Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times
Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times

Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, its Meaning, and Consequences

Edited by
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Laughing at the Beast: The *Judensau*:
Anti-Jewish Propaganda and Humor from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period

Around 1900, the visitors of a fair in Saxony might have come across a traveling theater that was performing there, and if they stayed for the afterpiece, they might have been entertained with a puppet that is now kept at the Municipal Museum in Munich: a pig that, whenever the strings are pulled, is turned into a *Schacherjude*, the ‘classical’ figure of a bearded Jew, bearing all the stereotyped facial features and extending a hand in a gesture that should evoke the idea of haggling, of reaching out for money. The swift transformations from sow to Jew to sow, enabled by a tilting mechanism, must have left a deep impression on the spectators who saw the two images blurring into one right in front of their eyes. Although this device is in its simplicity a far cry from the complex and sophisticated medieval and early modern *Judensau* icons and shares nothing but the most basic features with them, it must have brought to mind to spectators the very image of the *Judensau* and further cemented a connection that lay at the basis of probably the most successful anti-Jewish image in the German speaking realm: the Jew *per se* is equal to a sow, and therefore barely, if at all, human. Therefore it is absolutely justified, even inevitable, to laugh at him; he deserves no better.

The oldest example of a *Judensau* that is still in existence, although badly weathered, is dated to about 1230 and located in the Cathedral of Brandenburg an

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1 Stefan Rohrbacher and Michael Schmidt, *Judenbilder: Kulturgeschichte antijüdischer Mythen und antisemitischer Vorurteile* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1991), 28–31, with illustration. I would like to express my gratitude to Albrecht Classen and Jean N. Goodrich for their valuable comments and corrections of the whole article.
der Havel (northeastern Germany, between Magdeburg and Berlin), where it forms the capital of a column in the cloister of the Cathedral. While the main features of the typical Judensau are present in this relief—the sow, the suckling, and the Jewish hat—it differs from the later pieces due to the beast-human hybrid character that the sow and one piglet display: both feature a human head (with the sow wearing a hat that resembles the typical pointed Jewish hat) and a human arm instead of one of their legs. This composition is therefore reflecting the quite common subject of beast-human hybrid figures of medieval art in general, yet it is not an ‘ordinary’ human whose head is placed on the animal’s body, and whose offspring is suckling her teats, but clearly a Jew. In addition to that, there are two human figures flanking the sow: a woman in front of the sow seems to be feeding it while a man wearing a long coat is crouching behind the animal and reaching toward its backside, a scene at least foreshadowing the later common composition of a man caressing the sow’s anus.

These two activities of the Jews, the suckling of the sow’s teats and the occupation with the animal’s hindquarters, turned out to become the key features of the Judensau that were repeated in almost all of its renditions, even if the composition of the figures differed in their setup. The other (still existing) early-to mid-thirteenth-century Judensäue too vary profoundly from what would eventually emerge as the ‘classic’ type. The Judensau of St. Mary’s at Lemgo (southwest of Hanover) from around 1310 features a kneeling man wearing a Jewish hat who is embracing and (probably) kissing a sow. In the Cathedral of Xanten, an ensemble consisting of a sow, a Jew, and a little hybrid monster are depicted on a corbel in the north side of the choir; the Jew, recognizable as such with his Jewish hat, side-locks and chin-beard, is half-kneeling, his head turned toward the beholder, while the sow is biting into the pointed end of his hat. The

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tiny monster, interpretable as a Jew\textsuperscript{4} with side-locks and a hat and nothing but a trefoil leaf covering its buttocks, sucks the sow’s teats. The sow-kissing Jew in the nave of Mary Magdalene’s church in Eberswalde (northeast of Berlin), and the Jew who is pushing away one of the piglets that are suckling a sow’s teats in a church in Bad Wimpfen (north of Stuttgart) are further examples of the variations of yet one and the same topic.\textsuperscript{5}

One of the main questions remains why the \textit{Judensau} developed primarily in the German speaking regions. Isaiah Shachar sees different readings and interpretation of Biblical texts, an aligning of the swine with the Jews in Hrabanus Maurus’ \textit{De universo}, at the origin of the development, contrasting the German tradition with the English that is remarkably void of the Jew-sow motif, in spite of the quite numerous examples of sows, often with suckling piglets, in English churches and monasteries as well as in manuscripts of bestiaries. Both traditions share the idea of the filthiness of the swine,\textsuperscript{6} utilizing the animal to symbolize impurity, thus also serving as a symbol for heretics, and the vices of \textit{luxuria} and \textit{gula},\textsuperscript{7} yet the sow-with-piglets seems to be a distinctive feature of the English manuscript illustration. Recently, Israel Yuval has launched the appealing theory

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{5} Shachar, \textit{Judensau}, 16–19, pl. 7–12. Recently, the sculpture in Bad Wimpfen (gargoyle) has been replaced by a replica while the original has been moved to the municipal museum.
\item\textsuperscript{6} Alexandra Cuffel, \textit{Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic} (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 40–45, explores the classical and late antique roots of the image(s) both the Jewish and Christian Middle Ages had of the pig.
\end{itemize}
that the *Judensau* motif derived from the vilification of the Messianic donkey, that it is, in fact, its satiric opposite.  

The early types, as much as they differ from what is to become the ‘classical’ *Judensau*, nevertheless give not only evidence of the quite wide-ranging distribution of the general image of sow-with-Jew but share characteristic traits that make them predecessors of the later derogatory image. Be it the dehumanizing of the Jew by using the hybrid forms in the Brandenburg and Xanten examples, the sow-kissing Jew of Eberswalde with its allusion to the sodomy proclivities of the sexually deviant Jew, its emphasis is on the Jews’ beastly, non-human descent, similar to other beast-Jew hybrids like the one that adorns the corbel of a column in the cloisters of the Carmelite monastery in Bamberg (see figure 1). The oldest depiction that shows all the main features which in the centuries to come would add up to the ‘classical’ image of the *Judensau* is probably the one at the Cathedral of Magdeburg from the last third of the thirteenth century, a carved frieze on the wall of the (former) atrium, thus visible to all upon entering the church. The frieze is badly damaged today, yet the main characteristics are clearly discernible: on two sides of a corbel, a huge sow is depicted with its head reaching around the corner, and a Jew wearing a long frockcoat, a conical hat, long hair and beard is standing behind her while a second Jew, similarly attired, is kneeling beneath the sow, holding and suckling one of her teats. Due to the damage, we cannot determine fully whether the Jew standing behind the sow is reaching toward her anus since his arms have broken off; also the heads of the two piglets, one sitting under the sow’s belly, the other standing beneath her head, are missing. On the other side of the corbel, in front of the sow, a woman is picking an acorn from a tree while holding a bowl, behind her, a Jew is depicted holding an open scroll.

None of the thirteenth-century *Judensäue* stands alone. In Brandenburg an der Havel and Xanten, the *Judensau* images are contrasted with battle scenes between representations of evil. In Brandenburg, dragons are fighting knights or mangling their already dead bodies, while at Xanten, the encounter of the evil forces —fighting dragons on the one and the *Judensau* on the other corbel—is contrasted by the holy scene that is going on above, in the scene the sculptures standing on the two corbels represent: the Visitation scene, the meeting of Mary and

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9 The idea of the sexually insatiable Jew has already been introduced by antique writers, including Tacitus, see Jan Nicolaas Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 142.

Elizabeth.\textsuperscript{11} The \textit{Judensau} at Magdeburg is part of an elaborate cycle that Isaiah Shachar interprets as a series of vices that are portrayed by usage of human-animal pairings: a naked girl, with a ram and apes as the allegorization of \textit{luxuria} whereas the sow and the Jews are representing \textit{gula}, gluttony. Twelfth-century bestiaries give a hint as to what the sow stands for in medieval iconographical context:\textsuperscript{12} a representation of slack penitents, of sinners who return to their sin, reflecting the words of St. Peter that “the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Peter 2:22), which is considered an even greater sin than just sinning once, because it means despising the forgiveness that was granted to the sinner due to his, or her, repentance. This passage also established the equation of Jews with both swine and dogs by Christian polemics, particularly from the eleventh century onwards;\textsuperscript{13} a more widespread adaptation was triggered by the allusion in the \textit{Decretum Gratiani} that, referring to the council of Agde from 506 C.E., declared that Jews who considered baptism should remain catechumens for eight months since they “tend to return to their vomit because of their perfidy.”\textsuperscript{14} The swine, an animal already linked to leprosy and skin diseases by authors like Plutarch\textsuperscript{15} and further stigmatized by the Bible as standing for unclean, sinful people, negligent penitents and heretics as well as being associated with luxury and gluttony, therefore was the ‘ideal’ beast to be connected with Jews: it was the Jews that often served as representatives of unwanted Christian behavior, pairings of Jews and heretics had become, according to Lipton,

\textsuperscript{11} Shachar, \textit{Judensau}, 17.


\textsuperscript{15} Frey, “Vergleiche von Juden mit Hunden,” 122, points out that this literary image was also used as an argument for the (financial) support of newly baptised Christians lest they are forced to return to their old religion like a dog to its vomit.

\textsuperscript{15} Sevenster, \textit{The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism}, 137–38.
commonplace by the thirteenth century. Jews were closely connected with the sins of greed and excessive luxury, and there is but little doubt that Christians were aware of the Jewish ritual regulations that marked the swine as unclean, adding yet another layer of insult to the equation.

Yet as much as these interpretations fit with the medieval usage of animal symbolism, it is, however, crucial, as Alexandra Cuffel has pointed out, to seek for other animals or iconography in the surroundings of the Judensau image that may not be part of the cycles of vices but provide an additional connection to Jews, thus allowing anti-Jewish polemics to appear repeatedly in many churches of medieval Christiandom, even if these are not placed in the foreground. As much as treating any artistic denigration of Jews as primarily, even exclusively, anti-Jewish propaganda would reduce the complexity of medieval metaphorical and pictorial language, minimizing the at least mocking effect these depictions presented at the expense of the Jews would amount to ignoring crucial aspects. Animals which, in their own surroundings, represented primarily other sins or vices, like the (similarly not kosher) rabbit that stands for sexual promiscuity and homosexuality, the owl and its representation of darkness, or the goat with its strong connection


17 The pig as a derogatory image was neither reduced to Jews nor used exclusively by Christians. Both Christians and Jews equated Muslims to pigs, see Cuffel, Gendering Disgust, 76 and 134, with the example of the Nizzahon Yashan, see also Israel Jacob Yuval, “They tell lies: you ate the man’: Jewish Reactions to Ritual Murder Accusations,” Religious Violence between Christians and Jews: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives, ed. Anna Sapir Abulafia (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 86–106, particularly 91–94; Martin Przybilski, “Zwei Beispiele antichristlicher Polemik in Spästantike und Mittelalter: tol’dot jeshu und nizzachon ja'chan” Juden und Christen in Mittelalter und Frühneuzeit, ed. Eveline Brugger and Birgit Wiedl (Innsbruck, Vienna, and Bolzano: StudienVerlag, 2007), 253–68, particularly 260–64, and the contribution of John Sewell in this volume. Furthermore, there are other humiliating rituals that include Jews and swine, like the infamous oath-taking on a swine’s skin (actually with few ‘real-life’ examples), whereas elder ceremonies feature a goat’s skin (twelfth century, only one reference), see a summary of the discussion by Gundula Grebner, “Haltungen zum Judeneid: Texte und Kontexte der Frankfurter Eidesformeln im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert,” “...Ihrer Bürger Freiheit”: Frankfurt am Main im Mittelalter. Beiträge zur Erinnerung an die Frankfurter Mediaevistin Elsabet Orth, ed. Heribert Müller. Veröffentlichungen der Frankfurter Historischen Kommission, 22 (Frankfurt a. M.: Waldemar Kramer, 2004), 141–73.

18 Cuffel, Gendering Disgust, 229–31.


20 Higgs Strickland, Saracens, Demons, & Jews, 137.
with the devil, nevertheless could form a second, more loose cycle that was based on the ‘lowest common factor’: the Jews. Jews suckling a lamb’s tail,²¹ heretics kissing a cat’s anus:²² applying their mouths—site of the ingestion of the immaculate Host by good Catholics—to filthy animal orifices²³ not only aroused disgust against the offenders, be they Jews or other, and drew derogatory smirks, but evoked further association. Money, filth and even obscenity, come to mind, thus providing another link to the Jews; what Sara Lipton has demonstrated so convincingly for the linkage of cat-heretics-Jews is even more applicable to the iconographical patterns surrounding the swine: related yet hitherto unconnected images were strung together to form a new whole.²⁴

The manifold attitudes of the Middle Ages toward animals cannot be discussed here because it was so manifold and could even include friendship and love²⁵; yet it is crucial to an examination of the Judensau to consider at least a few points. In contrast to the clear separation between human being and beast that was upheld during the early Middle Ages, the insult consisting more in the equation with the irrational beast,²⁶ the gap started to close from the twelfth century onwards when animals became more and more humanized while simultaneously, the ‘beast within’ was being recognized in the human beings.²⁷ Animals were being held responsible for their actions and trials against them, though remaining a rarity, were held particularly against swine,²⁸ while punishment through (self-) humiliation by equating the delinquent with an animal spans from the Middle Ages²⁹ throughout the Early Modern Period.³⁰ Animals figure prominently in

²¹ Higgs Strickland, Saracens, Demons, & Jews, 120.
²² Lipton, Images of Intolerance, 88.
²³ Lipton, Images of Intolerance, 90.
²⁴ Lipton, Images of Intolerance, 90.
²⁷ Salisbury, The Beast Within; Peter Dinzelbacher, Das fremde Mittelalter: Gottesurteil und Tierprozess (Essen: Magnus Verlag, 2006), 139. Furthermore, animal behavior was described to convey moral lessons and point out desired Christian behavior, see Higgs Strickland, “The Jews, Leviticus, and the Unclean,” 203.
²⁸ Dinzelbacher, Das fremde Mittelalter, 110–11 and 113. The system of trial and punishment worked the other way round, too: e.g., according to Burgundian law, a falcon that had been stolen had the right to pick six ounces of flesh out of his thief’s body, id., 143.
²⁹ Famous is the scene of El Cid’s reconciliation with King Alfonso where he, in an act of self-humiliation, acts like cattle: “Forthwith to earth he bends him on the hand and on the knee. And the grass of the meadow with his very teeth he rent.” Quoted after the online version of The Lay of the Cid, translated by R. Selden Rose and Leonard Bacon (Berkeley: University of California
medieval iconography, both as ‘themselves’ and as representation of one or more characteristics, traits, or groups of people. While some beasts are assigned an exclusively positive image, like the panther or the phoenix, others, like the dog, are of diverse interpretation, according to the context they are used in. Allegories of Jews and animals are manifold, and it does not come as a surprise that those linked with the Jews, the sow being but one among them, are in the rarest of cases provided with a positive interpretation. Instead, they are regularly associated with uncleanness and irrational and bestial nature. The aforementioned rabbit, or hare, with its connotation of sexual deviance, is hunted to death by dogs, as Christians will eventually overcome the Jews. The owl with its preference for darkness over light is equated with the Jews’ obstinate refusal of the light of Christ, and is attacked by smaller birds, like righteous Christians would rebel against the wicked Jew while the owl-Jew remains stoic, persevering in his wrongs. Lest the spectator miss the connection, a more visible insult was sometimes added by giving depictions of owls’ ‘Jewish features’ by turning its beak into the likeness of a hooked nose. Obduracy against the truth of the Christian faith had been, and would remain, one of the central reproaches against the Jews throughout the Middle Ages, utilized already in the vernacular sermons.

30 Bianca Frohne, “Narren, Tiere und gewöhnliche Figuren: Zur Inszenierung komischer Körperlichkeit im Kontext von Blößstellung. Spott und Schande vom 13. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert,” Glaubensstreit und Gelächter: Reformation und Lachkultur im Mittelalter und in der Frühen Neuzeit, ed. Christoph Auffarth and Sonja Kerth. Religionen in der pluralen Welt, 6 (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2008), 19–54; here 42–43, gives the example of what is known as Schandsteine (literally ‘stones of disgrace’), stones in the shape of animals that were considered disgusting or infamous, like dogs or toads, that had to be carried around by the perpetrator as a form of public punishment.
32 Peter Dinzelpacher, “Mensch und Tier,” 220. See below for the usage of dogs with regard to Jews.
36 Miyazaki, “Misericord Owls and Medieval Anti-Semitism,” 28–29; Higgs Strickland, Saracens, Demons, & Jews, 77–78, who gives evidence of the hooked nose being a general signifier of ‘evilness’, e.g., used in images of (non-Jewish) executioners or torturers of saints, see also Amishai-Maisels, “Demonization of the ‘Other’ in the Visual Arts,” 53–54, with the example of an English manuscript where in the betrayal of Christ, the Romans are depicted as black (i.e., Muslims) with hooked noses and Jewish hats.
of the early Middle Ages, an obduracy, almost defiance, that was all the worse because it was done deliberately; and thus Christians felt a certain right to mock the Jews since their obduracy provoked it.

The ravenous hyena, changing its sex at will and devouring corpses, is as much a symbol of the unclean, idolatrous Jew as the mythical manticore of the mid thirteenth-century Salisbury bestiary with its pointed Phrygian hat, long beard and grotesque profile; their monstrosity, so pointedly non-human, is even heightened by the deeds they commit. The manticore-Jew hybrid has the remains of a human leg between his jaws, the hyena feeds on human corpses: an allusion to both cannibalism associated with monsters and barbarians, and ritual murder accusations against Jews, the blood libels that had started off in England in 1144—a quite ‘sophisticated’ reference that later would be stripped of all possible ambiguity and be hammered home: possibly in the early fourteenth-century Cologne Judensau, and most definitely, and blatantly so, in the Judensau of


39 The idea that hyenas could change their sex (not only a European-centered myth) goes back to the fact that the genitalia of the female are protruding, thus resembling a penis. Already Aristotle had spoken against that assumption, as the UC Berkeley hyena specialist, Stephen E. Glickman, has pointed out in his summing up of the ‘bad reputation’ history of the hyena, “The Spotted Hyena from Aristotle to the Lion King: Reputation is Everything—In the Company of Animals” Social Research 1995,3, text online at (last accessed on Jan. 30, 2010): http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2267/is_n3_v62/ai_17909878/?tag=content;coll1.


41 Higgs Strickland, Saracens, Demons, & Jews, 136, figure 60 and pl. 3; Pamela Gravestock, “Did Imaginary Animals Exist?,” The Mark of the Beast, 119–40; here 121.


44 Shachar, Judensau, 24–25.
Frankfurt that was linked to the alleged murder of Simon of Trent, leaving no place for doubts about the Jews’ viciousness. With the new emphasis on transubstantiation and the Eucharist emerging as a sacrament, the accusations of host desecration and blood libels are mirrored in the depiction and presentation of Jews in many regards: apart from allusive motifs like Jews holding knives or having bloodstains on their clothes, scenes of Jews abducting, tormenting, and slaughtering a Christian child very quickly became a popular subject for paintings and, particularly, prints, intensifying and channelling the anti-Jewish sentiments that culminated in the abovementioned combination of a *Judensau* and the blood libel of Simon of Trent.\(^{45}\)

Equally vicious is the scorpion who surfaces particularly as the heraldic animal on banners, pennants, shields, and armors of Jews appearing in passion plays and passion scenes in the visual representations; sometimes, the allegorical figure of *Synagoga* accompanying a group of Jews is also portrayed carrying a scorpion banner.\(^ {46}\) Scorpions, in Christian theological tradition, are not only malevolent but deceitful: they are peaceful in appearance, friendly on the surface, yet woe betide anyone who touches them, they will sting with their venomous barb which they had so treacherously kept hidden from view—like the Jews, who appear as if they meant no harm yet seek to poison Christians with their false teachings. Even as late as 1563, in the infamous broadsheet *Der Juden zukünftiger Messias* that contributed in a major fashion to the dissemination of the *Judensau* image that formed the center of the woodcut,\(^ {47}\) a fire-breathing scorpion is hovering above the procession of Jews who are led to Hell by two devils.

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As serious as the context, and primary intent, of these beast allegories may be, humor if often utilized to add a further quality. The corbels in the choir of the Xanten Cathedral might portray the evil counterpart to the holy Visitation scene they support yet might have drawn the attention of bypassers mainly due to their drôlerie-like appearance, as might the almost caricature-like faces of the owls or the bizarre profile of the manticore, while gargoyles, whichever shape they may take on, had, in addition to inducing fear and intimidation, a definite comical aspect per se. Furthermore, topsy-turvy ness is a key feature of the medieval choice of animals representing Jews: the owl that flies backwards and at night, the hyena and the rabbit who can change their sex, the hybrid manticore and the man- nuring pig: animals who act contrary to nature, like the Jews act contrary to the real faith, a truly abhorrent thing—and yet the comical element of a topsy-turvy world is present, resounding in the inscription attached to the fifteenth-century Judensau in the choir of the Cathedral of Freising that ‘sets it right’ again: “So wahr die Maus die Katz nit frisst, wird der Jud kein wahrer Christ” (as much as the mouse does not eat the cat, the Jew won’t become a true Christian).

Although mentioning that anti-Jewish polemics, in whichever form, existed in regions without Jewish settlements is almost tantamount to a commonplace by now, it is nevertheless important to state that evidence of a connection between the creation of a Judensau in either of the aforementioned cities and actual violence


49 For a detailed study of grotesque Jewish features contrasted with noble Christian faces, see Jung, “The Passion, the Jews, and the Crisis of the Individual,” 154–56, and throughout the article. See further Janetta Rebold Benton, “Gargoyles: Animal Imagery and Artistic Individuality in Medieval Art,” Animals in the Middle Ages, 147–65, particularly 158–59; ead., Holy Terrors: Gargoyles on Medieval Buildings (New York: Abbeville Press, 1997); Albrecht Classen, “Gargoyles — Wasserspeier: Phantasieprodukte des Mittelalters und der Moderne,” (here 127 and 130) and Peter Dinzelbacher, “Monster und Dämonen am Kirchenbau,” both Dämonen, Monster, Fabelwesen, 127–33 and 103–26, respectively. Dinzelbacher, 111, cites the doyen of German art history, Georg Dehio, who complaints about academics taking the grotesque monsters at medieval churches seriously instead of interpreting them as the expression of ‘insignificant humor.’

50 On the topsy-turvy world as a place of inverse relationships of animals and humans, see Janetta Rebold Benton, Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004), 69.

51 The discussion on the comical aspects of the topsy-turvy world and its instrumentalization are manifold. With a focus on the German-speaking areas, see Michael Kupfer, Zur Semiotik der Inversion: Verkehrte Welt und Lachkultur im 16. Jahrhundert (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1993); Komische Gegenwelten: Lachen und Literatur in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit, ed. Werner Röcke and Helga Neumann (Paderborn, Munich, and Vienna: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1999).

52 Shachar, Judensau, 33.
against Jews, or even their physical presence, is scarce.\textsuperscript{53} Jewish settlement took place either later, not before the early fourteenth century (Brandenburg, Bad Wimpfen) or no evidence of a medieval Jewish population can be traced at all (Lemgo). As for Xanten and Magdeburg, cities that not only share the existence of a large medieval Jewish population but also a history of violence against their Jews, any temporal correlation with the existence of a Judensau is unprovable at best. The Jews of Xanten were slaughtered during the first crusade;\textsuperscript{54} whereas Magdeburg, the town that had seen its archbishop Albrecht II kiss the Torah of the Jews who greeted him along with other citizens upon his arrival from Rome in 1207,\textsuperscript{55} persecuted its Jews several times throughout the thirteenth and early fourteenth century. Yet the link between an anti-Jewish riot in 1266/1267 and the dating of the Madgeburg Judensau has been questioned, and proved highly unlikely, by Shachar.\textsuperscript{56} It, however, also signifies that whoever commissioned the creation of a Judensau felt certain that the imagery would be understood, even if the spectators had never once in their lives come across a real Jew.

Why the swine, then? The general importance of images for the inhabitants of medieval Europe cannot be underestimated: Bernhard Blumenkranz called the walls of medieval churches ‘huge picture books’,\textsuperscript{57} while other scholars have pointed out the impact sermons had on the illiterate masses, which taught them how to read the paintings and sculptures they came across in- and outside the church: ‘a picture,’ as (allegedly) Pope Gregory the Great put it in a letter, ‘is like a lesson for the people.’\textsuperscript{58} Nevertheless, manuscripts remained exclusive to a

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\item \textsuperscript{53} Edith Wenzel has stated the same for Frankfurt and Alsfeld as the place of late medieval passion-plays, where the Jewish population has been overestimated, “Do worden die Judden alle geschant”: Rolle und Funktion der Juden in spätmedeulerlichen Spielen. Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur, 14 (München: Fink, 1992), 12–13; for Naumburg see Jung, “The Passion, the Jews, and the Crisis of the Individual,” 173–74.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgung während des Ersten Kreuzzugs, ed. Eva Havercamp. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Hebräische Texte aus dem mittelalterlichen Deutschland, 1 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2005), 432–43 (Hebrew and German translation).
\item \textsuperscript{56} Shachar, Judensau, 19.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Bernhard Blumenkranz, Juden und Judentum in der mittelalterlichen Kunst (Stuttgart: W. Kohhammer, 1965), 9.
\item \textsuperscript{58} See for a recent summary of the extensive discussion the highly instructive article by Sara Lipton, “Images and Their Uses,” The Cambridge History of Christianity, 4: Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100–c. 1500, ed. Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge
minority of the population\textsuperscript{59}; the deciphering of vice cycles requested either a certain level of education or constant re-hearing about it,\textsuperscript{60} and to fully appreciate their various allegations required a profound religious knowledge that went beyond years of exposure to sermons, however explanatory, and having been read Biblical and liturgical texts.\textsuperscript{61} Even more so, to really and fully understand the vileness and malignance of a scorpion or the obduracy of an owl, it was indispensable to have undergone a certain education.\textsuperscript{62} Therefore, it does not surprise that the equations of Jews with beasts that prevailed, and moved out of their sophisticated context, were those with animals that were ‘accessible’ in everyday contact and therefore understandable to the populace. Jews sentenced to death by hanging were accompanied by two dogs that were hanged on either side of the Jew;\textsuperscript{63} Jews were riding goats or were accompanied by these, like the Synagoga statue at Erfurt that holds a goat’s head. Whereas medieval art was more to bring to life already existing teaching and not to teach new things,\textsuperscript{64} people would need no additional explanation, given before or after contemplating the image, to understand the filthiness of a swine. Even if the uneducated spectators missed the link of Jews–swine–devil, they would understand the very mundane association of Jews with filth, stench, and uncleanness. Pigs were linked with excrement and wrong belief already in early Christian symbolism (which they

\textsuperscript{59}Lipton, “Images and their uses,” 262.

\textsuperscript{60}Lipton, “Images and their uses,” 264, cites the story about Duke Godfrey of Bouillon, who, even after listening to the sermon, demanded explanations of every single image and picture in a church.


\textsuperscript{62}Still basic on the question whether medieval ‘pictures speak for themselves’ is Lawrence G. Duggan, “Was Art Really the “Book of the Illiterate”?,” Word and Image, 5.3 (1989), 227–51. See also Lipton, “Images and Their Uses,” and Messerli, “Intermedialität.”


\textsuperscript{64}Lipton, “Images and their Uses,” 264.
shared with Pagans and Jews), while the foetor iudaicus derived from a punishment for the killing of Christ—and the Judensau brought these two elements together: the pigs and their excrement, and the Jews who feed on them. Yet the pig as a symbol for filth and dirt was to a great extent self-explanatory: it was visible and smell-able for the majority of people on a daily basis. And however often Christians would consume pork— the sow remained the only mammal the milk of which was not put to use— and even if they were not aware of the antique theory that the mere tasting of a sow’s milk would result in contracting rashes, even leprosy, they would perhaps smile about the fact that the Jews, who abstained from eating pork, would feed on the very part that was not fit for consumption.

In the course of the fourteenth century, the Judensau took on a more and more unified appearance that in its main traits resembled the Magdeburg frieze: apart from a few examples (Cologne, Colmar), the ‘standard’ Judensau was now a standing sow that was held by or touched at the head by a Jew standing in front of it. One or more usually smaller Jews were kneeling below its belly and suckling its teats while another Jew was busy fondling the animal’s hindquarters. It was, however, a depiction still exclusively utilised by the church: sculptures of the Judensau remained on the in- or outside of churches or monasteries, and about half of the fourteenth-century Judensau sculptures form a part of a cycle of vices, with their representation of gula remaining the key (if not only) function. However, the

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65 Cuffel, Gendering Disgust, 67.
67 See Shachar, Judensau, pl. 18 (Metz, Regensburg), 19–21 (Uppsala), 23 (Gniezno), 25b and c (Nordhausen), 26–27 (Wittenberg). Other Judensau statues have been documented for Ahrweiler (ca. 1295, gargoyles at St Laurent’s church), Bacharach (ca. 1290, Werner’s chapel, gargoyle), Bamberg (Cathedral), Basel (ca. 1432, destroyed), Bayreuth (parish church), Bützow (mid-fourteenth century, abbey church), Calbe (gargoyle at St Stephen’s church), Nuremberg (ca.1370, east choir of St. Sebald’s church) and Zerbst (two examples: St Nicolas’ church, ca. 1447; carved wooden beam from a residential house at the market place, now municipal museum), see Hermann Rusam, Judensau-Darstellungen in der plastischen Kunst Bayerns: ein Zeugnis christlicher Judenfeindschaft. Begegnungen, 90, Sonderheft (Hanover: Evangelisch-Lutherischer Zentralverein für Begegnung von Christen und Juden, 2007) and the illustrated book by Regina E. G. Schymiczek, Höllenbrut und Himmelswächter: Mittelalterliche Wasserspeier an Kirchen und Kathedralen (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2006). The often listed gate at Remagen shows a sow and piglets that is, despite the similarities in the structure, without any reference to Jews, see Shachar, Judensau, 12 and pl. 2 and 3a.
68 Shachar, Judensau, 31–32.
additional aspect(s) that was already present in the earliest sculptures was drifting more and more into the focus: with the Jews taking up more and more space, becoming more prominent foreground players, they were being more and more condemned solely for being Jews than for being sinners sticking to their vices. Even if we will have to set the ‘explicit abusive intention’ a lot earlier than Shachar, in fact with the first appearance of the Judensau, it is quite obvious that a shift in the central meaning of the motif occurred.

First and foremost, the Judensau moves from inside to the outside of the churches. With the exception of the Judensau gargoyle of Bad Wimpfen, which is placed about eight metres above ground,\(^69\) the thirteenth-century Judensäue remained on the inside: the atrium of the respective churches in Magdeburg and Lemgo, the nave in Eberswalde, and the choir and the cloisters of Xanten and Brandenburg, respectively. These sculptures and friezes were, unlike their successors, visible only by the visitors of the church, some to an even more limited group of people, those with limited access, e.g., to the cloisters of the Brandenburg Cathedral. However much, though, these Judensäue might have educated, disgusted, and amused Christian churchgoers, there was only a scant chance that they were ever seen by Jews,\(^70\) and even so, their positioning inside churches gives evidence that Jews were not the target audience. They were not intended as jokes, and even if they evoke a smile from a passing-by monk or visitor, their underlying meaning is dead serious: a warning for the Christians not to become a sinner, which was illustrated by a series of depictions the Jews were merely a part of.

The Judensäue (pl.) that follow these early examples are placed quite differently within the ecclesiastical and urban space. Although some remain privy to the eyes of a few, like the carved reliefs in the choir stalls of the Cathedrals of Nordhausen and Cologne, the latter of which, in addition to the sow-feeding and –suckling, features a quite likely allusion to the Werner of Oberwesel legend,\(^71\) or the capitals in Gniezno (Poland) and Metz (France) that are still in the inside of the churches. The majority of the Judensäue of the following centuries, however, were visible from the outside: gargoyles, like on the St Martin’s Minster of Colmar (France, south of Strasbourg) or the St Mary’s church of Heiligenstadt (south-east of Göttingen), or relief sculptures like two of the most prominent examples, those of the Cathedral of Regensburg (Ratisbon, see figure 2) and the parish church at Wittenberg (see figure 3). Although they are placed up high (seven and eight

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\(^{69}\) Shachar, Judensau, 12–13.

\(^{70}\) While there is definite evidence of Christians showing no qualms to enter a synagogue, the question whether Jews had (and wanted) access to churches is much debated, see lately Martha Keil, “Orte der jüdischen Öffentlichkeit: Judenviertel, Synagoge, Friedhof,” Ein Thema – zwei Perspektiven, 170–86.

\(^{71}\) Shachar, Judensau, 24–25; Rohrbacher and Schmidt, Judenbilder, 310–11.
meters respectively), they are in plain view of any passer-by who no longer had to enter the church to experience a shudder of disgust and share a good laugh at the bizarre sight of humans or half-humans suckling the teats of a swine. Shachar identifies the Regensburg sculpture as part of a cycle of virtues and vices—there are sculptures of other animals next to and above the buttress that carries the \textit{Judensau}—but he is definitely a tad too gentle when he doubts any intention as anti-Jewish mockery.\textsuperscript{72}

However much the city of Regensburg, where one of the largest Jewish communities within the realms of the Holy Roman Empire was allowed to flourish, tended to be protective of their Jews and even actively shielded them from the Rindfleisch riots in 1298 and the persecutions accompanying the Black Death in 1349/50,\textsuperscript{73} there is no denying the at least additional, if not already basic purpose of deriding the Jews by use of a metaphorical language even the inhabitants of a ‘Jew-friendly’ city as Regensburg would understand immediately; even more so since the main Jewish living quarters were located in closest vicinity of the Cathedral, the \textit{Judensau} therefore being within immediate sight of those it was mocking.\textsuperscript{74}

The case is different in Wittenberg,\textsuperscript{75} perhaps the most well-known of the \textit{Judensau} sculptures due to Martin Luther’s reference to it in his \textit{Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi} and the inscription subsequently placed above the sculpture, it was however quite singular already in its time of origin. Not only is there no evidence of it being part of a larger motif or cycle, but it takes up the topic of one of the Jews fondling the sow’s hindquarters in a very distinctly obscene way. Had the previous execution of this motif consisted in Jews merely touching the sow’s hindquarters or tail, the Jew of Wittenberg grabs the sow’s behind with both hands, with one hand lifting the animal’s right hind-leg, with the other lifting or holding its tail. His head is tilted to the side, and there can be no mistaking as to where his gaze is directed: right at the sow’s anus. Whereas earlier \textit{Judensäue} serve multiple purposes—representation of vices, warning to the

\textsuperscript{72} Shachar, \textit{Judensau}, 26–27.


\textsuperscript{75} Shachar, \textit{Judensau}, 30–31, 43–51 (on the later history of the Wittenberg \textit{Judensau}), pl. 26–27.
Christians, jibing at Jews—the ‘new’ ones show a single intention, and that is to insult the Jews on as many levels as possible.

With respect to the comical factor, this move of the *Judensau* from the inside to the outside cannot be underestimated in its impact. The recognition of laughing, or rather the different forms laughter can take on, as a way of social interaction goes back a long way,76 while the idea of the imminent importance of (rituals of) laughter for the constitution, consolidation, and communication of communities has been underrepresented,77 at least in a historical context. Werner Röcke and Hans Rudolf Velten have in their anthology translated the concept of ‘laughing communities’ (*Lachgemeinschaften*) into the historical perspective, stressing its importance for the constitution of communities and their self-definition. In the context of these laughing communities,78 it becomes obvious that the relocation of the *Judensau* had multiple effects on both the laughers and those laughed at. By translating it from the ecclesiastical into the lay sphere and moving it down from its former heights to the (almost) eye level of the commoners, the laughing community increased rapidly in number. In addition to that, the laughter took on a new quality since the Jews were excluded from this community in a completely different way.79 In contrast to before, when they were excluded from a joke that was told at a place where they had no or at best only very restricted access to, they were now shut out from it in public, maybe even in their presence, under the eyes of those who were, at that very moment, having fun at their expense. Although this practice of combining two actions—excluding a specific group from the ‘in-group’ of laughers and simultaneously exposing them as the targeted laughing stocks in their presence—was quite commonly used both in pictoral art and on stage against several groups or individuals, e.g., women, beggars, or even the authority, the Jews remained a prime target.80 The further development of the


78 For a definition of the term ‘Lachgemeinschaften,’ see Röcke and Velten, “Einleitung,” ix–xixi.

79 Unfortunately, I did not have the possibility to look into the basic work of Eugène Dupree, who has distinguished in his sociological essay *Le problème sociologique du rire between ‘including’ and ‘excluding’ laughter (rire d’acceuil vs. rire d’exclusion*, quoted after Röcke and Velten, “Einleitung,” xiii), yet his distinction requires further subdivisions.

Judensau gives ample evidence to this. Standing alone, outside any context, moralising or otherwise, the Judensau is no longer an allegory of sinners in the ‘shape’ of Jews but a depiction of Jews. Furthermore, the tendency to an emphasis of the obscene is increasing and translated into other means of dissemination that take up the topic.

One of the most important shifts that characterizes the development of the motif during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is a further expansion of not only the audience but also the ‘owners’ of Judensau sculptures. Had the move from the inside to the outside of churches and monasteries already brought new qualities and aspects—while reducing others—the Judensau becomes more and more personalized in the course of the Early Modern Period. Secular authorities, but also non-official parties, even individuals, begin to take hold of the possibility to acquire their own, personal Judensau. The town officials of Salzburg (Austria) paid the considerable sum of six florins to the known sculptor Hans Valkenauer and the painter Heinrich umb den Juden und saw ratturm (‘for the Jews and sow [on the] tower of the town hall’, see figure 4) in 1487,81 the gate of the castle at Cadolzburg (west of Nuremberg) as well as (presumably) a gate in the town of Aschersleben (south of Madgeburg) sported a Judensau.82 Reliefs with sows suckling Jews appear on private houses, like a pharmacy in Bavaria’s Kelheim (southwest of Regensburg), or in Spalt (south of Nuremberg)83 and Wiener Neustadt, (Austria, south of Vienna)84—everyone could have their own Judensau, at least those who could afford it, could bring it into their own home and enjoy the joke in private. They could present the joke to others and share a laugh with them. The once rather sophisticated (yet no less cruel) witticism, understandable in its entirety to only a few learned scholars, had literally moved down from church spires and out of cloisters and had turned into a broad joke that was accessible to everyone who happened to pass by. The Judensau had now entirely moved from the ecclesiastical to the lay sphere; not only could it be seen but also owned by lay people. This also


82 Shachar, Judensau, 37–38, who is however doubtful of the Ascherleben example since the only reference is to a gate called Sautor (‘sow’s gate’).

83 There is a second Judensau to be found in Spalt, at the parish church St Wenceslas of Theilenberg, today an urban district of Spalt.

meant that Jews now could not only see the *Judensau*, but knew precisely who meant them to see it, adding a personal layer to the multiple levels of insult.

Among these—though not a sculpture but a painting—is the *Judensau* of Frankfurt, along with the Wittenberg example the most influential and widespread depiction. Placed in the public passage of the *Alte Brückenturm*, the busy passage across the river Main, and originally set next to a crucifixion, it introduced in all clarity what the *Judensau* of the choir stall in Cologne had merely hinted at: Above the *Judensau*, a male child was depicted, his naked body covered in wounds while a description explained to the passer-bys that this was, in fact, the famous child-martyr Simon of Trent who had been allegedly murdered by Jews in 1475, triggering a production of broadsheets that aided in spreading the ‘facts’ in a ‘propaganda campaign unique to the late middle ages’. Combined with a display of hitherto unsurpassed obscenity, the effect the Frankfurt rendition of the *Judensau* had must have been overwhelming, evoking a plethora of feelings and sentiments that spanned from abhorrence and loathing to disgust and fear, and, no doubt, laughter of all kinds. More than its predecessors, the Frankfurt *Judensau* is blatantly, even aggressively obscene, adding and re-arranging elements that derived not only from the other sculptured *Judensäue* but showed clear influence of the perhaps most crucial means in the further dissemination of the motif, the woodcut pamphlets that had appeared in the first half of the fifteenth century (see figure 5). The similarities are striking: apart from the suckling Jews, there is a

85 Shachar, *Judensau*, 43–51 (later history of the Wittenberg *Judensau*), 52–61 (later history of the Frankfurt *Judensau*).


Jew, in some reproductions identified as the Messiah, riding backwards while lifting the sow’s tail, another one is kneeling behind the sow, with the animal’s excrement gushing into his eagerly opened mouth while in some renditions, the sow too is devouring a pile of excrement. This particularly disgusting motif of the Jews not only suckling the sow’s milk but devouring its excrement, had been introduced by the woodcuts, its only possible forerunner being the *Judensau* at the east choir of St Sebald’s church in Nuremberg (ca. 1380, see figure 6), where a Jew is collecting the sow’s excrement in a bowl. Faeces were, by both scholarly and popular belief, the food of the devil, thus establishing, or rather cementing, the demonization of the Jews that was further enhanced by the appearance of the goat in the background. The woodcuts, distributed via the new ‘mass media’ of leaflets and broadsheets that literally flooded the Holy Roman Empire in the Reformation period, are the single anti-Jewish joke, often accompanied by various texts which further emphasize the jokes that were made at the Jews’ expense: at the bottom of the earliest of its renditions, it is explained that ‘this is why we do not eat roast pork, and thus we are lustful and our breath stinks’ (*umb dass wir nicht essen swinin brotten, darumb sind wir gel und stinkt untz der oten*). One of the Jews is encouraging the Jew riding on the sow’s back to suck its tail so as to uncover her rectum, while another one is calling the sow ‘our mother’: ample insinuations at the desire of the Jews to consume pork and to interact sexually with what is both a filthy animal and their mother.

While the Wittenberg *Judensau* developed more into a theological emblem due to the works of Luther and Fabricius and their discussion of the *Shem Hamphoras*, the whole image of the Frankfurt *Judensau* is the epitome of topsy-turvyness that catered to the (even) broader masses: riding with your back to the head of the

who classifies twelve different, if overlapping, motifs that were presented on broadsheets (27–33). See also Winfried Frey and Andrea Frölich, *Das Judenbild in den Flugschriften des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Nordhausen: Bautz-Verlag, 2008, CD).  


90 Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder*, 213–14, who points out Luther’s writings about faeces and demonic pollution as well as popular stories such as Till Eulenspiegel, where Jews are tricked into buying a peasant’s faeces as a rare medicament, thus exposing both the Jews’ stupidness and their craving for ‘wrong’ food to ridicule.  


mount, a male devil who sports breasts, a female swine with a boar’s fangs, faeces as edible food, adults suckling like infants—all this contributes to the general composition of the image which features inversion as a key element. Yet the clothes the Jews are dressed in remain realistic, everyday clothes any Jew (and non-Jew alike) of this time might be seen wearing on the street, and thus establish a link to normalcy and reality, enabling the spectator to draw a parallel to ‘real-life’ Jews, even their Jewish neighbours they would encounter during their every-day contact.94 Furthermore, the contrast between the two scenes—the “martyrdom” of Simon of Trent and the Judensau—emphasizes the two antagonists, the (absolute) Pure and the (equally absolute) Impure, whereby the swine adds another detail of defamation: in the particular sphere of their lives where the Jews place the highest value on purity (in Christian observation), they are depicted as ultimately impure. They serve as an abstract model of all that is horrendous and rotten, and yet they are real; and thus, any insults, however violent and vile, and all painful mockery were legitimized by the most horrible crime the Jews were accused of having committed, the murdering of the—almost saintly—young child Simon.95

The Frankfurt Judensau soon became the most popular type of Judensau to be used for leaflets and broadsheets up until the nineteenth century (see figure 7), supplanting the earlier ones. In its various renditions, it stood either alone or with other insulting depictions, or it accompanied, accentuated, or literally illustrated catchphrases, poems, or even longer texts, with the phrase sauff du die milch friß du den dreck, das ist doch euer bestes geschleck (‘you guzzle down the milk and you devour the filth, this is after all your favorite dish’) being the most popular one. Pigs and disgusting, murderous Jews are everywhere: in the early seventeenth-century broadsheet Der Juden Synagog (‘The Jews’ Synagogue)96 the synagogue itself is a pigsty: pigs peep out of every possible window while Jews devote themselves to either criminal activities or studying their false and treacherous books. Surrounded by other derogatory symbols of Judaism like the Golden Calf, the Frankfurt Judensau makes up the center, forming the epitome of evil, filth, and perversion. Claudine Fabre-Vassas has pointed out the omnipresence of the pig not only in Judensau woodcuts—such as the badges of the Jews slaughtering Simon of Trent in a late fifteenth-century Italian engraving that have little pigs in their centers—playing on the image of the Jew as the cannibal butcher who performs on a human being what the Christians carry out around Easter, after a period of abstinence from eating pork during Lent: the slaughtering of the piglets they had

94 The aspect of inversion has been pointed out by Gundula Grebner in her highly instructive article, “Die Judensaudarstellung am Frankfurter Brückentor als Schandbild,” 93.
95 Grebner, “Die Judensaudarstellung am Frankfurter Brückentor als Schandbild,” 93–94.
96 Shachar, Judensau, 57–58, pl. 49.
bred and raised at their homes, spanning, if we want to follow her suggestion, the bridge all the way back to the cannibalistic hyenas and the manticore of the Salisbury bestiary.

Both the broadsheets and Judensau sculptures of the Early Modern Period bring to light all the anti-Jewish elements that had been partially, if never completely, veiled by layers of metaphorical meanings during the Middle Ages. Yet although there is scarcely any other intention than anti-Jewish propaganda, the early modern Judensäue nevertheless consist of several components that cater to different stimuli: the Jews are marked as belonging to the sow, as a different, and lesser form of being, as offsprings of a beast to whom they turn when in need of nourishment; they are connected with obscenity and are branded as bordering on the sodomitic, sporting shady sexual proclivities. Thus, the Judensau stresses the ‘alien quality’ of the Jews that allows the Christian hostility toward Jews to persist beyond the Middle Ages; it has contributed in transferring the primarily religious polemics and antagonism to a broader level, helping fix the stereotyped image in various cultural levels as verbal abuse, jokes, proverbs, and firmly establishing the distinct notion that Jews simply were ‘another category of beings’, a non-human life-form. At the end of the fifteenth century, the Judensau also made it on stage, adding yet another layer of mockery and crude humour, exploiting another means of drawing laughter at the expense of the Jews.

Hans Folz, who had a considerable knowledge of talmudic scripture, accuses the Jews in his die alt und neu ee (“the old and the new marriage”) verbatim of being “step-children of she-monkeys, jennies, and pigs” while a repentant Jew, shocked by the extent of his own blindness, sums up all the “misdeeds” of his faith: their descent from beasts, the envy and hatred they bear against all Christians, their idleness and gluttony, and the eventual result of these character

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97 Fabre-Vassas, *The Singular Beast*, 130–36, fig. 12–14. Hers is definitively a compelling study—the historian may criticize that some of the conclusions are based on evidence and source material too different in time and region, and that she falls for some ‘medieval’ myths that are, in fact, products of much later times, yet one cannot help but acknowledge the power of the sheer amount of symbols and metaphors she unveils.

98 The connection ritual murder-cannibalism was also suggested by Georg R. Schoubek, “Zur Tradierung und Diffusion einer europäischen Aberglaubensvorstellung,” *Die Legende vom Ritualmord*, 17–24; here 17–18, who points out that the accusation of ritual murder and its association with cannibalism can be found in many societies and religious communities as a derogatory incrimination of other religious groups.

99 Still basic is Wenzel, “Do worden die Judden alle geschant”.


traits: usury. In his later and most aggressively anti-Jewish Spil vom Herzog von Burgund (“Play of the Duke of Burgundy”), Folz even extends the catalogue of Jewish misdeeds, having the Antichrist, the fraudulent Jewish Messiah, reel off all the crimes “common” to Jews, from rapacious usury to ritual murders and murders committed by Jewish physicians. As in Die alt und neu e, the effect is intensified by means of the self-accusation of the Jews. In the final scene of the Spil, the Christian characters call for the execution of the Jews, outdoing each other in sadistic and humiliating visions of torture, and the climax is reached when a sow is brought onto the stage and the Jews are forced by threats to lie down below the sow — the sculptures and paintings were brought to life, providing a hilariously funny scene amidst the most cruel fantasies. Vicious humour and funny cruelty, both ‘signature features’ of not only late-medieval humor were united, with some obscenity as a topping to the deliciously venomous mix.

The knowledge among Christians of the Jewish dietary laws, particularly concerning the consumption of pork, cannot be doubted, and the association with the animal the Jews most kept away from, even abhorred, was already in its beginnings decidedly anti-Jewish, despite the contemporary use of the pig as an insult for Christians in Jewish polemics which the Christians were probably aware of. Unclean animals, with the inclusion of pigs, frequently functioned as metaphors for enemies in Jewish tradition: in the Leviticus Rabbah, written in fifth- or sixth-century Palestine, the pig symbolised Rome, along with other unclean animals that represented Babylon (camel), Media (badger), and Greece (hare); both impure ones (meaning Christians) and swine ‘lay in wait for Jewish blood’ in a poem reflecting the horrendous persecutions during the first crusade. The usage of pigs in Jewish texts was however not limited to non-Jews — apart from Pagans and Christians, also ‘bad’ Jews were linked to pigs, a quite similar usage to the Christian tradition of equating Jews, pigs, and ‘bad’ Christians. An acquaintance of both Christians and Jews with the images used by the respective other can be safely assumed, and is sometimes put to use to secretly mock the

102 Wenzel, “Synagoga und Ecclesia,” 76.
103 Wenzel, “Do worden die Judden alle geschant,” 252–54; eadem, “Synagoga und Ecclesia,” 80–81; Po-Chia Hsia, The Myth of Ritual Murder, 63–64, with the connection to the host desecrations of Deggendorf and Passau that appear in many of Folz’s plays and poems.
104 Higgs Strickland, “The Jews, Leviticus, and the Unclean,” 218 and 226–28 with a more than convincing linkage to the Judensau; Cuffel, Gendering Disgust, 52–53.
105 Cuffel, Gendering Disgust, 144.
106 Cuffel, Gendering Disgust, 43–45.
adversary, but it is crucial to stress that although these insults might have been drawn ‘from a common set of symbols,’ they did not carry the same meaning to either of the groups.

Yet however obvious the mocking intention of equating Jews with their ‘negative counterpart’ in medieval art may have been, the reduction to and focussing on the derogatory purpose from the late fourteenth century onwards gave rise to other, more distinct ways of presenting the insult. Not only were the Jews depicted as offspring of the sow and therefore being fed by it, their ‘real-life abstinence’ from eating its meat was exploited to supplement the insult with a further, virtually inverse layer: although the Jews ‘officially’ claim that they do not eat pork they in fact secretly lust for it. Particularly in Judensau broadsheets, where explanatory captions comment on the ongoing scene, the Jews are exposed to mockery also because they lust for what they may not have: but instinct-driven beings as they are, they are eventually unable to suppress their greed, an idea that is reflected in the abovementioned caption of the Frankfurt Judensau that refers to the ‘favorite dish’ of the Jews.

In the translation of the Judensau on the stages of the fifteenth-century theater, this motif is expressed verbatim: Hans Folz, in his Der Juden und der Christen streit vor kaiser Constantinus, a mock-version of the earlier disputations of Ecclesia and Synagoga, ultimately states that it wasn’t for the theological arguments of the Christian that the Jews saw reason and asked for baptism but for their irrepresensible craving for pork sausages—yet, as soon as the Jews will eat them, they will “turn into different kinds of sausages”, indicating that everything the Jews touch turns into something foul. The laughter these scenes evoked was, as Edith Wenzel has

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107 The quite common image of dogs (Christians) hunting after rabbits (Jews) was turned upside down in an illumination of the famous Kaufmann Haggadah (Spain, fourteenth century, now Ms. A 422 of the Kaufmann Collection in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Science, Budapest), where rabbits are putting a dog to flight, see Alexander (Sándor) Scheiber, The Kaufmann Haggadah. Publications of the Oriental Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1 (Budapest: Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1957), 55, see also Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, The Kaufmann Haggadah (Budapest: Kultural International, 1990).

108 Cuffel, Gendering Disgust, 15 (with the inclusion of Muslims); see also Lipton, Images of Intolerance, 141 (‘similarity of the form in no way entails the identity of meaning’).

109 Another of Folz’ dialogues between a Christian and a Jew has been examined by Frey, “The Intimate Other.”

pointed out, springing rather from relishing in humiliating the enemy than from having prevailed in a battle of wits, while combining it with the delight in scatological humour so typical of the Fastnachtsspiele (Shrovetide Plays).\footnote{Wenzel, “Synagoga und Ecclesia,” 73.}

Jews lusting after, eating, or at least trying to eat pork remained a central element of anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic propaganda; in the German-speaking area, the image prevailed in print, literature, and every-day language, the term \textit{Judensau} developing into one of the most common verbal insults toward Jews.\footnote{It is a sad fact that up until today, the equation of Jews with swine is a common means of anti-Semitic propaganda launched by right-wing circles, the example of a pig with a painted-on Star of David and the name of Ignatz Bubis on its back that was herded across Alexanderplatz, Berlin, in 1998 by a group of neo-Nazis (Berliner Zeitung, 9 November, 1998), may serve as one among, unfortunately, all too many examples. See also \textit{Bilder der Judenfeindschaft. Antisemitismus, Vorurteile und Mythen}, ed. Julius H. Schoeps and Joachim Schlör (Augsburg: Bechtermünz, 1999).}

Yet the impact of the \textit{Judensau}, or, rather Jew-with-sow image, went far beyond its geographical scope. English caricatures of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries thematise the attempted emancipation and assimilation of the English Jews by usage of this very image: in demonstrating their emancipation, Jews start to eat pork, pointedly enjoying it, but ‘get it wrong’ by eating the wrong parts or trying to eat it alive—reflecting yet again the association with cannibalism—or kissing, in their enthusiasm, the still living swine and thus repeating the old motif with the connection of obscenity, sexual deviances, and sodomitic tendencies. To further stress their alienness, the Jews of a nineteenth-century caricature speak with a heavy German accent while bystanders laugh at the obvious vainness of their attempts at being naturalized.\footnote{Shachar, \textit{Judensau}, fig. 58a, 59ab and 60ab.}

The nineteenth-century English caricature has at its bottom what had developed into a main target of mockery during the late Middle Ages and the early modern period: a caption of (often fake) Hebrew that accompanied \textit{Judensau} woodcuts\footnote{Shachar, \textit{Judensau}, 34.} or was shown to the audience during passion plays (also in contrast to the Roman INRI).\footnote{Heil, \textit{‘Gottesfeinde’ — ‘Menschenfeinde’}, 173–74.} The Jews’ language was ridiculed, presented as some sort of gibberish no rational human would want to speak; at the same time, the ‘ominous’ quality of their language was pointed out, hinting at a clandestine and most likely hostile communication that was taking place between the Jews, both local and foreign.\footnote{Heil, \textit{‘Gottesfeinde’ — ‘Menschenfeinde’}, 174. See also Mellinkoff, \textit{Outcasts}, 63 (on the connection Jews-sorcery), 95–110.}
Ecclesiastical art, never reluctant to use genuine Hebrew lettering, seized on this trend, perhaps the most famous example being the sixteenth-century altarpiece of St Anthony’s church at Isenheim, painted by Mathias Grünewald and now on display at the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar,\(^\text{117}\) that features a chamber pot with a ‘Hebrew’ inscription, mocking the language and once again stressing the linking of Jews with excrement.\(^\text{118}\)

Despite the ongoing reduction of the imagery to the merely insulting, it is obvious that the connection Jews–pigs–\textit{gula} was neither forgotten nor reduced to depictions of the \textit{Judensau}. The connotation with usury, which the medieval depictions had partially expressed more subtly, was established firmly in the course of the seventeenth century: a money pouch that is dangling off the belt of the Jew kneeling behind the sow was added to some of the renditions of the Frankfurt \textit{Judensau}, making sure that no one missed the connection.\(^\text{119}\) Hans Folz’ \textit{Die alt und neu ee}, to name but one literary example, unmask the Jews as embodiment of \textit{gula} and \textit{luxuria} at the end,\(^\text{120}\) while aspects of the metaphorical language of Hieronymus Bosch (who can, though, not be accused of using simple imagery) show that also late fifteenth-century artists would still put this imagery to good and effective use. Although no Jews are present in person in the two paintings that make up the left wing of the reconstructed ‘New Triptych’ (\textit{Ship of Fools} and \textit{Gula}) and cover several more or less deadly sins, from drinking and unchaste love to selfishness and sloth, not only the exemplified vices are those most conventionally associated with Jews, but there are a number of symbols that point toward the Jews. Most interesting in the present context is the pig’s trotter in the heraldic standard of the tent that houses the two unchaste lovers: not only do pigs’ trotters ‘always crop up in Bosch’s work wherever gluttony or impending poverty are concerned’, the association of pigs and Jews definitely exceeds the mere connotation with the depicted vice(s).\(^\text{121}\)

In the course of the early modern period, particularly enhanced during the Reformation, with Catholics and Protestants of various persuasions attacking each


\(^{118}\) Mellinkoff, \textit{The Devil at Isenheim}, 61, with linkage to the Judensau 65–68, and figure 36, and several mentions of the topic in \textit{Outcasts}; Mentgen, \textit{Juden im Elsass}, 453. See also Lipton, \textit{Images of Intolerance}, 36, on the connection filth/excrement—money; on the usage of Hebrew in woodcuts, see Schöner, \textit{Judenbilder}, 259–62.

\(^{119}\) Shachar, \textit{Judensau}, pl. 41a and 41c, pointed out by Grebner, “Die Judensaudarstellung am Frankfurter Brückentor als Schandbild,” 92. See also Higgs Strickland, \textit{Saracens, Demons, & Jews}, 140–43, on the medieval motif, with further literature.

\(^{120}\) Wenzel, “\textit{Do worden die Judden alle geschant}”, 217.

\(^{121}\) Hartau, “Bosch and the Jews,” 33–35, fig. 1 and 2.
other by use of arguments borrowed from the anti-Jewish arsenal,¹²² and the rapidly increasing use of print media, other defamatory anti-Jewish images evolve along with and in interaction with the Judensau while the Judensau manages to not only intrude into the lay sphere but to eventually advance into the inside of the Christians’ houses. Objects of the daily routine, like playing cards,¹²³ featured the image of the Judensau, allowing it to become an integral part of everyday life—and, presumably, of daily jokes. Other motifs, like the depiction of one or more persons riding with their back turned to the head of their mount, were adapted by and at the same time influenced by the Judensau complex. The Sauritt (‘sow-ride’, also Eselsritt, ass-ride, rarely with dogs or horses) is the typical feature of a type of pamphlet that is known as Schändbild or Schmähbrief (‘defamatory picture/letter’) that evolves into a central means of punishment in the context of the Ehrenstrafen (shame sanction) and is utilised by groups and individuals of various social standing and intention.¹²⁴ Generally, these defamatory pictures show the person(s) they are directed against as riding backwards; if groups of people are depicted, they might also engage in the ‘typical’ habit of occupying themselves with the animal’s behind, shoving seals or money pouches into its hindquarters, or devouring its excrement.¹²⁵ As an illustration to Luther’s pamphlet of 1545, Against the Roman Papacy founded by the devil with its vituperations of Paul III,¹²⁶ the pope himself was shown riding the back of a sow—a woodcut that stands in a tradition of defamatory images against the pope (Papstspottbilder) that showed the pope (Clement IV) in full regalia who is wielding a sword, about to behead the Holy Roman Emperor (Conrad III, The Pope’s Threat), or being himself hanged from the gallows along with his ‘satanic’ cardinals while demons take their souls,¹²⁷ images quite unrelated to any Jewish aspects. On the other hand, the merger of human and beast into an equally horrid and hilarious, even pathetic, creature was an essential element of both political and religious polemics. Creatures like the

¹²² On the complex ‘relationship’ of laughter and religion in the context of the reformation, see Auffarth, “Alle Tage Karneval?,” who addresses the issue of laughter as a long-existent tool in religious practice and ritual, 82–85. See also Amishai-Maisels, “Demonization of the ‘Other’ in the Visual Arts,” 54, on the repertoire of demon-like features (horns, claws, tails, flames, monstrous facial and/or bodily features) and its (almost world-wide) usage up until the twenty-first century.


¹²⁴ Lentz, Konflikt, Ehre, Ordnung, 357–58.


¹²⁶ Stadtwald, Roman Popes and German Patriots, 199–205.
Papstesel (‘Pope-donkey’) and the Mönchskalb (‘monk-calf’), two ‘only recently discovered horrid monsters’ whose existence and appearance was brought to the attention of a wider audience by broadsheets, provoked both horror and laughter, whereby these emotional reactions were not mutually exclusive but could be experienced simultaneously.\(^\text{128}\) Yet there is a difference to be detected between the human-beast hybrids, however commonly used,\(^\text{129}\) and the sow-riding: like the Schmähbriefe, the sow-riding pope not only translated an already well-established image into a new setting that only “worked” because people were already socially conditioned to react properly to the primary stimulus,\(^\text{130}\) but played with an image that would at least with a part of the audience evoke other, and definitely non-papal, associations: unlike the beast-human hybrids, the sow-with-human image was quite firmly linked to one specific group—the Jews.

From the sixteenth century onwards, with the many variations of the Judensau spread by use of printed matters, the Judensau was often no longer standing alone but being surrounded by other, equally derogatory symbols. While the Frankfurt Judensau is in many of its renditions accompanied by a woman leading the symbol of the devil par excellence, a he-goat,\(^\text{131}\) the viciously anti-Jewish text of the leaflet Der Juden Erbarkeit (“On the Jews’ respectability”, 1571) was illustrated by a woodcut on the front cover that shows three grotesque, barely human-shaped figures: two creatures featuring devilish symbols like hooves and talons, horns and antlers, long snouts and pointed ears. Their cloaks, however, bear a circle-shaped emblem that is easily recognisable as the infamous yellow badge that had become widely accepted as a derogative distinctive feature for Jewishness throughout

\(^{128}\) Philipp Melanchton and Martin Luther emphasized in their accompanying explanation of Lucas Cranach the Elder’s woodcuts the beastliness of these creatures and the threat they (and what they allegorically represented) posed, thus triggering or at last fuelling a more fearful reaction; Bianca Frohne has however rightly pointed out that both the intention of the broadsheet and the reaction(s) it provoked encompassed more than fearful and disgusted emotions, and emphasizes the satirical, grotesque, and comical character of these hybrid creatures, see Frohne, “Narren, Tiere und gewichtliche Figuren,” 19–22 and 47–49, and fig. 1 and 2.

\(^{129}\) For the ‘master’ of these human-beast-demon hybrids and their equally terrifying and ridiculing purpose, Hieronymus Bosch, see lately and with regard to this aspect Guido Boulboule, “Groteske Angst. Die Höllenphantasien des Hieronymus Bosch,” Glaubensstreit und Gelächter, 55–78, particularly 67–68. See also Amishai-Maisels, “Demonization of the ‘Other’ in the Visual Arts,” 54, on the depiction of Muslims with the heads of animals.

\(^{130}\) Heil, ‘Gottesfeinde’—’Menschenfeinde’, 151; on the similarities of Catholic reproaches against heretics, witches, and Jews; on the—much discussed—linkage of Jews and heretics, see Lipton, Images of Intolerance, chapter 4 (83–111).

\(^{131}\) See Po-Chia Hsia, The Myth of Ritual Murder, 213–15, with figure 14 (rendition of the Frankfurt Judensau), on the demonization of Jews by use of Judensau and goat.
Europe, complementing and partially replacing the Jewish hat. The third creature to their right, with the same smaller hooves and talons, is riding on the back of a sow and playing some sort of bagpipe while the sow is devouring a pile of excrement. Whereas the sow remains primarily connotated with the Jews, the only ‘rival’ to the swine, the he-goat with its equally strong connection with dirt and filth, and the even stronger allusions of the devil, serves even more comprehensive purposes, as a frequent companion of witches and sorcerers, to name but one example. The illumination however in the thirteenth-century Bible moralisée that shows Jews kissing a he-goat’s anus and the fifteenth-century capital in a Flemish church that features a Jew on the back of a he-goat might be centuries apart and were meant for audiences rather different in number and status, yet the imagery is similar in its intent. The Synagoga statue at Erfurt holds a goat-head, goats appear as mounts of Synagoga, and during the Early Modern Period, the goat with its lascivious character and incessant sexual desire, its stubbornness and its horns became almost as popular and widespread as the Judensau when it appeared on various defamatory pamphlets. Like the Judensau of this time, it combined images deriving from the anti-Jewish arsenal with images that were generally used in a defamatory context: goat-riders, in particular the Ellenritter or Ellenreiter (literally cubit-knight or cubit-rider), a tailor riding a he-

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132 Earlier in Western Europe: In both Ashkenzaic England and Sephardic Spain, yellow was a “sign” of Jews as early as the early 13th century; in 1269 and 1274, the kings of France and England respectively decreed that Jews had to wear a yellow badge on their clothing (Blumenkranz, juden und judentum, 23–24, fig. 14 and 15 that show examples from early 14th century Florence and France, respectively), while in the realm of the Holy Roman Empire, the badge wasn’t generally implemented as a sign before the 15th century (first mention is 1294 in Erfurt, where the Jewish community obtained the permission to not wear the badge which had officially been implemented two years earlier, Germania Judaica I, 216).

133 Winfried Frey has pointed out that in the copy of this leaflet that is kept in the Bavarian State Library in Munich (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München), there’s another defamatory text added to the pamphlet listing (again) anti-Jewish resentments which, among others, express the author’s wish that the Jews ‘may be hanged like dogs’. Frey, “Vergleiche von Juden mit Hunden,” 131.

134 The manuscript was made in the 1220s for the king of France; the context in which the illumination is placed—the worship of the golden calf which is also illustrated in the roundel above, the Jew holding the goat carries a moneybag—firmly establishes the connection avarice-worship of the devil-Jews; many of the images refer in some way to moneylending. Another roundel in the codex shows a Jew kissing the anus of a cat; Lipton, Images of Intolerance, 1 (dating), 42–43, with fig. 26, 49, with fig. 32, 50–51.


goat,\textsuperscript{137} were an image that was often used in a mocking context up until the nineteenth century in both visual art and literature.\textsuperscript{138}

In the context of anti-Jewish mockery and defamation, the goad-riding takes on a particular development that features striking parallels to the \textit{Judensau}: The “traditional” medieval pairing of the allegorical embodiments of Ecclesia and Synagoga,\textsuperscript{139} adorning as sculptures many a Romanesque and Gothic church in the shape of two beautiful female figures\textsuperscript{140} and discussing their respective postulates in various dialogues, developed into a derogatory image of a barely human Synagoga riding a he-goat and an open dispute that not only ended in favour of Ecclesia but with a crushing defeat of Synagoga, often accompanied by violent insults. Whereas the dialogues were like the early Judensau statues and the bestiaries limited to a specific group of readers/viewers both in regard to the accessibility of the objects and to the level of education of the ‘consumers’,\textsuperscript{141} both the vituperations that became a typical part of preludes to passion plays\textsuperscript{142} and the imaginary that developed more and more into a broad joke were meant for a broader public.

\textsuperscript{137} Rohrbacher and Schmidt, \textit{Judenbilder}, 161.
\textsuperscript{138} In one of the stories that the nineteenth century constructed around the historical figure of Appollonius von Gailingen, a fourteenth-century “robber-knight” in Franconia, he calls the wealthy merchants of a town “Käsewürmer, Ellenreiter und Pfeffersäcke” (cheese-worms, cubit-riders, and pepper-bags).
\textsuperscript{140} There has been much discussion about the broad variety of meanings these statues conveyed to the contemporaries, with newer works stressing the intrinsic stage-character of these statues that would cause an entire scene to reel off in the minds of the spectators, impressively “re-enacted” by Helga Sciuie, “Ecclesia und Synagoge an den Domen zu Straßburg, Bamberg, Magdeburg und Erfurt. Körpersprachliche Wandlungen im gestalterischen Kontext,” \textit{Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte XLVI/XLVII: Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Kunst}, vol. 2 (1993/94): 679–88, 871–74 (illustrations); here 684–85, on the basis of the statues of Erfurt and Strasbourg, see also Weber, “Glaube und Wissen,” and Elizabeth Monroe, “‘Fair and Friendly, Sweet and Beautiful’: Hopes for Jewish Conversion in Synagoga’s Song of Songs Imagery,” \textit{Beyond the Yellow Badge}, 33–61, for a more positive image of Synagoga.
\textsuperscript{141} Weber, “Glaube und Wissen,” 94 (education), 96 (accessibility).
Laughing at the Beast: The *Judensau*

The fourteenth-century carvings at the choir stall of the cathedral of Erfurt shows a quite untypical *Judensau*, a mixture of *Judensau* and *Synagoga* in fact, that is part a “Battle of faiths” in which *Ecclesia* is jousting in quite chivalric a manner against *Synagoga*. The carvings show the moment of defeat; *Ecclesia* is about to drive the tip of her lance into *Synagoga’s* throat while *Synagoga* is rendered defenceless. Not only does she have neither shield nor weapon to protect herself with, she is clearly marked inferior because of her mount—and here is where the ridiculous element is tied in: while *Ecclesia* is riding a horse in knightly fashion, *Synagoga* has to make do with a sow. It might well be that the (exaggeratedly) large teats of the sow reminded spectators of other “pairings” of Jews with sows they had come across, thus deriding the Jews not only in an allegorical sense, as ending up on the losing side of the battle of faiths, but as those who drink a beast’s milk, obviously being only half-humans themselves.

The quite frequent inclusion of the *Synagoga* sculpture into the row of the Foolish Virgins might have eluded in its deeper theological meanings the average by-goer, yet they would nevertheless grin at the Foolish Virgins, with their often grotesque grimacing, and thusly at *Synagoga* who stands in their line, marked as foolish, lacking prudence, and therefore being, with no one to blame but herself. With the emergence of what is referred to as *Lebendes Kreuz* (‘Living Cross’), a type of depiction to be found almost exclusively in book illuminations and wall paintings from the fifteenth century onwards in Central Europe, *Synagoga* takes on a completely different shape: blindfolded as usual, yet no longer bearing herself regally but with attributes that are meant to evoke both laughter and disgust in the spectators: she is riding an ass or (less often) a goat, that is in some cases already

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143 The dating of early 15th century (thusly Shachar, *Judensau*, pl. 28) has been corrected by means of dendrochronological examination carried out in 2002 that placed the felling of the trees used for the stalls in the years 1329 and 1364/65, the time of the second expansion of the choir, see Rainer Müller and Thomas Nitz, *Forschungen zum Dom Erfurt. Das Chorgestühl des Erfurter Domes*, 2 vols. Arbeitshefte des Thüringischen Vereins für Denkmalpflege, N.F. 20.1 (2003; Altenburg: Verlag Reinhold, 2005).

144 The Cathedral also hosts a “classical” pairing of Ecclesia/Synagoga statues at the jamb of the main entrance portal in the context of the Ten Virgins.


146 Scurie, “Ecclesia und Synagoge,” 683.

147 Old but still essential is Robert L. Füglistler, *Das Lebende Kreuz*. Ikonographisch-ikonologische Untersuchung der Herkunft und Entwicklung einer spätmittelalterlichen Bildidee und ihrer Verwurzelung im Wort (Einsiedeln, Zurich, and Cologne: Benzinger Verlag, 1964). Most of the images share a quite homogenous setup: In the center, there is Golgatha, with Christ on the cross, and above the joist, God himself appears—in various shapes—with a blessing gestus. Typical are the two female figures that approach the cross—to the left, there is *Ecclesia* with her crown, riding a tetramorph that symbolizes the four Evangelists, she carries the chalice to collect Christ’s blood and the lance with His symbol. To the right is the above described *Synagoga*, who is sometimes paired with Eve while Mary stands at *Ecclesia’s* side.
dying, she not only holds on to a broken lance but carries a goat’s head with her. It is quite evident that her own posture as well as the situation she is in is designed not only to degrade but decry, but the most striking—and telling—difference is the sword that comes thrusting down from the joist: the old statues of Strasbourg and Bamberg might have shown a Synagoga that had been defeated, that was blind and submissively lowering her head, yet a Synagoga that was still alive, whereas in the Living Cross the distinctive feature is that she is being killed, pierced by the sword.\textsuperscript{148} Like the Judensau, the Synagoga in the context of the Living Cross is a figure that is to be laughed at—more on the pathetic, even deplorable side than the Judensau, yet the metaphorical language shows many parallels: the usage of filthy animals—swine, goat, ass—and the close connection that is established between the Synagoga/Jews and those soiled creatures, the riding with one’s back to the animal’s head (although seldomly used in the Living Cross), and the general exclusion from the human world.

The question remains how to deal with the remaining Judensäue that are still present in- and outside medieval and early modern buildings. Some have been removed in earlier times, like the one at the Town Hall of Salzburg which was taken down by command of the Archbishop in 1785, or have weathered away, like the barely recognisable sculpture at the parish church of Bayreuth. Some have been removed ‘by accident,’ like the Frankfurt Judensau that was, despite the pleas of the Jewish community of Frankfurt from as early as 1609 onwards,\textsuperscript{149} torn down along with the Brückenturm in 1801, albeit surviving in its manifold versions on broadsheets and pamphlets.

During the last decades, some have been taken down, like the ones in Wiener Neustadt and Bad Wimpfen that are now on display in the respective municipal museums. Up until today, though, many sculptures still are where they had been placed centuries ago, in plain sight. At some places, plaques have been attached to or in close vicinity of the respective Judensau, explaining the meaning and historical context of the sculpture, albeit in varying degrees of distancing: while the Wittenberg (mounted 1988) and Bayreuth (2005) point to guilt and responsibility of the church, the plaque at Regensburg (2005) merely speaks of ‘a document that is to be seen in the context of its time, and will seem strange to us today.’ In Nuremberg, for instance, a recent comment on the church’s website (www.sebalduskirche.de, 2005) and a flyer that is being distributed inside the

\textsuperscript{148} A particularly impressive example (although not the only one) is the Minster of Freiburg that has both a pairing of Ecclesia and Synagoga sculptures and (as stained-glass windows) a Living Cross, from the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, respectively, see Heike Mittmann, \textit{Die Glasfenster des Freiburger Münsters}. Großer Kunstführer Schnell & Steiner, 219 (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2005).

\textsuperscript{149} Po-Chia Hsia, \textit{The Myth of Ritual Murder}, 210–11.
Laughing at the Beast: The Judensau

church bear both explanation and apology; and artists like Wolfram Kastner (www.christliche-sauerei.de) have alerted both authorities and general public to the problem, drawing both positive and negative reactions, and even the German Pig Museum (www.deutsches-schweinemuseum.de) has devoted a small part of its 2004 exhibition to the Judensau.

Many sculptures, however, still remain uncommented, continuing to stand amidst other testaments of medieval humor, yet both their existence and the negligent, even indifferent handling of that fact are indeed no matter to laugh about.
Figure 1: Bamberg, cloister of the Carmelite monastery: corbel with a Jew-beast hybrid, fourteenth century (photo: @Birgit Wiedl)
Figure 2: Regensburg Cathedral, sculpture of a *Judensau* on a buttress on the south wall of the Cathedral, around 1330 (from wikipedia.de, public domain)
Figure 3: Broadsheet showing the Wittenberg *Judensau*, Wolfgang Meissner 1596. The rendition features the common addition of a second, smaller *Judensau* to the left, while the suckling Jews have badges on their backs (from wikipedia.de, public domain)
Figure 4: Entry to the account book of the Salzburg Mayor Hans Glavenberger, 1487, billing the costs for the *Judensau* on the tower of the town hall (Municipal Archives of Salzburg, BU 264)
Figure 5: *Judensau*. Woodcut, Germany, from a fifteenth-century block (first printed in 1472) (from wikipedia.de, public domain)
Laughing at the Beast: The *Judensau*

Figure 6: Nuremberg, St Sebaldus, sculpture of a *Judensau* on a buttress at the east choir, around 1380 (Bildarchiv Hans-Christoph Dittscheid)
Figure 7: Eighteenth-century broadsheet showing the Frankfurt Judensau, with the typical additions of Simon of Trent above the Judensau, and a woman with a he-goat, a horned devil, and the Old Bridge Tower as background. The line above the Judensau reads: “Au weyh Rabb Ansch au au mauschi au weyh au au” and is in many renditions followed by the ‘invitation’ to ‘guzzle down the milk and devour the filth’ (from wikipedia.de, public domain)