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Heinz Schreckenberg, The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History. New York: Continuum Publishing Co., 1996, \$120.00 ISBN 0-8264-0936-9 (hc) 400 pp. Translated by John Bowden from the German Die Juden in der Kunst Europas. Ein Bildatlas, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996

The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History

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This encyclopedic volume of more than 1,000 pictures, 12 pages of which are in color, has been described as "a sad book revealing the downside of human history" (Dr. Isaac Levy). It is nevertheless a valuable work for anyone attempting an honest and comprehensive study of Christian attitudes toward Jews over the past 2,000 years.

It is the unique lifetime work of Heinz Schreckenberg, an associate at the Institutum Delitzchianum of Judaica in Münster who, over the course of twenty years, gathered examples of imagery in churches and cathedrals initially for use in his lectures on Christian anti-Judaism. His enormous collection, much of which can still be viewed throughout Europe

today, helps us understand how Christian polemic against the Jews was reinforced by a wealth of imagery from the time of Charlemagne until the twentieth century. The prejudices and misrepresentations are vividly reflected in paintings, statues, stained glass windows, sculptures, murals, frescoes, woodcuts, bronze reliefs and manuscript embellishments. Created specifically for the instruction and edification of all Christians - from the Middle Ages until deep into modern times - these works of art conveyed in pictorial form to the illiterate masses the same polemics and denigrations to which theologians and priests were exposed in the books they studied. The collection enables us to see how overt depictions and background details which appear to have come quite naturally to the artists had a subtle and tenacious impact on the subconscious of the masses seeking religious edification.

By categorizing the works of art thematically and historically - from the time of Rome versus Judea (66-70 CE) through twentieth century history in Christian Europe - Schrekenberg illustrates that art is a serious means of accessing historical knowledge about the ideological constructs Christian thinkers and artists developed around Jews. An extended introduction explains how the pictures are categorized thematically and how they illustrate various kinds of texts (theological, political, social, legendary...) and different historical periods (Destruction of Jerusalem, Middle Ages, Modern times...). Twelve chapters of pictures with detailed commentary vividly convey: the polemics of the early Church fathers; the social impact of the Fourth Lateran Council (with its clothing and segregation regulations to protect Christians from contamination); supersessionism (the triumphant ecclesia/defeated synagogue depictions); the "old" and "new" dispensation juxtapositions; the missionary efforts of the medieval church; the blood libel charges and the shocking Judensau depictions. About 150 pages are illustrations relating to the Hebrew scriptures and the Christian New Testament. The volume concludes with an extensive bibliography as well as an appendix listing the titles of Christian texts on the Jews from the second to the twentieth century.

The only critique one might make of this work is its cost which will unfortunately make it inaccessible to many. However, given the volume of information it contains, the quality of the reproductions and the commentaries, and the great need in the Christian world for a work of this nature it is an investment well worth making. Schreckenberg has presented the unhappy past in a manner which not only illustrates the malignant nature of a "teaching of contempt," but also opens our eyes to the power works of art have on the formation of public opinion - an awareness needed more than ever in view of the pictorial invasion of our lives by movies, television and cyberspace today.