In the thirteenth century, sculptures of Synagoga and Ecclesia – paired female personifications of the Synagogue defeated and the Church triumphant – became a favored motif on cathedral façades in France and Germany. Throughout the centuries leading up to this era, the Jews of northern Europe prospered financially and intellectually, a trend that ran counter to the long-standing Christian conception of Jews as relics of the prehistory of the Church. In The Jew, the Cathedral, and the Medieval City, Nina Rowe examines the sculptures as defining elements in the urban Jewish–Christian encounter. She locates the roots of the Synagoga–Ecclesia motif in antiquity and explores the public manifestations of the theme at the cathedrals of Reims, Bamberg, and Strasbourg, considering each example in relation to local politics and culture. Ultimately, she demonstrates that royal and ecclesiastical policies to restrain the religious, social, and economic lives of Jews in the early thirteenth century found a material analog in lovely renderings of a downtrodden Synagoga placed in the public arena of the city square.

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THE JEW, THE CATHEDRAL, AND THE MEDIEVAL CITY

Synagoga and Ecclesia in the Thirteenth Century

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For Glenn and Ezra
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Abbreviations

CCCM  Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis
CCSL  Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
MGH Const. Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Constitutiones et acta
        publica imperatorum et regum (Legum Sectio IV)
MGH SS  Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores
MGH SSRM Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores Rerum
         Merovingicarum
PL     Patrologia Latina