

## Rigord of St-Denis on the Expulsion of the Jews from France (1182)

Rigord, Deeds of Philip Augustus, trans. W.L. North from the edition of H. Françoise Delaborde. Paris: Libraire Renouard 1882, pp. 24-30; 118-119; 140-142.

[5] On the king's hatred for the Jews

A very few days after the new king returned to Paris after his sacred anointing, he pursued an action that he had long been considering secretly in his mind but had feared to carry out of the tremendous reverence which he showed to his most Christian father. For he had often heard from children who had been raised with him in the palace—and he had committed this to memory without any loss—that the Jews who lived in Paris strangled one Christian each year on Good Friday or during Holy Week as if it were a sacrifice in order to disgrace the Christian religion, and they did so while hiding in underground crypts. And since they long persevered in the iniquity of this diabolical falsehood, in the time of his father they were often apprehended and burned. St Richard whose body rests in peace in the church of the Holy Innocent of Champeaux after having been thus killed by the Jews and crucified, migrated to the Lord happily through martyrdom. There, as we have heard, many miracles occur to the honor of the Lord through the prayers and intercessions of St Richard, with the Lord himself performing them. And because that most Christian king Philip had by diligent inquiry learned most fully from his elders about these and many other unspeakable things about the Jews, he was kindled with the zeal of God and, at his command, on Saturday, 14 February in the very same year that he received the sacred reins of governance of the kingdom of the Franks [1180], the Jews were captured throughout France in their synagogues. They were then despoiled of their gold, silver, clothing, just as the Jews themselves despoiled the Egyptians as they left Egypt. In this action there was presaged their expulsion to come which, by God's disposition and with the progression of time, occurred at a later time.

[11] Here is set the first reason why King Philip drove the Jews from all France.

At this time the greatest multitude of Jews lived in France. It had assembled there over a very long time from diverse parts of the world because of the long-lasting peace and the liberality of the French. For the Jews had heard of the vigor of the Frankish kings against their enemies and their great piety towards their subjects. Consequently their elders and those more learned in the law of Moses who were called "teachers" (*rabbis*) decided to come to Paris. After living there for a long time, they grew so wealthy that they bought for themselves almost half of the entire city and—what is against God's command and the decrees of the Church—they had Christians as servants and handmaids in their houses who, after openly departing from the faith of Jesus Christ, judaized with the Jews themselves. And because the Lord in Deuteronomy said through Moses: *You shall not charge interest to your brother but to the stranger* [Deut. 23:19-20], the Jew wickedly understands by "stranger" every Christian and therefore lends his money to Christians at interest. Indeed so greatly do they burden the citizens, soldiers, and peasants from the suburbs, towns, and quarters [of the city] that many, many of them were compelled to abandon their possessions. Others in Paris, bound by oath in the houses of Jews, were held captive as though they were in jail. When he heard this, that most Christian prince, moved by piety, took counsel with a certain hermit named Bernard, a holy and religious man who was, at the time, living in the forest of Vincennes, as to what it was necessary to do. On the basis of his counsel, he released all Christians in his kingdom from debts owed to the Jews, a fifth of which sum he kept for himself.

[12] Here is set the second reason.

To add to their damnation, the ecclesiastical vessels dedicated to God, namely gold and silver crosses,

bearing the image of the crucified lord Jesus Christ, and chalices which had been entrusted to them under title of a security deposit because of the pressing need of the churches ... all these they treated so foully out of hatred and derision for the Christian religion that in the chalices in which the Body and Blood of our lord Jesus Christ was confectioned, their infants ate their mush made with wine and drank from them.

Truly the Jews did not recall what is written in the book of kings about how Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the eleventh year of the reign of King Sedechias of Jerusalem, captured the holy city of Jerusalem through Nabuzarda, prince of the army, despoiled the Temple and took away the precious vessels dedicated to God which the most wise Solomon had made, because the sins of the Jews demanded it. Nonetheless, although Nebuchadnezzar was a gentile and an idolater, he feared the God of the Jews and refused to drink from those vessels or put them to his own uses. Indeed, he ordered that they be preserved in his own temple next to the idol just like a sacred treasure. But when Balthasar (Belshazzar) succeeded to the throne, who ruled sixth after Nebuchadnezzar, and was having a great celebration with his magnates and princes, he ordered that the vessels that his ancestor Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple of the Lord be brought forth. Then the king, his magnates, and their wives and concubines all drank from them. In that hour, the Lord, having been roused to anger against Balthasar, showed him the sign of his destruction, namely a hand writing on the wall in front of him: Mane, Techel, Phares, words which mean when translated: number, weighing, division.<sup>1</sup> That very night Babylon was captured by Cyrus and Darius and Balthasar was killed at this very celebration, just as Isaiah had predicted long before: *Set the table, gaze into the mirror* (i.e., upon the wall), *those who eat and drink from the vessels of the Lord. Arise, princes, take up arms*<sup>2</sup> for the city has been captured. And immediately when the Medes and Persians attacked unexpectedly, Balthasar was killed at this very celebration. Now then, who would dare conceal what God decides to reveal?

[13] Here is set the third reason for the expulsion of the Jews.

At that time, because the Jews feared lest their homes be inspected by the king's officers, it happened that a certain Jew, who was staying in Paris at that time, had security deposits from churches, namely a gold cross distinguished by gems and a Gospel book wondrously adorned with gold and precious stones, along with silver cups and other vessels. All these he placed in a sack and lowered it most foully into the deep pit where people customarily empty their stomachs.<sup>3</sup> A short while later, however, all of these items were found there by the Christians (with Lord revealing it) and, once the fifth portion of the entire debt was paid to the Lord king, the items were brought back to the proper church with the greatest joy and honor.

This year can rightly be called a jubilee, because just as in the Old Law all possessions are freely returned in the jubilee year to their original owners and all debts are forgiven, so, after so great a release of debtors had been accomplished by the most Christian king, the Christians living in the kingdom of France gained perpetual freedom from the debts to the Jews.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel 5.

<sup>2</sup> Is. 21:9.

<sup>3</sup> I.e., a latrine.

[14] In the year of the Lord's incarnation 1182, in the month of April, which is called Nisan by the Jews themselves, an edict went forth from the most serene king Philip Augustus that all Jews should be prepared to leave his kingdom as of the next feast of St John the Baptist. At that time, too, the king gave them permission to sell all their movables until the time which he had specified, namely the feast of St. John. But he reserved for himself and his successors, the kings of France, their immoveable property, namely houses, fields, vineyards, granaries, presses, and the like. When this was learned, some of the perfidious Jews, after being reborn from water and the Holy Spirit, converted to the Lord and persevered in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. After considering their Christian religion, the king restored to these persons all their possessions and endowed them with perpetual liberty. Others, blinded by their ancient error and remaining in their perfidy, began to entice the princes of the region, namely the counts, barons, archbishops and bishops, with great gifts and promises. In these ways, they worked on them to see if they might somehow be able to recall the king's mind from so firm a purpose through their counsel, urging, and endless promises of money. But the compassionate and merciful Lord, who does not abandon those who place their hope in him and does not humble those who rely upon his strength, poured forth his heaven-sent grace and so affirmed the illuminated mind of this king with the blazing strength of the Holy Spirit that it could not be softened either by entreaties or by promises of temporal goods. And to tell the truth, what was said about St Agatha can be fittingly applied to him: *More easily can stones be made soft and iron be turned into malleable lead than the mind of the most Christian king can be recalled from its divinely inspired purpose.*<sup>4</sup>

[15] On the rejection of the princes.

When the faithless Jews saw that the princes had been rejected through whom they had once inclined other kings, his predecessors, easily to their will, they wondered at King Philip's greatness of spirit and firm constancy in the Lord. Astonished and almost made speechless, they went to sell all their moveable goods shouting with a kind of wonder *Schema Israhel*.<sup>5</sup> For the time was now drawing near when, by order of the king, they were obliged to leave the entirety of France, an event that could not be put off any longer for any reason. Then the Jews, in trying to fulfill the king's commands, sold their moveable property with amazing haste. For all their immoveable property passed into the king's fisc. Once their possessions were sold, the Jews had the money for their journey and they left with their wives, children, and entire company in the abovementioned year of the Lord 1182, in the month of July, which is called Tamuz by the Jews themselves, the third year of the reign of King Philip Augustus and his seventeenth year of life that began the previous August, namely on the feast of St Symphorian, August 22. And so the seventeenth year of the king's life ended in the month following the expulsion of the Jews, namely in August. For they had departed in the month of July, as was said earlier. Therefore, there remained until the completion of his seventeenth year only three weeks or twenty-one days.

[16] That King Philip ever Augustus had the synagogues of the Jews dedicated to God as churches.

Once the expulsion of the faithless Jews had occurred and they had been dispersed throughout the entire world, King Philip, ever Augustus, not unmindful of his deeds, completed the work that had been gloriously begun with even greater glory by God's decree in the year of our Lord's incarnation 1183, at the

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<sup>4</sup> *Acta Sanctorum* 5 februarii I 615, col. 214.

<sup>5</sup> *AHear, O Israel!*@

beginning of his eighteenth year. For the Jews' synagogues—that is to say, what they call schools, where Jews, in the name of false religion, assembled daily supposedly for the sake of prayer—the king commanded first to be cleansed. Then, contrary to the wish of all the princes, the king had these same synagogues dedicated to God as churches and had the altars consecrated in honor of our lord Jesus Christ and the blessed mother of God and Virgin Mary. For he thought with pious and honorable consideration that wherever the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, as Jerome on Isaiah bears witness, used to be blasphemed day in and day out, God, who alone performs great miracles, should be praised there by clergy and the entire Christian people.

(Year 1192)

'84 And after several months of this year had passed, on 18 March (1192), King Philip, while staying at Saint-Germain-de-Laia, learned of the ignoble death of a certain Christian that had been perpetrated by the Jews. Having compassion for the Christian faith and religion, he immediately set out without his household knowing where he was going and came swiftly to the castle which they call Brie. After guards were set at the gates of this castle and the Jews were seized, he had eighty or more burned. For the countess of the castle, corrupted by great bribes from the Jews, had handed over to them a certain Christian whom they falsely accused of theft and murder. This man the Jews, kindled with an ancient hatred [of Christianity], led him through the entire town crowned with thorns and with his hands tied behind his back, beating him with clubs all the way. Afterwards they hung him from the gallows, although they themselves said at the time of the Lord's passion: *We are not allowed to kill anyone.*

(Year 1197)

In this year innumerable novelties happened. At Roseum in Brie, during the sacrifice of the altar<sup>6</sup>, wine was visibly transformed into blood and bread into flesh. At Vermandois, a certain knight who had been dead came back to life, predicted what would later befall many persons, and lived for a long time without food or drink. In Gaul, one night around the time of the feast of St John the Baptist<sup>7</sup> a honeyed torrent fell from heaven, covering the crops so that many who placed the grain in their mouth very clearly perceived the taste of honey. When a storm arose, a lightning bolt killed a man in Paris, and hail damaged crops and vineyards in certain places. After a few days, in the month of July, another storm occurred of such terrible force that from Tremblacus to the monastery of Kala and the places nearby it utterly destroyed the crops, vineyards, and groves. Indeed, stones were seen to fall from heaven as large as nutes, and in certain places as large as eggs and even larger, or so the story goes. Popular opinion was saying that Antichrist had been born in Babylon and the end of the world was at hand. And during the three prior years, crop failure denied the people food.

In this same July, King Philip, in opposition to the opinion of all men and his very own edict, brought the Jews back to Paris and gravely persecuted the churches of God. And because of this, during the following September, namely on the vigil of St Michael,<sup>8</sup> punishment followed. For, catching the king of the French unprepared, the king of England suddenly attacked Vexin near Gisors with 1500 armed knights, many men of Cotarelle, and an innumerable multitude of armed footsoldiers. He destroyed a certain fortification

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<sup>6</sup> I.e., the Eucharist.

<sup>7</sup> June 24 (birth of S. J. B) or August 29 (death). Given the chronological movement of the section, June 24 seems the more likely date.

<sup>8</sup> September 28.

which they call Corcelle, set many rural estates (villages?) ablaze, and pillaged. Inflamed with tremendous rage, King Philip wanted to go to the castle of Gisors with only 500 knights. But since the enemy stood in his way, he could not easily make the passage. When he saw this, he surpassed his own greatness of spirit with his boldness and, rushing madly through the middle of enemy lines and bravely attacking the enemy with just a few knights, he escaped safe and sound by the mercy of God and arrived at Gisors after many of his knights had been captured and others put to flight.

Most concerned about what had happened, though not recalling to mind (memoria) his offense against God, the king of the French summoned an army and, entering Normandy, laid waste to it.