Medieval Heresies

Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Middle Ages were divided in many ways. But one thing they shared in common was the fear that God was offended by wrong belief. *Medieval Heresies: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam* is the first comparative survey of heresy and its response throughout the medieval world. Spanning England to Persia, it examines heresy, error, and religious dissent – and efforts to end them through correction, persuasion, or punishment – among Latin Christians, Greek Christians, Jews, and Muslims. With a lively narrative that begins in the late fourth century and ends in the early sixteenth century, *Medieval Heresies* is an unprecedented history of how the three great monotheistic religions of the Middle Ages resembled, differed from, and even interrelated with each other in defining heresy and orthodoxy.

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To my children
CONTENTS

List of figures ix
List of maps xi
Acknowledgments xii
Note on texts and translations xiv

Introduction: “My community will be divided”:
heresy in the medieval world 1
Truly medieval heresies 2
What is heresy? 6
Comparing medieval heresies 15
Heresy in this book 25

1 Peoples of the Book (380–661) 28
Heresy and territory 31
Defining and redefining heresy in a changing Roman Empire 32
Repressing Christian heresy: the foundations 43
Arians and Nicenes in the post-Roman West 53
Heresy and religious change in the East 65
Authority and texts in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam 68
Conclusion: let there be unity 77

2 Triumphs of orthodoxy (661–1031) 79
Religious authority in early-medieval Islam 81
Repressing heresy in the Muslim East 86
Heresy in Muslim al-Andalus 97
The Karaites 103
Contents

Heresy and response in the Christian East 112
The “reappearance” of heresy in the Latin West 127
Conclusion: an early-medieval persecuting society? 135

3 The perfect hatred (1031–1209) 137
Conflict, heresy, and religious otherness in the eleventh and twelfth centuries 139
Heresy and religious movements in the Latin West 146
Heresy, spirituality, and rebellion in the Muslim world 163
Inventing orthodoxy and punishing heresy in high-medieval Judaism 174
Byzantine heresy in the high Middle Ages 187
Philosophy, theology, and heresy 196
Conclusion: hating those who hate you 201

4 Cinders and ashes (1209–1328) 203
God’s judgment 207
Poverty and apocalypticism 220
Greeks and Latins, brothers and heretics 228
Jews as heresy accusers 232
Jews as Christian heretics 237
Aristotle, Greek philosophy, and heresy 242
Two heretics (d. 1328) 250
Conclusion: eye of the beholder 261

5 Purity and peoples (1328–1510) 263
Heresy, nation, and state in the late Middle Ages 267
Blood, baptism, and heresy 270
Orthodoxy and heresy in late-medieval Judaism 278
Language, nation, and heresy 286
Eastern Christianity: heresy and the end of the state 307
Conclusion: no longer Jew or Greek 320
Epilogue 323

For further reading 330
Glossary 335
Index 339
FIGURES

1 Constantine the Great at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, ordering the burning of Arian books. *Canon of the Councils*, ninth century. Biblioteca Capitolare Vercelli (Photo credit: Gianni Dagli Orti/The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY) page 14
2 Disputation between Augustine of Hippo and Faustus. School of Mont Saint Michel. French, early thirteenth century. Bibliothèque Municipale, Avranches, MS 90, f. 1v. (Photo credit: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY) 50
3 The baptism of Christ by John the Baptist, with the river god of Jordan. Cupola mosaic, Baptistery of the Arians, Ravenna, built by Theodoric before AD 526. (Photo credit: Alfredo Dagli Orti/The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY) 55
4 Isaiah’s prophecy of Muhammad, from *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* by Al-Biruni, 1307. Edinburgh University Library, Scotland. (Photo credit: The University of Edinburgh/Bridgeman Images) 75
5 Execution of Al-Hallaj, from *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* by Al-Biruni, 1307. Edinburgh University Library, Scotland. (Photo credit: The University of Edinburgh/Bridgeman Images) 91
6 Carpet page from a Karaite Bible, British Library, London. (Photo credit: Bridgeman Images) 107
7 Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople and iconoclasts. The Theodore Psalter/Studion Psalter of Theodore of Caesarea, Studios Monastery, Constantinople, 1066. (Photo credit: HIP/Art Resource, NY) 116
List of figures

8 Icon of the triumph of orthodoxy, Constantinople, c. 1400. (©The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved) 117
10 Abbreviated Talmud of R. Asher ben Jehiel, c. 1250–1328. (Photo credit: Kharbine-Tapabor/The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY) 238
12 Shah Ismail (1501–23) fighting Shaybani Khan. Period of Abbas II. Safavid mural in the Audience Hall, 1660s. Chihil Sutun (Pavilion of Forty Columns), Isfahan, Iran. (Photo credit: SEF/Art Resource, NY) 306
13 Palm Sunday procession in Moscow, April 8, 1498. Ivan III, Zoe Palaiologina, and Elena of Wallachia. Collection of the State History Museum, Moscow. (Photo credit: HIP/Art Resource, NY) 319
# MAPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Byzantine Empire</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Islamic Near East</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Europe in the year 1000</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Mediterranean world in the twelfth century</td>
<td>xviii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The later medieval world</td>
<td>xix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While I am no Augustine, the Quodvultdeus of this project was Elizabeth Friend-Smith at Cambridge University Press. A comparative history of heresy in medieval Judaism, Christianity, and Islam was Liz’s inspired idea, and I can only hope that this book reflects a bit of what she first envisioned. I am enormously grateful to Liz for her insights and patience throughout the process, to Valerie Appleby for shaping this into a book students might read, and to Rosalyn Scott for her cheerful assistance in all things.

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This book is dedicated to my children: May your liberty of mind and body never be at the mercy of others’ notions of paradise, and of their certain faith in how to attain it.
While it hopes to contribute to scholarly conversations about heresy in the Middle Ages, *Medieval Heresies* has been written with an eye to student use. Wherever possible, I have used primary sources readily available in English translation, including some that exist online. On rare occasions, I have provided my own translations from the original language, and these are identified in the notes. Footnotes have been kept to a minimum, and normally accompany only direct quotation from primary sources. I encourage readers to consult not only the “For further reading” section at the end of the book, but also the fuller, traditional bibliography available on the book’s website.


Map 4 The Mediterranean world in the twelfth century