

Beyond the Yellow Badge

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Beyond the Yellow Badge

Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval
and Early Modern Visual Culture

Edited by

Mitchell B. Merback



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—M. B. M.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PASSION, THE JEWS, AND THE CRISIS OF THE INDIVIDUAL ON THE NAUMBURG WEST CHOIR SCREEN*

Jacqueline E. Jung

Marking the boundary of nave and choir, respective domains of laity and clergy in medieval churches, the Gothic choir screen at once reinforced social distinctions and provided a stable, unifying focus during liturgical rituals.¹ Yet to cast these structures in strictly binary terms, as has often been the case in earlier scholarship, is to risk oversimplifying a situation that was far more complex. First, the binary approach concentrates solely on the solid frame of the screen while ignoring its points of permeability; the Gothic screen was, after all, as important for its capacity for (controlled) passage as it was for its exclusions. Second, this approach implicitly assigns a static, inflexible character to liturgical spaces that is belied by documentary and pictorial evidence

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¹ See Jacqueline E. Jung, "Beyond the Barrier: The Unifying Role of the Choir Screen in Gothic Churches," *Art Bulletin* 82, no. 4 (Dec. 2000): 622–57; and idem, "Seeing through Screens: The Gothic Choir Enclosure as Frame," in *Thresholds of the Sacred: Architectural, Art Historical, Liturgical and Theological Perspectives on Religious Screens, East and West*, ed. Sharon Gerstel (Washington, D.C., 2006), 188–213. For German screens through to the end of the Middle Ages, see Monika Schmelzer, *Der mittelalterliche Lettner im deutschsprachigen Raum: Typologie und Funktion* (Petersberg, 2004).

alike; just as members of the clergy performed many services outside the choir—at altars distributed throughout the nave, in side chapels, or in elevated galleries—so were at least some laypeople allowed to venture into the clerical sanctuary.² The possibility of selective access points to the third inadequacy of the binary approach: that is, its effacement of the internal diversity of the social groups in question. For all the insistence in contemporary writings on the sharp divide between clergy and layfolk, members of both groups were well aware that the subtler distinctions within their own cohort—in social status, institutional affiliation, education, gender, and so forth—were no less visible, consequential, and crucial to maintain.³

These more specific social identities not only determined people's physical access to the spaces demarcated by a choir screen, but also must have inflected understandings of the pictorial programs displayed thereon. In sartorial details, gestural conventions, material accessories, and even stylistic modes, the narrative sculptures embellishing the great stone screens of the thirteenth century—whether scenes from sacred history (as at Amiens, Chartres, Bourges, Modena, and Naumburg), depictions of virtuous behavior in the present (as at Strasbourg), or renderings of persons' fates in the future (as at Mainz and Gelnhausen)—are packed with social commentary that would have been immediately recognized, if variously understood, by contemporary beholders of diverse social origins.⁴ One group particularly well-represented in the imagery of Gothic choir screens was, paradoxically, a group without access to the screens at all—Jews.

This paper concentrates on the portrayal of Jewish men in the Passion narrative on the finest thirteenth-century choir screen to have survived *in situ*: the *Westlettner* of Naumburg Cathedral (fig. 1), fashioned around 1250 by a group of sculptors previously responsible for the (now

² On the complex nature of Gothic choirs, see the essays in *Kunst und Liturgie: Choranlagen des Spätmittelalters—ihre Architektur, Ausstattung und Nutzung*, ed. Anna Moraht-Fromm (Ostfildern, 2003); and my review in *KUNSTFORM* 5 (2004), Nr. 7/8 [15.07.2004], www.kunstform.historicum.net/2004/07/5073.html.

³ Especially useful on the question of social definition and distinction in the High Middle Ages are Giles Constable, "The Orders of Society," in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, 1995), 249–360; and Caroline Walker Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?" in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), 82–109.

⁴ See Jung, "Beyond the Barrier," for discussion of these monuments and further bibliography.

destroyed) choir screen at the metropolitan cathedral of Mainz.⁵ The stone reliefs at Naumburg, carved with exceptional verve and composed with unusual dramatic force, have long been extolled as embodiments of the “new individualism” characteristic of high medieval intellectual culture.⁶ Not bound to an exclusively didactic function, each figure in the program seems conceived as a character, his (or, in one case, her) gestures, physiognomy, and facial expression conveying something of a personality that gave new inflections to the well-known stories.⁷ For all their seeming spontaneity and naturalism, however, the figures’ social identities are consistently fixed—and thus their degree of individualism checked—through costume elements, bodily comportment, and other material details.⁸ In some cases these elements of local meaning have led to modern misunderstandings of the scenes’ social content; for example, despite many commentators’ conviction that the Apostles appear here as rustic folk—especially in the first relief, which shows Christ’s companions eating with their fingers at the Last Supper (fig. 2)—their luxurious clothing, modish hairstyles, and stylized gestures

⁵ On the Naumburg choir screen program, Ingrid Schulze, *Der Westlettner des Naumburger Doms: Das Portal als Gleichnis* (Frankfurt, 1995); Antje-Fee Köllermann, “Die Darstellung der Passion Christi am Naumburger Westlettner,” and Anja Rasche, “Die Passionsreliefs am Naumburger Westlettner: Beobachtungen zur Erzählstruktur und Einbeziehung des Betrachters,” both in *Meisterwerke mittelalterlicher Skulptur*, ed. Hartmut Krohm (Berlin, 1996), 349–64 and 365–76 respectively; Jung, “West Choir Screen”; and Michael Viktor Schwarz, “Retelling the Passion at Naumburg: The West-Screen and Its Audience,” *Artibus et historiae* 51 (2005), 59–72. For its architecture, see Schmelzer, *Der mittelalterliche Lettner*, 124–28. On the Mainz screen, completed in the 1230s, Kathryn Brush, “The West Choir Screen at Mainz Cathedral: Studies in Program, Patronage, and Meaning” (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1987); and Christine Kitzlinger and Stefan Gabelt, “Die ehemalige Westlettneranlage im Dom zu Mainz,” in Krohm, ed., *Meisterwerke*, 205–44.

⁶ For the current state of the question of individualism in this period, see esp. Susan R. Kramer and Caroline W. Bynum, “Revisiting the Twelfth-Century Individual: The Inner Self and the Christian Community,” in *Das Eigene und das Ganze: Zum Individuellen im mittelalterlichen Religiosentum*, ed. Gert Melville and Markus Schürer (Münster, 2002), 57–85; and the essays collected in *Individuum und Individualität im Mittelalter*, ed. Jan A. Aertsen and Andreas Speer (Berlin, 1996).

⁷ See, for example, Peter Kidson, “A Note on Naumburg,” in *Romanesque and Gothic: Essays for George Zarnecki* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1987), 143–46. On individuality in the Naumburg donor figures, Ernst Schubert, “Individualität und Individualisierung in der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts: Die Naumburger Stifterstandbilder,” Dritte Sigurd Greven-Vorlesung gehalten am 4. Mai 1999 im Schnütgen-Museum Köln (Cologne, 1999).

⁸ The tension between “bildnishafter, individualisierender Charakterisierung . . . und idealisierender Typisierung” is also noted by Rasche, “Passionsreliefs,” 367.

would have instead defined them as noble in the eyes of contemporary viewers, as I have shown elsewhere.⁹

Such misattribution is impossible with regard to the Jewish characters. Of the thirty-one figures populating the screen's six original reliefs, thirteen wear the funnel-shaped hats that had come to signify Jewishness in medieval iconography well before the thirteenth century. These figures play leading roles in three of the reliefs: the second in the sequence, showing Judas' receipt of the thirty silver pieces from the High Priest Caiaphas (see fig. 8); the third, Christ's Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane (see fig. 10); and the fifth, Christ's Trial before Pilate (see fig. 15).¹⁰ Two additional Jewish men, each brandishing a pole, occupy the otherwise empty ground to the right of the portal's central gable, compositionally balancing the image of Peter's Denial on the left-hand side and forming a transition to the Trial scene on the right. The last two reliefs in the sequence, showing the Flagellation and the Carrying of the Cross, are roughly carved wooden replacements of originals badly damaged in a fire in 1532; although many of the attendant figures in these scenes were given updated costumes by their eighteenth-century designer, the appearance of pointed hats on several suggests that the original models also featured Jewish men.¹¹

As we shall see, for all its quantitative emphasis on Jewish involvement in Christ's Passion, the Naumburg program is unusual, if not unique, among contemporaneous monumental depictions of the subject in its refusal to cast the Jews consistently and unambiguously as malevolent "others." Not only do most of the Jewish characters appear physically interchangeable with the Apostles or the Romans, but also, far from heaping crass and violent abuses on Christ, they conduct themselves according to the legal conventions and behavioral codes of thirteenth-century Saxon laypeople. Through this pictorial strategy, I argue, the critique of the Jewish establishment in the Passion narrative, while

⁹ Jacqueline E. Jung, "Peasant Meal or Lord's Feast? The Social Iconography of the Naumburg Last Supper," *Gesta* 42 (2003): 39–61. For closer views of these figures, see the photographs by Janos Stekovics in Ernst Schubert, *Der Naumburger Dom* (Halle an der Saale, 1997), 137–41.

¹⁰ For detailed images, see Schubert and Stekovics, *Naumburger Dom*, 143–63.

¹¹ Ibid., 162–63. The wooden reliefs were fashioned over the course of three weeks (!) in 1747 by a local turner named Johann Jacob Lütticke as replacements for the damaged originals. The contract (quoted at 160), specifies only that Lütticke adhere to certain drawn designs (*Risse*). For further discussion of these reliefs and their iconography, Jung, "West Choir Screen," 295–96.

certainly acknowledged, is also dispersed onto the Christian lay elite who comprised a primary audience for the reliefs. Thus, rather than acting as demonizing devices aimed at channelling fear and hostility onto a collective religious “other,” the depictions of Jews at Naumburg were designed so as to compel beholders to turn scrutiny back upon the self.

In light of then-current representational practices for rendering Christ’s Jewish antagonists during the Passion, this choice is surprising; its very singularity, I suggest, reveals something about the local political conditions of this provincial bishopric and about the engagement of the cathedral clergy with the ethical concerns that characterized much social thought in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹² On the one hand, as we shall see, the patron of the Naumburg west choir, Bishop Dietrich II von Wettin (act. 1242–72), had practical reasons for downplaying the role of the Jews as unambiguous enemies; anti-Jewish activity was flaring elsewhere in the Empire, and Dietrich depended on the financial resources of local Jews for the construction of his church and the defense of his territory against the heavy-handed incursions of his half-brother, Margrave Henry the Illustrious of Meissen (1218–88).¹³ On the other, the removal of primary responsibility for Christ’s death from the collective shoulders of the Jews throws the actions of the individuals into higher relief, calling attention to the sometimes devastating consequences of personally motivated actions within rigorously structured social codes. As we shall see, beneath what scholars have long celebrated as the newly personalized conception of the Passion narrative at Naumburg there lies a darker subtext, a critique of the “new individual” who breaks established conventions governing public behavior. Whereas the concern with the motivations and intentions of individual agents characteristic of mid-thirteenth-century ethics is

¹² The new ethics, articulated earliest and most explicitly in Peter Abelard’s *Scito te ipsum* (“Know Yourself”) and evident in various cultural domains, from confessional practices to devotional exercises and legal processes, placed emphasis on the personal internal intentions behind outer deeds; see Peter Abelard, *Ethical Writings: His Ethics or “Know Yourself” and his Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew and a Christian*, trans. by Paul Vincent Space (Indianapolis, 1995). The literature on the larger phenomenon is too expansive to cite comprehensively here, but a useful overview of the issues is Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200* (1972; repr. Toronto, 1987), esp. 64–75. For more specialized studies on individuality and intention in the philosophy and ethics of the late Middle Ages, see Aertsen and Speer, ed., *Individuum* (as n. 6).

¹³ On Dietrich’s troubled tenure, Heinz Wiessner, *Das Bistum Naumburg I: Die Diözese, Germania Sacra, N.F. 35* (Berlin, 1998), 2: 801–10; and Jung, “West Choir Screen,” 9–30.

present here, it is, paradoxically, instrumentalized to reinforce group solidarity and existing social mores for a target audience of high-status Christians.

*Beyond the Pointed Hat:
Anti-Jewish Polemic in Monumental Narrative Sculpture*

For modern-day viewers, all-too aware of the tragic consequences of government-imposed clothing restrictions, it is easy to regard the funnel-caps balanced on the heads of the Naumburg figures as an essentially derogatory sign forced on Jews by a hostile Christian establishment¹⁴—an assumption that seems confirmed by Canon 68 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which stipulated that Jews and Muslims “of either sex, in all Christian lands and at all times...easily be distinguished from the rest of the population by the quality of their clothes.”¹⁵ The main purpose of this canon was to prevent sexual intermingling between persons of various religious groups; in certain lands, the clerical drafters complained, “there has arisen such confusion that no differences are noticeable.”¹⁶

It was not only Christian authorities who worried over the lack of visual differentiation among members of diverse religious communities; the danger of blurred boundaries was also sensed by Jewish men and women, who, despite close interactions with their Christian neighbors, were equally averse to being mistaken for them.¹⁷ Just as living together

¹⁴ See, for example, Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, 1993), 1: 65–73, 91–94. A more nuanced approach is taken by Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible moralisée*, (Princeton, 1999), 15–19.

¹⁵ Original Latin and translated text in Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century: A Study of Their Relations During the Years 1198–1254, Based on the Papal Letters and the Conciliar Decrees of the Period*, rev. ed. (New York, 1966), 308–309; for further analysis, see Allan Cutler, “Innocent III and the Distinctive Clothing of Jews and Muslims,” *Studies in Medieval Culture* 3 (1970): 92–116.

¹⁶ Grayzel, *Church and the Jews*, 309.

¹⁷ For an excellent account of the social life of Jewish communities in Christian towns in the High Middle Ages, see John Y. B. Hood, *Aquinas and the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1995), 19–37; for the later period, Dean Phillip Bell, *Sacred Communities: Jewish and Christian Identities in Fifteenth-Century Germany* (Boston: Brill, 2001). For further remarks on religious definition in Germany, Ivan G. Marcus, “Hierarchies, Religious Boundaries, and Jewish Spirituality in Medieval Germany,” *Jewish History* 1, no. 2 (1986): 7–26; and Yacov Guggenheim, “Meeting on the Road: Encounters between German Jews and Christians on the Margins of Society,” in *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile*

in specially designated streets was sometimes understood by medieval Jews less as a form of “ghettoization” than as a means of protection and community,¹⁸ so could the wearing of distinctive tokens, paradoxically, serve to forge and reinforce group solidarity. Numerous Hebrew manuscripts, as well as the coats of arms and seals of some prominent Jewish families, included emblematic images of pointed hats.¹⁹ While, in social practice, some medieval Jewish communities seem to have adopted the conical hat “of their own will as a national custom,” others mandated that their members “not cut [their] hair or shave [their] beard[s] after the manner of the gentiles.”²⁰ Such stipulations indicate both that visual distinctions were important to some Jews, and that a slippage, “a tendency . . . for the younger and more prosperous Jews to catch up with the prevalent [Christian] styles,” was desirable to others.²¹

Nonetheless, the evidence that medieval Jews wore distinctive caps after Lateran IV, or that the Christian establishment took pains to impose them, is slim. The pointed cap had signified Jewishness in the pictorial arts long before 1215—indeed, during that very time prior to the Council when Jewish and Christian communities were supposedly threatened by their lack of discernable difference. The drafters of Canon 68 were surely familiar with such sartorial coding from pictures of Old Testament Jews in manuscripts, on liturgical paraphernalia, and in monumental public sculpture programs,²² and it is possible that their idea of imposing distinct iconographic markers on real bodies was inspired by the clarity such images provided. On the other hand, it is important to keep in mind that the canon leaves unspecified the precise nature of the clothing to be regulated. Those prelates who did obey it often chose other markers such as badges, earrings, or colored cloaks;²³

Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann (Cambridge, 1995), 125–36.

¹⁸ For the (often slippery) distinctions between “voluntary” and “compulsory” forms of Jewish settlement, see Alfred Haverkamp, “The Jewish Quarters in German Towns during the Late Middle Ages,” in Hsia and Lehmann, eds., *In and Out of the Ghetto*, 13–28, esp. 13–16.

¹⁹ Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 18.

²⁰ On hats, see Grayzel, *Church and the Jews*, 67, n. 114; on beards, 66, n. 112. This was a precept from a rabbinical synod held by Rhineland Jews in 1220.

²¹ Grayzel, *Church and the Jews*, 66, n. 112.

²² See Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 18. For hats on positive figures, see Bernard Blumenkranz, *Le juif médiéval au miroir de l'art chrétien* (Paris, 1966), 117–34.

²³ Grayzel, *Church and the Jews*, 67. For one alternative, see Ariel Toaff, “The Jewish Badge in Italy during the Fifteenth Century,” in *Die Juden in ihrer mittelalterlichen Umwelt*, ed. Alfred Ebenbauer and Klaus Zatloukal (Vienna, 1991), 275–80.

but enough churchmen disregarded the precepts altogether that Gregory IX lamented in 1233 that “a disgraceful situation still obtains in some parts of Germany, namely that no difference [between Christians and Jews] is discernible.”²⁴ We do not read of the Jews of Naumburg wearing special hats until 1454, when anti-Jewish sentiments, motivated by political as well as religious factors, flared in the region.²⁵

Whereas the pointed hat was not, in itself, an unambiguous mark of denigration, it became one when conjoined with the patently negative motifs that played a growing part in imagery of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and reached a particularly ugly nadir in the Late Gothic screen at Havelberg Cathedral (to be discussed below). Not content with using neutral accessories to identify the Jews of the Gospels, Christian artists in these contexts imbued their characters with bodily signs—wild gesticulations, contorted facial expressions, and a stereotyped physiognomy—to brand them as “other” in a clearly negative sense.²⁶ The combined modernization and demonization of biblical Jews in medieval art represented, as Joshua Trachtenberg put it, a “conscious effort” on the part of churchmen to present them “not as . . . historical figure[s] but as the contemporary Jew[s] with whom the audience was more or less familiar. The sins of Jesus’ contemporaries were deliberately piled upon the collective head of medieval Jewry.”²⁷ Medieval liturgical dramas, sermon exempla, and a wide variety of images—from abstruse visual commentary in moralized Bibles to monumental public narratives on portals and choir screens—are filled with anonymous figures who serve no narrative purpose beyond displaying signs of Jewish perfidy, blindness, and guilt.²⁸

²⁴ Grayzel, *Church and the Jews*, 198–99.

²⁵ Discussed further below.

²⁶ A survey of negative attributes is in Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1: 111–227. For anti-Jewish signs and their relation to strategies for demonizing other groups, see Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton, 2003), esp. 105–55.

²⁷ Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism* (1943; repr. Philadelphia, 1983), 13.

²⁸ See Henry Kraus, *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art* (Philadelphia, 1967), 139–62. On the modernization of biblical Jews in liturgical plays, Heinz Pflaum, “Les scènes de juifs dans la littérature dramatique,” *Revue des Études Juives* 89 (1930): 111–34; and Winfried Frey, “Zur Rolle der Juden in mittelalterlichen deutschen Texten des Weihnachtsstoffkreises,” in *Spannungen und Konflikte menschlichen Zusammenlebens in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, Bristoler Colloquium 1993, ed. Kurt Gärtner, Ingrid Kasten, and Frank Shaw (Tübingen, 1996), 125–41. For exempla, Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (Albany, NY, 1997),

A veritable encyclopedia of anti-Jewish caricature appears in the twelfth-century sculpture program on the west façade of the abbey church of St-Gilles-du-Gard, a cycle possibly known to the designers of the Naumburg choir screen.²⁹ In the relief showing the Payment of Judas, two bearded figures press close together in a corner, apparently commenting on the transaction unfolding beside them (fig. 3). The distance of this pair from the main action gives their conversation an air of secrecy; the gesture of the figure on the right, busily counting his fingers, suggests that it concerns money. Like the two attendants who shove an apparently reluctant Judas toward the High Priest's throne, these men wear the knee-length tunics of medieval servants, though their fashionably gathered sleeves and short capes suggest employment in a home of high rank.³⁰ And although the faces, like many in the series, are badly eroded, it would take a good deal more rain to wear away the counting figure's huge hooked nose, angular cheekbones, and jutting jaw.

In the adjacent relief, showing the Betrayal and Arrest of Christ, Jesus is confronted by a motley procession of characters whose faces—marked by furrowed brows, hooked or porcine noses, leering mouths and double chins—brand them as aberrant by nature and not only for what they do (fig. 4).³¹ In contrast to the tall, elegantly attired Christ and Judas, these men wear the knee-length sheaths and saggy boots of the servile. Whereas this band of rogues also includes Roman soldiers, the peaked hats of the two bearded, hook-nosed henchmen who flank Christ and Judas mark them as specifically Jewish.³²

169–235; and Ivan G. Marcus, “Images of the Jews in the *Exempla* of Caesarius of Heisterbach,” in *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (Wiesbaden, 1996), 247–56.

²⁹ The connection between Naumburg and St-Gilles was first drawn by Richard Hamann, *Die Abteikirche von St. Gilles und ihre künstlerische Nachfolge*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1955), 1: 416–23; for the Judas scenes, see 1:84–86; and for photographic details, 2: plates 54–55. For close stylistic analyses of these scenes, Whitney S. Stoddard, *The Façade of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard: Its Influence on French Sculpture* (Middletown, Conn., 1973), 95–96. The central tympanum of this program also included an early depiction of Ecclesia and Synagoga flanking the crucifix; see Henry Kraus, *Living Theatre*, 150, 152.

³⁰ Uncharacteristically, the High Priest appears in the guise of a generic kingly figure, positioned frontally with splayed limbs and long garment. Evidently it was his haughtiness rather than his social identity that was the artist's main concern; bodily signs of Jewishness were reserved for servile figures.

³¹ Hamann, *Abteikirche*, 1: 84–86 and 3: plates 73–75; Stoddard, *Façade*, 95.

³² For further examples of stereotyped Jews in Payment, Arrest, and Trial scenes, Gertrud Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst*, 4 vols. (Gütersloh, 1968), 2: 62–69, 71–76.

Such derogatory motifs were hardly alien to artists active in later medieval Saxony. The sculptors who, between 1395 and 1411, fashioned the reliefs for the H-shaped screen ensemble in Havelberg Cathedral exploited and expanded the established range of physiognomic and expressive devices for degrading Jews in order to visualize more clearly that paradoxical combination of ignorance and malevolence attributed to Christ's persecutors.³³ Throughout the program's twenty Passion reliefs, Jesus is confronted by male figures whose aggressive gestures and grotesque features strike a contrast with the mild manners and noble faces of himself and his apostolic cohort. Such visual denigration, at times, even rubs against the grain of the biblical text and longstanding iconographic traditions; in the Entry into Jerusalem, for example, Christ's donkey pulls back on stiffened forelegs as a spindly man in a funnel-cap crawls toward him on all fours, more like a nasty dog than a person paying homage, while a tall, nattily dressed man brandishes a cloak in front of Christ's path as if to impede, rather than encourage, his progress.³⁴

The anti-Jewish message in this relief is subtle, however, compared to that apparent in scenes of overt violence. Christ's Flagellation and

³³ This unusually large ensemble consists of a lateral screen with a central pulpit flanked by two small doors, attached to two longitudinal walls that separate the choir and crossing from the side aisles; for this and other so-called *Kanzelleitner*, Schmelzer, *Der mittelalterliche Lettner*, 41–64; and Jung, "Seeing through Screens," 205–7. The outer surfaces of the north and south enclosing walls also contain narrative scenes, but the Passion reliefs I discuss here are located on the walls facing the Cross Altar and thus would have been visible during lay services. For a concise overview of the screen and its imagery, Harald Wildhagen and Torsten Buchholz, *Der Lettner im Dom zu Havelberg* (Halle an der Saale, 1995). For a stylistic analysis of the reliefs, Ingrid Schulze, "Böhmischer Einfluß in der Plastik des fortgeschrittenen 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts in Barby und Havelberg," in *Skulptur des Mittelalters: Funktion und Gestalt*, ed. Friedrich Möbius and Ernst Schubert (Weimar, 1987), 255–79, esp. 266–79; and idem, "Die Havelberger Lettner- und Chorschrankenreliefs: Inhaltliche Problematik und stilistische Kriterien," in *Die mittelalterliche Plastik in der Mark Brandenburg*, ed. Lothar Lambacher and Frank Matthias Kammel (Berlin, 1990), 93–99. On the use of the screen in liturgical dramas, Claudia Lichte, "Der Havelberger Lettner als Bühne: Zum Verhältnis von Bildprogramm und Liturgie," in *Mittelalterliche Plastik*, 101–7. The only monographic study of the screen and its context is idem, *Die Inszenierung einer Wallfahrt: Der Lettner im Havelberger Dom und das Wilsnacker Wunderblut* (Worms, 1990). The studies by both Schulze and Lichte sidestep the question of anti-Judaism in the reliefs, placing emphasis rather on formal and stylistic qualities of the representations. Lichte insists that the contemporary garb of the monstrous Jewish characters served primarily to make them more effective vehicles of identification for Christian pilgrims (!), who would have been warned away from similarly bad behavior (*Inszenierung*, 119).

³⁴ See Lichte, *Inszenierung*, 51, fig. 31.

Crowning with Thorns are accomplished by exclusively Jewish men, most wearing foppish contemporary clothing that reveals large expanses of their legs and buttocks.³⁵ Although the Jewish antagonists are unified by their oversized peaked caps crowned by a ball, distinctions of status are drawn through the figures' clothing and gestures. Whereas the Crown of Thorns is affixed to Christ's head by a pair of dwarfish ruffians who must be physically supported in order to accomplish their goal, this action is framed by two stately Elders or Pharisees in long formal robes, who, resting their hands on the backs of their servants, tacitly give their approval (and assistance) to the proceedings.

In this image it is the figures' gestures and placement, more than their facial features, that lend the scene its polemical edge; in others, Christ is attacked by persons barely recognizable as human at all. Placing one hand on the shoulder of a dapper henchman, Caiaphas—his huge beaked nose overhanging a mustachioed upper lip—watches approvingly as another pair of Jewish brigands manhandle their meek captive (fig. 5).³⁶ One, in the long robe of an Elder, crawls on the floor, jerking his head back to reveal his tongue and teeth as he swings his club against Christ's thigh. As if the stereotyped physiognomy left any doubt as to this character's affiliation, the sculptor has drawn further attention to his hat by including an additional henchman who fondles its crowning knob from behind. Meanwhile, Christ's right arm and shoulder are grasped by an armed figure with scraggly hair and bulldog-like features; cocking his lantern-jaw and stretching his thick lower lip toward his nose, the figure gazes into distant space from eyes pressed deep within skull-like sockets. His strictly tactile engagement with Christ, the strange positioning of his head, and his deeply sunken eyes suggest that this man is blind, making his juxtaposition with the literally blindfolded Jesus all the more poignant.³⁷ Indeed, the chain of touch that links all the Jewish figures in this scene—a chain whose center is occupied by Christ, although, his hands being tied, he is not an active participant—reinforces the impression that the figures' knowledge is gained

³⁵ See Lichte, *Inszenierung*, 55, fig. 39 (Flagellation), 56, fig. 40 (Crowning with Thorns).

³⁶ Lichte, *Inszenierung*, 54, 67–68 identifies this relief as Christ before Herod. The fact that the main figure's clothing and physiognomy are identical to those of Caiaphas in the preceding relief, which depicts the High Priest rending his garments while accusing Jesus of blasphemy, suggests that the two images are meant to form a continuous scene.

³⁷ On blindness motifs in the Middle Ages, see Moshe Barasch, *Blindness: The History of a Mental Image in Western Thought* (New York, 2001), 67–114.

by blind groping rather than insight, and that their communication occurs through carnal contact rather than through intelligible speech.

The suggestion in the Havelberg relief that Christ's Jewish persecutors were at once blind, dumb, and malicious is accentuated by its contrast with the adjacent image of Christ before Pilate. Here, communication does take place through speech—exceptionally loud speech, to judge from the gaping mouth of Christ's accuser, who tilts his oversized head back to shout his complaints from grotesquely distended lips (fig. 6). Although the angle of Pilate's head, the shape of his long beard, and the sharp lines of his cheekbones make him resemble Christ, his prominently hooked nose aligns him with the stereotyped Jews shown elsewhere. Indeed, the fact that he wears both a hat and a long, buttoned robe almost identical to those worn by Caiaphas shows him to be cut, as it were, from the same cloth. In this case, stereotypical anti-Jewish attributes are translated onto the Roman character so as to highlight his guilt—this despite the fact that long-entrenched interpretations of the Passion (visual and textual alike) tended to mitigate Pilate's agency so as to amplify Jewish calls for blood.

Recent scholarship on the Naumburg west choir screen gives the impression that attitudes toward Jews were no less hostile there than in the St-Gilles and Havelberg programs that bracket it chronologically. In her important article on choir screen sculpture, Annette Weber described the Naumburg Jews as displaying “petulant faces framed by unkempt hair and beards, with sharp profiles and emphatically crooked noses,” “small, dark, close-set eyes beneath deeply furrowed brows,” and “devilish” grimaces.³⁸ Such features are certainly to be found on the Jewish captor who grasps Christ's tunic in the Naumburg Arrest scene (discussed below)—but what is remarkable for the whole program, especially in light of then-widespread visual conventions, is the fact that the remaining reliefs not only minimize physical differences among Jews, Romans, and Apostles but even reinforce the likenesses among them. At Naumburg, the Jews formed but one group among several whose members, through their personal decisions and actions,

³⁸ Annette Weber, “Die Entwicklung des Judenbildes im 13. Jahrhundert und sein Platz in der Lettner- und Tympanonskulptur: Fragen zum Verhältnis von Ikonographie und Stil,” *Städte-Jahrbuch* 14 (1993): 35–54 at 35. Interestingly, German art historians of the 1920s and 1930s thought the figures looked not like Jews but like the Slavs who populated the eastern frontier region; see Jung, “West Choir Screen,” 292, n. 35.

brought about the death of Christ. The first was a man from Christ's own inner circle—Judas.

*The Naumburg West Choir Screen:
Jews, Apostles, and the Dispersed Responsibility for Christ's Death*

The scene of Judas's receipt of silver from the High Priest Caiaphas in return for his promised delivery of Christ—the second image in the Naumburg sequence (see fig. 8)—was rarely depicted in monumental sculpture of the Middle Ages.³⁹ When it was shown, the location of the treacherous act in a specific social setting, “the court of the high priest” (Matt. 26:3), tilted the scene toward sharp and varied anti-Jewish polemicizing. Most surviving examples employ compositional and iconographic devices designed to cast the Jewish high priests as the initiators and Judas as a passive, if not unwilling, participant in the exchange—a reversal of the Gospel accounts, where Judas approaches the chief priests, themselves uncertain how to apprehend Jesus without causing a ruckus, with his offer to turn Christ over to them.⁴⁰ At St-Gilles, an attendant shoves Judas toward Caiaphas, who waits with outstretched arm to pass off the coins (see fig. 3). In a console relief from the choir screen at Modena Cathedral (ca. 1180), which displays the tense moment just before the money changes hands, Judas likewise appears as a reluctant partner in crime (fig. 7).⁴¹ Indeed, the prominent halo behind his head, whose form is echoed in the *empty* purse at Judas's side, suggests that he is still without malice, in contrast to the behatted Caiaphas and the hook-nosed *camerarius* who stands at the ready, weighing in his hands a bulging sack of coins. The *jubé* at Bourges Cathedral (ca. 1260) rendered the episode as a cool financial

³⁹ For other examples, Schiller, *Ikongraphie*, 2: 34–35.

⁴⁰ Mt. 26:14–15; Mk. 14:10–11; Lk. 22:3–6. Cf. the comments on this scene by Schwarz, “Retelling the Passion,” 63–65.

⁴¹ For details of this early screen ensemble, *Il Duomo di Modena Atlante fotografico*, ed. Marina Armandi, photos by Cesare Leonardi (Modena, 1985), 858–85. For a color view of this relief, see *Il Duomo di Modena/The Cathedral of Modena: Atlante fotografico*, ed. Chiara Frugoni, photos by Ghigo Roli, 3 vols. (Modena, 1999), 2: 678, plate 1322. For the iconography of this screen, see Erika Doberer, “Il ciclo della passione sul pontile di Modena,” in *Romanico padano, Romanico europeo* (Parma, 1982), 391–98. The comparison between Naumburg and Modena is also drawn by Schulze, *Westlittner*, 45–46.

transaction between equal partners.⁴² A large rectangular purse dangles from one figure's fingertips, a familiar sign of his association with the new, and still threatening, cash economy.⁴³

At Naumburg, by contrast, Judas appears as the active initiator of the exchange (fig. 8); he rushes in from the side, his face anxious and hurried, thrusting the bundled edge of his cloak into Caiaphas's lap.⁴⁴ Whereas the sculptors at Modena and St-Gilles drew upon the conventions of seals to portray the High Priest as a man of authority⁴⁵—with frontal, open body, firmly planted feet, splayed knees, and angled elbows—the body of Caiaphas at Naumburg swivels toward one side and is largely obscured by Judas. Moreover, rather than turning his head to confront Judas actively, the High Priest turns *away* from him and toward beholders. Together, the two figures form what Stephen Kern—writing of a formula widely employed in nineteenth-century painting, in which a male figure in profile gazes at a thoughtful, frontally oriented female—calls a “proposal composition.”⁴⁶ Kern emphasizes the “greater depth perception of binocular vision as well as a wider horizon of visual interests, a broader range of purposes, and more profound, if not more intense, emotions” implied in the frontal faces of the women in such pictures.⁴⁷ Although, obviously, the nature of the Passion narrative precludes an interpretation of the High Priest as a sympathetic character, the frontality of the Naumburg figure's head, his ocular engagement of beholders, and his ambiguous demeanor, suggestive of exhaustion or worry—an expression, in fact, resembling nothing so much as that of the Virgin Mary who weeps over her crucified Son in the portal below⁴⁸—make this Caiaphas a character of

⁴² See Fabienne Joubert, *Le jubé de Bourges* (Paris, 1994), 54 and fig. 31.

⁴³ See Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1978); Jacques LeGoff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages*, trans. Patricia Ranum (New York, 1990); also see Anne Harris's contribution in this volume.

⁴⁴ Cf. Schwarz, “Retelling the Passion,” who interprets Judas's expression as “horrorified” (65) and one of “despair” (68).

⁴⁵ For royal and imperial seals employing the same bodily configuration, see *Die Zeit der Staufer: Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur*, ed. Reiner Hausscherr and Christian Väterlein, 5 vols. (Stuttgart, 1977), 3: plates 1–30.

⁴⁶ Stephen Kern, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Culture, 1840–1900* (New York, 1996).

⁴⁷ Kern, *Eyes of Love*, 7.

⁴⁸ See Schubert and Stekovics, *Naumburger Dom*, 168–69.

considerable psychological complexity, complicating any impression of him as a thuggish instigator of a nefarious plot.

If the designers of this relief (and the clerical patrons who gave their approval) wished to highlight the depravity of Christ's Jewish antagonists, it is surprising that they included none of the usual signs that marked the Jews as servile, hostile, ignorant, or blind. The Chief Priest can be said to be stereotyped only in that he wears a beard without a mustache;⁴⁹ his nose is slightly larger than those of his attendants, but the strict frontality of his face makes its forward extension impossible to apprehend from a standpoint on the ground. The courtiers who frame the transaction are clean-shaven, and their physiognomies—with large, wide-set eyes, broad foreheads, square jaws, and full lips—make them more closely resemble the Apostle John in the Last Supper relief (see fig. 2), as well as several of the male donor figures in the west choir proper, than the High Priest.⁵⁰ Their noses are thin and straight; and if their hair appears “stringy and unkempt,” it is no more so than that of Christ and the Apostles. Their costumes and mannerisms are designed to give the courtiers an air of nobility; they wear ankle-length, belted tunics under broad-collared cloaks, and the figure at the far right-hand side pulls his cloak around his back in a gesture often associated in Gothic sculpture with aristocratic refinement.⁵¹

Especially noteworthy here is the omission of a moneybag or purse, the attribute of Judas and emblem of Jewish greed in much thirteenth-century imagery.⁵² Rather, Caiaphas lets the coins slip loosely through active hands, his gesture echoing, but inverting, that with which Christ fed Judas in the preceding relief (see fig. 2). Taking these pairs of hands as the conceptual as well as formal center of each image, we can recognize that the two reliefs are structurally analogous. Each features a transaction in which a bearded, frontally oriented man bestows one or

⁴⁹ On the beard as signifier of Jewish piety, see Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 20–21.

⁵⁰ Cf. the faces of Hermann of Meissen, Eckehard of Meissen, and Wilhelm of Camburg, in Schubert and Stekovics, *Naumburger Dom*, 82, 88, and 107.

⁵¹ The margrave Hermann in the Naumburg west choir, and an Apostle on a lintel from Metz Cathedral, a work associated with the “Naumburg Master,” handle their cloaks this way. On the formulaic quality of the gesture, Willibald Sauerländer, “Die Naumburger Stifterfiguren: Rückblick und Fragen,” in Hausscherr and Väterlein, eds., *Zeit der Staufer* (Stuttgart, 1979), 5: 169–245 at 192. On Metz, Richard H. L. Hamann, “Das Apostelrelief vom Liebfrauenportal am Metzger Dom um 1250,” *Deutsche Kunst* 10, no. 6 (1943): 63–64.

⁵² On this motif, see Strickland, *Saracens*, 140–43. On the stereotype of the cash-obsessed Jew, Trachtenberg, *Devil and the Jews*, 188–94.

more disk-shaped objects upon a beardless recipient in profile. Each exchange is framed by four figures who demonstrate group cohesion: whereas the Apostles of the Last Supper are united by gestures of consumption, the Jews at the High Priest's court are conjoined through both their hats and their gestures of intrigue.⁵³ The decisive difference between the two scenes is the manner in which Judas accepts the disk-shaped object(s) from his partner. Whereas Judas's reception of bread from the hand of Christ was audacious in its flippancy—accompanied as it was by his simultaneous groping in the sop-bowl⁵⁴—his receipt of the coins from Caiaphas is reverent, even if rushed. These he treats as holy objects, scooping them up with veiled hands.

Although this Caiaphas is not overtly demonized the way his counterparts in other sculptural monuments were, his structural analogy with Jesus at the Last Supper invites viewers to recognize him as Christ's anti-type, distributing coins directly from his body as if in a perverted Eucharistic ritual. At the same time, by showing Judas actively approaching the High Priest and by eschewing overt signs of Jewish alterity, the designers of this image complicate the anti-Jewish message, for these choices call attention back to the errant Apostle, the loner who cherishes coins more than hosts.

In contrast to much contemporaneous pictorial imagery, which endowed Judas with the distorted features of stereotyped Jews,⁵⁵ the Naumburg Judas is tall, well-proportioned, and as handsome as any of the other Apostles. His deviance is conveyed rather through his gestures and behavior, which viewers know to be ill-intentioned, and through his social and psychological alienation from the surrounding figures.⁵⁶ Although fixed in the center of the scene, Judas is excluded from the chain of touching and whispering gestures that links the other men; his action thus appears self-motivated, and, to judge by the expressions

⁵³ Although the motif of close talking recalls the whispering Jews at St-Gilles, the Naumburg figures neither count anything nor display stereotyped facial features; their communication thus appears a more generalized instance of court intrigue. Medieval critics complained of secrecy and gossip-mongering as constant features of both secular and episcopal court life; see C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210* (Philadelphia, 1985), 61–64.

⁵⁴ See Jung, "Peasant Meal," 51–52; cf. Schulze, *Westlennetner*, 46–48.

⁵⁵ On the increasing ugliness of Judas in later medieval art, Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1: 134–35; and Peter Dinzelbacher, *Judastraditionen* (Vienna, 1977), 22–26.

⁵⁶ Isolation, both spatial and social, was one of the most important defining features of Judas in visual representations before the later Middle Ages; see Dinzelbacher, *Judastraditionen*, 27–28.

of the courtiers' faces, it is unsettling. Costume details reinforce the impression of Judas's "otherness" at the High Priest's court. In a relief that places unusual emphasis on feet—pressing against the base of the throne, dangling from a crossed leg, twisting to follow the curve of a stooped body—Judas's bare feet and ankles signal his continued identity as an Apostle despite his appearance in a dressy milieu. In contrast to the other figures, Judas is also shown hatless, his hair flowing in undulating waves across his shoulder. Within the behatted crowd, it is now a bare head that signals outsider status.

From a frontal standpoint on the ground, however, this is not readily apparent; for Judas's body occludes another attendant figure on the back plane, whose funnel-cap is aligned directly with the top of Judas's head. Only by moving toward the right (toward the center of the screen) and thus changing the angle of view can a beholder discern the spatial distance between the heads of Judas and this other figure, which now peeks out from behind Judas's back (fig. 9). In a subtle but brilliant artistic maneuver, the sculptor has thus exploited the peculiar ability of his medium to shift appearances in conjunction with the viewer's movement in order to enhance the psychological content of the scene. Judas may be shown to be a dangerous outsider through the conventional iconography of his isolation—but his treachery, his shiftiness, his neither-nor status are rendered visible through the tricks his sculpted form plays on the eyes. If, sliding barefoot into the scene, he *seems* to adopt the Jewish hat that would make him an insider, the movements of viewers reveal him to be an imposter. The apparently troubled responses of the courtiers make it clear that, for all their own conspiratorial whispering, it is not Jewishness *per se* that makes one dangerous; it is, rather, the insinuating behavior of the renegade who moves betwixt and between social groups.

Although some medieval writers posited Judas's eventual despair of salvation, rather than his betrayal of Christ, as his greatest crime,⁵⁷ the Gospel narratives portrayed Judas's treason as contemptible—inspired, according to John 13, by Satan himself. This point would surely have resonated strongly among thirteenth-century upper-class laypeople and clerics alike, for whom loyalty to one's lord was paramount in the

⁵⁷ As discussed in Michael Viktor Schwarz, "Kathedralen verstehen (St. Veit in Prag als räumlich organisiertes Medienensemble)," in *Virtuelle Räume. Raumwahrnehmung und Raumvorstellung im Mittelalter*, Akten des 10. Symposiums des Mediävistenverbandes, Krems, 24.–26. März 2003, ed. Elisabeth Vavra (Berlin, 2005), 47–68, at 64–65.

maintenance of social stability.⁵⁸ By cloaking the Passion narrative in the guise of contemporary secular interactions, the Naumburg sculptors, more than any of their peers, invited—indeed, demanded—viewers to understand that story in terms of their own legal and social relations. Seen through that lens, the third relief in the series, showing Judas performing the action that leads to his lord’s capture (fig. 10), would have carried all the more weight. In contrast to most depictions of the Betrayal, Judas here stands taller than Christ, so that he must stoop down slightly to plant the kiss on his lips. The male *osculum*, of course, was loaded with social significance in thirteenth-century legal culture, having long comprised the central moment of the rites of entry into vassalage.⁵⁹ Immediately following the *immixtio manum*, which expressed the “more or less marked subordination of the vassal to the lord,”⁶⁰ the mouth-to-mouth kiss reconfigured the relationship as one of equality and good faith; only after this was the final step of investiture, the establishment of a “reciprocal contract,” possible.⁶¹ Significantly, this—the one moment in the relief series where Judas engages in direct physical contact with another person, and the single instance in which he appears to act in accordance with social rules—leads not to solidarity with his lord but to radical alienation from him. Henceforth Judas disappears from view, and his leading role in the Naumburg Passion is taken over by the cathedral’s co-patron, the Apostle Peter.

Dominating the frontal plane of this relief as he swings his broadsword down upon a crouching figure in a funnel-cap, Peter forms a visual and iconographic counterpart both to Judas, whose body he

⁵⁸ Throughout the Old Saxon *Heliand*, a vernacular translation of the Gospels written for an audience of newly converted warriors, Judas’s betrayal of Christ is presented explicitly as a breach of a man’s loyalty to his superior; see *The Heliand: The Saxon Gospel*, trans. and commentary by G. Ronald Murphy, S.J. (New York, 1992), 152, 158–59.

⁵⁹ The most influential discussion of the kiss in rites of fealty remains Jacques Le Goff, “The Symbolic Ritual of Vassalage,” in *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1980), 237–87. It has been reviewed and, in some details, revised by Yannick Carré, *Le baiser sur la bouche au moyen âge: Rites, symboles, mentalités, à travers les textes et les images, XI^e–XV^e siècles* (Paris, 1992). On the social nuances of the kiss, see also Klaus Schreiner, “‘Er küsse mich mit dem Kuß seines Mundes’ (*Osculetur me osculo oris sui*, Cant. 1,1): Metaphorik, kommunikative und herrschaftliche Funktionen einer symbolischer Handlung,” in *Höfische Repräsentation: Das Zeremoniell und das Zeichen*, ed. Hedda Ragotzky and Horst Wenzel (Tübingen, 1990), 89–132; and Michael Camille, “Gothic Signs and the Surplus: The Kiss on the Cathedral,” in *Contexts: Style and Values in Medieval Art and Literature*, special issue of *Yale French Studies*, ed. Daniel Poirion and Nancy Freeman Regalado (New Haven, 1991), 151–70.

⁶⁰ Le Goff, “Symbolic Ritual,” 250.

⁶¹ Le Goff, “Symbolic Ritual,” 253.

abuts from behind, and to the Jewish captor on the opposite side of the panel. Peter and the captor, both wielding large swords, bracket the entire group, their expansive bodies lunging from the middle-ground to the frontal plane and their bearded heads positioned toward the center at a three-quarters angle. But Peter's smooth face and calm demeanor strike a contrast with the angular, agitated features of his counterpart. In the latter figure, for the first and only time on the Naumburg choir screen, we find the characteristic distortions of anti-Jewish pictorial polemic: the furrowed brows and narrowed eyes, the stretched, leering mouth, the oversized beak (fig. 11).⁶² The physiognomic difference between these two dominating figures reinforces their differing actions toward Christ: at the same moment Peter defends the lord that Judas betrays, he also protects the lord that the Jew attacks.

Yet the word "attacks" does not quite describe what the captor—or any of the Jews who inhabit this scene—is doing here. Whereas the Gospel account read on Good Friday specifies that the "band of soldiers and servants from the chief priests and the Pharisees" apprehended Christ on the Mount of Olives bearing "lanterns and torches and weapons" (John 18:3),⁶³ the relief is curiously devoid of instruments of war. It does include the instruments of illumination mentioned in the Gospel: against the back plane, a behatted attendant raises aloft a flickering torch, its cluster of flames curling around the smooth circle of Christ's halo as if forming the material counterpart to Christ's immaterial radiance. But the armaments that feature so prominently both in the biblical text and in medieval renditions of the scene—on the Modena choir screen, for example, where Judas and Christ are framed by the strong vertical lines of a battle-axe and spear (fig. 12); at St-Gilles, where the clubs and swords brandished by stocky servile types punctuate the scene (see fig. 4); and in a relief from the destroyed choir screen at Amiens Cathedral (ca. 1260), where the chief captor, grasping Christ's collar with the same backhanded gesture as his counterpart at Naumburg, wears the chain mail, tunic, helmet and girdle of a Christian knight (fig. 13)⁶⁴—are entirely absent. The captor's sword in the Naumburg

⁶² For a closer view, Schubert and Stekovics, *Naumburger Dom*, 147. This is the figure to which Weber's description in "Entwicklung," 35 best applies.

⁶³ *Missale secundum rubricam Numburgensis* (Nuremberg, 1501), fols. lxxxiii verso–lxxxv verso. The Gospel reading comprised all of John 18–19. The quoted passage is from the Douay-Rheims translation of the Bible.

⁶⁴ See Dorothy Gillerman, "The Arrest of Christ: A Gothic Relief in the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Journal* 15 (1981): 67–90; Charles T. Little,

Arrest, balanced upright against his shoulder, its blade bound in thick strips of leather, would have been recognizable to contemporary viewers not as a useable weapon, which both local and imperial law forbade Jews to bear, but as an emblem of judicial authority, which, in certain instances, it accorded them.⁶⁵ One did not need to turn to illustrated legal handbooks such as the *Sachsenspiegel* to see this manner of bearing the sword;⁶⁶ the bearded donor figure of the Thuringian count Sizzo in the west choir apse carries his sword in precisely this manner (fig. 14). So too does the figure of St. Sebastian in a stained glass window nearby, who, departing from traditional iconography, likewise wears a beard and peaked cap.⁶⁷ If the distorted facial features of the captor signaled his “otherness,” then, his sword-bearing pose emphasized his dangerous *likeness* to modern representatives of worldly authority.

What we see here is not, therefore, what Debra Strickland has called an “iconography of rejection”⁶⁸—though, to be sure, it is hardly an iconography of warm toleration either. The tendency in modern scholarship to regard any pictorial denigration of a Jewish figure as evidence *primarily* of cultural anti-Judaism (let alone anti-Semitism) flattens out the complexity both of medieval pictorial languages and of the relationships with and attitudes toward Jews such languages expressed.⁶⁹ At Naumburg, the figure most clearly portrayed as perfidious

“Monumental Gothic Sculpture from Amiens in American Collections,” in *Pierre, lumière, couleur: Études d'histoire de l'art du Moyen Âge en l'honneur d'Anne Prache*, ed. Fabienne Joubert and Dany Sandron (Paris, 1999), 243–53; Jung, “Beyond the Barrier,” 638–39 and 640, fig. 18.

⁶⁵ On the sword as a symbol of judicial power, see Joachim Bumke, *Höfische Kultur: Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter* (Munich, 1986), 226. For this gesture, Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, “Gebärdensprache im mittelalterlichen Recht,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 16 (1982), 363–79. On Jewish rights in medieval Germany, including their right to present cases against Christians, Friedrich Lotter, “The Scope and Effectiveness of Imperial Jewry Law in the High Middle Ages,” *Jewish History* 4 (1989): 31–58.

⁶⁶ See Walter Koschorreck, *Der Sachsenspiegel in Bildern* (Frankfurt am Main, 1976), figs. 21, 35, 36.

⁶⁷ See Christa Schmidt, *Glasfenster im Naumburger Dom* (Berlin, 1975), 8; Schubert and Stekovics, *Naumburger Dom*, 122–27.

⁶⁸ Debra Hassig, “The Iconography of Rejection: Jews and Other Monstrous Races,” in *Image and Belief: Studies in Celebration of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, 1999), 25–46, an idea developed further in her *Saracens*.

⁶⁹ On the problem of historicizing Christian (or secular) attitudes toward Jews, see Johannes Heil, “‘Antijudaismus’ und ‘Antisemitismus’: Begriffe als Bedeutungsträger,” *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 6 (1997): 93–114; and Zygmunt Bauman, “Allosemitism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern,” in *Modernity, Culture and “the Jew,”* ed. Bryan

seems to be targeted not for his Jewishness but for his motivated action as a representative of a legal system—a legal system under which the patrons, the makers, and the intended beholders of the choir screen also lived. The points of likeness that link the Jewish antagonist on the screen to noble Christian figures in the choir make plain that the line between good and bad social behavior was understood to be a fine one. It is in this sense that the captor's caricatured physiognomy becomes important. Precisely in its radical *contrast* to the faces of the other Jewish men in these reliefs—including his companions in this scene, and the character who accuses Christ before Pilate in a subsequent relief (discussed below)—it suggests a displacement of culpability from the Jews as a collective; the pairing of the ugly face with a gesture of active aggression against a peaceable subject—the violent grasping at Christ's chest, the hate-filled facial expression—posits a continuity between inner malevolence, manifested in an ugly exterior, and unjust *acts*. To put it another way: the absence of demonizing features in the other Jewish men in these reliefs suggests that the captor's ugliness arises less from the socio-religious identity he shares with them than from his vicious (even if legally sanctioned) behavior. The anti-Jewish features of this image are thus made to serve a message that includes but also transcends anti-Judaism: namely, that culpability rests on the deeds and motivations of individual agents acting within a highly structured world.

The problem of individual agency arises again in the representation of St. Peter, who wields the only proper weapon to be included in this scene. Here, too, we find a tension between the scriptural texts, in which Peter is immediately chastised by Christ for his aggression against the servant Malchus,⁷⁰ and the image, in which Peter forms a swashbuckling, heroic figure as he lunges across the frontal plane, expertly handling a huge broadsword. The depiction of Malchus as an able-bodied adult in fashionable knightly garb,⁷¹ straining with his upper body against the

Cheyette and Laura Marcus (Stanford, 1998), 143–56. I thank Mitchell Merback for bringing these studies to my attention.

⁷⁰ See Mt. 26:51–54, Lk. 22:49–53, and Jn. 18:10–11. Each account renders Jesus's response to the attack differently; but in each, it is less Peter's violence that Jesus condemns than the underlying presumptions that he was in need of human defensive actions (“Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me . . . more than twelve legions of angels?”) and that the ensuing redemptive process could or should be avoided through such actions (“The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”).

⁷¹ Malchus's garb is nearly identical to that of the noble warrior Saint Pancratus in the stained glass of the choir; see Schmidt, *Glasfenster*, 7.

sword-blade in a vigorous crouching contrapposto, adds to the sense of adventure created by Peter's gesture. This was a highly unusual representational choice for the time. Typically, Malchus appeared as a buffoonish character: short, ugly, poorly dressed—hardly a worthy opponent for the Prince of Apostles. At St-Gilles, Peter ambushes Malchus from behind, grasping his neck with one hand and sawing at his ear with the other while the servant, with bulging eyes and lolling tongue, stumbles awkwardly and struggles for breath (see fig. 4).⁷² His dwarfish counterpart at Modena yanks Christ's elbow as Peter, clutching a handful of the servant's close-shorn hair, calmly clips his ear (see fig. 12).⁷³ The Amienois Malchus sits plopped on the ground as Christ heals his ear from behind the back of Judas, his degradation revealed not only through the natural signs of his body—its scrawny limbs and dumb, slack-jawed face—but also through the conventional signs of clothing and haircut: as at St-Gilles and Modena, he wears the knee-length tunic and cropped hair of the socially low (see fig. 13).⁷⁴ As Peter, garbed in a voluminous mantle, sheathes his (now missing) sword with a grand flourish of the arm, his pride in victory appears misplaced; the disparity both in bodily stature and armaments (a little dagger, still sheathed, dangles at Malchus's side) suggests that there cannot have been much of a contest. A similar scene plays out at Havelberg, where Christ himself appears less to be healing the ear of the diminutive servant, who crawls on the ground clutching his phallic cap between his thighs, than pulling the latter's beard and thereby adding to his degradation.⁷⁵

The parity of the Naumburg figures and the force with which Peter strikes Malchus imbues the episode with a dramatic seriousness absent in other renditions, lending it the flavor of the vernacular epics then being composed in secular (as well as ecclesiastical) courts.⁷⁶

⁷² See Hamann, *Abteikirche*, 1: 84–86; and Stoddard, *Façade*, 95.

⁷³ See Frugoni and Roli, *Il Duomo di Modena*, 2: 669, plate 1311; and Doberer, "Ciclo della passione," 391–98.

⁷⁴ On the association of short hair and garments with servile status, Jung, "Peasant Meal," 48–49.

⁷⁵ Lichte, *Inszenierung*, 53, fig. 35.

⁷⁶ The courts of the margrave of Meissen and the landgraves of Thuringia were hotbeds of literary production in the thirteenth century; see Joachim Bumke, *Mäzene im Mittelalter: Die Gönner und Auftraggeber der höfischen Literatur in Deutschland, 1150–1300* (Munich, 1979). For pictorial depictions of similar swordplay, Joan A. Holladay, *Illuminating the Epic: The Kassel Willehalm Codex and the Landgraves of Hesse in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Seattle, 1996), esp. 171–73, pls. 11–13; and Rita Lejeune and Jacques Stiennon, *The Legend of Roland in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (London, 1971), 1: 235, plate 26. In the

Yet contemporary viewers would have known that the apparent heroism of the Naumburg Peter was compromised by his victim's legal status. The local and imperial prohibitions of Jews and clergy from bearing arms meant that members of both groups, being unable to defend themselves adequately, were legally immune from armed attack.⁷⁷ The *Sachsenspiegel* warned that members of either group who did "carry arms in transgression of the law" forfeited that automatic protection.⁷⁸ But, as noted above, the Jews in the Naumburg relief act in a way consonant with Saxon law in their absence of visible weaponry. Thus Peter's attack, though partially legitimized (in terms of feudal relations) by being performed against an adult enemy in defense of a threatened lord, also conflicted with both chivalric injunctions against attacking any unarmed foes⁷⁹ and legal prohibitions against attacking Jews. If Christians guilty of the former might lose honor, those guilty of the latter might lose their heads; injury to persons under imperial protection was punishable by death.⁸⁰

The little funnel-cap balanced atop Malchus's head would not have offered much protection against Peter's broadsword—a devastating instrument designed for hacking and crushing bones, not slicing off delicate appendages.⁸¹ The relief makes plain that the precision with which the blade falls on the victim's ear cannot be credited to Peter's excellent marksmanship; rather, it is Christ's right hand, pressing forward with palm turned inward, that has gently deflected the blade from what must have been the intended target, Malchus's skull.⁸² Here, too,

Heliand, Peter's violent defense of Christ was likewise legitimated through the transformation of the Jewish servant into "the first man of the enemy"; see *Heliand*, 160; and the commentary by G. Ronald Murphy, S.J., *The Saxon Savior: The Transformation of the Gospel in the Ninth-Century Heliand* (New York, 1989), 106–8.

⁷⁷ *The Saxon Mirror: A Sachsenspiegel of the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Maria Dobozy (Philadelphia, 1999), book 3, par. 2, p. 119. On the extent to which the imperial laws were applied throughout Germany, Lotter, "Scope and Effectiveness."

⁷⁸ *Saxon Mirror*, 119.

⁷⁹ On the ethics of knightly combat, Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble: Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1998), 112–18; and Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1999), esp. 129–88.

⁸⁰ *Saxon Mirror*, book 3, par. 7, p. 118. The accompanying image shows a henchman casually wiping his sword-blade clean as the decapitated body of the Christian perpetrator falls to the ground; see Koschorrek, *Sachsenspiegel*, fig. 32.

⁸¹ John France, *Western Warfare in the Age of the Crusades, 1000–1300* (Ithaca, NY, 1999), 22–23.

⁸² Cf. Gillerman, "Arrest of Christ," 80, who does not seem to notice Christ's gesture. Likewise Schwarz, "Retelling the Passion," disregards this intervention in his discussion at 68.

the image presents an alternative interpretation to the Gospel texts; rather than admonishing Peter for his violence on the grounds that it will prove ineffective and healing the servant *post facto*, Christ is shown *controlling* Peter's violence behind the scenes, guiding the sword blade so as to inflict a comparatively minor injury rather than a grisly death.⁸³ This allows Peter's attack to retain its appearance of (ambivalent) heroism while also saving *two* lives: that of Malchus, whose head is not split in two; and that of Peter himself, who, by killing an unarmed Jew, would have been guilty of a capital offense under Saxon law. Peter thus functions as the dynamic opposite of the Jewish captor in ethical as well as formal terms: if the latter was contemptible for his malicious behavior despite the fact that his action itself was legally sanctioned, Peter appears admirable for his protective behavior despite the fact that his action broke the law.

The presentation of Peter's violence at Gethsemane as a valiant defense of his lord against outside threats—a defense simultaneously controlled and checked by the lord himself—also makes sense in light of the ongoing conflict between the Naumburg bishop and chapter, who, like the Jews, were prohibited from bearing arms, and Margrave Henry the Illustrious of Meissen, whose military prowess and resources were well known and widely feared.⁸⁴ A chastising letter written to the margrave by Innocent IV in 1247—as the choir screen was being planned, if not executed—suggests that Bishop Dietrich perceived his own situation to be like that of Christ on the Mount of Olives, surrounded on all sides by dangerous persecutors. Responding to Dietrich's complaints about the “injuries and offenses” the margrave had inflicted upon “the [Naumburg] church and the persons belonging to it,” the pope warned Henry that “through such grievances to them our Lord Jesus Christ is vexed and seems himself to be persecuted.”⁸⁵ Seen through the lens of

⁸³ Cf. Paulus Hinz, *Der Naumburger Meister: Ein protestantischer Mensch des XIII. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1951), 52, who bizarrely claims that Christ's motion represents the artist's protest against the “kriegerischen Gewaltmethoden der mittelalterlichen Kirche.”

⁸⁴ Wolf Rudolf Lutz, *Heinrich der Erlauchte (1218–88), Markgraf von Meissen und der Ostmark (1221–88), Landgraf von Thüringen und Pfalzgraf von Sachsen (1247–63)*, Erlanger Studien 17 (Erlangen, 1977), 227–320.

⁸⁵ See *Urkundenbuch des Hochstifts Naumburg, Teil 2 (1207–1304)*, ed. Hans K. Schulze (Cologne, 2000), no. 213, entry for January 22, 1247 (Lyon), pp. 238–39 at 238: “Quanto maiores creduntur potentie tue vires, tanto amplius te decet et convenit, ut ab ecclesiarum et personarum ecclesiasticarum abstineas iniuriis et offensis, cum in ipsarum molestiis offendatur et persequi videatur ipse dominus Iesus Christus.”

such circumstances, the image of Peter's violence may have reminded local laymen of their duties to protect Christ, in the person of their bishop, against *any* outside encroachments—even as Christ's salutary intervention in the attack highlights the need to keep violence under control. The absence of demonizing devices in the portrayal of Malchus suggests that it was not specifically the Jews who were targeted, but anyone, including well-dressed nobles, who posed a threat.

This idea comes to the fore even more sharply in the depiction of Christ's trial before Pilate (fig. 15). Although Pilate's identity as a Roman prefect was well-known from the Gospel texts, and although the same texts stressed that it not malice but spinelessness that caused him to capitulate to calls for Jesus's blood, medieval artists tended to invest him with the same monstrous qualities—and sometimes the same attributes—as they did the Jews themselves. At St-Gilles and Modena, this likeness is conveyed through the clothing and body language of both Pilate and Caiaphas. At St-Gilles, each man sits frontally with splayed knees, his left arm extended and his right hand planted on his thigh, the elbow jutting outward from beneath a cloak fastened at shoulder.⁸⁶ Pilate and Caiaphas resemble each other even more closely on the *pontile* at Modena; not only do they wear identical clothing and echo one another in their angular arm positions, but they also display matching beards, prominent noses, and distinctive headdresses (a peaked cap for Caiaphas, a turban for Pilate).⁸⁷ Nearly two hundred years later the sculptors at Havelberg highlighted the depravity of the Roman prefect by giving him the costume, beard, and beaked nose of the Jewish Elders depicted elsewhere in the series (see figs. 5 and 6).

At Naumburg, Pilate appears as a contemporary Saxon count. Seated with his ankles crossed in the conventional pose of judicial authority, he wears a richly ornamented cyclas and cloak, along with the fur-lined flapped hat of a high-level judicial arbitrator.⁸⁸ His wavy bobbed

⁸⁶ See Stoddard, *Façade*, 82, figs. 111–112.

⁸⁷ See Frugoni and Roli, *Il Duomo di Modena*, 2: 670, plate 1312.

⁸⁸ The donor figures Dietmar and Sizzo, both visible through the screen's central portal, wear elements of this garb—the former the flapped cap, the latter the sleeveless tunic; see Schubert and Stekovics, *Naumburger Dom*, 92 (Dietmar), 97–99 (Sizzo). On crossed ankles or legs as a sign of authority, see H. Bächtold-Stäubli, “Beine kreuzen oder verschränken,” *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 26 (1925–26): 47–54. In the *Sachsenspiegel* illustrations, the flapped cap is worn exclusively by upper-level judges (counts); see Koschorreck, *Sachsenspiegel*, 74.

hairstyle and his facial features, with a narrow nose, clean-shaven cheeks, robust jaw, and firm chin, echo those of John in the Last Supper and other Apostles in the Arrest scene. This physiognomy forms a marked contrast to that of Christ's bearded accuser, who, with mouth open in speech and finger pressed emphatically against his own chest, confronts Pilate from across the frontal plane. Yet despite his physiognomic difference from the Roman prefect, the Jewish figure cannot be said to be "demonized" in the way that his counterpart in the Arrest scene had been. The agitation conveyed by his furrowed brows and slightly opened mouth—a similar expression, again, to that of the donor Sizzo in the choir (see fig. 14)—acquires meaning and motivation through the figure's conventional gestures of legal complaint; with his right hand turning inward against the chest to assert the speaker's own agency, he grasps Christ's wrist with his left, not in a spontaneous motion of brutality or disrespect but in a formalized gesture that, according to the illustrations in Saxon law codes, was used when bringing an untried prisoner before a judicial authority.⁸⁹

Despite the contrasting physical appearances of the Jewish plaintiff and the Roman judge, the sculptor has asserted continuity between them through the introduction of auxiliary figures in the background. Inverting the usual practice of applying to Pilate the distorted features of Jews, the Naumburg sculptor has flanked Christ with two identical attendants; wearing the funnel-caps that align them with Christ's accuser but displaying facial features and expressions identical to those of Pilate, they forge a visual link between plaintiff and judge. This absence of physical difference not only corresponds more closely to contemporary social reality than the sharp distinctions typically drawn between Jews and Gentiles in thirteenth-century art; it also enables the sculptor to shift the responsibility for the impending execution from either a single individual (Pilate) or a single group (the Jews) to the larger judicial *system* in which they all played a part.

Taken together, the Naumburg Passion reliefs thus convey a twofold message, one fraught with ambiguity and tension. On the one hand, the images emphasize the dangers posed by renegade actions within a rigorous social order (witness Judas's behavior both at the Last Supper and at Caiaphas's court). On the other, they pin responsibility for the unjust

⁸⁹ Koschorreck, *Sachsenspiegel*, fig. 63. The corresponding textual passage does not describe this gesture; see *Saxon Mirror*, Book 3, par. 60, p. 131.

treatment of an innocent man on a social order—envisioned in terms of the contemporary legal system—that subsumes everyone, regardless of religious identity (Pilate and the Jewish accusers alike). The Jews play their role here, to be sure; and the caricatured depiction of the captor in the Arrest scene proves that the screen's designer was hardly averse to employing well-worn pictorial methods of disparagement where the narrative called for the depiction of overtly malevolent behavior. But the images' simultaneous insistence on his and other figures' outward conformity to long-established codes of law, combined with the neutral or ambiguous portrayals of Jews in the remaining reliefs, suggests that the sculptor's and patron's concern was not primarily (if at all) to feed the flames of anti-Jewish sentiment. If, in general, the depiction of biblical Jews wearing modern clothes represented the medieval church's effort to pile "the sins of Jesus' contemporaries... upon the collective head of medieval Jewry,"⁹⁰ it must be admitted that at Naumburg, unlike at Modena, Havelberg, and elsewhere, the heads of judicial officials and other secular nobles were also made to bear a good deal of weight. Yet within this system of discrete, though also interlocking and overlapping, social communities and jurisdictions—the courtly nobles represented by Christ and his friends, well-to-do Jews, and judicial administrators—it was individual, self-motivated decisions and actions that propelled the narrative onward to its awful, bloody end.

Art as Mediator: Social Ethics and Local Politics in Medieval Naumburg

The thirteenth-century clergy of Naumburg Cathedral and the laypeople who attended Mass there on feast days were certainly aware of the anti-Jewish attitudes that undergird the Passion narrative; the Gospel writers themselves worked to enkindle bitterness toward Christ's Jewish persecutors.⁹¹ Nor would they have been ignorant of the anti-Jewish ramifications of the heightened attention to Christ's suffering humanity characteristic of high medieval theological currents⁹² and

⁹⁰ See the quotation by Trachtenberg above.

⁹¹ See Trachtenberg, *Devil and the Jews*, 20. For anti-Jewish sentiments in the centuries just before and just after Christ, see Kurt Schubert, "Gottesvolk—Teufelsvolk—Gottesvolk," in Jüdisches Museum, ed., *Macht der Bilder*, 30–52.

⁹² On the correlation between the rise of anti-Judaism and the "new humanism" of the so-called Twelfth-Century Renaissance, see Robert Chazan, "The Deteriorating Image of the Jews—Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Christendom and Its Discontents*:

embodied, with unprecedented naturalism and emotional force, in the great Crucifixion group in their screen's central portal (see fig. 1).⁹³ The placement of the corpus in the doorway itself, rather than in its usual location atop the screen,⁹⁴ aimed to stimulate a new intensity in affective response. No longer aloof and triumphal, presiding over activity in the nave from on high, the broken body of Christ at Naumburg was made physically accessible and psychologically immediate, implicating each beholder who approached or passed through the doorway in the spectacle and drama of violent death.⁹⁵

Through the stunning physical presence of the life-sized crucifix in the door, the engagement of viewers by the weeping Mary and John in the jambs, and the private nature of the confrontation between Christ and each individual traversing the portal, the culminating moment of the Passion was pulled from the distant biblical past into the here-and-now of the thirteenth-century Saxon cathedral.⁹⁶ In light of the fact that this Crucifixion scene itself was continually animated by the bodies of real people moving through it, it makes sense that the preceding narrative moments pictured in the reliefs above would show Christ surrounded by characters drawn from that same modern (i.e., mid-thirteenth-century) world. The nature and extent of identification between living subjects and the subjects of representation would have varied according to the viewer's social station, rank, gender, and so forth; what is clear, however, is that the program as a whole demonstrates a deep interest in contemporary questions of noble comportment and conduct within a rigidly structured social order.

As I have suggested, the concern with exploring the (largely negative) consequences of individual agency in the Naumburg Passion overrode

Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000–1500, ed. Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl (Cambridge, 1996), 220–33, esp. 226; Anna Abulafia, "Twelfth-Century Renaissance Theology and the Jews," in Cohen, ed., *From Witness to Witchcraft*, 125–39. For the state of the question of the Jews' guilt for Christ's death in the mid-thirteenth century, see Hood, *Aquinas*, 62–76.

⁹³ See Gerhard Lutz, *Das Bild des Gekreuzigten im Wandel: Die sächsischen und westfälischen Kruzifixe der ersten Hälfte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Petersberg, 2004), esp. 46–47; Jung, "West Choir Screen," 112–229; and Michael Viktor Schwarz, "Mittelbarkeit und Unmittelbarkeit medial: Der Gekreuzigte am Naumburger Westchor," in *Visuelle Medien im christlichen Kult: Fallstudien aus dem 13. bis 16. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 2002), 25–64.

⁹⁴ See Reiner Hausscherr, "Triumphkreuzgruppen der Stauferzeit," in Hausscherr and Väterlein, eds., *Zeit der Staufer*, 5: 131–68.

⁹⁵ See also Schwarz, "Mittelbarkeit und Unmittelbarkeit."

⁹⁶ On the spatial and optical dynamics of the portal group, Jung, "Seeing through Screens."

any concern with displaying the (supposedly negative) traits of any one group. Although included in large numbers, the Jewish characters at Naumburg comprise one group among several whose members propel the narrative forward. By eschewing the usual demonizing devices, and thereby downplaying any systematic Jewish antagonism, the program runs counter to the heightened vilification of the Jews evident in so many other areas of mid-thirteenth-century social life and representational practices.⁹⁷ In this sense, the reliefs served to mediate two overlapping yet seemingly contradictory sets of concerns: one the one hand, large-scale changes in ethics, manifested in a new attention to individual intentionality in various cultural domains,⁹⁸ and, on the other, old-fashioned small-scale political interests—in this case, the episcopal patron's concern to protect "his" Jews from local hostility, which, he knew, could easily escalate into violence.⁹⁹

Although written documents do not attest the presence of Jewish residents in Naumburg until the fourteenth century, the location of the *Judengasse* in a central location, just next to the marketplace, suggests that they had settled in the town at a considerably earlier date.¹⁰⁰ They were

⁹⁷ For social manifestations of anti-Judaism in this period, Trachtenberg, *Devil and the Jews*; R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250* (London, 1987); and Gavin I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Anti-Semitism* (Berkeley, 1990). For their intellectual underpinnings, Amos Funkenstein, "Basic Types of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages," *Viator* 2 (1971): 373–82; and Jeremy Cohen, "The Jews as the Killers of Christ in the Latin Tradition, from Augustine to the Friars," *Traditio* 39 (1983): 1–27. For manifestations in devotional writings, Thomas H. Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature in Medieval Society* (Philadelphia, 1996), 68–110; and Gavin I. Langmuir, "The Tortures of the Body of Christ," in Waugh and Diehl, eds., *Christendom and Its Discontents*, 287–309; in vernacular literature, see Winfried Frey, "Gottesmörder und Menschenfeinde: Zum Judenbild in der deutschen Literatur der Mittelalters," in Ebenbauer and Zatloukal, eds., *Juden in ihrer mittelalterlichen Umwelt*, 35–51; and in visual images, Stefan Rohrbacher, "The Charge of Deicide: An Anti-Jewish Motif in Medieval Christian Art," *Journal of Medieval History* 17 (1991): 297–321.

⁹⁸ See note 12 above.

⁹⁹ On the easy slippage from anti-Jewish rhetoric to actual violence and back again, see Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, 1999); and Mitchell B. Merback, "Fount of Mercy, City of Blood: Cultic Anti-Judaism and the Pulkau Passion Altarpiece," *Art Bulletin* 87, no. 4 (Dec. 2005): 589–642, which appeared as this essay neared completion. As David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1996) reminds us, such violence was often motivated by social and political factors unrelated to religious identity *per se*.

¹⁰⁰ Dorothea Quien, "Zur Geschichte der Juden in Naumburg während des Mittelalters, 1302–1426," Kirchengeschichtliche Seminararbeit, Naumburg 1984 (Stadtarchiv Naumburg, photocopy), 19. On the significance of the location of Jewish quarters generally, see Haverkamp, "Jewish Quarters."

well established in the diocese by 1302, when they were mentioned in a charter as moneylenders in Pforte, five kilometers from Naumburg.¹⁰¹ During his tenure, Bishop Dietrich seems to have taken advantage of the moneylenders in his midst—to the ultimate detriment of his diocese. In 1282, ten years after his death, his successor Ludolph complained of the impoverished state of the Naumburg church, as he sold off dozens of episcopal properties in order to begin clearing the debts accrued during Dietrich's reign.¹⁰² Some of the borrowed money must have been spent defending the church's interests against the margrave of Meissen, as Heinz Wiessner and Irene Crusius have recently argued.¹⁰³ But if we take seriously Dietrich's insistence that he was indeed eager to "finish what has been begun" of the west choir—as a funding plea circulated in 1249 states¹⁰⁴—it is reasonable to suppose that the money he had borrowed at precisely this time, possibly from Jews, was put into that endeavor. Cash-strapped as he was, Dietrich may not have wanted the images in his church to kindle hostility toward those providing him with substantial financial resources.

He did have good reason to worry about the safety of local Jews, given the well-known events of the previous decade. In late 1235, five Christian boys had perished in a fire that consumed their father's mill in Fulda. Fingers were immediately pointed at two Jewish men, who admitted that they had indeed killed the boys in order to collect their blood.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Quien, "Geschichte der Juden," 19.

¹⁰² Schulze, ed., *Urkundenbuch*, Charter 497, entry for September 15, 1282 (Merseburg), 536–38 at 536: "Nam alicubi apud iudeos absorbebamur usurarum voragine, alicubi bona ecclesie nostre . . . obligata erant tytulo pignoris, alicubi vero fideiussores nostri a creditoribus nostris moniti secundum formam promissionis eorum iacere cogebantur more fideiussorio cum magno nostro et ecclesie nostre dispendio sive dampno."

¹⁰³ Heinz Wiessner and Irene Crusius, "Adeliges Burgstift und Reichskirche: Zu den historischen Voraussetzungen des Naumburger Westchores und seiner Stifterfiguren," in *Studien zum weltlichen Kollegiatstift in Deutschland*, ed. Irene Crusius (Göttingen, 1995), 232–58 at 246–48.

¹⁰⁴ The funding plea, issued in 1249 by Bishop Dietrich and the cathedral chapter and directed toward "all the faithful of every rank" (*omnis conditionis fidelibus*) is our most important source for dating the west choir. It names the church's twelve most important early (lay) patrons, many of whom were represented in the donor figures of the choir, and urges the living to join their ranks by contributing money to complete the building project (*consummationem totius operis*); see Schulze, ed., *Urkundenbuch*, 257–58 (Charter 236); for translation and further discussion, Jung, "West Choir Screen," 16–21.

¹⁰⁵ On Fulda case, see Langmuir, *Toward a Definition*, 263–81; and Friedrich Lotter, "Aufkommen und Verbreitung von Ritualmord- und Hostienfrevellanklagen gegen Juden," in *Jüdisches Museum*, ed., *Macht der Bilder*, 60–78 at 66–67. On the blood libel, see Trachtenberg, *Devil and the Jews*, 140–55.

The Christian townspeople, perhaps spurred on directly by the abbot of Fulda and certainly filled with fantasies of the bloody heretical rituals uncovered by the inquisitor Conrad of Marburg, killed the thirty-four Jews who then lived in Fulda before carrying the bodies of the boys to Emperor Frederick II in Hagenau. Despite Frederick's dismissal of the boys' sanctity, they were buried "with honor, as if they were martyrs." "There followed," the chronicler adds, "great persecutions against the Jews" throughout the region.¹⁰⁶ If the presentation of the bodies to the emperor was meant to urge him to sanction violence against the Jews (or to legitimate the cult in the absence of papal authorization), the plan backfired. For Jewish citizens, feeling the impending threats against them, had already appealed to Frederick for help.¹⁰⁷ He called together an assembly of converted Jews from England and France to comb the writings of the Talmud and the Hebrew scriptures for any demands for Christian blood, and came up empty. Thereafter, Frederick intensified measures to protect "his" Jews not only in Fulda but throughout the Empire, forbidding not only violence against them but even any accusations that they were out for blood and placing all the Empire's Jews under his immediate protection and legal jurisdiction.¹⁰⁸

Nonetheless, virulent anti-Judaism reemerged in 1247, when many Jews in the town of Valréas, at the westernmost border of the Empire, were tortured and killed for purportedly having crucified a young child.¹⁰⁹ This time, it was Pope Innocent IV who leapt to their defense, condemning the persecutions, proclaiming the accusations false and forbidding similar ones in the future, and confirming his protection of Jews in a series of bulls issued during the same year.¹¹⁰ During this period of tension between Jews and Christians, aggravated by crusading

¹⁰⁶ Johannes Trithemius, *Chronicum Monasterium Hirsaugenses* (written 1509–1514), quoted in *Varia insonderheit zur Witterungs-Geschichte, Band II, 1201–1400* (Naumburg Stadtarchiv, manuscript Sa 37): "Eodem anno [1236], ante expeditionem Imperatoris praescriptam in Italiam Judaei in oppido Fuldensi com(mem)orantes, quosdam pueros Christianorum ut sanguinem eoru(m) reciperent, in quodam molendino etiam occiderunt. Quo comperto facinore, multi ex eius combusti sunt. Corpora autem puerorum Imperatori conspicienda ad Hagenau praesentata sunt, et ibidem quasi martyrum cum honore sepulta, et subsequuta est magna in Judaeos persecutio."

¹⁰⁷ I rely on Lotter, "Aufkommen und Verbreitung," 66 for the following information.

¹⁰⁸ Lotter, "Scope and Effectiveness," argues that German bishops consistently supported the repeated imperial injunctions against Jewish persecutions.

¹⁰⁹ Langmuir, *Toward a Definition*, 265.

¹¹⁰ For the original bull of May 28, 1247, see Grayzel, *Church and the Jews*, 264–67. Further protection was granted the Jews of Germany in a bull of July 5, 1247; see *ibid.*, 268–71.

fervor abroad and searches for heretics at home, the protection of Jews was one of very few points on which emperor and pope agreed. And while on cathedral façades and screens elsewhere Jewish degradation was visualized in figures of blind, helpless Synagoga¹¹¹ or hook-nosed villains gleefully battering Christ, the creators of the Naumburg Passion program took care to assure that no more malice could be ascribed to the Jewish characters than was required by the Gospel narrative—and that even this would be mitigated by an emphasis on enemies closer to home (the hatless Judas, the Saxon count Pilate).

While we do not have written documentation of special protection offered by Dietrich toward the Jews in his diocese, we also have no records of violence against them during or after his tenure. Events recorded in subsequent centuries indicate a close, persistent connection between episcopal authorities and the local Jewish community. During the Black Death in 1348–49, the Naumburg Jews were accused of plotting to set fire to the town, and the margrave of Meissen, Frederick, swiftly ordered their destruction.¹¹² This measure was opposed by the citizenry, however, and in the following year Jews were still living within the city walls. The arson accusation was later acknowledged to have arisen from the margrave's political hostility *toward the Naumburg bishop*.¹¹³ Thus we have a clear case in which actions undertaken against Jews were calculated to harm an ecclesiastical leader who both relied on their financial support and was legally bound to protect them.¹¹⁴ Yet the intimate association of Naumburg clerics with high-placed Jews continued unabated. In 1372, the bishop Gerhard was reprimanded by the pope for maintaining too close contact with a Jewish man named Marquard, who seems to have participated often in official church business.¹¹⁵

Although the twenty-two Jewish families still living in Naumburg by 1411 would be subjected to extortion at the hand of magistrates, no drastic measures were taken against this community until later in

¹¹¹ See the contribution by Nina Rowe in this volume.

¹¹² Quien, "Geschichte der Juden," 20–21.

¹¹³ Ibid., 20, citing the chronicler Sixtus Braun, who claims that the accusation was made, in part, "weil der Bischof um diese Zeit einen Feind gehabt."

¹¹⁴ For the political uses of anti-Jewish violence in Spain, see Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*. Much of this had to do with the Jews' legal status as private property of the local ecclesiastical or secular lord; see James Parkes, *The Jew in the Medieval Community*, 2nd rev. edn. (New York, 1976), 101–54.

¹¹⁵ Martin Onnasch, "Naumburg," in *Wegweiser durch das jüdische Sachsen-Anhalt*, ed. Jutta Dick and Marina Sassenberg (Potsdam, 1998), 143; and Wiessner, *Bistum Naumburg*, 858–59.

the century. In 1454, concurrent with the establishment of a Corpus Christi fraternity, came a mandate requiring the Naumburg Jews to wear distinguishing hats.¹¹⁶ Forty years later, the city council, with the encouragement of the Saxon duke and imperial elector Frederick the Wise, expelled the Jews from the town “for all eternity.”¹¹⁷ This was considered a major blow to the bishop, who received for his loss a yearly fee of sixty Gulden, which the city continued to pay until 1803. In 1496, the synagogue, located near the center of town, was demolished and its stones used for new constructions. Today, more than five hundred years after the expulsion, the only Jews to be found in Naumburg reside in the cathedral, in the Passion reliefs of the west choir screen.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Onnasch, “Naumburg,” 144. Onnasch connects this mandate with the intensified interest in Christian self-definition manifested in the fraternity, in a lecture given in the Naumburg Marienkirche, May 14, 1994, titled “Die Ausweisung der Juden aus Naumburg vor 500 Jahren” (manuscript in Naumburg Stadtarchiv), 2.

¹¹⁷ An unsigned relief commemorating the event, made in 1994, is installed in the wall along the Judengasse in present-day Naumburg. On the expulsion and its repercussions, see Onnasch, “Naumburg,” 144–45.

¹¹⁸ Onnasch, “Ausweisung der Juden,” 20. To my knowledge, no Jewish families have moved to Naumburg since Onnasch cited this statistic in 1998.