

THE WANDERING JEW AS RELIC

LISA LAMPERT-WEISSIG

The legend of the Wandering Jew, who insulted Christ at the time of the Passion and was cursed by him to wander the earth until the Second Coming, dates back to the sixth century. The Wandering Jew story has been told through hundreds of versions across many languages. In many of the better-known accounts, the Wandering Jew is associated with mysterious supernatural forces. We can find traces of this in Chaucer's "Pardoner's Tale," which features an Old Man whose unending existence resembles that of the Wandering Jew. Centuries later, in Matthew Lewis's 1796 gothic novel, *The Monk*, the Wandering Jew appears from nowhere to tame the ghostly Bleeding Nun. In works such as Eugène Sue's 1844 *Le Juif Errant*, the Wandering Jew (and Jewess) move in and out of the novel almost like phantoms.¹

But while some portrayals, especially those of the Romantic period, might seem to cast the Wandering Jew as a disembodied and otherworldly hero, with his gothic incarnations leading him into a world of ghosts and even of vampires, the Wandering Jew is, nevertheless, always firmly moored to the material world of sin and labor in which he is doomed to wander.² In this essay I focus on this material aspect in two influential medieval accounts of the Wandering Jew figure: St. Albans' chronicles dating from the thirteenth century. The first is a 1228 entry in Roger of Wendover's *Flores historiarum*. The second is Matthew of Paris's reworking of Roger's chronicle, in his *Chronica Majora*: a slightly revised entry for 1228 and a new entry for 1252. Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, was responsible for the creation of a printed edition of the *Chronica* in 1571; the subsequent dissemination of this edition in German-speaking lands was crucial to the development of early modern and modern forms of the legend.³ Because of the relatively broad transmission of Parker's edition, the St. Albans' chronicles comprise the most important medieval written contributions to the Wandering Jew tradition.

Wandering Jew scholarship tends to read the St. Albans' accounts in a cursory way, an understandable approach given the huge volume of Wandering Jew literature.⁴ I want to examine the St. Albans' accounts of the Wandering Jew more closely, focusing specifically on his temporality. I will attempt to tie the particular and paradoxical temporality of the Wandering Jew story to the temporal dynamics associated with Christian relics, the way that a holy relic brings a material piece of the past into the present and acts as a sign of future redemption. I will argue for reading the Wandering Jew as a kind of relic and then suggest that understanding the Wandering Jew as relic, as simultaneously both human and object, sheds light not only on this figure and his legend, but also on Christian representations of Jews more generally.

A relic, as Cynthia Hahn, an art historian known for her work on relics and reliquaries defines it, is “a physical object understood to carry the *virtus* of a saint or Christ, literally ‘virtue’ but more accurately the ‘power’ of a holy person. It can be a bone or bones, some other portion of the body, or merely an object that has been sanctified through contact with a sacred person.”⁵ Hahn also notes that this power can travel in a way that almost seems “contagious,” imbuing even objects that have merely come into contact with the holy with *virtus*.⁶ A relic has the power to bring any believer into the presence of the divine, allowing a material contact that reaches across time.

The Wandering Jew parallels many aspects of relics while also inverting them. He enacts the temporal dynamics of the relic, literally bringing the past into the present, but he delivers Christian truth to the faithful not as a saint, but as a repentant sinner yet to be judged. Similarly, he is immortal but he also ages. A relic is an object that conflates the boundaries between the living and dead. It is part of or had contact with a holy body, but remains powerful beyond the life of that body, able to act in the world of the living. The Wandering Jew does not die, but his uncanny immortality also blurs the boundary between life and death. Finally, the Wandering Jew’s story inverts the typical origin narrative of a relic. Pilgrims typically travel to visit relics; the Wandering Jew is mobile and one can encounter him anywhere he roams.

Like many of the most sacred medieval relics, the Wandering Jew comes from the East. Roger of Wendover tells us that in 1228 an Armenian archbishop made a pilgrimage to England to visit relics and holy places.⁷ Weary from his journey, the archbishop stopped at St. Albans to rest and, with the aid of an interpreter, entered into dialogue with the abbey’s monks. The English monks asked “whether he had ever seen or heard anything of Joseph, a man of whom there was much talk in the world, who, when our Lord suffered, was present and spoke to him, and who is still alive in evidence of the Christian faith.”⁸ The monks have clearly already heard something of the Wandering Jew legend, but are eager to learn more.

The archbishop can satisfy the monks’ curiosity as only an eyewitness can: he knows the Wanderer well, having conversed with him several times in Armenia. The archbishop’s account of the Wanderer begins in Pilate’s court and depicts a nefarious role for the Jews in the infamous trial of Jesus, to which a man named Cartaphilus is witness. As the Jews were dragging Jesus away, Cartaphilus, “a porter of the hall in Pilate’s service,” struck Jesus on the back with his hand and said in mockery: “Go quicker, Jesus, go quicker, why do you loiter?” And Jesus, looking back on him with a severe countenance said to him, ‘I am going, and you will wait till I return.’”⁹ Like the revered contact relics of Christ, Cartaphilus touches the divine, but this touch is not one of kindness, like the one that created the image of Christ’s face on Veronica’s veil, but of cruelty.¹⁰ For his cruelty, the Wandering Jew becomes a living *arma Christi*, an instrument of suffering sanctified through contact with the Savior.¹¹

After his encounter with Christ, Cartaphilus is converted to the truth of Christianity and subsequently baptized Joseph. He now waits, eternally penitent, for Christ’s return, but his existence is not without a temporal rhythm. At the time of the Passion, Joseph was thirty years of age. Now his lifetime runs in cycles; he ages to one hundred years only then to return “to the

same age as he was when our Lord suffered.”¹² Augustine, among others, posited that thirty would be the age of those resurrected at Christ’s return.¹³ The Wandering Jew’s perpetually renewing lifespan is thus linked to eschatological expectation. The legend resonates with prevalent views about holy bodies and holy matter concomitant with Christian desires for redemption and resurrection. Christ’s curse always brings Joseph back to his sin and to the time of the Passion — “when our Lord suffered” — but it also allows him to return to a time of life that signals the promise of future forgiveness.

Joseph’s encounter with Christ has transformed him from a disbelieving tormentor to a holy man of humble demeanor. He is not talkative, but when asked he will speak “of the events of old times, and of the events which occurred at the suffering and resurrection of our Lord, and of the witnesses of the resurrection.”¹⁴ These remembrances are related “without smiling or levity . . . as one who is well practised in the sorrow and fear of God, always looking forward with fear to the coming of Jesus Christ, lest at the last judgment he should find him in anger, whom, when on his way to death, he had provoked to just vengeance.”¹⁵ Joseph is sought after for his knowledge and to “men of authority, he explains all doubts on the matters on which he is questioned.”¹⁶ He accepts no gifts, living ascetically and ever in the hope that he will eventually be redeemed because he sinned in ignorance, following the words of Christ from Luke 23:24 that conclude Roger’s account: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”¹⁷ These words connect the Wandering Jew to those who tormented Christ and, by extension, to all sinners.

In his 1228 entry on the Wandering Jew in the *Chronica Majora*, Matthew Paris makes only a few changes to Roger’s account, underlining the Wanderer’s perverse immortality and introducing a new temporal dimension — typology. When describing how Joseph cycles back in age from one hundred to thirty years, Matthew adds that at this moment of transformation the Wanderer is healed as from a kind of illness and then transported into ecstasy, a transformation Matthew illustrates with Psalm 103:5, “My youth is renewed as the eagle’s.”¹⁸ The Psalm quotation underscores the prospect of renewal and strength that is also part of the Christian promise of resurrection. The Wandering Jew, because of his sin against Christ, has been given an earthly “eternal life” that is not a promised reward, but is instead a curse. Through his continually renewing life cycle, he comes to represent a dramatically augmented version of the cycle of human life and human decay. As in Roger’s account, the renewal the Wandering Jew experiences every seventy years also provides a taste of the redemption that will come to all believers at the End of Days. In keeping with his own apocalyptic expectations, Matthew emphasizes Joseph’s fear of the Lord (*timore Domini*), who will return in fire to judge the world.¹⁹

Matthew concludes his Wandering Jew account somewhat differently than Roger does by adding a typological dimension, shaping the Wandering Jew story so that it resonates with the lives of Paul and of Judas, two Jewish followers of Christ who are central to the early Christian story. Paul sinned in ignorance and is ultimately saved, as was Peter. Like Paul, the Wandering Jew travels widely, speaking of the life of Christ. Judas, in contrast, betrayed the Lord knowingly and received due punishment. The Wandering Jew longs for a conversion to

the good, for a fate different than that of the eternally damned Judas. Like Judas, however, the Wandering Jew has committed a thoroughly repugnant act against the savior, and the consequences of his crime cling to him. By invoking these key figures in early Christianity, Matthew implies typological relationships between them and the Wandering Jew, thus anchoring this apocryphal figure into Christian history.

In addition to his emended version of Roger's account of the 1228 Armenian guests, Matthew also includes a 1252 entry concerning the Wandering Jew, extending the typology in a material way. More visitors arrive from Armenia, here described as a place thirty days' journey from Jerusalem and the site where Noah's ark is buried; they once again tell of the Wanderer. Matthew's reference to the final resting place of Noah's ark ties the Wandering Jew to another story of redemption, doing so in a way that specifically evokes material remains of a biblical past.²⁰ With the flood, God punished humans and Noah, and the others on the ark had also to endure hardship for a prescribed interval after which they found deliverance for themselves and for humankind. In another pseudo-typology, the Wandering Jew legend parallels this story of sin and redemption.²¹ The Eastern origins of the Armenian Christians materially link to those of Western Christians through the Noah story, the ark the material remnant through which this typology of a shared past is anchored.

A final typological layering concerns the Tartars. Matthew tells us that the Armenian visitors also bring news of another of Matthew's preoccupations in the *Chronica*, the Tartars, whose destructive path Matthew saw as presaging the apocalypse. God wreaks vengeance on the Tartars with a devastating plague, driving them back whence they came.²² Matthew draws on the same root word for "vengeance," *ulciscor*, as he did in discussing the fate of the Wandering Jew in the 1228 entry. In this way, Matthew thereby links the fate of the Tartars with that of the Wandering Jew and with other forms of divine vengeance enacted against the Jews more generally, as in the narrative of the Fall of Jerusalem.

Matthew had previously linked the Jews and the Tartars not only in punishment, but also in crime. In an entry for 1241, he details a nefarious conspiracy the Jews and Tartars allegedly shared to destroy Christendom.²³ As Ruth Nissé has convincingly shown, Matthew, in his recounting of this Jewish/Tartar plot is not only projecting a fantasy of Jewish conspiracy, but reflecting "disturbing rumors about the Jews' own messianic expectations."²⁴ In the mid-thirteenth century Jewish and Christian messianic expectations clashed; for Matthew, Jewish messianism must be exposed and refuted. The defeat of the Tartars, alleged allies of the Jews, heralds the nearing of the End of Days, of which the Wandering Jew is another sign. The Wandering Jew is therefore both a living piece of the Christian past and a sign of a Christian future. In this figure of the eternally penitent Jew, Christian origins reach a Christian end.

Matthew's 1252 entry emphasizes the extraordinary temporal dimensions of the Wandering Jew's existence. He is a continual living sign of the Christian past and of Christian belief.²⁵ But he is not just a sign. As a living witness of the Passion, the Wandering Jew also makes that past materially present. The Wandering Jew's story embodies the paradox of Christian temporality and the ways in which the Christian historical past, especially the Passion, exists in a real and tangible way in the Christian present. Elizabeth Castelli has noted the complexity

of Christianity's relationship to time, which stems from its "claims to be simultaneously *both* historical at its root *and* outside of time, eternal."²⁶ Peter Brown describes this Christian "collapsing of time in the narrative and liturgical repetitions within the martyr cults" as a "concertina effect."²⁷ The rite of the Mass as well, which reenacts the Passion, brings the past into the present in a way that defies quotidian conceptions of time.²⁸

Relics, and the legendary Wandering Jew, as Jean-Claude Schmitt has observed, are able to convey the double and contradictory nature of Christian temporality, which cultivates the memory of the Passion at the same time that this memory is endlessly re-activated in the present, with the temporal distance between past and present inexorably collapsed.²⁹ The Wandering Jew brings a sentient vitality to the Christian matter of the relic cults. Because he can retell his story and the Passion story in which it is embedded, the Wandering Jew simultaneously circumvents and deploys the concertina effect. That this living history is conveyed to Christians through a Jew converted by Christ himself also makes the Wandering Jew an embodiment of Christian supersession, the notion that Christianity is the rightful heir to Judaism, supplanting and replacing it as the only true faith.

But is Matthew's Wandering Jew actually (or even materially) a Jew? Neither Roger nor Matthew specifically refers to Cartaphilus as Jewish. It seems clear, however, that Roger and Matthew were familiar with multiple versions, likely oral, of the story.³⁰ The St. Albans' monks, after all, ask the Armenians about a story already well known. Matthew's illustration of the Wandering Jew in MS Cambridge Corpus Christi College 16, fol. 70v is believed to be his own drawing and is widely accepted as evidence for reading Cartaphilus/Joseph as Jewish (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Detail: Image of the Wandering Jew, created by Matthew Paris in the *Chronica Majora* Part II from MS Cambridge Corpus Christi College 16, fol. 70v. Reprinted by permission from the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

In contrast to the accompanying text the action in the illustration takes place on the road to Calvary rather than before Pilate, hearkening back to early sources of the legend.³¹ The figures face each other, clearly in conversation. While Christ is moving forward, he is also turning back, his dual posture signifying the strange combination of movement and stasis that will come to typify the existence of the Wandering Jew.³² While the speech scroll inscriptions in the illustration differ from the written text they accompany, they still emphasize the paired temporal elements of hurrying and waiting central to the Wandering Jew's crime and punishment.³³

Ugly and unfortunately proportioned, the Cartaphilus figure is dressed like a peasant. He carries a mattock, an agricultural tool very similar to a pickax, an instrument typically associated with Cain.³⁴ The eternal wandering that Cain endures as punishment for killing Abel parallels Cartaphilus's fate; Christian exegetes, significantly, also connected the Cain story with the Jews.³⁵ The Cross, which Christ appears to carry with such ease, visually echoes the mattock carried by Cartaphilus, as both slant at almost the same angle. The head of the mattock grazes the ground with its handle sloped downward, contrasting in its seeming heaviness with the graceful uplift Matthew's drawing lends to Christ's bearing of the Cross. The mattock's downward slant also evokes defeat and is reminiscent of the broken lances of Synagoga figures.³⁶

Matthew's drawing of the Cross and the mattock depicts a moment in the time of the Passion, but in his own time, these objects were carried in the hands of men, the former a sign of future redemption, and the latter of the life of toil that is our due as sinners. For his sin, Adam must work for his sustenance, and the biblical verse that specifies this, Genesis 3:19, resonates with the story of the Wandering Jew, who for his transgression will not be allowed to return to dust.³⁷ Cain, Adam's murderous son and traditional bearer of the mattock, is a sign of both Jewish and of human sinfulness, over which Christ and his Cross will triumph.

We should also be mindful that these representations of material objects, the Cross and the mattock, are part of a text in which objects, especially holy objects, figure prominently. Matthew's drawing reflects the complex temporality shared by the Wandering Jew and by relics. The dark green Cross that Christ bears in Matthew's illustration has a spike at the bottom of its vertical shaft, thereby resembling a processional cross.³⁸ For Suzanne Lewis this detail makes "the instrument of the Passion...traverse time and space from the Crucifixion in Jerusalem to the medieval present in a visible reflection of the legend's central temporal juxtapositions."³⁹ We could say then, that Matthew's depiction of the Cross as a processional cross visually captures the "concertina effect" of Christian temporality, an effect that is the dominant temporal mode of the Wandering Jew legend.

This drawing of the Cross is one of several representations of relics of Christ, part of what Lewis has called the "strong preoccupation with relics, miracles, and sacred images associated with the True Cross that recurs throughout the *Chronica Majora*."⁴⁰ Matthew affords considerable attention to the acquisition of holy relics by the French King Louis IX. Matthew tells us that Louis purchased and installed at Paris a relic of the True Cross, along with his earlier acquisition, the Crown of Thorns, purchased from the emperor of Constantinople.⁴¹

Louis had also obtained the head of the lance that pierced Christ's side, and the sponge used to torment him with vinegar.⁴² Matthew notes that the Crown Louis has obtained is one that "the Jews had woven and placed on his [Christ's] head when about to suffer on the cross for the redemption of the human race."⁴³ The alleged perfidy of the Jews toward Christ is never far from Christ's relics. In his appearance in the *Chronica* the Wandering Jew takes his place in this chronicling of material reminders of Jewish disbelief and cruelty.

Louis's pious collecting of relics seems to have inspired the English King Henry III, who installed a relic of Christ's Holy Blood at Westminster in 1247.⁴⁴ King Henry ordered all of his nobles to assemble at Westminster to witness the installation of the blood, which had been sent to England from Jerusalem. He also ordered Matthew to witness and record the event.⁴⁵ Matthew recounts how Henry himself carried the crystalline vial containing the blood with great ceremony to the altar and also records some of the sermon preached by the bishop of Norwich on the occasion. The bishop emphasized that this blood relic was the most holy of all relics because of its contact with Christ, providing almost a definition of the source of a contact relic's sanctity: "In truth, the cross is a most holy thing, on account of the more holy shedding of Christ's blood upon it, not the blood-shedding holy on account of the cross."⁴⁶ The sermon pronounces the English king the most Christian of princes, a holiness that led to the bestowing of the treasure of Christ's blood by the patriarch to the English king and to England. The power of this relic transfers to English soil and its spiritual benefits confer to those who venerate it. The relics then, not only bring the time of the Passion into the present, but also bring Jerusalem to London.

The Wandering Jew, as a contact relic who can move on his own, brings both the time and place of the Passion wherever and whenever he goes. News of the Wanderer can travel even more broadly. The visiting Armenian Christians have retold the legend as one of "many strange things concerning eastern countries."⁴⁷ The *Chronica* entries on the Wandering Jew are therefore accounts of exchange between East and West, with the story of the Wandering Jew mirroring the westward flow of material relics that began with the Crusades. The details of the Wanderer's story Matthew provides, including specification of the language of the interpreter, seem included to demonstrate veracity, just as in a narrative designed to confirm the provenance of a holy relic.⁴⁸ The Wandering Jew is both a legend and a commodity; a relic whose provenance creates its value.

Relics are things, material objects, but, to borrow from Jacques Maritain, they "constantly pass beyond themselves, and give more than they have."⁴⁹ What a relic gives and to whom it gives are very much at issue when we consider the Wandering Jew as relic. The Wandering Jew is a living eyewitness, indeed *the* living eyewitness, to the events of the Passion. He is *the* relic who can actually respond to questions. In this unique capacity as both a sign and source of Christian truth and Christian memory, the Wandering Jew needs to be considered in relation to what Jeremy Cohen has called the "hermeneutical Jew," a complex, shifting, and not purely negative figure "crafted" in the interests of Christian "self-definition." Patristic and medieval Christian thinkers used the hermeneutical Jew as a conceptual tool through which to claim Christianity as the universal faith.⁵⁰ Cohen takes the title of the book in which

he explores this figure, *Living Letters of the Law*, from Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard believed the Jews to embody, literally, the meaning of the "Old Testament." Bernard's formulation follows a tradition that also includes Augustine, who refers to Jews as "our librarians," destined to preserve until the Endtimes a sacred text that they do not truly understand.⁵¹ In these conceptions of Jews as both keepers of sacred books and as the very letters on their pages, we can discern a strange duality of representation: the Jews are simultaneously both objects and humans who preserve objects.

The Wandering Jew is also both human and object, bringing to life the uncanny humanity that lurks within the theology of Christian relic veneration. Patrick Geary has remarked that "[l]ike slaves, relics belong to that category, unusual in Western society, of objects that are both persons and things."⁵² The Wandering Jew exists in a state that we might profitably compare to the social death of slavery. As a man in thrall to his curse, the Wandering Jew is both relic and slave. He is not quite living, not quite dead; he is human, but also an object. Finally, Joseph is a Christian, having converted, but he is nevertheless still a Jew, doomed to a liminal existence not unlike that of medieval Anglo-Jewish converts to Christianity, for whom King Henry erected a *domus conversorum* (house of converts) in London in 1232.⁵³

In addition to his association with relics, the Wanderer embodies the tenuous position of the diaspora Jew in medieval Europe and the endless nature of the Wandering Jew's curse captures that sense of "*interim*" — "betweentimes" in which the Jews are trapped within the temporal dimensions of Christian theology.⁵⁴ As Augustine, Bernard, and other Christian thinkers would have it, Jews are ideally meant to exist in a kind of spiritual stasis. Never acknowledged as a living, believing human being, the Jew is instead a religious symbol frozen in amber until the Endtimes. Reading the Wandering Jew as relic sheds light on this aspect of medieval Christian representation of Jews, illuminating another dichotomy in representation. Jews are not only "revered and reviled," but also human and not human, somehow simultaneously alive and dead.⁵⁵ The Jew functions as an object that performs a specific type of "work" within Christian thought. This work is conceptual, but it is a kind of slavery nonetheless.

In considering the Wandering Jew as relic, we can also see yet another way that the figure of the Jew is woven into the fabric of medieval Christian spirituality. Scholars such as Caroline Bynum and Mitchell Merback have revealed ways in which the figure of the Jew played a fundamental role in Christian narratives about relic cults and their shrines, among other forms of piety.⁵⁶ Matthew's influential account of the Wandering Jew in the *Chronica* is also embedded in a narrative deeply engaged with what Robyn Malo calls "relic discourse," and this discourse has a shaping force on the development of the Wandering legend.⁵⁷ As I noted at the outset, the mysterious Old Man in Chaucer's "Pardoner's Tale" draws power from the Wandering Jew legend. Understanding the Wandering Jew as relic casts a new light not only on the Pardoner's relics, but also on the references to Jews that Chaucer uses to saffron the Pardoner's tale and his depiction of the Pardoner himself.⁵⁸

Thinking about the Wandering Jew as relic also affords a new perspective on the 1602 German pamphlet the *Kurtze Beschreibung und Erzählung von einem Juden mit namen*

Ahasverus [A Brief Description and Narration Regarding a Jew named Ahasuerus], the most influential early modern Wandering Jew text.⁵⁹ I read this pamphlet as a specifically Lutheran response to the Catholic veneration of relics that had reached unprecedented levels in some German-speaking territories just prior to the Reformation. In the *Kurtze Beschreibung*, the Wandering Jew, now called Ahasverus, appears to an important Lutheran leader, Paulus von Eitzen, during services in a Hamburg church. The account's emphasis on the Wandering Jew's attention to the sermon preached and to the Wanderer's own powers of narration subtly reshape the Wandering Jew from a relic-like object to an individual focused on the saving power of the Word. These shifts reflect Lutheran emphasis on the Word and on individual salvation, although Ahasverus remains an example of the use of the Jew as a figure to convey Christian ideas, to perform conceptual labor.

While later adaptations of the Wandering Jew legend sometimes depict a more fully realized individual than the medieval and early modern accounts, the roots of the legend in a narrative that objectifies the Wandering Jew figure continue to define its limits. Critical receptions of modern adaptations of the legend often discuss the Wandering Jew in heroic terms. I would argue, however, that despite the vitality and agency that later artists attempt to breathe into him, the Wandering Jew is always a hero whose feet of clay are tied to his Jewishness, and not only to his own sins, but to the perceived sins of the entire Jewish people against Christ and Christians. Created as an object and a sign for Christians, this figure of the Jew can wander endlessly, but will never escape his role as a Christian sign, even in the hands of an artist such as Stephen Heym, who was highly attuned to the Wanderer's historical roots and resistant to Christian attempts to define and limit him.⁶⁰

Grounding the origins of the Wandering Jew in relation to the context of the relic devotion that influenced early re-tellings of the legend, seeing the figure as a relic, helps us to understand its development. Tracing this development further illuminates how Christian representations of Jews function in Christian theology and cultural production. Understanding how the Jew can be seen as both human and yet not quite human, and recognizing that this phenomenon can occur in ways that are not demonizing, but are nevertheless objectifying, can help us to delineate more clearly the limits of Christian tolerance.

Lisa Lampert-Weissig
Literature Department, UC San Diego

NOTES

¹ The definitive study of the Wandering Jew legend is George K. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965). It includes extensive bibliography on primary and key secondary materials on the legend.

² On the connection between the vampire and the Wandering Jew, see Carol Margaret Davidson, *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 87–119.

³ For an introduction to this transmission history see Anderson, *Legend*, 41–42.

⁴ Anderson, *Legend*, remains the most important source on the legend's history despite the addition of Mona Körte, *Die Uneinholbarkeit des Verfolgten: der Ewige Jude in der literarischen Phantastik* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2000). Some of most significant scholarship prior to Anderson is gathered and translated in Galit Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes, eds., *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

⁵ Cynthia Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400-circa 1204* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 8–9.

⁶*Ibid.*, 9.

⁷ “et de partibus orientis plura admiranda referre.” Roger Wendover, *Rogeri de Wendover Liber qui dicitur Flores Historiarum ab Anno Domini MCLIV* [FH] ed. H.G. Hewlett. 3 vols. (London: Rolls Series, 1886–1889), 2: 353. Translation can be found in *Flores historiarum* [Flowers], trans. J.A. Giles, *The Flowers of History*. 2 vols. (London: Bohn, 1849), 2: 512–13. A slightly different translation also can be found in Anderson, *Legend*, 18–20.

⁸ “Interrogatus autem inter caetera de Joseph, viro illo, de quo frequens sermo habetur inter homines, qui, quando passus est Dominus, praesens fuit et locutus est cum eo, qui adhuc vivit in argumentum fidei Christianae, si illum aliquando viderit vel de illo quicquam audierit.” FH 2: 353; *Flowers* 2: 513.

⁹ “Trahentibus autem Judaeis Jesum extra praetorium, cum venisset ad ostium, Cartaphilus, praetorii ostiarius et Pontii Pilati, cum per ostium exiret Jesus, pepulit eum pugno post tergum impie et irridens dixit, ‘Vade Jesu citius, vade, quid moraris?’ Et Jesus severo vultu et oculo respiciens in eum dixit, ‘Ego,’ inquit, ‘vado, et tu exspectabis donec redeam.’” FH 2: 354; *Flowers* 2: 513.

¹⁰ On contact relics, see Mitchell Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom: Violence, Memory, and Visual Culture at the Host-Miracle Shrines of Germany and Austria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 194–8 and Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 131–39.

¹¹ For the *arma Christi* in relation to representations of Jews, see Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms, 1350–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 145–168.

¹² “Itaque juxta verbum Domini exspectat adhuc Cartaphilus ille, qui tempore Dominicae passionis erat quasi triginta annorum, et semper, cum usque ad centum attingeret annorum, redit ad illum aetatis statum, quo fuit anno quando passus est Christus.” FH 2: 354; *Flowers* 2: 513.

¹³ On thirty as the age of the resurrected body, see *De civitate Dei*, bk. 22, chap. 15, p. 834, cited in Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 98.

¹⁴ “Et tunc referre solet de rebus antiquitatis, et de iis quae gesta fuerant in passione Domini et resurrectione, et de testibus resurrectionis.” FH 2: 354; *Flowers* 2: 513.

¹⁵ “et hoc sine risu et omni levitate verborum, ut qui magis versatur in lachrymis et timore Domini, metuens semper et suspectum habens adventum Jesu Christi, ne ipsum in ultimo examine inveniat iratum, quem ad passionem properantem irridens ad dignam provocaverat ultionem.” FH 2: 354; *Flowers* 2: 514.

¹⁶ “Veniunt ad eum multi de remotis mundi partibus, delectantes in ejus visione et confabulatione, quibus, si sint viri authentici, de rebus interrogatis breviter quaestiones absolvit.” FH 2: 354–5; *Flowers* 2: 514.

¹⁷ “‘Pater,’ inquit, ‘ignosce illis, quia nesciunt quid faciunt.’” FH 2: 355; *Flowers*, 2: 514.

¹⁸ “corripitur quasi incurabili infirmitate, et rapitur quasi in extasim.” CM 3: 162. “renovatur ut aquilae juvenis mea” CM 3: 163. All Latin citations of the *Chronica* [CM] are from Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard. 7 vols. (London: Rolls Series, 1872–1884). English translations (with modifications) are from *Matthew Paris's English History* [EH], trans. J.A. Giles, 3 vols. (London, 1852–1854). For a brief textual history of the *Chronica* manuscripts including the Corpus Christi College MSS 16 and 26, see Richard Vaughn, *The Illustrated Chronicles of Matthew Paris: Observations of Thirteenth-Century Life* (Cambridge: Corpus Christi College, 1993), vii–xiii. On the chronology of the MSS, particularly in regard to illustration,

see Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 377–417.

¹⁹ “in igne, saeculum iudicaturi” CM 3: 163. See Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris*, 302–03. On the “apocalyptic scaffolding” of the *Chronica*, see Daniel Connolly, *The Maps of Matthew Paris: Medieval Journeys through Space, Time and Liturgy* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press 2009), 13.

²⁰ CM 5: 340–1.

²¹ See Jean-Claude Schmitt, “La genèse médiévale de la légende et de l’iconographie du Juif errant,” in *Le Juif errant: Un témoin du temps*, ed. Juliette Braillon-Philippe (Musée d’art et d’histoire du Judaïsme, 2001), 55–76 at 61. Schmitt’s essay on the Wandering Jew opens his discussion of a number of early images of the Wandering Jew with a brilliantly insightful connection between the temporality of the Wandering Jew and that of relics and other forms of Christian spiritual piety and practice. My work on the Wandering Jew attempts to examine more fully the significant implications of this briefly mentioned insight and to argue for the Wandering Jew himself as a type of relic.

²² CM 5: 340–1.

²³ See CM 4:131–33 and important discussion by Sophia Menache, “Tartars, Jews, Saracens and the Jewish-Mongol ‘plot’ of 1241,” *History* 81 (1996): 319–42.

²⁴ Ruth Nissé, “A Romance of the Jewish East: The Ten Lost Tribes and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs in Medieval Europe,” *Medieval Encounters: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Culture in Confluence and Dialogue* 13 (2007): 499–523 at 511.

²⁵ “hoc est unum de mundi mirabilibus et magnum Christianae fidei argumentum.” CM 5: 341.

²⁶ Castelli is here examining Maurice Halbwach’s theories of Christian collective memory. Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 13.

²⁷ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 81. Cited in Castelli, *Martyrdom*, 208 n. 18.

²⁸ On this dynamic in relation to Christian representation of Jews, see Lisa Lampert, “The Once and Future Jew: Little Robert of Bury, Historical Memory and the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*,” *Jewish History* 15.3 (2001): 235–55.

²⁹ Schmitt, “La Genèse,” 55.

³⁰ Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 302 and 304 and Anderson, *Legend*, 20.

³¹ Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 303.

³² See Schmitt, “La Genèse,” 63 and Julian Luxford, “A Fifteenth-Century Version of Matthew Paris’s Procession with the Relic of the Holy Blood and Evidence for its Carthusian Context,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 72 (2009): 81–101 at 86–87.

³³ In the drawing Cartaphilus says “Hurry, Christ, to the trial, which has been prepared for you.” Christ responds, “I go as it is written of me, but you will wait until I return.” (*Vade Jhesu ad iudicium tibi preparatum. Vado sicut scriptum est de me. Tu vero expectabis donec veniam.*) Transcription from Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 301. For discussion see Eszter Losonczy, “The Visual Patterns of the Wandering Jew in the late Middle Ages” (Master’s Thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 2012), 38.

³⁴ Diane Wolfthal, “The Wandering Jew: Some Medieval and Renaissance Depictions,” in *Tribute to Lotte Brand Philip, Art Historian and Detective*, eds. William W. Clark, Colin Eisler, William S. Heckscher and Barbara G. Lane (New York: Abaris Books, 1985), 217–27 at 221 and Ruth Mellinkoff, *The Mark of Cain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

³⁵ See Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 303, Mellinkopf, *Mark of Cain*, 38–40 and Losonczy, “Visual Patterns,” 38–41.

³⁶ See Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Continuum, 1996), 31–74 and Nina Rowe, *The Jew, The Cathedral, and the Medieval City: Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2011), 40–85. Ambrose compares Cain and Abel to the Synagogue and the Church, as does Augustine. See discussion in Mellinkoff, *Mark*, 92–93.

³⁷ "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." (Douay-Rheims translation).

³⁸ Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 303. On the processional cross form, including the presence of relics in some processional crosses, see Colum Hourihane, *The Processional Cross in late Medieval England: the Dallye Cross* (London: The Society of Antiquaries of London, 2005).

³⁹ Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 303. The representation of a processional cross also has some interesting implications for considering Matthew's illustration in the context of actual Jewish-Christian relations of the period. As Robert Stacey has noted, Jews were subject to frequent displays of "Christian militancy," given that they lived "check to jowl" with their Christian neighbors, which could include religious processions through areas frequented or inhabited by Jews. See Stacey, "The Conversion of the Jews to Christianity in Thirteenth-Century England" *Speculum* 67 (1992): 263–88 at 265. While this Jewish perspective is not something one could necessarily ever attribute to Matthew, the idea of a processional display and a conversionary outlook is interesting given Matthew's visual depiction of the Wandering Jew. On an alleged 1268 Jewish attack on a processional Cross in Oxford, see Christoph Cluse, "Stories of Breaking and Taking the Cross: A Possible Context for the Oxford Incident of 1268," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 90 (1995): 336–442.

⁴⁰ Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 304. Matthew depicts the True Cross in the same deep green as in his Wandering Jew, a color choice that may connect to the idea of "just vengeance." As Thomas Hall has shown, a strand in the Latin *Vindicta Salvatoris* tradition influential in Old English literature speaks of Christ hung on a *lignum viride*, a green tree, and also of the Jews being punished by being hung on dry trees at the Fall of Jerusalem. This conjuncture echoes Luke 23:31: "Quia si in viridi ligno haec faciunt, in arido quid fiet?" Thomas Hall, "The Cross as Green Tree in the *Vindicta Salvatoris* and the Green Rod of Moses in *Exodus*," *English Studies* 72 (1991): 297–307, esp. 297–99. This color choice could be then, another visual realization of the "concertina effect" of Christian narrative.

⁴¹ Losonczi, "Visual Patterns," 41. For an important discussion of relics including images in the *Chronica* see Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 304–13.

⁴² CM 4:90–92.

⁴³ CM 4:75.

⁴⁴ See CM 4: 641–44 for Matthew's account of the installation. For discussions of the event see Merback, *Pilgrimage*, 194 and Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 304–312 and Nicholas Vincent, *The Holy Blood: King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁴⁵ CM 4:644–5.

⁴⁶ EH 2: 241. CM 4:262.

⁴⁷ "et de partibus orientis plura admiranda referre." CM 3:161.

⁴⁸ Patrick Geary, "Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 203–4.

⁴⁹ Jacques Maritain, writing more generally of "things" in "Poetic Experience," *Review of Politics* 6 no. 4 (1944): 387–402, at 397. Cited in Shannon Gayk and Robyn Malo, "The Sacred Object," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 44 (2014): 457–67 at 457.

⁵⁰ Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 3.

⁵¹ *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 56:9. CCSL 39:700. See Rowe, *The Jew*, 254, n. 14 and discussion in Cohen, *Living Letters*, 35 ff.

⁵² Geary, "Sacred Commodities," 169.

⁵³ On the *domus conversorum*, Stacey, "Conversion."

⁵⁴ This idea of "interim" or "betweentimes" is emphasized in logna-Prat's discussion of Peter the Venerable's *Adversus Iudeorum inveteratam duritiem*. According to Peter, relics "reveal the beatitude and glory that the souls of the saints (*spiritus*) acquire betweentimes in the presence of the Almighty. This time 'betweentimes' (*interim*) functions to express the passing of the saints from life to death and the bipolarity of their presence. They reign in the afterlife, while remaining in the world" (Dominique logna-Prat, *Order and*

Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam, 1000–1150, trans. Graham Edwards (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2003), 300–1.

⁵⁵ On the Jews as “revered and reviled” see Elisa Narin van Court, “Socially Marginal, Culturally Central: Representing Jews in Late Medieval English Literature,” *Exemplaria* 12 (2000): 293–326.

⁵⁶ See Merback, *Pilgrimage*, 2013 and Bynum, “The Presence of Objects: Medieval Anti-Judaism in Modern Germany,” *Common Knowledge* 10 (2004): 1–32 and *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

⁵⁷ Robyn Malo, *Relics and Writing in Late Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 7.

⁵⁸ On this relationship see my “The Pardoner and the Jews,” forthcoming in *Exemplaria*, 2016.

⁵⁹ *Kurtze Beschreibung und Erzählung von einem Juden mit Namen Ahasverus* (Bautzen: 1602). For discussion and translation of most of the pamphlet see Anderson, *Legend*, 42–51. I deal with the pamphlet and its relation to relic veneration belief and practice in the context of the Reformation in my forthcoming book on the Wandering Jew.

⁶⁰ The novel *Ahasver* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1981) reflects Heym’s background as a dissident East-German writer, a German-Jew, and committed socialist who had actively countered the National-Socialist regime as both a writer and as a soldier in the U.S. Army. As I argue in my forthcoming book on the Wandering Jew legend, *Ahasver* engages directly with the history and scholarship of the Wandering Jew legend as the novel takes on questions of German and Christian collective memory from a Jewish perspective that is highly critical of both.

⁶¹ Many thanks are due Anne Lester and Katie Little for organizing the wonderful “Medieval Materiality” conference and editing this special issue.

Copyright of English Language Notes is the property of English Language Notes and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.