

← CHAPTER 3

The Place of the Jews

Where is the place of the Jews? Although this is a difficult question with which to begin, it is crucial, for in defining the place of the Jews—not just geographically but also spiritually and epistemologically—medieval European Christians defined both themselves and the very notion of alterity. It is nothing new to suggest that Christian identity was, throughout the Middle Ages, modeled on conceptions of Jewish identity. As Daniel Boyarin has shown, the “hermeneutics of supersession” embedded in Pauline theology richly informed both the early writings of the Church Fathers and subsequent developments in Christian theology.¹ In a wide-ranging series of studies, Jeremy Cohen has illustrated the ways in which Jewish identity was used as a template to define Christianity not only directly (as its typological prefiguration) but also indirectly (in its correspondence to a series of enemies thought to threaten the Church, including heretics and Muslims).²

Building on Cohen’s work, in this chapter I outline some of the ways in which place functions in the definition of Jewish alterity. In religious terms, Judaism is the place holder, as it were, for Christianity. It is the primitive

“type” that is fulfilled and superseded by the “antitype,” as the Old Law of Moses gives way to the New Law of Christ and the so-called “Old” Testament is reinterpreted in the light of its successor, the “New” Testament.³ In geographical terms, Jews are conceived of as at once dispersed and contained, scattered all over the world in a series of diasporas emanating from Jerusalem yet, paradoxically, contained within a variety of enclosures.⁴ This spatial ambivalence, where Jews are imagined as belonging nowhere yet found everywhere, is the geographical expression of the epistemological ambivalence embedded within medieval understandings of the role of Judaism: it is both privileged, as the wellspring of Christianity, and condemned, as the “blind” Jews repeatedly refuse to recognize the Messiah among them. On the one hand, Judaism is proximate to Christianity, as its prefiguration and spiritual progenitor; on the other hand, Jews are (like heretics and Muslims) the remorseless enemy of the Church. Accordingly, medieval texts place Jews and Judaism at once at the middle of things and at the very edge of the world, ranging from the “Giudecca,” the most intimate circle of Dante’s *Inferno*,⁵ to the *ubera aquilonis*, the mountains in the farthest north where the enclosed tribes of Gog and Magog (identified here with the tribes of Israel) were thought to have been enclosed by Alexander the Great. Jewish bodies are the site where this ambivalence is played out, as the integrity of the Church (as the mystical body of Christ) is symbolically affirmed by their dismemberment and dissolution.

In a study of European representations of Islam and the Orient, discussion of medieval depictions of Jews might seem out of place. On the contrary, however, an understanding of medieval constructions of the Jewish body is a necessary first step in the effort to comprehend medieval constructions of the Saracen body. Saracen, the most common medieval term used to describe what we would now call Muslims, is a term that defines both religious and ethnic alterity. As Norman Daniel has pointed out, the term is never used to describe Christian Arabs, although it is sometimes used generically to refer

3. The typological relationship of “Old” Covenant and “New” Covenant is ubiquitous in medieval culture, but is perhaps nowhere so fully apparent as in biblical glosses. For an important study of this topic in the context of thirteenth-century French culture, see Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*.

4. In this chapter, the term *diaspora* is used to refer to the historical dispersion of Jews from Jerusalem, particularly the expulsion of 70 C.E. chronicled by Josephus (who used this Greek term, and whose writings were widely disseminated throughout the Middle Ages). I do not intend to evoke the political sense of the term, which Daniel Boyarin has recently used to signal a political project in which “Diaspora” serves as “a theoretical and historical model to replace national self-determination” (*Radical Jew*, 249). Boyarin himself notes the long intellectual genealogy of this effort (333n28).

5. On the significance of Dante’s “Giudecca” see Tomasch, “Indecca” 247–67.

1. Boyarin, *Carnal Israel*; Boyarin, *Radical Jew*. A highly condensed (and very useful) formulation of the hermeneutics of supersession appears in Boyarin, “This We Know,” 474–505.

2. Cohen, “Muslim Conversion,” 111. Cf. also Cohen, *Judaism and Its Discontents*, 158–65.

to other kinds of non-Christian aliens.⁶ (For example, the Saracens found in the Middle English *King Horn* appear to be non-Christian Danish invaders.)⁷ The term Saracen thus functions in a way similar to the term Jew, in simultaneously defining both ethnic and religious difference. By ascertaining how religious and ethnic difference were intertwined in medieval European understandings of Jews, it becomes possible to understand how and to what extent these were also intertwined in understandings of Saracens. Further, by examining the ways in which Jewish humoral physiology was thought to be determined by such factors as climate and dietary habits, it becomes possible to understand how the Saracen body was constructed as the product of an Oriental climate, nourished by exotic and alien foodstuffs.

Accordingly, this chapter begins with a consideration of the geographical place of the Jews, titled "Dispersal and Enclosure." One might expect to find Jerusalem identified as the rightful place of the Jews, based on its prominent role in chronicles of Jewish history, biblical accounts, and apocrypha. Due to Jerusalem's identification as the spiritual center of Christian salvation history, however, it could be recognized as the rightful place of the Jews only in the past. Consequently, medieval Christian accounts of a Jewish Jerusalem focus relentlessly on the act of expulsion and the physical destruction of the city, constructing a narrative of triumphant Christian dominion on the razed ground of Jewish history. Paradoxically, however, such depictions of the outward flow of Jews in diaspora are mirrored by portrayals of Jews tightly contained within enclosed spaces. This section outlines the tension between centrifugal diaspora and centripetal containment in accounts of Jews found in a variety of texts, including encyclopedias, lists of nations, and historical chronicles.

The second section, "Climate and the Diasporic Body," turns to the ways in which geography intersected with emergent theories of race, with the body serving as a microcosm of the larger world. Just as medieval Orientalism defines Saracen difference both in terms of religious orientation and bodily diversity, so medieval anti-Judaic discourse defines Jewish difference in terms of both soul and body. It is precisely in this focus on bodily difference that medieval anti-Judaism shades over into antisemitism, a distinction to which I return. This chapter therefore includes a detailed discussion of the ways in which Jewish bodies—as opposed to Jewish souls—were understood to differ from those of Western Christians, laying the foundation for chapter 4's exploration of "The Saracen Body" as well as, more broadly, a deeper understanding of how climate was thought to determine the biological and behavioral characteristics of peoples.

While Noahid descent, discussed at some length in chapter 1, was certainly an important component of medieval understandings of the causes of bodily diversity, climate was also thought to dictate the humoral makeup of the individual as well as the collective "natural" predispositions of nations. Within this framework, the Jews were a peculiar case: scattered from their original home within the fourth, moderate climate, they were nonetheless thought to retain essential anatomical and physiological features in spite of their itinerant nature. Conceptions of Jewish bodily diversity were intimately related to conceptions of religious diversity, so that the well-established discourse of anti-Judaism served as the substrate of an emergent discourse of antisemitism.⁸ Jewish bodies were used as the medium through which anxieties regarding the integrity of the Christian community could be expressed, with anti-Judaic and antisemitic discourses operating in tandem.

← Dispersal and Enclosure

One might expect to find Jerusalem identified as the rightful place of the Jews, since it appears prominently in chronicles of Jewish history as well as the Bible. Such a recognition of the centrality of Jerusalem within the history of the Jews would be in keeping with more general ideas about Jerusalem, which (as we saw in chapter 1) was thought by medieval European Christians to be the symbolic center of the world, the site of mankind's spiritual rebirth at the time of the Crucifixion and the place where the Last Judgment would begin. Paradoxically, however, Jerusalem is precisely *not* the place of the Jews in the medieval imagination: they are thought to be displaced from Jerusalem by the will of God, their right to the holy city revoked by their own rejection and persecution of Jesus. Discussions of a Jewish Jerusalem, therefore, whether in historical chronicles or literary texts, reveal a profound ambiguity. Jerusalem is identified as having been the place of the Jews only in the past, not in the present or the future. Consequently, medieval depictions of

8. Kathleen Biddick has recently warned that the tendency to see anti-Judaism as antecedent to antisemitism reveals "an anxiety about the supersessionary fantasy at the core of the typological imaginary." Biddick, *Typological Imaginary*, 10. Nonetheless, there seems to be a consensus among historians of Jews in medieval Europe that anti-Judaism existed in the period of early Christianity while antisemitism did not, even though the definitions of these two phenomena vary widely. Among the considerable literature, see especially Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Antisemitism*, and *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*. A useful assessment of Langmuir's efforts to define and distinguish between anti-Judaism and antisemitism appears in Stacey, "History, Religion, and Medieval Antisemitism,"

6. Daniel, *Arabs and Medieval Europe*, 53, 54; Baskett, *Arab, Saracen, and Muslim*, 90, 115.

a Jewish Jerusalem invariably focus not on the Jews' habitation of the city, but on their expulsion.

Other than the Bible itself, encyclopedias were the most widely distributed source of information about the geography and populations of the lands bordering the eastern Mediterranean. The account given by Isidore of Seville in his seventh-century *Etymologies* (itself based largely on Orosius and Pliny) was reproduced by later encyclopedists such as Bartholomaeus Anglicus and Vincent of Beauvais, both writing in the thirteenth century. While Vincent, in his *Speculum Naturale*, repeats Isidore almost verbatim, Bartholomaeus adds a few interesting variations. The most significant concerns the spatial relationship of the different lands of the Near East—Syria, Palestine, and Judea—to one another. Isidore simply describes each of these regions in turn, without clearly specifying their locations. Bartholomaeus, on the other hand, describes each of these regions as nested within one another. "Palestina is a prouynce of Siria," while "Iudea . . . is a cuntrey in Palestina," and Judea itself houses the central point of the entire world: "In the myddel of this Iudea is the cite of Ierusalem, as it were the nauel of alle the cuntrey and londe" (15.113, p. 792; 15.78, p. 772). (A similarly nested effect appears in the thirteenth-century *Opus maius* of Roger Bacon, which also uses Isidore's *Etymologies* for basic information on the geography of the Holy Land.)⁹ The centrality of Jerusalem is thus underscored, as it were, by the borders circling around it like ripples in a pond: first the borders of Judea, then of Palestine, then of Syria.

Like Isidore and Vincent, Bartholomaeus includes Jews among the other "dyuerse nacions" living in the region, such as "Tyries" (i.e., people of Tyre), Palestinians, "Comagines" (Carthaginians?), "Fenicis" (Phoenicians), "Nabadei" (Nabateans), and "Saraceni" (15.78, p. 772; 15.113, p. 792; 15.145, p. 809). They appear simply as one people among many, having no special claim to the territory they inhabit; no claim, that is, that the encyclopedist is willing to allow. Isidore puts it this way, in words echoed almost verbatim by Bartholomaeus and Vincent: "Therefore, because of the pleasant climate [lit., harmony of the elements], the Jews thought that [Judea] was the land promised to their forefathers, flowing with milk and honey, by means of

9. "Nomen enim Syriae in tempore regum Israel attribuebatur Damasco et regioni ejus. Haec igitur provincia Syriae Phoenicis habet terram Hebraeorum a meridie et terram Philistinorum; sed terra Philistinorum incipit a finibus Aconensis territorii usque ad turbidum fluvium Aegypti, et antiquitus continebat fere totam terram Judaeorum citra Jordanem" (For the name of Syria in the time of the kings of Israel was given to Damascus and its region. This province, therefore, of Phoenician Syria has the land of the Hebrews to the south and the land of the Philistines; but the land of the Philistines begins at the confines of the territory of Acon as far as the turbid stream of Egypt, and in ancient times contained nearly the whole country of the Jews this side of Jordan). Bacon, *Opus Majus*, *Book 1*:346; Bacon, *Opus Majus*, *Book 1*:364.

which God promised them the privilege of the resurrection" (Unde secundum elementorum gratiam existimaverunt Iudaei eam promissam patribus terram fluentem mel et lac, cum hic illis Deus resurrectionis praerogativam polliceretur). Implicitly, then, the Jews' claim to the territory is represented as an error of judgment grounded on coincidence: as Bartholomaeus, puts it (in Trevisa's translation), "Iewes trowede that this londe was yhote to here formefadres and that it wellid melk and hony" (15.78; pp. 772–73). The encyclopedists also emphasize that the Jews were not the original residents of the land: "This londe was first yclepede Canaan and hadde that name of Chames sone, other of tenne nacions of Chandelos that were yput oute, and thanne Iewes hadde possessioun of that londe" (15.78; p. 772). Jewish residence in Judea is thus represented as neither original nor exclusive, for their presence is simply one stage in the habitation of the land (preceded by the Canaanites and followed by a range of other ethnic groups) and their current status is just that of one group among many. As Bartholomaeus' Middle English translator puts it, the territory of Judea itself is the "comune wonynge" of various nations (15.78, p. 772). Finally, the Jews' claim to Judea is said to be fundamentally false, grounded on the misguided belief that God had sanctioned their right to the territory: the Jews merely "believed" that the land was theirs.¹⁰

Bartholomaeus' account also differs from that found in Isidore's *Etymologies* in his description of the Palestinians as a kind of counterpart to the Jews, living in the same land and having many of the same faults. Bartholomaeus notes that the Palestinians were originally "yclepede Alophili that is to menyngre 'aliens and straungers'; for alweye they were straunge to the children of Israel, for thei were departed fer oute of here companye and kynreden" (15.113; p. 793).¹¹ While Isidore had noted the earlier name "Alophili" (*Etym.* 9.2.20), it is Bartholomaeus who introduces the explanation of the name's source in the estrangement of the Palestinians from the Jews. He amplifies this observation later in the same chapter, citing as his source "Erodatus," an unidentified (probably lost) writer named elsewhere in the *De proprietatibus rerum* in connection with the characteristics of various nations.¹² Bartholomaeus states that the Palestinians "ben allweye fals and gyleful and wyly, greuous enemys

10. Bartholomaeus' Middle English translator, John Trevisa, makes one of his rare editorial interjections in this passage, identifying Judea as "the Jewerie" (15.78, p. 772). Interestingly, this is the same term used to designate the Jewish quarter in European cities, as in Chaucer's *Prioress' Tale* (VII.489). On the use of this term in the *Prioress' Tale*, see Delany, "Chaucer's *Prioress*," 43–57, esp. 47.

11. "Allophili, id est, alienigenae, eo quod semper fuerunt filiis Israel alieni, et longe ab eorum societate et genere separati." Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, 684.

12. On "Erodatus," see Greenham, "Fabulous Geography," 207–8.

to the kyngedome of Israel, bothe for they hadde enuye to the Iues, and also for they were proude of the welthe of here owne londe" (15.113, p. 793).¹³ The reason for their animosity, paradoxically, is their very similarity to their enemy, for envy and pride were the faults most commonly ascribed to Jews. For example, medieval lists of nations, which encapsulate the essential characteristics of ethnic or national groups in a few memorable lines, frequently describe Jews as characterized by "invidia."¹⁴ Their devotion to the acquisition of wealth, often through the practice of usury, is also noted in these lists. They are, in sum, a "natio nefandi generis," a nation of wicked origin.¹⁵

These lists of nations also describe what their writers perceive as the Jews' rightful place in the world: that is, nowhere and everywhere. They are said to be a nation scattered throughout the world as a result of their sins—that is, their supposed culpability for the crucifixion of Jesus. One of these lists of nations, appearing in a thirteenth-century manuscript and titled "De nequitia Judeorum" (On the Iniquity of the Jews), exclaims, "O gens ceca nimium vagans per inania."¹⁶ Literally, this means "Oh blind folk, wandering wide through empty space"; "inania" can also refer to the emptiness of the "gens," however, so that the line refers not only to the wandering itself, but to the emptiness of spirit that lies behind it. Another list of nations, titled "Gentium quicumque mores" (The Habits of Every Folk) also emphasizes the scattered nature of the Jews; the order of the list, however, which follows a west-to-east geographical trajectory, reveals a curious ambiguity regarding the place of the Jews. Though they are said to be scattered ("sparsi") throughout the world, they are simultaneously located at the center of things—in terms of the sequence of the verses, at the end of the list. After ranging through western Europe, the poem moves to eastern countries such as Hungary and Poland, and then finally to ever more barbaric nations:

Tartari sunt infideles / sanguinariii crudeles, / feri et hippophagi.
Sunt Pruteni multi boni, / multi mali et coloni / variarum gentium.

13. "Gens, ut narrat Herodotus, astuta et callida, molesta semper regno Israelitico et infesta, tum quia prosperitatis Iudaeorum invadebat, tum etiam, qui de soli sui felicitate . . . nimium praesumebat" (*De prop. rerum*, 684). Trevisa's translation of "astuta et callida" as "fals and gyleful and wyly" is discussed in chapter 4 of this book, 162.

14. Meyvaert notes examples as early as the ninth century, in additions to Isidore's *History of the Gots*. See Meyvaert, "'Rainaldus est malus scriptor Francigenus,'" 743–63, esp. 747–48.

15. A useful selection of nation lists appears in Walther, "Scherz und Ernst in der Völker—und Stämme-Charakteristik mittellateinischer Verse," 263–301. In them, Jews are said to be given to usury (268, #33), envious (277, #99), hard-hearted and pitiless (274, #77), shameful ("inhonestus"; 284, #147), hard-necked and heavy-hearted (277, #99), and unstable, like whores and converts (277, #147).

Marcomanni et Bohemi / sunt heretici blasphemii, / madidi Austriaci.
Turce, Mauri, et Schiite / alieque gentes mundi / hostes sunt ecclesie.
Passim sparsi sunt Judei / et quod Christi mortis rei, / his incerta
patria est.
Ergo finem faciamus / et regnum Dei queramus, / cetera non [nam?]
transeunt.

The Tartars are without faith, bloodthirsty, wild, and eaters of horses;
The Prussians are often good farmers, often bad ones—a mongrel race
of men.

Marcomanni [?] and Bohemians are heretical blasphemers, the Austrians
are sodden with drink.

The Turks, Moors, Shiites, and other races of the world are enemies of
the Church.

The Jews are scattered here and there, and because they put Christ to
death, their homeland is uncertain.

Therefore let us make an end of this, and seek the kingdom of God; all
other things will pass away.¹⁷

Some features of this poem mark it as a product of the late Middle Ages, especially the distinction drawn between Turks, Moors, and (unprecedented in the earlier Middle Ages) Shiites. This line was clearly altered from an earlier version, as the faulty rhyme indicates; other aspects, however, are very much in keeping with the list of nations genre which, as Meyvaert notes, has its roots as early as the ninth century.¹⁸ The place of the Jews is, as the poem states, "incerta": their supposed culpability is, as usual, adduced as the cause for their dispersal. Nonetheless, in spite of their diasporic status, they remain in the penultimate position, their "patria" foreshadowing the "regnum Dei" to come and, inevitably, being superseded by it.

The treatment of the place of the Jews found in the encyclopedias and lists of nations corresponds to that found in historical chronicles, especially the accounts of Orosius and Josephus and their medieval redactors. For Orosius, writing in the early fifth century, the physical city of Jerusalem held little value; instead, like his mentor Augustine, Orosius urged his readers to turn their gaze toward the spiritual Jerusalem, embarking upon the figurative pilgrimage of the soul rather than the literal pilgrimage of the body. In his

17. *Ibid.*, 273, #72. Thanks to A. G. Rigg for help with this translation.

18. Walther notes the faulty rhyme and comments that the poem is clearly much older than this

chronicle, Orosius describes the cycles of destruction and reedification of Jerusalem; his description of the Jews' habitation of Jerusalem differs, however, depending upon whether he describes the period before the time of Christ or after. Jews living after the time of Christ are portrayed as sinful, and as suffering on account of their sins: "the Jews, entirely abandoned by the grace of God after the Passion of Christ, found themselves entirely surrounded by evils" (*Iudaei post passionem Christi destituti in totum gratia Dei cum omnibus undique malis circumvenirentur* [7.9.2; 3: 37–38]). Jews living before the time of Christ, conversely, are described as virtuous and God-fearing. In keeping with his usual historiographical method of noting the simultaneity of events in different cultures, Orosius states that, at the same moment that the Roman republic was founded, the Jewish people returned from their captivity in Babylon to "sanctam Hierusalem" and rebuilt the "templum Domini."¹⁹ Here, the position of the Jews in "holy Jerusalem" seems rightful and assured, as they draw together in worship at "the temple of God."

Orosius' description of the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem at the hands of Titus and Vespasian in 70 C.E., however, portrays them very differently. Titus lays siege to the city, breaches the walls, and approaches the Temple, where many priests and prominent citizens (*multitudo sacerdotum ac principum* [7.9.4; 3: 38]) had gathered to make a last stand. At that moment, Titus experiences a moment of self-doubt:

Quod tamen postquam in potestatem redactum opere atque antiquitate suspexit, diu deliberavit utrum tamquam incitamentum hostium incenderet an in testimonium victoriae reservaret. Sed Ecclesia Dei iam per totum Orbem uberrime germinante, hoc tamquam effatum ac vacuum nullique usui bono commodum arbitrio Dei auferendum fuit. Itaque Titus . . . templum in Hierosolymis incendit ac diruit.

Then, after having brought [the Temple] under his control, Titus admired the work and its noble age, asking himself whether he should burn it as an incentive toward continued hostilities, or whether he should preserve it in testimony to his victory. But, at the moment when the Church of God was already germinating in a fecund way across the whole world, this [Temple], emptied by the act of giving birth and void, and which could serve no useful purpose, must disappear by the

19. Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos* 7.2.3; 3: 17.

will of God. That is why Titus . . . burned and destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem. (7.9.5–6; 3: 38–39)

Though I have supplied the referent in the translation, the word *templum* is largely absent from the Latin passage, appearing only in its closing words with reference to the Temple's destruction. Such omission is appropriate to the sense of the passage, which centers on the very superfluity of the Temple, now merely an empty shell, devoid of that which once had made it holy. This description of the Temple as "vacuum," that is, empty or void, refers not just to the actual physical space of the Temple but the symbolic space of Judaism itself. The passage resonates with the words of "De nequitia Judeorum," quoted above, where the Jews are similarly characterized: they are said to be scattered through the world, "vagans per inania" (wandering through empty space), their own spiritual vacuum precipitating their endless wandering in the void. While the destruction of the Temple is carried out by Titus, the ethnic cleansing of the city is completed only under Hadrian, as Orosius recounts: "he ordered that no Jew was to be allowed into Jerusalem, only Christians being permitted within the city" (*praecepitque ne cui Iudaeo introeundi Hierosolymam esset licentia, Christianis tantum civitate permissa* [7.13.5; 3: 46]). In this moment, the appropriation of Jerusalem is complete, as the Jews are driven out to make way for the Christians.

Orosius' description of the Temple as a womb emptied of its child is significant, for it imposes a gendered framework upon not only the Temple but also the city of Jerusalem, and even Judaism itself.²⁰ From an early date, the rending of the veil before the door of the Holy of Holies in the Temple was understood by Christian writers to be a physical manifestation of the fundamental change in the status of Judaism with the death of Jesus.²¹ The moment of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God was thought to be the typological fulfillment of the sacrifice offered by Abraham, and the New Law, correspondingly, the fulfillment of the Old Law delivered to the Jews by Moses. This typological relationship was frequently signified, in both visual art and exegetical texts, in terms of the binary opposition of Ecclesia (the Church) and Synagoga.²²

20. The gendered depiction found in Orosius may be derived from Augustine, who likens Jewish Jerusalem to an infertile woman. On the ninth-century afterlife of Augustine's comments, see Albert, "Adversus Iudaeos," 119–42, esp. 128–35. This gendered depiction seems to be absent from earlier anti-Judaic patristic literature; see Stroumsa, "From Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism," 1–26.

21. On exegesis of Matthew 27: 51, see Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 1: 110–12.

22. On the role of gender in the personification of Synagoga and Ecclesia, see Ferrante, *Woman as Image*, 20. More generally on Synagoga and Ecclesia, see Seiferth, *Synagogue and Church*, 33–41; Schleich, "Allegory of Church and Synagogue," 448–64.

Modern scholars often interpret Synagoga as a personification of Judaism; more accurately, it is the Jewish community that corresponds to the Christian entity of the Church, understood as a single body of believers united by their common faith. Ecclesia and Synagoga are containers, as it were, enclosing the members of their respective communities in a spiritual sense, just as the actual church or synagogue would physically enclose worshipers.

Visual depictions of Synagoga and Ecclesia during the ninth through eleventh centuries illustrate the way in which, through the fulfillment of typology, Synagoga gives way to Ecclesia. After the twelfth century, Ruth Mellinkoff has argued, depictions of Synagoga became increasingly negative, as she was seen to represent not the virtuous Jews of the period before Christ but rather those who had rejected his message, including contemporary Jews; accordingly, after the twelfth century, Synagoga came to be sometimes portrayed wearing the pointed hat or yellow clothing conventionally used to identify medieval Jews in manuscript illustrations.²³ The connotations of the gender identification of Synagoga and Ecclesia are made increasingly explicit in texts and illustrations of the later Middle Ages. For example, as Sara Lipton notes in her study of the thirteenth-century *Bibles moralisées*, the supplanting of Synagoga by Ecclesia is depicted as the rejection of a sterile, unfruitful conjugal relationship between Christ and Synagoga and Christ in favor of a new, fecund union with Ecclesia.²⁴ Lipton points out that the figure of Synagoga was even coupled with depictions of Haeresis (Heresy) in order to illustrate the pernicious alliance of the enemies of Christianity.²⁵ Orosius' metaphorical description of Jerusalem as an emptied womb can thus be seen as an early manifestation of a trend that would become prevalent in medieval Christianity: that is, the belief that Judaism was significant not in itself, but only as the preliminary phase of Christianity, the dry husk to be cast away once the seed of "true" belief had been successfully disseminated throughout the world.²⁶

23. Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1: 35–36.

24. Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 118. See also Lipton's study of depictions of Ecclesia and Synagoga in "Temple Is My Body," 129–64.

25. Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 84–86, 94–99. On the identification of heresy with Judaism in art, see Cahn, "Expulsion of the Jews," 94–109.

26. A study of the changing depiction of the Jews and Jerusalem in late medieval redactions of Orosius (including the widely disseminated vernacular adaptation, the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*) would doubtless be very fruitful. For a useful survey of late medieval manuscripts of Orosius, see Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques latins aux XIe et XIIe siècles*, vol. 2. On illustrations of Jerusalem in manuscripts of Old French adaptations of Orosius, see Oltrogge, *Die Illustrationszyklen zur "Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César."*

There is little doubt that the most influential strand in medieval writing about the geographical place of the Jews is made up of the many retellings of the fall of Jerusalem first chronicled by Josephus. Written in the first century, Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* was an important source for the early fathers of the Church, accorded an authoritative status comparable at least to the Apocrypha. The *Bellum Judaicum* survives not only in numerous manuscripts of the full text, but also in innumerable quotations and excerpts in theological writings, historical chronicles, romances, and encyclopedias; during the later Middle Ages, its account of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian in 70 C.E. was even rendered in vernacular translations.²⁷ The *Bellum Judaicum* was known to medieval writers both directly, by means of a Latin translation of Josephus' Greek text, and indirectly, through the fourth-century redaction attributed to Hegesippus.²⁸ One of the most widely disseminated versions of Josephus' account of the siege of Jerusalem appears in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*, the historical chronicle contained within Vincent's voluminous *Speculum Maius*. Vincent essentially reproduces Josephus' account of the atrocities that took place during the siege of Jerusalem: he describes the bodies of the fleeing inhabitants, eviscerated by Roman soldiers looking for the gold coins the Jews had swallowed before their flight; the terrible hunger that led to "monstrous deeds" (*immunda facti*) of cannibalism; the killing and burning of the priests before the Temple at the end of the siege.²⁹ The dismemberment of Jewish bodies, highlighted repeatedly throughout the passage, symbolically represents the fragmentary, partial nature of Judaism itself. From a medieval Christian perspective, wholeness and bodily integrity were seen as fundamental attributes of the body of the Church, mystically united by the sacrifice of the Eucharist; fragmentation and incompleteness, by contrast, were thought to be the hallmarks of Christianity's precursor, now superseded. In keeping with this view, the evisceration of Jewish bodies to find the gold coins inside is proof of the "avaritia" or avarice of the Jews themselves, not of their Roman captors; similarly, the dismemberment of bodies in preparation for cannibalistic consumption is evidence of the monstrosity of the immured Jews, not the inhuman behavior of those who laid siege to

27. A useful survey of the reception of Josephus can be found in Schreckenberg, *Die Flavius-Josephus-Tradition in Antike und Mittelalter*.

28. There are early printed editions (Paris: Ascensius, 1524; Cologne: Cholinus, 1559) but no modern edition of Hegesippus' *De excidio hierosolymitano*. A useful study of the text appears in Bell, "Historical Analysis."

29. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale* 10.4–6 (col. 370–71).

the city. In Vincent's description, as in his source text, the fragmented Jewish body is simply a visible sign of the spiritual defects intrinsic to Judaism.

Josephus' account appears once again in the *Siege of Jerusalem*, a Middle English alliterative poem written during the second half of the fourteenth century. Although it recounts the same narrative of destruction and despair, the *Siege of Jerusalem* differs from the account found in Vincent's *Speculum Historiale* in the moral valence it ascribes to the acts committed by the besieged occupants of the city. In the Middle English poem as in Vincent's chronicle, Jewish identity serves as the template for Christian identity, informed by the hermeneutics of supersession derived from Pauline theology.³⁰ At the same time, however, the *Siege of Jerusalem* employs tropes used in crusade chronicles to describe quite a different enemy of the Christian host—the Muslims who defended Jerusalem against the crusaders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Such overlapping of Muslim and Jewish identity is far from uncommon; as Jeremy Cohen puts it, in the medieval “classification of the Jews together with the Muslims,” both are merely “subsets in a larger genus of hermeneutically constructed *infideles* who undermined the unity of Christian faith.”³¹ In canon law, regulations limiting the interactions of Christians with Jews and Muslims treated the latter two as equivalents.³² Literary texts reflect this interchangeability as well: medieval mystery plays depicting the nativity of Jesus, for example, characterize Herod using the conventions associated with Muslim sultans in the *chansons de geste* and romances. He is opulently dressed, given to violent rages and, most tellingly, invokes the name of his god, Muhammad [“Mahounde”].³³ (The theological dimensions of this overlapping of Muslim and Jewish identity are discussed in more detail in chapter 5.) What makes the treatment of Jewish identity in the *Siege of Jerusalem* unique is not the identification of Muslims with Jews, but the fact that the poem uses Jewish identity as the template not only for the construction of Muslim identity, but for the construction of Christian identity as well. This complicated overlapping of categories of identity,

30. See Elisa Narin van Court's influential reading of the poem in terms of supersession, especially as articulated by Boyarin: “*The Siege of Jerusalem* and Augustinian Historians: Writing about Jews in Fourteenth-century England,” *Chaucer Review* 29 (1995): 227–48; reprinted in *Chaucer and the Jews*, ed. Sheila Delany (New York: Routledge, 2002), 165–84. On supersession in medieval English literature more broadly, see also van Court, “Hermeneutics of Supersession 43–87; “Socially Marginal,” 293–326. On the relationship of gender and supersession, see Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference*, 26–35.

31. Jeremy Cohen, “Muslim Connection,” 162. See also Cutler, *Jew as the Ally*, 97.

32. Simonsohn, *Apostolic See and the Jews*, passim.

33. “Mahounde full of might” (line 283; cf. 327, 406): “Vintners Plave” 156–74

coupled with the symbolic use of space in the establishment of those categories, makes it worth examining the *Siege of Jerusalem* at some length.

Recent readers of the *Siege of Jerusalem* have tended to take one of two positions regarding the depiction of Jews in the poem. Some, recognizing the very evident resemblance of the *Siege of Jerusalem* to contemporary *chansons de geste* and crusade romances, suggest that the Jews of the poem are to be equated with Muslims, and that the poem as a whole functions as crusade propaganda.³⁴ Others argue that to interpret the Jews simply as coded terms for Muslims is to fail to do justice to the depiction of Jews in the poem: in spite of the fact that Jews had been expelled from England in 1290, and therefore that the poem's writer and its readers were unlikely to have met any living Jewish people, the virtual presence of Jews must be recognized.³⁵ The romance's treatment of Jewish bodies, ranging from the horrific cannibalism practiced by the besieged Jews to the complete immolation of the Jewish priests at the hands of the Romans, reveals some of the ways medieval Christians used Jewish identity in order to define the borders of their own community, both affirmatively (predicating Christian identity on the basis of Jewish identity) and negatively (identifying Jewish and Muslim identity as fundamentally similar, and hence excluding both).

In order to understand the strategic use of Jewish identity in the *Siege of Jerusalem*, it is helpful to examine how communities are constituted in the poem and how their borders are defined. It is certainly true that the Jews of the *Siege* are characterized, in certain respects, in terms that evoke the Muslims depicted in contemporary crusade literature. Strangely, however, the Jews are simultaneously characterized in terms that are not merely “sympathetic” (as van Court has suggested),³⁶ but that explicitly identify them with the Christian protagonists of the crusade chronicles—not the Muslim antagonists. This ambivalence creates a peculiar economy in the poem in which the Jews are simultaneously the object of identification for the Christian reader and that which must be abjected. The genre of the siege poem lends itself especially well to this ambivalent characterization, for siege poems in general are centrally concerned not with conversion, but with the integrity of the community.³⁷ They do not feature, as do the *chansons de geste* or romances, climactic scenes of conversion; the *Siege of Jerusalem* is no exception, for here the goal is not conversion, but extermination. The integrity of the Christian

34. Hamel, “*Siege of Jerusalem*,” 177–94; Lawton, “Titus Goes Hunting,” 105–17, esp. 116.

35. Van Court, “Siege,” 227–48; Millar, “*Siege of Jerusalem*,” 141–80.

36. Van Court, “Siege” 241.

37. Alhadi, “Incarnation” 22–44, esp. 31–32.

community is affirmed, its wholeness the mirror image of the fragmented Jewish bodies in which the poem so memorably revels.

The *Siege of Jerusalem* is based on several sources, the most important one of which is Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*. Yet it also has a curious analogue, a kind of shadow text that corresponds to it in many ways, and which also circulated under the title "The Siege of Jerusalem." The *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* of William of Tyre, completed in 1183, includes a history of the Holy Land from antiquity, a comprehensive account of the First Crusade, and a chronicle of the early years of the First Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Written originally in Latin, it was translated into Old French by 1225 and circulated widely in the vernacular (more so than in the Latin original). It was translated back into Latin in the thirteenth century, as well as into other vernacular languages.³⁸ In what follows, as I point out some correspondences between the *Siege of Jerusalem* and its "shadow text" of the same name, I will quote from the late fifteenth-century English translation printed by William Caxton, and will refer to it as the "Caxton *Siege of Jerusalem*" in order to distinguish it from the alliterative poem. The Caxton *Siege* differs from William of Tyre's original chronicle in many respects, most important in its overall scope and theme: it is comprised only of the first nine books of William's twenty-three, omitting the history of the Latin Kingdom following the consolidation of Christian power in Jerusalem. In this abbreviated history, the siege of Jerusalem becomes the focus of the narrative and the conquest its climax, as the crusaders, led by the heroic figure of Godfrey of Bouillon, move inexorably forward.

As Mary Hamel has noted, the scenes of violence and savage warfare depicted in the *Siege of Jerusalem* closely resemble passages found in crusade chronicles and the romances based upon them.³⁹ The terrible bloodshed found in the crusade histories is echoed in the alliterative poem:

Rappis rispen forth / that [rydders] an hundred
Scholde be busy to burie / that on a bent lafte.
Castels clateren down, / cameles brosten,
Dromedaries to the deth / drowen ful swythe;
The blode fomed hem fro / in the flasches aboute
Th[at] kne-depe in the dale / dascheden stedes.

38. On the various versions of William of Tyre, see Riant, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de L'Eracles*; Pryor, "Eracles," 293. Evidence of the early thirteenth-century Latin retranslation appears in Ralph of Coggeshall's *De Expugnacione Terrae Sanctae*, 257, in *Radulphi de Coggeshall*; noted in *Godfrey of Boloyne*, ed. Colvin, xix.

39. Hamel "Siege of Jerusalem," 183.

Guts burst forth, so that a hundred men would be needed to bury what was left on the field. Castles [containing men riding elephants] clattered down, camels burst open, dromedaries drew close to death quickly. The blood foamed forth from them into the streams nearby, so that horses galloped knee-deep in that valley. (571–76)⁴⁰

The chronicler Raymond d'Aguiliers describes a similar scene, also set in Jerusalem, but at the time of the First Crusade: "In the Temple and porch of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins. Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies. The city was filled with corpses and blood." Fulcher of Chartres puts it more baldly: "If you had been there, your feet would have been stained up to the ankles with the blood of the slain."⁴¹ In the Caxton *Siege*, the blood of the vanquished enemy flows freely, as though it were water: "There was so moche blood shedde that the canellys and ruisheauls [little rivers] ronne alle of blood / and alle the stretes of the toun were couerd with dede men" (273.36–274.1).⁴² Similarly, in the *Siege of Jerusalem*, the "Baches woxen ablode aboute in the vale, / And goutes fram gold wede as goteres they runne" (Streams became bloody, all through the valley, and little streams of golden clothing ran like channels of water [563–64]). The blood shed in the sacred precincts has, paradoxically, a purifying effect: as the Caxton *Siege* puts it, "It was wel couenable [suitable] thyng that . . . theyr blood sholde also be shedd, where as they had spred the ordure of mescreaunce" (274.22–26).⁴³

The sheer multiplicity of faceless, nameless bodies appears in both *Siege of Jerusalem* texts as well: in the alliterative poem, "The fals Iewes in the felde fallen so thicke / As hail froward heuen, hepe ouer other. / So was the bent ouerbrad, blody byrunne, / With ded bodies aboute alle the brod vale" (The false Jews in the field fell as thickly as hail from heaven, one heap upon the other. The field was overrun with blood, and thickly spread with dead bodies around the whole wide valley [601–4]). The piles of corpses in the poem,

40. *Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. Hanna and Lawton; cited by line number in the text. Translations are my own; thorn and yogh are transliterated.

41. Trans. in [Fulcher of Chartres] Edward Peters, *The First Crusade*, 77, 214.

42. The Caxton *Siege of Jerusalem* (*Godfrey of Boloyne*) is cited by page and line number in the text.

43. The rhetoric of pollution is discussed at greater length in the third part of chapter 5. On how

“one heap upon the other,” echo the conventions of crusade accounts found in the Caxton *Siege*: “They slewe so many in the stretes / that there were heeps of dede bodyes, and [one] myght not goo ne passe but vpon them that so laye deed” (273.7–9). The alliterative *Siege* continues similarly: “Myght no stede doun stap bot on stele wede / Or on burne, other on beste or on bright scheldes. / So myche was the multitude” (No horse could put his foot down, except on steel armor, or on men, or on animals, or on bright shields, the multitude was so great [605–7]). Yet the scenes of violence and bloodshed are not the only ones to be drawn from crusade accounts: as Christine Chism has noted, the luxurious depictions of the opulent wealth found in Jerusalem clearly come from the same source, as do the “olyfauntes” (449) used to carry groups of armed men to the battlefield.⁴⁴ The fabulous wealth of the Jewish Temple, covered “with rebies grete; / With perles and peritotes,” glowing with gold and having “dores ful of dyemauntes” (1254–57), is pillaged by the Roman armies, just as the fabulous wealth of the mosques is taken by the crusaders. The treasures of Jerusalem, the poet relates, are too abundant to be described: “Telle couthe no tonge the tresours that thei ther founden: / Iewels for ioly men [and] ie[me]wes riche; / Ffloreyms of [fyne] gold [ther] no freke wanted, / [Ne r]iche pelour and pane princes to were; / Besauntes, bies of gold, broches and rynges, / Clene clothes of selke many carte fulle” (No tongue could tell all the treasures they found there: jewels for jolly men, and rich gems. No man lacked florins of fine gold, nor rich furs and cloth suited to princes, besants, gold bracelets, brooches and rings, clothes of pure silk—many cartfuls of them [1274–79]). Similarly, in the latter-day sack of Jerusalem, the crusaders “founde therin grete hauoyr [wealth], and gold, syluer, precious stones and cloth of sylk. [They] made alle to be born a way” (274.12–14). The final correspondence between the depiction of Muslims in the Caxton *Siege of Jerusalem* and that of the Jews in the alliterative *Siege* concerns the nature of the “misbelief” that earns death for the victims, whether they be slaughtered in the first century or in the eleventh. It is faith in a false “law”: in the alliterative *Siege*, the Jews are said to follow “Moyses lawe” (484, 586), while in the Caxton *Siege*, the Muslims are said to follow the “lawe of machomet” (274.24, 276.38). This parallelism, central to the long tradition of polemics against Islam (discussed in chapter 5), is evoked in the alliterative poem to suggest that the Jews, like the Muslims, are a kind of perennial enemy of Christianity.

44. Chism, “*Siege of Jerusalem*,” 309–40, esp. 320–25.

The paradox is that, in the very same poem, the Jews are also likened to Christians—not just Christians in general, but Christians as they are portrayed in precisely the same crusade chronicles from which the parallels between Jews and Muslim were derived. In the *Siege of Jerusalem*, the suffering of the Jews is depicted in great detail; yet it is portrayed not only with malicious pleasure at their plight but, at least on occasion, with compassion. Their suffering first becomes acute when they begin to lack water after the Romans besieging them stop up the streams that flow into the city:

The cors of the condit / that comen to toun
Stoppen, euereche a streem / ther any str[and]e yede,
With stockes and stones / and stynkande bestes
That they no water myght wynne / that weren enclosed.

They stopped the watercourse of every conduit
that came into the town, every small stream,
wherever any current went, using sticks, and stones, and
rotting corpses of animals, so that
they who were enclosed could get no water.

(689–92)

Exactly the same military strategy is described in the Caxton *Siege of Jerusalem*, except that here the action is carried out by the Muslims against the Christians: “[T]hey stopped the mowthes of thyse fontaynes and of the Cysternes . . . ffor they thought that the pylgryms for lacke of watres sholde not mayntene theyr syege to fore the toun” (254.17.20). The Christians suffer greatly as a result, as the Caxton *Siege* recounts in detail: “Thanguyssh of thirst grewe moch of the heete that was in Iuyn, And of the trauaylle that they suffred, and for the duste that entred in theyr mowthes” (258.10–12). The suffering of the Jews in the alliterative poem becomes even greater, however, when they are subjected to the pains of hunger as well, as the Romans determine to starve them out of the city. The lack of goods causes prices to be driven up sharply, so that “Was nocht for besauntes to bye that men bite myght. / For a ferthyng-worth of fode floryns an hundred / Princes profren in the toun” (There was nothing that could be eaten that could be bought with gold coins. For a penny-worth of food, princes would offer a hundred florins [1142–44]). Similar inflation is depicted in the Caxton *Siege*, where the crusaders suffer from lack of food: “a cowe was worth four marc weyght of syluer, which a man myght haue at begynnyng for echt or ten shylyngis.

A lambe or a kyd was at sex shylyngis, whiche to fore was worth but thre or four pens" (144.29–32).

The climax, however, of Jewish suffering in the *Siege of Jerusalem* occurs when a woman living in Jerusalem during the prolonged siege suffers terrible hunger, and is driven to commit a terrible act.⁴⁵ This is one of the most horrible scenes in the poem, but also one of the most beautifully written; in its empathetic portrayal of the mother, it differs strikingly from the parallel account found in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*, described above. To convey the tone of the passage, it is necessary to quote it in full:

On Marie, a myld wyf, / for meschef of foode,
 Hir owen barn that yo bar, / yo brad on the gledis,
 Rostyth rigge and rib / with rewfyl wordes,
 Sayth, "sone, vpon eche side / our sorow is a-lofte:
 Batail aboute the borwe / our bodies to quelle;
 Withyn h[u]nger so hote / that negh our herte brestyth.
 Therfor yeld that I the yaf / and ayen tourne,
 And entr ther thou [o]ut cam," / and etyth a schouldere.
 The [rich] roos of the rost / right [in]to the [strete]
 that fele fastyng folke / felde[n] the saure.
 Doun thei daschen the dore, / dey scholde the berde
 That mete yn this meschef / hadde from men l[a]yned.
 Than saith that worthi wif / in a wode hunger,
 "Myn owen barn haue I brad / and the bones gnawen,
 Yit haue I saued you som," / and forth a side feccheth
 Of the barn that yo bare, / and alle hire blode chaungeth.
 [Forth] they went for wo / wep[ande sore]
 And sayn, "alas in this lif / how longe schul we dwelle?"

One Mary, a gentle woman, for lack of food, put on the coals her own child that she bore; she roasted the back and the ribs, with sorrowful words, saying, "Son, our sorrow is raised up upon each side: battle is all around the city to slay us, and within hunger so sharp that our heart almost bursts. Therefore, give me back what I gave you, and turn around, and go back in where you came out!" And she ate a shoulder. The smell rose up from the roast, right into the streets, so that the many starving

people smelled the savor. They smashed the door down, for any woman should die who had kept meat away from other people during this time of suffering. Then that worthy woman said, crazed with hunger: "I have roasted my own child, and gnawed the bones. But I saved some for you." And she went to fetch a side of the child that she had borne, and they all became pale. They went away full of sorrow, weeping, and said, "Alas, how long will we go on in this life?"

(1081–98)

The horror and sorrow experienced by those who burst in on the mother is echoed in the reader. Compassion is generated by her description as "a myld wyf" and (even after she eats her child) "that worthi wif," by the "rewful wordes" she addresses to the little body before she consumes it, and by the generosity she shows ("yit haue I saued you som"). Although the narrative has accordingly been characterized as showing "sympathy" for the besieged Jews,⁴⁶ it would be more accurate to say that it encourages the Christian reader to identify with them. The correspondence between the suffering experienced by the Jews in the alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem* and the suffering experienced by the Christians in the Caxton *Siege* encourages such identification.

In the *Siege of Jerusalem*, Judaism is presented as a parody of Christianity. This would seem, at first glance, impossible, because parody is by definition secondary, enacted subsequent to that which it imitates, and Judaism unquestionably predates Christianity.⁴⁷ Judaism after the time of Christ, then, is specifically what is identified as parodic. Accordingly, the cannibalistic mother, Mary, functions as a parody of the Virgin Mary: each mother sacrifices her son, and offers her son as food to nourish others. Even the roasting of the child in the oven is an allusion to Mary's relation to Jesus, for medieval images of the Virgin presenting her Child in the form of a baked wafer are common in the fourteenth century.⁴⁸ The purpose of such parodic identification is not so much to identify the Jews with Christians (and thus to humanize them), but rather to identify the Christians with the Jews, in order to articulate a notion of Christian identity that both takes Judaism as its model and eradicates it utterly. This act makes Judaism into the parodic ape of Christianity, and Christianity into the authentic, originary "law."

The fate of the Jews in the *Siege of Jerusalem* is therefore, paradoxically, double: on the one hand, they must be annihilated so that the superiority

45. An analogue to the Siege's account of the cannibalistic mother can be found in a rabbinic story about the wife of Doeg ben Joseph; see Buber, *Midrash Echa rabbati*, commentary on Lamentations 2:20. Thanks to Jeremy Cohen for this reference.

46. Van Court, "Siege," 233.

47. On parody as repetition, see Hutcheon, *Theory of Parody*.

48. Deegre, "Mary of the Eucharist" 375–401, esp. 386–87.

of Christianity can be clearly demonstrated; on the other, they must be preserved in order to maintain the authenticity of the model they offer for Christians. Both the bodies of the captured Jewish priests and the walls and buildings of the city are reduced to dust, so that no fragment will remain as a locus for remembering a Jewish Jerusalem:

[The kyng] bade "a bole-fure betyn / to brennen the corses,
Kesten Cayphas theryn / and his clerkes [alle],
And bren[n]en euereche bon / into the browne askes.
Suth wen[de] to the walle / on the wynde syde
And alle abrod on the burwe / bl[o]wen the powdere."

The king commanded, "Kindle a great fire to
burn up the bodies; cast Caiphaz in there, and all
of his priests, and burn up every each bone into
brown ashes. Then go to the wall, on the windward
side, and blow the powder all over the town."

(718–22)

Now masouns and mynours / han the molde soughte,
With pykeyse and ponsone / persched the walles;
Hewen throw hard ston, / h[url]ed hem to grounde
That alle derkned the diche / for doust of the poudere. . . .
Nas no ston in the stede / stondande alofte,
Mortere ne m[u]de-walle / bot alle to mulle fallen;
Nother tymbre ne tre, / temple ne other,
Bot doun betyn and brent / into blake erthe.

Now masons and miners dug into the earth, so
that the walls were destroyed with picks and
pointed tools. They hewed through hard stones,
threw them to the ground, so that the whole trench
was darkened with the dust from the powder. . . .
There was no stone in the place still standing
aloft, neither mortar nor brick wall—all was
collapsed into dust. There was neither house nor
tree, neither temple nor any other building; all
was beaten down and burned into black earth.

(1281–92)

Like the cannibalistic mother who is a parody of the Virgin Mary, Caiphaz and his followers are a feeble imitation of Jesus and his apostles; they differ, however, in that no memorial or commemorative place remains to recall that they ever lived. The annihilation of the walls of the city, repeated in microcosm in the annihilation of the bodies of the Jewish men, is a visible manifestation of the erasure of Synagoga. Ecclesia takes her place as Christian Jerusalem—both spiritual goal and material city—is erected on the ground of its Jewish precursor.

In stark contrast to the shrines dedicated to the relics of the apostles and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, there is no place remaining, in the economy of the *Siege of Jerusalem*, to be associated with the Jews who had lived there. What does remain, however, is portable property: not just the treasures of gold coin, jewels, and silks carried away to Rome, but also the crowning glory of Jewish learning, for the poem notes in closing that "Iosophus the gentile clerke aiorned was to Rome / Ther of this mater and mo he made fayr bokes" (Josephus, the noble cleric, journeyed to Rome, where he made great books about this topic and others [1325–26]). Here, Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*, the primary source for the alliterative poem, appears as part of the booty of Jerusalem, both priceless treasure and authenticating document. Josephus thus functions as a witness to the victory of the Roman Christians and the destruction of the Jews; he is what Ora Limor identifies as the "knowing Jew," who "continually affirms, against his will, the truth of the Christian beliefs," and thereby acts as "the constitutor of the Christian identity."⁴⁹ However, while Limor discusses the phenomenon of the "knowing Jew" in connection with Christian sacred spaces of the Holy Land, Josephus serves as authenticator not of a specific holy place, but precisely the absence of one. He testifies to the state of Jerusalem as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate upon which the history of Christian Jerusalem can be inscribed. The subsequent reconquest of Jerusalem by the Muslims will be characterized as a return to the "Old Law" of the Jews, a reedification of what had been cast down by the Romans in the first century; the triumphant entry of the Christians into Jerusalem, whether during the first century or the eleventh, is therefore heralded as taking place at a significant moment in salvation history. The former takes place on the "the Paske euene" (*Siege* 1215), that is, the last night before the Easter commemoration of the Resurrection;⁵⁰ the latter takes place "vpon a

49. Limor, "Christian Sacred Space," 55–77; quotation from 77.

50. This detail does not appear in Josephus; it does appear in the account found in Higden's *Polychronicon* (IV.10).

frydaye, aboute None . . . ffor on this daye and about that hour suffred [oure lord] deth on the crosse right cruel in the same place, for the Redempcion of man" (Caxton *Siege* 272.25–29). The destruction of the Muslims in Jerusalem during the First Crusade and the destruction of the Jews in the first century are equivalent, part of a cycle of destruction and reedification that will come to an end only with the Apocalypse.

Yet while the city of Jerusalem can be rebuilt and reconstituted, repopulated with "righteous" (i.e., Christian) inhabitants, the Jewish body is doomed to remain in a state of fragmentation, a symbol of the diasporic community sold into exile by the Romans. In the *Siege of Jerusalem*, Jewish bodies are repeatedly shown in the act of being torn to pieces: in the bodies that fly apart as they are struck by hurled stones (826–32), in the bodies of Jewish prisoners that are cut open by Christian soldiers eager to find the gold coins concealed in their "gottes" (1167), in the bodies of the Jewish priests flayed into "rede peces" (706). This is not only a fragmented community, but a community that is in the act of eating itself up, as is powerfully symbolized in the mother who eats the body of her child, ordering him to "turn around, and go back in where you came out" (1087–88). Steven Kruger has shown that several other late medieval English texts, including the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* and Chaucer's *Prioress' Tale*, depict Jewish bodies as ending, inevitably, in "dismemberment and disintegration." Kruger argues that Jewish bodies are presented in this way in order to symbolize the fragmentation of the diasporic Jewish community, which functions as a mirror image of the Christian community whose integrity is reaffirmed daily in the sacrifice of the Mass.⁵¹ Christian wholeness, then, is necessarily built on the ground of Jewish fragmentation. This is perhaps the most fundamental distinction between the depiction of Jews and Muslims in medieval literature, which otherwise correspond in many respects: the Muslim community is located outside, on the outer borders of the Christian community, and therefore is repudiated, as it were, at a distance; the Jewish community, by contrast, is located both outside and inside, within the Christian community itself, and must therefore be repudiated by being abjected from within.⁵² The Jewish community is defined as internal to the Christian community based not only

on the actual presence of Jewish communities within the cities of western Europe (at least until the expulsions of the later Middle Ages),⁵³ but also on the virtual presence of Judaism as a shadowy presence prior to Christianity.

In the *Siege of Jerusalem*, as in the accounts of the events of 70 C.E. found in Orosius, Josephus, and Vincent of Beauvais, the history of Jewish presence in Jerusalem is fundamentally a narrative of dispersal. The enclosure of the Jews within the besieged city results in the self-destruction of the community, epitomized by the mother who eats up her own child. Synagoga, like Ecclesia, is a community composed of those who share a single faith; unlike Ecclesia, however, Synagoga is a self-consuming community, one which participates actively in her own destruction. Inevitably, enclosure within the besieged city results both in an eruption of goods that are carried away by the victorious Romans and in a dispersal of survivors doomed to wander the face of the earth—at least until the cycle of enclosure and dispersal begins once again. The Jews who survive the siege are, in the words of the list of nations titled "Gentium quicumque mores," a dispersed people (*sparsi*), whose homeland is uncertain (*incerta*). Thirteenth-century accounts of the "wandering Jew," condemned to linger until the second coming of Christ as punishment for his participation in the Crucifixion, can be found in a range of texts including Matthew Paris' *Chronica maiora*, affirming the fundamental importance of dispersion in medieval conceptions of Jewish identity.⁵⁴ Throughout this discourse of Jewish alterity, the centripetal movement of enclosure is immediately followed by the centrifugal motion of dispersal, generating a perennial cycle that lifts Jewish identity out of the realm of the temporal, making it into an idealized, eternal referent rather than a contemporary lived reality.

The sequence of centripetal enclosure and centrifugal dispersal is also evident in another strand in the medieval discourse of Jewish alterity: the identification of the enclosed, unclean tribes of Gog and Magog with the descendants of Israel. In chapter 2, we saw how medieval accounts of Alexander the Great highlight the conqueror's enclosure of Gog and Magog in the mountains near the Caspian Sea, drawing upon the *Revelations* of pseudo-Methodius as well as the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister. In these texts, there is no question of the enclosed tribes being identified as Jews; on the contrary,

51. Kruger, "Bodies of Jews," 301–23; quotation from 318.

52. Kruger makes a similar distinction with regard to twelfth-century perspectives: "The Muslim 'other' is conceived not, like the Jews . . . as a scattered presence within a Christian hegemony, but as a hegemony of its own." Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis)identifications," 185–203; quotation from 194. These crucial distinctions separating Jewish and Muslim alterity provide a useful corrective to Grady's reading of the pitiable Jew of the *Siege of Jerusalem* as a counterpart of the "virtuous heathen"; he suggests that the Siege "highlight[s] the Christian 'other' as a 'virtuous heathen' . . ."

Middle English discourse of the righteous heathen was affiliated with the most venomous expressions" of anti-Judaism. Grady, *Representing Righteous Heathens*, 131.

53. For a useful survey of the presence of Jewish communities in England before the expulsion of 1290, see Stacey, "Jews and Christians," 340–54.

54. Matthew Paris, *Chronica maiora*, 3: 161–63; 5: 340–41. On the emergence of the theme of the 'wandering Jew' during the thirteenth century, see Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au moyen*

many accounts of Alexander the Great, including the *Liber Floridus* of Lambert of St. Omer and the *Roman de toute chevalerie* of Thomas of Kent, incorporate the episode of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem found in Josephus, portraying the Jews in a strikingly positive light as worshipers of the one God. Alexander's prostration before the high priest puzzles his men until the Macedonian declares that he worships the name on the breastplate worn by the priest, not the man himself. Certainly, a hermeneutics of supersession is operational in these Alexander narratives, especially in Lambert's *Liber Floridus*, where Alexander is depicted as a typological prefiguration of the Christian king of Jerusalem in the time of the crusades. They do not, however, participate in a discourse of anti-Judaism, much less antisemitism.⁵⁵ Instead, Judaism is used as an authenticator, indicating Alexander's predisposition toward monotheism in spite of his apparent devotional promiscuity.

Other texts, however, do explicitly associate the enclosed tribes of Gog and Magog with the Jews in an expression of what both Andrew Gow and Benjamin Braude have identified as antisemitism; Braude goes so far as to describe one representative text in this tradition as "a warrant for genocide."⁵⁶ The earliest example of the association of Gog and Magog with the Jews appears in the ninth-century account of Christian of Stavelot; not until the twelfth century, however, does this tendency become more common, appearing in such widely disseminated works as the *Pantheon* of Godfrey of Viterbo and the *Historia Scholastica* of Peter Comestor.⁵⁷ The confusion—if it can be called that—of Gog and Magog with the tribes of Israel probably arose from a passage found in Orosius' fifth-century world chronicle in which he writes that, during the reign of Artaxerxes, many Jews migrated to the northern regions of Hyrcania, near the Caspian Sea: "It is thought that they still remain there today, considerably increased in number, and that they will burst out of there someday."⁵⁸ This already rather paranoid vision of exilic Jewry came to be fused with pseudo-Methodius' account of the unclean tribes of Gog and Magog, perhaps because Orosius mentions the birth of Alexander immediately prior to his description of the northern Jews.⁵⁹ Influenced by the detailed description of the northern wastes inhabited by Gog and Magog

55. On the distinction between anti-Judaism and antisemitism, see n. 108, below.

56. Gow, *Red Jews*, 3. Braude, "Mandeville's Jews," 133–58; quotation from 145.

57. Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica* (commentary on Esther), PL 198, col. 1496a–c; on the dissemination of this concept, see Gow, *Red Jews*, 37–63; Westrem, "Against Gog and Magog," 54–75, esp. 65–66. Still useful is the foundational work in Anderson, *Alexander's Gate*, along with some corrections in Westrem, "Gog and Magog," 56.

58. "[Q]uos ibi usque in hodiernum diem amplissimis generis sui incrementis consistere atque exim quandoque erupturos opinio est." Orosius 3.7.6–7; 1: 147–48.

59. Orosius 3.7.5; 1: 147.

found in the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister, later medieval writers readily coupled the Jews with the unclean tribes enclosed by Alexander behind the northern mountains, or *ubera aquilonis*. For example, in his *Opus maius*, Roger Bacon declares that the northern regions bordering the Caspian Sea include not only Gog and Magog, but "likewise, the Jews, whom Orosius and other sacred writers state will come forth."⁶⁰ Like Aethicus Ister, whom he cites explicitly, Bacon emphasizes the forbidding nature of the northern environment inhabited by these hostile tribes.

The association of the Jews with Gog and Magog became widespread during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, mediated by such popular texts as Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*, Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon*, and Roger Bacon's *Opus Maius*. Its broadest dissemination, however, came by way of *The Book of John Mandeville*, a mid-fourteenth-century work which (as we saw in chapter 1) was translated into a variety of vernacular languages (and Latin) and which survives in an unusually large number of manuscripts.⁶¹ The author of *The Book of John Mandeville* pursues several different strategies to impose order upon the heterogeneous world, ranging from the geographical (all the rivers of the world are said to flow from the four rivers of paradise) to the genealogical (all the people of the earth are said to be descended from the three sons of Noah). The genealogical schema employed in the work is rather unusual, however, as Benjamin Braude has shown in his survey of the manuscript evidence.⁶² While medieval *mappaemundi* conventionally divide the world into the three continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe, assigning each of them to Shem, Ham, and Japheth, respectively,⁶³ *The Book of John Mandeville* reallocates the continents so that "Ham... took the largest and best part, towards the East, which is called Asia, and Shem took Africa, and Japheth took Europe" (Cham... prist la plus grande partie et la meillour partie orientele qe est appellé Asie, et Sem prist Affrique, et Japhez prist Europe [24; 378]).

More extraordinary, however, is *The Book's* account of the extended lineal descent from Noah: the sons of Ham are the "diverses gentz" (diverse folk)

60. "[E]t Judaei similiter, quos Orosius et alii sanct referunt exituros." Bacon, *Opus Maius* IV; ed. 1:365, trans. 1:382 (translation modified slightly). Bacon's use of the term *similiter* to associate the Jews with Gog and Magog can be fruitfully compared with the use of the same term in thirteenth-century *Bibles moralisées* to associate Jews and Christian heretics. See Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, *passim*.

61. On the dissemination of *The Book of John Mandeville*, see chapter 1 of this book.

62. Braude, "The Sons of Noah," 103–42, esp. 116–20. Braude promises a comparative edition of this section of *Mandeville's Travels*, drawing upon a variety of manuscripts and printed editions (118n35).

63. My assessment of the conventions of the *mappaemundi* differs slightly from Braude's; see

Nota!

of India, the sons of Shem are the Saracens, and the sons of Japheth include not only “nous qe demorrums en Europe” (we that dwell in Europe), but also “le poeple de Israël” (the people of Israel) (24; 379). It is entirely conventional to identify the Asiatic Saracens as the offspring of Shem and to identify the Europeans as the offspring of Japheth;⁶⁴ but to couple “the people of Israel” (that is, the descendants of Jacob, rather than the inhabitants of a certain land) with the Europeans is something quite extraordinary. One might be forgiven for optimistically believing, for a moment, that the author is suggesting that there is a kinship between the Europeans and the Jews, that they share a common birthright. Instead, however, it soon becomes clear that the purpose of the anomaly is to lay the groundwork for an alternative account of Jewish genealogical descent: that is, the identification of the Jews with the unclean, enclosed tribes of Gog and Magog, who are conventionally identified (following Genesis) as the offspring of Japheth.⁶⁵

The author of *The Book of John Mandeville* describes the remote northern mountain pass where “the ten tribes of Jews are enclosed, that men call Gog and Magog” (les Juys de X lienés sont enclos, qe homme appelle Goth et Magoth). He retells the widely known story of how Alexander the Great shut them up there behind great mountainous gates, “so that they dwell there all locked up and entirely enclosed” (si qe ils demoerent la touz enserrez et tout enclos), and explains that “the Jews have no land of their own in all the world, except for that land between the mountains” (ly Juys n’ount point de propre terre en tout le mounde forsque celle terre entre les montaignes [29; 428–29]). So far, it would seem that the “place” of the Jews, in *The Book of John Mandeville* as in Roger Bacon’s account in the *Opus Maius*, is at the margin of the known world. This placement is depicted visually on many medieval world maps that show the two enclosing mountains (or *ubera aquilonis*) at the northernmost extreme.⁶⁶ Yet in *The Book of John Mandeville*’s version of this scenario, the Jews represent a threat located both far away in the wilderness, and in one’s own backyard:

[L]’em dit q’ils isseront fors en temps de Antecrist et q’ils ferront grant occisioun de christiens. Et pur ceo touz Juys qe demoerent par toutes

64. Among the sons of Shem: “Ismael filius Abraham, a quo Ismaelitaie, qui nunc corrupto nomine Saraceni, quasi a Sarra, et Agareni ab Agar.” Isidore, *Etymologiarum sive Originum* 9.2.6. With regard to Japheth: “Haec sunt gentes de stirpe Iaphet, quae a Tauro monte ad aquilonem mediam partem Asiae et omnem Europam usque ad Oceanum Britannicum possident.” Isidore, *Etymologiarum* 9.2.37.

65. Isidore, *Etymologiarum* 9.2.27; 14.3.31.

66. Andrew Gow, “Gog and Magog,” 61–88. See also the examples cited in Westrem, “Gog and Magog,” 61–62; von den Brincken *Fines Terrae*

terres apprendent toutdis a parler ebrieu, sur celle esperance qe, quant cils de montaynes de Caspie isseront fors, qe ly autres Juys sachent parler a eux et les conduire en Christienetés pur christiens destruire.

Men say that they will issue forth in the time of Antichrist, and that they will carry out great slaughter of Christian people. And for this reason, all the Jews that dwell in all lands always learn to speak Hebrew, in the hope that, when those of the Caspian mountains issue forth, the other Jews will know how to speak with them and will conduct them into Christian lands, to destroy Christian people. (29; 430)

The enclosed Jews appear almost completely alien, separated as they are by the boundaries of language: even if one of them should happen to escape, the narrator recounts, “they know no language except for Hebrew, and so they are unable to speak with the people” (ils ne scievent langage fors ebrieu si ne scievent parler as gentz [29; 430]). The Jews of the cities, by contrast, are both familiar and strange, speaking the foreign tongue of their enclosed kindred as well as the vernacular languages of Europe. They are a kind of “fifth column” located in the vulnerable heart of western power.

This “double place” of the Jews, located both within the city and at the edge of the world, is a spatial expression of their ontological status—that is, their ontological status as seen from the perspective of medieval Christians. From this point of view, Judaism itself is understood as at once the wellspring of Christianity and as the “Old Law” that must be cast off with the advent of the “New Law” of Christ; in an epistemological sense, it is both interior (in that it lies at the point of origin) and exterior (in that it must be abjected in order to accommodate that which supplants it).⁶⁷ The “double place” of the Jews—both at the center and at the margins—reflects this ambivalence. What I have tried to illustrate in these pages is the extent to which the place of the Jews is configured as being perennially in flux, always in the process of either the centripetal motion of enclosure or the centrifugal motion of dispersal. The history of Jewish Jerusalem, with its repeated cycles of destruction and reedification, illustrates this flux, as does the identification of the Jews with the unclean tribes of Gog and Magog. These two models of Jewish alterity differ, however, in that the history of Jewish Jerusalem is a repetitive narrative, made up of cycles of enclosure and dispersal: it unfolds in linear time. The identification of the Jews with Gog and Magog, by

contrast, takes place in apocalyptic time, where the long-awaited dispersal is deferred until the Last Days, and the moment of eruption forever remains in the future.

← Climate and the Diasporic Body

The dynamics of place are fundamental to premodern articulations of Jewish difference, not only with respect to the geographical heartland of Jerusalem and the concealed nether regions of Gog and Magog, but also with respect to the role of climate in shaping the characteristics of nations. In both domains, the individual Jewish body is the vehicle for the expression of alterity, whether in the dismembered corpses of Caiphas and his fellows in the ruins of Jerusalem or in the wandering, diasporic body of the Jew, which is the focus of the following pages. It is impossible to understand the way in which medieval writers depicted Jewish bodily difference without a clear sense of the way in which they understood *all* bodily diversity to arise from the dictates of climate. It is, moreover, difficult to understand how medieval writers conceived of the relationship of climate and racial characteristics without paying special attention to the depiction of Jews within that system, for their diasporic status called into question the fundamental relationship between place and identity. Further, the diasporic body of the Jew offered a locus where Western Christians could consider how bodily diversity intersected with religious deviance, imagining how wrongly oriented devotion might be manifested in the anatomy and physiology of the individual body.

Medieval texts describe bodies in a wide variety of ways: some are tall, some short; some are fair-skinned, some dark; some are perfectly proportioned, some strangely formed, even having features like tusks or hide. Bodily diversity, in the Middle Ages, is heterogeneous and infinitely variable. In this respect, it is quite different from modern constructions of race, which posit a limited number of “races” that can be intermixed in individuals, but never ontologically blended. That is, a person can be of mixed “race,” but a race itself can never be altered.⁶⁸ The strict categorization of race is often expressed in terms of binary opposition, which led Abdul JanMohamed to coin the memorable (and influential) phrase “Manichean allegory of race.” However medieval the resonances of this phrase, views of bodily diversity in the Middle Ages were far from binary. The range of mankind, like the range of the whole

of creation, was thought to be more like a spectrum, with normalcy lying at the middle and increasing diversity as one moved away from the center. This view of bodily diversity—or at least part of it—is visible on medieval world maps, where the margins of the ecumene, whether in the extreme north or south, are inhabited by the so-called “monstrous races,” strange-looking creatures with the faces of men.⁶⁹ On such mappamundi, of course, the region of normalcy is merely implicit, for only the anomalous creatures of the remote regions are worth portraying on the map. Medieval scientific medical and astronomical texts, however, describe in detail the variable nature of the bodies found in the seven climates of the temperate zone. In his *Speculum Naturale*, for example, the encyclopedist Vincent of Beauvais juxtaposes his description of the monstrous races with an account of how human anatomy and physiology vary in the diverse regions of the world.⁷⁰

In spite of this disparity, modern theories of race, developed in the wake of the Enlightenment and elaborated in the colonial context, have their roots in medieval theories regarding the effects of climate in determining the humoral makeup of individuals and the anatomical, physiological, and even behavioral predispositions of nations.⁷¹ In this section, I discuss medieval theories of how climate dictates bodily diversity and then move to a more narrowly focused discussion of how Jewish physiology was understood during the Middle Ages. There are two reasons why it is useful to combine these topics. First, it is necessary to understand humoral physiology (which lies at the basis of climate theory) in order to understand medieval discussions of Jewish physiology. Second, these discussions of Jewish physiology cast an interesting light back on climate theory itself, for the Jewish body is the anomaly that casts doubt on the validity of the theory. (This second aspect provides a useful basis for the fuller exploration of climate theory and the construction of the “Saracen” body in chapter 4.) Because Jews were conceived of as being perpetually displaced, in a state of permanent diaspora, they were thought to be not bound by the norms of climate theory in the way that other nations were. Their supposedly innate national characteristics were instead accounted for through other means: that is, through behavioral habits, especially diet.

With the reintroduction of the Aristotelian corpus during the thirteenth century, accompanied by the rich commentaries of Muslim philosophers

69. On monstrous races appearing on the map, see Camille, *Image on the Edge*; Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews*.

70. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Naturale* 31.67–72 (on climate and humoral physiology), 31.126–32 (on monstrous races).

71. On medieval applications of climate theory, see Tooley, “Bodin and the Medieval Theory of Climate,” 41–82. On modern applications, see Charlin, “Natural Philosophy,” 229–52.

such as Avicenna and Averroës, the view of natural diversity inherited from Pliny's *Natural History* (by way of Solinus and Isidore) was substantially altered. It was no longer sufficient to describe and label the heterogeneous range of monstrous races and fabulous animals; instead, it became necessary to categorize them, to account for how their unusual features had come to be, and to explain how bodily differences such as skin color shaded off into monstrosity. Some more ambitious commentators, such as Albertus Magnus, even suggested that those bodily attributes might change within a few generations if a creature shaped by the environment of one climatic extreme were transferred to a more temperate climate. The importance of climate in determining the natural diversity of mankind is emphasized in both the astronomical and the medical tradition. In the *De Sphaera*, a popular treatise based on Ptolemy's cosmology, the astronomer Sacrobosco explains that Ethiopia must be located at the equator, that is, in the torrid zone, "for [the inhabitants] would not be so black if they were born in the temperate habitable zone."⁷² His commentators, influenced by Aristotelian explanations of causation and change, elaborated on this passage with enthusiasm. One early thirteenth-century commentator launches into a digression on the physiology of the people of Ethiopia: "An example of the blackening of Ethiopians is the cooking of golden honey. First it is golden, then reddish, and finally by long cooking it becomes black and bitter, and that which was at first sweet is now salty. And it is just this way all over Ethiopia." Their blood is drawn to the surface of the skin by the great heat, where it becomes "black and bitter, and in this way it can be clearly seen why the Ethiopian is black."⁷³ Several other commentators and glossators include other, comparable elaborations on this same passage in the *De Sphaera*.⁷⁴

In the medical tradition as in the astronomical, writers such as Avicenna and Haly Abbas (known in the West through the translation of Constantinus Africanus) similarly explain the blackness of the inhabitants of the southern regions in terms of natural process. In a passage frequently paraphrased by other writers, Constantinus explains that the northern regions near the pole are cold and dry, and therefore the water and air are especially clear, and the bodies of the inhabitants are healthy, of a pleasing color, the women's bodies

soft and the men's strong. The women conceive only rarely (because they are "frigid") and give birth with difficulty, because of the dryness of the climate, which is reflected in their bodily complexion. The northerners vomit easily and have a good appetite. The southern regions are precisely opposite: being hot and humid, the bodies of the inhabitants are black in color and tend to be phlegmatic. This humor impairs their digestion, and because their natural bodily heat is dissipated through their pores, they are soft-bodied, become drunk easily, and are prone to dysentery and diarrhea. Southern women conceive more easily, but also miscarry frequently.⁷⁵

In the thirteenth century, the encyclopedist Bartholomaeus Anglicus took up the explanations of the effects of climate on bodies found in the medical tradition and, influenced by the astronomy of Sacrobosco, integrated these views into his geographical survey of the world; in other words, he took medical theories that distinguished between northern and southern bodies in general, and applied them to a range of specific countries. Bartholomaeus' geography, found in book 15 of his *De proprietatibus rerum*, follows in rough outline the geography included by Isidore of Seville in his seventh-century *Etymologies*. By integrating medical and astronomical theories with the standard geography, Bartholomaeus differs significantly from Vincent of Beauvais, who follows Isidore quite slavishly. Though Vincent is clearly familiar with the theories of Avicenna and Constantinus Africanus, and even quotes the pertinent passages elsewhere in his vast encyclopedia,⁷⁶ he does not draw out their implications for the geographical sections. In each section of his geography, however, Bartholomaeus takes pains to note the correspondence of climate to the bodily nature of the inhabitants of a given land. Those of the northern countries, such as Albania and Almania, for example, are large-bodied and fair-skinned, with blond, straight hair, while those of the southern countries, such as Ethiopia and Libya, have smaller bodies, with dark skin and "crisp" hair.⁷⁷ Monstrosities—that is, bodies "wondrous and horribilche

75. Constantinus Africanus, *Pantegni*, book 5; quoted from Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Naturale* 4.110 (col. 303). For a more detailed discussion of the interrelation of climate and physiology, see chapter 4, "The Saracen Body." A deeper exploration of the relationship of climate and physiology would compare the schema found in the *Pantegni* with those appearing in Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* (I.2.2.1 in Lyon 1498) and William of Conches' *Dragmaticon Philosophiae*.

76. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Naturale* 4.110 (col. 303), quoting Constantinus Africanus; *Speculum Naturale* 6.18 (cols. 380–81), quoting Avicenna, *Liber canonis*, lib. 1, doct. 2, summa 1, cap. 11 (Venice, 1507, fol. 32r; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1964).

77. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* (Frankfurt, 1601; reprint, Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964), 15.7, 15, 52, 91; 627 (15.7), 630 (15.15), 649 (15.52), 671 (15.91); also quoted in the late fourteenth century Middle English of *Trivium: On the Properties of Things*, 2: 728, 732, 754, 770.

72. Sacrobosco, *Sphere*, ed. and trans. Thorndyke, 107 (Lat. text), 137 (Eng. trans.).

73. This commentary is possibly by Michael Scot; in *Ibid.*, 334 (Lat. text); translation mine.

74. These include the thirteenth-century anonymous commentary in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius MSS 137, fol. 46b ([Sacrobosco], Thorndyke, *Sphere*, 461); another anonymous commentary preserved in two thirteenth-century manuscripts, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon Misc. MSS 161 and Princeton, Garrett MSS 99 (Thorndyke, *Sphere*, 439); and the fifteenth-century commentary by John de Fundis (Thorndyke, *Sphere*, 50).

yshape" (*monstrosa facie horribilibus* [15.52; 649; 754])—are found here, in the torrid regions, where excess of heat affects conception and gestation.

Yet Bartholomaeus goes still further, for in his geography he repeatedly emphasizes not just the diversity of mankind, but its balance: each climatic extreme, each geographical location, has its opposite, or (one might say) its complement. Thus he writes of Gallia that "by the dyuersite of heuene, face and colour of men and hertes and witte and quantite of bodyes ben dyuers. Therefor Rome gendreth heuy men, Grece light men, Affrica gyleful men, and Fraunce kyndeliche fers men and sharpe of witte" (*secundum enim diversitatem coeli et facies hominum et colores animorum diversitates existunt et corporum qualitates. Inde Roma graves generat. Graecia leves. Affrica versipelles. Gallia natura feroces ingenioque acres*).⁷⁸ In his entry on Europe, we see the binary opposition that underlies this exuberant diversity:

Haec mundi particula, et si sic minor quam Asia, ei tamen par est in populorum numerosa genetositate, populos enim, ut dicit Plinius alit corpore maiores, viribus fortiores, animo audaciores, forma et specie pulciores, quam faciunt Asiae vel Affricae regiones. Nam solaris aestus adureus propter eius permanentiam super Affros, illos efficit consumendo humores corpore breviores, facie nigriores, crine crispiores, et propter evaporationem spirituum per apertos poros animo defectiores. E contrario vero est apud Septentrionales. Nam ex frigiditate poros extrinsecus opilante generantur humores in corpore, et efficiuntur homines corpulentiores, et ex ipsa frigiditate, quae mater est albedinis in exterioribus in cute scilicet et facie albiore, et ex repercussione vaporum et spirituum ad interiora efficiuntur calidiores interius, et per consequens plus audaces.

Yif this partie of the worlde be lesse than Asia, yitte is it pere therto in nombre and noblete of men, for as Plius seithe, he fedeth men that ben more huge in bodie, more stronge in myghte and vertue, more bolde of herte, more faire and semeliche of shappe, thanne men of the cuntries and londes of Asia other of Affrica. For the sonne abideth longe ouer the Affers, men of Affrica, and brennen and wasten humours and maken ham short of body, blacke of face, with criske here. And for

78. Bartholomaeus Anglicus 15.66; 657; 763. This is an elaboration of Isidore, *Etymologies* 9.2.105: "Inde Romanos graves, Graecos leves, Afros versipelles, Gallos natura feroces atque aciores ingenio pervidemus, quod natura climatum facit." This appears not in Isidore's geography, but in his book on languages and cities.

spirites passe outte atte pores that ben open, so they be more cowardes of herte.

An the cuntrarye is of men of the northe londe: for coldenes that is withoute stoppeth the pores and breedeth humours of the bodye maketh men more ful and huge; and coolde that is modir of whitenesse maketh hem the more white in face and in skynne, and vapoures and spirites ben ysmyten inwarde and maken hatter withinne and so the more bolde and hardy.⁷⁹

Each land has its complement; but it is absolutely clear, in this binary opposition, which is the preferable climate, and which body is the beautiful and desirable norm.

These binary oppositions, curiously and paradoxically, are evidence of the fundamental harmony of the world, as Bartholomaeus describes the unity in diversity as a kind of natural music:

Mundus itaque ex rebus multis oppositis et contrariis est compositus, et tamen in se est unus. Mundus enim unus est numero, et non plures mundi. . . . Mundus ergo de quo hic loquimur, non est diversus in se, nequae divisus secundum substantiam, quamvis in ipsius partibus inveniatur contrarietas, quo ad aliquam qualitatis repugnantiam. Summam enim et necessariam habet mundus in suo toto convenientiam, et quasi quandam musicam harmoniam. . . . Ex quo patet, quod mundus ratione suae mutationis est siquidem admirandus. . . . Nulla enim est tam vilis, tam infima in tota mundi machina pars sive particula, in qua tam in materia, quam in virtute et forma non reluceat laus divina. Nam in materia et forma mundi quaedam est differentia, sed cum harmonia est pars [*sic*] summa.

The world is made of many thingis compowned and contrariouse, and yit in itsilf it is one. The worlde is one in noubre and tale and nought many worldes. . . . The worlde of the whiche we speket at this tyme is not diuers in itsilf nothir departid in substaunce, though contrarioussnesse be founde in parties therof, touchinge contrarioussnesse of the qualitees. For the worlde hath most nedeful acord [*harmonia*] al itsilf,

79. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, 15.50; 648; 752–53. The balanced contraries of mankind are central to Bartholomaeus' overall presentation of the natural world: see, for example, the balanced "oppositions of beast against beast" noted by Greetham, "Concept of Nature," 663–77, esp. 670. Thanks to Richard Beisswiler for this reference.

and as it were acorde of musik. . . Herof it folewith that the world is wondirful bicause of chaunginge therof. . . Nothing in the schappe of the worlde is so vile nothir so lowe nothir partykel, in the whiche schinyth noght praysinge of God in mater and in vertu and in schap. For in the mater and schappe of the worlde is some difference, but that is with acorde and most pees. (8.1; 369–70; 443–44)

It is important to stress that, while this view of the harmonious diversity of mankind may seem ideal and even utopian, it contains within it the elements of an intellectual system, based on the relationship of climate to physiology, that could be used to justify the subjugation of peoples and would be used, eventually, as part of the justification for the institution of slavery. As early as the sixteenth century, the philosopher Jean Bodin had suggested that the principles of political administration should be tailored to match the predisposition of different national groups. That is, forms of government must vary depending upon the tractability of each national group, whose behavioral characteristics were in turn determined by their climate; here, Bodin uses Aristotelian notions concerning the role of climate in human development and applies them pragmatically to the question of how to govern most effectively.⁸⁰ By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, as Joyce Chaplin has shown, Aristotelian climatic theories were applied to the native populations of North America. These so-called “Indians” were, supposedly, identical to the Indians in India: they tended by virtue of their climate to be prone to disease, easily drunk (like the Ethiopians), and generally debauched. Their extermination in the wake of European settlement was thus rationalized as biological destiny.⁸¹ Finally, climatic theory was used to explain the suitability of Africans for slavery, until climate-based explanations of their “natural” inferiority were supplanted, during the eighteenth century, by theories based primarily on the role of heredity.⁸²

In *The Book of John Mandeville*, which owes much to the worldview presented in the geographical sections of Bartholomaeus’ encyclopedia, bodily diversity is accounted for in terms of both heredity and climatic influence; the latter cause, however, is predominant. The bizarre features of the “monstrous races” are explained as the natural consequence of the climatic extremes found in Ethiopia and India. In each land described, climate is adduced as the cause of the physiology of the inhabitants. This is especially well illustrated in Mandeville’s account of the land of the Pygmies, where the people are all

only a few spans in height; this is appropriate to their climate. Curiously, however, when men of normal stature come to live there, their offspring are also of diminutive stature, like the Pygmies. The reason for this, says Mandeville, is that “the nature of the lond is such” (*la nature de la terre est tiele* [22; 365; 152]).⁸³ Here, climate governs the physiology not only of the native inhabitants, but also of those who merely pass through. This would suggest that the effects of climate are mutable or, in other words, that the bodily diversity of mankind is not essential, but rather subject to variation.

In this, Mandeville resembles Albertus Magnus, who in his *De natura loci* suggests that if Ethiopians were removed from the first climate to the fourth or fifth climate (that is, more temperate climates), within a few generations they would be altered: their offspring would have white skin and all the other attributes of the northern climates.⁸⁴ Yet Albertus is unusual in his strict application of Aristotelian theory to the description of human physiology; more common is a composite of climatic theory and genealogical descent. This can be seen, for example, in Bartholomaeus Anglicus, who generally adheres to a climate-based theory of human diversity; in his entry on “Pictavia,” however, he inserts heredity into his analysis of the inhabitants. Their qualities are a peculiar combination of what might be found in more northern and more southern climates; Bartholomaeus explains, however, that this is “no wondir” (*nec mirum*), for the men of Pictavia are of mixed descent, a combination of “Pictes” (*Pictis*) and “Frenshe men” (*Gallicis*). They have the qualities of each nation, qualities that were first formed by “kynde of clymes” (*natura climatum*) and subsequently combined through heredity (15.122; 689; 768). Here, two seemingly mutual exclusive theories of human diversity—environment and heredity—are yoked together.

Within the categories of climate theory, the Jews occupy a peculiar place. Belonging nowhere yet found everywhere, they inhabit no fixed climate that might dictate their national attributes. Their diasporic state—not only driven from their native territory but also having no permanent home elsewhere—prevents them from being definable within the norms of any single climate. As a result, texts that characterize the attributes of nations based upon their native climates face a conundrum in describing the Jews. This is particularly evident in the *De proprietatibus rerum*, where Bartholomaeus Anglicus departs

83. The source for the passage is Oderic of Pordenone, but the explanation of the cause (that is, the “nature of the lond”) is original to Mandeville. See Oderic of Pordenone, “Relatio,” 468–69 (24.2).

84. “Licet autem huiusmodi nigri aliquando nascantur etiam in aliis climatibus, sicut in quarto vel in quinto, tamen nigredinem accipiunt a primis generantibus, quae complexionata sunt in climatibus

80. Tooley, “Bodin and the Medieval Theory of Climate,” 80–81.

81. Chaplin, “Natural Philosophy,” 236–38.

from his usual tendency to characterize the predispositions of each nation when he describes the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem and its environs. As noted in the first pages of this chapter, Bartholomaeus simply mentions the Jews as one people among several others in his description of Judea and the surrounding territories, saying nothing about how climate might have influenced their collective development.

There is one context, however, in which animated discussion of Jewish national proclivities does appear in conjunction with debates on the characteristics of inhabitants of the frigid north and torrid south: that is, the commentaries and debates occasioned by the scientific writings on climate and physiology described in the preceding pages. Some of the most revealing examples of this phenomenon appear in the records of the quodlibetal debates conducted in Paris in the years around 1300. As Peter Biller points out, several of the questions focus on the relationship between climate and physiology: these include “Are white men bold?” and “Do white women or black women have stronger sexual desire?”⁸⁵ It is easy to recognize the generalizations concerning climate made by medical writers such as Constantinus Africanus, Avicenna, and Albertus Magnus that provided the basis for these questions.⁸⁶ Those engaged in the quodlibetal debates, however, moved far beyond the medical writers’ generalizations in their exploration of the relationship of climate and national predisposition as it illuminated their understanding of Jewish physiology. The relevant debates center on the cause of the flow of blood supposedly experienced by Jewish men; one version, from the quodlibets edited by Biller, states “queritur utrum iudei paciuntur fluxum” (it is asked whether the Jews suffer from a flux). The approximately contemporary *Lilium medicinae* of Bernard of Gordon addresses the same question, this time specifically identifying the bloody flux as hemorrhoidal, in keeping with the explanation of Albertus Magnus appearing in his *Quaestiones super De animalibus*; and the anonymous *Omnes homines*, a widely disseminated product of the Salernitan medical community, phrases the question similarly to the *Lilium medicinae*, but offers more elaborate explanations of the cause of the bloody flux.

While these discussions are consistent in many respects, they differ in important details. For example, while Albertus Magnus had specified that the

85. “Consequenter queritur utrum homines albi sint audaces”; “Alia questio fuit utrum mulier alba magis appetit virum quam nigra”; “Utrum albe mulieres magis appetant coire quam nigre.” Quoted in Biller, “Views of Jews from Paris,” 187–207; quotations from 200 and 200n40.

86. As Biller points out, the encyclopedist Vincent of Beauvais may well have been an intermediary for the basic outlines of humoral and climate theory (Ibid., 200–201).

flux experienced by Jewish men is not regulated by the cycles of the moon (as is women’s menstruation), the *Omnes homines* states that their flux is indeed monthly.⁸⁷ Though all of the discussions indicate that the flux occurs due to the body’s need to purge itself of an excess of melancholy (black humor) in the blood, they differ with regard to the causes of that excess, sometimes identifying it as the result of a cultural practice, other times attributing it to a natural predisposition. Albertus Magnus states that hemorrhoidal bleeding often appears in “those who live off gross and salted food [nutrimento grosso et salso], such as the Jews.”⁸⁸ Implicitly, a change of foodstuffs would effect a restoration of humoral balance, suggesting that the flux of blood seen in Jews is the result of cultural practices rather than an innate predisposition. The corresponding passage appearing in the quodlibetal debates appears at first to be very similar to that expressed by Albertus: the Paris quodlibet, for example, specifies that Jews experience a flux of melancholic blood “because they use roast foods [alimentis assatis] . . . and these are difficult to digest. . . . Also, they have roast fat, such as oil.”⁸⁹ Unlike Albertus, however, the quodlibet implies that the hemorrhoidal flux is not simply the result of cultural practices (that is, diet), but rather is innate. It states that the melancholy of the Jews is also evident in their pallor (“pallidi sunt”), their natural timidity (“timidi sunt naturaliter”), and their eagerness to keep themselves apart from the society of others (“iudei naturaliter retrahunt se a societate et coniunctione cum aliis”). The term “naturaliter,” which occurs repeatedly in the quodlibet, emphasizes that the Jews’ melancholy is inborn, not (as Albertus had implied) acquired. The term “naturaliter” continues to appear in texts in this tradition, including the *Omnes homines*.⁹⁰

It is this identification of the Jewish “natural” predisposition to melancholy that reveals the limitations of the climate theory in the effort to explain the origins of bodily diversity. Because they are widely dispersed from their

87. Albertus Magnus: “super fluxum eius non dominatur luna sicut super menstruum,” *Quaestiones super De animalibus*, 12: 205–6; reproduced in Biller, “Scientific View,” 160. *Omnes homines*: “in eis generatur multus sanguis melanconicus qui in ipsis tempore menstrualium expellitur seu expurgator,” *Problemata Varia Anatomica*, 38–39; reproduced in Biller, “Scientific View,” 164.

88. Albertus Magnus, *Quaestiones super De animalibus* 9.7, 206; reproduced in Biller, “Scientific View,” 160.

89. Paris arts quodlibet, Paris, Bib. nat. ms. lat. 16089, f. 57ra, reproduced in Biller, “Scientific View,” 160.

90. Another significant difference is introduced in the *Omnes homines*, where the description of the offending foodstuffs as “dense” (spissus), found in Albertus Magnus and the Paris quodlibet, is replaced by a description of the food as “phlegmatic and cold” (flegmaticis et frigidis), illustrating how Aristotelian notions of causation had given way to humoral theories derived from Hippocrates and Galen. *Omnes homines*, in *Problemata Varia Anatomica*, 38–39; reproduced in Biller, “Scientific View,” 164.

native land, Jews should (according to climate theory) no longer have a particular physiological predisposition generated by climate. Like the hypothetical Ethiopians living in the far north discussed by Albertus Magnus, the Jews' bodily complexion should have long since altered as a result of prolonged residence in new places. Peculiarly, however, as we have seen, Jews are repeatedly described as having a "naturally" melancholy complexion, as is evident from their numerous symptoms (bloody flux, paleness, solitary nature, fearfulness, and so on). The consistency of their diet is precisely what generates their melancholy nature. To put it another way, the Jews take their climate with them. This obligation was thought to be dictated, according to another record of the Paris quodlibet, by their religious law ("lege sua"; Biller, 162). The *Omnes homines* similarly states that "many good meats are prohibited for them according to their law" (in lege eorum sunt prohibite; Biller, 164).

The association of diet with climate is widespread. In general, one's natural diet is dictated by one's climate: that is, you eat the foods native to the same climate to which you yourself are native. As a result, medieval texts frequently draw attention to the plight of travelers who find themselves obliged to eat foods unsuited to them. For example, the fifteenth-century pilgrimage itinerary of William Wey counsels the traveler to "be wel ware of dyuerse frutys, for they be not acording to youre complexioun, and they engender a bloody fluxe."⁹¹ Another example can be found in the late Middle English romance of *Richard Coer de Lion*, in which the king falls ill because of the unsuitability of the local foodstuffs.⁹² The case of the Jews is the logical extension of this relationship between climate and food: just as the traveler must take pains to maintain a diet as close as possible to the diet he would ordinarily consume in his native climate, the Jews maintain their habitual diet. By doing so, they set themselves apart from those who are native to the lands that the Jews enter into, not just in a social or cultural sense, but physiologically as well. What they eat makes them what they are.

This connection between diet and physiology has a more sinister aspect as well, centered not on the source of Jewish melancholy and consequent hemorrhoidal flux but on the means by which this ailment might be cured.

91. Wey, *Itineraries of William Wey*, 6.

92. In the *Romaunce of Richard Coer de Lion*, while on campaign in the Holy Land, Richard is said to crave English food: he is "alongyd after pork." On this passage and how Richard's consumption of flesh articulates the boundaries of the English nation along the lines of the eucharistic community, see Akbari, "Hunger for National Identity." Nicola McDonald's otherwise insightful essay misidentifies Richard's desire for pork as simply an "insatiable hunger for pork" (134) rather than a longing for food appropriate to his native climate: see "Eating People," 124–50.

I refer, of course, to the Jewish "blood libel," accusations that Jews killed and consumed Christians (usually male children) as part of their religious ritual. These accusations are usually seen as part of a theological discourse of Jewish alterity, in which the act is seen as a reenactment of the Crucifixion and a hideous parody of the eucharistic sacrifice.⁹³ It is worth noting, however, that the scientific, "naturalistic" discourse of Jewish alterity also made reference to the practice of the Jews consuming blood in order to cure the flux caused by melancholy. One of the earliest examples of this claim appeared in the early fourteenth century, when Rudolph of Schlettstadt declared that the Jews suffer monthly from a flow of blood, along with dysentery. This ailment could be cured, Rudolph added, by drinking the blood of a baptized Christian (Sanatur autem per sanguinem hominis Christiani, qui nomine Christi baptisatus est).⁹⁴ Examples of this accusation became more numerous in the fifteenth century.⁹⁵

Although Gilbert Dahan was perhaps the first to identify the importance of the quodlibetal debates and related texts in the emergence of constructions of Jewish alterity,⁹⁶ Peter Biller's work, along with that of Irvén Resnick and Willis Johnson, has done much to show how widespread these notions concerning the supposed bloody flux of the Jews became during the later Middle Ages.⁹⁷ While Resnick and Johnson focus particularly on the role of gender in medieval constructions of Jewish alterity (with Resnick affirming and Johnson denying that Jewish male alterity is predicated on an identification with the feminine), they share with Biller an awareness of how constructions of alterity based on theological distinctions overlap with those based on medical or scientific distinctions.⁹⁸ In Biller's words, "in the years around 1300" these distinctions— theological and scientific— came to be like "intersecting circles in a Venn diagram."⁹⁹ Although these two strands in the discourse of Jewish alterity had different origins, they were far from mutually exclusive. For example, one commentary on the

93. See Rubin, *Gentle Tales*, 7–39 ("From Jewish Boy to Bleeding Host").

94. Rudolph von Schlettstadt, *Historiae Memorabiles*, 65; quoted in Johnson, "Myth of Jewish Male Menses," 290n51, and in Resnick, "On Roots of the Myth," 25.

95. Some fifteenth-century examples are cited by Resnick, "Roots of the Myth," 25–26; see also Hsia, *Myth of Ritual Murder*.

96. Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au moyen âge*, 528–30; see also Dahan, "Juifs et judaïsme dans la littérature quodlibétique."

97. Biller, "Scientific View," 137–68; see also Biller, "Views of Jews from Paris." The former article represents a more mature account of the research described in the latter, and includes very useful appendices reproducing the original quodlibets and related scientific texts (154–68).

98. Resnick, "Roots of the Myth," 1–27; Johnson, "Myth of Jewish Male Menses," 273–95.

99. Biller, "Scientific View," 146.

pseudo-Albertus Magnus *De secretis mulierum* states that the hemorrhoidal flux experienced by Jewish men is the result of both natural causes (their melancholy nature) and the judgment of God.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, the *Omnes homines* makes it clear that the flux can be explained both theologically (“theologicæ”), as a consequence of Jewish culpability for the death of Christ, and naturally (“naturaliter”) according to the medical theories of humoral physiology.¹⁰¹

It is nothing new to suggest that the supposed uncleanness of the Jewish body can be understood in an anthropological sense: in Mary Douglas’s influential formulation, that which is unclean is simply “matter out of place.”¹⁰² The bloody discharge believed to flow from the individual Jewish body reflected, on a microcosmic level, the uncleanness of Synagoga herself, for the entire community of the Jews was believed to have become unclean (that is, “out of place,” cast out, excluded) at the time of the Crucifixion. That singular event was repeated annually, as the commemoration of Holy Week was believed to herald not only the unification of the Christian community, but the exclusion of the Jewish community. This act of simultaneous unification and exclusion was made manifest in the ritual stoning of Jewish quarters carried out in various Christian cities, as David Nirenberg has shown.¹⁰³ In this context, it is significant that some of the texts describing the bloody flux experienced by the Jews specify that it regularly occurs during Holy Week.¹⁰⁴ In these texts, the theological discourse of Jewish alterity makes manifest the way in which the individual body was thought to mirror the status of the community as a whole. As Willis Johnson puts it, “When Christians were made clean by the shedding of blood on Good Friday, Jews were made unclean.”¹⁰⁵ Through the rituals of Holy Week, Christ’s blood could be seen to purify and unite Ecclesia even as it polluted and cast out Synagoga. A similar relationship of the individual and the community appears in texts recounting the siege of Jerusalem, where the bodies of Jewish people are shown in the act of being torn apart, cannibalistically consumed, or burned to ashes. Their individual

100. Commentator B, in pseudo-Albertus Magnus, *Women’s Secretes*, 74; quoted in Johnson, “Myth,” 294n69.

101. *Omnes homines*, in *Problemata Varia Anatomica*, 38; reproduced in Biller, “Scientific View,” 164.

102. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*.

103. In Nirenberg’s view, Holy Week riots are “repeated, controlled, and meaningful rituals” which “bind and sunder in the same motion” (229). Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*; see especially chapter 7, “The Two Faces of Sacred Violence,” 200–230.

104. Caesarius of Heisterbach, writing in the early thirteenth century, reports that Jewish males suffer from a bloody flux on the Friday before Easter (*Dialogus Miraculorum*, 1: 92). It should be noted that Willis Johnson argues that this aspect may be a fourteenth-century interpolation (“Myth,” 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000).

destruction and dispersal is, once again, a microcosm of the community as a whole: the walls of the city are crushed and the people are dispersed, scattered abroad like dust in the wind. Just as their individual bodies will not be reintegrated in the resurrection, so too their community will not be reconstituted after the supersession of Judaism by Christianity.

Within this dynamic, Jerusalem has two identities: as Christian Jerusalem, it is the geographical target of crusading aspirations and the eschatological goal of the individual soul. As Jewish Jerusalem, however, the city is a physical, tangible manifestation of Synagoga. Consequently, its walls are crushed and the city itself is polluted. As Paschasius Radbertus puts it in his ninth-century commentary on Lamentations 1:17 (“Jerusalem is become among them like a woman polluted by menstrual uncleanness”): “Just as a woman is an abomination at that time when she suffers menstruation, so too even these people were an abomination, just as are the Jews today both to us and to their enemies.”¹⁰⁶ Like Orosius, who likened the temple at the time of the siege of Jerusalem to a womb “emptied by the act of giving birth and void” (“effetum ac vacuum” [7.9.6; 3: 39]), Paschasius describes Jewish Jerusalem as an empty vessel; both writers depict the place of the Jews as feminized and as polluted, whether by birth or by menstruation.¹⁰⁷

The intersection of theological and scientific discourses described in these pages helps to illuminate the relationship between anti-Judaism and antisemitism, particularly with relationship to the role of embodiment in the discourse of Jewish alterity.¹⁰⁸ It would not be correct to say that antisemitism arises

106. “Et facta est Hierusalem quasi polluta menstruis inter eos. Quia sicut execrabilis est mulier eo tempore quo menstrua patitur ita et illa execrabiles erant, Iudei et sunt usque hodie tam nobis et hostibus suis.” Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Lamentatione Hieremiae* 1.17.

107. The book of Leviticus prescribes ritual means of purification following childbirth (Lev. 12:1–8) and contact with menstrual blood (Lev. 15:21). A brief but useful overview of ritual purity laws in Leviticus can be found in Klawans, “Ritual,” 19–28, esp. 20. See also Klawans, *Impurity and Sin*.

108. A great deal has been written on the distinction between and the interrelation of anti-Judaism and antisemitism. The work of Gavin Langmuir has been particularly influential; but see Stacey’s helpful assessment of the problems attendant upon Langmuir’s definition of anti-Judaism as “essentially sociological,” while antisemitism is “essentially psychological.” For Langmuir, the former is a “nonrational response to nonrational doubts,” while the latter is an “irrational reaction to repressed rational doubts” (Stacey, “History, Religion, and Medieval Antisemitism,” 98). More helpful is Stacey’s emphasis on the role of embodiment in the emergent discourse of antisemitism: “Ethnic or even racial antisemitism is not the creation of the modern era. It can be traced from the late thirteenth century onward in the opinion . . . that not even baptism could eradicate the ‘Jewishness’ of a convert/apostate from Judaism” (100). On the role of embodiment in antisemitism, see also Kruger, “Bodies of Jews”; Abulafia, “Bodies in the Jewish-Christian Debate,” 124–37. Sara Lipton suggests that a crucial change in conceptions of Jewish alterity occurs when, during the fifteenth century, pictorial representations of Jews begin to display certain conventional, stereotyped features (*Images*

from anti-Judaism, though it is certainly true that the theological discourse of Jewish alterity exists prior to the appearance of the scientific discourse. These two discourses, however, as we have seen, do not remain separate; instead, one reinforces the other, as justifications for exclusion drawn from one discourse are used to augment the other. It is difficult to know whether to define them as distinct discourses, or as two complementary strands in a single discourse: the discourse of anti-Judaism certainly stood alone prior to the thirteenth century, but the discourse of antisemitism has never fully disentangled itself from that of anti-Judaism.¹⁰⁹ In this chapter, I have illustrated how, from a medieval, European, Christian perspective, the place of the Jews is by definition an unstable one, as liquid and untidy as the Jewish body itself. The centrifugal flow of diaspora reappears in microcosm in the bloody flux emanating from the individual body. In the next chapter, I show how the construction of the “Saracen” body proceeded along similar lines. Like the Jewish body, the Saracen body was defined and categorized by means of the conventions of climate theory. It differed significantly, however, in two ways, lacking the complicating factors of dispersal and expulsion and intersecting quite differently with the theological discourse of alterity.

109. Certain aspects of anti-Judaic and antisemitic discourse not discussed in this chapter are central to the account of medieval Western understandings of both Islam and Judaism as religions that adore the letter rather than the spirit; these include the focus on bodily circumcision (emblematic of the “Old” Covenant) and the notion of spiritual blindness (that is, willful rejection of the “New” Covenant). On the dichotomies of letter versus spirit and body versus soul in anti-Judaic and Orientalist discourse, see chapter 6 (“The Form of Heaven”).

← CHAPTER 4

The Saracen Body

While modern constructions of Orientalism center on the idea of the “Arab” or the “Muslim,” focusing alternatively on ethnic and religious identities, medieval constructions conflated categories of ethnicity and religion within a single term that served as a marker of both: “Saracen.” This term identified its object as religiously different (not a follower of Christ, but of Muhammad), and ethnically or racially different (from Oriental regions). It is significant that the term “Saracen” is never used to identify Christian Arabs, showing that the term was understood as defining alterity in both dimensions; that is, in terms of both religion and race.¹ In this dual reference, the term “Saracen” is similar to the contemporaneous use of the term “Jew,” with both groups of people thought to differ from Christians not only in religious terms, but in bodily terms as well. Unlike the diasporic body of the Jew, however, which was characterized by the qualities of leakiness and permeability that mirrored in microcosm the diasporic state of the nation, the Saracen body was understood in terms of fixed locations.

As shown in some detail in chapter 3, climate theory provided a totalizing system within which bodies of all shapes, colors, and sizes could be categorized according to their qualities and rationalized in terms of their place of

1. On the development of the term “Saracen,” see Rotter, *Abendland und Sarazenen*, 68–77; Tolan,