

Foreigners and Fear in the Middle Ages

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“All the world is foreign soil to those whose native land should be heaven.”
Hugh of St Victor, *In Ecclesiasten Homiliae*

A. Introduction

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As is perhaps made most poignantly clear in the words of Hugh of St Victor quoted above, the entire physical world might be considered foreign in the Middle Ages. Like many stereotypes of the medieval culture, however, that reduction does not hold up so well under further scrutiny. Whereas in the modern world we usually make more of a distinction between the “foreign” as either a strange physical space or a person from another culture and/or religion, and the “other” as something even more distant from our understanding, such as a conceived and constructed other (devil, monster, ghost, etc.), or someone of a physical deformity or different sexual orientation, the medieval world often made no such distinction. Yet, it is only in more recent years that the complexity of that medieval notion has been more seriously considered by scholars. As Mary Campbell has observed, the medieval world was “self-centered” and its “ethnocentricity is reflected in the concentrically divided world of [its] maps and geographical writings.” The illustrations on medieval *mappaemundi* reveal monstrosities placed at the far edges of the world, Jerusalem is dead center, and Europe is in the inner circle.

The most inhabitable part of the world was depicted as the climate of the northern Mediterranean, and the farther from “home” you went, “the more outlandish, *unheimlich*, became the bodies and manners of men” (Campbell 1988). Yet, even this limitation to the internal versus external boundaries of the study of the foreign or the “Other” and the familiar are shifting. Perhaps receiving its greatest impetus from the movement of modern medieval scholars to the study of the “other” provided by such works as that of Edward Said, or the post-colonial applications to the medieval outlined by Jeremy Cohen and other recent scholars, the concept of both the “foreign” and the “other” has become more prominent in the study of the medieval culture (Said 1978; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen 2000). This essay will provide an overview of that study and also examine how the stereotypically expected reaction to both the foreign and the other, namely fear, has been modified to show that the medieval response was much more complex. We turn first to the evolution of the concept of the foreigner and its significance in medieval culture.

B. Foreign and Foreigner

In the attempt to better understand medieval portrayals of the foreign we rely largely on various genres of medieval literature. David Tinsley, in his more recent study of medieval German

courtly literature, for example, examines the etymology of the concept of the *vremde* and the connotations of its related word *fremde* in the modern German, where it bears two connotations. The first is that of foreign in the sense of place, or a difference in geography and culture, and the second which bears a sense of the unconventional in appearance. He argues that both connotations can be detected in **Wolfram von Eschenbach's** (ca. 1170–1220) *Parzival* (ca. 1205), wherein “foreignness” is “rooted in unconventional behaviors usually associated with visits from foreign cultures and registered in the reactions of the indigenous” (Tinsley 2002, 46; see also Krusche 1985; Wierlacher, ed., 1985; Pochat 1997). Tinsley also points out that the Middle High German word “*ellende*” connotes “persons who have been banned or exiled from their own society” and thus must live in a “foreign culture,” and notes how this quality of the displaced who become strangers in a strange land is explored in the character of **Rüdiger of Pöchlarn** at the end of the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200; Tinsley 2002, 45). Overall, Tinsley is concerned with the way this literature reflects on how identity is explored in encounters with the foreign, and how “identity is born in the recurring interaction of the individual, the social group, and the exemplar.” Thus, “notions of the foreign are inevitably shaped by social expectations surrounding conduct, dress, and obligation” (Tinsley 2002, 47; see also Haymes 1997). This dynamic notion of the concept of the foreign also led the medieval world to include those who violated social norms within society as being “foreign” based on subjective notions of the social group. For example, as he points out, the nobility considered commoners as foreigners, and peasants were little more than animals. As well, for the clerics, “the laity constitute the ‘Other’; men proclaim their physical and moral superiority to women; whereas in the cities foreignness comes to reside ever more outside one’s particular guild or profession” (Tinsley, 2002, 48; Sträth, ed., 2000; see also Phillips 1997; Reyerson 1997). Perhaps the most dominant notion of the foreign, however, was the simple medieval conviction voiced in the *Song of Roland* that “Pagans are wrong and Christians are right,” a principle that stood at the base of the interface between Christians and non-Christians throughout the Middle Ages (Strickland 2003, 157). Another interesting aspect of the role of literature in defining the foreign is found in the relationship between the author and his audience. **Wolfram**, for example, adapted his romances based on models from the Old French and a variety of other sources, but he had to prepare his version for an audience familiar with the heroic epics and songs of the German literature. So also the author of the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200) had to blend the oral heroic poems with the newly emerging norms of the courtly literature, which, in Tinsley’s terms meant that the “act of authorship itself presupposed in the thirteenth century intensive interaction with the foreign.” Thus, as Tinsley concludes, both authors had to give “familiar shape to what was in essence, foreign material” (Tinsley 2002, 48–49; cf. also Hatto, trans., 1966; Bartsch and de Boor, ed., 1997; Wailes 1978; Lionarons 1998; Haymes 1994).

Albrecht Classen, in his introduction to *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages*, has provided further direction for those who wish to explore the foreign in the Middle Ages. He first of all calls attention to the phenomenology of human existence which demands definition and explanation as developed by Martin Heidegger and Hubert Dreyfus. In essence, in Classen’s

summary, “Without the foreign there would be no familiar” (Classen 2002, xi; Dreyfus 1984). He postulates that this modern concept can be applied to the Middle Ages even though modern concepts of the self, personal identity, or “nationhood” were not in place, because we begin to see that “radical changes can be observed in literature, the visual arts, politics, and religion” beginning in the twelfth century that suggest the early emergence of such. In Classen’s words, “human existence and its development over time is determined by a process of distinguishing the self from the other” (Classen 2002, xii; cf. also Harris 1992; Hanning 1977; Benton 1982; Bynum 1972; Patterson 1987).

Secondly, Classen reminds us how much of the visual arts, religion, and politics in the Middle Ages were concerned with and reflected upon the opposition between self and the other. Whether that conflict was between Christian and pagan, Jew, or Muslim, or between the human and the non-human, namely monsters, the record is found in architectural gargoyles, manuscript illuminations, tales in travelogues, and the accounts of miracles, myths, and legends. Though Classen is cautious, he is positive in his assessment that: “It will remain uncertain how far medieval artists, writers and travelers fully understood the implications of the opposition between self and other, but they certainly observed the distance and tried to come to terms with it in many ways” (Classen 2002, xiii; see also Classen 1997; McKendrick 1996; Leonardi 1999; Camille 1992). Contrary to the stereotypes of the Middle Ages as an age of intolerance, Classen argues that during that era “the relationship between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ was still a matter of complex and open-ended negotiations.” Classen does acknowledge that this openness was declining by the late Middle Ages, when “the need for self-identity and the establishment of nationhood . . . increased tremendously,” and that the decline involved the development of a “disturbing trend . . . to erect race barriers, to discriminate against non-conformists, and to expel non-Christians.” By the end of the fifteenth century, as nations began to be more clearly developing, “the monstrous became more commodified than ever and turned into a topic of both public and private debates”(Classen 2002, xv).

Thirdly, Classen further opens the dialogue on the debate over the characterization of the Middle Ages as an age of intolerance in the context of defining the “other” by focusing on the minority groups in medieval society, namely, Jews, lepers, homosexuals, and heretics. It is clear that violence was prominent in the Middle Ages, especially in times of stress from disease, famine, or external invasion, and was often directed against the minority populations, but the minorities were not the only ones to suffer from the perceptions of the other. As Classen points out, “even the majority felt threatened by external forces, by unknown elements of nature, and by the impact of myth on everyday life” (Classen 2002, xvi; see also Nirenberg 1996).

Furthermore, Classen takes a more moderate position on the issue of rejection and/or violence toward the foreign. Using such evidence as the travel narratives of *John of Mandeville* and the *Mappaemundi*, Classen sees these as demonstrations of how the medieval world was reflecting a “strong concern to use the other simply as a catalyst to identify and characterize the self.” Though a modern sense of “tolerance” was absent in the collective, “there were certain early indications that some individuals espoused a remarkable open mind toward other cultures”

(Classen 2002, xvi; cf. also Flasch and Jeck, ed., 1997). Furthermore, heroic epics (e.g., *Beowulf* and the *Thidrekssaga*) depict a conflict between heroes and creatures from another world, and the courtly romances led knights on quests in which they encountered worlds full of danger; all of which led to self-reflection. In many cases, as Classen notes, the foreign creatures might point out the weaknesses or faults of the familiar society, or the monster creatures might even seem to represent a “higher form of culture.” *Kâlogrenant* in *Hartman von Aue’s* (ca. 1160–ca. 1220) *Iwein* (ca. 1202), for example, encounters a “wild man” living in a peaceful setting, which is in direct contrast with the knightly world of violence and fighting which characterizes the court of King *Arthur*. Similarly, in other romances, such as *Tristan und Isolde* or *Parzival*, the wilderness is depicted in a dual fashion, sometimes as something to be feared, or in contrast, as something more like a wooded refuge from a corrupt society (Classen 2002, xviii–xix; Hasty 1990; Rider 2000; Yamamoto 2000).

In his extensive introduction to *Meeting the Foreign*, Classen calls attention to several other ways in which the foreign was confronted in the medieval context. Perhaps most simply, the differences among cultures, or the notion of the stranger, or racial, cultural, or political differences are those we might most expect to find (Classen 2002, xxii, xxiv, xlv). However, Classen also draws upon the work of scholars who are exploring the views of women toward the other, as well as how the medieval men viewed women and their roles being depicted as often “foreign” (Classen 2002, xxv–xxviii, xxv; cf. Oswald 2012). He points out that much of medieval culture was defined as being in a liminal status, where the foreign was often deemed attractive, and not to be feared, where the despicable heathen was also an admirable warrior, or where heroes such as Gawain experienced the “foreign” as they ventured out on their quests (Classen 2002, xxx, xxxv–xxxix). The foreign other could be as concrete and to be feared as the Viking, Magyar, Mongol or Saracen invaders, or as symbolic as the dangerous mountains, mysterious monsters, or dark forests of the legends and myths which found some origins in Scripture (Classen 2002, xlii; Connell 1973). It could also be found in the visions and mystical experiences of those who sought to connect directly with God. Thus, in those worlds the foreign could be Evil in the form of the Devil or Good in the form of God (Classen 2002, xli–xlii).

Because the range of notions regarding the “foreign” was so broad, space does not allow us here to review each in depth. Thus, we will focus on those encounters which were most persistent, most prominent, and perhaps most characteristic of the way the medieval world responded to the other.

C. 1. The Heretic as Foreigner

Focusing in particular on some of the most concrete experiences with the other, the medieval experience with heretics and other perceived enemies of the Christian faith is exemplary. Although there are examples of religious toleration and reaching out to the other by such individuals as *Peter Abelard* (1079–1142), *Petrus Alfonsi* (ca. 1062–ca. 1110), and *John of Salisbury* (ca. 1120–1180), the most consistent and persistent reaction to heretics, Jews, and Muslims was ambiguous, though regularly negative to the point of violence (Classen 2002, xxix, xxxii, xliii, xlix–li). We turn first to examine the emergence of heresy.

Beginning in the eleventh century Christian Europe experienced an accelerated contact with the foreign. As trade expanded and pilgrims multiplied, stories of encounters with new cultures began to spread, ideas from the East began to circulate, and eventually even began to challenge traditional Christian beliefs. Malcolm Lambert reminds us, at the “beginning of the eleventh century, leading churchmen in Western Europe had no living experience of heresy,” but by mid-century they had come to know a new set of ideas supposedly influenced by the teaching of a third-century Persian prophet known as **Mani** (ca. 216–276), whose ideas became associated with the end of the world (Lambert 1998, 4–5). **Raoul Glaber** (ca. 985–ca. 1047), the Benedictine chronicler most associated with the fears of the first millennium, stirred up fears of the developing sects of heretics in southern France as adherents of the Devil. Similarly, **Ademar of Chabannes** (ca. 988–1034), another monastic chronicler residing at **St. Martial of Limoges**, wrote in 1018 describing the alleged **Manicheans** of Aquitaine as messengers of **Antichrist**, whose major offense was that although they practiced asceticism, they were really not what they seemed to be; that is, they really were secret practitioners of vice (Lambert 1998, 5–6).

Without real knowledge of the teachings of these sects, the influence of **Augustine**, who had an encounter with real **Manicheans**, even belonging to a group for nine years before denouncing their Elect members for “secret vices,” predominated as the eleventh-century revival of heresy was subsequently accused of such vices as magic, demonic possession, poison, seduction, orgies, and physical contagion (Lambert 1998, 6–8). To combat these evils of the “other,” the clergy had to steel themselves against “devilish deceit” with the sign of the cross, and prayer, as well as daily communion in preparation for trying the heretics after they were apprehended. In dealing with the heretics, the clergy early on had accepted “ideas and preconceptions [of the foreign, that is, those who rejected Christianity] from the past broadly dictating their views on heresy” (Lambert 1998, 8–9; Moore, 1976; Fichtenau 1992; Grundmann 1927). However, in fact, the heretics of the eleventh century were not **Manicheans** at all. Instead, they derived impetus from “the religious and social history of their own age,” particularly with the failed attempt at reform of widespread abuses by clergy and lay lords associated with the **Peace of God** movement (Lambert 1998, 11–12).

By the twelfth century, however, significant heretical movements did arise which attacked and threatened the ethical and hierarchical bases of the Church. There were those accused of being **Donatists**, that is, did not believe that the sacraments delivered by “evil-living” priests were valid, and others who attacked the need for the clerical institution itself. Wandering preachers such as **Robert of Abrissel** (ca. 1045–1116) and **Bernard of Tiron** (ca. 1046–1117) caused suspicion as they attracted crowds by calling for a return to the *vita apostolica*. **Peter of Bruys** (fl. ca. 1117–d. 1131) questioned the mass and communion, and rejected the need for church buildings or traditional forms of worship, especially the veneration of the cross (Lambert 1998, 14–15). These developments are placed in the context of significant social change in medieval society, especially that of the rise of the urban economy, which occurred so rapidly that the Church had difficulty in responding to this new form of the “foreign.”

Those charged with responding to heresy had great difficulty. First, they had to pin down the nature of the heretical beliefs. The bishop of **Soisson** in 1114, for example, found those whom he questioned about their beliefs to be responding quite like Christians. Some of the accused were found guilty by means of the ordeal or confessed, but were not punished immediately. Confusion led to a postponement of punishment of some of the accused, and, in one case, in the temporary absence of the bishop to attend a regional synod, a local crowd broke into the jail and burned the prisoners. Thus, violence became the popular method of responding to the fear of the unknown, but the use of force in confronting the foreign created a number of ongoing difficulties for the Church, including the undermining of confidence in the hierarchy itself (Lambert 1998, 16–17; Moore 1984; 1975).

One of the most serious threats came at the hands of the **Cathars**, who became prominent and widespread in the middle of the twelfth century. The visionary abbess **Hildegard of Bingen** (1098–1179) dated their appearance along the Rhine to 1140, and upon reading the **Apocalypse**, began to even have visions about the heretics. One of these recorded in 1163, reported that “the wicked works of men which are blown out from the mouth of the black beast ... [were] causing great destruction” (Lambert 1998, 19), reflected a common way that the medieval world dealt with the unknown by dehumanizing the “other” (Connell 2013). But characterization did not lead to successful elimination of the threat. **Ekbart**, brother of **St. Elizabeth of Schönau**, a friend of **Hildegard**’s, took the lead in responding to **Catharism** in the Rhineland. In a series of sermons preached in 1163, **Ekbart** expressed the dangers of the heresy. First, he once again erroneously demonized its beliefs as **Manichean** and wrongly borrowed from **Augustine** to refute it. Yet, he also correctly identified the heresy as having a set of beliefs that were likely to outlast the idiosyncratic teachings of any one individual, and thus truly posed a threat to the Christian faith (Lambert 1998, 19–20). The **Cathars** were foreign to the traditional Roman Church, which they labeled the Church of Satan, but the dualism of the **Cathars** in the division of its followers between the most committed, celibate, ascetic “elite,” and the ordinary members who remained in the world and lived a simple life of marriage, children and a normal diet, does not seem that far from the separation of clergy and laity in the traditional Roman Church (Lambert 1998, 21). By attacking the traditional church at its ritual roots and claiming to be more true to the apostolic church, the **Cathars** represented a new kind of foreign threat, and perhaps most dangerous because it came from within the culture of Christianity itself.

A strange twist in the struggle against heresy is found in the so-called **Albigensian Crusade**, an attempt to eliminate the **Cathars** in **Occitania** that lasted from 1209 to 1255. It is strange in several ways. First, because the geographical region south of the Loire was “foreign” in many ways to the kings of France who resided in Paris, yet it was those kings who intervened in the matters of the inhabitants of that region upon receiving a call from Pope **Innocent III** in 1209 to crusade against the heretics. Influenced by the work of Frederic Cheyette, Sharon Kinoshita portrays it as follows: “with Pope **Innocent**’s call; throughout **Occitania**, nobles—heretics and good Christians alike—were about to find out what it meant to have Normans, Frenchmen and other foreigners ‘in their house’ ” (Kinoshita 2006, 203; Cheyette 2001). The

crusade was strange in a second way because the crusaders took no mercy on even the orthodox inhabitants of the territory who were merely tolerant of the **Cathars**. As the papal legate who accompanied the first expedition is alleged to have said, “Kill them all; God will recognize his own” (Kinoshita 2006, 203; Roquebert 1999; Sumption 1978). Following the success of the early stages of the crusade, the invaders began to treat the conquered territories as colonies by imposing northern customs and practices, which in turn led to a broad-scale resistance by Occitanians to the northern “foreigners” (Kinoshita 2006, 206). However, even appeals by the orthodox to the pope could not overturn the destruction of feudal society in the region. Much of the early turmoil caused by the **Albigensian Crusade** (1209–1255) is recorded in the anonymous *Chanson de la Croisade Albigeoise*, but the courtly poets of **Occitania** subsequently apparently gave up the fight and left for Iberia or the courts of northern Italy, where in turn they experienced another form of “foreignness” (Kinoshita 2006, 234–35; Huot 1984; Paterson 1993).

Similar to the **Cathars** in some ways were the **Waldensians** of southern France who in the later twelfth century also challenged the notion of the hierarchical church. Symbolic of changes in society which raised the level of the laity and the importance of the masses which were not being reached spiritually by the clergy, the **Waldensians** argued for lay preaching and the rights of women to be included as preachers. **Peter Waldo** (ca. 1140–1218) of Lyons, who, according to **Bernard Gui** (ca. 1260–1331) in his *Manual for Inquisitors*, began to preach poverty and care for the poor in or about 1170. He later met with church hierarchs at the **Third Lateran Council** (1179) to try to persuade the Church to soften its stance on preaching by the laity. That effort was unsuccessful, and subsequently he was formally condemned as a heretic at the **Fourth Lateran Council** of 1215.

The **Waldensian** challenge to papal authority and its focus on the poverty of the apostles as the best model of Christianity, reminds modern scholars of several other issues regarding the way the Church dealt with the foreign within the context of the medieval struggle with heresy. Perhaps most interesting is the way the heretics were often depicted as illiterate, which was another way of distinguishing the “other,” especially as the laity began to challenge the clergy after the year 1000. As Peter Biller describes the association, “the *topos* of the heretic as **illiterate**,” is both early occurring and persistent throughout the Middle Ages. Despite the explicit claim of **St Augustine** (354–430) in his *On Heresies* that heresy originated in philosophic speculation, the tradition of the apostles as unlettered fishermen whose holiness created suspicion surrounding learning, led to subsequent confusion. Whereas earlier churchmen often ignored **Augustine** on this point, and instead relied on Scripture to create images in the eleventh century of the heretic as **illiterate**, namely “outside of the Latin ‘educated-world’” and thus a foreign other, later churchmen had to come to grips with increasing literacy among the laity which undermined the earlier image. Often, the complex nature of that difficulty led to the creation of the notion of the heretical sect as consisting of masters or teachers who were **literate**, and able to secure “diabolical assistance,” which enabled them to seduce the simple or stupid masses of **illiterates** (Biller and Hudson, ed. 1994, 1–3; see also Stock 1983). Despite the recognition of more sophisticated heretics, as well as the rise of the vernacular languages in

various forms of literature, including the [sermon](#), and the need to better educate the clergy to deal with heresy, in the mid-thirteenth century the text by the *Anonymous of Passau* still linked the theme to a division of social ranking and power and sex: “every kind of man has our faith: philosophers, the illiterate, and Princes; but only a few have the faith of the heretics, and these are only the poor, workmen, women, and idiots [*ydiote*, i.e., the [illiterate](#)].” By the fourteenth century there were still examples of the *topos* of the heretic as [illiterate](#), but it was no longer the predominant image (Biller and Hudson 1994, 4–5). By the time we reach the age of the [Lollards](#) in fourteenth century England, “The attractiveness of heresy as a choice against orthodoxy is not necessarily conditioned by literacy, but it may be assisted by it” (Swanson 1994, 290).

C. 2. The Saracen as Foreigner

The bibliography on the Western reaction to [Islam](#) and the development of the derogatory term [Saracen](#) is enormous and growing. One might start with the work of Richard Southern entitled *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (1962), and continue with Norman Daniel’s work, *Islam and the West: the Making of an Image* (1993), and then sample from various anthologies such as those edited by Maya Shatzmiller on *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth Century-Syria* (1993), and Michael Frassetto and David Blanks called *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of the Other* (1999). Images of the [Saracen](#) in medieval Christian art have been analyzed more carefully and insightfully as well. This has been brought to light in more comprehensive studies such as in *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image Making in Medieval Art* (1989) by Michael Camille, and in *Saracens, Demons & Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (2003) by Debra Higgs Strickland. More prominent individual views of Islam in the Middle Ages have been portrayed in studies such as that of James Kritzeck in *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (1964). The ambiguity and more positive nature of the [Saracen](#) image has been examined as well, beginning with such works as Norman Daniel’s *Heroes and Saracens: an Interpretation of the Chansons de Geste* (1984), and Robert Burns in *Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia* (1984), and continuing most recently in the work of the authors featured in the anthology edited by Albrecht Classen entitled *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages* (2002), and in his *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times* (Classen, ed., 2013; see also Goetz 2013).

For the past twenty years or so, the work of John Tolan, including his more comprehensive overview of a large representation of the studies prior to 2002 which bears the title, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (2002), offers a combination of bibliographical analysis and thought-provoking interpretations to encourage ongoing examination and highlight where we have come in this study of the Western reaction to the [Muslims](#) over the past forty to fifty years. Tolan opens his broad-reaching study of the [Saracens](#) with a long quote from a letter by [Riccoldo of Monte Croce](#) (ca. 1243–1320) bemoaning the Fall of [Acre](#) in 1291. [Riccoldo](#) was both amazed and confused in his visit to [Baghdad](#) where he

viewed the splendor of the Saracen capital while at the same time reflected on the loss of **Acre** (1291), the last Christian stronghold in the Holy Land, “What could be the cause of such massacre and such degradation of the Christian people? Of so much world prosperity for the perfidious Saracen people?” For Tolan, this statement “expresses all the ambivalence, the attraction and repulsion, that medieval Latin Christendom felt for the world of Islam” (Tolan 2002, xiii). He subsequently details the evolution of the medieval reaction to the **Saracen** as the “other,” beginning with first Christian encounters with the Muslim world and tracing the development of that dynamic encounter through the thirteenth century. The history of that experience is in many ways a microcosm of the medieval Christian world’s reaction to the foreigner in general. As Tolan sums it up, “Western attitudes toward Muslims and towards Arabs (terms that are often poorly distinguished) are still problematic, still tinged with condescension and mistrust, still rife with contradictions.” The same has been said about the Muslim attitudes toward the Christians or Franks (terms often poorly distinguished in the Middle Ages), especially in the **Holy Land** (Tolan 2002, xvii).

In portraying the evolving Christian perception of Islam, Tolan begins with **Isidore of Seville** (ca. 540–636), who conflated human geography with human history, and relied upon Scripture where **Ishmael** fathered twelve sons that became identified with the twelve tribes of the Arabs. Thus, **Ishmael**, born of **Hagar** and **Abraham**, bred the **Ishmaelites**, whose name became corrupted into **Saracens** (*Saraceni*), but **Isidore** did not conflate **Agarenes**, **Saracens**, **Ishamaelites** and **Arabs** together into interchangeable terms for the same people as did his contemporaries. For **Isidore**, the Arabs were foreigners in a distant place who pierced their ears and were heretics who believed in reincarnation. On the other hand, the **Saracens** “are so called, either because they claim to be born from Sarah or because (as the pagans say) they are of Syrian origin” (Tolan 2002, 287 n. 25; Shaid 1984; Rotter 1986). **Eusebius of Caesarea** (ca. 260–339) and other earlier Eastern writers described the Arabs as ferocious warriors, and as “blood-thirsty cannibals,” or as “robbers of Arabia,” or “wolves of Arabia” (Tolan 2002, 10–11; Lamoreaux 1996). Regardless, those writing and living in Europe prior to the mid-seventh century had little actual experience with the Arabs before or after they became practitioners of Islam.

In contrast to the early Christian perceptions of the Saracen was the Muslim view of Christians. Amidst the doctrine found in the **Koran** and the **Hadith**, as well as other early Muslim texts, the “religious others,” in particular Christians and Jews, were portrayed as “corrupt, superseded versions of the true religion, Islam; their adherents were to be tolerated, but were not to be considered equal to Muslims” (Tolan 2002, 21).

In the face of the reality of the Muslim conquest of the Holy Land and their subsequent expansion as far West as Spain, Christians had to find new ways to confront the foreign. **Maximus the Confessor** (ca.580–662), for example, not even aware of the new religion of Islam, wrote a letter from Alexandria in the 630s labeling the newly Muslim invaders as “Jews and followers of **Antichrist**,” a “barbarous nation of the desert,” consisting of “wild and untamed beasts” who laid waste our civilization (Tolan 2002, 43). An anonymous author of the anti-Jewish text, the *Doctrine of Jacob Recently Baptized* (634), saw the Arab invasions as part of the

apocalyptic drama of the final days of the creation as portrayed in the [Book of Daniel](#) (Tolan 2002, 45).

Tolerated and given the option to convert to Islam, which occurred more frequently with the passage of time, the defensive rhetorical response of Christians changed to one labeling the Muslims as heretics, which of course was the worst kind of medieval Christian. [John of Damascus](#) (ca. 655–749) was among the most influential of apologists and polemicists of the era who took up the cause. Having played a role in the [Umayyad](#) (ruling Caliphate, ca.661–750) government in [Damascus](#) before he retired to write, John took a unique position regarding Islam. He characterized it as not a new religion, but as the last of one hundred heresies, “the religion of the [Ishmaelites](#), which still dominates today, leading the people astray, precursor of the [Antichrist](#)” (Tolan 2002, 51–52; Sahas 1972).

By the ninth century, when it was clear that the Muslims were not going away, the apologists tried to provide Christians with an explanation for their success in the context of Christian history. [Theophanes](#) (ca. 758–818) for example, who compiled his [Chronicle](#) around 815, spoke of [Muhammad](#) (ca. 570–632) as a “leader and false prophet of the Saracens” who are the descendants of the [Ishmaelites](#). [Theophanes](#) further wrote that [Muhammad](#) had fooled the Jews into thinking of him as their Messiah, and that [Islam](#) was a heresy composed of both Jewish and Christian components. But he becomes less certain when trying to explain why God allowed the Muslims to conquer so much of the known world. Though he saw the conquests as having some part in God’s plan, he did not place them directly into the Christian apocalyptic tradition (Tolan 2002, 64–66).

Continuing in their ignorance of the true Muslim beliefs, especially that of Islamic monotheism, many Christian texts in Latin, French and other vernacular languages portrayed the Saracens as pagans who paid homage to many gods and demons. This propaganda became particularly rampant during the era of the [First](#) and [Second Crusades](#) (1095–1148). Earlier, [Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim](#) (ca. 935–1002) had claimed that the Muslims “inflicted the death penalty on anyone who blasphemed the gods they made of gold” (Tolan 2002, 106). She also provided an example by telling the story of a Saracen king (allegedly [Abd al-Rahman III](#), 912–961) who “stained with bodily lust,” attempted to seduce a Christian boy named [Pelagius](#), who rejected the king and was eventually decapitated for insulting the king and blaspheming the pagan gods he worshipped. As the first Latin author to describe Saracen paganism in such lurid detail, [Hrotsvitha](#) became a model for later chroniclers of the crusades. [The Chronicles of the Archbishops of Salzburg](#) tell the story of Archbishop [Thiemo](#) who was killed during the latter stages of the [First Crusade](#) (1097–1099). [Thiemo](#) was accompanying a group of pilgrims, which was captured by a band of Saracen warriors, who were angered by the success of the Christians and so took vengeance on unarmed pilgrims. While a captive, [Thiemo](#), who was also a trained goldsmith, was asked to repair an idol made of gold. When he smashed it instead, and subsequently responded to the charge of blasphemy by warning the leader of this group of Saracens to desist from worshipping obscene idols, he was martyred in a brutal manner, including the cutting off of his limbs and the drinking of his blood. As Tolan sums it up, while

not so lurid in detail, other chroniclers did not contradict this hostile picture of the Saracens (Tolan 2002, 108–09; Tolan 1999; Flori 1992; 1995; 1997; Loutchitskaja 1996; 1999).

Other chronicles of the **First Crusade** where **Saracen** paganism plays a central role include those of **Petrus Tudebodus** (fl. ca. 1080–ca. 1120), and **Raymond d’Aguilers** (d. ca. 1100?), and it is also key to the drama of the *Chanson d’Antioche* (ca. 1180), a collection of poems inspired by the various crusading events from 1097–1099. The poets and chroniclers were clever in stirring up the emotions of their Christian readers by creating fictions of scenes wherein a supposed pagan Saracen, such as the alleged ruler of Jerusalem at its capture, would bemoan to the pagan gods the losses of territory to the “power of the crucifix,” or report the discovery of a silver idol of **Muhammad** in the **temple of Solomon**, where **d’Aguilers** described knights riding in blood up to their knees as they captured Jerusalem (Tolan 2002, 118–19). In the Christian mind, the **temple of Solomon** was the center of a cult, the cult of **Muhammad**, and the idolatry of that temple was portrayed as a form of “pollution” of the holy city by the pagan followers of that cult (Tolan 2002, 120; Camille 1989; Cole 1993).

Even though the crusaders who settled in the **Holy Land** after the **First Crusade** (1097–1099) learned that Muslims were not polytheists, that false perception did not disappear in either the *Chansons de Geste* or the chronicles of the later crusades. Perhaps most influential in the West was the *Chanson de Roland* (ca. 1100; Tolan 2002, 105, 312 n. 1, uses Short, ed. 1990, of Braut tr.), which depicts the **Saracens** as pagans worshipping a triad of gods, including **Muhammad** himself as one of them (Tolan 2002, 125; Kedar 1984; Dufournet 1987; Bervoc-Huard 1978; Haidu 1993). Also important was the *Chanson d’Antioche* (ca. 1100), which as Tolan describes it, made “the Crusade central to Christian eschatology by having **Christ** himself predict it,” when, at the time of his crucifixion, He speaks to the good thief to predict the future arrival of the crusaders (**Franks** specifically) to free the **Holy Land** and eliminate paganism. Since the Romans were the original pagans in this narrative, it became necessary to replace them with the **Saracens** as the target for avenging the death of **Christ**: “The crusaders’ historical model was the capture of Jerusalem by the Roman Emperor **Titus**, in revenge (as was commonly believed in the Middle Ages) for the killing of Jesus” (Tolan 2002, 121). Thus, medieval architecture picked up on this theme, as in the church of **Moissac**, wherein the porch was modeled on **Titus**’s triumphal arch to symbolize the successful recapture of Jerusalem by the crusaders (Seidel 1986). The image of the **Saracen** foreigner as the pagan became so pervasive that even the ancient Greco-Roman pagans were referred to as “**Saracens**” who “worship **Mahomet**,” and many pagan idols became referred to by the name of **Muhammad** or some other corrupt form (e.g., **Mahomet**, **Mahon**, **Mahoun**, **Mawmet**). This stereotype of the Saracen as pagan prevailed well beyond the era of the initial crusades to the **Holy Land**. The **Hereford map** of the thirteenth century labels the golden calf worshipped by the **Israelites** during the exodus as a “**Mahom**,” the *Decreta* of the **Council of Vienne** (1311) accused the Saracens of worshipping **Muhammad**; and, even English plays of the fourteenth century took great liberties in declaring that the ancients **Alexander the Great**, **Julius Caesar**, and **Pontius Pilate** all acknowledged “**Mahound**” in some way (Tolan 2002, 126–27; Bancourt 1982; Daniel 1984; Keller 1987;

Camille 1989; Metlitzki 1977).

The dynamic interplay of Christian and Saracen in the Middle Ages often led to the simultaneous projection of different images. This was true in the twelfth century, for example, where in contrast to the persistent picture of the Saracen as the archetypical pagan, there was the conflicting notion of the Saracen as heretic. Four Latin polemics of that era, for example, portray Muhammad as heretic, trickster, and magician (Tolan 2002, 137). **Embrico of Mainz** (*Vita Mahumeti*, written ca. 1100), **Gautier de Compiègne** (*De otia machometi*, ca. 1155), **Adelphus** (*Vita Machometi*, ca. early twelfth century), and **Guibert of Nogent** (ca. 1055–1124; brief biography of **Muhammad** in his *Gesta*) all combine a mix of real knowledge of Islam with numerous popular images of the prophet to reflect a growing curiosity about the man and his religion (Tolan 1996; 2012). The significance of these works, according to Tolan, is that although they borrow from earlier Eastern and Latin texts that describe **Muhammad** as a heretic, they go far beyond in creating a view of him as a scoundrel who fools the **Saracens** through trickery of various sorts.

At least three of these four authors openly demonstrate that they are taking much of their opinions from popular vulgar legend, and though “they distance themselves from their material . . . they exploit its potential to defame the **Saracen** enemy” (Tolan 2002, 139). In the context of heresy and reform within Europe of the twelfth century, these four accounts show how one needs to define the other in order to come to grips with one’s self. As Tolan briefs the views of **Guibert**, for example, “Orientals are clever, flighty intellectuals whose brilliant circumlocutions carry them off into heresy, contrasted implicitly to the stodgy, earthbound, authority-respecting Latins. Is it any wonder, **Guibert** continues, that virtually all the heresiarchs were Orientals, from **Mani** (216–276 c.e.) and **Arius** (256–336 c.e.) forward?” (Tolan 2002, 145)

One might expect those Christians living together with Muslims, as in Spain, to have a more enlightened view of Islam. Yet, the turmoil of *reconquista* meant that there was a constant migration of Christians and Muslims moving north and south across the peninsula as the Christians pushed further south to reconquer Muslim-held territories throughout the later Middle Ages (Burns 1999). As a result, a number of polemical and apologetic works were produced by Judaic, Christian, and Islamic authors. All were trying to confront the “other” in their own ways, but the Christian authors for the most part continued to paint the Muslims as heretics. **Muhammad** was a false prophet; the **Koran** was illogical; polygamy and the promise of sexual pleasure in heaven were a joke; whereas the **Bible** was truth.

What was new perhaps in these treatises was their demonstrated familiarity with **Arab science**, and with the approaches of Latin theologians such as **Hugh of St Victor** (ca. 1096–1141) and **Peter Abelard** (1079–1142) using the “new logic” to construct their arguments. **Petrus Alfonsi** (ca. 1062–ca. 1110) perhaps best illustrates this approach in crafting his anti-Muslim polemic as part of his *Dialogues against the Jews*, wherein **Alfonsi** characterizes **Muhammad** as a false prophet who is violent, lustful (the latter being a sign of his lacking in the signs of a true prophet), and the Islamic rituals and beliefs as merely a collection of confused, heretical Christian practices (Tolan 2002, 150). **Alfonsi** was widely read in the Middle Ages, and his ideas

apparently had some influence on **Peter the Venerable** (ca. 1092–1156), the abbot of Cluny, who used **Alfonsi**'s anti-Muslim tract to compose his own treatises against both the Muslims and the Jews in the 1140s and 1150s (Tolan 2002, 155; Tolan 1993). Though the abbot's approach was ultimately more analytical and careful (he traveled to Spain and had the **Koran** translated into Latin, for example), his first response to his more direct encounter with Islam was to compose his *Summa totius haeresis ac diabolicae sectae Saracenorum siue Hismahelitarum*. Therein he saw his purpose to prepare Christians to understand **Muhammad** and what he taught before they read the new edition of the **Koran** in Latin. In this tract, however, he still concluded that **Muhammad** was "a poor, vile, unlettered Arab" who went on to deceive others by claiming a religious vocation that led to his role as prophet, and eventually to his partnering with a heretical **Nestorian** monk and several Jews to establish a new heretical doctrine of his own (Tolan 2002, 157; Tolan 1998; Kritzeck 1964). In around 1156, he later wrote a more reasoned treatise (*Contra sectam siue haeresim Saracenorum*) in order to plead with potential Muslim readers to hear him out and to convince them to accept Christian scripture. In book two of this work, he tries to prove logically that **Muhammad** was not really a prophet by comparing him unfavorably with the **Old Testament** prophets (Tolan 2002, 159).

Tolan presents a succinct overview of the European reaction to the Muslim other from the ninth through the twelfth century in these words: "Islam [was] a new variety of . . . pagan idolatry, heresy, the cult of **Antichrist**, or a confused blend of all of these" (Tolan 2002, 171). He goes on to describe how the writers in the thirteenth century used this base to propagandize the *reconquista* in Spain or to try to launch a new crusade to the Holy land. However, the rhetoric took two directions in the later period. First, there was the overreaching militant crusading optimism that ultimate victory over **Islam** could still be obtained through force. Second, others began to conceive that peaceful missionary work could better lead to ultimate victory through conversion of all of Islam to Christianity. The missionary advocates changed the rhetorical strategy to portray the Islamic world as "ready to convert to Christianity given a proper mix of political allegiance and rational argumentation" (Tolan 2002, 172). Interestingly, the ambivalence of the Western perspective appeared in the way the primary missionaries, the **Franciscans** and **Dominicans**, adopted different approaches to engage the Muslims. The **Franciscans** decided not to learn the Arabic language or study the **Koran**; instead they relied on the model of preaching apostolic poverty. On the other hand, the **Dominicans** took a more organized and planful approach which included the study of Arabic, engagement with both the **Koran** and the **Hadith**, and direct theological debate with Muslim scholars.

Ultimately, neither the militant nor the missionary approach succeeded. The last Christian stronghold in the **Holy Land** fell in 1291 with the capture of **Acre**, and as Tolan concludes, by the fourteenth-century Christian protagonists, such as **Riccoldo of Montecroce** (ca. 1243–1320), had decided to revert to portraying "Muslims as illogical, invariably hostile enemies." Thus, they were no longer considering the possibility of even logically demonstrating that Christianity was superior to the Islamic other (Tolan 2002, 173).

C. 3. The Jew as Foreigner

Very similar to the ambiguity of the Saracen image, was the everchanging Christian view of the Jew as an “other” to confront throughout the Middle Ages. For example, **Isidore of Seville** (ca. 560–636) in his treatise *Against the Jews* presented a picture of Jewish culture that was more based on his “reading of **Jerome** rather than on any contact with real Jews.” He chastised them for not converting, accusing them of being illogical and stubborn, and thus saw them as a threat to his constructed narrative of the ultimate triumph of Christianity. In the mind of **Isidore**, since the **Visigothic Arians** had been converted the only remaining threat to Christianity was the infidel Jews (Tolan 2002, 15–16; Albert 1982). The reflection of such Christian attitudes toward Jews in later attitudes toward Islam ironically had a parallel in Jewish attitudes toward Christianity. For example, some Jewish polemics refer to **Jesus** as a magician who led Israel astray, and passages in the **Talmud** also present **Jesus** as suffering in hell for having mocked the Jewish prophets (Tolan 2002, 16; Green 1985). As a minority struggling to preserve its religious traditions, the Jews took to an aggressive defense, even to the point of liturgical condemnations of the Christians as heretics (*minim*) (Tolan 2002, 16; Green 1985).

Of course, the Jews were foreign to the Muslims as well, and the Muslims were not consistent in their portrayal of or in their attitude toward the Jews (Tolan 2002, 33). On the one hand, the Jews were afforded a place in Heaven as “people of the Book,” but, on the other hand, were accused of misinterpreting that same scripture to deny the prophethood of Muhammad or the antiquity of **Islam** (Tolan 2002, 33–34). However, for the Muslim in the seventh-century Islamic capital of **Damascus**, the proof of superiority was found in the conquest of both Christians and Jews. As Tolan summarizes it, “Their weakness and submission were appropriate to their inferior, secondary status in the eyes of God” (Tolan 2002, 39; see also M. Cohen 1994; Chazan 1996).

We have a problem sorting out the medieval perception of the Jew because, in the words of Debra Strickland, “It is far more difficult to draw a line between the actual and the fantastic during the Middle Ages given that constructed views of living non-Christians were nearly entirely stereotyped and imaginary. Contemporary descriptions of Jews illustrate this very clearly.” Thus, she concludes that medieval views of the Jews could be seen in the extreme as the “embodiment of everything medieval Christians dreaded and feared about themselves, their society, and their own religion (Strickland 2003, 95). Jean Delumeau, in writing a history of late medieval and early modern fear, devotes a chapter to the Jews as one of the agents of Satan, wherein the Jew is often portrayed as the “absolute Evil” to be feared (Delumeau 1978, ch. 9).

However, more recent scholarship does enable us to determine that not all medieval views of the Jews were negative. Especially from the twelfth century forward, at least in northern Europe, images were sometimes neutral, sometimes positive, as in the exegesis of the **Old Testament**. For example, the role of **David** as model king, or the illustration of the genealogy of **Christ** as part of the **Tree of Jesse** with roots in the **Old Testament**, offer samples of the positive

role played by the Jews in Christian thought (Strickland 2003, 97–98; Shapiro 1960; Wright 1993; Hourihane 2002).

Unfortunately, there is more evidence on the negative side of this perception, and the work of such individuals as Bernhard Blumenkranz and Ruth Mellinkoff provide insight as to the breadth of medieval anti-Jewish images. Cecil Roth early in the twentieth century argued that the Jews were so detested because not only were they “non-Christians,” but they “deliberately rejected Christianity, and they did so with authority,” an explanation that still bears consideration according to Strickland (Strickland 2003, 96; see also Roth 1938; Blumenkranz 1965, 1966, 1980; Mellinkoff 1993 and 1999; Stow 1992; Rubin 1999). The image of the Jews as the enemies of **Christ** came from the **New Testament** because Jews were too stubborn to recognize **Christ** as the Messiah. **Peter the Venerable** called them out on this in his *Against the Inveterate Obstinacy of the Jews* (*Against the Jews*, in brief). Alternatively, and again as verified in the **New Testament** in passages from Luke 23:21, the Jews were said to cry out to **Pontius Pilate**: “crucify him!” Thus, the Jews, instead of the Romans who were carefully often edited out of the medieval versions of this text, became known as “Christ-killers.” As Jeremy Cohen has pointed out, this tradition was one that persisted throughout the Middle Ages from the time of **Augustine** to that of the late medieval friars (Strickland 2003, 99; J. Cohen 1982, 1983; Blumenkranz 1958; Fredriksen 1996).

In contrast to a tendency to want to slay the Jews in revenge for **Christ**’s death, there was the goal to convert them in order that they play their assigned role in Christian eschatology. Using **St. Paul**’s *epistle to the Romans* (Rom. 11:16–27) as evidence, it was believed that the Jews must remain alive because their mass conversion was necessary to initiate the **Second Coming** of **Christ**. Another later medieval mystic and prophet, **Joachim of Fiore** (ca. 1135–1202), who believed in the nearness of that **Second Coming**, wrote in his treatise *Against the Jews*, that “the time is at hand to take pity on them, the time of their consolation and conversion” (Strickland 2003, 99–100; Hirsch-Reich 1966; Bloomfield 1957; Reeves 1969). Even earlier, the **Third Lateran Council** (1179) had encouraged the support of Jews for the sake of humanity; and later in thirteenth century, **Thomas Aquinas** argued for toleration of the Jews since they played an important role in history and in Christian theology (Classen 2002, xliii–xliv). However, as Leonard Glick argues, the justification for toleration were not always humanitarian: “the reason for their survival... was that they were useful—often all but indispensable—as sources of liquid capital. But once that usefulness, declined, they were doomed” (Glick 1999; see also Classen 2002, lxviii, n. 168; Hood 1995).

Though Glick’s pessimistic view is somewhat offset by more recent research, the pogroms that accompanied the organization of the army for the **First Crusade**, or the expulsion of Jews from England in the late thirteenth century, should not be overlooked in trying to strike a balanced view of how the Christians treated the Jews as others” (Classen 2002, xliii–xliv; Yerushalmi 1979; Classen 1998; J. Cohen 1996a). One cannot avoid the question of “usefulness” that Glick raises. The official Christian doctrine saw too much profit from the loaning of money (i.e., **usury**) as sinful and therefore forbidden by the Church, which put the Jews in an enviable

economic position in the rising urban world of the later Middle Ages. Even though the Jews also regarded “immoderate profit” as wrong, they believed it was permissible to loan money at interest to “foreigners.” Of course this bred resentment among the Christians, and in the subsequent twelfth- and thirteenth-century persecutions it is possible to determine that they were undertaken to relieve Christian debtors from paying their Jewish creditors. This was certainly true at [York](#) in 1190, and likely so in England overall in 1290 (Strickland 2003, 140; Kirschenbaum 1985; Jordan 1989; Lipton 1995; Stacey 1992).

Debra Strickland has called attention to the degree to which art played a role in attacking the Jews in the Middle Ages, and has accumulated a significant collection of examples to demonstrate how art was both powerful propaganda and played an important role in what she labels “a much broader, multifaceted campaign that employed pictorial, literary, dramatic, legal, economic and political mechanisms to suppress and to persecute Jews within Western Christian society.” Persecution and physical expulsion from England came in 1290; from France in 1306, and again in 1332 and 1394; from Spain in 1492; and from dozens of German principalities and towns during the fifteenth century, as well as Italy in 1541. The campaign was so effective that “By the fifteenth century, there were almost no Jews in Western Europe” (Strickland 2003, 105).

The art of the era contributed the stereotypical male Jewish icon, portrayed as bearded, hook-nosed, and hat-wearing. The medieval Jewish “hat” was usually either the softer flatter Phrygian cap, or a more pointed tall hat with the most exaggerated forms looking like an inverted funnel, the modern “dunce’s cap.” Though it is not likely that the Jews in fact wore distinguished costumes before the [Lateran Council](#) of 1215, which required both Jews and Muslims to wear a form of dress to distinguish them from Christians, the fact is that in the thirteenth century the “foreignness” of the Jew was emphasized (Strickland 2003, 105–06). Though the wearing of a hat per se was not necessarily negative or confined to Jewish figures, it was often perceived as a sign of evil regardless of the wearer. Even familiar [Old Testament](#) figures such as [Moses](#) took on some negative connotations for the Jews when depicted in medieval art.

In a register from the thirteenth-century French manuscript of the *Somme le roy* (*Dream of the King*), “a horned [Moses](#) receiving the tablets of the Law kneels opposite the image of a blind-folded [Synagoga](#) grasping her broken staff,” and below in another frame, the [Israelites](#) are shown worshipping an image of the [Golden Calf](#) (Exod. 32:1–6, 3 Kings 28–30), suggesting an affiliation of [Moses](#) with idolatry. Often, [Moses](#) was portrayed as having horns, which for medieval theologians were construed as symbols of honor and power, but for the average medieval viewer horns were more likely seen as derisive, especially since one of the more common views was that contemporary Jews concealed horns and tails beneath their clothing (Strickland 2002, 106; Mellinkoff 1970).

The pejorative views of the Jews began to become prominent in northern Europe from the late twelfth century as Jewish-Christian relations really deteriorated. Jews were burned in London in 1189, for example, and a massacre of Jews occurred in [York](#) in 1190 (Jones and Watson, ed., 2013; see also, Alexander, ed., 2004, and Bale 2010). Increased settlement of Jews in the urban areas of England, France, and Germany was a likely cause for increased conflict

(see, for example, Auslander 2005). Artistic productions bear witness to the transformation, where the number one theme became the belief that the Jews murdered **Christ**, which provided an opportunity to fan the fires of Christian hatred because of the perceived evil and guilt of the Jews in the Passion. Thus, Christians regularly assumed the Jews to be agents of the Devil, and assigned them to prominent places in Hell in the medieval Christian iconography, as illustrated in the *Bible moralisée*, which dates from Paris in the 1240s (illustration in Strickland 2003, 126; see also Lipton 1999; Trachtenberg 1993).

In the anthology of work collected and edited by Scott Waugh and Peter Diehl under the title *Christendom and its Discontents*, various authors address the question of how religion shaped both personal identity and the culture (Waugh and Diehl, ed., 1996, 5). Drawing upon **Freud**'s notion that constraints on individual behavior in a civilized society often lead to "neuroses and unresolved conflicts among individuals in that society" (Freud 1961; Waugh and Diehl 1996, 3), various authors therein explore how often medieval society dealt with conflict with the other by excluding individuals or groups from society, and how obedience became the test of inclusion or not. As well, studies by R. I. Moore, Jeffrey Russell, and John Boswell all confront related issues regarding the systematic condemnation of a wide range of "others" in medieval society, especially Muslims and Jews, but also heretics, lepers, male homosexuals and female prostitutes, and conclude that there is a linkage between these actions and the neuroses and fears of the dominant culture (Moore 1987; Russell 1992; Boswell 1980; Waugh and Diehl, ed., 1996, 3–8).

Close to the alleged role of the Jews in the Passion was the accusation of ongoing idolatry, and the two portrayals are seen in manuscripts, stained glass, and other forms of artistic representation. Color, particularly yellow and red, played a key role in denigration of the Jews. In certain regions the Jews were forced to wear the yellow badge; the funnel hat was usually yellow, the Phrygian cap red or yellow; the stockings were red; the skin usually dark. Red and black or dark are symbols of evil or criminality; yellow was used because it stood out in a crowd, thus distinguishing the foreigner. Gold was also used as a way to emphasize the timeless nature of an event being depicted, which thus linked the Jews of the Passion itself to their guilty ancestors in the contemporary world (Strickland 2003, 109–11; Kisch 1957; Petzold 1999).

One further illustration of artistic anti-Judaism is found in the prominent role played by the drama of the **Apocalypse** that is especially true in English illuminated manuscripts of the thirteenth century. Perhaps the most famous of these for its strong bias is the **Gulbenkian Apocalypse** of around 1260–1270, which contains a direct anti-Jewish commentary that claims that the Jews worshipped dragons and were followers of **Antichrist** who is depicted as a Jew. In this manuscript traditional figures of the **Apocalypse** are replaced by Jews, including one or more of the **Four Horsemen**. Therein, the pointed hat, the veil of **Moses** in the form of a cowl, and other symbols of Jewishness are used to heighten its "unusual virulent anti-Jewish imagery," as noted by the work of Suzanne Lewis in her examination of the manuscript (Strickland 2003, 130; Lewis 1986).

In many ways the Jews were ‘classic’ foreigners in the medieval world because they were perceived as barbarians, monsters, ethnically different, and sometimes even viewed as fools (the latter for having failed to convert to Christianity) (Strickland 2003, 133–40). As in Greek times, where the barbarian was anyone whose physical appearance and social customs differed, in the Christian medieval world Jews were “different.” They lived in different sections of the cities, they ate a strange diet (no pork); they spoke a different language (Hebrew) from either the vernacular or the Latin; and they were sexually licentious. Moreover, they were physically deformed (males were circumcised), they had a foul odor, they concealed tails and horns under their clothing, and they followed an alien religion! (Strickland 2003, 133; Hood 1995). Unfortunately the anti-Jewish polemic became more and more organized and stereotyped as the image of the Jew deteriorated with the increasing Jewish settlement within the urban centers of later medieval life. By the middle of the twelfth century, the Jews were resented because of the increased visibility of their economic activity, and because of the way they were treated positively by the Christian authorities who supported Jewish money-lending. After their persecution in northern Europe that occurred in the context of recruitment for the [First Crusade](#), the image of the Jew as an “enemy of the faith” was enhanced in the public imagination leading up to the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290 (Funkenstein 1971; Chazan 1996; 1997; J. Cohen 1982, 1996a; Foa 1996; Mirrer 1996; Despres 1998; Lipton 1999). With the approach of the fifteenth century in England, for example, this “differentness” became further accentuated when a sense of identity became more based upon a national sense of geographic place, and later, in the case of Shakespeare, with a sense of “Englishness” (Shapiro 1996; and Lampert 2004).

Regarding the connection between a sense of geographic space and one’s identity in the Middle Ages, David Leshock undertook a closer examination of two medieval texts that in his view began to exclude both Jews and Muslims from any legitimate place within either “England” or “Europe.” In his article regarding how Jews and Muslims became designated specifically as “foreigners,” Leshock uses the [Hereford mappaemundi](#) and [The Book of John Mandeville](#) to show how in “a Christian-centered world, identity is connected with religion,” but in these two texts it is also connected with geographic space. Thus, he argues further that: “These two texts in particular show the ways that both geography and religion can influence the construction of identity, and thereby determine what is ‘foreign’ ” (Leshock 2002, 202). It is clear to Leshock that religion “trumps geographic proximity” regarding those who belong and those who do not. However, in expelling the Jews, Leshock also avers that this was an act of “medieval nationalism” supported by the idea that “many people felt that foreign people inhabited *their* land” (Leshock 2002, 203, emphasis his). He cites in support of contemporary ideas related to this concept the chronicler [Pierre de Langtoft](#) (d. 1305), who stated “there is nobody who opposes it / To expel the Jews” (Leshock 2002, 203).

His focus on the two main texts ultimately leads him to point out how the [Hereford map](#), for example, “erased Jews from Europe and placed them in Asia,” while Mandeville claimed that “only the enclosure of [Gog and Magog](#) is the true home of Jews until they emerge during the [Apocalypse](#)” (Leshock 2002, 220). Thus, in the sense of constructed communities as defined by

the work of Benedict Anderson and Nelson Goodman, Leshock argues that a geographical location did not define a community for Jews or Muslims who might be residing in medieval England, that is, “Those who do not meet further requirements could be defined as foreigners in their own homeland” (Leshock 2002, 221; Anderson 1991; Goodman 1978; Westrem 2001; see also the contributions to this *Handbook* by Miriamne Krummel and Mark Abate).

C. 4. Death and the Ultimate Confrontation of God as the Foreign

Returning to the theme of the other as the mirror image of the self, there is one other persistent confrontation with the “other” in medieval life, namely the human challenge to understand God. To Saint **Anselm** (1033–1109), “God is radically other, dwelling in ‘light inaccessible,’ eluding our senses and our understanding alike” (Clayton 1998; Classen 2002, xli). Similarly, it has been argued that **Beowulf**’s encounters with **Grendel** and Grendel’s mother in the cave under the sea, **Gawain**’s journey confronting his sense of self in the wood, or **Dante**’s meeting with death in *The Divine Comedy* while in the “midway journey of life” can all be seen as necessary and positive ways of confronting the divine other. In a related way, attempts to face up to death might have led to encounters with revenants, that is, the ghosts who inhabited regions beyond the known world, but returned to help the living. Aline Hornaday argues, “that sometimes unwelcome and intrusive third [party] was an ideal self which both the living percipient and the ‘undead’ ghost needed to internalize in order to enter the heavenly world, the ‘celestial fatherland’ as **Gregory the Great** calls it” (Hornaday 2002, 71). Thus, overall, as observed by Charles Dahlberg, “unlikeness is a part of likeness, that unlikeness exists only as a consequence of man’s likeness to God” (quoted in Classen 2002, xli; Dahlberg 1988). The later medieval mystics, such as **Meister Eckhart** (ca. 1260–1329) and **Mechthild von Magdeburg** (ca. 1208–1282/1297), pursued this quest to the ultimate, believing and hoping, as Classen states in his prelude to **Anselm**’s remark above: “To witness God would indeed be to witness the final otherness” (Classen 2002, xli).

Other recent scholarship has turned even more attention to exploring how modern analysis of the loss of psychological form leading to a bifurcated reaction of repulsion and attraction might better enable an understanding of the medieval confrontation with God during the coming of the **Last Days**. David Williams relates, for example, that “The loss of identity of the self is met with abhorrence, for it betokens an assault not only upon the individual being that is the self but on the very possibility of Being” (Williams 1996, 79). As Williams develops the analysis, the deforming of self is both a psychological and a religious question “since it is an experience that extends beyond the dimensions of psyche to encounter those of metaphysics.” Furthermore, he states that “as personal form structures the understanding of the self and makes possible the various rapports between self and other, it is also that form that permits and limits the relation of the self and God” (Williams, 1996, 79).

To provide a specific medieval example, Williams calls attention to the language of the mystics, such as **St. Catherine of Siena** (ca. 1347–1380), who speak of being permeated by God

or of their divine ravishing and absorption into God, thus emphasizing the “disappearance of self into the Godhead, not in the pantheistic sense of diluting God into the forces of nature, but rather in the erotic sense of union in which lovers become as one” (Williams 1996, 81). Especially in confrontations with sin and guilt, and the prospect of the [Last Judgment](#), Williams point out that “in the roles of penitent, petitioner, and seeker, the devout are provided with discourses in which God is cast as the ultimate Other: the Just God who punishes, the Merciful God who answers our prayers, the Hidden God who is the object of a life-long search” (Williams 119, 81). To conclude this part, we again turn to [Catherine of Siena](#), where we find these words about her confrontation with God in her meditation on [The Cell of Self Knowledge](#): “Daughter, do you not know who you are and who I am? . . . You are she that is not, and I am he who is” (St. Catherine 1981, 29; Williams 1996, 81).

Modern scholarship sampled above regarding the most dominant and more obvious ways the medieval world confronted the foreign does not reveal or exhaust the totality of the forms of foreignness. More of those will be discussed below as we focus on medieval fears. But to review briefly before we move on to discuss “fear” in some detail, the foreign could be a military opponent such as the pagan barbarians, whether they be [Celts](#), [Goths](#), [Vikings](#), [Magyars](#), [Tartars](#); or non-Christian monotheists such as the Muslims and Jews; or those abandoning their Christian faith for heresy; or the mythical and mystical others in the worlds of theologians and poets. The “other” might also be someone close by who was not of the same clan, or not of the same guild, or women who did not hold equal status with men, or peasants and merchants who could not rise to become lords or knights. In response to both the concrete foreign others and the symbolic, the medieval world was ambivalent and ambiguous; resulting in encounters which resulted in “violent and vitriolic forms of hostility, rejection and fear, and they can also trigger a quest for self-analysis, possibly producing tolerant attitudes” (Classen 2002, xlii; 226–48; Nederman 2002; Patschovsky and Zimmermann, ed., 1998; Dinzelbacher 1996). Unfortunately, much of the perception of the foreign in the Middle Ages, as in the modern world, was based on a fear of the unknown. We now turn attention to a review of some of the ways in which the medieval world experienced and dealt with fear.

D. Fear in the Middle Ages

In the 1970s, as Jean Delumeau undertook the writing of *La Peur en Occident (XIVe–XVIIIe siècles)*, he reminded his readers that fear is natural, and at the same time he wondered why such a history had not been written before. He concluded that this had something do with the way humans juxtapose fear and cowardice, or courage and rashness. He also pointed to the work of Delpierre, who had insightfully noted that the word “fear” is “charged with so much shame” (Delpierre 1974, 7; Delumeau 1978, 3). Similarly in the medieval world as portrayed in the romance literature and the *chansons de geste*, the archetypal knight in shining armor is portrayed as “without fear if not always without reproach,” and is contrasted sharply with the masses who

are reputedly without courage (Delumeau 1978, 4). Dorsey Armstrong more recently has examined the work of **Malory** (ca. 1405–1471), who in his tale of **Sir Lancelot** “stresses preoccupation with a knight’s identity as male,” and contends that the knight, out of fear of a loss of identity, seeks violent adventures in order to maintain his male identity (Armstrong 2002; Scott and Kosso, ed. 2002, xxxiv; Crane 1197). Delumeau also reminded us that the poet **Virgil**, who was a favorite among medieval readers, wrote that “Fear is proof of a lowly birth” (Delumeau 1978, 4, quoting from *Enéide*, IV, 13).

Tracing these ancient world traditions regarding fear as an introduction to *Fear and its Representations in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Cynthia Kosso lists several ways that fear was significant to the Greeks and the Romans (Scott and Kosso, ed., 2002). Fear of losing power, for example, because it led to the shame of dishonor (*infamia*). Fear of death was linked to their fear of the gods; and they also feared the “pollution” of their religion by less powerful gods or new gods that were “foreign” (Scott and Kosso 2002, xviii; Bailey 1971; Gilmore, ed., 1987; Barton, 2001).

Since the new religion of Christianity was eclectic in nature and not far from its pagan roots, these ideas carried forward and built into new fears in medieval society, such as fear of sin that might incur the wrath of the one God (Delumeau 1990). Fear of women and fear of sex with women was added to the list of everyday fears as fear became embraced in many different forms. Fear of the sea began with the Greeks and Romans, and persisted thereafter, as did fear of divination and sorcery. One could add somewhat less rational fears, such as fear of the night, continued in the medieval world alongside the more rational fears of famine, pestilence, and war. Diffusion of fear was made possible through rumor mongering, as well as by the sermon on a Sunday (Delumeau 1990). Fear was an emotion that needed to be cultivated, explored or exploited.

Fear in the Middle Ages was potent; it could teach lessons that enhanced faith; or, it could motivate cultural and political changes. Fear played a significant role in the **Inquisition** and its associated use of torture, or in the use of **excommunication** to control the faithful (Peters 1988 and 1996; Vodola 1996). As David Scruton’s collection of studies in *Sociophobics: the Anthropology of Fear* (Scruton 1986) provides examples across all cultures, the experience of fear is physiological (within the body), physical (e.g., external threats to the body), and social (i.e., anxieties develop over social interactions, leading to both fear of and fear for others) (Scott and Kosso 2002, xii). Evidence of social fear-building in medieval society is found in the way the Christian belief system excluded others (Jews, Saracens, heretics, and “witches”), and built images of them that led to fear of individuals who were so labeled (Kors and Peters, ed., 1972; Delumeau 1990). As Kosso continues in her introduction, other medieval fears included fear of eternal damnation and pain in hell; fear of sexual or social deviants, including homosexuals, prostitutes and gypsies; and the penultimate fears of the devil, death, and God. Of course Christians, with these fears in mind, would not want to confront them directly, which often meant they feared going to confession where they had to confront their own sins and the penance these might incur (Scott and Kosso 2002, xiv–xxvi; Duggan 1984).

In the medieval world, fear was used in religious writings or even the secular medieval romances to promote repentance or to “overcome spiritual paralysis,” and, of course, to coerce, control and manipulate others (Lander 1971). Fear was an issue of masculinity in the chivalric romances (Kaeuper 1999; Armstrong 2002; cf. Crane 1997). For **Thomas Aquinas** (ca. 1225–1274), fear was something to be embraced; it could be a natural and instinctive reaction to deal with things that might corrupt the human world, or it could be non-natural as a reflection of man’s laziness or shame or anxiety. Fear could be disabling also, especially if sermons in response to natural disaster or religious wars fed on pessimism to breed fear and to bully parishioners (Delumeau 1990). Because man was rational, **Thomas** thought that human fears should be regarded as significant; as when fear represented an intuitive shrinking by man from a future evil, such as in the fear of hell (Scott and Kosso 2002, xxiii–xxv; Taylor 1999; Bernstein 2000; Loughlin 2002).

Though only somewhat less true today, the medieval world was regularly threatened by a number of physical dangers, such as the severity of the environment, which the literary metaphor of the deep, dark woods so often captured (Semmler 1991). Also, European society was periodically challenged by outside invaders—from the Germanic tribes of the fifth and sixth centuries to the Vikings of the eighth and ninth, to the Mongols of the thirteenth who struck fear into the hearts of countless numbers from Russia to England, and signaled to many the end of the physical world itself (Strickland 2003, 192–206; Jackson 2005; Morgan 2007; Connell 1973; Saunders 1969, 1971; Bezzola 1969; Turnbull 1980). At a more local level, the peasants and clerical populace often had to fear the wrath of the local lords who might ravage their lands, steal their corps, or even kill them as the knights fought one another in the midst of a growing population beginning the late tenth century. Others, such as pirates, highway robbers, or thieves who represented threats to personal property, security, and even life, had to be feared. One needed, as well, to fear the effects of famine and disease which truly threatened survival on a regular basis. Yet, medieval manuscripts and elements of church architecture are filled with grotesque images, gargoyles, and other forms of fantastic creatures to engender fears that do not seem so related to the actual physical dangers. In the last twenty years, the research of Ruth Mellinkoff and Dolores Frese, among others, has explored more deeply how “these images were not simply fantastic rations, but often reflected . . . deep seated fears and concrete existential problems which medieval people could not solve, wherefore the artists . . . resorted to forms of psychological substitution via illustrations, sculptures, and literary texts when dealing with outsiders, namely members of religious, ethnic, racial, and gender minorities” (Mellinkoff 1993; Frese 1991; Camille 1989; J. J. Cohen 1994, 1999). monster.

There is not space herein to offer greater details on all the fears experience in the medieval world, but we will examine a few that more clearly relate to perhaps the more prominent medieval confrontations with the “other” (for broad looks at the “other” in the arts and literature, see, for example, Ramey 2008; Kinoshita 2006; Strickland 2003; Nederman 2002; Devise and Mollat 2010; J. J. Cohen 2000a; Rider 2000; Goodich 1998; Lionarons 1998; Kruger

1997; Dinzelbacher 1996; Uebel 1996, 2002; Williams 1996; Classen 1993; Stow 1992; Friedman 1983; Camille 1989, 1992).

D. 1. Fear of the Monster in the Middle Ages

As the medieval world confronted the multifaceted foreigner, various forms of monster were created and evolved as symbols evoking fear. For example, the figure of the **dwarf** in the early Middle Ages was depicted as representing an advanced underground world to be feared. By the late Middle Ages it had become more concretely “a dangerous, horrid, mean-spirited, and evil being which deserved to be eliminated” (Classen 2002, xxiii; 1999; Habicht 2010; see also the article on dwarves in this *Handbook* by Werner Schäfke). Jews and Arabs (**Saracens**) were feared and subsequently demonized into monsters. As well, those who were perceived as or looked different were often depicted as objects of fear. Thus, those of a different skin color, particularly black, and those with terminal diseases or physical deformities (e.g., lepers), or different sexual preferences, or of a lower social class were more and more portrayed as evil and marginalized in society, or worse. Whereas in the ancient world monsters had been seen as harbingers of ill-doing and a disruption of the natural order of things, in the Christian era, monsters were a sign of God’s power and a part of his plan. On a positive note, for example, **Augustine** said that God would even restore monstrous men to perfect form at the Resurrection. But most of the medieval world more agreed with Bishop **Patrick** of Ireland who said that the monstrous races were given by God; yes, but as “Signs of future ill/that He might frighten those whom He willed to see them”(Friedman 1981, 109; Jackson 2001). Of course there were exceptions to seeing all monsters and foreigners as evil, such as witnessed in the writings of **Wolfram von Eschenbach** (1170–1220) in his *Willehalm* and *Parzival* or in the text of his lesser-known contemporary **Wirnt van Gravenberg**’s *Wigalois* (ca. 1210–1220) where the people of “difference” were better treated. There were even “good monsters” (Classen 1997). However, for the most part, and regardless of one’s status in medieval society, fear played a significant role in daily life and shaped the images of the other in art and literature (Classen 2002, xxiii–xxv; 1993; Str ath 2000; Goss and Bornstein, ed., 1986; Maksymiuk 1992; Mellinkoff 1993, 229; J. J. Cohen 1994).

Examination of medieval art and architecture is perhaps most revealing of the ways the medieval world confronted its fears. It was natural for the inhabitants of that world to be ambiguous because they were confronted with a theology that looked forward to the next world and had contempt for the nature of the world they physically inhabited in this life. This view came from the very top of the religious establishment. **Pope Innocent III** (1160–1216; r. 1198–1216), who was very active in dealing with worldly matters, in his work entitled *De Contemptu Mundi, sive de miseria conditionis humanae* wrote that: “Man is born for work, for suffering, for fear—and what is worse—for death” (Delumeau 1990). This conflict of holding out a hope for a better next life, while living a miserable life on earth, was reflected in many artistic ways. For example, artists throughout the Middle Ages, depicted monsters in abnormal physical forms

while performing “uncivilized” activities. From the twelfth century onward, demons “by contrast transcend the realms of sin and barbarity to embody concepts more abstract . . . That is, demons represent an attempt to visualize the nature of evil itself” (Strickland 2003, 61; cf. Marx 1995, 5). Of course, one must fear embracing evil, for it threatens achievement of the good life in the next world. Thus, intentionally and ironically, devils were created with features from “all of God’s creatures,” and shaped into a more abhorrent and “hideous hodgepodge,” often “sporting horns, a tail, shaggy hair, wings, goat or bird legs, and hooves, paws, or claws.” Human parts were usually “distorted, with long, hooked noses and ugly grimaces, and unnatural coloring, usually dark” (Strickland 2003, 61–62; see also Erich 1931). After the eleventh century, the most common characteristic of the Devil was horns, an ancient symbol of power, with the next two most common being the tail and wings (Strickland 2003, 62).

Fear was further promoted by the instruments of torture depicted as being carried by the devils, namely tridents, pitchforks, and flesh hooks, all of which were common agricultural implements then turned against both the peasant laboring man and his master to torment them in hell as they were made to fear the wrath of the devil (on torture in general, see Peters 1996). One also often sees devils portrayed with cat-o-nine-tails-style whips or ladles pouring molten lead down the throats of the damned, as shown in illuminated manuscripts such as the *Guthlac Roll* (ca. 1210) or the later *Livre de la Vigne de Nostre Seigneur* (ca. 1450–1470) (Palmer 1992; also, Mellinkoff 1970; and, manuscripts illustrated in Strickland 2003, 62–63).

The use of wings to depict devils likely caused some confusion among viewers of various representations because wings were normally used to designate positive Christian figures such as the angels or saints. However, in the depictions of devils, they usually have wings in the wrong places, as in the example of the Devil who is shown tempting Christ in a stained-glass image from *Troyes Cathedral* (ca. 1170–1180; image in Victoria and Albert Museum, London), where the wings “sprout not from the conventional angelic location of between the shoulder blades, but perversely from the wrists, ankles, and backside.” As Strickland observes, such portrayals convey “demonic perversity . . . using an attribute which in other contexts has positive connotations in order to underscore what demons are *not*” (emphasis hers, Strickland 2003, 63–64, with black and white image of the stained glass panel on 64).

Similar to the images of the Monstrous Races, the devil and other demons are seen nude or minimally clothed in order to represent them as barbarous, and to better highlight their physical deformities, as well as to indicate sin. Naked images of Adam and Eve were the prototype of this form of representation, but other generic representations of sinners in general followed. One can see such an example of a naked sinner who is surrounded by fearful bulls in an illuminated initial D for Psalm 21 in a twelfth century Psalter from St. Albans (*Albani Psalter*) (Strickland 2003, 64; Dodwell, Pächt, and Wormald 1960; Klingender 1971). Naked images are used by the artists to contrast them with the virtuous, as is the case in the *Last Judgment tympanum* at *Autun*. In one of the details, an angel figure is graceful, with delicate features and a serene expression; the body is mostly hidden by long robes. Opposite are the demons whose bodies are completely naked, even to the point of muscle and ribs exposed; they

are grotesquely presented with angled postures that imply “violent and erratic movements,” with large heads and open mouths that accentuate “gleeful, sadistic expressions.” Even the soul of the damned in this scene is represented in demonic fashion (Strickland 2003, 72–73, with illustration on 69). Modern research by Barbara Palmer and others indicates that throughout the Middle Ages the iconography of angels remained consistent, but that of the devil was more variable. Strickland comments that, “This suggests that evil held a greater fascination than good, or perhaps that the negative incentive of nightmarish and terrifying images was the most effective in encouraging the Christian to stay on the proper moral path” (Strickland 2003, 73; see also Palmer 1992, 20; Caciola 2003).

D. 2. Fear of the Saracens and the Jews

As the medieval world progressed beyond the year 1000 and began to settle down into a pattern of reurbanization and population growth, there was increasing interaction between Christians, Jews and Muslims. This created an opportunity for what the research of David Scruton and others has characterized as “sociophobias,” or, the “study of human fears as they occur and are experienced in the context of the socio-cultural systems humans have created” (Scruton 1986, 9). Thus, “Fears are situational,” and fear is a method “to symbolize and to feel in order to cope with problems that arise from living” (Scruton 1986, 40). This concept seems applicable to the way Christians reacted to both the Jews and the Saracens, and the similarities of the response seem to make the “other” interchangeable as Christians responded in the crusade era in particular.

Despite the rather euphoric response of **Fulcher of Chartres** (ca. 1059–1127) to what he observed of the Crusader Kingdom immediately following the success of the **First Crusade**, namely, “I pray and reflect in our time how God has transformed the Occident into the Orient. . . . He who was a Roman or a Frank has in this land been made into a **Galilean**, or a **Palestinian** [sic],” (quoted in Menache 2009, 67; see also Hagenmeyer 1913; Peters 1971; Dressler 1995; Morris 83), the analysis of Sophia Menache has illustrated how unique he was. Even **Fulcher’s** emotional outburst is better seen in her words as reflecting “the expectations and perhaps also some of the compensation mechanisms that gradually developed among the Latin settlers” (Menache 2009, 68). The Christian response to the Saracen quickly turned more to fear. Even in **Fulcher’s** own lifetime the tide was running against the Christian settlers, who lost in the **Battle of the Field of Blood** in 1119, which likely heightened a growing sense of alarm that accelerated after the Christian defeat in the **Second Crusade** that occurred after the fall of **Edessa** in 1144.

In the crusading culture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the hatred of the Jews and Muslims was often combined. At the cathedral of **Chartres**, for example, the Royal Portal contains in its iconography, especially the depiction of the **Massacre of the Innocents**, “anomalies which can be read as coded references to Jewish guilt and Muslim vice,” which are meant to inspire knights to become crusaders (Dressler 1995, 191; see also 200–03). The **Massacre** became a symbol linking Jews and Muslims around the city of Jerusalem as a

destination for the crusaders. As the Roman Emperor **Titus** (ca. 41–81) captured the Jewish Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the account of Josephus reported that a wealthy female resident killed, roasted, and fed her own son to the Roman soldiers to save herself. This horrible image terrorized the medieval imagination, and it was recreated in numerous manuscripts. Subsequent Christian interpretation of those events saw the Roman victory as God’s judgment against the Jews, and as fulfillment of **Christ’s** prophecy of Jerusalem’s fall as told in **Luke** 19:40–44 and **Luke** 21:20ff. This led to ongoing anti-Jewish polemic dating from **Eusebius of Caesarea** (ca. 260–339) forward to various Christian texts and images of the twelfth century when Jerusalem became a Muslim city (Dressler 1995, 204–07; see also Schreckenberger 1996; Schreckenberger and Schubert, ed., 1992).

The north embrasure of the Royal Portal at **Chartres** includes sculptures of three figures which, according to the interpretation of Dressler, “allude to Muslim depravity and evoke Christian virtue” and play upon Christian anxiety over alleged Muslim sexual license and religious idolatry (Dressler 1995, 207). As elaborated in related Christian polemic, from that of **John of Damascus** (676–749) to **William of Tripoli** (fl. late thirteenth century) and **Riccoldo of Monte Croce** (1242–1320), even though the latter were encouraging missionary work among the Muslims, the attack of Muhammad’s pagan childhood, as well as his sensuality did not let up. Also, in the more popular crusader chronicles and epics, “Muslims emerge as violent, sensual and idolatrous” (Dressler 1995, 207–08). It was not difficult for Christians to project from the leader to the followers, and thus a blanket condemnation and fear of “Saracen depravity” followed, and was played out in the great iconographic attention given to the battle of the vices (Muslim and Jewish) against the virtues (Christian) (Dressler 1995, 208–17).

Among the more vitriolic attempts to raise crusaders in the era of **Innocent III** was presented by **Jacques de Vitry** (ca. 1160/1170–1240), who left us with a rather unique characterization of the **Saracens**. In order to justify their “extermination,” Jacques proclaimed the **Saracens** as heretics, who were “poisonous limbs” and “decayed flesh” that threatened the health of the entire Christian body. This was a powerful way to combine the Christian fear of both heresy and disease by planting the seed of fear in the minds of Christians that **Saracen** heresy was a disease which threatened to spread its “poison and decay” unless it were eradicated (Menache 2009, 74; see also Moore 1976).

Anti-Jewish art of the Middle Ages may appear to some moderns as more of theoretical propaganda by intellectuals and artists, but the work of Debra Strickland provides evidence that it was so widespread “that it is safe to assume that everyone—religious, lay, old, young, male, female, Christian and Jew—would have been familiar with and understood the meanings of all the types of images,” and therefore, “such imagery must be recognized as powerful propaganda” with “devastating effects on the Jewish populace, from civic persecution to mass murder, and ultimately, physical expulsion” (Strickland 2003, 105). And indeed, there were expulsions of the Jews from England in 1290; France in 1306, 1322, and 1394; Spain in 1492; as well as from numerous German principalities in the early fifteenth century and even from southern Italy as late as 1541. Thus, it does not seem to have made a difference that there was a history of cross-

fertilization of cultures as in Spain or southern Italy; the fear of the corruption or contamination by the Jews rose to a point of violent action against them.

The artistic portrayals or the anti-Jewish sermons most often heard by most Christians reveal numerous aspects of the Christian fear. The Jews were accused of numerous “crimes,” especially avarice and usury, which was one of the justifications offered for the massacre of the Jews at York. Sexual intercourse with a Jew was deemed a “crime” as well as mortal sin. The souls of Jews were alleged to be the “dwelling places of demons,” or at least, the Jews were “friends of the devil” (Strickland 2003, 122–30). They were portrayed as monsters, such as in the [Westminster Abbey Bestiary](#) (ca. 1275–1300) showing a three-faced monster wearing a bright orange Phrygian hat, and a [Sciopod](#) wearing a similar orange hat as well (Strickland 2003, 134). Often the Jews were accused of desecrating the hosts of the Eucharistic rite, and as the “sociophobia” of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries intensified, Jews were accused of ritual torture and the murder of Christian boys, which was added to the charge of killing [Christ](#) himself. So in the marginalia of illuminated manuscripts, more and more one could find images featuring the Jews as physically deformed monsters, evil torturers, or even as non-humans, such as in the [Fetternear Banner](#), where Jews are shown as heads only, and bearing instruments of torture (Strickland 2003, 108; also see ch. 3 *passim*). Even those Jews who actually decided to convert to Christianity under the pressure could not escape the Christian fear of the Jews. “Once a Jew, always a Jew . . .” was the underlying suspicion that led Christians to continue to express their hatred toward Jews at large; hatred and violence often resulted from that fear. The counterpart to that fear was the one that Christians would convert to Judaism. Thus, the contamination by the Jews could result in “spiritual death” for Christians. In the summation of Strickland, what Christians imagined about the Jews represented “everything medieval Christians feared and doubted about their own religion” (Strickland 2003, 155; Stacey 1992).

The more recent work of Anthony Bale on *Feeling Persecuted: Christians, Jews and Images of Violence in the Middle Ages* (Bale 2010) has opened up a wider realm of possible ways to examine medieval literary and artistic images of the imagined Jewish aggression toward Christians in the age of fear. Specifically, he explored images expressing Jewish aggression against Christ, Mary, the Eucharist, and Christian children in order to try to understand how those operated within the medieval mind. He speculates that Christians used those images, particularly in the late Middle Ages that focused on the way the Jews were portrayed in the pictures of the suffering of Christ, to “help Christians to identify emotionally with the fear and agony of being persecuted and tormented to death. In these images Jews were deliberately depicted as depraved and grotesque beings enacting violence against Christ, ridiculing Mary, and attacking Christians Reliving the pain of those . . . who had been persecuted by Jews . . . was meant to encourage introspection and prayer . . . negative imagery of Jews was used to serve Christian devotional purposes” (Abulafia 2012, 180, review of Bale’s work).

What one can say about the specific fears of Jews applied with equal force regarding the [Saracens](#) in medieval culture. The fear of Muslim contamination appears in articles of various Church councils and was even codified in canon law. The [Council of Nablus](#) in 1120, for

example, mandated harsh penalties against Latin men who might have sex with Muslim women, and Gratian's *Decretum* (1140) even set the penalty for living in Muslim households as excommunication. The distinguishing dress for the "others" mandated in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 was designed to prevent Christians from having sexual contact with either Jews or Muslims (Strickland 2003, 288, n. 92). This fear is represented in various iconography as well. In a reliquary, the *Chasse of Saint Valerie* from Limoges (ca. 1175–1185), the martyrdom of Saint Valerie (legendary saint of Roman period) is depicted. Beside her there is a Saracen executioner, who is wearing a distinctive headgear that was a stereotypical portrayal of the Saracen in medieval art. Strickland suggests that this juxtaposition of the two figures, male Saracen and female Christian saint, "may have had resonance for viewers in light of Christian fears of Muslim 'contamination' (Strickland 2003, 174; see also Hahn 1999; Uebel 1996).

Even traditional crimes or roles of Jews were apportioned to Saracens, such as the Saracen participating in the execution of Christ himself. As late as the fifteenth century, perhaps more influenced by the Turks, a stained glass image from Cologne portrays a Saracen with scimitar and turban among those accompanying Christ as he bears his cross on the way to death (Strickland 2003, 177). Illustrations in the *Bible moralisée* (1220s) substitute Saracens for Philistines in the battle between the Israelites and the Philistines (I Kings 5:1–2) that brought about the theft of the Ark of the Covenant. The images in the illustrations portray the Saracens as "grimacing, misshapen demons" bearing "the skin colors of infamy: red, yellow, and black" (Strickland 2003, 171–72). The use of dark color skin to stereotype the Saracen made it sometimes difficult to separate the Muslim from the Ethiopian, but most often illustrators also used other attributes, such as headgear and the scimitar, to distinguish the Muslim. For Strickland the appearance of Saracen/Ethiopian "hybrids" indicates the "extent to which a common pejorative visual vocabulary is applied across different enemy types [demons, Jews, Ethiopians and Saracens]" (Strickland 2003, 173; 169). In the *chansons de geste*, however, Saracens specifically are variously characterized as "people of the devil, enemies of God, people of Satan, sons of Satan, sons of the devil, and diabolical beings" (Strickland, 2003, 169). A chronicle of the Third Crusade emphasized blackness in connecting the Saracens to the devil in an "almost genetic" way by describing the enemy other as follows: "Among the opponents was a fiendish race, forceful and relentless, deformed by nature and unlike other living beings, black in color, of enormous stature and inhuman savageness" (Strickland 2003, 169, emphasis mine; see also 173; 179–81).

Just as the Jews had been, the Saracens were frequently depicted as idolaters, which meant for Christians that both were to be feared since idolatry meant they both had allegiance to the devil. Illustrations of the Flight into Egypt that show idols falling off of pedestals as the Holy Family arrives, for example, are interpreted as showing "a sign of Saracen idolatry owing to the fact that the crusades of the first half of this century [thirteenth] were directed against the Ayyubid sultans of Egypt" (Strickland 2003, 168; Camille 1989, 135). Whereas the Jews were seen as followers of the devil, the Saracens were more likely to be identified as actual demons. Early in the Spanish encounter with Muslims, *Eulogius of Cordoba* (ca. 819–859) feared

Muhammad as the “angel of Satan,” and “precursor of Antichrist,” and at the time of Urban II’s call to the First Crusade, Fulcher of Chartres warned of the Saracens, whom he stated were a race enslaved by demons (Strickland 2003, 169).

Various images of the Muslim warrior meant to invoke fear persisted into the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries despite the long-standing actual contact with the people and the culture of the followers of Islam. Of many examples cited by Strickland, the Luttrell Psalter (ca. 1320–1330) provides an illustration of a text of Psalms wherein a Saracen is juxtaposed with a “foreigner,” and a “naked, hairy, Ethiopian Wild Man, aliens three if not downright barbarians.” Then in the fifteenth century we find a tapestry likely produced in Strasbourg, which depicts a castle occupied by “comparatively small Saracens” being besieged by “giant Wild Folk.” The Saracens are all dark-skinned, and interpreted to be the main subject of the scene, as well as the personification of evil, or at least the scene itself as “one wild, barbaric type engaged in combat with another” (Strickland 2003, 183). In the case of the fifteenth century, it is likely that the scene reflects the latest fear of invasion and directed toward those Christians who might have to take up the fight against the latest Muslim assault by the Ottoman Turks. Continuing this analysis, Strickland further concludes that, “As was the case in images of Jews, it is really just a short step from this type of fanciful, wild, Saracen portrayal to one that pictures the Muslim as wholly monstrous, such as the Saracen gryllus on the Ripon misericord (fifteenth century) of the spies returning from Canaan” (Strickland 2003, 184, with a picture of the Ripon gryllus on 57). A fifteenth-century carving on the end of a pew shows a hairy Wild Man clad in only loin cloth, but brandishing a scimitar as if to attack the incoming worshippers. Other such portrayals exist in the margins of the earlier Oscott Psalter (ca 1250–1300), wherein we also find numerous pejorative images of the Jews in the Passion illustrations. Apparently, in the evolution of the ongoing relationship between Christians, Jews and Saracens in the later Middle Ages, Christian patrons and viewers of such art, as they went to worship, were even reminded to view the Muslim and the Jew as dangerous enemies to be feared (Strickland 2003, 184, with a picture of the Saracen bench-end).

D. 3. Fear and the Color Black

The use of the dark to portray evil was accentuated in the evolution of the color black to depict both imaginary demons and real people in the art of the medieval world. Early portraits of the devil as a featureless, black imp were probably based on the work of the Pseudo-Dionysius (late 5th–early 6th century) among others that suggested that the devil is dark and possesses no existence (like the “black hole” of modern physics). The ninth-century Book of Kells exhibits “a lanky, sooty imp standing in profile beside the temple in the image of Christ’s temptation” (Strickland 2003, 80). However, these vague images were later replaced by either bestial demons, such as those described above, or by a human, namely the Ethiopian. Although most Europeans had never seen an Ethiopian (nor would they), artistic creativity “manipulated the idea

of ‘black’ by transforming the image of the Devil from a black *void* to a black *man*” (Strickland 2003, 81; emphasis hers).

This interchangeability of demons and Ethiopians is evident in such illustrated manuscripts as the twelfth-century *Canterbury Psalter* which portrays Christ healing some demoniacs (Matt. 8:28–32), who are depicted as very black Ethiopians in loin cloths, and even the demons being driven out by Christ are small, black, winged Ethiopians, thus “creating a strong visual identification between Ethiopians, demons and evil” (Strickland 2003, 81, illustration on p. 80) The color black became a defining feature of the Ethiopian figure in the art of the Middle Ages, though other dark colors such as brown, dark blue, purple or dark green were used, especially when the artist wanted to more fully expose other stereotyped facial features (e.g., large eyes, flat noses, everted lips). Thus, “Black,” “Ethiopian” and the “Devil” became synonymous, and in the late medieval theater, demons “conventionally wore black faces, and in literature and folklore, the Devil had titles such as ‘Black Knight,’ ‘Black Jehovah,’ ‘Black Man,’ and ‘Black Ethiopian.’” No color can be said to have carried a clear, consistent, or absolute meaning in medieval iconography, but the color black was most often interpreted negatively as spiritual darkness, vice, and sin by the Christian world (Strickland 2003, 83–84; Devise 1979, vol. 2, pt. 1, 51; Erich 1931, 89–90).

D. 4. Fear of the Tartars

Though most Europeans did not encounter the Ethiopian, many were confronted by the “Tartars” whose invasion of eastern Europe in 1241 caused panic and fear that reached all the way to England, and led the fishermen of the North Sea to cease their activity lest their lands be overrun next. The sudden eruption of this new *fremde* caused a subsequent series of Western reactions, not the least of which was fear (Schmieder 1994; Jackson 2005; Ruotsala 2001; Bezzola 1974; Connell 1973). The name of “Tartar” for these Mongol-led forces was derived from the reports of their strategy of indiscriminate slaughter of the enemies as they advanced toward Vienna, which led the witnesses to associate them with the region of Biblical *tartarus*, the infernal region of Hell, wherein the demons lived. Matthew Paris (ca. 1200–1259), the English chronicler of St. Albans, graphically illustrated his chronicle entry for 1243 with a portrait depicting the Tartars as cannibals (illustration in Strickland 2003, 192, and, in Claster 2009, 242; see also Guzman 1991; Lewis 1987; Saunders 1969; Ruotsala 2001). A letter of Ivo of Narbonne enclosed in Matthew’s *Chronica majora* provides a description of the invaders as “dog-headed cannibals—Anthropophagi” who raped the Virgins, and whose chiefs were described as having such physiological features as “short, distorted noses,” “teeth long and few,” and “eyes shifty and black” (Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Luard, vol. 4, 273, 275, trans. Giles, vol. I, 469–70, 471; in Strickland 2003, 193; Saunders 1969).

The widespread fear and threat of total disaster for the West led Pope Gregory IX to attempt unsuccessfully to raise a crusade against the Tartars early in 1241. At the same time, he

sent an emissary to the **Mongol** camp in China. **John of Plano Carpini** (1182–1252) was so appalled that he called the **Tartars** in effect, “tricky devils,” which must be resisted with utmost force or be slaughtered by them (*History of the Mongols*, in Dawson 1955, 45–46; see also Strickland 2003, 198). By late 1241, however, as the **Mongols** retreated from **Vienna** and settled in **Russia** and the Near East, the fear lessened. In fact, missionaries were sent in the hope of converting the **Mongols** to Christianity, or at least enlisting them as allies in the fight against the **Saracens** in the **Holy Land**. Even though the effort to understand who they were and their purpose continued, most often the **Tartars** were understood as descendants of the peoples of **Gog and Magog** as described in Scripture (Connell 1973). A mysterious letter from a certain **Prester John**, who was perceived as Christian ruler in the “East” who might be an ally, and envoys to the popes from the **Mongols**, as well as first-hand reports from individuals such as **Riccardo of Monte Cruce** (ca. 1243–1320) kept hopes alive well into the early fourteenth century (Jackson 2005).

In its response to the **Tartars**, we see the ambiguity of the Western reaction to the foreigner from the farthest reaches of the East. Though cast as mythical monsters, these were nonetheless a real people who represented a real threat to safety. Well after the initial horror, the nervousness about a possible invasion continued into the fifteenth century. For example, in the *Livre des merveilles* (*Book of Marvels*) presented to the **Duke of Berry** in 1413 there is an image of gigantic warriors passing through mountains bursting through to devastate the countryside. The **Tartars** are often portrayed in later iconography within the tradition of the **Monstrous Races**, rather than as heretics as were the Jews and **Saracens**, because of their appearance and because of a lack of knowledge of what the **Mongols** really believed and thought. In this sense they were closer to monsters, and Christian missionaries often reported seeing other monsters—**Sciopodes**, **Dogheads**, **Apple-Sniffer/Straw Drinker** hybrids, and other **Wild Folk**—in the lands of the **Tartars**. Thus, the **Tartars** moved into the literature of the exotic and the marvelous. Both the *Travels* of **Marco Polo** (1254–1324) and **John of Mandeville** (ca. 1300?–ca. 1383?), one based on real experience, the other entirely fictitious, were much more favorable in their impressions of the **Mongols**, even to the point of admiration such as we witness in the account of **Marco Polo** (Strickland 2003, 198–209; Uebel 2005; Fleck 2000; *Mandeville’s Travels* 1953; Olschki 1960; Larner 1999).

Recent research on the question of barbaric practices, especially **cannibalism**, among the **Mongols** has developed new insights into the Western reaction in the Middle Ages. Anthropologists and historians alike have begun to think more about **cannibalism** in the context of colonization, and are wondering whether “**cannibalism**” was a product of the “European imagination, a tool of Empire with its origin in the disturbed human psyche” (Hulme 1998), or simply a handy derogatory ethnic stereotype, rather than an observation and reflection on an actual practice (Guzman 1991; Lindenbaum 2004; Daston and Park 2001; Kilgour 1990, 2001). With a greater focus on interdisciplinary research and a response to Western Orientalism (Said 1978), those of the Orient might also argue, what about the alleged Frankish **cannibalism** of the **Saracens** in the siege of **Antioch** as reported by the Western chronicler **Raymond d’Aguiliers** (fl.

late 11th century). His story of crusader cannibalism appears also in the Arabic chronicles of [Ibn al-Qalanisi](#) (ca. 1070–1160), author of a chronicle of [Damascus](#); and in the works of [Ibn Al-Athir](#) (1160–1233), a [Kurd](#) historian who lived in [Aleppo](#) and [Damascus](#); and, [Kemal al-Din](#) (1192–1262), a historian at [Aleppo](#) trusted for his knowledge of the [Assassins](#), but who probably used [al-Qalanisi](#) for his narration of crusade period events (Heng 2003, 1998).

Rumors of this forbidden act in the West must have caused a horrific reaction. The crusaders had been charged to eliminate the pollution of the holy places by the [Saracen](#), not to soil those places themselves, even if there was a terrible famine at the time that may have led to an act of desperation for survival. Geraldine Heng has provided greater context in pointing out that a Christian at this time lived in a culture “in which eating was overlaid with sacramental, ritual, and symbolic significance. . . . The apotheosis of that culture turned, of course, upon the symbolic eating of sacramental food—a sacred cannibalism . . .—the shared experience of which created and bound the identity of the individual Christian to a symbolic community that crossed divisions of country, region, ethnicity, family, tribe, caste and race” (Heng 2003, 26). In contrast to the eating of God, which in Christian doctrine placed one on the path to divinity, the eating of any “unclean other body” led Christians to regard cannibalism with a fundamentally disproportionate horror” (Tannahill 1996, 32; Heng 2003, 27; Kilgour 1990). As Caroline Bynum concludes in her study of *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity*, “cannibalism—the consumption in which survival of body is most deeply threatened . . . is the ultimate barbarism, the ultimate horror” for early Christians, and likely not much less so in the later Middle Ages (Bynum 1995). The horror of cannibalism is brought forth in late medieval representations of the hell-mouth wherein “humans are God’s victim” (Williams 1996, 144, with illustration from the [Winchester Psalter](#), British Museum, Cotton Nero IV). As David Williams analyzes the ambiguity of the hell-mouth, it “may be seen as destroying or as purifying, for the act of eating is primarily a reducing of substance to its most fundamental constituents. The symbolic eating of the hell-mouth does the same, distilling humans to their spiritual essence by eating away their physical dross” (Williams 1996, 145).

Moving further with his analysis, Williams, asserts that “In general, one eats one’s inferior.” Thus, God can eat the highest of physical beings, but the eating of one’s equal, i.e., the act of cannibalism does “of itself establish monstrosity.” But, cannibalism is also an “indication of a monster’s participation in human nature” which “enjoins the question of the distinction between the self and that which is not the self” (Williams 1996, 145). Why is this so threatening? Normally, at death the soul is liberated from the body through the process of decomposition, but the integrity of the “self” is maintained. However, with cannibalism, the body is absorbed by another, “suggesting a grotesque and perverse postmortem continuation of the self within and as a part of another, a monstrosity, without identity or even consciousness.” Yet the ambiguity continues if one interprets the human act of eating another of the same species as the “extension of the self to the point of inclusion of the other. It is for this reason that much ritual cannibalism has to do with the eating of parents and other close relatives to avoid the loss of a part of the self” (Williams 1996, 146; Osborne 1997).

Whether it was real or not, the impact of an imagined **cannibalism** was widespread, and the fear of it was reflected in the art and in the literature of the later medieval world. Based upon an ancient analysis of cruelty derived largely from **Seneca** (4 B.C.E.–65 C.E.), any “other” that was associated with barbarian characteristics, especially excessive violence, was often linked to cannibalistic practices. This appeared especially true in the case of the **Mongols**, wherein “Detailed accounts of systematic violence, sexual barbarism, and **cannibalism** carried undeniably affective intent and repeatedly labeled the **Mongols** as cruel” (Kaeuper 2004, 587; Guzman 1991). But, as Andrew Fleck has speculated in analyzing *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, cannibalistic ritual could also be operating as “a kind of mimicking inversion that causes instability in the perception of a distinct self and other during this encounter” (Fleck 2000, 394). Regardless, by the fourteenth century, “Tartary was a land of fable liberally sprinkled with fiction,” as found in the likes of **Mandeville** in his *Travels* and **Chaucer** in his *Squire’s Tale*. As summed up by Alan Ambrisco in a more recent article, “the claims made about **Mongols** in romances, chronicles, and travel accounts present them as provoking both fear and wonder in their European counterparts” (Ambrisco 2004, 206; Campbell 1988).

D. 5. Fear of Women

Antifeminism and its concomitant fear of women were not new to the later Middle Ages (Blamires 1992; 1997; 2004). The fear of women could be expressed in numerous ways. There is the “wild woman” tradition, for example, which is documented in various literary and visual sources, which modern studies suggest represents an “ideal substitute for repressed sexuality and fear of the unknown” (Classen 2002, xx; see also Stock 2000). There is also the example of the woman as a “death-figure” which appears in the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200) in the person of the Burgundian queen **Kriemhild** who takes revenge on her relatives because they slew her husband (Classen 2002, xlv; 2011, ch. 2). However, the most prominent way fear of women was developed into anti-feminism in the Middle Ages is found particularly related to the portrayals of the institution of marriage in both clerical and secular sources of several types.

Anxiety and animosity directed at women throughout the Christian Middle Ages was based on two traditions, specifically the secular satire found in the literature of Greece and Rome, and the beliefs and teachings of the early **Church Fathers**. The most influential ancient works were those of the Roman satirists **Horace** (65–8 B.C.E.), **Persius** (34–62 C.E.), and especially **Juvenal** (ca. late first-early second C.E.), whose depiction of the vices of women in his sixth satire greatly influenced the strongest of the misogynists among the medieval clergy (Smith 2005). **Ovid** (43 B.C.E.–ca. 18 C.E.) was important because of his satire on female lust in his *Remedia amoris*, which became “grist to the mill of medieval satirists as they compiled their catalogues of complaints against women’s errant behavior” (Walsh 2005, 224). The historian **Sallust** (86–35 B.C.E.) was also popular among misogynists in the later Middle Ages, especially cited for his depiction of the vices of **Sempronia** in his *Catilinae coniuratio* (Walsh 2005, 224).

However, as one might expect, the Latin patristic writers carried even more weight in the

onslaught against the temptations of women. Borrowing from [Scripture](#) and the more idealistic [Greek Fathers](#), [Tertullian](#) (160–220), [Cyprian](#) (ca. 200–258), [Jerome](#) (347–420), and even [Augustine](#) (354–430), though he was more evenly balanced in his treatment, took to the idealization of a sacred form of virginity which led to their condemnation of or advisement against marriage, and a particular provocation of fear for men (Walsh 2005, 225). [Jerome](#) was a model for the use of this theme in his treatise *Adversos Jovinianum* (*Against Jovinian*, 392 C.E.), wherein he responded to [Jovinian](#) (d. ca. 405), a monk who had made the case that the married state had as much merit as that of “sacred virginity” (Walsh 2005, 225).

Moving forward as [Scripture](#) began to emerge in its written medieval Latin form (the [Vulgate](#)) as produced by [Jerome](#) in the fourth century, individuals such as [Macrobius](#) (fl. early fifth century C.E.), and then later the monks of the tenth and eleventh centuries built on the anti-feminine base provided by the ancients and the Church Fathers. [Odo](#) (ca. 878–942), second abbot of Cluny, and [Marbode](#) (ca. 1035–1123), bishop of Rennes and then monk at Angers, for example, developed such arguments as “the beauty of women is only skin-deep” or that the worst trap of men provided by the “enemy [the devil]”, and the most difficult to evade, is woman, the “deadly vine-trap of misfortune” (Delumeau 1978, 313). The fame of [Peter Abelard](#)’s *Historia calamitatum* (1118) added to the fire by providing an account of his love affair, marriage, and the significant “calamities” that resulted from this series of events (Walsh 2005, 226–27; see also Blamires 2004). [Andreas Capellanus](#) (mid-to late-twelfth century) provides another example, though he does so in a confusing fashion. In the first two parts of his *De Amore* (ca. 1185), Andreas depicts men of various stations in life being instructed as to how to court ladies of either the upper or the lower class in society. Then, in part three, he unexplainably takes to a “scurrilous catalogue of their [women in general] alleged vices” (Walsh 2005, 227). [Andreas](#) goes so far as to label the female as a “true devil, an enemy of peace, a source of impatience” (Delumeau 1978, 314; see also Classen 2002c).

The medieval view of women was not consistent, perplexingly ambivalent, and even bipolar in the ironical way it fluctuated between the extreme models of the character and role of women found in [Eve](#) and the [Virgin Mary](#). It is also important to remember in this context, for example, how women were portrayed in the [New Testament](#) as loyal servants of [Christ](#), present at his crucifixion and at his tomb when the male disciples were nowhere to be found. Also, in the early expansion of Christianity, we learn that women played key roles, often persuading husbands, especially some of the pagan kings in the West, to convert to Christianity. Ironically, it was those talents of persuasion that later become the targets of the clergy as they began to fear that women might persuade their husbands to heresy. Even the appearance of the medieval cults of the [Virgin Mary](#), or the much lesser-known devotion to [Jesus our Mother](#) in the twelfth century, had little impact on the male anxiety regarding the female (Bynum 1982). As argued more recently by Carolyn Waters, ultimately it appears that it was the combined fear of women’s speech and sexual allure that led to the ongoing development of the fear of women in general (Waters 2004, esp. ch. 5).

The views of **St Jerome** (ca. 347–420) regarding marriage became very popular in the clerical community of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Since the time of the eleventh-century church reform movement ordained clergy could not be married in the Western Church. Therefore, it was necessary to find arguments to persuade simple clerics from marrying and forfeiting the option of eventual full ordination as priests (Walsh 2005, 225). Moreover, of course, women of the thirteenth century were explicitly forbidden to preach. Prior to that time, as **Innocent III** became aware before he issued the prohibition in his bull of 1210 (*Nova quaedam nuper*), women had become involved and effective in responding to a growing need for preaching to the laity. He issued the bull with the explicit denial of the “power of the keys,” which according to church doctrine, was only available to men who were the only ones permitted to receive the priestly ordination. The pope’s fears regarding the potential spread of the **Waldensians** or the **Cathar** heresy in southern France surely played a key role here as the role of lay women preachers in these movements was rumored to be effective (Shahar 2001).

Apparently the inference that one need fear the temptations of women toward marriage contributed more widely to a generalized fear of women as the population grew in that era and the demand for ordained clergy grew along with it. Sermons seeking to recruit preachers, as well as to tend to the other spiritual needs of the laity, made it harder for listeners not intending to become clergy to not be influenced by the general message about the problems of marital entanglement. As Claire Waters reminds us, however, our knowledge and perception of the fear of women in the Middle Ages comes to us from literature and from the “mouths of skilled rhetoricians with a purpose” (Waters 2004, 86–89). Like our understandings of much of the heresy of the era, we must be wary of the sources of those views. Yet, we do have such direct evidence as that of **Humbert of Romans** (ca. 1200–1277), who in his thirteenth-century preaching manuals for the training of the **Dominican** friars, excluded women from preaching for four reasons. These included what he regarded as a deficiency of understanding within women, the subordinate status of women overall, the memory of the “foolishness of the first woman,” and, the fear that if women preached, they might provoke men to lust because of their appearance (Waters 2004, 37). In the same period, the influential and perhaps somewhat more neutral **Vincent of Beauvais** (ca. 1190–1264) compiled a massive *Speculum maius* in which he tried to catalogue all knowledge of the world by grouping it into three categories, which he called the natural, the doctrinal, and the historical. In one of those categories, which he titled *Speculum naturale*, he devotes a chapter to the vices of women, where he drew upon the authority of ancient authors such as **Terence** (ca. 190–159 B.C.E.), **Macrobius**, and **Seneca** (4 B.C.E.–65 C.E.). Relying especially upon the latter of these, **Vincent** determined that the root of the vices in women is avarice.

The sermons of the emerging new preaching orders, which had an enormous widespread influence throughout Europe in the thirteenth century, often portrayed woman as less than man and predestined to evil (Delumeau 1978, 315). In much of this literature, there was a particular focus on marriage and the reasons why men should not marry. Accusations against women ranged from frailty of the species which requires men to work hard to take care of their wives, to

the fickleness, greediness, and lustfulness of women, the latter leading men to “take the fatal step” into marriage, or to adultery when married. Wives are also cited as being irascible, arrogant, and spiteful, all of which could lead men to ruin; therefore, marriage was to be feared and shunned (Walsh 2005, 223).

Such onslaughts against women continued into the fourteenth century vernacular literature as well. **John Lydgate** (ca. 1370–ca. 1451), for example in his *Payne and Sorrow*, borrowed from the ideas of **Chaucer** (ca. 1343–1400) in his “*Wife of Bath’s Tale*,” where one finds a compelling satire on the institution of marriage, though more recent analysis reminds us of possible alternative readings. According to Warren Smith, for example, there is ambiguity in **Chaucer’s** approach, for “the Wife of Bath, while at times mocking **Jerome’s** procelibacy biblical exegesis, is not quick to contradict **Jerome’s** position.” He goes on to conclude that it is his belief that the *Wife of Bath* presents a reasonably balanced, “even Augustinian view of celibacy and marriage that triumphantly defends a literalist interpretation of the Bible against the mischief of its male glossators” (Smith 2005, 245).

Beyond the association of women with a myriad of vices to ruin men, the fear of women was pushed further in their characterization as agents of the devil. Although this occurred more in the later Middle Ages, and more in conjunction with the attack against the Jews, it was both the clergy and the lay judges who enhanced this view. Jeffrey Jeremy Cohen has argued that the medieval world was “almost always faced by outsiders, foreigners, hence the other,” which often included peasants, women, and Jews, especially in the later Middle Ages (Classen 2002, xlvii; J. J. Cohen 2000a, 98). The attitude of the males in society toward the “second sex” had always been contradictory and swinging back and forth from attraction to repulsion or from wonder and admiration to hostility (Delumeau 1978, 305). But, on the eve of the **Reformation**, the **Alsatian Franciscan** preacher **Thomas Murner** (1475–ca. 1537) still found occasion in 1512 to focus on the negative by writing that the female is “commonly unfaithful, vain, vicious and a flirt,” in sum, a “domestic devil” (Delumeau 1978, 315; Blamires 1992, 2004).

Thus, in the samples provided of the fears surrounding woman as the “other” we see how fear could damage institutions that could stabilize a society—the family, childrearing, and trust between the sexes that compose that society. In this essay we cannot address all the fears in detail, but we must turn our attention to that complex, convoluted, and ultimate fear, namely death.

D. 6. Eschatological Fear: Death, the Last Judgment, and Hell

In many ways fear in the Middle Ages was connected to the Christian **Apocalypse**. Anticipation of The **Final Coming** must have been the “super storm of fear” in the Middle Ages. Imagine confronting famine, plague, war, and death at the same time as the crisis of fourteenth century presaged once again the coming of the **Antichrist**, then death, then the fear of God as he would judge whether you went to the pains of hell to join the devil (Emmerson 1981; Emmerson and

McGinn 1992; Wright 1995; Aberth 2000, 2010; Backman 2000; Bernstein 2000). Thus, many of the “others” were also placed into the construct of the [Last Days](#) so as to account for their ongoing persistence and success in the conflict with Christianity (Dinzelbacher 1996).

As Michael Uebel and David Burr have pointed out, this was especially true of the Christian response to the Jew and the Saracen (Uebel 1996; Burr 1996; cf. Jackson 2001). Even though the [Apocalypse](#) and its early commentaries predate the founding of Islam, in the later Middle Ages it became somehow necessary to write its followers, as well as the Jews, into it. The ongoing success of the Saracens led the Franciscan [Henry of Cossey](#), for example, in his fourteenth century commentary on the [Apocalypse](#) to say: “Many Christians, seeing so many people follow the Islamic sect, will say that God could never have wished so many people to be lost . . . Thus deceived, they will follow the Beast” (as quoted in Strickland 2003, 211; using Burr 1996, 145).

Andrew Gow has focused on how the role of the Jews in Christian eschatology became “gradually more incriminating, from necessary participants in the final conversion to Christ to eager servants and supporters of [Antichrist](#)” (Gow 1996, 259). Various legends stated that the [Antichrist](#) himself would be a Jew, or, as in one fourteenth-century play, *Le Jour du Jugement* (*The Day of Judgment*), that he would be the offspring of the devil and a Jewish whore (Strickland 2003, 213). As well, images in medieval art featured the [Antichrist](#) in stereotypical Jewish costume or physiognomy or both. The [Eton College Apocalypse](#) provides evidence wherein the bright red pointed hat on the [Antichrist](#), or other images with the grotesque physiognomy, profile stance, and the proximity of the beastly figure next to the devil, leave no doubt about the anti-Jewish nature of the portrayal. There is also the misericord at [Cartmel Priory](#) in [Cumbria](#) which shows a three-faced [Antichrist](#) with the stereotyped Jewish features of the large nose, bulging eyes, and prominent beard (Strickland 2003, 213).

In many versions of the [Apocalypse](#) in the later Middle Ages, there is the suggestion that “the Saracens as well as Jews will receive the mark of the Beast.” In a copy of the *Bible moralisée* known as the [Oxford Bible](#), for example, [Apocalypse](#) 13:12 indicates that a two-horned beast (symbol of Judaism for many) “will be given the power to compel the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first (seven-headed) beast.” Below that frame in the illustration there is a bearded [Saracen](#) wearing a knotted turban depicted in conversation with a dark demon, while next to him a second demon clubs a praying bishop, while the text explains that “God will give the beast the power to destroy the saints in a world that has fallen into the hands of the impious” (Strickland 2003, 215–16). In the analysis of Strickland, “Eschatological images of Jews . . . require a more nuanced interpretation because Jews were a local as opposed to a distant enemy who were perceived as a very real social and economic threat to the Christian majority.” Though the most extreme form of this fear was developed in the legend of the [Red Jews](#) that was based on a characterization of the Jews as inherently evil, the reality of this anxiety being based in a more local socio-political experience is likely (Strickland 2003, 239). One of those experiences was the [Black Death](#) outbreak in the fourteenth century, which in the city of [Zurich](#) was specifically blamed on those so-called “[Red Jews](#).” Labeled a “more dangerous strain of

superhuman Jews,” they were invented in the minds of fearful Christians to explain the horrors of the plague. In this case the Jews were accused of poisoning wells with serpent venom to spread the disease (Strickland 2003, 232–33).

As for the Muslims of the crusade era, they were presented to the Christian faithful as a “necessary part of salvation history, which had now reached the stage of the final persecution of the Church” (Strickland 2003, 239; see also Whalen 2009; Rubenstein 2011; Flori 2007; Cole 1993, 1991). One can find anti-Muslim association with the *Apocalypse*, especially among the *Franciscans* of the later thirteenth century, but also earlier by Pope *Innocent III*, who, in his call for the *Fifth Crusade* in 1213 in the bull *Quia maior*, had identified *Muhammad* as the *Antichrist*. *Joachim of Fiore* (ca. 1135–1202), in his *Liber Figurarum* (*Book of Figures*), singled out the “Islamic menace” as a significant indicator of the forthcoming “*End of Time*” (Strickland 2003, 220–23; Burr 1996; Southern 1962). *Joachim* was especially concerned with *Saladin* (1138–1193), the feared and admired leader of the Muslim forces that captured *Jerusalem* in 1187. This led *Joachim* to identify him as the sixth head of the apocalyptic seven-headed dragon. However, in 1190 *Joachim* prophesied to *King Richard I* (1157–1199), who had failed to re-capture *Jerusalem* but negotiated with *Saladin* a truce to allow Christian pilgrims regular access to the Holy City following the end of the *First Crusade*, that *Saladin* would lose control of *Jerusalem* and would be killed (Strickland 2003, 225.) Later polemics and treatises became a bit more optimistic that the *Saracens* could be converted to Christianity, even though they might portray the military successes of the Muslims as being accomplished with brutality and fearful acts of various sorts, they were confident that this was all part of God’s plan (Tolan 2002, ch 8. Strickland 2003; Goss and Bornstein 1986; Kedar 1984; E. R. Daniel 1969).

Also difficult to place in God’s plan was the appearance of the plague known as the *Black Death* of the fourteenth century. A recent study by Laura Smoller argues that the writers of that era “entered into a tangled web of symbols,” and as a result of debating its “naturalness” versus its eschatological significance they “appeared to be unwilling to say that plague was either entirely natural or entirely apocalyptic” (Smoller 2000, 158). Symbols of both fear and marvel were being “mapped,” which meant that the chroniclers “mapped God’s apocalyptic torments onto an orb whose image already was pregnant with religious meanings apparent in the great *mappaemundi*” (Smoller 200, 158). Thus, apocalyptic signs such as snakes and toads or hail and fire were portrayed as raining down in the East, which was also the land of the marvels such as monsters, *Prester John*, or *Gog and Magog*. By the fourteenth century the East was also the land of potential converts such as the *Tartars* or the *Saracens*. On those “maps” the plague moved from east to west, from the land of pagans to the land of Christians in the west. Contemporary authors apparently thought, Smoller speculates, that if they could plot the progress, they might be able to control the plague itself, and simultaneously place it into the apocalyptic plan. As Smoller concludes, “Mapping has been called a form of conquest and control of territory, and mapping plague’s progress was perhaps an attempt at mastering and possessing the feared disease.” (Smoller 2000, 159). At the same time the apocalyptic plan portrayed in Matthew 24:14 called for a mass conversion of all the non-Christians, and a subsequent “universal passage of all the

faithful” to the **Holy Land** prior to the appearance of the **Antichrist** (Smoller 2000, 157–59). Thus, **Jerusalem**, the center of the world in the *mappaemundi* would become the locus of the **final** denouement and the fulfillment of the apocalyptic prophecy.

The most feared aspect of the final denouement, namely Hell itself, was increasingly portrayed in later medieval art and sculpture in such a way as to identify it with all of the negative symbols of disorder and darkness to heighten the fear of the unknown (Davidson and Seiler 1992; Sheingorn 1992). The early descriptions of Hell by **Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite** (ca. 500), who drew an “ugly, disproportionate, dark, disordered, incongruous” picture of it and its inhabitants, set the tone and others followed throughout the Middle Ages (Strickland 2003, 7). Examples are provided by the *Livre de la Vigne* (ca. 1450–ca. 1470), a manuscript which emphasizes the dark coloration of the twelve devils therein; while the green devil of the earlier **Tanner Apocalypse** (ca. 1250–1255) is shown forcing a dragon into a large welcoming fiery hell-mouth. This green devil has an extra face of its own on its belly “with a mouth of its own spewing a flame spewing its own flame precisely [from] where a penis should be” (Strickland 2003, 71, with fig. 25 showing the illus. from the Tanner ms.). The image of hell in the *Hortus Deliciarum* (*Garden of Delights*) of **Herrad of Hohenbourg** produced in **Alsace** in the late twelfth century reveals some of most vivid images of the damned caught up in a multi-levelled chasm. The text that accompanies the images describes hell as “dark with perpetual flames, frigid cold, demons, vermin,” and it is filled with “sinners and criminals” such as the “prideful, liars, drunkards, thieves, murderers, fornicators, and blasphemers, among others” (Strickland 2003, 123–24). In other words, it describes plenty of characters with whom everyday persons might identify around them. A twelfth-century English anonymous painting depicts a huge hell-mouth in the shape of a two-headed monster engulfing the damned while the angel prepares to lock the gates after them, and the demons prepare to administer various tortures. Details of the **Last Judgment** painted by **Stefan Lochner** about 1430 reveal several monster-formed demons in various dark colors dragging the damned in chains into a deeper darker abyss (illustrations in Evans 1966, 228–29).

Bynum and Freedman in their introduction to their work on *Last Things* as conceived in the Middle Ages, note that “last things sometimes referred to events (such as . . . advent of **Antichrist**, or the resurrection and **Last Judgment**) that might come to all humanity in time,” and thus society could be seen as constantly on a pilgrimage, “confidently expectant or cowering in fear” (Bynum and Freedman, 5). But, as they also note, there were other times when the focus was not on the collective end, but the individual, from temporal to beyond time or atemporal, from a stress on spirit to a sense of embodied or re-embodied self” (Bynum and Freedman 2000, 5). Recent scholarship has also shown a change in the attitude toward death in the Middle Ages, from a death experience in a community to one of “personal death” which was reflected in a change in the view of the afterlife. Instead of seeing the resurrection after death as one literally of the material body to face judgment, the idea of a “twofold eschatological landscape of heaven and hell” evolved into one stressing the concept of a separated soul from body that after death could experience a “three-tiered afterlife, including the in-between space and time of purgatory”

as a possibility (Bynum and Freedman 2000, 6). From their reading of the scholarship on eschatology Bynum and Freedman conclude that “religion is not so much doctrine as a way of life.” Therefore, we should not be too concerned about changes or contradictions and ambiguities in the medieval *weltanschauung*, because “Medieval eschatology was, like life, profoundly inconsistent” (Bynum and Freedman 2000, 6).

Since the watershed study by Johann Huizinga entitled *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Huizinga 1996; orig. 1919), which portrayed the fourteenth century as a time of total gloom and doom, we have come a long way in our analysis of fear in the Middle Ages (e.g., Fanning 2002, 296). Still, the power of that image has adhered into the late twentieth century. Popular thinking was still being influenced by such mid-century studies as Ziegler’s *The Black Death* or Barbara Tuchman’s still widely-read *The Distant Mirror, the Calamitous 14th Century* (Ziegler 1969; Tuchman 1979). Only more recently have scholars such as John Aberth in his *From the Brink of the Apocalypse* tried to offset the dark picture by presenting a more balanced study illustrating how a closer examination of prayers, chronicles, poetry and commemorative art reveals a greater sense of optimism within the late medieval culture (Aberth 2000, 2010). Perhaps this is best illustrated with a specific example. In his essay “To Fear or Not to Fear, That is the Question” (Classen 2002b), Albrecht Classen argues that **Oswald von Wolkenstein** “mirrors the typical fears of his time.” He had been imprisoned, tortured, suffered personal failures, and yet, his poetry was not filled with despair. Oswald’s attitudes toward death and damnation may have been typical, but he expressed more concern about the issues of everyday life and remained “unconcerned with His presence” (Scott and Kosso, ed. 2002, xxxv; Classen 2002b).

The study of fear and the foreigner in the Middle Ages reveals much ambiguity. The foreigner was treated with force and violence, sometimes tolerance or the early appearances of it, attempts to make the foreigner “like us” through missionary work, or the attempt to demonize or “wonderize” the various foreigners by pushing them into the realm of eastern exotica in travel tales or *mappaemundi*. Often those who did not accept Christianity, or were otherwise considered “different” or the abstract “other,” became objects of fear. What drove these concepts was most simply a fear of the unknown. However, the medieval world did not collapse out of fear. It came to live with it, and by the late Middle Ages, seems to have focused more on everyday existence and the practicalities thereof. This perhaps means that hope triumphed over fear so long as you did what you could in pursuit of the best life you could possibly live leading toward a “good death.” The immediacy of the **Last Judgment** had been pushed to the margin, and whenever it came, a “good life” was more likely to result in a “good death,” meaning a favorable judgment. Whether Christian, Jew or Muslim, you experienced the foreign and the fear that accompanied it; and, you came to accept it as all part of God’s plan.

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