

**BETWEEN FOREIGNERS, STRANGERS AND JEWS:
THE CHANGING PERCEPTION OF PARISIAN JEWS ON THE EVE OF THE
1306 EXPULSION**

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ABSTRACT

An unpublished document from late thirteenth-century Paris contains evidence of a Jewish-Christian public confrontation, on the one hand, and of Jewish-Christian economic criminal collaboration on the other. Using methods of micro-history, this article traces the story of Merot the Jew and his father-in-law, Benoait of St. Denis, who were caught attempting to smuggle merchandise by way of the River Seine. Their story is told in a verdict handed down by the *parloir de Paris*, the municipal judicial authority in charge of economic infractions. The *parloir* decreed the complete confiscation of Merot and Benoait's merchandise on the grounds that "they were foreigners." Taking this terminology as a point of departure, this paper tackles broader socio-economic aspects of belonging and foreignness among medieval Parisian Jews, and asks: in what ways were Jews considered "foreigners" in late thirteenth-century Paris? What were the implications of such a designation, and how did these perceptions change in the years leading up to the expulsion of 1306?

Introduction – a Brawl on the Bridges of Paris

In 1293, Regnaut Giffart, abbot of the St. Denis abbey in the northern outskirts of Paris; Benoait, a Jew from the village of St. Denis; and his son-in-law, Merot the Jew, collaborated in an attempt to smuggle merchandise into Paris by way of the River Seine.¹ Doing so, they violated the code of conduct of the prominent guild of the “Merchants of the Waters of Paris” (*Les marchands de l'eau de Paris*). According to this code, which had been enacted for the first time in 1170 as stipulated by a royal privilege granted to the guild, all merchandise brought into the city on the River Seine – specifically the part of the river otherwise known as “the Parisian *hanse* zone” (*la zone privilégiée de l'hanse Parisien*) – starting at the bridge of Mante, approximately 50 kilometers northwest of Paris, and continuing through the city’s bridges – had to be reported to the guild, and a toll had to be paid.² The story of Merot and Benoait is detailed in a single surviving document, a verdict of the *parloir*, the municipal judicial authority responsible for dealing with economic misconduct in late medieval Paris.³

The *parloir* verdict serves as unusual evidence of a Jewish-Christian encounter that sheds light on the legal, social, and economic standing of Jews in Paris in the years leading up to their expulsion in 1306. Despite being caught red-handed, our protagonists were reluctant to give up

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¹ The abbot of St. Denis is identified according to “Chronique de St. Denis, depuis 1285 jusqu'en 1328,” in *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. Martin Bouquet, vol. 20 (Paris: Imprimerie royal, 1840), 654. While the *parloir* referred to the abbot himself as one of the parties to the collaboration, his name was not mentioned explicitly. Throughout the document, there are mentions of “the abbot and his men” (*l'abbé et le convent de seint denis et leur procureur*), indicating that the abbot may have collaborated with Merot and Benoait via proxy and was mentioned in the verdict as administratively responsible, and not necessarily due to his direct participation.

² The privilege, granted for the first time by *Louis VI*, is mentioned in the re-giving of rights to the Merchants of the Waters in 1345 in *Philippe VI de Valois: Ordonnances des roys de France de la troisième race. quatrième volume*, ed. Denis-François Secousse (Paris: Imprimerie royal, 1734), 270–71. See also Émile Picarda, *Les marchands de l'eau: Hanse parisienne et compagnie française* (Paris: E. Bouillon, 1901), 3.

³ Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS. Français 5900. This manuscript is a compilation of regulations, ordinances, and resolutions of the provost of the merchants of Paris and of the *parloir de Paris*. Some documents date to the last decade of the thirteenth century, while most are not dated. For reasons unknown, this document is not included in the extensive printed collection of the *parloir*’s sentences from the years 1268–1325. See “Le livre des sentences du parloir aux bourgeois années 1268-1325,” in Le Roux de-Lincy, *Histoire de l'hôtel de ville de Paris* (Paris: Libraire de la Société de l'École des chartes, 1846).

their smuggled merchandise. As detailed in the verdict, a raucous brawl commenced on one of the bridges of Paris, involving Beonoait, Merot, and the delegates of the abbot of St. Denis:⁴

What had brought the provost and his deputies [to us, the *parloir*] were the disturbances and troubles caused by the abbot, the convent, their people, and by Benoait the Jew [and his son-in-law Merot], at the time when the provost and his deputies were seizing all the [smuggled] merchandise... [They caused so much trouble] that [the provost and his deputies] had to arrest them until the court decided what to do about their claims to leave the merchandise in their hands.⁵

This account of mayhem on one of the bridges of Paris, presumably in broad daylight and in the presence of curious onlookers, serves as rare evidence of a public clash in which representatives of the authorities, Jews, and clerics were involved. One can easily imagine the attempt to seize the smuggled merchandise while the ship or boat was on its way to Paris, and the ensuing loud, public confrontation between the parties.

A passage toward the end of the document is particularly noteworthy. After describing the infractions committed by both Jews and Christians, the court went on to announce the verdict, ultimately placing sole responsibility on the Jews involved – Benoait and Merot. The terminology used to justify this decision is striking:

In the question that has been brought before us, regarding the merchandise that was brought illegally against the regulations mentioned above [the regulations of the Merchants of the Waters of Paris], **as Merot and Benoait the Jews are foreigners, and are neither a part of the *hanse* nor have they arranged their merchandise to be accompanied by anyone from Paris that is a part of the *hanse* merchants of the waters,** it is for this reason that they must lose all their merchandise.⁶
(emphasis mine)

⁴ Most likely, this was the bridge situated near *la place du Grève*, also known as *place de l'hôtel de ville*, which served as the main entry point for bringing merchandise into Paris. See Etienne Boileau, *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris: XIIIe siècle. Publié par René de Lespinasse et François Bonnardot* (Paris: Impr. nationale, 1879), 244, n.1; Picarda, *Les marchands de l'eau*, 47.

⁵ “...Pour quoi requierent les diz prevost et eschevins, pour leur office, que l'empechement et le trouble que les diz abbe et convent et leur gens, et le dit Benoait juif sont de nouvel au dit prevost et eschevins, en leur saisine desus dite soit ote, et que la dite marcheandise soit remise en leur main...” Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS. Française 5900, f. 35v–36r. See Annex 1, lines 89–93. The provost was the Parisian local governor, appointed by the king, and was a Parisian equivalent to the regional sovereigns, namely the seneschals (*sénéchaux*) in the southern regions of the realm and the bailiffs (*baillis*) in the northern parts. The provost of the merchants was specifically appointed by the general provost and handled all economic affairs in the city.

⁶ “Item il fu question mene, que ladite marcheandise, il avoit amenée contre la costume desus dite, comme les diz Merot et benoait juis soient forains, et ne fussent hanses ne il sont compagnié en la marcheandi se d'aucuns de paris, qui marcheant fut hanse de liaue de Paris, et que, pour tant la dite marcheandise, il avoit perdue toute.” Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS. Français 5900, f. 35v. See Annex 1, lines 80–84.

Considering that the merchandise was confiscated, all three parties seem to have suffered a loss due to this verdict. Precisely for this reason, however, the verdict's wording raises important questions regarding attitudes toward Jews during this period.⁷ Why did the men of the abbey of St. Denis, headed by one of the most powerful men in the area of Paris and perhaps in all of France, arrange to collaborate illegally with two Jewish merchants who did not enjoy the protection of the guild? Why were only the Jews mentioned in the conclusion of the verdict, and why did it emphasize their being Jews and "foreigners" in addition to specifying that they were not guild members? Were Merot and Benoait designated as foreigners because they were living outside of Paris at the time, or were they residents of the city?

Taking this unusual case as a point of departure, the following article assesses how foreignness was conceptualized more broadly in late medieval Paris, and how the use of specific terminologies, particularly with reference to Jews, reflected changes in the perception of foreignness.⁸ The article is divided into two parts. The first section examines the urban topography of late thirteenth-century Paris by tracing the ... of the individual actors involved in our case study. It determines the place of residence and activity of Parisian Jews as the setting for their involvement in the Parisian economy. The second section looks into the nexus between law and society more broadly. It examines how legal and social frameworks distinguished between different social and economic groups, demonstrating how these distinctions shaped perceptions of foreignness within specific social, economic, and spatial contexts. The conclusion circles back to the case of Merot and Benoait and to the question that stands at the heart of this

⁷ The practice of confiscating goods by official authorities is described in the document of the *parloir*. This mechanism prescribed that half the merchandise be given to the king and half to the Merchants of the Waters. See Annex I to this article. The practice of legal confiscation of property to repay a debt was studied thoroughly in Julie Claustre, *Dans les geôles du roi: L'emprisonnement pour dette à Paris à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2007); Julie Claustre, "Dette et obligation à Paris à la fin du Moyen Âge," in *Aleurs et justice: écarts et proximités entre société et monde judiciaire du Moyen Âge au XVIIIe siècle* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011), 69–83; Daniel Lord Smail, *Legal Plunder: Households and Debt Collection in Late Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016).

⁸ Common medieval terms used to refer to non-inhabitants or other social or political outsiders in northern French legal documents were: "foreigner," "stranger," or "alien." Nevertheless, the semantics I point out in this article highlight a specific perception of Jews as outsiders, socially, economically, politically, and spatially. In a way, the contemporary use of the word "stranger" might best approximate the medieval usage of the term "foreigner," as it is illustrated in this article.

article: in what ways were Jews considered “foreigners” in late thirteenth-century Paris? What were the implications of such a designation, and how did these perceptions change in the years leading up to the expulsion of 1306?

Jews and Christians as Neighbors

As Jews active in the Parisian economy, Merot and Benoait were involved in Paris’s relatively large Jewish community while conducting their day-to-day affairs amidst political and economic instability. Estimates of the number of Jewish inhabitants in Paris at the end of the thirteenth century vary between 1000 and 2000, amounting to approximately one percent of the city’s overall population.⁹ The increase in Jewish residents in the years preceding 1306 is attributed mainly to the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290 and to local banishments within France, for example from Gascony in 1287 and from Anjou in 1289. These expulsions led to massive Jewish migration to economic centers in northern France, primarily Paris.¹⁰

The end of the thirteenth century also saw significant developments in local as well as regional politics. Following his coronation in 1285, Philippe IV the Fair was in continual conflict with Pope Boniface VIII and local representatives of the crown, who had various judicial and financial posts throughout the realm, namely the *sénéchaux* in the south and the *baillis* in the north. These confrontations, which often concerned sovereignty over land, management of

⁹ Jean Favier, *Le bourgeois de Paris au moyen âge* (Paris: Tallandier, 2012), 11; William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews: From Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 183; Michel Roblin, *Les juifs de Paris: démographie, économie, culture* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1952), 20. Estimates of the total population of Paris at the end of the thirteenth century range between 80,000 and 200,000. For different estimates, see Caroline Bourlet and Alain Layec, “Densité de population et socio-topographie: La géolocalisation de rôle de taille de 1300,” in *Paris de parcelles en pixels* (Paris: Presses universités de Vincennes, 2013), 230–31; John Baldwin, *Paris, 1200* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 30–31; Raymond Cazelles, “La population de Paris avant la peste noire,” *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 110, no. 4 (1966): 539–41; Sharon A. Farmer, *The Silk Industries of Medieval Paris: Artisanal Migration, Technological Innovation, and Gendered Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 226; David Herlihy, *Opera Muliebria: Women and Work in Medieval Europe* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990), 128–31; Roblin, *Les juifs de Paris*, 18–19; Miri Rubin, *Cities of Strangers: Making Lives in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 5.

¹⁰ Bernard Blumenkranz, *Histoire des juifs en France* (Toulouse: Edouard Privat editeur, 1972); Susan L. Einbinder, *No Place of Rest: Jewish Literature, Expulsion, and the Memory of Medieval France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Jordan, *The French Monarchy*, 180–85; Gérard Nahon, *La communauté juive de Paris au XIIIe siècle: problèmes topographiques, démographiques et institutionnels* (Paris: Bibliothèque national, 1978), 149.

institutions, and financial resources, directly impacted the king's inconsistent attitude towards minorities, particularly Jews.¹¹ During his thirty-year reign (1285–1314), Philippe IV defended Jews on more than one occasion, denouncing any harm caused to them or their property by Christian neighbors or sovereigns. On other occasions, however, he utterly refused to intervene in recurring attacks against Jews. In 1295, Philippe ordered all Parisian Jews to be arrested, all Jewish moneylenders to be incarcerated in the *châtelet* fortress, their property to be confiscated, and any pawns in their possession to be returned to their Christian debtors.¹² This attitude culminated with the expulsion of the Jews from France in 1306.

It was within this volatile political climate that Merot and Benoait navigated urban economic life. In 1298, five years after the smuggling incident of 1293, “Merot the Jew, son-in-law of Benoait of St. Denis” was mentioned once more in a record of the *parloir*.¹³ In this case, Merot was sued by his creditors for not repaying his debts.¹⁴ The court then allowed his creditors to seize personal items from his home in order to recoup what they were owed, specifying the exact items at stake:

These are the things of Merot the Jew, son-in-law of Benoait of St. Denis, which are to be forfeited [to his creditors]. Testifying to the existence of these items are Abraham Merot, Salemin Conrrat, Viet le noir, and the aforementioned Merot, all living in Paris on Court Robert Street:

First: 2 coverlets and 4 feather-stuffed cushions;

Next: 2 carpets and 2 bundles of fabric;

Next: 16 alders¹⁵ of squirrel fur;

¹¹ Jordan, *The French Monarchy*, 180–238 ; Juliette Sibon, *Chasser les juifs pour régner: les expulsions par les rois de France au moyen âge* (Paris: Perrin, 2016), 91–127; Joseph R. Strayer, *The Reign of Philip the Fair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 55, 237–99.

¹² Edgard Boutaric, *La France sous Philippe le Bel* (Paris: Academie des inscriptions et belles lettres, 1861), 301.

¹³ In 1298, the institution was still called *le parloir de Paris*. Only in the mid-fourteenth century did it become the *Hotel de ville de Paris*. See Le Roux de Lincy, *Histoire*, i–viii.

¹⁴ The verdict does not specify whether the creditors were Christians or Jews.

¹⁵ 1 alder is equivalent to 1.18 meters.

Next: 2 cauldrons, and 2 men's tunics with sleeves, 1 with stripes, the other mottled;

Next: 4 pots, 3 with handles and 1 without;

Next: 2 copper pots;

Next: one grill, 2 helmets, 8 hats, and 1 bag.

All together worth 7 Parisian livres...¹⁶

Merot's house was evidently in Court Robert Street (See Figure 1). Merot owned different types of clothes, vestments, various cooking utensils, and other housewares. Most of these items were everyday necessities for private use, which could easily be used or sold. Similarly, the 1293 document had detailed the items that were allegedly smuggled by the same Merot: "bed covers, cushions, carpets, rounded vessels, straw mattresses, and several other things" (*et autres plusieurs choses*).¹⁷ Although quantities were not specified, we see that the smuggled goods in 1293 were also everyday necessities, which would have made them easy to sell. It is evident that Merot transported goods of this kind to Paris, probably not for the first time, and kept them in his house before selling them. This explains the number of hats in his house or the numerous kitchen utensils that were later forfeited to his creditors. Both *parloir* documents demonstrate that Merot was a Parisian resident, active in the city's economy and familiar to the municipal institutions. Benoit, on the other hand – also called "Benoit from St. Denis" – clearly lived outside of Paris, albeit in its vicinity.¹⁸

¹⁶ Le Roux de Lincy, *Histoire*, deuxième partie, 138.

¹⁷ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. Français 5900, f. 35v. See Annex 1, lines 75–77.

¹⁸ Merot was identified by the court both in 1293 and in 1298 as the son-in-law of Benoit, indicating that Benoit himself was well-known to the authorities. While the discussion of identification and self-identification in the medieval city is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting that an analysis of the list of taxpaying Jews in the 1292 tax lists from Paris shows that more than 50% of Jewish taxpayers were identified by their family ties. See Géraud Hercule, *Paris sous Philippe le Bel – des documents originaux et notamment d'après un manuscrit, contenant le rôle de la taille imposée sur les habitants de Paris en 1292* (Paris: Imprimerie de crapelet, 1837).

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Figure 1: Map of thirteenth century Paris. Marked: Court Robert Street.

Source: “Le Paris de Guillot. Règne de Philippe le Bel, an 1300 — Plan dressé sous la direction de E. Mareuse par L. Taisne; Gravé par Erhard.” Paris: Librairie générale, 1875. (Gallica : <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8492245f/fl.item>. Public domain)

The respective places of residence of Merot and Benoait and the venue of the abbey of St. Denis suggest a potential incentive for their criminal cooperation. By the thirteenth century, the abbey of St. Denis sponsored three regional fairs: the fair of St. Mathias, held in February in the town of St. Denis; the fair of St. Denis, held in October; and the *Lendit* fair held in June in La Plaine, halfway between Paris and St. Denis.¹⁹ These fairs attracted merchants, moneylenders, and numerous consumers. The *Lendit* fair was by far the largest and most important of the three.²⁰ As of 1124, the king granted the abbey of St. Denis near-exclusive control over the *Lendit* fair, including judicial, taxing, commission, and stall rental rights (See Figure 2). Seeing as Paris was home to one of the largest concentrations of consumers in western Europe, the demand for goods was greater than the municipal markets could supply, leaving room for regional fairs in the city’s periphery such as the Lendit Fair. The Lendit Fair specialized in goods that served the everyday needs of Parisians: garments and dress clothes, flour, meat, and parchment.²¹ Such goods, which were in particularly high demand, were also the most profitable in the fair.²² This specialization was compatible with the merchandise that Merot, Benoait, and the abbot of St. Denis smuggled into Paris in 1293, as well as the items Merot held in his house in 1298. Although the basis for this economic collaboration is not explicitly given in court’s verdict, it is feasible that the abbey of St. Denis, Merot, and Benoait intended the smuggled

¹⁹ Anne Lombard-Jourdan, “Les foires de l’abbaye de Saint Denis: revue des données et révisions des opinion admises,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes* 145, no. 2 (1987): 18.

²⁰ Lombard-Jourdan, 18. The Lendit Fair was described as the most royal fair in the world (*La plus roial Foire du monde*) in “Le dit du lendit rimé,” a poem written in 1290. See Etienne Barbazan, *Fabliaux et contes des poètes françois des XI, XII, XIII, XIVe et XVe siècles* (Paris: Imprimerie de crapelet, 1808), 2:301–7.

²¹ The Lendit Fair was also called “the parchment fair” (*la foire du parchemin*) in “Le dit du lendit rimé” from 1290. See Barbazan, *Fabliaux*, 2:302.

²² William C. Jordan, *A Tale of Two Monasteries: Westminster and St. Denis in the Thirteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 27–29.

merchandise for sale at the Lendit Fair. This would have been beneficial to all parties: Merot and Benoit would have avoided the toll payable to the Parisian *hanse*, required for all merchandise shipped via the Seine into Paris even if the goods' ultimate destination was outside of Paris. This in turn would have lowered the costs of the goods and allowed for a larger profit margin. As party to the collaboration, the abbot would have procured larger commissions for the sales made under his legal and economic jurisdiction.²³

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Figure 2: The *Lendit* fair of St. Denis (early fifteenth century). At the center – the bishop of Paris and the abbot of St. Denis. Source: Paris, BnF, MS Latin 962 f.264r (Gallica: [ark:/12148/btv1b8496554p](https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8496554p). Public domain)

The spatial dimension sheds light on our protagonists' itinerary and their reasons for collaborating illegally, while complicating the question of the verdict's terminology with regard to Merot and Benoit's foreignness. Merot's residence in Paris in particular raises the question of Parisian Jews' perceived foreignness within the urban community. Another contemporaneous document – the tax lists of the city of Paris (*Les livres de la taille*) – offers additional perspective on this issue. Of the three witnesses in the 1298 case of the *Parloir*, Abraham Merot – Merot's neighbor, who testified to the existence of the forfeited items – was included as a taxpayer in the municipal tax lists. The lists were based on seven censuses carried out in Paris between the years 1292 and 1313. The tax collected – the *taille* – was calculated according to the annual revenues of each household. Despite a clear incentive to collect information about the majority of Parisians, it is estimated that a mere 25% of Parisians were documented in the lists, which included wealthy inhabitants (*Les gros gens*), poor yet taxpaying inhabitants (*Les menues gens*),

²³Although there is no evidence on this point, it is plausible that Benoit, a resident of St. Denis, served as an intermediate between Merot and the abbey.

Jews, and Lombards – i.e., Italian merchants.²⁴ Nobles, clergy, non-residents, students, and university professors were excluded from the lists.²⁵

The lists contain a wealth of information about the people of Paris, e.g., names, addresses (parish and specific street), family ties, geographical origins, occupations, and individual tax payments in the years 1292, 1296–1300, and 1313. By indicating the place of residence, the lists provide evidence of Jews and Christians living in close proximity, often next door to each other.²⁶ Jewish taxpayers lived mainly on five streets with Christian inhabitants: *La Tacherie*, *Neuve St. Merri*, *Franc Mourier*, *Court Robert*, and the street on bridge *Petit Pont* (**Table 1**). Although the lists were generally organized according to place of residence, Jewish taxpayers appear only in the closing section, separately from Christian taxpayers. This indicates that to a certain extent, the Jews of Paris, while included in the municipal tax lists and sharing the tax burden, were considered an ontologically distinct group.

	1292	1296	1297
Overall households on shared streets	130	137	178
Jewish households	90 (69%)	84 (61%)	84 (47%)
Christian households	40 (31%)	53 (39%)	94 (53%)

Table 1: Jewish and Christian taxpaying households on five streets on which Jews lived, 1292. (As of 1298, Jews do not appear in the general tax lists).

Could Parisian Jews become citizens of the city? An ordinance from 1287 indicates that inhabitants who paid the *taille* were granted *bourgeois* privileges.²⁷ Similarly, a *parloir* case from 1308 suggests that a *bourgeois* was someone living in the city who paid the *taille* and other

²⁴ Included in the 1292 tax list were 15,200 taxpayers, which corresponds to only 30% of the lowest estimates of the overall population of Paris. Boris Bove and Claude Gauvard, eds., *Le Paris du moyen âge* (Paris: Belin, 2014), 121; Alain Layec and Caroline Bourlet, “Densité de population,” 224; Hercule, *Paris sous Philippe le Bel*, 179.

²⁵ Bove and Gauvard, *Le Paris du moyen âge*, 121; Al Slivinski and Nathan Sussman, “Tax Administration and Compliance: Evidence from Medieval Paris,” CEPR Discussion Paper No. DP13512, (2019) available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3332315>. See especially pages 8–10.

²⁶ Bourlet and Layec, “Densité de population,” 223–24; Hercule, *Paris sous Philippe le Bel*, iiv–v; Isidore Leob, “Le rôle des juifs de Paris en 1296 et 1297,” *Revue des Études Juives* 1 (1880): 61.

²⁷ *Ordonnances des roys de France, Premier volume* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1723), 315; Bove and Gauvard, *Le Paris du moyen âge*, 118–21. This ordinance stated that if a citizen of one city wished to leave for a different city and acquire citizenship there, he would not be allowed to do so until he settled all his *taille* duties to the former city of residence.

municipal fees.²⁸ According to this rule, Jews were presumably counted as *bourgeois*.²⁹

Taxpaying Jews in Paris paid one percent of the total tax collected, which roughly corresponds to the percentage of Jews in the city’s overall population (See Table 2). It is noteworthy that the lists attributed various professions to Jewish men and women, referring to them as goldsmiths, tailors, flour millers, merchants, moneylenders, drapers, apothecaries, wool and silk workers, and more. This, too, indicates that Jews were deeply embedded in the Parisian economy, that they were integrated with various economic fields and shared urban space with their Christian neighbors, even as they were officially singled out as a distinct group.

	1292	1296	1297
Total tax collected	12,243	10,024	10,560
Tax paid by Jewish inhabitants	126 (~1%)	101 (~1%)	101 (~0.95%)

Table 2: *taille* tax paid by Jewish inhabitants of Paris, and the overall tax collected (in *Livres Tournois*)

Abraham, Merot’s neighbor, was included in the tax lists of 1292, 1296, and 1297. In the list of 1292, his name appears under the title “Jews of the city of Paris,” and he is reported as having paid 58 Parisian sous, well above the average that year among Jewish taxpayers, 28 sous (**Figure 3**). Some years later, however, his situation changed. According to the 1296 and 1297 lists, Abraham lived and conducted business on *Court Robert* street, paying 8 sous in tax each year, while the average among Jewish taxpayers was 24 sous. Surprisingly, despite clear evidence of his economic activity, Merot himself was not included in any of the tax lists – neither as the head nor as a member of a taxpaying household – implying the scale of his allegedly illegal activities and of the unreported revenues thereof.

²⁸ Le Roux de Lincy, *Histoire*, 171–72; Sussman and Slivinski, “Tax Administration,” 9.

²⁹ *Ordonnances des roys de France, Premier volume*, 314. Existing research shows a correlation between tax payment and formal as well as informal inclusion of Jews in the surrounding population. See, for example, Osavaldo Cavallar and Julius Kirshner, “Jews as Citizens in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy: The Case of Isacco Da Pisa,” *Jewish History* 25 (2011): 269–318; Rubin, *Cities of Strangers*, 58.

[Insert Figure 3 here]

Figure 3: Abraham Merot (fourth line from the bottom) in the 1292 tax list, under the title (in red) – “*Ce sunt les juifs de la ville de paris.*” BnF, Département des manuscrits, Fr. 6220. f, 78r.

The participation of Jews as taxpayers and evidence of Merot and Benoait’s collaboration with the abbey of St. Denis point to their *de facto* social and economic involvement and frequent daily encounters with Christians on the streets and waterways of the city. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that in the *parloir* case of 1298, at least one, if not all three witnesses were Jews. This corresponds to the unsurprising yet significant Jewish presence in Christian municipal courts both as defendants and as witnesses. This participation was in defiance of the Jewish religious directive not to testify against or sue fellow Jews in non-Jewish courts and attests to the discrepancy between official religious law and everyday practice.³⁰ Given this evidence of Jewish physical presence and participation in Parisian life, in both the economical and the legal spheres, the designation of Merot and Benoait as “foreigners” in the 1293 *parloir* case seems all the more peculiar. Why was Merot, a local Parisian Jew, designated a “foreigner,” and how does this terminology attest to the unstable attitude and perception of Jews in northern France in the years leading up to their expulsion in 1306?

“*Forensis id est persona externae*”:³¹ *Changing Perceptions of Parisian Jews as Foreigners*
Understanding the broader social meanings attached to the designation “foreigner” requires distinguishing between three economic groups whose members were considered outsiders within the French realm in the late thirteenth century: foreign merchants, Lombards, and Jews. Roger Kohn first established this distinction in his study on the Jews of northern France in the second half of the fourteenth century.³² However, this distinction is reflected already in the 1293

³⁰ For example: Simcha Emanuel, ed., *Responsa of Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg and His Colleagues: Critical Edition* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: ha-Igud ha-olami le-mad’ e ha-Yahadut: Keren ha-Rav David Mosheh ye-‘ Amalyah Rozen, 2012), n. 454. I would like to thank Aviya Doron for drawing my attention to this source.

³¹ *Les Statuts municipaux de Marseille*, ed. Régine Pernoud (Paris: L’imprimerie nationale de Monaco, 1949), no. 18, 198 and no. 21, 202.

³² Roger S. Kohn, “Le statut forain: Marchands étrangers, lombards et juifs en France royale et en Bourgogne (Seconde moitié du XIV^{ème} siècle),” *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 61, no. 1 (1983): 7–24. For an

document of the *parloir*. Legal authorities constantly scrutinized all three groups, yet there were clear differences between them.³³ Foreign merchants originated from outside of French lands. They were not part of the social network in local urban communities and did not receive the privileges granted to the *bourgeois*. They probably spoke a different dialect or language, frequently held designated occupations, and depended on royal privileges to protect themselves and their property while traveling and conducting business.³⁴ The usually brief sojourn of foreign merchants in northern France did not present a pressing need to regulate the conditions for their settlement. Accordingly, their stay was restricted neither geographically nor temporally.

Unlike foreign merchants, the Lombards – Italian merchants and moneylenders – lived among the local population in cities and interacted with locals on a daily basis.³⁵ They were granted specific privileges, mainly to regulate their moneylending activities. Lombards in Paris were taxed as non-citizens according to a unique charter given to the municipal authorities in 1282 that allowed for their exceptional inclusion in the *taille* obligation.³⁶ No similar permit was granted to city authorities concerning the taxation of Jews. Thus, it appears that Jews included in the tax lists were considered inhabitants of Paris and had a different status from that of the Lombards. Nonetheless, as Christians, Lombards were more deeply integrated into urban social life than Jewish merchants and moneylenders.³⁷

etymological discussion, see Christoph Cluse, “Jewish Community and Civic Commune in the High Middle Ages,” in *Strangers and Poor People: Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion in Europe and the Mediterranean World from Classical Antiquity to the Present Day*, ed. Andreas Gestrich, Raphael Lutz, and Herbert Uerlings (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009); W. Rothwell, “‘Strange’, ‘Foreign’, and ‘Alien’: The Semantic History of Three Quasi-Synonyms in a Trilingual Medieval England,” *Modern Language Review* 105, no. 1 (January 2010): 1–19; Rubin, *Cities of Strangers*, 16.

³³ It was not only economic “others” who were examined closely by the authorities. Foreign students in Paris, for example, were also scrutinized throughout the thirteenth century. See Rubin, *Cities of Strangers*, 31–33.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

³⁵ Pierre Champion, “Juifs et lombards à Paris au moyen âge,” *Revue de Paris* 15 (1933): 858–1313. On daily intimate relations between Lombards and Christian residents of Paris, see Farmer, *The Silk Industries of Medieval Paris*, 139–57, 233–37; William Chester Jordan, “Jews on Top: Women and the Availability of Consumption Loans in Northern France and in the Mid-Thirteenth Century,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 29, no. 1 (1978): 50.

³⁶ Le Roux de Lincy, *Histoire*, deuxième partie, 261.

³⁷ Kohn, “Le statut forain,” 8–10.

Comparing Lombard and Jewish taxpayers in Paris highlights the subtleties in official royal attitudes towards the two groups.³⁸ In the 1292 *taille* lists, all Jewish taxpayers were included in a separate section at the end of the list. However, Lombards were included both in a designated section, under the title “these are the Lombards of the city,” as well as throughout the list along with other local taxpayers, with a specific addition to each entry which indicated that the specific taxpayer mentioned was a Lombard (*le lombard \ la lombarde*).³⁹ In the tax lists of 1296, 1297, 1298, and 1313, Lombards were listed according to the parishes in which they resided. Jews were still mentioned separately in the lists of 1296 and 1297. As of 1298, the *taille* paid by Jews was levied, registered, and collected separately, and Jews were not included in the municipal list of all Parisian taxpayers. The apparent difference between the inclusion of Jewish and Lombard taxpayers in Paris emphasizes the singular status of Jews and indicates an entangled stratification of the perception of “foreigner” at the end of the thirteenth century.⁴⁰

This unique attitude towards Jews is also evident when we compare them to foreign merchants. Throughout the fourteenth century, Jews received privileges that enabled their resettlement in different areas in northern France, where they had resided prior to the expulsions. These privileges also regulated their participation in specific occupations and the terms for moneylending.⁴¹ Urban topography, i.e., the places where Jews, Lombards, and foreign merchants resided within Paris, reveals a clear legal and economic differentiation between Jews and foreign merchants throughout the century. For example, while foreign merchants were not allowed to own houses or communal institutions, Jews demonstrably owned such properties in

³⁸ This comparison was also made for the period following the expulsion of Jews from France. See Myriam Greilsammer, *L'usurier chrétien, un juif métaphorique: Histoire de l'exclusion des prêteurs lombards (XIIIe-XVIIe siècle)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012).

³⁹ Hercule, *Paris sous Philippe le Bel*; Karl Michaëlsson, *Le livre de la taille de Paris l'an 1296* (Göteborg: Universitets Arsskrift, 1958); Karl Michaëlsson, ed., *Le livre de la taille de Paris l'an 1297* (Göteborg: Universitets Arsskrift, 1962); Buchon J.A, *Le livre de la taille de Paris l'an 1313* (Paris: Verdier, 1827).

⁴⁰ *Tallia Judeorum*, also referred to as *De finatione Judeorum Parisius*. The *taille* that was levied on Jews as of 1298 was also registered differently. See Jules Viard, *Les journaux du trésor de Philippe IV le Bel* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1940), xvii, and registers n. 707, n. 1307, n. 1607.

⁴¹ While privileges granted to Lombards limited the areas in northern France where they were allowed to settle, as well as the number of years of settlement permitted, in privileges granted to Jews, mostly in the second half of the fourteenth century, no such geographical restriction was included. Jews were given the option to choose the place to re-settle, yet the privileges limited the number of years Jews were allowed to stay in northern France. See Kohn, “Le statut forain,” 15–19.

the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁴² Nevertheless, despite this prerogative, Jews' existence in French-controlled lands was precarious. In 1315, Jews received royal permission to reside in France for at least 12 years, but they were expelled once more in 1322, testifying to the volatility of legal attitudes towards them. Perhaps the most pertinent distinction between foreign merchants, Lombards, and Jews concerned questions of collective responsibility. While foreign merchants and Lombards were not held responsible for the personal misconduct of another member of their group, Jews were formally held accountable – personally and collectively – for such incidents.⁴³

These distinctions become all the more apparent when considering the regulations of the guild of the Merchants of the Waters of Paris, also called “the Parisian *hanse*.”⁴⁴ Like other guilds across Europe, the guild of the Merchants of the Waters of Paris was established to promote its members' financial and social interests by maintaining a commercial monopoly over part of one of the most important maritime trade routes in the region – the Seine River. The Parisian *hanse* obtained its position from the French monarchs, who ratified its economic

⁴² Roger Kohn, “Les juifs de Paris (1359-1394): Problèmes de topographie urbaine,” *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 7 (1977): 1–8; William Chester Jordan, “The Jewish Cemeteries of France after the Expulsion of 1306,” in *Studies in Medieval Jewish Intellectual and Social History: Festschrift in Honor of Robert Chazan* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 227–44; Gérard Nahon, “Jewish Cemeteries in France,” *Jüdische Friedhöfe Und Bestattungskultur in Europa* (Berlin: Hendrik Bäessler verlag, 2011), 77–80 ; Emile Lévy, “Un document sur les juifs du barrois en 1321-23,” *Revue des études juives* 19 (1889): 246–58. For the archeological findings and the urban mapping of Paris, see Hélène Noizet et al., eds., *Paris de parcelles en pixels: analyse géomatique de l'espace parisien médiéval et moderne*. (St. Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2013); Hélène Noizet and Eric Grosso, “Mesurer la ville: Paris de l'actuel au moyen âge. Les apports du système d'information géographique d'ALPAGE,” *Revue du comité français de cartographie* 211 (2012) : 85–100. **The map of thirteenth-century Paris**, among other sources, **was known already in the eighteenth century**, according to the tax lists of Paris. See *Le Paris de Guillot*, 1875.

⁴³ Kohn, “Le statut forain,” 17. On the correlation between different degrees of autonomy and social acceptance, see Rubin, *Cities of Strangers*, 13.

⁴⁴ Merchants involved in long-distance trade frequently created local or regional forms of self-organization. These organizations were often called *hanse*—the old German word for “association.” The objectives of these associations, which functioned as local or regional guilds, were to provide physical and financial protection to their members, to reduce high transaction costs, and to acquire political power. Scholars of economics have debated the role of guilds as private institutions in the growth of economies and their role as a restraint or even alternative to governmental economic interference. See Peter Clark, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 428–30; Sheilagh Ogilvie, *The European Guilds: An Economic Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 36–38. Perhaps the most famous merchants' organization was the confederation of the Hanseatic League in northern and central Europe. See Philippe Dollinger, *The German Hansa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970). Another such organization was the *Cinque ports confédération* in the area of the English channel, established in the 1270s. See Maryanne Kowaleski, *Medieval Towns: A Reader* (Toronto: Higher Education University of Toronto, 2008), 75–76.

rights.⁴⁵ Guilds consistently discriminated against perceived outsiders: women, Jews, the poor, migrants, non-citizens, and other members of ethnic, linguistic, territorial, and religious minorities.⁴⁶

The Parisian *hanse* was perhaps the most eminent and influential guild in medieval Paris. It monopolized the city's waterways and enforced the payment of tolls for the passage of merchandise via the river and through the city.⁴⁷ Attesting to the magnitude and influence of this guild is its thirteenth-century seal, which ultimately became the symbol of modern Paris (See Figures 4a and 4b).⁴⁸ The case of Benoait and Merot demonstrates the political, social, geographic, and economic prominence of the Parisian *hanse*:

Lo and Behold, as the provost of the merchants of the waters of Paris and his deputies claim against the abbot and convent of St. Denis and their fiduciaries – as well as against Benoait the Jew⁴⁹ – to have made the mischief for which it has been decided as follows: First of all, the aforementioned provost and deputies shall take possession of all merchandise in question, meaning all that was brought illegally along the waters against their regulations, [which is to say] from the bridge of Mante, through any of the bridges of Paris, where merchants of the waters of Paris that are not *hanse*, or that do not have a *hanse* companion to accompany their merchandise, illegally smuggle their merchandise and thus must forfeit half of it to the king and the other half to the merchants of the waters of Paris.⁵⁰

[Insert Figure 4a here]

[Insert Figure 4b here]

Figure 4a. Molding of the seal of the Merchants of the Waters of Paris, 1210. (Paris, *Archives nationales de France, Collection de sceaux*, n. 5582)

Figure 4b. The official symbol of modern Paris, incorporating the Merchants of the Water's coat-of-arms

⁴⁵ Guilds were not always aligned with the sovereign's interests, and in certain places there was even a fundamental opposition between guilds and governments on both economic and political matters. For a discussion of guilds and governments, see Ogilvie, *The European Guilds*, 36–41,

⁴⁶ In medieval Europe, citizenship as a category applied within the local community (town or village), not on the state level. Ogilvie, *The European Guilds*, 96; David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City, 1300-1500: A History of Urban Society in Europe* (London: Longman, 1997), 58–61. The debate around the extent to which guilds' restrictions towards outsiders merely reflected cultural attitudes is ongoing. See Ogilvie, *The European Guilds*, 164–65.

⁴⁷ The Seine was a central trade route already in the Roman period. The ancient corporation of boatmen in Paris, *Nautae Parisiaci*, had similar goals as the medieval Merchants of the Water. See Albert Demangeon, "The Port of Paris," *Geographical Review* 10, no. 5 (1920): 277. Although the guild was known as the Parisian *hanse*, it was not part of the well-known Hanseatic League of northwestern and central Europe.

⁴⁸ In 1357, the official house of the Parisian **Hanse** and the court building of the *parloir*, both of which were situated in the *Place de Grève*, became the headquarters of Paris's local administration.

⁴⁹ Merot is mentioned in the following passage as a collaborating party.

⁵⁰ Paris, Bibliothèque national de France, MS. Français 5900, f. 34r. See Annex 1, lines 1–10.

The Parisian merchant's guild was a particularized merchants' institution, meaning that its rules distinguished between various identity-related categories such as gender, religion, place of economic activity, residence, or group membership.⁵¹ Accordingly, few were exempt from the tolls owed to this guild, while its members received the most exemptions. All members of the guild were male inhabitants of Paris who held *bourgeois* privileges.

According to an in-depth study of the legal statute of the Merchants of the Waters of Paris published in 1901 by Emile Picarda, members of the guild were bound by oath. Specific groups were barred from membership and could transfer goods through the *hanse* zone only in exchange for tolls proportionate to the value of the transferred merchandise. In addition, merchandise transported by non-members had to be accompanied by a "*hanse* companion" – a merchant from the *hanse* network who in return was entitled to either a portion of the goods or part of the revenues from its sale.⁵² By the end of the thirteenth century, companions did not physically accompany shipments. Rather, the guild supplied legal authorization to the merchants to pass through Paris after payments for the guild and the companion had been settled.

Who exactly was barred from membership according to the regulations of the guild and how did this designation reflect concepts of foreignness and social attitudes towards the Jews of Paris? It seems that all three groups mentioned above were denied participation on the grounds of being "outsiders": Jews, foreign merchants, and Lombards.⁵³ In addition, women, who were, with some exceptions, typically excluded from guilds, were explicitly barred from membership in the Parisian *hanse*. In a circular manner, beyond serving as a technical criterion of eligibility (or lack thereof) in the first place, the label "foreign" or "stranger" also simply referred to all

⁵¹ For an economic discussion of guilds and the terms *particularized institution* and *generalized institution*, see Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade Merchant Guilds, 1000-1800*, 1–35.

⁵² Picarda, *Marchands de l'eau*, 45–49. This is the *hanse compaignon* mentioned in the text of the *parloir*.

⁵³ Ogilvie, *The European Guilds*, 58; Kathryn L. Reyerson, "The Merchants of the Mediterranean: Merchants as Strangers," in *The Stranger in Medieval Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 1–26.

merchants who were not part of the guild, for whatever reason.⁵⁴ Notably, however, the above-quoted opening statement of the 1293 verdict referred to non-members of the guild as “merchants who were not hanse” (*ne soit hanse*) in a dry and straightforward manner, without calling them “foreign.” This further indicates the ambiguity of the term and the broader social meaning it carried, which appears to have extended well beyond a technical designation.

The authority that oversaw economic regulations in Paris, including those pertaining to the rights of the Parisian *hanse* guild, was the provost of the merchants of Paris (*la prévôt des marchands*). This provost headed the judicial authority that enforced these economic regulations – the *Parloir de Paris*. The *parloir* had four deputies (*échevins*) in charge of recording and regulating debts (See Figure 5).⁵⁵ The *parloir* was responsible for the wording of the 1293 verdict, which referred to Merot and Benoait not only as non-members, but as “foreigners.” Interestingly, in similar cases involving foreign merchants, the *parloir* refers to merchants who were not members of the Parisian *hanse* by specifying their origin – for example, “the people of Cormeilles” (*homines de Cormelliis*)⁵⁶ or “the merchants of Gascony” (*mercatori de Wasconia*)⁵⁷ – rather than simply labelling them as “foreigners.” Furthermore, the *parloir* used the terms *estrange* or *externeus* to refer specifically to people who were not under royal jurisdiction.⁵⁸ Merot and Benoait, in contrast, are referred to as “the Jews” and then as “foreigners,” in addition to an explicit clarification that they were not members of the guild. As Merot was a Parisian, he was not a “stranger” in terms of legal sovereignty – he was, like all the Jews of Paris, a royal subject. For this reason, too, the wording with respect to Merot and Benoait is suggestive of a deeper social attitude toward Jews as foreigners.

⁵⁴ Picarda, *Marchands de l'eau*, 29. On the use of the terms “strangers” or “aliens,” see for example *Les Olim, ou registres des arrêts rendus par la cour du roi* (Paris: Imprimerie Royal, 1839), 2:363, n. XXVII (“mercantiribus extraneis”); 708, n. XXXIII (“externeus qui non sit de terra domini vel feodo ejus”); 713, n. LVIII (“aliquis externeus”); 724, n. XVII (“personne estrange”); 818, n. CCIII (“estrange”).

⁵⁵ Picarda, 63. The provost of the merchants in 1293, before whom the case of Merot and Benoait was brought, was Jean Popin, according to Le Roux de Lincy, *Histoire, premiere partie*, 203.

⁵⁶ *Les Olim, ou registres des arrêts rendus par La cour du roi* (Paris: Imprimerie royal, 1839), 1:597

⁵⁷ *Les Olim, ou registres des arrêts rendus par La cour du roi* (Paris: Imprimerie Royal, 1839), 2:93.

⁵⁸ See, for example, *Les Olim*, 2:363, n. XXVII (“mercantiribus extraneis”); 708, n. XXXIII (“externeus qui non sit de terra domini vel feodo ejus”); 713, n. LVIII (“aliquis externeus”); 724 n. XVII (“personne estrange”); 818, n. CCIII (“estrange”).

[Insert Figure 5 here]

Figure 5: Structure of the provost of the merchants of Paris (sixteenth century). At the top are the *parloir*. Beneath them are their deputies (*échevins*): at the left-hand table is *Le greff* – the clerk's office responsible for documentation; at the right-hand table is *Le receveur* – regulating debts. Above the right-hand table and slightly to the right are the procurator and a clerk. At the bottom are the merchants of the Parisian *hanse* guild.

(Source: BnF, département Réserve des livres rares, 4-Z LE SENNE-962, *Ordonnances royaulx De la jurisdiction De la prevoste des marchans et eschevinaige de la ville de paris*, 1528)

Based on the evidence reviewed thus far, at the end of the thirteenth century and throughout the fourteenth century, there was a fine line between foreignness and belonging for the Jews of Paris, mediated by economic, political, religious, and social conditions.⁵⁹ While both the tax lists and the 1293 *parloir* document attest to the alleged inclusion of Jews in the Parisian economy and urban space, both also single them out *as* Jews. The case of Merot and Benoit suggests that the Jews of Paris belonged to the urban community in manifold ways and on different levels: they could simultaneously belong to the city – its space, economy, legal framework, and social fabric – and be considered foreigners in it.⁶⁰ The ambivalent nature of medieval perceptions of foreignness is reflected in the prescriptive terminologies used in administrative sources, as well as in their descriptive documentation of quotidian relations.⁶¹

The Precarious Status of Parisian Jews: Inclusion, Foreignness, and Expulsion

During the thirteenth century, new forms of social cohesion and expressions of urban identity developed throughout western Europe, including Paris. These developments also spurred conflict, especially with respect to those who were considered outsiders. By the end of the thirteenth century, the perception of a distinct urban community in Paris was well formed and reflected in administrative documents.⁶² The city's growing autonomy, the royal charters

⁵⁹ Jordan, *The French Monarchy*, 181–203; Sibon, *Chasser les juifs*, 91–117.

⁶⁰ Also manifested by the Latin term *civitas* in the sense of the united community that formed the concept of “city”.

⁶¹ See also Philip Daileader, *True Citizens: Violence, Memory, and Identity in the Medieval Community of Perpignan, 1162-1397* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

⁶² John W. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus: Foundations of French Royal Power in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 59–60; Kohn, “Le statut forain,” 9; Joseph Morsel, “Comment peut-on être parisien? Contribution à l’histoire de la genèse de la communauté Parisienne au XIIIe siècle,” in

supporting its self-organization, and the development of urban identity, all leading to a cohesion of the Parisian community (*civitas Pariensis*) at end of the thirteenth century, emphasized the dichotomies between foreigners and Parisians, and thus shaped attitudes towards the Jews of Paris.⁶³ Recent research demonstrates the ways in which the accretion of regulations governing the entry and presence of visitors, and the increasing number of gates, chains, and guards in medieval towns, corresponded to conceptions of foreignness in medieval cities.⁶⁴ The everyday encounters between Jews and Christians in the form of economic collaboration, the variety of occupations held by Jews, and the patterns of Jewish settlement within Paris illustrate the fragile layers folded into the dual concepts of foreignness and belonging.⁶⁵

A comparison between the Jews listed in the 1292 tax list and the 1297 tax list unveils another facet of foreignness relating to the internal stratification within the Jewish community, on top of the inter-group distinctions between Jews and Christians.⁶⁶ According to this comparison, first made by William Chester Jordan, 76 percent of the Jews in the tax list of 1297 had not been listed in 1292. Much of this change is the result of the immigration of English Jews.⁶⁷ Conceptions of foreignness thus became entangled with another, more subtle differentiation, between “native” Parisian-Jews and new Jewish immigrants.

Mélanges offerts à Jean-Louis Biget, ed. Patrick Boucheron, Jacques Chiffolleau (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2000), 363–81. Attitudes towards foreigners were also reflected in papal resolutions from southern France. See Rowan W. Dorin, “Banishing Usury: The Expulsion of Foreign Moneylenders in Medieval Europe, 1200–1450” (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2015), 287–88. On the historical problem of community, see Daileader, *True Citizens*, 222–30.

⁶³ Clark, *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History*, 421, 447–48; Peter Clark, *European Cities and Towns: 400-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 89–97. Urban topography developed concurrently with the social and personal identity of Parisians. One terminological example given by Joseph Morsel indicates that, while in the twelfth century the inhabitants of Paris were usually referred to as *nostris burgensibus Pariensibus*, in the early thirteenth century the possessive adjective was consistently omitted, and the inhabitants of Paris were referred to as *omnes cives Pariensis* or *populus Pariensis*. See Morsel, “Comment peut-on être Parisien ?,” 5.

⁶⁴ Rubin, *Cities of Strangers*, 15. The existence of gates and guards for the isolation of French cities is also evident in descriptions of the closing of Montpellier to outsiders during the Black Death. See, for example, *La grand chirurgie de M. Guy de Chauliac*, ed. Laurence Joubert (Tournon: Claude Michel, 1619), 172.

⁶⁵ Favier, *Le bourgeois de Paris au moyen âge*, 574–75.

⁶⁶ See also Justine Firnhaber-Baker, “Introduction,” in *Difference and Identity in Francia and Medieval France*, ed. Meredith Cohen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 4. For analysis of the neurological foundations of the relationship between the individual intergroup interactions and group intergroup interactions, see Robert M. Sapolsky, *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (London: Vintage Books, 2018), 387–424.

⁶⁷ Jordan, *The French Monarchy*, 183–84.

This article has attempted to shed light on the complexity of the perception of Jews as foreigners through the prism of a particular case preserved in an administrative document. Placing the story of Merot and Benoait within a broader political and social context highlights the nexus between economy, society, and law that shaped the changing perceptions of Jews simultaneously as foreigners and as local citizens. The *parloir* document of 1293 offers a unique opportunity to follow a particular incident almost from beginning to end, thus capturing the human drama behind this duality. Reconstructing the story of Benoait and Merot also highlights how legal terminology and formal economic policies pertaining to Jewish inhabitants did not necessarily reflect the realities of everyday life. Mutual economic interests and daily encounters led to interpersonal cooperation and the maintenance of personal ties, as well as clashes and disputes between Jews and Christians on the streets and bridges of Paris. As established in previous research, acquiring formal legal status did not guarantee the immediate transformation of Jews into full members of the urban community, least of all in the eyes of the Christian population.⁶⁸ However, the incident of Merot and Benoait demonstrates that this ambiguity went both ways – for the Jews of late thirteenth-century Paris, opportunities for economic participation extended beyond those afforded by their formal legal status.

The analysis of the changing status of Parisian Jews on the eve of their expulsion demonstrates their *conditional* toleration and the social, political, and economic developments in northern France at the turn of the thirteenth century: the marginalization of minorities alongside the intensive construction of local-urban identities, urban topographical changes, the growth of trade and the centrality of trade routes, professionalization, the ascending economic and political power of guilds, and the rise in royal scrutiny and administration.⁶⁹ As a final point, I would like to suggest that these trends were, in fact, the first signs of a series of consecutive events that unfolded during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries more broadly, throughout western

⁶⁸ Cluse, “Jewish Community and Civic Commune in the High Middle Ages”; Cavallar and Kirshner, “Jews as Citizens in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy,” 273.

⁶⁹ I use the term “conditional tolerance” as coined in Noel D. Johnson and Mark Koyama, *Persecution & Toleration: The Long Road to Religious Freedom* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 74–88.

Europe.⁷⁰ The numerous crises and calamities in the fourteenth century – the great famine, the Black Death, rebellions and riots, the end of the Capetian dynasty, and the Hundred Years’ War – exacerbated pre-existing attitudes towards minorities and outsiders, resulting in the intensification of attacks against Jews, lepers, beggars, Muslims, and more.⁷¹ Repeated expulsions of Jews, moneylenders, and foreign merchants from France during the fourteenth century, accusations of well poisoning against lepers and Jews that began in 1321 and spread throughout western and central Europe as well as the Iberian peninsula, the large-scale massacre of Jews in Castile and Aragon in 1391, and the persecution of Jews in Germany throughout the fourteenth century are but a few examples of this intensification.⁷² Within this broader European context, the perceived foreignness of Jews became salient. During the fourteenth century, the somewhat ambivalent attitude towards Jews took the form of complete exclusion – socially and physically. The story of Merot and Benoait demonstrates the changing perceptions towards Jews at the turn of the fourteenth century, contributing not only to the discussion about the history of the Jews of Paris in the years leading up to the expulsion of Jews from France but also to the nuanced discussion about Jewish life *between* calamities and the precarious status of Jews throughout the later Middle Ages.

⁷⁰ Rubin, *Cities of Strangers*, 8–13; Clark, *European Cities and Towns*, 21–23; Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City*, 5–36; Elizabeth A. R. Brown, *Politics and Institutions in Capetian France* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1991); Johnson and Koyama, *Persecution & Toleration*, 153–56.

⁷¹ Rowan W. Dorin, “L’expulsion des usuriers hors de France à la fin du XIII^e siècle,” *Hypotheses* 17, no. 1 (2014): 157–66; Johnson and Koyama, *Persecution & Toleration*, 73–93; David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 43–124; Tzafir Barzilay, “Well-Poisoning Accusations in Medieval Europe: 1250–1500” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2016), 171–242.

⁷² Sibon, *Chasser les juifs*, 179–82; Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence*, 229–30; Johnson and Koyama, *Persecution & Toleration*, 112–13; Alfred Haverkamp, “Die Judenverfolgungen zur Zeit des Schwarzen Todes im Gesellschaftsgefüge deutscher Städte,” in *Zur Geschichte der Juden im Deutschland des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp (Stuttgart, 1981), 27–93.

1 [f. 34r] Dient et entendent approuver le prevost et les eschevins de la mar-
2 cheandise de liaue de Paris en non de leur office. contre religi-
3 eus hommes. l'abbé et le convent de seint denis et leur procureur et
4 contre benoait le juif les faiz et les resons qui sensuivent.
5 primierement que les diz prevost et eschevins de Paris, sunt en
6 saisine toute foiz quil est question que aucun ait forfait contre
7 leur coustumes en amenant ou ramenant marcheandise par
8 iaue des le pont de mante duquel aus pons de paris qui mar-
9 cheant de liaue de paris ne soit hanse, ou qui nait compaignion
10 en la marcheandise marcheant hanse de liaue de Paris. et qui pour
11 le forfait la marcheandise doie estre perdue à celi à qui ete estoit.
12 [f. 34v] et gaignié au roy pour la moitié et pour l'autre moitié aus marcheans
13 de Paris de liaue de cete question d'avoir la cognoissance et le jugement.
14 Item et d'avoir quant la marcheandise est jugiée a estre perdue à celi a
15 qui ete estoit et a estre gaigniée le roy et eus li comme il est dit de ven-
16 dre et ploitier ladite marcheandise par leur main et de retenir, la moi-
17 tié pour eus et de baillier ausi le roy la seue moitié par leur main.
18 Item que il sunt en cete saisine ou cas desus dit contre tous, de quelque
19 iourise ou seignorie il soient.
20 Item que il sunt en cete sesine ou cas desus dit de toutes marcheandises
21 menées ou ramenées par iaue des les ponz de paris duquel au pont de
22 mante que queles soient et à quiconques il soient.
23 Item il sunt en saisine ou cas desus dit que ce que il jugent de la mar-
24 cheandise soit tenuz
25 Item de faire obeir a leur jugié
26 Item de metre leur jugie a execution par eus ou par leur commande-
27 ment de la marcheandise qui est en ladite iaue dedenz les termes

28 desus diz
29 Item il sunt en saisine darrester et de retenir en arrest par eus ou
30 par leur commandement la marcheandise en liaue dedenz les termes
31 desus diz, pour la question de la forfaiture tant que le soit terminée
32 par leur jugement quant il puent trouver la marcheandise en li-
33 aue dedenz les termes desus diz.
34 Item, il sunt en saisine quant la marcheandise est mise hors de liaue
35 et transportée de la poursiure, en quelque terre justice seignorie ete soit
36 transportée dedenz le royalme.
37 Item il sunt en saisine de traire au prevost de Paris, et aus genz
38 le roy de les requerre darrester par leur main et tenir en arrest
39 [f. 35r] les dites marcheandises qu'il porsuient en quelque terre justice seigno-
40 rie il soient transportées et de faire adioriii ceus à qui la chose touche
41 en ce cas de quelque terre justice seigneurie il soient par devant les diz
42 prevost et eschevins en leur parler à Paris et de mettre et tenir a droit
43 et den avoir la court et la cognoissance. et que par les diz prevost et esche-
44 vins soit iugie de la question desus dite ou cas desus dit.
45 Item il sunt en saisine que leur requeste desus dite ou cas desus dit soit
46 mise à execucion par le prevost de Paris, et par les gens le roy, et que
47 il soient garder en leur saisines desus dites par especial garde du roy
48 et de ses genz toute foiz quil leur plaist a les en requerre ou cas desus dit
49 contre touz et en touz lieus dedenz le royaume de quiconques iustice sei-
50 gnorie il soient. Item que li rois de sa souverenece et en saisine da-
51 voir l'execucion et la garde especial de leur requeste et de leur saisines
52 ou cas desus dit contre touz et en touz lieus de quelque iustice, seignourie
53 il soient. et especialment quant il est parconnier et à la moitié de
54 la forfeiture quant ele est jugiée par eus. Item que les dites saisines
55 ou cas desus dit les genz le roy, et les diz prevost et eschevins ont use en

56 la maniere qu'il est dit toutes fois que le cas est avenu. et il ont seu
57 generalment contre touz et en touz lieux dedenz le royalme de quelque
58 justice seignorie il soient et par longtemps quil nest memoire dou con-
59 traire et tant de fois et tant longuement que droit leur en est acquis
60 ~~devant~~. Item il dient et entendent approuve que leur coustumes leur
61 sunt otroiees et confermees des rois de france especialment et de cer-
62 taine esaence une qui dancienete est tele comme il s'ensuit, cest asavoir
63 quil ne laist a nulli aucune marcheandise à paris par yaue amener
64 [f. 35v] ou ramener des le pont de mante duquel aus ponz de Paris se celi nest mar-
65 cheant de Paris de liaue quen claime hanse ou se il na en la marcheandise com-
66 paignon aucun marchant hanse de liaue de Paris demourant a paris.
67 et se aucun esoit faire le contraire il perdrait le tout, et de ce tout. le
68 roy en droit la moitié por le forfait par la main du dit prevost et esche-
69 vins et ses borjois de Paris marchant hanse de liaus auroient l'autre
70 moitié. Item que ladite coustume est approuvee et gardee en touz cas
71 qui sunt avenu et sunt venu à leur cognoissance et de si long temps quil
72 nest memoire dou contraire. especialment entre les metes nommées des
73 devant diz abbé et convent contre touz dom que il fussent.
74 Item il dient et entendent approuver que merot le juif gendre du dit beno-
75 ait juif fut amener marcheandise par iaue dedenz les diz termes cest asa-
76 voir, coutes, coissans, tapis, poz et paietes, et autres pluseurs cho-
77 ses. Item que liaue qui court entre seint denis et argenteul est liaue
78 de la Marcheandise de Paris qui court des le pont de Paris iuquel au
79 pont de mante, et est et a touz jours este ces termes et de ces termes.
80 Item il fu question mene que ladite marcheandise il avoit amenee con-
81 tre la costume desus dite, comme les diz merot et benoait juis soient
82 forains et ne fussent hanses neuisent compagnie en la marcheandi
83 se daucuns de paris qui marchant fuit hanse de liaue de Paris et

84 que pour tant la dite marcheandise il avoit perdue toute.
85 Item que por cete question les diz prevost et eschevins firent la dite
86 marcheandise arrester et tindrent en arrest tant que vous sire prevost
87 en main souverainne en avez fere recreance par le debat des parties
88 desus dites. Item que le dit arrest il povoient faire en continuant
89 leur saisine desus dite. Pour quoi requierent les diz prevost et
90 [f. 36r] eschevins pour leur office que l'empechement et le trouble que les diz ab-
91 be et convent et leur gens et le dit benoait juif sunt de nouvel au dit
92 prevost et eschevins en leur saisine desus dite soit ote et que la dite mar-
93 cheandise soit remise en leur main et en leur arrest, et eu premier
94 estat et que la court et la cognoissance de ladite question leur soit
95 rendue. et par ces meisines resons dient les diz prevost et esche-
96 vins que les diz abbe et convent, leur procureur por eus et le dit beno-
97 ait juif ne doivent estre oyz de leur requeste ne au contraire de
98 la requeste des diz prevost et eschevins. et en metent en lli les
99 diz prevost et eschevins le fait propose de la partie adverse en tant
100 comme il est contraire ou prejudicial à leur entencion. et offret
101 aprouire de leur fait ce tant seulement qui souffire porra et devra
102 a leur droit garder. Et sont retenue que ce qui est dit desus de
103 proprete il le mettent à la fin tant seulement de conforter leur saisine.