

The Little Jewish Boy: Afterlife of a Byzantine Legend in Thirteenth-Century Spain

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Annemarie Weyl Carr's boundless intellectual range more than once included forays from Byzantium into medieval Iberia, a part of the world that, despite its remoteness from the Byzantine *omphalos*, speedily came to appreciate the unique dynamic powers of the Virgin Mary and her images.¹ These brief but rewarding intersections of our interests inspired the present work, which traces the visual afterlife of a Marian miracle story as it traveled from its source in Byzantium to my arguably less civilized corner of the Mediterranean world. In honoring the legacy that Annemarie built during her sojourn on the prairies of "New Spain," I hope that the scrutiny of this miracle's westward journey will offer fresh testimony to the centrality of the Byzantine legacy in the medieval visual world, even in unexpected places and times.

The narrative in question is known by various nicknames, perhaps most commonly that of "The Jewish Boy of Bourges." As we shall see below, it tells the story of a little Jewish lad who innocently takes communion with his Christian friends and is locked by his enraged father in a hotly burning furnace. Protected from the flames by the Virgin Mary, the boy is eventually rescued and, sometimes along with his mother, converts to Christianity. Originating in sixth-century Byzantium and almost immediately afterward picked up by Latin authors, this narrative became one of the most widely repeated Marian legends in Western Christendom, where it found memorable musical-visual form in a now famous illustrated manuscript of the *Cantigas de Santa María* that was made for King Alfonso X of Castile around 1280 (Biblioteca de El Escorial, MS T.I.1).

¹ Annemarie Weyl Carr, "East, west, and icons in twelfth-century Outremer," in Vladimir P. Goss (ed.), *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange between East and West During the Period of the Crusades* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1986), 347–60.

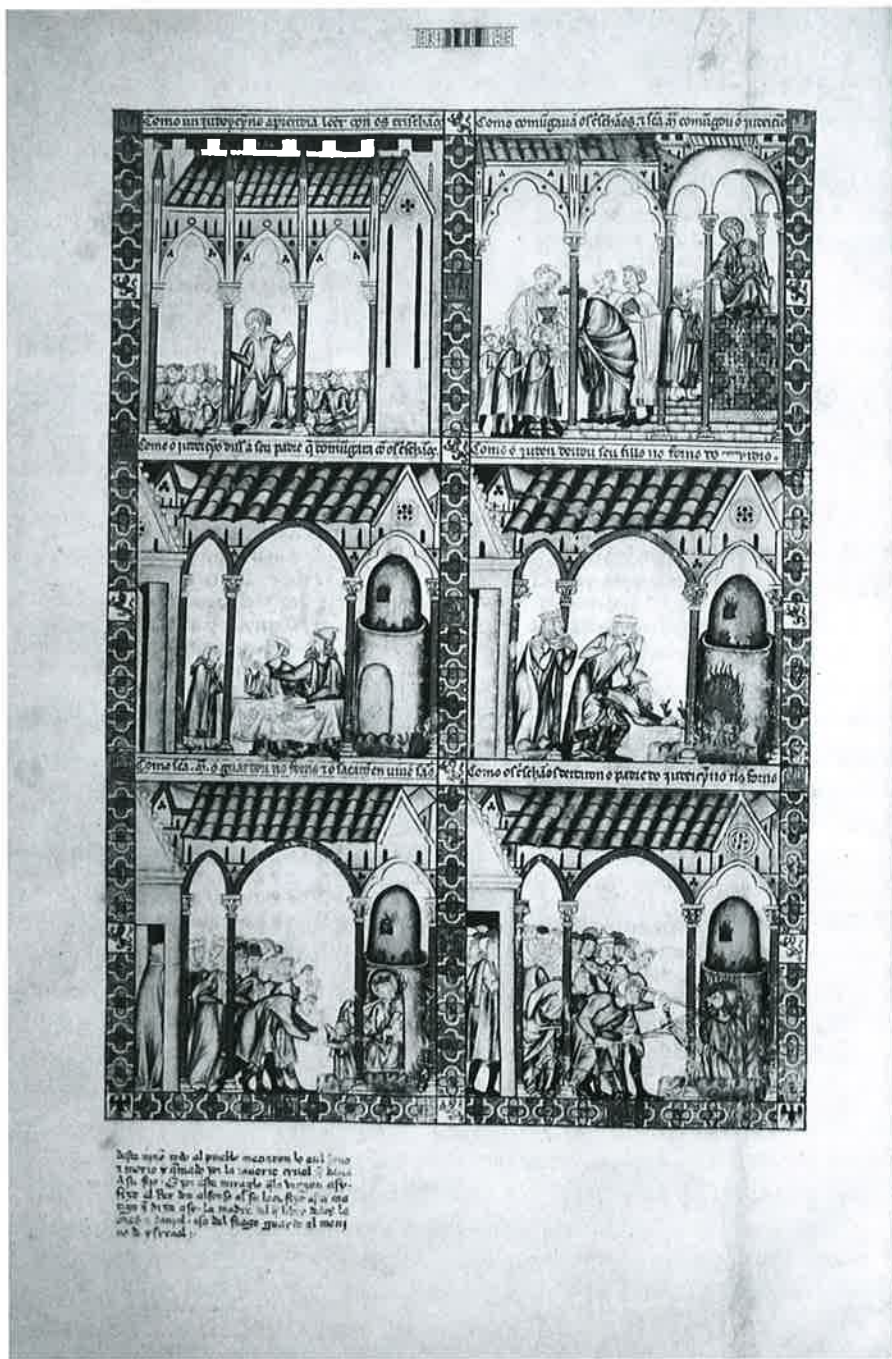


Fig. 3.1 [Plate 5] The Jewish Boy Who Took Communion (Cantiga 4), *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. Biblioteca de El Escorial, MS T.I.1, fol. 9v.

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As I will argue in this chapter, the illustration of this *cantiga* merits particular notice for its unique intermingling of visual elements—physiognomic distortion, recognizable local costume, and vividly physical violence—that endow the boy's spiritual transformation with multiple layers of meaning, many of which reflect to preoccupations peculiar to the *cantiga's* Iberian milieu (Figure 3.1 = Plate 5). These concerns included whether and how to regulate social proximity among the faith groups of a deeply multiethnic society; anxieties about how the rapid reshaping of political boundaries at the peak of the Iberian Reconquest challenged longstanding social and religious ones, or the lack of them; and frustration with the continued permeability of those same boundaries despite reinforcement by both Crown and Church. Yet, as we shall see, the effectiveness with which these distinctly local concerns were brought out in the illustration rests largely on the adroitness with which a Greek textual narrative, imported from a time and place so distant from this distinctive Iberian milieu, could be adapted to serve these localized concerns. Retracing the tale's peregrination from sixth-century Byzantium to Alfonso's thirteenth-century court effectively reveals its force and flexibility.

Consideration of the visual ancestry of the Jewish Boy tale is well overdue. While its various texts have enjoyed a long history of scholarly study, from the philological work of Eugen Wolter to Miri Rubin's erudite analysis of the story's late medieval texts and contexts, few scholars have closely investigated how the various verbal permutations of the tale intersected with the vivid pictorial versions that began cropping up in its wake as it passed from Byzantium across Western Europe and into central Spain.² How precisely did such verbal texts nurture the visual narratives they inspired? How did they continue to shape the images as they themselves evolved? A closer look at the legend's visual and textual afterlife will reveal how the wide scattering of texts, images, and associations that it inspired across Europe would come to endow the *cantiga* illustration with its prismatic effectiveness.

² These include Eugen Wolter, *Der Judenknabe: 5 Griechische, 14 Lateinische und 8 Französische Texte* (Halle, 1879); Theodor Pelizaeus, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Legende vom Judenknabe* (PhD dissertation, Halle a. d. Saale, 1914); Theodor Nissen, "Zu den ältesten Fassungen der Legende vom Judenknaben," *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 62 (1939): 393–403; Wernfried Hofmeister, "Das Jüdel im Kontext mitteldeutscher literarischer Kindesdarstellungen," in A. Ebenbauer and Klaus Zatloukal (eds), *Die Juden in ihrer Mittelalterlichen Umwelt* (Vienna, 1991), 91–103; Heike A. Burmeister, *Der Judenknabe: Studien und Texte zu einem mittelalterlichen Marienmirakel in deutscher Überlieferung* (Göppingen, 1998); and Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (College Park, PA, 1999), 7–39. For depictions of the Jewish Boy tale in several late medieval English manuscripts, see Denise L. Despres, "Mary of the Eucharist: Cultic anti-Judaism in some fourteenth-century English devotional manuscripts," in Jeremy Cohen (ed.), *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought* (Wiesbaden, 1996), 375–401.



Tracing the Jewish Boy Tale from Byzantium to France

Although earlier Greek versions of the Jewish Boy narrative may have existed, the earliest surviving account appears in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius Scholasticus (536/37–after 594).³ Evagrius' tale, set in Constantinople, is brief and appealingly homespun. It tells how one day, during the customary distribution of the unused remains of eucharistic bread to the city's young schoolboys, a Jewish boy who happened to be with the lads shared in the feast. His father, a glassmaker, became furious upon learning of his son's participation and locked the boy in the burning glass-furnace. Unable to find the boy, his desperate mother wandered the city for three days until she entered her husband's workshop and heard her son calling from the furnace; she forced open the doors and found him unharmed among the coals. When asked how he had survived, the boy reported that he had been protected during his ordeal by a woman in a purple robe, who brought him food and offered him water to quench the flames around him. Upon discovery of the miracle, the child and his mother were baptized at the Emperor Justinian's command, while the father refused conversion and was impaled in Sycae, outside the city.⁴

Many aspects of this laconic tale remain unexplained. It is unclear, for example, whether the boy understood the implications of his consumption of the bread (perhaps related to the Eastern custom of distributing blessed but unconsecrated eucharistic bread as the *antidoron*), nor why his father reacted so murderously to this apparently innocent act. Instead, the story's focus rests on the boy's Christlike three-day enclosure in the furnace, on the Virgin's protective role, and on the intervention of the emperor in the fate of both father and son. Such themes conform well with the general tenor of Evagrius' *History*, in which such miracles serve to highlight the spiritual triumphs and imperial endorsement enjoyed by the early Byzantine Church.⁵

Quite different concerns emerge, by contrast, in the earliest known Latin version of the tale, which was composed shortly after 590 by Gregory of Tours (c. 538–94) as part of his *De gloria martyrum*.⁶ Gregory likewise situates the story in the East (*in Oriente*) and identifies the boy as the son of a glazier; he also establishes the lad more firmly as a schoolmate of the Christian boys, with whom he was "studying and learning the alphabet."⁷

³ Michael Whitby, trans. and intro., *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (Liverpool, 2000); for the Greek, see Wolter, *Judenknabe*.

⁴ Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History*, 241–2.

⁵ On the *antidoron*, see Nicon D. Patrinos, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy* (Pleasantville, NY, 1987), 30–31.

⁶ Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, trans. and intro. Raymond van Dam (Liverpool, 1988), 29–31. See also Gregory of Tours, *De Gloria Martyrum*, I, cap. X. *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne and A. Hamman (Paris, 1844–64): LXXI, 732, col. 714C.

⁷ Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, 29–30.

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His most significant development, however, is his conversion of the boy's consumption of the bread into true liturgical communication: he tells how the lad accompanies the other boys to Mass, where he joins them in receiving the eucharist. This revision helps to clarify the furious reaction of the Jewish father, for whom the boy's innocent act now becomes an affront deserving of draconian consequences. He declares, "If you have communicated with these boys and forgotten your ancestral worship, then to avenge this insult to the law of Moses I will step forward against you as a merciless murderer," and throws the boy into his blazing oven, adding wood to make the fire burn more strongly.⁸ The boy's mother learns immediately about the attack, but unlike her Byzantine counterpart she is unable to rescue her child on her own. Instead, her cries attract the Christians of the town, who open the furnace, pull out the boy, and—in an act of mob vigilantism that surely would have surprised Evagrius—throw the father into the flames. The boy and his mother then convert, inspiring other Jews to do the same.

Miri Rubin has written perceptively of the eucharistic themes raised by Gregory's legend and its many Western variants, noting especially their potential to serve as "witness tales" in which the eucharist itself offered the impetus to convert.⁹ Such a view is borne out by the boy's evident familiarity with Christian culture and its practices, which seems to inform his actions more directly than in the Greek version of the tale. The bread that he consumes here is not merely the remains of that intended for the Mass, but a consecrated host that has actually transubstantiated; it is the body of Christ. The boy's impulsive desire to partake of it highlights the attractiveness of the eucharist in his innocent eyes and sets him firmly on the path toward conversion, themes firmly in keeping with the concerns of the early Latin Church.¹⁰

Gregory's version of the tale gained still further dimensions when later variants of his narrative came to be included in the numerous Marian miracle collections that were beginning to circulate in Western Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As first formulated in England and then disseminated in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and eventually also Iberia by such authors as Gautier de Coincy, Caesarius of Heisterbach, Vincent of Beauvais, and Gonzalo de Berceo, these narratives were unified by the emphatic protagonism of the Virgin Mary, whose repeated agency on behalf of her followers reflected her generally expanded role in the medieval West.¹¹ The collections' strong Marian emphasis also exerted an influence on

⁸ Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, 30.

⁹ Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 7–27, esp. 9.

¹⁰ Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 9–10.

¹¹ On the miracle tradition, see see Adolf Mussafia, "Studien zu den mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden," *Sitzungsberichte der kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, philosophisch-historische Classe* 113, no. 2 (1886), 917–94; 115, no. 1 (1888), 5–92; 119, no. 9 (1889), 1–66; 123, no. 8 (1891), 1–85 and 139, no. 8 (1898), 1–74; Richard Southern, "The

the shape of the Jewish Boy tale, which now shifted away from eucharistic concerns to focus on the Virgin's protection of the lad against the violence of his father. For a high medieval audience, this shift could prompt powerful associations: Mary's maternal defense of an innocent boy from his merciless Jewish attacker easily evoked the narrative framework of the Passion, allowing the Jewish father to reenact the merciless violence of Christ's biblical attackers, while the boy, although still only an incipient Christian, offered a satisfactorily symbolic stand-in for Mary's sacrificed son.¹² Such associations were consistent with a contemporaneous obsession among medieval Christian writers with the role of Jews generally in the death of Christ, once presented by theologians as virtually inadvertent but now increasingly transformed into a conscious, premeditated act of violence.¹³

The vitality of this association is more than clear in the poetic version of the tale composed by the French monk Gautier de Coincy in his early thirteenth-century *Miracles de Notre Dame*. Coincy's two-volume vernacular collection of 58 narratives and 18 chansons enjoyed an extraordinary popularity in its own day, as reflected in the 61 manuscripts still surviving from the thirteenth century alone. It became a fundamental source for many subsequent collections, among them the *Cantigas de Santa María* themselves.¹⁴

Coincy's version of the Jewish Boy story follows the general outline of Gregory's narrative, identifying the boy as the son of a glazier who imitates his Christian schoolmates in taking communion during Mass. However, it intensifies the tension between the innocent future convert and his malevolent Jewish father in a manner carefully attuned to his medieval audience. First, it shifts the story's location from Constantinople to the French city of Bourges, a familiar and contemporary setting whose recent religious controversies may well have heightened the tale's inherent tensions.¹⁵ Next, it actively develops

English origins of the 'miracles of the Virgin,'" *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1958): 176–216; Beverly Boyd, *The Middle English Miracles of the Virgin* (San Marino, CA, 1964); Evelyn Faye Wilson, *The Stella Maris of John of Garland* (Cambridge, MA, 1946); and Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 10–16. On the cult of the Virgin in this period, see Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven, CT, 2009), 191–284.

¹² A similarly syllogistic reception of other miracles is described by Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 141–2.

¹³ See especially Jeremy Cohen, "The Jews as killers of Christ in the Latin tradition: From Augustine to the friars," *Traditio* 39 (1983), 1–27; and *Christ Killers: The Jews and the Passion from the Bible to the Big Screen* (Oxford, 2007), esp. 73–92.

¹⁴ Tony Hunt, *Miraculous Rhymes: The Writing of Gautier de Coincy* (Cambridge, 2007), 3–4. On the surviving manuscripts, see Arlette P. Ducrot-Granderye, *Études sur les miracles Notre Dame de Gautier de Coincy* (Helsinki, 1932); and Ardis Butterfield, "Introduction. Gautier de Coincy, *Miracles de Notre Dame*: Texts and manuscripts," in Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones (eds), *Gautier de Coincy: Miracles, Music, and Manuscripts* (Turnhout, 2006), 1–18. The standard critical edition is Gautier de Coincy, *Les Miracles de Notre Dame*, ed. V. Frederic Koenig (4 vols, Geneva, 1961–70).

¹⁵ Gilbert Dahan, "Les Juifs dans les *Miracles* de Gautier de Coincy," *Archives Juives* (1980): 41–8 and 59–68, esp. 43.

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the moral contrast between father and son by rendering it in somatic terms, jarringly juxtaposing a description of the boy as very intelligent and even more beautiful ("mielz entendant et mout plus bel") against an account of the merciless abuse to which his father subjects his tender flesh ("La char, qu'avoit tenrete et mole./sovent ses pere li batoit/por ce qu'avec aus s'embatoit").¹⁶ Finally, it sets the Mass at which the boy communicates not just on any feast day but on Easter itself, activating the linkage between the boy's victimization by a malevolent Jew and "resurrection" from the furnace with the central events of the Passion.¹⁷ Most striking of all, however, is the degree to which Coincy frames the boy's predicament not as a problem of individual violence or disbelief, but as a more categorical problem of Jews versus Christians, a natural extension of a presumed Jewish hostility toward Christ. His tale thus ends not with an account of the father's death and the boy's conversion, but with a multi-stanza diatribe on the Jews as a group, which ends: "I am so very hard towards them/That if I were king of the whole kingdom/I would not tolerate even one of them."¹⁸

With its evocative overlaying of eucharistic and Passion themes, Mariolatry, and garden variety anti-Judaism, Coincy's version of the story provides a foundation of unparalleled conceptual richness for the visual tradition that would follow.

Envisioning the Narrative

The earliest pictorial narratives of the Jewish Boy tale convey few of the thematic layers accrued by the textual versions of the tale. Unlike these verbal sources, the visual tradition appears to have originated in the West: the earliest surviving exemplars appear in English and French stained glass beginning in the second quarter of the thirteenth century.¹⁹ These display an abbreviation characteristic of their medium, typically comprising two or three essential scenes. Two fragments of the tale, produced between 1220 and 1235, survive in the north choir aisle of Lincoln Cathedral; two more short cycles appear in the north and south ambulatories of Le Mans Cathedral, where

¹⁶ Gautier de Coincy, *Miracles*, II: 95, lines 6–14.

¹⁷ On references to the Passion in this tale, see especially Daniel E. O'Sullivan, "Reading children in Gautier de Coincy's *Miracles de Notre Dame*," *Neophilologus* 89 (2005): 201–19, esp. 204–7.

¹⁸ Translation from Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 14; see also Gautier de Coincy, *Miracles*, II: 100, lines 140–43.

¹⁹ A brief overview of its emergence in the West is offered by Maurice Vloberg, *L'eucharistie dans l'art* (Grenoble, 1946), 113–14; see also Anna Russakoff, "Imaging the miraculous: Les miracles de Notre-Dame (Paris, BnF, n.acq.fr. 24541)" (PhD dissertation, New York University, 2006), 45–66.



Fig. 3.2 [Plate 6] The Jewish Boy who Took Communion, bay 110, south ambulatory window, Le Mans Cathedral.

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they were added just after the middle of the thirteenth century.²⁰ Typically such narratives do not stand alone; like their textual contemporaries, they comprise part of a larger ensemble of stories dedicated to the life and miracles of the Virgin.²¹

The Jewish Boy narrative in the south ambulatory window at Le Mans (Bay 110) displays both the truncated format and the characteristic spareness of the stained glass exemplars (Figure 3.2 = Plate 6). The lowest scene depicts a priest offering communion to a small group of boys; the altar behind him bears a chalice partly covered by a corporal, an obvious reference to the eucharistic miracle just effected in the Mass. In the succeeding scene, the Jewish boy, hands clasped in prayer, is slipped smoothly into the oven by his father as his mother looks on impassively; only the patriarch's knitted brow hints at the malevolence so enthusiastically elaborated in Coincy's and similar texts. In the third and uppermost scene, the boy remains in the oven, but he now rests squarely on the lap of the Virgin, who extends her arms around him in a frontal composition strongly resembling traditional images of the Virgin as "Throne of Wisdom," with the Jewish Boy now occupying the place traditionally taken by the Christ Child.²²

This reduction to the tale's three central narrative moments—communion, immolation, and rescue—and the simplified iconography of the series offer only limited thematic elaboration; they play mainly upon the eucharistic and Christological themes most deeply rooted in the textual tradition. In the first scene, the presence of chalice and corporal on the altar asserts the centrality of the eucharist and its transfigurative power, while the displacement of the Christ Child by the Jewish boy in the third scene hints at his role as a stand-in for the Savior. Far more limited, however, is the anti-Jewish dimension developed so richly in the texts of the Marian tradition. In the scene of the boy's attempted immolation, the father's robotic movements and the mother's quiescent stare deaden the potentially dynamic opposition between tender Christ-surrogate and enraged Jewish attacker; and, indeed, little visual reference is made to the Jewishness of either father or son. The boy's soft features and simple yellow tunic render him nearly indistinguishable from his Christian schoolfriends, while the father lacks the stereotypically Jewish signs, such as an enlarged nose or a grimace, that were at this date well

²⁰ The Lincoln scenes depict the boy being thrust into the oven and his protection by the Virgin; see Nigel Morgan, *The Medieval Painted Glass of Lincoln Cathedral* (London, 1983), 9–11 and 30. On Le Mans, see Meredith Parsons Lillich, *Armor of Light: Stained Glass in Western France* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), 10–47; and Henry Kraus, *The Living Theater of Medieval Art* (Bloomington, IN, 1967), 159–61.

²¹ Lillich, *Armor*, 29–31; see also Meredith Parsons Lillich, "Gothic glaziers: Monks, Jews, taxpayers, Bretons, women," *Journal of Glass Studies* 28 (1985), 72–92, esp. 72–3.

²² Ilene E. Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom: Wood Sculptures of the Madonna in Romanesque France* (Princeton, NJ, 1972).

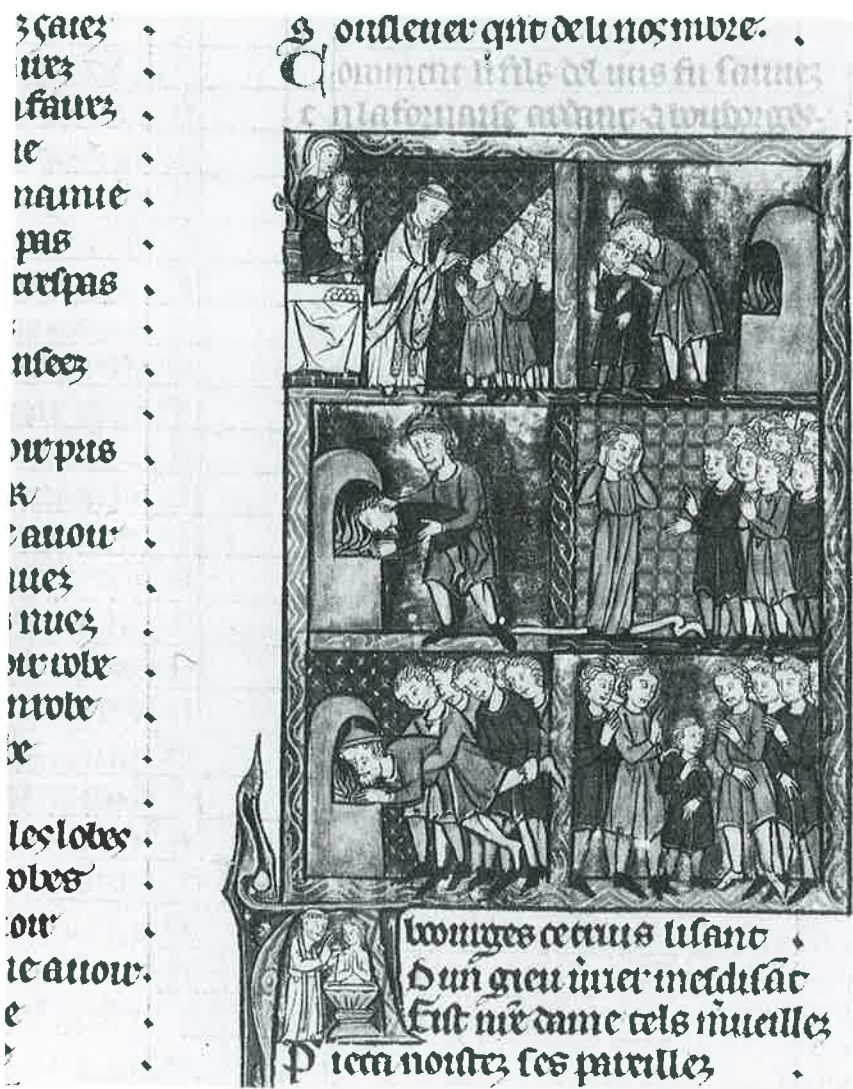


Fig. 3.3 The Jewish Boy Who Took Communion, *Miracles de Nostre Dame*. National Library of Russia, Fr. F.v. XIV 9, fol. 71r.

established elsewhere in the European visual lexicon. Only his softly peaked cap signals his religious identity.²³

²³ On the "Jewish hat," see Danièle Sansy, "Chapeau juif ou chapeau pointu? Esquisse d'un signe d'infamie," in *Symbole des Alltags, Alltag der Symbole* (Graz, 1992): 349–75. Bibliography on the iconography assigned to medieval Jews is extensive; for an overview, see Debra Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton,

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The relative conservatism of stained glass cycles like that at Le Mans might be ascribed to several factors, above all to the newness of the image tradition, which at this date had not had time to develop the symbolic elaboration of its textual equivalent. The peculiar demands of such cycles' medium and setting may also have limited the number and complexity of the scenes planned for each window. However, these differences did not result from setting and medium alone: even in the comparatively flexible realm of thirteenth-century manuscript painting, pictorial narratives of the Jewish Boy tale often display a similar reticence.

This is nowhere more clear than in the illustrations of the Jewish Boy tale found in manuscripts of Coincy's *Miracles de Notre Dame*. The production of such illustrated codices can be traced in France from about 1260 onward; of those thirteenth-century manuscripts that survive, at least eight preserve an illustration of the Jewish Boy tale, providing an ideal opportunity to examine the artistic response to Coincy's text.²⁴ Yet these illustrations are surprisingly modest: most often, they take the form of a single historiated initial enclosing the tale's most recognizable narrative moment, that of the father placing his son in the oven; and they lack the symbolic elaboration that would permit consideration of the tale's more complex themes.

In only two surviving thirteenth-century Coincy manuscripts does the Jewish Boy story approach the narrative richness of its model. Now in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 22928) and St. Petersburg (National Library of Russia, Fr. F.v. XIV 9), these manuscripts contain rectangular multi-episodic miniatures preceding the text of the tale.²⁵ The illustration in the St. Petersburg manuscript (fol. 71r) is more extensive. It configures the tale in six scenes, which are contained within a rectangular panel set into the column where the miracle poem begins (Figure 3.3).²⁶ In the first scene, a priest stands before an altar bearing a sculpture of the Virgin and Child and offers communion to the foremost of several boys, whose packed bodies form a pyramidal mass that nearly fills the space. In the next, the boy embraces his father, who scrutinizes his son in apparent reference to Coincy's claim that the young communicant's

NJ, 2003), 95–155; and Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art in the Later Middle Ages* (2 vols, Berkeley, CA, 1993).

²⁴ Both of these were likely produced in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. On illustrated Coincy manuscripts of this period, see Alison Stones, "Notes on the artistic context of some Gautier de Coinci manuscripts," in Krause and Stones (eds), *Gautier de Coinci*, 65–98 and Appendices III and IV (pp. 369–96). See also Christine Lapostolle, "Images et apparitions: Illustrations des 'Miracles de Notre-Dame,'" *Médiévales* 2 (1982): 47–67; and Russakoff, "Imaging the miraculous," 76–95 and 327–36.

²⁵ Lapostolle discusses illustrations of this tale in various Gautier manuscripts, including Paris, BNF 22928; see "Images et apparitions," 55–61.

²⁶ I.P. Mokretsova and V.I. Romanova, *Les manuscrits enluminés français du XIIIe siècles dans les collections soviétiques, 1270–1300* (Moscow, 1984), 102–3; and Tamara Voronova and Andrei Sterligov, *Les manuscrits enluminés occidentaux du VIIIe au XVIe siècle à la Bibliothèque nationale de Russie de Saint-Petersbourg, France, Espagne, Angleterre, Allemagne, Italie, Pays-Bas*, trans. Mireille Faure (St. Petersburg, 1996), 66–7.



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face "shone with his great joy."²⁷ Two subsequent scenes depict first the father tossing the boy headfirst into his already burning oven, then the mother, who tears her hair as her cries summon the townspeople. In the final two panels, the townspeople first throw the father into the oven, and then rejoice as the boy explains his divine protection. Beneath the panel, the initial A that introduces the poetic text contains a tiny image of the boy's baptism.

In extending the visual narrative into multiple scenes, this illustration offers a closer approximation of the events recounted in the text. By extending beyond the essential narrative moments of the boy's communion, immolation, and rescue, it plays on the very polarities of tenderness and violence innovated by Coincy. The Virgin and Child make gestures of blessing from the altar as the boy accepts communion; the lad's shining face stands against his father's angry grimace and his mother's desperate gestures as he is thrown into the fire; and the rambunctious throng of townspeople forms an impromptu Greek chorus that responds to the mother's cries, deposits the father in the oven, and celebrates the boy's rescue.

Yet despite its extensiveness, even this illustration falls short of the possibilities raised by the text's deeply layered discourse, especially its strongly anti-Jewish slant. The communion and furnace scenes preserve the spare formulae of the stained glass exemplars, and neither the boy's Jewishness nor that of his father is signaled strongly beyond the latter's conventional pointed hat. Even the potentially cathartic scene in which the mob thrusts the father into the furnace possesses an almost balletic detachment. Neither this nor the other thirteenth-century illustrations of the tale offers a precedent for the earthy, immediate violence found in the *Cantigas de Santa María*.

Illustrating the Jewish Boy Tale in the *Cantigas de Santa María*

The tale of the Jewish Boy was among the earliest narratives to join the great compendium of Marian songs known as the *Cantigas de Santa María* when it became part of the first redaction of the collection initiated by the Castilian king Alfonso X (r. 1252–84) in the early 1260s. It thus stood among the earliest Marian miracle tales to be included in a monumental compendium of imported and invented narratives and praise songs that by the end of the king's reign would number over 400. Whereas this process seems to have occupied at least part of the king's court from the late 1260s until his death in 1284, it appears to have been only during the final five or six years that Alfonso instructed a team of artists and scribes to copy this collection into the two generously illustrated manuscripts known today.²⁸

²⁷ "Toute sa face resclaira de la grant joie qu'il avoit." Coincy, *Miracles*, II: 96, line 36.

²⁸ Biblioteca de El Escorial, MS T.I.1 and Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, banco rari 20. On the collection's chronology, see esp. Evelyn S. Procter, *Alfonso of Castile: Patron of*

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Although four thirteenth-century manuscripts of the *Cantigas de Santa María* have survived, only two contain narrative illustrations: one in the Biblioteca de El Escorial (MS T.I.1) and the other in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence (MS *banco rari* 20).²⁹ The two were undoubtedly intended as companion volumes in which each of the songs were to be represented not just by text and musical notation, but also by six- or twelve-panel illustrations occupying either one or two full pages. The Escorial manuscript was likely completed by the early 1280s and still preserves 192 of an original 200 *cantigas*, but the Florence codex was left unfinished, perhaps at Alfonso's death.³⁰ It is in the Escorial manuscript, as *Cantiga* 4, that the Jewish Boy tale appears.

The illustration of *Cantiga* 4 presents significant differences from its French and English predecessors.³¹ As elsewhere in the Escorial manuscript, the tale

Literature and Learning (Oxford, 1951), 34–46; Manuel Pedro Ferreira, "The stemma of the Marian *Cantigas*: Philological and musical evidence," *Cantigueiros* 6 (1994): 58–98; María Victoria Chico Picaza, "Cronología de la miniatura Alfonsí: estado de la cuestión," *Anales de la Historia del Arte* 4 (1993–94): 569–76; Joseph O'Callaghan, *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa María: A Poetic Biography* (Leiden, 1998), 8–13; and David Wulstan, "The compilation of the *Cantigas* of Alfonso el Sabio," in *Cobras e Son: Papers on the Text, Music, and Manuscripts of the Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Stephen Parkinson (Oxford, 2000), 154–85.

²⁹ The unillustrated manuscripts are Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS 10069, which contains 127 songs with skeletal musical notation, and Escorial MS B.I.2, which contains 401 songs with musical notation as well as 40 small panels depicting musicians in performance. See Walter Mettmann, *Cantigas de Santa María* (Coimbra, 1959–72), I: vii–xxiv.

³⁰ Bibliography on the illustrated codices of the *Cantigas de Santa María* is vast. On the works' art historical dimensions, see especially Ana Dominguez Rodríguez and Pilar Treviño Gajardo, *Las Cantigas de Santa María: Formas e imágenes* (Madrid, 2007); María Victoria Chico Picaza, "La relación texto-imagen en las *Cantigas de Santa María*, de Alfonso el Sabio," *Reales Sitios* 28/87 (1986): 61–72; Ellen Kosmer and James F. Powers, "Manuscript illustration: The *Cantigas* in their contemporary art context," in Robert I. Burns (ed.), *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X the Learned and His Thirteenth-Century Renaissance* (Philadelphia, 1990), 46–71; Deirdre F. Jackson, "Shields of faith: Apotropaic images of the Virgin in Alfonso X's *Cantigas de Santa María*," *RACAR: Revue d'Art Canadienne* 24/2 (1997): 38–46; Rocio Sánchez Ameijeiras, "Imaxes e teoría da imaxe nas *Cantigas de Santa María*," in *As Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Elvira Fidalgo (Vigo, 2002), 246–301, and "La fortuna sevillana del códice florentino de las *Cantigas*: Tumbas, textos e imaxes," *Quintana* 15 (2002): 257–73; and Francisco Prado-Vilar, "The gothic anamorphic gaze: Regarding the worth of others," in *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*, ed. Cynthia Robinson and Leyla Rouhi (Leiden, 2005), 67–100. Scholarship on more specific aspects of the codices, especially the depiction of religious minorities, will be cited below.

³¹ The Jewish Boy *cantiga* has been discussed primarily within broader studies concerned with the representation of Jews in the *Cantigas de Santa María*, among them B.N. Teensma, "Os Judeus na Espanha do século XIII, segunda as *Cantigas de Santa María* de Alfonso X el Sabio," *Ocidente* (1970): 85–102; Albert Bagby, "The Jew in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X, el Sabio," *Speculum* 46/4 (1971): 670–88 and "The figure of the Jew in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X," in Israel Katz and John Esten Keller (eds), *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa María: Proceedings of the First International Symposium on the Cantigas de Santa María of Alfonso X El Sabio (1221–1284)* (Madison, WI, 1987), 235–45; Jesús Montoya Martínez, "Judíos y moros en las *Cantigas de Santa María*," *Historia del derecho* (1980), 69–90; Angus Hatton and Vikki McKay, "Anti-Semitism in the *Cantigas de Santa María*," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 61 (1983): 189–99; Mary Louise Trivison, "Prayer and prejudice in the CSM," *Cantigueiros* 1 (1988): 119–27; Dwayne Carpenter, "Social perception and literary portrayal: Jews and Muslims in medieval Spanish literature," in Vivian Mann et al. (eds), *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain* (New York, 1992), 61–81, and "The portrayal of the

comprises six episodes, each in its own square panel and surmounted by a brief explanatory caption. The first panel depicts the boy seated at school with his friends, an episode absent from earlier visual traditions. In it, a hooded cleric and a cluster of small boys are seated within a vaulted, churchlike space presumably meant to represent an ecclesiastical school. The Jewish boy is difficult to identify among the mass of seated pupils, although his dress in subsequent scenes suggests that he may be the child in brown, his face turned in profile, who sits just to the right of a colonnette at the teacher's left hand. He is far more easily recognized in the second scene, where he displays the costume characteristically assigned to Jewish figures in the *Cantigas de Santa María*: a hooded brown cloak that resembles that actually worn by many Iberian Jews at this date, and curving black slippers similar to those depicted in Western Islamic painting.³² His dress differs distinctly from the simple tunics and shoes of his schoolmates, and it sharpens his separation from them as he steps forward to accept communion not from the priest, but from a sculpture of the Virgin and Child that rests on the church altar.

A more surprising attribute is the hawk-nosed profile that the boy here turns upward toward the Virgin's statue. Echoing a physiognomic stereotype employed widely in images of Jews outside Iberia at this time, this feature draws force both from the unexpectedness of its appearance on a child—for neither in Iberia nor in Europe as a whole were children traditionally caricatured in this way—and from its obvious connection with the exaggerated physiognomy of his father, whose staring eyes, arched nose, dark brows, and shaggy black beard manifest one of the earliest Iberian stereotypes of this kind. For medieval Christian viewers, such facial traits infused Jewish figures with a panoply of moral flaws, among them anger, stubbornness, and violence, that were now implicitly if temporarily shared by both characters.³³

Jew in Alfonso the Learned's *Cantigas de Santa María*," in Bernard Dov Cooperman (ed.), *In Iberia and Beyond: Hispanic Jews Between Cultures* (Newark, DE, 1998): 15–42; Xosé Filgueira Valverde, "Os xudeos nas *Cantigas de Santa María*," in *Xudeos e conversos* (1994): 245–63; and Elvira Fidalgo Francisco, "Consideración social de los judíos a través de las *Cantigas de Santa María*," *Revista de literatura medieval* 8 (1996): 91–104. More recently, see Paolino Rodríguez Barral, "La dialéctica texto-imagen a propósito de la representación del judío en las *Cantigas de Santa María* de Alfonso X," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 37/1 (2007): 213–43; Peter Klein, "Der Ausdruck unterschiedlicher Konflikte in der Darstellung der Juden und Mauren in den 'Cantigas' Alfons des Weisen von Kastilien und León," in Oliver Auge et al. (eds), *Bereit zum Konflikt: Strategien und Medien Konfliktzeugungen und Konfliktbewältigung im europäischen Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2008), 67–86, and "Moros y judíos en las 'Cantigas' de Alfonso el Sabio: Imágenes de conflictos distintos," in Manuel Valdés Fernández (ed.), *Simposio Internacional: El legado de Al-Andalus: Al arte andalusí en los reinos de León y Castilla durante la Edad Media* (Valladolid, 2008), 341–64.

³² See Carmen Bernis Madrazo, "Las Cantigas: La vida en el siglo XIII según la representación iconográfica (II). Traje, aderezo, afeites," *Cuadernos de la Alhambra*, 15–17 (1979–81), 89–174, esp. 150.

³³ See Heinz Cecil Roth, "Portraits and caricatures of medieval English Jews," in *Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History* (Philadelphia, 1962), 22–5; Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, I: 114–15 and 127–30; Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History*, trans. John

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As such, they contribute indispensably to the Alfonsine narrative. When in the third panel the boy returns home from church to face his father, his outsized nose has precipitously returned to ordinary dimensions, posing a sharp contrast to his patriarch's distorted profile.³⁴ This visual juxtaposition speaks eloquently of both the child's spiritual transformation and the moral failings of the father, whose bulging eyes next converge almost comically over an enormous nose as he jerkily pokes the boy into the blazing furnace.

The final two scenes of the illustration focus on the townspeople's rescue of the boy from the furnace and their violent reprisal toward the father. In the first, a crowd of men and women lean forward to receive the lad as he is propelled out of the furnace by a regal Virgin; in the second, they use sticks to force the struggling father, his brows now contorted in fear, into the translucent flames. This final scene abandons the more tranquil denouement shown in the St. Petersburg illustration, shifting the focus of the tale from the boy's joyful conversion to the father's transgression and gruesome punishment. This reconfiguration even more strongly counterposes the fates of the savage Jewish father and the innocent Christlike son, while the inventive combination of stereotyped physiognomy with locally familiar signifiers like the hooded cloak and "Muslim" slippers effectively grounds their opposition within the medieval Iberian sphere.

What motivated Alfonso's artists to develop a narrative of such immediacy and violence? Lacking obvious visual parallels, we might turn to the various textual versions of the tale that might have been known to the artists as they worked. The Alfonsine narrative itself would have been the most important of these. Although based on Gautier de Coincy's poem, the *cantiga* shortens and restructures that narrative to suit its more concise musical format.³⁵ It dwells particularly on the boy's pleasure in studying hard, his acceptance by his school friends, and his joyous experience in taking communion with them:

He went into the church where he saw the abbot at the altar giving communion wafers and wine from a beautiful chalice to the youths.

Bowden (London, 1996), 303–40; Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews*, 37–41 and 105–7; Peter Klein, "Jud, dir kuckt der Spitzbub aus dem Gesicht! Traditionen antisemitischer Bildstereotype oder die Physiognomie der 'Juden' als Construct," in Helmut Gold et al. (eds), *Abgestempelt: Judenfeindliche Postkarten* (Heidelberg, 1999), 43–78; and Pamela A. Patton, *Art of Estrangement: Redefining Jews in Reconquest Spain* (College Park, PA, 2012), 67–101.

³⁴ As observed in Pamela A. Patton, "Constructing the inimical Jew in the *Cantigas de Santa María*: Theophilus's magician in text and image," in Mitch Merback (ed.), *Beyond the Yellow Badge: Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval and Early Modern Visual Culture* (Leiden, 2008), 233–56, esp. 239–40. A similar observation has been made by Rodríguez Barral, "Dialéctica texto-imagen," 65, and Klein, "Moros y judíos," 346.

³⁵ On the possible ties between Coincy's work in the composition of the *Cantigas de Santa María*, see Teresa Marullo, "Osservazioni sulle *Cantigas de Alfonso e sui Miracles de Coincy*," *Archivum Romanum* 18 (1934): 495–539; and Rocío Sánchez Ameijeiras, "Imaxes e teoría da imaxe nas *Cantigas de Santa María*," in *As Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Elvira Fidalgo (Vigo, 2002), 246–301.

The little Jew was pleased, for it seemed to him that Holy Mary, whom he saw resplendent on the altar cradling Her Son Immanuel in Her arms, was giving them the sacrament.

When the boy saw this vision, it thrilled him so much that he placed himself among the others to receive his portion. Holy Mary then stretched out Her hand to him and gave him communion, which tasted sweeter than honey.³⁶

These elements find apt expression in the opening scene of the *cantiga* illustration, which shows the boy studying happily among his schoolmates, as well as in the unusual depiction of the lad receiving communion directly from the statue of the Virgin and Child on the altar. On the other hand, the text of the *cantiga* offers little foundation for the illustration's focus on the viciousness of the father's attack on his son and his own grisly demise. It merely reports crisply that:

Because of this great miracle, the Jewess came to believe, and the boy received baptism at once. The father, who had done the evil deed in his madness, was put to death in the same manner that he had tried to kill his son Abel.³⁷

A better understanding of the illustration's final scenes is offered by another Iberian telling of the Jewish Boy tale, that of the Riojan clergyman Gonzalo de Berceo (c. 1198–after 1252). Berceo's vernacular *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* were composed in the mid-thirteenth century in La Rioja and soon gained wide popularity throughout Christian Iberia.³⁸ Berceo's *milagro* reports a similar series of events to those in the Alfonsine *cantiga*, but it plays much more heavily on the father's diabolical character and the violence of his end. Berceo describes him as a "bedeviled man" (*diablado*), a "treacherous dog" (*can traïdor*), and a "mad sinner" (*locco peccador*) who made "evil faces like someone demon-possessed" (*fazié figuras malas como demoniado*) as he stoked the fire in his great furnace. The mother's reaction is nearly as mad: she cries out and claws herself so dramatically that she quickly attracts a crowd.³⁹ The boy's rescue reaches its climax not with the boy's conversion, but when the attribution of his rescue to the Virgin prompts the crowd to turn immediately

³⁶ Kathleen Kulp-Hill, *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the Wise: A Translation of the Cantigas de Santa María* (Tempe, AZ, 2000), 6. For the Galician-Portuguese, see Mettmann, *Cantigas*, 11–14.

³⁷ Kulp-Hill, *Songs of Holy Mary*, 6–7.

³⁸ David A. Flory, "Berceo's *Milagros* and the *Cantigas de Santa María*: The question of intended audience," *Cantigueiros* 8 (1996): 15–28; and Annette Grant Cash, "Holy Mary intervenes for the clergy in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X and in the *Milagros* of Berceo: Observations concerning the implicit audience," *Cantigueiros* 8 (1996): 3–13.

³⁹ For the Castilian, see Gonzalo de Berceo, *Obras completas II: Los milagros de Nuestra Señora*, ed. and trans. Brian Dutton (London, 1971), 125–8. Both here and following, translations are from Gonzalo de Berceo, *Miracles of Our Lady*, trans. Richard Terry Mount and Annette Grant Cash (Lexington, KY, 1997), 77–80.

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to vengeance against the murderous father, whose ritualistic incineration goes on for three bloodthirsty stanzas:

They seized the Jew, the false disloyal one,
the one who had done such great wrong to his little son;
they tied his hands with a strong rope
and they cast him into the great fire.
In the time it would take for someone to count a few pennies,
he was turned into ashes and embers;
they did not say psalms or prayers for his soul,
rather they hurled insults and great curses.
They gave him dreadful rites; they made for him a vile offering:
instead of the *Pater Noster*, they said "as he did so may he receive."
From this *comunicanda* God defend us,
and let such terrible payment be with the devil.⁴⁰

The story ends with praises of the Virgin, without ever mentioning the boy's baptism.⁴¹

Both in its lingering account of the father's demise and its omission of the son's conversion, Berceo offers powerful parallels with the end of the *cantiga* illustration, suggesting the artists' awareness of, and preference for, Berceo's more violent ending.⁴² The artists' willingness to abandon the narrative thread of the Alfonsine text at this point is not surprising in itself: as one of the earliest tales to join the collection, around 1260, the Jewish Boy *cantiga* had been completed more than a decade, possibly two, prior to the production of its illustration—a distance that surely facilitated an independent approach.⁴³ Moreover, their willingness to depart from the original narrative must have been further encouraged by their sensitivity to social factors well beyond the scope of the text. These concerns, centering on the place of Jews in Iberian society, had intensified sharply during the years between the composition of the *cantiga* and its subsequent illustration.

The final decades of the thirteenth century in Castile witnessed an increasingly evident effort on the part of Christian religious and political leaders to reconceptualize social relations between Christians and Jews as the kingdom expanded rapidly into the formerly Muslim lands of southern Iberia.

⁴⁰ Gonzalo de Berceo, *Miracles of Our Lady*, 79.

⁴¹ Francisco Prado correctly observes that the baptism scene may be dispensable here because the boy's emergence from the oven serves effectively to signal his rebirth; see Francisco Prado-Vilar, "Iudeus sacer: life, law, and identity in the 'state of exception' called 'Marian miracle,'" in Herbert Kessler and David Nirenberg, eds., *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism* (Philadelphia, 2011), 115-142, esp. 129.

⁴² The similarity to Berceo's ending has also been noted by Connie S. Scarborough, "Verbalization and visualization in MS T.j.I of the *Cantigas de Santa María*" (PhD dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1983), 38.

⁴³ Patton, "Constructing the inimical Jew," 252.

The successes of the thirteenth-century Reconquest had rendered Iberia's Jews both financially and administratively indispensable. At the same time, ecclesiastical pressures and an increasingly European cultural orientation had begun to harden once-casual attitudes toward the interaction of Christians with the religious minorities with whom they had long shared social space. Like other Iberian rulers, Alfonso X himself began to take more seriously long-ignored papal legislation aimed at restricting social contact between Christians and Jews by imposing distinctive dress, regulating interfaith commerce more tightly, and increasingly restricting the urban spaces in which Jews were permitted to move and live.⁴⁴

The most innovative features of the illustration in the *Cantigas de Santa María* must be understood as responding to precisely this desire to explore and delineate boundaries between those of different faiths. This is expressed most in the adoption of a formulaic physiognomic caricature for the Jewish boy's father and, more variably, for the boy himself. The hooded cloak worn by the Jewish boy performs a similar, but more locally resonant function: such cloaks, worn voluntarily by Iberian Jews for centuries, had begun to figure centrally in current controversies over the imposition of distinguishing dress for Iberian Jews. Spain's Christian kings had for decades ignored or evaded the Fourth Lateran Council regulation of 1215 that Jews wear a badge, hat, or other distinguishing sign when in public;⁴⁵ but in the late thirteenth century, as laws came more frequently to be enforced, the hooded cloak often became the garment of choice.⁴⁶ Together, the Iberian cloak and the imported facial stereotype offered a powerful new idiom by which religious difference could be signaled.

New Castilian concerns about Jewish violence offered another factor that might have shaped the *cantiga* illustration. Fears of such violence against Christian children in particular had expanded significantly in Western Europe since the first claim of ritual murder of a local child was leveled in Norwich in 1144, and copycat claims soon proliferated elsewhere.⁴⁷ By the

⁴⁴ See esp. Jonathan Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier: The Reconquista and the Jewish Community in Medieval Iberia* (Ithaca, NY, 2006); Yom Tov Assis, *The Golden Age of Spanish Jewry: Community and Society in the Crown of Aragon, 1213–1327* (London, 1997).

⁴⁵ In 1219, Ferdinand III received papal permission for exemption from this rule; Robert Chazan (ed.), *Church, State, and Jew in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1980), 179–80. Alfonso X later endorsed the papal requirement in his great law code, the *Siete Partidas*. Persistent complaints of noncompliance, such as those raised by the Cortes of Palencia (1313) and Toro (1371), suggest that it was not regularly enforced. See David Nirenberg, "Sex and segregation: Jews and Christians in medieval Spain," *American Historical Review* 107/4 (2002), 1065–93, esp. 1081, n. 54.

⁴⁶ See Assis, *Golden Age of Spanish Jewry*, 283–85; Rosa María Alcoy i Pedros, "Canvis i oscil·lacions en la imatge pictòrica dels jueus a la Catalunya del segle XIV," in *Actes del primer col·loqui d'història dels jueus a la corona d'Aragó* (Lleida, 1991), 371–92, esp. 373; Enrique Cantera Montenegro, *Aspectos de la vida cotidiana de los judíos en la España medieval* (Madrid, 1998), 132–6; and Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier*, 156–8.

⁴⁷ See Gavin I. Langmuir, "Historiographic Crucifixion," in Gilbert Dahan (ed.), *Les Juifs au regard de l'histoire* (Paris, 1985), 109–27; John M. McCulloch, "Jewish ritual murder:

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end of the twelfth century, similar charges had appeared in France, Germany, and Bohemia, and by the end of the thirteenth, despite a papal interdict, they had tripled in number.⁴⁸ Although such claims never reached the heights in Iberia that they did in northern Europe, Castilians were not unaware of them. The first documented charges of ritual murder in Iberia were recorded in 1294, when the Jewish communities of Zaragoza and Biel were accused separately in the deaths of local children.⁴⁹ Still earlier mention of such claims, if in characteristically skeptical terms, can be found in an oft-quoted passage of Alfonso X's own great law code, *Las Siete Partidas*.⁵⁰ Although this hardly constitutes evidence that such claims had gained local traction, it does suggest that they had been heard even by Castilians who might never directly have encountered them. It is easy to see how such awareness might have shaped the devilish physiognomy and spasmodic gestures that invest the *cantiga's* Jewish father with such malevolence, or the decision to close the narrative with a scene of the crowd's near-cathartic involvement in his grisly execution. The artists' changes to the visual tradition of the Jewish Boy narrative must be recognized as a response to the rapidly transforming social realities within which they lived and worked.

With its long roots and richly layered history, the Jewish Boy narrative offered an ideal prism for such broad-ranging social concerns. From its first incarnation in Byzantium, its central conflict rested on the problems posed by the social permeability so often found in regions where religious communities rub shoulders. In Evagrius' Greek tale, it was the openness of his Christian schoolmates that permitted the Jewish boy to join them in accepting bread from the church; in the Latin version, it was this same lack of boundaries that

William of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth, and the early dissemination of the myth," *Speculum* 72/3 (1997): 698–740. The trajectory of this charge in Spain is more complex; see Patton, *Art of Estrangement*, 62–3.

⁴⁸ Gavin I. Langmuir, "L'absence d'accusation de meurtre rituel a l'ouest du Rhone," in *Juifs et judaïsme de Languedoc, XIIIe siècle-début XIVe siècle*, ed. Marie-Humbert Vicaire and Bernhard Blumenkranz (Toulouse, 1977), 235–49, esp. 235–42; Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven, CT, 1988), 2–3.

⁴⁹ See Fritz [Yitzhak] Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, trans. Louis Schoffman (2 vols, Philadelphia, 1961–66; repr. 1992), II: 6–7. See also Langmuir, "L'absence d'accusation"; Sor Maria Despina, "Las acusaciones de Crimen Ritual en España," *El Olivo* 9 (1979): 48–70. On the Jewish response to such concerns, see Elena Lourie, "A plot which failed? The case of the corpse found in the Jewish call of Barcelona," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 1 (1986): 187–220.

⁵⁰ "And because we heard that in some places the Jews reenacted derisively—and continue to do so—on Good Friday the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, stealing children and putting them on a cross, or forming waxen images and crucifying them when children are unavailable, we order that if we discover from this time forward that such a thing has occurred in any part of our kingdom, and if it can be determined, then all those involved shall be seized, arrested, and brought before the king. And as soon as he has determined the truth of the matter, he shall order the guilty parties to be mercilessly put to death." Dwayne E. Carpenter, *Alfonso X and the Jews: An Edition of and Commentary on Siete Partidas 7.24 "De los judíos"* (Berkeley, CA, 1986), 29.

enabled him to enter the church himself. It was the very accessibility of the liturgy and its substances—an accessibility recognized and then assiduously legislated from the thirteenth century onward—that then motivated him to trespass further by accepting communion. Finally, it was his father's shrewd awareness of the dangers posed by such transgression that drove him to his deadly act.

What Iberianists might call the *convivencia* at the heart of the Jewish Boy narrative—the “living togetherness” that prompted its transgressions, its confrontations, and their resolutions—thus reveals itself not to be particularly Castilian or even particularly Iberian. Instead, it constitutes part of the continually transformative process of cultural contact, conflict, and exchange that drove change throughout the medieval world. The dynamics of this process mattered as much to Evagrius, to Gregory of Tours, and to Gautier de Coincy as they did to Alfonso X or to his artists precisely because they underlay the particular conflicts that mattered most to each. Thus, while the *cantiga* illustration reveals much about what likely will continue to be labeled *convivencia* in medieval Castile, its links to this broader phenomenon should not be forgotten. In its peregrination from Byzantium to Spain, the Jewish Boy tale testifies to this, just as it testifies more broadly to the power of a good story. Transcending language, genre, and format, it offered each of its medieval recipients a choice lens through which to scrutinize the peculiarities of his or her own world.