



The 'Satanization' and Persecution of the Jews

HPRS50I5/60I5

Session Outline



- The Jews as the agents of Satan: origins of the concept
 - Growing hostility towards the Jews
- The 'Satanization' of the Jews in medieval art
 - Accusations of ritual murder

The Jews as the Agents of Satan: Origins of the Concept

I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. I declare what I have seen in the Father's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father. They answered him, 'Abraham is our father'. Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are indeed doing what your father does'. They said to him, 'We are not illegitimate children; we have one father, God himself.' Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. **You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.** When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God' (John 8:37-47).

The Gospel of John and Judaism

- Does John's Gospel support an anti-Semitic worldview?
- 'The Gospel of John has proved to be a dangerous document, for although it may not itself be anti-Semitic, it has given aid and comfort to anti-Semites' – D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, p. 169
- References to 'the Jews': a group that embodies opposition to Jesus and is ultimately responsible for Jesus' death.

Who are 'the Jews' in John?

- Symbol of unbelief.
- Judaeans (i.e. inhabitants of Judaea)?
- Jewish religious authorities, often linked closely to 'the Pharisees' (11:46-52; 18:1-3; 18:12-14).
- Those who are themselves Jews fear 'the Jews' (7:13; 20:19).
- Socio-historical context: tension between Johannine Christians and synagogue Jews (see John 9:22; 16:2).

Further Biblical ‘Proof-Texts’

‘I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander on the part of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a **synagogue of Satan**’ (Revelation 2:9).

‘I will make **those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not**, but are lying – I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you’ (Revelation 3:9).

Hostility towards the Jews in the Early Church

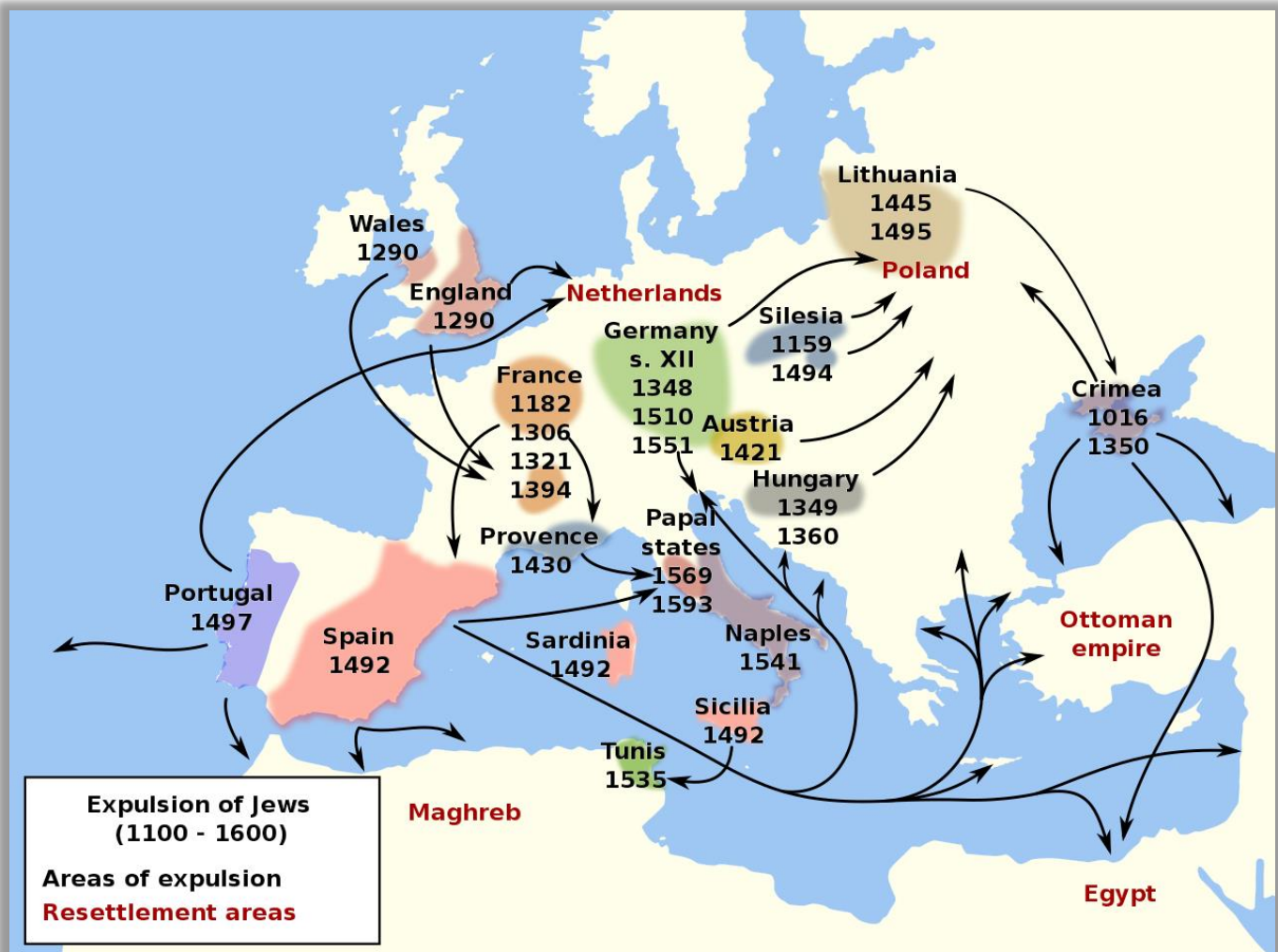
- Hatred and persecution: condemnation of the Jews by several Church fathers for their refusal to accept Christ.
- Limited tolerance: the Jews were witnesses by their own error to the truth of Christianity (the Jews as homeless wanderers), but their survival meant that they had a purpose in the divine plan (e.g. Augustine).

Hostility towards the Jews in the Early Church

- *Adversus Iudaeos*: the anti-Jewish literary tradition of the Early Church Fathers (see, for example, Tertullian's *Against the Jews* and John Chrysostom's *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians*).
- **John Chrysostom**: 'the synagogues of the Jews are the homes of idolatry and devils'. Satan himself 'inhabits the soul of a Jew' (*Adversus Iudaeos*, c. 386-387).

Shift in Attitudes

- From 1000 onwards the official policy of 'limited toleration' disintegrates:
 - banning of Judaism by local authorities
 - closure of synagogues and enforced baptisms
 - murder and expulsion
 - negative visual representations of the Jews



Theological Interpretations

- As Jews were no longer God's people they must be the devil's people.
- Whenever you see a genuine Jew, you may with a good conscience cross yourself, and say, 'There goes a devil incarnate' (*On the Jews and their Lies*, 1543).



Popular Interpretations

- Shift from restricted theological circles to the popular masses through the work of preachers and playwrights.
- Denunciation in passion plays: evil demons ‘invest the Jews with courage to kill him by their outrage and to hate him just as we do’ (French Mystery Play).
- ‘Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation’ (Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 2:2, 7).
- ‘Let me say “Amen” betimes lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew’ (3:I, 22).

Satanic Features of the Jews in Medieval Art

- Animal characteristics & ugliness (thick lips, bulging eyes, long hooked nose)
- Red hair
- Riding backwards
- Pointed hat to hide horns

Exchequer Receipt Roll (England, 1233)



Illuminated Manuscript of Jewish Money Lenders in France (c. 1270)



Jesus Before Caiaphas from Salvin Hours (c. 1275)



The Betrayal of Christ, Caspar Isenmann (c. 1465)



Christ among the Doctors, Albrecht Durer (1506)



Title Page of *Der Juden Erbarkeit* (1571)



Association of Jews with Pigs

- Pigs were commonly associated with evil and Satan.
- Characterized by filth and stench.
- An unclean animal as a symbol of an unclean people.
- Offensive odour (like their father, the Devil) – the *foetor judaicus*

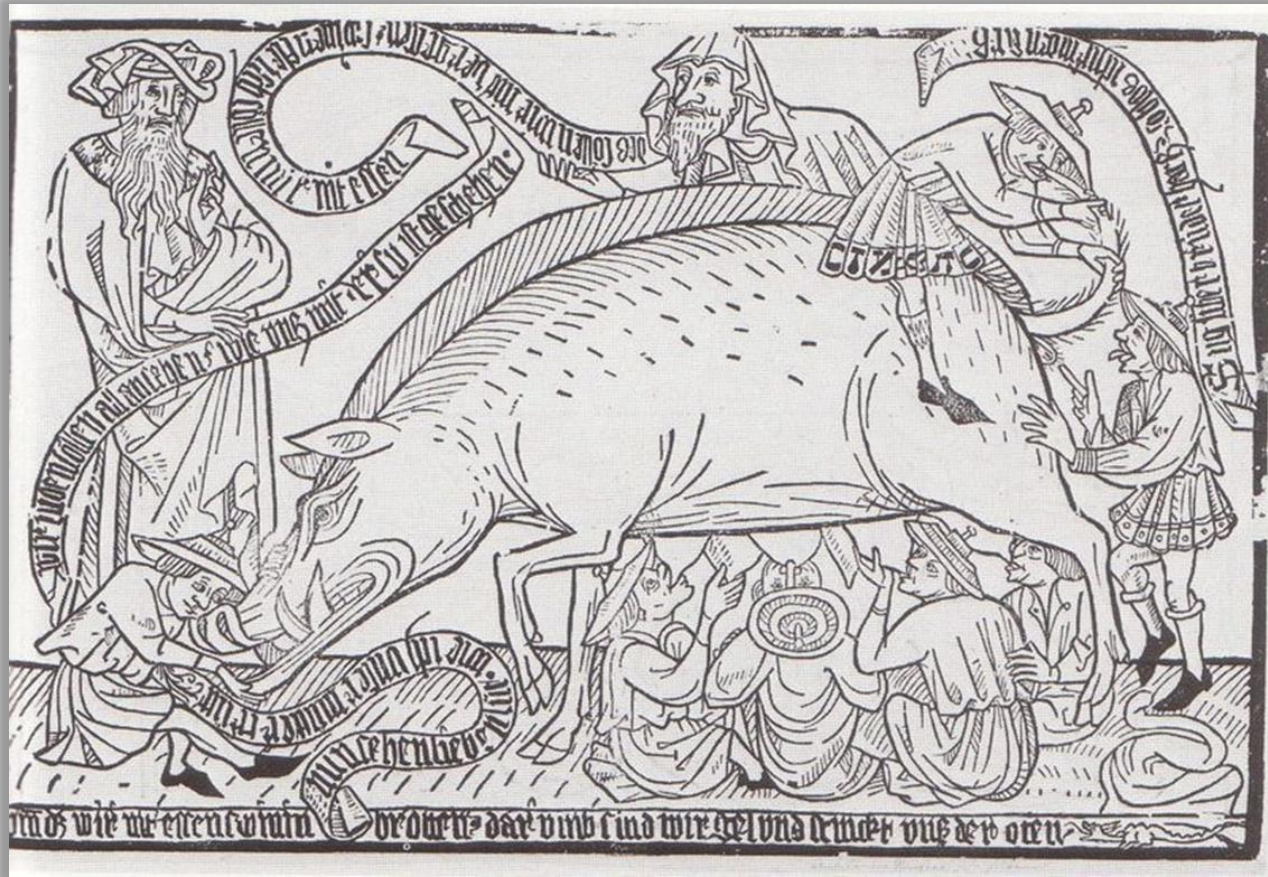
The *Judensau*

- German images of the sow as a mother (*Judensau*) suckling her Jewish offspring in the presence of the Devil.
- An adult Jew rides the animal backwards and another eats the pig's excrement.
- Luther: the Jews wallow in the Devil's excrement like swine.
- Emphasis on the alien character of the Jew; the offspring of the pig.

Judensau on Wittenberg Parish Church



Woodcut from Munich (c. 1470)



Stiftskirche, Bad Wimpfen



Woodcut of the Bridge Tower at Frankfurt (Early 17th Century)



Afterlife of Caricatures

- These caricatures survived into later centuries.
- ‘Standing over them, with a toasting-fork in his hand, was a very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair’ – depiction of Fagin in Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, chapter 7



Antisemitic
Propaganda from
Nazi-occupied
Serbia (1941)



Ritual Murder by Lucifer's Children

- Satanization of the Jews linked to other false accusations.
- Ritual murder: crucifying of young Christian boys to insult Christ.
- Charge of blood libel: the Jews required Christian blood for a variety of purposes – to anoint the dead, to remove their foul odour, to guard against illness, to make Passover bread (*matzah*).
- Over 150 incidents of blood libel are recorded in Europe between 1140 and 1600.
- Blood libel and ritual murder became popular accusations which stemmed from fear of the Jews and the depiction of them as allies of Lucifer.

Illustration in Hartmann Schedel's *Weltchronik* (1493)



Hugh of Lincoln (1255)

- Body of 8-year old boy discovered in a pit in the city of Lincoln (1255).
- Local Jews were accused of his death, intended as a parody of the crucifixion.
- 90 Jews sent to the Tower of London; 18 of them hanged.
- The child became known as 'Little Saint Hugh'.
- The cathedral became a shrine with statues, pictures and reported miracles.

Matthew Paris on the Murder of ‘Little Saint Hugh’

‘This year [1255] about the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul [27 July], the Jews of Lincoln stole a boy called Hugh, who was about eight years old. After shutting him up in a secret chamber, where they fed him on milk and other childish food, they sent to almost all the cities of England in which there were Jews, and summoned some of their sect from each city to be present at a sacrifice to take place at Lincoln, in contumely and insult of Jesus Christ. For, as they said, they had a boy concealed for the purpose of being crucified; so a great number of them assembled at Lincoln, and then they appointed a Jew of Lincoln judge, to take the place of Pilate, by whose sentence, and with the concurrence of all, the boy was subjected to various tortures. They scourged him till the blood flowed, they crowned him with thorns, mocked him, and spat upon him; each of them also pierced him with a knife, and they made him drink gall, and scoffed at him with blasphemous insults, and kept gnashing their teeth and calling him Jesus, the false prophet. And after tormenting him in diverse ways they crucified him, and pierced him to the heart with a spear. When the boy was dead, they took the body down from the cross, and for some reason disemboweled it; it is said for the purpose of their magic arts’.

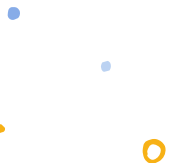
Afterlife of Hugh of Lincoln

‘I have, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They are a piece of stubborn antiquity, compared with which Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the pyramids But I should not be in habits of familiar intercourse with any of that nation. I confess that I have not the nerves to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln’

– Charles Lamb, ‘Imperial Sympathies’, 1823



1955 inscription on a memorial tablet to Little Saint Hugh in Lincoln Cathedral



Trumped-up stories of ritual murders of Christian boys by Jewish communities were common throughout the Middle Ages, and even much later. These fictions cost many innocent Jews their lives. Lincoln had its own legend, and the alleged victim was buried in the Cathedral. A shrine was erected above and the boy was referred to as Little St Hugh. Such stories do not redound to the credit of Christendom, and so we pray: 'Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers'

Perpetuating the Myth of Ritual Murder

Die Stürmer Preis 30 Pfennig
antisches Wochenblatt zum Kampfe um die Wahrheit
 HERAUSGEBER: JULIUS STREICHER
 München, im Mai 1934

Jüdischer Mordplan
 gegen die nichtjüdische Menschheit aufgedeckt

Das Mörderroll

Die Juden haben in der ganzen Welt in einem fortwährenden Kampfe, den sie nicht hören, nur ihren eigenen Nutzen zu verfolgen. Sie haben sich nicht um die Gerechtigkeit gekümmert, sondern nur um ihren eigenen Vorteil. Sie haben sich nicht um die Gerechtigkeit gekümmert, sondern nur um ihren eigenen Vorteil. Sie haben sich nicht um die Gerechtigkeit gekümmert, sondern nur um ihren eigenen Vorteil.

Judenopfer



Die Juden sind ein gefährliches Volk. Sie haben sich nicht um die Gerechtigkeit gekümmert, sondern nur um ihren eigenen Vorteil. Sie haben sich nicht um die Gerechtigkeit gekümmert, sondern nur um ihren eigenen Vorteil. Sie haben sich nicht um die Gerechtigkeit gekümmert, sondern nur um ihren eigenen Vorteil.

Die Juden sind unser Unglück!

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Ritualmord

Der große Mordplan der Juden



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Die Juden sind unser Unglück!

Summary

- Beginnings of association between Jews and Satan found in certain NT texts and in the works of the Early Church Fathers.
- Growing hostility towards Jews during the medieval period – the ‘Satanization’ of the Jews reflected in the art and literature of the time.
- Antisemitic depictions and canards of the medieval period would have grave consequences even centuries later. They persist to this day.