

Medieval Jewish History: Violence and Coexistence

November 27, 2006

- Housekeeping issues
- Divergent Jewish traditions in Islamic and Christian lands.
- Coexistence: In Islamic **and** Christian Lands
- Occasional persecution in Islamic lands
- Violence, expulsion in Christian lands

Housekeeping

- **Papers due this week**
- Sections are cancelled Dec. 11, 12
- Extra Review Sessions (Open)
 - Monday Dec 11, 11:00 (Key 0120)
 - Wed. Dec 13, 11:00 (Room TBA)
- Extra Credit possibilities

Extra Credit Possibilities: Secondary Sources

- Baskin, *Jewish Women*
 - Choose one chapter
 - Summarize argument
 - Choose primary sources **we studied** that either support or contradict the argument.
 - Discuss
- Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*
 - Using JSTOR on MDUSA (UM Libraries' database) search for reviews of the book.
 - Read five reviews. **Try** to find at least one positive and at least one negative review. Give **FULL CITATION**
 - Discuss: What elements appear most controversial? What do reviewers say is the most important contribution?
- 500–700 words. 5 pts. **Do only one.**

Divergent Jewish traditions in Islamic and Christian lands.

- In the Islamic (and post-Islamic) lands
 - Talmud is prolegomenon to a complete education
 - E.g. presuppositions in Maimonides's Guide
- In the Ashkenazic lands
 - Bible, Talmud, law substantially made up Jewish education
 - Rashi (1040–1105) and Tosafot (a "school" including Rashi's sons-in-law and grandsons) reflect both the internalist focus, **and** (esp. Tosafot) some features of wider Christian intellectual tradition (scholastic dialectic)
- Scholars of So. France (e.g., Ramban = Moses b. Nahman = Nahmanides) harmonize these tradition

Coexistence: In Islamic *and* Christian Lands

- "**Convivencia**" the idealized coexistence of Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Spain both before and after **Reconquista**. Idealized because persecution and hostility is **assumed**.
- But more generally: long periods of **coexistence**. Current debate: whether coexistence or violence needs special explanation.
- Nevertheless, coexistence of Jews with others takes place within cultures of subordinate status, violence, and hostility

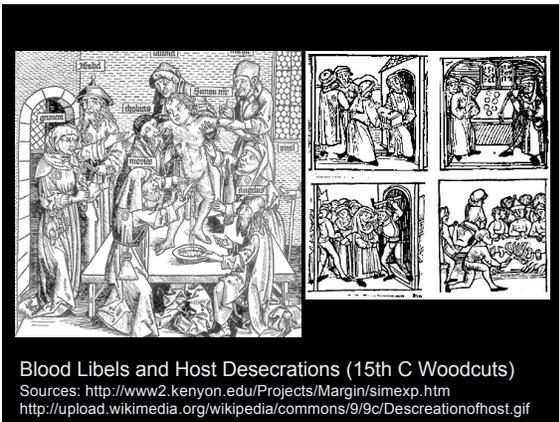
Occasional violence, persecution in Islamic lands

- Some examples
- 1066 lynching of Joseph b. Samuel ibn Naghrela in Granada
 - Repressive policies of al-muwahhidun (Almohades, 1147–1269: Morocco, So. Spain, Tunisia): destruction of synagogues, enforced conversions
 - Forced conversions also in Yemen (1165), Baghdad (1333, 1344)

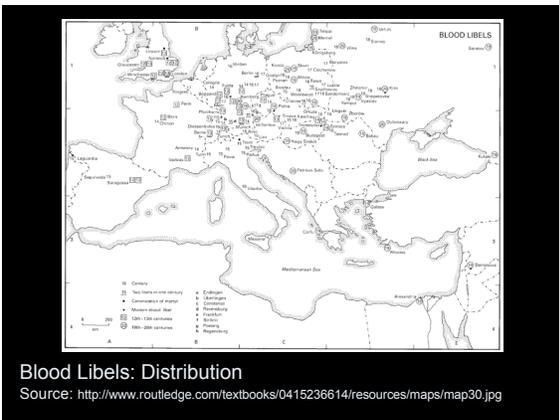


Christian fantasies of Jews:

- Blood libel (reenacting the **crucifixion**)
- Host desecration (**transubstantiation** official doctrine after 1215)
- Black Death, 1348 (frightening Other within)



Blood Libels and Host Desecrations (15th C Woodcuts)
Sources: <http://www2.kenyon.edu/Projects/Margin/simexp.htm>
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9c/Desecrationofhost.gif>



Blood Libels: Distribution
Source: <http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/0415236614/resources/maps/map30.jpg>
