

Narratives of Violence, Suffering and Eschatology: Depictions of the Jews in the  
*Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris

by

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## ABSTRACT

The 13<sup>th</sup>-century universal chronicle *Chronica Majora* of the St. Alban's Benedictine monk Matthew Paris is a vital historical source for the study of Christian conceptions of Jews. Between 1236 and 1259, Matthew carefully documented the affairs of Christendom including accusations of blood libel, Jewish collusion with the Tartars, and the financial ruination of Anglo-Jewry. Matthew's dedication to the Augustinian mandate of tolerance as a guideline for Christian-Jewish relations is constantly tested by suspicions that Jewish violence undermines the moral stability of the English realm and Christendom. Yet his image of the Jews is protean enough to also capture the suffering of the Jewish community under the royal government of King Henry III. In this way, the multitudinous themes of the *Chronica* – Jewish hostility, apocalyptic anxiety, and unjust kingship – overlap and influence Matthew's depiction of the Jews and Judaism.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

- C.M.* Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, RS, 7 vols.  
(London: 1872-1883)
- E.H.* J.A. Giles, ed. *Matthew Paris' English History*, 3 vols.  
(London: 1852-1854)

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 The Jewish Community in 13<sup>th</sup>-Century England

For the most prolific monastic chronicler of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Matthew Paris, the Jews were a hostile, alien population outside the parameters of Christendom, but also a familiar community of the English nation. Although scholars have explored the depictions of England's Jews in Matthew's greatest work, the *Chronica Majora* (*Greater Chronicle*), many insufficiently consider the place of this Jewish material within the *Chronica*'s broader themes. Starting in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Christian perspectives concerning Jews began to shift rapidly which gave rise to new anti-Jewish stereotypes embodying notions of hostility, duplicity, and avarice. These ideas manifested in stories of Jewish violence against children or conspiracies to overthrow Christendom, but they also reflect Christian disquietude with the intimacy between Jewish moneylending and royal governments. This thesis will examine how one 13<sup>th</sup>-century observer chose to present the Jews of England and relate them to his broader historical, eschatological, and political themes.

Jewish immigrants arrived in England shortly after the Norman Conquest. After another wave of immigration during the first years of Henry II's reign (r. 1154-1189), the community expanded beyond its center in London and reached York by 1176.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by a demographic boom that saw the Jewish population reach approximately

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<sup>1</sup> R.B. Dobson, *The Jews of Medieval York and the Massacre of March 1190* (York: St. Anthony's Press, 1974), 6.

5000 members by the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> By the 1160s, the Jews had gained a prominent foothold in the lending economy of England thanks in large part to Henry II's actions against small-scale Anglo-Saxon merchant-financiers and more affluent creditors.<sup>3</sup> With the Jews now filling the financial gaps left by these men, and their communities spreading across north-eastern England, King Henry II took several steps to shore up his claims to sole authority over them. The revised statutes in the *Laws of Edward the Confessor* (initially collected in the 1130s but reissued in the 1170s) stated unequivocally that the Jews were responsible to the king alone.<sup>4</sup> The Jews' rights vis-à-vis the other communities of England were positively affirmed by a charter of liberties, but they were unfree men in their relationship with their liege lord (i.e., the Angevin King).<sup>5</sup> Several 13<sup>th</sup>-century statutes reconfirmed their servile status (e.g., the *Statutes of Jewry* from 1253 and 1275). The precariousness of Jewish life and business is best exemplified by the case of Aaron of Lincoln, one of the richest men of England at his time. After Aaron's death in 1186, Henry appropriated his entire estate and established an ad hoc bureaucratic entity, *scaccarium Aaronis* (*Exchequer of Aaron*), charged with managing the deceased's assets. The bureau spent much of its energy pursuing loans owed to Aaron which infuriated his

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<sup>2</sup> Most scholars accept Lipman's estimation of the Jewish population; Vivian D. Lipman, "Anatomy of Medieval Anglo-Jewry," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 21 (1968), 64-65.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Stacey, "Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century England: Some Dynamics of a Changing Relationship," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, eds. Michael A. Signer and John Van Engen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 346-347.

<sup>4</sup> J.A. Watt, "The Jews, The Law, And the Church: The Concept of Jewish Serfdom in Thirteenth-Century England," in *The Church and Sovereignty c. 590-1918: Essays in Honour of Michael Wilks*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 156-158; Robert Stacey, "The Massacres of 1189-90 and the Origins of the Jewish Exchequer, 1186-1226," in *Christians and Jews in Angevin England: The York Massacre of 1190 Narratives and Contexts*, eds. Sarah Rees Jones and Sethina Watson, (York: York Medieval Press, 2013), 110.

<sup>5</sup> For this charter issued to the Jews in 1190 and 1201, but which dates back at least to the reign of Henry II, see Robert Chazan, *Church, State and Jew in the Middle Ages* (New York: Behrman House, 1980), 77-79.



debtors and contributed to the anti-Jewish violence that swept over north-eastern England in 1189-1190.<sup>6</sup>

The Angevin Kings first began to fully exploit their legal stranglehold on the community in the 1180s. Instead of negotiating loans with Jewish financiers, King Henry II began exacting direct taxes from the Jews.<sup>7</sup> Under the rapacious government of King John (r. 1199-1216), these taxes were assessed at alarming sums; in 1210, the Jews were told to pay 60 000 marks (plus 6000 marks in Queen's gold) which, in combination with the civil war of 1215-1217, left the Jewish community destitute. The community recovered between the 1210s and 1230s, but John's successor and son, Henry III (r. 1217-1272) resuscitated his father's financial policy, and between 1240-1255 assessed taxes at a total of 110 000 marks.<sup>8</sup> This put unprecedented strain on both the Jews and their Christian debtors. Struggling to meet these royal exactions, Jewish creditors pressured their debtors to settle their loans. Furthermore, these creditors were forced to sell their bonds on the market at a discount price or sign over their assets to the King who, in turn, redistributed these bonds to his royal councillors. One result of Henry's financial policy was a growing and widespread frustration with the practice of Jewish moneylending in England.<sup>9</sup>

The legal status of the Jews in England is analogous to how Christians had for centuries conceptualized the Jews' role in salvation history. While the writings of the Apostle Paul laid the foundation for all Christian thought in this regard, it was St.

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<sup>6</sup> H.G. Richardson, *The English Jewry Under Angevin Kings* (London: Methuen, 1960), 114-117; Robert Stacey, "The Massacres of 1189-90 and the Origins of the Jewish Exchequer, 1186-1226," 110.

<sup>7</sup> H.G. Richardson, *The English Jewry Under Angevin Kings*, 60-66.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Stacey, "1240-60: a Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?" *Historical Research* 82 (1988), 138

<sup>9</sup> Robert Stacey, "1240-60: a Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?" 145-146.

Augustine (354-430) who established the notion of *testes fidei* (*witnesses to the Christian faith*) which mandated toleration for the Jews. For Augustine, the Jews bore witness to the Christian faith by maintaining the Old Testament. The destruction of the Second Temple and their life in the diasporic communities proved that they had incurred the wrath of God on account of their rejection of his son, Jesus Christ. The Church adopted Augustine's mandate of tolerance and incorporated it into the papal policies and legal decrees dictating the appropriate treatment of the Jews and guidelines for how the two communities ought to interact. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the repeatedly promulgated papal bull *Sicut Judeis* required the protection of the Jewish community.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, the notion that the Jews must serve Christianity, often justified on the basis of *Genesis* 25:23, ("the older shall serve the younger"), was an intrinsic theme of Augustine's thought. Christians also conceived of Judaism as a contaminant (*Galatians* 5:9, "a little leaven leavens the entire dough") that endangered the moral integrity of Christian society.<sup>11</sup> At the IV Lateran Council (1215), several decrees addressed growing concerns that the Jews no longer acted as inferior subordinates to their Christian neighbours, and the Lateran fathers imposed numerous restrictions on relations between Jews and Christians. These decrees were confirmed, and more radical ones announced, at the Council of Oxford (1222), including prohibitions on Christian servants in Jewish homes and inter-religious sexual relations as well as the infamous law that required Jews

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<sup>10</sup> Solomon Grayzel, "The Papal Bull *Sicut Judeis*," in *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, eds. Meir Ben-Horin, Bernard D. Weinryb, Solomon Zeitlin, (Philadelphia: Brill, 1962), 249-255.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in Kenneth Stow, "The Church and the Jews," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume 5. C. 1198-c. 1300*, ed. David Abulafia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 209.

to wear a distinctive badge (*tabula*).<sup>12</sup> In 1253, King Henry III brought secular law into accordance with the position of the English Church by adopting the decrees from the Council of Oxford. The *Statutes of Jewry* (1253) expressed clearly the notion that Jews must serve Christians (i.e., the King) and cease any activities that may deleteriously affect the Christian community.

Fears of Jewish misconduct or criminality were the backdrop for such legislation, and the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the development and dissemination of new anti-Jewish stereotypes centering on the themes of usury and the biblical act of deicide. Avarice was a great concern for the canonists and Churchmen, and its two primary manifestations, simony and usury, were thought to undermine the moral integrity of the Church and Christian society.<sup>13</sup> Whereas in theory the practice of usury by Christians was absolutely prohibited, the popes condoned the charging of interest by Jews so long as the financial returns were “moderate.” Yet the canonists and bishops never truly accepted usurious moneylending which they considered to be intrinsically evil. In England, Churchmen like Thomas of Chobham (subdean of Salisbury; d. 1233-35) and the influential bishop of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175-1253) decried royal tolerance of Jewish usurers.<sup>14</sup> The condoning of moderate interest did not mollify the stigma of usury, especially when the profiteers were non-Christians. By the late-12<sup>th</sup> century, the “usurious Jew” was a

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<sup>12</sup> John Edwards, “The Church and the Jews in Medieval England,” in *The Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary, and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 90-92.

<sup>13</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages*, trans. Patricia Ranum (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 27.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth R. Stow, “Papal and Royal Attitudes toward Jewish Lending in the Thirteenth Century,” *AJS Review* 6 (1981), 172-173.

common trope, and their avarice was artistically and textually depicted through association with moneybags, excrement and demons.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the vilification of Jewish cupidity, new reports of Jewish violence also appeared in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Christians accused the Jews of bizarre and cruel behaviour and they believed that the Jewish community conspired at the local or international level to harm Jesus Christ and his followers. It was thought that there were several forms of Jewish violence including the murder of children, the consumption of Christian blood in religious rites, and the procurement and desecration of the Eucharistic wafer or sacred icons. These accusations were suffused with theological meaning and local myth that played on the Jews' role in the murder of Jesus Christ. Contradictorily, some of these accusations required Jews to believe in the messiahship or divinity of Christ despite their self-evident rejection of this very concept. Thus, modern scholars generally agree that these stories express more about Christian religiosity and culture than they do about medieval Judaism, although there is still no consensus on how or why these tales developed in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>16</sup>

In England, the most oft-repeated accusation was the claim that the Jews planned to kidnap, torture, and crucify Christian boys. In these parodies of the Passion, the Jews

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<sup>15</sup> Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (London: Paul Elek, 1978), 52-54.

<sup>16</sup> Miri Rubin suggests that tales of Eucharistic host desecration are better understood as literary topos generated by the growing importance of the Eucharist and Marian themes in popular Christian devotion than records of actual events; Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 26-29. Contrarily, other scholars like Israel Jacob Yuval have argued that the ritual crucifixion narratives of the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century were inspired by the Rhineland Jews' acts of self-sacrifice during the pogroms of the First Crusade in 1096. According to Yuval, Christians were aware of the religious ideology behind Jewish self-martyrdom wherein the blood of the slain was believed to incite the wrath of God. This facilitated the coming of the Final Redemption when the vengeful God would annihilate their wrongdoers; Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 139.

were primarily motivated by their malice toward Christ and his followers, but it was also believed that the Jews sacrificed the child in order to liberate themselves from their state of servitude. The first fully-constructed ritual crucifixion narrative was the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century *Life of Saint William*, a hagiographical account of the murder of a twelve-year old boy from Norwich whose body was the site of numerous miracles after its burial in the local monastery. In these narratives, the interment of the child-martyr (which coincided with the founding of a cultic shrine dedicated to his memory) often symbolizes the overcoming of the Jewish assault, but the Jewish perpetrators typically remained at large.<sup>17</sup> This troubled the Benedictine authors who were predominately responsible for the recording and dissemination of these stories.

## **1.2 Historiography of 12<sup>th</sup>- and 13<sup>th</sup>-century Christian Perceptions**

Since the atrocities of the Holocaust, the study of Jewish history and Christian conceptions of Jews and Judaism has understandably accelerated, and there is now a large body of scholarship dedicated to each facet of medieval Jewish-Christian relations. Of particular interest to scholars is how to characterize the substantive changes that anti-Jewish thought underwent in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The historian Gavin Langmuir posed the most ambitious and comprehensive theory about the evolution and categories of anti-Jewish expression, arguing that the 12<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to what can be called “anti-Semitism.” For Langmuir, the content of anti-Semitism (regardless of whether anti-Semitic notions were rooted in bio-racial or religious systems of thought) mattered less than the psychological impetus behind expressions and acts of hatred toward Jews. The

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Stacey gives a succinct summary of the general framework of these narratives; Robert Stacey, “From Ritual Crucifixion to Host Desecration: Jews and the Body of Christ,” *Jewish History* 12 (1999), 15.

anti-Jewish thought that characterized the first eleven centuries of Christian history was ultimately rooted in empirically-verifiable observation such as the biblical Gospel accounts, and was therefore “reasonably” believable. The development of “a false irrational conception of the Jew” in the 12<sup>th</sup> century marked a significant departure in Christian thought.<sup>18</sup> Medieval anti-Semitic accusations of ritual murder, well poisoning and Host desecration lacked evidentiary support that might justify “rational” consent to these rumors; instead, Langmuir proposed that these types of charges stemmed from a society-level psychological disturbance caused by supra-rational Christian doctrine. As the Church’s institutional capabilities grew after the Gregorian Reform movement and its influence reached all levels of Western European society, it was better equipped to compel popular consent to Christian dogma. When Innocent III and the canonists pronounced the miracle of Transubstantiation as ecclesiastical dogma after the convening of the IV Lateran Council, the pope put the Church’s institutional weight behind a miraculous and not-easily believed phenomenon (the substantive presence of Christ), the details of which Christians had argued over for centuries. Doubts concerning the veracity of the Eucharistic miracle caused sceptical Christians to project their disquietude onto Jews. For Christian stories about Jewish violence to be psychologically effective, they required the Jews to believe in the power of the objects they insulted and violated.<sup>19</sup> In this way, Christians bolstered their own belief in Church doctrine.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Langmuir maintained that anti-Judaism only became popular in Western Europe in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The legal and social alienation of Jews due to their religious difference was necessary for the development of more radical “anti-Semitism.” Langmuir, “Anti-Judaism as the Necessary Preparation for Antisemitism,” in *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, ed. Gavin Langmuir (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 59-61.

<sup>19</sup> As Miri Rubin has written, “Jews were simultaneously seen as believers in Christ’s presence in the host and inflictors of harm upon that presence, to the detriment of Christians. This is a contradictory view...in

Langmuir's thesis advanced historians' understanding of Christian-Jewish relations in two ways: 1) it highlighted the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries as a liminal period in Christian perceptions of Jews and Judaism; 2) it noted the qualitative difference between anti-Judaism, rooted in the doctrinal differences between Christianity and Judaism, and the various forms of anti-Semitism that emerge in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Langmuir's emphasis on the role of institutions in the development of anti-Semitism was taken up by R.I. Moore who argued that the High Middle Ages (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries) gave rise to a "persecuting society." In this view, the enhanced capabilities of an increasingly institutionalized and centralized Church made ecclesiastical efforts to invoke structural and spiritual reform in Christendom more effective. The demand for uniformity in the *Christiana societas* was spearheaded by a new class of literati who staffed both ecclesiastical and secular bureaucracies and who shared a class identity defined in opposition to the illiterate *populus*.<sup>21</sup> Moore proposes that the coeval persecution of several minority groups (heretics, Jews and lepers) reflects a concerted effort by these burgeoning bureaucratic entities to consolidate their power by exercising their techniques of government and defining the parameters of the Christian community.<sup>22</sup> In this line of thinking, a persecuting *mentalité* emerged in Europe in the face of which the differences between the oppressed out-groups were eschewed and, indeed, mattered less than their threatening non-conformity.

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inflicting pain on the host, the Jews are taken to believe that it is indeed a worthy recipient of injury." Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 99.

<sup>20</sup> Gavin I. Langmuir "The Tortures of the Body of Christ," in *Christendom and its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000-1500*, eds. Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 287-290.

<sup>21</sup> R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 135-140.

<sup>22</sup> R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 109-112.

There are numerous problems with Moore's thesis, not the least the elision of Jews with other minority groups like alleged "heretics" or his wholesale attribution of the newly-emerging anti-Jewish accusations to the power politics of social elites. By focusing on theories of social formation and the division of European society into power blocs, Moore neglects the special place that Jews and Judaism had in Christian theology. Scholars like Paula Fredriksen have explored the roots of the Augustinian epithet *testes fidei* which guided Church thinking and policy regarding the Jewish community throughout the medieval period.<sup>23</sup> Jeremy Cohen has examined the various permutations of the Augustinian mandate "Slay them not" (*Psalms* 58:12) from its gestation in Augustine's appreciation of literal hermeneutic to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of his studies, scholars have a better picture of how exegetes and theologians of the 12<sup>th</sup> century began to chip away at the Augustinian mandate without disassembling it entirely. Key to Cohen's methodology is the notion of the "hermeneutical Jew", that is, the construction of the idea of Jewishness premised on scriptural authority rather than social reality. This construct had vital ideological functions in Christian definitions of their own identity and conceptions of salvation history.<sup>24</sup> While the testimonial function of this construct proved to be incredibly durable, its distance from the living Jewish community with its independent and evolving religious traditions made the "hermeneutical Jew" intrinsically unsustainable. One of the hallmarks of the 13<sup>th</sup> century was the Christian awakening to

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<sup>23</sup> Paula Fredriksen, "Excaecati Occulta Justitia Dei: Augustine on Jews and Judaism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995), 299-301.

<sup>24</sup> As Cohen writes, "In order to meet their particular needs, Christian theology and exegesis created a Jew of their own...Even if, in his inception, in his function, and in his veritable power in the Christian mindset, the hermeneutical Jew of late antique or medieval times had relatively little to do with the Jewish civilization of his day, his career certainly influenced the Christian treatment of the Jewish minority, the sole consistently tolerated minority, of medieval Christendom. Medieval Christian perceptions of this Jew's personality contributed significantly amply to the significance of Judaism and anti-Judaism in Western intellectual and cultural history." Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 2, 5.



this independent tradition which is epitomized by the so-called Trial of the Talmud (1240). Here, French episcopal officials adjudicated on, *inter alia*, whether the contemporary Jews of Europe had adopted religious customs beyond the Mosaic Law; in other words, had the Jews rejected their function as *testes fidei*.<sup>25</sup>

The hermeneutically-constructed Jew remained the benchmark by which Christians gauged the Jews into the 13<sup>th</sup> century. When the Churchmen of England like Thomas of Chobham and Robert Grosseteste lashed out at Christian princes for their intimate ties to Jewish financiers, their criticisms focused on the disjuncture between the prescriptions of the Augustinian mandate, especially the notion that the Jews must serve Christians, and the leverage that wealthy Jews held over their Christian debtors. Indeed, at the same time that new stereotypes about Jews were gaining traction in Europe, the Augustinian mandate continued to anchor much of Christian thinking, and prelates like Bernard of Clairvaux and Pope Innocent IV, as well as English canons like William of Newburgh, reiterated this requirement for tolerance during periods of intense religious violence. Similar to other parts of Europe, the disproportionate presence of Jewish creditors in the moneylending economy of England unsettled the prelates of the Church who consistently referred back to biblical episodes that had for centuries been used to justify Jewish servitude.<sup>26</sup> Also similar to other regions, the intimacy of the English king

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<sup>25</sup> Elsewhere, Cohen claims that the newly-formed Dominican and Franciscan orders were responsible for a concerted programme of discrediting and disenfranchising the Jews of Europe; Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 13.

<sup>26</sup> In the 1230s, Robert Grosseteste referred to the typological interpretation of the Cain and Abel narrative in order to demonstrate that the Jews should not enjoy the profits of usury. Considering Cain a *typus* of the Jews, Grosseteste tells how part of Cain's punishment was the hardship he would experience in his labour (the earth "shall not yield to thee its fruit" *Genesis* 4:12). Others might enjoy the produce of Cain's labour (i.e., the King), but because of their crimes the Jews were destined to serve; J.A. Watt, "The Jews, The Law, And the Church: The Concept of Jewish Serfdom in Thirteenth-Century England," in *The*

and his Jewish “serfs” – as King Edward I’s 1275 *Statutes of Jewry* referred to the Jews – further aggravated the prelates and the other communities of the realm. Scholars like J.A. Watt have noted the similarity between the Jews’ legal status under the English monarch and the theologically-mandated service that Jews owed Christians.<sup>27</sup> More recently, Anna Sapir Abulafia has used the concept of “servitude” to frame the realities of Jewish experience in English society. Abulafia stresses that the interaction between Jews and Christians was mediated by two frameworks: the political role of the Jews as defined in law, and the theological which was expressed through the statutes of Church councils.<sup>28</sup> In 13<sup>th</sup>-century England, royal princes considered the Jews as their serfs and therefore responsible only to the Crown, whereas the Church was concerned with maintaining the spiritual purity of its constituents and saw in the Jewish religion a source of danger to the Christian faith. Earlier scholars like Langmuir and H.G. Richardson noted the gap between the Church’s anti-Jewish pronouncements and the statutes and liberties granted

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*Church and Sovereignty c. 590-1918: Essays in Honour of Michael Wilks*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 166-167.

<sup>27</sup> Jewish service to the Crown is expressed in Henry III’s 1253 *Statute of Jewry*: “no Jew may remain in England unless he does the king service; just as soon as he is born, every Jew, male or female, serves us in some way.” Cited in J.A. Watt, “The Jews, The Law, And the Church: The Concept of Jewish Serfdom in Thirteenth-Century England,” 172. As for the Church, the first statute pertaining to the Jews from the 1222 Council of Oxford reads: “because it is absurd that the sons of the free woman [Abraham’s wife, Sarah] should serve the sons of the slave [Hagar] and because considerable scandal regularly arise in God’s Church on account of Jews and Christians living together, we decree that from now on Jews may not have Christian servants.” The prelates of the council were responding to what they perceived as the inversion of the Augustinian mandate in English society; Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century: A Study of their Relations during the Years 1196-1254, Based on the Papal Letters and the Conciliar Decrees of the Period* (Philadelphia: The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1933), 315.

<sup>28</sup> Anna Sapir Abulafia, “Notions of Jewish Service in Twelfth-and Thirteenth-Century England,” in *Christians and Jews in Angevin England: The York Massacre of 1190 Narratives and Contexts*, eds. Sarah Rees Jones and Sethina Watson (York: York Medieval Press, 2013), 211-213. The notion of Jewish service is the organizing principal of her textbook, *Christian-Jewish relations 1000-1300: Jews in the Service of Medieval Christendom* (Toronto: Longman Pearson, 2011).

by the English King.<sup>29</sup> Abulafia and Watt, however, have turned this thinking on its head by underlining this framework of “servitude” but also stressing that “there was no real conflict of policy between Church and State.”<sup>30</sup>

Conciliar decrees, royal statutes and administrative records have all been used to explore the contours of medieval English thinking about Jews. Robert Stacey has made particularly insightful use of Angevin financial records and plea rolls. In a series of articles, Stacey tracks the changes in royal financial policy toward the Jews and the devolving condition of the Jewish community in the 1240s-1250s.<sup>31</sup> Building off the conclusions of R.B. Dobson regarding the 1190 massacre of York<sup>32</sup>, Stacey suggests that widespread disgruntlement with the Jews was mostly due to the King’s acquisition of Jewish bonds and, consequently, the disseising of the indebted landed gentry. As Stacey writes:

As Jews came to be seen more by more and more people as the instruments of royal injustice, antagonism towards them grew. The consequences of this rising hostility are clear in the lootings, confiscations and assaults on Jews and their property which characterized the brief rule of de Montfort and his partisan in 1263 and 1264.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> While Langmuir acknowledged that “The most obvious factor affecting the status of medieval Jews was the doctrine and law of the Church and the actions of individual churchmen,” H.G. Richardson disagreed and noted the “impotence of ecclesiastical authorities to legislate for the Jewry in defiance of the civil power.” Gavin I. Langmuir, “The Jews and the Archives of Angevin England: Reflections on Medieval Anti-Semitism,” *Traditio* 19 (1963), 244; and H.G. Richardson, *The English Jewry Under Angevin Kings*, 193.

<sup>30</sup> J.A. Watt, “The English Episcopate, the State, and the Jews: the Evidence of the Thirteenth-Century Conciliar Decrees,” in *Thirteenth Century England II: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1987*, eds. P.R. Cross and S.D. Lyod (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1988), 142.

<sup>31</sup> E.g., Robert Stacey, “Royal Taxation and the Social Structure of Medieval Anglo-Jewry: The Tallages of 1239-1242,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 56 (1985): 175-249; “The English Jews under Henry III,” in *The Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary and Archeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 41-54; and “1240-60: a Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?” *Historical Research* 82 (1988), 135-150.

<sup>32</sup> R.B. Dobson, *The Jews of Medieval York and the Massacre of March 1190*, 36-37.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Stacey, “1240-60: a Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?” 146.

For Stacey, several additional factors made England the perfect cauldron for “medieval anti-Semitism”: the ritual crucifixion stories first appear in England, providing the “theological and devotional developments that helped produce the host desecration charge”; the Jews of England were the wealthiest in Europe; it was the first kingdom to charge the whole Jewish population as coin-clippers (in the 1270s); and it was also the first country to have its royal government make the conversion of Jews to Christianity a priority.<sup>34</sup> The intimacy of the Crown and the Jews ensured that many expressions of anti-Semitism were simultaneously anti-royal. This changed by the mid-1250s when for the first time an English monarch, King Henry III, endorsed the cult of an allegedly-martyred child, Little St. Hugh of Lincoln. Thereafter, royal support of such fanciful accusations against Jews became more frequent and direct. More than the rest of Europe, the Angevin state propelled the evolution of medieval anti-Semitism in England.

Other scholars have focused on the role of popular religiosity in the formation of what would become standard anti-Jewish narratives of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Joan Young Gregg has analyzed the rich source material from the homiletic *exempla* tradition and argued that “the popular homiletic exemplum [is] irreplaceable as a cultural artifact” insofar as it “allows us to witness the interchange between popular and scholarly theology and, in doing so, permits us to discover those unselfconscious cultural notions that, by their frequent hearing and retelling in narrative context, became imprinted on the medieval mind.”<sup>35</sup> While Gregg is right to stress that homiletic preaching helped to

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Stacey, “Anti-Semitism and the Medieval English State,” in *Medieval State: Essays Presented to James Campbell*, eds. James Campbell, D.M. Palliser and John Robert Maddicott (Rio Grande: Hambledon Press, 2000), 165.

<sup>35</sup> Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 3-4.

disseminate anti-Jewish imagery and myths, she also obfuscates the significant differences between devils, women and Jews whom she believes formed a “dark and distorted reflection of the orthodox trinity of Christian doctrine.”<sup>36</sup> Others have examined the *exempla* tradition to suggest how its religious themes began to change in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Jennifer Shea has shown how the Benedictine monk and chronicler William of Malmesbury adapted one *exemplum* tale (the “Jewish Boy” which dates back to 6<sup>th</sup> century) to stress the intercessory power of the Virgin Mary. Similarly, in his *Le Gracial* (c. 1165, an Anglo-Norman collection of Marian tales), William Adgar used the vernacular language of courtly romance to emend the traditionally-Latin *exempla* and stress the moral gulf between the Virgin Mary and the treacherous Jews who reject her.<sup>37</sup> Miri Rubin also examines the shifting religious backdrop of popular tales involving Jews and the Eucharistic host. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries these stories began adopting elements from their cultural environment: they became suffused with Marian themes; they identified the host with Christ, especially the infant Christ; and by 1290, they depict the Jews as cognizant of the Eucharistic host’s salvific property and, by consequence, transform these stories into cases of conscious deicide.<sup>38</sup>

Reminiscent of Jeremy Cohen’s “hermeneutical Jew”, the aforementioned scholars focus on the image of Jews in texts. These textually-created “Jews” often serve many functions in the narratives where they are presented. Stressing that these literary depictions serve the main themes of the written work, Denise L. Despres has coined the

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<sup>36</sup> Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Jennifer Shea, “Adgar’s *Gracial* and Christian Images of Jews in Twelfth-Century Vernacular Literature,” *Journal of Medieval History* 33 (2007), 187.

<sup>38</sup> 280-282., *Gentile Tales*, 42-43. Gavin Langmuir makes the same point in his “The Tortures of the Body of Christ,” 300-301.

“protean Jew” whose character is malleable though certain topoi reoccur.<sup>39</sup> As Anthony Bale notes, “Even if we regard antisemitism as a pathology, a psychosis, a folk-belief, or a crude political tool, it is through textual and visual culture that it was manifested and mediated...an idea of Judaism is filtered and structured by a written or visual narrative.”<sup>40</sup> From this perspective, the literary context becomes paramount to understanding the underlying logic of the image. Scholars like Anthony Bale, Nicholas Vincent and Sarah Lipton have shown how Christians manipulated stereotypes of Jews in complex ways to comment on socio-political realities.<sup>41</sup> The strategic deployment of these images could provide rhetorical cover for speculations or criticisms of people and ideas that were otherwise difficult to discuss openly. The more “chimerical” attributions to Jews (e.g., possessing horns and emitting a foul odour, practicing ritual murder and cannibalizing children, or being in league with the devil) were often iterated facetiously in order to teach moral lessons or to provide accentuated contrasts between impious Jews and exemplary Christians. As these images of the hostile, impious and avaricious Jew were repeated in art and writing, they became commonplace topoi. Yet these images were deployed in many distinct cultural mediums, and Christians manipulated them liberally to suit different ends. For this reason, an examination of Matthew Paris’s historiographical perspective will help to explicate his depictions of Jews in the *Chronica Majora*.

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<sup>39</sup> Denise L. Depres, “The Protean Jew in the Vernon Manuscript,” in *Chaucer and the Jews: Sources, Contexts, Meanings*, ed. Sheila Delany (New York: Routledge, 2002), 146.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms, 1350-1500* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 16.

<sup>41</sup> Anthony Bale, “Fictions of Judaism in England Before 1290,” in *The Jews in Medieval Britain Historical, Literary and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 137-138; Nicholas Vincent, “William of Newburgh, Josephus and the New Titans,” in *Christians and Jews in Angevin England: The York Massacre of 1190 Narratives and Contexts*, eds. Sarah Rees Jones and Sethina Watson (York: York Medieval Press, 2013), 57-58; and Sara Lipton, “Issac and Antichrist in the Archives,” *Past & Present* 232 (2016), 39-42.

### 1.3 Matthew Paris and the *Chronica Majora*

Matthew Paris is universally known in the field of medieval history as the author of the *Chronica Majora* “the most comprehensive history yet written in England.”<sup>42</sup> He entered the Benedictine monastery of St. Alban’s – one of the wealthiest religious houses in England – in 1217 where he likely worked under the great chronicler, Roger of Wendover. Matthew continued Wendover’s universal chronicle, *Flores historiarum* (*Flowers of History*), after the former’s death on 6 May, 1236.<sup>43</sup> He began his continuation around 1245 when he started composing original entries where Wendover had concluded (under the year 1236 in the *Chronica*).<sup>44</sup> On several occasions, Matthew temporarily ceased his work on the *Chronica*; in 1247, he was on a papally-sanctioned mission to Norway to reform the monastery of St. Benet Holme, and he stopped working on the *Chronica* for two years after 1250 because of his fears of the impending apocalypse.<sup>45</sup> Matthew continued recording notes despite these interruptions, and his annals reach their end during the year of his death, 1259.<sup>46</sup> Not satisfied with merely reproducing and continuing Wendover’s work, Matthew interpolated new entries and marginal material (most notably, pictorial marginalia) into the earlier sections of the *Chronica*. He also redacted many of Wendover’s reports.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, he affixed the *Liber Additamentorum* (*The Book of Additions*) to the end of the *Chronica*. The *Liber* comprises a dossier of over two hundred miscellaneous documents including charters,

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<sup>42</sup> Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 359.

<sup>43</sup> *C.M.*, VI, 274.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge At the University Press, 1958), 59-60.

<sup>45</sup> Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 61; *C.M.*, V, 42-45 and *C.M.*, V, 191-198.

<sup>46</sup> *C.M.*, V, 748.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 32-34.

compilations of conciliar decrees, and letters.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the *Chronica Majora* is not only a continuation of the *Flores historiarum*, but truly a novel work.

The *Chronica* was only one of Matthew's historical works, but it diverges from these in both size (Henry Luard's 1872-1873 critical edition for the Rolls Series runs to around 3500 pages) and subject-matter.<sup>49</sup> Unlike several of his other works, the *Chronica* was written for the monks of St. Albans. For Matthew, the writing of history was a devotional act that celebrated the wonder of God's Creation and helped his fellow brothers to pursue a pious and morally-righteous life. As Björn Weiler describes his historiographical purposes:

Chief among them are a desire to use history as means of, on the one hand, offering moral counsel, and, on the other, of setting events within the broader context of human history and its place within a divine plan of creation. To these can be added the need to explore the workings of the supernatural and transcendental within earthly society, but also a desire to record and preserve for future generations the history, the deeds both laudable and damnable of contemporaries, of a monastic community, its patrons, saints and leader. All of these were also central to Matthew Paris's concept of writing history.<sup>50</sup>

For this reason, Matthew was often careful to elucidate the meaning of events within a moral framework. Writing history was not a mere pastime or a means of self-

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-75.

<sup>49</sup> His other works include the *Historia Anglorum* (a history of England from the Norman Conquest to 1250); the *Gesta abbatum* (a history of St. Albans and, more specifically, its abbots); and the *Abbreviatio chronicarum* and *Flores historiarum* (two abridgements of the *Chronica*; the *Flores* influenced many English writers in the 13th and 14th centuries). Matthew also wrote or revised several hagiographies including: the Latin *Vitae* of Kings Offa I and II, Archbishops Edmund Rich and Stephen Langton; and the Anglo-Norman *Vitae* of Edward the Confessor, St. Alban, Thomas Becket, and, again, Archbishop Edmund; for bibliographical details, see Björn Weiler, "Matthew Paris on the Writing of History," *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009), 278.

<sup>50</sup> Björn Weiler, "Matthew Paris on the Writing of History," 257-258.



aggrandizement (Matthew only rarely refers to himself in the *Chronica*), but, instead, a guide to the world that was filled with earthly temptations and inducements to commit sin. As a devotee to the Benedictine Rule (demonstrated by his selection to reform the monks of St. Benet Holme) Matthew had committed himself to the worship of God and the spiritual perfection of himself and those with whom he shared the coenobitic life. In a sense, the writing of history for Matthew is a type of pastoral care for his community insofar as it provided models of pious and valiant lives and examples of sinful and cruel men who strayed from his monastic ideals or who did not accept the Christian faith.<sup>51</sup>

The writing of history also helped to reveal truths that were essential for the salvific end of the monastic life. Whereas exemplary historical figures, both good and bad, exhibited the timelessness of religious righteousness and sin, other events provided insights to the timeline of temporal history. Prophecies, natural portents, and oneiric visions were indubitable forecasts of future events, but Matthew believed also that human affairs were eschatological signs.<sup>52</sup> When Matthew ended his chronicle in 1250, he was stunned by the turbulent state of the world, and in his penultimate entry he enumerated the wondrous events of the last half-century that effectively summarize the major themes of the *Chronica* thereto. Following the conventions of universal history writing, the chronological structure of the *Chronica* hinges on the three pivotal moments of salvation history (i.e., Creation, Jesus Christ, and the Last Judgement). The events in the list of

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<sup>51</sup> In the prologue to the *Chronica*, Matthew says that he has recorded portents, tribulations of mankind, and the fate of sinners to encourage men to seek God's forgiveness. Like the recording of the biblical stories of Moses and Abel and Cain, the preservation of the deeds of good and sinful men provided examples necessary for the attainment of human wisdom and, ultimately, salvation; *C.M.*, I, 1-2.

<sup>52</sup> Suzanne Lewis notes how Matthew Paris and Roger of Wendover differed in their interpretations of natural portents. Whereas Wendover tended to interpret these occurrences as foreshadowing local events, Matthew often attributed eschatological meaning to them; Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 294.

*mirabilia* are all measured in relation to this eschatological structure of time. By doing so, he presents a moral interpretation of the world that would assist his confrères in their understanding of the soteriological tribulations of their time and ultimately encourage contrition and penitence.<sup>53</sup>

Most modern readers of the *Chronica* now acknowledge that Matthew's historiographical perspective was less concerned with a modern conception of historical truth – events as they actually happened – than the realization of Christian values in the world.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, Matthew was not indifferent to the need for accurate and trustworthy sources. He often alludes to eyewitnesses or documentary evidence, including direct citations from the *Liber Additamentorum*, to buttress his accounts. Although Matthew had "...something of the forger in him..."<sup>55</sup> and altered documents and evidence to suit his own interests, he rarely fabricates details entirely, and instead borrowed from previous entries in the *Chronica* in order to present a more uniform and illustrative image of his subject.<sup>56</sup> When Matthew reproduces Ivo of Narbonne's letter reporting on the Tartar siege of an Austrian city in 1244, he interpolated a passage describing how the monstrous assailants cannibalized their Christian victims, and included a vivid pictorial representation of this "cannibal feast."<sup>57</sup> Matthew had epistolary sources dated closer to

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<sup>53</sup> Sarah L. Hamilton, "Tales of Wonder in the *Chronica Majora* of Matthew Paris," *Reading Medieval Studies* 26 (2000), 128-30.

<sup>54</sup> Björn Weiler, "Matthew Paris on the Writing of History," 274-276.

<sup>55</sup> Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 134.

<sup>56</sup> As Robert Stacey writes of Matthew, "Even when he is writing years after the events he describes...his information is often extraordinarily accurate." Robert Stacey, *Politics, Policy, and Finance under Henry III 1216-1245* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 122. Paul Hyams has shown how Matthew weaved his accounts of Jewish violence together; P.R. Hyams, "The Jewish Minority in Mediaeval England, 1066-1290," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 25 (1974), 280-282.

<sup>57</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 273. For this illustration, see Chapter 3, 72.

the invasion of 1241 that verified the cruelty and cannibalistic practices of the Tartars;<sup>58</sup> Matthew simply borrowed and exaggerated these details in order to compose a compelling and fear-inducing narrative, the effect of which would hopefully inspire spiritual reform in the reader.

Despite these caveats, Matthew was concerned primarily with the moral meaning of history as his literary techniques reflect. He was fond of contrasting good and bad characters that function as literary *exempla*. There were several ways of conveying his interpretation of events: attributing speeches to authoritative individuals or voicing the unspoken opinion of the common people;<sup>59</sup> drawing subtle comparisons between how individuals' behaved or even died;<sup>60</sup> and utilizing his paratactic style of writing (the recording of short, episodic entries with no conspicuous thematic continuity) by placing seemingly disparate subjects in proximity to one another, therefore highlighting similarities or contrasts.<sup>61</sup> Matthew deploys each of these techniques when depicting the Jews, but also the many persons and corporate groups whom he turned his pen against. Scholars often comment on Matthew's "outspokenness" and how his Benedictine identity shaped his parochial interests.<sup>62</sup> The *Chronica* often resembles a series of polemical attacks on laymen who abuse their power and religious prelates or clerics whose conduct

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<sup>58</sup> J.J. Saunders, "Matthew Paris and the Mongols," in *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, eds. T.A. Sandquist and M.R. Powicke (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 124-126.

<sup>59</sup> For examples, see Chapter 2, 40 and Chapter 4, 100.

<sup>60</sup> The most obvious example is the death of Frederick II and Innocent IV. Whereas Frederick, whom Matthew applauded for reclaiming Jerusalem and contesting the power-hungry popes, died a repentant sinner, Innocent IV (one of the most-criticized men in the *Chronica*) had miserable death. Innocent's tortures did not end here; in two entries, Matthew describes the visions of cardinals who witnessed the continued suffering of the sinful pope after his death; Respectively, *C.M.*, V, 216; *C.M.*, V, 429-439; *C.M.*, V, 470-472 and 491-492.

<sup>61</sup> Whereas Vaughan interpreted these forms of indirect criticism as concealing his opinion, Björn Weiler suggests that they reflect Matthew's confidence in his methods of writing history; Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 135; Björn Weiler, "Matthew Paris on the Writing of History," 272-274.

<sup>62</sup> Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 372.

does not accord with Matthew's Benedictine ideals. These included the English King Henry III (who according to Matthew was an avaricious and incompetent monarch who transgressed the privileges and liberties of his subjects) and his royal councillors, popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV (whose vainglory and greed impelled them to pursue policies that weakened the English Church and caused divisions within Christendom) and the non-Benedictine religious orders of England (particularly the mendicant orders whom Matthew charged with abandoning the apostolic life and enlisting with the papacy to further their material interests). For those outside the pale of Christendom such as the Tartars or Saracens, more overt criticisms were sufficient. Yet even here, Matthew's insatiable curiosity impelled him to include evidence to support his denunciations – under the year 1236, the *Chronica* contains a dossier of texts from the Dominicans which outline the life and laws of Machomet (Muhammad), a comparison between the beliefs of Saracens and Christians, and a polemical obituary that associates Machomet, and his followers by association, with the sins of pride, lust and gluttony.<sup>63</sup> As the only tolerated non-Christian community in the English nation, Matthew could confidently denigrate the Jews in similarly straightforward manner. On the other hand, he also used topoi associated with the Jews to voice his criticisms of other Christian groups.

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<sup>63</sup> *C.M.*, III, 343-361. Despite this direct textual evidence that delegitimizes the Saracen religion, Matthew also draws comparison between the ill-conceived laws of Machomet and the just and beneficial laws passed recently by Henry III. Furthermore, immediately following these entries is a report concerning the suppression of the heretical Paterinians and Bugarians by the mendicant friars. Considering that Machomet learned his creed from an apostate monk, it appears that Matthew was identifying the Saracen religion with other heretical movements. Conversely, the Paterinian-Bugarian entry may have been part of the Dominican dossier concerning its missionary activities; James Powell, "Matthew Paris, the Lives of Muhammad, and the Dominicans," in *Dei Gesta Per Francos: Crusade Studies in Honour of Jean Richard*, eds. Michel Balard Benjamin, Z. Kedar and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 68-69.

#### 1.4 The Jews of England in the *Chronica Majora*

As an unparalleled historical source for 13<sup>th</sup>-century England, the *Chronica Majora* provides valuable insights to Christian perceptions of the Jewish community. Jews appear in various historical contexts in the *Chronica* which can be categorized in different ways. First, Matthew makes a distinction between *Hebrei* (biblical Jews) and *Judei* (contemporary Jews). Whereas the *Hebrei* are treated reverently as the forerunners of Christianity, the *Judei* are accused of slanderous conduct, heinous crimes, but also sympathized with as fellow victims of an abusive English monarch.<sup>64</sup> Sophia Menache has divided the various commentaries on the Jews between “theological” and “political-economic” perspectives.<sup>65</sup> For Menache, the image of the Jews in the *Chronica* are drawn from either religiously-inspired stereotypes, or they are rooted in Matthew’s observations of the real Jews of England (the actual “Jew-on-the-street”<sup>66</sup>), especially in their relationship with King Henry III. Expanding on Menache’s organizing scheme, these portraits of the Jews can be understood in reference to three predominate themes: 1) Jewish hostility to Christianity; 2) the place of the Jews in Christian eschatology; 3) and the relationship between the Jews and the communities of the English realm, especially the Crown.

Typically, most scholars have emphasised what Menache calls the “theological” portrait of the Jews in the *Chronica Majora*. One of the more thoughtful studies is Gavin I. Langmuir’s article, “A Knight’s Tale of Young Hugh of Lincoln” (1972, republished in 1990). Herein, Langmuir compares Matthew’s account of victim of Jewish ritual

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<sup>64</sup> Sophia Menache, “Matthew Paris’s Attitudes Toward Anglo-Jewry,” *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997), 153, fn. 80.

<sup>65</sup> Sophia Menache, “Matthew Paris’s Attitudes Toward Anglo-Jewry,” 141-142.

<sup>66</sup> Anthony Bale, “Fictions of Judaism in England before 1290,” 130.

crucifixion, Little Hugh of Lincoln (1255) with other contemporary sources such as the *Burton Annals*, *Annals of Waverly*, and the Anglo-Norman “Ballad” of St. Hugh. Arguing that Matthew emended key details of Hugh’s death, Langmuir concluded that Matthew manipulated reports from Lincoln in order to incriminate and vilify the Jews.<sup>67</sup> Langmuir implicitly suggests that Matthew was inspired by his sheer detestation, but there is evidence to propose that it was the intervention of the Franciscan friars, who secured the release of the Jews, that led Matthew to enhance their guilt and cruelty. Here, a more nuanced and broader reading of Matthew’s *Chronica* reveals the possibility that the topos of Jewish hostility serves a larger purpose, namely, the criticism of the religious orders whose political affiliations with the papacy and aggressive evangelism threatened the liberties of the Benedictine monks.

Another approach to Matthew’s *Chronica* is to assess how exemplary or, contrarily, unique his depictions of Jews were in 13<sup>th</sup> century England. In his much referred to article, ““1240-60: a Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?” (1988), Robert Stacey places Matthew’s writings in the socio-political environment of the 1240s-1250s. As popular opinion of Jews deteriorated because of their intimate financial ties to the deeply resented regime of King Henry III, stereotypical images of Jews began to proliferate and become commonplace. Stacey proposes that the greatest significance of the *Chronica* is not the presence of these images and accusations, but instead the fact that Matthew “is the first regularly to employ such allegations as ostensible explanations for actual royal measures taken against them...It is the justificatory purpose of Matthew’s fictional constructions which makes them so particularly striking and potentially so

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<sup>67</sup> “A Knight’s Tale of Young Hugh of Lincoln,” in *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, ed. Gavin I. Langmuir (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 242-248.

dangerous.”<sup>68</sup> Citing the observations of Paul Hyams, Stacey acknowledges that when Matthew lacked detailed information about an incident or event, he often borrowed material from earlier entries in the *Chronica*.<sup>69</sup> Yet he misrepresents Matthew’s historiographical mindset when he labels these stories as “entirely invented.”<sup>70</sup> As a Benedictine chronicler, Matthew felt it was his task to compile historical information that could be useful for the spiritual life of his audience. By borrowing material from previous entries of the *Chronica*, Matthew provided more comprehensive and compelling accounts of Jewish crimes, therefore emphasising the timelessness of Jewish hostility towards Christianity.

Several scholars have concentrated on the theme of eschatological anxiety in the *Chronica*. Following Richard Vaughan’s characterization of Matthew “as a mirror of his age,”<sup>71</sup> Sophia Menache contextualizes the narrative of the “Jewish-Mongol Plot” wherein the Rhineland Jews are accused of provisioning the Tartars, whom they identified as their eschatological liberators, with logistical provisions.<sup>72</sup> Far from being unique, the details and themes of the narrative – “the Jews’ desire for revenge; the Jews’ messianic hopes; and the Jews’ view of the Mongols as a means provided by providence to compensate for their long distress among Christians”– were commonplace and derived from what contemporaries considered to be authoritative and reliable sources of information.<sup>73</sup> While Menache is wrong to emphasize Matthew’s identification of the

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<sup>68</sup> Robert Stacey, “1240-60: a Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?” 150.

<sup>69</sup> See above, fn. 56.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Stacey, “1240-60: a Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?” 149.

<sup>71</sup> Richard Vaughan, *The Illustrated Chronicles of Matthew Paris, Observations of Thirteenth-Century Life* (Cambridge, 1993), x.

<sup>72</sup> “Tartars” was the name that most Latinate writers used for the Mongols.

<sup>73</sup> Sophia Menache, “Tartars, Jews, Saracens and the Jewish-Mongol ‘Plot’ of 1241,” *History* 81 (1996), 340. These sources include prophecies (e.g., the Pseudo-Methodian *Sermo* or *Revelatio*, and the *Cedar of*

Tartars as Saracens, she perceptively interprets the “Jewish-Mongol Plot” as a literary creation that embodies the 13<sup>th</sup>-century climate of opinion.<sup>74</sup> In partial response to Menache, Ruth Nisse has contextualized Matthew’s comments on the translation from Greek to Latin of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* within the “shifting attitudes toward Jews not only as textual scholars but also as representatives of the world beyond Europe’s frontier.”<sup>75</sup> Here, Nisse relates Matthew’s fear of the Hebrew language to several broader concerns about the Jews: that the Jews possessed an independent and competitive conception of salvation history; fears that the Hebrew language was used to hide religious texts that had significant repercussions for Christians; and the possibility that the Jews and their allies used Hebrew in their clandestine operations against Christendom. According to Nisse, Matthew’s commentary on the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (inter alia, a series of prophecies attributed to the biblical sons of Jacob which anticipate the arrival of Jesus Christ) is effectively a rebuttal of Jewish eschatological projections, especially their purported belief that the Tartars were the exilic Ten Tribes of Israel.<sup>76</sup>

The only scholar to have conducted a comprehensive study of the depictions of the Jews in the *Chronica Majora* is Sophia Menache. In the article “Matthew Paris’s

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*Lebanon*); scholastic works (especially Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica*); reports from the East (e.g., the mid-12th century letters from the mythical king, Prester John); and missives from the continent (many of which are reproduced in Matthew’s *Liber Additamentorum*).

<sup>74</sup>It appears that Menache relied on J.A. Giles 1852 tradition for this passage, “These Saracens, the memory of whom is detestable, are believed to have been of the ten tribes...”; *E.H.*, I, 313. This does not follow Henry Luard’s critical edition which reads: *Creduntur isti Tartari, quorum memoria est detestabilis, fuisse de decem triububus* (*These dreadful Tartars, the memory of whom is detestable, are believed to have been of the ten tribes...*). Menache uses this passage to argue that the image of the Tartars in the *Chronica* is an amalgamation of Saracen and Jewish stereotypes; Sophia Menache, “Tartars, Jews, Saracens,” 340.

<sup>75</sup> Ruth Nisse, “A Romance of the Jewish East: The Ten Tribes and The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007), 500.

<sup>76</sup> Ruth Nisse, “A Romance of the Jewish East,” 519.



Attitudes toward Anglo-Jewry” (1997), Menache accuses other scholars of focusing solely on Matthew as a disseminator of religiously-inspired “anti-Jewish” images.<sup>77</sup> Responding to the “lack of coherence attributed to Matthew Paris”, Menache proposes that Matthew’s animus toward King Henry III and Pope Innocent IV guided his commentary on the Jews. Whereas Matthew’s theologically-informed perspective of English Jews was typical of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, his observations about the ruinous relationship between the Crown and the Anglo-Jewish community are exceptional in scope and tenor.<sup>78</sup> Particularly noteworthy are Matthew’s expressions of sympathy for the Jewish community whose suffering under the extractive policies of Henry III drove them into destitution. While Menache acknowledges the possibility that Matthew felt genuine pity for the impoverished Jews, she perceptively notes how “his commiseration with the Jews’ grievances merely covered his opposition to the king’s centralising policy.”<sup>79</sup> A careful assessment of the interaction between this Jewish material and the major themes of the *Chronica* reveals how Matthew exploited different images of the Jew to comment on a wide variety of socio-political phenomena.

Menache’s approach provides a useful starting point for any study of the *Chronica*. At the same time, she inadequately situates Matthew’s reportage on the Jews within its literary and historical context. The records of episodes involving Jews in the *Chronica* are far from straightforward. Ostensibly, many of these entries have Jewish violence or suffering as their central subject. Yet Matthew also uses these Jewish motifs in order to comment on related matters. While Menache is right to interpret the

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<sup>77</sup> Sophia Menache, “Matthew Paris’s Attitudes Toward Anglo-Jewry,” 141.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

sympathetic portrait of the Jew as a rhetorical means of criticizing the Crown, she neglects other instances where Jews are likewise used to offer a moral judgement on individuals or events. Wherever possible, Matthew uses the rhetorical conventions of chronicle writing to convey these judgements.

Hostility to Christ and his followers is one of the central Jewish themes in the *Chronica*. Matthew felt that he had plenty of evidence to accuse the Jews – in 1242, the translation of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* proved that the modern Jews had concealed prophecies of the coming of Jesus Christ; in 1244, a victim of ritual violence was found with Hebrew writing inscribed on his body; and in 1255, Matthew had both the confession of an incriminated Jew and the testimony of a learned and reputable knight (John of Lexington) to support his claims that the Jews used the viscera of Christian children for their magical auguries. Indeed, Matthew was so confident that the Jews were guilty of such crimes that he often augmented his reports with fantastic details. On at least two occasions, it appears that he fabricated episodes of ritual crucifixion and icon desecration. Yet the target of these fabrications was not solely the Jews. In 1244 Matthew takes aim at canons and monks who exploited the deaths of martyred children; in 1255 he attacks the Franciscan friars for aiding the incriminated Jews; and in 1240 and 1250, he concocts fabulous tales in order to pose questions about the intimate relationship between Jews and the Crown. On these occasions, the motif of Jewish violence serves broader themes of the *Chronica*.

The underlying template for Matthew's opinion of Jews and Judaism was the Augustinian concept of tolerance. The Psalmic basis for Augustine's precept (*Psalm* 59:12 "Slay them not, lest at any time they forget your law; scatter them in your might")

guides Matthew's thinking, and he cites this passage in an entry from the year 1190 to criticize unrestrained attacks on the Jewish communities of England.<sup>80</sup> The tale of the "Wandering Jew" (who was condemned to live immortally after striking Jesus Christ) preserves the testimonial role described by Augustine, but this positive function stands in tension with the story's other message: the Jews continued to bear the guilt of their biblical ancestors who had killed Christ.<sup>81</sup> The idea that the Jews were similar to their biblical ancestors appears again in Matthew's suspicions that the Tartars were actually the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. The 12<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Peter Comestor was the first to identify these Tribes (whom the Assyrians had deported to the East according to *II Kings* 17:5-6) as harbingers of the apocalypse whose destructive return would signal the Last Days. In an entry from 1241, Matthew describes how the Rhineland Jews celebrated the arrival of their exilic brethren who had come to liberate their kin from the Christian yoke. He goes on to describe a Jewish scheme to provision the Tartars with weapons which is only revealed when an incredulous bridge keeper checked the convoy's cargo.<sup>82</sup> Here, the biblical portrait of their forefathers – their wickedness, cruelty, and sacrilegious disbelief – is projected onto the contemporary Jewish community.

The narrative of the Jewish-Tartar plot recorded under the year 1241 provides a significant clue to the Jewish problem in the *Chronica*. After the bridge keeper discovers the Jews' hidden cargo, Matthew has the keeper ask, "Why do we allow such people [the Jews] to live amongst us?" Matthew knew the answer to this question: Jewish exile testified to the truths of Christianity, and Scripture prophesied that the Jews would

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<sup>80</sup> *C.M.*, II, 358.

<sup>81</sup> *C.M.*, II, 161-163.

<sup>82</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 131-133.

renounce their errors and find salvation under God before the Last Judgement. These ideas were cornerstones in the Christian conception of history. Yet the numerous episodes of Jewish violence that Matthew notes in the *Chronica* – theological, Christological, apocalyptic, and financial – tested the limits of Augustine’s mandate. Matthew felt that King Henry’s response to accusations of ritual crucifixion, icon desecration, and coin-clipping (the extraction of metal from coins, hence debasing its value) were woefully inadequate. The absence of proportional punishment in these cases pointed to the moral corruption of King Henry III who protected religious criminals rather than securing the safety of his Christian subjects. In Matthew’s eyes, the Jewish problem in England could be mitigated if the King administered justice properly.

Of all the themes of the *Chronica*, its reportage on the King and his shaky relationship with the various constituents of his kingdom dominates. Matthew paid close attention to the multitudinous conflicts that characterized his accounts of Henry’s reign. Not satisfied with merely recording events, Matthew shared his opinions on Henry’s inept management of the kingdom – the plundering of vacant episcopal and abbatial offices, the preferential treatment of foreigners rather than native Englishmen, the corruption of royal officials at the expense of the landed gentry, and the extravagantly expensive foreign policy that rarely yielded any benefit to the kingdom. Matthew’s fierce criticisms of the King had a bearing on how he discusses the Anglo-Jewish community. While the 1240-1255 tallages do not appear as a concerted financial policy in the *Chronica* (contrary to the claims of Menache), Matthew acknowledges the impact they had on the Jewish community. While he commiserates with the suffering of the Jewish community, these expressions of sympathy appear to serve his anti-royal agenda. Similarly, when

describing a series of coin-clipping accusations against the Jews, Matthew deploys several rhetorical strategies that draw on the image of Jewish criminality in order to depict King Henry III's regime as weak and incompetent.

The depiction of the Jews in the *Chronica Majora* overlap with Matthew's broader interests concerning sacrilegious violence, the imminence of the apocalypse, and royal tyranny. Their main features are ultimately drawn from Christian theology as formulated by St. Augustine and perpetuated by the Church. There are few novel claims made excluding the Jewish-Tartar Plot wherein European Jewry is portrayed as an active agent propelling the movement of history toward its closing chapter. Yet even this idea is moored in centuries of speculations about the Jewish function as anti-Christians during the End Times. On the other hand, the Jews act as a literary medium by which Matthew can voice his criticisms of individuals, religious orders, and the Crown. Though Matthew works within the parameters of traditional and more recent definitions and stereotypes, he tailors his accounts of Jews to further his historiographical interests. There are three themes that impose continuity on the various depictions of the Jews in the *Chronica*: notions of Jewish hostility to Christianity, Christian conceptions of the End Times, and the unjust reign of King Henry III.

## CHAPTER 2

“Slay them not, lest at any time they forget your law.”

Reconciling Jewish Hostility and Augustinian Toleration in the *Chronica Majora*

### 2.1 Introduction

There can be no doubt that the Jews’ seemingly-unassimilable nature in Christian conceptions of history troubled many chroniclers in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The *Chronica Majora*’s multitudinous entries concerning the Jews reflect this disquietude, and this is perhaps best epitomized by the verse alluded to in the first half of this chapter’s title, “Slay them not, lest at any time they forget your law” (*Psalms* 59:12). This particular Psalm was made famous by the Patristic author Saint Augustine (354-430) whose works had an enormous import for the High Middle Ages. Augustine would be cited by ecclesiastical policy makers, theologians, *littérateurs*, and chroniclers for centuries. His ideas served as the basis whereby Matthew Paris judged the relationship between Jews and those Christian officials charged with maintaining social order. Matthew cited *Psalms* 59:12 explicitly to condemn the egregious crimes committed against several Anglo-Jewish communities in the year 1190. The premise of *Psalms* 59:12, and the commentary Augustine provided, embraces the very important notion of Christian tolerance for the Jews. However, there is an inherent contradiction in the *Chronica* whereby many entries of alleged Jewish animosity towards Christianity are revealed, and subsequent responses by various Christian official groups are likewise called to question.

Matthew’s depiction of the Jews in the *Chronica* poignantly reflects ongoing changes in the history of Jewish-Christian relations, and these depictions along with others would go on to have ominous repercussions for the Jewish community of England, most noteworthy its expulsion from the kingdom in 1290. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries,

the papal reaffirmations of the bull *Sicut Judeis* had guaranteed security for Jews living in Christian lands.<sup>83</sup> However, by the time of Matthew Paris, certain developments in Christian theology and popular religiosity began to challenge this earlier spirit of protection provided by papal promulgations. These changes of course were complicated by the circulation of new stereotypes regarding Jews and Judaism. Notwithstanding the *Chronica*'s adherence to Augustinian guidelines, Matthew Paris's fascination (and horror) with stories of Jewish hostility reveal his concern that the Jews of Europe were no longer fulfilling their soteriological function. Thus, the depiction of the Jews in the *Chronica Majora* is protean enough to allow Matthew to sympathize and lament the massacres of 1190 while also denouncing forms of Jewish attacks on Christian salvation history and utilizing the trope of Jewish violence to malign Anglo-Jewry and official Christian groups.

## 2.2 The Jewish Role in Christian Salvation History: Augustine and the Bible

The proximity of Christianity and Judaism through their common Abrahamic heritage has complicated how the two communities viewed and interacted with one another.<sup>84</sup> As a Benedictine monk and chronicler, Matthew Paris was well-versed with Patristic writings that elucidated proper interactions between Christians and Jews

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<sup>83</sup> The papal bull *Sicut Judeis* was first pronounced by Calixtus II (1119-24), but it drew on elements from imperial promulgations by Theodoric the Ostrogoth (c. 500) and the writings of Pope Gregory I (590-604). It outlines the rights of the Jewish community that episcopal and secular officials must respect, but also qualifies this tolerance by excluding from papal protection any Jews who act against the Christian faith. It was reissued by nearly every pope in the late-12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially during periods of inter-communal violence. When Christians attacked several Jewish communities around Fulda in 1235 on account of accusations that the Jews had kidnapped children and consumed their blood in their religious rites, Pope Gregory IX reissued *Sicut Judeis* to stymie the violence; Solomon Grayzel, "The Papal Bull *Sicut Judeis*," in *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, eds. Meir Ben-Horin, Bernard D. Weinryb, Solomon Zeitlin (Philadelphia: Brill, 1962), 249-255.

<sup>84</sup> One example of this is the contest over the symbols of Esau-Jacob of *Genesis*. 25:23, "Two peoples, born of you [Rebecca], shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger." Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 13-17.

premised on the basis of scriptural authority. The question of how proto-Christians ought to treat those who rejected Jesus Christ and the New Dispensation (i.e., the sacraments of Christ) in favour of the Mosaic Law was first posed by the Apostle Paul.<sup>85</sup> In his *Epistle to the Romans*, Paul portrays the Jews and Israel as the elect of God who were selected as recipients of His dispensation. Despite this, the Mosaic Law was simply a preparation for the True Law that was to come in the death and resurrection of Christ. Notwithstanding the supersession of the Jews by the Gentiles and incurrence of God's enmity, their history as the People of the Covenant and the promise of their moral correction in the future – emblemized by the allegorical tree of salvation in *Romans* 11:17-24 – ensured that they retained a special, albeit problematic, status.

Despite this, early Christian polemicists often used the ambivalent letters of Paul to criticize the Jews on account of their blindness to Christian truths in the Hebrew Bible (for Christians, the Old Testament). Augustine further elucidated this idea. Many factors shaped his opinions, but his adoption of typological allegory – and later, literal-historical interpretation – as an essential hermeneutical principle for reading Scripture was perhaps most influential.<sup>86</sup> Augustine's evolving hermeneutics meant that he emphasised different scriptural passages as models for proper Christian-Jewish relations over the course of his life.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, Augustine discovered *Psalms* 59:12 ("Slay them not, lest at any time

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<sup>85</sup>Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 4-8.

<sup>86</sup>Indeed, Augustine's early writing on the Jews is within the context of his polemic against the Manicheans. Augustine believed the Jews and Manicheans both erred by interpreting scripture literally; Paula Fredriksen, "Excaecati Occulta Justitia Dei: Augustine on Jews and Judaism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* (1995), 312-314.

<sup>87</sup>One example of how this influenced Augustine's reading of scripture is his various commentaries on the story of Cain and Abel. When Augustine favored the typological interpretation, he viewed Cain and Abel as prefiguring the relationship between Jews and Christians, Cain being marked and exiled for the murder of his brother. Later in life, Augustine interpreted the story historically, and in *De Civitate Dei* considered the



they forget your law; scatter them in your might”) to be the clearest injunction concerning the place of the Jews in the post-Incarnation world.

The most significant implication of *Psalm* 59:12 was that the Jews must be preserved and protected. This protection was warranted due to their maintenance of the Old Testament, a divine Dispensation in its own right, though the Jews were ignorant of this proper reading of Scripture. Their very ignorance of the Scripture they carried, moreover, was proof against Augustine’s polemical adversaries such as the Manicheans for whom the Old Testament was not canonical, that Christians had not forged the Old Testament. Indeed, Christians maintained that the biblical prophets had foretold Jewish ignorance (early Christians described it as “blindness”). The second half of the *Psalm* (“scatter them in your might”) meant, for Augustine, that the Jews must be dispersed and humbled by Christians – the biblical prophets had prophesied this as well – in order to disseminate the Old Testament across the world. Exodus and subjugation provided proof to non-Christians of the realization of the Old Testament prophecies. Furthermore, Jewish misfortune demonstrated the elevation of Christianity above its religious ancestor. Thus, the Jews function as *testes fidei* (“witnesses of the faith”) who inadvertently exhibit the truths of Christianity through their very existence and continued practice of their faith.<sup>88</sup>

Augustine’s concept of *testes fidei* contributed to the thought of several early-medieval writers (e.g., Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville), albeit with many variations.

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brothers as forerunners of the two cities. However, this new emphasis did not negate the older typological interpretation; Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 14.

<sup>88</sup> In late antiquity and the early-medieval period, this Augustinian concept could be used in moral *exempla* to depict the Jews positively (as potential proselytes or friendly neighbours in contrast to pagans or Saracens) but by the High Middle Ages the Jews in this genre symbolized disbelief, sin, and carnality; Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 179-180.

It would eventually become the foundation for ecclesiastical policy, and in fact the *testes fidei* directly informed the papal bull *Sicut Judeis* which called for episcopal and secular officials to respect the rights of Jewish communities to practice their faith and live free from unwarranted repression.<sup>89</sup> Jews were considered reprehensible due to their biblical act of deicide, their enduring blindness to the spiritual meaning of the Mosaic Law and rejection of Jesus Christ, but unlike other non-Christian minorities, God had established a positive role for Jews in his plan for the redemption of humankind. Beginning in the late-12<sup>th</sup> century, papal and local episcopal councils issued increasingly-detailed promulgations and decrees that proscribed Jewish-Christian interaction and regulated the living conditions of the Jewish community within Christendom. Concerned with reinvigorating Christian orthodoxy by shielding the members of the Church from the spiritual impieties of non-conforming outgroups, the Churchmen at the IV Lateran Council (1215) erected legal boundaries around those who practiced Judaism.<sup>90</sup> Canon 69, *Etsi Judaeos*, expresses the spirit of the Lateran fathers' concerns: "It is quite absurd that any who blaspheme against Christ should have power over Christians."<sup>91</sup> At the same that the notion of Jewish subservience was being articulated, the Church was also reaffirming basic religious freedoms and, through bulls like *Sicut Judeis*, the extension of papal protection on theological grounds, though this protection was contingent on Jewish

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<sup>89</sup> Solomon Grayzel, "The Papal Bull *Sicut Judeis*," 256-257.

<sup>90</sup> John Edwards, "The Church and the Jews in Medieval England," in *The Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary, and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 90.

<sup>91</sup> Cited in Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century: A Study of their Relations during the Years 1196-1254, Based on the Papal Letters and the Conciliar Decrees of the Period* (Philadelphia: The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, 1933), 311.

restraint from harming or insulting the Christian faith.<sup>92</sup> Though numerous developments in the High Middle Ages challenged the Church policy of toleration, the Augustinian mandate continued to serve as a lynchpin for Christian-Jewish relations.<sup>93</sup>

In the case of the *Chronica Majora*, the most obvious application of Augustine's prohibition of violence against Jews appears in an entry that describes several attacks by the nobility on Jewish communities across England in the year 1190.<sup>94</sup> Matthew censures the assailants who, in his opinion, were not inspired by religious conviction, but instead by their onerous debts to the Jews.<sup>95</sup> While some contemporary monastic historians like William of Newburgh (d. 1198) asserted that the violence was a divine malediction against Jewish sinfulness, Matthew is more sympathetic.<sup>96</sup> After graphically describing the massacres at Norwich, Stamford and Bury, Matthew laments the transgression of *Psalms* 59:12. Furthermore, when describing a massacre of the Jewish community in Spain (1236), Matthew staidly comments on how Henry III guarded the English Jews from similar attacks.<sup>97</sup> Matthew may have disliked the Jewish community, but he did not feel that this justified unauthorized violence against them.

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<sup>92</sup> The concluding sentence of *Sicut Judeis* reads: We desire, however, to place under the protections of this decree only those who do not presume to plot against the Christian faith." Cited in Solomon Grayzel, "The Papal Bull *Sicut Judeis*," 244-245.

<sup>93</sup> Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 67-68.

<sup>94</sup> *C.M.*, II, 358.

<sup>95</sup> According to multiple contemporary sources (Roger of Howden, William of Newburgh), the noblemen sought out and destroyed the *archae* (chirographic chests) which contained the debtors bonds; R.B. Dobson, *The Jews of Medieval York and the Massacre of March 1190* (York: St. Anthony's Press, 1974), 28.

<sup>96</sup> Nicholas Vincent has shown that William's anti-Jewish expression is complicated by his use of ironic juxtaposition. William's rhetorical constructions, in turn, make the fury and fanaticism of the Christian perpetrators a targets of his invective; see Nicholas Vincent, "William of Newburgh, Josephus and the New Titans," in *Christians and Jews in Angevin England: The York Massacre of 1190 Narratives and Contexts*, eds. Sarah Rees Jones and Sethina Watson (York: York Medieval Press, 2013), 60-62.

<sup>97</sup> *C.M.*, III, 369.

The concept of *testes fidei* also is presented in variable forms in the *Chronica*. In the tale of the Wandering Jew, Cartaphilus, Augustinian motifs are employed in a way that stresses the testimonial function of the Jews, but also the unremitting contest between Christianity and Judaism.<sup>98</sup> Recorded in the year 1228, Matthew reports how Cartaphilus, a porter in the house of Pontius Pilate, struck Jesus on the face.<sup>99</sup> In response, Jesus cursed Cartaphilus with immortality which could only be relieved after the Second Coming. Realizing his error, Cartaphilus converted and began his peregrinations in the region around Armenia renamed as “Joseph.” Here, he instructed the faithful on the Passion and Resurrection of Christ and the careers of the Apostles.<sup>100</sup>

It is tempting to dismiss the Cartaphilus entry as mere monastic gossip, but this narrative is also a succinct commentary on the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. Firstly, Cartaphilus sustains the Gospels, similar to how the post-biblical Jews preserve the Old Testament. His meanderings spread the truths of Christ and testify to the supersession and punishment of the Jews. Likewise, his initial “ignorance” is reminiscent of the Jews’ failure to identify signs of Christ in their own scripture. When Cartaphilus is baptized, he overcomes this ignorance, but his punishment and guilt are permanent. His repentance and entrance into the Christian faith did not mollify Matthew’s critical opinion

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<sup>98</sup> The story derives from the 6th-century *Leimonarion* (*Spiritual Meadow*), but was likely known to Matthew through oral reports; George Kumler Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965), 11-15.

<sup>99</sup> *C.M.*, III, 161-163.

<sup>100</sup> Sophia Menache’s account of Cartaphilus, whom she calls *Ahasuerus*, only tangentially resembles Matthew’s entry. This is likely due to an elision between Matthew’s narrative of Cartaphilus and later developments in the legend of the Wandering Jew; Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew*, 42 and 50; and Sophia Menache, “Matthew Paris’s Attitudes toward Anglo-Jewry,” *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997), 144.

of him.<sup>101</sup> In the pictorial marginalia accompanying the entry, Cartaphilus, who is depicted as enfeebled and sorrowful, stands before a remarkably empowered Christ bearing the Cross, and speech scrolls extend from both figures reading, “the judgement prepared for you” (Christ) and, “just as it is written for me” (Cartaphilus) (Fig. 1).<sup>102</sup> It appears that even genuine contrition cannot absolve the guilt that the Jews incurred for their abuse of the Messiah and Son of God. The only relief for these miserable people is in the Second Coming, when the “nation of Israel” would return to God’s covenant by their conversion.<sup>103</sup> In this narrative, the Jewish man maintains his status as *testis fidei* and is partially transformed by his repudiation of the Mosaic Law, but only the final reconciliation between the religious rivals (i.e., the Final Conversion) can save him.



Fig. 1 Legend of the Wandering Jew “Cartaphilus.”  
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 16, fol. 70v.

<sup>101</sup> Matthew’s opinion of Jewish conversion is vague. The Cartaphilus entry suggests that Matthew believed that the Jews bore the guilt for their murder of Christ until the Last Judgement, but in an entry under the year 1259, Matthew describes elatedly how Elias of London was saved from the devil and became a Christian; *C.M.*, VI, 730.

<sup>102</sup> See Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 303.

<sup>103</sup> *Romans* 11:25-26 where Paul proclaims that all Israel will be saved.

### 2.3 Endangering Eschatology: Depiction of the Jews in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (TTP)*

The notion of a final reconciliation raises the problem of Jewish eschatology which contradicted Christian schemes for the End of Times. The “Jewish-Mongol Plot” of 1241 is a pivotal point in the depiction of the Jews in the *Chronica* because it is here that Matthew begins to present a Jewish eschatological threat to Christendom. In this entry, Matthew describes how the Jews of the Holy Roman Empire, likely from the Rhineland, plotted to supply the Tartars (the Latin name for the Mongols), who had recently invaded Poland, with logistical provisions. According to Matthew, the Jewish conspirators hosted a secret meeting where an elder of the community declared their program:

My brothers, seed of the illustrious Abraham, vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth, whom our God Adonai has permitted to be so long oppressed under Christian rule, now the time has arrived for us to liberate ourselves, and by the judgement of God to oppress them in our turn, that the remnant of Israel may be saved. For our brethren of the tribes of Israel, who were formerly shut up, have gone forth to bring the whole world to subjection to them and to us. And the more severe and more lasting that our former suffering has been, the greater will be the glory that will ensue to us. Let us therefore go to meet them with valuable gifts, and receive them with the highest honour: they are in need of corn, wine and arms.<sup>104</sup>

In this entirely fictional speech, Jewish oppression is divinely mandated, but the arrival of the Tartars, who are actually the Ten Lost Tribes, signals the lifting of God’s enmity. The Ten Tribes, whom the Assyrians deported from the northern kingdom of Israel in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, were part of a shared scriptural tradition between Judaism and

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<sup>104</sup>*E.H.*, I, 357; *C.M.*, IV, 132.

Christianity.<sup>105</sup> Rabbinical Judaism often interpreted the Ten Tribes as eschatological liberators who would unite the Jewish people in Israel before the advent of the Messianic age.<sup>106</sup>

For Matthew, Jewish identification with the Tartars amounts to an eschatological challenge to the Christian conception of salvation history. One way that Matthew disarms the Jewish-Tartar threat was to cite scholastic sources that portray the Ten Tribes as harbingers of the Antichrist rather than apocalyptic heroes.<sup>107</sup> On the other hand, Matthew also reclaims the Ten Tribes for the Christian tradition by citing the translation, from Greek to Latin, of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (henceforth, *TTP*). Its translator was Robert Grosseteste, a scholar-bishop of Lincoln who had elsewhere denounced the continued practice of the Mosaic Law as heretical and written that the English Jews' practice of usury violated the theologically-mandated notion of Jewish subservience.<sup>108</sup> Matthew used Grosseteste's translation to attack the Jews in an entry dated to 1242:

Also, in this time, Robert, bishop of Lincoln, a man most skilled in Latin and Greek, translated accurately the Testaments of the twelve patriarchs

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<sup>105</sup> *II Kings* 17:5-6 "Then the king of Assyria invaded all the land and came to Samaria; for three years he besieged it. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria captured Samaria; he carried the Israelites away to Assyria. He placed them in Halah, on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."

<sup>106</sup> The Talmudic rabbis appear to have drawn this conclusion from the biblical prophets (e.g., *Ezekiel* 37:19 "I am about to take the stick of Joseph [which is in the hand of Ephraim] and the tribes of Israel associated with it; and I will put the stick of Judah upon it, and make them one stick, in order that they may be one in my hand"). Nevertheless, the rabbis did not unanimously agree that the Ten Tribes would return; A. Neubauer, "Where Are the Ten Tribes?: I. Bible, Talmud, and Midrashic Literature," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* I (1888), 19-21.

<sup>107</sup> Matthew cites the *Historia scholastica*, an immensely popular 12<sup>th</sup>-century commentary on the historical books of the Bible, to support his identification of the Tartars as the Ten Tribes whom Alexander the Great enclosed in the Caspian Mountains. As presented in the *Historia*, the Ten Tribes will be unleashed during the Last Days, thus depicting the exilic Jews as a formidable apocalyptic foe who Christ will vanquish after the Second Coming.

<sup>108</sup> This was a standard position for Christian theologians; Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 103-106.

from the Greek into Latin; which for many years had been unknown and concealed, through the jealousy of the Jews, because of the prophecies concerning our Saviour therein contained. But the Greeks, the most indefatigable investigators of all writings, being the first who learnt about this, translated it from Hebrew into Greek, and kept it to themselves until our own time. Nor in the time of St. Jerome, or of any other holy interpreter, could it in any way whatever come to the knowledge of the Christians, on account of the scheming malice of the Jews. Therefore, the abovenamed bishop, assisted by Master Nicolas, a Greek, and clerk of the abbey of St. Albans, translated clearly, evidently, and word for word, into Latin, that glorious treatise, to the strengthening of the Christian faith, and to the greater confusion of the Jews.<sup>109</sup>

The *TTP*, which Matthew believed was the authentic testimony of the twelve sons of the biblical patriarch Jacob, constituted a series of deathbed confessions, exhortations, and prophecies.

For Matthew, Jewish concealment of the *TTP*, effectively a dissimulation of biblical truths, amounts to an attack on Christianity. While modern scholars have attributed Grosseteste's working copy of the *TTP* to a 3<sup>rd</sup>-century Christian authorship, Matthew confidently asserted its Jewish provenance. Indeed, to Matthew the prophecies of the *TTP* were authentic insofar as many had already been realized (e.g., the destruction of the Temple).<sup>110</sup> Though prophecy was only one element of the *TTP*, which consists of twelve books, each written by one of the patriarchs and addressed to his sons, it was the books with lengthier prophetic sections (e.g., Levi and Judah) that caught Matthew's attention. The modern historian Horm W. Hollender has identified four types of prophecy in the *TTP*: 1) the descendants of the patriarchs would sin, go into exile, and eventually be redeemed; 2) they will rebel against the descendants of Levi and Judah; 3) the arrival of a

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<sup>109</sup> *E.H.*, I, 437-438; *C.M.*, IV, 232-233.

<sup>110</sup> Like so many of prophetic sources that Matthew quotes in the *Chronica* (e.g., *Pseudo-Methodius*, see Chapter 2), the *TTP* was actually history written in the guise of prophecy (*vaticinium ex eventu*).



“future ideal saviour” from Levi and Judah; 4) the twelve patriarchs would return from the dead at the end of time to assume the leadership of their respective posterity.<sup>111</sup> The book of Levi displays type two and three wherein the patriarch has a heavenly vision of the figure who “shall redeem Israel” and would be of “thee [Levi] and Judah,” and this is the saviour of the world. Despite this, the Jews would reject and abuse the saviour and go into exile for their crimes against him.<sup>112</sup> For Matthew, these are the “prophecies concerning our Saviour” which the Jews willfully concealed from Christians.

The *TTP* entry is in effect a theological contestation over a commonly-shared scriptural heritage that had in Matthew’s estimation tilted to the advantage of the Jews. Ruth Nisse believes that Matthew was primarily concerned with the “supplanting of the Christian eschatological narrative” by a Jewish one manifested by their identification of the Tartars with the Ten Tribes.<sup>113</sup> The translation of the *TTP*, in Matthew’s opinion, effectively disproves the claims of the conspiring Rhineland Jews by drawing attention to the proto-Christian status of the twelve patriarchs who possessed prescient knowledge of the Saviour. Matthew was not contesting the Tartar-Ten Tribes connection, but the soteriological function that the Rhineland Jews ascribed to them. By citing the *TTP*, Matthew calls into question Jewish understanding and treatment of their scriptural heritage. Their intentional rejection of the prognostications of their patriarchal forefathers, who (the *TTP* tells) would return as the rightful leaders of the Ten Tribes during the Last Days, reveals a conscious disregard for biblical authority. Matthew might have had the

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<sup>111</sup>Horm W. Hollander, “Israel and God’s Eschatological Agent in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs” in *Aspects of Religious Contact and Conflict in the Ancient World*, ed. P.W. van der Horst (Utrecht: Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid, 1995), 95.

<sup>112</sup> R.H. Charles, trans., *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908), 62-67.

<sup>113</sup> Ruth Nisse, “A Romance of the Jewish East: The Ten Lost Tribes and The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” *Medieval Encounters* 13 (2007), 519.

words of the apostle Paul in mind (*Romans* 9:6 “For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, and not all of Abraham’s children are his true descendants,”) when he recorded the *TTP* entry. The “true” Israelites are those who obediently receive the prophecies of their biblical ancestors and acknowledge Jesus Christ therein. They are certainly not the consanguineous descendants of Israel – the Jews and Tartars.

Claims that the Jews intentionally hid Scripture from Christians – Matthew explicitly accepted the *TTP* as such – was a serious charge as it violated the papal bull *Sicut Judeis*. The bull concludes with a condition “We desire, however, to place under the protections of this decree only those who do not presume to plot against the Christian faith” which was invoked, in spirit if not explicitly, during the legal proceedings against the Talmud at Paris in 1239-1241.<sup>114</sup> Here, papal and episcopal officials, backed by Louis IX, charged the Talmud with blasphemy for, inter alia, abasing the biblical prophets in favour of the rabbinical sages. Though there existed a long tradition of Christian polemics against the Jews for rejecting, or even killing, their prophets (the evangelist Matthew has Jesus himself espouse such an opinion), this had never led to the policing or prosecution of contemporary Judaism; but inasmuch as the Mosaic Law was a divine Dispensation which had special import for Christian salvation history, the popes were – in their opinion – obligated to safeguard the true Judaism.<sup>115</sup> At the heart of the trial of the Talmud was the notion that contemporary Judaism, by following theological innovations extraneous to the Old Testament, constituted heresy. In the *Chronica*, contemporary Jews are depicted,

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<sup>114</sup> Grayzel, “The Papal Bull *Sicut Judeis*,” 244-45.

<sup>115</sup> James Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels: The Church and the Non-Christian World, 1250-1550* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 30-31.

instead, as theological aggressors who impede the practice of the legitimate faith, but not as heretical innovators.

The *TTP* implicitly raises the issue of Jewish intentionality in the murder of Christ. Matthew's commentary suggests that the twelve patriarchs had explicitly informed their descendants of the conditions in which the messiah would arrive (which, not surprisingly, parallel the life of Jesus Christ as told in the Gospels).<sup>116</sup> The context for Grosseteste's translation of the *TTP* is telling. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Christian society was more comfortable with the idea that the Jews of Jerusalem had been aware of the divinity and messiahship of Christ when they killed him. While this idea was still being worked out in the field of exegesis and scholastic theology, the idea that the Jews continued to re-enact the slaying of Christ was already present in narratives of ritual crucifixion.<sup>117</sup>

#### **2.4 Assailants of Christ: Jewish Ritual Violence in the *Chronica Majora***

Like many of his ideas, Augustine's conception of Jewish guilt incurred from their biblical act of deicide lasted into the High Middle Ages. Few argued that the Jews had not inherited guilt from their ancestors. This was self-evident from the Jewish admission of guilt in *Matthew 27:25* "His blood is on us and on our children," but other scriptural passages suggested that the Jews were ignorant of the true meaning of their actions (e.g., *Luke 23:34*, where Jesus says, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do"). Augustine agreed, and wrote that the Jews thought Jesus Christ had blasphemed when he called himself the Son of God, and they were, therefore, ignorant of Christ's true

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<sup>116</sup> Robert A. Kugler, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 24.

<sup>117</sup> Jeremy Cohen, "The Jews as Killers of Christ in the Latin Tradition, From Augustine to the Friars," *Tradition* 19 (1983), 5-6.

identity.<sup>118</sup> Whereas the priestly and scribal class bore most of the blame for Christ's murder, the lesser people were culpable for not stopping the crime. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Christian scholars debating the nature of sin (i.e., the relationship between intention, action, and volition) began emphasising that the Jews somehow knew of Christ's messiahship but nevertheless killed him out of envy or malice. Though it was thought that the lesser people's ignorance partially excused their involvement, it was also suggested that these uneducated Jews could have consulted the learned class. On the other hand, the religious and social elites must have known that Jesus was the messiah from their familiarity with Scripture.<sup>119</sup> By the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Thomas Aquinas was accusing the learned Jews of voluntary ignorance, that is, of observing the signs of Jesus's divinity, but refusing to acknowledge them by investigating the Hebrew Bible. Similar to how 13<sup>th</sup> century Christians were accusing the Jews of willfully dissimulating their own religious tradition, Jews were also pinned with committing the most egregiously-irrational crime: murdering God.

At the same time that these debates were taking place, new reports started to appear that accused contemporary Jews of insulting and abusing Christ and his followers. For centuries, Jewish disdain for Christianity had been a prevalent theme in *exempla* tales

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<sup>118</sup> Jeremy Cohen, *Christ Killers: The Jews and the Passion From the Bible to the Big Screen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 76.

<sup>119</sup> As Jack Watt writes of Alexander of Hales, "This is the type of ignorance, it would seem, which Alexander would categorize as 'gross' (*crassa*): ignorance which should have been remedied, but the neglect of doing so was not willed...It is less culpable than 'willed' (*affectata*) ignorance, were the neglect of seeking necessary information was deliberate." Jack Watt. "Parisian Theologians and the Jews: Peter Lombard and Peter Cantor," in *The Medieval Church: Universities, Heresy and the Religious Life: Essays in Honour of Gordon Leff*, eds. Peter Biller and Barrie Dobson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), 66.

(pithy and illustrative narratives that delivered moral lessons).<sup>120</sup> Yet the type of charge levelled against the Jews in the *Chronica*, ritual crucifixion, differed significantly. Ritual crucifixion narratives do not have a direct antecedent in the *exempla*, hagiographical, or historical tradition, and there is no scholarly consensus on the origin of this idea.<sup>121</sup>

Thomas of Monmouth, a monk of Norwich abbey, recorded his *Life and Passion of Saint William of Norwich* in the 1150s, although the event at the center of his hagiography – the kidnapping and crucifixion in 1144 of a twelve-year old Christian boy by the Jews of Norwich – was known in Germany (Würzburg) by the late-1140s.<sup>122</sup> Unlike *exempla* tales, it was the Benedictine monks of England who were responsible for the concoction and dissemination of these stories. The monks commemorated the slain children by writing hagiographies that illustrated the victim's piety in life, the horror of their martyrdom, and the thaumaturgical powers of their bodies after death.<sup>123</sup> Sainthood, which was often

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<sup>120</sup> Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 169-173. Miri Rubin discusses how *exempla* tales foreshadowed late-13<sup>th</sup> century accusations of Host desecration; Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 38-41.

<sup>121</sup> Gavin I. Langmuir has shown that the two reports of Jewish ritual murder from antiquity (from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century BCE historian Posidonius which Josephus mentions in his *Against Apion*, and 5<sup>th</sup>-century Christian historian Socrates who was known in the High Middle Ages through the *Historia tripartite*) could not have directly influenced 12<sup>th</sup>-century ritual crucifixion accusations; Gavin I. Langmuir, "Thomas of Monmouth: Detector of Ritual Murder," In *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, ed. Gavin I. Langmuir (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 212-216.

<sup>122</sup> John M. McCulloh, "Jewish Ritual Murder: William of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth, and the Early Dissemination of the Myth," *Speculum* 72 (1997), 731-732.

<sup>123</sup> Some cases of alleged ritual crucifixion from the late-12<sup>th</sup> century are: Robert of Bury (d. 1181) with a *Vita* written by Jocelin of Brakelond (no longer extant); Harold of Gloucester (c.1168) who was commemorated in the monks of St Peter's chronicle; the French boy of Winchester (1192) recorded by Richard of Devizes, a monk of St. Swithun's; and several others which are harder to characterize because: 1) they are not tied to monastic centers; 2) their narratives synthesize elements from the typical Benedictine crucifixion stories and more popular folk or *exempla* tales concerning Jewish violence or maliciousness; 3) they are difficult to date. A case in point is the boy Adam of Bristol which was not circulated by Benedictines, merges a ritual crucifixion with many themes of Marian tales, and claims to have taken place in the 12<sup>th</sup> century but could only have been recorded in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century; see Robert Stacey, "From Ritual Crucifixion to Host Desecration: Jews and the Body of Christ," *Jewish History* 12 (1998), 22-24. Stacey makes the case that the story of Adam exhibits the movement of Benedictine crucifixion narratives outside the confines of the monastery and into more popular circulation where they began to merge with folktale and *exempla* narratives.

associated with the performance of miracles, was not requisite for the memorializing and celebration of these events: as martyrs whom the Jews killed on account of their hatred of the Christian faith (*odium fidei*), these children died in the service of Christ. Indeed, the celebration of martyred Christians was a devotional act that kept the memory of the victims (who had an intimate communion with the divine) alive.<sup>124</sup>

Though Jewish hostility was an integral motif in the structure of the child-martyr reports, it should be remembered that the sanctity of the child himself took center stage. In Thomas of Monmouth's *Life of Saint William*, the majority of the work concerns the various miracles that attended the deceased's body. In most accounts of ritual crucifixion, local monks or canons quickly claimed these bodies and carried them to their Church for proper burial. Subsequently, as word of the martyr's deeds spread and the cult of the martyr gained popularity, the resident monks/canons translate the remains to a special chapel for veneration. These acts of institutionalizing the memory of child-martyrs resemble the broader pattern of the Benedictine economy of saints in England.<sup>125</sup> Reputable patron saints could enhance the prestige and sanctity of a monastery and invigorate the spiritual lives of the monks. Moreover, the successful enshrinement of

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<sup>124</sup> By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was thought that all Christians had a communion Christ through the sacrament of the Eucharist. Nevertheless, martyrs were different from ordinary followers because their death shared a likeness with the sacrifice of Christ; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine. Volume III: The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 177-178.

<sup>125</sup> The market of saints in England could be very competitive. Through the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, Matthew Paris's abbey, St. Albans, clashed with the monastery of Ely over claims to the relics of St. Alban the proto-martyr. In light of the popularity and veneration of St. Alban, the potential spoils of this feud were, indeed, extremely beneficial; Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 198-204.

saints was lucrative as these holy sites attracted throngs of pilgrims along with their alms and charitable donations.<sup>126</sup>

Though there exist key structural differences between chronicle writing and hagiography, Matthew's reports of ritual crucifixion closely resemble the *Life of Saint William*.<sup>127</sup> After writing how the Norwich Jews lured William into their house, Thomas describes how the boy was bound, tortured, and finally crucified as an "innocent lamb" on the first night of Passover.<sup>128</sup> The most obvious source for the narrative's imagery is the Gospels which themselves speak of how future generations would inherit the blame for the deicidal crime.<sup>129</sup> From here, the *exempla* tales adopted the theme of Jewish animus toward the Christ which manifested in their attacks on the religious icons including liturgical crosses.<sup>130</sup> Matthew himself repeats this type of accusation under the year 1222. The *Chronica* tells how a deacon had fallen in love with a Jewess and apostatized. At the Council of Oxford, the Jew was declared guilty and then executed by the infamous castellan Fawkes de Breauté.<sup>131</sup> In another of Matthew's historical works, *Historia*

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<sup>126</sup> Anthony Bale suggests that Thomas of Monmouth and the Bishop of Norwich's persistent efforts to establish the cult of William were a direct response to the burgeoning cult of St. Edmund. In turn, St. Edmund founded its own child-martyr cult (Robert of Bury) in 1181; Anthony Bale, "Fictions of Judaism in England before 1290," in *The Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary and Archeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Cambridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 131. The rivalry between Gloucester and Worcester also produced a new child-martyr cult; J. Hillaby, "The Ritual-Child-Murder Accusation: Its Dissemination and Harold of Gloucester," *Jewish Historical Studies* 34 (1994-96), 82-83.

<sup>127</sup> Matthew knew little about William of Norwich and never read Thomas's *Life*. In his *Flores historiarum*, Matthew mentions that a "certain boy" was crucified by the Norwich Jews in 1144; McCulloh, "Jewish Ritual Murder," 714-715. Other narrative features of Thomas's *Life*, such as the "peeping Christian maid" who reveals the Jews' crime to the community, would be repeated in later allegations in England; E.M. Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich: The Origins of the Blood Libel in Medieval Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 84.

<sup>128</sup> See Augustus Jessop and Montague Rhodes James, trans. *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich by Thomas of Monmouth* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1896), 19-22.

<sup>129</sup> In *Matthew* 27:25, when Pontius Pilate excuses himself from any blame for the killing of Christ, the Jews respond "His blood be on us and on our children."

<sup>130</sup> Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 212-213.

<sup>131</sup> *C.M.*, III, 71.

*Anglorum*, the deacon emphatically pronounces his renouncement of the Christian faith by spitting on the cross before the council, thus declaring his antipathy to Christ.<sup>132</sup> Here, the blasphemous act severs decisively the deacon from the grace of God which can only be secured through his son. Similarly, in stories of ritual crucifixion the motive for the Jews' attack is simply hatred toward the Christian faith. Though the stories are portrayed as a re-enactment of the original deicide, they are more concerned with the Jews' rejection and disdain of Christian truths. In some renditions, the reporters of these accusations attribute eschatological motives to the Jews. Thomas of Monmouth gave two explanations for the slaying of William: 1) it was an act of malice against Christ whose death had condemned the Jews to perpetual servitude; 2) the apostate Jew Theobald confessed that the Jews must offer the blood of a Christian child as a sacrifice to God in order to hastened their return from exile and liberation from Christian oppression.<sup>133</sup> Not satisfied with incriminating the Jews of England alone, Theobald further described how Jews of Spain met annually in Narbonne to plan this sacrifice which they apportioned to different countries each year. Thus, the notion of an international Jewish conspiracy takes shape in Thomas's *Life of Saint William*.

Several of the aforementioned themes appear in Matthew Paris's *Chronica* though his presentation of ritual crucifixion differs in important ways. Matthew did not record these episodes to bolster the cult of martyred-children, and St. Albans was not associated with any case of Jewish violence. Despite his respect and sympathy for these victims,

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<sup>132</sup> *Historia Anglorum* II 254. Interestingly, Matthew cites John of Basingtoke, archdeacon of London, as his source for this account. As Frederick Maitland noted, Matthew likely meant archdeacon of Leicester. When recording John's obituary in 1252, Matthew tells how John had informed Robert Grosseteste of Greek copies of the *TTP* in Athens where the archdeacon was studying. At Grosseteste's request, John procured a copy of the *TTP* and returned to England where the Grosseteste made his translation; *C.M.*, V, 284.

<sup>133</sup> Augustus Jessop and Montague Rhodes James, *The Life and Miracles of St William of Norwich*, 93-94.



most of Matthew's accounts in the *Chronica* emphasize the Jew's inveterate hatred of Christianity and the severity of this Jewish threat to Christian society. Also enmeshed in these accounts are the responses of official Christian groups to acts of Jewish hostility. There are several cases of ritual crucifixion reports in the *Chronica*, and two will be discussed here.

In an entry recorded in the annals of 1244, Matthew describes the discovery of a young boy in the cemetery of St. Benedict, London.<sup>134</sup> The telltale signs of ritual crucifixion were obvious: the perpetrators had inscribed Hebrew characters on the body which was also marked with stress wounds, presumably incurred when the boy was affixed to the cross. Matthew twice repeats that the Jews often committed such ghastly crimes (likely an allusion to earlier entries in the *Chronica* that record an attempted crucifixion in 1240), and intimates that the culprits were several Jews who had recently left London.<sup>135</sup> When the king's bailiffs arrive on the scene, they recruited several converted Jews to translate the Hebrew script. It is revealed that the boy had been sold to the Jews, introducing the ominous possibility of a clandestine market for sacrificial victims. At the end of the entry, Matthew remarks on rumors that the deceased child performed miracles, but this is immediately put to question since, as Matthew notes, there were no signs of the stigmata.<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, the canons of St. Paul's quickly transported the body to St. Paul's where it was sepulchered near the high altar.

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<sup>134</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 377-378.

<sup>135</sup> This case of attempted ritual crucifixion is discussed in Chapter 3; *C.M.*, IV, 30-31.

<sup>136</sup> Matthew held St. Francis and the early-Franciscan friars in high esteem. He added an elaborate illustration of St. Francis's stigmata and vision of the six-winged seraph to Roger of Wendover's original entry; Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris*, 316-318; *C.M.*, III, 134-135.

The next entry in the *Chronica* provides further evidence of Matthew's scepticism regarding the boy of St. Benedict's thaumaturgical power. Here, he lists several miracles witnessed at the tombs of exemplary English prelates and noblemen. Matthew describes these in direct speech which stands in contrast to the sources (rumors) that assigned miracles to the child-martyr. In light of how Matthew discusses these two entries, it appears that he is cynically questioning the motives of the canons and the false attributions of miracles to the victims of ritual crucifixion. Asking questions about the events surrounding the boy's death did not mean that Matthew thought the victim should not have been venerated. As a martyr, the boy had entered into a special communion with the death and blood of Christ – a notion which is made stronger by the fact that the boy was crucified like Jesus – which warranted commemoration and respect in its own right. Instead, Matthew may be critiquing the proliferation of cultic shrines, and especially ones devoted to victims of ritual crucifixion, that monks and canons erected for the financial gain and prestige of individual houses. In the boy of St. Benedict entry, Matthew explicitly states that miracles were often attributed to the child victims of Jewish hostility, and it was not uncommon for their bodies to be put to rest in churches. Matthew played an important role in the enhancement of the cult of St. Alban and Amphibalus at his own monastery, and this experience likely informed his perspective on the erection of child-martyr cults in England.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Under the year 1177, there are several entries describing the discovery of Amphibalus's body which the monks quickly translated to the abbey's church. And in 1257, Matthew notes the discovery of St. Alban's original tomb; *C.M.*, II, 308 and *C.M.*, V, 608. Matthew also revised *La Vie de Seint Auban*, an Anglo-Norman poem commemorating his abbey's patron saint. This text included vivid illustrations of the martyrdom of St. Alban and Amphibalus; Florence McCulloh, "Saints Alban and Amphibalus in the Works of Matthew Paris: Dublin, Trinity College MS 177," *Speculum* 56 (1981), 781-784.

The most detailed account of ritual crucifixion in the *Chronica* concerns Hugh of Lincoln, a child who was killed in the summer of 1255. This incident is significant as it was the first time that the King of England intervened and prosecuted the Jews for allegedly crucifying a Christian. This report, as it is told in the *Chronica*, unfolds in two ways. First, Matthew narrates the kidnapping, murder, and discovery of Hugh without recourse to eye-witnesses. Like the narrative from Thomas's *Life of Saint William*, Hugh is kidnapped and sacrificed in a twisted parody of Christ's Passion. The Jews appoint one of their members to play the role of Pontius Pilate and hold a mock trial before torturing him in similar ways as described in the Gospels (e.g., crowning him with thorns, making him drink gall, and piercing his side with a spear).<sup>138</sup>

After Hugh's mother discovers his body in the domicile well of a Jew named Copin, Matthew tells how John of Lexington, a former steward of King Henry III who held several royal offices in Lincolnshire, led an investigation into the crime.<sup>139</sup> After detaining Copin, John led an interrogation (Matthew now retells the story through Copin's confession) which reveals several new details. First, Copin confirms Matthew's claim that the Jews frequently kidnap and crucify Christian children. The Jews had discarded the body after removing Hugh's viscera to use in their magical rites.<sup>140</sup> After failing to bury the body (Copin tells how the earth "vomited" forth the body), the Jews

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<sup>138</sup> *C.M.*, V, 516-517.

<sup>139</sup> John of Lexington features at least once more in the *Chronica*. In 1241, Matthew writes glowingly of how John saved his brother, the abbot of Savigny, from the Genoese allies of Frederick II. The abbot had set out to attend a council called by Pope Gregory IX to discuss the papal-imperial conflict; *C.M.*, IV, 125.

<sup>140</sup> This detail does not appear in any other accounts of Hugh's death, and Matthew likely borrowed it from an entry recorded under the year 1189 which tells how the Jew were prohibited from King Richard's coronation ceremony on account of their practicing magic; *C.M.*, II, 348-349. Paul Hyams notes how Matthew often borrows elements from previous sections of the *Chronica* when he had only vague details about an event; P.R. Hyams, "The Jewish Minority in Mediaeval England, 1066-1290," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 25 (1974), 282-283.

decided to deposit it in the domicile well.<sup>141</sup> Finally, after King Henry arrived in Lincoln and revoked John's issuance of immunity, the Jew, now destined for the gallows, incriminates the entire Jewish community of England in a desperate attempt to save his own life. Copin tells how the Jews of England plot annually to ritually murder Christians as a "paschal offering" and all the Jewish communities of England were present at Hugh's crucifixion.<sup>142</sup> By implicating all the Jews of England in the crime, Matthew raises the specter of a national Jewish conspiracy. Significantly, this is not the first time that Matthew made such an accusation. In Jewish-Tartar plot of 1241, the Jews are also depicted as an organized and concerted threat to Christendom – Matthew saw at least two Jewish conspiracies (at the national and trans-national level) to insult and overthrow, Christendom.

Seeking to incriminate the Jews beyond any doubt, Matthew fabricated several significant details in this report. By comparing the *Chronica* with several contemporary sources, Gavin Langmuir has shown that Matthew made three key mistakes: 1) he incorrectly claimed that John of Lexington intervened before the arrival of Henry III in Lincoln; 2) he concocted the idea of Jewish auguries or magical rites, though Matthew actually borrowed this detail from an entry under the year 1190;<sup>143</sup> 3) for Matthew, Hugh's body was discovered in Copin's domicile well, whereas all other accounts suggest alternative locations. It appears that Matthew manipulated the details of Hugh's death in order to vilify the Jews.<sup>144</sup> The release of the Lincoln Jews from the Tower of London in 1256, despite their conviction by a jury of knights, further aggravated Matthew as this

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<sup>141</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 518.

<sup>142</sup> "*Paschale sacrificium.*" *C.M.*, V, 519.

<sup>143</sup> See above, fn. 104.

<sup>144</sup> Gavin I. Langmuir, "A Knight's Tale of Young Hugh of Lincoln," in *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, ed. Gavin I. Langmuir (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 242-248.

was just another example of King Henry's tolerance of Jewish criminals. Yet the strongest criticisms are reserved for the Franciscan friars who interceded on behalf of the Jews after receiving bribes.<sup>145</sup>

The involvement of the Franciscans helps to explain why Matthew augmented the account of Hugh's death. Matthew's disdain for the mendicant orders is well known to modern scholars, though his marginal illustrations of the stigmata of St. Francis and reproduction of the *Regula Bullata* reveals his deep respect for the apostolic ideals and sanctity of the Franciscans' founding saint.<sup>146</sup> After 1236, the year Matthew's original entries begin, the tone of the *Chronica* toward the Franciscans quickly soured: they abused their prerogative as crusade preachers to extort funds from the English Church<sup>147</sup>; they encroached on monastic liberties by celebrating masses while guests at St Albans, accepting confessions from its parishioners, and attempting to establish permanent residencies<sup>148</sup>; and they acted as tax collectors and agents of the popes who themselves were guilty of multiple moral transgressions.<sup>149</sup> In an entry under the year 1243, Matthew describes how the renowned prophetess Hildegard of Bingen (d.1179) had foretold that the spiritual lives of the new religious orders would deteriorate as the friars became distracted by wealth and worldly reputation.<sup>150</sup> Their moral decline was one of many events signalling the imminent apocalypse which Matthew included in a penultimate

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<sup>145</sup> Though Matthew venerated St. Francis as a saint and admired the apostolic ideal of the order, his opinion of the friars had soured by the 1250s. This is largely because of the friars' service as papal agents, but also due to their encroachment on the liberties of the Benedictine abbeys in England.

<sup>146</sup> See above, fn. 101.

<sup>147</sup> *C.M.*, III, 287.

<sup>148</sup> *C.M.*, III, 332-333. Under the year 1246, Matthew tells how an archdeacon of St. Albans cited the canons of the IV Lateran Council in a dispute with the friars over their taking confessions. The archdeacon tells how the right to take yearly confessions belonged to the parish priest as decreed in the conciliar canon *Omnis ustrisque sexus*; *C.M.*, IV, 516-517.

<sup>149</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 599.

<sup>150</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 279-280.

entry before terminating the *Chronica* in 1250.<sup>151</sup> Together, the Franciscan material provides a vital textual backdrop to the account of Hugh of Lincoln. The friars' intercession "for those men who belong to the devil" (i.e., the Jews) displays how far they had devolved from their halcyon days under St. Francis.<sup>152</sup> Using the technique of association, Matthew added incriminating details to the reports of Hugh's crucifixion not only to highlight the danger and hideousness of Jewish hostility, but also to implicate the friars in the blasphemous crimes of Christ's perennial enemies.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The idea that the modern Jews do not fulfil their role as *testes fidei* is the backdrop for many depictions of Jewish hostility in the *Chronica Majora*. Matthew's reports act as a type of social commentary on what he perceived to be worsening Jewish-Christian relations. His notion of the archetypal Jew was Cartaphilus who sustained the truths of Christianity despite the blemish of his congenital Jewish guilt. Matthew clearly expressed his disdain for unauthorized oppression of the Jewish community whose existence was theologically mandated. Yet Matthew was deeply troubled also by the Jews' perennial animus toward Jesus Christ which impelled them to kidnap and crucify Christian children, and to also conceal the prophetic testimony of their own patriarchs.

Matthew Paris was a consumer and disseminator of the aforementioned tales of Jewish hostility and his works helped to preserve and perpetuate anti-Jewish stereotypes in 14<sup>th</sup>-century literature and beyond.<sup>153</sup> Matthew's fears and anxieties were not unique,

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<sup>151</sup> *C.M.*, V, 194-195.

<sup>152</sup> *C.M.*, V, 546.

<sup>153</sup> Matthew's account of Hugh of Lincoln was one of the inspirations for Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale"; Gavin I. Langmuir, "A Knight's Tale", 237-238.

but as a historian he felt the need to diligently substantiate his reports of Jewish violence by including evidence such as the confession of Copin, the wounds on the boy of St. Benedict's body, and the *TTP*. The immediate literary context, however, reveals further evidence about the meaning behind these entries. For one, Matthew did not necessarily believe in the thaumaturgical powers of the slain children. He goes out of his way to point out that the boy of St. Benedict lacked the stigmata, and he does not attribute miracles to Hugh of Lincoln nor call him a saint. There is also evidence to suggest that Matthew augmented his reports in order to criticize the Franciscans for interceding on behalf of the Jews. These literary additions put to question the friars' dedication to their Christian ideals by associating them with the killers of children and assailants of Christ. Thus, Matthew's commentaries on Jewish violence are not simple presentations of anti-Jewish bigotry. They also show careful uses of suggestion and association in order to comment on wider themes in the *Chronica*.

## CHAPTER 3

“Why do we allow such people to live amongst us?”  
Tartars, Jews and the Apocalypse in the *Chronica Majora*

### 3.1 Introduction

For Christian commentators like Matthew Paris the Mongol invasion of Eastern Europe in 1241-42 was a catastrophe with eschatological ramifications for humankind. Several monastic sources identified the “Tartars” (the name which Latinate writers typically used for the Mongols) as the biblical Gog and Magog or the accompanying party of the Antichrist who would inflict misery on Christian society before the return of Jesus Christ.<sup>154</sup> Drawing on recent novelties in biblical exegesis and eschatological theology, Matthew clarifies how the Tartars were the descendants of the Ten Tribes of Israel. This exile narrative of the Ten Tribes enmeshed with the Alexandrian legend and apocalyptic prophecy which was discussed in the works of the great Parisian magister Peter Comestor. Herein, the return of the Ten Tribes from their wastelands beyond Alexander’s Gate will trigger a domino-effect of cataclysmic events leading to the termination of temporal history.

Matthew breaks new ground, however, when he claims that the native Jews of Europe were conspiring to assist their exilic brethren, the Tartars, to overthrow their Christian masters. The Jewish-Tartar Plot entry of 1241, already discussed in regard to the *TTP* in Chapter 1, provides a confession from the Jewish elders that confirmed the biblical ancestry of the Tartars. For Matthew, the testimony of the elders suggests that the

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<sup>154</sup> The designation “Tartar” is first applied to the Mongols by Quilichinus of Spoleto in 1236; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410* (New York: Longman Pearson, 2006), 59. Matthew was aware that “Tartar” is an allusion to the Hell of Classical Antiquity, Tartarus. In 1241, Matthew records a speech attributed to King Louis IX (r. 1226-1270) who promised to throw the Tartars “back into the regions of Tartarus”; *C.M.*, IV, 111-112.



Jews have a disparate eschatological scheme of the future that contains no positive role for Christianity; instead, the Jews perceive Christians to be immoral oppressors who must be denigrated and defeated. The narrative of the Jewish-Tartar Plot stemmed from Matthew's concern with this rival conception of the End. With the Jews standing shoulder to shoulder with the apocalyptic enemy, the Tartars, Matthew is free to question the tenability of Augustinian tolerance. Thus, in the climactic moment of the narrative, when an incredulous bridge keeper revealed the true contents of the Jewish convey (i.e., Cologne daggers and foodstuffs), Matthew has the bridge keeper ask, "Why do we allow such people to live among us?"<sup>155</sup>

The hypothetical meeting of Jewish and Tartar merger reflects a tendency in the *Chronica* to divide the world into separate parties: Christians, internal enemies (i.e., dissidents residing within Christian society), and external enemies (i.e., those who live beyond Christendom's borders). As a diligent follower of 13<sup>th</sup>-century world news, Matthew carefully documented the troubles plaguing the Church and Christian kingdoms, including the proliferation of heresy, schism with the Greek Church, the Papal-Imperial contest, and the Saracen threat at the borders of Christendom from Spain to the Holy Land. Several entries suggest that Matthew was troubled by the possibility that Christendom's internal enemies, particularly lax Christians and heretics, might collude with the Sultans of Babylon (Cairo), that is, the external enemy. Nevertheless, the notion of a Jewish alliance with the Tartars is qualitatively different insofar as the Jews, the perennial and quintessential disputants of Christian truths, have a defined role in Christian eschatological theology. Due to their testimonial purpose outlined by Augustine, the Jews

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<sup>155</sup> *E.H.*, I, 357-358; *C.M.*, IV, 131-3.

were the only tolerated minority in Western society. At the same time, many Christian authorities expected the Jews to openly oppose Christ at the End of Time and pledge themselves to Antichrist before undergoing a Final Conversion. It is at this moment that Jewish treachery reaches its historical apex, something that fits well with Matthew's depictions of the Jews.

Matthew concluded the *Chronica* in the year 1250 convinced that the apocalypse was underway. The determination of this year was influenced by two decisive events: 1) Reports from Eastern Europe of the devastation of the Tartar army and 2) Matthew's reading of a prophecy, inspired by the Calabrian exegete and prophet Joachim of Fiore (d. 1202), which proclaimed that the Antichrist would be born in 1250. This ominous date provides chronological structure to *Chronica*. In effect, 1250 acts as a Doomsday Clock, and every new disaster that beleaguers Christendom – the Mongol invasion of 1241, the fall of Jerusalem in 1244, the death of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II in 1250 – are metaphorical movements of the hour hand towards twelve o'clock. Within this temporal framework, the issue of the Jewish role in Christian eschatology became paramount.

### **3.2 Antichrist and Earthquakes:**

#### **The Apocalyptic Timeline of the *Chronica Majora***

The End of Time, along with the original act of Creation and the Nativity of Jesus Christ, are the fundamental superstructure of Christian conceptions of history.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> C.A. Patrides, *The Grand Design of God: The Literary Form of the Christian View of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 17-18. For Christians, the three-stage revelatory template is presented in Scripture: "The story of the Master's appearance at three successive vigils of night (*Luke*, 21:38) might symbolize the three stages of God's revelation in history, or in the life of each individual man"; Paul Archambault, "The Ages of Man and the Ages of the World. A Study of Two Traditions," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 12 (1966), 201.

Apocalypticism – conceptions of the sequence of events preceding the cessation of temporal history – was an element present in the earliest Christian writings.<sup>157</sup>

Speculations concerning the fate of the Jews began with the Apostle Paul who tells how redemption would extend to “Israel” after the “full number of the Gentiles has come in” (*Romans* 11:25). On these grounds, Christians throughout the High Middle Ages maintained a positive eschatological role for Jews, notwithstanding debates on the specific definition of “Israel” as either collective (the entire Jewish community) or limited (the few worth redeeming).<sup>158</sup>

Despite Matthew’s fears that the Jews of Europe were abetting the enemies of Christianity, he nevertheless does not doubt their imminent conversion. The *Cartaphilus* entry clearly conceives of Jewish guilt as a permanent blemish that can only be absolved by the Second Coming, and the Jewish acceptance of their true Saviour. Two other entries, namely, the widely-popular *Tiburtina Sibyl* and *Cedar of Lebanon*, support the notion of a Final Conversion for the Jews.<sup>159</sup> In an entry for the year 1239, Matthew records the *Cedar of Lebanon* prophecy (of Bavarian provenance and written in response to rumors of the Tartar devastation) which warns of coming wars and desolation, the humbling of the proud, and the unification of all nations under God after eleven years (i.e., 1250).

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<sup>157</sup> Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Tradition in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 11-14.

<sup>158</sup> Jeremy Cohen, “The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation: Romans 11:25-26 in Patristic and Medieval Exegesis,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 98 (2005), 277-278.

<sup>159</sup> *C.M.*, I, 42-43. Beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, translations of the *Tiburtina Sibyl* from Greek to Latin circulated throughout Western Europe. Christians appreciated the Sibylline tradition as they constitute pagan prophecies that foretell the life of Jesus Christ and maintain the Christian conception of the apocalypse. Anke Holdenried argues that Matthew’s interest in the Sibyl was due not only to its prophetic content, but also because of its antiquarian data and its usefulness as a devotional text; Anke Holdenried, *The Sibyl and Her Scribes Manuscripts and Interpretation of the Latin Sibylla Tiburtina c. 1050-1500* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 153 and 161-162.

The lofty cedar of Lebanon shall be cut down. Mars shall prevail over Saturn and Jupiter, and Saturn shall lay snares for Jupiter in all things. There shall be one God, that is a monarch. The Second God has come. The sons of Israel shall be released from captivity within eleven years. A certain people, considered to be without a chief, shall come in their wanderings. Alas for the clergy; if it should fall, a new order flourishes; alas for the faith of the church, of laws, and of kingdoms. Changes shall occur, and the whole Saracen nation shall be subverted.<sup>160</sup>

The universalization of the Christian faith perhaps explains the next line (“the sons of Israel shall be released from captivity within eleven years”).<sup>161</sup> Unlike his contemporaries and the composers of the prophecy, Matthew surprisingly did not associate these “sons of Israel” with the Tartars whom he considered to be the Ten Tribes. Instead, when coupled with other prophecies such as the *Tiburtina Sibyl* which explicitly mention the defeat of the Saracens (Hagarenes) and the conversion of the Jews, the *Cedar of Lebanon* prophecy appears as be in conformity with the standard conception of the End times.

The question of the fate of the Jews became more pressing as the year 1250 approached. Though the *Cedar of Lebanon* prophecy alludes to the mid-century, a Joachite verse (attributed to Joachim of Fiore), which emanated from Franciscan circles, more firmly assigned 1250 apocalyptic significance. It first appears in the *Chronica* as a marginal note alongside the Nativity entry at the end of the Fourth Age:

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<sup>160</sup> *C.M.*, III, 538.

<sup>161</sup> The foremost expert on the prophecy, Robert Lerner, has written concerning Matthew: “The fact that Matthew did not comment on the connection between the prophetic message and the Mongol invasions strongly suggests that he did not realize it had anything to do with them, because Matthew was otherwise extremely interested in Mongol affairs.” Robert E. Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 27.

When twice six hundred years and fifty more are gone, since bless Mary's  
son was born, Then Antichrist will come, full of the Devil.<sup>162</sup>

Matthew also copied the verse, again as a marginal note, alongside a missive from the Landgrave of Thuringia to the duke of Brabant (dated to 1242 or mid-1241) in his *Liber Additamentorum*.<sup>163</sup> The Landgrave reports how the Tartar leader *Zingiton* (i.e., Chinggis Khan) spared no one besides children whom he had branded on the forehead with his seal. This is an allusion to *Revelation* 13:16-17 where the Second Beast, whom most Christian commentators identified as Antichrist, marks his sign on those he deceives.<sup>164</sup> With these ominous rumors concerning the Tartars and the Joachite verse predicting the birth of Antichrist, the Doomsday Clock of the *Chronica* was set to 1250.

When Matthew concluded the *Chronica* in 1250, he recorded observations of the chaotic condition of the natural world, Christian society, and the enemies of Christ. First, Matthew writes "It ought also to be mentioned...that in none of these half-centuries up to the thirty-third [1200-1250], did so many wonderful and extraordinary novel occurrences take place as in this one last past," followed by a litany of *miribalia* which begins with the Mongol invasion of 1241.<sup>165</sup> This list is essentially a synopsis of the *Chronica*'s major themes over the last fifty years. For Matthew, the most disturbing developments of the 13<sup>th</sup> century were the degeneration of stable and respectful relations between Christian kingdoms, growing immorality in the Church, the proliferation of heretical groups and

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<sup>162</sup> *C.M.*, I, 81. This verse was known in Northern Europe with the date 1260 rather than 1250. Excitement around the decade 1250-60 was heavily influenced by Joachim's writing and ideas accredited to him; Marjorie E. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), 48-50.

<sup>163</sup> *C.M.*, VI, 78.

<sup>164</sup> Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of Human Fascination with Evil* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 53-54.

<sup>165</sup> *E.H.*, II, 405-406; *C.M.*, V, 191-197.

increasing frequency of Christian apostasy, not to mention the growing threat of pagans and Saracens. The frequency and severity of these “novel occurrences” distinguish them from the historical past which suggests that the events of preceding centuries could not provide an interpretative template for these turbulent times. The current age was exceptional (“All these remarkable and strange events, the like of which have never been seen or heard of, nor are found in any of the writings of our fathers in past times, occurred during this last half-century...”) <sup>166</sup> and Matthew resorted to Scripture for an explanatory model.

This upheaval and breakdown of social and moral order is mirrored by certain unexpected developments, especially the death of Matthew’s cherished hero king, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, and reports of an unnatural earthquake in Herefordshire.<sup>167</sup> While the death of Frederick II was unforeseen, the disaster in Herefordshire, for Matthew, violated the laws of nature insofar as the shire’s chalky soil should have prevented earthquakes. Matthew interprets the Herefordshire earthquake through the sequence of cataclysmic events given in the “Little Apocalypse” of *Mark* 13:1-37, *Matthew* 24:1-25 and *Luke* 21:5-38, which he cites explicitly (“there shall be earthquakes in divers places.”) In a separate entry describing the draining of the English people’s wealth by King Henry III’s foreign relatives which is attributed to the “many-shaped cunning of Satan”, the knight Roger de Thurkeby alludes to *John* 4:23 and 16:2 when warning Matthew of the impending end: “The time is coming, O religious men!

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<sup>166</sup> *C.M.*, V, 196.

<sup>167</sup> *C.M.*, V, 190 and 187, respectively. Frederick II, the *stupor mundi* (“wonder of the world) served as a model for Matthew in several respects, especially his rejection of the over-reaching authority of the popes Gregory IX and Innocent IX, his successful crusading activities (he retook Jerusalem in 1229), his defensive efforts against the Tartars, but also how he managed the presence of foreigners at his court (which, for Matthew, contrasts with Henry III’s royal council); Björn Weiler, “Matthew Paris on the Writing of History,” *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009), 272-73.

And, indeed, now is, when everyone who oppresses you thinks he is doing God a service...”<sup>168</sup> Matthew responds likewise with an apocalyptically-laden passage from *Timothy* 3:1-2, “in the last days of the world, there will be men, loving themselves, who have no regard to the advantage of their neighbour.” The proliferation of sin and law-defying natural disasters were an integral part of Christian conceptions of the End, and Matthew interprets the two events as divine portents of the imminent apocalypse.<sup>169</sup>

The death of Frederick II and earthquake of Herefordshire signify the tolling of Matthew’s Doomsday Clock. The events leading up to it – the abusive and corrupt reign of King John and Henry III, the vainglorious popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV, the proliferation of usury and avarice, the faltering of Christian faith, the loss of Jerusalem in 1244 and defeat of the Crusaders at Damietta in 1250 – only reinforced the imminence of the expected apocalypse. Wishing to convey the greater eschatological meaning behind a world in flux, Matthew brought the audience’s attention to the most-obvious signs of the closing of temporal history.

### **3.3 “An Immense Horde of that Detestable Race of Satan”: The Tartars as the Ten Tribes of Israel**

One of the foremost threats to Christianity in the *Chronica* is the Tartars whose tremendous expansion across Eurasia brought them to borders of Western Christendom in 1241. After subduing Eastern Europe between 1241-1242, the Tartar armies receded from Poland and Hungary. In an entry under the year 1244, Matthew writes that the Tartars had withdrawn from Hungary – sacking Persia on their way, and unsettling the Khwarazmians

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<sup>168</sup> *C.M.*, V, 252-253

<sup>169</sup> Interpreting “unnatural” disasters as signs of the End was common in the High Middle Ages; Laura A. Smoller, “Of Earthquakes, Hail, Frogs, and Geography Plague and the Investigation of the Apocalypse in the Later Middle Ages,” in *Last Things Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, eds. Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 156-157.

who, with the Sultan of Babylon, sacked Jerusalem – but the possibility of their return looms over the *Chronica*.<sup>170</sup> This entry, along with others, contains important questions about the Tartars and their eschatological implications. The Greco-Roman Classical authors (Herodotus, Pliny the Elder, Solinus) supplied a general framework for people like Matthew who investigated the various nations of the East. Many Christians believed that the Tartars were actually the Scythians; in 1241, Matthew repeats rumors that the Scythians and Hyperboreans of the northern mountains were present in the Cumanian armies that had participated in the Tartar invasion.<sup>171</sup> What was known of the men of Scythia – the northern lands beyond Latin Christendom’s eastern borders – was that they lived without agriculture, practiced cannibalism, and maintained the pagan gods and idolatry. In other words, the 13<sup>th</sup> century observers repeated the Classical literary topoi of the “barbarian.”<sup>172</sup> The Christian commentators of the 13<sup>th</sup> century also drew on the apocalyptic prophecy and biblical legends which in many ways merged with these Classical images. Thus, we find an attempt to rationalize the Tartars within a Christian conception of history.<sup>173</sup>

Matthew relied on two categories of evidence when writing about the Tartars, and each supported his claim that the Tartars were actually the Ten Tribes of Israel from the biblical book *II Kings* 17:5-6. The first category constitutes a collection of missives from Benedictine monks, Mendicant friars, ecclesiastical prelates, and German princes.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 299-300.

<sup>171</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 119-120.

<sup>172</sup> W.R. Jones, “The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe.” *CSSH* 13 (1971), 391.

<sup>173</sup> Felicitas Schmieder, “Christians, Jews, Muslims –and Mongols: Fitting a Foreign People into the Western Christian Apocalyptic Scenario,” *Medieval Encounters* 12 (2006), 281-82.

<sup>174</sup> J.J. Saunders, “Matthew Paris and the Mongols,” in *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson* eds. T.A. Sandquist and M.R. Powicke ( Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 124-126. In the *Chronica* these sources include: 1) a letter from the Duke of Brabant (*C.M.*, IV, 109-112); 2) an



These sources, especially the monastic letters, typically conceptualize the Tartar nation within the framework of the Pseudo-Methodius prophecy. Compiled in 7<sup>th</sup>-century Syria but misattributed to the 4<sup>th</sup>-century bishop of Olympia, Methodius, the *Sermo* or *Revelation* comprises a historical narrative that begins with Creation and terminates with the inauguration of God's heavenly kingdom on earth. The *Sermo* is a *vaticinium ex eventu* (history dressed as prophecy) from the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the Saracen ("Midianite" or "Ishmaelite") conquests of the 7<sup>th</sup> century; its subsequent prognostications are genuine prophecy with elements drawn from multiple traditions (the biblical books *Daniel* and *Revelation*, and the Alexander Legend).<sup>175</sup> It terminates with the Coming of Christ after the rise of Antichrist and the descent of the apocalyptic forces (Gog and Magog, the resurgent Midianites, and the twenty-two unclean nations) on Jerusalem. Several of Matthew's epistolary sources utilize the Pseudo-Methodian *Sermo* to identify the Tartars. The most detailed is the testimony of the purported Archbishop of Rus, Peter, at the Council of Lyon (1245).<sup>176</sup> While Matthew added details to Peter's account, the Archbishop's arguments for the identity of the Tartars (i.e., the Midianites) remained

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encyclical from Frederick II (*C.M.*, IV, 112-119); 3) a lengthy letter, which Matthew added several fabulous details to, from the accused-apostate Ivo of Narbonne to the Archbishop of Bordeaux, Gerald de Mulemort (*C.M.*, IV, 270-277); 4) a letter from the prelates of the Holy Land who, when commenting on the sacking of Jerusalem, reflect on the Tartars' role (*C.M.*, IV, 337-344); 5) the reportage of Peter, "archbishop of Russia" at the Council of Lyons in 1245 (*C.M.*, IV, 386-389). In the *Book of Additions*, Matthew copies letters from the following sources: 1) an unnamed Hungarian bishop to the Bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne (*C.M.*, VI, 75-76); 2) Henry Raspe, Landgrave of Thuringia, to the Duke of Brabant (*C.M.*, VI, 76-78); 3) The Abbot of St. Mary's in Hungary (*C.M.*, VI, 78-80); 4) Jordan, provincial vicar of the Franciscans in Poland (*C.M.*, VI, 80-81); 5) a Dominican and Franciscan Friar, apparently from Eastern Europe (*C.M.*, VI, 81-83); 6) G. warden of the Franciscans of Cologne to the Duke of Brabant, reproducing a letter from Jordan, warden of Pinsk (today's Belarus) (*C.M.*, VI, 83-84); 7) a report at the Council of Lyon by Andrew, a Dominican Friar (*C.M.*, VI, 113-114).

<sup>175</sup>Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70-76.

<sup>176</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 386-389.

largely unredacted.<sup>177</sup> The testimony of Peter reflects the diverse explanatory models for the Tartars that were circulating throughout Europe.

The second category of evidence in the *Chronica* concerning the Ten Tribes reflects recent trends in biblical exegesis. In one of his first entries concerning the Tartars, Matthew provides a litany of ethnographic observations on the Tartar nation and army with specific emphasis on their origin. Here, he cites the *Historia scholastica* of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Parisian *magister* Peter Comestor which constitutes a digest of Christian history and theology.<sup>178</sup> What is noteworthy of Comestor's methodology is that he represents the culmination of literary trend whereby the Alexandrian tradition of such figures like Pseudo-Callithenes was unflinchingly merged with the biblical legend of the Ten Tribes.<sup>179</sup> We see this especially in Book Five of his commentary on *Esther* where Comestor digressed from the narrative to discuss the fate of the Ten Tribes who the Assyrians had exiled to "Halah and Habor" in northwestern Iran. In the *Historia*, Comestor has Alexander discover the Ten Tribes already enclosed in the Caspian mountains. When he learned the reason for their enclosure – their biblical sin of idolatry –

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<sup>177</sup>Matthew did interpolate details concerning the geographic origins of the Tartars. For example, he inserts a sentence linking the Tartars to the island of "Tarachonta" which is borrowed from the 8<sup>th</sup>-century geographer Aethicus Ister; Peter Jackson, "The Testimony of the Russian Archbishop Peter Concerning the Mongols (1244/5): Precious Intelligence or Timely Disinformation?" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26 (2016), 67.

<sup>178</sup> Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica* was immensely popular as a textbook for reading the bible in a literal-historical manner, and over eight hundred manuscripts from the 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries are extant. Comestor valued the 1<sup>st</sup>-century Jewish historian Josephus and he often used his text as lemmata, but he also had a great appreciation for St. Methodius. On several occasions, Comestor used Pseudo-Methodius to fill details that are absent from the biblical narrative (e.g., whereas *Genesis* does not specify what sins had caused the Flood, Pseudo-Methodius describes how excessive and unnatural fornication incited God's wrath); M.J. Clark, *The Making of the Historia scholastica, 1150-1200* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015), 138-141.

<sup>179</sup> In his study, Andrew R. Anderson follows the details of the Alexander Gate, Gog and Magog, and Ten Tribes legends from their inceptions to their synthesis in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. For the Comestorian synthesis, see Andrew Runni Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and The Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge: The Medieval Academy of American, 1932), 64-66.

Alexander petitioned God's assistance in building a gate to reinforce the mountains. Herein, Comestor highlights the wickedness of the Ten Tribes by substituting them for the twenty-two barbarian and "unclean" tribes from the original version of Pseudo-Methodius. Furthermore, their idolatrous perversity stands in contrast to the piety of Alexander who was, at least nominally, a pagan.

The legend of the Ten Tribes provided Western Christians with essential information about the veiled regions of the world east of the Saracens. The Talmud and Greco-Roman sources placed the Tribes beyond the non-traversable Sambation River east of the Euphrates, and in the 9<sup>th</sup> century Eldad the Danite interpreted all the Jewish communities of the East as descendants of the Ten Tribes.<sup>180</sup> Benjamin of Tudela, who in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century explored the regions beyond the Holy Land, made similar observations and heard that some of the tribes numbered in the hundreds of thousands.<sup>181</sup> These sources were translated into the major languages of Europe and provided the backdrop for the several letters attributed to the legendary Prester John that circulated in Europe after the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century. Several versions of these letters make note of the Ten Tribes whom Prester John was enclosing beyond the Sambation. Without his army and fortifications, John writes, the war-hungry tribes would overrun the entire world.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> The tale of Eldad is preserved in two letters. The first is a letter addressed to the Jews of Spain, and the second a letter from the rabbis of Qairouan (in today's Tunisia) to the Gaon Zemah of Babylon. A. Neubauer gives a translation of the second version in A. Neubauer, "Where Are the Ten Tribes? II. Eldad the Danite," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 1 (1889), 99-104.

<sup>181</sup> The portion of Benjamin of Tudela's diary concerning the Jews of the East tells how the king of Persia travelled to the land of Nissapur on the river Gozan in order to destroy the Kofar al-Turak (a confederation of nomadic tribes). Upon arriving, they discovered a mountainous Jewish kingdom that was immensely powerful and allied to the Kofar al-Turak. For a translation of these passages, see A. Neubauer, "Where Are the Ten Tribes? III. Early Translators of the Bible and Commentators: Abraham Bar Hiyya, Benjamin of Tudela, Prester John, Obadiah of Bertinoro, Abraham Levi and His Contemporaries," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 1 (1889), 189-194.

<sup>182</sup> A. Neubauer, "Where are the Ten Tribes? III," 194-195.

Rumors that the related “King David” was coming to aid Christendom in its fight against the Saracens reached the crusaders besieged at Damietta (Egypt) in 1220-1221. In one reproduction of a letter that narrates the accomplishments of David (the *Relatio de Davide*), the eastern king is entitled *rex Iudeorum* (*King of the Jews*) instead of *Indorum* (*the Indians*).<sup>183</sup> This accumulation of evidence concerning the Ten Tribes led Western Christians to believe that the eastern Jews would one day arrive on the doorstep of Latin Christendom.

Matthew himself made novel contributions to the evolving Comestorian synthesis by applying it to the Tartars. For Matthew, the isolation and unnaturalness of the land and topography of their homeland transformed the Ten Tribes.<sup>184</sup> Deprived of the Mosaic Law, the Ten Tribes lost the source of legal customs and the Hebrew language and degenerated into a barbaric nation of men. Just as the Ten Tribes had blasphemed and worshiped the golden calf, their descendants followed “strange gods.” Their isolation in the remote northern places of the world shaped their way of life (“that of cruel and irrational wild beast”) which mirrors the unnaturalness of their bodies (claws and fangs, and with heads and limbs disproportionate to their torsos).<sup>185</sup> The monstrousness of the Tartars reflects both climatic effects as well as the wickedness of their souls (Fig. 2).<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Another alluring detail from the *Historia gestorum David regis Indorum* was his father “King Israel” or “King of Israel”; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 143-144.

<sup>184</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 78.

<sup>185</sup> Matthew contested Frederick II’s claims that the Tartars had come from the southern climes and, instead, located them in the northern wasteland which he associated with the Scythians and Hyperboreans. The latter two share common descriptors with the Tartars “[they] thirst eagerly for human blood, inhabiting the mountainous and rugged regions of the north, leading the life of wild beasts, worshipping the gods of the mountains of appointed days”; *E.H.*, I, 347-348; *C.M.*, IV., 120.

<sup>186</sup> Though one strain of thought (heavily influenced by St. Augustine) suggested that all mortal-rational creatures were descendants of Adam and, therefore, could potentially become Christians, by the Carolingian period monstrousness had taken on a deeply pessimistic meaning; Kim M. Phillips, *Before*

Matthew was also convinced by the reports of a Hungarian bishop who interrogated two Mongol spies in 1241. The anonymous bishop gives an account of the Tartar homeland “beyond the mountains...near a river which is called Egog” which is also the land of “Gog and Magog” the apocalyptic marauders from *Ezekiel* and John’s *Revelation*.<sup>187</sup> Furthermore, the bishop had learned that the Tartars utilize the Hebrew script which they had learned from a sect of “pale men” and whose “superstitions” paralleled those of the biblical Pharisees and Sadducees.<sup>188</sup> The testimony of the bishop corroborates the claims of a Ten Tribe-Tartar affiliation made elsewhere in the *Chronica*; the Tartars do not resemble the domestic Jews of Europe because they have a distinct lineage in the isolated wastelands beyond the Caspian Mountains. Contrary to other reports, the Tartars still follow their ancestral religious leaders which for Matthew testify to their ancient Jewish heritage.

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*Orientalism Asian Peoples and Cultures in European Travel Writing 1245-1510* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 189-190.

<sup>187</sup> *C.M.*, VI, 75-76.

<sup>188</sup> Peter Jackson has suggested that the letter of the Hungarian bishop may document rumors of Uyghur Buddhist ascetics from Inner Asia who played a prominent role in the administration of the Mongol Empire; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 146.



Fig. 2 A Tartar Cannibal Feast.  
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 16 fol. 166.

### 3.4 An Internal Eschatological Foe: Matthew Paris's Pessimistic Conception of the Jews and the Apocalypse

13<sup>th</sup>-century responses to the Tartar invasion differed across Christian and Jewish communities, yet Matthew was not the first to suspect that the Jews revelled in the defeat of their religious adversaries. Some communities of European Jews were likewise convinced that the Tartars were their eschatological liberators, and numerous Hebrew sources from the early-13<sup>th</sup> century reflect a period of messianic fervour as the year 1240 (5000 in the Jewish calendar) approached.<sup>189</sup> German sources indicate that Christians

<sup>189</sup> The source of this date is a Talmudic saying that divides the duration of temporal history (6000 years) into three periods of 2000 years: 1) Chaos 2) Torah 3) Messiah. The Messianic age would begin between the year 4000 and 4999, the latter corresponding to 1240. Speculations and excitement surrounding this date are well represented in Jewish sources from the early-13<sup>th</sup> century; Israel Jacob Yuval, "Jewish Messianic Expectations Towards 1240 and Christian Reactions," in *Toward the Millennium Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Mark R. Cohen (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 106.

were aware of these eschatological murmurings.<sup>190</sup> In the *Annales Marbacenses* (from Marbach, Saxony), an entry for the year 1222 records how the Jews were accused of welcoming the Tartars and reportedly calling their leader the “son of David.”<sup>191</sup> In the Rhineland, the municipal history *Gestorum Treverorum Continuatio* records an outburst of messianic exhilaration among the Jews which frightened the town’s residents.<sup>192</sup> The Trier Christians also suspected that the Jews were planning to cause harm to the community. The Frankfurt massacre of 1241, where 180 Jews were killed in sectarian-street fighting, is perhaps the culmination of a tense climate of fear and, for Jews, hope, especially considering the Mongols’ recent victories in Poland.<sup>193</sup>

In the *Chronica*, the possibility that the domestic Jews of Europe were planning to overthrow Christendom reflects a general fear of heretical groups and internal dissidents. The proliferation of unorthodox or heretical sects (e.g. the Albigensians) and the general decline of confidence in the Christian faith concerned Matthew, but perhaps more threatening was the possibility that these renegade groups may find a common cause with the external enemies of Christendom, particularly the Sultan of Babylon.<sup>194</sup> Besides the

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<sup>190</sup> Compared to the eschatological expectations of other European communities, the theme of anti-Christian vengeance played a significant role in the theology of the Ashkenazic community. Herein, the apocalyptic antagonist Edom was identified with the Holy Roman Empire which gave Ashkenazic eschatology a political dimension; Jacob Yuval Israel, *Two Nations in Your Womb Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 113-115.

<sup>191</sup> Sophia Menache, “Tartars, Jews, Saracens and the Jewish Mongol ‘Plot’ of 1241,” *History* 81 (1996), 337.

<sup>192</sup> Sophia Menache, “Tartars, Jews, Saracens and the Jewish Mongol ‘Plot’ of 1241,” 337-338.

<sup>193</sup> Sparked by Jewish efforts to prevent the baptism of a youth, the Frankfurt massacre ended with the death of 180 Jews. Both Menache and Yuval emphasize the massacre’s temporal proximity to the battle of Liegnitz (April 9) where the Mongols defeated Duke Henry of Silesia; Sophia Menache, “Tartars, Jews, Saracens and the Jewish-Mongol ‘Plot’ of 1241,” 338; Israel Yuval, “Jewish Messianic Expectations,” 119-120. For the battle of Liegnitz, see Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 63.

<sup>194</sup> In the 1190s, some Christians feared that the heretical Albigensians would form an alliance with the Saracens against Christendom; Marjorie E. Reeves, “History and Prophecy in Medieval Thought,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 5 (1974), 61.

Jewish-Tartar Plot, the best example takes place under the year 1251, where in a series of entries Matthew narrates how a Hungarian apostate colluded with the Sultan to undermine the French kingdom.<sup>195</sup> Having led many French peasants into heresy, the leader threatened to uproot Christian authority by attacking clergymen and sacking cities. For Matthew, these types of conspiracies and moment of religious unrest were the greatest threat to the Church since the inception of the Saracen faith and demonstrates how the hostile forces beyond Christendom could foment and exploit growing disbelief within its borders.<sup>196</sup>

Matthew was not the first to accuse the Jews of colluding with the external enemies of Christendom. In 11<sup>th</sup>-century Toulouse, the residents maintained a legend that the local Jews had assisted the Saracens in sacking the city several hundred years earlier (an entirely fictionalized event).<sup>197</sup> Another high profile accusation by Rudolfus Glaber and Ademar of Chabannes incriminated the Jews in the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher (1009) by the Fatimid caliph al-Hākim.<sup>198</sup> These chimerical claims continued after the time of Matthew Paris; in 1321, Christian officials discovered a “conspiracy” whereby lepers and Jews collaborated with the Sultan of Granada to poison wells in Eastern and Southern France.<sup>199</sup> The notion of international networks of anti-Christian enemies was an important component of ritual crucifixion narratives as well, and together these claims

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<sup>195</sup> C.M., V, 246-254. Numerous contemporaneous chroniclers also note the “Crusade” of the *Pastoureaux*; Peter Jackson, *The Seventh Crusade, 1244-1255: Sources and Documents* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 179-181.

<sup>196</sup> C.M., V, 358.

<sup>197</sup> Lester K. Little, “The Jews in Christian Europe” in *Judaism and Christianity in Conflict from Late Antiquity to the Reformation*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 282.

<sup>198</sup> Phyllis G. Jestice, “A Great Jewish Conspiracy? Worsening Jewish-Christian Relations and the Destruction of the Holy Sepulcher” in *Christian Attitudes Toward the Jews in the Middle Ages A Casebook*, ed. Michael Frassetto (New York: Routledge, 2007), 26-27.

<sup>199</sup> Malcolm Barbar, “Lepers, Jews and Moslems: The Plot to Overthrow Christendom in 1321,” *History* 66 (1981), 2-8.



reflect the evolving landscape of anti-Jewish fear that saw Christians increasingly considering clandestine Jewish conspiracies as a real and formidable threat.

In the *Chronica*, the Jews of Europe have similar motivations as their ancestral relatives, the Ten Tribes. Several of the epistolary sources in the *Chronica* explicitly mention the Tartars' hatred of Christendom. For instance, letters from Brothers Benedict and John from the Russian monastery of St. Mary's lament the Tartar targeting of clerics and desecration of Christian spaces.<sup>200</sup> Not surprisingly, an encyclical from Frederick II talks of Tartars "subduing the whole of the West...and of ruining and uprooting the faith and name of Christ."<sup>201</sup> Ivo of Narbonne gives seven reasons to explain the Tartar aggression, and two are specifically anti-Christian. First, Ivo claims that the Tartars wished to reclaim the relics of the Magi who according to legend had been great kings of the East and proselytes of St. Thomas.<sup>202</sup> Ivo also claimed that the Tartars were desperate to interrupt the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, a prominent cultic shrine in Galicia commemorating the Apostle James. While many of these same sources and contemporary chronicles describe the Tartar invasion as a divine purgative mission to punish and correct the sinful condition of Christendom, this notion in the *Chronica* that the Tartars, in alliance with the Jews, endeavoured to exterminate the Christian faith

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<sup>200</sup> *C.M.*, VI, 78-80.

<sup>201</sup> *E.H.* I, 472; *C.M.*, IV, 276-277.

<sup>202</sup> In 1164, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa had the relics of the Magi translated from Milan to Cologne cathedral to establish an imperial cultic shrine; Bernard Hamilton, "Prester John and the Three Kings of Cologne," in *Prester John, the Mongols, and the Ten Lost Tribes*, eds. Charles F. Beckingham and Bernard Hamilton (Cornwall: Variorum, 1996), 175-177.

suggests a more significant and sinister role in the eschatological program of the End Times.<sup>203</sup>

Far from deviating from common opinion, Matthew's vision of the Jewish role in the ultimate events of temporal history conforms to typical conceptions of the apocalypse. While none doubted the idea of a Final Conversion, another pessimistic strain of thought maintained that the Jews would partake in the anti-Christian backlash that characterizes the age of Antichrist. Antichrist was considered as the quintessential agent of Satan, the enemy of God, and beginning in the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Jews were increasingly considered as his underlings.<sup>204</sup> The most popular scriptural passage justifying these types of vilifications was *John* 5:43 ("I [Jesus] came in the name of my Father and you did not accept me; if another comes in his own name, him you will accept") which Christian commentators interpreted as Jewish acceptance of Antichrist.<sup>205</sup> In his immensely popular *Moralia in Job*, a staple in most monastic libraries, Gregory the Great wrote that because the Jews rejected Christ as the Messiah, they still awaited their saviour and were therefore vulnerable to the deceits of Antichrist.<sup>206</sup> Indeed, Antichrist will intentionally hoodwink the Jews by accepting the Old Law (demonstrated through his circumcision). Furthermore,

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<sup>203</sup> Many 13<sup>th</sup>-century Christian writers considered the Mongol invasion as a "purgative mission" including the compilers of the *Novgorod Chronicle*, the *Historia Pontificum Salonitanorum atque Spalatensium* of Thomas of Spalato, and the reports of the Mendicant friars John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck; Devin Dewese, "The Influence of the Mongols on the Religious Consciousness of Thirteenth Century Europe," *Mongolian Studies* 5 (1978-9), 48-52; and James Ross Sweeney, "Thomas of Spalato and the Mongols: A Thirteenth-Century Dalmation View of Mongol Customs," *Florilegium* 4 (1982), 169-70.

<sup>204</sup> Robert Bonfil, "The Devil and the Jews in the Christian Consciousness of the Middle Ages," in *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, ed. Shmuel Almog (New York: Pergamon Press, 1988), 93-95.

<sup>205</sup> Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), 46.

<sup>206</sup> Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, 91.

it was commonly believed that Antichrist would be born from the Tribe of Dan and therefore of Jewish parentage.<sup>207</sup>

The alliance of the Jews and Antichrist was paralleled by the notion that the Jews also served the Devil. Once again, Scripture provided a basis for this claim (in *John* 8:44, Jesus says to the Jews “You are from your father the Devil”). Matthew’s reflection on the act of self-martyrdom at York in 1190, where the Jewish community chose to commit mass-suicide rather than succumb to the Christian besiegers, intimates that the Jews sacrificed their children to demons (*quos sacrificaverant daemoniis*).<sup>208</sup> This mirrors the opinion of John Chrysostom (d. 407) who wrote that the Jews “sacrificed their sons and daughters to devils...with their own hands they murder their own offspring to worship the avenging devils who are the foes of our life.”<sup>209</sup> Possessing the same damning moral sins that characterized Satan, it was thought that the vices of the Jews (lying, stealing, blaspheming, and violence) were shared with the primordial enemy. For this reason, Jews and devils or Satan are often presented as unholy companions in homiletic *exempla*.<sup>210</sup> The correlation between the Devil and the Jews appears in Matthew’s reportage on the aftermath of Hugh of Lincoln’s death in 1255. After the Franciscans interceded to free the Jews from imprisonment, Matthew denigrates their pious pity for the community as futile since, “as for the devil, or those manifestly condemned, we cannot have hopes for

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<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>208</sup> Israel Yuval argues that the Jew killing of their own during the massacres of the First Crusade inspired Christian accusations of ritual crucifixion. Christian responses to these episodes of mass suicide (for the Jews, an act of self-sacrifice to God) were often similar to Matthew’s. The 11<sup>th</sup>-century monk of St. Blasian, Bernold, described such suicides as a “satanic” act in his *Chronicon*; Israel Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb*, 139.

<sup>209</sup> Quoted in Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), 21.

<sup>210</sup> Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 198-199.

them, nor need they be prayed for, as there is no hope for them. Death and a definitive sentence enshackled these Jews irrevocably.”<sup>211</sup> It is not likely that this reference was mere rhetorical flourish. As the scholar Joshua Trachtenberg wrote in the 1940s, “though medieval Jews always thought of Satan allegorically, he had a real, personal reality for Christians, and his acting against humans was incessant and extremely dangerous.”<sup>212</sup> This was the case for Matthew who feared the unholy alliance between Europe’s Jews, the Tartars, and the forces of the Devil and Antichrist.<sup>213</sup>

### 3.5 Conclusion

Joshua Trachtenberg once wrote of medieval Christian conceptions of the Jews: “No sin was too foul to be adduced against [them] – but the most heinous offense of all was [their] imputed intention to destroy Christianity and Christendom.”<sup>214</sup> The association of Jews and the ultimate enemies of God and his Creation, the Devil and Antichrist, had a long tradition. The most respected Fathers of the Church (e.g., St. Gregory, St. Jerome) had supported and contributed to the standard conception of salvation history that would see the Jews alongside the armies of Antichrist during the End Times. For Matthew Paris, reports of Antichrist’s imminent birth impelled him to record the wonderful and miraculous events of the last fifty years (1200-1250) before temporarily concluding the *Chronica* in 1250. And with these apocalyptic anxieties propelling his work forward, Matthew used his best research tools to determine the identity of the harbingers of the End Times – the Tartars. Utilizing cutting-edge

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<sup>211</sup> *E.H.*, III, 163; *C.M.*, V, 546.

<sup>212</sup> Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 19.

<sup>213</sup> In another entry under the year 1259, Matthew notes how a baptism saved the Jew Elias from the ranks of the devil; *C.M.*, V, 730.

<sup>214</sup> Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 13.

exegetical texts (*Historia scholastica*) and his network of informants, Matthew had substantial evidence to identify the Tartars as the exilic Ten Tribes whose return would mark the closing chapters of history.

With this apocalyptic timetable established, Matthew implicated the Jews in the Tartar offensive by fabricating an elaborate narrative of betrayal and blind hatred. The ingredients of this narrative existed within the *Chronica*; Matthew had heard of Jewish ritual murders by the time he recorded the Jewish-Tartar Plot, and his commentary on the *TTP* reveals his concerns with Jewish dissimulation of Christian truths. An alliance with the murderous Ten Tribes whose *raison d'être* was the slaughter of Christians and destruction of the Christian faith compliments the image of the Jew as the ritual murderer. Yet both these figures serve Christian conceptions of history: in general, the miserable condition of the Jews testify to their supersession, while their apocalyptic, exilic co-religionists act as the final tribulation to face mankind before the Second Coming and the Last Judgement. The Tribes and their European allies are signposts in the eschatological framework of temporal history. At the same time, the domestic Jews continued to inhabit Christendom as an internal, unassimilable enemy. With the apocalypse approaching, and Jewish violence reaching new historical heights, Matthew asked the central theological and practical question “Why do we allow such people to live among us.”

## CHAPTER 4

“Avoiding Charybdis to be Dashed on Scylla”:

The Condition of Anglo-Jewry under King Henry III in the *Chronica Majora*

### 4.1 Introduction

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Anglo-Jewry was firmly under the thumb of the Angevin dynasty. Henry III's (r.1217-1272) government was under dire fiscal pressure between 1244/1245 and the year of the baronial reform movement, 1258.<sup>215</sup> Facing declining revenues and rising costs, Henry resorted to a heavy-handed taxation on the Jewish community. By the 1250s, the leading magnates of the Jewish community had become impecunious. Robert Stacey has called the period of 1240 to 1260 a “watershed in Anglo-Jewish relations” for during these years the financial ruination of Anglo-Jewry was paralleled by (and according to Stacey, linked to) worsening anti-Jewish sentiment across English society.<sup>216</sup>

Matthew Paris's depictions of the Jews reflect this ominous decline in their relationship with the King and the English nation. As discussed in previous chapters, we know that Matthew was an active disseminator of negative stereotypes of the Jews. Stacey notes that Matthew was the first English commentator to “regularly employ such allegations [sorcery, ritual murder, and excremental desecration] as ostensible explanations for actual royal measures taken against them.”<sup>217</sup> On the other hand, Matthew rarely peddles in another widespread stereotype: the avaricious Jew. The steady

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<sup>215</sup> Henry III came to the throne in 1217 at the age of 9. Therefore, most scholars have separated his reign into at least two periods: his “Minority” (1217-1234) and his “Personal Rule” (1234 or 1236-1272).

<sup>216</sup> Stacey borrowed this term from Professor Barrie Dobson's 1979 article “The Decline and Expulsion of the Medieval Jews of York”, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 26 (1979), 36; Robert Stacey, “1240-60: A Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?” *Historical Research* 81 (1988), 135.

<sup>217</sup> Robert Stacey, “1240-60: A Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?” 150.

expansion of the Western European economy after the 11<sup>th</sup> century saw an increase in the volume of capital circulating through society and the rise of previously marginal professional groups, namely, bankers and creditors. Christians could rely on an arsenal of scriptural passages to condemn the acquisition of wealth and the related sin of usury.<sup>218</sup> Usury was especially egregious to Christian thinkers on several grounds, including scriptural prohibition against the charging of interest on loans between kinsmen.<sup>219</sup> Hence, the only tolerated minority group in Europe, the Jews, had a theoretical monopoly on usurious moneylending.<sup>220</sup> And since the Jews were disproportionately represented in the moneylending economy, they were stigmatized with the stain of avarice and cupidity; the artistic portrayal of Jews with moneybags hanging from their necks was commonplace in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Western Europe.<sup>221</sup>

Matthew is generally reticent about Jewish moneylending customs. On one occasion he maintains the honesty and fairness of Jewish interest rates in contrast to the hated Cahorsins (French financiers who enjoyed privileged treatment under King Henry and the papacy). Yet Matthew understood the economic value of the Jews and acknowledged their vulnerable position vis-à-vis the Crown. This awareness did not prevent Matthew from criticizing the relationship between the Jews and the Crown. When

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<sup>218</sup> E.g., *Ecclesiastes* 31:5, "The lover of gold will not be free from sin, for he who pursues wealth is led astray by it."

<sup>219</sup> E.g. *Deut.* 23:20-21, "You shall not demand interest from your countrymen on a loan of money or of food or of anything else on which interest is usually demanded. You may demand interest from a foreigner, but not from your countrymen."

<sup>220</sup> Of course, the prescriptions and prohibitions of the Churchmen who formulated this view did not prevent Christians from practicing moneylending. Furthermore, though the pejorative term usury was defined as the repayment on a loan that exceeded the value of that loan, there were scenarios wherein "interest" could be applied licitly. Nevertheless, usury, along with simony, were considered forms of avarice and, therefore, a sin; Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages*, trans. Patricia Ranum (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 27.

<sup>221</sup> Sarah Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible Moralisée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 32.

King Henry or his officials interceded in judicial proceedings to protect Jewish defendants, Matthew was prone to exaggerating the charges or even fabricating new ones. Nevertheless, at several points in the *Chronica*, animus towards the Jews is set aside and, instead, their misery under Henry's onerous taxation is associated with his exploitation of the English nation in what Sophia Menache calls a "solidarity of suffering."<sup>222</sup> This sympathy for the Jews appears as a rhetorical trope that was intended to further criticize the King. It also reflects the precariousness of the community under what Matthew considered to be an avaricious and corrupt monarch. Financial desperation led many members to flee the English kingdom as the "high priest of the Jews" (*presbyter omnium judeorum*), Elias of London, exclaimed in 1254. In a speech that Matthew attributes to Elias, the *presbyter* acknowledges the mutual suffering of Christians and Jews under Henry ("How can he love us wretched Jews, or spare us, who destroys his natural English subjects") before putting forth a request to leave the kingdom. The response of the royal officials – again, written by Matthew – reveals how severe the condition of Anglo-Jewry had really become:

Wither would you fly, wretched beings? The French king hates and persecutes you, and has condemned you to perpetual banishment; do you wish in avoiding Charybdis to be dashed on Scylla?<sup>223</sup>

#### **4.2 A "Vigilant and Indefatigable Searcher of Money": Depictions of King Henry III in the *Chronica Majora***

To better understand how Matthew chose to depict the Jews and their relationship to Henry III, Matthew's attitudes toward the King and his policies must be considered. In

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<sup>222</sup> Sophia Menache, "Matthew Paris's Attitudes Toward Anglo-Jewry," *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997), 159.

<sup>223</sup> *E.H.*, III, 76; *C.M.*, V, 441.



addition to the crusades and the greater Papal-Imperial conflict, one of the other dominant themes of the *Chronica Majora* is the English nation and the age-old problems of the relationship between the Crown and its different dependencies. Matthew's attitude toward royal policy and the character of Henry III is generally pessimistic, and this is likely a result of his first-hand experience. Matthew had a large social circle, including several earls (Cornwall, Kent, and Gloucester), knights, royal administrators (John Mansell and Alexander Swereford, the latter a baron of the Exchequer) and bishops (most notably, Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln). Furthermore, Matthew was an acquaintance of Aaron of York, one of the wealthiest Jews of England whose harsh treatment by Henry was noted in an entry of the *Chronica* under the year 1250.<sup>224</sup> The testimony of his informants, including Aaron's, influenced how Matthew chose to depict King Henry in the *Chronica*.

King Henry began his Personal Rule in 1234 facing intense financial difficulties and the challenge of reclaiming his lost Continental fiefs (e.g., Normandy, Maine, and Poitou).<sup>225</sup> With many sources of revenue and royal possessions alienated – a trend that began under King Richard (r. 1189-1199), but which spiked during the Baron's Rebellion of 1215-17 – Henry struggled to exert the same level of authority over his realm (the greater magnates in particular) as his predecessors had.<sup>226</sup> Moreover, *Magna Carta* further reduced his different sources of income, and Henry's requests for financial aid

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<sup>224</sup> *C.M.*, V, 136. For a full list of the Matthew's known friends and informants, see Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (New York: Cambridge at the University Press, 1958), 13-17.

<sup>225</sup> Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Brittany and Poitou were "legally" lost in 1202 when Philip Augustus abrogated King John's possession of these fiefs.

<sup>226</sup> Robert Stacey, *Politics, Policy, and Finance under Henry III 1216-1245* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 10-13.

from his nobility were contingent on the reissuances of the charter.<sup>227</sup> In light of this financial pressure, King Henry was forced to seek out alternative methods of increasing royal revenues.

In the entries relevant for the years of Henry's reign, Matthew carefully documented the King's efforts to retain and increase his wealth and authority. These financial programmes were often contentious as they necessarily denuded the gentry of its possessions or encroached on the liberties of the Church. Early in his reign, Henry's councillors reformed royal management of the sheriffdoms and the royal demesne, and as a result increased their profitability.<sup>228</sup> However, many of these reforms were soon abandoned after 1239 with the departure of their chief architect and Henry's leading councillor, William de Raleigh. And to complicate matters, rising expenditures from different construction projects, an expensive foreign policy, and the bestowment of patronage on the earls and great barons of the realm placed Henry's regime under severe financial strain by the late 1240s. Trying to appease the great men of the realm while at the same time increasing his revenues, Henry directed his officials (sheriffs and justiciars) to raise greater sums of money, which upset those who bore the brunt of this policy, namely, the lesser barons, knights, and landed gentry.<sup>229</sup> This pressure on the lesser men of the realm was one of several factors (including Henry's unpopular purchase of the Sicilian throne and conciliar factionalism in the royal household) that sparked the 1258 baronial

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<sup>227</sup> Robert Stacey, *Politics, Policy, and Finance*, 6-9. *Magna Carta* reduced channels of revenue from the magnates through arbitrary fines and amercements, and proved to be a great challenge to the financial stability of Henry's court. Henry reaffirmed his dedication to the charter in 1225, 1237, and 1253.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92.

<sup>229</sup> David Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996), 88. In 1258, Matthew gives several examples of the corrupt practices of the sheriffs; *C.M.*, V, 720.

reform movement which saw Henry make unprecedented concessions to his subjects.<sup>230</sup> To Matthew, Henry was a “vigilant and indefatigable searcher of money” whose avarice was only matched by the papacy and its surrogates (e.g. Italian bankers and the Cahorsin moneylenders).<sup>231</sup> The *Chronica* is consistently critical of the king’s sumptuous tastes at court and his superfluous displays of pageantry. At the heart of Henry’s problematic finances was his inability to manage the realm effectively; in a vain attempt to shore up his legitimacy, Henry had splashed out tremendous gifts to courtiers, the papacy, and potential allies on the Continent. Yet according to Matthew, the king’s beneficent policy rarely yielded the desired results and, instead, further impoverished the English nation: in 1258, when Henry requested an aid because a promise to pay the papacy 60 000 marks in exchange for the fief of Sicily, Matthew derided the king for his *supina simplicitas* (*supine simplicity*).<sup>232</sup>

Although Matthew criticizes the Crown on many grounds, he was particularly incensed by Henry’s numerous demands for financial aid from his subjects, as well as infringements on the liberties of the Church and rank nepotism and protection of Henry’s favoured courtiers. Because Henry was squandering the nation’s wealth, Matthew considered almost all royal requests for financial aid to be inspired by avarice rather than need.<sup>233</sup> For Matthew, greed and politics influenced Henry to interfere in abbatial or

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<sup>230</sup> David Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery Britain 1066-1284* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 342-344 and 347.

<sup>231</sup> *C.M.*, V, 55.

<sup>232</sup> *C.M.*, V, 676. Matthew depicts Henry as gleefully rolling on the floor when the pope offered him the crown of Sicily; *C.M.*, V, 457-458.

<sup>233</sup> Matthew also disagreed with how Henry pressured his subjects to accept these requests. In an entry from 1249, Matthew recounts how Henry obstructed traffic flowing into London in order to force its citizens to respond to a request for aid; *C.M.* V, 49-50. And in 1244, when describing the negotiations between Henry and a united committee of prelates, earls, and barons, Matthew censures the king for using manipulative tactics to divide the different factions of the committee; *C.M.*, IV, 362-363.

episcopal elections, the revenues of which reverted to the king when vacant.<sup>234</sup> Beyond this, Matthew was seriously concerned with Henry's disregard for the equitable and speedy deliverance of justice. Matthew was well aware that the royal courtiers – Henry's Poitevin and Savoyard relatives and most of the earls of the realm – were shielded from complaints by lesser Englishmen.<sup>235</sup> Indeed, in an entry under the year 1256, Matthew records his suspicions that the king was, with the assistance of his protected council, seeking to subjugate the *universitas regni* (all subjects under the king).<sup>236</sup> As we shall see, Matthew tailors his discussions of the Jews and royal taxation to fit this larger narrative of an oppressive and avaricious king.

#### 4.3 A Second Titus or Vespasian: Anglo-Jewry under King Henry III

The departure of Henry's leading councillor William de Raleigh in 1239 marked a point of transformation of royal governmental and financial policy that, in turn, had tremendous repercussions for the Jews of England. The nature of the Jews' legal status made them particularly susceptible to these changes. Several legal compilations (e.g., *Laws of Edward the Confessor* c. 1130s but reissued in the 1180s, and the *Statutes of Jewry*, 1253) outlined how the Jews must serve the king, and no other person, if they were to reside in the English realm.<sup>237</sup> These statutes clarified that the Jews did not have

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<sup>234</sup> In 1237, Matthew attributes a speech to Earl Richard who dismissed Henry's request for financial aid because his profiting too much from the abuse of the Church, specifically, the vacancies of abbacies and bishoprics; *C.M.*, III, 478.

<sup>235</sup> D.A. Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III*, 82. In 1256, Matthew reproduces an order from Henry that prohibited the issuance of writs that may disadvantage his conciliar barons, or Poitevin and Savoyard relatives; *C.M.*, V, 594.

<sup>236</sup> *C.M.*, V, 514.

<sup>237</sup> The *Statutes of Jewry* (1275) spoke of the Jews as the king's serfs, and one of Henry's 1253 statutes read "no Jew may remain in England unless he does the king service; just as soon as he is born, every Jew, male or female, serves us in some way." Cited in J.A. Watt, "The Jews, The Law, and The Church: The Concept of Jewish Serfdom in Thirteenth-Century England," in *The Church and Sovereignty c. 590-1918: Essays in Honour of Michael Wilks*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 156 and 172.

rights to their property or financial capital, and the condition of their residence in England was contingent on the whims of the monarch. This legal relationship had different implications for the Jewish community. On the one hand, the Jews were under the aegis of royal authority which ordered its local officials (sheriffs or bailiffs) to protect the community and to assist the Jews in the collection of their loans. The Crown also ensured that Jewish commercial activity continued smoothly by establishing the Exchequer of the Jews (*scaccarium Iudaeorum*), a bureaucratic entity responsible for preserving financial documents (e.g., loans), receiving receipts on taxation, and hearing legal cases brought against or by Jew moneylenders. On the other hand, the Exchequer of the Jews was another mechanism the kings used to extend their authority over the community. Insofar as the department kept record of all Jewish property and capital assets, its clerks had an idea of their total wealth which they used to assess taxation. And because the Jews possessed no legal rights (excluding the procedural customs of the statutes or the Exchequer), they were vulnerable to capricious royal taxation or outright seizure of their property and outstanding bonds. In essence, the Jews possessed the same status as the medieval villein: the king could determine where they lived, demand their labour without resort to custom, and appropriate their property.<sup>238</sup> This is exemplified by the case of Aaron of Lincoln, the wealthiest English Jew of the late-12<sup>th</sup> century. When he died in 1189, his entire fortune was seized by the Crown, and a bureaucratic entity was set up (The Aaron Exchequer) to manage the deceased's vast assets.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> J.A. Watt, "The Jews, The Law, and The Church," 155-156.

<sup>239</sup> Customarily, the kings expected one-third of the inheritance left by Jews, but in this instance Henry II appropriated the entire sum; H.G. Richardson, *The English Jewry Under Angevin Kings* (London: Methuen, 1960), 114-117.

The direct relationship between the Crown and the Jews first began to change in the 1170s when Henry II (r. 1154-1189) refused to negotiate loans and instead directly taxed the Jewish community.<sup>240</sup> King John (r. 1199-1216) continued this policy and required the Jews to pay 60 000 marks in the year 1210. From 1210 to the year 1238, royal taxation of the Jews lightened, but King Henry III reverted to a policy of direct extraction in 1239 when he demanded one-third of all chattels belonging to the Jews. This was the beginning of a long series of onerous tallages between 1240 and 1255 that saw the Jews paying taxes assessed at 110 000 marks.<sup>241</sup> By 1255, the Jewish magnates, who shouldered much of the collected taxes, were now penurious and some, like Elias of London, plead for royal permission to leave England. To underscore the degree of this exploitation, in 1255 Henry leased the right to collect taxes from the Jewish community to his brother Richard, the Earl of Cornwall, in exchange for a loan of 6000 marks.<sup>242</sup> Richard soon discovered that this well had indeed run dry, and that the Jews could not pay the vast sums that Henry had obtained from them in former years.

Returning to the *Chronica*, Matthew describes in detail the effects of Henry's ruthless extraction of resources from the Jews and presents their plight to be like the oppression of the English nation. Matthew adroitly used scriptural analogies of Jewish oppression for the despoilment of the English nation by the King. In the year 1244, the prelates of England were required to provide pecuniary aid to the papacy and King Henry, and Matthew presents these English prelates as the Israelites from Exodus who were

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<sup>240</sup> H.G. Richardson, *The English Jewry Under Angevin Kings*, 60-66.

<sup>241</sup> Richard Stacey's analysis of the exchequer receipts suggests that most of this sum was likely collected; Robert Stacey, "1240-60: A Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?" 139.

<sup>242</sup> Richard is also the target of Matthew's criticisms due to his love of money; *C.M.*, V, 457-4458. This is despite Matthew's deep respect for the Earl's accomplishment while on crusade: in 1241, a letter written by Richard tells how he secured the freedom of a group of crusaders who had been captured by the Saracens; *C.M.*, IV, 143.

enduring servitude under the Pharaoh.<sup>243</sup> For Matthew, England had become the contemporaneous Egypt of Scripture, and Englishmen the Israelites.<sup>244</sup>

The aforementioned entry is significant insofar as it demarcates an area of Henry's reign wherein Matthew was willing, perhaps curiously, to sympathize and identify with the Jews. On two occasions in the *Chronica*, Matthew explicitly groups together Englishmen and Jews as victims of the unjust financial policy of Henry. In 1243, when the King asked the nobles and prelates for money to pay for the marriage of Richard and Sanchia of Provence (the Queen's sister), Matthew lists the King's demands from the Jewish community alongside those requests being put to the abbots and priors. Among the Jews, abbots, and priors, Matthew writes "if any did not please him [King Henry], he rejected them, extorting gifts more valuable, and which were more pleasing to the royal dignity...and whoever refused him, found him no longer a king, but a tyrant."<sup>245</sup> This sentiment did not wane with time; Matthew's most vehement criticism of the King appears in an entry from 1252 after Henry took up the cross to support the failing crusade of King Louis IX:

The king, therefore, in order to comply with the pope's urgent desire, extorted from the Jews whatever visible property those wretched people possessed, not only, as it were, skinning them merely, but also plucking out their entrails. Thus this dropsical thirster after gold cheated Christians as well as Jews out of their money, food, and jewels, with such greediness that it seemed as if a new Crassus was arisen from the dead.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Matthew carefully documented every one of Henry's requests for financial aid from his magnates. In 1244, his justification for this request was the cost of his marriage alliances and his political and martial struggles in Gascony, Wales, and Scotland; *C.M.*, III, 476.

<sup>244</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 379.

<sup>245</sup> Giles, *E.H.* I, 459; *C.M.*, IV, 260. Matthew begins this entry by noting how his acquaintance, Aaron of York, was forced to pay four marks of gold and 4000 marks of silver.

<sup>246</sup> *E.H.*, II, 474; *C.M.*, V, 274.

Here, the avarice of the King is illustrated by a comparison with the 1<sup>st</sup>-century Roman politician and general Crassus who was known as one of the wealthiest men of the Roman Republic. Matthew employed the rhetorical strategy of comparing Henry to Roman-era historical figures often; enraged by the aforementioned mortgaging of the Jewish community to Richard in 1255, Matthew decried Henry as a “second Titus or Vespasian.”<sup>247</sup> In Matthew’s eyes, the deleterious effect of royal financial policy was comparable to the Roman generals’ levelling of the Second Temple and exiling of the Jews.

At the core of the *Chronica*’s sympathy for Jewish suffering was a constant disdain for Henry and his spending habits. Matthew considered all forms of taxation on the kingdom as extortionate and avaricious.<sup>248</sup> King Henry was not alone as an exemplar of avarice; Matthew often described how greed had tainted the initially-holy mission of the Mendicant friars and poisoned the papacy. It brought the hated moneylending Cahorsins to England under the auspices of the papacy and deprived the realm of its resources. These themes – papal, royal, and mercantile avarice – permeate the entries covering the year 1236-1259 of the *Chronica*.<sup>249</sup> Yet when Matthew charges the Jews with financial crimes, he does not criticize their avarice or their accumulation of wealth. Instead, he is much more disturbed by their practice of coin-clipping. This distinction is

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<sup>247</sup> *C.M.*, V, 488.

<sup>248</sup>As Richard Vaughan has written “Matthew’s view of the State, often referred to as his ‘constitutional’ attitude, seems also to be based on his own material interests and those of his house. All forms of taxation are violently opposed and invariably regarded as mere royal extortion. For instance, we are told that Henry III ‘extorted’ (*fecit extorqueri*) a scutage in 1242, whereas in fact this had been agreed to by the barons.” Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 139.

<sup>249</sup> The greed of the papacy, king, and Christian financiers are all mentioned in the list of fantastic events that precede the concluding entry under the year 1250; see Chapter 2, 64-65.



noteworthy considering the general climate of condemnation of usury and its association with Jewry.<sup>250</sup>

For medieval Christians, the archetype of Jewish avarice was Judas Iscariot who had famously betrayed Jesus Christ for thirty silver pieces.<sup>251</sup> Besides the Gospel sources, Christians learned of the Judas's story from the *Legend of Judas*, a type of anti-hagiography that circulated in Latin and vernacular editions in Western Europe.<sup>252</sup> Matthew, unlike his predecessor Roger of Wendover, did not include the *Legend* in his *Chronica*; however he did mention Judas at the end of his aforementioned Cartaphilus entry. In this entry, the moral failings of Paul and Peter (ignorance and weakness, respectively) could not match the iniquity and cupidity of Judas's betrayal.<sup>253</sup> Judas's punishment for this crime was eternal damnation, and, indeed, Matthew vividly describes the agony of those condemned souls who loved money. In a series of entries for the year 1196, Matthew describes the visions of a monk of Evesham which describe purgatory and hell. In particular, he noted how a fraudulent goldsmith was forced to repeatedly eat and pass red-hot and blistering coins.<sup>254</sup> Already guilty of their inherited crime of deicide, the Jews and their participation in the money-lending economy made them susceptible to

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<sup>250</sup> When the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux condemned Christian usurers who "jew worse than the Jews themselves," he imagined the Jews and usury as synonymous terms; Cited in Robert Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 25.

<sup>251</sup> Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (London: Paul Elek, 1978), 54.

<sup>252</sup> In addition to his betrayal of Jesus, the *Legend* also reports on Judas's condemnable acts of fratricide, parricide, and incest.

<sup>253</sup> *C.M.*, III, 163.

<sup>254</sup> *C.M.*, II, 430-31.

accusations of avarice. Yet Matthew does not highlight the trope of Jewish greed, despite the overall emphasis that he places on the corrupting influence of wealth.<sup>255</sup>

The close relationship between St. Albans and Jewish creditors/financiers possibly explains why Matthew did not censor the Jews for their practicing usury. Jewish loans supplied capital for all sectors of English society and were an integral part of the English economy. English monasteries formed especially close ties to Jewish moneylenders who sold the bonds of indebted landowners to the monks. When the debtors defaulted on their payments, the security on the loan (which was often land) was transferred to the purchaser of the debt. The legal conditions that determined Jewish life also favoured the monasteries; because the Jews were prohibited from accumulating landholdings, they often sold the seized land of defaulted debtors to those monks and the great magnates who were the only groups who could afford these purchases.<sup>256</sup> Like many monasteries, St. Alban's was involved in this form of business arrangement, and Matthew possibly met individuals like Aaron of York when the Jews were negotiating such transactions at St. Albans.<sup>257</sup> Indeed, business relations with Jews were so normalized that Matthew spoke glowingly of Jewish interest rates in an entry from 1253. Matthew prefaces his comments with references to scriptural condemnations of usury before describing how the Cahorsins deceive religious men into signing illicit loans. The Cahorsins, according to Matthew, would only accept full payments equal to the total amount of the loan, whereas the Jews

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<sup>255</sup> Matthew meticulously documents the quantities of money that passed between the various constituents of England. As Richard Vaughan writes "The *Chronica Majora* betrays, on the part of its author, a rather mercenary outlook on life. Sums of money are mentioned on every possible occasion, and marginal notices about them are common there, as well as in the *Liber Additamentorum*." Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 145.

<sup>256</sup> Robert R. Mundill, *England's Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion, 1262-1290* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 246-247. The Jews would be prohibited from accepting land as a security on loans in 1269.

<sup>257</sup> H.G. Richardson, *The English Jewry Under Angevin Kings*, 92-98.

accepted piecemeal payments “with a good grace” and only charged interest “commensurate with the time the money has been lent.”<sup>258</sup> Royal and papal sanctioning and protection of the Cahorsins serve as a backdrop for Matthew’s approval of Jewish lending customs, but it is clear that there were logistical issues also.<sup>259</sup>

Matthew is also reticent about the seizure of the gentry’s land as a result of Henry’s financial policy. Facing bankruptcy, many Jewish creditors opted to sell their bonds to Christians (by the 1250s, most Jews could no longer afford to bid for these bonds) or distraint their debtors (i.e. seize the security of the loan). Alternatively, the Jews could forfeit their assets directly to the Crown and, in turn, royal officials sold these bonds to Christians at a discount price. More controversially, Henry often pledged these debts to his favoured councillors, especially Earl Richard and his Poitevin half-brothers. Either way, the men who profited the most from the redistribution of Jewish bonds were the powerful, and unpopular, men at Henry’s court.<sup>260</sup> For many of the lesser men of the realm, these practices were another sign of Henry’s rapaciousness, and in 1258 the barons took up their cause by including their complaints in the *Petition of the Barons*, a document of proposed reform addressed to the King.<sup>261</sup> As a diligent follower of the wave of discontent leading up to 1258, and a hostile critic of the Poitevins, it is surprising that Matthew does not mention the misuse of Jewish bonds. Yet once again, his parochial interests – the reputation and prosperity of his monastery – likely informed the absence of any commentary on this type of injustice.

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<sup>258</sup> *C.M.*, V, 405.

<sup>259</sup> Sophia Menache, “Matthew Paris’s Attitudes Toward Anglo-Jewry” 154-155.

<sup>260</sup> Robert Stacey, “1240-60: A Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?” 142-143.

<sup>261</sup> In clause 25 of the *Petitio Baronum*, the barons identified the transference of Jewish debts and the consequent seizure of property by Henry’s councillors as an unfair hardship for the lesser men of the realm; in I.J. Sanders and R.F. Treharne, eds., *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion 1258-1267* (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1973), 87.

#### 4.4 Coin-Clipping and Icon Desecration: Justice and the Jews in the *Chronica Majora*

The aforementioned expressions of sympathy for Jewish suffering in the *Chronica* exist alongside strong denouncements of Jewish criminality. In contrast to his opinion of Jewish moneylending customs Matthew was gravely worried by the depreciatory effects of coin-clipping on the English penny. His fears became a reality in 1248 when King Henry issued a new coinage which, rather than bring monetary security, instead burdened the English people with an extortionate exchange cost of 13 denarius per pound of old pennies.<sup>262</sup> On one occasion, Matthew accuses the Jews of “circumcising” the English penny, but he quickly explains the Jewish currency crimes as a reactionary measure to King Henry’s financial policy of direct taxation.<sup>263</sup> Matthew even employs language and imagery associating Jewishness with coin-clipping in a literary attack on the inadequacy and weakness of royal governance. The commentary on the 1247-1248 currency crises, as Matthew depicts it, revolves around the theme of incompetent royal governance; Jewish involvement hovers on the margins and is once again an instrument to further malign King Henry III. As discussed in Chapter 1, Matthew was keenly interested in reports of Jewish hostility and the responses of Christians to these crimes. When Hugh of Lincoln’s murderers successfully bribed their way out a death sentence, Matthew turned his pen against the Franciscan friars whose greed had misled them into assisting the companions of the devil. Yet it was the royal officials who were ultimately responsible for releasing the guilty party, and there is a continuing sense in the *Chronica* that the King and his attendants regularly prevent the implementation of the law in cases involving the Jews.

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<sup>262</sup> *C.M.*, V, 18-19.

<sup>263</sup> Matthew does play on the use of *circumcidere* (*to cut, clip*) which was used to express the act of circumcision and the clipping of coins; see *C.M.*, IV, 632-633 where Louis IX blames the “circumcised” Jews for debasing coins.

In the year 1247, Matthew began documenting the decreasing condition of the English coinage. Relative to other currencies of Europe, English coins had a high value and their depreciation unsettled commodity prices in both England and France.<sup>264</sup> The transportation and handling of coins must account for some of the decreasing metal content – the last recoinage was in 1205 – but contemporary literary sources were quick to cite coin-clippers (*tonsores*). Matthew diligently followed, and implicitly compared, responses to the crisis by King Louis IX of France and King Henry. According to Matthew, King Louis reacted swiftly by ordering the liquidation of English coin.<sup>265</sup> Furthermore, the French king decreed that the perpetrators of such crimes were to be executed and their bodies publicly displayed at the gallows.<sup>266</sup> In this same entry, Matthew outlines King Henry's response: clipped-coins were not to be accepted in cities or fairs, and an investigation was launched to discover the perpetrators of such crimes. Although it was discovered that the Jews, Cahorsins and Flemish wool merchants were involved, Matthew is conspicuously quiet about the nature of their punishment. This comparison between the respective responses of the two kings – one orders for the criminals to be executed, the other orders an investigation – is a subtle criticism of the kingship of King Henry. King Louis IX's action to preserve monetary stability in the kingdom stands in contrast to the deteriorating state of affairs in England where the remedial measures by the royal government were considered insufficient.

Matthew clearly felt that the Jews should be held responsible for their coin-clipping crimes. In 1250, after commenting how the King “dry with avaricious thirst”

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<sup>264</sup> Zefira Entin Rokéah, “Money and the hangman in late-13th-century England: Jews, Christians and coinage offences alleged and real (Part 1),” *Jewish Historical Studies* 31 (1988-90), 84.

<sup>265</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 632-633.

<sup>266</sup> *C.M.*, V, 15-16.

requested another ruinous tax from the Jews, Matthew implores the reader not extend their pity as the Jews were possessors of “false coinage” and were known to forge seals.<sup>267</sup> This view, however, is complicated by an entry from the year 1247. Here, Matthew condemns the “infidel” Jews for their role in the debasement of coins, but he deflects blame onto King Henry by claiming that the Jews resorted to coin-clipping only after his undue tallages had reduced the community to beggary.<sup>268</sup> Sophia Menache has suggested that Matthew might have perceived a royal scheme to manipulate commodity prices by pushing the Jews to clip coins, which “provided the king with a significant income while leaving Anglo-Jewry subjected to the hatred of the population.”<sup>269</sup> While his perception of such a sophisticated plot is conjecture, Menache adeptly notes how Matthew’s commentary here is yet another elaboration of his anti-royal attitudes. On the other hand, these entries display a more nuanced critique of royal government than Menache proposes. The quality of a kingdom’s currency and the social stability that accompanied it was an index of the monarch’s leadership and governance.<sup>270</sup> The inability to manage the monetary market was a sign of royal incompetency. By suggesting that royal financial policy caused at least some communities to clip coins, Matthew

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<sup>267</sup> *C.M.*, V, 114. These seals must be the tripartite chirographs that the Crown stored in their royal *archae* in order to keep record of the holdings of Jews. Royal ministers often complained about Jewish forgery, but as H.G. Richardson notes, “the connivance of many people – lenders, borrowers and officials – was necessary to make clandestine transactions easy and safe.” H.G. Richardson, *The English Jewry Under Angevin Kings*, 147-148.

<sup>268</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 608-607.

<sup>269</sup> Sophia Menache, “Matthew Paris’s Attitudes Toward Anglo-Jewry,” 156.

<sup>270</sup> W. Johnson, “Textual Sources for the Study of Jewish Currency Crimes in Thirteenth-Century England,” *British Numismatic Journal*, 66 (1997), 22.

intimates that King Henry was inadequately aware of the potential repercussions of his own policies.<sup>271</sup>

The unforeseen consequences that King Henry's taxes set in motion included the recoinage of 1247.<sup>272</sup> Known for introducing the long-cross penny to England, the recoinage was likely a response to the wear of pennies in circulation (many dated back to the 1180) rather than a rash of coin-clipping. However, the effect of the recoinage, for Matthew, was nevertheless the same since the exchange rate for old pennies was extortionately high. While the people suffered, King Henry and his brother Richard benefited. Matthew made sure to comment on royal profits: Richard, whom King Henry charged with reforming the currency, purportedly earned £20 000 from the project.<sup>273</sup> Here, the chain of events terminates in the further impoverishment of the English people and the enrichment of the King and his councillors. Jewish involvement in coin-clipping was an inadvertent consequence of royal incompetency. The King took advantage of the depreciation of the penny to the detriment of the English people; for Matthew, King Henry's responses themselves caused more harm than benefit.

On one occasion, Matthew invoked language that associated Jews and coin-clipping in order to demonstrate the weakness of the English monarchy. In the aforementioned entry from 1255<sup>274</sup>, King Henry demanded another tallage and the Jews answered by citing their poverty and requesting permission to quit the kingdom. Matthew attributed the following response to the King:

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<sup>271</sup> W. Johnson, "Textual Sources for the Study of Jewish Currency Crimes in Thirteenth-Century England," 28-30.

<sup>272</sup> Matthew dates this recoinage to 1248; *C.M.*, V, 18-19.

<sup>273</sup> *C.M.*, V, 19.

<sup>274</sup> See fn. 248.

It is no wonder that I covet money, for it is dreadful to think of the debts in which I am involved. By God's head! They amount to a sum of two hundred thousand marks; nay, were I to say three, I should not exceed the bounds of truth. I am divided all around. I am a mutilated and diminished king, even half a king...

W. Johnson has noted the peculiarity of the language herein, especially the phrase *seducor undique* (*I am divided all around*). Johnson suggests that Matthew's invocation of this monetary image portrayed the King as "weakened, feminized and partially castrated."<sup>275</sup> In previous entries, Matthew had used the verb *circumcidere* (*to cut/clip* but also *to circumcise*) when describing the shearing of the penny's exterior rim.<sup>276</sup> This also resembles the dual meaning of the contemporary word *curtus*, often implying a circumcised Jew or a clipped coin.<sup>277</sup> By using such imagery and language, Matthew connects Jewish coin-clipping, royal financial malfeasance, and the weakness of King Henry. Ironically, the King has now become the figurative coin that the Jews clipped under the pressure of his own government.

Another aspect of Henry's relationship with the Jews that disturbed Matthew was the extension of legal protection to Jewish criminals. Henry's government often shielded the Jews from judicial prosecution because of its dependence on Jewish capital, and when prelates attempted to initiate legal procedures, the Crown jealously protected its rights to try the Jews in the royal court. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Church and Crown were often at loggerheads over the jurisdictional reach of their courts, including the issue of the

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<sup>275</sup> W. Johnson, "Textual Sources for the Study of Jewish Currency Crimes in Thirteenth-Century England," 30.

<sup>276</sup> See above, fn. 262.

<sup>277</sup> W. Johnson, "Textual Sources for the Study of Jewish Currency Crimes in Thirteenth-Century England," 27.



king's rights over his Jews.<sup>278</sup> At times, the *Chronica* documents the English prelates' efforts to stop this practice; under the year 1257 of the *Liber Additamentorum*, Matthew reproduced a list of statutes collected by a council of bishops in Oxford. Charged with identifying challenges to the Church and suggesting reforms, Statute 32 repudiated the interference of sheriffs or royal justices in cases involving a Jew who had been brought before an ecclesiastical judge.<sup>279</sup> Based on his experience, Matthew believed that the royal courts too often failed to uphold the integrity of justice.

A series of entries between 1235 and 1240 are particularly illustrative of the ways that recent events could influence how Matthew depicted the responses of the King and Church to Jewish crimes. From what scholars can tell, in 1230 several Jews in Norwich kidnapped and forcefully circumcised a Jewish apostate's son after he had also accepted the Christian faith.<sup>280</sup> Whereas most sources such as the anonymously written *Chronica* from Bury St. Edmund present this incident as a local disturbance, Matthew transforms the report into an attempted ritual crucifixion.<sup>281</sup> In the *Chronica*, Matthew muddled the rumors from Norwich by treating the alleged crime as two separate incidents. According to Matthew, the first case came before Henry in 1235, and the Jews were arrested after giving a confession.<sup>282</sup> Next, in 1239, Matthew claims that the Jews paid one-third of their chattel in exchange for royal protection from recent attacks on their

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<sup>278</sup> G.B. Flahiff, "The Writ of Prohibition to Court Christian in the 13th century," *Mediaeval Studies* 6 (1942): 301-305.

<sup>279</sup> The statute concerns the issuance of writs prohibition that bar the ecclesiastical courts from trying Jews who commit sacrilegious acts, assaulting clerks, and maintaining sexual relations with Christian women; *C.M.*, VI, 60-61.

<sup>280</sup> V.D. Lipman, *The Jews of Medieval Norwich* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1967), 59-62.

<sup>281</sup> A. Gransden, trans., *Chronica Buriensis (1212-1301)* (London: London Nelson, 1964), 10; and Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 53-56.

<sup>282</sup> *C.M.*, III, 305-306.

communities. These disturbances, Matthew explains, were incited by a “secret murder” (no details are provided) and the kidnapping of the Norwich boy; Matthew concludes the entry with a brief comment on the hanging of several of the condemned.<sup>283</sup>

Contradictorily, the report is retold in 1240 as an entirely separate event, but now Matthew states that the Jews had wished to crucify the boy. New details are added – the Jews gave the previously anonymous boy the name Jurnin, and they hid him in a well where his father discovers him – before Matthew tells how the bishop of Norwich, the aforementioned William de Releigh, intervened in the affair. Matthew quotes the bishop who pressed for the criminals to be tried in an ecclesiastical court for two reasons: 1) the Jews were known to seek the protection of the King when they were charged; 2) the crime pertained to ecclesiastical law since the Jews had insulted the Christian religion and coercively circumcised a Christian child. Consequently, four of the Jews were found guilty and executed.<sup>284</sup>

This transformation of a communal dispute into an episode of attempted crucifixion reflects the increasing suspicions across England of the malevolent and clandestine activities of the Jewish community. Matthew often inserted fabricated detail into his accounts to instill a sense of horror and repulsion or to incriminate those parties who he believed were incontrovertibly guilty.<sup>285</sup> The speech attributed to William de Releigh suggests that Matthew was particularly incensed by the extension of royal

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<sup>283</sup> *C.M.*, III, 543.

<sup>284</sup> *C.M.*, IV, 30-31. Royal writs from the period suggest that the original crime – kidnapping – occurred in 1230, an accusation by the child’s father was made in 1231 or 1234, and the case was resolved in 1240; V.D. Lipman, *The Jews of Medieval Norwich*, 59-62.

<sup>285</sup> In the letter of Ivo of Narbonne which recounts the Tartar siege of Neustadt (Austria), Matthew interpolated several fantastic and graphic details, including the ravaging of Christian women until they died and the Tartars’ cannibalistic banquets; *C.M.*, IV, 272-3; and Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 287 fn. 188.

immunity to the Jews. William was a heroic figure to Matthew on account of his struggle with Henry over the election to the bishopric of Winchester. Henry kept the bishopric (by far the richest in England) vacant for six years before William finally acceded to office in 1244. Thus, William, the champion of the liberties of the Church vis-à-vis the Crown, was an ideal character through whom Matthew could criticize the protection of Jewish lawbreakers by royal officials.<sup>286</sup>

In another concocted report, Matthew takes aim at Jewish coin-clipping and the close relationship between Jewish financiers and great magnates. In an entry from 1250, Matthew describes how the Jew Abraham of Berkhamstead and Wallingford was accused of three crimes, namely, coin-clipping, blasphemy, and murder.<sup>287</sup> In this symbolically complex tale, Abraham procured an icon of the Virgin Mary nursing the infant Christ and placed it in his latrine to abuse the Holy Family.<sup>288</sup> After finding his wife (Floria) cleaning the Virgin's face out of sense of womanly sympathy, Abraham murdered her, but his crimes were somehow discovered and he was imprisoned. Despite being found guilty on all charges, Abraham was released from the Tower of London after the intercession of the Earl of Cornwall, Richard, and he paid a fine of seven hundred marks for the coin-clipping charge.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> According to Matthew, the rivalry between Henry and William was so heated that the bishop was barred from the entire city of Winchester and issued propaganda to sully William's reputation. Contrarily, Matthew depicts William as a pious and humble, yet forceful figure who upon arriving barefoot at Winchester and finding it closed to him laid the entire city under interdict; *C.M.*, IV, 264-266.

<sup>287</sup> *C.M.*, V, 114-115.

<sup>288</sup> Stacey, "1240-60: A Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?" 149.

<sup>289</sup> Matthew possibly concocted this tale from two sources, the latter included in the *Chronica*: a similar exemplum story that first appears in the 7<sup>th</sup> century but became popular in the 12<sup>th</sup> century; and an entry in the *Chronica* recorded under the year 1222 that tells how a Christian deacon apostatized and defiled a cross and Eucharistic wafer after falling in love with a Jewess. P.R. Hyams has noted how Matthew often added details from other entries on Jews in the *Chronica* to emphasize specific themes; P.R. Hyams, "The Jewish minority in mediaeval England, 1066-1290," *Journal Jewish Studies* 25 (1974), 1282-1283.

Behind the several symbolic disparities between Abraham and Floria and the Holy Family is an underlying objection to liaisons between influential earls, who had the power to obstruct judicial processes, and Jewish financiers. By drawing on contemporary stereotypes that played on the adversarial relationship between Jews and Christ, Matthew calls into question how Jewish hostility can be reconciled with the community of true believers, Christians. Indeed, the juxtaposition of Abraham/Floria and Mary/Jesus stresses the essential differences between Jews and Christians – the disharmony of the Abraham/Floria and the unity of the Holy Family, the excremental despoilment of the Jewish religion and the life-giving power of faith in Mary and Jesus – which makes the friendship between Richard and Abraham unsettlingly jarring.<sup>290</sup> Implicit in the Abraham entry is a critique of the King's and his councillors' inability to maintain proper relations between a hostile, lawbreaking, religiously repulsive minority (Jewry) and the royal government, especially when Henry was so dependent on Jewish financial activity.

When arrested, Abraham promised to supply evidence that the Jews of England were traitors. In response, the community confirmed that Abraham was indeed a coin-clipper, and offered the Earl of Cornwall 1000 marks to guarantee his conviction.<sup>291</sup> This disharmony between wealthy Jewish magnates and their less affluent co-religionists may reflect the collapse of communal solidarity in the 1250s. By this time, many of the leading financiers had gone bankrupt excluding those Jews with close ties to the royal family who continued to receive preferential treatment.<sup>292</sup> Immediately following the Abraham entry, Matthew mentions another consequence of the financial pressure placed

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<sup>290</sup>Anthony Bale, "Fictions of Judaism in England Before 1290," in *The Jews in Medieval Britain Historical, Literary and Archaeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 136-137.

<sup>291</sup> *C.M.*, V, 115.

<sup>292</sup> Robert Stacey, "1240-1260: A Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?" 141-142.

on the community. Here, a group of justiciaries whom Henry had sent to audit the assets of the Jews, were accompanied by one of their co-religionists (presumably an official from the Exchequer of the Jews). The King's Jew ignored the cries of the local Christians who were lamenting his abuse of their Jewish neighbours. Moreover, this "merciless" Jew revealed the community's secrets to the justiciaries and swore that the community would pay twice the amount that the king had previously demanded. In both of the aforementioned entries, Matthew's fiercest criticisms are reserved for the Jews who were associated with the royal family or the Exchequer. The rest of the community are, instead, victims of an avaricious alliance between privileged Jews and King Henry and his councillors.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

In the *Chronica*, Matthew consistently deploys expressions of sympathy for the Jews in order to criticize the "vigilant and indefatigable searcher for money", King Henry III. The Jews are portrayed as one of the oppressed communities of the realm who were susceptible to the avarice of a corrupt king and royal administration. Matthew seems to have understood the ramifications of royal financial policy toward the Jews. Not only did vicious taxation bankrupt the Jewish community and force its members to consider fleeing from the kingdom. It also impelled the Jews in their financial desperation to clip coins. Whereas the royal family ultimately profited from the fallout of the coin-clipping scandal, the English nation was only further impoverished. By not unqualifiedly blaming the Jews for the depreciation of the English coinage, Matthew shifts the guilt onto Henry III.

While Mathew often understood the fundamental causes of the ruination of the Jewish community, he also criticized the close relationship between the Jews and the royal family. The fabrication of ritual crucifixion or icon desecration accusations reveals Matthew's commitment to notions of Jewish hostility. The nature of these details that Matthew added to his entries in order to incriminate the Jews exemplify the degree to which Matthew distrusted the Jewish community and the social circles around (and including) King Henry. Indeed, Matthew's simultaneous commiseration with and fear of the Jews only makes sense when the aforementioned entries are placed in the context of the anti-royal invectives that fill the *Chronica Majora*.

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion

#### 5.1 Conclusion

There can be no question that Matthew Paris's *Chronica* provides historians with the most complete picture of a 13<sup>th</sup>-century writer's thoughts and feelings toward the Jewish community of Europe. Encapsulating an encyclopedic array of topics, the scope and size of the *Chronica* places Jews in multiple contexts. Matthew's interest in the affairs of the world led him to collect invaluable reports from afar (the tale of the "Wandering Jew" or his accounts of the Tartars), local rumors (accusations of ritual crucifixion) as well as information concerning the royal government and its relations with the communities of English realm. Together, these pieces of data coalesce into a complex image of the Jews that draws on traditional theological concepts, but is also rooted in the specific socio-political world of mid-13<sup>th</sup> century England.

Matthew's thinking about the Jews is pegged to the notion of *testes fidei* and the biblical account of the Passion. His fascination with Cartaphilus, as indicated by the addition of pictorial marginalia, provides important clues for his broader conception of the Jews in Christian salvation history. In an entry from the year 1252, the presence of several Armenian monks at St. Albans gave Matthew the opportunity to mention the tale of Cartaphilus again. Repeating most of the details from the 1228 entry, Matthew states clearly that "Joseph" (Cartaphilus's baptismal name) continued to await the Second Coming and that this immortal witness of Jesus Christ was undeniably "a great proof of

the Christian faith.”<sup>293</sup> Here, the image of the repentant yet still condemned Jew stands within the eschatological framework of Christian salvation history. His redemption will only come at the end of time, and although he serves the Christian faith, his Jewishness can only be wiped away by the Last Judgement. The eschatological theme of this entry is enhanced by the Armenian monks’ reportage on the Tartars. Although the news is positive – according to the monks, plague had forced the Tartars to retreat back to their homeland – Matthew recalls the horror of their previous eruptions which was the gravest disaster to befall the world. This recalls the 1241 Jewish-Tartar Plot wherein the malice of the Rhineland Jews and the apocalyptic Ten Tribes coincide and will be overcome only with the Final Conversion when Christianity and Judaism are finally reconciled.

The *Chronica*’s emphasis on this timeless guilt and hostility is far from unique and reflects the changing climate of opinion concerning Jews in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Europe. Its numerous episodes of ritual crucifixions, icon desecration, and the exilic Ten Tribes are moored in the recently-born stereotypes of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Matthew thought of himself as a diligent researcher and pursuer of the truth, and he brought his skills as a historian to bear on his accounts of Jewish violence. Each of his claims is premised on reliable evidence (by medieval standards) including trustworthy texts (e.g., the *TTP* or the *Historia scholastica*), eye-witness accounts (e.g., the Hungarian bishop’s letter, the confession of Copin) or previous events recorded in the *Chronica* (e.g., Jewish practice of magic or the numerous accusations of ritual crucifixion). For Matthew, this evidence substantiated his characterization of the Jews as the enemies of the Christian faith, and raised the question “Why do we allow such people to live amongst us?”

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<sup>293</sup>“*magnum Christianae fidei argumentum.*” *C.M.*, V, 340-341.



Matthew's critical opinion of King Henry III and his officials lie behind the only positive expressions toward the Jews in the *Chronica*. The tyrannical and rapacious reign of Henry is the central theme of the *Chronica*, and Matthew's documentation of the King's moneymaking schemes and unjust management of the English nation often collide with the fate of the Jews. Disgruntled by Henry's centralizing policies and impingement on the liberties and customs of the communities of the realm (especially the bishoprics and monasteries), Matthew took every opportunity to portray the King negatively. When royal policy toward the Jews changed in 1239, Matthew became attentive to the deteriorating condition of the Jewish community and even gave voice to the lamentations of individual Jews. When the Jews were accused of coin-clipping in the late-1240s, Matthew blamed Henry's excessive taxation which, in his opinion, forced the Jews to find illicit means of supporting themselves. Despite these moments of sympathy, fears of Jewish sacrilege continued to dominate the *Chronica*. On several occasions, Matthew denounces the special status of the Jews vis-à-vis the Crown and their exemption from royal justice. He fabricates charges to incriminate Jews whose crimes had gone unpunished (e.g., Abraham of Berkhamstead), and he highlights the intervention of exemplary prelates as a contrast with the self-serving judicial policy of Henry and his councillors.

The 13<sup>th</sup> century was a pivotal period in the history Christian-Jewish relations in England and the *Chronica* exhibits the shifting of opinions regarding the Jews and Judaism. In the half-century after Matthew's death (1259), the legislative stranglehold only tightened as the Church, barons, and landed gentry grew evermore vexed by the Jews' protected legal status and role in the moneylending economy. During the Barons'

Rebellion (1264-1267), the followers of Simon de Montfort attacked Jewish communities across England and targeted the *archae* containing Jewish debt records. The basis of this popular discontent was the same as it had been in the 1240s and 1250s: the loss of land used as security on loans.<sup>294</sup> In the early-1270s, the Jews were evicted from numerous settlements and required to reside in the main towns;<sup>295</sup> in 1275, King Edward (r. 1272-1307) issued the *Statutes of Jewry* which prohibited the Jews from practicing usury, thereby ending their two-century long role in the English economy; and in 1290, King Edward expelled the Jews from England in exchange for the largest grant of taxation in the history of medieval England. Behind these developments were the theologically-rooted stereotypes of Jewish hostility which made the idea of Jewish expurgation more acceptable to English society. Yet the monastic chroniclers who recorded this event were not supportive of King Edward's decision. The monastic authors might have had an important hand in the creation and dissemination of the ritual crucifixion narrative, but their dedication to Augustine's theological mandate, as well as their material ties to Jewish financiers ensured their ambivalence toward any project to expel the Jews from England.<sup>296</sup> Half a century early, Matthew Paris had similar reasons for disagreeing with the annihilation and impoverishment of the Jewish community, even as he exploited images of Jewish hostility.

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<sup>294</sup>Robert Stacey, "The English Jews under Henry III," in *The Jews in Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary and Archeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 53.

<sup>295</sup>Robin R. Mundill, "Edward I and the Final Phase of Anglo-Jewry," in *The Jews In Medieval Britain: Historical, Literary and Archeological Perspectives*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 57-58.

<sup>296</sup>Sophia Menache, "Faith, Myth, and Politics: The Stereotype of the Jews and Their Expulsion from England and France," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 75 (1985), 356-358.

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