

martyrologies, one of which, the ninth-century *Martyrology of Óengus*, provides the first record of Saint Patrick's feast day being observed on March 17.

So what did distinguish the clients? "For their part, Céli Dé in Óengus's day maintained severe rules, undertook massive vigils, dutifully confessed their sins, performed their penances, and stringently observed Sunday because these were the actions or services that they felt were required of God's 'clients' and that would mark them as such. Moreover, while they considered themselves apart from others, they were not entirely reclusive or isolationist, for they advocated an active pastoral ministry within their own communities" (215).

By its nature a technical study based on codicological evidence has a limited audience, and this book will appeal primarily to specialists in Irish church history.

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Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages. By **Jonathan Elukin**. Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the Ancient to the Modern World. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007. xii + 196 pp. \$24.95 cloth.

Jonathan Elukin has penned a concise, vigorous polemic designed to challenge what he views as the dominant thesis regarding medieval Jewish-Christian relations during the past sixty years. In his own words, "The historical fulcrum for much of the recent work on the treatment of Jews is the claim that twelfth-century Europe became a 'persecuting society.' The treatment of Jews in the medieval past thus ominously signals the fundamentally intolerant character of European states and Christian culture" (4). For historians working under the shadow of the Holocaust, this thesis may have seemed compelling, both for its explanatory power in the face of the Shoah, and for the warrant it provided for continued secularization in the West. Yet Elukin feels that it has "inadvertently distorted or at least obscured our ability to see a fuller range of Jewish experience in the Middle Ages" (5). He proposes instead seeing the series of disasters that befell medieval Jewry—beginning with the crusader massacres of 1096, including the confiscations and burning of the Talmud in the thirteenth century, and culminating in the expulsions from England (1290), France (1306), and Spain (1492)—as exceptional, while an admittedly imperfect yet resilient *convivencia* between Jews and Christians was the norm.

Elukin's thinking is guided by a simple series of questions: Why is it that after each of these disasters Jews (and often their Christian neighbors) sought to restore the normalcy of the *status quo ante*, and often succeeded in doing so? If unremitting violence and persecution was the norm in medieval Christendom, whence the enduring belief in the possibility of tolerance? Is the incidence of violence against Jews really that remarkable, given the "background level" of generalized violence in the Middle Ages? Is it likely that so many Jews could have been so wrong for so long about something so crucial, while only we moderns can see medieval reality for what it was? It is possible, of course, to answer the last question in the affirmative, if one assumes that medieval Jews (and their descendants up to the last century) shared a "diaspora" mentality that concealed from them the implacable

hostility of the Christian majority; and that in any case there was then no imaginable alternative to accepting their destiny of exile and persecution. But Elukin offers a different reading of the same evidence, one that seeks to take medieval Jews seriously as observers and agents in their own environment.

For the most part, Elukin does not offer new evidence, but instead offers a new master narrative in terms of which the familiar data can be reinterpreted. Although he doesn't want to deny the obvious catastrophes, he endeavors to strip them of their inevitability, arguing that each of them can be explained by local, contingent circumstances and that they do not form a pattern of inexorable and intensifying intolerance. In the case of Visigothic Spain, aggressive anti-Jewish measures on the part of the church may actually indicate a much more fluid and tolerant situation on the ground that the bishops were seeking to change, with limited success (36ff.). Jewish responses to the crusade massacres of 1096 ironically illustrate the degree to which Jews were integrated with twelfth-century Christian culture (66). The expulsion of the Jews from England "should not be seen as the inevitable purging of non-Christian elements from English society, but as an experiment in crisis management over taxation" (118).

In these instances and others, Elukin offers refreshing insights, eschewing what Salo Baron described as a "lachrymose view" of Jewish history, and preserving a sense of historical contingency in the face of all-embracing theories. Nonetheless, the author may be too dismissive of the significant role of changes in theology, royal ideology, or popular consciousness in undermining the position of Jews in the high and late Middle Ages. The "elephant in the room" is the perception that the terms of Jewish life in Europe underwent a fundamental if gradual change for the worse over this period; Elukin shows that much of the furniture in the room remained intact, but, in this reviewer's opinion, he does not quite make the elephant disappear.

For those familiar with the scholars to whose work Elukin is responding (Joseph Strayer, Robert I. Moore, Jeremy Cohen, Anna Sapir Abulafia, Robert Chazan, Gavin Langmuir) and those he sees as allies (Cary Nederman, John Hood, Ivan Marcus, Robert Lerner, Johannes Heil, Edward Peters), this book will be an invigorating exercise in historiography. Those newer to the field might be confused by the allusions to alternate interpretations that are not clearly described (for example, Cohen's thesis regarding mendicant anti-Judaism), or by the speculative nature of some of his counter-explanations (note the five occurrences of the word "may" in the last paragraph on 34). At any rate, he has clearly placed the issue on the table.

The book is generally well-produced, although closer editing might have weeded out some problems of syntax and diction. The notes and bibliography are ample. Scholars of Jewish-Christian relations will need to reckon with this book and its argument.

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Thomas Becket and his Biographers. By Michael Staunton. Studies in the History of Medieval Religion 28. Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell, 2006. viii + 249 pp. \$80.00 cloth.

The first thing to say about this monograph is that it provides a model of clarity of organization for such a work. From the table of contents, which