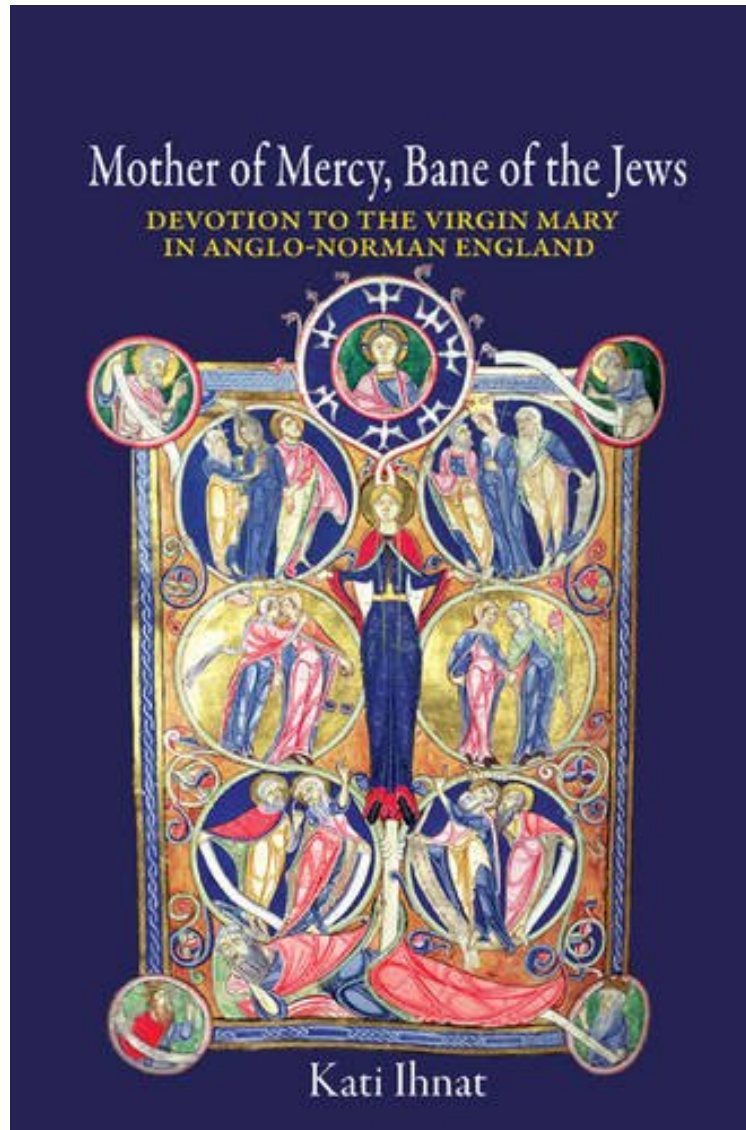


Mother of Mercy, Bane of the Jews: Devotion to the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Norman England

Kati Ihnat

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Kati Ihnat : Mother of Mercy, Bane of the Jews: Devotion to the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Norman England
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mother of Mercy, Bane of the Jews: Devotion to the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Norman England:

Mother of Mercy, Bane of the Jews explores a key moment in the rise of the cult of the Virgin Mary and the way the Jews became central to her story. Benedictine monks in England at the turn of the twelfth century developed many innovative ways to venerate Mary as the most powerful saintly intercessor. They sought her mercy on a weekly and daily basis with extensive liturgical practices, commemorated additional moments of her life on special feast days, and praised her above all other human beings with new doctrines that claimed her Immaculate Conception and bodily Assumption. They also collected hundreds of stories about the miracles Mary performed for her followers in what became one of the most popular devotional literary genres of the Middle Ages. In all these sources, but especially the miracle stories, the figure of the Jew appears in an important role as Mary's enemy. Drawing from theological and legendary traditions dating back to early Christianity, monks revived the idea that Jews violently opposed the virgin mother of God; the goal of the monks was to contrast the veneration they thought Mary deserved with the resistance of the Jews. Kati Ihnat argues that the imagined antagonism of the Jews toward Mary came to serve an essential purpose in encouraging Christian devotion to her as merciful mother and heavenly Queen. Through an examination of miracles, sermons, liturgy, and theology, *Mother of Mercy, Bane of the Jews* reveals how English monks helped to establish an enduring rivalry between Mary and the Jews, in consolidating her as the most popular saint of the Middle Ages and in making devotion to her a foundational marker of Christian identity.

"Kati Ihnat offers a careful exploration of the way in which 11th- and 12th-century monks painstakingly developed the cult of the Virgin Mary, in part by casting the Jewish people as her prototypical enemy. . . . This a study that has much to offer not only for medievalists but also, more generally, for scholars with an interest in religion, culture and the ways that hatred of minorities can be fostered."--Rachel Moss, *Times Higher Education* From the Back Cover "Kati Ihnat's book is an eloquent and important contribution to our understanding of the cult of the Virgin Mary, medieval anti-Jewish polemics, and the role of the liturgy in medieval cultural politics. It is an exemplary study of how religious stories are created, and is essential reading for anyone interested in cultural politics, the power of imagery, and the ramifications of monastic thought in the Middle Ages."--Anthony Bale, *Birkbeck College, London* "In *Mother of Mercy, Bane of the Jews*, Kati Ihnat achieves a great deal, exploring liturgy, miracle tales, chronicles, and images with equal authority and insight. She links the rise of the Virgin Mary to the rhythms of monastic liturgical life, and demonstrates the use made of Jews in the efforts to imagine Mary anew. Here is a book that will offer all medievalists a new chapter in European religion, and a great deal of pleasure."--Miri Rubin, author of *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* "This book argues persuasively that the foundations for the expansion in the role accorded Mary in the medieval Latin church were established in English monastic communities by the middle of the twelfth century. Ihnat looks at new liturgical forms and theological treatises that praised Mary, and delves into how these texts developed a threatening image of the Jew to affirm Mary's ability to rescue Christians from misdeeds and evil."--Irvn M. Resnick, *University of Tennessee, Chattanooga* "While the centrality of English monasticism to the cult of Mary has long been recognized, until now we have had no comprehensive study of post-Conquest Marian devotion. Ihnat carefully delineates the increasing prominence awarded Mary in the liturgy, identifies the monks who spearheaded this effort, and considers how this exaltation intensified Christian anti-Judaism. This book fills a major gap in our understanding of the history of Christianity."--Sara Lipton, *State University of New York, Stony Brook* About the Author Kati Ihnat is lecturer in medieval history at *Radboud University Nijmegen* in the Netherlands.