

Dear Working Group Colleagues:

This is a draft of the third chapter of my book project, tentatively titled *Beyond the Mediterranean: The Intellectual Venture of Ramon Martí (fl. 1250-84)*. The previous two chapters will have shown the following: That the Dominican Martí was entirely dependent on the Arab-Christian culture of the Islamicate Mediterranean when he refuted Islam in his *On the Sect of Muhammad* (ch. 1) and that that brief treatise and his other supposedly anti-Islamic work, *Explanation of the Apostles' Creed*, were in no sense adequate responses to the lengthy and learned attack on Christianity by Ahmad ibn Umar al-Qurtubi (d. 1258), an Andalusi intellectual who wrote earlier in Martí's life (ch. 2). This chapter then argues that when Martí turned to refuting Judaism in his third, lengthy work, the *Halter of the Jews*, he turned entirely away from the learned culture of the Islamicate world, choosing instead to engage Judaism from within a distinctly Latin-Christian tradition of anti-Jewish writing—a tradition that he elaborated enormously—but in a way that also had resonance much more widely in Latin-Christian intellectual culture. Martí here, then, has moved well beyond the intellectual world of the Mediterranean. The fourth and final chapter will complicate all that I've argued in the first three chapters by showing that when he argued for the Trinity in his final immense work, the *Dagger of Faith*, he was both very much within the Mediterranean in the basic structure of his argument but has merged it with strongly Latin-European ideas from the north: In and beyond the Mediterranean both.

I apologize in advance for the length of this chapter. You may want to skip over the last quarter of it (entitled “Demonstrating that the Messiah has Already Come to Muslims in Arabic”) which may well wind up in another part of the book.

“Ramon Martí on the Advent of Christ:

Deploying Rabbinical Sources for Christian Purposes”

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Introduction

When Ramon Martí refuted Islam in his *On the Sect of Muhammad*, he gave the impression, as we saw in chapter one, of working with a large number of Islamic texts—the Qur'an, Qur'anic commentaries, the Sīrah literature, Hadith collections. But to a considerable degree, that impression was false, since primarily he was simply refabricating the anonymous Coptic-Arabic *Whetted Sword* for a Latin-Christian audience. Though he was certainly consulting the Qur'an directly and perhaps some commentaries, all the other quotations from Islamic sources came by way of that earlier Christian attack on Islam. But after Martí pivoted definitively to writing against Judaism, we find something quite different. His arguments in his third work, the *Halter of the Jews*, completed in about 1267, once again focus not just on his adversary's holy book, but on a welter of other Jewish texts, and now there is no doubt that he is handling these works himself. We know of no intermediately source.

Moreover, the range of these post-Biblical materials is staggering, especially for anyone not already at home with the gloriously recondite allusiveness of Rabbinic literature. Martí’s argumentation in this work moves rapidly from Biblical text to medieval commentary to Talmud to classical midrash to lexicographical works to Targumim, Martí managing throughout to toggle from Biblical Hebrew to Rabbinic Hebrew to Aramaic as this mass of texts required. He does this because, of course, the Rabbinic discourse of his putative Jewish audience has much the same character, the rabbis having memorized vast amounts of this corpus, giving them the ability to pivot with brilliant rapidity among all these texts.¹

But while there was no Christian scholar before him who could work with this range of texts with anything like Martí’s facility, this making his scholarly production absolutely unique in its age, he was certainly working within a tradition of Christian engagement with Judaism that flourished specifically in Latin Europe and overwhelmingly north of Pyrenees. It was there in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that we find scholars turning directly to the Hebrew original of their Old Testament to make more convincing arguments against Jews; there that we find Christian polemicists taking up the Talmud, or least texts that they thought were the Talmud, in their attacks on Judaism; there that we even find some using Talmudic texts, as Martí would do, in support of Christian belief, rather than simply attacking them as demonic. I am not the first scholar to notice his connection to this tradition,² but the fact of his writing so fully within it has not received the attention it deserves, especially in light of his very different engagement with

¹ Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), **; Ephraim Kanarfogel. *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Wayne State University Press, 2006), **.

² See especially Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 136-38.

Islam. When he combatted Islam, as we have seen, Martí followed no Latin model, but turned entirely to Arab-Christian works written by Copts.

But in addition to arguing that when he confronted Judaism, Martí moved intellectually beyond the Mediterranean into the scholarly culture of Latin-Scholastic Europe and its very particular long-running dispute with Judaism, this chapter will suggest something else as well. Martí’s favorite tactic in his anti-Jewish writing is the one that we see on evidence in the passage of the *Halter of the Jews* that I discussed above: arguing that specifically Jewish texts, whether Biblical or post-Biblical, attest decisively that the promised Messiah has already come. This is the burden of the entirety of not only that work, but of all the vast second book (some 90 folios long) of his final work, the *Dagger of Faith*. It turns out, though, that this was a topic that, at least by the end of Martí’s life was being discussed quite widely in Latin Christendom. At some point in the second half of the thirteenth century, for example, an anonymous author concocted a slim Latin treatise called the *Quiver of Faith* that purported to demonstrate the Messiah had already come as Jesus of Nazareth using only Hebrew Bible passages. Nothing like so learned or sophisticated as Martí’s similarly named *Dagger of Faith*, this work is of interest mostly because of its enormous popularity: it survives in some one hundred manuscripts from the late thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries as well as in early printed versions and vernacular translations. These numbers indicate, I will suggest, that this treatise was being read by far more scholars than the relatively small number actually involved in disputation with Jews, and that it raised a question of deep interest to Christian intellectuals quite apart from its putative concern to refute Jews. Indeed, soon after we lose track of Martí in 1284, we find the Franciscan Roger of Marston (d. 1303) arguing in a quodlibetal question intended entirely for an

audience of Christian scholastics that one could demonstrate that “Christ had already come” using only evidence from the Hebrew Bible.³ In the early fourteenth century, Nicholas of Lyra, after Martí the most learned Hebraist in Latin Christendom, was likewise offering a scholastic *quaestio* aimed at Christian scholars in which he, like Martí, used his unusual linguistic abilities in making a similar demonstration. He and other scholars were making these arguments, Deanna Copeland Klepper contends, not primarily in refutation of Jews, but to address deep epistemological problems that their Augustinian theological tradition entailed.⁴

I will be arguing in this chapter, therefore, that not only was Martí certainly attacking Judaism, and doing so very much within a tradition of specifically Latin polemic, but that he was, at the same time, also engaging with a theological issue of real significance within Latin Christian-thought and culture quite apart from its relevance to Judaism. This, moreover, I will propose at the end, is a pattern that we see in his anti-Jewish works: that while they are polemical, they are also very much caught up in broader currents of Latin scholastic thought, something that helps us, I suggest, understand why he dedicated so much energy to them, and so little to Islam.

But this chapter has one further task, for there is still another text testifying to the ubiquity among Christian intellectuals of the desire to demonstrate, with Jewish sources only, the advent of Jesus as the Messiah: a puzzling version of the argument preserved in Arabic and

³ “Secundum primam viam, quadrupliciter declaratur Christum iam advenisse . . .” (Roger Marston, *Quodlibeta quatuor ad fidem codicum nunc primum edita*, ed. Girard Etzkorn and Ignatius Brady (Quaracchi: Ex typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1968) 2.3.1., p. 106).

⁴ Deanna Copeland Klepper, *The Insight of Unbelievers: Nicholas of Lyra and Christian Reading of Jewish Text in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 61-64 and ff.

deriving from still earlier in the thirteenth century. The last third of the Christian treatise called *Trinitizing the Unity [of the Godhead]*, a work preserved only fragmentarily in the extensive Andalusī-Muslim refutation of Christianity that preoccupied us so much in the previous chapter, this version was directed, quite surprisingly, at Muslims. A Christian treatise written in Iberia in Arabic that quotes the Hebrew Bible in Hebrew and in Aramaic--such a work cannot help but make us wonder if Martí is its author. As I will show, he just might be. Yet whether or not he was, the existence of this peculiar text raises, once again, the question at the heart of this book. If not Martí, then someone with very similar skills and interests directed one of his favorite anti-Jewish arguments against Muslims. Why did not he?

Messianic Mathematics: Martí and Daniel 9:24-27

Before doing all this, though, we must first look more closely at the *Halter of the Jews*, the text in which he first advances this argument, focusing to begin with on its overall organization and thrust, and then looking closely at one of its lengthy chapters, so as to offer a full taste of the combination of erudition, prolixity, and ugly hostility that characterize his anti-Jewish works. Having done all that, we will take up the evidence for his writing in the Latin-tradition of polemical typical of this period and then explore how in doing so Martí was also working within larger currents of Latin-Christian thought.

Martí begins the *Halter of the Jews* begins with a quick nod to Trinity, the Virgin, and both St. Dominic, founder of Martí’s Dominican order, and St. Peter of Verona, its most famous martyr, but then gets quickly down to business. This treatise, he observes, consists of

a collection of certain authorities of the Old Testament by which, first and principally, the coming of Christ will be proved as well as, incidentally, some particular articles of the Christian faith in order to illuminate the blindness of the Jews and to shatter the hardness of their heart or <at least> to limit their malice and confound their perfidy.⁵

Of course, Christians for centuries had been assembling such lists of Hebrew Bible passages that they believed testified to Christian doctrine, but Martí quickly makes clear why his is different.⁶ He first asserts that Jews typically combat Christian claims about the meaning of Biblical texts either by objecting that Jerome's Vulgate translation does not conform to the Hebrew original or by insisting that the texts cannot be understood as Christians read them. His approach, he tells us, will nullify both those strategies. He will, on the one hand, "translate these authorities . . . word for word" (*auctoritates igitur istas . . . verbum ex verbo transferam*), referring at times to the interpretation of the rabbis. On the other hand, he tells us,

I have collected from the Talmud and other books considered authoritative by them certain statements of their ancient teachers who introduced or explained these [Biblical] authorities, and [collected] other statements of the prophets that, by divine disposition, rather than their intention, contribute to our purpose. All of these I will insert [in my exposition] or place in the margins, translating them word for word.⁷

⁵ "incipit collectio quarumdam auctoritatum Veteris Testamenti, quibus probabitur, primo ac principaliter, adventus Christi, et, incidenter, aliqui aii articuli Christianae fidei, ad Iudeorum caecitatem illuminandam et cordis duritiam conterendum, vel ad eorum malitiam refrenandam et perfidiam confundendam" (CAPISTRUM IUDAORUM Prefatio 1, 54).

⁶ See A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Iudeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), 3-13.

⁷ "collegi in Talmud, et ex aliis libris authenticis apud eos, quaedam dicta magistrorum suorum antiquorum inducentium vel exponentium auctoritates huiusmodi, et alia verba prophetarum, Dei dispositione, ut arbitror, non

His intention, then, is first to confront Jews with the Hebrew Bible in Hebrew—he does not say so here, but his practice throughout the book is to offer the Hebrew texts in his own verbatim translations with abundant words and phrases in transliteration as well—so that Jews have no recourse to arguing that the Vulgate misrepresents it. Second, he will argue that ancient rabbis actually often supported Christian readings of these texts, drawing on the Talmud and other authoritative Rabbinic texts to make his case.

The product of this two-fold strategy is a two-part treatise preceded by the preface from which I have been quoting. Part one consists of seven “arguments” (*rationes*) which collectively show that “the Messiah, that is Christ, not only will come, but that he was born before the destruction of the temple, and has <thus> arrived, and that the Messiah was not, nor could he be, any other than our Lord Jesus.”⁸ To balance the first part’s seven arguments in favor of the Messiah’s having come, the second part comprises seven *nequitiae*, by which he means something like “worthless objections,” by which “Jews attempt to prove that the Messiah has not come.”⁹ Each of these objections is, like each of the arguments in the first part, rooted in a specific passage of the Hebrew Bible (or in one case, the Gospel of Matthew).¹⁰ The first, for example, is founded on Jeremiah 23:5-6:

sua intentione ad propositum nostrum. Quae quidem, vel interseram, vel in margine ponam, eadem similiter verbum ex verbo sicut expressius fieri poterit transferendo” (CAPISTRUM IUDAORUM praefatio 2, 54).

⁸ “in cuius prima pars, [Christo] auxiliante, probatur quod Messias, id est Cristus, non solum venturus sit, sed etiam ante desruptionem templi natus fuerit, ac venerit. Et quod nullus alius praeter Iesum Dominum nostrum fuerit, velle potuerit,” (CI 1.1, 68).

⁹ “Incipiunt ea quibus Iudei probare conantur Messiam nondum venisse,” (CAPISTRUM IUDAORUM 2. 1, 24).

¹⁰ The seventh “nequicia” is based on Mt 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law . . .”.

See, a time is coming—declares GOD—when I will raise up a true branch of David’s line. He shall reign as king and shall prosper, and he shall do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah shall be delivered and Israel shall dwell secure. And this is the name by which he shall be called: “GOD is our Vindicator.”

If this passage refers to the days of the Messiah, which both Jews and Christians agreed that it did*, then Jesus can certainly not have been the Messiah--or so Martí claims that Jews argue--since he “could not save himself or his followers or indeed all the Jews” (*nec se, neque suos, nedum omnes Judaeos salvare potuerit*)—Judah is not delivered nor is Israel’s dwelling secure.¹¹

Most of the Biblical authorities that are at the core of both the Christian arguments in favor of the Messiah’s arrival and the Jewish objections that he has not yet come were well known in Christian-Jewish disputation by Martí’s day. We saw that the Isaiah passage (66:7-8) with which we began was being used in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as a prooftext of the virgin birth. Others, such as Genesis 49:10 (“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet; until Shiloh comes, And the homage of peoples is his”¹²) had been invoked by Christians since at least the time of Origin (c. 185 – c. 253).¹³ Zacharia 9:9 (“Rejoice greatly, Fair Zion/ Raise a shout, Fair Jerusalem!/ Lo, your king is coming to you/ He is victorious, triumphant”), the basis for the fifth Jewish objection, had already given a Christological sense in Matthew 21:4-5 and was interpreted likewise by Justin Martyr (d. 165).¹⁴

¹¹ CAPISTRUM IUDAeorum 2. 1, 24.

¹² JPS with adjustment to the third clause to achieve a literal translation.

¹³ Origin, *Contra Celsum*,

¹⁴ Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und histortorisches Umfeld (1.-11. Jh.)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 1982), 73, 191.

But this broad overview of the *Halter of the Jews* fails to communicate much of the essential quality of the work. That can only be grasped by following Martí doggedly as he marshals his vast apparatus of Latin, Hebrew, and Aramaic texts, applying to them both his philological rigor and his unstinting conviction that the Hebrew Bible, properly understood, preaches Christian doctrine. The fourth chapter of the first part is an excellent candidate for such an exploration. It is by no means the easiest part of the text to follow, but it offers a capacious view of Martí’s argumentative approach.

“The fourth argument [that the Messiah has come],” Martí tells us at the beginning of this chapter, “is universally taken by everyone from what is read in Daniel.”¹⁵ This is scarcely an exaggeration, since, from at least the third century on, Christian intellectuals had seen in the passage to which he refers, Daniel 9:24-27, a much beloved prophecy of the historical circumstances of Jesus’ arrival as Messiah.¹⁶ These verses are a vision that Gabriel gave to Daniel, who was then suffering under the Babylonian captivity, after he had pleaded for an explanation of the prophet Jeremiah’s earlier prophecy that “When the seventy years are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation and the land of the Chaldeans for their sins—declares GOD—and I will make it a desolation for all time.”¹⁷ Daniel’s resulting vision has quite rightly been described as “opaque”¹⁸:

¹⁵ “Quarta vero ratio communiter ab omnibus sumitur ab eo quod in Daniele sic legitur,” (CAPISTRUM IUDAORUM 1. 4. 1, 126).

¹⁶ See William Adler, “The Apocalyptic Survey of History Adapted by Christians: Daniel’s Prophecy of 70 Weeks,” in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, 201-38, ed. James C. Vanderkam and William Adler (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), 201-38 at 220-21. On its wide use in Christian apologetic writing see Robert Chazan, *Fashioning Jewish Identity in Medieval Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 148.

¹⁷ Jer. 25:12.

¹⁸ Chazan, *Fashioning Jewish Identity*, 151.

24. Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city until the measure of transgression is filled and that of sin complete, until iniquity is expiated, and eternal righteousness ushered in; and prophetic vision ratified, and the Holy of Holies anointed.

25. You must know and understand: From the issuance of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the [time of the] anointed leader is seven weeks; and for sixty-two weeks it will be rebuilt, square and moat, but in a time of distress.

26. And after those sixty-two weeks, the anointed one will disappear and vanish. The army of a leader who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, but its end will come through a flood. Desolation is decreed until the end of war.

27. During one week he will make a firm covenant with many. For half a week he will put a stop to the sacrifice and the meal offering. At the corner [of the altar] will be an appalling abomination until the decreed destruction will be poured down upon the appalling thing.

Questions pile up as we read the verses. What is meant by the seventy weeks, when Jeremiah had spoken of seventy years? Why seventy weeks in verse 24 but then seven and sixty-two in verse 25, and then one week and a half in verses 26-27? When did/do these events begin and when end? The combination of numerical specificity and historical ambiguity meant that these verses were ripe for elaborate, speculative interpretation especially since they seemed to touch on the coming of the Messiah: that verse 25 spoke of an “anointed leader” using the word *mashīah*, “anointed/messiah,” seemed to suggest this as did as did verse 26’s statement that

after sixty-two weeks, “the anointed will be cut off” (*yikkaret mashiah*). In quoting this whole passage—as always in the *Halter of the Jews* in his own Latin translation from the Hebrew—and then indulging in complex Messianic mathematics, Martí was only following long precedent.

The fourth chapter of part one of the *Halter of the Jews*, where Martí offers these calculations, exists in two versions, a shorter one that appears in the thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Bologna manuscript (Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 1675) that the text’s editor considers closely based on Martí’s autograph, and a longer in a fourteenth-century Parisian codex (Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS 3463) that seems to be Martí’s own revision of his first attempt. Indeed, he continued to work on these verses throughout his life, for the second book of the *Dagger of Faith* reproduces and expands on many large sections of the *Halter of the Jews*, including its lengthy discussion of Daniel 9:24-27. In what follows, though, I will be focusing on the earliest version of his exposition of these verses in that earliest version, with occasional references to the later versions as convenient.¹⁹

Perhaps because it was Martí’s first attempt at interpreting this difficult passage, his exposition in this earliest version can be hard to follow. The reason for this is two-fold, I suggest. First, he was concerned to respond to a specific Jewish claim about the meaning of these verses that he does not spell out, but assumes that his readers will know. Second, not everything he discusses is actually relevant to that effort, for he also seems to feel obliged to

¹⁹ See Adolfo Robles Sierra’s discussion in the introduction to his edition of the *Halter: Capistrum Iudeorum* 1, 22-25.

provide a Christian interpretation of as much of the passage as he can, whether it serves the interests of that larger argument or not. The result often feels disjointed.

The Jewish claim that Martí is refuting is one that, as we will see later, had been advanced not long before he wrote the *Halter of the Jews* at the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263. At that notorious event the great rabbi Nachmanides argued that if Christians believe that the Messiah came at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, and use this Daniel passage as evidence, then their calculations are off, because there was a significant amount of time between the passion of Jesus and the destruction of the Second Temple.²⁰ Martí's main goal in this sometimes rambling chapter is to account for those missing years. He will find them in the forty-six years between when the Second Temple was begun and when it was finished.

The basic equation, then, is as follows:

If to the seventy years of the [Babylonian] captivity and the 420 years that [the Second Temple] stood, you add the forty-six years of the building [of the Second Temple], you have 536 years. If you subtract the three and a half [years] during which [the Israelites] were out of their country . . . and the 490 that make up the seventy weeks, nothing remains but the forty-two years from the passion of Christ to the destruction of the [Second] Temple.²¹

²⁰ On Nahmanides' argument, see Chazan, *Fashioning Jewish Identity*, 158.

²¹ "Igitur si LXX annis captivitatis, et CCCCXX duratonis, istos XLVI aedificationis addideris, quingentos et triginta VI annos habebis. De quibus si tres et dimidium, quos extra terram egerunt, ut saepius dictum est, removeas, et quadrigentos XC qui faciunt septenas LXX, non remanebunt nisi XLII anni, qui fuerunt a passione Christi usque ad destructionem templi, (CAPISTRUM IUDAEOGRUM 1. 4. 24, 170-72).

Thus, the gap that Nahmanides had had pointed to—but which Martí does not directly mention—is accounted for. Daniel 9:24-27, therefore, is a clear prophecy of precisely the time when Jesus, the Messiah, died.

Getting to that conclusion requires, though, a very circuitous journey, though Martí does foreground it right at the beginning of the chapter when he says, after quoting the verses, that “One must note that here Gabriel the angel enumerates to Daniel the weeks *until the death of Christ.*”²² The reference to seventy weeks in verse 24 indicates the total time, Martí observes, whereas the seven and sixty-two of verse 25 break up the time into distinct periods. But having made these basic assertions, he quickly turns to refuting two Jewish claims that have little bearing on his argument—first, that these weeks consist not of days or weeks or months, but of jubilees and centuries, and second, that Daniel is not a prophet.²³ While he will return to the second claim at the very end, he never mentions the first claim again.

Martí then gives his explanation of what these weeks are: periods of seven years. The total number of years under discussion in the verses is, therefore 490 years, and the years are lunar not solar years, he insists, for this is what the phrase translated “seventy weeks have been decreed for you” in verse 24 actually means. The passive verb *nehet tak* (translated as “decreed” here) actually means “abbreviated” (as in the Vulgate--*abbreviatae*) or “cut short” (*praecisae*) as lunar years are in comparison with solar.²⁴

²²“Notandum quod Gabriel angelus enumerat hic Danieli septimanas usque *ad morem Christi*” (CAPISTRUM IUDAORUM 1. 4. 2, 128. My italics).

²³ CAPISTRUM IUDAORUM 1. 4. 2, 128.

²⁴ CAPISTRUM IUDAORUM 1. 4. 3-5, 128-30.

All this leads Martí to pose the key question: “how should the number of these weeks be taken?”²⁵ The standard Latin *Glossa ordinaria*, he observes, citing the first of many texts, offers four opinions: those of Bede, Julius Africanus, “the Hebrews,” and Tertullian.²⁶ Of these, the Church prefers Bede’s view which, he tells us, considers the seventy weeks of years to begin with Nehemiah’s completion of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in the twentieth year of the reign of the Persian ruler Artaxerxes I (465-424 BCE) and to conclude in the eighteenth year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar (14-37 CE) under whom Jesus was crucified.²⁷ After reviewing the necessary calculations to show that 490 years did indeed pass between these two dates, Martí then turns to the Gospel of Luke for confirmation of the last date (Luke 3:1 relates that Jesus was baptized in the fifteenth year of Tiberius; with the three years of Jesus’ ministry added on we arrive at the eighteenth year of his reign).²⁸

But, as always, Martí wants to offer his readers Rabbinical validation of his claims, stating that “Because the Jews do not want to drink any sort of wine besides Jewish wine, so they refuse to accept any judgment (*dictum*) except a Jewish one.”²⁹ He therefore launches into a second argument in support of the Christian reading of the passage, turning to the first of a number of passages of post-Biblical Jewish literature, quoting here *Seder ‘Olam Rabbah*.³⁰ A second-century Hebrew chronology of the world (the title means “The Great Order/Succession

²⁵ “Quarta quaestio esse potest, qualiter numerus istarum septenarum accipiens sit,” (CAPISTRUM IUDAICORUM 1. 4. 6., 130).

²⁶ CAPISTRUM IUDAICORUM 1. 4. 6-7, 130-34.

²⁷ CAPISTRUM IUDAICORUM 1. 4. 6, 130-34.

²⁸ CAPISTRUM IUDAICORUM 1. 4. 7, 134.

²⁹ “Quoniam autem Iudei, sicut nullum nisi Iudaicum volunt bibere vinum, ita nullum nisi Iudaicum volunt recipere dictum,” (CAPISTRUM IUDAICORUM 1. 4. 8, 134).

³⁰ A work that was important in contemporary Jewish messianic calculations in Catalonia. See, for example, Nachmanides, *Sefer ha-Geullah*, **. I thank Jeremy Brown for this reference.

of the World”), its twenty-eighth chapter includes a brief account of the historical context of Daniel’s vision that Martí quotes and paraphrases at some length,³¹ praising it for how diligently it shows when the enumeration of weeks of years begins and ends. Especially important is the accounting this text puts in the mouth of Rabbi Jose: “Seventy weeks from the time of the destruction of the First Temple until the destruction of the Second Temple: seventy [years] for the destruction of it and 420 for its existence.”³²

Yet in praising this ancient Rabbinical source unavailable otherwise to Latin readers—something that, we will see, he often does—Martí nevertheless is quick to point out what he sees as either negligent or fraudulent omissions: Jose’s reckoning passes over the period of the reconstruction of the temple, leading to an incorrect total number of years, and fails “to say anything concerning the Messiah, whether little or much, or good or bad, although Gabriel very expressly made mention of the Messiah in two places in the passage.”³³

Both these points will recur in the following sections the *Halter of the Jews*, but Martí turns first to the lack of reference to the Messiah, something he also finds in another Jewish work, the commentary of great Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, usually known as Rashi (1040-1105). A seminal French scholar who wrote commentaries on both the whole Talmud and the Hebrew

³¹ CAPISTRUM IUDAEOGRUM 1. 4. 8-9, 134-38; see *Seder Olam: The Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology*, translation and commentary by Heinrich W. Guggenheimer (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1998), 237-46.

³² “R. Yoce dixit: Septenae LXX a tempore quo destructa est prima domus usque ad destructionem ultimae domus. Septuaginta destructionis eius et CCCCXX aedificatio eius,” (CAPISTRUM IUDAEOGRUM 1. 4. 8, 136). רבי יוסי אומר, שבעים שבעים משחרב בית ראשון ועד שררב בית אחרון, שבעים לחרבון וארבע מאות ועשרים לבניו.

³³ “ita negligenter vel forsitan fraudulenter omittit toum aedificationis ultimi templi tempus, ac dicere de Messia paucum vel multum, bonum vel malum, licet Gabriel Danieli de ipsis, in duobus locis supradictae auctoritatis, valde expressam fecerit mentionem,” (CAPISTRUM IUDAEOGRUM 1. 4. 10, 138. Robles’ edition presents, beginning with this paragraph, two recensions of the text (I will discuss these below). I follow at this point the earlier recension (B).

Bible, Rashi often countered Christological interpretations as he elucidated the Bible, something he does here.³⁴ The meaning of the phrase “the anointed will be cut off” is, he says, is that “Agrippa, the king of Judea, who was ruling in the days of the destruction [of the Second Temple], will be slain (*yehareg*),” and points out that the term *meshiḥa* here is “an expression for a leader and great man” (*lison shar we-gadol*)—pointedly not reading it in a Messianic sense.³⁵ This suggestion that Herold Agrippa (10 BCE-40 CE) could be considered “anointed” infuriates Martí who launches into one of his many *ad hominem* attacks on Rashi, the “modern” rabbi whom he sees as most hostile to Christianity. “See how this impudent dog proceeds like a clever fox, by twisted rather than straight paths.”³⁶ Indeed, far from being anointed with either corporal or spiritual oil, Martí insists, Agrippa and the other Jews of his time who did not believe in Jesus, whose miracles made clear that he was truly anointed by God, were responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.³⁷

But Martí’s grappling with Jewish claims that these verses do not refer to the true Messiah does not end there. He immediately turns to another Jewish claim: that when verse twenty-five says “until the anointed leader is seven weeks” it is referring to a very different figure from much earlier in history, Cyrus the Great, king of the Persians (576–530 BCE), who rose up some forty-nine years (that is, seven weeks of years) after the destruction of the First

³⁴ See, for example, Robert Chazan, “Rashi’s Commentary on the Book of *Daniel*,” in *Rashi et la culture juive en France du Nord au moyen âge*, ed. Gérard Nahon and Charles Touati (Paris-Louvian: E. Peeters, 1997), 111-21 at 118 and *passim*. On the immense influence of Rashi’s Biblical commentaries (it survives in more than 200 manuscripts), see Eric Lawee, *Rashi’s Commentary on the Torah: Canonization and Resistance in the Reception of a Jewish Classic* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 5 and *passim*.

³⁵ Rashi, **, *ad locum*.

³⁶ “Vide qualiter imputdetissimus canis iste, velut vulpes calidissima non rectis itineribus, sed tortuosis fere semper anfractibus gradiatur,” (CAPISTRUM IUDAICORUM 1. 4. 11, 140).

³⁷ CAPISTRUM IUDAICORUM 1. 4. 12, 140-42.

Temple. Martí does not attribute this view to anyone in particular³⁸ but he finds it equally fraudulent in its reasoning, not least because it violates the Masoretic pointing of the verse. There is no pair of vertical dots, no *sof pasuq*, he insists, separating the seven weeks mentioned in this verse from the sixty-two weeks that immediately follow. This typical bit of philological polemic behind, him, Martí then comes to a definitive conclusion to this part of his exposition: “Hence, one learns certainly and clearly that by no means was Cyrus or anyone else called Messiah in this passage other than the Lord Jesus Christ alone.”³⁹

For further vindication of his claim that Cyrus cannot be the messianic figure referred to here, Martí then turns to the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Megillah, where an ancient rabbi raises an obviously relevant question about Isaiah 45:1 which seems to identify Cyrus as a Messiah: “Thus says the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held.” “Was Cyrus then a Messiah?” the rabbi asks.⁴⁰ But the answer is a firm no. The meaning of the verse, he goes on to say, is that God is “complaining” (*qubel*) to the Messiah “about Cyrus” (*‘al koresh*).⁴¹ Moreover, Rashi agrees with this interpretation.⁴² From this Martí concludes that “it is evidently shown that Cyrus was by no means called the Messiah” and then leaps to the conclusion that only Jesus Christ can be satisfactorily named as such, and in doing so raises the issue that, I am contending, is at the core of his argument concerning Daniel 9:24-27: that one

³⁸ But see Rashi on Daniel 9:25* and Nachmanides, *Vikuah* **.

³⁹ “Inde hinc certius liquidiusque colligitur, quod nequaquam Cyrus, vel quispiam alius, hoc in loco est appellatus Messias, sed Dominus solummodo Iesus Christus” (CAPISTRUM IUDAICORUM 1. 4. 14, 144).

⁴⁰ B. T. Megillah, 12A: “? בָּרוּךְ מֶשֶׁיחַ קָדָה”

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Rashi on Isaiah 45:1 ad locum.

must include the forty-six years during which the Temple was built into calculations of when the Messiah is to come.⁴³

Martí then presents a series of Biblical passages from 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Haggai⁴⁴ that collectively, he insists, show that from the time of the return of the Children of Israel from the captivity until the sixth year of the reign of Darius, the temple remained intermittently under construction and, as far as they were concerned, “did not exist” (*ac si non esset*).⁴⁵ “It is obvious,” Martí then claims,

That the Jews, since they include in the number of the aforementioned weeks only the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity and the four hundred twenty during which they say the [second] Temple stood, leave out all the time of the building on that temple.⁴⁶

After discussing the succession of rulers during this period when the Temple was unfinished,⁴⁷ Martí finally comes to the point. I quote again his summation:

If to the seventy years of the [Babylonian] captivity and the 420 years that [the Second Temple] stood, you add the forty-six years of the building [of the Second Temple], you have 536 years. If you subtract the three and a half [years] during which [the Israelites] were out of their country . . . and the 490 that make up the seventy weeks, nothing

⁴³ CAPISTRUM IUDAEORUM 4. 15, 144-46.

⁴⁴ CAPISTRUM IUDAEORUM 4. 16-17, 148-50.

⁴⁵ CAPISTRUM IUDAEORUM 4. 19, 158.

⁴⁶ “Manifestum est ergo, quod Iudei, cum non ponunt in numero praedictarum hebdomadarum nisi LXX annos captivitatis Babylonicae et CCCCXX, quibus aedificium templi stitisse dicunt, totum tempus istud aedificationis omittunt,” (CAPISTRUM IUDAEORUM 1. 4. 20. 158-60).

⁴⁷ CAPISTRUM IUDAEORUM 1. 4. 21-23, 164-70.

remains but the forty-two years from the passion of Christ to the destruction of the [Second] Temple.⁴⁸

But Martí is not done, despite having offered the central argument of the chapter, for he goes on to discuss a variety of other matters—how tractate Rosh Ha-Shana of the Babylonian Talmud offers justification for how he had counted overlapping regnal years in his calculations;⁴⁹ the meaning of some important terms in the passage (*nagid, berith, yikkaret*) using David Kimhi's early thirteenth-century Hebrew dictionary as a key source;⁵⁰ offering an explanation for why Gabriel, after first specifying seventy weeks, goes on in the following verses to outline periods of seven, sixty-two, one, and one half weeks;⁵¹ presenting a brief refutation of Porphyry's ancient claim that parts of Daniel were written after the events that the book appeared to foretell had actually happened, and suggesting that while Jews do not believe that Daniel was a prophet, they nevertheless hold him in high esteem, quoting on this last point tractate B. T. Baba Batra.⁵²

Latin Antecedents

Now it is true that the kernel of this sort of argument is ancient. It was also widespread. We find that Christians in the Islamicate world must have trotted it out well before the lifetime

⁴⁸ "Igitur si LXX annis captivitatis, et CCCCXX duratonis, istos XLVI aedificationis addideris, quingentos et triginta VI annos habebis. De quibus si tres et dimidium, quos extra terram egerunt, ut saepius dictum est, removeas, et quadrigentos XC qui faciunt septenas LXX, non remanebunt nisi XLII anni, qui fuerunt a passione Christi usque ad destructionem templi, (CAPISTRUM IUDAEOGRUM 1. 4. 24, 170-72).

⁴⁹ CAPISTRUM IUDAEOGRUM 1. 4. 25, 172; cf. B. T. Rosh Ha-Shanah 2a. 1-8.

⁵⁰ CAPISTRUM IUDAEOGRUM 1. 4. 29, 186-90. Kimhi**

⁵¹ CAPISTRUM IUDAEOGRUM 1. 4. 32-36.

⁵² CAPISTRUM IUDAEOGRUM 1. 4. 37-38, 198-200; on Porphyry's claim, see Zier, "Nicholas of Lyra on the Book of Daniel," 181; cf. B. T. Baba Batra 14b.

of Martí, for the Karaite Jewish polemicist Ya'qūb al-Qirqisānī felt obliged to deal with it in the tenth century when he critiqued Christianity,⁵³ while the great Rabbanite intellectual, Sa'adia ha-Gaon likewise countered it in the same period.⁵⁴ But if Middle-Eastern Christians were advancing Christological arguments based on Daniel 9:24-27, it cannot be stressed enough that there are no parallels in the Islamicate world for many of the key features of Martí's expansive argument. For one thing, the genre of Christian anti-Jewish polemic scarcely existed in the Islamic Mediterranean. As the religion of power and prestige, Islam would always be seen as the main threat to Christians living in the Islamicate world, and the literature of Christian anti-Muslim polemic in Arabic, Syriac, Coptic and other languages was—and is—therefore vast. Such Arab-Christian works against Judaism as did exist, moreover, provided no models for key features of Martí's approach.*

Rather, earlier Latin-Christian anti-Jewish works are Martí's models. Take, for example, his insistence on learning the original language of the Hebrew Bible and quoting its verses in his own translations. We know of no Christian Hebraists in the Islamicate world, but William of Bourges, a converted Jew from France who became a deacon and author of an anti-Jewish work entitled *The Wars of the Lord*, modeled this practice in about 1235, claiming that "I have written every chapter" of the work "in Latin letters and in Hebrew words just as the Jews read so that the Jews are not able to deny the scriptural authorities of the prophets that pertain to

⁵³ See Daniel J. Lasker, "The Jewish Critique of Christianity under Islam in the Middle Ages," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 57 (1990-91): 121-53 at 125, 129.

⁵⁴ See Robert Chazan, "Daniel 9:24-27: Exegesis and Polemics," in *Contra Iudeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy Stroumsa (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996). 143-59 at 145-52.

Christ.”⁵⁵ Thus, for example, at the beginning of a chapter on the miraculous conception of Jesus, he writes, “In regard to the conception of the Lord, Isaiah prophesied, *Ynne al alama hara* which means *Behold a virgin will conceive* and bear a son and his name will be called Emmanuel.”⁵⁶ The transliterated words correspond to the famous Hebrew words of Isaiah 7:14, in this case slightly garbled (probably by the fifteenth century scribe of the only manuscript): *hinnah ha-'almah hara*. As here, William typically gives only the incipit of the passage in Hebrew, offering us the whole only in Latin, and typically does this only near the beginning of chapters. Thus, chapter nine begins as follows: “Regarding John the Baptist . . . Isaiah prophesied, *Col quore bandybar [= qol qore bamidbar]* which is *a voice crying in the desert: prepare the way of the Lord* (Is. 40:3).”⁵⁷

While dating to the twelfth century, a treatise called *Introduction to Theology*, written by an otherwise unknown follower of Peter Abelard and Hugh of Saint Victor named Odo,⁵⁸ not only offers the Hebrew of many Biblical passages, but does so in the original alphabet. “Hear Isaiah,” he wrote at one point, “in regard to the conception and nativity of the redeemer.” Then, in large Hebrew characters that do not quite fill the ample space left in the manuscript

⁵⁵ “Ut igitur Iudei negare non possint prophetarum auctoritates ad Christum pertinentes, omnia capitula litteris latinis et verbis hebraicis, sicut ipsi Iudei legunt, scripsi” (William of Bourges, *Liber bellorum Domini* * SC 288: 29).

⁵⁶ “De conceptione domini prophetavit Ysaias: *Ynne a alama hara*, quod interpretatur: *Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitur nomen Emmanuel*” (Title 4, SC 288: 102).

⁵⁷ “De Iohanne Baptista, precursore Domini, prophetavit Ysaias: *Co quore bandybar*, quod est: *Vox clamantis in deserto; parate viam Domini*” (Title 9, SC 288:120).

⁵⁸ See on this point Constant J. Mews, “An English Response to Victorine thought: Odo’s *Ysagoge* in theogiam,” in *Omnium expetendorum prima est sapientia. Studies on Victorine thought and influence*, ed. by Wanda Bajor, Michał Buraczewski, Marcin Jan Janecki and Dominique Poirel (Turnhout, 2021): 329–341, *passim*. On this figure see also David E. Luscombe, « The authorship of the *Ysagoge* in theogiam », *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 35 (1968): 7-16.

for them, we find the verse that we saw Martí using above (Is. 66:7: “Before she labored, she was delivered; Before her pangs came, she bore a son”):

בטרם תחיל ילדה בטרם תבא חבל לה שהמלימה זכר⁵⁹

The Latin translation appears immediately beneath:

*Antequam doleret peperit; antequam ueniret dolor ei peperit masculum.*⁶⁰

Though in this case and many others there is no vowel pointing, earlier in the manuscript the diacritics have been carefully (although not always accurately) added as in this quotation from Exodus 20:3:

לא יהיה לך אללים אחרים עלי פנִי

[“You shall have no other gods besides Me.”]

*Non sit tibi Deus alienus super faciem meam.*⁶¹

Not only do we have the Hebrew alphabet and vowel pointing foregrounded in a way that anticipates Martí’s practice in the *Dagger of Faith*, but the author of this treatise has also translated both these Biblical passages anew into Latin, just as Martí did throughout his anti-Jewish works.⁶²

⁵⁹ What to make of change of second verb (which is dif. from Leningrad codex?)

⁶⁰ Anonymous, *Ysagoge in theologiam*, ed., Artur Michael Landgra in his *Écrits théologiques de l'école d'Abélard : Textes inédits* (Louvain : "Spicilegium sacrum lovaniense", 1934), 141.

⁶¹ Ibid., 133.

⁶² Vulgate Is. 66:7: “Antequam parturiret peperit antequam venire partus eius peperit masculum;” Ex. 20:3: “non habebis deos alienos coram me.”

But Martí did much more than merely quote and retranslate the Hebrew Bible. He also scoured the Talmud and other Rabbinical sources for material to use in his Christian arguments. This is also something for which there is no precedent in the Islamicate Mediterranean. As Daniel Lasker put it in a seminal essay, “There is no discussion of Rabbinic literature in Jewish-Christian polemics written under Islam. Either [Eastern] Christians were unaware of the Talmud and midrashic compilations, or, more likely, they did not know enough about these works to warrant the time and effort to make a thorough study of them.”⁶³ But there was ample precedent in the Latin world for Martí’s doing so, going back to the early twelfth century. This is well known in the case of Petrus Alfonsi (d. after 1116), an Andalusī Jewish convert to Latin Christianity. He mentioned a Talmud tractate by name on the first page of the body of his enormous *Dialogue against the Jews*, written early in the twelfth century, telling his readers that they can find evidence that Jews believe in a God with “form and body” in “the first part of your teaching, whose name is *Benedictions*.” As Irven M. Resnick points out, this is a reference to tractate Berachot (= “blessings, benedictions”) in the Babylonian Talmud.⁶⁴ Soon after, Petrus asserts to his Jewish interlocutor that “in a book of your teachings” it says that “God exists only in the west,” a mistaken notion he seems to have derived from Rabbinical texts such as B. T. Baba Batra 25a.⁶⁵ Though Petrus never refers to the Talmud by name, many further references to Talmudic material follow.

⁶³ Lasker, “The Jewish Critique,” 135. Of course, Jewish polemical works against Christianity written in Arabic were quite rare in any case. See “Jewish Polemics against Islam and Christianity in the Light of Judaeo-Arabic Texts,” in Robert Hoyland, ed., *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society* (Aldershot, Hants./Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 201-10.

⁶⁴ p. 48. *Petri Alfonsi Dialogus*. Edited by Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, Darko Senekovic, and Thomas Ziegler. Firenze: SISMEL, 2018.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 53. Resnick??

Half a century later, Peter the Venerable also engages frequently with Talmudic material as he attacks Judaism in his *Against the Inveterate Obstinacy of the Jews*. Unlike Petrus, he frequently claims that this material comes from a text that he calls the *Thalmuth*.⁶⁶ He quotes, for example, the Talmudic legend of Joshua ben Levi (B. T. Ketubot 77b), who never died so long as he was studying Talmud, and then denounces the diminishment of the divine that, in his view, the story entails: “The Talmud is so much greater than you [God] that even if you command that men die, the Talmud will withstand you.”⁶⁷

Less well known is the engagement with Rabbinical literature that we find in a little-studied treatise by the powerful archbishop of Toledo, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (d. 1247). Entitled *The Book of the Dialogue of Life*, it is, as Lucy K. Pick has pointed out, a sort of theological summa directed rhetorically at Jews. Not really a dialogue at all, the text speaks to Jews in the second person throughout without leaving room for any response, all the while defending a series of Christian claims.⁶⁸ We will see later in this book that there are other intriguing potential connections between it and Martí’s works, but for now I merely stress that

⁶⁶ See Peter the Venerable, *Adversus Iudeorum inveteratam duritiam* 5, ed. Yvonne Friedman, CCCM 58 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), 130-33, 150, 156. Resnick, Irven. “Peter the Venerable on the Talmud, the Jews, and Islam.” *Medieval Encounters* 24, no. 5-6 (2018): 510-29 at 520. Resnick points out, though, that he only begins referring to the Talmud by name from the beginning of chapter five on.

⁶⁷ “Maior est enim Thalmuth quam tu. In tantum enim est Thalmuth quam tu, ut etiam si praecipias mori homines Thalmuth resistat” (Peter the Venerable, *Adversus Iudeorum inveteratam duritiam* 5, CCCM 58, 174). Resnick, “Peter the Venerable and the Talmud,” 520-21. For Peter’s attack on the Talmud as black magic, see the essay by Alain Boureau, “Un épisode central dans la construction de la magie noire du livre: de la rivalité des exégèses à la crémation du Talmud (1144-1242)” in Peter Ganz, ed, *Das Buch als magisches und als Repräsentationsobjekt* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992)

⁶⁸ Lucy K. Pick, *Conflict and Coexistence: Archbishop Rodrigo and the Muslims and Jews of Medieval Spain* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 138-39.

Rodrigo incorporates much Rabbinical material. While discussing Jewish beliefs about the Messiah, for example, Rodrigo writes that

They say besides that the Davidic Messiah seeks perpetual life for himself and had obtained this response from God: “David from whose line you are descended, already sought what you seek and obtained what he sought.” And in the persona of David they adduce the verse of the Psalm thus, as if said, “I give thanks since You heard me praying for my son who sought life from you,” and he uses the past instead of the future as if he had preceded the one who was heard: *And You gave life to him, length of days forever and forever* (Psalm 20:5).⁶⁹

As Pick makes clear, this account “has its origin” in B. T. Sukkah 52a:

When he (the Messiah, the son of David) will see that the Messiah the son of Joseph is slain, he will say to Him, “Lord of the Universe, I ask of Thee only the gift of life.” “As to life,” he would answer him, “Your father David has already prophesied this concerning you,” as it is said, *He asked life of thee, thou gavest it him* (Psalm 20:5).⁷⁰

Many other passages of the *Book of the Dialogue of Life* similarly incorporate Rabbinical texts whether through quotation or paraphrase.

⁶⁹ “Dicunt insuper quod messias Dauiticus uitam perpetuam petit sibi et talem responsum a deo reportauit: Dauid de cuius genere processisti, pro te peciit quod tu petis, et obtinuit quod petiuit; et in persona Dauid psalmi uersiculum sic inducunt quasi diceret: *gracias ago quia me orante pro meo filio exaudisti, qui peciit ad te uitam;* et ponit preteritum pro futuro ac si exaudito precessisset; *et tu uitam dedisti ei et insuper longitudinem dierum in seculum seculi*” (Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *Dialogus libri vite* 5.7, CCCM 72C, 309). See Pick’s slightly different translation, *Conflict and Coexistence*, 152.

⁷⁰ Pick, *Conflict and Coexistence*, 152.

In these examples, Latin-Christian scholars engaged the Talmud in order to denounce it, but Martí, as we have seen, often argues that Talmudic and other Rabbinical texts actually support Christian belief. But this also has precedent in earlier Latin thought. As Jeremy Cohen has shown, though Petrus Alfonsi typically attacked the Talmud unrelentingly, he occasionally made such arguments,⁷¹ and Alan of Lille, a twelfth-century French polymath, used a Rabbinical passage as he attempted to demonstrate that the Messiah had already come in his *On the Catholic Faith against Heretics, Waldensians, Jews, and Pagans*:

In its greatest part the law has been abolished; it seems therefore that the law has no validity. Indeed, in the *School of Elias*, it says that the world will endure six thousand years—two thousand shall have been in vanity, which refers to the time before Mosaic Law, two thousand under Mosaic Law, and the following two thousand of the messianic age. But it is obvious that more than four thousand have passed; thus, it is apparent that the law has passed and the messiah come.⁷²

What exactly he means by the *School of Elias* is anyone’s guess, but an account like this can be found, as Cohen points out, in B. T. Sanhedrin, 97a.⁷³

⁷¹ See Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 204, 206.

⁷² “in maxima parte abolita est lex: Videtur ergo quod lex locum non habeat. In Sehale etiam loquitur Elias, quod mundus duraturus est per sex millia annorum, et duo millia fuisse vanitatis, quod refertur ad tempus quod fuit ante legem Mosaicam, duo vero millia legis Mosaicae, sequentia duo millia, Messiae. Sed manifestum est, plus quam quatuor annorum millia transiisse; ergo manifestum est legem transiisse, et Messiam venisse,” Alan of Lille, *De fide catholica contra haereticos sui temporis, praesertim albigenesis* 3.10, PL 210:410c. The translation follows J. Cohen, *Living Letters*, 309, but reads “schola” instead of “Sehale” following Joseph H. Pearson, “The Anti-Jewish Polemic of Alan of Lille,” 100.

⁷³ Cohen, *Living Letters*, 309. On this passage see also Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 459-60.

Southern European rabbis, moreover, knew that Latin-Christian apologists were making use of Rabbinical texts for Christological arguments. The *Milḥemet Miẓvah*, for example, a rambling, anonymous mid-thirteenth-century anthology of Hebrew sermons, disputational texts, and other works, contains “a number of rudimentary references to Christian awareness of rabbinic literature and law,” Robert Chazan has pointed out. In one case, a Christian disputant asserts that: “Behold your sages have said that ‘falsehood cannot stand’ (B. T. Sanhedrin, 98a). If so, then how has the faith of Jesus lasted so long, unless it is actually the truth.”⁷⁴

It was the Jewish Convert and Dominican Pau Cristià, though, who, before Martí, most vividly employed the Talmud in defense of Christian belief.⁷⁵ Near the beginning of Nahmanides’ Hebrew account of the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263, he describes Friar Pau as saying that “he would prove from the Talmud that the Messiah had already come whom the prophets had foreseen.”⁷⁶ Though he actually launched into this task by arguing first, as countless Christians had, that Genesis 49:10 (“The scepter shall not pass from Judah . . . until

⁷⁴ Chazan, *Fashioning Jewish Identity*, 69.

⁷⁵ For overviews of Pau Cristià’s life and activities, see Chazan, *Daggers of Faith*, 70-71; Roos, Lena, “Paul Christian. A Jewish Dominican preaching for the Jews,” *Studia Theologica* 57 (2003): 49-60; Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 334-42; Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 103-28.

On the broader significance of his preaching campaign among the Jews, including his role in the Disputation of Barcelona, see Harvey J. Hames, “Reason and Faith: Inter-religious Polemic and Christian Identity in the Thirteenth Century”, *Trumah: Zeitschrift der Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg* 12 (2002), 267-284.

⁷⁶ פתח פראי פול ואמר שהוא יוכיח מן התלמוד שסביר בא המשיה אשר הנביאים מעידים עליו

Vikuah Barcelona 7, 304. The bibliography on this disputation is vast, but see most recently Nina Caputo, *Nahmanides in Medieval Catalonia: History, Community, & Messianism* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 91-128. For the most detailed analysis of the event and the relevant sources, though, see Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and Its Aftermath* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1992), *passim*.

Shiloh comes") demonstrated this, it was not long before Friar Pau was using Rabbinical texts—in this case an Aramaic one—to advance the same argument. "He produced," Nahmanides says, the homily in Midrash Eikhah Rabbah⁷⁷ about a certain [Jewish] man who was plowing and whose ox lowed while he was plowing. A passing Arab called to him: "son of the Jew, son of the Jew, untie your ox, untie your plow, untie your plowshare, for the Holy House [= the Temple] has been destroyed." He untied his ox, untied the plow and untied the plowshare. The ox then lowed a second time. He said to him. "Tie your cow, tie your plow, tie your plowshare, for your Messiah has been born."⁷⁸

Nahmanides' account of the debate is far longer than the anonymous surviving Latin account, and they obviously do not agree on all the details of the encounter, but they are in harmony regarding Friar Pau's reliance on Rabbinical literature. Against what it says was Nahmanides' claim that the Messiah had already been born, but had not really arrived meaningfully as conquering Messiah because he had not accepted lordship over the Jews or freed them, "the Talmud was introduced," the Latin version says, "which manifestly says that the today [the Messiah] has come to them."⁷⁹ Later, the same document points out that "it had been proven through many authoritative passages of the Talmud" that the famous verses in Isaiah 53—such

⁷⁷ I. e., the late-antique commentary on Lamentations.

⁷⁸ חזר פראי פול כי בתלמוד שסביר בא המשיח והביא אותה הגדה שבמדרשי איבר בההוא גורא דהו (ה)אגעת תורה עבר חד ערבי ואמר ליה בר יהודאי בא ר' יהודאי שרי תורה שר' פדנץ דיאויחרב בית המקדש שר' תורה שר' פדנץ שר' קנפניא געת זמן תניניה. אמר אמר ליה אסור תורה אסור פדנץ אסור קנקן, דיאויליד משיחכון *Vikuah Barcelona* 19, 306. I have not found this passage in Eikhah Rabbah but the identical passage appears in the Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot 2:4:12.

⁷⁹ "Contra quam responcionem adducta fuit auctoritas Talmuth, que manifeste dicit, quod etiam eis hodie veniet," ed. Denifle, p. 260.

as “He was despised, shunned by others, A man of suffering, familiar with disease (verse 3)--are understood regarding [Jesus] Christ.”⁸⁰

In using Rabbinic texts to demonstrate Christian teaching, therefore, Martí was, once again following and building on earlier Latin precedent, but there is still another striking characteristic of Ramon Martí’s argumentation in the *Halter of the Jew*. As we saw in the first pages of this chapter, Martí has narrowed his focus in this work to demonstrating specifically that the Messiah has already come. There were many other aspects of the messianic advent that Christians have theologized throughout the centuries but Martí overwhelmingly foregrounds this one, though he does not ever really say why. This is because Christian apologists were already discussing messiahship along these lines in southern France and northern Spain, as Robert Chazan has also made abundantly clear. Pau Cristià’s plan at the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263 was, he has pointed out, to prove three things: 1] that Messiah had already come; 2 that the Messiah was to be human and divine; 3] that Jesus’ suffering and death were clearly prophesied. But “The first,” Chazan says, “is clearly the decisive one.” It was, he comments elsewhere, “the key to all the rest” and the “linchpin of the new Christian missionizing” of the mid-thirteenth century.⁸¹ The language of the Latin and Hebrew accounts communicates some of the urgency of this issue. Pau Cristià “asserted to [Nahmanides],” the Latin protocol points out near the beginning,

⁸⁰ “probatum fuit ei per multas auctoritates de Thalmut . . . quod de Christo intelligitur predictum complimentum Hys. [Isaiah 53:1 ff.],” ed. Denifle, p. 233. WHAT DOES COMPLIMENTUM MEAN HERE?

⁸¹ Chazan, *Daggers of Faith*, 80-81, 109, 117; see also, Chazan, *Fashioning Jewish Identity*, 181, 186.

That he [Pau], with the help of God, would prove through scriptures recognized as universal (*communes*) and authentic by Jews that . . . the Messiah, which means Christ, whom the Jews are expecting has undoubtedly come.”⁸²

Nahmanides describes the opening of the disputation in similarly bald terms:

And then Fray Paul began, saying that he would demonstrate from the Talmud which belongs to us [Jews] that the Messiah whom the prophets foretold has already come.⁸³

It is striking, moreover, that other contemporary Jewish intellectuals noticed this new emphasis as well. A rabbi from Avignon, Mordechai ben Joseph, who was a contemporary of Pau Christià and wrote a Hebrew polemical work aimed at him, had clearly grasped this new Christian insistence on the Messiah’s already having arrived. While his *Reinforcer of Faith*⁸⁴ is a lengthy treatise in thirteen chapters,⁸⁵ there is no mistaking, Chazan comments, “the concentration on the issue of whether the Messiah has already come.”⁸⁶

While Martí wrote anti-Islamic polemic, therefore, almost entirely along the lines of the centuries-old Arab-Christian polemical tradition that he knew through treatises of Coptic origin, when he came to engage Judaism in the *Halter of the Jews*, he worked fully within, and brought to its fullest elaboration, a Latin-Christian tradition of anti-Jewish writing. That he was doing so,

⁸² Fray Paul “proposituit dicto Magistro Iudeo, se cum Dei auxilio probaturum per scripturas communes et autenticas apud Iudeos ista per per ordinem que sequuntur, videlicet: Messiam, qui interpretatur Christus, quem ipsi Iudei expectabant, indubitanter venisse,” (ed. Denifle, P. 259).

⁸³ *Vikuah Barcelona* 7. For Hebrew see note ** above. For an insightful explanation for why Christian polemicists adopted this approach, see Robert Chazan, “***” *Speculum*, 1977.

⁸⁴ I. e., *Maḥazik Emunah*. For bibliography on this work see Chazan, *Daggers of Faith*, 197n. 41.

⁸⁵ Chazan, *Daggers of Faith*, 103-06.

⁸⁶ **

moreover, helps us understand a particularly puzzling part of his argument in the fourth *Ratio* of that work that we have been examining. As we saw, Martí was at great pains to demonstrate that the abstruse mathematics written into Daniel 9:24-27 and the known unfolding of Jewish and Christian history made space for the gap between Jesus' life and the destruction of the Second Temple. He scolded the Rabbis for not taking into account the time it took to build it, arguing ultimately that if one adds the forty-six years required for its construction one is able to account for the forty-two-year period between Jesus' death and the destruction of the Temple by Titus and Vespasian.

He did not, however, say anything about why such a calculation was so important that it occupied the majority of his exposition of this passage. But if we look back to the Disputation of Barcelona, that notorious event in the immediate aftermath of which Martí wrote, we begin, I suggest, to understand why. On the second day of the debate, Pau Cristià, Martí's Dominican confrere, had offered a much simpler version of the argument from Daniel 9:24, stating that "the seventy weeks refer to 490 years, which are the 420 years of the existence of the Second Temple and the seventy years of the Babylonian exile. The most holy one [mentioned in the verse] is Jesus."⁸⁷ Nahmanides immediately countered this argument:

Was not Jesus alive more than thirty weeks [of years or 210 years] before that time, according to our accounting, which is the truth that the knowledgeable and those who recognized him in his generation testified about him. Even according to your accounting,

⁸⁷ ושבועים שבעים הם של שנים והוא ת"ך שנה שעמד בית שני עם ע' שנה של גלות בבל וקדושים הוא ישן. *Vikuah Barcelona* 56, 312.

he was alive more than ten weeks [or seventy years] before [the destruction of the Temple].⁸⁸

Indeed, Nahmanides had already suggested in the disputation that, according to Christian calculations, Jesus did not arrive at the same time as the destruction of the temple, although the Biblical prophecies indicated that the Messiah would come at the same moment.⁸⁹ In Nahmanides' account, therefore, Pau's Christian argument from the Daniel passage had fallen flat—Friar Pau had no rejoinder to Nahmanides' assertion.

Robert Chazan has already shown that Martí's anti-Jewish works at times respond directly to Nahmanides' arguments in 1263,⁹⁰ and I suggest that this is what happened in *Ratio* four of the *Halter of the Jews*. With Nahmanides' incisive critique of Christian calculations ringing in his ears, Martí focused the majority of his exposition on finding a way to account for the obvious gap between Jesus' earthly ministry and the destruction of the Second Temple. It was an issue, moreover, that remained very much on his mind, for when in the second book of the *Dagger of Faith* he offered once again a lengthy argument to demonstrate from Jewish sources that the Messiah had already come, he devoted a whole chapter to Daniel 9:24-27 and once again the majority of it is an even more elaborate arithmetical argument culminating in

⁸⁸ אמרתי לו: והלא ישו קודם זהה היה יותר משלשים שבועים לחשבוננו שהוא האמת שהיעידו עליו יודען ובכיריו בני דורו. ואפיו לחשבו שלכם היה קודם יותר מעשרה שבועים

Vikuah Barcelona 57, 312. See also the Book of Redemption, 614-15.

⁸⁹ *Vikuah Barcelona* 22, 306. See Chazan, "Daniel 9:24-27: Exegesis and Polemics," 153.

⁹⁰ See especially Chazan, *Daggers of Faith*, 115, 135-36, but also Cohen, *Living Letters*, 346-47, and Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 136.

the claim that “42 years are left over, which were from passion of our Lord Savior until the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.”⁹¹

That Martí admitted that this later version of the argument from Daniel 9:24-27 that he offered in the *Dagger of Faith* was so prolix that it was really more of a short book communicates how important making this case was for him.⁹² But doing so was only one part of his multi-pronged demonstration that the Messiah had already come in the person of Jesus, a demonstration that, all told, encompassed a whole series of Biblical verses—Isaiah 66:7-8, Genesis 49:10, and many others—and a vast assortment of post-Biblical Jewish texts, a demonstration that, moreover, he advanced in great detail twice. All told, Martí wrote more about this topic than any other, and, as his additions to the autograph manuscript’s version of the argument indicate, he continued to think about it until the end of his life.

Beyond Polemic: Proving the Advent of the Messiah in Latin Intellectual Culture

This probably should not surprise us, for making the case that the Messiah had already come in the person of Jesus using only Jewish sources was an endeavor that had long been important in medieval Latin thought, as we have seen above in the cases of the twelfth-century *Introduction to Theology* and William of Bourges’ *Wars of the Lord*, and indeed a tradition of

⁹¹ “supererunt 42 qui fuerunt ab ipsius domini salvatoris nostri passione usque ad Jerusalem et templi destructionem, (PF 2. 3. 12, BSG MS 1405, fol. *; Leipzig ed., 283).

⁹² “Demum quia in hoc capitulo ita processit longius sermo quod ita non habet formam capituli sed libelli . . . (PF 2. 3. 33, BSG MS 1405, fol. 45v; Leipzig ed., p. 294). See also Robles’ note on CAPISTRUM IUDAICORUM 1. 4. 38, 322n267.

doing so went back to late antiquity.⁹³ In taking up this task Martí was participating in that long tradition.

But it is noteworthy that this long interest in demonstrating the reality of Jesus' Messiahship using only Jewish sources was especially intense in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Perhaps the best evidence for that assertion is the enormous success of one of the most widely copied polemical texts of the Middle Ages: a slim work called the *Quiver of Faith (Pharetra fidei)*. An anonymous tract written at an unknown date very likely in the second half of the thirteenth century,⁹⁴ this text is nothing like so learned as Martí's *Halter of the Jews or Dagger of Faith*—its author made no recourse to post-Biblical Jewish literature, though he may have known some Hebrew—but it unmistakably participates in this long tradition.

The twenty-eight chapters of the *Quiver of Faith* each focus on a different moment or aspect of the life of Jesus from his birth to his death and ascension. Each of them consists of proof texts drawn only from the Hebrew Bible. Chapter two, for example, is entitled “That Christ has already come” (*Quod Christus iam dudum venerit*) and begins, not surprisingly with a quotation of Genesis 49:10:

That Christ has already come is proven through the words of Jacob who says in the penultimate chapter of Genesis, “the scepter will not pass from the house of Judah nor

⁹³ See for example A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), ch. 1: “The Earliest Books of Testimonies,” 3-13.

⁹⁴ This dating seems to me to be the probable conclusion of Isaac Lampurlanés' excellent discussion of its content and structure in his “*Pharetra fidei contra iudeos: Sus fuentes y una edición de trabajo*,” *Sefarad* 80:2 (2020): 315-64. On this work see also Gilbert Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au Moyen Age* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1990), 414, 426-27, 461-64.

the leader from between his legs until the one who is sent comes and he is the expectation of the nations [Gn 49:10]." It is certain that until the coming of Christ a king of the people was not absent from the people of Judah until Herod who was foreign born. Under [Herod] Christ was born who is "the expectation of the nations."⁹⁵

Likewise at chapter twelve, where the author argues that Jesus died for humanity's sins and not his own, he quotes no New-Testament passages, but only Isaiah 53:4-5: "Truly he took on our weaknesses and he carried our pains and we considered him to be a leper and one struck and humiliated by God. He was wounded on account of our iniquities."⁹⁶ And so throughout the whole treatise. Not surprisingly, the anonymous author also quotes a portion of the passage of Daniel 9 that has preoccupied us so much in this chapter. Back at the end of chapter one, after quoting the warning in Deuteronomy 18:19 that God will be the avenger of those who hear not his words, the *Quiver of Faith* quotes Daniel 9:26 in asking

Has not this come to pass among the Jews as is clear in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian [and] in the dispersion of their people throughout the world? Daniel foretold concerning this vengeance in chapter nine: "Christ will be killed . . . the

⁹⁵ "Quod autem Christus iam venerit probatur per verba Iacob qui ait genesi penultimo capitulo: «non auferetur sceptrum de domo Iuda et dux de femoribus eius donec veniat qui mittendus est et ipse erit expectatio gentium» [Gn 49:10]. Certum est usque ad ortum Christi regem populi non defuisse ex genere Iuda usque ad Herodem qui fuit alienigena. Sub quo Christus natus est qui est «expectatio gentium»" (*Pharetra fidei contra Iudeos* 2, ed. Isaac Lampurlanés in his "*Pharetra fidei contra iudeos*," 334-64 at 336).

⁹⁶ "vere languores nostros ipse tulit et dolores nostros ipse portavit et nos reputavimus eum quasi leprosum et percussum a Deo et humiliatum ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras" (*Pharetra fidei* 12, 348).

people—that is the Romans—with the leader who is to come—that is with Titus—will destroy the city and the temple.”⁹⁷

There is nothing particularly innovative about this work. Indeed, as Isaac Lamperlanés, its editor has shown, it is mostly based on much older texts: Isidore of Seville’s *De fide nostra contra Judaeos* and the works of Josephus.⁹⁸ What makes it relevant to this inquiry is its staggering popularity. From soon after the time it was written, it circulated only with a treatise written by the thirteenth-century French Dominican Thibaud de Sézanne called the *Errors of the Jews*, and of the two works combined some one hundred manuscripts survive from the beginning of the thirteenth century to the sixteenth.⁹⁹ Lots of intellectuals, therefore, wanted to be walked methodically through the putative Hebrew testimonia of Jesus’ messiahship in this short, accessible form.

When we consider, moreover, the nature of the text it circulated with, the *Errors of the Jews*, moreover, the collective popularity of these texts becomes even more intriguing. A similarly short text, Thibaud’s *Errors of the Jews* attacks especially what it sees as contemporary Judaism’s departures from Biblical faith because of its adherence to the Talmud which, the

⁹⁷ “Nonne hoc completum est in iudeis sicut patet in excidio Hierusalem per Titum et Vespasianum in dispersione gentis eorum per mundum? De hac ultione praedixit Danihel capitulo nono: «occidetur Christus . . . et civitatem et sanctuarium dissipabit populus—scilicet Romanus—cum duce venturo —id est cum Tito—» (*Pharetra fidei* 1, 336).

⁹⁸ See his “*Pharetra fidei contra iudeos*,” 320-28.

⁹⁹ On the *Errors of the Jews* see most recently Isaac Lampurlanés, “The *Errores Iudeorum* by friar Thibaud de Sézanne. A critical working edition,” *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch*, 55.3 (2020): 365-418. See also Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens*, 414.

preface of the work claims, “is preferred by the Jews over the books of Moses and the prophets.”¹⁰⁰ In its second chapter, for example, Thibaud argues as follows:

Likewise, regarding that statement of Jeremiah in the twelfth chapter: “I have abandoned my house; I have dismissed my inheritance [Jeremiah 12:7].” Rabbi Iohel says: There are three guardians of the angels and God is the guardian above the guardian [of the angels], He who sits, crying out like a lion and weeping: “woe to me; I am cursed because I have cast away the Temple and the Jews, and left my house deserted; I have burned my palace and have made my sons captive among the nations of the age.” If God weeps and curses himself, he therefore is miserable and unable to himself or others which is a heresy.¹⁰¹

Thibaud was apparently not himself able to work directly with the Talmud, his citations of it being derived from earlier Latin anthologies of it,¹⁰² but he offers dozens of Talmudic passages and his own polemical commentary in a way that clearly attracted readers. In the scores of manuscripts of the *Quiver of Faith* and the *Errors of the Jews*, therefore, intellectuals sought and encountered across many decades much of Marti’s own program—though in a much-simplified form to be sure.

¹⁰⁰ “Hunc Talmud iudaei paeferunt libris Moysi et prophetis,” (Thibaud de Sézanne, *Errores iudeorum*, ed. Isaac Lampurlanés in his “The *Errores Iudeorum*,” 397-418 at 397.

¹⁰¹ “Item super illo verbo Hieremiae duodecimo: »reliqui domum meam dimisi hereditatem meam« [Ier 12, 7]. Dicit rabi Iohel: Tres sunt custodiae angelorum et super custodiam custodia est Deus qui sedet clamans ut leo et flens: ›Vae mihi, et maledictus ego, quia dimisi templum et iudeos, desertam dimisi domum meam, combussi palatium meum et captivavi filios meos inter gentes saeculi. Si Deus flet et se ipsum maledicit, ergo est miser et impotens se iuvare et alios, quod est haeresis. (Thibaud, *Errores Iudeorum*, 2, 399). As the editor notes, *ibid.*, Thibaud is here quoting (?) B. T. Berakoth 3a.

¹⁰² Appropriate note.

The popularity of these two works, moreover, suggests something else besides how broad the audience was for the kind of project that Martí was embarked upon in the *Halter of the Jews* and the second book of *Dagger of Faith*: that the audience almost certainly included many intellectuals who were only vaguely interested in polemic. For one thing, it is easy to forget that “polemic” is our term for the genre that includes such texts as Martí’s works and the *Quiver of Faith* and *Errors of the Jews*. No such category really existed in the Middle Ages. When we identify such treatises as “polemical” we foreground the ways that these texts attack the (especially religious) other. There is no doubt that Martí’s four works do this. But in categorizing them as such, we diminish our ability to grasp the extent to which they are directed not only at the religious other, but also (and perhaps even primarily) at their authors’ coreligionists. It cannot be emphasized enough that none of these works, though they depend in varying degrees on knowledge of Jewish languages, was written in Hebrew or a vernacular that Jews spoke. Martí, at least, brilliant linguist that he was, could conceivably have composed in that language or Arabic (still an important Jewish language in thirteenth-century Iberia), and the authors of all these treatises could have put them into some version of medieval Romance or German. But none, as far as we know, did, meaning that they were in the first instance, consciously or unconsciously, speaking to a learned, Latin audience whose collective intellectual preoccupations no doubt often included attacking Judaism directly, but also encompassed many other concerns as well. One of these was surely answering a question that any Christian might find quite troubling even in the absence of Jews in the surrounding society: is there any scriptural evidence for the most challenging Christian beliefs—in the Trinity and the Incarnation—apart from those writings that were produced after Jesus’ life on earth? Can one

ground these scandalous doctrines in Biblical texts that preceded him? If we bear in mind—as is too rarely done—that the Hebrew Bible comprises eighty percent of the Christian Bible, the force of this line of questioning becomes even more obvious.

And indeed, Deanna Copeland Klepper has argued, persuasively to my mind, that a question like this was very much on the minds of theologians who were not engaged primarily in anti-Jewish polemic in precisely this period—the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Certain aspects of the Augustinian theological tradition that they had inherited made the question of whether the Messiah’s past advent could be demonstrated from Jewish sources alone into a pressing enough question that we find it being raised, not in debate with Jews, but in scholastic disputations in the schools. A small handful of quodlibetal questions survives to the present attesting to that interest.¹⁰³ The earliest of these was composed by the English Franciscan, Roger Marston (d. 1303), the question at its heart is phrased in a way that cannot help but make us think of Martí: “Whether it is possible to prove that Christ has already been incarnated through [Biblical] prophecies?”¹⁰⁴ In the course of this forty page question, Marston argues unstintingly for the affirmative, citing in many cases the same scriptural passages that Martí (and the *Quiver of Faith*) had. He rounds off his argument, for example, by discussing Genesis 49:10, to which Martí had devoted whole chapters in both the *Halter of the Jews* and in the *Dagger of Faith*, book two.¹⁰⁵ Marston had quoted this verse—“The scepter will not depart

¹⁰³ These are discussed in detail in Deanna Copeland Klepper, *The Insight of Unbelievers: Nicholas of Lyra and Christian Reading of Jewish Text in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 61-81.

¹⁰⁴ “Postea quaeritur utrum per prophetias possit probari Christum iam incarnatum fuisse?” (Roger Marston, *Quodlibeta quatuor* 2, 3, 1, 104)

¹⁰⁵ See *Capistrum Iudaeorum* 1. 2, 72-98 and *Pugio fidei* 2. 4, Leipzig ed., 312-30. See also, Chazan, **.

from Judah nor the leader from between his thighs until the one who is to be sent comes”¹⁰⁶—at the beginning of the question together with a Jewish refutation of the age-old Christian reading of it as a clear prophecy of Jesus’ Messiahship. While the fact of Jewish governance of themselves had been abolished at various times, went the Jewish refutation, the right of governing (*ius regendi et dominandi*) expressed by “scepter” had never ceased among Jews. In circling back to the verse at the end, Marston claims, on the contrary, that the right of governing had disappeared precisely at the time of Jesus when a “foreign-born” (*alienigena*) prince—Herod—took over rule among the Jews. “It is not possible for anyone,” he concludes, “to come into doubt that this prophecy by itself proves the coming of Christ.”¹⁰⁷

Like Martí as well, Marston dwells at length on Daniel 9:24-27. Daniel, he says, “makes expressly known the desolation of the Jews and the consolation of the justice to be brought by Christ at a specific and determined time”¹⁰⁸ when Gabriel spoke to him these verses and their seventy weeks of years. His exposition of the verses, which he had quoted in their entirety, follows Bede’s well-known interpretation in *De temporum ratione*,¹⁰⁹ and lacks entirely Martí’s array of post-Biblical authorities, but comes to a similar conclusion: “This prophecy, as I believe, so completely “restrains the obdurate brows [of unbelievers] that they must necessarily

¹⁰⁶ “Non auferetur sceptrum de luda nec dux de femore eius donec veniat qui mittendus est” (Marston, *Quodlibeta quatuor* 2. 3. 2, 105)

¹⁰⁷ “nulli potest venire in dubium praedictam prophetiam per se solam probare adventum Christi” (Marston, *Quodlibeta quatuor* 2. 3. 5, 146).

¹⁰⁸ “Et hanc desolationem Iudeorum et [consolationem] verae justiciae intruducendae per Christum, sub certo et determinato emporte, expresse insinuate Daniel, loquente ad eum Gabriel et dicente, Dan. 9, 24-27” (Marston, *Quodlibeta quatuor* 2. 2.1. 4, 115).

¹⁰⁹ Marston, *Quodlibeta quatuor*. 2.1. 4, 115-19; cf. Bede, *De temporum ratione* 9, CCSL 123B, 304-10.

prostrate themselves facedown, in order to seek mercy, or fall over backwards where they will never know, to be blinded forever.”¹¹⁰

All this in a quodlibetal question addressed, Klepper rightly points out, to “theology students and masters.”¹¹¹ The same can be said of another enormously widely read quodlibetal question—it survives in more than one hundred manuscripts¹¹²—by the most influential Biblical exegete of the later Middle Ages, Nicholas of Lyra (c. 1270-1349). Likewise a Franciscan, Nicholas’ completed his *quaestio* in 1308-09,¹¹³ and it is even more obviously cognate with Martí’s arguments about the arrival of the Messiah in the *Halter of the Jews* and *Dagger of Faith*. To be sure, he poses the question rather differently on the surface: “Whether from the scriptures accepted by the Jews it is possible to prove effectually that our Savior was God and Man.” But having offered the question, he immediately clarifies that it contains two elements: “that which pertains to the person of Christ, that is that he be God and man, and that which pertains to the time, that is that the mystery of Christ be already completed.”¹¹⁴ Half of the question, therefore, corresponds directly with Martí’s inquiry. Equally significantly, Lyra’s methods are thoroughly reminiscent of Martí’s. Before addressing the core of his argument, for example, Lyra takes time to reflect on exactly what the Jewish scriptures consist of. Having

¹¹⁰ “Haec prophetia, ut credo, tam valide retundit frontes obduratas, ut necesse habeant aut in faciem prosterna ut patent misericordiam, aut retrorsum cadere ubi nesciunt in perpetuum excaecandi” (Marston, *Quodlibet* 2. 2.1. 4, 119).

¹¹¹ Kepper, *Insight of Unbelievers*, 68.

¹¹² Deeana Copeland Klepper, “Nicholas of Lyra’s *Questio de adventu Christi* and the Franciscan Encounter with Jewish Tradition in the Late Middle Ages,” (Ph.D., Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1995), 217.

¹¹³ Klepper, *Insight of Unbelievers*, 84.

¹¹⁴ LATIN. Nicholas of Lyra, *Questio de adventu Christi*, ed. Deeana Copeland Klepper, in her “Nicholas of Lyra’s *Questio de adventu Christi*,”²¹⁸ This edition, the only one available for this text, is a transcription of Paris, BnF MS 13781.

listed the canon of Hebrew scriptures *per se*, though, he quickly adds that the Aramaic translation of Jonathan b. Uzziel is so important that in manuscripts the Jews often place the “pure Hebrew in one column and the Aramaic text from this Jonathan in the other [likewise] in Hebrew characters.”¹¹⁵ This absolutely correct observation¹¹⁶ leads him to say that, since the Aramaic version clarifies many obscure points in the Hebrew, and since this translation is “so authoritative among them that no one has dared to contradict it,” “this translation is necessary for disputing with Jews at many points.”¹¹⁷ But that is not all. “Beyond the canonical scriptures,” he stresses, “there are other writings accepted by Jews as authoritative, such as the Talmud because, according to them,” Martí tendentiously claims, “this writing does not differ from canonical scripture.”¹¹⁸ After providing an overview of the history of the Talmud, he then goes even further: “Similarly, the statements of the Hebrew teachers who have glossed the Old Testament are more authoritative among them than the statements of Augustine and the Catholic doctors among us.”¹¹⁹ All these texts, despite the fact that the Talmud and glosses are “in large part false” (*pro magna parte sint false*), will be taken into account in the inquiry that follows.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ “cuius scriptura ita est autentica apud Hebreos quod nullus ausus fuit sibi contradicere, propter quod in libris notabilibus iudeorum ponitur Hebraicum purum in una columpna et Caldaicum scriptum ab iste Ionathan litteris Hebraicis in altera” (Lyra, *Questio*, 220).

¹¹⁶ See Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman, “A Variety of Targum Texts,” in Houtman, Alberdina, Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman, and Hans-Martin Kirn, eds., *A Jewish Targum in a Christian World* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 9-31 at 12-13.

¹¹⁷ “et maxime Ionathan filius Eziel, cuius scriptura ita est autentica apud Hebreos quod nullus ausus fuit sibi contradicere, . . . Ideo, illa translatio necessaria est ad disputandum cum iudeis in passibus multis” (Lyra, *Questio*, 220).

¹¹⁸ “Item, preter Scripturas canonicas sunt alie scripture a iudeis recepte tamquam autenticate, scilicet Thalamud, quia secundum ipsos, Scriptura ista non differet a Scripturis canonicis” (Lyra, *Questio*, 221).

¹¹⁹ “Similiter dicta doctorum Hebraicorum qui Glossaverunt Vetus Testamentum sunt autentica apud eos multo magis quam apud nos dicta Augustinus et aliorum catholicorum doctorum,” (Lyra, *Questio*, 222).

¹²⁰ Lyra, *Questio*, 222.

For both Martí and Lyra, therefore, arguing that the Messiah has already come on the basis of Jewish authorities means much more than quoting the well-known Biblical prooftexts, and this is evident throughout Lyra’s *quaestio*. When he turns to Daniel 9:24, for example, he first takes time to refute the highly influential view of Bede that the 490 years proposed by this verse are to be understood as lunar, rather than solar, years. Bede’s argument, Lyra tells us, is based on two points. First, the text says “abbreviated weeks” (*ebdomades abbreviate*) and this must refer to shorter weeks of years and since lunar years are shorter than solar, they must be referred to here. Second, the angel was speaking to Daniel who was a Hebrew, and the Hebrews calculate time in lunar years. But Lyra disagrees: “with all due reverence to Bede, each statement is false.”¹²¹ After explaining why, Lyra, like Martí, asks the question of when the calculation of these seventy weeks of years begins, pointing out that the Jews have offered many opinions about this, referring readers to his commentary on Daniel for further discussion of them.¹²² “Nevertheless,” he observes,

I here want briefly to counter a certain false solution that Rabbi Solomon [i. e., Rashi] gives to this calculation when he says that these seventy weeks [of years] do not include the specific time until the advent of Christ and his passion or mystery . . . but includes [only] the time from the destruction of the first temple until the destruction of the second by Titus and Vespasian.¹²³

¹²¹ “Sed salva Bede reverentia, utrumque dictum falsum esse videtur” (Lyra, *Questio*, 267).

¹²² Lyra, *Questio*, 269.

¹²³ “Breviter tamen hie volo removere quandam solutionem falsam quam dat Rabi Solomon ad rationem predictam, dicens quod ille 70 ebdomades non continent tempus precisum usque ad Christus adventum et passionis sue misterium . . . sed continent tempus precisum a destructione primi templi, usque ad destructionem secundi per Titum et Vespasianum,” (Lyra, *Questio*, 269).

He follows this up with a quotation from Rashi's commentary on Daniel where he does, indeed, make this case,¹²⁴ and dedicates a long paragraph to refuting it.¹²⁵ For both Martí and Lyra, then, though in different ways, providing a convincing Christian reading of Daniel 9:24 meant quoting and refuting the great Jewish master Rashi.

Klepper is right, I think, to point out that in writing this text Lyra's concern "was not the conversion of the Jews but staking his claim to disputed biblical territory" and that "the disputing that Nicholas cited here was one that took place within the Christian community itself."¹²⁶ The same is even more true of his commentary on Daniel that, as we have seen, he alluded to this *quaestio*.¹²⁷ When he came to Daniel 9:24-27 in the final version of his vast *Postills on the Whole Bible*, a text directed only at Christian Biblical exegetes, he found that he needed to write what amounts to a small treatise. In the manuscript I will cite here (Paris, BnF, lat. 11976) it is fully five large folios long.¹²⁸ Once again Lyra takes on Rashi's interpretation, directly quoting it as necessary. He points out, for example, that one of the reasons Rashi

¹²⁴See Rashi on Dan. 9:24 (alhatorah.org):

–**שבעים שבועים נחתך**
 על ירושלים מיום חורבן ראשון בימי צדקהינו עד שהיה בשניה
 –**לכל הפשע ולהתם חטא**
 שיקבלו ישראל את גמר
 פורענותם בגלות טיטוס ושיעבוד אדום וכדי שיכלו פשעתם ויתמו חטאיהם ויתכפר עונם כדי להביא עליהם צדק עולמים
 –**ולמשוח (עליהם) קודש קדשים**
 הארון והמזבחות וכל הקדש שיבאו להם על ידי מלך המשיח ומפני שבעים שבעים ארבע מאות ותשעים שנה, גלות בבל שבעים
 ובית שני ארבע מאות ותשעים.

¹²⁵ Lyra, *Questio*, 270-72.

¹²⁶ Klepper, *Insight of Unbelievers*, 91.

¹²⁷ See above, **.

¹²⁸ Paris, BnF, lat. 11976, fols. 32ra-37rb. The folios measure 265 x 190 mm. On this manuscript see <https://portail.biblissima.fr/ark:/43093/mdatae28fc14750161e020de0563dd90c10977ce958b9> (accessed September 25, 2025). On Lyra and his vast Biblical commentary, see especially the essays in Gilbert Dahan, ed., *Nicolas de Lyre, franciscain du XIV^e siècle: exégète et théologien* (Paris 2011) and Philip D. W. Krey and Lesley W. Smith, *Nicolas of Lyra: The Senses of Scripture* (Leiden, 2000).

disagrees with Christians about the passage is that he adopts here and there different readings of the verses. When Daniel says in verse 9:24 that “Seventy weeks have been decreed . . . until . . . the Holy of Holies is anointed,” Rashi interprets the key noun, *qodesh*, as “holy place/thing” (*sanctum* in the neuter) while “we say holy person” (*sanctus* in the masculine). Quite rightly, Lyra goes on to explain,

in Hebrew there is no distinction [between these readings] because [the word] is written and pronounced in the same way in both the neuter and the masculine. Thus, [Rashi] explains [the words] “the Holy of Holies will be anointed” as follows: “the Temple which will be rebuilt by the Messiah and the Ark of the Covenant and the other utensils of the Temple.”¹²⁹

While not a direct translation of Rashi’s gloss on “Holy of Holies,” the last phrase in Lyra’s exposition is closely based on it.¹³⁰ For Martí (and for Christian exegetes generally) the “Holy of Holies” here is a reference to Jesus, as he will go on to argue, but Lyra clearly felt impelled to contend with Rashi’s interpretation while writing for a large audience of Christian scholars, most of whom would never indulge in traditional polemic against Jews. And that audience, I cannot emphasize enough, was vast. Where more than a hundred manuscripts of Lyra’s question on the Advent of Christ have survived, more than 800 manuscripts of his *Postills* are

¹²⁹ “et vngatur *sanctum sanctorum*. vbi enim nos dicimus *sanctus*, ra. sa. dicit. *sanctum* et in hebraico non est distinctio. quia eodem modo scribitur et pronunciatur in neutro et masculino. sic igitur exponit. *vngatur sanctum sanctorum*. id est templum quod reedicabitur per messyam et archa testamenti et {33rb} alia vasa sanctuarii” (Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla in totam bibliam* on Daniel 9:24, BnF, lat. 11976, 33ra-rb).

¹³⁰ *הָאָרוֹן וְכָלְבָבָוֹת וְכָלְקָרְבָּנִים* “WHAT ED.” For an ample discussion of Lyra’ approach to Daniel and this passage in particular, see Mark Zier’s excellent “Nicholas of Lyra on the Book of Daniel,” in *Nicholas of Lyra: The Senses of Scripture*, ed. Philip D. W. Krey and Lesley Smith (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 173-93.

extant, making it one of the most widely copied works of the entire Middle Ages.¹³¹ Not surprisingly, it was the first Biblical commentary to see print.¹³²

The compulsion to demonstrate that Jesus was the true, already arrived, Messiah foretold by the Hebrew Bible was widely dispersed in Latin Europe in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries in both works that we have long thought of as polemical and works that have long been seen as non-polemical. In addressing it at such length, therefore, Martí was, to be sure, serving polemical ends, but he was at the same time commenting with unequaled erudition on a matter of great interest to Latin scholars. When we read his exposition of Daniel 9:24-27 alongside Nicholas of Lyra’s the parallels are striking. Both authors, the polemicist and the Biblical commentator, bring their knowledge of Hebrew and their extensive reading of Rashi to the project of making these cryptic verses speak specifically about Jesus of Nazareth’s coming as Messiah at a specific point in the past. And they both, though in different degrees, make hostile asides about the errors of the Jews.

We have seen in the previous chapter that while there was some interest in challenging Islam intellectually, Latin scholastic culture was in fact rather indifferent toward Islam. Its intellectual giants said almost nothing about it, its greatest encyclopedist hardly alluded to it, and leading missionary figures—at least some of them—were doubtful about evangelizing among Muslims. Martí’s reticence about Islam, despite his excellent command of Arabic, his

¹³¹ See Philip D. W. Krey and Lesley Smith’s “Introduction” to their *Nicholas of Lyra: The Senses of Scripture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 1-18 at 8.

¹³² Lesley Smith, “Nicholas of Lyra and Old Testament Interpretation,” in M. Saebo, ed., *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment [1300-1800]* 2 (Göttingen: Ruprecht Gmbh & Co., 2008), 49-63 at 50.

long residence in North Africa, and his ability to take advantage of textual networks running all the way to Egypt, I have suggested, is of a piece with that scholastic disinterest in Islam. But, having now considered Martí’s lengthy attempt to show that the Messiah has already come alongside the similar attempts of Lyra, Roger Marston, and the author of the *Quiver of Faith*, I propose that there is another dimension to his choice to turn away from confronting Islam to confronting Judaism: in doing so he could also contribute, in way that almost no one else could, to answering a question of profound interest to his broader intellectual culture. In addition to the disincentives to engaging Islam, here, then, was a clear incentive to grapple with Judaism in this very particular way.

For in doing so Martí could take his place in that long line of Christian scholars who had found that thinking with and against Judaism—to adopt the recent language of Katherina Heyden and David Nirenberg —was an irresistibly attractive way to “co-produce” Christianity. Indeed, both Martí and Lyra, learned readers of Hebrew and students of Rashi, are equally intelligible as “co-producers,” as Christian intellectuals who were in varying degrees polemical in their language and choice of genre, but who were entirely alike in the degree to which engaging with the texts of Jews allowed them to form and re-form their own intellectual-religious tradition.¹³³ Seeing them as such erases the artificial boundary we have created between polemical and non-polemical intellectual production and discloses them to us in a way much more like they would have appeared to contemporaries: as profoundly erudite scholars whose works contribute ultimately to much the same project of making Christianity make sense

¹³³ Katharina Heyden and David Nirenberg, “Co-produced Religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,” *Harvard Theological Review* 118:1 (2025): 159-80 at 160 and *passim*.

of its own deeply problematic holy texts. Indeed, it has been known for decades that Lyra was actually turning to Martí’s *Dagger of Faith* as he commented on the Bible, and more evidence that this is so has come to light recently.¹³⁴ Moreover, as Alexander Fidora has shown, Martí’s “polemical” works were used extensively by another Biblical commentator as well, the Catalan Franciscan Ponç Carbonell (d. 1320).¹³⁵

We are not privy to the inmost workings of Martí’s inspirations and ambitions; we cannot speak decisively about his motives. But we can certainly affirm that his huge investment in the co-produced project of building Christianity through and against Judaism must have shared something in common with the similar investments of scholars such as Lyra who, while he wrote in a different genre, was launched upon much the same project.

Demonstrating that the Messiah has Already Come to Muslims in Arabic

I will take up these issues at more length in the conclusion to this book, however, because our examination of Martí’s *Halter of the Jews* and the broad background of endeavors to demonstrate the already-arrival of the Messiah is not, in fact, over. For there is one other text that both begs our attention and complicates in fascinating ways the story I have been telling. Still another attempt to show that the Messiah arrived in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, this one dates, very likely, to before Martí began writing and exists not in Latin but in an Arabic version quoted by the same Andalusī Imam, Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar al-Qurṭubī (d. 1258),

¹³⁴ See Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars*, (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1963), 163-64; and Thomas E. Burman, “Ramon Martí, Nicholas of Lyra, Is. 48:16, and the Extended Literal Sense of Scripture,” in *Christian Readings of Rabbinic Sources*, Alexander Fidora and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, eds. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2024), 121-37

¹³⁵ See Alexander Fidora, “Ponç Carbonell and the Early Franciscan Reception of the *Pugio fidei*,” *Medieval Encounters* 19 (2013): 567-85.

whose ample anti-Christian polemic, the *Notification of the Corruption in the Religion of the Christians*, preoccupied us so much in the last chapter. Called *Tathlīth al-wahdānīyah* or *Trinitizing the Unity [of the Godhead]*, this Christian text offers a number of interpretive challenges, as will be obvious in what follows, but it also, I will be arguing, serves as further testimony to how broad the geography was in which this endeavor was being taken up. Yet it also, and as importantly, forces upon us the asking of the very question at the heart of this book. For in this case the attempt to demonstrate that the Messiah has come using only the Hebrew Bible is directed (quite oddly) to Muslims. Someone before Martí was using one of the key arguments he used against Jews to engage with Muslims, something Martí never did. Once again, we cannot help but ask why.

Since it survives only as Ahmad ibn 'Umar al-Qurtubī quoted it, we cannot be sure how extensive it originally was. Its title is taken from the first of its three parts which advances a rationalist argument for the Trinity based on kalāmic thought.¹³⁶ In the second part the anonymous author defends the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is part three, though, that will preoccupy us here. Entitled (somewhat misleadingly, as we will see) "The Argument of the Three Religions" (*iḥtijāj al-thalāt milāl*), this portion of the Arab-Christian text begins with an intriguing discussion of disputation among the three religions of Medieval Iberia. Men of all

¹³⁶ See Thomas E. Burman, "Via impugnandi in the Age of Alfonso VIII: Iberian-Christian Kalām and a Latin Triad Revisited," forthcoming in Miguel Gomez, ed., *Rex Nobilis: the reign of Alfonso VIII of Castile (1158-1214)*, and id., *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs, c. 1050-1200* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 157-89. On *Tathlīth al-wahdānīyah* in general see, most recently, *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History* (hereafter CMR), ed. David Thomas et al., (Leiden/Boston: E. J. Brill, 2009 -) 3 [art. Thomas E. Burman], and Daniel Potthast's extremely learned *Christen und Muslime im Andalus: Andalusische Christen und ihre Literatur nach religionspolemischen Texten des zehnten bis zwölften Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 2013), 327-38 and (for a German translation), 537-50.

three faiths, we are told—Jews, Christians, and Muslims—assert that their own religion is the only true faith, generally doing so for worldly reasons and without knowledge of the rules of logical argument. Moreover, if a pagan (*majūsī*) came to this land he would find a thoroughly confusing religious situation: while the faithful of all three religions believe that the Jewish prophets are true messengers of God, Christians argue that the Gospels abrogate the Jewish scriptures, and Muslims contend that the Qur’ān invalidates the Christians scriptures, with the Jews adamantly maintaining that no scriptures other than their own are valid at all. In such circumstances convincing a *majūsī* of the rightness of one’s faith requires Christians to present evidence from the Jewish scriptures that demonstrates that the Messiah awaited by Jews has already come, and Muslims must demonstrate that the prophethood of Muhammad is foretold in the Bible. Whoever can do so is a believer in the true faith.¹³⁷

In the ensuing sections of part of three of *Trinitizing the Unity* that survive in al-Qurṭubī’s work, therefore, the Christian author argues first that it is clear from the Jewish scriptures alone that the Messiah has come. He cites Hosea 3:4, for example (“For many days the Children of Israel will abide without king and without prince”) and Genesis 49:10 (“Ruling power [*mulk*] will not disappear from Judah, nor the legislator from between his feet until the Messiah comes, and to him the nations will give obedience”) to make the standard Christian

¹³⁷ Anonymous, *Tathlīth al-wahdānīyah*, fragments of which survive only in Ahmad ibn ‘Umar ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, *al-‘I‘lām bi-mā fī dīn al-Naṣrānī min al-fasād wa-l-awhām wa-iżhār maḥāsin dīn al-Islām wa-ithbāt nubuwwat nabiyinā Muḥammad*, ed. A. Hijāzī al-Saqqā (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1980) [hereafter, “al-Qurṭubī”], 163–65. On this Muslim work see CMR 4:391–94 [art., Juan Pedro Montferrer Sala].

argument that since Jews lack political power, and their own scriptures say that this will happen with the coming of the Messiah, the Messiah must have come.¹³⁸

Strikingly enough, the anonymous author actually quotes these verses in Hebrew (and in one case Aramaic as well) in Arabic script before translating them into Arabic. He presents the Hosea passage, for example, as follows:

The prophet Hosea son of Beeri, peace be upon him, speaks the following in Hebrew speech: *Ki yamim rabi yshebu bene yisra’el ’en melekh we-’en şar*. Its translation: “For many days the Children of Israel will endure without king and without leader.” Now when the Jewish infidel is asked if among [the Jews] there is a king or a leader, he will have no answer except to say, “we have no king and no leader.”¹³⁹

Having argued in this way that the Hebrew Bible alone demonstrates that Jesus was the Messiah awaited by the Jews, the Christian author then demands that his Muslim interlocutors similarly demonstrate that Muhammad was foretold by the Bible, but then rather forecloses that possibility when he asserts that Christians will not accept such arguments in any case since

¹³⁸ “Inna ayyāman kathīrah yuqīmū banī (sic) Isrā’īl dūna mulk wa-dūna muqaddim;””lā yuntiqādū al-mulk min Yahūdā wa-rāsim min bayna rijlayhi ḥattā ya’tī al-Masīḥ wa-la-hu taṭawwa’u al-umam” (*Tathlīth al-wahdānīyah* in *al-Qurṭubī*, 181). The Christian author has translated the Hebrew *Shiloh* as “Messiah” (*al-Masīḥ*) in a Christological reading of the passage.

¹³⁹ “Qāla al-nabī Hoshi’ā ibn Bīrī . . . hakadhā bi-kalām ‘ibrānī: ‘ki yamīm rabīm yeshebū bene isra’īl (sic) ’en melekh (?) we-’en şar;’ tafsīruhu: ‘Inna ayyāman kathīrah yuqīmū banī (sic) Isrā’īl dūna mulk wa-dūna muqaddim. Fa-idhā su’ila al-Yahūdī al-jāhid in kāna la-hum malik aw muqaddim, fa-lā yakūnu jawābuhu illā an yaqūla ‘laysa ‘inda-nā malik wa-lā muqaddim’ (*ibid.* I quote the transliterated Hebrew from Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala’s better edition of these passages in his “Siete citas hebreas, más una aramea, transcritas al árabe en el *I/lām* del Imām al-Qurtubī, *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos* 48 [1999]:393-403 at 396.)

they do not recognize the authority of the Qur’ān which contains such despicable content as marriage laws that encourage adultery.¹⁴⁰

Quoting the prooftexts from the Hebrew Bible in the Hebrew language to demonstrate that the Messiah has already come makes us think immediately of texts we have already seen in this chapter including, of course, Martí’s *Halter of the Jews* and the second book of the *Dagger of Faith*. Indeed, both the author of *Trinitizing the Unity* and Martí offer their readers much the same explanation for why they cite these Jewish texts in their original languages. “Notice,” the former comments,

that I have written down for you in the Hebrew language and the Aramaic language some of the scriptural evidences of the prophets sent by God from the books in their (i.e., the Jews’) hands, and that the Jews are not able [therefore] to deny a word of them when I advance [these scriptural evidences] in argument with them in Hebrew and Aramaic.¹⁴¹

In the preface to the *Dagger of Faith*, Martí likewise explained that

When citing in Hebrew authoritative passages of the text, from wherever [in the text] derived, I will not follow the Septuagint or any other translation, and--what might appear to be even more presumptuous—I will not pay obeisance to Jerome or even avoid somewhat improper Latin, in order to translate the truth of whatever the

¹⁴⁰ *Tathlīth al-wahdānīyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 215-17.

¹⁴¹ “l’lām annī katabtu la-ka bi-al-‘ibrānī wa-al-suryānī min shahādāt al-anbiyā’ ‘an Allāh min al-kutub allatī bi-aydīhim wa-anna al-yahūd lā yaqdirūna ‘alā inkār ḥarfin min-hā aḥtajju ma’ā-hum bi-al- al-‘ibrānī wa-al-suryānī” (*Tathlīth al-wahdānīyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 185).

Hebrews have [in their scriptures] word for word whenever it is possible to do so. For by this means, a wide and spacious way of escape is closed off for the lying Jews, since they are entirely unable to say that [the text] is not thus among them, since the truth will be cited by us against them, with me as the translator.¹⁴²

Leaving aside for the moment the messy question of the dating of the Arabic text, when we read it alongside Martí’s works a series of arresting similarities and differences compete for our attention. At times, indeed, we feel that Martí could, in fact, be the author of the Arab-Christian treatise (an outside possibility as we will see below), though at others, very different minds seem to be at work. On the one hand, of the eight¹⁴³ Biblical passages the Arab-Christian author offers in their original languages—Hosea 3:4, Genesis 49:10, Lamentations 2:3, Jeremiah 15:1-2, Jeremiah 31:31-32, Jeremiah 3:14, Jeremiah 3:15, Jeremiah 3:16—five appear in both of Martí’s works against Judaism: Hosea 3:4, Genesis 49:10, Lamentations 2:3, Jeremiah 31:31-32, Jeremiah 3:14.¹⁴⁴ But on the other hand, the respective Arabic and Latin translations of these verses are often quite different. In Genesis 49:10, for example, the Hebrew *mehoqeq*, “a prescriber (of laws),” becomes the very literal *rāsim*, “inscriber, drawer,” in Arabic, while Martí

¹⁴² “Ceterum. inducendo auctoritates textus. ubicumque ab ebraico fuerit deriuatum (ut vid.) non .lxx. sequar nec interpretem alium. et quod maioris presumptionis uidebitur; non ipsum etiam in hoc reuerebor ieronimum. nec tolerabilem latine lingue uitabo impropietatem; uero que apud hebreos sunt; ex uerbo in uerbum quocienscumque seruari hoc poterit; transferam ueritatem. Per hoc enim iudei falsiloquis lata valde spaciosaque subterfugiendi precludetur uia. cum minime poterunt dicere. non sic haberi apud eos; ut a nostris contra ipsos me interprete ueritas induceretur” (Martí, *Pugio fidei* proemium, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 3r; Leipzig ed., 4).

¹⁴³ Monferrer Sala learnedly discussed seven quotations of the Hebrew Bible in this works, but there is an eighth—Jr 15:1-2—that he passed over. See his “Siete citas hebreas” and *Tathlīth al-wāḥdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, pp. 181-82.

¹⁴⁴ *Tathlīth al-wāḥdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 181-85. Martí’s quotations: Hos 3:4 (*Capistrum iudeorum* 2.7. 9 [II.236]; *Pugio fidei* 3.3.21, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 424v; Leipzig ed., 953); Gn 49:10 (*Capistrum iudeorum* 1.2.3 [I.72]; *Pugio fidei* 2.4.1-3, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 46r; Leipzig ed., 312); Lm 2:3 (*Capistrum iudeorum* 2.7.15, 17 [II.254-258]; *Pugio fidei* 2.14, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 110r; Leipzig ed., 454-55); Jr 31:31-32 (*Capistrum iudeorum* 1.3.23 [I.122]); *Pugio fidei* 2.4, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 54r; Leipzig ed., 328); Jr 3:14 (*Capistrum iudeorum* 2.1.11-12 [II.38-40]; *Pugio fidei* 2.11, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 83v; Leipzig ed., 405).

gives us the rather more suitable *legumlator* and *legumdator*—“giver of laws.”¹⁴⁵ The Arab-Christian author, furthermore abbreviates and paraphrases Jeremiah 31:31-32, while Martí translates it literally but only partially. The Hebrew text in full reads as follows:

31. See, a time is coming—declares the Lord—when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. 32. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt . .

.¹⁴⁶

In *Trinitizing the Unity* the whole Hebrew text appears followed by this abridged version in Arabic:

God says, I have established a new covenant for the House of Israel and Judah, not like the covenant which I spoke (sic) to their father on the day upon which I led them from the house of servitude.¹⁴⁷

In Martí’s two Latin versions—once each in the *Halter of the Jews* and the *Dagger of Faith*--, on the other hand, only the first part of this passage appears, but without abbreviation or paraphrase (quoting the former version here with the *Dagger of Faith*’s variations in brackets):

¹⁴⁵ *Tathlīth al-wahdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 181. In *Capistrum iudeorum* we have *legumlator* (1.2.3 [l.72]), in *Pugio fidei*, *legumdator vel lator* (2.4.1-3, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 46r; Leipzig ed., 312).

¹⁴⁶ Here and below I use New Jewish Publication Society Translation, 2nd ed., for extended quotations of the Hebrew Bible in English.

¹⁴⁷ “Yaqūlu Allāh: wa-athbattu li-bayt Isrā’īl wa-Yahūdā ‘ahd jadīd laysa ka-al-‘ahd alladhī qultu li-ābā’ihim fī al-yawm alladhī akhrajtu-hum min arḍ Miṣr min bayt al-‘ubūdīyah” (*Tathlīth al-wahdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 182-83; cf. Monferrer, “Siete citas hebreas,” 397).

I will make a new pact [new law] for the House of Israel and the House of Judah, not like the pact [*berith* (in transliteration)] which I made with their fathers on the day on which I took [strengthened] their hand in order to lead them from Egypt.¹⁴⁸

And there are still other notable differences. Martí translates the Hebrew *karati . . . berith hadasha*, “I will cut a new covenant,” rather slavishly as *scindam . . . foedus novum / legem novam*, “I will cut a new pact / new law,” where the Arabic is less literal: *uthbitu . . . ‘ahdan jadīdan*, “I have established a new covenant.” Moreover, the Arabic paraphrases “the land of Egypt” as “the house of servitude,” while in Latin it becomes simply “Egypt.”

But it is not just the translations that differ. Martí discusses these passages at far greater length than the author of the *Trinitizing the Unity*, even though their argumentative use is the same. The Christian author of the latter work quotes the Hebrew and Arabic versions of Lamentations 2:3 (“In blazing anger He has cut down all the might of Israel . . .”) prefaced by the explanation that “God spoke on the tongue of Jeremiah the prophet about the cutting off of [the Jews’] ruling authority in Hebrew speech as follows,” with no other comment of any kind.¹⁴⁹ In both *Halter of the Jews* and *Dagger of Faith* Martí hedges his quotation of this verse

¹⁴⁸ “Scindam domui Israël et domui Iuda foedus novum, non sicut foedus quod scidi cum patribus in die qua apprehendi manum eorum ut educerem eos de terra Aegypti” (*Capistrum iudeorum* 1.3.23 [I.122]); “scindam domui israel et domui iuda. berith nouam id est legem vnde subdit; non sicut berith quam scidi cum patribus eorum in die qua confortauit manum eorum, ut educerem eos de terra egypti” (*Pugio fidei* 2.4, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 54r; Leipzig ed., 328).

¹⁴⁹ “Qāla Allāh . . . ‘alá lisān Irmīyā’ al-nabī fī inqīṭā’ mulkihim bi-kalām ‘ibrānī hakadhā . . .” (*Tathlīth al-waḥdānīyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 182).

about with a discussion of a lengthy midrash on it, the whole running to more than fifty lines of text in the autograph manuscript of the *Pugio*.¹⁵⁰

Nevertheless, there are striking parallels here that go beyond the fact that, as in the *Dagger of Faith*, the Hebrew/Aramaic passages appear in transliteration in *Trinitizing the Unity* as well as in transliteration. While there are differences of detail between the respective Arabic and Latin versions, in general, the translations into both languages carefully follow the Hebrew text—the respective Arabic and Latin versions of Hosea 3:4, for example, hew closely to the Hebrew word order.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, Martí’s specific interpretations of these verses sometimes match up suggestively closely. In introducing his quotation of Jeremiah 3:14, the author of *Trinitizing the Unity* asserts that the “new covenant” described later in Jeremiah 31:31-32 is specifically the faith of Jesus’ disciples and those who follow them:

just as God said in another passage on the tongue of Jeremiah the prophet about the disciples . . . Its translation: ‘Return, O sons of stubbornness, for I have become master over you. I will take you, one from a city, and two from a clan, and I will introduce you into Zion (Jeremiah 3:14).’ And thus [Jesus] took the disciples, one from a city and two from a clan.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ *Capistrum iudeorum* 2.7.15, 17 [II. 254-258]; *Pugio fidei* 2.14, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 110r-111v; Leipzig ed., 454-56.

¹⁵¹ “Quia diebus multi sedebunt vel habitabunt vel morabuntur filii israel sine rege, et sine principe” (*Capistrum iudeorum* 2.7. 9 [II.246]); “diebus enim multis. morabuntur filii Israel. sine rege. et sine principe” (*Pugio fidei* 3.3.21, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 424v; Leipzig ed., 953).

¹⁵² “kamā qāla Allāh fī mawdū‘ ākhar ‘alā lisān Irmīyā‘ al-nabī bi-lisān ‘ibrānī ‘an al-imān al-ḥawāriyūn . . . tafsīruhu: ‘Irja‘ū yā awlād al-lajājah fī-innī sudtu ‘alaykum wa ākudhukum wāḥidan min madīnah wa-ithnayn min ‘ashīrah wa-adkhulukum ilā shāhyūn.’ Wa-ka-dhalika ākhadu al- al-ḥawāriyūn wāḥidan min madīnah wa-ithnayn min ‘ashīrah” (*Tathlīth al-wahdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 183; cf. Monferrer, “Siete citas hebreas,” 398).

In both the *Halter of the Jews* and the *Dagger of Faith* Martí quotes this verse as it appears in a passage from tractate B. T. Sanhedrin (111a) that he argues indicates that only a small number of Jews will be saved. In *Dagger of Faith*, however, he lingers over this verse, connecting it explicitly with Jesus’ disciples as well, for “our Lord Jesus Christ had saved Jews, one from a city, such as blessed Paul of Tarsus in Cilicia, and two from a family, such as blessed Peter and Andrew, who were brothers, and James and John who were also brothers.”¹⁵³

Moreover, the selection of verses itself is telling. While some of the five passages quoted in both *Trinitizing the Unity* and the works of Martí are so commonplace in Christian works *adversus judaeos*—Jeremiah 31:31-32 and, especially, Genesis 49:10--that the coincidence by itself means nothing, others appear far more rarely in this literature, such as the just discussed Jeremiah 3:14. Isidore of Seville of Seville used it centuries earlier in his *De fide catholica ex veteri et novo testamento contra judaeos*, but I know of no other cases.¹⁵⁴ One passage--Lamentations 2:3, “He [God] will cut off all the horn of Israel,” which *Trinitizing the Unity* says refers to as “the cutting off of [the Jew’s] ruling authority,”¹⁵⁵ and Martí reads likewise--appears nowhere else in Christian attacks on Judaism that I have examined. In these cases the occurrence of the passage in both works suggests a far closer connection, perhaps even common authorship.

¹⁵³ “Cum igitur dominus noster ihesus christus. saluauerit iudeos. unum de ciuitate. ut beatum paulum de tarso cilicie. et duos de cognatione. ut petrum et andream qui fuerunt fratres. iacobum et iohannem; qui similiter fuerunt fratres” (*Pugio fidei* 2.11, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 83v; Leipzig ed., 405; cf. *Capistrum iudeorum* 2.1.11-12 [II.38-40]).

¹⁵⁴ Chapter 3, PL 83 505b-506a.

¹⁵⁵ See above note ____.

The evidence from part three of the *Trinitizing the Unity* discussed up to this point, therefore, is something of a muddle. Its author and Martí handled some passages quite differently; in some cases there are striking parallels in translation or interpretation; some aspects of both works are so typical of the *Adversus judaeos* genre that there is little to be learned from them; in other places we are in the presence of highly suggestive coincidence.

In the one instance in which *Trinitizing the Unity* gives us both the Hebrew *and* the Aramaic versions of a verse—when its author takes up Genesis 49:10—we confront all these conflicting features of the evidence once again. Having quoted the verse initially in Hebrew, he then translated the key word *Shiloh* as *Messiah* in accordance with the ubiquitous Christian interpretation of this verse that goes back to Justin Martyr: *lā yantaqidu al-mulk min Yahūda . . . hattá ya’tá al-Masīḥ*, “The king will not disappear among the Jews . . . until the Messiah comes.” This being the case, he observes, addressing the Jews directly, “Since you do not have ruling authority . . . the Messiah has come.”¹⁵⁶

But after an intervening discussion of Jeremiah 15:1-2, the Christian author surprisingly returns to the Genesis passage, this time presenting it in the Aramaic translation of Targum Onkelos followed by an Arabic translation of that version:

Then God (He is exalted!) said on the tongue of Jacob the excellent Prophet in the Aramaic (*suryānī*) language as follows: *Lo ya’ede shuleṭan mi-dabet Yehuda we-safra mi-bane banohi ‘ad ‘alama’ ‘ad dayete Mashiha dadileh ḥi’ malkhutha wa-leh yishtama’on , ‘amamaya’*. And this is the translation of it . . . ‘ruling authority will not

¹⁵⁶ “fa-yuqālu la-hum: idh laysa la-kum mulk . . . fa-qad jā’ā al-Masīḥ” (*Tathlīth al-wahdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 181.)

disappear from Judah, and the scribe from his sons, until *Mashīhā* comes, which is the Messiah who has ruling authority, and the nations will be obedient to him.’¹⁵⁷

The Arab-Christian author’s point in quoting the Targum here is that it gives a seemingly Christian interpretation of the Hebrew *Shiloh* by translating it as “the Messiah,” *Mashīhā*. Martí likewise often presented both the Hebrew original of a verse and its Aramaic translation when the amplified version of the Targum seemed particularly susceptible to Christian interpretation. Indeed, his handling of 49:10 in both the *Halter of the Jews* in the 1260s and the *Dagger of Faith* in the 1270s is identical with what we find in *Trinitizing the Unity*. In the *Pugio* he quotes the verse first in Hebrew, and then gives us his Latin translation which follows the Hebrew closely. After asserting that “no one among [the Jews] presumes to contradict” the Aramaic version of the Hebrew Bible, which was translated long before the coming of the Messiah, he then quotes it, followed by an amplified translation of his own into Latin: “The fact or action of power or royal dominion will not disappear from the House of Judah . . . until the Messiah comes . . .”¹⁵⁸ So here we have Genesis 49:10 quoted in both Hebrew and Aramaic, with the Aramaic version from Targum Onkelos being used for exactly the same purpose for which the

¹⁵⁷ “thumma qāla Allāh ta’āla ‘alā lisān Ya’qūb al-nabī al-fādil bi-lisān suryāni hakadhā: “*Lo ya’ede shuleṭan midabet Yehuda we-safra mi-bane banohi ‘ad ‘alama ‘ad dayete Mashiha dadileh hī’ malkhutha wa-leh yishtama’on, ‘amamaya”*”. Wa-hadhā tafsīruhu . . . “lā yantaqīdu qadīb al-mulk min Yahūda wa-rāsim min abnā’ihī ḥattā an ya’tī Mashiha alladhī huwa al-Masīh alladhī la-hu al-mulk wa-la-hu taṭū’ al-umam” (*Tathlīth al-wāḥdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 182—for the Aramaic I have followed Monferrer, 400).

¹⁵⁸ “Quod autem eiusmodi translatio <Latina> premissorum . . . sit fidelis; ostenditur per targum id est translationem caldaicam . . . quae inter iudeos eos tantam auctoritatem obtinet; quod a nullo eorum sibi presumitur contradici . . . factum uel actio. sultan.potestatis uel dominii regii. middebeth yehuda. de domo uel familia iude . . . áad deyethe. . . . usquequo ueniat. messihá. messias uel christus” (*Pugio fidei* 2.4.1-3, Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405, 46r; Leipzig ed., 312—here Martí, after quoting the Aramaic in the Hebrew-Aramaic alphabet, also transliterates it as he paraphrases).

author of *Trinitizing the Unity* used it: to justify the interpretation of the Hebrew *Shiloh* as “Messiah.”

But though Martí does not present the original Hebrew and Aramaic versions of Genesis 49:10 in his earlier *Halter of the Jews*, but only Latin translations of them (his procedure, we have seen, throughout that work), his handling of this verse in that work is in some ways even more similar to what we find in *Trinitizing the Unity*. Here, having cited Genesis 49:10, and having discussed the meaning of the Hebrew term, *gōyim* (“that is,” he explains, “the nations”), he then emphasizes that “Likewise in the Targum [is what is necessary] for proving that *Shiloh* in the above verse is Messiah.”¹⁵⁹ He then gives us a Latin translation of the Aramaic that differs from what he later presented in *Dagger of Faith*:

Non praeteribit actio soldani de domo Yehuda, et scriba de filiis filorum eius usque in saeculum, donec quod veniat Messiha, cui est regnum, et ei obedient populi. (The action of ruling will not disappear from the house of Judah, and the scribe from his sons until the end of the age, until *Messiha* comes, who possesses ruling power, and the people will obey him.)¹⁶⁰

The corresponding Arabic version of the same Aramaic that we find in *Trinitizing the Unity* reads as follows:

Lā yantaqīdu qaḍīb al-mulk min yahuda wa-rāsim min ibnā’ihi ḥattá an ya’tī mashiḥā alladhī huwa al-Masiḥ wa-la-hu taṭū’u al-umam. [The staff of ruling authority will not

¹⁵⁹ “Idem in Targum ad probandum quod šilōh in praedicta auctoritate est Messias” (*Capistrum iudeorum* 1.2.3 [I.72]).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

disappear from Judah and the scribe from among his sons until *mashīḥā* who is the Messiah, and the nations obey him.]¹⁶¹

There are clear differences of approach here: Martí’s Latin retains the Aramaic’s *shuleṭan* (“ruling power”) for the Hebrew “scepter” by means of the Latin *soldanus* (“sultan, ruling power”—ultimately derived from that Aramaic term through Arabic), while the Arabic stays somewhat closer to the original Hebrew with *qaḍīm al-mulk*, “staff of ruling authority.” But the parallels are just as striking: Not only does the Aramaic *Mashīḥā*—and that word only—appear in transliteration in both versions, but in both versions the Aramaic *dadileh hī malkhūta*, “to him is ruling authority,” is translated with dative-of-possession constructions that scrupulously parallel it (*cui regnum est / wa-lahu al-mulk*)—indeed the Latin and Arabic versions could easily be translations of each other.

Once again, therefore, we have impressive parallels alongside equally impressive differences, making it difficult indeed to draw convincing conclusions about the relationship between *Trinitizing the Unity*’s Hebrew-Bible arguments for Jesus’ Messiahship and those developed at great length by Martí. We might well see *Trinitizing the Unity*’s and Martí’s recourse to these methods as unrelated, parallel developments of a kind that do sometimes occur. Indeed the view to which I once subscribed that the author of *Trinitizing the Unity* was a Jewish convert to Christianity could well make sense of all this, for he thus would have had the linguistic means and traditional Jewish learning necessary to quote the Hebrew and Aramaic versions of Genesis 49:10 before translating them into Arabic.¹⁶² On that interpretation, there

¹⁶¹ *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 182.

¹⁶² See Burman, *Religious Polemic*, 76-77.

would be no need to assume any connection at all between the Arab-Christian author and the learned Dominican polemicist.

But looked at more broadly, it is hard not see the parallels as potential signs of a close relationship between the anonymous Arab-Christian text and Martí’s writings against Judaism. First of all, while the Hebrew Bible did play a key role in intra-Christian discussions in the Arab world,¹⁶³ it was always problematic to argue on the basis of it or the Christian Bible with Muslims because, as Barbara Roggema has put it, Muslims were “generally eager to point out that the text of the Bible was corrupt”¹⁶⁴—likely, that is, to invoke the well-known doctrine of *tahřīf*, the Muslim belief that Jews and Christians had gravely distorted their scriptures. While not all Muslim intellectuals agreed that this had occurred,¹⁶⁵ the majority held that both Jews and Christians had removed important passages from their scriptures, and forged other material which they add to them, making them largely unreliable. In the eleventh century, al-Juwaynī in the east and Ibn Ḥazm in the west, for example, had rehearsed at great length the contradictions of the Bible that they took as evidence of this corruption.¹⁶⁶ Not surprisingly, the response of the Muslim scholar, Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar al-Qurṭubī, in whose work it survives, to the *Trinitizing the Unity*’s citation of the eight Hebrew Bible verses is a substantial chapter entitled, “Concerning the Imperfection that has Overtaken the Torah and that It Was Not Handed down

¹⁶³ See, for example, Ḥabīb ibn Khidma Abū Rā’iṭa I-Takrītī (d. c. 830), *Shahādāt min qawl al-Tawrāt wa-al-anbiyā’ wa-al-qiddīsīn*, a collection of 80 Hebrew Bible passages of use in arguing for the Trinity or Incarnation (on which see CMR 1).

¹⁶⁴ See her article on “To Mār Naṣr, Letter 36,” by Patriarch Timothy (d. 823), in CMR 1.

¹⁶⁵ See “*tahřīf*,” Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed. [art. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh].

¹⁶⁶ See the former’s *Shifā’ al-ghalīl fī bayān mā waqa’ā fī I-Tawrāt wa-l-Injīl min al-tabdīl*, ed. A.H. al-Saqqā (Cairo, 1979), *passim*; and the latter’s *Kitāb al-Fiṣal fī al-milāl wa-al-ahwā’ wa-al-nihāl*, 5 vols. (Cairo, 1899-1903).

in an Unbroken Succession, so it Therefore Is Not Preserved from Error and Mistake,”¹⁶⁷ in which many of the standard Muslim arguments are trotted out.¹⁶⁸

Such attacks on its validity did not, of course, keep Muslims from citing other passages of the Hebrew Bible as authoritative predictions of the coming of Muhammad—anymore than Christian attacks on the Qur’ān kept Christians from using it to argue in favor of the Trinity—and this is something that, indeed, Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar al-Qurṭubī also does at great length later in the *Notification*.¹⁶⁹ It is true, moreover, that, as Sabine Schmidtke has shown, Jews who had converted to Islam, especially in the Ottoman period, were known to quote passages of the Hebrew Bible that they believed demonstrated the prophethood of Muhammad in both Hebrew and in Arabic transliteration, much as the author of *Trinitizing the Unity* did.¹⁷⁰ But I know of no precedent in Arab-Christian literature for the citation of Hebrew and Aramaic Biblical passages in disputation against Muslims, and this is especially unlikely after Muslim arguments for the corruption of the Bible become more common after the eleventh century.¹⁷¹

More to the point, while Christians had long used Old Testament passages in disputation with Jews to argue that the Messiah has come, there is something distinctly odd about a Christian making this argument to Muslims because, in a very real sense, they already believe

¹⁶⁷ “Faṣl fī ba’ḍ mā ṭara’ā fī al-tawrah min al-khalal wa-anna-hā lam tanqul naqlan mutūwātiran fa-<lam> taslam li-ajlihi min al-khaṭa’ wal-zalal” (*Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 188).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 188-202.

¹⁶⁹ See *ibid*, 263-68.

¹⁷⁰ See, for example, her “*The Rightly Guiding Epistle (al-Risāla al-Hādiya)* by ‘Abd al-Salām al-Muhtadī al-Muhammadī: A Critical Edition,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36 (2009): 439-70, *passim*, esp. 442.

¹⁷¹ See, for example, Sidney H. Griffith, “Arguing from Scripture: The Bible in the Christian/Muslim Encounter in the Middle Ages,” in Thomas J. Heffernan and Thomas E. Burman, eds., *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2005), 29-58.

this. One of Jesus’ most common Qur’ānic titles is, after all, “Jesus the Messiah,” and he was regularly referred to in Muslim texts as simply *al-Masīh*, “the Messiah.” What Muslims did not believe is that this Messiah was also divine and the second person of the Trinity, something the first two parts of *Trinitizing the Unity* had attempted to show. Arguing that the Hebrew Bible demonstrates that the Messiah has come is, in point of fact, a distinct oddity in Christian apologetic directed at Islam.

Now it is true that the author of *Trinitizing the Unity* refers to this third section of his work—as we have seen—as “the argument of the three religions,” and thus we might view this portion as intended primarily for Jewish readers who knew Arabic. Yet this is clearly not what he has in mind. Indeed, he stresses that the argument is strictly between Christians and Muslims. If the former can demonstrate convincingly that the Messiah has come on the basis of the Jewish scriptures, they are believers in the true faith; if Muslims can demonstrate that Muhammad was prophesied by the Bible, they are the true believers.¹⁷² And certainly Ahmad ibn ‘Umar al-Qurṭubī read this section as directed only at Muslims as is readily apparent in his attack on the Jewish scriptures that immediately ensued.

Part three of the Andalusī *Trinitizing the Unity*, therefore, appears to be entirely exceptional in the Arabic tradition of Christian polemic against Islam. Its core argument, moreover, shares a great deal in common with arguments for Jesus as the Messiah advanced in Christian Spain by Ramon Martí who, as I will show in the following chapter, also proposed at great length the same Trinitarian argument that *Trinitizing the Unity* offers in its first part.¹⁷³

¹⁷² *Tathlīth al-waḥdāniyah* in al-Qurṭubī, 215-17.

¹⁷³ See Thomas E. Burman, “Ramon Martí, the Trinity,” *passim*.

Had Martí—whose Arabic was exceptionally good, as we have seen—been reading *Trinitizing the Unity* or other Arab-Christian texts like it? Could he, on the other hand, actually be the author of *Trinitizing the Unity*? Were *Trinitizing the Unity* and Martí working from common sources?

I have thus far avoided discussing the date of *Trinitizing the Unity* but can obviously do so no longer. Here also we are faced with messy uncertainty, though recent, painstaking work by Samir Kaddouri has clarified the picture somewhat. The only manuscripts *Instruction about the Corruption of the Christian Religion* —the Muslim work that preserves this Christian treatise fragmentarily—attribute it to one “Imam al-Qurṭubī,” the Cordoban Imam, a vague identifier indeed in the context of medieval al-Andalus. As a result, there were a number of proposed datings for this thick book (nearly five-hundred pages in the modern edition). Kaddouri, however, was able to identify this Cordoban Imam definitively as Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, a traditionist who died in 626/1258. Moreover, while it is difficult to be certain when in his lifetime this scholar wrote *Instruction about the Corruption of the Christian Religion*, Kaddouri has made a fairly persuasive, if not fully convincing argument that he must have written it before about 1220.¹⁷⁴

Trinitizing the Unity, a work preserved only in fragments quoted in that Muslim refutation of Christianity, must, therefore have been written before 1258 and very likely before

¹⁷⁴ Samir Kaddouri (Qaddūrī), ‘Identificación de “al-Qurṭubī”, autor de *Al-i‘lām bi-mā fī dīn al-Naṣārā min al-fasād wa-l-awhām*’, *Al-Qantara* 21 (2000) 215-19; and id., ‘Rīḥlāt Aḥmad ibn ‘Amr al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī (t. 656 H.) fī I-Maghrib wa-l-Mashriq wa-mu’allafātihī al-‘ilmīyya’, *Majallat Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyya* 11 (2005) 207-60. On this work in general see *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History* (hereafter CMR), ed. David Thomas et al., (Leiden/Boston: E. J. Brill, 2009 -) 4:391-94 [art., Juan Pedro Montferrer Sala].

1220. If Kaddouri is wrong about the latter point, and Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar al-Qurṭubī *about the Corruption of the Christian Religion* and possibly, therefore, *Trinitizing the Unity* were written not long before the death al-Qurṭubī, then we would be justified in seeing *Trinitizing the Unity* as potentially a work of Martí or his circle of Arabic-, Hebrew-, and Aramaic-educated friars. Indeed, 1258 is likely the year when Martí completed his only real Latin work against Islam, the brief *On the Sect of Muhammad*. If, on the other hand, Kaddouri is correct in his dating of about 1220 for the Muslim work that contains it, then it seems likely, as I have suggested, that *Trinitizing the Unity* was written not long before then by someone connected to the court of Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (1170-1247), where that Trinitarian argument was also adopted for use against Jews, and where we otherwise find an interest in making Christian arguments in Arabic against Muslims.¹⁷⁵ Earlier dates for *Trinitizing the Unity* are, of course, possible as well, though I have reiterated in even stronger terms my view of thirty years ago that it had to have been written after about 1150.¹⁷⁶

Conclusion

If Martí was the author of *Trinitizing the Unity*, then its rather ill-conceived attempt to prove the arrival of the Messiah to Muslims using Hebrew Bible prooftexts represents further evidence that early in his writing career he was indeed actively engaged in refuting Islam. But we are still left with the quandary at the heart of this book: why did he turn away from these early, inchoate efforts to focus instead overwhelmingly on Judaism. If, as seems much more likely, this was a work emerging from Rodrigo's circle of scholars, then much the same question

¹⁷⁵ See Burman, “*Via impugnandi* in the Age of Alfonso VIII.”

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

intrudes, though in a different form: why did Martí not follow up these earlier Iberian attempts at persuading Muslims of Christian belief with something on the scale of the *Halter of the Jews* and the *Dagger of Faith*?

The substance of this chapter has suggested that he did so, at least in part, because in putting his linguistic expertise and single-minded sifting of other people's religious texts to work on demonstrating the arrival of the Messiah to Jews he was able to contribute at the same time to answering a question that was widely asked in scholastic culture generally. As Jan Loop has made so very clear, there would come a time, in the seventeenth century, when Latin Orientalists would find ways to put knowledge of Arabic and Islamic texts to direct use in answering questions of similar currency within Latin-Christian scholarly culture. Calvinist Orientalists such as Johann Hottinger would argue that the tenth-century Arabic *Annals of Sa'īd ibn Baṭrīq*, a Christian universal history, provided rich information about the organization of the early Church that favored Reformed views of ecclesiology and that the existence of vowel pointing in the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'ān was evidence that the ancient manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible must have contained the Masoretic vowel points as well—a view common among Protestant scholars.¹⁷⁷ He was utterly wrong on both points, but he at least believed that his Arabic-language skills had relevance to central Latin-Christian questions of his day. Martí, I suggest, was not able to find a way to put his own mastery of Arabic to work in a similar way. But then no one else in the thirteenth and early fourteenth century did either. His fellow Dominican Arabists, William of Tripoli (DATES) and Riccoldo da Monte di Croce (d. 1320), wrote,

¹⁷⁷ Loop, Jan. *Johann Heinrich Hottinger: Arabic and Islamic Studies in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 91-130.

like Martí, rather short treatises against Islam but never really addressed larger Christian theological issues while doing so.¹⁷⁸ The exception, as we will see in the conclusion, was Martí's Iberian contemporary, Ramon Lull (d. 1316) who put his *sui generis Art*—a complex philosophical-disputational system—to work equally on converting unbelievers and propounding Christian theology.

But if Martí, in attempting at such great length to show that Jesus of Nazareth was the already arrived Messiah foretold in Hebrew scriptures, had turned utterly away from the Mediterranean Islamicate culture from which he had learned to combat Islam, he nevertheless did not leave it behind. His long residence in North Africa and his immersion in Arabic intellectual culture left a permanent mark on him. As we will see in the following chapter, when arguing in the *Dagger of Faith* for another core Christian teaching, that God is a Trinity, this increasingly Latin-oriented scholar-linguist brought a great deal of Mediterranean intellectual and religious culture with him.

¹⁷⁸ Relevant note.

