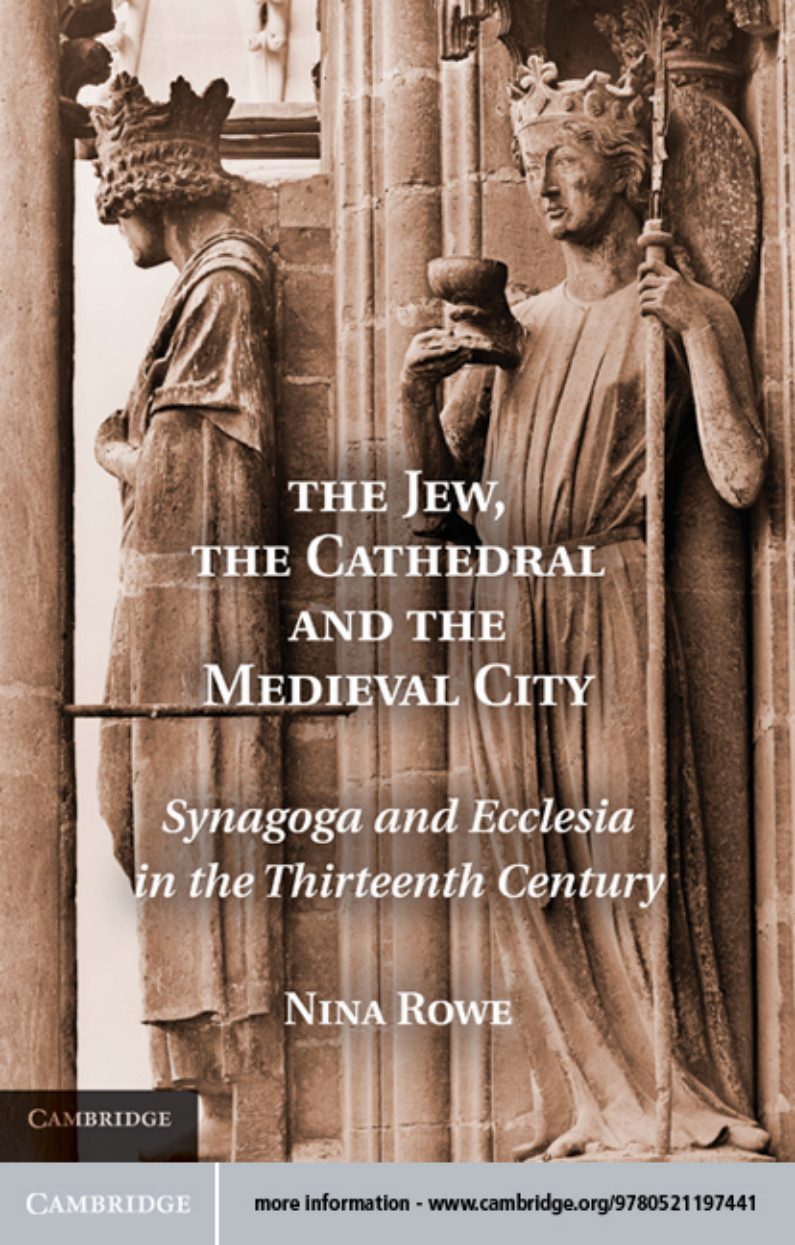

THE JEW, THE CATHEDRAL AND THE MEDIEVAL CITY

Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Thirteenth Century

NINA ROWE

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The Jew, the Cathedral, and the Medieval City

In the thirteenth century, sculptures of Synagoga and Ecclesia – paired female personifications of the Synagogue defeated and the Church triumphant – became a favored motif on cathedral façades in France and Germany. Throughout the centuries leading up to this era, the Jews of northern Europe prospered financially and intellectually, a trend that ran counter to the long-standing Christian conception of Jews as relics of the prehistory of the Church. In *The Jew, the Cathedral, and the Medieval City*, Nina Rowe examines the sculptures as defining elements in the urban Jewish–Christian encounter. She locates the roots of the Synagoga-Ecclesia motif in antiquity and explores the public manifestations of the theme at the cathedrals of Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg, considering each example in relation to local politics and culture. Ultimately, she demonstrates that royal and ecclesiastical policies to restrain the religious, social, and economic lives of Jews in the early thirteenth century found a material analog in lovely renderings of a downtrodden Synagoga placed in the public arena of the city square.

Nina Rowe is an associate professor of art history at Fordham University. She coauthored (with Sandra Hindman, Michael Camille, and Rowan Watson) *Manuscript Illumination in the Modern Age: Recovery and Reconstruction* and coedited (with David Areford) *Excavating the Medieval Image: Manuscripts, Artists, Audiences – Essays in Honor of Sandra Hindman*. She has published articles in the journals *Gesta* and *Studies in Iconography*, as well as in various edited volumes.

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For Glenn and Ezra

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Abbreviations

CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
MGH Const.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum (Legum Sectio IV)
MGH SS	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores
MGH SSRM	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum
PL	Patrologia Latina

Introduction: The Jew, the Cathedral, and the Medieval City

In the second quarter of the thirteenth century, images of a beautiful and benighted Judaism began to appear on cathedral façades across northern Europe. In the sculpted decorative programs of the most ambitious ecclesiastical building projects of the age, the Synagogue, personified as a comely lady, was paired with a likewise feminine personification of the Church. Known as Ecclesia and Synagoga, these personae became hinge figures within the monumental sculpted ensembles that dominated the public space at city centers in the French kingdom and the German empire. These urban milieux were sites of lively economic and social exchange, where local Christian burghers, traveling merchants, mendicant clerics, visiting pilgrims, itinerant artists, insurgent preachers, and Jewish men and women traded, argued, observed, and engaged one another in the course of daily life. Poised above the motley populace were the sculpted figures conveying Christian triumph and Jewish defeat. On cathedral façades, Ecclesia typically is shown crowned and holding a battle standard and chalice. Synagoga, in contrast, is blindfolded and drooping; she holds a broken staff and is dropping the tablets of the law. The images of Synagoga that bedecked cathedral exteriors stood in stark contrast to the real Jews living in streets at the heart of Europe's cities in the High Middle Ages. While Ashkenazic communities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were strong contributors to a still-celebrated flowering of Jewish intellectual, spiritual, and economic life, Synagoga consistently was represented in monumental public sculpture as an incapacitated and downtrodden figure.

This book makes a case for the political meaning of the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif when presented in public sculpted form by considering such instantiations of the theme in relation to Christian motivations and strategies for controlling Jewish communities in the High Middle Ages. From the ninth century on, artists had used female personifications of Church and Synagogue to convey dichotomies that lay at the heart of the Christian understanding of history and scripture: that the era of the law was a prelude to the age of grace; that the Hebrew Bible foretold both the life of Jesus and the principles of Christian belief; that the triumph of Christianity over Judaism was fundamental to the Lord's plan

for humanity. In small-scale works of the Carolingian era, the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif manifested such theological and ecclesiological notions of Judaism's position vis-à-vis Christianity. As Christian antagonism toward Jews and Judaism became a key theme in twelfth-century theology, and as Christian scholars increasingly concerned themselves with what they considered to be the typological relationship between Old and New Testament scripture, images of a rejected Synagoga and a triumphant Ecclesia began to figure in stained glass and sculpted reliefs designed to teach the public the fundamentals of Christian dogma. But it was only in the thirteenth century, when artists across northern Europe experimented with new sculptural styles inspired in part by the monuments of ancient Rome, that sculpted personifications of Church and Synagogue took pride of place as prominent elements in cathedral decorative programs. In the second quarter of the thirteenth century, twinned sculptures of Ecclesia and Synagoga, like latter-day figures of Nike or Roma, appeared as pendants to idealized images of male rulers.

The three earliest surviving instances of the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif in monumental form are found at the cathedrals of Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg. All created in the years around 1225 to 1235, the decorative programs at these three sites form a coherent trio. The ensembles were carved by sculptors who seem to have moved among the three locales, and there were diplomatic and administrative ties among the cathedrals' patrons. These conditions suggest a shared approach to the theme at the moment of what we might call its urban debut. At Reims, colossal figures of Ecclesia and Synagoga are installed on the south façade of the cathedral's east end, the portion of the building facing the archbishop's palace (see Figs. 20–22). Here they flank the façade's rose window and are surrounded by seven sculptures of kings. The designers at Reims embraced a motif that long had conveyed theological notions of the relationship of Judaism and Christianity in small-scale works and monumentalized it on the most politically resonant portion of the city's new cathedral – the locale for the coronation of the kings of France. Ecclesia and Synagoga at Reims Cathedral thus introduce a mounting conception of the theme as one that was pertinent to ideologies of rulership. At Bamberg Cathedral, overlife-sized images of Ecclesia and Synagoga stand atop the two pillars at either side of the Fürstenportal, the bishop's ceremonial entrance to the church. Thus installed, the female personifications greet visitors entering the space dominated by the celebrated Bamberg Rider sculpture (see Figs. 73 and 77–78). While amplifying the politicized treatment of the motif as seen at Reims, the ensemble at Bamberg Cathedral in addition demonstrates how sculptural styles of the first half of the thirteenth century could enhance a message sketched in iconography. At Bamberg, naturalistic form, designed to be seen from multiple angles, materially manifests a notion of Christian fortitude and Jewish weakness. At Strasbourg, personifications of Church and Synagogue, again over life-sized, enter the space of the viewer, bracketing the cathedral's south façade, which is

dominated at the center by a sculpture of King Solomon (see Figs. 122 and 126–127). The Strasbourg façade faces the bishop's palace, lay in intimate proximity to the city's Jewish district, and was a site used for the dispensation of ecclesiastical justice as well as for popular penance. This site suggests the ways in which varied audiences – clerical, lay, and Jewish – might have experienced public images in the course of their daily lives or political and religious rituals, and introduces the multiple meanings Ecclesia and Synagoga could garner in their urban settings.

In this book, I examine Ecclesia and Synagoga and their larger decorative programs at the cathedrals of Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg in an attempt to glean the ways in which the motif taught audiences about the position of Jews and Judaism in a properly ordered Christian world. The consistent joining of the motif to images of ideal male rulership on ceremonial entrances of the local ecclesiastical and secular lord, the bishop, suggests that in the period around 1225 sculpting workshops and their ecclesiastical patrons had come to see Ecclesia and Synagoga as figures particularly appropriate to convey ideals of power relations to urban publics.

Sculptures of Ecclesia and Synagoga both pre- and postdating the examples at Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg do not tend to present the figures in consort with images of earthly male rulers.[1] In the twelfth century, Ecclesia and Synagoga appeared as two among multiple elements within sculpted relief ensembles. The figures are found in a crucifixion scene on the right tympanum of the abbey church of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard (ca. 1130–40), and at Dijon they join cherubim and evangelists flanking Christ in majesty at the tympanum (destroyed in the French Revolution) of the church of Saint-Bénigne (ca. 1160).[2] Ecclesia and Synagoga were joined again to the Maiestas at the priory church of Provins (after 1157) and perhaps at the now destroyed church of Saint-Pierre in Nevers (ca. 1200), in both cases appearing in the portal's archivolts.[3]

Monumental sculptures of Ecclesia and Synagoga carved almost in the round did find precedents at Chartres Cathedral (ca. 1220) and at Notre-Dame de Paris (ca. 1220), two sites roughly contemporary to the examples at Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg. At both locales the figures were destroyed during the course of the French Revolution. Early written descriptions of Chartres indicate that free-standing personifications of Church and Synagogue were inserted within the north porch's architectural armature, where they joined other figures variously identified as the *Vita activa* and the *Vita contemplativa* or as Rachel and Leah, Old Testament heroines who were conceived as typological antecedents to the Church and the Synagogue in contemporary theology.[4] At Notre-Dame, the figures appear to have stood in the aedicules in the buttresses of the west façade, flanking the central Judgment portal.[5] The reformulations of Ecclesia and Synagoga installed during Notre-Dame's post-Revolutionary restoration begun in 1843 seem to follow late medieval models rather than the lost originals.[6] The compromised state of the Chartres and Paris façades requires

that I exclude these examples from my analysis, though the use of both sites as theaters of justice, in the latter case dominated by Christ as a model judge, are in keeping with general trends I discern at Reims, Bamberg, and especially Strasbourg.[7] In the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Ecclesia and Synagoga tend to appear alongside figures that refer to virtue and vice, an issue I discuss in my epilogue.

Why were Ecclesia and Synagoga suddenly so popular as a motif in sculpted portal programs in the era around 1225? And why at this time and in these contexts did the figures tend to accompany images of male authority? These are questions that have not been addressed in the scholarship to date. Most previous studies consider the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif in broad terms, surveying instances of the theme as it appeared in carved ivories, manuscript illumination, metalwork, stained glass, portal sculpture, and painting at sites across Europe from the ninth through the fifteenth centuries. Following standard practice, encyclopedias of iconography catalogue a wealth of images of Ecclesia and Synagoga and introduce corresponding written sources.[8] Typically these discussions note that images of Synagoga became increasingly defamatory as animus toward Jews quickened across Europe from the late eleventh century on. General surveys of images of Jews in medieval art likewise review a range of instances of the motif, identifying and grouping image types.[9] A recent exhibition catalogue devoted just to representations of Ecclesia and Synagoga supplements such surveys by offering a useful compilation of reproductions.[10]

More developed analyses have focused on texts that present Ecclesia and Synagoga as female personae in debate and note similarities between various depictions of the motif in images and those in the written word. The foundational exemplar of this approach is Paul Weber's *Geistliches Schauspiel und kirchliche Kunst* (1894).[11] In this pathbreaking book, Weber seeks to demonstrate the influence of sacred dramas on visual production by reviewing texts from the early through the late Middle Ages and matching their descriptions of Ecclesia and Synagoga to various artistic representations. Weber's study is an indispensible compendium of textual treatments of the theme. And Weber is admirably forthright in his conviction that, together, Ecclesia and Synagoga functioned as a tool through which clerics sought to foster enmity toward Jews, thereby demonstrating that the spread of this motif contributed to society-wide hostilities. Weber suggests the relevance of the particular historical contingencies surrounding the sites he discusses, though he stops short of considering these factors in a sustained way. More accessible to Anglo-American audiences is Wolfgang Seiferth's *Synagogue and Church in the Middle Ages: Two Symbols in Art and Literature*, published in English in 1970.[12] This book offers a far-ranging review of the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif in images and texts from the early Christian period to the Reformation, interspersed with general discussions of the history of Jewish-Christian relations. While this study has been a standard reference for scholars in a variety of disciplines, the breadth of

material covered by Seiferth precludes assessment of the conditions surrounding the production or reception of the many works he addresses.[13]

For those committed to investigating the uses and effects of cultural productions in specific historical milieux, most of the previous scholarship on the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif leaves gaps because the figures tend to be isolated from both their larger iconographic and historical contexts. Tracking gestures, attributes, and only occasionally the visual settings of the figures, questions regarding medium, scale, style, patronage, and particularly viewership tend to be unexplored. Exceptions to these trends are found in recent analyses of the monumental sculptures that lie at the heart of my discussion. Helga Sciurie recognizes that renderings of Ecclesia and Synagoga on high-medieval cathedral portals both responded to and helped shape urban conceptions of virtue and justice, though her discussion is brief and thus general, and contemporary conceptions of Jews fall out of her analysis altogether.[14] Annette Weber takes on more directly the conditions for viewing monumental figures of Ecclesia and Synagoga, specifically at the cathedral of Strasbourg.[15] Her suggestive discussion runs parallel to some of my own insights in Chapter 5 of this book, but Weber gives little consideration to the local status of Jews and the regional political scene – issues at the core of my analysis. Other studies have tracked instances of the theme in manuscripts and wall paintings and thereby recognize, if only implicitly, the effects of scale and medium on the audiences for such works.[16]

In this study I depart from previous scholarship by considering the monumental sculptures of Ecclesia and Synagoga at Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg in relation to the specific artistic, political, and social conditions of the locales in which they were created. At each site I focus especially on the relevant construction history of the cathedral and the particularities of the Ecclesia and Synagoga sculptures in relation to the building's larger decorative program. Here I am concerned above all with early thirteenth-century sculptural styles, investigating their artistic effects and possible political meanings. In the decades between 1210 and 1240, workshops across northern Europe refined techniques for the lifelike depiction of figures. Often looking to Roman antiquity for models, they created works with a remarkable degree of liveliness and individuality, works that could convey a message of imperious authority. Early thirteenth-century bishops and cathedral chapters, competitively seeking to promote their sees, snatched up the masons and sculptors working in the innovative and naturalistic modes of the day as a way to assert their own status.

Sculptors, masons, and local cathedral authorities likely operated with some degree of collaboration to formulate new kinds of visual arenas – arenas in which figures carved in emphatically naturalistic styles could make a direct address to their urban publics. Cathedral hierarchies used these arenas for the performance of ecclesiastical power, the lifelike figures inhabiting them attesting to the tangibility of the divine realm through the intermediate authority of clerics. Artistic

bravado, egged on by clerical imperatives, thus was responsible for the stylistic and formal specifics of Ecclesia and Synagoga – as well, of course, as the other figures within each program – at Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg. The particular manner in which Synagoga is depicted has significance too. For at all three sites this personification of the Jewish tradition is presented following the tropes for feminine beauty encoded in images of the Virgin, female saints, and indeed, Ecclesia, as has been noted by generations of scholars.[17] The beauty and sympathy with which Synagoga was rendered, I contend, indicates that she was understood to be an integral component of the Christian system, but her broken staff, defunct tablets, blindfold, and wilting posture make it plain that she was powerless within it.

The discourse of reception theory helps us to conceptualize what this downtrodden figure would have meant to her original audiences. While some students of reader response concern themselves with the variety of ideologically driven present-day schools of inquiry, Hans Robert Jauss and others equally have promoted the investigation of reception in historical terms, searching out the ways in which authors of the past anticipated audience reactions and considering how texts, in turn, could affect society.[18] Concern with the manner in which cultural productions appealed to audiences, of course, has long been essential to art historical investigation.[19] So it is a self-consciousness about exploring reception rather than the adoption of a novel method that distinguishes recent work in art history analyzing viewer response. For my own investigation, the most useful term drawn from the critical discourse on reception is "interpretive community." Stanley Fish popularized the formulation in his inquiries on contemporary readers and the conventions that unite them in their acceptance of a given interpretation of a text.[20] The concept of the interpretive community, though, can fruitfully be used to distinguish among the various categories of medieval audiences for both texts and images, as is evident, for instance, in the work of Brian Stock.[21] In the medieval city one can systematically differentiate among communities, for instance, of clerics, burghers, heretics, Jews, foreign merchants, and a host of other categories of urbanite whose collective identity was forged by social, economic, or confessional affiliations. Such varying communities presumably understood the lavish decorative ensembles adorning cathedral façades in terms induced by the network of beliefs, preconceptions, and commitments that contributed to their corporate identities. Such a network of associations constitutes what Jauss deems a "horizon of expectations." The interpretive community whose expectations or experience can best be determined in the cases I consider is the cathedral chapter at each site under investigation. With knowledge, not only of general theological and ecclesiological principles that structured the collective identities of the cathedral chapters, but also of the specific local and transregional political and social preoccupations of these communities, we are in a position to speculate about how monumental sculptures of Ecclesia and Synagoga and their larger iconographic contexts appealed to and were understood by audiences of canons.

The canons at Reims, at Bamberg, and at Strasbourg in the second quarter of the thirteenth century lived in settings in which there were growing anxieties about Jewish fiscal strength, Jewish rejection of the Christian message, and even at times Jewish mockery of Christian dogma as manifest in anti-Christian polemics and reports of Jewish scorn for Christian symbols. Moreover, from the late eleventh century on, northern Europe witnessed periodic waves of attacks on Jews, violent riots that threatened to destroy the fabric of Christian society. In an era when ecclesiastical and secular rulers instituted new legal codes to control, contain, and limit Jewish economic, intellectual, and social life while also protecting Jews from aggression, building designers installed sculptures of a defunct Synagogue paired with a triumphant Church as pendants to images of ideal male Christian rulers. These sculpted ensembles projected a fiction of absolute Christian authority and made it possible for clerical audiences to believe in and pursue an ideal of Jewish containment that ran counter to actual local conditions.

My investigation of the reciprocal nature of ideals and realities pertaining to Jews in the Middle Ages contributes to a growing scholarly discourse. Jeremy Cohen has provided a model for historians of theology and literature in his conceptualization of the "hermeneutical Jew," a notion of the Jew developed in Christian thought to be an ideal predecessor and contemporary antithesis to the Christian faith.[22] David Nirenberg distinguishes between Jewish "figures of thought" and "figures of flesh" – notions of the ontological distinctiveness of Jews on the one hand and actual living Jewish bodies on the other – and recognizes their mutual sustainability.[23] That is, abstract conceptions of Jews drive social and political action, while contingencies of the real world, in their turn, also affect ideas about Jews. Art historians have interrogated the ways in which theological and social hostilities toward Jews motivated conventional image types depicting male Jews as beady-eyed, hooked-nosed, greedy, malevolent outsiders, and some suggest that such stereotypes reinforced animosity.[24] Most of these art historical studies focus on luxury works created for the highest estates, thereby inaccessible to all but the social elite. In this book, conversely, I examine images of an idealized, feminized Judaism, created to be installed in public spaces in cities. Designed to appeal to broad audiences, monumental sculptures of Synagoga directly confronted urban inhabitants with conceptualization of Judaism as docile and incapacitated – a material manifestation of a "figure of thought" tailored to affect understanding of Jewish "figures of flesh."

R. I. Moore's assessments of high-medieval Europe as a "persecuting society" provide a framework through which to consider the disjunction between the wretched and menacing male Jew presented to the eyes of elites and the comely and incapacitated Synagoga presented to variegated city audiences.[25] Moore maintains that identifying the Jew (along with other social outcasts) as a threatening element within Christian society was a means through which rulers could

shore up their own hegemony. Moving to the art historical realm, in the simplest terms, private images that demonized male Jews reveal the drive to cast Jews as outsiders; public images of a defeated Synagoga, in their turn, projected an ideal of Jewish submission. But there is more to it. While I am inspired by Moore, I seek to ground the larger structural trends that he articulates through focused investigations of specific material and political conditions at each site under analysis. And in my considerations of the urban environs that surrounded the cathedrals at Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg, I draw particular inspiration from a body of recent scholarship that considers the mutual influences of Jews and Christians in the high-medieval city.[26] Scholars such as Ivan Marcus and Israel Yuval admonish contemporary readers to put aside popular notions of Ashkenazic Jewry as isolated and marginal. Jews and Christians lived cheek by jowl within urban spaces where they brushed up against one another daily. Commingling in an often cacophonous metropolitan arena, Jews and Christians could become alternately curious about or scared by the intellectual, ritual, and social life of the other group. Marcus, Yuval, and others have demonstrated how Jews and Christians borrowed ritual and symbolic elements from one another. My inquiry is framed by the more fundamental recognition that, within the high-medieval city, Christians could hardly have avoided awareness of Jewish financial and intellectual vigor, and, most important, that they may too have observed or heard tell of Jewish expressions of scorn for Christianity.

The decorative programs of the cathedrals at the heart of my investigation are three instances where new conceptions of the need to contain the Jew met with revolutionary artistic experiments. These sites are addressed in Part II of my book. But before those discussions, I set the stage with two chapters that track the historical development of the Christian notion of the Jew on the one hand and the artistic formulation of the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif on the other, both realms of discourse that underwent radical realignment around the half-century between 1175 and 1225. In Chapter 1, I review Early Christian theological formulations justifying the desirable endurance of the Jew within a Christian world. Jews were conceived of as living memorials of the prehistory of the church and as preservers of Old Testament texts and rites for the good of Christians. Such notions of the Jew as relics of a sort, gratefully serving a Christian cause, could persist in northern Europe as long as churchmen had little contact with actual Jews. But in the twelfth century, after decades of migration and population growth, when Ashkenazic communities were entrenched and enjoying a flowering in spiritual, intellectual, and economic life, church thinkers were compelled to recognize that real Jews hardly fulfilled Christian ideals for chastened subservience. Indeed, some Jews composed tracts mocking the tenets of the Christian faith and scorned Christian belief and symbols as a matter of course. With this recognition in the opening decades of the thirteenth century, ecclesiastical and secular leaders instituted new measures to contain and control the Jew. Legal codes were promulgated

limiting Jewish gains in the money trades and regulating Jewish–Christian social interaction, and a campaign was launched against the perceived anti-Christian perfidy of the Talmud. If the Jew in the street did not conform to an ancient ideal of submission, Christian authorities would enact laws that reconfigured the Jew to fit the Christian mold. Because this opening chapter offers a synthesis of recent scholarship on Jewish–Christian relations, those readers familiar with the debates may choose to skip this portion of my text.

In the second chapter of my book, I explore personifications of Church and Synagogue from their Early Christian origins through twelfth-century manifestations. The life of the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif would seem to be well-trodden territory, since it has been assessed in the iconographic reviews mentioned previously. But my discussion takes a new approach, uncovering the roots of Ecclesia and Synagoga in ancient imperial idealizations of earthly order and world dominance, and I track the motif's development in terms of the Jewish–Christian power relations germane to my larger arguments. Ancient artistic and literary conventions for concretizing abstract notions through feminine personifications fed the earliest surviving formulation of Ecclesia and Synagoga in a fifth-century text attributed to Augustine in the Middle Ages. The figures appear first in visual form among other classicizing figures in carved ivories made for elite viewers at the Carolingian imperial court. Still bound in these early instances to an antique vocabulary of regal authority, Ecclesia and Synagoga here served to convey a message more of Christian triumph in general than one directed toward denigrating Jews. However, by the twelfth century, when Jewish populations expanded and prospered in northern Europe, the motif was increasingly used to disparage Jews and Judaism. As churchmen observed Jewish dynamism despite Christian claims to ascendancy and learned of Jewish reproaches of Christian belief, artists more emphatically denigrated Synagoga in pictorial depictions. As iconographic marks of Synagoga's alienation became codified, artists at workshops in the French kingdom and the German empire experimented with new sculptural styles, deploying antique modes to serve an imperious Christian message. I address these experiments and their implications in the introduction to Part II of my book, a discussion that binds the diachronic overviews of my first two chapters to the case studies of my final three.

Chapter 3 of this book introduces the colossal figures of Ecclesia and Synagoga installed among a coterie of kings on the south façade at the east end of Reims Cathedral. The program was completed at a moment of tentative stability after a period of insecurity for the local cathedral chapter. The French Crown recently had shown particular favor to Reims's rival church, Saint-Denis, threatening the city's long-held status as coronation site, and the French king was slow to come to the aid of the cathedral hierarchy when the burghers of Reims launched a series of violent rebellions. The rulers whose favor the Reims ecclesiastics sought, in the same era, instituted a host of new regulations aimed at

limiting Jewish economic life, ordaining Jews to be the virtual property of their overlords, and restricting Jewish profiteering through the money trades. Jewish intellectual and spiritual life equally came under attack when King Louis IX ordered the impounding of Jewish sacred texts across the kingdom, and when the king's mother, Blanche of Castile, oversaw the so-called Talmud Trial. Imagining the viewing experience of the Reims canons as they processed around the east end of their cathedral in celebration of the structure's completion, I argue that, here, Ecclesia and Synagoga advanced a message of the righteousness of Jewish submission in an ideally ordered realm under the guidance of the kings of France. New directions for conducting coronation ceremonies, meanwhile, forged an equation between the rulers of the Old Testament and the French monarchy. The actual Jews of the French kingdom and the neighboring county of Champagne had enjoyed remarkable economic and intellectual vitality in previous generations. But within the worldview presented at Reims south, Synagoga serves as an ideal image of a Judaism that stands meek and broken beside Ecclesia and the surrounding kings.

My fourth chapter turns to the sculpted ensemble of the Fürstenportal at Bamberg Cathedral. Artists who apparently had worked at the east end of Reims Cathedral came to Bamberg and contributed to a program there that joined the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif to an image of a single Christian ruler, the Bamberg Rider. The program at Bamberg was overseen by a cathedral chapter eager to assert ties to the imperial court after a period of disgrace. The bishop of Bamberg became a trusted ambassador of Emperor Frederick II, and the decorative program at the cathedral can be understood in relation to panegyrical tropes and policies of the imperial court. Frederick II instituted a string of new legal codes aimed at systematically orchestrating earthly society on a celestial model. Among his ordinances was a landmark ruling defending the Jews of the German kingdom against violent attack on the grounds that they were the special preserve of the imperial chamber. Bamberg hosted a flourishing population of Jews and was home to some of the leading intellectuals of the region. It was the task of the cathedral chapter to see to it that locally this community was kept in check, did not exert undue authority over Christians, and did not ignite deadly pogroms, as had happened across the empire. The canons of Bamberg regularly walked through the Fürstenportal and from this entrance had the privilege of viewing the cathedral's Ecclesia and Synagoga sculptures from multiple vantage points. Viewed progressively, the two sculptures offer a stunning opposition between strength and lassitude that found analogies in Frederick II's Jewry policy. The emperor himself could be invoked, in the eyes of the cathedral canons, through the sculpture of the Bamberg Rider. The trio of figures outside and inside the Fürstenportal, along with other decorative elements at the cathedral, offered an image of the transcendent justice of a world

in which a righteous ruler ensured that Jews would remain impotent and the church would keep a firm grip on the reins of society.

In my fifth chapter I turn to the south portal at Strasbourg Cathedral, where Ecclesia and Synagoga flank an image of Solomon enthroned, scenes celebrating the Virgin and apostle figures. The portal at Strasbourg lay at the center of an urban environment traversed daily by merchants, craftspeople, civic administrators, and Jews, as well as the expected clerics. In addition to being the bishop's ceremonial entrance to the cathedral, Strasbourg's south portal and the porch in front of it were the site for the exercise of ecclesiastical justice and lay penitential ritual. Because Strasbourg south was so evidently a multi-use district with meanings for a variety of urban audiences, in my discussion of the cathedral I consider the ways in which, here, Ecclesia and Synagoga addressed not only cathedral canons but also laypeople and Jews. The bishop under whose reign the Strasbourg portal was created was an avowed enemy of Emperor Frederick II, and his militia clashed with imperial allies in a contest over authority in the region. The Jews of Strasbourg, meanwhile, were unusually well-integrated into the workings of the city, living in a street that communicated directly with the cathedral's northern parvis and being entrusted with civic responsibilities. For cathedral clerics, the south façade of Strasbourg could function as an image of civic order where it was the bishop, not the far-distant and scorned emperor, who embodied the model rulership represented by Solomon. Accompanying this figure, sculptures of Ecclesia and Synagoga at Strasbourg strike poses that underscore Christian self-assurance on the one hand and Jewish resignation on the other. Scholars have seen the Strasbourg program as a visualization of twelfth-century Christian exegesis on the Song of Songs, which imagines Synagoga as the Sulamite woman once rejected but ultimately to be embraced by Christ. But Jewish onlookers, versed in anti-Christian polemic denouncing Christian exegesis on the Song of Songs, might just as easily have mocked such an interpretation of a sculpted image purportedly representing their people, and moreover dismissed the image of the benighted Synagoga in light of the noteworthy vigor and advanced education of the Strasbourg community. Lay penitents who saw the Strasbourg portal in the course of atonement rituals were encouraged, in turn, to associate the abject Synagoga with sinfulness writ large. Activated by rites of contrition, a figure of Judaism defeated became a general figure for vice vanquished or the church's rejection of sinners.

In the closing pages of this book, I offer an epilogue that considers the public life of the Ecclesia-Synagoga motif in the era from the mid-thirteenth through the fourteenth century. In this period, Ecclesia and Synagoga appeared as characters in dramas performed in city centers to instruct and delight the laity. In the texts of these plays the personifications tended to serve as universalizing figures, presenting the opposition between salvation and damnation. On

sculpted portals in this period as well, Ecclesia and Synagoga no longer were presented in conjunction with ideal images of male authority, but rather with figures referring to virtue and vice. This new treatment of the theme coincided with increased repressions of and violence toward Jewish communities. In the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries across northern Europe, Jews were expelled from noble domains or slaughtered in mass executions in retaliation for perceived malevolence. All the while, the figure of Synagoga assumed her place in an ecclesiastical triumphal parade, an emblem of a Jewish–Christian debate that was now increasingly being silenced.

PART I

IMAGINING JEWS AND JUDAISM IN LIFE AND ART

1

The Jew in a Christian World: Denunciation and Restraint in the Age of Cathedrals

The era around the turn of the thirteenth century witnessed a series of fundamental shifts in Christian conceptions of Jews and Judaism. From the time of the early church on, Jewish scripture had been considered a prophetic antecedent to the Christian Bible; ancient Jewish history had been seen as an account of the prehistory of the Christian church; and Jews themselves were understood as having been preserved within Christian society on the ground that they were living witnesses to the era of the church's foundations. In the years between roughly 1175 and 1225, however, theologians began to recognize that the actual Jews living in Europe did not conform to the ideal images Christians had formulated for them, igniting a campaign to restrict Jewish intellectual and spiritual life. In the realm of the law, papal pronouncements had long defended Jews against attack. But around the year 1200 new statements from Rome qualified Jewish protections, limited Jewish economic activity, and sought to mark Jews as an alien presence living in the midst of Christian society. On the streets of Europe's expanding cities, meanwhile, animosities grew as Christians became increasingly indebted to Jewish moneylenders and rumors that Jews ritually murdered Christian children circulated.

The monumental sculptures of Ecclesia and Synagoga at Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg were installed during the era when these new spiritual notions, legal codes, and societal phenomena were crystallizing. In this chapter I shall analyze the religious and social developments to which those sculptures respond. Taking a diachronic approach, I track enduring theological and juridical ideas of the Jew in Europe, note moments when these conceptions met with challenges, and point to early thirteenth-century episodes and policies aimed at constraining Jews to conform to Christian ideals. While scholars disagree over the precise date of the shifts I track, as well as their causes and the nuances of their manifestations, most concur that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were an age of new anxieties over the Jewish presence in Christian society.[1] In an effort to demonstrate the turns in perceptions of Jews in a variety of spheres, my discussion in this chapter is divided into three sections, addressing in succession fundamentals and