Introduction

Believers are usually driven to share their truths with others. This is particularly true for monotheistic believers. The conviction that there is only one true deity in the universe heightens the sense of responsibility to share this unique truth with others.[1] There is almost a moral imperative associated with this sharing. Given the conviction of truth, by what right can the believer withhold that blessing from fellow-humans?[2] To be sure, there is a second and less altruistic side to the commitment to sharing truth, and that involves the doubt and uncertainty associated with religious belief. One of the simplest techniques for dealing with doubt and uncertainty is to enhance the number of fellow-believers. Indeed, the very process of addressing others with supposedly certain truth augments for those doing the outreach the conviction of the veracity of their message.[3]

[1] On the social consequences of monotheistic faiths, see Rodney Stark, *Just One God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). The very first of the social consequences of monotheism that Stark addresses is the commitment to mission. As a striking contemporary expression of this sense of the relationship of faith and mission, we might note a letter published on July 15, 2002, in the *New York Times.* Responding to an essay on religious bigotry in Islam, on the one hand, and in American Christian circles on the other, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, wrote as follows: "In the end, the great world religions stand or fall on the validity of their truth claims. This is especially the case with Christianity and Islam, both of which stake their case on a claim of divine revelation. Furthermore, both faiths make a universal claim to truth and seek to convert nonbelievers. An Islam that settles for religious pluralism is not authentic Islam, and Christianity without zeal for conversion is not true Christianity."

[2] On p. 35 of *Just One God*, Stark proposes the following analogy: "Imagine a society's discovering a vaccine against a deadly disease that has been ravaging its people and continues to ravage people in neighboring societies, where the cause of the disease is incorrectly attributed to improper diet. What would be the judgment on such a society if it withheld its vaccine on the grounds that it would be ethnocentric to try to instruct members of another culture that their medical ideas are incorrect, and to induce them to adopt the effective treatment? If one accepts that one has the good fortune to be in possession of the true religion and thereby has access to the most valuable possible rewards, is one not similarly obligated to spread this blessing to those less fortunate?"

[3] Stark, in *Just One God*, does not introduce this less altruistic aspect of the compulsion to missionize.

Christianity has been, of the three Western monotheisms, the one most intensely committed to spreading its religious truth among others.[4] Christianity's early history and rise to power were entirely dependent on outreach to a variety of others. Beginning as a tiny sectarian group in first-century Palestine, Christianity spread via preaching to a multitude of audiences throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire. It was the attraction of increasingly large masses to the Christian faith that created the backdrop to the decision of the fourth-century Emperor Constantine to cease the persecution to which the young religion had been subjected and to set it on the road to becoming the ruling religion of the entire empire. To be sure, at that point the further spread of Christianity was conditioned by more than simply preaching. The emphasis on preaching and on winning the hearts and minds of non-believers was never lost, however, and remains a central commitment of many Christian communities down to the present day.

Christian preaching to the Jews represents a very special and complex aspect of Christian missionizing. In the earliest phases of Christian history, when Jesus and his immediate followers were part and parcel of Palestinian Jewry, his preaching was intra-communal exhortation to a particular understanding of the ancient covenant between God and Israel. Jesus reached out to his fellow Jews in much the same way as a number of other Jewish visionaries of the period. The message of the young faith community was rapidly extended beyond its Palestinian Jewish matrix, winning large numbers of gentile followers. Eventually, the Christian community broke with its Jewish origins, although claiming inheritance of the Israelite covenant that Jesus had earlier interpreted.[5] At this point of separation, preaching to the Jews became a real and complicated issue.

There were reasonable – indeed compelling – considerations against such preaching. Jesus, his immediate followers, and the crucially important apostle Paul had all tried and failed to win significant support among Jews. Why should subsequent followers repeat their efforts? How might these followers succeed at an objective that had eluded their more divinely inspired predecessors?[6] Moreover, successful Christian proselytizing had made the young religious community far larger than its older rival. Why pursue an increasingly small set of potential converts, when much larger

[4] I make this statement with considerable caution. No one has yet attempted a comparative evaluation of the missionizing of the three Western monotheisms. Stark, in his discussion of mission in *Just One God*, focuses heavily on Christian proselytizing. It is interesting to note that, as the modern age of enlightenment and toleration dawned, spokesmen for Judaism emphasized heavily its purported aversion to missionizing.

[5] For further detail on this evolution along with bibliographic references, see below, Chap. 1.

[6] As we shall see below, Chap. 13, medieval Jewish polemicists often made precisely this argument.

human communities remained to be addressed? Over the ages, there have in fact been periods when Christian efforts to win Jews have been minimal.

At the same time, there remained powerful stimuli to Christian preaching to the Jews. In the first place, the fact that the group from which Jesus and his immediate followers had emerged remained obdurate in its refusal to believe constituted an ongoing irritant and a constant danger. Since so much of the Christian case for religious truth was rooted in the Hebrew Bible, it was distressing that the people with whom that Hebrew Bible was shared rejected the Christian reading. To be sure, Christian thinkers explained the Jewish rejection in a variety of ways, including the errors of Jewish tradition, the role of Jewish teachers in leading their followers astray, Jewish blindness and willfulness, and divine intention. Nonetheless, Jewish rejection remained deeply troubling. Indeed, Jewish rejection of Christian reading of Scripture posed an element of danger. Christian believers themselves might be led to wonder which of the two alternative readings was actually the correct one. They might, on occasion at least, question the imagery of Jewish error. In addition, there was a strong Christian tradition that spoke of eventual Jewish agreement to the truths of Christianity. That eventual agreement was regularly associated with the onset of full messianic advent. Thus, periods of religious exhilaration often saw augmented efforts to reach out to the Jews. Overall, despite the seeming improbability of successful missionizing among the Jews, there remained powerful inducements to undertake the task. Just as there were periods of relative neglect of this task, so, too, were there periods of intense preaching efforts aimed at the Jews.

Our focus is precisely such a period. With the fall of the western portion of the Roman Empire in the fifth century and the onslaught of the Muslims beginning in the early eighth century, the leadership of medieval western Christendom had far more pressing issues with which to deal, and conversion of the Jews was relatively neglected. However, with the invigoration of medieval western Christendom, beginning in the late tenth and eleventh centuries and increasingly realized during the twelfth century, the stage was set for intensified appeal to the Jewish minority.[7] By the middle decades

[7] The fullest analysis of twelfth-century Christian missionizing or lack thereof can be found in David Berger, "Mission to the Jews and Jewish-Christian Contacts in the Polemical Literature of the High Middle Ages," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 576–591. The Berger article will be discussed shortly. Daniel J. Lasker argues in a forthcoming essay that the Christian pressures involved more than overt proselytizing; Lasker suggests that Christian philosophical sophistication in and of itself constituted an ongoing pressure on the Jews of southern France. See Lasker, "Christianity, Philosophy, and Polemic in Jewish Provence" (Hebrew), forthcoming. My appreciation to Daniel Lasker for sharing this essay with me.

of the thirteenth century, the informal spiritual pressures of the twelfth century evolved into a full-blown missionizing campaign, involving the allocation of significant Church resources, the development of regularized channels for confronting Jews with Christian argumentation, and the adumbration of innovative argumentation intended to break down Jewish defenses.[8]

The leadership of those Jewish communities living within the orbit of Latin Christendom at this critical juncture had to take up the challenge of countering majority Christian pressure. We shall study the responses of major Jewish leaders of the late twelfth and early to mid thirteenth centuries, as they strove to identify the central thrusts of Christian pressure and to offer their followers convincing lines of rebuttal that would enable their co-religionists to resist the forces working upon them and to remain fully rooted in their Jewish community and identity.

The Christian challenge was surely pan-European, and we possess twelfth- and thirteenth-century Jewish polemical works from all areas of Latin Christendom – from the older southern regions of northern Spain, southern France, and Italy and from the newer northern regions, such as northern France.[9] To be sure, the challenge was mounted somewhat differently, was perceived somewhat differently, and was rebutted somewhat differently in these diverse areas.[10] Of these varied areas of twelfth- and

[8] I have studied the thirteenth-century missionizing campaign in *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and the Jewish Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). In a sense, I am proceeding backward in time in the present book, analyzing developments prior to those studied in *Daggers of Faith*.

[9] For a full bibliography of Jewish anti-Christian polemical works, see Judah Rosenthal, "The Anti-Christian Polemical Literature to the End of the Eighteenth Century" (Hebrew), *Areshet* 2 (1960):130–179. There is no full overview of the history of Jewish polemics. Broad synthesizing works include Hans Joachim Schoeps, *The Jewish–Christian Argument: A History of Theologies in Conflict*, trans. David E. Green (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1963), and Samuel Krauss, *The Jewish–Christian Controversy from the Earliest Times to 1789*, ed. and rev. William Horbury (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995). For a collection of sources organized thematically, see Frank Ephraim Talmage (ed.), *Disputation and Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish–Christian Encounter* (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1975). For medieval Jewish polemics specifically, see Hanne Trautner-Kromann, *Shield and Sword: Jewish Polemics against Christianity and the Christians in France and Spain from 1100–1500* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1993); Jeremy Cohen, "Toward a Functional Classification of Jewish Anti-Christian Polemic in the High Middle Ages," in *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*, ed. Bernard Lewis and Friedrich Niewohner (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 93–114; and Daniel J. Lasker, "Major Themes of the Jewish–Christian Debate: God, Humanity, Messiah," *Solomon Goldman Lectures* 7 (1999): 107–130. For full discussion of medieval Jewish philosophical polemics, see Daniel J. Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity in the Middle Ages* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1977).

[10] For an illuminating statement of these differences, note Daniel J. Lasker, "Jewish Polemics against Christianity in Thirteenth-Century Italy," in *Ḥazon Naḥum: Studies in Jewish Law, Thought, and History Presented to Dr. Norman Lamm*, ed. Yaakov Elman and Jeffrey S. Gurock (New York: Yeshiva

thirteenth-century Latin Christendom, one stands out as the arena from which we have the earliest and most persistent Jewish polemical writings. That area is southern France and northern Spain. I have made the decision to focus on this one ambiance, rather than attempting a survey of Jewish polemical writings from the entirety of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Latin Christendom. In so doing, I am sacrificing comprehensiveness in favor of concentration on a relatively homogeneous socio-cultural environment. Since I am committed to seeing the Jewish polemical enterprise in its communal and social setting, I believe that the advantages in treating a relatively homogeneous socio-cultural environment outweigh the liabilities.[11]

The Christian–Jewish relationship is deep and complex, with important implications for the polemical interchange between the two faith communities. The complexities of this relationship have been beautifully captured by David Berger, in an overview he has provided of Jewish–Christian polemics.

> The intensity, persistence, and significance of Jewish–Christian polemics are in large measure a function of the peculiar combination of intimacy and divergence that marks the relationship between the two faiths. It is not merely the fact that Christianity emerges out of Judaism; it is, further, the combination of the continuing centrality of the Hebrew Bible for Christians together with the profundity of the theological differences that separated Christians from Jews.[12]

The intimacy regularly led Christians to believe that immersion in the Hebrew Bible should smoothly lead Jews to acknowledge Christian truth

University Press, 1997), 251–263. On p. 252, Lasker notes: "Most of the Jewish polemical activity in the thirteenth century was concentrated in Iberia, Provence, France, and Germany, each Jewish community responding to the Christian challenge in its own way."

[11] I shall argue shortly that there were significant differences between the various areas of Latin Christendom with respect to missionizing among the Jews, with southern France and northern Spain in fact leading the way in this new endeavor. For a sense of the cultural cohesion of southern France and northern Spain, see Joseph Strayer, *The Albigensian Crusades* (New York: Dial Press, 1971), 1–14. Because the places mentioned are central to our investigation, it is worth noting the following in Strayer: "The southern [French] tongue is very close to Catalan, fairly close to Castilian, and quite remote from French. A merchant from Narbonne would have been easily understood in Barcelona, while he would have needed an interpreter in Paris." Strayer pursues the parallels between southern France and northern Spain in a number of cultural, economic, and political domains. From the Jewish perspective, note David Berger, "Judaism and General Culture in Medieval and Early Modern Times," in *Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures: Rejection or Integration?*, ed. Jacob J. Schacter (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1997), 60–141. Berger treats what he sees as the critical period in the relation of medieval Jews to the general culture around them in a section entitled "The Great Struggle: Provence and Northern Spain from the Late Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Century" (85–108).

[12] David Berger, "Jewish–Christian Polemics," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 16 vols. ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1987), XI: 389–395.

and Jews to wonder at Christian misreading of these same sacred texts; the divergence led to the dismay and often intense anger that each side felt toward the other.

As twelfth- and thirteenth-century western Christendom began to exert accelerating spiritual pressure upon its Jews, well-defined lines of majority argumentation had long been in existence. From its inception, Christianity has been engaged in argument with the Jewish matrix from which it emerged, first as a dissident group within the Jewish community of first-century Palestine and then as a separate church that claimed to supplant and supersede the Jewish community and its religious vision. Much of New Testament literature constitutes a running argument with Judaism and the Jews.[13] Beyond the New Testament, the *adversus Judaeos* literature developed early, proliferated quickly, and remained a staple of Christian intellectual creativity over the ages. This literature is diverse in its lines of argumentation and rich in detail.[14]

It might be reasonably assumed that Judaism has a parallel *adversus Christianos* literature from its side – equally old, diverse, and rich. Such in fact is not at all the case. Judaism of late antiquity and the first half of the Middle Ages is relatively devoid of a literature that engages Christianity in an extended and serious manner. The classics of rabbinic literature – the Mishnah, the two Talmuds, and the early midrashic literature – offer only the scantiest mention of Jesus and his faith. There is a folkish literature called the *Toldot Yeshu* literature that retells the Gospel story in derogatory terms. The history of this literature is obscure, and it does not in any case represent serious engagement with Christianity and the challenges it poses. The first genuine medieval Jewish engagement with Christianity came in the Muslim sphere, where the majority of world Jewry was to be found in the early centuries of the Middle Ages. This first genuine engagement is, however, hardly extensive.[15] We shall thus be studying the first protracted and intensive Jewish engagement with Christian truth claims, with a focus on the geographic area of western Christendom in which the Jewish

[13] For some detail on this running argument, see below, Chaps. 1 and 2.

[14] For the fullest description of this *adversus Judaeos* literature, see Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christliche Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.–11. Jh.)*, 4th ed. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999); *idem*, *Die christliche Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (11.–13. Jh.)*, 3rd ed. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1997); *idem*, *Die christliche Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (13.–20. Jh.)* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994). Also highly useful is Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs chrétiens-latins du moyen âge sur les juifs and le judaïsme* (Paris: Mouton, 1963). For discussion of some of the key lines of argumentation to be found in the earliest strata of this literature, see Chap. 2.

[15] For the pre-twelfth-century Jewish polemical literature, see below, Chap. 3.

engagement with Christian claims first surfaced and was most persistently expressed.

It is not too difficult to understand the relative dearth of Jewish anti-Christian polemics during the early centuries of the Middle Ages. The explanations lie in the nature of the Christian–Jewish relationship and in the demographic realities of Jewish life. Christianity as the challenger faith had to make a constant case against the community it claimed to supersede and supplant. This ongoing case against the Jews began with the New Testament. Since this polemical concern inhered in the Christian situation and was so deeply embedded in Christian Scripture, it was natural that the *adversus Judaeos* literature would be maintained as an important Christian literary genre. None of these factors were operative for the Jews. Jews did not see for themselves the necessity of engaging Christianity, which they envisioned simply as an offshoot and aberrant religious sect.[16] To the extent that Jews lived in the Muslim orbit, in which Christianity did not threaten them in any significant way, they could remain relatively aloof from the Christian–Jewish conflict.

As the center of the world Jewish population began to shift toward western Christendom, Jewish engagement with Christianity deepened considerably.[17] Toward the end of the 1160s, we encounter, for the first time, full-blown Jewish anti-Christian polemical works composed in Christendom.[18] Probably the very first such work is a literary dialogue known as *Sefer*

[16] See the brief but interesting discussion of this imagery in Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 23–26.

[17] For a broad sense of this population shift, see Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd ed., 18 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952–83), IV: 86–91, and Robert Chazan, "Then and Now: Jewish Life at the End of the First and Second Christian Millenium," *Solomon Goldman Lectures*, 8 (2003): 51–70.

[18] By "full-blown Jewish anti-Christian polemical works," I mean works devoted directly and fully to polemics, rather than the occasional anti-Christian references that might be found in earlier authors, such as some of those treated in Chap. 3. For a sense of the newness of these works, see Daniel J. Lasker, "Jewish–Christian Polemics at the Turning Point: Jewish Evidence from the Twelfth Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996): 161–173, and Simon Schwarzfuchs, "Religion populaire et polémique savante: le tournant de la polémique judeo-chrétienne au 12e siècle," in *Medieval Studies in Honor of Avrom Saltman*, ed. Bat-Sheva Albert et al. (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ian University Press, 1995), 189–206. It will be clear that there is much in the latter study with which I disagree. I have used the term "polemics" broadly, not distinguishing between defensive thrusts, sometimes identified as apologetic, and attacks on the opposing faith. With regard to the distinction between those works intended for insiders and those for outsiders, I also use the inclusive term polemics, although I sometimes tend to call the latter missionizing or proselytizing works. Due to the basic rules of Jewish presence in medieval western Christendom, addressing Christians to convince them of the truth of Judaism was out of the question, and thus there is simply no real Jewish polemical literature aimed at Christians or – to use the alternative terminology – no real Jewish missionizing literature. With respect to Christian polemical literature, it is often difficult to be sure whether it is intended for an external Jewish or internal Christian audience.

ha-Berit (*The Book of the Covenant*), written by a well-known Jewish grammarian and exegete, Joseph Kimhi of Narbonne.[19] Only a few years later, an unknown Jew, Jacob ben Reuben, writing probably in northern Spain, composed a well-organized polemical manual, again in dialogue format, entitled *Milḥamot ha-Shem* (*The Wars of the Lord*).

During the thirteenth century, Jewish polemical works multiplied all across western Christendom. We possess such works from the old Jewish community of Italy and from the much younger Jewish settlements of northern Europe.[20] Yet it was the Jewries of southern France and northern Spain, which had produced the first two anti-Christian tracts just now noted, that continued to produce the most extensive Jewish polemical literature. Joseph Kimhi's son, David, likewise of Narbonne, wrote early in the thirteenth century one of the most popular Jewish Bible commentaries of the Middle Ages, in which he engaged recurrently and at some length Christian claims. These comments were perceived as so useful that they were widely purveyed as a separate composition of anti-Christian polemic. Over an extended period of time, from roughly the 1230s through the 1260s, Rabbi Meir bar Simon of Narbonne (again), composed a lengthy and rambling collection of opuscules under the title *Milḥemet Miẓvah* (*The Obligatory War*). Most of the elements in this wide-ranging collection are polemical in nature. Finally, Rabbi Moses ben Nahman of Gerona, who was the Jewish spokesman in the well-known Barcelona disputation of 1263, composed, in the wake of this major public engagement, a number of works with obvious polemical objectives. Thus, the 1160s saw the very beginnings of serious Jewish polemical writings in western Christendom, located specifically in southern France and northern Spain. In this same area, the new literary genre developed rapidly, with a set of important writings already completed a century later.[21]

[19] For this and the other works described in this paragraph and the next, full bibliographic and background information will be provided in Chap. 4. On the Jewish community of Narbonne, home to three of our five Jewish polemicists, see the classic study by Jean Régné, *Etude sur la condition des Juifs de Narbonne du Ve au XIVe siècle* (Narbonne: F. Caillard, 1912).

[20] For Italy, note Solomon ben Moses de Rossi's *'Edut ha-Shem Ne'emanah* and Moses of Salerno's *Ma'amar ha-Emunah*. See again Lasker, "Jewish Polemics against Christianity in Thirteenth-Century Italy." For northern Europe, note *Sefer Yosef ha-Mekane* and the *Sefer Niẓaḥon Yashan*. See David Berger, *The Jewish–Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1979).

[21] There is one further work that stems from southern France that might well have been included, and that is the *Sefer Maḥazik Emunah* of Mordechai ben Jehosafa of Avignon. This work has been edited and translated by a doctoral student at New York University, Yocheved Engelberg-Cohen. The work is a bit later than the works of Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, but not all that much later. I eventually decided to leave this work out of the present study partly because of the appealing notion of treating

What explains the sudden and rapid development of this hitherto uncultivated field of Jewish creativity and its striking geographic concentration? The most obvious factor is the growing number of Jews who made their way into Christendom, especially its southwestern sectors. The impressive development of the more westerly sectors of medieval Christendom – both southern and northern – began to attract Jewish immigrants at about the turn of the millennium. Simultaneously, some of the upheavals in the westernmost sectors of the Muslim world, especially North Africa and the Iberian peninsula, caused Jews from these areas to make their way into neighboring Christian northern Spain and southern France.[22] The Kimhi family, mentioned above, is one such refugee family that made a highly successful adjustment to a new home in Christian territory. Jews living in medieval Christendom were faced on a daily basis with the challenge of Christianity and had to erect their defenses against its blandishments. This is, of course, precisely the function of polemical literature.

While Jewish population movement forms part of the explanation of the efflorescence of Jewish polemical literature from the 1160s onward, it is by no means the only – or even the dominant – factor. Equally or perhaps more important was the stimulus provided by the Christian spiritual aggressiveness of the twelfth century. The issue of twelfth-century Christian missionizing has been most carefully addressed by David Berger. Focusing on the important Christian *adversus Judaeos* tracts composed in northern Europe, Berger concludes that, "despite the proliferation of Christian polemics in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, the evidence is overwhelming that these works were not rooted in a new or continuing missionary impulse."[23] The conclusion Berger draws from his evidence seems to me compelling – for northern Europe, the locus of the Christian polemical writing he examines. A focus on southern Europe and an alternative body of data suggests, however, a different picture. The evidence supplied by the proliferation of Jewish anti-Christian polemics in southern France and northern Spain indicates that the Jews of this area felt themselves very much under spiritual

the 1160s through the 1260s and partly because the *Maḥazik Emunah* adds very little to the lines of Christian argumentation perceived by our Jewish authors and equally little to the lines of Jewish response projected.

[22] For this major transition, the classic work is Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols, trans. Louis Schoffman et al. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1960–66), I: 39–110.

[23] Berger, "Mission to the Jews and Jewish–Christian Contacts in the Polemical Literature of the High Middle Ages," 578. Berger further suggests that the proliferation of Christian polemical works can be explained in terms of general intellectual stimulation and the specific challenges posed by contacts with Jews.

pressure. Further, one of the arguments noted by Berger for the existence of twelfth-century proselytizing (which he, to be sure, rejects) is the evidence of full-blown Christian missionizing during the middle decades of the thirteenth century. My earlier study of the new missionizing suggests that the center of this effort was southern France and northern Spain.[24] Thus, it seems to me that Christian missionizing inclinations were indeed relatively absent across northern Europe, but very much present in the south. It was this new missionizing spirit in the south that gave rise to the first Jewish anti-Christian polemical treatises in the 1160s and 1170s and that accounts for the ongoing production of such materials through the ensuing century.

The factors in the new Christian militancy toward the Jewish minority within medieval western Christendom are complex. Here let us only note that the Christian aggressiveness was the result of a curious combination of impressive vigor and self-confidence, on the one hand, and considerable doubt and uncertainty on the other.

The rapid development of western Christendom was in and of itself the source of considerable Christian pride and self-confidence. This rapid development led in turn to the crusading mood and venture. The successes of the First Crusade served to expand the Christian sense of divine favor; it also in a variety of ways accelerated the process of growth and development within western Christendom. The area upon which we are focused – southern France and northern Spain – had embarked, even prior to the First Crusade, on a protracted military engagement with the Muslim forces of the Iberian peninsula. This engagement eventually proved to be far more successful that the grandiose expeditions to the Near East. Slowly, the Christian forces conquered more and more of the peninsula and added these rich areas to western Christendom.[25] All this served to swell pride further among the Christian population of Europe.

At the same time, the crusading movement in general and the successful military operations on the Iberian peninsula served to enhance Christian familiarity with the Muslim world, its depth and power, and its achievements. The unrealistic hubris engendered by the conquest of Jerusalem

[24] Chazan, *Daggers of Faith*.

[25] For an overview of what Christians saw as the re-conquest of the peninsula, see Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 193–357. For briefer treatment, see Bernard F. Reilly, *The Medieval Spains* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 90–189. Because of our focus on areas belonging to the Crown of Aragon, see also T. N. Bisson, *The Medieval Crown of Aragon: A Short History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 31–85.