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Jews and Judaism in the Medieval Latin Liturgy

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THE LITURGY OF THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

EDITED BY
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AND
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JEWES AND JUDAISM IN THE MEDIEVAL LATIN LITURGY

LAWRENCE E. FRIZZELL AND J. FRANK HENDERSON

Introduction

AS THE CHRISTIAN FAITH SPREAD from the eastern Mediterranean to the rest of Europe and beyond, its adherents carried two streams of the past into the cultures they encountered. The world of the Hebrew Bible had mingled with Greco-Roman thought and culture in the wake of Alexander's conquests and the advance of the Roman Empire to the East. These influences formed the warp and woof of the fabric that supported the Christian vision of reality. The stamp of Jewish spirituality and practices imbued the Church's worship; biblical moral values, Greek philosophical perspectives, and Roman legislative genius laid the foundations for the social order.

In a far-flung Dispersion [Diaspora], Jews preceded Christians into the major cities of the Roman Empire. The Torah ["instruction," rendered as "Law" in Greek] or five Books of Moses had been translated into Greek in Alexandria during the third century B.C.E. The other parts of the Hebrew Bible, along with additional works, were translated later and became vehicles for the early Church to present the Christian message to the Greek-speaking peoples of the Mediterranean. This translation of the Bible (the Septuagint) was used in worship and became the basis for Christian rendering of God's Word into Latin. Besides providing the key to understanding the literary corpus that became the "New Testament," the Jewish

Scriptures served to prove to the pagans that Christianity possessed venerable credentials. Novelty was spurned by most cultures of that era, so the record of a heritage going back beyond Plato and Homer was crucial to the Church.

Did Jews and Christians stand together in presenting the biblical message to the world? Tragically, their common history was frequently marred by polemics and recriminations. The burdens of past misunderstandings and animosity often joined current frictions and persecutions during the Middle Ages, to foment hatred between the communities. The purpose of this study is to sketch the positive and negative dimensions in the Latin liturgy of the Church's relationship to Judaism and the Jewish people during the period prior to the sixteenth century. Seasons of the liturgical year and particular ceremonies are discussed in some detail to present the impact of the liturgy on the perception of Catholics regarding their Jewish neighbors.

The Jewish Roots of the Christian Liturgy

The long and rich spiritual heritage incorporated into the Hebrew Bible was integrated into the liturgy of the Second Temple period (538 B.C.E.—C.E. 70), first in the Temple of Jerusalem and later in houses of prayer and study known as "synagogues" throughout the land of Judah and in the Dispersion.

From its beginnings in Jerusalem, the Christian community shared the rhythms of prayer that defined Judaism: an annual cycle of feasts and fasts, a weekly day of rest and worship, and daily times of prayer. The synagogue service and its use of the Hebrew Bible provided the basis for the Christian "liturgy of the Word," although the Gospel came to replace the Torah as the most important reading. The command of Jesus to employ bread and wine from the Passover Meal for a Thanksgiving Sacrifice in his memory (Matt. 26:17–19) laid the foundation for the second part of the Eucharistic liturgy, also known as the *Mass*, a term derived from "Ite, missa est," the final formula of commissioning [*mittere, missus*] the faithful to carry God's gift into their daily lives.

Celebrating the sacraments and other prayers of the Church became the occasion for teaching aspects of God's plan for the larger community and its members as a parish or family. Symbols and words drawn from the Jewish Scriptures became part of this pedagogical process. Moreover, the psalms and canticles used in the Temple and synagogue became part of the daily and weekly rhythms of prayer, especially in the "liturgy of the hours" (the Divine Office). In the early Church, these times of prayer were modeled after the Jewish practice of praying in union with the sacrifices being offered in the Temple, but eventually the themes of these "hours" were related to the time of events during the Passion of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The designation of seven "hours" for the Office came later, with reference to Ps. 118 [119]:164¹ ("Seven times a day I praise you").

At an early date both the synagogue morning prayer and the Christian Eucharist used the seraphic hymn of Isa. 6:3 ("Holy, holy, holy . . .") to celebrate the union of the liturgy on earth with its heavenly model. In the Mass this is followed by a Christian application of Ps. 117 [118]:25–26 (used in the Passover meal and in Matt. 21:42) to the return of Christ triumphant, who will lead the created world to the eschatological goal of worship.²

After the "institution narrative" (words of consecration), the canon of the Roman rite Mass includes a prayer linking this offering of the pure, holy, spotless victim with "the offerings of your just servant Abel" (Gen. 4:2–5), the sacrifice of Abraham our Patriarch (Gen. 22:1–14) and "that which Melchisedek, your high priest, offered to you, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim" (Gen. 14:18–20).³ This prayer dates back at least to the

¹Following the Septuagint, St. Jerome's Vulgate numbering of the Psalms is given first, followed by the Hebrew number in brackets.

²"Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus *Sabaoth*." The Hebrew term for "hosts, armies" was retained in the liturgy, even though the Vulgate of St. Jerome translated "dominus Deus exercituum," which means "Lord God of hosts." Evidently the early liturgy preserved the term as it did other Hebrew words, such as *Amen*, *Alleluiah*, and *Hosanna*.

³In the Gelasian Sacramentary (see Appendix 1) the preface for Christmas notes that a victim was always being immolated in praise of God, mentioning the just Abel, Abraham, and the

fourth century and is interesting for several reasons. For our purpose; it is noteworthy that Abraham is designated as "our Patriarch," probably adapting the phrase "Abraham our father" in the New Testament (Luke 1:73, 16:24, 16:30; Rom. 4:1, etc.).

The Liturgical Year

The Eucharistic Liturgy for Sundays, major feasts and saints' days drew heavily upon the Psalms and other parts of the Jewish Scripture for chanted texts that varied with each Mass: these came to be called the Introit, Psalm and Gradual, Offertory, and Communion. The Gallican liturgy, used in the realm of the Franks until the eighth century, included three readings in the Liturgy of the Word: one usually taken from the Jewish Scriptures, the second from the Epistles or the Acts of the Apostles, and the third from the Gospel.⁴ Unfortunately, as the Roman rite became more dominant in western Europe, the practice of reading first from the Jewish Scriptures was lost for Sundays and the ordinary week days except for the seasons of Advent and Lent. These Lenten passages were selected for their Messianic implications, pointing for the Christian community to the Incarnation of Jesus and to the Paschal Mystery of his death and resurrection. The very term *Pascha* [Aramaic for the Hebrew word *Pesach* or "Passover"] shows that the Church interpreted the culminating work of Jesus in relation to the Exodus and its symbols. Mystically, the deliverance of the Hebrew people from Egyptian servitude by the blood of the lamb points to the rescue of the Church from diabolical servitude by the Passion of Christ.⁵

priest Melchisedek. The prayer then remarks that Christ, the true lamb and eternal priest, fulfilled these figures or types. See Bibliography at end of this chapter for editions of all the sacramentaries cited.

⁴Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origin and Development*, 2 vols. (New York, 1951), 1:47.

⁵Compare this reflection of a very influential medieval liturgical commentary by William

1. Ember Days (*Quattuor tempora*, "the four seasons")

The practice of fasting on Wednesday and Friday is very ancient [*Didache*, Teaching of the Twelve Apostles 8:1], distinct from the Jewish tradition of fasting on Monday and Thursday. The Bridegroom was taken away on Friday (Mark 2:20), so this was an especially appropriate day for Christians to do penance. According to later sources, Pope St. Callistus (217–22) added a fast on Saturday for the "ember days" at the time of the grain harvest (June), the wine harvest (September), and the pressing of oil (December). These times were said to fulfill a prophetic text (Zech. 8:19 or Joel 2:19). Was this an adaptation of Jewish custom to the Italian agricultural cycle or do we have a Christian interpretation applied to pagan fasts related to the harvests? Pope St. Leo (440–61) urged that the fast of the tenth month (December) not be neglected "because its observance is taken from the Old Law" (Zech. 8:19). Perhaps because Zechariah mentioned *four* fasts, another set of ember days was added in Lent (March).

Three of the series of ember days were shaped by the important liturgical seasons—Advent, Lent, and Pentecost, respectively. Thus, on the Ember Wednesday in Advent, Isa. 2:1–5 and 7:10–15 were proclaimed; on the Friday, Isa. 11:1–5; and on the Saturday, Isa. 19:20–22, 35:1–7, 40:9–11, 42:1–9, 45:1–8, and (in some manuscripts) Dan. 3:47–51, followed by part of the hymn of the three youths (Dan. 3:52–56). The prophet Isaiah was the source of many passages in the Mass and Divine Office for Advent because, for the pious Christian, they clearly point to Jesus. The readings for the Lenten ember days are listed for the first week of Lent (Appendix 2). The

Durand with that of the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Non-Christian Religions: "... the salvation of the Church is prefigured mystically in the exodus of God's chosen people from the land of bondage" (*Nostra Aetate* #4). Throughout, I will quote Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* (Naples, 1859) by book, chapter, and number. See Timothy Thibodeau, "William Durand: Compiler Rationale," *Ecclesia Orans* 9 (1992): 97–113 and his "Enigmata Figurarum: Biblical Exegesis and Liturgical Exposition in Durand's Rationale," *Harvard Theological Review* 86 (1993): 65–79.

ember days of the Pentecost season had a selection from Joel (3:23–24, 26–27) on Friday; on Saturday the readings were Joel 2: 28–32, Lev. 23:9–11, 15–17, 21, Deut. 26:1–3, 7–11, Lev. 26:2–12, and Dan. 3:47–51.

The September ember days had very evocative readings, especially when we recall that this is approximately the time of the Jewish high holy days. The readings from the Jewish Scriptures for Ember Wednesday were Amos 9:13–15 (on the abundance of harvest in Messianic days) and 2 Esdras (Nehemiah) 8:1–10, which speaks of the holy day in the seventh month. Hos. 14:2–10 (on the transforming power of divine forgiveness) was read on Ember Friday, and on the Saturday the selections were Lev. 23:26–32 (concerning the day of Atonement), 23:39–43 (on the feast of booths), Mic. 7:14–20, Zech. 8:1–2, 14–19 (on the four fasts), and Daniel 3, followed by Heb. 9:2–12, which describes the Temple and its liturgy in relation to the priestly work of Jesus. Thus, both the solemn fast of Yom Kippur and the autumnal eight-day feast were background for Christian reflection on the need for penance and for gratitude to God the provider.⁶

Ember Saturdays were the customary context for ordination to minor and major orders in the medieval Church. Berno of Reichenau (d. 1048) explained that lessons from the Jewish Scriptures reminded the ordinands that they should know the Law and the Prophets, which are recapitulated in the Gospel. This benign teaching was supplemented by Berno's explanation for the choice of the ember days: Wednesday was the day when the Jews plotted to kill Christ; on Friday they carried the plan into effect; on Saturday the Apostles mourned his death.⁷

2. The Great Antiphons (17–23 December)

The climax of Vespers (evening prayer) is the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55), the canticle of Mary, which is chanted by the standing community

⁶See Jean Daniélou, "Les Quatre-Temps de septembre et la fête des Tabernacles," *La Maison-Dieu* 46 (1956): 114–36.

⁷*Libellus de quibusdam rebus and missae officium pertinentibus*, PL 142: 1073–98.

as the altar is incensed. The anticipation of Christmas during the seven days before the Vigil (24 December) is celebrated by a special series of antiphons for the Magnificat. Each begins with the vocative interjection "O" followed by a title of the Messiah drawn from the Jewish scriptures. In reverse order the initials of the titles spell an acrostic ERO CRAS ["I shall be here tomorrow!"]. The series goes back at least to the eighth century and shows how the piety of the Latin Church drew upon the prophets and wisdom writers of ancient Israel, moving from creation through the history of Israel. The second title is the Hebrew term "Adonai" [Lord], known to these Christians from Jerome's Vulgate for the hymn of Judith (at 16:16). Appropriately, this substitute for the Tetragrammaton [the four letter Name YHWH revealed to Moses in Exod. 3:14–15] is used in reference to the burning bush and the gift of the Torah [*Lex*] at Mount Sinai. Themes about the Davidic Messiah from Isaiah are woven into the third and fourth antiphons, celebrating the titles Root of Jesse and Key of David. The urgent need of deliverance for the Gentiles is clear in several antiphons. The hope for the union of Jew and Gentile is expressed in the second last prayer. "O King and desire of all nations (Hag. 2:8) and chief cornerstone (Ps. 117 [118]:22), who makes the two to be one: "come and save the human being, whom you have formed from clay." Drawing upon Eph. 2:14, which sees unity flowing from the work of the Prince of Peace, the petition focuses on the redemption of all humanity, in the person of the first Adam. Christians everywhere knew the meaning of the Hebrew phrase "Emmanuel" [God is with us] from Isa. 7:14 and 8:10. The final antiphon uses this title: "O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the expectation of the peoples (Gen. 49:10) and their Savior, come to save us, O Lord our God."⁸

⁸See Thomas J. Knoblach, "The 'O' Antiphons," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 106 (1992): 177–204.

3. Lent and Holy Week

a. Ash Wednesday to Spy Wednesday. The forty days of Lent constituted a penitential season patterned after the fast of Moses (Exod. 34:28) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:8) and the way that Jesus prepared for his public ministry (Matt. 4:1–11). The faithful would acknowledge their sinful condition and reflect on the mystery of Jesus' persecution and death. Why does this fast move directly to the celebration of this Paschal Mystery? The great canonist and liturgical scholar William Durand (ca. 1230–96) explained: (1) In Lent we represent the people of Israel, who spent forty years in the wilderness immediately after they celebrated the Passover. (2) The resurrection of Christ flows from his Passion, so it is reasonable that our mortification relate to the Savior's Passion. Just as he suffered for us, we must suffer with him so that we may reign with him. (3) As the children of Israel afflicted themselves and ate bitter herbs before they ate the lamb, so we must first be afflicted through the bitterness of penance so that immediately afterwards we may worthily eat the lamb of life, which is the body of Christ, in order that we may receive the mystical Paschal sacraments.⁹ For Durand, the season of Lent not only commemorated the time when the children of Israel remained in the desert but also reminded people of the sojourn of Jacob and his descendants in Egypt, the seventy-year captivity in Babylon, recalled on Septuagesima Sunday, and the dispersion caused by Vespasian and Titus throughout the whole world, which Christians do not commemorate because they will never be called back from it. "The Lord has delivered me into their grip; I am unable to rise" (Lam. 1:14) is his proof-text for this prevalent Christian view of the fate befalling the Jewish people.¹⁰ This type of prejudice, grounded on an interpretation of the Bible that can be traced back to

⁹Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.32.12. On Septuagesima (the seventieth day before Easter) and the Babylonian captivity see *ibid.*, VI.24.4. For a general survey see Roger E. Reynolds, "Holy Week," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, vol. 6 (1985), pp. 276–80.

¹⁰Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.28.6.

the early Church in a time of intense competition with Judaism, frequently found expression in biblical commentaries, homilies, and tracts "against the Jews" [*adversus Judaeos*]. It is beyond the scope of this essay to analyze examples of preaching that reflect on Jews and Judaism. It only can be noted that the Lenten season provided the faithful with many readings from the Jewish Scriptures (see Appendix 2). Joseph and Jeremiah, who were persecuted by their family and fellow countrymen respectively, were regarded as types of Jesus in his Passion. Ideally, as many spiritual writers have noted, the faithful should have reflected on their sinfulness and the Gospel call to conversion and penance. However, for those whose Latin was limited, the proclamation of biblical passages would offer a challenge to the community only inasmuch as the preacher developed such a point in his homily. Regarding the Palm Sunday liturgy, Durand aptly remarked:

We must rejoice concerning the fruit of his Passion, and suffer with him, because he suffered for us. We rejoice, therefore, of the love which he showed for us on the cross, and we are sad because of our sins, which are so many, on account of which the Son of God had to suffer.¹¹

One would hope that preachers integrated this biblical perspective (Rom. 4:25, etc.) into their homilies! This point was emphasized in the Catechism of the Council of Trent (Article IV). Both in the liturgy and in devotions such as the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary and the stations of the cross, the piety of the faithful focused increasingly on the pain and anguish of Christ crucified. All too frequently, the Jewish complicity with the Romans was emphasized, even to the point of linking all the various malicious acts done by others with Jews. Already in the early fifth century, Augustine of Hippo noted concerning "the sacrifice of Isaac" that the ram caught by the horns in a thicket (Gen. 22:13) prefigured Jesus "crowned with Jewish thorns [*spinis Judaicis*] before he was immolated."¹² Why speak of "Jewish

¹¹Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.37.11.

¹²*City of God*, XVI:32, in *Corpus Christianorum, series latina* 48 (1955): 537.

thorns?" The ordeal of crown of thorns was a deed of the soldiers, not the Jewish leaders or "the crowd" (see Matt. 27:29).

Among the extensive pedagogical reflections on the Holy Week liturgy, only a limited number represent the medieval Christian's attitude toward the Jewish people. The pattern was often negative, but this was not always the case. According to the Palm Sunday Gospel (Matt. 21:1-11), Jesus sent two disciples to find a donkey and her colt. The number "two" shows that they practice the twin commandments of loving God and neighbor. The animals represent the Jewish and Gentile people whom Jesus will lead into the heavenly Jerusalem.¹³ The practice of taking particular details of the text and using them for an allegorical basis for teaching important moral and doctrinal points is pervasive in the Church from early times.

On Palm Sunday the Passion narrative according to Matthew was chanted in three parts (narrator, Christ, and *turba* [the crowd; also designated as "synagogue"]); Mark and Luke were proclaimed in like manner on Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week. How many of the lay faithful understood the Latin of each Gospel that they heard being dramatized with considerable artistry? Especially as private devotions to the Passion of Jesus developed and the events were portrayed in painting, sculpture, and glass, everyone knew the story and associated its details with the liturgy being celebrated. Ideally, this should have provoked an attitude of penance and promoted the ideal of modeling one's life on the example of the Master. "Have among yourselves the attitude that was in Christ Jesus" is the challenge introducing the well-known call for self-emptying recorded in the Christological hymn of Philippians (2:5-11). Did the ordinary people consider that they were being represented by the fickle "crowd" and the individuals (such as Judas, Peter, high priest, servants) whose words were chanted in a high voice? That would have brought the lessons of the Gospel home to them. But the title "synagogue" in some manuscripts indicates that for people who knew this designation these groups and individuals were identified simply as "the Jews."

¹³Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.67.14.

b. *The Sacred Triduum*. The most solemn days of the liturgical calendar are calculated from sundown, following the Jewish practice, as the Church does for Sunday as well. Thus, in early times, the Last Supper on Holy Thursday evening began the three-day commemoration of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. The early Church's custom of an *evening* Mass to commemorate the Last Supper was lost by the tenth century. Throughout later times (until 1955) there was a Mass in the morning, so the connection with the Passover Meal was less obvious to participants in the ceremonies.¹⁴

i.) *Good Friday*. This service began with two readings (Hos. 6:1-6 and Exod. 12:1-11),

because Christ suffered for two peoples, Gentiles and Jews, or for the salvation of body and soul. One is taken from the Law, the other from the Prophets, because Christ's Passion was foretold by the Prophets and the Law and prefigured by the Patriarchs. Figuratively, Abraham immolated the flesh of Christ when he sacrificed the ram [Gen. 22]. In a similar way, Abel did this when he offered the lamb. . . .¹⁵

The Passion according to John was proclaimed to move the faithful from reflecting on the Passion of Christ to that of the Church in imitation of him, as Peter said: "Christ suffered for you so that you will follow in his footsteps" (1 Pet. 1:21). "The lamb of Exod. 12:5 is the spotless body of Christ; the goat is the Church, which means us, who are sinners. Christ's Passion is his immolation; ours is celebrated in the mortification of vices."¹⁶ At this point the scholar's proper application of the liturgy is clear.

The Good Friday liturgy preserved a series of solemn supplications [*orationes solemnes*] that were common in the worship of the early Church

¹⁴See James Monti, *The Week of Salvation: History and Traditions of Holy Week* (Huntington, 1993), pp. 101-39.

¹⁵Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.77.2.

¹⁶Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.77.4.

(1 Tim. 2:1–2). In contrast to the Eastern liturgies, the tradition of Rome included prayers for Jews and pagans, heretics and schismatics, and for the destruction of error. As Durand pointed out, Christ prayed for enemies and friends so the Church must pray for everyone, that Christ infuse his grace into them and turn them to faith.¹⁷ The nine prayers followed a structure: an introduction that focused on the given category of people, a time of silent prayer while kneeling, and a collect proclaimed by the celebrant. The deacon omitted the order to kneel at the second last prayer, which was for the Jews. Durand explained that the Church bends the knee in these prayers to show humility, except for the Jews, because they genuflected in mockery before the Lord, saying: “Prophecy to us, Christ, who struck you?” (Matt. 26:67–68). So in detesting this insult, the Church does not bend the knees in praying for them, so that she might avoid deceitful works.¹⁸ The text was chanted as follows:

“Let us pray also for the unbelieving Jews so that our God and Lord may remove the veil from their hearts and that they would know Christ Jesus our Lord.” This introduction is followed by a moment of silence. “Let us pray. Almighty, eternal God, who do not reject even Jewish unbelief from your mercy, hear our prayers which we offer to you for the blindness of this people, that having acknowledged the light of your truth, which is Christ, they may be rescued from their darkness.”¹⁹

¹⁷Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.77.12.

¹⁸Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.77.13.

¹⁹The Latin “*Oremus et pro perfidis Judaeis*” is often rendered “let us pray for the perfidious Jews . . .” John M. Oesterreicher argued that the English should read “unbelieving”; see his study “Pro perfidis Judaeis,” *Theological Studies* 8 (1947): 80–96 and that of Kathryn Sullivan, “Pro perfidis Judaeis,” *The Bridge* 2 (1956): 212–23. Many pertinent issues cannot be treated within the limits of this paper, but we must note recent developments. Pope John XXIII ordered that the call to kneel be inserted for the petition concerning the Jews. After the Second Vatican Council, the prayer itself was replaced by one that shows respect for the Jewish people and their faith.

Drawing on St. Paul’s reflection concerning the veil worn by Moses after his experience of God on Mount Sinai (2 Cor. 3:7–18 on Exod. 34:29–35), the people formulated the prayer as a petition that Jews come to faith in Christ. The theme of blindness is derived from Matthew (15:14; 23:16, 19, 24), where the criticism of Pharisees who accepted the title “guides of the blind” (see Rom. 2:19), is generalized to all Jews of all ages after the coming of Jesus. The identification of Christ with the truth of God is especially familiar, drawn from the Fourth Gospel (John 1:9, 14:6, etc.). Within the limitations of its time, probably from prototypes in early Christian liturgy, the prayer is benign to the extent that it did not curse Jews but offers hope to them, as individuals and a community. Of course, the fact that this hope is expressed in precisely Christian terms is problematic to people sensitive to triumphalism in the Church. Durand remarked that their blindness cannot be dispelled by prayer until the plenitude of the Gentiles enters in (see Rom. 11:25–26).²⁰ Therefore the prayer is not to be said intensely nor with bended knee but, rather, is to be said because the time will come when the One exalted on the Cross will draw all to himself (see John 12:32–34). How many of the laity would have understood the prayer? Even fewer would have been alert to the biblical allusions. However, everyone would have sensed a negative dimension to this petition for the Jews because they did not genuflect during the time of silent prayer. The Jews were treated differently and most people would have thought immediately of the role played by some Jews in the persecution and death of Jesus.

The next part of the ceremony was a solemn procession and unveiling of the cross, held by two priests. In Rome it can be traced back to the ninth century. As the faithful venerate the cross individually, the choir would sing the Reproaches [*Improperia*]; the refrain to each verse, sung by the opposite sides of the choir in Greek and then in Latin is rendered: “Holy God, Holy and Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us.” This use of Greek indicates the antiquity of the petition. Abbot Rupert of Deutz (ca. 1075–1129) linked the Reproaches to the title on the cross of Jesus, which

²⁰Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.77.13.

was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. "There is no response in Hebrew because that people still denies its king and curses and detests that title."²¹ Durand offered a different interpretation. The priest who chants while carrying the cross sings, as it were, in Hebrew, in the person of the Savior; the acolytes sing in Greek, in the person of the Greeks; and the choir responds "Sanctus, sanctus," in the person of the Latins. Thus God is praised in three languages: Hebrew which, on account of the Law, is the mother of all languages; Greek because it is the teacher; and Latin, because it is the ruler on account of the dominion of the Roman Empire and the papacy.²²

The bilingual plea for mercy constitutes a response to the question and complaints expressed as the voice of Christ. The pattern is drawn from the prophet Micah and follows the model of the court case against a vassal accused of breaking a treaty: "O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me. For I brought you up from the land of Egypt . . ." (Mic. 6:3-4).²³ Using the principle of typology and accepting Paul's admonition in 1 Cor. 10:6 ["These things happened to them as an example and they have been written down as a warning to us"], the early Christian community probably included itself in each indictment. The Greek refrain (in the first person plural), introduced into the Latin liturgy in the ninth or tenth century, clearly reminds the faithful approaching the cross in procession that *they* need divine mercy and forgiveness. However, the intense debate between Christians and Jews, already in the second century, is the context for twisting the impact of the sacred text. Rather than a challenge to the community hearing God's Word in the liturgical readings, most Christians dissociated themselves from the Jews. The latter were blamed in a global fashion for all the events of the Passion, including the

²¹*Liber de divinis officiis, Corpus Christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis* 7 (1957): 201.

²²Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.77.14.

²³See Julien Harvey, *Le plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël après la rupture de l'alliance* (Paris, 1967); and James Limburg, "The root RIB and the prophetic lawsuit speeches," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 291-304.

actions of the Roman soldiers (see 2 Esd. 1:4-37 and Melito of Sardis, *On the Passover*).²⁴ Durand summarized earlier commentators.²⁵ The recurring question ("my people, what have I done to you?") is attributed to Christ, and the priest—speaking in the Lord's name—addresses the Hebrews and is considered, as it were, to be speaking Hebrew. Jews had brought three accusations against Christ: that he refused to pay tribute to Caesar (Luke 23:2), that he made himself king (John 19:21), and that he declared himself to be God's Son (John 19:7). In response Christ reproached them regarding three of his benefits: liberation from Egypt, guidance in the wilderness, and entry into a good land. It is as if he said:

You accuse me of refusing to pay taxes, but you should rather give thanks because I freed you from tribute, from slavery to Egypt. You accuse me of saying that I am king, whereas you should rather give thanks that I governed you in the desert and fed you regularly. Moreover, you accuse me of claiming to be Son of God, whereas you should rather give thanks because I led you to a land flowing with milk and honey.²⁶

Through this juxtaposition of these contrasts between the Exodus experience and the trial of Jesus, people lost the sense that the historical events in the Exodus and sojourn in the wilderness have a typological value for the

²⁴See the text with commentary by Othmar Perler, *Melito of Sardis, Sur la Paque* (Paris: Cerf, 1966); Eric Werner, "Melito of Sardis, the first poet of deicide," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 37 (1966): 191-210; Vittorino Grossi, "Melitone di Sardi, Peri Pascha 72-99, 523-763," in *Dimensioni drammatiche della liturgia medievale: Atti del I Convegno di studio* Viterbo, 31 Maggio, 1-2 Giugno 1976 (Rome, 1977): 203-16; and Michael Brocke, "On the Jewish origin of the 'Improperia,'" *Immanuel* 7 (Spring 1977): 44-51.

²⁵Commenting on Mic. 6:3, Jerome applied this passage to Christians in their sinfulness; see *Corpus Christianorum, series latina* 76 (1969): 496. Sicardus of Cremona (1150?-1215) noted that Micah 6 is the source for the *Improperia*. He lists three accusations of Jews against Jesus, to which the Savior replies with three accusations taken from Micah (*Mitrale*, Patrologia Latina. 213:317). See his study "The Liturgy of the liberation of Jerusalem," *Medieval Studies* 52 (1990): 110-31.

²⁶Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.77.15.

Christian community (see 1 Cor. 10:1–13). The greater tragedy was a pervasive tendency of Christians to attribute the attitude of those Jewish leaders who condemned Jesus to the contemporary Jewish community at large and to all succeeding generations of Jews.

During the procession before the veneration of the cross it was unveiled in three stages. According to Durand, this was done as a sign that perverse Jews stripped the Savior; this unveiling took place in three stages to teach that Christ was mocked three times in his Passion: (1) In the courtyard of the high priest, where they blindfolded him and struck his face (Mark 14:65); this is indicated when only the top of the cross is unveiled and the face of the Crucified is not seen. (2) Before the praetorium, when the soldiers mocked him; plaiting a crown of thorns (Mark 15:17) and genuflecting, they said: "Hail, king of the Jews." This is represented when the head and face of the Crucified is unveiled. (3) When he was hanging on the cross, passersby said: "Aha! You would destroy the Temple . . ." (Mark 15:29). The veil is removed entirely from the cross to recall that Christ was naked on the cross. It also signified that all which was obscure in the Law and the Prophets was now open and manifest in the passion.²⁷

The cross was unveiled after the petitions to emphasize that prayer has its effect and exemplar in the cross, because Christ prayed for both friends and enemies. Durand further explained that the right side of the cross is unveiled first because Christ crucified was adored with true faith by the Apostles and the Jewish disciples, who were on the right. The faith was proclaimed by them devoutly and was carried into the midst of the Gentiles; this is shown when the priest places the cross before the middle of the altar. Then, because Christ, now resting, watches over the Church and does so until the end of time, the cross is placed on the altar, by which the Church of the Gentiles is designated. At last, because at the end of time faith in the hearts of the Gentiles will grow cold and according to Isaiah (10:20), he will be accepted by the remnant of Israel, he will be held in common by

²⁷Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.77.17.

Jews and Gentiles. To signify this, the cross is taken down from the altar at the end of Mass and located in a common place.²⁸

This passage shows how each movement in the liturgy is laden with meaning for salvation history. These explanations flow from a long tradition concerning the ceremonies of the Mass as such. Because teachers forgot early Christian roots in the Jewish practices at Passover Meal and in the Temple; Amalarius of Metz (780?–850) and others explained details in terms of the Passion of Jesus. According to their familiarity with this general tradition, the faithful would be disposed to interpret Good Friday ceremonies as Durand suggests.²⁹

ii.) The Paschal Vigil. The Easter Vigil ceremony, beginning with the blessing of the Paschal candle, followed by numerous readings with chants, and the celebration of Baptism in the context of commemorating the Lord's resurrection, must have been very impressive. Jerome explained the significance of the night vigil as follows:

The tradition of the Jews is that the Messiah [*Christus*] is to come in middle of the night as in the days of Egypt. When the Passover is celebrated the exterminator (angel of death) comes and the Lord passes over the dwellings and our doorposts are consecrated by the blood of the lamb. Thus I think the apostolic tradition persists that, on the day of the Paschal Vigil, it is not licit to dismiss the people before midnight, awaiting Christ's coming. . . .³⁰

²⁸Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.77.18.

²⁹At times the Jewish feast of Purim, with its mockery of the crucified Haman (Esther 9: 20–28), fell at a time close to Good Friday. This could have led to tensions between the Jews and the Christian community. See Cecil Roth, "The feast of Purim and the origins of the blood accusation," *Speculum* 8 (1933): 520–26. Another example of tension, this time around the fast commemorating the destruction of Jerusalem on the Ninth of Abh, has been studied by Amnon Linder, "The destruction of Jerusalem Sunday," *Sacris erudiri* 30 (1987–88): 253–92.

³⁰Jerome, Commentary on Matthew in *Corpus Christianorum (series latina)* 77 (1969): 237, quoted by Amalarius. See J. M. Hanssens, *Amalarii Episcopi Opera Liturgica Omnia*, 3 vols. (Vatican City, 1948), 2:109–110.

Which passages from the Scriptures were read? Zeno, bishop of Verona for a time between 360–80, preached briefly on each reading and 62 of his sermons for the Paschal rites have survived. He spoke on Genesis 1 (creation hymn), Exodus 12 (Passover meal), 14 (crossing of the sea), Isaiah 1 (judgment of sinful Israelites), 5 (song of the vineyard), and Daniel 3 (youths in the furnace). Later there is reference to twelve readings from the Jewish Scriptures (i.e., six passages were read in Greek and then in Latin). The Gelasian Sacramentary (between 560–90) has the following readings: Gen. 1:1–2:2 (Creation); 22:1–17 (sacrifice of Isaac), Exod. 14:24–15:1, Isa. 4:1–6 (forgiveness and divine indwelling), Deut. 31:22–30 (Moses' final message), and Psalm 41. At a second stage, Isa. 54:17–55:11 (God's redemptive gifts) replaced 4:1–6, and Ezek. 37:1–14 (vision of the dry bones) was chosen instead of Deuteronomy 31.³¹

The response to each reading is a canticle from the Scriptures, followed by a prayer; the celebration of God's mercy through Christ is rooted in the divine care for Israel. The liberation of one people from Egyptian persecution prepares for the salvation of the nations through the waters of regeneration: "Grant that the fullness of the whole world may come into the children of Abraham and the dignity of Israel." The theme of this prayer is derived from St. Paul's explanation that baptism introduces the Gentiles into the family of God and of Abraham (Gal. 3:26–29). It provides a basis for the Church to exhort the faithful to a deep respect for the Jewish people in the mystery of salvation.

At the beginning of the Easter Vigil the church building is in darkness and a new fire is sparked by a rock being struck with flint. Durand explained that

the old fire symbolized the Old Law, whose images were completed in Christ's death and therefore it must be allowed to cease, but the Holy Spirit poured upon

³¹G. P. James, "The Paschal Liturgy in Zeno of Verona," *Studia Patristica* 18/2 (1989): 375–79; see Bernard Botte, "Le choix des lectures de la veillée pascale," *Questions liturgiques et paroissiales* 33 (1952): 65–70.

us from the rock, that is, from Christ, who is the cornerstone. . . . The new fire is blessed so that, like the one who is inextinguishable light, enlightening every person coming into the world, the fire guided Moses. The Paschal candle signifies the column of fire which preceded the people of Israel at night. Second, the candle signifies Christ, who enlightens us in the night of this world. . . .³²

The *Exultet* or solemn salutation of Christ, symbolized by the Paschal candle, draws extensively from the Exodus experience but does not imply the cessation of its meaning:

This is our Passover feast, when Christ, the true lamb, is slain, whose blood consecrates the homes of all believers. This is the night when first you saved our ancestors: you freed the people of Israel from their slavery and led them dryshod through the sea. . . .

The Jewish people do not appear prominently in other parts of the liturgical year. The New Testament readings would provide a context for homilies that might allude to the Jews. However, the study of such feasts as the Circumcision of Jesus (1 January), the Presentation and Purification (2 February), the Presentation of Mary (21 November), etc. did draw on the Jewish Scriptures and their traditions. Of course, the readings from the New Testament would provide a context for homilies that might include allusions to the Jews and their faith.

The Jewish Scriptures and Saints in the Latin Rites of Passage

The popular practice of declaring certain people to be holy (or blessed) is rooted in the ancient Jewish tradition. Thus, the elect are called "the holy people of the Most High" (Dan. 7:27). The early Church celebrated the martyrs whose deaths are recorded in 2 Macc. 6:18–7:41, especially the mother

³²Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, VI.80.1, 4, and 5.

and her seven sons, whose feast is celebrated on 1 August.³³ The martyrologies include a great number of saints not mentioned in the liturgical calendar that governs the celebration of Mass and the Divine Office. In many prayers from the liturgy of baptism, marriage, ordination, sickness, death, and burial there are references to personalities and themes of the Jewish Bible.

On Holy Thursday, the oils are consecrated for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, orders, and anointing of the sick. The precedents of anointing kings, priests and prophet (1 Kings 19:16) are mentioned in prayers, which find types of the sacraments in biblical texts.

David foreknew by prophetic inspiration the sacraments of your grace and that our faces would be made glad with oil [Ps. 103 [104]:15]. When of old the world's sins were expiated by the flood, a dove announced that peace was restored to the earth by bearing an olive branch [Gen. 8:11] the type of gifts to come, which in these latter days has been manifested. . . .³⁴

In the early Church, candidates were prepared for baptism in a series of steps and baptized during the Vigil for Easter or Pentecost. Prayers used on these occasions were included in medieval liturgical books, even though the steps of the catechumenate, moving through Lent to Baptism in the Easter Vigil, were no longer followed. The first prayer for the exorcism of male candidates evoked the God of the patriarchs:

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God who appeared to your servant Moses upon Mount Sinai, and led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, sending to them the angel of your goodness to guard them day and night. . . .³⁵

³³See Margaret Schatkin, "The Maccabean Martyrs," *Vigiliae Christianae* 28 (1974): 97-113; Bernard Botte, "Les saints de l'Ancien Testament," *La Maison-Dieu* 52 (1957): 109-20; and F. Lurz, "Jeremia in der Liturgie der alten Kirche," *Ecclesia Orans* 9 (1992): 141-71.

³⁴Gelasian Sacramentary 386-88, Gregorian Sacramentary 335. See Bibliography at end of this chapter for editions of all the sacramentaries cited.

³⁵Gelasian Sacramentary 291, Gregorian Sacramentary 1071.

The prayer over women began with reference to the God of the patriarchs, "who admonished the tribes of Israel and freed Susannah from false accusation . . ." (Dan. 13).³⁶

The marriage ceremony includes prayers that develop themes from the story of Eve being taken from Adam's side (Gen. 2:21-24); the nuptial blessing also asks that the bride "prove loving to her husband, like Rachel; wise, like Rebecca; long-lived and faithful, like Sarah."³⁷ Jerome's Latin version of Tobit influenced marriage customs in western Europe. A blessing over the couple was drawn from Tob. 7:15 (Vulgate): "May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob be with you and join you and fill you with his blessing."³⁸

The Temple liturgy and the roles of priests and Levites were important paradigms for the ordination prayers for deacons, priests, and bishops. The ceremonies for the dedication of a church also drew heavily upon the accounts about the consecration of the Temple.

When visiting the home of a sick person, the priest prayed: "God, you gave fifteen years of life to your servant Hezekiah [Ezekias in Latin, see 2 Kings 20:1-11]; likewise by your power give your servant (name) to rise from the sickbed to health."³⁹ The Gregorian Sacramentary reminds us that Tobit and Sarah were healed through the intercession of Raphael, whose name was known to mean healing or medicine of God.⁴⁰ These persons and Job are mentioned in other prayers for the sick.⁴¹ Among prayers for the dying is a litany with the petition:

³⁶Gelasian Sacramentary 295, Gregorian Sacramentary 1076.

³⁷Gelasian Sacramentary 1451, Gregorian Sacramentary 838.

³⁸Sarum Manual, p. 49. On the development of the Christian marriage liturgy from Jewish roots see T. Fisch and D. G. Hunter, "Echoes of the early Roman Nuptial Blessing: Ambrosiaster, De peccato Adae et Evae," *Ecclesia Orans* 11 (1994): 225-44.

³⁹Gregorian Sacramentary 987, 1386.

⁴⁰Durand, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, IV.33.19.

⁴¹Gelasian Sacramentary 1721, Gregorian Sacramentary 980.

Deliver, Lord, the soul of your servant as you delivered Enoch and Elijah from ordinary death, Lot from Sodom and the burning flame, Isaac from the hand of his father Abraham, Moses from the hand of Pharaoh, Job from his sufferings, David from the hand of Goliath and from King Saul, Daniel from the lions' den, the three youths from the burning furnace, Susanna from false accusation.⁴²

Such prayers and the use of psalms in all key moments of the life pilgrimage give an insight into the importance of the Jewish Scriptures in the ministry of the Church.

Conclusion

The encounter over the centuries between Christians and Jews included moments of positive exchange and mutual respect for the integrity of the other faith. However, the intense debate of early centuries contributed to a set of interpretative principles that pitted "Ecclesia" against "Synagoga," in Christian exegesis of the Jewish Scriptures and the New Testament. This twisted use of the biblical message entered into the liturgy in a number of places. After the Second Vatican Council, the application of the documents on Divine Revelation, the Liturgy, and the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions [*Nostra Aetate/In Our Age*] provide the foundation for reforms that endeavor to correct the bias and to foster a wholesome appreciation of the Jewish people, their faith and their heritage.

⁴²Sacramentary of Gellone 2893; Sarum Manual, p. 118.

Appendix 1

Sacramentaries

The liturgy consists of texts that remain constant (the Ordinary) and others which vary daily. The earliest collection of liturgical texts gathered the second category of prayers. More elaborate collections became known as "sacramentaries." Those associated with Rome include first the Gelasian Sacramentary (mistakenly attributed to Pope Gelasius I, who reigned 492–496), prime example being Vatican manuscript Reginensis latinus 316 from the mid-eighth century, and the Gellone Sacramentary, later in the same century. The second Roman text is represented by the Gregorian Sacramentary, attributed to Pope Gregory I (590–604) but probably compiled some decades after his death.

See Henry Ashworth, "Sacramentaries," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1967), 12:792–800; and Roger E. Reynolds, "Sacramentary," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1988), 10:605–06.

Appendix 2

Readings for Lenten Liturgy

	<u>Würzburg</u>	<u>Murbach</u>	<u>MR 1570</u>
Ash Wed.	Joel 2:12-13	Joel 2:12-13	Joel 2:12-19
Thur.		Isa. 38:1-6	Isa. 38:1-6
Fri.	Isa. 58:1-9	Isa. 58:1-9	Isa. 58:1-9
Sat.		Isa. 58:9-14	Isa. 58:1-14
WEEK 1			
Mon.	Ezek. 34:11-16	Ezek. 34:11-16	Ezek. 34:11-16
Tue.	Isa. 55:6-11	Isa. 55:6-11	Isa. 55:6-11
Wed.	Exod. 24:12-18 1 Kings 19:3-8	Exod. 24:12-18 1 Kings 19:3-8	Exod. 24:12-18 1 Kings 19:3-8
Thur.		Ezek. 18:1-9	Ezek. 18:1-9
Fri.	Ezek. 18:20-28	Ezek. 18:20-28	Ezek. 18:20-28
Sat.		Deut. 11:22-25	Deut. 26:12-19 Deut. 11:22-25 Sir. 36:1-10 Dan. 3:47-51
WEEK 2			
Mon.	Dan. 9:15-19	Dan. 9:15-19	Dan. 9:15-19
Tue.	1 Kings 17:8-16	1 Kings 17:8-16	1 Kings 17:8-16
Wed.	Esther 13:9-17	Esther 13:8-17	Esther 17:8-11, 15-17
Thur.		Jer. 17:5-10	Jer. 17:5-10
Fri.	Gen. 37:6-22	Gen. 37:6-22	Gen. 37:6-22
Sat.	Gen. 27:6-39	Gen. 27:6-39	Gen. 27:6-40
WEEK 3			
Mon.	2 Kings 5:1-15	2 Kings 5:1-15	2 Kings 5:1-15
Tue.	2 Kings 4:1-7	2 Kings 4:1-7	2 Kings 4:1-7
Wed.	Exod. 20:12-24	Exod. 20:12-24	Exod. 20:12-24
Thur.		Jer. 7:1-17	Jer. 7:1-17
Fri.	Num. 20:1-13	Num. 20:1-13	Num. 20:1-3, 6-13
Sat.	Dan. 13:1-62	Dan. 13:1-62	Dan. 13:1-9, 15-17

WEEK 4

Mon.	1 Kings 3:16-28	1 Kings 3:16-28	1 Kings 3:16-28
Tue.	Exod. 32:7-14	Exod. 32:7-14	Exod. 32:7-14
Wed.	Ezek. 36:23-28 Isa. 1:16-19	Ezek. 36:23-28 Isa. 1:16-19	Ezek. 36:23-28 Isa. 1:16-19
Thur.		2 Kings 4:25-38	2 Kings 4:25-38
Fri.	1 Kings 17:17-24	1 Kings 17:17-24	1 Kings 17:17-24
Sat.	Isa. 49:8-15 Isa. 55:1-11	Isa. 49:8-15 Isa. 5:1-11	Isa. 49:8-15

WEEK 5

Mon.	Jonah 3:1-10	Jonah 3:1-10	Jonah 3:1-10
Tue.	Dan. 14:27-42	Dan. 14:27-42	Dan. 14:27-42
Wed.	Lev. 19:11-19	Lev. 19:11-19	Lev. 19:1-2, 11-19, 25
Thur.		Dan. 3:25, 34-35	Dan. 3:25, 34-35
Fri.	Jer. 17:13-18	Jer. 17:13-18	Jer. 17:13-18
Sat.	Jer. 18:18-23	Jer. 18:18-23	Jer. 18:18-23

HOLY WEEK

Mon.	Isa. 50:5-10	Isa. 50:5-10 Zech. 11:10-13; 13:6-9	Isa. 50:1-10
Tue.	Jer. 11:18-20 Wis. 2:12-22	Jer. 11:18-20 Wis. 2:12-22	Jer. 11:18-20
Wed.	Isa. 62:11-63:7 Isa. 53:1-12	Isa. 62:11-63:7 Isa. 53:1-12	Isa. 62:11-63:7 Isa. 53:1-12
Thur.	—	—	—
Fri.		Hos. 6:1-6 Exod. 12:1-11	Hos. 6:1-6 Exod. 12:1-11

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