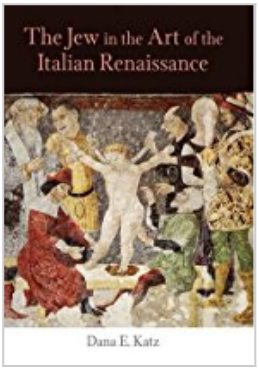

The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance (Jewish Culture and Contexts)

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Yet this written record tells only one part of the story. Pictures tell another. In *The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance*, Dana E. Katz reveals how Renaissance paintings and sculpture became part of a policy of tolerance that deflected violence to a symbolic status. While rulers upheld toleration legislation governing Christian-Jewish relations, they simultaneously supported artistic commissions that perpetuated violence against Jews. The economic benefits Jewish toleration supplied never outweighed the animosity toward Jews' participation in the Christian community.

Katz examines how particular forms of visual representation were used to punish Jews symbolically for alleged crimes against Christianity, including host desecration, deicide, and ritual murder. The production of such imagery testifies to the distinctive Jewry policies employed in the northern Italian princedoms, republican Florence, and imperial Trent. The book provides new insights into famous masterworks by Andrea Mantegna, Paolo Uccello, and others, placing these paintings within a larger discourse that incorporates noncanonical, provincial works of art.

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Review

"A rigorous, well-written, and readable book on the sensitive topic of Christian anti-Judaism and its manifestation and transmission in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian art. *The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance* will stand as the definitive study of its topic."—Stephen Campbell, The Johns Hopkins University

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Introduction

Princes, Jews, and the Rhetoric of Tolerance

Before the calm night sky and peaceful rolling hills of a northern Italian landscape, a Jewish moneylender, his wife, and two young children are burnt at the stake in Paolo Uccello's 1468 predella panel for the Corpus Domini Altarpiece in Urbino. Renaissance paintings in other northern Italian cities resemble Uccello's panel in that they portray Jews as deviant outcasts of Italian society. In Mantua's Santa Maria della Vittoria, a Madonna and Child altarpiece depicts the Jewish moneylender Daniele da Norsa who allegedly desecrated a Christian image. In Ferrara's Augustinian refectory at Sant'Andrea, a fresco represents the slaying of Synagoga, the personification of Jews and Judaism, despite St. Augustine's prophetic policy on Jews in Christendom: "Slay them not, lest they forget your law." Placed within ecclesiastical and monastic spaces for Christian consumption, these paintings are images of punishment, commissioned or approved by the despotic rulers of Italy to humiliate and deprecate Jews.

In contrast to the antipathy toward Jews portrayed in painting, contemporaneous written documents suggest that the Renaissance was a period of unusual tolerance and privilege for Jews. Marquis Francesco Gonzaga, for example, stated in a *grida* (proclamation) dated 2 March 1515 that the recent popular uprising against the Jews in Mantua greatly displeased him. The *grida* explains that Jews are tolerated by the Roman Church and must also be tolerated in the Gonzaga dominion by the marquis's subjects. Accordingly Francesco declares, "no one under any condition, now or in the future, can dare presume to injure or displease any Jew in any way under penalty of three pulls of the cord [i.e., the rope hoist, an instrument of torture]." The marquis explains that the penalty is irreversible and will take place immediately. Moreover, if the offense committed against the Jew is particularly egregious, the marquis will adjust the punishment to fit the crime.

Scholars, influenced by the rhetoric of contemporary state letters, princely decrees, and notarial registries, have portrayed the Renaissance as a period of unusual princely toleration for Jews and the Italian principalities as a safe haven for Jewish difference. Cecil Roth in his *History of the Jews of Italy* speaks of an idealistic toleration of Jews in fourteenth-century Italy, free from religious and sociopolitical persecution by the Italian princes, prelates, or populace. Roth writes:

> This period of expansion was from some points of view the golden age of Italian Jewish

> history. In the south, the ruined Jewries were being nursed back into life; in the north, there was steady growth, general prosperity and a ferment of intellectual activity. A flow of immigrants arrived from abroad, new centers were established in almost unbroken succession, the older ones constantly expanded . . . . Only in Italy did the Jews enjoy general well-being. A few setbacks are chronicled, but they are isolated and exceptional. If, during civic disturbances, the Jews may sometimes have suffered more than their neighbors, this did not betoken a persecutory spirit among the people.

Roth's historical approach to Italian Jewry searches for periods of social and intellectual exchange, moments of harmonious symbiosis, between Jews and Christians, as he frames his study of the past in relation to the present-day context still recoiling from the Holocaust. For Roth, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brought socioeconomic prosperity to the Jews in Renaissance Italy, whose well being incited anti-Jewish hostilities, particularly in northern Italy where venomous sermons against the Jews by the influential Observant Franciscans gave rise to periodic social disorder. Such turbulence, according to the author, was momentary, and was not tolerated in the Italian courts or the republics such as Venice, where rulers "ordered protection to be given to the Jews throughout their territories."

Roth's reconstruction of Italian Jewish life, however uncritical, elucidates the general attitudes of toleration characteristic of Renaissance Italy, specifically the northern Italian principalities. Indeed, relative to the virulent aggressions against the Jews in contemporary Spain and to the Jews' loss of rights and ghettoization beginning in the sixteenth century in certain Italian cities including Venice and Rome, the Italian Renaissance courts stand apart in their tolerance of Jews. But what is toleration in the early modern context? How do derisive paintings of Jews participate in the promotion of Renaissance tolerance? In this study, I seek to explore the different nuances of meaning embedded in the concept and practice of tolerance in the Italian courts by examining the written history of Renaissance Jews documented in Italian archives and interpreted by historians, and the visual history recorded in sacred painting. This book provides an extensive study of the relations and negotiations between Jewish cultural history and the visual culture of the Italian Renaissance, a period in which art flourished and forged new societal values and behaviors. I investigate how the Renaissance term "tollerare" acquired local meanings depending on cultural context and how the dynamics of tolerance inevitably were linked to civic identity, particularly the identity created by and for the Christian prince.

The Renaissance principalities of Urbino, Mantua, and Ferrara are the focus of this study because of their relatively prosperous Jewish populations and because all three city-states shared regional and political affinities as northern Italian territories and as hereditary principalities governed by a single despot. I examine the three princely states as case studies and contrast them to republican Florence and imperial Trent. An analysis of the Florentine and Tridentine contexts provides salient contrast to my investigation of the Italian courts, placing in relief the unique character of the Jewish-Christian encounter in the Renaissance principates. Whereas the rulers of Renaissance Urbino, Mantua, and Ferrara initiated similar Jewry policies, the manner in which each prince executed such policies differed depending on the nature of the prince's political hold on his territory and his subjects. I analyze how each of the Renaissance court rulers distinctively upheld toleration legislation governing Christian-Jewish relations, while simultaneously supporting artistic commissions that perpetuated violence against Jews. In particular, I explore how the different forms of representation used to depict Jews in Italian Renaissance court painting, such as narrative, portraiture, and allegory, both induced the limited persecution of Jews and helped to maintain the Jews' safety. Though the effects of this pictorial language may appear contradictory, I argue that the symbolic violence targeted against local Jews in the princely courts ultimately sought to unify the larger community and foster civic harmony.

Toward a Definition of Tolerance

The notion of tolerance discussed in this study is not synonymous with the Enlightenment call for religious acceptance put forth by John Locke (1632-1704) in his *Letter on Toleration* of 1689, nor is it analogous to the modern theories of liberalism and skepticism elaborated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Immanuel Kant, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Benjamin Constant, and John Stuart Mill, who advocated tolerance of individual thought and speech, acceptance of non-Christian belief systems and rejection of religion, and the right to privacy and personal liberties. For not only does this discussion of tolerance predate its theoretical conceptualization beginning in the late seventeenth century, it approaches the varying contours of toleration from a social historical point of view, rather than from the perspective of philosophy or intellectual history.

The definition of tolerance treated here corresponds to the privileges given to certain groups of social deviants to dwell among the communities in Latin Christendom provided such dissenters served a beneficial role in the society as a whole and proved no threat to Christianity. The medieval notion of tolerance, which circulated in the works of canon law and scholasticism, was thus a policy of *patientia* toward nonbelievers and other outgroups inasmuch as it justified deviance within a community that refused to accept freedom of religion or religious plurality. Tolerance as a political concept offered limited social forbearance to select marginalized groups while opposing policies of expulsion and extermination.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) wrote in his *Summa theologica* that toleration of evil is necessary if greater evil should come from intolerance or the expulsion of deviance. In this sense, prostitution was permitted in medieval society lest men be destroyed by their own unchanneled lust and resort to the great sin of adultery, rape, or sodomy. Lepers, beggars, and the insane were also served by the medieval idea of tolerance as a result of their physical or economic impediments because their presence ideally inspired the generosity of Christian charity. The only forms of social dissent to go beyond the boundaries of tolerable behavior was that of heretics and homosexuals, for both were thought to have committed the greatest of sins that threatened the moral center of Christian civilization. By refusing to subscribe to ecclesiastical doctrines and authority, heretics scandalized the Church by publicly spreading heterodox beliefs, whereas homosexuals were labeled immoral and iniquitous by the Christian faith because of their sexual practices, which were thought to threaten the distinction between the sexes.

The Thomistic conception of toleration moreover gave theological support to the continued civic participation of Jews in communities throughout Christendom. Christians were never to embrace Jews—whom Thomas calls "our enemies"—as members of the community, but as practitioners of evil rites whose work in the moneylending business served to induce economic prosperity. For scholastic writers usury (defined most generally by a loan requiring a borrower to repay more than the initial sum lent) was more than a sin against the just price, usurious practice in its Christian setting was a sin against nature. As Jacques Le Goff writes, "The usurer's only chance for salvation, since all his gain was ill-acquired, was to make total restitution of what he had earned." While spiritual confessors made restitution and purgatory an alternative for the Christian lender who struggled between wealth and eternal damnation, legal injunctions issued by secular authorities served Jewish usurers whose credit induced economic equalization and prosperity in the monetized society of medieval and Renaissance Europe. Bob Scribner, studying the historical phenomenon of religious toleration in early modern Germany, writes that tolerance based on economics was the result of pragmatic policy-making by civil magistrates, which was effected only after several generations of clerical opposition. Toleration policies rooted in economics offered the margins of society, including Jews, only tenuous privileges. Only so long as the presence of Jewish merchants and moneylenders proved economically necessary for the community was the tolerance of Jews communally feasible.

The vulnerability of tolerance policies and the potency of its ensuing politics are well exemplified in the

fifteenth-century duchy of Milan. Extant *condotte* (charters) from the fifteenth century record the conditions of Jewish residency in the Milanese dominion. The duke and local authorities approved such documents for individual Jews or groups typically for a period of ten years. Jews, such as Salomone Galli, son of Abramo, in Parma, were to lend money at a fixed rate of interest; in exchange, they could observe Judaism and Jewish holidays, as well as build synagogues, cemeteries, and kosher slaughterhouses. The agreements provided the Jews the right to reside in the duchy, assured their safety, and offered them legal protection. For example, in 1452 Francesco Sforza, *signore* of Milan, defied Pope Pius II's order to tax the Jews of the duchy one-fifth of the value of their possessions in order to finance the crusade against the Turks. The Sforza policies of *tolerantia* continued under Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza; nevertheless, Lodovico Maria Sforza, Galeazzo's successor, expelled all Jews from the duchy on 3 December 1490.

The orders for expulsion came after a heated trial beginning on 26 March 1488 in which Vincenzo, a Jew who converted to Christianity, accused 38 Jews of inserting anti-Christian statements in several Jewish texts, including the Talmud and the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides. The Christians' translation of the Aramaic texts alleged the Jews called the Virgin Mary a harlot and condemned Christ to eternal damnation. Authorities sentenced nine of the indicted Jews to death by decapitation. Their punishment, however, was commuted to a fine of 19,000 ducats, confiscation of their property, and expulsion. Lodovico ordered the remaining accused banished from the dukedom, leaving their property to the *camera ducale*. The prince never fully carried out the general expulsion of his Jewish subjects, as documents indicate that he issued a *condotta* in 1498 to the physician Solomon, son of Aaron Gallico, to serve as the prince's book dealer. Lodovico occasionally permitted Jewish merchants and doctors in Milan but only under special circumstances, and granted temporary *condotte* for brief periods of time. Although certain Jews remained within city walls after the exile, the general banishment of the Jewish community bespeaks an intolerance intrinsic to Lodovico Sforza's political directives.

Such policies contrast significantly from those adopted by the princes of Urbino, Mantua, and Ferrara, neighboring Italian city-states where toleration prevailed. In these small Renaissance princedoms individual Jews were punished for alleged blasphemies, yet the security of the Jewish collective remained intact. Sforza Milan offers an intriguing counterpoint to the case studies discussed in this book, which principally treats the ways in which the Jew figured in the visual culture of Christian Urbino, Mantua, and Ferrara. Whereas paintings in these small courtly communities portray Jews committing impious acts against Christianity, no analogous image can be found in Milan. Jewish liturgical books in the Milanese territories represent Jews engaging in various religious rituals, yet these illuminated manuscripts were used exclusively within the Jewish context. In this book I explore how deprecating pictures of Jews in Christian art of the Renaissance sought to unify the community and define its parts. Symbolic violence in the form of paintings offers an evocative look at the contours of toleration in several Italian Renaissance courts. Milan's intolerance of Jews via expulsion made such civic definitions of community obsolete and therefore such defamatory paintings unnecessary.

Milan during the Renaissance was a large city and major international trading center in Europe. Because of the profitability of its mercantile economy, Jewish moneylending, though beneficial to local credit markets, was expendable. In fact, Genoa, another powerful maritime force in the Italian peninsula, also refused to permit Jewish settlement. In the Milanese example Jews proved politically detrimental to the Sforza lords, particularly after the 1488 trials when popular animosity and rioting against Jews was most volatile. The expulsion order testifies to the vulnerability of local Jews but also of Lodovico Sforza himself. The Sforza was a new dynasty in Milan, not recognized by the Holy Roman Empire until Lodovico purchased the ducal title in 1494. His shaky claims to legitimate rulership made him susceptible to attack, evidenced in 1499 when the French sacked Milan and took Lodovico prisoner.

Urbino, Mantua, and Ferrara by contrast were small, hereditary principalities governed for centuries by well-

established despotic families. Machiavelli discusses the particularity of the hereditary principalities in *The Prince* (1513):

> I say, then, that in hereditary states, accustomed to their prince's family, there are far fewer difficulties in maintaining one's rule than in new principalities; because it is enough merely not to neglect the institutions founded by one's ancestors and then to adapt policy to events. In this way, if the prince is reasonably assiduous he will always maintain his rule.

These Renaissance princedoms, despite their modest size, curried significant powers as a result of the princes' savvy politics, including the strength they obtained through marriage and through allies achieved from military victories. In this smaller political forum, the *signori* encouraged Jewish settlement to promote the development of private credit markets and public finance. A symbiotic relationship formed between Jewish moneylenders and the Italian Renaissance courts: the moneylenders earned compensation by providing the poor with small loans at a rate of interest often greater than that offered by the Christian lenders, while the city benefited from the influx of capital and increased revenue exacted from the Jews as taxes. Previously banned by the merchant and artisan guilds as a consequence of their religious difference, Jews turned to usury and participated directly in markets of money exchange. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, over two hundred Jewish communities had settled in the region, and by mid-century Jewish moneylending played a significant role in the economic affairs of the cities in the north.

Although tolerated by northern hereditary princes for their economic acumen, Jews were simultaneously relegated to a subordinate, inferior position in the city, barred from full participation in the community. Their marginalization was the direct result of the prince's policy of tolerance that called for the incorporation of a Jewish presence, albeit on the city's outskirts. In sum, Jewish inclusion in medieval and Renaissance society was a function of their communal exclusion. Jews were denied access to the civic body (*civitas*) for the sake of the community's purity, as civic identity throughout the communities in Latin Christendom was defined by its common belief in Christianity, and not through the diversity of its parts. Although they did not suffer the pogroms and expulsion endemic elsewhere in contemporary Europe, the Jews of northern Italy endured ritualized, symbolic forms of violence. The specious accusations against Jews of ritual murder, host desecration, and image profanation, in addition to the ceaseless charges of deicide and usurious corruption, became a prominent part of the sociocultural topography of Renaissance Europe and had a marked presence in the visual arts. This imagery flourished throughout the continent, inculpating European Jewries primarily from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. This new pan-European visual language also became part of northern Italian local history, connecting violence and toleration in a dialogical relationship that solidified the prince's power and delineated communal boundaries.

This book investigates how Christians defined themselves and their faith through the production of images that sought to vilify Jews in order to create a unified Christian social body. I bring to light evidence not treated in examinations of medieval tolerance or in historical surveys of Italian Renaissance Jewries. By juxtaposing the extant visual and verbal documentation, this study provides a balanced examination of how subtle yet systemic persecution targeted against local Jews entered Italian campaigns of toleration. I seek to provide new insights into famous masterworks by artists such as Andrea Mantegna and Paolo Uccello and place these paintings within a larger discourse that incorporates noncanonical, provincial works of art. An examination of these paintings provides valuable information on the religious polemics of the time as well as coeval despotic politics and policies of civic identity. It is my contention that painting became part of a seigniorial policy of tolerance that deflected violence from the real world onto a symbolic world that ensured the continuation and simultaneous containment of violence against Jews. Painting possesses the power to impose a reality on its subjects and to ensure the continual efficacy of that reality. This study explores pictures of Jewish degradation within their local courtly contexts to understand how painting constructed a

Jewish reality based on myth but artfully imprinted in history.

Historicizing the Jew in Renaissance Italy

Direct acts of persecution against the Jews of Italy can be traced back as early as the thirteenth century, when in 1291 the Jews of southern Italy, a community with origins in the region dating to the first century, faced forced conversion or death. With the near destruction of Italian Jewry in the south, its survivors migrated to Rome where they received papal privilege and by the fourteenth century to northern Italy where they obtained the protection of the secular princes. Moneylending, although viewed as an illicit profession and a canonical sin that went against the natural order, became a significant catalyst in the economic prosperity, population growth, and cultural rebirth of fifteenth-century northern Italy, bringing to an end, at least momentarily, the demographic and financial deteriorations the Italian Jewry had faced since 1291.

Strong opposition to Jewish prosperity, however, mounted during the fifteenth century, particularly among the itinerant Observant Franciscans whose anti-Jewish preachings in churches and public squares proclaimed Jewish moneylenders as usurers and enemies of the poor. Franciscan leaders such as Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444), Giacomo della Marca (1391-1476), Giovanni da Capistrano (1386-1456), and Bernardino da Feltre (1439-1494) sought to keep Christians in need of loans away from Jewish moneylenders because lending at interest was a mortal sin, as well as an affront to charity, universal brotherhood, and economic justice. Bernardino da Siena depicted Jewish lenders as bloodsuckers depleting the city and *contado* (countryside) of its money in his sermon 43 on usury:

> It is usually the case that when wealth and money are concentrated into fewer and fewer hands and purses, it is a sign of the deteriorating state of the city and the land. This is similar to when the natural warmth of the body abandons the extremities and concentrates only in the heart and the internal organs; this is seen as the clearest indication that life is slipping way and that the person is soon to die. And if this concentration of wealth in the hands of the few is dangerous to the health of the city, it is even more dangerous when this wealth and money is concentrated and gathered into the hands of the Jews. For in that case, the natural warmth of the city—for this is what its wealth represents—is not flowing back to the heart to give it assistance but instead rushes to an abscess in a deadly hemorrhage, since all Jews, especially those who are moneylenders, are the chief enemies of all Christians.

Franciscan sermons, steeped in ecclesiastical law, condemned Christians found eating or drinking with a Jew, visiting a Jewish doctor, bathing in the company of a Jew, socializing with a Jew in their home, helping to raise Jewish children, eating a Jew's unleavened bread, or renting a house to a Jew. The friars, moreover, called for prohibitions on the construction or renovation of Jewish synagogues, and recommended that Jews wear compulsory badges and follow a strict curfew during Holy Week.

Franciscan anti-Jewish sermons influenced civil legislation concerning Jews in several Renaissance cities including Siena, Perugia, Amelia, Orvieto, and Vicenza, where Jews temporarily lost their right to act as moneylenders, were forced to wear a badge to distinguish them from Christians, or received other restrictions that impacted their everyday lives. Diane Owen Hughes writes, "The friars, whose intolerance of the Jews has been traced to their earliest inquisitorial activities, were early promoters in Italy—as elsewhere in Europe—of the segregation of the Jews." Although civic leaders rejected segregation during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the inquisitorial zeal of Observant Franciscans incited popular rioting against the Jews in the city streets throughout northern Italy and elsewhere during this period.

It was under these charged socioeconomic and religious circumstances that the *monti di pietà* (*mons pietatis*) flourished in Italy. Established in accordance with the Christian notion of caritas (charity), the *monti* were

charitable credit institutions that issued small loans against pledges of modest value (such as a bedsheet, a belt, or napkins) to the impecunious at a low rate of interest. The *monte* thus competed directly with Jewish lenders, whom it sought to squeeze out of the credit market. In her study on the Florentine *monte*, Carol Bresnahan Menning explains, "As brokers of small loans against pawns, Italian *monti di pietà* were expected not only to replace Jewish moneylenders but also to set up the conditions in which all Jews could be expelled." Dependent upon the largesse of wealthy Christians and fueled by the anti-Jewish sermons of Observant Franciscans, particularly Bernardino da Feltre and Giacomo della Marca, the *monti* flourished in Umbria, the Marches, the Veneto, Lombardy, Emilia, Tuscany, and beyond, as an estimated twenty institutions were founded in northern Italy between the years 1462 and 1496.

In contrast to the small northern Italian communes and princedoms, the large commercial cities of Florence and Venice did not readily permit the establishment of the *monte* within city limits for fear of negative repercussions to international trade and regional economic decline. Menning writes that Lorenzo de' Medici went so far as to support publicly the establishment of the Florentine *monte* to appease the populace but, privately opposing socioeconomic sanctions against the Jews, worked behind the scenes to block its foundation. Although the *monte* occupied a significant space in the monetary economy of Renaissance North and Central Italy, it had many inherent problems and did not detract considerably from Jewish moneylending, particularly during the fifteenth century. If not economically punitive, the *monte* did represent a symbolic attack against the privileges and protections promised to the Jews. Such anti-Jewish legislation on the part of the *signori* illustrates how malleable a political tool the prince's policy on tolerance was, fluctuations in Jewish privileges and prohibitions reflecting strategic acts of statecraft.

Renaissance Italy contrasts significantly from medieval and Renaissance France, England, Spain, and Portugal, which summarily expelled their Jewish populations. In *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, Robert Bonfil emphasizes the exceptionality of the Italian peninsula in its treatment of Jews, but criticizes the standard interpretation of the Italian Renaissance put forth by historians such as Cecil Roth, Moses Avigdor Shulvass, and Attilio Milano as a period of intense Jewish assimilation to the Christian majority. Bonfil instead argues that Jewish life in Renaissance Italy was neither an example of harmonious assimilation nor the "lachrymose conception" of continuous exploitation, persecution, and expulsion. The lachrymose school, promoted by writers such as Heinrich Graetz, understands Jewish history from the time of the fall of Jerusalem as a valley of tears caused by the constant tragedies encountered by Jews. David Nirenberg writes that this conception "is part an eschatological vision, with each disaster increasing in magnitude until the last and greatest disaster precipitates the coming of the Messiah and redemption."

Rejecting interpretations of Jewish history framed in terms of an oscillation between the lachrymose and antilachrymose schools, Bonfil argues instead in favor of a structural analysis that interprets Jewish life in Renaissance Italy through the dialectic of self and other. He explains that Christians and Jews constructed their identities through mutual interplay; that is, Jews formed their identity by mirroring and opposing the behaviors and attitudes of the Christian community. According to this "specular model," Christians, though marginalizing Jews, tolerated Jewish difference because Jews provided a foil to Christian spiritual and material wealth. This socioreligious phenomenon can be traced as early as the patristic era when Christians recognized Jews as witnesses to Old Testament law and as potential converts. Although this association was not powerful enough to stop popular anti-Jewish outbreaks, "it did afford to the Jewish faith," writes Cary Nederman, "a sort of formal (albeit limited) toleration, the significance of which should not be disparaged." Bonfil's revisionist position objects to the notion of a Jewish Italian Renaissance as a mutual cooperation and acculturation between Jews and their Christian counterparts. Instead, Bonfil historiographically situates himself in opposition to Roth and others who study the openness of Italian Renaissance culture to the exclusion of its censures and enclosures of the Renaissance Jew.

Scholars of medieval minorities similarly have sought more nuanced approaches to the persecution

paradigms of European Jewries. David Nirenberg, for example, looks at the relations and negotiations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Crown of Aragon and the French Pyrenees region, especially during the fourteenth century, and investigates the role violence played in the medieval tolerance of minority societies. His examination studies violence not only in its brutal, cataclysmic form but also in its milder, more systemic appearance in everyday dissensions and annual rituals. For instance, Holy Week stonings against Jews can be read as a controlled and ritualized form of violence that served to warn Jews that toleration came at a cost. Nirenberg stresses that such ritualized violence must be situated within its local history: "To treat Holy Week riots as signs or symptoms of a linear march toward intolerance is to deny their character as repeated, controlled, and meaningful rituals, and to ignore the possibility that violence can bind and sunder in the same motion."

The effects of violence and the inextricability of persecution and tolerance are of primary importance to the study of Italian Renaissance court paintings of Jews. Whereas Nirenberg concentrates on corporal attacks against Jews in the form of massacres during the Shepherds' Crusade of 1320 or physical violence against minorities that arose around the quotidian issue of miscegenation, my examination seeks to investigate the role *symbolic* violence played in Italian toleration policies and the role painting played in the development of Renaissance violence. According to Pierre Bourdieu's writings on precapitalist modes of domination, there are:

> two ways (and they prove in the end to be just one way) of getting and keeping a lasting hold over someone . . . overt (physical or economic) violence, or symbolic violence—*censored, euphemized*, i.e., unrecognizable, socially recognized violence. There is an intelligible relation—not a contraction—between these two forms of violence, which coexist in the same social formation and sometimes in the same relationship.

Previous histories of Jewish tolerance in Renaissance Italy have failed to consider the iconographic import of the demonizing and derisive paintings of Jews adorning ecclesiastical and monastic interiors. Research on Renaissance violence has tended to focus on the most obvious manifestations of violence: crime, civil disorder, war, and economic discord, to the exclusion of more hidden forms. Renaissance images of Jewish punishment represent another dimension of the Renaissance despot's policy on Jews that, although not often documented in written decrees, provide an important contribution to the history of Renaissance violence.

These paintings, commissioned or approved by the despotic ruler, represent the byproduct of artful princely negotiations to safeguard Jews and their credit and commerce from popular aggression, while publicly admonishing and marginalizing Jews so as to protect the social balance. The paintings functioned in a manner similar to the penalties meted out by criminal prosecution. According to the author of the *Coustumez, usaigez et stillez . . . ou pais d'Anjou* of c. 1440, corporal punishment served four principal functions: as retribution, as a cautionary tale for prospective social deviants, as a means to expunge evil from society, and finally as a means to prevent future evil from spreading through society. Seigniorial sponsorship of Renaissance painting of Jews sought the same communal results, yet without the need for physical violence. Placed in public spaces for Christian consumption, the paintings symbolically punished Jews for their alleged crimes in an attempt to preserve Christian social order. Unlike the ephemeral executions of criminal offenders, the pictorial punishment of Jews in Urbino, Mantua, and Ferrara remained a permanent event in religious painting and in civic consciousness. This book explores the typological structures of these northern Italian paintings of Jewish abuse and demonstrates how violence delineated and reinforced the social relations and religious boundaries between local Christians and Jews. I offer a detailed study of the interactions of tolerance and violence, protection and persecution, in the Italian Renaissance courts by localizing violence within its distinctive political, economic, and cultural cityscape.

To this end, chapter one presents an analysis of the Corpus Domini Altarpiece in Urbino as a visual expression of Duke Federigo da Montefeltro's policy on Jews. I argue that the two parts of the altarpiece, Paolo Uccello's *Miracle of the Profaned Host* and Joos van Ghent's *Communion of the Apostles*, portray a symbolic act of cleansing, purging the city of all non-Christians threatening Urbino's civic and spiritual economy. The altarpiece's two panels work together to alleviate visually the Christian community's fear of external threats, specifically the Ottoman Turks, by turning the attention to Urbino's Jews. The painting's message reinforced the duke's political interests by eliminating from the city those religious dissenters hostile to the Christian faith, thus reassuring his subjects of their security and promoting Christian unity through the demonization of Jews.

In chapter two, I turn my attention to fifteenth-century Mantua, where according to textual documentation Marquis Francesco II Gonzaga tolerated and protected the Jews in his territories. Francesco, for example, permitted Jewish moneylenders to carry arms to defend themselves from Christian attack, and during his early marquisate absolved Jews from wearing the compulsory "Jewish badge." This chapter presents a microhistory of the events surrounding an alleged case of image profanation in late fifteenth-century Mantua by the prominent Jewish moneylender Daniele da Norsa, an event that provoked dangerous popular rioting and disorder in the city. Central to my investigation is an analysis of the court proceedings and personal correspondence related to this incident as well as the two quattrocento Mantuan altarpieces associated with the event and its aftermath: the *Madonna della Vittoria* by Andrea Mantegna and the anonymous *Madonna and Child with Saints and Norsa Family* (Norsa Madonna). I posit that the production and placement of these two paintings, which permanently imprinted Jewish persecution within the city's collective memory, illustrates the culture of quiet violence in fifteenth-century Mantua.

Among all the despotisms of Renaissance Italy, Ferrara under the House of Este emerged as one of the quintessential safe havens for Jewish immigrants. Not only were Italian and German Jewish communities permitted to settle in Ferrara during the fifteenth century, but Sephardic Jews and New Christians (*conversos*) after their expulsion from Spain and Portugal also received authorization to settle in the Este dukedom throughout the sixteenth century. Chapter three looks at the rich intertextual sources related to the Jews of Renaissance Ferrara. Extant ducal decrees, court accounting records, chronicles, and letters indicate that Jews, though tolerated via princely proclamation, maintained a tenuous existence in Ferrara. For instance, after the 1457 construction of Santa Maria degli Angeli Borso d'Este, ruler of Ferrara from 1450 to 1471, fined the Ferrarese Jewish community the tremendous sum of 35,000 ducats in order to finance his project to pave and line the via degli Angeli with poplar trees. Pictorial sources furthermore illustrate how painting and anti-Jewish policies and politics came together in Renaissance Ferrara. Stephen Campbell in his study on Cosmè Tura analyzes the Roverella altarpiece (c. 1474) as symbolically representative of an anti-Jewish polemic circulating in Renaissance Ferrara. Works of art executed by other local artists share similar anti-Jewish ideologies, such as Benvenuto da Garofalo's 1523 fresco of *The Crucifix with Ecclesia and Synagoga* for the Augustinian convent of Sant'Andrea. This chapter examines the multiple receptions of Garofalo's painting among Ferrara's ducal, communal, and Augustinian leaders to understand the social ramifications of the prince's call for *tolleranza*.

If the case studies of Urbino, Mantua, and Ferrara examined images of Jewish abuse within a common sociopolitical and cultural framework, the final two chapters investigate the connection between Jewish punishment and symbolic violence in neighboring yet distinctive environments: the republic of Florence and the imperial principality of Trent. Such a discussion allows me to examine the politico-aesthetic dimensions of Jewish-Christian relations in different forms of Renaissance governance, underscoring the unique conditions for Jews in the Italian principates. In chapter four I investigate the details surrounding the popular stoning of a Jew in Florence found guilty in 1493 of desecrating several representations of the Virgin, most notably the sculpture of the *Madonna of the Rose* at Orsanmichele. Although the committee of magistrates from the Florentine *Otto di Guardia e Balìa* sentenced the Jew to death, a popular mob disrupted civil

proceedings and collectively killed and dismembered the accused. The event remained permanent in civic memory when an inscription telling the story was added to the *Madonna of the Rose*. My analysis of the event and, more specifically, of the visual imagery related to the narrative explores how such an act of popular violence both threatened and reaffirmed republican identity in Renaissance Florence.

While the violence against the Jew in Florence was popular and public, it nevertheless was directed at one specific Jew charged with blasphemy. Chapter five examines Renaissance Trent, where the violence against Jews was widespread, calling for the complete purgation of the Jewish community. Trent was an imperial principality in the southern Tirol, the southernmost territory of the Holy Roman Empire, where "Trent lay at the crossroads between the Germanic and Italian worlds." It is in this infamous city where accusations of ritual murder against the Jews of Trent were lodged. Found guilty in 1475, Jews were burnt at the stake for allegedly killing the young Christian boy Simon Unferdorben in order to use his blood in the preparation of the Jews' Passover celebrations. This chapter examines the varying typologies governing the representations of the alleged ritual murder. Images of Simon are found not only in Trent proper but also pepper the countryside of the Tridentine and Valcamonica regions. Whereas examples of pictorial persecution against local Jews in Urbino, Mantua, Ferrara, and Florence are notable but few, images representing the blood libel of Simon proliferate throughout North Italy, as paintings decorate the parish churches of Cerveno, Niardo, Malegno, Borno, Breno, Bienno, Iseo, Esine, Artogne, Pian Camuno, Pisogne, Rovato, Dimaro, Cavareno, Povo, and Avio. It is the aim of the chapter to analyze how these paintings created a collective Christian social body in the bilingual city of Trent, and how the extensive production of such imagery redefined the local history of North Italy.

Renaissance paintings have significant heuristic value to Jewish historiography as integral components of the sociopolitical and religious infrastructure of Renaissance Italy. Such paintings functioned as a mechanism of social distinction that legitimized and universalized Christian powers in general and princely authority in particular. A balanced examination of the surviving visual and verbal documentation pertaining to Renaissance Jews demonstrates how persecution and toleration politics conjoined in Italian Renaissance art and the Italian Renaissance city.

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