

CHAPTER 2 THE PAN-EUROPEAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

LOOKING AHEAD

The Roman Catholic Church's doctrines, its policies, and the image of Jews it presented greatly impacted the fate of the Jews in Christian lands. But no matter how influential the Church was, it was not the only force and its impact was not the same throughout different locations and periods. Therefore, we must now discuss the various Jewish communities throughout Western civilizations. We shall see how the Church's doctrines, policies and imagery interacted with different local circumstances and affected the Jewish communities in different ways.

We shall also see how many Jewish communities in medieval western Christendom experienced a burst of creativity, largely due to their dynamic surroundings. Jews were very much aware of the culture dynamism of their Christian environment. They were impressed by it but also threatened as they saw it as an outcome of the Christian religion. As a result, the Jewish people were compelled to reject these Christian achievements while proclaiming the superiority of the Jewish faith and of *its* cultural and spiritual creativity. Both Jews and Christians harbored mixed feelings about the other faith.