

Walking in the Shadows of the Past: The Jewish Experience of Rome in the Twelfth Century

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Abstract

The Jewish and Christian inhabitants of twelfth-century Rome viewed the urban landscape of their city through the lens of its ancient past. Their perception of Rome was shaped by a highly localized topography of cultural memory that was both shared and contested by Jews and Christians. Our reconstruction of this distinctively Roman perspective emerges from a careful juxtaposition of the report of Benjamin of Tudela's visit to Rome preserved in his *Itinerary* and various Christian liturgical and topographical texts, especially those produced by the canons of the Lateran basilica. These sources demonstrate that long-standing local claims regarding the presence in Rome of ancient artifacts from the Jerusalem Temple and their subsequent conservation in the Lateran acquired particular potency in the twelfth century. Jews and Christians participated in a common religious discourse that invested remains from the biblical and Jewish past reportedly housed in Rome with symbolic capital valued by the two communities and that thus fostered both contact and competition between them. During this pivotal century and within the special microcosm of Rome, Jews and Christians experienced unusually robust cultural and social interactions, especially as the Jews increasingly aligned themselves with the protective power of the papacy.

Keywords

Rome, Jewish community, twelfth century, Lateran basilica, papacy, *Sicut Judaeis*, Benjamin of Tudela, Jerusalem Temple, sacred vessels, *spolia*

The image of twelfth-century Rome evokes, for many, visions of bustling marketplaces and tumultuous streets, of crowded churches, and frequent conflicts between and among nobility and clergy, the mundane daily activities of its citizens unfolding in the imposing shadow of relics of past

grandeur.¹ But this popular picture is almost always of a purely Christian Rome, extending beyond the *abitato* of the Tiber Bend and across to the vast tracts of the *disabitato*.² On closer inspection, however, a deeply-rooted, if distinct, Roman-Jewish community also flourished amid the turmoil, strife, and conflict in the city.³ The Jewish inhabitants of Rome participated in civic life in Rome as one of its seventeen *scholae*.⁴ The *schola* of the Jews played a crucial part in various papal ceremonies, functioning alongside the other *scholae* or associations of craftsmen whose specific task it was to supply a variety of goods and services to the papacy. Thus, the Jewish perspective on the city was typical of all of its inhabitants, while also being distinctive to members of this minority community.

¹ Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312 to 1308* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable, eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Robert N. Swanson, *The Twelfth Century Renaissance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999). On the ubiquity of the ancient past within the medieval city, see Robert Brentano, *Rome before Avignon: A Social History of Thirteenth-Century Rome* (London: Longman, 1974); Herbert L. Kessler and Johanna Zacharias, *Rome 1300: On the Path of the Pilgrim* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). Regarding the Roman nobility and Commune, see Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, “Il comune romano,” in *Storia di Roma dall’antichità ad oggi, Roma medievale*, ed. André Vauchez (Bari: Laterza, 2001), 117–157; Laura Moscati, *Alle origini del comune romano: economia, società, istituzioni* (Rome: B. Carucci, 1980).

² About the inhabited and uninhabited spaces within the city of Rome during this period, see Etienne Hubert, “L’organizzazione territoriale e l’urbanizzazione,” in Vauchez, *Roma medievale*, 159–186; Hubert, *Espace urbain et habitat à Rome du X^e siècle à la fin du XIII^e siècle*, Collection de l’École Française de Rome 135 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, École Française de Rome, 1990), esp. 74–96.

³ For the Jewish community of Rome in the Middle Ages, see most recently Alberto Somekh, “Gli ebrei a Roma durante l’alto medioevo,” in *Roma fra Oriente e Occidente*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 49, 2 vols. (Spoleto: CISAM, 2002), 1:209–135; Abraham Berliner, *Storia degli Ebrei di Roma, dall’antichità allo smantellamento del ghetto* (Milan: Saggi Bompiani, 2000); Anna Esposito, *Un’altra Roma: Minoranze nazionali e comunità ebraiche tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Rome: Il Calamo, 1995). On the Jewish community of Rome within its wider medieval European context, see the important series of studies by Kenneth R. Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Stow, *The ‘1007 Anonymous’ and Papal Sovereignty: Jewish Perception of the Papacy and Papal Policy in the High Middle Ages* (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College, 1984).

⁴ “A company, association [or] body;... a colony of aliens established at Rome and organized as a corporation” (Jan Frederik Niermeyer and Co van de Kieft, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 1232–1233).

In this article, we argue that Jews and Christians alike—but especially the elite leadership of both groups—cultivated and exploited long-standing discursive traditions regarding the enduring religious significance of Rome. We set out to demonstrate that these frequently intersecting lines of tradition were of particular importance for both communities within the Roman context of the period. Jews and Christians participated in a common religious discourse that invested remains from the biblical and Jewish past housed in Rome with symbolic capital valued by the two communities and that, thus, fostered both contact and competition between them. The power differential between Jews and Christians in the city of the Popes heightened the intensity of their contestation over ownership of the past, but also lent stability to their ongoing engagement with common and highly local idioms of religious authority and authenticity. The extant sources—Christian and Jewish, Latin and Hebrew—reveal a rich and interlocking series of cultural assumptions that were operative across both communities. Indeed, the traditions in these sources reflect and refract events as far back as the Augustan age, and served as vehicles of memory that made the presence of antiquity palpable within twelfth-century Rome and its physical milieu.⁵ Moreover, eleventh- and twelfth-century Rome saw an intensification of interest in *spolia* as well as in the ubiquitous ancient remains within the built environment; these extant items from Roman antiquity underwent a process of resignification, as they acquired novel identifications and were imbued with new meanings that were often recognized by Jewish and Christian Romans alike.⁶ While the background of this article is the formation of this “Roman memory” over the course of late antiquity, we focus here on how the Jews of twelfth-century Rome

⁵ James B. Ross, “A Study of Twelfth-Century Interest in the Antiquities of Rome,” in *Medieval and Historiographical Essays in Honor of James Westfall Thompson*, eds. James L. Cate and Eugene N. Anderson (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 302-321; Herbert Bloch, “The New Fascination with Ancient Rome,” in Benson and Constable, *Renaissance*, 615-636.

⁶ On the re-use of ancient *spolia* in twelfth-century building projects, see Dale Kinney, “Spolia,” in *St. Peter's in the Vatican*, ed. William Tronzo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 16-47; Kinney, “*Spolia: Damnatio and Renovatio Memoriae*,” *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 42 (1997): 117-148; and Kinney, “Rape or Restitution of the Past? Interpreting *Spolia*,” in *The Art of Interpreting*, ed. Susan C. Scott, Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University 9 (University Park, PA: Department of Art History, The Pennsylvania State University, 1995), 52-67. See also the studies in Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney, eds., *Reuse Value: Spolia and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherrie Levine* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

incorporated these traditions into their ongoing interactions with the Christian authorities of the city, and how this process of negotiation played out alongside uncannily similar Christian claims to the city and its ancient patrimony.

Several significant texts produced in Rome and describing the city—its topography, institutions, and processions—permit us a glimpse of interactions between the Jewish community and Roman-Christian clergy and laity in daily and ceremonial situations. Among these texts are the *Historia Imaginis Salvatoris* (ca. 1145) of Nicholas Maniacutius;⁷ the anonymous *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae* (ca. 1073–1085) and its first revision by John the Deacon (ca. 1159–1181);⁸ Cardinal Boso's entries in the *Liber Pontificalis* (ca. 1154–1178);⁹ the *Liber Censuum* of Cencius Camerarius (ca. 1192);¹⁰ and the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* (ca. 1143) of Canon Benedict, an early and enormously influential description of medieval Rome.¹¹ The canons shed light on the history of Christian rituals that incorporated

⁷ Nicholas Maniacutius, *Historia Imaginis Salvatoris* (ca. 1145), Fondo SMM 2, fols. 237–244, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, printed in Gerhard Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani: Studien zur Geschichte des römischen Kultbildes im Mittelalter* (Weinheim: VCH Acta Humaniora, 1990), 321–325, at 323. A brief excerpt from the *Historia* is also printed in Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 500. For further discussion of the *Historia* and the other works by Nicolaus, see Gerhard Wolf, “‘Laetare filia Sion. Ecce ego venio et habitabo in medio tui’: Images of Christ transferred to Rome from Jerusalem,” *Jewish Art* 23–24 (1997–1998): 418–429; Vittorio Peri, “Nicola Maniacutia, autore ecclesiastico romano del XII secolo,” *Aevum* 36 (1962): 534–588; Peri, “Nicola Maniacutia, un testimone della filogia romana del XII secolo,” *Aevum* 42 (1967): 67–90; and Peri, “Nicola Maniacutia, ‘Correctores immo corruptores’: Un saggio di critica testuale nella Roma del XII secolo,” *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 20 (1977): 119–125.

⁸ Printed in Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti, eds., *Codice topografico della città di Roma*, 4 vols. (Rome: Tipografica del Senato, 1940–1953), 3:319–373.

⁹ *Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, introduction et commentaire*, ed. Louis Duchesne, 3 vols. (2nd series; Paris: Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 1955–1957), 2:388–446; Boso, *Life of Adrian IV*, in *Adrian IV, the English Pope (1154–1159): Studies and Texts*, ed. and trans. Brenda Bolton and Anne Duggan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 214–233; G.M. Ellis, trans., *Boso's Life of Alexander III*, intro. Peter Munz (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973); Fritz Geisthardt, *Der Kämmerer Boso*, *Historische Studien* 293 (Berlin: Verlag dr. Emil Ebering, 1936).

¹⁰ Cencius, *Le liber censuum de l'église romaine*, eds. Paul Fabre and Louis Duchesne, 3 vols. (Paris: Fontemoing, Thorin, 1889–1952). On the early history of the *Liber Censuum*, see Teresa Montecchi Palazzi, “Cencius Camerarius et la formation du *Liber censuum* de 1192,” *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 96 (1984): 49–93.

¹¹ Benedictus Canonicus, *Mirabilia urbis Romae*, in Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice*

the pre-Christian “Jewish past” as their own. For its part, the *Mirabilia*, as a kind of descriptive “guide” to Rome, catalogs historical sites in the city that were symbolically significant for Roman Christians and, in specific cases, Roman Jews as well.¹² These ecclesiastical texts situate Rome’s urban topography within a distinctively Christian framework vital to the power and authority of the papacy.

And yet the city was of almost equal interest to contemporary Jewry. Indeed, many of the same sites, monuments, and artifacts made Rome as dense a landscape of memory for its Jewish inhabitants as it was for their Christian counterparts. Central to our argument is the text known as *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, which complements the thematic emphasis and content of documents from the Lateran in several significant ways.¹³ In this well-known travel narrative of the mid-twelfth century, Benjamin, a Jew from the kingdom of Navarre, describes Rome during his visit there around the year 1161.¹⁴ Though problematic as a source for

topografico, 3:3–65; Benedict, *The Marvels of Rome: Mirabilia urbis Romae*, ed. Eileen Gardiner, 2nd edn. (New York, NY: Italica Press, 1986).

¹² On the *Mirabilia* as belonging to the genre of a *descriptio urbis* and the revival of this genre in twelfth-century Rome, see especially Dale Kinney, “Fact and Fiction in the *Mirabilia urbis Romae*,” in *Roma Felix: Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome*, eds. Éamonn Ó. Carragáin and Carol Neumann de Vegvar (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 235–252, and the scholarly literature cited there. On the *Mirabilia* more specifically as a commentary on the papal liturgy, see the article in this issue by Louis Hamilton.

¹³ The most up-to-date critical edition of the text is still Marcus Nathan Adler, ed. and trans., *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela: Travels in the Middle Ages* (London: H. Frowde, 1907). Adler’s edition uses as its base-text what appears to be the earliest extant manuscript, MS British Museum Add. 27089 (ca. fourteenth century), supplemented by two other complete copies (MS Casanatense 3097; MS Epstein) as well as fragments from two additional manuscripts (MS Oxford Oppenheim Add. 8° 36 [= Neubauer 2425]; MS Oxford Oppenheim Add. 8° 58 [= Neubauer 2580]). For discussion of these manuscripts as well as of the numerous earlier printed editions, going back to the *editio princeps* (Constantinople, 1543) and the Ferrara edition of 1556, see Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, xiv–xv. All translations of the text in this chapter are based on Adler’s edition and are our own. Adler’s translation is also reprinted in Michael A. Signer, ed., *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela: Travels in the Middle Ages* (Malibu, CA: Joseph Simon/Pangloss Press, 1983), which, in addition to a new introduction by Signer, also reprints Adler’s introduction as well as the introduction from the earlier edition of Abraham Asher, ed. and trans., *The Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela*, 2 vols. (London and Berlin: A. Asher & Co., 1840).

¹⁴ Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, 1 n. 2, suggests that Benjamin’s visit to Rome occurred between late 1165 and 1167. David Jacoby, “Benjamin of Tudela and his ‘Book of Travels,’” in *Venezia incrocio di culture*, ed. Klaus Herbers and Felicitas Schmieder (Rome:

strictly positivist history, the *Itinerary* nevertheless reveals a distinctly Jewish perspective on the urban landscape of the city. Joseph Shatzmiller has argued that Benjamin intended to provide more than a mere narration of his travels and instead was writing in order “to draw attention to monuments, in Rome and Constantinople . . . that a traveler should not miss.”¹⁵ Whether Benjamin derived his knowledge from local Jewish guides to the city or from information gleaned from other texts is not always certain. The prologue to the *Itinerary*, indicating that the guides in each of the communities through which he passed were local Jews, was added to the original text by a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century editor.¹⁶ In addition, both the prologue and the incompleteness of the narrative suggest that the original text was edited twice. Finally, the manuscript trail extends no further back than a fourteenth-century copy and, hence, the original text of the *Itinerary*, as it was composed by Benjamin, cannot be fully reconstructed.¹⁷

While Benjamin of Tudela’s text has been found to contain inconsistencies and even some errors of fact, it nevertheless carries significant historical value for assessing the institutions, practices, and traditions of specific Jewish communities of which he had personal knowledge.¹⁸ The Christian texts and the *Itinerary*, when carefully juxtaposed and correlated, disclose facets of Rome’s Jewish community that have gone unappreciated in modern historiography. Not only do these texts illuminate the status of Jews

Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2008), 135–164, at 145, considers a post-June 1161 dating of the visit to be more likely.

¹⁵ Joseph Shatzmiller, “Jews, Pilgrimage, and the Christian Cult of Saints: Benjamin of Tudela and his Contemporaries,” in *After Rome’s Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 337–347, at 347. See also Giulio Busi, “Binyamin da Tudela: nuove avventure bibliografiche,” *Materia giudaica* 3 (1997): 39–42.

¹⁶ For the most lucid review of the compositional history of the text, see Jacoby, “Benjamin of Tudela and his ‘Book of Travels,’” 135–140.

¹⁷ Jacoby, “Benjamin of Tudela and his ‘Book of Travels,’” 136, referring to MS British Museum Add. 27089.

¹⁸ Jacoby, “Benjamin of Tudela and his ‘Book of Travels,’” 163–164, describes the *Itinerary* as “a rich and multifaceted source of the twelfth century.” On the historical reliability of the text, see also David Jacoby, “Benjamin of Tudela in Byzantium,” *Palaeoslavica* 10 (2002): 180–185; Yosef Levanon, “The Holy Place in Jewish Piety: Evidence of Two Twelfth-Century Itineraries,” *The Annual of Rabbinic Judaism* 1 (1998): 103–118; Rolf Schmitz, “Benjamin von Tudela ‘Das Buch der Reisen’: Realität oder Fiktion,” *Henoch* 16 (1994): 295–314.

within Rome and the particular roles that they played in the life of the city, but they also reveal the “landscape of Jewish cultural memory” that had developed there over the eleven centuries since the destruction of the Temple.¹⁹

In particular, both the Christian and Jewish texts discussed here express a continued fascination with the fate of the treasures taken from Jerusalem and the divine authority attributed to those sacred artifacts. Titus’s destruction of the Temple, the transfer to Rome of its sacred vessels, and their subsequent display as spoils of war in the imperial triumph, established both for Jews and for Christians an enduring association between the city and the Jerusalem Temple and its *sancta*.²⁰ The belief that the Temple treasures had remained in Rome persisted well into the twelfth century, especially within the local context.²¹ We argue that Jewish and Christian sources from this period not only attest to and participate in a common discourse regarding the fate of the vessels but that Roman Jews and Christians alike shared a distinctive set of traditions reflecting a common perception of the city’s architectural sites. These local cultural memories, whether pressed into service for one religious community or the other, were always in a very real sense Roman.

The Jewish Community of Rome

The removal from Jerusalem of the Temple treasures by the victorious Roman army occurred more than a century after the establishment of the

¹⁹ The phrase “landscape of Jewish cultural memory” comes from Ra’anan S. Boustán, “The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire, in *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World*, eds. Gregg Gardner and Kevin L. Osterloh (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 327–372, at 341.

²⁰ Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (New York, NY: Knopf, 2007), 428.

²¹ Marie Thérèse Champagne, “‘Treasures of the Temple’ and Claims to Authority in Twelfth-Century Rome,” in *Aspects of Power and Authority in the Middle Ages*, eds. Brenda Bolton and Christine Meek, *International Medieval Research* 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 107–118, at 109. Also see Sible de Blaauw, “The Solitary Celebration of the Supreme Pontiff: The Lateran Basilica as the New Temple in the Medieval Liturgy of Maundy Thursday,” in *Omnes Circumstantes: Contributions towards a History of the People in the Liturgy Presented to Hermann Wegman on his Retirement*, eds. Charles Caspers and Marc Schneiders (Kampen: Kok, 1990), 120–143, at 132–136.

first Jewish community in Rome.²² By the twelfth century, that community, which stood apart from the rest of Italian Jewry, had long since enjoyed a vigorous and distinctive history of which it was both intensely aware and enormously proud.²³ Indeed, in his *Itinerary*, Benjamin proclaims triumphantly of Rome and its Jews:

There are also great scholars there, at whose head are R. Daniel and R. Yehiel, a minister of the Pope. He is a handsome young man, intelligent and wise, and has access to (lit. enters and exits) the residence of the Pope, serving as the steward of his household and all of his property. He is a grandson of R. Nathan, who composed the *Sefer ha-'arukh* and its commentaries. (Other scholars are) R. Yoav, son of the chief rabbi (*ha-rav*) R. Shlomo, and R. Menaḥem, the head of the rabbinical academy (*yeshivah*), and R. Yehiel, who lives in Trastevere, and R. Benjamin, son of R. Shabbetai of blessed memory.²⁴

The Roman-Jewish community thus came to occupy a position of prominence within the western Mediterranean and European diaspora between the tenth and twelfth centuries, in no small measure because of its immensely rich past. One of the most prominent scholars among the rabbinic leaders of the community—to whom Benjamin alludes—was Nathan ben Yehiel, composer of the *'Arukh* (ca. 1101), a compendium of Talmudic study.²⁵ On a number of occasions, Jewish communities in both Ashkenaz (Germany and France) and Sepharad (the Iberian Peninsula)

²² Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 368; E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 128-129. For the most recent comprehensive surveys of the evidence for the Roman-Jewish community from its beginnings to Late Antiquity, see Silvia Cappelletti, *The Jewish Community in Rome: From the Second Century B.C. to the Third Century C.E.*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 113 (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Leonard V. Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome: Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 126 (Leiden: Brill, 1995); also the individual contributions in Joan Goodnick Westenholz, ed., *The Jewish Presence in Rome* (Jerusalem: Bible Lands Museum, 1995).

²³ See especially Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 23-24, 65-88; also Levanon, "Holy Place in Jewish Piety," 104; Hermann Vogelstein, *Rome* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1940), 130-136.

²⁴ Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, *6-7 (page numbers with an asterisk refer to the page numbers in Adler's printed edition of the Hebrew text).

²⁵ For an invaluable discussion of this seminal text, see Luisa Ferretti Cuomo, "Le Glosse Volgari nell'*Arukh* di R. Natan ben Yehi'el da Roma," *Medioevo Romanzo* 22 (1998): 232-283; also Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 69-70.

turned to the leaders of the Roman-Jewish community not only for legal guidance but also, as we shall see, for diplomatic assistance. Sources preserved by members of the prominent Qalonymos family who settled in the Rhineland proudly claim that, during the tenth century, Roman Jews had served as the principle conduit to other communities to the north for both Jewish religious thought and ritual, at first in Lucca and eventually in such trans-alpine cities as Mainz.²⁶ Despite the growth of these new intellectual centers, the schools of Mainz nevertheless continued to acknowledge the precedence of Roman rabbinic decisions.²⁷

The Jews of Rome enjoyed a high degree of cultural and intellectual prominence within the Jewish world, acting as intermediaries between their fellow Jews who lived under Christian rule outside of the city and the non-Jewish ecclesiastical and secular powers. In particular, the Roman-Jewish community enjoyed direct lines of communication with the papacy and, by 598, had already formed a sufficiently influential group to enable it to mount a decisive intervention with Pope Gregory the Great.²⁸ Apparently, Jews in Sicily had bitterly complained of unfair treatment—caused by the expropriation of some land or building for the establishment of a church; in response, the Pope issued a detailed letter demanding that Victor, bishop of Palermo, treat the Jews in a just manner.²⁹

Much later, in the eleventh century, the Roman Jews, under the patronage of the noble Pierleoni family, interceded once more with the papacy, this time on behalf of the Jews in Spain.³⁰ Kenneth Stow has argued

²⁶ For a useful summary of this process of population and cultural migration, see Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 68-88, building on foundations laid by Avraham Grossman, "The Migration of the Kalonymos Family from Italy to Germany" (Hebrew), *Zion* 40 (1975): 154-184; Grossman, *The Early Sages of Ashkenaz* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), 27-105.

²⁷ Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 93.

²⁸ See Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews, Documents: 492-1404*, Studies and Texts 94 (Toronto, ON: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1991), nos. 19-20; Pope Gregory I, *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, trans. and intro. J.C. Martyn, *Medieval Sources in Translation* 40, 3 vols. (Toronto, ON: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2004), 2: 521 [8.25].

²⁹ Dag Norberg, ed., *S. Gregorii Magni registrum epistularum*, Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina 140-140A, 2 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), 1:ix and 38; Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 76-80. See also Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 73-94.

³⁰ The relevant letters from Alexander II are found in Simonsohn, *Documents*, nos. 36-38.

persuasively that the highly localized circumstances prevailing in Rome made the city an excellent laboratory for renegotiating the relationship between the Jews and the papacy.³¹ Most likely, it was the Pierleoni family—descended from a Jewish convert to Christianity and still residing in close proximity to the Jewish quarter—that fostered this relationship.³² From 1059 onwards, the Pierleoni allied themselves with the papacy; and, at several crucial junctures, members of this family played an instrumental role in helping to bring a series of reforming popes to office, including Gregory VII (1073-1085) and Urban II (1088-1099).³³ Members of the Roman-Jewish community—well-situated in the capital of Western Christendom and enjoying the patronage of a powerful family to whom one or other pope was beholden—were pioneers in obtaining grants of papal protection. Indeed, over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as the vulnerability and protection of Jewish interests came to rest increasingly with ecclesiastical rather than with secular powers, this Roman innovation was to have lasting implications for the rest of the Jewish world.³⁴

See also Robert Chazan, *Church, State, and Jew in the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Behrman House, 1980), 99-100.

³¹ Kenneth R. Stow, "The Approach of the Jews to the Papacy and the Papal Doctrine of the Protection of the Jews, 1063-1147" (Hebrew), *Studies in the History of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel* 5 (1980): 175-190, usefully summarized in Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 39-40.

³² Hubert, *Espace urbain*, 291, confirms the Pierleoni dominance of the Ripa district, in close proximity to Jewish settlement within Rome. See also Moscati, *Alle origini del comune romano*, 45-47.

³³ On the relationship of the Pierleoni family to the papacy, see especially Pietro Fedele, "Le famiglie di Anacleto II e di Gelasio II," *Archivio della Regia società Romana di Storia Patria* 27 (1904): 399-433; Demetrius B. Zema, "The Houses of Tuscany and of Pierleone in the Crisis of Rome in the Eleventh Century," *Traditio* 2 (1944): 171-172. For further background to the Pierleoni family in twelfth-century Rome, see Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City*, 150, 157, and 274; Mary Stroll, *The Jewish Pope: Ideology and Politics in the Papal Schism of 1130* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 140-145 and 180; Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 40; Ian S. Robinson, *The Papacy: 1073-1198* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 8-14. For a comparative discussion of the behavior of noble families such as the Pierleoni in urban areas in the twelfth century, see also Jacques Heers, *Family Clans in the Middle Ages: A Study of Political and Social Structures in Urban Areas* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Pub. Co., 1977), esp. 249.

³⁴ Stow, "Approach of the Jews to the Papacy," esp. 188-190. The status and safety of Jews tended to vary from the special situation in Rome according to locale. See Marie Thérèse Champagne, "Celestine III and the Jews," in *Pope Celestine III (1191-98): Diplomat and Pastor*, eds. John Doran and Damian Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008),

The spiritual and civic value of Rome for its Jewish community lay in the particular practice there of an Italo-Ashkenazi rite of synagogue worship. This "Palestinian" branch of the synagogue liturgy was believed to bear the influence of religious poetry that had originated in Jerusalem, possibly even being brought to Rome by the earliest Jewish settlers who had migrated to the city.³⁵

Moreover, the Jews of Rome also valued the city for its stability and relative safety. *Sicut Judaeis*, the charter of protection for the Jewish community in Rome, first promulgated by Calixtus II in around 1122-1123, was issued by subsequent popes on five further occasions between 1145 and 1198.³⁶ This document appears to have been effective as a local mantle of protection, for no evidence exists to indicate that either violence or persecution directed at Jews was carried out in Rome at any point during the twelfth century. In fact, it would appear that the Roman-Jewish community suffered no major disturbance throughout the entire Middle Ages.³⁷ Living within the special microcosm of the capital of Christendom, Roman

271-285, which argues that the situation in both Orléans and Rouen to which Celestine III responded demonstrates the differing status and safety of Jews in communities far beyond Rome (281-283). While the Pope's response to the local seizure of synagogues and the persecution of Jews in those cities, within the domains of the Capetian king and the Angevin Duke of Normandy respectively, did reinforce the superior rights of Christians over Jews, he also protected the Jews of Rome by re-issuing the decree *Sicut Judaeis* at some point during his pontificate. The political realities in Orléans and Rouen in 1193 differed greatly from those in Rome.

³⁵ Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 368; Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 24, 69. On the migration of the Jews to Rome, see Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 12, 415-419.

³⁶ See Simonsohn, *Documents*, nos. 44, 46 and 49; Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews: History*, Studies and Texts 109 (Toronto, ON: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1991), 16-17, nn. 61-62; Solomon Grayzel, "The Papal Bull 'Sicut Judeis,'" in *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, eds. Meir Ben-Horin, Bernard D. Weinryb and Solomon Zeitlin (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 243-280; Grayzel, "Popes, Jews, and Inquisition, from 'Sicut' to 'Turbato,'" in *Essays on the Occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Dropsie University, 1909-1979*, eds. Abraham Isaac Katsh and Leon Nemoy (Philadelphia, PA: Dropsie University, 1979), 151-188; Kenneth R. Stow, "Hatred of the Jews or Love of the Church: Papal Policy toward the Jews in the Middle Ages," in *Anti-Semitism through the Ages*, ed. Shmuel Almog, trans. Nathan H. Reisner (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), 71-89; Stow, "The Fruit of Ambivalence: Papal Jewry Policies over the Centuries," in *The Roman Inquisition, the Index, and the Jews: Contexts, Sources and Perspectives*, ed. Stephan Wendehorst (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 3-17.

³⁷ Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 24; Stow, *The Jews in Rome*, *Studia Post-Biblica* 48 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), xi-xii.

Jews and Christians experienced unusually robust cultural and social interactions, especially as the Jews increasingly aligned themselves with the protective power of the papacy.

Jewish and Christian Cultural Memories of Rome

By the twelfth century, the memory of first-century Imperial Rome had long carried a wide range of symbolic meanings for those Jews who called the city their home. The disaster that brought a dramatic end to the Temple cult in Jerusalem shaped the attitude toward Rome among Roman Jews as well as in other diaspora communities throughout the Mediterranean. Martin Goodman has observed that the transfer of the cultic vessels from Jerusalem to Rome almost certainly exerted a powerful impact at the local level, as the Jews of the imperial capital found themselves front-line witnesses to the consequences of Roman power for their ancestral homeland and its religious institutions: "The Jews of the city of Rome must have felt their dual loyalties under intolerable strain as the sacred relics of the Temple they revered were carried in mocking triumph through the streets of their adopted city, their pride at being Roman in direct conflict with the propaganda of the new imperial regime."³⁸

The events of the epic conquest of Judaea and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, as recorded by Josephus Flavius, have been recounted and explored in numerous studies.³⁹ Significantly, however, besides a few

³⁸ Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, 439; and, in more detail, idem, "Diaspora Reactions to the Destruction of the Temple," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James D.G. Dunn (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 27-38. Cappelletti, *Jewish Community in Rome*, 91-92, strikes a more cautious note, stressing the absence of evidence for the local Jewish reaction in Rome. But on the pronounced and pervasive ideological uses to which the Flavian dynasty put the destruction and despoiling of Jerusalem, see Fergus Millar, "Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, eds. Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, and James Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 101-128.

³⁹ The bibliography here is vast. For recent assessments of the reliability of Josephus' account of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, compare the conflicting assessments in Tommaso Leoni, "Against Caesar's Wishes: Flavius Josephus as a Source for the Burning of the Temple," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 58 (2007): 39-51, which credits the report of Josephus that the destruction was an unpremeditated action undertaken by rank and file soldiers, and James Rives, "Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 145-166, which argues that the destruction

brief allusions in second-century Greek and Latin sources to the cultic implements from the Jerusalem Temple, Roman historians and propagandists are almost entirely silent on this matter. By contrast, the Jews of late antiquity did evince an ongoing interest in the fate of the Temple vessels, a theme that was likewise taken up by Christian historians and chroniclers in the Byzantine period.⁴⁰ Both Jewish and Christian writers thus kept alive the image of the sacred vessels hidden in Rome, transmitting it to their medieval literary heirs in the twelfth-century city.⁴¹ As we shall demonstrate below, the landscape of cultural memory preserved in rabbinic and related Jewish literature, on the one hand, and in Byzantine histories and chronicles, on the other, continued to be promoted in late-eleventh and, more particularly, in twelfth-century Roman texts, both Christian and Jewish. And, in this same century, the claims of the Lateran to possess the Temple treasures had their counterpart in the local traditions recorded by Benjamin of Tudela.

Benjamin's *Itinerary* provides an extensive description of Jewish communities around the Mediterranean, extending as far to the East as western Iran.⁴² His account of Rome, however, indicates the importance that the history of the Jerusalem Temple and the fate of the sacred vessels occupied in the cultural memory of the city's Jews. Although their Temple had ceased to exist nearly eleven centuries before, the Jews of the diaspora continued to follow the practice of praying in the direction of its former site in Jerusalem.⁴³ They fasted and prayed on the Ninth of Av, the traditional

of the Jerusalem cult was a Roman strategy intended to subdue the rebellious population of Judea.

⁴⁰ Boustán, "Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple," 337–339, 356–362.

⁴¹ The *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae*, in Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*, 3:319–322 and 335–342, emphasizes the unique association of the Lateran with ancient Judaism, and uses that claim to support papal authority during the Investiture struggle and other political and ecclesiastical conflicts, on which see de Blaauw, "Solitary Celebration of the Supreme Pontiff," 126. The *Historia Imaginis Salvatoris* (ca. 1145) of Nicolaus Maniacutius, printed in Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*, 321–325, is another twelfth-century Christian text claiming that the sacred vessels of the Temple were contained in the Lateran Basilica.

⁴² Jacoby, "Benjamin of Tudela and his 'Book of Travels,'" 149–150, notes, however, that, while Benjamin included information on communities as far east as Tibet and China, he apparently traveled no further east than Isfahan.

⁴³ On the origins of this practice in Late Antiquity and its enduring impact on synagogue liturgy and architecture, see especially Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*, 2nd edn. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 326–330, esp.

date for the destruction of both Temples, the First by the Babylonians and the Second by the Romans.⁴⁴ Thus, before discussing the location of the Temple vessels, Benjamin first reports that the local Roman-Jewish community believed that some part of the structure of the Temple was actually in Rome:

There are in the church of St John in the Lateran two bronze columns, which had been in the Temple from among the handiwork of King Solomon, peace be upon him; and on both is carved "Solomon son of David." The Jews in Rome reported (to me) that every year on the Ninth of Av they found sweat running down them like water.⁴⁵

The practice of commemorating the anniversary of the Destruction was widespread throughout the communities of the diaspora. Yet its observance in Rome seems to have carried the added weight of local history—enhanced, as the Jews of Rome believed it was, by the presence of the two actual columns and the sacred vessels from the Temple itself.

Benjamin's report dovetails significantly with contemporary Christian discourse regarding the distinctive bronze columns in the Lateran basilica. The connection between the Lateran and the Temple as exemplified through physical artifacts may well reflect local Roman perceptions reaching beyond the Jewish community. Indeed, this link also pervaded Christian representations of the Lateran basilica, the Lateran palace, and the pope's private chapel of San Lorenzo, known as the *Sancta Sanctorum*.⁴⁶

327 nt. 56, for relevant rabbinic sources; also Isaiah M. Gafni, *Land, Center, and Diaspora: Jewish Constructs in Late Antiquity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 58-73.

⁴⁴ For the development of the fast-day of the Ninth of Av and the various "tragedies" attracted to that date over the course of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, see now Shulamit Elizur, *Wherefore Have We Fasted? "Megillat Ta'anit Batra" and Similar Lists of Fasts* (Hebrew), *Sources for the Study of Jewish Culture* 9 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2007), 154-155; and, more generally, the classic essay by Judah Rosenthal, "The Four Commemorative Fast Days," in *The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Volume of the Jewish Quarterly Review*, eds. Abraham A. Neuman and Solomon Zeitlin (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Quarterly Review, 1967), 446-459.

⁴⁵ Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, *8.

⁴⁶ See Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600: Christian Concord in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 112-158; and De Blaauw, "Solitary Celebration," 136, which only briefly touches on the Roman material in Benjamin of Tudela's *Itinerary*. See also Richard Krautheimer, *Corpus basilicarum Christianarum Romae*, 5 vols. (Città del Vaticano: Pontificio istituto di archeologia Cristiana, 1977), 5:10; Kessler and Zacharias, *Rome 1300*, 39-40. For the broader Frankish perceptions of Rome as the New Jerusalem, see Herbert L. Kessler, "Rome's Place between Judaea and Francia in

The association of the Lateran basilica with biblical Judaism may be dated to the building program of the Emperor Constantine.⁴⁷ In later Christian sources, it was recorded that, among the many adornments Constantine deposited in the Constantinian (Lateran) basilica, the seven brass candelabra were uniquely decorated with images of Old Testament prophets, rather than with Christian saints and martyrs.⁴⁸ The Jewish association seems to have persisted: by the tenth century, a mosaic inscription decorating the apse of the Lateran compared the Church's rituals to the law given to Moses on Mount Sinai:

This house of God is similar to Sinai, bearing the sacred rites, as the law demonstrates, the law which once had been brought forth here, which went forth from here, which leads minds from the lowest places, and which, having become known, gave light throughout the regions of the world.⁴⁹

Pope Sergius III (904-911) directed the creation of that inscription as part of a restoration program to recall and enhance the basilica's venerable

Carolingian Art," in *Roma fra Oriente e Occidente*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 49, 2 vols. (Spoleto: CISAM, 2002), 2:695-718.

⁴⁷ Krautheimer, *Corpus*, 5:9-10. See also Peter C. Claussen, *Die Kirchen der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter, 1050-1300: San Giovanni in Laterano*, *Corpus Cosmatorum* 2.2, *Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie* 21 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2008), 25-28.

⁴⁸ "...candelabra auricalca VII ante altaria, qui sunt in pedibus X cum ornatu ex argento interclusum sigillis prophetarum" (*Liber Pontificalis* 1: 77-79); Raymond Davis, trans., *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*, *Translated Texts for Historians* 6 (rev. ed.; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 17. Furnishings donated by Constantine to other Roman Churches, including the basilicas of Santi Pietro e Paolo and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in the Sessorian Palace, were all decorated with Christian images.

⁴⁹ "AULA DEI HAEC SIMILIS SYNAI SACRA IURA FERENTI / UT LEX DEMONSTRAT HIC QUAE FUIT EDITA QUONDAM / LEX HINC EXIVIT MENTES QUAE DUCIT AB IMIS / ET VULGATA DEDIT NOMEN PER CLIMATA SAEC(U)LI" (Ciampini, *De sacra aedificiis*, 16). Other editions of this inscription and brief analyses can be found at Giovanni Battista de Rossi, *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores*, 2 vols. (Rome: Ex Officina Libraria Pontificia, 1861-1888), 2:149-150 no. 17, 305-306 no. 4; Philippe Lauer, *Le palais de Latran, étude historique et archéologique* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1911), 49, 138; Ursula Nilgen, "Texte et image dans les absides des XI^e-XII^e siècles en Italie," in *Épigraphie et iconographie: actes du colloque tenu à Poitiers les 5-8 octobre 1995*, ed. Robert Favreau (Poitiers: Université de Poitiers, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale, 1996), 153-164, at 157.

“ancient” reputation, in part reflecting the medieval belief that the Lateran altar contained Jewish relics (including the “Tablets of the Law”) in contrast to the “new law of Christ.”⁵⁰

In the twelfth century, the connection of the Lateran to “biblical Judaism” persisted. This association served as the basis for a poem by Petrus Mallius, a canon of St. Peter’s (ca. 1145-1181), who in a decidedly derogatory manner addressed the Lateran as “Synagogue.”

Here let the people venerate the throne of Peter,
Let them honor the church of the Prince [of the Apostles],
Let them revere the head of the world and of the city.
I was established as the first parent, the mother, the head of churches,
For Peter held the primacy over all companions
And God conferred it upon me so that the illustrious people
Should consider me the cathedral seat of the Prince,
As the sole mistress and teacher of the world.
I glory in Peter and Paul but you, Synagogue,
Rejoice only in signs and ancient anointings.
I consider those men at the same time Jews and followers of Moses
Who believe the old Synagogue to be the head of the Church.
For that old figure says nothing about the Prince without equal.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *Liber Pontificalis* 2:236; Lauer, *Le palais de Latran*, 138; Nilgen, “Texte et image,” 157-158.

⁵¹ “Hic cathedram Petri populi venerentur, honorent / Principis ecclesiam, caput orbis et urbis adorent. / Tunc ego prima parens, mater, caput ecclesiarum / Constituta fui; socios cum Petrus in omnes / Primatum tenuit, Deus et mihi contulit illum, / Ut clarus populus cathedrales Principis aedes / Me solam dominam teneat orbisque magistram. / Glorior in Petro Paulo, sed tu, synagoga, / In signis tantum gaudes vetustisque [veterisque] lituris. / Hos ego iudaeos reputo simul et moysistas, / Qui caput ecclesiae veterem credunt synagogam: / Principe [principi] absque pari taceat vetus illa figura” (Petrus Mallius, *Descriptio basilicae Vaticanae*, in Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*, 3: 375-442, here 379-380). The first half of the translation is ours, while the second half (from “I glory in...”) is from Freiberg, *Lateran in 1600*, 205 n. 101. Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*, 3: 380, also record a second poem, probably also by Mallius, that carries a similar sentiment: “Cum Petrus ecclesiae det pallia, non Lateranum, / Linguosi tacitam ponit in ore manum, / Et caput et princeps Laterani Petrus habetur, / Ut fidei pietas omnibus una detur. / Hic Vaticanum fuit antea quam Lateranum, / Cum Petrus esset ibi tractus ab ore canum, / Raptus et inde fuit, rediit tamen, ut locus idem / Per stabilem toto praesit in orbe fidem.” For an extensive manuscript history of these poems and of the *Descriptio basilicae Vaticanae* of Petrus Mallius, see Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico*, 3:375-381. On the similarities between the *Descriptio basilicae Vaticanae* and the *Descriptio ecclesiae Lateranensis*, see Cyril Vogel, “La *Descriptio Ecclesiae Lateranensis* du Diacre Jean: Histoire du texte

The tone of Mallius's poem suggests that the on-going animosity between the canons of St. Peter's and the Lateran for primacy in Rome must have been particularly acute during his lifetime.⁵² The poet's polemical application of the appellation "Synagogue" to the Lateran reflects—and inverts—the intimate association between the Lateran basilica and Judaism. The claim to the prestige of the ancient Jewish past, which was so dear to the Lateran canons, is here explicitly framed within Christian supersessionist discourse to powerful rhetorical effect.

Over a century later, another mosaic inscription in the Lateran apse again reminded viewers of the special relationship of the Lateran basilica to biblical Judaism, reinforcing these long-standing local associations. Created around 1291 under Pope Nicholas IV, this inscription catalogs the Jewish relics supposedly deposited underneath the high altar of the Lateran, including the Arc of the Covenant, the staffs of Moses and Aaron, the golden menorah, the golden censer, and the golden urn filled with manna and the showbread; the inscription further notes that, along with these *sancta*, the four bronze columns still present in the church were brought back from Jerusalem to Rome by Titus and Vespasian.⁵³ While the other vessels lay concealed beneath the altar, the four columns were

manuscrit," in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Monseigneur Michel Andrieu* (Strasbourg: Palais Universitaire, 1956), 457–460.

⁵² On the rivalry between the two basilicas in the medieval period, see Michele Maccarone, "La cathedra Sancti Petri nel medioevo: da simbolo a reliquia," *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia* 36 (1985): 349–447; reprinted in Pietro Zerbi, Raffaele Volpini, and Alessandro Galuzzi, eds., *Ecclesia Romana: Cathedra sancti Petri*, Italia Sacra 47, part 8, 2 vols. (Rome: Herder, 1991), 2:1249–1373. For the continuation of the rivalry into the Counter-Reformation period, see Freiberg, *Lateran in 1600*, 11–12.

⁵³ The relevant section of the inscription in Claussen's expanded transcription reads: "Sub isto nempe altari est Arca Federis in qua sunt due tabule testamenti, virga Moysi et et virga Aaron; est ibi candelabrum aureum et thuribulum aureum thymiamate plenum et urna aurea plena manna et de panibus propositionum. Hanc autem arcam cum candelabro et hiis que dicta sunt cum quatuor presentibus columpnis Titus et Vespasianus a Iudeis asportari fecerunt de H[i]erusalima ad Urbem, sicut usque hodie cernitur in triumphali fornice qui est iuxta ecclesiam sancte Marie Nove, ob victoriam et perpetuum monumentum eorum a Senatu Populoque Romano positum" (Claussen, *Kirchen der Stadt Rom*, 344). Freiberg, *Lateran in 1600*, 134–136, argues that, with the rise of the legend regarding the deposit of the Temple vessels in the Lateran, the bronze columns gradually became identified with those from Solomon's Temple and thus displaced earlier traditions offering alternative explanations for their origins. See also the brief discussion in Kinney, "Spolia," 35–36.

visible to all, clergy and laity alike.⁵⁴ The inscription crystallized long-standing Roman perceptions of the unique affinity of the Lateran basilica with the Jerusalem Temple in its role as a sacred repository.⁵⁵ Benjamin of Tudela thus recorded a reflex of this local tradition, though expressed in a distinctively Jewish register that linked the columns to the commemoration of the destruction of the Temple on the Ninth of Av.⁵⁶ In the process, a common Roman cultural memory came to be preserved well beyond the bounds of the city of Rome for Jewish posterity.

The sights of Roman antiquity and other memories fill Benjamin's narrative, especially those intimately connected with Jewish history. While he does mention generally that "...there are eighty palaces belonging to eighty kings who lived there, each called Emperor, commencing from King Tarquinius down to Nero and Tiberius, ... ending with Pepin," he particularly emphasizes the three emperors who had been most closely connected with the Jews in Rome and with the fate of the Temple and sacred vessels.⁵⁷ Significantly, Benjamin begins his list of imperial palaces

⁵⁴ As Kinney, "Spolia," 35, explains, the bronze columns seem to have originally formed part of the supporting structure of the Constantian *fastigium*, a permanent structure that may have spanned the nave in the early Lateran Basilica. These columns were subsequently moved during the renovation program carried out under Gregory XIII (1572–1585) and were re-used to support the altar structure within the SS. Sacramento (Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament) in the south transept.

⁵⁵ In this same period, two other apse inscriptions referring to the Jewish Law were commissioned, one for the Abbey church of Montecassino (late-eleventh century) and one for San Clemente in Rome (early twelfth century). But these inscriptions do not explicitly mention the Jerusalem Temple or its *spolia*, nor are they found in institutions that carried the exceptional standing of the Lateran. For discussion of these inscriptions in relation to ones in the Lateran, see Nilgen, "Texte et image," 153–164; also Stefano Riccioni, *Il mosaico absidale di San Clemente a Roma: exemplum della chiesa riformata* (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM, 2006), 65–75; Riccioni, "La décoration monumentale à Rome aux XI^e et XII^e siècles: révisions chronologiques, stylistiques et thématiques," *Perspective: la revue de l'institute national d'histoire de l'art* 2 (2010–2011): 319–360; Mary Stroll, "The Twelfth-Century Apse Mosaic in San Clemente in Rome and its Enigmatic Inscription," *Storia e Civiltà* 4 (1988): 20–34.

⁵⁶ It is worth noting that Benjamin reports that there were two—and not four—bronze columns, which would have been identified by his Jewish readers with the sentinel columns from the Temple of Solomon, Jachin and Boaz. Benjamin's text thereby molds the tradition regarding the Lateran columns to its biblical referent.

⁵⁷ The palaces of Julius Caesar, Titus, and Vespasian are all briefly mentioned in another twelfth-century travel narrative of Rome, the *Mirabilia urbis Romae* (ca. 1143), which included an extensive list of "palaces" of past Roman emperors and officials. According to

with that of Julius Caesar. Jews in the late Roman Republic and early Empire had respected Caesar, both during his rule and afterwards. In early 44 BCE, Caesar had demonstrated his appreciation for the Judean leaders' loyalty to him by granting several decrees that benefited them, including one in particular that allowed the rebuilding of their Temple walls, destroyed nearly twenty years earlier by Pompey.⁵⁸ Indeed, the Jews favored Caesar in large measure precisely because of his enmity toward Pompey. According to Suetonius, the deep respect of the Roman Jews for Caesar led to demonstrations of public grief at his funeral pyre in the Forum.⁵⁹

While traditionally revering Julius Caesar, the Jews despised Vespasian and especially Titus.⁶⁰ Both men had commanded the Roman legions during the Jewish War and Titus had overseen, passively or actively, the destruction of the Temple.⁶¹ In his narrative, Benjamin strikes a rather

Gardiner, *Marvels of Rome*, xxv, Rome was filled with ruins of ancient buildings and "when the function of a structure was in doubt, it was often simply called a palace and associated with the name of one of the great emperors." Benjamin was drawing on a common Roman cultural memory in mentioning the emperors' palaces, but he focused on those sights most notable to his Jewish audience.

⁵⁸ See Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 127-128, 136, and the primary sources cited there.

⁵⁹ Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars*, 1.84.5.

⁶⁰ On the historical development of Jewish attitudes toward Roman imperial power, especially the figure of Titus, see Ra'anan S. Boustán, "Immolating Emperors: Spectacles of Imperial Suffering and the Making of a Jewish Minority Culture in Late Antiquity," *Biblical Interpretation* 17 (2009): 207-238, at 227-231.

⁶¹ On the question of whether the Roman armies under Titus intended to destroy the Temple, see footnote 39 above. It is worth noting that the negative depiction of Titus in Jewish texts contrasts starkly with the view promoted by Christian writers, who for centuries had interpreted the Destruction of the Temple and the subsequent dispersal of Jews as God's vengeance against them for their faithlessness and especially for their role in the death of Christ. This particular understanding of the Destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple enjoyed a very long history in Christian culture, beginning in the fourth century with Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (esp. *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 3.7-8) and the Latin paraphrase of Josephus's Jewish War by "Hegesippus" (ca. 370) preserved among the writings of Ambrose (Pseudo-Hegesippus, *De excidio urbis Hierosolymitanæ* 2.12.1; Vincenzo Ussani, ed., *Hegesippi qui dicitur historiae libri V*, CSEL 66.2 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky a.-g., 1932), 163-164). A brief, but excellent discussion of this theme in Eusebius and Pseudo-Hegesippus is given by Heinz Schreckenberg and Kurt Schubert, *Jewish Historiography and Iconography in Early and Medieval Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 71-73. For a powerful echo of this Christian claim within late antique Jewish culture, see Israel J. Yuval, "The Myth of the Jewish Exile from the Land of Israel: A Demonstration of Irenic Scholarship," *Common Knowledge* 12 (2006): 16-33. This polemical theme

matter of fact tone when identifying the palace of Vespasian: “There is the palace of Emperor Vespasian, which is an exceedingly large and secure building.”⁶² By contrast, his report of the palace of Titus expresses a complex and textured view of that emperor:

There is the palace of Titus⁶³ standing outside the city because the consul and his 300 councilors did not receive him (in triumph) since he did not fulfill their order, taking three years to conquer Jerusalem rather than the two years they had decreed.⁶⁴

While this brief report provides a faint echo of the long-standing animosity expressed by Jewish writers towards Titus, it is nevertheless significant that Benjamin neither merely repeats nor alludes to standard rabbinic narratives regarding Titus’s punishment for having despoiled the Jerusalem Temple.⁶⁵ Rather, he gives expression to a distinctive tradition that seems to reflect the pride felt by the local Jewish community over the ferocity with which first-century Judeans had resisted Rome’s power.

In its depiction by Benjamin, the twelfth-century Roman-Jewish community appears deeply conscious of its role as guardian of those traditions that it viewed as both ancient and local. But this particularly “local” knowledge is inseparable from the circulation of Jewish traditions in sources that reached far beyond this one community. Traditions regarding Rome and

remained central to Christian historiography into the twelfth century, as for example in the writings of Nicolaus Maniacutius (ca. 1145), on which see Wolf, “*Laetare filia Sion*,” 423.

⁶² Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, *7. Compare the reports in Josephus, *The Jewish War* 7.158–162 and Dio Cassius 65.15.1 regarding Vespasian’s palace as a repository for some of the Temple vessels. Significantly, Benjamin does make explicit the connection between the Temple vessels and Vespasian’s palace. For discussion, see Millar, “Last Year in Jerusalem,” 101–128; Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City*, 10.

⁶³ The phrase “the palace of Titus” (היכל טיטוס) is absent from Adler’s base-text, MS British Museum Add. 27089, but is supplied in MS Epstein as well as in Asher’s text (Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, *7 n. 24). Since without this specification the textual unit makes little sense, we follow the reading in MS Epstein.

⁶⁴ Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, *7.

⁶⁵ This narrative is found in a wide variety of forms in rabbinic literature: *Sifrei Deuteronomy* §328; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 26; *Leviticus Rabbah* 20:5, 22:3; *Deuteronomy Rabbah* 21 (Lieberman); *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A and B 7; *Genesis Rabbah* 10: 7; *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 5:8; *Tanhuma*, Huqat 1; *Tanhuma Buber*, Huqat 1; *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* 48; *Numbers Rabbah* 18: 22; BT *Gittin* 56b. For a brilliant analysis of this much-discussed narrative, see Joshua Levinson, “Tragedies Naturally Performed: Fatal Charades, *Parodia Sacra*, and the Death of Titus,” in *Jewish Culture and Society under the Christian Roman Empire*, ed. Richard Kalmin and Seth Schwartz (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 349–382.

its emperors would have certainly been reinforced by rabbinic literary traditions embedded in such corpora as the *Babylonian Talmud*. It is difficult to determine how local (perhaps oral) traditions interacted with written sources, but we can detect in Benjamin's account both general themes common throughout the Jewish world and a distinctive local perspective. Indeed, we might say that the traditions in Benjamin are over-determined as, in the increasingly textualized Jewish culture of the twelfth century, local knowledge had assimilated those written traditions, thus reinforcing long-standing ideologies and interests.⁶⁶

This dynamic interaction between local and general Jewish traditions is particularly visible in Benjamin's discussion of the fate of the Temple vessels, which he reports had been placed in a "cave" in Rome by Titus:

There is the cave in which Titus son of Vespasian hid the Temple vessels that he brought back from Jerusalem. And there is (another) cave in a hill, on the side along the banks of the Tiber River, where the righteous ones are buried, the ten martyrs (*ve-sham qevurim ha-tsaddiqim 'asarah harugei melukhab*).⁶⁷

This juxtaposition between the Temple vessels and the remains of the "ten martyrs," both hidden in caves in Rome, is especially noteworthy. Neither motif is a strictly local tradition. Earlier we have seen how widespread was the tradition regarding the Temple vessels in Rome in late antique and early medieval Jewish sources. In the case of the ten martyrs, the text fails to specify the identity of these figures. Are they perhaps the famed rabbinic martyrs executed, according to tradition, during the Roman persecutions of the second century?⁶⁸ Or are they instead the group of more local Italian martyrs, mentioned in Shabbetai Donnolo's *Sefer Ḥakhmoni*, and put to

⁶⁶ On the textualization of Jewish culture in Northern Europe, but with important implications for Jewish culture generally, see Talya Fishman, "Rhineland Pietist Approaches to Prayer and the Textualization of Rabbinic Culture in Medieval Northern Europe," *The Jewish Studies Quarterly* 11 (2004): 313–331.

⁶⁷ Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, *8 (MS British Museum Add. 27089). This phrase varies very slightly in MSS Casanatense 3097 and Epstein, which read עשרה הרוגי מלכות (rather than מלובה).

⁶⁸ Many late antique and early medieval sources explicitly refer to this group of ten martyrs as "R. Akiva and his colleagues," though other specific forms of nomenclature were also available. See Ra'anan S. Boustán, *From Martyr to Mystic: Rabbinic Martyrology and the Making of Merkavah Mysticism*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 112 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), esp. 51–97.

death at the hands of the Fatimid army in Oria in Southern Italy in 925?⁶⁹ Or finally, are they yet another group of ten, otherwise unknown, Jewish martyrs from the local community in Rome, as Marcus Adler insists?⁷⁰ The text remains fundamentally ambiguous. But it is this very lack of clarity that demonstrates how traditional motifs could function both locally and trans-locally. The themes of the “Temple vessels” and of the “ten martyrs” seem to have circulated between these two levels, entering the lore of the Jewish community of Rome from the wider Jewish culture and returning again to general Jewish lore, in this case re-embedded within Benjamin’s text. Whatever their ultimate origins, these traditions remained active and meaningful within the immediate discursive context of twelfth-century Rome.

With the ruins of ancient Rome, unexcavated and interwoven into the fabric of the medieval city and confronting visitor and Roman resident alike, many erroneous, yet traditional, beliefs had sprung up over time to enter into local Roman cultural memory.⁷¹ The two caves mentioned in Benjamin’s account, one containing the Temple vessels and the other the Jewish martyrs, may be a reflex of local traditions regarding entrances to ancient spaces lying beneath the city, often formed by ancient subterranean ruins.⁷² The Lateran basilica, for instance, had been constructed atop the *castrum equitum singularium*, the former barracks of the imperial

⁶⁹ David Castelli, ed., *Il Commento di Sabbatai Donnolo sul Libro della creazione* (Florence: Successori Le Monnier, 1880), *3: “Ten wise and righteous rabbis, of blessed memory, were slain (וְנִהְרְגוּ עֲשֶׂרָה רַבִּיִּים חַכְמִים וְצַדִּיקִים זָכָרָם לְבִרְכָּה).” For discussion of this event within the context of Shabbetai Donnolo’s life, see Andrew Sharf, *The Universe of Shabbetai Donnolo* (New York, NY: Ktav, 1976), 7–13.

⁷⁰ Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, 7 n. 1. Adler, however, fails to appreciate the fact that the technical phraseology used by Benjamin (עֲשֶׂרָה הַרוּגֵי מְלוּכָה), which is conventionally applied to the ten rabbinic martyrs of the second century, differs from the language used in Shabbetai Donnolo’s report (see previous note).

⁷¹ See Bloch, “The New Fascination with Ancient Rome,” 630–633; and Gardiner, *The Marvels of Rome*, xxv–xxviii.

⁷² Of course, the motif of the sacred cave is not unique to the Roman portion of Benjamin’s text, but is repeated later in context of the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron (Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, 25–26 and *26–*27). Benjamin reports there that while Christians were visiting the tombs restored by Crusaders, Jewish guards showed Jewish pilgrims the “actual Tombs” of the Patriarchs that lay deeper within the same cave complex. For discussion, see Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300–800* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Press, 2005), 218–219.

bodyguard.⁷³ The motif of the sacred cave housing supernatural power or presence also appears in the ninth-century description in the *Liber Pontificalis* of a “serpent of a dire sort called *basilisk* in Greek,” which the people believed inhabited a cave near S. Lucia on the Esquiline Hill.⁷⁴

Most significantly, Benjamin’s descriptions of the monuments that stood before the Lateran Palace bears striking resemblance to Christian inventories of this space and thus to the common interest among Jews and Christians in the built environment of Rome and its ancient statuary. Benjamin reports:

Across from St. John in the Lateran are carved (statues) of Samson in marble holding a ball as well as Absalom son of David. Likewise, Emperor Constantine, who founded Constantinople and lent his name to the city, is caste in bronze and his horse caste in gold.⁷⁵

Similar local identifications, disseminated through the Roman community and transmitted through pilgrims and visitors, are also to be found in Christian “guides” to the city of Rome, including those produced during the twelfth century. Most notably, Canon Benedict, the likely author of the popular *Mirabilia Urbis Romae* (ca. 1143), also mentions the antique sculptures standing before the Lateran basilica. According to the *Mirabilia*,

At the Lateran there is a certain bronze horse called Constantine’s Horse, but it is not so. [...] The Colosseum was the Temple of the sun. [...] Besides this there were the supercelestial signs and the planets *Sol* and *Luna*, which were drawn along in their proper chariots. And in the middle dwelled Phoebus, who is the god of the Sun. With his feet on the earth he reached to heaven with his head and held in his hand an orb

⁷³ Krautheimer, *Corpus*, 5: 24-28.21

⁷⁴ *Liber Pontificalis* 2:110. Davis, *Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, 118, nt. 28, suggests that this account of the *basilisk* and Pope Leo IV’s “exorcism” of it by means of a miraculous Lateran icon in ca. 847-855 was motivated by the sound of escaping methane gas from decaying organic material underneath current Roman buildings. In the *Historia Imaginis Salvatoris*, Nicolaus Maniacutius repeats the story (transcribed in Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani*, 323). An opening into the “Cave of Latona,” beneath the Basilica of Constantine and Maxentius on the Forum, led to a medieval belief that the cave housed a “dragon” that had been defeated by Pope Sylvester in the fourth century (Kessler and Zaccharias, *Rome 1300*, 103-105).

⁷⁵ Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, *8.

that signified that Rome ruled over the whole world. After some time the Blessed Sylvester ordered that temple [the Colosseum] destroyed and likewise other palaces [...] But he had the head and hands of the aforesaid idol laid before his Palace of the Lateran in remembrance of the temple, and they are now falsely called by the vulgar Samson's Ball.⁷⁶

The identification of one of the imperial sculptures as Sampson, found in both Benedict and Benjamin, demonstrates the tenacity of such local Roman traditions. The author himself claims to have drawn his information from multiple sources, "...as we have read in old chronicles, have seen with our own eyes, and have heard the ancient men tell of."⁷⁷ A local cleric who was writing about his own city would undoubtedly have plumbed the local sources. Both Benjamin, the Jewish visitor, and Benedict, the Roman cleric, related not only what they learned from the physical and textual evidence available to them, but also from that most important repository of local history, the inhabitants of Rome.

It would thus seem that Benjamin's rich and textured report on the built environment of Rome, even if informed to some degree by traditions drawn from wider Jewish literary culture, reveals a highly local landscape of Roman memory. That the landscape was populated with sites and meanings adopted by all inhabitants of the city as part of their own local history shows that the Roman Jews could make it very much their own.

Jewish Participation in the Twelfth-Century Papal Adventus: The Intersection of Ritual with the Roman Landscape of Cultural Memory

The Jews and Christians of twelfth-century Rome shared not only a Roman landscape crowded with cultural memories, but also navigated a concrete social space within which their economic, political and religious activities intersected. Like the other *scholae* that constituted Rome's civic body, the Jewish community served as an essential participant in *adventus* ceremonies on those occasions when a pope entered Rome for the first time,

⁷⁶ Nichols, *Marvels of Rome*, 9 and 28-29. Regarding this passage, Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City*, 193, writes: "Popular belief, from before the 1100s and into the thirteenth century, viewed the fragments as remains of a giant Samson."

⁷⁷ Nichols, *Marvels of Rome*, 46. See Kinney, "Fact and Fiction," 252.

returned to the city from exile, or processed through the city on specific festivals such as Easter Monday and the anniversary of the pope's consecration.⁷⁸ While scarcity of direct evidence from the Jewish community of Rome makes it difficult to discern precisely what specific meaning the ceremonial held for the Jews, Roman chronicles and *ordines* provide valuable information. Thus, contemporary (or near-contemporary) records provide us an oblique glimpse of the highly symbolic choreography through which the Jewish community of Rome and the papacy negotiated the terms of their finely-tuned relationship, especially as the protocols of the papal *adventus* assumed their canonical form over the course of the twelfth century.⁷⁹

The perception of Rome as a repository of the sacred past, of which both Jews and Christians were acutely conscious, was reinforced by a dense network of civic and economic ties. We argue in this section that, although the papal *adventus* enacted and made visible the boundary between Jew and Christian, the Jews of Rome did not cultivate a separate or oppositional approach to these rites, at least in the specific context of twelfth-century Rome. The theological meaning of the *adventus*, as an assertion of Christian supersessionist ideology, did not nullify its other civic and economic dimensions. Rather, the Jews of Rome treated the *adventus* ceremony as an occasion for reaffirming their place—as a distinctive religious minority—within Roman civic life.

According to custom, the popes encountered the seventeen Roman *scholae* at various stopping places along the processional route. Representatives of the Jewish *schola* played a vital part within this broader ceremonial structure, uttering carefully scripted verbal acclamations and actions that made visible the unique social, political, and doctrinal relationship between

⁷⁸ *Liber Censuum*, 1:297-298 [32-36]; Champagne, "Celestine III and the Jews," 271-272; Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial*, 186-189.

⁷⁹ For an extensive study of the origins and development of the papal *adventus*, with an emphasis on its distinctive twelfth-century history, see Susan Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial at Rome in the Twelfth Century*, Subsidia (Henry Bradshaw Society) 4 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002). On Jewish perceptions of this ritual, see especially Amnon Linder, "The Jews too were not absent . . . carrying Moses's Law on their shoulders': The Ritual Encounter of Pope and Jews from the Middle Ages to Modern Times," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 99 (2009): 323-395, though see our reservations to Linder's approach presented below.

the Jews and the pope.⁸⁰ The *adventus* ceremony marking Calixtus II's entrance into Rome in 1120 seems to have been the first of the century, and included the Jews' acclamation in Hebrew as the papal procession moved by. A contemporary account records that the pope, "[n]ot only proceed[ed] past the applauding of the Greeks and Latins, but also the confused cheering of the Jews..."⁸¹ Significantly, however, such trilingual acclamations in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew had long been performed for secular rulers as one component of their reception by their subjects. In fact, less than a decade earlier, the Roman Jews had offered such praises in Hebrew at the entrance of Emperor Henry V into the city.⁸² This evidence suggests that acclamations in Hebrew by the Jews were meant as a demonstration of their loyalty to their Gentile ruler, who in the case of Calixtus II's entrance in 1120 happened to be the pope.⁸³

The very next papal *adventus* held in Rome, in 1145, replaced the *laudes* with a different ritual performed by the Roman Jews, one that would endure across the centuries, namely, the presentation of a Torah-scroll to the pope.⁸⁴ Accounts of the entry-type papal *adventus* ceremonies celebrated in 1145, 1165, 1192 and 1198 indicate that the Jews presented the Torah to the pope, in some cases accompanied by the *laudes* and in some not. The record of Clement III's entry-type *adventus* in 1188 notes that the Jews participated "according to custom," but does not specifically indicate whether the Torah was presented.⁸⁵ Throughout its long history, the

⁸⁰ Linder, "Ritual Encounter of Pope and Jews," 325; Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial*, 201–206; also Salo W. Baron, "'Plenitude of Apostolic Power' and Medieval 'Jewish Serfdom,'" in *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History*, ed. Leon Aryeh Feldmann (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 284–307.

⁸¹ "Nec defuere Graecorum et Latinorum concentibus confusi Iudaeorum plausus..." (*Uodalscalcus de Egino et Herimanno*, ed. Philipp Jaffé, *MGH SS* 12 (Hannover, 1856; Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1963), 446, lines 34–37). See discussion of this passage in Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial*, 93–94.

⁸² "Ante portam a Iudeis, in porta a Grecis cantando exseptus est" (*Annales Romani*, 340; Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial*, 155).

⁸³ Noël Coulet, "De l'intégration à l'exclusion: La place des juifs dans les cérémonies d'entrée solennelle au Moyen Âge," *Annales, économies, sociétés, civilisations* 34 (1979): 672–683.

⁸⁴ Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial*, 203–204.

⁸⁵ "Quem Romani tam maiores quam minores, clerici ac laici, Iudei etiam, magno cum gaudio, cum canticis et laudibus ut mos est, eum benigne susceperunt" (*Annales Romani*, in *Liber Pontificalis* 2:329–350 [349]).

presentation of the Torah remained a prominent feature of the ritual encounter between the Jews and the pope.

Drawing on an abundance of later sources, Amnon Linder has recently suggested that, in addition to the mutually recognized elements of the *adventus*, the Jews also cultivated a “covert” reading of the semiotics of this ritual.⁸⁶ In Linder’s sweeping structural account, this ritual encounter between the Jews and the pope—from its very beginning in Rome and throughout its long history in various locales—gave expression to a coherent and singular ideology of Christian triumphalism against which its Jewish participants positioned themselves. Yet, evidence from earlier centuries outside of Rome, or from later centuries in Rome, should not be applied to the Jewish community in twelfth-century Rome, where the Roman Jews thrived in a distinctive and distinctively protected environment.⁸⁷ As a review of the available sources shows, from 1145, when the ritual of the presentation of the Torah first became embedded within the Roman *adventus* ceremonial, and throughout the twelfth century, no evidence exists that the Jews perceived in their own actions any hidden or subversive meaning.

In December 1145, Eugenius III entered the city for the first time as pope, and the Roman *scholae* came out to greet him.⁸⁸ Boso recorded the Jewish role in Eugenius’ *adventus* thus:⁸⁹

The banner-bearers led the way with banners, they followed the scribes and judges; also, that the Jews might not go astray, they carried on their arms the law of Moses, with so much joy; yes, the entire Roman clergy sang psalms as one, saying: “Blessed is

⁸⁶ For Linder’s discussion of the twelfth-century evidence, often interpreted in light of later sources or evidence from outside Rome, see “Ritual Encounter of Pope and Jews,” esp. 331–335, 336–342, 356–360.

⁸⁷ Linder, “Ritual Encounter of Pope and Jews,” 328–331, interprets the performance of the *laudes* as a key example of the “covert equivocality” that characterized Jewish participation in these papal ceremonies. But the evidence he offers for this reading relates to Ashkenazi communities in the 1180s and does not reflect the specific situation in Rome itself.

⁸⁸ *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, ed. Philipp Jaffé, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Veit, 1888), 2:21 and 27. Eugenius had been forced into exile only three days after his election. He completed neither the coronation nor *possessio* rituals, including *adventus*, until he re-entered the city and took possession of it on 21 December 1145.

⁸⁹ As a Curial official holding various positions, Boso served from 1149 until at least 1181. His *vita* of Alexander III (1159–1181) is especially valuable for the eyewitness material on this pope’s two *adventus* processions (Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial*, 38).

he who comes in the name of the Lord.” And so, with great joy and a shout of the people, the pope merited to ascend to the Lateran Palace.⁹⁰

Two decades later, on 23 November 1165, the same ceremonial was re-enacted by the people for Alexander III, as he entered the city after a lengthy period in exile:⁹¹

And then, with olive branches they escorted him with honor all the way to the Lateran gate, with the joy and delight of all; and where the entire city clergy, solemnly putting on vestments according to custom, already longing for him for a long time, were waiting for the *adventus* of the same pope; then the Jews arrived, in accordance with custom, bringing down their law on their arms; then the banner-bearers rushed together with the banners, the grooms, the scribes, the judges, with the advocates and with a not small multitude of the same people.⁹²

In the *Liber Censuum* ca. 1192, which included a compilation of Roman *ordines*, Cencius, Cardinal Boso’s successor and papal chamberlain to both Clement III and Celestine III,⁹³ recorded the customary contribution that the Roman Jews offered to the pope, which they presented either at the consecration of the pope or on the Monday following Easter:

The Jews present the Law to the Lord Pope on the road on the day of his coronation and acclaim him; and they carry three and a half pounds of pepper and two and a half pounds of cinnamon to the Chamber.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ “Precedebant signiferi cum bannis, sequebantur scriniarii et iudices; Iudei quoque non deerant tantae letitiae, portantes in humeris suis legem Mosaycam; universus etiam Romanus clerus psallebant in unum, dicentes: *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*. Sic itaque cum magno populorum gaudio et clamore idem pontifex Lateranense palatium conscendere meruit” (*Liber pontificalis* 2:387).

⁹¹ Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial*, 99.

⁹² “Mane autem facto senatores cum nobilibus et magna cleri ac populi multitudo ex Urbe sibi honorifice occurrerunt, exhibentes sibi tanquam animarum suarum pastori obedientiam debitam et consuetam reverentiam. Et exinde cum ramis olivarum usque ad portam Lateranensem ipsum honorifice cum omni gaudio et letitia conduxerunt; ibique totus Urbis clerus, de more sollempniter indutus, eiusdem pontificis iamdiu desideratum prestolabatur adventum; ibi advenerant Iudei, ex more legem suam deferentes in brachiis; ibi concurrerant signiferi cum bandis, stratores, scriniarii, iudices, cum advocatis et non modica eiusdem populi multitudine” (*Liber Pontificalis* 2:413).

⁹³ *Liber censuum*, 1:1–5, at 1: “...ego Centius quondam felices recordationis Clementis pape III, nunc vero domini Celestini pape III camerarius...”

⁹⁴ “Iudei vero representant domino pape in die coronationis sue legem in via et ei faciunt

Cencius's report in particular highlights the mercantile function of the Jewish community of Rome within the ritual as suppliers of rare and expensive spices. Benjamin's report that Rabbi Yehiel served as the steward of the papal household likewise underscores the centrality of practical considerations in the relationship between the papacy and the merchant elite of the Jewish community.⁹⁵ The economic dimension of the Jewish role in the *adventus* ceremony and the religious meaning of formal Jewish acclamation of papal authority co-exist and are mutually reinforcing.⁹⁶

Although texts that describe *adventus* from later centuries may indeed reflect the Jews' "dual discursive competence" within the ritual,⁹⁷ the sources from the twelfth century do not support Linder's claim that a covert Jewish meaning had existed from the beginning. Sources from later centuries should not be extrapolated back in time to explain events taking place in the twelfth century. In fact, the Roman Jews had much to gain from participating in a civic/liturgical ritual that acknowledged their acceptance of the ruling authority and maintained their roles as legitimate members of the civic community.

It must also be emphasized that, during the twelfth century, no fewer than six popes issued *Sicut Judaeis* in an attempt to protect the Jewish community.⁹⁸ Evidence of a *quid pro quo* relationship between *Sicut Judaeis* and the Jews' participation in *adventus* is not found in the sources, although certainly the popes of that century who conducted *adventus* rituals also decreed *Sicut Judaeis* during their pontificates.⁹⁹ Rather than point forward to the increasingly vexed relations between Jews and the papacy in

laudes; et III libras et dimidiam piperis et duas libras et dimidiam cinnamoni afferunt ad cameram" (*Liber censuum*, 1:306 [56]; Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial*, 193).

⁹⁵ Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, *6.

⁹⁶ Although Linder notes in his discussion of this passage the significant fiscal and mercantile roles the Jewish community were expected to play ("Ritual Encounter of Pope and Jews," 359), he downplays these functions in his overall interpretation.

⁹⁷ Linder, "Ritual Encounter of Pope and Jews," 356.

⁹⁸ Solomon Grayzel, "The Papal Bull *Sicut Judeis*," in Ben-Horin, *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, eds. Meir Ben-Horin, Bernard D. Weinryb, and Solomon Zeitlin (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 243–280; Kenneth R. Stow, "The Church and the Jews," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History* 5, ed. David Abulafia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 216; Champagne, "Celestine III and the Jews," 273–275.

⁹⁹ Twyman, *Papal Ceremonial at Rome*, 204, asserts that, if the presentation of the Torah in later twelfth-century *adventus* was basically a "recognition of sovereignty, it seems highly probable that its introduction was also related to the promulgation of *Sicut Judaeis*."

subsequent centuries, the gradual crystallization of both *Sicut Judaeis* and the papal *adventus* ceremony in fact provide additional insights into the perspective that the Jewish population of Rome had on their city in the particular context of the twelfth century.

Conclusion

The distinctive nature of the Jewish community thriving within Rome, the capital of Christendom, set it apart from other communities of the Jewish diaspora during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Roman Jewish community enjoyed particular prominence as a center of Talmudic study and as the source of legal guidance and diplomatic assistance to the communities of Northern Europe. As a result of their long-standing settlement within the city, these same Jews had also established a close relationship with the papacy, enhanced by the patronage of the Pierleoni nobles. While steadfastly maintaining their distinctive religious traditions and rituals, these Jews also participated in papal ceremonial as a vital component of their Roman civic duty.

The Christian landscape of twelfth-century Rome, layered with artifacts that served as reminders both of its past in imperial antiquity and its present as a Christian city, was likewise saturated with Jewish cultural memory. Christian tradition had long associated the Lateran basilica with Jewish history, an association that was intensified by competition with St. Peter's for the coveted appellation of *mater et caput*. The claims of the Lateran to possess the sacred vessels from the Jerusalem Temple played an important role in this contest. Such public disputes reverberated beyond Rome's Christians into the local Jewish community. Benjamin of Tudela's report that the famous bronze columns from Solomon's Temple survived in Rome was reinforced by prevalent belief among Rome's Jews that the city had been a repository for various sacred relics following the destruction of the Temple. Benjamin's report on the Jewish community of Rome tapped into widely disseminated Jewish traditions about the city. Yet, several of its distinctive elements, especially its highly specific references to ancient artifacts and their locations also discussed in Roman-Christian sources, suggest a more local Roman perspective and thus attest to the salience of these traditions among Roman Jews.

The Jews and Christians of Rome were organized into distinct communities, the boundaries of which were not only reinforced on a daily

basis but were regularly performed on ceremonial occasions such as the papal *adventus*. Nevertheless, these communities remained bound together by a highly localized discourse about the past that suffused their shared urban landscape with a surfeit of memory and meaning.

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