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*Illuminating "Cardboard Villains:"
The Christian Witness against Judaism in a "Bible Moralisée"
(Codex Vindobonensis 2554)*

ABSTRACT: "Moralized Bibles" (*Bibles moralisées*) are among the most famous illuminated manuscripts of the European Middle Ages. Analyzing an image from *Codex Vindobonensis 2554* (fol. 3v-b), this essay demonstrates how Christians in thirteenth-century France used art to depict Jews as direct enemies to Christianity, the Church, and the very person of Christ.

KEYWORDS: *medieval history; art history; France; St. Augustine of Hippo; King Louis IX of France; Christianity; Judaism; anti-Judaism; Bible moralisée; Codex Vindobonensis 2554*

Introduction

According to Sara Lipton, a medieval historian at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, the early Church Father Augustine of Hippo (354-430) asserted that it was "the Jews' primary function [...] to serve both as 'witness to' and as 'living signs of' Christian truth and triumph."¹ The use of Jewish iconography in Christian art was a potential tool to illustrate Augustine's assertion but, as Lipton observes, "for the first thousand years of the Christian era, there were no visible Jews in Western art [...]. Then, quite suddenly, shortly after the year 1000, the Jew emerged from obscurity."² Once Jewish iconography surfaced in the context of Christian art, theology inspired the brushstrokes of artistic design, and "Augustine's conception of Jewish witness finally [made its] way into art."³ Lipton argues that Christian depictions of Jews developed in various stages from the eleventh century onward, and [that] by the end of the medieval era "the Jew became one of the most powerful and poisonous symbols in all of Christian art."⁴

While Lipton draws a direct connection between Augustinian theology and Christian art during and after the eleventh century, other scholars suggest that there was a widespread break from Augustine's view of the Jews, which was replaced by a much harsher theological depiction of anti-Jewish sentiment. As David E. Timmer, a professor of religion, points out, "the Augustinian tradition had been characterized by its assumption that the Jews, despite their unbelief, were to be tolerated within Christian society."⁵ However, at least in northern Europe, this assumption had been cast aside by the eleventh century: The crusades of 1096 and 1146 were accompanied by massacres of French and German Jews,

¹ Sara Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014), 4.

² Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 1.

³ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 5-6.

⁴ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 1.

⁵ David T. Timmer, "Biblical Exegesis and the Jewish-Christian Controversy in the Early Twelfth Century," *Church History* 58, no. 3 (1989): 309-321, here 310.

and by the middle of the thirteenth century, French authorities were sponsoring public burnings of the Talmud.⁶ Timmer's observations align with historian Michael Frassetto's claim that a "reappraisal of the theological conception of the Jews and rejection of the Augustinian doctrine of witness emerged after the turn of the year 1000."⁷ Frassetto suggests that there was a "clear step toward the demonization of the Jews."⁸ Timmer, in a similar tone but pointing ahead in time, suggests that "a threshold was crossed in the thirteenth century."⁹

The European Christian attitude toward Jews is, quite literally, reflected by the images of medieval moralized Bibles (*Bibles moralisées*). According to art historian Arthur Haseloff, these richly illuminated (i.e., illustrated) Bibles represent "la plus vaste entreprise du Moyen Age en fait de miniature" (i.e., "the most extensive undertaking of the Middle Ages with regard to miniatures"),¹⁰ and, more recently, art historian Gerald B. Guest has stated that "the known corpus of moralized Bibles contains the most extensive cycle of biblical illustration to have survived the Middle Ages."¹¹ But these images extend beyond the realms of art and educated entertainment. Lipton stresses that these manuscripts "illuminate not only theological anti-Jewish polemic [...] but also some of the values and concerns permeating thirteenth-century French Christian culture proper."¹² In other words, the scenes depicted in the moralized Bibles facilitate our understanding of medieval Christians' assumptions and commitments. Returning the agency to the manuscripts and their creators, Guest argues that "the purpose of the moralized Bible was to interpret contemporary moral problems through the veil of sacred scripture,"¹³ and in this respect Judaism emerges as a primary matter. According to Lipton, "Jews and Judaism are a central – I would even suggest in some ways the fundamental – theme of the artistic program of these manuscripts."¹⁴ Thus, the moralized Bibles' illuminations capture contemporary European Christian attitudes toward the Jews, and they reflect the transition toward an increasingly antisemitic perception.

⁶ Timmer, "Biblical Exegesis," 310.

⁷ Michael Frassetto, "Augustine's Doctrine of Witness and Attitudes toward the Jews in the Eleventh Century," *Church History and Religious Culture* 87, no. 3 (2007): 287-304, here 289.

⁸ Frassetto, "Augustine's Doctrine," 294.

⁹ Timmer, "Biblical Exegesis," 310.

¹⁰ Arthur Haseloff, "La miniature dans les pays cisalpins depuis le commencement du XII^e jusqu'au milieu du XIV^e siècle," in *Histoire de l'Art depuis les premiers temps chrétiens jusqu'à nos jours*, ed. André Michel, 8 vols. (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1906), 2: 297-371, here 336.

¹¹ Gerald Guest, *Bible moralisée: Codex Vindobonensis 2554*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (London: Harvey Miller, 1995), 1.

¹² Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible Moralisée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 4.

¹³ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 23.

¹⁴ Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 1.

Lipton especially has mined these works. She argues that they "constitute an unprecedented visual polemic against Jews."¹⁵ One of these highly illuminated manuscripts interests us here: the famous thirteenth-century *Bible Moralisée* held as Codex Vindobonensis 2554 in Vienna's Österreichische Nationalbibliothek and available in its entirety online.¹⁶ Considering the alleged theological transition in thirteenth-century northern Europe, this essay analyzes a particular artistic scene unexplored by Lipton. The medallion or roundlet "b" on fol. 3v of Codex 2554 (hereafter: fol. 3v-b) displays an image of Christ on the cross, flanked by two figures on his right and two on his left. These separate parties are decidedly juxtaposed. The image contains theological undertones that reveal a developing shift in Christian thought. I hope to offer a new perspective, namely, one that reveals how Christians artistically constructed Christ as witness against the Jews, and to show how this visual polemic reveals and aligns with the period's changing Christian commitments. To a degree, this image serves as an entry point to the transition of Christian theology and art in the thirteenth century. Ultimately, the Augustinian Jewish witness of Christianity was inverted and transformed into a blatant Christian witness against Judaism.

I. The Manuscript: Codex Vindobonensis 2554

The authors and artists of Codex 2554 are unknown, but there is information regarding the manuscript's provenance. It was produced sometime between 1215 and 1230 in Paris, France,¹⁷ and, according to Erin Grady, "commissioned by or for Blanche of Castile [the mother of King Louis IX of France] and executed by members of a religious house in the vicinity."¹⁸ While its ownership during the medieval period remains somewhat of a mystery, it had made its way into the hands of Luxembourg's De Mercy family by the sixteenth century.¹⁹ In 1567, it was relocated to the Königliches Damenstift in Hall (Tyrol), Austria,²⁰ where it resided until 1783.²¹ In that same year, it was relocated to Vienna's Court Library, now the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, where it is presently housed as Codex 2554.²²

The Vienna *Bible moralisée* is identifiable by its unique physical traits. It is a bound book (codex), measuring 344 mm by 260 mm, and consists of 131 parchment folios (or 262 pages) in 19 gatherings of 8 leaves.²³ It is paginated (by a later hand,

¹⁵ Lipton, *Images of Intolerance*, 1.

¹⁶ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis 2554 (*Bible moralisée*), ms. s. XIII, [online](#), accessed June 14, 2022.

¹⁷ *Bible Moralisée: Facsimile Edition*, [online](#), accessed June 14, 2022.

¹⁸ Erin Grady, "Moralizing Monsters: Heretics in the Bible Moralisée, Vienna 2554" (M.A. thesis, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016), 2.

¹⁹ *Bible Moralisée: Facsimile Edition*.

²⁰ *Bible Moralisée: Facsimile Edition*.

²¹ *Bible Moralisée: Facsimile Edition*.

²² *Bible Moralisée: Facsimile Edition*.

²³ Grady, "Moralizing Monsters," 2.

in pencil), and the binding dates from the modern era. Codex 2554 is written in black Gothic book script (Gothic textualis or textura), and it utilizes red and blue initials, as well as rubrics.²⁴ The language of the text corresponding to the images is written in Old French.²⁵ Most importantly, Codex 2554 contains an impressive number of images: it features one full-page miniature and an additional 129 pages of 8 illustrated medallions (or roundlets) each — 1,032 roundlets in total.²⁶

The Old Testament serves as Codex 2554's textual foundation. It includes the Torah, consisting of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Fols. 1v, 1r-8v, and 10r-15r highlight scenes from the book of Genesis, including the creation narrative, the story of the Garden of Eden, the account of Noah, and the lives of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while dedicating fols. 7r-8v and 10r-15r to the life of Joseph.²⁷ Fols. 16r-26v focus on Exodus, including Moses's early life, Israel's departure from Egypt, and the Israelites' forty years of wandering through the wilderness.²⁸ Fols. 27r-30v pertain to Leviticus, a book on early Jewish law and customs;²⁹ fols. 30v-33v cover the book of Numbers;³⁰ and fols. 9r-9v feature excerpts from Deuteronomy (chapters 27, 28, 31, and 34).³¹

In addition to these five books, Codex 2554 also includes the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Kings, II Kings, III Kings, and IV Kings. Fol. 34r presents the book of Joshua, which is limited to chapters 4 and 6, and recounts the story of Israel's victory over Jericho.³² The book of Judges appears on fols. 58v-63v and recalls the stories of Gideon, Abimelech and Jephthah, and Samson.³³ Fols. 63v and 34v focus on the book of Ruth.³⁴ Fols. 35r-43r is dedicated to the first book of Kings, particularly the stories of the prophet Samuel, King Saul, David's defeat of Goliath, and the death of Saul.³⁵ The second book of Kings is documented on fols. 43r-48v and features David's ascension to the throne, the Ark of the Covenant, and David's affair with Bathsheba.³⁶ Fols. 48v-56r visualize the third book of Kings, including David's death, the wisdom of Solomon, the stories of Rehoboam and Jeroboam, and the accounts of Elijah and Jezebel.³⁷ The final book illuminated in Codex 2554

²⁴ *Bible Moralisée: Facsimile Edition*.

²⁵ Grady, "Moralizing Monsters," 3.

²⁶ Grady, "Moralizing Monsters," 2-3.

²⁷ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 53-68.

²⁸ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 69-84.

²⁹ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 84-88.

³⁰ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 88-93.

³¹ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 93-94.

³² Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 94.

³³ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 95-105.

³⁴ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 106.

³⁵ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 107-120.

³⁶ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 120-128.

³⁷ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 128-140.

is the fourth book of Kings, fols. 56r-58r. It tells of Elijah's chariot ride to heaven, the passing of Elijah's mantle to Elisha, and Elisha's various miracles.³⁸

All these Old-Testament stories are visualized in the manuscript's roundlets.³⁹ The roundlets are grouped in two rows of four per page, and they follow a particular pattern of progression (A-a-B-b-C-c-D-d).⁴⁰ The top-left roundlet (A), for instance, corresponds to an Old-Testament passage. The roundlet directly below it (a) depicts a moralized interpretation for Christians living in thirteenth-century France, occasionally infused with New-Testament depictions. The reader then transitions to the two roundlets on the top right, the first (B) being a biblical commentary and the second (b) a moralized commentary. Following this, the reader moves on to the two bottom-left roundlets (C-c) and finally to the two bottom-right roundlets (D-d). The relationship between the Old-Testament story and scenery followed by the thirteenth-century depiction of an application provides unique insight into Christian medieval thought, especially relating to Jews.

II. Visualizing Jews in the Moralized Bible

The focus of my analysis is a roundlet from Codex 2554 that displays Christ, Christians, and Jews. This roundlet is located on fol. 3v and corresponds with text b, which states, *ce qe li uns des freres le descoovri & li autre le recovrire[n]t senefie les gieus qi descoovrire[n]t la honte iesu c[r]ist & li crestien le recovrirent* ("that one of the brothers [of the sons of Noah] un-covered him [i.e., Noah] and the others re-covered him signifies the Jews who un-covered the shame of Jesus Christ and the Christians who re-covered him").⁴¹ The roundlet's background is gold; it is enclosed in a red sphere; and it contains five figures. In the center, above the other four figures, hangs Christ, a red halo surrounding his head; he is nailed to the cross with his arms outstretched wide; his head rests on his right shoulder; and there is a blue sash around his waist. On the left side (i.e., the right side from Christ's perspective), stand two barefooted Christians, recognizable as such because the head of one of them is surrounded by a golden halo. The Christian closest to Christ's body is dressed in a green robe; he looks directly at Christ and extends the white sash hanging from his shoulders toward Christ. Slightly behind him stands another Christian, dressed in a blue robe with a red sash hanging from his shoulders; his left hand shields his eyes from gazing upon Christ's crucified body and his right hand holds his red sash (which, upon closer inspection, appears to extend all the way into the right hand of the other Christian who, thus, extends both his white sash and the other's red sash toward Christ). On the opposite side (i.e., the left side from Christ's perspective), stand two Jews, recognizable as such

³⁸ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 140-144.

³⁹ See Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 2, for a chart displaying the picture-text organization.

⁴⁰ See Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 2, for a chart displaying the picture-text organization.

⁴¹ Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 57.

because one of them wears the white pointed hat (*pileus cornutus*) associated with Jews in medieval iconography. Both are bearded and wear shoes. The one toward the front is trying to pull the blue sash away from Christ's waist; he is dressed in red and yellow (not gold – a material illuminators generally would not have used for Jews), and his eyes are fixed on the blue sash. The one toward the back, wearing the white pointed hat, is dressed in red; he looks directly at Christ and extends a stick with something fixed atop (presumably the vinegar-soaked sponge mentioned in the Gospel accounts)⁴² toward Christ.

The precise intentions of the artist who created this roundlet are impossible to know, but Christian art at this time certainly depicted Jews alongside the crucified Christ. Lipton has explored such scenes and argues that they generally reveal conceptions about sight. Expanding on the Augustinian notion of witness, Lipton remarks that "a remarkable number of these images highlight not only what the Jews look like but, even more, how – and whether – they see."⁴³ However, the crucifixion art explored by Lipton usually pertains to Christ and the Jews without the presence of Christians. Codex 2554's roundlet of fol. 3v-b displays Christians contrasted with Jews, and it places Christ as the dividing figure. Christ, Christians, and Jews appear together, and they all display some sort of gaze: Christ looks toward the Christians, one Christian looks toward Christ, the other Christian covers his eyes, one Jew is fixated on the sash covering Christ's waist, and the other stares at Christ. This company of multiple viewers suggests an extension of Jewish sight. It is in this contrast of vision that a theological departure from the Augustinian notion of sight to a more radical anti-Jewish commitment is revealed. Each particular gaze works toward this perspective.

Firstly, the image of fol. 3v-b draws attention to the gaze of the Jew. The Jew in the foreground, while trying to pull the blue sash away from Christ's body, stares at the cloth itself, while the Jew behind him stares at Christ as he extends the vinegar-soaked sponge toward him. The actions of these figures and their fixed gaze betray the contemporary Christian notions concerning Jews. As far as their actions are concerned, they constitute a theological reorientation that makes the Jews take the place of the Roman soldiers who had crucified Christ. Soldiers had divided Christ's garments, and soldiers (even though this is only explicit in the Gospel of Luke) had offered Christ the sour wine (or vinegar).⁴⁴ In this image, however, the artist displays a Jew reaching for and tearing at Christ's garment, and a Jew is depicted as offering the wine. These portrayals, which are both ahistorical and theologically incorrect, also incorporate conniving facial expressions. According to Lipton, the depiction of Jews changed during the

⁴² Matthew 27:48, Mark 15:36, and John 19:29 contain no further information on the bystander(s) who extended the vinegar-soaked sponge toward Christ. Luke 23:36 relates that the mocking soldiers offered Christ sour wine but makes no mention of the sponge.

⁴³ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 3.

⁴⁴ See above, note 42.

twelfth century, and they were increasingly "endowed with ungainly, glowering, even distorted features and expressions."⁴⁵ This trend is evident in the image of fol. 3v-b. The Jew looking directly at Christ is painted with a mocking sneer, as if he enjoys witnessing the suffering Christ. His companion, meanwhile, is preoccupied with Christ's garment rather than his actual body, and he is painted with a facial expression of greed as he pulls away Christ's garment.

This type of gaze is not a random artistic expression but, rather, a nod to a contemporary Christian theology that had been developing for some time. Timmer's work on the life of Rupert of Deutz (c. 1070-1129), a Benedictine abbot who propagated anti-Jewish theology, identifies the notions that are reflected in the roundlet's gaze of the Jew. According to Timmer's reading of Rupert, "the carnality of the Jews consists in their absorption in material and temporal concerns (*avaritia, luxuria, negotium*) and their consequent blindness to the spiritual and eternal essence of true religion."⁴⁶ According to Timmer, Rupert "advanced the view that it was not regrettable ignorance but rather culpable vice which blinded [the Jews] to the true meaning of scripture."⁴⁷ And Rupert was not a solitary voice. An anonymous thirteenth-century sermon further captures the same ideas: "the chosen people saw him [i.e., Christ] who was hung up in front of their eyes, [and] they did not blush."⁴⁸ Instead, the roundlet's artist gave them a devilish smile.

The Jewish gaze presents a sharp contrast with its Christian equivalent. While one Christian is looking toward Christ and the other is covering his eyes, both present an aspect of Christian awareness and sight. The Christian in the foreground, wide-eyed and extending his sash, represents an open awareness of the Savior revealed through physical sight; this echoes the early Christians who personally witnessed Christ and believed him to be the Messiah. The Christian in the background, who is covering his eyes, echoes the text's reference to Christ's revealed shame, but it also attests to an inner spiritual sight free from any physical reference points, suggesting that this Christian is "seeing" the Savior without physical sight. Lipton further explains this depiction of contrasting gazes. Referring to New-Testament texts, Lipton interprets St. Paul's distinction between the "letter" and the "spirit" as a distinction between Jewish and Christian sight, the former physical, the latter spiritual.⁴⁹ Paul's contrast implies, so Lipton, that Jews maintain "flesh-bound thinking," making them "blind to spiritual truths," and that "they could not look beyond the humble body of the crucified convict and see the divine glory enshrined within."⁵⁰ Unlike the Jews, the Christians, even

⁴⁵ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 97.

⁴⁶ Timmer, "Biblical Exegesis," 315.

⁴⁷ Timmer, "Biblical Exegesis," 321.

⁴⁸ Marc De Groote, "An Anonymous Sermon against the Hagarenes, the Bogomils, and the Jews," *The Harvard Theological Review* 97, no. 3 (2004): 329-334 and 336-351, here 348.

⁴⁹ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 4.

⁵⁰ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 4.

those who had not physically witnessed the crucified Christ, managed to spiritually affirm the truth of Christ's "divine glory." This is the vision Christians assumed they had, and the roundlet's artist presents a stark contrast that shows how "Jews are summoned to embody the failure of vision."⁵¹

In addition to the Christians' physical and spiritual sight, the image suggests an anti-Jewish gaze emanating from the person of Christ. With his eyes averted from the Jews, Christ is displayed with a preference toward the Christians. Leaning his head in their direction is an active gesture against the Jews in the image. Christ's active refusal to look upon the Jews communicates his turning-away from the Jewish people, and it imposes a theological shift that reinterprets scripture as witness against the Jews. The depiction of Christ turning away from the Jews echoes the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, where Christ separates the righteous from the unrighteous, or the sheep from the goats. While there is no textual reference to this passage here, the medieval "visual reader" would have made the connection. As Guest points out, "the imagery may supplement the text by including information that is not present in written form."⁵² The visual information presented in this roundlet suggests an awareness of Matthew 25, albeit in a slanted reinterpretation.

There are strong thematic connections between Christ's final judgment in Matthew 25 and the roundlet of fol. 3v-b. In Matthew 25, Christ foretells his coming judgment over the nations. As the passage unfolds, he gathers people from every nation and separates them, "as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats."⁵³ According to Matthew 25:33, "[Christ] will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." After separating the sheep from the goats, Christ tells the sheep to "inherit the kingdom prepared for you."⁵⁴ When explaining the justification for this reward, Christ declares, "I was naked and you clothed me."⁵⁵ The sheep – or righteous individuals – respond to Christ, "When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you?"⁵⁶ Christ then declares to them that "inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."⁵⁷ Turning to the goats – or righteous individuals – Christ says, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels,"⁵⁸ explaining, "I was a stranger and you did not take me in, naked and you did not clothe me."⁵⁹

⁵¹ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 4.

⁵² Guest, *Bible moralisée*, 29.

⁵³ Matthew 25:32 NKJV.

⁵⁴ Matthew 25:32 NKJV.

⁵⁵ Matthew 25:36 NKJV.

⁵⁶ Matthew 25:38 NKJV.

⁵⁷ Matthew 25:40 NKJV.

⁵⁸ Matthew 25:41 NKJV.

⁵⁹ Matthew 25:43 NKJV.

The roundlet's visual message is eerily similar to the eschatological judgment in Matthew 25. The Christians' and Jews' respective position is reminiscent of that of the sheep and the goats. In both cases, one party is on Christ's right, the other on his left. In the roundlet, the Christians stand in the position of the sheep, the Jews in that of the goats. In addition, their respective acts of covering and uncovering also reflect Matthew 25. The Christians give of their own clothes to cover Christ's body, the Jews, meanwhile, pull away Christ's only garment. Taking these themes together, the roundlet offers a distorted visual presentation of Matthew 25, one that designates the Christians as the sheep and the Jews as the goats. Yet, Matthew's Gospel says nothing of the goats representing the Jews. Thus, this visual presentation suggests a theological reformulation of Christ's final judgment. In a way, the roundlet's artist presents Judaism as the antithesis to Christianity, which hardly reflects Augustine's fourth-century view.

While there are superficial similarities between the text in Matthew 25 and the roundlet of fol. 3v-b, there are also noticeable differences. The most obvious discrepancy is that Christ in the roundlet is hanging on the cross while Christ in Matthew 25 appears in a glorified state. However, asserting Christ as judge while hanging on the cross is consistent with thirteenth-century Christian theology. A sermon from this period suggests that "Christ, judging as a king on a royal throne—the cross, decides that the ruler of the world should be thrown out of his own realm."⁶⁰ Christians at this time articulated the functionality of the cross as a place where Christ would pronounce judgment. While this sermon pits Christ against the "ruler of the world," the general notion of the cross as a place of divine decree was absorbed into thirteenth-century theology. In the case of the roundlet, the decree "from the cross" is levied against the Jews. The traditional Augustinian notion of the Jewish witness has been inverted. The Jews, once portrayed as a witness to Christianity, have been transformed under Christ's thirteenth-century gaze, and the Christian Savior now acts as a direct witness against Judaism.

Conclusion

Codex 2554's image of fol. 3v-b is a striking representation of the change in theological and political positions that occurred between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Augustine's view of the Jews as witness had dominated the theological arena prior to the eleventh century, but the expansion of Christianity as a state religion throughout Europe intensified antisemitic legislation. The thirteenth century witnessed the escalation of such political moves, and the art from this period attests to these changing moods. France especially promoted anti-Jewish sentiment. According to Robert Chazan, "the long reign of the most pious of French kings [i.e., Louis IX, r. 1226-1270] witnessed a series of profound

⁶⁰ De Groote, "Anonymous Sermon," 338.

catastrophes for the once proud French Jewish community."⁶¹ And, Chazan continues, "by the end of this reign, French Jewry had lost the vigor, strength, and intellectual prowess that had been its pride since the late eleventh century."⁶² The burning of the Talmud was an especially telling transition. As James Thomas has pointed out, "the Talmud was denounced in a series of papal bulls in 1239 and 1244, burned in Paris under papal direction in 1242, and openly condemned by a commission of prelates and university masters in 1248."⁶³ Thus, for French Jews, the thirteenth century marked "the beginning of a decline from which it would never recover."⁶⁴ To a large degree, the fusion of Christianity with political forces served as a vehicle to bring about this decline.

The thirteenth-century Christian attack on Judaism was both encouraged and reinforced by Christian art. Expanding upon Lipton's theory of the Jewish gaze to include both Christian sight and Christ's vision, I suggest that Codex 2554's illuminator of fol. 3v-b reimagined Christ's gaze not just as witness against Judaism but as a condemnation of Judaism. But the image reveals another aspect of Christian thought. Neither Christ nor the Christians in this image show any noticeable perception of the Jews. Marc De Groote, in addressing the polemic of Christian writing leading up to the thirteenth century, states that "Jews functioned in this genre as a rhetorical device that allowed Christian writers to assert their own superiority."⁶⁵ He further suggests that "[Jews] served as cardboard villains rather than as interlocutors in a serious religious debate."⁶⁶ The very same can be said about the image from Codex 2554. Rather than encouraging real engagement between Judaism and Christianity, the Church sidestepped true interaction. Instead, Christian artists fabricated their perception of Jews. In the end, they used the imagery of a crucified Jew to justify the persecution of other innocent Jews.

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⁶¹ Robert Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France: A Political and Social History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 101.

⁶² Chazan, *Medieval Jewry*, 101.

⁶³ James M. Thomas, "The Racial Formation of Medieval Jews: A Challenge to the Field," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33, no. 10 (2010): 1737-1755, here 1745.

⁶⁴ Chazan, *Medieval Jewry*, 101.

⁶⁵ De Groote, "Anonymous Sermon," 332.

⁶⁶ De Groote, "Anonymous Sermon," 332.