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THE SPECTRAL JEW

CONVERSION AND EMBODIMENT IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

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INTRODUCTION



Figure 1. The living cross: historiated initial "A." Codex Monacensis 23041, fol. 3v (ca. 1494–97). Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich. Reproduced with permission.

In the fine example of the late medieval pictorial tradition of the “living cross” shown in Figure 1, Jews and Jewishness are everywhere, yet at the same time everywhere under erasure.¹ The scene of the crucifixion is presided over by God the Father, surrounded by angels who hover next to and below him, holding scrolls: these represent, no doubt, not only the New Testament texts that testify to the details of the crucifixion scene (along with, perhaps, the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus that recounts the Harrowing of Hell, the scene at the base of the illustration) but also the prophetic texts of the “Old Testament,” the Hebrew texts that, from the Christian perspective, unerringly predict the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as Messiah. Read backward from the moment of the crucifixion, a moment thought to confirm “Old Testament” prophecy of a new, Christian dispensation, these Jewish texts become something other than Jewish, incorporable now into a Christian Holy Scripture that, while acknowledging its partly Jewish origin, firmly relegates Jewishness to a past, superseded moment. Thus, in this illustration, the “Old Testament” moments visually represented or alluded to are clearly taken over into a Christian typology. Eve stands below and to the left of the crucified Christ (to the viewer’s right): just between her head and her right hand, which plucks fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, is the head of the serpent, whose body coils around the trunk of the tree. The consequence of Eve’s imminent eating from that tree—death for all human beings—is clearly indicated by the skull she cradles in her left hand, halfway between her naked breasts and genitals. The death that Eve’s act institutes reverberates throughout the picture: in the naked bodies of the patriarchs, who kneel below Eve in the flames of hell; in Christ’s naked body, dead on the cross. But of course the initiation of death is also—in the later moments represented here, the crucifixion and the harrowing—connected to its dissolution: Christ dies on the

cross to defeat death, and that defeat is triumphantly depicted in the approach of Christ—still largely naked, with the wounds of the crucifixion apparent on his hands, feet, and side, but now robed and attended by angels—toward the gate of hell. The gate has fallen before his approach, crushing two animal-like demons beneath it. A ratlike demon atop hell-gate holds a pitchfork, and another demon, directly below Eve, a crook; but their defense of hell is clearly doomed, their instruments powerless before the staffs Christ and one of the angels preceding Christ carry (both staffs are surmounted by the cross). The prediction, from Genesis 3:15, that Eve (*"mulierem . . . ipsa"*) will crush the serpent underfoot,² traditionally read to prophesy that a woman, Mary, will repair the injuries of Eve's fall,³ is also depicted here: even as she sins, Eve steps on one of the defeated demonic figures. And Eve's typological fulfillment, Mary, faces her across the pictorial space.⁴ Mary's face echoes Eve's, but everything else about her suggests a radical change. She is richly robed, not naked. Her head is crowned and haloed, not bare. Under her aegis stands the Christ of the harrowing and his attendant angels, not the souls consigned to hell by Eve's act. She cradles near her body not a death's head but two modestly dressed women, women bound like the figures about to be freed from hell for salvation instead of eternal death. She also grasps, with her left hand, a miniature replica of the cross and the crucified body of Christ that grows at the center of a flourishing tree: here, Mary's action demonstrates that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—which, through Eve's action, brought death into the world—becomes the life-giving tree, the cross, which, in bearing the crucified body of Christ, defeats death. Moreover, Mary's plucking the crucifix from the tree has explicitly Eucharistic resonances: indeed, in some other living cross depictions, the fruit of this tree is clearly the consecrated host.⁵ Mary's tree may also evoke the burning bush of Exodus, a standard figure for Mary's virgin motherhood.⁶ And at the same time, this tree may make us think of the Tree of Jesse, the genealogical tree that, in Christian tradition, connects Jesus Christ to the Davidic line of inheritance through Mary.⁷

The Hebrew text—Genesis especially but also Exodus and prophetic texts like Isaiah 11:1 (*"a shoot shall go out from the root of Jesse and a flower shall ascend from his root"*)⁸—is thus thoroughly taken up into the Christian story; likewise, all the Jewish figures in the picture are in the process of leaving Judaism behind. Thus, the righteous patriarchs,

about to be released from death and hell by Christ, are also about to be drawn out of their Jewishness (consistently placed in this illustration to the left of the crucified Christ) into a new, Christian, dispensation, made possible by Christ's incarnation. The same is of course true of the other Jews in the picture—Mary, who already occupies a place diametrically opposed to the "Old Testament" figure of Eve, and Christ himself, whose body occupies center stage, the place where old, Jewish, and new, Christian, traditions meet and diverge. This body, like the "Old Testament," is marked by its Jewish origin (physically marked, we know, by circumcision), and yet, in the moment of the crucifixion, it is transformed into a new kind of body—a body to be resurrected, a body that can descend into death and hell but now to "conquer death" rather than to be conquered.

The point of the depiction of the "living cross" is to make vivid this central Christian paradox, that death is defeated through death, that Christ's crucifixion, the killing of God's son, paradoxically allows for a salvation and an eternal life previously denied human beings. If, in this illustration, the typological transformation of Eve's fall into a series of actions that repair that fall is at all unclear or obscure, the central tableau of the crucifixion reiterates that transformation in a striking way. In the picture's major conceit, the very instrument of Christ's violent death, the cross, is identified with life rather than death.⁹ God the Father surmounts it, suggesting clearly that the cross is his instrument.¹⁰ Moreover, living hands sprout from each of the cross's remaining points. From the bottom grows an arm that holds a hammer (notably, one of the instruments of the passion) aimed menacingly at the ratlike demon poised above the gate of hell;¹¹ this living arm, then, like the cross itself, reemphasizes the living, redemptive nature of the violence that attends Christ's death. The hand that emerges from the right side of the cross points to a scroll that evokes the new scriptures of Christianity, since immediately below rides the figure of Ecclesia, the church, on a mount clearly representing the New Testament Gospels.¹² The multiple feet of Ecclesia's multiform beast are the feet of the four creatures that traditionally represent the evangelists—a hoof (for Luke the ox), a lion's paw (for Mark), a human or angelic foot (for Matthew), and an eagle's talons (for John); the beast also has four heads, a lion's, an eagle's, an ox's, and a person's (or angel's). Carrying in her right hand a staff that echoes those held by the angel and Christ below, Ecclesia rides triumphantly forward, and she holds in her left hand a cup with which she collects the

(Eucharistic) blood coursing from Christ's side, the blood that gives her, the Church, life. But the birth of Ecclesia under the aegis of the living cross is at the same time a death for the allegorical figure who directly faces her from the left side of the cross, Synagoga. Synagoga rides not the powerful lion-eagle-ox-man of the evangelists but, as Wolfgang Seiferth notes, a "stumbling donkey whose hocks have been cut,"¹³ a figure perhaps of Judaism's obstinacy in adhering to the radically limited "Old Testament" law rather than the Gospels. Indeed, as is typically the case, Synagoga here is blindfolded, unable to see the scene of the crucifixion that unfolds before her and that marks her end. While in her left hand Ecclesia extends the chalice that catches Christ's life-giving blood, Synagoga holds in her left hand a black goat's head that echoes the grotesque bodies of the demons toward the bottom of the illustration and that evokes traditional medieval associations of Judaism with animal sacrifice, devil worship, and lust.¹⁴ Where Ecclesia grasps in her right hand the staff of her institutional power, Synagoga's staff, surmounted by the banner of her power, disintegrates: its broken form echoes the twisted forms of the demons' crook and pitchfork rather than the staffs of Christ and his angel. And, in what is perhaps the illustration's most powerful gesture, the hand that emerges from the left arm of the "living cross" wields a sword with which it stabs Synagoga in the head.

If the main argument of the "living cross" is that death finds its death in the moment of the crucifixion, then a corollary of that argument is that part of what is killed off in this moment is the prior religious dispensation associated with Synagoga; as death dies, so does a Judaism that thus comes to be identified with death. As Christine Rose notes, "the tree of Life (the cross) becomes a tree of Death for the infidel Synagogue."¹⁵ Christ's death inaugurates eternal life: hell is broken, heaven opened, the instrument of death itself, the cross, lives on. A future of life, of salvation, of resurrection, unlike anything that has previously been available to human beings, is opened up, but not only through the death and resurrection of Christ. This event also effects, and depends upon, the death and *non*resurrection of Judaism. And yet, even as Ecclesia arises and Synagoga falls, the prior Jewish dispensation—Synagoga herself, but also the "Old Testament" texts whose meaning changes irrevocably with Christ's incarnation, the Jewish figures of the patriarchs and indeed of Mary and Christ himself—must be represented in order for us to understand the meaning of that which displaces it. Even as it is

made to die, to disappear, Judaism comes to occupy our field of vision. It is this dynamic in medieval Christian thought—a dependence upon the Jewish ancestor that is simultaneously an erasure—which I hope the book that follows helps us more fully to understand. To gesture here toward my largest argument, in this illustration of the living cross, Jewishness is a *spectral* presence, strongly felt and yet just as strongly derealized.

A representation like the living cross makes no attempt to depict contemporary, late fifteenth-century European Jews. Indeed, its identification of the moment of the crucifixion with the death of Synagoga (wishfully and counterfactually) suggests that Jews cannot be part of a present, post-incarnational moment. Clearly, something other than a desire to grapple with a vital, contemporary religious competitor motivates such a representation, and in recent years much work on medieval Christian engagements with Judaism has emphasized the ways in which "the Jew" serves certain primarily ideological functions within hegemonic medieval culture. This line of inquiry has treated "the Jew" as a fantasy construction that had as much or more to do with Christian identity as it did with actual Jews and Jewish communities.¹⁶ Thus, for instance, in his important recent book *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity*, Jeremy Cohen considers the long-standing Christian tradition of the "hermeneutical Jew":

In order to meet their particular needs, Christian theology and exegesis created a Jew of their own. . . . Even if, in his inception, in his function, and in his veritable power in the Christian mindset, the hermeneutical Jew of late antique or medieval times had relatively little to do with the Jewish civilization of his day, his career certainly influenced the Christian treatment of the Jewish minority, the sole consistently tolerated minority, of medieval Christendom. Medieval Christian perceptions of this Jew's personality contributed amply to the significance of Judaism and anti-Judaism in Western intellectual and cultural history. Viewed more broadly, these perceptions shed light on the place and purpose of the "other" in the collective mentality of the Christian majority.¹⁷

As Cohen himself notes, the idea of a "theological Jew," a "juif théologique," developed by Gilbert Dahan in his magisterial *Les intellectuels*

chrétiens et les Juifs au Moyen Âge, presents a similar construction.¹⁸ Like Cohen, Dahan makes it clear that the constructs he analyzes do not necessarily reflect, directly or clearly, social reality; he notes a certain "schizophrenic view of the Jews," a "quotidian and real Jew, with whom one willingly discusses the Bible or the sciences," on which is "superimposed that which we have called the 'juif théologique,' an unreal Jew in whom diverse stereotypes come to be mixed and added together, born first of all from the reflection of theologians."¹⁹

Cohen and Dahan are primarily interested in medieval theological and intellectual work, where we might expect especially abstract formulations of Jewish difference, but recent scholarship also recognizes the prevalence of figures like the "hermeneutical" and "theological Jew" in less elite and abstruse medieval cultural formations. Thus, in her recent study of poetic and dramatic as well as theological texts, Lisa Lampert takes up Cohen's "hermeneutical Jew," arguing that this figure works in tandem with the gendered figure of the "hermeneutical Woman" to further a universalizing Christian self-definition: "The hermeneutical Woman and the hermeneutical Jew both become associated with veiled knowledge, a clouded seeing, and, of course, with carnality and the body itself. Both become figured as embodied particulars in relation to a universal that transcends embodiment."²⁰ In work on English texts and history after the expulsion of Jewish communities in 1290, it is no surprise that figures emphasizing the fictionality, the "absent presence,"²¹ of "the Jew" should dominate. Jeffrey J. Cohen has asked the provocative question "Was Margery Kempe Jewish?" suggesting that, in the absence of Jews in fifteenth-century England, we might read Kempe as a "performative Jew," figured forth as Jewish by her "exorbitant voice" and unorthodox, "boystows," behavior, though herself failing to "recognize the Jewish timbre of her voice."²² And while the historical absence of Jews may allow for a more uninhibited medieval fantasizing about Jewishness, it does not necessarily lead to a monolithic stereotyping or othering of Jews. (As Cohen's reading of Margery Kempe suggests, in such fantasy constructions, the Jew might indeed come into a certain dangerous proximity with the Christian.) Thus, Denise L. Despres calls our attention to "the protean Jew," arguing that, in late medieval England, Jewish figures might operate in "markedly different ways"; as she suggests, a single, late fourteenth-century English manuscript (the Vernon manuscript) "provides us with important evidence of conflicting attitudes toward the

Jew, who emerges from these narratives simultaneously as intellectual, criminal, convertible [*sic*], and equally resistant to genuine conversion."²³ In a similar vein, Elisa Narin van Court argues that, in "textual productions which represent medieval Jews,"

[t]here are stereotypes, to be sure, but there are also authors who return to the symbolic to re-imagine Jews and Judaism; there are texts which hold in unresolved tension mutually exclusive responses to the Jews; and there are texts which invoke the Jews as exemplars for Christian community. . . . In the absence of organized Jewish communities, that nearly total material absence, they remain a strong conceptual presence.²⁴

And while Jewish absence does not stand in the way of Jews and Jewishness assuming and maintaining a certain cultural centrality and complexity, Jewish social-historical presence might well call forth attempts to deny or erase that presence—whether ideologically or, all too often, in actual practice. Several scholars have emphasized that, even in real historical proximity to Jews and Jewish communities, Christian understandings tend to construct an absence. Kathleen Biddick argues, in reading two Albrecht Altdorfer etchings of the Regensburg synagogue made immediately before the 1519 destruction of the synagogue and expulsion of the Jewish community, that these depictions do the work of "'disappearing' Jews," constructing a representational space "where others are reduced to ontological absence"; as their community is destroyed, historical Jews become, through the work of Christian "ethnographic" representation, "paper Jews."²⁵ And Sylvia Tomasch has developed the powerful notion of "the virtual Jew," which applies equally to situations in which Jews are present or absent; in either case, Tomasch argues, medieval constructions replace actuality with virtuality:

the virtual does not refer to the actual, although this is what it claims to do. Rather, the virtual "surround[s] the realm of the actual in a system of reality," thereby creating a simulation that, by seeming to be more authentic than the actual, may be mistaken for it. When we examine the virtual Jew, for example, we see that it does not refer directly to any actual Jew, nor present an accurate depiction of one, nor even a faulty fiction of one;

instead it “surrounds” Jews with a “reality” that displaces and supplants their actuality. In fact, following the trail of the virtual guarantees that one will never arrive at the actual, for the referent of the virtual is always irretrievable. Thus, rather than being surprised at or having to explain the continuation of English reference to Jews after the expulsion, we might better acknowledge that Jewish absence is likely the best precondition for virtual presence. For wherever in Western culture Jews come to reside, they encounter the phantom that follows and precedes them. By virtue of its virtuality, therefore, “the Jew” maintains its frightful power.²⁶

Such a formulation would suggest that Jews are important, even central, in mainstream Christian culture not so much because they provide a religious challenge to Christianity and its thought, and not so much because they present a real social and cultural alternative to Christian hegemony, but because—whatever the social reality of Jewish-Christian relations, and despite the complex, “protean” nature of representations of Jews—Jews and Judaism can be quite easily rendered “virtual,” reduced to a nonpresence, even a nonbeing that functions to reconfirm a real, present Christianity. The notion of the spectral Jew, which is at the heart of the book that follows, is clearly related, and indebted, to notions like the “hermeneutical,” “theological,” “paper,” and “virtual.” Like these, the spectral emphasizes that the Jews we encounter in medieval Christian texts—theological, historical, polemical, autobiographical, fictional—are constructions that do not correspond in any easy way to the lived experiences of Jews, or even of the Christians who elaborated and made use of these constructions. But I want to emphasize that these constructions are also potentially “protean” and complex, not reducible, despite their constructedness, to a single form or even a single (anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic) impulse.²⁷ To my mind, the *specter*, standing between life and death, conjured up but not therefore necessarily in the full control of the conjurer, best suggests this potential complexity. I want to emphasize, moreover, that the lack of a clear correspondence between fantasy constructions of Jews and lived experience does not mean that these constructions do not themselves constitute a crucial part of lived experience. One critic has responded to an earlier formulation of “the spectral Jew” by suggesting that “Kruger’s provocative essay

is much influenced by Jaques [sic] Derrida’s *Spectres de Marx* . . . , and in my view underestimates the extent to which Jews and Judaism were living realities for the medieval Christian.”²⁸ Part of my response would be that “Jews and Judaism were living realities for the medieval Christian”—even the medieval English Christian post-1290 for whom “real” Jews were absent—but that those “living realities” were experienced as much and as importantly *through* the constructions of fantasy and ideology as in any more purely experiential realm.

That is *not* to say that the significance of the experiential—of real historical figures standing in discernible, concrete, material relations to each other—should be overlooked in favor of an analysis of figures and constructions, and their corresponding “mentalities” or ideologies. In a recent essay on the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, David Lawton has suggested that we have “mov[ed] too hastily from the body to notions of absence—the cultural significance of absent Jews, studied by Sylvia Tomasch in an essay on ‘The Virtual Jew’ and by Steven Kruger as ‘The Spectral Jew.’”²⁹ But as I hope to show throughout this project, spectrality is not simply to be opposed to body: indeed, medieval Jews’ spectrality often brings them into a particularly close relation to pure or dead body, mere materiality. More generally, while the spectral is a figure of a certain immateriality, it also remains significantly wrapped up in embodiment; without body, or something like body, how could the specter appear? In Jacques Derrida’s formulation of spectrality (which will be explored more fully in chapter 1 below), “the specter is a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit.”³⁰

In addition to being thought to deny the body or materiality, an idea like spectrality potentially leaves itself open to the serious charge that it levels the *differences* among interreligious interactions as these existed at different points in time and in different locations: if the medieval Jew is always, for Christians, spectral, how can we distinguish the very different dynamics of Jewish-Christian interaction in pre- and post-1290 England, or in pre- and post-1096 Northern Europe, or, at any given moment, among educated clerics, nobles in part economically dependent on Jewish communities, and those who might be in a more competitive or directly conflictual relationship to Jews? David Nirenberg—in one of the most influential and admired of recent books on medieval majority-minority relations, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in*

the Middle Ages—has emphasized the primary importance of historical specificity in considering interreligious dynamics. Strongly criticizing the approach of a certain “structuralist” intellectual history or history of discourse that would ignore the specific social circumstances in which discursive structures are embedded and played out (as claims and counterclaims that may sometimes be successful and sometimes not), he argues that, while the same discourse or representation of “the Jew”—as usurer, as literal-minded, etc.—may appear in radically different circumstances, that does not mean that the status of Jews has remained unchanged. Indeed, as Nirenberg would argue, we can only know the meaning of a particular discursive claim if we analyze its deployment in its particular historical moment.³¹

My own work in this book, with its emphasis on the operations of spectrality, will no doubt appear to belong to the “structuralist” school that Nirenberg strongly critiques. Yet I take Nirenberg’s position seriously. The reappearance of particular tropes or discourses, of the “hermeneutical” or “theological” or “virtual” or “spectral Jew,” does not mean that relations between Christians and Jews simply replay the same dynamic over and over.³² Power shifts; relations among distinct religious communities become more intensely confrontational or, sometimes, cooperative.³³ The deployment of discourses—to follow Michel Foucault—is polyvalent:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. . . . There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy; they can, on the contrary, circulate without changing their form from one strategy to another, opposing strategy.³⁴

The figure of the Jew could be put to many, and conflicting, uses—and the discourses surrounding that figure were available to be taken up for

very different ends, even into counterdiscourses developed by Jews and Jewish communities themselves (if often counterdiscourses that failed in achieving their political goals). But it is important as well to recognize the persistence of discourses, the remaining centrality of Jews in relation to Christian self-construction. While we must question, as Nirenberg has questioned, a historical master narrative that would see the emergence of a “persecuting society” in Europe in the eleventh or twelfth or thirteenth century, and a growing anti-Semitism (replacing an earlier, less virulent anti-Judaism) that leads to a “racist” persecution and expulsion of Jews from a formerly “tolerant” fifteenth-century Iberia, and then, across the centuries, to the most virulent racism of Nazi Germany’s Final Solution, we must still recognize how in fact transhistorically Jewish figures, Jewish “specters,” have survived—to feed destructive projects, but, indeed, also projects of Christian self-construction and projects of Jewish survival.³⁵

While I recognize the force of such constructions as the “hermeneutical,” “virtual,” “theological,” and “paper Jew,” I believe (as I hope the book that follows will demonstrate) that *spectrality* might be particularly useful in thinking the overarching dynamics of medieval Jewish-Christian relations and in answering Nirenberg’s call for historical specificity. As I argue more fully in chapter 1, spectrality focuses attention explicitly on questions of historicity and historical change, on questions of pastness, presentness, futurity. And the figure of the spectral Jew, while primarily a Christian construction, also perhaps leaves some space for Jewish agency, for an acting within, through, and against the hegemonic attempts to limit Jews to a position of significance primarily for Christian projects.

In *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*, I rethink the significance of Jewish presence and absence in Western Europe during the high and late Middle Ages. While we often conceive of Western European Christianity as monolithic, an enormously powerful institution that formed medieval Europe in the most crucial manner—and while there is of course some truth in such a description—it is also true that the church and the European culture it shaped defined themselves in complex, and not always self-consistent, ways, and that crucial to such definitions were “orthodox” Christians’ attempts to place themselves in relation to other religious groups: Islam, Judaism, the pagan

cultures Christianity often had displaced, and the “heresies” orthodoxy identified within Christendom itself.

In this book I focus particularly on texts that represent or enact Christian-Jewish contact. While medieval Jewish-Christian relations are intimately intertwined with the histories of Islam, Christian “heresy,” and paganism, Judaism stands in a privileged relation to Christianity, since it is out of Judaism that Christianity first arose. One might therefore expect that Christian self-understanding will particularly have to grapple with its “parent” religion. By examining texts where such grappling occurs, as well as Jewish texts that respond to or counter Christian arguments, I hope to understand more fully both the processes by which Christianity constructed itself and the ways in which Jewish self-understandings were shaped by the encounter, in Western Europe, with Christianity.

Body and embodiment were especially crucial terms in medieval Jewish-Christian interactions. Christian writers often understood the relationship between Christianity and Judaism in terms of an opposition between Jewish corporeality and Christian spirituality. In Christian polemic, we find Jews depicted as excessively corporeal and concomitantly less spiritual than their Christian counterparts. Jewish men were thought to suffer a monthly “bloody flux” that associated them, in at least certain Christian writers’ minds, with menstruating (“unclean”) women.³⁶ Jews were accused of such violent corporeal crimes as ritual murder, cannibalism, host desecration, and well poisoning—all of which were thought to threaten Christian bodies at the same time that they expressed a certain monstrous Jewish bodiliness. In the realm of intellectual difference, too, bodies were crucial: Christian exegetes understood specifically Jewish readings of scripture as overly literal, corporeal denials of the “true spirit” of the text.

At the same time, however, the medieval record of relations between Jews and Christians is filled with moments when Jews are, fictionally and in real life, *decorporealized*, rendered shadowy or invisible. Chronicles often fail to mention the presence of Jews in places where other evidence suggests that there were thriving Jewish communities. In a text like Peter Abelard’s twelfth-century *Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew, and a Christian*, the Jew speaks only in the first third of the text; after that point, he is silent, essentially absent.³⁷ From the thirteenth century on, one increasingly common way in which Christian communities and nations dealt

with anxieties about Jews was expulsion. As noted above, England’s Jews were expelled in 1290, not openly to return until the seventeenth century; France expelled Jews soon after, in 1306; the Iberian expulsion of 1492 is the best known. Such actions were partly responses to corporeal fears like those sketched above, partly the result of economic calculation. In any case, this history of expulsion effectively derealized Jews for many medieval people. But though, for instance, most English people from the late thirteenth to the mid-seventeenth century were unlikely to encounter Jews,³⁸ a threatening Jewish corporeality (though one usually displaced from contemporary England either temporally or spatially) continues to be an important trope in such major English texts as Chaucer’s *Prioress’s Tale*, Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, the cycle drama, and, later, Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*.

The Spectral Jew makes clear the ways in which interactions between medieval Christians and Jews pivoted on a dynamic relation between embodiment and disembodiment, the attribution of gross corporeality to Jewish bodies and a concomitant attempt to make those bodies disappear. Condensed in this relation were Christian anxieties about identity—the identity both of Christendom as a whole (a body dangerously “infiltrated” by non-Christian bodies) and of individual Christians (anxious to distinguish themselves from those believing otherwise). Further, Jewish literature and culture, and a Jewish sense of identity, were themselves deeply marked by the dynamic movement between embodiment and erasure: Jewish thinkers and writers had both to respond to the accusation that Judaism was an excessively corporeal religion and to attempt to make Jews visible in their actual embodiment, without visibility becoming simply a spur to renewed violence and erasure.

My investigation of the ways in which bodiliness and disembodiment shape medieval Jewish-Christian interactions rests on a wide variety of sources: polemical Christian anti-Jewish and Jewish anti-Christian texts; the writing of converts from Judaism to Christianity, and fragments of accounts of conversion from Christianity to Judaism; chronicles, laws, papal documents; transcripts of actual public disputations between Christians and Jews as well as fictional accounts of interreligious debate. By giving attention to such a wide range of different kinds of text, as well as to texts written from both Jewish and Christian points of view, and by reading these texts in both their historical-sociopolitical and textual-

literary contexts, I hope to develop as broad and deep a sense as possible of how questions of Jewish-Christian difference mattered in medieval culture. My sources also derive from a wide geographic area—England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy—and from a broad temporal span, the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. While there are dangers in making the purview of the project so large, I believe that doing so is fruitful—in enabling a tracing of continuities and changes over time as well as a recognition of similarities and differences across space.

I begin the investigation in the second half of the eleventh century because, as historical work has made clear, this moment is associated with a shift in both Christian and Jewish self-understanding, as well as in Christian-Jewish relations.³⁹ Thus, for instance, massacres of Jews associated with the First Crusade characterized the closing years of the eleventh century. While Christianity, from its beginning, expressed an uneasiness with Judaism, we can see, starting in the late eleventh century, and accelerating through the twelfth and into the thirteenth century, a growing intensity of Christian anti-Judaism. The same period was, however, also a time in which much collaborative work between Jews and Christians was ongoing: Christian exegetes consulted with Jewish biblical scholars in Paris during the twelfth century; the “renaissance” of that same period involved Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scholars working together on a massive, and deeply influential, project of recovering ancient (classical) knowledge. The period when both Christian persecution of Jews and Jewish-Christian collaborations intensified should be a particularly revealing one for the understanding of complex interreligious dynamics, and I study what I call the “long” twelfth century especially fully (it is, indeed, a period when many Jewish texts about Christianity and many Christian texts about Judaism were produced). But I also bring my investigation into the later Middle Ages, since this period is characterized by repeated attempts to remove or eliminate Jews from Christian Europe, whether through conversion, expulsion, or massacre.

In framing the project around the dynamic movement between embodiment and disembodiment, I have been influenced by recent discussions of “spectrality” and “apparitionality” in writers as diverse as Terry Castle (*The Apparitional Lesbian*), Kathleen Brogan (*Cultural Haunting: Ghosts and Ethnicity in Recent American Literature*), and Jacques Derrida (*Specters of Marx*), and I explore the usefulness of such formulations for thinking medieval Jewish-Christian relations in chapter 1, “The Spec-

tral Jew.” Spectral or apparitional figures—at one and the same time corporeally threatening and decorporealized—crystallize a dynamic in which the attempt to rid oneself of a presence perceived as dangerous is haunted by the impossibility of doing just that. “Ghosting” may operate in the realms of gender and sexuality (as we see, for instance, in Castle), race and ethnicity (as in Brogan), and (as I will argue) religion; in all these cases, the spectral works in part to solidify one’s own sense of identity over against an “other.” But, as Derrida emphasizes, the work of “conjuring away” a specter also “conjures it up”: the very need to derealize the specter, to declare it dead, depends upon a recognition that it is in fact *not* yet dead.⁴⁰ Synagoga must be made to appear beneath the living cross if her definitive elimination through the crucifixion is to be announced. But violent as the work of conjuration may be (as when Jews were expelled from their homes in England or massacred in Northern France and the Rhineland in 1096), in its ambivalent stance between presence and absence it might open a certain space for resistance on the part of those who are “ghosted.” As Castle suggests, while “the apparitional figure seem[s] to obliterate . . . the disturbing carnality of lesbian love,” at the same time, it represents a “reembodiment,” an “uncanny return to the flesh.”⁴¹ One persistent question in my project, then, is whether, in the space between the violent derealizing of Jewish bodies and the concomitant recognition of the presence of those bodies, we might find a place for medieval Jewish resistance to a Christian hegemony.

Chapter 2, “Body Effects: Individual and Community Identity in the Long Twelfth Century,” examines how medieval understandings both of individual Christian identity and of a corporate Christendom depended in crucial ways on constructions of the body of the Jewish individual and of Jewry as a whole. The late eleventh and early twelfth centuries were a period of intensive church reform that also involved, with the First Crusade (1096), a violent reaching beyond the boundaries of Europe. The (re)formation of a medieval Christian sense of identity in this moment was, I argue, importantly dependent on a differentiation from, and sometimes a direct attack on, Jews as well as Muslims; this differentiation often operated in terms of the body. At the same time, as noted above, this moment saw significant collaboration between Jews and Christians, and I consider here the paradoxes that characterized Jewish-Christian contacts during this era. In part, I do so by turning to the extensive and varied (historiographical, autobiographical, and theological-polemical)

writings of Guibert of Nogent, intensively considering how Guibert represented Western European Christians' encounters with a range of religious others—Jews, Muslims, Greek Christians, and Christian “heretics.” In closing the chapter, I then look at how European Jewish writers responded to twelfth-century changes in their relationship with Christendom, attempting to reassert Jewish identity, to reconstruct and reclaim it in terms that a dominant Christian ideology would disallow, even as they represented the real destruction of Jewish communities. My discussion throughout makes clear that the differences in religious identity constructed by both Christian and Jewish writers depended significantly upon idealized and gendered imaginings of the body, with Christian chroniclers positing a heroic, masculine crusader's body over against decrepit Jewish and Muslim ones, and with Jewish chroniclers constructing both masculine and feminine models of heroic martyrdom.

Chapter 3, “Becoming Christian? Conversion and the Stubborn Body,” shifts its attention from the explicitly violent confrontations of the First Crusade to the more subtly coercive relations in which Jews were often urged (and sometimes forced, as indeed during the First Crusade) to convert to Christianity. The texts of conversion are especially crucial to my project—I return to them in chapters 4 and 5—since they dramatize both the separateness of Jewish and Christian positions and the possibility of a movement between these. That is, they especially crystallize questions about religious identity and its stability or instability. Here, the Jewish body poses a real problem to Christian thinking: if Jews, in the very stuff of their corporeality, are somehow essentially different from Christians, what happens when they undergo a religious conversion? Are their bodies also converted? Or do Jewish bodies remain strange, recalcitrant to religious, moral “reform?” As we will see, such questions about bodily change also entail significant questions about the convert's gender and sexuality. To recover as full a sense as possible of the gendered, sexualized body's place in the process of religious conversion, I here bring forward a wide range of kinds of evidence—legal-judicial, medical, polemical, fictional, autobiographical—from the high and late Middle Ages. This adds up, I believe, to a compelling case for seeing bodies, genders, and sexualities as intimately involved with religious identity and conversion. In the remaining two chapters of the book, I then complement this analysis by turning to a more intensive investi-

gation of several texts at the center of which stand questions of identity and conversion, gender, sexuality, and embodiment.

The texts considered in chapters 4 and 5 all represent direct confrontations—debates or disputations—between Jews and Christians. Many surviving medieval texts—in both Latin and Hebrew—stage fictional or allegorical debates between Jewish and Christian positions, and some of these fictions display a tantalizing connection to “real life.” Thus, one literary dialogue between a Jew and a Christian was composed by the theologian Rupert of Deutz, and while we have no evidence that this text itself represents a debate that actually occurred, the Jewish convert to Christianity, Hermann of Cologne, elsewhere claims to have engaged in a public disputation with Rupert.⁴² We have, moreover, surviving Hebrew and Latin accounts of a variety of historically verifiable public debates between Jews and Christians. While some of these varied debate texts are discussed in earlier chapters, in chapter 4, “Merchants, Converts, Jews: Interreligious Debate and the Troubling of Christian Identity,” I turn to a more intensive consideration of this literature and what it might tell us about medieval Jewish-Christian interaction and identity formation. I examine first the clearly fictional *Dialogi* of Peter Alfonsi, an extremely popular polemic written by a Jewish convert to Christianity. While the text develops a powerful anti-Jewish and anti-Islamic argument, in focusing attention on Peter's identity as a convert, it at the same time complicates a sense of what it means to be a Christian as opposed to a Jew. On the one hand, a “conversion identity”—an identity paradoxically dependent upon a radical change in identity—is historically constitutive of both the Christian community and the Christian individual: Christianity, after all, originates in and grows by means of conversion, and individual Christian moral reform is often treated as conversion. We might, then, see the convert Peter (like the New Testament convert Saul/Paul before him) as a particularly appropriate emblem of Christian identity. On the other hand, however, an explicit recognition in Peter of the proximity of Christian identity to Jewishness might be deeply disturbing to a Christian sense of self.

A similar ambivalence characterizes the other major set of texts at play in chapter 4, the twelfth- and thirteenth-century disputations of Ceuta and Majorca, which (unlike Peter's *Dialogi*) purport to recount actual disputations between Jews and Christian merchants. A rise in Christian

mercantile activity—from the twelfth century to the fifteenth, and then into “modernity”—threatened Christianity’s sense of itself as a *spiritual* dispensation established over against the corporeal tradition of a superseded Judaism, and these debates develop strategies for distinguishing *Christian* mercantilism from discredited Jewish mercantile and monetary practices. At the same time, however, the debates (especially the disputation of Majorca) implicate their merchant protagonists in Jewishness and thus fail to put anxieties about the proper *Christianitas* of mercantile identity wholly to rest.

The final chapter, “Staying Jewish? Public Disputation, Conversion, and Resistance,” continues to examine texts generated by public debate between Jews and Christians, in this case Hebrew and Latin accounts of the church- and state-sponsored disputations held, most notably, at Paris in 1240, Barcelona in 1263, and Tortosa in 1413–14. These three debates share certain intriguing features: unlike the earlier disputational literature, all focus their attention especially on postbiblical Hebrew texts, particularly the Talmud, and all have as their main Christian interlocutor a Jewish convert to Christianity. Both facts suggest that, for the Christian officials who arranged and presided over these disputations, crucial to Christian self-identification remain a consideration of and confrontation with Jewishness (Judaism’s authoritative texts) and Jewish difference (the difference that is both figured forth and overcome in the convert). At the same time, these debates bring to bear a strong pressure toward policing Jewish identity, belief, and practice, trying to ensure that Judaism take a form confirming Christian ideas of “proper” Jewishness. In the last of the debates, at Tortosa, the Christian pressure on Jewishness intensifies, pushing toward a full elimination of Jewish identity through conversion. In concluding *The Spectral Jew*, I look especially fully at this last disputation, examining how the pressure toward Jewish conversion builds, what its local Iberian and broader European politics are, and thinking through how spectrality—the conjuring up of a Jewish presence in order to subject it to attack and a wished-for disappearance—continues to operate in late medieval Jewish-Christian interactions, if differently than it did in the earlier Middle Ages. In closing, I return, too, to the difficult question of how much space might remain within late medieval Christian constructions for medieval European Jews to *stay* Jewish.

THE SPECTRAL JEW



THE CHRISTIAN REORGANIZATION OF HISTORY

*It is often a matter of pretending to certify
death there where the death certificate is
still the performative of an act of war or the
impotent gesticulation, the restless dream,
of an execution.*

—Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 48

For medieval Christianity, one historical moment—the moment of Christ’s incarnation—rewrites all of history. The point at which divinity intervenes decisively in human affairs—not just to shape or redirect them but to change them essentially—opens a new future for humanity, and whether this is thought in individual or corporate terms, with attentiveness to the personal consequences of (im)moral behavior or to the promises and dangers of apocalypse and millennium, it demands a very different relation also to present and past time. The present comes to be intimately connected to both the (past) incarnational moment and the salvific future this makes possible. Indeed, the present becomes a time of Christ’s presence, with the church and its institutions (and particularly the Eucharist) maintaining the real bodily and spiritual presence of the divine in the world. And there come to be, in essence, two quite different sorts of past time: the first, the everyday past of living human beings, a past lived within the present time instituted by the

incarnation; but the second, a past truly past, the past of life before the incarnation, standing outside the framework of a properly Christian history.

Such a restructuring of time was commonplace for believing medieval Christians, established, early on and influentially, in Augustine's conceptualization of history as a sequence of seven days or ages. The sixth of these, initiated by Christ, is the time of the Christian present, containing all of Christian history until the end of time, the seventh day when "God will rest . . . and cause us, who are the seventh day, to find our rest in him."¹ The current, sixth, age, an ongoing present not to end until the world itself is ready to end, provides a premonition of future timelessness; indeed, for Augustine, during this present age "carnal man," having experienced the coming of Christ, now begins to realize his "spiritual" potential. If postincarnational history thus becomes a single, uninterrupted era of the present awaiting its future, the preincarnational becomes the realm of history proper; divided into five discrete ages, this is a realm of change and diversity, of the this-worldly ("carnal") existence that was the only possibility before the ("spiritual") potentials of the future were opened up by Christ, and it is a realm that, with the incarnation, is definitively made past.

Of course, other temporalities than this official Christian one were powerfully at play in the Middle Ages.² Despite the idea that the present was one continuous age—in Lee Patterson's words, "a vacant and meaningless period of time about which nothing useful can be said"³—events and changes *were* felt to occur. Classical literature and the historical models (both linear and cyclical) that it provided the Middle Ages were influential alternatives to an "Augustinian [historiographical] severity."⁴ Other exegetical readings of history than Augustine's, particularly apocalyptic ones, "both expanded and redirected the previously definitive view of Augustine," and enabled the elaboration of alternative historical models.⁵ Further, a cyclical, seasonal temporality governed much of the activity of everyday life. Still, the reorganization of history around the incarnational moment was immensely influential, and, as I will suggest here, not least in its shaping of Christian-Jewish relations.

Jews are positioned differently from any other group in relation to Christian history. As the direct precursor of Christianity, Judaism is precisely that which Christian history needs to move beyond. Indeed, the Christian incarnational reorganization of history, in working to make fully

past that which precedes the rupture of the incarnation, operates efficiently to put Judaism to rest, to kill it off (at least, but not only, phantasmatically) and thus to make way for the new, Christian dispensation. Such an impulse is already at work in the Gospels, with their nascent (and immensely influential) typological understanding of Hebrew scripture. Pauline formulations of a "faith" that makes "the law" unnecessary, of a "carnal" and "literal" understanding superseded by the "spiritual," of an "old man" replaced by a "new," of "death" giving way to "life" definitively write Jewish law, Jewish understanding, Jewish being as the past, as an inflexible, literal-minded legalism made unnecessary by the new belief, as a blindness stubbornly resistant to spiritual enlightenment, as an immersion in the body that blocks access to salvation, as death—all ideas crucial for dominant Christian theology, and reverberating strongly in anti-Jewish polemic of the Middle Ages (and beyond).⁶ (We have seen above, in the elaborate late medieval typologies of the living cross, the longevity—and capacity for innovative renewal—of such tropes.) The Christian exegetical apparatuses founded in Pauline doctrine—both simple typology and more complex, multitiered systems of allegoresis—work to rewrite all of biblical history before Christ as literally dead, significant only as it points toward the incarnational narrative that remakes all of history, or as it comments on the soul's present relation to Christ, or as it gestures toward the living history of the church's triumph in the world.⁷ Significantly, Augustine's historical schema of seven ages is itself an allegorical one that transforms the letter of Genesis, the creation in seven days, into a history that reveals its goal in Christ and the post-incarnational movement to an end-time.

Christianity thus claims to recognize a new and universal structure of time instituted by the incarnation, and it claims for itself a similar universality: not just one alternative to other systems of belief, it effects a universal reorganization of human life. It is the truth breaking into a history that until then contained only glimpses of truth—that is, glimpses of the Christian dispensation to come. And that now-finished history is largely identified with Judaism. In making such claims, of course, Christianity has to address the problem of Christ's historical Jewishness, and it does so with a bold denial: Christ is presented as "divine and *human*," not as divine and *a male Jew* (as might still be read, for instance, from Matthew's account of his life). As archetypal human being, attached to all human beings, Christ supersedes his own Jewishness, and while, in

relation to the "Gentiles," universalizing Christ in this way operates as a gesture of embrace, the gesture, in relation to those Jews who, after Christ, remain Jewish, is rather one of refusal and rejection.⁸ Indeed, after Christ, to be properly human, to participate in Christ's powerful conflation of divinity and "humanity," to live in a present of Christ's presence, one needs specifically *not* to be Jewish, no longer to subscribe to an "old," preincarnational system, as Christ opens up for the "human" a future not before possible. To be Jewish after the incarnation is precisely not to be "human" in the ways enabled by Christ, not to participate in the dispensation of the "spirit," not to have access to the future of salvation.

The thoroughness with which Jews are repositioned by the new Christian understanding of history is made especially visible in allegorical readings that invert the biblical text's literal opposition between Jewish believers and non-Jewish unbelievers to make the believers Christian types and the unbelievers Jewish infidels.⁹ I cite here just one instance, from a letter written (ca. 1040–41) by Peter Damian against "the madness of Jewish depravity and all their garrulous fabrications."¹⁰ Addressing a "contentious Jew"¹¹ in order to provide "evidence for the coming of Christ,"¹² Peter presents his reading of Obadiah 18, "the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame; the house of Esau stubble":¹³ "What is meant by the house of Jacob and Joseph but the Church of Christ? What should be understood by the house of Esau if not infidel people?"¹⁴ Such a reading violently alienates postincarnational Jews from their sacred history, repositioning them with "infidel people" and claiming the faithful Jews of biblical tradition not for a history of Judaism but for the present time of the "Church of Christ." In such formulations, the "true Israel," *verus Israel*, becomes not the historical (Jewish) Israel, but its Christian successor.¹⁵

Jews, Jewishness, and Judaism, however, were not to be so easily put to rest.¹⁶ Some Jews, of course, had refused, and continued to refuse, the "new" dispensation; Jewish communities existed alongside and within Christian communities throughout the Middle Ages, though the attempt to identify Judaism as past history was echoed in actions—forced conversions, expulsions, and massacres—intended to eliminate real Jews from the present moment. Still, majority Christian communities and institutions had to make pragmatic decisions about how to deal with Jews, and the decisions made were variously tolerant, neutral, full of hatred. The variation in Christian treatments of Jews needs to be analyzed carefully in

relation to economic conditions and class divisions, tensions between secular and religious institutions, the perceived and real instabilities of Christian hegemony, the presence of Islam, "heresies," and native "pagan" traditions alongside Christianity and Judaism.¹⁷ Here, though, I want to suggest that, despite the historical vicissitudes, and in addition to any pragmatic pressures toward or away from Christian tolerance of Jews, there was, in the basic structure of Christianity's self-definition in relation to Judaism, a strong ambivalence.¹⁸ Despite all the pressure to disavow, indeed destroy, Judaism, Christianity also expressed a certain need to preserve Jews.

Paradoxically, this ambivalence arose from the very restructuring of history that worked to accomplish the supersession of Judaism. The argument that the incarnation marked a definitive new beginning could not be validated except in relation to certain prior claims about God's relation to humanity, and, for a Christianity that arose from Judaism, these were the claims of Jewish scripture. The self-presentation of Christianity as universal thus paradoxically relied upon the specificity of its relationship to an ancestral Judaism understood as having (if only "darkly") recognized what would be revealed with Christ's coming. Typological and allegorical readings dealt with this dependence upon Judaism by denying "true" Jewishness (that is, chosenness) to Jews; after the incarnation, this quality passed to Christians. Even so, the definition of Christianness remained dependent upon Jewishness: witness the repeated reiteration and continual development of "Old Testament" exegesis.

The actual survival of Jews complicated matters further, giving the lie to claims of their pastness, and Christian ideology developed a complex rationale that simultaneously justified Jewish survival and reaffirmed Jewish obsolescence. It is significantly Augustine, the prime theorist of the new Christian history, who most influentially states this rationale in a double formulation that reflects the double sense of the past chosenness and present obsolescence of Jews. On the one hand, "dispersed among all nations, in whatever direction the Christian Church spreads," Jews, "in spite of themselves," give testimony to Christian truth, "by their possession and preservation of those books" of scripture "bear[ing] witness for us that we have not fabricated the prophecies about Christ."¹⁹ Here, Jews act as the present spokespeople for their ancestors, important for their relation to the past rather than for their own present being. In addition, however, the present condition of Jews is significant, but only

as it demonstrates their true pastness, their absencing from salvific history. The divine punishment, the exile and subjugation Jews are thought to suffer because of their rejection of Christ, is read as testimony to Christian truth and Jewish error: "if they had not sinned against God by turning aside to the worship of strange gods and of idols, seduced by impious superstition as if by magic arts, if they had not finally sinned by putting Christ to death, they would have continued in possession of the same realm, a realm exceeding others in happiness, if not in extent."²⁰ Surviving Jews thus testify not only to the scriptural basis for Christian revelation but also to the very supersession of Judaism that survival might rather be thought to belie. This is true, too, of the role Jews are expected to have in the future, when, upon Elijah's arrival, they will have "their hearts turned by conversion."²¹ The final conversion—that is, the final historical supersession—of the Jews will mark the salvific end that the incarnation has instituted if only to defer, even as it has deinstitutioned Judaism only to defer its final demise.

This Christian reorganization of history has had remarkable staying power—though of course its deployment in various historical circumstances has functioned in markedly different ways. We might see its most devastating recent effects in largely secularized nineteenth- and twentieth-century moves to exclude Christianity's predecessor from "modernity," which functioned, most virulently, by identifying Jews and Jewishness with racial "degenerescence," thus justifying ("eugenic") attempts to exterminate Jews altogether.²² Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion* of 1938 (Figure 2) gains its power at least in part by intervening in such ultimately Christian constructions of supersession. Chagall draws here on medieval and early modern traditions of representing the crucifixion, some of which—for example, the "living cross" examined above—actively show the crucifixion as the moment of Synagoga's destruction, the moment when Jews and Judaism are expelled from history.²³ In his revision of such representations, Chagall outrageously claims Jesus for Judaism—making Jesus's loincloth the fringed tallith (prayer shawl) of Jewish tradition, and surmounting the crucified figure not only with the traditional I.N.R.I. (see John 19:19: "Iesus Nazarenus rex Iudaeorum") but also with its Hebrew or Aramaic "original," "Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews." In so doing, Chagall rewrites the moment that institutes Christianity as a religion of supersession as precisely a moment of Judaism's continuation and continuity.²⁴ The past of the so-called Old Testa-



Figure 2. Marc Chagall (French, born Russia, 1887–1985), *White Crucifixion*, 1938. Oil on canvas, 154.3 x 139.7 cm. Gift of Alfred S. Alschuler to the Art Institute of Chicago. Item no. 1946.925. Reproduction courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago. Copyright 2004 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris. Reproduced with permission.

ment, as both Jesus's past and the past of the besieged shtetls of 1938, is evoked throughout the painting—in the tablets of the law that surmount the burning synagogue; in the Torah preserved (in the foreground, by the figure who moves toward the left), and in the Torah attacked, taken from the holy ark in the burning synagogue by a "brownshirt trooper,"²⁵ and dashed to the ground at bottom right. Yet that last Torah emanates something powerful—fire? smoke? incense?—even from its forbidden position on the ground. And what it emanates leads to Jacob's ladder, which, rather than reveal "angels of God ascending and descending" (Genesis 28:12), leads to the cross and to the strong swath of white light that cuts diagonally across the picture and connects the besieged ground of the town turned upside down, burning, destroyed, and of the ship filled with dismayed escapees, to an unseen heaven. Perhaps this band of light

suggests some divine force that oversees and organizes the scene of horror, but the sole visible occupants of heaven here are a hovering group of contemporary Jews, perhaps the souls of the dead,²⁶ who seem as dismayed by what they witness as the fleeing, disoriented figures in the foreground. This hovering group replaces the traditional mourners at the foot of the cross—the figures actually near the base of the cross all move away from it, too immersed in their own small piece of the catastrophe to survey the wider scene around them—but these distressed, floating spirits mourn a whole complex scene of which the crucifixion is but one, if a central, element. That scene includes synchronously the Torah, Jesus, and contemporary, twentieth-century Jewish communities and Jews—the figure in the left foreground originally wore a sign that read “Ich bin ein Jude” [I am a Jew], which Chagall later removed as too explicit²⁷—all under attack, framed menacingly by Soviet and Nazi armies (marked by their respective flags to the left and the right)²⁸ but also, in the center foreground, by an unextinguished menorah, an undying Judaism. An unambiguously Jewish past, that of the Torah; a past usually identified with the beginning of Christianity, that of the crucifixion; and a threatened Judaism of the present all participate in a staying Jewish that is not the stagnant removal from change constructed for Jews and Judaism by medieval Christianity, but a wrapped-upness in change. The fleshly, passionate bodiliness claimed by Christianity for itself—the power of an incarnation, of a suffering that might transform the world and history—is here remade as Jewish. A Jewish past, both the “Old Testament” and Jesus, that has been taken away from Jews is here revived, reawakened as Jewish, to be activated in a situation of present distress.

SPECTERS OF JUDAISM

Haunting belongs to the structure of every hegemony.

—Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 37

A recurring pattern in the history of the West is the declaration of a historical end that then, as it turns out, is not quite at hand. We are at such a moment presently, with the “end of philosophy,” the “end of science,”

the “end of Marxism/communism/socialism,” and the “end of history” all having been recently declared. Jacques Derrida, in *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, presents an extended reflection on this present historical moment, and I believe that his thinking is useful as well for an analysis of the temporality of medieval Christian-Jewish relations. The terms of Derrida’s own argument suggest that this might be so. In discussing Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man*, he calls attention to the book’s status as “a gospel” and as “neo-testamentary,”²⁹ and he notes that Fukuyama claims to bring “good news” (57, 59–60) that, like the Gospel announcements of a new dispensation, proclaims a new structure of history; indeed, Derrida reads “This end of History” as “essentially a Christian eschatology” (60).

Derrida recognizes in the proclamation of such an end—and, by implication, in all “gospels”—a statement that performs the end that it claims to describe. That is, Fukuyama’s announcement of the “end of history,” the fall of Marxism and the triumph of liberal democracy, rather than being a constative speech act is a “performative interpretation . . . that transforms the very thing it interprets” (51).³⁰ Not primarily a response to the perception of Marxism’s demise, such an announcement is rather a wishful movement toward that demise, and a movement that arises precisely because Marxism is felt—despite its “defeat”—to be still a threatening presence, still in historical play: “At a time when a new world disorder is attempting to install its neo-capitalism and neo-liberalism, no disavowal has managed to rid itself of all of Marx’s ghosts” (*Specters*, 37). For Derrida, indeed, it is a sense of open-endedness, of time’s unpredictable movements, of a present that is not simply self-present but rather “unhinged” and “out of joint” (17–29)—open to the insistent demands of the past and the future—that calls forth such (wishful) “descriptions” (performances) of the end. The moment when a certain historical trajectory of Marxism seems to have run its course suggests to Derrida not the death of Marxism but the renewed need to ask what might remain of the radical potential of a particular movement for social, political, and economic justice, and it is fear of the possible responses to such a question that motivates the impulse to put Marxism altogether to rest.

Another way of looking at it, and one that approaches more closely to the significance for Derrida of *specters*, would be to see Marxism—though pushed aside after the demise of Eastern European communism—as

still *spectrally* present in the form of certain unfulfilled (economic, social, and political) promises. Or more accurately, since the specter is for Derrida precisely that which is *not* present, Marxism and its unfulfilled potentials “haunt” the present moment as a call from the past heard in the present and demanding a radically different kind of future (and thus also a radically different kind of present). It is this spectral disturbance of present security that performative claims of “the end” like Fukuyama’s serve to deny and allay.

But for Derrida the “conjuring” of the specter—the performative attempt to put it to rest—is always ambivalent. As he points out, “conjurat[i]on” evokes a complex set of meanings: (1a) “the conspiracy (*Ver-schwörung* in German) of those who promise solemnly, sometimes secretly, by swearing together an oath (*Schwur*) to struggle against a superior power” (40); (1b) “the magical incantation destined to *evoke*, to bring forth with the voice, to *convoke* a charm or a spirit” (41); and (2) “‘conjurement’ (*Beschwörung*), namely the magical exorcism that, on the contrary, tends to expulse the evil spirit which would have been called up or convoked (OED: ‘the exorcising of spirits by invocation,’ ‘the exercise of magical or occult influence’)” (47).³¹ The attempt to “conjure away,” while it claims the death of the specter, always admits at the same time its continued existence, as a threat that *needs* to be exorcised, maintaining it in relation to the present even as it claims to put it to rest:

Since such a conjuration today insists, in such a deafening consensus, that what is, it says, indeed dead, remain dead indeed, it arouses a suspicion. It awakens us where it would like to put us to sleep. Vigilance, therefore: the cadaver is perhaps not as dead, as simply dead as the conjuration tries to delude us into believing. The one who has disappeared appears still to be *there*, and his apparition is not nothing. It does not do nothing. (*Specters*, 97)³²

The pertinence of Derrida’s analysis for thinking the peculiar operations of temporality in medieval Christianity’s definition of its relation to Judaism, I hope, begins to become clear. This analysis first of all calls our attention to the *performative* work of Christian historical thinking: though Judaism survives, the new temporal scheme that Christianity puts in place attempts to settle it as past, “conjure” it away, provide it once and for all with its “death certificate” (48). But the very act of conjuration

suggests that the hoped-for effect of the performative does not in fact pertain, that Jews and Judaism are not fully past, but rather still disturbing and disruptive—“haunting”—enough to Christianity’s sense of its own hegemony to necessitate the act of conjuration. The “conjuration,” as “the conspiracy... of those who promise solemnly... to struggle against a superior power” (40), serves to reinforce a sense of Christian unity over against its religious opponent, but only at the expense of admitting the continued power of the opponent that is, in this very act, declared dead. That is, the attempt to conjure Jews away also serves to conjure them up, into a certain presence: defining Jews as past involves simultaneously recognizing their (ongoing) role as Christianity’s ancestor and (oedipal?) competitor.

Like any ancestor, Judaism provides Christianity with an inheritance, which is always, Derrida suggests, spectral (not of the present, but influencing, appearing in, the present, demanding some present response) and “heterogeneous” (resisting in its complexity any reductive response): “If the readability of a legacy were given, natural, transparent, univocal, if it did not call for and at the same time defy interpretation, we would never have anything to inherit from it. We would be affected by it as by a cause—natural or genetic. One always inherits from a secret—which says ‘read me, will you ever be able to do so?’” (16). If Christianity works radically to reduce the “heterogeneity” of Judaism, to claim for itself the one proper “reading” of the Jewish “legacy,” and a reading that denies validity to Jewish readings, the felt necessity of keeping Judaism and Jews in play, to provide testimony both through the divine punishment they are believed to be undergoing and through their preservation of Hebrew scriptures, allows for a Jewish presence that is spectral—consigned to a time other than the present and yet “haunting” the present, disrupting its “identity to itself” (xx) by bringing the past to bear on it, and thus also suggesting, despite the insistences of Christian eschatological thinking, a future different from that securely predicted.

An admitted danger of emphasizing spectrality in our consideration of Christian-Jewish relations is that it potentially replicates the tendency of medieval Christianity (and of traditional medievalist historicism) to deny the significance of Jews and Jewish communities in their own right. Medieval Jews are significant not only for the roles they play in Christian self-constructions. They have a real presence and at least some agency within Western Europe. Subject to economic, political, and

social pressures and violences, they also potentially intervene against these, shaping their lives in ways that might be disallowed by a dominant Christian culture. Still, I will insist on the usefulness of thinking the spectrality of medieval Jews and Judaism, not because this reveals everything about their relationship to Christianity and Christians—of course, it does not—but because it enables a reading of some of the complexities of that relationship, including the effects that the construction of Jews as spectral might have upon Jews as real corporeal and social presences. Such effects include both the deadly work that a culture performs upon its spectral others (not just ideological disavowal but real violence) and a space for survival and resistance that spectrality, in its ambivalence as both the disavowed and the inherited, both the absent and the present, both the bodiless and the embodied, might open up—a space, for instance, in which medieval Jews might make certain claims for their own priority and for the significance of their traditions. The specter shares this ambivalence with such other disavowed, (anti)-social categories as the polluting and the queer. In Mary Douglas's influential formulation, even while polluting entities, entities thought to disrupt social-cultural order, are met with attempts at purification and extirpation, the place of the polluted remains the place of a certain power, engendering a "danger" for hegemony.³³ Similarly, as Judith Butler suggests, "the construction of the human" operates to produce a queer "outside," "the inhuman, the humanly unthinkable," "refused the possibility of cultural articulation." But the queer space thus created is not an "absolute 'outside'"; it stands instead in a constitutive relationship to the culturally intelligible: "These excluded sites come to bound the 'human' as its constitutive outside, and to haunt those boundaries as the persistent possibility of their disruption and rearticulation."³⁴ As we analyze the processes by which pollution and the queer are put to rest, and specters conjured away, we must not forget to examine how occupying the space of danger or the time of the specter might also present some real, if difficult and dangerous, opportunities for disruption, rearticulation, and resistance.

Derrida's analysis and models like Douglas's and Butler's in fact help elucidate not just the general structure of medieval Christian thinking about the historicity of Jews but also more specific, historically particular aspects of Christian-Jewish relations, and I will be considering these in some detail in the following chapters. Thus, one crucial site for the elaboration of a Christian sense of Jewish otherness is, as I have

argued elsewhere and will develop more fully below, the Jewish body—seen as deficient and excessive, fragmented and porous, dirty, bloody, excremental.³⁵ Judaism, as (from the Christian perspective) a religion dependent upon corporeal, rather than spiritual, understanding, comes to be identified with bodiliness, and with a bodiliness seen as particularly debased—disintegrating, but also threatening the integrity of other (Christian) bodies. Though embodiment might be thought to be the opposite of spectrality, medieval Christian attention to the Jewish body stands in a significant relationship to the spectral in Christian constructions of Jewish otherness. In order to affirm Christianity's definitive, spiritual turn away from materiality, mere corporeality—a turn that, of course, paradoxically involves a theology of incarnation³⁶—the dead body of the Jews is summoned up as an absolute other, a body that must be once and for all buried. And Christian polemical texts indeed often conjure up this body in all its deficient-excessive physicality. But in being summoned up for burial, Jewish corporeality is also paradoxically preserved and invested with a transgressive, polluting power. In Derrida's terms, conjuring up and conjuring away are here inseparable.

In one of the most common genres of medieval interreligious polemic, the Christian-Jewish debate, the Jewish body is conjured up primarily through the voice of a Jewish spokesman whose positions are evoked in order to be put to rest. While the claim of the dialogue form is that Jewish and Christian disputants are given equal opportunities to make their case, in such Christian-authored works of debate, Jewish positions are given expression largely as questions about or objections to Christian doctrine that the Christian author or interlocutor can easily dismiss. Thus, for instance, the "dialogue" in Peter Damian's letter consists of brief, formulaic "Jewish" questions to which Peter gives much fuller responses in his own voice. The Jewish spokesman (of course, a creation of Peter's) has no opportunity for rebuttal.³⁷

The conjuring up of Jews in such a work thus serves mainly to conjure them away. But, as Derrida's analysis emphasizes, the need to conjure specters away belies the claim of their death—challenging, in this case, the Christian ideology of Jewish pastness. Clearly, Christian authors who imagine Jews in debate with Christians still feel that the "superseceded" ancestral religion represents a threat that must be grappled with. When Peter Damian first presents himself as having been asked by his correspondent Honestus to provide "something . . . to use in silencing,

with reasoned arguments, the Jews,"³⁸ Peter begins to beg off, suggesting that Judaism does not provide any real challenge for Christian doctrine and that it would be more profitable for the individual Christian to look inward, to his own moral state, than to take on a debate with Judaism: "if you wish to be a knight of Christ and to fight manfully for him, as a renowned warrior take up arms against the vices of the flesh, against the stratagems of the devil, enemies, indeed, who never die, rather than against the Jews who now have been almost exterminated from the face of the earth."³⁹ Peter here clearly expresses the idea of Jewish pastness, but he immediately rethinks this position, recasting the "almost exterminated" Jews as in fact capable of disturbing the very foundations of Christian faith:

Surely it is disgraceful for a man of the Church to hold his tongue out of ignorance when those outside the fold set things in a false light, and that a Christian incapable of giving an account of Christ should retreat, conquered and ashamed, as his enemies vaunt over him. One may add, that often harmful ineptitude and dangerous simplicity in such matters not only excite boldness in the unbelieving, but also beget error and doubt in the hearts of the faithful.

And since certainly this knowledge relates totally to the faith, and faith is undoubtedly the foundation of all virtues, when the foundation is shaken, the whole structure of the building soon threatens to fall into ruin.⁴⁰

To resettle this "foundation," to secure a place where believing Christians can stand firm in their belief, the threat posed by Jewishness, at first disavowed, must be acknowledged and ultimately put to rest, and this becomes the project of Peter's letter.

The structure of Peter's anti-Jewish letter itself reiterates the explicit ambivalence with which it thus opens. Having promised to provide "a few, clear statements of the prophets" by which Honestus might "win a victory over all the madness of Jewish depravity and all their garrulous fabrications," Peter introduces a Jewish presence as the object of his discourse, as its "target": "since an arrow is shot more accurately if first the target which it must pierce is set up for us to hit, I here bring on this contentious Jew, that the shafts of my words put into the air may not fly aimlessly, but in a well-aimed barrage, may rather reach the specified

objective."⁴¹ Jewish presence structures the polemic, providing it with its "aim," and from here Peter directly addresses his arguments to the conjured-up Jewish persona:

What do you have to say to that, Jew? By what shameless daring can you avoid such obvious, such divine statements? Even allowing what you blasphemously say, that Christ could invent lies about himself, if he were not God, would he be able to prophesy about himself through the lips of others before he was born? I would also like to hear how you interpret this verse: "My heart has uttered a good word, I speak of my works to the king" [Psalm 44:2].⁴² Who is this king to whom God speaks of his works? Perhaps you will tell me: "David." But read through the rest of the psalm and understand its true meaning. Continue on a little, and do not ask me, but ask the Lord himself who this king is to whom he speaks of his works. Listen to what God himself says to this king.⁴³

But while the Jew is thus insistently called upon to speak—and while Peter imagines his possible statements, even citing him here as having "blasphemously" spoken—through the whole course of this section of Peter's letter, the Jew is kept in silence. Only after Peter has essentially concluded his argument and can exhort his Jewish "interlocutor" to admit the truth of what has been proven—"Obviously, for anyone who still needs evidence after such enlightening testimony, it remains for him to request a lighted lamp to view the radiant sun at noontime. With the vision of so many heavenly stars sparkling before you, Jew, I marvel how such deep shades of blindness can hold sway, even in eyes that are totally without sight"⁴⁴—does Peter have the Jew speak in "his own" voice. The "dialogue" that ensues is thus not only one-sided but belated, occurring after the truth of Christian positions has already been "demonstrated." Further, Peter's introduction of the discussion limits it to a narrow range of material, and makes clear that its outcome is decided in advance: "now let us have a brief discourse in dialogue form, using questions and answers, on certain ceremonies about which you often inquire in great detail, and in your wordy circumlocutions bring suit in these matters; so that when all shall be to your satisfaction, you will be compelled either to agree that you have lost, or to depart in confusion because of your shameful disbelief."⁴⁵

Peter thus delimits Jewish presence and speech so that these will present no threat to Christian truths. Still, the Jewish figure remains potentially disruptive to the security and self-enclosure of Christian arguments, as the very reluctance to give him voice suggests. Even after he has successfully answered all the Jew's questions, Peter does not close his letter but feels the need to re-present the Christian argument: "But now, Jew, after such a cloud of witnesses I will compose a peroration for you. Beginning with the coming of the humanity of Christ and proceeding through the passage of time until its end, I will place before your eyes, if you are up to it, the evidence of the prophets, that you may view in summary, as it were, and in one glance everything that you saw me discussing above in a diffuse and scattered way."⁴⁶ And even after the completion of this scriptural summary (which as it recurs to the preincarnational moment of the prophets makes that moment significant only as it relates to a "passage of time" that begins with "the coming of the humanity of Christ"), Peter is not finished, but insists on presenting a further argument "from reason,"⁴⁷ which he then follows with an exhortation to the Jew, urging his conversion, his movement, that is, out of the anachronistic position of being a Jew in a present defined as essentially Christian.⁴⁸

The Jew's words—though few and unpersuasive—are thus carefully cordoned off, presented in such a controlled manner that their potential disruptiveness is especially emphasized. Indeed, not even Peter's exhortation to the Jew sufficiently concludes the work. Peter finally abandons his address to the Jew and speaks once again to the Christian Honestus, stressing the polemical use-value of the letter and particularly of the Jew's "contribution" to it:

in placing before you almost bare texts from Scripture, I have sent you, as it were, a bundle of arrows for your quiver. And since from the words of your opponent a good opportunity of replying is provided, I have indeed supplied the weapons. But since the contest is not imminent, I was unable to instruct you fully as to where, when unscathed, you should let loose, and where you should protect yourself with your shield. But you have at your disposal all that is necessary for such an engagement. Use the means before you as you shall judge expedient.⁴⁹

Though Peter's letter presents "weapons" for use against the Jews, and though the Jewish figure's words are necessary for learning how to use

those weapons, Jewish statements here are also explicitly recognized as dangerous, sometimes necessitating a "shield." And Peter's final words to Honestus take the form of a prayer—"Dear brother, may almighty God in his mercy protect you from the hidden snares of the enemy and bring you safely through the battles of this world to his heavenly kingdom. Amen"⁵⁰—which, though conventional in its call for divine protection, also specifically evokes a Jewish presence engaged in "battle" with Christianity. No matter that the Jews have been "almost exterminated," that Peter carefully orchestrates their representation and speech, that they are repeatedly conjured away: as soon as they are conjured into the letter, they intrude (in Peter's Christian imagination) in ways that may not be wholly predicted or controlled.

I do not mean to suggest that works like Peter's letter open up for their readers the possibility of seeing Jews in positive terms; clearly, this is not the case. The Jew remains a specter that must be put to rest, a polluting presence whose only hope for survival is conversion—that is, a survival gained through self-erasure. But the representation of Jews here and in similar works does emphasize the anxiety provoked by Jewish presences—even unreal ones created in Christian texts and therefore under tight ideological control.

SPECTRALITY AND CONVERSION

*Ego = ghost. Therefore "I am" would mean
"I am haunted": I am haunted by myself
who am (haunted by myself who am haunted
by myself who am . . . and so forth).*

—Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 133

So far, I have mostly focused attention on the ways in which the larger historical, ideological, and social dynamics of medieval Christian-Jewish relations may be understood as "spectral," but I also want to suggest here that spectrality might be a useful way of reading psychic as well as social phenomena. Derrida's formulation in *Specters of Marx* relies, after all, on Freud as well as Marx, and particularly on Freud's analysis of "the work of mourning." Freud suggests that the formation of the ego involves a double movement of loss and preservation:

[W]e have come to understand that this kind of substitution [of an object-cathexis by an identification] has a great share in determining the form taken on by the ego and that it contributes materially towards building up what is called its "character." . . . When it happens that a person has to give up a sexual object, there quite often ensues a modification in his ego which can only be described as a reinstatement of the object within the ego, as it occurs in melancholia. . . . [T]he process, especially in the early phases of development, is a very frequent one, and it points to the conclusion that the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains a record of past object-choices.⁵¹

Derrida's reading of the ambivalent operations of spectrality—of the heir's reception of an inheritance that may be repudiated but still insists on being taken up—and my own reading of Christianity's self-positioning vis-à-vis its ancestor describe similar movements: the "triumphant mourning" for an ancestor (and rival) that results not just in putting it to rest but in making it (if only *as* repudiated) always integral to the self.

Given such an understanding of medieval interreligious relations, it is not surprising that the figure of the convert—both the Jewish convert to Christianity (who, from a Christian perspective, recognizes an emptiness in his native tradition that leads to its repudiation) and the Christian convert to Judaism (who, again to a Christian cast of mind, would wrongly revivify what has been identified as dead)—should be a particularly salient one for Christian self-definitions. (I turn to a fuller consideration of the dynamics of conversion in chapters 3, 4, and 5 below.) And in the literature of conversion we can see operating intrapsychically the kinds of spectral movements that characterize the larger social relations of Judaism and Christianity. Thus, for instance, while Hermann of Cologne, in recounting his conversion, constructs a linear narrative of supersession—tracing step by step his attraction to Christianity, his training in Christian modes of reading, his recognition of Jewish errors, all leading to a moment of enlightenment after which Hermann can never turn back to his originary Jewishness—he also makes his account oddly circular, beginning and ending it with a dream that he had before his first encounter with Christianity.⁵² On the one hand, that dream serves to reconfirm the linearity of the movement away from

Judaism: Hermann shows, in retrospect, that the "material" (Jewish) interpretation originally given the dream was erroneous and that in fact it predicted the "spiritual" movement of his conversion. But the return to the dream also emphasizes the ways in which Hermann's new Christian identity continues to depend upon his original Jewish status. As convert, he is always defined by Jewishness, even after this is definitively given up, a fact that the opening of Hermann's autobiography makes clear in how it names its author-subject: "I, a sinner and unworthy priest, Hermann, once called Judah, of the Israelite people, the tribe of Levi, born of my father David and mother Sephora in the city of Cologne."⁵³

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, considering the complex depiction of converted identity in even such an orthodox Christian apologist as Hermann of Cologne, the convert from Judaism to Christianity him- or herself becomes a particularly vexed figure for medieval Christianity. Emphasizing on the one hand the triumph of Christian truth, anticipating that moment when, approaching the end-time, all Jews will see the light and convert, Jewish conversion also calls to mind, perhaps too keenly, the Jewish origin not just of the individual convert but of Christianity itself. Replicating the triumphal movement of Christian revelation, individual conversion also calls up the specters of Jewish identity that, declared dead, nonetheless continue to haunt Christian self-definitions, as excluded from but still necessary to them. Dramatizing the movement from Judaism to Christianity, the figure of the convert nonetheless also calls forth anxiety about the possibility of the reverse movement, a "relapse" to Judaism that was, in fact, forbidden, sometimes on pain of death, to converts.⁵⁴

APPARITIONABILITY AND IDENTITY

*Upon waking next morning about daylight,
I found Queequeg's arm thrown over me in
the most loving and affectionate manner.
You had almost thought I had been his wife.*

—Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, 32

My discussion of spectrality here has focused on questions of religious identity, but I want, in conclusion, to suggest that a similar sort of analysis

might be useful for thinking about other medieval identity categories and how these intersect with religious self-definition. (I turn to a fuller consideration of identity and "intersectionality" in chapter 3 below.) The Freudian theory, with its emphasis on lost "sexual objects," is of course most directly pertinent to thinking about the development of gender and sexuality. Recently, indeed, Judith Butler has explored the ways in which Freud's work on mourning and melancholia might be used to develop a model of "gender as a kind of melancholy, or as one of melancholy's effects."⁵⁵ Moreover, in a treatment that does not make use of Derrida's analysis of specters but that in many ways complements that analysis (and that is itself indebted to Freud), Terry Castle has identified a tradition, stretching from the eighteenth century to the present, of "apparitional" representations of lesbians. In Castle's reading, lesbian "apparitoriality" displays an ambivalence much like that of Derridean spectrality:

[T]he apparitional figure seemed to obliterate, through a single vaporizing gesture, the disturbing carnality of lesbian love. It made of such love—literally—a phantasm: an ineffable anticoupling between "women" who weren't there.

—Or did it? As I have tried to intimate, the case could be made that the metaphor meant to derealize lesbian desire in fact did just the opposite. Indeed, strictly for repressive purposes, one could hardly think of a *worse* metaphor. For embedded in the ghostly figure, as even its first proponents seemed at times to realize, was inevitably a notion of reembodiment: of uncanny return to the flesh. . . . To become an apparition was also to become endlessly capable of "appearing." And once there, the specter, like a living being, was not so easily gotten rid of.⁵⁶

Recognizing Castle's insistence that this specific tradition of lesbian representation be treated as important on its own and not dissolved into "queer" or "gay male" constructions, one might still argue that this tradition takes its place alongside other traditions of representing "otherness" to which notions of spectrality or apparitoriality are central.

In a later period than the medieval, it is clear that spectral figures might condense several different aspects of identity—gender, sexuality, race, religion—focusing attention particularly on their ambivalences and

instabilities. In "The Counterpane" chapter of *Moby Dick* when Ishmael awakens to find "Queequeg's arm thrown over" him, questions about gender, sexual, and racial identity are all in play. Queequeg, after all, has just been identified as a "cannibal," if a "clean, comely looking" one,⁵⁷ and the situation in which Ishmael finds himself leads him to express anxieties about gender and sexual identity, expostulating "upon the unbecomingness of [Queequeg's] hugging a fellow male in that matrimonial sort of style" (33–34). Strikingly, Ishmael's position here evokes for him "a somewhat similar" childhood "circumstance" that seems, if in largely undefined ways, crucial to Ishmael's sense of self. Sent to bed early by his stepmother as a punishment, he slips into "a troubled nightmare of a doze," and then,

slowly waking from it—half steeped in dreams—I opened my eyes, and the before sunlit room was now wrapped in outer darkness. Instantly I felt a shock running through all my frame; nothing was to be seen, and nothing was to be heard; but a supernatural hand seemed placed in mine. My arm hung over the counterpane, and the nameless, unimaginable, silent form or phantom, to which the hand belonged, seemed closely seated by my bedside. For what seemed ages piled on ages, I lay there, frozen with the most awful fears, not daring to drag away my hand; yet ever thinking that if I could but stir it one single inch, the horrid spell would be broken. I knew not how this consciousness at last glided away from me; but waking in the morning, I shudderingly remembered it all, and for days and weeks and months afterwards I lost myself in confounding attempts to explain the mystery. Nay, to this very hour, I often puzzle myself with it. (33)

The encounter with a racial other who also threatens the self's sense of masculinity and heterosexuality recalls, significantly, a spectral figure that the "I" still feels as "mysteriously" significant, somehow crucially relevant to the moment of gender, sexual, and racial crisis in which it finds itself. Having suggested, in this chapter, that a similar spectral figure is crucial to the definition of Judaism in its relation to medieval Christianity, I wish to suggest, in closing (and in anticipation especially of the work of chapter 3 below), that that figure might also be significant

for the investigation of medieval anxieties about gender and sexuality, and in particular for thinking about how those anxieties intersect with the concerns of Christian self-definition. As I will argue below, it is clear that a medieval sense of religious identity is crucially interimplicated with gender (note, for instance, the metaphorizing of interreligious debate, in the Peter Damian text discussed above, as a contest of masculinities), with sexuality (as the discussion of Guibert of Nogent's memoirs in the next chapter will make clear), and with a category like the modern one of race (that Jews are thought to be different from Christians in the very biology of their bodies suggests at least a quasi-racial definition of Jewishness). If Jewish identity is that which is excluded from the Christian self but also that which returns in the shape of the disavowed but inescapable specter, we might expect that a similar apparitional or spectral dynamic is at work in medieval constructions of hegemonic or "proper" gender, sexuality, and race as these categories operate on their own *and* in complex intertwinings with each other and with the category of religious identity.

2

BODY EFFECTS

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY IN THE
LONG TWELFTH CENTURY

We sell cattle to Christians, we have partnerships with Christians, we allow ourselves to be alone with them, we give our children to Christian wet-nurses, and we teach Torah to Christians—for there are now many Christian priests who can read Hebrew books.

—Rabbi Yehiel at the Paris Disputation,
1240 (Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 32)

Sortiarii autem et sortiarie cum detecti fuerint, maxime autem, qui Judeos consuluerint super vita, vel actibus sorte discutiendum; ad episcopum destinantur, pro sue discretionis arbitrio, puniendi. . . .

Prohibemus etiam, sub interminatione anathematis, ne mulieres Christiane pueros nutriant Judeorum, nec habeant Judei famulos Christianos, in eorum hospitibus pernoctantes.

Prohibemus etiam, ne Christiani recipiant pecuniam Judeorum, quasi res proprias, ut magis salvo custodiantur, in ecclesiis deponendas.

NOTES



INTRODUCTION

1. The fullest discussion of the living cross tradition remains Füglistner's *Das Lebende Kreuz*, which examines thirty examples of the motif, dating from the first quarter of the fifteenth century to the late seventeenth century. My Figure 1, from Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Codex Monacensis 23041, a Latin Gradual from the "Klarissinenkloster [convent of the Order of Clair] auf dem Anger" in Munich, is reproduced as Füglistner's Figure XII; Füglistner dates it 1494–97 and discusses it extensively at 54–57, along with a second, smaller example of the living cross found in the same manuscript at fol. 181v. As Füglistner notes, the initial "A" illuminated on fol. 3v is from the "Introitus des ersten Adventssonntages ('Ad te levavi animam meam . . .') [Introitus for the first Sunday of Advent ('I have lifted up my soul to you . . .')] (54; my translation); the text is ultimately from Psalm 142:8 (in the Vulgate; 143:8 in the RSV). Recently, Timmermann has published an extensive treatment of the living cross tradition, reproducing ten examples of the living cross (but not the illustration at hand) and noting that about three dozen survive. He defines the tradition as flourishing in the late fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries "in a wide geographical arc defined by the northernmost Italian provinces, the Alpine countries, Bavaria, Slovakia, Silesia, and some areas of western Poland. Three isolated examples also survive from Denmark, Westphalia, and the lower Rhine" ("Avening Crucifix," 143). Timmermann reads the tradition as having developed out of the secular allegory of *Iustitia* [Justice]; as inverting "contemporary narratives of Jewish abuse, especially stories of Eucharist desecration"; and as participating in a program of "anti-schismatic and anti-heretical propaganda, which often accused the Jews of collaborating with heretics" (143). For briefer discussions, see Seifert, *Synagogue and Church*, 146–47 and Figure 59; Blumenkranz, *Juif médiéval*, 109 and Figure 124; Schreckenberg, *Jews in Christian Art*, 64–66, III.1d.4, and Plates 5–6; Rose, "Jewish Mother-in-Law," 12–13; Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 158–61 and Figures 527–31; Guldán, *Eva und Maria*, 137–39 and Figures 153–55. Füglistner (*Das Lebende Kreuz*, Figure IX), Guldán (*Eva und Maria*, Figure 154), and Schiller (*Iconography of Christian Art*, Figure 529) all reproduce a Bavarian-Austrian woodcut dated ca. 1460–70 that is strikingly similar in composition to the two historiated initials in Codex Monacensis 23041; see Füglistner, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 57. On broader traditions of representing Synagoga, also see Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, vol. 2, Figures II.32, 34–37; III.17, 18, 20, 57, 90, 91; XI.6, 7, discussed at 1:48–51, 64–65, 80–81, and 217–20.

2. Biblical references throughout are to the Latin Vulgate text. I have consulted both *Biblia Sacra Latina* and *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*. Translations of the Latin are my own, but I have also consulted the Douai-Rheims translation: *Holy Bible*,

Translated from the Latin Vulgate. Though the RSV of Genesis 3:15 attaches the action of "bruising" the serpent's head to the woman's "seed" (*Holy Bible*, RSV), the Vulgate clearly indicates a female agent ("ipsa")—in this context, "the woman" ("mulierem").

3. This prophetic reading of Genesis 3:15 is extremely common. See, for an overview, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* article on "The Blessed Virgin Mary," which opens with a discussion of this verse.

4. Seiferth at first reads this figure as "Ecclesia, representing the church, with a crown and staff of the cross, spreading the folds of her mantle over her protégés," but he later notes that "This is an example of the equating of Ecclesia with Mary. The so-called Madonna in the Protective Mantle became a frequent and popular motif at just that time, near the end of the fifteenth century" (*Synagogue and Church*, 147). For another example of the "Schutzmantelmadonna" associated with the living cross, see Timmermann, "Avenging Crucifix," 146.

5. See Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 160, and Timmermann, "Avenging Crucifix," 146. And on the tradition of host and skull trees associated with the opposition between Mary and Eve, see Guldán, *Eva und Maria*, 140–43, 221–22, and Figures 156–59, and Füglistner, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 134–57.

6. For one striking vernacular example of this trope, see Geoffrey Chaucer's *Prologue to the Prioress's Tale*: "O mooder Mayde, O mayde Mooder free! / O bussh unbrent, brennyng in Moyses sighte" (*Riverside Chaucer*, VII.467–68). And on pictorial representations, see Harris, "Mary in the Burning Bush."

7. Several high medieval Jesse Trees can be viewed at the Getty Museum Web site: <http://www.getty.edu/art/collections/objects/0112629.html>, <http://www.getty.edu/art/collections/objects/03506.html>, and <http://www.getty.edu/art/collections/objects/03551.html>. A late medieval example by Jan Mostaert (1485) is available at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Web site: <http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/images/aria/sk/z/sk-a-3901.z>.

8. Isaiah 11:1: "et egredietur virga de radice Iesse et flos de radice eius ascendet."

9. The cross's life is stressed in a wide range of medieval depictions, visual and otherwise, and such depictions are not limited to late medieval culture. Thus, for instance, several Anglo-Saxon images emphasize the fecundity of the cross, as does an Old English poem like *The Dream of the Rood*, where the cross itself speaks the story of the crucifixion. On the images, see O'Reilly, "Rough-Hewn Cross," and Vaccaro, "Crux Christi/Cristes Rod."

10. Often in the living cross tradition, a hand grows from the top of the cross, holding a key with which it unlocks heaven; see Figures 527, 528, 530, and 531 in Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, and most of the figures in Füglistner, *Das Lebende Kreuz*.

11. See Füglistner, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 56. In most of the living cross images reproduced in Füglistner, Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, Guldán, *Eva und Maria*, and Blumenkranz, *Juif médiéval*, this bottom hand wields a hammer with which it strikes at hell or death (sometimes represented by a skull). That life emerges from the base of the cross directly reverses a pictorial convention in which the cross stands on a skull and/or bones (the crucifixion, after all, takes place at Golgotha, consistently interpreted in the Gospels as "Calvariae locus" or "the place of the skull" [Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, Luke 23:33, John 19:17]). See the twelfth-century example in Bynum, *Resurrection*, Plate 9, and the early sixteenth-century example in Steinberg, *Sexuality*, 301 (Fig. 284).

12. The scroll in the same position in the Bavarian-Austrian woodcut whose composition echoes that of the manuscript illustration (see n. 1 above) reads: "Sine gewalt ist dir geben / du pist das ewig leben" [His lordship is given to you / you are the deathless life] (Guldán, *Eva und Maria*, 220; my translation). For a full discussion of the various texts associated with the living cross tradition, see Füglistner, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 167–84.

13. Seiferth, *Synagogue and Church*, 146. Mellinkoff notes that "often [Synagoga] is shown riding on an ass" (*Outcasts*, 1:49).

14. Thus, for instance, goats are associated with both demonic practices and Old Testament sacrifice in the program of illustrations analyzed by Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 42–43, 52, 56, 58, 65, 118, 191–92 n. 34. Mellinkoff notes that Synagoga's "connection to lust was suggested by portrayals of her riding a goat or holding the animal's head in her hand" (*Outcasts*, 1:49), a reading supported by Blumenkranz, *Juif médiéval*, 109. The scroll that accompanies Synagoga on the living cross depiction in San Petronio Cathedral reads: "Hirco[rum] sanguis me decipit velut anguis / he[um] su[m] cecata [et] a regno dei separata" [The blood of goats has deceived me like the serpent / Alas, I am blind and separated from God's reign] (Timmermann, "Avenging Crucifix," 157 n. 19; Timmermann's translation 146), associating the goat with Temple sacrifice. (Compare the fresco by Thomas von Villach in Thörl [Kärnten], ca. 1470 [Figure X in Füglistner, *Das Lebende Kreuz*], where the scroll reads "Heu sum cecata tradit [a?] a...a privata...Hircorum sanguis [?] me decepit velut a[n]guis [?]" [ibid., 47].) The contrasting scroll of Ecclesia in San Petronio Cathedral evokes the Eucharist: "Sanguine doctata su[m] xri sponsa vocata / ad coelu[m] scandit q[ui] mi[hi] selera pandit" [Born from the blood, I am called the Bride of Christ / He who confesses his sins to me will rise to heaven] (Timmermann, "Avenging Crucifix," 157 n. 18; Timmermann's translation 146). Also see Guldán, *Eva und Maria*, 137, and Füglistner, *Das Lebende Kreuz*, 28, 168–74.

15. Rose, "Jewish Mother-in-Law," 12.

16. The influential theoretical work of Slavoj Žižek provides support for work that sees the figure of the Jew operating in primarily ideological and phantasmatic ways: "Jews are clearly a social symptom: the point at which the immanent social antagonism assumes a positive form, erupts on to the social surface, the point at which it becomes obvious that society 'doesn't work,' that the social mechanism 'creaks.' If we look at it through the frame of (corporatist) fantasy, the 'Jew' appears as an intruder who introduces from outside disorder, decomposition and corruption of the social edifice—it appears as an outward positive cause whose elimination would enable us to restore order, stability and identity. But in 'going through the fantasy' we must in the same move identify with the symptom: we must recognize in the properties attributed to the 'Jew' the necessary product of our very social system; we must recognize in the 'excesses' attributed to 'Jews' the truth about ourselves" (*Sublime Object*, 127–28). For one recent work that makes extensive and interesting use of Žižek, see Biberman, *Masculinity, Anti-Semitism*. To my mind, the central problem of Žižek's formulations about the Jew is that they look always at Jews from a non-Jewish, hegemonic, European perspective and hence do not enable us to conceive of a Jew who is an agent and not just a symptom. This is potentially a problem with all formulations that conceive of the Jew primarily as a Christian figure, including my own, and it is a problem that I am concerned to address in my deployment of the figure of "the spectral Jew" below.

17. Cohen, *Living Letters*, 2, 5. More recently, Cohen, "*Synagoga conversa*," has begun to describe a different medieval construction, which he calls the "eschatological Jew."

18. Cohen cites Dahan's "theological Jew" at *Living Letters*, 3 n. 3.

19. Dahan, *Intellectuels chrétiens*, 585: "On ne sera pas surpris non plus que chez certains—voire chez la plupart—des penseurs, cette bipolarité ait abouti à une vue en quelque sorte schizophrénique des juifs: au juif quotidien et réel, avec qui l'on discute volontiers de Bible ou de sciences, se superpose ce que nous avons appelé le 'juif théologique,' un juif irréel, en qui viennent se mêler, s'additionner divers stéréotypes—nés d'abord de la réflexion des théologiens." Compare Bauman's formulation of the "*abstract Jew*, the Jew as a concept located in a different discourse from the practical knowledge of 'empirical' Jews, and hence located at a secure distance from experience and immune to whatever information may be supplied by that experience and whatever emotions may be aroused by daily intercourse" ("Allosemitism," 148).

20. Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference*, 29. In developing the idea of the "hermeneutical Woman," Lampert depends especially on Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*. Cohen's "hermeneutical Jew" has also been taken up by Paula Fredriksen, "*Excaecati*," 321, and "Divine Justice," 52.

21. The phrase is used by Tomasch, "Postcolonial Chaucer," 243; repr. 69. Delany also uses the phrase ("Editor's Introduction," ix), attributing it to Cigman (*ibid.*, xi n. 2).

22. I quote here from Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 185–87, and "Was Margery Kempe Jewish?"

23. Despres, "Protean Jew," 146, 160.

24. Narin van Court, "Socially Marginal," 325–26. What Bush calls "notional Jews" ("You're Gonna Miss Me," 1264) continue to be significant in English culture well into the early modern period. Indeed, as Bush points out, although, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, most English legal material ceased to refer to Jews, this was reversed in the sixteenth century, before any significant readmission of Jews to England: Jews came to be prominently "included in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century legal expositions, despite the absence of circumstances in which the status of Jews would be directly relevant or even legally possible" (*ibid.*, 1225).

25. Biddick, "Paper Jews," 594, 599 (revised and expanded, *Typological Imaginary*, Chapter 3). Also see Biddick's "ABC of Ptolemy" (revised, *Typological Imaginary*, Chapter 1).

26. Tomasch, "Postcolonial Chaucer," 253; repr. 78. See also Tomasch, "Judecca."

27. Bauman proposes that we think in terms of "allosemitism" rather than "anti-semitism": "'allosemitism' refers to the practice of setting the Jews apart as people radically different from all the others, needing separate concepts to describe and comprehend them and special treatment in all or most social intercourse" ("Allosemitism," 143). "Allosemitism" would subsume both "anti-" and "philosemitism" and would express "a radically ambivalent attitude" resonating with "the endemic ambivalence of the other, the stranger—and consequently the Jew, as a most radical embodiment, the epitome, of the latter" (*ibid.*, 143–44).

28. Dove, "Chaucer and the Translation," 102 n. 2, responding to Kruger, "Spectral Jew."

29. Lawton, "Sacrilege and Theatricality," 291. Lawton here oversimplifies Tomasch, who does claim that "Jewish absence is likely the best precondition for virtual presence," but continues, "*wherever* in Western culture actual Jews come to reside, they encounter the phantom that follows and precedes them" ("Postcolonial Chaucer," 253; repr. 78; my emphasis). It seems clear, then, that "virtuality" in Tomasch does not apply, as Lawton suggests, just to "absent Jews." The same, I hope, is true of "spectrality" as I use it in the essay to which Lawton refers (where my main examples in fact are not from times and places where Jews were absent) and as I elaborate it in the work at hand.

30. Derrida, *Specters*, 6. Derrida works out the phenomenality of the spectral body most fully in his discussion of Marx in Chapter 5.

31. Nirenberg, *Communities*, esp. 3–17; for use of the term "structuralist," see 5. In his recent plenary address at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, Nirenberg himself evoked the figure of the specter—calling his lecture "The Specter of Judaism in the Age of Mass Conversion: Spain 1391–1492."

32. Cohen, for one, in *Living Letters*, devotes much energy to plotting the ways in which the notion of the "hermeneutical Jew" changes with time, while still retaining certain crucial features.

33. One of the most important accomplishments of Nirenberg's *Communities* is its deconstruction of the binarism of tolerance/intolerance, "[t]he central dichotomy in modern studies of the treatment of medieval minorities" (9). Nirenberg argues that "The identification of a constructive relationship between conflict and coexistence suggests that such a dichotomy is untenable" (*ibid.*, 9). For recent work that continues to emphasize "tolerance," see Nederman, *Worlds of Difference* and *Beyond the Persecuting Society*.

34. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 100–102.

35. Medieval shifts in anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic attitude and action are discussed in more detail below. The phrase "persecuting society" is from Moore, *Formation*.

36. See the fuller discussion in chapter 3 below.

37. Abelard, *Dialogus*; translated in *Dialogue* and *Ethical Writings*.

38. Several scholars have, however, rightly emphasized that an assumption of a *total* Jewish absence from England during this long period is unwarranted. See, for instance, Lawton, "Sacrilege and Theatricality," 293. But it is clear that there were no organized Jewish communities in England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Stacey, "Conversion," notes that the Domus Conversorum [House of Converts], "a kind of halfway house" for Jews who converted to Christianity, designed to ease their entry into Christian society, functioned until the mid-fourteenth century (274): "after 1290 the inmates of the Domus and their descendants would themselves remain as the only surviving representatives of Jewish culture in medieval England" (283). Shapiro notes that "From 1290 until the mid-sixteenth century there is no evidence of organized communities of Jews in England," but that "This changed after 1540," more than a century before the traditional date of "readmission" (*Shakespeare and the Jews*, 68).

39. For a fuller consideration of the historical shifts sketched here, see chapter 2 below.

40. Derrida, *Specters*, 40–48.

41. Castle, *Apparitional Lesbian*, 62–63.

42. For the Latin text of Rupert's dialogue, see Arduini, *Ruperto di Deutz*; the text is also contained in the *PL*, Rupert, *Dialogus*. For the reference to the debate with Rupert in Hermann's autobiography, see Hermann, *Opusculum*, 76–83; Morrison, *Conversion and Text*, 81–85.

1. THE SPECTRAL JEW

1. Augustine, *City of God* 22.30, 1091; *De civitate dei*, 866: "Post hanc tamquam in die septimo requiescet Deus, cum eundem diem septimum, quod nos erimus, in se ipso Deo faciet requiescere." The historical schema is also developed in Augustine's *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* I.23, 190–93. Boas provides a convenient summary and sketches the importance of Augustine's schema for other medieval conceptualizations of history (*Essays on Primitivism*, 177–80). For a discussion of Augustine's historical schema and its importance for Christian treatments of Judaism, see Cohen, *Living Letters*, 24–26, 52–55, and the bibliography provided there.

2. For an important body of work on medieval temporality, see Le Goff, *Time and Medieval Imagination*. And see the more recent work of Schmitt, *Corps*.

3. Patterson, *Chaucer*, 86.

4. *Ibid.*, 89. See also Patterson, *Negotiating*, esp. the discussion of "medieval historicism," 157–230.

5. Emmerson and Herzman, *Apocalyptic Imagination*, 2; see esp. the discussion of Joachim of Fiore, 1–35. Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, emphasizes the importance of the thirteenth-century invention of "purgatorial time" (67–77); also see his *Birth of Purgatory*.

6. Such formulations shape Pauline thought rather generally. For some exemplary passages, see Romans 2–5, 7:6, 8:2–27; Galatians 2:14–21, 4:22–31, 5:16–25; Ephesians 2:8–9; 2 Corinthians 3:6–8. See Boyarin, *Radical Jew*, for a challenging reading of these formulations as arising out of Paul's "internal critic[ism] of Jewish culture" (12).

7. For foundational work on Christian exegesis, see Auerbach, "Figura"; Daniélou, *From Shadows to Reality*; de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*; and Smalley, *Study of the Bible*. For more recent work, see *Moyen Âge et la Bible*; Whitman, *Allegory*; and Dahan, *Exégèse chrétienne*, esp. 359–87. See Cohen, *Living Letters*, 44–51 and 59–60, on the significance of Augustine's exegetical procedures for his doctrine of Jewish witness. Central to Biddick's *Typological Imaginary* is a rethinking of Christian typology and supersessionism that has much in common with my own project here.

8. See, for instance, Galatians 3:28 and Romans 2:28–29 and 10:12. On Paul's "apparent about-face" in Romans 11, where he "endow[s] his Jewish coreligionists with a critical role in the divine economy of salvation," see Cohen, *Living Letters*, 7–9, at 7. And see Boyarin's reading, *Radical Jew*, of Paul's complex position as part of "an inner-discourse of Jewish culture": "Both the passionate commitment to Jewish difference and the equally passionate commitment to universal humanity are dialectically structural possibilities of Jewish culture as it is (always) in contact with and context of the rest of the world" (12).

9. This is an important move in Pauline theology, as when Sarah and Isaac become types of the Christian and Hagar and Ishmael types of the Jews; Galatians 4:21–31. For a

recent reading of this allegory, see Boyarin, *Radical Jew*, 32–36. On competing Jewish and Christian allegorizations of Jacob and Esau, see Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 2–6, 46–49, 53, 125–26. On the importance of this mode of allegorical reading in early Christian anti-Jewish polemic, see Simon, *Verus Israel*, 148–49, 170–71, 188.

10. Damian, *Letters* 1–30, 1:39 (Letter 1). Letter 1 is printed in the *PL* as two separate "opuscula," *Opusculum secundum* and *tertium*; the citation is at 42: "contra omnem Judaicæ pravittatis insaniam, et eorum ventosa commenta." In the references to Letter 1 that follow, I first present volume and page numbers from the English translation, then column numbers from the *PL* edition. I have checked the *PL* text against the more recent and reliable MGH edition, *Briefe*, and I note any significant differences below.

11. Damian, Letter 1, 1:39; 42: "confligentem Judæum."

12. *Ibid.*, 1:51; 49: "De . . . Christi adventu . . . testimonium."

13. *Ibid.*, 1:52; 49, citing Obadiah 18: "erit domus Jacob ignis, et domus Joseph flamma, et domus Esau stipula."

14. *Ibid.*, 1:52; 49: "Quid enim per domum Jacob, et Joseph, nisi Ecclesia Christi? Quid per domum Esau debet intelligi, nisi infidelium populi?"

15. See Simon, *Verus Israel*, esp. 79–80, 169–73.

16. Recent work on early Christianity has indeed emphasized the ways in which the new religion developed in close connection to an also changing Judaism. Boyarin, *Dying for God*, for instance, describes (in at least the first three centuries after Christ) an unbroken continuum stretching from Judaism to Christianity through various intermediate Jewish-Christian and Christian-Jewish configurations. See also the extensive bibliography on the period provided by Boyarin.

17. Thus, for instance, the situation of Jews in Spain was materially different from that in the rest of Europe in part because of the powerful presence of Islam. For an impressively particularized consideration of the relations among Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Northern Iberia during the fourteenth century—and for a comparative consideration of parallel events in Southern France—see Nirenberg, *Communities*. Economic factors clearly played an important role both in the protection of Jews and in the animus expressed against them. For another finely developed analysis, see Mundill, *England's Jewish Solution*, on thirteenth-century England and the events there leading up to the 1290 expulsion of Jews.

18. Compare the suggestion in Chazan, *Daggers*, that there was "an inherent instability in the traditional and fragile Church position with regard to Jews," an "ambiguous combination of toleration and repudiation" (180). Also see Cohen, *Living Letters*, on ambiguity as central to medieval attitudes toward Jews and Judaism.

19. Augustine, *City of God* 18.46, 827–28; *De civitate dei*, 644: "Iudaei autem . . . per scripturas suas testimonio nobis sunt prophetias nos non finxisse de Christo. . . . Nobis quidem illae sufficiunt, quae de nostrorum inimicorum codicibus proferuntur, quos agnoscimus propter hoc testimonium, quod nobis inuiti perhibent eosdem codices habendo atque seruando, per omnes gentes etiam ipsos esse dispersos, quaque uersum Christi ecclesia dilatatur." On Augustine's treatment of the Jews' continuing historical role, see Cohen, *Living Letters*, 19–65, as well as his earlier discussion in *Friars*, esp. 19–22; see also Chazan, *Daggers*, esp. 10–11. Blumenkranz's older studies of Augustine's relation to Jews

and Judaism remain useful—see *Judenpredigt* and “Augustin.” For recent rethinking of Blumenkranz’s conclusions, see Fredriksen, “*Excaecati*” and “Divine Justice.”

20. Augustine, *City of God* 4.34, 178; *De civitate dei*, 127: “si non in eum peccassent, impia curiositate tamquam magicis artibus seducti ad alienos deos et ad idola defluendo, et postremo Christum occidendo: in eodem regno etsi non spatiosiore, tamen feliciore mansissent.”

21. Ibid. 20.29, 957; 753: “conuerso corde.”

22. For one important treatment of nineteenth- and twentieth-century racialized thinking about Jews, see Gilman, *Jew’s Body*. In the post-Holocaust era, the Catholic Church has in some ways recognized the violent effects that a supersessionist view of Judaism has helped enable, and it has tried to distance itself from that view, if often not successfully. See the brief discussion in Biddick, *Typological Imaginary*, 7, and Kwalbrun, “Playing God’s Chosen,” 1–5, discussing Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Jewish People*.

23. Haftmann connects the *White Crucifixion* to the Mannerists, specifically El Greco, and “the characteristic qualities of the votive picture” (*Marc Chagall*, 118). Meyer, however, sees no “connection with the forms of the icons,” noting that “If Chagall had any models they were sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works he had admired in museums” (*Marc Chagall*, 414). Alexander perceptively notes that “Unlike medieval crucifixions, which out of history and out of place (hence the gold ground), or Renaissance crucifixions, which occur in an optically real space, this one occurs in *history*, in twentieth-century history” (*Marc Chagall*, 316).

24. See Meyer’s comments on how the *White Crucifixion* rewrites Christian understandings: “The scenes that frame the cross, twined round it like a crown of thorns—from the shattered village to the pillaged, burning synagogue—constitute an exemplary Jewish martyrology. . . . But, most important of all, this Christ’s relation to the world differs entirely from that in all Christian representations of the Crucifixion. There it is not the world that suffers, except in grief for his death on the cross; all suffering is concentrated in Christ, transferred to him in order that he may overcome it by his sacrifice. Here instead, though all the suffering of the world is mirrored in the Crucifixion, suffering remains man’s lasting fate and is not abolished by Christ’s death. So Chagall’s Christ figure lacks the Christian concept of salvation” (*Marc Chagall*, 414, 416). Most critics, however, read Chagall’s turn to Christian imagery as expressing a “universalizing” impulse, a reading that finds some sanction in Chagall’s own words: “If a painter is a Jew and paints life, how is he to keep Jewish elements out of his work! But if he is a good painter, his painting will contain a great deal more. The Jewish content will be there, of course, but his art will aim at universal relevance” (quoted in Walther and Metzger, *Marc Chagall*, 63). Walther and Metzger themselves conclude that “In the figure of Christ on the cross . . . Chagall located a universal emblem for the sufferings of this time” (ibid.). In a chapter on Chagall as a religious painter, Cassou suggests that the *White Crucifixion* shows “the catastrophe of Jewry, foreshadowing the universal catastrophe” (*Chagall*, 242); for Cassou, Chagall’s religious art “goes beyond the differences between Judaism and Christianity, beyond the personalities and the doctrines of the two religions, and expresses rather what unites the two. Chagall takes no account of the differences and distinctions between them, but reduces all to the common denominator of human suffering” (ibid., 247). For a subtler reading, see Roskies,

who reads Chagall as “addressing a particularist message to a universal audience”: “The primary purpose of Chagall’s ‘White Crucifixion’ was to interpret the course of Jewish events in terms of an absent God and a powerless Son” (*Against the Apocalypse*, 286). My own reading, in its insistence on the Jewishness of the *White Crucifixion*, is out of sympathy with this tradition of universalizing readings.

The crucifixion was a consistent theme in Chagall’s work, appearing as early as 1912 in *Golgotha* or *Calvary* (Museum of Modern Art; see the reproduction in Haftmann, *Marc Chagall*, colorplate 10), and continuing to appear in works later than the *White Crucifixion*. See especially the *Blue Crucifixion* of 1941, the *Yellow Crucifixion* of 1943, *The Martyr* of 1940, and *The Crucified* of 1944 (the latter two discussed in relation to the *White Crucifixion* by Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse*, 286–89); for related depictions, also see *Descent from the Cross* (1941) and *Flayed Ox* (1947).

25. The phrase is Meyer’s (*Marc Chagall*, 416).

26. Haftmann proposes that these “lamenting figures” are “from the Old Testament” (*Marc Chagall*, 118), a view echoed by Walther and Metzger (*Marc Chagall*, 63). Meyer sees them as “elders” (*Marc Chagall*, 414), an assessment with which Alexander concurs (*Marc Chagall*, 316).

27. Ibid.

28. Alexander, however, suggests that “In this picture the Red Army certainly figures as a liberating power” (ibid.).

29. Derrida, *Specters*, 56. Subsequent page references are given parenthetically in my text.

30. For Derrida’s earlier and fuller engagement with speech act theory, see *Limited Inc.*

31. For a similar recognition of the ambivalence of the ghost, see Brogan, *Cultural Haunting*: “As an embodiment of the continuity between the living and the dead, the ghost evades the finality of death. It represents a compromise, or an essentially antithetical act: a simultaneous acknowledgment of and denial of death. . . . Yet continuity with the past can be a source both of comfort and anxiety, at times even of terror” (20). Brogan here depends on specifically Freudian models (ibid., 177 nn. 43, 45). For a further recognition of the complex historical work ghosts might accomplish, this time in a medieval context, see Chism, *Alliterative Revivals*. And for an intriguing treatment of medieval ghosts and ghost stories, see Schmitt, *Ghosts*.

32. The ambivalence also works in reverse: “positive conjuration” of specters, “in order to call up and not to drive away,” while it “seems welcoming and hospitable, since it calls forth the dead, makes or lets them come, . . . is never free of anxiety. And thus of a movement of repulsion or restriction” (Derrida, *Specters*, 108).

33. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*. Models of pollution tend mainly to emphasize spatiality—threats from the margins and interstices of a culture; the preservation of social boundaries and the integrity of social bodies—but it is clear that pollution involves temporal violations as well. In the contemporary moment of the AIDS crisis, for instance, while much energy has been expended in erecting and policing spatial barriers around so-called “risk groups,” and in projecting HIV/AIDS elsewhere geopolitically, the “protective” distinctions of Third World/First World, gay/straight, minority/majority operate as well by means of a temporal logic. Thus, Africa is constructed in the West as the primal

scene of AIDS not just because it is distant but because it is thought to be archaic, somehow outside "modernity." A time not our own intrudes on the present, threatening to mark, or pollute, this moment with qualities and experiences—an encounter with a so-called "plague" constructed as both "primitive" and "medieval"—that we thought we had superseded. As I will suggest here, a similar temporal logic characterizes medieval Christian constructions of the relation to Jews and Jewishness, and it is as much the temporality of this relation as a spatial logic of proximity and distance that defines the dynamic of Jewish pollution. For a fuller treatment of the temporality of representations of HIV/AIDS, see Kruger, "Medieval/Post-Modern."

34. Butler, *Bodies*, 8.

35. See Kruger, "Bodies," and Abulafia, "Bodies."

36. I will examine some of the consequences of this paradox in chapter 2 below.

37. Damian, Letter 1, 1:66–72; 57–61.

38. Ibid., 1:38; 41: "aliquid... Judaeorum ora rationalibus argumentis obstruere." Damian, *Briefe*, reads "rationabilibus" for "rationalibus" (65).

39. Damian, Letter 1, 1:38; 41: "si Christi miles esse, et pro eo viriliter pugnare desideras, contra carnis vitia, contra diaboli machinas insignis bellator arma potius corripe; hostes videlicet, qui nunquam moriuntur: quam contra Judaeos, qui jam de terra pene deleti sunt." Note here the strongly masculine, military, gendering of the Christian disputant; this gendering is discussed at greater length in chapter 3 below.

40. Ibid., 1:38; 41: "Inhonestum quippe est, ut ecclesiasticus vir his, qui foris sunt, calumniantibus, per ignorantiam conticescat: et Christianus de Christo reddere rationem nesciens, inimicis insultantibus victus et confusus abscedat. Huc accedit, quod saepe hujus rei noxia imperitia, et cavenda simplicitas non solum audaciam incredulis suggerit, sed etiam errorem et dubietatem in cordibus fidelium gignit. / Et cum haec scientia ad fidem certe tota pertineat, fides autem omnium virtutum sit proculdubio fundamentum; ubi fundamentum quatitur, tota mox aedificii fabrica praecipitium ruitura minatur."

41. Ibid., 1:39; 42: "pauca et apertiora prophetarum testimonia curamus apponere, quibus tamen contra omnem Judaicae pravitatis insaniam, et eorum ventosa commenta valeas cum Dei adjutorio obtinere victoriam. Et quia sagitta directius mittitur, si meta, cui infigi debeat, e diverso primitus opponatur, nos ipsum confligentem Judaeum hic introducimus, ut verborum nostrorum spicula non in ventum effusa inaniter defluant, sed ad certam potius materiam jaculata pertingant."

42. This is Psalm 45:1 in the RSV.

43. I cite just one of many such moments of direct address in Peter's letter. Damian, Letter 1, 1:57–58; 52: "Quid ad haec, Judaeae, jam tentabis [*Briefe*: temptabis (81)] objicere? Qua inverecundae mentis audacia tam claris, tam apertis, tam divinis poteris assertionibus obviare? Esto, quod blasphemantes dicitis, Christum de se potuisse mendacia fingere; nunquid, et antequam nasceretur, si Deus non esset, per aliorum ora semetipsum valuit prophetare? Illud etiam qualiter intelligas, audire delectat: 'Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum, dico ego opera mea regi' [Psalm 44:2]. Quis est ille rex, cui Deus opera sua dicat [*Briefe*: dicit (81)]. Dicis mihi fortasse: David; sed lege sextum [*Briefe*: textum (81)] psalmum per ordinem, et sensus intellige veritatem: descende paululum inferius, et interroga non

me, sed ipsum Dominum, quis sit rex, cui ipse opera sua dicat. Audi quid praedicto regi Deus ipse loquatur."

44. Ibid., 1:65; 57: "Ecce qui post tam perspicuam exemplorum lucem adhuc testimoniis indiget, restat ut ad contemplandum radiantem in meridie solem lucernae lumen efflagitet. Nam cum tot astrorum coelestium radios coram te, Judaeae, videas enitescere, miror, quae tam densae tenebrae caecitatis locum etiam in vacuis oculorum orbibus valeant obtinere."

45. Ibid., 1:66; 57: "Nunc autem de quibusdam caeremoniis, super quibus saepe scrupulosissime quaeritis, et garrulis ambagibus quaestionum lucem [*Briefe*: litem (88)] movetis, sub quodam inquisitionis, responsionisque dialogo brevis inter nos contexatur oratio, ut cum tibi fuerit ex omnibus satisfactum, aut compellaris manus dare convictus, aut cum ignominiosa tua recedas infidelitate confusus."

46. Ibid., 1:72; 61: "Sed jam post tantam testimonium nubem, Judaeae, tibi epilogum faciam, et incipiens ab exordio humanitatis Christi per incrementa temporum usque ad consumptionem, prophetica testimonia tibi, si habes, ante oculos ponam, ut quasi sub uno aspectu collecta breviter videas, quae me diffuse, et sparsim ponere superius attendebas."

47. Ibid., 1:79; 64: "ratiocinatione."

48. Ibid., 1:82; 66.

49. Ibid., 1:82–83; 67–68: "dum nuda pene tibi Scripturarum exempla proposui, velut sagittarum fasciculum in pharetram misi. Et quia ex verbis contrariis [*Briefe*: contrarii (102)] suggeritur copia respondendi, arma quidem praebui; quo vero te invictum [*Briefe*: inictum (102)] effundere debeas, quo clypeum circumvolvere, quia bella necdum imminet, ad plenum docere non potui. Habes igitur coram posita, quae ad hujusmodi conflictum sunt necessaria. Utere paratis, ut expedire decreveris."

50. Ibid., 1:83; 68: "Omnipotens Deus, dilectissime frater, ab invisibilium te insidiis hostium misericorditer protegat et immunem te de hujusmodi [*Briefe*: huius mundi (102)] certamine ad coelestia regna perducatur. Amen."

51. Freud, *Ego*, 35–36. Freud here builds on his earlier "Mourning and Melancholia." (He also of course presents his own reading of the historical relations between Judaism and Christianity in *Moses and Monotheism*, esp. 109–17.)

52. For the framing dream, see Hermann, *Opusculum*, 70–72, 122–27; Morrison, *Conversion and Text*, 77–78, 110–13. On the significance of the dream for structuring Hermann's conversion account, see Kruger, *Dreaming*, 154–65. On Hermann's conversion, and for further bibliography, see Cohen, "Mentality," and *Living Letters*, 289–305; Morrison, *Understanding Conversion*, 50–57, and *Conversion and Text*, 39–75. There has been significant debate on the authenticity of Hermann's *Opusculum*; for the case against authenticity, see Saltman, "Hermann's *Opusculum*." I read the *Opusculum* as an authentic autobiography, but even if it is a Christian fabrication, it gives us significant insight into the meanings of conversion for its audience. See Schmitt, *Conversion*. For an extensive discussion of Jewish conversion to Christianity in a later period, see Carlebach, *Divided Souls*.

53. Hermann, *Opusculum*, 70: "peccator ego et indignus sacerdos Hermannus, Iudas quondam dictus, genere Israelita, tribu Levita, ex patre David et matre Sephora, in Coloniensi metropoli oriundus"; my translation (see also Morrison, *Conversion and Text*, 77).

54. For a papal statement of 1097–98 on the “relapse” of converts, see Simonsohn, *Apostolic See*, 1:42. Also see Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 3:39, 3:247, 4:5; and Rabinowitz, *Social Life of the Jews*, 107. On the case of the fourteenth-century “relapsed convert” Baruch the German, see Grayzel, “Confession.”

55. Butler, “Melancholy Gender,” 21. Also see Butler’s *Gender Trouble*, esp. 57–65, and *Psychic Life*.

56. Castle, *Apparitional Lesbian*, 62–63. Edelman’s formulation of what he calls “homographesis,” which can be both “regulatory” and “deconstructive,” emphasizes a similar ambivalence; see *Homographesis*, esp. Chapter 1.

57. Melville, *Moby Dick*, 31; I give subsequent page references parenthetically in my text.

2. BODY EFFECTS

1. See, for instance, the complex navigation of “psychological” and “political” questions in Sedgwick, *Between Men*, *Epistemology*, and *Tendencies*; Butler, *Gender Trouble*, *Bodies*, and *Psychic Life*; and Pellegrini, *Performance Anxieties*.

2. See, for instance, the (different) formulations developed by Butler, in the works cited above; Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*; and de Lauretis, *Practice of Love*.

3. I use a contemporary term like “heterosexist” advisedly, aware that the work of medievalists like Lochrie (*Heterosyncrasies*) and Burger (*Chaucer’s Queer Nation*) calls into question the notion that medieval and modern “heterosexuality” are cognate constructions, or even that “heterosexuality” or “heteronormativity” existed in the Middle Ages. Still, we can certainly recognize as part of a medieval sexual system a privileging of what we would call “heterosexual” acts and relationships—alongside, of course, privileged sexual categories like virginity, celibacy, and chastity that have very different meanings and values in the Middle Ages and in (post)modernity.

4. For one cogent example, see Fuss’s deconstruction of an internal/external binary in “Inside/Out”; also, more generally, see the work of the queer theorists cited above, nn. 1–2.

5. Muñoz usefully develops a three-part distinction based on the work of Michel Pêcheux: “Pêcheux built on [Althusser’s] theory by describing the three modes in which a subject is constructed by ideological practices. In this schema, the first mode is understood as ‘identification,’ where a ‘Good Subject’ chooses the path of identification with discursive and ideological forms. ‘Bad Subjects’ resist and attempt to reject the images and identificatory sites offered by dominant ideology and proceed to rebel, to ‘counteridentify’ and turn against this symbolic system. . . . Disidentification is the third mode of dealing with dominant ideology, one that neither opts to assimilate within such a structure nor strictly opposes it; rather, disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology” (*Disidentifications*, 11).

6. Butler, *Bodies*, 116.

7. See, for instance, Southern, *Making*, 219–57; Ullmann, *Individual and Society*; Dronke, *Poetic Individuality*; Morris, *Discovery*; Hanning, *Individual*; Benton, “Conscious-

ness of Self”; and, more recently, Gurevich, *Origins*. For a partly skeptical response to some of this work, see Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 82–109. For a recent discussion of “the discovery of the self” that directly treats Jewish-Christian relations, see Elukin, “Discovery.”

8. For more on the “twelfth-century renaissance,” see, in addition to the sources cited in the previous note, Haskins, *Renaissance*; Lewis, *Allegory of Love*; Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society*; Leclercq, *Love of Learning*; Stock, *Myth and Science*; Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry: Renaissance and Renewal*; and Stiefel, *Intellectual Revolution*. For the fullest treatment of Jewish-Christian relations and the “twelfth-century renaissance,” see Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*.

9. For a fuller treatment of European expansion and Christian consolidation, see Bartlett, *Making*. For essays that treat various moments in the history of medieval conversion to Christianity, see *Varieties of Religious Conversion*.

10. For a fuller treatment of European crusading, see the essays collected in *History of the Crusades*.

11. On the Gregorian Reform, see Fliche, *Réforme grégorienne*, and Cowdrey, *Cluniacs*.

12. Cluny was founded in 910 and played an important role in eleventh- and twelfth-century reforms. Cîteaux and the Cistercian order were founded in 1098, in part in reaction against Cluny. Norbert of Xanten founded the Premonstratensian order in 1120, under the influence of the Cistercians. For an extensive treatment of Cluniac positions vis-à-vis non-Christians and “heretics,” see Iogna-Prat, *Order and Exclusion*.

13. For one treatment of eleventh- and twelfth-century heretical movements and orthodox reaction to them, see Moore, *Origins*. On the Albigensian crusade, see Evans, “Albigensian Crusade.”

14. Guibert, *Gesta*, in *Recueil*, 135: “papa primus ex Francis.” I have consulted the *Gesta* in the *Recueil* edition, the *PL*, and the more recent *Corpus Christianorum* text. In my references, I will give page numbers from the *Recueil* edition followed by column numbers from the *PL*. Unless otherwise noted, I cite the text from the *Recueil*. Translations are my own, but I have also benefited from Levine’s translation: Guibert, *Deeds of God*.

15. Cole, *Preaching*, 14, summarizing the account of Robert of Reims.

16. Guibert, *Gesta*, 140; 702: “Peroraverat vir excellentissimus, et omnes qui se ituros voverant, beati Petri potestate absolvit, eadem, ipsa apostolica benedictione firmavit, et signum satis conveniens hujus tam honestae professionis instituit, et veluti cingulum militiae, vel potius militaturis Deo passionis Dominicae stigma tradens, Crucis figuram, ex cujuslibet materiae panni, tunicis, palliis et byrris iturorum assui mandavit.”

17. Cohen has argued, in *Living Letters*, that the twelfth century is the period in which we begin to see in Christian understandings a blurring of distinctions between Jews and other religious others like Muslims and heretics; the earlier medieval sense of a special status to be accorded to Judaism as Christianity’s forerunner begins, Cohen believes, to fade—and along with this change, Christian positions begin to become more strongly anti-Jewish (see esp. 147–66; also see Cohen, “Muslim Connection”). Such a view is consonant with that of Moore, *Formation*; Moore sees Jews as one of several “others” in the period subjected to an increasingly persecutory Christian hegemony. While much evidence supports Cohen’s and Moore’s positions, however, it is also the case that Jews do not