

B. Restatement of problem researched or creative activity

In the summer of 2006 I used a faculty development grant to attend the international Medieval Congress in Leeds, England and conduct independent research in Cambridge and London. The grant covered my transportation and costs associated with the conference. I had also requested funds to be used for costs incurred while pursuing research in Cambridge and London.

C. Brief review of the research procedure utilized

The Leeds conference was a valuable learning experience during which I made many professional contacts. Among these were Ann Duggan (U. London), Peter, Christoph Egger (U. Vienna), Sharon Farmer (UC Santa Barbara), and Laura Smoller (UALR). Previous relationships were continued with Brenda Bolton (U. London) and Marie Therese Champagne (U. St. Martin).

Following the conference I joined a National Endowment for the Humanities institute at Oxford. The institute focused on representations of Jews in the middle ages. Room and board were covered by a separate stipend.

Later in the summer I went to Cambridge where I was allowed to access the Matthew Parker Library at Corpus Christi College. There I found an illuminated manuscript with an image of use to my research work. I ordered a digital scan to be made and sent to me on a CD.

In London I studied the collection of ivories at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Several of them related to my research. These had already been photographed so I purchased an illustrated catalog.

#### D. Summary of findings

My focus during all of this was to examine the origins of some powerful anti-Jewish iconography. I learned that, despite the dramatic escalation of both frequency and intensity of pejorative imagery following the First Crusade, there were several examples of early images reflecting an almost universal perception and awareness of Jewish "otherness" by European Christians. My preliminary work on this was presented at the annual Southeast College Art Conference (SECAC) in Nashville. Another, more subtly nuanced paper on the Carolingian iconography will be presented this summer at the Leeds conference.

Different Strokes for Different Folks: picturing Jews in early Medieval art  
Nancy Bishop, Ph.D.

By the late middle ages a fairly established visual vocabulary was available for artists when they wished to depict a member of the Jewish religion. Often these were grotesque or demonic images informed by a growing anti-Semitism among medieval Christian scholars. It is fairly safe to say these representations were never based on observation but instead reflect stereotypical notions of a people considered different and dangerous on many levels. There is also a difference in the ways artists depicted Old Testament figures, New Testament figures, and contemporary Jews. In the early middle ages, however, the vocabulary and distinctions were not quite as codified. The Phrygian cap, for example, long accepted as a key attribute of Jews, was initially used to distinguish any person from the East. If and how early medieval artists distinguished Jews from Magi, for example, are questions needing further examination. I have argued in the past that not only did artists feel a need to identify Jews but, in at least one early example, a circumcision mark was used as the key attribute. This paper will examine the visual and verbal vocabularies employed by Carolingians and other early medieval artists in an attempt to identify specific images in figural art. It will also reflect my work as a participant in the 2006 NEH summer institute entitled *Representations of the 'Other': Jews in Medieval Christendom*.

## Different Strokes for Different Folks

Nancy Bishop

Tolerance of people who differ from us has recently been heavy on my heart and in my mind. By its very nature faith of any kind holds certain improvable ideas to be true. Other beliefs are not only viewed as incompatible with those beliefs but are, by necessity, held to be untrue. How do people of any faith view and treat people outside of that faith when they consider their beliefs false?

XXX Last summer I participated in an institute at Oxford sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. We focused on representations of Jews in Medieval Christendom drawing heavily from sources in European intellectual history both Jewish and Christian.

XXX Far from a static phenomenon I saw the perceptions of the Jewish other change radically over the centuries with a major escalation of negativity occurring at the time of the First Crusade.

XXX

One starting point for our discussions last summer was the examination of concepts of self vs. other and in what ways people find it necessary to hold a negative view of someone different. This depends on defining what one is not, and thereby, it is hoped, making very clear what one is.

[Franks]

Others were almost always bad and, to most early medieval minds, were the neighbors who posed a very real threat to the body: Vikings, Huns, Goths, in short, pagans of any description.

[Boniface]

As these threats subsided European Christians identified another source of danger, one that did not necessarily threaten the body but the mind, in particular the spiritual health of Christians.

[Dispute]

Pagans, heretics, Jews and Muslims not only served as objects for this fear but also became victims. In many ways they were more subversive than the barbarians had been and they could and did infiltrate God-fearing Christian communities. With these others it

was the internal difference that was far more pernicious than the external ones exhibited by the barbarians. Viking warriors may kill the body but non-Christians threatened the immortal soul. Some of these dangerous others were Jews.

[Synagogue]

Jews were clearly a different sort of other, coming from the same milieu as the hegemonic Christians, and moving into Europe in groups. But the gulf had widened through the mass conversions of Europeans during the intervening years. Jews often tended to keep a cultural distance from Christians maintaining their dietary and religious distinction.

Christians may have thought, if they thought about Jews at all, that they had been part of the early mass conversions reported in Acts 2:41 “. . .and about 3,000 were added to their number that day.” The Jews moving into Europe had not been added to the number of zealous Christian converts on that day or any other time since. Many Christians like Augustine tried to come to terms with this recalcitrance in their writings.

[hanging]

The tide turned for Jews at the time of the first Crusade. The militants on the march to redeem the Holy Land from the Saracen realized that an equally evil enemy dwelt among them – the very killers of Christ. Things got worse.

[Naumberg]

Some of you may be familiar with the later polemical images of Jews. It is their sensational nature that shocks and repels us. It is also these images that have received most of the attention from historians of religion and art.

[Judenhute]

Once Jews were clearly defined as enemies within medieval Christendom, a rich and powerful vocabulary of iconography grew. Most obvious is the Phrygian cap. It had evolved into various forms and shapes, some resembling a knobbed funnel.

[wandering Jew]

Physical attributes were often assigned to figures intended to be Jews: hooked noses usually shown in profile, swarthy complexions, and crooked or deformed bodies.

[badges]

Later Jews were distinguished by badges or prescribed clothing in certain communities.  
[ritual murder]

Illustrations of some of the more outrageous accusations against members of the Jewish community were also created by artists, often as prints or manuscripts.

[E&S]

Another iconography was employed but as a personification of the Jewish religion rather than a depiction of the Jew in society. This is the image of Synagoga. Her attributes varied somewhat in the Gothic period but she is always clearly identifiable in juxtaposition to Ecclesia, personification of the Christian church. She can appear lovely, as in the Strasbourg portal sculpture but, unfortunately is almost always blind.

[extreme E&S]

In the most extreme examples Synagoga appears as the scapegoat for the hate and negativity we must assume flourished. In the years following the first crusade anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic rhetoric escalated as did the artistic expressions of hate, distrust, and fear.

[Barberini guy]

I became interested in Christian representations of Jews when I cautiously suggested in my dissertation that the little exhibitionist in the middle of a canon table in the Barberini Gospels was a Jew. I had hoped that my participation in the Oxford institute would enable me either to disprove or to support this theory. I wrote the abstract of this paper prior to engaging in the work and, at that point, I was optimistic about uncovering a massive amount of early imagery. The wealth of images and information turned out to be quite different than I had anticipated and, fortunately for us all, I realized that the entire body of early medieval imagery was well beyond my grasp in such a short amount of time. Instead, I chose to focus on three types of iconographical themes that appear early and occasionally in medieval art; Synagoga, Melchizedek, and the martyrdom of Stephen. Clearly, this is a work in progress.

[O.T. Jews]

The earliest representations of Jews in European art do not appear to distinguish them at all. While most Biblical figures were Jewish they show no clear outward distinction from European people, such as the representations of the early martyrs.

[OT and NT]

This is consistent with period of "Concordia" based on the belief that all of the Old Testament was prologue to the New Testament.

[Magus from s. App. N.]

Distinct from these representations are the images of Easterners outside the Jewish faith. As we know, medieval artists chose to adopt the Phrygian cap as an outward sign of an exotic eastern origin. As such it appears in early Christian art, most frequently on the magi but also, on occasion, to distinguish the enemies of Old Testament Jews. Soon this cap's use was extended to any men hailing from the exotic East including Jews. Others have dealt extensively with this iconography so I will not do so today.

### C3 ECCLESIA AND SYNAGOGA

[Sabina E&S]

Other than the cap distinction, the iconography of Synagoga also appeared in the early middle ages. As a personification of the Jewish religion she was often placed in opposition to Ecclesia, the personification of the Christian Church. I believe she first appeared in a 5<sup>TH</sup> century mosaic at Santa Sabina in Rome. But in this early incarnation the women have been labeled as *Ecclesia ex Circumcisione*, the church of the circumcision, and *Ecclesia ex gentibus*, the church of the people. Despite other interpretations, I think they must be understood as Jews and Gentiles, the two groups that comprised the early church, as their names indicate. Both women wear similar dark clothing, hold books, and gesture a blessing. In this context, as Synagoga represents the Jewish converts to Christianity, we would expect and see a positive or favorable image. But the women are far from identical. The artist appears to have been trying to distinguish the two on the basis of facial characteristics as well as the slight variation in head covering. *Ecclesia ex gentibus* has darker, thicker eyebrows and fuller lips than *Ecclesia ex circumcissione*, attributes that later signify Jewishness but here signify the gentile church.

[Pudenziana]

Another example of this iconography is found in the Santa Pudenziana mosaics. The identities of the two women are not given but many believe them to be personifications of *Ecclesia ex circumcissione* and *Ecclesia ex gentibus* again. Dating from roughly the same period as the Santa Sabina mosaics they may reflect a current spin on the ecumenicalism of the early church. Each not only relates to a component of that church but also underscores the roles of Peter, bishop of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, and Paul, apostle to the gentiles, both early martyrs in Rome. I hesitate to analyze the physiognomies of the women because the mosaics have been heavily restored and may not reflect their original appearance.

[carol. 1]

The transition from this positive one in the spirit of *Concordia* to the later personification of the uncovered Jewish religion is an area for further research. Textual anti-Jewish rhetoric in the tradition of *adversos Judeos* appears and is widely disseminated, contributing to the growing belief that all Jews were and continue to be the killers of Christ and enemies of the Christian faith. *Synagoga* makes a few appearances in Carolingian art and there begins to take on the attributes that mark the Jews as lost and outside of grace.

In a new version of crucifixion iconography many familiar figures appear but several new elements have been added to amplify and augment the meaning of the event. Both women initially appear in the conservative clothing we saw in Santa Sabina but they carry staffs with pennants, signifying their roles as religions. *Ecclesia*, on Christ's right, catches his blood in her chalice symbolizing the role of the Christian church as the recipient of this act of atonement and also alluding to the celebration of the eucharist. On Christ's sinister side *Synagoga* carries her staff and, though her body is turned away from Christ, her face gazes up at his. This expression has been interpreted in both negative and positive language. It is not inconceivable to imagine *Synagoga* turning in the next moment and joining the group of worshippers, in other words, accepting Christ.

[carol 2]

Another ivory shows the pair of women on Christ's left as *Synagoga* moves away from him and encounters an enthroned *Ecclesia*.



[carol 3]

The next ivory shows a crowded field with what is thought of as two Ecclesia, one collecting the blood and the other sitting on a throne.[detail] Synagoga reaches for the orb in Ecclesia's lap, indicating a desire to regain the lost position of primacy in the world.

[drogo]

An inhabited initial from the Drogo Sacramentary shows another pared down version of similar iconography. Synagoga sits as a witness to the event and holds an orb. This could be the throne and the orb she is about to cede to Ecclesia.

[carol 4]

This other crucifixion from the Metz school is far simpler, showing Synagoga on her way out of the frame, not glancing back or in any way indicating her feelings.

[Breton]

A charmingly naïve 9<sup>th</sup> century Breton Gospel Book shows a much simplified arrangement. Unlike the ivories, the two crucified thieves are included as are Ecclesia and Synagoga. Here the latter holds a symbolic representation of the law and looks like someone who is not having a very good time at a party. She is downcast but hasn't gone home yet.

[Byzantine]

A Byzantine enamel shows a neutral image of the turned away Synagoga. Her covered hands indicate her awareness of the holiness of the event, apparently without acceptance of it.

[Italian]

In a much later Italian version, the two women occupy their own register and two angels accompany them to clarify God's role. Ecclesia is being led to Christ, the bridegroom while Synagoga is being pushed out.

[carol vs. Strasbourg ]

In all of the early versions I just showed you Synagoga still had the ability to see and, if she carried a staff, it was shown whole. This is in sharp contrast to the far more polemic later versions that show a blindfolded woman with a broken staff.

[Auxerre]

We know in the later middle ages that Jews were vilified as the killers of Christ and enemies of the Christian faith. Surely all of them were considered guilty of the sins of their fathers and so it is natural to find images of Jews in the representations of the passion of Christ, as we have just seen. Another first century murder also took some of the artistic spotlight, that of protomartyr St. Stephen. His story is recorded in the book of Acts and holds potential for employment as anti-Jewish polemic. Stephen engages in a lengthy tirade against the Sanhedrin, closing with the accusation, "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him – you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it." According to the author, this rhetoric incited the crowd of Jews to gnash their teeth and stone Stephen to death. The most notable early representation of his martyrdom is that in the crypt of St. Germaine in Auxerre. The murderous Jews appear, hurling stones from the safety of what must be Jerusalem. One appears to be bearded but, other than that, not noticeably distinguished in any way.

[bury Stephen]

This later image, from the Bury Psalter, I felt was particularly pointed.

It may be that the images in the margins were added later but their point is clear and places this example in the *adversos judaeos* tradition. King Herod within a walled city, presumably Jerusalem, commands his soldiers to murder the male children of Bethlehem in the massacre of the Innocents. The artist adds the gruesome details of a carrion bird and dog, devouring recognizable body parts. A mother is identified as "Rachel". Saul, the as yet unsaved Paul, oversees the stoning of Stephen, identified in the right margin. His attackers are clearly labeled as "Jews" as they hurl stones across the body of text in a remarkable spatial construct. The text that has been illuminated by these two isolated scenes from the New Testament is Psalm 79. "O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance, they have defiled your holy temple, they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble. They have given the dead bodies of your servants as food to the birds of the air, the flesh of your saints to the beasts of the earth. They have poured out blood like water all around Jerusalem, and there is no one to bury the dead."

The choice of the imagery here is no accident. One might expect to see King David fighting nobly against the Philistines. Instead the artist situates New Testament figures with this Old Testament text, forcing the reader to make a new identity for the enemy nations. The tables have turned. Instead of the Jews being the good guys they have now become the villains. The Jewish King Herod intended to kill Christ but instead slaughtered countless children. The murder of Stephen followed a lengthy debate where the Jews steadfastly rejected the new faith. Clearly these images are intended to depict Jews as the enemies of the Christian faith.

The instances of the appearance of images of the martyrdom and the rise of his cult is another area for further research. I am not the only scholar who sees a connection between St. Stephen and anti-Jewish polemic.

[SMM Melchizedek]

Another clear indication of a change in attitude toward Jews over the course of the middle ages is the iconography of Melchizedek. He was a minor character in the book of Genesis, appearing in one scene where he blessed Abraham, gave him bread and wine, and received a tithe offering. An early mosaic in Santa Maria Maggiore depicts this scene, showing Melchizedek bringing the bread and wine to Abram. We see no indication of Abram's offering but, instead, see the significant gesture of God in heaven. The artist is making the connection between God and Melchizedek rather than Abram, indicating a heavenly hierarchy that accommodated his typological use as a parallel for Christ. The author of Hebrews had done this first, arguing that when Abram, as Levi's ancestor, offered a tithe to Melchizedek it indicated a hierarchy wherein Melchizedek was shown to be superior to Abram, Levi, and all the tribes of Israel. According to the author of Hebrews the superior position belongs to Christ because the inability of the law to redeem its adherents necessitated a new priest outside of the Jewish law, like Melchizedek, in other words, Christ.

[s.vit mel]

The second example is far more puzzling. In one of the lunettes in San Vitale we see representations of Abel and Melchizedek. The scene must be considered symbolic,

few generations in the Genesis narrative. Another possibility is that the name Abel is a mistake and should be Abram. This is an area that needs further work. The theory of mosaicist error would be supported by the corresponding lunette on the opposite wall – the scene from Genesis showing Abraham offering hospitality to the three angels.

[S. Apollinare in Classe Melchizedek]

[Prudentius Mel.]

It was this later version of Melchizedek that caught my attention and drew me into its typological use. The Corpus Christi copy of the Psychomachia of Prudentius holds yet another version of this theme. On purely visual terms, the scene appears to show two different individuals bringing an offering to the altar that stands between them, much like the San Vitale example. Abram offers a lamb and, in response, Melchizedek offers the prefiguration of the Eucharist. That was my first impression. It seemed as though the Eucharist was being shown as a superior offering to God, replacing the blood sacrifice of the Old Testament. Here it becomes a polemic declaring the superiority of the Christian offering and, conversely, the insufficiency of the Jewish one. Further work needs to be done here.

[closing pic]

The iconography that I have shared with you today was never meant to represent the specific contemporary other. These images grew out of a need among Christians to understand and explain the continued presence of Jews and their lack of acceptance of Christianity. Writers like Augustine were inclined to be more concerned about the big picture, Jews as a group, Judaism as a religion, but not the Jew next door. That would explain the relatively mild form of these early images. Jews were considered blind to the Gospel message but when the role of Christ killer later became attached to flesh and blood individuals, the hate crimes and hateful images appeared. As mild as they seem, however, the representations of Jews in early medieval art allow us to see the seeds of suspicion, distrust, and otherness that were to bear the poisonous fruit of later anti-Semitism.

[the end]

Thank you.