THE LOST MIRROR

JEWS AND *CONVERSOS* IN MEDIEVAL SPAIN

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Barcelona, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya
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2023

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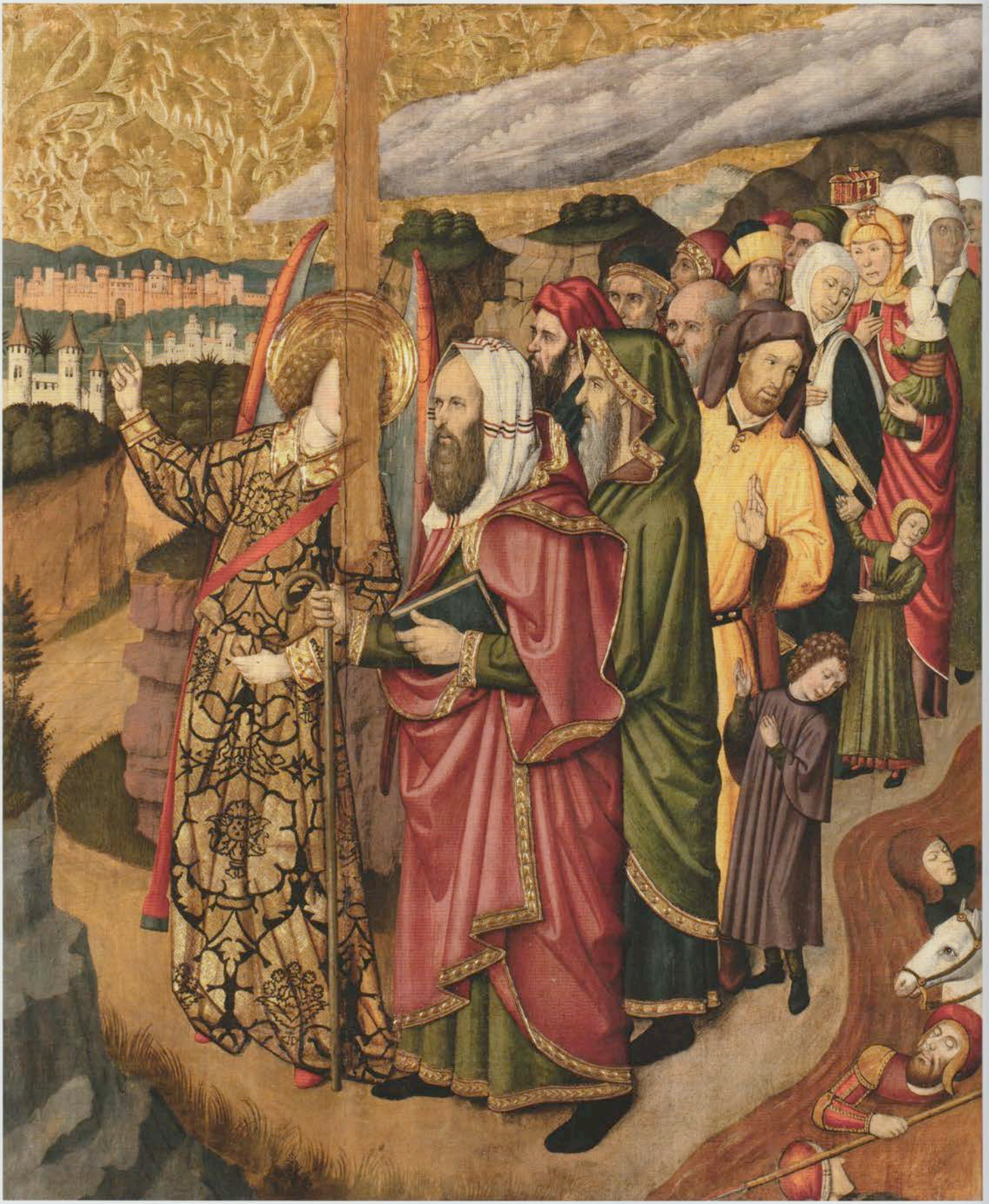
THEMES EXPLORED IN THE EXHIBITION



Pamela A. Patton

SIGN, SOMA, STEREOTYPE: WAYS OF SEEING JEWS

The representation of Jews and Judaism in medieval Iberia may fairly be described as 'kaleidoscopic'. From idealised figures nearly indistinguishable from medieval images of Christians to stereotyped, monstrous, and even racist images, such portrayals varied as widely as did the identities, mentalities, and resources of their makers and viewers. In this respect, they reflect how frequently medieval artists transformed images into a visual rhetoric less concerned with recording the appearance of people and things than with situating their subjects clearly within a preferred world view.[1] The 'kaleidoscope of portraits' in the present exhibition, which emphasises works made for both Jews and Christians in the later Middle Ages – a time of particular instability in the two communities' relationship – provides an unparalleled opportunity to consider how Jews were seen, as well as how they saw themselves, within medieval Iberian society.

To understand these images requires appreciating how routinely medieval artists relied upon widely recognisable visual conventions that could function on more than one level, by both identifying individual subjects and signalling their place within an idealised social or soteriological hierarchy. Such conventions extended well beyond the religious stereotypes to be treated in this essay; they also included such generic types as the king, the nun, or the beggar as well as thoroughly fantastical ones, such as the foreigners and monsters that many medieval people imagined at the margins of the known world. Employing these conventions offered the advantage of rendering their subjects identifiable to a moderately experienced viewer while offering guidance in parsing their value and relationships: the authority of the king was manifested in his frontality, regal costume, and idealised features; the humility of the beggar in tattered clothing and an abject posture; the alterity of the foreigner in odd garb and uncanny features.

Such a semiotically-driven approach guided image-making throughout medieval western Europe, but in medieval Iberia it would prove essential to representing Jews, whose actual counterparts lived among Christians and Muslims under a wide range of circumstances that required artists to calibrate their iconography with care.[2] The resultant images must be read with attention to both their context (private or public? elite or popular? ritual, theological, literary, or polemical?) and their intended viewers (Christian or Jewish? lay or religious? gendered or general? educated or naïve?).[3] The present text bears this in mind in examining the signifier arguably most central to medieval representations of Jews – the soma, or body, itself – and asks how its presentation, adaptation, and distortion responded to the mentalities and experiences of its various viewing communities.

Jaume Huguet
Exodus from Egypt, in the retable *Saint Bernardino of Siena and the Guardian Angel*, 1462–75
Oil on panel, 139 × 103 cm
Barcelona, Museo de la S. I. Catedral Basílica, 2522687/2522688

Representing Jews for Jewish Eyes

The most subtle and positive claims that medieval images made about Jews appear, unsurprisingly, in works made by and for the Jews themselves. Many of these are manuscripts produced in Spain's northern, Christian-ruled kingdoms, and include haggadot, or manuscripts for Passover, which sometimes featured opulent prefatory biblical cycles along with marginal decoration, as well as secular texts with more modest ornament. Such imagery was not always credited to Jewish artists. Because the format and decoration of works such as the *Golden Haggadah* [fig. 35] and the illuminated manuscript of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* now known as the *Copenhagen Maimonides* [fig. 36] often resemble those of manuscripts made for Christians, but also because medieval Jews were once thought to have been more conservative about the making of images than is now recognised, it was once common to assume that the illumination of Hebrew manuscripts was carried out by Christian painters. However, more recent scholarship has highlighted the distinctively Jewish character of the iconography in many Hebrew manuscripts, noting that even when Jewish and Christian miniatures shared an iconographic vocabulary, those with a Jewish audience were often adapted to a Jewish frame of reference.[4] A vivid example appears in the *Golden Haggadah* (fol. 4v) where in the binding of Isaac (Gen 22:1–13) the artist has eliminated details thought by Christians to foreshadow New Testament events, such as the cross-shaped bundle of sticks Isaac bears in some Christian variants of the scene [fig. 35].[5]

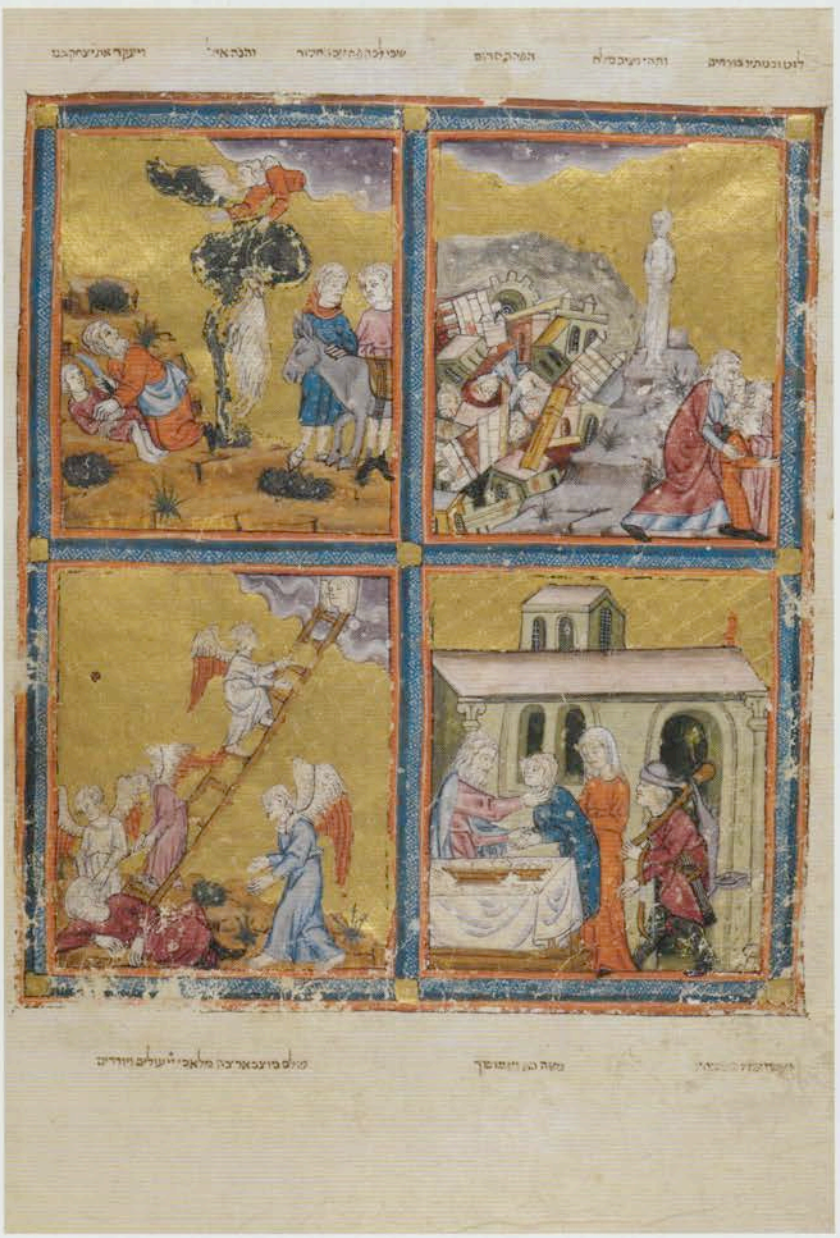


fig. 35

'The Binding of Isaac' and other Genesis scenes in the *Golden Haggadah*, 1320–30
Illuminated parchment, 245 × 200 mm
London, British Library, Add ms. 27210, fol. 4v

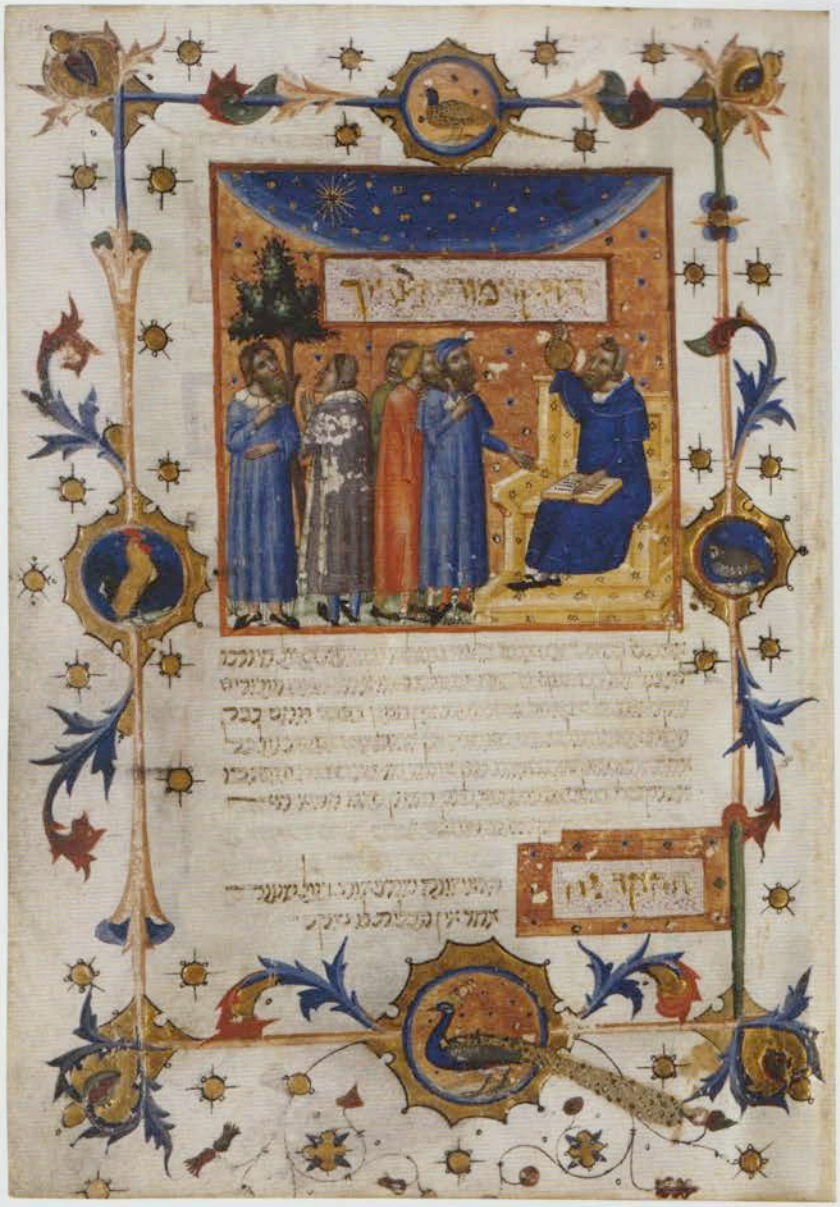


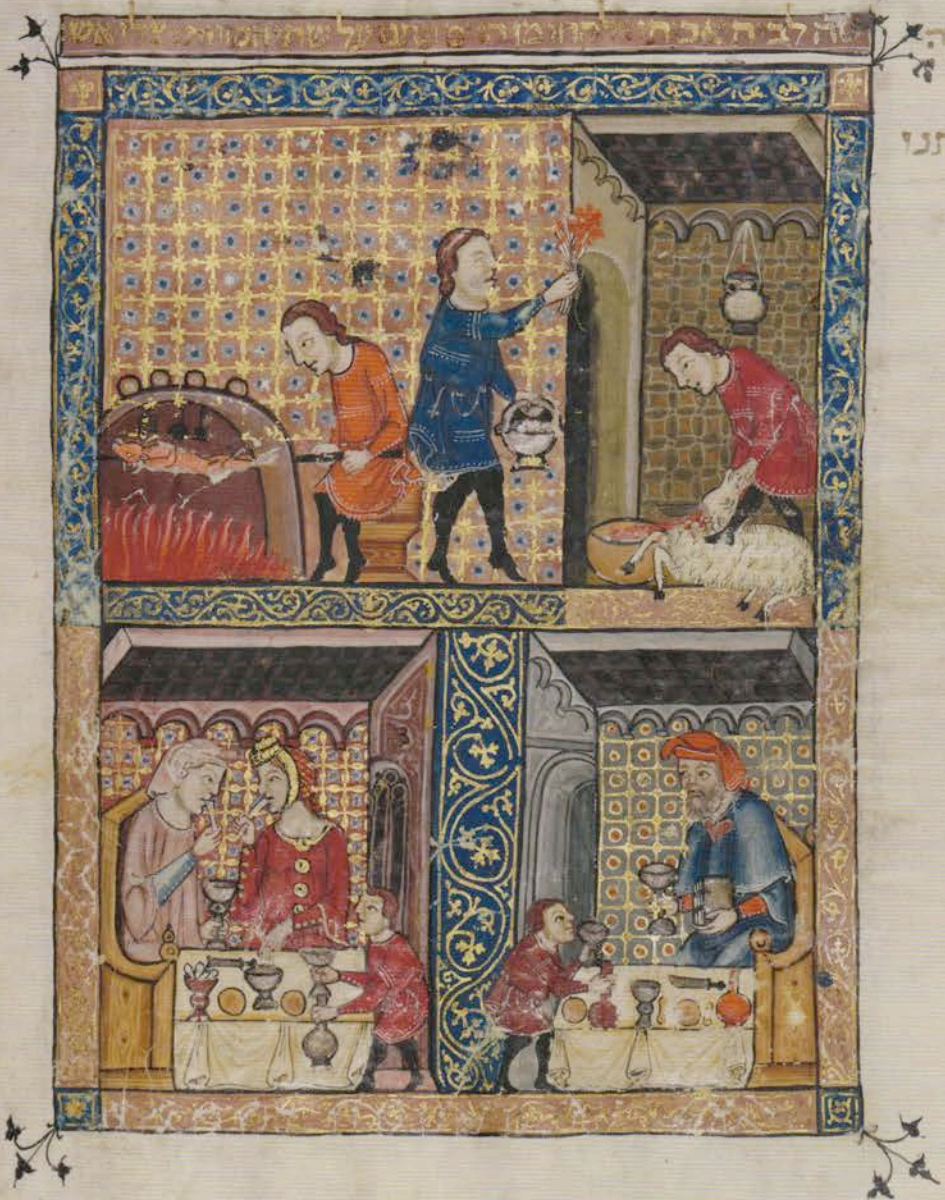
fig. 36

Teaching scene in Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, illuminated by Ferrer Bassa, 1348
Illuminated parchment, 194 × 133 mm
Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Cod. Heb. 37, fol. 114r

Omitting this element and its Christological implications rendered the image appropriate for use in a Jewish book, and it also speaks powerfully to the intervention of its Jewish patron and perhaps also a Jewish artist.

Jewish self-renderings in these works suggest similar self-awareness. As we shall see, imagery made for medieval Christian viewers often identified Jewish figures using exaggerated facial features, such as a large nose or unkempt beard, that marked them as social and religious outsiders and often bore negative connotations. Jewish viewers would have found such signs both offensive and nonsensical; instead, works produced for their eyes present Jews with the same idealised physiognomic and somatic features used in Christian self-representations. The delicate countenances and fashionable hairstyles of the Jewish protagonists in the *Golden Haggadah* resemble those of Christian figures in courtly Parisian manuscripts of the same era, while in the *Copenhagen Maimonides*, which was illuminated in a style consistent with that of the Christian painter Ferrer Bassa (c. 1285–1348),[6] the philosopher and physician Maimonides and his Jewish listeners are presented as well-dressed scholars with generic oval faces and tidy beards much like those throughout Bassa's oeuvre [fig. 36].

Rather than relying on the body to signal identity, Jewish artists sometimes turned to identifiers drawn from daily life, such as costume. In the fourteenth-century *Rylands Haggadah*, a female celebrant wears a distinctive headdress, comprised of a veil with a chinstrap and round ornament that



rests at the centre of the forehead, which reflects a type of headwear worn at this time by Jewish women in the Crown of Aragon [fig. 37], one apparently so well known that, as we shall see, it also was represented in works made for Christians.[7]

Such a strategy is not surprising. Although a few scholars in the past have asserted that Jewish artists and viewers accepted as normative the alienating stereotypes crafted for them by Christian artists,[8] the avoidance of such iconography in Jewish-made art shows a keen awareness of its aims. One might argue that in adopting the same somatic conventions as those that Christians used in their own self-representations, Jews purposely positioned themselves and their community on a comparable social and religious footing. The same might be claimed of the Jewish adoption of secular ornament used in Christian manuscripts, such as the musicians in bicolour tunics beneath a representation of the *matzah* in the *Barcelona Haggadah* [fig. 51]. Reminiscent of the jongleurs and acrobats found in the margins of Christian prayer books, these figures evoke a generic courtly culture to which the book's prosperous Jewish owner perhaps aspired, or even belonged.[9]

fig. 37

Passover scenes in the *Rylands Haggadah*, 1335–40
Illuminated parchment, 280 × 230 mm
Manchester, The John Rylands Research Institute and Library, Hebrew ms. 6, fol. 19v

Christians Representing Jews

Images of Jews made for Christian viewers pose a contrast to those made for Jewish eyes. Following trends developed in northern Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Iberian Christian artists adopted a new vocabulary of visual signs that frequently – although not inevitably – marked Jewish figures as alien, inferior, and even dangerous to those of the majority faith. This occurred at a moment when, as other essays in this catalogue discuss, the Jewish-Christian relationship in Iberia was strained by a destructive combination of factors. These included the emergence of new polemics concerning the place of Jews within Christian doctrine and salvation history; legal changes that curtailed Jewish social and economic status; and, following massive annexations of Muslim-held lands by Castile-Leon, the Crown of Aragon, and Portugal in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a restructured vision of the place of non-Christian subjects in these newly expanded realms.

Much of the new iconography originated elsewhere. Both England, where anti-Jewish rhetoric and violence culminated in the expulsion of all Jews by 1290, and Capetian-ruled France, which by the mid-thirteenth century had become a vector for anti-Judaic polemic and disputation, proved especially powerful sources of visual tropes that disparaged Jews for their unfamiliar religious practices, their resistance to Christian doctrine, and their engagement in the money trade. Meanwhile, ecclesiastical networks throughout northern Europe served as conduits for popular anti-Jewish fantasies such as the blood libel (the claim that Jews captured and ritually killed Christian children) and accusations of host desecration.[10] Conveyed via written and oral texts as well as by portable visual media, such tropes easily reached Christian-ruled Iberia, where they began to take root in the thirteenth century.[11]

The new iconography centred on the body. Like the negative somatic signs used in images of other social and religious outsiders, such as Muslims, Indians, Mongols, or even Ethiopians, those used by Christian

artists to represent Jews drew on classical and early medieval ideas that equated bodily difference with foreignness and danger. In Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (completed 77 CE) and the works of medieval writers who followed – among them the Visigothic encyclopaedist Isidore of Seville – those who lived in foreign places were ascribed both real and imagined bodily divergences that found visual expression in formulae such as the so-called 'Monstrous Races'.[12] Whether they be the single foot of the Sciapod, the canine heads of Cynocephali, or the very white or very dark skin of Scandinavians and Africans, such bodily differences were often presented by these authors as also reflecting undesirable inner traits such as aggression, idolatry, greed, or cowardice.[13]

The generic equation of physical difference with moral inferiority transferred readily to medieval Christian representations of Jews, resulting in some of the most powerful and disturbing images in this exhibition. Many of them feature a widely repeated physiognomic stereotype with an exaggeratedly large nose, oversized eyes, a grimacing expression, and a long or untamed beard. Such signs had already been associated by medieval encyclopaedists and others with specific character traits: for example, a large nose with greed, aggression, or spiritual inadequacy and unkempt hair with bestiality.[14] As such, they offered an effective strategy for marking Jews not just as Jews, but as social and spiritual inferiors in a Christian-centred hierarchy. Their adoption in the Christian-ruled kingdoms, where Jewish subjects had lived for centuries among Christians from whom they likely looked little different, proved crucial to the formation of an iconography that reflected the growing precarity of Jewish status there.

The stereotype becomes central to several illustrations in the *Cantigas de Santa María*, specifically in some of the ones included in the two densely illustrated manuscripts produced for King Alfonso X of Castile and Leon in the years around 1280 kept in El Escorial and Florence.[15] This corpus of over four hundred Marian miracle songs, many drawn from Latin and vernacular collections originating north of the Pyrenees, features numerous stories of the Virgin's correction or punishment of Jewish or Muslim malefactors. Fourteen narratives feature significant Jewish characters, nearly all antagonists, whose enmity is suggested by the large noses, wide eyes, and unkempt, curling black beards that distinguish them sharply from the blond, small-featured Christians with whom they interact.[16] The stereotype is here exclusive to masculine figures, while Jewish women consistently display the same small, generic features as their Christian counterparts. Whether this was because women were perceived as more receptive to social control or because the conversion of the mother brought with it the strategic advantage

fig. 38

Caricature of Salomó Vidal on the cover of a *liber iudeorum*, 1334–40
Ink on parchment, 310 × 205 mm
Vic, Arxiu i Biblioteca Episcopal de Vic, Cúria Fumada, ABEV, ACF-4603

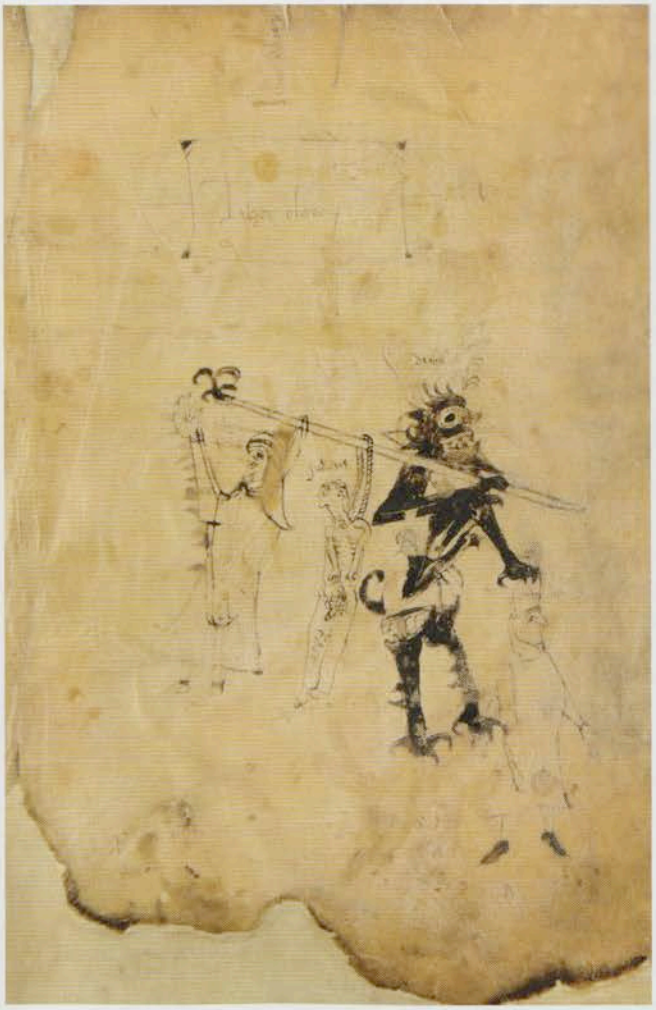


fig. 39

Jew bearing demon on the cover of a *liber iudeorum* of Cardona, 15th century
Ink on parchment, 320 × 240 mm
Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, Archivo de la Bailía de Cardona, B-VI-3

of converting her children, it underscores the more radical threat perceived in their male counterparts.[17]

Those threats are vividly suggested in Cantiga 12, a story widely circulated in medieval Europe but set in the city of Toledo [fig. 76]. It recounts that upon hearing the Virgin Mary's voice call out that the Jews were attacking her son, a medieval Christian congregation rushed to the Jewish quarter to discover a group of Jewish men abusing a waxen figure on a cross. In the illustration, the attackers' distorted features, coiling hair, and wild grimaces give them a maddened, aggressive aspect consistent with both the violence of the attack and their implicit enmity toward Christ, for which they are slaughtered in the final scene.

Jewish stereotypes are central to Cantiga 4, another tale of European origin this time set in the French city of Bourges [fig. 84]. It tells how a young Jewish boy who attended school with Christian friends innocently took communion when he accompanied them to church. When the boy reported his act to his parents, his father seized him and threw him into an oven where, the tale recounts, the Virgin Mary protected him from the flames until the townspeople rescued him and consigned the Jewish father to the flames instead. The illustration of this story endows the father with stereotyped features much like those in Cantiga 12, but while the son initially displays a similarly large nose, after communion this organ appears smaller and more delicate, like those of his Christian peers. Whether this subtle physiognomic alteration was deliberate is uncertain, but its effect is clear: highlighting the boy's spiritual transformation in the face of his father's rage, it attests to the power of stereotype to signal moral status and social value.[18]

Related physiognomic manipulations appear among the scribal caricatures sometimes found in notarial books known as *libri iudeorum*, which were used by Christian administrators to record Jewish financial dealings in the Crown of Aragon. One such drawing, on a book recording the loans of the powerful creditor Salomó Vidal in Vic between 1334 and 1340, portrays the moneylender adorned with a fantastical headdress above a distorted visage with an enormous nose, gaping mouth, and eyes askew [fig. 38]. The monstrousness of this image might be explained partly by the informality of the drawing, likely the spontaneous product of a notary with limited artistic training. Yet it also implies the resentment probably engendered by its subject, a prominent moneylender who, along with his brothers Juçef and Astruch, dominated the financial markets of Vic from the 1330s until his death in 1349.[19]

Jewish involvement in moneylending during this period was only partly a matter of choice. Throughout western Europe, beginning in the central Middle Ages, Jews

began to be excluded from landownership as well as other occupations, many of which began to require membership in Christian guilds. Meanwhile, increased enforcement of canon laws against Christians lending at interest to others of their own faith led authorities to encourage Jews into the money trade to keep capital flowing.[20] In Iberia as elsewhere, their predominance in lending gave some Jews significant economic power over their Christian debtors while also earning them the favour of the king, to whom the Jews as royal vassals owed a percentage of their profits.[21] The image of Salomó, like the even more vitriolic depiction of three Jews carried off by a grinning black devil on the cover of a *liber iudeorum* from Cardona that is also in this exhibition [fig. 39], suggests the profound hostility these relationships could provoke.

Not all images of Jews in Christian-made art were negative: some, primarily those representing the Israelites who formed part of Christianity's own biblical history, were conceived more favourably.[22] These included Old Testament figures, such as Abraham and Moses, whose lives were viewed by Christians as prefiguring New Testament events, as well as certain New Testament Jews, such as Joseph the husband of Mary or Joseph of Arimathea, who played positive roles in the Christian story. In portraying such personages, artists avoided the aggressive stereotypes they might have chosen in other contexts, opting for relatively neutral signs that could emphasise each figure's role in Christian narratives without entirely relinquishing an emphasis on Jewish difference.

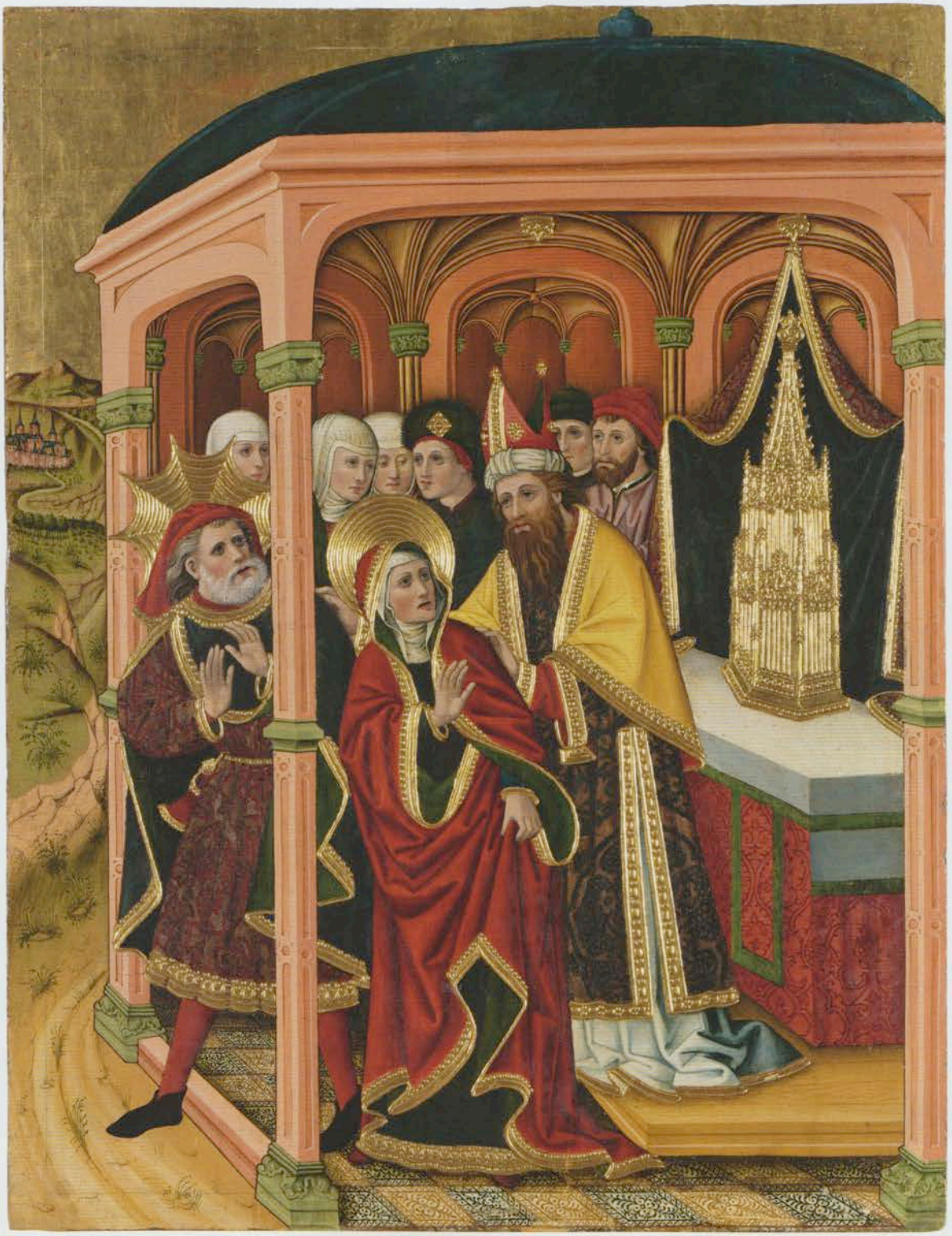
One such sign was the polygonal halo used especially in the late medieval Crown of Aragon to differentiate 'positive' Jewish figures from Christian ones, for whom circular halos were the norm.[23] In this exhibition, the panel of Moses on Mount Sinai by Pere Vall (active c. 1400–c. 1422) uses a hexagonal halo to signal the holiness of the prophet Moses [fig. 3], whose salvation of the Israelites from Egypt was seen as prefiguring Christ's redemption of humanity, while distinguishing him from the faithless Israelites who chose to worship a golden calf in his absence and lack halos altogether. A more complex hierarchy appears in the panel of the *Expulsion of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne from the Temple* [fig. 40] executed by Nicolás (doc. 1446–1490) and Martín Zahortiga, in which Joachim wears an eight-pointed halo like that of other biblical patriarchs but his wife Anna, who according to doctrine would be made an immaculate vessel for Mary the mother of Jesus, has earned a round one like that of Christians.

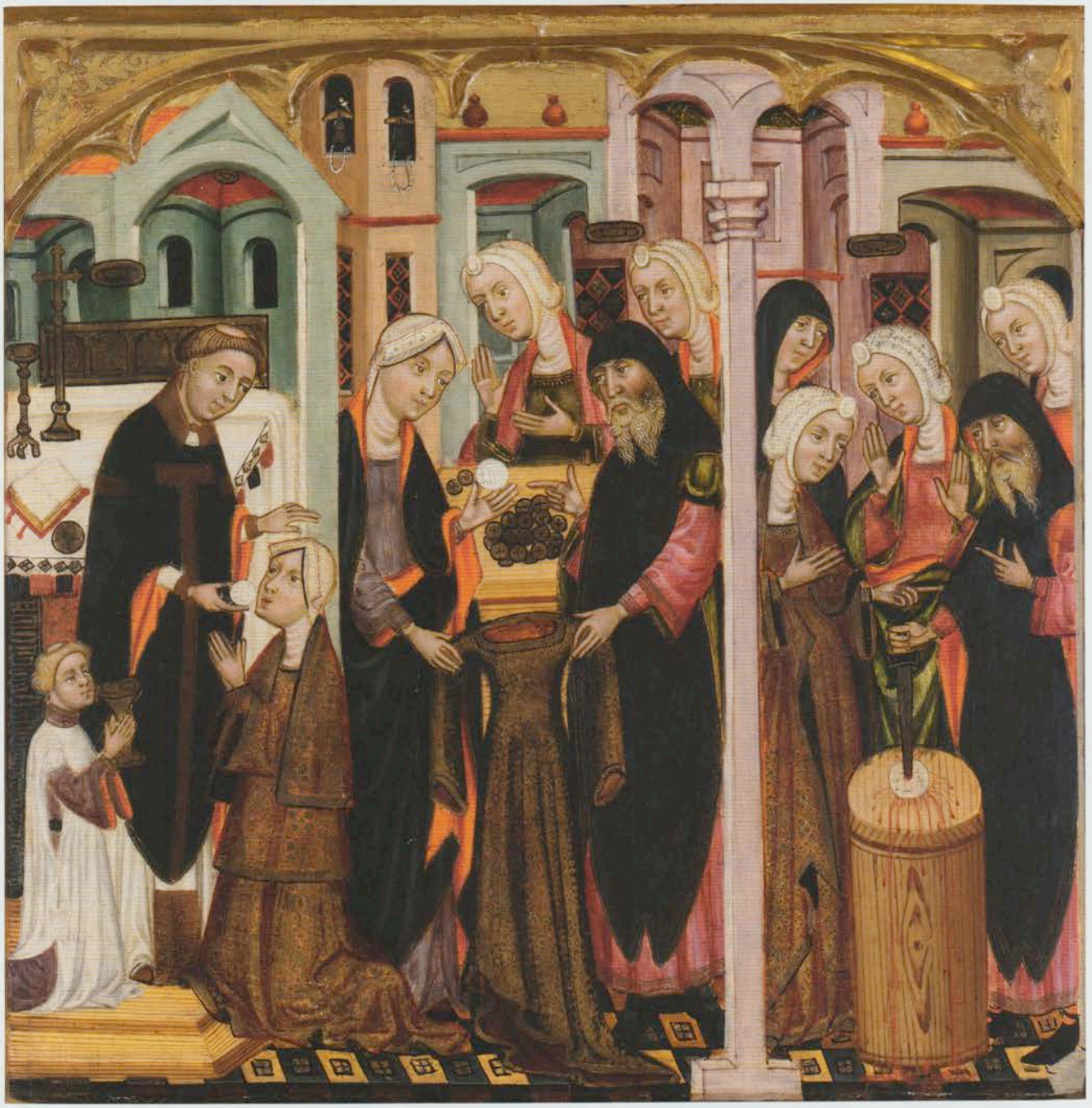
Costume offered a more variable marker of Jewish identity. In much of western Europe, the most common Jewish sign was a pointed hat, a choice consistent with the medieval habit of using formulaic headgear, such as crowns, helmets, wimples, turbans, or pilgrim's hats, to identify people of various types and occupations. There is little evidence that the pointed hat imitated actual Jewish attire: a descendant of the gently peaked Phrygian cap often used in Roman and late Antique art to denote foreign peoples especially from Central and West Asia, it served primarily to indicate its wearer's alien status, a concept that dovetailed neatly with the medieval Christian view of Jews as cultural outsiders.[24]

The popularity of the Jew's hat in the later Middle Ages ran in parallel with the stipulation made at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 that actual Jews and Muslims wear an identifying sign in public. The regulation was necessary, according to Pope

fig. 40

Nicolás and Martín Zahortiga
Expulsion of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne from the Temple, in the retable of Santa María de Borja, 1465–77
Oil on panel, 130 × 98 cm
Borja, Museo de la Colegiata de Santa María





Innocent III, because in places where these groups did not dress differently from Christians 'no differences are noticeable'.[25] The Lateran requirement was interpreted variably across western Europe, and it met with considerable resistance in Spain's Christian-ruled kingdoms, where many Jews petitioned for, and for a time received, exemption from it. By the fourteenth century, when the requirement began to be imposed more consistently in the Iberian Peninsula, the most common obligatory dress was a dark-coloured, hooded mantle or a red or yellow badge (*rotulus*) worn on the shoulder.[26] It was not long before these elements also found their way into Iberian works of art, where they coexisted with but eventually replaced more abstract signs such as the pointed hat. In panel paintings such as the retable and frontal produced by Guillem Seguer (d. 1371) for the convent of Vallbona de les Monges [figs. 71 and 73], Jewish figures who are featured repeatedly as attackers of the Eucharist wear dark, hooded garments consistent with those stipulated in Aragonese legislation, and that resemble similar attire represented in Jewish-made examples of the same period, such as the *Sarajevo Haggadah*.[27]

Both the mantle and the *rotulus* appear in the fourteenth-century compilation of legal privileges known as the *Llibre verd de Barcelona*.[28] Here, introducing a section of laws concerning moneylending, an initial I is decorated with a tiny Jewish figure wearing a blue hooded cloak, affixed to which is a faint red badge. More unusual are the fine white strings that fall from beneath the figure's hood. These might be meant to represent the specially knotted fringes (*tzitzit*) attached to the corners of the shawl (*tallit*) worn by Jewish men. As required by the Torah (Num 15:37–41 and Deut 22:12), *tzitzit* were to be attached to the four corners of one's garment, usually the *tallit*, as a reminder to keep the commandments.

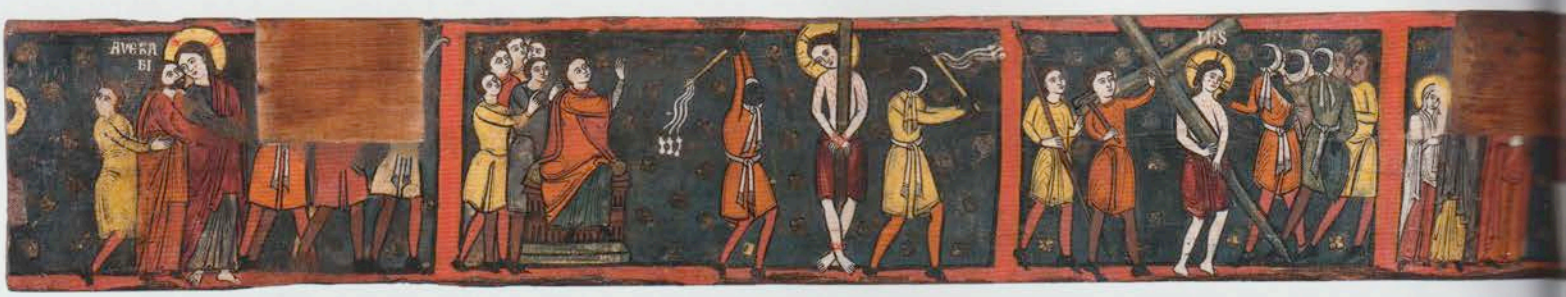
Although in the Ashkenazi Jewish traditions of northern and central Europe the *tallit* had come to be worn exclusively for prayer by the twelfth century, on the Iberian Peninsula it continued to be worn in non-ritual contexts as well.[29] This more widespread use might have facilitated Christians' recognition of *tzitzit* as a distinctively Jewish item of dress, prompting their inclusion in the *Llibre verd* image. A similar explanation may apply to the portrayal by Jaume Huguet (c. 1412–1492), in the retable *of Saint Bernardino de Siena and the Guardian Angel*, of Moses with his head draped in a striped garment that might have been meant to represent a *tallit* as he leads the Israelites across the Red Sea [see p. 94].[30]

Another Jewish costume detail often found in Christian works is the distinctive women's headdress, featuring a veil bound by a chinstrap with a round ornament at the forehead, that was noted earlier in the *Golden* and *Rylands* haggadot. White veils of this type are worn, for example, by the Jewish women in the retable of 1370–80 for Villahermosa del Río attributed to Llorenç Saragossà (c. 1335–c. 1406) [fig. 41][31] and by a midwife attending the birth of John the Baptist by Joan Martorell in a retable of 1435–45 [cover image]. The coexistence of such locally inspired iconography with more abstract conventions is among the features that make the medieval Iberian tradition so distinctive.

Also distinctive are those images that visually conflate Jews with the Muslims who lived alongside them as either subjects or slaves in Iberia's Christian-ruled kingdoms. Such images may strike one as startling in lands where Christians, having long shared space with both Muslims and Jews, must have been among the few Europeans with a reliable sense of the differences between them. Yet accuracy was not the point of such images. The kingdoms' sweeping annexation of Muslim-ruled lands in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the subjugation of Granada as a Castilian tributary, and the subsequent drive to convert both Jews and Muslims throughout Christian-held realms encouraged newly empowered Christians to define themselves in collective opposition to the subjugated faith groups. This impulse can be traced in verbal rhetoric, such as the writings of the thirteenth-century Dominican theologist Ramon Martí, that paired Jews with Muslims as tandem targets of disputation and conversion; in the anti-Jewish violence that sometimes accompanied the capture of a Muslim-ruled city;

fig. 41

Llorenç Saragossà (?)
Detail of the *Retable of the Eucharist*, c. 1370–80
Tempera on panel, 255 × 234 cm (overall)
Villahermosa del Río (Castellón), Iglesia parroquial de la Natividad de la Virgen María



figs. 42 and 43

Painted beam with Passion scenes (overall view and detail of the Flagellation), c. 1192–1220
Tempera on panel, 20 × 233.5 cm
Barcelona, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, MNAC 15833

and in idiosyncratic images that presented Muslims and Jews as paired or even interchangeable as opponents of Christians and their faith.[32]

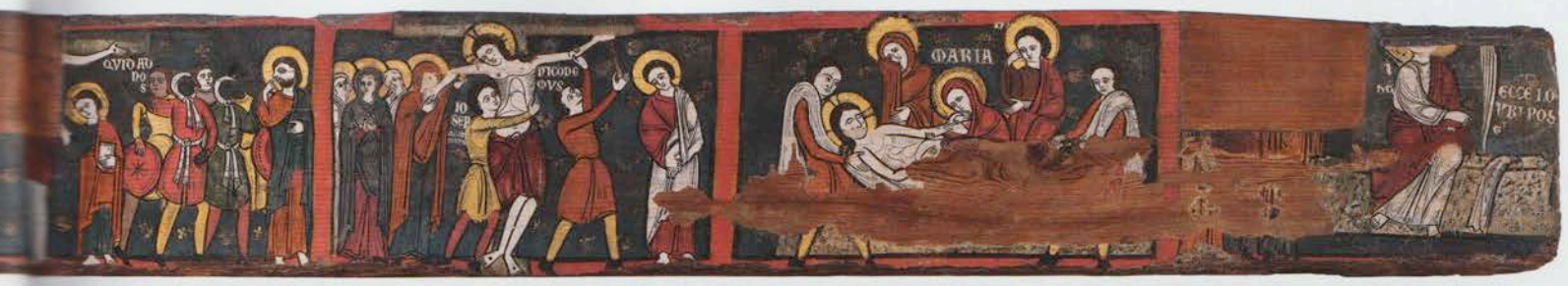
A remarkable exemplar of this last practice is a late twelfth or early thirteenth-century wooden beam painted with scenes of the Passion, in which both the Roman tormentors of Christ and the Jewish priests and pharisees who conspired with Judas to arrest him are depicted with the tasselled head wraps, round shields, dark skin, and curly hair often used by non-Muslim Iberian artists to represent Muslim figures [figs. 42 and 43]. Despite the fundamental anachronism of such details in a biblical story that predated the birth of Islam by centuries, the beam's characterisation of the pharisees in this guise is richly multivalent. Combining specific signifiers of Islamic culture with the dark skin that western European viewers traditionally saw as foreign, they present Christ's biblical Jewish opponents as alien and inimical to both Christ and the medieval Christian viewer.[33]

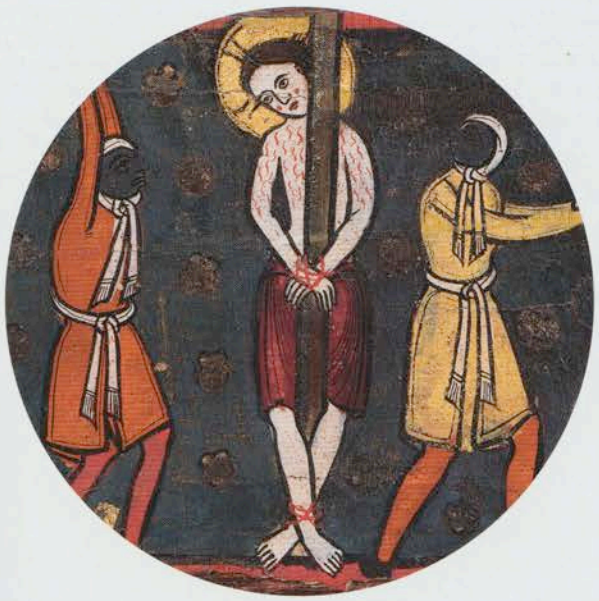
Shared symbolic and amuletic signs such as the Hand of Fatima (*hamsa*) and the Star of David possessed similar multivalency. Although today the hexagram is almost indelibly associated with Judaism, in the Middle Ages both hexagram and *hamsa* were more culturally fluid, serving amuletic purposes for Iberian Christians as well as for Muslims and Jews.[34] Yet in Christian-made art of the later Middle Ages, these signs were associated increasingly and seemingly indiscriminately with both non-Christian groups. Hexagrams appear in both Jewish and Muslim settings in the *Cantigas de Santa María* illustrations, as in the Museo de la Catedral de Valencia painting of the martyrdom of the Muslim convert Saint Bernard of Alzira and his sisters by Antoni Peris (c. 1365–1436), where both symbols adorn shields held by the saint's Muslim persecutors.

The strategic alignment of Jews and Muslims in these Christian-made examples raises a further question not heretofore addressed: how did Iberian Muslims themselves represent the Jews in visual form? Although figural imagery was certainly both permitted and produced in many parts of the medieval Islamic world, that which survives from al-Andalus does not include identifiably Jewish figures. In the absence of more abundant or conclusive evidence from this corner of the Dar al-Islam, it remains difficult to say how Iberian Muslims might have depicted Jews during this era.[35]

Jewish Identity and Race in Medieval Iberia

The significance assigned to the Jewish body by both Jewish and Christian artists inspires a further line of inquiry: to what extent did medieval people conceive of Jewish identity as truly located in the soma? And to what extent did this intersect with evolving medieval concepts of race? The word 'race', of course, is post-medieval: its various linguistic forms emerged in Europe primarily in the fifteenth century, and then in reference to animal breeding; it was not routinely applied to human beings until the eighteenth century.[36] Yet as Geraldine Heng and others have argued, although the word 'race' itself may be post-medieval, the concept behind





it is not: during the Middle Ages, as today, people who shared lineage, geographical origins, religion, or other cultural identities were routinely categorised into discrete, nameable groups.[37] These could be based on a common land of origin, as for Mongols or Indians; a non-European appearance, as for the sub-Saharan Africans whom Europeans often labelled generically 'Ethiopians'; or a common religious practice, as for Muslims and Jews. Such groups were often also described as sharing common physical features, such as body type, skin colour, or eye shape, regardless of whether this was truly the case, because the validity of these descriptions mattered less than did popular belief in them. As with the identifying signs imposed on Jews and Muslims by the Fourth Lateran Council, their value lay in their potential to make imagined racial difference visible.

The Jewish stereotype that emerged in Iberia's Christian-ruled kingdoms over the course of the thirteenth century might be considered in similar light, for it too served not merely to identify, but to give consistent visual form to a human category that had once been defined non-visually. Its formation coincided with other, more concrete strategies aimed both at converting Jews to Christianity and at hardening the social and legal boundaries between members of the two faiths. The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 stood among the first of these initiatives, which over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries would include widespread religious polemicising, public disputation, and state-sponsored missionising, as well as a series of devastating anti-Jewish pogroms that in 1391 swept major cities in both Castile and Aragon. The cumulative result was that by the beginning of the fifteenth century, tens of thousands of 'New Christians', many unwilling, had been brought into the fold.[38]

Yet even mass religious conversion failed to allay Christian concern with Jewish difference. As the new converts began to benefit from, and compete for, the social and legal privileges accorded members of their new faith, their status was increasingly challenged by so-called 'Old Christians' who claimed a longer religious pedigree. The impossibility of drawing clear boundaries between newcomers to the faith and those of longer Christian descent prompted new legislation that was intended to concretise that difference. First promulgated in 1449, such laws required proof of purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*, or the absence

of Jewish or Muslim ancestry) to a degree that barred recently converted Christians from holding certain public offices, working as notaries, and serving as legal witnesses, among other privileges.[39]

Because these new laws relied on a conception of Jewish difference that was based not on sincerity of belief but rather on an immutable point of lineage, they might be understood as both racial and racist, a conclusion that sheds new light on the late medieval predilection for visual stereotype as a means of configuring Jewish identity. Like the *limpieza de sangre* laws, the stereotypes used by Iberian artists presented Jewishness in terms of an inherent difference that was grounded in affiliation with a firmly delimited community. Moreover, by representing in visible, bodily terms the potentially elusive differences among practicing Jews, Jewish converts, and the 'Old Christians' who saw them as a threat, the images reinforced a distinction that was perceived to be critical to the social and legal hierarchies within which these groups interacted. If, as Heng has argued, race can be defined as 'a structural relationship for the articulation and management of human difference', then these images easily fall within its scope.[40]

It is impossible in a text of this length to pursue this question fully. Yet raising it should be sufficient to emphasise the instrumentality of visual images in articulating and promoting notions of identity – in medieval Europe generally, in medieval Iberia more specifically, and for that matter, in the modern world as well. As the works gathered in this exhibition so powerfully demonstrate, the iconographic choices that Christians made in representing Jews, as well as the choices that Jews made in representing themselves, served as essential tools for both communities as they negotiated the shifting relationships and social spaces that they shared throughout the Middle Ages.

1 Recent discussion and bibliography in Patton 2022.
2 Of the extensive scholarship on Jews in European Christian art, especially useful are Strickland 2003 and Lipton 2014; for medieval Iberia see esp. Molina 2002; Molina 2008; Rodríguez Barral 2009; Patton 2012.
3 As emphasised by Molina 2008, 37.
4 Epstein 2015, 38–39.
5 Kogman-Appel 2000, 836–42.
6 Alcoy 1992; Sed-Rajna 1992.
7 Goldman-Ida 1999; Frojmovic 2023, esp. 161, 170–71.
8 For example, Mellinkoff 1999.
9 Decter 2012; Camille 1992, 99–127.
10 Teter 2020; Rubin 1999.
11 Patton 2012, esp. 23–65.
12 Friedman 1981.
13 Strickland 2003, 29–59.
14 Ibid., 77–78; Lipton 2014, 172–75.
15 Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, ms. T-I-1, and Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. b. r. 20. See the annotated manuscripts: Alfonso X el Sabio–Domínguez, Santiago and Chico 1989–91; Alfonso X el Sabio–Fernández and Ruiz 2011.
16 For background and further bibliography see Patton 2012, 135–67.
17 Lipton 2008; Patton 2012, 165–68.
18 Patton 2014.
19 Patton 2012, 59–61
20 Le Goff 1986, 112–32.
21 Barton 2015, esp. 4–10; Soifer Irish 2016, esp. 28–38.
22 Lipton 2014, 131–67.
23 Zucker 1978, esp. 65–68.
24 Lipton 2014, 16–45.
25 Resnick 2018.
26 Ray 2006, 157–64.
27 Sabar 2018, 150–55.
28 Barcelona, Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona, illustrated parchment, ms. Gen. 6-225, fol. 79r.
29 Kogman-Appel 2012, 69–74.
30 Mann 2010, 106.
31 Frojmovic 2023, 173–74.
32 Patton 2012, 103–32.
33 Ibid., 107–19; Freidenreich and Plesch 2020.
34 Patton 2012, 128–31.
35 For eastern Islamic lands see Milstein 2013.
36 Miramon 2009; Gómez-Bravo 2020.
37 Heng 2018; for the Iberian Peninsula see also Nirenberg 2007; Nirenberg 2009.
38 Domínguez Ortiz 1992; recent bibliography in Yisraeli and Israeli 2022.
39 Sicroff 1960, esp. 32–36; Domínguez Ortiz 1992, 137–72.
40 Heng 2018, 19. A complementary argument, which ties Jewish raciality to medieval theological constructs of enslavement and subordination, is offered by Kaplan 2019.