

The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School

Occasional Papers Series in Education



Occasional Paper Number Seven

Peter Alfonsi and the Trial of the Talmud

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October 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I must thank Professor Anna Sapir Abulafia. It was her undergraduate teaching that persuaded me to enrol on the M.Phil in Medieval History, and her keen guidance and endless patience that has enabled this dissertation. My belief in the value of this project was reinforced at its beginning when Professor Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann offered her help and kindly shared her forthcoming article on the *Dialogus*. Neil Wright, Tessa Webber, and the other teachers on the M.Phil made great efforts to turn me into a medievalist, for which I owe them a great deal, as I do the other M.Phil students.

Throughout the last ten years I have been lucky enough to be taught by excellent historians. At Cambridge, Dr William O'Reilly showed me the value of research, while Dr John-Paul Ghobrial opened my eyes to new aspects of History and pushed me to follow my interest in the History of Judaism. Dr Stephen Mawdsley taught me the value of proper planning, and from my first week my Director of Studies Dr Deborah Thom's belief in my ability has been invaluable. As a schoolboy Alex Craig, Roy Sloan, Alex Simm, Simon Hyde and Ian St. John all nurtured my interest in History beyond the narrow scope of a school curriculum.

I also owe a great deal to my parents – it is only by their generosity that any academic endeavour of mine has been possible – and to my brother and sister, whose advice has been consistently invaluable. Aaron Taylor has proved a great sounding-board for all things historical or Jewish over the last two years. Lastly, I must thank Vicky for all her patience, proof-reading, and love.

ABBREVIATIONS

BNF – Paris, Bibliotheque nationale de France

BT – Epstein, I., (trans.), The Babylonian Talmud, (London, 1935-48)

PL – Migne, J-P. *Patrologia Latina*

INTRODUCTION

The Trial of the Talmud in Paris in 1240 occupies a highly significant position in the history of Medieval Christian-Jewish relations. At first glance, the subjection of this Jewish holy text to formal investigation on Papal instruction seems to represent the first instance of Christian awareness of the Talmud, and a major step in a deterioration of the Jewish position in society in Western Europe that continued with the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263. However, Christian knowledge of the Talmud was not new. Peter Alfonsi, a convert from Judaism to Christianity, wrote his *Dialogus Contra Iudaeos* between 1109 and 1110.¹ It takes the form of a debate between the author and a Jew, named Moses, who represents the author's former Jewish self. In the work, Peter devotes four chapters specifically to the nature of Judaism, and in them refers repeatedly to the Talmud. The following chapter attacks Islam, while the final seven provide a 'rational' defence of Christianity. As recent work by Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann has shown, there are thirty-five copies of the *Dialogus* surviving that pre-date the Talmud trial, and the generous layout of even the earliest manuscripts reveal it as an important document, in addition to one that has been transmitted very widely.² John Tolan, who pioneered study of the medieval reception of Alfonsi's works with his 1993 monograph *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, identified sixty-three surviving manuscripts containing the *Dialogus*, including twelfth century copies from Fécamp, St. Victor de Paris and St. Germain des Prés.³ Tolan has also identified an incomplete list of thirteen texts that have directly used the *Dialogus*. It was even more widely distributed than the *Disputatio Judaei cum Christiano*

¹ Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann & Philipp Roelli, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus. Background – Context – Reception*, (Florence, 2014), p. 4; Although elsewhere referred to as *Dialogi*, work by Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann and others has shown that there is no original title to the work. Cf. Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, Darko Senekovic, & Thomas Ziegler, "Modes of Variability: The Textual Transmission of Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus*", in Cardelle de Hartmann & Roelli, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus*, pp. 227-48.

² Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann and Darko Senekevic, "Reading Petrus Alfonsi Before The Talmud Trials. The Manuscript Evidence", (forthcoming). This article has been kindly shared with me by the authors.

³ John Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, (Gainesville, 1993), pp.193-4.

of Gilbert Crispin.⁴ For the sake of broader comparison, there are just four surviving manuscript copies of Peter the Venerable of Cluny's *Adversus Iudeorum*, five of Joachim of Fiore's *Adversus Iudeus*, and only three of Peter Abelard's *Dialogus inter philosophum*.⁵ Given the evidence of its importance, usage, and widespread dissemination, it seems natural to ask whether or not knowledge of Peter Alfonsi in France prepared the way for Donin's accusations' acceptance as official and public charges, moving anti-Jewish polemic from literary disputations to a formal trial.

The importance of this lies in the nature of the debate about the Jewish position in Europe. Jeremy Cohen, who has written extensively on this subject since the publication of his doctoral dissertation, has argued that, through the efforts of the new mendicant orders, a 'new Christian ideology with regard to the Jews' was developed, which 'allotted the Jews no legitimate right to exist in European society' from the thirteenth century on, undermining the Augustinian theology of the Jew as *testimonium veritatis*, witness to the truth of Jesus.⁶ While others, such as Robert Chazan, allow that the involvement of the Talmud in anti-Jewish polemic effected major changes to the tone and nature of relations between the Christian and Jewish communities, it has been convincingly suggested that this was not wholly a thirteenth century phenomenon.⁷ Amos Funkenstein has argued that the availability of texts such as Alfonsi's meant that any shift in the nature of anti-Jewish polemic occurred in the twelfth century rather than thirteenth.⁸ Anna Abulafia has joined him in arguing that the twelfth-century Renaissance's focus on *ratio* underpinned polemic changes, and has argued forcefully that

⁴ Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in Dispute. Disputational Literature and the Rise of Anti-Judaism in the West (c.1000-1500)*, (Aldershot, 1998).

⁵ Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, p. 99.

⁶ Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval anti-Judaism*, (Ithaca, 1982), p.14.

⁷ Robert Chazan, *Daggers of faith. Thirteenth-century Christian missionizing and Jewish response*, (Berkeley, 1989).

⁸ Amos Funkenstein, "Basic Types of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages", *Viator* 2(1971), 373-82; Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, (Berkeley, 1993).

testimonium veritatis, with its implication of Jewish service, remained an important part of the Jewish position in medieval society - despite changes in the tone of polemic this was not matched by real changes in the Jewish position in society.⁹ Although it is possible to see polemic developments as a change with largely intellectual implications, the fact that the toleration of Jews in Christian society was theologically rooted left the proportionately tiny Jewish populations in Northern Europe highly sensitive to such developments. Putting together a consideration of the relationship between Peter Alfonsi and the Trial of the Talmud provides an opportunity to test the validity of these arguments in a specific set of circumstances. There are two distinct historiographies, and the two largely fail to overlap, save for passing mentions of Alfonsi in the introductory sections to works on the disputation in Paris. It is well worth outlining these historiographies, why they fail to overlap, and why this failure has left interesting areas to explore.

This is a good time to be working on Peter Alfonsi. Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, Darko Senekovic and Thomas Ziegler are leading a project at the Universität Zürich to produce a full critical edition of the *Dialogus*, which is expected to be published later this year. A by-product of this effort has been the production of an excellent essay collection edited by Cardelle and Phillip Roelli.¹⁰ More is known about Peter Alfonsi and his *Dialogus* now than at any other time. Until the Zurich edition is published, the *Dialogus* is available in two printed editions. The first, in the *Patrologia Latina*, reproduces the 1536 edition, is based off a lost manuscript, and remains the standard version of the text at this point.¹¹ The second was produced by Klaus-Pieter Mieth as a doctoral dissertation, collating fifteen manuscripts and, unfortunately, taking

⁹ Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in Dispute. Disputational Literature and the Rise of Anti-Judaism in the West (c.1000-1500)*, (Aldershot, 1998); Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, (London, 1995); Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations 1000-1300. Jews in the Service of Medieval Christendom*, (Harlow, 2011).

¹⁰ Cardelle de Hartmann & Roelli, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus*.

¹¹ Petrus Alfonsi, "Dialogus Petri cognomento Alphonsi ex Iudeo Christiani et Moysi Iudae", ed. J-P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 157, cols. 535–672.

as its basis a manuscript which Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann's has identified as transmitting a recension of the original without being aware that it is an altered version.¹² Further, it is most readily available in a Spanish edition that lacks critical apparatus.¹³ For the purposes of my work, I will be referring to the *Patrologia Latina* edition throughout this dissertation.

Secondary work on Peter Alfonsi has not been unduly limited by the lack of a critical edition, with much of it focusing on Alfonsi's position as a convert to Christianity and the nature of his polemic, rather than looking at his potential relevance to the events of Paris and Barcelona more than a century after the writing of the *Dialogus*.¹⁴ Peter Alfonsi was undoubtedly intellectually and literarily talented, writing a range of other texts, including his very popular *Disciplina Clericalis*, a collection of fables and tales with moral implications for clergymen, and other works transmitting Arabic astronomical and scientific knowledge, which lie beyond the scope of this dissertation.¹⁵ This broadness of output is seen in the *Dialogus* itself, as shown in the 2014 essay collection, which contains groups of articles dealing with his biography, his treatment of Islam, and the reception of his text.¹⁶ These recent developments make a fuller engagement with Peter Alfonsi more possible than had previously been the case, hoping specifically to look at his role as a potential influence on the events of Paris.

The Trial of the Talmud is a subject of vast historiographical concern. Primary sources exist in both Latin and Hebrew. The key Christian source is Paris Bibliotheque Nationale de France

¹² Klaus-Pieter Mieth, *Der Dialog des Petrus Alfonsi: seine Überlieferung im Druck und in den Handschriften Textedition*, (Berlin, 1982).

¹³ Jesús Lacarra, (ed.), *Diálogo contra los judíos*, (Huesca, 1996).

¹⁴ Cf amongst others Gilbert Dahan, "L'usage de la ratio dans la polemique contre les Juifs, XIIIe-XVe siecles", in H. Santiago-Otero (ed.), *Dialogo filosofico-religioso entre cristianismo, judaismo e islamismo durante la edad media en la Peninsula Iberica*, (Turnhout, 1994), Jeremy Cohen, "The Mentality of the Medieval Jewish Apostate: Peter Alfonsi, Hermann of Cologne, and Pablo Christiani," in Todd M. Endelman (ed), *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World*, (New York, 1987), pp.20-47; Septimus, B. "Petrus Alfonsi on the Cult at Mecca," *Speculum* 56 (1981), 517-33, Manfred Kniewasser, "Die antijudische Polemik des Petrus Alfonsi und des Abtes Petrus Venerabilis von Cluny." *Kairos* 22 (1980): 34-76.

¹⁵ Petrus Alfonsi, *Disciplina clericalis*, ed. A. Hilka and W. Söderhjelm, (Helsinki, 1911); Charles Burnett, "The Works of Petrus Alfonsi: Questions of Authenticity," *Medium Aevum* 66/1 (1997).

¹⁶ Cardelle de Hartmann & Roelli, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus*.

ms. 16558, for which Dahan's volume helpfully provides a list of contents. This manuscript contains three particularly vital texts. The first of these is a letter of Odo of Chateauroux to Pope Innocent IV. Odo was uniquely positioned throughout the period of the Trial and burning of the Talmud. He served as Chancellor at the University of Paris between 1238 and 1244, was made Cardinal-Bishop of Frascati and papal legate in 1244, and joined Louis on his first crusading expedition in 1248.¹⁷ He was involved both with the original trial and its aftermath. This letter, which is undated but seems very likely to date between 1247 and 1248, summarises the results of his re-investigation into the Talmud and argues forcefully that the original Trial reached the right conclusion.¹⁸ In doing so, he includes the letters of Gregory IX sent to the Bishop of Paris which started the Trial of the Talmud, and which have been edited by both Solomon Grayzel and Shlomo Simonsohn.¹⁹ The Paris manuscript also contains the 35 accusations made against the Talmud that were brought by Nicholas Donin, the convert from Judaism who is alleged to have argued against the Talmud at the disputation, and the depositions of two major northern French Rabbis. Both the accusations and the confessions have been edited by Isidore Loeb, while Judah Rosenthal has provided the relevant Talmudic references for each of the accusations made by Donin.²⁰ The Hebrew narrative was written by Rabbi Joseph ben Nathan Official, and was published in an edition by Grunbaum in 1873.²¹ Hyam Maccoby provided a paraphrase of excerpts of this, while Judah Galinsky has identified two more versions of the same text.²² Entitled (in John Friedman's translation) "The

¹⁷ Alexis Charansonnet, "Du Berry en Curie. La carrière du Cardinal Eudes de Châteauroux (1190?-1273) et son reflet dans sa prédication". *Revue Histoire Église France* 86 (1934), 5–37.

¹⁸ John Friedman, Jean Connell Hoff, & Robert Chazan, *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, (Toronto, 2012), pp.97-98.

¹⁹ Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the Thirteenth Century*, Philadelphia, 1933 (new ed. New York, 1966), Schlomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, (Toronto, 1991).

²⁰ Isidore Loeb, "La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud", *Revue des études juives* 2 (1881), 252-70, Isidore Loeb, "La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud", *Revue des études juives* 3 (1882), 39-57; Judah Rosenthal, "The Talmud on Trial, The Disputation at Paris in the year 1240", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 47, (1956), 58-76.

²¹ S. Grunbaum (ed.), *Sefer Vikuah Rabbenu Yehiel MiParis*, (Thorn, 1873).

²² Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian disputations in the Middle Ages*, (Rutherford, 1982); Judah Galinsky, "The Different Hebrew Versions of the 'Talmud Trial' of 1240 in Paris," in Elisheva Carlebach and Jacob J. Shachter (eds), *New Perspectives on Jewish-Christian Relations*, (Leiden, 2012), pp.109-140.

Disputation of Rabbi Yehiel of Paris”, it identifies the four Rabbis who defended the Talmud –Judah ben David of Melun, Samuel ben Solomon of Falaise, Moses ben Jacob of Coucy, a well-known author in his own right, and Rabbi Yehiel of Paris, who contested the accusations and who later left Paris for Acre with a large body of students.²³ It is a later literary construct, rather than an account of the trial, but remains useful.

More recently, the Trial has been the subject of a great deal of scholarship. These studies have included the disputation itself, the relationship between the events at Paris and the Papacy, and the position of the episode in canon law.²⁴ Despite this, the subject has elicited no extended monograph since 1970.²⁵ The two major treatments of the episode come in the second half of Chen Merhavia’s Hebrew work *Ha-Talmud be-Rei ha-Nazrut* (The Talmud in the View of Christianity), which I have been unable to use for reasons of linguistic accessibility, and a volume of papers published in 1999 entitled *Le brulement du Talmud à Paris 1242-44*, edited by Gilbert Dahan.²⁶ The two fullest English treatments of the episode come in Cohen’s *Living Letters of the Law*, which devotes around fifteen pages to the subject, and Robert Chazan’s essay “Trial, Condemnation, and Censorship”, which appears as the first part of a volume that

²³ Friedman, Connell Hoff, and Chazan, *Trial of the Talmud*, p.128; Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, p.307.

²⁴ Rosenthal, “The Talmud on Trial”, Robert Chazan, “The Condemnation of the Talmud Reconsidered (1239-1248)”, *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 55, (1988), 11-30, Paul Lawrence Rose, “When was the Talmud Burnt at Paris? A Critical Examination of the Christian and Jewish Sources and a New Dating: June 1241”, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 62 (2011), 324-339; Galinsky, “The Different Hebrew Versions of the ‘Talmud Trial’”; Solomon Grayzel, “The Talmud and the Medieval Papacy”, in W. Jacob (ed.), *Essays in Honour of S. B. Freehof*, (Pittsburgh 1964); Joel Rembaum, “The Talmud and the Popes: Reflections on the Talmud Trials of the 1240s”, *Viator* 13(1982), 203-224; Benjamin Z. Kedar, “Canon Law and the Burning of the Talmud”, *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 9 (1973), 79-82.

²⁵ Friedman, Connell Hoff, & Chazan, *The Trial of the Talmud*.

²⁶ Chen Merhavia, *Ha-Talmud be-Rei ha-Nazrut*, (Jerusalem, 1970); Gilbert Dahan (ed.), *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris*, (Paris, 1999).

also provides new English translations of the primary source materials.²⁷ Most recently, Yossef Schwartz has attempted to place the Talmud Trial in its institutional context.²⁸

Although it is true that the primary sources that deal with the Trial of the Talmud make no direct reference to Peter Alfonsi's work, this does not remove the interest in discovering the extent of his influence on the reception of the Talmud. Given the subject at hand, some reference to Alfonsi's damning evaluation of the Talmud, which he compares to 'the words of little boys making jokes in school, or women telling old wives' tales in the street' might be expected.²⁹ There are several possibilities as to why this was not the case, and it is this investigation that has determined the direction of this dissertation.

To be able to do this, it has been necessary to begin with a reconsideration of the *Dialogus* itself, which is performed in Chapter 1. This has attempted to consider both the nature of Alfonsi's polemic and the position of Talmudic material in this. Chapter 2 moves on to look at the *Dialogus*' twelfth- and early thirteenth-century reception, examining both the manuscript transmission and its usage by other Christian authors. In Chapter 3, the Talmud trial itself is placed centrally in order to understand the arguments at its core, before the changes that the Talmud trial wrought on usage of the *Dialogus* are introduced in the final chapter. Much of the primary material at the centre of this dissertation has already been published in translation. I have followed the published translation in all cases except where I feel strongly that the translator misrepresents the sense of the Latin text – this has occurred frequently only when dealing with Irven Resnick's translation of the word '*doctores*' as 'sages', rather than

²⁷ Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity*, (Berkeley, 1999).

²⁸ Yossef Schwartz, "Authority, Control, and Conflict in Thirteenth-Century Paris: Contextualizing the Talmud Trial, in Elisheva Baumgarten & Judah Galinsky, *Jews and Christians in Thirteenth-Century France*, (New York, 2015), pp.93-112.

²⁹ PL 157, 540C: 'verba videntur jocantium in scholis puerorum, vel nentium in plateis mulierum'; Irven Resnick (trans.), *Dialogue against the Jews*, (Washington, 2006), p.46.

‘doctors’,³⁰ and where I quote I have provided the reference both to the Latin source and the published translation, even where the translation in the text is my own. Elsewhere the translations of Resnick, Jean Connell Hoff, and Solomon Grayzel have been of great value.

³⁰ Cf. Chapter 1, on the importance of ‘*doctores*’ to Alfonsi’s argument.
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THE *DIALOGUS CONTRA IUDAEOS* OF PETER ALFONSI

Written between 1109 and 1110, Peter Alfonsi's *Dialogus contra Iudaeos* appears to have been by far the most widely disseminated anti-Jewish text in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Alex Novikoff has pointed to the fact that, like Gilbert Crispin's *Disputatio Judaei cum Christiano*, it displays an 'ability to captivate and stimulate... dramatizing tangible persons', but the real power of the *Dialogus* lies both in its arguments and the novel material on which it based them.¹ In order to understand the implications of Alfonsi's polemic, it is worth outlining the overall purpose of his work and the nature of his argument, both against Judaism and for Christianity, although as will be seen, one is very much dependent on the other.

Unlike other polemicists such as Gilbert Crispin, Alfonsi suffered from no ignorance of Judaism. Raised a Jew in Moorish Spain before converting to Christianity under the patronage of Alfonso I of Aragon, his *Dialogus* represents a major development in anti-Jewish polemic. The *Dialogus* stands out from preceding writings attacking Judaism and the Jewish position in society in several ways. It purports to represent the arguments and causes behind Alfonsi's own conversion to Christianity. Petrus Alfonsi's major concern in this was to provide a rational demonstration of the superiority of Christianity to Judaism and, to a lesser extent, Islam. Although Alfonsi's attack on Islam was itself of great significance, a detailed exposition would be tangential to considering Alfonsi's use of the Talmud and anti-Jewish polemic, the topic of this dissertation. The importance of *ratio* to Alfonsi has been well established, particularly by Gilbert Dahan and more recently by Piero Capelli, who has suggested that Alfonsi saw himself as part of an 'international intellectual *koine* that transcended political and chronological... boundaries.'² Alfonsi used the principle of reason as the basic test of the arguments he has his

¹ Alexander Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance*, (Philadelphia, 2013), 184.

² Gilbert Dahan, "L'usage de la ratio dans la polemique contre les Juifs, XIIe-XVe siecles", in H. Santiago-Otero (ed.), *Dialogo filosofico-religioso entre cristianismo, judaismo e islamismo durante la edad media en la Peninsula Iberica*, (Turnhout, 1994); Piero Capelli, "Conversion to Christianity and Anti-Talmudic Criticism

characters put forward. Any contention must survive rational scrutiny, particularly with regard to exegesis and beliefs about the nature of God. The basis of many of Alfonsi's arguments was scriptural, but he sought to demonstrate that they were not rationally impossible before providing the scriptural evidence to show that they were correct. Only a small number of basic principles, such as the existence of God and the nature of East and West, were established on purely rational grounds.³ This is not to say that these were not important. By demonstrating his capability for rational argument and the application of logic, Alfonsi buttressed the authority of his argument to reach its more profound conclusions.

The *Dialogus* begins with a proemium and prologue in which Alfonsi sets out his aims, his methods, and his reasoning for adopting them, as well as introducing the two sparring aspects of his personality: Petrus, representing his new Christian self, and Moyses, the Jew he was before.⁴ From the beginning, both the fundamental importance of reason to Alfonsi's style of argument and the important position of the attack on the Talmud in undermining any sense of rationality in post-Biblical Jewish belief are made clear. He describes his beliefs and the process by which he was converted and baptised as a Christian. He also incorporates into his statement of Christian teachings the notable addition that the Jews crucified Christ 'by their disposition and will' – '*sua dispositione et voluntate*'.⁵ This introduces the concept of deliberate deicide, with first-century Jews responsible for the death of Jesus, having killed him not because they truly disbelieved his teachings, but from pride, envy and malice. Deliberate deicide is key to the potency of Alfonsi's attack on Judaism and, as shown by its position in a

from Petrus Alfonsi to Nicholas Donin and Pablo Christiani," in Gorge K. Hasselhoff & Knut Martin Stunkel (eds.), *Transcending Words. The Language of Religious Contact Between Buddhists, Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Premodern Times*, (Bochum, 2015), p.90.

³ PL 157 543D-549A; 554D-563C. Although there is a more recent edition of the *Dialogus* than the *Patrologia Latina* edition, recent work by Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann's group has suggested strongly that this version, edited by Klaus-Pieter Mieth, has several problems, and that the PL transmits a version of the text that is a better representative of the original.

⁴ PL 157 536-541.

⁵ PL 157 537B.

statement of his beliefs, his understanding of the Christian faith. Alfonsi moves on to outline his credentials as a source of information on Judaism, saying that Jews who knew him before his conversion regarded him as “well-trained in the books of the prophets and the sayings of the teachers,” and sought to find out why he had turned his back on Judaism.⁶ This “little book” was written ‘so that all may know my intention and hear my argument, in which I set forth the destruction of the belief of all the other nations.’⁷ He then proceeds to describe the division of the work into 12 *tituli*, four of which constitute his demonstration of the errors of Judaism, one on the marked, but dissimilar, problems undermining Islam, and seven establishing aspects of Christian belief. This order is by no means coincidental – not only does this present his novel material at the front for most effect, but it allows the argument to build gradually to a recognition that, other arguments having been dismissed, the answers provided by Christianity are all that remain.

Alfonsi moves on to introduce the characters played by the two aspects of his personality, who enable him to structure the book as a dialogue ‘in order that the mind of the readers may [reach] understanding quicker’.⁸ Petrus is the name used when defending Christian arguments, whereas ‘in the disproving arguments of the adversary, the name which I had before baptism, that is Moyses’ is used.⁹ Alfonsi does not use these two names just to indicate opposing sides of argument, but develops them into real characters. Moyses and Petrus build a relationship throughout the *Dialogus*, and it is the character of Moyses that enables Petrus to bring the Christian-Jewish debate into new territory. Alfonsi placed Moyses in service to Petrus and his polemic aims. He serves in the traditional sense as a testament to the truth of the Old Testament

⁶ PL 157 538A: ‘probaverant peritum in libris prophetarum et dictis doctorum’; Irvén Resnick (trans.), *Dialogue against the Jews*, (Washington, 2006), p.41.

⁷ PL 157 538B: ‘libellum composui, ut omnes et meam cognoscant inentionem, et audient rationem, in quo omnium aliarum gentium credulitatis destructionem praeosui’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.41.

⁸ PL 157 538B: ‘ut lectoris animus promptior fiat ad intelligum’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.41.

⁹ PL 157 538C: ‘in rationibus vero adversarii confutandis, nomen quod ante baptismum habueram, id est Moysen’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.41.

and the prophecies fulfilled by the coming of Christ, as well as allowing Alfonsi to introduce the idea that as a Christian Petrus is able to deploy philosophical knowledge that is inaccessible to Moyses as a Jew.¹⁰ This is seen in the one-sided nature of the debate. Although Moyses contests difficult points and alleges that Petrus has committed errors, Moyses does not apply the same tools of reason in scrutiny of Christianity as he is made to submit to in his defence of Judaism. Furthermore, it is through Moyses that Alfonsi is able to examine Talmudic beliefs in detail – by disputing the validity of Moyses’ interpretations, Alfonsi draws out the full conclusions of his logic, in a process repeated throughout the *Dialogus*.

With both Petrus and Moyses suitably introduced, and the topics for the discussion agreed, Alfonsi adds an important condition to the debate: that if Petrus ‘bring forth any authority from Scripture, you [Petrus] choose to do this according to the Hebrew truth’.¹¹ Alfonsi’s desire, expressed by Moyses, to use the *Hebraica Veritas*, enables Petrus to depart, at times, from the text of Jerome’s Vulgate. Petrus’ agreement also reveals his aim: ‘*ipsius gladius occidere te*’ – to ‘slay you with your own sword’.¹² Although the phrase ‘*hebraica veritas*’ has been known to imply the use of Hebrew exegesis, it is clear, both from Petrus’ practice throughout the dialogue and the reference made by Moyses to ‘*Scripturis auctoritatem*’ that here it refers to using the Hebrew text of the Bible.¹³ Before embarking on the main text, Moyses and Petrus also agree common ground – Moyses has Petrus affirm his belief that Moses was a true prophet, and that the Law he received has been accurately preserved by the Jews.¹⁴ Having in this way framed the debate – there is to be no dispute over textual accuracy, only interpretation – Petrus

¹⁰ Anna Sapir Abulafia, “Moyses in service of Petrus in Petrus Alfonsi’s *Dialogus*”, in Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann & Philipp Roelli, (eds.), *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus. Background – Context – Reception*, (Florence, 2014), pp.111-128.

¹¹ PL 157 539C: ‘Quod si aliquam de Scripturis auctoritatem attuleris, secundum veritatem Hebraicam hoc facere velis’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.44.

¹² PL 157 539C, Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.44.

¹³ Aryeh Grabois, “The *Hebraica Veritas* and Jewish-Christian Intellectual Relations in the Twelfth Century”, *Speculum*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Oct., 1975), pp. 613-634.

¹⁴ PL 157 539D-540A, Resnick, *Dialogue*, pp. 44-45.

defends himself against a charge of having ‘transgressed’ Mosaic law, putting forward as his first point the argument with which he will eventually close the *Dialogus*: that it is he, as a Christian, who preserves the ‘complete faith’ of Moses’ law, and that the Jews follow only the letter and not the spirit of the Law.¹⁵ In fact, this is the argument which runs through the *Dialogus*, starting with the attack on Judaism and ending with the conclusion that Christianity is the correct understanding of Scripture. It is necessary for Alfonsi to dispose of Judaism in order to argue the merits of Christianity more freely, and he returns to attacking Judaism at several points throughout the later *tituli* of the *Dialogus*, where the professed aim is demonstrating the truth of Christianity.¹⁶

From this, the preliminary part of the *Dialogus* ends with two lengthy speeches: one from Petrus introducing his attack on the Talmud, and one urging moderation from Moyses. The speech from Petrus is worth considering in more detail, as it is one of the least guarded and most vituperative passages in the whole text, revealing the nature of Petrus’ argument against the Talmud. Petrus, asked to explain what he means by his accusation of Jewish carnal interpretation of the law, says:

‘Are you not mindful of your teachers [*doctores*] who wrote your teaching [*doctrina*], on which your entire law relies, according to you, how they claim that God has a form and a body, and they attribute such things to his ineffable majesty that are not based on reason? And that they advanced such opinions concerning him which appear to be nothing other than the words of little boys making jokes in school, or women telling old wives’ tales in the streets. Again explaining the law according to the capacity of your intellect, you hope that you are about to escape from captivity, in a manner that cannot

¹⁵ PL 157 540B: ‘nunc completam ejus... fidem conservo’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.45.

¹⁶ See below, p. 27, dealing with *titulus* 10.

happen. Again, in the escape from captivity, you hope that God will perform an extraordinary miracle, so that he will raise your dead, who will begin to dwell on the earth in the manner they did previously. Likewise, I note that while living in captivity you observe very little of the laws' precepts, even according to your own explanation. Moreover, that which you do [observe] you believe is pleasing and acceptable to God, but you never confess that he will hold you blameworthy for what you omit, and you seem to have fulfilled for yourselves everything which clearly holds the chief place of error.¹⁷

This passage is particularly revealing. Not only does Petrus reveal the disdain in which he holds aggadic writings, but some of the implications of this disdain. Although at no point in the *Dialogus* does Alfonsi use the word 'Talmud', which would have to wait until the writings of Peter the Venerable of Cluny to receive its first mention in a Christian text, his reference to '*doctrina*' appears to be a reference to the Talmud. By the time of the Talmud Trial in Paris the terms were treated as translations of each other.¹⁸ There remains a debate, left open by Alfonsi's failure to use the term Talmud, as to whether he had access to a full written 'Talmud' or merely a collection of aggadic stories.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the importance of the *aggadot*

¹⁷ PL 157, 540C: 'Non reminisceris doctorum vestrorum qui vestram doctrinam, cui lex vestra tota, secundum vos, annititur, scripserunt, quomodo asseverant Deum corpus et formam habere, et ejus ineffabili majestati talia applicant quae nec ulla constant ratione? Quin et de eo tales protulerunt sententias, quae non aliud nisi verba videntur jocantium in scholis puerorum, vel nentium in plateis mulierum. Item, secundum vestry intellectus capacitatem legem explanantes, vos captivitatem speratis evasuros eo modo quo fieri nequit. Item in captivitatis evasionem speratis vos adeo inusitatem fieri miraculum, ut vestros suscitaret mortuos, qui terras denuo, ut prius incipiant inhabitare. Item vos in captivitate existentes, de omnibus legis praeceptis, etiam secundum vestram explanationem, nihil nisi minimum quid contueor agree. Idipsum autem quod agitis Deo placent, et acceptabile creditis, de eo quod praetermittitis, eum nequaquam vos culpaturum confiditis, omniaque complexisse vobis videmini, quod evidenter obtinet maximum locum erroris. Sunt enim alii per plures errors, in quos vos conjecerunt non sanae legis explanationes.

¹⁸ Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the Thirteenth Century*, Philadelphia, 1933 (new ed. New York, 1966), pp.240-41.

¹⁹ Gorge K. Hasselhoff, "Petrus Alfonsis Judentum vor dem Hintergrund seiner Zeit", in Cardelle de Hartmann & Roeli, (eds.), *Petrus Alfonsi and his Dialogus*, pp.61-76. This debate is part of a wider debate on the position of the Talmud in medieval Jewish belief. Cf. Talya Fishman, *Becoming the People of the Talmud: Oral Torah as Written Tradition in Medieval Jewish Cultures*, (Philadelphia, 2011), and Haim Soloveitchik, "The People of the Book - Since When?", *The Jewish Review of Books* 12, (2013).

mentioned to his argument is made clear by his contention that according to Moyses the entire law depends on this 'teaching'.²⁰

Alfonsi addresses each of the major points of his first four *tituli* in this passage: that the Jews hold irrational beliefs as to the nature of God, that they misunderstand the reasons for their captivity, that they believe in an impossible resurrection, and that they fail to observe Mosaic law correctly. That the introductory portions of the *Dialogus* are bookended by two of the most important of his contentions, beginning with the suggestion that the death of Christ constituted deliberate deicide and ending with a full delineation of the areas which Alfonsi argued rendered Judaism a fundamentally irrational religion, is an indicator of how crucial and connected these two ideas were to him. Without the proof of Judaism's irrationality there could be no suggestion that the actions of the Jews in Jesus' death were deliberate deicide, or that the whole Jewish diaspora should take responsibility for them. By proving the almost laughable irrationality and impossibility of the beliefs taught by the Jewish *doctores*, Petrus is later able to blame the same kind of teachers for the death of Christ, having demonstrated their willingness to spread teachings about God that a small amount of scrutiny can demonstrate to be untrue. It is this same willingness to teach and accept falsehoods about the death of Christ and the Jewish involvement in it that, for Alfonsi, brought the guilt of deicide onto the Jewish people.

As Alfonsi introduces his first area of Talmud for attack, the method by which he deconstructs and dismisses Talmudic belief becomes clear. The fundamental method is to subject the literal meaning of Talmudic beliefs to rational scrutiny. Unlike later anti-Jewish and anti-Talmudic writers, Alfonsi did not make use of passages that can be said to slander the Virgin and Christ but instead concentrates on those he considered incompatible with an philosophical understanding of logic. He starts with an attack on the concept of *Shi'ur Qomah*, the

²⁰ PL 157, 540C: 'doctrina'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.32.

measurement of the body of God, which by tradition was revealed to R. Akiva in a vision. It was attacked by other medieval writers, including Maimonides in the later twelfth century, and had been interpreted allegorically rather than literally by Saadia Gaon in the ninth century as well as by Alfonsi's near-contemporaries Abraham ibn Ezra and Judah Halevi.²¹ Alfonsi attacks the idea that God has corporeal features. He begins by attacking the idea that God wears phylacteries, placed on him by the angel Metatron, although he chooses not to use the Latin 'phylacteria' but instead the word 'pyxis', which is often used in Christian writing to describe the vessel containing the consecrated host.²² By doing this, Alfonsi emphasises the importance of *tefillin* in Judaism and the fundamentally physical nature of these vessels, in contrast to the fundamentally incorporeal nature of God. Petrus has Moyses confirm the validity of his claims about the Talmudic text and its contents and asks for a scriptural authority to justify them.²³ Moyses points to Exodus 33.23, 'You will see my back, my face will not be seen', as evidence that Moses did indeed see God's back.²⁴ This provides Petrus with the opportunity to undermine the validity of this Talmudic story about phylacteries with regard to the text it is based on, pointing out both that at no point is it said that God has a band on his neck, nor, indeed, that Moses saw his neck. He argues that God's wearing of tefillin is justifiable 'non ratione vel legis auctoritate, sed sola probatis voluntate'.²⁵ 'Voluntate', previously used to describe the manner in which the Jews killed Christ, is here used to describe the wishful thinking required to believe the *aggadot*.²⁶ Petrus points out the problem of assuming that even if there was a band on God's neck, there must therefore be a box attached in the manner of a phylactery, or that this box must contain the texts that are contained in *tefillin*.²⁷ Pointing out

²¹ John Toland, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers*, (Gainesville, 1993), p.24.

²² Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.48, note 4; PL 157, 541C.

²³ PL 157, 541D; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.49.

²⁴ PL 157, 541D; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.49.

²⁵ PL 157, 542A; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.50: 'you do not prove what you assert by reason or by authority of the law, but only by your will' (Resnick has 'wishful thinking').

²⁶ PL 157 537B.

²⁷ PL 157 542.

that Moses himself left no record of this episode, Moyses claims that ‘the mystery of such a secret matter’ was transmitted ‘through the followers of the ancients, at last it came to the notice of our teachers.’²⁸

This is an important moment in the *Dialogus*, as by forcing Moyses to admit there is no direct scriptural authority for this belief, Alfonsi is able to reject the use of oral tradition as authority at an early stage. He suggests that Moyses has breached the terms of their debate by claiming this as an authority, saying that ‘you have wandered to the refuge of an irrational conclusion, since you will be able to ground every falsehood on the followers of the ancients.’²⁹ He then castigates Moyses, saying that this transmission from the ancients is false, and instead the teachers ‘themselves invented such things in the course of explaining the verses’.³⁰ This view of Talmudic teachings is distinctive, arguing that the stories are both exegetical in nature and deliberately invented. This establishes that Jewish teachers are both willing to go beyond the truth of the text and misunderstand it, a recurring theme.

Having dealt with the issue of God’s wearing of phylacteries on the grounds of authority, Petrus then attacks this belief ‘through reason of nature’, to use Moyses’ term.³¹ In accordance with his original declared intention to destroy his objections with reason and authority, having undermined any authority by which Moyses could hold this belief, Petrus goes on to argue the rational problem of the corporeal description of God. For Petrus, any suggestion that God has a body means he is finite, and thus bounded by something. Furthermore, the concept of God wearing a band has its own problems – if the band comes from him, then he is divided in

²⁸ PL 157 542D ‘tam secretae rei arcanum’, PL 157 543A: ‘Per veterum successors, ad nostrorum tandem doctorum pervenit notitiam’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.51.

²⁹ PL 157 543A: ‘Cum ad tam irrationabilis conclusionis diffugium vestrum deviet argumentum, per antiquorum successions omne tibi licebit firmare mendacium.’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.51.

³⁰ PL 157 543A: ‘ipsi in versuum explatione talia commentatur’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.52.

³¹ PL 157 543B: ‘per naturae rationem’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.52.

substance from himself, or if it is from something else then there must be two creators. Neither of these are at all satisfactory to Petrus.³²

Having already disposed of the argument that there might be an authoritative basis for Talmudic stories beyond the Old Testament, Petrus spends the rest of the first *titulus* demonstrating logical problems with other aggadic beliefs. He continues his assault on the implied corporeality of God, arguing against the alleged belief found in a ‘book of teachings’ that God exists only in the West.³³ This begins a lengthy discussion of the relative nature of East and West, using scientific knowledge of longitude, climate, and ‘the division of the earth’.³⁴ Although this appears to have little bearing on the main debate about locating God, it serves another purpose – by demonstrating that Petrus is able to make better use of astronomical knowledge than Moyses, Alfonsi is able to show the reason he has gained since becoming a Christian, and to show that Moyses is unable to apply reason correctly without having it explained for him. This undermines Moyses’ capacity to make rational argument, and further discredits the beliefs he is defending. Petrus rejects the idea of God being bounded by six sides, and of God’s daily anger and weeping at the captivity of the Jews on the basis of corporeality: if God is bounded, there must exist some substance greater than he, but if he is the creator this is impossible, whereas to be angry God must be possessed of humours in the medical sense, and to produce physical tears must be made up of the four elements. Petrus considers all these stories to be not merely incorrect, but unworthy of the greatness of God. In a rare display of vitriol, Moyses is asked why ‘should anyone give credence to teachers of this sort and adopt a faith from their treatises?’³⁵

³² PL 157, 543 B-C.

³³ PL 157, 543D: ‘in doctrinarum libro’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.53.

³⁴ PL 157 549A ‘de terrae... divisione’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.61.

³⁵ PL 157 552D ‘debet quisquam hujusmodi credere doctoribus, et fidem eorum accommodare tractatibus’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.71.

Petrus proceeds to argue against a series of Talmudic traditions that seem objectionable on rational rather than religious grounds, including the tradition that God left the northern part of the skies empty in case any rival should challenge his work. In this case, not only does Petrus point out that the concept of any rival challenging God is unacceptable, but also the observable fact that the sky and stars are complete. He moves on to other legends that he considers absurd: the legend of the keys of Korah, which he considers mathematically impossible,³⁶ the legend that Dan threw a huge stone into the sea and caused a flood in Egypt, and that Joshua tricked an angel into taking him up to heaven. Moses concedes that such legends are unworthy of God, and that he has seen the light of truth.³⁷

With its focus on Talmudic teachings, the first *titulus* underpins the rest of Alfonsi's arguments. It attempts to demonstrate that Judaism's postbiblical beliefs are irrational, and the responsibility for this lies with the teachers themselves, who ought not to be believed. The second *titulus*, which attempts to explain the destruction of the Temple and Jewish captivity and exile, moves this logic further, deploying the mechanism by which Alfonsi considers the Jews responsible for the death of Christ, and providing his evidence for this.

Petrus starts by starkly informing Moses that until he keeps the precepts of Christ he can expect to remain in exile, and asks Moses for his explanation of the long exile of the Jews. Moses points to the Talmudic response that it was caused by envy and the people becoming the enemy of one another.³⁸ Petrus considers this by no means a sufficient explanation for the magnitude of the exile and the suffering involved in the destruction of the temple and dispersal of the Jews. He points to the long list of specific crimes responsible for the Babylonian captivity, which had lasted far less time than this second captivity. Petrus argues that Moses

³⁶ PL 157 564-5.

³⁷ PL 157 564.

³⁸ PL 157 568.

doesn't truly know the cause of the captivity, which is the death of Jesus. Petrus alleges that the Jews justified killing Jesus by 'saying that he is a magician, born from fornication, and that he led the entire people into error.'³⁹ He goes on to say that 'your elders proclaimed these things and others like them until they caused the entire people to share in their depraved will, and they led a just man to a very unjust punishment – they crucified and they slew him'.⁴⁰ He connects this directly to the destruction of the temple by pointing to portents that occurred in Jerusalem around the time of Jesus' death, using a Talmudic source. He uses this to argue that the teachers of the mid-first century, particularly R. Yohanan ben Zakkai, knew that Christ's death was the cause of captivity.⁴¹ In light of so great a crime, Petrus claims that the Jews' continued existence is 'only that you serve all the nations' in order that all people would not forget the guilt of the Jews and the severity of the crime they had committed.⁴² Petrus goes on to claim further that it was the death of the Christ that caused the execution of the ten martyrs of Hadrian (a story which has its origin in a 5th century geonic text, the *Eleh Ezkerah*), and that this was the great sin of the Jewish people, resulting in their condemnation until they should convert.⁴³ Interestingly, Petrus again uses a Talmudic source to justify this, referring to BT Sanhedrin 98a, where R. Joshua ben Levi asks when the son of David might come and receives the response 'today, if you believe his words.'⁴⁴ Here Petrus' desire to 'kill you by your own sword' is clear. And by arguing that Jewish teachers had known of the guilt they had taken on from the time of Christ's death, and that they had known the remedy for their suffering since at least the third century (the time of Joshua ben Levi), he is able to leave the impression that it is

³⁹ PL 157 573: 'dicentes eum magum, et de scorto natum, et quod totam gentem in errorem induxit'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.106.

⁴⁰ PL 157 576: 'Majores vestri haec et his similia protestati sunt, donec totam plebem suae pravae voluntatis efficientes consortem, virum justum injuste in injustum valde iudicium adduxerunt, crucifixerunt et occiderunt.'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.106.

⁴¹ PL 157 573D.

⁴² PL 157 574D: 'ut universis gentibus serviatis'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.109.

⁴³ For the legend of the ten martyrs, see David Stern, *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature*, (Yale, 1998), pp.143-166.

⁴⁴ PL 157 581B: 'hodie, si verbis credideritis ejus'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.119.

through stubbornness and malice that the Jews have rejected Christianity, rather than genuine disbelief.

These two *tituli*, which are dependent on the Talmud as a source, put forward Alfonsi's strongest and most important arguments, establishing Judaism as irrational and demonstrating Jewish knowledge of the guilt incurred by the death of Christ. By length, they make up almost a third of the *Dialogus* itself, and the longest *titulus* other than these is barely half the length of either. Instead, much of the rest of the *Dialogus* consists of Alfonsi applying these conclusions to different aspects of Jewish and Christian faith, buttressing his arguments with scriptural reference. This is the case in the third *titulus*, which argues that in addition to misunderstanding the nature of their captivity, the Jewish belief in bodily resurrection is not based on scriptural authority, claiming that 'none of those who lived before Christ predicted it', and that the Jewish understanding of resurrection is irrational, as it would entail either immortality or a second death and thus the disturbance of those at rest.⁴⁵ Further, widows who had remarried would present a problem, and it would be impossible to say which of the biblical High Priests would become High Priest again, unless there were a new law and a Messiah who was both man and God, so that he was clearly superior to the patriarchs.⁴⁶ This serves to support Alfonsi's claim that Judaism's beliefs are irrational and internally inconsistent while providing evidence for the necessity of Jesus' status as Christ.

The fourth *titulus* is slightly different. It aims to prove that postbiblical Jews 'observe hardly any of the law's precepts'.⁴⁷ Petrus points to a long list of requirements of Biblical Judaism that are no longer fulfilled in the diaspora communities, including the offering of the Paschal lamb and the provision of burnt offerings.⁴⁸ Understandably, Moyses defends this on the

⁴⁵ PL 157 582C: 'nemo tamen ex his qui ante Christum fuerunt istud praedixit'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.121.

⁴⁶ PL 157 588-590.

⁴⁷ PL 157 593B: 'de praeceptis legis minimum quid agere'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.139.

⁴⁸ PL 157 593B.

grounds that since the destruction of the Temple there has been no way to make suitable sacrifices, and no priests with the legitimacy to perform them.⁴⁹ Petrus argues instead that if the sacrifices had been accepted, the Temple would not have been destroyed and the Jews cast out. Instead, the Temple was, in Petrus' view, destroyed in order that the Jews could no longer observe customs which were displeasing to God. Again connecting the destruction of the Temple with the coming of Christ, he argues that 'once the veil of the law had been removed, [Christ] revealed the spiritual sense that it concealed,' and that in refusing to stop Temple traditions and observances of Mosaic law the Jews sinned.⁵⁰ Petrus points to the Talmud again as his closing evidence: referencing BT Berahot 32b, he tells Moses that 'your own teachers attest that God has not accepted your prayers since the time when the Temple was destroyed.'⁵¹ He concludes that, without sacrifices and without priests, the Jews are all ritually unclean by their own law, polluted by contact with the dead and by unclean foods and female menstruation, meaning that all those who pray to God can have no hope of his hearing their prayers.⁵² In this way he aims to show the fundamental futility of Judaism.

In the fifth *titulus*, Petrus and Moses move on to discuss Islam, which is not of direct relevance to this study, except to point out that Alfonsi starts it with Moses' admission that Judaism is 'worthless and inconsistent... in every respect irrational and unwelcome in its service to God'.⁵³ This sums up what Alfonsi has aimed to achieve in this first part of the *Dialogus*, in order that he may demonstrate Christian superiority over Judaism. He does this by examining some central tenets of the Christian faith, arguing that they are both rationally possible and

⁴⁹ PL 157 594B.

⁵⁰ PL 157 596A-B; 'legis sublato velamine, spiritualem qui latebat sensum aperuit'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, pp.143-4.

⁵¹ PL 157 596C: 'vestri doctores testentur Deum ab illo tempore preces vestras non suscepisse, quo templum destructum est.'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.145.

⁵² PL 147 596D-597A.

⁵³ PL 157 597B: 'quam inanis et inconstans in omnibus esset, eorumque obsequium quam irrationabile Deo atque ingratum existeret'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.146.

scripturally supported. Alfonsi's Christian exegesis is not always distinguished – Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann has characterised Alfonsi's way of understanding Christian doctrine as 'rather idiosyncratic'⁵⁴ – and his exegesis is by no means as extensive as his attack on Judaism, despite the stated aim of the work being to prove that 'the Christian law is superior to all others.'⁵⁵ This is perhaps because, having proved the inferiority of Judaism (and Islam), Christian teaching needs only to be internally consistent and founded in authority to be superior and true for Petrus.

In *Titulus 6* he starts with the Trinity. Here the importance of Moyses' insistence on commitment to *Hebraica veritas* in the prologue becomes apparent. This enables Petrus to argue for the trinity based on the plural form taken by the words '*Elohim*' and '*Adonai*'. Stating that these cannot refer to several Gods, he suggests that instead this means one God in several persons.⁵⁶ Pointing both to the Tetragrammaton and several notable Biblical instances of triplets, including Psalm 104 and Isaiah 6:3, Alfonsi even refers to synagogue culture in support of the Trinity, arguing that the hand gesture used during the blessing of the Kohanim also indicate a Trinitarian God.⁵⁷

Titulus 7 is similarly constructed. Dealing with the question of Mary and the Virgin birth, it too is mainly exegetical, leaning heavily on the prophecies of Isaiah, accompanied by a discussion of the Hebrew word '*halma*', and whether this implies that Mary was a virgin.⁵⁸ Petrus concludes that it does. The 8th *titulus* also relies repeatedly on Isaiah in arguing that deity could take a human body and incarnate as Christ.⁵⁹ It uses both a scientific analogy (comparing

⁵⁴ Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, Darko Senekovic, & Thomas Ziegler, "Modes of Variability: the Textual Transmission of Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus*", in Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann & Philipp Roelli, (eds.), *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus. Background – Context – Reception*, (Florence, 2014), p.245.

⁵⁵ PL 157 538B: 'Christianam legem omnibus praestantiorē esse'; Resnick, *Dialogus*, p.41.

⁵⁶ PL157 608-611.

⁵⁷ PL 157 611-613. Alfonsi's diagram of the Tetragrammaton would go on to be one of his most influential ideas, used by Joachim of Fiore, Ramon Marti, and Arnold of Villanova. Cf. Tolan, 113-4.

⁵⁸ PL 157 615B.

⁵⁹ PL 157 619-623.

the divine nature of Jesus with the presence of brightness and heat in fire) as well as an argument from BT Ta'anith 31a, claiming that the belief that one day people would point God out to one another was only possible if a person was both man and God.⁶⁰ This is interesting, as the Christian doctrine of Jesus Christ as incarnate God enables Petrus to interpret this in such a way as to avoid the charge of corporeality he earlier levied at other Talmudic stories. Although not made explicitly, Petrus implies that this teaching is similar to that referenced in *titulus* two – a message from the teachers who knew the truth of Jesus' death to Jews that were willing to see it that Christ had already come.⁶¹

Alfonsi's Christian apologetic is expanded upon in the 9th *titulus*, which deals directly with the question of whether Christ had already arrived. Quoting Genesis 49:10, Petrus argues that the absence of a ruler of Judah since Jesus was indicative of his messianic status.⁶² Here he uses neither the Vulgate nor Vetus Latina texts of the Old Testament, but instead a formulation that is also seen in Rashi.⁶³ Bolstering this with a complex mathematical calculation based on the Book of Daniel to prove that Jesus lived at the right time, Petrus puts forward several authorities to suggest that Old Testament prophecies could not apply to anyone else.⁶⁴ He argues that Jesus fulfilled Deuteronomy 18:18 as the only prophet since Moses to give a law, and Isaiah 42:6-8 by bringing law to the gentiles.⁶⁵ Attacking the Talmudic belief that God had been present in the Temple but had departed as a misunderstanding of Isaiah 57:19, Petrus again seeks to

⁶⁰ PL 157 621A-B.

⁶¹ PL 157 621-2.

⁶² PL 157 624C.

⁶³ J.H.L. Reuter, *Petrus Alfonsi: An Examination of his Works, their Scientific Content and Background*, D.Phil. Oxford University, 1975, p.47.

⁶⁴ The medieval interpretation of these texts has been considered by Robert Chazan, "Daniel 9:24-27: Exegesis and Polemics," in Limor, O., & Stroumsa G.G., (eds), *Contra Iudaeos. Ancient and Medieval Polemics Between Christians and Jews*, (Tubingen, 1996).

⁶⁵ PL 157 628D.

present Christian truth as indisputable, and disbelief unjustifiable by reason, and therefore deliberate.⁶⁶

This is reinforced in the tenth *titulus*, in which Alfonsi has Moyses present several of the arguments given by Jews to absolve them of blame for the death of Jesus. The title of this *titulus* is ‘that Christ was crucified and killed by the Jews of their own spontaneous will.’⁶⁷

Alfonsi has Moyses argue three defences to the charge of Jewish culpability in the death of Christ: that it was necessary for salvation, that their particular ancestors played no role in his death, and that Jesus was justly executed as a heretic and magician. Petrus rejects all of them, arguing that the intention of the Jews was not to save mankind and thus their guilt remained, incurred by the magnitude of the sin on the whole Jewish people.⁶⁸ Further, he argues that the only way Jesus could have committed the miracles that led him to be accused of magic was through the power of God, thus proving his status as God and man. The rejection of these arguments enables Alfonsi to place the responsibility for Jesus’ death onto the Jewish people and, more specifically, on ‘*doctores legis et Scribae*’ – ‘teachers of the law and scribes’.⁶⁹ The reference to Scribes is not common in the *Dialogus*, but is reminiscent of Jesus’ attack on the Pharisees in Matthew 23. The *doctores*, however, are the same group of people at whose feet Petrus lays the blame for the irrationality of Talmudic Judaism, the same that he charges with deliberately misleading the Jews as to the reason for their exile and the destruction of the Temple. Adding deliberate deicide to this list is both consistent with and dependent on the first two accusations. In the first *titulus*, Alfonsi had Moyses confess that Talmudic teachings are ‘invented’,⁷⁰ while in the second *titulus*, Peter’s contends that knowledge of the truth of Christ

⁶⁶ PL 157 629D.

⁶⁷ PL 157 639A: ‘Quod voluntate spontanea a Judaeis crucifixus est Christus et occisus.’; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.220.

⁶⁸ PL 157 639B-647. Cf. Tolán, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, pp.19-22.

⁶⁹ PL 157 649D.

⁷⁰ PL 157 543A.

prompted the teachers to propose demonstrably false explanations for their people's captivity.⁷¹ This serves to lay the foundations for this much larger charge, of deliberately putting to death the Son of God, for the same reasons – envy and malice. This is the necessary conclusion of Petrus' argument against postbiblical Judaism – its falseness has been caused by the *doctores* who claim to teach and defend God's law - *doctrina*.

The last two *tituli*, which deal with Christ's resurrection and the position of the Apostles in Petrus' Christianity, are in the same vein as others of the *tituli* concerning Christianity – exegetical and fairly brief. The eleventh claims that God referred to Jesus when speaking to Abraham, and argues that Christ was able to ascend to heaven because at death he lost all weight and thickness, no longer needing to eat and drink.⁷² The twelfth brings the *Dialogus* to its conclusion by squaring Petrus' belief in the teachings of the Apostles with his initial statement that he believes he fulfils the law of Moses correctly. He argues that Christ has superseded Jewish rituals such as circumcision, the Sabbath, and Passover, taking the opportunity to point to the Paschal lamb as a symbol of Christ and reassign the blame for Christ's death to the Jews, saying, 'even though not all were present, all nevertheless offered their assent.'⁷³ In this he makes clear that the guilt incurred by the *doctores* was taken on by all Jews. Defending Christian practices such as the symbolic use of the cross and communion with reference to prophecy from Jeremiah and Isaiah, the *Dialogus* ends with the acknowledgement by Moyses of Petrus' superior reason, which Petrus ascribes to his receipt of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, saying that Moyses cannot hope to enjoy the same 'illumination' without being baptised, and that he hoped Moyses is given 'a better end than beginning.'⁷⁴ Although Moyses concedes his wrongness, the *Dialogus* itself does not see him convert to Christianity.

⁷¹ PL 157 581B.

⁷² PL 157 652 B-D, 653A.

⁷³ PL 157 663C: 'Licet enim non omnis adfuit, omnis tamen assensum praebuit.' Resnick, *Dialogue*, p. 261.

⁷⁴ PL 157 672A: 'illuminationem', 'finem meliorem quam principium tibi praestet.' Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.273.

The *Dialogus* is a complicated polemic, with a great deal of exegetical material that I have not dealt with in detail here, and philosophical and scientific tangents that are of great interest to those studying the transmission of Arabic knowledge into Christian Europe. However, as a religious work, the key argument is that Christianity is superior to Judaism because it is rational and Judaism is not. For Alfonsi, not only are Jews lacking the blessing of the Holy Spirit, but they have been wilfully misled into following teaching that seeks to blind them from the obvious truth – that in killing Christ their ancestors sinned, and that guilt is borne on their shoulders. Further, the same group in their culture that made the conscious decision to murder the Son of God – the *doctores legis* - is that which claims that Judaism depends on the *aggadot* and other oral teachings - unscriptural irrationalities that deserve no place in a rational system of thought.

RECEPTION AND USAGE OF THE *DIALOGUS CONTRA IUDAEOS* BEFORE THE
TALMUD TRIAL

In the 130 years between Petrus Alfonsi's writing of the *Dialogus contra Iudaeos* and the Trial of the Talmud it became by far the most widely copied anti-Jewish text of the twelfth century.¹ Given the wide-ranging nature of the material in the *Dialogus*, those copying it, whether reproducing the whole text, producing a new recension, or excerpting and paraphrasing it for their own ends, display interests into many different areas of Alfonsi's work. As the first Christian text to make use of postbiblical Jewish material and one of the first to demonstrate real knowledge of Islamic belief, it might be thought that the *Dialogus* was used primarily as a source of information on these areas. Although this is true to an extent, an examination of the nature of the manuscripts containing the *Dialogus* and works by other medieval authors using it, attests to a varied and changing set of uses. This examination begs the question of Petrus' work into the main strand of Christian-Jewish historiography on the attack of the Talmud. Amos Funkenstein and Jeremy Cohen have suggested different answers to the question of how far and when a change in the nature and tone of anti-Jewish Polemic was seen in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.² Changes in the nature of Alfonsi's reception and reproduction reflect on this, although the most marked changes in the use of the *Dialogus* came after the Talmud Trial itself.

In assessing the manuscript transmission, the work of Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann and her team in Zurich towards producing a critical edition of the *Dialogus* is essential. In two recent articles they have built on the work of John Tolan to expand the available material on the manuscripts. Having presented initial conclusions in a volume edited by de Hartmann and Roelli, the more recent article by de Hartmann and Senekovic goes into greater detail about the

¹ John Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, (Gainesville, 1993), p. 99.

² Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval anti-Judaism*, (Ithaca, 1982); Amos Funkenstein, "Basic Types of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages", *Viator* 2 (1971), 373-82.

implications of the manuscripts that pre-date the Trial of the Talmud in 1240.³ From this work it is clear that the *Dialogus* enjoyed both immediate popularity and a degree of prestige. De Hartmann and Senekovic report their surprise at the quality of the older manuscripts, which appear to have been written by well-trained scribes who abbreviate the text infrequently.⁴ This impression is reinforced by the fact that of the 76 manuscripts of the *Dialogus*, only 8 display signs of revisions, all at a linguistic level.⁵ 35 of these pre-date the Talmud trial.⁶ Despite the new material contained within the *Dialogus*, there is no special space reserved for commentary and marginal glosses are rare, despite the fact that roughly two-thirds of the manuscripts are written in two columns. That such a large amount of parchment should be dedicated to a work not only suggests that it was not reproduced for practical purposes such as schooling or sermon preparation, but also that the author was held in high regard, surprisingly given he was not ancient nor from an influential institutional background.⁷ Although Tolan suggested that St. Victor was the centre from which the *Dialogus* was distributed, and more recently Francesco Santi has suggested that Alfonsi had received Cluniac backing, none of the twelfth-century scribes made any mention of an institutional connection for Alfonsi.⁸ The manuscripts' introductions give little away about the uses that they were put to. Fewer than half of the manuscripts give an indication of the contents of the *Dialogus*, and those that do rarely give any indication of its aim – only 8 of the 35 manuscripts pre-dating the Talmud trial which refer

³ The article in question, "Reading Petrus Alfonsi Before The Talmud Trials: The Manuscript Evidence", is forthcoming, but was kindly shared with me by Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann.

⁴ Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann and Darko Senekovic, "Reading Petrus Alfonsi Before The Talmud Trials: The Manuscript Evidence," p.4.

⁵ Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, Darko Senekovic, & Thomas Ziegler, "Modes of Variability: The Textual Transmission of Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus*", in Cardelle de Hartmann & Roelli, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus*, p.245.

⁶ Cardelle de Hartmann & Senekovic, "Reading Petrus Alfonsi".

⁷ Cardelle de Hartmann, Senekovic, & Ziegler, "Modes of Variability", p.245.

⁸ Cardelle de Hartmann & Senekovic, "Reading Petrus Alfonsi", p.5.

to the *Dialogus* point to its anti-Jewish nature, whether by referring to it as a *disputatio* or by remarking that the work was directed against the Jews in a colophon.⁹

The Zurich project has also attempted to discern more about the uses that the *Dialogus* was put to by looking at the context in which copies of the *Dialogus* are found in manuscripts, comparing the other works with which they have been bound at time of composition. This is an area where there does appear to have been a major shift in the nature of usage. From the second half of the thirteenth century the *Dialogus* appears most often with other anti-Jewish and polemical works. Before then, no such pattern was observed.¹⁰ Of the 21 codices pre-dating the Talmud Trial that were planned and written as a collection of texts, rather than bound together later, two show no discernible pattern. One is a late twelfth-century manuscript at Hereford that places the *Dialogus* amongst a group of texts on mysticism and the cross, and the other is a manuscript now at Troyes that dates to the first half of the thirteenth century and places the *Dialogus* with Arnoldus Bonae Vallis's *Liber de cardinalibus Christi operibus* and Henricus de Castro Marsiaco's *De peregrinante ciuitate Dei*. Two more codices include excerpts from the *Dialogus* as part of a florilegium. In one of these the collection has been written by several different authors, and although the excerpts are solely from *titulus* five of the *Dialogus*, dealing with Islam, this has not been established as a predominant interest of the florilegium itself. The other attests to the importance placed on Alfonsi, and again limits itself to one *titulus* of the *Dialogus* – the first. It places its excerpts from the *Dialogus* amongst writings from a wide range of patristic and classical texts. Alfonsi is one of only three medieval authors contained in the work, produced in around 1200 and now in the Bibliotheque Nationale,

⁹ Ibid., p.6.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Paris – the others are Fulbert of Chartres and Bernard of Clairvaux, which places Alfonsi in highly illustrious company.¹¹

The rest of the codices can be grouped into four categories, with the *Dialogus* placed variously with texts on moral theology, historiographical works, hagiographical texts, and some that display an interest in religious polemic. In the theological codices, the *Dialogus* appears in two instances alongside works of Innocent III, in both cases including his *De miseria humanae conditionis*, a moral work reflecting Innocent's concerns about the papal curia.¹² The other codex transmits the *Dialogus* alongside a *Summa de poenitentia* and a text, *De septem vitiis capitalibus*, that was allegedly written by Robert Grosseteste, although this is not a strongly supported claim.¹³ One of the three codices that includes the *Dialogus* as part of a group of historiographical works abandons its transcription of the *Dialogus* without finishing the prologue, while another transmits the *Dialogus* along with a short verse chronicle, which makes it difficult to draw any major conclusions. The third apparently historiographic collection is more interesting. The *Dialogus* is included in a collection containing several abbreviated works on the history of England, including the *Historia Brittonum* of Nennius, Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*. However, the work also contains cosmographical texts including the *Imago mundi* of Honorius Augustodunensis and the *Cosmographia* of Bernard Silvestris, which immediately precedes the *Dialogus*.¹⁴ Given the lengthy discussions of cosmographical issues in the *Dialogus*, including the two illustrations included in *titulus* one, it seems fair to suggest that this might be the point of overlap between the *Dialogus* and its companions, with the rest included for its

¹¹ Ibid., p.7.

¹² John C. Moore, "Innocent III's 'De Miseria Humanae Conditions': A Speculum Curiae?", *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Oct., 1981), pp. 553-564.

¹³ Cardelle de Hartmann & Senekovic, "Reading Petrus Alfonsi", p.7.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.8.

general historical information on Islam and the Jewish captivity, although this cannot be said for certain.

While the later use of the *Dialogus* by writers such as Vincent of Beauvais (d.1264) suggests that its reception was primarily as an anti-Jewish polemic text, few of the early manuscripts display this in their codicological context. Two Portuguese manuscripts from the first half of the thirteenth century transmit the *Dialogus* alongside Gilbert Crispin's *Disputatio*, while one from Tarragona transmits it alongside the codex Calixtinus and a work on Constantinople.¹⁵ All three of these date from the thirteenth century. In the twelfth century, however, although some *Dialogi* appear to be situated amongst other works because of their shared polemic character, it may instead be the theme of conversion that drew them together. While one of the Paris manuscripts from the late twelfth century does place Alfonsi's work alongside a body of recognisably anti-Jewish texts, this is not the case with two manuscripts that include the *Dialogus* and the *Recognitiones pseudo-clementinae*, a text which includes debates between Christians and Pagans. Although it might be suggested that the common thread of dispute and debate links these, an analysis of hagiographic texts transmitted alongside the *Dialogus* in other codices suggests otherwise.¹⁶ Five twelfth century codices include the *Dialogus* in a group of hagiographical works. In two of these the *Dialogus* is included alongside Gilbert Crispin's *Disputatio*, near texts related to saints and festivals related to April and May (the *Disputatio* is dedicated to Anselm, whose feast day is the 21st of April).¹⁷ The other codices include, in two cases, a *Vita Eustachii rhythmica*, and in the other accounts of the lives of the distinguished monks Norbert of Xanten and Bernard of Clairvaux.¹⁸ Understanding conversion both as a change of religion and alternatively a shift to a more holy way of life, it has been suggested

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

that this motif connects not only these five manuscripts but those which pair the *Dialogus* with the *Recognitiones pseudo-clementinae*, to which conversion is a fundamental theme.¹⁹

However, this is not to say that the *Dialogus* was not being put to polemic use before the Trial of the Talmud. In addition to BNF. Lat. 10624, which transmits the *Dialogus* alongside other anti-Jewish texts including those of Walter of Chatillon and Guibert de Nogent, and dates to the last third of the twelfth century,²⁰ De Hartmann and her team have also identified a redaction of the *Dialogus* that appears to have transmitted only the first five *tituli*.²¹ Contained in five manuscripts, the earliest of which can be identified as having been written in France in the second half of the twelfth century and the most complete of which was written in the first quarter of the thirteenth century and belonged to St. Victor in Paris, the redaction displays a ‘markedly’ shortened version of the text. Further, the choices made by the redactor indicate an interest in the Talmudic sections of Alfonsi’s work.²² The description of Jewish beliefs is maintained, but Petrus’ refutations of articles of Jewish belief are reduced, indicating possibly that the work was being used as a source of material on Judaism rather than for its rhetorical and polemic value. This redaction also makes an addition to the fifth *titulus* which makes it possible both to date it fairly precisely and to establish a link with another anti-Jewish writer. Adding a sentence about a warrior who defended Mohammed and lost a hand, it appears to have taken information from the *Apologia al-Kindi*, an 1142 translation of an Arabic work into Latin in Toledo for Petrus Venerabilis.²³ At this point, therefore, it appears that the *Dialogus* was being used for its Talmudic contents.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ BNF. lat. MS 10624, accessed at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90766287>.

²¹ Cardelle de Hartmann & Senekovic, “Reading Petrus Alfonsi”, p.10.

²² Ibid., p.11.

²³ Cardelle de Hartmann & Senekovic, “Reading Petrus Alfonsi”, p.12; Fernando González Muñoz, *Exposición y refutación del Islam : la versión latina de las epístolas de al-Hāsimī y al-Kindī*, (A Coruña, 2005), p. lx.

By contrast, a different version of the text, transmitted in two manuscripts from Upper Bavaria and labelled by Tolan as the ‘Schaftlarn recension’, reduces the aggadic stories to a minimum and focuses on the philosophical parts, such as the discussion of the status of substance, place and time in *titulus* 1 or the discussion of the soul in *titulus* 3.²⁴ In one manuscript these are accompanied by red headings that further this impression of a lack of interest in Jewish religious beliefs, which is reinforced by the redactor’s treatment of the characters of Petrus and Moyses – Moyses is removed and the dialogue becomes a monologue.²⁵

Based on this study of the manuscripts, de Hartmann and Senekovic have suggested that the *Dialogus* was chiefly used as an addition to the body of works dealing with the nature of conversion, and also used as a source of information on Islam, which was difficult to get hold of in Northern France and England at this time. There seems to be no evidence to suggest that the *Dialogus* was widely used for its knowledge of Jewish exegesis or as a guide to the correct understanding of the Bible, despite the fact that this makes up a huge amount of the *Dialogus* itself. Only one manuscript has the *Dialogus* associated with an exegetical work, and of the Christian writers who used the *Dialogus* in their own works in this period, only one wrote down a passage about the correct understanding of the Bible text. It has been suggested that this was because there were other, better sources for this material, such as Stephen Harding or the school at St. Victor, whereas the *Dialogus* provided a chance to gain the ‘arcane knowledge’ of aggadic stories.²⁶ This is certainly how the *Dialogus* appears to have been used by those authors who incorporated it into their own work.

²⁴ Tolan, *Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, pp.121-3.

²⁵ Cardelle de Hartmann & Senekovic, “Reading Petrus Alfonsi”p.13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.14.

One of the earliest and most well-known authors was Petrus Venerabilis, or Peter the Venerable, who has been described as ‘the last great abbot of Cluny’.²⁷ Although his anti-Jewish work *Adversus Iudeorum Inveteram Duritiam* – Against the Inveterate Obstinance of the Jews – only survives in four manuscript copies, his position as head of one of the great Monastic orders and the vehemence of his argument has served to enhance its prominence.²⁸ Furthermore, Venerabilis, writing in around 1146, is the first Latin author to make use of the word ‘Talmud’, whereas Alfonsi used the word ‘*doctrina*’.²⁹ Although the Talmud is only attacked in the fifth and final chapter of *Adversus Iudeorum*, it is central to Venerabilis’ overall argument, which is two-fold. First he seeks to prove the truth of Christian belief through Old Testament scripture, and then attack Judaism and the false beliefs of the Talmud in particular. Proving Christianity before attacking Judaism is the opposite method to Alfonsi, perhaps reflecting the fact that, as a born Christian, Venerabilis was not trying to justify a shift from Judaism to Christianity in the same way – rather than sweep away the foundations of his former beliefs and build on them from a new position of correctness, Peter the Venerable sought to build the strength of his Christian position before casting stones at the Jewish one. Although Venerabilis claimed to have knowledge of Jewish sources in his defence of Christianity, he was unable to identify differences between the Vulgate and the Hebrew Bible, and made use of the Book of Baruch despite its lack of standing in Jewish eyes.³⁰ He also claimed that his Talmudic knowledge was given to him by Christ in a miraculous fashion.³¹ However, many of the accounts of aggadic legends he cites are very similar to the text of the *Dialogus*. All of these legends are close to their Talmudic or Midrashic source, implying that their original translator was familiar with an accurate version of these texts. Venerabilis tried to give the impression

²⁷ Owing to the number of Petrus/Peters in this discussion, the Abbot of Cluny will be referred to as ‘Venerabilis’, and the author of the *Dialogus* as ‘Alfonsi’.

²⁸ Yvonne Friedman (ed.), *Adversus Iudeorum Inveteram Duritiam*, (Turnhout, 1985), p.vii.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, V, pp.35-41.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, II, pp.217-226.

³¹ *Ibid.*, V, pp.35-41.

that he was quoting directly from the Talmud, using the phrase ‘*inquit Talmuth*’ on several occasions and discussing the legends on a word-by-word basis, but displays that his understanding of the Talmud is of a collection of legends to be believed literally or face damnation, rather than showing any familiarity with the legal writings that make up its majority.³² Despite this, Yvonne Friedman has suggested that ‘we might conceivably assume’ that both authors used an anthology of Talmudic legends without presupposing any interdependence.³³

In arguing this, she points to the absence of the aggadic story of Metatron tying a phylactery on God’s brow from *Adversus Iudeorum*, despite its position at the beginning of the first *titulus* of the *Dialogus*. Further, both the *Dialogus* and the *Adversus Iudeorum* contain a detail in the legend of Og that is shared by a Hebrew work written in 1161 in Spain but not in the Talmud, suggesting either a common non-Talmudic origin or a deviation in the Talmud as read in Spain at this time from the text that would later become accepted. In addition to this, there are differences in detail in another Talmudic legend, that of the meeting of the sons of Jacob and of Esau, as well as extensive differences in their accounts of R. Joshua ben Levi’s journey through hell and paradise.³⁴ However, in this case the account of Alfonsi is fairly close to the Talmudic source. The additions by Venerabilis not only change the nature of the story entirely, but give the legend an anti-Christian slant not present in Alfonsi’s version.³⁵ Further, he shifts the story so as to equate the Talmud with the Gospels, having R. Joshua swear an oath by the Talmud in the same manner that a Christian might swear on the Gospels.³⁶

³² Ibid., V, pp.239, 920, 1088.

³³ Ibid., p.xv.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., p.xvi.

³⁶ Ibid., V, pp.2150-2152.

In terms of the reception of the *Dialogus*, there are several reasons why this question of whether or not Alfonsi was Venerabilis' source is important. Venerabilis' work is a particularly violent piece of polemic. He makes it repeatedly clear that he does not believe that Jews are truly human, referring to them as 'beasts', 'animals', and 'swine'.³⁷ His justification for this appears to be that the Talmud is preparing the Jews for the coming of the anti-Christ. If Alfonsi was among his sources for Talmudic material, this would indicate that the *Dialogus* helped to enable the shift in direction of polemic seen in the *Adversus Iudeorum*. It is clear that Venerabilis had other sources of postbiblical Jewish material, notably the Alphabet of Ben Sira.³⁸ The story of the birth of Ben Sira is (incorrectly) identified by Venerabilis as being non-Talmudic but still authoritative in Jewish belief.³⁹ Further, his discussion of legends about God studying the Talmud and the story of R. Nehemiah bear no resemblance either to the Alphabet of Ben Sira or the Talmudic texts.

Venerabilis' source material makes for a complex picture. It is distinctly possible that some legends, and perhaps the name of the Talmud itself, were obtained through conversation with Jews. Certainly that would explain why two of his Talmudic stories, do not bear close resemblance to the Talmud itself. Further, the position of the Alphabet of Ben Sira seems fairly simple. It seems remarkable that despite displaying a propensity for inaccuracy in his wider use of Talmudic material, those stories that are shared with the *Dialogus* are very close to the Talmudic text, with one minor exception of detail and a major one of rhetoric. However, it is still not possible to say for certain that Venerabilis had access to Alfonsi's *Dialogus*. That is not to say, though, that the *Adversus Iudeorum Inveteram Duritiem* is unimportant for the study of the reception of the *Dialogus*. Whether Venerabilis took his Talmudic literature from an

³⁷ Ibid., p.viii.

³⁸ Ibid., p.xvii.

³⁹ Ibid., V, pp.2150-52.

anthology or Alfonsi's work, his writing shows that the same aggadic stories that were used in the *Dialogus* could be used to build a picture of Jews as a major threat to Christian society without the subtlety of Alfonsi's argument, which was founded in an analysis of the Jewish captivity and the killing of Christ as deliberate deicide.

Other writers to make use of the *Dialogus* are much simpler to deal with. The Disputation of Peter of Cornwall against Symon the Jew, written by the 4th prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate in 1208 and dedicated to Stephen Langton, claims to represent the result of the lengthiest disputation between any Christian and any Jew.⁴⁰ However, Peter of Cornwall displays none of the knowledge of Hebrew or Jewish culture that would give credence to this bold claim. Instead, as R.W. Hunt has demonstrated, where it shows a knowledge of Hebrew or Jewish literature it is exclusively dependent on the *Dialogus*. In fact, it quotes large passages verbatim, only changing the name of the disputant from Moyses to Symon. This is particularly striking given that it also demonstrates no knowledge of Andrew of St. Victor or the Christian-Jewish interchanges which resulted in the increased usage of Hebrew by Christian authors of this time.⁴¹ Unfortunately no edition of more than the opening of this Disputation is available, but concluding with Symon's conversion to Christianity, it takes a more moderate tone than that of Peter the Venerable, reflecting its dependence on the *Dialogus*.

Helinand of Froidmont, born around 1160, was the first author to identify Alfonsi by name, writing his *Chronicon* between 1211 and 1223. As recent work by Isabelle Draelants has shown, Helinand used seven extracts from the *Dialogus*.⁴² Interestingly, the first citation, a reference to the third *titulus*, in which Alfonsi attacks Jewish beliefs in bodily resurrection,

⁴⁰ R.W. Hunt, "The Disputation of Peter of Cornwall against Symon the Jew," in R.W. Hunt, W.A. Pantin, & R.W. Southern, *Studies in Medieval History presented to F.M. Powicke*, (Oxford, 1948), p.149.

⁴¹ R.W. Hunt, *The Disputation of Peter of Cornwall against Symon the Jew*, 150.

⁴² Isabelle Draelants, "Hélinand de Froidmont et l'exégèse hébraïque du *Dialogus* du Petrus Alfonsi", in Cardelle de Hartmann & Roelli, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus*, pp.301-320.

makes no distinction between the words of Petrus and Moyses, and uses the *Dialogus* to point out the error made by Alfonsi, whose arguments on resurrection can be included in his ‘rather idiosyncratic way of understanding Christian doctrine’.⁴³ Helinand’s choice of references to the *Dialogus* is intriguing throughout – there is only one taken from an aggadic story, namely that of the keys of Korah. The rest use the *Dialogus* to provide Jewish evidence for Christ and as a source of Old Testament exegesis. In Book 5 chapter 35 Helinand borrows Alfonsi’s discussion of the adverb ‘*co*’ with regard to Christ’s resurrection, from *titulus* 11.⁴⁴ In book 11 of the *Chronicon*, two excerpts from *titulus* 6 are used in separate chapters to attest to the truth of the Trinity – one on the nature of the prayer shawl, and one on the blessing of the Kohanim.⁴⁵ The *Dialogus* is also used as the source of the argument that the Tetragrammaton can be used to reveal the truth of the Holy Trinity.⁴⁶ This was one of the few pieces of Christian apologetic of Alfonsi’s that would be used by twelfth and thirteenth century authors.

The same material was used in a similar fashion by Peter of Blois (d.1212) in his *Contra Perfidiam Iudaeorum*.⁴⁷ He made use of Alfonsi’s discussion of ‘Elohim’ and ‘Adonai’, his explication of the Tetragrammaton, and the blessing of the Kohanim.⁴⁸ This comes in the course of what has been described as a ‘fairly pedestrian reworking of many standard topics.’⁴⁹ A similar use of the *Dialogus* is seen in Joachim of Fiore’s *Expositio in Apocalypsim*.⁵⁰ Joachim died in 1202.⁵¹ Here, the theory of the three names of God from the sixth *titulus* of the *Dialogus* is used to help create a conception of three periods of History. Interestingly, Fiore also cites

⁴³ Ibid., p.303; Cardelle de Hartmann, Senekovic, & Ziegler, “Modes of Variability”, p.245.

⁴⁴ Draelants, “Helinand de Froidmont”, p.307.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp.316-7.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp.309-311.

⁴⁷ PL 207 825-70.

⁴⁸ A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos: A Bird’s Eye view of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*, (Cambridge, 1935), pp.400-407.

⁴⁹ Anna Sapir Abulafia, “Twelfth-century Christian Expectations of Jewish Conversion: A Case Study of Peter of Blois,” *Aschkenas* 8, 1998, 69.

⁵⁰ Joachim of Fiore, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, (Venice: 1527) (fac. edn Frankfurt am Main, 1964).

⁵¹ Delno C. West & Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, *Joachim of Fiore: A Study in Spiritual Perception and History*, (Bloomington, 1983).

one of Alfonsi's sources, an unknown work referred to in the *Dialogus* as the 'secretis secretorum', or Secret of Secrets.⁵² The other authors also use Alfonsi for non-polemic means – Robert Grosseteste was the first writer to ascribe to Alfonsi the title of Rabbi, comparing him to Maimonides and making use of his ideas several times in his *De Sphaera*. He paraphrases Alfonsi's discussion of the climate and location of the city of Aren, and takes Alfonsi's system of seven climates, his map of climate, and his explanation for the uninhabitability of the southern hemisphere, all from the first *titulus*.⁵³

By the mid-thirteenth century, however, the polemic value of the *Dialogus* had been clearly realised. In Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*, which was written between 1244 and 1259 and survives in over 200 Latin manuscripts, twenty-eight 'chapters' are devoted to a recension of the *Dialogus*.⁵⁴ As with the 'Schafhlarn recension', the character of Moyses is removed and the dialogue is turned into a monologue. Although at times this means the text does not make immediate sense, it is clear what Vincent's aims, writing immediately after the Talmud trial, were – the long discussions of the climates of the earth and the sun's orbit are removed entirely, while Alfonsi's account of the creation is greatly shortened. Vincent's interest is not philosophical but polemic. No part of the apologetic chapters of the *Dialogus* makes it into the *Speculum Historiale*. Notably, given its fundamental nature to Petrus' argument that the Jews killed Christ by their own will, nor does the end of the second *titulus*, which argues that the crucifixion was the cause of the Jews' captivity.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, that the overall aim is polemic can be deduced from the fact that, barring the end of *titulus 2*, the only

⁵² PL 157 611A.

⁵³ Tolán, *Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, p.104.

⁵⁴ Isabelle Draelants, "Libellus Elegans Satis Contra Iudaeos et Sarracenos: La Rédaction du *Dialogus* dans le *Speculum Historiale* de Vincent de Beauvais," in Cardelle de Hartmann & Roelli, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus*, p.254.

⁵⁵ Tolán, *Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, p.124.

sections of the *Dialogus* not to be substantially shortened are those aimed specifically at undermining the beliefs of Judaism and Islam.

This approach is seen in another writer who makes use of these stories in a similar fashion: Thibaud de Sezanne, who wrote *Pharetra Fidei contra Iudeaos* soon after the Talmud Trial.⁵⁶ Thibaud is certainly more familiar with the Talmud than some of his predecessors. He asserts, in a very similar manner to Venerabilis, that ‘the Jews prefer this book, the Talmud, to the books of Moses and the Prophets,’ going on to outline the organisation of the Talmud and excerpt Talmudic passages that neither Alfonsi nor Venerabilis use.⁵⁷ However, large sections of the Talmudic stories that are shared between the *Dialogus* and the *Adversus Iudeorum* are contained in Thibaud’s work. That his source was Alfonsi rather than Venerabilis is shown by his inclusion of the legend of God wearing phylacteries. Further, Alfonsi’s arguments against the corporeality are included, if paraphrased.⁵⁸ Thibaud’s work appears to be different in aim to Alfonsi’s. While Alfonsi sought to defeat Judaism and support Christianity, Thibaud’s *Pharetra Fidei* attacks the Talmud alone, pointing to the rightness of persecuting the Jews by arguing that the King of France and the Dominican Friars were not punished for burning the Talmud, proving ‘how much heretical doctrine the Talmud contains’.⁵⁹

It is clear that there was a strong interest in the *Dialogus* from its original writing and transmission. The text was treated as important from a very early stage. That the aggadic material contained within the *Dialogus* was of use to polemicists writing against Judaism can be seen from the work of Peter the Venerable, whose 5th chapter of *Adversus Iudeorum* uses a similar body of material to come to conclusions that more severe in tone to those of Alfonsi,

⁵⁶ Cf. Chapter 3, p. X; Gilbert Dahan, “Les traductions latines de Thibaud de Sézanne”, in Gilbert Dahan, (ed.), *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris*, (Paris, 1999), pp.95-120.

⁵⁷ Theobaldi de Saxonia, “Pharetra Fidei contra Iudaeos,” in J. Wolf, (ed.), *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, 4, (Hamburg, 1733), p.560; Tolán, *Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, p.117.

⁵⁸ Tolán, *Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, p.118.

⁵⁹ Theobaldi de Saxonia, “Pharetra Fidei”, pp.566-7.

even if both accept the Augustinian rationale for the continued existence of the Jews. However, particularly in its early transmission, this was not the only or even the predominant use made of the *Dialogus*. As well as being used by Helinand of Froidmont for Christian apologetics and Robert Grosseteste for its scientific material, its narrative of conversion chimed with theological and ethical concerns of the so-called Twelfth-Century Renaissance, as evidenced by the codices in which it survives. The polemic interest, though, was the one that was sustained, and by the time of the Talmud Trial the *Dialogus* would be used explicitly to justify the undermining of the Jewish position in medieval society. After the Talmud trial, the *Dialogus* would go on to be used by Raymond Marti and others to the same ends as those sought by Nicholas Donin in 1240. The question remains, then of why the *Dialogus*, whose potential value to an assault on the Talmud was demonstrated by Peter the Venerable's use of the same material, and which appears to have been used to this end after the Talmud Trial, does not appear to have been used in the events around Paris itself. To understand this, the events of the Trial of the Talmud must be explored.

THE TRIAL OF THE TALMUD IN PARIS

In order to understand the indirect nature of the relationship between Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus Contra Iudaeos* and the Trial of the Talmud in Paris, it is necessary to lay out the chronology of events and nature of the arguments that took place in Paris in the 1240s. Although the Trial of the Talmud can be considered a single (lengthy) legal proceeding, it developed in several stages, and copies of the Talmud and other Hebrew literature may have been burned in Paris on as many as three occasions between 1241 and 1248.

The Trial of the Talmud originated with the actions of Nicholas Donin, a convert from Judaism to Christianity, who in 1236 presented Gregory IX with a number of accusations about the Talmud. How Donin was able to make representations to the papal court is unclear. He is not directly described as having any institutional connection, and no work is confidently attributable to his hand, although he may have been the author of the 35 accusations brought against the Talmud.¹ Andre Tuilier has posited that Donin might have been connected to the Paris mendicants, but there is no evidence to confirm this.² The Hebrew account of the Trial described him, accurately from the Jewish perspective, as a 'heretic' and 'apostate', even labelling him as the 'enemy', whereas the 35 accusations against the Talmud referred to him as 'a man very learned in Hebrew even according to the testimony of the Jews, so much that

¹ John Friedman, Jean Connell Hoff, & Robert Chazan, *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, (Toronto, 2012), p.39.

² André Tuilier, "La condamnation du Talmud par les maitres universitaires parisiens. Ses causes et ses conséquences politiques et idéologiques", in Gilbert Dahan, (ed.), *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris*, (Paris, 1999), pp.59-78.

one would scarcely find anyone like him in the nature and grammar of the Hebrew language.’³

By the Pope, he was simply described as ‘our beloved son, Nicholas, a former Jew.’⁴

The events of the Trial itself began with the delivery by Donin of a packet of letters from Pope Gregory IX to William of Auvergne, the Bishop of Paris, in 1239. The packet, as described in the letter to William of Auvergne pertained ‘to the matter of the books of the Jews that has been entrusted to you and your colleagues’.⁵ William of Auvergne was asked to pass letters on, when ‘it seems expedient to you’, to the kings of France, England, Aragon, Navarre, Castile and Leon and Portugal, as well as the French archbishops.⁶ The unspecific request to pass the letters on, the fairly sympathetic nature of William’s use of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* and the inaction of these other kings has led Lesley Smith to suggest that William failed to pass on the letters.⁷ This first letter, dated the 9th June 1239, was accompanied by three more. These lay out the basic reasoning behind the inquiry into the Talmud and assign responsibilities to the three groups of people to whom they are addressed – the archbishops of France, the kings of Europe, and the leaders of the clergy in Paris, i.e. William of Auvergne and the leaders of the two orders of Mendicant friars, the Dominicans and Franciscans. Each shared the same formulation of the basic charges made against the Talmud:

‘If the things that are asserted about the Jews residing in the Kingdom of France and other provinces are true, there would be no adequate or fitting punishment

³ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, p.129-30, 102; Isidore Loeb, “La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud”, *Revue des études juives* 2 (1881), p.252: ‘ad fidem in hebreo plurimum eruditum eciam secundum testimonium Iudeorum, ita ut in natura et grammatical sermonis ebraici vix sibi similiem invenerit’.

⁴ Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the Thirteenth Century*, (Philadelphia, 1933; revised edition New York, 1966), pp.238-241: ‘dilectum filium Nicolaum quondam Judeum’; Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, p.93.

⁵ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.238-241: ‘ad negotium super libris Juedorum tibi, et collegis tuis a nobis comissum’; Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, p.93.

⁶ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.238-241: ‘cum videris expedire’; Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, p.93.

⁷ Lesley Smith, “William of Auvergne and the Jews”, in Diana Wood, (ed.), *Christianity and Judaism*, (Oxford, 1992), pp.107-117.

for them. For not content, as we have heard, with the old Law, which the Lord gave in writing through Moses, indeed completely neglecting the same, they maintain that the Lord also proclaimed another law, which is called the Talmud, i.e. teaching; and they falsely claim that it was passed on orally to Moses and inserted in their minds and preserved for a long time without being written down, until certain people came along, whom they call sages and scribes, who rendered it in writing so that it would not slip from men's minds through forgetfulness, the book of which exceeds the text of the Bible in size. In it are contained so many falsities and offensive things that they are a source of shame to those who repeat them and horror to those who hear them.'⁸

These charges were followed with a statement alleging that 'this is said to be the main reason that keeps the Jews stubborn in their perfidy,' and then outlining the actions to be taken by each of the three groups.⁹ Both the archbishops and kings were instructed to seize all the books belonging to the Jews while the Jews were assembled in their synagogues, and to hand them over to the safekeeping of the Dominicans and Franciscans. This was to happen on the first Saturday of the following Lent, March 3rd 1240. For the Jewish community this was Shabbat Zachor, a week before Purim, which recalled the attack by Amalek in Deuteronomy. The archbishops were told to promulgate a sentence of excommunication against all, lay or clergy, who were unwilling to give up any Hebrew books, while William of Auvergne and the

⁸ Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.93-4; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.240-241: 'Si vera sunt, que de Judeis in regno Francie, et aliis provinciis commorantibus asseruntur, nulla de ipsis esset poena sufficiens, sive digna; ipsi enim sicut accepimus, lege veteri, quam Dominus per Moysen in scriptis edidit, non contenti, immo penitus pretermittentes eadem, affirmant legem aliam, que Talmut, id est Doctrina, dicitur, Dominum edidisse ac verbo Moysi traditam; et insertam eorum mentibus mentiuntur tamdiu sine scriptis servatam, donec quidam venerunt, quos Sapientes, et scribas appellant, qui eam, ne per oblivionem a mentibus hominum laberetur, in scripturam, cujus volumen in immensum excedit Textum Bible, redegerunt; in qua tot abusiones, et nefaria continentur, quod pudori referentibus, et audientibus sunt horri.'.

⁹ Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, p.94, Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.240-241: 'Cum igitur hec dicatur esse causa precipua, que Judeos in sua tenet perfidia obstinatos'.

mendicant leaders were given responsibility for burning in a bonfire any books that contained ‘errors of this kind.’¹⁰

These letters reveal several things about the nature of the attack on the Talmud, and the potential justification for its burning. The primary charge made was that the Jews were not content with the Old Law and completely neglected it in favour of the Talmud. The Talmud was described as containing ‘so many falsities and offensive things that they are a source of shame to those who repeat them and horror to those who hear them,’ a formulation that would recur in the later correspondence concerning the Talmud between Innocent IV, Louis IX, and Odo of Chateauroux.¹¹ These charges were given power by the contention that it was this that was the ‘chief cause’ of the refusal of the Jews to convert to Christianity.¹² This is especially important if Jews were expected to be aware of the Christian theology underpinning their continued tolerance in medieval society, which depended heavily on Christian perceptions of their literal relationship with the Old Testament. The writings of Ephraim of Bonn, writing in the late twelfth century, suggest that they were aware of their role as *testimonium veritatis*, witness to the truth of Christ, pointing to Bernard of Clairvaux’s Augustinian interpretation of Psalm 58:12, ‘Slay them not, lest at any time my people forget’, as important in combating the pogroms of 1146.¹³

The response to these letters was that a significant amount of Hebrew literature was seized in Paris, an examination of the Talmud took place, with the input of at least two Rabbis, and Talmudic literature was burnt in a bonfire. However, establishing details beyond this becomes

¹⁰ Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, p.95, Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.242-243: ‘errores hujusmodi’.

¹¹ Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, p.94, Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.240-241: ‘quod pudori referentibus, et audientibus sunt horrore’.

¹² Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, p.94, Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.240-241: ‘causa precipua’.

¹³ Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations 1000-1300. Jews in the Service of Medieval Christendom*, (Harlow, 2011), p.157.

difficult. There are two sets of sources for the events of the trial itself, while the date of the burning or burnings has come under much recent scrutiny.¹⁴ The Christian sources were collated in one manuscript, along with other anti-Jewish material, which is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. An edition of some parts of this manuscript, Ms Lat. 16448, was published by Isidore Loeb in the *Revue des Etude Juives*, and more recently Gilbert Dahan has produced a description of its contents.¹⁵ As well as the important collection of translations of Talmudic extracts into Latin known as *the Extractions de Talmud*, it contains all of the letters previously mentioned, a collection of the 35 accusations brought against the Talmud, and a report of the ‘confessions’ of two of the Rabbis who defended the Talmud. Although these confessions are brief, they give a useful overview of the arguments. The manuscript itself is of thirteenth-century origin, and the text is believed to have been compiled before 1255.¹⁶

The Hebrew account of the trial, entitled ‘The Disputation (Vikuah) of Rabbi Yehiel of Paris’, has proved more difficult to understand. Despite its name, it was written not by Rabbi Yehiel himself but by Rabbi Joseph ben Nathan Official, one of his followers, roughly twenty years after the events of the trial.¹⁷ Whereas the Latin documents imply an inquisitorial examination of the Talmud, in which the Rabbis served not as antagonists in a disputation but merely as expert witnesses, the Hebrew account pits Rabbi Yehiel in direct conflict with Nicholas Donin at the royal court, before the Queen (normally taken to be Blanche of Castile, the Queen Mother).¹⁸

¹⁴ Paul Lawrence Rose, “When was the Talmud Burnt at Paris? A Critical Examination of the Christian and Jewish Sources and a New Dating: June 1241”, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 62 (2011), 324-339.

¹⁵ Isidore Loeb, “La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud”, *Revue des études juives* 2 (1881), 252-70, 3 (1882), 39-57; Gilbert Dahan, “Les traductions latines de Thibaud de Sézanne”, in Gilbert Dahan, (ed.), *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris*, (Paris, 1999), pp.95-120.

¹⁶ Chen Merchevia, “Talmudic Terms and Idioms in the Latin Manuscript Paris B.N. 16558”, *Journal of Semitic Studies* XI (2) (1966), 175-201.

¹⁷ Judah M Rosenthal, "Official, Nathan ben Joseph and Joseph", in Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 2nd ed. Vol. 15. (Detroit, 2007), pp. 388-389.

¹⁸ Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.126-168.

Several pieces of recent work have suggested that the relatively early period of the Trial means that the format of an inquisition would be unlikely and that the Trial should be understood as a fundamentally disputational event. Judah Galinsky and Harvey Hames have cast serious doubt on the primacy of the Hebrew account. Hames has pointed to the number of striking details possessed solely by the *Vikuah*, including the presence of Nicholas Donin and Blanche of Castile, as evidence that it represents a literary reconstruction of the events of 1240 on the model of Nahmanides' account of the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263.¹⁹ Further, the transmission of this account as part of R. Joseph ben Nathan Official's polemic work 'Sefer Yosef ha-Meqanne' indicates that the two disputations were meant to be read together. This is reinforced by Galinsky's work examining a second version of the Yehiel's *Vikuah*, which is significantly lengthier and more substantial, as well as his examination of a further Hebrew fragment contained in the Vatican which points firmly to a less disputational arrangement. Although it is still a dialogue between Donin and Yehiel, the tone is much less discursive, with the Rabbi admitted alone to the panel and required to 'answer 'Yes' or 'No' concerning what is written in your books'.²⁰ He concerns himself with answering the questions put in front of him, with some defence, but is unable to control the debate in the manner of the *Vikuah*.²¹ This reinforces the impression given by the Latin evidence that the Trail was more an inquiry than a disputation. The literary tropes and dubious provenance of the *Vikuah* mean that its utility is limited in discerning the level of Talmudic knowledge possessed by the Christians responsible for the examination of the Talmud.

¹⁹ Harvey J. Hames, "Reconstructing Thirteenth-century Jewish-Christian Polemic: From Paris 1240 to Barcelona 1263 and Back Again", in Ryan Szpiech (ed.), *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference. Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, (New York, 2015), pp.113-126.

²⁰ Judah D. Galinsky, "The Different Hebrew Versions of the 'Talmud Trial' of 1240 in Paris," in Elisheva Carlebach and Jacob J. Shachter (eds), *New Perspectives on Jewish-Christian Relations*, (Leiden, 2012), pp.133-134.

²¹ Ibid.

Similar problematic issues surround any attempt to discern the final outcome of the trial. It is widely accepted that some Talmudic literature was burned, on the evidence, particularly, of a May 1244 letter from the new Pope, Innocent IV to Louis IX, which states that ‘the chancellor of Paris, and the doctors regent in Holy Writ in Paris, at the command of our predecessor, Pope Gregory of happy memory, publicly burned in a fire before the clergy and the people both the aforesaid book of abuse as well as some others which they partially read and examined along with all their glosses’.²² Hillel of Verona, a 13th century Talmudist, suggested that 1,200 books of Hebrew words were burnt, and traditionally it has been reported that 24 cartloads of books were burnt, although Colette Sirat has suggested that this figure was more likely ‘many tens and maybe one or two hundreds.’²³ Innocent wrote that he knew of the burning from the letters of the Paris clergy, which sadly have not survived. It has normally been accepted that the first burning was in 1242, based on the work of Heinrich Graetz.²⁴ Paul Lawrence Rose, though, has recently suggested that the most likely year was in 1241, although his calculations are at best an educated guess based on other factors.²⁵ He has also suggested that it might be possible that there was another burning of Talmudic texts after the receipt of Innocent’s 1244 letter or in 1248. The effect of the burning on the Jewish community is made clear by Meir of Rothenberg’s poem lamenting the loss of the Talmudic texts.²⁶ That the Talmud trial resulted

²² Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.95-7; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.250-253: ‘Et licet dilectus filius cancellarius Parisiensis, et doctores regentes Parisiis, in sacra pagina, de mandato felicis recordationis Gregorii Pape predecessoris nostril, tam predictum abusiois librum, quam alios quosdam cum omnibus glossis suis perlectis in potestate, ac examinatos... publice coram clero et populo, incendio concremarint’.

²³ Colette Sirat, “Les manuscrits du Talmud en France du Nord au XIII^e siècle”, in Dahan, *Le Brulement du Talmud*, pp.125-127: ‘plusiers dizaines et peut-etre une ou deux centaines’; William Chester Jordan, *Ideology and Royal Power in Medieval France*, (Aldershot, 2001) pp.137-41.

²⁴ Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, VII, pp.104-5; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, p.32; Judah Rosenthal, “The Talmud on Trial, The Disputation at Paris in the year 1240”, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 47, (1956), 58-76.

²⁵ Rose, “When was the Talmud Burnt at Paris?”.

²⁶ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.169-172.

in at least one public deflagration is enough to show the significance of this attack on the Talmud.

As mentioned above, the events around the Talmud Trial did not end with the burning of books. In 1244 Innocent's letter reveals some of the conclusions the Talmud trial came to – that the Jews 'commit unusual things that are a source of shame to those who repeat them and a horror to those who hear them... They disregard the Mosaic law and the prophets and follow certain traditions of their elders... which they call the Talmud in Hebrew – and it is a great book among them, exceeding the text of the Bible in size, in which there are manifest blasphemies against God and his Christ and the Blessed Virgin, convoluted tales, erroneous insults, and unheard-of foolishness – they teach and bring up their children and make them thoroughly estranged from the teaching of the Law and the prophets.'²⁷ It was not the Talmud itself that most concerned Innocent, however, but its two social effects – the raising of children who should be exposed, through the Old Testament, to the truth of Christianity, and the polluting influence of these Jews on the Christian women they often took as nursemaids or servants. Although Innocent urged further zeal in prosecuting and burning the Talmud, it was the issue of the nursemaids that he returned to in closing his letter – a social issue with a long history of papal attention trumping purely theological issues. The language used by Innocent was that of *Etsi Iudaeos*, Innocent III's bull on the topic.²⁸

Perhaps the most revealing aspects of the Latin sources emerged as a result of the letter written by Innocent to Louis on 12th August 1247. Three years after exhorting Louis to further his anti-

²⁷ Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.95-7; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.250-253: 'illa committit enormia, que stupori audientibus et referentibus sunt horror... omissis, seu contemptis lege Mosaica et prophetis, quasdam traditiones seniorum suorum sequuntur... que Talmud Hebraice nuncupantur, et magnus liber est apud eos, excedens textum Bible in immensum, in quo sunt blasphemie in Deum et Christum eius, ac Beatam Virginem manifeste intricabilis fabule, abusiones erronee, ac stultitie inaudite, filios suos docent ac nutriunt, et a legis, et prophetarum doctrina reddunt ipsos penitus alienos'.

²⁸ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.114-118.

Talmudic efforts, Innocent wrote to him saying that ‘since the masters of the Jews of your kingdom recently stated before us and our brethren that without that book that in Hebrew is called the Talmud they are unable to understand the Bible...we... have thought fit to answer them that, just as we are unwilling to deprive them of the Law itself, so in consequence we are unwilling to deprive them unjustly of their books.’²⁹ He further informed Louis that he had sent a letter to Odo of Chateauroux instructing him to inspect the Talmud and ‘tolerate them in those matters in which he sees that they ought to be tolerated in the sight of God without damage to the Christian faith and restore them to the aforesaid masters.’³⁰ In doing so, Innocent rejected the conclusions of the original trial, and sought a pragmatic solution that preserved the Jewish legal position in society.

The request to ‘tolerate’ the Talmud was not acceded to lightly by Odo. His response, undated, but likely before his condemnation of the Talmud in May 1248, describes the toleration or return of the books as ‘no small scandal as well as an eternal reproach to the Apostolic See’.³¹ To come to this conclusion, he outlines the ‘legal proceedings that were once held concerning the aforesaid books’, in case the Pope was ignorant of these.³² He quotes the justification for the investigation from Gregory IX’s first letters, and reproduces the letters Gregory sent to the archbishops, Kings, and the Bishop of Paris and mendicants. Describing the procedure of investigation, he argued that ‘far more things were found in the aforesaid books’, when examined by the archbishop of Sens, the bishops of Paris and Senlis, brother Godfried of

²⁹ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp. 97-98; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘Sane magistris Judeorum regni tui nuper proponentibus coram nobis et fratribus nobis quod sine illo libro qui hebraice Talmud dicitur, bibiam et alia statute sue legis secundum fidem ipsorum intelligere nequeunt, nos... perconsequens suis libris nolumus injuste privare.’

³⁰ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp. 97-98; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘eosdem toleret in his in quibus secundum Deum sine fidei Christiane injuria viderit tolerandos. Et magistris restituat supradictis’.

³¹ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.98-100; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘Et esset scandalum non minimum, et Sedis Apostolice sepiternum opprobrium’.

³² Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.98-100; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘autem sanctitatem vestram non lateat processus quondam habitus circa libros predictor’.

Blevel, at that point the regent in Paris and chaplain to Innocent, as well as ‘other masters of theology, and even the masters of the Jews’.³³ More specifically, and more importantly for an examination of the attack on the Talmud itself, he claimed that ‘when a diligent examination was subsequently made, it was found that the said books were full of errors, and a veil has been placed over their hearts to such an extent that these works turn the Jews away not only from a spiritual understanding but even from a literal one and toward fables and fictions,’ going on to label the claim that the Talmud was necessary for the understanding of the Bible ‘a falsehood’.³⁴ Odo pointed to Jerome as his authority for the treatment of the Jews as if they were heretics, with their books to be condemned for their errors regardless of if they hold some good.³⁵

The basis of his argument here was the same as had been advanced in Gregory’s original letters – that Talmudic errors blinded Jews not only to the proper Christian understanding of the Old Testament, but also to the literal understanding that was consistent with their religions place in medieval society. This argument, that the Talmud rendered the Jews incapable of understanding the correct meaning of the Bible, is immediately reminiscent of the arguments of Petrus Alfonsi. Alfonsi speaks of Jewish Law as a veil lifted by Jesus, with the illumination which granted him enough reason to see through it a gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁶ It is fundamental to Alfonsi’s argument that the Talmudic stories written by Jewish teachers had led the Jews away from even a correct literal understanding of the Bible, arguing that he, as a Christian, kept the Law of Moses better than the Jews. However, Odo did not pursue this argument as far as

³³ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.98-100; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘multo plura inventa fuerunt in predictis libris’, ‘aliorum magistrorum theologie et etiam magistrorum Judeorum’.

³⁴ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.98-100; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘Facta etiam postea diligenti examinatione inventum est quod dicti libri erroribus erant pleni, et est velamen positum super corda ipsorum in tantum, ut non solum ab intellectu spirituali Judeos avertant, immo etiam a litterali, et ad fabulas et quedam fictitia convertant.’

³⁵ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.98-100; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279.

³⁶ PL 157 596C, PL 157 672A.

Alfonsi, and did not suggest that the falsehoods were the result of a deliberate attempt by Jewish teachers and scribes to hide their complicity in the killing of Christ.

By the time Odo had reinvestigated the Talmud, and issued a condemnatory decree against it, his argumentation had changed. This document was also signed by 41 others, including the important figures of Thibaud of Sézanne,³⁷ who produced the *Extractiones de Talmud*, and Henry of Cologne, alleged by Thomas Cantimpré to have been responsible for organising the original trial.³⁸ Odo did not argue that the Jews' reliance on the Talmud was causing them to misunderstand their own religion but that the innumerable errors, insults, and offensive things contained within the Talmud would cause 'damage to the Christian faith', before repeating Gregory's formulation about the shame and horror of hearing Talmudic teachings.³⁹ Labelling this a 'decisive judicial sentence', he left no way to justify the continued existence of the Talmud.⁴⁰ The dependence on the charge that the Talmud damaged Christianity appears to be an attempt to bring into play the addition of Innocent III to the Papal Bull *Sicut Iudeis*. The standard guarantee of protection to the Jews was qualified by the statement that this protection was only for 'those who have not presumed to plot against the Christian faith'.⁴¹ It is possible that this abandonment of the argument that Jews were failing to properly follow their own religion ended the process of trial in Paris. Despite Odo's objection to the nature of the Talmudic texts, it was on the basis that these errors constituted a 'complete neglect' of the Law of Moses that the Papal intervention had been justified all along⁴² – again following the

³⁷ Cf. Chapter 2, pp.42-43.

³⁸ Thomas of Cantimpré, *Bonum universale de apibus*, (Douai, 1627,) pp.17-18.

³⁹ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp. 100-101; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: 'fidei Christiane injuria'.

⁴⁰ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp. 100-101; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: 'diffinitivam setentiam'.

⁴¹ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, p.95: 'qui nichil machinari presumpserint in subversionem fidei Christiane'.

⁴² Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Canon Law and the Burning of the Talmud", *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 9 (1973), 79-82.

guidance of *Sicut Iudeis*, which declared that ‘license ought not to be granted the Jews to presume to do in their synagogues more than the law permits them’.⁴³

The attempt, as seen in Alfonsi’s *Dialogus*, to found the argument that the Jews failed to fulfil their law on the inadequacies of Talmudic material is made more clear when considering the materials directly relating to the trial itself. The 35 accusations that Donin brought to the papacy are reproduced in Paris lat. 16558, and each consists of an accusation and then a number of Talmudic references to support it.⁴⁴ It is easy to see, given the detailed nature of these, how difficult the position of the Rabbis brought in to attest to their truth was.

That the overall strategy was directed to proving that the Jews were prevented from the true Christian understanding of the Bible by their belief in the Talmud can be seen in the construction of the accusations. There was no need to demonstrate the truth of Christian readings of the Old Testament, as there was for Alfonsi in the course of *Dialogus*. Instead, the accusations sought to show that the Talmud prevented belief in Christianity, both directly through attacks on Christianity itself, before their blindness to the truth of the Old Testament was proven in two ways – in their rejection of and blasphemies against Jesus, Mary, and the Church, who were, in Christian eyes, obviously predicted by Old Testament prophets, as well as by the holding of false and obscene beliefs about Adam, Eve, and Noah.⁴⁵

The accusations were backed by a body of Talmudic material that represented a marked change from that used in other anti-Jewish works. Not only was each accusation backed by at least one reference either to the Talmud or to Jewish liturgical practice, but these did not, like Alfonsi or

⁴³ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, p.94: ‘Judeis non debet esse licentia in synagogis suis, ultra quam permissum est lege presumere’.

⁴⁴ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.102-121; Loeb, “La controverse de 1240”, *Revue des études juives* 2, 252-70; 3, 39-55.

⁴⁵ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.102-121; Loeb, “La controverse de 1240”, *Revue des études juives* 2, 252-70; 3, 39-55.

Petrus Venerabilis before them, merely quote or paraphrase the Talmud, but instead cited them by Order, Tractate, and in many cases Chapter.⁴⁶ There is evidence that the Talmud used by the collator of these accusations was organised slightly differently to a modern Talmud – repeated reference is made to the book of Berahot being situated in Moed rather than Zeraim, although that might be owing to Berahot’s position as the only tractate in Order Zeraim that has a Gemara. If the collator had been unaware of the Mishnah, they might well have assumed that the tractate Berahot was part of the Order it preceded rather than separate.⁴⁷ That these accusations were made using a significant knowledge of Hebrew is also demonstrated by the frequency of Hebrew words used in Latin sentences, often with a translation. The author also demonstrates knowledge of recent Jewish exegesis through references to the glosses of Rashi, as well as other glosses, particularly those related to establishing the identity of Jesus Noceri (alleged by Donin to be Jesus of Nazareth).⁴⁸

Facing these charges, it is more understandable to see why the reports of the ‘confessions’ of Rabbi Yehiel of Paris and Judah of Melun are brief. In this third part of the Paris manuscript, they are not asked to describe the contents of the Talmud but instead to confirm the truth of the accusations placed before the inquiry by Donin. Certainly this method of questioning may have necessitated Donin’s intervention, as suggested by the Vatican Hebrew fragment, in which he appears to be assisting the court in an advisory role, as there was a level of complexity to the Talmudic material used beyond the aggadic stories of earlier polemic.⁴⁹ Yehiel’s ‘confession’ is comfortably the longer one, and touches on most of the areas identified in Donin’s list of accusations.⁵⁰ Yehiel’s first action was supposedly to refuse to swear an oath. He then

⁴⁶ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.102-121; Loeb, “La controverse de 1240”, *Revue des études juives* 2, 252-70; 3, 39-55.

⁴⁷ Isidore Epstein, (trans.), *The Babylonian Talmud*, (London, 1935-48).

⁴⁸ Loeb, “La controverse de 1240”, III, 48.

⁴⁹ Judah D. Galinsky, “The Different Hebrew Versions”, p.135.

⁵⁰ Loeb, “La controverse de 1240”, III, 55-57.

confirmed his belief that the Talmud never lied and conceded that Jesus Nocerri was a Jesus of Nazareth, but different to Jesus Christ.⁵¹ His testimony, faced with a body of Talmudic citations such as was put together in the accusations, only departs from admission of the truth of Donin's claims to suggest that the word 'goy', meaning 'gentile', should be taken not to mean Christians, at which point the writers points out that he was lying.⁵² Yehiel was also made to confirm Talmudic stories that are alleged to blaspheme God, Adam and Eve, and the belief that Jews were to suffer less than Christians after death.⁵³

Judah of Melun's testimony is recorded as merely adding to this. He confirmed that the son of Stada was also the son of Mary, killed at Passover for witchcraft, and that Rashi taught that he was called Jesus Nocerri. Further he is alleged to have admitted that the Talmud taught that Jesus was being punished in Hell and that God laughed at two Rabbis' refusal to believe his voice from heaven.⁵⁴ Although Judah, like Yehiel, admitted that children studied the Talmud rather than the Bible, he offered the only real defence of the Talmud in these confessions, suggesting that the Talmud did not have force except in matters that pertain to the Law, which could not take effect except through the words of the sages.⁵⁵

Although similar in strategy, the arguments put forward in the Talmud trial appear to have been based on a far greater understanding and deeper deployment of Talmudic material than available in the *Dialogus Contra Iudaeos*. This reflects, in part, their differing aims – Alfonsi attempted to demonstrate the validity of his own conversion through reason and authority, often buttressing his arguments with apologetic scriptural reference. Instead, the Trial of the Talmud had specific legal aims, aimed at the Talmud in particular rather than Judaism in general. The

⁵¹ Ibid. 55-6.

⁵² Ibid., 55.

⁵³ Ibid., 56.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 57.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 57.

investigation initially attempted to establish whether the Talmud rendered Jews unable to correctly understand their own teaching, before the reinvestigation by Odo of Chateauroux in 1248 contended that the blasphemies contained within it were dangerous to Christianity. The masters of Paris wanted to deny Jews the opportunity to believe in and propagate the errors that were contained in the Talmud, but there was no attempt to subjugate the Jews – the basic concepts underpinning the Jewish position in medieval society remained valid according both to Augustinian theory and canon law. The extension of the anti-Talmudic argument to assert that the Jews no longer followed Mosaic law was ultimately rejected by Innocent IV. Although the Talmud was burned, this was not accompanied by more violent action against the Jews of France.

To get to this point, however, Christian Paris had demonstrated an unprecedented knowledge of the Talmud. Although converts and Christian Hebraists in the twelfth and thirteenth century translated large amounts of Jewish exegesis and literature, by all accounts the trial itself was administered by senior churchmen who were unlikely to have the necessary Hebrew and Aramaic to delve deeply into the Talmud itself. In examining the potential impact of Peter Alfonsi's *Dialogus* on the Talmud Trial, it is necessary to take a broader view of the Trial to include its influence on the intellectual climate of Paris, and particularly those churchmen, such as Odo of Chateauroux, who played a key role in the Talmud Trial itself.

PETER ALFONSI IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE TALMUD TRIAL

The Trial of the Talmud in Paris marked a real departure from previous anti-Jewish activity. Rather than a literary disputation, it was a judicial process with institutional backing. Initiated by the Pope with a letter to the Bishop of Paris, the Talmudic texts seized were held by Paris' Dominican and Franciscan Orders, and the reinvestigation was conducted by a man who was at various points Chancellor of the University of Paris, bishop of Tusculum and papal legate before following Louis IX on crusade in 1248. This meant that the nature of argument used by those seeking to prove Nicholas Donin's accusations was very different to Petrus Alfonsi's, which had broader and more philosophical aims. As such, there is no direct evidence of familiarity with Alfonsi's work in the material relating to the Trial of the Talmud. However, there is some evidence that the *Dialogus* was used in the aftermath.

Donin's accusations, and the judicial process that followed them, resulted in a heavy scrutiny of Talmudic literature by the Masters of Paris. The papal command to examine the Talmud in detail necessitated a wider availability of Talmudic material than was available either in the literary disputations or in Donin's accusations, which both saw the Talmud deployed selectively by a single author, often in a position of privileged knowledge owing to their own conversion. This was particularly the case after Innocent IV's change of position on the Talmud. Innocent had originally greeted the trial and burning of the Talmud, writing to Louis IX in 1244 to commend his efforts and entreating him to 'see to it that they are struck down with due severity [and] you order burned in a fire... the aforesaid books of abuses.'¹

¹ John Friedman, Jean Connell Hoff, & Robert Chazan, *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, (Toronto, 2012), pp.95-7; Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the Thirteenth Century*, (Philadelphia, 1933; revised edition New York, 1966), pp.250-253: 'facias debita severitate percelli. [Et] tam predictos abusiones libros... igni cremari'.

However, the Jewish community in northern France sought to re-establish the legitimacy of their use of the Talmud to understand the Hebrew Bible. In 1247 Innocent wrote again to King Louis, telling him that ‘the masters of the Jews of your kingdom recently stated before us and our brethren that without that book that in Hebrew is called the Talmud they are unable to understand the Bible and the other statutes of their Law in accordance with their faith’.² This was an important way to frame their objection, as it undermined the claim that the Jews preferred the Talmud to the law of Moses, which was the basis for the initial investigation, rather than disputing the conclusions reached about the contents of the Talmud. It aimed to bring the Talmud under the protection of the guarantees made by the Popes in *Sicut Iudeis*, that the Jews ‘ought not to suffer curtailment in those (privileges) which have been conceded them.’³ The right to interpret the Hebrew Bible as they saw fit was certainly one of these. As such, Odo of Chateauroux was instructed (in an unsurviving letter, presumably of 1247) to reinvestigate the Talmudic literature and ‘tolerate them in those matters in which he sees that they ought to be tolerated in the sight of God without damage to the Christian faith and restore them to the aforesaid masters.’⁴

However, by this point work had already been done to bring more of the Talmudic material at the centre of the events in Paris in the 1240s into Latin. The main part of the Paris manuscript which contains the Latin sources for the events of the Trial of the Talmud is made up of the *Extractiones de Talmud*, the first and largest corpus of Latin Talmud translations.⁵ First

² Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp. 97-98; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘Sane magistris Judeorum regni tui nuper proponentibus coram nobis et fratribus nobis quod sine illo libro qui hebraice Talmut dicitur, bibliam et alia statute sue legis secundum fidem ipsorum intelligere nequeunt, nos... perconsequens suis libris nolumus injuste privare.’

³ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.92-93: ‘ita in his, que eis concessa sunt, nullum debent preiudicium sustinere’.

⁴ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp. 97-98; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘eosdem toleret in his in quibus secundum Deum sine fidei Christiane injuria viderit tolerandos. Et magistris restituat supradictis’.

⁵ BNF ms. Lat 16558; Alexander Fidora, “The Latin Talmud and Its Influence on Christian-Jewish Polemic”, *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 1, (2014), 338.

introduced by Isidore Loeb, and currently the subject of a European Research Council Project at the University of Barcelona, the *Extractiones* as presented in BNF lat. 16558 is made up of two texts that, on first glance, appear to present the same material in two different fashions.⁶ The first is classed thematically, while the second places the extracts in the order that they appear in the rabbinic literature from which they came. This sequential version groups the extracts by the four Orders used (Mo'ed, Yeshu'ot, Nashim, and Qodashim) and, in the case of those from Seder Mo'ed and Seder Yeshu'ot, by tractate as well.⁷ This is followed by extracts that are liturgical in origin, and glosses of Rashi. By contrast, the first, thematic version displays clearly the underlying polemic purpose of the compilation and groups the extracts under 13 headings, each demonstrating a different problem with the Talmud.⁸

The question of who translated the *Extractiones* has not been completely settled. The preface suggests both that a single translator and a pair of translators were responsible for producing the work. Using the word 'transtuli' in the first person, the author writes that the translation was produced on the order of Father Odo, Bishop of Tusculum, Legate of the Apostolic See, but the text also makes reference to 'two greatly learned interpreters', and points to the two translators' production of identical translations as evidence of the truth of their translations. The process of translation into Latin using two translators was a common one, with one translating the original text into the vernacular, and the other translating this into Latin. Indeed, in a recent paper Alexander Fidora has suggested that this was the method by which Donin's accusations were translated into Latin. But in this case the document itself speaks of two interpreters of Hebrew, and Gilbert Dahan has provided a sensible, if not entirely proven, identification of these. From the list of experts who also signed Odo's condemnation of the

⁶ Loeb, II and III; The ERC research project can be found at <http://pagines.uab.cat/lattal/> It has several papers forthcoming that will hopefully shed more light on the *Extractiones de Talmud*.

⁷ Yeshu'ot is an alternative name for the 4th Seder of Mishnah, more commonly known as Nezikin.

⁸ Gilbert Dahan, "Les traductions latines de Thibaud de Sézanne", in Gilbert Dahan, (ed.), *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris*, (Paris, 1999), p.96.

Talmud in 1248, two are identifiable neither as masters of theology or canon law, but instead as two Hebraists: ‘frater henricus teuthonicus., frater theobaldus de saxannia.’⁹ The first is Henry of Cologne, who is known to have some knowledge of Hebrew, and according to Thomas de Cantimpré’s *Bonum universale de apibus* was responsible for Louis IX’s decision to act on Gregory IX’s request to seize the Jewish books in 1240.¹⁰

The second, however, is variously known as Theobald of Saxony or Thibaud de Sézanne, who was also the author of the polemical *Pharetra Fidei contra Iudeos*, a work discussed briefly in chapter 2. Described by Dahan as the ‘key personage’ of the *Extractiones*, Sezanne was subprior of the Dominican convent of St. Jacques in Paris, and his other work reveals his substantial command of Hebrew. His critical work is known through four mentions in the correctory – a text of the Latin Vulgate resulting from critical emendation – of St. Jacques, written in around 1255, which refer to his own correctory, ‘in correctionibus fratris theob.’¹¹ These mentions reveal a grammatical understanding of Hebrew, for example in one case inserting prepositions into the Latin text of the book of Joel in order to reflect their presence in the Hebrew. This is important when considering the nature of the *Extractiones* and its development.

The preface to both versions of the *Extractiones* contains an introduction to Talmudic literature, including a description of the structure of the Talmud, a lexicon of common terms, consideration of Hebrew phonetics, and transcription difficulties. In this it reveals what Dahan has described as a ‘striking’ scientific aspect that is reinforced by the impression given by the rest of the work – the running titles in the sequential version refer to the Order and Tractate of the Talmudic extracts, while biblical citations are identified by a marginal reference following

⁹ Heinrich Denifle & Emile Chatelaine, (eds.), *Chartulariam Universitatis Parisiensis*, I, (Paris, 1889), pp.209-211.

¹⁰ Dahan, “Les traductions latines”, p.100.

¹¹ Dahan, “Les traductions latines”, 102; BnF lat. 16719-22.

Stephen Langton's numbering of the Bible.¹² Further, the *Extractiones* is closed by an 'exhaustive' index of scriptural citations.¹³ All these reinforce the impression that, though in choice of extracts driven by a polemic purpose, the *Extractiones* represent a methodical translation aiming to provide a comprehensive body of Talmudic source material.

The size and accuracy of the translations from the Talmud contained within the *Extractiones*, and the attention devoted to enabling Christian readers to understand the position these excerpts held in the Talmud itself, each attest to the seriousness with which this attempt to provide the accusations of Donin with firm scholarly foundations was undertaken. The *Extractiones* is also important as a reflection of the development of the events in Paris through the 1240s. While in the Paris manuscript both the thematic and sequential versions of the *Extractiones* are included, the *Extractiones* exists in six other copies which only transmit one or the other.¹⁴ This suggests that the two versions, collected under the same title in the Paris manuscript, were not originally considered to be one work. Given that it is the thematic version, copied first in the Paris manuscript, that contains additions to the sequential version, it seems likely that this version was updated in light of the need to defend the results of the initial Talmud trial. As Alexander Fidora has shown, the text of the original sequential *Extractiones* is dateable to 1244 on internal evidence.¹⁵ It is clear from the treatment of the *Extractiones* in the thematic version that every attempt was being made to bolster Donin's accusations against the argument that Talmudic Judaism was a tool to understand the Old Testament and not a threat to Christian belief, and it

¹² Dahan, "Les traductions latines," p.97, 'on est frappé'.

¹³ Dahan, "Les traductions latines," p.97 'un index exhaustif'.

¹⁴ Alexander Fidora, "Textual Rearrangement and Thwarted Intentions. The Two Versions of the Latin Talmud", paper given at the workshop 'Translating Sacred Texts', El Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales (CCHS) del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, January 13th, 2015. Accessed at <http://pagines.uab.cat/lattal/sites/pagines.uab.cat.lattal/files/Madrid%20CCHS-CSIC.pdf>. Also forthcoming in *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies* 2, 1 (2015).

¹⁵ Fidora, "Textual Rearrangement", 2.

seems likely that this process was carried out before Odo pronounced sentence on the Talmud in 1248.

A cursory comparison of the 13 thematic headings of the *Extractiones* and Donin's accusations reveals their similarity, both in nature and order. The thematic version of the *Extractiones* mirrors the accusations, with 13 titles that follow a similar order to the accusations.¹⁶ Even at a glance the similarity between the two lists is clear. Further, the thematic version of the *Extractiones* incorporates material from the 35 accusations that formed the basis of the Talmud Trial, as Fidora has demonstrated by a comparison of the passage Avoda Zara 3b, which considers how God spends his day.¹⁷ Similar additions can be seen throughout the thematic version. In some instances, Rashi's glosses, as quoted by Donin, are worked into the thematic extracts to further the polemic point, while some phrasing is changed to reflect Nicholas' interpretations.¹⁸ Given that there is no evidence that Donin himself was in any way involved in the production of either version of the *Extractiones*, the incorporation of his accusations into the thematic version suggests that the Talmud Trial sparked interest building Talmudic selections into a body of material available for both polemic and legal use.

That this was the case can also be seen in Thibaud of Sezanne's other major work, the *Pharetra Fidei contra Iudaeos*. Although the earliest extant copy dates to the fourteenth century,¹⁹ and the work is clearly of a different genre to the *Extractiones*, Dahan is confident in suggesting that they were the work of the same author, based not only on the similarity of some material, but also the positioning by both of the tractate Berahot.²⁰ Although it normally appears in Seder Zeraim, both works place it in the order Mo'ed. The two also make use of the same system of

¹⁶ See Appendix 1, Chapter-Headings of the Thematic *Extractiones*.

¹⁷ Fidora, "Textual Rearrangement", 6-7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁹ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Vat. Lat. 4265, described in Alexander Patschovsky (ed.), *Quellen zur böhmischen Inquisition im 14. Jahrhundert*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, XI, (Weimar, 1979), 152-7.

²⁰ Dahan, "Les traductions latines"; Cf. above, p.57.

transcription from Hebrew, which displays ‘characteristic traits’ of Northern French Hebrew pronunciation.²¹ Although where the two works make use of the same Talmudic texts they relay them differently, this can be ascribed as much to a difference of aim as a difference of material and understanding. The *Pharetra Fidei* is an avowedly polemical work, rather than a collection of material for polemic uses. The *Pharetra* makes use of quotations that are contained within the *Extractiones* as the foundation of its polemic.²² The influence of the Talmud trial on this process can be seen in the refutations that follow the Talmudic passages contained within the *Pharetra*, which seek to demonstrate the blasphemous implications of the Talmud. Dahan argues that in writing the *Pharetra*, Thibaud de Sezanne appears to have reprised his earlier work for a different purpose.²³

The authorship of the *Extractiones* and *Pharetra* are vitally important, because the *Pharetra* appears to contain material both from the *Extractiones* and from the *Dialogus Contra Iudaeos* of Petrus Alfonsi. This represents the most direct indication that a figure involved with the Trial of the Talmud was familiar with the work of Alfonsi. That the figure is one so centrally involved suggests that Alfonsi’s work was considered, although not directly relevant, useful support for the case being made against the Talmud in the mid-thirteenth century. Theobald was charged with assembling a collection of Talmudic texts in order to demonstrate the correctness of Donin’s accusations by Odo of Chateauroux, and who was themselves directly familiar with Talmudic material, rather than solely reliant on Alfonsi and other converts for information. It is notable, therefore, that he chose to make use of Alfonsi nevertheless. The *Pharetra* makes use of material from the first *titulus* of the *Dialogus* that attacks the aggadot in order to reinforce the argument that there were blasphemies and errors contained within the

²¹ Dahan, “Les traductions latines”, p.103.

²² Theobaldi de Saxonia, “Pharetra Fidei contra Iudaeos,” in Wolf, J., (ed.), *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, 4, (Hamburg, 1733).

²³ Dahan, “Les traductions latines”, p.106.

Talmud, including the corporeality of God.²⁴ This was crucial to the argument of the Parisian clergy who condemned the Talmud in 1248, who maintained that it was the errors, insults, and offensive writings that had the potential to cause ‘damage to the Christian faith’.²⁵ The need to justify and support the condemnation of the Talmud conditioned the usage of the *Dialogus* after this point.

Certainly, the 1240s were the time at which Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann and her team have suggested that ‘an active reception of the [*Dialogus*] began’, and it is also contemporaneous with the incorporation of the *Dialogus* into Vincent of Beauvais’ *Speculum Historia*, which came as part of the expansion of the *Speculum Maius* from a bipartite to tripartite work between 1245 and 1259.²⁶ This version of the *Dialogus* also reflects the concerns of the Talmud trial, again using the *Dialogus* as a polemic tool to demonstrate the inherent problems of the Talmud. The rendition of the *Dialogus* in the *Speculum Historia* consistently favours the polemic over the philosophical aspects of the work, although, as has been seen, it removed the end of the second *titulus*, which argues that the crucifixion was the cause of the Jews’ captivity.²⁷ That these two usages of the *Dialogus*, by Thibaud of Sézanne and Vincent of Beauvais occurred in Northern France at this time points to the realisation that it could be used as a further source to confirm Donin’s accusations.

But there is some evidence that the attack on the Talmud in this period was not solely a judicial affair. David Behrman has described a sermon given by Odo of Chateauroux at some point before his departure for the Holy Land in 1248 that makes use of Talmudic quotations.

²⁴ Theobaldi de Saxonia, “Pharetra Fidei”.

²⁵ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp. 100-101; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘fidei Christiane injuria’.

²⁶ Isabelle Draelants, “*Libellus Elegans Satis Contra Iudaeos et Sarracenos: La Rédaction du Dialogus dans le Speculum Historiale de Vincent de Beauvais*,” in Cardelle de Hartmann & Roelli, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus*, p.265.

²⁷ John Tolan, *Alfonsi and his Medieval Readers*, (Gainesville, 1993), p.124.

Behrman uses this sermon to consider whether Odo can be considered a ‘missionizer’ rather than its use of anti-Talmudic material.²⁸ Not only does this sermon serve as evidence of the increased availability of the Talmud to Christian clerics not themselves known for any ability in Hebrew, but the nature of it suggests that it is not wholly dependent on the *Extractiones*, and in its argument it appears to echo Petrus Alfonsi. The sermon, entitled ‘*De conversione iudaeorum*’, also helps to place the Talmud trial in context. The grounds on which the Trial of the Talmud was allowed to proceed was that the Talmud was ‘the main reason that keeps the Jews stubborn in their perfidy.’ Odo’s sermon appears to be further evidence that the attack on the Talmud was motivated by a desire to hurry what was seen as the inevitable conversion of the Jews to Christianity. Indeed, the sermon opens with the report of ‘a few’ converts from Judaism, and seeks support for a home for their religious needs, saying that ‘here the converted will live in an ordered fashion, and not run through taverns and places of iniquity’. Although there is no direct evidence of a house of converts in France, they were known in Oxford and London. Regardless of what Odo’s remark may imply about the behaviour of newly-converted Christians, it reveals an ongoing, active and officially-supported attempt to convert Jews in the 1240s.²⁹

The sermon takes as its base text Jeremiah 31:10: ‘He that scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him, as the shepherd does his flock.’ Odo understands this in a thirteenth-century context to refer to the ongoing exile of the Jews (their scattering), their conversion to Christianity (rather than gathering in a literal sense), and the eternal blessing to be received after their conversion as their ‘keeping’.³⁰ The majority of the sermon is given over to an analysis of the Jewish exile, which Odo clearly sees (as Alfonsi did) as key to the understanding

²⁸ David Behrman, “*Volumina vilissima*, a Sermon of Eudes of Chateauroux on the Jews and their Talmud” in Dahan, *Le Brulement du Talmud*, p.194; Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith. Thirteenth-century Christian missionizing and Jewish Response*, (Berkeley, 1989).

²⁹ Behrman, “*Volumina*”, in Dahan, *Le Brulement du Talmud*, p.194.

³⁰ David Behrman (ed.), “*Sermo de conversione Iudeorum*”, in Dahan, *Le Brulement du Talmud*, p.201.

of the Jewish religion.³¹ It is the continued exile and subjugation of the Jewish people that, for Odo, makes their religious position untenable. For him it is especially harsh given the Jews' previous closeness to God, as evidenced by the Old Testament.³² Odo explained this by arguing that the Jews had rejected the threefold truth, of justice, of doctrine, and of life. Each of these is illustrated by brief Talmudic examples, none of which are explained in great detail. It has been suggested either that the audience for the sermon was already familiar with the Talmud, or that Odo felt that the audience did not need to know this much about the structure of rabbinic Judaism.³³

For the truth of justice, Odo quotes two Talmudic laws, both relating to legal matters – one concerning the punishment owed to a man whose false witness leads to a judicial execution, and the other the perceived incongruity in punishments for a man who gives half his offspring to an idol as opposed to one who gives it all.³⁴ Both of these laws are found in the *Extractiones de Talmud*.³⁵ Given that the *Extractiones* was written at Odo's behest, it is unsurprising that he made use of it, even if this sermon may have been given before the *Extractiones* was completed. In demonstrating that the Jews had strayed from the truth of doctrine, Odo points to Talmudic interpretations of stories that are not in keeping with Old Testament tradition. These stories are not contained, it appears, within the *Extractiones*, and include a lengthy calculation about the absurdity of size of King Og as described in the Talmud and a non-Biblical fable about rabbis performing miraculous deeds, in which a basket set down by a Rabbi disappeared while the sky made a full revolution.³⁶ While the story of the basket is reported in the *Extractiones*, the Talmudic dimensions of Og are not reported there. Og's size as reported in the Talmud may

³¹ Behrman, (ed.), "Sermo de conversione Iudeorum", pp.201-209.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., p.204.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ BNF lat. 16558, f160va, f222rb.

³⁶ Behrman, (ed.), "Sermo de conversione Iudeorum", p.204.

have been extrapolated from the description of the size to his ankle based on BT Berahot 54b that is contained in both the Alfonsi's *Dialogus* and Peter the Venerable's *Adversus Iudeorum Inveteram Duritiem*. However, it seems more likely that Odo had a different source for this material, based on the description of Og's femur in BT Niddah 24b, which comes from a tractate of the Talmud that was not used in the *Extractiones*.³⁷ This demonstrates that Odo was not limited in his knowledge of the Talmud to that directly used in the Talmud Trial or subsequently collected in the *Extractiones*.

This is also seen in Odo's argument that Jews rejected the truth of life, which depends on their supposed rejection of the commandments. Using liturgical material included in the *Extractiones*, Odo suggests that the annual cancellation of vows, (actually the Kol Nidre prayer) is proof of this. The problem of oaths and vows is recurrent in both the Latin and Hebrew accounts of the Talmud Trial. Having established with aggadic stories that Jewish interpretations of the Old Testament were ludicrous and that Jews were not keeping to the laws of the Old Testament, Odo moves to the subject of the ongoing exile of the Jews. This argumentative strategy feels immediately familiar when considered in light of Petrus Alfonsi. Odo first suggests, as the character of Moyses does in Alfonsi's *Dialogus*, that according to the Jews their exile and the destruction of the temple was not caused by any particular sin. Not only does Odo then examine the comparison with the exile in Egypt, and conclude that the sale of Joseph by his brothers and idolatry were the causes of this, but he also draws from this the same conclusion as that of Alfonsi – that this was because of their killing of Christ. He wrote that 'they did kill the Messiah, the true God and true man – a sin which exceeds the sin of idolatry and all other sins which they had committed.'³⁸ This charge of deicide is one that is

³⁷ PL 157 565C; Yvonne Friedman (ed.), *Adversus Iudeorum Inveteram Duritiem*, (Turnhout, 1985); Behrman, (ed.), "Sermo de conversione Iudeorum", p.204.

³⁸ Behrman, (ed.), "Sermo de conversione Iudeorum", p.197.

notable both by its centrality to Alfonsi's *Dialogus* and its absence in the understanding of Judaism in the Talmud trial. That Odo was willing to use it to argue from Talmudic material in a sermon ostensibly about conversion (as Alfonsi's *Dialogus* was about his own conversion) is even more striking. Again, like Alfonsi, Odo's scriptural references are based predominantly in the Old Testament. Although not obviously guided by Alfonsi's desire to defeat Judaism by its own sword, Odo's use of the Old Testament, like Alfonsi's, was based on demonstrating the fulfilment of the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah. His view was that Jews were unable to understand their own Bible properly, and that it was the Talmud that directly contradicted biblical commandments. The similarity between this argument and that put forward by Alfonsi in *titulus 2* of his *Dialogus* makes me think it is very likely that Odo had knowledge of Alfonsi in the production of this sermon.³⁹

Although not making direct reference to Alfonsi, Odo's sermon suggests that Alfonsi's arguments were at least tried out by the key figure in the Talmud trial. That they were not in the reinvestigation of the Talmud can be put down to the focus that Innocent's letter forced on whether or not Talmudic Judaism was actually damaging to Christianity, rather than merely incorrect, whether by reference to the Old Testament or not. Further, the usage of Alfonsi by Thibaud of Sezanne, who also compiled, at Odo's request, the *Extractiones de Talmud*, which brought far more Talmudic material into Latin, and in a more organised manner, than any other Latin work, reinforces the esteem with which Alfonsi's work appears to have been held based on the manuscript evidence. Its inclusion in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historia*, which would go on to be copied in over 200 manuscripts, only serves to reinforce the impression that Alfonsi's work was a trusted source of polemic material, even if it lacked the rigour of a more scientific compilation such as the *Extractiones*

³⁹ See Chapter 2, pp.21-22, on *titulus 2*.

CONCLUSION

The comparison between Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus* and the Trial of the Talmud in Paris has revealed much about each. The investigations made into the Talmud in Paris brought a new focus on Alfonsi's polemic, with the *Dialogus Contra Iudaeos*, the first anti-Jewish text to make use of Talmudic material, providing aggadic material and polemic strategies that would become increasingly important in its aftermath.

Considering them, though, has most clearly delineated their differences. Previous work on the Talmud trial has often looked to the Hebrew account of the disputation between Rabbi Yehiel and Nicholas Donin, which provides an account that is both more revealing and more exciting than the Latin evidence.¹ This is perhaps understandable, as the Latin sources give no direct evidence of the procedure followed in investigating the Talmud. The recent work of Harvey Hames and Judah Galinsky that has cast doubt on the reliability of the Hebrew account means that viewing the trial primarily as part of a medieval disputational culture appears less valid.² Instead, the debate between Innocent IV and Odo of Chateauroux suggests that the trial was mainly legal rather than polemic in nature, and is better treated as a trial rather than a disputation. By contrast, the *Dialogus* was wholly polemic. Their letters reveal the centrality of *Sicut Iudeis* to the way in which the accusations against the Talmud were considered. Gregory IX's first letter had been primarily concerned with the charge that Jewish religious practice was not consistent with the basis of their position in Jewish society, and that 'not content, as we have heard, with the old law, which the Lord gave in writing through Moses,

¹Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on trial: Jewish-Christian disputations in the Middle Ages*, (Rutherford, 1982); Alexander Novikoff, *The Medieval Culture of Disputation: Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance*, (Philadelphia, 2013).

²Harvey J. Hames, "Reconstructing Thirteenth-century Jewish-Christian Polemic: From Paris 1240 to Barcelona 1263 and Back Again", in Ryan Szpiech (ed.), *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference. Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, (New York, 2015), pp.113-126; Judah D. Galinsky, "The Different Hebrew Versions of the 'Talmud Trial' of 1240 in Paris," in Elisheva Carlebach and Jacob J. Shachter (eds), *New Perspectives on Jewish-Christian Relations*, (Leiden, 2012), pp.133-134.

indeed completely neglecting the same, they maintain that the Lord also proclaimed another law, which is called the Talmud, i.e. teaching.’³ It seems likely that it was on this basis that the first investigation of the Talmud was carried out, querying whether Jews had breached the protection *Sicut Iudeis* gave them. This canon stated clearly that ‘license ought not to be granted the Jews to presume to do in their synagogues more than the law permits them’.⁴

Innocent IV’s 1244 letter to Louis IX lauded the Parisian efforts to counter the Talmud, which caused the Jews to be ‘thoroughly estranged from the teaching of the Law’.⁵ It also betrayed a different legal motive, making repeated reference to the issue of Jews having Christian nursemaids, which was one of the primary concerns of Innocent III’s 1205 bull *Etsi Iudeos*. However, by 1247 he had accepted the argument of French Jews that without the Talmud ‘they are unable to understand the Bible and the other statutes of their Law,’ and instructed Odo of Chateauroux to ‘tolerate them’.⁶ Odo objected to this instruction, implying that the final caveat added to *Sicut Iudeis* by Innocent III, that only those ‘who had not presumed to plot against the Christian faith’ were protected, had been breached, and that the Talmud itself ‘damaged the Christian faith.’⁷ Regardless of the position taken by each of these individuals on the Talmud, the arguments that proved conclusive were all grounded in the requisite canon law, and were

³ John Friedman, Jean Connell Hoff, & Robert Chazan, *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, (Toronto, 2012), pp.93-4; Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the Thirteenth Century*, Philadelphia, 1933 (new ed. New York, 1966), pp.240-241: ‘ipsi enim sicut accepimus, lege veteri, quam Dominus per Moysen in scriptis edidit, non contenti, immo penitus pretermittentes eadem, affirmant legem aliam, que Talmut, id est Doctrina, dicitur’.

⁴ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, p.94: ‘Judeis non debet esse licentia in synagogis suis, ultra quam permissum est lege presumere’.

⁵ Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.95-7; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.250-253: ‘a legis, et prophetarum doctrina reddunt ipsos penitus alienos’.

⁶ Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp. 97-98; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘sine illo libro qui hebraice Talmut dicitur, bibliam et alia statute sue legis secundum fidem ipsorum intelligere nequeunt.’, ‘eosdem toleret’.

⁷ Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, p.95: ‘qui nichil machinari presumpserint in subversionem fidei Christiane’; Friedman et al., *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp. 100-101; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.275-279: ‘fidei Christiane injuria’.

not a wide-ranging attack on Judaism itself – if Odo’s position had acquired papal support this may have been different.

By contrast, the *Dialogus* was such a wide-ranging attack on Judaism. It was not grounded in canon law, and instead was the attempt of a convert to justify his conversion as a rational process. Alfonsi’s argument was grounded in demonstrating the absurdity of the *aggadot* contained within the Talmud. Although the initial conductors of the Talmud trial concurred with Alfonsi’s assessment that belief in the truth of these stories prevented the Jews from correctly understanding their own scriptures, the difference in genre between the two meant that they used this argument in a very different way. Petrus Alfonsi went on to argue that responsibility for the stories was attributable to the *doctores* who taught them, and who were of the same kind as those who had taken the decision to kill Jesus ‘from the poison of envy, since they feared that they feared that they would lose their glory and rank.’⁸ Adding that ‘even though not all were present, all nevertheless offered their assent,’ Alfonsi made the case that the killing of Jesus had been an act of deliberate deicide.⁹ This went beyond the scope of the judicial process of the Talmud trial.

Manuscripts of the *Dialogus* appear to have been available in Paris at the time of the Talmud Trial, with one twelfth century manuscript originating in St. Victor, while others are catalogued as having been produced in other places in Northern France, including Fecamp, Arras and Prémontré.¹⁰ Although the *Dialogus* was not initially necessary for the trial of the Talmud, widening Christian interest in the Talmud led to greater polemic use of the *Dialogus*. Despite

⁸ PL 157 649D: ‘invidiae veneno... cum per eum gloriam et dignitatem suam amissuros se esse timuerunt’; Irven Resnick (trans.), *Dialogue against the Jews*, (Washington, 2006), p.237.

⁹ PL 157 663C: ‘Licet enim non omnis adfuit, omnis tamen assensum praebuit.’ Resnick, *Dialogue*, p. 261.

¹⁰ Cf. Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, Darko Senekovic, & Thomas Ziegler, “Modes of Variability: The Textual Transmission of Petrus Alfonsi’s *Dialogus*”, in Cardelle de Hartmann & Roelli, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Dialogus*, pp. 227-48; Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann and Darko Senekovic, “Reading Petrus Alfonsi Before The Talmud Trials: The Manuscript Evidence.”.

familiarity with Talmudic material, Thibaud of Sezanne placed excerpts from the *Dialogus* alongside extracts from the *Extractiones de Talmud* in his *Pharetra Fidei*, while Odo of Chateauroux made use of Alfonsi's argumentation to advance his case to support Jewish converts to Christianity, and to explain, as Alfonsi did, their reasons for converting. This activity has led Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann to label it the beginning of 'an active reception of the text', as interest in the Talmud 'moved to the focus of polemics'.¹¹ Although not directly involved in the Trial of the Talmud, the *Dialogus* was an influential part of the small body of Latin literature produced about the Talmud in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

That material of such different genres comes from similar interpretations of Talmudic material can be seen in the choice of language they use. Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus* did not use the word Talmud, but instead spoke of a singular '*doctrina*' upon which the Jews' 'entire law relies'.¹² Gregory IX spoke of '*Talmut, id est doctrina*' when opening the Paris investigations into the Talmud, and Thibaud of Sézanne's *Pharetra Fidei Contra Iudaeos* opens with the clear statement that '*Thalmut est doctrina*'.¹³ All of these works speak to the debate prompted by Jeremy Cohen's argument that the thirteenth-century attack on the Talmud was part of a 'new Christian ideology with regard to the Jews', which 'allotted the Jews no legitimate right to exist in European society'.¹⁴ This conclusion is certainly not borne out by an examination of the *Dialogus Contra Iudaeos* and the Trial of the Talmud in Paris. Both attacked the Talmud, and Alfonsi considered it to be a major part of Jewish disbelief in Christ, but the attack on the Talmud was not accompanied by a sustained attack on Judaism itself. Even in Paris, the assault on the Talmud moved from polemic to judicial investigation and public burning of Jewish religious texts, without anti-Jewish violence. Further, Innocent IV's instruction to Odo to

¹¹ Cardelle de Hartmann, Senekovic, & Ziegler, "Modes of Variability", p.246-7.

¹² PL 157 540C: 'lex vestra tota... annitur'; Resnick, *Dialogue*, p.32.

¹³ Friedman et al, *The Trial of the Talmud*, pp.93-4; Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*, pp.240-241; Theobaldi de Saxonia, "Pharetra Fidei contra Iudaeos," in J. Wolf, (ed.), *Bibliotheca Hebraea*, 4, (Hamburg, 1733), p.560.

¹⁴ Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval anti-Judaism*, (Ithaca, 1982), p.14.

reinvestigate the Talmud made clear that he was not convinced by the argument that the Talmud had caused Jews to reject Mosaic law and thus undermined their position as witnesses to the truth of Christ. Nor were Alfonsi's charges of deliberate disbelief and deliberate deicide were not taken up in order to undermine the position of Judaism in medieval society. Judaism was certainly attacked in a polemic sense, but there is no evidence of a concerted effort to deny it a right to exist.

There is a great deal of room for further research in this area. The forthcoming critical edition being produced by Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann and her team in Zurich will greatly aid anyone working on the *Dialogus Contra Iudaeos*, while the manuscript research it has necessitated should continue to answer difficult questions of availability and transmission. When considering the aftermath of the Trial of the Talmud, the project headed by Alexander Fidora in Barcelona, entitled "The Latin Talmud and Its Influence on Christian-Jewish Polemic", should be similarly impactful, especially if it is able to achieve its stated aim of producing an edition of the *Extractiones de Talmud*.

A natural progression for further work on the relationship between Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus Contra Iudaeos* and the 'attack on the Talmud' would be to extend consideration of the *Dialogus*' influence to the 1263 Barcelona Disputation, and its corollary, the 1270 second Disputation of Paris.¹⁵ These were attacks on the Talmud led by Friar Pablo Christiani which had a different aim to the original Paris trial – conversion. Given the directly competing nature of the accounts of Barcelona, a good knowledge of Hebrew would be a prerequisite for this work, while the implications of Harvey Hames' argument that the Hebrew account of the 1240 Talmud Trial was reflective of events in Barcelona would likely be of immediate importance.

¹⁵ Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond. The Disputation of 1263 and its Aftermath*, (Berkeley, 1992); Joseph Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris: Un chapitre dans la polémique entre chrétiens et juifs au Moyen Âge*, (Paris, 1994); Hames, "Reconstructing Thirteenth-century Jewish-Christian Polemic".

APPENDIX 1: CHAPTER-HEADINGS OF THE THEMATIC *EXTRACTIONES DU TALMUD*¹

De auctoritate Talmud	On the Authority of the Talmud
De sapientibus et magistris	On the Sages and Masters
De blasphemiiis contra Christum et beatam virginem	On blasphemies against Christ and the Blessed Virgin
De blasphemiiis contra Deum	On blasphemies against God
De malis quae dicunt de goym, id est christianis	On wickedness towards those who they call ‘goyim’, i.e. Christians
De erroribus	On errors
De sortilegiis	On witchcraft
De somniis	On dreams
De futuro saeculo	On the future world
De Messia	On the Messiah
De stultitiis	On nonsenses
De turpitudinibus et immunditiis	On shameful and disgusting things
De fabulis	On tales

¹ BNF lat. 16558; described in Gilbert Dahan , “Les traductions latines de Thibaud de Sézanne”, in Gilbert Dahan, (ed.), *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris*, (Paris, 1999).

APPENDIX 2: TITLES OF THE LATIN ACCUSATIONS¹

1	ASSERUNT IUDEI LEGEM QUE TALMUT DICITUR DOMINUM EDIDISSE	THE JEWS CLAIM THAT THE LORD GAVE THE LAW WHICH IS CALLED THE TALMUD
2	DE VERBO DOMINI DICUNT TRADITAM	THEY SAY THAT IT WAS HANDED DOWN BY THE WORD OF THE LORD
3	ET INSERTAM EORUM MENTIBUS (menciuntur)	AND IMPLANTED IN THEIR MINDS (they lie)
4	DICUNT CECIAM EAM TAMDIU SINE SCRIPTIS SERVATAM, DONEC QUIDAM VENERUNT, QUOS SAPIENTES ET SCRIBAS APPELLANT, QUI EAM, NE PER OBLIVIONEM A MENTIBUS HOMINUM LABRETUR, IN SCRIPTURAM CUIUS VOLUMEN IN IMMENSUM EXCEDIT TEXTUM BIBLIE REDEGERUNT	THEY SAY ALSO THAT IT WAS PRESERVED FOR A LONG TIME WITHOUT BEING WRITTEN UNTIL CERTAIN MEN CAME WHOM THEY CALL SAGES AND SCRIBES, WHO RENDERED IT IN WRITING SO THAT IT WOULD NOT SLIP FROM MEN'S MINDS THROUGH FORGETFULNESS, THE BOOK OF WHICH EXCEEDS THE TEXT OF THE BIBLE IN SIZE
5	IN QUA INTER CETERA INANIA CONTINETUR, QUOD DICTI SAPIENTES ET SCRIBE MELIUS VALENT QUAM PROPHETE	IN IT AMONG OTHER SILLY THINGS IT IS CONTAINED THAT THE SAID SAGES AND SCRIBES ARE WORTH MORE THAN THE PROPHETS
6	ET VERBA LEGIS SCRIPTE DSETRUERE POTUERUNT	AND THEY WERE ABLE TO OVERTURN THE WORDS OF THE WRITTEN LAW
7	ET CREDI DEBET EISDEM SI SINISTRAM DEXTRAM DICERENT	AND IT OUGHT TO BE BELIEVED OF THE SAME THAT IF THEY SAID LEFT

¹ BNF lat. 16558; Isidore Loeb, "La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud", *Revue des etudes juives* 2 (1881), 252-70, Isidore Loeb, "La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud", *Revue des etudes juives* 3 (1882), 39-57.

	VEL E CONTRARIO DEXTRAM VERTERENT IN SINISTRAM	WAS RIGHT OR VICE VERSA, THEY WOULD TURN RIGHT INTO LEFT
8	MORIQUE DEBET QUI NON SERVAVIT QUE DIXERUNT	AND HE OUGHT TO DIE WHO DOES NOT OBSERVE WHAT THEY SAY
9	QUI PROHIBENT NE INFANTES BIBLIA UTANTUR, QUIA NON EST MODUS, UT DICUNT, DISCENDUM EA, SED DOCTRINAM TALMUT PREFERENTES, QUEDAM EDIDERUNT PRO SUA VOLUNTATE MANDATA	THEY PROHIBIT YOUNG CHILDREN FROM STUDYING THE BIBLE BECAUSE IT IS NOT A VIRTUE, AS THEY SAY, TO LEARN THESE THINGS, BUT, PREFERRING THE TEACHING OF THE TALMUD, THEY HAVE PROMULGATED CERTAIN INJUNCTIONS OF THEIR OWN ACCORD
10	IN QUIBUS QUI PRO LEGE DIXERUNT: OPTIMUM XPISTIANORUM OCCIDE	AMONG THEM [ARE] SOME WHO PRESCRIBED AS LAW: KILL THE BEST CHRISTIAN
11	ET XPISTIANUS QUIESCENS VEL STUDENS IN LEGE, PENE MORTIS SUBDATUR	AND LET THE CHRISTIAN WHO RESTS OR STUDIES THE LAW BE PLACED UNDER PUNISHMENT OF DEATH
12	ET XPRISTIANORUM QUILIBET ARTE QUALIBET VEL INGENIO POTEST DECIPI SINE PECCATO	AND ANY OF THE CHRISTIANS CAN BE DECEIVED BY ANY ARTIFICE OR CLEVER TRICK WITHOUT SIN
13	ET QUICUMQUE IURAMENTO ALIQUO VULT NON TENERI, IN ANNI PRINCIPIO PROTESTETUR QUOD VOTA ET IURAMENTA EIUS NON VALEANT QUE FACIET ILLO ANNO	AND ANYONE WHO DOES NOT WISH TO BE BOUND BY SOME OATH, LET HIM DECLARE IN PUBLIC AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR THAT THE VOWS AND OATHS OF HIS THAT HE

		WILL MAKE IN THAT YEAR ARE NOT VALID
14	TRES QUOQUE IUDEI, QUICUNQUE SUNT, POSSUNT ABSOLVERE QUENCUNQUE AB OMNI IURAMENTO	ALSO THREE JEWS, WHOEVER THEY MAY BE, CAN RELEASE ANYONE FROM EVERY OATH
15	ASSERUNT ECIAM DOMINUM PECCASE	THEY ALSO CLAIM THAT THE LORD SINNED
16	ET PENITUISSE IURAMENTI QUOD FECIT IN IRA	AND THAT HE REPENTED THE OATH THAT HE MADE IN ANGER
17	ET SIBI MALEDIXESSE QUIA IURAVERAT ET ABSOLUCIONEM EXINDE POSTULASSE	AND THAT HE CURSED HIMSELF BECAUSE HE HAD SWORN AN OATH AND ASKED TO BE RELEASED FROM IT
18	AC SINGULIS NOCTIBUS SIBI MALEDICERE QUIA DIMISIT TEMPLUM ET ISRAEL SUBDIDIT SERVITUTI	AND THAT EVERY NIGHT HE CURSES HIMSELF BECAUSE HE DESTROYED THE TEMPLE AND SENT THE ISRAELITES INTO SLAVERY
19	ITEM DICUNT EUM ABRAHE FUISSE MENTITUM	THEY ALSO SAY THAT HE LIED TO ABRAHAM
20	ET SAMUELI PROPHETE MANDASSE MENTIRI	AND THAT HE ORDERED THE PROPHET SAMUEL TO LIE
21	ET POSTQUAM TEMPLUM DESERUIT, AD MENSURAM III ^{OR} BRACHIORUM CERTUS SIBI LOCUS REMANSIT UBI STUDET IN PREFATA DOCTRINA	AND AFTER HE DESTROYED THE TEMPLE, A SPECIFIED PLACE MEASURING FOUR CUBITS WAS LEFT FOR HIM, WHERE HE STUDIES THE SAID TEACHING

22	ET COTIDIE EXERCET STUDIUM DOCENDO PUEROS QUI DECEDUNT TALI SCIENCIA NON IMBUTI	AND EVERY DAY HE ENGAGES IN STUDY, TEACHING CHILDREN WHO DIE WITHOUT BEING INSTRUCTED IN SUCH KNOWLEDGE
23	ROGAT ECIAM SUPER SE IPSUM UT IUDEORUM DEBEAT MISERERI	HE ALSO ASKS HIMSELF TO HAVE MERCY ON THE JEWS
24	AC RESPONDIT SE AB EIS VICTUM IN DISPUTATIONE SUA SUPER EADEM DOCTRINA	AND HE ANSWERS THAT HE WAS DEFEATED BY THEM IN THEIR DISPUTATION ABOUT THE SAME TEACHING
25	ET TER DIE QUOLIBET LACRIMATUR	AND HE CRIES THREE TIMES EVERY DAY
26	DE XPISTO ECIAM DICERE NON VERENTUR QUOD MATER EIUS EUM DE ADULTERIO CONCEPIT EX QUODAM QUI AB EIS PANDERA VULGARITER APPELLATUR	THEY ARE ALSO NOT AFRAID TO SAY ABOUT CHRIST THAT HIS MOTHER CONCEIVED HIM IN ADULTERY BY A CERTAIN MAN WHO IS COMMONLY CALLED PANDIRA BY THEM
27	ET QUOD IDEM IHESUS IN STERCORE CALIDO PATITUR IN INFERNO, QUONIAM IRRIDEBAT VERBA SAPIENCIUM PREFATORUM	AND THAT THIS SAME JESUS SUFFERS IN HOT EXCREMENT IN HELL BECAUSE HE MOCKED THE WORDS OF THE ABOVEMENTIONED SAGES
28	ADHUC DICUNT QUOD QUELIBET VERBA POLLUTA PROFERRE, PECCATUM EST, EXCEPTIS QUE IN CONTEMPTUM ECCLESIE VERGERE DINOSCUNTUR	THEY SAY THAT IT IS A SIN TO SPEAK ANY UNCLEAN WORDS, EXCEPT THOSE THAT ARE KNOWN TO VERGE ON CONTEMPT OF THE CHURCH

29	ET UTUNTUR QUIBUSDAM VOCABULIS QUIBUS ROMANUM PONTIFICEM ET XPISTIANITATEM DEHONESTANT	AND THEY USE CERTAIN WORDS WITH WHICH THEY DISPARAGE THE ROMAN PONTIFF AND CHRISTIANITY
30	IN SINGULIS DIEBUS TER IN ORACIONE QUAM DIGNIOREM ADDERUNT MINISTRIS ECCLESIE, REGIBUS ET ALIIS OMNIBUS, IPSIS IUDEIS INIMICANTIBUS, MALEDICUNT	THREE TIMES A NIGHT IN THE PRAYER THAT THEY CLAIM IS THE MOST WORTHY THEY CURSE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH, KINGS AND ALL OTHERS, EVEN JEWS THEMSELVES, WHO ARE THEIR ENEMIES
31	CONTINETUR ECIAM IN DOCTRINA PREFATA QUOD IUDEI ULTRA XII MENSES PENAM INFERNI MINIME PACIENTUR, NEC ULTERIUS POTEST EIS PENA GEHENALIS NOCERE	IT IS ALSO CONTAINED IN THE SAID TEACHING THAT JEWS DO NOT SUFFER THE PUNISHMENT OF HEL FOR MORE THAN TWELVE MONTHS, AND THE PUNISHMENT OF GEHENNA CANNOT HARM THE ME ANY LONGER THAN THAT
32	AC SECURUS EST IN FUTURO QUI IN DOCTRINA PREFATA STUDUERIT IN PRESENTI	AND HE WHO STUDIED TE AFORESAID TEACHING IN THE PRESENT LIFE IS SAFE IN THE FUTURE
33	ET OMNES IEIUNANTES REPUTANT PECCATORES	AND THEY REGARD ALL WHO FAST AS SINNERS
34	DICENTES ADAM CUM OMNIBUS BRUTIS ET SERPENTEM CUM EVA COISSE	SAYING THAT ADAM LAY WITH ALL THE BEASTS AND THE SERPENT LAY WITH EVE
35	ET CHAM NOHE PATRE SUO FUISSE	AND THAT HAM ABUSED NOAH, HIS OWN FATHER

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