

The body as a locus of the supernatural power in Guibert's de Nogent autobiography

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Summary

We propose to study Guibert's de Nogent (1053 - c.1125) Memoirs, its «heterology», i.e. the references to Jews and heretics. Medieval bodies are texts on which cultural narratives are inscribed. One of these narratives is the obstinate idea that the Christian world should be homogeneous. In the narrative strategy followed by Guibert, Jews although culturally central are transformed into marginal shadows exercising evil power. Contrary to what has been argued, the use of sexual categories has to do less with Guibert's personality and more with the cultural categories that he disposes and needs in order to construct otherness in a hierarchical mode. He constructs the Jew as an animal, essentially different from the Christian. He follows a double strategy: First he marginalizes the Jew by offering him a secondary role as a mediator for the Devil that threatens Christian bodies. Secondly, he gives to all his sexual fantasies the appearance of supernatural expressions. In this case the supernatural functions as an effet de réel.

Nothing would be known of Guibert de Nogent if he had not written his so-called autobiography (*De vita sua*)¹. Son of an average noble family, whose members were vassals of the local count, he was born in 1053. He became an Abbot for the Benedictine

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Order at the Nogent-sous-Coucy monastery, in the Laon area in 11104 and died around 1125. He was also the author of Biblical comments, a hymn to the Virgin Mary, a treatise against the Jews (*De incarnatione contra Judaeos*), a treatise on saints' relics (*De pignoribus sanctorum*) and a chronicle of the first crusade (*Gesta Dei per Francos*)².

Extensive references to his childhood, his parents, his emotions, the conflict between spirit and flesh, the dreams which are described in detail in his *Memoirs* provided the impetus for studies on his personality and sexuality³. In this paper I will focus on the role assumed by the body in his work. What is the relationship between this extraordinary man's attitude and that of his peers, the clerical elite of the times, regarding the social changes that were taking place during that time⁴?

Incarnation is at the heart of Christianity and Christ's body is at the centre of all rituals⁵. For this reason worship, representations, and Christian practices are associated with the body in the phenomenological sense of the experience of the embodied self⁶, in the sense of «a natural symbol»⁷, which represents society and its relationship with nature and culture⁸, and finally in the sense of power politics, namely, managing the body via sexuality and reproduction, illness etc.⁹. Christ's body and the rituals connected to it supply the language that expresses the relationship between self and society and offers the field on which social competitions are settled, and political practices are exercised; it is also the locus from which a group can draw symbolic power¹⁰. Medieval piety foregrounds the suffering body of the worshiper that is in pain as an opportunity or even a reason for salvation¹¹.

Bodies are conceived and experienced amongst discourses of various origins (theological, medical, legal ...), discourses that sometimes also happen to be contradictory¹². In the saints' lives, in literature, through the historical verbal conventions, the bodies become predominantly the locus where the supernatural intervenes. The healing touch of the miracle-working kings, as been studied by M. Bloch¹³ –in the form of belief, myth, and ritual with religious allegiances and political consequences– inaugurated the idea that discourse on the body belongs specifically to stories that conflate the «supernatural» with the «real».

I will attempt to elucidate historically specific conceptualisations of the body expressed in Guibert's references to the Jews, the heretics and the practice of divine justice. Religious culture conflu-

tes supernatural configurations and data from reality into a single discourse¹⁴ and decrees the body as metaphor.

Jews, heretics and physicality: The supernatural as effet de réel

Guibert's aversion to the body has been the subject of much discussion¹⁵. This loathing of the flesh is not only connected to sexuality and the confession of sins but takes on social connotations. Let me indicate G. Duby's assertion that the condemnation of heretics in nuptial affairs conceals a desire on the part of the clergy to be exclusively in charge of matters of the flesh, in which lay people also wanted to have a say¹⁶. In the same train of thought, I believe that the reference to the physicality of the Jews really conceals another issue which is at stake here: the defense of the Christian dogma on a symbolic level. In narratives Jews are presented as endangering the integrity of the body; weakness in Christian bodies makes them vulnerable to temptation or to the profane influences of the Jews, who act as the instrument of Satan¹⁷. In the high Middle Ages sex and its relation to pollution and sin was reinterpreted. A new emphasis on the power and wonder of the Eucharist led the Church to become concerned with having a more pure clergy to administer it. Efforts were made to protect clerics as far as possible from the polluting influences of the body, to keep them distant from the corrupting power of women, whose nature was more libidinous. Clerical marriage that had been tolerated was stamped out after the mideleventh century. Reflecting these anxieties, the association of women with demons and with conscious, intentional carnality became increasingly evident and virulent in the clerical literature¹⁸.

In Guibert's Memoirs, demons are presented as «accepting those who were denied baptism»¹⁹, namely, the Jews. One of their victims is a monk, who began to keep company with a Jewish doctor after he had been taken ill. They confessed their secrets to each other and, riddled by curiosity – which is a sin – for the «corrupted arts», the Jew agreed to be the intermediary to the Devil (*assensit Juadeus, et sequestrum ei apud diabolum se futurum pollicetur*). To be initiated into the Jew's secrets – the art of magic –, the monk had to sacrifice everything most delectable to him (*dele-*

ctabilis) and perform an act of oblation of his sperm (*sperma libabis*). Guibert comments that the ancient foe (*antiquus hostis*), the Jew, provokes this profane act in order to blaspheme against the clergy and the blessed Host. What follows exemplifies the consequences of the devastating exchange: A monk consorts with a nun and when they are in danger of being discovered unbeknown to her he turns her into a huge dog using magic²⁰! In the renewed debate over theological matters in the 12th and 13th centuries, new emphasis was given to miracles (stigmata, bleeding hosts etc.) in which bodies are mediators between earth and heaven²¹. The monk that has sinned continues to live a life severed from God, who punishes him by inflicting on him a severe illness²². The monk relates the story in his confession and Anselm himself, who was at the time the Abbot of Beck, judges this affair. The monk is excluded from the Sacraments, which means he is excommunicated and expelled. Nevertheless, affected by the demons' lies, the monk continues to believe he will become a Bishop... In this episode the Jew assumes the role of the intermediary to the Devil.

In this case the demons are incorporeal, whereas in the same text but in a different episode, when Satan fails to tempt a monk, the former turns into a monk and kills him²³. Since he could not harm the spirit, he harms the body. Since the 12th century, demons have appeared in texts in human form in order to ensnare the human body²⁴ and have acquired a privileged place amongst the stereotypes used by the discourse of the treatises *contra iudaeos*²⁵. The association between the Jew and the Devil is also true for the New Testament. In this line of thought, Guibert is a prime instigator in cultivating this attitude of the deception of Christians by Jews via sexual means²⁶. The loss of control over the body, a «perverse sexuality», is the product of the Jewish doctor practicing his art. Curiosity, which is a mortal sin, leads to the loss of rational control and reduces the nun to an animal status, the exact opposite of the Christian body. The transformation (*a mirabile really*) functions for the reader as the most concrete illustration of the evil power²⁷ while narratively it offers a way out of the contradictions between the «good» and the «bad» facets of the body.

The second Jew referred to by Guibert²⁸ is an accomplice of a degenerate and murderous woman, mother of Count Jean de Soisson, himself a heretic. The Jew is led to the pyre by the secular judges (if this incident indeed took place it is a novel event for

such an incident was first recorded in 1022 when the heretics in Orleans were set alight). Divine judgment inflicts punishment on the woman's body in the form of paralysis and loss of speech, condemning her to «live like a pig». The metamorphosis into an animal takes place in the narrative, metaphorically, manifests itself in the form of divine retribution, as it did in the previous episode, and is the result of the dangerous consorting with Jews.

How do we interpret the transformation of the nun into a dog and the likening of the degenerate noble woman to a pig in relationship to their consorting with Jews? The aforementioned episodes can be interpreted within the framework of the polemics between Jews and Christians during the Middle Ages, at the heart of which lay the fundamental difference of dogma regarding the Incarnation of Christ and the Virgin Mary but also the secret body of the worshippers, who become flesh of Christ's flesh through baptism.

Differences in dogma and the preoccupation of the theologians with the faculty of logic and its uses – after the introduction of Aristotle's work– encouraged scholars of the 12th century to project the binary oppositions between mind/body, spirit/flesh, human/animal onto the conflict between Christians and Jews. Anselm (later a Bishop of Canterbury and a monk at the Abbey of Saint Germer where Guibert studied²⁹) believed that the worshippers understood the necessity for and the feasibility of the Incarnation through logic, which was the instrument of truth; the fact that pagans and Jews were incapable of comprehending the spiritual implications of faith indicated they lacked the fundamental quality of human beings, namely, logic. Jews predominantly resemble animals since they rely on their senses to be taught the truth, wrote Odo, Bishop of Cambrai. Thus according to the theory put forth by theologians, Christians heeded logic which governed the mind, while Jews read the Bible «physically» or literally as regards to the body and its animal qualities, lacked spiritual qualities and were dominated by the body³⁰.

In his treatise *De Incarnatione Contra Judaeos*³¹ –which he writes against the heretic Count Jean de Soisson, who is attracted by Judaism– Guibert himself opposes the belief that God could not take on human form. He uses the Jews to personify the Count's mistake. He says that bodies are pure when they have not sinned. Unlike all human beings, Christ's body was completely pure as it was born to the Virgin. Within the framework of faith, logic re-

strains urges and reigns in the fleshy forms of the body. Jews do not curb their materialistic instincts and are thus an animalistic people that indulge in the worldly, in the literal meaning of the Old Testament. The supposed literal Jewish interpretation is transformed into a carnal behavior that equates Jews with animals, barring them from any spiritual pursuit since «the Pentateuch can offer them nothing but material acquisitions». In these lines, concepts such as «Jewish no positivism» and the animalistic nature of Jews assume a central focus.

Guibert's world was one of magic, where the Devil, the good and bad spirits intervene. The visible and the invisible, the natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine, the carnal and the spiritual are constantly connected. Cultural identities are projected onto the body. Guibert was interested less in the Jews and Judaism and more in the spiritual wellbeing of the Christian world. Jewish bodies are narratively constructed to mirror their constant punishment and the danger they harbor for the Christian social body (when all these fall short, then special clothing and particular illustrations are enlisted as well). Jews choose the body and its secrets to despoil innocence and trust, they poison in their capacity as doctors, and they use children's blood... During the 12th and 13th centuries, while the homogeneity of the Christian world is being invented, Jews are excluded and a specific angst related to boundaries comes into existence. Guibert testifies to this exact course of events. The excluded body of the «other» returns then to haunt the pure Christian body. Fantasies of ritual murders would later be born, especially murders of Christian children preyed upon by Jewish men³². The myth of the desecration of the Host would spread during the 13th century, a charge referred to by Guibert. The Host can be considered a hybrid, a sacred object situated in the boundaries between religion and magic, the sacred and the profane, scholarly and lay piety. The new way of thinking that accompanied the expression of the belief of Transubstantiation gave new emotional meaning to the presence of Christ in the Host; the Church became *corpus mysticum* and the Host became *corpus Christi*³³. As a result of this new religiosity, Christ's body on earth and in terms of human temporality could undergo torture, spiritual and physical. By the end of the 13th century, after 1290, reports not only of the desecration but also of the torture of the Host proliferate³⁴. From the frenzy of children being abused in the 12th century to the delusion as regards the desecration of the Host in

the 13th and the poisoning of wells in the 14th century³⁵, terrible stories pollute the everyday dealings between Jews and Christians with mistrust. These are fantasies of violence through the agency of demonized Jewish man who carries all the anxieties, shame and fears that Christians felt about themselves, their bodies, their doubts and their desires³⁶. Bodies are vulnerable not only because they are mortal but also because they are threatened by disease, taint, decomposition from all that is experienced or noticed in others. This is why they are conducive to the discourse of «heterology».

The Jews have been connected to heretics on the literary level. The hero of the third episode³⁷, in which a Jew appears, always nameless, is Jean de Soisson himself. Not only does the Count refuse to believe in Resurrection after death but he also scorns his beautiful wife and has a relationship with an old woman he meets in the bed offered by a Jew in the latter's house. Even when divine justice fatally strikes him, he insists that «all women belong to all men and that this does not constitute sinning». In other words, he admits to the charges leveled at Jews by Christians. In this story the Jew appears as an accomplice as well.

In the same manner, insisting on the Jews' refusal to accept Christ's Incarnation, the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion, and highlighting their sexual perversions, Guibert actually describes a Manichaean heresy and the secret meetings at which they indulge in orgies and ritual infanticide followed by an inversion of the liturgy of Communion³⁸. All practices attributed to heretics incriminate them for despising the body. According to C. Bynum, the recognition of the body's positive qualities has been a strategic tactic in the war against heresies³⁹. In response to the extreme Christian and semi-Christian positions that devalued the body and the theologians of the 13th century reacted by considering both the philosophical and theological binarism of the Cathars intensely threatening. Emphasis was placed on corporeal miracles and female piety came to be considered useful in the war waged against the heretics. Any positive qualities associated with the body were connected to its relationship with the super-natural.

Medieval bodies are themselves texts on which cultural stories are inscribed, one of which is the compulsive idea of the need to have a homogeneous Christian world. In his narrative, Guibert presents the Jews, initially belonging to a cultural centre, as becoming marginalized shadows that wield devastating power⁴⁰. I be-

lieve that references to sexuality are related less to Guibert's personality than they are to the cultural categories that are necessary for the construction of otherness. An animalistic, carnal Jew is always implied. He is substantially different. (even the heretic Count is not accepted as a Jew by the Jews even if he observes their religious practices but is instead seen as insane (*insano*)⁴¹. We have then a double narrative technique: the construction of the Jewish danger (through deception) and the dismissal of the Jews by assigning them a secondary role, that of being the intermediary to the Devil, one that exerts destructive power over Christian bodies. For the story to be credible, sexual fantasies have to be transfused by the supernatural. The super-natural functions to simulate reality; as R. Barthes would say, it functions as *effet de reel*⁴².

The invocation of the body in otherness functions rather dynamically in western tradition since it bespeaks the (metaphysical) desire to differentiate the human from the animal, thus vying for the spirit and leaving the body behind. Therefore, the cultural differences between people appear to be «natural», inscribed on the flesh, attested to by everyone⁴³. In Guibert's world, this realization can come about through the invocation of the supernatural in the construction of the physicality of the bodies. Bodies are a locus that confirms boundaries made up by magic and sexual fears. As D. Nirenberg among others has shown⁴⁴, these boundaries seem to be dynamic, displaceable, highly responsive to the changing ideas of the society that produced them.

In Guibert's discourse the supernatural intervenes in the formulation of the «physicality» of bodies of «others». The personal body is a text across which a cultural narrative is written. Bodies are a locus of the supernatural and one that confirms boundaries and hierarchies across groups.

Notes

1. Guibert de Nogent, *Autobiographie*, Introduction, édition et traduction Edmond René Labande, Paris, 1981. See also John F. Benton (ed.), *Self and Society in Medieval France: The memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent*, C.C. Swinton Bland trans (revised by Benton), New York, 1970.

2. «Tractatus de Incarnatione contra Judaeos», *Opera omnia*, ed. L. Dachery, Paris, 1652, pp. 264-282, reprinted in P.L., t.CLVI, col. 489-528, «De pignoribus sanctorum libri quator», ed. Dachery, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-366, P.L.

col. 607-680, «Gesta Dei per Francos», ed. Dachery, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-453, P.L., col. 678-834.

3. See J. Kantor, «A psycho-historical source: The memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent», *Journal of Medieval History* 2, (9), 1976, pp. 281-304. J.F. Benton, «The Personality of Guibert of Nogent», *Psychoanalytic Review* LVII, 1970-1971, pp. 563-586. M.D. Coupe, «The personality of Guibert de Nogent reconsidered», *Journal of Medieval History* 9, 1983, pp. 317-329. S. Lerer, «Transgessio Studii: Writing and Sexuality in Guibert of Nogent», *Stanford French Review* 14, 1990, pp. 243-266. For a revision of the psychoanalytic approaches cf. L. Patterson, «Chaucer's pardoner on the Couch: Psyche and Clio in Medieval Literary Studies», *Speculum* 76, 2001, pp. 638-680.

4. See R.I. Moore, «Guibert de Nogent and his World», *Studies in Medieval History*, presented to R.H.C. Davis, ed. by H. Mayrharting and R.I. Moore, London and Ronceverte, 1985, pp. 107-117.

5. See J.Cl. Schmitt, *Le corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps. Essais d'anthropologie médiévale*, Paris, 2001. S. Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings*, London and New York, 1993.

6. Th. S. Csordas, *Embodiment and Experience. The existential ground of culture and self*, Cambridge, 1994. According to C.W. Bynum, the roots of the modern notion of a particular embodied self lies in the late Middle Ages, see «Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective», *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1), 1995, pp. 1-33.

7. According to M. Douglas, the human body is always treated as an image of society and there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension (M. Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, London, 1973).

8. See the fundamental essay by M. Mauss, «Les techniques du corps», *Sociologie et Anthroppologie*, Paris, 1983. On the Middle Ages, see J. Le Goff, «Political Uses of Body Metaphors», in Feher M., Neddoff R., Tazi N. (eds), *Fragments for a History of the Body*, vol. 3, Zone, New York, 1989, pp. 13-27. J.Cl. Schmitt, *La raison des gestes*, Paris, 1990. Idem, «Le corps en chrétienté: Le corps social», *Le corps, les rites, les rêves...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 356-359. M. James, «Ritual, Drama and the Social Body in Late Medieval English Town», *Past and Present* 98, 1983, pp. 3-29.

9. See G. Duby, *Le chevalier, la femme et le prêtre. Le mariage dans la société féodale*, Paris, 1980. M. Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges. Étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale particulièrement en France et en Angleterre*, Paris, 1983 (1924). M.G. Pegg, «Le corps et l'autorité: La lèpre de Baudouin IV», *Annales E.S.C.* 2, 1990, pp. 265-287. M.-Ch. Pouchelle, *Corps et chirurgie à l'apogée du Moyen Age. Savoir et imaginaire du corps chez Henri de Mondeville chirurgien de Philippe le Bel*, Paris, 1983. J. Agrimi, Ch. Crisciani, «Savoir médical et anthropologie religieuse. Les représentations de la vetula (XIIIe - Xve siècle)», *Annales E.S.C.* 5, 1993, pp. 1281-1308.

10. For the body as the site for the close interrelation of symbolic classi-

fication, ritual process and the formation of social solidarity see M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, Cambridge, 1991. For the political uses of the body see D. Aers, «Figuring Forth the Body of Christ: Devotion and Politics», *Essays in Medieval Studies*, vol. 11, 1994, pp. 1-11. E.A.R. Brown, «Death and the Human Body in the Later Middle Ages: The Legislation of Boniface VIII on the division of the Corpse», *Viator* 12, 1981, pp. 221-270. E. Cohen, «Symbols of Culpability and the Universal language of Justice: The ritual of Public Executions in Late Medieval Europe», *History of European Ideas* 11, 1990, pp. 407-416. W.R.J. Barron, «The penalties for treason in medieval life and literature», *Journal of Medieval History* 7, 1981, pp. 187-202. See also the analysis of F. Rabelais by M. Bachtine who speaks of the «lower body stratum» and the «lower social stratum» (Mikhail Bachtine, *L'Oeuvre de Francois Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance*, Paris, 1970).

11. See C.W. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, 1992, idem, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast. The religious significance of food to medieval women*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987. S. Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society...*, op. cit. C. Vincent, «Discipline du corps et de l'esprit chez les Flagellants au Moyen Age», *Revue Historique* 615, 2000, pp. 593-613. E. Cohen, «The Animated Pain of the Body», *American Historical Review*, 2000, pp. 36-68.

12. M. Rubin, «The body, Whole and Vulnerable, in fifteenth century England», in B. Hanawalt, D. Wallace (eds), *Bodies and Disciplines. Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth Century England*, Minneapolis, London, 1996, pp. 19-28.

13. M. Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges...*, op. cit.

14. See J. Le Goff, «Le merveilleux dans l'occident médiéval», *L'imaginaire médiéval*, Paris, 1995, pp. 17-39. C.W. Bynum, «Wonder», *American Historical Review* 102 (1), 1997, pp. 1-26. B. Ward, *Miracles and the medieval mind*, Philadelphia, 1987. A. Vauchez, «Conclusion», in *Miracles, Prodiges et Merveilles au Moyen Age*, XXVe Congrès de la S.H.M.E.S. (Orléans, juin 1994), Paris, 1995, pp. 317-325. L. Daston, «Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe», *Critical Inquiry* 18, 1991, pp. 93-124. F. Dubost, *Aspects fantastiques de la littérature médiévale (XIIe-XIIIe siècle)*, Paris 1993.

15. See note 3.

16. G. Duby, *Le chevalier, la femme...*, op. cit.

17. For a similar argument, regarding the heretics, see E. Freeman, «Wonders, prodigies and marvels: unusual bodies and the fear of heresy in Ralph of Coggeshall's *Chronicon Anglicanum*», *Journal of Medieval History*, 26 (2), 2000, pp. 127-143.

18. D. Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality and Demonology in the Middle Ages*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1999.

19. *Autobiographie...*, op. cit., pp. 202-206.

20. Speaking of giants, J. Cohen shows that the hybrid body of the monster became a communal form for expressing anxieties about the limits and the fragility of identity. See J.J. Cohen, *Of Giants. Sex, Monsters and the Middle Ages*, Minneapolis, London, 1999. See also Cl. Kappler, *Monstres, démons et merveilles à la fin du Moyen Age*, Paris, 1980.

21. C.W. Bynum, *Fragmentation...*, op. cit.

22. The body possessed by illness is a locus of the demonic possession and the paradigm of all disease. See J. Cl. Schmitt, «Corps malade, corps possédé», *Le corps, les rites...*, op. cit., pp. 319-343.

23. *Autobiographie...*, op. cit., pp. 254.

24. R. Muchembled, *Une histoire du diable XIIIe-Xxe siècle*, Paris, 2000.

25. See G. Stroumsa and O. Limor (eds), *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christian and Jews*, Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism, Tübingen, 1996.

26. See J. Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews. The medieval conception of the Jew and its Relation to modern Anti-Semitism*, Philadelphia, 1983. W.R.J. Barron, «The penalties for treason in medieval life and literature», *Journal of Medieval History* 7, 1981, pp. 187-202.

27. M.E. Goodich, *Violence and Miracle in the Forteenth Century. Private Grief and Public Salvation*, Chicago, London, 1995.

28. *Autobiographie...*, op. cit., pp. 422.

29. J. Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law. Ideas of the Jew in medieval Christianity*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1999.

30. See A. Sapir-Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth Century Renaissance*, London, 1995. And more specifically A. Sapir-Abulafia, «Bodies in the Jewish-Christian Debate», in S. Kay, M. Rubin (eds), *Framing Medieval Bodies*, Manchester, 1994, pp. 123-137.

31. *Tractatus de Incarnatione contra Iudaeos...*, op. cit.

32. See G. Langmuir, «Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of ritual Murder», *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1990, pp. 209-236. J.M. McCulloh, «Jewish Ritual Murder: William of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth and the Early Dissemination Myth», *Speculum* 72, 1997, pp. 698-740. K. Biddick, «Genders, Bodies, Borders: Technologies of the Visible», *Speculum* 68 (2), 1993, pp. 389-417.

33. Not only did they believe that the bread on the altar became Christ at the moment of consecration but they also experienced miracles in which the bread turned into bloody flesh in the mouth of the recipient; devotees consumed and thus incorporated the power of the torture. See C.W. Bynum, *Fragmentation...*, op. cit., pp.185.

34. See Miri Rubin, *Gentile tales; the narratives assault in late medieval Jews*, New Haven and London, 1999.

35. D. Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*, Cambridge Mass, 1997, pp. 65-66.

36. M. Rubin, «The body, Whole and Vulnerable, in fifteenth century

England», in B. Hanawalt, D. Wallace (eds), *Bodies and Disciplines...*, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

37. *Autobiographie...*, op. cit., pp. 426.

38. *Autobiographie...*, op. cit., pp. 428-430.

39. C.W. Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast...*, op. cit., pp. 251-255.

40. See Elisa Narin van Court, «Socially Marginal, Culturally Central: Representing Jews in Late Medieval English Literature», *Exemplaria* 12 (2), 2000.

41. *Autobiographie...*, op. cit., pp. 424.

42. R. Barthes, «L'effet de réel», *Littérature et réalité*, R. Barthes, L. Bensani, Ph. Hamon, M. Riffaterre (eds), Paris, 1982, pp. 81-90.

43. St. F. Kruger, «Medieval Christian (Dis)identifications: Muslims and Jews in Guibert of Nogent», <http://www.georgetown.edu/labyrinth/conf/cs95/papers/kruger.html>.

44. D. Nirenberg, «Conversion, Sex and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain», *American Historical Review*, 2002, pp. 1065-1093.

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