

A Fruitful Partnership:
Jews and the Canons of St. Kilian in Twelfth-century Würzburg

by

JOHN D. YOUNG, St. Augustine, FL, USA

Over the course of about a century, from around 1120 to around 1220, the canons of St. Kilian, caretakers of the Neumünster church in Würzburg (with its sacred grave and relics of the Franconian apostle St. Kilian) had frequent – one might even say constant – business dealings with the Jews of that same city.¹ Most of these economic interactions involved land: the transfer of property, mostly in the city, from one party to another, either from the Jews to the canons, from the canons to the Jews, or from a third party to either the canons or the Jews with the other acting as another agent in the transaction. Put together, the sources detailing these land transactions approach the richness of, for instance, the *Schreinskarten* of the parish of St. Lawrence in Cologne, one of the key sources for Matthias Schmandt's excellent study of the Cologne Jews.²

Despite thorough explorations by mostly German scholars on the spread of Jewish settlements throughout the Reich and on specific Jewish communities, most scholars have not looked at the economic interactions that accompanied settlement and development from the perspective of the Christian institutions

¹ On the cult of St. Kilian, see Kilian: Mönch aus Irland – aller Franken Patron 689–1989: Katalog der Sonderausstellung zur 1300-Jahr-Feier des Kiliansmartyriums, 1989, and JOACHIM DIENEMANN, Der Kult des heiligen Kilian im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert. Beiträge zur geistigen und politischen Entwicklung der Karolingerzeit, 1955. On the Kilian cult in Würzburg, see KNUT SCHÄFERDIEK, Kilian von Würzburg: Gestalt und Gestaltung eines Heiligen, in: *Iconologia Sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas. Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. HAGEN KELLER, NIKOLAUS STAUBACH (*Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung* 23), 1994, p. 313–340; ROLF SPRANDEL, Kilian und die Anfänge des Bistums Würzburg, in: *Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter* 54 (1992), p. 5–17.

² MATTHIAS SCHMANDT, *Judei, cives et incole: Studien zur jüdischen Geschichte Kölns im Mittelalter (Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden A 11)*, 2002.

involved in these interactions.³ The focus has been almost entirely (and understandably) on Jewish agency and Jewish motives, it seems with the assumption that Christian institutions simply intended to exploit a vulnerable yet wealthy minority and that most Christian townsmen resented the very presence of Jews in their cities.⁴ Instead of a vertical, hierarchical relationship, this article presents some of these interactions and the sometimes-longstanding relations or partnerships that developed out of them, as horizontal, as business between simultaneously privileged and vulnerable peers. Indeed, the economic interactions between the St. Kilian canons and the Würzburg Jews – like the interactions between urban Jews and religious houses in other German communities – display the development of normativity, of the growth of rules and standards that governed Jewish-Christian relations and solidified the social, legal, and economic standing of both Jews and religious communities. Regional history thus serves both as a barometer for broader historical trends and as a check on the tendency to flatten complex, nuanced historical circumstances with convenient rubrics like “exploitation” or “persecution.”⁵

The normativity sought after and achieved by Jews and their Christian interlocutors during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Würzburg and other riverine towns of the Reich had three facets: physical proximity, shared legal privilege, and lucrative business partnerships. This article will discuss each of these facets but will reserve its most substantial discussion for the

³ On the history of Jewish settlements in the Middle Ages, see especially MICHAEL TOCH, *Jewish Migrations to, within and from Medieval Germany*, in: *Le Migrazioni in Europa secc. XIII–XVIII: della “Wventicinesima settimana di studi”*, 3–8 maggio 1993, ed. SIMONETTA CAVACIOCCHI (Pubblicazioni. Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica F. Datini, Prato 2/25), 1994, p. 639–652; MICHAEL TOCH, *Die Juden im Mittelalterlichen Reich (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 44)*, 2003, p. 5–13. On the Jews of Würzburg, see especially KARLHEINZ MÜLLER, *Die Würzburger Judengemeinde im Mittelalter: von den Anfängen um 1100 bis zum Tod Julius Eichters (1617) (Mainfränkische Studien 70)*, 2004. Other community studies include SIEGFRIED WITTMER, *Jüdisches Leben in Regensburg: vom frühen Mittelalter bis 1519*, 2001, and ALFRED HAVERKAMP, *Die Juden im mittelalterlichen Trier*, in: *Kurtierisches Jahrbuch 19* (1979), p. 5–57. RAINER LENG provides a brief summary of some of the transactions between Würzburg Jews and clerical institutions in Würzburg im 12. Jahrhundert (*Das Bayerische Jahrtausend 2*), 2012, p. 69–72.

⁴ For an example of this tendency to assume exploitation and resentment, see the summary of eleventh-century Jewish privileges in ROBERT CHAZAN, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom, 1000–1500 (Cambridge medieval textbooks)*, 2006, p. 171–174.

⁵ The “persecution” label has been especially durable since the publication of ROBERT IAN MOORE’s seminal *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250*, 1987. Beholden to this same approach is the influential work by DOMINIQUE IOGNA-PRAT, *Ordonner et exclure: Cluny et la société chrétienne face à l’hérésie, au judaïsme et à l’islam, 1000–1150*, 1998.

business partnerships. It will also suggest a fourth facet, with the admission that my thinking about this facet is still developing.

Proximity

As in other German cities along the Rhine, Main, and Danube rivers in the high Middle Ages, the Jews of Würzburg lived in the town center, merely a hundred meters or so from the cathedral, next to which sat the Neumünster. The origins of the Jewish community in Würzburg date to around 1100 and probably consisted in the early years of migrants who fled the Rhineland cities in aftermath of the First Crusade massacres.⁶ In the first decades of the twelfth century, Jewish townsmen began to buy up urban real estate between the present-day main market and the Juliuspital, a neighborhood that abutted a marsh (presumably along the Main) called “Rigol.” The synagogue occupied the site of the present Marienkapelle, the church built in the fourteenth century after the Jews were expelled from the city in the midst of plague outbreaks.⁷ It seems no coincidence that the modern-day market square occupies the same part of the city as the medieval Jewish community, since the Jews contributed much to the growth of trade in Würzburg. Evidence indicates that, among other things, Jews owned or obtained usufruct of some of the vineyards that dominate the hills of the city, the vineyards that should have led to the city being named Weinburg instead of Würzburg, especially as there is no concrete evidence of major spice trade in the city.

At least until recent years, the general tendency for many scholars looking at medieval Jews has been to assume they lived on the margins of towns in unhealthy, unwanted locations. The editors of the first volume of the *Germania Judaica*, for instance, in writing about the Jews of twelfth-century Würzburg, speculated with no real evidence that the area around the Rigol marsh, the

⁶ Though this explanation of the origins of the Würzburg Jews is conjecture, it is supported somewhat by information from the gravestones of the medieval Jewish cemetery. The earliest gravestone documents the 1154 death of a daughter of the renowned Rabbi Eliezer b. Nathan (the “Raavan”), thought to have moved from Mainz after the 1096 massacres. See MÜLLER, *Die Würzburger Judengemeinde* (like note 3), p. 31, and KARLHEINZ MÜLLER, *Würzburg: The World’s Largest Find from a Medieval Jewish Cemetery*, in: *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries): Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Speyer, 20–25 October 2002*, ed. CHRISTOPH CLUSE, 2004, p. 379–387, here p. 383–384.

⁷ On the plague in Würzburg, see STUART JENKS, *The Black Death and Würzburg: Michael de Leone’s Reaction in Context* (PhD Dissertation, Yale University), 1976.

locus in many documents for Jewish settlement, “may have been unhealthy”.⁸ In truth, Jews settled in prominent areas of many German towns, in locations next to the major markets and close to the cathedrals, urban monasteries, and other important institutions. They were allowed and even encouraged to do so by city authorities. The most prominent example of such encouragement comes from the city of Speyer in the second half of the eleventh century, when Bishop Rüdiger Huozmann of Speyer issued privilege charter to Jews along with the explanation, “When I made a town out of the village of Speyer, I estimated that I would increase the honor of the place a thousand-fold if I should also gather the Jews there.”⁹ Speyer Jews were required to pay an annual tax, in exchange for which they were given special economic privileges that would, as Bishop Rüdiger saw it, allow them to bolster the economy of the town. While there are no surviving documents that indicate the bishop of Würzburg or other prominent institutions or individuals actively recruited or incentivized the Jews to settle and trade in Würzburg, their frequent involvement in business dealings with Jews suggests that their opinions paralleled those of Rüdiger of Speyer. The presence in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Würzburg of Jews from many other German towns likewise suggests that the economic and social climate of the city was welcoming and productive for the Jews.¹⁰

Proximity – Jews living and trading a short walk from the Neumünster – enabled the canons of St. Kilian to interact with them, even to come to trust them to manage the business affairs of the monastery. As was the case for urban monks or canons and Jewish neighborhoods in several other cities in the *Reich*, the canons of St. Kilian and the residents of other clerical houses (the canons of the cathedral chapter, the monks of the Abbey of St. Stephan, even perhaps the Cistercian nuns of Himmelsporten,¹¹ and so forth) would

⁸ ISMAR ELBOGEN, ARON FREIMANN, CHAIM TYKOCINSKI (eds.), *Germania Judaica 1: Von den ältesten Zeiten bis 1238, 1934* (reprint 1963), p. 475.

⁹ *Urkunden zur Geschichte der Stadt Speyer*, ed. ALFRED HILGARD, 1885, p. 11, no. 11: *cum ex Spirensi villa urbem facerem, putavi milies amplificare honorem loci nostri, si et iudeos colligerem.*

¹⁰ *Germania Judaica 1* (like note 8), p. 477, identifies Jews from Augsburg, Grünsfeld, Mainz, Nuremberg, Pleichfeld, Randesacker, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Rothenfels, Schwarzach, Schweinfurt, and Wertheim. Much of this evidence comes from the names of witnesses on documents from the period.

¹¹ Several documents from the early fourteenth century describe agreements between the Jews of Würzburg and the nuns of Himmelsporten. See HERMANN HOFFMAN (ed.), *Urkundenregesten zur Geschichte Zisterzienserinnenklosters Himmelsporten, 1231–1400* (*Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Bistums und Hochstifts Würzburg 14, Regesta Herbipolensia 4*), 1962, p. 166–167, 174–175, 186–187, nos. 143, 154, and 165.

have walked through the Jewish neighborhood, perhaps greeting the Jews they knew, as they visited other religious institutions.¹²

Privilege

While proximity provided the skeletal framework for the normativity of relations, the emerging legal structures of the high Middle Ages contributed much to the interior substance of that normativity. Both Jewish communities and religious institutions like monasteries (as well as towns themselves) came to enjoy and rely upon the privileges granted them by higher authorities – kings, emperors, and other nobles as well as popes, bishops, and other ecclesiastical officials. Ensclosed in charters with dangling seals that often were kept safe in cartularies stored in community chests, privileges defined an individual's or a community's legal existence – and to a large extent its social and economic existence – in this period. Privileges included such components as guarantees of protection, entitlements to trade in certain goods, and immunities from taxation. Though sometimes equipped with an expiration date, they were usually reconfirmed with the passage of power from one ruler or official to the next over the generations.¹³

Although no specific privilege charter for the Jews of Würzburg survives from the twelfth or thirteenth century, examples from the Rhineland cities and from the nearby city of Regensburg give us a sense of the kinds of privileges Jews of other communities would have brokered with their lords, whether the emperor, the bishop, or other secular or ecclesiastical authorities.¹⁴ Emperor

¹² Regensburg is another very good example of this proximity. The Jewish quarter there lay on the ground occupied by the present-day Neupfarrplatz, the large square between the cathedral precinct to the north and the prominent monasteries on the southern side of the city, including St. Emmeram and the Schottenkloster St. Jacob. See *Germania Judaica* 1 (like note 8), p. 287.

¹³ On privilege in the high Middle Ages, see especially ALAIN BOUREAU, *Privilege in Medieval Societies from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Centuries, or: How the Exception Proves the Rule*, in: *The Medieval World*, ed. PETER LINEHAN, JANET L. NELSON, MARIOS COSTAMBEYS, 2nd ed., 2018, p. 720–733.

¹⁴ For privileges extended to Rhineland Jews, see, for example, the 1074 charter of Emperor Henry IV to the Jews of Worms in *Die Urkunden Heinrichs IV. 1056–1076* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica Diplomata Regum et Imperatorum Germaniae* 6,1), ed. DIETRICH VON GLADISS and ALFRED GAWLIK, 1941, p. 341–343, no. 267; the 1090 charters of Henry IV to the Jews of Worms and Speyer in *Die Urkunden Heinrichs IV. 1077–1106* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica Diplomata Regum et Imperatorum Germaniae* 6,2), ed. DIETRICH VON GLADISS, 1952, p. 546–549, nos. 411 and 412. For a summary of imperial charters to Jews, see FRIEDRICH LOTTER, *The Scope and Effectiveness of Imperial Jewry Law in the High Middle Ages*, in: *Jewish History* 4/1 (1989), p. 31–58.

Frederick II issued a general privilege to all the Jews of his realm in 1236, but Jews in the important cities of the Reich had already enjoyed a privileged legal, social, and economic existence for a century and half – perhaps longer – by that point.¹⁵

The privileges extended to Jews by various authorities were similar, at times almost identical, to those offered to monasteries and other religious institutions. Like the Jews, monks and other clerics lacked the means of protecting themselves and thus required protection from privilege-granting authorities. Like Jews, monasteries and other religious institutions needed to manage and extend their wealth in order to carry out their desired activities, so both communities sought economic privileges like market rights and taxation immunities. Jewish communities and monastic houses also obtained privileges from multiple authorities simultaneously, in order to ensure their social and economic positions in the most comprehensive way.¹⁶ Of course, authorities granted privileges to monks and other clergy for different reasons than they offered privileges to Jews – to monasteries in exchange for prayers and other spiritual benefits, as well as for assistance in reform projects and church administration, and to Jews for sure taxation income and other economic benefits – but both communities enjoyed similar privileged status even if their obligations as privileged entities differed. Put simply, Jews and monks were privileged peers with little incentive to compete with one another legally (authorities did not necessarily have a limited number of privileges to hand out, after all) and lots of incentive to work together in order to press the mutual advantages of their privileged status. Indeed, monks, canons, and

¹⁵ The 1236 imperial charter for the Jews: *Privilegium et sententia in favorem iudaeorum*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Constitutiones et Acta Publica Imperatorum et Regum* 2, ed. LUDWIG WEILAND, 1896, p. 274, no. 204. See the insightful interpretation of this charter and its context in DAVID ABULAFIA, *The King and the Jews – the Jews in the Ruler’s Service*, in: *The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. CLUSE (like note 6), p. 43–53.

¹⁶ For one example, the Benedictine monastery of Reinhausen, near Göttingen, obtained privileges from the Archbishop of Mainz, the German emperor, the duke of Bavaria, and the pope between the early twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. See *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Reinhausen*, ed. MANFRED HAMANN (*Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Niedersachsen und Bremen* 37, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Niedersachsens im Mittelalter* 14, *Göttingen-Grubenhagener Urkundenbuch* 3), 1991, p. 28–43, nos. 3, 6, 12, and 18. Monastic charters like these may be used as a means to track shifting loyalties and hedging political calculations among the various communities of Germany in this era of competition between the emperors and popes. It is notable that the 1207 papal charter to Reinhausen, for instance, was issued during a time of imperial weakness, when the Welf and the Stauf families were competing for the imperial throne. Pope Innocent III and his thirteenth-century successors often issued privilege charters in an attempt to lay claim to institutions or entities that were formerly tied closely to the emperors.

other clergy came to constitute the paradigmatic example of a privileged Christian group, while Jews occupied that position among non-Christians.

Business Partnerships

Mutual interest in using their privileges to enrich themselves and enhance their well-being led monks and Jews to form business partnerships in many of the cities of the *Reich* during the high Middle Ages. Such partnerships focused on two overlapping concerns: land and money. Monasteries, bishoprics, cathedral chapters, and other religious communities often controlled large landholdings, most often by receiving them as gifts (either accompanying the entrance of the children of the nobility or given shortly before a noble's death as grants *ad succurendum*).¹⁷ While some clergy probably proved to be effective managers and exploiters of their communities' possessions, many clergy had neither the time nor the inclination to do what was necessary to secure an income from landholdings. Just as Jews were becoming the go-to figures for finance and long-distance trade in the emerging European economy, Jews also achieved a reputation for effective property management in this period. Both clerical institutions and townspeople came to rely on the Jews for their real estate concerns. This is the economic activity most in evidence in the Würzburg documents.

The earliest source detailing property transactions between the Würzburg Jews and the canons of St. Kilian comes from 1119.¹⁸ In that year, the widow of a Christian burgher named Wicmann returned to the canons a property in Würzburg that she (and presumably her husband) had managed. Upon handing over the property, she advised the canons to give its management over to a Jew named Jacob and his wife Gute, as she had done.¹⁹ Though the

¹⁷ The staggering scope of some monastic landholdings can be seen in the detailed *Schenkungsbücher* kept by prominent houses in this period. See, for instance, *Schenkungsbuch des Klosters St. Emmeramm zu Regensburg*, ed. FRANZ MICHAEL WITTMANN (*Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen und deutschen Geschichte* 1), 1856, p. 1–146.

¹⁸ JULIUS ARONIUS (ed.), *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden im fränkischen und deutschen Reiche bis zum Jahre 1273*, 1902 (reprint 1970), p. 100, no. 217; *Regesta sive rerum Boicarum autographa ad annum usque 1300* 1, ed. KARL HEINRICH DE LANG, 1822, p. 117.

¹⁹ The record does not say specifically that Jacob and Gute resided in Würzburg, but the association with the town may provide the earliest documented evidence of a Jewish community in the city. The earliest accepted account of Jewish settlement in Würzburg is the record of the 1147 massacre of 22 Jews – probably a result of the fervor created by the Second Crusade but also the earliest documented murder accusation against Jews on the continent. See the *Annales Herbipolenses*, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores* 16, ed. GEORG HEINRICH PERTZ, 1859, p. 1–14, here p. 3–4. See also the Hebrew account of Ephraim of Bonn,

document does not stipulate the exact terms of the sub-contract, one may assume the profit she received due to the effective oversight of her Jewish managers was significantly higher than the value of the half vessel of wine that she was required to pay the canons annually in exchange for holding the land in the first place. It seems that she had promised Jacob and Gute that they would hold and manage the property “by hereditary right,” so her insistence that the canons maintain the arrangement may have arisen from her effort to follow through on her promises.²⁰ The deacon of Neumünster appears to have met with the Jewish couple and determined to follow the widow’s recommendation, for he gladly agreed to grant the property to the Jews “by the same [hereditary] right.” The Jews were required to make an annual payment to the monastery each autumn, based on the annually-assessed value of the property.²¹ In other words, if the Jews improved the value of the property, as they were expected to do, the monastery would receive a higher payment. It is thus not hard to understand why the canons were delighted with the arrangement. It freed them from the obligation of managing the property directly and promised a growth in the income they would receive from the land.

It is uncertain if the property management relationship between the St. Kilian canons and the Jews of Würzburg was the original idea of the widow Wicmann, but it is certain that the canons quickly embraced the beneficial partnership achieved by her suggestion. By the late twelfth century, this type of arrangement had become the norm, the solution to the canons’ need for effective property management. Indeed, between 1180 and 1212, there were at least ten separate property transactions between the canons and the Jews, the volume alone of which suggests that the two parties trusted and respected each other to an extraordinary degree.²² None of the records of these transactions are entirely straightforward; that is, they do more than simply indicate

“*Sefer Zekirah*, or the Book of Remembrance,” in: *The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades*, ed. and trans. SHLOMO EIDELBERG, 1977, p. 121–133. The Hebrew edition of this text is A.M. HABERMAN, *Sefer Zekirah: Selihot ve-Kinot le-Rabbi Efraim b’r Ya’akov*, 1970.

²⁰ ARONIUS, *Regesten* (like note 18), p. 100, no. 217: *resignaverunt et cuidam Iudeo nomine Iacobo, fratri Samsonis et Natan, et illius uxori hereditario iure.*

²¹ ARONIUS, *Regesten* (like note 18), p. 100, no. 217: *Nos itaque piis eorum petitionibus annuentes prememorato Iudeo Iacobo et eius uxori nomine Gute et eorum heredibus, quos ipsi insimul genuerint, pro oblatione pretaxata annuatim in autumno solvenda, prescriptas duas areas et domum per manus decani nostri domini Hermanni ipso iure, quomodo ipsi possederunt, concessimus.*

²² ARONIUS, *Regesten* (like note 18), p. 133–136, 142–144, 146–148, and 170, nos. 312–313, 315, 317–318, 320, 324, 326, 329, and 383.

that Jew X sold Property Y to the Neumünster, or vice-versa. On the contrary, these valuable sources seem to depict a well-established and mutually beneficial business partnership between the city's Jews, the house of canons, and often other townspeople.

The complexity and depth of this business relationship can be seen, for example, in the record of an 1180 transaction. Samuel, a Jew from Rothenburg with ties to Würzburg, purchased a piece of real estate from Count Ekehard, the son of Billung the *Schultheiss*. The plot in question was located next to the residence of Billung himself and was thus in a very prominent place in Würzburg. The major stipulation of this land deal was that Samuel, the Jew, would “deliver the property, together with the buildings, to the altar of the precious martyr Kilian and the appointed delegate of his order.”²³ This meant, essentially, that Samuel was required to become a vassal of the monastery, in exchange for being granted full control of the property in question. As a mark of his commitment to the abbey (and probably to give Ekehard and Billung the satisfaction of having made an indirect grant to the monastery, thus qualifying him for the salvation that came with such), Samuel was to furnish “eight pounds of wax annually on the feast of Saint Kilian.”²⁴ Otherwise, Samuel exercised usufruct over the property, to live in it or pass it on to someone else, to erect new buildings or tear down old ones, as he pleased. The canons, of course, received a substance essential to the pursuit of their vocation: wax for the liturgical candles used during the feast day services for their patron saint.

Samuel was not the only Jew to have such a close relationship with the brothers of St. Kilian. In fact, the Neumünster seems to have purposely sought out such relationships with Jews, and the obligations sometimes ran the opposite direction. In 1184, for instance, the canons participated in multiple property deals with the Jewish couple Vivis and Sarah; these were accomplished through a third-party agent (*fideicommissarius*), perhaps the twelfth-century equivalent of a realtor. First, the couple entrusted (*delegasse*) a six-acre vineyard to the monastery (again not surprising, given the prominence of the city's vineyards). In return, the abbey promised to pay them a measure of wheat annually on the feast day of Saint Michael. The source proclaims that the Jews sought this transaction with the monastery “in the hope of protection

²³ Monumenta Boica 37, 1864, p. 111, no. 126: *eandem aream simul cum aedificiis ... ad altare preciosi martiris Kyliani et sociorum eius legitime delegatam contradidit.*

²⁴ Monumenta Boica 37 (like note 23), p. 11, no. 126: *in festo sancti Kyliani VIII nummatas cerae annis singulis persolvat.*

and favor.”²⁵ In other words, they sought a privilege from the monks, the terms of which included the common guarantee of physical protection. The canons, it appears, were willing to take on the direct management of this property because, again, it supplied a substance vital to their vocation: wine for the sacraments and perhaps also to sell for profit.

Later the same year, the same couple, working through their agent as before, bestowed their personal residence on the abbey, again “in the hope of protection and favor”, then received it back as a kind of fief or benefice, in exchange for an annual payment of two pounds of wax and the promise that they could sell the property in case of hardship.²⁶ It seems important to point out that it was preferable for the Jews to manage their own residence as a benefice from the canons, rather than to own it outright. This agreement illustrates the level to which the Jews and the canons were integrated into the all-important social networks of the day, with the land grants, ritual gestures, and promises of protection that solidified such relationships. Property became an important way to establish social ties with powerful entities who could protect and sponsor them, just as it was for many others throughout the social and political landscape. Both communities were thus remarkably integrated into the larger polity: economically, politically, and socially.

The canons of St. Kilian were not the only ecclesiastical entity in Würzburg who carried on a longstanding business partnership with the Jews. The bishop and cathedral chapter, as well as several monasteries in the city and surrounding region, turned repeatedly to the Jews for help with trade and property management.²⁷ Bishop Otto in the early thirteenth century, for instance, appointed a Jew to serve as the master of his mint, an important position to be sure in this era of growing currency exchange and standardization.²⁸ Nor was Würzburg the only city that featured such business partnerships; they can also be found in evidence from Cologne, Regensburg, Nuremberg, and other German cities.²⁹ Indeed, partnerships between clerical institutions and Jews, particularly in the realms of real estate speculation and property management, were one of the defining features of Jewish life – and

²⁵ Monumenta Boica 37 (like note 23), p. 124–125, no. 135: *spe defensionis et gratiae*. The monastery received other properties from Jews for the same stated reason. See, for instance, Regesta sive rerum Boicarum 1 (like note 18), p. 355.

²⁶ Monumenta Boica 37 (like note 23), p. 125–126, no. 136.

²⁷ See Monumenta Boica 37 (like note 23), p. 96, 153, 171, nos. 113, 156, 170; ARONIUS, Regesten (like note 18), p. 161, 172–173, nos. 362, 388.

²⁸ ARONIUS, Regesten (like note 18), p. 188–189, no. 425.

²⁹ See, for example, ARONIUS, Regesten (like note 18), p. 98, 131–132, 168–170, nos. 213, 308, 381.

of Christian religious life – in the high medieval Reich. Such relations were hardly extraordinary and were indeed the norm for both Jews and clerics.

Conclusion: The Symbolic Function of Jews

I realize that one might counter my argument by pointing out that monastic and other clerical writers of this period had little that was positive to say about Jews, that they both repeated and extended the anti-Jewish tropes that were formulated by Saint Paul and the church fathers. Rupert of Deutz, Honorius Augustodunensis, and others wrote fairly extensively on the Jews and, with a few exceptions, little of it is commendatory or suggestive of the amicable relations that appear to be the norm in charters and trade documents. One might also counter my depiction of peaceful, normative relations in Würzburg by drawing reference to the massacre of Jews in that city in 1147 (the first documented murder charge against Jews on the continent) and the much larger and more destructive pogroms in Franconia at the end of the thirteenth century. I would respond to that charge by pointing out that theological conversations existed largely in a closed space, that these authors were “thinking with” Jews as a way of understanding their own lives and vocations rather than thinking about actual Jews with whom they might have had actual relationships.³⁰ But that response, I think, does not go far enough to account for all phenomena, nor does it explain why tensions boiled over so violently in 1147 and 1298. So, I suggest a fourth pillar of normativity: that the Jews had a symbolic function in the high medieval Reich, similar to the function attributed to the Jews in fourteenth century Spain by David Nirenberg.³¹ Augustine’s doctrine of Jewish witness was certainly part of this, as evidenced by Bernard of Clairvaux preaching against Radulf just before the Second Crusade, but it was not the whole of it.³² Jews were symbols of the fallen world, a world where such things as property management and monetary loans were necessary if undesirable, a world that would be replaced when the Jews converted to Christianity and the second coming of Christ offered a return to paradise. This symbolic function was ritualized and

³⁰ On this line of argument, see especially the seminal work by DAVID NIRENBERG, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, 2013.

³¹ See DAVID NIRENBERG, *Communities of Violence, Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, 1996.

³² See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistolae nos. 363 and 365*, in: *Sancti Bernardi Opera* 1, ed. JACQUES MABILLION, 1719, p. 329–330, 332. On Bernard and the Jews, see DAVID BERGER, *The Attitude of St. Bernard of Clairvaux toward the Jews*, in: *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 40 (1972), p. 89–108.

JOHN D. YOUNG: A Fruitful Partnership

normative, yet it could also contribute to the breakdown of relations and even to atrocity when combined with growing indebtedness and the resentment of the Jews' special relationship with unpopular emperors: the combination that seems to account for the Rintfleisch massacres of 1298. Still, I also think the breakdown of normativity demonstrates its very existence; the exception proves the rule.

Prof. Dr. John D. Young,
Flagler College
Department Humanities, School of Humanities and Sciences
74 King Street
St. Augustine, FL 32084
jyoung1@flagler.edu