"Why is This Knight Different from All Other Knights?" Jews, Anti-Semitism, and the Old French Grail Narratives

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For those interested in the representations of Jews and Judaism in the Middle Ages, the genre of chivalric romance, especially Arthurian romance, does not, at first glance, appear to offer particularly promising sources. One certainly does find the occasional reference to Jews sprinkled in among the recounting of adventures, quests, and love affairs, but other genres, such as sermons, drama, or Miracles of the Virgin, for example, seem immediately to yield far richer material. In this essay I will focus on Old French Grail narratives, Chrétien de Troyes's *Conte du Graal,* Robert de Boron's *Joseph d'Arimathie* (late twelfth or early thirteenth century), the *Perlesvaus* (thirteenth century) and the *Queste del Saint Graal* of the Vulgate Cycle (thirteenth century) to show how we can locate the haunting presence of the Jew through two related master narratives that shape Grail romance: the master narratives of the Passion and of Christian supersession, the triumph of the New Law over the Old.[1]

Medieval romance provides, after all, an idealized projection of the knightly class and takes as its central subject the development of the Christian knight.[2] The significance of Christianity to the romance genre is nowhere more richly explored than in those concerning the Grail. And it is precisely because of the centrality of Christianity and of the Passion to Grail narratives, I would argue, that we find in them the romance genre's

1. My description here (a "haunting presence") draws directly on the work of Toni Morrison who, in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Random House, 1993), describes how white U.S. writers have used black characters to shape visions of a normatively white American identity in their writings. The title of this essay is borrowed from a witty and very helpful response to an early version of this work by John Ganim, who tells me that the pun was the creation of Larry Sklute. I am also grateful to Peggy McCracken for feedback on an early conference version of this paper as well as advice about editions. Michelle Warren also gave helpful advice on finding sources. Maura Nolan and the editors of *JEGP* were extremely generous with their time, comments, and editorial skills.

2. See Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature,* trans. Willard Trask, intro. Edward Said (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2003), and Joachim Bumke, *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages,* trans. Thomas Dunlap (New York: Overlook Duckworth, 2000).

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fullest engagement with medieval discourses about Jews and Judaism. This engagement occurs because medieval Christian self-representation continually explores the relationship of Christianity to its precursor, Judaism. Christianity figures itself as the rightful inheritor and fulfillment of Jewish tradition, a succession that Jews resist by the very fact of retaining their own faith. Christian self-definition must therefore always negotiate a relationship to its Jewish roots and often confronts as well the refusal of contemporary Jews to accept Christian teachings.

It may be argued that Grail romances, whose development began in the late twelfth century, are too early to draw upon the harsh and demonizing representations of Jews as Christ-killers that we can find so prevalent in later medieval texts such as the *Meditationes vitae Christi.* There is, however, evidence to support the claim that the Grail romances are engaging with an emerging discourse that includes these vehemently negative depictions of Jews. The work of scholars such as F. P. Pickering and James H. Marrow has focused on the development of representations of the Passion in written and visual forms, an area of study most recently researched by Thomas Bestul in his *Texts of the Passion.*[3] Bestul argues for the Passion story as a "master narrative" that "organizes perceptions and gives meaning to a society over an extended period of time." Bestul's study of the Passion also demonstrates that "from about the middle of the twelfth century, the role played by the Jews in the Passion of Christ is greatly enlarged." I will argue that Grail narratives engage with this master narrative of the Passion in a variety of ways, one of which is the shaping of the Grail as a Christian relic whose history and power derive from a story of Christian triumph over Jewish persecution, a story shaped through the temporal dynamics of Christian typology.

The Grail narratives take the supersessionist reading strategy of Christian typology and give it narrative form. The knightly episodes of the Grail quests are interpreted by figures within the narratives themselves as part of an overall struggle between the forces of the Old Law and the New. In this way supersession functions as the other master narrative shaping the Grail romances, one in which the story of the Passion itself is embedded as the pivotal event in the Christian narrative of salvation history. The master narrative of supersession comes to govern the structure of the Grail

3. F. P. Pickering, *Literature and Art in the Middle Ages* (London: Macmillan, 1970); James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortijk: Van Ghemmert, 1979); Thomas Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); the following quotations are from pp. 24 and 69.

narratives: these texts generate their own internal typologies which figure the deeds of the Grail knights as battles in Christian salvation history.[4]

Grail typology engages with representations of Jews and Judaism through symbolism that associates the Jews with spiritual blindness, an accusation that has long precedent in Christian tradition. The notion that Jews are "hermeneutically handicapped" has roots in the Gospels and in the Pauline metaphor of the veil from 2 Corinthians 3:15–18.[5] It later appears in texts as disparate as the writings of Pope Innocent IV and of the convert Herman-Judah, who uses the metaphor of the veil to describe his own spiritual struggles to embrace Christianity.[6] These sorts of representations form part of an overall ideology of supersession, a way of seeing and interpreting both scriptural and secular texts through a series of metaphors that connect the Jews and Judaism to blindness, obstinacy, and spiritual death as well as sometimes generating even darker associations with evil and with the "old enemy," Satan himself.

As part of the discourse of Jewish spiritual blindness, the allegorical figure of Synagoga, a popular mode of representing Jewish blindness, is often presented in contrast to her superseding opposite, Ecclesia.[7] Synagoga embodies the dynamic of Christian supersession. She personifies the subjugation of the Jewish people, her blindfold symbolizing their stunted, inferior mode of seeing and interpreting both signifier and signified. The figure of the Synagogue appears in the *Queste del Saint Graal* and is associated with a dire Satanic threat to Christian knights; she is represented as

4. My argument here attempts to extend the excellent work on the typological structure of Grail narratives in relation to representations of Jews and Judaism in Fanni Bogdanow, "The Grail Romances and the Old Law," in *Arthurian Studies in Honour of P. J. C. Field,* ed. Bonnie Wheeler (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 1–14; Anne Marie D'Arcy, "*Li Anemis Meismes:* Satan and Synagogue in *La Queste del Saint Graal,*" *Medium Ævum,* 66 (1972), 207–35; Margaret Schlauch, "The Allegory of Church and Synagogue," *Speculum,* 24 (1939), 448–64; Michelle Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain, 1100–1300* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2000). See also, more generally, D. H. Green, *The Beginnings of Medieval Romance: Fact and Fiction, 1150–1220* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), pp. 103–13.

5. The phrase "hermeneutically handicapped" is from Rita Copeland, "Why Women Can't Read: Medieval Hermeneutics, Statutory Law, and the Lollard Heresy Trials," in *Representing Women: Law, Literature, and Feminism,* ed. Susan Heinzelman and Zipporah Batshaw Wiseman (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1994), p. 257.

6. See for example Pope Innocent IV's raging against Jewish blindness and perfidy in his letter to the French king in 1244, ed. Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century,* 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Dropsie College, 1933), I, 251; cited in Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989), p. 188. Hermann-Judah, *Hermannus quondam Iudaeus opusculum de conversione tua,* ed. G. Niemeyer, MGH Geistesgeschichte, 4 (Weimar: H. Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1963), pp. 104–5.

7. Wolfgang Seiferth, *Synagogue and Church in the Middle Ages,* trans. Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1970), p. 131.

standing in opposition to Ecclesia, who represents salvation and the New Law. Such a negatively portrayed figure of the Synagogue accords perfectly with the typological structure of so much Grail romance, in which knightly episodes are read against scripture.[8] This typological narrative structure focuses around the events of the Passion, with the suffering and torture of Christ marking that moment of transition between Old and New. Through this focus, the violence of many of the knightly episodes becomes linked to the violence of the Passion, with the Jews, as the named perpetrators against Christ, serving as either explicit or implicit enemies of the Grail knights. The interpretations of these knightly deeds, often provided by hermit figures, are typological, reading events in accordance with the New Law, which is not acknowledged and, indeed, actively opposed by those characters that embody and defend the Old. In this way, the exegetical conflict between Old Law and New that we find in theological texts is literalized through the Grail narratives, transformed from hermeneutical conflict into heroic battles. As J. Neale Carman observes, "Perlesvaus and Gawain are Biblical characters in medieval armor."[9]

This typological narrative framework engages the many Eucharistic allusions in the Grail narratives, where the Grail itself is sometimes figured as a "Eucharistic vessel."[10] Jill Mann has argued that the "Grail romances use religion as a means of exalting the dignity of the knightly class," pointing to the importance of the body and blood of the knight in the Grail quests and suggesting that the knightly body becomes a site of bodily suffering and sacrifice "through which his [the knight's] spiritual worth is realized."[11] Thus, the knight's body is figured in a way that makes it understandable only through Christ's body, a reading that Mann does not explicitly label as typological but which I would argue is precisely in keeping with the typological structure of Grail narratives, which continually ask the reader to read stories of knightly deeds against a scriptural pattern. Mann connects the knight's body to the Grail, a vessel containing the blood of Christ. This representation also makes a powerful symbolic connection between the blood of the knight, defender of the New Law, and the blood of Christ, shed willingly and sacrificially for the New Law.

As Pauline Matarasso argues of the representation of the Grail in the *Queste,* "On the literal level the Grail clearly is a relic, one whose unique holiness, derived from its use at certain historical moments, empowers

8. See Bogdanow, "The Grail Romances," pp. 12–13, for an expression of surprise that the *Queste,* a romance influenced by Cistercian themes, is also "vehemently anti-Semitic."

9. J. Neale Carman, "The Symbolism of the *Perlesvaus,*" *PMLA,* 61 (1946), 83.

10. Jill Mann, "Malory and the Grail Legend," in *A Companion to Malory,* ed. Elizabeth Archibald and A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge, England: D. S. Brewer, 1996), p. 206.

11. Mann, "Malory and the Grail Legend," pp. 208–9.

it to embody in a real sense the significance of those events: certainly of the first sacrificial meal, perhaps also of the blood shed by Christ on the cross, though this is not specifically stated in the text."[12] As the body of the knight comes to be associated with the body of the Grail, so too does the shedding of the knight's blood become a symbol powerfully connected with the blood of Christ, blood shed at the Passion at the hands of Jews. The Jews, therefore, become an identity through which not only Christian, but knightly identity is shaped.

The Grail can then be seen as the ultimate Christian relic and as a symbol around which an elite and emblematic Christian community is created through the Grail's guardians and those who seek it. It strongly resembles two of the crucial ways in which the Passion was made present to medieval Christians: the ritual of the Mass and narratives of ritual murder performed by Jews.[13] The Eucharistic ritual may be so powerfully engaged in Grail texts because the Mass itself reenacts the Crucifixion, bringing the moment of the Passion out of the past into the present of the ritual. The Mass, of course, is neither simply a memorial nor merely a representation of the Crucifixion, but it is rather a ritual means through which that past sacrifice is brought into the present moment of the rite.[14] In this sacrament, temporality becomes linked to the Real Presence, and linear and historical time both are transcended by bringing the past and the present together as one. And just as each Mass is tied to the Passion, so too are celebrations of the Eucharist joined together. The Jews are implicated in these celebrations as the agents of the violence done to Christ's body, violence that is repeatedly reenacted in Christian ritual. As Miri Rubin argues, "The eucharist placed Christians within a symbolic system operating within a history of salvation, and it was a drama re-enacted at every altar during every Mass."[15] The creation of an "eternal present" in

12. Pauline Matarasso, *The Redemption of Chivalry: A Study of the* Queste del Saint Graal," (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979), p. 182.

13. Peggy McCracken, *Blood, Gender, and Medieval Literature: The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 102–5, has demonstrated how "as the grail becomes more explicitly associated with eucharistic ritual, its access is increasingly restricted to men." McCracken identifies an important link between representations of women and Jews in Grail narrative, in which both women and Jews are groups "whose exclusion from Christian salvation is figured through blood."

14. Joseph Jungmann, *The Mass: An Historical, Theological and Pastoral Survey,* trans. Julian Fernandes, SJ, ed. Mary Ellen Evans (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1976), p. 184. Some of my treatment here draws upon earlier work in which I discuss the temporality of the Mass, including Odo Casel's concept of the *Mysteriengegenwart,* in relation to ritual murder accusation. See Lisa Lampert, "The Once and Future Jew: The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament,* Little Robert of Bury and Historical Memory," *Jewish History,* 15 (2002), 235–55.

15. Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), p. 14.

the Mass ritual can be seen as part of the development of the myth of ritual murder. Ritual murder accusation presents another type of reenactment of the Passion; the tragic episode of ritual murder accusation at Blois in 1171, for which thirty-two Jews were executed, was an alleged crucifixion of a Christian youth. Ritual murder accusation, by providing another instance of treacherous Jews murdering an innocent young Christian, reenacts the Crucifixion, bringing that moment of sacrifice in the master narrative of the Passion into the present in a grisly and perverse way just as the Mass does in a sacramental way.

The Grail narratives, I want to suggest, also engage with this master narrative of the Passion. Their representations of the sacrament of the Eucharist and their emphasis on the cruel role of the Jews in the Passion draw upon the same temporal dynamics from which the Mass and ritual murder accusation draw. In the ritual and in the accusation the Passion has two temporal functions. It serves as the dividing point in salvation history, that moment that divides the Old Dispensation from the New, the temporal fulcrum of supersession. But it is not merely a fixed moment, but rather it is enacted again and again, in the Mass, in ritual murder accusation, and in each episode of these romances in which an agent of the New Law triumphs despite hardship over the wicked agents of the Old. Structured typologically and providing their own internal exegesis, the Grail narratives present their own keys for interpreting these complex temporal framings—a way to help readers to unlock the embedded outlines of the master narrative all the more readily. These readings not only provide an understanding of the Christian history enfolded in the stories of the Grail, but they also act as guides to understanding the role of the Jews in this history: the eternal, and eternally defeated, antagonist.

Recently there have been a number of important explorations of the figure of the Jew as a "haunting" or "spectral" one, particularly in relation to the literature of medieval England, where the Jewish presence was quite literally ghostly after the expulsion of 1290. As Steven Kruger, Sylvia Tomasch, and Denise Despres have shown, the presence of this imaginary figure was paradoxically stronger in the absence of actual Jewish communities.[16] At the time of the development of the Grail narratives, however,

16. See Steven Kruger, "The Spectral Jew," *New Medieval Literatures*, 2 (1998), 9–35; Sylvia Tomasch, "Postcolonial Chaucer and the Virtual Jew," in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey J. Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 247–67; Denise Despres, "The Protean Jew in the Vernon Manuscript," in *Chaucer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, Meanings*, ed. Sheila Delany (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 145–64; Kathleen Biddick, *The Typological Imaginary: Circumcision, Technology, History* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999); Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

there were notable and established Jewish communities in France. In this light, we must consider that the depictions of Jewish perfidy in the Grail narratives could have evoked alleged contemporary Jewish crimes.[17]

The Grail narratives took shape during a period of struggle and periodic tragic crisis for the Jews of Northern France, as historians such as Robert Chazan and William Chester Jordan have shown. The communities in Northern France did not suffer the brutal attacks endured by Jewish communities in the Rhineland during the First Crusade. Indeed much has been made of the thriving intellectual life of Jewish communities in Northern France, which produced the great scholar Rashi (1040–1105) and of which we have some evidence of scholarly exchange with Christian clergy, as explored in Beryl Smalley's classic *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*.[18] By the late twelfth century, however, conditions for these communities had taken a marked turn for the worse. Historians of medieval European Jewry have presented many different explanations for why the nature of Christian attitudes toward the Jews appeared to shift around this time, but there is wide agreement that the turn of the century marks a sea change in attitude and policy. Writing about the medieval Jewish community in Northern France, Jordan asserts:

> [A] fundamental negative shift in Christian attitudes toward the Jews occurred around 1200. It cannot be coincidental that this took place at the same time as the incoherence of lordly policies became manifest and the inability of Christians to accept the dichotomy between the ideal of charity and the reality of usury became equally severe. (p. 46)

After his coronation in 1179, some of the earliest actions of the adolescent king, Philip Auguste, were directed against the Jews in his domain, from which they were expelled in 1182 and then allowed to return in 1198. As Jordan's analysis indicates, much of the treatment of the Jews in this period had to do with power conflicts between powerful Christians, as Philip successfully attempted to expand his power. Business and financial concerns also played a role. Chazan argues that "As a result of business advances

17. I have learned much concerning the significance of local context to ritual murder accusation and on the relationship between these accusations and literary production from recent scholarship concerning ritual murder accusation in England. See Jeffrey J. Cohen, "The Flow of Blood in Medieval Norwich," *Speculum,* 79 (2004), 26–65; Joe Hillaby, "The Ritual-Child-Murder Accusation: Its Dissemination and Harold of Gloucester," *Jewish Historical Studies,* 34 (1994–96), 69–109; John M. McCulloh, "Jewish Ritual Murder: William of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth, and the Early Dissemination of the Myth," *Speculum,* 72 (1997), 698–740; Robert C. Stacey, "From Ritual Crucifixion to Host Desecration: Jews and the Body of Christ," *Jewish History,* 12 (1998), 11–25.

18. For an important, judicious discussion of some of Beryl Smalley's claims for interfaith dialogue, see William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), p. 11.

of the times, the Jews were thrown ever more firmly into the alliance with the feudal rulers; increasing ecclesiastical agitation and heightened popular animosity deepened these ties. The alliance which now afforded both physical safety and business stability left the Jews very little political mobility, a development fraught with serious dangers."[19]

One of Philip's biographers, Rigord, is vehement in his negative views of the Jews and enthusiastically supports Philip's order of expulsion, seeing it as a means to "safeguard the religious purity of the realm."[20] Rigord accuses the Jews of usury, defacing Christian holy objects, and the annual ritual murder of Christians.[21] The charge of ritual murder, which originated in Norwich, England, in 1144, had reached across the English Channel by the 1170s and began to appear in France as well. In 1171 the Jewish community at Blois was accused of the ritual crucifixion of a boy and ultimately thirty-two of the forty adults in that community were executed. Twenty years later, in Bray, eighty Jews were executed because they were allegedly involved in the death of one of Philip's vassals. The incident occurred in the domain of Henry II of Champagne as it was under the temporary rule of his mother, Marie, one of the patrons of the author of the first Grail romance, Chrétien de Troyes. The incident at Blois seems to be an assertion of power on Philip's part, but his animosity toward the Jews also clearly seemed motivated on religious grounds as well as reasons of political savvy.[22]

Religious motivations also clearly played a role in the anti-Jewish actions of Louis IX, who began his reign in 1223 after the sudden death of his father, Louis VIII. Louis IX was renowned for his personal piety, which included animosity against the Jews. One biographer records Louis as having said that when a layman hears a Jew malign Christianity, he "should defend it only by the sword, with a good thrust in the belly, as far as the sword will go."[23] Louis also believed that he was responsible for the behavior of Jews

19. Robert Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France: A Political and Social History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1973), p. 62.

20. Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France,* p. 67.

21. *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton, historien de Phillipe-Auguste,* ed. H. François Delaborde, 2 vols. (Paris, Librarie Renouard, 1882–85), II, 22; cited in Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France,* p. 67. For a translation see *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Source Book 315–1791,* ed. Jacob Marcus (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938), pp. 24–27.

22. Jordan, *The French Monarchy,* pp. 18–19. Jordan (p. 36) argues that this event occurred not in Blois but in Brie.

23. John of Joinville, *The Life of St. Louis,* trans. René Hague (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), pp. 26–40; cited in Chazan, *Medieval Jewry,* pp. 102–3. "Mes l'omme loy, quant il ot mesdire de la lay crestienne, ne doit pas desfendre la lay crestienne ne mais de l'espee, de quoy il doit donner par mi le ventre dedens tant comme elle y peut entrer"; Joinville, *Vie de saint Louis,* ed. J. Monfrin (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1995), pp. 26 and 28.

within his realm and in 1223 decreed an ordinance that, among other provisions, canceled much debt owed to Jews. Finally, during the first half of the thirteenth century, in 1240, the Talmud was seized and burned in France. This event can be read, of course, against the static portrayal of Jews that underlies the typology of the Grail romances. When Christian scholars realized, through "discovery" of the Talmud, that Judaism was not the fossilized religion signified by the term "Old Law," they attacked and destroyed the document that presented so vividly a Judaism living and growing well after the time of Jesus.[24]

The Old French Grail narratives are haunted, then, by a Jewish presence that inhabits not only the imaginary but the actual life of Christians. The Grail narratives explore the story of the ultimate Christian relic, a key symbol in discourses of Christian identities, identities created and shaped through representations of the Jews as enemies of Christ and by extension as enemies of the Grail community. The figure of the Jew becomes a shaping force, I will argue, through an engagement with the master narratives of the Passion and of supersession. The Jews are repeatedly and continually represented through their alleged role in the cruel torture and murder of Christ, and all other conflicts or anxieties that develop from real or imagined Jewish-Christian relations, such as tension over financial issues and disputes, become shaped and filtered through this narrative lens. The Jewish role also figures into the master narrative of supersession that also shapes these texts: the Jews are the evil agents responsible for the Crucifixion, that event which stands as the dividing point between the Old Dispensation and the New.

CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES

Chrétien's *Conte du Graal* was written between 1168 and 1191, with some very convincing scholarly arguments placing the likely composition close to 1180 or 1181.[25] Chrétien's narrative refers to Christ as one much shamed

24. See Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1982).

25. See Joseph J. Duggan, *The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2001), p. 21. My reading of Jews and the Grail differs greatly from two controversial studies that also link the topic in differing, interesting, and ultimately unconvincing ways: Urban T. Holmes Jr. and Sr. Amelia Klenke, OP, *Chrétien, Troyes, and the Grail* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1959), and Eugene J. Weinraub, *Chrétien's Jewish Grail: A New Investigation of the Imagery and Significance of Chrétien de Troyes's Grail Episode based on Medieval Hebraic Sources,* North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 168; Essays, no. 2 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Dept. of Romance Languages, 1976).

by the Jews, defining the savior through Jewish violence: "Jesucrist, le prophete sainte / Cui Gïu firent honte mainte."[26] This reference comes from Perceval's mother, as she gives him final advice before he leaves her, attempting to fill in quickly his very spotty courtly and religious education. She explains to him the definition of a church or minster:

> Mere, fet il, que est iglise?
> Uns leus ou an fet le servise
> Celui qui ciel et terre fist
> Et homes et bestes i mist.
> Et mostiers, qu'est? Ice meïsme:
> Une meison bele et saintisme,
> Ou il a cors sainz et tresors.
> S'i sacrefie l'an le cors
> Jesucrist, la prophete sainte,
> Cui Gïu firent honte mainte.
> Traïz fu et jugiez a tort
> So sofri angoisse de mort
> Por les homes et por les fames,
> Qu'an anfer aloient les ames
> Qant eles partoient des cors,
> Et il les an gita puis fors.
> Cil fu a l'estaiche lïez,
> Batuz et puis crocefiez,
> Et porta corone d'espines.
> Por oïr messes et matines
> Et por cel seignor aorer
> Vos lo gié au mostier aler. (ll. 573–94)

("Mother, what is church?" he asked. "A place where the service is celebrated to the One Who created heaven and earth, and there placed men and beasts." "And what is minster?" "The same. A beautiful and sacred house filled with holy relics and treasures, where the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ occurs, the holy prophet whom the Jews treated so shamefully. He was betrayed and wrongfully condemned and, for the sake of men and women, suffered the agony of death. Until that time, souls went to hell when they left their bodies. He was the one who delivered them from there. He was bound to the pillar, scourged, and then crucified, wearing a crown of thorns. I counsel you to go to the minster to hear masses and matins and to worship the Lord.")[27]

26. *Perceval, ou le conte du graal,* ll. 581–83, in *Oeuvres completes,* ed. Daniel Poirion (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléïade, 1997). Also cited by Bogdanow, "The Grail Romances," p. 3.

27. *The Complete Romances of Chrétien de Troyes,* trans. with intro. by David Staines (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 346–47; subsequent references are cited in the body of the text.

This very definition of a Church includes reference to the Passion and the rite of the Mass, which reenacts it. The Passion stands as the great turning point in human salvation history, marking that time after which fallen humanity can be redeemed and escape hell. The split between two temporal realms is created by the Jews, who are seen as playing a starkly violent role in Christ's torture and agonizing death. In the Grail narratives, Christ is defined not through his teaching and ministry, but through his suffering, leading to a polarizing split between good and evil that conforms to the split between Old Dispensation and New.

The role of the Jews in the Passion is reiterated at another important point in Perceval's spiritual education. The narrative returns from its focus on Gawain to tell Perceval's story and we find that he has "so lost his memory that he no longer remembered God"; despite a constant pursuit of knightly deeds, Perceval has not worshipped for five years (p. 414). At the end of this time he encounters five knights and ten ladies on Good Friday. They are shocked that he is fully armed on this holy day and they reiterate for him the story of Christ, his life, betrayal, sacrifice, and the redemption it bought for humanity. This long explanation concludes with the role of the Jews:

> Li fel Gïu par lor anvie,
> Qu'an devroit tuer come chiens,
> Se firent max, et a nos biens,
> Qant il an la croiz le leverent;
> Aus perdirent et nos salverent. (ll. 6292–96)[28]

> (In their hatred the wicked Jews, who should be killed like dogs, forged their own evil and our great good when they raised Him on the cross. They damned themselves and saved us. [p. 415])

The reference to the Jews as dogs echoes the references to Psalm 21:17 in the Good Friday liturgy: *circumdederunt me canes multi.* The Good Friday scene marks a spiritual turning point for Perceval. In this way his own narrative reflects the shape of Christian salvation history and liturgical time, with the date of the Crucifixion marking the transition from damnation to salvation. The speaker reminds us that Perceval's own opportunity for salvation was created through the violence of the Jews, who have simultaneously assured their own damnation. Such formulations highlight the ways in which Christian notions of salvation history are not only shaped through positive visions of sacrifice but also through negative, defining acts of Jewish violence. Within Chrétien's narrative, the font of Grail romance, then, we have a powerful connection between the Passion and Jewish perfidy, an association which reverberates through the evocation

28. Also cited in Bogdanow, "The Grail Romances," p. 3.

of the symbols and instruments of the Passion in the presentation of the Grail, through the mysterious bleeding lance, for example, which evokes Longinus's lance.[29] Chrétien's unfinished, suggestive, and seductive Grail narrative sparked numerous new recountings of the Grail, each of which retells and recreates the Grail legend by kindling the sparks from Chrétien's tale into a flame.[30]

ROBERT DE BORON

Robert de Boron's *Joseph d'Arimathie* provides the Grail with a genealogy going back to the Crucifixion, creating what Nigel Bryant perceptively observes "could almost be described as a new apocryphal gospel."[31] The text clearly draws upon the *Evangelium Nicodemi* as a source for its interpolative history of the story of Joseph and his guardianship of the Grail.[32] *Joseph d'Arimathie* points to Jewish activity and culpability at every turn in the Passion story, embellishing Gospel and apocryphal accounts and weaving his view of Jewish perfidy against Christ indelibly into the fabric of his influential Grail narrative. There are extensive references to Jewish cruelty against Jesus and his followers, who are, of course, never identified as Jews themselves. Veronica describes their flogging of Christ as he makes his way to the cross (p. 175); they also, for example, seize Joseph of Arimathea naked from his bed, beating him mercilessly and throwing him

29. Nigel Bryant, "Introduction," in his *Merlin and the Grail: Joseph of Arimathea, Merlin, Perceval. The Trilogy of Prose Romances Attributed to Robert de Boron* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), p. 8.

30. On the provocative nature of Chrétien's Grail imagery, see Jeff Rider, "The Perpetual Enigma of Chrétien's Grail Episode," *Arthuriana*, 8, no. 1 (1998), 6–21.

31. Bryant, *Merlin*, p. 7. On the "histories" created in these Old French Grail romances see also Robert W. Hanning, "Arthurian Evangelists: The Language of Truth in Thirteenth-Century French Prose Romances," *Philological Quarterly*, 64 (1985), 347–65, and Fanni Bogdanow, "Robert de Boron's Vision of Arthurian History," *Arthurian History*, 14 (1996), 19–52. *Joseph d'Arimathie*, linked to a trilogy that also contains *Merlin* and *Perceval*, exists in both verse and prose forms. The chronology of these two versions is debated but the more convincing arguments favor the priority of the verse version and its subsequent revision into prose. There are seventeen known manuscript versions. For complete discussion of the tradition of manuscripts and editions see the thorough introduction to the facing-page edition by Richard O'Gorman, *Robert de Boron, Joseph d'Arimathie: A Critical Edition of the Verse and Prose Versions* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1995), pp. 1–27. The prose version from this edition will be cited in the text. An edition of the complete trilogy from the Modena manuscript was made by Bernard Cerquiglini, *Le Roman du Graal: Manuscrit de Modène* (Paris: Union Général d'Éditions, 1981).

32. *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, ed. H. C. Kim (Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1973); see also Richard O'Gorman, "The *Gospel of Nicodemus* in the Vernacular Literature of Medieval France," in *The Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts in Western Europe*, ed. Zbigniew Izydorczyk (Tempe, Ariz.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1997), pp. 103–32.

into a dungeon, presumably to starve to death (pp. 89–93). In this text it is clearly the Jews who are responsible for the Crucifixion as the triple repetition of the line "his blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. 27:25) emphasizes.[33] We read of Judas among his disciples, determined to have the thirty pence he believes are his due and of a horrified Joseph of Arimathea sitting among the Jewish plotters against Christ (pp. 49–53). As Maureen Boulton argues, "The cumulative effect of these narratives is to focus the guilt of the Crucifixion exclusively on the Jews, even to the point of exonerating Pilate."[34] The author draws upon this master narrative of the Passion, stressing Jewish wrongdoing. Pilate feels "powerless" before the Jews (p. 63) and must even close the door for fear that the Jews will overhear when he speaks with the emperor's Roman messengers who have come in search of a cure for Vespasian (p. 147). The Jews demonstrate perverse delight at Judas's willing betrayal of Christ. This delight is ironically echoed in their mistaken belief that the emperor wants to know who has killed Christ in order to offer reward, an error leading to their brutal demise and to Joseph's eventual release, revenge for their deeds against the Savior (p. 201).

The suggestively mysterious aura of the Grail castle in Chrétien's Grail narrative becomes a different kind of secrecy in *Josephe d'Arimathie.* Robert, it has been convincingly established, built his narrative on Chrétien's version, bringing in other sources such as the *Venjance Nostre Seigneur.* Elements of the Grail story are made more explicit, concrete, and historical and the mysteries of the Grail become linked to those of the events of the Passion and the secrecy and betrayals of that story.[35] In particular, Robert links the Grail to the Chalice of the Last Supper;[36] he also provides historical concretization to the Grail history.[37] We are given events, place names (Bethlehem, the River Jordan), historical figures and actions, and relics such as the Grail and Veronica's veil. This "history" is very much informed by typology and an emphasis on the supersession of the New Dispensation over the Old, a transition marked by absolute difference. The text opens with a reminder of the fundamental shift in salvation history wrought by the Incarnation:

33. See O'Gorman, *Robert de Boron,* p. 350, n. 423.

34. Maureen Boulton, "Anti-Jewish Attitudes in Twelfth-Century French Literature," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe,* ed. Michael A. Signer and John Van Engen (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame Univ. Press, 2001), p. 246.

35. For an analysis of anti-Jewish portrayal in the *Venjance,* see Boulton, pp. 242–46. On secrecy see Henry and Renée Kahane, "The Secrets of the Grail: Apropos of Francesco Zambon's *Robert de Boron,*" *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie,* 103 (1987), 108–14.

36. Richard O'Gorman, "Ecclesiastical Tradition and the Holy Grail," *Australian Journal of French Studies,* 6, no. 1 (1969), 3–8.

37. See Robert Hanning, "Arthurian Evangelists: The Language of Truth in Thirteenth-Century French Prose Romances," *Philological Quarterly,* 64 (1985), 347–65.

> Ce doivent savoir tuit li pecheor que, devant ce que nostre Sires venist en terre, que il feïst parler les prophetes en son non et anoncier sa venue en terre. En icel tens dont je vous parol aloient tuit en enfer, nes li prophete i aloient. Et quant deable les i avoient menez, si cuidoient avoir mout bein esploitié; et il s'i estoient engignié quant [c]il se confortoient en la venue Jesucrist. Nostre Sires vint, si li plot qu'il venist en terre, et s'aombra en la Virge Marie. (p. 33)
>
> (All sinful people should know this: that before Our Lord came to Earth, He made the Prophets speak in His name and announce His coming to this world. At the time of which I speak all people went to Hell—even the prophets. And when the demons had led them there they thought they had scored a great victory; but they were woefully mistaken, for the people took comfort in the coming of Christ. And Our Lord came, choosing to come to Earth incarnate of the Virgin Mary. [p. 15])

This opening frame echoes Perceval's mother's lesson in Chrétien's versions. At the Passion, Christ freed humanity from the bonds of Hell. This victory is achieved through a terrible sacrifice, enacted at the hands of the Jews. This narrative trajectory, the story of a Christian victory snatched from the jaws of turmoil and persecution, is repeated again and again throughout the narrative.

An important component of this story, that of the betrayal of Christ by Judas, is re-enacted typologically in the third movement of the narrative when an evil character, Moïs (Moses), attempts to join the group and is destroyed. The history that is created is not linear but rather doubles upon itself, conforming to the shape of typological reading. We see this in the third section of the text in which famine and hardship have befallen Joseph and his followers because his companions were following the path of lust. Only those who are still good and true believers are allowed into the presence of the Grail, but there is one from among the sinners, Moïs, who begs for admission to their company. The voice of the Holy Spirit directs Joseph to recreate the scene of the Last Supper with Joseph sitting in the place of Jesus with Bron, his dear friend, at his right hand. But Bron leaves an empty seat between them, one that can only be filled by Bron's son. Moïs, who has been admitted through the compassion of the Grail company, attempts to occupy this chair, despite a warning not to assume a place of which he is not worthy. Becoming a type of Judas, he sits in the empty chair where only the worthiest should sit and is swallowed up. The Holy Spirit's voice explains that Moïs is a wicked unbeliever and has hence "fallen into abysmal depths" (p. 285; trans. Bryant, p. 38). Moïs, whose name invokes the great Jewish deliverer and the sometimes stubborn and disobedient Jews of the Old Law whom he led, clearly stands for the Jews. His resistance to belief is equivalent to their stubborn failure to recognize Jesus as the messiah. Through this character then, Robert de

Boron further reinforces Jewish exclusion from and enmity toward the Christian community, as exemplified by the community of the Grail. The Jews are its foes, as they were foes of Christ and the community of believers following Him. As the next section will show, *Josephe d'Arimathie* provided a fruitful model for other Grail texts, particularly in its representation of the Jews. Not only were Jews portrayed as aggressive, violent enemies of the Christian community, but the Grail legend itself became a typological rendition of the Christian master narrative of the Passion. This combination of violence and typology, I argue, is essential to our understanding of both the construction of the Grail legend, and the construction of Christian identity.

PERLESVAUS

The early thirteenth-century anonymously authored romance *Perlesvaus* draws upon *Josephe* in several key ways, incorporating the figures of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus into the history of the Grail and also including the character of Alain le Gros as Perceval's father.[38] Like Robert de Boron in his version of the Grail legend, the author of *Perlesvaus* presents the Grail legend as a type of history, citing as his source a divinely inspired Josephus, whom scholars have connected to Flavius Josephus, author of *The Jewish War.* And, as in *Josephe,* the narrative treats the Grail as a holy relic, beginning with a call to hear "Li estoires du saintisme vessel que on apele Graal, o quel li precieus sans au Sauveeur fu receüz au jor qu'il fu crucefiez por le pueple rachater d'enfer" (the story of that holy vessel which is called the Grail, in which the precious blood of the Saviour was gathered on the day when He was crucified to redeem mankind from Hell).[39] The text is veritably littered with relics of the Passion, including the Grail. These holy artifacts bring the moment of the Passion into the temporal realm of the knightly narrative. The Circle of Gold, destined to be won by the knight who first sees the Grail, is literally the Crown

38. William Albert Nitze, "*Perlesvaus,*" in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 267.

39. *Le haut livre du graal: Perlesvaus,* ed. William A. Nitze and T. Atkinson Jenkins, 2 vols. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1932 and 1937), I, 23. For an English translation see *The High Book of the Grail: A Translation of the Thirteenth Century Romance of Perlesvaus,* trans. Nigel Bryant (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1978), p. 1. Subsequent references to these editions will appear in the text. On the date and manuscript tradition of the *Perlesvaus* and its relationship to other Grail narratives, see Thomas E. Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus, A Structural Study* (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1974), pp. 9–36; *Le haut livre de graal,* ed. Nitze and Jenkins, II, 3–89; and Nitze, "Perlesvaus," pp. 263–72, esp. 268–70, on dating and the relationship to the *Queste.*

of Thorns encased in gold. Just as the Mass brings the Passion into the present time of the celebrant, so, too, do relics such as the gold-encased Crown of Thorns literally carry the temporal moment of the Passion into the time of the narrative.

The Grail itself is also a relic of Christ's Passion. This moment of suffering is represented to Gawain through the Grail on the walls of the Grail castle:

> et li senble que li Graax soit tot en l'air. Et voit, ce li est avis, par deseure un home cloufichié en une croiz, et li estoit le glaive fichié eu costé. Missire Gavains le voit, si en a grant pitié, et ne li sovient d'autre chose fors de la dolor que li rois sofre. (pp. 119–120)
>
> (it appeared to him that the Grail was high up in the air. And above it he saw, he thought, a crowned king nailed to a cross with a spear thrust in his side. Sir Gawain was filled with sorrow at the sight and he could think of nothing save the pain that the king was suffering. [pp. 79–80])

This representation of a king nailed to a cross obviously evokes Christ's Passion. It also, and inevitably, is haunted by the figure of the violent Jew, the absent agent of Christ's torture and death, made present through the sheer density of medieval representations of murderous Jews in both literary and historical texts. Similarly, the evocation of the Eucharist in *Perlesvaus* forms part of a developing tradition of narratives about the Host, including some in which a Jewish boy experiences a similar vision and is brutally punished by his parents, only to be saved by the Virgin.[40] A version of the story of the Jewish boy appears in the Marian miracles of Gautier de Coincy, which began to circulate in France at roughly the same time that the Grail narratives appeared. In the opening scenes of *Perlesvaus,* Arthur is unable to enter the Chapel of St. Augustine, but as he stands outside its doors and peers in, he sees a vision of the Virgin and her son and also witnesses the celebration of a Mass where a child appears on the altar. Here Arthur is in the position of the outsider who is witnessing a true manifestation of the faith. He must remain outside because he has failed in his pursuit of noble deeds, but this vision causes him to renew these endeavors, placing him once more squarely on the side of the defenders of the New Law.

The Crucifixion acts as central point of reference for the defenders of the New Law throughout this relentlessly bloody and violent text, a fo-

40. See William Roach, "Eucharistic Tradition in the *Perlesvaus*," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie,* 59 (1939), 10–56, and Peggy McCracken, "The Poetics of Sacrifice: Allegory and Myth in the Grail Quest," *Yale French Studies,* 95 (1999), 152–68. See also Myrrha Lot-Borodine, "Les apparitions du Christ aux messes de *l'Estoire* et de la *Queste del Saint Graal*," *Romania,* 72 (1951), 202–23, and Eugène Anitchkof, "Le Saint Graal et les rites eucharistiques," *Romania,* 55 (1929), 174–94.

cal point all the more interesting because of the lack of reference to the Resurrection. Carman observes that "[f]or the author of the *Perlesvaus* the great marvel of Christ's career was not the conquest of death, but the submission to humiliation and torment" (p. 58).[41] In the *Perlesvaus* this relationship between the Old and the New structures the narrative in two important ways. First the text generates its own typology, as events in the text are subsequently interpreted by hermit characters as figuring a conflict between the Old and New Laws. The method closely resembles the reading strategy of Christian exegesis: "Whereas the scriptural commentators discovered in the events and persons of the Old Testament 'figures' which found their fulfillment in the New Testament, the author of *Perlesvaus* borrows from the matter of Britain adventures and agents which serve as 'examples' to recall or bring to mind the spiritual truth of the New Law."[42] This reading practice is facilitated by the fact that the narrative is itself shaped by a clash between the New Law and the Old. Hero knights such as Perceval, Arthur, Gawain, and Lancelot are always agents of the New Law, either killing or converting its opponents, the champions of the Old Law, who include Jews, pagans and even some treacherous members of the Grail family.[43]

A signal example of the text's harsh portrayal of the Jews appears in the figures of a gentle beast, representing Christ, and the twelve dogs surrounding him, representing the Jews. A hermit then tells how the Jews had demonstrated their unworthiness by ignoring God's instructions as they were sustained in the desert with manna, telling him that for their lack of worth he had them "all dispersed through unknown lands" (p. 166). He then explains that

> Li .xii. chien ce sont li Juïs que Dex a norriz, e qui nasquirent en la loi que il establi, ne onques ne le voudrent croire ne amer; ainz le crucefierent e depechierent son cors au plus vilainement qu'il porent. . . . Li chien qui s'en fuïrent e devinrent sauvaje quant il orent la beste depechie, ce sont li Juïs, qui sauvaje sunt e ierent d'ore an avant. (p. 258)
>
> (The twelve dogs are the Jews whom God nourished and who were born into the Law which He had established, but never wished to believe in Him or love Him; instead they crucified Him and broke His body as basely as they

41. Carman, "The Symbolism," p. 58.

42. Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal,* p. 94.

43. On occasion, the representation of the Jews in this text is far less vituperative than that in Chrétien's *Conte du Graal;* for example, when the hermit interprets the episode of the Maidens of the Cart, he explains that the heads of the Christian knights are sealed in gold, the Jewish heads in the cart in silver, and the heads of the Saracens in lead (p. 109). This formulation creates a kind of middle ground for the Jews, to be sure, but despite this seeming mitigation of the text's anti-Jewishness, it remains deeply structured by a typological model of Christian supersession.

> could . . . The dogs which fled away and turned wild after they had torn the beast apart are the Jews, who are wild, and henceforth will always be subject to the men of the New Law. [p. 166])

To this Perceval replies, "il est bien droiz que il aient mal guerredon, puis que il crucefierent celui qui les avoit faiz" (p. 258; "it is only right that they should suffer such an ill reward, for they crucified Him who made them" [p. 166]). This moment seems to allude to Chrétien's references to Good Friday liturgy and its use of Psalm 21 to describe the enemies of Christ as dogs. The Crucifixion is ultimately a redemptive one for Christians, but the deeds of the Jews, while serving to bring about this redemption, are still actionable.

The King of Castle Mortal, one of the greatest villains in the story, is an agent of the Old Law. Perceval is warned of his plans by the Maiden of the Cart:

> Li Rois Ermites, qui frere est madame vostre mere, vous mande que se vous ne venez hastivement en la terre qui fu au Roi Pescheor vostre oncle, que la Nouvele Loi que Dex a establie i amenuisera molt, car li Rois del Chastel Mor[tel], qui la terre a sesie et le chastel, a fet crier par tout le païs que tuit cil qui voudront maintenir la Viez Loi et guerpir la Nouvele avront sa garantie et sun conseil et s'aide, et cil qui fere nel voudront seront destruit et essillié. (p. 235)

> (The Hermit King, the brother of my lady your mother, sends you word that if you do not go swiftly to the land which belonged to your uncle the Fisher King, the New Law proclaimed by God will wane there, for the King of Castle Mortal, who has seized the land and the castle, has declared throughout the country that all those who will support the Old Law and abandon the New will have his protection and counsel and aid, but those who will not will be destroyed and ruined. [p. 152])

The King of the Castle Moral, Perceval is warned, represents the complex way that the negative forces of the Old Law can attack those of the New not only from without, but from within as well (p. 155). As is not uncommon in medieval texts, Muslim and Jewish identities can be blurred or linked. Schlauch sees such a connection when she reads the conversion of the blind heathen Queen Jandree, who regains her literal sight through a spiritual vision and through prayer, as a representation of the "final conquest of Synagogue by Church."[44] In this way the representation of the Old Law, here through the figure of the converted "heathen queen," is conflated with the allegorical representation of the Jews. Despite such conflations, however, the overall effect of the typological framework of

44. Schlauch, "The Allegory," p. 450.

the tale is one of polarization: the world is divided into believers and nonbelievers.

QUESTE DEL SAINT GRAAL

The vision of good versus evil is equally well defined in the *Queste del Saint Graal,* in which Synagoga and Ecclesia appear as polar opposites. As she appears to Perceval, Synagoga sits astride a serpent. She represents heresy, hypocrisy, and mortal sin. The young Ecclesia rides triumphantly astride a lion. As Richard Barber argues, "The author of the *Queste* took the physical history of the Grail as described by Robert de Boron, and turned it into a spiritual history, the history both of the Grail, and the three knights who 'achieve' the quest."[45] This spiritual history shares with the other Grail narratives a reliance on typological form as evidenced in the representation of three great fellowships, those of Jesus Christ, the Grail, and Arthur, each symbolized by a table (those of the Last Supper, the Grail Castle, and the Round Table respectively) with the story of each dynasty relating to the other in typological fashion. The master narrative of the Passion exerts a shaping force on the two histories recounted in the text, including a tale of noble fraternity threatened by Jewish aggression. The text begins with reference to the Passion, which makes it the central event around which the narrative is shaped.

Subsequent adventures occur in an allegorical form that reflects this shaping, as in Perceval's initial encounter with a serpent and a lion, which then metamorphoses into a series of events that links them with Synagoga and Ecclesia, respectively, and which also link the serpent with a female temptress and with the devil. First Perceval disrupts a fight between the serpent and lion, causing the lion, which he considers to be the nobler of the two animals, to win. Soon after this encounter he has a dream in which this same pairing of beasts reappears in different form:

> Quant Perceval se fu endormiz, si li avint une aventure merveilleuse: car il li fu avis en son dormant que devant lui venoient deus dames dont l'une ert vielle et ancienne et l'autre n'ert mie de mout grant aage, mes bele estoit. Les deus dames ne venoient pas a pié, ainz estoient montees sus deus molt diverses bestes: car l'une estoit montee sus un lyon et l'autre sus un serpent.[46]

45. Richard Barber, "Chivalry, Cistercianism and the Grail," in *A Companion to the Lancelot-Grail Cycle,* ed. Carol Dover (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), p. 8.

46. *La Queste del Saint Graal,* ed. Albert Pauphilet (Paris: Champion, 1965), pp. 96–97. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the body of the text. For a translation, see *The Quest for the Holy Grail,* trans. E. Jane Burns, vol. 4 of *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation* (New York: Garland, 1995).

> (Once Perceval was asleep, an amazing adventure took place. It appeared to him in a dream that two women were approaching, one very old and the other young and beautiful. The women were not on foot but mounted on two strange animals: one rode a lion and the other a serpent.)[47]

The woman on the lion represents the Church and the New Law (p. 121), the other figure, as a hermit later explains to Perceval, stands for her rival, the Synagogue:

> Cele dame a qui tu veis le serpent chevauchier, ce est la Synagogue, la premiere Loi, qui fu ariere mise, si tost come Jhesucrist ot aporté avant la Novele Loi. Et li serpenz qui la porte, ce est l'Escriture mauvesement entendue et mauvesement esponse, ce est ypocrisie et heresie et iniquitez et pechié mortel, ce est li anemis meismes; ce est li serpenz qui par son orgueil fu gitez de paradis; ce est li serpenz qui dist a Adam et a sa moillier: «Se vos mengiez de cest fruit vos seroiz ausi come Dieu,» et par ceste parole entra en aus covoitise. (p. 103)

> (The lady you saw riding the serpent represents the Synagogue, the Old Lady that was displaced when Jesus Christ brought forth the New Law. The serpent carrying her is the Scripture, poorly understood and interpreted. It is hypocrisy, heresy, inequity, and mortal sin; the devil himself, the serpent who was thrown out of heaven because of his pride. He's the very serpent who said to Adam and his wife, "If you eat of this fruit, you will be just like God," those words that instilled covetousness within them. [p. 34])

The Synagogue is carried by a beast that signifies religious interpretation itself. Jewish understanding is made akin to heresy and related typologically to the Fall of humankind. The Jews and Judaism appear in this text not as those who threaten directly in battle, but as sly and subtle seducers who tempt Christians to iniquity through false understanding. Synagoga is the fallen, superseded representative of a dead and ultimately ineffectual religion. Perceval is able to resist her lure and cling to Christian truth.

In the *Queste,* the Jews come to represent not only an opposing force to Christianity, but a subtly poisonous influence that can also wreak havoc from within. The figure of Synagoga is closely related to a seductive woman who attempts to lure Perceval from his quest. As with Synagoga, this figure of sexual temptation is linked back to the Fall and related typologically to the sins of Eve. E. Jane Burns's reading of Perceval's dream of Synagoga and Ecclesia reveals the unique way the *Queste* modifies the typically hierarchical structure of typological readings to create a series of references that folds together Biblical and Arthurian history, with the different elements of the episodes related to the dream referring back and

47. *The Quest for the Holy Grail,* trans. Burns, p. 34. Subsequent references to this translation will appear in the text.

forth to one another.[48] She demonstrates that when the hermit interprets Perceval's dream:

> The entire passage is based on a series of metamorphic variants such that the lion and the serpent in Perceval's initial adventure are transformed, in the dream version, into mounts for two women, then modulated into women-animal couplets representing the Old and New Law, and reduced in the final version, to a woman-serpent combination that plays the role of the temptress.[49]

These figures simultaneously evoke Biblical episodes like the Fall and generate a depiction of the triumph of Christ over evil in keeping with the romance's engagement of the master narrative of supersession. This dream sequence clearly relies on the supersessionist approach inherent in Christian typology even as the *Queste* modifies and recreates typological form. The representation of Judaism morphs into different forms, but it is continually placed in the role of enemy, linked to the devil, posing a threat that must be overcome. Here again we find an engagement with the master narrative of supersession, with the *Queste* embracing it even as it restructures it.

Burns points to a series of topoi or "allomorphs" that appear across the entire Lancelot-Grail cycle as a main feature of its structure of repetition.[50] Allomorphs are "motifs that convey the same semantic information and have the same function, even though they take on widely differing forms." These allomorphs include the topos of the Veil, which she links to a wide range of "allomorphs used to indicate deception." The idea of blindness and the Veil, as we have seen, are so common in relation to representations of Jews that here, I think, we find a way in which the anti-Jewish theme recurs across the *Queste.* We can see a continued use of symbolic episodes that draw upon Biblical elements that had strong connections to a negative representation of Jews and Judaism in Biblical exegesis, such as the fig tree, a hardened stone, and the topos of the veil, connected to spiritual blindness and to sin.

I see in these allomorphs a strong use of the Pauline imagery that prevails in much of the medieval representations of Jews and Judaism. Galahad comes across a graveyard from which he removes the body of a "false Christian," a knight buried in full armor (p. 14). When Galahad

48. E. Jane Burns, *Arthurian Fictions: Rereading the Vulgate Cycle* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 72–75. On the importance of these typologies with relation to gender, particularly to the figure of Eve, see Susan Aronstein, "Rewriting Perceval's Sister: Eucharistic Vision and Typological Destiny in the *Queste del San Graal,*" *Women's Studies,* (1992), 211–30.

49. Burns, *Arthurian Fictions,* p. 72.

50. Burns, *Arthurian Fictions;* the following quotations are from pp. 86 and 125.

removes the tombstone from the grave, "smoke and flame pour forth" (p. 14), and the devil himself issues from the grave. The monks who have encouraged Galahad in this adventure explain its meaning to him: "La tombe qui covroit le mort senefie la durté dou monde, que Nostre Sires trova si grant quant il vint en terre, car il n'i avoit se durté non" (p. 37). The tombstone that he removes "represents the extreme harshness of the world that our Lord encountered when he came to earth; there was nothing but harshness then" (p. 14). These people whose hearts are harder than stone are the Jews, a fact made explicit as the monk's exegesis of events continues:

> Le tombe senefie la grant durté des Gyeus et li cors senefie aux et lor oirs qui tuit estoient mort par lor pechié mortel, dont il ne se pooient mie oster legierement. Et la voiz qui de la tombe issoit senefie la dolereuse parole qu'il distrent a Pilate le prevost: "Li sans de lui soit sor nos et sor nos enfanz!" Et por cele parole furent il honi et perdirent aux et quant qu'il avoient. Einsi poez vos veoir en ceste aventure le senefiance de la Passion Jhesucrist et la semblance de son avenement. (p. 39)
>
> (The tombstone represents the extreme harshness of the Jews, and the body signifies how they and their descendants were condemned to death by mortal sins that they could not easily overcome. The voice issuing from the tomb represents the doleful words they uttered before the proconsul Pontius Pilate: "May his blood be on our hands and on our children's hands!" Because of these words, they were put to shame and lost everything. You can see in this adventure the meaning of Christ's Passion and the image of His coming. [p. 14])

The Jews are also explicitly referred to as blind to the truth of the Savior, inspired to violence through the devil, who found his way into their hearts by whispering in their ears (p. 14). The voice coming from the grave not only echoes Matthew 27:25 ("his blood be upon us and our children"), but also keeps it continually alive, repeating and reinforcing a sense of Jewish guilt reiterated in perpetuity. This reiterative temporality bears a certain similarity to how the Mass and ritual murder accusation also, in very different ways, provide an "eternal present" for the figure of the Jew as Christ-killer. The Jews' treachery leads to their punishment, both in the long term and in the short term. The *Queste* refers as well to the vengeance of Vespasian upon the Jews, a story linked to the Grail history in Robert de Boron's *Josephe*.[51]

51. Noted on p. 14, n. 3 in Burns's translation.

CONCLUSION

When entering the world of Grail narrative, it is not unreasonable to assume that one is entering a Christian realm in which only the purest of Christian knights can succeed. What I have tried to show is that representations of Jews and Judaism are in some ways marginalized by Christian genres like the Grail narratives, but they are, at the same time, at the center of the narratives. The role of the Jew in the Grail narratives, while perhaps not as extensive as in some other medieval genres, is a shaping one, due in large part to the ways in which these romances engage the master narratives of the Passion and of Christian supersession. The Grail develops in these texts from Chrétien's mysterious "platter" into the ultimate Christian relic, containing the very blood Christ shed to redeem the sins of humankind. Jewish presence may often be implicit, but its importance should not be underestimated.

The Grail's story builds upon the master narrative of the Passion, interpolating between the accounts of the Gospels to create a Christian history that extends the time of Christ into the time of Arthur. The deeds of Arthur and his knights in the Grail narratives are meant to be read typologically as one event reflects upon another event, in the same way as Christian exegesis reads the Old Testament as a prefiguring of the New. Following this typological form, the Grail narratives fold back on themselves, presenting dozens of discrete adventures that eventually conform to one storyline: the triumph of the New Dispensation over the Old. In terms of their repetitive structures, these narratives mirror the endless repetition of torture and suffering that we find in narratives of ritual murder accusation, which rely on similarly complex temporal modes to bring the past sacrifice of the Passion into an "eternal present." In ritual murder accusation, the narrative is also shaped to reflect the master narrative of the Passion in the death of each martyr, allegedly at the hands of Jews, enacted on a tender child whose death reflects the supposed vulnerability and sanctity of the Christian community.

The Grail narratives developed at the same time as narratives of ritual murder accusation spread across Europe, and both genres reflect the status of Jewish communities in medieval Europe. Although it was the Jews who were in actuality persecuted, they came to be represented by Christians as spiritual, economic, and literal threats both in the past and in the present. This threat of Jewish violence, through engagement with these two master narratives, comes to shape a vision of the Christian community. Christianity's central institutions and symbols become defined by their opposition to Jews and Judaism. In the Grail narratives this comes to apply to the Church itself, the Christian knight, and the Grail. These

Jewish figural symbols, while not central to the plot, come to haunt the Grail narratives. The Christian knight is defined by his opposition to the Jew, and the stories of Arthur and the Grail, so foundational to Europe's mythic narrative of itself, become defined against the Jews. By defeating the Jew the Christian knight comes, at least in part, to create his identity.