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from the catacombs to colonialism / / edited by Herbert L. Kessler and

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Nota di contenuto Frontmatter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Introduction / Nirenberg,

David -- Chapter 1. "Pharaoh's Army Got Drownded": Some Reflections on Jewish and Roman Genealogies in Early Christian Art / Elsner, Ja -- Chapter 2. Unfeigned Witness: Jews, Matter, and Vision in Twelfth-Century Christian Art / Lipton, Sara -- Chapter 3. Shaded with Dust: Jewish Eyes on Christian Art / Kessler, Herbert L. -- Chapter 4. Iudeus sacer: Life, Law, and Identity in the "State of Exception" Called "Marian Miracle" / Prado-Vilar, Francisco -- Chapter 5. Abraham Circumcises Himself: A Scene at the Endgame of Jewish Utility to Christian Art / Kupfer, Marcia -- Chapter 6. Frau Venus, the Eucharist, and the Jews of Landshut / Timmermann, Achim -- Chapter 7. Jewish Carnality, Christian Guilt, and Eucharistic Peril in the Rotterdam-Berlin Altarpiece

of the Holy Sacrament -- Chapter 8. The Ghetto and the Gaze in Early Modern Venice / Katz, Dana E. -- Chapter 9. Through a Glass Darkly: Paths to Salvation in Spanish Painting at the Outset of the Inquisition / Pereda, Felipe -- Chapter 10. Renaissance Naturalism and the Jewish Bible: Ferrara, Brescia, Bergamo, 1520-1540 / Campbell, Stephen J. -- Chapter 11. Poussin's Useless Treasures / Neer, Richard -- Chapter 12.

Sommario/riassunto

Eugène Delacroix's Jewish Wedding and the Medium of Painting / Ubl, Ralph -- Chapter 13. The Judaism of Christian Art -- Contributors -- Index -- Acknowledgments

Christian cultures across the centuries have invoked Judaism in order to debate, represent, and contain the dangers presented by the sensual nature of art. By engaging Judaism, both real and imagined, they explored and expanded the perils and possibilities for Christian representation of the material world. The thirteen essays in Judaism and Christian Art reveal that Christian art has always defined itself through the figures of Judaism that it produces. From its beginnings. Christianity confronted a host of questions about visual representation. Should Christians make art, or does attention to the beautiful works of human hands constitute a misplaced emphasis on the things of this world or, worse, a form of idolatry ("Thou shalt make no graven image")? And if art is allowed, upon what styles, motifs, and symbols should it draw? Christian artists, theologians, and philosophers answered these questions and many others by thinking about and representing the relationship of Christianity to Judaism. This volume is the first dedicated to the long history, from the catacombs to colonialism but with special emphasis on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, of the ways in which Christian art deployed cohorts of "Jews"-more figurative than real-in order to conquer, defend, and explore its own territory.