

**From *Testimonia* to Testimony:
Thirteenth-Century Anti-Jewish Polemic and
the *Mostrador de justicia* of
Abner of Burgos / Alfonso of Valladolid**

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of
Yale University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
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May, 2006

UMI Number: 3214312

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Abstract

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2006

Born in the years following the Disputation of Barcelona of 1263, the Castilian Jew Abner of Burgos (c.1270-c.1347), known after his conversion to Christianity as Alfonso of Valladolid, wrote various anti-Jewish polemics in Hebrew that included arguments similar to those made previously by Dominican missionaries. Principle among his works is the *Moreh Zedek* (Heb. “Teacher of Righteousness”), which survives only in a contemporary Castilian translation as *Mostrador de justicia*. This dissertation examines the *Mostrador de justicia* in the context of thirteenth-century Dominican use of postbiblical Jewish sources in support of Christian arguments (rather than simply Biblical proof texts, or *testimonia*) in order to establish to what degree Abner/Alfonso’s work followed from earlier polemics and in what ways his writing can be seen as innovative. By looking at the question of how textual authority is constructed in polemical texts, I show that the elaboration of arguments from the Disputation of Barcelona by the Dominican polyglot Raymond Martini constituted a shift in focus away from direct, missionary engagement with real Jews towards a more theological, textual polemic meaningful more to Christian readers than to Jewish disputants. I then demonstrate that Abner/Alfonso, who appears not to know Martini’s texts, wrote polemics intended for a Jewish readership and developed the same arguments from the Disputation of Barcelona while keeping the rhetorical demands of real persuasion and appeal in mind. Specifically, by including his

personal testimony as a convert and former Jew with the traditional exegetical use of proof texts, he expanded the basis of argumentative authority. By framing his polemic within the narrative of his own conversion and by addressing his Jewish reader directly, Abner/Alfonso puts his own testimony on par with textual sources and invites his reader to see his own struggle and conversion as a model to be emulated. I conclude that by implicating himself in his own text and by authenticating his use of textual authorities with his own personal testimony and imitation of Jewish textual norms and style, Abner/Alfonso introduces ambiguity and self-contradiction into his text that undermines his missionizing agenda.

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Acknowledgments

To recall the many people who have helped and supported me in my education makes me realize how much this dissertation is a collective effort, and how inappropriate it is to call it mine only.

My first debt is to my teachers. I am extremely grateful to all the wonderful professors at Yale University who have inspired, challenged, and otherwise moved me to deepen my knowledge, improve my language skills, and sharpen my thinking. In particular, I wish to thank my advisor, María Rosa Menocal, who has profoundly influenced my understanding of many things. Above all, she has taught me the importance of being interesting (although, as this dissertation shows, I've got a long way to go). I also wish to thank the readers of my dissertation: my professor, neighbor, and friend, Oscar Martín who, together with Lourdes Casas, has taught me much and helped me in uncountable ways, personally and academically; Professor Iván Fernández, who has given much appreciated and useful practical advice; and Daniel Lasker, who provided me with materials, bibliographies, and guidance both in class and out, and whose positive influence and gentle correction have influenced many parts of this dissertation.

I wish to thank Professor Rolena Adorno in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Yale and Professor Howard Bloch in French, both of whom had more impact on my thinking than I recognized while in their classes; my Arabic professors Beatrice Gruendler and Dimitri Gutas for their patience with my many deficiencies and their willingness to allow me to pursue my interests; my Hebrew teachers Ayala Dvoretzky and Victoria Hoffer, both of whom taught me much in a short span of years; Bob Babcock at the Beinecke Library for his encouragement and paleographical

expertise; Gad Freudenthal for his help with many queries, for his real enthusiasm over Abner of Burgos, and for sharing with me some of his unpublished material on Abner/Alfonso's work; Jonathan Ray for his wry humor and his practical help; and Jeffrey Larson at Sterling Library for acquiring a microfilm of the *Mostrador* for me. I am also grateful to the Beinecke Rare Book Library and to the John F. Enders Fellowship at Yale for supporting me with research funding.

Beyond Yale, I also wish to thank Professors Dwayne Carpenter at Boston College and Ross Brann at Cornell University for sharing copies of their work with me; Chaim Hames for sending me his digital copy of the *Pugio Fidei*; Luis Girón Negrón for suggesting some useful bibliographical leads for me; Linde Brocato, for teaching me how to read Augustine; Basilio Losada, Professor of Galician at the University of Barcelona, who is ultimately responsible for my initial interest in Medieval Spain; and to my friend and mentor, Herb Marder, who shared with me his warm eye for paradox, rabbinical and otherwise. A very special thanks must go to my professors in Comparative Literature at the University of Illinois, especially Professor Michael Palencia Roth, "lo mio maestro", who has helped and inspired me at every stage of my graduate career, and who made me an irredeemable comparatist. I still depend on his guidance and cherish his friendship.

I am also grateful to all my good friends at the University of Illinois and at Yale for their friendship and affection. Thanks to Amber Landis for insisting on the good things in life; to Valerie Wilhite for her particular approach to Medieval Studies; to Steve Adisasmito-Smith, fellow hermeneut, for being one of my secret heroes; to Gagan Sood for reading Arabic with me; to Camilo Gómez and Emmanuelle Salgues for their companionship and for babysitting and loving Finn; and to David Assouline for listening

to me go Deep Abner, for sharing with me his perfect combination of humor and originality, and for being my very dear friend. Thanks also to my friends beyond my studies, Andrea, Krista, Esti, and Jon, for continuing to enrich my life with their friendship. I can't say enough to convey my gratitude and affection to all of them.

My deepest debt is to my family. I am grateful to my father-in-law Ed for all the books and for his very careful comments on much of this dissertation—*Tibi qui doctor es verus etsi tua sponte incognitus maximas uberesque gratias ago*—and to my mother-in-law Nancy for her practical help and quirky humor. I am forever beholden to my parents, Terry and Joyce, who have given me everything, above all my peace of mind; to my wife Mary Deirdre Casey for her amazing love, uncountable sacrifices, and ongoing patience in helping me pursue my interests—*“diez años en mi mente con imperio tus luces han reinado”*—and to our son Finnegan Eli—*“der herrliche Fremdling mit den sinnvollen Augen”*—who is the greatest source of Joy in both of our lives, and who was my motivation to finally finish this dissertation.

I finally wish to thank the two pioneering women who have most influenced my intellectual growth and academic pursuits: my grandmother, Helen Engelbach—the first person in our family to attend college (B.S. 1931)—who has continued to nurture me in my studies for my entire life; and my sister, Dr. Kimberly Szpiech—the first and, thus far, only person in our family to earn a doctorate (Ph.D. 1996)—who has always been my model in all things academic, and whose example, encouragement, and assistance are the reason I ever started studying and the reason I am now find myself finishing my degree. It is to them that I wish to dedicate this dissertation. I wish I had more to offer in return for all they have given me.

For my grandmother Helen and my sister Kim,
for their inspiration and example.

A note on the format of citations:

Whenever possible, I refer to Abner/Alfonso's texts by their original Hebrew titles (this excludes those works for which no Hebrew title is known, such as the *Libro de la ley*). For the *Mostrador de justicia*, because no Hebrew original is extant, I have opted to refer to the text by its Castilian title unless specifically discussing the lost Hebrew version. I have, however, insisted on using "Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid" or "Abner/Alfonso" in order to highlight the essentially dual nature of his authorial identity.

In citations of page and folio numbers, I give the manuscript folio first and then the page number of the published edition. When more than one published edition exists, the edition is specified in each case. Regardless of the format of the printed editions, manuscript folios are referred to as "r" (recto), "v" (verso) not "a" or "b". For two-column manuscripts (i.e. Vatican MS 6423), folio and column are listed as "ra", "rb", "va", and "vb", not "a", "b", "c", or "d". For references to the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, when the text exists in both the Hebrew original and the Castilian translation, I give the folio of the Hebrew MS Parma "De Rossi" 533 first, followed by the folio of the Castilian MS Vatican 6423. Castilian manuscript folio numbers always follow Hebrew manuscript folio numbers. When passages do not correspond, the cited manuscript is designated as either "H" (Hebrew) or "C" (Castilian). For the *Teshuvot ha-Meshubot*, I give the page numbers in Rosenthal's published version only. For the polemical letters, I give Rosenthal's pages followed by the folio number of the Castilian MS 6423 when it corresponds to the Hebrew text.

Introduction

One telling way to measure the importance of a polemical work—which necessarily includes its influence on later works—is to assess the number of responses, both positive and negative, it produced. Of all the anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim polemics written in the Middle Ages, few incited as many responses from its polemical enemies as that of the learned Jewish convert to Christianity, Abner of Burgos (ca. 1270-ca. 1347), known after his conversion as Alfonso of Valladolid.¹ In the century and a half after Abner/Alfonso's death, over a dozen Jewish writers took to refuting or directly addressing his arguments.² Equally significant, his work is a source for three of the most important and influential Christian polemicists in the century after his death: Pablo de Santa María (formerly Solomon Ha-Levi, Rabbi and later Bishop of Burgos, and private tutor of King Juan II), Gerónimo de Santa Fe (formerly Joshua Ha-Lorki, Christian disputant at the anti-Jewish Tortosa debate in 1412-3), and Alfonso de Spina (fifteenth-century Franciscan polemicist and confessor to King Henry IV of Castile). Some of Abner/Alfonso's works received the attention of the Infanta Blanca, granddaughter of Alfonso X and *señora* of the convent of Las Huelgas, and some showed up in the personal library of the rival pope

¹ The Levantine Christian *Letter of al-Kindī* and the Mozarabic *Contrarietas alfolica* were by far the most read and influential Christian polemics against Islam. The *Dialogus contra Iudaeos* of the twelfth-century Spanish convert Petrus Alfonsi was the most read anti-Jewish polemic of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as well as a major source of anti-Muslim arguments, and the letter of Rabbi Isaac to Rabbi Samuel by the Bishop of Marrakech, Alfonso Buenhombre de Cuenca, was among the most read Latin anti-Jewish polemics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The popularity of these writings, however, is measured mostly in the attention they received from other Christians, and none of these works incited the array of responses from the people they attacked that Abner/Alfonso's texts did from Iberian Jews. As Chazan argues, "Perhaps the most persuasive gauge of the significance of the man lies in the number of Jewish responses to Abner-Alfonso that have been preserved as part of medieval Jewish polemical literature" (*Daggers of Faith* 165).

² Among the more illustrious of whom are Joseph ben Shem Tov, Moses ha-Cohen of Tordesillas, Shem Tov Ibn Shaprut, Isaac Polgar, Moses Narboni, Joseph Shalom, Isaac Albalag, Isaac Israeli, Samuel Ibn Sasson, Hayim ben Yehuda Ibn Musa, and Judah Leon of Modena, among others. We will consider the responses to Abner/Alfonso's work in more detail in chapter one of the supplement.

Benedict XIII of Avignon (Pedro de Luna), who was at the heart of the papal schism between Rome and Avignon that began in 1378.³ It has even been speculated that Abner/Alfonso's influence is evident in the Hebrew and Castilian writing of the fourteenth-century author Sem Tob de Carrión. In the words of historian Norman Roth, "no other single polemicist, "old Christian" or convert, has ever produced so formidable an array of respondents" (*Conversos* 191). The historian of thirteenth-century Jewry, Robert Chazan, calls Abner/Alfonso "the most impressive of the medieval converts from Judaism to Christianity" (*Daggers of Faith* 165), and Yitzhak Baer, perhaps the most influential twentieth-century historian of medieval Spanish Jewry, agrees: "Of the disputants who took a stand against Israel in the Middle Ages, the convert Abner of Burgos exceeds all in the worth and the depth of his influence" (*Sefer Minh'at Qenaot of Abner of Burgos* 188).⁴

This impact is probably due, as others have pointed out, to the important fact that Alfonso wrote his works not in Latin, but in Hebrew and Castilian (Roth, *Conversos* 191). Not only did his writing constitute the first substantive Christian attack on Judaism written in Hebrew—even the polyglot polemicists of the thirteenth century, who quoted Hebrew abundantly, did not *compose* their anti-Jewish polemics in anything but Latin—it was also among the first examples of such literature in Castilian or any other romance language. The direct address of polemical, conversionary arguments to the Jews in their sacred language by a learned Rabbi who converted after long struggle and contemplation

³ On the papal library, see supplement chapter one.

⁴ Baer was fascinated with Abner/Alfonso and had stated plans to undertake an exhaustive study of his life and works. He makes similar statements about Abner/Alfonso's importance in polemical writing in other works and dedicated a long section to him in his *History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (1:327-54). Although he commented more on the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, he was very familiar with the *Mostrador de justica*.

(and not under duress) continued to disconcert many Spanish Jews for over a century after Alfonso's death. Because he spoke as a former Jew directly to Jews in Hebrew, Abner/Alfonso could serve as more than just a polemicist or converter, but as a living testimony to his own words, a Jew who presented cogent arguments in favor of Christianity. No other figure, convert or otherwise, presented the same mixture of polemical argument with personal testimony.

It is meaningful that it was the Infanta Blanca who first prompted Abner/Alfonso from within the convent walls of Las Huelgas of Burgos to translate his Hebrew work *Sefer Milhamot Adonai* (*Book of the Wars of the Lord*) into Castilian under the title *Libro de las batallas de Dios*. Less than a century after Alfonso X had transformed the status and use of Castilian through his translations into and compositions in that language, his granddaughter, by patronizing Abner/Alfonso's work, oversaw the creation of one of the earliest and by far the longest polemical text in that language theretofore. Although we only know for certain that Abner/Alfonso translated the *Libro de las batallas* himself, it is very likely that he continued this practice of self-translation from Hebrew to Spanish in his later works. Walter Mettmann, the recent editor of the first-known printing of Abner/Alfonso's longest work, the *Mostrador de justicia*, the fourteenth-century Castilian translation of his magnum opus *Moreh Zedek* (Heb. "Teacher of Righteousness"), persuasively defends the argument that Abner/Alfonso was directly involved in producing the Spanish versions of his texts.⁵ While a number of Alfonso's lost works are known of

⁵ Baer notes that his works were "mostly written in Hebrew and later translated under his own supervision" (*A History*, 1: 334). Mettmann considers this assertion, asking, "Handelt es sich beim "Mostrador", wie bisher meist angenommen, um die Übersetzung, möglicherweise aus der Hand Alfonsos selbst (wie dies von den verlorengegangenen "Milhamot Adonai"/"Libro de las Batallas de Dios" berichtet wird), eines zuerst hebräisch abgefaßten Werks mit dem Titel "Moreh Zedek"? Alle Indizien sprechen dagegen" (Abner of Burgos, *Mostrador de Justicia*, 8). Abner/Alfonso either translated his works himself, as he did for certain in

only in their Hebrew versions,⁶ many of his extant works are known also in medieval Castilian translations. The fourteenth-century Manuscript 6423 of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana contains a Castilian version of *Libro del zelo de Dios* (Heb. *Minḥat Qenaot*) as well as Castilian versions of most of the contents of the Hebrew manuscript Parma 2440/De Rossi 533 (which contains, among other things, various letters of Alfonso and his dispute with his former friend, Rabbi Isaac Polgar, the *Respuestas al blasfemo* (Heb. *Teshuvot la-Meharef*)).⁷ The survival not only of the Castilian manuscript of the *Mostrador* (now the only known extant version of the work) but also the Castilian versions of a number of his other important works—all in manuscripts from the fourteenth century—blurs the line between original and translation and gives reason for seeing the Castilian versions as no less representative of Alfonso's authorial handiwork than his original Hebrew texts. Both the fact that the work was translated into Castilian and not Latin, and the fact that the text takes the form of a dramatized dialog rather than as a didactic missionizing manual, makes it difficult to identify the genre of the work, which blends strict polemical concerns with the ambiguity of literary autobiography. The scholar Carlos Sainz de la Maza does not exaggerate when he dubs Alfonso "el verdadero

the case of his *Milḥamot* or, less likely, he worked carefully with a Christian *converso* translator who knew Hebrew as well as he did, and who was familiar enough with biblical and rabbinic literature as well as with Arabic philosophy to understand his arguments. It would be surprising to find another convert in Abner/Alfonso's time who could have possessed the know-how and background to translate Abner/Alfonso's works effectively, and even more unlikely that such a convert should exist and still go completely unknown and unmentioned in all his works. Regarding the doubt, expressed in early criticism of Abner/Alfonso, if the *Mostrador* was actually composed in Hebrew or Castilian, there are specific statements in the text (considered in supplement chapter two) that show the Castilian text we now possess is a translation made from an original Hebrew text.

⁶ Abner/Alfonso's lost works are discussed in appendix two of the supplement.

⁷ This work has been the subject of doctoral dissertations by Shoshana Gershenzon (Jewish Theological Seminary, 1984) Jonathon Hecht (New York University, 1993) and Carlos Sainz de la Maza (Universidad Complutense 1990). For a fuller consideration of each of Abner/Alfonso's works and their manuscript sources, see supplement chapter one.

fundador de la apologética antijudaica en lengua romance” (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 799), but Abner/Alfonso’s work is also among the earliest examples of autobiographical prose in Castilian. The cornerstone of this dual polemical and autobiographical foundation, Alfonso’s *Mostrador de Justicia* is the earliest of his works to survive and is the longest, most diverse, and most “literary” of his extant works. No consideration of any of Abner/Alfonso’s other works can be undertaken without a clear understanding of it.

This dissertation considers the evolution of medieval Christian anti-Jewish polemic through a detailed study of the *Mostrador* in comparison with earlier thirteenth-century polemics. Abner/Alfonso’s writing appears at the end of a process of change in polemical writing in which polemicists sought to reconcile the inaccurate representations of Jews and Judaism in many traditional writings of the church fathers with more realistic notions gained from interaction with real Jews and real Jewish texts. As I argue, his work repeats many of the arguments from that process and at the same time stands apart from it through innovations in its argument and presentation. Among Abner/Alfonso’s many philosophical and polemical texts, his *Mostrador* likewise represents a central work in the development of his own writings, containing much material repeated or reformulated in his later work. It is unique, however, in its blending of standard polemical material with a discussion of his individual perspective as a religious convert, making an innovative appeal to personal experience as the source of his polemical knowledge and his authority to adduce and prove polemical arguments against Judaism. By comparing Abner/Alfonso’s work with earlier polemics by other authors, it is possible to examine the apparent continuity between his “new” polemical style in the *Mostrador* and thirteenth-

century polemics against Jews and Judaism and to show the specific ways in which Abner/Alfonso's personal approach was an innovation on previous polemical arguments. Although the figure of the converted Jew becomes critically important in the Jewish-Christian polemical conflict of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (in both texts and public disputations), Abner/Alfonso expands this previous innovation by representing, in himself, the converted Jew as both a source of authentic information about Jewish belief and writing and, at the same time, as a model of conversionary behavior.

Although the conflation of the figures of the convert and missionary can be said to have existed from the beginnings of Christianity in the figure of St. Paul and the early church fathers who themselves were converted (Tertullian and Augustine, among others), the convert/polemicist begins to play a significant role in anti-Jewish writing in the works of Moshe Sefardi, known after his conversion in 1106 as Petrus Alfonsi. Following a series of important converts who embodied the new practice in thirteenth-century polemics of making use of postbiblical Jewish writing as textual sources to prove the truth of Christianity (such as Nicolas Donin, who spearheaded the trial of the Talmud in Paris in the 1240s, and Pablo Christiani, the central figure in the disputation of Barcelona in 1263), Abner/Alfonso represents the culmination of this phenomenon in which the personal identity of the polemicist comes to play a critical role in the construction and defense of authority supporting the polemical argument. At the same time, as we can see by comparing him to previous similar converts, his polemics embody an inherent ambiguity in the function of converts in Christian missionizing, because in his writing the opposed stances of Christian and Jew as converter and converted often become confused in a new hybrid notion of the "converted converter," the missionary who has the power

to convert based on his own pre-conversion experience. This confusion of perspectives distinguishes the polemics of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid from the similar texts and arguments that preceded him, such as the arguments of Pablo Christiani at the Disputation of Barcelona and the attack on the Talmud in Paris a decade later and the anti-Jewish *Capistrum Iudaeorum* and *Pugio Fidei* of Raymond Martini. A careful reading of some of the key texts associated with this so-called “missionizing” movement of thirteenth-century Dominicans reveals a mixture of disparate intentions at the disputation of Barcelona, in which polemicists sought to provide proof and argumentation directed at Jewish listeners and to recycle traditional polemical themes relevant only to a Christian audience. Although such mixed intentions can be discerned in later polemics, texts such as those of Raymond Martini evince a gradual turn (or return) towards a purely textual anti-Jewish polemic based on standard arguments of Christian apologetic and away from the practical concerns and rhetorical demands of real persuasion and active missionizing. Abner/Alfonso’s mixed identity as both converter and converted—perspectives which are both vitally present in the *Mostrador*—constitutes an opposite turn towards missionizing at the expense of the coherence and integrity of his apologetic themes.

A close examination of Abner/Alfonso’s citations in the *Mostrador*, shows that much of his material came from Hebrew sources and very little was taken from Latin and Arabic ones. Perhaps the most important consequence of this is that the polemics of Martini had little if any influence on his thinking and, in fact, the only texts from this thirteenth-century missionizing movement that were used by Abner/Alfonso were the Hebrew account of the Talmud trial of Paris in the 1240s by Rabbi Yehiel and the Hebrew account of the Barcelona disputation by Rabbi Moses ben Nahman

(Nahmanides) of Gerona. It is possible, in fact, to see Abner/Alfonso's polemics as a parallel but essentially separate branch of development from the polemics of thirteenth-century Dominicans. It is necessary to examine to what extent his polemics follow Raymond Martini's turn away from the concerns of real missionizing and persuasion and to what extent Abner/Alfonso's goal in his polemics was to actually convince Jews to convert to Christianity as he had done. By concluding our study of the *Mostrador* with a detailed consideration of Abner/Alfonso's argumentative strategies—specifically, the expansion of the notion of textual authority to include proof and support based on personal testimony and even solidarity with Jewish readers—we will show that Abner/Alfonso demonstrates a marked concern in the *Mostrador* with persuasion and missionary effectiveness, and that the concomitant rhetorical demands are in constant tension with Abner/Alfonso's more traditional apologetic concerns.

Much has been written over the last century attempting to summarize and analyze the history of Christian writing against the Jews. As Jonathan Hecht has explained in his recent New York University dissertation on Abner/Alfonso's *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, it is possible to divide recent studies of polemical literature into two groups: close study of a single text, usually involving the production of an edition of that work;⁸ and

⁸ In this category, in addition to the editions of Hebrew manuscripts by Rosenthal of Jacob ben Reuben's *Milhamot ha-Shem*, Berger's edition of the *Nizzahon Vetus* in *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, Lasker's edition and translation of Hasdai Crescas's *Bittul 'Iqqarei ha-Nozrim* and, with Sarah Stroumsa, an edition of the *Qisṣat Mujādalat al-Uṣṣuf* and *Sefer Nestor ha-Komer* in *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest*, and Eisenstein, *Ozar Vikuahim* (all cited by Hecht), many other recent editions and studies of Christian anti-Jewish works have appeared as well. These include John Tolan's study of the *Dialogus* of Petrus Alfonsi (in Lacarra, *Estudios*, and reprinted in a modified Castilian translation as part of the new edition of the Latin text by Klaus-Peter Mieth published with the new translation by Esperanza Ducaý), the forthcoming English translation of Alfonsi's text by Irven Resnick, Marenbon and Orlandi's edition and study of the *Collationes* of Peter Abelard (Oxford, 2001), Anna Abulafia's edition of Gilbert Crispin's polemic (Oxford, 1986) and Moise Orfali's translation and study of Gerónimo de Santa Fe's *De Iudaicis erroribus ex Talmut* (Madrid, 1987), not to mention Hecht's own dissertation-edition, and the dissertations of Shoshana Gershenson and Carlos Sainz de la Maza, mentioned above.

thematic studies of polemical themes, approaching polemical writing as an independent genre in an attempt to draw synthetic conclusions about its development.⁹ When surveyed together, the bibliographies of both of these branches of anti-Jewish polemics are large. Because this dissertation includes both a detailed study of a single work—Abner/Alfonso’s *Mostrador*—and a lengthy consideration of the larger historical context of missionizing and polemical writing in the thirteenth century, it can be seen as an attempt to blend these two critical approaches in polemical studies.

Although the bibliography on Abner/Alfonso is not small and has grown significantly in past decades, very little attention has been given to the *Mostrador* or its important connection to his other works. The connection between his works is so pervasive and direct that the lack of attention to the *Mostrador* (due in part to the fact that it survives only in Castilian) represents a significant and critical lacuna in the understanding of Abner/Alfonso’s ideas. In addition, Abner/Alfonso’s works have been unduly overlooked by many historians of anti-Jewish polemics—his name is not mentioned once by Cohen in his recent survey of anti-Jewish polemics, *Living Letters of the Law*—an oversight due in part to the survival of Abner/Alfonso’s works in only a handful of single-copy manuscripts (rather than, for example, the over sixty copies of the *Dialogus* of Petrus Alfonsi). As we have intimated, the dearth of manuscript copies of

⁹ In this category, in addition to the studies cited by Hecht—Loeb (“Notes sur l’histoire des Juifs”, “La Controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud”, “La Controverse de 1263 à Barcelona Entre Paulus Christiani et Moises Ben Nachman”, “La Controverse Religieuse Entre le Chrétiens et le Juifs Au Moyen Age en France et en Espagne”, “Polémistes Chrétiens et Juifs en France et en Espagne”; Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*; Chazan, *Daggers of Faith and Barcelona and Beyond*; Funkenstein “Basic Types of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages” and “Changes in the Patterns of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Twelfth Century”; and Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics*—one can add the recent studies by Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*; Chazan, *Fashioning Jewish Identity in Medieval Christendom*; the very recent book by Kruger, *The Spectral Jew*; as well as the indispensable works of Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*; Blumenkranz *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du Moyen Age sur les juifs et le judaïsme*; Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au moyen âge*; and Schrekenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld*.

Abner/Alfonso's works is extremely misleading in the assessment of his importance in Christian anti-Jewish polemics. Abner/Alfonso was intimately involved with the Jewish community of his day and, as a well-known (among that community) convert to Christianity, his writing constituted a serious threat to Jewish apologetic defenses against the onslaught, missionizing and otherwise, of an increasingly intolerant Christendom in fourteenth-century Castile. As Merchán Fernández notes, "No es muy aventurado afirmar que Rabbí Abner...habría llegado a ser una de las causas del debilitamiento de la comunidad hebrea" in Castilla (*Los judíos de Valladolid* 69). The lack of multiple manuscript copies can be easily attributed to the fact that Abner/Alfonso's texts were directed primarily to a readership that had little pragmatic interest in preserving and perpetuating the arguments they contained. Even more importantly, however, Abner/Alfonso stands outside of the main thrust of the missionizing campaign of the thirteenth century that marked a significant deterioration in the treatment of Jews in Christian Aragon. As a fourteenth-century Castilian rather than a thirteenth-century Aragonese Jew, the crisis of faith that prompted Abner/Alfonso's conversion and that fueled his polemical zeal can be seen, as Baer has noted, as a manifestation of the effects of thirteenth-century missionizing on the Jews of that region, and it even constitutes proof of the penetration of that Aragonese upheaval into a traditionally autonomous and comparatively safe Castilian Jewish population.¹⁰ Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador* likewise possesses a unique appeal that justifies its study: not only is it, curiously, among the longest anti-Jewish polemical texts written in the Middle Ages, and not only is it perhaps the only (or at least one among very few) medieval anti-Jewish polemic *written* in

¹⁰ For a discussion of Mendicant missionizing in Castile, see García-Serrano, *Preachers of the City: The Expansion of the Dominican Order in Castile (1217-1348)*; and Linage Conde, "Algunas particularidades de la implantación Mendicante en la península ibérica" and "De los monjes a los frailes."

Hebrew,¹¹ it also includes a striking autobiographical element absent from most medieval polemical writing.¹²

Considering these many unique characteristics, along with the many responses that Abner/Alfonso's writing provoked from the Jewish community, the *Mostrador de justicia* constitutes a valuable, and as-yet little told, chapter in the history of anti-Jewish polemic. The *Mostrador* is a useful touchstone in testing and telling part of the larger story of Jewish/Christian interaction in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the time preceding the transformation of the "Jewish problem" in Spain into the "*converso* problem," as Eloy Benito Ruano has so aptly phrased it. The rationale for this approach is the argument that Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador* represents a hybrid of old and new polemical strategies that is at once the culmination of a previous tradition of anti-Jewish polemic based on non-Christian sources while standing apart from that tradition in his incorporation of personal testimony and direct appeal.

Current studies on Abner/Alfonso are faced with the problem of divided focus in much of the scholarly bibliography. Although early pioneers such as Baer worked equally

¹¹ As far as I know, no earlier work of anti-Jewish polemic *written* in Hebrew is known to exist. The *Disputa de un cristiano y un judío* from ca. 1240 (see the edition by Castro and the more recent edition by Salvador Miguel) is one of very few known predecessors of Abner/Alfonso's Castilian anti-Jewish polemic. The work of San Pedro Pascual (with whom Abner has sometimes been confused) also precedes Alfonso's work by half a century, and although only his anti-Muslim polemic is in Castilian, his one anti-Jewish work being composed in Valencian Romance. Alfonso's other obvious direct predecessor in the revolutionary turn to Romance polemic was Ramon Llull whose *Llibre del gentil y els tres savis* still survives in Catalan. (See Mettmann's *Die volkssprachliche apologetische Literatur* for a summary of polemical writing in Romance languages.) Abner/Alfonso's composition in Hebrew and later translation into Castilian parallels Llull's repeated auto-translations between Catalan, Arabic and Latin (Llull wrote the million words of his *Llibre de contemplació de Deu* first in Arabic, and later translated them himself, a practice he repeated with many of his Latin works), but even Llull, who became increasingly involved in anti-Jewish polemic over the course of his prolific career, never wrote in Hebrew.

¹² Although Petrus Alfonsi does describe his conversion in the introduction to his *Dialogus*, the autobiographical element in his text is entirely formulaic and serves only as a lead-in to Alfonsi's statement of purpose in his works: to respond to challenges from other Jews who claimed that he had converted out of ignorance, error, or vanity. The notion of personal crisis, such as we find in Abner's text, is entirely lacking.

well in Hebrew and Romance sources, recent work on Abner/Alfonso, with the exception of a few scholars such as Carpenter and Saenz de la Maza, has focused more on Abner/Alfonso's surviving Hebrew texts, without making use of the abundant material in Castilian that is essential for understanding Abner/Alfonso's literary output. I aim in this dissertation to begin to bridge that division, working with Abner/Alfonso's longest and most important work, the Castilian *Mostrador*, while at the same time taking into account the relevant Hebrew sources and scholarship on Abner/Alfonso's Hebrew works. The other issue plaguing scholarship on Abner/Alfonso is that, despite the fact that three substantial doctoral dissertations have been written on Abner/Alfonso in the last two and a half decades (Gershenzon, Sainz de la Maza, and Hecht), no major book-length study has ever been published on any of his works, Hebrew or Castilian. Because of the large amount of basic information on Abner/Alfonso's life, ideas, sources, and writing that is necessary for a full understanding of his work but which cannot be found in any readily available source, I have included such information apart from the main text of this dissertation in a supplementary section. This includes a detailed bio-bibliographical study of Abner/Alfonso and his works which involves a discussion of specific textual and biographical issues. The reason for this division of material is simple. Since there is no complete study of the *Mostrador*, the specific textual and theoretical issues raised by the text are abundant, and this abundance precludes the incorporation of such material within notes or the main text in a meaningful or sufficiently useful or readable way. The discussion in the main text of this dissertation is therefore intended as a study of the historical importance of the *Mostrador* for both specialists in Abner/Alfonso's work and those only tangentially familiar with it. The supplementary section is meant to provide the

bulk of the necessary data relating to the study in the main text and is intended to supplement the synthetic discussion found there, but does not include any new arguments that are not already included in the main text.

In order to understand the place of the *Mostrador* in the history of Christian missionizing and the Mendicant use of the Talmud, it is necessary to discuss the nature of that missionizing in detail. This will entail a careful reconsideration of the primary and secondary literature surrounding thirteenth-century missionizing and preaching, and will necessarily include an epitome of much previous scholarship. Because the ultimate goal of this study, however, is to show the unique place that the Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador* holds in the history of late-medieval polemical writing, our review and reconsideration of the relevant history of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is undertaken with Abner/Alfonso's own arguments always in mind, arguments that are marked, as I demonstrate below, by a real desire to convince and convert Jews and, as a result, by a constant tension between the interests of apologetic theology and the rhetorical demands of effective persuasion. In the pages that follow, I aim to address the following basic questions: To what extent does thirteenth century Mendicant argumentation depend on traditional polemical arguments and in what way does it represent an innovative break with that tradition? To what extent can the texts and figures most closely associated with the missionizing movement (Raymond of Peñafort, Paul Christiani, Raymond Martini) actually be shown to pursue missionizing rather than apologetic goals? In what way can Abner/Alfonso's intentions in the *Mostrador* be shown to be actual persuasion and conversion of Jews, and what relation does Abner/Alfonso have to previous Mendicant

missionizing argumentation? What are the implications of Abner/Alfonso's personal conversion narrative and direct appeal for his missionizing argument?

The main text of this study is divided into two parts, each containing two chapters. The two parts represent the two foci of this study of Christian polemic, the first historical and the second textual, and thus chapters one and two address pressing questions about the history of anti-Jewish polemical writing, and chapters three and four focus specifically on the *Mostrador de justicia* of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid. In chapter one, I present a brief survey of the development of anti-Jewish polemical writing from its inception through the thirteenth century. I first examine the paradoxical figure of the "hermeneutical Jew", the Jew as he was imagined by Christians in early polemical literature, and stress that the first millennium of polemical writing was thoroughly apologetic in spirit (concerning internal Christian issues and intended mostly for other Christians) and was built entirely on a base of biblical hermeneutics, primarily according to the models of Paul and Augustine. I then examine twelfth-century polemics based on rational and philosophical arguments and show that the inclusion of philosophical material around the turn of the twelfth century marked the beginning of a conflict between competing Christian ideas of Jewish identity (The Jew was either defined by his rejection of the Christological meaning of the Hebrew Bible or by his irrationality and his rejection of rational arguments in defense of Christianity). Concomitant with this new double idea of the Jew in Western Christendom was the beginning of an interest in arguing with and possibly converting Jews to Christianity through convincing explanations, and this was the earliest trace of what can be seen as the interest in missionizing that developed in the thirteenth century. Finally, I examine the constant

tension between argument and force, mission and crusade, in Christian approaches to non-Christians, and show that the specter of forcible conversion was constantly in competition with Christian ideas of convincing proofs and persuasive arguments. This discussion opens the way in chapter two to consideration of the nature of thirteenth-century polemics in relation to previous anti-Jewish arguments.

In chapter two, I first consider the history of the thirteenth-century use of the Talmud, specifically examining the nature of Christian missionizing by Mendicant friars. Because of the legal restrictions against forced conversion, missionizing on the basis of the Talmud offered an ostensibly viable solution to dealing with Jewish opposition to Christianity. Nevertheless, the question remains as to how much Christian missionaries actually structured and developed their arguments with persuasion and proof in mind. Responding to recent criticism that calls the missionizing movement into question, I show that some (but not all) thirteenth-century polemics or polemical disputations do evince a real intention to convert Jews to Christianity, and this intention was always in dialog with ecclesiastical and royal policies concerning Jewish legal rights. Compared with previous centuries, there was an increase in discussion of missionizing and conversion by thirteenth-century churchmen, but I argue that this did not necessarily guide the action of Mendicants in disputations and forced sermons. Because discussion of Jewish conversion was often framed in terms of the Jews' acceptance or rejection of their own textual authorities in the Talmud, including any argument that a Christian could make with those authorities, this thirteenth-century missionizing did not differ substantially in argument from previous exegetical arguments that conceived of the Jew as blind to the "true meaning" of their own scriptural authorities. To show the significance of this

exegetical reliance on textual authority, I undertake a detailed consideration of the Christian notion of textual authority in order to show that all Christian polemic relies on the support of *auctoritates*, or textual authorities, taken as apodictic and legally binding proofs, and this attitude toward textual authorities continues through the thirteenth century in the so-called missionary efforts of Dominicans. Specifically, I show that thirteenth-century Dominicans (including Friar Paul at the disputation of Barcelona), even though their practice sometimes included public disputations and their source base included many more Jewish postbiblical texts than previous polemicists, constructed their arguments primarily on the basis of an appeal to those texts from a traditional apologetic perspective as binding authoritative sources. Although the format of Christian polemics had expanded in the thirteenth century, the arguments and proofs had not, and the efforts that some historians refer to as “missionizing” are better understood as the public presentation of Christian apologetic arguments based on postbiblical sources. This is not to say that polemicists were not concerned with the converting Jews, but only that they did little to innovate on previous polemical arguments in order to respond to their stated concern over how Jewish listeners could respond to and refute their arguments. As I show, the principle response of Dominican polemicists to Jewish resistance was not to change their basic exegetical approach, but only to back up their arguments with more textual proofs.

In part two (chapters three and four), I turn to the *Mostrador* of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid. In chapter three, I directly consider the extent of Abner/Alfonso’s use of arguments similar to those of the thirteenth-century polemical efforts. I show that, very differently from thirteenth-century polemics, Abner/Alfonso

actually set out to convince and convert Jews with his arguments. I examine his own argumentative strategy in the *Mostrador* and the unique use of personal experience and testimony there as a basis for argumentative authority. I show how this autobiographical content is directly based on Abner/Alfonso's mimetic style, language, and source base and how he uses his own autobiography as a rhetorical tool to blur the line of division between himself and his Jewish readers. In contrast with many previous polemical arguments, Abner/Alfonso's text can be actually be seen as missionary in its intentions, because he shows a constant concern with the beliefs of his readers that will result from his arguments. He is not only interested in showing his readers that they are bound by textual authorities, but in appealing personally to his readers to take action based on those authorities, just as he himself had. The final appeal to the Jew to convert is made apart from any possible textual proofs he might offer in his polemic.

I conclude in chapter four that the blurring of boundaries that results from Abner/Alfonso's simultaneous use of personal testimony along with an emphasis on certain fundamental differences between Jews and Christians injects an irresolvable ambiguity into Abner/Alfonso's arguments, an ambiguity that is reflected both in the ongoing resistance of the Jewish interlocutor in the text to the Christian claims to truth and in the inconclusiveness of the end of the text. I examine in detail the many internal contradictions in Abner/Alfonso's arguments, paying close attention to the irresolvable paradox created by his own appeal to his readers on familiar, pseudo-Jewish terms. Above all, I focus on the textual ambiguities created by Abner/Alfonso's attempt to alternate between first-person autobiography, literary dialog, religious and philosophical polemic, and emotional appeal.

In the conclusion, I suggest that because the ambivalent and at times self-defeating rhetoric of Abner/Alfonso's autobiographical perspective can be linked to a deeper ambivalence about Judaism within in Christian self-understanding, the development of later-medieval missionizing polemics that employ the figure of the convert cannot be separated from the development of the controversy over the role of converts in Christian society, a controversy that was to dominate Jewish-Christian relations in the Iberian Peninsula after the anti-Jewish riots of 1391. A discussion of Abner/Alfonso's attitude regarding violence and forced conversion is therefore of critical importance and serves as a fitting conclusion to the consideration of his argumentative strategy in the *Mostrador* in its historical context.

The supplemental bio-bibliographical study appended to the main text is divided into three chapters and four appendices. The first chapter treats specific questions relating to Abner/Alfonso's biography and his impact on later Jewish and Christian writers. The second chapter discusses Abner/Alfonso's non-Jewish Latin and Arabic sources, treating his knowledge of earlier Christian polemical works and paying particular attention to the lingering question of Abner/Alfonso's possible connection to Raymond Martini. The third chapter treats Abner/Alfonso's Jewish sources, including Biblical, Talmudic, Midrashic, exegetical, historical, mystical, philosophical, scientific, and polemical texts, most important among which are the writings of Maimonides and Naḥmanides. The appendices include an outline of the contents of the *Mostrador*, a list of the known information relating to his lost works, a clustered list of his references to Arabic works by Islamic authors with notes on possible sources, and a preliminary index of the references in Abner/Alfonso's abundant citations.

Finally, a word on terminology is in order: The terms “polemic”, “apologetic”, and “missionizing” are all used in varying ways by historians of medieval Christianity. In the pages that follow, I have based my use of these terms on consideration of two issues: the goals of a given text and its tone. I use the terms “apologetic” and “missionizing” to describe the intentions or goals of a text. If a text or argument was written for Christians and was not meant to convert non-Christians but served instead to better articulate points of Christian doctrine or belief, I describe that text or argument as “apologetic” in focus. If, on the other hand, it was written as part of an effort to present arguments to non-Christians in hopes of converting them, I describe that it as “missionizing.” I use the term “polemic” to describe texts whose tone is polemical, aggressive, or argumentative or texts seeking to refute the arguments of another (real or unreal), and this includes texts written entirely for a Christian readership (polemical apologetic) or texts written with conversion in mind (missionizing polemic). I reject the common usage of the terms that implies a necessary opposition between polemics and apologetics, but instead understand that most polemical writing in the West was implicitly apologetic.



Part One

History and Context

The polemical writing of the Jewish convert Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid, although considered by most critics as *sui generis* in its language, sources, and style, cannot be understood apart from the historical context of Christian polemic as it developed in the second half of the thirteenth century. This assertion is not as obvious as it may at first seem: A close look at Abner's sources and style indeed suggests that he was in many ways removed from the ecclesiastical culture in which most other polemical writing, mostly in Latin, was produced. Nevertheless, Abner/Alfonso's writing, especially his longest and most important work, the *Moreh Zedek/Mostrador de justicia*, responds directly to this ecclesiastical polemic, but does so only by considering how such polemic was experienced from a Jewish rather than Christian perspective. In other words, Abner/Alfonso does not respond directly to earlier Christian polemic or cite many Christian polemical sources, but instead responds to Christian arguments mainly as they were preserved in Jewish sources written in defense. Beyond situating Abner's/Alfonso's writing in the larger history of medieval Christian polemic, it is important to examine the *Mostrador* in the specific context of later-thirteenth-century polemical activity, above all the disputation of Barcelona in 1263 and its effect on figures such as the Dominican Raymond Martini. By considering the continuity of the long history of Christian polemical writing in the West, it will be possible to better understand both the nature of innovations in that tradition made by thirteenth-century churchmen and the specific ways that Abner/Alfonso responds to those thirteenth-century innovations.

Chapter One

Historical Overview of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemic

“The consul...looked upon us Jews not as creatures of flesh and blood but as purely literary heroes who had stepped out of the pages of the Old Testament and would step back into those of the New at the Last Judgment, and who meanwhile must be kept from entering another story by mistake...”

—A. B. Yehoshua, *Mr. Mani*

“Anti-Judaism was originally more than social polemic. It was an expression of Christian self-affirmation.”

—Rosemary Reuther, *Faith and Fratricide*

“Christian thinkers are, *qua* Christians, incapable of speaking about Jews in a thoroughly normal, non-mythical manner”

—Steven R. Haynes, *Jews and the Christian Imagination*

The growth of anti-Jewish sentiment in Western Christendom in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was built on over a thousand years of tradition. The specific content of anti-Jewish polemic at this time itself grew out of a large canon of *Adversus Iudaeos* writing while also reflecting the specific concerns of contemporary churchmen and theologians. The attention in the thirteenth century to post-biblical Jewish literature, especially the Talmud and Midrash—a phenomenon that resulted in part from the influence of recent converts from Judaism who informed Christian intellectuals of the inner workings of contemporary Jewish belief and practice—sparked a new wave in polemical writing that relied on traditional polemical ideas while at the same time making use of these previously unknown sources. By considering the history of anti-Jewish writing in the context of papal policy, it will be possible to contextualize the development of new arguments in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and better understand the specific polemical efforts of Paul Christiani, Raymond Martini, Raymond Llull, and Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid.

A. The Foundation of Medieval Christian Anti-Jewish Polemic

Despite the long history of anti-Jewish Christian writing in the West, it is not difficult to summarize in broad strokes the major stages of its development. The reason for this is simple: despite the fact that the *Adversus Iudaeos* tradition spans the entire history of Christianity, it includes a surprisingly limited variety of arguments and sources. Most anti-Jewish polemic in the first millennium was a repetition of arguments by early Church Fathers and Patristic sources, principally Augustine,¹ although many more early writers composed treatises against the Jews in the patristic period, such as Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Athanasius of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, St. Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, Origin, Claudius Apollinarius, Eusebius, Epiphanius, among many others.²

The historian Gilbert Dahan has noted that the four main forms of polemical writing, the letter, the dialog, the treatise, and the collection of scriptural *testimonia*, can be found very early in the history of Christian polemic in four representative works: the letter of pseudo-Barnabas, the *Dialog with Trypho* of Justin Martyr, the *Adversus Iudaeos* of Tertullian, and the *Ad Quirinum* of Cyprian.³ In all of these forms, polemical authors, despite their individual variations, put forth nearly identical arguments regarding Jews and Judaism. With their singular source as the Old Testament, early polemical writers argued that the Messiah has already come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and the Jewish people were unable to recognize him as such; that the Hebrew scriptures prefigure

¹ For a consideration of Augustine's writings relating to Jews, see Bernard Blumenkranz, *Die Judenpredigt Augustins*, Paula Fredriksen's "Excaecati Occulta Justitia Dei: Augustine on Jews and Judaism", and part one of Jeremy Cohen's *Living Letters of the Law*, 19-65.

² The most complete overviews of these sources can be found in Blumenkranz, *Les Auteurs chrétiens latins*, Schreckenberg, *Christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte... (1.-11. Jh.)*, Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos*, and Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy*, pp. 1-51. Cohen, *Living Letters*, p. 9 n. 7 and *The Friars and the Jews*, 19 n. 1 provides the standard bibliographical references on the subject.

³ Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens*, p 340.

the revelations of the New Testament, but an overly-literal historical reading of the Hebrew Bible precludes the Jews from properly seeing the revelations in their own scripture; that because the Jews were unable to recognize the prefiguration of the Christ in the *Tanakh*, they misunderstood their own prophetic books, which specifically refer to Jesus as the Christ and predict his coming; and that because Jesus is the Messiah predicted in the Hebrew scriptures, the Old Pentateuchal law of Moses is abrogated by the new law of Jesus, and the “true Israel” with whom God keeps his covenant is no longer the Jewish people but the Christians. The repetition of these arguments over a millennium not surprisingly meant that the same key Bible verses—classic passages include Genesis 49:10 (the “Shiloh” passage), Isaiah 7;14 (the virgin birth), Isaiah 52-3 (the suffering servant), Psalm 110, the messianic predictions of the book of Daniel, etc.—were cited and recited with little variation.

Historian Marcel Simon states the obvious when he remarks that “from the Church’s beginnings, and certainly from the time when St. Paul made it conscious of its own independence, it was in conflict with Judaism.” (*Verus Israel* 135). As Gilbert Dahan explains, the form of the Christian confrontation with Judaism is drawn in the image of Jesus debating with the doctors of the Law in the Gospels (*Les Intellectuels* 340). For many such critics, anti-Jewish polemic arguably begins in the foundational texts of Christianity, notably in the writing of St. Paul. The debate over the alleged anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic content of the New Testament is still an active one, and it is not the place of this study to enter into that debate directly.⁴ Leaving that question and the question of Paul’s own

⁴ For a presentation of the key issues of the debate and the relevant bibliography, see chapter two Rosemary Reuther’s now canonical study *Faith and Fratricide*, as well as more recent studies such as *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, edited by Craig Evans and Donald Hagner, Lilian Freudmann’s *Antisemitism in the New Testament*, Richard Giesriegl’s *Juden und die Tora im Neuen Testament*, Timo Laato’s *Paul*

understanding of his ministry to New Testament scholars, it is nevertheless possible to see with little difficulty the Christian notion that Jewish exegesis is excessively literal, which was to dominate anti-Jewish polemical writing for centuries, already in the words of St. Paul to the Romans: “For it is not he is a Jew, who is so outwardly; nor is that circumcision which is outwardly in the flesh: But he is a Jew, that is one inwardly; and the circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter...” (Rom. 2:28-29). Jesus’ attack on pharisaical myopia provides a template for Paul to marshal his attack on a strict “carnal” adherence to the Law, and so suggest a foundational hermeneutic dichotomy between Christianity and Judaism.⁵

E. P. Sanders, in *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*, stated “Knowing the outcome, we can see in the Pauline letters the nucleus of much of Christianity’s understanding of itself” (209). Central to this self-understanding was the articulation of the precise difference between Christianity and Judaism, because such an articulation determined one of the central issues of Christian legitimacy. If Christian thinkers could not firmly establish the difference between Christianity and Judaism, and at the same time justify that difference as part of God’s plan for his chosen people, then the Jewish rejection of Christian ideas, as they were taught by Jesus and by the early church, would prove to be the most basic and irrefutable argument against Christian truth. Christian legitimacy required independence from a traditional Jewish understanding of the Law as unchanging and unchangeable. Such independence entailed the need for an explanation

and Judaism: an Anthropological Approach, and Samuel Sandmel’s *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament?*, among various others.

⁵ Although E. P. Sanders rejects the notion that Paul sought to establish a definitive separation between non-Christian Jews and Gentile Christians—indeed, he argues the opposite, namely that Paul sought to undo as many categories of difference as possible (154-160)—he concedes that Paul implies a certain “break” with Judaism in his theology, specifically in treatment of the concept of election, and in his replacement of adherence to the Law with faith in Christ as the only means of salvation (207-210).

for why the Jews did not accept Jesus as the messiah and did not share early Christian interpretation of history based on that, and this fact explains the importance of the hermeneutic argument of the difference between Jewish and Christian exegesis and likewise indicates the importance of Paul's letters, where these differences are first sketched out, in guiding the development of Christian attitudes toward the Jews. James Parkes argues that Paul presents two different arguments explaining the Christian relationship to Judaism: the belief in the inadequacy of the Law for salvation,⁶ and perception of the inadequacy of the Jewish interpretation of the Law, noting that the latter idea was the one "which won more general acceptance" (53). E. P. Sanders, on the other hand, attributes this apparent double belief to what he calls Paul's "lack of systematic thinking about the law" (144),⁷ concluding that Paul seems to have one idea of the Law for those born into it (Jews) and another for those without it (Gentiles), but that both groups end up with the same faith because discussion of the Law "has to do with how people enter the body of those who will be saved," but questions of faith in Jesus, which apply equally to Jew and Greek, concern "how [people] behave once in" (145). It is important to insist, however, that Paul preached and taught at such an early stage in Christian history that he did not approach Judaism as a religion entirely separate from that of Jesus' teaching, and thus did not face the thorny question of the implications of the Judaism's historical survival for the legitimacy of the independent Christian church. Nevertheless, Paul's linking of hermeneutics and legitimacy in faith—that is, his argument that to interpret the spirit of the text is to believe truly—provided the theoretical

⁶ As in, for example, Romans 3:20.

⁷ He repeats this idea even more clearly in his conclusions, stating "I have come to the conclusion that there is no single unity which adequately accounts for every statement about the law" (147).

framework for the Christian doctrine of abrogation that was the Christian response to this question in later centuries when Judaism and Christianity viewed each other as separate and mutually exclusive religions.⁸

This idea of abrogation, foundational for Christian self-definition in opposition to Israel and for the tradition of polemical writing that grew out of that opposition, holds that Christianity keeps and fulfills God's word while Judaism forgets and ignores it, and thus Christianity inherits the status of God's chosen nation, the True Israel, at the same time that Judaism loses that status. Christian abrogation functions both historically and textually: as the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus become the center of history, the Jews become merely a vestige of an earlier stage in God's relationship with his people, and the Christians replace the Jews for the rest of time. Likewise, the Jewish reading of the Hebrew texts remains literal and historical, while the Christian exegesis of Scriptures becomes Christological and soteriological through figurativism. The thrust of this polemic is therefore to unveil such pre-Christian *figurae* of Christ within the Hebrew Bible in order to prove the error of this imagined Jewish hermeneutics and thereby vilify the Jewish reception of God's revelation and glorify the Christian exegetical method. This Christocentric Judaism was a contrary projection of the Christian idea of its own role as the inheritor and fulfiller of the Law and tradition of Israel. Based on Paul's model, exegesis becomes the primary means of defining the difference between Christians and Jews, and logically became the central tool of Christian anti-Jewish polemical

⁸ According to James Parkes, this distinction has its origins in the thought of Jesus himself, not only Paul. "It is not possible historically to trace this antagonism of the Christian to the Jew exclusively to the fact of the crucifixion. Nor can the Jewish antagonism to Christianity be traced exclusively to the teaching of Paul. The origin of the profound difference which exists between Judaism and Christianity must ultimately be related to the teaching of Jesus" (33-34). Elsewhere he states that Paul "is logically following to their conclusion the denunciations of the Pharisees in the gospels" (53).

argumentation as well (Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* 51). Without a doubt, exegesis constitutes the linchpin of early Christian and, eventually, medieval anti-Jewish polemical argumentation.

As the ongoing presence of real Jews in the world, and in Christian society specifically, called Christian inheritance of the status of “True Israel” into question (Why would God allow Jews to continue to exist and even prosper if they had been replaced by Christians in God’s covenant?), polemical exegesis served to justify Christianity’s usurpation from Jewish tradition of the status of being God’s chosen people. “Its function,” Funkenstein explains, “was to assist the self-interpretation of Christianity and to supply the community with an explanation for the existence of the Jews...the “blindness” of the Jews is due to the “stubbornness” with which they stick to the *sensus literalis* of the Old Testament” (“Basic Types” 374). Based on the foundational ideas of the New Testament, the sentiment of Jewish literalism, contrasting sharply with Christian figurative exegesis of the Hebrew Bible, very quickly became a foundational trope of Christian writing, appearing repeatedly in the writing of nearly all of early Church Fathers. It appears as a central theme in even the earliest polemical treatises, the best-known among which is Justin Martyr’s *Dialog with Trypho*. In one passage early in the dialog, Justin voices this standard view. “The words which I use...are contained in your Scriptures, or rather not yours, but ours. For we believe and obey them, whereas you, though you read them, do not grasp their spirit” (*Dialog with Trypho* 44).⁹ While Justin’s text is remarkable to many for its relatively irenic tone, the theme of Jewish blindness

⁹ Quoted in Parkes, 97. This theme appears various times in Justin’s dialog. For example, ““My friend,” I replied,” I pardon you...for you have been instructed by teachers who are ignorant of the meaning of Scriptures” (17), etc. For a developed discussion of Justin’s view of Judaism, see B. Z. Bokser, “Justin Martyr and the Jews” and, more recently, David Rokéah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews* and Daniel Boyarin, “Justin Martyr Invents Judaism.”

appears no less here than in more vituperative and acerbic polemics. Deriving from exegesis of Is 6:9-10¹⁰ and the use of this passage in John 12:37-41, the blindness (caecitas) of the Jews becomes linked to their “stubbornness” and “hardness of heart” (durtia cordis), making their exegetical shortcomings at once outside their control and at the same time an example of their wrongdoing and sin.¹¹ For example, Justin not only accuses his interlocutor Moses of being “blind” (149) and of trying to “explain [Biblical] passages in an earthly manner” (167), he also accuses the Jews repeatedly of “hardness of heart” (42). He states, “If your ears were not so dull, or your hearts so hardened, you would see that the words [of the Hebrew Bible] refer to our Jesus” (51) and therefore concludes that “you, however, have understood nothing of [my interpretation], nor do you make any effort to understand” (188). Tertullian speaks both of “velamen cordis illorum [iudaeorum] ad caecitatem” (Migne, *Patrologia* 1:499A) and “durtia cordis vestri,” (2:629D),¹² Origin of “σωματικοί Ιουδαιοί” or “material Jews” (*Commentary on Matthew*, 13:939), and Jerome of their blindness (caecitas) at not “following the *Hebraicam veritatem*” (*Patrologia Latina* 24: 421B).¹³ Such examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely, given the consistency of theme in the first millennium of *Adversus Iudaeos* literature. Whatever the intention of Paul and other New Testament authors, the

¹⁰ "...You hear indeed, but don't understand; and you see indeed, but don't perceive.' Make the heart of this people fat. Make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed." For a discussion of this verse in Jewish and Christian interpretation, see Evans, *To See and not Perceive*.

¹¹ On obstinacy, among other charges against the Jews, see Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy* 23.

¹² For a full discussion of Tertullian's views, see Aziza, *Tertullien*, especially pp. 61-89. For more bibliography on this topic, see Krauss *The Jewish-Christian Controversy* 33.

¹³ On anti-Jewish polemic in Jerome, see González Salinero, *Biblia y polémica antijudía en Jerónimo*; Gourdain, “La Polémique anti-juive...”; and Newman, *Jerome and the Jews*. González Salinero notes “el concepto de la *hebraica veritas* debe entenderse principalmente como un instrumento que se inserta en el contexto polémico de las *altercationes* entre la *Ecclesia* y la *Synagoga*” (91).

conflation of historical/eschatological ideas with exegetical ones in much polemical anti-Jewish literature follows seamlessly from the foundational model presented in the earliest canonical Christian texts.

Jeremy Cohen, however, in his first book *The Friars and the Jews* and more recently, *Living Letters of the Law*, vigorously defended the notion that it was Augustine's rather than Paul's depiction of Jewish blindness that was the most influential of all the early Church Fathers on medieval anti-Judaism. Substantial development of this thesis by Paula Fredriksen and Cohen offers even more support for the importance of Augustine's view of Judaism on later church positions. In Fredriksen's assessment, "seldom has a biblical hermeneutic had such an immediate and perduring social effect" ("Excaecati Occulta Justicia Dei" 320). The main effect of Augustine's influence, according to Cohen and Fredriksen, was the dissemination of his doctrine of "Jewish witness," arguing that the Jew should be allowed to survive because, despite his blindness to and rejection of Christ, he is part of God's plan and bears witness, for Christians, to what they overcame and left behind in following Christ. The idea that Jews play a role in Christian salvation history because they preserve the memory of the "old law" for Christians until the end of time was, according to Cohen, not developed before Augustine. As Cohen argues, "the doctrine of Jewish witness was new, and it conditioned the transmission of "standard" patristic *Adversus Iudaeos* doctrine to Augustine's medieval successors" (*Living Letters* 65). Central to the Augustinian attitude in Cohen's view is a figurative reading of Psalm 59:12, "Slay them not, lest at any time they forget your law" (*Living Letters* 33). In a letter to Bishop Paulinus of Nola in 414, Augustine explains that Jews should be protected in subjugation so that they would "be witness of the Scriptures throughout the world,

wherever the Church would be established. For by no clearer proof is it demonstrated to the nations what is observed most advantageously—that the name of Christ is distinguished by such great authority in the hope for eternal salvation.”¹⁴ It was this notion that the Jews played the role of witnesses to the truth of Christianity—and, by implication, played an important and functional role in Christian salvation history, even after the life of Jesus—that Cohen believes determined the policy of conception and treatment of Jews in large part until the thirteenth century.¹⁵

As Fredriksen notes, Augustine’s concept of the Jew as historical “witness” is premised on a biblical hermeneutic rather than a genuine encounter with real Jews. As such, it constitutes a very narrow idea of what Jews believe and worship, seeing them primarily as little more than poor readers of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁶ The result of this sharp disjunction between real Jews and imaginary Judaism, and the Christian legislation that resulted from such an imaginary understanding, had the long-term effect of preserving real Jewish communities in Europe in a hermetic and mysterious space of difference, almost completely unknown and misunderstood by Christians.¹⁷ The Augustinian view of

¹⁴ “...ut apud eam esset testimonium scripturarum toto orbe terrarum, unde ecclesia fuerat evocanda. Nullo enim evidentiore documento ostenditur gentibus, quod saluberrime advertitur...ut christi nomen in spe salutis aeternae tanta auctoritate praepolleat” (*S. Aureli Augustini...Epistulae* 44 (1904): 356). Translation quoted in Cohen, *Living Letters* 39.

¹⁵ Although Cohen says this idea was new with Augustine, such an idea can clearly be seen in Jerome’s writing as well. For example, in *Commentaria in Isaiam*, he argues in his discussion of Rom. 11:11 that “caecitas ex parte facta est in Israel, donec plenitudo gentium introeat, et tunc omnis Israel salvus fiat...si enim illi viderint, et conversi fuerint, et intellexerint, et sanati fuerint, totus mundus non recipiet sanitatem.” (lib. 3, cap. 6, par. 9, l. 86-111/1321-1332).

¹⁶ Fredriksen and Cohen’s notion of the hermeneutic foundation of the Augustinian doctrine of witness parts ways with previous assessments of Augustine’s anti-Judaism by Blumenkranz (*Die Judenpredigt Augustins* and “Augustin et les Juifs”) and Marcel Simon (*Verus Israel*), both of whom believed such ideas grew from a real Jewish competitive presence that constituted a perceived threat.

¹⁷ To say that the inner life of real Jews living in Christian lands went “undisturbed” does not imply that Christians did not persecute Jews or treat them violently. By this I mean that the real beliefs of Jews and the

Jewish witness can thus be linked, as both Cohen and Fredriksen argue, with the notably tolerant legislation of Pope Gregory the Great at the turn of the seventh century, whose apparently tolerant doctrine of *Sicut Iudaeis* determined the papal legislation regarding Jews in Christian lands well into the eleventh century.¹⁸ The essence of the doctrine of protection is contained in various letters of Gregory at the end of the sixth century, especially his letter to Victor, Bishop of Palermo, in June, 598, containing the words “Sicut Iudaeos.”¹⁹ As Gregory explains, Jews should enjoy certain basic rights in Christian society: “Just as license ought not to be granted to the Jews to presume to do in their synagogues more than the law permits them, just so ought they not to suffer curtailment in those (privileges) which have been conceded them.” (Grayzel, *The Church* 1: 93)²⁰ Despite the legal ramifications of Augustine’s influence on Gregory, it is important to stress that the essence of Augustine’s view is theological, and that this theological vision rests squarely on an exegetical foundation. In the discussion of Augustine’s views of the Jews and of Judaism, few scholars explore with due attention the link between Augustine

inner workings of real Jewish communities was never understood by Christians, even those who discussed or attacked Jews in their polemics. There is, of course, no correlation between polemical attack and real understanding.

¹⁸ Fredriksen notes that “Augustine’s position on the continuing religious importance of the Jewish people...ultimately served to safeguard later generations for centuries in medieval Christian Europe” (“Excaecati Occulta Justicia Dei” 320). Solomon Grayzel has studied the sources and effects of Gregory’s bull in detail in the introduction to *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century*, and in his articles “The Papal Bull *Sicut Judaeis*” and “Popes, Jews, and Inquisition. From “Sicut” to “Turbato”.”

¹⁹ This letter, #25 from book 8, can be found in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epist.* 2, Berlin 1891, p. 27.

²⁰ “Sicut ergo Judaeis non debet esse licentia in synagogis suis, ultra quam permissum est lege presumere, ita in his, que eis concessa sunt, nullum debent preiudicium sustinere” (Grayzel, *The Church*, 1: 92).

and Jerome and the influence of the correspondence between Jerome and Augustine over Jewish and Christian exegesis on Augustine's fully formed exegetical theology.²¹

The seemingly paradoxical argument that the Jew was both blind and stubborn in refusing to recognize the truth runs parallel to the Christian notion of the Jew as both guilty of the murder of Jesus and ignorant of his divinity, and thus of the full import of their own actions. Jews thus play a double functional role in Christian theology, as both the exegetical inferior of Christians and as the enemies of Jesus. Christian ambivalence toward this double role is manifest in the defense of Jews as "witnesses" while the Jewish *synagoga* is essentially characterized by her blindness. Cohen again attributes the paradoxical vision of the Jew to Augustine:

Augustine's Jew constitutes a paradox, a set of living contradictions. He survived the crucifixion, though he deserved to die in punishment for it; he somehow belongs in Christendom, though he eschews Christianity. He accompanies the church on its march through history and in its expansion throughout the world, though he remains fixed "in useless antiquity." The Jew pertains, at one and the same time, to two opposing realms." (*Living Letters* 60)

Augustine's own words in 16.21 of *Contra Faustum* allude to this paradoxical double identity: "In not comprehending the truth they offer additional testimony to the truth, because when they do not understand those books in which it was predicted that they would not understand, they show them for that reason to be true."²² Sanders has

²¹ On this correspondence and its influence on Augustine, see Fürst, *Augustinis Briefwechsel mit Hieronymus*, Lössl, "A Shift in Patristic Exegesis," and Signer, "From Theory to Practice, pp. 84-89.

²² "Unde magis non intellegendo veritatem perhibent testimonium veritati, quia cum eos libros non intellegunt a quibus non intellecturi praedicta sunt etiam hinc eos veraces ostendunt." (464). On this passage, see the remarks of Fredriksen, "Excaecati Occulta Justicia Dei" 317-318.

identified this paradoxical ambivalence towards Judaism even in the writings of Paul, concluding that Christianity, following Paul's model, "achieved its own identity by pursuing...a course which involved the simultaneous appropriation and rejection of Judaism" (Paul 210).²³ In his study on Jews as "killers of Christ", however, Cohen links this paradoxical attitude to what he sees as an evolving notion of Jewish blindness, arguing that a notion of Jewish ignorance was more prominent in Western Christian writing up to the twelfth century, but that by the thirteenth, "a new tradition of intentionality emerged as predominant in certain clerical circles" (3). Such a vision can be clearly seen in the attitude of Thomas Aquinas, who maintained Jewish "ignorance did not excuse them from their crime, since it was, in a sense, voluntary ignorance."²⁴ Thus, Cohen notes, Aquinas clearly "parts company" with Augustine (*Living Letters* 370) who saw Jewish blindness to Jesus' true identity as unintentional even though Augustine does not argue that the Jews were innocent in their blindness, because even though God knew that the Jews would reject Jesus, they did so freely.²⁵ Fredriksen argues convincingly that

²³ González Salinero, *Biblia y polémica*, 95-117, and Wiesen, *St. Jerome as a Satirist* 188-94, explores this ambivalence of acceptance and rejection in the writing of Jerome.

²⁴ "Sciendum tamen quod eorum ignorantia eos non excusabat a crimine, quia erat quodammodo ignorantia affectata" (*Summa Theologiae* 3.47.5 corpus, in *Opera Omnia* XI (1903), quoted in Cohen, *Living Letters* 373).

²⁵ For a full discussion of Thomas's views on Jewish intentionality, see pp. 364-375. Augustine, by contrast, explains in 53:4 of his *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus* (on John 12:37-43) that "fecerunt ergo peccatum Judei, quod eos non compulsi facere, cui peccatum non placet; sed facturus esse praedixit, quem nihil latet. Et ideo si non malum, sed bonum facere voluissent, non prohiberentur; et hoc facturi praeviderentur ab eo qui novit quid sit quisque facturus, et quid ei sit pro eius opere redditurus" (53:4, l. 24-25/10330-10331). In 53:6 of the same work, he explains that "Quare autem non poterant, si a me quaeratur, cito respondeo, quia nolebant: malam quippe eorum voluntatem praevidit Deus, et per Prophetam praenuntiavit ille cui abscondi futura non possunt. Sed aliam causam, inquis, dicit Propheta non voluntatis eorum. Quam causam dicit Propheta...etiam hoc eorum voluntatem meruisse respondeo. Sic enim execat, sic obdurat Deus, deserendo et non diuvando: quod occulto iudicio facere postest, iniquo non potest" (53:6, l. 5-9 /10341-10345). On these ideas, see Evans, *To See and not Perceive*, 158 and Fredriksen, "Excaecati Occulta Iusticia Dei". The circular idea that the Jew is somehow responsible for his own blindness can also be seen before Augustine in the writing of Jerome. In Jerome's *Commentaria in Esaiam*, he explains, "Ex quo animadvertimus, quamvis grave sit peccatum, si quis concertatur, eum posse sanari..." (lib. 3, cap. 6, par. 9,

Augustine was pressed to face the vexing question of free will and divine justice, an issue he had first explored in his debates with Manichees, in a new context in an effort to defend as clear and just God's revelation to Israel before the coming of Christ. In his reply to Faustus, Augustine finds a logical way out of the sticky position created by God's foreknowledge of Jewish blindness by explaining that the blindness of the Jews actually is a punishment for a "secret sin" and a "secret criminality."²⁶ God is fully just when he sees their obstinacy in their blindness.²⁷ Whether Augustine is the main source for later ideas about Jewish intentionality or, as Cohen argues, such an idea only gains currency after the twelfth century, the question of Jewish guilt for blindness is of prime importance for Raymond Martini and, as we shall see, albeit in a different form, for Abner of Burgos as well. In fact, as we will see, it is on this point that Martini and Abner/Alfonso most significantly differ.

Whether one emphasizes Paul or Augustine's development of Pauline ideas as more important in the development of Christian anti-Jewish polemic, there emerged in Augustine's writing and afterward a specific image of the Jew and of Judaism that was entirely determined by Christian exegetical needs and consequently, had little to say about real Judaism after the destruction of the second Temple. This unreal, functional

1. 113/1332). Elsewhere, in his *Commentaria in Zachariam*, he explains, "Videbant Judaei; et quia lumen recipere noluerunt, aeterna caecitate cooperti sunt" (*Commentariorum in Prophetis Minores* 2 (76A): lib. 3, cap 14, 1503 / 10434).

²⁶ On this question of "secret sin", see Fredriksen, "Excaecati Occulta Justicia Dei" 306 and 318-319.

²⁷ He says in 13.11, "Quod si diceret, Quid ergo peccaverunt Judaei, si Deus illos excaecavit ne agnoscerent Christum? Quantum possemus, imbuendo rudi homini ostenderemus ex aliis occultis peccatis Deo cognitis, venire justam poenam hujus caecitatis...volentem ostendere quaedam peccata manifesta, ex poena venire quorumdam occultorum...ostendit [Jeremias] occulti eorum meriti fuisse ut non cognoscerent" (390). Compare the words of Pope Innocent IV in 1244, in his call to renew the effort to burn Jewish books after his predecessor, Gregory IX, initiated the Talmud trial of 1242: "Impia Judeorum perfidia, de quorum cordibus propter immensitatem eorum scelerum Redemptor noster velamen non abstulit, sed in cecitate, que contingit ex parte, in Israel adhuc manere permittit..." (Grayzel, *The Church*, 1: 250).

image of the Jew as the opposite of the Christian, an image which Jeremy Cohen has termed the “hermeneutical Jew,”²⁸ came to be the standard picture painted in polemical writing for the next millennium. As historian Amos Funkenstein, among others, has remarked, most Christian polemic against Judaism before the twelfth century was predominantly an exercise in defining Christian doctrine rather than a real confrontation with Judaism, or even less, with real Jews. It was, in this sense, not missionizing polemic, but entirely theological apologetic, and this suggests a greater debt to Augustine’s theological hermeneutic developed in his polemics against the Manichees more than it does to Paul’s ideas about the place of real Jews in the ministry of Jesus in which biblical hermeneutics and theological apologetic only begin to frame his vision of the role of Jews in Church history. In any case, it is clear that medieval texts built off of Augustine’s theological hermeneutic respond not to Judaism as it was practiced by the living Jews of Europe, but to an imaginary Judaism as it existed within the terms of Christian soteriological history, as the negative exegetical correlative of Christian figurativism. It was this stereotypical, reductive view of the exegetical difference between Jews and Christians that inspired the ubiquitous images of upright *ecclesia* triumphant over blind and crestfallen *synagoga*, which have come to represent the essence of the medieval Jewish-Christian debate for medieval historians. A clear understanding of this foundational concept sheds light on the changes in polemical writing in the twelfth century and the nature of missionary efforts by polemicists in the thirteenth.

²⁸ For a discussion of this term and its relation to Dahan’s concept of the “theological” Jew, see Cohen, *Living Letters*, 3 n. 3. See also Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 585; Markus, “The Jew as a Hermeneutic Device”; and Fredriksen, “Excaecati Occulta Justicia Dei” 320-321.

B. Reason and Talmud in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

Most scholars agree that a major change occurred in Christian attitudes toward and treatment of Jews after the first Christian millennium. There continues to be much heated debate, however, over precisely what this change entailed, when such a change began to occur, and what constituted its primary cause, and even if there was a primary cause at all. Historians such as R. I. Moore have sought to chart the development of Christian doctrines of exclusion following the eleventh-century Gregorian reform, placing persecution of Jews alongside that of many other marginalized groups such as lepers and heretics.²⁹ While some scholars have stressed the importance of developments in canon law in the twelfth century, others such as Solomon Grayzel locate the deterioration of the Jews in thirteenth-century papal policy, represented most clearly by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.³⁰ Among scholars of polemics, Anna Sapir Abulafia has defended the argument that the twelfth century saw a fundamental change in the arguments used against Jews, beginning for the first time to be based on philosophical and rational rather than scriptural arguments.³¹ Historians such as Gavin Langmuir, Lester Little, and H.H. Ben Sasson have linked anti-Jewish sentiment to a twelfth-century Christian crisis of identity produced by a decisive economic shift and the development of a monetary

²⁹ In “Heresy, Repression and Social Change,” he states specifically that “there can be no doubt that this [the development of the concept of heresy] was a direct result of the transformation of social relations brought about by the upheavals commonly if inadequately referred to as the feudal revolution and the Gregorian reform, and the attendant reconceptualization of society as comprising “the three orders” which has been the object of so much attention in recent years. Those who were condemned as heretics consistently disputed both the morality of the surplus extraction associated with a new mode of production, the seigneurie, and the legitimacy of the power relations founded upon it” (41).

³⁰ On the twelfth-century side, see Shlomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews*, Kenneth Stow, *The “1007 Anonymous” and Papal Sovereignty*, and Walter Pakter, *Medieval Canon Law and the Jews*. Defending the importance of thirteenth-century Church policies, see Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews*. In his later essay “Popes, Jews, and Inquisition. From “Sicut” to “Turbato,”” traces the changes in papal policy that led up to this change, occurring early in the twelfth century.

³¹ See her *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* and *Christians and Jews in Dispute*.

economy of rising urban centers.³² Amos Funkenstein likewise argues that the first shift in polemical trends begins in the twelfth century, which he sees as the beginning of a series of changes that negatively affected the Jews over the following centuries.³³

In his *Jewish Philosophical Polemics*, polemical scholar Daniel Lasker presents an extremely useful distillation of the types of arguments made by polemicists in the Middle Ages: arguments are either exegetical, historical/social, or rational, and rational arguments themselves can appeal either to “common sense” or to more strict philosophical arguments based on fixed categories and terms (*Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 1-11). Much anti-Jewish polemic in the Latin West from before the twelfth century was exegetical in nature, appealing to the support of biblical *testimonia* for authoritative proof. Occasionally, a few historical/social arguments and arguments from common sense were mixed into these exegetical arguments, such as arguments that the Jews were few in number or dispersed in exile, so they could not possibly enjoy God’s favor. By and large, however, early Christian arguments against Judaism were exegetical.

The argument that the worsening Christian treatment of Jews is rooted in the twelfth century focuses on the notable shift in polemical writing at that time to include

³² Langmuir, in his *History, Religion, and Antisemitism* and *Towards a Definition of Antisemitism*, has presented the most incisive and perspicacious treatment of the theoretical underpinnings of Christian anti-Semitism and its link to changes in twelfth-century society. Little most clearly presented his well-known thesis in *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, arguing that the decline of Jewish status in the second feudal age from “insecure but negotiable status of virtual equality to one of abject servility” (50) was born from Christian insecurity about changes in Christian economy. “Christians hated Jews because they saw in Jews the same calculating for profit in which they themselves were deeply and, in their own view, unjustifiably involved. It was above all the guilt for this involvement that they projected onto the Jews. The Jews functioned as a scapegoat for Christian failure to adapt successfully to the profit economy” (54-55). Little’s views provide a historiographical elaboration of ideas about Christian scapegoating of Jews expressed more abstractly by thinkers such as René Girard. Cf., for example, Girard’s “Violence and Representation in the Mythical Text”, in *To Double Business Bound*, 192. Ben Sasson suggests something similar to Little’s theory as well (234).

³³ See his Hebrew article “Changes in the Patterns of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Twelfth Century [Hebrew]” and the English summary of that article, “Basic Types of Anti-Christian Polemic in the Later Middle Ages.”

arguments based on the use of reason and philosophy rather than merely on the citation of scripture. At the end of the eleventh century, St. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury composed (perhaps in response to the *Disputatio judei et Christiani* sent to him by Gilbert of Crispin, abbot of Westminster)³⁴ his *Cur deus homo* (*Why did God Become Man?*). Although this work is not explicitly polemical, it offers one of the first rational, philosophical apologies for Christian doctrine. Abulafia explains that

The real importance of the *Cur Deus Homo* for [the Jewish-Christian] debate is...that it shows so clearly the overlap between Jewish objections to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and the internal Christian questions coming from Christians studying the trivium. It is this overlap that would encourage Anselm's protégés to use rational arguments when they themselves did enter the arena of the debate against Jews. (*Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* 45)

Anselm's text is thus considered to be the inaugural text in a series of new rationalist treatises seeking to define and defend Christian doctrine with the tools of reason and philosophy. This new impulse towards a rational explanation of faith many of the most important polemical works of the twelfth century, such as the *Dialogus inter Philosophum, Iudaeum, et Christianum* of Peter Abelard, the *Disputatio contra Iudaeum Leonem* of Odo of Tournai and, at the beginning of the twelfth century, the *Dialogus* of the convert Petrus Alfonsi. Despite the declaration in these texts of a desire to argue without aggression (debating according to mutually fair ground rules, refraining from insults, etc.),³⁵ the goal

³⁴ See Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 44-6, and R. W. Southern's "St. Anselm and Gilbert Crispin." For an edition of Crispin's works, see *The Works of Gilbert Crispin Abbot of Westminster*, Ed. Anna Sapir Abulafia and G.R. Evans. London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1986.

³⁵ The comparatively irenic tone of Abelard's dialog is typified by the words of the author who, at the end of the first discussion, between the philosopher and the Jew, holds off judging who is right "desiring more to

of these texts is most often to present a rational defense of the superiority of Christian doctrine over other religions. This basic polemical intention paved the way for writers such as Peter the Venerable in the middle of the twelfth century to blend traditional arguments of Jewish blindness with twelfth-century contentions based on rational arguments and draw the conclusion that because Jews do not accept the rational proofs for the truth of Christianity, and because all humans, according to Aristotle, are rational, the Jews are somehow less than human.³⁶ Although most polemical texts from the twelfth-century were clearly not missionizing texts, tendencies such as Peter the Venerable's to include statements about "real" Jews in the criticism of ideas of Judaism suggests the continuity between the rationalistic treatment of Judaism in the twelfth century and the confrontation with real Jews in the texts and disputations of the thirteenth. According to Robert Chazan, "these twelfth-century figures introduce us to the new mid-thirteenth-century argumentation not only in their genuine drive to missionize among the Jews but also in their early sense of the need to develop new proselytizing argumentation by

learn than give judgment" (cupidus discendi magis quam iudicandi)(*Collationes* 76-7). Compare to this Crispin's stated desire to argue "in a tolerant spirit" (toleranti animo)(*The Works of Gilbert Crispin* 10), or Alfonsi's intention to argue "without contention" (sine contentione). Nevertheless, the relatively shorter arguments allotted to the Jews in these debates seems to belie the pretension to fairness between the interlocutors.

³⁶ "Hominem enim te profiteri ne forte mentiar, non audeo, quia in te extinctam, immo sepultam quae hominem a caeteris animalibus vel bestiis separat eis que praefert rationem agnosco...cur enim non dicaris animal brutum, cur non bestia, cur non iumentum?...Audiet nec intelliget asinus, audiet nec intelliget Iudeus...an ego hoc primus dico? Nonne hoc idem ante multa saecula dictum est?" (*Adversus Iudeorum...durtiem* 125). "Lest I lie, I dare not profess that you are human, because I understand that the rational faculty which distinguishes the human being from other animals and beasts and renders him superior to them has been obliterated or suppressed in you...why are you not called a brute animal, why not a beast, why not a beast of burden?...the ass hears but does not understand; the Jew hears but does not understand...Am I the first to say this? Was this not said many centuries ago?" For discussion of this passage, see Cohen, *Living Letters*, 259-60.

gaining better awareness of the Jewish psyche and its patterns of thought” (*Daggers of Faith* 23).³⁷

While scholars such as Abulafia and Funkenstein stress the importance of the twelfth century in the growth of anti-Jewish sentiment, other scholars such as Jeremy Cohen and Robert Chazan have stressed the centrality of the thirteenth century in the history of medieval Jewish-Christian relations. In his groundbreaking *The Friars and the Jews*, Cohen presented the argument that the development of Christian Mendicant orders in the thirteenth century, and above all the foundation of the Dominican Order to combat Christian heresy among the Cathars in the early thirteenth century, signaled the intensification of anti-Jewish sentiment within Western Christendom. Specifically, Cohen points to the new Christian awareness of post-Biblical Jewish writing such as the Talmud and Midrash that undermined the longstanding Augustinian Doctrine of Witness. As he explains, “The Church now depicted the “living” Judaism of its own day as a heresy and perversion, a pernicious oral tradition of religious law and doctrine...a gross deviation from the religion of the Old Testament” (77). Chazan, in his *Daggers of Faith* and his important article, “The Condemnation of the Talmud Reconsidered (1239-1248),” criticized Cohen’s idea that the change in thirteenth-century treatment of Jews involved a reconceptualization of the contemporary Jew as different from the Jew of the Old Testament.³⁸ For Chazan, the thirteenth-century shift was one of method in dealing with the Jew rather than a new ideology regarding Jewish existence. He agrees that the

³⁷ Despite his statement that “the evidence is overwhelming that [eleventh- and twelfth-century polemics] were not rooted in a new or continuing missionary impulse” (“Mission to the Jews” 578), David Berger does see “signs of things to come” (584) in twelfth-century polemicists such as Odo, author of the *Ysagoge in theologiam*, Joachim of Fiore and, notably, Peter the Venerable, although he quickly backtracks from his suggestion noting “these exceptions are few in number, and there is less to them than meets the eye” (585). Cf. Cohen, *Living Letters*, 258 n. 112.

thirteenth century shift involved a dramatic rise in missionizing efforts to the Jews, but attributed this “new missionizing” to “an inherent instability in the traditional and fragile Church position with regard to the Jews...this is not a new doctrine; it is the realization of the negative potential inherent in the old and traditional and complex Church doctrine” (180). Although Cohen has modified his view somewhat under pressure from critics such as Robert Chazan, he defends, in his recent book *Living Letters of the Law*, the importance of the Augustinian doctrine of witness in medieval Christian attitudes and treatment of Jews. Stating his interest in “avoiding neat, all-purpose solutions” (*Living Letters* 155), he presents a more balanced view: “In all, the movement away from the Augustinian doctrine was typically gradual, often incomplete, and notably erratic...Still, late medieval Christendom frequently ignored the mandates implied in “Slay them not, lest at any time they forget your law” (396).³⁹

Both Chazan and Cohen seek to answer the question of what the cause and significance were of the attention given to post-Biblical literature in thirteenth-century polemics. Although the Talmud had been cited in the *Dialogus* of Petrus Alfonsi, the *Adversus Iudeorum...duritiam* of Peter the Venerable, and the *De fide Catholica* of Alan of Lille, these discussions were relatively limited in scope and, in the cases of Peter the Venerable and Alan of Lille, were not based on any extensive first-hand knowledge. In addition, and

³⁹ After Chazan responded to Cohen’s thesis in “The Condemnation of the Talmud Reconsidered,” and again at length in *Daggers of Faith* 170-181, Cohen responded to Chazan’s assertions in *Living Letters of the Law*, chapter 8, especially pp. 358-363. Cohen returns there to his original challenge to Funkenstein’s claim regarding the importance of the twelfth century in the development of anti-Jewish polemic, conceding that Funkenstein was correct in his claims that the twelfth century witnessed two key events in this development: the use of reason and philosophy in polemics, and the attention to post-Biblical literature. To this list Cohen adds a third change, the expansion of “those who did not belong to the community of the truly faithful” (*Living Letters* 156), and as a result, “the Jew ceased to function in Christian thought as the sole or even the predominant “other”...if the terminology and orientation of the *Adversus Iudaeos* tradition formerly highlighted that which rendered the Jew unique in Christendom, twelfth-century clerical writers began to focus on that which he shared with other marginal types” (156-7).

perhaps more importantly, these discussions were limited to *Adversus Iudaeos* writing among Christians, and had little or no direct impact on the beliefs or practices of actual Jews (even if later Jews engaged some of their ideas in later polemical ripostes). The situation was of an entirely different ilk in the thirteenth century. The first appearance of the Talmud in Christian discussion of Judaism in the thirteenth century was in the controversy over the Talmud in Paris in 1240.⁴⁰ In 1236,⁴¹ the converted Jew Nicholas Donin denounced the Talmud to the papacy for containing remarks against Christians and Christianity, for encouraging anti-Christian behavior, for containing blasphemies, obscenities and other absurd remarks, for seeing the Talmud as given by God, and for representing a deviation from biblical teaching.⁴² Although this latter accusation was, in fact, not taken up by the Church in its subsequent condemnation of the Talmud, this point has served for debate among scholars over the importance of this new Christian post-Biblical literature.⁴³ Nearly three years after Donin's accusations, Pope Gregory IX

⁴⁰ The Talmud had already been mentioned in the twelfth century in texts by Petrus Alfonsi, Peter the Venerable, and Alan of Lille, but never in any systematic fashion. The main sources of information on the Paris Talmud controversy are the Latin documents in the Paris B.N. MS Lat 16558, the Hebrew account by a student of R. Yehiel, R. Joseph ben Nathan Official (*Vikuah Rabbenu Yehiel mi-Pariz*), and the papal and clerical correspondence, mostly contained in Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* I. The Bib. Nat. Ms. contains some of the basic documents surrounding this controversy, including Donin's *Articuli litterarum papae*, giving specific accusations against the Talmud which Donin presented to the Pope. This event has been discussed in detail by Loeb, "La controverse de 1240," Rosenthal, "The Talmud on Trial;" Baer "The Disputations of R. Yehiel;" Merchavia, *The Talmud* 240ff.; Chazan, *Medieval Jewry*, 124-133; Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 60-76; and more recently the articles in *Le brûlement du Talmud*, ed. G. Dahan. Also of related interest is Joseph Shatzmiller, ed. *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, which we will consider in more detail below.

⁴¹ This date, "anno enim ab incarnatione domini MCCXXXVI circiter..." is given in Paris B.N. MS Lat 16558, fol 211b (Loeb, "La controverse" 2:252).

⁴² On Donin, see Grayzel, *The Church* 1: 339-40, Merchavia, *The Talmud* 229-240, and the full bibliographic references in Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, p. 61 n. 19. For a full list of Donin's charges, see Rosenthal, "The Talmud on Trial," p. 145-169.

⁴³ Cohen stresses this accusation in *The Friars and the Jews* to lend support to his claim that Christians came to view the Talmud as proof of Jewish heresy, but Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* p. 33 and 187 n. 17, notes that this charge does not appear in the Papal charges made as a result of Donin's initial accusations.

wrote a letter (delivered by Donin) to the Bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne,⁴⁴ including Donin's accusations and commanding him to write to all the archbishops and kings of France, England, Portugal, and Spain, ordering them to confiscate Jewish books on the first Sabbath of Lent in the following year (March 3, 1240) when Jews would be in synagogue. The Dominican and Franciscan friars were to then investigate the books and burn any that contained doctrinal errors. King Louis IX of France, the only monarch to carry out these orders, then called for proceedings in which the Jews could defend themselves. Presided over by Louis's mother, Blanche of Castile (Great aunt of the Castilian king Alfonso X, the wise), the "dispute" between Nicholas Donin and Rabbi Yehiel ben Joseph of Paris, as well as the more formal trial of the Talmud that followed (assuming these were separate events) took place in June, 1240.⁴⁵ In any case, the confrontation resulted in the burning of thousands—perhaps tens of thousands—of Hebrew manuscripts in 1242, above all at the instigation of king Louis IX. The events were repeated in 1244 when Pope Innocent IV repeated the call to burn any remaining copies of the Talmud (Grayzel, *The Church*, 1: 250-253).

Although the attack on post-biblical Judaism by no means subsided in the second half of the thirteenth century, the harsh attack on the Talmud of the 1240's differs in a number of important ways from the next major Christian anti-Jewish attack, the Barcelona Disputation of 1263. Before considering the dispute itself, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of the more general Christian attention given to the ideas of

⁴⁴ See Grayzel, *The Church* 1: 238-43, for copies of this and the following documents.

⁴⁵ Baer, "The Disputation of R. Yehiel", argues that the Hebrew account is a dramatization, and that R. Yehiel never actually spoke to Donin. Judah Rosenthal, "The Talmud on Trial," however, disagrees. Recently Robert Chazan, in "The Hebrew Report," suggested that the Hebrew account is "studded with caricature and with poetic embellishments; it does not achieve a significant level of realism, suspense, or reader engagement" (85). Still, Chazan never questions that an actual confrontation did take place. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews* 63 n. 22 defends the existence of two events rather than only one.

missionizing and conversion undertaken in the thirteenth century. Chazan has emphasized that the Catholic Church actually undertook a much more serious campaign of missionizing in the thirteenth century, manifest in a greater allocation of resources, the development of missionizing techniques, and the elaboration of missionizing argumentation (*Daggers of Faith* 14). We will consider below the question of how far these steps towards active missionizing were actually implemented and carried out, but certainly Chazan is correct in identifying signs of an intensification in the *discussion* of Christian missionary efforts, even if the actions that resulted from such discussions might not have been intended to actually convert people and so cannot be properly called “missionizing.” This intensification can be attributed to various causes. First of all, the successes of the first crusade to reclaim the holy land at the turn of the twelfth century had given way to the disillusionment of the second and third crusades in the twelfth century. In the middle of the twelfth century, ecclesiastical writers such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter the Venerable encouraged Christian attention to other religions, the former preaching in favor of the second crusade, the latter, in addition to composing his anti-Jewish polemic that included a harsh criticism of the Talmud, patronizing the first Latin translation of the Qur’ān.⁴⁶ At the same time, the spread of heretical movements such as Catharism and Waldensianism in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries had given rise an interest among zealous clergy in missionizing to wayward Christians and eventually helped spur the formation of the Dominican order for preaching against the

⁴⁶ On the influence of Peter the Venerable on polemical writing, see Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* and Iogna-Prat, *Ordonner et exclure*; and Tolan, *Sarracens*, chapter 6.

Cathars in 1216.⁴⁷ The legislation endorsed at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 (in the wake of which the Dominican Order was approved by Pope Honorius III) requiring Jews and Muslims to wear distinctive badges evinces the intensification of Christian, specifically ecclesiastical, efforts in the early thirteenth century at responding to non-Christian groups and in encouraging separation between these groups and Christians. This effort itself obviously required the clear delineation of the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy, and it was at this time, as Cohen has argued, that Judaism began to be associated with Christian heresy. Finally, the efforts Christian kings in Iberia, above all Fernando III of Castile-León, to conquer lands of Muslim Al-Andalus met with the greatest successes in the first half of the thirteenth century, when Fernando took key Muslim cities such as Córdoba, Jaén, and Seville. Although some scholars have warned against linking the growth of anti-Jewish polemic in the thirteenth century too closely with the increased interest in missionizing to and conversion of Muslims, the intensification of missionizing efforts proposed by Chazan obviously fits within the parameters of this larger history of a new Christian effort to define itself in opposition to many new heterodox enemies, including Christian heretics in Provence and elsewhere, Muslims in Spain, Sicily and the Holy Land, and Jews living throughout Christian lands.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ On the possible connection between Judaism and Christian heretical movements, see Neuman, *Jewish Influences*, 156ff.; Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* 9: 55-62 and 267, n. 5; Shatzmiller, "The Albigensian Heresy..."

⁴⁸ A number of critics have explored the connection between Christian attitudes to Judaism and Islam in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam*, signals numerous cases in which the Jews are somehow linked with the "heresies" of Muhammad. For example, In the *Capitula* layout of Peter's *Contra sectam Sarracenorum*, Peter's secretary Peter of Poitiers, noted that Muhammad's writing was a variation on known heresy such as Manichaeism and nonsense in the Talmud (Kritzeck 219). Such examples abound in Peter's work. Another striking example is his pairing, in the *Liber contra Sectam Sarracenorum* of the Muslim and Jew because they both converted away from the true faith to a heretical one: "a veritate Christiana vos ad fabulas Mahumeth, Iudaei, ad fabulas Thalmuth" (Kritzeck 285). Examples of such pairing of Muslims and Jews as heretical or heterodox faiths becomes increasingly prevalent in this period. A few other examples include Petrus Alfonsi's inclusion of an anti-Muslim polemic in chapter five of

C. Crusade and Mission in Thirteenth-Century Anti-Judaism

In his study of Christian strategies for confronting Islam in the Middle Ages *Crusade and Mission*, Benjamin Kedar proposes that warfare and religious conversion, or crusading and missionizing, are intimately and inextricably linked. Such an insight is germane to the consideration of the rise of missionizing efforts against the Jews in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, given the military background of reconquest in the Iberian Peninsula and crusade to the Holy Land. Indeed, the connection of anti-Jewish sentiment with religious crusade is apparent as early as 1096 in the attacks on Jews by fervent bands of crusaders on the first crusade. In a letter to King Louis VII of France in 1146, just before the second crusade (when Bernard of Clairvaux sought to protect the Jews of the Rhineland from a similar violence like that of the first crusade), Peter the Venerable of Cluny asked

What good is it to pursue and persecute the enemies of the Christian faith in far and distant lands if the Jews, vile blasphemers and far worse than the Saracens, nor far away from us but right in our midst, blaspheme, abuse, and trample on Christ and the Christian sacraments so freely and insolently and with impunity? (*Letters* 1: 328; quoted in Cohen, *Living Letters*, 247).

Such a sentiment about the proximate, intimate threat presented by the Jews, compared to the more distant, military threat of the Muslims, is echoed by Raymond Martini at the

his anti-Jewish *Dialogs*; Alan of Lille's parallel criticism of Jews, Muslims, and Christian heretics in his *De Fide Catholica*; the various works of Raymond Martini for the conversion of Jews and Muslims, especially the *Pugio Fidei*, which treats Islam in the first section and Judaism in the second and third sections; the polemics of Raymond Lull against both faiths; and even the later polemics of Alfonso Buenhombre (Bonihominis). For a fuller treatment of the question of the link between anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish missionizing, see Cutler and Cutler, *The Jew as the Ally of the Muslim* and the criticism of this by Cohen in his review in *Judaism*, as well as his "The Muslim Connection..."; the remarks of Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West* 82-85, 18-189, et passim. Also of interest on this subject is Lourie, "Anatomy of Ambivalence," pp. 51-68 and Tolan's recent *Saracens*, 233-255.

end of the thirteenth century, when he opens his *Pugio Fidei*, written against both Muslims and Jews, with the following words: “As the dictum of Seneca goes, “no plague is more effective at damaging than a familiar enemy.” Likewise, no enemy of the Christian faith is more familiar, and more inevitable, than the Jew” (2). In this same prologue, he says that he is writing “principally against the Jews, and then against Saracens and other enemies of the true faith,”⁴⁹ and the importance that Martini allots to Judaism over Islam for Christian polemicists is reflected above all in the space he devotes to it in the work. The only discussion of Islam is included in the first and shortest of the three sections of the work, and Martini includes no citations of Muslim works in the original Arabic (all citations in section one are given in Latin), but includes hundreds of citations in Hebrew in sections two and three. In his attention to the Jews as the most “intimate” and the most “inevitable” problem for Christians, he expresses an ambivalent attitude of aggression and missionizing by writing “a work that might be like a dagger for preachers and guardians of the Christian faith...at some times for slicing off for the Jews the bread of the divine word in sermons; at other times for slaying their impiety and perfidy, and for cutting the throat of their pertinacity against Christ and their impudent insanity” (2).⁵⁰ This pairing of missionizing with a militant aggressiveness in polemical rhetoric points to the new turn in thirteenth-century polemical texts, already hinted at in various aspects in

⁴⁹ “...principaliter contra Iudaeos, deinde contra Sarracenos, et alios quosdam verae fidei adversarios fabricabo” (2).

⁵⁰ The Latin reads, “Injunctum est mihi...opus tale componam, quod quasi Pugio quidam praedicatoribus Christianae fidei atque cultoribus esse possit in promptu, ad scindendum quandoque Judaeis in sermonibus panem verbi divini; quandoque vero ad eorum impietatem atque perfidiam jugulandam, eorumque contra Christum *pertinaciam* et impudentem insaniam perimendam” (2). The word “Jugulandam,” literally suggests “cutting the throat of,” and is meant to be paired with the previous verb, “scindendum,” another verb meaning to cut or slice which can also be used for food. Both verbs, as well as the third, “perimendam,” (“annihilate”), connote killing. This passage perfectly displays the double intentions of missionizing and crusading apparent in many twelfth- and thirteenth-century texts.

the twelfth-century turn toward the use of postbiblical sources and arguments based on reason, to directly confronting a real polemical enemy rather than merely a textual one. This new sensitivity to the real presence of one's polemical enemy has, as Robert Chazan has maintained, important implications for the development of polemical arguments, particularly in the turn towards active missionizing among non-Christian groups. The dominance of aggressiveness and condemnation, however, calls into question the real concern in such missionizing in convincing Jews and Muslims, and highlights the permeability between thirteenth-century Christian notions of mission and crusade.

In theory, both mission and crusade are concrete approaches to real non-Christian groups, representing direct means of engaging with Jews and Muslims outside the parameters of textual polemic. In reality, however, there was still a great difference between the militant violence of crusaders and the ideological, elaborate arguments of Christian thinkers interested in missionizing. The reasons for this difference are various. First of all, the idea of conversion, especially of Jews, had remained a constant element in Christian apologetic, constituting an important trope that was far more important in polemical discussions of Judaism than in real policies toward Jews. Despite the rhetoric surrounding the crusades in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the discussion of crusade played no such important role in the development of real Christian policies toward Jews, even in the thirteenth century. Secondly, missionizing and proselytizing are, at least in theory, actions based on appeal and persuasion, not force. Indeed, the papal interdiction of forced conversion points to this essential difference between mission and crusade in ecclesiastical thought. Thirdly, the missionizing arguments of thirteenth century churchmen were presented within the traditional parameters of Christian polemical

writing, which for most of Christian history had consisted only of apologetic arguments intended to be compelling only to Christian readers and were never intended to elicit conversion from rival groups. Thus, unlike missionizing efforts which were undertaken in the intellectual context of elaborate, apologetic argumentation in Christian polemical texts, crusading was effected more by unlettered militants than educated Churchmen and was accompanied by comparatively little legal or theoretical discussion of crusading in contemporary writing. Thus while one aspect of crusading, the direct engagement with real non-Christian groups, can also be said to be an important part of missionizing and proselytism, there is another, much more intellectual aspect of missionizing that shares more with traditional Christian apologetical writing than with externally directed engagement with Jews and Muslims. The preponderance of aggressive language such as Martini's alongside arguments allegedly intended for conversion points to the persistent apologetic and formulaic nature of the latter and the difficulties faced by the Mendicants of the missionizing movement to effectively develop missionary arguments intended to convert non-Christians through persuasion rather than coercion.

The mixed interests of mission and crusade, as well as the split intentions of missionizing between real engagement and rarified, intellectual apologetical arguments can be seen in the development of polemical writing in the latter half of the thirteenth century. Between the statements of Peter the Venerable and Raymond Martini, the dual purposes of mission and crusade can be discerned in the background of the dispute of Barcelona between Nahmanides and the Jewish convert Paul Christiani, which took place, as the Latin protocol explains, in the presence of King James I of Aragon as well as barons, prelates, and "many other...religious and military men" ("multis aliis...religiosis et

militibus”) (Baer, “The Disputations” 185). Based on the source accounts, the dispute took place between July 20 and July 27, 1263, when King James called the leader of the Catalan Jewish community, Moses ben Naḥman of Gerona (Naḥmanides) to debate with the Christian convert from Judaism, Paul Christiani, a disciple of the Dominican Raymond of Peñafort who was, according to some historians, already active as a “missionary” among the Jews in Provence and Catalonia. After the four sessions of the debate, Naḥmanides is known to have disputed with King James and Pablo on August 4, 1263 before returning to Gerona.⁵¹ What is known of the debate comes mainly from two accounts of the proceedings, one brief text in Latin, and the other in Hebrew written by Naḥmanides.⁵² Although modern criticism of the dispute based on these sources has itself become polarized and, at times, polemical, Chazan has made the apposite assertion in *Barcelona and Beyond* that any consideration of the debate based solely on one source will “skew the results” (13).⁵³ Indeed, the debate must be considered for its historical value and not in an effort to prove “who won”, an idea which is entirely devoid of historiographical meaning.

With a judicious consideration of both accounts of the Barcelona dispute, it has been possible for scholars to identify the basic content of the four sessions and the main arguments adduced by each disputant. The central aim of the dispute was not, according

⁵¹ The main historiographical sources on the dispute include Loeb, “La controverse de 1263”; Baer, *A History* 1:150-62 and “The Disputations”; C. Roth, “The Disputation”; Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews* 108-128; Chazan, “The Barcelona ‘Disputation’ of 1263 and *Barcelona and Beyond*”; and Ragacs, *Die zweite Talmuddisputation von Paris 1269*.

⁵² The Latin text can be found in Denifle, “Quellen zu Disputation” 231-4, which also includes other relevant Latin sources; and Baer, “The Disputations” 185-7. The Hebrew text of Naḥmanides can be found in Moses ben Naḥman, *Kitvei* 1:299-320, and translated into English in *Writing* and in Rankin, ed., *Jewish Religious Polemic*; An English translation of both texts is included in Maccoby, ed., *Judaism on Trial*.

⁵³ For a summary of the partisan scholarship surrounding the debate, see Chazan’s summary on pp. 4-12.

to the words of the Latin account of the disputation, to question the truth of Christianity, but to use Jewish texts to prove

that the Messiah (of which the interpretation is “Christ”) whom the Jews expect, has undoubtedly come; further, that the Messiah himself, as had been prophesied, must be both God and man; further, that he truly suffered and died for the salvation of the human race; further, that the legal or ceremonial matters ceased and had to cease after the coming of the said Messiah.⁵⁴

Cohen and Chazan have neatly summarized the main arguments and principle source texts for each session (*The Friars and the Jews* 111-112; Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond*, 61-63) and, as both observe, the foundation of the entire debate was the first argument, that the messiah has already come. If this point could be proved, then the subsequent arguments about the implications of such a reality could be more easily established.⁵⁵

While this particular argument that the Messiah had already come was by no means original, what most critics see as an “innovation” was the use of Talmudic material, rather than strictly biblical *testimonia*, to establish this point as true. As Chazan has studied in detail in *Daggers of Faith*, this innovative approach was developed in the aftermath of the Barcelona Disputation in the writings of later Dominican missionaries such as Raymond Martini. Although it is not certain if Martini was actually present at the

⁵⁴ “Messiam, qui interpretatur Christus, quem ipsi Iudei expectabunt, indubitanter venisse. Item ipsum Messiam, sicut prophetatum fuerat, unum Deum et hominem debere esse. Item ipsum vere passum et mortuum esse pro salute humani generis. Item quod legalia sive ceremonialia cessaverunt et cessare debuerunt post adventum dicti Messie” (Baer, “The Disputation,” 185/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial* 147-8).

⁵⁵ While they agree on this point, they disagree as to which of the four points was the most critical to ensure Christian success at the debate. Cohen argues in *The Friars and the Jews* that the fourth—maintaining that Jewish law was null and void—was the most important, implying that the Jews thereby lost their claim to the status of traditional protection in Christian society (113). Chazan, on the other hand, calls Cohen’s argument “untenable,” (171), arguing that the most important issue was only to prove if the messiah had come or not.

Barcelona Disputation, his work follows directly in the style of the approach used there by Friar Paul and appeared immediately after in the following decades.⁵⁶ He first sought to employ Talmudic material to substantiate his attack on Judaism in his *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, which appeared around 1267, and developed this material even further over the next twenty years in his massive *Pugio Fidei*, which appeared in 1287.⁵⁷ Both texts make use of Talmudic and Midrashic material in an effort to prove that these Jewish texts support the basic Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the need for redemption from original sin, and the birth, passion, and resurrection of Jesus as the Messiah. Although, when compared with the dispute of Barcelona, the sophistication, learning, and sheer volume of material in Martini's text far exceeds that proffered by Paul Christiani, the essential underlying argument of Martini's text is the same as that introduced by Christiani at Barcelona: that postbiblical Jewish writing actually helps prove Christian truth.

⁵⁶ Baer's assertion that the Latin text was possibly written by Martini ("The Disputations" 180) is unfounded and very unlikely.

⁵⁷ The *Capistrum* has recently been edited and translated by Adolfo Robles Sierra, and the *Pugio* is most widely available in the 1967 facsimile of the 1687 edition. For perspectives and bibliography on Martini, see Reinhardt and Santiago-Otero, *Biblioteca bíblica ibérica medieval* 297-302; Robles, *Escritores dominicos de la corona de Aragón* 68-77 (with specific bibliographies on each of his works, including his connection to Thomas Aquinas); Berthier, "Un maître orientaliste du XIII^e siècle" Raymond Martin, O.P."; Carreras y Artau, *Historia de la filosofía española* 1: 147-170; Ina and Thomas Willi-Plein, *Glaubensdolch und Messiasbeweis*; Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* 115-158; *ibid.* "From Friar Paul to Friar Raymond"; Cohen, *Friars and the Jews* 129-169; *ibid.* *Living Letters of the Law* 342-58; *ibid.* "The *Capistrum Iudaeorum* of Raymundus Martini." [Hebrew]; Colomer, "La controversia islamo-judeo-cristiana en la obra apologética de Ramón Martí"; Hames, "Reason and Faith"; Bonfil, "The Image of Judaism in Raymond Martini's *Pugio Fidei*" [Hebrew]; Muñoz Leon, "Targum, Midrash y Talmud en la obra 'Pugio Fidei' de Raimundo Martí", especially 147 n.1; plus Robles Sierra's introduction to his recent edition of the *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, 1: 7-52; Ragacs, "Christliche Gelehrsamkeit versus rabbinische Tradition—das *Capistrum Iudaeorum* des Raimund Martini und die Disputation von Barcelona" and her discussion in *Die zweite Talmuddisputation von Paris 1269*, 107-131; Tolan, *Saracens* 233-255. For consideration of Martini's interaction with Raymond Lull, see Colomer "Ramón Martí y Ramón Lull"; Bonner, "L'apologética de Ramon Martí i Ramon Lull devant de l'Islam i del Judaisme"; For consideration of the charges of forgery of Midrashim by Martini, see Baer, "The Forged Midrashim of Raymond Martini" [Hebrew]; Lieberman, "Raymund Martini and His Alleged Forgeries"; Díez Macho, "Acerca de los midrašim falsificados de Raimundo Martí"; Fumagalli, "The Original Manuscript of the *Pugio Fidei* of Raymundus Martini" [Hebrew]; Ragacs, "The Forged Midrashim of Raymond Martini—Reconsidered".

That the argument of Paul Christiani against Nahmanides seemed effective enough for Christians to merit further elaboration and development is apparent not only in Martini's work, as Chazan argues, but also in the later efforts of Christiani himself to argue against the Jews of France. Scholars had been aware of a short Hebrew report about the activity of Friar Paul in France in 1269.⁵⁸ Joseph Shatzmiller has recently published a previously-unknown document from a former Soviet library that depicts a later missionizing effort of Christiani in Paris in ca. 1270, shedding further light on Paul's activities after Barcelona. According to the Hebrew report of the dispute,

the heretic Paul came and summoned all the rabbis, and thus did he address them...“Hear me, house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel, know that if you do not hear to heed to repent and leave your faith for superior beliefs that I shall demonstrate to you, I will not relent until I show my vengeance upon you, and I will exact the blood of your souls. For I want to prove to you that you are without a faith...heretics, worthy of being burned...I have been commanded by the king to bring you to redemption and to perfection” (44; English translation found in Cohen, *Living Letters*, 337, with my modification)

A reading of the account of the conflict shows Christiani had continued to develop his methods of argumentation debuted at the Barcelona debate, specifically in the use of Jewish postbiblical texts to argue that the messiah had already come, that he was born of a virgin, that he was prophesied to die for the salvation of humanity, and that he replaced

⁵⁸ The text is contained in Hebrew MS 53 of the Victor Emmanuel Library in Rome. It was first published by Rosenthal in “A Religious Disputation between a Jew called Menaḥem and the Convert Pablo Christiani” and republished and translated by Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris* 36-43. See also Rembaum, “A Reevaluation of a Medieval Polemical Manuscript”, Chazan, “A Medieval Hebrew Polemical Mélange” 103-110, Cohen, *Living Letters* 336 n. 48, and the recent comments of Ragacs, *Die zweite Talmuddisputation von Paris 1269*, 100-106.

the law of Moses with a new covenant (Shatzmiller 19). Indeed, Shatzmiller calls the similarity of agenda between the Barcelona Disputation and the encounter a decade later in Paris “striking.” As he explains, “Les thèses sont les mêmes et elles sont présentées dans un séquence identique” (20). The vitriolic tone of this later encounter in Paris, however,⁵⁹ contrasts sharply with the relatively restrained interaction, as depicted in the source accounts, of the Barcelona dispute, and it thus intimates an aggressiveness that lay just beneath the surface of Dominican missionary activity.

The early consistency and repetitiveness of Christian polemical writing changed dramatically in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The use of rational arguments, and the pull of mixed intentions of missionizing and military crusade, both to the holy land and within the Iberian Peninsula, placed polemical writing and argumentation in a context of much more direct engagement with real non-Christian groups. What was traditionally a totally apologetic, inwardly-directed genre came to be mixed with more concrete, outward-looking consideration of Jews and Muslims. In the second half of the thirteenth century, polemical argumentation thus reflects strikingly mixed intentions, on the one hand seeking to engage real, non-Christian groups in dispute, while on the other continuing traditional apologetic lines of thought. In order to better understand the nature of late thirteenth-century missionizing, as well as the polemical arguments of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid which followed in its wake—and to decide if Sainz de la Maza is correct in calling Abner/Alfonso “uno de los mejores representantes de la línea polémica inaugurada por los Mendicantes en el siglo XIII” (“*Vi en vision de suenno*” 198 n. 23)—it is therefore necessary to scrutinize more closely the relation

⁵⁹ See Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris* 11-15 for a description of the events. As he observes there, “L’état de tension dans lequel se déroulèrent ces rencontres, l’emploi d’un langage dur et des échanges féroces sont bien rendus par notre récit” (13).

between the various, mixed intentions of mission, force, and textual apologetic in the trial of the Talmud in the 1240s, the Disputation of Barcelona and the later dispute of Paris, and in later polemical writing such as that of Raymond Martini and Raymond Lull. In this way, it will be possible to better establish the relation between Christian hostility toward the Jewish population living in Christian lands and the Christian effort to actually convert Jews through persuasion in the second half of the thirteenth century, and thereby to clarify to what degree the Christian mission actually sought to persuade the Jews to convert with its arguments. It is thus to a more detailed consideration of the missionizing movement of the second half of the thirteenth century that we now turn.

Chapter Two

Apology, Authority, and Thirteenth-Century Missionizing

“The question of the representation of difference is therefore always a problem of authority.”

—Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*

“The admission of the litigant is worth a hundred witnesses.”

—Talmud Bavli *Gittin* 40b; *Kiddushin* 65b; *Bava Mezia* 3b

“...Authority has a nose of wax, that is, it can be bent into different meanings...”

—Alan of Lille, *De Fide Catholica contra Haereticos, Waldenses, Iudaeos, et Paganos seu Mahometanos*

Many critics have emphasized the originality of the use of Jewish sources by Dominicans such as Paul Christiani and Raymond Martini in the thirteenth century, asserting that such use was for specifically proselytizing purposes and constituted, in Robert Chazan’s words, a “new missionizing campaign” (*Daggers of Faith* 6 et passim).¹ Certainly, there is historical evidence from various sources supporting the assertions that the second half of the thirteenth century did indeed witness a growth in Christian discussion of preaching to Jews and Muslims, with the ostensible purpose of converting

¹ Both critics Robert Chazan and Jeremy Cohen, who have maintained a longstanding dispute over the nature of the thirteenth-century Christian attitude toward the Jews, agree that the thirteenth century was a time when the relationship between Jews and Christians changed significantly, and deteriorated in marked ways. For Cohen, this change was the result of a new conception of the Jew as unworthy of the protection afforded under the Augustinian view of Jewish witness; the Jew became a different sort of Jew in Christian understanding. For Chazan, the thirteenth-century deterioration of Christian-Jewish relations was due to the Christian belief that the Talmud constituted a real threat to Christianity, and that the Christian attacks on the Talmud and on contemporary Jews were merely the enactment of a long-standing policy forbidding the Jew from posing any threat to Christendom. The notion of the Jew did not change, but only the idea of the threat he posed to Christian belief. Both Cohen and Chazan inherently agree, however, that the Jew was treated in a new way in the thirteenth century. For Cohen, the difference of the new “Talmudic” Jew was a difference of kind; for Chazan, this difference was merely a difference of degree. I believe both critics are partly correct in their assessments, and that, taken together, their arguments point to two separate aspects of a single set of circumstances. On the one hand, Cohen makes a strong case that the association of Judaism with heresy constituted a real change in how Judaism was discussed and dealt with in Christian society. However, his insistence that the change was absolute and that it guided most Church policies towards the Jews is overly simplistic and does not consider with sufficient attention the nuanced and often contradictory, or at least ambiguous, policies of thirteenth century popes and secular rulers with regard to the Jews. By the same token, Chazan is correct, in my view, to assert that the policies of aggressiveness towards the Jews were already built into Church policy and did not entail any real innovation, but I believe he is mistaken to reject Cohen’s evidence for the association of Judaism with heresy.

them. Specifically, the papal and royal legislation about forced sermonizing strongly supports the argument in favor of Christian missionizing intentions, and the existence, in the second half of the thirteenth century, of at least an abstract interest in missionizing seems incontrovertible. Nevertheless, the degree to which this effort involved actual preaching and missionizing or overlapped with the efforts of polemicists and Dominicans such as Paul Christiani and Raymond Martini is less certain. From this perspective, a few critics have challenged recently the claims of previous historians of the missionizing movement. Robin Vose, for example, has argued in a recent dissertation that the efforts spearheaded by Raymond of Peñafort had less to do with actual conversion of Muslims and more to do with pastoral care and defense against possible Christian interest in Islam and its texts (“Converting the Faithful” 91). Others, such as Harvey Hames, have argued that thirteenth-century “polemical writings...must be seen as an integral part of what was going on in Christian intellectual circles in this period” (“Reason and Faith” 268), and thus that “the public disputations and written treatises [of the thirteenth century] reflect more an internal Christian process, than an implicit attempt to convert the Jews” (270).

If the Barcelona dispute and the later harangue of Friar Paul in Paris in ca. 1271 corresponded to the already established pattern of forced sermonizing, how, then, can we reconcile this conclusion with the new arguments of young critics like Vose and Hames, who argue that the polemics of Paul Christian and Raymond Martini served to answer internal Christian doubts more than they actually spoke, or were meant to speak, to actual Jews? In other words, is Chazan correct to argue that Christiani and Martini form an essential part of the effort to missionize to the Jews and actually convert them, or are Vose and Hames correct in arguing that Christiani’s disputes in Barcelona and Paris and

Martini's polemics never intended to actually convince and convert real Jews, but rather served to better articulate Christian belief in the face of new challenges against traditional orthodoxy such as rabbinical literature and scholasticism? Is there any middle ground to be found between these two arguments? Most importantly, if there was no missionizing intention in the polemics of Christiani and Martini, in what way did the conversionary polemics of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid, according to Baer, represent "the conclusion and the finale of the upheavals that rocked Spanish Jewry during the thirteenth century" (*A History* 1: 330)? Before turning to examine the nature of thirteenth-century argumentation and its relation to Abner/Alfonso's missionary polemics, we must first review the historical evidence for the existence of a thirteenth-century missionary movement in order to decide if such criticisms bear close scrutiny.

A. From Paris to "Barcelona and Beyond"- Was There a Thirteenth-Century "Missionizing Movement"?

One of the key questions of this history that needs to be addressed in order to understand and contextualize the growth of missionizing to the Jews in the second half of the thirteenth century is how the controversy of 1240 is linked with the dispute of Barcelona.² Although Cohen has remarked that the dispute "had no catastrophic aftermath comparable to the burning of the Talmud" (*The Friars and the Jews* 110), the dispute is clearly linked with the Paris Disputation in many ways. Not only were both events instigated by Jewish converts who became members of the Dominican order (Donin and Christiani), but both of those converted Dominicans may have been linked to

² Ragacs undertakes a lengthy comparison of the first Paris Disputation with later events in *Die zweite Talmuddisputation von Paris 1269* 43-69.

the proselytizing efforts of Raymond of Peñafort.³ Most importantly, both of these converted Dominicans focused much of their attention on the Talmud and other postbiblical literature. As Chazan notes, “Friar Paul followed the lead of the earlier Nicholas Donin in taking a hand in the effort to ban the Talmud” (*Barcelona and Beyond* 26), and it is important to stress the continuity of the debates in their common focus on postbiblical literature. Nevertheless, assessments of what this focus entailed vary. Chazan, for example, argues that at Barcelona, Friar Paul turned “the mid-thirteenth-century missionizing effort in creative new directions” (*Daggers of Faith* 71). This statement contrasts starkly with Cohen’s assessment that the missionizing of the thirteenth century “represented no ideational break at all with the stance taken at the Paris trials of the 1240s, but rather a more sophisticated development of it” (*Friars and the Jews* 168). This disparity of opinion points at the basic question in relating the events of Paris and Barcelona: to what extent were arguments based on Jewish texts meant to convert and convince Jews, and to what extent were they simply the means of condemning contemporary Jewish belief as heretical. As I argue below, the goal of converting Jews to Christianity by persuasion, even if it was never realized or even attempted with any seriousness, must be seen as a different, albeit related, campaign than the censorship and destruction of Jewish books. The mixed intentions of both criticizing or condemning

³ According to Ochoa and Diez in their edition of the *Summa de Paenitentia* of Peñafort, the Dominican was cited as confessor to Pope Gregory IX (“paenitentiarium Papae”) in various papal documents at least as late as 1237 (LXX n. 121 and LXXII-LXXIII), and that he did not return to Spain until April or June of 1236. (LXXI). It was in that same year, “anno enim ab incarnatione Domini MCCXXXVI circiter” (Loeb, “La Controverse,” 252), that Donin first brought Gregory his charges against the Talmud which later resulted in the Pope’s orders to confiscate and burn Jewish books. Cf. Cohen, *Friars and the Jews* 106 and 124 and *Living Letters* 334. Peñafort was Master General of the Dominican order from 1238 to 1240, during which time Gregory prepared his missives regarding Jewish books. Indeed, he was in Paris at the time that Gregory dispatched his June 9, 1239 Bull to Parisian Archbishop William of Auvergne, and he was still Master General of the order during Lent of 1240, when Jewish books were first confiscated. Peñafort’s possible connection to Donin and to the actions of Gregory IX still awaits a more careful scholarly treatment.

Jewish literature and of actually seeking to convince Jews of new beliefs based on that literature—both of which are present in varying degrees in the sources of the period—is apparent in the polemical debates and literature of the period, and serves to coherently explain the progression from the condemnation of the Talmud in Paris to its use as a source text by Friar Paul at the Barcelona dispute, by Raymond Martini in his polemical writings, and even later by Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid, who worked to hone and perfect the arguments of Friar Paul in a way very different from the approach taken by Martini. Such mixed intentions reflected an uncertainty about the meaning of Jewish texts for Christian polemicists who did not know whether to criticize such texts from traditional, apologetic perspective, or appeal to such texts from a rhetorical, missionizing one. In order to show how this is so, it is necessary to consider various aspects of this history including the question of audience at the disputations, the rise of forced sermonizing, the traditional doctrine of tolerance of Jews in Christian society, and the ambivalent policies of Pope Innocent IV and King James I of Aragón.

As we have seen, part of what distinguishes the Talmud trial of the 1240s from the two later encounters with Pablo Christiani is that at the first conflict, Dominicans directly attacked the Talmud as blasphemous, dangerous to Christianity, and full of absurdities, whereas in the later encounters, despite their hostility toward the Talmud, Mendicants sought to employ the postbiblical literature as textual proof that endorsed the truth of Christianity. The shift from more aggressive tactics to more rhetorical ones is by no means absolute, but what marks the later disputes in contrast to the first attack at Paris is the inclusion, along with traditional apologetics and criticism, of arguments meant to convince the Jews rather than merely slander them or, in the absence of these, of the

discussion of such arguments and ideas about conversion. It is difficult to identify how real such intentions and discussions were, because there was no purely missionizing argumentation in any of the thirteenth-century polemics, but instead we find a varying mixture of missionizing rhetoric and an apologetic agenda. There is still a notable change, however, because nowhere in the Paris Disputation, as it has been preserved in the later accounts, was any argument made to support Christianity based on rabbinical writings. Rather, the entire Talmud trial of the 1240s involved charges against the Talmud, its alleged blasphemies, absurd or illogical statements, attacks on Christianity, or other content deemed worthy of condemnation or rejection by a Christian reader. This litany of attacks seems to stand in stark contrast to the effort of argumentation and persuasion, however aggressive it may have been, undertaken at the later two disputations of Barcelona and Paris.⁴

Perhaps even more important to cite as a fundamental difference between the first encounter and the later disputations is the audience present at each event. In the first trial of Paris, as Baer has argued with general critical consensus (“The disputations” 172-7), the event was essentially an inquisitorial trial, with the rabbis called merely as witnesses who were not allowed to respond with any freedom. If we accept the description of the Hebrew account of the event, the rabbis were interrogated separately and presented no unified front against Christian attacks (See Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* 34). Although there is still debate about the actual sequence of events and the number and nature of the sessions that took place, there is no evidence in any of the sources that conversion was even part of the language of the disputation, let alone a real part of the agenda of Donin and the other

⁴ See the comments of Ragacs, *Die zweite Talmuddisputation von Paris 1269*, 69

Christians involved.⁵ Obviously, despite any obfuscation of the real nature of the event because of the unreliability of the source accounts, it is nonetheless clear that there was not a large Jewish population present at the event and that there was little or no effort at winning over the rabbis. There is no mention of any Jewish audience present to hear the charges, and the nature of the charges is only critical and accusatory. Clearly, no effort was made to convince the handful of Jewish participants present of anything, let alone persuade members the larger Parisian Jewish community.

The later disputes of Barcelona and Paris, on the other hand, despite the aggressive and critical tone of many remarks made by Pablo Christiani, both involved an effort to force many Jews to hear Christian arguments. It is certainly reasonable to conclude, from the accounts of Naḥmanides and from the Hebrew account of the later Paris Disputation published by Shatzmiller, that the audience for each event contained many Jews, and that those Jews were forced to be present to hear the arguments presented.⁶ Cohen himself seems to take it as a given fact that the Barcelona dispute was “conducted before a large audience of Jews and Christians, supervised by leading churchmen” (*Living Letters* 337). Likewise, Chazan has asserted unequivocally that “it must be remembered that ultimately both Friar Paul and Naḥmanides were addressing a Jewish audience” (*Daggers of Faith* 96). According to the Latin protocol, Naḥmanides was summoned to Barcelona “along with many other Jews, who seemed and were reputed

⁵ Baer, “The Disputation of R. Yehiel of Paris”, did not believe that there was a face-to-face confrontation between Rabbi Yehiel and Donin, but Rosenthal (“The Talmud on Trial”) disagrees. Merchavia, *The Church Versus Talmudic and Midrashic Literature (500-1248)*, 240f, believes that two “sessions” took place in the disputation, but this is by no means certain. Dahan observes “Nous ignorons le déroulement précis des débats, qui ont peut-être duré plusieurs jours; ce qui apparaît nettement, c’est leur caractère extrêmement tendu, renforcé encore par le sentiment éprouvé par les représentants juifs de se retrouver impliqués dans un procès où leurs chances de se défendre étaient bien maigres” (*Les intellectuels chrétiens* 355).

⁶ See Chazan’s discussion of this question in *Barcelona and Beyond*, 65-6.

among other Jews most learned.”⁷ In Nahmanides’ own Hebrew account, it is not clear if any Jews were present on the first day of the disputation (Friday, July 20 1263), but on the second day (Monday, July 23) “all the people of the city assembled there, Gentiles and Jews.”⁸ Although the third session (Thursday, July 26), was held by the king’s orders “in private” in his chambers (*Kitvei* 1: 314/ Maccoby 130), the fourth and last session (Friday, July 27) was held in the presence of the Bishop, “many lords...many knights and people from all quarters of the city,”⁹ thus naturally implying the Jewish quarter as well. In addition, in this last session when Nahmanides states that he does not want to continue the disputation, he remarks that “the crowd here is large,” referring to the Jews who encouraged him to stop the disputation.¹⁰ The Latin account remarks that because the Gerona rabbi “had been defeated many times in public, and both Jews and Christians were treating him with scorn,” he made this request not to continue “in front of everyone”,¹¹ again implying the presence of a Jewish audience. Even if, however, one sees the references to Jewish listeners with skepticism, it is clear that the proceedings, except for those held in the third session, were not held in secret, and the results of Nahmanides’ parries of Christian assaults would have been readily known. It cannot be doubted that

⁷ Baer, “The Disputations” 185.

⁸ "ביום ההוא הלך המלם לקלישטרויש אשר בעיר ונתקבצו שם כל אנשי העיר גוים ויהודים" (*Kitvei* 1:308/ Maccoby 114).

⁹ "למחר ביום הששי...שם היה ההגמון ושרים רבים ג'ילס דיסרגון ופירי ברגה ופרשים רבים וכל מגרשי העיר ומדלת העם" (*Kitvei* 1: 316/Maccoby 133).

¹⁰ I accept Chazan’s interpretation of Nahmanides’ statement “rav ha-qahal be-k’an” to mean “there is a great crowd here” (*Barcelona* 75 and 217 n. 63) and not “The Jewish community here is large,” as Maccoby translated it (133).

¹¹ “Item cum non posset respondere et esset pluries publice confusus, et tam Iudei quam Christiani contra eum insultarent, dixit pertinaciter coram omnibus, quod nullo modo responderet...” (Baer, “The Disputation of R. Yehiel of Paris” 187; Maccoby 150)

the event had a real impact on the Aragonese Jewish communities who were aware of its proceedings.

The Hebrew account of the later Parisian disputation with Friar Paul also includes details that point to the presence of a Jewish audience of some kind. The text states that “In the year 33 of the sixth century [1272-3],¹² the heretic Paul came to convene all the rabbis. He addressed them before the Parisian crowd¹³ and before the chief clerics who were there: “Hear me, House of Jacob and all the families of Israel....”¹⁴ As Shatzmiller observes (11-12, and 12 n. 7), the text says that the Jews present were “more than a thousand” (47). Likewise, the text says repeatedly that the crowd there was made up of “men, women, and children” (e.g. 44, 46, 56), and then notes that in the last session of the encounter, the rabbis were not ordered to bring their wives and children (56), and that the rabbis and sages alone constituted only “nine or ten” men (56). From the Hebrew account, it seems abundantly clear that the events of the second encounter in Paris, much like the events of Barcelona a decade previous, involved the deliberate summoning of Jewish religious leaders and scholars to try and respond to the arguments of Friar Paul based on postbiblical Jewish sources.

Much different from the first Paris trial, in which Jewish leaders were summoned to defend the Talmud before Christian authorities only, the later encounters of Barcelona and Paris constituted, as many scholars have affirmed, an effort to force Jews into debates with Christians. The content of these forced debates, by their very nature, involved the

¹² On the date, see Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris* 17

¹³ Instead of the word for crowd, “he-hamon,” Shatzmiller proposes the possibility “ha-hegmon” (the bishop) as well. A careful look at the facsimile of the manuscript (44) makes the latter reading seem less probable to me, although perhaps a more logical reading, based on the rest of the sentence.

¹⁴ Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris* 44.

mixed intentions of forcing Jews to consider issues relevant only from a Christian apologetic perspective, and the presentation of arguments meant to possibly persuade Jews to adopt the Christian view on those ideas. The distinction between apologetic arguments and missionizing ones, however fine, is a real one: the former involves forcing Jews to try and disprove Christian ideas and defend their own beliefs; the latter, which does not necessarily follow from the former (each side would naturally tend to affirm the traditional beliefs of their community even if they could not defend them in debate), involves persuading Jews to accept a Christian viewpoint.

The form taken by the so-called “missionizing” effort, the forced sermon, represented a solution to the tension generated by the two different intentions of presenting a Christian agenda and addressing a Jewish listener. Use of the forced sermon is known of first in this period in a letter of the Aragonese king James I from March, 1242, in which the king states that

whenever the Archbishop, bishops, or Dominican or Franciscan Friars...want to preach the word of God to the said Jews or Saracens, these shall gather at their call, and shall patiently listen to their preaching. If they do not want to come freely, our officials shall, heedless of excuse, compel them to do this.”¹⁵

The forced nature of the Barcelona Disputation is also apparent, as is suggested by Nahmanides already-cited agreement to “listen to [Friar Paul’s] words, since such is the

¹⁵ “Statuimus, quod quandocumque Archiepiscopus, Episcopi, vel Fratres Predicatores, et Minores accesserint ad villas, vel loca ubi Sarraceni, vel Judei moram fecerint, et verbum Dei dictis Judeis, vel Sarracenis proponere voluerint, ipsi ad vocationem ipsorum convenient, et patienter audiant predicationem eorum, et Officiales nostri, si gratis venire noluerint, eos ad hoc omni excusatione postposita compellant.” (Grayzel, *The Church* 1: 256) Grayzel’s translation on 1: 257 seems to misconstrue “si gratis venire noluerint” as “if they want to attain our favor”, but Chazan translated the passage correctly as “if they [the Jews or Sarracens] do not wish to come of their own will” (*Daggers of Faith* 38).

King's wish" (*Kitvei* 1:304; Maccoby 105).¹⁶ A letter from King Louis in 1269 also highlights how forced sermonizing was part of Friar Paul's activity after the Barcelona Disputation as well. The king states to his officers,

We order you to force [the Jews] to appear in his presence whenever this friar [Paul] requests it and, if necessary, to keep the Jews residing in your areas and under your control so that they might hear without struggle the word of God and show him their books...Force them to respond fully to the Friar's words in all things, without calumny or subterfuge."¹⁷

As the letter states, Paul's goal in preaching was none other than "to preach to the Jews to praise the divine name" ("intendat ad laudem divini nominis praedicare judaeis", Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris* 35), and nowhere in Louis's letter does it mention the goal of converting the Jews. The words of the Latin protocol of the Barcelona Disputation are particularly revealing in this respect. As it states, Nahmanides and "many other Jews" were summoned, not to put the truth of Christianity into question, but "so that the truth of that faith would be made manifest in order to destroy the errors of the Jews and in order to remove the confidence of many Jews..."¹⁸ These

¹⁶ Both the Latin and Hebrew accounts state clearly that this disputation was instigated by the Christians against the will of the Jews (Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond* 64-5), but it is not clear if the King or the Jews themselves chose Rabbi Moses as the spokesman for the Jewish side of the dispute. On the question of Nahmanides' role as spokesman, see Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond* 65-6. The fullest consideration of forced sermons has been undertaken by Chazan, *Daggers of Faith*, chapter 3, pp. 38-48, and Browe, *Die Judenmission im Mittelalter und die Päpste*, 14-54.

¹⁷ "Mandamus vobis quatenus judeos in locis et potestatibus vestris existentes, ad requisitionem ipsius fratris faciatis et distringatis si opus fuerit in sua praesentia comparare [sic], auditurus ab ipso et sine verborum strepitu verbum Dei et eum ostensuros libros suos quos idem frater duxerit requirendos...dicto fratri in omnibus sine calumnia et subterfugio respondere plenius compellatis" (Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, 35).

¹⁸ "Non ut fides domini Ihesu Christi, que propter sui certitudinem non est in disputatione ponenda, deduceretur in medium quasi res dubia cum Iudeis, sed ut ipsius fidei, veritas manifesta fieret propter

words, very similar to the agenda later adduced by Friar Paul in Paris, suggests that the goal of such argumentation by Friar Paul was not necessarily to bring Jews to believe in Christianity, but to unsettle their faith in Judaism. A real, active attempt to missionize and convert Jews through debate and disputation would have entailed, on the other hand, proving Christianity in a fair context in which Jews freely affirmed Christian proofs, and such a context would have required that the foundations of Christianity be called into question, at least in theory. Only if Christian beliefs could potentially be proven wrong—even if the expectation was that they would not be—would the proof of their veracity have any effectiveness or meaning, insofar as that veracity depended on proof in a fair and balanced contest. Friar Paul in his debates did not set out to prove Christianity was true, but only to force Jews to hear arguments that would disprove Judaism.

The direct link between the forced debate at Barcelona and the missionizing tactic of forced sermons is clear in the events immediately following the proceedings, when King James himself, who had presided over the sessions, visited the Barcelona synagogue a week after the disputation on the Sabbath (August 4, 1263). According to Naḥmanides' account (although absent from Christian sources), both the king and the former Master General of the Dominican order, Raymond of Peñafort, entered the synagogue and gave sermons which the Jews were obliged to attend. As Chazan observes, neither figure seems to have used the “new argumentation” of citing Talmudic material in support of Christianity (Indeed, neither would have been capable of sustaining such an argument) (*Barcelona and Beyond* 82), and this is further supported by Naḥmanides' response. I agree with Chazan that their visit reflects in part a Christian sense of “determination to press

destruendos Iudeorum errores et ad tollendam confidentiam multorum Iudeorum...” (Baer, “The Disputations” 185; Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial* 147).

the perceived advantage”, but I believe it signifies more than simply “a public follow-up to the disputation” (83), especially given the fact that neither sermonizer utilized the new argumentation based on the Talmud. Without a doubt, this event fits within a pattern of examples of Jews being forced to hear conversionary sermons as well as legislation supporting this campaign (*Daggers of Faith* 44). A mere three weeks after these compulsory sermons, King James passed a series of edicts that repeat and expand upon previous support for compulsory sermons, and even include a number of clarifications and limitations on the practice, probably as a result of unfavorable Jewish responses to the first edicts.¹⁹ In any case, the Barcelona debate can be situated squarely within a larger effort of preaching to Jews, usually through compulsory sermons, and that the intention of such sermons, as stated by the sources, was never to prove Christianity but instead was to disprove Judaism. The efforts were primarily anti-Jewish rather than pro-Christian.

Nevertheless, despite the basic context of the forced sermon, the discussion of converting Jews with polemical arguments is not absent from the language of the accounts of the events. The Hebrew account of the second Paris confrontation states that the Christians sought both to present a mixture of arguments aimed to destroy Jewish beliefs and entertained an additional hope that such negative arguments might provoke conversions. After mentioning that the crowd of listeners attending the disputation included men, women, and children in excess of a thousand people, the author of the text observes:

The king had essentially ordered us: Every time that Paul the heretic shall want to dispute with you, you shall all, large and small, gather together and come. Perhaps

¹⁹ The texts of this legislation are contained in Denifle, “Quellen zu Disputation” 234-37. Chazan discusses the edicts in *Barcelona and Beyond*, 82-86.

there is among you a part [lit. “root] which will understand his replies and proofs and will give over his heart and turn to the law of Jesus. I will take from you one from each city and two from each family...and Praise to our Creator, not one of us turned to faithlessness and falsehood and to the arrogant ones.²⁰

This text points to the subjection of the Parisian Jewish population to forced sermonizing, but also to the underlying secondary intention, recognized by the Jewish audience, of conversion. Importantly, it also points to the ineffectiveness of even the new argumentation to convince and convert the Jews. The primary goal at both the disputations of Barcelona and Paris was not to prove the truth of Christianity per se, but to disprove Judaism using its own texts, texts which instead could be shown to support Christianity. Of course, the Christians welcomed the possibility that this destruction of Jewish beliefs might happen to lead Jews to convert out of despair, but gaining converts was not their primary motive as it is recorded in the sources.

The treatment of the two issues at hand here—the attack on Judaism and the secondary desire for converts—is the locus of the historiographical conflict between Chazan and Cohen, who assess the primacy of these issues differently. Cohen, in his reading of the second encounter in Paris provided by Cohen in *Living Letters of the Law* acknowledges many similarities between the Barcelona and later Paris disputations (including the fact that both were “conducted before a large audience of Jews and Christians” (337)), but argues that churchmen found “contemporary Jews worthy targets of Christian missionizing—and perhaps...deserving of expulsion and even death” because it first found rabbinic literature “worthy of condemnation” (342). As he phrases

²⁰ "כי כן צוה לנו המלך: בכל עת אשר ירצה פל המין להתוכח עמכם, הקהלו ובאו כולכם גדולים וקטנים. אולי יש בכם שרש אשר יבין תשובותיו וראיותיו ויתן לבו לפנות אל תורת ישו, ואקח מכם אחד מעיר ושנים ממשפחה...ושבח ליוצרנו לא פנה אחד ממנו אל שט וכזב ואל רהבים" (Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, 47).

it, "If, in the eyes of some thirteenth-century churchmen, allegiance to the Talmud had rendered contemporary Judaism unacceptable in a properly ordered Christian society, how better to eradicate the problem than to convert those Jews to Christianity?" (334). Chazan, on the other hand, believes that the actual gaining of converts was the primary goal of Christian argumentation rather than a residual effect of the Christian attack on rabbinical literature or a shift in Jewish status because of such literature. Neither assessment is wholly satisfactory. I believe it is most correct to emphasize that the chain of causes and effects in the development of Dominican arguments in the second half of the thirteenth century alternated between abstract, apologetic concerns and real historical circumstances, making neither Christian condemnation of Judaism nor its missionizing of it a complete explanation of every aspect of the disputations and polemics that followed from them. The theological, apologetic concerns in the arguments of Friar Paul and Raymond Martini were motivated by the Christian understanding of the disparity between traditional images of Jewry and the beliefs of contemporary, medieval Jews, were the driving force of the Dominican engagement and disputation with real Jews. This real aggressive engagement in disputation and forced sermonizing was, however, always in tension with the conceptual precedent of long-standing Jewish rights in Christian society, a tension that was resolved, at least abstractly, by the conversion of Jews. The efforts at Barcelona and Paris represent a conflation of the intellectual, textual assault on Jewish literature and the contemporary culture of real engagement though forced sermonizing. The effect was a mixture of intentions that showed an abstract interest in conversion of Jews, but that took few steps to realize that goal. The honing of arguments and allotment of resources highlighted by Chazan as proof that this activity was part of a missionizing

movement intended for conversion did take place, but that development of “missionizing” arguments was dictated more by the interests of Christian apologetics than by the demands of real persuasion.

There was, nevertheless, a real, albeit secondary interest in conversion. Given the proclivity to aggression in the 1240s, the idea of encouraging and elaborating a missionary effort to the Jews would seem entirely superfluous and unnecessary if the only goal was condemnation and destruction of Jewish civilization within Christendom. Clearly, the development of such techniques at Barcelona and their elaboration in the decades that followed must be seen as a separate, although certainly not unrelated, effort from the initial condemnation of the Talmud, even if evidence of a condemning attitude can also be discerned in the efforts of Friar Paul. Chazan rightly distinguishes between the Christian and Jewish perception of forced sermonizing, noting that for Christian leaders, forced sermonizing did not constitute a violation of Jewish rights because “while Jews might be compelled to hear the truth, they would ultimately assent to it only by an act of free and independent will “(*Daggers of Faith* 39). Proselytizing, therefore, constituted for Christians a means of policing Jewish belief without, from a Christian perspective, violating Jewish rights of protection, but for Jews it constituted a means of outright attack.

To be sure, missionizing and condemnation clearly went hand-in-hand in much of the Christian responses to Judaism in the second half of the thirteenth century, but what distinguishes the first Paris trial from the later disputations is the presence in the latter—however mixed with aggression and however unsuccessful it may have been—of a certain limited effort to *communicate* its ideas and arguments to Jews rather than simply dismiss them outright. The overriding goal of both methods seems to be the destruction of

contemporary Jewry, and missionizing was seen as a means to that end parallel to but not synonymous with outright attack, expulsion, and destruction. It is necessary, therefore, to explore more precisely the way in which missionizing, polemic, and aggression were seen as complimentary force without conflating them into one blanket notion of “condemnation” or “mission.”

Chazan states that the trial of the Talmud in Paris and the emergence of what he calls “the new-style Christian missionizing among the Jews” (*Daggers of Faith* 38) appear at the same time “quite by coincidence” (38), suggesting that there was no direct cause-and-effect connection between the Paris trial and the emergence of an interest in forced sermonizing. Nevertheless, the papal interest in missionizing rather than simply in outright attack may be attributable in part to King Louis of France, who was involved in both the trial of the Talmud in the 1240s and in the second Paris Disputation of Friar Paul in the 1270s. Even more importantly, however, just as Louis provides a link between the two events in Paris, Pope Innocent IV represents a link between the Talmud trial and the later evolution of forced sermonizing. Innocent acceded to the papal seat after nearly twenty months of interregnum, when the death of Gregory IX in August, 1241, and of Celestine IV in November of that year after only a few weeks of rule, left no pope in place during the Talmud trial of 1242. Although Innocent quickly repeats, in May, 1244, the call of Gregory IX to burn Jewish books (Grayzel, *The Church*, 1: 250-253), stressing the crime and stubbornness of the Jews manifest above all in the Talmud in which they “throw away and despise the Law of Moses and the prophets, and follow some tradition of their elders”(251), he makes reference in August of the following year to the letter of James I of Aragon from March, 1242, the very eve of burning of Jewish books in Paris,

encouraging the use of forced sermons by Dominican and Franciscan Friars to convert Jews and Muslims.(256).

In addition, a few scholars have noted a softening of his stance against the Jews in his letters of this period. Only fourteen months after his citation of the letter of King James, he states in a letter to the king of Navarre that “It is fitting that the Christian Faith afford the Jews the protection due them against their persecutors” and orders that the King “guard them, their children and their property” (Grayzel, *The Church*, 1: 260-61). Half a year later, in a letter to the Archbishop of Vienne, he evokes a more traditional doctrine of tolerance, maintaining that “divine justice has never cast the Jewish people aside so completely that it reserves no remnant of them for salvation” (262-3), and specifically refers to them as “witnesses of His saving passion” in another letter dated the same day (264-5). Later that year, in a letter to Louis IX of France (to whom Innocent had renewed the order of Jewish book burning a few years earlier), retreated from his earlier position, saying “we do not want to deprive them of their books if as a result we should be depriving them of their Law” (274-5). Indeed, as Norman Roth points out, the pope uses the word “toleret” in reference to the Jews in both this letter to Louis and in his earlier letter to the Bishop of Vienne, stating that he directed Odo, bishop of Tusculum, to inspect the Talmud and other Jewish books and (in reference to the *Sicut Iudais* doctrine of tolerance) “bound as we are by the Divine command to tolerate them in their Law...he should tolerate such as he will find may be tolerated, in accordance with divine command, without injury to the Christian Faith.”²¹ Although Odo condemned, with a council whose members included Albertus Magnus, more Jewish books to be burned (see

²¹ “Nos qui juxta mandatum divinum in eadem lege ipsos tolerare tenemur...Eosdem toleret in his in quibus secundum Deum sine fidei Christiane injuria viderit tolerandos” (Grayzel *The Church* 1: 275-81).

Grayzel, *The Church* 1: 275-79, n. 3), the sequence of letters by Innocent, along with his increasing attention to the problem of charges against Jews of Blood Libel, may indicate, as Roth says, “a change of heart” (“Talmud, Condemnation of” 635).

The question of whether Innocent’s attitude toward the Talmud constituted a change from Gregory IX’s outright attack has been hotly debated by critics, and even with Cohen’s recent return to the subject, the question remains without a definitive answer.²² Cohen is right to argue that this question cannot be considered separately from the more general implications of Innocent’s clear attitude toward Jewish belief, following in the footsteps of his predecessors, as an issue of heterodoxy and orthodoxy that fell within the jurisdiction of the Church’s control. Innocent’s commentaries on the *Decretales* of Gregory IX consider the Jews subject to the pope’s judgment “if they violate the moral precepts of their law and their own prelates do not punish them, and likewise if they invent heresies against their own law” (Kedar, “Canon Law” 80; quoted in Cohen, *Living Letters* 329). Kenneth Stow, in a comment on the January 28, 1290 Bull of Nicholas IV explains that Innocent IV, “more explicitly than anyone else, insisted upon” the papal right “to police the purity of Jewish observance and action” (Grayzel, *The Church* 2: 177-8, n.3). Leaving aside the question of *why* the papacy began to consider post-biblical Judaism as heretical (because it deviated from the Bible, because it constituted a threat to Christianity, etc), it is still possible to affirm that the association of Judaism with heresy

²² Alberto Melloni, *Innocenzo IV*, noted a fundamentally “contradictory” attitude toward the Jews in Innocent’s papacy (187-196), saying “la politica di Innocenzo IV vive una sorta di schizofrenia” (187). Chazan, “The Condemnation”, considers this apparent shift in Innocent’s views in his letters in the 1240’s, specifically arguing against Cohen’s notion that Christian attitudes regarding the Talmud constituted a decisive shift away from the Augustinian doctrine of witness. Joel Rembaum, “The Talmud,” also challenged Cohen’s views on Innocent’s 1244 letter, arguing that Innocent moved away from Gregory’s position against the Talmud, and Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See*, 7: 304-5, seems to agree. Cohen directly addresses the polemic in *Living Letters*, 325-330. The most recent analysis of Innocent’s attitude toward non-Christians has been provided by Sandra Brand-Pierach in her 2004 dissertation at the University of Constance, *Ungläubige im Kirchenrecht*.

explains the shift between the way the Jews were dealt with in the Talmud trial of the 1240s and the Barcelona Disputation. The very controversy over Innocent's policies in modern scholarship may indicate the presence of a shift, if not in how the Talmud was viewed, than in how the Church ought to deal with the Jews who followed the Talmud. The balance of papal policy and the implementation of actual measures regarding the Jews points toward a shift in Innocent's papacy towards responding to the problem presented by Talmudic Judaism with a policy of missionizing rather than merely outright censorship and attack. As Cohen observes, "Pope Innocent IV moved readily from voicing his rationale for policing the doctrinal beliefs of infidels to advocating aggressive missionizing among them. Why should one doubt that such a linkage appeared in ecclesiastical attitudes toward the Jews?" (*Living Letters* 334). Because such a policy of encouraging missionizing had been largely absent from papal recommendations to rulers and clergymen (Grayzel, *The Church* 1: 15-16), it is significant that it appears in Innocent's papacy in the wake of the controversy over the Talmud. Innocent's endorsement of the missionizing message of James I of Aragon in August, 1245, after his call to renew Gregory IX's investigation of the Talmud, is in line with his policy of trying to police Jewish belief. Thus Chazan's remark that the appearance of the call to missionize in the 1242 letter of James I of Aragon was "quite by coincidence" (*Daggers of Faith* 38) cannot be likewise be said of Innocent's deliberate citation and endorsement of that letter three years later. As Chazan himself concludes, "Forcing Jews and Muslims to attend conversionary sermons was not unprecedented in Christendom...what is new in 1242 is institutionalization of the practice." (39). The novelty of that institutionalization likewise holds for Innocent's papacy.

This close look at the attitudes toward missionizing of Church leaders like Innocent IV can help us understand the real connection between the two tendencies of attack and persuasion that defined Christian actions against Jews in the second half of the thirteenth century. The policies of Innocent IV, like those of secular leaders like James I of Aragón, show a constant concern with policing Jewish belief much more than had been common (or acceptable) in the past. What seems to vary between such leaders is their willingness to undermine traditional policies of tolerance of Jews in Christendom. Indeed, such mixed interests may explain the apparent prevarication of these leaders on how to approach this question. Innocent's apparent "shift" in policy may instead be evidence for a double interest in both censorship and conversion, as Innocent himself indicates in his commentary on the *Decretals* compiled under his predecessor, Gregory IX.

Given that infidels should not be forced to accept the faith...nevertheless the Pope can order the infidels to admit preachers of the Gospels in lands under his jurisdiction...if these same [infidels] prohibit the preachers from preaching, they sin and can be punished for it"²³

Even if this reference to avoiding forced conversions is only lip-service to a already-eroded ecclesiastical tradition, the mere mention of it indicates that Innocent believed forced sermonizing and missionizing were within the bounds of policing Jewish behavior. That mention of traditional Jewish rights even enters into Innocent's rhetoric indicates that it had not become an entirely moot point in the formation of papal policy.

²³ "Licet non debeant infideles cogi ad fidem...tamen mandare potest papa infidelibus, quod admittant praedicatores evangelii in terris suae iurisdictionis...si ipsi prohibent praedicatores praedicare, peccant et ideo puniendi sunt" (431va). Cited in Grayzel, "Popes, Jews, and Inquisition" 34 n. 74; Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews* 98 n. 62; and Brand-Pierach, *Ungläubige im Kirchenrecht* 181-182. Cohen has noted that Innocent advocates policing the Jews, considering them basically in a state of servitude, but again does not fully consider the implications of a call to missionize. Brand-Pierach has considered this issue in greater detail. See especially pp. 82-90 of her study, which focus on missionizing.

Solomon Grayzel, who in the two volumes of his *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century* has traced the growth of hostility toward the Jews in papal documents, has considered the question in the greatest detail. In his essay "Popes, Jews, and Inquisition. From "Sicut" to "Turbato,"" Grayzel specifically considers the erosion of the traditional doctrine of protection of the Jews *Sicut Iudaeos* (see above), and explores the connection between the growth of missionizing and forced sermons and the fate of the *Sicut* doctrine. After tracing the development of the doctrine of protection under Augustine and the enunciation of the Augustinian view by Gregory I, he observes that the *Sicut* doctrine was upheld in the wake of attacks during the Crusades and remained central to papal policy through the twelfth century. Grayzel cites the issuance of *Sicut* by Innocent III on the eve of the thirteenth century as the "turning point" after which the doctrine began to lose effectiveness, a process which he sees as culminating in the bull "Turbato Corde" by Clement IV in 1267, immediately after calling upon King James of Aragon to confiscate and burn the Talmud just as had been done two decades previous in Paris (a mandate which James does not seem to have fulfilled) (Grayzel, *The Church* 2: 15, 11 and 102 n. 8). Grayzel notes,

Whatever the two dramatic trials of rabbinic literature [in Paris and Barcelona] achieved in terms of degrading Judaism and the Jews in the opinion of Christians, they made meaningless the Church's promise in *Sicut* to leave Judaism entirely to the Jews...What then remained of *Sicut* in the second half of the 13th century? Practically little more was left than that living Jews, when all was peaceful around them, could not be compelled to accept baptism, and that dead Jews might remain in their cemeteries undisturbed." (11)

The prohibition against forced baptism was, in fact, one of the few vestiges remaining of the traditional doctrine of protection, and this prohibition was the very reason for being of the missionizing movement. It is important to stress that although it was greatly eroded by increasing papal and Mendicant aggressiveness, the *Sicut* doctrine had not yet been totally undermined. Grayzel himself points out that despite the efforts to burn the Talmud by Innocent IV in the 1240s and again by Clement IV in the 1260s, both Popes, like a number of thirteenth-century popes, issued statements referring to the *Sicut Iudais* doctrine of protection.²⁴ To be sure, the censoring and burning of the Talmud represented a blatant violation of the rights traditionally granted by *Sicut*, whereas the erosion of Jewish rights through the missionizing efforts of the same churchmen was much more ambiguous and easy to defend. Grayzel calls the re-issuance of *Sicut* by thirteenth-century popes “a gesture, a formality, part of the ceremonial connected with the official entrance of the pope into the Eternal City” (2: 6). By the very token that the doctrine existed on only level of formality, that doctrine is shown not to have disappeared completely, but to have influenced papal policy for a few decades longer in a residual form. Its quick disappearance from papal documents over the following centuries contrasts with this still frequent, albeit formalized and certainly less effective, issuance in the second half of the thirteenth century, and shows that the *Sicut* doctrine of protection

²⁴ That the second bull can be attributed to Clement IV is Grayzel’s assessment. The document carries no date or signature, and such an attribution is hard to confirm. (Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 2: 114 n. 1). In any case, as Grayzel indicates, the bull was repeated in the thirteenth century by Gregory X, Nicholas III, Martin I, and Honorius IV.

continued to influence papal policy on some level up to the dispute of Tortosa in the early fifteenth century.²⁵

The significance for our purposes of the residual survival of the *Sicut* doctrine can be seen in its implications for polemics and missionizing. The survival of the doctrine on at least a theoretical level forced missionaries and polemicists to present arguments that reflected contemporary Jewish beliefs (as Christians understood them) more accurately than the old model of the Hermeneutical Jew. To do so meant that Christians would have more success if they presented arguments in favor of Christianity that they believed Jews would find more compelling and that would ostensibly spur Jews to convert to Christianity with sincerity, in a way that was acceptable where force clearly was not. There was without a doubt an awareness that conversion of Jews required much more than traditional arguments based on Biblical *testimonia* but, as we suggested above and as we will explore in more detail below, this awareness was dramatically compromised by the dominance of Christian apologetic concerns. The development of persuasive, rhetorically effective arguments presented to real, believing Jews was sidetracked into the discussion of the textual support of Jewish authoritative texts for issues relevant only from a Christian perspective.

Part of the link between the question of Jewish rights and the nature of conversion can be seen in the development of the doctrine of *Turbato corde*. The 1267 bull has to do with the problem of forced converts returning to Judaism. The bull recommends that anyone found out to have done this can be punished as a Christian heretic (“quos talia

²⁵ Kenneth Stow remarks “It is thus all the more amazing that the doctrine of *Sicut Judaeis* remained in force, with all but one effective (although still not absolute) hiatus under Benedict XIII, in 1415, until the period of the Catholic Restoration. Then it indeed did suffer true violence at the hands of Paul IV and others” (Grayzel, *The Church* 2: 115 n. 5).

inveneritis commisisse, tanquam contra haereticos procedatis” 2: 103). Grayzel cites this bull as representative of the erosion of Jewish rights in the second half of the thirteenth century, and indeed, the bull evinces an atmosphere of mounting hostility towards Jews in Western Christendom and a severe curtailment of Jewish autonomy as Jews were thus brought under the jurisdiction of the papal Inquisition. Yet the papal policy as expressed in this and related bulls still maintained that Jews were under no circumstances to be forced to accept Christianity, but persuaded, in Gregory the Great’s words, by “with coaxing,” (*blandimentis*).²⁶ A critical question for popes in the second half of the thirteenth century which motivated *Turbato* and other discussions of forced converts (including those of Thomas Aquinas) was what to do with those who were forced to convert. After the first crusade, when many Jews had been forced to convert by marauding crusaders and then were allowed by Emperor Henry IV to return to Judaism when no longer under duress, pope Urban II, who had called for the first crusade himself, did not object (although the antipope Clement III did) (Grayzel, *The Church* 2: 4 and 26 n. 12 and 13). The papal policy that baptism, even when forced, cannot be reversed, dates back to the Fourth council of Toledo in 633,²⁷ and this decision was cited by Gratian in the *Decretum* (D.45, c.5),²⁸ and again by Innocent III in a 1201 bull (Grayzel, *The Church* 1:

²⁶ See Grayzel, *The Church* 1: 14 n. 8.

²⁷ For a detailed discussion of the legislation of the Council of Toledo, see Barcala Muñoz, *Biblioteca antijudaica de los escritores eclesiásticos hispanos* 2:2, p. 295-332.

²⁸ I disagree with Grayzel that Gratian, by citing the ruling of IV Toledo, “chose to emphasize, not the nature or degree of force used in converting Jews, but rather the sanctity of the formula spoken while they were being baptized” (*The Church* 2:), because he presents this text (C.XV.v) along with a letter of Pope Gregory I to Paschasius, Bishop of Naples around the turn of the seventh century, arguing that Jews should be converted by persuasion, not force (C.XV.iii). As Browe notes, it was common, among writers like Ivo of Chartres, Pope Gregory IX, and Gratian himself, to offer both Gregory I’s words and those of IV Toledo (236). That the issue of forced conversion was not clearly determined by Gratian’s inclusion of the idea of IV Toledo is also evident in the epigraphs of a fifteenth-century manuscript of Paulus de Sancta Maria’s

100-103). While Grayzel comments that Innocent's bull left no doubt that the Church had begun to defend forced baptism, Kenneth Stow remarks that the policy did not actually become law until 1298 when Boniface VIII included a similar idea in his *Liber Sextus*, 5.2.13. (2: 104 n. 3).²⁹ Throughout the thirteenth century, despite the progressive worsening of Jewish status in Christian law, the papacy (and the local clerics and secular rulers counseled by them) never embraced or displayed a complete willingness to abrogate the rights of *Sicut Iudaeos* altogether. Although relapsed converts came increasingly under ecclesiastical and inquisitorial jurisdiction, and although the definition of "force" used in conversions grew increasingly nuanced and legalistic,³⁰ there remained a commitment and interest in the idea of "real" conversion by argument and persuasion as a means of expanding Christian jurisdiction without flouting Jewish rights *in toto*.

The papal attention to the question of Jewish rights, however perfunctory at this point, was shared by James of Aragón, in a context in which the Jewish presence was much greater and the tradition of preserving the status quo of Jewish rights was stronger. Vacillation over the rights of Jews in the context of forced sermonizing is apparent in the legislation of James I of Aragón immediately following the Barcelona Disputation. Not only did James pass legislation meant to encourage forced sermonizing among the Jews, he quickly added another edict limiting such efforts by stating that Jews should not be forced out of their neighborhood to hear sermons, and even that they should only hear

Scrutinium Scripturarum which refer to Gratian to cite both texts alongside of one another. On the citation of these two texts together, see my article "*Converso* Polemic in Naples" 1-9.

²⁹ Stow even cautions that "one must, however, be careful in seeing this as a violation of *Sicut Iudaeis*. No matter what papal policy and feeling about baptism was before the fact, once baptism had been effected, its rejection was unthinkable because of the obvious imputation and insult to the Church that such an action brought about" (2: 104 n. 3). Elsewhere, Stow maintains that through this policy on forced conversions, "...*Sicut* was limited, although not cast aside..." (2: 115 n. 5).

³⁰ See Grayzel, *The Church* 2: 18.

sermons “if they wish” (“si voluerint”) (Denifle 237). On this apparent irresolution, Chazan remarks “we see King James the Conqueror walking a fine line between support of ecclesiastical initiatives and concern for his important Jewish population” (*Barcelona and Beyond* 85). In both cases of Innocent and James, the apparent influence of Jewish lobbying seems to have helped sway the leaders to mollify their position. In Innocent’s case, the appeal of Jews to argue that they could not practice their religion without the Talmud prompted him to “reopen” the trial of the Talmud under the direction of Eudes de Chateauroux (who, nevertheless, condemned the Talmud to the flames once again). In the case of James, the influence of Jewish lobbying, as Chazan argues (85), seems the obvious explanation for his quick undercutting of his previous legislation. The apparent willingness to entertain the complaints of Jews that their rights were being undermined, despite the failure to curb the negative influence of the growth of forced sermonizing among the Jews, evinces an ongoing awareness of Jewish rights in the background of the missionizing effort. The decisive shift between the burning and re-burning of the Talmud in the 1240s in Paris and the dispute of Barcelona and its aftermath can be seen in the fact that when Innocent revisited the question of Jewish rights to their own books, opening a new investigation of the Talmud led by Odo of Tuluscum, the conclusion was to burn the Talmud again. When James ordered the censorship of Jewish books following the Barcelona dispute, he did so under penalty of burning if Jews did not cooperate, but no burning was ever carried out. Indeed, Pope Clement IV wrote to James three years later complaining that he gave too much support and defense to the Jews and urging that he “burn” (reluceat) more in his faith against them (Grayzel, *The Church* 2: 94).³¹

³¹ It is interesting to note that, even here, the Pope makes reference to existing Jewish rights, noting that Jews should not be given public offices, but only “in quantum concessa eis a sede apostolica privilegia

We have seen through a close consideration of Christian attitudes toward missionizing to Jews and attacking Jewish doctrine that both Papal and royal policies evince an ongoing ambivalence over the extent of Jewish rights and the responsibilities of Christian leaders. This ambivalence in policy translated into a very noticeable division in the activities and arguments of actual Dominican polemicists such as Friar Paul Christiani. The source-accounts of Paul's disputations of Barcelona in 1263 and Paris in 1271-2 show a focus on issues of most relevance in an apologetic context, presented as an attack on Judaism, and only a secondary interest in actual persuasion and conversion, presented as a proof and defense of Christian ideas. Nevertheless, the physical context of the disputations, in which a few Jews not only disputed with or defended themselves against Christians like Paul but in which many other Jews were also present to hear such arguments and counterarguments, shows that conversion of Jews was by no means absent from Christian intentions, even if his arguments were more polemical than persuasive, and even if conversion was only a secondary goal along with the primary intention of destroying Jewish beliefs for Christian apologetic purposes. The growth of the new missionizing argumentation based on Jewish source texts seems to represent a blend of the desire to use Jewish texts to better articulate ideas of Christian faith, the impulse to control Jewish life from a legal perspective, and the recognition of the Jewish right not to be forced to practice Christianity.

Recognizing the mixture of intentions behind the missionizing movement should force us to resist any single explanation of the goals and effects of the thirteenth-century

patiuntur" (*The Church* 2: 94). About this statement, Grayzel notes that this is "a negative and unusual extension of the *Sicut Judaeis* bull," but Kenneth Stow counters this by noting that the statement may simply be a formulaic reminder that "observance of canonical restrictions does not imply the invalidation of rights otherwise canonically granted, with the point of reference being, indeed, *Sicut Judaeis*" (Grayzel, *The Church* 2: 95, n. 3).

arguments and polemics to the Jews. Cohen has argued that “the urgency for a Christian mission to the Jews suggested that contemporary Judaism no longer qualified for toleration in Augustinian terms” (*Living Letters* 335). I believe, however, that the growth of missionary ideas, however vague, is proof that a blanket dismissal and condemnation of Judaism as heretical was too simplistic a solution to be practically helpful for Christian leaders interested in policing Christian orthodoxy. An interest in conversion signified the desire for a real, long-term solution to the problems represented by Judaism for the thirteenth-century Church: If Jews could be *convinced* of the truth of Christianity through effective persuasion, they would no longer need to be condemned as heterodox or dissident groups within Christendom, but could subsequently be brought into the increasingly strict fold of the thirteenth-century church. On the other hand, I agree with Cohen’s argument that “the Friars of the Inquisition may have paid lip service to the canons protecting the Jews and their niche in Christendom, but men so zealous as these were not easily thwarted” (*The Friars and the Jews* 97). This determination of the friars had its effects. The aggressive presentation of apologetic arguments of interest to Christians—arguments which, of course, produced very few converts—in a context where the conversion of Jews based on those arguments was at least a secondary goal exposed the limitations of the Christian “missionary” style. In this context, the need for effective and convincing arguments to missionize to the Jews grew ever more acute with the intensity of the campaign to claim dominion over Jewish life and belief. The use of the Talmud and other postbiblical literature as authoritative proofs constituted the crux of this effort to argue more effectively, but how different was this approach from previous arguments in anti-Jewish polemics?

In order to answer this question, essential for understanding Abner/Alfonso's polemical writing, I propose to take a central aspect of all of his polemics, especially the *Mostrador*—the consideration of what constitutes argumentative authority from a Jewish perspective—and attempt to trace its development in the texts of the Barcelona and Paris disputations and the polemics of Raymond Martini. Over the past quarter century, much has been written about the new missionizing method of Friar Paul and the school of Raymond of Peñafort in the second half of the thirteenth century, and it is not necessary to fully review that material any further here. Nevertheless, less attention has been paid specifically to the importance of argumentative authority in the Christian thrusts and Jewish parries provoked by this new approach, perhaps because the role of authority in polemical argumentation has been viewed as obvious and in need of no further elaboration.³² As a constant and basic feature of all the texts related to argumentation with the Jews in the second half of the thirteenth century, however, comparison of the attitudes towards and assumptions about authority in these texts constitute a useful way of tracking the changes and development of anti-Jewish polemic at this time. Recalling Daniel Lasker's summary of polemical arguments, mentioned in the previous chapter, as either exegetical, historical/social, rational/common-sensical or rational/philosophical (*Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 1-11), we can thus observe that thirteenth-century arguments based on postbiblical literature continued to be predominantly exegetical, relying on textual sources for the final proof of each argument. Attitudes towards textual authority provide a common thread that links the Latin and Hebrew accounts of the Barcelona Disputation, the polemical texts of Raymond Martini, and the polemics of Abner/Alfonso

³² The most notable exception, as we will see below, is Gilbert Dahan, who considers authority at length in his *Les intellectuels chrétiens*, pp. 440-471.

in the fourteenth century, and indeed even on through the polemicists of the fifteenth century. Such persistence of the issue of authorities evolved from a need to augment the Old Testament when polemicists came to understand the grave disparity between real Jewish beliefs and the image represented for centuries by the figure of the hermeneutical Jew, and thus an overview of polemicists' attitudes toward the use of authoritative sources in the later thirteenth century shows that, although the central role of arguments based on authority remains constant, the concept of authority necessarily evolved as some polemicists such as Abner/Alfonso sought to find arguments that they believed Jews would find truly compelling and to which they would actually assent in conversion. A consideration of the common thread of attitudes towards authority and authoritative sources will help show first the intimate link between Abner/Alfonso's polemics and the writing of the previous generation, despite Abner/Alfonso's limited direct use of other Christian polemics as sources.³³

B. The Continuity of Thirteenth-Century Missionizing with Traditional Anti-Jewish Polemics

The question of authority in polemics does not, of course, originate in the later Middle Ages but, because the use of *auctoritates* was the foundation of exegetical arguments, textual authority was a central issue in Christian polemical arguments from their very beginning. Summarizing the history of polemical writing, Gilbert Dahan has divided polemics into two categories, those with arguments based on *auctoritas*, or authoritative scriptures, consisting of almost all polemic before Gilbert Crispin, and those

³³ The discussion that follows draws heavily from existing criticism and history on the subject, especially the work of Robert Chazan and Jeremy Cohen.

texts with arguments appealing to *ratio*, or reason, which begin to appear in the twelfth century (*Les intellectuels* 423-27). Before this, as we have seen, Christian polemicists substantiated their claims almost entirely by citing verses from the Old Testament and interpreting them in terms of Christian figurative exegesis. A.J. Minnis has carefully studied, without considering polemical writing, the medieval concept of *auctoritas* in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As he explains, an *auctor* or written authority, usually distinguished from a mere human author, is not only one who is responsible for a text but someone who is to be quoted and believed. The *auctor* was seen as an authority because he possessed *auctoritas*, the authority to speak truly, the wisdom to speak well, and the believability to be trusted as a source. Minnis defines *auctoritas* as having “intrinsic worth and authenticity” (*Medieval Theory of Authorship* 10). To have intrinsic worth meant that what one said or wrote did not contradict Christian doctrine; to have authenticity indicated that an *auctor* was connected with an ancient and true source. Just as every discipline had its own *auctores*—grammar had Priscian and Donatus, rhetoric had Cicero, dialectic had Aristotle, Porphyry and Boethius, etc—so the *auctoritas* for Biblical exegesis and, by extension, polemical writing was the most ancient and true source of all, the Bible, whose *auctor* was none other than God himself (*Medieval Theory* 10-13). Polemical assertions of Jewish blindness, stubbornness, and sinfulness rested, as we saw in the preceding chapter, on the authority of the biblical *testimonia*, and the single source of Christian polemic before the twelfth century was the Old Testament. Quite logically, the observations of an individual exegete or polemicist were of far less importance than the biblical material used to substantiate his arguments. By Augustine’s time and certainly after, the supreme authority of biblical *testimonia* was not only a product of the fact of

divine revelation, but actually came to depend on the perceived Jewish disbelief of a Christological figurative reading. As Augustine states in 16.21 of *Contra Faustum*, “the unbelief of the Jews increases rather than lessens the authority of these [Biblical] books, for this blindness is itself foretold.”³⁴ The central role of Jewish belief, as understood by Christians, in the authority of biblical sources helps explain the later centrality of post-Biblical Jewish ideas for proofs of Christian truth. We can recall that in Augustine’s letter to Bishop Paulinus of Nola in 414 that he recommends the preservation of the Jews as testimony to Christian truth Jews “the name of Christ is distinguished by such great authority in the hope for eternal salvation.”³⁵

In carefully explaining the two sources of argumentative authority, reason and biblical *testimonia*, Dahan, who is one of the few scholars to discuss authority in polemical writing in any detail, also notes the changing nature of polemical arguments of both kinds starting in the twelfth century, asserting that “L’évolution est remarquable aux XIIe-XIVe siècles, tant sur le plan de la *ratio*...que sur celui de l’*auctoritas*” (*Les intellectuels* 424). Following the initial debut of purely rational arguments in Christian writing at the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth centuries, the arguments presented by polemicists in the twelfth century and after repeatedly state their intention to argue based on both sources of authority, reason *and* scriptural authority.³⁶ Petrus Alfonsi, for

³⁴ “Nec inde auctoritas illis libris minuitur, quod a Judaeis non intelliguntur; imo et augetur: nam et ipsa eorum caecitas ibi praedicta est” (464).

³⁵ “...ut christi nomen in spe salutis aeternae tanta auctoritate praepolleat” (*S. Aureli Augustini...Epistulae* 44 (1904):356). Translation quoted in Cohen, *Living Letters* 39.

³⁶ Philosophical arguments had employed in non-Latin polemics before the twelfth century. Among anti-Christian Jewish polemics, the ninth-century Judeo-Arabic *‘Isrūn maqāla*, or *Twenty Chapters*, of Dāwūd ibn Mawān al-Muqammiṣ presents sophisticated philosophical arguments against Christianity. Also, the Arabic *Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Uṣqūf*, or *Account of the Disputation of the Priest*, probably written in the middle of the ninth century and translated into Hebrew in the twelfth century as *Sefer Nestor Ha-Komer*, or *The Book of Nestor the*

example, in the beginning of the twelfth century, sets out to argue, as he says, on the basis of both. “I have set forth all the objections of any enemy of the Christian faith and, having given them, have destroyed them with reason and authority according to my understanding.”³⁷ Likewise, Gilbert Crispin, who wrote one of the earliest Christian Latin polemics appealing principally to *ratio*, by no means abandons the standard appeal to *testimonia* from the Bible. This approach of appealing simultaneously to philosophical reasons and to biblical authorities became a standard technique in polemics over the following centuries. As Dahan observes, “Comme Gilbert Crispin, les polémistes des XIIe-XIVe siècles affirment sans cesse (mais avec des nuances diverses) la nécessité d’une conjugaison de la *ratio* et de l’*auctoritas* dans les discussions avec les juifs” (*Les intellectuels* 424). A careful look, for example, at the *Adversus duritiem inveteratam iudeorum* of Peter the Venerable of Cluny reveals that authority not surprisingly plays an essential role in his polemical argument. He says, “When all of these things, O Jews, are proven both by sacred authorities and by invincible reasons, what do you maintain? If you have faith in your authorities, yield to the authorities. If you are rational or reasonable, acquiesce to the reasons.”³⁸ Funkenstein, who has maintained that Peter represents a darker, more intolerant side of the new rationalist polemic with his argument that Jews were “less than human” because they did not accept rational arguments, has oddly skipped over the

Priest, shows familiarity with philosophical polemics. The ninth-century *Radd ‘alā al-thalāth frāq min al-nasārā* by the Muslim Abū ‘Īsā al-Warrāq likewise presents a thorough refutation of Christianity on exclusively philosophical grounds. The text by Al-Muqammiṣ has been edited and translated by Sarah Stroumsa; the *Qisṣat* and Hebrew *Sefer* were edited and translated by Daniel Lasker and Sarah Stroumsa; and the *Radd* of al-Warrāq was edited and translated by David Thomas.

³⁷ “Ad ultimum etiam omnes cuiuslibet Christiane legis adversarii obiectiones posui positasque pro meo sapere cum ratione et auctoritate destruxi” (*Diálogo contra los Judíos* 7).

³⁸ “Cum ista omnia, O Judaei, et auctoritatibus sacris, et rationibus invictis probata sint, quid sustinetis? Si Scripturis vestris fidem datis, auctoritati cedite. Si rationales aut rationabiles estis, rationi adquiescite” (*Adversus Iudeorum* 83).

important role of authority in Peter's argument.³⁹ Peter actually argues that Jews are "less than human" not only because they do not accept arguments appealing to *ratio*, but also because they reject the proof of biblical authorities. He remarks, "I do not know completely if the Jew, who neither believes human reason nor accepts authorities divine and his own, is a man."⁴⁰ To the proof of faith by reason and authoritative sources, Peter also adds "miracles, force, and pleasure" (*miracula, vis et voluptas*)⁴¹ to the reasons that induce people to believe and convert. Because people are neither persuaded or compelled to believe, he says, the primary reason to believe in Christianity is faith in miracles, and Peter then notes that the Jew rejects miracles as magic all the same.⁴² Based on all of his arguments about reason, authority, and miracles, Peter orders the Jew to draw the only possible conclusion: believe in Christianity.⁴³ That the Jew remains, for Peter, stubborn and blind to such arguments calls his status as a human being into question. It is important to stress that along with miracles, authority and authoritative sources, not only

³⁹ See Funkenstein, "Basic types" 378-80, and "Changes," 138-41.

⁴⁰ "Nescio plane utrum Iudaeus homo sit, qui nec rationi humanae caedit, nec auctoritibus divinis et propriis acquiescit." (*Adversus Iudeorum* 57-58) Cf. similar statements such as "Videor michi, Iudee, tot auctoritatibus, tantis rationibus satisfacisse me, ut arbitror, super hiis, quae in quaestione proposita fuerant, omni homini. Quod si omni homini, tunc et tibi, si tamen homo es" (125).

⁴¹ "Impossibile enim fuit, vel hos de quibus sermo est, vel quoslibet alios, doctis temporibus absque aliqua certa causa vel illiciente, vel compellente, ab inveterato vel innato usu potuisse averti, et ad insolita et nova converti. Causa autem ad nova illa vel illiciens vel compellens, nisi fallor, alia nulla exstitit, nisi aut auctoritas, aut ratio, aut miracula, aut vis, aut voluptas, vel simul omnia, vel horum aliqua" (110).

⁴² "Claret igitur quod nulla mortalis vitae, vel rerum voluptate, ad credendum Christo, mundus illectus est. Restant ergo quae medio supradictarum causarum loco posita sunt miracula...constat ergo quod orbis Christianus, absque harum aliqua ut in Christum crederet, nec illectus est, nec compulsus. Sed rursus probatum est quod nec auctoritate, nec ratione, nec vi, nec voluptate ad Christum conversus est. Claret igitur quod solis ad suscipiendam Christi fidem miraculis, sola gratia spiritus provocatus est. Sed...dixisti enim. Miracula quibus mundum [sic] ad fidem Christi conversus dicis aut nulla sunt aut magica." (114-115).

⁴³ "Vt igitur breviter, o Iudaeae, diffusius dicta recolligam, tam multiplici Scripturarum auctoritate, quam evidenti miraculorum ratione agnosce probatum esse, tene certum esse Christum Dominum nostrum...non quasi eum, qui nondum venerit, exspectandum, sed sicut eum qui jam praescripto tempore venit, suscipiendum et adorandum" (124).

reason, play a central role in Peter's litany of compelling proofs and in his final conclusion about the essential nature of the Jew.

In his careful treatment of the *Adversus Iudaeorum...durtiem*, Cohen (*Living Letters* 254-70) acknowledges that citation of biblical proof texts plays a role in Peter's polemic, along with rational arguments and belief in miracles, and concludes that, by combining these elements, "the traditionally circumscribed discourse of Christian religious polemic had unquestionably widened" (270). It bears emphasis that with Peter's pairing of reason and proof texts alongside of one another, and with his rejection of Talmudic arguments, this widening is essentially one of how to understand authority and authoritative proof. It can be remembered that Peter rejects the Talmud as a heretical replacement of biblical authority, while later, thirteenth-century churchmen after Paul Christiani would accept the Talmud as a source containing at least some authentic and authoritative proof for Christianity. Peter's expansion of the methodology of polemical discourse comes in his pairing of traditional proofs with more contemporary, rational ones, and the effect of this was to redefine what constituted traditional proof. Peter can, in this sense, be considered a transitional figure, not only in his attention to the Talmud or his notably acerbic anti-Judaism, but also in his slight reconfiguration of what constitutes compelling motives for belief in Christianity. In his treatment of the Talmud along with rational and Biblical proofs, Peter opened the door to a more elaborate reconfiguration of the parameters of authentic authority in the century to follow. By the end of the twelfth century, Alan of Lille, in his *De fide catholica contra Haereticos, Waldenses, Iudaeos, et Paganos seu Mahometanos*, also called the *Summa quadripertita*, presented his arguments based both "ratione et auctoritatibus" like Peter Alfonsi and Peter the Venerable before him, but began to show

concern over the shifting nature of what arguments could be supported by authoritative sources. He indicates that it is possible to manipulate the interpretations of authoritative sources, thus requiring support from reason as well. In his words, “Since authority has a nose of wax, that is it can be bent into different meanings, it should be supported by rational arguments.”⁴⁴ This claim that authority, as it was traditionally understood, could not always stand alone, and needed the tools of reason to support it, carries the implications of Peter the Venerable’s eclectic blend of sources one step further. While I agree with Cohen that Alan’s occasional citation of the Talmud is perhaps not of such monumental importance as attributed to it by other critics, it is important to notice that Alan is the first Christian polemicist to cite the Talmud in support of his arguments rather than as proof of Jewish heresy. G.R. Evans, who has studied the evolution of authority in medieval Christianity, draws special attention to what he calls “the most significant shift not only in the thirteenth century, but perhaps of the whole medieval period, in habits of thought about authority to determine what is authoritative” (“Exegesis and Authority” 93). Within Christian thought, the thirteenth century was when the crisis of the authority of *moderni* to add to or even alter patristic authority came to a head, and the shifting notion of authority in anti-Jewish polemic—authority both over Jews and other Christians—must be seen as a parallel development to this internal Christian process of evolution.⁴⁵ The transition from the twelfth- to the thirteenth-century view of

⁴⁴ “Quia auctoritas cereum habet nasum, id est in diversum potest flecti sensum, rationibus roborandum est.” (*Patrologia Latina* 210: 333A).

⁴⁵ Stephen Benin (“The Search for Truth in Sacred Scripture. Jews, Christians, and the Authority to Interpret”) has also recently explored the shifting notion of authority in both Jewish and Christian exegesis in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He notes that “Jewish and Christian exegetes accepted the words of their forbears, yet felt free to depart from them, while at the same time aspiring to amplify and transcend them...it would be only a matter of time before their novelties became part of the tradition itself” (26). Benin does not, however, consider the implications this rising status of *moderni* had in Jewish-Christian polemic.

authoritative sources is conveniently represented in Alan's polemic, which appeared right at the dawn of the thirteenth century.

In considering the shift in the concept of authority by the turn of the twelfth century, it is important to distinguish between those arguments made against Jews and Jewish traditions but directed to other Christian readers in an apologetic context, and those arguments made in the second half of the thirteenth century with an ostensibly missionizing intention. Before the twelfth century, the use of Biblical authority in traditional apologetic polemics offered sources considered authoritative by Christian readers, and there is no evidence that such arguments were used for missionizing purposes. In refuting the imaginary, hermeneutical Jew of early medieval Christian polemic, the concept of authoritativeness was defined in entirely Christian terms, because, as Cohen has stated it, "Christians perceived the Jews to be who they were *supposed* to be, not who they actually *were*, and related to them accordingly" (*Living Letters* 2). Thus, Jews were long believed to hold the "Old Testament" as the ultimate authority and source, and the failure of real Jews to accept and adopt Christian arguments based on this ultimate collection of "auctoritates" mystified Christian theologians for centuries, while at the same time serving to further confirm the idea, so necessary for Christian self-understanding as the "true Israel" of God's salvific plan, the image of the Jew as blind and stubborn. It was not until the twelfth century that Christian intellectuals had much accurate knowledge about rabbinical Judaism, and polemicists only very slowly, before the thirteenth century, began to discern the disparity between their own interpretation of verses from the Hebrew Bible and the interpretations of rabbinical tradition. Peter the Venerable's argument that the Jewish unamenability to rational and biblical proofs called

their humanity into question is the clearest and earliest example of the growing Christian awareness of and lack of comprehension of this disparity. Although an extensive treatment of the subject is outside the parameters of this study, it is clear that the transformation of the concept of argumentative authority in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, especially in response to Jewish post-Biblical literature, began first of all with introduction of rational arguments, rather than strictly Biblical evidence interpreted from a Christological perspective.⁴⁶ This shift entailed a fundamental redefinition of polemical arguments to include an evaluation of the differences between Christianity and Judaism from a broader perspective that included more than exegetical techniques.

As I argued above, one of the primary moving forces behind the development of the new techniques of Dominican friars in the thirteenth century was an expansion of Church control with the intention of more carefully and completely policing Jewish belief and practice. As Christian churchmen came in more intimate contact with original writings of rabbinical Judaism, and in the Talmud trial in Paris, much attention was given to the question of supposed Jewish blasphemies and insults to Christianity found in the Talmud and in the daily prayer liturgy. What was, in the twelfth century among writers like Petrus Alfonsi and Peter the Venerable of Cluny, an awareness of rabbinical literature as an important and deviant aspect of contemporary Jewish belief and practice—Peter the Venerable accuses the Jews of preferring “that Talmud of yours, that

⁴⁶ Funkenstein, who has most famously traced the evolution of anti-Jewish polemics, does not causally connect the emergence in the twelfth century of rationalist polemics with a new awareness of post-Biblical rabbinical literature. Nevertheless, he does begin to hint that the emergence of rationalist defenses of Christianity, such as in Anslem of Canterbury, led to a shift in the goals of polemic, seeking to defend Christianity and attack other religions in much less distorted and imaginary terms. Cf. “Basic Types” 377-9, and “Changes” 125-33.

egregious doctrine of yours, to prophetic books and all authentic judgments”⁴⁷—became by the 1240s an issue of Christian jurisdiction to censor the content of Jewish books and control the nature of Jewish worship.⁴⁸ Melloni gives a very clear explanation of this notion of jurisdiction with regard to the challenge presented to Christianity by Talmudic texts:

Talmudic tradition represents formally and historically the condition of liberty and of liberal evolution of Judaism in a non-Jewish society. This is not, however, possible in an evolved Christianity: the very heterogeneous presence to be tolerated in it is an immobile presence...[The Jews] are permitted to have a rhetorical “variability” that can be valued only insofar as they are recognized as pertinent within a homogenous whole. Talmud dynamism is *a fortiori* incompatible with the determinist situation [of the 13th century]. The immobility of the subject—rationalized immobility—became a necessity.⁴⁹

The effort in the thirteenth century to employ postbiblical sources was simply an effort to realign the uncertainty presented by the identity of the Talmudic Jew within a traditional framework of Christian abrogation.

⁴⁷ “illum Thalmuth tuum, illam egregiam doctrinam tuam, propheticis libris et cunctis sententiis autenticis praeferendam” (126).

⁴⁸ John Tolan, in *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers* 19-22, and “Los Diálogos”, has argued, probably following Cohen’s lead in *The Friars and the Jews*, that Petrus Alfonsi saw Jewish belief in the Talmud as heretical. Cohen, however, in *Living Letters*, 213-218, argues against such a view, concluding that “although Alfonsi...suggested a potential rationale for the indictment of contemporary Judaism as heresy, he himself did not follow through to draw the conclusion, and one wonders whether he actually appreciated the possibility...one cannot overemphasize the graduality of this process” (216-217).

⁴⁹ La tradizione Talmudica rappresenta plasticamente e storicamente la condizione di libertà e di libera evoluzione del giudaismo in una società non giudaica. Questo, però, non è possibile in una cristianità evoluta: la sola presenza eterogenea tollerabile in essa è una presenza immobile...Essi sono assimilabili, per così dire, ad una *variatio* retorica che può essere apprezzata solo se e in quanto riconosciuta pertinente in un tutto omogeneo. Il dinamismo Talmudico era *a fortiori* incompatibile con la situazione determinata [nel XIII secolo]...l’immobilità dei soggetti, la razionalizzata immobilità, diventava una necessità” (196).

By the second half of the twelfth century, the expansion of ecclesiastical influence over Jewish life came to directly affect the definition and use of what sources could be considered “authoritative” by Jews. The question over what rights Christian authorities had to determine authoritative sources for Jews is of central importance around the time of the Talmud trial in Paris, when Jews appealed directly to Pope Innocent IV to protect their right to worship according to their own law, a practice which, they explained, required the Talmud. Innocent’s statement that “We then, bound as we are by the Divine command to tolerate them in their Law, thought fit to have the answer given to them that we do not want to deprive them of their books if as a result we should deprive them of their Law” testifies to the ongoing existence of at least a nominal attention to traditional Jewish rights.⁵⁰ Although, as we have seen, the Pope’s commission, led by Odo of Tusculum, did end up burning the Talmud again, the nominal and perfunctory concern over Jewish rights to their own Law points to a recognition, at least on a theoretical level, that the Jews had authoritative sources that were different from those of the Christians, and likewise that the Old Testament alone interpreted from a Christian perspective was understood not to be authoritative among the Jews, as Peter the Venerable had believed a century before. The ecclesiastical effort to expand jurisdiction to include control over those different authoritative sources was intimately tied up with the expansion of the concept of authority in polemical argumentation, mirroring the later effort to appropriate Jewish sources in support of Christianity at the dispute of Barcelona and in the writings of Raymond Martini. Yet before Christian thinkers actually recognized that post-biblical Jewish sources were a different and potentially valid source of authority for belief (and for

⁵⁰ “Nos qui juxta mandatum divinum in eadem lege ipsos tolerare tenemur, dignum eis duximus respondendum quod sicut eos ipsa lege sic perconsequens [sic] suis libris nolumus injuste privare” (Grayzel, *The Church* 1: 278-80).

rejection of Christianity), there was no question over what actually could be used as authoritative support in polemical arguments: The Bible remained the sole textual authority until the thirteenth century, and only rational proofs could offer competition to its inveterate sovereignty. In Petrus Alfonsi's dialog, for example, the Christian Peter asks Moses "on what authority" Jews believe certain traditions (such as the wearing of phylacteries) discussed in the Talmud (*Los Diálogos* 13), indicating that even though the Talmud is seen as a source of certain Jewish beliefs and practices, it is not yet understood as a textual authority in its own right. As post-Biblical Jewish writing came to be recognized as a real source determining the understanding of that biblical authority different from Christian exegetical sources, the first important issue to be decided by churchmen was the right of the Jews to have such an alternate tradition. The expansion of papal jurisdiction to censor and control the content of that alternate tradition constituted the first Christian effort to actually confront the issue of the textual authority of Jewish sources, an effort that would develop within a few decades into the appropriation of those sources for Christian arguments. The decision by Odo to burn the Talmud again in 1248 was made, as he says, by those with "apostolic authority" (*auctoritate apostolica*) (Grayzel, *The Church* 1: 278 n3), indicating that, like the later appropriation of the Talmud by polemicists for Christian proofs, this expansion of ecclesiastical jurisdiction entailed a redefinition of what or who constituted the ultimate authority in determining the meaning of authoritative sources.

In short, the campaign to claim authority over the content and use of Jewish sources was premised first on a recognition that what constituted authoritative sources for Jews was not the same as for Christians. This may seem obvious, but it must be

remembered that compared to even a century previous, this recognition was unprecedented insofar as it related to the goals of converting Jews with persuasive arguments, and it marks an important change in Christian polemic.⁵¹ In the context of the polemical campaign of the decades following the Talmud trial, this recognition carried with it an awareness that arguments could not rely on Biblical verses alone if they were to be found compelling by Jews. Although some, such as Cohen (*Living Letters* 258) and Chazan (*Daggers of Faith* 23), have recognized the missionizing intentions of pre-thirteenth figures like Peter the Venerable, the Christian effort to use rabbinical writing to support Christianity does not, as we have seen, begin until a few decades after the Talmud trial of the 1240s. The dispute of Barcelona constitutes the first concerted effort to appeal to sources that Christians believed Jews would recognize and accept as authoritative and binding. Scholars have stressed the innovativeness of using rabbinical sources to argue against the Jews, but few have articulated the underlying Christian assumption about authority that the use of the Talmud and Midrash in Christian polemical argument hinges on the initial assumption that the sources being used are considered authoritative among the Jews, and thus any conclusions drawn from them would, polemicists assumed, necessarily be binding. The same belief had, in centuries previous, been long held regarding Jewish belief in the Old Testament, and the turn to rabbinical sources fills the gap left by the twelfth-century realization that the Hebrew Bible may not be accepted as authoritative without an accompanying rabbinical interpretation. The new missionizing campaign of the thirteenth century rests first of all

⁵¹ This shift will have long-term effects. In the fifteenth century, for example, some anti-Jewish polemical arguments, including those apologetic arguments not meant to speak directly to Jews, show a recognition that what, in theory, ought to convert a Jew must go beyond Biblical sources. For example, the Latin polemics of converts like Paulus of Sancta Maria or Hieronymus de Sancta Fide, written for Christian audiences, reflect this important shift.

on the assumption that any conclusions drawn from authoritative Jewish sources would be automatically accepted and necessitate Jewish acceptance of Christian views and conversion. The key to understanding the Christian attitude toward the binding nature of Jewish authorities is that for Christian polemicists, the understanding that sources were authentic and authoritative necessarily meant that they were apodictic and binding in a specific way. For Jews, on the other hand, the acceptance of aggadic sources as authoritative did not imply an apodictically binding law in the way that the acceptance of halakhic sources did. As we shall see through a more detailed consideration of the sources related to the arguments of Friar Paul at Barcelona and Paris and Raymond Martini in his written polemics (sources already considered briefly in the previous chapter), the question of authority in the thirteenth-century Christian mission to the Jews played a defining role in the development of missionizing techniques from purely textual arguments, such as those found in the polemics of Raymond Martini, to arguments based in part on personal experience, such as those of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid. Abner/Alfonso's turn away from purely textual support in the *Mostrador* to persuasive appeal and personal testimony involved an approach to aggadic sources from a Jewish perspective, as dialogical and anapodictic (undemonstrable), rather than as from the traditional Christian perspective in which no such distinction was made between apodictic and narrative sources.

A central figure in the thirteenth-century development of the use of Jewish sources as proof texts in anti-Jewish arguments was the Dominican Raymond of Peñafort.⁵² More than any other church figure, Raymond of Peñafort bridges the gap between the Talmud

⁵² A full consideration of Peñafort's methods and career can be found in Cohen, *The Friars*, pp. 104-8.

trials of the 1240s as instigated by Gregory IX and the appropriation of the Talmud as a proof-text in the Barcelona Disputation. Cohen implies this when he observes “Raymond...sensed an implicit connection between Gregory’s concern with the Talmud and the logic for proselytizing among the Jews” (*Living Letters* 334). Besides being the master general of the Dominican order from 1238-40 and the confessor and advisor to a string of popes in the thirteenth century (including Gregory IX and Innocent IV), he was one of the primary causes behind the establishment of the Inquisition in Aragón.⁵³ He was also the compiler of the *Decretales*, credited to Gregory IX (who oversaw his work), which selected and organized various canon law codes into a practical, efficient compendium that remained the basic source of Canon Law in the Catholic Church until the *Code of Canon Law* was promulgated by Benedict XV in 1918.

Most importantly for our purposes, he is also generally cited as the primary instigator of the so-called missionizing movement in the thirteenth century. It may have been under Raymond’s influence that Innocent IV began to encourage missionizing as a sanctioned technique for converting Jews along with the confiscation, censorship, and destruction of their books. It is known that Raymond, while still Master General of the Dominicans, induced pope Gregory IX to issue a series of bulls in May, 1240, in support of the Dominicans, such as one directed to all archbishops, bishops, abbots, prelates, priors, and deacons exhorting them to welcome the Dominicans and not to hinder their effort to preach and convert (*Raymundiana* 93-94). It is important to stress the simultaneity of this call for support of preaching and missionizing with the first confiscation of the Talmud on March 3, 1240. In the wake of the first acts of aggression of the trial and

⁵³ See, for example, the description of royal Chronicler Petrus Marsilius in Balme, ed. *Raymundiana*, 1:10-16, especially 12. See also the documents in 2:41-46, and Valls Taberner, chapter 11, especially 116-120. Cf. Cohen, *The Friars* 105 n. 5.

burning of the Talmud, Raymond chose as one of his last acts as Master General of the order (he renounced the post less than a month later) the apparent endorsement of missionizing and preaching. Raymond's final oversight of both the confiscation of Jewish books along with the effort of Mendicants to preach and convert clearly points to the dual nature of the treatment of Jews by Mendicants, a treatment that Peñafort would continue to espouse for decades. As Valls Taberner observes, "San Ramón aparece, precisamente, como uno de los más grandes representantes de la idea misional en el momento en que esta se yuxtapuso a la idea de cruzada, a la que gradualmente había de llevar a sustituir" (123).⁵⁴

Raymond's attitude toward preaching and conversion is easy to glean from his writings. As he states in the *Summa de Paenitentia*, "Jews as well as Muslims should, as Gregory says, be provoked to take up...the Christian faith with authorities and soothing reasons, rather than harsh ones. They should not be compelled, because forced service does not please God."⁵⁵ The most innovative and important aspect of his zeal for preaching to Muslims and Jews, deriving from his commitment to presenting, like Pope Gregory I, "soothing" reasons, was his apparent encouragement of language schools for the study of Arabic and Hebrew.⁵⁶ Although it is known that the Franciscans had traveled

⁵⁴ Ribes Montané states something similar: Peñafort "de alguna manera vislumbró la necesidad de transformar las cruzadas en misiones" (130).

⁵⁵ "Debent, sicut ait Gregorius, tam iudaei quam sarraceni auctoritatibus, rationibus et blandimentis, potius quam asperitatibus, ad fidem christianam de novo suscipiendam provocari, non autem compelli, quia coacta servitia non placent Deo" (*Summa de Paenitentia* 309).

⁵⁶ Cohen, *The Friars*, p. 107 n. 11, provides a full bibliography of the *studia linguarum*. See the works he lists there, especially Coll's essay "Escuelas de Lenguas Orientales en los siglos XIII y XIV." Other important contributions have been made by Burns in his *Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia*, Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens*, 258-63, and the introductory remarks of Robles Serra to Martini's *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, 1: 7-22. In his recent dissertation, "Converting the Faithful", Robin Vose also considers the evidence, and concludes that there in fact was no substantial movement to found and support real schools

in Tunis in 1230, they are not known to have founded any schools specifically for the study of Arabic and Hebrew. Rather, it was the Dominicans who, in the latter half of the thirteenth century, founded language schools for the study of Hebrew and Arabic. The first Master General after Dominic himself, Jordan de Saxony, stated in 1236, “We order that in all provinces and convents, friars learn the languages of those who are near them.”⁵⁷ Humbert of Romans (Master General from 1254-63), said in 1255 that one of the primary obstacles to conversion of Jews, Muslims, and pagans, and of the rectifying of heretics and schismatics, was “a lack of languages, to the learning of which hardly any Friar wants to devote time, with many putting sundry curiosity ahead of usefulness in study.”⁵⁸ Therefore he recommended that “It is to be undertaken that certain suitable Friars labor (lit. “sweat over”) in suitable places in the learning of Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, and foreign tongues.”⁵⁹ After the first efforts to teach Arabic were undertaken in Mallorca in the 1230s, schools were founded for the study of Arabic, probably in Tunisia in the 1240s, and other schools were founded in Murcia in 1266 (Hebrew and Arabic), Barcelona in 1275 (Hebrew), Valencia in 1280 (Arabic), and Játiva in 1302 (Hebrew and Arabic). (Coll, “Escuelas,” 17: 121-124; 18:76-7).⁶⁰ According to Coll, one of the most

for languages study. The evidence for a few small groups of Dominicans has been, he argues, greatly exaggerated and misunderstood.

⁵⁷ “Monemus quod in omnibus provinciis et conventibus fratres linguas addiscant illorum quibus sunt propingui” [sic] (Früwirth and Reichert, eds. *Acta capitulorum generalium...*, 1898, 9).

⁵⁸ “Sed effectui rei huius obviant duo quedam. Unum est defectus linguarum, quibus addiscendis vix ullus Frater vult vacare, multis curiositatem multimodam utilitati preponentibus in studendo” (Reichert, ed. *Litterae Encyclicae* 19).

⁵⁹ “Curandum est ut aliqui Fratres idonei insudent in locis idoneis ad linguam arabicam, hebraicam, graecam et barbaras addiscendas” (*Opera* 2: 187-8). Cf. the discussion by Browe 267-79, and Dahan, *Les Intellectuals*, 258-63.

⁶⁰ To this list one can also add the famous Miramar of Raymond Lull, founded in Mallorca in 1276. On this, see Garcías Palou, *El Miramar de Ramon Llull*. On the pending questions surrounding the foundation of language schools, see E. Colomer, “La controversia,” 233-7.

influential historians of thirteenth-century Dominican language schools, Peñafort was the prime mover behind all efforts to argue with the Jews in the second half of the thirteenth century, “el que lo organizó y encauzó...poniendo a contribución para ello el celo, saber y dinamismo de Fr. Pablo y el talento y los vastos conocimientos semíticos de Fr. Ramón Martí” (“Escuelas” 1946: 218). Knowing from Nahmanides’ account that Peñafort was present at the dispute of Barcelona in 1263 and preached alongside of King James I in a synagogue of Barcelona shortly afterwards, and that the first so-called *studium hebraicum* was established in Murcia and then moved to Barcelona within little more than a decade of the disputation, it is not difficult to draw a connection, as many critics have done, between Peñafort’s influence and the study of Hebrew for polemics against the Jews.

Such circumstantial support is important because there is relative lack of sources proving his direct role in the establishment of language schools, including schools for Hebrew.⁶¹ One of the few documents in which Peñafort speaks directly about language study and missionizing is an undated letter to the Master General John Wildeshausen the Teuton (who led the order between 1241-1252, after Peñafort resigned) regarding the “fruit of the ministry of the brothers in Africa and Spain” (“Fructus qui sit per ministerium fratrum in Africa et in Hispania” *Diplomatarium* 133). Although five of the six “fruits” have more to do with pastoral care of Christians in North Africa, the sixth fruit “is among Sarracens...many of whom, especially at Murcia, both secretly and openly

⁶¹ This lack of evidence has been carefully considered by Robin Vose in his recent dissertation on Dominican missionary activity in the thirteenth century. He argues that the size and scope of the movement to found such schools has been greatly exaggerated, and concludes that “maximalist assumptions of a deliberate, widespread, and long-lasting network of Dominican Hebrew and Arabic schools can no longer be plausibly upheld” (“Converting the Faithful” 198).

were converted to the Faith.”⁶² Although no other specific statements by Peñafort explaining his beliefs about the foundation of language schools or the use of original languages for proselytizing to Jews or Muslims seem to survive, such beliefs are attributed to him in a biography, the *Vita vetus*, written less than a century after his death:

With [Raymond’s] counsel and support, certain friars were thus instructed also in the Hebrew language, so they would be able to refute the wickedness and errors of the Jews, who would not be able any more, as they were used to doing in the past, to audaciously deny the true text and glosses of their own ancient sages, which concord with our saints concerning those things having to do with the Catholic faith. Beyond this, the falsehoods and corruptions which the forgers of truth inserted in the Bible in many places to hide the mystery of the Passion and other sacraments of the faith are revealed by their own authentic Scriptures.⁶³

More information about Peñafort’s alleged support for language schools comes from the Chronicle of Petrus Marsilius, Dominican in Barcelona at the end of the thirteenth century. He states that Raymond “ardently desired infidel conversion” and that “he established language *studia* for the brothers of his orders at Tunis and Murcia, for which

⁶² “Sextus fructus est inter Saracenos, apud quos, et maxime potentiores et eciam apud ipsum Miramolinim sive regem Tunicii, tantam contulit eis Dei gratiam et favorem, ultra quam ad presens expediat scribere, quod ianua videtur aperta quasi ad inestimabilem fructum, dum tamen messorum non desinunt; et eciam iam multi ex eis, maxime apud Murciam tam in occulto quam in manifestis sunt conversi ad fidem” (*Diplomatarium* 133; Reichert, ed. *Vitae fratrum Ordinis Praedicatorum* 310; Coll, “Escuelas” 17: 138). See Vose’s discussion of this passage in “Converting the Faithful” 219-20.

⁶³ “In lingua etiam hebraica cum ipsius consilio et favore, fratres aliqui taliter sunt instructi, quod possunt Iudeorum convincere malitias et errores, qui jam non possunt, sicut hactenus consueverant, audacter negare textum verum et glossas suorum sapientum antiquiorum cum sanctis nostris in his que ad fidem catholicam pertinent concordantes. Falsitates insuper et corruptiones quas in Biblia in locis pluribus inseruerant ad occultanda mysteria Passionis et cetera sacramenta fidei, falsarii veritatis per Scripturas eorum authenticas revelantur” (*Raymundiana* 1: 32; *Diplomatarium* 281-2).

he took care that selected Catalan friars be chosen....”⁶⁴ Certainly, Peñafort was seen as a motor of missionary activity by later Dominicans, but direct evidence proving that this reputation was based on fact is mostly lacking.

Based on the circumstantial sources given above, Cohen concludes that, for Peñafort, “to proselytize effectively, the missionary had to appeal to the infidels on their own terms—that is, with sources and arguments they themselves would consider authoritative” (*The Friars* 106). If this was indeed the vision of Raymond of Peñafort, as many (though not all) scholars assume it to be, we can hypothesize that his foundation and support for language schools, especially those for the study of Hebrew in which Raymond Martini and Paul Christiani are known to have participated, was undertaken with the expressed purpose of accessing the “authentic” scriptures of Jews in order to provide compelling arguments that rested on accepted authority, or in his words, that they “be provoked to take up...the Christian faith with authorities and soothing reasons” (*Summa* 309). Even if no direct evidence for a missionary movement led by Peñafort can be adduced, it is clear that his approach to non-Christian sources hinged entirely on his concept of the compelling power of textual authority. As we will see by considering the development of this idea by Paul Christiani at the Disputation of Barcelona and after, all missionizing and conversionary arguments were entirely conflated with a notion of textual authority. A compelling argument was one that rested on firm textual authority, and therefore proof was understood to be no different for Jews than it was for Christians.

⁶⁴ “Conversionem etiam infidelium ardentem desiderans...studia linguarum pro fratribus sui Ordinis Tunicii et Murciae statuit, ad quae fratres Cathalanos electos destinari procuravit, qui in multum fructum animarum profecerunt et in suae decoratum speculum nationis” (*Raymundiana* 1: 12; *Diplomatarium* 341). The text of Marsilius is actually preserved in a later text by Franciscus Diago, from which both sources took this text about Raymond.

C. Authority in Mission and Apologetic: Was Conversion the Goal of Thirteenth-Century Polemic?

The impact of Peñafort's perspective is evident in the sources surrounding Disputation of Barcelona in 1263, and the anonymous Latin protocol of the dispute shows a constant concern with how to lend authority to polemical arguments through textual support. As the text reads, "Brother Paulus...proposed to the said Jewish Master that he would prove, with the help of God, through writings accepted and authoritative among the Jews, the following things..."⁶⁵ According to the account, which presents Nahmanides ("The Ramban") as overwhelmed by proofs, "it was proved to him clearly by both the authority of the Law and the Prophets and by the Talmud," and so Nahmanides was "defeated by irrefutable proofs and authorities"⁶⁶. It was proved to him "by many authorities from the Talmud" ("per multas auctoritates de Thalmut") that the suffering servant of Isaiah 52-3 refers to the Messiah, and he was "compelled at length by the authorities, admitted that it is understood and explained in reference to Christ."⁶⁷ The text even brings up the important question at the dispute of Nahmanides' rejection of the binding authority of aggadic sources, in which the Ramban likens such anecdotal sources to Christian sermons and homilies. The Latin protocol explains,

since he [Nahmanides] was unwilling to admit the truth unless compelled by the authorities, when he could not explain the authorities, he said publicly that he did

⁶⁵ "Frater Paulus...proposuit dicto magistro Iudeo, se cum Dei auxilio probaturum per scripturas comunes et autenticas apud Iudeos ista per ordinem que sequuntur" (Baer, "The Disputations," 185/ Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 147).

⁶⁶ "Fuit ei evidenter probatum tam per auctoritates legis et prophetarum quam per Talmuth...ad quod cum respondere non posset, victus necessariis probationibus et auctoritatibus concessit" (Baer 186/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 148).

⁶⁷ "Ipse vero tandem coactus per auctoritates confessus est, quod de Christo intelligitur et exponitur"(Baer 187/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 149).

not believe in the authorities which were cited against him, though they were in ancient, authoritative books of the Jews...he dismissed both the teachers and the scriptures of the Jews. Further, he first denied all, or nearly all, the things which he had previously admitted and which had been proved to him, and then, having been refuted again through authorities and defeated, he was compelled to admit them again.”⁶⁸

The repeated references to the “authorities” of the Jews evinces an underlying assumption that, if the Old Testament was not binding for the Jews in the way it was once assumed to be, other authoritative sources were, and if the Jews failed to accept things proven with those sources, they were guilty of rejecting the authority of their own sources. If the Jews could not be proved to be heretics in reference to Biblical texts, they could be found to be so in relation to their own traditions.

In the face of this Christian attitude toward authoritative Jewish sources, the Jewish defensive response ran along two lines: on the one hand, an effort was made to directly address the content of the arguments proffered by Christians, rejecting the arguments which Jewish sources were made to support. This type of response has been exhaustively treated by scholars of the missionizing movement such as Robert Chazan. On the other hand, there was a formidable effort not only to reject the Christian interpretation of Jewish sources, but to invalidate the knowledge and ability of the polemicist himself who proffered such sources, in effect personalizing the question of argumentative authority. While Chazan has remarked on this strategy in his treatment of

⁶⁸ “Item cum nollet confiteri veritatem nisi coactus auctoritatibus, cum auctoritates non posset exponere, dicebat publice, quod illis auctoritatibus, que inducebantur contra eum, licet sint in libris Iudeorum antiquis et autenticis...pro quo arguebat tam doctores quam scripturas Iudeorum. Item omnia, que confessus est et que ei probata sunt vel fere omnia prius negavit, et postea redargutus per auctoritates confusus coactus est confiteri. (Baer, “The Disputations” 187/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 149-50).

the Barcelona dispute (*Daggers of Faith* 100; *Barcelona and Beyond* 68 and 113),⁶⁹ it has not been considered in detail, and has been considered merely a marginal addition to a more central missionizing argument. This argument, however, is not simply an additional argument to be considered as an afterthought in discussing the responses of Nahmanides in his *Vikuah*, as Chazan lists it—he calls it a “last” tactic appended to the Ramban’s “four major directions” (*Daggers* 100)—but a vital line of response that strikes directly at the heart of the underlying Christian strategy in employing Jewish sources to support Christian beliefs. This strategy directly responds to the Christian assumptions about authority in a way that the other arguments of the Ramban concerning the actual content of the sources do not. By making the authoritativeness of the sources hinge not only on the sources themselves but on the knowledge of the polemicist to understand, interpret, and present them correctly, the personalization of the question of authority responds directly to the Christian assumption that anything argued on the basis of Jewish authoritative sources would automatically be considered binding for a believing Jew. By questioning not only the authoritativeness of the sources cited, but also the authority of the polemicists themselves to interpret and wield those authoritative sources, the Jewish respondents like Nahmanides put an additional burden of proof on Christian arguments. Without establishing the individual authority of the one who quoted and read Jewish sources, the Christian arguments based on Jewish sources could not stand.

There are a number of key examples of Nahmanides’ effort to undermine Friar Paul’s argumentative authority by attacking his knowledge and ability. It is important to emphasize that even if Nahmanides is guilty of distortion or exaggeration in his Hebrew

⁶⁹ Chazan notes that “Nahmanides’s vilification of Friar Paul was not incidental to his purposes. By continually denigrating his opponent, he was in effect assuring his Jewish readers that the new argumentation could have not real merit” (*Barcelona and Beyond*, 68).

account of the debate, the text is undoubtedly his, and thus his responses to Friar Paul, even if they did not happen at the real disputation, reflect that the issues they imply were important for Naḥmanides in his response to the disputation. In the beginning of Naḥmanides' account, he records his argument that the sages of the Talmud did not convert to Christianity, and thus their words cannot be taken to support to Christianity. "The whole purpose of the Talmud is only to teach us the practice of the Torah, and how our Fathers practiced it in the time of the Temple from the mouth of the prophets and from the mouth of Moses our teacher."⁷⁰ By describing the Talmud as part of the unbroken oral tradition received from Moses and the prophets, he repeats the standard view that the Talmud is the authoritative interpretation of the Torah. He then compares these authorities with Friar Paul, noting that they did not convert to Christianity as he did, and ironically quipping that Paul apparently "understands their words better than they did themselves."⁷¹ Clearly, Naḥmanides tries to separate Paul from the venerable tradition of scholars and sages whose interpretations of the Torah guide the belief and practice of Judaism. Paul then tries to undermine Naḥmanides' own authority (Heb. *samkhut*) by arguing, as proof for his messianic interpretation of Genesis 49:10, that "you do not have the Ordination (*semikhah*) which was known in the Talmud" and as a result "the fact that you are called "Maestro," that is a mistake" because "there is no one among

⁷⁰ "כי כל התלמד אינו אלא ללמדנו מנהגי התורה והמצוה והיאך נהגו בה האבות במקדש מפי הנביאים ומפי משה רבינו" (*Kitvei* 1:304/ Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 104).

⁷¹ "...פול המבין דבריהם יותר מהם עצמם" (*Kitvei* 1:304/ Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 105).

you today who can rightly be called “Rabbi”.⁷² Nahmanides responds by correcting Paul’s understanding of the Hebrew equivalent of “Maestro,” stating,

What you say is not true. For “Maestro” is not the equivalent of “Rabbi” but of “Rav,” and the title “Rav” is used in the Talmud for teachers who did not have *semikhah*. But I confess that I am not really a “Maestro” or even a first-rate Disciple. I said this to correct him.⁷³

Nahmanides does not try to paint himself as equal to early sages of the Talmud, but only as more authoritative than Paul Christian and other contemporary Christians.

This response leads Nahmanides directly into the assertion that “the trouble is that you do not understand Halakhic matters; you just know little about aggadic matters, in which you have busied yourself.”⁷⁴ In his Hebrew account, his strategy in responding to Paul is to undermine his use of legally binding texts by invalidating his knowledge of legal matters and of the Hebrew language. When “the first Jew that they found” (*Kitvei* 1:314/ Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 128) was brought in to settle a dispute between Paul and Rabbi Moses about the meaning of the Hebrew word “yom”, Nahmanides disparages Paul’s knowledge as less than that of even a typical Jew, saying “this Jew is certainly a better judge of the matter than Friar Paul, but not better than I...I am speaking on matters of wisdom to someone who does not know and does not

⁷² "והיום אין לכם הסמיכה הידועה בתלמוד...ואין בכם היום ראוי להקרא רבי ומה שקורין אותך [היום] מאישטרי הוא טעות" (*Kitvei* 1:304/ Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 106).

⁷³ "אינך אומר אמת. שאין רבי מאישטרי כי רב הוא מאישטרי ובלא סמיכה נקראים רבי בתלמוד, אבל אני מודה כי איני מאישטרי" (*Kitvei* 1:304-5/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 107, with my corrections). I disagree with Maccoby’s correction of Rankin’s translation of “be-derekh musar” to mean “in the way of modesty” rather than “by way of correcting him.” The sense of the verb is clearly to correct or reprove, and the Ramban has just finished correcting Friar Paul’s mistaken translation.

⁷⁴ "אינך מבין דין והלכה, אלא מעט בהגדות אשר הרגלת עצמך בהן." (*Kitvei* 1:345 /Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 107).

There is even a passage, less remarked upon by other critics, in which Naḥmanides responds to a sermon given by King James in the synagogue on August 4, the second Sabbath after the debate had ended. The importance of the text merits a long citation from the Ramban's text:

I stood on my feet and said, "the words of our lord the King are noble, exalted and honored, since they go forth from the mouth who is more noble, exalted and honored than anyone else in the world. But I will not give his words the praise of saying that they are true. For I have clear proofs, and arguments that shine like the sun, to show that the truth is not in accordance with his words...the things which the King says in our ears to induce us to believe in the Messiahship of Jesus were argued by Jesus himself to our forefathers, and he took great trouble to urge it before them, yet they denied it with a complete and strong denial. He was a person who had greater knowledge and capability to prove his words than the King, according to your opinion that he was divine. And if our forefathers, who saw and knew him, did not listen to him, how shall we believe and listen to the voice of the King, who has no knowledge of the matter except through a remote report which he has heard from people who did not know Jesus...?⁷⁸

In this description found near the very end of the *Vikuah*, Naḥmanides faces the potentially difficult question of how to characterize the authority of the king to make his own binding arguments, without recognizing those arguments as true. He at first

⁷⁸ "ועמדתי על רגלי ואמרתי: דברי אדוננו המלך בעיני נגידים ומעולים ונכבדים שיוצאים מפי נגיד ונעלה ומכובד אין כמוהו בעולם, אבל לא אשבח אותם שהם אמת. כי יש לי ראיות ברורות ודברים מאירים כשמש שאין האמת כדבריו... כי הדברים שהוא אומר באזנינו להאמין בישו שהוא משיח, ישו עצמו הוא המביא הדבר לאבותינו והוא אשר נשתדל לומר אותו להם. ובפניו הכהשוהו הכחשה גמורה וחזקה, והוא היודע והיכול לאמת דבריו יותר מן המלך כפי סברתכם שהוא אלוה. ואם אליו לא שמעו לו אבותינו הרואים אותו ויודעים בו. איך נאמין אנחנו ונשמע בקול המלך שאין לו ידיעה בדבר אלא (מפי) שמועה רחוקה ששמע מבני אדם" (Kittvei 1:419-420/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 143, with my changes).

recognizes the compelling authority of the king by saying that he is more noble and honored than anyone in the world. He then changes the direction of this argument with a clever comparison of the king with the second-temple sages who rejected Jesus. If Jesus himself could not convince them, then certainly the king could not convince Jews listening to his sermon. If those early forefathers were unwilling to accept the authority of Jesus to re-interpret the Law, then the authority of the king, noble and honored as he is, could in no way be considered binding or compelling, given that he spoke based on tradition that was many degrees removed from the original authority of Jesus, which was, in any case, rejected by his contemporaries. Nahmanides thus very adroitly solves the problem of why the king, whose secular jurisdiction was recognized and honored by the Jews of Aragon, should not be taken as an authority in the interpretation of the Law.

Related to the tactic of attacking Paul's authority to interpret Jewish sources, another of the strategies used by Nahmanides that has been noted by critics of the Barcelona dispute is the Ramban's rejection of the authority of the actual textual sources cited by Paul, specifically rejecting certain rabbinic aggadot. In his account, Nahmanides relates that on Friday, the first day of the debate, when Friar Paul quoted the well-known Midrash from *Lamentations Rabbah* about the Arab whose cow lows while plowing, he responded plainly that "I do not believe in this Aggadah" (*Kitvei* 1:306/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 110). To this assertion, Paul exclaimed "See how he denies his own books,"⁷⁹ charging that Nahmanides rejects those very texts that Jews, according to Paul's understanding, consider authoritative. The Ramban felt the need to explain his position at length on the following Monday:

⁷⁹ "ראו שהוא מכחיש בספרים שלהם" (*Kitvei* 1:306/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 110, with my changes)

Know that we Jews have three kinds of books: the first is the Bible, and we all believe in this with perfect faith; the second is called the Talmud, and it is an explication of the commandments of the Torah, for there are 613 commandments in the Torah, and every single one of them is explicated in the Talmud, and we believe in this explication of the commandments; and we also have a third book which is called the Midrash, which means “Sermons”. This is just as if the bishop were to stand up and make a sermon, and one of his hearers liked it so much he wrote it down. And as for this book, the Midrash, if anyone wants to believe in it, well and good, but if someone does not believe in it, there is no harm.⁸⁰

There are, in fact, other examples of Nahmanides making a distinction between aggadic and halakhic texts in response to Paul’s assertions as well. Early in the debate, when Paul says he will “show from the words of your own Sages that the passage [of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah] speaks of the Messiah,” Rabbi Moses concedes that “it is true that our Teachers...in the aggadic books, interpret the passage allegorically of the Messiah.”⁸¹ By repeating that this argument is only supported by aggadic material, however, he shows he believes it to be non-binding and thus invalid in Paul’s argument. Throughout Nahmanides’ account of the disputation, he specifies many places where Friar Paul cited an aggadic proof, and in the context of his stance on such aggadot, the implication is that many of Paul’s sources are not to be considered binding in any way.

⁸⁰ "[דעו כי] אנחנו יש לנו שלשה מינין של ספרים. האחד הוא הבב"ליה וכולנו מאמינים בו אמונה שלמה. והשני הוא נקרא תלמוד והוא פירוש למצות התורה, כי בתורה יש תרי"ג מצות ואין בה אחת שלא נתפרשה בתלמוד ואנחנו מאמינים בו בפירוש המצות. עוד יש לנו ספר שלישי הנקרא מדרש, רוצה לומר שרמ"וניש כמו שאם יעמוד ההגמון ויעשה שרמון (אחד), ואחד מן השומעין היה טוב ירמון (אחד) וכתבו. וזה הספר מי שיאמין בו טוב, ומי שלא יאמין בו לא יזיק" (*Kitvei* 1:308/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 115).

⁸¹ "ואמת הוא כי רבותינו ז"ל בספרי ההגדות דורשים אותו על משיח" (*Kitvei* 1:307/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 112)

This much-debated tactic reportedly taken by Nahmanides represents the flipside of his tactic of personalizing authority. In the latter strategy, he sought to argue that any arguments based on authoritative sources that were not made by someone with authority to correctly interpret the sources. In the former, he tries to reduce the number of sources being cited by Paul Christian that must actually be considered authoritative. Certain critics have doubted that the Ramban would actually make such an argument, given his beliefs known from other evidence. In the context of the Barcelona dispute, however, in which he was clearly in a defensive, disadvantaged position, his argument can be understood very easily, if not as his actual belief, then certainly as a clever tactic, not unlike his direct attack on the ability and knowledge of Paul Christian, to remove the authoritativeness from Paul Christian's cited sources. Whatever his actual belief, this response (reported in both the Hebrew and Latin accounts) gives further evidence for the important and little-highlighted aspect of authoritativeness in the new missionizing strategy. The description of this in the Latin account, which we have seen above, in which "when he could not explain the authorities, he said publicly that he did not believe the authorities...though they were in ancient, authoritative books of the Jews" (Baer, "The disputations" 187/ Maccoby149), makes manifest that, with this argument, the Ramban was responding directly to the question of authority and authoritativeness as understood by the Christians at the debate.

The Hebrew account of Friar Paul's disputation in Paris in 1270s shows that the new argumentative method was still being employed, seemingly with little variation from the arguments employed in 1263, a decade after the confrontation in Barcelona. The Hebrew account of the Paris Disputation, like that of Nahmanides after Barcelona, offers

much more certain information about a Jewish perception of the events than about the actual performance of Friar Paul. From this Jewish perspective, the account shows that the Jewish response to the arguments of Friar Paul was much along the same lines as in Naḥmanides' account. Repeatedly, the account asserts Paul's lack of knowledge of Hebrew and of the sources he cites. The very beginning of the account is instructive on this point:

Here are the responses of the rebel...he came from Spain to destroy the rest of Israel and was called Paul the Cordelier. "Sages are called scribes (*soferim*), because they count the letters" (Qiddushin 30a) in order reply to the heretics (*apikorosim*) and ever answer their heresy. The heretics (*minim*) are called unbelievers (*qoferim*), because they refuse what is in Scripture."⁸²

The Hebrew account clearly reflects a perspective that sees Friar Paul as a heretic and not a sage, and there are many instances when the text calls his knowledge and skill into question. Paul is nothing but an "unbeliever" (*min*) who "knows nothing at all, including about reading Scripture."⁸³ Paul is told "it is your hatred that makes you deform the text, change the teachings, and explain verses out of order."⁸⁴ Specifically, the text calls Paul's knowledge into question in much the same terms as Naḥmanides does in his account of the Barcelona dispute. In discussing the interpretation of the Hebrew word "pit'om", which Paul translates as "quickly", his opponent asks, "Why do you preach lies and bad

⁸² "אלו תשובות המין...ובא מאספמ<א> לכלות שארית ישראל, והיה שמו פול החובל. "לפי' נקראו הכמ' סופרים שהיו סופרים האותיות" להשיב האפיקורוסים. וכל מקום שפקרו תשובתם בצדם. ולפי' נקראו המינים כופרים, שכופרים על מה שכתו'..." (Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, 44).

⁸³ "אף מן המקרא אינך יודע כלל..." (Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, 50).

⁸⁴ "שנאתך היא היא גורמת לך לקלקל השורה שאתה גונב הדרשות ודורש הכתובי'" (Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, 54).

words, for children even know that “pit’om” does not mean “fast” but “by surprise and in despair?”⁸⁵ This calls to mind Naḥmanides’ assertion that any Christian child is capable of asking Paul’s questions. Even more importantly, there is repeated emphasis on Paul’s use of aggadic rather than halakhic sources. Paul “knows nothing of our law; he has selected only aggadot.”⁸⁶ Paul is told, “Clearly, you are not coherent ... you leave aside the Talmud, as if it were nothing, and you give proofs to us through aggadot, and this is no use to you.”⁸⁷ Paul’s opponent concludes that “he comes to convince us by the authority of an Aggadah in which there is no Law and no reverence....”⁸⁸ Just like Naḥmanides’ ripostes in his account of the Barcelona Disputation, the anonymous Hebrew account of the Paris Disputation indicates the same Jewish strategy in responding of undermining both Paul’s knowledge to understand his sources and the authoritative status of the texts themselves. The repeated emphasis on the fact that Paul only uses aggadic rather than halakhic sources strikes at Paul’s claim to support Christian claims to truth with Jewish sources. As the Jewish respondents at both the disputations of Barcelona and Paris seem to have understood, the question of the authoritativeness of proof texts was vitally important for the Christian arguments based on post-Biblical literature, and without it their compelling proofs would become little more than ill-spirited misreadings by Christian polemicists. By proving that aggadic dicta are never apodictic but instead, like much postbiblical literature, dialogical or at least propositional, Jewish polemicists

⁸⁵ "מה לך להטיף כזבים ודבריך לא טובים, כי דבר שתינוקות יודעים כי 'פתאום' אינו כמו 'מהרה' כי אם בפתע וביאוש'..." (Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, 49).

⁸⁶ "כי לא ידע כלל מן תורתנו, רק ההגדות לקח" (Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, 50).

⁸⁷ "ודאי אינך עומד על סוף דעתך...ואתה אח פ"ל, חולין הוא לך להניח התלמוד. להוכיחנו במדרשי אגדה ואעפ"י שלא יועילו לך" (Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, 50-51).

⁸⁸ "זה האח פול בא להוכיחנו מכח ההגדה שאין בה לא תורה ולא יראה..." (Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, 51).

removed what was naturally assumed by Christians to be binding about many postbiblical sources. The fundamental difference between Christian and Jewish attitudes toward the nature of aggadic or homiletical sources was, as Maccoby adroitly observes, the most basic issue of the Jewish-Christian disputations at Barcelona and Paris.⁸⁹ As we will see, the sensitivity of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid to the anapodeictic, or undemonstrable, nature of claims to truth in aggadic sources that set his polemic apart from most others.

This analysis of authority in the polemics of Friar Paul leaves no doubt as to the missionizing appeal, albeit secondary to larger goal of destruction and refutation of Jewish responses, which he sought to create with his arguments. Paul's entire strategy hinges on his belief about the binding nature of Jewish authorities for Jews, not for Christians. Nevertheless, it is precisely based on Paul's attitude toward authority that Harvey Hames has argued that his primary intention was to answer internal, Christian doubts—a decidedly apologetic, non-missionizing goal—rather than to convince Jews with his arguments. As Hames explains, “Because Paul sought the medium of textual contextualization and rationalization for the disputation rather than dealing with the beliefs of the flesh and blood person standing across the floor, he never really challenged Nahmanides’ ideology...Nahmanides’ replies to Paul in the disputation...show that he understood that conversion was not the real purpose” (“Reason and Faith” 272-3). For Hames, the total reliance on authoritative textual proof interpreted from a Christian point of view shows that the disputation was primarily an intellectual, apologetic exercise for Christians rather than a missionizing effort to Jews, and Hames sees this textual focus

⁸⁹ Maccoby observes that “In Judaism, the Aggadah is subordinate whereas in Christianity, the Aggadah, or what corresponds to the Aggadah, is central. Christianity is an Aggadic religion. This difference accounts for the basic lack of rapprochement and mutual understanding in the disputations” (*Judaism on Trial* 48).

as even more revealing in the cases of Raymond Martini for whom, as he says, “the contemporary Jew was defined and identified by his authoritative texts and was not considered person with continually changing and evolving beliefs” (267).⁹⁰

The argument that Paul presented his arguments based on Jewish sources apart from any real intention to convert Jews conflicts directly with our previous observations that the Disputation of Barcelona and Paul’s activity in Paris took place within the context of forced sermonizing to the Jews and Muslims. Hames’ argument does not take into account the very real possibility that Paul simply did not understand Naḥmanides’ beliefs as well as he thought he did, and that his appeal to authoritative sources in fact was meant as binding proof that would provoke doubt or even conversion in other Jews witnessing the event. In other words, proof that Paul and other Dominicans misunderstood the beliefs of the Jews they debated with is not in itself proof that the Christians did not actually wish to convince and convert them. The mere fact that Martini shows a limited understanding of the belief of contemporary Jews—presenting them as defined entirely by their authoritative texts understood and read literally—does not itself prove he had no missionizing intention with his arguments. Such arguments only point to the failure of the Christian intention to missionize to Jews in the thirteenth century by taking their perspectives into account, not the lack of such an intention altogether.⁹¹

Nevertheless, I do believe Hames is correct in his observation that the arguments

⁹⁰ For Hames, the only exceptions to this perspective are Raymond Lull and Abner/Alfonso of Burgos (“Reason and Faith” 267 and 272 n.16). As I suggest below, however, even Lull goes back on his ideas about Jewish authoritative texts in his later religious polemics.

⁹¹ Hames’s argument runs into problems when he suggests that Naḥmanides’ account of the disputation actually does try to offer its Jewish readers “the necessary tools for disputation should the need arise” (“Reason and Faith” 274 n. 22). Hames does not address why Naḥmanides might find it necessary to give Jews the tools for disputation if “he understood that conversion was not the real purpose” (273).

of Paul at Barcelona and Paris reflect more the concerns of Christians than Jews, and seem to serve the needs more of traditional Christian anti-Jewish apologetic polemic than a desire to missionize to the Jews. This is, in my view, attributable in large part to the tradition of anti-Jewish Christian polemic. As we showed in the previous chapter, before the thirteenth century—or at the very least, before the twelfth—anti-Jewish polemic was never intended for missionizing purposes and the image of the Jew in such polemics was not constructed with real Jewish belief in mind. What the hermeneutical Jew did and did not find compelling in such polemics was determined by Christian beliefs about Jews, not Jewish belief itself, and thus the traditional source of authority in early apologetic polemic was the Old Testament, the ultimate authority for ancient Israelites and thus, it was believed, for contemporary Jews as well. The appeal to a new expanded reservoir of authoritative sources including the Talmud and Midrash was simply an expansion of this age-old concept, and the question of what a contemporary Jew found compelling beyond such textual authority was no more an issue than it had previously been. Paul’s appeal to authority, especially as reflected in the Latin protocol from Barcelona, reflected the same traditional concerns and assumptions of *Adversus Iudaeos* apologetic—the Jew as purely textual, the Jew as hermeneutically blind, the Jew as stubborn and obdurate, etc—even if this appeal was intended as part of a compelling missionizing argument.⁹²

Given the very real context of the Barcelona and Paris disputes of forced Christian sermonizing, as well as the important role of Raymond of Peñafort in Paul’s activities—not to mention the importance of Paul’s own perspective of speaking as a convert

⁹² Hames has suggested something similar: “In a strange way, it is possible to also read this as a continuation of the Augustinian *testimonium veritates*, only expanded to include the post-biblical texts. The Jews were still the *capsarii* of the Christians as their biblical and post-biblical texts bore witness to the truth of Christianity” (“Reason and Faith” 284 n. 50).

himself—the fact that Paul’s activities fit within a larger anti-Jewish argumentative movement seems certain, and Chazan has provided ample support of this conclusion. Nevertheless, the important, ongoing influence of traditional apologetic concerns, especially in Paul’s appeals to textual authority, supports in part Hames’ assertions and points to a more internally-directed appeal to a Christian audience within Paul’s arguments and proofs. Having considered both sides of the argument regarding Christian missionizing in the thirteenth century, both the argument in favor of Paul’s missionizing intention and of the strong internally-directed, apologetic tone to the disputation seem correct, and thus each answer only provides a partial explanation. The efforts of Friar Paul at Barcelona and Paris, fitting within a context of real missionizing to non-Christian groups while at the same time reflecting more the interests of apologetic polemic, can thus be said to reflect decidedly mixed intentions. The appeal to what Christian churchmen believed was a Jewish sense of authority shows a real concern with somehow making Paul’s conclusions binding for contemporary, rabbinical Jews as well as Christians, while this approach of relying entirely on textual authority understood from a Christian point of view shows how entrenched Paul’s arguments at Barcelona and Paris remained in a traditional apologetic perspective (and further explains the resounding failure of his appeal to contemporary Jews). The significance of this dialectical explanation to the Christian intentions behind the Barcelona and Paris disputations becomes evident when we consider the polemical sources that drew directly from the Paul’s arguments, above all those of Raymond Martini. As we will see, the missionizing intention which in the disputations of Friar Paul was pursued within a framework of traditional *Adversus Iudaeos* polemic became even further diluted by such concerns in the Martini’s polemics. Indeed,

as we shall see (and as Hames himself observes), Martini's conflates Jews with textual authority to an even greater degree, representing a full return to the concerns and arguments of traditional polemic in which the Jew, although updated according to a wider Dominican scope that included post-Biblical literature, remains essentially the hermeneutical Jew of old, in whom any real conversionary or missionizing appeal to real, non-hermeneutical Jews is fully undermined.

The Carreras Artau brothers asserted over half a century ago that "podemos afirmar con certeza que desde 1250, Raimundo Martí se convierte en ejeutor fiel de la gran empresa cultural concebida por San Raimundo de Peñafort" (1: 88). Chazan has elaborated on this assertion, arguing that the Barcelona dispute constituted a sort of "test run" for the new missionizing strategy that grew out of Peñafort's alleged support for language studies. Given the undetermined and ambiguous outcome of the dispute, both sides were able to claim victory for themselves; the disputation was "successful" enough for the Christian side to merit continued resources and effort to hone the arguments, but successful enough for the Jewish side in that they could still easily expose the weakness of the Christian argumentation. In Chazan's words, "Friar Paul had convinced these [Dominican] colleagues of the fundamental viability of the approach but had left them with the feeling that there was much to be done in perfecting it" (*Daggers of Faith* 85). In part against Chazan's conclusions, we have proposed that Martini's polemic in fact represented a continuation of Friar Paul's model only in part, representing his mixed intentions of missionizing and developing apologetics, but showing a notable turn away from a real and direct concern with effective missionizing and conversion in favor of an

elaborate and purely textual refutation of possible Jewish counterarguments more in the style of traditional anti-Jewish polemic.⁹³

A careful re-reading of Martini's two anti-Jewish polemics, the *Capistrum Iudaeorum* of 1267 and the *Pugio Fidei* of 1287, especially in terms of Martini's attitude toward authoritative sources, lends support to this proposal. Even in Martini's early writings against Islam, there is a clear concern with authority. In his early polemic *De seta machometi*, after showing at length, through use of the Qur'ān and other works of Islamic tradition, that Muḥammad did not possess "the true signs of a prophet," he sets out to answer the Muslim objection to the veracity of the Christian New Testament. He explains,

If any Saracen, who should want to consent to the truth put forth and proven in the preceding arguments, argues that the books of the New and Old Testament have been falsified or modified, we will, since God is their author, show clearly with rational arguments and authorities and ancient history that said books...have remained in their totality from the beginning unchanged and not falsified.⁹⁴

He concludes, after a long defense, that the Qur'ān itself cannot be admitted if one discounts the veracity of these previous authoritative sources. His use of the Qur'ān and other Islamic works to argue against basic tenets of Islamic belief, such as the

⁹³ Ragacs undertakes a careful comparison of the arguments and careers of Christiani and Martini, and concludes that although they obviously knew each other's work, there is no indication that they ever actually worked together. "Alle angestellten Überlegungen führen zu dem Schluß, daß Pablo Christiani durch das Werk des Raimund Martini beeinflusst worden ist; und umgekehrt Raimund Martini durch die Disputationen des Pablo Christiani. Davon auf eine direkte Zusammenarbeit der beiden zu schließen, scheint jedoch nicht möglich" (*Die zweite Talmuddisputation von Paris 1269* 131).

⁹⁴ "Si autem sarracenus aliquis, veritati predicte et probate in precedentibus acquiescere volens, dicat libros Novi et Veteris Testamenti fuisse corruptos et inmutatos, nos auctore Deo, probabimus evidenter rationibus, auctoritatibus et historiis antiquis prefatos libros, sicut a Spiritu Sancto editi sunt, ab initio inmutatos et incorruptos penitus permansisse" (52-4).

prophethood of Muhammad, shows from the very beginning his assumption that assertions supported with sources considered authoritative for the opposition must be accepted as true and binding. Indeed, he builds his entire defense of non-Islamic sources on the authoritative status of Islamic ones, believing that such proof would be accepted by anyone who believed in them. Compared with the arguments of Peter the Venerable or Alan of Lille that make use of Islamic sources, Raymond's polemic marks a major development in the Christian understanding of non-Christian authoritative sources.

Although Martini does include some rational/philosophical and historical/social arguments in his polemics, the essence of his polemical project was the development of elaborate exegetical arguments based on postbiblical sources. This trend in Martini's writing of building an argument off the assumption of such authoritative status of textual proofs only became more developed in Martini's two later main anti-Jewish works. In both works, Martini's assumptions about the binding nature of Jewish sources are evident first of all in his explicit concern with addressing possible Jewish ripostes and counterarguments that reject or put conditions on such authority. Martini begins his *Capistrum Iudaeorum* with a lengthy discussion of this question, and on this basis, he explains his goal in writing the work. The appropriateness of the details merits a long citation of Martini's words:

There are two ways that Jews argue about, or hedge with subterfuge about, or introduce their own false ideas against, the truth of a text, namely, either by saying that it is not thus in Hebrew, taking the occasion [to point out] that blessed Jerome more often translated according to the sense rather than word-for-word, or if they accept a text, [they argue] by saying that it should not be understood or

explained in that way...As for other things which occur in disputations with the Jews, there are many tricks...[they] deny what is brought against them from the Talmud...against which it will be very important that this little work be written not only in Latin, but also in Hebrew, and [showing] knowledge of how to read it, even if one has no understanding of Hebrew....⁹⁵

Here Martini makes explicit reference to the Christian perception of the Jewish approach to textual sources in Jewish-Christian disputations. The central issue for him, and one that has guided the composition of his polemical work, is the Jewish recourse to the original text and meaning of their own literature as a point of attack that Jews use in their defense. Martini's explicit concern with this issue points immediately to his intention not to *convince* Jews of anything, or to present arguments that missionaries or other churchmen could use to convince them (which is usually assumed to be his goal), but instead to refute them successfully and destroy their counterarguments. From the beginning, Martini's stance is defensive and apologetic, not persuasive and missionizing. This approach, as Robin Vose has pointed out, is in line with the standard Dominican perspective on preaching, given entirely to defense of perceived truth rather than persuasion and appeal. Vose explains that

The concept of combatting error had been fundamental to the Dominicans since the earliest days of their struggle with Cathar and Waldensian heretics. It also lay

⁹⁵ Martini actually cites an additional three techniques used by the Jews, listing a total of five ways that Jews respond in disputations. The original reads: "Duobus autem modis Iudaei circa textum veritatem impugnant, vel subterfugiant, vel suam contra eum ingerunt falsitatem, scilicet, vel dicendo non sic haberi in Hebraei, sumpta occasione ex hoc quo beatus Hieronymus saepius sensum ex sensu, quam verbum ex verbo transtulerit, vel si forte textum concesserint, dicendo non sic debere intelligi, vel exponi...circa cetera vero, quae in Iudaeorum disputatione concurrunt, multos habent dolos...quorum primus est, illa, quae contra eos de Talmud inducuntur...contra quod, optimum erit si istud opusculum non solum in Latino, sed etiam in Hebraeo, et scientia legendi, etsi non intelligendi Hebraicum habeatur." (1: 54-6). Dahan considers these citations in *Les intellectuels*, 443.

at the heart of how medieval Dominicans came to understand their apostolic mission. The fundamental problem as they saw it was not so much to convert individuals or groups from one religion to another as to uphold the truth of Catholic doctrine and oppose errors which contradicted it. (“Converting the Faithful: 91).

Before Martini ever begins the ten arguments in favor of Christianity which make up the first part of the work (with ten counterarguments of Jews making up the second part), he shows his overarching concern is with refuting, not convincing the Jews.

In addition to listing the two Jewish responses to Christian claims and the most effective strategy for dealing with them, Martini also mentions three other “tricks” (*dolos*) used by Jews in arguing with Christians, namely, to “deny what is brought against them from the Talmud,”⁹⁶ to “hardly or not at all respond to what is put forward, but to move...from this to something else,”⁹⁷ and to “respond, but by putting first a long discussion...and in a deceitful answer, they discuss and delay so long, they use up almost all the time.”⁹⁸ These complaints show again a candid concern with the kinds of responses Jews give to Christian assertions, and indeed, the title of the work, “The Muzzle of the Jews” (*Capistrum Iudaeorum*), indicates very clearly Martini’s intention of keeping the Jews from obviating Christian arguments based on Jewish authorities with long responses. Martini’s goal in his work is, he says, to provide Old Testament authorities that prove articles of the Christian faith in order “to illuminate the blindness of the Jews and to

⁹⁶ “quae contra eos de Talmud inducuntur...denegare” (1: 56).

⁹⁷ “vix aut numquam ad propositum respondere, sed transferre se et hominem ex hoc in illud” (1: 56).

⁹⁸ “ quaestioni qualitercumque finaliter respondere, praemittendo semper tamen sermonem non modicum...in his et huiusmodi, et in responsione dolosa, tamdiu se iactant atque dilatant, donec tempus expenderit quasi totum” (1: 56-8).

crumble the hardness of [their] hearts, or to restrain their evil and confuse their perfidy.”⁹⁹ As in the *Pugio*, Martini speaks directly to Christians who ostensibly will debate with Jews, teaching them with information about Jewish belief in the Talmud and preparing them for debate with advice about how to respond to Jewish strategies. As many critics have remarked, the overly elaborate, long, and complex presentation of his argument itself undermined the practical utility of the work, and the very limited dissemination of the work in only a few manuscripts further testifies to this lack of practical value.¹⁰⁰ As his words show, the most proper and effective response to both of the first two Jewish defense strategies listed above hinges on an appeal to authoritative sources. Against the charge that “it is not thus in the Hebrew”, Martini says, “With God’s help, I will translate these authorities word for word.”¹⁰¹ Against the second charge that the words of the Talmud “should not be understood thus,” Martini says “I gather from the Talmud and other books considered authentic among them certain sayings of their ancient teachers who put forth and expound these authorities in this way.”¹⁰² In Martini’s concern with preparing a cogent response to Jewish defenses both through appeal to the original language of certain biblical authoritative verses and the rabbinic interpretation of those texts, the central issue is to appeal to the authority of scripture *as Jews understood it*, or more accurately, as Martini believed Jews understood it according to their own sources,

⁹⁹ “...ad Iudaeorum caecitatem illuminandam et cordis durtiam conterendam, vel ad eorum malitiam refrenandam et perfidiam confundendam” (1: 54).

¹⁰⁰ See Vose, “Converting the Faithful,” 106.

¹⁰¹ “Auctoritates igitur istas, cum Dei auxilio, verbum ex verbo transferam” (1: 54).

¹⁰² “Collegi in Talmud, et ex aliis libris authenticis apud eos, quaedam dicta magistrorum suorum antiquorum inducentium vel exponentium auctoritates huiusmodi” (1: 54).

but the goal of such an appeal is evidently not to provide compelling proof but to forestall any Jewish retaliation.

This explicit concern over how to answer Jewish defenses only becomes more acute in Martini's magnum opus, the *Pugio Fidei*. He again shows his interest in obviating any Jewish complaints about the original meaning of the text as well as about his own ability to understand those texts by citing the original texts and providing his own translations that were often more literal than other translations known among the Christians. His goal is not only to show an understanding of the content of the sources themselves and their use in supporting his argument, but rather to obviate any possible complaints against his arguments by establishing their authenticity apart from his own knowledge and ability. His attitude is reflected clearly in his words at the end of part one of the *Capistrum Iudaeorum*:

It profits not at all or very little to damage the enemy with force, without knowing his forces and abilities to do damage, for in such a way one can receive his blows without harm, or skillfully evade them. In this way it not only is worth little, but from it you will know the great danger, if you fail to recognize the falsities with which they impugn the truth of the faith, even if you damage the errors of the faith of the enemies with valid reasons. I want you to be no less able in those things which the Jews object to us, than in the material that we adduce against their error.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ "Sicut enim nihil aut parum prodest hostem fortiter ferire, nisi vires eius et nocendi astutias noveris, ut sic indemnis ictus eius possis suscipere, aut providus declinare, sic non solum parum valet, sed etiam ex eo maximum noveris imminere discrimen, si etiam validis rationibus errores inimicorum fidei ferias, et falsitates, quibus ipsi impugnant fidei veritatem, ignoras. Non minus igitur circa haec, quae Iudaei contra nos obiciunt, te volo fore sollicitum, quam circa illa quae nos inducimus contra errorem suum" (1: 308-310).

This belief that an effective argument against the Jews entailed not only use of their sources but also knowledge of their objections is reflected extensively throughout the *Pugio*.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps nowhere is Martini's keen interest in obviating possible Jewish attacks on Christian knowledge of Jewish source material than in his careful citation and translation of Hebrew. Martini addresses again the Jewish recourse to the original meaning of the original text again in the prologue of the *Pugio*,

In bringing forth other authorities, the Hebrew text was used, [and] the Septuagint was not followed, or any rendition...as such, the wide and spacious way of the subterfuge of Jewish false speech is precluded, and very little will they be able to say that it is not thus among them."¹⁰⁵

Martini specifically asserts that when the Hebrew is translated, Jews do not criticize the translation as much. Quoting the disparate meaning of the vulgate and original Hebrew of *Habbakuk* 1:5, he observes that it is better to stay close to the original Hebrew, because, while the Vulgate is disparaged by the Jews, "The Hebrew receives no criticism," and thus "not our letter, but rather the Hebrew letter is to be imitated...this version suffices [to

¹⁰⁴ Martini's complaint about Jewish defense strategies recalls the numerous exchanges recorded in Nahmanides' account of the Barcelona dispute in which the meaning of a particular Hebrew word is disputed. The first such exchange, cited above, is over the meaning of the vernacular word "maestro," which Friar Paul asserts means "rabbi" in Hebrew, and then argues Nahmanides is not deserving of this title because he has not been ordained. Rabbi Moses responds by proffering a correction of Paul's translation, arguing that "maestro" should be translated as "rav" and not "rabbi," and that "rav" refers to scholars who have not received ordination (*semikhah*). The Latin account also makes reference to this dispute. In the second session, according to Nahmanides, Rabbi Moses rejects Paul's interpretation of the word "yom" as possibly meaning "year" and not only "day." (*Kitvei* 1:314/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 127-8). The text contains a number of such ripostes and assertions by Nahmanides challenging the Christian interpretation of certain Hebrew words and passages and clarifying the meaning of others, such as the meaning of the word *shiloh* in Genesis 49:10 (*Kitvei* 1:316/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 134) or *tohu* and *bohu* (*Kitvei* 1:319/Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 141). Chazan has organized these responses as depicted in both the Hebrew account (*Barcelona and Beyond*, 70), and succeeds in proving that, in the perception of Rabbi Moses, the key strategy for undermining the Christian arguments presented in the dispute was to try and expose them as incorrect readings based on misinterpretation of the original source material.

¹⁰⁵ "Caeterum inducendo auctoritatem textus ubicumque ad Hebraico fuerit desumptum, non septuaginta sequar, nec interpretem alium...per hoc enim Judaeis falsiloquis lata valde spatiosaque subterfugendi praecludetur via et minime poterunt dicere non sic haberi apud eos." (*Pugio Fidei* 4).

argue] against them who were to be refuted.”¹⁰⁶ Again, Martini’s concern with gainsaying any possible Jewish criticism of his use or understanding of sources seems to be a direct response to previous Jewish attacks on Christian use of authoritative Jewish sources.¹⁰⁷

Previously, observations about Martini’s use of Hebrew in the *Pugio* have rested only on the seventeenth-century printed editions of the work. Chaim Merchavia and Pier Fumagalli have considered the existing manuscripts of the work, drawing attention to the Sainte Geneviève manuscript in Paris.¹⁰⁸ As Merchavia notes, there are more Hebrew quotations in the manuscript, which he sees as closer to the original form of the work (“The Hebrew Versions” 288), than in the printed edition, and that the citations are usually voweled (283). Indeed, Merchavia’s brief consideration of the manuscript version of the text only confirms what is evident from the printed editions, that Martini goes to great lengths in his work to provide the most original and authentic textual support possible and, in the context of his stated goals in the text, such a strategy can only be understood as an effort to obviate any possible Jewish objections to his knowledge of Hebrew and Hebrew sources. Chazan, Cohen, and various other scholars have belabored

¹⁰⁶ “Sicque nostra praedicta translatio in talem sensum de sensu Hebraico translata eiusmodi recipiendo calumniam, *nemo credit*, id est rarius compellet nos dicere. Litera vero hebraea nullam calumniam recipit...affirmans non literam nostram, sed potius Hebraicam imitatus est...haec dicta sufficiant adversus eos, qui reprehensuri erant” (5).

¹⁰⁷ It is worth noting that in the *Pugio Fidei*, Martini apparently no longer felt the need to develop the arguments against Muslims in a similar way. The entire first part of the *Pugio* contains many quotations from Arabic philosophers and canonical religious texts, but all texts are given in translation. There is no effort at all to cite the original sources and languages in this philosophical argument directed in part against Islam, and there is little consideration of the “authentic” meaning or interpretation of Arabic words. Obviously, the question of the identity of the polemicist played little role in the elaboration and defense of arguments based purely on reason and philosophy. In the second and third parts of the *Pugio*, however, which are specifically against Judaism, Martini expands on Aquinas’s idea, accepting more than the Old Testament as authoritative in disputations with Jews.

¹⁰⁸ Merchavia, “The Hebrew versions of the “Pugio fidei” in the Saint-Genviève Manuscript” [Hebrew], and Fumagalli, “I trattati medievali “Adversus Judaeos”, il “Pugio fidei” e il suo influsso sulla concezione cristiana dell’Ebraismo”; and *ibid*, “The Original Manuscript of the *Pugio Fidei* of Raymundus Martini” [Hebrew].

the point that Martini's approach to rabbinical texts represents a development and refinement of the arguments used by Paul at the dispute of Barcelona, and this point certainly needs no defending.¹⁰⁹ It is worth emphasizing here, however, that Martini's interest in eliminating any grounds for Jewish arguments against his knowledge of the original sources represents a particular kind of development of Paul's initial efforts, one which seeks to remove as many barriers as possible between the polemical arguments he makes and authority of the original Jewish sources. It is not, however, a development of the missionary appeal of his arguments.

As we have seen, the use of reason in polemical arguments quickly led to the standard claim that polemicists would prove their arguments *ratione et auctoritate*, including both biblical support and rational proofs. As Dahan notes, in the prologue to the *Pugio*, Martini transforms this standard dyad by replacing "ratio/auctoritas" with "auctoritas/traditiones" (*Les intellectuels* 441). As Martini explains,

As for what concerns the Jews, the material of this *Pugio* is double: The first and principle part will be the authority of the laws and prophets, and of the entire Old Testament; and the second part will be certain traditions which are found in the Talmud and *Midrashim*, that is, glosses and traditions of ancient Jews.¹¹⁰

At first, his distinction between "traditiones" and "auctoritates" seems to indicate that he does not take his original Hebrew source material as authoritative. Indeed, he is consistent throughout the massive *Pugio* in calling Biblical verses "auctoritates" and

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, Cohen, *Friars and the Jews*, 132-6; Chazan, *Daggers*, 117-120; Willi-Plein and Willi, *Glaubensdolch und Messiasbeweis*, 16-18, and recently Ragacs, "Christliche Gelehrsamkeit versus rabbinische Tradition—das *Capistrum Iudaeorum* des Raimund Martini und die Disputation von Barcelona."

¹¹⁰ "Deinde materia ipsius Pugionis, quantum ad Iudaeos et prophetarum, totiusque Veteris Testamenti; secundaria vero, quaedam traditiones, quas in Talmud et Midrashim id est glossis et traditionibus antiquorum Iudaeorum reperi" (*Pugio Fidei* 2-3).

rabbinic material “traditiones,” and he frequently insults such rabbinical writing as full of absurdities and errors. He notes that the Jews believe that this “Oral Torah” (“Torah she be-al peh”) was given to Moses on Sinai with the written Torah, and that one can conclude nothing other than that this is “the insanity of a ruined mind.” Still, he sees some of these “traditiones” as not to be rejected, because

They know the truth and reveal and put forth everywhere the doctrine of the prophets and the holy fathers very incredibly and wonderfully pronounce the Christian faith...I do not judge that one ought to disagree that they successively came down from Moses and the prophets and the other holy fathers to those who recorded them, for in no other way than from the prophets and the fathers do we think such things could have come, since these traditions in this way are everywhere contrary to those about the Messiah and many other things which the Jews have believed since the time of Christ until now. (3).

For this reason, “like pearls which I raised from a large dungheap” (3), they are the most useful tool in making Christian arguments compelling and binding:

We do not therefore reject such *traditiones* but rather we embrace [them], both on account of those things that have been said, and because nothing so forceful in the confuting of the impudence of the Jews is come upon, nothing so effective at convincing [others] of their worthlessness is found.”¹¹¹

While Martini never states explicitly that these texts should be taken as *auctoritates* for Christian readers—indeed, he condemns the great majority of rabbinic literature as false and evil, a “great dungheap”—he states plainly his intention to use *reliquis scriptis suis apud*

¹¹¹ “Non ergo respuamus traditiones eiusmodi sed potius amplectamur tum propter ea quae dicta sunt, tum et quod nihil tam validum ad confutandam Judaeorum impudentiam reperitur, nihil ad eorum convincendam nequitiam tam efficax invenitur. (3).

eos authenticis, “relics of their writings, considered *authentic* among them” (*Pugio Fidei* 2). In the *Capistrum*, Martini states that when a Talmudic verse contains “some prophetic authority (“*aliquam auctoritatem propheticam*”) regarding the Messiah, it should be accepted if it is “well put” (“*si bene eam exposuerit*”), but if it is fabulous or poorly put, “that statement is to be rejected but its authority retained.”¹¹² As his statement reveals, his interest is in extracting the authority from the *auctoritates* and *traditiones* found in Jewish texts. We know from his other statements that this interest derives from his stated goal of refuting the Jews, and the effectiveness of this appeal to authoritative *traditiones* is, as he says in the *Pugio*, to “cut off the head of the infidel with his own knife” (4). Dahan has maintained that Martini’s use of Hebrew sources represents “l’élargissement de la notion d’“autorité”” (*Les intellectuels chrétiens* 441) in which “la littérature rabbinique est passée au rang d’*auctoritas* servant le dessein des chrétiens” (443).¹¹³ It is necessary to insist that Martini never names post-Biblical literature as an *auctoritas* as he does Biblical verses, and his appeal to rabbinical literature is rife with insults and condemnations of its absurdity. Martini emphasizes in his prologue that the “pearls” of truth in post-Biblical literature which he proposes to lift from the dungheap have been preserved and transmitted in spite of the Jews’ beliefs, a fact that is manifest in that such pearls are “everywhere contrary” (*Pugio Fidei* 3) to Jewish belief. Thus the “expansion” of *auctoritas* in Martini’s conception of

¹¹² “Si autem, ut frequentius facit, fabulose aut male ipsam exposuerit, abicienda est tunc eius expositio, auctoritate retenta” (*Capistrum* 2:30).

¹¹³ Although it is outside the purview of this study, this concept of *auctoritas* comes to its fullest expression in the writing of Nicolas of Lyra. As Dahan notes, the “enlargement” of the concept of “*auctoritas*” “voit son couronnement ou, mieux, sa “*canonisation*” avec Nicolas de Lyre... [il] énumère les Écritures dont l’autorité est reconnue par les juifs” (441-2). One can say with near certainty that Lyra was unknown to Abner/Alfonso of Burgos, given that the two lived simultaneously in separate places and Abner/Alfonso shows little if any familiarity with contemporary Latin sources in anti-Jewish polemic. As Harvey Halperin has shown, however, Lyra exercised an enormous influence on Pablo de Santa María in the fifteenth century.

rabbinical writing entails separating the Jews from their own literature in order to claim, just as traditional polemic in line with Christian doctrine had appropriated the Hebrew bible as a Christian document and Israel's status as God's chosen as a Christian inheritance, that anything of merit in post-Biblical literature was a Christian, not a Jewish, teaching. Martini is careful to claim the Talmud as an *auctoritas* only for Christians, not for Jews, but only as understood in Christian terms, making authentic Jewish teachings contradictory to Christian teaching of no consequence while keeping such "pearls" as further proof of Christian truth.

Because Martini's intention in his polemic was not to engage directly with Jews but allegedly to prepare materials and arguments for other Mendicants and polemicists to use in their refutation of Jewish defensive arguments, one of his main strategies, along with that of using Jewish authorities, is to criticize the Jewish position as incorrect and senseless, and indeed, there is no shortage of vituperative language against Jews and Jewish writing in his texts. Harvey Hames has observed that this dual intention of criticizing and convincing is based on a blend of rational and authoritative arguments.

Martí combines the authority of the text with philosophical reasoning to demonstrate the absurdity of the Jewish position ... Scholastic reasoning ... was applied to the authoritative texts of both Judaism and Islam, in order to demonstrate the false suppositions of the latter faiths, and illuminate the support their authoritative sources gave to Christian truths. Crucially, this approach emphasized the engagement with the text, rather than with the ideas and beliefs of these scholastics' Jewish and Muslim contemporaries. (*Art of Conversion* 8)

Martini's arguments in fact show no real signs of being written for actual use by preachers in a missionizing context, but instead seem to lend themselves to polemical attacks on Jewish beliefs and opinions in a disputational context. Robin Vose's observation about Martini's earlier works applies equally well to his anti-Jewish polemics, because in all of his works "Martini left the task of translating polemic into persuasion entirely in the hands of his readers" ("Converting the Faithful" 102).¹¹⁴

This tendency of engaging intellectually with the texts from a purely scholastic position with little or no concern for convincing Jews or Muslims directly can also be seen in the writing of some of Martini's contemporaries, such as Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas, whom many have argued was directly connected to Peñafort's missionizing strategies and support,¹¹⁵ differs significantly from Martini because of the near complete absence of post-Biblical Jewish sources from his *Summa contra gentiles*. Aquinas directly discusses the question of authorities in an oft-quoted passage from book 1, chapter 2:

It is difficult to refute the errors of each individual...because some of them, like the Mohammedans and pagans, do not agree with us as to the authority of Scripture whereby they may be convinced, in the same way as we are able to dispute with the Jews by means of the Old Testament, and with the heretics by means of the new, whereas the former accept neither. Wherefore it is necessary to have recourse to natural reason, to which all are compelled to assent." (3)¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Chazan notes that "The Jews are portrayed negatively throughout the work, in part in an effort to explain the anomaly of rabbinic insight into Christian truth and ongoing Jewish rejection of the truth. To be sure, this is a tack likely to have little positive impact on a Jewish audience" (*Daggers of Faith* 135).

¹¹⁵ On this question, see Cohen, *Friars and the Jews* 105 n. 6, 129-30 n. 2.

¹¹⁶ "Contra singulorum autem errores difficile est producere...quia quidam eorum, ut Mahumetistae et pagani, non conveniunt nobiscum in auctoritate alicuius Scripturae, per quam possint convinci, sicut contra Iudaeos disputare possumus per Vetus Testamentum, contra haereticos per Novum. Hi vero neutrum

Aquinas, different from Martini, suggests that reason is only necessary in disputation with Muslims, with whom Christians share no authoritative sources. For Aquinas, who subscribed, as Jeremy Cohen has shown, to a relatively traditional concept of the hermeneutical Jew devoid of any real understanding of contemporary rabbinical Judaism, there is no apparent need to expand the concept of authority as there clearly is in Martini's writings.¹¹⁷ Compared to Aquinas, Martini's anti-Jewish polemics include support from a wider array of authoritative sources, evaluated often on the basis of natural reason. Both Dominicans, however, show their primary concern to be an intellectual refutation of perceived Jewish errors rather than a practical, persuasive appeal to real Jews.

On the other end of the spectrum, but also opposed to Martini, is the polemical method of the Catalan polymath, Raymond Lull. Although Lull wrote well over two hundred fifty philosophical, literary, and polemical works, and it is impossible to summarize every aspect of his thought concisely, a number of specific observations can be made about his approach to Judaism that contribute to a fuller understanding of the evolution of Christian anti-Jewish polemic, specifically in terms of the importance of textual authority in missionizing argumentation. Although Lull did not join any

recipiunt. Unde necesse est ad naturalem rationem recurrere, cui omnes assentire coguntur" (book 1, ch 2, 10-12). Cohen oddly cites this verse as representative of Peñafort's view of arguing "with sources and arguments they [the infidels] themselves would consider authoritative" (*The Friars* 106). Aquinas's words, however, make no mention of the use of rabbinic texts in arguments with the Jews, and seems to explain, not the rationale of Peñafort's missionizing strategy, but more that of a figure like Raymond Lull, who employed reason as the common authority.

¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, one finds a statement in Martini's early (1257) *Explanatio symboli apostolorum* that "since not all men accept the authority of holy books, whereas everyone, faithful or unfaithful, follow reason, we will put forth a few rational arguments after the *auctoritates* to make manifest the holy Trinity for everyone" ("Verum, quia auctoritates sacrorum librorum non omnes recipiunt sapientes, tam fideles communiter quam infideles rationibus acquiescunt, rationes aliquas post auctoritates ad ostensionem sancte trinitatis in medium proponemus" 457).

Mendicant order, he was strongly influenced by Raymond of Peñafort with whom he is known to have had conversations, and was directly connected not only to Peñafort's ideas about how to argue with Muslims and Jews, but also to Raymond Martini. Llull explicitly criticized Martini on no less than five occasions for what he saw as an ineffective and incorrect missionizing method, faulting Martini for not being able to prove the truth of Christianity rationally when asked to do so by the king of Tunisia.¹¹⁸ Llull criticized Martini in the *Liber de Fine* as “one of those who could do good and are sent out to do so, but do not do good, and almost entirely overlook it” (Lavajo 175).¹¹⁹

Llull's criticism of Martini helps shed additional light on Martini's polemical method and his approach to missionizing. In the *Liber de Acquisitione Terrae Sanctae*, Llull describes how “a certain Christian religious well-versed in Arabic” (“quidam christianus religiosus bene in arabico litteratus” 276) disputed with the king of Tunis. After proving “per mores et exempla” that Islam was erroneous and false and prompting the king to plan to renounce his religion and convert along with his whole kingdom if the Christian (Martini) could prove the truth of Christianity to him. The Christian responded “The faith of the Christian cannot be proven, but here is the symbol expressed in Arabic: believe it,”¹²⁰ prompted the king to denounce the Christian for leaving him with no religion at all, since he had disproved Islam and could not prove Christianity (276-7). This well-known anecdote, which also includes allusions to similar encounters of Martini debating in Hebrew with Jews in Barcelona and failing on the same points, shows that,

¹¹⁸ On Llull's criticism of Martini, see Hilgarth, *Ramon Llull and Lullism*, 21-2; Lavajo, “The Apologetical Method” 158 and 174-6; and Colomer, “Ramón Llull y Ramón Martí.”

¹¹⁹ Llull gives this description in dist. I, part 5: “Ideo conscientia spectet habere iudicium contra illos, qui possunt agere bonum, et ad hoc deputati sunt, et non agunt, et quasi ab illis penitus est neglectum.”

¹²⁰ “Fides Christianorum non potest probari, sed ecce symbolum in arabico expositum; credas ipsum” (276).

from Llull's perspective, the essence of Martini's approach to other religions was based on disproving his opponent's faith without offering proof of one's own. In Llull's characterization, Martini's approach to missionizing entails presenting, attacking, and dismissing other religions and then providing apologetic arguments about Christianity that take for granted its truth. As the Muslim king responds (in the *Liber de convenientia fidei et intellectus in obiecto*) to Martini's call to simply believe by stating, "That is no proof, but simply an affirmation,"¹²¹ pointing to what in Llull's rendition constitutes the essence of apologetic rather than missionizing argumentation. Likewise, Martini's response to the Jew in Llull's rendition situates him firmly within a traditional *Adversus Iudaeos* apologetic polemic, unable to prove his religion compellingly and baffled by the faithlessness and obduracy of the unconvinced Jew: "The Friar responded that he could not understand why the Jew continued as if our law was to be scorned as improbable and untrue."¹²²

Part of Llull's criticism of Martini stems from his belief that Christianity can and should be proven with necessary reasons rather than authoritative textual support, because, in Harvey Hames' words, "Llull understood that polemic based on authoritative texts was pointless because each side could remain entrenched in their own hermeneutics and would not have to come to grips with the real issues" (*The Art of Conversion*, 9). As a result, Llull seems to make use of very few textual authorities, and modern readers are often frustrated by his consistent failure to name his sources.¹²³ Llull was himself an advocate of Peñafort's model of approaching missionizing through language study, not in

¹²¹ IV, 11, p. 4: "Haec non est aliqua probabilitas, immo totum est positivum" (IV, 11^o: p. 4; Lavajo, 175).

¹²² "Et frater respondebat quod intellegere non poterat, quare judeus remansit sicut erat spernendo legem nostram tanquam improbabilem et non veram" (*Liber de Acquisitione* 277; Lavajo 176).

¹²³ Carreras y Artau offer a list of Llull's named sources on 1: 268-9.

order to cite the authoritative sources of one's adversary, but rather to better persuade them with coherent, rational arguments in their own language. Lull founded his own language school, Miramar, in Mallorca in 1276, for the study of Arabic, and he effectively petitioned Pope Clement V and helped persuade the council of Vienne to mandate language studies at numerous European universities to teach Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic.¹²⁴ Against Aquinas's statement that one only needs the Old Testament to engage and convince the Jews, and Martini's approach of including the range of authorities and evaluating them on the basis of natural reason, Lull developed his own singular rational approach to polemic, an elaborate system, called the "Art", by which one can prove the truth of Christianity after taking into account points of common ground between the three "religions of the book." Lullian scholars Mark Johnston and Thomas Burman have both pointed to an essential passage in Lull's *Libre de contemplació en Deu* in which Lull explains his early stance on the use of authorities:

If one sees that [one's opponent] is a man of crude understanding and not subtle, he can bring him from his error with authorities and miracles of saints that make him believe, which he will not do with reasons or natural arguments. For a man of crude understanding is closer to faith than reason...When a subtle man

¹²⁴ Clement V decreed at the council that there were to be two experts in each university, and clearly stated the intention to set up these studies to aid in missionizing: "Hoc sacro approbante concilio in scholis in subscriptarum linguarum generibus, ubicunque Romanam curiam residere contigeret, nec non in Parisiensi et Oxoniensi, Bononiensi et Salamantino studiis providimus erigendas, statuentes, ut in quolibet locorum ipsorum teneantur viri catholici, sufficientem habentes hebraicae, arabicae et chaldaee linguarum notitiam, duo videlicet uniuscuiusque linguae periti, qui scholas regant inibi et libros de linguis ipsis in latinum fideliter transferentes, alios linguas ipsas sollicite doceant, earumque peritiam studiosa in illos instructione transfundant, ut instructi et edocti sufficienter in linguis huiusmodi fructum speratum possint Deo auctore producere, fidem propagaturi salubriter in ipsos populos infideles" (Grayzel, *The Church* 2: 226). As Burns notes, however, there is no evidence of this decree actually being put into effect (*Muslims, Christians, and Jews* 99). In fact, as Grayzel notes, "the credit goes to John XXII" (*The Church* 2: 307 n.3). On Lull's efforts to support language study, see Garcías Palou, *El Miramar de Ramón Lull*; and Altaner, "Raimundus Lullus und der sprachenkanon des Konzils von Vienne," as well as Lull's *Petitio ad Celestinum V papam* and *Petitio Raymundi in Concilio Generali*. On the call for language studies, see Altaner, "Sprachstudien un Sprachkenntnisse"; Müller, "Das Konzil von Vienne"; and Browe, *Judenmission*, 273ff.

disputes...with another subtle man...he should dispute with him with syllogizing reasons...because he can lead a subtle man to truth better with reasons than with faith or authorities.¹²⁵

Llull asserted a decade later, however, in *Blanquerna* that when one is preaching to shepherds, one ought to use “necessary, probable reasons” rather than authorities, for “Shepherds are people more disposed to understanding through reasons than through *auctoritates*” (*Obres* 9: 232), suggesting that he came to believe that reason was better in proving the truths of faith even when one was speaking to a rustic rather than learned audience.¹²⁶

It is thus puzzling that Llull began, as Thomas Burman explains, to use textual authorities for the first time very late in his career in his *Liber praedicationis contra iudaeos* and *Liber de Fine*, both of 1305. Llull suggests in the *Liber de Fine* that Christians who know Hebrew should

Dispute with the Jews, even in their homes, by collecting authorities from the Old Testament in which the New Testament is prefigured, which authorities they should lead back to necessary reasons, because authorities are not contrary to reason when they are true...and therefore it would be good that those learned

¹²⁵ “On, sil veu que sia home de gros enteniment e que no sia home subtil, molt mills lo porá trer de sa error ab auctoritats e ab miracles de sants que li fassa creure, que no fará ab raons ni ab arguments naturals; car home de gros enginy pus prop es de fe que de raó...com home subtil disputa...ab altre home subtil, sil vol trer de sa error ni endur a veritat, cové que desput ab ell per raons silogitzans naturals en les coses sensuales e en les coses entellectuals, car molt mills endúu hom home subtil a veritat per raons que per fe ni per auctoritats” (5: 172) On this passage, see Burman, “The Influence” 217, Johnston, *The Spiritual Logic of Ramon Llull* 136-7, and Cohen, *The Friars* 202-3.

¹²⁶ Johnston also notes, importantly, that “Llull almost never appeals to his own personal experience. Perhaps he hesitates to invoke his own authority, just as he refuses to cite learned *auctoritates*” (*The Evangelical Rhetoric* 113). As we will see, it is just this sort of appeal to personal experience that distinguishes the polemic of Abner/Alfonso from his predecessors.

men, thus diligent in Hebrew, would collect and have many authorities and apply these to necessary reasons.¹²⁷

In the *Liber Praedicationis contra Iudaeos*, also written in 1305, he expresses a similar point:

Since the Jews believe they are in truth according to the Law of Moses, by alleging the authority of that Law, and since reason is naturally the judge of reason, and the Jews observe the Ten Commandments, we intend to proceed in this book in three ways, namely with authorities of the old Law, and with *problemata* and with commandments, proving that the Jews are in error.¹²⁸

It is clear that Llull turned to authorities in his later polemics against the Jews in a way that he never seemed to do in his anti-Muslim polemic.¹²⁹ His unexpected approach lends further support to the argument that the anti-Jewish polemic that grew out of the school of Raymond of Peñafort in the second half of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth had as its linchpin an assumption about the central role of authoritative sources among the Jews. Given Llull's criticism of Martini's approach, it seems he believed his polemical appeal to *auctoritas* evaluated by reason as expressed in his later

¹²⁷ "In diebus dominicis predicarent in syngogis, et in diebus etiam sabbatinis, et cum Iudaeis et in eorum domibus disputarent, colligendo auctoritates Veteris testamenti, in quibus Testamentum novuum est figuratum, et quod illas auctoritates reducant ad necessarias rationes. Quoniam auctoritates non sunt contra rationem ut sunt verae...et ideo esset bonum quod illi sapientes in hebraico sit studentes, multas auctoritates colligerent et haberent, et ipsas ad rationes necessarias applicarent" (*Raymundi Lulli Opera Latina* 9:259-264-73). Cf. The discussion by Burman, "The Influence" 218. For a full discussion of this aspect of Llull's thought, see Burman p., 213-228.

¹²⁸ "Quoniam iudei credunt esse in veritate per legum Moysi, allegando auctoritatem illius legis, et cum intellectus naturaliter sit iudex rationi, et iudei extant ad decem precepta, intendimus procedere tribus modis in isto libro, scilicet cum auctoritatibus veteris Legis, et cum problematibus et cum preceptis, probandi quod iudei sunt in errore." (*Raymundi Lulli Opera Latina*, 12:14.6-9). This is found in Millás Vallicrosa's earlier edition on 71. Cf. the discussion by Burman, "The Influence" 214; and Dahan, *Les intellectuels*, 424, who oddly offers this citation as proof of the typical recourse of polemicists indiscriminately to "ratione et auctoritate."

¹²⁹ Thomas Burman, "The Influence," has argued that Llull's "return" to *auctoritates* was a direct result of Llull's familiarity with the anti-Muslim polemics *Apology of al-Kindī* and the *Contrarietas alfolica*.

polemics served his more general goal of converting non-Christians with compelling and convincing arguments. As Hames has stated, Lull's approach to mission and to authority is fundamentally different from Martini's, which does indeed seem, as he says, "reflect more an internal Christian process than an implicit attempt to convert the Jews" ("Reason and Faith" 270). Nevertheless, a careful comparison of both thinkers with the disputations of Barcelona and Paris show that Martini's turn away from direct missionizing towards issues more internally relevant to Christianity from an apologetic perspective reflects only one aspect of Friar Paul's decidedly mixed efforts. Based on Paul's conflicted interests of mission and apologetic, Martini's polemic tends towards the latter, to the detriment and desuetude of any real missionizing strategy, and it is precisely this turn away from mission that Ramon Lull condemns and seeks to rectify in his own missionizing.

Although it is outside the purview of this study, it is important to note that the central role of post-Biblical literature in the Christian understanding and use of textual authority, reflected variously the Disputation of Barcelona through the writings of Raymond Martini and Raymond Lull, came to its fullest expression in the fourteenth century. The Christian Hebraist Nicholas of Lyra, for example, whose *Postillae* on Scripture came to be enormously influential over the following centuries, articulated the importance of authoritative Jewish sources in polemic in no uncertain terms, showing in fully developed form the ideas that had been developing over half a century. In Dahan's words, the polemical attention to Jewish *auctoritates* "voient son couronnement ou, mieux, sa "canonisation" avec Nicolas de Lyre" (*Les intellectuels chrétiens* 441). As Lyra notes, "Besides the canonical texts there are also other texts accepted by the Jews as equally

authoritative...although the texts of this sort—i.e. the Talmud and the glosses of the Hebrew doctors—are in large part false, with them we can still argue effectively against them, since they are accepted by them in the manner described” (*Biblia Sacra* 6:275FG). Likewise, Dahan has noted that Lyra’s contemporary Guido Terreni (Guy Terré),¹³⁰ articulated the same opinion about Jewish sources:

The canonical works accepted by the Jews as authentic are other, namely the Talmud, since according to them this Scripture does not differ from canonical texts...likewise the sayings of the Hebrew doctors glossed the Old Testament are authentic among them much more than the sayings of Jerome, Augustine, and other Catholic doctors are among us. (83v-84)¹³¹

One can follow the development of this idea well into the fifteenth century, in writers such as Pablo de Santa María, Gerónimo de Santa Fe, and Alonso de Spina. In most polemical writing from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that appeals to post-Biblical Jewish authority, however, the intention is purely apologetic polemic, serving no discernable missionizing or conversionary purpose whatsoever. The mixed tendencies of compelling missionizing tactics and traditional apologetic arguments evident in the efforts of Friar Paul evolved away from engagement with real non-Christians, whether rhetorically or pastorally, in Martini’s polemic, and this more inward-looking apologetic focus became the dominant norm in the following centuries.

¹³⁰ Terreni (ca 1260-1342) was master of theology in Paris, Prior General of the Carmelite Order (1318-21), Bishop of Mallorca from 1321-32 and of Elne in 1332-42. He was counselor to Pope John XXII, an inquisitor, and an active fighter against heresy in Provence and Catalonia, as well as an active early promoter of the concept of papal infallibility. For the main bibliography on Terreni, see *Repertorium Fontium Historicae* 5: 285-6, and Turley, “Terreni, Heresy, and the Reconstruction of Tradition”, especially 52 n.2.

¹³¹ This text is found in the work *Utrum principalis articulus fidei nostre, scil. quod ponit trinitatem in unitate essentie, possit probari contra iudeos per scripturas receptas ab eis*, in Paris BN MS lat. 16523, folia 83-86v. Dahan makes an argument for its attribution to Terreni in *Les Intellectuals* 442, n. 69 and cites the text on 456.

This analysis shows that Abner/Alfonso, almost exactly contemporary with writers like Lyra and Terreni, wrote his polemics at a time when the constant focus on the question of textual authority in polemical writing had, as Dahan stated about Raymond Martini, “expanded” the very concept of *auctoritas* far beyond its limited scope before the twelfth century. The inherent limitations of the exegetical approach, which reached its pinnacle of development in the Martini’s polemics, are signaled very clearly by Jewish polemicists who seem to respond to Martini’s arguments, such as the thirteenth-century Rabbi of Barcelona, Solomon Ibn Adret. Although Ibn Adret does not specifically mention Martini in his texts, he leaves clear signs that he was aware of the Dominican missionizing argumentation based on postbiblical literature.¹³² In Cohen’s words, Ibn Adret “set out to extrapolate from contemporary Christian polemic the most central and threatening arguments” (*Friars and the Jews* 157). From Ibn Adret’s remarks, it seems that one of the most central arguments in Martini’s polemic and, by extension, in all previous Dominican missionizing, was the question of authority. He argues that the presentation of an authoritative text alone is not, from his perspective, enough to convince or compel a Jewish audience, but that the identity and faith of the polemicist himself must enter into the debate. He asks:

Who recounted this *Aggadah*? A Jew or a Christian or a heretic who behaved like a Jew and believed like a Christian? Now if he was truly a Jew, then he did not make the statement in the fashion you indicate, for then he would not have been a Jew. If he was a Christian, then I need not believe in what he said regarding this

¹³² Orfali, Cohen and Chazan all defend the argument that Ibn Adret responded to and even knew Martini directly (Orfali, “R. Selomoh Ibn Aderet y la controversia judeo cristiana”; Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* 138-139; Cohen, *Friars and the Jews* 156-163 and “The Polemical Adversary of Solomon Ibn Adret”). See also Thomas Willi, “Die ‘Perusche Aggadot’ des R. Salomo ben Adret.”

matter. Let him say whatever he wishes. If he was a heretic, then neither we nor you need believe in what he says. One does not bring proof from a heretic.¹³³

This accusation against the right of the polemicist to wield Jewish sources in attacking the Jews strikes at the heart of Martini's exegetical polemic, which assumes that authoritative textual sources are binding on their own as texts. It was to this issue that Abner/Alfonso specifically responded with his own Hebrew polemic addressed directly to Jews. While writers like Lyra and Terreni wrote without any apparent concern for conversion of Jews through compelling arguments, and Raymond Martini wrote for other Dominicans, showing often as much interest in disparaging the Jews and their literature as offering arguments intended to convert them, Abner/Alfonso composed his works with a clear intention to speak as directly as possible to other Jews. Thus while his writing logically shares the same attitudes toward Jewish *auctoritates* as his contemporaries, his work can be said to be intended for actual missionizing and conversion more than any previous texts or arguments since those of Friar Paul at the Barcelona Disputation, and indeed, as we shall see, perhaps more. Given Abner/Alfonso's familiarity with the arguments of Friar Paul at Barcelona through the Hebrew account of Nahmanides, Abner/Alfonso's missionary polemic in the *Mostrador* can be said to represent a parallel but opposite development out of Paul's mixed intentions, emphasizing rhetorical effectiveness along with the intellectual questions posed at Barcelona. Abner/Alfonso's answer to this challenge mounted by Jewish polemicists—his own personal testimony as a former Jew and as an expert in Jewish literature—although it does respond directly to the question of the identity and faith of the polemicist, is not without its own logical problems. Let us now

¹³³ "מי היה המגיד אותה הגדה ישראלי או נצרי או מין? שהיה נוהג כישראלי ומאמין בנצרי אם ישראלי היה באמת לא אמרו על הצד שאמרת שא"כ לא ישראלי היה ואם נצרי אין לי להאמין בו במה שאמר בזה ויאמר מה שיאמר יאם מין לא לנו ולכם להאמין (Perles, Hebrew 42). במה שיאמר ואין מביאין ראיה מן המינים"

turn to Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador*, paying specific attention to his strategies for establishing his own authority and his own careful presentation of his authorial identity.

Part Two

Authority and Ambiguity in the

Mostrador de justicia of Abner of Burgos / Alfonso of Valladolid

The importance of the *Moreh Zedek*/*Mostrador de justicia* does not rest only on the mere fact of its length and the complexity of its arguments. As Abner/Alfonso's earliest complete surviving work, it is also a source for many of the ideas and arguments developed in his later polemics. As such, the text constitutes the most essential source of material available for understanding the life and work of its author. A full consideration of Abner/Alfonso's textual sources in his major works, especially in his *Mostrador* (see the attached bio-bibliographical study) shows, not surprisingly, a strong predominance of Jewish and Hebrew sources and a very limited use of Christian Latin sources and Arabic philosophical texts. Unlike other polemics that employ Hebrew material, his *Mostrador* is, like the *Pugio Fidei* of Raymond Martini, made up predominantly of sources from the Jewish tradition. Raymond Martini's polemics, however, although they make use of abundant material from Talmudic and Midrashic sources, employ Christian Latin and Muslim Arabic sources much more than Abner/Alfonso does. An essential question that needs to be answered in studying Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador* is what polemical function this preponderance of Jewish sources serves in his work.

As we considered in part one, Abner/Alfonso's polemics in Castile followed in the wake of the appearance of similar texts and arguments in Aragón, most notably the arguments of Friar Paul Christiani at the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263 and the anti-Jewish *Capistrum Iudaeorum* and *Pugio Fidei* of Raymond Martini. A careful reading of some of the key texts associated with the so-called "missionizing" movement of thirteenth-

century Dominicans revealed a mixture of disparate intentions at the Disputation of Barcelona, in which polemicists sought both to provide proof and argumentation directed at Jewish listeners and to recycle traditional polemical themes relevant only to a Christian audience. Although such mixed intentions can also be seen in later polemics like Martini's, his texts evince a gradual turn (or return) towards a purely *textual* anti-Jewish polemic based on standard arguments of Christian apologetic and a turn away from the concerns and demands of real persuasion and active missionizing. Martini's texts are concerned more with attacking and proving Jews wrong than with trying to present cogent arguments that Jews themselves might consider convincing. Because his texts were intended for use by friars who would ostensibly dispute with Jews, the arguments they put forth are a degree removed from the context of real disputation, in which arguments were presented directly to Jews, to the level of *textual* polemic, in which the Jew exists only as the imaginary enemy of the Christian writer. We can remember that Paul Christiani left no written texts, whereas Martini left over half-a-million written words in various works, a length rivaled only by his contemporary Raymond Lull.

Given the importance of Martini's written polemics, it is significant that Abner/Alfonso's texts show no signs of his familiarity with Martini's work (for a full consideration of the question of Martini's possible influence on Abner/Alfonso, see supplement chapter two). In fact, one of the most notable characteristics of Abner/Alfonso's polemical arguments is his effort to engage directly with actual Jewish readers. It is within this context that Abner/Alfonso's preponderant reliance on Jewish sources must be considered. Given his polemical agenda, Abner/Alfonso's use of sources can be understood as part of his overall polemical strategy of representing both himself

and his arguments as essentially Jewish in nature, and the use of this strategy can be seen in many different aspects of the text including its language, style, voice, and use of personal testimony. Abner/Alfonso demonstrates in his magnum opus a marked concern with persuasion and missionary effectiveness, and the rhetorical demands produced by this focus are in constant tension with Abner/Alfonso's more traditional apologetic concerns. It is to a close analysis of these aspects of the *Mostrador* that we now turn.



Chapter Three

From *Testimonia* to Testimony:

Authority in the *Mostrador de justicia*

“The shortest path from the self to itself lies in the speech of the other.”

—Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*

“There is no pair. This is a wrestling match not of two parties but of one.”

—Franz Rosenzweig *The Star of Redemption*

“Only as apostate am I faithful. I am you when I am myself.”

—Paul Celan, “Praise of Distance”

I. Overview of the Contents of the *Mostrador de justicia*

Given the length and complexity of the text of the *Mostrador* and the fact that it is little-known by most scholars (even some working on Abner/Alfonso directly), it will be helpful to provide a brief overview of the structure and content of the text. The description that follows is intended for those readers who lack a basic familiarity with the content of the *Mostrador*, and as such it can be easily skipped by those already familiar with the text. An outline of the contents of the text can also be found in Appendix one.

The *Mostrador de justicia* (Bibliothèque Nationale MS Espagnol 43 ff. 12r-342v) is arranged into a short preliminary section two folios in length, followed by a fourteen-folio chapter-by-chapter description of the contents of the text to follow, and ten chapters (“capítulos”) ranging between thirteen and fifty-one folios, each consisting of a back-and-forth “dialog” between a Christian figure, the “Teacher” (“Mostrador”), and a Jewish disputant, the “Rebel” (“rebele”). Each statement or response by the teacher or rebel constitutes a separate paragraph (“peragraffo”), which range in length from a few lines to dozens of folios in length. Because of the extreme variety in the length of each paragraph, the number of paragraphs in each chapter varies greatly, from six (in chapter three, which

is 23 folios long) to fifty-seven (in chapter nine, which is 43 folios long).¹ In general, the passages attributed to the Christian teacher are much longer than those attributed to the Jewish rebel (the longest—chapter ten, paragraph seven—is well over twenty-five folios), although, as I discuss below, the responses of the rebel, though comparatively short (the longest—paragraph 24 in chapter ten—is a few folios long), are oftentimes much longer than is normal for anti-Jewish polemical dialogs and are often highly combative.

The central topic of the *Mostrador de justicia* is the Messiah, as it is variously discussed in Jewish and Christian literature on the subject. Like earlier polemicists of the thirteenth century, Abner/Alfonso argues principally that Jewish sources support the Christian belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah awaited in the Jewish tradition, and that Jews have misinterpreted and misunderstood their own sources regarding this tradition. The beginning of the work includes a description of Abner/Alfonso's own conversion to Christianity after passing through a long period of doubt and despair over the fate of the Jews, whom he calls "my people." He then briefly describes his motives in composing the *Mostrador*: "to show the correct faith, and the truth and justice in it, to the Jews who have need of it...and to respond to all the contrary statements and doubts, or most of them, which every rebel and contrary Jew can make to our words."² He repeats this description of his intention again near the end of chapter one (paragraph 31).

¹ Chapter one is 15 folios in length and contains thirty five paragraphs; chapter two (30 folios) contains twenty two, chapters four (23 folios) and five (25 folios) each contain twenty six, chapter six (42 folios) contains thirty four, chapter seven (51 folios) contains forty one, chapter eight (13 folios) contains twelve, and chapter ten (51 folios) contains twenty five. The introductory summary describes two extra paragraphs in chapter ten which do not appear in the text of the manuscript, making the total number of paragraphs in the work (as described in the introduction) 286, 284 of which are actually extant in the manuscript.

² "...mostrar la ffe cierta, e la verdat e la justicia en ella, a los judios, que la avien mester...e para rresponder a todas la contradiciones e las dubdas o las más dellas, que nos pueden ffazer todo judio rrebelde e contradezidor a las nuestras palabras." (13r/1: 15).

Abner/Alfonso's strategy for proving that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah is simple and, not surprisingly, is not his own. He first establishes that the Talmud can be used as a proof by the Christians, then proceeds to argue that, according to Jewish tradition and sources, the Law of Moses was to change in form at the time of the Messiah. He then specifically discusses what, according to his reading of Jewish sources, the messiah was supposed to do and what his nature was supposed to be, and finally concludes that this image matches that of Jesus of Nazareth as understood in the Christian tradition. He concludes that the Jews are in error (showing how they made errors in calculating the date of the Messiah's arrival) and that because of this they have forfeited God's favor and have been replaced as God's chosen people by the Christians.

The progression of these very common polemical arguments corresponds to the order of chapters in the text. The goal of the first chapter is "to name which are the books and basis from which we can take proofs in this book, and in what way we will take the proof from there."³ Abner/Alfonso discusses the use of sources in debates between Jews and Christians, justifying the use of the Talmud as a source to prove Christian truth. He claims that it is not appropriate to use one's own sources in proving one's faith to another, because people of other faiths don't yet take those sources as true (33v / 1: 54). It is here that he first introduces the argument that the writers of the Talmud understood that Jesus was the Messiah but chose not to accept him as such (31v-32v / 1: 50-2). As an opening to the debate, the Rebel agrees to consider the arguments of the Teacher if they are logical, although he argues that the teacher is bound to fail, because to claim to know more than the Jews know themselves about their own literature is arrogant and

³ "El capitulo primero es para nonbrar quáles sson los los libros e las premissas donde devemos tomar pruebas en todo este libro, e en cuál manera la prueba dende" (28r / 1: 43).

fundamentally flawed. The Rebel also expresses reluctance that the Teacher will not argue in a fair way or that he will try to deceive him.

Chapter two aims “to prove that there was to be a new Law upon the coming of the Christ.”⁴ Abner/Alfonso argues that, according to the Jewish tradition, the Law given to Moses in the written and oral Torahs was prophesied to change once the Messiah appeared. For Abner/Alfonso, this is evident in verses of the Bible, and it is proven and even discussed explicitly in the Talmud and Midrash. The Teacher gives specific examples of laws that were to change, such as “the festivals which are named for the sanctification and remembrance of the flight from Egypt” (i.e. Passover),⁵ commandments concerning kosher dietary restrictions (50r-52v / 1: 86-91), the performance of sacrifices (53r-54v / 1: 92-5), the circumcision of male children, etc. The Teacher argues that, according to the Talmud, “ceremonial commandments, which are nothing more than ‘railings’, like dividers or walls to contain moral commandments, those are the ones that can change to a more favorable course in order to preserve the moral ones.”⁶ This argument—that the form of God’s commandments can change, but the moral meaning of those commandments cannot—forms part of his more general proof that there was to be a new law at the time of Christ. To support this argument, after arguing back-and-forth with the Rebel, he identifies four things that show it to be true: What the sages say in the Bible and Talmud, the fact that the prophets spoke about moral not ceremonial issues, the proof that ceremonial commandments were simply given to help keep moral

⁴ “El capitulo segundo es para provar que avia a sser Ley nueva a la venida del Christo” (43v / 1: 73).

⁵ “...todas las fiestas que sson llamadas de santidad e rremenbrança de la ssalida d’Egipto” (49v / 1: 85).

⁶ “...los mandamientos cerimoniales, que non sson ssinon guardas e como setas e paredes para guardar los mandamientos morales, aquellos sson los que pueeden aver mudacion de carrera sennalada a otra carrera más aprovechable para guardar loss morales” (54v / 1I: 95).

laws, and the assertion that the sages changed and adapted the law depending on the context. (134 / 1: 72r). At this the Rebel capitulates (paragraph 20), although he says he still has doubts about the reason why God would reveal a law that was to be replaced (opening the door to the next chapter).

The goal of chapter three is “to explain what are the justifications for that new Law, and what was its cause.”⁷ Abner/Alfonso continues the discussion from chapter two (with very little “dialog”) about the reason and cause of the new Law that he believes was prophesied to be given at the time of the Messiah. The Teacher explains that salvation began with the law of Abraham and Moses, but it was not completed there (77v / 1: 144), because there are certain things that are revealed “in secret” in scripture that are to be revealed openly at the time of the Christ (78r / 1: 145). These secret things were not stated openly for fear of commanding something that all the people could not understand. For example, he argues that the mystical nature of God, being, as Christians argue, one in substance and three in nature, would be incomprehensible to early Jews who were being led away from polytheism and idolatry. Thus, this more abstruse truth was only revealed later in history, long after polytheism had been overcome by ceremonial law. As part of this argument, in a very technical discussion of the philosophical and mystical aspects of the Tetragrammaton, he sets out to prove that God is triune in nature and one in substance. In this section, as in other parts of the text, he names the three parts with various names from philosophical and mystical language, such as primary mover, primary form, primary end (82r / 1: 152); wisdom (ssapiençia), understanding (entender una cosa de otra), knowledge (saber) (162 / 1: 86v); adonay, el, elohim; etc. Because

⁷ “El capitulo terçero es para esplanar quáles avian a sser las rrazones de aqualla Ley nueva, e quál ffue la causa para ella” (73v / 1: 136).

believers would be at risk of polytheism if they misunderstood the complex triune nature of God's aspects (as reflected in the divine name), or because they could misunderstand the divine secret that God was to be incarnated, these things (and other "secrets" like them) were kept partly secret, but were revealed in part in Scripture. Abner/Alfonso argues that man sinned by eating of the tree of knowledge, and this sin indicates that he acquired knowledge of God too early. At the time of the Messiah, he argues, man will then be able to eat of the tree of knowledge without sin (76v / 1: 142). Because knowledge of God must be revealed in stages, the "secrets" of the interpretation of the Laws are not spoken of openly in the revelation, which needs to be understandable by everyone. Nevertheless, these "secrets" are contained in the Law, and they are, he repeats, to be revealed at the time of the Messiah. In the law of Moses, God revealed his unity and through the prophets, he repeated the prohibition against idolatry. God did not, however, reveal clearly the notion of punishment and reward after death because of the danger of teaching people this before they accepted God's unity and shunned idolatry (78r / 1: 145). The concept of punishment and reward was expressed secretly in scripture, and the sages understood that this was not to be revealed openly until the time of the messiah.

Chapter four is "about the arguments of the contradictors of what we said, i.e. that the Christ was to come and die and forgive the sin of Adam; and [about] what destroys those arguments."⁸ Abner/Alfonso summarizes and rejects Jewish arguments against the Christian claim that the Messiah was to suffer and die in order to excuse the sin of Adam. Because the subject is the role of the Messiah in redemption, much of the chapter discusses of the nature of original sin and the way that sin can be passed from

⁸ "El capitulo quarto es en la rrazones de los contradezidores a lo que nos dezimos que el Christo avia a venir e a morir para perdonar el peccado de Adam, e como sserá el quebrantamiento de aquellas ssus rrazones" (97r / 1: 183).

Adam and Eve through later generations. When the Rebel argues that the whole purpose of the Law is to free man from sin and teach him how to follow God's will, the Teacher argues that there are two kinds of sin, sin which is based on wrong belief and wrong understanding and sin which is part of the nature of one's being. The Law frees man from the former sin, but cannot free man from the latter, for which there can only be remission through some sort of miracle. After discussing the argument made by the Rebel that people are not to be held accountable for the sins of their fathers, and so the Christian notion of Original Sin does not make sense, the Teacher counters this by describing the sin of Adam in terms of Aristotelian philosophy. In a section that takes up roughly half of the entire chapter (paragraph sixteen), he argues that there are sins that one does, and others that one inherits, and says that the sin of eating the apple in the garden is the sin of the natural world, of corruption and generation, and it is different from the more general state of original sin that is universal and essential. He draws parallels between these two kinds of sin and the two trees in the Garden of Eden, the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. The Teacher states that each represents a different kind of knowledge, and that there are separate punishments inflicted for eating from each tree. He associates the "tree of knowledge," (of which man and woman continue to eat in Original Sin) with logical or formal knowledge ("la generalitat logical") and he associates the "tree of life" (of which man never eats, because he has been expelled from the garden) with what he calls "natural" knowledge ("la generalitat natural"), i.e. essence, and he equates this "natural" knowledge with the Aristotelian active intellect (*intelligencia obrador*). Eve's sin was a sin of logical knowledge (eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil), and so her sin can be atoned for through the fulfillment of the commandments and the law. There is,

however, a more general, universal sin—the result, he says, of “eating of the tree” as opposed to “eating of the fruit of the tree”—and this cannot be remedied by human action, but requires the miracle of the self-sacrifice of Jesus as the Messiah. The Rebel charges that the Teacher only sees Biblical events as allegories and ignores their historical reality. Because the sin of Adam was greater than the later sin of Israel’s faithlessness, the simple correction of the Law was not enough to save mankind from damnation. Humankind could not be saved without the atonement of the death of Jesus.

Chapter five is “about the arguments of those who contradict what we say about the Trinity in God, and about his incarnation in the humanity of the Christ through the person of the Son; and what destroys those arguments.”⁹ Abner/Alfonso specifically explains the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, presenting the standard argument that God is one but has three “persons.” The Teacher uses both Aristotelian terms (prime mover, primary form, primary will) and with other groups of three terms (imagination, understanding, will; or thing, species, order) to explain the three persons of the Trinity. The Rebel charges that the three parts cannot logically be both independent of each other and share the same unity. The Teacher counters by quoting from *Genesis Rabbah* 4:4, that in a mirror someone can appear in many places without actually being everywhere, and in the same way, God can have various aspects and still be one in substance. The Teacher supports the Trinity with a passage attributed to the Muslim philosopher Avicenna which states that the “world was created through the Son,” but the Rebel remains unconvinced and says that the Teacher contradicted both Jewish law and the philosophers (126v / 1: 242). The Teacher (showing the difference between the

⁹ “Capítulo quinto en las rrazones de los contradizientes a lo que nos dezimos de las perssonas de la Trinidad en Dios e el su envestimiento en la umanidad del Christo de parte de la perssona del Fijo, e como será el quebrantamiento de sus rrazones dellos” (117r / 1: 222).

Mostrador and polemical texts that appeal strictly to reason) defends himself, arguing that philosophers sometimes contradict each other and that he only contradicts those philosophers who are in error. Philosophical reasons should only be used insofar as they support the primary intention of the Law because true conclusions can be drawn from false premises, and the Teacher then gives abundant examples of such philosophical support of the Law. The discussion then migrates from a consideration of philosophical support of the Law to an understanding of the Trinity. The Teacher gives various textual examples to prove that God includes more than one person, such as God's invocation "Let us make man in our image" (Gen 1:26), and the verse of Isaiah 6:3 that describes God as "Holy, holy, holy." The rebel gives traditional explanations of these verses against multiplicity, and the Teacher counters that not all interpretations of a given verse are correct. The Teacher concludes that, by dint of authorities (philosophers, literal exegesis, Talmudic exegesis, Kabbalistic commentary), his gloss is superior to other Jewish glosses that explain away the notion of God's persons. The Teacher invokes the *Dialogus* of Petrus Alfonsi, citing his discussion there of the Trinity as a conjunction of "substance, wisdom, and will."¹⁰ To all of the arguments that the Teacher proffers to prove the "incarnation of the divinity in humanity" ("de la divinidad en la humanidad"), the Rebel responds with skepticism and doubt, ultimately rejecting his proofs.

Chapter six gives "the arguments of those who contradict what we say in general about the incarnation of the divinity in the humanity of Christ; and how we will destroy their arguments."¹¹ Abner/Alfonso discusses the question of the divinity of the Messiah

¹⁰ See Tolan's introduction in Petrus Alfonsi, *Diálogos* 39.

¹¹ "El capítulo sexto en las razones de los contradizientes a lo que nos dezimos en general del enuestimimiento de la divinidad en la humanidad del Christo, e cómo quebrantaremos sus razones dellos" (142v / 2: 7).

and presents the standard Christian notion that the messiah was prophesied to be the divinity incarnated in a human. The Rebel presents a number of standard polemical arguments against the Christian idea of the divinity of Jesus. After rejecting the Jew's idea that God would never enter into a woman's womb because it is a "dirty and fetid place" ("lugar ssuzio e enconado" 142v/1: 274), the Teacher argues that women are not essentially dirty, and that the divinity would not be contaminated by the material. To the Rebel's charge that Jesus could not have both a human and divine nature without having two natures (an idea he says Christians reject), the Teacher argues that Christ was of one nature, although he was both fully human and fully divine. He cites St. Thomas to argue that the divinity in Jesus was not like the form in something material, because it does not suffer accidents. The Christ's divinity is, on the other hand, one and the same with the material, although it is, paradoxically, also separate from it. (As we shall see, this discussion shares much in common with the treatment of the same topic in Martini's *Pugio*, even though Martini was not his source).¹² This is followed by a discussion of the possible names given to Christ in the Talmud and later Jewish writers based on Is 9:6. The Teacher argues that the Masoretic commentators changed the punctuation of the original text of the Bible, and gives the example that Is 9:6 was to read "he was called" instead of "he will be called." The Rebel misquotes a series of verses from the Christian Gospels, and is quickly accused of misquotation by the Teacher (this accusation of misquotation is later repeated by the Rebel against the Teacher as well). The discussion then turns to the incarnation, and the Teacher offers a number of examples from Arabic philosophers supporting the notion of the incarnation of God. He then claims that

¹² For a comparison of Abner/Alfonso and Martini, see the discussion in supplement chapter two.

because the Jews deny the notion of incarnation, they deny the entire Law, the sayings of the prophets, the sages of the Talmud, and the philosophers, who all agree on this point, because to deny incarnation is, he says, to deny the notion of punishment and reward. The Teacher argues that without the concept of punishment and reward in the afterlife, there can be no covenant or relationship between mankind and God: Thus to deny God's incarnation—which, he says, is the foundation for the notion of punishment and reward, being absent in his view from the law of Moses—is to deny the entire covenant and to call God's justness—and power to judge—into question. In a dramatic conclusion, the teacher appeals at length to Jewish readers of the text that, if they have doubts, they should not remain in their uncertainty but seek out answers to their doubts. Addressing the Rebel directly as “tú, judío,” he invokes the importance of tradition within Judaism and the transmission of truth from father to son over generations in order to try and pressure the Jew into seeking answers to his doubts. If he does not seek answers apart from his tradition, the Teacher argues, the Jew will not only condemn himself, but all his progeny as well, because he will pass his own doubt and uncertainty down to them. As a final solution, he proposes that the Jew convert to Christianity *before* understanding why he should, and then later seek the answers and explanations to justify that conversion.

Chapter seven, the longest chapter in the work, sets out “to prove that the hope that the Jews have in the coming of the prophesied Christ is a false hope; and that Jesus the Nazarene was the Christ which came according to the times that were indicated for the coming of the Christ in the books of the prophets and the sages.”¹³ In it, Abner/Alfonso turns to the Jewish notion of the Messiah and argues that the Jewish hope

¹³ “El capitulo seteno es para provar que la esperança que los judios an a la venida del Christo sennalado es falsa esperança; mas que Jhesu Nazareno fue el Christo que veno segund los tiempos sennalados que ffueron dichos para la venida del Christo en los libros de los prophetas e de los sabios” (185r / 2: 100).

for a redeemer is a false hope because Jesus of Nazareth was the real Messiah awaited in prophecy. Because much traditional Jewish calculation of the messianic age depended in part or in whole on the book of Daniel, this entire chapter involves an interpretation of Daniel, and Abner/Alfonso spends a good deal of time answering the interpretations of verses relating to chronology in the Talmud and later commentators such as Rashi and Nahmanides. This discussion resembles in many points some of the arguments of Friar Paul and Nahmanides at the Disputation of Barcelona, and it is clear that Abner/Alfonso bases part of his discussion on the Ramban's Hebrew account of the event. The Teacher starts out by asserting that Jews themselves do not even agree among each other about when the Messiah will come and he sets out to show that the Jews misunderstand the verses from the book of Daniel relating to the chronology of Jewish history (8:13-14 and 25-26, 9:24, and 12:11) and, as a result, they miscalculate the time of the messianic age. The Teacher directly asks the Rebel if he believes that the coming of the Messiah can be calculated based on the prophets, prompting him to explain his beliefs. The Rebel then gives his belief about the calculation of the coming of the Messiah in great detail: By calculating the numeric significance of the Hebrew for the words "night" and "day" ("ve-haya erev ve-haya boqer" Gen 1:5) to be 574, the Rebel adds this number to the 2300 years from Daniel 8:14 to arrive at a sum of 2874, the total, he says, of the 210 years of Egyptian captivity, 480 years to the building of the First Temple, 410 years of activity in the First Temple (the way he arrives at this number is complicated), 70 years of exile, 414 more years of Second-Temple activity (also a complicated calculation), and 1290 years from Daniel 12:11. When this number, 2874, is added to the number of days from creation to captivity (2238), the final year of the Messiah's is calculated to be 5112 of

creation (Gregorian 1351-2). In an interesting error in the text in which the Christian is called “el maestro” instead of “Mostrador” (calling to mind Abner/Alfonso’s own title as “master Alfonso”), the Teacher sets out to correct the Jew’s calculations making use of the calculations of David Kimḥi and Rashi, among others.¹⁴

Chapter eight, the shortest of all the chapters, “is about the arguments that Jews argue saying that the Christ has not yet come, for which reason they say that the Christians are the people of Edom or Esau, which was to be destroyed and to fall before the coming of the Christ; and [it is about] how we will destroy their arguments.”¹⁵ In it, Abner/Alfonso continues the discussion of Jewish chronology begun in chapter seven and argues that traditional ideas of history within Judaism all support the argument that Jesus was the Messiah. He specifically takes on the common identification in Jewish tradition of the “fourth” kingdom seen in the vision of book seven of Daniel, specifically 7:24 (in light of Zechariah 6:1-2), with Edom, identified with Rome and the Roman church (stated by the Rebel on 236r / 2: 209-10). To the Rebel’s assertions, the Teacher sets out to prove that this explanation is incorrect in various ways, listing five “errors” made by the Rebel. First, the kingdoms of Media ad Persia are two kingdoms, not one. Second, the assertion that the kingdom of Rome, which was to fall at the end of the four reigns, is still stable is also not true. Third, the kingdom of Rome was not the fourth kingdom. Fourth, the kingdom of Rome was not the kingdom of “Edom.” Fifth, Edom does not represent the kingdom of the Christians. This chapter, like the previous, represents a more developed

¹⁴ The content of this chapter represents a much more elaborate version of the arguments Abner/Alfonso would later send in the second of his “three letters”, prompting the response of Joseph Shalom.

¹⁵ “El capitulo octavo es en las rrazones que los judios rrazonan diziendo que aun non es venido el Christo, por rrazon que dizen que los christianos sson la gente de Edom e Esau, la qual gente avia [a] aver quebranto e caymiento ante la venida del Christo, e como quebrantaremos nos las ssus rraznes dellos” (236r / 2: 209).

version of the argument in Abner's letters, specifically the first letter, to which Joseph Shalom responded. Through a series of other examples, including the meaning of the "flying scroll" of Zachariah 5:1, the *Book of Zerubavel* and the legend about the "Messiah ben Joseph" (usually understood to be the precursor of the final Messiah, the "Messiah ben David"), the meaning of "sefarad" and "zarefat" in Obadiah 20, and others, the Teacher tries to disprove the traditional Jewish historical chronology espoused by the Rebel. In the final paragraph, the Teacher notes that "Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra wrote that the sleepers who will not wake from their insane dream believe that the Jews are now in the captivity of Edom, and it is not as they believe," a statement that he then tries to use to appeal directly to the Jew: "Look, you, Rebel, how this sage explained this argument to you and other Jews who are just like you..." (249r / 2: 241).¹⁶

Chapter nine sets out "to prove that the hope that the Jews have for the coming of the Christ at any time not finished or cut short is also a false hope, and for this reason the Jews are again in exile from Israel."¹⁷ Abner/Alfonso here takes up the inveterate polemical argument that the current state of degradation and exile is proof that the Jews have lost God's favor by rejecting Jesus as the Messiah. The Teacher emphasizes that God's promises to bring the Jews out of captivity and gather the tribes were not made without condition. If this were true, the prophets would be liars, since they spoke constantly about God's punishment for faithlessness (249v / 2: 243). The Teacher gives many examples, Biblical, Talmudic, and medieval, which he says show that the Jews would never be gathered together from exile by the Messiah unless they put an end to

¹⁶ We will consider the significance of imagery of sleep and dreams later in this chapter.

¹⁷ "El capitulo noveno es para provar que la esperanza que los judios an para la venida del Christo en qualquier tienpo que ssea non terminado nin tajado es otrossi esperanza falssa, e que por esso son salidos los judios de buelta de Isrrael" (249r / 2: 242).

their sins. When the Rebel proffers support from prophetic verses such as those in Isaiah 60, Jeremiah 30-31, and Ezekiel 36 which suggest that the ten tribes are to be gathered together, the Teacher responds that some of these prophecies were meant about the Second Temple period and some about the salvation to come. “But you take some verses which seem like they might help you, and you don’t pay attention to other verses and sayings of the sages which go against your opinion.”¹⁸ It is fascinating to note that these same charges were brought against Abner/Alfonso by Joseph Shalom in his second and third letters. The Teacher cites and explains a litany of Biblical authorities (including Hosea 1:1-9 and 3:1-5, Isaiah 6:3-13, and Deuteronomy, book 12, and Leviticus book 26), and the Rebel counters his attacks (which also include the interpretations of Ibn Ezra and Maimonides) by insisting that God would not promise things He did not plan to deliver. When the Rebel then turns the arguments of the Teacher against him, arguing that if Christ wiped out sin, it makes no sense that there are still sinners in the world, the Teacher launches into a very interesting passage about free will and predetermination, a philosophical issue that remains a constant concern in Abner/Alfonso’s later writing.¹⁹ The Teacher brings forth many Talmudic and Midrashic verses, notably the statement in T.B. *Sanhedrin* 38a that Israel will not be saved until the two ruling houses come to an end (276r / 2: 307). The Teacher repeatedly presents Biblical authorities to argue that the ten tribes are not prophesied to be gathered together again, and the Rebel repeatedly presents counterarguments arguing that it does prophesy this. The Teacher tries to connect the prophecies about the chronology of Jewish history with other events in

¹⁸ “Tú te travas a algunos viessos que parecen como que te ayudan, e non catas a otros viessos e dichos de los sabios que son contra tu opinion” (258v / 2: 265).

¹⁹ This issue is discussed in more detail in supplement chapter three.

medieval history such as the rise of the Mendicant orders in Europe, and he gives explanations for various events related to the coming of the Messiah, including the war of Gog and Magog (which he associates with the time of Antiochus Epiphanes in the third century BCE). He expands the traditional Christian argument that the Jewish hope for a future Messiah is false and unfounded by adding Talmudic and other postBiblical sources to the standard litany of Biblical testimonia.

Chapter ten “is to prove that the Christians, according the customs and commandments which they have in their Law, should be called the holy of Israel, and that the Jews, according to the customs and commandments which they have in the Law of the Talmud are not fit to return to Israel; and [to show] how we will destroy all the arguments that they put forth against this.”²⁰ Here, the Teacher concludes that the Christians, because they followed Jesus as the Messiah, have inherited the status of the “true Israel” and are now God’s chosen people. The Teacher tries to prove that the Christians are morally superior to Jews in their commandments, laws, and behavior. He points to specific legal teachings about many crimes and vices (stealing, violence, rape, sodomy, etc) and tries to show that Christian law is superior to the recommendations of the Talmud. He argues that there are two kinds of commandments, those in which the primary intention is what is stated, and those that are simply a means to arriving at the primary intention. All commandments, he argues, are meant for a moral purpose, and so those commandments that are simply a means to a moral end can change according to the era that fulfills them. The ceremonial rituals are thus changeable, the teacher says,

²⁰ “El capitulo dezeno es para provar que lo[s] christianos, segund sus costumbres e los mandamientos que tienen puestos en ssu Ley, son convenientes a ser llamados los santos de [Israel], e que los judios, segund sus costumbres e sus mandamientos que tienen puestos en la Ley del Talmud, non son convinibles para ser de buelta de Israel; e como quebrantaremos todas las rrazones que ellos rrazonan contra esto” (292r / 2: 347).

and thus it is possible for Christians to fulfill the commandments better than Jews if they arrive more successfully at the moral intention behind them. In the very long paragraph seven (longer itself than chapters one, four, and eight), the Teacher sets out to consider, following the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides, all six-hundred thirteen commandments to evaluate them according to their intention, to decide if they still must be kept. He explicitly names over two-hundred commandments (pointing out places where he sees overlap between positive and negative commandments), and concludes that “it is proved with this that lack or abandonment of some commandments would be a fulfillment and following of the primary Law.”²¹ Because Jews have received some bad or ineffective commandments from their ancestors, they do not fulfill the Law, and it is for this reason that they are still in exile. When the Rebel refuses to accept this argument, the Teacher tries to show that the Jews themselves do not agree on the fulfillment of the Law (pointing to disagreement between Karaites and Rabbinites, as well as other Jewish groups), and since many commandments require the Temple in order to be fulfilled, either the Jew can do without them, or he fails to fulfill them. The Teacher even brings the Muslims into the discussion, arguing that although they too distort the Law, “we have to say that the Law of the Moors is not as bad as the faith of the Jews.”²² After a protracted debate about the inheritance of the status of “true Israel” by the Christians by virtue of their fulfillment of the moral Law, the Rebel, in his longest section in the book, remains unconvinced, accusing the Teacher of being “a man of many words” (339r / 2: 439). In his final words, the Teacher seems to give up on his arguments, concluding that “truth will be revealed

²¹ “Es provado con esto de como menguar de algunos mandamientos e dexarlos será cumplimiento e endereçamiento en la Ley primera” (322r / 2: 407-8).

²² “Devemos dezir que la Ley de los moros non es tan mala como la ffe de los judios” (332v / 2: 427).

not by means of attractive words or deceitful gestures.”²³ In two final paragraphs listed in the introductory description of contents (27v-28r / 1: 42) but not found in the actual text, the Rebel says he is even stronger in his faith than before the disputation, and the Christian simply insists again that God promised the Christians in Isaiah that they would “win all such disputations”, because their law is better than all others. Parallel to the Disputation of Barcelona, the conclusion of the debate is shrouded in uncertainty, with both sides claiming victory.

II. Hebrew Polemic and “Talmudic” Style

The most important characteristic that sets Abner/Alfonso’s writing apart from previous polemics is that he emphasizes unambiguously that he is writing for a Jewish readership. Previous polemicists did show some interest in doing this, although not necessarily to convince them through argumentation, and none did so with the consistency and the volume of Abner/Alfonso. Peter the Venerable of Cluny, for example, does express an interest in making his polemic against the Qur’ān available to Muslims in an Arabic translation, but there is no evidence that this interest ever bore fruit. In the thirteenth century, although the arguments of converts like Nicholas Donin in Paris and Paul Christiani in Barcelona and Paris were made, by most indications, directly to Jews (obviously against their will), but neither left an actual polemical text that was intended to be read by Jews. Obviously, the Hebrew accounts of both events that do survive, which were made by Jews for a Jewish readership, and as such they do not share the polemical goals of either convert. We have already shown that none of Raymond

²³ “La verdad mostrará ssu camino non por parte de palabras affeytadas nin de gestos engannosos” (342r / 2: 443).

Martini's texts, although they do show an interest in taking real Jewish responses into account in honing anti-Jewish polemical arguments, were intended to be read directly by Jews and that his arguments do not show much concern with positively convincing Jews of anything, but instead apparently aim only to prove their own arguments and disprove any counter-arguments. The only possible figure that may not follow this general trend found among other polemicists is Raymond Lull, who does show an interest both in reaching a Muslim readership and actually convincing Muslims of his points on positive grounds. Nevertheless, in the immense corpus of his writings, only some of his texts—none from his anti-Jewish polemic—fit this description, while many, many other texts resemble more traditional textual polemic.

It is, thus, one of Abner/Alfonso's unique characteristics that all of his writing was intended for Jews, including some texts directed at specific people. Even in those cases where a specific reader is not identified, such as in the *Mostrador*, *Libro de la ley*, and apparently his *Sefer Milhamot Adonai*, the simple fact that Abner/Alfonso composed his works in Hebrew can be taken as an indication that his readership was Jewish. Abner/Alfonso seems to be unique in this respect, being the first (and one of very few overall) to actually compose his anti-Jewish polemic in Hebrew. Raymond Martini, of course, went to great lengths to include accurate Hebrew texts and translations in his citations, but did not compose any of his arguments in Hebrew. Likewise, Raymond Lull did apparently compose a few of his texts in Arabic but this constitutes only a tiny fraction of his total output and none of his works was composed in Hebrew. Abner/Alfonso is totally unique in that he composed most of his anti-Jewish texts in Hebrew.²⁴ His text

²⁴ It is possible that some of his lost works, such as the "Libro de las maldiciones de los judios", were not composed in Hebrew. Also, Mettmann considers it "doubtful" that *Libro de la ley* was composed in Hebrew

could thus claim a similar readership to that of various anti-Christian polemics written in Hebrew in the twelfth through the fourteenth century, such as the *Sefer Milhamot Adonai* (*Book of the Wars of the Lord*) of Jacob ben Reuben, the *Sefer ha-Berit* (*Book of the Covenant*) of Joseph Kimḥi, the *Milhemet Mizvah* (*The Obligatory War*) of Meir ben Simeon of Narbonne, the *Sefer Kelimat ha-Goyim* (*Confusion of the Gentiles*) of Profiat Duran, the *Bittul 'Iqqare ha-Nozrim* (*Refutation of the Christian Principles*) of Ḥasdai Crescas, and many others (for a more complete list, see Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics*, 13-20). Even more specifically, Abner/Alfonso's polemics in some cases were paired with a Jewish response against them in Hebrew, as was the case in the surviving manuscript of the *Teshuvot* and the polemical letters. Although many of his works were translated into Castilian, such as his *Sefer Milhamot Adonai* (*Libro de las batallas de Dios*), the *Moreh* itself (*Mostrador de justicia*), his polemical letters, *Minhat Qenaot* (*Ofrenda de Zelos*), and *Teshuvot la-Meharef* (*Respuestas al blasfemo*), we know that, at least in the first case, this was undertaken at the request of a Christian (Doña Blanca of Portugal) in order to include Christian readers among those who knew his texts. The lingering question of who translated Abner/Alfonso's works into Castilian after Abner/Alfonso himself translated the *Sefer Milhamot* remains unanswerable. Sainz de la Maza, who takes it as almost certain that Abner/Alfonso was his own translator, speculates that he translated his own works into Castilian either to reach more Jews or to make his arguments available to Christians who did not know Latin (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 247-48). It is extremely significant, in the context of this discussion, that the *Sefer Milhamot*, his earliest text after his conversion, was also the first to

(*Ofrenda de Zelos und Libro de la ley* 87 n. 1), although this remains uncertain. There is also, of course, still controversy, over the two Castilian texts occasionally attributed to Abner/Alfonso, the *Libro de la tres creencias* and the *Sermones contra los iudíos y moros*, but as we observe in the bio-bibliographical study, many critics doubt such attributions and no definitive proof has been given to certify them.

be translated into Castilian. Even though all of his other surviving texts were written after this work, and even though we know that Abner/Alfonso himself translated this text into Castilian, he still chose to write all of his later works in Hebrew, thus emphasizing that his primary intended audience was Jewish and not Christian. This unambiguous directness sets Abner/Alfonso's polemics apart from most texts in the Western *Adversus Iudaeos* tradition.

Proof of his intention to speak directly to Jews does not come only from the fact of the language of his texts alone. Abner/Alfonso repeatedly states in his texts that this is his intention. His *Teshuvot la-Meharef* is addressed in second person to his rival, Isaac Polgar, with whom Abner/Alfonso maintained an ongoing polemical debate through a series of his works. Likewise, in the beginning of his *Minhat Qenaot / Ofrenda de Zelos*, it states that this was a work "which Master Alfonso composed against a Jews who argued against him, named Isaac ben Polgar."²⁵ In each of his three polemical letters, Abner/Alfonso speaks in the second person, and in the first and second letter, he identifies the person to whom the letter is addressed. His *Teshuvot ha-Meshubot (Response to the Apostasies)* is also in the second person addressed to Joseph Shalom, in response to his three responses to Abner/Alfonso's polemical letters. We also know that he addressed another letter to Isaac Israeli in Toledo in 1334, which was partly incorporated into Israeli's *Yesod Olam* (36b). In *Libro de la ley*, even though Abner/Alfonso does not directly address his Jewish reader and speaks of Jews in the third person, he still expresses a hope that his work will convince Jews of his arguments. Abner/Alfonso states that "perhaps this book will be reason and cause by God for some sages and those understanding and wise who might be among the

²⁵ "...que compuso maestro Alfonso <contra> un judio que la contradizia, que avya nonbre Ysach ben Polgar" (1a / 13).

Jews to understand and know with their wills the good points of our Christianity which they do not know..." (1v / 87).²⁶ In all of these works, Abner/Alfonso shows an explicit interest not only in countering Jewish arguments against him, but in presenting his own arguments to Jews in a meaningful and effective way in hopes of actually convincing them.

His clearest statement of intention is in his *Mostrador*. In the preface in which he includes his conversion account, he states

...In order that the reasons be more evident and manifest to whomever should want to know the truth in them, I wanted to compose this book, which I called "Teacher of Righteousness", in order to show the true faith, and the truth and justice in it, to the Jews, who have need of it, as I was told [in my dream], and in order to respond to all the counter-arguments and doubts, or most of them, that every rebel or contradictory Jew can make to our words.²⁷

His stated intention is to show the truth to the Jews, and to respond to their doubt. In Chapter six, paragraph fourteen, he again states his intention in similar terms. In describing his citations from the Hebrew Bible, he notes

I did not take verses according to how they are translated to Latin among Christians, but rather according to how they are understood in the Hebrew language. This is because my words and arguments here are not with Christians,

²⁶ "Puede que quiçab [sic] será este libro razon e causa de parte de Dios a algunos sabios y entendidos e buenos que podrán ser de los judios, para entender y connoçer con sus voluntades los bienes de la nuestra cristiandad que no connoçen..." (1v/87).

²⁷ . "E por amor que las rrazones ssean más paladinas e manifestas a quien quisiere saber la verdat en ellas, quisse conponer este libro, que lo llamé por nonbre "Mostrador de Justiçia", por mostrar la ffe çierta, e la verdat e la justicia en ella, a los judios, que la avien mester, segund que me ffue dicho, e para rresponder a todas las contradiciones e las dubdas, o las más dellas, que non pueden ffazer todo judio rrebelde e contrdezidor a las nuestras palabras" (13r/ 1:15).

but with contrary Jews, for the sages do not have need of medicine, in the way the sick have need of it.”²⁸

What is suggested by the fact that Abner/Alfonso composed his works in Hebrew—i.e. that Abner/Alfonso’s goal was to speak directly to Jews and not Christians—is confirmed by his explicit statements in his major works. The directness intended in his works sets them apart from previous polemics.

Given this intention in the *Mostrador*, the other unique aspects of the text take on greater significance. Not only did Abner/Alfonso write his work in Hebrew, but he goes to great lengths to couch his anti-Jewish arguments in terms that would be familiar to Jewish readers as those of original Jewish works. We have already seen that Abner/Alfonso avoids using non-Jewish sources the majority of the time, and when he does, they come mostly from classical and Arabic philosophical sources that had already been translated into Hebrew and were well-known among intellectual Jews of Spain and Provence. Through his wealth of citations, he shows a profound knowledge not only of major rabbinical arguments in the Talmud and major Midrashim, but also of other works from many other periods of Jewish writing, including major works by figures such as Rashi, David Kimḥi, Naḥmanides and Maimonides (including Maimonides’ legal discussion of commandments), other works of medieval exegesis and philosophy including Saadya Gaon and Moses Chiquitilla and Abraham Ibn Ezra, works of medieval historiography such as the *Sefer Yosippon*, and the *Sefer ha-Kabbalah* of Ibn Daud, and even

²⁸ “...non tomé los viessos ssegund que sson trasladados al latin entre los christianos, ssinon segunt <152r> que sson entendudos en lengua del ebrayco. E esto es porque mis palabras e mis rrazones aqui non son con los christianos, ssinon con los judios contradezidores; ca los sabios non an menester melezina, como lo an me[ne]ster los enfermos” (151v-152r / 2: 28).

apocalyptic works such as the *Sefer Zerubavel*. A full consideration of his Jewish sources is given in chapter three of the supplement.

Historian Jacob Katz has noted that the most threatening thing about a convert to Christianity in the Middle Ages and after was his reputation among other Jews. The conversion of an unlearned or unliked Jew was not perceived to be a threat as was that of a Jew from a more important position in society such as a public figure or scholar. "It was the loss of these," he states, "even though they might number a few only, and not the loss of those of dubious character and position, that caused the community to be in a state of permanent defense against Christianity" (*Tolerance* 76).²⁹ The wide array of sources presented in Abner/Alfonso's works, as well as his obvious mastery of the Hebrew language, posed a substantial threat because it reinforced the understanding that Abner/Alfonso was not uneducated or simple minded, but was fully educated within the Jewish tradition. Even Jews of his own day praised Abner/Alfonso for his learning. Moses Narboni, for example, in his "Epistle on Free Will", called him "a sage among the most singular of his generation...."³⁰ Hecht states that "In all the responses to Abner/Alfonso in our possession, the level of his knowledge of Judaism is never questioned. On the contrary, he is mentioned with great esteem by those who responded to him...his Hebrew fluency and knowledge of Jewish sources was complete" (48). Likewise modern critics have unanimously lauded his learning in Hebrew and Jewish sources. Shamir stated that

²⁹ Katz also makes insightful observations about the psychological threat presented by Christian missionizing and conversionary efforts: "In countries where the whole material and spiritual culture was pervaded by Christian thought and symbolism, the appeal of Christianity to a Jew must have been of a very complex character. To embrace Christianity meant accepting the whole scale of values which prevailed in the ruling society. As medieval civilization was expressed almost entirely in religious terms, it is very likely that a Jew who was captivated by the values of Christian society experienced this process subjectively in the form of religious conversion" (*Exclusiveness and Tolerance* 76).

³⁰ "ראיתי והנה חכם מהמיוחדים שבדורו ואני השגתינו באחרית ימיו" (Hayoun, "L'Épître du Libre Arbitre" 146).

“Alphonso was a scholar and very learned in Jewish studies” and he praised the “vast and deep learning manifested in [the *Mostrador*]” (48). Even Baer, who is often quick to criticize Abner/Alfonso as a dangerous opportunist, praised Abner/Alfonso as being “highly gifted” (*A History* 1: 347). The wealth of citations from a very wide panoply of sources must be understood in the larger context of Abner/Alfonso’s polemical goal of creating a compelling argument in support of Christianity from within the Jewish tradition or, in Hecht’s words, “a Christian missionary thrust completely within a pseudo-Jewish structure” (48). Beyond the approach of Raymond Martini, who presents Jewish sources that he claims support Christianity in spite of their Jewish nature, Abner/Alfonso presents his sources as all naturally pointing together to a vision of the Messiah that ultimately supports Christian claims to truth, but without such a great disparity between what the texts claim to say (from a Jewish perspective) and what they “actually” say (from a Christian one). By even rejecting Christian sources that would seem to naturally support his arguments (such as Petrus Alfonsi, whom he criticizes), Abner/Alfonso seeks to paint his reading of sources as measured and unbiased. As we will explore in greater detail below, he seeks to subtly replace the opposition between Christian and Jew into an opposition between those that, in his view, seek truth (such as himself) and those that merely follow tradition (such as most Jews). The wealth and variety of his source material supports this shift in perspective by attempting to show that his arguments not only make use of Jewish sources, but that they ultimately derive from them as well. This fundamental difference sets Abner/Alfonso’s polemic apart from previous polemics that sought to make use of Jewish authorities.

One of the subtle ways Abner/Alfonso seeks to successfully represent his anti-Jewish polemical arguments as essentially “Jewish” is through the style of his work. Baer has remarked that Abner/Alfonso’s style can be seen as “Midrashic” in its stringing together of source citations and its constant and oftentimes meandering argumentation that includes opposing or contradictory considerations within its own arguments. He states, “His Hebrew style, his fluency in composition, and his way of skipping from one topic to another put him in a class with the aggadists or eschatological writers like R. Abraham b. Ḥiyya and the contemporary mystics rather than with the Christian and Jewish schoolmen.” (*A History* 1: 334). Sainz de la Maza has also observed this aspect of Abner/Alfonso’s style, distinguishing it from that of previous polemics, most notably that of Raymond Martini. He describes very clearly the “rabbinic” style of Abner/Alfonso’s polemic, which is made up not of careful, point-by-point exposition of arguments but of a weaving argument full of tangential considerations that presents a wide variety of sources in rapid succession to create an effect of agglutination of *auctoritates*.

El estilo del *Mostrador de justicia*, sin embargo, se aleja marcadamente de la diáfana ordenación escolástica dada por Raimundo Martí a su *Pugio*; Abner-Alfonso se ajusta más bien a los vaivenes del discurso y a la acumulación y encadenamiento de *testimonia* fragmentarios de la más diversa procedencia característicos de la exégesis rabínica, tal como lo encontramos, por ejemplo, en los comentarios midráshicos. (“El *Toledot Yeshu* castellano en el Maestro Alfonso de Valladolid” 800).

Indeed, Martini’s “diaphanous scholastic order” cannot be found in Abner/Alfonso’s arguments. Abner/Alfonso states in the introduction to the *Mostrador* that he actually

imposed more order on his text than he is “used to”, pointing to the great disparity between his own polemical project and that of previous Christian writers. He explains

This book is divided into ten chapters and each of those chapters divided in pieces, according to the arguments that pass between disputers in things such as these, we will state here in general the rubrics of each of those chapters of each of their pieces, so that they be easy to find for those who wish to look for them...even though naming the rubrics of each of those parts is sometimes damaging to lazy disciples who want to know the ends of things without studying and knowing the premises necessary for them...and I took pains to compose this book in this way, although I am not at all used to it...”³¹

Despite his efforts at imposing order, his chapters are often extremely long (chapters seven and ten, for example, are each nearly the length of the entire text of the *Dialogus* of Petrus Alfonsi) and the individual paragraphs vary in length from a few lines to over fifty pages in length. This lack of excessively rigid order served as part of Abner/Alfonso’s strategy of speaking directly to his Jewish reader in as “natural” a voice and style as possible. In Hecht’s words, “there is an ease of presentation in his Hebrew works that is appealing to the Hebrew reader” (48). This appealing ease of presentation of language and sources is, moreover, only one part of a larger edifice of authorial manipulation aimed to blur the boundaries between converter and converted, polemicized and polemicist.

³¹ “E desde agora comienço e digo que este libro es partido a diez capitulos, e cada capitulo dellos partido por pedaços, segund las rrazones que an huso de correr entre los disputadores en tales cosas como éstas, e nonbraremos aqui en general las rrubricas de cada capitulo dellos e de cada uno de sus pedaços, porque ssean ligeros de ffallar al qui las quisiere buscar...maguera quel nonbrar las rrubricas de todas aquellas partes ffaz danno a vegadas a los deciplos perezosos, que quieren ssaber las ffines de las cosas a menos que sse adelanten a estudiarlas e ssaber las premissas que son mester para ellas...e sobre esto me asoffrí en conponer este libro desta guisa, maguera que non so guisado para tanto...” (13r-v/1:15).

III. Personal Testimony and Direct Appeal

We can recall Alastair Minnis's explanation that the authority of a textual proof source, or *auctor*, depended on its authenticity as well as its intrinsic worth as inherently Christian. In apologetic polemics, the convert-author is a symbol who represents the goals of the readership, and although his authenticity (having first-hand knowledge of pre-conversion texts) is not called into question, he must establish his intrinsic worth by proving the true conviction that lies behind his conversion. In missionizing polemic like Abner/Alfonso's, on the other hand, Abner/Alfonso must prove for his Jewish readership both his intrinsic worth in presenting realistic Jewish arguments against the Christian Teacher, as well as his authenticity as a one who shares a Jewish perspective and whose conversion resulted from that perspective. Martini hints at the importance of this very issue even as early as the *Capistrum*, when he states that

As often as we might adduce something true from the Talmud against them, to overcome some wickedness or to refute some objection of their, or even to establish a certain truth in earnest, they argue extensively that we ought not to, nor can we fairly adduce something from the Talmud on our behalf against them, unless we were to believe in the entire Talmud and accept it all.³²

Although, as we showed in the previous chapter, Martini does not take steps to counter this accusation except to add more textual sources to his argument, Abner/Alfonso, on the other hand, tries to blur the line between himself and his reader by implying that he in fact does believe in and accept the Talmud, and that this is the basis of his conversion

³² "Quotiescumque siquidem verum aliquod de suo Talmud inducimus contra eos, ad ipsorum malitiam aliquam confutandam, vel nequitiam repellendam, vel etiam ad veritatem aliquam comprobendam serio multum causantur non debere nos, nec iuste posse de Talmud aliquid inducere pro nobis contra eos, nisi toti Talmud credamus et totum admittamus" (2: 280-81).

and Christian faith. There are many subtle steps that Abner/Alfonso takes to effect this authorial illusion.

In the context of Abner/Alfonso's goal to present his anti-Jewish arguments in a pseudo-Jewish form, the importance of the dialog form of his *Mostrador* cannot be overlooked. Sainz de la Maza has argued that the organization of the text into the form of a dialog between the Christian "Teacher" (*Mostrador*) and the Jewish "Rebel" (*Mamreh/Rebele*) is too common to be of any significance. It is true that polemics were frequently organized into dialogs, and Gilbert Dahan (*Les Intellectuels Chrétiens*, 340) classifies the dialog among the most common polemical forms, along with the letter, the treatise, and the collection of *testimonia*. Even so, none of the many polemical dialogs from the *Adversus Iudaeos* tradition were intended for missionizing or conversionary purposes because their primary readership was Christian. In the context of Abner/Alfonso's stated goal of presenting his arguments directly to Jews, the generic form of a dialog takes on greater significance, because it mirrors within the text the real confrontation ostensibly taking place outside the text as well. In traditional polemics, the hermeneutical Jew existed only in the minds of the Christian polemicist and his readership. There is, however, occasional erosion of the edifice of the textual dialog when Abner/Alfonso's own authorial voice breaks through that of the Teacher and Rebel. One of the places where this slippage is most obvious is when Abner/Alfonso makes statements in a first-person voice. Leaving the prefatory personal conversion narrative aside for the moment (given its importance in Abner/Alfonso's arguments, we will consider it in more detail below), we can see Abner/Alfonso's first-person voice shining through in the introductory description of the contents of the work. Frequently, instead of saying that the Rebel will

argue “against the Teacher,” as he does in every other paragraph of the text, it states that he will argue “against us” (“contra nos”). The use of the authorial plural first person throughout the table of contents to represent the perspective of the Teacher is constant. Even more significantly, in certain places, the “we” and “us” is transformed into “I” and “me”, such as in the description of chapter five, paragraph eleven, in which the Rebel “goes against me concerning what I cited from the sayings of the sages of the Talmud about the verse in Genesis....”³³ This conflation of the Christian perspective of “us” and the authorial “me” occurs repeatedly through the table of contents, exposing the intended perspective behind the “I”-and-“You” interaction of the Teacher and Rebel, and making this textual debate a stand-in for the real debate between Abner/Alfonso and his former Jewish co-religionists outside the text. There is one critical moment when this slippage becomes even clearer. In Chapter seven, paragraph three, instead of the standard beginning of every other paragraph in the work “The Teacher said” (“Dixo el Mostrador”), the text reads “The Master said” (“Dixo el Maestro” 187r / 2: 104). This transposition of “Maestro” for “Mostrador” immediately recalls the beginning of every one of Abner/Alfonso’s major works, which begin “Dixo el Maestro” (*Mostrador* 12r / 1: 13, *Ofrenda de zelos* 1va / 15), “Dixo Alffonso” (Castilian *Teshuvot* 41c / 11), “Amar Maestri Alfonso” (“Master Alfonso said”) (Hebrew *Teshuvot* 8a, and the *Teshuvot ha-Meshubot* 326), and “Dixo Maestro Alffonso” (*Libro de la ley* 1v / 87).³⁴ This egregious slip of stating “maestro” for “mostrador” shows that Abner/Alfonso thought of his polemical

³³ “Para contradiezir a mí en lo que nonbré de dichos de los sabios del Talmud sobre el viesso que dize en “Genesi”...” (19r / 1: 25).

³⁴ See the note by Mettmann in his edition of the Castilian *Těšuvot la-Měharef. Spanische Fassung* 11 n. 1.

dialog in the *Mostrador* as one between him himself and those Jews who argued against him. The text's dialogical format is thus critical for Abner/Alfonso's rhetorical strategy.

Because Abner/Alfonso's personal identification with the Teacher in this polemical dialog is so patently obvious, the other examples when the Teacher directly addresses the Jew outside the parameters of the topic under discussion can all be seen as moments when Abner/Alfonso himself directly addresses his Jewish reader. For example, at the end of chapter eight, after citing Abraham Ibn Ezra, the Teacher says "Look you, Rebel, how this sage explained this subject to you and to other Jews who are just like you...."³⁵ In chapter one, paragraph thirty-three, he even calls the Jew his "brother: "And now you, brother Jew, I implore you that you put your understanding towards the service of God to know only truth and justice."³⁶

One of the most fascinating and important moments of this sort when the edifice of the polemical dialog and the role of Teacher and Rebel fades to the background and "the Jew" is directly addressed with admonishing words comes, interestingly, around the very middle of the manuscript:

And now you, Jew, pay attention to the words put forth which I showed you here, if you are among men with understanding who are very used to working in true sciences, and given that you agreed to the position that we established at the beginning of [this] book that your intention in these disputations would be to seek the truth and service of God, not in order to win nor for vainglory, and you will see the certainty of the faith of the Christians...If you are not used to studying the

³⁵ "Cata tú, rrebelle, como metió este ssabio a ti e a los otros judios, que sson tales como tú, en esta rrazon..." (249r / 2: 241).

³⁶ "E agora tú, hermano judios [sic], ruégote que sea tu entendimiento al servicio de Dios e para saber la verdat e la justicia solamente..." (42v/1:71).

books of the sciences and knowing all that ancient books said about these profound and subtle things where the studies of the great sages end up, remove ill from your heart and pluck malice from your flesh and make your ear like a windmill in order to receive and give yourself over to those who know more than you, and incline your ear and hear the words of the sages, and put your heart according to my understanding, and do not go ahead to argue with and contradict their understandings. (184r-v / 2: 98).³⁷

Abner encourages the Jew who is doubting and confused to study more intensely the sages of his own tradition. As he states in the introduction to the *Teshuvot* in his explanation of his intentions in writing *Minhat Qenaot / Ofrenda de Zelos*, “God, may He be blessed, knows my heart. I did not write it for my glory nor did I intend to be glorified by your disgrace...my desire was to honor God and not to increase disputes in Israel.”³⁸ Part of his strategy, as he states it, is to encourage Jews to study more in search of truth, because he believes that, just as was the case in his experience as he represents it, this will naturally lead them to question their faith and possibly turn to his explanations as an alternative. He concludes his advice thus:

³⁷ “E agora tú, judio, ten mientes a estas palabras assumadas que te mostré aqui, si tú eres de los omnes entendudos que usaron mucho a trabajar en las çiençias verdaderas, e con lo que otorgueste la postura que pusiemos en comienço del libro que será tu entençion en estas disputaciones a querer la verdat e seruiçio de dios, non por manera de vençer nin de vanagloria, e verás la çertedunbre de la fe de los christianos en como es en la ffin de <184v> quanto más puede ser del cumplimento para endereçar al pueblo en este mundo e acarrearlos a la vida del otro mundo e a la gloria perdurable. E demas que es ffundada sobre las rrayzes que ffueron dicha[s] para ella en la Ley de Moysen e las prophcias e en los dichos de los ssabios e de los filosofos, como ya nonbré ssuso. E ssi tú non huseste a estudiar en los libros de las sciencias e ssaber todo lo que los antigos dixieron en estas cosas ffundas e sotiles, ado llegaron los estudios de los mayores sabios, rriedra sanna de tu coraçon e tuelle malicia de tu carne e ffaz a tu oreja como la tolva del molino para rresçebir e asufrirte ssobre los que saben más que tú, e acuesta tu oreja e escucha palabras de los sabios, e tu coraçon pon a mi entendimiento, e non allegues adelante para porfiar e contraddezir a sus entendimientos dellos...” (184r-v/2:98). The end of this passage resembles a passage in paragraph twenty-seven of chapter one, in which the Teacher also makes the appeal to “tira sanna de tu coraçon e faz passar malicia de tu carne [e] escucha palabra de rrazon con manssedunbre e assentamiento de sesso” (34r / 1: 56).

³⁸ “כי נתכוונתי לכבוד האל וכדי שלא ירבו מחלוקות בישראל” (8b / Hecht 339).

And if one does not have a great understanding to know good and evil, and truth and falsehood, and is doubting about the issue, let him go to the sages to learn from them. And if he finds a contradiction among the sages, let him strive and work to understand by himself, and he will have the heart³⁸ to understand in their words where the truth lies. For if one strives greatly in this, he will later see the truth, and he will write it in its [essential] nature...a man should not remain doubtful in this great foundation [of faith], for this is not among those things that can be forgiven, nor should it be taken as vulgar and outmoded, for the deception that a man can receive in it is not like material deception, but rather it is the deception of the soul for him and for his offspring and for all those who follow him, them and their children and their children's children, [because] all of Israel is faithful one through another. (184v / 2: 99)³⁹

This passage, which is one of the most candid and, for that reason, significant passages in the entire text of the *Mostrador*, gives a clear picture of Abner/Alfonso's polemical strategy and of his attitude *vis-à-vis* his Jewish reader. The entire facade of the point-by-point disputation fades to the background in this passage and the thin veil separating the voice of the Teacher from that of Abner/Alfonso authorial voice is removed by this direct appeal to the Jewish Rebel and the Jewish reader. His primary

³⁸ This statement "...e abrá el coraçon para entender..." makes more sense when read without the accent, i.e. "...and let him open his heart to understand." With the accent, however, it seems to read "...and he will have the heart to understand" or, possibly, "...and his heart will have [what it needs] to understand...."

³⁹ "E si non a entendimiento largo para conoçer en el bien e el mal, e la verdat e la mintira, e está dubdando en la cosa, vaya a los sabios [a] aprender dellos. E si fallare contradicion entre los sabios, punne e trabaje para entender por sí mismo, e abrá él coraçon para entender e sus palabras dellos a quál cabo acuesta la verdat...E non deve ffinçar omne dubdoso en esta grand rrayz, ca non es de las cosas que se pueden perdonar, nin deven tomarla groseramente e como de passada, ca el enganno que omne puede rrecebir en ello non es como enganno de aver, mas es enganno del alma para él e para su ssimiente e para todos los qui dél ssiquieren, ellos e sus ffigjos e fijos de sus ffigjos fasta siglo, e que todo Isrrael sson fiadores unos por otros" (184v / 2: 99).

goal is not only to encourage others to explore their faith and come to understand the authorities of their tradition, but to encourage them to seek truth from all corners and to be open to things they find from sources not accepted in Jewish tradition. Abner/Alfonso's appeal is made of two parts: the first calls upon the Jew to "pay attention" and study more assiduously the writings of his own sages within the Jewish tradition. The second is to "strive and work by yourself" if contradictions or difficulties in the teachings of the sages are found. He does not impugn the Jewish tradition as false, but instead encourages the Jewish reader to study more diligently. He presents Jewish sources as more true than false, even though he claims that Christians understand them better, and thus are closer to the truth.

You, the Jews, by negating this named incarnation [of Christ], always stumble and are caught in a very strong net and trap, and [you do] worse things, such as denying the entire Law...and moreover, you deny the sayings of the prophets and the great sages of the Talmud and the philosophers, who concur about this incarnation, as we've said. But we, the Christians, who do believe [in the incarnation], have no fear of stumbling or ever falling in those nets in which you are caught, nor in the other net which you mentioned [of believing in idols and polytheism], because we believe firmly in the sayings of the prophets and the great sages who are authentic among you and among other gentiles...⁴⁰

⁴⁰ "Mas vos, los judios, en que negades este investimento dicho, entrepeçades ssienpre e sodes presos en rred e en lazo más fuerte e más peor, que es negar toda la Ley...e demas, que negades los dichos de los prophetas e de los grandes sabios del Talmud e de los ffilosofos, que conuerdan en este investimento, segund dicho es. Mas nos, los christianos, que lo creemos, non avemos miedo de entrepeçar nin caer nunca en aquellas rredes en que vos ssodes presos, nin en la otra rred que dixiste, pues que nos fallamos e creemos bien ffirmemente los dichos de los prophetas e de los grandes ssabios abtenticos entre vos e entre otros gentiles" (165r /2: 57-8).

Here, the Teacher accepts the authoritative status of Jewish sources, and makes the claim not only that those sources support Christian teachings—a claim made by previous Dominican polemicists—but also that the Christians actually believe in the authorities that are accepted among the Jews, whereas the Jews themselves deny their own authorities. The ultimate appeal, in this and other similar passages, is for the Jewish reader to work and study in search of the truth in order to “truly” accept and follow his own authorities. After presenting in the *Mostrador* a Christian argument that he says is supported by the sayings of Rabbi Akiva, the Teacher says to the Rebel that, “I think that you also, Jew, know this, but that out of love of believing you will win, pride forced you to go against your own teachers.”⁴¹ In a roundabout way, the appeal is to be Christian by being a better Jew, that is, by adhering more to what Abner/Alfonso understands to be the meaning of the texts and traditions considered as authentic and authoritative within Judaism. At the same time, however, the Teacher does push the Jewish reader to think of himself apart from his tradition, and to see his own understanding as capable of discerning truth above and beyond that of the authorities of his religion. (We will consider below Abner/Alfonso’s defense of “moving beyond” the authorities as an addition to the conclusions of one’s teacher.) The worst thing, in Abner/Alfonso’s view as it is expressed here, is to “remain in doubt” because this is unforgivable, more so than striving alone to resolve doubts and converting, even if one is in error. He encourages the “understanding sage to study subtly.”⁴²

⁴¹ “E yo cudo que tambien tú, judio, conosçes esto, ssinon que por amor de cuydar vençer te forço la soberbia de yr contra tus maestros” (252v / 2: 251).

⁴² “...sabio entendudo a estudiar ssoilmientre...” (33r / 1:53).

The rhetorical strategy of this direct appeal involves feigning in a believable way Abner/Alfonso's own respect for the position of his individual reader, a respect that is reflected not only in the general avoidance of direct insults of the sort we see in other polemics between the Teacher and the Rebel, but in Abner/Alfonso's own effort to convince and convert his reader by appealing to his knowledge and understanding. Ram Ben-Shalom noted this as Abner/Alfonso's strategy in his polemical letters and his response to the responses of Joseph Shalom, stating,

Despite the severity of Abner's claims against the Jews and Judaism, it appears that, on a personal level, he remained interested in the company of Jewish scholarly circles, respecting Joseph Shalom's attempt to return fire. Indeed, it is because of Shalom's wisdom that Abner expects him to understand his arguments and convert" (55).⁴³

The implicit logic of this rhetorical appeal is very complicated, and it epitomizes that of the entire argumentative strategy in the *Mostrador*. First, by pushing his reader to study more, he encourages the Jew to admit he has doubts and points of faith that he may not fully understand. This is the first step in his overall goal of separating the Jew from his tradition. This appeal that he "struggle and work to understand by himself" ("punne e trabaje para entender por sí mismo") translates, behind a veiled obsequiousness that represents the Jew as more intelligent than his community, into a call for the Jew to think apart from his own tradition and be open to other, non-Jewish sources. He then introduces the possibility that true arguments could come from Christian polemicists such

⁴³ As Ben-Shalom points out, this is evident in the opening to his *Teshuvot ha-Meshubot* (55), e.g. see Rosenthal's edition, 326.

as himself. Near the end of chapter one in paragraph thirty-one, the Teacher encourages the Rebel to be open minded:

Thus, when you should find Christians who give some gloss of some verse that contradicts your opinion, do not pressure yourself to push it away or discard it on the basis that other [verses] do not follow that intention—as many Jews did who composed books of disputations against Christians—but look first to see if that argument which they linked to the verse is confirmed as true through philosophical study or the sayings of students of philosophy or the sayings of the sages of the Talmud or others who are authentic [authorities] among you.”⁴⁴

Not only does he encourage the Jew not to follow Jewish tradition of the rabbinic sages if he should find contradictions or points he does not agree with there. He stresses the relativity of the categories of belief and heresy and says that the only way to decide who is really right to follow is not tradition, but personal understanding and reason:

It is known that whoever holds to a belief in the world will reason according to his nature as much as he can and will say that that [belief] is the most certain of all, and that all others are bad and lying and heresies and idolatries compared with it. And there is nothing fitting to choose the truth from among the lies except one’s understanding and the weight of reason.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ E por ende, quando fallares a los christianos que dieren alguna glosa de algun viesso tal que contradiga la tu opinion, non te apresses a enpuxarla nin a desecharla por parte de que non siguiessen los otros viessos asegund aquella entencion, como lo fizieron todos los judios que conpusieron libros de disputaciones contra los christianos, mas cata primero si aquella rrazon que arrimaron al viesso es confirmada por verdadera de parte del estudio filosofico o de dichos de los filosofos estudiantes o de dichos de los ssabios del Talmud o los otros abtenticos entre vos” (40v / 1: 67).

⁴⁵ “Sabida cosa es que qualque[quier] se pagar de una creencia del mundo razonará segund su natura quanto más puidere e dirá que aquella es la más çierta de todas, e que todas las otras en comparacion della son malas e mintrosas e heresias e ydolatrias conplidas. E non ay cosa conuiniente para escoger la verdat de entre la mintira, sinon el entendimiento e el peso de la raçon” (37r/1: 61).

With this argument, he also, in exhorting the Jew to think for himself, encourages him to separate himself from the tradition of anti-Christian Hebrew polemicists of the likes of Jacob ben Reuben, Joseph Kimḥi, Meir ben Simeon of Narbonne, and others. He speaks as an individual and addresses his reader as an individual, all in an effort to isolate his reader from the defenses against unorthodox appeals that would normally be at his disposal within his community.

It is ironic that part of this strategy of isolation stems from Abner/Alfonso's rhetoric appealing to a sense of tradition in the Jewish community. Abner/Alfonso does not totally disparage Judaism and call for the Jew to leave it outright, as many polemicists traditionally did, including the Dominicans of the thirteenth century (a strategy that, of course, could only be meaningful when the Jew being appealed to is an imaginary one of the Christian polemicist). Abner/Alfonso in fact appeals to a Jewish notion of continuity and tradition in trying to spur his reader to take his individual responsibility seriously. Part of the foundation of his argument against the Talmud is that the early sages in fact knew that Jesus was the expected Messiah but refused to teach others what they discerned in scriptures and traditional authorities. This deliberate concealment by the original sages was then perpetuated by later Jewish leaders and handed down as tradition within the Jewish community. He appeals to the individual Jew as being an essential part of a sacred chain of Jewish tradition that could either transmit truth or falsehood, and he places the responsibility for the correct understanding of later generations of one's offspring on the individual Jew's decision to sort out his doubts. Citing Ezekiel 37:25, ("...and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever..."), he states that if each individual does not sort out his beliefs, his doubt would end up to be, he says,

a “deception of the soul for him and for his offspring and for all those who follow him, them and their children and their children’s children” (184v / 2: 99). The implicit argument is that, ironically, in order to preserve Jewish tradition, the individual Jew must break away from it and find truth on his own, or else the legacy of his own doubt and misbelief will be perpetuated and amplified in later Jews. Bending the language of family and tradition to fit his call to the individual search for truth, he asserts that “every man is his own intimate relation and partisan and relative to himself,”⁴⁶ and it is through the individual’s choice to seek truth individually that the community remains faithful and true. He ends his appeal, found in the last paragraph of chapter six, with the loaded words, “all of Israel is faithful one through another”,⁴⁷ a statement that turns the courageous apostasy of one man into the saving grace not only for himself, but for all of Judaism. Through this subtle series of steps, Abner/Alfonso attempts to transform apostasy from a divisive and destructive force into the only step capable of preserving Judaism.

One of the essential arguments of Abner/Alfonso’s appeal to generational continuity is the legal concept that children are not responsible for the sins of their parents. To this discussion, the Rebel brings the citation from Ezekiel 18:20, “the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor shall the father bear the iniquity of the son,” which is then countered by the Teacher’s citation of Exodus 34:7, that God is “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children.” The Teacher, in an effort to explain this apparent contradiction between verses, then states that “if the sons take on the bad works of their parents, God will inflict the punishment of

⁴⁶ “Todo omne es çercano e vandro e pariente de ssí mismo” (43r/1:35).

⁴⁷ “Todo Isrrael sson fiadores unos por otros.” (184v / 2: 99).

the sinning fathers on their sons. If the sons do not...they will not suffer punishment for their fathers.”⁴⁸ In fact, Abner/Alfonso says, the sin of the son who follows the works of the father is greater than the sin of the father, which was done without precedent:

We need to understand and know in what way the sons will suffer punishment for the sins of their fathers more than the punishment that they themselves should suffer for the sin that they do like their fathers. And this is because when a man sins himself, not having before a custom of that sin through a legacy from his parents, it is not as difficult to remove oneself from it as it would be to remove oneself when one had it before through the legacy of one’s parents. And for that stain which he received through the legacy of one’s parents the punishment will be great by its nature, greater than the punishment it should be if it was not a custom beforehand...God commits no injustice in this.⁴⁹

The framing of the responsibility of the individual Jew to choose his tradition freely in legal terms thus increases the number of levels on which Abner/Alfonso appeals to his reader as an individual. Not only does he try to convince by establishing himself as a model and by appealing to a Jewish sense of preservation of tradition as the very thing that should prompt a Jew to take his own faith seriously, he also enters into legal niceties about the responsibility of the individual Jew to decide his own fate and to take the

⁴⁸ “Ssi los ffijos se atienen a las obras malas de sus padres, pechará Dios la pena de los peccadores padres sobre ssus ffijos; e ssi los ffijos non se atienen a las obras malas de los padres, non padeçrán [sic] ellos pena por sus padres” (31r / 1: 49).

⁴⁹ “Devemos entender e ssaber en quál manera los ffijos padesçerán pena por los peccados de sus padres, demas de la pena que ellos mismos deven padeçer por el peccado que fazen como sus padres. E esto es porque, quando el omne peca por ssý mismo, non aviendo ante huso de aquel peccado por erençia de los padres, non será tan ffuerte de tirarsse dél como sseria fuerte de tirarsse dél quando ante lo oviesse husado por erençia de ssus padres. E por aquella manziella quel ffincó de la erençia de los padres sserá la su pena grand por natura, e mayor que la pena que devia aver quando non oviesse husado en ella de ante” (31r / 1: 49).

consequences of his decision. In Abner/Alfonso's depiction of the situation, the failure to question tradition will result in the stiffest punishment of all.

One can see in the discussion of this point a very important point of difference between the arguments of Raymond Martini and those of Abner/Alfonso. Martini, in his distinction between Jews of the present and those in the past, condemns outright those of the present as worse than their predecessors for the very reason cited in the *Mostrador*. Abner/Alfonso, however, rather than emphasizing the sin that, according to polemicists like Martini, modern Jews have already accrued for carrying on the tradition of their fathers without questioning it, Abner/Alfonso argues that Jews are at risk of increasing that sin, but emphasizes the freedom of the individual Jew to break away from that tradition as he himself chose to do. The conversionary rhetoric of the *Mostrador*, and the notable absence of such genuine rhetoric in the *Pugio Fidei*, is evident above all in this difference.

IV. The Rebelliousness of the Rebel, Revisited

A point essential to Abner/Alfonso's appeal (a point that also further illustrates the difference between Abner/Alfonso and Martini) is his treatment of the possible reasons why Jews do not accept arguments such as his and resist conversion to Christianity. As we explore in the bio-bibliographical study, Martini does consider in both the *Capistrum Iudaeorum* and the *Pugio Fidei* the possible objections that a Jew might have to arguments such as his, objections that he tries to counter by his careful citation of texts in their original languages. Martini's consideration of the issue is undertaken always from the perspective of how the Christian should respond to such counterarguments.

Abner/Alfonso, on the other hand, as part of his appeal to his reader from the perspective of one who claims to understand the situation of the Jews and even calls them “my people from whom I am descended” (“el mi pueblo donde yo era” 12r / 1: 13), tries to consider from a meaningful, Jewish perspective the reasons why he believes Jews do not convert to Christianity. This discussion, which is found in the first chapter of the *Mostrador*, comes in part as a response to the Rebel’s question of why the sages of the Talmud—whom the Teacher claims saw that the Messiah had already come but hid their knowledge from others—did not themselves convert to Christianity if they believed in it as the Teacher asserts. The Rebel asks: “If they [the sages of the Talmud] believed in Jesus the Nazarene and his Law, as you believe, why didn’t they do as you did and take up that Law? Perhaps you believe you understand their words better than they themselves do who said them? This is in no way an acceptable argument.”⁵⁰ The Teacher then counters that “the fact that the sages of the Talmud [remained] in the faith of the Jews is not proof that they did not believe in the faith of the Christians.”⁵¹

When the Rebel rejects this, the Teacher then lists twelve factors that keep a man from leaving his religion. It is necessary for us to proceed through the details of the list in order to show the elaborateness of Abner/Alfonso’s argumentation and the notable attention he devotes to the issue. The beginning of the list suggests a parallel with Abner/Alfonso’s own personal situation:

⁵⁰ “E ssi ellos creyeran en Jhesu Naçareno e en su Ley, como cudas tú, ¿pues cómo non ffizieron ellos tal como tú ffiziste en tomar aquella Ley? ¿Quiçá que cudas tú entender ssus palabras dellos mejor que ellos mismos, que las dixieron? Non es esto rrazon conuiniente por ninguna guisa” (29r / 1: 44-45).

⁵¹ “...Non porque ffuessen los sabios del Talmud en la ffe de los judios es prueva de que ellos non creyeron la ffe de los christianos” (29r / 1: 45).

The first [reason why Jews do not convert] is because it is hard for most men, according to their nature, to change habits and the upbringing in which they used to follow them...the second is because a man knows that most men hold changes of habit and custom to be hard, and that the commotion that will result from his [change] will be for this reason very great, and there would be men talking about it with surprise, and this would be a reason essentially for ill-wishers and accidentally for well-wishers to speak ill of it in all the world. For when men speak well of one, others come and speak ill of him, and moreover, many of the friends which he used to have become his enemies. The more a man is honored and lauded before people, the stronger this second thing [the loss of friends] will be for him.⁵²

This suggestion that a convert who wins success loses his friends certainly represents Abner/Alfonso's situation, if we are to judge by the pugnacious responses of his former student Isaac Polgar and other contemporary Jews who criticized Abner/Alfonso. The next seven items on Abner/Alfonso's list of reasons are even more revealing of his perspective:

The third thing is that a man...finds burdensome the dishonor that his relatives could receive, and he knows...his relatives would hold him in dishonor. The fourth thing is that... he finds it burdensome to be among strangers...the fifth is that a

⁵² "La primera es porque es duro a los más de los omnes, ssegunt ssu natura, el mudar huso e la criança en que usaron esto...e la segunda cosa es porque el omne sabe que los más omnes tienen por duro el mudamiento de huso e la costunbre, e que la voz e el ssueno que ssaldrá dél por esto sserá grande mucho, e que abrian los omnes a ffablar en él mucho espantosamientre, e que sseria ésta rrazon por essencia a los malquirientes, e por açidente a los bienquirientes, para dezir mal dél en todo el mundo. Ca por dezir los omnes bien de alguno, por otro vienen algunos a dezir mal dél, e demas, muchos de los amigos que ssolia avier sse le tornarán enemigos. E quanto más el omne es onrado o preciado ante la gente, tanto sserá esta cosa ssegunda más ffuerte sobre él" (29v-30r / 1:46-47).

man...loves his wife and children and fears they won't want to follow him and will remain desolate. The sixth is the need that some men have to rely on their *aljama*, such as rabbis and preachers and writers and those who show themselves to be scholars...the rabbis who gain wealth and honor among them...do not want to give it up. The seventh is because a Jew is afraid he will end up poor, because he will have to stop his loans to others...the eighth is because a man might be modest and be ashamed to take off his clothes and go in the water [of baptism] before men and women, especially if he has some blemish on the body...the ninth thing is pride and obstinacy of heart, because after he raised his voice publicly to defend his law and put it above other laws, he would not want to then lower his honor and give himself to be weak and conquered by the other who disputes against him. The tenth is the lightness of the burden of captivity...that lords put on those they have as slaves.⁵⁴

This list plays an extremely important part in Abner/Alfonso's text and a very strategic role in his argument. Not only does he use it to try and show that there are many possible reasons why the sages of the Talmud did not convert, it more importantly serves to show that he understands the nature of real Jewish doubt. Unlike Martini, who

⁵⁴ "El la cosa tercera es que el omne por ssu natura toma pesar de la desonrra que ssus parientes podrian rreçebir, e sabe que...sus parientes se lo ternian [sic] en grand desonrra. E la cosa quarta es que el omne por su natura toma pesar de ser entre gente estranna, de sin parientes nin amadores. E la cosa quinta es que el ome por su natura ama a ssu muger e a ssus ffigjos, e a miedo de que non querrán venir enpos él e que fincarán desanparados. E la cosa sesta es el mester que algunos omnes an de aprovecharse de su aljama, como los rrabis e los predicadores e los escrivanos e los que amuestran escolares...e los rrabis que ganan rriqueza e onrra entrellos...non lo quer[r]ia[n] dexar. E la cosa setena es porque el judio a miedo que fincará pobre, porque abrá mester de parar él su algo a otros...E la cosa .VIII. es porque algun omne ssea vergonçoso en ssí e tomará vergüença de despojar sus pannos e entrar en agua ante omnes e mugeres, mayormiente si a alguna macula en ssu cuerpo...la cosa novena es de ssobervia e porffia de coraçon que alguno puede aver. Ca despues que alço la voz publicadamiente para esforçar su Ley e ponerle ventaja sobre las otras Lees, non querria despues abaxar la ssu onrra en darsse como fflaco e vençido de otro desputador contra él. E la cosa dezena es de liviandat de la premia de la captividat e la piadat que les ffazen los ssennores que los tienen en captivo" (30r / 1:47).

claims that the Jews do not convert out of malice, idiocy, and obduracy—ideas that derive more from Christian theology than from real consideration of Jewish experience—Abner/Alfonso tries to consider the practical reasons that actual Jews do not convert. Besides issues of finances, this passage emphasizes that, from his perspective, there are many aspects of conversion that threaten a man with isolation, leaving him without friends, family, and community in the midst of strangers. Likewise, those whom the Jew loves could be left alone as well, such as his wife, who was often still considered legally married and so not allowed to divorce or remarry (Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* 70). This attempt to take into account the real exigencies of Jewish experience that interfere with conversion is less apparent in the final (twelfth) reason Abner/Alfonso gives,⁵⁵ but in his penultimate (eleventh) argument, however, he shows not only a consideration of Jewish experience, but also his own awareness of the rhetorical demands put on his own polemical arguments. The eleventh reason, very important in consideration of Abner/Alfonso's polemical, missionizing strategy, is:

That the wise and good man, no matter what people he is among, will not leave his Law for another without finding two reasons together: the first reason is that he find some doubt or lack in the arguments for the first Law. The second reason is that he find something in the other Law to solve those doubts and fill those lacks. And not every sage finds those two reasons together, but could find the first without happening to find the second. This is for four reasons: the first is that the

⁵⁵ His argument that “because of the sentence put by God on those men, that they not leave the Law in which they were born,” (“...Por la ssentencia que ffue puesta de Dios ssobre aquellos omnes, que non salliessen de aquella Ley en que nasçieron”, 30v / 1: 48), raises the difficult question of Abner/Alfonso's ideas of predestination, which are too complicated to be entered into here. These ideas are considered in greater detail in the supplemental chapters.

reasons of the second Law are very profound, such that not all men can understand them, and the reasons of the Christian law are like this. The second is that that Law is new in time and had not expanded in the world to be found in every place a teacher of that Law, like the Law of the Christians was a new law at the time of the Talmud. The third cause is because a man is separated and is not used to discuss with the sages of that law...like Maimonides, who lived in the land of Muslims and did not often speak to Christian sages. The fourth is because a man is used to being with men in error who are held to be sages in that law without being so...⁵⁵

This assertion that, in order to effect conversion, the polemicist must both cause a doubt and fill that doubt with a point from his own religion sheds light on Abner/Alfonso's own sense of his goal in the *Mostrador*. Because he was familiar with the arguments of the Disputation of Barcelona through the Hebrew account of Nahmanides, we can understand the possible differences he saw between previous anti-Jewish arguments based on postbiblical literature and his own arguments based on text sources and on personal testimony. This is even more significant in the context of his overall list of many reasons why Jews do not convert. Here, he aims to show his reader that both that he understands

⁵⁵ "La cosa onzena, que el omne sabio e bono, en qual gente quier que sea, non saldrá de su Ley a otra, sinon ayuntándose dos rrazones en uno: La una rrazon es que falle alguna dubda o mengua en las rrayzes de ssu Ley primera; e la rrazon segunda es que falle ventaja en la otra Ley para soltar aquellas dubdas e conplir aquellas minguas. E non es que todo ssabio falle aquellas dos rrazones en uno, mas podria sser que fallará la rrazon primera e que non sse le acaecrá de fallar la rrazon segunda. Esto podria sser por quatro causas: E la primera es porque serian las rrazones de la Ley segunda muy profundadas, de guisa que non las pueden entender todos omnes, assi como las rrazones de la Ley de los (30v) christianos sson tales. E la segunda causa es porque aquella Ley ssegunda seria nueva en tienpo e que non sse huvió espander en el mundo para que ffuesse fallado en todo logar mostrador de aquella Ley, assi como la Ley de los christianos era Ley nueva al tienpo de los ssabios del Talmud. E la causa terçera es porque el omne sseria apartado e que non husó a departier con los ssabios de aquella Ley...assi como lo ffue tal Rrabi Moysen el Egipçiano, que morava en tierra de moros e que non husava a ffablar con los sabios christianos. E la causa quarta es porque el omne husaria con omnes erradores, tenidos por sabios en las rrayzes de aquella Ley, non seyendo assi." (30r-v/1: 47-8).

his position and experience as a Jew, and that he understands the rhetorical onus of his own conversionary arguments as convert and polemicist. The overall effect of this long list of reasons why Jews do not convert is overwhelming. Not only does Abner/Alfonso try to show that he understands the reasons why his reader might resist his own arguments, which in light of the frame of his personal conversion story suggests that he himself may have suffered these points of doubt before conversion. He also explains, with mechanical clarity, the factors that he thinks are necessary for conversion to actually occur.

Just as Abner/Alfonso drew parallels between his personal situation and that of his reader and that of the Jewish population as a whole, he also here draws parallels between the individual Jew and the sages of the Talmud, as well as contemporary sages such as Maimonides. Although he states elsewhere that the former (sages of the Talmud) did not convert because of stubbornness and malice, he avoids insult here and tries to give practical and logical reasons that explain how it might be possible that they believed in Christianity but did not convert (i.e. they could not find teachers because Christianity had not spread or because they lived far away, Christianity is hard to understand, etc.). The ostensible goal of all of this explanation is to show that Abner/Alfonso not only is a source of information about alleged Christian content in the Talmud and Midrash, he also understands that convincing his reader involves much more than simply presenting textual arguments (in the style of Raymond Martini), no matter how abundant. By showing that his ideas about Jewish doubt go beyond traditional Christian concepts tied to the image of the hermeneutical Jew, he tries to lay claim to such doubt as something within the realm of his knowledge.

The extent to which Abner/Alfonso differed from other polemicists in this section can be seen by comparing his list to a similar list given by the Christian Hebraist and anti-Jewish polemicist Nicholas of Lyra. In his *Contra Iudaeos*, revised into its final form in the early 1330s, roughly a decade after Abner/Alfonso wrote his *Mostrador*, Lyra lists three reasons why Jews do not convert to Christianity: their love of goods/fear of poverty, their dislike of Christianity which they learned early in life, and their inability to understand Christian thought (*Biblia Sacra* VI: 275-80; Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* 140 and 287 n. 37). Lyra's arguments are, of course, in no way intended to show to Jews his understanding of the Jewish experience, and consequently they express the typical simplicity and bitterness of all anti-Jewish polemic. Compared to Lyra's list, Abner/Alfonso's discussion of Jewish resistance shows an effort at least to feign sensitivity to the ideas and concerns of those he addressed in an effort to persuade them more effectively. In the *Mostrador*, there are many complicated reasons why Jews do not convert to Christianity, and most of them do not have to do with traditional ideas of Jewish blindness, obduracy, or malice, but instead with real issues resulting from real Jewish experience living in Christian lands. Compared with other, contemporary polemicists who employed similar postbiblical sources, Abner/Alfonso stands apart as the most complex and developed in his effort to depict the real experience of his Jewish readers.

This list of possible reasons that keep Jews from embracing Christianity shows Abner/Alfonso's own awareness that there are many things that can keep his own textual arguments in the *Mostrador* itself from being persuasive. Very different from Martini—and in a totally different category from purely apologetic polemics of previous centuries—Abner/Alfonso approaches his rhetorical goal of persuasion in a practical way, and his

representation of himself as a personal model who allegedly experienced the same things as other Jews and understands their situation forms an essential part of his persuasive strategy. Abner/Alfonso does not frequently depict the resistance of the Jew in mythical or stereotypical terms, and this realistic attitude runs throughout the text of the *Mostrador*, being reinforced in many places by the representation of the opposition to the Teacher's arguments presented by the Jewish Rebel. At first blush, this point may not seem important, because the stubbornness of the Jewish interlocutor in polemical debates is commonplace. In the content of Abner/Alfonso's choice not to employ standard anti-Jewish accusations, however, the issue of the intended audience of the text is the key to understanding the uniqueness and importance of Abner/Alfonso's representation of the Rebel as rebellious. Rather than fulfilling the expectations of traditional polemic, in which the stubborn Jew is an essential prop in an oft-repeated drama, the stubborn Jew in Abner/Alfonso's text must somehow fit with his polemical goals of persuasion and proof. Consequently, the Rebel's responses to arguments made by the Teacher are different from those of traditional polemical "dialogs" in a number of ways. First, the Rebel's answers are sometimes longer than anything found in previous polemics. In many previous polemical dialogs between a Christian and a Jew, such as those of Justin Martyr, Petrus Alfonsi, or Gilbert Crispin, among many others, the Jewish disputant speaks frequently, but his statements are usually very short compared to those of the Christian. Mostly, these statements are perfunctory prompts setting up the Christian explanation that follows. It is useful to take as a comparison the *Dialogus* of Petrus Alfonsi, both because it was the most widely known polemical dialog of the Middle Ages and because it was known for certain by Abner/Alfonso. In this text, the Christian Petrus has many long

statements, some well over 500 words, whereas the Jewish Moses has only one of this length (and that response comes in book five of the work, spoken against Islam rather than Judaism). Also, Petrus frequently accuses Moses of irrationality or faulty reasoning, whereas Moses rarely charges Petrus this way. His most common responses are simply requests for the Christian to explain a certain point in more detail. Overall, the statements of the Jew are disproportionately short and lacking in real assertiveness in comparison with those of the Christian, and this observation is representative of nearly all other medieval Jewish-Christian dialogs.⁵⁷

In comparison with these texts, the *Mostrador* shows some important differences. To be sure, the *Mostrador* has many passages that are many pages long, and there is still a very great disproportion between the length of the statements made by the Jewish Rebel and those made by the Christian Teacher. Nevertheless, the passages given to the Jewish Rebel are sometimes longer than the Jewish sections in any other medieval polemical dialog.⁵⁸ Compared with other dialogs, the Rebel says more, asks less generic questions to prompt Christian expatiation on issues of Christian doctrine, gives more insults and generally disagrees with the Teacher much more. Although he does concede certain small points, the Rebel never concedes any of the nine major arguments given in chapters two

⁵⁷ In Gilbert Crispin's text, for example, which is much shorter (neither Jew nor Christian "speaks" even 20 times; in Alfonsi's *Dialogus*, by contrast, each makes over 300 statements!), the Jewish statements are very short and lacking in any real argumentativeness. In the *Dialog* of Peter Abelard, the Philosopher speaks about 65-70 times, the Christian about twenty-five, and the Jew less than ten. In Raymond Lull's *Disputa dels tres savis*, the section in which the Jew and Muslim defend their religions is each little over 1000 lines, whereas the section given to the Christian is twice that size. Likewise, the Christian has much longer explanatory passages than the Jew. In the dialog of Ingetus Contardus, the Jew gives no statements reaching even 500 words, but the Christian frequently does. In the dialog of Rupert of Deutz, the statements by the Jew are likewise notably shorter than those of the Christian.

⁵⁸ Those statements longer than 500 words include: 74 lines (VI:17); 36 lines (VI:19), 20 lines (VI: 21); 56.5 lines (VI:29); 32 lines (VI: 31); 55 lines (VI: 33); 122 lines (VII: 2); 57 lines (VII: 4); 29 lines (VII: 40); 26 lines (VIII: 1); 32 lines (VIII: 8); 40 lines (VIII: 12); 21 lines (VIII: 40); 25 lines (VIII: 46), 57 lines (X:2); 50.5 lines (X: 22); and the longest, 174 lines (X: 24).

through ten. These differences are subtle, but when taken together, the representation of the Jewish protagonist in the *Mostrador* shows striking differences from traditional polemic. Related to this, one of the most important differences that sets Abner/Alfonso's text apart is the ambiguity of the overall conclusion of the book, which we will discuss in more detail below.

The representation of the Rebel as actually resistant to Christian arguments fits within a larger discussion of the relationship between teacher and disciple and the implications of this relationship on the broader issue of tradition and innovation in interpretation. Abner/Alfonso's message contains a notable tension between insisting on continuity and orthodoxy within Jewish tradition and encouraging the Jew to think apart from his own tradition. There is, on the one hand, a strong emphasis on continuity, faith, and tradition. At many points in the text, the Teacher criticizes the impulse to interpret Biblical and Talmudic passages according to one's own whims. He says: "if man had the power to add words to the verses according to his will, he would distort the words of God and destroy the world."⁵⁸ Elsewhere, he also argues against freely interpreting authorities in an allegorical way when this goes against tradition. He notes that one should only interpret texts allegorically or figuratively if there is no logical literal interpretation: "When there is nothing which forces us to explain the text in terms of [interpreted] judgment, we should not understand it outside of its literal interpretation, especially when there is something there that forces us to explain it according to its literal meaning."⁵⁹ He

⁵⁸ "Ca si el omne oviesse poder de ennader vierbos en los viessos segund su voluntad, trastornaria las palabras de Dios e astragaria el mundo" (192r/2:115). Cf. also 307r/2:378.

⁵⁹ "Quando non ay cosa que nos fuerçe para esplanar el vierbo en manera de sentençia, non lo devemos sacar de su entendimiento llano, mayormiente aviendo y cosa que nos fuerçe para esplanarle segund su entendimiento llano" (188v)/2:108). We will return to this citation in the next chapter.

emphasizes that one should follow the orthodox interpretations of Talmudic sages whenever possible. When the Rebel charges that the Teacher misinterpreted the prophecies of Daniel that were often associated with the chronology of Jewish history, the Teacher states that

Even if we do not know how to explain the verses and interpret them as they should be, it is not right for this reason to explain them how they should not be explained, nor to put on them vain or senseless things or things that are outside the opinions of all the sages of the Talmud, especially things that, beyond this, are harmful to people...Nevertheless, despite this, I dare, with the mercy of God, to explain all those prophecies in a literal way, clean and free of all contradictions and deviations, and according to the opinions of most of the sages of the Talmud who disputed and gave subtle explanations for a long time on this issue.”⁶⁰

In these and many other similar paragraphs, the Teacher emphasizes that it is dangerous and misguided to deviate from the most logical, literal, and traditional understanding, and he stresses that his explanation of Jewish sources to prove Christian ideas is in line with orthodox thinking. Even though he does frequently argue that support for Christian ideas is a secret contained within the Talmud, he emphasizes that he, as a disciple, follows closely the teachings of previous masters in interpreting things literally as much as possible, and he encourages his Jewish reader to do the same.

⁶⁰ “Aunque non sopiesemos esplanar los viessos e asesegarnos como deven, no es guisado por esto de los esplanar como non deven, nin de aponerles cosas mucho baldias e fuera de la rrazon e fuera de las opiniones de todos los sabios del Talmud, mayormiente cosas que, demas desto, son dan[n]osas a la gente mucho ademas...E maguera, con todo esto, yo me atrevo, con la merçed de Dios, a esplanar todas aquellas prophecias en manera llana e linpia e escusada de todas las contradiciones e las esquivizas, e segund opiniones de los mayores sabios del Talmud que disputaron e asotilizaron en esta rrazon de luengos tienpos” (193v / 2: 119).

Part of his emphasis on faithfulness to tradition hinges on his depiction of himself as a good disciple of past sages. Abner/Alfonso goes to great lengths to emphasize the virtues of being a good disciple rather than a radical or maverick thinker, saying “no man should think of himself as a sage, but instead as an apprentice disciple.”⁶¹ He even lists what, according to the Talmud, defines a good disciple:

The masters of the Talmud already said what are the conditions of a good disciple who deserves to be given the secrets of the Law, and they are that he be neither irascible nor a drunkard, and it is necessary that he be in the middle of his days, and that he be solicitous in his heart and that he be wise and that he understand things with his understanding and be wise in speaking of things masterfully, in such a way that no one understands him except those who deserve to, and that he understands the words said about such subjects.”⁶²

Abner/Alfonso, of course, presents himself as fitting this description, being in the middle of his life (a detail gleaned from his conversion story), as well as one who seeks and understands the secrets of the law. It is in this context that Abner/Alfonso presents his own conversion, comparing himself to Abraham as one who refused to serve his father and instead heeded the call of God, stating that “I converted to the faith of the

⁶¹ “Cierto es por verdat que ningun omne se deve tener por sabio, mas como diciplo aprendiz...” (34v / 1:56).

⁶² “E ya dixieron los maestros del Talmud que de las condiciones del buen diciplo, que merece quel den las poridades de la Ley, es que non sea sannudo nin beudo, como que es mester que esté en la meytad de sus días e que aya gran cuidado en su coraçon e que sea sabio e que entienda las cosas por ssu entendimiento e que sea sabio de fablar cosas maestradamente, en guisa que las non entiendan sinon los que las merecen entender, e que entienda él las palabras que son dichas en tal materia.” (184v / 2: 98).

Christians...always drawing near to the understanding of the those great, authentic sages, as far as I was able.”⁶³

This emphasis on following tradition and being a faithful disciple is, however, in constant tension with his call to the reader to be like Abraham and separate himself from tradition and seek the hidden truth, a truth that he himself claims to have been shown and which he proffers as his own masterful wisdom. Just as he himself claims he struggled to understand his own tradition, he encourages the Jew to also strive to find the truth contained in the wisdom of the Talmud and of past sages. He justifies both his own deviation from Jewish teaching and his call to other Jews to explore their doubts and understand things on their own by observing that every good disciple has the duty to add to his master’s knowledge.

If no man had boldness or daring...enough to say and write something new which he found through his study, about which he had never heard nor received from his masters, knowledge would diminish and be lost from the world...if it appears to later scholars that the sayings of the first ones are not right or correct for some reason or other, they have to prove them wrong and say so in their books. They will [write] all those reasons and proofs by which they prove them wrong, and the disciples and other people will benefit from this and avoid those errors, and students will also benefit in their study and not err in what the first ones erred in.⁶⁴

⁶³ “E a esto me atove yo en lo que me convertí a la fe de los christianos e en las rrazones que escriví della, e allegándome sienpre a los entendimientos de aquellos grandes sabios abtenticos, segund quanto yo más pude” (36r/1: 59).

⁶⁴ “Enpero, ssi ningun omne non oviessse osadia nin atrevimiento, por miedo desto, para dezir o escrivir alguna cosa nueva que fallase por su estudio de lo que non oyó nunca nin rresçibió de sus maestros, apocarse-ya la sçiencia e perderse-ya del mundo...E si paresçiere a los postrimeros que los dichos de los primeros non son ciertos nin derechos por tales e por tales rrazones, desmintirlo-an e ponerlos-an en sus libros. Otrossi ellos [escribirán] todas aquellas rrazones e pruevas por do gelas desmintieron, e

Just as each man should think of himself as a disciple and not a master—as Abner/Alfonso goes to lengths to claim that this is how he thinks of himself—so each man should be daring and correct his teachers when he finds them in error, just as he has been daring and corrected the sages of the Talmud. Sometimes, as in Abner/Alfonso’s case, being a good disciple means correcting your teachers and going against their teaching, no matter how traditional. He explains:

I said elsewhere that if man was allowed to add or take away from the words that are found in the verses and the words of the sages, he would destroy the world and undo the words of the living God. It is not proper for him to change or alter the words, unless reason forces him to do so in some places where he has no other advice.⁶⁵

For these reasons, he argues that his own work, like that of every bold but faithful disciple, be praised and accepted: “it is right to thank and hold in high esteem every man who writes and composes a book on every beneficial subject, even if he should err in some argument, as long as his intention be the service of God and the knowledge of the truth. By this path all books of knowledge were composed.”⁶⁶ He then returns to the sages of the Talmud, who state that a good disciple has the right to add to his master’s teaching. “As

aprovecharán con esto a los diciplos e las otras gentes, ca los escapanrán de aquellos yerros. E otrossi aprovecharán a los estudiantes en comienço de su estudio para que non yerren ellos en lo que erraron los primeros.” (34v / 1: 56-7).

⁶⁵ “Ya nonbré otra vegada que ssy suelto ffuesse al omne para ennader o minguar en los vierbos e los dichos que sson ffallados en los viessos e en las palabras de los sabios, astragaria el mundo e desataria las palabras de Dios vivo. E non es guisado de ffazerlo assi, demudar nin camiar los vierbos, ssino ssi lo forçasse la rrazon en algunos logares, non aviendo y otro conssejo” (227r / 2: 191).

⁶⁶ “E por esto es guisado de gradesçer e tener por bien a todo omne que escriviere e conpusiere libro en toda cosa aprovechable, aunque errase en alguna rrazon, en tal que su entençion sea a servicio de Dios e para connoçimiento de la verdad. E por este camino fueron cunpuestos todos los libros de las sçiençias” (34v / 1: 56-7).

the masters of the Talmud said, if a disciple should say some good argument, he should not be criticized or taken as proud.”⁶⁷ Even though it is true, he says, that one’s ancestors should be held as wiser than those of the present day,

it is a fitting rule for most people, who receive things without study, and for women and children, who should behave according to the sayings of others. They should not depart from the rule that they have received...but it is proper that when a man leaves off being a child and becomes of good understanding, as though he were old...then he no longer has a reason to stay in the faith of his father and mother in which he was born and was raised, and the customs he was used to, except because of the truth itself that he comes to know after great study and many disputations that he has with great sages of his time, and after all doubts were taken from his heart.⁶⁸

Here Abner/Alfonso, who has represented himself as both a good disciple and a good master, alludes to his own conversion again, and so seeks to reconcile the tension between following tradition and breaking with it that pervades his work. As we will consider in the next chapter, this ongoing tension between following as a disciple and innovating as a master that Abner/Alfonso employs as part of his missionizing strategy itself can be taken

⁶⁷ “E asi, como dixieron los maestros del Talmud, que si algun diciplo dixiere alguna bona rrazon, non gelo deven esquivar nin tenérgelo a sobervia” (34r / 1: 57).

⁶⁸ “E aquella premissa que los postrimeros non pueden alcançar en la sçiençia al grado de los primeros antigos, mayormiente a más alto que el[los], es de la premissas convinientes al comun de la gente, que rresçiben las cosas ssin estudio, e a las mugeres e a los ninnos, que se deven mantener por dichos de otros. Ca ellos non deven sallir de su rregla que tienen rrescebida...mas guisado es que, quando el omne saliere de ser ninno e fuere entendido como si fuesse viejo...entonce non a por qué tenerse a la ffe de su padre e de su madre en quanto nasció e crio en(35v)trellos e hussó sus husos, sinon por parte de verdat misma que él connosca despues de grand estudio e de muchas disputaçiones que ffaça con grandes sabios de los que fueron en el su tienpo, e despues de que fueren tollidas todas las dubdas de ssu coraçon” (35r-v / 1: 57-58).

to work against Abner/Alfonso's own argument by encouraging his reader to both follow his explanations and to innovate upon them.

Abner/Alfonso's does not only appeal to a Jew's sense of religious doubt by recognizing Jewish resistance to Christian arguments and by calling upon his reader to innovate upon his own tradition. He also places his statements about individual doubts (including his own) within a larger context of the historical struggles of Jews in Aragón in the thirteenth century. In his remarks, the Teacher makes many specific references to recent events in Jewish history, events that, in an uncanny parallel between text and reality, provide the real-life context for his own polemical work and at the same time function within the text as part of Abner/Alfonso's argumentative strategy. Such historical references include mention of the activities of Mendicant friars in the thirteenth century (such as his statement that in the thirteenth century "the Order of Saint Francis expanded in the world, which was only a short time before the order of Saint Dominic"⁶⁹) as well as specific references to recent events in Karaite history, when the Karaites of the Iberian peninsula were forced to accept rabbinical Judaism (these references are discussed in more detail in supplement chapters two and three). In the discussion of these and other contemporary issues, Abner/Alfonso shows familiarity with the struggles that had marked the lives of Sefardic Jews such as those to whom he addressed his text. It is important to see that the effort to blend real events with polemical arguments was not only a textual strategy on Abner/Alfonso's part. Just over a decade after the *Mostrador* was written, Abner/Alfonso himself is known to have brought his polemical arguments to the attention of the king, making an accusation that Jews slander Christians in their prayer

⁶⁹ "E en aquel tiempo se expandió la orden de Sant Francisco en el mundo, con lo que fue ante de poco tiempo la orden de Santo Domingo" (235r / 2: 207).

services. As Abner/Alfonso reports, the Jews “...say that the Christians are gentiles and servants of idols and the evil kingdom of Edom. And about them was composed the prayer of the heretics, in which they slander Christians five times daily, according to what is ordered in the [Talmudic] book *Berakhot*.”⁷⁰ It is known that Abner/Alfonso brought charges against the Jews in 1336 over this issue, prompting King Alfonso XI to pass a ban on the prayer (this issue is considered in more detail in supplement chapter one). As Sainz de la Maza points out, this is one of the few examples that is known of Abner/Alfonso’s involvement in public life beyond the mere fact of his position as sacristan of the collegiate church of Valladolid. (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 146, 172). Abner/Alfonso’s reference to this issue in the *Mostrador*, however, long before his own public action, also serves to link him in part to the events of the 1240s when the convert Nicholas Donin brought similar charges against the Jews, prompting the repeated trial and burning of the Talmud. Elsewhere, Abner/Alfonso makes even more specific reference to the burning of the Talmud. At the end of the text, the Rebel mentions, in his closing remarks, that information about the Talmud such as is found in the *Mostrador* might help educate Christians “who want ill for us, for which reason they sought to burn our Law and our Talmud and remove it from the world.”⁷¹

Strangely, this reference comes shortly before mention of the same events in which Abner/Alfonso includes Nicholas Donin among his list of schismatic Jews, taking

⁷⁰ “E dixieron que los christianos sson gentiles e sservidores de idolos e el rregno malo de Edom. E sobrellos fue conpuesta la oracion de los erejes, en que maldizen a los christianos çinco vezes cada dia, segunt gelo manda en el libro “Baracod”” (300r / 2: 364).

⁷¹ “...nos mal quieren, de lo que cudavan quemar nuestra Ley e nuestro Talmud e tollerlo del mundo...” (342r / 2: 443).

his struggle against Judaism (which is not altogether different from Abner/Alfonso's own) as proof of lack of agreement in Judaism and thereby of its inherent weakness. He states:

There are found among the Jews many men who deny their Talmud, by which they also deny the Trinity and the incarnation of divinity in humanity, and they demand of the bishops and other Christian princes that they burn that Talmud. And this is because they have their minds on two things: the first, that those received opinions which they believe are contrary [to them] be lost from the world, and the second, so that the received opinions found in the Talmud about the persons of the Trinity and the incarnation of divinity in humanity also be lost, things which are against them and their heresies, and such men flee and distance themselves from disputing with Christians, because they believe that they [the Christians] will prove to them [these things] from their Talmud. And this is so that what they deny about their Talmud would not be known, and they strengthen themselves in their heresy when they see the disagreements that the Jews have in their faith. This is because it is amazing to find ten men among twenty of them who agree on all issues of their faith.⁷²

⁷² "E por esto sson fallados en los judios muchos omnes que niegan el ssu Talmud dellos, con que niegan otrossi las perssonas de la Trinidat e el investimiento de la divinidat en la umanidat, e demandan a los obispos e a los otros principes christianos que quemassen aquel Talmud. E esto es porque tienen mientes a dos cosas: la una, porque sse perdiessen del mundo aquellas opiniones rrescebidas que tienen que sson contrarias, e la ssegunda, porque sse perdiessen otrossi las opiniones rrescebidas que sson ffalladas en aquel Talmud de las perssonas de la Trinidat e del investimiento de la divinidat en la umanidat, las quales cosas sson contra ellos e contra ssus eregias, e tales omnes como éstos ffuyen e aluéganse de disputar con el christiano, que cuydan dél que les provará del ssu Talmud. E esto porque non ssea ssabido lo que ellos niegan al ssu Talmud, e enfuérçansse en ssu eregia quando veen las desacordanças que an los judios en ssu ffe. E esto es porque es maravilloso de ffallar diez omnes entre veynte dellos que concuerden en todas las cosas de ssu ffe." (328r-v/2:419).

This passage is partly repeated in the *Teshuvot*, in a section that now only survives in the Castilian version. Abner/Alfonso accuses Isaac Polgar of heresy, and associates him with those who burned the Talmud:

I know that if you were to give [your arguments] in front of many others, they would recognize your heresies in which you departed from the agreement which they have received [passed down in Jewish tradition] by which they hold themselves to be Jews. You gave up the rank of Jew among them...they will not hold you as a Jew, but as another Samaritan or Sadducee heretic...you asked some bishops, powerful through the Pope, that they burn the Talmud of the Jews and destroy it from the world, but God did not help respond to you or help you, because he did not want that all of the “pearls of wisdom” and “medicines for the soul” that are in it, which are the hope of the righteous of Israel, to be lost. God truly knows how much I worked so that it would not be burned!⁷⁴

Abner/Alfonso’s argumentative strategy of weaving together opposite notions of tradition and innovation is very clear in both of these passages. First, he calls to mind the burning of the Talmud in the 1240s, an event certainly known to many Jews in his day, above all through the Hebrew account of the dispute of Rabbi Yehiel (see chapter one, n. 40 and 45). Instead of defending Donin, however, as one would expect from Abner/Alfonso, who was similar to him in many respects—both were converts, both anti-Jewish polemicists, both brought charges concerning the “Blessing of the Heretics”—Abner/Alfonso evokes

⁷⁴ “Empero que yo ssé que si tú esto dixieres ante muchos, entonçe te conosçer[i]an las tus heregias en que saliste de su concordança que tienen rreçebuda, por la qual se tienen por judíos, e saliste de grade de judio entre ellos...Ca non te ternán por judio, sinon por otro herege ssamaritano o ssaduçeo...(63ra) Ca pidiedes a algunos obispos poderossos de parte del Papa que quemassen el Talmud de los judios e lo astragassen del mundo, sinon que non se vos aguijó nin vos ayudó Dios a ello. Ca non quisso que se perdiessen todas aquellas margaritas e las melezinas de las almas que son en él, las quales cossas son sperança de los justos de Israel. ¡E Dios verdadero sabe quanto me trabajé por que non se quemasse!” (62vb-63ra/71).

Donin and his actions as examples of heresy in Judaism. This is, not surprisingly, precisely how Donin was understood by later Jews who knew of the trial of the Talmud, but instead of arguing against this opinion, Abner/Alfonso states it as his own, but then completely inverts its meaning. Rather than seeing these events as proof that the Jews are being attacked by Christians and thus the Jewish reader should not listen to Abner/Alfonso's own anti-Jewish remarks, he cites them as proof that the Jews are not unified in their faith and ultimately every Jew needs to consider the implications of such extreme fragmentation within the Jewish community.

He takes his assertions even further, however, in the second passage from the *Teshuvot*. Abner/Alfonso actually presents himself as the defender of the Talmud and his opponent, Isaac Polgar, as the heretic who wants to destroy Jewish tradition. Although it is, as Carlos del Valle points out,⁷⁴ hard to believe either that Polgar had a hand in an effort to burn the Talmud or that Abner/Alfonso actually tried to defend it, this passage immediately calls to mind the Talmud burning of Paris and freely associates Polgar with Donin and glorifies Abner/Alfonso by association with Rabbi Yehiel of Paris. Abner/Alfonso distances himself from the Christian attack on the Talmud, and tries to pass himself off as a preserver of Jewish tradition and a defender of true Judaism and the "righteous of Israel."

To be sure, this is a dangerous tactic: Abner/Alfonso is walking a fine line between associating himself with the likes of Donin and distancing himself from him in an effort to show that the Jews are in need, as he says in the introduction, of "a Teacher of

⁷⁴ Carlos del Valle, "La Contradicción del Hereje de Isaac ben Polgar" 553.

Righteousness in whom they may know the truth.”⁷⁶ The essence of his strategy, however, is to evoke in his reader a real sense of uncertainty and concern over the state of the Jewish community in Christian Castile and as Abner/Alfonso himself as one who can help unify and defend tradition. Baer was among the first to observe that Abner/Alfonso’s arguments can be seen as a climax of the multi-pronged attacks on Aragonese Jewry in the thirteenth century (*A History* 1: 330). Abner/Alfonso evokes this history of taxes, Talmud burning, censorship, and disputations as proof that the Jewish reader personally needs to take action. As he says at the end of chapter six of the *Mostrador*, adopting Christianity is the best way for Jews and all nations to overcome their internal fragmentation and tribulations and find “a concordance and a faith to undo all of the din and battles among them and achieve peace and salvation and eternal life.”⁷⁷ Abner/Alfonso evokes the first struggles of what was to evolve into a major crisis for Jews by the second half of the fourteenth century, and he is among the first writers to present conversion to Christianity not only as a victory for the Christians but as the best “solution” for the Jews to the problems they faced.

V. Prophetic Dreams and Messianic Duty

Abner/Alfonso’s references to recent Jewish history are only one part of his larger framing of his text within the terms of his own personal testimony. All of Abner/Alfonso’s subtle tactics for encouraging the Jewish reader to think of himself apart from his tradition and to resolve his own doubts through eclectic and unbiased study must be

⁷⁶ “Por mengua de “Mostrador de Justicia” donde conoscan la verdad” (12r / 1: 13).

⁷⁷ “...una concordança e una fe para destajar todos los rroydos e las batallas de entrellos e ganar la paz e la salud e la vida perdurable” (184r / 2: 98).

understood within this context of Abner/Alfonso's own personal presence in the text. As Abner/Alfonso relates in his conversion narrative, his spiritual stresses began with his experience of meeting and helping many people when the messianic hopes of many Jews in 1295 turned out to be false. According to the fifteenth-century polemicists Pablo de Sancta María and Alonso de Spina, who quoted and summarized parts of Abner/Alfonso's first work, *Sefer Milhamot Adonai*, or *Book of the Wars of the Lord*,⁷⁸ the false prophets arose in Ávila and Ayllón and, in Baer's words, "shook the Castilian Jewish communities to their very foundations" (*A History* 2: 280), provoking a response by the leader of Aragonese Jewry Ibn Adret to the scandal at Ávila.⁷⁹ Both prophets seem to have predicted that in the year 1295 (5055 AM), on the last day of the summer month Tammuz, the Jews would be called out of exile. After preparing themselves with penitence and alms, they assembled in the synagogue in white garments, as for Yom Kippur. According to the Christian sources, Abner's work related that crosses appeared on their clothing, and when they arrived home they found their garments there also marked. Santa María relates that "signo viso, multi eorum fuerunt turbati" (*Scrutinium* 525a, and copied verbatim by Spina, *Fortalitium*, in 3.10, 172rb), and according to De Spina, some of these sought medical advice from Abner, who was a doctor in Burgos (*Fortalitium* 3.10).⁸⁰ According to the fragments of Abner/Alfonso's work cited by De

⁷⁸ Now lost, but referred to by Abner/Alfonso in the *Mostrador* (12v-13r/ 1: 14-15), as well as Alonso de Spina and Pablo de Santa María (the former probably drawing material from the latter). On the fragmentary evidence about this work, see Del Valle Rodríguez, "El Libro de las batallas de Dios, de Abner de Burgos." Pablo, perhaps drawing from Abner/Alfonso's lost description, explains that "secundum morem eorum honeste vivebant, quod ab omnibus Iudeis istius regionis reputabantur sancti prophetae" (*Scrutinium Scripturarum*, 2.6.10, 524b). This phrase is repeated by Spina in the *Fortalitium*, 3.10, 172ra.

⁷⁹ *Sheelot u-Teshuvot* # 548. (271-272).

⁸⁰ "Donec in fine illo capitulo narrat quod cum ipse erat medicus aliqui praedictorum petebant consilium medicine ut possent curari praedictis cogitationibus quia credebant parentes eorum quod eis acciderat ex

Spina, it is clear that his experience with those who came to him for help constituted the beginning of his doubt in his ancestral faith.⁸⁰

Rather than portraying his conversion as a sudden moment of clarity in which he saw the error of his Jewish belief, he paints his conversion as the product of an experience that he shared with other Jews in their common time of stress. By recounting this anecdote as the seed of his conversion and transformation from Jew into anti-Jewish polemicist, he suggests that his Jewish readers, who experienced the same history or who were certainly familiar with it, could very easily follow in Abner/Alfonso's footsteps in conversion. He uses this historical event, which like all historical references in the text serve to draw parallels between the real history outside the text and the imaginary drama staged within it, as a bridge between himself and his audience. The parallel between the text and the events of history is, in this way, reduced into another parallel between Abner/Alfonso's public experiences and the private transformation that they provoked in him. On a textual level the parallel between public and private experience, outer and

aliqua infirmitate et debilitate cerebri." (*Fortalitium* 3.10, 172rb). Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio*, 153-6, addresses doubt's about Abner/Alfonso's medical knowledge, noting that Abner/Alfonso's use of medical metaphors in the *Mostrador* evinces a clear medical education. In addition to Chapter IV, paragraph 16 (103r/ 1: 194) cited by Sainz de la Maza, some other noteworthy examples where Abner/Alfonso mentions medicine or uses medical metaphors include the prologue (13v/ 1: 15), VI:14 (152r/ 2: 28), VI:16 (152v/ 2: 30); VI: 34 (183v/ 2: 96), IX:5 (251r/ 2: 247), X: 5 (296r/ 355), X: 7 (301v/ 2: 367), X:7 (316v/ 2: 395), X:19 (333r-v/ 2: 428), X: 22 (335r-v/ 2: 432), X:23 (338v-339r/ 2: 438-9). It is also interesting to note Abner/Alfonso's citation of ancient and medieval Arabic medical authors, such as Hippocrates, Galen, Abū Marwān Ibn Zuhr, Abū al-Qāssim al-Zahrāwī, and Ḥunayn Ibn Iṣḥāq, discussed in the next chapter.

⁸⁰ If Abner/Alfonso was a medical doctor of some sort, as it has been generally assumed based on the explicit statement to that effect by Pablo de Santa María and Alonso de Spina, a corresponding medical education can be assumed. For a description of a typical medical education, see Schatzmiller, "On Becoming a Jewish Doctor in the High Middle Ages." Roth, *Conversos* 83-4 and 381 n. 25 claims that Abner/Alfonso was not a doctor, but rather a bookbinder. Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio*, 167, says such an assertion is "without foundation," although the sources he notes that claim it are different from Roth's, showing the assertion to be rather widespread (see 190 n. 86).

inner man, Rebel and Teacher, are expressed as the parallel between imaginary edifice of the polemical dialog and the intended real effect of persuasion and conversion.

The cornerstone of Abner/Alfonso's larger polemical strategy of direct appeal to his readers is the presentation of his arguments within the context of his own personal testimony of his beliefs and conversion, a testimony grounded in a historical experience shared with his readership. Baer has made the interesting observation that "the personality of Abner of Burgos, with its many interesting facets, is far more sharply and clearly defined for us than that of any other medieval Jewish apostate" (*A History 1*: 330). This is because Abner/Alfonso is the first convert to try and represent his conversion in ostensibly real terms (although those "real" terms are part of a staged argumentative strategy) rather than, as in previous conversion narratives which were intended for Christian readers, in the purely allegorical terms of *Adversus Iudaeos* polemic.

We must not make the mistake of reading Abner/Alfonso's candid personal confession as a faithful record of history because his intentions are, as in all medieval conversion narratives, purely rhetorical. Chazan does carefully frame his statements about Abner/Alfonso's conversion as "according to his own testimony" ("Undermining the Jewish Sense of Future" 186), but he does not explore the implications of this textual framing in Abner/Alfonso's account. His reading does show progress in the right direction, however, when compared with what can only be called Cohen's ingenuous reading of the twelfth-century conversion account of Herman-Judah of Cologne in the *Opusculum de conversione sua*. As Karl Morrison, Paula Fredriksen, and, more recently, Jean-Claude Schmitt, have shown in their readings of the *Opusculum*, conversion texts, as examples of autobiography, can never be taken at face-value but must be read as partly

fictional. In Morrison's terms, conversion texts are "a venture in poetics" in which "there is little to distinguish a fictive reconstruction of an actual event from the fictional invention of one that never happened."⁸¹ Conversion texts can be analyzed as to how they function textually and symbolically apart from how they might represent, misrepresent, or concoct "real" events in the lives of real people, and so the historical question of why and how a real, historical person actually converts must be considered apart from the role that conversion plays in a text, especially a polemical one. Because of this, and because of the strategic position of the conversion as the opening frame within which the entire polemical text of the *Mostrador* fits, Abner/Alfonso's description of his conversion experience represents much more than a simple account of what actually prompted him to leave his ancestral faith. His account plays a critical role in framing the rest of his polemical argument and, as such, constitutes the key to his overall polemical argumentative strategy.

In order to understand how Abner/Alfonso presents his own conversion as the product of a trauma suffered by many Jews of his community and connects the doubt and uncertainty that he tries to evoke throughout the text with his own experience and action of conversion, we will need to consider his conversion account in detail. He begins his

⁸¹ Morrison, *Conversion and Text* 144. Morrison expands on his ideas in his important work, *Understanding Conversion*. Fredriksen explores the rhetoric of the conversion narrative in her masterful article, "Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and the Retrospective Self." Jean-Claude Schmitt likewise explores this in his recent book on the *Oppusculum* of Herman, *La conversion d'Hermann le Juif. Autobiographie, histoire et fiction*. Very recently, Kruger has touched on the same issues in *The Spectral Jew. Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*. The logic of this distinction between the real event of conversion and the textual narrative of it is explained very clearly by Paul Ricoeur's remarks about autobiography: "La compréhension de soi est une interprétation; l'interprétation de soi, à son tour, trouve dans le récit...une médiation privilégiée; cette dernière emprunte à l'histoire autant qu'à la fiction, faisant de l'histoire d'une vie une histoire fictive, ou, si l'on préfère, une fiction historique, entrecroisant le style historiographique des biographies au style romanesque des autobiographies imaginaires." (*Soi-Même comme un autre*, 138 n. 1).

conversion account in a well-known and oft-cited passage at the very beginning of the work:

I saw the burden of the Jews, my people from whom I am descended, who are, in this long captivity, oppressed and broken and burdened heavily by taxes, this people that has lost the honor and glory it once had, which has no help or strength in itself. And it happened one day, as I was thinking much on this plight, that I went into the synagogue with great cries and bitterness of heart, and I prayed unto the Lord, speaking thus: "I ask you, Lord God, for mercy that you be aware of the tribulations we are in, and why this is, and on what basis this is, and on what the basis is for your great anger and fury which you have had for your people for a long time, your people and the lambs of your flock. Why will the nations say: Where is their God? Now, Lord, hear my prayer and my supplications, and shine on your sanctuary which is destroyed, and have mercy on your people Israel."⁸²

The importance of the details of this opening passage cannot be overstated. Abner/Alfonso begins first of all by invoking the historical suffering and struggle of Iberian Jewry, who had been "oppressed and broken and heavily burdened by taxes." By mentioning the "honor and glory it once had", Abner/Alfonso specifically invokes the transformations undergone by Iberian Jews, especially those of Aragón, in the thirteenth

⁸² "Caté la premia de los judios, el mi pueblo donde yo era, que sson en esta luenga captividad quexados e quebrantados e angustiados en ffecho de los pechos, el pueblo que descendieron de la ssu onrra e del ssu loor que ssolian aver, e non an ayuda nin ffuerça en ssý. E acaesçió un día, penssando yo mucho en este pleito, que entré a la ssignoga con gran lloro e amargura de mi coraçon, e ffiz plegarias a Dios, diziendo assy: "Pídote, Dios Ssennor, merçed que tengas mientes a estas coytas en que ssomos, nin por qué es esto, e ssobre qué es esta yra grande e ffuror tuya que as ssobre el tu pueblo desde tan grand tiempo aca, tu pueblo e ovejas de tu pasto. ¿por qué dirán los pueblos: ¿Adó es ssu Dios destes? E agora, Ssennor, escucha la mi oraçion e las mis plegarias, e alunbra sobre el tu ssantuario que está assolado, e piada ssobre el tu pueblo Israel" (12r / 1: 13).

century when the “golden age” came to a definitive end. Abner/Alfonso invokes this suffering as his own, describing himself as a member with the Jewish community. He calls the Jews “my people, from whom I come” and describes “these tribulations which *we* are in.” He invokes God’s mercy through a prayer for his own people, which he calls “your people”, “your flock”, and “your people Israel”. Likewise, the suffering of his people is his own suffering, as he indicates by emphasizing that “I was thinking much on this plight” and “I went into the synagogue with great cries and bitterness of heart.” With this opening, Abner/Alfonso describes himself first of all as a Jew who suffers the plight of all the Jews, and then establishes himself as the spokesman for that people, praying to God for its liberation and welfare.

Within this context of Abner’s call for help and mercy from within his great shared suffering, Abner/Alfonso then receives the first of a series of dreams which played a critical role in his conversion. He continues:

And in the great anxiety which I had in my heart and from the toil I had taken upon myself I grew tired and fell asleep. And I saw in a dream vision a great man who said to me: “Why are you asleep? Understand the words I am speaking to you, and straighten up, for I say to you that the Jews have been in this captivity for such a long time because of their folly and stupidity and for lack of a teacher of righteousness through whom they may know the truth. This is what God said to you, Go in peace.⁸³

⁸³ “E de la gran coyta que tenia en mi coraçon e de la lazeria que avia tomado cansé e adormesçime; e vy en vision de ssuenno un grand omne que me dizia: “Por qué estás adormesçido? Entiende estas palabras que te ffablo, e párate enffiesto, que yo te digo que los judios están desde tan grand tienpo en esta captividad por su locura e por su nesçedad e por mengua de “Mostrador de Justiçia” donde conoscan la verdad. Esto es lo que fabló Dios, e vete con tanto.” (12r/ 1:13).

He presents his dream vision as coming to him without his control, and portrays himself as completely passive and even helpless in the face of it. Because of his great suffering on account of the Jews, he became tired and was overcome by sleep. By fashioning himself from the very beginning as both victim and redeemer, Abner/Alfonso not only claims to be a Jew among Jews, but more importantly, as a prophet figure who has redemptive power. He suffers the suffering of all and intercedes on behalf of all Jews. The answer from God comes to him from beyond his own control, suggesting that his dream visions represent a kind of prophecy. He explicitly relates that his dream vision was what “God spoke to you” and thus the content is not even his own. Sainz de la Maza argues for the same understanding of the dream, especially as it is presented in the context of a longer internal struggle in Abner/Alfonso: “el detalle de mencionarse como previa a [los sueños] una actividad de tipo incubatorio los aleja de la experiencia onírica ordinaria ligada al reposo nocturno y los convierte en ejemplos de ese *somnium coeleste*, oracular, *ex revelatione angelica...*” (“*Vi en visión de sueño*” 206). As we have already seen, there is a transparency between the figure of the Teacher in the text and Abner/Alfonso’s own voice, and in the context of his dream vision, he presents himself as being chosen as a prophet of God to be the “Teacher of Righteousness” that the Jews need for salvation. As we consider in the supplement chapters bio-bibliographical study, the title “Teacher of Righteousness” was traditionally associated, in both Rabbinic and Karaite circles, with the prophet Elijah who will come to herald the Messiah and resolve all doubts surrounding the interpretation of law and prophecy. He specifically refers to the belief that dreams were a form of prophecy in a citation at the beginning of his *Minḥat/Ofrenda*:

This is as Aristotile wrote in the book “On Sense and the Sensible” that true dreams are of the kinds of things understood from universal understanding and not understanding of the things of this world, and that God is the cause and reason of those dreams...See it is proved here from the sayings of Aristotle and Ibn Rushd that God is the cause and meaning of prophecies and true dreams, and with them he makes new things known which are to happen in the world. And this is likewise proved through the sayings of Al-Fārābī about dreams and prophecies.⁸⁵

With his introductory dream vision in the *Mostrador*, Abner/Alfonso presents himself as that divinely-sent unraveler of exegetical knots, chosen unawares to finally help his people out of the captivity in which they are languishing. His self-understanding as a model to be imitated can be seen later in the text in his invitation to the Jew to “put your heart according to my understanding” (184v / 2: 98).

Not only does Abner/Alfonso depict himself as chosen to receive the understanding granted by God in response to his supplications. He also presents the

⁸⁵ “E esto es como lo que escrivió Aristotiles en el “Libro del Sseso e Ensessado” que los suennos verdaderos sson de linage de las cosas entendidas del entendimiento universsal, e non del entendimiento ganado de las cosas deste mundo, e que Dios e scausa e rrazon de aquellos ssuennos...Evás aqui provado de los dichos de Aristotiles, como dixo Ben Rrost, que Dios es causa e rraz[o]n de las profeçias e de los ssuen[n]os verdaderos, e que con ellos faze ssaber las cosas nuevas que son a contesçer en el mundo. E assi sse prueba esto por dichos de Pharavio en los ssunnos (5b) e en la proffeçias” (5ra-5rb / 22). This statement cannot be found in Aristotle’s *On Sense and the Sensible*, but related statements can be found in other works of the *Parva Naturalia* along with this work, e.g. *On Dreams* and *On Prophesying by Dreams*. Cf., however, this statement from the latter: “On the whole...it may be concluded that dreams are not sent by God, nor are they designed for this purpose [to reveal the future]. They have a divine aspect, however...” (*Basic Works of Aristotle* 628). Abner/Alfonso seems to have drawn this idea from a statement by Ibn Rushd in the *Faṣl al-maqāl* (and a similar one in the *Dedicatory Epistle (Ḍamīma)* which accompanies it), that “true dream-visions contain premonitions of particular things that are to be generated in the future” (“...al-ru’yā l-ṣādiqatun tataḍammanu al-indhārāt bi-l-juz’iyāti l-ḥādithati fī l-zamāni l-mustaqbali” 14). For a full consideration of Abner/Alfonso’s use of these sources, see the bio-bibliographical study.

entire process that leads him from his dreams to his final conversion as an unconscious process of his vision. He states:

And when I awoke from my dream, I could not remember anything from that vision, but a desire entered me to see and study about the foundations of faith in books of the Law and of the Prophets and wise men, and historical and allegorical commentators and books of philosophy, as much as I could, and I worked at this for some time. And what I gained from all those studies after much work was hard for me [to accept], because it was very strange reasoning to me, according to the habit and custom which I was used to before this in believing in the faith of the Jewish people.⁸⁵

It is significant that he states he could not remember anything of his dream when he awoke, but was only guided by a unexplainable desire to study. Considering the later prodding of his reader to “incline your ear and hear the words of the sages...and do not go out ahead to argue with and contradict their understanding” (184v / 2: 98), his initial depiction of his own process of study and enlightenment logically comes to him from beyond the pale of his own intentions. He represents his struggle with the new ideas that God had led him to understand with his vision by noting how “it was very strange reasoning to me” because of how used he was to “believing in the faith of the Jewish people.” Indeed, like a good Jew, he does not give himself over to the new ideas, but struggles against them. He continues his narrative:

⁸⁵ E quando desperté de my suenno, no tove mientes a ninguna cosa de aquella vision, sinon que me entró en voluntad a catar e estudiar sobre las rrayzes de la fe en los libros de la Ley e de los prophetas e de los sabios e de los glosadores estoricos e allegoricos e en los libros de filosofos segund esso que yo podia, e trabajé en esto algun tiempo. E lo que gané de todos aquellos estudios despues de gran trabajo, érame duro ademas, porque era rrazon estranna a mí mucho, segund el huso e la costunbre que avia husado ante desto en creer la ffe del comun de los judios (12r / 1: 13).

And then I had to remember the reason that was told me in the dream vision, that the Jews have been so long in their captivity on account of their insanity and ignorance, and I said, “I shall not remember [my dream] any more, I shall remove it from my heart and imagination, and I shall remain in the faith in which I was born, as my father and grandfather and all my past generations remained, whether it be a good faith or a bad one, and I will not pay heed to my heart or my thoughts, for I am no better than my ancestors.”⁸⁶

Again in this passage, Abner/Alfonso presents his own doubt as upsetting to him. He even expresses his true intention to ignore the revelations coming to him. He again emphasizes his own Jewish identity by stating his resolve to “remain in the faith in which I was born,” not because he does not have doubts, but because all of his ancestors turned from their doubts and remained Jewish and indeed, he is “no better.” This passage recalls this direct appeal in the very middle of the text, when Abner/Alfonso inverts his appeal to the continuity of generations to emphasize that a Jew who does not resolve his doubts will transmit his doubt to generations and is ultimately responsible for the sin of all of Israel.

We can see again in this passage the suggestion that Abner/Alfonso himself is a prophet figure who is presenting his revelation in the pages of the *Mostrador* that follow his account. He specifically depicts himself with the same dilemma faced by past Jews who saw, he says, that Jesus was the Messiah, and he initially chooses to ignore what his heart tells him. Again and again, he tries to slough off the burden of his revelation, but God

⁸⁶ “E entonce me ove a rremenbrar de la rrazon que me ffue dicha en la vision del ssuenno, que los judios sson desde gran tienpo en ssu captividad por ssu locura e por su nesçedad, e dizia: “Non lo menbraré más, e tollerlo-he de mi coraçon e mi ymaginaçion, e ffincaré en la mi fe en que nasçí, como fincó mi padre e mi avuelo e todas mis generaçiones, si quier sea bona fe o mala, e non cataré a mi coraçon nin a mis pensamientos, ca non so yo mejor que mis parientes” (12r / 1: 13).

keeps calling him back against his will. Abner/Alfonso himself, by saying his is “no better than my ancestors”, subtly suggests that he does not see himself as a great sage, but only as one who “saw in a dream vision.” The suggestion of prophecy is heightened even more as the passage concludes:

And after I remained that way for many days, some tribulations befell me, and being oppressed by them and had been fasting that day, it happened on the following night that I saw in a dream vision that same man as three years before, and he said to me, as if he were angry: “How long, slugabed, will you sleep? When will you arise from dreams? Because you are responsible for the sins of all of the Jews and their children and generations.” And as he said these things to me, I was very frightened and afraid, and then all of my top clothing became wet with very beautiful pictures of crosses, according to the sign of Jesus the Nazerene. And then that man turned to me kindly to console me, and said to me: “The seal of God is true (T.B. *Shabbat* 55a). Behold I made your errors like a cloud and like a cloud your sins. Turn to me, for I have redeemed you.” I had this dream many times in different ways, which it is not necessary to recount here, except this one, which tells [it] in general.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ “E desde finqué asi muchos días, acaesçieronme algunas tribulaçiones, e estando un día quexado por ellos e ayunando aquel día, acaesçióme a la noche despues que vi en vision de suenno aquel mismo baron que ante desto quanto tres annos, e díxome como sannudo: “¿Hata cuándo, pereçoso, dormirás? ¿Quándo te levantarás de ssuenno? Ca los peccados de todos los judios e de ssus fijos e de sus generaçiones tienes a cuestas.” E él fablándome esto, yo (12v) tomé gran miedo e espanto, e luego mohósseme toda la vestimienta dessusera con pinturas muy ffermosas como de cruces, ssegund el sseello de Jhesu Nazareno. E tornósse entonce aquel omne como plazentero a conssolarme, e díxome: “El sseello de Dios es verdad. He que amaté como nube tus yerros e como nube tus peccados; tórnate a mí, que redimíte.” E ssegund este ssunno vi por muchas vegadas en maneras departidas, que non es mester de nonbrarlas aqui ssinon éste, que dize en general.” (12r-v/ 1:13).

Saying he was “frightened and afraid”, he paints himself as the chosen recipient of a vision that he did not want or understand at first, describing the things revealed to him as “these subtle and marvelous things which the tongue does not have power to say according to how they are.”⁸⁸ His dream vision is the vehicle by which he authenticates his new understanding of his ancestral tradition as more than just his own interpretation. Through it, God has granted him a penetrating understanding that goes beyond his description and even beyond his own knowledge. His own account of his period of intense study and doubt made him, partly against his own will, into one of the sages he cites as an authentic proof, sages he refers to as “the great authentic sages who studied much in the sciences and wrote authentic books.” By representing his own period of study and doubt, he depicts himself as an authentic sage and implies that his text, the very text being read by the Jewish reader, is one of the Jews’ own “authentic books.”

With each stage of Abner/Alfonso’s conversion story, his rhetorical appeal becomes all the more complex. Here, he connects his own dream revelation with a the real, historical events experience by Castilian Jewry during the messianic movement of 1295. He continues:

And with this the desire entered me to compose a book about the reasons of the [Christian] faith, to which I gave the name “Book of the Wars of God”, but it was a secret hidden within me, because I did not want my disciples to know and have some harm come to me from them. On the morning after I saw that vision, I thought about what was told to me that “the seal of God is true,” and I also thought about the meaning of those seals in the form of crosses that I found on my

⁸⁸ “...en estas cosas sotiles e maravillosas, que non a la lengua poder de las dezir segund que ellas son...” (13v / 1: 15).

clothes, and I said: “Perhaps the fact of those seals was like the seals that many *aljamas* of Jews in this kingdom of Castile found as a symbol of the coming of Christ, which was shown to them through the sayings of two Jews held to be prophets among them at that time, which was twenty-five years ago...”⁹⁰

He implies that the historical events of 1295, which marked the beginning of his spiritual doubt when he treated those Jews affected negatively by their experience, came to a climax as they become aligned with Abner/Alfonso’s prophetic experience in his dreams. He thus represents the culmination of the spiritual stresses of Iberian Jewry, as Baer claimed, not only in his personal experience, but in the alignment of his personal experience with that of the public events in the history of Castilian Jewry.

Abner/Alfonso goes to great lengths to depict his conversion as part of the shared history of “his” people rather than the isolated experience of one individual apostate. Besides referring to Jews as “my people”, there are other, subtle details that reiterate this message in the text. When Abner/Alfonso quotes the tenth-century Gaon Saadya ben Joseph, he refers to him by the common title “rabbenu”, meaning “our Rabbi.” While this detail is so common as to be of little significance in most Hebrew texts, Abner/Alfonso’s failure to avoid such titles, whose meaning he surely understood, can only be taken as deliberate. Abner/Alfonso makes an effort through such details to create

⁹⁰ “E con esto entró[me] en voluntad de conponer un libro en rrazon de la fe, al qual pus nonbre “Libro de Batallas de Dios,” sinon que era puridat encubierta entre mí, porque me non lo ssopiessen los dicipulos e que me nasciesse algun danno dellos. E quando fue la mannana del día que vi aquella vision dicha, penssé en lo que me fue dicho que el ssello de Dios es verdat, e penssé otrossi en rrazon de aquellos ssellos ssegund cruces que fallé en mi vestimienta e dix: “Quiça que [el] fecho destes seellos fue como los seellos segund cruces que ffallaron muchas aljamas de los judios en este rregno de Castiella, por ssennal de la venida del Christo, que les fue mostrado por dicho de dos judios tenidos por profetas entrellos aquel tienpo, que era ante desta vision quanto veynte e cinco annos” (12v / 1: 13-14).

a community of people like himself, that is, Jews who strive to work out their doubts. Abner/Alfonso is not alone in his doubt, but

many are the Jews who are oppressed and weighted down in their hearts because they were born in their Law, and they curse their parents and their grandparents with their mouths or in their hearts because they did not turn to the Law of the Christians, but left them this bad legacy and this prison from which they cannot leave as they wanted.⁹⁰

This “legacy” is just what Abner/Alfonso encourages his Jewish readers to consider as a motivation to explore their own doubts and search for truth on their own, apart from the guidelines of their faith if need be.

In Abner/Alfonso’s framing of his polemical argument, his dream vision is of capital importance and without a thorough understanding of its role in the text, it is impossible to correctly understand the later content of the work. Of the scholars to consider Abner/Alfonso’s work, the only one to treat in any substantive detail the function of the dream sequence in Abner/Alfonso’s text is Sainz de la Maza. In his important and overlooked article ““Vi en visión de suenno”: conversión religiosa y autobiografía onírica en Abner de Burgos, *alias* Alfonso de Valladolid,” he focuses on Abner/Alfonso’s vision within the context of other texts, polemical and otherwise, that make use of the dream sequence, paying special attention to the importance of the subjective first-person perspective represented in such oneiric texts. He concludes, however, that there is little that makes Abner/Alfonso’s account original in this wider

⁹⁰ “...assi como sson muchos en los judios que tienen coyta e pesar en ssus coraçones porque nascieron en aquella Ley ssuya, que maldizen a ssus padres e a ssus avuelos por ssus bocas o en ssus coraçones, porque non sse tornaron ellos [a] aquella Ley de los christianos, e que les dexaron tal eredat mala como esta e prision de que non pueden ssallir segund que ellos querrian” (30v / 1: 48).

context except Abner/Alfonso's decision to study after waking up from his vision. Sainz de la Maza's conclusion ignores, however, the absolutely unique position of Abner/Alfonso's conversion narrative within a polemical text whose intended audience (by virtue of its language and Abner/Alfonso's own stated intentions) was made up of his former coreligionists. No critic has yet explored the polemical function of the dream vision in Abner/Alfonso's text within this unique setting of a Hebrew anti-Jewish polemic.

One important point that Sainz de la Maza does raise, which helps begin consideration of this issue, is Abner/Alfonso's desire through his dream narrative to establish himself as a model for others to follow. Linking his experience with the destiny of the community to which he belonged, he explains that Abner/Alfonso "se propone así a sus lectores como caso individual, con un valor de ejemplo social, de hombre justo ligado necesariamente a un destino revelante en el difícil universo multiétnico en el que le había tocado vivir" (208). We have already mentioned that the use of a dream vision as Abner/Alfonso's source of knowledge justifies his conversion and the reasons that led up to it with revelations that have the status of prophetic vision granted by God. The connection between this prophetic vision and his own conversion not only lends weight to Abner/Alfonso's textual arguments, it also establishes Abner/Alfonso's action as worthy of imitation. In the words of St. Augustine in his description of the conversion of the orator Victorinus (*Confessions*, book 8, chapter 4), well-known converts, especially those who possess authority in the community, become through their conversion "auctoritati ad salutem," "models to salvation." This is precisely how Abner/Alfonso seeks to portray himself through his dream vision. This effort to establish himself as a model relates, as we will see shortly, with Abner/Alfonso's connection between textual authorities cited in

support of his arguments and personal testimony in which the entire polemical argument of the *Mostrador* is framed.

Abner/Alfonso's prophetic status is not only suggested in the dream account at the beginning, however, but also is suggested throughout the text when Abner/Alfonso makes use of the dream motif to describe the transformation of the convert. Sainz de la Maza also notes that the description of the end of his dream and waking "abre el camino a la resolución del conflicto interior del sujeto, que pasa del saber pasivo a la acción, del estudio de las *auctoritates* a la escritura de una obra especulativa..." ("Vi en visión de sueno" 203).⁹¹ This movement from text to action likewise becomes a metaphor for the kind of self-motivated transformation that Abner/Alfonso calls his readers to undertake. Just as he presents himself as having wakened from his dreams and eventually converted, Abner/Alfonso uses the language of sleep and dreams to represent illusion and uncertain knowledge and the language of awakening as the journey of the dreamer from illusion to truth. We have already considered a section of one passage from chapter eight, paragraph twelve in which the Jew is directly addressed in the text apart from his role as the Rebel and called to consider a citation from Abraham Ibn Ezra. The full passage, which relates to the interpretation of the "four kingdoms" commonly understood from the prophecy of chapter twelve of the book of Daniel, reads:

"Thus Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra wrote that the sleepers who do not awaken from the sleep of insanity believe that Jews are now in the captivity of Edom, and it is not thus as they believe. Look you, Rebel, how this sage explained this subject to

⁹¹ Karl Morrison makes a similar observation about the dream sequence in the *Oppusculum de conversione sua* of Herman-Judah of Cologne. He explains that "The architectonic unity of the [*opusculum*] narrative depends upon the hermeneutic gap between the first dream and its misinterpretation, and, at the end, the correct interpretation that came to Herman-Judah in his Christian state" (*Conversion and Text* 53).

you and to other Jews who are just like you, in terms of sleepers who will not awaken from their insane dream and of the things which indicate that these Jews are mixed with those of Esau, who have the same judgment according to the Christ they wait for.⁹²

In this passage, those with the wrong understanding are those who have not awoken from their dreams. In most of his statements about sleep, dreams, and awakening, Abner/Alfonso invokes Daniel 12:2, which states that “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence.” In all nine citations of this verse in the text, Abner/Alfonso distinguishes between the righteous, who will be raised from the dead, and those who do not believe in Christ or who reject what they know to be true about him, who will not be raised. In the last citation, which is one of the very last biblical *testimonia* given in the whole text of the *Mostrador* (on the very last folio), the Teacher specifically says those “sleepers” are the sages of the Talmud, “those of wrong understanding and sleepers who have to awaken for rejection and dishonor of eternity.”⁹³ Sleep and dreams represent the error of remaining in tradition, and the sages of the Talmud, in his view, were guilty of remaining in their tradition and of leading others to do the same. We can remember, from the passage already cited from chapter six, paragraph thirty-four, that sleep is associated with a lack of piety, an idea that Abner/Alfonso says Maimonides supports.

⁹² E assi escrivió Rrabi Abraham ben Ezra que los dormidores que non despiertan del ssuenno de la locura cuydan que los judios sson agora en la captividad de Edom, e que non es assi como ellos cuydan. Cata tú, rrebelle, como metió este ssabio a ti e a los otros judios, que sson tales como tú, en esta rrazon en buelta de los dormidores que non despertaron del ssuenno de la locura e de las cosas que dan a entender que estos judios son mezclados con los de Esau, e que an tal juyzio como ellos en la manera del Christo que ellos esperan” (249r / 2: 241).

⁹³ “...los malos entendidos e los dormidores que avien a despertar para rreproyos e dessionrra del ssieglo” (342v / 2: 444).

“And as the sage Rabbi Moses the Egyptian spoke at length on this, perhaps you will say “Let me be on my own, and I will go and enjoy my sleep,” do not do it, since the verse [from Psalm 1:2] says “May his will be in the Law of God.””⁹⁴ Abner/Alfonso then reminds the reader that one must awaken from his sleep “because from Him it is put on every man to choose good and everlasting glory for himself and his offspring and his relatives.”⁹⁵ The injunction to the reader to examine closely his own tradition and resolve his doubts by drawing from non-Jewish sources and non-orthodox readings of Jewish sources (sources which he is, or course, more than happy to provide)—a process that is represented through the metaphor of awakening from sleep and dreams—thus intersects with Abner/Alfonso’s own conversion narrative through which he seeks to establish himself as a model. His awakening, subsequent study, and eventual conversion provide a model for the individual journey he calls the Jewish reader to undertake, and also—insofar as his personal narrative intersects, through his suggestive rhetoric, with the historical trajectory of the Jewish people—it also provides a model for the possible evolution of Jewish society away from reliance on tradition towards a more active examination of faith and, eventually, towards Christianity.

It is thus clear that Abner/Alfonso’s use of dreams, like his presentation of his own identity as Jew/Christian, convert/converter, disciple/master, is two-fold: on the one hand, it is the way he represents his conversion and his learning of the arguments he expresses in the *Mostrador* as the stuff of prophecy rather than merely individual belief. By

⁹⁴ “E como alongó el sabio Rrabi Mosse el Egiptiano en fablar en esto, e quiça que dirás: ‘abóndame que me esté en lo mio, e yré e folgaré con mi suenno’, non lo debes fazer, ca el viesso dize: “En la Ley de Dios sea su voluntad.”” (184v / 2: 98).

⁹⁵ “Ca dél es echado sobre todo omne para escoger en el bien e en la gloria perdurable para él e para su simiente [e] para sus parientes” (184v / 2: 98-9).

representing a drama of reluctance and struggle, he depicts his conversion as an event caused by God and depicts himself as a pious follower of God's will. At the same time, the dreams and Abner/Alfonso's subsequent awakening constitutes a metaphor of the hermeneutical journey from wrong to right understanding that he himself underwent and that he calls his readers to undertake as well. His dreams and the awakening they prompted are thus also the basis of Abner/Alfonso's depiction of himself as a model to be imitated in conversion. In a subtle manipulation of imagery, sleep and dreams are thus used in two, contradictory ways as the foundation for Abner/Alfonso's authority (as a prophet) and the state that Abner/Alfonso escaped in his transformation. Dreams represent both the prophecy that prompts his conversion and the ignorance and blindness that he claims to overcome in that conversion, and they are used as tools to call the Jewish reader both to trust Abner/Alfonso's word and to follow his lead. The ambiguity created by this double-speak is never addressed in the text, but it left Abner/Alfonso open to criticism of his argument in his own terms. In his letter to Abner/Alfonso (the *Teshuvot Apikoros*) which prompted his *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, Isaac Polgar takes up the language of dreams to insult his former teacher as one who has gone astray. He says, "I will sway and mourn and with a bitter voice I will eulogize and lament for one who sought great science and hidden wisdom which is grand and lofty and turned to engage in empty things and dreams."⁹⁶

In his final dream vision, Abner/Alfonso not only depicts himself as a sort of prophet, but as a mystic as well, who received the final vision that convinced him after fasting, ostensibly out of religious piety. His prophetic status approaches a messianic pitch

⁹⁶ "ועתה אנו ואקונו ובקול מר אספוד ואתאונו לדורש החכמות העצומות והתושיות הנעלמות הנשגבות והרמות ושב להתעסק בדברי הבל וחלומות" (1a / Hecht 327).

when “the great man” in his dream tells him that he is “responsible for the sins of all of the Jews and their children and generations.”⁹⁷ Indeed, this “responsibility” that he has to save the Jews from the sin of generations, a sin he says he shares, is what prompted him to write his first work, the *Sefer Milhamot Adonai*, and his second work as well, the *Mostrador*. Let us return to a passage we have already considered in part to focus on this specific aspect of responsibility:

And after I composed the “Book of the Wars of God” on this true foundation, which is its seal from God, and after [the beliefs] took root in me from heaven in many ways, I converted to the Law of the Christians publicly, God be praised, to save my soul from my sins and from the sins of all the Jews, for whom I was responsible if I didn’t reveal to them what was shown to me from heaven. And in order that the reasons be more evident and manifest to whomever should want to know the truth in them, I wanted to compose this book, which I called “Teacher of Righteousness”, in order to show the true faith, and the truth and justice in it, to the Jews, who have need of it, as I was told [in my dream], and in order to respond to all the counter-arguments and doubts, or most of them, that every rebel or contradictory Jew can make to our words.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ His “mystical” dream calls to mind the ecstasy of Abraham Abulafia, who relates in the *Ozar Eden Ganuz* (*Treasure of the Hidden Garden*) that “when I was thirty-one years old, in Barcelona, I was awakened by God from my slumber, and I studied *Sefer Yezirah* with its commentaries” (Jellinek, *Beit ha-Midrash* 3:xliv). Cf. Hames, *The Art of Conversion*, 133.

⁹⁸ . “E despues que conpus [sic] el “Libro de las Batallas de Dios” sobre esta rrayz verddera, la qual es ssu sseello de Dios, e despues de que me affincaron del çielo por muchas maneras, convertíme a la Ley de los Christianos publicament, loado sea Dios, para salvar mi alma de los mis pecados e de los pecados de todos los judios, que tenia a cuestas ssi non descubriesse a ssus orejas lo que me mostraron del çielo. E por amor que las rrzones ssean más paladinas e manifiestas a quien quisiere saber la verdat en ellas, quisse conponer este libro, que lo llamé “Mostrador de Justiçia”, por mostrar la ffe çierta, e la verdat e la justicia en ella, a los judios, que la avien mester, segund que me ffue dicho, e para rresponder a todas las contradiciones e las dubbdas, o las más dellas, que non pueden ffazer todo judio rebelde e contrdezidor a las nuestras palabras” (13r/ 1:15).

Abner/Alfonso thus fits the entire text of the *Mostrador* into the frame of his own personal revelation which was born entirely out of the common experience of his readership. By referring to his “responsibility” for other Jews, he sets up the underlying appeal of the entire text of encouraging his reader to see himself as an individual apart from his tradition. Here again, Abner/Alfonso inverts the expected perspective of an anti-Jewish polemicist, as he does in various places in the text (such as the argument, considered above, that Nicholas Donin exemplifies the inner fragmentation of Jewish belief, necessitating individual Jews to work out the issues of their faith alone.) After first building a complex edifice of support to link the personal experiences that led to his conversion with the common experiences of Castilian Jewry, Abner/Alfonso then inverts his message to say that, by virtue of his part of the Jewish community, he is responsible for encouraging each Jew to seek truth apart from that community, just as he himself has done. Indeed, just as Abner/Alfonso is “responsible” for other Jews if he doesn’t tell them the prophecy he received (against his will), other Jews are responsible for those who will be negatively affected by their failure to work out their doubts. The real meaning of Abner/Alfonso’s loaded assertion, “all of Israel is faithful one through another”, is thus intimated first of all in the opening frame narrative of the text. The tension between the private and the public, the individual and the community, the imaginary dialog within the text and the real disputation outside of it, is thus represented again on this fundamental level of Abner/Alfonso’s presentation and interpretation of his conversion experience, an experience with which he frames the entire polemical text that follows.

Abner/Alfonso’s entire set-up of his polemical argument through his detailed conversion account appeals to a common notion within Jewish legal thought that a Jew

remains a Jew even after his conversion to another religion. Historian Jacob Katz explains the common notion that a Jew remains a Jew even if he sins thus: “The general trend prevailing in [the halakhists’] discussions was to designate the apostate (*mumar* or *meshummad*) as a ‘sinning Jew’ who, by his baptism, neither lost his Jewish identity nor exempted himself from any obligation incumbent on a Jew by virtue of his birth” (*Exclusiveness and Tolerance* 68-9). Rashi especially emphasized this again and again, using the dictum that “although he has sinned he remains a Jew.”⁹⁹ It was common to refer to the convert by his original name with a slight disparaging change. Thus, just as Yehudah becomes Yehudah^h (going astray) and Avraham becomes Avedan (ruin) (73), the name Abner, which means “father of light” in Hebrew, was sometimes changed into “Ab ḥoshekh” (i.e. “father of darkness”), such as in the *Magen ve-Ramah* (*Shield and Spear*) of

⁹⁹ It is interesting to note that the debate over Abner/Alfonso’s “Jewish” identity continues to be played out in modern scholarship. Baer stated plainly that “Abner’s friends spoke truthfully when they said that he remained a Jew at heart” (*A History* 1: 334), stating that he was a “malicious informer” (354) within the Jewish community. Ram Ben-Shalom seems to endorse this idea as well, citing Baer’s statement (55 n. 183). Yehuda Shamir, on the other hand, resists granting Jewish status to Abner/Alfonso, maintaining that Abner/Alfonso was a “true convert” unrelenting in his neophyte zealotry, who “used all means available to destroy Judaism” (*Rabbi Moses ha-Kohen de Tordesillas* 53). Sainz de la Maza states, ¿Escritor converso y judío, pues? Sí, ciertamente, y sin que quepa sorprenderse por ello...esta dualidad de referencias culturales parece inevitable en quienes, como Abner, se convierten ya en su madurez física e intelectual...En efecto, Alfonso vuelve a ser o, mejor dicho, sigue siendo Abner al ocuparse de la filosofía...” (“El converso y judío Alfonso de Valladolid” 79). Raphael Jospe sums up the problem, asking, “What place, if any, should we assign to Jews who, in the Middle Ages, converted to Islam, like Abu ‘l-Barakat (Netanel) al-Baghdadi, or to Christianity, like Abner of Burgos (Alfonso de Valladolid)? Do we treat such thinkers and their works as Jewish, as Jewish until the time of their apostasy, or as non-Jewish and having no place in the context of Jewish philosophy?” (*What is Jewish Philosophy?* 9). His words echo those of Jacob Levinger, who likewise pondered, "כיצד נתייחס, למשל, לאבנר מבורגוס מהמאה ה-14, יהודי תלמיד-חכם ופילוסוף שהתנצר באמצע חייו? השפעתו של מלומד זה ניכרת בצורה ברורה ביותר בכתיבה של הרבה יהודים בני-זמנו, כגון ב"עזר הדת" של יצחק פולקר וב"מאמר הבחירה" של הגרבוני. כן ידועה השפעתו הברורה על הפולוסוף היהודי המעמיק והנאמן לדתו היהודית רבי חסדאי קרשקש. האומנם ראשים של הגרבוני. כן ידועה השפעתו הברורה על הפולוסוף היהודי המעמיק והנאמן לדתו היהודית רבי חסדאי קרשקש. האומנם ראשים של הגרבוני?" ["How shall we relate, for example, to Abner of Burgos in the fourteenth century, a learned Jew and philosopher who converted to Christianity in the middle of his life? His influence on the writings of many of his Jewish contemporaries is clear, such as Isaac Polgar’s “Support of the Faith” (*Ezer Ha-Dat*) and Moses Narboni’s “Treatise on Free Will” (*Ma’amar Ha-Behirah*). We are also aware of his clear influence on that profound and loyal Jewish philosopher, Hasdai Crescas. So can we regard [Abner of Burgos] as a Jewish intellectual?"] (Symposium 148).

Hayim ben Yehuda ibn Musa (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 265 and 277 n. 58).¹⁰⁰ Isaac ben Polgar may be making a play on this notion when he says that Abner's interpretation "covers the light with darkness" (1b / Hecht 327). In his response to Abner/Alfonso, Polgar emphasized the opposite notion that Abner/Alfonso had lost his Jewish status. He emphasizes that he remains a Jew, whereas Abner/Alfonso has turned away and "exchanged the glory of our God for a foreign god."¹⁰¹ Polgar reinforces this notion that Abner/Alfonso has lost his Jewish status by signing his letter thus: "All my days, and still with all my power and being, [I am] a Jew."¹⁰² He emphasizes that this issue of status is more than just a nominal detail, but instead has to do with Abner/Alfonso's argumentative authority in his text. He claims that "from the day your sins enticed you to do this, you do not have permission...to speak or make claims, except by the teachings of the faith to which you have turned."¹⁰³ Importantly, Isaac's use of the word "rēshut," meaning permission or authorization, evokes the very question of who has the right to make claims like Abner's, recognizing that the question of who could be seen as an authority was central to Abner's polemical argument. The central issue in Abner/Alfonso's appeal to his Jewish identity as part of his argument is his authority to make use of Jewish texts for his arguments, and this is precisely what Polgar denies him in his polemical response. On a more subtle level, Abner/Alfonso's appeal to his past

¹⁰⁰ It is interesting to note how this name changing often occurred even when one hadn't converted. Rosenthal points out that the *haskala* thinker Jacob Emden (1697-1776), in order to criticize the views of Moses Narboni (who had expended considerable effort to argue against Abner/Alfonso's determinist ideas), dubbed him "Abner ha-Narboni" ("The Anti-Maimonides Polemic" 157).

¹⁰¹ "והמירך את כבוד אלוהינו באל נכר" (1a / Hecht 326).

¹⁰² "כל ימי שבתי ועודי בכל יכולתי ומאודי איש יהודי" (7b / Hecht 338).

¹⁰³ "מן העת אשר הסיתון עוונך לעשות כדבר הזה אין לך רשות להתנחם בגלוי ולדבר ולטעון כי אם בדברי האמונה אשר אליה" "שבת כדי להראות אל עמי הערץ כי מחכמה עשית זה" (6b / Hecht 337).

experience also functions to establish a commonality of experience with his reader in order to then suggest that conversion is a real possibility for others as it was for Abner/Alfonso himself.

Part of Abner/Alfonso's notion of responsibility involves what he describes as protecting Jews from erroneous arguments put forth by Jewish authorities. This goal of protecting Jews from their rabbis is expressed in the beginning of the *Teshuvot*, when Abner/Alfonso tells Isaac ben Polgar that he seeks "to remove from the hearts of the communities that which keeps you in heresy...I want to reveal your sin...to make known your malice and your insanity...."¹⁰⁵ He constantly accuses Isaac of being the "heretic" and "blasphemer" to which he must respond. In the *Mostrador*, likewise depicts himself as the protector of the true Jewish faith against heretics who reject the Christological interpretation of prophecy. First, Abner/Alfonso appeals to his reader as intelligent enough to be separated from the common mass of believers, and then sets himself out as one chosen to lead those who are to know the secrets of the truth. This attitude can be seen in his citation of an idea he attributes to the tenth-century philosopher Al-Fārābī. According to him, the meaning of the details of tradition and the Law is found in "...the knowledge of only a few sages, who are pillars of the Law, because they sustain the received faith so that whoever comes [to dispute it] does not undo it."¹⁰⁶ Abner/Alfonso thus suggests that he is one of the "pillars" of the law who actually is defending the faith

¹⁰⁵ "להוציא מלבן של הקהלות את מה שמחזיקין אותך ככופר...רוצה לגלות עונך...ופרסם ודוניך ושגעוניך" (8a-8b / Hecht 339).

¹⁰⁶ "E esto es lo que sse apropien en lo saber los sabios pocos ssolamient, los quales son pilares de la Ley, porque sostienen la fe rrescebida en ella para que non la desate qualquier que viniere, como lo escribió el Ffaravio en la "Sciencia Moral" (41v-42r / 1: 70). This same sentiment is expressed in the *Teshuvot* (Hebrew 12b/Castilian 45b.). For a consideration of Abner/Alfonso's citations from Arabic philosophers, see the bio-bibliographical study supplement chapter two and appendix three.

from those who try to undo it and teach falsehoods. For an authentic sage like him, who has a responsibility to teach what he has been shown, “it will be a dishonor of the Law and a dishonor of those who hold it if they don’t have a mouth to respond to those who contradict it.”¹⁰⁶ Abner/Alfonso even admits that he thinks the Christians dishonored their faith at times by not defending it well in disputations with Jews: “This is what happened many times to Christian theologians when they disputed on some points with the Jews or with other contradictors.”¹⁰⁷ Abner/Alfonso implies that the Jewish sages who denied Jesus are those against whom the real Law must be protected for the sake of the faith of all Jews, and at the same time he criticizes the arguments and strategies of other Christians in their disputations, thus also appealing to those Jews who sense the inherent weakness in past Christian polemical arguments.

It is clear from statements made elsewhere in the *Mostrador* and in his other works that Abner/Alfonso conceives of himself as one of the pillar of the law who preserve its secret meaning. For example, at the end of his *Minhat Qenaot / Ofrenda de Zelos*, he explains why he composed his book on predestination and God’s knowledge of particulars, and states

it was necessary that this argument be shown to some sages who are pillars of the world in order to justify the judgments of God and to heal the wounds of their

¹⁰⁶ “E será desonrra de la Ley en ello e desonrra de los que la tienen, quando non ovieren boca para rresponder a sus contradezidores” (42v / 1: 71).

¹⁰⁷ “Tal contesçió muchas vezes a los teologos christianos quando disputavan en algunas cosas con los judios o con otros contradezidores” (42v / 1: 71).

hearts on this issue and to still the din and noise of those who put themselves out as sages and struggle against God and his Law on this issue.¹⁰⁸

Abner/Alfonso himself believes that even though it may be dangerous to reveal his secret revelation to some who are not ready to understand them, he sees his mission as producing more good than ill. As he states in an interesting passage that makes one wonder about his effectiveness in his past career as doctor:

It is necessary to put this benefit ahead and not pay attention to that damage, just as it is good that a doctor lives in a village, who most of the time will heal the ailing, even if sometimes he causes an accident and makes some in the town fall ill or die. In this way, it is good that there be found at least one man who is zealous for the honor of God and who removes the dispute and strong rejection which the Jews put to the faith of the Christians, and who removes also that damage which we said that the lazy fools might receive. And this might even be a reason for the salvation of all the remaining Jews, or some of them.¹⁰⁹

His appeal to his reader is justified with this logic in which it is better to do what one believes is God's will and make some mistakes than not to strive at all. To this effect, we can recall his words, cited above, that "it is right to thank and hold in high esteem every

¹⁰⁸ "E que fue mester de seer descubierta esta rrazon a algunos sabios pilares del mundo para justificar los juyzios de Dios e sanar las dolencias de ssus coraçones en esta rrazon e aquedar la varaja e el rroydo de los que sse dan por ssabios e que lidian contra Dios e contra su Ley en esta rrazon" (40va / 76).

¹⁰⁹ "Es mester de dar ventaja a este provecho e non catar aquel danno, asi como es bueno que more en la villa algun fisico, que las más vegadas guareçrá los dolientes, maguer que algunas vegadas sea causa por algun asçidente a fazer enfermar a algunos de la villa o morir. Assi es bono que sea fallado en el mundo siquier un omne que tome zelo por la onrra de Dios e porque tuelga el denuesto e repoyo fuerte que los judios ponen a la ffe de los christianos, e que tuelga otrosi aquel danno que dixiemos que los nesçios perezosos podian rrescebir. E aun quita será esta rrazon para salvaçion de la rremasajas de los judios todos, o algunos dellos" 13v / 1: 15). To my mind, the echoes of Don Quijote's quest to "enderezar tuertos e desfacer agravios" are uncanny, although obviously coincidental.

man who writes and composes a book on every beneficial subject, even if he should err in some argument, as long as his intention be the service of God and the knowledge of the truth.”¹¹⁰ Abner/Alfonso is thus willing to share his prophetic “secret of redemption”¹¹¹ in order to help and protect the Jew, if the Jew will help him interpret it in good faith. Abner/Alfonso’s ultimate strategy is to set up his text and all of its polemical arguments not as just another flawed Christian argument against Jews, but as the joint conclusions of the Teacher and the Rebel who work together but who are separated from their own religious traditions. They are like other “pillars of the Law” who are privy to the true, secret meaning of God’s revelation and salvation:

I will put forth to you the arguments according to how God showed them to me and according to what I could understand, and let us make subtle arguments about them together between both of us in a loving and good-natured way in order to affirm the truth and sustain it in its certainty, and this argument will be composed by me and by you. And although we will not be able to give all of the reasons and particular disputations that men could say about it, nevertheless we will name many of them, whence those with understanding will be able to understand the others.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ “E por esto es guisado de gradesçer e tener por bien a todo omne que escriviere e conpusiere libro en toda cosa aprovechable, aunque errasse en alguna rrazon, en tal que su entençion sea a servicio de Dios e para connoçimiento de la verdat” (34v / 1: 57).

¹¹¹ This is the title of one of Abner/Alfonso’s lost works, on which, see Appendix 2.

¹¹² “E yo ponerte-he las rrazones delante, segund que Dios me las mostró e segund esso que yo pude entender, e asotilizemos en ellas entre amos en manera de amor e de bondat para firmar la verdat e sostenerla en ssu çertedumbre, e de mí e de ti será conpuesta esta rrazon. E maguera que non podremos dezir todas las rrazones e disputaciones particulares que los omnes podrán dezir en ello, con todo esso nonbraremos muchas dellas, donde los entendidos podrán entender las otras” (42v / 1: 71).

This appeal to love and good-will hearkens back to earlier Christian polemics such as Jewish-Christian dialogs of Gilbert Crispin and Petrus Alfonsi, or the philosophical three-way discussions in the texts Peter Abelard or Raymond Lull, all of which begin with the agreement of the participants to compare their faiths openly and without vituperation or asperity. The important difference in Abner/Alfonso's declaration is that his dialog was meant to be read by Jews, and thus his call for tolerance must be understood within the terms his rhetorical appeal, rather than simply as part of the verisimilar details of a discussion that never left a Christian context. As we will see, this appeal plays a much more complicated and ultimately ambiguous rhetorical role than in internally-directed polemical dialogs for Christians because it is accompanied by the doubts and contradictions of the Jewish Rebel.

We have seen that Abner/Alfonso goes to elaborate lengths to construct the rhetorical appeal of his work. Because it is certain, through his composition of his works in Hebrew and through his own explicit statements to the effect, that Abner/Alfonso's first intended audience was other Jews rather than Christians, his polemical strategies are very different from those of other Christian anti-Jewish polemics. Under close scrutiny, Chazan's statement that "no other work can match the *Pugio Fidei* for its dedicated effort to probe the Jewish psyche" (*Daggers of Faith* 115) seems to miss the mark by conflating the elaborateness of textual proofs with rhetorical effectiveness, and we can see precisely the sort of rhetoric that did seek to "probe the Jewish psyche" in Abner/Alfonso's labyrinthine authorial logic. In order to separate him from the support of his own tradition, Abner/Alfonso tries to persuade his antagonistic Jewish reader through a series of rhetorical tactics such as his attempt to imitate a Talmudic rather than scholastic style,

his use of personal testimony, his depiction of himself and his struggle as inherently Jewish rather than Christian, his depiction of his message as divinely-revealed prophecy rather than simply the conclusions of one apostate, his attempt to depict the resistance of the Jewish interlocutor in verisimilar terms, and his direct appeal to his reader as an individual. As we will consider in the final chapter, all of these tactics are related by forming part of Abner/Alfonso's own notion of argumentative authority, and as such can be contrasted to more textual notions of authority expressed in earlier anti-Jewish polemic. Although the limitations of previous polemicists' reliance on textual authority are easy to see, close reading shows that Abner/Alfonso's alternative of building authority on personal testimony and direct appeal, insofar as it relies on a paradoxical language of duality (Christian/Jew, convert/converter, master/disciple, tradition/innovation, individual/community, etc.) is also fraught with a number of basic internal contradictions that undermine the rhetorical effectiveness he seeks to achieve.

Chapter Four

Auctoritas, Authorship, and Ambiguity

“Longing itself is changed as it plunges from the dream into experience. Every means is an obstacle.”

—Martin Buber, *I and Thou*

“A question then arises...as to whether the mimetic faculty can escape this fate of being used against itself, whether it could be used against being used against itself?”

—Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*

“The subject is immolated in itself...Unable to take a distance from itself, it is hunted down in itself.”

—Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*

Abner/Alfonso's tactics of rhetorical appeal are manifold and involve a direct appeal to his Jewish reader. He tries to blur the boundaries between himself and his reader both explicitly in his remarks and language and implicitly in his style. In chapter two, we saw that earlier anti-Jewish polemics appealed to Jewish sources to support an anti-Jewish attack that was much more traditional in its polemical imagery and language and did not display a real interest in convincing Jews through effective rhetorical appeal or persuasion. The limit of the appeal to potential Jewish listeners or readers is a reliance on a traditional notion of textual authority in which polemicists like Paul Christiani and Raymond Martini believed that any point proved from their perspective to be true on the basis of Jewish *auctoritates* such as the Talmud and Midrash would necessarily be apodictic and binding for a believing Jew. This belief is patently clear in the multiple references to “authority” in the Latin protocol of the Barcelona Disputation. In comparison with this attitude, Abner/Alfonso shows a much more nuanced and complex understanding of the difficulties facing polemicists making arguments on the basis of Jewish sources. Having already examined in detail the many tactics used by Abner/Alfonso besides appeal to textual authorities to construct an argument convincing to his Jewish readers, we must conclude by examining his actual attitude towards textual sources and the relationship

that his perspective has to his other rhetorical strategies. As we will see, Abner/Alfonso's notion of textual *auctoritas* cannot be separated from his direct appeal on the basis of personal testimony, and this fact, intended to make his arguments more convincing, actually introduces a wealth of internal problems that taint his overall polemical appeal with a fundamental ambiguity. What was intended to make his arguments more cogent and compelling by avoiding the previous blind reliance on textual authority actually leads Abner/Alfonso to build his polemical arguments—and indeed, his entire text—on a fundamental self-contradiction.



I. Textual *Auctoritas* and Authoritative Testimony

The discussion of what constitutes textual authority holds a place almost as prominent in the overall content of the *Mostrador* as does Abner/Alfonso's beginning conversion account, constituting the topic of the entire first chapter. After the conversionary account in the preface and the fourteen-folio table of contents describing the arguments of each of the two-hundred eighty that make up the rest of the work, the first chapter takes up the first fifteen folios of the main text of the *Mostrador*. Abner/Alfonso explicitly treats the issue of, as he says, "what the books and premises are from which we should take proof in this book, and what way we will take proof from them."¹ The Teacher explains that such books are of three classes:

¹ "Quáles sson los libros e las premissas donde devemos tomar pruebas en todo este libro, e en cuál manera tomaremos la prueba dende" (28r / 1: 43).

There are books from which both sides, Christians and Jews, that is, the Christian Teacher and the Jewish Rebel, should take proofs equally, and also the Moors can take proof from them if they should want to. These are the “Books of Moses” and the “Prophets”, twenty-four books, and books of Hebrew grammar, and the “Book of Josippon.” Also the books of the philosophers, who are affirmed for the weight of their good understanding, are of this category. And also everything which shows good human understanding, even if it not found written in a book, is of this category.²

There are sources that are appropriate for use by all sides in a polemical debate, as a direct result of the fact either that they are accepted as authoritative by all sides, such as the Torah and the Prophetic books, or they are not religious in nature, such as books of grammar, history, or philosophy. Indeed, anything outside the category of religious texts can be authoritative as long as they display “good human understanding” (“bon entendimiento umanal”). Besides the inclusion of Muslims here, which shows that the issue of authorial sources (and Jewish-Christian polemic) is a much larger issue involving all three Abrahamic faiths, there are two important issues raised by this description of universally accepted sources. First, Abner/Alfonso shows that the issue of what sources are accepted by the opponent in the polemical debate is key to determining what sources are to be used as authorities. This becomes even clearer in the discussion of the second class of books. Before looking at that second class, it is important to consider the

² “...ay libros donde devemos tomar pruebas por equal amas las dos compannas, los christianos e los judios, quiere dezir, el mostrador christiano e el rrebelle judio; e assi los moros tomarán prueba della ssi quisieren. Estos sson los “Libros de Moysen” e de los “Prophetas” veynt e quatro libros, e los libros de la gramatica del ebrayco, e el “Libro de Joseffon.” Otrossi los libros de los filosofos, los que fueron çertificados por peso de bon entendimiento, sson deste linage. E assi todo lo que muestra el bon entendimiento umanal, maguera non fuesse fallado escripto en el libro, será deste linage” (28r / 1: 43).

implications of his examples of non-religious texts that fit in this category. He not only mentions actual texts such as the *Sefer Josippon* and books of grammar and philosophy, but includes any argument of good sense, “even if it is not written in a book.”³ The implications of this wide perspective are significant in the context of his larger polemical strategy. If he is actually referring to non-written argumentation here, as he seems to be, then he is calling for authority in textual argumentation to move beyond the realm of the purely textual to include any kind of “good understanding,” including that of personal testimony. His constant appeal to his own experience and the weight that his conversion lends to his own status as an authority, as well as the implication that his experience was in some way prophetic, provides a specific reference point to which his mention of non-written sources naturally refers. By expanding his definition of authority to include the non-textual, he provides further support for his own authority in his text, which is framed within his testimony about his own conversion experience.

The second class of books are those that are to be used by Jews only in arguments against Christians:

There are books from which the Jewish Rebel will be able to take proofs against us, the Christians, and from which the Christian Teacher should not take proofs against the Jews, and these are the books that are authentic among the Christians and not the Jews, such as the “Book of Ecclesiasticus” and the “Book of Wisdom” and “Tobias” and “Baruch” and the Gospels and the Apocalypse and the Epistles, and all the other books that were composed by Christian saints, which the Jews

³ The translation of “maguera non fuesse fallado escript en el libro” as “even if it is not written in a book” (rather than “the book”) makes more sense here. There is no singular book mentioned that can serve as an antecedent to this reference, and he does not say “todo libro” or “cada libro” that shows good understanding (que muestra), but simply “todo.”

say were done in partisanship [with the Christians] and that the relative should should not be believed on account of it being a relative [*Mishnah Sanhedrin* 3:3-4].⁴

This second class of books includes books of the New Testament and the Apocryphal books accepted in Catholic tradition, as well as any books considered “authentic” among Christians. We can recall from chapter two that one of essential qualities that defines an *auctoritas* is its authenticity, and here Abner/Alfonso specifically mentions this characteristic as the basis of limiting these texts to use by Jews against Christians. This issue of authenticity is of critical importance for Abner/Alfonso, because it can be brought to bear on his larger appeal to his personal experience as a converted author possessing authentic knowledge of his pre-converted identity.

The third category of authoritative sources involve those which Christians can use but Jews cannot. Not surprisingly, these sources are directly opposite those of the previous category in terms of their authenticity among the polemical opponent:

And just in this way there are books that only the Christian Teacher can take proofs from and not the Jewish Rebel. These are the books that are authentic only among the Jews and not among the Christians, such as the books of the Talmud and its glosses and allegories [Midrashim and aggadic dicta]. For we can say that

⁴ “E hay libros que el rrebbele judio podrá tomar pruebas dellos para contra nos los christianos; e que el mostrador christiano non deve tomar pruebas dellos contra los judios; e estos sson los libros que sson abtenticos entre los christianos e non entre los judios, como el “Libro Ecclesiastico”, el “Libro de la Ssapiencia”, e el “Tobias”, e “Baruc” e los “Evangelios”, e el “Apocalipssi”, e las “Epistolas”, e todos los otros libros que fueron conpuestos de los santos christianos, que los judios dizen dellos que fueron fechos a vanderia, e que el vadero non deve sser creýdo en la rrazon en quanto es vadero” (27r / 1: 43). The word “vadero”, which often means “rebel”, in this sense refers to a relative or close associate. For this meaning and Abner/Alfonso’s use of the word, see Teshuvot 53v/82vb-83ra, where it is a translation of “Karov”.

those books were composed in partisanship with the Jews, and that for this reason they should not be believed [in arguments] against the Christians.⁵

Again, the issue of authenticity is of key importance in deciding what sources should be allowed into polemical argument. The basis of Abner/Alfonso's distinction is that only those texts accepted as authoritative by the opposition can be used as proof, but neither side can use sources that they themselves consider authoritative unless they are considered so by all parties. We can glimpse Abner/Alfonso's sense of the importance of authenticity in a statement made at the beginning of the *Libro de la ley* in which he mentions his now-lost work *Libro de las maldiçiones de los judios*. He there explains that in that lost work, he employs authorities considered "authentic" by his readers. He states:

After we showed in the "Book of the Maledictions of the Jews" the many slanders that the Jews have against the Christians in their books which they themselves composed and which they hold as authentic books among themselves...we now want to show in this book the many good things of our Christian Law, good things which the Jews have written in the books of the Law of Moses and of the holy prophets and according to the sayings of the great sages of their Talmud, which are authentic among them, and from the majority of the philosophers—good things which no Jews among them do or believe.⁶

⁵ "E assi desta guisa hay libros que el mostrador christiano solamiente puede tomar pruebas dellos, e non el rebelle judio. Estos sson los libros abtenticos entre los judios ssolamiente, e non entre los christianos, como los libros del "Talmud" e ssus glosas e ssus allegorias, Ca podemos dezir que aquellos libros ffueron conpuestos a banderia de los judios, e que por esso non deven sser creydos contra los christianos" (28v / 1: 43).

⁶ "Despues de que mostramos en el "Libro de las Maldiçiones de los Judios" muchas maliçias que tienen los judios contra los cristianos escritas en sus libros que ellos compusieron de ssí e que los tienen por libros autenticos entre ssí...queremos agora mostrar en este libro muchos bienes de la nuestra Ley cristiana, los quales bienes los judios tienen escritos en los libros de la Ley de Moysen y de los profetas santos y segund

This notion of authenticity is key in Abner/Alfonso's ideas for his appeal to his Jewish readers on what he believes are their own terms. The authenticity of a work is synonymous with the degree to which actual Jews believe in it and accept its content.

This attitude towards textual sources roughly matches that of earlier Christian anti-Jewish arguments that make use of original Jewish source material such as those of Paul Christiani and Raymond Martini (although they are not so strict in limiting Christian use of Christian sources). The fundamental assumption on which these arguments were based was that textual authority was sufficient to make an argument fully binding. We can recall the statement from the Latin protocol of the Barcelona Disputation about Nahmanides that because he was unwilling to admit the truth of an argument "unless compelled by the authorities, when he could not explain the authorities, he said publicly that he did not believe in the authorities...though they were in ancient, authoritative books of the Jews..." (Baer 187; Maccoby 149-50). Martini's elaborate textual edifice likewise reflects this overriding concern with the binding force of textual authority in itself in anti-Jewish arguments. Abner/Alfonso, however, although he does explain at length this attitude about textual authority, also hints from the very beginning that textual authority is not sufficient in dealing with the Jews because they do not all believe in all the same texts in the same ways. The Christians err when they assume that Jews accept aggadic dicta as apodictic, legal commandments. He explains:

But we will takes proofs from them against them just as they can take proofs against us from our own books, not because we believe so much in their books as the Christians believe in their books, since the Jews are so dispersed and lacking in

dichos de los sus grandes sabios del su Talmud, autenticos entrellos, y de los mayores de los filo[so]fos, los quales bienes no fazen nin creen los judios ninguno dellos" (1v/87).

agreement that one does not believe what the other believes regarding all the sayings of the Law, as I will show in this book...and what's more, that the faith of the Christians is so abhorred and rejected among them that they will not want to believe it based on the word of any sage in the world. I already have seen some of them with such elevated pride in their hearts say that even if they heard it said with the mouth of God himself, they would plainly say "I will not believe you about it."⁷

Abner/Alfonso's evocation of the internal lack of coherence and unity among Jews is the basis of his affective appeal to the individual Jewish reader to explore his doubt individually and not be afraid of questioning his own tradition, but it is also important, as we see here, in his conception of what constitutes authoritative source material. Because of this inner discord as to the understanding of textual sources, he suggests that he understands that textual sources are not sufficient to convince Jews. Indeed, some of them are so resistant that even if a source was heard "a boca de Dios mismo" it would be rejected if it supported Christianity and was like something that came from a Christian. Importantly, the text suggests that such a Jew says "I will not believe *you* about it" ("non *te* lo quiero creer", italics mine), showing that the issue is not a blaspheming Jew who rejects revelation from God, but that he distrusts the Christian to such a profound degree, that even revelation from God would have to be rejected if it came through a Christian. The

⁷ "Mas nos tomaremos prueva dellos contra ellos, como ellos pueden tomar prueva contra nos de los nuestros libros mismos; non porque los judios fian tanto de ssus libros dellos en esta rrazon como los christianos fian de sus libros mismos dellos. Ca tanto sson los judios ssueltos e non concordantes, que non cree el uno lo que cree el otro en todos los dichos de la Ley, ssegund sse probará en este libro, e ssenaladamientre en el peragraffo XV^o del capitulo quinto. E más: que tanto es aborresçida e dessechada entrellos esta fe de los (28v) christianos, que non la querrian creer por dicho de ningun ssabio del mundo. E ya vi alguno dellos que le levó la ssobervia de ssu coraçon que, aunque lo oyesse dezir a boca de Dios mismo, dezirle-ya paladinamientre "non te lo quiero creer" (28r-v / 1: 43).

importance of this is that Abner/Alfonso shows he understands the need to present his arguments with the support of more than just textual authority. He also needs to present them with a non-Christian voice that the Jewish reader will not discount outright. This detail is extremely important for understanding the use of personal testimony and direct appeal in the text, and shows precisely in what way a traditional notion of textual authority had to be expanded to include Abner/Alfonso's personal perspective of testimony in order to try and be rhetorically effective and compelling.

Abner/Alfonso then explains specifically that “we Christians can take proof from their books in five ways”,⁸ namely:

The first way is [to show] that most of the Jews believe in the sayings of the sages of the Talmud, and very few of them dare to go against those sages. Thus, our reason should strive against them when we bring proofs against them from the great sages that are authentic and honored among them. The second way is [through] the fact that those sages used to be Jews, and “what the litigation affirms is worth a hundred witnesses.” The third way is that since such men are found among them, who were the greatest sages of the Jews and the most good and just among them, who affirmed the likes of this faith of the Christians, we have a strong proof against them that our faith is not a disbelief in God or goodness or uprightness, as the Jews believe of it. Since there are not among the Jews those who suspect any of the sages of the Talmud of heresy or opposition to faith in God or his Law....the fourth way is when we prove through the prophets that at the

⁸ “La prueba que nos podemos tomar de ssus libros dellos es en çinco maneras” (28v 1: 43).

time of Christ there were some Jews who affirmed the coming of Christ in their words, even though they did not comply with them...”⁹

This explanation sheds light on Abner/Alfonso’s idea of precisely how support of Jewish authorities helps prove Christian truths. As he says, it is because the early rabbis were considered “authentic” and because they were Jewish, were morally good, and lived at the time of Christ. All of these points fit within Abner/Alfonso’s overall explanation of the nature and use of textual authority in anti-Jewish polemics. In his fifth and final way to use of authoritative sources, Abner/Alfonso specifically discusses the issues of logic raised by the use of authoritative sources that one does not believe in personally:

The fifth way is that sometimes we will prove, on the basis of the sayings of the sages of the Jews and also of the philosophers, some things which Christians do not agree on, but we will use them first as a way to prove the opposite of the opinions of contrary Jews, just as they prove things sometimes against us out of the Gospels, which they do not believe in. The reason for this is that [the Jews] might follow true conclusions based on false premises, as if you were to say: all stones are sensate, all men are stones, ergo all men are sensate...¹⁰

⁹ “La una manera es que los más de los judios creen en los dichos de ssus ssabios del Talmud, e muy pocos sson dellos que ossan yr contra aquellos ssabios. Por ende enfforçarsse-a la nuestra rrazon contra ellos quando nos aduremos pruebas contra ellos de los sus grandes ssabios abtenticos e onrrados entrellos. E la manera ssegunda es por parte que aquellos sabios fueron judios, e que lo que otorga la parte val tanto como cient testigos. E la manera terçera es que, pues que sson ffallados dichos delos omnes que fueron de los mayores ssabios de los judios e de los bonos e justos entrellos [que] dixieron tal como esta ffe de los christianos, tenemos nos prueba fuerte contra ellos para que la nuestra ffe non es descreencia en Dios nin ffuera de la bondat e del derecho, como los judios cudan della. Ca non a en los judios qui ssospeche a ninguno de los sabios del Talmud por erege nin desatador de la ffe en Dios e en ssu Ley...E la manera quarta es que quando provaremos por los prophetas que al tiempo del Christo avian algunos de los judios [a] otorgar en ssus palabras [la venida] del Christo, de ssin que las conpliessen...”

¹⁰ “E la manera quinta es que a las vezes provaremos de los dichos de los ssabios de los judios, e assi de los filosoffos, algunas cosas que non concordamos los christianos en ellas, ssinon que las tomamos a primero en manera de postura para provar dende a los judios contradezidores lo que es contrario de ssus opiniones, assi como ellos pruevan a las vezes contra nos del Evangelio, que no lo otrogan ellos. E la rrazon para esto es

Abner/Alfonso's explanation of this strange reasoning essentially endorses the use of specious logic simply because the ends justify the means. Abner/Alfonso continues his explanation in heavily philosophical terms:

Preachers many times have need of syllogisms like these when they want to prove useful truths to the general public on the basis of [the public's] corrupt opinions, and they convince them by using a strange word for the middle term [of the syllogism] as a way of covering up [the false premises]. The conclusions follows essentially when they accept the replacement of that [middle] term. If the cover-up is discovered and they no longer accept the use of that [strange middle], the premises will be exposed along with the lies they contain without the truth being drawn from the conclusion. This is known to anyone who knows anything of logic."¹¹

What is most interesting for our purposes is not the specific niceties of logical casuistry, but the implications that this endorsement of using falsehoods to reach truths has for Abner/Alfonso's notion of textual authority. The underlying belief of this argument is that special steps need to be taken when dealing with Jews because sometimes straightforward authoritative proof is not enough. He already complained that some Jews are so stubborn that they reject anything from a Christian, even if they know it to be true.

que puede sser que ssigan conclusiones verdaderas de premissas mintrosas, como si dixiesse[des]: toda piedra es cuerpo; todo omne es piedra; ergo: todo omne es ssentidor..." (28v / 1: 44).

¹¹ "...e los predicadores an mester muchas vezes tales ssilogismos como estos quando quieren provar las verdades aprovechables al comun de las gentes por parte de ssus opiniones corruptas, e convenirles-a esto tomando aprestado nonbre estranno el termino mediano, en manera de encobrimiento. Ca segund la concordança en el prestamo daquel nonbre siguiress-a la conclusion por essencial. E ssi se descubriere la encubierta e sse tolliere la concordança en el (29r) pretamiento daquel nonbre, ffincarán las premissas con la ssu mintira en ellas, de ssin que sse tuelga la verdat de la conclusion. E esto es magniffiesto [sic] a qui entendiere alguna cosa en la logica" (28v-29r / 1: 44). Cf. *Teshuvot* 53v/83ra.

His quiet sanctioning of using false logic to arrive at what he considers true conclusions makes sense in light of his anxiety about Jewish resistance, and it shows that Abner/Alfonso believed that textual authority, no matter how elaborate, was still in need of a little tweaking to make it compelling to Jews. We can easily see how Abner/Alfonso's many-layered rhetorical strategies (outlined in the previous chapter) fit within this category of "extra" authoritative support that is necessary to present a compelling argument to Jews.

This is the key to understanding what makes Abner/Alfonso's polemical argument different from the polemics of the thirteenth century. Because he has a clearly rhetorical goal of persuasion and because he expresses, unlike his predecessors, an understanding that textual authority alone would not suffice to make an argument compelling, Abner/Alfonso's then framed this wide use of textual sources (which still takes up much of the text) within his own personal perspective of testimony and direct appeal. We can recall this mixture of testimony and textual proof in his statement that "I converted to the faith of the Christians...always drawing near to the understanding of the those great, authentic sages, as far as I was able."¹² Because of his awareness of the limitations of an appeal to textual authority, his mixture of discourse about his own experience and his appeal to the secret Christian truths in the Talmud must be seen as complimentary forces in the text. He claims that he writes his polemics "not to increase disputes in Israel" (*Teshuvot* 8b/Hecht 339), but to serve God and "to show the true faith and the truth and justice in it to the Jews who have need of it, according to how it was told to me..." (*Mostrador* 13v/1: 15). Later, he again states that "I will put forth [my]

¹² "...Me convertí a la fe de los christianos...allegándome sienpre a los entendimientos de aquellos grandes sabios abtenticos, segund quanto yo más pude" (36r / 1: 59).

arguments, according to how God showed them to me and according to how I was able to understand them....”¹³ As he tells his truth as “according to how it was told to me”, his appeal to textual authorities by “their great sages, authentic and honored among them”¹⁴ is intimately tied up with his own personal testimony and direct appeal to his reader. His notion of *auctoritas* has been expanded from the thirteenth-century obsession with textual authority to include not only Biblical and Rabbinical *testimonia*, but personal testimony as well.

This notion of extra-textual proof relates to Abner/Alfonso’s conception of the role of aggadic texts in understanding truth. As we pointed out in the Hebrew accounts of Friar Paul’s arguments in Barcelona and in Paris, in polemical debates, Jewish disputants frequently charged the Christian with relying only on aggadic texts, and even came out to explicitly say, as Nahmanides did, that a Jew is not obliged to believe in those specific aggadic texts. Not only, as we have seen, did Nahmanides try to undermine Paul’s arguments by denying the binding authority of some Midrashim, saying they are like “sermons” that one can believe if one wants (*Kitvei* 1:308/Maccoby 115). He also states explicitly to Paul that “the trouble is that you do not understand halakhic matters; you just know a little about aggadic matters, in which you have busied yourself” (*Kitvei* 1:305/Maccoby 107). Chazan has noted that one of Raymond Martini’s strategies to improve upon Paul’s argumentation was precisely to offer more textual support than simply aggadic sources. Abner/Alfonso likewise pays specific attention to legal issues in his polemic in some places. The first major argument that Abner/Alfonso adduces in the

¹³ “E yo ponerte-he las rrazones delante, segund que Dios me las mostró e segund esso que yo pude entender...” (42v / 1: 71).

¹⁴ “...los sus grandes ssabios abtenticos e onrrados entrellos” (28v / 1: 44).

Mostrador—mainly in chapters two and three, after his discussion in chapter one of sources and their use in polemical arguments—in fact deals directly with legal issues, in which Abner/Alfonso argues that laws and ceremonies of Jewish tradition were meant to be nullified and changed upon the coming of the Messiah, and that there was to be a new Law at that time that would abrogate the old. Abner/Alfonso, however, responds to this same point from Friar Paul’s arguments concerning legalistic sources in a different way from either Friar Paul or Martini. When the Rebel gives the same arguments as Naḥmanides that aggadic arguments are not binding like halakhic passages are and claims that “Jews are not bound to believe in those books, which are like sermons”,¹⁵ Abner/Alfonso enters into a long defense of aggadic sources. Rather than simply working, as Martini had done, to add more textual proofs from a wider range of sources including halakhic texts, Abner/Alfonso defends aggadic sources as meaningful in their literal sense. Abner/Alfonso explains his understanding of aggadic sources very clearly in the *Teshuvot*. The Jews, Abner/Alfonso asserts, accept the words of the sages even when they are not reasonable, but the Christians follow the words of the sages only “according to subtle investigation,” and this is the proper way to understand and use aggadot:

There are many *aggadot* in the teachings of the ancient sages that teach in this way about salvation, but the majority of the people do not pay heed to them...[the sages] gave us a full explanation from very many perspectives but we do not pay attention. We do not awaken to understand their meaning, rather we throw them over our shoulders and say, ‘they are riddles and parables referring to the things

¹⁵ “Ca non es debdo forçado a los judios a creer de aquellos libros, ca son como sermones” (37r/1:61).

which are not known, and (say) that we should not pose difficulties with regard (55a) to *Aggadah* and similar weak lines of rejection”¹⁶

The error of rejecting these parables, Abner/Alfonso concludes, is believing that they have no bearing on the commandments because they do not explicitly discuss them. The truth, however, is that God revealed himself in a way that only those with the proper understanding would receive his most profound truth.

He argues that when an aggadic sources says something, it should not be understood as figurative or metaphorical unless there is good reason to justify it.

He explains in the *Mostrador*, in a passage that is found almost verbatim in the *Teshuvot*, that the ultimate test is how reasonable aggadic sources are when supported with other “testimonies”:

Samuel ha-Nagid wrote in his “Commentary on the Talmud” that every gloss that is found in the Talmud about something which is not a commandment is called a “Aggadah”, and you should not learn any argument from them that is not reasonable. Behold, here judgment of the Aggadah is given to understanding, so if the understanding will allow it, it is fitting to learn from it without taking them

¹⁶ "ובעבור היות בדברי החכמים הראשונים הגדות רבות בדרך זה מורות את הישועה, ולא היו המון העם שמים לב אליהם...פירשו לנו את הדברים באר היטב ומצדדים רבים מאד ואין אנו שמים לב אליהם. ולא התעוררים להבין מה היתה הכוונה בהם אלא משליכים אותן אחר גו ואומרים "הם חידות ומשלים לדברים אחרים בלתי נודעים להם." וכי אין מקשין (55א) בהגדה וכיוצא " (54v-55r/Hecht 439). The Castilian reads: "Et porque son en los dichos de los sabios primeros palabras muchas en esta manera que muestran la salvacion, e el comun de la gente non catavan por ellas...nos splanaron (84a) las cossas muy paladinamente e de muchas partes, e non catamos por ellas nin nos spertamos a entender qual fue la entencion de los dezidores que las dixieron. Sinon las echamos trascuestas e dezimos que son metaphoras e palabras non sabidas, e que non deven contradzir (55a) nin vandeear por ellas nada" (83va-vb/119).

from their plain meaning, especially when there are other words which give testimony of the truth of those meanings.¹⁷

He first argues that the commandments that do not add or remove anything from the Law refer to the “moral” aspect of the commandments, not the “ceremonial” ones. Prophets are entrusted to reveal the Law, but it is the sages who are responsible for interpreting this difference:

The prophet does not have power, insofar as he is a prophet, to show this...but it was entrusted into the power of the sages who were of good understanding who knew what the essential proofs were that should be received and which were the accidental proofs that should not be received. Based on this argument, they said that the sage is worth more than the prophet. So the faith of the Christians is proved by intelligible reasons and proofs deemed essential among men of understanding, and it is also proved by the sayings of the sages and those of understanding...it is not right to reject [the Christian faith] and throw it out, saying it is heresy and idolatry, as you say, and saying that we should not listen to the sages concerning it, and saying that their words are sermons and metaphorical arguments which should not be heeded in their literal sense.¹⁸

¹⁷ “E escribió Rrabi Ssamuel el Nagud en el “Libro del comentario del Talmud” que toda glosa que viniere en el Talmud sobre alguna rrazon que no ffue mandamiento, aquello a nonbre “Hagada”, e que non deven aprender della ssinon aquello que sse diere al entendimiento. Evat aqui que dio el juyzio en la Hagada al entendimiento, que ssi el entendimiento lo sufriere, será conviniente de aprender della de ssin que la saquen de ssu estoria llana, mayormient seyendo falladas otras palabras que dan testimonio de la verdat de aquellas estorias” (57r / 1: 101-102). Cf. the argument of the Teacher to the Rebel later in the text: “Ca esto non es bona rrazon, porque quando non ay cosa que nos fuerçe para esplanar el vierbo en manera de sentençia, non lo devemos sacar de su entendimiento llano, mayormientre aviendo y cosa que nos fuerce para esplanarle segund su entendimiento llano” (188v/2:108).

¹⁸ “E non a el propheta poder, en quanto es propheta, para fazer esta demostracion...mas ffue dado el poderio a los sabios que fueron de bonos entendimientos, que conoscian quáles sson pruebas ensenciales convinientes de rresçebir, e quáles sson pruebas ascidentales, non convinientes para rrescibir. E sobre tal rrazon como ésta dixieron ellos que el ssabio vale más que el propheta. E pues que la ffe de los christianos

Most importantly, Abner/Alfonso directly challenges the strategy of Jewish polemicists of discarding or rejecting the authority of aggadic sources. He argues that these texts are used by the most important thinkers in medieval Jewish tradition to prove their points, so rejecting them is tantamount to heresy:

[Aggadic texts] were pronounced and composed by the greatest sages of the Talmud, who were Jews or in whom most Jews have faith. Also, those books are the root of the Talmud...and moreover all the great masters who are called *Geonim* adduce those books and take proofs from them in whatever they want to explain or prove. Thus Rashi and Maimonides and other later commentators take proofs from those books.¹⁹

His conclusion is that anyone who denies the authority of those texts is, in fact, not a Jew but a heretic. The Teacher charges the Rebel with denying these authorities, saying “you deny your own authentic sages, who given testimony of the faith of God and of his prophets.”²⁰ Abner/Alfonso repeats this charge against Isaac Polgar in the *Teshuvot*, calling to mind his final words in the *Teshuvot Apikoros* directed against Abner/Alfonso, signing his polemic “All my days, and still with all my power and being, [I am] a Jew.”²¹

es provada por las rrazones intellegibles e por las otras pruebas ensenciales entre los omnes entendudos, e es provada otrossi de los dichos de los entendidos e sabios...non conviene de puxarla nin desecharla, diziendo que es eregia e ydolatria, como tú dizes, e diziendo que non devemos escuchar a los ssabios en ello, e que ssus palabras eran ssermones e rrazones metafforicas, que non deven catar a ssus estorias llanas” (38v/1: 64).

¹⁹ “...los dixieron e los conpusieron los mayores sabios del Talmud, los quales todos los judios, o los más, ffian dellos. Otrossi, que aquellos libros ffueron la rrayz del Talmud...otrossi, todos los grandes maestros que sson dichos *geonim* allegan aquellos libros e toman pruebas dellos en todo lo que quieren esplanar e provar” (39r / 1: 65).

²⁰ “...negades vos a los vuestros ssabios abtenticos, que dan testimonio de la ffe de Dios e de ssus prophetas...” (293r/2:349).

²¹ “כל ימי שבתי ועודי בכל יכולתי ומאודי איש יהודי” (7v / Hecht 338).

Abner/Alfonso, in reference to the belief in the authority of aggadic sources, alleges that “whoever does not believe this, like you...is not a “Jewish person” as you signed your name in the Letter of Blasphemies: “a Jewish person.” Rather, he is a sectarian and an heretic.”²² In the *Mostrador*, the Teacher appeals once again, in much the same terms, to the Jew’s sense of generational continuity and authentic tradition based on the understanding of the Rabbis, and says that because Jews do not heed the interpretations of their sages, “you do not truly have the Law. It was forgotten by your ancestors and by you, because you do not understand it according to the truth held by men of authentic understanding.”²³ The ultimate implication of Abner/Alfonso’s idea that the “sage is worth more than the prophet” is that Abner/Alfonso, the Teacher of Righteousness with good understanding, is among those to properly interpret the legal meaning in the aggadic sources. The non-legal sources themselves come to bear on the commandments through the explanation and testimonies of sages like Abner/Alfonso. In this way, Abner/Alfonso shows that he is not trying to compensate for the non-legal nature of aggadic sources by offering other halakhic sources in their place. Rather, he claims that the authority of aggadic texts depends on how they are supported by other authentic texts and explanations by Jewish sages. It is here that he includes, by implication, his own personal commentary, speaking on the authority of one who claims to share the experience of his reader. Not only does Abner/Alfonso present his teachings as prophetic in their revelation to him in his dream visions. He also claims that he is an authentic sage

²² "כי מי שאינו מודה בכך כמוך...אינו "איש יהודי" כמו שחתמת את שמך באגרת ההרפות שלך "איש יהודי" אלא הוא כותי "ואפיקורוס" (54r/Hecht 437).

²³ "...non avedes Ley de verdat. Ca ffue olvidada de vuestros parientes e de vos, pues que non la entendedes segund la verdat que tienen los omnes de los entendimientos abtenticos" (38v/1: 64).

of Jewish tradition who interprets the subtle meaning of aggadic sources according to God's truth revealed in prophecy. Because Abner/Alfonso does not rely only on the proofs of authoritative sources but argues through appeal and testimony as well, he does not leave himself open to the criticism that he relied only on aggadic sources. In fact, rather than offering aggadic proofs while discussing halakhic issues, he instead argues that there was a fundamental shift in the Law at the coming of the Messiah, and the nature of this shift is something that was only passed on secretly within Jewish tradition. For this reason, aggadic sources can be said to bear on halakhic matters.

His discussion of aggadic sources points again to his belief in using the testimony and commentary of later sages to authenticate laws and commandments built off the Bible and Talmud. There is one passage near the end of chapter one in which Abner/Alfonso clearly addresses the role of testimony in his text, showing how he conflates his own personal testimony as a convert with that of previous leaders of the Jewish community. He explains that because his goal is to dispute with Jews and not Christians, he seeks to offer arguments both against their criticisms of Christianity and against what they say to affirm Judaism. Each of these two foci is achieved through two sets of respective strategies. He explains that his four methods are "proof" (*prueba*), "testimony" (*testimonio*), "destruction" (*quebrantamiento*) and "solution" (*soltura*). A proof is taken from things received by all. A testimony is not as certain as the proof, but "the soul alone reclines to receive it."²⁴ Destruction serves, on the basis of the previous two methods, to undo the arguments put forth by those in dispute, and "solution" is what addresses their doubts and questions. He explains that

²⁴ "El alma se acuesta a rrescebirla ssolamientras" (41r / 1: 68).

since every contrary Jew holds certain in his arguments with great force, it is necessary to come against him gently and remove him from them little by little, as is appropriate for human nature. It is necessary to convince him first of the solution, then the testimonies, then the proof, and with this he will be completely defeated. The essence of my words in this book is summed up in this.²⁵

The essence of Abner/Alfonso's argumentative strategy is to appeal to the reader on more grounds than simply textual proof. Although by "testimony" here he refers partly to textual testimony, in the context of his own personal testimony this method takes on greater significance. His statement that the Jew must be convinced "gently" (*mansamient*) and "little-by-little" makes sense in the overall tone of his work which intersperses direct appeal with textual proof, and does not insult the Jew to the degree that other polemics do. His words call to mind Raymond of Peñafort repetition of Gregory the Great's advice that Jews should be encouraged to convert "with authorities and soothing reasons, rather than harsh ones. They should not be compelled, because forced service does not please God."²⁶ In comparison with Raymond Martini (who puts all his emphasis, to use Abner/Alfonso's terms, on proof and destruction), Abner/Alfonso focuses, alongside these things, on the appeal of testimony and the solution of real questions and doubts. The role of Abner/Alfonso's personal testimony in this slow, gentle appeal is central, and

²⁵ "E porque el judio contradezidor tiénese por sseguro e por mucho esfforçado en ssus rrazones, es mester de venir contra él mansamiente e tollerle de aquella razon poco a poco, segund que conviene a la natura de los omnes, e es mester a convencerle primero a la soltura, e despues a los testimonios, e despues a la prueba, e con esto será caydo complidamente. E en esto sse ençierra la rrayz de mis palabras en este libro" (41r / 1: 68).

²⁶ "Debent...auctoritatibus, rationibus et blandimentis, potius quam asperitatibus, ad fidem christianam de novo suscipiendam provocari, non autem compelli, quia coacta servitia non placent Deo" (*Summa de Paenitentia* 309).

it involves winning Jews over by resolving their doubts and giving them trustworthy sources rather than destroying their arguments by manipulating their texts.

One of the most concrete manifestations of the “expansion” of the notion of authority to include personal testimony is the preponderate presence of an authorial voice throughout the text of the *Mostrador*. The author Abner/Alfonso stands behind the facade of the textual dialog as a real figure, one whose real conversion experience forms part of the content of the work and serves to authenticate the polemical arguments it contains as having real, extra-textual implications. As one critic, Gómez Redondo, has commented, such characteristics in the *Mostrador* and in the other works by Abner/Alfonso “revelan el temple y el carácter de un escritor que no renuncia a dejar estas huellas de su presencia, quizá para volver más convincentes sus argumentaciones” (*Historia de la prosa* 2: 1754-5). Besides the conversion narrative itself, which we have already examined in detail, Abner/Alfonso’s frequent references to the book he is writing reinforce his authorial presence throughout. For example, after the Teacher makes a point or argument to the Rebel, Abner/Alfonso frequently qualifies it by stating things like “...as will be well proven to all who shall understand this book according to pure truth, without partisanship,”²⁷ or “...as will be shown to the one who shall understand well this book and other similar books in theology.”²⁸ At the end of the work, the Teacher states that “it was not my intention in this book to honor or dishonor anyone insofar as he is Christian or

²⁷ “...como se provará bien a todo qui entendiere este libro segund pura verdat, ssin vanderia ninguna” (163v / 1: 54).

²⁸ “...como se provará al que entendiere bien este libro e los otros libros ssus semejantes en la teologia” (280r / 2: 317).

Jew...”²⁹ but the Rebel never abandons his suspicions expressed at the beginning of the work that “you will not write the book without partisanship or properly or with equal treatment.”³⁰ Such examples, and what Gómez Redondo sees the work’s “estructura muy cuidada”, serve to frame the “juego de sentidos que la obra encierra” (2: 1754-5), attesting to Abner/Alfonso’s careful authorial hand in composing and ordering the work. In the context of medieval Castilian prose, this “authorial consciousness” marks Abner/Alfonso’s text as unique not only among polemical texts, but also among Castilian writing in general. As he asserts about Abner/Alfonso’s authorial presence in the *Mostrador*, “pocas conciencias de autoría, salvo la de don Juan Manuel, muestran este rigor, afirmado en una prodigiosa erudición...” (1754-5). For our purposes, Abner/Alfonso’s very present authorial voice within the *Mostrador*, a voice which in his later works becomes his own unmediated voice of debate with his former co-religionists, is especially important as part of his overall argumentative strategy. Abner/Alfonso’s evocation of his pre-conversionary Jewish identity through testimony and appeal thus expands the capacity of argumentative authority to authenticate his polemical authorship.

II. From Testimonial Authority to Textual Ambiguity

Abner/Alfonso’s appeal to his former experience as a strategy to construct his argumentative authority is one of the characteristics that sets his work apart from previous anti-Jewish polemics, including other polemics in the form of dialogs between

²⁹ “...non ffue la mi entencion en este libro para onrrar nin desonrrar a ningun omne enquanto es christiano o judio...” (342r / 2:444).

³⁰ “...ca esto otrossi mete dubda e sospecha para cudar que tú non escrives el libro sin vanderia nin en manera de derecho e egual juyzio” (43r / 1: 71).

a Jewish character and a Christian one (such as the dialogs of Odo of Tournai or Gilbert Crispin). Earlier polemical authors who were themselves converts, such as Petrus Alfonsi, do in fact make a similar appeal to past experience: one can think of the claim in the beginning of Alfonsi's *Dialogus* by the Jewish voice Moses to his counterpart Petrus that "you used to be more zealous in the law than all of your contemporaries; you preached to the Jews in the synagogues lest any withdraw from the faith."³¹ What sets Abner/Alfonso's text apart from even similar texts like Alfonsi's is that his primary audience is Jews rather than other Christians (and his text is in Hebrew rather than Latin). As a result, Abner/Alfonso's use of and reference to his experience as a Jew constitutes, as we have seen, a rhetorical strategy rather than simply a trope of polemical apologetic.³²

Abner/Alfonso's inclusion of his own personal experience and perspective, however, is not simply a benign addition to his polemical argument. It rather has serious implications for the overall coherence of his argument in the *Mostrador* that obfuscates his overarching conclusion and ultimately undermines the polemical goal of his work. Before looking at these implications, it can be said that there are, somewhat apart from issues related to Abner/Alfonso's personal voice in the text, certain basic internal paradoxes within the argumentation of the text. For example, we have seen that part of Abner/Alfonso's strategy involves direct appeal to his Jewish readers to consider themselves as individuals apart from their tradition, while at the same time representing his Christological arguments as contained within the Jewish tradition and its sources.

³¹ "Novi enim bene olim te...a puericia quoque super omnes coequeros tuos legis zelatorum fuisse...Iudeis in synagogis, ne a sua umquam fide recederent, predicasse..." (*Diálogo contra los judíos* 8-9).

³² See the bibliography on this subject mentioned in the previous chapter, n. 81.

Indeed, Abner/Alfonso makes an impassioned call for the Jew to look more carefully at his own tradition. We can recall his appeal at the end of chapter six that if a man

does not have a great understanding to know good and evil, and truth and falsehood, and is doubting about the issue, let him go to the sages to learn from them. And if he finds a contradiction among the sages, let him strive and work to understand by himself, and he will have the heart to understand in their words where the truth lies.³³

This argument, followed by the argument that one should not perpetuate one's doubts and errors to posterity because "all of Israel is faithful one through another" (184v / 2: 99), can be seen, at its most basic level as a simultaneous appeal to the integrity of Jewish tradition as well as a call for an individual to seek his truth apart from that tradition. In other words, the reader is called to preserve tradition by turning away from it, to fulfill the Law by looking beyond it. Carried further, Abner/Alfonso's appeal constitutes a call to preserve faith and tradition through apostasy and conversion. Certain key images in the elaboration of this argument, such as the presentation of dreams as both prophetic in character (as in his own personal conversion experience) and as illusory (in his repeated calls for the Jews to "wake up" from their error and convert).

Another important aspect of the internal contradiction in the work created by Abner/Alfonso's call to the reader to separate himself from his tradition while at the same time remaining faithful to it relate to Abner/Alfonso's philosophical ideas. Abner/Alfonso adheres in many passages of his works including the *Mostrador* and especially his *Minhat*

³³ "E si non a entendimiento largo para conoçer en el bien e el mal, e la verdat e la mintira, e está dubdando en la dosa, vaya a los sabios [a] aprender dellos. E si fallare contradicion entre los sabios, punne e trabaje para entender por sí mismo, e abrá él coraçon para entender e sus palabras dellos a quál cabo aquesta la verdat..." (99/184v).

Qenaot/Ofrenda de zelos, to a strict philosophical determinism in which God knows the future of all general and particular things in existence before they come to pass. Although this idea and Abner/Alfonso's sources for it are discussed in more detail in supplement chapter three, it can be said here that Abner/Alfonso believed that even individual belief is the product of a predetermined outcome and not individual choice in the present. The philosopher Moses Narboni, who wrote his *Treatise on Free Will (Ha-Maamar ba-Behirah)* against Abner/Alfonso's ideas, claimed that Abner/Alfonso taught the paradoxical idea that "Although only the inevitable exists...it is necessary to put forth effort for what is sought."³⁴ In the context of Abner/Alfonso's assertion that his reader should explore his doubts apart from the sages of his tradition, and that his choice not to resolve his doubts in the present will have negative effects for later generations of Jews, there is a striking internal dissonance between Abner/Alfonso's stated determinist philosophical views and his conversionary appeal to his reader. Just as he presents his reader with an argument stressing the importance of the individual Jew's decision to convert, he undermines the urgency of that call to action by arguing elsewhere that any individual action, including conversion, is not the product of free choice but of a predetermined plan in the mind of God. As a result of this philosophical interference in his conversionary arguments, the Jewish reader is left without any compelling reason to make an individual leap of faith.

These examples of internal paradoxes are, however, only circumstantial to the larger self-contradiction of the text engendered by Abner/Alfonso's use of his personal experience as a source of argumentative authority. We have seen that Abner/Alfonso

³⁴ "ואמר כי הוא ואם הכל מחוייב...צריך להשתדל בדרוש" (Hayoun, "L'Épître du Libre Arbitre" 146).

takes care to try and represent real concerns of a contemporary Jewish readership, mentioning both historical realities (taxes, recent historical events such as the burning of the Talmud in Paris, increased Christian hostility, etc) as well as real Jewish objections to Christian arguments, some taken directly from anti-Christian polemical literature. While this fact in itself is interesting in the context of the self-referentiality of most anti-Jewish polemic, it is extremely problematic in light of Abner/Alfonso's frequent representation of himself as Jewish rather than simply Christian. Abner/Alfonso uses Hebrew language, rabbinical style, and predominantly Jewish sources, and discusses himself in Jewish rather than Christian terms, calling the Jews "my people from whom I come" ("...los judios, el mi pueblo donde yo era..." 12r / 1: 13). He refers to the Jewish reader as "you, brother Jew" ("tú, hermano judío" 42v / 1: 71) and he says that his conversion resulted not from turning away from Judaism, but from "drawing close always to the understandings of those great authentic sages, as far as I was able."³⁵ Thus Abner/Alfonso's rhetoric operates on two levels, at once appealing to the difficulty and doubts suffered by contemporary Jews, and also depicting himself as fundamentally Jewish in his experience, knowledge, and even his conversion to Christianity, in order to appeal to his Jewish reader to trust his arguments.

The upshot of this parallel rhetoric of both trying to represent the Jew in realistic and sympathetic terms and also of presenting himself and his experience of conversion as part of that Jewish experience is that Abner/Alfonso subjects the foundation of authority in his text—his own prophetically inspired conversion experience—to the very rhetoric of "Jewish doubt" that he uses as a tool of persuasion in the text. Abner/Alfonso's

³⁵ "...allegándome sienpre a los entendimientos de aquellos grandes sabios abtenticos, segund quanto yo más pude" (36r / 1: 59).

representation of himself as both Jewish in his experience and knowledge and Christian in his conclusions and anti-Jewish arguments is rendered irresolvably self-contradictory by the constant representation of the Jewish Rebel as rebellious. Part of this ambiguity is expressed in terms of a lack of trust of the Jewish Rebel of the Christian Teacher. Abner/Alfonso depicts himself to his reader as the Teacher who should be trusted by his disciples, and he encourages the Jew by saying that “it is fitting for every man, as much as he is able, to imitate the good habits of the righteousness sages. According to this they said that a man ought to make himself like the disciple of a sage.”³⁶ At the same time, however, he encourage each man “to strive and work to understand by himself.”³⁷ He calls his reader to follow his teaching, and to fight against it to prove him wrong.

We have already noted in the previous chapter that Abner/Alfonso stresses the importance of being a “good disciple” to one’s master, implying that his reader should follow him in his explanations and his own exemplary conversion. Abner/Alfonso goes to great lengths to present himself as both a good disciple to the sages of the Talmud and a prophetic innovator who works to purify and preserve what is true from Jewish tradition. Ironically, however, his language of double identity as both disciple and master creates internal contradictions that set up his own argument for failure. In addition to encouraging his reader to be like him and follow the sages, he also justifies himself by saying that those who innovate (as he did) keep knowledge alive by adding to it and correcting the mistakes of the past. By calling on his readers to be his disciples, he also

³⁶ “E conviene a todo omne, segund quanto más pudiere, de tomar semejança a las bonas costumbres de los justos sabios. E segund esto dixieron que sienpre se deve el omne fazer como disciplo de sabio” (36r / 1: 59).

³⁷ “punne e trabaje para entender por sí mismo...” (99/184v).

opens his own arguments up to correction and rejection. In the attempt to justify himself as a polemicist within the Jewish tradition, he again opens up his own interpretation to the criticism and correction of his “disciples.” Once again, his effort to present himself from two perspectives—both Christian and Jew, both convert and converter, both prophet and sage, both disciple and master—calls the authenticity and authority of his identity as either one of his two selves into perpetual uncertainty.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in an effort to accurately represent the Jewish Rebel in a believable way, Abner/Alfonso depicts him as doubtful of the good intentions of the Christian Teacher. At the end of chapter one, the Rebel states

I am afraid of you—I tell God the truth—that perhaps you will trick me with tricky words and flattery and deceptive wheedling, since that is the habit of every wheedler and manipulator of the Law. But despite this know that my intention will be for service of God and to know truth and righteousness...³⁸

The Jew states that he does not trust the Christian, and describes him as deceptive and false, and at the same time states that he promises to strive honestly for truth above all things (implying, of course, above and beyond his own tradition as a Jew). The Rebel repeats his distrust of the Teacher in various passages in the text, such as his statement in chapter nine that

Perhaps you aim to trick me so that I will accept allegorical proofs or arrangement or tallying of letters [i.e. Gematria or Hebrew numerology] which you took from your heart [i.e. which you invented] in order to undo the true and received faith

³⁸ “Yo [he] miedo de tí, digo verdat a Dios, que quizá me engannarás con palabras de engannos e falagos e sosacamientos engannosos, ca tal es costunbre de todo omne ssoacador e puxador de la Ley. Mas con todo esto ssepas por verdat que mi entencion será a servicio de Dios e para connocer la verdat e la justicia...” (42v / 1: 71).

that I have. I have seen many heretics and converts who do this, and according to what I heard about you, you are in some ways just like them.³⁹

This same argument overlaps with the Rebel's responses to the Teacher's claims about the legal weight of aggadic sources. When the Teacher argues that aggadic sources and parables should be understood literally whenever they can and not be discarded as metaphors and parables with no fixed meaning, the Rebel claims the Christians were tricked by the parables of Jesus himself. If the Christians really want to take Jewish parables and rabbinic dicta at face value, then they have to accept the words of Jesus as literal too, especially when he claims to be the "bread of life." The bread and the wine of mass should literally be understood to be the body and blood of Jesus, and so "they would become therefore digestive [matter] and the remains of filth and urine."⁴⁰ "Even though Jesus, your Christ, tricked you with metaphorical and hyperbolic words, in which you understood what he did not want to tell you, the deceiver met with [the implications of] his deception."⁴¹ In an uncanny parallel, Abner/Alfonso must himself face the implications of his "deception" (as the Rebel charges the Teacher), and his polemical argument comes to work against itself when the assumptions behind the invocation of his pseudo-Jewish voice is brought to bear on the overall Christian argument of his work.

³⁹ "¿O quiça que cudas enga[n]arme para que te rresçibiesse yo pruebas allegoricas o de arrimamientos o de cuentos de letras que assacaste de tu coraçon para desatar la ffe çierta e rresçebida que yo tengo, assi como vi muchos erejes e converssos que lo ffazen assi, e segund que yo oý de ti que en algunas rrazones eres tú tal como ellos?" (39r / 1: 65).

⁴⁰ "E serian dende digestiones e sobrajas de suzia e de orina" (180r/2:90).

⁴¹ "E aun, si Jhesu, el vuestro Cristo, vos engan[n]ó con sus palabras metaforicas y yperbolicas, en que entendiestes dellas lo que él non vos queria dezir, quel conplió al engan[n]ador con su enganno" (180r/2:90-91).

The Rebel's staged distrust of the Teacher becomes the reader's distrust of the author, Abner/Alfonso.

Because Abner/Alfonso identifies himself with both the Christian Teacher and the Jewish Rebel, this distrust not only involves a representation of Jewish doubt, but also implies Abner/Alfonso's own internal distrust of his own arguments and reasonings to himself. The suggestion that the "Christian" side of Abner/Alfonso has not fully convinced the "Jewish" side suggests that the real conversion experience that resulted from that confrontation of internal Jew and Christian was not based on solid conviction that was free of doubt or hesitation. Put in the context of Abner/Alfonso's use of his own conversion story—full of doubts, struggles, and a long transformation—the authoritative voice he constructs as the basis of his rhetorical appeal is thus tainted with an "authentic" representation of real doubt and uncertainty. His own "internal" past Jewish self is unconvinced of his Christian arguments, and so his own conversion is false and his polemical arguments are without testimony.

The conundrum created by the contrary textual goals of authentic representation (including Jewish doubt) and certain proclamation and defense of Christian faith could be potentially resolved by the conversion of the Rebel Jew to Christianity at the end of the text. The final conversion of the Rebel would signify the defeat of his rebelliousness and a final affirmation of the Teacher's arguments and, with them, the foundation of Abner/Alfonso's convictions and his status as a model to be followed in conversion. This solution, however, never appears in the work, and the Jew shows as much resistance at the end of the long text of the *Mostrador* as he does at the beginning. Not only does the Jew not convert, he argues at the very end that the Christian Teacher actually defended and

aided the Jews with his arguments. The fact that the Jew remains defiant throughout the text and does not convert at the end may not seem surprising when compared to other anti-Jewish polemics in which the stubbornness and blindness of the Jew is simply reinforced by his failure to convert at the end of a polemical dialogue (one can think, for example, of Gilbert Crispin's polemical dialog).⁴² In the context of Abner/Alfonso's rhetorical appeal to Jewish readers, however, the stubbornness of the Jew and his resistance of Christian arguments results in a wealth of contradictory messages within the text. If Abner/Alfonso is indeed evoking the standard trope of the stubborn and obdurate hermeneutical Jew of medieval theology and polemic, then his depiction can at best fall on deaf ears as a Christian and not a Jewish perspective (a fact that works against his ongoing testimony and appeal to his perspective as more Jewish than Christian). At worst, the invocation of a stubborn Jew in an effort to be "authentic" in his depiction of the Rebel can only encourage the Jewish reader to affirm this resistance as part of his own experience as a Jew and increase in his resolute rejection of Abner/Alfonso's anti-Jewish arguments. The "rebelliousness" of the Rebel is thus either a call to resist the arguments of the text or proof of its irrelevance as another work of Christian theology and of its false claim to solidarity and understanding. Once again, the double perspective evoked by Abner/Alfonso is a source of internal dissonance and contradiction rather than the basis of a cogent rhetorical appeal.

The ambiguity created by the rebelliousness of the Rebel manifests itself in many places in the text, but is apparent especially when the Rebel points out that the teacher

⁴² The Jew with whom Crispin debates does not convert, but in some manuscripts, in his letter to Anselm at the beginning the text, Crispin mentions that a certain Jew from London had converted as a result of his polemic (*The Works of Gilbert Crispin* 10).

commits the same mistakes that the Teacher has claimed of the Rebel. For example, among the very few references to the New Testament are some spurious citations by the Rebel, citations which the Teacher is, of course, quick to expose as false (160r / 2: 46). This bait-and-switch to expose the Rebel as false seems to be in keeping with Christian anti-Jewish polemics, which frequently misrepresent Jewish knowledge of Christianity as misinformed. The presence of these false citations is complicated, however, by the fact that the Rebel had already caught the Teacher in a false citation of an argument by Averroes. The Teacher states at the beginning of chapter five that “Ibn Rushd wrote in the “Book of Divine Conjunction” that there is nothing stable in all the world except God, and this is his unity, and it was about this that it was said that Christ was the Son of God, and that divinity was incarnated in humanity...”⁴³ The source of this statement, the *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect*, which only survives in a Hebrew translation within an extant commentary by Moses Narboni, reads slightly differently:

...Only God...is in existence and...He brought into being all the existents. This is the unity. And this is directed against those who err in saying of the Messiah that he is the son of God, and that the divinity came forth out of a woman, and that the deity entered the womb of Mary, who bore the Messiah.”⁴⁴

⁴³ “Escribió Aben Rrost en el “Libro del ayuntamiento divinal” que no a en todo el mundo cosa estable sinon Dios solo, e que aquello es la su unidat, e que por ello fue dicho en el Christo que era Fijo de Dios, e que la divinidat se envistió en la umanidat...” (118v / 1: 225). A very similar statement is made in the *Teshuvot*: תשובות 24ב: וכתב בן רשד בספר הדבוק האלוהי שאין בכל המציאות לבד האלוה. וכי זה הוא הייחוד שלו. וכי לכך [Teshuvot 24b- “Averroes wrote in the Book of Divine Conjunction, “There is nothing in all existence except God. This is His unity [or uniqueness]. In this way it is said about the Messiah that He was the son of God. ;The divine became incarnate in man and took on flesh in the womb of the woman, Mary, when she became pregnant with the Messiah.”] *Teshuvot* (Castilian) 52ra/: “E escribió Aven Rrost en el “Libro del Ayuntamiento divinal” que non ha en todo el ser sinon Dios, e que esta es la ssu unidat. E que por esso fue dicho en el Christo que fue Fijo de Dios; que la divinidat se envistió en la humanidad e tomó carne en vientre de la muger Maria, quando conçibió al Christo.”

⁴⁴ “ואין בנמצא רק השם ישתבח כל הנמצאות וזה הוא הייחוד וזה הוא כנגד לאשר הם טועים שאומרים במשיח שהוא בן אלהים”

Over forty folia later, in chapter six, the Rebel brings up this misquotation, stating:

Do not think that I forgot what you tried to adduce in the second paragraph of the fifth chapter about what Ibn Rushd wrote in the *Book of Divine Conjunction*, which was said directly and reasonably about Christ, that he was the son of God...I see that you erred in this or you wanted to make [others] err...See that the intention of Ibn Rushd was to say that the Christians erred in what they said about the Christ, that he was the son of God...and you took the word of Ibn Rushd as honor and praise of the Christ of the Christians, and he did not say this except for their dishonor.⁴⁵

The polemical effect of representing the Jew as misquoting the New Testament becomes ambiguous self-contradiction when the Teacher himself is caught in the blatant manipulation of his sources. This ambiguity forms part of the more global contradictions with which the *Mostrador* is riven by implying, through the association between the Teacher and the author, that Abner/Alfonso himself perhaps manipulated his sources for his own benefit and that the Jewish reader would do well not to trust his unconventional use of authoritative sources.⁴⁶ The charge of falsification against the Teacher reminds us again of the Rebel's words at the end of chapter one when he stated that "I am afraid of you—I tell God the truth—that perhaps you will trick me with tricky words and flattery

"והאלהות יצה מאשה ושהאל נכנס בבטן מרים ונשאה משיחח" (Hebrew 65, English 59. in Bland's edition).

⁴⁵ "Non cudes que olvidé lo que tú cudeste aduzir prueva por tus rrazones en el peragraffo ssegundo del capitulo quinto de que escribió Aben Roshd en el "Libro del ayuntamiento divinal" que ffue dicho con derecho e con rrazon en el Christo que era ffijo de Dios...Que yo veo que erreste en esto o quisiste fazer errar...E cata que ssu entencion de Aben Rrost fue para dezir que erraron los christianos en lo que dixieron en el Christo que era ffijo de Dios...E tú tomeste la palabra de Aben Rrost a onrra e alabança del Christo de los christianos, e él non lo dixo ssinon para desonrra dellos" (162r / 2: 51).

⁴⁶ The same distorted passage from Ibn Rushd is cited in the *Teshuvot* 24v, but without the charge of forgery by the Rebel. Hecht pointed out Abner/Alfonso's distortion in 183 n.438.

and deceptive wheedling, since that is the habit of every wheedler and manipulator of the Law...⁴⁷

The unfulfilled promise of the Christian at the start of the work to win the Jew over is complicated by an elaborate play of perspective between who is actually convincing whom. After the Jew expressed his fear of the Christian and his concern that he would trick him with false arguments, he inverts the entire perspective of the roles of Teacher and Rebel, stating to his Christian opponent:

I want you to know something about me: just as you believe you will conquer and turn my understanding to believe in your opinions, so I believe I will conquer you and turn your understanding to believe in mine. Just because you write this book and call your name “Teacher” and mine “Rebel”, I believe that the struggle is the opposite, and the names and words of the writing could be changed and the book would end up as a help to the Jews, just as you believe it will be a help to the Christians, but it would be necessary to speak at greater length to defend the arguments of the Jews, just as you speak at length in defense of the arguments of the Christians. This [fact] also casts doubt and suspicion that you do not write this book without partisanship or in a manner of fairness and equal judgment.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ “Yo [he] miedo de ti, digo verdat a Dios, que quiça me engannarás con palabras de engannos e falagos e sosacamientos engannosos, ca tal es costunbre de todo omne ssosacador e puxador de la Ley” (42v / 1: 71).

⁴⁸ “...quiero que ssepas una rrazon de mí: que assy como tu cuydas vencer e tornar mi entendimiento para creer tus opiniones, asi cudo yo vencer a ti e tornar tu entendimiento para creer en las mias e maguera que tú (43r) escrites este libro e llamas tu nonbre en él “Mostrador” e el mio “Rrebelle”, yo cuydo el pleito al contrario, ca sserán mudados los nonbres e los vierbos en ssu escriptura, e fincará el libro tal qual es para sser ayuda de los judios, segund que tú cudas ayudar con él a los christianos, sinon que avia mester de alongar más en enforçamiento de las rrazones de los judios, como tú aluengas en enforçamiento de las rrazones de los christianos más de lo que aluengas en enforçamiento de las rrazones de los judios. Ca esto otrossi mete dubda e sospecha para cudar que tú non escrites el libro sin vanderia nin en manera de derecho e equal juyzio” 42v-43r / 1: 71).

This belief that the positions could easily be exchanged and that the work could easily end up being a “help” to the Jews rather than the Christians is reinforced at the very end of the text. In a long final statement, the Jew states that

I see that in all of [your arguments] you always used the sayings of the sages of the Talmud as assistance and proof and testimony for your Christian faith. For this we the Jews should thank you very much, although we do not believe you, because you gave honor to our sages and our Law before the Christians, and you did a great good for us. This will be a reason, with the help of God, to dissuade the Christians, who want ill for us, in their attempt to burn our Law and our Talmud and destroy it from the world. Know that, above and beyond your words, you did us more good than at the beginning, insofar as you gave good arguments before the nations [showing] that it is right and correct that the gentiles do not give us a great burden, but rather that they sustain us gently, so that we can live and not be lost from the world. I believe that the Christians who want ill for us will say to you what Balak, king of Moab, said to Balaam the prophet: “What have you done to me? I told you to curse my enemies, and, behold, you have blessed them altogether.” (Num 23:11).⁴⁹

⁴⁹ “E veo que en todas tomaste ssienpre los dichos de los ssabios del Talmud por ayuda e prueva e testimonio ssobre vuestra ffe de los christianos. E sobre esto devemos te lo agradecer mucho los judios, como quier que non te lo creamos, porque diste onrra a nuestros sabios e a nuestra Ley ante los christianos, e que nos ffiziste en ello grand bien. Ca esto será rrazon, con la ayuda de Dios, para sacar de ssus voluntades de los christianos, que nos mal quieren, de lo que cudavan quemar nuestra Ley e nuestro Talmud e tollerlo del mundo. E aun agora, ençima de tus palabras, nos ffeziste mayor bien que a primero, en que nonbraste bonas rrazones ante los pueblos que derecho es e rrazon que non nos fffagan los gentiles grand premia, sinon que nos mantengan manssamientre, en guisa que podamos bivar e que non (342r) sseamos perdidos del mundo. Sinon que yo cudo que te dirán los christianos que nos quieren mal como lo que dixo Balach, el rrey de Moab, a Baalam, el propheta: ¿Qué es esto que me ffeziste? Que para maldezir a mis enemigos te tomé, e tú bendexístelos” (341v-342r / 1: 443).

Not only can the roles of Christian and Jew, Teacher and Rebel be reversed, but the intended effect of the Christian's words results, from the Jewish perspective, as a help rather than an injury. With this statement, Abner/Alfonso undermines the success of his entire rhetorical enterprise in the *Mostrador*, showing that the result of his use of Jewish sources and counter-arguments only ended up helping to convince Jews of their faith and convince Christians of the worth of the Talmud. Indeed, he takes this to be proof that God is actually on the side of the Jews and turns every act of Christian aggression into a benefit for them. Abner/Alfonso first lists in detail the many alleged aggressions and libels that Jews commit against Christians. Near the end of the work, in chapter ten, paragraph twenty-two, the rebel begins to brag that the Christians seem to have no power to harm the Jews or reduce their numbers, despite their intentions to do so:

I see that God looks out for us, the Jews, and that he guards us both through natural means and through miracles...and this is because we live among Christians and Moors and other gentiles, who are all our enemies and those who want ill for us. And they understand and know of us that we want ill for them, just as they want ill for us, or worse, and they slander us in their churches, and we give thanks to God when we see some of them fallen, and we implore God to destroy those that are not fallen, and we slander their monuments and their dead and their ancestors living and dead, and we avoid them and hold them to be excessive in eating and drinking.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ “Yo veo que Dios tiene mientes en nos, los judios, e que nos guarda propriamiente ssobre natura e en miraglo maravilloso...E es esto que nos moramos entre los christianos e los moros e [los] otros gentiles, que sson todos nuestros enemigos e nuestros malquerientes. E ellos conoçen e ssaben de nos que los queremos mal, assi como ellos quieren mal a nos, o peor, e que nos maldezimos ssus eglesias, e que damos loores a Dios quando vueemos [sic] algunas caydas, e que rrogamos a Dios que quebrante las que non sson caydas,

Abner/Alfonso then goes to great lengths to elaborate on the many things that Jews do against Christians that should, he implies, provoke them to not allow Christians to live among them. Christians, Muslims, and other gentiles

Know that our law prohibits us from making them beneficial medicine, and from giving them peace or giving them presents...or from giving them board in our houses or from giving them donations, or from showing them any love whatsoever. And they know that we are ordered by our Law to kill them and make them give things up and not return what they gave, and we killed their Christ, whom they hold to be their god, and we kill their disciples, and we malign them every day, and we pray to God that they be lost and destroyed from the world, because we believe they are heretics and idolaters, and the evil kingdom of Edom, whose destruction we await, upon which even we will have salvation.⁵¹

This litany of bad things that Jews supposedly do to Christians seems like standard anti-Christian polemical material, and it would be something to be expected more from the *Pugio Fidei* than from Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador*. While Abner/Alfonso's polemical intentions show through clearly in this passage, we are reminded again of the self-contradiction generated by Abner/Alfonso's stated desire to convince and convert Jews "gently" and his depiction of the evils committed by Jews against Christians. This passage

e que maldezimos sus monumentos e a ssus muertos e a ssus parientes bivos e muertos, e que los esquivamos e los tenemos por enconados en comer e en beber" (335r / 2: 431-2).

⁵¹ "E saben que non es deffendido por nuestra Ley de les fazer melezina aprovechable, nin de les dar paz, nin de les enbiar presente, nin de les (335v) fazer melezina, nin de les dar posada en nuestras casas, nin de les dar donadio, nin les ffazer amor ninguno. E ssaben que nos es mandado por nuestra Ley de los matar e de ffazerles perder el algo e non les tornar lo que perdieren, e que matamos a ssu Christo, que tienen que es ssu Dios, e que matamos a ssu[s] diçiplos, e que nos maldezimos de [ellos] cada día, e que rrogamos a Dios que ssean perdidos e astragados del mundo, porque los tenemos por erejes e por sservidores de idolo, e que sson el rregno malo de Edom, el que esperamos nos que a a sser quebrantado, e que con esso abremos nos ssalvacion" (335r-v / 2: 432).

is so typically polemical, in fact, that it almost seems that Abner/Alfonso has given up on the internal coherence of his work, and has taken to simply including slander where he can fit it in. The conclusion of this passage, however, reminds us that we are still very much within the edifice of Abner/Alfonso's disputational drama, and the Rebel's words make these slanderous accusations part of an attempt at realistic depiction of the Jewish situation. The Rebel concludes, inverting the standard Christian arguments based on history:

Despite all this they know we live among them in spite of them, and kings or other leaders or other people have not been able to live without us since many years back. How many of their kings and leaders have taken advice and agreed to destroy us from the world! But God undoes their counsels and their thoughts. He kills them, and they die bad deaths, or they are turned upside-down and sent into wars with each other. Not only one of them rose up against us, but in every generation they rise up against us to destroy us, but God protects us and saves us from their hands. So look if there is a greater or stronger miracle than this! What proof could be greater than this to know that we are God's people and his heirs, and that he fulfills the promise and covenant he made with our ancestors when he said "And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God" (Lv 26:44).⁵²

⁵² "E con todo esto que ssaben que nos moramos entrellos a ssu pesar dellos, e que non pueden bevir ssin nos nin los rreyes nin los otros principes nin la otra gente desde muchos annos a aca. ¡E cuántos e cuántos rrees e principes dellos tomaron conssejo e acuerdo para nos astragar del mundo! Mas Dios desffaze ssus conssejos e ssus pensamientos dellos, o con que los mata, e mueren malas muertes, o con que mete rebueltas e guerras entrellos. E non uno tan ssolamiente dellos se levantó contra nos, mas en cada generacio e generacio sse levantan contra nos para nos astragar; sinon que Dios nos guarda e nos escapa de

Ten folia later, after hearing the Teacher's answers to his statements, the Rebel is unmoved and unconvinced, and repeats his conclusion with confidence: "What proof could be greater than this to know that God loves us, the Jews, and he protects us and frees us from all evil? While you might have thought ill of us, God thought well of us..."⁵³ Thus the slander that Abner/Alfonso asserts the Jews make against the Christians do not lead him into a one-sided polemical condemnation in which the Jews should be punished or expelled from Christian lands. On the contrary, the Rebel offers this as proof that God loves the Jews because he protects them despite their precarious situation with the lands of Christian and Muslim leaders. The effect of this long section, which shows how much attention Abner/Alfonso actually gives to the Rebel's ideas about the Jews as God's Chosen People, is that the Teacher's polemical assertions against the Jews in other sections become relativized, and Christian proofs lose their persuasive appeal. Rhetorical effectiveness and argumentative momentum are lost at the expense of true-to-life portrayal of the Jewish-Christian debate as a never-ending intransigent tit-for-tat of unconvincing arguments.

Abner/Alfonso actually alludes to the impossibility of his task as polemicist within the text, in a sense undermining the possibility of his own success as a polemical author aiming to convince and convert his Jewish readers. He states that

ssus manos dellos. ¡Pues catad si a en el mundo miraglos mayores nin más ffuertes que éstos! ¿E cuál prueba puede sser mayor que ésta para connoçer que somos nos pueblo de Dios e ssu eredat, e que nos cumple el pleito e la postura que puso con nuestros parientes en lo que dixo: 'Aun con todo esto, quando ffueren en tierra de ssus enemigos, non los aborrescré nin los esquivaré para astragarlos e quebrantaré mi postura con ellos, ca yo sso Domino, ssu Dios?'" (335v / 2: 432).

⁵³ "¿E cuál prueba puede sser mayor que ésta para connoçer que Dios nos ama a nos, los judios, e nos guarda e nos libra de todo mal? Que ssi vos penssastes mal ssobre nos, penssólo Dios por bien..." (342r / 1: 443).

It is true what is said in the book *Sanhedrin* that a man should always learn what to respond to the gentile heretic. But to respond to the heretic of Israel, there is no reason to learn, because he will only become more of a heretic on account of [the response]. So it is said that the Jewish heretic, he who despises what the Jews have received from their ancestors, and being a Jew who denies the persons of the Trinity and the incarnation of divinity in humanity, such a man as this cannot be corrected by any argument which other Jews argue to him, since they despise and cast doubt on the arguments received from them and they deny the opinions understood from them which could correct and undo his doubts.⁵⁴

This concession of the ineffectiveness of such arguments, even from one Jew to another, calls to mind the polemical goals of Raymond Martini half a century previously in the *Capistrum Iudeorum*, ostensibly directed to those who would go out and argue with Jews, that “I want you to be no less attentive regarding those things which the Jews object to us than regarding those things which we adduce against their error.” Martini’s shows his concern that the arguments of missionaries could easily prove ineffective. By the end of Abner/Alfonso’s work, there is no tenable conclusion except that there are no arguments that will actually work to convince Jews of Christianity, even those (like Abner/Alfonso’s) that are based on personal appeal rather than textual authority. Abner/Alfonso seems to suggest that even his own arguments, justified by the authority of his own personal testimony as a Jew, are not convincing. This not only invalidates the Christian arguments

⁵⁴ “E por ende es verdat lo que dize en el libro “Çanhedrim” que ssienpre deve omne aprender lo que rresponda al ereje gentil. Mas para rresponder al ereje de Israel, non a por qué aprender, porque por aquello sse ffaria más ereje. Como que diz que el ereje judio, el que despreçia en lo que tienen rresçebido los judios de ssus antecessores, e él sseyendo judio e negar las perssonas de la Trinidat e el envestimiento de la divinidad en la umanidat, tal omne como éste non puede aver endereçamiento por ninguna (328v) rrazon quel rrazonassen los otros judios, despues que desdennan e ponen dubda en sus opiniones rresçebidas dellos e que niega[n] las opiniones entendidas, las que podrian endereçar e ssoltar ssus dubdas” (328r-v / 2: 419).

of the Teacher in the work. It also calls into question the justification of Abner/Alfonso's own conversion with which he opens the work, and with it the very sense of his work as a whole. The internal contradictions in the *Mostrador* are played out not only as a missionizing problem (Follow or do not follow the Talmud; Be a Jew or do not be a Jew, etc.) but as the internal crisis of doubt of the Jew (Listen or do not listen to the Teacher; Convert or do not convert, etc.). Even though Abner/Alfonso encourages the Jew to explore his doubts, as he did, the ultimate message is that there is no resolving them for either Abner/Alfonso or for his readers. The author Abner/Alfonso does not seem, despite some statements to the contrary, convinced of his own arguments, and so the model of his own conversion is likewise unconvincing. The impassable aporia created by Abner/Alfonso's paradoxical double rhetoric signals the failure of his missionizing endeavor and leaves the reader in an abulia in which no decision is satisfactory.

In his final words in the text, the Teacher rejects the Rebel's statement that the dispute resulted more in helping Jews rather than hurting them. He argues

It was not my intention in this book to honor or dishonor any man insofar as he is Christian or Jew, but to point out those sages insofar as they were Jewish sages and men of understanding among you who said words which belie your opinions. It is a blessing and an honor to you that your authentic sages disprove you and agree with the sages of the gentiles in giving testimony against you that you are false and in error. Rather, the honor is theirs insofar as they affirm truth and the dishonor is yours, because there is no force left in your arguments...⁵⁵

⁵⁵ "Ca non ffue la mi entencion en este libro para onrrar nin desonrrar a ningun omne enquanto es christiano o judio, sinon para nonbrar aquellos ssabios enquanto ffueron judios ssabios e entendidos entre vos, que dixieron palabras que contradizen la[s] vuestras opiniones, e que benedicion e onrra es a vos en que los vuestros ssabios abtenticos entre vos vos desmienten e que concuerdan con los sabios de los gentiles

In this passage we can see the two keys to Abner/Alfonso's strategies of rhetorical appeal discussed at length in the previous pages —the reference to “authentic” sources and the giving of testimony by Jews against Jews—brought together in the Teacher's assertions. In the midst of the contradictions created by the Rebel's continued rebellion and his words of thanks to the Teacher for helping the Jewish case, the Teacher's words, however, seem perfunctory and do not make sense as part of the text's overall presentation of its argument.

This Parthian shot with which the extant text concludes provides cold comfort from a Christian polemical perspective, and we know that this was also not remedied by the original ending to the manuscript, no longer extant. According to the introductory table-of-contents summary in the manuscript, the original text contained two more paragraphs which are not actually found in the surviving text of the *Mostrador*. In these, as they are understood from the introductory summary, the Rebel and Teacher each gave one final retort before the end of the work. The description of this section, however, in no way suggests that the Rebel has any change of heart or decides to convert at the end of the work or that the Christian's statements were any less unconvincing or feckless. The Jew's final statement includes a strange change from third-person description to first-person authorial testimony lamenting the uselessness of the polemical engagement with the Christian. According to the table of contents, the final words of the Rebel were intended:

en dar testimonio contra vos de que ssodes erradores e ffalssarios. Mas la onrra es a ellos enquanto otorgan la verdad, e es desonrra a vos, porque non vos ffincó ninguna ffuerça en vuestras rrazones...” (342r / 1: 444).

To show what the Jew says about being more certain in his Jewish faith even after these and other disputations, more than he was even before this one. And [to show] that he and other Jews write and will write more books among them to insult the faith of the Christians, and that I gained nothing in all of these disputations which I wrote against them, but I lost [something] in that I ended up on bad terms with all the Jews, and that the Christians will not take me for good, and it will happen to me what happened to Elishah the Heretic when the Christians did not accept his words.⁵⁶

In this striking passage, the Rebel declares the pointlessness of entertaining Christian disputations and of responding to Christian arguments, because it only leads one into isolation from his group. The Jew's comparison of himself with Elishah the Heretic (Elishah ben Avuyah) is striking as well, given that elsewhere Abner/Alfonso condemns Elishah as "in error and deceptive in [the Christian faith]"⁵⁷ and says that he was "was the cause and reason for the denial of the persons of God and...was the cause and reason why faith in the persons of God was taken out and removed from among the Jews."⁵⁸ He even says that "I called the Jew "rebel" in this book for this very reason."⁵⁹ From the perspective of the Rebel, the isolation that results from entertaining Christian disputations

⁵⁶ "De nonbrar lo que el rrebelle dize que está más seguro en la ssu ffe de los judios aun despues destas e otras disputaciones, más de quanto era ante desto; e que él e otros judios escriven e escribirán otros libros entrellos para denostar la fe de los chirstianos, e que yo non gané nada en todas disputaçiones que escri[ví] contra ellos, mas que perdí en que me paré mal con todos los judios, e que los christianos non me lo tomarán a bien, e que me contezrá como contesçió a Eliseo el herege, que non rresçibieron los christianos sus palabras" (28r / 1: 42, 2: 445 n. 1105).

⁵⁷ "...él era errado e engannoso en ella..." (30v / 1: 48).

⁵⁸ "...Fue causa e rrazon para negar las perssonas de Dios...e fue causa e rrazon para que ffue tajada e arrincada de entre los judios aquella ffe de las perssonas" (89r / 1: 166).

⁵⁹ "E como lo que yo llamo rrebelle al judio en este libro por esta misma rrazon..." (89v / 1: 167).

and arguments is the opposite of the truth promised by the Teacher to the Jew who thinks apart from his tradition and seeks truth individually. According to the final words of the Jewish Rebel, anyone (and the author Abner/Alfonso is always in the background of the Rebel's doubts) who leaves his tradition and tries to find truth alone or who engages with the Christian disputant will end up worse off.

The internal dissonance between the implications of Abner/Alfonso's appeal to his personal experience and the effort to represent the Jewish Rebel in verisimilitudinous terms outside the ideas of Christian theology cannot be considered apart from the tension inherent in the Christian appropriation and use of Rabbinical sources in service of Christian truth. There is, from the very beginning of this use in Paul Christiani at the Disputation of Barcelona and even more explicitly in the writings of Raymond Martini, a fundamental ambivalence about the real nature of such Rabbinical sources, and they are represented by these polemicists as simultaneously erroneous and truthful. In Martini's words, "for a wise man never despises a precious stone, even if it is found on the head of a dragon or a toad. Honey is the spit of bees, something that [a creature] with a poisonous is not worthy of."⁶⁰ For Martini, the solution to this conundrum comes by arguing that the Talmud happens to contain some true things, but this was in spite of the Jews themselves, and was transmitted despite their contrary ideas elsewhere. For Abner/Alfonso, the double status of the Talmud as both a source of truth and the proof of Jewish deviation from that truth means that it serves as an even more authoritative proof of his arguments. He states, blending the words of Maimonides with a well-known

⁶⁰ "Lapidem enim pretiosum prudens nequaquam despicit licet inventus fuerit in draconis capite, vel bufonis. Mel quoque sputum est apum et aliquid forsan aliud minus dignum, habentium quidem venenosum aculeum" (*Pugio* 3). As we note in supplement chapter two, n. 41, this passage is similar to an earlier passage from Martini's *Capistrum*.

Talmudic dicta, that “I help myself to the truth no matter who says it, and all the more because “the testimony of the litigant is worth a hundred witnesses””.⁶¹ This rabbinic dicta can be understood not only as the reason justifying Abner/Alfonso’s use of Rabbinical sources as proof texts in his work, but also as the motivation behind his inclusion of his own personal testimony and his appeal to his experience as quintessentially Jewish. The internal contradictions in the Christian appropriation of Jewish sources for Christological purposes plays itself out dramatically in the appropriation of Jewish identity and experience for argumentative polemical appeal.

Ultimately, the rhetorical technique used by Abner/Alfonso to appeal to the Jew by representing his own experience and blurring the boundaries of his own internal debate can have no solution. If the Jew were not to be represented as rebellious and stubborn, than Abner/Alfonso could not really say he “understands” the Jewish arguments against Christianity, presenting in their place a typical Christian invention of Jewish anti-Christian arguments. Because an essential part of the appeal of Abner/Alfonso’s text is his stated understanding of the reasons why Jews do not convert and because his representation of the Rebel depends on this remotely verisimilar representation of Jewish uncertainty regarding Christian ideas, actual Christian arguments cannot be represented as truly convincing to Jews without attributing that to some other extra-textual support. The invocation of Abner/Alfonso’s own testimony to fill this void is, however, rendered unconvincing by the representation of the “real” Jew as

⁶¹ “Yo me ayudo de la verdad de quien quier que la diga, e más porque el otorgamiento del qui es parte del pleito vale tanto como cient testigos” (32v / 1: 52). The first half of this statement can be found in the works of various writers, and was written by Maimonides in the introduction to the *Eight Chapters* (*Thamāniyah fusūl/Shemonah Peraqim*), found within his Arabic commentary on the Mishnah *Avot*. He says “Wa ’isma’ l-ḥaq mimman qaluhu” (“shema ha-emet mi-mi she-amarah”) (*Eight Chapters of Maimonides* 6). Cf. Jospe, *Filosofiah Yehudit ma-hi?* 19 The second half of the statement comes from T.B. *Gittin* 40b; *Kiddushin* 65b; *Bava Mezia* 3b.

unconvinced by such Christian arguments. In other words, either Abner/Alfonso is a “real” Jew like his reader (in which case his conversion and Christian arguments are inauthentic and cannot inspire the “real” Jewish reader to convert) or he only falsely paints himself—like the “deceptive wheedler” named by the Rebel—as a Jew whose belief led him to convert (in which case he either a lying Jew or a malicious Christian, and in either case he is not to be trusted). The only way for Abner/Alfonso to actually invoke his situation as a source of authority and trustworthy proof is to show that his conversion to Christianity was unjustified by his own arguments and that his “internal” Jewish voice still remains unconvinced. This situation, however, undermines his polemical aim of converting Jews to Christianity and responding to their doubts and counterarguments in a believable, “authentic” way. This effort to authentically represent himself as both converter and converted implies that he is either the unconvinced Jew whose conversion was false or the unconvincing Christian who need not be heeded. We are reminded again of the challenge given by the thirteenth-century Barcelona Rabbi Solomon Ibn Adret, who asks in his *Perushe Aggadot*:

Who recounted this *Aggadah*? A Jew or a Christian or a heretic who behaved like a Jew and believed like a Christian? Now if he was truly a Jew, then he did not make the statement in the fashion you indicate, for then he would not have been a Jew. If he was a Christian, then I need not believe in what he said regarding this matter. Let him say whatever he wishes. If he was a heretic, then neither we nor you need believe in what he says. One does not bring proof from a heretic.⁶²

⁶² "מי היה המגיד אותה הגדה ישראלית או נצרי או מין? שהיה נוהג כישראלי ומאמין בנצרי אם ישראלי היה באמת לא אמרו על הצד שאמרת שא"כ לא ישראלי היה ואם נצרי אין לי להאמין בו במה שאמר בזה ויאמר מה שיאמר ואם מין לא לנו ולכם להאמין במה שאמרת שא"כ לא ישראלי היה ואין מביאין ראיה מן המינים" (Perles Hebrew 42).

In the end, Abner/Alfonso's effort to invoke the testimony of his own hybrid identity opens the door to the undermining of his polemical authority.

In the introductory summary that describes what were to be the Teacher's final words and the final words of the text, the Teacher was to claim that "God promised the Christians in the sayings of Isaiah that they would win all these disputations..."⁶³ This final return to prophecy, however, as the ultimate source of victory in the disputation is itself riven by the internal contradictions already created in the text, recalling Abner/Alfonso's prophetic dreams and the use of extra-textual testimony as the ultimate grounds for proving Christian arguments over Jewish dissent. This final appeal to prophecy hurls the reader and the personas of Rebel and Teacher back into a *desdoblamiento* of argumentative perspective that cannot, in the end, escape the influence of Abner/Alfonso's personal narrative that framed the polemic from its very first words. The internal disputation of Jew and Christian, of Rebel and Teacher, of Abner and Alfonso, cannot be coherently resolved while these identities are in fluid motion and the boundary lines between them continue to shift as they are used within the polemical argument. Anxiety over this blending of opposites found its way into the text itself, as when the Rebel himself laments the attempt of the Teacher to cross the boundaries of his Christian identity in his rhetorical appeal, stating "Woe to those who say good for evil and put shadow for light and light for shadow and bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!"⁶⁴ Abner/Alfonso turns this mixing of opposites into a test of faith when the Teacher

⁶³ "Dios prometió a los christianos por dichos de Ysayas que ellos avian a vencer todas estas disputaciones" (28r / 1: 42, 2: 445 n. 1106).

⁶⁴ ¡Guay de los que dizen por el mal bien, e ponen tiniebra por luz e luz pro tiniebra, e ponen amargo por dulce e dulce por amargo!" (349/293r).

reminds the Rebel of a saying from *Song of Songs Rabbah*, “Even if the sages tell you that the right is the left and the left is the right, listen to them.”⁶⁵ Abner/Alfonso quotes this same dictum in the *Teshuvot*, and asserts to Isaac Polgar, “whoever does not believe this, like you...is not a “Jewish person”...Rather, he is a sectarian and an heretic.”⁶⁶

It is interesting to note that after Abner/Alfonso’s composition of the *Mostrador*, Abner/Alfonso’s internal debate represented in the text as an internal, imaginary dialog moved outward, in his subsequent texts, into the extra-textual world in which Abner/Alfonso only spoke for the Christian side of the argument and his opponent became a real, external Jew rather than an internal, imaginary one. Only when the author of the anti-Jewish polemic becomes Christian and makes no appeal to the authority of his pre-converted self can there be a disputation, and yet in such a disputation, there is never a victor because neither side shares the same notion of authoritative proof. As in the Barcelona Disputation, both sides can claim victory for themselves and conversion is simply impossible. In an encounter between Christians and Jews in which the boundaries between sides are always moving, neither can escape confusion with its opponent, no real dialog is possible, and the goal of a meaningful conversion in any direction is rendered meaningless. Viewed diachronically in comparison with the other texts of the Dominican anti-Jewish polemical movement of the thirteenth century, Abner/Alfonso’s texts represent the failure of the rhetoric of conversion. Out of the ashes of such failure the only possible encounter between Christians and Jews must be one either of mutual tolerance, in which the differences

⁶⁵ “...“lo que que [sic] te mostraren e te dixieren los sabios, e aunque te digan del diestro que es siniestro e del siniestro que es el diestro, escúchagelo”” (38r/1:63).

⁶⁶ "כי מי שאינו מודה בכך כמוך...אינו איש יהודי...אלא הוא כותי ואפיקורוס" (54r/Hecht 437).

between each side are accepted as the grounds for debate and no effort is made to reduce or change them, or intolerant violence, in which destruction and expulsion end all interaction by removing half of the equation. We can try to gauge Abner/Alfonso's own reaction to the failure of his missionary ideal by concluding this study with a brief consideration of his attitude toward persecution, violence, and forced conversion.

Conclusion

Conversion or Coercion? The Road to 1391

“No one can claim to be one hundred per cent Christian or one hundred per cent pagan. Convert and converter will have to live on united in one and the same person, like two movements of our respiration, like a constant dying and coming to life again of our faith”

—Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy, *The Christian Future*

“They cannot stand the Jews, but imitate them constantly.”

—Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

“Violence is supremely mimetic.”

—René Girard, “Mimesis and Violence”

Our reading of anti-Jewish polemics, especially those of the later thirteenth century, showed that the evolution of polemic from the twelfth century on depended in large part on an evolution of the definition of textual authority. What began in the twelfth century as a shift towards the use of reason continued to evolve in the thirteenth century as a campaign to appropriate Rabbinical sources under the guise of Christian *authoritates*. Much has been written defending the claim that the polemical arguments of the second half of the thirteenth century, notably those of Paul Christiani at the disputations of Barcelona and later in Paris, and of Raymond Martini in his *Capistrum Iudaeorum* and *Pugio Fidei*, formed part of a larger missionizing movement whose common goal was conversion of Jews. Our considerations of the sources related to thirteenth-century Dominican activity showed that the total rejection of the notion of a missionizing movement proposed by some critics is unwarranted. Without denying that Christian “mission”, broadly conceived, formed part of what defined the efforts of Christiani and Martini under the influence and guidance of Raymond of Peñafort, however, our close reading of the sources associated with these polemics showed that such missionizing never fully escaped the legacy of textual anti-Jewish Christian polemic in which polemical arguments

addressed issues more germane to Christian theological discussions than it offered persuasive appeals to a potentially convertible Jewish public. While the physical circumstances of the Barcelona Disputation obviously imply an outward turn in the presentation of Christian ideas to engage directly with Nahmanides, the issues discussed at the disputation ultimately address Christian theological concerns more than the rhetorical demands of an argument convincing to non-Jews. While the polemics of Raymond Martini do certainly represent an elaboration and development of these issues, honing the initial efforts of Paul Christiani into elaborate polemical arguments with abundant source support, Martini shows little or no real concern in his presentation of those arguments and sources with the rhetorical onus of convincing or converting Jews. As abundant examples in Martini's works demonstrate, the extent of his practical engagement with "real" Jews involved silencing and confounding potential Jewish disputants rather than actually convincing and converting them in the style of Raymond Lull. In short, what began at the Barcelona Disputation as a mixture of theological arguments presented in a context of concrete engagement with real Jews evolved into an elaborate textual edifice devoid of any sign of direct engagement with extra-textual realities. The basis of this purely textual argument is the assumption that the use of Jewish authoritative texts would itself be proof enough to be fully binding to any Jew confronted with such arguments.

While Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador* does show familiarity with the arguments and methods of Friar Paul at the Barcelona disputation (through the Hebrew account of Nahmanides), his elaboration of those initial arguments takes a decidedly different tack than that of Raymond Martini. Rather than developing only the textual side of his

arguments by adding more textual proofs, Abner/Alfonso considers the potential affective responses of a Jewish audience and in turn constructs his polemic around a mixture of elaborate textual proofs and a direct rhetorical appeal to his Jewish readers and respondents. By presenting his argument as Jewish in language, style, and source material, and above all by framing his textual arguments within his personal experience of doubt and conversion, Abner/Alfonso expands the notion of textual *auctoritas*, which Martini took such great pains to develop, to include not only textual proofs but also personal testimony. Given that Abner/Alfonso shows no signs of familiarity with Martini's polemics (for a full consideration of this question, see supplement chapter two), it is possible to see his polemics as a line of argumentation parallel to but very distinct from that of Raymond Martini. If we accept that the Barcelona Disputation contained a mixture of textual, theological issues and a real context of direct engagement and persuasion, Martini and Abner/Alfonso thus represent the separate development of each of the two tendencies, respectively. While Martini developed textual, theological argumentation to a redoubtable degree of complexity, Abner/Alfonso, although equally complex, tried to augment his textual arguments by considering the affective needs of real engagement and effective persuasion.

The parallel lines of development of each polemicist can be seen likewise as parallel trajectories of exhaustion and failure in the respective polemical method of each. Chazan has commented on the apparent failure of the missionizing movement, noting that "there is not evidence to suggest the immediate efficacy of the conversionist sermons of the period from the 1240s through the 1270s" (*Daggers of Faith* 159). Just as Martini's arguments, when they reached the massive scale and complexity of the *Pugio Fidei*,

became ineffective (judging by its limited dissemination and lack of an immediate intellectual heir to carry it on and develop it or apply it further), so Abner/Alfonso reached a critical breaking point in his polemical argumentation when his appeal to personal experience became a source of irresolvable uncertainty that forestalled the potential effectiveness of his own developed rhetorical appeal. Like Martini, Abner/Alfonso too was without a disciple that could follow his polemical maneuverings with anything but a vague and watered-down repetition of selected arguments and proofs (and lacking entirely in the personal testimonial appeal). What then became of the thirteenth-century missionizing arguments to Jews after the parallel lines of procedure at the Barcelona Disputation had been developed to their fullest and exhausted of their effectiveness? In the case of Martini, the solution was the interchangeability of textual appeal and proof with vituperative insult and condemnation, as Cohen, among others, has shown in great detail. Was Abner/Alfonso's solution likewise an embitterment in tone or even an endorsement of physical coercion?

Yitzhaq Baer leaves no doubt as to his response to this question. In his *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, he claimed that "it was Abner who fathered that ideology of apostasy which was destined, about two generations after his death, to bring wrack and ruin upon Spanish Jewry" (1: 330). The argument that Abner/Alfonso, as a Castilian apostate in the immediate history preceding the riots and persecutions of 1391 in which many thousands of Jews lost their lives and many, many thousands more were forcibly converted to Christianity, was somehow a harbinger of events to come was not unique to Baer. Shamir notes that Abner/Alfonso "was a reflection of the turbulence of his time and his writings raised a religious debate that helped to shatter Judaism in Spain" (1:40).

It was Baer, however, who insisted most stridently that Abner/Alfonso not only was a precursor to the events later in the fourteenth century, but also that he helped bring those events on by his support for forced conversion. He argues:

Maestre Alfonso leaves no doubt as to his own solution to the Jewish problem. Bloody persecutions are the only means to redeeming them...he revealed also his character, that of a malicious informer. The plan which the enemies of Israel were to carry out in its entirety in the year 1391 is outlined here for the first time” (*A History* 1: 353-54).¹

We have considered Abner/Alfonso’s rhetorical strategies and arguments in the *Mostrador* in detail, arriving at the conclusion that Abner/Alfonso went to great lengths in this work to make his text compelling to a Jewish reader. Because Baer made his argument that Abner/Alfonso endorsed forced conversions and violent persecutions of Jews on the basis of his statements in the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, it is necessary to ask if this attitude is at all present in Abner/Alfonso’s other works, and if it is an accurate representation of Abner/Alfonso’s agenda.

One important aspect of Abner/Alfonso’s thought that impacted his beliefs concerning forced conversions were his philosophical ideas related to free will and determinism. Although there is not space here to consider these ideas in detail (we consider his philosophical ideas and their influence in more detail in the bio-

¹ On the basis of Baer’s assertions, critics such as Ron Barkai have recently alleged that “presentó el judeoconverso Abner de Burgos pruebas del Libro de Ben Sira, del *Talmud* y de la historia judía, para demostrar que la única manera de acercar a los judíos, a la verdad y a la redención era por medio de ‘grandes castigos’” (“Diálogo filosófico-religioso” 23). Klaus Reinhardt, arguing against Abner/Alfonso’s authorship for the *Disputatio Abutalib sarraceni et Samuelis iudaei*, likewise claims that Abner/Alfonso “emplea en sus escritos mucha...dureza y agresividad con sus antiguos correligionarios” (“Un musulmán y un judío prueban la verdad de la fe cristiana” 210). Orfali follows Baer to the letter, arguing that Abner/Alfonso endorsed “persecuciones sangrientas” as a solution to the “Jewish situation” in Spain (*Talmud y Cristianismo* 156).

bibliographical study), we can point to the charge of Abner/Alfonso's contemporary Moses Narboni about Abner/Alfonso's conversion that "when he saw that what he had done was wrong even according to philosophy...he tried to absolve himself of guilt by preaching an all-embracing determinism, claiming that everything was pre-ordained" (Hayoun, "L'Épître du libre arbitre" 149). Colette Sirat, in her detailed consideration of Abner/Alfonso's determinist views, drew different, but wider-reaching conclusions, arguing that "not only does Abner of Burgos—Alfonso of Valladolid—affirm absolute determinism, he also gives a definition of will that justifies in advance the forced baptisms and all the tortures of the Inquisition reserved for the *conversos*" (*A History of Jewish Philosophy* 312). The condemnations of both medieval and modern commentators are harsh, and we must look briefly at the *Mostrador* itself to see if these ideas were present in Abner/Alfonso's earliest and most elaborate work.

Philosophically, we must insist that Abner/Alfonso's views on determinism do not provide any room to "exonerate" him from the effects of his conversion to Christianity. He did not believe that human choice was without implications, even though he did affirm that God knew all particular future contingencies before they occurred. It is a complex and paradoxical view, but he affirmed that the human experience of choice allowed God to justly reward and punish people for their actions, even if those actions were known from an eternal, omniscient perspective. Abner/Alfonso, in fact, goes to great lengths to insist that a lack of belief in reward and punishment was one of the deficiencies of the "old" Law of Moses, justifying the need for the new Law of Jesus. As a result of his beliefs about reward and punishment, people were responsible for their choices, and so it is inaccurate to say that Abner/Alfonso tried to free himself from the

soteriological effects of his own conversion. It can likewise be said that the perpetrators of later violence against Jews of the sort Sirat evokes would not be, from Abner/Alfonso's perspective, free of the effects of their own actions, good or bad. Sirat's assertions, like Narboni's, do not accurately represent Abner/Alfonso's particular and paradoxical blend of a belief in total determinism and just reward and punishment. That said, the question still remains of what Abner/Alfonso's view on forced conversion actually was.

There are several places in the *Mostrador* where Abner/Alfonso mentions the idea of forcing conversion. In a discussion of the Ten Commandments, Abner/Alfonso states the common view that they were given to be received and fulfilled first, and understood second. After citing a number of sources to this effect, he refers to Is 43:10, "...that you may know me and believe me and know that I am He," and observes that "he said "believe" before "understand" because it is necessary in marvelous and amazing things that man believes them before he understands them."² Abner/Alfonso then cites Ex 24: 7 (not Dt 5:27, as Mettmann misidentifies it) in which the those who received the commandments answered "we will do and we will hear" (*naaseh ve-nishma*). Abner/Alfonso then explains:

I want to point out that they put forth the hearing of the Commandments in a way of received faith, before they heard the reasons for it. The way of this belief, which goes before understanding, [may] seem very hasty, if one thinks of the many, many great sages and the many groups of men who first received the arguments of the Law were not so foolish and blind of heart as to leave off all other beliefs in which they were born and which they were used to before that and

² "Ca dixo "creades" ante que "entendades" porque es mester en estas cosas maravillosas e provechables que las crea el omne ante que las entienda..." (183v / 2: 97).

turn to believe these principles, being so far and seeming so remote from the understandings of both foolish and wise men—so much so that even animals, who have no reason, did not receive them—but rather [it is not so because] a great need forced the sages to receive them, upon which they found in those arguments the true intended meanings, valuable above all things, which they did not find as such in the arguments of other Laws...After a man is used to believing them in this way for a long time [i.e. without understanding], then he will be able to inquire secretly and humbly of the sages of the Christians, in order to know why were they so necessary and what were those intended meanings...³

Abner/Alfonso explains that the doubts that men of understanding naturally cultivate and explore in the face of a different Law is what kept the sages of the Talmud from converting even though they believed Christian principles. It would be better, therefore, that men be pushed over into a new faith and then helped to figure out and explore the arguments in defense of that faith because, if they are left to figure everything out before conversion, they will never act. A man must be converted first, and ask questions later.

We can recall Abner/Alfonso's list in paragraph five of chapter one of the twelve things that keep men from conversion "even though they see through good understanding

³ "quiero dezir que adelantaron el oyr de los mandamientos en manera de ffe de rresçibimiento, ante que oyesen las rrazones dellos. E la manera deste creer, que es dante que el entender, es muy liviano, quando se diere el omne a pensar que cuántos e cuántos de los grandes sabios e cuántas muchas conpan[n]as de omnes que recibieron a primero las rrazones desta Ley non eran todos tan neçios e tan ciegos de coraçon que dexasen todas las otras creençias, en que nacieron e que avian usado ante desto, e que tornasen a rresçebir e creer estas rrayzes, seyendo tan alongadas e tan esquivas a parecer de los entendimientos de los omnes sabios e neçios, e que aun los otros animales, que no an rrazon, no las rresçibrán, sinon que fue porque el grand mester <184v> los forçó a los sabios dellos para los rresçebir. Con que fallaron en aquellas rrayzes meollos verdaderos, preciados más que toda cosa, lo que non fallaron tal en [las] rrayzes de las otras Lees, e que son, como lo que prophetizó Daniel, pena e ensay [sic] e escarmiento con que se pueden apurar e enblanqueçer e esmerar muchos, e que non lo entenderán todos los malos, e los entendidos lo entenderán. E despues de que husare omne grand tienpo a creerlos en esta manera, entonce abrá poder por pescudar encubiertamient e omildosamient de los sabios de la teologia de los christianos, para saber cuál fue aquel grand mester e quáles son aquellos meollos onrrados más que toda cosa" (183v-184r / 2: 97).

that they should do it.”⁴ In a few places, Abner/Alfonso makes statements similar to what he notes at the end of the text that “many intelligent Jews malign the Pope and Christian kings with their mouths and hearts because they do not put harsh sentences on the Jews and do not impose a burden in any way to [make them] convert to their law”⁵ At one point in chapter seven, paragraph thirty-seven, the Teacher specifically discusses the benefit of imposing such “burdens”:

These are the words that show that there have to be more taxes and poverty than there is now, and that they have to despise the faith they have, since fines and taxes will force them to pay more attention to the reasons that they have for their faith in order to know the reason for the ill which befalls them. This is as King Solomon says, “the rod and reproof impart wisdom.”⁶

In these and similar statements, it would seem that some sort of coercion, with the ultimate intention of working out the details of belief after the conversion, formed part of Abner/Alfonso’s missionary idea.

In the context of this perspective on free will, it is necessary to consider more carefully just what the real meaning of coercion is in Abner/Alfonso’s understanding. It seems patently clear that Abner/Alfonso’s ultimate goal was to convince Jews both that their arguments against Christianity were wrong and that Christianity actually constituted

⁴ “...maguera que biesse por bon entendimiento que lo devia fazer” (29v / 1: 46).

⁵ “...sson muchos entendidos de los judios que maldizen al Papa e a los rrees christianos con ssus bocas o con ssus coraçones, porque non ponen ssobre los judios ssentençias graves e que los non apremian en alguna manera para tornar a ssu Ley” (337r / 1: 435).

⁶ E aquellas son las palabras que muestran que an [a] aver tribulaçiones e pobredad más de lo que agora tienen, e que an a despreciar en la fe que tienen. Ca la pena e las tribulaciones los forçarán para tener mientes mejor en la rrazon de la fe que tienen para saber por qué es este mal que les viene, e esto segund lo que dixo el rre Salamon: “La verdasca e la affruenta dan sapiençia” (224r / 2: 186).

the fullest expression of Jewish laws and revelations. Because his ultimate goal was conversion, he shows that textually this cannot be achieved with discussions relevant only to a Christian readership. This careful consideration of a Jewish perspective in formulating his anti-Jewish arguments is not contrary to a simultaneous support for physical and social conditions that would pressure a Jew to question his commitment to his faith. He explicitly says in his reasons for not converting that the “lightness of the burden of captivity and the indulgence that masters give [Jews] in captivity”⁷ is what allows Jews to avoid questioning their faith. He follows this statement with the adage “the Sage will be conquered with few words and the fool with a whip,”⁸ a citation given in the very same passage cited by Baer in the *Teshuvot* as proof of Abner/Alfonso’s support of “bloody persecutions.”⁹ In chapter eight of the *Mostrador*, when Abner/Alfonso explains the “ten negative commandments” that he believes were given in the Talmud in juxtaposition to the commandments given to Moses, he argues that this list was prophesied in the vision of Zechariah of the flying scroll (5:1-4). In the *Teshuvot*, Abner/Alfonso includes the same discussion from the *Mostrador*, modified only slightly, and concludes that the authors of the Babylonian Talmud “were the wicked ones who will not have any remedy in the future. Instead, (they will be), as the prophet called them,

⁷ “...liviandat de la premia de la captivitat e la piadat que les ffazen los ssennores que los tienen en captivo” (30r / 1: 47).

⁸ “Vençerá al ssabio con poca palabra, e al loco con el açote” (30r / 1: 47).

⁹ The Castilian of the text in the *Mostrador* matches that of the Castilian *Teshuvot*, but does not literally translate the original phrase from the Hebrew *Teshuvot* (and, one assumes, the original Hebrew *Moreh*). The original citation comes from Midrash on Proverbs 22:6 that reads in the Aramaic “To the wise, a gesture; to the fool, a fist” (le-Ḥakima birmiza, ve-le-shatya, bekhurmiza”). For more discussion of the citation and its use by Abner/Alfonso, see chapter three of the bio-bibliographical study.

‘sheep meant for slaughter.’”¹⁰ Hecht makes the strikingly understated note that “perhaps Abner/Alfonso is presenting a justification for the persecution of Jews within Christendom” (219 n. 621). This same discussion is found in the *Mostrador*, and although the violent image comparing the Jews to the “sheep meant for slaughter” is less visible because it is watered down within a much longer discussion filled with many more citations, the image is there in the *Mostrador* just as it is in the *Teshuvot*. We can also recall Abner/Alfonso’s comparison of the Jews to “sick asses who have given up to death, for whom spurs do not do much good, and whose owners no longer want to make use of them.”¹¹ Such language shows that the arguments that are more provocative in Abner/Alfonso’s later works that do seem to endorse the use of force and even violence are present in the *Mostrador* as well. The only difference between these two stages of Abner/Alfonso’s career is that in his later writing, Abner/Alfonso is speaking only as a Christian and is writing against an individual opponent with much more focused arguments and terse style. In the *Mostrador*, on the other hand, all of the arguments, including those relating to forced conversion and violence against Jews, are presented within an overwhelmingly prolix elaboration of complex messianic views and are made under the auspice of Abner/Alfonso’s missionizing rhetoric. Abner/Alfonso presents many complex arguments in the *Mostrador*, arguments not present in his later writing with the same degree of detail or byzantine elaborateness, and the length and complexity of such arguments attenuates the harshness of his anti-Jewish language. We can, of course,

¹⁰ "הם הרשעים אשר לא היה עתיד להיות להם שום תקנה. אלא כמ שקראם [כך כתוב] הנבוא צאן ההרגה" (34b / Hecht 393).

¹¹ “Sodes como los asnos enfermos e acostados a la muerte, [que] los agujijones non ffazen mucho pro a ellos, e que ssus duennos non an voluntad para sservirse dellos ya más...” (339r / 2: 439).

also recall examples of strikingly gentle language in the same text, such the Teacher's invitation early in the text, "let us subtly study...between the two of us in the way of love and goodness...this argument will be put together by both you and me."¹² He likewise stated, with language reminiscent of Gregory the Great, that "it is necessary to proceed against [the Jew] gently and to move him from [the wrong] reasoning little by little, as is appropriate for human nature. It is necessary to convince him..."¹³ Early in his polemical career, Abner/Alfonso's endorsement of force seems strangely to go hand-in-hand with his belief in real persuasion and his realistic consideration of the perspective of his Jewish readers. Because there are too many factors that keep a Jew from taking a leap of faith to any other religion, even if they have doubts, he understands that his own textual proofs alone would not suffice to convince others. By the same token, he endorsed any influence, rhetorical or coercive, that brought a Jew to pull away from his faith and take action. The reasons needed to explain and support such a decision—reasons which he was more than willing to provide in detail—could be imparted and understood after the break was made, but the key for Abner/Alfonso was to stimulate a Jew to consider himself and his faith as an individual, apart from the many fetters that held him to tradition.

Benjamin Kedar has observed in his *Crusade and Mission* the interesting fact that as the prospects of success of Mendicant missionizing efforts to Muslims diminished, the interest in "crusade" increased.¹⁴ We considered in our final chapter how

¹² "...asotilizemos en ellas entre amos en manera de amor e de bondat...e de mí e de ti será conpuesta esta rrazon" (42v / 1: 71).

¹³ "Es mester de venir contra él mansamiente e tollerle de aquella rrazon poco a poco, segund que conviene a la natura de los omnes, e es mester a convencerle..." (41r / 1: 68).

¹⁴ As he explains, "But it soon transpired that Mendicant missionizing in Muslim countries was much more conducive to filling heaven with Christian martyrs than the earth with Muslim converts...practical men could not regard this Mendicant activity as a viable solution to the Muslim threat to the existence of the

Abner/Alfonso's elaborate rhetorical devices of appealing directly to his reader and of framing his polemical argument within his own conversion experience—thus expanding the notion of textual authority to include personal testimony—resulted in an argumentative Gordian knot from which Abner/Alfonso was unable to escape in his text. We can say that Abner/Alfonso, when faced with the limitations of his own “missionizing” arguments did indeed respond by endorsing force more than persuasion in his later polemics.

Nevertheless, while Abner/Alfonso's commitment to effecting conversion, even through force and pressure, cannot be denied, Baer's and Sirat's statements that Abner/Alfonso constituted a preamble to the persecutions of 1391 (and even those of the Inquisition in the century after) must be seen as anachronistic and even careless. The nature of Abner/Alfonso's ideas of conversion are very different from the fifteenth-century concept of mass conversion on a societal level. In truth, his ideas were totally uninformed by the concept of mass conversions like those of 1391, a phenomenon which was unprecedented in the Iberian Peninsula and which permanently changed the meaning of conversion there for both Christians and Jews. Because Abner/Alfonso does not see other Jews only from the same stereotypical perspectives of Christian theology (rather, he invents many of his own stereotypes based on his peculiar perspective), his endorsement of force within his idiosyncratic and highly complex arguments cannot be properly associated with riots like those of 1391 which were popular, not learned, mass movements motivated by hysterical scapegoatism rather than careful argumentation or philosophical or exegetical niceties. The facile linking of polemical attacks such as

rump Crusading Kingdom. Leading Mendicants did indeed draw this conclusion, offering the crusade as the only adequate solution” (155).

Abner/Alfonso's and complex social events such as the persecutions of 1391 diminishes the complexity of both Abner/Alfonso's polemics and of the many factors that contributed to the decline in Jewish security and livelihood in fourteenth-century Castile. Most notably, it ignores the economic stresses on both Christians and Jews which for many constitute the most significant aspect of degradation of the Jews and the rise of anti-Semitic accusations in fourteenth-century Castile.¹⁵ Likewise, directly linking Abner/Alfonso with the events of 1391 is, practically, very difficult: The pogroms started in Seville, not in the north, and the Jewish communities of Valladolid suffered their effects much less than many other communities in the south and east. It is also very hard to connect Abner/Alfonso's long and complex Hebrew polemics with the incendiary rhetoric of popular preachers far away from Abner/Alfonso's sphere of activity and influence.¹⁶ Linking Abner/Alfonso to the events of 1391 (or the Inquisition) is only meaningful in terms of historiographical categories—as examples of the increase in intolerance and persecution of Jews in the fourteenth century—but these things cannot be meaningfully linked as parts of a single phenomenon or movement. If, by dint of their proximity within the same century, we insist on forging such a historiographical link between Abner/Alfonso and 1391, it would make more sense to cite Abner/Alfonso's rhetoric about the “poverty” of the Jews, the stress of taxes, and the need for Christian

¹⁵ Montsalvo Antón, one of the most influential historians of late-medieval anti-Judaism in Castile, has observed that “las fuentes literarias, textos jurídicos, crónicas..., coinciden en señalar la penuria económica en la primera mitad del siglo XIV” (*Teoría y evolución de un conflicto social* 213). “La situación económica y social exige la búsqueda de culpables y de soluciones” (214).

¹⁶ Emilio Mitre Fernández, *Los judíos de Castilla en tiempo de Enrique III. El pogrom de 1391*, emphasizes the variation of the intensity and negative effects of the persecutions between the south and central areas of the Peninsula and certain areas of the north, including Valladolid.

leaders to apply more material pressure to Jews than to point to Abner/Alfonso's endorsement of "bloody persecutions" (to recall Baer's phrase) or forced conversion.

This is, of course, not to say that Abner/Alfonso did not endorse violence or that his arguments were any less polemical or intolerant than later arguments. Despite Abner/Alfonso's efforts to feign interest in the real situation of other Jews that kept them from converting, despite his efforts to appeal to his Jewish readers on personal terms, and despite his call for "gentle" persuasion, his intentions were always polemical and always motivated by a fundamental intolerance for his former coreligionists and, judging by a comparison of his *Mostrador* with the *Teshuvot*, this intolerance increased over the course of his polemical career. Nevertheless, because he made his polemical appeal to Jews on a personal, individual level and encouraged independent action and belief apart from Jewish tradition, his rhetoric of internal belief and doubt seems extremely disparate in focus from the consideration of Jews in terms of social class or racial ancestry that emerged in the second half of the fifteenth century. Despite the many differences between his polemics and the history of thirteenth-century missionizing, it is much more accurate to connect Abner/Alfonso to that history that preceded him than with the history that followed. No matter how he is situated historiographically, however, the evolution of Abner/Alfonso's polemics, from the early *Sefer Milhamot* and *Mostrador* all the way to the *Teshuvot* and the *Libro de la ley*, constitutes an essential chapter in the history of fourteenth-century Jewish-Christian relations in the Iberian Peninsula. Events that somehow constitute that history such as the pogroms of 1391 make manifest above all the extremely fine line that divided rhetorical mission from violent crusade in late-medieval Christian thought.

A Bio-Bibliographical Supplement

to

From *Testimonia* to Testimony:
Thirteenth-Century Anti-Jewish Polemic and
the *Mostrador de justicia* of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid

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2006

Introduction

We have considered the rhetorical strategies of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid in the *Mostrador de justicia* in their historical context, focusing mainly on the expansion of the traditional notion of argumentative *auctoritas* to include not only textual sources but personal testimony as well. In focusing on this specific aspect of Abner/Alfonso and his work, we have by necessity left aside many important questions regarding Abner/Alfonso, including specific details of his biography, the connection between the *Mostrador* and Abner/Alfonso's other works, information about his lost works, and specific consideration of his abundant Hebrew and Arabic sources in his polemical *oeuvre*. Because no exhaustive study of Abner/Alfonso has yet been published, it is necessary begin to address many of those pending questions here in order to supplement the observations and conclusions made in the main text of this dissertation. In order to provide sufficient context for the main arguments of this study, I include here a number of supplemental chapters and appendices addressing some of the more important details from Abner/Alfonso's life and work. This information is not intended to adduce another argument apart from that already defended in the preceding text, but is instead provided here to allow further consideration of any questions that arise in the course of reading. It is, for this reason, not meant to replace or obscure the main text of this dissertation, but only to provide the background information on a large topic that remains in the very early stages of research.



Supplement Chapter One

Life, Writings, and Impact

of Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid (ca. 1265-ca. 1347)

I. Issues in Abner/Alfonso's Biography and Bibliography

Little is known about Abner's early life. The details that Abner/Alfonso himself provides in the *Mostrador* are highly tropological, and cannot serve to extrapolate real information about the life of the author. Numerous scholars have attempted, based on Abner/Alfonso's comments and descriptions by other medieval authors, to piece together the basic framework of his biography, most notable among which are Graetz (*Geschichte* 7: 450 n. 13), Baron, (9: 299-300, n. 11), Baer (*A History* 1: 327-54), Gershenzon ("A Study" 6-7), Shamir (40-43), Sainz de la Maza (*Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio* 144-197), Ben Sasson (233-34) and Hecht (26-31). In these sketchy reconstructions of Abner/Alfonso's life, a number of common points stand out, which through repetition have become definitive in the characterization of his life and writing. Sainz de la Maza lists three events that he sees as essential in the reconstruction of Abner's biography by linking him to a better-documented historical context: his connection with the failed messianic movement of Ávila in 1295, his conversion to Christianity sometime around 1320, and his participation in the anti-Jewish effort that took place in northern Castile between 1336-39 (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 146). Beyond this, most biographical observations made about Abner/Alfonso are speculative. For example, Gershenzon remarks that "on the basis of the erudition shown in his writings, Abner/Alfonso must have received the education provided for its sons by an upper class Spanish Jewish household" (*A Study* 7). Certainly, Abner/Alfonso shows advanced ability in Hebrew and a solid education in the

Bible, Talmud, and other rabbinic writings. Nothing concrete is known, however, about his early life, and his career as a doctor, though accepted by most with relative certainty, has been called into question by a few scholars.¹

According to the information given in the beginning pages of the *Mostrador*, we can deduce a rough chronology for his later conversion. Numerous authors erroneously assert that Abner/Alfonso converted as early as 1295 or as late as 1330.² As Sainz de la Maza reconstructs it, Abner's relates his conversion "twenty-five years" (12v/ 1: 14) after the events of the false messiahs in 1295, putting it around the years 1320-21. Given that his first dream occurred "three years" (12r/ 1: 13) before the second, it can be dated around 1317, leaving a lag of a few years between his private decision to convert and his public conversion. According to Pablo de Santa María, the monastery house of San Benito in Valladolid possessed a copy of Abner/Alfonso's *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem* in Castilian. The sixteenth-century *Viage* of Ambrosio de Morales also gives notice of

A book in parchment of very old writing with this title: *This is the Book of the Wars of the Lord which Master Alfonso, convert, who used to have the name Rabbi Abner when he was a Jew, composed, and he translated it from Hebrew to the Castilian language by order of the Infanta Doña Blanca, Lady of the monastery of Las Huelgas de Burgos.*³

¹ On this question, see chapter 3, n. 80.

² 1295 is given as his date of baptism by Sangrador Vitores, *Historia de la muy noble y leal ciudad de Valladolid* 1: 236; P. Sicart, "Alphonse Abner", Merchán Fernández, *Los judíos de Valladolid* 44, and, as recently as 1984, Lorenzo Rubio González, "Alfonso de Valladolid, el primer escritor local (1270-1346)" 53. Ortega y Rubio, *Historia de Valladolid*, 1: 100 ff estimates he converted in 1330.

³ "Un Libro e pergamino, de letra harto antigua, y tiene este titulo: *Este es el Libro de las Batallas de Dios, que compuso Maestre Alfonso, Converso, que solia haber nombre Rabbi Abner, quando era Judío, è trasladolo de Hebraico en lengua Castellana por mandado de la Infanta Doña Blanca, Señora del monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos*" (9).

The assertion found in this record was repeated by Joseph Rodriguez de Castro, (1: 195) and, through his catalogue, copied by later scholars such as Graetz and Amador de los Ríos. Given that Doña Blanca died in 1321 (not 1331, as Flórez, Baer and others have claimed⁴), the work had to have been written before that date, thus confirming the dates given above, a few years must have passed between Abner/Alfonso's decision to convert and his change of name in public conversion. Sainz de la Maza proposes that because Abner took the name Alfonso from king Alfonso XI, who was not of age to begin his reign until 1325, he probably did not convert publicly before this date (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 168-9). Nevertheless, Rucquoi observes that Abner/Alfonso is probably the same as the "maestre Alfonso" who appears in various acts of the collegiate church of Valladolid between 1324 (Archives of the Cathedral of Valladolid, legajo 22, #17) and 1341 (legajo 3, # 43) (not to mention "Iohan Alfon, fijo de maestre Alfon" in 1348 (legajo 16, #53) (*Valladolid au Moyen Age* 638 n. 537). To this collection of dates we can also add the statement by Pablo de Santa María that Abner/Alfonso converted when he was sixty years old (*Scrutinium* 521), implying his birth was around the year 1265.

We can get some help in specifying Abner/Alfonso's dates of conversion and the composition of his works by considering a statement made in chapter seven of the *Mostrador*. In citing book five of the *Megillat ha-Megalleh* (*Scroll of the Revealer*) of Abraham Bar Ḥiyya (d. ca. 1136), in which the coming of the Messiah is calculated based on scriptural exegesis and astrological tables, Abner/Alfonso mentions the date 4946 (1186) as a key date when signs of the salvation of Israel will begin to appear (such as the

⁴ See Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio* 191 n. 90, who points out the error, followed by Baer, of Flórez in his notes to the *Viage* of Ambrosio de Morales. The other sources on Doña Blanca all concur on the correct date of death. See in particular Castro Garrido, *Documentación del monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos (1307-1321)*.

downfall of the Muslims).⁵ He then adds “and you will find that more than one-hundred thirty-six years have passed since that time and none of the signs of the salvation of the Jews have appeared.”⁶ One-hundred thirty-six years after Nissan, 4946 is 5082, i.e. April 1322, giving us definitive proof that Abner/Alfonso was writing chapter seven of the *Mostrador* after this date but before April 1323. Taking this into account in light of observations by previous critics, we can conclude that Abner was born ca. 1265-70, began doubting his faith in 1295, had his first “dream” around 1317-18 and his second around 1320 (if, in fact, he actually had the dreams in the way and at the time he describes them in the *Mostrador*), composed his *Sefer Milhamot* around 1320-21, converted publicly sometime between 1320-1322 (when he took the name “Alfonso”), and finished his *Moreh Zedek* certainly before 1325 as Mettmann asserts (*Mostrador* 1: 7), but after 1322.

The *Mostrador* is Abner/Alfonso’s longest and most important surviving work. Nearly every critic who has commented on Abner/Alfonso has denominated this work as his magnum opus, and thus it is an egregious lacuna that no studies dedicated directly to the work and its place in his polemical career. By recounting an experience of doubt and struggle and by suggesting in the prologue that Abner/Alfonso himself is the “teacher of righteousness” whom the Jews lack, the text is intimately tied up with his conversion to Christianity in a way that his later works are not. Written shortly after his conversion, the work is also the earliest of his works to survive, and served as a source for much of his later writing, but in comparison to the *Mostrador*, the important

⁵ The specific date given by Bar Ḥiyya is the neomenia (time of new moon) of the month of Nissan of 4946 (i.e. the 27th of Nissan, or the 25th or April, 1186) (Guttman 155 / Millàs I Vallicrosa 252).

⁶ “E vos fallaredes que sson passados despues de aquel tienpo más de cient e treynta e seys annos, e non parecieron ningunos sennales de salvacion a los judios” (235r / 2: 207).

autobiographical element in Abner/Alfonso's polemical arguments is decidedly lacking from his later works. This corresponds, as we shall see, to a move from what can be called "internal" engagement in the *Mostrador*, in which both the Christian and Jewish voices in the polemical debate are supplied by Abner/Alfonso to, in his later works, a more external engagement by Abner/Alfonso with his former coreligionists (most notably Isaac Ibn Polgar⁷ in the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, and Joseph Shalom in Abner/Alfonso's three polemical letters, considered later in this chapter). Because of its central importance in the context of Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador*, a more detailed consideration of his conversion to Christianity is in order.

Although Abner/Alfonso's conversion can be confirmed from numerous other sources, what is known about the true circumstances and nature of his abandonment of Judaism and embracing of Christianity comes mostly from his own account in the *Mostrador*. What begins in 1295 with Abner/Alfonso's initial doubts after treating his coreligionists begins to plague him again, according to his account, twenty-two years later with his first dream. After his three years of study, his second dream, which recurred many times, seems to have prompted him inwardly toward conversion. As he says, he kept his initial desire to compose the *Sefer Milhamot* as "a secret hidden inside myself" ("puridat encubierta entre mí"), because he worried that his "discípulos" would find out his thoughts. As he have already seen, his public conversion took place some time after his second, recurring dream, between the composition of the *Sefer Milhamot* and the *Mostrador*.

⁷ His name is variously written as "Polqar", "Pulgar", "Polegar", "Polgar", etc. In the Parma MS, it is "Polqar" (פּוֹלְקָר). See Carlos del Valle, "La Contradicción del hereje" 552 n. 4, who points out that his name as it appears in the Hebrew poetry of Ibn Sasson matches this, rhyming with other words ending in -qar, -car, etc. On the name "Pulgar", see also Roth, *Conversos* 382-3 n. 133, "Isaac Polgar y su libro contra un converso" 68 n.4, and Levinger's note to Polgar's *Ezer ha-Dat*, 9 n. 1 and 29 n. 1.

Thus the *Mostrador*, according to the author's recounting, represents the culmination of his process of conversion, which may have lasted up to thirty years. Beyond Abner/Alfonso's own account, however, no first-hand account survives, the closest thing being the brief comments made by Isaac Polgar and Moses Narboni in their works. Thus, what is the central, framing element of his vast missionizing polemic exists only in the terms in which he recounts and constructs it, to the extent that nothing more can be known for certain about his conversion beyond the mere fact that it occurred. Why and how it occurred are completely shrouded in Abner/Alfonso's personal agenda in narrating his own story as part of his polemical argument. As we have seen, this narrated account plays a critical role in Abner/Alfonso's construction of polemical authority and helps to show in what way the *Mostrador* was intended as a missionizing rather than simply an apologetic polemic.

The other details of Abner/Alfonso's life are equally sparse. After his conversion, Abner/Alfonso relocated to Valladolid where he became the Sacristan of the *colegiata*, or collegiate church, of Santa María la Mayor in Valladolid, before the construction of the cathedral.⁸ The significance of this change of city and profession is not entirely clear, but Sainz de la Maza speculates that these changes were to distance himself from his former co-religionists and also resulted both from the loss of clientele in his work as well as the probable adoption of his finances by the crown (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 169).⁹ Beyond this, he says, the fact that the Infanta Blanca, "señora" (not "abadesa") of Las

⁸ As Sainz de la Maza points out, there was no cathedral in Valladolid at that time. On the collegiate church of Valladolid, see Rucquoi, "Ciudad e Iglesia: la colegiata de Valladolid en la Edad Media" and *Valladolid au Moyen Age* 118-122.

⁹ On the confiscation of patrimony and goods of a converted Jew by the crown, see Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews* 1: 19 n.36.

Huelgas, who was possibly his protector and patron,¹⁰ died around the time of his public conversion, his situation could have been all the more difficult, and may even explain his delay in converting publicly (169). Equally disputed, as Sainz de la Maza notes, has been the importance of Abner/Alfonso's position as sacristan in Valladolid. Baer downplayed the status of such a position, and Gershenzon called it "a modest sinecure indeed" (*A Study* 17). Sainz de la Maza, following Graetz, does not accept this, asserting that "el sacristía del templo más importante de Valladolid no era tampoco el puesto insignificante que pretende Baer" (170), especially given that such figures could play a role in drafting royal documents.¹¹

Some support as well the possibility that Abner/Alfonso developed a strong relationship with friars of the area, collaborating especially with Dominicans in developing his missionizing polemical arguments. Although such contact is certainly possible, the nature of the few instances where the friars are mentioned in the *Mostrador* (235r/ 2: 207; and 276r/ 2: 308) by no means points toward any kind of collaboration or even contact, and makes no mention of any specific friars besides St. Francis and St.

¹⁰ This claim is based entirely on the notice of Morales two centuries after the fact regarding the translation of his work from Hebrew to Castilian. No other notice survives connecting Abner/Alfonso to Blanca. Rubio González claims without foundation that Abner/Alfonso "estuvo al servicio de la infanta doña Blanca de Portugal como capellán" (54). Considering the wealth of names mentioned in her will, including a number of Jews (most notably "don Salamon, fisigo" (Castro Garrido, ed. *Documentación del monasterio* 329), as well as the likes of "tres moças de la cozina" and "Salamon, espeçiero" (330), it seems extremely strange that Abner/Alfonso would not be mentioned if their relation was of any consequence. Indeed, Abner/Alfonso's name cannot be found in any of the published documentation relating to Las Huelgas de Burgos between 1284-1328, raising doubts about his importance there, and even his presence, during these years. See Araceli Castro Garrido, ed. *Documentación del monasterio de Las Huelgas de Burgos (1307-1321) and Documentación... (1322-1328). Indices 1284-1328*). Roth mistakenly claims that the *Mostrador* was written "bajo el patronato de Doña Blanca" (Isaac Polgar y su libro contra un converso" 68), although Blanca died in 1321.

¹¹ Uncertainty about the importance of Abner/Alfonso's position can be seen even in recent discussions of his life after conversion. Niclòs, in his very recent article "La disputa religiosa de D. Pedro de Luna con el judío de Tudela D. Shem Tob Ibn Shaprut" claims that Abner/Alfonso was named bishop of Valladolid after his conversion! (411). See also Brian Tate's comments in his edition of Fernando de Pulgar's *Claros varones*, 105 n. 195, where he includes Abner/Alfonso in his list of converted bishops.

Dominic. As we will consider in more detail in the next supplement chapter, Abner/Alfonso's own writing shows little or no familiarity with the writing of Raymond Martini, a fact that seems to belie any extensive contact with local friars or collaboration on polemical projects. There are at least two specific indications in the text of the *Mostrador* that might point to Abner/Alfonso's own sense of his change in profession after his conversion. The first comes near the beginning of the text, in section five of book one, in a passage where the Teacher discusses the possible reasons or circumstances that preclude conversion of Jews to Christianity. Among the twelve reasons that might cause a Jew to resist conversion (considered above in chapter three), which include not wanting to be a stranger to others or be among unknown people in one's new community, and a fear that one's wife and children would not follow in conversion (Gershenzon, *A Study* 16, speculated that this was Abner/Alfonso's situation), one of the impediments is "that a Jew is afraid that he will become poor, because he will have to give up his estate to others, and because he would sin in loaning to others at interest, and he would end up poor."¹² Although it is not known how closely this statement might apply to Abner/Alfonso's case, it is known that conversion often entailed the appropriation of the convert's fortune by the crown as well as the prohibition of loaning money at interest, and it is entirely plausible that Abner/Alfonso experienced some financial difficulty upon his conversion. It is certain, in any case, that there is no mention of his practicing medicine after leaving Burgos.

There is another statement in the *Mostrador* that might offer more information on Abner/Alfonso's view on the financial change effected by his conversion. In chapter

¹² "...el judio a miedo que fincará pobre, porque abrá mester de para él su algo a otros, e porque abria peccado despues de prestar a logro, e ffincaria pobre" (30r/ 1: 47).

nine, section forty, the Jewish rebel argues that one of the proofs that the messiah has not yet come is that there has never been the peace prophesied in Za 9:10 and Is 2:4, in which “he shall speak peace unto the nations; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea” and “the nations...shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Among the various arguments against this claim, the Christian Teacher, adducing what Lasker calls a “historical/social” argument (*Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 7-9), observes that

Among the great manifest signs showing that the basis necessary to bring peace into this world and the next is among the Christians—although at some times they might not have peace—is that which is found openly among them everywhere they live: Whoever among them who should habitually occupy himself with studying and doing good works among others is usually recognized as good and will acquire some rank of honor, ranks of which there are many in the Church, such as canon or prior or archdeacon, and various others. And this is not found among any other peoples of the world.¹³

This passage is especially interesting when read in light of a number of other passages about Abner/Alfonso found in other the works of his respondents and opponents. Moses Narboni in his “Epistle on Free Will” accuses Abner/Alfonso saying “he had come upon hard times...he was not one of those pious lovers of science for whom it is enough to have

¹³ “E de las grandes ssennales magnifistas para conosçer que es entre los christianos las rrayz aparejada para tornar la paz para este mundo e para el otro...maguera que en algun tiempo non toviessen aquella paz, es esto que es fallado en ellos magnifistamiento e en todos los logares do moran. Qualquier dellos que usare e se entremetiere en estudiar e fazer bonas obras comunalmente es en las más vezes conosçido por bueno e abrá algun grado de los onrrados grados que sson muchos en la elesia, como canonigo o prior o arçidiano e otros tales. E non es ffallado tal en ninguna de las otras gentes del mundo.” (280r-v/2:318).

a few carobs from one Friday to the next.”¹⁴ Even more revealing are the acerbic words of his most significant opponent, his former disciple Isaac Polgar: “Do not think that you will rise to the position on account of which you did this, for “the office which you pursue eludes you.”¹⁵ You were not born in “under a Star of Plenty.”¹⁶ Such repeated references to Abner/Alfonso’s material situation, even in the context of maligning a former Jew for his conversion, shed light on his own comments in the *Mostrador*, and highlight the importance of material and financial concerns in the reconstruction of the events surrounding Abner/Alfonso’s conversion and new career.

Abner/Alfonso’s work produced a wealth of responses from contemporary writers, testifying to the profound impact that his ideas had on contemporary Jewish communities in Castile. Even if he convinced few or none with his polemics, the very fact of his conversion, given his previous reputation within the intellectual Jewish community, and the fact that his works were composed in Hebrew, meant that his ideas were heard by many Jews and formed an important part of contemporary discussions on a variety of topics. His wealth of respondents therefore also indicates the degree to which he was perceived as a threat to Jews as well. One important response that provides some details about Abner/Alfonso’s public activity in the 1330s comes from the *Yesod ‘Olam* (*Foundation of the World*) of Isaac ben Yosef Israeli (II, or the younger), a Jewish astronomer working

¹⁴ “ואל תחשוב לעלות אל המדרגה אשר בעבורה עשית זאת” (T. B. Ta’anit 25a). “...ראה העקות העת...לא היה מהחסידיים שלמי הידיעה אשר די להן בקב הרובין מע"ש לע"ש” (Hayoun, “L’Épître du Libre Arbitre” 149). Baer translates this as “one of those pious men whose faith remains unimpaired even by extreme material want (*A History* 1: 332).

¹⁵ *Midrash Tanhuma*, Vayikra 3.

¹⁶ Literally, “in the time of sustenance.” T. B. Ta’anit 25a. “ואל תחשוב לעלות אל המדרגה אשר בעבורה עשית זאת” (T. B. Ta’anit 25a). “...ראה העקות העת...לא היה מהחסידיים שלמי הידיעה אשר די להן בקב הרובין מע"ש לע"ש” (Hayoun, “L’Épître du Libre Arbitre” 149). Baer translates this as “one of those pious men whose faith remains unimpaired even by extreme material want (*A History* 1: 332).

around the turn of the fourteenth century.¹⁷ At the end of the second part, Israeli includes and responds to part of a letter sent by Abner to the leaders of the Jewish community of Toledo in 1334 accusing them of miscalculating the date of Passover and thus desecrating the holiday.¹⁸ Abner/Alfonso's argument seems to be the same argument put forth in the *Mostrador* in Chapter ten, section seven, in which Abner/Alfonso reviews all the commandments of the Jews, showing that they are either obsolete or else fulfilled more completely by Christians. While the letter itself has only survived in what Israeli himself transmits in his astronomical work, a similar argument on the same subject can be found in the *Mostrador*. On folios 302-309, Abner/Alfonso undertakes a lengthy discussion of the calculation of the Sabbath, attempting to prove likewise that the Jews had violated the Sabbath by eating leavened bread on the first days (fifteenth and sixteenth of the month of Nissan) of Passover, and thus invalidated the commandment and all others based on this date. Baer believed that Abner/Alfonso's comments were based on similar criticisms of rabbinic calculations made in Karaite polemics, which would add support to the argument that Karaite thought played a role in the formation of his polemical ideas.¹⁹

As such intersections of Abner/Alfonso's writing shows, part of what makes the *Mostrador* such an important document is its wealth of such clues concerning the author's

¹⁷ For information on Isaac, see Graetz, *Geschichte* 7 250; and the edition of the *Yesod* by Goldberg and Rosenkranz, including the introductory notes by Cassel, as well as *Encyclopedia Judaica* article by Arthur Beer.

¹⁸ For a fuller discussion of this letter and response, see Baer "Abner aus Burgos" 1929, 35; *ibid*, *Toledot* 206, translated by Lacave, *Historia*, 391 (not in the English translation); Gershenzon, *A Study* 17. See Appendix 2 on his lost works, #10.

¹⁹ On Abner's attitude *vis-à-vis* the Karaites, see Sainz de la Maza, "Alfonso de Valladolid y los caraitas"; Loeb, note two of his "Notes sur l'histoire des Juifs" titled "Les Caraites en Espagne" (206-9); Baer "Abner aus Burgos", 1929, pp. 30-31, 34-5; *ibid*, "The Kabbalistic Doctrine in the Christological Teaching" 279-87; and Lasker, "Karaism and the Jewish-Christian Debate" 326. See also the discussion in supplement chapter three.

life and times, and the context of his later writing and influence. After his conversion, perhaps the best documented, and certainly the most discussed, aspect of his life is his role in renewing the controversy among Christians over alleged slander against non-Jews in Jewish liturgy. The Christian scandal over the “Birkat ha-Minim” or “Benediction concerning heretics”, the twelfth benediction of the weekday *Amidah* prayers, was by no means new in Abner/Alfonso’s time. The original formulation of the prayer, ascribed to Samuel ha-Katan (T.B. *Berakhot* 28b), seems to have been a response to Syrian-Hellenistic persecution during the Second Temple period, but came to be used to different ends in different historical circumstances, and is mentioned by Christian writers such as Justin Martyr, Epiphanius, and Jerome.²⁰ Charges that the Jews maligned Christians in their prayers also formed part of the condemnation of the Talmud by Gregory IX in 1239, in which the Pope charged that “three times per day in a prayer which they deem most important they malign as enemies church ministers, kings, and all others, even Jews themselves.”²¹ Abner/Alfonso himself is known to have revived such accusations, spearheading the effort to bring Alfonso XI to ban the prayer. He refers to the prayer in three places in the *Mostrador*.²² In the first, in part thirty of chapter six, he observes that

²⁰ For the history of the prayer, see Zeitlin, “The Tefillah, The Shemoneh Esreh: An Historical Study of the First Canonization of the Hebrew Liturgy”; Schiffman, “Le réponse de la halakha à l’ascension du christianisme”; Passeto, “Los Minim en la oración “Birkat Ha-Minim”; Gevariahu, “Birkat ha-Minim” [Hebrew]; and Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy* 31-36, 45-46 and throughout; For its criticism by Christian writers, see Horbury, “The benediction of the “minim” and early Jewish-Christian controversy”; and recently, Dahan “La prière juive au regard des chrétiens au moyen âge”, 445-8, which does not mention Abner/Alfonso. Daniel Boyarin’s discussion of the issue in “Justin Martyr Invents Judaism” is masterful and though-provoking, as usual.

²¹ “In singulis diebus ter in oracione quam digniorem asserunt ministris ecclesie, regibus et aliis omnibus, ipsi Iudeis inimicantibus maledicunt” (Loeb, “La Controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud” 3 (1881): 50-51). See Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 175 and 196 n. 118. My translation follows Loeb’s, but the Latin text is problematic, making the exact meaning unclear.

²² Abner/Alfonso’s discussion in the *Mostrador* seems also to be the source for the discussion of the issue by Pablo de Santa María in the *Scrutinium Scripturarum* Book I, distinction V, Chapter 7 (181b).

Jews are not righteous to gentiles nor do they pray to God for them ... and they also pray to God every day that He destroy the gentiles and the heretics. And they call “heretics” everyone who serves idols, like Christians ... So how can you say that they pray to God for the gentiles, so that He make them righteous?²³

In part seven of chapter ten, he again refers specifically to the benediction. He says the Jews

Also say about heretics and converts, like Jesus the Nazarene and his disciples, that [God] shall make them fall in a well and lose both hands. And They say that Christians are gentiles and servants of idols, and are the evil kingdom of Edom. About them was composed the “Prayer of the Heretics”, in which they slander the Christians five times daily, as they are told to in the book “Berakhot.”²⁴

At the end of the *Mostrador*, in a passage we cited in chapter four, the Rebel notes that “we [Jews] malign them [the Christians] every day, and we pray to God that they be lost and destroyed from the world, because we believe they are heretics and idolaters, and the evil kingdom of Edom, whose destruction we await, upon which even we will have salvation.”²⁵ These comments are not the earliest surviving discussion of the issue by Abner/Alfonso. De Spina relates in the *Fortalitiū Fidei* that

²³ “E demas, que los judios non ffazen justos a los gentiles nin rruegan Dios por ellos ... E otroosi rruegan a Dios de cada dia que quebrante a los gentiles e a los erejes; e llaman “erejes” a todos que sirven idolos, como los christianos ... ¿E pues cómo devedes dezir que ellos rruegan a Dios por los gentiles e que los ffazeen seer justos?” (169r / 2: 65).

²⁴ “Dixieron otroosi que los erejes e los tornadizos, como Jhesu Nazareno e ssus diçiplos, decenderlos-an al pozo e fazerlos-an perder a amas manos. E dixieron que los christianos sson gentiles e sservidores de idolos e el rregno malo de Edom. E sobrellos fue conpuesta la oracion de los erejes, en que maldizen a los christianos çinco vezes cada dia, segunt gelo manda en el libro “Baracod.” (300r / 2: 363).

²⁵ “...nos maldezimos de [ellos] cada dia, e que rrogamos a Dios que ssean perdidos e astragados del mundo, porque los tenemos por erejes e por sservidores de idolo, e que sson el rregno malo de Edom, el que esperamos nos que a a sser quebrantado, e que con esso abremos nos ssalvacion.” (335r-v / 2: 432).

Master Alfonso the convert in the *Book of the Wars of the Lord*, ch. 43, calls Jews proud and cruel because they do not pray out of love like Christians, and he puts forth the above mentioned prayer in this way: “May those who are converted to another law not have hope and all may all heretics perish suddenly...” And they call Christians the kingdom of malice...”²⁶

The earliest notice, other than Abner/Alfonso’s own comments, of his charges against the prayer come from the contemporary poet, Samuel Ibn Sasson.²⁷ In his only surviving *dīwān*, entitled *Sefer Avnei ha-Shoham*, Ibn Sasson seems to refer to the scandal caused by the Abner/Alfonso’s conversion in certain lines of poem 8: “Now your people is in distress/ Because a foe has arisen to degrade its stature” (line 113).²⁸ On lines 31-33, he makes specific reference to the charges against the “Birkat ha-minim”: “In other respects the “Midanite merchants” cause destruction, since the foe slandered their prayer, and if one goes to the sanctuary to pray, it is not allowed.”²⁹ The Christian voice in the *Ezer ha-Emunah*, which was written as a direct response to Abner/Alfonso, states that

²⁶ “Magister Alfonsus conversus in Libro de bellis Dei c. **xliiii** [“xliiii” in the text printed by Carlos del Valle], vocat iudeos superbos et crudeles quia non orant ex charitate sicut christiani et ponit in terminis supradictam orationem sub hac forma: “Qui convertuntur ad aliam legem non habeant spem et omnes heretici subito pereant et omnes nostri inimici et omnes odientes nos et omnes qui querunt mala nobis subito succidantur et omne regnum superbie frange cito, destrue et opprime cito in diebus nostris” Et ipsi vocant christianos regnum malignitatis” (De Spina, *Fortalium*, book III consideratio VII, 148v-a). Relevant sections from the 1525 Lugduni edition were printed in Carlos del Valle, “El Libro de las batallas de Dios de Abner de Burgos” 114.

²⁷ On Ibn Sasson’s account of Abner’s charges, see Brann et al., “The Poetic Universe of Samuel Ibn Sasson” 80-81 and Baer, “Fragments from Poets of Castile” 198-99 and *Toledot* 213 / *Historia de los Judíos en la España Cristiana*, 398-9 and 427 (not complete in the English translation).

²⁸ "(17) "נעתה עמך יושב בצרה \ אשר קם צר להשפיל מעלתו".

²⁹ "(12-13) "נעושים שמד בענגנים אחרים \ אנשי מדני"ם סוחרים" \ אשר אויב תפלתם ככל \ וקא אל מקדשו להתפלל ולא יוכל". (Also quoted by Baer, “Fragments from Poets of Castile”, 199).

You [the Jews] also curse us [the Christians] and our king [of Castile] three times daily in the prayer said while standing saying “The apostates should not have a hope” which you say because of those who returned to our faith whom you call *meshumadim* [apostates], and “All the informers let them perish immediately,” etc. All this you say about us, whom you call heretics and enemies and haters...all this you say on the kings of the gentiles whom you call “Kingdom of Arrogance.”³⁰

There is also notice that Abner/Alfonso charged the Jews with this slander in a public disputation. According to De Spina’s account in the *Fortalitium Fidei*, probably based, in large part, on the decree of Alfonso XI included in the text, Abner/Alfonso held a public disputation with local Jews in late 1335 or early 1336 about the benediction:

When it was said to the Jews by the Christians that they made this prayer, they denied it right away, but this is their lying iniquity, as was publicly shown to the most illustrious king Alfonso by the above-mentioned Master Alfonso, who disputed with the elders and wise men of the Jews and made them recognize that they said the prayer and slander against Christians.³¹

Abner/Alfonso’s criticism of the blessing led to the promulgation of an edict by King Alfonso XI of Castile, dated February 25, 1336, banning its use in daily prayer, and the text of Alfonso XI’s edict, preserved only by Alonso de Spina in the *Fortalitium Fidei*,

³⁰ וגם אתם מקללים אותנו ואת מלכנו ג' פעמי' בתפילת מעומד בכל יום באמרכם "למשומדי' אל תהי תקוה" אתם אומר'י בשביל' אותם שחזרו לאמונתינו שאתם קורין אותם משומדי' "וכל המלשיני' כרגע יאבדו" וגו' כל זה אתם אומרים עלינו שאתם קורא'י אותו (Fol. 94b/Shamir 2: 136).

³¹ “Cum autem iudeis dicitur a christianis quod ipsi faciant hanc orationem, statim negant, sed mentita est iniquitas sibi cum hoc fuerit publice ostensum per supradictum magistrum Alfonsum illustrissimo regi Alfonso, qui disputavit cum maioribus et sapientioribus iudeorum et fecit eos cognoscere quod dicebant praedictam orationem et maledictionem contra christianos.” (Alonso de Spina, *Fortalitium Fidei*, Liber III, consideratio VII, 148v-a; printed by Carlos del Valle, “El Libro de las batallas de Dios de Abner de Burgos” 114-115). On the disputation, see the mention by Krauss/Horbury, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy*, 94.

confirms as well that Abner did debate publicly with Jews on the issue.³² The reissue of the edict by Juan I of Castile in 1380 meant that “Alfonso XI’s temporary decree was thus raised to the status of official law” (Baer, *History* 1: 375), although there is little evidence about how much it was enforced. In any case, the movement of Abner/Alfonso’s polemic out of a purely textual format and into the realm of public disputation follows the trajectory of his own arguments that he first represented, in the *Mostrador*, as internal to himself, and that eventually came to be directed at real polemical adversaries. Starting with the secret arguments of the early doubts and misgivings produced by his crisis of conversion, and then moving into a fully internalized but textual

³² “Dominus Alfonsus Castelle, Tolethi et Legionis Galicie Hyspali, Cordube, Murcie, Gihennii et Algarbii Rex Dominusque Moline consiliis iudeorum omnium regnorum nostrorum et ipsorum cuilibet gratiam cum salute. Volo vos scire nobis fuisse relatum per magistrum Alfonsum conversum, sacristam maioris ecclesie valislitane, vos uti a magnis temporibus inter vos quotidie ab utroque sexu adulte etatis oratione quadam in qua maledictionem Omnipotentis Dei christianis ac omnibus ad fidem Christi conversis imprecamini eos censendo hereticos, etiam inimicos capitales, et quod publice Deum exoratis ut eos destruat atque perdat. Et licet aliqui Judaeorum dicendo negabant: hoc non dicere Christianis, disputavit tamen hoc dictus magister Alfonsus cum sapientioribus Vallesle, qui de vobis fuerint adinventi, coram iudicibus vestris ac scribis publicis et meritis atque probis viris de praedicatoribus fratribus et multis aliis circumstantibus, ubi iuramento legis Judaeorum illi summe literati inter se concesserunt, dictis librorum suorum injunctum ab antecessoribus hoc fuisse, veluti, dictus magister Alfonsus demonstrabat et ipsi suis nominibus super hoc vice et vicibus roborarunt in hebraico. Videntibus nobis hoc vituperare et [d]erogare fidei christiane in bonum duximus per mandatum ne in aliquo regnorum nostrorum amplius hoc fiat, quod si iudeus aliquis vel iudea hoc presumerit attemptare iudicibus omnibus et merinis [sic- meaning uncertain. Perhaps “ministris”?] atque potentibus cuiuscumque loci in quo hoc acciderit qui hanc nostram literam viderit vel transumptum signato notario publico, iniungimus viva voce ibi remedium ponere, sicut erga illos qui contra christianam fidem proponunt et literam nostram recipiunt in contemptum et quod ut ibi scribitur compleatis et unus pro alio non excusetur quod iniungimus ponere in effectu et custodiatis et defendatis. Predictae nostre litere vel transumpti illius signati notario publico ostensorum nec permittatis dicto vel facto aliquem vel aliquos contra eum procedere quocumque modo nec aliud faciatis in hoc sub pena nostri domini centumque marabetinorum nummisme nove cuiuslibet omni vice et qualibet vos hanc literam vel transumptum signatum notario publico tales vel tales dixeritis adimplendum cuique notario publico cuiusque ville vel loci qui ad hoc vocatus fuerit imponimus per mandatum quod homini hanc literam nostram nuncianti testimonio suo **signatum** signo praebeat ut nobis **constat** qualiter mandatum nostrum duxeritis ad implendum et aliud nullus vestrum audeat **attentare** sub dicta pena et officii vestri lecta litera sibi omnimodo presentetis. Datum in Valesoleti XXV die mensis februaryi era MCCCLXXIII.” (Alonso de Spina, *Fortalium Fidei*, Liber III, consideratio VII, 148v-a and 148v-b; Copied and printed by Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraea* 3: 123-4. Printed in Graetz, *Geschichte* 7: 451 and Carlos del Valle, “El Libro de las batallas de Dios de Abner de Burgos” 115-116 (NB: the words in bold represent the slight differences between the 1494 Nuremberg edition and the text printed by Carlos del Valle). As Sainz de la Maza notes, this document has not been found elsewhere (*Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio*, 194 n. 110). See also Merchán Fernández, *Los judíos de Valladolid* 45. Salvador de Moxó, in his study “Los judíos castellanos en el reinado de Alfonso XI”, makes no mention of the document or the events it describes.

argument in which Abner/Alfonso himself represents both the voice of the Christian polemicist and the counterthrusts of the Jewish rebel, his protracted and public (but still textual) disputation with Polgar and Shalom brought his polemic from an internal to an external context, and this external movement continued in 1336 with his public disputation and effort to influence royal policy, seemingly apart from a formal written work.³³

The events surrounding the disputation of 1336 and the banning of the benediction constitute one of the most significant events in Abner/Alfonso's later life. After these events, very little is known about his life or death. The only other notice about him comes from the *Ma'amar ha-Behirah* (*Treatise on Free Will*) of one of Abner/Alfonso's critics, Moses Narboni, cited now many times by previous critics: "I looked and there was a sage among the most singular of his generation and I caught up with him at the end of his days..."³⁴ Graetz's observation that Narboni did not leave Perpignon for Castile until 1344³⁵ and may have left for Aragón around 1347-8, since he was found in Cervera in 1349 (Munk, *Mélanges*, 504 n. 1; Graetz *Geschichte* 7: 450) places their meeting, and end of Abner/Alfonso's days, sometime between these dates. Some confusion has been

³³ Abner claims, at the beginning of *Libro de la ley* (MS BN 43, 1v (or 3v. On pagination of the MS, see list of lost works in Appendix 2, n. 1); Mettmann edition 87), that in his now-lost work, the *Libro de las maldiciones de los judios* (Book of the Maledictions of the Jews), he demonstrated "muchas maldicias que tienen los judios contra los cristianos escritas en sus libros que ellos compusieron de ssí e que los tienen por libros autenticos entre ssí, las quales maldicias fazen todas e continuan en ellas con consentimiento de algunos cristianos que gelo no entienden e de algunos que gelo no quieren entender..." (1v). There has been some speculation by Loeb (*Polémistes chrétiens*" 53), Baer ("Abner aus Burgos", 1928, 1: 339), Shamir (43), Mettmann (*Ofenda de zelos* 9 n. 8), that this work might actually be Abner/Alfonso's formal charges against the "Birkat ha-Minim", although Carlos del Valle calls the assertion "gratuitous" ("El Libro de las Batallas de Dios" 90 n. 34).

³⁴ "ראיתי והנה חכם מהמיוחדים שבדורו ואני השגתיי באחרית ימיו" (Hayoun, "L'Épître du Libre Arbitre" 146).

³⁵ See his *Commentary on the Possibility of Conjunction* of Averroes, BN MS 918, Fonds hébreu, fol. 166b. (English 53/Hebrew 112). Cf., however, Munk's note, 303 n. 2, which says that even though the text says Moses finished the work June 19, 1344, it must be an error because this date (17 Tammuz) was a Saturday.

created by the assertions of Nicolao Antonio about Abner/Alfonso's death date based on a misreading of the testimony of Pablo de Santa María in the *Scrutinium Scripturarum*. Speaking about the events of the false messianic movement of 1295 which prompted the beginning of Abner/Alfonso's doubts, Pablo notes that "...I had not yet been born at the time of that signal ("signi"), since it took place nearly sixty years before my birth..." (525).³⁶ Nicolao Antonio (*Bibliotheca hispana vetus* 2: 152) has misread "signi" to refer somehow to Abner/Alfonso himself (and Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio* 176-7, has followed him and tried to make sense of this by reading "ligni", taken to refer to Abner/Alfonso, rather than "signi"). In this way, Antonio claims that Pablo put his birth sixty years after Abner/Alfonso's death. Antonio thus tried to make sense of the implications of his error by reading "six" instead of "sixty",³⁷ thus placing Abner/Alfonso's death in 1346 (the year itself is not improbable, judging by other information, but Antonio's logic is totally false). In fact, Pablo's statement that he was born "almost sixty years" after the events of 1295 makes perfect sense and needs no correction. While 1346 is logical and certainly plausible as the year of Abner/Alfonso's death, it cannot be specifically confirmed. For now, the firmest estimate for Abner/Alfonso's death remains that of Graetz, placing it somewhere between 1344-1347.

³⁶ This is repeated by Spina in the *Fortalitium* III.10, 172rb-va: "De praedicto etiam miraculo dominus Paulus Burgensis episcopus in suo dyalogo dicet supra ca. iii. Post multa quod supradicta sunt dictum: ego autem licet nondum essem tempore isti signi natus quod quidem terminus praecessit nativitatem meam per LX annos fere".

³⁷ This too is a problematic attempt at a solution, (his other misreading notwithstanding), because such a number would have been written in the manuscripts as "LX" (not "60" or "sexaginta"), and thus was hardly confusable with "VI". In Beinecke MS 353, a copy of the *Scrutinium* from 1450-1455 (before Pablo's death in 1456), the number is listed as "LX" (198r).

II. Works by Abner/Alfonso

It is helpful to divide Abner/Alfonso's biography into four major periods of activity: his life as a Jew before 1295, his period of doubt, study, and conversion between 1295-ca. 1320, his period of polemical activity from ca. 1320- ca. 1340, and his final years from ca. 1340 to his death (probably in or before 1347). Although some notice has survived of works composed before his conversion, most of his literary activity took place in the third of these periods between ca. 1320- ca. 1340. The *Mostrador* is only the earliest of various works to survive,³⁸ some in Hebrew, others in Castilian translation, and some in both. Martínez Añíbarro y Rives, Rosenthal, Mettmann, Hecht, Sainz de la Maza, Gershenzon, and Carpenter, among various others, have all compiled lists of Abner/Alfonso's known works, surviving and lost, and their total number of works varies substantially,³⁹ mainly in the number of spurious or lost works attributed to

³⁸ The same cannot be said with confidence about the form it survives in, the Castilian translation, *Mostrador de justicia*. Contrary to Roth's misreading of Baer (*Conversos* 383 n. 135), nothing is known about the translation of the *Moreh* as the *Mostrador*. The manuscript of the text does date from the fourteenth century, indicating that the text must have been translated at least within fifty years or so of Abner/Alfonso's death. It is known that the *Sefer Milhamot*, according to the testimony of Ambrosio de Morales of the title of the work (9), was translated by Abner himself. We can assume that this occurred within a few years of its composition (probably less than two), and the *Moreh* was the next work to be written. Given the very strong influence of Hebrew on the Castilian translation and considering the content of the work itself, it seems highly unlikely that the work would have been translated by anyone other than Abner/Alfonso himself. Mettmann argues in favor of Abner/Alfonso as the translator (or overseer of the translation) (*Mostrador* 1: 8; *Volkssprachliche apologetische Literatur* 33; and "La littérature" 26a). Sainz de la Maza, in considering the Vatican MS Lat. 6423, is less certain, observing that "no parece raro, por tanto, que el ex-rabino Abner pudiera haber tomado a su cargo la traducción a la lengua vulgar de sus propios originales hebreos; sin embargo, no contamos con ningún testimonio que lo confirme por lo que respecta a las obras de nuestro códice" (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 284).

³⁹ Martínez Añíbarro's list is on pp. 70-73; Rosenthal's list can be found in "From *Sefer Alfonso*" 621 n. 1; Gershenzon includes a list in her *A Study of the Teshuvot la-Meharef*, 19-23; Mettmann includes a list in his *La littérature dans la Péninsule Ibérique ux XIVe et XVe siècles*, vol. 2, fasc. 7, 25a-26 and 52b, and in his edition of *Ofenda de zelos*, 8-9, and reproduces Hecht's list in his edition of the Castilian translation of *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, 7 n. 1; Hecht's list can be found on pp. 31-35 of his dissertation; Sainz de la Maza includes his annotated list in *Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio*.198-203, which seems to form the basis of Carpenter's list in *Diccionario filológico*, 141-152. Santiago-Otero and Reinhardt have an incomplete list with manuscript information in *Biblioteca bíblica*, 83-88. Of all lists, Carpenter's is the most complete and most up-to-date.

Abner/Alfonso. Among the surviving works attributed to him with certainty, the most important include the *Mostrador de justicia*;⁴⁰ the *Teshuwoṭ la-Meharef* (*Responses to the Blasphemer*), probably from around 1340, surviving also in an untitled Castilian translation (often called *Respuestas al blasfemo*);⁴¹ the *Ofrenda de Zelos* (*Offering of Zeal*), also called the *Libro del Zelo de Dios* (*Book of the Zeal of God*), perhaps from the early 1330s, which is a Castilian translation of a now-lost Hebrew work, *Minḥat Qenaot*;⁴² the *Libro de la ley* (*Book of the Law*), written ca. 1336-1340, possibly written directly in and now preserved only in

⁴⁰ On the MS BN 43, see Rodríguez de Castro, *Biblioteca española* 1: 195; Ochoa, *Catálogo* 28; Loeb, “Polémistes chrétiens et juifs”, 52-54; Amador de los Ríos, *Historia crítica* 4:86; Morel-Fatio, *Catalogue des manuscrits espagnols*, 7; Mettmann, *La littérature* 25b-6a; *ibid.* Alfonso de Valladolid (*Abner aus Burgos*). *Mostrador* 1:11-12; Reinhardt et al., *Biblioteca bíblica* 85-6; Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio* 208-16, 233; Carpenter, 143, 149-50. Sainz de la Maza, based on the articles of Martín de Barcelona and Galindo Romeo, describes the provenance of the MS thus: “El códice, por lo cuidado de su escritura y por los restos de iluminación en su primera página parece haber sido copiado para alguien de importancia, muy bien puede tratarse...del “*liber intitulus Mostrador de iustitia contra Iudeos*, in vulgari, et in papiro, coopertus de albo” que a comienzos del siglo XV formaba parte de la biblioteca del Papa Luna, Benedicto XIII, que...llevó consigo a Peñíscola una parte de ella en 1403...En 1429, a los seis años de la muerte de Benedicto XIII, el cardenal Pierre de Foix, legado para la definitiva liquidación del Cisma de Occidente, se incautó de los bienes pontificios en Peñíscola. Los libros pasaron al Collège de Foix de Toulouse, para acabar, en 1680, incorporándose a la Bibliothèq̄ue Royale” (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 209). On the papal library, see below, n. 87.

⁴¹ Hecht has recently prepared an edition and translation of the Hebrew text of the *Teshuwoṭ la-Meharef*, found in MS Parma 533 ff. 8r-65r, in his 1993 NYU dissertation. Gershenson studied the work in her 1984 Jewish Theological Seminary dissertation, including a partial translation and photocopy of MS Parma 533. Sainz de la Maza has prepared an edition and study of MS 6423 of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, which includes the Castilian *Respuestas al blasfemo*, in his *Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio*, 542-730. Mettmann has recently published an edition of the Castilian text as *Tēšuwot la-Mēharef. Spanische Fassung*. See also the comments of Mettmann, *La littérature* 26a; and Carpenter, “Alfonso de Valladolid” 145.

⁴² Mettmann has edited this work as *Ofrenda de Zelos (Minḥat Kēna’ot) und Libro de la Ley. Ausgabe und Kommentar*. Long passages have been translated back into Hebrew by Baer in his article, “*Sefer Minḥat Qenaot* of Abner of Burgos and its Influence on Hasdai Crescas.” On the *Minḥat*, see also Gershenson, “The View of Maimonides as a Determinist in *Sefer Minḥat Qenaot* by Abner of Burgos”; and “El converso y judío Alfonso de Valladolid y su *Libro del zelo de Dios*.” *Minḥat Qenaot* was composed late in Abner/Alfonso’s life, after “la fflaqueza de vejedat [or “grand edat”] que...es venida ssobre mí” (1d). This seems to belie Sainz de la Maza’s hypothesis that “por los títulos que cita, parece escrita en la década del 1330, quizá algo antes de la controversia de Valladolid” (*Alfonso de Vallasolid: Edición y estudio*, 200). Indeed, the “fflqueza de...edat” which he contrasts even to the “tiento de mi vegez” when he says he wrote the now-lost “Torre de fortaleza” could not be before the late 1330s or even into the 1440s. See also Mettmann, *La littérature* 25b.

Castilian,⁴³ the *Teshuvot ha-Meshuvot* (*Responses to the Apostasies*) (or *Teshuvot ha-Teshuvot*, according to some critics), probably from the early 1330s, which is not preserved in Castilian translation (as asserted by Gershenzon, and Hecht),⁴⁴ a mathematical treatise *Meyasher 'akov* (*Straightening the Curved*), possibly composed at the end of the 1330s or beginning of the 1340s,⁴⁵ and three letters, probably sent between 1325-1335, preserved in both in their original Hebrew and in Castilian translation.⁴⁶ Numerous other works,

⁴³ Mettmann edited this work together with the *Minhat Qenaot* (see previous note). We can accept Loeb's proposal, "Polémistes," 53, that this work is the same mentioned as "Concordia de las leyes" by Rodríguez de Castro 195 and Graetz, *Geschichte* 7: 444. See also Carpenter, 143-4. Carlos del Valle ("La tercera carta" 353 n. 4) proposes the *Libro de la ley* be called "Libro del Nombre divino" because of its content. See also Jeff Diamond, "El tema de la trinidad en *El libro de la ley*" de Alfonso de Valladolid."

⁴⁴ The text is found in Ms Parma 533 ff 110r-137r. Judah Rosenthal has edited the text as *Sefer Teshubot ha-Meshubot* (despite following Graetz, *Geschichte* 7: 445f, in his "From *Sefer Alfonso*" 621 n. 1, in calling the work *Teshuvot al ha-Teshuvot shel Yosef Shalom*), a title that Gershenzon, Shamir, and others have copied in part. Gershenzon, *A Study*, 22, claims that Vatican MS 6423 contains a Castilian translation of this text and Hecht, 34, repeats her statement. See Mettmann, ed. *Ofrenda de Zelos* 9, and Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio* 229 n. 11, who claims the title *Teshubot ha-Meshubot* is incorrect (probably based on information in De Rossi and Graetz), but see Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts*, 404a, in which the title given by Rosenthal is repeated. Benjamin Richler, who prepared the catalog with Malachi Beit-Arié, has confirmed to me by correspondence that the manuscript "clearly reads" תשובות and not משובות, so if Sainz de la Maza and Mettmann are correct, this would represent a scribal error.

⁴⁵ G. M. Gluskina et al. have published this as *Meyasher 'Akav*, including an edition of the Hebrew text with a Russian translation and an English summary. Gluskina in this 1983 Moscow edition (136) estimates the date of the composition at the end of the 1330s or beginning of the 1340s based on Abner/Alfonso's statement on f. 94a that he studied "from my early days to my old age." See also Gluskina, "On the Authorship of the Mathematical Treatise "Mēyaššēr 'āqōb" [Russian], and, *ibid*, "On the Unpublished Medieval Treatise "Mēyaššēr 'āqōb" in the British Museum" [Russian]; and Gad Freudenthal, "Two notes on the "*Sefer Meysher 'akov*" by Alfonso, alias Abner of Burgos [Hebrew]" recently republished in English in *Science in the Medieval Hebrew and Arabic Traditions*.

⁴⁶ The Hebrew text of the three letters from Ms Parma 533, 66r-109v, were published by Judah Rosenthal as follows: the first in "From the 'Sefer Alfonso.' [Hebrew] in *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, 588-621; the second in *The Abraham Weiss Jubilee Volume*, 483-510; and the third in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, 42-51. The Castilian translations from Vatican MS Lat. 6423 were edited and published by Alba Cecilia and Saiz de la Maza as follows: the first in *Sefarad* 53 (1990): 157-70; the second in *Sefarad* 51 (1991): 389-416; and the third in *Anuario Medieval* 2 (1990): 7-22. The third was also edited by Sainz de la Maza in his 1989 dissertation, pp. 731-765. An edition of the Hebrew and Castilian texts of the third was also published by Carlos del Valle in *Miscelánea de estudios árabes y hebraicas* 37-38:2 (1988-89): 353-371. Alba Cecilia has also published a study of the content of the letters, "Argumentaciones de Abner de Burgos en sus tres epístolas a los sabios judíos." Robert Chazan, in "Maestre Alfonso of Valladolid and the New Missionizing," "Undermining the Jewish Sense of Future: Alfonso of Valladolid and the New Christian Missionizing," and *Daggers of Faith* 165-66 and 207, has considered Abner/Alfonso's letters (mainly his third) in relation to the historical context of late-thirteenth century "missionizing" efforts. We will have

beyond the already mentioned *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem/Libro de las batallas de Dios (Book of the Wars of the Lord)*, which dates from around 1320-21, are named by Abner/Alfonso or by other writers, but do not survive,⁴⁷ and a few other works exist, including those known as the *Libro declarante* (or *Libro de las tres creencias, Book of the Three Faiths*),⁴⁸ the so-named *Tratado contra las hadas (Treatise against Chance)*,⁴⁹ and the *Sermones contra los judíos y moros (Sermons against Moors and Jews)*,⁵⁰ but their attribution to Abner/Alfonso continues to be

opportunity to return to Chazan's arguments when we consider Abner/Alfonso's relation to Raymond Martini.

⁴⁷ For a list and discussion of Abner/Alfonso's lost works thus far identified, see Appendix 2.

⁴⁸ Dwayne Carpenter has published the text as *Text and Concordance of Libro de las tres creencias, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid Ms 9302*. On this text and the debate surrounding its attribution to Abner/Alfonso, see Amador de los Ríos, *Estudios históricos* 301-3; Menéndez Pidal, *Crestomatía*, 2: 438-40; Carpenter, "Abner de Burgos, Libro de las tres creencias: The Spanish Manuscripts." and "The Language of Polemic: Abner de Burgos' Quadrilingual Defense of Christianity."; Díez Merino, "El argumento mariano en la controversia judeocristiana del siglo XII"; Juan Antonio Sagredo Fernández, El "Libro declarante de la Santa Fe Catholica" de Abner de Burgos." Santiago-Otero, "The *Libro declarante*"; and Mettmann, "El *Libro declarante*, una obra falsamente atribuida a Alfonso de Valladolid." For discussion of a Portuguese translation of the work, see Vilares Cepeda, "Uma versão portuguesa do *Libro de las tres creencias*"; and José Antunes, "O Livro das Tres Creencias ou Tratado Theológico" in his 1995 doctoral dissertation at the University of Coimbra, "A cultura erudita portuguesa nos séculos XIII e XIV (juristas e teólogos)."

⁴⁹ The work was edited as a work of San Pedro Pascual (whom, as Sainz de la Maza asserts, we should refer to as the "Pseudo San Pedro Pascual," given the serious doubts that can be raised about his identity. On this, see also Jaume Riera i Sans, "La invenció literaria de Sant Pere Pasqual" and Mettmann, *Die volkssprachliche apologetische Literatur* 21-30) by Armegol Valenzuela, *Obras de San Pedro Pascual*, 3: 54-91; See Armegol Valenzuela's comments in *Obras*, 3: XXVI-XXXII; the early comments by Menéndez Pidal in *Crestomatía* 2: 437-8 and "Sobre la bibliografía de San Pedro Pascual"; Baer, "Abner aus Burgos" (1929) 25; Sainz de la Maza, "Apuntes para la edición del tratado *Contra las hadas* atribuido a Alfonso de Valladolid (Abner de Burgos)", who sketches out a very convincing argument against the work's attribution to Abner/Alfonso, although he does note certain similarities to Abner/Alfonso's *Minhat Qenaot* (116).

⁵⁰ On this work, see the edition by Dagenais et al., *The Text and Concordances of "Sermones contra los iudios e moros."* Alfonso de Valladolid (?). MS 25-H, Biblioteca Pública de Soria; and the articles by Nachman Falbel, "Sermones contra los judíos e moros (MS. H-25), A XIV Century Spanish Polemical Writing", and Santiago-Otero, "Un sermón, anónimo, de controversia." Abner/Alfonso has also been suggested as the author of the *Disputatio Abutalib sarraceni et Samuelis iudaei*, but this claim has been easily disproved by critics. See Reinhardt, "Un musulman y un judío prueban la verdad de la fe cristiana" and Suárez Fernández, *Judíos españoles en la Edad Media*, 240.

the reconstruction of the events in Abner/Alfonso's debate with Polgar by Gershenzon (*A Study* 23-6) and Hecht (36-38), it seems clear that after the composition of Abner/Alfonso's early work, the "Book of Philosophizing," which Polgar was familiar with, and after Abner's conversion and composition of the *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem / Libro de las batallas del Señor*, or possibly after the composition of the *Mostrador*, Polgar composed a series of three works (which Abner/Alfonso refers to as "letters"). These works are now lost (although Gershenzon asserts with good reason that these works probably made up the early versions of some parts of Polgar's later polemical collection, *Ezer ha-Dat* (25-6). Abner/Alfonso gives titles and vague indications of their contents in his *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, naming the *Be-Hakhashat ha-Iztaginut (On the Refutation of Astrology)* (*Tesuvot* 14a), called in Castilian the *Libro de negar e desmentir la astrologia (Ofrenda* 1c) and *Libro de desmentimiento o de la astrologia*" (3c), the *Igeret Harafot (Answer to the Heretic)*, called in Castilian *Libro de las dessonras* or *Carta de las dessonras (Teshuvot...spanische Fassung* 41va/42ra and 80rb),⁵³ and the *Iggereth-Tiqvah (Epistle of Hope)* (14a), called in Castilian *Libro de la esperanza*

tú usseste e mi escuela desde quando fuste pequeno, e que te amava como mi alma. E si agora coçeeste e ffalsseste, todo lo olvideste con sobervia de tu coraçon: aaunque mucho te pesse, yo so tu maestro. Omne cria cuervo; e engruessa el cuervo, açelada e assechal para sacarle el ojo" (46r/22). At the beginning of *Minhat Qenaot*, he states that "Ysach el dicho ffue mucho mi amigo en otro tienpo que éramos companones en rrazon del estudio e del aprender, e non tenia por guysado de barajar con él nin de ffazerle assannar por ninguna guisa" (1v-2r). Polgar himself refers to their bond, stating that "פעם אחת נתחברתי עם איש אחד חי נפשי, מהיר ויודע בדרכי הדת גם בפילוסופיא" ("Once I had a friendship with a lively man, quick-witted and knowledgeable in the ways of religion and philosophy" *Ezer ha-Dat* (Bellasco 25/Levinger 60). In the *Teshuvat Apikoros*, he stated "כי במקום שיש חילול השם אין כבוד לרב...ובבקשה מן האהבה הקדומה והרתו העצומה לשלוח אלי פתשגן שיש הספר אשר באמתיות כופר...ארדפנו ואהדפנו וכמו גויי אריקנו ולחרפה ובזו אשימנו ואעשה לו כאש—לדחינו." ["Where the Name is defiled, the teacher is not honored...When he requests from old friendship and very quickly sends me a copy of the book which denies truth...I will chase him and drive him out and like a corpse I will empty it and into disgrace and mockery I will put it and I will do to him as [he did] to our faith" (1a-b/Hecht 326-7). For discussion of their relationship, see Carlos del Valle, "La Contrdicción del Hereje de Isaac Ben Polgar," 553.

⁵³ As Hecht notes, this is not known for certain to be the "second" work (38), but it is the most logical explanation, especially given the fact that the other "letters" are sometimes called "books" in the Castilian, making the work in question the "second" of three "books" in response to Abner/Alfonso. On this question, see also Sainz de la Maza 228 n. 5. Hecht notes (117 n. 112) that Polgar refers to the first section

(46rb) . The first work seems to have included a refutation of Abner/Alfonso's astrological notions about predestination, the second (assuming it is the work contained at the beginning of MS Parma 2440) "attempted to demonstrate the superiority of Judaism by synchronizing it with Maimonidan and Aristotelian notions" (Hecht 38), and the third seems to have responded to Abner/Alfonso's ideas about resurrection and afterlife.

In response to the first and third of Polgar's works, Abner composed the *Minhat Qenaot*, and in response to the *Teshuvat Apikoros*, he eventually composed the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*. Although he claims not to have received the work until ten years after its composition (8a), this comment is dubious, as Hecht has shown, especially because Abner/Alfonso mentions the "Libro de la contradición del herege" (3c) in the *Ofrenda de zelos* (Castilian version of the *Minhat Qenaot*, probably composed around 1330⁵⁴), alongside mention of the other works to which he is responding.⁵⁵ In any case, Polgar's work is included in the beginning of Parma 2440/ De Rossi 533, and it is certain that Abner/Alfonso's work constitutes a response to it written rather late in the author's life.

Besides Polgar, another important respondent to Abner/Alfonso was one Joseph Shalom, an unidentified Castilian Jew contemporary with Abner. Although Abner / Alfonso wrote, perhaps in the late 1320s, the three letters found in the Parma MS to Jews other than Shalom (the first is to "Rabbi Abner of Zaragoza," the second to Rabbi Moses H̄azan, and the third is not addressed to any single identified person, but to an unnamed "you" (the addressee is second-person singular in both the Hebrew and the Castilian),

of *Ezer ha-Dat*, which is very similar to the untitled treatise that Abner/Alfonso calls *Iggeret Haraḥot*, as *Teshuvot Apikoros*, "Answer to the Heretic".

⁵⁴ If the *Mostrador* is dated ca. 1325 and the *Minhat Qenaot* around 1330, this statement supports a rough dating of the *Teshuvot la-Meharef* to around 1340. Abner's claim not to have known of Polgar's work until ten years after its composition is false, since he mentions the work by name in the *Minhat*.

⁵⁵ See Hecht's discussion of this claim on 116 n. 109.

Shalom himself wrote a response to each. In the first letter, Abner / Alfonso uses biblical exegesis of Daniel 7:1-2 and Zechariah 6:1-2 to interpret the four beasts recorded in book seven of Daniel (winged lion, bear, four-headed leopard, and the ten-horned beast) in relation to the “four kingdoms” of Jewish prophetic chronology, Babylonia, Media-Persia, Greece, and Edom, traditionally associated with Rome and the Roman Church. In his response, Shalom insists that Edom refers to Christianity, thus undercutting Abner / Alfonso’s assertions that Edom was destroyed in the era of the Maccabees and does not refer to the Church. In the second letter, Abner / Alfonso uses exegesis of Daniel 8:13-14 and 25-26, and 12:11, (which give the figures “two-thousand three-hundred” days and “one-thousand two-hundred ninety” days, figures often cited in calculations of the end of days) to argue that the Messiah had already come, and that the prophet of Daniel knew the significance of the figures he gave. Shalom counters by criticizing Abner/Alfonso for picking and choosing a few chronological verses on which to build his case, and maintains that the prophet of Daniel, as he states, did not understand his own vision. In the third letter, Abner / Alfonso used rabbinic and aggadic texts (T.B. *Sanhedrin* 98a and *Leviticus Rabbah*⁵⁶) to the same end of arguing that the Messiah has come and, as Hecht observed, the letter represents a shorter version of the second half of the *Teshuvot la-Meharef* (41). Abner/Alfonso argues that Jews have lost the status of “True Israel” because they have ignored the meaning of the divine name. Shalom answers Abner/Alfonso by insisting that some aggadot should be read according as parable, some literally, and some with a mixture of parable and literal reading. When two literal aggadot contradict one another,

⁵⁶ Both Abner and Shalom cite the text as *Exodus Rabbah*, although Abner cites it correctly in the *Mostrador*, 230a. Carlos del Valle argues (incorrectly, in my view) that this suggests the *Mostrador* was written later than the third letter (“La tercera carta” 356 n. 11).

the symbolic value must be sought, and thus Abner/Alfonso's assertions that the Messiah has come can be explained by recourse to a symbolic interpretation. Shalom follows the *Vikuah* of Nahmanides in arguing that the Messiah may indeed have been born, but this does not mean he has already come (*Kitvei* 1:306/Maccoby 111), and then he rejects Abner/Alfonso's claims about the divine name as illogical: If the Jews had sinned in exile by not knowing the divine name, but did know it before exile, they would not have had to go into exile for their sin. To this and Shalom's other arguments in response, Abner/Alfonso then wrote his own response, the *Teshuvot ha-Meshuvot* (*Responses to the Apostasies*). Although Abner/Alfonso's polemics with Polegar and Shalom have received the lion's share of critical attention in recent years making further commentary superfluous, we will have a chance to consider the content of these texts below when we consider the content of the *Mostrador* in relation to Abner/Alfonso's other works.

Within Abner/Alfonso's lifetime, responses to his work were not limited simply to disputes over rabbinical literature and interpretation of Jewish traditions. Other contemporaries responded on more philosophical grounds, while other references to Abner/Alfonso and his teachings pop up in belletristic sources. We have already noted the reference about Abner/Alfonso given by Moses Narboni in his *Maamar ha-Behirah* (*Treatise on Free Will*). This work contains a refutation of Abner/Alfonso's ideas on determinism. As Narboni explains, Abner himself

Composed an "Epistle on Predestination." He said in it: "There is no possible but only the necessary and the predetermined. Therefore everything is predestined."

In general, he said "This was understood among the ancient ones, but they concealed it so that the (human) nature of making an effort would not be

annulled.” He also said, “Although only the inevitable exists, there is no annulment of the intermediate causes, but rather it is necessary to put forth effort for what is sought.” For, “if diligence is predetermined, then trying will bring it into being.” In order to establish these two assertions, following his interpretation, we consequently interpret the saying of the sage, “If predestination is true, then exertion is false” as “If the will is in something, than exertion to do the opposite, and not exertion (itself, is false).” This is the general intent of the epistle.⁵⁷

After Baer, who was the first to consider Abner/Alfonso’s views on determinism in detail (“The *Sefer Minhāt Qenaot*”), Colette Sirat takes up the question again along with Narboni’s recondite ripostes (*A History of Jewish Philosophy* 308-14). As she explains, Abner believed in absolute determinism, in which God knows all future outcomes of human choices, even if those choices are the products of causes, and such ideas were intimately tied up with his learning in astronomy, astrology, and logic. Besides Narboni, one of Abner/Alfonso’s primary philosophical opponents on this issue was actually Isaac Polgar. Polgar’s *Ezer ha-Dat* seems to have been written with Abner/Alfonso very much in mind, as the opening poetic epithet suggests: “To the teacher of righteousness and the holder of inquiry, sound the voice of the learned and teach him religion. May [the teacher] show [him] the splendor of light and teach the straight path to defend the Torah and support

⁵⁷ [הוא] חבר אגרת הגזרה אמר בה כי אין שם אפשר אך הכל מחוייב ונגזר הכל בגזרה. וכללו אמ' כי זה אמתי אצל הראשונים אבל אמנם העלימוהו הראשונים לבלתי יבטלו טבע ההשתדלות. ואמר כי הוא ואם הכל מחוייב אין לבטל הסבות האמצעיות אבל צריך להשתדל בדרוש כי הוא ואם היה נגזר הזריות וההשתדלות יגיעו. ופי' שנמשך אחר דעתו זה לקיים שתי אלה ההקדמות כי (Hayoun, מאמר החכם אם הגזרה אמת החריצות שקר, הרצון בו החריצות בהפך לא החריצות בנגזר. זה כלל דבריו באגרתו. "L'Épître du Libre Arbitre" 146. Translation by Hecht, 42-3). For a general consideration of the problem of free will in Medieval Jewish philosophy, see Stein, *Die Willensfreiheit und der Verhältniss zur göttlichen Präsciens und Providenz bei den jüdischen Philosophen des Mittelalters*; and Krygier, *À la limite de Dieu*, who includes a few comments on Abner/Alfonso’s place in this history. See also Sirat’s discussion of Abner/Alfonso in *La Philosophie juive médiévale en pays de chétienté*, 124-130, which differs slightly from her *History*. See also Hayoun, *La Philosophie et la Théologie de Moïse de Narbonne* 233-41. Dan Cohn-Sherbok’s concise summary of Abner/Alfonso’s views in *Medieval Jewish Philosophy. An Introduction* is based entirely on Sirat and Baer.

faith!”⁵⁸ These lines seem to be a direct answer to Abner/Alfonso’s statement that the Jews are in “captivity” “because they are in need of a Teacher of Righteousness in whom they may know the truth.”⁵⁹ Likewise, the very first lines of the first part, “I saw my poor people in afflictions among enemies and oppressors, unknown and foreign...”⁶⁰ seems to be a direct reference to the first lines of the *Mostrador*, “I saw the burden of the Jews, my people from whom I am descended, who are, in this long captivity, oppressed and broken and burdened heavily by taxes...”⁶¹ As observed above, Polgar himself wrote a rejection of astrology and determinism in his initial trilogy of letters in response to Abner/Alfonso. Although that work is now lost, the third part of Polgar’s *Ezer ha-Dat* is directed against astrologers and those who believe in predestination, and while the only explicit mention of Abner/Alfonso by name is in part one, chapter seven, Levinger identifies Abner/Alfonso behind one of the cryptic references in that section (123 n. 60). His comments are in a similar vein, though less technical, than those of Narboni, and were obviously composed against Abner/Alfonso. Elaborating on the concept that God knows the things that will happen in the future because he also chooses them at the same time (Belasco 55/Levinger 115-116), he explains:

⁵⁸ "למורה הצדק ומחזיקי הברק תנו קול משכילים והעבירו לו דת\ יגלה זיו אורה נתיב יושר הורה להגן התורה וקם עזר לדת" (Bellasco 1/Levinger 25).

⁵⁹ "Los judíos están desde tan grand tienpo en esta captividad...por mengua de "Mostrador de Justicia" donde conoscan la verdad" (12r / 1: 13).

⁶⁰ "ראה ראיתי את עני עמי אשר במצרים, בין אויבים וצרים, נכרים וצרים" (Bellasco 3/Levinger 29). As Roth ("Isaac Polgar y su libro contra un converso" 68) and Levinger (29 n. 2) note, the text can read either "במצרים", "In Egypt", or "במצרים"/"במצרים", "in afflictions."

⁶¹ "Caté la premia de los judios, el mi pueblo donde yo era, que sson en esta luenga captividad quexados e quebrantados e angustiados en ffecho de los pechos..." (12r / 1: 13).

I have revealed to you the existence of the absolute nature of contingency which is that of everything coming into being before it comes about ... it is impossible for anyone to encompass and know which of the alternatives will be realized, as long as it is contingent, meaning as long as it is non-existent. When the Creator knows it, it will be necessary and avoidable, because his knowledge, which is his will, is what compels..."⁶²

Along with Narboni and Isaac Polgar, she presents a number of other contemporary thinkers, such as Joseph Caspi (1279?-1332?), Isaac Albalag (fl. end of thirteenth century), and even Gersonides (1288-1344) as taking up the same issue of future contingents as Abner/Alfonso, sometimes in direct response to his ideas (*A History of Jewish Philosophy* 308-314; "Deux philosophes juifs répondent à Abner de Burgos" 91). Krygier, following her assertions, accepts that Caspi responded to Abner/Alfonso (*A la limite de Dieu* 188). Albalag makes mention of a work, now-lost, on logic (on which, see Appendix 2), showing a direct response to his writing, but there is no direct evidence of Gersonides or Caspi responding to Abner/Alfonso, although others have suggested there may be evidence of Abner/Alfonso's knowledge of the Gersonides.⁶³ Sainz de la Maza notes that responses by Caspi and Gersonides would imply an extremely rapid dissemination of

⁶² "הגה ביארתי אליך וגליתי מציאות טבע האפשרות המוחלט לכל דבר מתחדש טרם חדושו...כי אי אפשר לשום יודע להקיף ולהשיג ולדעת הכרעת אחד מהפכי הדבר כל זמן אפשרותו, והוא כל עוד היותו נעדר, וכי כשיקענו היוצר ב'ה מיד יהיה מחוייב (Belasco 71/Levinger 137). ומוכרח להמצא, להיות ידיעתו אשר היא חפצו היא המכרעת, ואין ההכרעה הזאת מביאה לידי שנוי בידיעתו ובעצמו"

⁶³ Rosenthal believes that Gersonides is the source of a statement by Abner/Alfonso in his second polemical letter about Antioch IV Epifanes (176-164 BCE), king of Greece (Rosenthal 486/92vb), attributing this reference to Gersonides' commentary on Daniel, 8. This is extremely problematic for two reasons. Gersonides did not write this commentary until 1338 (Freudenthal, "Gersonides: Levi Ben Gershom" 741), implying that this letter was not written until long enough after this to account for dissemination of the work from Provence to Valladolid. Secondly, This passage is very similar to statements made in the *Mostrador* (e.g. 284v/2: 329), which was written long before Gersonides wrote his commentary.

Abner/Alfonso's works, given that both writers, working in Languedoc, probably died within a decade of Abner/Alfonso in the 1340s, and it is known that the *Minhat Qenaot*, Abner/Alfonso's earliest work on determinism, was only written around 1330 (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 254-5). Still, given Narboni's familiarity with and even occasional praise for Abner/Alfonso, such notoriety in philosophical circles is not so hard to believe as Sainz de la Maza asserts. Similar to Sirat, Roth has asserted that Judah ben Asher of Toledo may have also responded critically to Abner/Alfonso's ideas on astrology and determinism (*Conversos* 383 n. 135), but offers no proof to support the claim.

Responses to Abner/Alfonso's ideas, especially his interest in astronomy and astrology, has also been asserted in some belletristic writing of the fourteenth century. We have already noted the clear allusions to Abner/Alfonso in the Hebrew poetry of Ibn Sasson. One critic, the hispanist Sanford Shepard, has also gone to great lengths to insist upon Abner/Alfonso's presence in the writing of Shem Tov of Carrión (Shem Tov Isaac ben Arduṭi'el, ca. 1290-1360). In his reference to "un astroso" (a contemptible/ill-starred person) and to "escripto de tiserá" (scissor writing/writing with cut-out letters) in the *Proverbios morales*,⁶⁴ as well as other equally cryptic references in the *maqama* titled *Milhamot ha-Et ve-ha-Mispraim* (*Battle between Pen and Scissors*) and his *Viddui* (Prayer for Yom Kippur penance), Shepard has seen criticism of Abner/Alfonso and his ideas. Sainz de la Maza

⁶⁴ In stanzas 40-44 of his *Proverbios morales*, he writes "Un astroso cuydava / Y por mostrar que era / Sotil, yo le enbiava / Escripto de tiserá. / El nesçio non sabia / Que lo fize por infinita / Por que yo non quería / Perder e la tynta. / Ca por non la deñar, / Fize vazía la llena, / Y non le quise donar / La carta sana, buena. / Como el que tomava / Meollos de avellanas / Para sy, y donava / Al otro caxcas vanas; / Yo del papel saqué / La rrazón que dezía: / Con ella me finqué, / Dile carta vazía. ["A contemptible (or "ill-starred") man thought deeply, and to show he (or "I") was clever, I sent him scissor writing (writing with cut-out letters). The fool did not know I did it in jest because I did not want to waste the ink. So as not to show him respect, I cut out the letters (lit. "emptied what was full") and did not want to give him the good, correct letter. Because he takes the meats of hazelnuts for himself and gives others empty shells, I took out what was meaningful from the paper, which I kept for myself, and gave him an empty letter" (i.e. he gave him the scraps of the cut-out but not the letters themselves).](90-91).

has looked on such suggestions with skepticism given the lack of explicit mention of Abner/Alfonso or his works in Shem Tov's writings, maintaining that, despite the connection of both men to king Alfonso XI, Shepard's assertions are "escasamente plausibles" and such a response to Abner/Alfonso by Shem Tov is "lejos de toda confirmación" (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 259).⁶⁵ It can be said in Shepard's defense, however, that Shem Tov translated from Arabic to Hebrew the work on the Jewish liturgy *Mizvot zemanivot* of Israel Israeli of Toledo (the brother of Isaac Israeli, to whom Abner/Alfonso sent his polemical letter of 1334) (Zemke, "Shem Tov of Carrión" 753; see also Neubauer *A Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* # 904 and 1081), showing his interest in the subject and linking him as well with the Israeli family of Toledo. In addition, the same Ibn Sasson who criticized Abner/Alfonso and his slandering of the Jewish liturgy benediction praised Shem Tov in various poems (Brann et al. "The Poetic Universe" 81-82; and "Šěmu'el ibn Šáson" 57, 67-71), possibly providing another link between Abner/Alfonso and Shem Tov. Given these overlapping circumstances as well as the direct connection with Alfonso XI (it is known that Shem Tov was still connected with the court of Alfonso in 1336, when the king was swayed to pursue a less friendly Jewish policy), it seems unlikely that Shem Tov would not know of Abner/Alfonso's polemics, although it is true that any mention of this in his writing is hard to confirm with certainty.

The legacy of respondents provoked by Abner/Alfonso continued long after his death. One text that very clearly shows the direct influence of Abner/Alfonso is the

⁶⁵ Indeed, no mention of Shem Tov or Abner/Alfonso is made by Salvador de Moxó in his "Los judíos castellanos en el reinado de Alfonso IX" or by Sánchez-Arcilla Bernal in his *Alfonso XI*. See also the summary of Díaz-Mas and Mota in their edition of the *Proverbios morales* 34-36.

anonymous *Coloquio entre un cristiano y un judío* of 1370. Although García Moreno does not discuss this influence in his introductory remarks to his recent edition of the text, a careful comparison of the *Mostrador* and the *Coloquio* reveals Abner/Alfonso's influence in its arguments and in its sources, especially its Talmudic and Midrashic sources. A full consideration of the extent of this impact is still a scholarly desideratum, as is a comparison of Abner/Alfonso's work with the later *Declarante de los judíos* for possible points of influence.⁶⁶

One of Abner/Alfonso's most formidable respondents, after Polgar, was Moses ha-Cohen of Tordesillas (fl. second half of fourteenth century). Yehuda Shamir has studied ha-Cohen's responses to Abner/Alfonso in detail, editing his polemic *Ezer ha-Emunah* (*Support for the Faith*), whose title echoes that of Polgar's *Ezer ha-Dat*. (In fact, Moses himself composed another, shorter work also called *Ezer ha-Dat* which, together with the *Ezer ha-Emunah* was known as *Sefer ha-Ezer*) (Shamir 1: 17). Upon the sudden collapse of his fortunes after being robbed and imprisoned during the civil war provoked by the murder of King Pedro I by his brother in 1369, he relocated from Tordesillas (southwest of Valladolid) to Ávila. It was there in 1375 that, as he says in the *Ezer*, two apostates forced a public disputation with the Jews, represented by Moses ha-Cohen (although he disputes in most of the work with only one such *memir*) (Shamir 1: 15), which took place in the cathedral in four sessions (13b)⁶⁷ and mostly focused on Biblical material.⁶⁸ After the

⁶⁶ Professor Luis Manuel Girón Negrón has recently informed me that García Moreno is in fact now working on such a comparison. One awaits the results of his new findings with enthusiasm. For consideration of the *Declarante de los judíos*, see the recent edition by Tchimino Nahmías.

⁶⁷ All references are to the MS listed by Shamir as J3 (75-83), which he edited in volume two of his study.

⁶⁸ On the disputation of Ávila, see Shamir's comments (1:13-14), as well as Krauss/Horbury, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy* 165-7.

dispute, Moses says he was encouraged to write an expanded account of his success in the debate, which he finished that same year (covering ff. 13a-88a). As he worked on the text, another “Christian from Christian stock” (i.e. not a convert) (88b) appeared who claimed to be a disciple of Abner/Alfonso, and knew his *Mostrador*. This Christian forced another debate with Moses, which seems to have dealt more with Talmudic and aggadic material. Moses then wrote a version of this dispute in a later section of the *Ezer ha-Emunah* written around 1379 (starting around f. 88b) (Shamir 16-17).

Moses ha-Cohen’s polemical response to Abner/Alfonso’s ideas is of special interest among all of his opponents because it seems to focus more on the *Mostrador* than those writers with whom Abner/Alfonso engaged during his lifetime. (This material has been summarized by Shamir, 65-71). Moses says at the beginning of his work that he knows that the *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem* of Jacob ben Reuben (ca. 1170) covers the same material as he discusses,

But now different circumstance have arisen, “new things have recently come” [Dt. 32:17], the apostates of our Law multiplied [or argued]...and parts of the books which Abner ... wrote have come into their hands, [books] in which he wrote unfathomable heresies, including the book *Moreh Sheker* [“Teacher of Lies”]...and he called it *Moreh Zedek*. It obscures from our Talmud things written beautifully, and uses Aggadot for slander...” (14a).⁶⁹

In addition to the biblical questions addressed in the first part of the book (composed in 1375), Moses takes on some of Abner/Alfonso’s ideas about the Talmud and aggadot in

⁶⁹ "אבל עתה עניני' משוני' נבראי, חדשי' מקרוב באו, רבו ממירי תורתינו...ובאו לידם קצת ספרי' שחבר אבנר...שכתב בהם כפירות עד אין חקר ובכללם ספר מורה שקר...וקרא שמו מורה צדק, והסתיר מתלמודינו דברי' הכתובי' ביופי וכתב הגדות של " (14a / Shamir 2: 8). A version of this section was copied and translated by Loeb, “Polémistes” (226-29).

the section written later. In beginning the circumstances that led to the fifth debate session, he explains

There came to the community of Ávila a pupil from among the pupils of Maestro Alfonso “the blameless,” formerly Abner, and he was a Christian from the stock of Christians. Some of the books which Maestro Alfonso had composed came into his hand, including the *Moreh Sheker*, in which he wrote the slandered Aggadot which he found through the whole Talmud to steal the words of our sages of blessed memory and to mistreat us in dangerous things. And this Christian was versed in all the disputations, and in Torah and in [rabbinical] writings and in the Aggadot. When I was in my house teaching *halakha* to my colleagues, the Christian came to me and entreated me to dispute with him.⁷⁰

In his final section, Moses pays special attention to accusations that Jews slander Christians in their writings and in their prayers (94b), specifically addressing the charges about the “Birkat ha-Minim” (96b-97a). In addition to this, he confronts Abner/Alfonso’s ideas in nine other charges made against the Jews based on rabbinical literature arguing that Jews regard Christians as inferior and, indeed, as Shamir notes (70), Moses ha-Cohen was the first to confront Abner/Alfonso in such a detailed and direct way on such charges. More than any other response, the *Ezer ha-Emunah* helps us gauge the reception and impact of Abner/Alfonso’s arguments by his Jewish readers, and shows his legacy throughout the fourteenth century.

⁷⁰ "בא לכאן לאבילה תלמיד מתלמידיו של מיסי' אלפונשו הנק' בתחילה אבנר והוא נצרי מזרע נוצרי' ובא לידו קצת ספרי' שחבר מיש' אלפונסו הנז' ובכללם מורה שקר וכתב בו כל הגדות של דופי שמצא בכל התלמוד לתפוש על דברי חז"ל ולהתעולל עלינו בדברי סכנה והנצרי הזה היה בקי בכל הויכוחי' שבתורה שבכתב ושבהגדות. ובהיתי בביתי מגיד הלכה לחברי' בא אלי הנוצרי' ופייסני שאתוכח עמו" (89a / Shamir 2: 127). Part of this text was translated by Loeb, “Polémistes” (229-30).

Many critics have asserted, following Graetz (*Geschichte* 8: 20 n. 1), that the converted Jew who disputed with Moses in 1375 was John of Valladolid (on the history of this assumption, see Shamir 1:2-4), an assumption that builds off a mention of a “magister Johanes conversus” (Spina *Fortalitium* 172rb/Carlos del Valle, “El *Libro de las batallas de Dios*” 109). According to Graetz, this John, himself a convert, was one of the disputants of the first four sessions of 1375. Some, including Shamir (1:4), have taken this Juan to be the same as that mentioned in the erroneous eighteenth-century prefatory note to the BN MS 43 which contains the *Mostrador*, which reads “This book is entitled the Teacher of Truth, that is to say Justice, and its author is master Juan doctor of King don Alfonso the eleventh...he came to know God...in 1370 of the [Spanish] age.”⁷¹ He argues that this could not be the same who disputed with Moses because his death was five years before. Others, such as Loeb (“La controverse religieuse” 2: 144-5) and Sainz de la Maza (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 268 n. 5) have argued against such association, the latter pointing out that, in any case, the date of 1370 in Iberian calendars is actually 1332 by normal reckoning. Based on present sources, the identity of one of the disputants at Ávila with Moses ha-Cohen cannot be confirmed with certainty, although it may very well be the Johann mentioned by Spina, who has been identified as Juan de Valladolid (b. ca. 1335).⁷² There is no evidence that he can be associated with the “Iohan Alfon, fijo de

⁷¹ “Este libro se titula el Mostrador de la verdad, quiero decir de la justicia, y su autor es el maestre Juan Phisico del Rey don Alonso onceno...que vino al conocimiento de Dios...en la era de 1370.”

⁷² Antonio gives notice of him, taken from Spina (369), and then was followed by Ochoa, 26-8; Carlos del Valle includes his testimony, also taken from Spina, about the events of 1295 (“El *Libro de las batallas de Dios*” 83, 109). See also Sainz de la Maza (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 249). It is known that Juan de Valladolid composed a work called *De concordia Legum*, which has occasionally been confused with Abner/Alfonso’s *Libro de la ley*, also sometimes referred to as *Concordia de las leyes* (Loeb, “Polémistes chrétiens” 53). Spina also states that Juan wrote about the events of 1295 in his book, *De concordia legum*, and said that these events took place 40 years before his time: “De eodem etiam signo facit memoriam Magister Iohannus Conversus in libro suo de Concordia legum, ti. IIII ca. IIII. Dicit enim ibi quod praedictum

maestre Alfon” mentioned in 1348 in the archives of the Cathedral of Valladolid (legajo 16, #53), about whom nothing is known (Rucquoi *Valladolid au Moyen Age* 638 n. 537). In any case, little is known about Juan de Valladolid, but he was too young to be Abner/Alfonso’s disciple, and it is not known how well he knew Abner/Alfonso’s works.

At the same time as Moses ha-Cohen was drafting his additional section of the *Ezer ha-Emunah* in 1379, the cardinal Pedro de Luna of Aragón (the future Anti-Pope Benedict XIII) organized another debate against the Jews in Pamplona.⁷³ The Jewish side being led by Shem Tov ibn Shaprut, who describes the debate in book II, chapter nine and book XI, chapter sixteen of his *Eben Bohan* (*Touchstone*), the disputation was convened by Carlos II of Navarra. It took place in the cardinal’s palace and included a large audience of churchmen.⁷⁴ Writing the first fourteen books sometime between 1380-85 (he “ends” the work with book XIV), in which he includes some mention of Abner/Alfonso and the *Mostrador*, Ibn Shaprut then added discussion and refutation of what he says was Abner/Alfonso’s work against Jacob ben Reuben, probably *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem*, in book XV of his polemic.⁷⁵ Niclòs (*La piedra de toque* 52-3) has published and translated the

miraculum accidit in supradicto regno per XL annos ante tempus suum et quaerebat a Iudaeis qui remanserant quomodo cum tanto signo poterant remanere in iudaismo” (*Fortalitium* 172rb/Carlos del Valle, “El Libro de las batallas de Dios” 109). He is not to be confused with the fifteenth-century Juan de Valladolid discussed by Roth, *Conversos* 172-3.

⁷³ For a discussion of this event, see Krauss/Horbury *The Jewish-Christian Controversy* 167-8, with a full bibliography on 167 n. 73; Loeb, “Polémistes” 219-226; and Niclòs “La disputa religiosa de D. Pedro de Luna con el judío de Tudela D. Shem Tob Ibn Shprut en Pamplona (1379).”

⁷⁴ On Shem Tov and the *Eben Bohan*, see (besides the Niclòs edition of book I, which also includes a relevant bibliography on book XIII, Ibn Shaprut’s Hebrew version of the Book of Matthew), Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 15, 41, 135-50, and notes; Niclòs, “La disputa religiosa de D. Pedro de Luna con el judío de Tudela D. Shem Tob Ibn Shaprut e Pamplona (1379)” and Horbury, “The Revision of Shem Tob ibn Shaprut’s “Eben Bohan”.”

⁷⁵ Horbury notes that the argument in book fifteen added to the text refers to a different work than the *Mostrador* (which Ibn Shaprut criticizes in parts of the original fourteen books). He believes the content of

contents of the book as given by Shem Tov in the beginning of the work. In dialog form between a Jewish *meyahed* (unitarian) and a Christian *meshalleh* (trinitarian), the work directly engages with Abner/Alfonso's early writing and provides a wealth of information about the reception of his ideas, and possibly about his lost *Sefer Milhamot*. A detailed study of book fifteen of the *Eben Bohan* in relation to Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador* is a large and important project yet to be undertaken.

One can continue to follow Abner/Alfonso's influence well into the fifteenth century. Certainly the most notable among those figures influenced by Abner/Alfonso's teachings was the illustrious rabbi of Zaragoza, Ḥasdai Crescas. Baer has considered at length the possible influence of his ideas on Crescas' *Or Adonai (Light of the Lord)* ("*Sefer Minhah Qenaot of Abner of Burgos (And its Influence on Ḥasdai Crescas)*" [Hebrew]) and, as Gershenzon notes (*A Study* 28-9), his ideas began to be affirmed by other scholars of Jewish philosophy such as Guttman and Pines.⁷⁶ Recently, Sirat has also concluded that Crescas is "very close to Abner of Burgos" (*A History of Jewish Philosophy* 367), particularly in their view on causality and free will. Like Abner/Alfonso, she sees Crescas' view on free will "on the side of the theologians against the philosophers" (367) in affirming God's omniscience above all else (Cf. 310 on her discussion of the philosophical-theological dispute over contingent futures). James Robinson likewise echoes these findings in his work on Crescas ("Ḥasdai Crescas and anti-Aristotelianism" 393 and 409 n. 4). Recently, however, Aviezer Ravitzky (*Crescas' Sermon on Passover and Studies in His Philosophy*

the work supports Ibn Shaprut's claim that Abner/Alfonso's work (probably the *Sefer Milhamot Adonai*) responded to Jacob Ben Reuben ("The Revision of Shem Tob ibn Shaprut's "Eben Bohan"" 234).

⁷⁶ Guttman, "The Problem of Free Will in Ḥasdai Crescas" [Hebrew]; Pines, "Scholasticism after Thomas Aquinas."; Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy* 357-72; Feldman, "A Debate Concerning Determinism in Late Medieval Jewish Philosophy" and Krygier, *À la limite de Dieu* 179-214.

[Hebrew]38-46, 60-62; Cf Roth, *Conversos* 382 n. 129 and Krygier 299-300) has also taken up that topic, responding directly to these previous studies. Based on a study of Crescas' early *Sermon on Passover* in comparison with the *Light of the Lord*, he questions Baer's argument, and asserts that Crescas' adoption of non-Jewish ideas (including those of Abner/Alfonso in the *Minḥat*) involved a revision of their content to suit his own arguments and often a rejection of some of their basic assumptions.⁷⁷ Sainz de la Maza likewise points out the differences between the views of the two thinkers on astrology (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 264).

The wealth of ideas and arguments put forth by Abner/Alfonso in his works has led to ongoing speculation, similar to that regarding Abner/Alfonso's influence on Crescas, about the "traces" and "echoes" (as they have been called) of his ideas in works that do not mention him directly. Thus Baer has seen such "echoes" in Book III, chapters thirteen to sixteen and book IV, chapter forty two, of the *Sefer ha-'Ikkarim* (*Book of Principles*) of Joseph Albo (*A History* 2: 484 n. 53; *Historia* 684),⁷⁸ who was a disciple of Crescas and was the most important Jewish figure to argue before Pedro de Luna/Benedict XIII at the Dispute of Tortosa in 1413-14. Likewise, Gershenzon, following Munk (*A Study* 28; Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie* 507-9), states that Joseph ben Shem Tov, in his commentary on the satirical letter *Al tehi ka-avotekha* (*Be Not Like Your*

⁷⁷ Ravitzky emphasizes the difference between Crescas' early and later writings, a point also made, on the basis of a study of different sources, by Shalom Rosenberg, who looks at Crescas' disciple Abraham ben Judah ("The *Arba'ah Turim* of Rabbi Abraham bar Judah, Disciple of Don Ḥasdai Crescas"). He likewise finds little use of Abner/Alfonso's ideas or terminology in the "early stratum" of Crescas' writings, represented by the *Sermon on the Passover*.

⁷⁸ This is an addition made by Baer to the English edition not in the original Hebrew text, and it has as yet received no further critical consideration.

Fathers) of Profiat Duran,⁷⁹ also included a hidden response to Abner/Alfonso. Allegedly Shem Tov, who translated Crescas' *Bittul Iqqarei ha-Nozrim* (*Refutation of the Christian Principles*) into Hebrew⁸⁰ actually wrote another work, *Da'at 'Elyon* (*Knowledge of the Most High*), now lost, in which he reacted against Abner/Alfonso's determinist views in *Sod ha-Gemul*. Allegedly, Shem Tov's work against Abner/Alfonso also received commentaries, which are also not extant.⁸¹ Abner/Alfonso was also mentioned (under the maledictory moniker "Ab ḥoshekh" ("Father of darkness", a play on the meaning of "Ab nur" ("father of light") in Hebrew) by Ḥayim ben Yehuda ibn Musa in his *Magen ve-Ramah* (*Shield and Spear*) (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 265 and 277 n. 58) along with other anti-Jewish polemicists, showing the author's familiarity with his legacy, if not his works. Ibn Musa mentions Abner/Alfonso first in a list of Christians whose works tempt the ignorant. He says he wrote his work "on account of the fact that the ignorant who do not know the way of disputation are enticed by the words of the Christians, especially by the books of those who change faiths such as the books of "Ab ḥoshekh"[Abner]..."⁸² As George Vajda notes (*Isaac Albalag* 273-4 and 276 n. 4), Abner/Alfonso was even cited after the expulsion of

⁷⁹ Printed in *Kovez Vekhuhim* and elsewhere.

⁸⁰ The work was possibly written in Catalan. See Lasker's comments in the introduction to his translation, p. 2, the sources given on 87 n. 10.

⁸¹ Shem Tov mentions the work in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Pirush Sefer Ha-Middot*) and in his commentary on Averroes' treatise on conjunction with the active intellect. Wolf, 3: 428, lists the work in a MS in the Oppenheim collection at Bodlien Library, but it is no longer found there. See Munk, *Mélanges* 507-9; Steinschneider, *Hebräischen Übersetzungen* 196 n. 651 and "Josef ben Shemtob's Commenntar zu Averroës' grösserer Abhandlung über die Möglichkeit der Conjunction" 476 (and the text itself *Short Commentary on Averroës' 'Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction.'* Edited by Regev); Freiman, *Union Catalogue* 1: 115 and 2:# 1751; and Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 266 and 277 n. 60.

⁸² "בעבור שהסכלום אשר לא ידעו דרך הויכות יתפתו מדברי הנצרים ובפרט מספרי הממרים דתנו כספרי אב חשך..." (*Magen va-romah* 1).

1492 alongside other philosophers (oftentimes his opponents) by Jewish writers such as Isaac Abravanel and Joseph Ya'avez.

Abner/Alfonso's works and ideas had an ongoing impact on Jewish writing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well. Although we will consider Abner/Alfonso's own mystical sources and ideas in supplement chapter three, we can note here that a number of critics have tried to trace the ongoing influence of his ideas within early-modern Kabbalistic circles. Gershenzon (*A Study* 29, and "A Tale of Two Midrashim: The Legacy of Abner of Burgos") has demonstrated the transmission of Abner/Alfonso's ideas about the Trinity and the name of God in later Kabbalistic thinkers such as Isaac Mor Hayyim, Elhanan Sagi Nahor, Meir Ibn Gabbai, and David Messer Leon.⁸³ Besides Kabbalistic writers, Abner/Alfonso's impact can be found in other important Jewish figures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The northern Italian Gedalia ben Yosef Ibn Yahya (of Portuguese descent) in his *Shalshet ha-Kabalah (Chain of Tradition)* (26a) of 1587 alleged that Abner was a disciple of Nahmanides, thus spawning a spurious legend that was repeated over the last century by some, even though it was rejected by Graetz (*Geschichte* 7: 450).⁸⁴ Even more significant that Ibn Yahya's mention of Abner/Alfonso is that of the great Venetian Rabbi Judah Leon (Aryeh Yehudah) of Modena in the seventeenth century, who responds to Abner/Alfonso's appropriation of the Talmud in his *Behinat ha-Kabalah (Testing of Tradition)* (made up of two works, the *Kol Sakhal (Voice of the Ignorant)* and *Sha'agat Aryeh (Lion's Roar)*, a play on his name "Leon"). The

⁸³ One work that might also bear comparison with Abner/Alfonso's ideas is the *Minhat Qenaot* of Yehiel (Vitale) Nissim Da Pisa (1493?-before 1571), an important work of Italian Kabbalistic and philosophical thought.

⁸⁴ Sainz de la Maza (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 179 n. 8) notes the transmission of this legend by Belasco and De Rossi, and points to Rosenthal's comments that this might result from a confusion of Abner/Alfonso with Paul Christiani.

Kol Sakhal was actually an anonymous work written shortly after the expulsion which Leon then incorporated into his later work.⁸⁵ Leon himself transmitted Ibn Yahya's notice that Abner/Alfonso was the student of Naḥmanides, "from whose wine press he drank, even though he finally turned sour" (*Behinat ha-Kabalah* xiii-xiv). Most importantly, it is to Judah Leon of Modena that we owe the preservation of the only surviving Hebrew manuscript of Abner/Alfonso's works. As he relates it, he purchased the manuscript in 1611 and, realizing it was by Abner/Alfonso, concluded that in spite of its polemical content, "only a man of quality and a sage could possess the intellectual capacity to speak these words" (xii-xiv).

The transmission and impact of Abner/Alfonso's works among later Jewish writers represents only part of his legacy. His work, translated into Castilian, came to hold a significant place in Christian *Adversus Iudaeos* writing of the fifteenth century, transmitted by publication into later centuries as well. We have also already mentioned the notice given by Pablo de Santa María about Abner/Alfonso in the *Scrutinium Scripturarum*, giving information about the false messianic movement of 1295 and Abner/Alfonso's conversion. Not only is the strong influence of Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador* apparent in the *Scrutinium* (the very structure of the work as a master-disciple/Christian-Jew debate, in context of a convert writing from his own experience, seems to follow directly from Abner/Alfonso's model, and not from previous abundant examples of polemical "dialogs"), Pablo also mentions there Abner/Alfonso's work in translation. At the very end of the work, he names Abner/Alfonso as "Alphonsus Burgensis magnus Biblicus Philosophus et Methaphisicus...", stating that "when he was the sacristan of the Church

⁸⁵ On this, see Baer, "Abner aus Burgos" 1929, 35-7; and Baron 9: 303 n. 25.

of Valladolid, he composed a beautiful work in the Hebrew language for the confirmation of faith and the confutation of Jewish perfidy, translations of which into Romance can be found today in house of the Preachers of Valladolid.”⁸⁶ Not only can Abner/Alfonso be connected to Pablo through the latter’s words in the *Scrutinium*, but also we know that Pablo was close to Pedro de Luna/Pope Benedict XIII (who promoted Pablo to the bishopric of Burgos) possessed a copy of the *Mostrador* in Castilian in his papal library—indeed, as Sainz de la Maza has speculated, this may be the same unique manuscript copy of the work that exists today in the Bibliothèque National in Paris.⁸⁷ It was also Benedict XIII who organized the Dispute of Tortosa in 1413, at which Pablo’s disciple and Benedict’s physician Joshua ha-Lorki, known after his conversion as Gerónimo de Santa Fe, seems to have made ample use of Abner/Alfonso’s arguments in debating with

⁸⁶ “Et consequenter cum esset sacrista Ecclesiae Vallisoletanensis pulchra opuscula ad confirmationem fidei et confutationem Iudaicae perfidiae, in Hebraica lingua aedidit quorum translationes in vulgari in domo Praedicatorum Vallisoletanensis hodie reperiri possunt” (533a). If he is talking here about the *Sefer Milhamot*—which would make sense, since we know a copy in translation of this work once existed at San Benito in Valladolid (a Benedictine, it must be said, not a Dominican house)—the implication of Pablo’s statement that Abner/Alfonso composed the work when he was already a sacristan in Valladolid has not been considered by critics. If Pablo’s statement is accurate, it would mean Abner/Alfonso was in Valladolid much earlier than currently thought.

⁸⁷ See Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 208-9 and 234 n. 48. While Galindo Romeo, “La biblioteca de Benedicto XIII”, lists the work as “liber intitulatus *Mostrador de iusticia contra Iudeos*, in vulgari, et in papiro, coopertus de albo” (71) in the inventory of the Pope’s library in Avignon before his death, the title of the *Mostrador* as such does not appear in subsequent catalogs. Luna died in 1423, and the Cardenal Pierre de Foix took possession of the items in Peñíscola in 1429, which then passed to the Collège de Foix in Toulouse, and then into the Bibliothèque Royale in 1680 (Sainz de la Maza, 234 n. 48). In 1429, the listing of items included one “Liber concordancie novi et veteris legis et de dubiis que faciunt iudei contra christianos”, probably referring to the manuscript with both the *Mostrador* and the *Libro de la ley*, which is often called “Concordia de las leyes”. As Sainz describes it, this item was part of the papal library which Benedict took with him to Peñíscola in 1403, along with the *Pugio Fidei* of Martini and other polemics, including a Castilian version of the dialogs of Petrus Alfonsi. See Martín de Barcelona, “La biblioteca papal de Peníscola” (1922): 422 (#124) and Perarnau i Espelt, “Els inventaris de la biblioteca papal de Peníscola” 126 (#798). The most comprehensive treatment of the Peñíscola library has been given recently by Perarnau i Espelt in various articles in the *Arxiu de Textos Catalans Antics* 6 (1987), especially “Cent vint anys d’aportacions al coneixement de la Biblioteca Papal de Peníscola.”

Joseph Albo and other Jewish scholars.⁸⁸ The extensive discussion of Abner/Alfonso in book III of the *Fortalitium Fidei* of Alonso de Spina, already discussed, has preserved for us the few fragments of the *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem* to survive, as well as the only known source for the edict of king Alfonso XI banning the twelfth benediction in Jewish prayer. Mention of this material in Spina's work should not, however, obscure the clear impact that Abner/Alfonso's work had on Spina's own anti-Jewish arguments. One can likewise point too a handful of other references to or cases of clear influence by Abner/Alfonso and his work, such as the polemics of Juan el Viejo of Toledo (on whom, see Roth *Conversos* 197-8), Diego Rodríguez de Almela, and even later inquisitorial records, referred to briefly by Sainz de la Maza (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 253-4). Neuman casually remarks that Abner/Alfonso had a great impact on the sixteenth-century theologian, Miguel Serveto, but he offers no reference or proof to substantiate this assertion (*Jewish Influence* 191). As Sainz de la Maza observes, these fragmentary traces “nos permite comprobar cómo, en una época tan tardía, los argumentos de Abner se habían integrado en el repertorio apologético antisemita hasta el punto de desdibujarse su origen en la memoria de quienes los aplicaban” (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 254). The printing of many fifteenth-century polemics, including those of Santa María, Santa Fe, and Spina, all disseminated such references to Abner/Alfonso on a very wide scale that belies any lack of importance that might be implied by the dearth of manuscript copies of Abner/Alfonso's work.

⁸⁸ Benjamin Gampel has recently drawn a number of interesting comparisons as well between the experiences and arguments of Abner/Alfonso and Pablo and Gerónimo (“A letter to a Wayward Teacher” 416-23).

Supplement Chapter Two

Abner/Alfonso's Non-Jewish Sources in the *Mostrador de justicia*

I. Preliminary Remarks

The relationship between Abner/Alfonso and the anti-Jewish polemical tradition that preceded him has been a central concern for those critics who have considered his work. Yitzhaq Baer, perhaps Abner/Alfonso's most renowned critic, repeatedly made an effort to characterize his relationship to previous polemical writing. Emphasizing Abner/Alfonso's continuity with thirteenth-century missionizing, Baer asserted that "his spiritual stresses marked the conclusion and the finale of the upheavals that rocked Spanish Jewry during the thirteenth century" (*A History* 1: 330). At the same time, he sought to portray him as an innovator, and connect him to later changes in the Jewish community. "It was Abner," he adds, "who fathered that ideology of apostasy which was destined, about two generations after his death, to bring wrack and ruin upon Spanish Jewry" (330). This notion of inheriting the ideas and experiences of past generations of Jews, and at the same time "fathering" the outlook of future Jews, appears in later criticism of Baer's works as well (all based on Baer's foundational research). Chazan notes his "extensive utilization" of thirteenth-century missionary arguments, but at the same time maintains that he was "highly original in his argumentation" (*Daggers of Faith* 165). Jonathan Hecht, Chazan's student, likewise noted that "the work of Abner/Alfonso was a step forward in the search for a "common ground" for polemical argumentation" (48).

Baer's argument that Abner/Alfonso represents at once a continuation of and innovation on earlier polemical writing serves as a useful beginning for considering his sources in his polemical works. It is possible to flesh out this notion of tradition and

continuity on two fronts: in terms of sources, and in terms of argumentative method. In the sources it contains, Abner/Alfonso's writing appears at first to have much in common both with traditional, pre-thirteenth century polemic and with the new polemical innovations of the thirteenth century. Not only does he present most of the most traditional anti-Jewish polemical arguments, he does so, not surprisingly, based on many of the most-frequently cited Biblical verses. In addition, his use of the Talmud and Midrash, and of postbiblical Jewish writing of all sorts, reflects his close link to the missionizing efforts of the century that preceded him. The documentation of Abner/Alfonso's use of sources in the *Mostrador* is only a first step in assessing the claims of critics about his transitional (and transmissive) role in polemical writing. Equally important in the discussion of the *Mostrador* is a discussion of his argumentative methods (treated in chapter three) and this question is directly related to his use of sources, as the very fact that he employs Talmudic and Midrashic texts to buttress his arguments reflects his link to thirteenth-century missionizing ideals. In this sense, Chazan is right to say that, whether or not he used such sources directly, "his extensive utilization of the approach is beyond question" (*Daggers of Faith* 165).

Even a cursory glance at Abner/Alfonso's writings reveals much material that is similar to earlier polemics, and many critics have taken this similarity at face value without specifying the exact nature of Abner/Alfonso's reliance on previous writers. Baer, for example, asserts plainly that Abner/Alfonso "read Christian theological works," (I: 331), delving into few explicit details about what this reading entailed. Baer assumes by this claim that Abner/Alfonso's ability in Latin was sufficient for this purpose, again without offering any definitive proof. It is obvious from Abner/Alfonso's works, and the

Mostrador in particular, that they have much in common with an earlier Christian tradition of Biblical interpretation and polemical argumentation, but no critic has sufficiently addressed the question of what can be confidently proven regarding Abner/Alfonso's knowledge and what must be left to speculation. Ironically, of all Abner/Alfonso's works to be studied by critics, his *Mostrador*, although his longest work with the most quotations from the widest variety of sources, has been studied much less than his *Teshuvot* or his polemical letters. By considering Abner/Alfonso's sources in the *Mostrador*, it will be possible to gain a more general sense of Abner's abilities, interests and background, and to better understand the rest of his writings in the light of this.

The great majority of Abner/Alfonso's sources are, not surprisingly, Jewish. Apart from these sources, which we will consider in more detail in the next chapter, Abner/Alfonso does include a smaller number of Latin and Arabic sources in this work. These non-Hebrew sources raise a number of important and problematic questions about the breadth of Abner/Alfonso's learning, his linguistic knowledge (beyond Hebrew), and his connection with previous anti-Jewish Christian polemical writing. Before turning to the more substantial body of Jewish sources in his writing, it is necessary to consider Abner/Alfonso's Christian and Muslim sources and the problems that their use (or absence) raises in the wider consideration of Abner/Alfonso's polemical agenda.

II. Early Christian sources in the *Mostrador*

Following Dahan's division of polemical literature into argumentation based on *auctoritas* and that based on *ratio* and Funkenstein's description of four stages in the development of polemical writing (pre-twelfth century use of Biblical sources; twelfth-

century use of rational arguments; thirteenth-century attack on the Talmud, and thirteenth and post-thirteenth century use of the Talmud as a source), the polemical literature based solely on Biblical arguments constitutes the first group we will consider in looking at the *Mostrador's* Christian sources. Given the abundance of this literature and its fundamental importance for many other later polemicists in the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance, it is logical to expect at least some references to it in the *Mostrador*. This is not, however, the case at all. Although Abner/Alfonso does mention a few Christian writers from the fourth to the tenth centuries, he barely considers any Christian polemical writing from this period. Absolutely no mention is made, in the *Mostrador* or in any of his other known texts, of Tertullian, Origin, Justin Martyr, or any other early well-known *Adversus Iudaeos* texts. The earliest Christian writer mentioned by Abner/Alfonso, beyond the limited references to the New Testament, is Jerome, and none of his ten references to Jerome discuss anything but Jerome's translation of certain Hebrew words, seemingly ignoring Jerome's polemical writing altogether. Out of the handful of references to Augustine, no mention is made of Augustine's ideas about Jews and Judaism, or of his explicitly polemical writing. Rather, Abner/Alfonso makes passing reference to Augustine's ideas about signs (109r/1:206), conception of God and the Trinity (121v/1:231 ad 143r/2:7),¹ and explanation of the Eucharist (181v-182r/2:93). His two citations from Boethius (119r/1:226 and 144r/2:10 (repeated), 140r/1:271) are, not surprisingly, part of his discussion of philosophical topics. Specifically, they have to do with knowledge of the divine as the path to happiness and blessedness, and are in no direct way polemical. Even more significantly, Abner/Alfonso's one mention of Gregory I

¹ These citations are repeated almost exactly in *Libro de la ley*, on 5v and 10r, respectively, and in *Teshuvot la-Meharef* 49va and 50v.

(41r/1:68-9)—an author, as we have seen, used constantly in the later Middle Ages in discussion of Jewish rights of protection—does not relate to his ideas or policies about Judaism or his highly influential and well-known *Sicut Iudaeis* bull. Of the few early-medieval Christian authors cited by Abner/Alfonso, only a slight few involve explicitly polemical ideas. In one section of the text (304v-308v/2:373-381), Abner/Alfonso makes repeated mention of an argument by Bede that before the Torah was revealed on Mount Sinai, the Sabbath was kept on Sunday, not Saturday.² This idea, expressed in Bede's *De ratione temporum* and not in a polemical or anti-Jewish work, is used by Abner/Alfonso in his discussion of the 613 *mizvot* to support his own interpretation of the commandment to keep the Sabbath. Despite Abner/Alfonso's use of the idea, Bede's argument does not come from a polemical context. The only explicitly polemical references to authors from before the twelfth century are to the legendary debate between Pope Sylvester I and a Jew, probably taken from Jacobo de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*.³ Another anecdotal reference, this time to St. Catherine (140r/1: 270) and her dispute with fifty sages before the emperor Maxentius, is clearly taken, as Sainz de la Maza notes (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 215), from the *Legenda Aurea*, suggesting this as Abner/Alfonso's source for the Sylvester legend as well. These three references to Pope Sylvester (20r/1:27, 143v/2:9, and 168r/2:63) and Catherine constitute the only real anti-Christian polemical

² Abner also mentioned this idea in his *Sefer Milhamot Ha-Shem*. This information is preserved by Alfonso de Spina, *Fortalitium Fidei*, in 3.5.13, fol 119rb. See Carlos del Valle, "El Libro de las Batallas de Dios...", p. 101.

³ The legend began with the account of the debate in the *Actus Silvestri*, on which see Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus Judaeos-Texte* 1: 255-57 and 613; Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, 339-47, and Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy...*, p. 44-5. Abner's source for the legend was probably, as Sainz de la Maza notes, the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobo de Voragine (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 215). See Chapter XII of the *Legenda Aurea* (108-119, esp 113 and 115). However, as I suggest below, there were other possible non-Latin routes by which the legend could have been transmitted to Abner/Alfonso. Nevertheless, the fact that his reference to St. Catherine also seems to be taken from the *Legenda* (Ch. CLXVIII) lends support to this text as the source for his references to Sylvester.

material from before the twelfth century, although the legends themselves were not drawn from specifically polemical works.

Despite the dearth of references to Christian polemic from before the twelfth century, some of the central themes of the *Mostrador* are, not surprisingly, the same as those of much earlier polemic: the figurative meaning of the Hebrew Bible, the Christian inheritance of the identity of “true Israel,” the stubbornness and blindness of the Jews, the degradation in exile as proof of God’s rejection of the Jews, etc. Correspondingly, Abner/Alfonso cites all of the standard passages from the Hebrew Bible employed most frequently in the early *Adversus Iudaeos* literature: Genesis 49:10, Isaiah 52-53, Ezekiel 37-39, Zechariah 12-14, Malachi 3:19-24, Daniel 7-9, etc. Nevertheless, the ubiquity of these arguments and verses in most anti-Jewish polemic, along with Abner’s complete failure to cite any of the best-known and most-influential *Adversus Iudaeos* texts, suggests that Abner’s knowledge of the Christian anti-Jewish polemical tradition was filtered more through Jewish responses in Hebrew polemics than taken directly from Christian works.

This absence of standard polemical source material also points, more importantly, to Abner/Alfonso’s dependence on Hebrew sources for his work. Even his few references to Sylvester’s disputation in Rome are not definitive proof of Abner’s use of non-Hebrew sources, since the text existed in Greek and Syriac versions as well (although such a chain of influence is hard to prove).⁴ Some critics have noticed the gaps in Abner/Alfonso’s Christian knowledge produced by this attention to Hebrew sources, gaps

⁴ Samuel Krauss, in his *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, 243-4, argues that the *Actus Silvestri* may be seen as a source for the *Toledoth Yeshu*, thus emphasizing the influence of the Syriac version of the *Actus*. It is certainly possible and that if Abner/Alfonso was familiar with the *Actus Silvestri*, such familiarity did not come from its Latin version, and may be attributable to his familiarity with the Aramaic *Toledoth Yeshu*. See also Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy...*, 12-13, 44-46 and Sainz de la Maza, “El *Toledot Yeshu* castellano...” Nevertheless, the use of the *Legenda Aurea* in other places in the *Mostrador* makes that seem like a more likely source for the Sylvester legend.

that even include previous Christian arguments that made use of Jewish ideas and sources for polemical purposes. Salo Baron, for example, noted that Abner was unaware of the argument by Agobard of Lyons about the *She'ur Qomah* as proof of Jewish superstitions (*A Social and Religious History* 9: 301 n. 19), an argument he certainly would have found useful. Christian polemical writing from before the twelfth century provided very little direct influence on Abner/Alfonso in the *Mostrador*. Indeed, as Sainz de la Maza notes, “A la hora de citar testimonios provenientes de su recién adquirida religión...los conocimientos del converso Alfonso flaquean” (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 215). Besides the citations of Augustine and Boethius, Abner/Alfonso’s other Christian sources belong “a lo que podríamos llamar un cristianismo *de calle*” (215), i.e. a common and not particularly learned tradition. This assessment is important because it suggests that, despite the long history of polemics in the form of dialogs between Jews and Christians, there is no indication that this tradition provides the background or model for the form or content of the *Mostrador*. The significance of this isolation from the Christian polemical tradition will become even more apparent in considering Abner/Alfonso’s possible knowledge of thirteenth-century polemics such as the *Pugio Fidei* of Raymond Martini.

III. Abner and the *Ratio* tradition

If material drawn from early Christian polemics is lacking in the *Mostrador*, the use of twelfth- and thirteenth-century rationalist polemics is even less represented. Although Baer asserts, erroneously, that “the only explicit reference [to Christian theology] is to Augustine” (*A History* 1: 331; Cf. “Abner aus Burgos” 1929: 26), such references to Christian theology are, to be sure, extremely few. In all of Abner/Alfonso’s major works,

the only references to rationalist Christian philosophers or polemicists are one to Petrus Alfonsi, mentioned once in the *Mostrador* (140r/1: 270) and to Thomas Aquinas, mentioned three times (102r/1: 74 , 116r/1: 220 , 147r/2: 17). It is significant that Abner/Alfonso does not mention the anti-Jewish polemic of Peter the Venerable of Cluny, who includes (163-166) a rabbinical legend about Joshua ben Levi's journey to Hell, not extant in any other source. Abner/Alfonso does include a comparable but different legend about Joshua ben Levi's journey to Hell in both the *Teshuvot* (Castilian 56rb—not extant in Hebrew) and in the *Mostrador* (106v/1: 201), to be considered in the next chapter. It is certain that Peter's legend would have interested Abner/Alfonso.

Abner/Alfonso's one explicit reference to Petrus Alfonsi regards his Trinitarian argument:

Per Alfonso, the one who wrote in the “Book of the Disputations” that the person of the Father is said to be the substance of God, and the person of the Son is said for his Wisdom, and the person of the Holy Spirit is said for his Will, erred greatly, because each of the three persons of God is the Substance of God, not only the person of the Father.⁵

This discussion in chapter five, paragraph twenty two, taken from Petrus Alfonsi's polemical *Dialogus* (Titulus VI; 104ff.)⁶ fits within a wider discussion of Abner/Alfonso's explanation of the Trinity in the *Mostrador*, discussed in chapters three and five (although not limited to these chapters). Abner/Alfonso defends the notion that the Trinity consists

⁵ “Mas Per Alfonso, el que escrivió en el “Libro de las disputaciones” que la perssona del Padre es dicho por la sustancia de Dios, e que la perssona del Ffijo es dicho por la su sapiencia, e que la perssona del Spiritu Santo es dicho por la su voluntad, erró mucho, porque cada una de las tres perssonas de Dios es sustancia de dios, non que la perssona del Padre ssolamient” (140r/2: 270).

⁶ All references to the *Dialogus* will be to the Latin edition of the text by Klaus-Peter Mieth published in *Diálogo contra los judíos*, 5-193. A more corrupt edition is also contained in the *Patrologia Latina* 157: 535-672.

of unity of substance, and he believes this unity is reflected in the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) and the grammatically singular plural Hebrew name for God “Elohim”, as well as other terms such as “Adonai” and “Shavuot”. Specifically, he quotes a Midrash on Ps. 50:1, which begins “God, God, the Lord” (“El, Elohim, YHWH”) in which R. Simlai explains that “God created the world with three names, corresponding to the three good attributes by which the world was created, namely wisdom (*hokhmah*), understanding (*binah*), and knowledge (*da’at*)” (Midrash Tehillim 50:1). Based on this, Abner/Alfonso claims that this triple invocation is proof of the multiplicity of God’s persons and unity of his essence.

We can say that the name [El] indicates the only-born Son, by whom are created all things. And the name *Adonai*, which is the Tetragrammaton, indicates the person of the Father, who gives being to things from himself. And the name *Elohim* indicates the person of the Holy Spirit, which is *procedens* as a relation between both [other] persons and shows both the others and itself as one. For this reason is this name [Elohim] plural in its ending, because it shows each of the three persons as one and each of them in their endings. Thus the name is said as plural in Hebrew because it shows that plurality, for knowledge is like a relation between the knower and the thing known, and it shows the two relative terms in it.⁷

⁷ “E conviene a dezir que el nombre [El] muestra sobre la perssona del Ffijo unigenito, el qual por él son criadas todas las cosas. E el nombre *Adonay*, que es *Tetragramaton*, muestra sobre la perssona del Padre, que da ser a las cosas de sí mismo. E el nombre *Helohim* muestra sobre la persona del Spiritu Sancto, que es *procedens* como rrelacion entre amas las dos perssonas e muestra sobrellas amas e sobre sí mismo en uno. E por esto es este nombre en su cabo en lengua plural, porque es mostrador sobre todas tres las perssonas en uno e sobre cada una dellas en su cabo. E así el nombre es dicho en el ebrayco en lengua plural, porque muestra sobre aquella pluralidat, a el saber es como rrelaçion entre el sabidor e la cosa sabida, e muestra los dos rrelativos consigo” (87v/1: 163).

Abner/Alfonso's concept of the Trinity has been the subject of various scholarly discussions. Baer treated the question in detail in his *A History* (1: 335 and 343-48) and in his groundbreaking article "The Use of Kabbalah in the Christological Thought of Abner of Burgos" [Hebrew], in which he specifically treats the issue in the *Mostrador* on 287-89. Jonathan Hecht has included a discussion of Abner/Alfonso's conception of the Trinity in the *Teshuvot* in Appendix 4 to his edition of the text (484-93). Jeff Diamond has presented the notion of the Trinity in the *Libro de la Ley* ("El tema de la trinidad"), and following Baer's original arguments argued that, in *El Libro de la ley*, the notion of concealment of Trinitarian ideas among the Jews is presented as the root of their exile and historical suffering. Daniel Lasker in his extensive discussion of Trinitarian arguments in the medieval Christian-Jewish debate (*Jewish Philosophical Polemics Against Christianity* chapter four, 45-104), similarly observed that "Western Jewish polemicists...often made reference to the Christian notion of Persons as attributes. This may be the case because this doctrine, or one very similar, was propagated among the Jews" (64). Lasker specifically mentions Alfonsi as well as a number of other anti-Jewish polemicists such as Peter of Blois, Nicholas of Lyra, and Abner/Alfonso. After presenting Alfonsi's notion of the Trinity as *substantia*, *sapientia*, and *voluntas*, he also affirms (also following Baer) the Kabbalistic origin of Abner/Alfonso's terms for the Trinity wisdom (*hokhmah*), understanding (*tevunah*), and knowledge (*da'at*) (64), which we will consider in more detail below. It is important to note that most of *Libro de la ley* was based directly or drawn verbatim from passages already written in the *Mostrador*, and Diamond's argument holds true first there. Likewise, Lasker's observation applies to the *Teshuvot la-Meharef* (15v-17r), but the same argument is also found in less developed form in the *Mostrador*. By far the most extensive

consideration of Abner/Alfonso's Trinitarian ideas is that of Shoshana Gershenzon (*A Study of the Teshuvot la-Meharef* chapter IV, esp. 120-36) who shows Abner/Alfonso's direct dependence for his discussion of the Trinity in the *Teshuvot la-Meharef* on contemporary Kabbalistic thinkers, above all Moses of Leon and Joseph ibn Chiquitilla, in addition to ideas of multiplicity found in Midrash and in philosophical writers such as Avicenna and al-Ghazzālī.

We will consider Abner/Alfonso's use of Kabbalah in the *Mostrador* in the next chapter, but it is important to note here the aspects of this discussion that can be traced to specifically Christian sources, specifically those named by Abner/Alfonso, Petrus Alfonsi and Thomas Aquinas. Although Abner/Alfonso does not cite many Christian sources in his text, his ideas about the Trinity seem to share important points with previous Christian tradition.⁸ As we already noted, a number of Abner/Alfonso's Latin citations in the text are taken from the *Quicumque*, or Athanasian Creed, an early Christian prayer that enjoyed great popularity in the Middle Ages.⁹ This is particularly important because, as Daniel Lasker explains, Christians generally accepted and followed the ideas in the *Quicumque*, despite any disagreements about specifics (*Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 45). The essential points of the creed, as Lasker explains, are the unity of God in substance or nature, the Trinity of persons, the generation of the Son from the Father and the Spirit from both Father and Son, and the "co-equality" and "co-eternity" of all three (46). Abner/Alfonso invokes the *Quicumque* mainly in his explanation of the Trinity or of the

⁸ Grant (née Hurwitz), "Fidei Causa et Tui Amore", provides a very competent discussion of Alfonsi's notion of the Trinity on 56-63. She cites Lasker's observation in *Jewish Philosophical Polemics* that Abner/Alfonso seems to draw from Alfonsi's Trinitarian notions.

⁹ See also the comments about Abner/Alfonso's use of Latin in supplement chapter three.

Incarnation, above all to emphasize the unity of God, despite the multiplicity of persons (e.g. chapter five, paragraph eighteen or chapter six, paragraphs seven and eight). Likewise, one of Abner/Alfonso's references to Augustine (121v/1:231) specifically mentions his explanation of the Trinity in the *City of God*. In this respect, the discussion in the *Mostrador*, despite the clear Kabbalistic influence, fits roughly within a larger Christian formulation of the Trinity.

Abner/Alfonso's few references to Petrus Alfonsi and Aquinas fit within this context as well. In disagreeing with Alfonsi, he maintains that God's substance is shared by all three persons of the Trinity, and is not only identified with the Father. This idea is directly parallel to the arguments he attributes to Aquinas in chapter six, paragraph eight:

St. Thomas wrote that...just as God is one substance and three persons, without there being multiplicity in the divinity, so, on the contrary, there was in the Christ one person and three substances, which are divinity and rational soul and human flesh, without there being multiplicity in the one person, which is the person of Christ.¹⁰

Abner/Alfonso supported this same argument of the unity of God in the incarnation with a Latin citation from the *Quicumque* (clauses 34-6): "Who although he is God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ...one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person."¹¹ It is important to note that there is evidence of some

¹⁰ "E assi escrivió Ssanto Tomas que...assi como en Dios es una sustança e tres perssonas, de ssin que den muchiguamiento en la ssustancia de la divinidad, assi, al contrario, ovo en el Christo una perssona e tres ssustancias, que sson la divinidad e la alma de rrazon e la carne umanal, de ssin que den muchiguamiento en la una perssona, que es la perssona del Christo" (147r/2: 17).

¹¹ "Qui licet Deus sit et homo, non duo tamen, sed unus est Christus...unus onino non confusione sustantie, sed unitate perssone" [sic] (146v/2: 16). The original Latin text reads: "Qui licet Deus sit et homo, non duo tamen, sed unus est Christus...unus omnino non confusione substantiae, sed unitate personae."

influence from Christian ideas about the Trinity and incarnation that is not immediately visible judging from the explicit references. For example, both Alfonsi and Aquinas raise the question of divine plurality in the Hebrew name for God (*Diálogo* VI, 107-8, and *Summa Theologiae* I.39.3), an argument made at length by Abner/Alfonso, although without citing either author directly. It is certainly possible, given his other citations, that Aquinas provided a source for this idea. There is also clear evidence that Alfonsi influenced certain ideas in the *Mostrador* more than the single named reference would indicate. Lasker (*Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 122), for example, notes an argument, cited by Shem Tov ibn Shaprut (in Book XIV of the *Even Boḥan*) as one of Abner/Alfonso's arguments in response, he says, to Jacob ben Reuben, that may have been taken from Petrus Alfonsi. The argument involves an analogy about the incarnation, stating that attributes in Christ can be compared to the sun, which illuminates and heats simultaneously but in different ways (*Diálogo* VIII, 120).¹² Likewise, as we have noted, Abner/Alfonso elaborates on the plurality of the divinity as reflected in the Hebrew names for God such as "Elohim" and "YHWH". In paragraph one of chapter three, he presents these arguments at length, and notes not only that the "grammatical plurality" of these names reflects the multiplicity of the godhead, but also that the letters themselves reflect the Trinity. He cites the practice, common in the Middle Ages, of writing the name of God with three yods (י״י), specifically in *Midrash on Proverbs*, a practice that came to be associated with Abner/Alfonso in polemical texts:¹³

¹² Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 122 and note, and Grant (née Hurwitz), "Fidei Causa et Tui Amore" 221, note that Abner/Alfonso's discussion of this same image seems to draw directly from Alfonsi.

¹³ See Baer's discussion in "The Kabbalistic Doctrine" [Hebrew] 278-80, especially 278-9 n. 2, and Freudenthal's discussion of this practice in the *Meyasher 'Aqov* (985). See also Hecht's note, 171 n. 381.

It can be said that, for the three names [El, Adonai, Elohim] which show the three persons, three small letters were shown in the book, each which is called in Hebrew *Yod*. They write two close to each other, and the third above both [others], as if it is between them. And thus the Jews read, in a way, three names, and these are: the name [made of] of the four letters *Yod, He, Vav, He*, which show in Hebrew the unity of substance which gives being to things; and the other name [Adonai, made of] another four letters *Alef, Daled, Nun, Yod*, which show the absolute multiplicity in the divinity through the [vowel point ,] *kamaz*, which is below it; and the name [in which] each letter is called *Yod*, which shows the Trinity properly speaking.¹⁴

The famous discussion of the Tetragrammaton by Alfonsi bears similarity to Abner/Alfonso's discussion. Here he discusses the treatment of the name in a work he calls *Secreti secretorum, On the Secret of Secrets*:¹⁵

¹⁴ "E en atal guisa conviene a dezir que por los tres nonbres que muestran las tres personas mostraron en el libro nonbre de las tres letras pequennas, que cada una dellas ha nonbre en el ebrayco *Yod*. E escriven las dos una çerca otra, e la terçera ssobre amas, como que está entrellas. E por esto sson tres nonbres que los leen los judios en una manera, e estos son el nonbre de las quatro letras *Yod, He, Vav, He*, que muestra, segund ebrayco, la unidat de la sustancia que da el ser de las cosas, e el otro nonbre de otras quatro letras *Alef, Daled, Nun, Yod*, que muestra muchedunbre soluta en la divinidat por el punto *Cames*, que está yuso del, e el nonbre de las letras, que cada una dellas a nonbre *Yod*, que muestra la Trinidat propriamentre" (87v/1: 163-4). On a similar statement in the *Teshuvot*, see Gershenzon, *A Study*, 133 n. 94.

¹⁵ It is clear from Alfonsi's reference that the work he calls *Secreti secretorum* is not the same as the widely popular Arabic work *Sirr al-asrār* (See Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers* 220 n. 73). Büchler ("A Twelfth-Century Physician's Desk Book" 206) has proposed that the work mentioned by Alfonsi is a mix of other Jewish works such as the *Sefer ha-razim*, another work on alchemy, and the *Sefer Yezirah*. Steven Williams (*The Secret of Secrets* 64) has taken issue with Büchler's proposal that the alchemical work might possibly be the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta Secretorum*, and thereby dismissed the latter's suggestions altogether. See Sainz de la Maza's discussion in "Aristóteles, Alejandro y la polémica antijudaica en el siglo XIV." Although this specific question is outside the purview of this study, it is important to insist that the question of Alfonsi's use of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta* is separate from the possible influence of the *Sefer Yezirah* on the work that Alfonsi calls the *Secreti*. If such an influence is accepted, it allows another parallel between Alfonsi's and Abner/Alfonso's polemics, specifically in the latter's mention of the *Sefer Yezirah* in the prolog of the *Mostrador* in discussing the various combinations of the letters in the Hebrew word *Emet* (truth). This discussion is very similar to Alfonsi's discussion of the various combinations of the letters of the Tetragrammaton in book six of the *Dialogus* (104-113).

The Trinity is something subtle which is ineffable and hard to explain, of which the prophets have only spoken secretly and obscurely...but if you pay attention with subtlety to the name of God, which is explained in the *Secreti Secretorum*, you see that the name, I say, is written with three letters although the figures are four, since one is repeated. If you look carefully at it, I repeat, you will see the name itself is one in three, one in the unity of substance, three in the Trinity of persons.¹⁶

John Tolan considers this notion of the Trinity within the Tetragrammaton to be original to Alfonsi (*Petrus Alfonsi* 39), as does Gérard Gertoux (*The Name of God* 146). Although this argument was repeated by subsequent polemicists such as Petrus Blesensis (d. 1204), Joachim of Flora (d. 1202) and Raymond Martini, Alfonsi is the only author known to be a source in the *Mostrador*.¹⁷ He may have inspired Abner/Alfonso's discussion in chapter three of the *Mostrador*, even though he is not mentioned by name here. However, it is very likely that the substance of his ideas on the Tetragrammaton was taken, not from Alfonsi (even if the association with the Trinity was inspired in his work), but speculative and Kabbalistic sources, some of which are mentioned by name in the text.

¹⁶ "Trinitas quidem subtile quid est et ineffabile et ad explanandum difficile, de qua prophetae non nisi occulte loquuti sunt et sub velamine...Si tamen attendas subtilius et illud dei nomen, quod in Secretis secretorum explanatum invenitur, inspicias nomen, inquam, trium litterarum quamvis quatuor figuris, una namque de illis geminata bis scribitur, si, inquam, illud inspicias, videbis, quia idem nomen et unum sit et tria. Sed quod unum, ad unitatem substantiae, quod vero tria, ad trinitatem respicit personarum" (*Diálogo* 110-111). On Alfonsi's notion of the Trinity, see Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers* 36-9 and 113-114. Abner/Alfonso and Alfonsi's discussion of the Tetragrammaton bear comparison to that of Pablo de Santa María, which is found in his *Additiones* to the *Postillae* of Nicolas of Lyra on Exodus 3.

¹⁷ For a general consideration of the Tetragrammaton and the history of its interpretation, see Gertoux, *The Name of God*, Part II, especially 135-195. Gertoux comments on p. 157 on Abner/Alfonso's vocalized spellings of YHWH in the *Mostrador*.

IV. The Mendicant Influence on Abner/Alfonso

Other than the single direct reference to Petrus Alfonsi and the three to Aquinas, there are no Christian writers from the high or later Middle Ages mentioned in the *Mostrador*, or in any of Abner/Alfonso's major works. Despite this, however, numerous critics have assumed a logical continuity between the anti-Jewish efforts of thirteenth-century Mendicants and Abner/Alfonso's conversionary arguments, and it was for this reason that we opened this consideration of Abner/Alfonso's work with a detailed retelling of that history. There is no doubt that Abner/Alfonso is intimately connected with that thirteenth-century history, but the channels by which that history influenced Abner/Alfonso are not precisely those that previous critics have supposed. In order to properly specify what those channels in fact were, it is necessary to consider now the possible influence of the Mendicant orders on Abner/Alfonso's thought and, above all, determine his familiarity with the arguments and works of Raymond Martini, with whom he seems to share so much.

García Oro shows that Franciscans first established themselves in Burgos and Valladolid, along with many other important cities in the Peninsula, as early as the 1240s (*Francisco de Asís en la España medieval* 60) and García Serrano, who has traced the history of Dominican penetration in Castile, notes the first Dominican house in Valladolid was founded in 1272. Rucquoi ("Ciudad y iglesia" 967ff. and *Valladolid au Moyen Age* 123-127) has discussed the establishment of chapters of Mendicants and monastic orders in Valladolid, noting the arrival of Franciscans only as early as 1260 (122) and the Dominicans by 1276 (123). It cannot be assumed, however, that the mere presence of Mendicants in Valladolid entailed collaboration with the canons or other members of the

collegiate chapter. Rucquoi stresses the partial conflict of interest sparked by the arrival of Mendicants to the city, competing directly with the collegiate church for preeminence and control. She describes how, for the church in Valladolid, the Mendicant presence was a “peligro” (“Ciudad e iglesia” 968) and “une menace pour son quasi-monopole idéologique et économique au sein de cette société urbaine en expansion” (*Valladolid au Moyen Age* 127). She explains that “frente a la ‘amenaza’ que representaba para su autoridad en la ciudad la llegada de nuevas órdenes religiosas específicamente urbanas, la abadía ha reaccionado, pues, vigorosamente” (“Ciudad e iglesia” 971). Part of that reaction was the support of education within the collegial chapter. Comparing the collegial canons and the Mendicants of Valladolid, Rucquoi explains that “mejor preparada en el campo intelectual, la colegiata consigue dominar la vida eclesiástica vallisoletana hasta mediados del S. XIV” (“Ciudad e iglesia” 971). In addition, between 1290 and 1348 the names of nine collegiate clerics associated with Santa María la Mayor are named with the title *maestre*, the most famous among them being, of course, Abner/Alfonso (*Valladolid au Moyen Age* 121). Sainz de la Maza has briefly considered the possible relation between Abner/Alfonso and the Dominican order (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 169-172), taking Abner/Alfonso’s role in the anti-Jewish actions of 1336 as proof of “intense” contact (170). He considers it “probable” (170) that Abner/Alfonso participated in the advanced *studium* of Valladolid (in existence since 1260), and his own intellectual renown served the collegiate church in its own struggle for power. As Rucquoi notes, within the competition for intellectual and economic control in Valladolid, “la colegiata vallisoletana se pudo enorgullecer de tener como sacristán al ilustre maestre Alfonso de Valladolid” (“Ciudad e iglesia” 971).

It is, thus, not immediately obvious that Abner/Alfonso would have collaborated with the Dominicans in Valladolid, despite their shared polemical interests. Abner/Alfonso's own words in the *Mostrador*, however, suggest a less contentious relationship. In chapter seven, paragraph forty one, in his discussion of the place of the crusades in the historical chronology of Biblical prophesy, he states:

At that time, the Christians took the land of Israel from the control of the Moors...and at that time these two great orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis arose, which are two great pillars to sustain the Law of the Christians and give it great honor. Truly, they are abundant, and they expanded and increased knowledge and divine science in the world. And when their wisdom and goodness expanded in the world, especially that of St. Dominic, then the prophecy of Balaam was fulfilled which says "Now it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, See what God has done" [Num 23:23]...for another prophecy did not appear or spread in the world other than the preaching of that holy order, and there is not greater prophecy in the world than the preaching and glosses which the wise friars demonstrate concerning the sayings of the prophets and the confirmation of the true faith, which had not been announced or known before this...¹⁸

¹⁸ "Ca entonce tomaron los christianos la tierra de Isrrael de poder de los moros, como lo escrivio Rrabi Abraham mismo en aquel libro, e entonce se levantaron estas dos grandes ordenes de Santo Domingo e Ssant Francisco, que sson dos grandes pilares para sostener la Ley de los christianos e darle grand onrra. E ellos, segund verdad, sson muchos, que se espanden e creçientan el saber e la ciencia divinal en el mundo. E quando se espandió su sapiençia e su bondad en el mundo, e ssen[n]aladamiente la de Ssant Domingo, entonce sse conplió la prophecía de Balaam en lo que dixo: 'Como agora será dicho a Jacob e a Isrrael qué es lo que obra Dios.' E segund lo que escrivio el sabio Rrabi Mose el Egipçiano, que tenia rresçebido de sus parientes, los grandes rrabes, que aquel viesso de Balam muestra el tiempo quando avie a tornar la prophecía a Isrrael, que es quando passase desde el tiempo de aquella prophecía otro tanto quanto ovo desde la creaçion del mundo fasta aquel tiempo de Balaan. Ca non pareció otra prophecía nin se espandió en el mundo sinon las predicaciones de aquella orden santa, que no a en el mundo prophecía mayor que las predicaciones e las glosas que los sabios frayres muestran de los dichos de los prophetas, e confirmamiento de la fe çierta, la qual cosa non era publicada nin conocida ante desso" (235r/2: 207).

Abner/Alfonso also invokes Maimonides who, in the *Epistle to Yemen*, explained the verse Numbers 23:23 as a prediction about when prophecy will return to Israel, which was to be the same amount of time from Balaam's prophecy forward that had passed already from creation to the time of Balaam. This time, Abner/Alfonso claims, corresponds to the thirteenth century and the rise of the orders of the Franciscans and Dominicans. Abner/Alfonso repeats this assertion in chapter nine, paragraph thirty nine, when he claims that Abraham bar Ḥiyya (in his *Megillat ha-Megalleh/Scroll of the Redeemer V*) also explained something similar, and "these times were when the orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis arose, as we have proved."¹⁹ It seems from Abner/Alfonso's words that he did not see his interests in conflict with those of the Mendicant orders.

When we look for textual evidence of his familiarity with the work of the Mendicants, however, we can find very little. We have already seen that, on two occasions, Abner/Alfonso mentions the burning of the Talmud, apparently referring to the events of the trial of the Talmud in Paris in the 1240s. We can recall that in discussing "Jewish heretics", he explains that "there are found among the Jews many men who deny their Talmud...and demand of the bishops and other Christian princes that they burn that Talmud" (328v/2: 419),²⁰ and at the very end of the *Mostrador*, when the Rebel Jew recapitulates the main arguments of the entire work, he states that the Rebel's use of the Talmud "will be a good argument, with the help of God, to change the minds of Christians, who wish us ill, in wanting to burn our Law and our Talmud and destroy it

¹⁹ "...los quales tienpos ffueron quando se levenataron estas ordnes de Santo Domingo e de San Ffrançasco, como ya provamos" (276r/2: 308).

²⁰ This statement is an early testimony of the idea that Nicholas Donin was associated with Karaism, a question that has been hotly debated by Baer, Baron, Cohen, and Chazan, and which was rejected by Lasker ("Karaism and the Jewish-Christian Debate" 326-7). See the discussion of Karaism in the next supplement chapter.

from the world...”²¹ Earlier in the text, Abner/Alfonso also names the account of the Barcelona disputation by Nahmanides (288v/2: 340), and he repeatedly cites the Ramban’s arguments there. He does not, however, ever mention or allude to Friar Paul or to any other Mendicant friar. Considering his noticeably vague, albeit enthusiastic, praise for Mendicant orders, it is not surprising that he never once refers specifically to a Mendicant friar (besides Dominic and Francis) or a work written by one. This absence is extremely significant, given the noticeable similarities between Abner/Alfonso’s arguments in the *Mostrador* and those of the most famous of Dominican polemicists, Raymond Martini. It also calls sharply into question Sainz de la Maza’s assertions of collaboration between Abner/Alfonso and the Mendicant orders. In order to fully understand the scope (and limitations) of the sources in the text and definitively answer the lingering question of such collaboration, it is necessary to consider in detail the possible relation between Abner/Alfonso and the illustrious Dominican Martini.

V. Abner/Alfonso and Raymond Martini

a. General Comparison

There is no shortage of assertions by critics of Abner/Alfonso’s direct knowledge of the writings of Raymond Martini. Baer asserts that “there is no doubt that Maestre Alfonso utilized material that came to him from the *Pugio Fidei*” (“The Kabbalistic Doctrine” [Hebrew] 152), and in his *History*, Baer went even further, asserting that Abner/Alfonso “took over the Christological method of interpreting the Midrash from

²¹ “Ca esto será rrazon, con la ayuda de Dios, para sacar ssus voluntades de los christianos, que nos mal quieren, de lo que cudavan quemar nuestra Ley e nuestro Talmud e tollolo del mundo...” (341v-342r/2: 443).

Raymond Martini's *Pugio Fidei* (Dagger of the Faith), making very clever, careful and imaginative use of the forged Midrashim of the famous Dominican" (1: 331).²² Other critics, probably parroting Baer's remarks without looking into the question further, concur with his observations. Gershom Scholem also asserts that Abner made use of Martini's *Pugio* ("Zur Geschichte der Anfänge der christlichen Kabbala" 174), and Zvi Avneri, in his *Encyclopedia Judaica* article on Abner, plainly states that Abner/Alfonso's aggadic midrashim were taken from Martini's work (88-9). Carreras y Artau, directly following Baer, states that "la tesis y los argumentos del *Pugio* se reproduzcan en buena parte en el *Mostrador de justicia*, del judío Abner de Burgos (1: 49). Orfali notes that Abner/Alfonso "sigue las huellas de Raimundo Martí" (*Talmud y Cristianismo* 153) and Sainz de la Maza, although never concluding definitively that Abner/Alfonso knew or made use of Martini's writings, does observe that he "sigue los patrones a la última que los frailes de Santo Domingo, dirigidos por fray Raimundo de Peñafort, habían consolidado en la segunda mitad del siglo anterior" (*Alfonso de Valladolid: Edición y estudio* 77). He calls the lack of citations of Martini's work "a notable absence", especially given the fact that Martini's polemics, written thirty to fifty years before the *Mostrador*, had spread enough in the Iberian Peninsula to conceivably reach the notice of Abner/Alfonso.²³

²² The question of the veracity of all of the verses proffered by Martini has been the subject of hot debate for over a century, and gained new importance after Baer's accusations in his *History* and in his contemporary article "The Forged Midrashim of Raymond Martini and their Place in the Religious controversies in the Middle Ages." Saul Lieberman, for example, refuted Baer's ideas, concluding that Martini in no way forged the Talmudic sources he presented, but was simply working from sources and versions of material no longer extant. (1943: 92 f.). Based on Lieberman's arguments, Cohen called Baer's assertions about Martini "improbable" (*Friars and the Jews* 130 n. 2). For a recent consideration of the debate, see Ragacs, "The Forged Midrashim of Raymond Martini—Reconsidered."

²³ On the consideration of Abner/Alfonso's citation of "Rabi Rrahamon" (128r/1: 245), see below.

Other critics have made an effort to refute Baer's claim. Chazan, for example, has maintained "Abner's lack of familiarity with Friar Raymond's important opus" ("Maestre Alfonso of Valladolid and the New Missionizing." 86). Unlike previous critics, however, Chazan offers specific evidence to back up this claim. In his study of Abner's third polemical letter to Joseph Shalom, he notes that Abner/Alfonso used a Midrash on Malachi 3:16, attributed to Rabbi Levi, maintaining that Elijah and the Messiah keep a record of those who dutifully perform a commandment. First, as Chazan notes, multiple versions of this Midrash exist, and Abner/Alfonso uses a version found in *Leviticus Rabbah*, whereas Martini uses the version found in *Ruth Rabbah*. Perhaps more importantly, however, Martini explicitly rejects this Midrash as a source for proving Christian truth, while Abner/Alfonso accepts it.²⁴ This is indeed provocative evidence, and in the context of Abner/Alfonso's comparatively short letters, one clear example does seem sufficient to conclude that Abner/Alfonso was not referring to Martini's tome when he was crafting his responses to Joseph Shalom. As I demonstrate below, the content of Abner/Alfonso's later writings, especially his polemical letters, is identical to that of some arguments made in the *Mostrador*, implying that he simply repeated and recycled his previous arguments in some of his later writings. Within the vast context of the *Mostrador*—a work roughly equal to Martini's opus in size (both contain about a third of a million words)—one example can by no means be taken as definitive evidence. Although I do believe Chazan was correct in his conclusion, a more extensive consideration of Abner's sources in the

²⁴ See Chazan "Alfonso de Valladolid and the New Christian Missionizing" 85-6. As Chazan notes, Martini's rejection of this Midrash is found in the *Pugio* 352. In "From Friar Paul to Friar Raymond" he also discusses the issue at length.

Mostrador is necessary to accurately assess his relation to the innovations of thirteenth-century Aragonese missionizing.

The question of Abner/Alfonso's sources is by no means an easy one to answer. Mettmann, in his recent edition of the *Mostrador*, has left the question of Martini's influence on the *Mostrador* unanswered, concluding that "Die Frage, ob Alfonso den "Pugio Fidei" gekannt oder gar benutzt hat (letzteres ist unwahrscheinlich), muß offen bleiben" (*Mostrador* 1:7). The perplexing nature of the problem is evident in Chazan's remark on Abner in his impressive study of Martini's *Pugio*: on the one hand, Chazan defended his earlier conclusion that Abner/Alfonso "was highly original in his argumentation, in no sense relying on Friar Raymond's massive compendium." On the other hand, Chazan adds that "his extensive utilization of the approach is beyond question" (*Daggers of Faith* 165). This necessarily raises the question of precisely how Abner/Alfonso became familiar with this approach, and how he saw his own work in relation to previous anti-Jewish polemics. No critic has directly treated this question in relation to the *Mostrador*.

From a general standpoint, it seems that Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador de justicia* has more in common with Martini's *Pugio Fidei* than with any other medieval work of Christian polemic. Perhaps the most obvious, but least meaningful, similarity is the length of each. Both works run well over 300,000 words, and in order of length, the next-longest important Christian polemical works written before Abner/Alfonso are just over a fifth that long.²⁵ Both works also quote very little if at all from the New Testament and,

²⁵ Abner/Alfonso's and Martini's texts are both roughly five times longer than the *Dialogus* of Petrus Alfonsi (which is about 56,000 words in the *Patrologia Latina*). The *Scrutinium Scripturarum* of Pablo de Santa María, written a century after Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador*, is roughly 200,000 words.

more importantly, both works also share the same approach in their treatment of Jewish sources. After the debut of the Mendicant use of the Talmud for Christological arguments by Paulus Christiani at the dispute of Barcelona in 1263, Martini's *Pugio* (finished in 1287) represented, in Chazan's words, "the high-water mark not only of the mid-thirteenth-century missionizing effort but, in many ways, of medieval Christian proselytizing argumentation against the Jews altogether" (*Daggers of Faith* 136). Perhaps the most important fact that seems to link the two works is their historical propinquity. Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador*, appearing in the early 1320's, was the next work of Christian polemic to appear after Martini's work that made extensive use of Talmudic material. Between these works, no comparable works of anti-Jewish polemic were produced in Western Christendom. The appearance of both works within a generation of each other, both in the Iberian Peninsula, links both works in a striking way, and that link is only strengthened by the very similar content of the two works. Of all anti-Jewish polemics both preceding and following the half century in which these were produced, these two works quote the most, many times over, from Talmudic material, both aggadic and halakhic. Chazan has asserted that "no other work can match the *Pugio Fidei* for its dedicated effort to probe the Jewish psyche, for its massive collection of Jewish sources, or for its careful and sophisticated argumentation on the broadest possible range of theological issues" (*Daggers* 115). Dahan has made a similar assertion that "nous ne trouvons pas après Raymond Martin d'aussi bons connaisseurs de la littérature juive que celui-ci" (*Les intellectuels chrétiens* 466). It can be said, however, that Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador* does indeed match and even surpass the *Pugio* in its breadth of sources, sophistication, and psychological impact. In Sainz de la Maza's words, the *Mostrador* as

“una obra clave dentro del género apologético antijudío, una implacable *summa* de argumentos de un valor comparable al del *Pugio Fidei*” (“Alfonso de Valladolid y los caraítas” 16).²⁶ Considering this similarity of argument, method, and sources, and the appearance in nearby regions within a few decades of each other, the connection between the two works seems hard to doubt.

Both include material taken directly from the arguments presented at the dispute of Barcelona and Abner/Alfonso even mentions the Ramban by name (but he does not mention, as we have noted, Friar Paul). The main arguments of Friar Paul at the dispute of Barcelona were (1) the Messiah has already come; (2) the Messiah was intended to be both divine and human; (3) the Messiah was intended to suffer and be killed for the salvation of mankind; and (4) the laws and ceremonials were intended to cease after the advent of the Messiah. These arguments are the same central arguments in the *Pugio*. The first—what Chazan calls the “linchpin of the new Christian missionizing” (117)—constitutes the main argument of the second part of Martini’s work. The second argument forms the first section of part three of the *Pugio*; the third is addressed in the second part of that section; and the fourth is addressed in chapters eleven and twelve in chapter three in part three. Not surprisingly, Abner/Alfonso proffers these arguments in the *Mostrador* as well: the first argument constitutes the subject of chapters seven and eight; the second is the argument of five and six, the third is the argument of chapter four, and the fourth is covered in chapters two and three. Other arguments in the *Pugio* that appeared first at the dispute of Barcelona form part of the *Mostrador* as well. For example,

²⁶ Baer expressed a similar statement in 1929, naming Abner/Alfonso as the last original Iberian polemicist: “In der christlichen spanischen Literatur sind Abners Werke neben dem *Pugio Fidei* zur Grundlage aller späteren Polemik gegen das Judentum geworden. Keiner seiner Nachfolger hat nach ihm einen neuen Gedanken zutage gefördert” (“Abner aus Burgos” 1929, 35).

the charge that the failure to accept Jesus as the Messiah effectively cut the Jews out of their covenant with God, leaving their role as the “chosen people” to be taken over by the Christians, an argument that occupies the concluding chapters of Martini’s work, likewise constitutes the thrust of the final two chapters (nine and ten) of the *Mostrador*. On an even more general level, the very method of the new missionizing presented by Friar Paul at the Barcelona dispute and elaborated by Friar Raymond in the *Pugio Fidei*—the use of postbiblical literature of the Jews to establish Christian truth—is explained and defended in detail in chapter one of Abner/Alfonso’s text. Thematically, all of the main arguments of the *Mostrador* can be matched to nearly identical arguments in Martini’s work, suggesting a strong influence of the latter on the former.

A closer comparison of the content of each work, however, supports Chazan’s general claim that Abner/Alfonso does not seem to have made use of Martini’s work. This is clear first of all in the comparison of the Bible verses cited by each author. Of the nine most-cited verses in the *Mostrador* (at least ten times), one is not cited at all in the *Pugio* (Dn. 12:10), five are only cited once (Ps. 87:5; Is. 51:4; Dn. 8:13; Dn. 24-5; and Dn. 9:27), one is cited twice (Ez. 37:25), and the two others (Dn. 9:26 and 9:24) are cited four and five times, respectively. Conversely, of those verses cited at least ten times in the *Pugio* (Gen. 1.1, Gen. 49.10, Za. 9.9, Dn. 7.13, and Jer. 23.6), none are cited even half the same frequency in the *Mostrador*. Even though both works cite over 2000 different verses from the Hebrew Bible, and cite very little from the Christian New Testament,²⁷ they do not invoke the same books or verses with the same frequency.

²⁷ Although of limited value, a numerical comparison of the two works does suggest different foci: Abner/Alfonso’s most cited verses are Gn 3:5 (9 times)[*Pugio* 2 times], Ps 87:5 (*Mostrador* 13x)[*Pugio* 1x], Is 51:4 (*Mostrador* 13x)[*Pugio* 1x]; Is 52:13 (*Mostrador* 9x)[*Pugio* 9x]; Ez 37:25 (*Mostrador* 10x)[*Pugio* 2x]; Dn 8:13 (*Mostrador* 13x)[*Pugio* 1x]; Dn 9:24 (*Mostrador* 11x)[*Pugio* 5x]; Dn 24-5 (*Mostrador* 11x)[*Pugio*

The difference between their use of the Hebrew Bible, however, can provide only a superficial hint at the deeper differences between the two works. One important point to compare between the two polemicists is their stated intentions in their respective works.

In the *Pugio*, Martini states that he has been ordered to compose

a work that might be like a dagger for preachers and guardians of the Christian faith...at some times for slicing off for the Jews the bread of the divine word in sermons; at other times for slaying their impiety and perfidy, and for cutting the throat of their pertinacity against Christ and their impudent insanity. (2)²⁸

We can recall that Abner/Alfonso, on the other hand, states that

...in order that the reasons be more evident and manifest to whomever should want to know the truth in them, I wanted to compose this book, which I called

1x]; Dn 9:26 (Mostrador 10x)[Pugio 4x]; Dn 9:27 (Mostrador 10x)[Pugio 1x]; Dn 11:31 (Mostrador 9x)[Pugio 0x]; Dn 12:10 (Mostrador 11x)[Pugio 0x]; Martini's most cited verses are Gen 1.1 (Pugio 17x)[Mostrador 3x]; Gn 49.10(Pugio 11x) [Mostrador 2x]; Is 11.4 (Pugio 8x)[Mostrador 2x]; Is 42.1 (Pugio 8x) [Mostrador 1x]; Is 45.17 (Pugio 9x)[Mostrador 4x]; Is 52.13 (Pugio 9x)[Mostrador 9x]; Is 53.5 (Pugio 8x)[Mostrador 3x]; Za 9.9 (Pugio 22x)[Mostrador 6x]; Ps 72.16 and 17 (Pugio 8x each)[Mostrador 2x of 72.17, 0x of 72:17]; Ps 110.1 (Pugio 9x)[Mostrador 4x]; Song of Songs 1.4 (Pugio 8x)[Mostrador 0x]; Dn 7.13 (Pugio 19x)[Mostrador 4x]; Jeremiah 23:6 (Pugio 12x)[Mostrador 6x]; The most-cited books by Abner/Alfonso are Genesis (204 different verses) [pugio 227 verses] out of a total number of 1533 verses (Abner/Alfonso cites 13.3% of the total verses in that book [Pugio 14.8% of total], Exodus (Mostrador 137 verses [Pugio 155 verses] out of 1213 (Mostrador 11.3%) [Pugio 12.8%], Deuteronomy (Mostrador 198 verses) [Pugio 158 verses] out of 959 (Mostrador 20.6%) [Pugio 16.5%], Isaiah (Mostrador 269 verses) [Pugio 299 verses] out of 1292 (Mostrador 20.8%) [Pugio 23.1%], and Psalms (Mostrador 209 verses)[Pugio 420 verses] out of 2461 (Mostrador 8.5%) [Pugio 17%]. The books least cited by Abner/Alfonso are Nahum (Mostrador 1 verse) [Pugio 5 verses], Jonah (Mostrador 3 verses) [Pugio 3 verses], and Zephaniah (Mostrador 5 verses) [Pugio 4 verses], and Martini's least cited are Jonah (Pugio verses) [Mostrador 3 verses], Zephaniah (Pugio 4 verses) [Mostrador 6 verses], Obadaiah (Pugio 4 verses) [Mostrador 8 verses], and Zephaniah (Pugio 0 verses) [Mostrador 4 verses]. The citations that represent the greatest total volume of any one single Biblical book are not the same in the *Pugio* and *Mostrador*. For example, Abner/Alfonso cites 29% of the total number of verses in Daniel (104 verses), but Martini only cites 17.4% of that book (62 verses in the *Pugio*). Both Martini and Abner/Alfonso cite the Hebrew Bible around 2000 times, about 10% of the total volume (*Pugio* 2391 verses, *Mostrador* just over 2000) and both cite the New Testament very little (Abner/Alfonso cites only 54 verses, Martini 152, or less than 3%).

²⁸ "Injunctum est mihi...opus tale componam, quod quasi Pugio quidam praedicatoribus Christianiae fidei atque cultoribus esse possit in promptu, ad scindendum quandoque Judaeis in sermonibus panem verbi divini; quandoque vero ad eorum impietatem atque perfidiam jugulandam, eorumque contra Christum *pertinaciam* et impudentem insaniam perimendam" (2).

“Teacher of Righteousness”, in order to show the true faith, and the truth and justice in it, to the Jews, who have need of it...²⁹

Obviously, Abner/Alfonso’s work is not premised on irenic intentions any more than Martini’s, but the difference between Abner/Alfonso’s stated intention to “teach” those Jews “who have need of it” stands in stark contrast to Martini’s more gory imagery of jugulation. In addition, Martini’s audience is “preachers and guardians of the Christian faith” whereas Abner/Alfonso states directly that he wants to directly engage the Jew: “Since it is my intention in this book to dispute with the contradictory rebel Jew, it is fitting that my argumentation be in two ways: the first is to undo contradictory opinions, since our arguments will be confirmed thereby, and the second is to undo the arguments that he might take to support his opinions.”³⁰ This fundamental difference between Abner/Alfonso and Martini in speaking to other Christians (indicative of Martini’s desire to adopt Jewish authorities for strictly Christian purposes within the mold of *Adversus Iudaeos* apologetic) versus speaking directly to Jews (indicative of Abner/Alfonso’s externally-directed perspective) rests at the heart of the different intentions stated by each polemicist.

b. Views on the Jews and the Talmud

²⁹ “...E por amor que las rrazones ssean más paladinas e manifestas a quien quisiere saber la verdat en ellas, quisse conponer este libro, que lo llamé “Mostrador de Justicia”, por mostrar la ffe çierta, e la verdat e la justicia en ella, a los judios, que la avien mester...” (13r/ 1:15).

³⁰ “E porque la mi entencion en este libro es para disputer con el judio rebelle contradiziente, convien que sea mi razonar con él en dos maneras generales. La primera para desatar las opinions contradizientes, porque finquen en ssí las nuestras rrazones confirmadas. E la manera segunda es para desatar las sus rrazones que tomare para conffirmar la su opinion.” (40v/1: 67).

The first chapter of the *Mostrador* names the Talmud as a source for arguing and proving Christian truth. The Teacher starts out by describing what books can be used by Jews and Christians (and Muslims) to argue against the other faiths. Some books, he says, can be used by all three religions, such as the five books of Moses, the Prophets, books of philosophy and “everything which shows good human understanding.”³¹ Some books can be used by Jews in their arguments against Christians, but cannot be used by Christians against Jews, namely, apocryphal books of the Bible and the books of the New Testament. These can be used against Christians only because Christians are the only ones who accept them as truth, so any proofs based on them would be compelling to Christians only. By the same token, certain books can be used by Christians against Jews, namely the books of the Talmud and Midrash and commentaries on them. When the Rebel charges that the Talmud cannot be used to prove Christianity because it came after the time of Jesus and the destruction of the Second Temple, the Teacher argues that “just because the sages of the Talmud were part of the Jewish faith is no proof that they did not believe the faith of the Christians.”³² Many Talmud scholars, he argues, secretly believed in Christianity or saw the truths that Christianity teaches, but still did not choose to follow it openly. He repeats this argument numerous times throughout the *Mostrador*, and its centrality in the work is attested to by its repetition in the final words of the Teacher, who

³¹ “...todo lo que muestra el bon entendimiento umanal” (28r/1: 43).

³² “Non porque ffuessen los sabios del Talmud en la ffe de los judios es prueba de que ellos non creyeron la ffe de los christianos” (29r/1: 45).

argues that the writers of the Talmud “were bad in their will and their works, since they did not want to do as they understood.”³³

This argument is very similar to the argument made by Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica*, 3.47.5, that Jewish elders saw in Jesus all the signs of the Messiah and “knew him to be the Christ promised in the Law.”³⁴ Jeremy Cohen notes that Martini “evidently shared Thomas Aquinas’s novel opinion” (*The Friars and the Jews* 145), and indeed, numerous passages in the *Pugio* attest to his belief that the Rabbis distorted the meaning of certain Biblical passages in order to cover up any allusions to Jesus.³⁵ None of these passages, however, can be shown with any certainty to be a source for Abner/Alfonso’s argument in the *Mostrador*, which recast the issue in terms of conversion: Although the sages of the Talmud saw the truths of Christianity, he argues, they were stubborn against conversion for reasons that go beyond the stereotypical intransigence of the Jews. Whereas Aquinas (explicitly) and Martini (implicitly) accuse the Jews of rejecting Jesus—even though they knew he was the Messiah—out of sinfulness and a desire to reject God, Abner/Alfonso explains that “there are many things” which keep people from converting from one religion to another, even when they know the truth. As he says,

³³ “Ffueron malos por parte de la voluntad e de las obras, que no quisieron fazer como lo entendia[n]” 342v/2: 444). For other examples of this charge against Jewish sages, see chapter two, paragraph seven (62v-63r/ 1: 112), chapter seven, paragraph forty (230v/ 2: 198), chapter eight, paragraph eight (241v/2: 222), and chapter ten, paragraph one (292r/ 2: 347).

³⁴ “Cognoverunt eum Christum esse promissum in lege.” *Opera Omnia* XI (1903). On this passage in Aquinas and a discussion of this concept, see Cohen, “The Jews as the Killers of Christ in the Latin Tradition, From Augustine to the Friars.” *Traditio* 39 (1983): 1-27.

³⁵ 3.3.2.13 “Ecce iste Rabbi, ut possit extinguere Lumen Deitatis Messiae, quomodo sacrae Scripturae lecturam jubet falsificare: tanta est autem hujus falsitatis impudentia, quod Judaei in hoc sibi renuunt obedire” (655). Cohen cites various others, including 2.3.8, p. 277, 3.1.9.4-5, pp. 530-31, 3.3.3.6, p. 667, and 3.3.18.7, p. 878 (1982: 147, n. 36).

“understanding is one thing, will is another,”³⁶ and the force of habit, the fear of slander, one’s duties to one’s parents, the difficulty of feeling at home among a strange new group of people, and various other reasons explain why understanding the truth is not always enough to bring people to convert (We considered this list of reasons in detail in chapter three). He does say clearly that the sin of the Talmud scholars was to know the truth, but still to deny Christ and the Prophets who foretold his coming. Nevertheless, although he calls this rejection a “rebellion” (“rrebellia”) and “a malice which was the reason and cause of many malices,”³⁷ his explanation of the many reasons why people refuse conversion attenuates the harshness of his condemnation of the Talmudic rejection of the Christian truth that was clear to them.³⁸

The two polemicists, Abner/Alfonso and Martini, have very different ideas of what should be done with the Talmud as a result of this difference in harshness. Various scholars have summarized Martini’s contradictory view of the Talmud, both in the *Pugio Fidei* and in the earlier *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, in which Martini argues that the Talmud should be rejected, and also that it should be accepted in part insofar as it proves the truth of Christianity.³⁹ Martini himself discusses his use of Talmudic sources in the prologue to his work. In explaining the nature of the “oral Torah” (“Torah she-be-‘al peh”), he argues that “to believe this...should be deemed—on account of the absurdities it contains—

³⁶ “El entender es una cosa, e la voluntad es otra” (29v/ 1: 45).

³⁷ “...una malicia que fue rrazon e comienço de muchas maliçias” (33v/1:54).

³⁸ This view differs from the more traditional Augustinian view that those who crucified Christ did so out of ignorance, and the later view of Anselm of Laon that the elders recognized Jesus as the Messiah but saw him as human, while the majority of Jews, who called for his crucifixion, were the ones ignorant of his true nature. See Cohen, “Jews as Killers...” 14 for Anselm’s view.

³⁹ See Cohen, *Living Letters*, pp. 355-58; Chazan, *Daggers*, pp. 118-120.

nothing other than the insanity of a wasted mind.”⁴⁰ Nevertheless, some things in the Talmud are not to be rejected, “for a wise man never despises a precious stone, even if it is found on the head of a dragon or a toad. Honey is the spit of bees, something that [a creature] with a poisonous sting is not worthy of.”⁴¹ This attitude reiterates what Martini had already expressed in the *Capistrum* that if the Talmud offers support for Christ as the Messiah, it should be accepted.⁴² Cohen explains Martini’s seemingly contradictory attitude towards the Talmud by showing that he distinguishes between certain traditions that he sees as originating in scripture and others that have no origin besides oral tradition. “On balance,” concludes Cohen, “one senses that the *Pugio fidei* distinguishes between the doctrines of the oral Torah recorded in the Talmud and Midrash, and the actual compendia of textual traditions that the Talmud and Midrash constitute” (*Living Letters* 356). The error of the Jews, then, consists in upholding all of the Talmud rather than only these passages based on scripture. It is, however, licit for Christian missionaries to use these Talmudic passages to prove Christian truth and to convert Jews more

⁴⁰ “Hoc autem videtur...credere propter innumeras absurditates quas continet nihil aliud reputandum est quam praecipitatae mentis insania” (*Pugio* 3).

⁴¹ “Lapidem enim pretiosum prudens nequaquam despicit licet inventus fuerit in draconis capite, vel bufonis. Mel quoque sputum est apum et aliquid forsitan aliud minus dignum, habentium quidem venenosum aculeum” (*Pugio* 3). This citation was previously considered at the end of chapter four. This argument, as Cohen has shown (*Living Letters*, 342-58), shares much with Martini’s earlier argument in his *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, in which Martini argues that one must be selective of what one takes from the Talmud just “as one does with pomegranates and with dates. He who eats dates wisely consumes the fruit outside and spits out the seed inside. And so too a man who eats a pomegranate prudently eats the seeds within and spits out the rind. Thus when we eat fish we spit out the bones, and eat the flesh. But birds that gulp down fish with their scales and spines and filth are called unclean and are unclean.” (“...sic docet agendum de scriptis et verbis sapientum, quemadmodum agitur de malogranatis et dactylis. Exterius etenim comedit, et interius proicit, qui sapienter comedit dactylos. Interiora vero grana mandit, et cortices abicit, qui prudenter et sicut homo, comedit malum punicum. Sic quoque nos spinas proicimus, et pulpum edimus, cum pisces manducamus. Immundae vero nominatur et sunt aves, quae piscem cum scamis [sic] suis et spinis ac sordibus glutunt” 2: 282).

⁴² “Sciendum autem quod quotienscumque Talmud offert nobis aliquam auctoritatem propheticae exponens eam de Messia, vel de illis quae ad Messiam pertinere noscuntur, si bene eam exposuerit, admittenda est” (*Capistrum* 2:30).

effectively because the good in the Talmud was handed down in spite of the Jews, for “in no other way than from the prophets and the fathers do we think such things could have come, since these traditions in this way are everywhere contrary to those about the Messiah and many other things which the Jews have believed since the time of Christ until now.”⁴³

Compared with this view, Abner/Alfonso’s attitude toward the Talmud of course shows many similarities. Like Martini, Abner/Alfonso maintains in many places that the Talmud contains erroneous material and should be rejected. In chapter seven, paragraph forty, for example, after citing a statement by Maimonides that many truths in the Talmud are hidden within other statements and that only some men can understand those truths, Abner/Alfonso concludes that “you can understand from the sayings of this sage that there are in that Talmud many words that are mistaken and very far from the truth and that are not convincing to men with understanding.”⁴⁴ He then repeats his argument that the Talmud was composed by Jewish sages who knew Jesus was the Messiah, but who deliberately chose not to follow him. Their deviance in composing the Talmud is the reason they will not be saved and why their are in permanent exile (chapter eight, paragraph eight, 241v/2: 222; and again in chapter ten, paragraph one, 292r/2: 347). Although Abner/Alfonso’s statement that “I help myself to the truth from whomever might say it”⁴⁵ sounds very similar to Martini’s statement about prizing a

⁴³ “...immo nullatenus talia aliunde quam a prophetis et patribus sanctis cogitare possumus devenisse; cum eiusmodi traditiones iis quae Judaei de messia et de aliis quam plurimis a Christi tempore usque nunc sentiunt, sint omnino contrariae” (3). See the discussion of this passage in Chapter two, above.

⁴⁴ “Puedes entender por dichos deste sabio que en aquel Talmud a muchas palabras que son esquivas e mucho alongadas de la verdad e que non sson convinientes a los omnes entendidos” (230v/2: 198).

⁴⁵ “Yo me ayudo de la verdat de quien quier que la diga” (32v/1: 52).

precious stone, even if you find it on the head of a dragon or toad, it more likely came from Maimonides (whom Abner/Alfonso cites many times) than from Martini.⁴⁶ Similar to Martini's claim that "there is nothing so capable of confuting the impudence of the Jews; there is found nothing so effective for overcoming their evil"⁴⁷ is Abner/Alfonso's repeated use of the Talmudic dicta that "the testimony of one who is part of the litigation is worth a hundred witnesses."⁴⁸ For Abner, as for Martini, the Talmud is full of falsehoods and should not be accepted *in toto*.

There are, however, important differences between Abner/Alfonso's and Martini's arguments as well. One important difference can be found in Abner/Alfonso's complicated (and confusing) view about why the Jews composed the Talmud. On the one hand, he argues that the Jews who composed the Talmud were made to do so by God as a punishment for their earlier sins. Because the Jews committed "the greatest and most severe of all the sins"⁴⁹ namely, not believing that God would reward and punish men for their works, God condemned them to not listen to the words of their teachers that told of the Messiah, and to deny and crucify Jesus. In this view, the Talmud was composed by recalcitrant sages who knew the truth, but refused to accept it. He explains, "on those sages the sentence of God was fulfilled that had been put on them at the the coming of the Christ, for being bad men of no understanding, and for being bad men who

⁴⁶ On this statement in Maimonides, see chapter 4, n. 61.

⁴⁷ "Nihil tam validum ad confutandam Judaeorum impudentiam reperitur, nihil ad eorum convincendam nequitiam tam efficax invenitur" (*Pugio* 3).

⁴⁸ "...el otorgamiento del qui es parte del pleito vale tanto como ciento testigos" (32v/1:52; cf 28v), a version of Talmud Bavli *Gittin* 40b; *Kiddushin* 65b; *Bava Mezia* 3b.

⁴⁹ "el mayor peccado e más ffuerte de todos los peccados" (31v/1:50).

understood the truth.”⁵⁰ In addition to this view that the Talmud is a punishment from God for earlier sins, Abner also argues that the sages of the Talmud deliberately misled the Jewish people by not clearly explaining that Jesus was the Messiah, and they are to be held accountable for that concealment of the truth that they recognized but would not accept.⁵¹ In many places, he unequivocally condemns the sages of the Talmud with statements to the effect “that their entire intention and will, for the reasons we stated at the beginning of this book, was to belie and deny the christhood of Jesus the Nazerene.”⁵² Still, his condemnation of the Talmud is not wholesale. Considering this, Baer was careless and imprecise in his assertion that “it would not be possible to find a Christian theologian of the Middle Ages who produced so comprehensive and methodical, and so venomous, a denunciation of the Talmud as did this apostate” (*A History* 1: 349). Compared to Martini, Abner/Alfonso can hardly be considered “venomous” and in any case, his anti-Talmudic argument seems to lack any method at all compared with Martini’s orderly and scholastic, comprehensive presentation. Essentially, Abner/Alfonso argues that the early *tannaim* and *amoraim* were punished by God for earlier sins, but that the result of that sin is another sin for which they are to be punished. This double

⁵⁰ “Se conplió en aquellos ssabios la sentençia de Dios que ffue puesta sobrellos para el tiempo para la venida del Christo, de sseer malos no entendidos, e sseer malos que entendiessen la verdad” (32v/1:52).

⁵¹ “Yo veo que [los sabios del Talmud] ovieron una malicia que fue rrazon e comienço de muchas maliçias, e es ésta que negaron al Christo e a los prophetas de Dios que pusieron tiempo sennalado e la venida del Christo e que nos dieron las sennas dél e de la Ley nueva que avia a rrenovar. Ca esta rrebellia fu [sic] causa e rrazon para conponimiento del Talmud, donde salió astragamiento del mundo” (33v/1:54).

⁵² “Que toda ssu entencion e su voluntad dellos, por la[s] rrazones que dixiemos en comienço del libro, era para desmintir e negar la christedat de Jhesu Nazareno” (168r/2:63). Cf. 230v/2:198: “toda su entençon de los judios era para negar en publico la christedad de Jhesu Nazareno por la rreveldia que rrebellaron en él...”

explanation of the nature of the Talmud clearly differs from Martini's account of the Oral Torah and the composition of the Talmud.

In addition to his views on the text of the Talmud, Abner/Alfonso distinguishes between the writers of the Talmud and the Jews of his own day, drawing very different conclusions than Martini. Whereas the sages of the Talmud denied what they knew to be true and thus bear the guilt for misleading later generations away from Christianity, he often implies that his contemporaries can still be saved if they simply believe that Jesus was the Messiah.⁵³ This view regarding the writers of the Talmud and of their difference from contemporary Jews contrasts starkly with Martini's vituperative argument that the early rabbis rejected Christ out of malevolent godlessness, and that contemporary Jews were even worse for rejecting that truth after it had stood the test of time. As he says in the *Pugio*, "After the time of Moses, most of [the Jews] went from bad to worse."⁵⁴ For Martini, modern Jews do not worship the true God and they are condemned almost irrevocably for their stubbornness.⁵⁵ Thus, Martini's discussion of modern Jews focuses almost entirely on their stupidity for believing the Talmud and their unwillingness and

⁵³ Because Christian truth is contained within the revelation of the Prophets and the teachings of the Talmud, belief in Christianity, for Abner/Alfonso, amounts to following Jewish Law properly. In other words, Jews are encouraged to be good Jews, which really leads them to being Christians.

⁵⁴ *Pugio* 3.3.21.22: "Post tempora quoque Moysis major pars ipsorum profecit de malo in pejus" (916). This attitude is clear in Martini's assertion in the *Capistrum* that "Ad cautelam autem hic sciendum est, quod quidam rabini, et maximi moderni, de quibus est R. Selomo, qui, ubicumque fere occurrit in scriptura sacra mentio de Messia, quibusdam de suis interpositis, semper conantur pervertere, si apparenter possunt; sin autem, totum transibunt et omitunt" (2: 206); and in his statement that "Infallibiliter cum fuerint mali, Moyses tot, et talia faciente signa, et vivo existente cum eis, tempore vero prophetarum multo peiores fuerint, modo sunt pessimi, si verum est argumentum illud Moysi, cum sint nunc absque miraculis, absque Moyses, et absque prophetis" (2:142). Cohen makes a strong case for this reading both of the *Pugio* (See *The Friars and the Jews* 151-53) and the *Capistrum* (See *Living Letters* 352-58).

⁵⁵ *Pugio* 2.15.15: "...modernorum Judaeorum Deum non esse verum sequitur evidenter"(474). Cf. 3.3.13.2: "...dictum est, eos diebus multis futuros esse ad non Deos veritatis; non incongrue dici potest, quod diebus multis erunt ad non Deum, i.e. sine Deo veritatis..." (954).

active opposition to accept arguments for Christian truth, leaving aside any explanation of what he thinks Jews need to do to be saved. Martini's goal in the *Pugio* (and, it can be said, in the *Capistrum* as well) is not to provide proofs to save the Jews, but to marshal arguments to prove the Jews wrong.

The differences in the attitudes toward the Talmud in Abner/Alfonso and Martini in part concerns the question of the intentionality of the blindness with which Jews were charged. As we considered in chapter one, the debate over Jewish intentionality has formed part of the anti-Jewish polemical tradition at least since Augustine. Both Martini and Abner/Alfonso consider the Jews in terms typical of *Adversus Iudaeos* literature as blind to the true meaning of scripture and stubborn in their unwillingness to accept Christianity, but there is an important difference in their ideas. Abner/Alfonso's overall goal is not simply to prove Jews wrong and foolish, but to provide strong arguments that Jews themselves might actually consider as alternatives to their "errors" and which might eventually spur them to reconsider their beliefs. Since an essential part of his argumentative strategy is to encourage Jews to explore any doubts they might have, it is illogical and counterproductive for him to completely demonize and insult his Jewish reader. Whereas Martini, speaking to other Christians, assumes the typical theological and polemical stance with regard to the Jews that they are blind, hard-hearted, and even demonic (such a stance supports his overall goal of usurping Jewish authorities for Christological purposes), Abner/Alfonso must back up his Christological claims with practical considerations of the situation of real Jews living in Christian Spain. An essential part of this effort, and one in which he differs radically from Martini, is his argument that modern Jews can still be saved by conversion, because "God does not ignore the good of

any creature.”⁵⁶ Martini does include statements such as “...as long as they shall be thus, i.e. Jews, they will never be saved,”⁵⁷ implying that if Jews did convert, they might be saved. Such statements are much fewer than exclamations about “how God will condemn them with an irrevocable sentence.”⁵⁸ In any case, Martini shows no concern with making his arguments convincing to real Jews who might hear them. Very different from this view in most places in the *Mostrador*, Abner/Alfonso argues that although the sages of the Talmud sinned because “they believed in the foundations of the faith of the Christians and they failed to turn to it...even though they saw with good understanding what they should do,”⁵⁹ modern Jews do not need to continue to be deceived by the sins of their sages. In a very significant passage, already considered in chapter three, the Teacher directly addresses his Jewish interlocutor and explains that if someone finds contradictions among their sages, they should work to understand things by themselves. “If he struggles hard in this, he will see the truth, and it will be revealed to him according to its nature...a man should not remain doubtful in this important foundation....”⁶⁰

To be sure, Abner/Alfonso does condemn the Jews as a whole for their stubbornness, at times moving in the direction of Martini’s proclivity towards insults. At the end of the work, the Teacher exclaims

⁵⁶ “Dios non desconosçe el bien a ninguna criatura” (33v/1: 54).

⁵⁷ 3.3.16.6: “...captivati sunt a romanis, a qua, quamdiu tales fuerint, i.e. Judei, nunquam sunt liberandi” (846). Cf. 2.14.6: “...Judei numquam terram suam sint ulterius possessuri. Secundum quod suis malis exigentibus factis a Deo sint in perpetuum reprobati” (449).

⁵⁸ “...quam irrevocabili autem sententia reprobaverit eos Deus...” 3.3.21.16 (912).

⁵⁹ “Creyeron en las rrayzes de la fe de los christianos e que dexaron de tornar a ella...maguera que biesse [sic] por bon entendimiento que lo devia fazer” (29v/1: 46).

⁶⁰ “Ca si él mucho punnare en esto, luego verá la verdat, e escobrírse-lo-a ella por su naturaleza...e non deve ffincar omne dubdoso en esta grand rrayz...” (184v/2: 99).

You [Jews] are stupid and crazy and far from salvation, moreover you are close to harm and perdition...more than all the asses of the world that feel spurs and whose owners still want to make use of them. But you are like sick asses who have given up to death, for whom spurs do not do much good, and whose owners no longer want to make use of them, because they have given up [thinking] that they will receive medicine again.⁶¹

Despite these insults, he emphasizes repeatedly the possibility of the individual Jew to escape from the error of his people, an error he characterizes more often as “sickness” than as pure malevolence. This emphasis on the individual Jew is emblematic of the essential difference between Martini’s and Abner/Alfonso’s polemics, the former speaking about Jews from an inflexible Christian perspective, the latter speaking directly to Jews in a familiar voice of solidarity.

This difference can be seen very clearly in comparing statements in which each author associates the Jews with the Devil. Numerous scholars have documented Martini’s argument in the *Pugio* that the Jews were in league with the Devil, specifically adducing Martini’s discussion of the Talmudic legend in T.B. *Me’ila* 17a-b in which the Simeon ben Yoḥai received help from “Ben Tamalyon” to destroy the Hadrianic prohibitions against Jewish ceremonies.⁶² Thus Martini concludes in both the *Capistrum* and the *Pugio* that the Devil restored the Sabbath and practice of circumcision and so the Jews are “servants of

⁶¹ “...ssodes neçios e locos e alongados de la ssalvaçion, mas que ssodes çercanos al danno e a la perdiçion, mucho más...que todos los asnos del mundo, los que ssienten los aguijones e que ssus duennos an voluntad para sservirse dellos. Mas sodes como los asnos enfermos e acostados a la muerte, [que] los aguijones non ffazen mucho pro a ellos, e que ssus duennos non an voluntad para sservirse dellos ya más, porque sson desffiuzados de que rresçibrán nunca melezina” (339r/2: 439).

⁶² *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, 1:88 and *Pugio* 456. For a discussion of Martini’s view of the connection between Jews and the devil, see Bonfils, “The Nature of Judaism...” p. 365ff., and his “The Devil and the Jews...” pp. 91-98; Cohen, *Living Letters*, 348-58, especially 353 n. 105, for other bibliographical references.

the Devil.”⁶³ Similarly, the Talmud “is not the Law of God, but the artifice of the Devil” and the observance of Judaism is “not the service or worship of God, but the cult of the Devil.”⁶⁴ Abner/Alfonso, however, does not discuss this Talmudic passage in the *Mostrador*, nor does he actually accuse the Jews of being in league with the Devil at any point in his argument. It is true that he does *compare* Jews to devils, saying they are both necessary to carry out God’s ill will against sinning Christians and Muslims:

It is necessary that God keep Jews in the world, just as he keeps devils, to be arms of his wrath and messengers of his ire, to make stumble and fall into punishment bad Christians and Muslims who deserve it, and to place temptations and doubts in their faith in order to destroy them from the world.⁶⁵

⁶³ “Adhuc etiam probari poterit per pauca quae dixi paulo superius, multo plura suo loco dicturus, quod Iudaei sunt a Deo reprobati et homines, et servi diaboli.” 2.14.23, 461; Cf. 3.3.11.21 (788) and 3.3.21.23 (918). Martini specifically criticizes the practice of orally cleansing the circumcision wound as part of the reinstatement of circumcision by “Ben Tamalyon: “Nonne enim, ut de aliis sileam, porcum qui crebris rostrum foedat spurciciis Iudaei imitando manducant, qui uniuscuiusque veretrum circumcisi, tam magni, quam parvi, in illud profanissimum os, quo Christum blasphemant, suscipiunt, et tamdiu suggunt, [sic] quamdiu inde sanguis egreditur?” (*Capistrum* 2: 286). Cf. *Pugio* 3.3.11.18 (786). On these passages, see Cohen, *Living Letters*, 352 and *The Friars*, 150.

⁶⁴ “Animadvertat prudentia tua, Lector, quod Talmud, quod ita pernitiouse docet eos mentiri, et Christianos occidere, non est lex Dei, sed figmentum diaboli.” *Pugio* 3.3.44.22 (936); “Observantia Circumcisionis, et Sabbathi, reliquorumque ceremonialium non est postquam venit messias, ut multipliciter probatum est, servitium, vel cultus Dei, sed cultus diaboli.” 3.1.14.24 (461); Martini repeats this charge that the Jews are in league with the Devil, and that the Talmud is an instrument of the Devil, dozens of times in the *Capistrum* and *Pugio*. See, for example, *Capistrum* 1: 88 and 2: 258-61; and *Pugio* 2.4.27 (329); 3.3.7.3 (740), 2.3.11.22 (789); 3.3.11.25 (791); and 3.3.13.2 (954).

⁶⁵ “Mester es que mantenga Dios a los judios en el mundo, como mantiene a los diablos, para sser armas de ssu sanna e menssageros de su yra para ffazer entrepeçar e caer en pena a los malos christianos e moros, que lo mereçen, e meterles tentaçones e dudas en ssu fe, por amor de astragarlos del mundo” (338v/ 2: 438). To this comment, he adds the observation that God chose Israel to be his servants “both in essence and accident” (“por essencia e por ascidente”): Essentially, God chose the Jews to be the people among whom Christ would be born; in accident, God chose the Jews by maintaining “a los malos dellos” (i.e. those who do not accept Jesus) “para castigar e dar pena con ellos a los peccadores que quiere castigar e ffazerlos tornar con penitencia e darles salvaçion en la postrimeria” (338v-339r/2: 438). Cf. X:25: “maguera que Dios guarda los diablos e los peccados e los malos angeles e los mantiene en el mundo, non devemos dezir por esto que non sson cosas malas en conparaçion del omne” (342v/2:444).

For Abner, the Jews are not precisely diabolical. Rather, they are essentially good, although they sinned in will by rejecting Jesus. Abner explains his attitude clearly at the very end of the text.

God did not create anything which is not good in itself...and so the Jews are in the world as part of absolute good, like other gentiles, and like serpents and scorpions and lions and bears, but they are bad in terms of their opinions...and thus the sages of the Talmud who gave reasonable words to support certain opinions, and who remained Jews, were of the lineage of absolute good, but were bad in terms of their will and their works, since they did not want to do as they understood.⁶⁶

Obviously, this attitude is very negative and shows Abner/Alfonso to be equally intolerant of Jews and Judaism as the acerbic Martini, but his emphasis on the possibility for Jews to convert and escape this negative characterization shows an important difference from Martini. Abner/Alfonso's attitude that Jews are only bad "in terms of their opinions" contrasts sharply with Martini's repeated assertions that "the Jews are...servants of the Devil" ("...Judaei sunt...servi diaboli" 2.1.14.23, 461).

c. Key Issues in the *Mostrador* and the *Pugio*

There are a number of points which appear in the *Mostrador* but which have little place in Martini's writings (and vice versa), such as the question of Karaites and Samaritans, the ideas of the Kabbalah, and the *Urim ve-Tumim* of ancient prophecy

⁶⁶ Non crio Dios cosa que non ssea bona en ssí...e assi los judios sson en el mundo de parte del bien ssoluto, como los otros gentiles, e como las sserpientes e los escorpiones, e como los leones e loss ossos, sinon que sson malos por parte de las sus opiniones...e assi los sabios del Talmud que dixieron palabras de rrazon para conffirmar las opiniones çiertas, e ellos ffincaron judios, ffueron del linage del bien ssoluto, sinon que ffueron malos por parte de la voluntad e de las obras, que non quisieron fazer como lo entendia[n]. (342v/2:444).

(among others), all discussed by Abner/Alfonso but little or not at all by Martini.⁶⁷ Such points of difference between Abner/Alfonso and Martini are, of course, not necessarily indications that the former did not know the work of the latter, but only that the *Mostrador* contains its own original content. In order to definitively compare the two works, it is necessary to look at a number of points where the authors discuss the same issues, to see if there is any indication that Abner/Alfonso's sources had to come through Martini. Chazan has clearly shown that Martini developed and expanded the arguments of Friar Paul, using the arguments of each friar on the issue of the prior advent of the Messiah to substantiate his argument. Judging from Abner/Alfonso's citations of Nahmanides, we know that he was familiar with the arguments made at the Disputation of Barcelona. It is important to consider, therefore, if Martini's expanded arguments find any place in Abner/Alfonso's work. As Chazan explains, the first important addition that Martini contributes consists of offering Jewish sources that he believes substantiate the traditional Christian interpretation of *Shiloh* in Gen 49:10, "The Scepter shall not depart from Judah...until *Shiloh* comes" (*Daggers of Faith*, 121-24). Specifically, Martini offers the interpretations of the Targum and likewise quotes a passage from *Genesis Rabbah* that states that Shiloh means the Messiah, but as Chazan notes, this Midrash cannot be found in any extant versions.⁶⁸ In any case, this Midrash discusses the right of the Sanhedrin to judge capital cases while it is still situated in the Chamber of Hewn Stones, and Martini adds more Talmudic material to support his argument that, because the movement of the

⁶⁷ Martini mentions the "Urim et Tumim" on 292, 381, and 673. He mentions the word "Kabbala" on 290-91 and 813, but in the sense of "tradition", equating it with the word "crebra" (repeatedly). He mentions "cuthim" in reference to ancient Samaritans on 369 and 429, but does not equate them with Karaites.

⁶⁸ *Pugio* 313. For a discussion of the dispute over Martini's allegedly "forged" midrashim, see above, n. 22 and chapter 1, n. 57.

Sanhedrin out of the Chamber before the destruction of the Second Temple, it can be seen as contemporary with the life of Jesus, thus fulfilling the expectation, based on Gen 49:10 that such an event would mark the coming of the Messiah. (314) Martini then goes on, following the argument of Friar Paul based on T.B. *Sanhedrin* 5a, to maintain that the “scepter” refers to the exilarchs of Babylonia, adducing the opinion of R. David Kimḥi to argue that the Jewish interpretation of the Hebrew words *shevet* (scepter) and *mehokek* (ruler’s staff) point to a messianic understanding of the word *shiloh*. (316) He also supports his view by discussing a passage from T.B. *Bava Batra* 3b about Herod’s massacre of the house of the Hasmoneans and the rabbis. He argues that this event corresponds to the departure of the “scepter” from Judah, thus pointing to the coming of “Shiloh,” understood as the Messiah. (318).

Martini follows this with a discussion of sundry rabbinic dicta, rejecting many of them (including those cited by Friar Paul) and adducing others that he believes support his case. Although Chazan has explained Martini’s argument and citations in detail, it is worthwhile here to summarize that information in order to contrast it to that found in the *Mostrador*.⁶⁹ In his discussion of the advent of the Messiah and the link between his birth and the destruction of the temple, Martini cites (besides Paul’s aggadot) T.J. *Berekhot* 17a-b, and two midrashim (no longer extant) from *Genesis Rabbah* (348-50), as well as a homily on Malachi 3:16 from *Ruth Rabbah* (353). Rejecting the Jewish exegesis of Is 10:34-11:1 and 66:7 (349-50), he also rejects the idea that the birth of the Messiah occurred near the time of the destruction of temple. If rabbis actually believe this, he says, they would not have supported the false Messiah, Simon bar Kohba (352). In place of these Midrashim,

⁶⁹ This summary follows Chazan’s presentation of Martini’s arguments in *Daggers of Faith*, 124-28.

he cites T.B. *Sanhedrin* 97a-b (394) and *Avodah Zarah* 9a (395) in an effort to calculate the year of the advent of the Messiah, based on the cosmic chronology that the world is divided into three ages of two thousand years each (two thousand years without the Torah, two thousand with it, and two thousand with the Messiah). Noting the lack of agreement between these two Talmudic sources, he maintains they made an error. Concerning the lack of coincidence with the birth of Jesus, he argues, based on exegesis of Is 60:22, that the calculation can be advanced but not delayed (395). He also cites a number of aggadot from T.B. *Sanhedrin* 98b, *Yoma* 10a, and *Avodah Zarah* 8b regarding the rule of Rome over Israel and the world (396-7), as well as citing *Genesis Rabbah* (again, in a non-extant passage) regarding the delay of salvation by the Messiah as a reward to Esau for his good treatment of his father (*Pugio* 398; Chazan, *Daggers* 120-128).

When we compare Abner/Alfonso's arguments in the *Mostrador* to Martini's treatment of this critical issue, there is no evidence that the former made use of the *Pugio* or any of Martini's additions to Friar Paul's statements at all to form his argument. First of all, while Martini cites Gen 49:10 on eleven separate occasions, Abner only cites it twice, and one of them (96r) does not even discuss the question of when the Messiah will come. Whereas Martini went to lengths to establish that "Shiloh" referred to the Messiah, Abner/Alfonso does not discuss this point at all. The quotation in the *Mostrador* of this verse simply substitutes "el Christo" for "Shiloh" without any explanation.⁷⁰ As we have seen, he follows Friar Paul in referring to T.B. *Sanhedrin* 5a, in which the "Scepter of Judah" is understood as the exilarchs of Babylonia. He limits himself to Paul's arguments, including none of the additional support adduced by Martini. For example, although

⁷⁰ This could conceivably be the work of a translator or copyist, but Abner/Alfonso does not discuss the point beyond saying that "vino Jhesu Christo, e sse conplió lo que dixo el viesso" (269v/2:292).

he does quote David Kimḥi many times in the *Mostrador*, he does not mention him, as Martini does, in his discussion of the Hebrew words of this verse. Likewise, although Abner/Alfonso quotes from *Genesis Rabbah* many times as well throughout his work, he does not make reference to the verse quoted by Martini nor does he ever mention the argument that the Sanhedrin had lost political authority when it passed out of the Chamber of Hewn Stones.

In addition to this, Abner/Alfonso does not follow Martini in his use of any freestanding rabbinic dicta relating to this issue. As noted, Friar Paul offered two well-known rabbinic dicta to support the argument that the Messiah had already come, one stating that the Messiah was born on the day the temple was destroyed (*Lamentations Rabbah* 2:57), and the other discussing a conversation between Elijah and Joshua ben Levi in which the former tells the latter that the Messiah is “at the gate of Rome” (T.B. *Sanhedrin* 98a). Abner/Alfonso makes use of both of these in the *Mostrador* (the former in VII:15, 209r/2:154, and in VII:33, 218v/2:175; and the latter in VI:30, 170v/2:68-9). Chazan demonstrated that Martini, “well aware of the weaknesses of the specific aggadot adduced by Friar Paul” (*Daggers of Faith*, 124), rejected both, among others, as “inane,” “frivolum,” and “fabulosa” (*Pugio* 352). He used other aggadot concerning the birth of the Messiah on the day of the destruction of the Temple and the advent of the Messiah, and then rejected all of them, including those by Paul. In an effort to sharpen the polemical argument of his confrere, he proffered two new aggadot that he believed actually did support the original claim of the prior coming of the Messiah. A search of the *Mostrador*, however, shows that Abner/Alfonso did not reject the original aggadot given by Paul, and did not follow Martini in using other aggadot to disprove them, or in offering new

aggadot in their place. Abner/Alfonso, by contrast, does not make reference to any except one of these verses in the *Mostrador*. Not only does he accept those aggadot of Friar Paul that Martini criticizes and rejects, he also does not make mention of the others that Martini puts forth in order to reject along with those of Friar Paul. Especially important is Abner/Alfonso's use of a different source for the homily on Malachi 3:16 cited by Martini,⁷¹ and Abner accepts that homily when Martini rejects it. He does not cite any of the aggadot regarding the rule of Rome in relation to the advent of the Messiah, although he does discuss this issue at length in his argument about the chronology of Daniel of the four empires that would rule before the coming of the Messiah.⁷² Importantly, he does refer to T.B. *Sanhedrin* 98a (229r/2:195), but not in reference to this question, showing that his own Talmudic knowledge and his arguments in no way depended on the material collected by Martini. What Chazan has shown to be a deliberate and clear expansion and modification of Friar Paul's arguments is entirely absent from the *Mostrador*, raising serious doubts about Abner/Alfonso's familiarity with or use of Martini's text.

This preliminary conclusion is reinforced by further comparison. Related to the question of the link between the Jews and the Devil is the treatment of material about the legendary Gog and Magog.⁷³ In the *Pugio*, Friar Raymond discusses the legend of Gog

⁷¹ Abner does not cite, as Martini does, *Ruth Rabbah* as the source, but *Leviticus Rabbah* (230r/2:197). As Chazan has noted this discrepancy between Martini's and Abner's sources on this issue in Abner's third letter to Joseph Shalom, and based his conclusion that Abner did not depend on Martini's work on that finding ("Maestre Alfonso of Valladolid and the New Missionizing" 85-6; *Daggers* 203-4 n. 44). There is no doubt that the material for these letters—and indeed, for all of Abner/Alfonso's later works—was taken from his earlier exposition of his arguments in the *Mostrador* (and possibly in the *Sefer Milhamot* as well).

⁷² Chazan, "Undermining the Jewish Sense of Future," studies Abner/Alfonso's views on this matter.

⁷³ This tradition appears first in Ez. 38-9 which describes a battle of a certain king Gog (some speculate this to be Gogo, king of Lydia), from the land of Magog, waged against Israel. Scholars have associated this prophesy with a general anxiety over invasions by the "evil...from the north" (Jer 4:6, etc), perhaps a foreign people. In the Talmud, the names are associated with a war that marks the advent of the Messiah (e.g. *Sifre Num.* 76, T.B. *Sanhedrin* 97b). Also associated with this war in the Palestinian Targum (Ex. 40:11 and Song

and Magog as part of “arguments that the Jews bring against us” during his treatment of the Jewish belief that the Messiah has not come because the tribes have not been gathered together again (2.14).⁷⁴ Associating the Hebrew word for roof (*gag*) with the name Gog,⁷⁵ he comments on the only New Testament verse referring to Gog, Rev 20:7,⁷⁶ noting that it foresees the persecution of the just “done as much by heretics as by the persecutors of the holy faith and truth.” All such persecutors are “the roof and dwelling of the Devil.” He explains that at the time of the Antichrist, Magog “who is interpreted as roof, that is, the devil, and Gog, “who is the roof of the Devil,” “will go out through the opening of persecution of the Antichrist.”⁷⁷ Quoting Augustine to the effect that “*Magog* signifies the Devil, but *Gog* the multitude of the impious,” he adds that Gog is the name of a king, and Magog that of a people. He concludes that Gog “is that great devil they call Ben Tamylon, and Magog is his people, clearly the Jewish people.”⁷⁸ This interpretation of Gog and Magog is premised on a more general rejection of any historical or messianic implication in the legend. Friar Raymond rejects various Jewish traditions that present such interpretations, and repeatedly states that Gog and Magog should be understood

4:5) is the “Messiah, son of Ephraim” (i.e. Messiah ben Yosef), who prepares the way for Messiah ben David, the messianic savior.

⁷⁴ 448-454; This discussion is very similar (in many places identical) to that in the *Capistrum*, 2:226-235.

⁷⁵ On this tradition of conflating “gag” and “Gog”, see Richard K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature*, p. 85.

⁷⁶ “And when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go forth, and seduce the nations, which are over the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, and shall gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.”

⁷⁷ “*Gog* enim a γαγ, quod Tectum est, dicitur, et in novissimus temporibus maxime futurum est, Antichristi tempore quod *Magog* qui interpretatur de tecto, id est, diabolus exhibit per apertam persecutionem de Antichristo, et suis qui sunt Gog, id est tectum diaboli” (2.14.15, 453).

⁷⁸ “Condescendam eis, et concedam eis propter bonum pacis *Gog* esse quendam magnum diabolum quem ipsi *Bentamalionem* vocant. *Magog* vero gentem eius, gentem videlicet Judaeorum.” (2.14.16, 454).

figuratively or allegorically, not literally.⁷⁹ He argues that the Jewish interpretation of the tradition are “entirely fabulous and false” (2.14.13, 452) and that those who interpret the tradition literally are in error.⁸⁰ As we will see, this is an important point of comparison with Abner/Alfonso.

Related to the Martini’s treatment of Gog and Magog is his reference to the rabbinical apocalyptic tradition that speaks of two Messiah figures rather than just one. According to this tradition, based on an interpretation of Zech 12:10 (“...they have pierced him through, and shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son...”) and appearing in the Talmud tractate T.B. *Sukkah* 52b, a Messiah figure was to be born first from the line of Joseph. When the “Messiah ben Joseph” (also called the “Messiah ben Ephraim”) is killed in battle, a second figure, of the line of David, will come and ask the Lord to resurrect him. This theme was adopted and expanded in the Palestinian Targum and in a number of medieval Jewish texts such as the *Book of Beliefs and Opinions* of Saadyah Gaon (treatise eight, chapter six) and apocalyptic works such as the *Sefer Zerubavel*. In the Targum, the Messiah ben Ephraim is associated with the apocalyptic war of Gog and Magog (Targ. Yer. Ex. 40:11 and Targ. Songs 4:5), and in the writing of Saadyah, it is the Devil figure “Armilus” (Aramaic for Romulus)⁸¹ that will appear during the Wars of Gog and Magog to kill Messiah ben Joseph, and then Messiah ben David will

⁷⁹ E.g. “illa quae in fine eiusdem Ezechielis de Jerusalem, et templo dicta sunt, non utique de terrestri, sed potius de coelesti” (2.14.11, 451). “Quiquid de God & Magog dictum est, mystice debent accipere” (2.14.9, 451).

⁸⁰ “Patet ego [sic] errare cum Judaeis eos qui sumunt cum Judaeis *Gog et Magog*, ad literam” (2.14.15, 453).

⁸¹ Scholarly consensus has linked Armilus with the Aramaic for Romulus. For the bibliography on this question, see Berger, “Three Typological Themes...”, 157 n. 59. Berger, 157-162, links this name with Balaam and Laban, but this interpretation is rejected by Joseph Dan in “Armilus: The Jewish Antichrist and the Origins and Dating of the *Sefer Zerubavel*.” 89 n. 44.

arrive to resurrect him and kill Armilus. In the *Sefer Zerubavel*, the Messiah ben Joseph (there called Neḥemiah ben Ḥushiel) will fight and be killed by the Persian king in Jerusalem. The Messiah ben David (there called Menahem ben Amiel) will then appear and slay him and resurrect ben Joseph.

Importantly, all discussion of the legend of the Messiah ben Joseph in the *Pugio* is based on a few sources, mainly T.B. *Sukkah* 52a, *Bereshit Rabbah* on 49:10, Rashi on Za 12:12, a Midrash on Psalms 92:9 and the Targum.⁸² Not surprisingly, he shows no familiarity with the traditions that maintain ben Joseph was to be killed by Armilus or in the war of Gog and Magog. Supporting his argument with scriptural, Talmudic and mainstream Midrashic quotations only (he does not mention any other Jewish apocalyptic works such as the *Sefer Zerubavel*), Friar Raymond in fact concludes that the two Messiah figures are actually the same,⁸³ an idea that he says is supported by the figure of Jesus himself, who was son of Joseph “not in flesh, but in education and upbringing” and son of David in flesh, according his lineage.⁸⁴ He states that the doctrine that the Messiah ben David was not to be killed does not contain anything contrary to the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, because he only died as a human, and was raised from the dead.⁸⁵ When one tells the Jews this fact, he says, and asks them how they could deny Jesus and believe “so many perversities...without the authority of any prophet explicitly saying so,” they claim that no other possibility could be true, “not even the statement of their teachers,

⁸² Martini discusses the notion of two messias in the *Pugio* in 2.11.9-14 (411-416) and (3.3.21.18-22, 913-918) and in the *Capistrum* 2: 3 *passim*.

⁸³ “Messiam filium Joseph, et filium David idem esse manifestum est” (2.11.14, 415).

⁸⁴ “...non quidem carne, sed educatione sive nutritione” (2.11.15, 416).

⁸⁵ “Nota quod nihil continet ista traditio Domino nostro Iesu Christo contrarium, ad quod scilicet sequitur Messiam filium David non fuisse moriturum” (2.11.13, 412).

which they ought to believe.”⁸⁶ This stubbornness, for Martini, is evinced by the erroneous belief of the Jews in the “two false messiahs,” “Ben Cosbam” and “Bar Cosba” (416). By the former (Ben Cosbam) Martini refers to Simon Bar Kosiba or Kozevah (also known as “Bar Kohba”), the leader and messianic pretender of Jewish war with Rome (CE 132-5). By the latter (Bar Cosba), Martini mistakenly asserts that another false Messiah had already come forth at the time of the destruction of the second temple.⁸⁷

The doctrine of two Messiahs appears repeatedly in the *Mostrador*. In chapter ten, paragraph fifteen, when Abner/Alfonso undertakes a list of the many different and contradictory beliefs held by different Jews (whom he regards as sectarians and heretics), he states that “some of [the Jews] believe that there was to be two Christs, one after the other, and the one [would be] from the line of Joseph, and the other from the line of David.”⁸⁸ In his main discussion in chapter six, paragraphs twenty nine and thirty, Abner/Alfonso does cite some of the same scriptural *testimonia* in this discussion (e.g. Za 1:10), but he does not, as Martini does, cite Rashi’s commentary that this specifically refers to the Messiah ben Joseph. The Rebel charges, in a statement that directly parallels Nahmanides in the *Vikuah* (*Kitvei* 1:307/Maccoby 113) that nowhere in the Talmud or Midrash does it say that the Messiah ben David was to be killed, as Jesus was. He also cites *Eliyahu Rabbah* as a source that alleges the Messiah ben Joseph was to be killed by

⁸⁶ “Cum dicitur igitur Judaeis, unde talis, ac tanta vestra potest esse perversitas, quod sine aliqua Prophetiae alicuius auctoritate hoc expresse dicente duos Messias venturos esse contenditis...respondent, nihil aliud de hac opinione se habere certitudinis, nisi dictum magistrorum suorum quibus credere debent” (2.11.14, 416).

⁸⁷ As Cohen notes, “The notions, however, that another Bar Kozevah lived during the destruction of the second temple and that only 48 ½ years elapsed between the temple’s destruction (70) and the Bar Kokhba rebellion (132) are entirely unfounded” (*The Friars and the Jews* 143).

⁸⁸ “Algunos dellos creen que avien a sser dos Christos, uno empos otro, e que el uno [será] de linage de Joseph, e el otro de linage de David” (329v/2: 421).

Armilus (166v-167r/2: 60-61), a detail never mentioned in the *Pugio*. The Teacher responds in paragraph thirty, he rejects that assertion (177r/2: 83), and claims that

there is not found in any place in the verses [of the Bible] that there was to be a Christ of the line of Joseph, but rather he was named by some of the sages of the Talmud in order to attribute to him the death that is said about the Christ in the verses, and to deny with this the christ-hood of Jesus the Nazarene, who was killed.⁸⁹

Abner/Alfonso explains that the belief in a Messiah ben Joseph derives from a misinterpretation of Za 12:8, in which “the house of David shall be like Gods, like the angel of the Lord,” i.e. there were to be other wise men called “Christs” who came before the Messiah, who was descended from David (177r/2: 84). Abner/Alfonso completely rejects the ideas that there were actually to be two Messiahs, and he accepts the notion that the real Messiah was to be killed (while Martini saw the references to two Messiahs as actually both discussing Jesus, accepting the notion that he was not to be killed). Also, Abner/Alfonso does not link this discussion of two Messiahs to his discussion of Ben Cozeva, which he mentions in chapter six, paragraph thirty (169r/2: 65) and chapter nine, paragraph forty five (280v-281r/2: 319). He does not, as Martini does, confuse the names “Ben Cosbam” and “Bar Cosba” or mention two false Messiahs. Finally, he does not share Martini’s interpretation of the battle of Gog and Magog. When the Rebel alleges that there has to be the battle of Gog and Magog before the coming of the Messiah (281v/2: 321), the Teacher counters that the battle already took place “at the

⁸⁹ “Ca non es fallado en ningun lugar de los viessos que avia a ser Christo proprio de linage de Josep, sinno que le nonbraron algunos de los sabios del Talmud para ponerle la matança que es dicha en los viessos del Christo, e negar con esto la christedad de Jhesu Nazareno, que fue matado” (177r/2: 83).

time of Antioch, king of Greece” (“al tiempo de Antiocho, rrey de Yavan” 284r/2: 328), i.e. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (176-164 BCE). He explains that Gog and Magog, according to T.B. *Sanhedrin* 94a, are the people of Senacherib, i.e. Syria, over whom Antiochus ruled centuries later. His reading of Gog and Magog, completely separated from the issue of the two Messiahs, is also separated from discussion of the devil Bentamylon, whom Abner/Alfonso discusses elsewhere. Compared to Martini’s statements that “Whatever is said of Gog and Magog should be taken in a mystical sense” and “They clearly are in error who take Gog and Magog literally”,⁹⁰ Abner/Alfonso reads the Gog and Magog legend historically and claims that the battle already passed. In fact, of Abner/Alfonso’s idea that Gog and Magog relates to Senacherib and his people, Martini comments that “Besides, there can be no greater madness than to seriously maintain that God ever wanted to make Senacherib or anyone else substantially different, especially along with his people.”⁹¹

One final aspect of Abner/Alfonso’s discussion of the legends of the Messiah ben Joseph and of Gog and Magog can be mentioned. In his treatment of the legend of Gog and Magog, Abner/Alfonso cites the specific belief that connects the battle of Gog and Magog with the fall of the kingdom of Edom. As we explained in summarizing Abner/Alfonso’s third polemical letter, the typical Jewish understanding of the prophecies of the book of Daniel (especially Dan. 7:1-17) explained that the “four beasts” that represented the “four kings” were the kingdoms of Babylonia, Media-Persia, Greece, and

⁹⁰ “Quiquid de God & Magog dictum est, mystice debent accipere” (2.14.9, 451) and “Patet ego [*sic*] errare cum Judaeis eos qui sumunt cum Judaeis *Gog et Magog*, ad literam” (2.14.15, 453).

⁹¹ “Alioqui nulla major potest esse insania quam serio dicere Deum voluisse unquam Senacheribum, vel quempiam alium substantialiter facere alterum, et maxime cum omni gente sua” (2.14.12 452).

Edom, usually understood as Rome. In chapter eight of the *Mostrador*, the Teacher lists five “errors” of the traditional Jewish view, namely that the kingdoms of Media and Persia are two kingdoms, not one, that the assertion that the kingdom of Rome, which was to fall at the end of the four reigns, is still stable is also not true, that the kingdom of Rome was not the fourth kingdom, that the kingdom of Rome was not the kingdom of “Edom”, and that Edom does not represent the kingdom of the Christians (236v/2: 210). Strangely, Abner/Alfonso’s interpretation takes Edom to refer to the Jews themselves who, through the conquest and forced conversions of John Hyrcanus, were mixed with Idumea. Abner concludes that “those of Esau were not to fall during the reign of the Christ of the lineage of David, but rather in the reign of the Christ of the lineage of Joseph, and as we already proved, the Maccabeen kings were called “Christ of the lineage of Joseph.”⁹² In addition, Abner/Alfonso mentions the *Sefer Zerubavel* on the previous folio and, although this reference does not specially relate to his connection of the question of Edom with that of the Messiah ben Joseph, it shows his familiarity with this work which presents the figure of Armilus in association with Christianity and specifically connects him to the Messiah ben Joseph. (Interestingly, Abner/Alfonso also cites Saadya Gaon, whose *Book of Beliefs and Opinions* disseminated the Armilus legend (VIII.6), although his references to Saadya do not make reference to this passage.) At the very end of his discussion in chapter eight, paragraph twelve, the Teacher cites *Eliyahu Rabbah* just as the Rebel did in chapter six, paragraph twenty nine (167r/2: 61) concerning Armilus. Although Armilus plays a very different role in Abner/Alfonso’s scheme of history than in

⁹² “...non avian los de Esau a caer en poder del Christo de linage de David, sinon en poder del Christo de linage de Josep, e como lo que ya provamos que los rrees de los Macabeos ffuerono llamados “Christo de linage de Josep”” (246v/2: 235).

the *Sefer Zerubavel*, being the “Christ” of the people of Esau, i.e. an antichrist, such details show his familiarity with the legend and prove that in Abner/Alfonso’s interpretation, the legend of Edom is directly connected with that of the Messiah ben Joseph. Abner/Alfonso also cites the “Libro de los doze ssignos” (234r/2: 205), i.e. the apocalyptic *Ten Signs* (not, as Hecht and Mettmann assert, the *Otot ha-Mashiah*, or *Signs of the Messiah*)⁹³ stating the belief that Gog and Magog were to come before the Messiah. Because he also cites this work twice in the *Teshuvot la-meharef* in connection to the Messiah ben Joseph (42r/74rb-va), it is clear that for Abner/Alfonso, the discussion of Armilus, Gog, and Edom all formed part of the same discussion.

This is important because such is not the case in Martini’s polemics. I was unable to find any mention of Armilus in the *Capistrum* or *Pugio*, and Martini only cites from Saadya Gaon on three occasions (493, 541, 867), but none of these citations match Abner/Alfonso’s citations of Saadya and none of these citations relate to the issue of the two Messiahs. Furthermore, Martini does not cite from the *Sefer Zerubavel* or *Ten Signs*. We have already seen that Martini’s interpretation of Gog and Magog is anti-historical and figurative or even mystical. Martini also discusses the four historical kingdoms understood in Daniel’s prophecy in the *Capistrum* (III.4ff) and the *Pugio* (II.5), and his conclusions and sources contrast with Abner/Alfonso’s there as well. In his explanation of Daniel’s dream interpretation for Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:27-45), Martini sets out to prove above all that Jesus is the “stone cut from the mountain without hands” (2:45), and in doing so, he shows that he does not reject the standard order of the four kingdoms. In 2.5.10, he recounts Daniel’s interpretation of the parts of the statue matching the four kingdoms that

⁹³ The question of the identification of this work will be discussed in the next supplement chapter.

will be destroyed by the “rock taken from the mountain.” The golden head matched the king’s reign, the silver arms and chest matched the kingdom of Persia and Medea, the bronze belly and hips are the Greeks, and the iron legs are the Romans (346). From this summary, we see two important differences from Abner/Alfonso’s interpretation. First, Martini groups Medea and Persia together, as the Jews typically did. Second, he takes the Romans to be the fourth kingdom. Abner/Alfonso explicitly rejects these two ideas, arguing that Persia and Media are second and third kingdoms, respectively, and that Greece, not Rome is the fourth (240r/2: 219). In addition, Martini accepts the argument that the Romans are the children of Esau, or Edom, as they maintained in the traditional Jewish view. As he explains in 2.10.8, “In my opinion, moreover, not only the Romans are not only said by the Jews to be, according to the flesh, Edom itself, but all others who persecuted and persecute the people of God are said by analogy to be Esau.”⁹⁴ Obviously, because they were arguing for different conclusions, each made use of different citations from rabbinic literature.

Another extremely important issue treated by Martini and Abner/Alfonso (but based on different sources) is the Trinity, especially the notion that God’s triune nature is evident in Biblical verses in which God is mentioned three times in a row. To be sure, there are certain definite similarities between the two. For example, both writers cite Petrus Alphonsi’s ideas on the Trinity from his *Dialogus*. Also, in discussing the divine attributes, both Abner/Alfonso and Martini make similar statements about the three “substances” within the single personhood of Jesus. In 3.3.4.4, Martini explains that “as it

⁹⁴ “Romani autem, ut opinior, non solum ipsi secundum carnem dicuntur, et dicti sunt a Judaeis Edom; vel filii Esau; sed et omnes alii qui persecuti sunt et persequuntur populum Dei dicuntur Esau propter imitationem” (400).

is said of the Messiah that there are three substances in him that are each different, namely body, soul, and the wisdom of God...God and man are not in the Messiah two persons, but one, nor [are there] two Messiahs, but one.”⁹⁵ This explanation is echoed very closely by Abner/Alfonso’s statement considered above, attributed to St. Thomas, that “just as God is one substance and three persons, without there being multiplicity in the divinity, so...there was in the Christ one person and three substances, which are divinity and rational soul and human flesh, without there being multiplicity in the one person, which is the person of Christ.”⁹⁶

Despite such similarities, however, there are important differences in the discussion of the Trinity in each work. We have already considered Abner/Alfonso’s use of Petrus Alfonsi, specifically his interpretation of the Tetragrammaton. Martini also mentions Alfonsi’s argument in 3.3.4.4 (685) of the *Pugio*, the same section just mentioned where he discusses the substances of Christ. In Martini’s citation, there is no specific mention of Alfonsi’s “substance, wisdom, and will” (or of Augustine’s “memory, intelligence, and will”) and there is no question of any disagreement with Alfonsi over his statement that the substance of the Trinity is in the Father. However, Abner/Alfonso, we can remember, disagrees with Alfonsi on this point, insisting that “each of the three persons of God is the Substance of God.”⁹⁷ Also, Abner/Alfonso does cite Alfonsi’s three

⁹⁵ “Indicatur, cum dicitur de Messia quod tres substantiae quae sunt in eo ab invicem differentes, scilicet corpus, anima, et Dei sapientia...non sunt in Messia Deus, et homo, duae personae, sed una; nec duo messiae, sed unus” (685).

⁹⁶ “E assi escrivió Ssanto Tomas que...assi como en Dios es una sustancia e tres perssonas, de ssin que den muchiguamiento en la ssustancia de la divinidad, assi, al contrario, ovo en el Christo una perssona e tres ssustancias, que sson la divinidad e la alma de rrazon e la carne umanal, de ssin que den muchiguamiento en la una perssona, que es la perssona del Christo” (147r/2: 17).

⁹⁷ “...cada una de la tres perssonas de Dios es sustancia de Dios” (140r/1: 270).

attributes and lists (without identifying his source) Augustine's as well. Martini mentions Alfonsi only in reference to his interpretation of the letters of the Tetragrammaton, whereas Abner/Alfonso discusses that issue in chapter three, not chapter five, where he takes issue with Alfonsi.⁹⁸

There is one very significant point of difference in the Trinitarian discussions of Martini and Abner/Alfonso, showing the different source material used by each. In her extensive discussion of the Trinity in Abner/Alfonso's *Teshuvot la-Meharef* (*A Study*, chapter four), Gershenzon notes the importance of *Midrash on Psalms* 50:1 in which the triple mention of God (El, Elohim, YHWE) is discussed by R. Simlai at the request of the *minim* (probably Christians).⁹⁹ Rabbi Simlai explains that the name is mentioned three times "to teach that the Holy One, blessed be He, created the universe by three names that stand for the three goodly attributes of wisdom (*hokhma*), understanding (*binah*) and knowledge (*da'at*)" (Braude, ed. *Midrash on Psalms* 1: 468). As she notes, a good part of chapter two of Abner/Alfonso's *Teshuvot* was built around this Midrash, which is also found in different form in *Genesis Rabbah* 8:9. Abner/Alfonso cites the Midrash on Psalms in the *Mostrador* on 86v-87r/1: 162 (but cf. also 33r/1: 53) as part of his discussion of God's multiplicity as shown by repetitions of his name in scripture. Martini also includes this Midrash in 3.1.4.11 of the *Pugio*, along with a mention of the *Genesis Rabbah* version and a number of other midrashim in which he also sees God described as triune in nature, such as a Midrash by Moses ha-Darshan on Gen 42:6 and *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* on Ec. 4:6. Given

⁹⁸ He also discusses the issue in chapter six, paragraph thirty. "E era la sangre sobre el columbriello e sobre los dos lunbrales como figura del nombre de Dios, que es de las tres letras *Yod, He, Vav*, que cada una dellas muestra "Dios" por dar sinificança de las persionas de la Trinidat de Dios" (175r-v/2: 79).

⁹⁹ See also the Hecht's brief discussion of the issue, 485ff.

the importance of this Midrash for Abner/Alfonso's arguments, a comparison of this possible point of borrowing from Martini is worth considering in more detail.

Baer has alleged that this citation is one example of what he sees as Martini's "forged midrashim", sources he deliberately misquoted or invented to support his cause ("The Forged Midrashim of Raymond Martini" 41). He also alleges ("The Kabbalistic Doctrine" 279 n. 3) that Abner/Alfonso took his citation from Martini's forgery in the *Pugio*, citing as evidence that both polemicists omit the word "tovot" after "midot". Lieberman, however, in his consideration of the issue ("Raymond Martini and His Alleged Forgeries" 97-8), has noted that in all but one of the editions of the Midrash, the word is absent, thus undermining Baer's claims of forgery (and of transmission to Abner/Alfonso) (cf. Gershenzon, *A Study* 120 n. 73 on this). In addition, there are a number of other important points of difference that invalidate Baer's claim. Most importantly, Martini's text cites the three attributes as "ḥokhma ve-da'at ve-tevunah", changing the order of the second two terms, whereas Abner/Alfonso lists "wisdom and understanding one thing from another and knowledge" ("ssapiençia, e entender una cosas [sic] de otra, e saber" 86v/1: 162). Abner/Alfonso lists them in this same order in both the Hebrew (16r) and Castilian (47ra) versions of the *Teshuvot* as well as in the *Libro de la ley* (3r) and actually gives both the Hebrew and Castilian words in the Castilian *Teshuvot*, thus confirming his translation and his intended order: "...their substances are, in Hebrew, 'ḥokhma and tevunah and da'at, that is to say 'wisdom' and 'understanding' and 'knowledge'."¹⁰⁰ Importantly, both orders given by Abner/Alfonso and Martini can both be found in different editions of the Midrash (Compare, for example, Buber's, Padua's,

¹⁰⁰ "...las substancialidades dellas, que son, segund el ebrayco, *hocma* e *tebuna* e *daad*, que quiere dezir 'sapiencia' e 'entender' e 'saber' (47rb/1:25).

and Kohen's editions), showing this difference in order to be a textual variant and not simply an error. In addition, Abner/Alfonso does not list any of the other material which follows the citation in Martini's text such as the parallel passage in *Genesis Rabbah*, the Midrash by Moses ha-Darshan, or the *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* on 4:9-12, even though these passages would all support Abner/Alfonso's case and even though he does quote from Moses ha-Darshan, *Genesis Rabbah*, and *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* elsewhere in the *Mostrador*. Nevertheless, despite Abner/Alfonso's failure to cite the other specific examples cited by Martini, his discussion of the issue is much longer overall, including much more of the Midrash on Psalms. Abner/Alfonso's failure to at least mention other versions or to include the other relevant material cited by Martini suggests he did not consult Martini on this point. Given the importance of this Midrash in Abner/Alfonso's Trinitarian argument (especially in the *Teshuvot*), its absence in Abner/Alfonso's text suggests no familiarity with Martini's text (which would otherwise have provided him with more relevant material to develop his argument). The different order in which the attributes are listed further supports the argument that each polemicist was using different source material and that Abner/Alfonso's sources did not include Martini's *Pugio*.

There remains one final point that deserves comparison to support the argument that Abner/Alfonso did not draw from Martini's polemics: the names of the Messiah according to an interpretation of Isaiah 9:5 (or 6), ("For a child is born unto us...and his name was called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"). The string of names is discussed by Martini (*Pugio* 3.1.9)¹⁰¹ and Abner/Alfonso

¹⁰¹ Domingo Muñoz León has considered Martini's treatment of the subject in "Targum, Midrash y Talmud en la obra "Pugio Fidei" de Raimundo Martí: Los nombres y atributos divinos del Niño-Hijo de Is 9,5-6."

(*Mostrador* VI.18), each drawing slightly different conclusions. The first issue concerns the reading of the terms as connected or separated. In Hebrew, there is some ambiguity as to where to separate the terms,¹⁰² yielding between four and eight names (“Wonderful (,) Counselor (,) Mighty (,) God (,) Father (,) Everlasting (,) Prince (of) Peace”) and Martini lists each separately (“Admirabilem, Consiliarium, Deum, Fortem, Patrem sempiternum, Principem, Pacem: vel Patrem sempiternitatis, principem pacis” 529). Martini criticizes Rashi for dividing the words without paying attention to the nominative and accusative cases, and presenting them in a different order. In the *Mostrador*, however, this passage appears as “Maravilloso consegero, Dios fuerte, padre de sienpre, Prinçipe de paz” (153r/2: 31), and because Abner/Alfonso does not cite this text in any of his surviving Hebrew texts, it is not clear at first if this translation represents his own interpretation or possibly that of another translator. Abner/Alfonso’s comments, however, make his understanding of the terms clear. The terms “padre de sienpre” and “prinçipe de paz” are common translations of this verse, and Abner/Alfonso states that “the name ‘Father’ and ‘Prince’ are, according to the Hebrew, linked to the words close to them, and should not enter in the count.”¹⁰³ In addition to this, he explains elsewhere that “he was called ‘Marvelous Counselor’ because he showed marvelous counsel” (“E ffue llamado otrossi ‘Maravilloso conssegero’, ca mostró maravilloso connssejo...” 157v/2: 40). He also equates the title “Dios ffuerte” with “Dios conusco”, i.e. Emmanuel, interpreting it as a single word representing a single name (157v/2: 41). It is clear from his comments that Abner/Alfonso reads this string of titles as four names, whereas Martini reads eight.

¹⁰² “שמו פלא יועץ אל גבור אביעד שר-שלום”

¹⁰³ “El nonbre ‘Padre’ e ‘Prinçipe’ sson, segunt el ebrayco, arrimados a los nonbres que sson cerca dellos, e non deven entrar en la cuenta” (154v/2: 34).

Both Martini and Abner/Alfonso show familiarity with the standard Jewish interpretation of the names, in which the terms are not all taken to refer to God, but instead to king Hezekiah (8th-7th centuries BCE). Although Abner/Alfonso makes contradictory statements on this issue,¹⁰⁴ his interpretation seems to be that the terms of Is 9:5 do refer to Hezekiah, but only “superficially,” and they “were also said for the spiritual Christ.”¹⁰⁵ Even though Abner/Alfonso resists the Jewish interpretation, he does allow that there is some sort of connection with Hezekiah. Martini, on the other hand, resists this association, even on a literal level. Instead, he argues that these terms “are not understood to refer literally to Hezekiah, but to him whose name is *Hiskias*...that is, the Messiah” and “the strength or power of God.”¹⁰⁶ In fact, he calls it “absurd” to attribute the names to the historical Hezekiah in any sense. In their disparate readings, both Martini and Abner/Alfonso cite T.B. *Sanhedrin* 94a which describes Hezekiah’s “eight” names, but they do so to different ends. Martini uses this text to conclude that all the names listed in Isaiah refer to the same person, “Hiskías”, who he claims is the Messiah. Abner/Alfonso, on the other hand, cites Abraham ibn Ezra who interprets all these as names for the child, from which he concludes that as Christ is also called “Emmanuel” as well as “all of the other names which show the incarnation of divinity in the humanity of Christ. And this does not contradict what is said in the book *Sanhedrin* and also in *Eliyahu*

¹⁰⁴ Compare “Otrossi conviene a dezir que el moço por qui dixo el viesso “Ca Ninno es naçido a nos, e ffigio es dado a nos”, non ffue dicho esto porYezechias, como lo tovieron los glosadores estoricos e algunos de los sabios del Talmud, ssinon ssi fuese esto en manera de allegoria e de arrimamiento por rrembrança ssolamient” (157r/2: 40) with “...el viesso que dize: “Ca moço es nacido, e ffigio es dado a nos” fue dicho por el rrey Yezechias” (275v/2: 307). Cf. *Pugio Fidei* 3.1.9.2-4, p. 529-30.

¹⁰⁵ “Ffue dicho otrossi por el Christo spiritual” (275v/2: 307).

¹⁰⁶ “...non de Ezechia intelligatur ad literam, sed de illo cui hoc nomen חזקיה *Hiskias* secundum interpretationem optime convenit, id est, de Messia” (530). “...id est, fortitudo vel virtus Dei” (530).

Rabbah, that Hezekiah has eight names...This is according to the way of allegory, as already said, not according to history.”¹⁰⁷ Abner/Alfonso cites a nearby section of *Sanhedrin* 94a, (“The Holy One, blessed be He, wished to appoint Hezekiah as the Messiah and Sennacherib as Gog and Magog...”) various times throughout the *Mostrador*, but every time he does so, as we have seen, it is to support a historical reading of the Gog and Magog legend in which Sennacherib, i.e. the Persians, is equated with Gog and Magog, thus indicating that the battle of Gog and Magog took place in the third century BCE “at the time of Antioch, king of Greece” (“al tiempo de Antiocho, rrey de Yavan” 283v/2: 328). Martini, however, who discusses this section of T.B. *Sanhedrin* 94a on two occasions (2.14.11-13 and 3.1.11.4-5, 451-2 and 530-1), his interpretation is different from Abner/Alfonso’s. First of all, as we noted, Martini argues against equating Sennacherib with Gog or Magog (451-2), but more importantly, however, Martini rejects the idea that God “wished to appoint Hezekiah as the Messiah”, exclaiming cryptically:

Woe is me, traitors betrayed, and they betrayed through the betrayal of traitors. I judge that it is hidden from no one how fabulous and how false the statement is according to the measure of judgment...that God wanted to make Hezekiah the Messiah, and [how false are] many [statements] of this kind which I omitted out of distaste for prolixity. Such an argument is effective [in showing] that some

¹⁰⁷ “E por ennde conviene a dezir, ssegund esto, que el Christo seria llamado otrosi “Emanuel” e todos los otros nombres que muestran el investimiento de la divinidad en la umanidad del Christo. E non contradize esto a lo que dixieron en el libro “Çanhedrim”, e otrosi en el libro “Eliahu Rraba”, que ocho nombres avia Yezechias...Ca sseria esto ensegunt manera de allegoria, como dicho es, non segund estoria” (154v/2: 34). NB: Mettmann’s emendation of “ocho” to “quatro” is incorrect, despite the grouping of the names into four in Castilian.

Jewish traditions are true, some false, and they are not always to be completely accepted.¹⁰⁸

Thus the Talmudic dictum that Abner/Alfonso accepts and uses to prove that the battle of Gog and Magog was actually the battle of King Antioch with the Maccabean kings is rejected by Martini.

The final point in considering the different interpretations of Martini and Abner/Alfonso regarding the names listed in Isaiah concerns their explanations of the aberrant writing of Is 9:6 and Nehemiah 2:13, in which the Hebrew letter “mem” is written differently than expected (closed (מ) rather than open (מ)—i.e. “לְמַרְכָּה” and open rather than closed—i.e. “מֵהַ”, respectively). In his interpretation of this oddity, Martini explains that the closed mem in Is 9:6 is proof that the Messiah had to be born of a “closed virgin contrary to custom and nature.”¹⁰⁹ He also sees in the closed mem the date of the Messiah’s birth, calculating 675 years from Isaiah’s prophecy to the destruction of the Temple, which is reduced to 600 (the numeric value of the closed mem) when you subtract 33 years (the age of Jesus at his death) and 42 years (the number of years from the death of Jesus to the destruction of the Temple in 70). His interpretation of Ne 2:13 (which is not given in this section, but 235 pages later in 3.3.8.9, 763-4) also follows a numerical scheme. The open mem (whose numeric value is forty) is explained as the number of years from the passion of Christ to the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem. To his explanation, Martini adds the statement from T.B. *Shabbat* 104a that “an open mem

¹⁰⁸ 2.14.13: “Vae mihi, proditores prodiderunt, et proditione prodiorum prodiderunt. Quam fabulosum et quam falsum sit quicquid hic dictum est de mensura iudicii...quod Deus voluit facere Ezechiam messiam, et multa hujusmodi quae fastidio prolixitatis omisi, neminem latere puto. Quod est efficax argumentum ad hoc quod traditiones Judaicae partim sunt verae, partim falsae, et non semper totaliter admittendae, quod optime docemur ubi dictum est” (452).

¹⁰⁹ “...de Virgine clausa contra morem et naturam” (532).

signifies an open teaching (מאמר) and a closed mem signifies a closed teaching” (764; he translates this as “mem aperta significat rem apertam...”).

Abner/Alfonso’s interpretation of the closed mem follows the text of T.B. *Sanhedrin* 94a more closely. First, he explains that the closed mem signifies that “Christ’s reign was to be closed for a time.”¹¹⁰ He then cites the explanation of R. Tanhum in T.B. *Sanhedrin* 94a that when God wished to appoint Hezekiah as the Messiah, the Attribute of Justice said that David, who sang more hymns and psalms, deserved it more than Hezekiah, who did not sing at all. In response, the mem was closed. Abner/Alfonso accepts and uses this interpretation to interpret the eight names of Is 9:5 as literally meaning Hezekiah, and figuratively meaning Jesus. “See it is proved here by its words that that chapter [Is 9:6] was said for Hezekiah and was said for the Christ, but that God did not want Hezekiah to be Christ. For this reason they said that those were names of the Christ, although they were names of Hezekiah.”¹¹¹ In his explanation of the open mem (rather than closed) in Ne 2:13, he states that “the masters said that this was to show that when the walls of Jerusalem, which were breached, were closed, then the reign that was closed will be open and manifest, and this will be at the coming of the Christ.”¹¹² This explanation is given in slightly clearer form in the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*: “When the walls of Jerusalem that had been breached at the time of the Babylonian exile were

¹¹⁰ “...por dar a entender de[] Christo que ssu sennorio avia a estar çerrado algun tienpo” (158r/2: 42).

¹¹¹ “Evad aqui provado por sus palabras dells que aquel capitulo ffue dicho por Yezechias e ffue dicho por el Christo, ssinon que non quiso Dios que fuesse Yezechias Christo. E por esso dixieron que aquellos nonbres eran nonbres del Christo, maguera que eran nonbres de Yezechias” (158r/2: 42).

¹¹² “E dixieron los maestros que esto ffue assi por mostrar que quando ffueren çerrados los muros de Jherusalem, que eran quebrantados, entonoçe sserá abierto e magnifiesto el pñicipadgo que era cerrado, e que esto sseria a la venida del Christo” (158r/2: 42). This same explanation is given in *Teshuvot la-Meharef* (Hebrew 45v/Castilian 75va). Hecht (417 n. 772) refers here to David Kimḥi on Is 9:5 and Ibn Ezra on Ne 2:13, whose commentaries Abner/Alfonso knew well.

“closed”, the authority of the Messiah “opened.”¹¹³ Contrary to Martini, Abner/Alfonso does not mention in his explanations of the closed and open mem the idea of the virgin birth, the numerical significance of the letters, or the statement from T.B. *Shabbat* 104a.

The results of comparing Abner/Alfonso’s and Martini’s use of Talmudic and Midrashic sources are also supported by a comparison of their Christian and Arabic sources. Although we will discuss Abner/Alfonso’s Arabic sources in more detail below, it is useful here to consider a few key differences. In general, the divergence in their use of Arabic sources mirrors similar differences that can be easily seen in their Christian sources. As noted, Abner/Alfonso rarely cites from Christian sources, including only a handful of references to Augustine, Aquinas, Bede, and Boethius, and few others. Martini, on the other hand, refers to a much wider variety of Christian sources. In the *Pugio* and *Capistrum*—Martini’s other texts such as the *Explanatio simboli Apostolorum* and *De Seta Machometi* [sic] do not brook any obvious comparison with Abner/Alfonso’s texts, and are thus beyond the purview of this consideration—he cites many authors that never appear in any of Abner/Alfonso’s works, including ancient authors such as Seneca (*Pugio* 198 and 213 and *Capistrum* 2: 24) and Cicero (*Pugio* 198), Christian authors such as Chrysostum (199), Bernard (212-13), Gregory of Nyssa (205), Isidore (*Pugio* 212 and *Capistrum* 1: 170 and 2: 248), and Tertullian (*Capistrum* 1: 130-32). He also mentions Christian works not cited by Abner/Alfonso such as Jerome’s *Adversus Jovinianum* (*Pugio* 198)—Abner/Alfonso’s references to Jerome, we can remember, deal with his Biblical translation only—, Gregory’s homilies on Ezekiel (229), and important works of Augustine’s such as the *De*

¹¹³ "כי כשיסתמו חומות ירושלים שהיו פרוצים בזמן גלות בבל אז תפתח המשרה של משיח" (45v/Hecht 417). The Castilian translation adds to the statement: "...quando fuessen çerrados los muros de Jherusalem, que eran quebrantados en el tienpo de la catividad de Babilonna, entonça se abririan, e se començaria el prinçipadgo del Christo" (75va/100).

Doctrina Christiana (211). As for Arabic sources that do not appear in Abner/Alfonso's texts,¹¹⁴ Martini cites both religious and philosophical texts in the *Pugio* and *Capistrum*. Among traditional religious texts, he cites the Qur'ān and various *Ḥadīth* (e.g. *Pugio* 749-50, 365-6), as well as texts such as the "Ciar", i.e. Ibn Hishām's rendition of Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* on the life of the prophet Muḥammad (*Capistrum* 2: 177). Among later Muslim writers, he cites al-Rāzī's *Kitāb Shukū 'alā Jālīnūs* (*Doubts About Galen*) (*Pugio* 231) against Galen, Avicenna's "Alixarat" i.e. the *al-Ishārāt wa-l-Tanbīhāt* (*Pointers and Reminders*) (*Pugio* 197) and his "Amuge", i.e. *al-Najāt* (*The Salvation*) (*Pugio* 178-9 and 205; and *Capistrum* 1: 250), as well as a few other of his short citations of other commentaries (Cortabarría 282). Martini also cites Averroes' commentary on the *Arjuza* of Avicenna (198) and Al-Ghazālī's *Mīzān al-'amal* (*Pugio* 199, 213, 368), and a few other of his lesser-known works as well. He also makes frequent mention of his *Munqidh min al-dalāl* (*Pugio* 192-4, 208-10, etc.),¹¹⁵ never mentioned by name in Abner/Alfonso's works and cited only once, in a famous quote derived, in all likelihood, from Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*. Interestingly, Martini never mentions Ibn Ṭufayl or Avicenna's so-called "Oriental Philosophy" as Abner/Alfonso does numerous times.

Beyond these many differences in source material between Abner/Alfonso and Martini, however, it is possible to point to one passage that appears in different versions in the writings of the two authors. In paragraph twenty-two of chapter five, in his

¹¹⁴ For consideration of Martini's Arabic texts, see Cortabarría, "La connaissance des textes arabes chez Raymond Martin, O.P. et sa position en face de l'Islam". He does not consider the citations found in the *Capistrum Iudaeorum*.

¹¹⁵ These citations have been studied by Poggi, *Un Classico della spiritualità musulmana* 55-79, in the section entitled "Il minqid e il Pugio Fidei".

discussion of God as the primary cause of the existence, the Teacher quotes a statement from Al-Ghazālī that

God’s knowledge of things is relative and is not related to other [kinds of] knowledge, which are relations of the knower and the known thing from without and as such one can change one of the relative terms without changing the other. This is like the pillar being on the right of Pedro and afterward being on his left, without the pillar moving. This is the nature of God’s knowledge; although the known thing is changed from without, God’s knowledge of it does not change. And the sage Ibn Rushd agrees on this, as he wrote in the *Book of Eternal Knowledge*.¹¹⁶

This argument can be found in Al-Ghazālī’s *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa (Incoherence of the Philosophers)* (13:9-10), and is quoted faithfully by Ibn Rushd in his *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut (Incoherence of the Incoherence)* and again, in slightly modified form, in his *Dedicatory Epistle* (the so-called *Damīna*). In Al-Ghazālī’s original version, there is no mention of a pillar or any other object, and what Al-Ghazālī calls a “pure relation” between knower and known is said only to be “like your being to the right or the left” of something (“ka-kaunika yamīnan wa-shamālan”) (140). In his *Epistle*, Averroes adds to the original text, stating that Al-Ghazālī

claimed that knowledge and what is known are related; and just as one of two things may change and the other related thing not change in itself, so it is likely to

¹¹⁶ “Como escribió el algazel en el “Libro de las contradicciones” que saber Dios las cosas es rrelativo, e non rrelaçion como otros sabers, que sson rrelaciones entre el sabidor e la cosa sabida de parte de fuera, e que assi sse puede mudar uno de los rrelativos sin que sse mude el otro rrelativo. E esto es como estar el pilar al diestro de Pedro e despues tornarse al siniestro, ssin que sse mude el pilar. Tal es la rrazon en el saber de Dios; ca maguera que sse demude la cosa sabida de fuera, non se muda el saber de Dios a ella. E en esto concuerta el sabio Aben Rrost, como lo escribió en el “Libro del saber eterno”...” (139r/1: 268).

occur with things in God's knowledge...an example of that...is for there to be a single column on Zayd's right, then for it to come to be on his left while Zayd would not have changed in himself.

Abner/Alfonso's text in the *Mostrador* is taken from Averroes' *Epistle*, not directly from Al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* or from Averroes' transcription of the text in his *Tahāfut*. This fact is important, because it provides a possible point of comparison with Martini, who provides a Latin translation of the epistle in part one, chapter twenty-five (231-233) of the *Pugio*.¹¹⁷ This seems like the most likely source for Abner/Alfonso's knowledge, given that his knowledge of original Arabic sources seems to have been very limited. A close comparison of the citations, however, shows there to be important details that undermine this possibility and show Abner/Alfonso's use of Arabic sources in Hebrew translation. First, the text in the *Epistle* specifically states it is a "column" ("uṣṭuwāna") on Zayd's right, a detail that is translated in Abner/Alfonso's text as "column" ("...el pilar al diestro de Pedro...") but in Martini's text, it is translated as a "candlestick" or "candelabrum" rather than a column: ("...quod erit candelabrum ad dextram Zeydi..." 251).¹¹⁸ Second, Abner/Alfonso's text reads "E esto es como estar el pilar al diestro de Pedro e despues tornarse al siniestro, ssin que sse mude *el pilar*" (italics mine), whereas Martini's text reads "The candelabrum will be on the right of Zayd, and then is moved to his left, and *Zayd* is not moved in himself."¹¹⁹ Martini's translation follows the Arabic text on this point, but

¹¹⁷ This text was edited by Asín Palacios in "El averroísmo teológico de Santo Tomás de Aquino." 325-31 and again in Alonso, *Teología de Averroes*, 356-65.

¹¹⁸ In the thirteenth-century Latin-Arabic *Vocabulista in Arabigo*, sometimes attributed to Martini, the only similar listing is "portico" for "uṣṭuwān" (Schiaparelli, ed.).

¹¹⁹ "Quod erit candelabrum ad dextram Zaydi, deinde transferatur ad sinistram ipsius; et *Zaydus* nondum est in seipso mutatus" (251; italics mine).

Abner/Alfonso's rendition represents an alternative, proposed by some modern critics without any knowledge of Abner/Alfonso's text.¹²⁰ Finally, and most importantly, Martini cites the text as "epistola ad amicum" (252), whereas Abner/Alfonso nowhere states that the text is a letter, and refers to it only as the "Libro del saber eterno" (*Mostrador* 139r/1: 268; *Ofrenda* 4vb; Castilian *Teshuvot* 49rb) or "Sefer ha-mada ha-kadmon" ("Book of Ancient Science") (*Teshuvot* 20r). Mettmann, not knowing which text this referred to, proposed Ibn Rushd's *Kitāb al-Kashf 'an manāhij al-adilla/The Exposition on the Methods of Proof*. Gershenzon identified this text as the *Faṣl al-maqāl*, but did not comment on the title or the question of the Hebrew version of the *Epistle*. As Vajda notes, however, there are two surviving Hebrew translations of Averroes' *Epistle*, apparently made separately from the *Faṣl* and surviving in four different manuscripts.¹²¹ Importantly, the translation by Todros Todrosi in the B.N. Hebrew MS 989, f. 29v (and similarly in the other manuscripts), is titled "Chapter by Ibn Rushd on Ancient Knowledge."¹²² Although this translation was surely made after the *Mostrador* was written (Todros' main translations are dated 1337), the second, anonymous translation, in a MS from 1472 (but very likely

¹²⁰ Gauthier changes the text to read "the column" instead of "Zayd", explaining his emendation in his edition of the *Faṣl* on 50 nn. 83-4, but Hourani argues against him in his note on 118 n. 206 of *Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* and his textual note D, 18-19, in his edition of the *Faṣl al-maqāl*. Although I was personally unable to examine the manuscripts containing the two Hebrew versions of the *Epistle* (Paris B.N. Hebrew 910 and 989) to see if this alternative reading is present there, Hourani claims that both manuscripts agree with his reading, making Abner/Alfonso's reading extremely puzzling.

¹²¹ According to Steinschneider, the *Epistle* was not translated into Hebrew with the *Faṣl* itself (*Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters* 277), although he does give notice of two of the manuscripts containing the translation by Todros without identifying it correctly (182). Golb, who edited and published in 1956-7 the Hebrew translations of the *Faṣl* was also unaware of a Hebrew translation of the *Epistle*. He noted, however, in his *Addenda and Corrigenda* (too late for his own study and edition) that Vajda had already published in 1954 a notice about two separate Hebrew versions of the *Epistle*: the first, translated by Abner/Alfonso's younger contemporary Todros Todrosi (who translated various works by Averroes and Avicenna), is found in B.N. Hebrew MS 989, ff. 29r-30r and MS 1023 ff. 162r-3r and British Museum Add. 27.559, ff. 309v-311v. The second, an anonymous translation, is found in B.N. Hebrew MS 910, ff. 65r-v.

¹²² "מאמר לאבן רשד בדעת הקדום."

translated much earlier), also states it is “the epistle of...Ibn Rushd about the subject of the doubt occurring about knowledge of the eternal.”¹²³ These titles match a section of the original Arabic text of the *Epistle*, which speaks of “the doubt occurring with respect to the knowledge of the Eternal.”¹²⁴ Likewise, Calo Calonymos (i.e. Kalonymos ben David the Younger, the sixteenth-century Neopolitan Hebrew-to-Latin translator of the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*)¹²⁵, cites the *Epistle* in 1527 in his *De Mundi Creatione*, based on the Hebrew translation, as “libello suo de scientia antiqua.”¹²⁶ Abner/Alfonso’s citations of “The Book of Ancient Knowledge” or “Libro del Saber Eterno” thus seem to come from the anonymous (or a similar, now lost) Hebrew translation. This is important because it is clear from these differences that Martini made direct use of the Arabic original, whereas Abner/Alfonso employed a Hebrew translation and was unaware of Martini’s translation of the text.

There are hundreds of possible comparisons of this type between Martini and Abner/Alfonso that could be made. It is, of course, not possible for reasons of space to

¹²³ "אגרת...בן רשד בענין הספק הקורה בידיעת הקדמון." ¹²³

¹²⁴ (38) "الشك العارض في علم القديم"

¹²⁵ He is not to be confused with the two fourteenth-century translators of Averroes with similar names Kalonymos ben Kalonymos ben Meir finished his translation of the *Tahāfut* from Arabic to Latin, undertaken at the request of Robert the Good of Anjou, in 1328. His contemporary Kalonymos ben David ben Todros (sometimes called Calo, Calo Calonymos, or Calo Calonymos the Elder), working in the very same decade, translated the *Tahāfut* from Arabic into Hebrew under the title *Happalat ha-Happala*. The sixteenth-century Neopolitan living in Venice, Kalonymos ben David (called variously Calo Calonymos, Kalonymos ben David the Younger, or Maestro Calo), used the Hebrew translation made by the second Calo as the basis of his Latin translation, published in Venice in 1527. See Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters* 332-3 and Zedler’s edition, *Averroes’ Destructio Destructionum Philosophiae Algazelis in the Latin Version of Calo Calonymos* 24-26.

¹²⁶ *De mundi creatione*, III, pars V, cap. 2, p. 1, lines 14-15; p. 2, lines 38-40; p. 6, line 20; p. 10, line 7. Cf. Alonso, *Teologia de Averroes* 360 n. 1; Zedler’s edition, *Averroes’ Destructio Destructionum* 49 n. 124. As Zedler notes about this and other “little books” mentioned by Calo, “he had probably encountered [them] in their Hebrew versions” (48), a fact which supports the idea that Abner/Alfonso’s use of this title derived from use of their Hebrew recensions.

exhaustively compare every point made by each author. Nevertheless, we have provided enough evidence to suggest that despite the obvious links and indeed, the many uncanny similarities between the *Pugio* and the *Mostrador*, it seems very unlikely that Abner/Alfonso knew or made use of Martini's massive work. There is, however, one very perplexing fact that calls much of this analysis into uncertainty. In paragraph ten of chapter five of the *Mostrador*, Abner/Alfonso states that "As Rabbi Rachmon says, if all of the prophets and Moses with them, and all of the angels, were put on a scale, and the king Christ were on the other [side] of the balance, , he would weigh more than all of them, and for this reason it was said [Ps. 45:3] that "You are more fair than the sons of man.""¹²⁷ This statement calls to mind *Pirkei Avot* 2:12, in which a similar statement is made about sages Eliezer ben Hyrcanos and Eleazar ben Arakh, and the statement cited by Abner/Alfonso seems like a Christian play on the meaning of those statements. Although Mettmann did not know what to make of the name Rachmon, and suggested it was intended to read "Nahaman", but the name "Rabbi Rachmon" has long been associated with Raymond Martini and the *Pugio Fidei*. In the printed editions of the *Pugio*, Martini mentions Rabbi Rachmon on fourteen different pages, and his identity has generated debate for over a century.¹²⁸ Previous critics have argued that a 13th century Kabbalist whose Aramaic name *Rachumai* may be the source of Martini's citations, but Ludwig Levy and later Baer, in his article alleging that Martini forged a number of midrashim to support his

¹²⁷ "E asi dize Rrabi Rrahamon que si todos los prophetas, e aun Moysen con ellos, e todos los angeles fuesen en una balança, e el rrey Christo fuese en la otra balança, pesaria él más que todos, e que por esso dixo el viesso "Fuste fermosos más que los omnes"" (128r/1: 245).

¹²⁸ "Rabbi Rachmon", who is not mentioned in the *Capistrum*, is mentioned in the *Pugio* on pp. 676, 695, 720, 744, 794, 847, 854, 862, 868, 872, 877, 925, 928, and 955 of the printed edition. Levy, "Rabbi Rachmon im Pugio fidei," has commented briefly on Martini's citations. For a full bibliography of the early discussion of Rachmon's identity, see Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, 135-136, nn. 12-13, Strack, "Raymond, Martini" 9: 408, Liebermann, *Shkiin*, 67f., and Merchavia, "*Pugio Fidei*—An Index of Citations" 206.

arguments, asserted that Rabbi Rachmon was a pseudonym that Martini gave to himself to include his own ideas under the guise of an authoritative source (Levy “Rabbi Rachmon im pugio fidei” 31; “The Forged Midrashim” 28-31). This argument has been countered by Liebermann (*Shkiin* 67-72), who believed that this Rachmon represented one of Martini’s collaborators and not Martini himself. Recently, the study of the manuscripts of the *Pugio* by Merchavia and Fumagalli has broadened the scope of the question by pointing out that more references to Rabbi Rachmon in the manuscript than in the printed edition, and Merchavia has pointed out that not all of the content of the citations attributed to Rachmon are Christological in nature, and (“*Pugio Fidei*—An Index of Citations” 206). At present, the issue of Rabbi Rachmon’s identity remains an open question in need of resolution.

The issue is complicated greatly by the mention of his name in the *Mostrador*. The attribution of the statement to a rabbi seems patently false, because it attributes an explicitly christological statement that is a direct reference to *Pirkei Avot* to an alleged Rabbi, but this does not rule out Lieberman’s suggestion that Rabbi Rachmon was a Jewish collaborator of Martini’s who was both a Jewish Rabbi and a supporter of Martini’s christological agenda. Although this citation seems to suggest that Abner/Alfonso knew Martini’s work, the content of the citation attributed to Rachmon by Abner does not match any of the statements attributed to him in the printed editions of the *Pugio*, and so the citation cannot be linked to Martini with any certainty. An examination of the manuscript of the work is necessary to confirm that Martini does not offer this citation. Moreover, if this reference actually did refer to the *Pugio Fidei* of Martini, it is not clear why it is the only such explicit reference in the entire corpus of

Abner/Alfonso's writing, a corpus that is full of citations of Talmud and Midrash that do not match Martini's citations. As we have seen, there are abundant passages in which Abner/Alfonso and Martini discuss similar ideas and verses, and Abner/Alfonso certainly would have had opportunity to cite Martini's arguments to further his cause if he had been aware of them. While the mention of Rabbi Rachmon in the *Mostrador* does raise important questions about the connection between Abner/Alfonso and Martini—questions that remain unanswered—it is itself by no means definitive evidence of a connection between the two.

It is possible, on the other hand, that Abner/Alfonso did in fact know Martini's work but took great pains to cover up any evidence of dependence on or borrowing from the *Pugio*, conceivably out of a desire on Abner's part to outdo, correct, or replace Martini's work with his own. If he knew Martini's arguments and disagreed with them, one would expect he would say so explicitly, as he did in his explicit disagreement with Petrus Alfonsi's polemical argument about the Trinity. Another possible explanation of Abner/Alfonso's failure to mention or allude to the *Pugio* is a desire on his part to noticeably distance himself from Martini and his book, possibly in order to strengthen his own argument by not presenting it in terms familiar to Jewish intellectuals as those of the Dominicans. Conceivably, because Martini included so much material that is similar to Abner/Alfonso's own arguments, and because Abner/Alfonso's stated purpose is to directly address the Jew—a purpose which he pursues by invoking his own identity and knowledge as a former Jew—perhaps he chose not to associate himself with the external, non-Jewish perspective of Martini as a way of maintaining the “Jewish-style” anti-Jewish argument which is so typical of the rest of the *Mostrador*. If this were the case, one would

expect his arguments to take the Jewish responses to Martini's work, such as the writing of R. Solomon ibn Adret, into account in his writing. There is, however, no firm evidence of such a chain of transmission from Ibn Adret, at least not firm enough to directly connect Abner/Alfonso with Martini's work.¹²⁹ Considering the similarities between Martini and Abner/Alfonso as well as the vague but enthusiastic praise of the friars in the *Mostrador*, one very possible scenario is that Abner/Alfonso had heard about Martini's work or the scale and nature of his polemical project (using Talmudic, Midrashic, philosophical, and other medieval Jewish sources to prove the basic beliefs of Christianity) and chose to imitate it without having direct access to his texts. One final possibility could be that parts or all of Martini's work were transmitted to Abner/Alfonso without a title or author to cite, in which case Abner/Alfonso may have simply drawn freely from Martini's collection of arguments. Neither of these suggestions, moreover, explains where Abner/Alfonso found his reference to Rabbi Rachmon. Given the important points on which they differ, however, this too seems unlikely. In any case, it is clear from our analysis above that, as Chazan has argued concerning the third polemical letter, Abner/Alfonso did not use Martini as a textual source for the *Mostrador*.

VI. Non-Jewish Classical and Arabic sources

In his most important surviving works (the *Teshuvot*, the *Minḥat Qenaot*, the polemical letters, the *Libro de la Ley* and the *Mostrador*), Abner/Alfonso mentions at least ten different Arabic authors (for a complete list of citations, see appendix). (This is apart from the abundant citations from Arabic works by Jewish authors such as Maimonides

¹²⁹ This question will be discussed in more detail in supplement chapter three.

and Abraham ibn Ezra, which we will consider in more detail in the next chapter.) Besides the single reference to *Kalila and Dimna* (*Ofrenda* 28ra), which had been translated into Hebrew and Castilian and was widely disseminated before the fourteenth century, and the passing reference to medical writers such as Abū Marwān ibn Zuhr, Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq, and Abū al-Qāssim al-Zahrāwī (all in *Ofrenda* 5ra), or an astronomer whom Abner/Alfonso calls “Algafiqui” (*Mostrador* 155r and 201v),¹³⁰ all of the non-Jewish Arabic writers mentioned by Abner/Alfonso (al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Bājja, Ibn Ṭufayl, and Ibn Rushd) come from the Muslim philosophical tradition. Abner/Alfonso’s use of sources and ideas from the Aristotelian tradition are by no means surprising. He cites extensively from Aristotle and to a lesser extent, Plato (and, under his name, Plotinus) in all of his major works, as well as later peripatetic commentators such as Alexander of Aphrodisias and Themistius. He does include a handful of citations of pre-Socratic thinkers like Thales, Zeno, Pythagoras, Empedocles, Parmenides, and Anaxagoras, post-Socratic thinkers (besides Plato and Aristotle) like Epicurus, medical writers such as Hippocrates and Galen, and astronomers like Ptolomy. By and large, however, Abner/Alfonso’s citations of Greek writers are limited to Plato, Plotinus, Aristotle, and his commentators. He may have accessed the other classical authors through Hebrew translation in some cases or, even more likely, within thirteenth-century Hebrew philosophic encyclopedias and commentaries such as the *Midrash Ha-Hokmah* of Judah ha-Kohen or the *De’ot Ha-Filosofim* and the *Moreh Ha-Moreh* of Shem Tov Ibn

¹³⁰ The identity of this author is not certain, but his name “Ghāfiqī”, which refers to the fortress of al-Ghāfiq near Cordova, suggests that he was Andalusian. The statement attributed to “Ghāfiqī” bears some resemblance to the polemical ideas of al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Ḥazm’s. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Appendix 3. I wish to thank Professor Gad Freudenthal and, through him, Professor Bernard R. Goldstein, for their help looking into this question.

Falaquera.¹³¹ Given that Abner/Alfonso certainly could not read Greek, his familiarity with the classical tradition ultimately derived, as it did for most medieval thinkers, from Arabic commentaries and translations (Gershenzon, *A Study* 10).

A close look at Abner/Alfonso's few citations of pre-socratic authors shows they are limited to a few superficial statements attributed to multiple philosophers which show little substantive familiarity with their writings. For example, in chapter ten, paragraph fifteen of the *Mostrador*, in Abner/Alfonso's litany of the manifold and conflictive beliefs of different Jewish groups, the Teacher states that

some of them believe in the exchange and movement of souls from one man to another or to a woman, and the soul of one woman to another or to a man, and from them to animals or birds or other serpents or fish or worms or plants or trees or stars or some of the celestial bodies. And they got this idea from the opinions of Pythagoras and Epicurus and Anaxagoras, and they even attribute it to Aristotle.¹³²

Earlier in the text, in chapter five, paragraph two, the Teacher makes a the same sort of general attribution to multiple authors in a string:

Avicenna said that the active intellect is in all bodies...and since God is the substance of all separate intelligences, they are all one substance, and this is the unity of God. He said that this was the meaning of Parmenides when he said all

¹³¹ The most recent discussion of the thirteenth-century philosophical compendia is Mauro Zonta, *La filosofia antica nel Medioevo ebraico*, pp. 199-220. For an introduction to the *De'ot ha-Filosofim*, see the remarks in Zonta's edition of the introduction of the work, published as *Un Dizionario filosofico ebraico del XIII secolo*. On the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, see the recent critical edition by Shifman.

¹³² "...e ay algunos dellos ue creen traslamiento e mudamiento de las almas de un omne a otro o a muger, e alma de muger a muger o a varon, e dellos a bestias o aves o otras serpençias o pescados o gusanos o yervas o arboles o estressa[s] o algunos de los cuerpos çelestiales. E esto les ffincó de las opinions de Pitagoras e Aficoras e Anassagoras, e aun que lo aponen a Aristotiles" (328r/2: 420).

things are one thing. And thus the sage Thales and Plato and Zeno and the friars called “sufis” among the Moors, and in general all great philosophers endorse this unity.¹³³

In all of Abner/Alfonso’s works (besides the *Meyasher ‘Aqov*), these are the only references to Anaxagoras, Epicurius, Pythagoras, Parmenides, and Zeno. Abner/Alfonso repeats the same statement attributed to Thales in the *Teshuvot* (Hebrew 21v/Castilian 50va) and the *Libro de la ley* (10v). In this case, Abner/Alfonso’s reference to Thales comes through Aristotle, who states in the *De Anima* I.5 that “certain thinkers say the soul is intermingled in the whole universe, and it is perhaps for that reason that Thales came to the opinion that all things are full of gods” (*The Basic Works of Aristotle* 553). The same derivation of an ancient citation from a later source can be found for Abner/Alfonso’s one mention of Euclid, in which he cites “chapter ten of the book of Euclid” (“el capitulo dezeno del “Libro de Uclidas” 165v-166r/2: 58), i.e. book ten of Euclid’s *Elements*, as part of his discussion of rational and irrational relationships between stars (“ffabladas” and “mudas”), a reference that Maimonides makes in *Guide* 1: 73, premise eleven.¹³⁴ In general, for ancient authors mentioned more than once in the text, Abner/Alfonso merely repeats the same statement in various places, as is the case for his citations of Empedokles, Alexander of Aphrodisias and Temistius, and for medical writers like Hippocrates and Galen. For these authors, what seems at first (from a mere index of

¹³³ “Otrossi dixo el Aviçena que la inteligencia obrador es en todos los cuerpos...e que, por parte que Dios es sustancia de <118r> todas las inteligencias separadas, son todas una sustançia, e que ésta es la unidat de Dios. E dixo que ésta fue la entençion de Barmendes en lo que dixo: todas las cosas son una cosa. E asi el sabio Çalis e Platon e Zanen, e los frayres que son dichos çaffin entre los moros, e en general todos los grandes filosofos, otorgan esta vnidat” (117v-118r/1: 223-4).

¹³⁴ This citation is discussed in more detail in supplemental chapter three, in the section on Abner/Alfonso’s scientific sources.

citations) to be many citations turns out to be, in substance, only a few statements that Abner/Alfonso used again and again. Given the paucity of the citations of most ancient writers besides Plato, Aristotle, and his commentators, only his citations of these major authors are of special interest in assessing Abner/Alfonso's knowledge and sources.¹³⁵

Although Abner/Alfonso cites much more often from Aristotle, Plato and Plotinus, his use of these authors is likewise less varied than it seems at first. In the case of all three writers, as is probably the case with his other philosophical citations, his familiarity with them derived in part from philosophical commentaries and collections such as Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's *Moreh ha-Moreh* (which we will consider in the next chapter when we consider Abner/Alfonso's Jewish sources). Apart from this, however, consideration of Abner/Alfonso's citations shows a limited variety of sources from these authors. Many of Abner/Alfonso's roughly twenty references to "Plato" bear more resemblance to Plotinus, although critics have not all agreed on which specific neoplatonic passages served as Abner/Alfonso's sources. Some statements are often sufficiently vague or altered to allow for a similar attribution to both Plato and Plotinus. Of these references to "Plato," one stands out as the most important to Abner/Alfonso's arguments, being cited at least seven times in his major works. In the *Mostrador*, he states "because the divinity can multiply itself in comparison with created things, according to what Plato said one should not say that God has power or powers, but that He is all powers in comparison with created things..."¹³⁶ Gershenzon, Hecht, and Sainz de la

¹³⁵ This assessment leaves out the more abundant citations of ancient authors in the *Meyasher 'Akav*, which include one reference to Empedokles, eight to Archimedes, twenty-one to Euclid, one to Ptolomy, three to Antiphon, and one to Democrates, among various others.

¹³⁶ "E porque la divinidat se puede multiplicar en comparacion de los criados, segund dixo Platon que non conviene a dezir que Dios a virtud nin virtudes, ssinon que él es todas las virtudes en comparacion de los

Maza do not agree as to which passage of the *Enneads* of Plotinus might be quoted here (they propose VI.4.9, V.8.9, and VI.9.6, respectively), and Gershenzon and Sainz de la Maza note some similarity to Plato's *Timaeus* 30-31. A direct citation of this work by Plato is not impossible, especially given that the *Timeaus* was among the most commonly cited platonic dialogs in medieval Hebrew texts and that Plotinus was transmitted primarily under Aristotle's name in the pseudo-aristotelian *Theology of Aristotle* (Zonta, *La filosofia antica* 170; Cf Stenschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters* 241-2). Some citations even match Plato's words exactly, such as the statement found in *Libro de la ley* that "according to what the sage Plato said, learning which a man learns is only recollection",¹³⁷ taken nearly verbatim from *Phaedo* 73a. Other statements, however, are clearly the words of Plotinus, such as the statement that "all philosophers affirm that in the elements is celestial heat, which bears the power that engenders animals and plants...Plato said it is the creating and engendering power of the body, and if the body were the condition for the being of that power, it [that power] would not create it."¹³⁸ As Abner states, this citation, and the misattribution of Plotinus' words to Plato, are found in the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, where Averroes explains that "Plato proves that the soul is

criados..." (74v/1: 138). He repeats this statement in the *Mostrador* on 129r, 139r, 140r, in the *Teshuvot* on 17r and 21v (Hebrew) and 48ra and 50va (Castilian), and in *Libro de la ley* on 10v. The meaning of "virtud" is that of *virtus* (power or strength), which clear from parallel passages in the Hebrew text of the *Teshuvot* which reads "strength" (הכח).

¹³⁷ "E segund lo que dixo el sabio Platon que el aprendizaje que el omne aprende no es sino arremembrasse" (3r/92).

¹³⁸ "Todos los filosofos otorgan que en los elementos es calentura celeste, la que sufre las virtudes que engendran los animales e las plantas...e que dixo Plato que aquella es la virtud criadora e engendradora del cuerpo, e que si el cuerpo fuesse condicion paral ser de aquella virtud, non lo criaria ella" (118r/1: 224). This passage is very similar to a statement in the *Teshuvot* that "Plato said that it is the power that forms and creates the body: if the body were the pre-condition for the power, it [the power] would not have created or formed it" ("וכי כן אפלטון אמ' שהוא הכח היוצר והמצייר את הגוף וכי אילו היה הגוף תנאי למציאות הכח לא היה יוצר ולא") (22r/22r). This is paraphrased in *Teshuvot* 26r and repeated in *Libro de la ley* 4r.

separated from the body, for the soul creates and forms the body, and if the body were the condition for the existence of the soul, the soul would not have created or formed it” (2: 358). This phrase seems to derive from the *Enneads*, IV.7.8-11.

In general, however, Plato and Plotinus, like most other ancient philosophers, do not appear often in Abner/Alfonso’s works. Aristotle not surprisingly plays the most prominent role, even though neo-platonic ideas seem more essentially important for Abner/Alfonso’s conceptual framework. A close inspection of the nearly fifty citations of Aristotle in his major works, however, uncovers frequent repetitions and a number of statements that may come from a pseudo-aristotelian rather than an authentic source document. A majority of the statements that can be attributed come from the *De Anima*, and there are, besides these, a few references to the *Metaphysica*, parts of the *Parva Naturalia*, *Ethica Niomachea*, *De Caelo*, and *De Generatione et Corruptione*. A number of his citations of Aristotle came through other works, especially the *Guide* of Maimonides. One of the most frequently repeated statements attributed to Aristotle is a good example of Abner/Alfonso’s reliance on Maimonides’ work. Abner/Alfonso repeatedly attributes statements to Aristotle to the effect that God is one in substance and three in causes, as he states in chapter three, paragraph one, after mentioning Al-Ghazālī’s *Mishqāt al-ānwār* (on which, see below) that the divine essence “are one in substance and three in nature, as is proved in the sayings of Aristotle.”¹³⁹ This statement is repeated in modified form in a number of other passages (In the *Mostrador*: 121r, 131r, 135v, 140v; in the *Teshuvot*: Hebrew 20r and 21r/Castilian 49ra and 50ra), and a few times Abner/Alfonso specifies that it comes from Aristotle’s *Metaphysica*. As Hecht notes, however, (166-7 n. 364), the

¹³⁹ “...son uno en sustançia e tres en rrazon, segunt que sse prueva por dichos de Aristotiles.” (85r/1: 160).

Metaphysica (V.2) lists four, not three causes, i.e the material, formal, efficient, and final causes (Aristotle repeats this list of four causes in *Physica* II.3), and in neither of these discussions of causes does Aristotle suggest that God is one in substance and three in cause. Maimonides, however, in 1:69 of the *Guide*, explains both Aristotle's theory of four causes and that of later philosophers that God is the efficient, formal, and final cause. What Abner/Alfonso attributes to Aristotle here is actually a later reading of his ideas mentioned by Maimonides. Likewise, Abner/Alfonso explicitly attributes some of his references to Aristotle in the *Minhat Qena'ot* to Maimonides' *Guide*, such as his statements in chapter seven that "Rabbi Moses in chapter XVII of the third part of his book wrote that he thinks, like Aristotle, that God does not govern other animals that are not men, [and] especially plants, and that all that happens to them is pure accident."¹⁴⁰ Although Abner/Alfonso seems to misread Maimonides' personal stance in this passage (Maimonides there explains four theories of divine providence held by others, not by himself, after which he explains the teachings of Jewish law), he is clearly citing Maimonides' explanation in 3:17 that "as for the other motions that occur in all individuals of a species, they occur by chance and do not, according to Aristotle, come about through the governance or ordering of one who governs or orders" (465). Not all of Abner/Alfonso's citations of Aristotle can be shown to be derivative in this way, although it is ultimately impossible to tell from the citations alone if Abner/Alfonso read the works themselves in translation or if he gathered his citations from the works of other philosophers or found them compiled in other compendia. Judging from those citations

¹⁴⁰ "E maguera que escrivió rabi Mosse en el capitulo XVIIº de la parte terçera de aquel su libro que en los otros animales que non son omnes, mayormiente en las plantas, tiene él en ellos, como tiene Aristotiles, que non es guarda de Dios en ellos, e (18c) que todo lo que les acaesçe es por açcidente puro" (18rb-va/44).

that can be identified, and from the relatively isolated nature of most references to Aristotle (and other ancient philosophers), it is possible to speculate that Abner/Alfonso drew most of his citations of Aristotle, Plato, and Plotinus from other sources such as the *Guide* of Maimonides (or the commentary by Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera), the *Tahāfut* and *Faṣl al-maqāl* of Averroes.

This raises the question of precisely what Arabic sources Abner/Alfonso used, and whether he read such works in the original Arabic or in Hebrew translation (Latin texts being, as we have shown, beyond his purview for the most part). To date, only a few critics have undertaken an assessment of Abner/Alfonso's citations of Arabic works.¹⁴¹ To determine if Abner/Alfonso read his Arabic sources in their original languages requires first identifying citations and then determining if these sources were available in Hebrew translation by the early fourteenth century. The fact that Abner/Alfonso was a medical doctor does not, as is sometimes assumed, indicate knowledge of Arabic. As Shatzmiller explains, ("On Becoming a Jewish Doctor in the High Middle Ages" 246-7), the medical texts used by Jews in the fourteenth century had all been translated into Hebrew.¹⁴² Taking account of all of Abner/Alfonso's works together—there is substantial overlap and repetition in the citations of Arabic philosophy in his different works—the

¹⁴¹ Vajda considered the issue briefly in connection with Abner/Alfonso's Hebrew citations of Al-Ghazālī, "A Note on the Texts of Al-Ghazzālī Quoted by Abner of Burgos" [Hebrew]. Sainz de la Maza gives a brief consideration of Abner/Alfonso's Arabic sources in *Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 332-37. Gershenzon, *A Study* 10-12 offers a list of specific authors and works cited in the *Teshuvot*, and discusses Abner/Alfonso's use of philosophy thought. In her notes and analysis, she has done the most work in tracing Abner/Alfonso's Arabic philosophical sources, and the discussion that follows draws frequently from her work.

¹⁴² Steinschneider's discussion of medical texts in Hebrew (*Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters*, section three, volume II, pp. 650-843) is still the most complete. Regarding information on the medical authors mentioned by Abner/Alfonso, for Abū Marwān ibn Zuhr, see Steinschneider 748-52 and Halkin 1327; for Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq, see Steinschneider 708-15 and Halkin 1327; for Abū al-Qāssim al-Zahrāwī, see Steinschneider 740-48 and Halkin 1327; On Avicenna's medical texts, see Steinschneider 677-702 and Halkin 1327.

philosophical works originally written in Arabic cited by Abner/Alfonso with a specific title include the *Book of Laws* (“sciencia moral”, or “Sefer ha-Nimusim,” which seems to be the *Tahṣīl al-sa’ādah* of Al-Fārābī, *Al-Mashriqīyūn* (“Libro de filosofía oriental” or “Filosofía hamizrahit”) and *Hayy Ibn Yaḡzān* (“Hiel ben Huriel”) of Ibn Sīnā, the *Mishkāṭ al-ānwār* (“Libro de las iluminarias” or “Sefer ha-maorot”) and the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (“Libro de las contradicciones” or “Libro de los desmentimientos” or “Sefer Hakhḡhashat ha-Pilosofim”) of Al-Ghazālī, the *Faṣl al-maqāl* (“Libro del saber sempiterno”, “Libro del saber eterno” or “Sefer ha-Mada ha-Kadmon”), the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut* (“Libro de las contradicciones” or “Libro del [d]esmentimiento de los desmentimientos” or “Sefer Hakhḡhashat ha-Hakhḡhashot”), and the *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect* (no original Arabic title survives; Abner/Alfonso cites it as “Libro del ayuntamiento divinal” or “Sefer ha-Divuk ha-Elohi”) of Ibn Rusḡd, and the *Hayy ibn Yaḡzān* (“ffazienda de Hylel ben Huriel” or “Hay ben Yacsami”) of Ibn Ṭufayl. Abner/Alfonso also cites a number of statements which he attributes to multiple authors together such as, for example, “el Aviçena e el Algazel e Ben Alçayz” (*Mostrador* 164r/2: 55) and “Aviçena e el Algazel e Aben Rrost e otros tales” (109r/1:206), most of which are too general to be traceable to a specific source. In addition, he attributes many statements to these authors without citing a specific work as a source, including the statement (repeated twice in the *Mostrador* and once in the *Libro de la ley*) attributed to Ibn Bājjā that “yo sso todos los passados.” This and other statements not attributed to a specific work can, for the most part, be found in the same works cited by name elsewhere in Abner/Alfonso’s writing.

At first blush, Abner/Alfonso’s citations of Arabic philosophical works seem numerous and varied enough to suggest his familiarity with original sources in Arabic.

While in the twelfth and even into the thirteenth centuries, Arabic remained the primary language of philosophy among Jews, upon the conquest of Spain by the Christians (and even more by Abner/Alfonso's time), Arabic works of philosophy, science, and medicine had been translated into Hebrew,¹⁴³ and original philosophical works by Jews living in Christian lands were composed (like Abner/Alfonso's works) in Hebrew. By the early fourteenth century, all of the major works of Arabic authors cited by Abner/Alfonso had been translated into Hebrew. Abner/Alfonso himself shows no unequivocal indications (such as citation or transliteration of Arabic words) that he had consulted his source texts directly and not in translation. The only possible exceptions are his citation of Ibn Tufayl's work in his introductory summary to the contents of the *Mostrador* as "Hay ben Yacsami" (17r/1: 22) and his mention of "muslim philosophers called "çoffia",¹⁴⁴ i.e. the Arabic plural *ṣūfiya* ("Sūfis") and "the Friars called "çaffin" among the Moors", i.e. *ṣūfiyūn* (alt. form "Sufis").¹⁴⁵ Abner/Alfonso also makes an interesting statement that "in the Arabic language it is known that they call the quiddity of a thing the soul of the thing,"¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ For specific discussion of translations of Arabic works into Hebrew, see Halkin, "Translation and Translators (Medieval)". Halkin's article is a useful distillation of Steinschneider's monumental *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters* which is still extremely useful for more detailed information individual authors, manuscripts, and translators. Recently, Zonta has written a up-to-date thorough treatment of the question in *La filosofia antica nel Medioevo ebraico*. Also of use is Harvey, "Arabic into Hebrew: The Hebrew translation movement and the influence of Averroes upon medieval Jewish thought"; and Ivry, "Philosophical Translations from Arabic in Hebrew during the Middle Ages." Gershenzon (*A Study* 10-11) observes that "whether Abner read these [Arabic] books in the original Arabic is an unanswered question; most of them were probably available in Hebrew translation."

¹⁴⁴ "...los filosofos moros que se llaman çoffia" (94r/1: 178).

¹⁴⁵ "...los frayres que son dichos çaffin entre los moros" (118r/1: 223-4). "Ṣūfiyūn" signifies both "Sufis" and "Sufism." Abner gives the Hebrew (rather than Arabic) plural form of this word later in the *Mostrador*: "...otros omnes que llaman çoffim" (163v/2: 54).

¹⁴⁶ "E assi en la lengua araviga sse connoçe esto que llaman la mismadat de la cosa como alma de la cosa" (91v/1: 171-2).

i.e. “nafs” (“soul”). These are the only explicit references in the *Mostrador* showing any knowledge of Arabic grammar or vocabulary.

Sainz de la Maza proposes that Abner/Alfonso’s mention of Ibn Ṭufayl’s work might help determine if Abner/Alfonso read Arabic (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 334), but such a judgment is based on his belief that the work was not translated into Hebrew until 1349 by Moses Narboni. In fact, Narboni did not translate the work, but wrote his 1349 commentary on an already-existing translation, which Steinschneider proposes had been translated into Hebrew at the beginning of the fourteenth century.¹⁴⁷ Without specific information about when the Hebrew translation was made beyond the fact that it was before 1349, we cannot prove Abner/Alfonso used the original Arabic text rather than the Hebrew translation. As in the case of most of his citations, it must be assumed, given the general lack of specific indications that Abner/Alfonso knew the original Arabic text, that his knowledge came through Hebrew translations of Arabic works.

In chapter four, we considered a citation of the *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect* of Averroes in which the Rebel accuses the Teacher of distorting the source to suit his polemical needs. This miscitation by the Teacher is interesting, especially given the fact that Abner/Alfonso was citing the Hebrew translation of the text that formed the basis of another commentary, also by Moses Narboni. These citations constitute an additional source for considering the transmission of this text, whose Arabic

¹⁴⁷ See Hayoun, “Le commentaire de Moïse de Narbonne (1300-1362) sur le *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān* d’Ibn Ṭufayl (mort en 1185)” 26 n. 1; Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen*, 365; and Tornero’s introduction and bibliography to González Palencia’s translation of Ibn Ṭufayl’s work as *El filósofo autodidacto*, 27. It is interesting to note as well that Abner/Alfonso’s clear reliance on the ideas of Ibn Ṭufayl lends circumstantial evidence to support Steinschneider’s dating of the Hebrew translation to the early fourteenth century, since Abner/Alfonso composed his work in the 1320s.

original version is now lost. Abner/Alfonso's use of the text shows that the Hebrew version preserved in the commentary by Narboni was circulating among Jewish intellectuals in the first half of the fourteenth century, among other works by Averroes. Abner/Alfonso's citations provide further evidence for the profound impact that the work of Averroes in particular had on medieval Jewish thought. This impact, considered by critics such as Steven Harvey ("Arabic into Hebrew") and Ernst Renan (*Averroès et l'averroïsme*), deserves careful emendation in the case of Abner/Alfonso. We have already seen in our comparison of sources with Raymond Martini that Abner/Alfonso shows signs of having used a Hebrew translation of the *Dedicatory Epistle* to the *Faṣl al-maqāl* of Ibn Rushd, specifically citing the work as it was named in two different Hebrew translations. Although Abner/Alfonso cites the *Tahāfut* in a number of places, even deriving his citations of other philosophers (such as, in one example, Plotinus) through this work, his references to this work are not extensive. Even the references to Al-Ghazzālī that seem logically to have come from the *Tahāfut*, however, are found to derive instead from the *Dedicatory Epistle*.¹⁴⁸ This points to an interesting anomaly in Abner/Alfonso's use of Averroes compared with other medieval Jewish intellectuals: he relies mostly on the *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect* and the *Dedicatory Epistle* and very little on the *Tahāfut* and *Faṣl* directly. There is, moreover, little evidence that Abner/Alfonso consulted Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle. Given the importance of Averroes for medieval Jewish philosophers, Abner/Alfonso's citations of his work do not follow the norm.

¹⁴⁸ Sainz de la Maza points this out for the *Teshuvot in Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 357 n. 121.

The anomalous use of Muslim philosophy by Abner/Alfonso is even more apparent when his citations of Averroes are compared to his references to Avicenna, which he actually cites more frequently than Averroes. Unlike the texts of Averroes, Avicenna's texts were not all translated into Hebrew by the fourteenth century and his ideas were much less well known and much less appreciated than other writers like al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Rushd. Harvey and Erwin Rosenthal have pointed to the notable lack of attention given to Avicenna's works among medieval Jews compared to that paid to other thinkers (Harvey "Arabic into Hebrew" 262-3; Rosenthal, "Avicenna's Influence on Jewish Thought" 70). We can remember, for example, Maimonides' statement in a letter to his translator Samuel Ibn Tibbon that "The works of Avicenna...cannot be compared to the writings of al-Fārābī" (*Letters of Maimonides* 136; Harvey, "Arabic into Hebrew" 263). This does not mean that Avicenna was not influential. In fact, many of Avicenna's ideas were cited by al-Ghazālī in his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, the first two books of which were translated into Hebrew in the thirteenth century and enjoyed wide dissemination among Jewish philosophers.¹⁴⁹ Vajda, discussing Abner/Alfonso's Arabic sources, notes that "la version hébraïque du *Maqāṣid*...devait être tout naturellement un de ses livres de chevet" (*Isaac Albalag* 276), and as Gershenzon points out, Abner/Alfonso's opponent Isaac Polegar states in the *Ezer ha-Dat* that the former had been influenced by al-Ghazālī's *De'ot ha-Pilosofim* (the title as it was translated by Albalag) in his views on God's knowledge of particulars.¹⁵⁰ Avicenna had also been cited

¹⁴⁹ See Zonta, *La filosofia antica nel Medioevo ebraico*, 57 and 165; Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters*, 298-301; Halkin, "Translation and Translators (Medieval)", 1323.

¹⁵⁰ See Gershenzon, *A Study* 11 n. 37 and 157 nn. 48-49. The statement is found in *Ezer ha-Dat*, ed. Levinger, p. 118-119: "וכפי מחשבתי אבו חאמד אלגואלי הוא אשר הכשילך והפיל את שכלך בדעה הרעה הנשחתת הזאת" "וכפי מחשבתי אבו חאמד אלגואלי הוא אשר הכשילך והפיל את שכלך בדעה הרעה הנשחתת הזאת" "As I thought, Abū Hamid al-Ghazālī was the one who led you

cited frequently by Shem Tov Falaquera in his *Moreh ha-Moreh* and other encyclopedic writings. There are thus clear Hebrew channels by which Abner/Alfonso could have accessed Avicenna's ideas, even though Avicenna was less important and influential in sefardic Jewry than Averroes or al-Fārābī. Abner/Alfonso's attention to Avicenna is noteworthy, even if it is not extraordinary.

What is most revealing about Abner/Alfonso's references to Avicenna, however, is his attention to what he calls the "filosofia oriental." Abner/Alfonso cites what seems to be the *Kitāb al-mashriqīyūn* (*Book of Oriental Philosophy*) by name in all of his major works, including four separate references in the *Mostrador*.¹⁵¹ Certain scholars, most notably Henri Corbin and his students, have defended the importance of Avicenna's "mystical" texts, and even now a belief in the importance of Avicenna's "oriental" and mystical ideas persists among scholars of his work.¹⁵² Dimitri Gutas, however, who has been among the most vocal in arguing against the existence of an "oriental" tradition in Avicenna, notes that most of the work was lost during Avicenna's lifetime and its content is not all known for certain, the lack of attention given to it by Avicenna himself points to its minor status

astray and brought down your intellect with this bad, corrupt understanding about divine knowledge of things"] Likewise, Mauro Zonta claims, without giving details, that Abner/Alfonso's work was "pregnato di elementi avicenniani..." (*La filosofia ebraica medievale* 174) and that "le sue più tarde opere di polemica antiebraica...appaiono peraltro riprendere fonti avicenniane e ghazaliane" (176).

¹⁵¹ Gershenzon, *A Study* 157 nn. 48-9, discusses Abner/Alfonso's references to "Oriental Philosophy" and defends him against the possible charge of "manufacturing" citations. As shown, however, the issue is not one of Abner/Alfonso duplicitously citing non-existent texts, but of his access to the Avicennian tradition being limited to a spurious andalusian attribution to the author. See also pp. 11, 14, and 263 n. 32.

¹⁵² See, for example, Henri Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, especially the "Postscript" (271-80), which summarizes recent scholarship on this tradition. See also Pines, "La 'Philosophie Orientale' d'Avicenne et sa polémique contre els Baghdadiens" and very recently, Sayyed H. Nasr, "Ibn Sīnā's Oriental Philosophy", which defends the existence of a mystical strain in Avicenna, maintaining that "although this dimension of Ibn Sīnā's thought did not influence the West and has not been taken seriously by contemporary Western scholars...it remains an important link in the uninterrupted tradition of Islamic philosophy marking a notable stepping stone from the synthesis of Ibn Sīnā to the Illuminationist doctrines of Suhrawardī" (247).

within the canon of his writings. Other works by Avicenna were also associated with “Easterners” or “Eastern Philosophy”,¹⁵³ but, according to Gutas, the description of all of this body of writing as “Eastern” or “Oriental” seems to have been simply Avicenna’s provisional terminology (abandoned later in life) for the Khorasani school of Aristotelian philosophy. In this respect, the works should not be considered apart (nor should they eclipse the importance of) Avicenna’s more major, surviving works. This is reflected in the fact that Avicenna himself stated after the loss of *Al-Mashriqīyyūn* that it would be easy to reproduce its contents and, as Gutas points out, the ideas contained in these early works were repeated and expanded in Avicenna’s later writing.¹⁵⁴

The minor status of Avicenna’s “eastern” texts, however, has not been reflected in the mention of the work by other medieval writers.¹⁵⁵ This was especially the case in Spain. Gutas explains that the text

was lost quite early in the East, and was never available in the Muslim West in Arabic, let alone in Latin translation. All medieval Western authors who referred to it, therefore, derived their information from Avicenna’s words about it in the

¹⁵³ Such as *Kitāb al-Inṣāf* (*Book of Fair Judgment*) and the *Al-Ta’līqāt ‘alā ḥawāshī kitāb al-naḥs* (*Marginal Notes on the De Anima*), on which see Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* 130-140.

¹⁵⁴ As Dimitri Gutas explains, consideration of this work and its content must be made apart from the multifarious and often misled or misleading statements about Avicenna’s “oriental” ideas: “In the terms in which it has gained notoriety in contemporary scholarship, therefore, the *concept* of Avicenna’s Eastern philosophy is a non-issue...As for the *texts* on Eastern philosophy and the Easterners, the loss of most of them...is deplorable only to the extent that we have been deprived of the opportunity to admire more instances of the acuity and perspicacity with which a great mind confronted another through the encrustations of thirteen centuries of philosophical history...In substantial terms nothing has been lost except variant reformulations of positions taken in other works, extant, but sadly, neglected” (*Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* 130).

¹⁵⁵ And by modern scholarship, whose mistreatment of the subject Gutas calls a “comedy of errors” (*Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* 130).

Prologue. This is true of Roger Bacon...of Averroes, and especially of Ibn Tufayl.

(*Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* 49-50).

Beyond the two references to Avicenna's "oriental philosophy" in the writings of Averroes,¹⁵⁶ Ibn Tufayl's interpretation is the best known. He refers to Avicenna's text in the introduction to *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, where he begins by stating to the friend to whom he writes, "you have asked me to unfold for you, as well as I am able, the secrets of the oriental philosophy mentioned by the prince of the philosophers, Avicenna."¹⁵⁷ Gutas explains that Ibn Tufayl's interpretation of Avicenna

proved to be particularly misleading. Ebn Tofayl, for his own purposes, misinterpreted as a difference of substance the stylistic contrast which Avicenna drew in the prologue of the *Šefā'* between that book and the *Ketāb al-Mašreqīyūn* and created the impression, through the whole tenor of his own introduction, that the Eastern philosophy has somehow to do with mysticism. ("Avicenna. V. Mysticism" 82)

Ibn Tufayl's (mis)interpretation of Avicenna's ideas had a profound impact in Spain and it was his rendition that trickled down to later Jewish thinkers like Abner/Alfonso. Abner/Alfonso not only shows his familiarity with Ibn Tufayl's work (which he cites by name); a number of his citations to other Arabic writers seem to have been taken from Ibn Tufayl's text. For example, Abner/Alfonso's citation (164r/2: 55; see Appendix 3) of Al-Ghazālī's citation of Ibn al-Mu'tazz in *Al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*

¹⁵⁶ For a complete list of the references to the work by Avicenna and other medieval Arabic authors, see Gutas, 115-119. Cf. Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters* 181 n. 548.

¹⁵⁷ "سألت أيها الإخ الكريم... إن ابث اليك ما أمكنني بثه من أسرار الحكمة المشرقية التي ذكرها الشيخ الرئيس أبو علي ابن سينا فاعلم ان من " (Gauthier 3-4/Goodman 95) أراد الحق الذي لا جمعة فيه فعليه بطلبها و الجد في اقتنائها..."

(*Deliverance from Error*) “Whatever it is, I won’t say, but believe it is a good, and do not ask about it”¹⁵⁸ appears immediately following Abner/Alfonso’s citations of *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān* about statements of ṣufi mystics. It is clear that Abner/Alfonso did not consult Al-Ghazālī’s text directly, but copied it from Ibn Ṭufayl’s text, where it appears after the same ṣufi citations in the same order. Likewise, shortly after this string of citations, Ibn Ṭufayl also mentions a statement from al-Ghazālī’s *Mishkt al-ānwār* (*Niche of Lights*) about those “veiled by light” who know the divine in a way that seems to negate its unity. Abner/Alfonso makes much of this statement in the *Mostrador*, citing it both there and in the *Teshwot* (see Appendix 3, # 32).¹⁵⁹ It is clear that a good part of Abner/Alfonso’s decidedly limited array of citations from Arabic philosophical works came filtered through the work of Ibn Ṭufayl.

This is clearly the case for Abner/Alfonso’s references to Avicenna’s “Oriental Philosophy,” a name which, in Ibn Ṭufayl’s interpretation, had a strong resonance among Sefardic Jews. As Erwin Rosenthal points out, “this type of Avicennian writings...seem to have been read widely by Jews” (“Avicenna’s Influence on Jewish Thought” 302). Whether the texts attributed to Avicenna were actually his is another question, but by “this type” of writing, Rosenthal refers to a tradition of esoteric knowledge which seems to have been associated with Avicenna in medieval Andalusian

¹⁵⁸ "فكان ما كان مما لست اذكره \ فظن خيرا ولا تسأل عن الخير" (Gauthier 4/Goodman 96).

¹⁵⁹ Even Abner/Alfonso’s repeated citation of the phrase “I am all those past” seems to be a paraphrase of Ibn Bājja’s statement near the beginning of his *Risālat al-widāʿ* (*Letter of Goodbye*) that those on the same who are searching and who will search on the philosophical path are our brothers. (Asín Palacios, “La ‘Carta de Adios’ de Avempace” 16). A related argument that the rational soul is one being in all individuals is made in Ibn Bājja’s, *Ittiṣāl al-ʿAql bi-l-Insān* (*Union of the Intellect with Man*). For both texts and their translations, see appendix 3. This idea, strangely, is discussed by Moses Narboni in his commentary on Ibn Ṭufayl’s text, written after Abner/Alfonso composed his works. See Hayoun, “Le commentaire de Moïse de Narbonne (1300-1362) sur le *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān* d’Ibn Ṭufayl (mort en 1185)” 38-9. It also finds its place, in altered form, in Maimonides. See Goodman, *Jewish and Islamic Philosophy* 108-118, and through him, in Abner/Alfonso.

sources and which was referred to in Hebrew sources, he notes, as “oriental philosophy” (303). One text sometimes associated with this work (or body of texts) is Avicenna’s own *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, which itself had been translated by Abraham ibn Ezra (d. 1164) and which Abner/Alfonso refers to (by its Hebrew name).¹⁶⁰ Importantly, Abner/Alfonso’s one mention of “lo que dixo el Avicena por Hiel ben Huriel” (144r/2: 10), i.e. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, matches what he attributes elsewhere to Avicenna’s “Filosofia Oriental” (164r/2: 55, etc; see Appendix, #20), and this attribution to Avicenna is found within the same discussion where he mentions Ibn Ṭufayl’s work. In fact, even though Abner/Alfonso does name Ibn Ṭufayl by name in the *Mostrador*, many of the citations that Abner/Alfonso attributes explicitly to Avicenna (both “Oriental Philosophy” and “*Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*”) exactly match passages from Ibn Ṭufayl’s *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, suggesting that both Hebrew translations of Avicenna’s and Ibn Ṭufayl’s versions of the story were found together under Avicenna’s name. What he cites as “oriental philosophy” has to do with the relationship or connection between the divine and being in the world, and ultimately it always connects with Abner/Alfonso’s idea of the incarnation of God in the Messiah. In the *Teshuvot* (29v/58ra-b), Abner/Alfonso states that “the Arab philosophers, who are called Sufis, agree on one man upright and perfect in his intellectual comprehension and whose speculation about the ultimate purpose of man is greater than other sages who speculate in philosophy. This is the parable of Yeḥiel ben Uriel.”¹⁶¹ This common theme of “the perfect man” was epitomized by Ibn Ṭufayl’s *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*, and what

¹⁶⁰ This text has been edited and analyzed in context by Corbin in *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*.

¹⁶¹ The Castilian version, which is collated in a different order than the Hebrew text in this section, reads, “E assi los phisicos (sic, *lege* “philosophos”) moros que se llaman *çophia* conuerdan e consideran un omne derecho e conplido en el alcançamiento de su entendimiento e su studio a la fin postremera mayor, más que todos los otros sabios estudiantes en la phica (sic, *lege* “philosophia”). Aquel es nonbrado entre ellos Yehiel ben Uriel” 58ra-b/Mettmann 59).

Abner/Alfonso attributes to Avicenna's "Oriental Philosophy" must be understood within the context of Ibn Ṭufayl's interpretation (or misinterpretation) of Avicenna as distinguishing between philosophical and mystical knowledge.¹⁶² This very limited purview of Avicenna's vast thought suggests that what Abner/Alfonso knew of Avicenna and his "Oriental Philosophy" came from some sort of thematic compendium inspired by Ibn Ṭufayl's understanding of the subject. The preponderance of Avicenna's "Oriental Philosophy" at the expense of other more central texts and ideas shows how little Abner/Alfonso knew about Avicenna's thought. Ironically, this evidence, which seems at first—given how little Avicenna's philosophical works were translated into Hebrew by Abner/Alfonso's time—like strong proof of Abner/Alfonso's familiarity with original Arabic source material, turns out to be strong evidence instead of the narrow lens through which Abner/Alfonso viewed the Arabic philosophical tradition. Certainly, Abner/Alfonso does show at least some familiarity with Avicenna's actual ideas, such as his theory of creation as emanation (by which God introduces multiplicity from unity) and his careful balancing between metaphysical determinism and accidental contingency and free will (although Abner/Alfonso follows Al-Ghazālī and Maimonides in rejecting Avicenna's assertion that God only knows individual things in a universal way). As Oliver Leaman notes, Abner/Alfonso "followed Avicenna in holding that human acts no less than natural occurrences are causally determined" ("Jewish Philosophy in the

¹⁶² The efforts of some critics such as Corbin to "father upon Ibn Sīnā a later tradition of mystical theosophy" (as Lenn Goodman put it in *Avicenna* 39) have justifiably met with skepticism and criticism by Avicenna scholars like Gutas and Goodman. The latter points out that the later Persian theosophist Suhrawardī "testifies decisively against the idea that the Prince of Philosophers had any hand in founding the distinctive traditions of theosophy that go beyond what is stated in any of Avicenna's familiar philosophical writings" (*Avicenna* 40). In Abner/Alfonso's case, however, the question is not to what extent Avicenna may actually have held such semi-mystical beliefs as are attributed to him by some, but how such attributions were transmitted within the Castilian Jewish community in the early fourteenth century.

MuslimWorld” 691). Nevertheless, he seems to have been misled or misinformed about the ideas of Muslim philosophers as often as he approximated an understanding of them. While this deficiency may not be his own fault, but instead be a product of the particular strain of philosophical thinking that made its way down to him through Hebrew translations and commentaries, his knowledge seems decidedly limited in important ways. In addition to his derivative references to Avicenna, most if not all of Abner/Alfonso’s citations of Arabic philosophy come from a very small range of sources, suggesting that not only did Abner/Alfonso not read and cite these texts directly from Arabic, but also that the sources he did use came, in all likelihood, in the form of available Hebrew translations and philosophical encyclopedias. Not only was Abner/Alfonso’s use of Arabic texts anomalous compared to other Jewish intellectuals (more attention to Avicenna than Averroes, more attention to Averroes’ *Dedicatory Epistle* than his commentaries on Aristotle, etc.), it was decidedly limited in its scope and shows that Abner/Alfonso’s grounding in the Arabic philosophical tradition was erratic and partly superficial. Abner/Alfonso’s philosophical thinking is, like his polemical project, eclectic and unconventional, weaving together bits and pieces from disparate sources in support of his particular ideas about faith and religious identity.



A careful consideration of the non-Hebrew sources in the *Mostrador* and other major works shows that, despite references to Latin authors such as Augustine, Aquinas, Bede, and Boethius, and to Arabic authors such as Al-Fārābī, Avicenna, Al-Ghazālī, Averroes, and others, Abner/Alfonso’s familiarity with these works was decidedly limited and often came transmitted through other texts. While it seems unlikely that

Abner/Alfonso knew no Latin or Arabic, he shows no indications of advanced ability sufficient to read extensively in the available philosophical and theological works in these languages. While this may go against what seems from an index of his citations to be a breadth of knowledge and sources, it is by no means surprising. Abner/Alfonso's entire career in composing, recycling, and developing his polemical arguments over the last three decades of his life was staged in Hebrew, and thus his familiarity with and recourse to non-Hebrew and non-Jewish sources was perforce extremely limited and not necessary for his polemical goals. As we will consider in detail in the next chapter, Abner/Alfonso's Jewish sources constituted the bulk of the authoritative tradition invoked to support his polemical arguments, and this nearly exclusive Jewish purview was an essential and defining characteristic of his argumentative strategy of direct appeal to and engagement with his Jewish former co-religionists.

Supplement Chapter Three

Jewish sources in the *Mostrador*

Daniel Lasker has stated that the polemical use of sources considered authoritative by the religion one attacks—beyond the use of Biblical or Talmudic texts—“is found in the works of only the most knowledgeable of the polemicists”, among whom he lists Abner/Alfonso (*Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 7). His observation is based on specific examples of the sources used in in the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, but it can be confirmed many times over by material from the *Mostrador*. Of the relatively few critics who have directly considered the *Mostrador* in any detail, the only ones to take up the question of Abner/Alfonso’s sources in any substantive detail have been Baer (“Abner aus Burgos” 1929, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* 1: 327-354, “The Kabbalistic Doctrine in the Christological Teaching of Abner of Burgos”), Sainz de la Maza (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 213-216), and Mettmann (*Mostrador* 1: 7-12) (Gershenzon’s discussion on 6-14 of *A Study of the Teshuvot la-Meharef*, while relevant to the study of the *Mostrador*, does not refer to it in any detail.). Although Mettmann’s brief introduction does provide a useful overview, a full survey of Abner/Alfonso’s Jewish sources in the *Mostrador*, especially along with a consideration of Latin and Arabic sources given in the previous chapter, is thus long overdue.

By considering Abner/Alfonso’s limited use of Latin and Arabic sources, we have intimated the fundamental importance of Jewish texts for his polemical arguments. Not only were all of Abner/Alfonso’s works composed in Hebrew, but Hebrew sources constitute the lion’s share of the authoritative support given for the arguments in those works. This is, of course, not surprising, given Abner/Alfonso’s background and

intentions. In addition, as we considered in chapter three, it is not only that his polemical works do not only employ many different Jewish works for support, but that the arguments supported by those works are expressed in a thoroughly Jewish format, including an advanced and literary Hebrew and a compact, Talmudic style, all within the context of a personal testimony by the author himself. It is necessary to round out the survey of the sources used in the *Mostrador* by carefully documenting that lion's share of authoritative support garnered from Hebrew and Jewish texts. In the pages that follow, we will look closely at Abner/Alfonso's use of the Hebrew Bible, Talmudic and other rabbinical sources, and religious and philosophical texts by later medieval Jewish writers. Not only will we attempt to clarify which sources Abner/Alfonso actually used, but we will also address any misconceptions or erroneous assertions regarding his sources made by previous critics. We will also look at the manifold problems in tracing some of his sources created by his repetitions, misattributions, and use of sources that are now not extant, as well as by our reliance on the obfuscatory Castilian translation of the original Hebrew text.

I. Biblical Testimonia in the *Mostrador*

In the nearly 350 folia making up the work in the Paris manuscript, Abner/Alfonso cites over two thousand different verses from the Hebrew Bible. He cites in his polemic roughly nine percent of the total verses in the Hebrew Bible, and those citations actually constitute a small but not insignificant portion of the actual text of the *Mostrador*. Without a doubt, the Hebrew Bible plays a much more important role in the text than the Christian New Testament, which hardly figures in the text. Abner/Alfonso

cites the New Testament only 54 times (about one percent of the total NT text, which is less than a third the size of the Hebrew Bible), which works out to an average of one citation every twelve or thirteen pages. Whereas he quotes multiple times from every book in the Hebrew Bible (except the Prophet Nahum, quoted once), fifty-two of his fifty-four New Testament quotes are from the Gospels. He quotes only once from the epistles of Paul (*I Corinthians*), and once from *Revelation*. A number of his New Testament quotations are spurious as well (e.g. 159v-160r/2: 45-46), and their apparent misquotation forms part of the debate between the Teacher and Rebel. Abner/Alfonso seems to have placed them in the mouth of the Rebel in order to provide fodder for corrective upbraiding of the Teacher (although, as we considered in chapter four, the Rebel also catches the Teacher with falsified arguments.) This almost exclusive focus on the Hebrew Bible is similar to the approach to Biblical texts in the *Pugio fidei* of Raymond Martini, who very rarely quotes the New Testament, favoring the Hebrew Bible at a ratio roughly equal to that of Abner/Alfonso.

Not surprisingly, Abner/Alfonso cites all of the verses most popular among medieval anti-Jewish polemicists and all of the verses used most by scores of polemical writers for over a millennium, such as Genesis 49:10 (“The scepter shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh comes”), Isaiah 7:14 (“Look, the virgin is with child and shall bear a son”) and 52-53 (“See, my servant shall prosper...”), Ezekiel 37-39 (“You, mortal, prophesy to the mountains of Israel...”), Zechariah 12-14 (“On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone...”), Malachi 3:19-24 (or 4:1-6) (“See, the day is coming, burning like an oven...”), Daniel 7-9 (“Daniel had a dream...”), etc. Gilbert Dahan has remarked in his overview of the Biblical books and verses most cited in polemical literature (Genesis,

Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel) that two different concerns dictate the attention to such material: On the one hand, theological concerns in explaining foundational myths (above all from Genesis) and on the other, Christological themes—which go hand-in-hand with *Adversus Iudaeos* themes concerning the infidelity of Israel—which include the life of Christ and the predictions about the Messiah (found mostly in the major prophets and Daniel). These two sets of concerns converge in the frequent recourse to the Psalms, which offer themselves to an exegetical blending mythical theology and messianic prophecy (*Les intellectuels chrétiens* 389). In these concerns, and in the citation of the books appropriate to their exposition, Abner/Alfonso shows little originality in his use of Biblical verses, quoting most frequently from Genesis, Psalms, the major prophets, and Daniel. Although he quotes more verses from the book of Isaiah than any other book (followed in order by Psalms, Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Exodus), and although he quotes Isaiah more times (including repetitions) than Daniel, Abner/Alfonso quotes more of the total volume of the book of Daniel than any other Biblical book (he includes nearly a third of the book in his text). Of the most-cited Biblical verses (cited ten times or more) in the *Mostrador*, six out of nine are from Daniel.¹ Beyond sheer numbers, however, which are of limited value in assessing the role of the Hebrew Bible in the text, the verses of Daniel and Isaiah that are cited receive the most attention and exegetical discussion in the work, pointing to their crucial role in the discussion of the messianic prophesy in the Bible and its fulfillment in history. Two key issues are discussed on the basis of these books: From the book of Isaiah, the discussion of the Suffering Servant in books 52:13-

¹ Abner's most cited verses (ten times or more) include Is 51:4 (13 times); Ps 87:5 (13x), Dn 8:13 (13x); 9:24 (11x); 24-5 (11x); 9:26 (10x); 9:27 (10x); 12:10 (11x), Ez 37:25 (10x). For more details on his Biblical citations, see supplement chapter two, n. 27.

53:12 plays a crucial role in Abner/Alfonso's discussion of the incarnation of the Messiah, treated above all in book six. From the book of Daniel, the vision of the four beasts forms the basis of Abner/Alfonso's calculations of the chronology of the world and the timing of the coming of the Messiah, which form the basis of book eight. In terms of the other major themes treated in the text, including the propitiation of original sin (chapter four), the Trinity, including the humanity and divinity of Jesus (chapters five and six), the abrogation of the Law (chapters two and three), the alleged miscalculation of the messianic age by the Jews (chapters seven, eight, and nine), and the belief in the moral superiority of the Christians (chapter ten), the discussion of each relies on standard passages.² The discussion of original sin and redemption in chapter four naturally relies most of all on chapter three of Genesis, the eating of the tree and expulsion from the garden. The discussion of the Trinity in chapter five, besides returning many times to Genesis chapters one (creation), eighteen (Abraham's three visitors), and nineteen (the destruction of Sodom), relies heavily on the first chapter of Ezekiel and the sixth chapter of Isaiah (both describing the vision of God on the throne). The discussion of the calculation or miscalculation of the messianic age relies, beyond the preponderance of citation from Daniel, on the historical books, and on the prophecies in Ezekiel in chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine about the restoration of Israel, including the war of Gog and Magog. There are few surprises in Abner/Alfonso's polemical use of Biblical *auctoritates*.

An important aspect of Abner/Alfonso's use of the Hebrew Bible is his direct citation of verses in their original language. As we know from the surviving Hebrew texts of Abner/Alfonso's polemics (the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, the polemical letters, the *Teshuvot ha-*

² For a brief consideration of the "standard verses" of most Christian polemical texts, see Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens* 386-422.

Meshuvot, and the *Meyasher 'Akou*), citations of the Hebrew Bible are given, obviously, in their original languages (usually Hebrew, and occasionally Aramaic).³ On a few rare occasions, the *Mostrador* contains citations from the Vulgate translation in Latin, but judging from the Castilian versions of existing Hebrew works such as the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, those quotations are given in contrast to another Castilian translation made directly from Hebrew. Of the notably few citations in Latin in the *Mostrador* (eleven, by my count),⁴ only two are of Biblical texts found in the Hebrew Bible. The rest include a few citations from the New Testament, a citation of the apocryphal book Azariah (not in Hebrew), a citation of St. Augustine, and a handful of citations from Christian prayers in Latin. Latin plays a negligible role in Abner/Alfonso's text,⁵ and nearly all scriptural references are, logically, directly to the Hebrew Bible. Mettmann addresses the question of Abner/Alfonso's knowledge of Latin, asserting that his abilities were in all likelihood very "modest", an opinion stated even more strongly by Graetz.⁶ To be sure, the almost total dearth of Latin and Latin authors in a traditionally Latin genre is remarkable, and

³ Abner/Alfonso quotes a number of verses from the Aramaic sections of Ezra, and many from books 2-7 of Daniel and makes frequent use of the Aramaic *Targumim*.

⁴ The notable instances of citation of Latin in the *Mostrador* are in the following paragraphs: III:1 (Daniel 3:57/Prayer of Azariah 35), IV:26 (Athanasian creed), V:4 ("Gloria patri" and Jn 1:1), V:18 (Athanasian Creed), VI: 4 (Jn 1:12-13 and Athanasian creed), VI: 7-8 (Athanasian creed), VI:33 (Jn 6:51-2), VI:34 (St Augustine), VII:7 (Ps 51:6), VII: 41 (Apostle's creed and Athanasian creed), IX:50 (part of Ps 10:16), X:11 ("Primo dierum" from Sunday Matins). In the Castilian *Teshuvot*, the only examples seem to be 47ra (Ps 50:1) and a few words on 65rb. In the *Ofrenda de zelos* and the *Libro de la ley*, and the polemical letters, there is no use of Latin beyond the occasional word "dominus".

⁵ Thus Sainz de la Maza concurs: "El latín, como lengua poco apreciada (aunque ni mucho menos desconocida) por los teóricos adversarios y, a la vez, destinatarios del texto de Alfonso, casi no se utiliza en el *Mostrador*" (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 238 n. 71).

⁶ Mettmann observes, in considering Abner/Alfonso's knowledge of Petrus Alfonsi, "Überhaupt stellt sich, trotz vereinzelter lateinischer Zitate und Hinweisen auf lateinische Autoren und Texte, die sich im «Mostrador» finden, die Frage, wieweit die Lateinkenntnisse unseres Autors reichten; vermutlich waren sie eher bescheiden" (*Mostrador* 1: 8). He cites Graetz as well, who goes so far as to assert plainly of Abner/Alfonso that "Lateinisch hat er dagegen nicht verstanden" (*Geschichte* 7: 451).

the most remarkable absence is that of Raymond Martini. Although it is likely that Abner/Alfonso had to have some familiarity with Latin for his position as sacristan at the collegiate church of Valladolid, and the nature of his occasional Latin citations suggests his basic familiarity with Latin must have come principally through liturgical sources and little, if at all, through Patristic or polemical texts. This apparently limited ability in Latin may help explain Abner/Alfonso's failure to draw from the large anti-Jewish polemical tradition in Latin, a tradition whose arguments he obviously shares.

The question must be addressed as to how we know for certain that Abner/Alfonso's Biblical citations were in Hebrew when we are working with a translated text like the *Mostrador* for which the original has been lost. After all, the citations in the text are not in Hebrew any more than they are in Latin, so the possibility arises that Abner/Alfonso used existing Castilian translations of the Bible rather than translated texts directly from Hebrew. Such doubts are easily answered. Besides the simple fact that we know with certainty that the text was composed in Hebrew and, like all his other works, which were also composed in that language, Abner/Alfonso's surviving Hebrew texts offer a clear example of how the Bible was most likely used in the original *Moreh Zedek*. In addition to this obvious proof, there is solid evidence in the Biblical citations of the text of an influence from the original Hebrew. Sainz de la Maza has considered the same question of the influence of Hebrew on the Castilian of Vatican Lat. MS 6423, pointing to specific Hebraisms such as the elision of the definite and indefinite articles, the omission of conjunctions, the frequent use of present participles, frequent paronomasia, especially the characteristically Biblical infinitive construct verb, and certain lexical traces (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 288-292), all of which can be easily found in the

Biblical citations of the *Mostrador*,⁷ as Mettmann has noted (*Mostrador* 1: 8). Such a heavy influence from Hebrew is evident throughout the text, and not only in the Biblical citations, pointing to the “semitismo original de su escritura” (Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 293), obvious in the constant discussion of transliterated Hebrew words.

In his introductory comments, Mettmann points to the significant moment in chapter seven, paragraph five, when the Teacher refers to “all of these reasons and others which cannot be translated to Romance,”⁸ indicating a possible point where the original Hebrew text was abridged or changed in translation to Castilian. In fact, this instance referred to by Mettmann is the second such statement in chapter seven, the first occurring two paragraphs before (in paragraph three) in which the Teacher quotes Joseph Kimḥi, and points to “many reasons that there are according to the Hebrew language, which indicates that Rabbi Joseph was in error in that gloss, but which cannot be translated into Romance.”⁹ There are, moreover, abundant references to the meaning of words in Hebrew, or to translation from Romance and Latin to Hebrew.¹⁰ A very interesting

⁷ Many of the very same examples cited by Sainz de la Maza were written first in the *Mostrador*, such as Ex 31:6, “en coraçon de todo sabio” (228v/2: 193), Za 5:3, “sobre faz de toda la tierra” (240v/2: 221), Ps 84:12 “ca sol e escudo es Domino” (287r/2: 336), Ez 12:27, “He casa de Isrrael dizientes” (259r/2: 267), Gen 2:17, “Morir morrás” (99v/1: 188), etc. The examples are much more abundant overall in the *Mostrador*, given its length (seven times that of the *Teshuvot*) and its more abundant Biblical citations (five times as many as the *Teshuvot*).

⁸ “...todas estas rrazones e otras que non se pueden trasladar a rromañçe” (193r/2: 118).

⁹ “...muchas rrazones que ay segund la lengua del ebrayco, que da a entender que erró Rrabi Yoçef en aquella glosa, ssinon que non se puede trasladar bien al rromañçe” (191r/2: 113).

¹⁰ Abner/Alfonso makes explicit reference to his use of the Hebrew Bible, or discusses the meaning of a word in Hebrew, in many places in the *Mostrador*. Some examples include the prologue (12v-13r/1: 14), chapter two, paragraphs thirteen (64r-v/1: 114-116), paragraph eighteen (66v-67r/1: 120-122), chapter three, paragraph one (73vff/1: 136ff), chapter five, paragraph two (118rff/1: 224ff), paragraphs seventeen and eighteen (134r-136r/1: 257-262), chapter six, pararaph fourteen (151v/2: 28), paragraph thirty (171r/2: 70, 175r-176r/ 2: 78-81), chapter seven, paragraphs two and three (185vff/2: 101ff), paragraph

example is found in Chapter six, paragraph fourteen, when the Teacher responds to accusations by the Rebel (from chapter six, paragraph thirteen, partly in reference to the Teacher's statement in chapter four, paragraph sixteen) that the Latin Vulgate includes a mistranslation of the first verses of Psalm 110 (accusing the Christian of translating "le-adoni" ("to my Lord" or "domino", referring to David) in verse one as "le-adonai" ("to the Lord," or "Domino", referring to God) (149v/2: 24), and of translating "amkha" ("your people") in verse three as "imkha" ("with you", or "tecum") (108r/1: 204). The Teacher responds by arguing that such arguments represent simple vocalization changes in the Hebrew (i.e. לַאֲדֹנָי \ לַאֲדֹנָי and עִמָּךְ \ עִמָּךְ), and then states:

I do not intend to speak in this book about the changes that are found in the translations of the prophecies, but rather in what might show something about the foundations of the Law. But in other things I did not take verses according to how they are translated to Latin among Christians, but rather according to how they are understood in the Hebrew language. This is because my words and arguments here are not with Christians, but with contrary Jews, for the sages do not have need of medicine, in the way the sick have need of it."¹¹

fifteen (207r/2: 150), paragraph nineteen (212v/2: 161), chapter eight, paragraph eight (240v-242v/2: 221-25), paragraph ten (246r-v/2: 234), chapter nine, paragraph three (250v/2: 245), paragraph thirteen (261r/2: 271), paragraph twenty five (270r/2: 293), paragraph forty one (278v/ 2: 313), chapter ten, paragraph eleven (324r/2: 412). This list is not exhaustive, but only points to some of the more important examples.

¹¹ "Yo no tengo mientes de ffablar en este libro en los camiamientos que sson ffallados en las trasladaçiones de las prophecias, ssinonn en lo que montare algo en las rrayzes de la Ley. Mas en las otras cosas non tomé los viessos ssegund que sson trasladados al latin entre los christianos, ssinono segunt <152r> que sson entendudos en lengua del ebrayco. E esto es porque mis palabras e mis rrazones aqui nono son con los christianos, ssinon con los judios contradezidores; ca los sabios non an menester melezina, como lo an mester los enfermos" (151v-152r/2: 28).

Such explicit statements about the use of the Hebrew Bible rather than the Latin Vulgate point to the important role that the original Biblical text naturally played in Abner/Alfonso's polemical argument in speaking, as he says, directly to Jews rather than to other Christians. His use of the Hebrew Bible constitutes the cornerstone of this strategy of directness.

In his use of exegesis of the Hebrew Bible for polemical purposes, his attitude towards the text is sometimes ambivalent. Most of the time, he treats the Hebrew text as unequivocally true and authoritative, and his use of the text constitutes an attempt to lend authority to his own arguments. There are a few instances, however, when he argues that the Hebrew text has been somehow corrupted by Jews and so tries to offer corrections or explain changes. In chapter six, paragraph eighteen, for example, Abner/Alfonso discusses the possible names given to the Messiah in Jewish tradition. In focusing on Isaiah 9:5 ("A child is born unto us...and his name shall be called marvelous counselor"), he states that the Jews misunderstand "va-yikra' shemo" as "his name called" rather than "will be called". He explains:

Perhaps your scribes corrupted the words and punctuation out of their rebellion against the faith of Christ, just as there were some of them who changed the punctuation in the verse in the prophecy of Daniel which says "He swore by the life of the world", and they punctuated so as to say "He swore in the living of the world".¹²

¹² "E quiça que los vuestros escrivanos corronpieron los vierbos e los puntos por la rrebellia que rrebellaron en la ffe del Christo, assi como ovo algunos dellos que camieron la puntadura en el viesso que dize en la prophesia de Daniel: "Juró en la vida del mundo", e puntáronle en guisa que sse entiende: "Juró en el vivo del mundo" (154v/2: 35). The accusation is that the text should not contain a *dagesh forte* on the *yod*, making a *vav*-conversive construction. Without the *dagesh*, the text would read "he will be called" rather than "he was called". Abner/Alfonso's accusation also involves the difference between "va-yikra'" (he called/will

He follows this with a string of other accusations of corruptions or changes to the original text, arguing that the changes made to the Bible (including omission of books) resulted from the denial by Jewish sages of the Christian truth they already saw in their own revelations. Such accusations fit with Abner/Alfonso's overall attitude to Jewish authorities, by which he maintains that the sages saw the truth of Christianity but did not want to admit to it, so they hid it in their books in various ways. This example is by no means unique in anti-Jewish polemic, nor is it the only such example in the text itself.¹³ In this instance, it is interesting to note the repetition of these arguments by Nicholas of Lyra in his *Postillae*.¹⁴ Another such parallel between Lyra and Abner/Alfonso can be seen in their discussion of Jeremiah 23:6 ("...and this is his name whereby he shall be called: 'God is our righteousness'"). Abner/Alfonso notes that "because the one who is the 'caller' is not known, we should say that the verse showed that 'they' would call him, as if to say that the men of the world will call the name of the Christ 'Lord, our righteousness.'"¹⁵ He then makes reference (as does Lyra) to the Aramaic *Targum* of this verse, noting that "thus Jonathan translated it, except that your scribes pointed it differently so that it would not

call) and "va-yikareh" (he was called/will be called). The second example mentioned by Abner/Alfonso comes from Dan 12:7, in which Abner/Alfonso discusses "be-ḥai ha-olam" and points to the difference between swearing oaths by God, which almost always take "ḥai", and non-sacred oaths, which are pointed with a tsere, "ḥei". (e.g. I Sam 20:3).

¹³ Abner/Alfonso also charges or at least suggests that the text has been corrupted in the following chapters: VI: 18, VII:3, VII:15, X:19. Accusations of corruption of the text of the Bible were made by polemicists throughout the Middle Ages such as Justin Martyr, Paulus Alvarus, Peter of Blois, Nicholas of Lyra, and Pablo de Santa Maria. Cohen discusses the issue of *Tiqqun saferim*, or scribal emendation, in Raymond Martini in *Friars and the Jews* 148 n.37 and *Living Letters* 349 n. 90. See also Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens* 272-3 and 454-6 and Hailperin *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* 169-73, 315 n. 274.

¹⁴ See Hailperin's discussion in *Rashi and the Christian Scholars*, 170-72.

¹⁵ "Porque non parece quién es llamador conosciadamente, que devemos dezir que el viesso mostrava que le llamarán, como que diz que los omnes del mundo llamarán al nombre del Christo 'Domino, nuestra justicia'" (155r/2: 36).

be understood this way, out of love of denying the divinity of Christ.”¹⁶ As we will see, however, the similarity of Abner/Alfonso’s accusations to Lyra’s cannot be explained, at least in Abner/Alfonso’s case, by direct familiarity with Lyra’s work. Nevertheless, the evidence supports seeing Abner/Alfonso’s discussion within a wider context of Christian Hebraism in anti-Jewish polemics, and may actually be a source for later Christian arguments of this type. Abner/Alfonso makes similar accusations that the Jews corrupted the Biblical text at various points throughout the *Mostrador*, and on one occasion uses this argument to claim that Islam is not as bad a deviation from Christianity as Judaism. “We should say that the Law of the Moors is not as bad as the faith of the Jews, and this is because the Moors do not have, according to their Law, all of those changes and disagreements and bad customs that are said of you, the Jews.”¹⁷ These “changes” refer to alterations in the Biblical text and in the understanding of the Law “as it was given to Moses”, and these “disagreements” refer to a related topic that plays a small but significant role in Abner/Alfonso’s argument based on Biblical texts, namely the conflict of Karaism with rabbinical Judaism. We shall consider the possible influence of Karaism on Abner/Alfonso’s work in more detail below in this chapter.

One important auxiliary point that is relevant in discussing the use of the Hebrew Bible in the *Mostrador* concerns the implications of the Castilian translation of Abner/Alfonso’s Hebrew text in the context of medieval Bible translations. In looking at the translation of Biblical verses into Castilian, it is necessary for our purposes only to

¹⁶ “...Assi como lo trasladó Jonatan, ssinon que los vuestros escribanos le puntaron en otra manera que no se entienda assi, por amor de negar la divinidad del Christo” (155r/2:36).

¹⁷ “...mas devemos dezir que la Ley de los moros non es tan mala como la ffe de los judios. E esto es porque non an los moros, segund ssu Ley, todas aquellas mudaçiones e descondordias e malas costunbres que sson dichas de vos, los judios” (332v/2: 427).

consider those texts known to be translated directly from Hebrew rather than from the Latin Vulgate.¹⁸ Moshe Lazar, in his study of *La Fazienda de ultramar*, dated this text between 1126-1152, and thus saw the text as the earliest example of Biblical verses translated directly from Hebrew to Castilian (9-39). As Gómez Redondo points out, however, various circumstances now lead historians to date the text later, sometime around 1230 (*Historia de la prosa* 1: 112). In the context of the earliest Biblical translations from Hebrew to Castilian (for a complete list, see Reinhardt and Otero, *Biblioteca bíblica* 22-25; and Faulhaber, “Semitica Iberica” 891), this still situates the work among the earliest known Biblical translations into Castilian, and still the earliest directly from Hebrew, given that the next known translation from Hebrew is the Psalms of Herman Aleman completed between 1240-1256 (contained within Escorial MS I-i-8, ff. 221ra-226vb, a pre-alfonsine Biblical translation made from the Latin Vulgate.)¹⁹ Following these, Llamas, Faulhaber, Reinhardt and Otero, and Lazar list various translations, dated by some to the thirteenth-century, of parts of the Bible made directly from Hebrew, such as Escorial MSS I-i-4, part of I-i-3, plus I-i-5 and I-i-7. By the time Abner/Alfonso composed the *Mostrador*, there were already a number of at least partial translations of the Bible based on the Hebrew rather than the Latin, but a comparison shows that none of these texts were used in the translation of the *Moreh Zedek* into the Castilian *Mostrador de justicia*. Thus the abundant Biblical citations in the *Mostrador* (roughly twice the Biblical material translated from Hebrew by Herman Aleman) make up another source that

¹⁸ For a summary of such information, see Faulhaber, *Semitica iberica*, 891, as well as his online database *Philobiblon: Bibliografía española de textos antiguos* (BETA), BETA textid 3010, 2938, 3013, and 3012; and the introduction by Llamas to his edition of *Biblias medievales romanceadas*, IX-LX.

¹⁹ See the bibliography in Gómez Redondo, *Historia*, 1: 126 n. 140, especially Wenceslada de Diego Lobejón, *El Salterio de Hermann el Alemán*. See also the complete edition of I-i-8 by Mark Littlefield, *Biblia Romanceada I.I.8*.

should be considered as a small but notable part of the history of the translation of the Bible from Hebrew to Castilian.

Even more significant, from the perspective of translation of Scripture, is Abner/Alfonso's use of Aramaic *Targumim* (translations of the Biblical books made in the late centuries BCE and early centuries CE in Palestine and Babylonia). Abner/Alfonso only cites two *Targumim* by name, *Onkelos* (of the Torah) and *Jonathan* (of the Prophets). Abner/Alfonso only mentions the *Targum Onkelos* of the Torah four times, citing it twice, but only one of those citations (238v/2: 216), of Num 24:24, actually matches the original text. By a large, most of Abner/Alfonso's citations of the *Targumim* come from the *Targum Jonathan*. Most of these citations of *Jonathan* are of the book of Isaiah, and most express a messianic theme or cite a translated passage in which Jonathan interprets the text as an explicit reference to the Messiah.

All of his citations of *Jonathan* roughly match the original text, except for a few which he calls *Jonathan* but which actually derive from the *Targum Yerushalmi* (also called the Pseudo-Jonathan).²⁰ It is interesting that he still attributes the text to Jonathan ben Uzziel, because in the *Minhat Qenaot/Ofrenda de Zelos* (34rb-35va/67) and in *Libro de la ley* (6r-v/101) he recounts the legend from T.B. *Megilla* 3a in which Jonathan confesses to having translated the prophetic books, and is told to desist in his desire to translate the writings. It seems Abner/Alfonso knew that Jonathan did not translate the Torah, but still attributed the *Targum* of Numbers 23:2 (169r/2:65) and 34:6 (256r/2: 259) to him. It is also important to note that Abner/Alfonso's citations of what he calls "Yerushalmi"

²⁰ The *Targum Yerushalmi* was frequently confused with Jonathan in the later Middle Ages because of a misreading of the abbreviation of the title of the former ("ן"), which identical with the abbreviation for the *Targum Jonathan*.

(*Mostrador* 102r, 159r, 179v, 220v, 244r; *Teshuvot* (Castilian; not in Hebrew) 56vb) do not, as Mettmann claims, refer to the *Zohar*. In fact, they do not all refer to the same text, but in one of them, Abner/Alfonso's reference to "la trasladaçion de Jerusalmi" of Ps. 45:8 (179v/2: 89) does, in fact, match the *Targum* of Pslams on the verse in question. The other mistaken reference to *Targum Jonathan* (256r/2: 259) refers to the "big sea" mentioned in Num 34:6, and Abner/Alfonso's citation matches the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* and can be found in the *Targum Neofiti* and Fragmentary *Targumim* as well. The textual history behind these quotations and misquotations is difficult to sort out and, given that most citations come from Jonathan on Isaiah, they are of little consequence. The most significant point that can be seen by collating and identifying his citations is that Abner/Alfonso's main goal in citing the *Targumim* of the Biblical text was to buttress his messianic exegesis, and in this sense he did not use the *Targumim* any differently than Talmudic, Midrashic, or philosophical texts. In the original *Moreh*, his citations of the *Targumim* were naturally in the original, as they are in the Hebrew text of the *Teshuvot* (28r and 51v).

II. Overview of the Rabbinical sources in the *Mostrador*

The nearly exclusive use of the Hebrew Bible (over the Latin Vulgate) in Abner/Alfonso's works is emblematic of his general approach with regard to sources. One of the keystones of Abner/Alfonso's argument, like that of Mendicant polemicists of the thirteenth century, is his use of Talmudic and Midrashic sources. The use of the Talmud and Midrash as support for Christian arguments originated, as we have already noted, around the time of the disputation of Barcelona when, instead of condemning and burning the Talmud for possible anti-Christian content, it was used by the convert Paul

Christiani to show that even Jewish tradition supports the truth of Christianity. The use of the Talmud and Midrash for Christian purposes is, in fact, one of the points that suggests a direct link between Abner/Alfonso and the anti-Jewish polemics of the thirteenth-century Mendicants such as Raymond Martini, a link which, as we have shown, did not entail Abner/Alfonso's familiarity with Mendicant sources. Despite this lack of direct connection with Dominican readings of the Talmud, Abner/Alfonso's employment of rabbinical texts attests to a certain undeniable continuity between his arguments and those of his immediate polemical predecessors. Still, we should not, in considering Abner/Alfonso's rabbinical citations, lose sight of the fact that Martini's massive compendium of material was, according to Lieberman and Chazan, the work of more than one person (Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* 116-7), whereas Abner's *Mostrador*, which contains a comparable variety of rabbinical and medieval sources, was, by all accounts, the work of Abner/Alfonso alone. From this perspective, the number and variety of citations is all the more impressive and attests to Abner/Alfonso's true mastery of the material on a first-hand basis.

Alfonso refers by name in the *Mostrador* to over 175 different Talmudic passages (roughly the same amount as Raymond Martini in the *Pugio Fidei*), and makes allusions to many others without naming them. Although Mettmann has indexed the pages where texts are mentioned, no scholar has yet checked the accuracy of the citations or attempted to index the specific references of each citation (for a preliminary catalog of citations, see appendix 4). Naturally, most of his Talmudic citations come from the Babylonian Talmud (*Bavli*), from which he cites twenty-three of the total sixty-three tractates

(*masekhot*), quoting at least one from each of the six “orders” (*sedarim*) into which Judah ha-Nassi organized the tractates.²¹

Only a handful of his citations are from the Palestinian Talmud (*Yerushalmi*), which he denotes sometimes as “Jerushalmi” (although a few of these references are to the *Targum Yerushalmi*), and sometimes explicitly as “Talmud de Jherusalem” or “Talmud Jerushalmi”. Abner/Alfonso’s references to what he calls the “Jerushalmi” refer to various texts including the Palestinian Talmud and the *Targum Yerushalmi*, as well as a few other.²² Other citations, such as in the case of the tractate *Shekalim*, come with no mention of the *Yerushalmi*. These references to the Palestinian Talmud are only significant insofar as they show the breadth of Abner/Alfonso’s Jewish sources, but they do not constitute a significant part of his argument.

Of his many citations of the Talmud Bavli, most are drawn from a few tractates (*Berakhot*, *Hagiga*, *Megillah*, *Shabbat*, *Sukkah*, *Avodah Zarah*, *Avot*, *Baba Batra*, and *Sanhedrin*). Not surprisingly, the most frequent references are to a few sections of *Sanhedrin* (90a, 93a-94a, 97b-99a), previously used by Friar Paul at the Disputation of Barcelona and again by later Dominican polemicists. One such oft-cited passage is from T.B. *Sanhedrin* 98a, cited by both Friar Paul (*Kitvei* 1:307/ Maccoby 113) and Martini (*Capistrum* 1.7.25: p. 1: 306;

²¹ The distribution of the tractates mentioned *by name* (there are, of course, many references that are incorporated into the text) is as follows: one from *Zeraim*/Seeds (*Berakhot* (13 times)), nine from *Moed*/Festival (*Bezah* (1), *Erubin* (2), *Hagiga* (11), *Megillah* (9), *Rosh ha-Shanah* (4), *Shabbat* (9), *Sukkah* (9), *Taanit* (3), and *Yoma* (6)), three from *Nashim*/Women (*Qiddushin* (3), *Nedarim* (1), and *Yebamot* (4)), seven from *Nezikin*/Damages (*Avodah Zarah* (11), *Avot* (11), *Baba Batra* (9), *Baba Mezia* (4), *Baba Qamma* (2), *Sanhedrin* (55), and *Shevuot* (1)), two from *Kodashim*/Holy Things (*Arakhin* (1) and *Hullin* (5)), and one from *Toharot*/Purity (*Niddah* (1)).

²² See below for a discussion of the legend of Joshua ben Levi’s visit to Hell, attributed in the Castilian *Teshuvot* (56v) to the “Jerussalmi” and in the *Mostrador* to *Genesis Rabbah* (106v-107r/1:201).

Pugio 2.7.4: p. 351). In this dictum, which appears in the *Mostrador* (170v/2: 69)²³ and the *Teshuvot* (Hebrew 49v/Castilian 79rb), Rabbi Joshua ben Levi asks Elijah when the Messiah will come, and Elijah responds “Ask him yourself. [He is] at the gate of Rome among the sick people.” The text is understood by all the polemicists as clearly linking the Messiah and the church of Rome. As Chazan explains with regard to Friar Paul’s use of this rabbinic dicta, the argument it is offered to support is that the Rabbis themselves already knew Jesus was the awaited Messiah. The end of the dictum is significant for Abner/Alfonso’s argument: When Joshua ben Levi goes to speak to the Messiah and ask when he will come, the Messiah replies “today.” When he returns to Elijah and says the Messiah spoke falsely to him, saying he would come that day and did not, Elijah responds, “This is what he said to you, today if you listen to his voice.”²⁴ Part of Abner/Alfonso’s interpretation hinges on showing that the Messiah has already come, and he takes Elijah’s statement that he is in Rome as proof of this. The conclusion of this dictum, however, also carries with it implications that support Abner/Alfonso’s argumentative appeal directly to Jews. As Elijah explains, the Messiah will come today “if you listen to his voice,” thus placing the onus of recognizing the Messiah on the effort and intention of the believer. As we will see, this direct appeal to the Jewish reader to look more closely at the writings from his own tradition in order to see their Christian content forms the basis of Abner/Alfonso’s use of rabbinical material, and this appeal is the most original and distinguishing characteristic of his polemic.

²³ Cf. other citations of the same story on 226r/2: 189; 229v/2: 195; 230r-v/2: 197; 290v/2: 344. As we noted in chapter four, it is significant that Abner/Alfonso does not show any familiarity with another legend, not found in any extant sources, about Joshua ben Levi’s journey to hell, recounted by Peter the Venerable in his *Adversus Iudaeorum inveteratam duritiam* (163-166).

²⁴ “Esto te quiso dezir: oy, si en su boz oyeredes” (170v/2: 69).

His use of Talmudic dicta cannot be considered apart from his extensive use of rabbinical Midrashim (study, glosses, exegesis, exposition, interpretation), which he cites more frequently than the Talmud. Abner/Alfonso refers by name to over two-hundred Midrashim, including so-called “exegetical” Midrashim (*Genesis Rabbah* (68 times), *Lamentations Rabbah* (12), and *Midrash on Psalms* (28), *Proverbs* (5), *Ruth* (2), and *Song of Songs* (9)), and “homiletic” Midrashim (*Leviticus Rabbah* (32), *Deuteronomy Rabbah* (3), *Exodus Rabbah* (25), *Tanḥuma/Yelamdeinu* (5), *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer*, (14), as well as the later *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah* (35)). Most of these citations match the original texts nearly exactly, but there are a few Midrashim that are more problematic. We have already noted one instance, for example, where Abner/Alfonso cites a rabbinic dictum as “Jerushalmi” in the *Teshuvot* and *Genesis Rabbah* in the *Mostrador*. There are a number of such references to Midrashim that can only be found in extant sources in other works, or in some cases (such as the three references to *Deuteronomy Rabbah*) can not be found with certainty in any other text. Abner/Alfonso’s references to *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah* are illustrative in this respect, since it is difficult to match the bulk of these citations with the text available today, but many of them can be found in other works of rabbinical literature. These occasional inconsistencies, much more common in Abner/Alfonso’s citations of Midrashim than of Talmudic verses, raise the question of the intentionality behind apparent misquotations. We have already seen that Baer presumingly asserts that Abner/Alfonso “took over the Christological method of interpreting the Midrash from Raymond Martini’s *Pugio Fidei* (Dagger of the Faith), making very clever, careful and imaginative use of the forged Midrashim of the famous Dominican” (*A History* 1: 331; Cf. “The Kabbalistic Doctrine...”[Hebrew] 279 n. 3), a statement that we have shown to be unsupported by

close comparison of the two polemicists. Gershenzon, on the other hand, defends Abner/Alfonso's intentions on the basis of "Abner's demonstrated knowledge of rabbinic texts" (120 n. 73). Saul Lieberman has shown in his defense of some of Martini's citations (and recently Ragacs, "The Forged Midrashim of Raymond Martini—Reconsidered" has agreed with his findings) that references of this kind more likely represent early textual variants that circulated simultaneously which have not been preserved in later redactions and editions (Lieberman calls the *Pugio* "a treasure of invaluable readings" ("Raymond Martini and his Alleged Forgeries" 99). Such an observation equally holds true for Abner/Alfonso's *Mostrador* (and the loss of the Hebrew text is also the loss of a similarly rich treasure of citations). Above all, the intentional misquotation on Abner/Alfonso's part does not make strategic sense in view of his polemical project, since he certainly understood the high level of expertise of his polemical opponents (Polgar himself was Abner/Alfonso's former student) and misuse of his alleged proof texts would only undermine the viability of his own assertions. This fact is even more true in Abner/Alfonso's case than in Martini's, who was not writing for Jewish readers.

Although he does refer to a few halakhic Midrashim such as *Mekhilta* (5 times), *Sifre* on Numbers (1) and on Deuteronomy (2), and one reference to *Sifra* by the title "Torah Kohanim," it is clear that the bulk of his citations, as in the polemical arguments of Christiani and Martini, derive from exegetical and aggadic (non-legal) texts rather than legal, halakhic sources. This is significant, because such an imbalance is the butt of one of Naḥmanides' criticisms in the *Vikuah* account of the Barcelona disputation. Given his familiarity with Naḥmanides' criticisms, Abner/Alfonso's preponderate use of non-legal Midrashim may seem curious, because Abner/Alfonso shows no sign of trying to obviate

Jewish charges of overdependence on aggadic texts by giving more attention to halakhic, legal sources. As we considered in chapter four, however, Abner/Alfonso does not try to avoid aggadic sources or compensate for their non-legal status, but argues that they can be brought to bear on halakhic matters through the support and testimony of other, later sages in Jewish tradition. While Martini, in an effort to develop the arguments of Friar Paul at Barcelona, actually cites more widely from halakhic Midrashim (see Merchavia, “*Pugio Fidei*—An Index of Citations” 209-10), Abner/Alfonso tries to change the nature of the argument altogether, and his failure to cite widely from halakhic texts is in keeping with this strategy.

Citation of a wide variety of Midrashim plays an integral role in each of the main arguments of the *Mostrador*'s ten chapters. Individual Midrashim are usually amassed with other texts offering support on a similar subject including other Midrashim, Talmudic dicta, medieval works of theology and exegesis, and philosophical texts. We have already considered Abner/Alfonso's use of *Midrash on Psalms* 50:1 in comparison with Martini's discussion in the *Pugio Fidei*, showing how Abner/Alfonso used this Midrash to build an elaborate Trinitarian argument that incorporated philosophical and Kabbalistic ideas. This example is in many ways representative of Abner/Alfonso's use of Midrashic texts, because his readings frequently involve a careful and extensive reading of the details of the text in relation to other authoritative sources. This text highlights Abner/Alfonso's very original readings of Midrashic texts to suit his polemical purposes.

Some of his citations are extremely common to polemical literature, such as *Lamentations Rabbah* 1:57, again found in Friar Paul's arguments at Barcelona (*Kitvei*

1:306/Maccoby 110) as reported by Naḥmanides and in Martini's polemics (*Pugio* 348).²⁵ Nevertheless, even his use of such commonly cited texts show a distinctive individual interpretation. Abner/Alfonso cites more of the original text than is attributed to Paul by Naḥmanides, and his text differs slightly from Martini's (who cites the version in T.J. *Berakhot* 17a-b):

It happened to a man who was plowing with his oxen, and an ox lowed. An Arab was passing by, and said to the plower: "What kind of man are you?" He said to him: "A Jew." He said to him: "Jew, O Jew, untie your oxen, untie your plough, untie your coulter." He said to him: "Why?" He said: "Because your temple is destroyed." He said to him: "How do you know?" He said to him: "I know from the voice your ox lowed. He untied his oxen and his plough and his coulter. As he was talking with him on that subject, the ox lowed another low. The Arab said to him: Tie up your oxen, tie up your ploughs, tie up your coulter, for your Christ is born, who will save you." He said to him: "What is his name?" He said to him: "Consoler." "And his father, what is his name?" He said "Mighty God." He said: "Where does he live?" He said to him: "In the house of an Arab in Bethlehem in the land of Judea..."²⁶

²⁵ Interestingly, Martini cites the version of the text found in T.J. *Berakhot* 17a-b, not *Lamentations Rabbah*.

²⁶ "...que acaesçio en un omne que arava con sus bu[e]yes, e metió boz en un buey. E pasava por allí un omne alarab, e dixo a aquel arador: "¿Qué omne eres?" Díxole: "Judío." Díxole: "Judío fi de judío, suelta tus bu[e]yes, suelta tus yuntas, suelta tu cantaro." Díxole: ¿Por qué?" Díxole: "Porque el vuestro Tenplo es desertado." Díxole: Dónde lo sabes tú? Díxole: "De la boz que echó tu buey lo ssé." Soltó sus bueyes e soltó sus yuntas e soltó su cantaro. Demientra que yua fablando con él en aquella rrazon, echó el buey otra boz. Díxole aquel alarab: "Ata tus bueyes, ata tus yuntas, ata tu cantaro, ca naçido es el vuestro Christo, que vos a de salvar." Díxole: "¿Cuál es su nonbre?" Díxole: "Conssolador." "¿E su padre, qual es su nonbre?" Dixo: "Dios fuerte." Dixo: "¿E dó posan?" Díxole: "En casa de un alarab de Bellem, en tierra de Judea..." (218v/2: 175).

The citation of this Midrash comes in paragraph thirty-three of chapter seven, forming part of his discussion of the Jewish hope for the Messiah and the argument that the Messiah has already come. Specifically, he argues that this text shows that the birth of the Messiah did not occur at the time of the destruction of the second temple by Titus “as some believed” (“como lo cudaron algunos” 219r/2: 176), a reference to Naḥmanides who states in the *Vikuaḥ* that this Midrash shows that the Messiah was not Jesus because he was born before the destruction of the Temple (*Kitvei* 1:306/ Maccoby 110-11). In fact, Abner/Alfonso picks apart the details of the Midrash in an effort to show that this does not refer to the destruction of the second Temple. Martini had already used the version of this legend in the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, rejecting the text among various others and stating “behold how the Jews confabulate concerning their fictitious Messiah” (“Ecce qualia fabulantur Judei de suo ficto Messia” 352). Abner/Alfonso, different from both Paul and Martini, interprets the events in this Midrash as occurring under the reign of Herod at the time Jesus was born.

Although Abner/Alfonso does cite from the all of the best-known exegetical Midrashim used in Christian polemics, he clearly gives preference, like Raymond Martini, to *Genesis Rabbah*, which he cites more frequently than any other non-Biblical single source and twice as often as any other Midrashic text. This preponderance points again to Abner/Alfonso’s reliance on exegetical and aggadic texts, which lend themselves more freely to the more elastic and unorthodox hermeneutics of polemicists. On the opposite end of the spectrum, among the sources cited very infrequently, it is possible to see the variety of Abner/Alfonso’s Midrashic authorities by considering a few minor Midrashim that pop up occasionally in the text. In chapter six, paragraph eight,

Abner/Alfonso includes a singular reference not found in any of his other major works:²⁷

“As Rabbi Moses the Glosser explained, it is as if it said ‘As for your belief that I was a man like you, I will not be silent, but I will charge you with it. You said nothing, but the incarnation of divinity in humanity in the Christ has been proved in many ways.’”²⁸ This reference is apparently to Moses ha-Darshan of Narbonne, who composed commentaries on Biblical and rabbinical writings in the early eleventh century, including the *Yesod*, a work frequently cited by Rashi and one of his grandsons. Raymond Martini cites his *Genesis Rabbati* at least two-dozen times (Merchavia, “*Pugio Fidei*—An Index of Citations” 214), and this has generated controversy over the authenticity of Martini’s sources, since nothing was known of this work until recently. It is now known that this work represents an abridgement of his other writings, and contains material based on *Genesis Rabbah* along with many additional comments from Midrashic and exegetical works now otherwise lost. Abner/Alfonso’s citation of his statement about Psalm 50:21 is problematic because it neither matches any of Martini’s citations nor does it derive from Ha-Darshan’s commentary on Genesis.

This reference “Mosse el Glosador” is not the only apparent connection of the *Mostrador* with lesser-known and minor Midrashic writings. Abner/Alfonso cites a number of works from outside the canon of major Midrashim as well. One such reference is to the “Midras del cantico del mar”, i.e. the *Midrash Va-Yosha*, or “Midrash of the Song of the

²⁷ This statement is about Psalm 50:21, i.e. “These things you have done, and I have kept silent. You thought I was one just as you are, but now I rebuke you, and lay the charge before you.”

²⁸ “E como esplanó Rabbi Mosse el Glosador que es como ssi dixiesse lo que cudeste que sseria varon como tú, non te lo callaré, sinon affrontarte-he sobrello. Non dixiste nada, pues que es povado por muchas maneras el investimiento de la divinidad en la umanidad del Christo” (147v/2: 18).

Red Sea” about Ex 14:30-15:18.²⁹ From this Abner/Alfonso cites a legend that Pharaoh was a cubit taller than Moses and had a beard a cubit and a palm longer (330v/2: 423). Another lesser-known Midrashim is the “Ma’aseh Torah” (“Mehoce Tora”), also called the *Midrash Sheloshah ve-Arba’ah*, a compilation of statements about the numbers three to ten.³⁰ Abner/Alfonso cites what it says about the number eight: “The Christ has eight names, which are: “Jinnon”, which means “son”, “Zemah” which means “sprout”, “Messiah”, which means “Christ”, “Marvelous Counselor”, “Mighty God, “Eternal Father”, “Prince of Peace.””³¹ A third minor Midrash is cited by Abner/Alfonso in both the *Mostrador* and the *Teshuvot*. In chapter seven, paragraph thirty-seven, the Teacher states, in arguing that the Messiah was prophesied to come two separate times, that “as it says in the book “Pirke Hekhalot” that the Christ will not come until a man says to another “Take Rome and all that is in it for a penny”, and [the other] says “I will not do it.” And in general I say that all of the evasive and strange words about the nature of the world...are not said except about this second coming.”³² In the *Teshuvot* (57r/85vb), Abner/Alfonso cites almost the same text with slight variations, although Hecht notes that this text is a slight misquotation of the original (297 n. 1078). In the *Vikuah*, Nahmanides reports that he cited the same text in response to a question by King James

²⁹ See Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* 337.

³⁰ See Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* 342.

³¹ “Orossi es escripto en el libro que a nonbre “Mehoce Tora” que ocho nonbres a el Christo, e éstos son: “Ynon”, que quiere dezir “ffijo”, e “Çemah”, que quiere dezir “cogollo”, e “Maxias”, que quiere dezir “Christo”, “Maravilloso consegero”, “Dios fuerte”, “Padre de ssienpre,” “Principe de paz.”” (154v/2: 34). Cf. 45v/1: 77.

³² “E assi dize en el libro “Pirque Hacolod” que non verná el Christo fasta que diga un omne a otro: “Toma a Rroma e quanto es en ella por una meaja”, e que diga “Non la é qué fazer.” E en general digo que todas las palabras esquivias e estrannas de la natura del mundo...non lo dizen ssinon por esta venida ssegunda” (223v/2: 185-6).

of Aragon about the Talmudic Aggadah that Elijah told Joshua ben Levi to find the Messiah “at the gates of Rome. As he explains (Naḥmanides claims he said these things “later to the king in private”, *Kitvei* 1:309/Maccoby 117), the Messiah only appeared in Rome and would remain there only until its destruction. It is possible that Abner/Alfonso drew his citation of this text from Naḥmanides, but their use of the citation in their respective texts is different, the latter using it to argue that the Messiah would not stay in Rome, the former to argue that there is to be a second coming of the Messiah. While these citations do not play a major role in the arguments of the *Mostrador*, they do show the breadth of Abner/Alfonso’s source base beyond that of traditional polemics.

Early Medieval Jewish sources

Like Raymond Martini’s citations, Abner/Alfonso’s vast array of sources is not limited to early rabbinical writing such as the Talmud and Midrashim. Abner/Alfonso himself lists as “sages of the Talmud” not only the early *Tannaim* and *Amoraim* but “Tannaim and Amoraim and Geonim and Rabbis and Saboraim.”³³ The other early medieval sources in the *Mostrador* can be divided into four categories: writings of the *Geonim* (Babylonian academy leaders, fl. 8th-10th centuries) , popular narratives, Biblical exegesis and Hebrew lexicography, and apocalyptic texts. Abner/Alfonso does not actually list any *Saboraim* (Rabbis following the *Amoraim*, 6th-7th centuries) and includes only a few authoritative interpretations from the *Geonim*, citing such authors as Judah ben Naḥmani and Saadya Ben Joseph. One enigmatic reference, found in chapter three, paragraph three (92r/1:172), refers to “Rrabi samuel el Gaon”, which could potentially

³³ “tanaym e [a]moraym e geonim [e] rabbanam e caborae” (226v/2: 189).

refer to a number of people, such as Samuel, Gaon in Sura (d. 748), Samuel ben Mari, Gaon of Pumbeditha (d. 752), Samuel b. Hofni (d. 1013), or Samuel b. Ali Halevi (d. 1194), although Mettmann believes it is the Samuel ben Ali Halevi, despite the fact that Samuel was not actually a Gaon. Still, his connection with Maimonides makes him a likely candidate, given the importance of Maimonides in all of Abner/Alfonso's works and the dearth of names of earlier, lesser-known *Geonim* there, as well as the fact that Abner/Alfonso mentioned Abraham ben David of Posqueires, his contemporary, alongside him. In chapter seven, paragraph fifteen, after citing Rashi on the angel's statements to Daniel in Dan 12 in his discussion of the knowledge of the end of days, Abner/Alfonso mentions another Gaon, Yehudai bar Nahmani.³⁴ The litany of important thinkers challenged by Abner/Alfonso exemplifies how he does not shy away from directly criticizing even the most respected authorities of Jewish tradition, although generally without (as in Raymond Martini) vituperation and insult:

Also the gaon Mar Yehuday wrote that angels knew the time of the end...and that Daniel didn't understand it until the angel explained it to him...and thus Abraham bar Hiyya and Rabbi Solomon of Troyes and Rabbi Joseph Kimhi and Rabbi David, his son, and Rabbi Moses bar Nahman, and many others follow them, all holding that the time of the end [and] of the coming of the Christ is known through the sayings of Daniel, and thus held Rabbi Saadya Gaon, but they all were in error in their explanation, as we explained...³⁵

³⁴ Probably Yehudai b. Nahman (d. 761). On his identity, see Rosenthal, "The Second Letter" 493-4; Alba Cecilia and Sainz de la Maza, "La Segunda epístola" 404 n. 109.

³⁵ "Otro si el gaon Mar Yehuday escribió que aquellos angeles entendían el tiempo de la fin...e que Daniel non lo entendía fasta que gelo esplanó el angel...E assi Rrabi Abraham (208v) bar Hia e Rrabi Ssalamon de Troyas e Rabi Yocef Camhi e Rrabi David, su fijo, e Rabi Mosse bar nahaman e muchos otros que siguen

Beyond the citation of Yehudai Gaon, Abner/Alfonso also invokes (and rejects) the opinion of Saadya Gaon (d. 942), the best known authority from the gaonic period. Most of the half dozen references concern exegetical statements made by Saadya and do not come from his most famous work, *Kitāb al-amānāt wa-l-ʿitiqādāt* (*Sefer Emunot we-De'ot/Book of Beliefs and Opinions*), although at least a few statements clearly do. Beyond the mention of these *Geonim*, however, this passage is interesting for what it reveals about the ongoing argumentative strategy of the *Mostrador*. After rejecting the opinions of these venerable Jewish intellectuals, Abner/Alfonso then compares their view to that of the sages of the Talmud:

But the sages of the Talmud, who said in an allegorical way that God said: “I will reveal it to my heart and I will not reveal it to my members and I will not reveal it to the angels, and the heart will not reveal it to the mouth.” Perhaps they and all those who followed them, after they saw that all of the ends of time that they could understand properly from these verses had ended and passed, said this for the redemption and salvation that is allotted to each man in himself. That does not have a fixed time, but is according to when it enters the will of each man to know the truth...”³⁶

a ellos, todos tovieron que el tiempo de la ffin de la venida del Christo es sabido por dichos de Daniel, e asi Rrabeno Çahadias gaon lo tenia, sinon que todos erraron en la manera del esplanamiento, como ya provamos” (208r-v/2: 153).

³⁶ “Mas los sabios del Talmud, que dixeron en manera de alegoria e dixo Dios: a mi coraçon lo descubrir e a mis miembros non lo descubrir e a los angeles non lo descubrir, e que el coraçon a la boca non lo descubrió, quiza que ellos e todos los que siguieron, despues que vieron que se acabaron e pasaron todas ffinas de los tienpos que pudieron entender derechamiente por los viessos, dixieron esto por el rredimiento e la salvaçion que es aparejada a cada un omne en ssí; que aquello non a tiempo destajado sinon segund entrare en voluntad de cada omne para conoçer la verdad...” (208v/2: 153).

In this explanation, Abner/Alfonso transforms a discussion of eschatological calculations into a statement that captures the underlying logic of his own polemical re-reading of the works of Jewish tradition from a Christian perspective: the ability to understand these works properly depends on the willingness of the individual believer and his faith in the explanations of later sages (like himself). This argument is the foundation of his own conversion story recounted at the beginning of the text and is repeatedly expressed throughout the text as an appeal to his Jewish reader to resolve his own doubts before accepting the teachings of tradition. Abner/Alfonso supports this assertion in a very clever way, by rejecting modern Jewish interpretations and by invoking the support of the Talmud. Very different from other polemicists who mine the Talmud for empirical support that the Messiah has already come and that the Talmudic sages knew the Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth, Abner/Alfonso here appeals to the Talmud to argue that the revelation of the truth is dependent on the will of the believer in the present. In effect, he appeals to the authority of the Talmud for support of the idea that each Jew needs to move beyond relying solely on textual support to resolve his doubt. It is this appeal directly to the individual reader beyond the support of textual authorities that sets Abner/Alfonso's polemic apart from similar polemical texts such as Martini's.

Connected to Abner/Alfonso's use of aggadic Midrashim is his occasional mention of medieval stories and legends about Biblical figures and Jewish history. In Chapter seven, paragraph thirty-five, the Teacher states to the Rebel:

It is not proper to take proof from the "Book of Ben Sira" since, as we gave testimony about it from the sages of the Talmud, that book is among the foreign books in which there is no truth, but rather some liar composed it, one who pulls

things out of his heart. One should not take proof from it, nor should one draw proof from the “Book of the Deeds of the Days of Moses” nor the “Book of Zerubbabel” nor the “Book of Eldad the Danite.” And there are many other books among the Jews which should not be believed. And Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra wrote that those books should not be received.”³⁷

This is the only mention in Abner/Alfonso’s works of the so-called *Chronicles of Moses* (*Divrei ha-Yamim le-Moshe Rabbenu*), a medieval story about Moses’ early life, although it may have been a source for some of Abner/Alfonso’s other citations, such as the “Midrash of the Song of the Red Sea.”³⁸ One of the other works he mentions, “The Book of Eldad the Danite” (*Sefer Eldad ha-Dani ben Maḥli*) from the second half of the ninth century includes description of his travels in the East and knowledge of the lost tribes of the Israelites as well as *halakhot* which, although their authenticity has been challenged, were quoted by many important medieval scholars such as Rashi and the Tosafists (medieval, mostly French, commentators on the Talmud after Rashi) (Schochat 577-8).³⁹ In chapter ten, paragraph seven, Abner/Alfonso again refers to Eldad the Danite, stating that his claim that “the river of stones runs every day but stops on the Sabbath” should be rejected “even though the “Book of Eldad the Danite” testifies to it, since as I already

³⁷ “Dixo el Mostrador: No es guisado de tomar prueva del “Libro Benzira”, ca ya dieron testimonio dél los sabios del Talmud que es aquel libro de los libros foranos, en que non a verdad, sinon quel conpuso algun mentidor e asacador de su coraçon, e non se deven asofrir sobrél, assi como non se deven asofrir sobre el “Libro de los fechos de los dias de Moysen” nin sobrel “Libro de Zorubabel” nin sobre el “Libro de Eldad el Dani.” E asi otros muchos libros son entre los judios que non deven ser creydos. E asi escrivió Rrabi Abraham ben Ezra que aquellos libros non deven ser creydos” (221v/2: 181).

³⁸ On the “Chronicles of Moses”, see Strack and Stemberger *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* 336-7; Dan, “Moses, Chronicles of” and *The Hebrew Story in the Middle Ages* [Hebrew] 137 and 271-72.

³⁹ On Eldad ha-Dani, see Strack and Stemberger 332, Schochat, “Eldad ha-Dani” and Dan, *The Hebrew Story in the Middle Ages* [Hebrew] 47f. and 268.

showed with the statement of Abraham Ibn Ezra, that “Book of Eldad the Danite” should not be accepted.”⁴⁰

Of those works that Abner/Alfonso rejects as an unacceptable authority to prove one’s arguments, one of the most interesting is the *Sefer Alfa Beta de-Ben Sira* (*The Book of the Alphabet of Ben Sira*), a work of narrative satire whose date is unknown, although Dan claims it was “probably written in the geonic period in the East” (“Ben Sira” 548).⁴¹ The work, which circulated widely among Western Jews from the eleventh century, is a harsh parody of religious beliefs from Judaism and, some have argued, Christianity as well. It narrates the life of Ben Sira, the offspring of the prophet Jeremiah with his daughter, who became pregnant after she bathed in a public bath in which he had masturbated. Although the actual content of the text, scandalously interesting as it is, does not concern us here, it is important to understand its iconoclastic nature in discussing its presence in Abner/Alfonso’s polemic. Abner/Alfonso states explicitly in the passage cited above that it is not right to use this text to support one’s arguments, but in the rest of the half-dozen citations in the text, he strangely does just that. One phrase, which he attributes to Ben Sira that he cites twice in the *Mostrador* and once in the *Teshuvot* is that “he will conquer the wise man with few words and the fool with a whip.”⁴² Both citations in the *Mostrador*

⁴⁰ “Es rrazon de vanidat, maguera que lo testiga el “Libro de Eldat el Dani”, e con lo que ya mostré por dicho de Rrabi Abraham ben Ezra que aquel “Libro de Eldat el Dani” non deve ser rrescebido” (308r/2: 382).

⁴¹ On this text, see Strack and Stemberger 334; Dan, “Ben Sira, Alphabet of” and *The Hebrew Story in the Middle Ages*, 69f. and 268; and Yassif, *The Tales of Ben Sira in the Middle Ages* [Hebrew], a critical recension and study of the various versions that circulated since the Middle Ages (although Joseph Dan has criticized his efforts to downplay the text’s satire.) An English translation of one of the versions can be found in Stern and Mirsky’s *Rabbinc Fantasies* 167-202, although based on his citations, this is not the version used by Abner/Alfonso.

⁴² “Vençerá al ssabio con poca palabra, e al loco con el açote” (30r/1: 47; cf 223v/2: 184).

are basically the same as the citation given in the Castilian version of the *Teshuvot* (86va), but in the original Hebrew of the *Teshuvot*, the text reads in Aramaic “To the wise, a gesture; to the fool, a fist” (le-ḥakima birmiza, ve-le-shatya, bekhurmiza”) (58r). Given that this is the source of the Castilian translation of the *Teshuvot*, it is certain that this phrase was the original text of the *Moreh* as well. Although this text comes from *Midrash to Proverbs* 22:6, it is also quoted in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* (Yasif 272). It was this text that Baer cited as proof of Abner/Alfonso’s endorsement of forced conversions (*A History* 1: 353-4), seeing in Abner/Alfonso a harbinger of the mass riots of 1391, marking the beginning of the largest movement of forced conversions in Western history (for commentary on this connection, see the conclusion to the main text of this dissertation). In the *Mostrador*, the text is cited first as part of Abner/Alfonso’s list in chapter one, paragraph five of the twelve things that prevent a Jew from converting to Christianity. He states: “The tenth thing is the lightness of the oppression of captivity and the kindness which their masters show them in captivity, for this makes them remain in their rebellion, according to what Solomon said....”⁴³ In chapter seven, paragraph thirty-seven, he states “Punishment and tribulations will force them [the Jews] to pay more attention to the basis of the faith that they have in order to know the reason for the ill that comes to them, and this is according to what king Solomon said....he will conquer the wise man with few words and the fool with a fist.”⁴⁴ Although Baer’s statement that according to Abner/Alfonso “bloody persecutions are the only means of redeeming them” (*A History* 1:

⁴³ “E la cosa dezena es la liviandat de la premia de la captivitat e la piadat que les ffazen los sennores que los tienen en captivo. Ca esto los ffaz tener en la su rrevellia, segund dixo Ssalamon... “Vençerá al ssabio con poca palabra, e al loco con el açote”” (30r/1: 47).

⁴⁴ “Ca la pena e las tribulationes les forçarán para tener mientes mejor en la rrazon de la fe que tienen para saber por qué es este mal que les viene, e esto segund lo que dixo el rre Salamon...” (223v/2: 186).

353) seems overly general in its lachrymose assessment of Abner/Alfonso's views, the other passages from the *Mostrador* do support the assertion that he saw coercion as a viable option among others in dealing with the Jews.

Another narrative text cited by Abner/Alfonso, the *Toledot Yeshu* (*The Life of Jesus*), is an unambiguously anti-Christian mock biography of Jesus. The text, which seems to have been compiled from earlier material was compiled, according to Joseph Dan, after the tenth century and circulated in both a Hebrew and an earlier Aramaic version. Abner/Alfonso actually refers to versions in both Hebrew and Aramaic, citing variously the "Acts of Jesus the Nazarene" ("Fazienda de Jhesu Nazareno") and "the other book which they composed in the language of Jerusalem of the Acts of Jesus, son of Panther" ("el otro libro que compusieron en lengua de Jherusalem de "Fazienda de Jhesu, fñijo de Pandera" 282r/2: 322; cf. 201r, 211v, and 282r).⁴⁵ The text had been cited previously by Agobard of Lyons in the early ninth century (*De insolentia Iudaeorum* 194 and *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus* 207-8), as well as by his successor Amulo (*Liber contra Judaeos* 146-7, 157-87, 167-9).⁴⁶ Raymond Martini made use of the text in both his *Pugio* (362-4 and 740-1) and *Capistrum* (1: 282 and 286). Sainz de la Maza, who is the only critic to have considered Abner/Alfonso's references to this text, argues that Abner/Alfonso's citations of the text are important because they are the first in Castilian (or, one may add, any

⁴⁵ On the *Toldot Yeshu*, see Krauss's foundational study, *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdische Quellen*. Recent discussions include Basser, "The Acts of Jesus", Biale, "Counter-History and Jewish Polemics against Christianity: The *Sefer toldot yeshu* and the *Sefer zerubavel*"; Dan, *The Hebrew Story in the Middle Ages* 122f.; and Chazan, *Fashioning Jewish Identity in Medieval Western Christendom* 72-6. On Abner/Alfonso's citations of the *Toldot*, see Sainz de la Maza, "El *Toledot Yeshu* Castellano en el Maestre Alfonso de Valladolid." For a full bibliography on the *Toldot*, see Sainz de la Maza 811-12 n. 29 and Cohen, *Living Letters* 131 n. 24.

⁴⁶ Sainz de la Maza, "El *Toledot Yeshu* Castellano" 812 n. 30; Merchavia, *The Church versus Talmudic Literature* 71-84; Tolon *Petrus Alfonsi*... 18; Schreckenberg *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte* 1: 483-84; and Cohen, *Living Letters* 131.

Romance language). Considering Abner/Alfonso's obvious intention of citing works relevant and authoritative for his readers, his inclusion of this text is puzzling because, as Chazan notes, Jewish polemicists from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries "do not generally include in their critiques the crude materials of the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition" (*Fashioning Jewish Identity* 75). One interesting fact, which seems to have gone unnoticed by Sainz de la Maza, is that Abner/Alfonso does not cite this text only in order to criticize it or to try and demonstrate that Jews secretly slandered Christians, as previous Christian polemicists do, but also as a source to support his arguments. For example, he states that, "Although I proved above that that book which the Jews have about the acts of Jesus is erroneous and false, despite this, there might be some true things in it with which they dressed up their error and made it more attractive, since it is the custom of those who deceive to do things this way."⁴⁷ Sainz de la Maza groups Abner/Alfonso's use of this text with his citations of the polemical *Book of Nestor the Priest*. We will consider this work shortly, when we look at the use of anti-Christian polemical texts, but we can point out that Abner/Alfonso does not invoke the *Book of Nestor* as a source to support his arguments in the way he does on occasion with the *Toledot Yeshu*.

Among the Hebrew narrative texts cited in the *Mostrador*, one last group of texts plays a small but crucial role in Abner/Alfonso's polemical arguments. Abner/Alfonso quotes from a handful of works from the genre of Jewish apocalyptic writing, a genre that is broad enough to include Biblical texts such as the book of Daniel (one of Abner/Alfonso's most important sources) and the Christian book of Revelation, as well as

⁴⁷ "E maguera que ya prové suso que aquel libro que tienen los judios de la ffazienda de Jhesu es errado e falso, con todo esso bien puede ser que oviessen y algunas cosas de verdat con que afeytasen e aformosasen el su error, segund es tal el huso de los engan[n]adores de lo fazer asi" (211v/2: 159).

a large variety of medieval texts. The genre enjoyed great popularity in the Middle Ages, and although the vast corpus of texts that can be called “apocalyptic” allows for few meaningful generalizations, many apocalyptic texts share the common themes of the end of days, the coming of the Messiah, the action of demons or other incarnations of evil, and revelation of secrets, often to a Biblical figure, by God either directly or through angels. As such, it cannot be totally separated from texts of early *Hekhalot* and *Merkavah* mysticism (which we will discuss below), although the preponderance of a fantastic narrative element does distinguish it from other mystical or hermetic texts where an actual narrative is less prominent. Abner/Alfonso does not devote nearly as much attention to these texts as he does to many of his other sources, but he does seem to derive a few key themes from this literature that play an important role in the *Mostrador*, such as his discussion of the wars of Gog and Magog, the devil Armilus, and the two Messiahs (son of David and son of Joseph). A discussion of his use of medieval narrative texts such as the *Toledot Yeshu* or the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* cannot overlook Abner/Alfonso’s few citations of narrative apocalyptic literature.

We mentioned, in our comparison of the *Mostrador* with the *Pugio Fidei* of Raymond Martini, Abner/Alfonso’s citation of one of the most important apocalyptic texts, the *Sefer Zerubavel*.⁴⁸ Abner/Alfonso’s pervasive ambivalence about his Jewish sources, criticizing them in one breath and then invoking them for support in the next, is apparent in his two direct references to this text as well. We already cited a passage (see

⁴⁸ The text of the *Sefer Zerubavel* is contained, in various versions, in: A. Jellinek, *Beit ha-Midrash*, Part 2: 54-7; Israel Levi, “L’apocalypse de Zorobabel et le Roi de Perses Siroès”; Eisenstein, *Ozar Midrashim*, 1:159-62; and Even Shmuel, *Midreshei ge’ullah*, 56-88 and 379-85. Translations and studies include: David Biale, “Counter-History and Jewish Polemics against Christianity: The *Sefer toldot yeshu* and the *Sefer zerubavel*”; Martha Himmelfarb’s translation in Stern and Mirsky’s *Rabbinic Fantasies*, 67-90; Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History...*, 5: 138-50 and 353-60; and Amparo Alba Cecilia, “El Libro de Zorobabel”.

above, n. 27) in which the Teacher lists a number of narrative texts from which “it is not proper to take proofs” (“non es guisado de tomar prueba”), in which he includes the *Sefer Zerubavel*. In the chapter following this statement, however, in his argument that the kingdom of Edom named in the Book of Daniel does not refer either to the Roman Empire or to Christianity, he argues that the capitol of the ancient land of Edom, Bozrah, does not refer to Rome. “It says in the *Book of Zerubbabel* that Bozrah was Nineveh, the great city. And for this reason, it is not Rome, where the apostolate is...”⁴⁹ This refers to the statement in the *Sefer Zerubavel* that Nineveh, the city to which Zerubbabel is taken by God, is “the city of blood, which is Edom the great.” (Even Shmuel, *Midrashe Geullah* 76-7). Bozrah, because it is synonymous with Nineveh cannot also be identified as Rome, and since Bozrah is already also synonymous with the ancient Edom, Abner/Alfonso believes that this constitutes proof that Edom does not refer to Rome. As he did with many of his sources, he cites what was useful to him, and at the same time criticizes the text as a source that should not be used for proof.

Another apocalyptic work mentioned in both the *Mostrador* and the *Teshuvot* is what Abner/Alfonso calls “Book of Twelve Signs” (“Libro de doze ssignos” 234r/2: 205), “Book of Ten Signs” (“Libro de Diez Signos” *Teshuvot la-Meharef Spanische Fassung* 74rb and 74va/97), and “Haggadah of Ten Signs” (“Aggadah shel eser otot” 42v/Hecht 410). Hecht logically identifies this text as the well-known apocalyptic text, *Otot ha-mashiah* (*Signs of the Messiah*), and Mettmann adopts his attribution in his editions. A look at the content of the citations, however, makes this attribution less likely. In the *Teshuvot*, it states that, according to this work, “the Messiah, son of Joseph, will be killed” and that “the coming

⁴⁹ “E dize en el “Libro de Zorubabel” que Bosra era Ninive, la grand çibdad. E por esto no es aquélla Rroma, do es el Apostoligo...” (245v/2:233).

of the Messiah, son of David, will be close to death of the Messiah, son of Joseph.”⁵⁰ In the *Mostrador*, it says that this works states that Gog and Magog “were to come to the world before the time of the Christ.”⁵¹ In the *Otot ha-Mashiah*, it does say that the Messiah ben Joseph will be killed (seventh sign) but it does not mention Gog and Magog and it states that between the death of the Messiah ben Joseph and the coming of the Messiah ben David there passed a period of “forty-five days” (the difference between the 1290 days of Dan 12:11 and the 1335 days of Dan 12:12) when the Israelites will wander in the desert, a detail common to apocalyptic texts that mention the two Messiahs. Abner/Alfonso’s citations may refer instead to the apocalyptic aggadah known as *Ten Signs*,⁵² where it states that the coming of Gog and Magog is one of the ten signs before the end of the world and the reign of the Messiah ben David (tenth sign) and that instead of forty-five days between the two Messiahs, the Israelites will hide for a period of twenty-five days (certainly “closer” in time). Although this identification is by no means certain, it seems more probable than the *Otot ha-Mashiah*.

Abner/Alfonso’s knowledge of a few lesser-known apocalyptic works can be gleaned from other passages in his writing as well. He states for example, that according to *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah*, the “time and time and half a time” prophesied in Dan 7:25 signifies one year, two years, and half a year, respectively. This statement, which can also be found in the *Teshuvot* (35r/68rv) and in the second polemical letter, describes content

⁵⁰ "שיהרג משיח בן יוסף..." (42v/Hecht 410). "Seria matado el Christo, fijo de Josep" (74rb/97) and "כי בואת..." (42v/ Hecht 410). "La venida del Christo, fijo de David seria cerca de la muerte del Christo, fijo de Jossep" (74va/97).

⁵¹ "Avian a venir al mundo ante del tiempo del Christo" (234r/2: 205).

⁵² This text has been published by Even Shmuel, *Midreshey ge'ullah*, 315-317, among others. See his textual note on 425.

found not in the extant versions of the *Seder Elyahu* but in the “Midrash of the Ten Kings” (Rosenthal 488 n. 15 and Hecht 221 n. 644). This is only one of various examples in which Abner/Alfonso refers to passages in the *Seder Elyahu* which can only be found in lesser-known Midrashim. Besides these references, Abner/Alfonso mentions elsewhere a statement given “as Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said in his book” (“como lo dize Rrabi Yossua ben Levi en su libro” 233r/2: 203). It is possible to confirm Mettmann’s proposal that this refers to the “Iggeret Rabbi Joshua ben Levi” based on other evidence in the text. As we discussed briefly in the previous chapter, Abner/Alfonso includes in both the *Teshuvot* and the *Mostrador* a legend (different from the Latin account recorded by Peter the Venerable in his polemic, which Abner/Alfonso did not know) about Joshua ben Levi’s journey to Hell. He relates:

It says in the book *Genesis Rabbah* that Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: “When I arrived to the doors of Hell, the Christ went with me, and when the captives of hell saw the light of the Christ, they became joyful to receive him, and said” “He will save us from this shadow,” as it says in the verse [Hos 13:14] “I will redeem them from the power of Hell, from death I will save them.”⁵³

In the *Teshuvot* (Castilian 56rb—not extant in Hebrew), he cites this same passage, but attributes it to the “Jerussalmi.” Although this passage cannot be found in either *Genesis Rabbah* or any possible text indicated by the title “Yerushalmi” (Talmud, Targum, *Sefer Bahir*), it can be found in the semi-apocalyptic text *Iggeret R. Yehoshua ben Levi*, also traditionally called the “story” (maaseh) and “revelation” of Joshua ben Levi, and

⁵³ “Dize en el libro “Bereshit Rraba” que dixo Rrabi Yosua ben Levi: Quando llegué a las puertas del infierno, yva comigo el Christo, e quando vieron los presos del infierno la luz del Christo, salieron alegres a rresçebirle, e dixieron: Éste nos sacará desta tinie(107r)bra, segunt dixo el viesso: “Del poder del infierno los rredemiré, de la muerte los salvaré” (107r/1: 201).

Himmelfarb has suggested that this legend can be found to derive in part from similar tales of visits to the netherworld in the Palestinian Talmud.⁵⁴ Some of the other narrative material related to Joshua ben Levi in the *Mostrador*, some of which is repeated in the *Teshuvot*, can likewise be attributed to this source, such as the statement that “According to what Joshua ben Levi relates...the patriarchs and Elijah said to the Christ about that time [of salvation], ‘Silence, for the end of the time of your salvation is near.’”⁵⁵ Consideration of these legends about Joshua ben Levi cannot be separated from consideration of the frequently cited dictum from T.B. *Sanhedrin* 98a, that Joshua spoke to the Messiah and then reported back to Elijah, who asked him when the Messiah said he would come. When the Messiah told him “today”, he doubted his response and told Elijah he spoke falsely. Elijah answered that he could come today, “if you would hear his voice.”⁵⁶ This legend, along with various others, also circulated in different versions of aggadot and was sometimes paired with the apocalyptic text of Joshua’s visits to heaven and hell. (Cf. Even Shmuel, *Midreshei ge’ullah* 292-4 and 306-8).

⁵⁴ On this text, see Dan, *The Hebrew Story in the Middle Ages* 90 and 273, Himmelfarb, *Tour of Hell* 32-33, 129 and 133. Cf. also Lieberman, “On Sins and Their Punishments” 47-48, who discusses similar texts. Portions of this text have been published by Jellinek, *Beit ha-Midrash* 2:48-51 and Eisenstein, *Ozar Midrashim* 1:213. A translation of part of this is found in Moses Gaster, *Studies and Texts*, 1: 124-164.

⁵⁵ “Otrossi por aquel tienpo dizian los patriarcas e Elias al Christo en el tienpo de Rrabi Yossua ben Levi: “Calla, ca la ffin del tienpo de la tu salvaçion çercana es”, ssegund lo cuenta Rrabi Yossua ben Levi” (234r/2: 205). This statement appears in fuller form in the *Teshuvot*, in which the specific patriarchs Moses and Aaron and David and Solomon are named, as it appears in the original text. This is repeated in both the Hebrew and Castilian versions of the *Teshuvot* on 28v/54rb and 55v/84va, and in the Castilian version only on 55ra, 64ra, 64rb. The original text reads ואליהו זכור לטוב נוטל ראשו של משיח ומניחו בחיקו ואומר לו החרש כי הקץ קרוב ואבות העולם והשבטים כלם ומשה ואהרן ודוד ושלמה וכל מלכי בית דוד ומלכי ישראל כל שני וחמישי ושבת ויו”ט (“On every Monday and Thursday and Saturday and Holiday the Patriarchs come to [the Messiah] and the fathers of the Tribes and Moses and Aaron and David and Solomon and every king of Israel and of the house of Judah, and they weep with him and comfort him, and say unto him, “Be quiet and wait, and rely upon your creator, for the end is drawing near”) (Eisenstein, *Ozar Midrashim* 1: 213).

⁵⁶ This is repeated on 170v, 226r, 229v, 272v, 290v, and in the *Teshuvot* on 48v/78rb, 49v/79rb, and 55v/84va.

Karaism, Rabbinic Historiography, and the Title *Moreh Zedek*

An extremely important question in considering Abner/Alfonso's wide pool of sources by Jewish writers is the influence of Karaite authors on his polemical arguments.⁵⁷ The earliest origins of Karaism are obscure, but it developed as a movement among Jews under Islamic rule in ninth-century Iraq and rejected many rabbinical traditions and writings in favor of a heavy focus on the text of the Hebrew Bible. Although no written records survive from Karaites in the Iberian Peninsula, we can deduce from references in other sources that some form of the movement had spread to the Iberian Peninsula by the eleventh century⁵⁸ and developed a presence in Castile in such cities as Burgos, Toledo, Talavera, and Carrión that was notable enough to provoke persecution by the Rabbinic majority. Various scholars have suggested a possible influence of Karaism on the polemics of Abner/Alfonso, including Loeb, Baer, Rosenthal, and Sainz de la Maza. Recently, Daniel Lasker has questioned such an influence, noting that "it is hard to credit the idea that the anti-Talmudic arguments of Abner of Burgos (1270-1348), as close to

⁵⁷ The most extensive and important consideration of Abner/Alfonso's relation to Karaism is by Sainz de la Maza, "Alfonso de Valladolid y los caraitas." The discussion that follows draws directly from his article, which considers the relevant text in the *Mostrador* in greater detail. See also Baer, "Abner aus Burgos" 1929 28-31 and 34-5 and *A History* I 65 and 390 n. 45; *ibid.*, "The Kabbalistic Doctrine in the Christological Teaching" 279-87. Baer's influence has been large: it is now assumed that Abner/Alfonso's ideas drew from a knowledge of Karaism, and even Moisés Orfali asserts as much in his recent *Talmud y Cristianismo* 66). For a general consideration of Karaism in Spain, see Rosenthal, "Karaites and Karaism in Western Europe" [Hebrew] 429-435, and G. Cohen, *A Critical Edition with a Translation* XLVI-L; Loeb, note two of his "Notes sur l'histoire des Juifs" titled "Les Caraites en Espagne" (206-9); Rosenthal, "Karaites and Karaism in Western Europe" [Hebrew] 429-435; *ibid.* "The Talmud on Trial" 64-68; G. Cohen, *A Critical Edition with a Translation* XLVI-L; Szysman, *Le Karaïsme* 61-65; Ben-Sasson, *Chapters in Medieval Jewish History* [Hebrew], 156-71; Lasker "Karaism in Twelfth-Century Spain" and "Karaism and the Jewish-Christian Debate."

⁵⁸ Ibn Ḥazm included criticism of Annanites, the followers of Anan ben David, in his *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī l-milal wa l-ahwā' wa l-niḥal* (*Book of Schisms and Sects*). On Ibn Ḥazm's polemic, see Adang, "Éléments karaites dans la polémique antijudaïques d'Ibn Ḥazm." For other information about Karaites in Spain, see Cohen's introduction to Ibn Daud's *Sefer ha-Kabbalah*, XLVI; Rosenthal, "Karaites and Karaism" 238-244; and Lasker, "Karaism in Twelfth-Century Spain."

Karaite contentions as they may have been, were actually derived from Karaite sources. Abner was much too erudite in rabbinic sources to need recourse to Karaite writings” (“Karaism and the Jewish-Christian Debate” 326; Cf. *Karaism and Jewish Studies* [Hebrew] 21). There is, however, as Sainz de la Maza has shown in his article “Alfonso de Valladolid y los caraitas,” some evidence in the *Mostrador* that throws the question back into doubt, and consideration of such evidence is important for fully understanding Abner/Alfonso’s sources. We must be careful, however, not to conflate a simple knowledge of the existence of Karaism and its general ideas—something which Abner/Alfonso no doubt had—and direct familiarity with and use of actual Karaite sources and arguments.

The Karaites figure briefly in the *Mostrador*, but play an important part in Abner/Alfonso’s argument about the lack of agreement among Jews about their beliefs. In chapter ten, paragraph thirteen, the Teacher states that

There are found among the Jews many man who deny their Talmud...they demand of the bishops and other Christian princes that they burn that Talmud...such men flee and distance themselves from disputing with Christians, because they believe of him that he will prove to them [these things] from their Talmud. And this is so that what they deny about their Talmud would not be known, and they strengthen themselves in their heresy when they see the disagreements that the Jews have in their faith. This is because it is amazing to find ten men among twenty of them who agree on all issues of their faith.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ “...sson fallados en los judios muchos omnes que niegan el ssu Talmud dellos ... demandan a los obispos e a los otros principes christianos que quemassen aquel Talmud...e tales omnes como éstos ffuyen e aluéganse de disputar con el christiano, que cuydan dél que les provará del ssu Taalmud. E esto porque non ssea ssabido lo que ellos niegan al ssu Talmud, e enfuérçansse en ssu eregia quando veen las

When the Rebel asks what such points of disagreement among Jews are, the Teacher replies in paragraph fifteen,

some of the Jews are those who believe in all of the Babylonian Talmud and they are called “Pharisees”, and some others are those who do not believe in all of the Babylonian Talmud, but only a part of it, and others are those who do not believe anything of the Talmud, but only [believe in] the Bible, and they are called “Kutim” [Cuthaeans], and there are others who are called “Sadducees” who do not believe that the souls of men remain after death, and there are others of them who believe that the soul remains in some way, but they do not believe that there will be reward or punishment...⁶⁰

This litany of different kinds of beliefs, according to Abner/Alfonso, found among Jews continues for a full folio beyond this, including a total of no less than fifty-four different beliefs which he claims “some Jews” hold (including different beliefs about the Messiah, Kabbalism, eschatology and salvation, and various other issues),⁶¹ a list he concludes by

desacordanças que an los judios en ssu ffe. E esto es porque es maraavilloso d ffallar diez omnes entre veynte dellos que concuerden en todas las cosas de ssu ffe” (328v/2: 419).

⁶⁰ “Dixo el Mostrador que algunos de los judios que son que creen en todo el Talmud de Babilonia et son llamados fariseos; e algunos otros sson que non creen todo el Talmud de Babilon[i]a, ssinon alguna parte dél; e otros que non creen ninguna cosa del Talmud, sinon la Vibria, e sson llamados cutim; e ay otros dellos que sson llamados çaduçeoos, que no creen el ffincamiento de las almas despues de la muerte, e ay otros dellos que creen que ffincan las almas despues de la muerte en alguna manera, sinon que no creen que abrán pena nin galardon alla...” (328v/2: 420).

⁶¹ The following is a paraphrase of the full list on 328v-330r: 1. Pharisees who believe in all the Talmud. 2. Those who believe in only part of the Talmud. 3. Cutheans who believe in nothing of the Talmud. 4. Sadducees who do not believe in the survival of the soul after death. 5. Those who believe that the soul survives after death, but that there is no reward or punishment. 6. Kabbalists who believe in ten persons in God. 7. Those who believe in two gods, Master and disciple, named Metatron. 8. Those who believe in the movement of souls between men, women, animals, trees, stars, and celestial bodies. 9. Those who believe that the souls have existed with God forever. 10. Those who believe that souls are made anew [at the beginning of the world. See note on Latin version below.] 11. Those who believe that souls are made anew when bodies are made. 12. Those who believe the universe had no beginning. 13. Those who believe the universe had a beginning. 14. Those who believe it is both new and eternal in one. 15. Those who believe there was a beginning from which you can measure time up to now. 16. Those who believe it began at a

claiming that “Some Jews believe beliefs made up of some of these things mixed with others, and there are also many of these combinations.”⁶² Sainz de la Maza proposes that “Kutim” (in item three) is a scribal error that should read “Karaites” instead, basing his claims on the Latin text of Abner/Alfonso’s *Sefer Milhamot* preserved in De Spina’s *Fortalitium Fidei* in which he mentions the terms again and lists Karaites as those “who

different time [than can be measured?]. 17. Those who believe that God makes worlds and then unmakes them. 18. Those who believe that they will be in the next world without a body forever, together with the glory of God. 19. Those who believe that they will be in the next world with a body and a soul. 20. Those who believe that they will eat and drink and have children in the next world, and all will eat of Leviathan and its mate and drink wine that has been kept since the world began, and eat and drink rivers of milk and balsam oil and eat beasts such as the Ziz bird... 21. Those who believe that nothing will be exactly this way, but that this [list] is figurative and a metaphor of spiritual things. 22. Those who do not believe in resurrection but who think that the next world refers to the future of this life. 23. Those who believe that only Jews will be resurrected. 24. Those who believe that good people and the gentiles will be raised from the dead also. 25. Those who believe that they will be raised in their clothes as they were buried. 26. Those who believe that their bodies will be glorified and they will not have to eat or drink or wear clothing. 27. Those who believe that after resurrection they will eat and drink and have children and die [Cf. 20]. 28. Those who believe that after resurrection they will eat and drink for a time, and then enter earthly paradise where they will not eat or drink. 29. Those who believe they will never return to dust. 30. Those who believe they will be in heaven and earthly paradise. 31. Those who believe that God did not reveal the coming of the Messiah to the prophets or angels. 32. Those who believe God did reveal this to the prophets, but that the time has not yet come. 33. Those who believe that this time passed, but that the Messiah did not come because of their sins. 34. Those who believe the Messiah is not yet born. 35. Those who believe the Messiah is born, but has not come. 36. Those who believe that the Messiah did come, but did not save them because of their sins. 37. Those who believe that their salvation depends on turning to God and doing good works. 38. Those who believe that their salvation does not depend on these things. 39. Those who believe that there will be no salvation until there is a generation when all are good and then a generation when all are bad. 40. Those who believe that the Messiah was to come in their time, but that after his time to come passed, he will never come. 41. Those who believe that the Messiah is still to come. 42. Those who believe that he was to come at an appointed time. 43. Those who believe the Messiah was to come at a different time than theirs. 44. Those who believe that the Messiah was to come at all times in the way of “a man and a man” [Ps 87:5, i.e. the “shepherd of Israel” Cf. 83v]. 45. Those who believe that the Messiah will never come. 46. Those who believe that there were to be two messiahs, one after the other, one from the lineage of Joseph and one from the lineage of David. 47. Those who believe that the Messiah was not to come until the day of judgment at the end of the world, when there will be no good or bad deeds. 48. Those who believe—and this is most of them—that the Messiah was to come not to give them salvation, but to save them from captivity and exile only. 49. Those who believe that the Messiah is to save souls and propitiate the sin of Adam. 50. Those who believe that they do not await the Messiah because he will actually come, but in order to receive the reward for awaiting him. 51. Those who believe that God will send down from heaven Jerusalem restored with the Temple built of large, precious stones, with the Messiah inside. 52. Those who believe that anyone who is good will be saved. 53. Those who are philosophers, who do not believe anything. 54. Those who believe beliefs made up of one or another of these beliefs. This list was first part of the *Sefer Milhamot Adonai* and is reproduced in slightly altered form in Latin translation by Spina, *Fortalitium* III.3, 129va-130ra, copied in part below. The lists differ in the order of the points and some of the details.

⁶² .E algunos dellos creen creencias conpuestas de unas con otras destas; e estas conposiciones sson muchas a demas” (329v-330r/2: 422).

only believe in the Bible” and Cutheans as those who “come from the land of Cutha.”⁶³ We can add that Abner/Alfonso uses the term “cutim” literally in the *Mostrador* to refer to Cutheans (290r/2: 324). While a scribal error may be possible given their description in the *Mostrador* as “those who do not believe anything of the Talmud, but only [believe in] the Bible,” it is necessary first to look into Abner/Alfonso’s other uses of the term “Karaites” and “Cutheans” and his mention of Karaite authors in order to confirm or reject this.

More importantly, Abner/Alfonso recounts in the *Mostrador* an event that took place in Carrion de los Condes at the end of the twelfth century, in which the Rabbinate Joseph ibn Alfacar and Todros ben Joseph Abulafia obtained in 4938 (1178) a decree from King Alfonso VIII of Castile (reg. 1158-1214) forcing Karaites to adopt Rabbinite beliefs (an interesting variation of sorts on forced conversion).⁶⁴ He based his text on the account given, he says, in a letter written by the Kabbalist Moses of León (Abner/Alfonso’s version is the only notice we have of this letter). Another mention of

⁶³ “Notat enim Magister Alfonsus Conversus in libro Praeliorum Dei cap. XXXIII ubi dicit quod iudei sunt inter se divisi in fide, quia aliqui eorum vocantur “rabini” et “pharisei” qui credunt Thalmud. Alii vocantur **“carrayni” qui solummodo credunt Bibliam**. Alii vocantur “saducei” qui non credunt animas post mortem manere. Alii credunt quod anime manent post mortem, sed non credunt penam vel remunerationem in alio mundo. Alii vocantur **“cuthibini” quia venerunt de terra que dicitur Cutha**, et habitaverunt in Samaria et conversi sunt ad legem iudeorum metu leonum; et aliqui istorum vocantur “samaritani”, quos alii iudei habent tanquam hereticos. Alii eorum vocantur mecubalini qui credunt in decem personis qui dicunt ipsi decem numeros qui sunt in Deo...” (*Fortalitium* III.3, 129va-130ra). The term “Kutim”, normally referring to Samaritans or Cuthaeans (who only accept the Pentateuch and reject the Writings and Prophecies), is not used, as far as I can find, for Karaites, and thus if this reference is to Karaites, then it is very likely, as Sainz de la Maza claims, a scribal error (“Alfonso de Valladolid y los caraitas” 24 n. 17). Below, however, Abner/Alfonso refers to Karaites as Sadducees (both in Castilian and Latin), suggesting that he might be using multiple terms for Karaites. See also his use of the term in the *Teshuvot*, cited below n. 82. It is also very possible, as we will consider below, that this is not a scribal error, and that the conflation of terms depends on the ideas of Ibn Daud.

⁶⁴ Although this event effectively marked the final decline of Karaism in Castile, Rosenthal has considered the possibility that Karaism persisted in Spain into the fourteenth century (“Talmud on Trial” 67; “Karaites and Karaism” 434), a possibility rejected by Szyszman (*Le Karaïsme* 65) and left unanswered by Loeb (“Notes sur l’histoire” 209), if Abner/Alfonso’s testimony is accepted, Karaism persisted at least into his lifetime in the first half of the fourteenth century. One would tend to trust Rosenthal over Szyszman.

these events, with slightly varying details, was made by Abraham ibn Daud in his *Sefer ha-Kabbalah* (*Book of Tradition*) and in a card by Todros ben Joseph Abulafia's son, Joseph.⁶⁵ There is also a Latin account, apparently from Abner/Alfonso's *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem*, which was recorded by Spina in his *Fortalitium Fidei* III.3, which adds some details to the account in the *Mostrador*.⁶⁶ The presence of Karaism in the work of Abner/Alfonso plays an important part in his argument that the Jews are not unified in their faith. "It was not long ago," he claims, "that these Castilian Jews and most of the Jews of Spain were Sadducees and heretics."⁶⁷ Therefore:

[The King] ordered all the Sadducees⁶⁸ to convert to the Law of the Pharisees, and so they all converted, despite themselves, to this Pharisee Law, which they

⁶⁵ The letter was published by Kobak in *Jeschurun* VIII (1872): 41, and Rosenthal in "The Talmud on Trial" 64-67.

⁶⁶ Although Sainz de la Maza implies that, despite Spina's attribution to a work entitled *Prelionum Dei*, the work may actually be a Latin version of the text of the *Mostrador* ("Alfonso de Valladolid y los caraitas" 30 n. 26), it is very likely instead that parts of the *Mostrador* were drawn from the *Sefer Milhamot*, just as Abner/Alfonso drew parts of his later works (the *Teshuvot la-Meharef* and the polemical letters, above all) from his *Mostrador*. In any case, the assertion about Spina's source is based on pure speculation, since most of what little we know of the *Sefer Milhamot* comes indirectly in translation. The Latin text of the *Fortalitium* III.3, 129va-130rb, which lists the different points of disagreement among Jews (see note above) is not an exact reproduction of the text of the *Mostrador*, but there are many similarities between them. The text is reproduced by Sainz de la Maza.

⁶⁷ "E poco tiempo a passado que estos judios del rregno de Castiella e de los más de la Espanna eran todos çaduçoës e erejes" (330r/2: 422).

⁶⁸ Abner/Alfonso's use of terms to describe Karaites and Rabbinites is interesting in various respects. Norman Golb observes, "it could be shown that the term "Sadducee" (Hebrew *seduka*) lost its particular sectarian connotation during the Talmudic period and came to be employed during the early Middle Ages as a generic term for various kinds of schismatics, not only for the historical Sadducees" (44). Cohen, in his introduction to Ibn Daud's text, also stated that "medieval Jews generally designated Karaites by "sectarian" (*Min*) and "Sadducee" almost interchangeably" (xxxviii). As Daniel Lasker shows, however, medieval references to "Saducees" almost invariably denote Karaites. Eventually, Karaite comes to refer to a variety of unconventional groups. See Lasker, "Karaites as the Jewish 'Other'" [Hebrew]. Although Revel asserts that not only Ibn Daud, but also Judah Halevi and Abraham Ibn Ezra "all assert that Karaism is an offshoot of Sadduceism" ("The Karaite Halakah" 7), Lasker has shown that Judah Halevi distinguishes between Sadducees and Karaites ("Judah Halevi and Karaism" 113 and 114 n. 11). Abner/Alfonso also lists the Sadducees separately from the Karaites, making this reference to Karaites/Rabbinates as Sadducees/Pharisees potentially confusing. This raises the question as to his flexibility in naming the Karaites, and suggests that the term "cutheans" (*cutim*) may not be, after all, a scribal error, but instead

now follow. By such accidents as these the Jews in each age turn from one belief to another and they wander in exile like sheep without a shepherd, ever since they left the true shepherd...⁶⁹

It is interesting to note, in comparing Abner/Alfonso's version with that preserved by Spina in the *Fortalitium*, that where Abner/Alfonso says the Karaites "converted, despite themselves, to the Pharisee Law", Spina emphasizes that "they were not converted voluntarily, but violently."⁷⁰

Not only is Abner/Alfonso's consideration of Karaism a way for him to highlight the internal schisms of Judaism, it is with this argument that he lends further support to his claim that the Jews have misinterpreted their own Hebrew scriptures by showing that they have not even preserved the text correctly and do not all agree on its interpretation. Obviously, Abner/Alfonso knew something of the existence of Karaism, but it seems much less likely that he had any direct familiarity with either Karaite arguments or Karaite works. As we observed in the previous chapter, text from a letter allegedly written by Abner to the Jewish community of Toledo in 1334, directed to Isaac Israeli, has been preserved in the latter's astronomical work *Yesod 'Olam* (36a; Cf. Appendix 2). In the letter, Abner/Alfonso accuses the Jews of Toledo of having miscalculated the date of Passover. As Baer (*Toledot* 206/*Historia* 391-2—this section is abbreviated in the English translation,

refers to Cutheans. Cf. the earlier mention of "muchas compannas de saduceos e erejes e ssamaritanos..." (292r/2: 347). See also the discussion of Ibn Daud's ideas of Cutheans, Sadducees, and Karaites, below.

⁶⁹ [El Rey] mandó a todos los çaduços tornar a la Ley de los fariseos. E entonce sse tornaron todos, a pesar dellos, a esta Ley de los fariseos, que agora tienen. E por tales açidentes como éstos sse tornan los judios en cada tienpo de una creencia a otra...e andan deserrados como ovejas ssin pastor, desde que dexaron el pastor verdadero..." (330r/2: 422). The irony of Abner/Alfonso's observation that the Jews are in exile because they convert with each new age (and so they should convert to Christianity) seems lost on him, judging by his discussion.

⁷⁰ "Conversi sunt...non voluntarie sed violenter" (*Fortalitium* 130rb).

1: 350; see also Baer's "Fragments" 198) has argued, this discussion draws from typical Karaite arguments about the Jewish calendar.⁷¹ Baer has also seen ("Abner aus Burgos" 1929, 34-5) the influence of Karaite sources in some of Abner/Alfonso's key concepts in the *Mostrador*, such as his "negative Ten Commandments" ("diez malos mandamientos"), a list of ten things that Abner/Alfonso claims are ordered in the Talmud which replace the ten commandments given to Moses. Building off of Zechariah 5:1-4, in which Zechariah receives a vision of the "flying scroll" of the Law which destroys those who steal and swear falsely on the Lord's name, he gives a list of ten things that invert the Ten commandments. The list of the "negative ten commandments" is found in chapter eight, paragraph eight (240v-241v/2: 221-223) and in more detail in chapter ten, paragraph thirteen (326v-328v/2: 416-419). He explains that

As it says in the book *Hullin* most of the heretics in the world are not among the gentiles but among the Jews. And this is...especially because of the ten bad commandments which were put in place of the ten commandments of the Law according to the sayings of the sages of the Talmud of Babylonia, which is "shadows and obscurities."⁷² And as the prophet Zechariah said in the prophecy of the flying scroll [5:1-4] that those ten bad commandments are to steal and to

⁷¹ Although written after Abner/Alfonso, the discussion of Samuel ben Moses al-Maghribī of Passover gives a good indication of current ideas. See *A Karaite Anthology*, ed. Leon Nemoy, 196-229. For a full discussion of Karaite calendation, see Magdi Shamuel, "The Karaite Calendar." See also Ankori, *Karaites in Byzantium*, 347.

⁷² This is a literal translation of the Castilian, which is itself a translation of Zeph 1:15, "darkness and gloom."

rob and to give false testimony and to pervert justice and to be proud and to swear falsely and to kill and to be unchaste and to loan at interest and to serve idols.⁷³

Baer believes that that this anti-decalogue “has too much similarity with parallels in some Karaites such as Salmon ben Yeruḥim (10th century) for this can be taken as coincidence” (1929, 34; translation mine).⁷⁴ There are, however, no direct channels by which Abner/Alfonso could have received the ideas or works of Salmon. Even if these ideas can be said to be similar to certain Karaite ideas, it is most likely that Abner/Alfonso derived such ideas second-hand through other, non-Karaite works.

We can, however, point to Abner/Alfonso’s mention of at least one Karaite figure, Anan ben David, considered by Rabbinate in the Middle Ages to be the founder of Karaism.⁷⁵ Mettmann lists two references to Anan ben David in his index to the *Mostrador*. In speaking about Saul/Paul of Tarsus in chapter seven, chapter forty-one, Abner/Alfonso states that “Saul was not the son of “Hanem” the heretic, as some contrary people say, since that Saul, son of “Hanem,” was in the time of Mar Yehudai, the Gaon, at the end of the fifth century of the fourth millennium, as it says in the *Book of*

⁷³ “E com dize en el libro “Hulim” que los más erejes del mundo non sson en los gentiles, ssinon en los judios. E esto es por esta rrazon que nonbré dellos, e mayormientre quando cataren los diez mandamientos malos que les ffueron puestos en derecho de los diez mandamientos de la Ley por dicho de los ssabios del Talmud de Babilonia, el qual Talmud es tiniebras e escurizas. E como gelo nonbró Zacarias el propheta en la propheta de la carta doblada que aquellos diez malos mandamientos son furta e rrobar e testiguar testimonio falso e torcer juyzio e ssoberviar e jurar en falso e matar e luxuriar [e] dar [a] logro e servir idolos” (326v/2: 416). Although most of the “negative” commandments match the positive commandments given in the Torah, there is no precise match between “torcer juyzio e ssoberviar” and “You shall have no other gods before me” and “Honor your father and mother.” This same content is recycled in the *Teshuvot*, 32v-34v/66ra-67vb. Cf. Orfali, *Talmud y Cristianismo* 66-67.

⁷⁴ Daniel Lasker, who does not include Salmon’s works in his brief list of Karaite works mentioned or alluded to by Spanish authors (“Karaism in Twelfth-Century Spain” 181-2), but concedes that “this list is very modest; undoubtedly Spanish Karaites had other compositions as well but we cannot identify them with certainty” (183).

⁷⁵ M. Gil (“The Origins of the Karaites”) has shown that Anan cannot be rightfully seen as the founder of Karaism, because members of his family served as heads of *yeshivot* into the ninth century.

Tradition, but Saint Paul was in the time of Jesus the Nazarene...”⁷⁶ This is clearly a reference to Anan ben David, because he clarifies that the “Hanem” he is talking about—whom he calls a “heretic”—lived at the time of Yehudai the Gaon (d. ca. 761), and the passage he indicates in Ibn Daud’s *Book of Tradition* (38 (Hebrew)/48 (English)) does refer to Anan ben David. This certain identification may help identify the reference of a later citation in the *Mostrador*. In Chapter ten, paragraph nine of the *Mostrador*, after citing Genesis 6:12 (“all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth”)—(not 7:21, as Mettmann states)—Abner/Alfonso observes that “Rabbi ‘Hanan’ said that this was the corruption which was the lust [which] beasts and other animals do with each other and with men.”⁷⁷ This “Hanan”, however, does not seem to refer to Anan ben David. In the first mention of Anan ben David, he is simply called “Hanem el ereje” but here the reference is to “Rabbi Hanan”, who is cited between two other citations by Rashi and “the sages of the Talmud.” It is not clear who this refers to, although it could be the *Amora* by the name Ḥanin/Ḥanan,⁷⁸ or Ḥanan bar Taḥlifa, whom Abner/Alfonso refers to elsewhere in two citations of T.B. *Sanhedrin* 97b. Moreover, the content of this statement has nothing to do with Karaism or Rabbanism, and so only the first citation, confirmed through Ibn Daud, can be taken as referring to Anan ben David. As Lasker notes, Anan’s name “was mentioned by almost every Spanish Rabbinic author who dealt with Karaism” (“Karaism in Twelfth-Century Spain” 182). Abner/Alfonso’s references here

⁷⁶ “E non ffue aquel Saul, fñijo de Hanem el ereje, como dize Algunos de los contradezidores. Ca aquel Saul, fñijo de Hanen, fue en tienpo de mar Yehuday, gaon, a la fñin de quinientos anos del millar quatro, como lo dize en el libro «Ceder Cabala», mas Ssant Pablo ffue en tienpo de Jhesu nazareno...” (233v/2: 204).

⁷⁷ “E dixo Rrabi Hanan que éste era coffondimiento que fazen luxuria las bestias e los otros animales unos con otros e con los omnes” (322v/2:409, not 323r, as Mettmann lists in his index).

⁷⁸ Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* 94.

show no direct familiarity with Karaite ideas or works, but only with Ibn Daud's statements in the *Book of Tradition*.

The reference to Ibn Daud's *Book of Tradition* in his mention of Anan ben David, one of roughly fifteen references to him in the *Mostrador*, is significant because Ibn Daud's account of Karaism in Spain can thus be shown to have a direct influence on Abner/Alfonso. In addition, enough other citations of Ibn Daud can be identified exactly to confirm the work as a source that Abner/Alfonso consulted first-hand (see appendix). Given that one of Abner/Alfonso's two explicit references to Anan came from Ibn Daud, the question must be asked how much else of Abner/Alfonso's discussion of Karaism in the *Mostrador* was drawn from Ibn Daud's criticism of sectarianism, a question not raised by Sainz de la Maza in his study of Abner/Alfonso and the Karaites. It is clear from Abner/Alfonso's calculations regarding the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, and from his explicit references to the *Book of Tradition*, that Ibn Daud's chronology of Jewish history, especially in the first chapter of the work, was an important and well-known source in the *Mostrador*. Comparison of chapter two of Ibn Daud's work with the *Mostrador* likewise shows that this section was also important for Abner/Alfonso. For example, Ibn Daud's passage regarding Antigonus of Soko and his disciples Zadok and Boethus (12-13 in Hebrew/18 in English) directly matches Abner/Alfonso's in chapter eight, paragraph eight (241r/2: 222).⁷⁹ Immediately following this discussion in the *Mostrador*, Abner/Alfonso mentions the Cutheans in a passage that directly mirrors the comments. A few other passages (177r/2: 83-84, 201r/2: 136) likewise directly parallel passages in Ibn Daud's second chapter (Indeed, the latter match even includes the detail

⁷⁹ See also *Teshuvot la-Meharef* (Hebrew 33r/Castilian 66va). Cf. Hecht 137 n. 212.

from Ibn Daud that Jesus “was apprehended at the age of thirty six”, a statement that Mettmann proposes to emend in the *Mostrador* to the more logical “thirty three”, 2: 136 n. 446). This is all strong evidence showing Abner/Alfonso’s familiarity with chapter two of Ibn Daud’s *Book of Tradition*.⁸⁰

The importance of this evidence lies in the terminology used to discuss “heretics” in the *Mostrador*. As we have noted above, Abner/Alfonso uses the words “cutim” (“Cutheans”) and çaduços (“Sadducees”) when discussing Karaites. Although the latter was common in the Middle Ages, the former is a strange conflation that seems, in the first case, like a scribal error (especially when comparing the text to the Latin account given by Alfonso de Spina). As we noted above, in the *Mostrador*, he states that there are some Jews “who do not believe anything from the Talmud, but only the Bible, and they are called “cutim” [Cutheans]” (328r/2: 420). The Latin text in Spina’s *Fortalitium*, however, cites Abner/Alfonso’s description of Cutheans as historical Samaritans, “because they came from the land which is called Cutha and they lived in Samaria” and calls Karaites those “who only believe in the Bible.”⁸¹ In the *Teshuvot*, Abner/Alfonso accuses Isaac Polgar of not being truly a Jew, but instead of being “a Cuthean” and heretic.⁸² It is possible to understand this mixing of terms in the context of Ibn Daud comments on these groups. Chapter two of *The Book of Tradition* explains what Ibn Daud calls “the genesis of the heresy,” (12 in Hebrew/18 in English), that is, the origins of Karaism. After first

⁸⁰ Likewise, *Libro de la ley* 2r is taken directly from Ibn Daud, chapter III (31 English/23 Hebrew).

⁸¹ “...quia venerunt de terra que dicitur Cutha et habitaverunt in Samaria” and “...qui solummodo credunt Bibliam” (*Fortalitium* III.3, 129v).

⁸² “כי מי שאינו מודה בכך כמוך...אינו “איש יהודי” כמו שחמת את שמך באגרת החרפות שלך “איש יהודי” אלא הוא כותי “ואפיקורוס” (54r/Hecht 437). In the Castilian, “Kuti” and “Apikoros” are translated as “ereje e descreydo” (83rb/118).

discussing the rise of Samaritanism (12/17-18), he generalizes this into the rise of other sectarianism, in which he includes beliefs of Samaritans, Sadducees, and Karaites, and he interchanges the terms used for each. As Cohen explains in the introduction to his edition of Ibn Daud's text,

Ibn Daud utilized the opportunity to substantiate the theory...that the Jewish sectarians of the twelfth century had an old and consistent past...his anachronistic use of terms was deliberate and intended to stress his theory that Anan "the Karaite" had merely revived an old heresy... (XXXVII-XXXVIII).

Cohen states his argument even more directly later: "To Ibn Daud the disciples of Anan are the reincarnation of the ancient Sadducees and Samaritans" (128 n. 53). Abner/Alfonso's joint mention of "çaduços e erejes" (330r/2: 422) seems to directly mirror Ibn Daud's "the Cutheans and the heretics" (18 in English/13 in Hebrew). Abner/Alfonso's use of "çaduços" can thus be linked to Ibn Daud's agenda in chapter two of his text, but the question remains about his use of the term "Cutheans" for Karaites. As Astren observes, "in [Ibn Daud's] historical scheme, all heresy comes from the same source, the Samaritans, whose errors are the result of the continued presence of unreformed idolatry. Ibn Daud connects subsequent manifestations of heresy in connection with the original schism." Although Ibn Daud never refers to Karaites as Cutheans, his linking of the groups offers another possible explanation (besides scribal error) for Abner/Alfonso's use of the term in the *Mostrador*. Although this seems unlikely, given the evidence in Spina's *Fortalitium*, it does help explain the context of Abner/Alfonso's conflation of medieval Karaites with ancient sectarian groups as all examples of schism among the Jews. We can remember that Abner/Alfonso, according to

Spina's *Fortalitium*, states that Samaritans are those "quos alii iudei habent tanquam hereticos" (III.3, 129v). In any case, it is obvious that Abner/Alfonso's discussion of Karaism is thoroughly colored by Ibn Daud's text, especially in the effort to contextualize the beliefs of Karaism alongside other sectarian groups.

This raises the question of Abner/Alfonso's source for his discussion of the persecution of Karaites on ff 328-330 of the *Mostrador* and in the Latin account by Alonso de Spina in book three of the *Fortalitium* of Abner/Alfonso's *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem*. Loeb, believing Abner/Alfonso's account to be the same as Ibn Daud's, expresses confusion over the discrepancies between the two ("Polémistes Chrétiens" 60 n. 1). In fact, however, Ibn Daud wrote his work in 1160-61, roughly seventeen years before the events recounted by Abner/Alfonso. The discrepancies between the texts are thus not surprising, since they are recounting two different events, as Rosenthal states ("The Talmud on Trial" 65). Ibn Daud's account, found in the epilogue to the *Book of Tradition* (95-99 in English/69-72 in Hebrew), claims that it was "Alfonso son of Raimund" who "prevailed over all the Ishmaelites living in Spain" (96/70) and conquered Calatrava (Alfonso VII, d. 1157), who later persecuted the Karaites. The events recounted by Abner/Alfonso, however, did not take place until 1178, when Alfonso VIII (grandson of Alfonso VII, reg. 1158-1214), by request of the Grenadine doctor and courtier Joseph ibn Alfacar, "ordered all Sadducees to convert to the Law of the Pharisees" (330r/2: 422). Sainz de la Maza, who states that Ibn Daud's account refers to the persecution of Karaites in 1146 and not the events of 1178, still observes that "soprende que el texto fuente no sea el *Séfer ha-qabbalá* de Abraham ibn Daud, obra muy cononcida que Abner, además, utiliza en otros lugares de su obra" ("Alfonso de Vallaldolid y los caraítas" 27-8). It is strange that

Abner/Alfonso did not include Ibn Daud's account of the events of 1146 along with those of 1178, given his use of Ibn Daud in other areas. It is, in fact, not known what Abner/Alfonso's source of information was for his account, except for one mention of an anti-Karaite letter written by Moses of Leon. Based on the events of Abner/Alfonso's account, it is clear that Ibn Daud's statement about the events of the middle of the century that, "accordingly the heretics were suppressed and have not been able to raise their heads any longer" (99/72), was not completely accurate.

One other issue that fits logically within a discussion of the possible Karaite influence on Abner/Alfonso is the origin of the title of his work, *Moreh Zedek*. Critics have offered various theories about the origin and meaning of the title for Abner/Alfonso, but have not settled on any one explanation. The term first appears, in reference to rain, in Hosea 10:12, "...that he may come and rain righteousness upon you", and later in Joel 2:23, "He has given you the early rain in just measure for your vindication" (or, "He has given you a teacher in just measure for your righteousness").⁸³ Although the title played an important role in the eschatological terminology of the Essenes, occurring frequently in Qumran documents, this was very different from later Karaite and Rabbinic use and is irrelevant to our study of Abner/Alfonso.⁸⁴ The term as such does not appear in the Talmud, although R. Yoḥanan (third century CE) alludes to Hos 10:12 in T.B. *Bekhorot* 24a (the only such Talmudic reference) when he leaves a question unanswered "until he

⁸³ "נָתַן לָכֶם אֶת-הַמּוֹרָה לְצִדְקָה" (יואל) and "עַד-יָבוֹא יְיָ צִדְקָה לָכֶם" (הושע) On its role in the book of Joel, see Roth, "The Teacher of Righteousness and the Prophecy of Joel."

⁸⁴ The bibliography on this title in Qumran documents is large and not relevant here, but one can see, e.g. Weingreen, "The title Moreh Zedek" and Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* among many other studies.

comes and teaches truth,”⁸⁵ a reference that Rashi, in his interpretation of T.B. *Bekhorot* 24a, notes refers to the prophet Elijah. Elijah has long been invoked in Rabbinic tradition as the precursor of the Messiah who will solve problems of interpretation in Scripture. The Talmudic term “teiqu” (“let it stand”), which was frequently used to designate an unfinished discussion, was interpreted by later Rabbinic tradition as an acrostic meaning “(Elijah) the Tishbite will explain such puzzles and problems.” (“Tishbi yetareḥ kushiyot u-va’ayot”). According to Louis Ginzberg,⁸⁶ “in no fewer than eighteen passages in the Talmud Elijah appears as the one who, in his capacity of precursor of the Messiah, will settle all doubts on matters ritual and juridical” (*An Unknown Jewish Sect* 212).

Citation of the Biblical phrase “Yoreh zedek” can be found by Gaon Rav Hai b. Nahshon (d. 896) and Abraham b. David of Posquieres (twelfth century) (and surely there were many more), and according to Ginzberg, the altered form of “Moreh Zedek” is found alongside Biblical references in post-Gaonic writing by both Karaites and Rabbinate (215). Some examples of Rabbinate Jews using the title “Moreh Zedek” in quoting the Biblical phrase from Hosea include Judah b. Barzilli al-Bargeloni (twelfth century) in his commentary on the *Sefer ha-Yezirah* and Eleazar b. Mathathiah (fourteenth century). The term “Moreh Zedek” is given to Elijah outside of the Biblical phrase as well, for example, by Gaon Ben Meir (tenth century), and is used in the congratulatory phrase “May you live to see the advent of the Moreh Zedek” (A similar phrase was written to Maimonides in a letter). It even came to be associated with the Messiah himself

⁸⁵ "עד יבוא ויורה צדק"

⁸⁶ The examples that follow are drawn directly from those arranged and explained by Louis Ginzberg in *An Unknown Jewish Sect*, 211-222. On the title “Teacher of Righteousness” in the Middle Ages, see also Weingreen, “The Title Moreh Sedek” 166; Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* 3 n. 11.2; and Buchanan, “The Office of the Teacher of Righteousness” 241-3, although Ginzberg’s discussion of the question is the most complete available.

by some writers (Ginzberg 216-7). In Rabbinic circles, the title seems to have been used as an honorific title as well. Maimonides, who came to be sometimes called “Moreh Zedek” in later tradition, was given this title shortly after his death by Isaac ibn Laṭīf (1210-1280) in his *Iggeret Teshuvah*,⁸⁷ and Ginzberg notes another such instance in *responsa* literature and in various other texts, including a letter of R. Hillel of Verona (1220-1295) and panegyric poetry to Maimonides (218 n. 46 and 49).⁸⁸ Weingreen claims that David Kimḥi refers to Abraham Ibn Ezra with this title out of courtesy (166). Ginzberg notes that Rashi refers to his own teacher R. Isaac b Judah by this name, as do a number of other known writers, including his son (218). He also cites Catalan Rabbinic Joseph Ibn Zabarra (twelfth century) who commends a town for its “sages, scholars, and teachers of righteousness” (218). The term also became a general title for “rabbi”, surviving even into the present day as an indication of the rabbinic qualification as a judge (Weingreen 166), and in North Africa the term replaced “marbiṣ torah” (teacher of the Torah) as a rabbinical title.⁸⁹

Although the first recorded use of the term “Moreh Zedek” outside the Qumran literature was by the Karaite Daniel al-Qūmiṣī (ninth-tenth centuries)—this is, in fact, the only indigenous term from Qumran that also appears in Karaite writing⁹⁰—Ginzberg

⁸⁷ *Iggeret teshuvat*, published in *Qovez al-yad* (1885): 56. This information is found in Roth, *Conversos* 382 n. 128.

⁸⁸ See the poetry in *Qovez al-yad* 1 (1885): 5 # 21: “...מורה צדק הוא ודברו...” and 12 #34: “...ולמוד ספר מורה...” “...צדק et passim.

⁸⁹ See the *Encyclopedia Judaica* article on “Rabbi, Rabbinic” in the section “Jewish Leadership in the Muslim East” by Leah Borenstein.

⁹⁰ Part of the debate concerns a Syriac document from ca. 800 C.E.—once considered the “missing link” in connecting the groups—by Nestorian patriarch Timotheus I written to Sergius, Metropolitan of Elam, discussing “books found ten years ago in a rock dwelling near Jericho.” The writings of Daniel al-Qūmiṣī (commentary on Psalm 74, Joel 2:23, and Hosiāh 10:12) was allegedly the first Karaite to use the term, followed by Yefeth ben ‘Elī (commentary on Habakkuk 2:2). See also Nemoy’s translation in *A Karaite Reader*

asserts that “its manifold employment in later literature is the same as in the sectarian fragments” (*An Unknown Jewish Sect* 214). A number of Karaite writers cited the Hosea verse in the same sense as the Rabbinite authors mentioned, such as Judah Hadasi (twelfth century) and Aaron ben Elijah of Nicomedia (fourteenth century) (Ginzberg 215), and the term “moreh” came to replace “yoreh” in both Rabbinite and Karaite literature. The use of the term among Karaites can be found in the later Middle Ages, and can even be traced directly to Spain. The term was used in a Karaite prayer for Yom Kippur (surviving into the present day),⁹¹ referring to a salvific figure identical to the prophet Elijah in Rabbinite Judaism (the prayer is based on Mal 4:5-6, and “Teacher of Righteousness” replaces the name Elijah). Yefet ben ‘Elī also named Elijah with this title in words very similar to this prayer.⁹²

31-4, esp. 34. In his note, Nemoy notes that this paraphrase of Hos 10:12 refers to Elijah (329). See Paul, *Écrits de qumran* 124-7; Erder, “The Karaites and the Second Temple Sects” 137-142; Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* I:11, VI:11, XX:1, 28, and 32. As Yoram Erder explains, the direct parallels between the Qumran scroll known as the *Damascus Document* and the “Zadokite fragments” found in the Cairo Geniza have confirmed the connection for many scholars (120), although Meira Polliack has recently challenged this notion directly in her “Wherein lies the Peshet? Re-Questioning the Connection between Medieval Karaite and Qumranic Modes of Biblical Interpretation.”

⁹¹ The prayer reads, “May he send us the Teacher of Righteousness, to restore the heart of the fathers to their sons.” (וישלח לנו מורה צדק להשיב לב אבות על בנים) (*Sidur ha-Tefilot* 3:117.) This text is also cited by Paul, *Écrits de qumran et sectes juives* 180 n. 7 and Szysman “A propos du Karaïsme et des textes de la Mer Morte” 347.

⁹² Polliack, “Wherein lies the Peshet” 42-44. See also the references in Siegel, “Two Further Medieval References” 438 n. 5; Paul in chapter six of *Écrits de qumran et sectes juives*, pp. 115-130. Specifically, pp. 124-127, and 180, deal with the Teacher of Righteousness as an Elijah-type figure. As Paul notes (127), Yefet ben ‘Elī includes a statement very similar to the text of the prayer. Polliack quotes a relevant section of Yefet’s commentary on Deuteronomy (42-3). See also Erder 137-8, who discusses some of the same material. Daniel al-Qūmisī states in his commentary on Joel 2:23 that “in my opinion, this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, Elijah, who will be sent to Israel to teach her the Laws...” (quoted in Paul, 179 n. 64). Siegel also points to a commentary on Hosea 2:16 by Yefet ben ‘Elī in the Leningrad Public Library equating the Teacher and Elijah (*The Severus Scroll* 55-6 n. 18). As Zvi Ankori observes, Yefet ben ‘Elī’s Biblical commentaries enjoyed “tremendous popularity in twelfth- and, undoubtedly, also in eleventh-century Spain” (346 n. 125). Cf. Lasker, “Karaism in Twelfth-Century Spain” 182 n. 13.

Other scholars have noted the use of the title “Moreh Zedek” in the concluding Hebrew prayers attached to two lists of alleged variants in the reading of the Pentateuch,⁹³ both written in Spanish Biblical codices, dated 1382 and 1404, respectively (Siegel “Two Further Medieval References to the Teacher of Righteousness” 439; *The Severus Scroll and IQJs*^a 49-58). This list of variants (found in *Bereshit Rabbati* of R. Moses ha-Darshan as well as in the two Bible codex lists) is known as the “Severus scroll” variants according to the Aramaic heading that describes a Torah that “was removed from Jerusalem with the captivity and taken to Rome. It was stored away in the Synagogue of Severus”.⁹⁴ A similar notice has been given by R. David Kimḥi in his commentary on Genesis 1:31 regarding a “Torah Scroll of R. Meir” (Siegel 51),⁹⁵ although there has been no certain identification of the “Synagogue of Severus” in Rome and the scroll is long

⁹³ Siegel (*The Severus Scroll* 77-8) explains that in the preservation of the official, Masoretic text of the Bible, older discrepancies were preserved because they were believed to be ancient (the *Ketiv-Qere* system). Frequently, lists of pre-Masoretic variants were preserved in the basic form of an introduction, a list, and a conclusion. “The Severus Scroll data is certainly to be included in this body of information” (78). Siegel believes the Severus Scroll represents truly ancient data on textual variants recorded outside of Palestine by diaspora Jews (perhaps in Rome), possibly in the third or fourth century. As we will briefly consider below, it seems the list was circulated among Karaites and copied in part by Moses ha-Darshan in the eleventh century.

⁹⁴ Siegel, *The Severus Scroll*, 50, 59-66; Siegel’s project (conducted at Brandeis University under the direction of Nahum Sarna), is the most up-to-date discussion of the Severus Scroll. Both Siegel, *The Severus Scroll and IQJs*^a, 15-67, and Loewinger, in his “Prolegomenon” to Aptowitz’s *Das Schriftwort in der rabbinischen Literatur*, XXV-XXXVIII, and “A Torah Scroll Stored in the Synagogue [?] of Severus in Rome” [Hebrew], summarize the history of the Severus Scroll, giving the relevant early bibliography by Neubauer, Epstein, C. Ginsburg, and Harkavy. Ginsberg’s explanation in his *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, 409-21, although dated, is still a helpful introduction.

⁹⁵ This may be of possible significance in linking the list to Abner/Alfonso. Although Abner/Alfonso shows no familiarity with Kimḥi’s commentary on Genesis (but quotes frequently from his commentary on Isaiah). He does mention, in discussing T.B. *Sanhedrin* 98a about the Messiah “at the gates of Rome”, a supporting comment that “es fallado escripto en el libro de Rrabi Mayr” (170v/2: 69). Elsewhere, he twice cites T.B. *Sanhedrin* 97b: “E esto es que dize alla en Çanhedrim que enbió dezir Rrab Hanan bar Taliffa a Rrabi Yoçef que: Fallé un omne, en su mano una carta escripta en letra de Assur e en lengua del ebrayco, e yo dixle: “Ésta ¿dónde la oviste?” E dixo que “Sso logado de las huestes de Rroma, e en los almazenes de Rroma la fallé” (234r/2: 205). aquella carta que fallaron en los almazenes de Rroma” (234v/2:206. Cf. 276r/2: 308 and *Teshuvot* 43v/not in Castilian). He likewise cites Moses ha-Darshan by name on one occasion (147v/2: 18).

since lost and the synagogue, if it existed, is destroyed. Appended to the two Biblical codex lists (but not to Moses ha-Darshan's list) are concluding prayers that mention the Teacher of Righteousness.⁹⁶ Both quotations, very similar in content (asking the "Teacher of Righteousness" to "come" and "say to us in our days...") bear a striking resemblance to medieval invocations of the Prophet Elijah in Rabbinite sources, and was an obligatory hymn in the Sephardic *Havdala* ceremony by which the Sabbath was ended on Saturday evening (Siegel "Two Further Medieval References" 439; *The Severus Scroll* 56). Although Siegel does not hesitate to attribute these additions of "a pious medieval Qaraite" ("Two Further Medieval References" 440)⁹⁷—an attribution which would, if it were true, attest to the late survival of Karaism in Spain)—there is, unfortunately, no particular evidence to support a Karaite rather than Rabbinite provenance of this kind of appeal to Elijah as the "Teacher of Righteousness." The connection to Karaism, if it is to be maintained, must be made on the grounds that the variant list itself was written and transmitted by Karaites, and so these late examples of the use of the term "Moreh Zedek" in Spain, while fascinating, do not prove decisive enough to connect the use of this term in fourteenth-century Spain—and Abner/Alfonso's use of it for his own purposes—to a Karaite source.

⁹⁶ Siegel has transcribed and translated the prayers in *The Severus Scroll* 50 and 89-92. He also includes a image of the variant list and prayer from BN MS Heb. 31 f. 399 on p. viii. The first prayer is found on f. 146 of the so-called "Farhi Bible" (copied between 1366-1382 in Rousillon, then part of Aragón). On this MS (Sassoon 368), copied by Elisha Crescas be Abraham Benvenis, see Sassoon, *Ohel David*, 6-14. The second is found in the Biblical codex Bibliothèque Nationale MS Heb. 31 (also of Aragonese provenance), on f. 399. On this MS, copied by Hayim ben Saul/Vidal Satorre, see Sed-Rajna, *Les manuscrits hébreux enlumines*, 80-85.

⁹⁷ Siegel asserts that, because of the frequent Karaite use of the invocation of the Teacher of Righteousness to solve textual problems, the two Iberian variant lists "came to Sephardic Jews via the Qaraites...Faced with what was presumed to be a genuine list of ancient Pentateuchal variants, a Qaraite scholar added the pious prayer to the Moreh zedek who would, at some later date, make known the true significance of the Severus Scroll variants" (*The Severus Scroll* 56-7).

The case for a Karaite origin of Abner/Alfonso's title *Moreh Zedek* might be stronger if his use of the term more closely matched other examples. It is, however, very much *sui generis*. On the one hand, Abner/Alfonso discusses at length the parallels he sees between Elijah and the Messiah, and argues that Elijah already appeared to the sages with news of the Messiah (as did, he asserts, the Messiah himself). In fact, he maintains, Elijah is one of the various names of the Christ himself.⁹⁸ This equation of Elijah and the Messiah is different from the typical rabbinical view that Elijah will precede the Messiah's coming. In addition to this, the presentation of the Teacher of Righteousness is actually separate from Elijah, and Abner/Alfonso does not equate the two. At one point, Abner/Alfonso makes explicit reference to the "teiqu" ("let it stand") tradition of invoking Elijah/The Teacher of Righteousness, implying his own rejection of this tradition: "[The Jews] used to say "Let this remain until the [Elijah]⁹⁹ should come! They await him as they await the Christ, according to what they think."¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, he does refer to the Teacher in terms typically reserved for Elijah at the end of days. The primary function of the Teacher of Righteousness in Karaite writing—and, according to Ginzberg, in Rabbinite writing as well—is, as Erder explains, "to decipher the prophecies of redemption intended for the last generation" (138). As Fred Astren observes, the use of

⁹⁸ Some passages where Abner/Alfonso discusses Elijah and his role are 45r-46v/1: 76-9, 69v-71r/1:127-31, 230r/2: 196-7, 290r-291r/343-45, 341r/2: 442. The role of Elijah is also of primary importance in Abner/Alfonso's third polemical letter. See Rosenthal's edition of the third letter and Chazan, "Maestre Alfonso de Valladolid and the New Missionizing."

⁹⁹ The text reads "Messiah." This seems to be a mistake, even though the meaning of the text is obviously messianic. Abner/Alfonso is clearly referring to Elijah and/or the Teacher of Righteousness, and reading "Messiah" here makes no sense given the rest of the sentence (Without the change, it would read "they await the Messiah as they await the Messiah"). This is said within an ongoing discussion of Elijah.

¹⁰⁰ "Mas dizian: "¡Ffinque esto fasta que venga el Mexias"; ca espéra[n]le assi como esperan el Christo, segund que ellos tienen" (290v/2: 344). Cf. 290r/2:343.

the term among Karaites probably “refers to a waited Messiah who in the eschatological future would resolve the halakhic dilemmas of the people” (93). Like Elijah, the Teacher is to “pave the way to redemption by deciphering the mysteries of the prophecy” (Erder 139).¹⁰¹ For Abner/Alfonso, the Teacher of Righteousness is to play precisely that function, showing the truth of Christianity as the resolution of their confusion and schismatic conflict. As he explains in his prologue, “the Jews have been so long in this captivity because of their insanity and their ignorance and because they lack a “Teacher of Righteousness” in whom they may know the truth.”¹⁰² We can also recall Abner/Alfonso’s description of his conversion, cited in the previous chapter:

...and after [the beliefs] took root in me from heaven in many ways, I converted to the Law of the Christians publicly, God be praised, to save my soul from my sins and from the sins of all the Jews, for whom I was responsible if I didn’t reveal to them what was shown to me from heaven. And in order that the reasons be more evident and manifest to whomever should want to know the truth in them, I wanted to compose this book, which I called “Teacher of Righteousness”, in order

¹⁰¹ Polliack, “Wherein Lies the Peshet?”, explains “the meaning attached to [the term Moreh Zedek] by the Karaites is different from that attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the latter *moreh ha-sedeq* serves as the symbolic appellation of the spiritual leader of the sect, a specific individual...The Karaites, however, use *moreh sedeq* to refer to an eschatological figure, a messiah, who will appear in the distant future. He will supply the ultimate solution for the exegetical debates among the Jews (Karaites versus Rabbinites) and among the Karaites themselves...by providing instruction, as does a teacher (*moreh*), concerning the correct, or right (*sedeq*) interpretation of the hidden aspects of the Law. This messianic role of *moreh sedeq* is reminiscent of the role of Elijah, the Tishbi, the “solver of riddles” in rabbinic sources, wherein he is portrayed as the messianic figure entrusted with putting to final rest the exegetical cruxes of the Hebrew Bible” (41-42).

¹⁰² “...los judíos están desde tan grand tiempo en esta captividad por su locura e por su nesçedad e por mengua de “Mostrador de Justicia’ donde conoscan la verdad” (12r/1: 13).

to show the true faith, and the truth and justice in it, to the Jews, who have need of it...¹⁰³

For Abner/Alfonso, the Teacher of Righteousness is the one who clarifies the obscurities and secrets of Jewish sources whose misunderstanding prevents Jews from seeing the truth of Christianity and converting. The Teacher's presence in the text is ubiquitous, being the title of the Christian voice disputing with the Jewish "Rebel". Every Christian statement in the text except one aberrant instance¹⁰⁴ is said by the voice of the "Teacher of Righteousness", and so the Teacher-figure is, in many ways, indistinguishable from Abner/Alfonso's own Christian authorial voice whose primary goal is precisely to resolve "confusion" that keeps Jews from Christianity. While Abner/Alfonso does not equate Elijah and the Teacher, he uses the title of Teacher of Righteousness in a way that was typically associated with Elijah as a teacher and resolver of differences at the end of days. Although this tradition exists in both Karaite and Rabbinic tradition, there is nothing to suggest that Abner/Alfonso's use of the term has anything to do with Karaism. Even more importantly, however, because Abner/Alfonso's understanding of Karaism can be shown to have no direct sources, and his references indicate that he knew little to nothing of Karaite authors and sources, we can confirm Lasker's initial suggestions based on the *Teshuvot* that Abner/Alfonso's arguments were

¹⁰³ "...e despues de que me affincaron del çielo por muchas maneras, convertíme a la Ley de los Christianos publicament, loado sea Dios, para salvar mi alma de los mis pecados e de los pecados de todos los judios, que tenia a cuestas ssi non descubriese a ssus orejas lo que me mostraron del çielo. E por amor que las rrazones ssean más paladinas e manifiestas a quien quisiere saber la verdat en ellas, quisse conponer este libro, que lo llamé "Mostrador de Justiçia", por mostrar la ffe çierta, e la verdat e la justicia en ella, a los judios, que la avien mester, segund que me ffue dicho, e para rresponder a todas las contradiciones e las dubdas, o las más dellas, que non pueden ffazer todo judio rrebele e contrdezidor a las nuestras palabras" (13r/ 1:15).

¹⁰⁴ In chapter seven, paragraph three (187r/2: 104), the Christian is called "Maestro" instead of "Mostrador".

not actually derived from Karaite sources. (“Karaism and the Jewish-Christian Debate” 326). This is not to say that Abner/Alfonso’s ideas are not similar to certain Karaite arguments, but as Polliack insists in arguing against a connection between the writings of Qumran and the Karaites, resemblance provides no certain proof of a connection, especially when there is a historical gap (“Wherein Lies the Peshet?” 46). Abner/Alfonso’s knowledge of the basic beliefs of Karaism and of the historical existence of Karaism in Spain—knowledge he seems to have gleaned through secondary sources, above all Ibn Daud—certainly served his argument against the reliability of Rabbinic tradition, and this criticism further serves his overall polemical appeal. This fact does not, however, equate to any proof that Abner/Alfonso actually read Karaite literature or adopted Karaite arguments.

Considering the importance of Maimonides (who was called “Moreh Zedek” by many, including his own son) in the *Mostrador* and in the *Minhat Qenaot*, the most likely origin of the title of Abner/Alfonso’s work is a reference to him. It is also very possible that this reference included a suggestion of the association between the Teacher of Righteousness and Elijah, the solver of hermeneutic difficulties and the revealer of scriptural secrets. The eschatological or messianic overtone of this sort of reference is in keeping with Abner/Alfonso’s own depiction of his understanding of the secrets of Judaism and Christianity as the product of his own pseudo-prophetic dream visions. Of course, Abner/Alfonso himself is the true Teacher of Righteousness, and we have seen examples of his own authorial voice sounding through the thin facade of his polemical dialog. Abner/Alfonso presents himself as many things in his work—sage, prophet,

teacher, disciple, master, keeper of scriptural secrets—and these multiple roles all find resonance within his title.

Besides the *Book of Tradition* of Ibn Daud, Abner/Alfonso does make use of a few other Jewish historiographical sources, although with much less consequence for his argument. On five occasions in the *Mostrador* and once in the *Teshuvot*, he cites the *Seder Olam Rabbah*, a chronology of Jewish history that dates from before the completion of the Babylonian Talmud and recounts, in what may be material from various versions, the history of the Jews from Adam through the rise of Bar Kokhba (Strack and Stemberger 326-7). Much more abundant in Abner/Alfonso's work are his citations to the *Sefer Yosippon*, a tenth-century work from southern Italy chronicling from the fall of Babylon through the destruction of the second temple.¹⁰⁵ This work, which was expanded in Italy in the twelfth century, was mistakenly ascribed at different points to the historian Josephus and Joseph ben Gorion, a general in the Jewish war against the Romans. Abner/Alfonso cites this work under both titles “Libro Joseffon” and “Libro de Josep Ben Gurion” over thirty times in his various works, often in combination with Ibn Daud's work (occasionally listing the titles as “Libro de Josep ben Gurion e...Çeder Cabalah” (*Mostrador* 200r/2: 134), a possible confusion of “Sefer ha-Kabbalah” with “Seder Olam”).¹⁰⁶ His references to *Sefer Yosippon* (“Libro Joseffon”) probably refer to the earlier version of the text from the tenth century, and his references to the *Sefer Yosef Ben Gurion*

¹⁰⁵ Steven Bowman, whose English translation of the *Sefer Yosippon* is forthcoming, has argued in favor of considering the work as both history and midrashic exegesis in his article “Sefer Yosippon: History and Midrash.” The critical edition of the *Sefer* was edited by David Flusser.

¹⁰⁶ For similar mention of both works and the mention of Ibn Daud's work as “Çeder (rather than “Sefer”) Cabalah”, see *Mostrador* 201r/2: 136, 219v/2: 176-77, 233v/2: 204-05, 248v/2: 240, *Libro de la ley* (2r/89), the first polemical letter: “כמו שכתוב בספר יוסף בן גוריון ובסדר קבלה...” (Rosenthal 613/ Vat. Ms. 6423 92ra), and again thus in the second polemical letter” (Rosenthal 488/ Vat. Ms. 6423 93vb).

(“Libro de Josep Ben Gorion”) refer to a later, expanded version of the text possibly from the twelfth century. Although his references clearly refer to the same work as it existed in various versions, Abner/Alfonso’s citation of both titles, even on the same folio, could suggest that he consulted them believing they were two separate and unconnected works. Other comments, however, further muddy the waters, making this conclusion equally unsatisfactory, and suggesting that he understood both works as translations of the lost original version of Josephus’s *Jewish Wars*.¹⁰⁷

Abner/Alfonso’s primary use of historiographical sources like Ibn Daud, *Seder Olam*, and the versions *Sefer Yosippon*, is to support arguments related to calculations of the chronology of Jewish history, based above all on his exegesis of key passages in the book of Daniel. It is thus not surprising that a majority of the citations are localized in chapters seven and eight of the *Mostrador*, which focus on Jewish calculations of the coming of the Messiah and the chronologies of the empires of the world (Babylon, Persia-Media, Greece, Edom) which must fall before the messianic event. Likewise, these sources appear mainly in the first polemical letter (there is one reference to Ibn Daud in the second), which pays particular attention to the issue of chronology and calculation of the coming of the Messiah (although these sources are not mentioned in the third letter, where they would also be expected based on Abner/Alfonso’s other writings). Abner/Alfonso’s argument that Jews miscalculated the date of the coming of the Messiah, that the fourth kingdom of Daniel’s prophecy is Greece and not Edom (Persia and Media being separate), and that Rome is not to be identified with Edom, all rely on his

¹⁰⁷ On 198v/2: 131 and 246v/2: 234-35, he cites both “Libro de Josep ben Gurion” and “Libro de Josefon” without connecting the two in any way. A few folia after the former example, however, he cites “el Libro de Josp ben Gurion” and then adds “e dizen en otra trasladaçion del “Libro de Josep Ben Gurion...” (200r-v/2: 135). On that very folio, he then cites “Libro de ioseffon iosep ben gurion.”

historiographical reconstruction of the second temple period. By supporting his chronological arguments with Hebrew historiographical works that were extremely popular among Jews in the later Middle Ages, Abner/Alfonso aims to remove the burden of proof from his own exegesis of Daniel and presents his argument as based on already accepted historical knowledge.

Abner/Alfonso's use of Jewish historiographical sources is, like his entire polemical project, full of contradictions and ambivalence. On the one hand, his appeal to these sources constitutes an appeal to venerable proof of the antiquity of his arguments. Just as Josephus himself appealed to the antiquity of the Jews as proof of their worth, the medieval authors of the *Yosippon* appealed to the antiquity of Josephus. Just as Ibn Daud reconstructed the tradition of continuity from temple to *Tannaim* and *Amoraim* to *Gaonim* to the culture of Sefardic Jewry, Abner/Alfonso's appeal to these sources served his ultimate argument that proof of Christian truth can be found throughout the rabbinic tradition all the way back to antiquity. On the other hand, his use of authors such as Ibn Daud directly contradicts the principle argument that connected Sefardic Jewry with the Sefarad of the Bible.¹⁰⁸ Abner/Alfonso can invoke specific details listed in Ibn Daud and the *Yosippon* as proof of a part of this claim, even though Abner/Alfonso's overall intention directly contradicts Ibn Daud's arguments. Abner/Alfonso's use of historiographical sources is in this way in line with his strategic and ambivalent use of non-Christian sources, because he invokes as proof the very texts whose larger arguments are those Abner/Alfonso argues against.

¹⁰⁸ On the use of antiquity in Jewish historiography in general, see Ayaso Martínez, "Antigüedad y excelencia de la diáspora judía en la península ibérica." On Abner/Alfonso's specific use of history and historical arguments, see 246-47.

Exegetical and Grammatical Sources

Among Abner/Alfonso's litany of sources, his use of later medieval exegetical and grammatical texts forms a critical part of his overall argument and these source citations are among the most abundant after citations of the Bible, Talmud, and Midrash. The presence of such sources in Abner/Alfonso's work is a good indication of the slightly larger variety of medieval Jewish sources in Abner/Alfonso's work than in any previous Christian polemic, including that of Raymond Martini.¹⁰⁹ Besides references to *Geonim* such as Saadya Gaon, discussed above, some of Abner/Alfonso's earlier exegetical references are to the commentaries of the eleventh-century commentator Moses Ibn Chiquitilla, one commentator among a handful (including Maimonides, Nahmanides, and others) whom Abner/Alfonso refer to as "historical glossers" ("glosadores estoricos" 279v/2: 316). We have already considered above the accusation against the Rebel that "there were some [Jewish scribes] who changed the vocalization in the verse in the prophecy of Daniel which says "He swore by the life of the world", and they vocalized it so as to say "He swore in the living of the world", to which Abner/Alfonso adds "thus the historical glosser Rabbi Moses Chicatiella wrote it."¹¹⁰ Again, we can see Abner/Alfonso's Janus-faced criticism and acceptance of his sources in his initial criticism

¹⁰⁹ Abner/Alfonso cites grammarians Ibn Janah and Ibn Ḥayyūj, as well as exegetes like Ibn Bil'am, whereas Martini only cites Ibn Jannah (*Pugio* 536, 851), and his citations do not match Abner/Alfonso's. Likewise, most of Martini's citations of the Radak (David Kimḥi) are from his *Sefer Miklol* and *Sefer ha-Shorashim*, whereas most of Abner/Alfonso's citations are from exegetical commentaries that again do not match those cited by Martini. Finally, Martini does not cite Joseph Kimḥi at all, and the citations of Ibn Ezra in the *Pugio* are concentrated on his commentaries on Psalms. None of them match Abner/Alfonso's citations of Ibn Ezra.

¹¹⁰ "...Ovo algunos dellos que camiaron la puntadura en el viesso que dize en la prophesia de Daniel: "Juró en la vida del mundo", e puntáronle en guisa que sse entiende: "Juró en el vivo del mundo."; asi lo escribió el glosador estorico Rrabi Mosse Chicatiella" (154v/2: 35). See above, note 12.

of commentators like Moses Chiquitilla and his subsequent invocation of his exegetical arguments, on three separate occasions, to support his own readings.

Although his references to Chiquitilla are few, they do show the breadth of Abner/Alfonso's citations, as does his passing reference to his contemporary Judah Ibn Bil'am (who criticized Chiquitilla as an atheist). Not surprisingly, however, the commentaries and exegesis of Chiquitilla's famous contemporary, Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes (Rashi, 1040-1105), are much more important for Abner/Alfonso's arguments. Although Rashi is much less present in Abner/Alfonso's arguments than his own contemporary, the exegete Nicholas of Lyra, Abner/Alfonso's use of Rashi resembles Lyra in that he invokes his exegetical judgment more often (although not exclusively) as proof than as example of error. Abner/Alfonso also resembles Lyra in that his citations focus much more on Rashi's Biblical commentaries and give much less attention to his Talmudic commentaries. Likewise, Abner/Alfonso does not make any mention of the Tosafists including Jacob ben Meir or their additions to Rashi's Talmudic commentary. Rashi is, in fact, the only exegete from the "northern school" that finds a place in Abner/Alfonso's commentary, in which Andalusian exegetes like Ibn Ezra and Maimonides and Provençal exegetes like Joseph and David Kimḥi not surprisingly play a much more significant role. In keeping with his general use of medieval exegetical sources, which are concentrated mainly in chapters seven through nine of the *Mostrador*, Abner/Alfonso's use of Rashi gives more attention to his commentary on Daniel than any other Biblical book, and most of these citations are naturally concentrated in chapter seven on the subject of Jewish messianic calculations.

About as prominent as Rashi in Abner/Alfonso's work is the exegesis of Joseph Kimḥi (ca. 1105-ca. 1170) mostly on the books of Daniel and, to a lesser extent, Isaiah. Abner/Alfonso's stance on Joseph Kimḥi is notably more critical than to other exegetes, and there are only a few instances where he is cited as support rather than as fodder for criticism.¹¹¹ Abner/Alfonso actually invokes Kimḥi as the kind of modern source whose authority should be rejected in favor of more ancient proofs. In chapter seven, in the midst of a string of criticisms of the Rebel's interpretation of Daniel's chronology, he states "it is more fitting to believe the sages of the Talmud and Rabbi Abraham Bar Hiyya than to believe Rabbi Joseph Kimḥi and the other later commentators."¹¹² It is clear that Abner/Alfonso is aware that Joseph Kimḥi's authority carries weight for his reader, and he specifically addresses a number of places where Kimḥi's statements go against his own arguments. At one point, he tells the Rebel, in reference to his interpretation of Is 42:1, that "you erred in that statement about Hebrew grammar, even though Rabbi Joseph Kimḥi, who was one of the great grammarians, wrote it was thus."¹¹³ In spite of his praise of Kimḥi's grammatical knowledge, he repeatedly criticizes such knowledge. One interesting passage is his criticism of Kimḥi's reading of Daniel 11:31, which seems to have been longer and more developed in the original Hebrew text of the *Moreh*. The Teacher states, after presenting his own reading, that "there are many

¹¹¹ See, for example, the second polemical letter (Rosenthal 486/Vat. Ms. 6423 92vb).

¹¹² "E más guisado es de creer a los sabios del Talmud e a Rrabi Abraham bar Hia, más que creer a Rrabi Yoçef Camhi e a los otros glosadores postrimeros" (189v/2: 111).

¹¹³ "Tú erraste en aquella palabra de parte de la gramatica del ebrayco, maguera que lo escribió asi Rrabi Yoçef Camhy, que era de los grandes gramaticos" (145r/2: 12).

other arguments according to the Hebrew language that show that Rabbi Joseph erred in this gloss, even though they cannot be translated well into Romance.”¹¹⁴

Abner/Alfonso’s use of exegetical commentaries by Kimḥi’s son, David Kimḥi (Radak, ca. 1160-ca. 1235), and his older contemporary Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) is less critical and more voluminous, especially in the case of the latter. Abner/Alfonso’s use of Kimḥi *fls* focuses nearly entirely on his Biblical exegesis, and he pays more attention to his commentary on Isaiah than any other single work. Although Abner/Alfonso does disagree with Kimḥi frequently, sometimes criticizing his grammatical or exegetical ideas on a certain verse of word in Hebrew, he invokes him as an authority for support on as many occasions as he criticizes him. Such acceptance is even more evident in the case of Ibn Ezra, who not only figures more often in Abner/Alfonso’s arguments, but whose ideas are accepted more than David Kimḥi as a real authority. In the case of the Kimḥis, the focus is overwhelmingly on their exegetical commentary, and this purview is even more pronounced in Abner/Alfonso’s treatment of Ibn Ezra’s works, which includes no reference to his poetic or scientific writings and only a few statements about his grammatical ideas. Abner/Alfonso does seem to have drawn from Ibn Ezra’s *Sefer Yesod Morah ve-Sod ha-Torah* (*Book on the Foundation of Awe and the Secret of the Torah*), especially in his discussion of the Tetragrammaton and its importance in Jewish mysticism (a point we will consider in more detail below).

Abner/Alfonso’s use of David and Joseph Kimḥi’s writings, on the other hand, although mainly focusing on their exegetical ideas, also involves their grammatical knowledge. Although Abner/Alfonso mentions Kimḥi’s grammatical ideas in a few places

¹¹⁴ “...e otras muchas rrazones que ay segund la lengua del ebrayco, que da a entender que erró Rrabi Yoçef en aquella glosa, ssinon que non se puede trasladar bien al rromance” (191r/2: 113).

and refers to him as a Hebrew grammarian rather than an exegete or philosopher (“Thus wrote the grammarians of Hebrew grammar, David Kimḥi and other sages.”)¹¹⁵ What is most interesting in the appeal to Kimḥi’s ideas is the lack of certain expected references. He does not refer to Kimḥi’s *Sefer Miklol* or *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (as does Raymond Martini) and he seems to make no use of Kimḥi’s extensive commentary on the roots of Hebrew verbs. It seems to have been through David Kimḥi that Abner/Alfonso was acquainted with the work of Jonah Ibn Janah or Judah ben David Ḥayyūj, and two of his three references to these grammarians are paired with mention of Kimḥi himself.

In comparison, Abner/Alfonso’s criticism of Joseph Kimḥi is odd alongside the more ambivalent use of his son David, given that both father and son show a similar tendency (although not exclusive) towards grammatically-based philological analysis and a favoring of the more literal *peshat* sense of scripture than the rabbinical *derash* exegesis favored by Rashi and other French exegetes. The attitude of both can be said to be less rigid in this than predecessors such as Abraham Ibn Ezra, and both often blend the Andalusí style of literal commentary with the French style of rabbinical explication. (Sáenz-Badillos and Targarona Borrás, *Los Judíos de Sefarad ante la Biblia* 162). Thus, even though Abner/Alfonso does reject and criticize some of David’s commentaries, he accepts them more than Joseph’s, and he uses and accepts the commentaries of Ibn Ezra more than both. Abner/Alfonso’s attitude toward exegesis and the balance between literal and metaphorical interpretation is hard to glean from his criticism or endorsement of other Jewish exegetes, but seems to be more a product of the specific demands of each argument. In the end, he does not turn to one commentator over another for their

¹¹⁵ “...assi lo escrivieron los gramaticos de la gramatica del ebrayco, David Camhy e otros sabios” (250v/2: 245).

general approach to scripture and prophecy, but for their specific comments on issues important for Abner/Alfonso's own arguments.

Astrological Sources

Although Abner/Alfonso was interested in astronomy and astrology, especially as it relates to the question of predestination and free will (we can remember that his *Minḥat Qenaot* treats the question of free will in detail), the litany of Abner/Alfonso's sources in the *Mostrador* includes relatively few works of science. We have already mentioned that none of the forty-six references to Abraham Ibn Ezra in the *Mostrador* or the handful of references in his other works include any mention of his scientific writings. There are only a few brief citations in the *Mostrador* that refer to themes or authors of astronomy or astrology. The first is the reference of a work which Abner/Alfonso calls the "Book of Astrology", mentioned in his discussion of the four ages of the prophecy of Daniel.

Even now the gentile sages count in their books the age of the Romans from the beginning of the reign of Alexander the Macedonian, who was the root and beginning of the reign of Greece. Thus it is written in the "Book of Astrology", and this shows that the kingdom of Rome was included within the kingdom of Greece [within Daniel's prophecy].¹¹⁶

Mettmann speculates that this title refers to the *Baraita of Rabbi Samuel*, although a similar statement cannot be found there. It is more likely that this reference refers to the *Megillat ha-Megaleh* of the Aragonese mathematician and astronomer Abraham Bar Ḥiyya d. ca

¹¹⁶ "E assi aun agora cuenta[n] los sabios de los gentiles la era de los annos de los rromanos en sus libros desde el comienço del rregno de Alixandre Maçedonio, el que fue rrayz e comienço del rregno de Yavan; e assi es escripto en el "Libro de la Astrologia." E esto es ssennal que el rregno de Rroma era [en]çerrado en el rregno de Yavan" (244v/2:231).

1136), which does include discussion of chronological interpretations of Daniel and includes extensive astrological information in book five.¹¹⁷ Bar Ḥiyya is, in fact, one of the few authors interested in astronomy and Hebrew science and mathematics mentioned by Abner/Alfonso, and he is mentioned in a second example of astrological sources in the *Mostrador* as well.¹¹⁸ In chapter four, on the subject of Jesus as the propitiation for the original sin of Adam, he asserts that Avicenna and al-Ghazālī both stated that when a man dies, his soul is joined to one of the heavenly bodies. Abner/Alfonso then explains that this idea resembles the understanding of Empedokles who stated that the heavens were made of four elements. This is followed by an interesting string of references, some of which do not appear anywhere else in Abner/Alfonso's work:

It seems this way in the literal histories of the sayings of the sages of the Talmud, which are not far from the understanding of Plato, who said that the material of all things was one, and that the world and all the bodies, insofar as they are new bodies, are generated and corrupt. In this lies the understanding of Rabbi Baḥya Ibn Paquda, as he wrote in the first chapter of the book called "Duties of the Heart", who said that the spheres have no other [fifth element] nature as Aristotle believed. Thus he said the verse "Who makes winds your messengers, flaming fire your ministers" [Ps 104:4]. Thus the sayings of the sage doctor Isaac in the "Book of Definitions" this argument is proved, I mean to say that the souls of some men pass into the heavenly bodies. And thus it is in the sayings of the Rabbi Abraham

¹¹⁷ I am grateful to Professor Gad Freudenthal and, through him, Professor Schlomo Sela, for assisting me with a query on this matter. Professor Sela suggested Bar Ḥiyya as a possible reference for this title, although, as he pointed out, the fifth book of *Megillat ha-Megalleh*, on the subject of astrology, is not where Bar Ḥiyya's discussion of Daniel is found, which is discussed in book four.

¹¹⁸ On Abraham Bar Ḥiyya, see Sela, *Abraham Ibn Ezra and the Rise of Medieval Hebrew Science* 96-104; Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy* 97-104; and the bibliographies contained in both works.

Bar Ḥiyya in the “Book of the Sad Soul” and thus in the sayings of Joseph Ibn Zaddik in the book called “Little World”...¹¹⁹

This is the only passage in his known works where Abner/Alfonso mentions Joseph Ibn Zaddik, and the only passage in the *Mostrador* where he mentions Bahya Ibn Paquda.¹²⁰ His statement about Bar Ḥiyya’s idea of the movement of the soul corresponds to the discussion of this topic in the first part of *Meditation of the Sad Soul* (*Hegyon ha-Nefesh ha-Azawah*). It seems, however, that Abraham’s *Scroll of the Revealer* (*Megillat ha-Megalleh*), mentioned as “Libro que compuso de la venida del Christo” (234v/2: 206), was more important for Abner/Alfonso’s argument in the *Mostrador* than the *Meditation*. This is not surprising, given that the project of the *Scroll* involves an eschatological discussion of the coming of the Messiah based on exegesis (with a focus on Daniel) and astrological information, a project directly related to Abner/Alfonso’s argument in chapter seven of the *Mostrador*, where the majority of Abner/Alfonso’s references to Bar Ḥiyya are found. Abner/Alfonso already referred to the contents of this work, although not by name, when he listed Bar Ḥiyya among Rashi, the Kimḥis, Naḥmanides, and Saadya Gaon as one of the many rabbis who taught that the time of the coming of the Messiah can be understood from the prophecies of Daniel, “even though they all erred in their manner of

¹¹⁹ “...como parece tal en las estorias llanas de los dichos de los sabios del Talmud, los quales non [son] alongados del entendimiento de Platon, que dizia que la materia de todas las cosas era una, e que el mundo e todos los cuerpos, en quanto son cuerpos nuevos, son generados e corruptos. E a esto acuesta el entendimiento de Rabi Bahie ben Bacoda, como lo escribió en el capitulo primero del libro que a nonbre “Habod ha-Lebabot”, que dixo que las esperas non an otra natura quanto como lo cudó Aristotiles; e por esso dixo el viesso: “Fazes tus angeles vientos, e tus ministradores fuego flamante.” E assi de los dichos del sabio fisico Ysac en el “Libro de las diffiniciones” se prueua esta rrazon, quiero dezir que las almas de algunos omnes passan en los cuerpos del çielo. E assi de los dichos de Rabi Abraham bar Hia en el “Libro del alma triste”, e assi de los dichos de Rabi Yoçe ben Çadic en el libro que a nonbre “Mundo Menor”...” (111v/1: 211-212).

¹²⁰ He does mention Ibn Paquda five times in the *Minḥat Qenaot/Ofrenda de Zelos*.

explanation, as we have shown.”¹²¹ Bar Ḥiyya has also been shown to be the source of some statements attributed by Abner/Alfonso to Saadya Gaon (199r/2: 133).¹²² On only a few occasions does Abner/Alfonso disagree with Bar Ḥiyya (187r/2: 105), such as in a passage where Abner/Alfonso rejects his historical explanation in *Scroll of the Revealer* of the meaning of Daniel 8:14 [“for two-thousand three-hundred evenings and mornings, then the temple shall be restored”] as a reference to the time of the second temple and after. Interestingly, however, Abner/Alfonso picks up part of this same explanation as acceptable proof only a few folia later with no mention of his previous disagreement (195r/II 123) and draws material from the same section as proof of his own arguments. This apparent respect for Bar Ḥiyya’s ideas is reflected in the passage, already considered above, in which Abner/Alfonso states that it is more fitting to believe the sages of the Talmud and Abraham Bar Ḥiyya than later commentators like the Kimḥis “e otros glosadores postrimeros” (189v/2: 111), a contraposition that also appears in the second polemical letter when Bar Ḥiyya’s ideas are cited as “proof that Rabbi Joseph Kimḥi erred...” (Rosenthal 489/Vat. Ms. 6423 94rb).

Some scholars have already suggested, although without reference to the *Mostrador* (which constitutes the main source of references to him), that Bar Ḥiyya had an influence on Abner/Alfonso. Ravitzky (*Derashat ha-Pesaḥ* 41 n. 20), for example, suggests that Abner/Alfonso took his notion of reward and punishment from him, an idea that Bar Ḥiyya discusses in detail in his *Scroll*. Roth disputes this claim (*Conversos*, 382 n. 127), but

¹²¹ “...sinon que todos erraron en la manera del esplanamiento, como ya probamos” (208v/2: 153).

¹²² “Mas lo que dixo el gaon Rrabeno Çahadias, e otrosi Rrabi Mosse el Egipciano, que aquel viesso que dize... [Dn 11:14] fue dicho por Jhesus Nazareno e su companna...” (199r/2: 133). Cf. Second polemical letter (Rosenthal 492 n. 34/Vat. Ms. 6423 96rb).

does so without considering the nine references to Abraham in the *Mostrador* or the constant discussion of reward and punishment there. In addition, Gluskina, in her edition of the *Meyasher 'Aqov*, suggests that Bar Ḥiyya, among other Hebrew writers, may have influenced Abner/Alfonso's scientific and mathematical terminology (136). Even Baer asserted that Abner/Alfonso had more in common with "the aggadists or eschatological writers like R. Abraham b. Hiyya and the contemporary mystics" (*A History* 1: 334) than with Christian or Jewish rationalists. A more exhaustive study of the specific questions of Abner/Alfonso's possible borrowing of terms and concepts remains to be undertaken, but the fact of Bar Ḥiyya's influence on Abner/Alfonso is patently obvious to anyone familiar with the *Mostrador*.

Beyond the references to Bar Ḥiyya, Abner/Alfonso does include a number of details that suggest he consulted a number of other astrological and scientific sources before writing the *Mostrador*. For example, he mentions a certain "Algafiqui" whom he mentions as a "Muslim sage" along with "other sages of astrology."¹²³ The identity of this writer is not altogether clear, nor is the intended reference to "other sages of astrology", although this statement does suggest a wider source base than what is evident from a simple list of his named citations such as Mettmann gives in his edition of the *Mostrador*.¹²⁴ Elsewhere, Abner/Alfonso mentions the writings of "sages of astrology, Ptolomy and the others,"¹²⁵ although this reference, like the previous one, is of little scientific substance. This is typical for Abner/Alfonso, who includes most of his discussion of scientific

¹²³ "...el sabio moro Algafique e otros sabios de astrologia" (201v/2: 137).

¹²⁴ On the identity of "Algafiqui", see supplement chapter 2, n. 126, above.

¹²⁵ "...los sabios de la estrologia, Tolomeo e los otros" (260v/2: 270).

concepts and sources alongside Talmudic and exegetical sources within a larger discussion of messianic ideas. For example, Abner/Alfonso includes astrological details about the nature of the ninth sphere of the heavens in his discussions of the nature of angels and the understanding of the divine chariot (*merkavah*) named in Ezekiel's vision (book 1). Referring to Ez 1:22 ("And over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament, like the color of the terrible ice..."), he explains

That [firmament] is the ninth sphere, which is smooth, without any star. That is called in the book *Hagigah* "curtain", which is like white linen. And they say that this curtain does not show anything, but causes night and brings out morning and renews the world each day. And since there is no star in that sphere it is said that it does not show anything observable, as do other stars...¹²⁶

This mention of the ninth sphere highlights the real intention of all of Abner/Alfonso's astronomical and astrological comments in the *Mostrador*, since the ninth sphere was typically rejected by astronomers as being unobservable, but was important in theological discussion of the heavenly structure.¹²⁷ In mystical traditions of interpreting Ezekiel's description of the *merkavah*, the highest heaven (*Aravot*) was traditionally understood to represent the seventh, not the ninth, heaven. Elsewhere, Abner/Alfonso blends this notion of the ninth heaven with a more traditional idea, taken from T.B. *Hagigah* 12b, that the *Aravot* is the seventh heaven where "there are right and judgment and righteousness, the treasures of life and the treasures of peace and the treasures of

¹²⁶ "Aquello es dicho por la espera novena, que es lezne, sin ninguna estrella. Aquella es la que llamaron en el libro "Haguiga" "cortina", que es como lienço blanco. E dixieron que esta cortina non muestra nada, sinon que mete la noche e saca la man[n]ana e rrenueva el mundo cada dia. Ca porque no a estrella en aquella espera es dicha que non muestra cosa sennalada, como fazen las otras esperas..." (123v/1: 236).

¹²⁷ For a discussion of the ninth sphere, see Sela, *Abraham Ibn Ezra* 224-233.

blessings, the souls of the righteous and the spirits and souls of those that are yet to be born...”¹²⁸ Abner/Alfonso’s specific presentation of this idea shows his debt to Maimonides, who explains in 1:70 of the *Guide* that

The textual words of the Sages, may their memory be blessed, which are repeated in every relevant passage, assert that there are seven heavens and that *araboth* is the highest encompassing the universe. Do not think it blameworthy that according to their reckoning there were seven heavens, whereas there are more than that. For sometimes, as is clear to those engaged in speculation on this subject and as I shall make clear further on, a sphere is counted as one though there be several heavens contained in it. What is intended here is to call attention to the fact that they constantly indicate that *araboth* is the highest part of the universe (171-2).

Abner/Alfonso in fact cites Maimonides by name in both his discussions of the ninth sphere (111r/1: 210-211 and 223v/2:185), and he accepts Maimonides’ idea that the ninth sphere contains no stars (*Guide* 2:9).¹²⁹

It goes without saying that Abner/Alfonso used all of his scientific sources in the *Mostrador*, like all other kinds of sources, for polemical purposes, not out of any pure scientific interest. We have already considered another example of astronomical knowledge being put to polemical use, looking at Abner/Alfonso’s argument in a series of letters in 1334 CE to the Jews of Toledo that the Jews of Castile had miscalculated the

¹²⁸ “dize en el libro Haguiga” que la espera susera, que a nonbre *Harabot*, están en ella almadenes de vida e almadenes de bendicion e almadenes de paz, e las almas de los justos, e las almas e los spiritus que an a sser criados” (111r/1: 211). Cf. 223r/2: 185.

¹²⁹ For discussion of Maimonides’ notion of the ninth sphere, see Sela, *Abraham Ibn Ezra* 226-27.

date of Passover (see the discussion in supplemental chapter one and Appendix 2, #10). Similar to this discussion, there is another very illuminating passage in the *Mostrador* in which Abner/Alfonso not only gives proof of his exposure to advanced astronomical and mathematical concepts, but does so within an argument blending scientific and messianic arguments. First, the Rebel asserts in chapter six, paragraph twenty-seven that in astronomical thought, events repeat themselves because the spheres and the order of the stars move in cycles and eventually return to their previous positions. The Teacher then argues against this assertion in paragraph twenty-eight. The significance of his explanation merits the long citation:

What you said about the return of the spheres and the order of the stars to the place where they previously were is another very bad heresy in which you, the Jews, fall more than other people. Some of the ancients who believed in the eternity of the world said that all individuals of the world will return at some point to the same way and the same order in which they once were, but the true philosophers already proved this wrong. It seems that if the relations between the movements each of the stars and the spheres were rational and commensurable, it could be that all the individuals of the world return at some point to the way and order exactly as they had been at a different time. But if those relations were irrational, not rational and commensurable, as it is proved in chapter ten of the “Book of Euclid”, it would never happen in any way that all the individuals of the world return in such a way and in such order that they seem exactly as they were at another time...But the rational relations which are found in the movements of the stars and the spheres in the books of the accounts of astrology are not true, but

rather they [only] approximate to the truth insofar as they are irrational [surd], not rational...and this is the reason why the astrologers err in the judgments of the stars in each period...this is like the sages of algorithms who try to take the root of a number that is not square, one [calculation] after another, infinitely, without arriving at it truly.”¹³⁰

To understand this explanation, it is necessary first to understand the meaning of Abner/Alfonso’s use of the words “ffabladas” and “mudas”, translated here as “rational” and “irrational”, respectively. Abner/Alfonso provides the key to this passage by his mention of “chapter ten of the Book of Euclid”, referring to the tenth book of Euclid’s *Elements* which treats the question of irrational numbers. There, Euclid introduced the terms “rhetos” (ρητός) and “alogos” (άλόγος) to describe rational numbers (such as the square root of four) and irrational numbers (such as the square root of two). These terms were translated as “speaking” and “mute” in the Arabic versions of Euclid (muntaq/ašamm) and, based on these, Latin adopted similar terms (whence comes the modern term “surd”, i.e. “surdus”, mute). The Arabic Euclid was translated into Hebrew

¹³⁰ “Mas lo que dixiste del tornamiento de la espera e el ordenamiento de las estrellas al logar en que fueron otra vegada, esto es otra eregia muy mala en que vos, los judios, caedes más que otras gentes. Como dizian algunos de los antigos que creýan la eternidat del mundo que todos los individuos del mundo tornarán algun tiempo a la misma manera e [al] mismo ordenamiento en que fueron otra vegada. E ya los ffilosofos verdaderos desataron esta opinion. E parece que ssi las rrelaçiones entre los movimientos de las estrellas e de las esperas unas a otras ffuessen ffabladas e aparçionadas, podia sser que tornassen todos los individuos del mundo en algun tiempo a tal manera e tal ordenamiento egualmient de como fueron otra vegada. Mas ssi aquellas rrelaçiones fueren mudas, non fabladas nin parçionadas, como se prueba en el capitulo (166r) dezeno del “Libro de Uclidas”, non convernía nunca por ninguna guisa que tornen los individuos todos del mundo a tal manera e tal ordenamiento que semeje[n] egualmient a lo ffueron otra vegada...Mas las rrelaçiones fabla[da]s que sson falladas a los movimientos de las estrellas e las esperas en los libros de los cuentos de la astrologia non sson rrelaçiones fabladas segund verdad, ssinon cerca llega[n] de la [ver]dat en quantia muda, non ffablada, como se provará a qui entendiere en ellos. E desto [e]s una grand rrayz para lo que yerran los astrologos en los juyzos de las estrellas en cada [tiemp]o...Assi como que los sabios del algorismo se acercan para tomar la rrayz del cuento que no es quadrado, uno más que otro, inffinidamiento, de ssin que ninguno dellos llegue a ello verdaderamente” (165v/2: 58- 166r/2: 59).

in the thirteenth century, and initially followed the same terminology (medubar/ilem).¹³¹ Abner/Alfonso's use of the words "ffablada" and "muda" derives from this terminology, and the same Hebrew use of "medubar" and "ilem" can be found in the *Meyasher Aqov*.¹³² The meaning of this usage in the *Mostrador* is confirmed by the final explanation of the "sages of algorithms who try to take the root of a number that is not square," a statement that repeats something Abner/Alfonso already noted in chapter three:

Doctors and philosophers agree only about those things that they choose, without needing to agree that those things are in the world, like the teachers of algorithms agree to imagine the root of each sum, without needing to agree that that root be found in the world, because there are many sums that do not have roots in any way, but the teachers allege that they always approach the agreed-upon root, without ever arriving at it.¹³³

Both of these passages show not only Abner/Alfonso's uncommon blending of mathematical and scientific concepts with messianic arguments, a blending that resembles the arguments of Abraham Bar Ḥiyya more than those of other works of Hebrew science. In another pair of passages, Abner/Alfonso blends a mystical consideration of the

¹³¹ On this specific translation of Euclid's terminology for rational and surd numbers, see Gad B. Sarfatti, *Mathematical Terminology in Hebrew Scientific Literature of the Middle Ages* [Hebrew], pp. 106-7, 244. On the translation of Euclid into Hebrew, see T. Lévy, "Les *Éléments* d'Euclide en hébreu (XIIIe-XIVe siècle)".

¹³² See, for example, 102b, l. 16 (156) and 114a l. 3-5 (177). Gluskina believed that this usage was one of Abner/Alfonso's own original coined mathematical terms (136).

¹³³ "Ca los ffisicos e los ffilosofos concuerdan ssolamiente en entender aquellos ssus escogidos, de ssin que avian mester de concordar que ffuessen en el mundo, assi como los maestros del algorismo concuerdan en ymaginar la rrayz de cada cuento, de ssin que aya mester de concordar que ssea aquella rrayz ffallada en el mundo, porque ay muchos cuentos que non an rrayzes por ninguna guisa, ssinon que los maestros sse allegan e sse açercan ssienpre a la rrayz concordada, de ssin que nunca lleguen nin alcançen a ella" (95r/1: 178).

Tetragrammaton with geometrical terminology, describing the Hebrew letters in terms of their shapes:

R. Abraham Ibn Ezra wrote on this that the name of God was [made of] three letters, to show it was a body of three dimensions, and their shapes are *Yod He Vav He*, according to the Hebrew script. This like a point and a line and a surface, which are the extremities which limit a body. There is in that name another, fourth letter, which is *He*, like a seat of the letter [of the] name, which is drawn with three lines, two of which are joined with each other in a surface, and the other third is separated from them to show a body which has another dimension vertically which is neither on the surface nor at the end point of the length or width.¹³⁴

Abner/Alfonso again returns to consider the relationship between geometrical elements in a later passage which relates to his geometrical consideration of the letter *He* (ה). In this passage, the Rebel directly challenges the Teacher's assertions about the letters of the Tetragrammaton in order to negate his claim that there is an "essential" multiplicity in God:

And how can it be said that the thing which is not sustained in itself, but is between two other things, is the substance or substantiality of only one of them?

This is like saying that the surface, which is a cut divided between two bodies is

¹³⁴ "E el ssabio Rrabi Abraham ben Ezra escrivió que por esso era el nombre de Dios de tres letras, por mostrar cuerpo de tres dimensiones; e que ssus figuras son *Yod He Vav He*, segund el escripto ebrayco, como punto e linna e superfficion, que sson las estremidades que terminan el cuerpo; e que ay en aquel nonbre otra letra quarta, que es *He*, en ffonдон de la letra nonbre, que es ffigurada de tres linnas, que las dos dellas sson ayuntadas una con otra en superfficion, e otra linna tercera departida dellas por mostrar ssobre cuerpo que ha otra dimension en el alto, que non es en ssuperfficio nin en un termino con la longura e la ladeza"(85r/1:159). Cf. *Teshuvot* 22v/51ra. As Hecht points out, this is a conflation of different passages from Ibn Ezra.

the substance of the body, or that the line is the substance of the body, or that the line is the substance of the surface, or that the point is the substance of the line.

This is foolish and false.¹³⁵

These passages, as well as the previous citations of astronomical descriptions, give a good indication of Abner/Alfonso's knowledge of scientific and geometrical concepts, a knowledge that is in the background of Abner/Alfonso's works but which is obscured by discussion of messianic and polemical topics (except in the *Meyasher 'aqov*). Once again, Abner/Alfonso's attitude towards his sources in the *Mostrador* is ambivalent, split between a real, objective interest in the ideas he proffers and an overriding concern with his messianic, polemical arguments.¹³⁶ This ambivalent attitude, part and parcel of the larger internal self-contradictory argument of the *Mostrador*, is indicative also of the important but problematic role that scientific ideas play in Abner/Alfonso's polemical work. Because his polemical treatment of topics such as astronomy or speculative geometry tended towards gnostic and even mystical or pseudo-mystical lines of thinking, it is appropriate to consider as well the importance of Abner/Alfonso's interpretation of Kabbalistic and *Merkavah* mystical thought in his *Mostrador*. Before turning to these ideas,

¹³⁵ "E la cosa que non a sostenmimiento en sí, sinon entre dos cosas, ¿cómo conviene a dezir en ella que es sustancia nin que es sustancialidad de la una dellas sola? E esto es como que diz que el superfficio, que es tajamiento parçionado a dos cuerpos, es sustancia del cuerpo, o que la linna es sustançia del cuerpo, o que la linna es sustançia del superfficio, o que el punto es sustancia de la linna; e esto es vano e falsso" (138v/1:267). Cf. the nearly identical passage in the *Teshuvot* 22v-23r/51ra-b.

¹³⁶ Grant (née Hurwitz), "Fidei Causa et Tui Amore" notes that Petrus Alfonsi's use of science includes a real pedagogical intention to disseminate scientific knowledge among his Christian readers, and in this sense "his work gains significance beyond the realm of polemic" (224). She developed this idea recently in "Ambivalence in Medieval Religious Polemic." The same cannot be said for Abner/Alfonso, although the *Mostrador* does achieve a unique blend of polemic and missionizing appeal to his reader. Grant is incorrect, however, in asserting that the use of medicine and astronomy was not adopted by later polemicists. Abner/Alfonso is a prime example of a polemicist influenced by Alfonsi who incorporated these elements into his polemic.

we must try to establish their place within Abner/Alfonso's wider presentation of philosophical ideas.

Philosophical and Mystical Sources

The question of Abner/Alfonso's interest in knowledge of astronomy and astrology cannot be separated from his philosophical discussion of determinism and the nature of free will. We have already considered, in the first chapter of the supplement, Abner/Alfonso's ideas on free will and their impact on later thinkers such as Moses Narboni and Ḥasdai Crescas. Part of Abner/Alfonso's influence can be explained by the fact that he synthesized the ideas of various previous writers in light of this single question of free will, and thus later writers interested in this subject found ample material condensed in Abner/Alfonso's writing. In fact, Abner/Alfonso's name has become so closely associated with a belief in absolute determinism that this often comes to stand out as his primary belief and teaching.¹³⁷ Baer describes his theory in the *Minḥat* as "absolute determinism which is a curious blend of the Pauline and Augustinian doctrines of predestination, with Moslem fatalism and the lore of astrology" (*A History* 1: 332-33). This strong association with determinism is probably due to the attention given to Abner/Alfonso's determinist ideas by Moses Narboni, whose *Ma'amar ha-Behirah/Treatise on Free Will* was composed against Abner/Alfonso's ideas in the *Minḥat Qenaot*. It is certain that Abner/Alfonso's *Minḥat Qenaot/Ofrenda de Zelos* is the place where he expresses his determinist ideas in most detail, but his statements on the subject in the *Mostrador* (written before the *Minḥat*) have received less critical attention. While a full treatment of the

¹³⁷ See, for example, the comments of Rivon Krygier, *À la limite de Dieu*, 188 n. 148 or 289 (where he mentions "les thèses fatalistes d'Avner de Burgos"). Abner/Alfonso's determinist ideas are also credited with influencing Ḥasdai Crescas, on which see Baer, "The Book *Minḥat Qenaot* of Abner of Burgos and its influence on Ḥasdai Crescas" [Hebrew]. We considered this issue above in supplement chapter one.

subject is not possible here, it will be useful to sketch out the basic lines of Abner/Alfonso's thought in the *Mostrador*, especially as it relates to his philosophical sources.

The basis of Abner/Alfonso's argument about determinism is his belief that God knows not only general, essential, and eternal things about creation, but that he knows all individual and accidental things as well. As he states in the *Minhat Qenaot/Ofrenda de Zelos*, "God knows all things particularly with an eternal knowledge,"¹³⁸ and as a result he knows the future of all things including man's individual actions. Colette Sirat explains the upshot of this belief, stating "man chooses between alternatives, but this choice is not free, for it depends on necessary laws. In fact, if human choice were free, God could not know human decision until the last moment, because it would be unforeseeable, even for man, until the last moment. He would thus not be omniscient" (*A History of Jewish Philosophy* 309).¹³⁹ God's knowledge, according to Abner/Alfonso, must include the future because God is omniscient, and thus individual choices of free will are known by God before they are willed.

Abner/Alfonso approaches this issue in the *Mostrador* in terms of the chronology of the coming of the Messiah. One statement that clearly expresses Abner/Alfonso's determinist opinion in relation to the Messiah can be found in paragraph thirty-nine of chapter seven, in which Abner/Alfonso reflects on the statement in T.B. *Hagigah* 12b that the *Arabot* (which both Abner/Alfonso and Maimonides equate with the outer sphere of

¹³⁸ "Dios tien mientes particularmiente en todas las cosas, e con ssu ssaber eterno" (3vb-4ra/20).

¹³⁹ Krygier, *À la limite de Dieu*, and Ludwig Stein, *Die Willensfreiheit*, explore the issues at hand in this sort of argumentation, taken up by many Medieval philosophers in much greater detail than what is found in Abner/Alfonso's extant works.

the cosmos) contains "...the spirits and souls of those that are yet to be born." Just like individual souls, which God conceived and knew potentially before they were actualized in creation, God knows all things from an eternal point of view, and man should not think "that God knows generalities and the species in terms of their universal material but does not know individuals, but rather [one should think] that all individuals, both in substance and in accident, are known before God."¹⁴⁰ Because God knows all individual things eternally, God's actions are not bound by any events on earth or in creation. In terms of the coming of the Messiah, this is important because some, Abner/Alfonso asserts, believe that certain conditions must be met on earth before the Messiah can come (that everyone is righteous or everyone is wicked, etc). Abner/Alfonso argues that there are not contingencies that need to occur before the coming of the Messiah that have the possibility of not occurring, because all things are thought of by God without reference to time. We should not, therefore, think that

the Christ will not come to this world until all the souls which arose in the mind of God to be created before the coming of the Christ are [actually] created, because this would not only [apply] to the [actions of the] Christ, but to [the actions of] each man and thing that came to be newly in the world. [If this were the case, then such a man or thing] would not be in the world until all the souls and all the things which arose in the mind of God to be created and to be done were

¹⁴⁰ "...Esto es porque non entre en voluntad de omne que Dios ssabe las generalidades e las especies de parte de la materia universsal dellas, e que non ssabe los individuos, sinon que cada individuo, tan bien de sustancias como de ascidentes, todo es conocido ante Dios" (228r/2: 193).

[actually] created and were in the world. But all things and the order of their being, one after the other, are known and understood [by God] all at once.¹⁴¹

Because God has eternal and complete knowledge, he knows both accident and essence, and he knows all things at once and not partially or seriatim. The implication of God's eternal knowledge of individual accidents is that God is never subject to contingency, but is always the ultimate cause of all things.

Abner/Alfonso expands on this notion that God is the ultimate or first cause by insisting repeatedly that such determinism is necessary to maintain the unity of God, for if his creation were multiple and not all derived from the same ultimate cause, then there would be things outside of God's ultimate control. He expresses the same idea in more Aristotelian terms in various places in the text, stating "God is the primary agent of the entire world in general, and is also the primary form, that is the agent of all individuals in the world, just as the form is agent of all individual things of which it is form. And [God] is also the primary will, that is the final intention and cause and, with all that, he is only one thing."¹⁴² This argument in the *Mostrador* is not unlike that presented in his other works, but what is unique to the *Mostrador* is the degree to which Abner/Alfonso links this unity of God and his creation to his explanation of the Trinity:

¹⁴¹ "E más, que non era mester de dezir por el Christo que non vernia a este mundo fasta que ffuessen criadas todas las almas que subieron en el pensamiento de Dios para sser criadas ante de la venida del Christo, ca non sseria esto en el Christo ssolamiento, ssino en todo omne e en toda cosa que ffuere nuevamiente en el mundo. Non será fasta que ssean criadas e que ssean en el mundo todas [las] almas e todas las cosas que ssubieron en el pensamiento de Dios para criar e para ffazer ante de aquel omne e ante de aquella cosa. Ca todas las cosas e el ordenamiento de ssu ser, unas despues dotras, sson conocidas e ssabidas a Dios en un tajamiento" (227v/2: 192).

¹⁴² "...es Dios obrador primero a todo el mundo en general, e es otrosi forma primera, quiero dezir obrador a todos los individuos del mundo, como que la forma es obrador de todos los individuos de las cosas de que es forma. E es otrosi voluntad primera, que quiere dezir entencion e causa final" (121v/1: 231-2).

Because God is cause in a universal and in a particular way, and the particular is born of the universal in the way that the species is born of the genus, God has to be personified and named as universal cause, for which reason the Christians call him “Father”, and he is also personified and named as the cause in a particular way, for which the Christians call him “Son”. From this particular person all the many created things were made, and separated one from another, which are in all the world...and because he himself is the intention and the end of those universal and particular works, he is personified and named in the person of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴³

He repeats this explanation at the end of chapter three¹⁴⁴ and again in the beginning of chapter five,¹⁴⁵ in both places insisting that God’s causality of all things is necessary for

¹⁴³ “Ca seyendo comienzo a todo el mundo en uno, que es de muchas partes que an una ffin, seria comienzo otrossi a cada una de sus partes, las quales la ffin dellas es paral todo, que su ffin dél es un Dios, que es virtud infinida. E porque Dios es causa en manera universal e en manera particular, e que la particular naçe de la universal en la manera que la especia naçe el genus, ovo a ser Dios personado e nonbrado que es causa univesal, que los christianos le dizen por esta parte “Padre”. E es otrosi personado e nonbrado que es causa en manera particular, que los christianos le dizen por esta parte “Ffijo”. E por esta perssona particular fueron ffechos todos los muchos criados, e demudados unos de otros, que son en todo el mundo...E (86v) porque él mismo es la entencion e la ffin en aquellas obras universales e particulares, es perssonado e nonbrado en persona de Spiritu Santo” (86r-v/1: 161).

¹⁴⁴ “E non puede ser que el alma del omne, sseyendo obrador proprio particular, que sse ayunte con Dios, que es obrador universsal, en guisa que ssean una cosa, sinon sseyendo obrador universal, que aquello es la perssona del Padre; esso mismo que el obrador proprio estremado quiero dezir la fforma primera, e aquella es la perssona del Ffijo; e seyendo otrossy spiritu e entendimiento como que enclina al obrador universsal para sser proprio, e ssea éste spiritu ffinal de la causa primera, esso mismo con la sustançioa de la causa primera, e esto e la perssona del Sspiritu Ssanto.” (96v/1: 181).

¹⁴⁵ “Ca él es obrador de todas las cosas en general, e en la obra que él obra el mundo en general es una persona e una entencion universal. E por esta parte es dicho en él que el uno no [es] dos, sino uno. E él es obrador de cada parte de las partes del mundo, en quanto son encerradas en el todo, e a él en esto otro anonbramiento e otra persona, e es entencion particular que nació de la entencion universal. E en quanto él mismo es comienzo universal soluto, el mundo en general es llamado Padre...e en quanto él mismo es comienzo para toda cosa particular, es dicho Fijo e generado, como que los individuos e las especies son dichas generaciones e ffijos, porque naçen de lo universal, que es dicho Padre, non que Dios es universal nin particular, sinon que es obrador de lo universal e de lo particular. E en quanto la su entencion en obrar las particulares es para conplir lo universal, que es uno, e asi la su entencion en obrar lo universal es a los particulares, que son muchos, a otra perssona medianera entre las dos dichas, que es llamado Spiritu Santo” (121r/1:231). He gives another summary of his ideas on 140v-141r/1: 272-3.

the unity of creation, and because of God's eternal knowledge, all caused things in creation, including individual will, are known to God at all times eternally.

Although Abner/Alfonso does seem to be a strict determinist thinker in the *Mostrador* as he is in the *Minhat Qenaot/Ofrenda de Zelos*, he insists that free will does exist in a way for all men, at least in experience, and that without this free will, there would be no rightful divine reward or punishment for human action. This idea, which is likewise present in all of his works, has received less attention by critics focusing on his determinist thought. Abner/Alfonso tries to reconcile the concepts of divine omniscience (which implies, for him, God's prescience of all things) and absolute divine justice (implying, philosophically, a need for free will) by arguing that man does not *experience* God's eternal knowledge of individual actions and thus man experiences all choices and makes all decisions as though they were his to decide freely. He explains that "Every man will always have the power of his free will. If he desires, he will do good works, and if he does not desire to, he will not do good works. This is according to how it is in the nature of men."¹⁴⁶ Even more importantly, he states that if it were not for this free choice, there would be no justice and no need for revelation. "If it were not for [man's experience of free choice], there would be no need of any Law, old or new, nor would there be punishment or reward or a Day of Forgiveness, and all of those prophets and sages which I named would be false and liars."¹⁴⁷ As we considered in chapter three, one of Abner/Alfonso's principle rhetorical techniques involves a direct appeal to his reader to

¹⁴⁶ "Sienpre será el poder de todo omne a su a[l]vedrio libre e dado en su mano; que si quisieren, fará[n] las bonas obras, e ssin non quisieren, non las farán. E esto segund que es tal en la natura de los omnes..." (274v/2: 303).

¹⁴⁷ "E ssinon por esto, non ovieran mester ninguna Ley, nin vieja nin nueva, nin abria y pena nin galardón nin Día de Perdones, e sserian todos aquellos prophetas e sabios que nonbré falsos e mintrosos; e esto conocido es a todo el qui quisiere otorgar la verdat" (274v/2:303).

control his own destiny and search for truth freely apart from his own tradition, and thus the effect of free choice and independent thinking is critical for the effectiveness of his persuasion. In one of the Teacher's direct appeals to the Jewish Rebel to hear his message, he reminds him that "from [God] it is put on every man to choose good and eternal glory for himself and his kin and his relatives...and a man should not remain doubtful in this great foundation, because it is not one of the things that can be forgiven."¹⁴⁸ Even so, man's free choice is never separated from God's knowledge, because, as he says in an allusion to the *Sefer Yezirah* (or, possibly, Jacob Ben Reuben, who uses the same image), "all the species and individuals of the world are tied and bound to God like the flame that is bound to the hot coal."¹⁴⁹

This brief consideration of Abner/Alfonso's statements on determinism in the *Mostrador* shows that he expresses a similar position there to what scholars have taken as his definitive statement on the subject in the *Minhat Qenaot*, but that he pays particular attention to the way this view intersects with his understanding of the Trinity. Abner/Alfonso does not cite many Jewish philosophical authors on the subject of determinism, but draws most of his philosophical support from statements he attributes to Muslim authors such as Al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd (on Abner/Alfonso's citation of Arabic sources, see supplement chapter two and appendix 3). Abner/Alfonso's one reference to Bahya Ibn Paquda in the *Mostrador* (he mentions him more in the *Minhat Qenaot*), as well as the accompanying single references to Neoplatonists such as Isaac

¹⁴⁸ "...ca dél es echado sobre todo omne para escoger en el bien e en la gloria perdurable para él e para su simiente [e] para sus parientes...E non deve ffincar omne dubdoso en esta grand rrayz, ca non es de las cosas que se pueden perdonar" (184v/2: 98-99).

¹⁴⁹ "Todas las especies e los individuos del mundo atados e ligados en Dios como la flama que es atada a la brasa" (122v/1: 234). The image of the fire joined to the coal is found in *Sefer Yezirah* 1.7. See below, n. 191.

Israeli and Joseph Ibn Zaddik (111v/1: 211-212, cited above), fit within his discussion of the nature of the cosmos and the oneness of the universe, and thus relate, at least indirectly, to his argument about determinism and God's eternal knowledge of particulars. The same can be said for Abner/Alfonso's few references to Ibn Gabirol, although the link of all of these references to determinism is only through the particular terms of Abner/Alfonso's discussion of the cosmos itself.

Abner/Alfonso also finds support for his determinist views in what is one of the most abundant and important sources in the *Mostrador*, Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*, which Abner/Alfonso naturally read in Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation.¹⁵⁰ The subject of Abner/Alfonso's use of Maimonides as a determinist thinker has been discussed by a number of critics, although not in reference to the *Mostrador*.¹⁵¹ Even in Abner/Alfonso's time, Moses Narboni refuted his determinism with arguments similar to those found in his commentary on the *Guide* (Hayoun, "L'Épître du Libre Arbitre" 154 n. 16ff). More recently, Baer argued that Abner/Alfonso distorted ("mehapekh") Maimonides in his *Minhat Qenaot* by attributing determinist ideas to him and invoking him as an authoritative source ("Sefer *Minhat Qenaot* of Abner of Burgos" [Hebrew] 196). Gershenzon has defended Abner/Alfonso, claiming that "Abner's argument, far from being disingenuous, is a painstaking structure, based on thorough study of Maimonides' works and a strong conviction as to their intent" ("The View of Maimonides as a Determinist" 93). As she shows, Abner/Alfonso does not ever doubt that Maimonides was a determinist thinker

¹⁵⁰ Abner/Alfonso mentions Samuel Ibn Tibbon by name in both the *Mostrador* (132v/1: 255), possibly referring to his *Perush ha-milim ha-zarot* on the meaning of "rizzpah (Is. 6:6), and he mentions him repeatedly in the *Minhat Qenaot*.

¹⁵¹ Krygier, *À la limite de Dieu*, 63-137 and Ludwig Stein, *Die Willensfreiheit* 57-103 both offer detailed treatments of Maimonides' thought in comparison to other authors. Recently, Lenn E. Goodman has written a very concise treatment in *Jewish and Islamic Philosophy. Crosspollinations in the Classic Age* 146-200.

and does not feel the need in any of his works to prove this fact, but instead invokes his ideas as authoritative support for his own determinism. In the *Minḥat*, the central passages which Abner/Alfonso employs to this end include the introduction to the *Guide*, as well as 1:72 and 3:17-20, and these same sections play an important role in the *Mostrador*. For example, Maimonides' argument in 1:72 that "this whole of being is one individual and nothing else" (184) bears much resemblance to Abner/Alfonso's argument that divine foreknowledge is a consequence of the absolute unity of the cosmos. He states,

Maimonides wrote that it should be understood that all the world together is one thing. This is a useful argument to prove that the Creator is one. With this understanding it is proved that the one only created one, and that the Creator effects the individual works in the world, as he brings about all the world as one...¹⁵²

There are other similar passages in which Abner/Alfonso's statements clearly derive from Maimonides' ideas in the *Guide*, even if Maimonides is not cited by name. For example, Abner/Alfonso's statement, cited above, that it is wrong to think "that God knows generalities and the species in terms of their universal material but does not know individuals, (228r/2: 193) resembles Maimonides' statement in 3:18 of the *Guide* that "It would not be proper for us to say that providence watches over the species and not the individuals (476). Likewise, Abner/Alfonso's statements that "although the thing known

¹⁵² "E assi escrivió Rrabi Mosse el Egipciano que conviene a entender que todo el mundo en uno es una cosa, e ésta es rrazon mucha aprovechable para provar que el Criador [es uno] e que con este entendimiento se provará que el uno non crio sinon uno, e que el Criador obra los individuos de las obras que sson en el mundo, como obra a todo el mundo en uno" (86r/1: 161).

from the outside moves, God's knowledge of it does not change"¹⁵³ and that "all things and the order of their being, one after the other, are known and understood [by God] all at once"¹⁵⁴ resembles Maimonides' statement in 3:20 that God's "insights do not differ because of the difference of the things known, as is the case in respect to us. Similarly we say that He has known all the things that are produced anew before they have come about and that He has known them perpetually" (480). In these passages, Abner/Alfonso does not directly name Maimonides as he does in other places (in one of these citations, he refers to Al-Ghazālī instead), but his dependence on the discussion of free will and determinism in 3:17-20 of the *Guide* is very apparent.

This philosophical use of Maimonides, similar to his invocation of Maimonides as a determinist in the *Minhat Qenaot*, is not the only use of him in the *Mostrador*. Examination of all of his explicit references to Maimonides shows that other passages from the *Guide* (besides those determinist passages mentioned above) play a more important role in Abner/Alfonso's arguments, as do a number of key citations from the *Mishneh Torah*. One passage that is of particular importance for Abner/Alfonso's subject in the *Mostrador* (281r and 291v) and which also appears in the *Teshuvot* (49r/79ra), is from the *Mishneh Torah*, *Shofetim* (Judges), XI-XII, in which Maimonides discusses the Messiah, the nature of his action in the world, and the signs of his arrival. Not surprisingly, there are also at least four references in the *Mostrador* to Maimonides' ideas on messianism from the *Letter to Yemen*, some which reappear in later writing such as the second polemical letter.

¹⁵³ "...ca maguera que sse demude la cosa sabida de fuera, non se muda el saber de Dios a ella" (139r/1: 268).

¹⁵⁴ "Ca todas las cosas e el ordenamiento de ssu ser, unas despues dotras, sson conocidas e ssabidas a Dios en un tajamiento" (227v/2: 192).

(Rosenthal 493/Vat. MS 6423 96rb). In this sense, Abner/Alfonso's use of Maimonides in the *Mostrador* bears more similarity to that in the *Teshuvot* than in the *Minḥat*, a fact that is not surprising given the messianic rather than philosophical focus of his work. Although he does include philosophical discussion in the *Mostrador*, it is always blended with messianic speculation and polemical argument, and as such it appears less explicitly philosophical than arguments made in the *Minḥat*. Despite this, we can discern a sophisticated philosophical understanding of existence, one which belies any one-dimensional or unsympathetic caricature of Abner/Alfonso (such as that of Baer) as a merciless polemicist with no real interest in the ideas he used for his polemics. As Gershenzon asserts, "Abner's interpretation fully deserves the attention devoted, let us say, to other 13th and 14th century commentaries on the *Guide [of the Perplexed]*" ("The View of Maimonides as a Determinist" 93). This reminds us that despite the fact that all polemical arguments, Abner/Alfonso's no less than any other, are by their nature compromised by the agenda of the polemical endeavor, such arguments are by no means devoid of complex philosophical thinking and, in Abner/Alfonso's case, formidable rhetorical strategizing.

Gershenzon is right to assert that Abner/Alfonso should be considered alongside other commentators of the *Guide* because he himself was familiar with such works and makes occasional reference to them. In the *Minḥat*, for example, he names "Rrabi Calonimos", who he says authored a book entitled "Ministrador de Moysen" "in which he set out to understand the sayings of Maimonides."¹⁵⁵ Although Abner/Alfonso does

¹⁵⁵ "...en lo que cuydó entender de los dichos de rrabi Mosse el Egipciano" (40vb/77). This work refers to the *Mesharet Moshéh* attributed to "Kalonymus", whose identity is not certain but may be Kalonymos ben Kalonymos. See the edition of this work by J. Goldenthal.

not mention him by name, there are clues that point to the influence of the commentary on the *Guide* by Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, on the *Mostrador*. Our consideration of Abner/Alfonso's Arabic citations led us to suggest the influence of philosophical encyclopedias such as those of Ibn Falaquera's (although this suggestion requires a more detailed consideration), and the influence of Ibn Falaquera's *Moreh* seems even more likely. One striking parallel between the *Moreh ha-Moreh* and the *Mostrador* is that each section of the Falaquera's work begins "amar morenu", "our teacher said" while each paragraph of the *Mostrador* begins either "Dixo el Mostrador" or "Dixo el Rrebelle", a translation of what was, in the original text, very likely "amar ha-moreh" ("the teacher said") and "amar ha-mored" ("the Rebel said"), respectively. Even more importantly, a number of the details that Abner/Alfonso adds to his citations to Maimonides can be found in Ibn Falaquera's commentary on the same passages. One possible comparison might be Abner/Alfonso's discussion of the *Guide* 1:70, in which Maimonides discusses created souls in the *Arabot*, or highest heaven. Ibn Falaquera's discussion in the *Moreh ha-Moreh* (169-70) raises a number of philosophical issues not present in Maimonides, and these issues resemble in part the philosophical slant that Abner/Alfonso gives to this issue in the *Mostrador* (228r/2:192-3). To confirm for certain that Abner/Alfonso used Ibn Falaquera's commentary in such instances would require the daunting task of comparing each of Abner/Alfonso's citations of Maimonides with parallel passages in the *Moreh ha-Moreh*. Generally speaking, however, the importance of Falaquera's presentation of the *Guide* on thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Hebrew philosophy makes it hard to fathom how Abner/Alfonso, who turned so frequently to the

Guide in his *Mostrador* as well as in his other works, could have not drawn from his predecessor's commentaries.

Although Abner/Alfonso both drew from philosophical sources and influenced later ones, his relationship to philosophy is a peculiar and problematic one, and itself cannot be separated from Abner/Alfonso's equally uneasy relationship with Jewish mystical thought. Moshe Lazar asserts that Abner/Alfonso "was certainly acquainted with the kabbalistic writings that were circulating in his area and in Catalonia as can be noticed in various sections of his *Mostrador de justicia*, but nevertheless kept himself at a distance from both Maimonides and his followers as well as from his contemporary kabbalists" (124). While we have already considered evidence that belies this statement regarding Abner/Alfonso's "distance" from Maimonides, it is true that Abner/Alfonso shows an ambivalent attitude toward mystical thought, more ambivalent than has been claimed previously.

Numerous critics have addressed this issue. Baer asserted a certain influence of Kabbalistic thought on Abner/Alfonso's ideas, stating

the Cabala was particularly helpful to him in his search. There can be no doubt than the streams of mystical thought then meandering through Spanish Jewry had a decisive influence upon Abner's thinking...Abner began with a critique of the rationalist interpretation of Judaism, cultivated by the Jewish intellectuals who were his friends—and for this he found ample support in cabalistic doctrine...” (*A History* 1: 335).

In an article he devoted to the subject (“The Kabbalistic Doctrine in the Christological Teaching of Abner of Burgos.” [Hebrew]), Baer specifically focuses on the *Teshuvot la-*

Meharef, and briefly considers the *Mostrador* in his conclusion.¹⁵⁶ Alfonso's description of the Trinity as wisdom (ḥokhmah), understanding (tevhunah), and knowledge (da'at), terms represented, he says, in the three letters for the Hebrew term for "truth" (Emet, or אמת), are parallel to the other Kabbalistic terms *sekhel*, *maskil*, and *muskal*. Gershom Scholem, who was influenced by Baer on this point, also notes Abner/Alfonso's use of Kabbalistic sources, especially trinitarian ideas of Joseph Chikitilla ("Zur Geschichte der Anfänge der christlichen Kabbala" 174-5). Gershenzon considers Abner/Alfonso's ideas about the Trinity in chapter four of her study of the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, in studying the transmission of such ideas, she focuses specifically on two Midrashim, *Midrash Tehillim* 50:1 (on Psalms) and *Shemot Rabbah* 29:1 (on Exodus), both of which discuss the name of God, "Elohim." Gershenzon's findings expand upon Scholem's earlier findings. Jeff Diamond ("El tema de la Trinidad en el *Libro de la ley* de Alfonso de Valladolid") and Harvey Hames (*The Art of Conversion* 262-65) have followed Gershenzon's argument in considering Abner/Alfonso's Castilian texts, and Hames has pointed to Abner/Alfonso's use of the Midrash on Psalms in the *Mostrador* and *Libro de la ley*.¹⁵⁷ Sainz de la Maza, following Gershenzon, concedes the influence of Kabbalistic ideas on Alfonso's exegetical method (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 318-19) and Daniel Lasker follows this same line of argument (*Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 64), as does Wirszubski, in his study of Pico della

¹⁵⁶ The bulk of his article constitutes an annotated transcription of the text of the *Teshuvot*, MS Parma 2440/De Rossi 533 15v-20v, with his own commentary included in the notes. He focuses specifically on Kabbalistic thought in the *Mostrador* on p. 287-89.

¹⁵⁷ See Lasker's discussion of this concept in *Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 64, 78 and 102. Although Hames only comments on Psalms 50:1, both Midrashim, from *Midrash Tehillim* 50:1 and from *Shemot Rabbah* 29:1 (as well as the similar verse from *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:8), are found in the first chapter of book three of the *Mostrador*, which includes a long discourse by the Teacher on why a new law was to replace the original law given by God. The discussion of these Midrashim on 86v/1: 162 and 75r-v/1: 139-40, respectively, is very close to that found in the *Mostrador*.

Mirandola. Jonathon Hecht, however, specifically considering the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, takes up the question of Kabbalistic influences in Appendix 2 to his doctoral dissertation, and argues that the Kabbalistic influence on Abner was overstated by Baer and his followers (471-9). Despite Hecht's conclusions, however, a consideration of the question in the *Mostrador* has only been undertaken—and not exhaustively—by Baer, and given the wealth of material cited in the *Mostrador* not yet considered, the question of Abner/Alfonso's Kabbalistic interests in light of material in the *Mostrador* remains open to further inquiry.¹⁵⁸

There are a number of key passages in the *Mostrador* in which Abner/Alfonso mentions Kabblah and Kabbalists directly. For example, in paragraph one of chapter three, Abner/Alfonso refers directly to “Kabbalists” numerous times, stating in one instance that “the group that is called ‘Kabbalists’ asserts plurality in God based on the verse of Exodus [11:15] and also in Genesis [9:6].”¹⁵⁹ He makes a similar statement in chapter five, paragraph two, in which he cites Kabbalists alongside “friars called Sufis among the Moors”,¹⁶⁰ stating “also the group called Kabbalists...says that God is ten in number, although he is one in substance.”¹⁶¹ In his discussion of the Trinity, he affirms that “the Kabbalists say that these three names, “I”, “him”, and “you” contain the

¹⁵⁸ Vajda's observation that “Le Kabbaliste Abner, maintes fois cité par Isaac d'Acco dans son *Me'irat Enayim*, çà et là avec l'épithète *hāsīd* (“pieux”), est sans aucun doute un personnage différent” (*Isaac Albalag* 276 n. 1) is called into question by Gershenzon's proof of later use of Abner/Alfonso's writings in Kabbalistic circles without knowledge of his identity (“A Tale of Two Midrashim”).

¹⁵⁹ “Otrossi la companna que sse nonbra *mecubalim* arriman pluralidat en Dios por el viesso que dize en “Esodo”...e assi por otro viesso que dize en el “Genesi”...” (88v/1:165).

¹⁶⁰ “...frayres que son dichos *çaffin* entre los moros.” (117v-118r/1: 223-4).

¹⁶¹ “E otrossi la companna que sse llaman *mecubalim* otorgan esto en lo que dizen que Dios que es diez cuentos, maguera que es uno en sustancia” (118r/1:224).

divinity,” a statement he repeats in the *Teshuvot*.¹⁶² In most places where he mentions the Kabbalists, he names “the ten counts held by the Kabbalists,”¹⁶³ a reference to the Kabbalistic understanding of the ten *sefirot* or levels (sometimes referred to as spheres) of divine emanation in which the mystical nature of the Godhead “resides” and “moves.”¹⁶⁴ Such references are significant, especially because the lack of any explicit mention of the *sefirot* in the *Teshuvot* was the basis of one of Hecht’s arguments against seeing a Kabbalistic influence in that work.

The ten Kabbalistic *sefirot* appear in a passage at the end of the *Mostrador*, in which the Teacher lists the many different beliefs that he believes keep Jews from unified belief. Alongside schismatic groups such as the Karaites/“Sadducees” (discussed above), he states that “there are other [Jews], who are called Kabbalists, who believe there are ten persons in God, and others of them who believe in two gods, master and his disciple, who is called Metatron.”¹⁶⁵ Here we see not only Abner/Alfonso’s familiarity with Kabbalistic thought, but with more traditional mystical ideas in Judaism relating to the glory of God, especially the descriptions of God’s throne-chariot (*merkabah*) in the book of Ezekiel and the descriptions, in Scholem’s words, “of the *hekhhaloth*, the heavenly halls of palaces

¹⁶² “E asi dizen los *mecubalim* que estos tres nombres “yo” e “él” e “tú” encierran la divinidad” (119r/1: 226). Cf. *Teshuvot* 22r/50rb. See also Scholem, “Zur Geschichte der Anfänge der christlichen Kabbala” 175 nn. 2-3.

¹⁶³ “los diez cuentos que tienen los *mecubalim*” (135v/1: 261).

¹⁶⁴ In Scholem’s words, “the divine life is expressed in ten steps or levels, which both conceal and reveal Him. It flows out and animates Creation; but at the same time it remains deep inside. The secret rhythm of its movement and pulse beat is the law of all Creation. As the divine life reveals itself—that is, becomes manifest through its actions on the various levels of divine emanation—it assumes a different shape on each level or, speaking theologically, appears in different attributes. In its totality the individual elements of the life process of God are unfolded yet constitute a unity (the unity of God revealing Himself); together they are the shape of the Godhead” (*On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* 39).

¹⁶⁵ “Ay otros dellos, que sson llamados *mecubalim* que creen diez personas en Dios; e ay otros dellos que creen dos dioses: maestro, e ssu diciplo, que a nonbre Mitatron” (328v/2: 420).

through which the visionary passes and in the seventh and last of which there rises the throne of divine glory” (*Major Trends* 45). In one of the traditions of *Hekhalot* literature, the cobbler Enoch is brought to heaven and ushered in to God on his throne, and after being given hermetic knowledge of heaven and earth, is transformed into the archangel Metatron. According to B.T. *Hagigah* 15a and in other *Hekhalot* literature, the sage Elisha ben Avuya saw Metatron “sitting” in heaven and, based on the tradition that no one but God is allowed to sit in heaven, he concluded that there must be two divine powers instead of one. (It is for this reason that he is called “Elisha the Heretic” in later tradition.)¹⁶⁶ Abner/Alfonso recounts this Aggadah in chapter three, paragraph one, in the midst of his discussion of Kabbalistic thought (89r/1:166), and connects the dual understanding of Elisha’s vision with a Trinitarian expression of the relationship between Father and Son. He claims that “that possibility and multiplicity in the substance of God could only have been said about Metatron, he who has a nature like his Lord. He is the one that the Christians call “Son” because he is the messenger and worker of particular works,”¹⁶⁷ but he still maintains that Elisha’s real heresy was not in ascribing duality to God, but in failing to see the true triune nature of the creator in the Trinity.

Abner/Alfonso’s interest in arguments from *Hekhalot* and *Merkhabah* literature, filtered through latter Kabbalist appropriations of these ideas, can be seen not only in his discussion of Metatron and his place in the Christian Trinity, but also in his explicit

¹⁶⁶ On Metatron’s name, see the essay by Saul Lieberman, “Metatron, the meaning of his name and his functions” appended to Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 235-41, as well as Gruenwald’s own discussion on 195-206. Baer discusses Abner/Alfonso’s naming of Metatron in “Abner aus Burgos” (1929), 33.

¹⁶⁷ “...non era aquel quedar e aquella possibilidat nin aquel amuchiguamiento en la sustancia de Dios sinon por parte de Mitatron, el que a natura como su sennor, e aquel es el que llaman los christianos de persona de Ffijo. Ca porque él es messagero e obrador de las obras particulares” (89r/1:166).

attention to discussion of the divine chariot and the nature of the *Hayyot* (living creatures) in the first book of Ezekiel (122r-126v/1: 232-242) and in his mention of works from the *Hekalot* tradition such as the *Pirkei Heikhalot*,¹⁶⁸ the *Perek Shirah* and the *Shiur Qomah* (17r/1:22 and 85r-v/1:159-160).¹⁶⁹ In connection with the latter, Abner/Alfonso mentions essential concepts of Kabbalistic developments of earlier mystical traditions, such as the “measure of the body of God” (“mesura del estado de Dios”), the Tetragrammaton, and the *Shekhinah* (God’s immanence in the world).¹⁷⁰ In his discussion of the Tetragrammaton, Abner/Alfonso also brings in the numerological ideas of Abraham Ibn Ezra from the *Sefer yesod Mora ve-Sod ha-Torah* (*Book on the Foundation of Awe and the Secret of the Torah*), in which Ibn Ezra discusses the implications of the letters of God’s name. In one long passage, considered in part above, Abner/Alfonso interprets the mystical content in Ibn Ezra’s geometrical interpretation of the letters of the Tetragrammaton. The rest of the citation shows Abner/Alfonso quickly moves from geometrical speculation about the point, line, and surface of the letter, to mystical speculation on the nature of God:

¹⁶⁸ Abner/Alfonso’s one citation of this work (repeated in the *Teshuvot*) derives, in all likelihood from the *Vikuah* of Nahmanides, in which he gives the same citation (*Kitvei* 1:310/Maccoby 117).

¹⁶⁹ Abner/Alfonso also mentions these works in the *Libro de la ley* and the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*. See n. 121, below. On the *Shiur Qomah*, See Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 213-17.

¹⁷⁰ Scholem notes that Abner/Alfonso’s rabbinic conception of the *Schekhinah* is blended with Ibn Ezra’s more speculative ideas: “Alfonso hat in langen Erörterungen die Inkarnationslehre in jüdische Quellen hineinzudeuten gesucht, wobei ihm nicht nur die rabinische Konzeption der Schechinah und die jüdisch-gnostischen Fragmente über das *Schi’ur Komah*, das “Mass des Körpers” (der Gottheit) dienten sondern auch grade die philosophische Umdeutung solcher Vorstellungen bei spekulativen Köpfen wie Abraham ibn Ezra” (“Zur Geschichte der Anfänge der christlichen Kabbala”174).

The sage Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra wrote that for this reason the name of God was of three letters, to show a body in three dimensions¹⁷¹ ...and this is among the great hidden secrets held by that sage, namely the being of the body approximated and was like a proposed subject of God, and in this God is called in Hebrew *Shekhinah* (dwelling) and *maon* (place) and *makom*, which means dwelling or place. And so He is called “dwelling of the Cherubs” and *Elohim and Zevaot*. [Ibn Ezra] said that this was the intention of the book they composed about the measure of the body of God [i.e. the *Shiur Qomah*], according to which Rabbi Ishmael said that everyone who knows the measure of the creator of the world, he will surely gain the next world...this is the foundation of the faith of the Kabbalah, which a group of some Jews who are called “Kabbalists” believe, as it is proved by some of their books...and about this argument the book of the *Perek Shirah* was composed...¹⁷²

It is clear from passages like these that Abner/Alfonso’s particular strand of pseudo-mystical thought drew from an eclectic blend of ideas from contemporary and traditional mystical or esoteric sources. Although he does show familiarity with certain key texts from

¹⁷¹ For a more detailed discussion of the rest of this passage in light of its mathematical concepts, see the discussion of scientific and mathematical sources in n.133, above.

¹⁷² “E el ssabio Rrabi Abraham ben Ezra escrivió que por esso era el nonbre de Dios de tres letras, por mostrar cuerpo de tres dimensiones; e que ssus figuras son *Yod He Vav He*, segund el escripto ebrayco, como punto e linna e superfficion, que sson las estremidades que terminan el cuerpo...E esto es de las grandes poridades encubiertas que tenia aquel ssabio, quiere dezir en sseer el cuerpo [sic] allegado e como ssubjecto proposito a Dios, e que por esta parte es Dios llamado en el abrayco *ssequina (habitaculo) e mohon (locus) e macom*, que quiere dezir morada e logar. E assi es dicho “Morador de los Cherubin” e *Elohim e Ssabaot*. E dixo que ésta ffuera la entencion en el libro que conpusieron en la mesura del estado de Dios, ssegund que dixo Rrabi Ismael que todo qui sabe la mesura del Criador del mundo, ssegura sserá que abrá el otro mundo...e esto es la rrayz de la ffe de la “Cabala”que tienen la companna de algunos judios que sse nonbran *mecubalim*, segunt sse prueba por ssus libros dellos...E ssobresta rrazon fue conpuesto el libro que a nonbre *Perec Ssira*...” (85r-v/1:159). Cf. the nearly identical passage in the *Teshuvot* (22v-23r/51ra-rb), which lacks the explicit statement that this is the “foundation of the faith of the Kabbalah” and jumps directly to the mention of the *Perek Shirah*. An abbreviated version is also found in the *Libro de la ley*, 10v.

Kabbalistic thought (although not to any great degree, as we will see, the *Zohar*), his knowledge is superficial and rejects mystical thinking as much as it accepts and invokes it.

The first actual work of this ilk that Abner/Alfonso refers to is *Sefer Yezirah* (12v/1:14),¹⁷³ mentioned at the very beginning of the text in the introductory conversion narrative. There are examples of images and language in the text that seem to derive from the *Sefer Yezirah*, even where Abner/Alfonso does not cite it explicitly, such as the statement (mentioned above) that “all the species and individuals of the world are tied and bound to God like the flame that is bound to the hot coal”,¹⁷⁴ an image that is taken from *Sefer Yezirah* 1.7. Abner/Alfonso’s statement at the beginning of the text mimics the *Sefer* in its interpretive arrangement and rearrangement of letters with his own creative analysis of the Hebrew word *Emet*, made up of the three letters *aleph*, *mem*, and *tav*. Following the statement in *Sefer Yezirah* that “three stones build six houses”, he divides the three letters of *Emet* into six possibilities, in which he then sees various images connected with Christianity.¹⁷⁵ There are contemporary commentaries on the *Sefer Yezirah* that make similar extrapolations on the basis of the letters of the word *emet*, and one can assume that Abner/Alfonso based his own Christological explication on a commentary of this sort.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ For a brief discussion of Abner/Alfonso’s use of this work, see also supplement chapter 2, n.15.

¹⁷⁴ “Todas las especias e los individuos del mundo atados e ligados en Dios como la flama que es atada a la brasa” (122v/1: 234).

¹⁷⁵ In “Et” (aleph and tav), he sees “plurality”, in “em” (mother) he sees Mary, in “Met” (death) he sees the crucifixion, in “ta” (which he claims means “estela” (column) rather than “compartment”) he sees the cross and in “tam” (wholeness) he sees that Jesus was healthy and whole after his bodily death. He finds the statement from *Sefer Yezirah* appropriate even though, as he admits, “Ma” (with an aleph) does not mean anything in Hebrew. (12r/1:14).

¹⁷⁶ Scholem notes a few such traditions in his discussion of traditions relating to the Golem. In a number of commentaries on the *Sefer Yezirah*, the word “emet” is imprinted on the forehead of a man “created by means of” the *Sefer Yezirah*. When the letter aleph was erased from the word, the man had to die. (*On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism* 178-80).

One of the points that Hecht adduces to support the argument that Kabbalistic ideas played a lesser role in the *Teshuvot* than claimed by previous critics like Baer and Gershenzon was that “Abner/Alfonso does not quote directly from any Jewish mystical work, nor does he ever specifically mention the central idea of thirteenth-century kabbalah, the Sefirot” (472-73). We have seen that Abner/Alfonso does in fact refer to the *sefirot*, which he calls “the ten counts which the Kabbalists believe in” (“los diez cuentos que tienen los *mecubalim*” 135v/1: 261), at various places in the *Mostrador*. The argument concerning the dearth of direct citations from mystical work, however, is a valid point for the *Mostrador* as it is for the *Teshuvot*. Although Abner/Alfonso does mention the *Perek Shirah* and, more importantly, the *Shiur Qomah*, (as he does in the *Teshuvot*), still his reference to the latter could be attributed to his citation of book twelve of Ibn Ezra’s *Yesod Mora* (See Hecht, 178 n. 420). Abner/Alfonso’s citation of the *Sefer Yezirah* is certainly significant, but his discussion does not show any specific evidence, beyond his mention of the *sefirot*, that he followed later Kabbalistic extrapolations based on this work. Abner/Alfonso was very clearly familiar with certain traditional mystical ideas in Judaism that found expression in works of *Hekhalot* literature, but it is not at all clear, based on the *Mostrador*, that he knew of very many specific works of Kabbalistic thought that developed in his midst in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century northern Castile.

In his very brief conclusion to his commentary on the Kabbalistic elements in the *Teshuvot*, Baer argues that certain proof of Kabbalistic thought can be found in paragraph one of chapter three of the *Mostrador*. There, he pays special attention to the following passage:

It says in the Talmud of Jerusalem about the verse in Genesis, “And Jacob called unto his sons, and said: “Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the end of days” [49:1], that Jacob...said “Perhaps there is a fault or a sin among my children, like [there was for] Abraham, my grandfather, from whom came Ishmael, or like [there was for] Isaac, my father, from whom came Esau.” They all responded and said, “Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Just as you do not have but one God in your heart, so we do not have in our hearts but one God.” The old man replied “Blessed be the name of the honor [or glory] of his reign forever and ever.”¹⁷⁷

Baer points out that this statement can be found in T.B. *Pesachim* 56a, and not in the Jerusalem Talmud. He argues that Abner/Alfonso’s explanation of Jacob’s final statement to his sons (79r-v/1: 147), “Blessed be the name of the honor of his reign forever and ever” (“Barukh shem kavod malkhuto le-olam va-ed”), was a phrase used in some contemporary Kabbalistic works (he gives the example of the fifteenth-century *Sefer ha-Kanah* in recounting this passage from the Talmud. He concludes, “there is no doubt that the Christological explanation of ‘Barukh shem kavod melkhuto le-olam va-ed’ derives from a mystical text in the manner of the Kabbalists” (“The Kabbalistic Doctrine” [Hebrew] 289).

Although we must be careful not to automatically describe as “Kabbalistic” certain ideas that came to be associated with Kabbalistic thinking but that in their earlier

¹⁷⁷ “E esto es que dize en el “Talmud de Jherusalem” ssobrel viesso que dize en el “Genesi”: “Llamó Jacob a ssus fijos e díxoles: allegatvos aca, e departirvos-he lo que vos contegrá en la postrimeria de los dias”, que quiso Jacob descubrir a sus fijos la ffin e dixo, “Quiça que a mingua e peccado en mis fijos, como Abraham, mi avuelo, que sallió dende Ysmael, e como Ysach, mi padre, que sallió dende Esau.” Rrespondieron todos e dixieron: “Escucha, Isrrael, Domino nuestro Dios, Domino uno. Assi como non tienes tú en tu coraçon ssinon un Dios, assi nos non tenemos en nuestros coraçones ssinon un Dios.” Rrespondió el viejo e dixo: “Bendicho el nonbre de la onrra del su rregno para sienpre jamas” (78r/1:145-46).

form had a less certain identity within Jewish thought, Baer's claim is supported by a careful reading of other passages of the Castilian text. The citation analyzed by Baer is given by Abner/Alfonso in the text as taken from the "Talmud de Jherusalem", which Baer says is an error for T.B. *Pesakhim* 56a. This conclusion takes the Castilian text at face value, but a close look at similar citations reveals that this may actually have been, in the original Hebrew of the *Moreh Zedek*, a reference to a Kabbalistic work, which had been obscured by the Castilian translation. To see how this is so, it is necessary to look at Abner/Alfonso's other citations of the *Talmud Yerushalmi*. Elsewhere in his Castilian works and in the *Mostrador*, Abner/Alfonso cites variously "Jerussalmi" or "Gerussalmi" as well as the "Talmud de Jerusalem", "Talmud gerusalmi" and "la transladaçion de Jerusalmi". Mettmann has indexed all those citations that mention the Talmud ("Talmud de Jerusalem", "Talmud gerusalmi") as the Jerusalem Talmud and those that do not actually say "talmud de Jherusalem" he has indexed as the *Zohar*. He argues that the *Zohar*, the most important and representative work from the medieval Kabbalistic tradition, was referred to as "Yerushalmi" in some early Kabbalistic texts.¹⁷⁸ I have been unable to find any of Abner/Alfonso's *Yerushalmi* citations in the *Zohar*, although some (102r, 220v, 244r, 282r) can indeed be found in the Jerusalem Talmud even though they are not called "Talmud gerusalmi" but simply "Jerussalmi." Moreover, in one instance when the Castilian text actually does name the "Talmud de Jherusalem" (158v/2: 42), the citation is actually from the *Targum Jonathan* (which, as we explained above, was sometimes accidentally called "Yerushalmi", resulting from a confusion with the Targum Yerushalmi). These seem like insignificant details, but we can deduce from them that all

¹⁷⁸ In fact, it was the *Bahir*, the most important Kabbalistic work before the *Zohar*, that was occasionally named as the *yerushalmi*. On this, see Scholem, *The Origins of the Kabbalah*, 40-41 n. 68.

of these sources (Talmud, Targum, possible Kabbalistic works) were mentioned in the original Hebrew of the *Mostrador* simply as “Yerushalmi” (ירושלמי) and was translated differently according to the context. When Baer read the reference to “Talmud de Jherusalem” at face value, he simply concluded that his text was wrongly attributed to the Palestinian Talmud instead of correctly, in his view, to the Babylonian Talmud. Nevertheless, the statement “Blessed be the name of the glory of his reign forever”, of which Baer makes so much can be found not only in the Babylonian Talmud but in the *Bahir* and *Zohar* as well. What Baer responds to may simply be an inappropriate translation of the original “Yerushalmi”, which in this form may have very correctly referred to an early Kabbalistic work such as the *Sefer Bahir*, which was occasionally called *Yerushalmi*.¹⁷⁹ More importantly, Mettmann’s attribution of all of the “yerushalmi” citations to the *Zohar* is, in this context, extremely problematic, especially given that the only other possible fact that points towards any knowledge of the *Zohar* is Abner/Alfonso’s one reference to its author, Moses of Leon. In this reference, however, Abner/Alfonso does not mention Moses’ Kabbalistic work or ideas, but cites instead a (now-lost) “letter that he composed to argue against the Karaites”,¹⁸⁰ otherwise remaining silent on Moses and his works. Based on all of this information, it seems fair to conclude that, despite Abner/Alfonso’s general knowledge and use of key Kabbalistic ideas such as the *Shekhinah*, the *sefirot*, and the mystical aspects of the divine name, Abner/Alfonso

¹⁷⁹ As we mentioned above, the *Targum Jonathan* was often confused in the later Middle Ages with *Targum Yerushalmi*. To confuse matters, there is a passage found only in the Castilian version of the *Teshuvot*, which cites as “Jerussalmi” (56rb) what is cited in the *Mostrador* as *Genesis Rabbah* (106v). The implication for the passage on 158v, however, is that the cited text must have been mentioned as “yerushalmi” and not “talmud yerushalmi” in the original text, suggesting that the alternating term of “Jerushalmi” and “Talmud de Jherusalem” in the *Mostrador* and in the *Teshuvot* was in all likelihood a variation inserted during translation, the original texts simply reading “yerushalmi.”

¹⁸⁰ “...la epistola que conpuso para contradezir a los çaduços” (330r/2:422).

probably gleaned these ideas from the early Kabbalistic sources available to him but was unaware, at least in the 1320s when he wrote the *Mostrador*, of the *Zohar* itself. Although such Kabbalistic ideas do form an important part of some his concepts of the Trinity and the incarnation, they are by no means the most influential or important sources for Abner/Alfonso in the *Mostrador*. Hecht's conclusions about the *Teshuvot* can be somewhat attenuated by considering the evidence of the *Mostrador* which does show Abner/Alfonso's familiarity with Kabbalah, but he is right to question the real importance of Kabbalistic ideas for Abner/Alfonso's overall polemic. A much fuller study of all of Abner/Alfonso's works together would be still necessary to realistically assess the extent of the importance of Kabbalistic ideas in his writing, but based on our overview of the material from the *Mostrador*, we can confirm Hecht's assertions about the *Teshuvot* for the *Mostrador*, and conclude that Jewish mysticism was not as essential to his argument as rabbinic literature and Aristotelian philosophy.

We can also reiterate Abner/Alfonso's patent ambivalence about esoteric and mystical sources and arguments. This ambivalence is evident above all in a passage found in the final folia of the work, in which the Teacher makes a string of accusations against the Jews and accuses them, among other things, of belief in various kinds of occult magic, in which he includes astrology. For each kind of occult practice described by Abner/Alfonso, I have suggested the modern equivalent in brackets:

The Jews are those in whom sins and evil deeds are concentrated, as we have said, insofar as there are found among them lot-casters and fortune tellers and diviners and hexers and those who inquire into dreams and the dead and backs ["scapulomancy"] and hands and fig leaves and birds and sneezes

[“sternutomancy”] and fences [“saepimancy”?] and lots and necromancy and astrology and divination by means oil, eggs, fingernails, crystals, candles, urine, and mirrors. And they make images and amulets and tie and untie [knots, i.e. “ḥover ḥavarim”] and have many other kinds of curses and tricks and bad customs, which are not found among Christians or Moors, who believe in Christ in some way...¹⁸¹

It is interesting to note the many internal contradictions generated by these accusations, given that Abner/Alfonso himself, at the beginning of the *Mostrador* justifies his conversion (and even his entire polemical authority) on his own dream interpretation. This condemnation also goes against what seems to be a defense of astrology in the *Minḥat Qenaot/Ofrenda de Zelos*, written, as Abner/Alfonso says, in response to Isaac Pulgar’s *Behakḥashat ha-Iztagminut* (“Libro de negar e desmentir la astrologia”, *Minḥat* lva-vb/15). The specific references to physiognomy and chiromancy within *Merkavah* mysticism also relate directly to later medieval interpretations of *Shiur Qomah*, which Abner/Alfonso himself cites as a source from which he draws his own “secrets” (17r/85r). Abner/Alfonso’s ambivalence over mystical and occult practices and sources seems even more pronounced than the more general ambivalence generated by using such a wide

¹⁸¹ “E assi los judios sson gente para en que sse ayunten los peccados e las maliçias, como ya dixiemos, enquanto sson fallados en ellos ssorteadores e agoreros e mano e en el ffigado e en las aves e en los estornudos e en çercos e en suertes e en negromançia e en astrologia e en diablos de olios e en diablos de huevos e en la unna e en el christal e en la candela e en el orinal e en el espejo. E fazen ymagenes e caractaras e ligamientos e ssoltamientos e otras muchas maneras de ffechizos e de engannos e de malas costumbres, de las que non sson en los christianos nin en los moros, que creen en el Christo en alguna manera...” (338v/2: 438). This list calls to mind Dt 18:10-12 [“There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one that uses divination, a soothsayer, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or one that consults a ghost or a familiar spirit, or a necromancer. . For whoever does these things is an abomination unto the Lord.”] For a discussion of some of these esoteric techniques, especially chiromancy and metoposcopy, see Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* 218-24.

variety of sources for the same polemical purpose. In his work, none of his sources are as important for his arguments as his polemical sources.

Polemical Literature and The Disputations of Paris and Barcelona

In our assessment of the vast array of sources in the *Mostrador*, we must never lose sight of the fact that most of Abner/Alfonso's works were polemics, and his relationship with rabbinical, exegetical, philosophical, historiographical, or mystical sources is based on a specific and utilitarian need within his larger polemical argument. Despite Abner/Alfonso's deep debt to the philosophical ideas of Maimonides and his effort to blend ideas from philosophy, mysticism, and exegesis, his relationship to polemical sources and ideas is the most important for his overall project in the *Mostrador* as well as in his later writings, even though this importance is not manifest in the relative number of polemical sources cited in the text. We established that Abner/Alfonso's relationship with previous Christian polemical sources (such as Martini's *Pugio Fidei*) was minimal compared to that with Jewish sources. Abner/Alfonso's relationship to polemical sources from the Jewish tradition is, in this context, of critical importance not only for a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of his source material, but also for a full understanding of his relationship to changing notions of argumentative authority. It is thus with this question that we will conclude our survey of Abner/Alfonso's sources, and attempt to tie the information in this supplementary study to the conclusions reached in the main text of this dissertation by showing that Abner/Alfonso's use of primarily Jewish sources fits within his larger polemical approach to authority and authoritative sources. His use of sources does not depend on a view that textual authority provides the only possible proof, but that successful conversion and proof depends on finding proof from

within one's own tradition, which must view the testimony of one's coreligionists as of equal or greater weight than the support of textual authorities alone.

We discussed Abner/Alfonso's use of both the Hebrew and Aramaic versions of the *Acts of Jesus* (*Toledot Yeshu*), a narrative satire of the life of Jesus that, as Chazan points out, fits Amos Funkenstein's notion of polemical "counter-history", a tradition in which texts which work to distort and disparage the image of the adversary by attacking its history (*Fashioning Jewish Identity* 74). While Abner/Alfonso makes use of the *Toledot Yeshu* as part of his more general attack on Jewish criticism of Christians and Christianity (we can remember that he also marshaled an attack on the so-called "Birkat ha-Minim" or "Blessing on Heretics", the thirteenth prayer of eighteen benedictions), he draws much more from later anti-Christian works within the polemical genre. One anti-Christian polemic that Abner/Alfonso makes use of in the *Mostrador* is the Hebrew *Sefer Nestor ha-Komer* (*Book of Nestor the Priest*), a twelfth-century translation, made within the Iberian peninsula, of the original Arabic *Qiṣṣat Mujādalat al-Uṣquf* (*Account of the Disputation of the Priest*). As Daniel Lasker and Sarah Stroumsa point out in their recent edition, this text, apparently from the ninth century, represents the earliest surviving Jewish polemical treatise attacking Christianity (*The Polemic of Nestor the Priest* 1:14).¹⁸² Abner/Alfonso's few citations of the text are particularly interesting because they seem to have gone unnoticed

¹⁸² As the authors point out, Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammaṣ was the first named Jewish polemicist against Christianity, but his specifically polemical works do not survive and his *Ishrūn Maqāla* (*Twenty Chapters*), recently edited by Stroumsa, presents polemical arguments in a broader theological and philosophical context. See also the proposal by Hames in his review of Lasker and Stroumsa's edition (2000) that the work originated as an internal Christian polemic written by a Nestorian.

by polemical historians and constitute a heretofore-unknown source in the history of the impact of the text on later Jewish polemical writing.¹⁸³

Abner/Alfonso mentions the polemic of Nestor five times in the *Mostrador*, and nowhere else in his existing works. Although the existing texts of the polemic do contain many variants, it is still possible to identify some of his specific references. In chapter two, paragraph nineteen, the Teacher responds to an assertion made by the Rebel in the previous paragraph:

It does not say in the Gospels, as you said—for Nestor the apostate made you err with the “Book of Lies”, which he wrote for the Jews—that everyone who removes the smallest *thing* from all the sayings of Moses will be called deficient in the kingdom of heaven. It does not say this, but instead says that [Mt 5:19] “everyone who should remove the least of those *commandments* will be called deficient in the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁸⁴ (*Italics mine*)

On the following folio, he adds that “when [Jesus] said that he did not come to undo the Law or the sayings of the prophets, he did not say it about the ceremonial commandments, as Nestor the apostate, and the Jews who followed him, held.”¹⁸⁵ These

¹⁸³ Lasker and Stroumsa do not list Abner/Alfonso among authors such as Ibn Kammūna, Jacob Ben Reuben, Joseph Kimḥi, and Joseph Official as one of the authors who was influenced by the text. Likewise, Rembaum (“The Influence of Sefer Nestor Hakomer on Medieval Jewish Polemics”) does not mention Abner/Alfonso in his detailed study of the impact of the text on later writers. Sainz de la Maza does mention these citations (“El *Toledot yeshu* castellano en el maestro Alfonso de Valladolid” 802), but does not comment on them in any detail.

¹⁸⁴ “E non dize en el Evangelio, como tú dix[i]este otrossi, e que te ffizo errar Niztor el Tornadizo en el “Libro de las Mintiras”, que escribió a los judios, de que dixiera que todo el qui tolliere la menor cosa de todos los dichos de Moysen será llamado menguado en en el rregno del çielo. Ca non dixo assi, mas dixo que “todo el qui tolliere aun el menor destes mandamientos, mingnado será llamado en el rregno del çielo”” (70v/1: 130).

¹⁸⁵ “Quando dixo que él non vinia para desatar la Ley nin los dichos de los prophetas, non lo dizia por los mandamientos çerimoniales, como lo tenia Niztor el Tornadizo e los judios que ssiguen a él” (71v/1: 132).

references can be found equally in the Arabic and Hebrew versions of the text (§ 35-36, 70, Lasker and Stroumsa 2: 36-7, 49, 88-89; and 98-99, 102, 118, 124) raising the question of which version Abner/Alfonso knew and used. His other citation of the text, however, allows us to affirm the logical assumption that he was citing the Hebrew version. After the Rebel asserts that the Gospels say that a sin against the Father or the Son will be forgiven, but a sin against the Holy Spirit will not, the Teacher retorts, “this statement is not found in the Gospels as you said it, but Nestor, heretical cleric, took it from his own heart and wrote it in the “Book of Lies” that he wrote to reprehend the Christians.”¹⁸⁶ As Lasker and Stroumsa point out, this statement can only be found in the Hebrew versions of the text (28a, Lasker and Stroumsa 2: 97-98, 116-117; see their commentary on 1: 145). The third citation from the text, within a discussion of a legend that the disciples of Jesus stole his body and kept it hidden, cannot be found in the extant versions of the *Polemic of Nestor* in Arabic or Hebrew, but does resemble statements contained in the *Toledot Yeshu* (see, for example, Krauss, *Das Leben Yeshu* 80-81), a text cited repeatedly in the text of Nestor.

One pressing question about which less is certain is the influence of Jacob ben Reuben’s *Sefer Milhamot Adonai* (*Book of the Wars of the Lord*) on Abner/Alfonso. There is no explicit mention of ben Reuben or his work in any of Abner/Alfonso’s writing, but there are examples of Ben Reuben’s arguments in some places. The reference to Nestor, mentioned above, that is found only in the Hebrew version of the text (stating that the sins against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven) can be found, as Lasker and Stroumsa

¹⁸⁶ “Non es fallada esta palabra en el Evangelio assi como tú dixiste, mas que Niztor, clerigo ereje, la assacó de su coraçon e la escrivió en el “Libro de las mintiras” que conpuso para rreprehender a los christianos” (141v/1: 274). Cf. 142r/1: 275.

point out (1: 145), in Ben Reuben's polemic (*Sefer Milhamot* 153). We noted in supplement chapter one, in considering Abner/Alfonso's influence on later writers, that Shem Tov Ibn Shaprut, who directed book fifteen of his *Eben Boḥan* (*Touchstone*) against Abner/Alfonso, specifically states that he is refuting Abner/Alfonso's "work written against" the author of the *Sefer Milhamot*. While the text referred to here is not clear, it is possibly Abner/Alfonso's now-lost polemic by the same name, *Sefer Milhamot Adonai*,¹⁸⁷ although some scholars dispute this.¹⁸⁸ In any case, Ibn Shaprut attributes arguments to Abner/Alfonso that can be understood as direct responses to Ben Reuben's work. One example, quoted by Lasker, concerns Abner/Alfonso's response to a charge by Ben Reuben that Jesus cannot have two natures by saying that "the sun illuminates and heats simultaneously, while it does not heat in the same way it illuminates" (*Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 122). In addition, it is not hard to notice parallels in the tone and language of the works. Ben Reuben begins his work by insisting that he did not compose his work "in order to debate with [Christians] or even to address them. Rather, [I wrote] in order to give testimony for those truly committed."¹⁸⁹ This statement first echoes Abner/Alfonso's

¹⁸⁷ See Horbury's comments on this, Horbury, "The Revision of Shem Tob ibn Shaprut's 'Eben Bohan'", 234.

¹⁸⁸ Graetz first discussed this question in *Geschichte* 7: 451-2, arguing that the parts of Abner/Alfonso's *Milhamot* preserved in De Spina's *Fortalitium Fidei* do not support the idea that Abner/Alfonso was responding to Ben Reuben's work by the same name. Also, as he points out, Ibn Shaprut states that Abner/Alfonso quotes the Aramaic *Toledot Yeshu* in his work, raising the possibility that his work against Ben Reuben is actually the *Moreh/Mostrador*. Loeb "Polémistes" 221, who adopts Graetz's other conclusions, shows that this is impossible, given that Shem Tov responds to the *Mostrador* in previous books of the work (e.g. even in book 1), and Ibn Shaprut states that he is refuting a work he had not previously known. Rosenthal, who edited the work of both Ben Reuben and Abner/Alfonso, also accepts that, based on the *Fortalitium*, Abner/Alfonso's alleged response to Ben Reuben was not the *Sefer Milhamot*, proposing instead Abner/Alfonso's "Malliciones de los Judios" (Jacob Ben Reuben, *Milhamot ha-Shem* XX n. 56). Carlos del Valle, who edited the known fragments of the *Sefer Milhamot* of Abner/Alfonso, also rejects any connection to Ben Reuben and calls Rosenthal's alternate proposal "gratuitous" ("El Libro de las batallas de Dios" 103 n. 77).

¹⁸⁹ "כי לא להתווכח עמהם ולא לדבר עמהם כי אם להיות עדות מסורה לרזיזים" (141).

own statement to Isaac Polgar in the *Teshuvot* that “my desire was to honor God and not to increase disputes in Israel.”¹⁹⁰ Even more, Ben Reuben’s statement that he wanted to “give testimony” has much in common with Abner/Alfonso’s statement that “It was not my intention in this book to honor or dishonor any man insofar as he is Christian or Jew, but to point out those sages insofar as they...disprove you and agree with the sages of the gentiles in giving testimony against you that you are false and in error.”¹⁹¹ Likewise, Ben Reuben’s uses the image of a hot coal, saying that there is “a flame without a coal and a coal without a flame, like the saying “flame of a pan” and like the saying “coal of a pot”...”, an image that Ibn Shaprut also attributes to Ben Reuben in the *Eben Boḥan*.¹⁹² This image recalls Abner/Alfonso’s statement, cited above, that “all the species and individuals of the world are tied and bound to God like the flame that is bound to the hot coal.”¹⁹³ While a more detailed study of book XV of Ibn Shaprut’s *Eben Boḥan* and of Ben Reuben’s *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem* (especially comparing Abner/Alfonso’s *Mostrador* with book twelve of Ben Reuben’s work) is necessary to further assess Abner/Alfonso’s alleged response to Ben Reuben, the former’s knowledge and use of the latter seems very likely. The arguments against such influence, most notably Carlos del Valle’s arguments in his consideration of Abner/Alfonso’s *Milhamot ha-Shem* (“*El Libro de las batallas de Dios...*”),

¹⁹⁰ "כי נתכוונתי לכבוד האל וכדי שלא ירבו מחלוקות בישראל" (8v/Hecht 339).

¹⁹¹ “Ca non ffue la mi entencion en este libro para onrrar nin desonrrar a ningun omne enquanto es christiano o judio, sinon para nonbrar aquellos ssabios enquanto...vos desmienten e que concuerdan con los sabios de los gentiles en dar testimonio contra vos de que ssodes erradores e ffalssarios.” (342r/1: 444).

¹⁹² "ועוד שאני מוצא להב שאינו על הגחל וגחל שאין בו להב, כגון להב מחבת וכגון גחל מרחשת" (Milhamot 10). Cf. the statement given by Ibn Shaprut, *Eben Boḥan* Jewish Theological Society of America MS 2426, 2:1, fol. 60b: “If you say that just as the coal is composed of three things, your God is composed of the Trinity, then compositon is the cause of every composed body” (quoted in Lasker, *Jewish Philosophical Polemics* 222 n. 379).

¹⁹³ “Todas las especies e los individuos del mundo atados e ligados en Dios como la flama que es atada a la brasa” (122v/1: 234). The image of the fire joined to the coal is found in *Sefer Yezirah* 1.7.

while plausible, cannot be accepted just because they are based on such a limited knowledge of the real content of Abner/Alfonso's lost work. It is impossible to make definitive judgments about the work, its content, and its sources based only on fragmentary evidence in Latin sources.

Ever since scholars discovered Ibn Shaprut's statement that he was responding to Abner/Alfonso's criticism of the *Sefer Milḥmot Adonai*—a work that, because of an erroneous manuscript tradition, was sometimes attributed to Joseph Kimḥi instead of Jacob Ben Reuben—there has been a critical thread that has alleged that Abner/Alfonso wrote his work against Kimḥi as well.¹⁹⁴ It is easier to discredit this as an erroneous tradition because there is a clear bibliographic trail of mistake. Even so, Abner/Alfonso does in fact respond to Joseph Kimḥi's polemic in the *Mostrador*. As we already considered, Abner/Alfonso's references to Kimḥi (most of which are critical of his views) refer to his Biblical exegesis. There is, however, one explicit reference to Kimḥi's *Sefer ha-Berit* (*Book of the Covenant*), in which the Teacher states to the Rebel:

Your statement that the verse in Isaiah [11:6] that reads “The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid goat” is meant according to its literal sense, not figuratively or metaphorically, is [the same as] what Joseph Kimḥi wrote in his “Book of disputations” which he wrote against the Christians. But he was wrong without a doubt, although some sages of the Talmud wrote the same thing...”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ This can be found in Rodrigo de Castro and, following him, Martínez-Añíbarro. Although it was long ago corrected by Graetz and Loeb, it persists in some criticism, appearing as recently as 1984 in Rubio González, “Alfonso de Valladolid, el primer escritor local”, 54.

¹⁹⁵ “Esto que dixiste que el capitulo de Ysayas en que dize “Morará el lobo con el cordero, e el leon pardo con el cabrito yará” es segund su estoria llana, non semejança nin metafora, escriviólo Rrabi Yocef Camhi

In Kimḥi's text, there is a discussion of literal versus allegorical interpretation, but the Jewish *Maamin* does not say what Abner/Alfonso claims he does, but instead asserts that the Torah is not to be taken altogether literally or figuratively (Talmage 47-8). This exact statement cited by Abner/Alfonso in fact cannot be found in Kimḥi's *Sefer ha-Berit*, suggesting that Abner/Alfonso gave Kimḥi's name to another citation by mistake. Likewise, although "The "Book of disputations" is not Kimḥi's title, but that of Nahmanides' *Vikuah*, a work which Abner/Alfonso names as the "Libro de la su disputaçion" only a few folios later, this citation cannot be found in Nahmanides' text either. A similar passage, however, can be found in the *Dialogus* of Petrus Alfonsi in which, after Moses makes the same claim that Is 11:6 should be understood literally, Petrus asks Moses, "Oh Moses, most stupid of all, do you believe that this prophecy literally as it was given?", to which Moses replied "Yes."¹⁹⁶ The fact that Abner/Alfonso mentions Alfonsi's text elsewhere in the *Mostrador*, and refers to it not by its customary title, *Dialogus contra Iudeos* or *Dialogus Petri et Moysi*, but as the "libro de las disputaciones" (140r/1: 270)—the very same title he attributes to Joseph Kimḥi, despite the fact that neither Joseph nor Petrus wrote a work by this specific title—suggests that Petrus Alfonsi, not Joseph Kimḥi, was his most likely source.¹⁹⁷ Given that this is the only instance where

en su "Libro de las disputaciones", que ffizo cotra los christianos. Mas errrólo ssin dubda, maguera que algunos de los sabios del Talmud lo dixieron assi..." (280v/2: 318).

¹⁹⁶ "Stultissime omnium, o Moyses, intelligis tu istam simpliciter ut posita est prophetarum?" "Etiam." (*Diálogo* 146).

¹⁹⁷ The discussion that follows this statement also supports this hypothesis. Abner/Alfonso states that the Messiah "was not to come to give salvation except to men only, insofar as they have reason and understanding and can know God...how could it be for other animals, who do not have reason?" ("...él non avie a venir para dar salvaçion ssinon a los omnes solamiente, enquanto an rrazon e entendimiento e que pueden conocer a Dios...E ¿pues cómo seria en los otros animales, que non an rrazon?"). Petrus Alfonsi explains his statement by stating that "he did not say this about herd animals, who have no rational soul and cannot have knowledge of God" ("neque enim hoc propter pecudes dixit, que cum nec animam habeant rationalem, nec domini scientiam habere possunt, id est domini cognitionem" 146-7).

Abner/Alfonso mentions Kimḥi's *Sefer ha-Berit* in his works, we can surmise that he knew the work little, if at all.

Most important of all is the question of Abner/Alfonso's familiarity with thirteenth-century Jewish polemics. We already considered in some detail in chapter three Abner/Alfonso's references to the burning of the Talmud that resulted from the efforts of the convert Nicholas Donin. As we saw, the charges brought by Abner/Alfonso against the "Blessing of Heretics" (*Birkat ha-minim*), charges brought earlier by Donin, are an important point of similarity between Donin and Abner/Alfonso. Although he does not mention it anywhere in his writings, there is evidence that Abner/Alfonso not only knew of Donin's actions and charges against the Jews, but that he knew of the Hebrew account of the Talmud trial of Paris. In chapter seven, he states that

some [Jews] say that the disciples of Jesus stole his body and kept it hidden more than two-hundred years...until some later Jews, when they saw this slander and dishonor of Jesus the Nazarene in their books, said that there were two or three or even four men, each of whom had the name Jesus the Nazarene, son of Mary, hairdresser of women, and son of Panther, a magician and wheedler and trickster who was killed by judgment of the Jewish mayors on the eve of Passover, which fell on the day of the Sabbath. These are words of laughter and scorn among [the Jews], without a doubt.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ "E algunos dellos dizen que sus disciplos de Jhesu furtaron el cuerpo e lo tovieron ascondido más de dozientos anno...fasta que algunos de los judios postrimeros, quando vieron (201v) este bolvimiento e desonrra en sus libros de Jhesu Nazareno, dixieron que omnes ffueron dos o tres o aun quatro, que cada uno dellos ovo nonbre Jhesu Nazareno, ffijo de Maria, afeytadora de las mugeres, e ffijo de Pandera, e fechizero e sosacador e engan[n]ador, e que fue muerto por juyzio de los alcalles judios viespera de la Pascua, que acaesció en dia de sabado. E éstas son palabras de rriso e de escarnio dellos sin dubda" (201r-v/2: 137).

While this legend comes from the satirical *Toledot Yeshu*, the mixture of these details with the claim by “later Jews” that there was more than one Jesus and Mary points to a passage in the *Vikuah* about Rabbi Yehiel of Paris. In this text, when Donin brings up the story of Jesus Ben Pandira and Miriam the hairdresser (a tradition mentioned in part in T.B. *Sanhedrin* 67a), Rabbi Yehiel claims that this does not refer to the same Mary of Christian tradition and that “there were thus two Jesuses, and possibly even two Jesuses from the same town”, a fact he defends with the well-known quip “not every Louis born in France is the King of France.”¹⁹⁹ Abner/Alfonso’s reference to this passage shows that his knowledge of Donin and the burning of the Talmud came at least in part from the Hebrew account of the Paris conflict.

Of even greater significance than Abner/Alfonso’s knowledge of previous charges against the Talmud such as those of the Talmud trial of the 1240s is his knowledge and use of the writings of Nahmanides. There has long circulated the legend that Abner/Alfonso was, in the words of the seventeenth-century Rabbi, Judah Aryah (Leon) of Modena, “a student of Nahmanides...from whose wine press he drank”, even though Nahmanides died in 1270, around the time critics estimate Abner/Alfonso was born. This apocryphal legend can be traced, as Rosenthal, Hecht, and Carpenter explain, to the *Shalshet ha-Kabbalah* of Gedalia ben Joseph ibn Yahya (d. 1587).²⁰⁰ Although Abner/Alfonso does draw from various sources by the Ramban such as his *Book of Redemption* (*Mostrador* 196r/2:125-6 and in the second polemical letter 491/Vat. Ms. 6423 95ra) and his *Discourse on “The Law of the Eternal is Perfect”* (279v-282r/2:316-322), his use

¹⁹⁹ "(17). "לא כל לויש הנולדים בצרפת מלכים מצרפת...".

²⁰⁰ See Rosenthal, “The Second Letter”, 484 . 12, who thinks that this legend is attributable to a confusion of Abner/Alfonso with Paul Christiani; and Hecht 44-5 n. 55.

of the *Disputation* is the most important for our purposes. We have already seen that while Abner/Alfonso did not know the arguments of Raymond Martini (or at least does not make any explicit use of them), he does show familiarity with the arguments of Pablo Christiani at the disputation of Barcelona, and he even includes many of the same passages as those allegedly adduced by Friar Paul. The details of his arguments, however, suggest that this knowledge was not limited to the general information in the Latin protocol, but came through the Hebrew account by Naḥmanides. In keeping with his tendencies throughout the *Mostrador*, Abner/Alfonso predictably draws mainly from Hebrew, Jewish sources rather than Christian, Latin ones.

Abner/Alfonso only mentions the *Vikuah* by name on one occasion in his writing, when he states on the subject of the death of the Messiah that

Rabbi Moses himself stated in the “Book of the Disputation”: I affirm what Maimonides said when he proved that the verse which reads “He shall not fail nor be crushed, until he puts judgment in the earth” [means] that the Christ was to live for some time and die afterwards. He said that this is what he believed.”²⁰¹

In the *Vikuah*, Friar Paul asserts that Maimonides states in the *Mishneh Torah, Shofetim* (*Judges*) that the Messiah would die. Naḥmanides denies that such a statement is found in that book and then adds:

But I admit that some of our sages do say so, as I mentioned earlier. For the opinion of the books of the Aggadah is that he was born on the day of the Destruction and that he will live forever. But the opinion of those who take a more

²⁰¹ “Otorgo a lo que dixo Rrabi Mosse el Egipçiano en lo que provó por el viesso que dize: “Non sse enfoscará nin sse quebrantaré fasta que ponga en la tierra juyzio” que el Christo avie a bivar annos por cuento e morir despues. E dixo que esto es lo que cree él” (288v/2: 340).

literal approach is that he will be born close to the time of the End, or Redemption, and he will live a long but finite life, and he will die in honor and bequeath his crown to his son. And I have already said that this is what I believe...²⁰²

As Maccoby points out (*Judaism on Trial* 131), Maimonides states that the Messiah will die and pass his reign on to his son in his commentary on the *Mishnah* in the introduction to *Helek*. Abner/Alfonso's citation conflates the actual words of Nahmanides in the *Vikuah* (*Kitvei* 1:315/Maccoby 131), in which this passage in Maimonides is not specifically mentioned, with Maimonides' own words in his commentary.

This citation alone is significant in that it directly links Abner/Alfonso to the *Vikuah* of Nahmanides, but it is only one of numerous citations of the Ramban's text in Abner/Alfonso's work. In addition to specific references to Rabbi Moses, Abner/Alfonso includes in a number of passages other important Aggadic material that was previously cited by Friar Paul at the Barcelona disputation. For example, Abner/Alfonso gives the same citation from *Pirkei Hekhalot* found in Nahmanides' work, and this is the only citation from this work by either author. Both the Ramban and Abner/Alfonso also cite the well-known Aggadah from *Lamentations Rabbah* (2:57), which states that the Messiah was born on the day of the destruction of the second temple (Abner/Alfonso recounts this dictum in chapter seven, paragraph thirty-three, 218v/2: 175; Nahmanides states this on 306 of the *Vikuah*; Cf *Mostrador* 209r/2: 154). Likewise, both recount the Aggadah from B.T. *Sanhedrin* 98a of the conversation between Elijah and Joshua ben Levi in which Joshua is

²⁰² "אמרתי לפניהם: אין בספר ההוא כן. אבל אני מודה שיש מחכמינו אומרים כן, כאשר הזכרתי תחלה, שדעת ספרי הגדה כי נולד ביום החרבן ויחיה לעולם. ודעת בעלי הפשט שיוולד קרוב לקץ הגאולה, ויחיה שנים רבות במספר, וימות בכבוד וינחיל כתר לבנו. וכבר אמרתי כי בזה אני מאמין..." (*Kitvei* 1:315/Maccoby 131).

told that the Messiah can be found at the gates of Rome tending the sick (170v/2: 69 and *Kitvei* 1:307). Abner/Alfonso, however, includes a longer version of the Aggadah in which Elijah tells Joshua that the Messiah will come “today, if you will hear his voice”,²⁰³ suggesting that Abner/Alfonso did not copy this citation from Naḥmanides.

Beyond this similar material, half of Abner/Alfonso’s references to Naḥmanides are references to the *Vikuaḥ*, mainly referring to details of the Messiah’s coming based on verses from the book of Daniel. As Abner/Alfonso states, Naḥmanides is one of many authorities, including Abraham bar Ḥiyya, Rashi, and Joseph and David Kimḥi, “who all held that the time of the end of the coming of the Messiah is known from the sayings of Daniel...but all of them erred in their way of explanation.”²⁰⁴ This explanation of the calculation of the coming of the Messiah based on the book of Daniel plays a prominent role in the content of the *Vikuaḥ* of Naḥmanides, and it is essential in Abner/Alfonso’s arguments in the *Mostrador*, especially in chapter seven, which treats the issue of Jewish calculations of the coming of the Messiah. In addition to the specific details from Daniel, Abner/Alfonso focuses on the arguments presented by Naḥmanides against basic Christian doctrines. For example, Abner/Alfonso argues against “the gloss that Rabbi Moses ben Naḥman gave...that speaks about the Christ in a way [that suggests] he was not to be killed or conquered or given into the power of his enemies” (169r/2: 65), a gloss that the Ramban gives specifically in the *Vikuaḥ* (*Kitvei* 1:307/Maccoby 113). Another passage which Abner/Alfonso refers to in both the *Mostrador* and again in the second

²⁰³ This also appears on 226r/2:189, 272v/2:300, 290v/2:344, and *Teshuvot* 42r/78rb, 48ra-rb/78vb, 55v/84va.

²⁰⁴ “...todos tovieron que el tiempo de la fin de la venida del Christo es sabido por dichos de Daniel...sinon que todos erraron en la manera del esplanamiento” (208v/2: 153).

polemical letter can be connected to Nahmanides' interpretation of the meaning of "the detestable thing that causes appalment" mentioned in Daniel 12:11 as idolatry (*Kitvei* 1:313)²⁰⁵.

These examples show that Abner/Alfonso drew repeatedly from the *Vikuaḥ* in formulating his arguments in the *Mostrador*, more than from his other polemical Hebrew sources. Thematically, the *Vikuaḥ* plays a very important role in some of Abner/Alfonso's arguments, and the citation of specific portions of the work shows that Abner/Alfonso was not relying on the Latin protocol of the disputation, which speaks more generally about the importance of the authority of the Talmud but which does not include the details found in the Ramban's text. While this is not surprising, it is important that we can confirm this supposition because it shows a continuity between this earlier source and Abner/Alfonso, a continuity that is not only thematic but that can be traced textually. Given that Abner/Alfonso did not, as we have shown, draw his arguments from Raymond Martini, this textual connection to Nahmanides explains the origin not only of some of Abner/Alfonso's key ideas, but more generally, provides the model that Abner/Alfonso followed in sketching out the polemical project elaborated in the *Mostrador*.

One final observation is in order. It is not possible to leave off the discussion of Abner/Alfonso's Hebrew sources without raising the possibility of his knowledge and use of the writing of the thirteenth-century Barcelona Rabbi, Solomon Ibn Adret.²⁰⁶ In

²⁰⁵ This appears on 190r/2: 111. Cf. 196r-v/2: 125-6 and in the second polemical letter on Rosenthal 591/Vat. Ms. 6423 94vb.

²⁰⁶ See Chazan, *Daggers of Faith* 137-158; Cohen, *Friars and the Jews* 156-163; and Thomas Willi, "Die 'Perusche Aggadot' des R. Salomo ben Adret." Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abraham b. Adreth*, 55-56, implies some connection with Abner/Alfonso by grouping him with Martini.

chapter two, we briefly considered a statement made by Ibn Adret in his polemical *Perushei Aggadot*, in which the Jewish interlocutor calls into question the authority of non-Jews to cite Jewish sources as proof. Abner/Alfonso's ambiguous self-presentation as both Jewish and Christian resonates very strongly with the concerns raised by Ibn Adret, and it would be very convenient to draw a line of influence between them. Nevertheless, Abner/Alfonso never mentions Ibn Adret in any of his writing, and the question remains as to the presence of Ibn Adret's writing and ideas in Abner/Alfonso's works. Certain fragmentary evidence has been used by critics to suggest a possible link to Abner/Alfonso. For example, Chazan has noted that in interpreting Gen 49:10 ("ad ki yabo' shiloh"), traditionally translated as "until Shiloh comes," Ibn Adret in an early rabbinic *responsum* reads the verse to mean "until Shiloh comes...and beyond" (*Daggers of Faith* 143). Posnanski long ago noted that Moses de Tordesillas, writing in the *Ezer ha-Emunah* "against one of the school of Alfonso de Valladolid," defends the interpretation, suggesting that Abner/Alfonso may have also made use of this argument and rejected it. Likewise, Shemtob Ibn Shaprut in his *Eben Boḥan*—in book 15, the chapter written in response to Abner—makes use of the same argument, ostensibly in response to Abner's now-lost *Sefer Milḥamot Adonai*.²⁰⁷ Despite this possible connection, Abner barely discusses Gen 49:10 in the *Mostrador*, and although he does discuss a number of Hebrew words disputed among Jewish and Christian polemicists (such as "kol," "alma," and "olam"), he does not discuss the word "ad" at any point. Beyond this, there are certain small points of similarity that might also be used to draw a connection between Ibn Adret and Abner/Alfonso. For example, Ibn Adret attributes a statement to the Christian

²⁰⁷ Book XV was not written, according to Horbury, in response to the *Mostrador*, but perhaps to his *Milḥamot Adonai* ("The Revision" 234).

interlocutor in which he divides the commandments given to Moses into three categories, “one pertaining to holiness, one pertaining to the functioning of the polity, and one for training and education.”²⁰⁸ As Cohen notes, this matches a division made by Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*,²⁰⁹ but it can also be said that this bears comparison with Abner/Alfonso’s repeated distinctions between the “moral” laws which will never change and the “ceremonial” laws, which will change when the Messiah comes (chapter II, e.g. 44v-45r/1:76 and 54r-v/1:94-5). Likewise, statements by the Jewish interlocutor in Ibn Adret’s text, such as the questions, “Who would force us to believe the statement of someone who does not understand what he is saying? Is it not better to say that the author of the statement understood his statement, but that it bears another explanation?”²¹⁰ seem to resemble statements made by the Rebel in Abner/Alfonso’s text, such as the rhetorical bullet, “Perhaps you believe you understand their words better than they themselves do who said them?”²¹¹ Nevertheless, despite these superficial similarities, a much more detailed comparison is necessary to affirm with any certainty that there existed a connection between Ibn Adret’s polemic and Abner/Alfonso’s *Mostrador*, especially because such similarities can also be attributed to Abner/Alfonso’s familiarity

²⁰⁸ "ואמנם המצות נחלקו לשלשת חלקים. חלק קדושה וחלק הנהגת המדינה וחלק הרגל ולמור" (Perles, Hebrew 30).

²⁰⁹ Cohen, *Friars and the Jews* 159-61. Cohen points to the *Summa Theologiae*, 2.1.99.4 and 2.1.101-2.

²¹⁰ "ומי מכריח אותנו להאמין במי שאינו יודע מה שהוא סח? הלא טוב אמור שבעל המאמר מבין מאמרו אם יש פירוש אחר?" (Perles, Hebrew 42).

²¹¹ "¿Quiçá que cudas tú entender ssus palabras dellos mejor que ellos mismos, que las dixieron?" (29r/1:45). He repeats this statement a few folia later, but this time about the Christian understanding his own sources: "...o quiça que cudas tú entender las palabras de los christianos mejor que ellos mismos" (41v/1:69).

with Nahmanides' *Vikuah*.²¹² It is, moreover, highly unlikely, to say the least, that Abner/Alfonso would not specifically name Jewish responses to Christian works such as Ibn Adret's (in order to refute them himself) if he were familiar with them. Based on a our very general and cursory comparison, and on the total absence of Ibn Adret's name from any of Abner/Alfonso's works, we must err on the side of caution and assume Abner/Alfonso was unfamiliar with Ibn Adret's polemical writing.



In chapter two, we concluded that the Barcelona disputation, as represented in the extant sources, expressed both an externally-directed missionizing impulse, intended to actually speak to Jews, and an internally-directed apologetic focus, address to speak to traditional Christian theological interests. The polemics of Raymond Martini, on the other hand, represented a marked turn away from actual engagement with non-Christians towards a theological attack on rabbinical literature mostly devoid of rhetorical and persuasive concerns. As we have now shown that Abner/Alfonso's arguments did not draw from Martini's polemics but did in fact draw from the mixed missionizing and apologetic arguments of the Barcelona disputation as expressed in the *Vikuah* of Nahmanides, we can see the missionizing arguments of the *Mostrador* as an offshoot of Barcelona that ran parallel to the efforts of Raymond Martini but did not intersect with them. While Martini represents an elaboration of the apologetic concerns of Barcelona, Abner/Alfonso in turn developed the same arguments with more interest in active missionizing and effective rhetorical persuasion. It is in this context that Abner/Alfonso's

²¹² Abner/Alfonso's words, for example, could very likely come from a statement attributed to Paul by Nahmanides, who says that "Paul understands their words better than they did themselves פול המבין יותר מהם עצמם".
 דבריהם יותר מהם עצמם" (*Kitvei* 1:304/ Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*, 105).

efforts to expand on traditional notions of what constituted argumentative authority to include personal testimony can best be understood. While Martini developed arguments that relied on a thoroughly textual notion of proof and authoritative support, Abner/Alfonso, more interested in the actual reception and effectiveness of his arguments among Jews, elaborated his arguments to rely on both a textual and an affective, testimonial notion of authoritative proof. While Martini honed the textual niceties of Friar Paul Christiani's arguments at Barcelona, Abner/Alonso by contrast honed Friar Paul's rhetorical techniques and worked to expand the basis and nature of his argumentative authority. Above and beyond his own abundant textual proofs and wide range of textual sources, Abner/Alfonso stands out in the history of polemical writing principally for his innovative expansion of the concept of authority to include personal testimony, and the consideration of his wide range of Jewish sources must be framed by an understanding of his overall polemical strategy. The variety of Jewish sources in the *Mostrador* must therefore be understood as a vital part of a larger rhetorical appeal to the Jewish reader that depends as much on the construction of the authorial voice as Jewish and familiar as it does on the simple affirmation afforded by each specific textual source. The abundance of Jewish sources in the text and the comparative dearth of Christian ones, are two essential aspects of Abner/Alfonso's wider testimonial appeal to his reader not as a foreign missionary or polemical opponent but as, to recall Baer's telling words, "a Jew at heart." (*A History* 1: 334).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Outline of the Contents of the *Mostrador*

Appendix 2: Lost Works

Appendix 3: Arabic Sources in the *Mostrador*

Appendix 4: Index of Source Citations in the *Mostrador*

Appendix One

Outline of the contents of the *Mostrador*

Ø. Introduction and Summary

A. 12r-13v- Preliminary remarks of Abner, including Abner's own conversion story and his intentions in writing the *Mostrador*.

B. 13v-28r- Summary of the contents of the *Mostrador*, including a list of topics in each of the ten chapters (13v-14r) and the topic of each of the 288 paragraphs.

I. 28r-43v- Chapter 1. Sources of proof and how to use them; Use of the Talmud.

A. Use of Talmud as source text in anti-Jewish disputation. (§1-4)

B. Why people do not convert (and why the authors of the Talmud did not convert). (§5)

C. How God sometimes condemns people to not do good, e.g. Pharaoh. (6-7)

D. Does God punish people for their parents' sins. (§8-9)

E. Israel's great sin that merited their exile and "captivity". (§10-11)

F. Can we use the Talmud to prove Christianity, if it was written by sinners. (§12-13)

G. Can we be selective about which passages to use from postbiblical literature? (§14-16)

H. How it is necessary to take proof wherever we find it, even if those same texts contain other passages that contradict our ideas. (§17)

- I. How can condemn Talmudic sages if they taught us so much? (§18-19)
- J. What the Talmud scholars did wrong. (§20-21)
- K. Why they rejected Jesus, and how they did not rebel against prophesy. (§22)
- L. The time of the Messiah has already come; The Talmud reinforces a rejection of that claim; The Talmud contains many “bad things”. (§23)
- M. Even if this were true, and even if the sages of the Talmud did reject Jesus, this does not make them sinners or bad people. (§24)
- N. The Talmud was composed by sages who wanted to reject Jesus as the Messiah.
- O. How we can we dare to say we understand things that our ancestors did not. (§26-27)
- P. The Talmud scholars did not add to the Law of Moses. (28-29)
- Q. Allegory and interpretation will not convince the Jews; a discussion of what will convince them to convert. (§30-31)
- R. Do Christians only have allegorical proofs or “Secrets” and no manifest proofs?
- S. Judaism is more reasonable than Christianity. (§34-5)

II. 43v-73r- Chapter 2. Proof that there has to be a new law upon the coming of the Messiah.

- A. All prophets and sages and Talmud scholars and commentators—and human reason—all claim there was to be a new Law at the time of the Messiah. (§1-5)
- B. Why it was not said openly that the “ceremonial” laws would change. (§6-9)

- C. If the reason why the Laws were to be changed had always been present, they would have already been changed (from the beginning). The Law cannot be changed. (§10-11)
- D. The Rebel would agree that there should be a new Law, if it were not for the Dt 34.10. (§12)
- E. That verse was added by Ezra or Joshua. The Hebrew word “od” is figurative and means “a long time,” but not an infinite time. (§13).
- F. Rejection of Is 66.17. Was it was said by sinners of Israel in the time of the First Temple? (§14-15)
- G. We should not listen to the disciples of Jesus, since it says in Dt 17.10 that we should not listen to any new prophets. (§16-17)
- H. The rebel rejects the statement that there was to be a change in the Law, because God would not change his mind. Jesus said he did not come to change the law, but fulfill it (§18)
- I. God uses figurative language. Disc of Hebrew words “kol” and “olam”. When the Bible says “all” and “never”, it sometimes means “most” and “rarely”. (§19)
- J. If the Law was supposed to change, why was there a first Law? (§20-22)

III. 73v-96v- Chapter 3. The reasons for and cause of the new Law.

- A. The general reason for the new Law. (§1)
- B. What the prophets, sages, commentators and philosophers say about the Trinity and incarnation. (§1)

- C. The secrets of the divine name (Tetragrammaton). (§1)
- D. Discussion of the afterlife, and the failure of the law of Moses to discuss reward and punishment. (§1-3)
- E. Is the Talmud is the new law? (§4-6)

IV. 97r-116v- Chapter 4. Response to those who reject the idea that the Messiah was is meant to relieve the sin of Adam

- A. Do all men suffer the sin of Adam? Can men inherit sins from their fathers? (§1-5)
- B. Punishments of the body and soul. (§6-14)
- C. The Law saves the soul, not the body. (§15)
- D. The difference between the Laws of Moses and Christ (§16)
- E. The Tree of Life, the Tree of Knowledge, and their fruits. (§16)
- F. The harrowing of hell (§16)
- G. The story of Genesis is not what it seems to be literally (§17-18)
- H. The angels of Lucifer and the ascension of good souls to heaven (§19-20)
- I. Abraham in paradise (§21-22)
- J. Were saints before Jesus as good as good men after him? (§23-4)
- K. How can the creator could become created? How can the death of the just propitiate the sin of the wicked? (§25-6)

V. 117r-142r- Chapter 5. Response to those who reject the Trinity

- A. Rebel rejects notion of Trinity; philosophers say God only created primary

intelligence (§1)

B. How to reconcile the unity of God, the Trinity and the Incarnation (§2)

C. Secrets of God's nature in the Trinity; Dt 6:4 and the Tetragrammaton (§2)

D. Jesus was born long after creation, and could not divide God's unity (§3-4)

E. If God and Jesus came "at the same time," they should be called twin brothers?

(§5-6)

F. Incarnation and the vision of Isaiah (§7-8)

G. If the heavens were created for the generation and corruption of elements, can an infinite thing have a finite end? Aristotelian notions of generation and corruption. (§9-10)

H. In Gen 1.2, is the "spirit over the waters" Christ? or Adam? (§11-12)

I. Does Gen 1.26, "Let us make man in our image," imply incarnation or plurality of God's persons? (§13-14)

J. Does the repetition of "Holy" in Is 6.3 imply the Trinity? (§15-16)

K. More discussion of multiplicity in God's persons; the Christian belief in the Trinity is not only based on the Bible. (§17-18)

L. Did Abraham see the Trinity when he "saw three men" in Gen 18.2? (§19-20)

M. Philosophical discussion of substance and accident, and the comparison of the Trinity with other groups of three "memory, will, understanding" and "substance, wisdom, and will". (§21-24)

N. Can you sin against the Father but not against the Spirit, as it says in Mt 12.31-2? (§25-26)

VI. 142v-184v- Chapter 6. Response to those who reject the divinity of Jesus.

A. Would God enter into the dirty womb of a woman? Is God in all places?

discussion of the *Shekhina*. (§1-2)

B. Reasons for and against considering Christ as God. (§3-4)

C. Discussion of Is 42.1 and Ps 22.1 and the question of Jesus' separateness from

God. Does the messiah have to die? (§5-6)

D. Were the divinity and humanity in Jesus two things or one? (§7-8)

E. The meaning of Ps 7.8. (§9-10)

F. The meaning of Ps 87.5. (§11-12)

G. Is Jesus "at God's right hand"? The meaning of Ps 110.1. (13-14)

H. It was said after Jesus that the Christ would be at God's right hand. Why

would prophesy speak of the future when it already happened? (§15-16).

I. The meaning of Is 7.14 and 9.6 and the Hebrew word "Alma". (§17-18)

J. The meaning of Mt 19.17. The Rebel "quotes falsely". (§19-20)

K. The lineage of Jesus in Mathew, Luke, and Samuel. (§21-22)

L. Discussion of Ibn Rushd's statement in about the Messiah. (§23-24)

M. How could God be hungry and thirsty as Jesus was? Why would he punish the

fig tree in Mt 21.19? (§25-26)

N. If Jesus were God incarnate, would that mean any man could be? Discussion of

astrology, the eternity of the world, and the uniqueness of Jesus. (§27-28)

O. Discussion of Is 52.13 and Za 12.10. (§29-30)

P. Discussion of Ps 45.7; The meaning of "your throne," and the question of

Jesus having children. (§31-32)

Q. Is God present in the bread and wine of mass? Is he in excrement? (§33-34).

R. The Jew should convert first, then search for reasons to justify his conversion after they act. If a Jew is in doubt and does not look for answers, he condemns his offspring with himself. (§34).

VII. 185r-235v- Chapter 7. The Jewish messianic hope in rabbinical literature is false, since Jesus has come as the Messiah according to the prophets and wise men.

A. The Jews have different ideas about the time of the coming of the Messiah.

What does the rebel think? (§1)

B. The chronology of creation and salvation according to Dan 8-9. (§2-3)

C. Discussion of Hebrew words for “Day” and “Time and Time and Half a Time”. (§3)

D. Discussion of “seventy weeks” in Daniel. (§4-6)

E. More chronology based on Daniel. (§7-8)

F. Interpretation of Ez 4.1-7 and Dan 9.24. The question of “432 years.” (§9-13)

G. Can either the Teacher or Rebel know when the Messiah will come? Did Daniel himself know? (§14-15)

H. When was Christ born according to Biblical (Hebrew Bible) chronologies? (§16-17)

I. The Jews made errors in calculating the history of the world. (§18-19)

J. Discussion of the genealogy and life of Moses. (§20-22)

K. Jacob's children. (§23-29)

L. The time of the destruction of the Second Temple (§30-35)

M. Is the Messiah to come twice? (§36-41).

VIII. 236r-248v- Chapter 8. Response to those who say that Christ is still going to come

because they call the Christians the "people of Edom or Esau".

A. What are the four ages of Daniel's prophecy and is Edom still "stable"? (§1-2)

B. Za 6 and Dan 7 and 11; The kingdoms of Media and Persia were separate, not one kingdom, as many Jews believe. (§3-4)

C. The "horns" in Za 1.20 (§5-6)

D. The "flying scroll" in Za 5.1 (7-8)

E. When was Rome Edom? (9-12)

IX. 249r-291v- Chapter 9. The Jewish Diaspora is proof that Jews sinned when they

rejected Jesus

A. Jews reject the essential proofs for the coming of the Messiah (§1-2)

B. Will the tribes be gathered again? (§3-9)

C. Will Sodom or Samaria be restored? (§10-11)

D. Were the prophecies fulfilled at the time of the Second Temple to bring the Messiah? Has Jerusalem been rebuilt? (§12-13)

E. Proof using Hosea. (§14-15)

F. Proof using Isaiah. (§16-17)

G. Proof using Dt 30.1-2. (§18-19)

- H. Ez 36. The promised time is coming. (§20-21)
- I. God makes good on his promises, even when men fail. (§22-23)
- J. Has Ez 37.24 been fulfilled? (§24-25)
- K. Has Za 6.12 been fulfilled? Is the Temple to be rebuilt? (§26-7)
- L. Is Lv 26.44 to be fulfilled? Are the Jews still to be saved? (§28-9)
- M. How many times was Israel to return to its land after exile in Babylonia? (§30-31)
- N. Does salvation depend on Israel's will, or God's mercy? (§32-33)
- O. Has Ez 20.34-38 been fulfilled? Were they in the wilderness? Did they speak to God face to face? (§34-35)
- P. Were there to be sinners in the world after the coming of the Messiah? (§36-7).
- Q. Discussion on Is 11.1 and 11.12. Did Jesus gather those of Judah? Four Ages of the world, and the eventual fulfillment of the prophesy (§38-9)
- R. Is 2.4 says men will beat swords into plowshares, and Is 2.2 says all will run to the Messiah and Dan 7.14 says all will serve him. Isaiah 65.25 says the lion will lie down with the lamb. How can the Messiah have come when these things have not happened? (§40-45).
- S. Meaning of Is 65.20-22, 25.8, Za 14.9. Did Jesus do the miracles the Christ was supposed to do? (§46-47)
- T. Jesus was poor, not a king, as the Messiah was to be. (§48-9)
- U. Why Jesus died and did not live forever. (§50-51)
- V. Meaning of I Esr 2.63, and of use of "urim ve-tummim" for divining during the period of the Second Temple. Will there then be a third Temple? (§52-3)

W. Meaning of Mal 4.5 and 3.23-4. Will Elijah come when the Messiah does?

(§54-5)

X. Do the Jews suffer exile and “captivity” now because they still await a messiah, or because they await the next world? (§56-7)

X. 292r-342v- Chapter 10. Christians are to be called the “holy ones of Israel” and the Jews, because of the Talmud, are not fit to return to Israel.

A. Because Jesus was the Christ, Christians are to be called Israel and not Jews.

General Introduction (§1-2)

B. The good and bad habits of the Jews. (§2-3).

C. Do the Christians fulfill the Law of God? Is the Law to change? (§4-5)

D. What are the 613 commandments and which are to change or be annulled?

(§6-7)

E. Can unclean meat be eaten? (§8-9)

F. Have the Jews miscalculated the day of the Sabbath? (§10-11)

G. Is it enough for salvation to do good works, as many Jews do? (§12-13)

H. The Talmud is a source for Christian truth. (§13)

I. Jews do not agree among themselves. Karaites and Rabbinates. (§13-15)

J. Jews insult Christians in their worship and in the Talmud (§15)

K. Jesus said that his followers do not have faith, and the Gospels prove it. (§16-

17)

L. The Jews do not depend on Christianity or Islam. The Jews have proofs of their

faith (e.g. they can make it rain with their prayer) but Christians have no proof. (§18-19)

M. Do the Christians practice what they preach in the “Our Father”? (§20-21)

N. The Jews have survived many trials and much persecution in history. They work for kings. Does this prove their divine favor? (§22-23)

Ω. Conclusion

A. Review of all arguments the book (§ 24)

B. Has the Teacher helped strengthen the Jewish cause with his reasons? Or did he win his case? (§24-25)

[C. The Jews are more certain in their faith than they were before. They will continue to argue. The rebel gained nothing in his dispute. (§26, missing)]

[D. The Christian Teacher thinks he won, not the Jewish Rebel (§27, missing)]

Appendix Two

Abner/Alfonso's Lost Works

1. "Sefer ha-Hitpalsefut" ("Book of Philosophizing"), mentioned as "Sefer Hitpalsefut ha-Hadash" in Isaac Polgar's *Teshuvat Apikoros*, MS Parma 2440/De Rossi 533 on 6rb and as *Sefer ha-Hitpalsefut* in Abner/Alfonso's *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, MS Parma 2440/De Rossi 533 on 62rb-63ra. This title seems too vague to represent the actual title of a work, but probably just describes its contents. Date unknown, before his conversion.

2. *Sod ha-Gemul* (*The Secret of Retribution*), mentioned in the *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, MS Parma 2440/De Rossi 533 on 15ra, and in the Castilian translation, *Libro de la Poridat de la Rretribucion*, MS Vatican 6423 on 45rb and 46vb and in the Castilian text of *Ofrenda de Zelos* (*Minhat Qenaot*), MS Vatican 6423 on 1vb, 3va, 3vb, 5rb, 10va, 14ra, 15va, 19va, 26vb, and 30rb; Sainz de la Maza asserts that it was criticized by Yosef ben Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov in the fifteenth century (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 199). Date unknown, but he mentions that he wrote it "en tienpo de mi mançeb[ez]" contrasting this with his work "Torre de Fortaleza" que conpuse en tienpo de mi vegez" (*Ofrenda de zelos* 1vb), thus Mettmann argues the text could have been written in 1290-95.

3. *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem* (*Book of the Wars of the Lord*). Mentioned in the *Mostrador* MS BN 43, 12v-13r (not "42b" as Gershenzon asserts and Hecht repeats). According to the chronology that can be reconstructed from the details of the *Mostrador*, it was probably composed around 1319-1320. Ambrosio de Morales in 1572 lists the work in Castilian

translation in the monastery of San Benito in Valladolid, asserts about the work that Abner/Alfonso “trasladolo de Hebraico en lengua Castellana, por mandado de la Infanta D. Blanca, señora del monasterio de las Huelgas de Burgos” (9), an assertion transmitted by Rodríguez de Castro (195), Graetz (7: 449), and Amador de los Ríos (*Estudios* 300). The work was lost when the contents of the library were transferred to the Biblioteca Universitaria de Santa Cruz, according to Sainz de la Maza, who received confirmation of this from Professor Teófilos Egido (Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 231 n. 25). The fragments of the work, cited in Latin as *Liber Bellorum Dei* by Pablo de Santa María in the *Scrutinium Scripturarum* (524-5) and as *Liber Bellorum Dei* and *Liber Preliorum Dei* by Alonso de Spina in the *Fortalitium Fidei* (1458) (book III), have been collected and published by Carlos del Valle, “El libro de las batallas de Dios.” See also the discussion of Sainz de la Maza (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 204-208), who poses a number of interesting questions about the work, although his proposal that the work known by Alonso de Spina was not the actual work composed by Abner/Alfonso requires much more proof to be tenable. At the end of the fourteenth century, Shem Tov ben Isaac Ibn Shaprut composed the *Eben Boḥan*, dedicating book fifteen as a response to Abner/Alfonso, possibly to his *Sefer Milḥamot* (But see also the discussion of Loeb, “La controverse religieuse” II: 145-6, and “Polémistes”, 220-222, and Carlos del Valle questioning this idea). On the link with Jacob ben Ruben, see Rosenthal’s 1963 edition of the *Sefer Milḥamot*, p. XX n. 56, Horbury, “The Revision” 236-7, and Sainz de la Maza, *Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 206, who proposes that the title *Teshubot ‘al Sefer milḥamot ha-[Shem] le-Qimḥi*, given by Graetz, *Geschichte*, 7: 511 (based on statements of Shem Tov ibn Shaprut), results from the confusion of David Qimḥi with Jacob ben Ruben, and is

the source of Martínenz Añíbarro's erroneous listing of two separate works, the *Libro de las batallas* and the *Impugnación al 'Milhamot ha-shem' de R. Qimhi contra los cristianos*. Loeb also notes in "Polémistes" 220 n. 1 the confusion of Kimḥi with Ben Ruben. Del Valle argues that the work was, in all likelihood, not a response to either the *Sefer Milḥamot* of Jacob ben Reuben or the *Sefer ha-Berit* of Joseph Kimḥi ("El *Libro de las batallas de Dios*" 103), and likewise rejects as "gratuitous" Rosenthal's hypothesis that Abner/Alfonso responded to Ben Reuben in his lost work, *Las maldições de los judíos* (103 n. 77).

4. *Migdal Oz* (*Tower of Strength*). Mentioned in *Minḥat Qenaot* 1vb, 3vb, under the title *Torre de Fortaleza*. Abner/Alfonso reports that it was composed "e tiempo de mi vegés" (1d). Sainz de la Maza, calling it a "tratado pro-astrológico" based on Abner/Alfonso's mention of it in the *Minḥat*, and dates it at least after 1330 (*Alfonso de Valladolid: edición y estudio* 200). Mettmann proposes it was not translated into Castilian, although this has not been confirmed with certainty.

5. *Libro de la disputaçion publica* (*Book of Public Disputation*). Mentioned in *Libro de la ley*, MS BN 43, f. 5v (or 6v, depending on how one interprets the folio numbering).¹ Mettmann proposes in his edition that this may refer to the *Mostrador* (99 n. 129), but this is highly unlikely, given that Abner/Alfonso refers to the "Mostrador de Justiçia" by name on 2v

¹ There are a number of issues that confuse the numbering of the first folia of MS BN 43. Not only have the folia been numbered thrice, twice by folia and once by page, the folio numbering repeats itself on the fifth folio. (See Mettmann's description in his introduction to the *Mostrador* I: 11). The text of the *Libro de la ley*, according to the folio numbering, follows two blank numbered folia, and is found on 3v-11v, but actually taking up ten folia (because of the repetition of number five). In his edition of the text, Mettmann does not follow the numbering written on the MS, and starts his numbering where the text begins, thus beginning with 1v instead of 3v. He thus avoids the repetition of the fifth folio number, and his edition ends with 10v. Thus, the *Libro de la disputaçion publica* is found on 5v according to Mettmann's numeration, 6v according to the folio number on the top right, or 7v if the folio were counted correctly according to the folio numeration (not skipping 5), as Carlos del Valle lists it ("La tercera carta" 353 n. 4).

and again 5v, the very same folio where he mentions the *Libro de la disputaçion publica!* Carlos del Valle (“La tercera carta” 354 n. 4) proposes that this work may be the same as the *Sefer Milhamot*, although this too is unlikely, given that he mentions that work as “Libro de las batallas de Dios” in the *Mostrador* and, judging by Del Valle’s own assessment of the content of the *Sefer Milhamot*, “public disputation” was not the central topic.

6. *Libro de las maldiçiones de los judios* (*Book of the Maledictions of the Jews*). Mentioned at the beginning of *Libro de la ley*, MS BN 43 1v. Abner/Alfonso says that in the work, “mostramos...muchas maldiçias que tienen los judios contra los cristianos escriptas en sus libros que ellos compusieron de ssí e que los tienen por libros autenticos entre ssí, las quales maldiçias fazen todas e continuan en ellas con consentimiento de algunos cristianos que gelo no entienden e de algunos que gelo no quieren entender...” (1v). As Sainz de la Maza points out, the content thus seems to echo Abner/Alfonso’s accusations against the “Blessing against Heretics” (*Birkat ha-minim*) in his *Mostrador* and later before king Alfonso XI, who proceeded to prohibit the blessing and required Jews to expurgate it from their liturgy and texts. Loeb suggests that this text may refer to these actual allegations in 1336 (*Polémistes chrétiens*” 53), a hypothesis repeated by Baer (“Abner aus Burgos”, 1928, I: 339) and Shamir (1: 43), although Carlos del Valle calls the assertion “gratuitous” (“*El Libro de las Batallas de Dios*” 90 n. 34). See also Graetz, note 13, 7: 450-51; Brann et al., “The Poetic Universe of Samuel Ibn Sasson” 80-81 and Baer, “Fragments from Poets of Castile” 198-99 and *Historia de los Judíos en la España Cristiana*, 398-9 and 427 (not in English translation), on the account of Abner’s accusations by the contemporary Hebrew poet, Ibn Sasson. Roth (*Conversos* 190) erroneously states that this work takes up

the first eleven folia of MS BN 43 (which actually contain the *Libro de la ley*). Abner/Alfonso may also be referring to this text when he mentions in *Libro de la ley* “lo que esplané en el mi “Capitulo sobre la malliçion de los erejes” (9v). This is strengthened by the fact that he discusses Jewish prayer in that section, the same issue that he already discussed in relation to the “Birkat ha-Minim”.

8. A commentary on the commentary of Abraham ibn Ezra on the Ten Commandments. This text is mentioned by Rodríguez de Castro, from whom Graetz and Martínez Añíbarro take their information, but no other record of it survives, and Rodríguez de Castro gives no information on his source. Abner does at least mention Ibn Ezra throughout his *Mostrador*, and even specifically names Ibn Ezra’s commentary on the Pentateuch (330r). The existence of such a commentary is by no means implausible, but no further notice survives.

9. An *excursus* on the fourth figure of the categorical syllogism appended to Isaac Albalag’s Hebrew translation of al-Ghazālī’s *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*. George Vajda attributed this to Abner/Alfonso based on the Budapest manuscript of Albalag’s text, which is the only one to mention Abner/Alfonso by name (the other manuscripts simply say “the translator” or “a philosopher” where the Budapest ms. names Abner/Alfonso). Vajda concludes “Abner a dû ajouter, sans aucun doute avant sa conversion survenue à un âge avancé, un *excursus* à la version hébraïque du *Maqāṣid* qui devait être tout naturellement un de ses livres de chevet. On comprend dès lors aisément que plusieurs copistes aient escamoté son nom, tandis que d’autres ont éliminé le texte qui avait pour auteur un apostat

particulièrement dangereux et détesté” (*Isaac Albalag* 276). See Vajda, *Isaac Albalag* 275-6 and Gershenzon, *A Study* 15.

10. A letter to the Jews of Toledo in 1334 discussing the chronology of Jewish history and accusing the Jews of miscalculating the date of Passover. Baer has claimed that these arguments, reproduced in part in the *Yesod Olam* of Isaac Israeli (36a), resemble similar arguments made by Karaite Jews against Rabbinite Jews. The letter is discussed by Baer (*Toledot* 206 / *Historia* 391—not in English translation of the *History*; as well as in “Fragments” 198) and Rosenthal, *Studies and Sources*, I: 362-66.

11. *Iggeret ha-Gezzerah* (*Letter on Predestination*). Mentioned by Moses of Narbonne in his *Maamar be-Behirah*, it may possibly be another name for the *Minhat Qenaot*. See M. R. Hayoun, “L’épître du libre-arbitre d Moïse de Narbone,” 146, and Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy* 308-314, and “Deux philosophes juifs répondent à Abner de Burgos.” See also Freimann, *Union Catalog* II: 1751, who gives information about the existence of this work, See also the comments by Sainz de la Maza, 202-3 and 229 n. 12.

12. *Sefer Marim* (*Book of Bitterness*) or *Sefer Miriam* (*Book of Mary*). See Belsaco, “Isaac Pulgar’s *Support of the Religion*” 27, as well as the notice included in Freimann, *Union Catalog* II: 6073; Carpenter proposes that these references perhaps denote the same work (“Alonso de Valladolid” 142 n. 5). Nothing more is known of these titles.

13. An unnamed work that contains criticism of the *Hoshen Mishpat* (*The Breastplate of Judgement*), the fourth column of the *Sefer Arba'a ha-Turim* (*Book of the Four Orders*) by Jacob ben Asher. See Leon of Modena, *Behinat ha-Kabbalah*, 51-2; De Rossi, *Manuscriptos Codices Hebraici* 51-3; Belasco, "Isaac Pulgar's *Support of the Religion*" 27-8. See also the comments by Baer, "Abner aus Burgos" (1929) 36, where he argues that this refers, in all likelihood, to the *Mostrador* (despite the fact that Abner/Alfonso does not mention Ben Asher or his work). See Baer's fuller discussion in *Historia*, and Rosenthal, *Studies and Sources* I: 366-7.

14. A number of authors have suggested that Abner/Alfonso wrote a medical work on the plague. See Bedarride, *Les Juifs en France*, 201 and 507 n. 14, who mentions that, according to Bartolccio, such a work "in 4^o" was published in Cordoba in 1551. Vera, *La cultura española medieval* I: 118-119, reports the work as lost. See Sarton "A Plague Treatise," 430. The article "Abner" in the *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada* 1966, also mentions such a work (from which Sarton took his notice), although such a reference is entirely derivative and offers no new information. It is very possible that notice of such a work came from a misreading of Nicolao Antonio's *Bibliotheca hispana nova*, which lists that "Alphonsus de Burgos" composed a *Tratado de peste, su esencia, prevencion y curacion, con observaciones muy particulares*, published in Cordoba in 1651 (I: 13-14). This Alphonsus, easily confused with Abner/Alfonso (who is called "Alphonsus Burgensis", for example, by Pablo de Santa María, *Scrutinium* I: 533a), was actually a doctor in Cordoba, and is known to have composed another work on the salubrious uses of snow (Cordoba, 1640).

His work on the plague, however, contrary to Bedarride's assertion, was printed in octavo, not quarto, in Cordoba in 1651, not 1551.

15. *Iggeret ha-mashiah*. Mentioned in *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, MS Parma 2440 / De Rossi 533 9ra. The statement in the *Mostrador* 310r, that "lo escribí en el libro "Epistola Christi" in all likelihood refers to the same work, as Mettmann maintains, indicating that it was composed *before* the *Mostrador*, i.e. 1320-25. This may represent the "New Testament Commentary" mentioned without reference in the *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada* article on "Abner", although this is pure speculation. Vera mentions a work of commentary on the New Testament as being found in a Vatican MS (I: 118-119), possibly this work, but probably referring to MS 6423.

Appendix Three

Citations of Arabic Works in the *Mostrador*

“Mostrador”=*Moreh Zedek/Mostrador de justicia*

“Ofrenda”=*Minhat Qenaot/Ofrenda de zelos*

“Ley”=*Libro de la ley*

C=Castilian

H=Hebrew

Kalīla wa-Dimna

1. **Ofrenda 28ra-** “E assi el “Libro de Calila e Digna” lo demuestra tal en el “Capitulo del Ffijo del Rrey e de ssus siervos”, que es capitulo de la nesçessidad.”

→**Source Notes:**

Chapter on “The King’s Son and His Companions” (Chapter 13, 16, or 17, in various versions)

Hunayn ibn Ishāq al-‘Ibādī (d. 260/873)=

Iohannitius

2. **Ofrenda 5rb-** “E assi escrivió Galieno, e assi Juaniçio, e Abo Alcazi, que a las vezes adolezerá el omne por sus peccados e ssus rrebeldias que ffiziere contra Dios.”

→**Source Notes:** Sources unidentified.

Al-Fārābī (d. 950)

3. **Mostrador 41v-42r-** “E esto es lo que sse apropien en lo saber los sabios pocos ssolamient, los cuales son pilares de la Ley, porque sostienen la fe rresçebida en

ella para que non la desate qualquier que viniere, como lo escrivió el Ffaravio en la “Sciencia Moral”.

תשובות 12ב: "וכת' אבו נצר אלפראבי בספר הנמוסים שבעלי התורה השלימה אשר בה יהיו בני האדם מגעיל אל ההצלחה הנצחית לעולם הזה ולעולם הבא אינן צריכין אל הפלוסופיא בטבע אלא שצריך שיהיו בהם אנשים [י]חידים יודעין אותה כדי לחזק בה את התורה ולהצילה מן האפיקורוסין" (Hecht 348). הקמים להלחם עליה"

[Teshuvot H12v: “In *The Book of Laws* (“Sefer ha-Nimusim”) al-Farābī writes that the masters of perfect instruction—that instruction by which human beings achieve eternal salvation in this world and the next—have no need for natural philosophy, except that [society] requires a few specialists who know in order to strengthen their instruction and defend it from unbelievers who would contradict it.”]

Teshuvot C45rb: “E escrivió Alfaravio en el “Libro de las Costunbres” que los que han la Ley complida, la qual Ley con ella l[[]]egarán los omnes a la gloria eternal, para este mundo e para el otro, non han mester ensençialmente en la philosophia, sinnon que es mester que sean en ellos omnes ssennalados que la sepan, por amor de enfforçar con ella la Ley e vandearla de los hereges que sse levantaren contra ella”.

→**Source Notes:**

Gershenson, *A Study* 221 n. 37 proposes al-Farābī’s epitome of Plato’s laws (*Talkhīṣ Nawāmīs Aflāṭūn/Compendium Legum Platonis*), or *Attainment of Happiness* (*Tahṣīl al-sa‘ādah*) 39, 40, 47. E.g.

"الكل علم منها قوم يستحفظونه ممن له قوة على جودة استنباط ما لم يُصرح له في الجنس الذي استخفظ
وعلى القيام بنصرته ومناقضة ما يناقضه ومضادة ما ضاده وعلى جودة تعليم كل ذلك"

(*Tahṣīl al-sa'ādah* 34)

[“Each kind [of science, i.e. theoretical, deliberative, moral, practical] will have a group to preserve it, who should be drawn from among those who possess the faculty that enables them to excel in the discovery of what has not been clearly stated to them with reference to the science they preserve, to defend it, to contradict what contradicts it, and to excel in teaching all of this to others”

(*Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle* 39]

In his notes to the *Mostrador*, Mettmann proposes that “*Sciencia Moral*” is al-Fārābī’s now-lost commentary on the *Nicomachian Ethics* of Aristotle (which is also mentioned in Maimonides’ *Guide* 3:18 and by Ibn Rushd in his *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction*). In his notes to the *Teshuvot*, Mettmann claims that this statement is not found in the epitome of Plato’s laws, but is in *Kitāb al-Milla* and *Kitāb Mābādi’ ārā’ ahl al-madīna al-fādila*, but I was unable to find corresponding passages in the pages he cited. In the *Teshuvot*, Abner/Alfonso mentions Aristotle’s *Ethics* just before the above citation, and the Castilian text translates “Political Science” (ha-ḥokhma ha-medinit) as “sciencia moral.” (See also Hecht’s note 133-4 n. 200). Steinschneider notes that Joseph Ibn Shem Tov cites Al-Fārābī’s *Aphorisms* (*Fuṣūl*) as “al-Fārābī’s Aphorisms on the Science of Ethics” (71), and Al-Fārābī does discuss, at the end of this work, the distinction between “the science of natural things” and the “science of what is after natural things” and when the philosopher comes to knowledge of “the goal and perfection for the sake of which

the human being was brought into being”, he then knows that “the natural principles that are in the human being and in the world are insufficient for the human being to come by them to the perfection he was brought into being to obtain” (*The Political Writings* 62).

4. Obfrenda 5rb- See #61

Abu al-Qāssim al-Zahrāwī (d. ca. 404/1013)=

Abulcasis

5. Ofrenda 5rb- see #2

“al-Ghāfiqī”

(Ibn al-Şaffār?)

6. Mostrador 154v-155r- “...los judios camiaron e mudaron su Ley e las eras de la annos del mundo por aquella rrebellia misma, en guisa que sson entrellos quarto trasladaçiones de ley, como escribió el sabio Algafiqui”

Mostrador 201v- “E como escribió el sabio moro Algafique e otros sabios de astrologia que fallaron quarto trasladaçiones al los judios, demuda[da]s unas dotras, en la Ley e en los cuentos de las eras del mundo...”

→**Source Notes:**

There are various possibilities of who Abner/Alfonso is referring to. This clearly does not refer to the oculist, poet, or renowned pharmacologist who all went by this name. Samsó mentions the 12th-century astronomer Muḥammad b. Qassūm al-Ghāfiqī (*Las ciencias de los antiguos en Al-Andalus* pp. 274, 365f., 370f.), whose work has been edited by Meyerhof. Sezgin, *Astrologie...* (*Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* vol. 7) lists Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ghāfiqī. Mettmann suggests Abū al-Qāsim al-Ghāfiqī, i.e. Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar al-Ghāfiqī al-Andalusī (d. 1035), better known as Ibn al-Ṣaffār, who is known to have kept astronomical tables and to have written a treatise on the astrolabe which was translated into both Latin and Hebrew (See Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, for the bibliography). I could not find his statement attributed to him by Abner/Alfonso in this work, and no other works of his are known. It is possible that Abner/Alfonso is referring to an idea promulgated by Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba in his anti-Jewish polemic or by al-Bīrūnī, who specifically comments on Jewish calendric miscalculations. See, for example, Adang’s commentary, *Islam frente al Judaísmo* 72 and *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible* 131-38 and 235-48. As Adang points out, however, both polemicists only discuss three, not four, versions of the Torah (*Muslim Writers on Judaism* 137). I am grateful to Professor Gad Freudenthal and, through him, Professor Bernard R. Goldstein for their help looking into this.

Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037)-

7. **Mostrador 85v-** “E esto mostró el Avicena encubiertamiente en la “Filosofia Oriental”, en que dixo que la sustancia del entendimiento obrador a setenta mill caras, e que en cada cara a setenta mill bocas, en en cada boca setenta mill lenguas, con que alaban ssienpre al Criador, e que aquella muchedunbre que pareçe non es muchedunbre segund verdat”

→**Source Notes:**

Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*:

"فراى له ذاتا برنة عن المادة ليست شيئا من الذوات التي شاهد قبلها ولا هي سواها ولهذه الذات سبعون الف وجه في كل وجه سبعون الف فم في كل فم سبعون الف لسان يسبح بها ذات الواحد الحق ويقدها ويمجدها لا يفتن" (Gauthier, ed.129)

[“Here too was an essence free of matter, not one with those he had seen—but none other. Only this being had seventy thousand faces. In every face were seventy thousand mouths; in every mouth, seventy thousand tongues, with which it ceaselessly praised, glorified, and sanctified the being of the One who is Truth.” (Goodman, trans. 153).]

8. **Mostrador 109r-** See #64

9. **Mostrador 111v-** “E assi escrivió el Avicena, e otrosi el Algazel acuerda con él, que el alma del omne despues de que se aparta del cuerpo espresso, posa en uno de los cuerpos de las esperas del çielo e de las estrellas, maguera que parece su

entendimiento en esto cercano e encostado al entendimiento de Abendocliz, que dizia que los çielos fueron fechos de los quatro elementos...”

Mostrador 113r- “E non es departimiento en esto entre los que son fallados en este mundo [e] los muertos que ya murieron, sinon que las almas de los muertos sson como virtudes más spirituales. Ca ellas fincan proprias grand tiempo investidas en alguna materia glorificada spiritual, la qual por ella es la diferencia entrellas, como lo escribió el Aviçena e otros muchos filosofos e teologos, sinon que ellas que son parcionadas unas con otras en rrazon de la una virtud universal que es dicha prinçipe de aquella gente e su durança, segund el grado de cada alma en sus opinions e en sus obras que fueron en este mundo, e que ffincó sen[n]al dellas en las almas de los vivos, unos enpos otros”

→**Source Notes:**

No specific source identified, but Ibn Sīnā discusses the immortality of the individual soul in both the *Shifā'* and *al-Najāt*.

10. Mostrador 117v- “E dixo el Aviçena que el omne conplido ha intelligencia separada, que si pudiesse ser el que rrescibiesse partimiento la intelligencia postrimera, que fue criada con la luna, que es dicha en nonbre proprio entendimiento obrador, diriamos que era parte della. E sinon porque fue nuevament despues que non fue, diriamos que non fue fecha de Nuevo, e que en esta manera son sustançias que fueron e despues sse arremataron, e que son con él en el ser ssin dubda, e que son sin fin en cuento, si pudiese sser dicho cuento en ellas, e que son todas una, si pudiese ser dicho una en ellas. Ca el Avicena dio a

entender en esto que la novedad de la intelligētia separada del omne es apropiarse el entendimiento obrador en su cuerpo, como dixo semejança de la luz del sol conparada al cuerpo que escl[a]reçe sobrel...

Mostrador 117r- “E escrivió el Avicena que las intelligēcias separadas non son Dios mismo, nin otra cosa, e que non son ellas almas de la esperas, nin otra cosa, E aseméjelas a la luz del sol, que esclareçe sobre los cuerpos, que ello non es otra cosa sinon la luz del sol proporcionada al cuerpo”

Mostrador 85v- “...e assi Platon le llamó “Verbo de Dios” assi como el Avicena le asemejó al sol en la “Filosofia oriental”

תשובות 20ב: וכמו שהחכם בן סינא המשילו אל השמש כשהיה מדבר באותן המאורות האלוהיות בפילוסופיא המזרחית והוא קורא אותו תמיד "דבר אלהים" כמו שהיה אפלטון קורא אותו "דבר אלהים" וכן הנוצרים קוראין את תאר הבן "דבר אלהים". וכשהיה לו שום רבוי כדברי אבו האמד ולא יהיה פחות מן שנים [21א] כי והוא הצווי וציוור הכוונה התכליתית באותו ציווי המיוחד. (Hecht 365).

[Teshuvot H20v- “When discussing the divine luminaries in his *Oriental Philosophy*, the sage Ibn Sīnā also compares this to the sun and always calls it “a divine thing.” So does Plato, and Christians call the Person of the Son “a divine thing.” Since the Obeyed Existent has some plurality, according to al-Ghazālī, it cannot be less than two, namely (21a) the command and the apprehension of the ultimate intent of that specific command.”]

Teshuvot C50ra- “Et como el ssabio Avicena le asemejó al sol quando fablava en aquellas luminarias divinales en la “Philosophia Oriental”. E él llámale sienpre “verbo de Dios.” E assi los christianos llaman la persona del Fijo “verbo de Dios.

Et aviendo en él[Dios] alguna muchedu[n]bre, como dixo el Algazel, e la muchedunbre no es menos de dos. Ca en este logar es el mandamiento e la ymaginación de la entençion final en aquel mandamiento proprio.”

Ley 5v- “E como lo escribió el savio Aviçena que quando se tollió el cuerpo sobre que esclareció el sol, tolliosse la su luz de ssin que sse tollió la luz; e assi quando esclareçiere sobrél, renovarse-a la su luz de ssin que sse renueve la luz.

→**Source Notes:**

Hayy Ibn Yaqzān, 18 and 130-31. See also # 32, below.

Ibn Ṭufayl’s text:

”لو جاز ان تتبعض ذات السبعين الف وجه لقلنا انها بعضها ولو لا ان هذه الذات حدثت بعد ان لم تكن لقلنا انها هي ولو لا اختصاصها ببدنه عند حدوثه لقلنا انها لم تحدث وشاهد في هذه الرتبة ذواتا مثل ذاته لابدان كانت ثم اضمحلت ولابدان هي معه في الوجود وهي من الكثرة في حد بحيث لا تنتاهي ان جاز ان يقال لها كثرة او هي كلها واحد ان جاز ان يقال لها واحد.” (Gauthier, ed. 130).

[“If it were permissible to single out individuals from the identity of the seventy thousand faces, I would say that he was one of them. Were it not that his being was created originally, I would say that they were he. And had this self of his not been individuated by a body on its creation I would have said that it had not come to be. From this height he saw other selves like his own, that had belonged to bodies which had come to be and perished, or to bodies with which they still coëxisted. There were so many (if one may speak of them as many) that they reached infinity. Or, if one may call them one, then all were one...” (Goodman, trans. 153).]

11. Mostrador 117v- “(cont’d) ...E por esso es el omne aquella misma intelligēcia, como lo escribió Temistios en el “Libro del alma” E la manera del separamiento de la intelligēcia separada es que su sostenimiento non es su sugepto [sic], como lo escribió tal Aben Rost, que non a subjecto en ninguna guisa...E otrossi dixo el Aviçena que la intelligencia obrador es en todos los cuerpos, maguera que es separada, porque es sostenida, e que está en sí misma, e que, por parte que Dios es sustancia de (118r) todas la intelligencias separadas, son todas una sustançia, e que ésta es la unidat de Dios”

תשובות 21ב-22א: "ואמ' בן סינא כמו תאמסשטיוס ואלסכנדר [22א] שהשכל הפועל הוא בכל הגופים. וכי אין דבר קיים בעולם אלא האלוה. כי שאר כל הדברים הם נימוחים. וכי זה הוא הייחוד שלו עם שהוא האלוה והשכל נבדל ועומד בעצמו. וזה מצד שאין מציאות הגוף תנאי למציאות השכל הפועל אלא הדבר בהפך שמציאות השכל הפועל תנאי למציאות הגוף." (Hecht 367).

[Teshuvot H21v-22r- “Ibn Sīnā, like Thememistius and Alexander, said (22a) that the active intellect is in all bodies and nothing endures in the world except the divine, for all things disintegrate. This is His unity [or uniqueness], notwithstanding that, He is God, and the (active) intellect is separable and autonomous. For the existence of a body is not a condition for the existence of the active intellect, rather it is the opposite: the existence of the active intellect is a condition for the existence of the body.”]

Teshuvot C50va- “E dixo el Avicena, como Temistius e Alexandre, que la intelligēcia agente es en todos los cuerpos, e que non ha cossa estable en el mundo sinon Dios, e todas las otras cossas sson dessatables. E que esto es la su unidat de Dios, e con que [es] Dios, e la intelligēcia es cossa sseparada e sostenida

en sí. E esto es porque el ser del cuerpo non es condiçion e rraçon para el ser de la inteligençia, mas es al contrario: quiero dezir que el ser de la inteligencia (50d) es condiçion e rraçon para el ser del cuerpo"

Source Notes:

Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*. See # 54.

12. Mostrador 123r- “E la rrazon daquellos espejos e de aquellas fazes que nonbraron los sabios del Talmud, essa es misma la razon de los espejos e de las fazes que nonbró el Avicena en al “Filosofia oriental.”

→**Source Notes:**

Possibly Ibn Ṭufayl, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*:

“...إلى ما وصفه من تدرّج المراتب وانتهائها إلى النيل بان يصير سره مرآة مجلوة محاذى بها شطر الحق” (Gauthier, ed. 7).

[“[Ibn Sīnā goes on] to describe the gradual process of the devotee, culminating as his inmost being becomes a polished mirror facing toward the truth”]

“وما زال يشاهد لكل فلك ذاتا مفارقة برنة عن المادة ليست هي شيئا من الذوات التي قبلها ولا هي غيرها وكأنها صورة الشمس التي تنعكس من مرآة إلى مرآة على رتب مرتبة بحسب ترتيب الافلاك...” (Gauthier, ed. 128-9).

“وشاهد ذواتا كثيرة مفارقة للمادة كأنها مرايا صدنة قد ران عليها الخبث” (Gauthier, ed. 131)

[“For each sphere he witnessed a transcendent immaterial subject, neither identical with nor distinct from those above, like the form of the sun reflected from mirror to mirror with the descending order of spheres...he also saw many

disembodied identities, more like tarnished mirrors, covered with rust...”

(Goodman, trans. 152-3)]

Cf. Polgar, *Ezer ha-Dat*:

[השכל] הוא המראה הלשושה והאספקלריאה המאירה הקדושה אשר בו צורות כל הנמצאות נראות

(Levinger, ed. 88). "הראויות להראות"

[“The intellect is a polished mirror, the holy, shining mirror, in which are the forms of all visible created beings worth showing.”]

13. Mostrador 126v- “E sabida cosa es que los que cree la Ley non otorgan la eternidat del mundo, como paresçe por los dichos de Aristotiles. E quando nos fallamos dubda en sus palabras e contradicen en alguna manera por dicho de Platon e el Endecliseo e otros filosofos que fueron ante que él, e assi por dichos de Aviçena e del Algazel e de otros que vinieron despues dél, devémosnos ayudar dellos”

→**Source Notes:** No specific source.

14. Mostrador 127r- See #56

15. Mostrador 127v- “La potència e la possibilidat saldrá[n] a acto sin dubda quando non ovier destorvador ascidental, sino que a mester a Dios quel dé ser e sostenimiento, e por qui a virtud de corrupcion e virtud de sostenimiento e mantenimiento. Ca por eso es, segunt tiene el Aviçena, possible de sí mismo e neçesado por otre. E non lo podrá aver esto de una parte. Ca si esso fuese, seria lo

estable corrupto, demientra que es estable de una parte misma; e seria esto falso, como dixo Aben Rrost. Mas sera estable de parte del todo, e generado e corrupto de parte de sus partes, como el omne en los annos de la parade, despues de los annos del crecimiento. Síguese desto quel mundo criado sea todo e partes. E por esto fueron los genus e las especies naturales e los cuerpos, que son partibles en potencia e en acto. E por esso crio Dios el mundo en manera de todo estable, e en manera de partes que sale de potencia a acto, e en manera medianera, como el movimiento que [faze] salir las cosas de potencia a acto, e de unidat a muchedunbre, e de muchedunbre a unidat”.

Ofrenda 4va-b “E como lo escribió el Abiçena, e asi el Algazel, e que toda cosa que es possible de parte de ssí para sseer en cada una de las dos contrariedades, es neçessada de parte de otrie para sseer en la una ssola dellas en el tienpo sennalado en que sse allegarán todas las causas quel endebdan el sseer. E esto es como el cuerpo de la çera, que es aparejado de parte de ssí mismo para rreçibir cada una de la[s] ffiguras egualmientre, e él non escapa en cada uno de los tienpos de sseer en una ffigura ssennalada ssolamientre, sinon que esta ffigura sennalada non la ovo la çera de parte de ssí, ssinon de parte de otrie, que fundó e puso en ella esta ffigura ssennalada en aquel tienpo ssennalado. E assi toda cosa possible de parte de ssí es neçessada de parte de otrie en aquel tienpo sennalado, e assi ssi aquello fuere possible de parte de ssí, es neçessado de parte de otrie, e assi uno de otrie, e assy (4d) una de otra, ffasta que llegue el fecho al movimiento de al espera que es la causa estremada a todas las cosas nuevas e temporales en quanto sson nuevas e tenporales, como lo provó Aristotiles en la “Metaffisica.”

→**Source Notes:** Source unidentified

16. Mostrador 129r- “non a Dios virtud nin virtudes, ssinon que dé les todas la virtudes en comparacion de los criados, como lo que prove por dichos de Platon e del Avicena.”

→**Source Notes:** Source unidentified

17. Mostrador 130v- [on gen 1:20-24]: “la glosa cierta e conviniente de aquel viesso es ésta: que se aconsejó Dios en que ovo concordança con sus tres personas sustanciales. E esto fue para enclinar la obra universal a la particular como [lo pruevan] los dichos de Platon e del Avicena e de otros filosofos...”

→**Source Notes:** No specific source

18. Mostrador 144r- “E non puede ser esto ssinon por el investimiento que diximos; de lo que dixo el Avicena por Hiel ben Huriel, e assi escrivió el sabio Boecio en el “Libro de la consolacion”, que el omne conplido es mester sin dubda que sea llamado “dios” sinon que non es esto como el que ganó sapiencia, que es llamado “sabio”, que asi el que ganó divinidad, que son buenas costumbres, que sea llamado “dios””

Mostrador 164r- “Todas las cosas non an nada de sostenimiento sinon lo que an dél, como lo nonbré por dichos de los ffilosofos, e que Dios e divinidad non es dos cosas, ssinon una sola, e que la verdadera de la sustancia del omne conplido es la verdadera de dios, ssin ningun demudamiento, como es provado en la

“Filosofia oriental”, e que non avia departimiento en él, segund verdat, entre sser Dios e ser divinal”

תשובות 23ב: "וכתב בן סינא בפילוסופיא המזרחית שהאדם השלם יש לו שכל נבדל שאילו היה איפשר שיתחלק השכל הפועל היינו אומר' שהוא חלק ממנו. ולולי שנתחדש אחרי שלא היה היינו אומר' שהוא הוה בעצמו. ולולי שהתיחד בגופו כשנתחדש היינו אומ' שלא נתחדש...וכן כתב בן סינא בפילוסופיא המזרחית שאמיתת עצם האדם השלם היא אמיתת עצם האלוה בלי שום שנוי וחילוף"

(Hecht 370-71).

[Teshuvot H23v- “Ibn Sīnā wrote in *Oriental Philosophy* that the perfect man has a separate intellect so that, if it was possible for the active intellect to become divisible we would say that it were part of him. Were it not that it (the human intellect) was created after not having been we would say that it was it (the active intellect) and were it not that it was united with his body when he was created we would say that it was not created...Thus Avicenna wrote in *Oriental Philosophy* that “The true essence of the perfect man is the true essence of God, without any change and variation.”]

Teshuvot C51va-vb “Et escribió el Avicena en al “Philosophia Oriental” que el omne conplido ha inteligençia separada; que si pudiesse ser que se partiesse la inteligençia agente, diríamos que esta es parte della. E sinon porque fue nueva despues de que non era, diríamos que era aquella misma, e sinon porque se apropió en su cuerpo quando sse ffizio de nuevo, diriermos que non se fizo de nuevo. Fasta aquí su palabra...E assi escribió el Avicena en la “Philosophia Oriental” que la verdadera de la substancia del omne conplido, aquella es la verdadera de Dios, sin ningun mudamiento nin contrariedadat.”

Ley 10r- “E dixieron otros que murió e que es echado en las alas de Dios, y esto segund lo que escribió el sabio Avicenna en al “Filosofia Oriental” que la verdadera del omne conplido, esso es la verdadera de Dios sin ningun departimiento”

Mostrador 17r-v “...assi los filosofos [e] teologos concordaron en en un omne de derecho entendimiento en la fin de quanto más puede sser—aquél es el que nonbraron en el aravigo Hay ben Yacsami—assi los de la Ley an mester concordar en (17v) un omne derecho e conplido en su entendimiento e en ssu bondad e en ssu affincamiento en Dios e en ssu salvacion en la ffin de quanto más puede ser, aquél es dicho entrellos Christo...”

Mostrador 94v- “E assi los ffilosofos moros que se llaman *çoffia* concuerdan en un omne derecho, conplido en alcançar por su entendimiento e ssu studio a la ffin del más alto grado que todos los ssabios estudiantes en la filosoffia, que aquel omne es nonbrado entrellos Hiel ben Huriel; e toda su entencion de lo que ellos pueden estudiar en la ffilosoffia es para llegar cada uno dellos, segunt quanto más pudiere, e tal alcançamiento de la çiençia de aquel omne concordado entrellos...”

→**Source Notes:**

Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān* (Gauthier, ed. 123-4 and 130):

"و تقوى عنده هذا الظن بما قد كان بان له من ان ذات الحق عز وجل لا تتكثر بوجه من الوجوه وان علمه بذاته هو ذاته بعينها فلزم عنده من هذا ان من حصل عنده العلم بذاته فقد حصلت عنده ذاته وقد كان حصل عنده العلم فحصلت عنده الذات وهذه الذات لا تحصل إلا عند ذاتها ونفس حصولها هو الذات فاذن هو الذات

(Gautier, ed. 123-4) بعينها

["Hayy was confirmed in the notion by his awareness that The Truth, glorified and exalted be He, was not in any sense plural and that His Self-knowledge was Himself. It seemed to him to follow that whatever gains consciousness of his essence wins that essence himself. Hayy had attained His identity...Hayy must be identical with him..." (Goodman, ed. 123-4).]

Boethius III:10, l. 85:

"Nam quoniam beatudinis adeptione fiunt homines beati, beatitudo vero est ipsa divinitas, divinitatis adeptione beatos fieri manifestum est. sed uti iustitiae adeptione iusti, sapientiae sapientes fiunt, ita divinitatem adeptos deos fieri simili ratione necesse est."

["Since men are made blessed by the obtaining of blessedness, and blessedness is nothing else but divinity, it is manifest that men are made blessed by the obtaining of divinity. And as men are made just by the obtaining of justice, and wise by the obtaining of wisdom, so they who obtain divinity must needs in like manner become Gods."]

Cf. #10 and Polgar, *Ezer ha-Dat*:

(Levinger, ed. 49)."...האדם האמתי אשר הוא המחשב והציור השכלי והוא צלם האלהים..."

["The true man is thought, the intellectual conception, he is the image of God..."]

19. Mostrador 146v- "E como escribió el sabio Aviçena que el animal simple soluto de sin ninguna condiçion, a ser en los individuos, que aquél es el que su ser propriamente es el ser divinal...E segunt esta lengua misma dixo Aviçena, como prové por sus palabras, que las intelligençias separadas no sson esso mismo que

Dios, nin otra cosa; e otrossi que la susstancialidad del omne conplido non es essa misma que la intelligencia separada, nin otra cosa”

→**Source Notes:**

Ibn Ṭufayl, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*:

"شاهد للفلک الاعلی الذي لا جسم وراءه ذاتا برئة عن المادة لیست هي ذات الواحد الحق ولا هي نفس الفلک ولا هي غیرهما... وشاهد ایضا للفلک... ذاتا برئة عن المادة ایضا لیست هي ذات الواحد الحق ولا ذات الفلک

العلی المفارقة ولا نفسه ولا هي غیرها". (Gauthier, ed. 127-8).

[“He saw a being corresponding to the highest sphere, beyond which there is no body, a subject free of matter, and neither identical with the Truth and the One nor with the sphere itself, nor distince from either...Hayy saw another non-material being. This again was neither identical with the Truth and the One, nor with the highest sphere, nor even with itself, yet distinct from none of these.”]

20. Mostrador 163v-164r- See # 60. Cf. #55

21. Mostrador 181r- “Ca ya es sabido a los filosofos [e] sabios sotiles, como lo escrivió el Aviçena, que las estremidades e las dimenssiones terminadas non entran en la verdaderia del cuerpo e su mismedad, e que la cantidad, e aun el ser, es de los asçidentes e no entra en la verdaderia de la sustançia. E por ende el cuerpo glorificado e linpio de todos los ascidentes non sera en un lugar ssin otro, nin en un tienpo ssin otro, e non a material propria nin muchas. E asi los cuerpos, que sson uno en sustançia, non an otredat en ellos ssinon en las estremidades e los asçidentes que entran en la mismedad. E por ende, quando aquellos cuerpos

fueren glorificados e linpios de todos aquellos ascidentes, serán uno ssin dubda e non serán en un lugar ssin otro, ca no abrán el ser divinal, que nonbró el Aviçena”

→**Source Notes:**

Source unidentified, but compare Ibn Ṭufayl’s comment, “those non-material beings who know the Truth, glorified and exalted be He, precisely because they are free of matter, need not be said to be either one or many. The reason is that there is multiplicity only where there is otherness and unity only where there is contact” (Goodman, trans 150-51).

22. Mostrador 228r- See #61

23. Mostrador 229r- “E demas, que rrebovimiento de las almas en esta manera tenemos que es eregia, que non la creyeron Aristotiles nin el Aviçena nin los otros filosofos andadores. Ca tenian que sse siguiria desto aver un cuerpo dos almas o mas, porque el entendimiento obrador es aparejado ssin ningun departimiento a dar alma a todo cuerpo aparejado para la rrescebir, como el sol es aparejado para alunbrar a todo cuerpo Christo a Dios...”

→**Source Notes:**

No specific source but Cf. Avicenna’s discussion of the survival of the soul after death in *al-Najāt* and Ibn Bājjā’s discussion in *Ittiṣāl al-‘Aql bi-l-Insān*.

24. Mostrador 331r- “E el qui a tan gran virtud en ssí que non rrescibe passion en ssus obras de las criaturas e está ayuntado con Dios, en qui non a passion

ninguna, aquél abrá grand ventaja ssobre las criaturas passibles, e obedecerle-an muchas dellas, segunt que lo escribió el ssabio Aviçena.”

Source Notes: Source unidentified

25.

תשובות 18ב: "כן היה צורך לזכור הכתו' שם אלהים המורה על הרבוי אצל זכרון היחוד. וזה כמו שכתב החכם בן סינא שהאיפשרות אשר בנאצל הראשון היא התחלה אל הרבוי הנמצא בעולם. לא שהאיפשרות לבדה תהיה התחלה אל הריבוי הנמצא בעולם אלא האיפשרות עם המדע של הב"ה אשר בו ידע את הפרטים האיפשריים ומכריע את כל אחד מהם לצד מיוחד מן המציאות כי בדעתו את עצמו ואיך משתלשלים כולם ממנו ידעם כולם ויהיה סבה למציאותם" (Hecht 361).

[Teshuvot H18v- “There was a need for Scripture to use the name *Elohim* which indicates multiplicity in the mentioning of unity. This is similar to that which the sage, Ibn Sina, wrote: “The possibility which is in the first Emanation is the source of the plurality found in the universe.” It is not that by itself it is the beginning of the multiplicity which exists in the world, rather it is combined with the knowledge of the Holy One, blessed be He, through which He knows the possible particulars and determines the existential particularity of each. In His knowing Himself and how all of them emanate from Him, He knows them all and is the cause of their existence...”]

Teshuvot C48vb- “Como escribió el sabio Avicena que la posibilidadat que ovo el criado primero, aquello fue comienço a la muchedunbre que es en el mundo. Non quiso dezir que la posibilidadat sola fue comienço al muchiguamiento que es en el mundo, sinon que la posibilidadat con el saber de Dios, que sabe los individuos

possibles, (49a) enclina a cada uno a parte sse[n]alada del ser. Aquello es comienzo del amuchiguamiento que es en el mundo. Ca con que ssabe Dios a ssí mismo e como deçenden dél todas las cossas, sábelas todas e es caussa para el ser dellas...”

→**Source Notes:**

Avicenna in fact denies that God knows particulars individually, as he expresses in *al-Najāt* 403-4 (See Van den Bergh’s edition of Averroes’ *Tahāfut* 2:81). There is a parallel passage in the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifā’*, book eight, chapter seven:

”فهو لذلك يعقل الأشياء دفعة واحدة من غير أن يتكثر بها في جوهره، أو تتصور في حقيقة ذاته بصورها بل تفيض عنه صورها معقولة...ولأنه يعقل ذاته وأنه مبدأ كل شيء، فيعقل من ذاته كل شيء” (291).

[“He intellectually apprehends all things at once, without being rendered multiple by them in His substance, or their becoming conceived in their forms in the reality of His essence. Rather, their forms emanate from Him as intelligibles...Because he intellectually apprehends His essence, and that He is the principle of all things, He apprehends [by] His essence all things.”]

Abner/Alfonso’s explanation does, however, approximate Avicenna’s notion of emanation and creation in which God’s unity is the cause of multiplicity in creation. Citations like these show that Abner/Alfonso’s use of Avicenna was not totally inauthentic or confused. Cf. Gershenzon, *A Study*, 242 n. 35

26.

תשובות 24א: "וכמו שכתב בן סינא עוד שהפעולות הבאות מן בעלי הצורות אינן להם באמת אבל הן לפועל שיפעל בהם הפעולות המיוחדות אליהם וכמאמר האומר הייתי שמע לאשר שמע בי וראות לאשר ראה בי." (Hecht 371).

[Teshuvot H24r- “As Avicenna further wrote, “the actions which come from those who possess form do not belong to them in truth, rather they belong to the actor who causes, through them, the actions to which they are connected. This is like the statement of one who says “I was heard by the one who hears in me, and seen by the one who sees in me.”]

Teshuvot C52ra- “E como escribió el Avicena otrossi que las obras que vienen de los que han las formas non son suyas dellos segund verdat, mas son de obrador que obra con ellos las obras que son anonbradas a ellos. Et como el dicho del que dizia: “Fuy oyr al qui oyó conmigo, e ver al qui vio conmigo.”

Ofrenda 23ra- “E esto es como lo que escribió el Abicepna [sic] en la “Philosofia Oriental”, que las obras que vienen de las cosas fformadas, quiere dezir que an fformas con que obren, non son por ellas ssegund verdat, nin sson dellas, mas son de obrador que obra con ellas las obras que son anonbradas a ellas, e como el dezir del que dixo: “Ffuy oyr del que oyó comigo, e veer del que vio comigo.” E dixo: “Non eché quando eché, mas Dios es el qui echó.”

→**Source Notes:**

Gershenzon, *A Study* 266 n.41 attributes this to the mystic al-Hallāj and draws a comparison with Maimonides, *Guide* 2:12. It appears, however, to be taken from Ibn Ṭufayl, especially given the extra details added in the *Ofrenda*:

"فتبين له ان الافعال الصادرة عنها ليست في الحقيقة لها وإنما هي لفاعل يفعل بها الافعال المنسوبة اليها وهذا المعنى الذي لاح له هو معنى قول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به وبصره الذي يبصر به وفي محكم التنزيل فلم تقتلوهم ولكن الله قتلهم وما رميت اذ رميت ولكن الله رمى"

(ed. Gauthier 74)

[“Clearly, the acts emerging from forms did not really arise in them, but all the actions attributed to them were brought about through them by another Being. This idea to which he had now awakened is the meaning of the Prophet’s words: “I am the ears He hears by and the sight He sees by.” As it is written in the unshakable Revelation: “It was not you but God who killed them; when you shot, it was not you who shot, but God” (Trans. Goodman 127).]

27. Ofrenda 4vb- See #15

28. Ofrenda 6va-b- “Ca las sustancias e las mismidades de las cosas, que sson los ssubjectos de la philosophia, non an sseer ssinon en el sseer eterno divinal, e los individuos, enquanto (6d) sson individuos, aquellos ssolamiente son falladas en el sseer temporal, e como lo provó el Abiçenna en la ssu “Metaffisica”.

→**Source Notes:**

In various places in his work, primarily his *Shifā*, *Metaphysics* book 2, Avicenna does maintain that matter depends on God for its existence and that things require not only a cause to come into existence but to continue in existence. By distinguishing between a metaphysical and a physical acting cause, he shows that action in time is accidental to an agent and so not all action must take place in time, so long as its

agent (God) is that whose existence is necessary through itself, and not only possible through itself. In this way, he argues against temporal creation, implying that essence is eternal.’

29. Ofrenda 9rb-va- “Ca paresçe desto que él [Isaac] non sopo el departimiento que es entre la obra del alma voluntable e entre la obra del alma natural. E esto es que el obrador por natura, como dixo él, o como (9va) deviera dezir, es el que non puede obrar de ssu natura, ssinon de de la una las dos contrariedades de la cosa solamiente. E el obrador, que es anima voluntable, es el que puede obrar de ssu natura cada una de las dos contrariedades egualmiente, ca non es fforçado de ssí mismo e de ssu natura para obrar la una dellas sola, como lo fazia el obrador por natura. Mas el qui la enclina para obrar la una dellas sola, es ssentimiento de alguna cosa para los ssesos, o penssamiento, o fantasia, o ymaginacion intellegible, que aquellas son cosas que vienen de nuevo sobre él, segun las causas que desçenden del movimiento de la espera, el qual movimiento enduze las cosas nuevas enquanto son nuevas, como es provado en la “Metafisicia” [de Avicenna?]. Ca aquel movimiento es como el termino mediano que enduze el predicado para posar sobrel subjecto, como es ssabido en la “Logica.”

→**Source Notes:**

Possibly Avicenna’s *Shifā’*, although the sense of this explanation is hard to discern.

30. Ofrenda 15vb- See #40

31. Ley 5v- See #10**al-Ghazālī (d. 1111)**

32. Mostrador 85v “Por parte destas tres personas escribió el Algazel en el “Libro de la iluminarias” que apareció en su studio profundado que la sustancia servida, la qual su conparacion a las lunbrarias divinales es como conparacion del sol a las lunbrarias ssentibles, es tollida della la unidat, que es pura de todas partes, e que aquella manda mover el movedor primero, e que sobre ella a otra, que non a esta muchedunbre, e ésta es rrazon de la Trinidad ssin dubda...”

תשובות 20ב: "וכן כתב אבו האמד בספר המאורות שהתבאר לו מתוך עיונו הדק שהמצוי הנעבד אשר ערכו אל המאורות האלוהיות כערך השמש לכל המאורות המורגשים נעדר ממנו היחוד אשר מכל הצדדים וכי הוא המצוה את המניע הראשון להניע וכי עליו יש מצוי שאין לו זה הרבוי" (Hecht 365).

[**Teshuvot H20v:** “In *The Book of Lights* al-Ghazālī wrote that through minute investigation it became clear to him that “the Obeyed Existent that is related to the divine luminaries in the way that the sun is related to all the perceived luminaries can in no respect be unity. It commands the Prime Mover to move, and above it is an Existent without plurality.”]

Teshuvot C49vb-50ra: “Et assi el Algazel en el “Libro de las Luminarias” escrivia que conosció por so sutil (50ra) studio que el sseyente servido, el que su proporcion a las luminaries divinales es tal como la proporcion del sol a todas la luminaries ssentibles, es privado de la unidat pura, que es de todas partes, e que él

es que manda al movedor primero mover, e que sobrél ha otro seyent[e], que non ha este muchiguamiento. Ffasta aqui es ssu palabra. Et esta es rraçon de las personas de la Trinidad ssin dubda...”

תשובות 20ב: "וכשיהיה לו שום רבוי כדברי אבו חאמד ולא יהיה פחות מן שנים כי והוא הצווי וצירור הכוונה התכליתית באותו ציווי המיוחד" (Hecht 365).

[Teshuvot H20v- “The Obeyed Existent has some plurality, according to al-Ghazālī, it cannot be less than two, namely (21a) the command and the apprehension of the ultimate intent of that specific command.”]

Teshuvot C50ra- “Et aviendo en él [Dios] alguna muchedu[n]bre, como dixo el Algazel, e la muchedunbre no es menos de dos. Ca en este logar es el mandamiento e la ymaginaçion de la entençion final en aquel mandamiento proprio.”

→**Source Notes:**

Al-Ghazālī’s words are from *Mishkat al-Anwār* chapter III: 31, but this citation is probably taken from Ibn Ṭufayl, *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* which mentions this idea. This citation comes near other citations taken from Ibn Ṭufayl, and these citations are all near each other in Ibn Ṭufayl’s text.

Al-Ghazālī’s original text:

"وإتما الواصلون صنف رابع تجلى لهم أيضاً أن هذا المطاع موصوف بصفة تنافي الوجدانية المحضة والكمال البالغ لسر لا يحتمل هذا الكتاب كشفه: وأن نسبة هذا المطاع نسبة الشمس في الأنوار. فتوجهوا من الذي يحرك السموات و من الذي يحرك الجرم الأقص، ومن الذي أمر بتحريكها إلى الذي فطر السموات وفطر الجرم الأقصى وفطر الأمر بتحريكها، فوصلوا إلى موجود منزه عن كل ما أدركه بصر من قلبهم."

["Those who have arrived are the fourth type. To them it has been disclosed that the one who is obeyed is described by an attribute that contradicts sheer oneness and utmost perfection. [This] belongs to a mystery which is beyond the capacity of this book to unveil. The relationship of this one who is obeyed is that of the sun among the lights. Therefore, they have turned their faces from the one who moves the heavens, from the one who moves the furthest celestial body, from the one who commands moving them, to Him who originates the heavens, originates the furthest celestial body, and originates the one who commands moving the heavens. They have arrived at an existent thing that is incomparable with everything that their sight has perceived."]

Ibn Ṭufayl's Text:

"وهو قوله بعد ذكر اصناف المحجوبين بالانوار ثم انتقاله إلى ذكر الواصلين انهم وقفوا على ان هذا الموجود متصف بصفة تنافي الوجدانية المحضة" (Gauthier, ed. 17-18).

["After discussing those "veiled by light", [al-Ghazālī] goes on to speak of those who achieve communion with the divine. He says they know this Being as characterized by an attribute which would tend to negate His utter unity."]

See also # 10, above. Cf. Gershenzon 250 notes 58-9.

33. Mostrador 109r- See #64

34. Mostrador 111v- See # 9

35. Mostrador 126v- See # 13

36. Mostrador 139r- “Como escribió el algazel en el “Libro de las contradicciones” que saber Dios las cosas es rrelativo, e non rrelaçion como otros sabers, que sson rrelaciones entre el sabidor e la cosa sabida de parte de fuera, e que assi sse puede mudar uno de los rrelativos sin que sse mude el otro rrelativo. E esto es como estar el pilar al diestro de Pedro e despues tornarse al siniestro, ssin que sse mude el pilar. Tal es la rrazon en el saber de Dios; ca maguera que sse demude la cosa sabida de fuera, non se muda el saber de Dios a ella. E en esto concuerda el sabio Aben Rrost, como lo escribió en el “Libro del saber eterno” que dixo que Dios las cosas es causa al su ser dellas e su rrenovamiento , non que el saber de Dios sea sostenido en las cosas, ssinon que ellas son sostenidas en saberlas Dios a ella[s]. E dixo que ésta es la opinion e rrazon de todo omne que sse atiene a las opinions e los entendimientos de Aristotiles.”

תשובות: 20א: "וכתב אבו חאמד אל גזאלי בספר ההכחשות כי ידיעת האלוה את הדברים הוא נערך לא ערך כאשר ידיעות וכן כתב אבו אל וליד בן רשד בספר המדע הקדמון" (Hecht 364).

[Teshuvot H20r: “Al-Ghazālī wrote in his *Book of Refutation* that God’s knowledge of things is not a changing one in a relationship like the knowledge in other beings, but correlate. And Averroes wrote to the same effect in *The Book of Ancient Science*.”]

Teshuvot C49vb: “Et scrivió el Algazel en el “Libro de los Desmentimientos” que el saber Dios las cossas es rrelativo e non rrelaçion como otras sabidurias. E assi escribió Aben Rroyz en el “Libro del Ssaber eterno.”

→**Source Notes:**

Al-Ghazālī's original (*Tahāfut al-Falāsifah* 13:10; and Ibn Rushd's *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*: 13:10 response (Van den Bergh 280):

"(حال) هي اضافة محضة ككونك يمينا وشمالا، فانّ هذا لا يرجع إلى وصف ذاتي بل هو اضافة محضة"

["It is a state] which is a pure relation, like being to the right or to the left [of something]; for this does not refer to an essential attribute but is a pure relation."]

Ibn Rushd's version *Damīma* [a.k.a *Epistle Dedicatory to Faṣl al-Maqāl*] 6 [solution]:

"قال قولاً معناه هذا: وهو أنه زعم أن العلم والمعلوم من المضاف، وكما أنه قد يتغير أحد المضيفين ولا يتغير المضاف الآخر في نفسه كذلك يشبه أن يعرض للأشياء في علم الله سبحانه أعني أن تتغير في أنفسها ولا يتغير علمه سبحانه بها. ومثال ذلك في المضاف أنه قد تكون الأستوانة الواحدة يمنة زيد ثم تعود يسرته

وزيد بعد لم يتغير في نفسه." (*Decisive Treatise and Epistle Dedicatory* 40)

["(Al-Ghazālī claimed that)... knowledge and what is known are related; and just as one of two things may change and the other related thing not change in itself, so it is likely to occur with things in God's knowledge...an example of that...is for there to be a single column on Zayd's right, then for it to come to be on his left while Zayd would not have changed in himself."]

Cf. Raymond Martini's translation of the "Epistula ad amicum":

"Scientia, inquit, et scitum relata sunt: sicut ergo plerumque mutatur unum relativorum, et alterum non mutatur in se; sic videtur rebus contingere in scientia Dei, videlicet ut mutantur ipsae res in se, et non mutetur Deus propter hoc, nec scientia eius; quemadmodum, verbi gratia, in relatione contingit, quod erit

candelabrum ad dextram Zeydi, deinde transferatur ad sinistram ipsius; et Zaydus nondum est in seipso mutatus...” (*Pugio Fidei*, Part one, section 25, p. 251).

[“Knowledge, he said, and the thing known are related, in such a way that many times one of the relative terms is moved and the other is not moved in itself. Thus does it seem things are held in the knowledge of God, that is, those things are moved in themselves, without God or his knowledge being moved on account of it. This is in such a way, for example, that there is a candle stick on the right of Zayd, and then it is transferred to his left, and Zayd is not moved in himself...”]

See also Hourani, *Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy* 98-9 n. 93 and his edition of the *Faṣl al-maqāl*, note D.

37. Mostrador 228r- See #61

38. Mostrador 164r- “E assi el Aviçena e el Algazel e Ben Alçayz ffazian tales maneras encubiertas como éstas en estas rrazones maravillosas. E por esso dixo el ssabio Algazel: Ffue lo que ffue, de lo que no dire; e piensa bien, e non me preguntes que te lo diga. E cierto es que non sse detenia tal ssabio como aquél de dezir el bien ssinon porque no plazeria a algunos que los oyesse de los de su Ley”

תשובות 21א: "ולכך אמ' אבו חאמד היה מה שהיה ממה שלא אזכירינו וחשוב טוב ולא תשאל

שאגדינו". (Hecht 365).

[**Teshuvot H21r:**] “Thus Abu Hamid said “What came into being, from what I will not mention. Think well and do not ask me to tell about it.”]

Teshuvot C50ra: “Et por esso dixo el Algael: ‘Es lo que es de lo que non nonbraré. E pienssa bien, e non preguntes que te lo diga.’”

→**Source Notes:**

Al-Ghazālī’s *Munkidh min al-dalāl* (*Deliverance From Error*), but probably as quoted in Ibn Ṭufayl’s *Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān* since Abner/Alfonso does not show any other familiarity with *Munkidh min al-dalāl* or mention it by name and this citation comes near other citations taken from Ibn Ṭufayl:

"فكان ما كان مما لست اذكره فظن خيرا ولا تسأل عن الخبر"

(Gautier, ed. 4/Goodman, trans. 96)

[“It was what it was, of which I will not speak. Think it well, and do not ask about it.”]

Cf. Gershenzon, *A Study* 252 n. 64.

39. Ofrenda 4va-b- See #15

40. Ofrenda 15vb- “E como lo que escrivió el Abiçena, e assi el Algazel, que en lo que Dios ssabe la ordenaçion de todas las causas, ssabe todas las posibilidades ssin dubda, de ssin que sse le amuchiguen ssaberes apartados, ssinon que en manera de todo las ssabe todas; e que el astrolog, porque pescuda de algunas de las causas ssolamiente e non puede circundar e ssaberlas todas, ha dubda en su juyzio. E ssi pudiesse sseer que alcançasse todas las causas, sseria ssu juyzio cumplido e ssu ssaber verdadero çierto”

→**Source Notes:**

This seems to be taken from Averroes' *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, discussion thirteen, although Abner/Alfonso seems to confuse the different views of Avicenna and Al-Ghazālī. The former does believe that God knows individual things, but only "in a universal way," (*Kitāb al-Najāt* 404 l.4) whereas al-Ghazālī believes that God knows all individually things individually. See Van den Bergh 2:150. See also # 25.

Ibn Bājja (Avempace) (d. 1138)

41. Mostrador 106r- "Ya uno de los grandes filosofos, que ovo nonbre Abulcad ben Alçayz, quando proffundava en ssu studio divinal e que tenia que era ayuntado a Dios en aquel studio, dizia: yo sso todos los passados"

Mostrador 115r- "E quando el entendido fuere rrazon de uno de los justos primeros, sera el entendimiento del entendedor ayuntado con aquel justo mismo, en guisa que serán una cosa en alguna manera e como dixo el filosofo Abubid: Yo so todos los antigos passados"

Ley 10r- "E dizen que un grand filosofo, Abubac ben Cays su nonbre, dixo: "Yo so todos los passados"

Cf. Ofrenda 28vb-29ra- "...todo que pone rrazon o que (29a) rresponde al conponedor contradiziéndole, es le mester ante...que estudie en todos los libros que sson conpuestos en aquella rrazon de todos los ssabios passados, e que non enloçanezca en ssu ymaginacion, nin que cuyde en ssu coraçon firmar alguna cosa

o negarla por su entendimiento solo, sino por el entendimiento de todos los sabios, como lo nombró el Filosofo.”

→ **Source Notes:**

Ibn Bājja makes statements to this effect in various places, including the *Risālat al-Widāʿ* (*Letter of Farewell*) and the *Ittiṣāl al-ʿAql bi-l-Insān* (*Union of the Intellect with Man*).

”فإن غرضت لقائى فأنا أرشدك وأرشد من يصد إليه هذا القول من إخواننا الذين في هذا الزمان ومن يأتى به الزمان منهم ويُثبثهم غابر الدهر، فكلّ من له هذا النوع من الفكرة واتفق له مع ذلك أن يرى هذا الرأى فهو من إخواننا كما نحن من إخوان مَنْ تقدم من أسلافنا ولست أعنى بالسلف للآباء الذين ولدوا أجسامنا بل أعنى بهم من ولد نفوسنا أو كان شأنه أن يلد مثله”

(Asín Palacios, “La ‘Carta de Adios’ de Avempace” 16)

[“If you truly seek to find me, I will guide you on the right path, as I will guide also all those of my friends who receive this treatise, those who live now, and those who will come to life in time over the course of future centuries. Because all who possess this sort of natural talent and who, moreover, profess this doctrine by happy coincidence, all of them are our brothers, as we are [brothers] of all our ancestors who preceded us. And by “ancestors” I don’t mean our fathers who engendered our bodies, but those who engendered our souls, or whose function was to engender something similar to themselves.”]

”وهذا العقل—إن كان واحدا بالعدد في كل إنسان—فظاهر على ما تلخص قبل هذا أنّ الأناسى الموجودين الذاهبين والغابرين واحد بالعدد غير أنّ هذا مشتع وعسى أن يكون محالا وإن كان الأناسى الموجودين والذاهبين والغابرين ليسوا واحدا بالعدد وهذا العقل ليس بواحد وبالجملة فإن كان هذا عقل واحد بالعدد فالأشخاص الذين لهم مثل هذا العقل كلهم واحد بالعدد”

(Asín Palacios, “Tratado de Avempace sobre la unión del intelecto con el hombre” 14).

[“If the intellect is arithmetically one in every man, then clearly, from what has been sketched thus far, all people, past, present and future, would be one arithmetically, bizarre and perhaps absurd as that might seem. But if they are not arithmetically one, this Intellect is not one...If there is one intellect in all of us, then all the individuals who have it are one arithmetically.”]

"المحرك الأول—ما دام باقيا واحدا بعينه—كان ذلك الموجود واحدا بعينه سواء فقد الآلة ولم يجد عوضها كالشيخ الأذرد—أو وجد عوضها—كحال من تنبت له الأسنان" (11).

[“As long as the prime mover is the same, the individual remains the same, whether he loses some instrument and finds no replacement, like the toothless old man, or does find one, like the youngster whose adult teeth are coming in.”]

But compare Ibn Ṭufayl’s statement, which suggests that, once again, Abner/Alfonso took his citation from Ibn Ṭufayl, not directly from the original text:

"وانظر إلى قول ابي بكر ابن الصانع...فانه يقول اذا فهم المعنى المقصود ظهر عند ذلك انه لا يمكن ان يكون معلوم من العلوم المتعاطاة في مرتبته وحصل متصوره بفهم ذلك المعنى في رتبة يرى نفسه فيها مباينا لجميع ما تقدم..." (Gautier, ed. 5).

[Look at the words of Ibn Bājja... “Once these ideas are understood it will be clear that nothing learned in ordinary studies can reach this level. For once the concept is grasped the mind can see itself as cut off from all that went before...” (Goodman, trans. 96).]

Mettmann identifies Abner/Alfonso's reference to him as to Ibn Ṭufayl in his edition of the *Libro de la ley* (111 n. 266), but corrects this in the *Mostrador*. On this notion in Ibn Bājja and its influence on Maimonides, see Goodman, *Jewish and Islamic Philosophy* 108-118.

42. Mostrador 112r- “Mas lo que escribió Rrabi Mosse el Egipciano en el capitulo sesenta e tres del capitulo primero de su libro “mostrador de los dubdosos”, e que lo nonbró por nonbre de del sabio moro Ben Alçayz e de todos los que punnaron de fablar en estas cosas profundadas, que lo que rremaneçe a Rrubem despues de su muerte es uno en numero con lo que rremanece de Ssimon, non es guisado a cudar que sera esto sinon despues que fueren las almas purgadas e alinpiadas, aviendo rreçebido su juyzio cada una por ssí”

תשובות 14א: "וזה גם כן כמו שכתבת באגרת שלישית שקראת אותה אגרת התקוה שהנשאר מנפש ראובן לאחר המות אינו זולת הנשאר מנפש שמעון. כי יתחייב מזה לומר שאין שכר ולא עונש ולא יתרון לנפשות הצדיקים ולא לנפשות הרשעים זו על זו כשלא יהיה בינותן שום הבדל במה שתהיה זאת זולת זאת" (Hecht 325).

[Teshuvot H14ra- "...“what is left of the soul of Reuben after death is nothing other than what is left of the soul of Simon.” Following this, it is necessary to say that there is no reward or punishment and that neither the righteous nor the evil souls have any advantage when compared to one another in that there are no differences between them.”]

Teshuvot C46rb- “...lo que finca del alma de Rruben despues de la muerte non es otro en uno sinon que lo que finca del alma de Simon. Ca seguirse-a desta tu

rrazon que non ay galardón nin pena a las almas, nin ventaja a las almas de los justos, nin de los malos, unas sobre otras, quando non oviere entre ellas alguna diferencia, con que sea la una otra que la otra.”

→**Source Notes:**

1:74 of the *Guide*. “What remains of Zayd is neither the cause nor the effect of what remains of Umar. Consequently, all are one in number, as Abū Bakr Ibn al-Ṣā’igh and others who were drawn into speaking of these matters have made clear” (221). See Hecht 140 n. 224, who also points out Pines’ Introduction, ciii-cviii, esp. ciii-civ and Maimonides’ similar statement in the *Letter on Resurrection*.

43. Mostrador 164r- See #60

Abū Marwān ibn Zuhr (grandson)

(d. 557/1161)

44. Ofrenda 5rb- “Escribió Ypocras e lo nonbró Ben Zohar, que a las vezes viene pestilencia e muerte en el mundo por los peccadores que van contra su voluntad de Dios”

→**Source Notes:** See #2

Abū Bakr Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 1185)

45. Mostrador 17r-v/94v- See # 18.

46. Mostrador 163v- See #60

47. Mostrador 164v- See #60

→See also #7, 12, 26, 32, 38, and 41 which show Abner/Alfonso's constant reliance on Ibn Ṭufayl's text.

Ibn Rushd (d. 1197)

48. Mostrador 21r- “De rrazonar contra nos de lo que escribió Aben Rroys, de que erró el que dixo: “alabado e enssalçado so, ca mucho es grande el mi grado de alteza.”

→**Source Notes:** See #60

49. Mostrador 102r- “E assi tenia el ssabio Aben Rrost la glosa deste detenimiento de Adam, omne primero.”

→**Source Notes:**

Possibly Ibn Rushd's *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect*. See Narboni's commentary (Hebrew 140/English 105).

50. Mostrador 109r- See #64

51. Mostrador 92v- “Ca perder omne ffiuza del galardon para el otro mundo, esto le aduze a perdiçion, asi como aver fiuza de averle al otro mundo con las obras, esto le aduze a ganarle, e ssegund que lo escrivió tal el ssabio Aben Rrost.”

Mostrador 114r- “E como escrivió el sabio Ben Rrost en el “Libro del ayuntamiento divinal” que en aver los omnes emiente de Dios e ffazer bonas obras, las que enduzen ssu nonbramiento, sienpre es el camino para ganer los omnes al otro mundo e la Gloria eternal. E como prove ssuso que olvidando los omnes la pena e el galardon, que enduze olvidar a Dios, aquello es camino para perdiçion de la almas e sser judgadas al inffierno”

Mostrador 79v- “Ca por nonbrar esta rrazon e non callar della, segunt escrivió es sabio Aben Rrost en el “Libro del ayuntamiento divinal” que nonbrado a Dios a su amor e su temor e sus mandamientos sienpre, a menudo faze allegar al omne a la Gloria perdurable”

→**Source Notes:**

Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect:

“...היתה העבודה התוריית אמנם הונחה לזכרון האל וזכרון לעולם הרוחני...ולזכרון האל תחוייב לו ביותר מהמנעו מהזמה והחמס. ואל הפך זה הענין באמרו ית', אם תשכחו האל הנה ישכחכם כי זכרון האל הוא סבת הגעת ההצלחה” (138-39)

[“...the *Shari'a* was established for remembering God and for remembering the spiritual world...The remembrance of Allah is a greater obligation for one than one’s restraining to do that which is abominable and unlawful. And He, may he be exalted, indicated the opposite of this by stating, “If you forget Allah, behold

He shall forget you” (Quran 9:68), for it is the remembrance of Allah which is the cause for the attainment of felicity (104).”]

...הנהגה כבוד התבאר לך שהצלחה לא תגיע בלמידה לבד ולא במעשה לבד ושהיא אמנם תגיע בשני

הפנים" (145)

[“It has been made clear to you that the felicity will not be attained by study alone or by action alone, but it will be attained by both things together.” (108).]

52. Mostrador 117r- “Enpero que es mester de entender en quál manera alcança cuento e diferencia a las intelligencias separadas en quanto son causas e causados, e en quál manera son la unas causadas de las otras, aun ssegund los ffilosofos que dizen dellas que son eternas, de ssin comienço temporal. Ca non es esto sinon, como dixo Aben Rrost, en que sea la una causa formal o ffinal, asi como las sciencias que son comienços e causas unas de otras, fasta que llegan a [la] çiençia primera, alta sobre todas, e que sson todas encerradas en ella... E escribió el Avicena que las intelligençias separadas non son Dios mismo, nin otra cosa, e que non son ellas almas de la esperas, nin otra cosa, E aseméjalas a la luz del sol, que esclareçe sobre los cuerpos, que ello non es otra cosa sinon la luz del sol proporcionada al cuerpo”

→**Source notes:**

The reference to Avicenna is drawn from Ibn Ṭufayl (See # 10). Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachian Ethics* Bk. 1, ch. 1-2, 9, cited in *Teshuvot* 12v/45ra and *Metaphysics* 5:2, cited in *Teshuvot* 20r/49va

53. Mostrador 117v- See #11

54. Mostrador 118r- “Otro si escribió Aben Rrost en el “Libro de las contradiciones” que todos los filosofos otorgan que en los elimentos es calenture celeste, la que sufre las virtudes que engendran los animals e las plantas, e que Galieno la llama la virtud figuradora e criadora, e que dixo Platon que aquélla es la virtud criadora e engendradora del cuerpo...”

תשובות 22א: "וכתב אבו אל וליד בן רשד בספר הכחשת ההכחשות שלא יחלוק אחד מן הפילוסופים שיש ביסודות חמימות שמימי נושא את הכחות המהוים את בעלי חיים ואת הצמחים...וכי גאלינוס יקראם הכח המצייר והיוצר...וכי כן אפלטון אמ' שהוא הכח היוצר והמצייר את הגוף וכי אילו היה הגוף תנאי למציאות הכל לא היה יוצר ולא מצייר אותו. ואמ' בן רשד כי מכאן נכנסו לומר במציאות השדים". (Hecht 367-8)

[Teshuvot H22r- “In *The Book of the Refutation of the Refutation*, Abu al-Walid Ibn Rushd wrote “None of the philosophers are opposed that there is in the elements heavenly warmth and that this is the substratum for the potencies which produce animals and plants...Galen calls it the forming power and the Creator...From this Plato said that it is the faculty which creates and forms the body, and if a body was a pre-condition for the existence of this faculty it could not create it or form it. Averroes said that this is the origin of their saying that demons exist”]

Teshuvot C50vb- “Et escribió Aven Rroys en el “Libro del [d]esmentimiento de los desmentimientos” que non contradize ninguno de los philosophos de que es en los elementos calenture çelestial, que es subjecto de las virtudes que dan generacion a los animals e a las plantas, e que Galieno las llama la virtud

figurador e criador. Que assi Platon dixo que aquella es la virtud criador e figurador del cuerpo, e que si el cuerpo fuesse condiçion el ser de la virtud, non seria ella criador nin figurador dél. E dixo Aven Rroys que por aqui entraron a dezir que avia diablos en el mundo”

→**Source Notes:**

Ibn Rushd, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*:

”فإنه لا يختلف أحد من الفلاسفة أن في الاسطقتات حرارة سموية وهي حاملة للقوى المكونة للحيوان والنبات. لكن بعضهم يسمى هذه قوة طبيعية سماوية وجالينوس يسميها القوة المصورة ويسميها أحياناً الخالق...ومن هنا يستدل أفلاطون على أن النفس مفارقة للبدن لأنها هي المخلقة له والمصورة. ولو كان البدن شرطاً في وجودها لم تخلقه ولا صورته”. (2:860)

[“None of the philosophers is opposed to the theory that in the elements there is heavenly warmth and that this is the substratum for the potencies which produce animals and plants, but some of the philosophers call this potency a natural heavenly potency, whereas Galen calls it the forming power and sometimes the demiurge...From this Plato proves that the soul is separated from the body, for the soul creates and forms the body, and if the body were the condition for the existence of the soul, the soul would not have created and formed it.” (Van den Bergh 357-8)]

55. Mostrador 118v- “Escribió Aben Rrost en el “Libro del ayuntamiento divinal” que no a en todo el mundo cosa estable sinon Dios solo, e que aquello es la su unidad, e que por ello fue dicho en el Christo que era Fijo de Dios, e que la divinidad se envistió en la umanidad...”

תשובות 24ב: "וכתב בן רשד בספר הדבוק האלוהי שאין בכל המציאות לבד האלוה וכי זה הוא הייחוד שלו וכי לכך נאמר במשיח שהיה בן אלהים וכי האלהות התלבש באנושות ולקח בשר בבטן האשה מרים כשנתעברה מן המשיח." (Hecht 372).

[Teshuvot H 24v- “Averroes wrote in the *Book of Divine Conjunction*, “There is nothing in all existence except God. This is His unity [or uniqueness]. In this way it is said about the Messiah that He was the son of God. The divine became incarnate in man and took on flesh in the womb of the woman, Mary, when she became pregnant with the Messiah.”]

Teshuvot C52ra- “E escribió Aven Rrost en el “Libro del Ayuntamiento divinal” que non ha en todo el ser sinon Dios, e que esta es la ssu unidat. E que por esso fue dicho en el Christo que fue Fijo de Dios; que la divinidad se envistió en la humanidad e tomó carne en vientre de la muger Maria, quando conçibió al Christo.”

→**Source Notes:**

Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect, preserved in Hebrew in Moses Narboni's commentary (Hebrew 65 / English 59-60)

"ואין בנמצא רק השם ישתבח כל הנמצאות וזה הוא הייחוד וזה הוא כנגד לאשר הם טועים שאומרים

במשיח שהוא בן אלהים והאלהות יצה מאשה ושהאל נכנס בבטן מרים ונשאה משיח."

[...Only God...is in existence and that He brought into being all the existents. This is the unity. And this is directed against those who err in saying of the Messiah that he is the son of God, and that the divinity came forth out of a woman, and that the deity entered the womb of Mary, who bore the Messiah.” (Hebrew 65, English 59.)] Cf. #60

56. Mostrador 127r- “E si tú catases en el “Libro de las contradiciones” que escribió Aben Rrost sobre el Avicena en el neçesario del ser, fallarás que él tiene que todas las esperas del çielo e todos lo angeles non fue la fin de la entenion porque fueron mester de ser sinon por una cosa sola. E era esto que salga al ser todo lo que es en la sapiençia de Dios para sacar, que esto es para continuar la generacion e la corrupçion con la virtud infinida. E escribió segund la opinion de Aristotiles que la primera entenion por natura e la causa final al movimiento de la espera en aquel movimiento conprende a todas las esperas; e aquél es el movimiento divino. Fue para que cada una de las partes de la espera esté sobre lo poblado de la tierra por mester de la generacion e de la corrupçion e que el deçendimiento de cada parte dellas diuso de la tierra es por entençion del subir de la parte que es su oposito sobre la tierra, segund que es tal en el omne que mueve el pie diestro segund la primera entençion, e que mueve el pie siniestro segund entençion segunda, para que se asufra sobrél para tornar al movimiento del pie diestro otra vegada”

→**Source Notes:**

This is a summary of part of the fifteenth discussion of the *Tahāfut* on the movement of the heavens. See especially Van den Bergh, 1:295-8. e.g. “as to the fact that the other heavens move in two contrary movements besides the diurnal, this happens because of the necessity of this opposition of movements for the sublunary world, namely the movement of generation and corruption” (1:298).

57. Mostrador 127v- See #15

58. Mostrador 139r- See # 36

59. Mostrador 162r- See #60

60. Mostrador 162r- “Non cudes que olvidé lo que tæ cudeste aduzir prueba...de que escribió Aben Rrost en el “Libro del ayuntamiento divinal” que ffue dicho con derecho e con rrazon en el Christo que era ffijo de Dios e que la divinidad se envistió e la umanidad e tomó carne en el vientre de la muger. Que yo veo que erreste en esto o quisiste fazer errar; e esto es que furteste el comienço de la palabra que dizia assi. E esta rrazon es lo que ffizo errar al [que se tenia por Dios], qui dixo: “Alabado sso e ensalçado so. ¡Quáto grand es mi grado!”...E cata que ssu entencion de Aben Rrost fue para dezir que erraron los christianos en lo que dixieron en el Christo que era ffijo de Dios e que la divinidad sse envistió en ssu umanidad, como erró aquel que sse tenia por Dios, qui dixo: “Alabado sso e ensalçado so. ¡Quáto grand es mi grado! E tú tomeste la palabra de Aben Rrst a onrra e alabança del Christo de los christianos, e él non lo dixo ssinon para desonrra dellos, como tú vees.”

Mostrador 163v-164r “E porrede, quando el ssabio Aben Rosht alabava el ayuntamiento divinal que diximos e dizia que non a en todo el mundo cosa estable ssinon Dios, e que aquello es la su unidat, e que por esso fue dicho en el Christo que era Ffijo de Dios, e que la divinidad sse envistió en la umanidad e

tomó carne en vientre de la muger Maria, quando concibió del Christo, despreciava entonçe a uno de los ffilosoffos que ffazia de ssí Dios, e dixo que esto es lo que ffizo errar al que dizia: “Alabado sso e enssalçado. ¡Quánto grande es el mi grado! E descubrió en esto que todo qui ffaze de ssí Dios, ssino el Christo, yerra e pecca...e ésta ffue la entençion de Aben Rrost ssin dubda en aquella palabra en que alabava aquel ayuntamiento divinal, como lo ovo Moysen e los otros omnes que llaman *çoffim*, e como lo alabava el Aviçena en el “Libro de la Ffilosofia oriental”, donde aprendió Aben Rrost aquella unidat de Dios, que nonbró, ssegund pareçe, en la manera de su fablar...e más, que puede ser qu’el sabio Aben Rrsot tenia en sus palabras mientes, demas desto, a que los de ssu gente, que estos sson los moros, nol toviessen por ereje en su Ley e en su secta, como e huso de todo ssabio e entendido de esquivar palabras que el comun de la gente las entienda en una manera e los sabios pocos las entiendan en otra manera. E assi como ffizo el ssabio Ben Tuffayl quando contó ffazienda de Hylel ben Huriel, que en comienço del libro como que despreciava al que dixo “alabado sso e enxalçado. ¡Quánto grande es mi grado!: e al que dixo : Yo sso Dios”. E despues alabava mucho a lo que al(164r)cançó Yehiel en la ffin del ssu grant studio santo que la verdaderia de su sustancia era la verdaderia de Dios ssin demudamiento ninguno. Ca non queria otrogar paladinamient que pudiesse llegar a la ffin de aquel grado maravilloso ssinon un omne solamiento, a quel mostraron encubiertamente, con el nonbre Yehiel ben Huriel; e aquel es, segund los que creen, la Ley del Rrey Christo, como ya dixiemos. E assi el Aviçena e el Algazel e

Ben Alçayz ffazian tales maneras encubiertas como éstas en estas rrazones maravillosas...

Mostrador 164v- “E él ssignificava en esto a los que erraron e se fazian dioses, non seyendo el tienpo que era prometido de los prophetas, como lo provaremos, si Dios quisiere, e como lo mostraron encubiertamiente los ffilosofos Ben Rrost e Ben Tufayl en lo que dixieron que erró el que (165r) dixiera “Alabado sso e ensalçado. ¡Quánto es grande el mi grado!”...

Mostrador 104r- “E como dixieron que Quiram, el rrey de Çor, e Nabucadonosor, rrey de Babilonna, e Tiberio Çesar e Gayo Çesar ffazian de ssí mismos dioses. E assi algunos ffilosoffos lo ffazian tal...”

תשובות 24א-ב: "וכן קצת הפילוסופים היו עושין את עצמן אלוהות כגון האומ' "אין תחת לבושי' אלא האלוה" ואמ' אחר "אני הוא האמיתי". כמו שאמ' אחר "אני הוא השכל הפועל" [24ב] ואמ' "אשתבח ואתרום מה גדולה מעלתי" (Hecht 372).

[**Teshuvot H24r-v-** “Also, a few of the philosophers deified themselves. For example, the one who says: “There is nothing under my garment but God.” Another said: “I am the true one.” Likewise, another said: “I am the active intellect.” (24b). He said: “I will be praised and exalted, how great is my high position.”]

Teshuvot C52ra- “Et assi algunos philosophos façian de ssí mismos dioses. Como el que dixia: “Non está so mi vestido sinon Dios.” E dizia otro: “Yo so el verdadero.” E dizíalo por Dios. Como dixo otro: “Yo sso la inteligencia agente.” (24b) E dixo otro: “Alabado e exalçado so, je quánto es grant el mi grado!”

→Source Notes:

Ibn Rushd: *Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect* (see #55).

Ibn Ṭufayl: *Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān*:

"غيران تلك الحال لما لها من البهجة والسرور والذة لا يستطيع من وصل اليها وانتهى إلى حد من حدودها ان يكتم امرها او يخفى سرها...[و]بعضهم قان في هذه الحال سبحانى ما اعظم شأنى وقال غيره انا الحاق

وقال آخر ليس فى الشوب الا الله". (Gauthier, ed. 4).

[“But the joy, delight, and bliss of this ecstasy are such that no one who has reached it or even come near it can keep the secret or conceal the mystery...thus in this state one said “Praise be to me, great am I! Another said “I am the Truth”; another, “There is within this robe nothing but God!” (Goodman, trans. 95)]

The passage from Ibn Ṭufayl that Abner/Alfonso seems to be citing was based on a very similar passage found near the end of chapter one of Al-Ghazālī’s *Mishkāṭ al-Anwār* (18). In the *Teshuvot* 23v/51va, Abner/Alfonso cites a statement that Themistius also once claimed “I am the active intellect”, a claim alluded to in other passages mentioning Themistius in the *Mostrador* (e.g. 119r) and the *Teshuvot*. Hecht, 165 n. 357, identifies the source of this as Themistius’ commentary on *De Anima*, 3.5. Parts are also taken from *Midrash ha-Gadol* 2, 57-8. Cf. a similar statement in # 18

61. Mostrador 228r- “...non entre en voluntad de omne que Dios ssabe la generalidades e las especies de parte de la material universal dellas, e que non ssabe los individuos, sinon que cada individuo, tan bien de sustancias como de asçidentes, todo es conocido ante Dios. E como dixo David, Non es negado mi

cuerpo sustancial de ti; e como lo escribió el ssabio Aben Rrost en el “Libro del saber sempiterno” e assi escribió Aviçena, e otros el Algazel, e otros ffilosofos que ssiguen a ellos.”

Ofrenda 4vb- “Otrossi escribió el ssabio Abubalit [sic] ben Rrost en el “Libro del Saber Eterno” que todos los ffilosofos que sson de la companna de Aristotiles tienen que Dios ssabe las particularidades e los individuos de todas las cosas nuevas con ssaber eterno, que non es de nuevo como ellas. Porque él es causa a ellas, e non causado dellas, como lo faze el ssaber nuevo, e que porende non sabe Dios las cosas con ssaber nuevo, mas sábelas con ssaber eterno. E dixo más en aquel libro como convenia a cuydar de los ssabios omnes desta companna que tovyessen (5a) ellos que el ssaber eterno de Dios non circundasse a todos los individuos, entendiendo ellos que él es causa de las prophecias e e los suen[n]os verdaderos e de los agüeros e adevinanças.”

Ofrenda 5ra- “Evás aqui provado de los dichos de Aristotiles, como dixo Ben Rrost, que Dios es causa e rraz[o]n de las prophecias e de los ssuen[n]os verdaderos, e que con ellos faze ssaber las cosas nuevas que son a contesçer en el mundo. E assi sse prueba esto por dichos de Pharavio en los ssuennos (5b) e en la proffeçias”

→**Source Notes:**

Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*:

"وكيف يُتوهم على المشائين أنهم يقولون أنه سبحانه لا يعلم بالعلم القديم الجزئيات وهم يرون أن الرؤيا الصادقة تتضمن الإنذارات بالجزئيات الحادثة في الزمان المستقبل..."

(*The Book of the Decisive Treatise* 13-14).

["How is it to be fancied that the Peripatetics would say that He (glorious is He) does not know particulars with eternal knowledge when they are of the opinion that true dream-visions contain premonitions of particular things that are to be generated in the future...?" (*The Book of the Decisive Treatise* 13-14)]

Compare this passage a nearly identical one in the *Damīma* (*The Book of the Decisive Treatise* 42). On Al-Fārābī's theory of dreams, see *Medīnat al-Fādila*, ch. 24-5, and Mu'tazid Wali ur-Rahman, "Al-Fārābī and his theory of dreams."

62. Teshuvot H20r / C49vb- See #36

63. Ofrenda 10ra- "E más, que el alma humanal non es toda sseparada como lo él cuidó, salvo el entendimiento ganado ssolamientre, que aquel mismo es el entendimiento agente, segund Abenrrost. El qual entendimiento non obra ninguna sinon con medianeria del entendimiento passivo, el qual por él dixo Aristotiles que es generado e corrupto."

→**Source Notes:**

Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect, passim.

64. Mostrador 109r- "los dientes e la lengua e los rrostros fueron en los animals estrumentos paral comer, e demas desto ffueron en el omne estrumentos para ffablar. E ya concordaron en esto muchos de los sabios antiguos, como Rrabi Abraham ben Ezra e Rrabi Mosse el Egipciano e otros que ssiguen a ellos. E assi

entre los Christianos lo ffizo tal ssant Agostin e otros sabios de la teologia, e entre los moros lo ffizieron tal el Aviçena e el Algazel e Aben Rrost e otros tales.

→**Source Notes:**

Possibly Aristotle's *De Anima* II.8: "The tongue is for the purpose of taste and speech"

Appendix Four

Preliminary Index of Source Citations in the *Moreh/Mostrador*

The following index contains an index of the source citations I have been able to identify in the *Mostrador de justicia* during the course of my research, as well as those citations identified in by other scholars in Abner/Alfonso's other works. Where appropriate, it draws heavily from the work of previous scholars, notably Hecht, Gershenzon, Rosenthal, Sainz de la Maza, and Mettmann. It hardly needs to be said that this list is nowhere near complete. Because it is the first index of actual page citations ever compiled for Abner/Alfonso's work, it is necessarily a very preliminary version of a much larger project, one whose proper completion extends far beyond my own knowledge and expertise. I am certain I have made my share of errors along the way of which I am unaware. I provide this work-in-progress in part as a demonstration of the breadth of Abner/Alfonso's knowledge, in part to show the essential place of the *Mostrador* in any consideration of Abner/Alfonso's work, and in part as a tool for other scholars to use as a starting point for their own research on Abner/Alfonso. I only hope that the information I provide helps more than it hinders in the further investigation.

For texts that survive in both Hebrew and Castilian version, Hebrew folia are listed first, Castilian second, and H/C is omitted. When only one manuscript is listed, H/C is specified. For the *Teshubot ha-Meshubot* and polemical letters, Rosenthal's page numbers (not folio numbers) are given first, followed by Castilian MS folio numbers when applicable. For example, "M240v" designates *Mostrador de justicia*, f. 240v. "TM 35r/67vb" designates *Teshuvot la-Meharef* Hebrew folio 35r, Castilian f. 67vb. "TM H65r"

designates *Teshuvot la-Meharef*, Hebrew version only, f. 65r. “TMB 329” designates *Teshuvot ha-Meshubot*, p. 329 in Rosenthal’s edition. “I2 485/93ra” designates the second polemical letter, p. 485 in Rosenthal’s Hebrew edition and f. 93ra in the Castilian manuscript.

The following sigla and abbreviations are used:

; indicates more than one reference to a given book on a single folio side.

* refers to folia numbers not indexed or indexed incorrectly in Mettmann’s edition.

? after a page reference indicates possible doubts regarding that page as source.

?? indicates that no source has been identified for a given reference.

M=*Mostrador de justicia*

TM=*Teshuvot la-Meharef*

TMB=*Teshuvot ha-Meshubot*

I=Polemical letters (I1=first letter, I2= second letter, I3=third letter)

H=Hebrew MS

C=Castilian MS

Targumim	
Jonathan	
M43v	Is 12:3
M50v	None
M51r	none
M71v*	Is 12:3
M83v-84r	Is 28:5, Jer 23:5
M126r	Ez 1:6
M132r	Is 6:1
M151v	Is 66:21
M153v-154r	Is 9:5
M155r	Jer 23:6
M158r	Is 9:5 (9:6)
M158v	Za 3:8, 6:12
M161r	Za 9:6-7
M169r	Pseudo-Jonathan
M169v	Is 52:13
M176v*	Is 53:11
M206r	None
M213v	I Sam 13:2
M222v	Is 57:16
M240v	Za 1:21
M243v	Hos 5:7
M256r	Pseudo-Jonathan
M265r	Is 6:13
M267v	Is 13:22
M268r	Is 13:22
M271v	Is 65:15
M283r	Is 3:6
M283v	Za 13:1
M291r	Is 65:15
M307v	No verse
TM 27r / 53d	Is 12:3
TM 51b / 80d	Is 57:5
TM 51v/80vb	Is 66:17
L 9v	Is 12:3
L 10v	Is 52:13
Onkelos	
M125v	Ex 33:23?
M175r	See Maimonides M175r
M238v	Num24:24
TM 32v/66ra	Ex 26:9

Targum on Psalms	
M179v*	On Ps 45:7
Mishnah	
Berakhot	
M115r	(13a-b) no
M195r	4:1
Rosh Ha-Shanah	
M162v	3:8
Ta'anit	
M250r	4:6
TMB 346	1:20
Megillah	
M192r	4:41
Sotah	
M293v	9:12
Sanhedrin	
M28r	3:3-4
M57v	10:1
M130v	10:1
M166v	4:5
M250r	10:3
M253v	10:1; 10:3
M275r*	3:3
TM 53v/ 82vb- ra	3:3
TM 31r	10:1
Eduyyot	
M70r	8:7
Avot	
M115r	4:11
M128r*	2:12
M183v	1:11
TM 34v/67va	4:2

Middot	
M255r	3:1
Talmud Yerushal.	
M78r	See TB <i>Pesachim</i> M78r
Berakhot	
M102r*	2:7 (2b)
Demai	
M337r*	1:3
TM 58r-v/86va	1:3
Shabbat	
M282r	14b
Shekalim	
M235v	5.1 (48c-d) ¹
M337r	5.1 (48c-d) ¹
TM 54v/83vb	5:1 (48c)
I3 44/98va	5:1
Yoma	
M294r*	1:1
TM 28v/54va	1:1
Taanit	
M220v*	3:8-9
M244r*	4:4? ²
Talmud Bavli	
Berakhot:	
M46r	7a
M49v	12b
M59r*	12b
M87r*	55a
M115r	13a-b
M122v	10a ³
M127r	7a
M145r	7a
M195r	26a

M230v	4a
M254r	4a
M259r	4b, 34b
M287v-288r*	64a
M300r	28b
M302v*	12b
M306r	5a
M330v	58a?
TM 11v/43va	17a
TM H15r	17b
TM 16r/47rb	55a ⁴
TM H19r	7a
TM 21v/50va	10a
TM 36v/69rb	34b
TM 41r/73rb	64a
TM 56v/85vb	34b ⁵
TM H63v	39b; 50b ⁶
H65a	33b; 48a; 54a; 60a; 60b ⁷
TMB 345	28a
TMB 357	28a
Shabbat	
M12v*	55a
M38v	138b
M67r	116a-b
M82v	127a
M164r	55a
M209r	31a
M224v	138b
M288v	55a
M291v	TB <i>Yoma</i> 9b
M330v	149b
TM C9r	67a ⁸
TM 11r/43ra	31a
TM 11v/43rb	10a ⁹
I3 44/97va	112b ¹⁰
Eruvin	
M38v	41a?
M68r	?
TM 15a	9a
TM 32v/66ra	21a
TMB 344	27a

Pesahim	
M78r*	56a ¹¹
TM 39v/72rb	87b
TMB 349	6b
Yoma	
M36v	54a-b
M152v	86b???
M251v	86b
M283v*	77b-78a ¹²
M290v	19b-20a
M291v	9b ¹³
M293v	9b ¹⁴
M294r*	9b
TM 9a	69b
TM12v/45ra	72b ¹⁵
TM 28v/54va	9v
TM 49v/79rb	19b
TM 52r/81va	69b
TM 57r/ 85va	9b
I3 43/98ra	9b
I3 44/98rb	9b
TMB 360	9b
Sukkah	
M106r	53a
M152r	TB <i>Sotah</i> 49a
M243r	51b: 20-1
M283v	TB <i>Yoma</i> 77b-78a
M287r	51b: 13
M289v	TB <i>Sotah</i> 48b
M290r	TB <i>Sotah</i> 48b
TM H9a	45b
TM 24r/51vb	53a
TM 25r/52rb	TB <i>Sanh.</i> 38b
TM 28v/54va	29a
I2 492/96ra-b	52a ¹⁶
Beitzah	
M307v	16a: 19
Rosh Ha-Shanah	
M115r	4b?
M162v*	29a

M188r	10b
M308v	25a
Taanit	
M190r	26b?
M244r	??
M250r	26b?
TM 22v/51ra	31a
Megillah	
M38v	Passim.
M52v	13a
M81r	18a
M118v	18a
M187v*	See TB <i>Sanhedrin</i> M187v*
M192r*	TB <i>Kiddushin</i> 49a; <i>Megillah</i> 32a TB <i>Megillah</i> 4:41
M237v	12a: 8-9
M240v*	12b?
M268r	3a:5-9
M330v	14b: 4-5
TM 24v/52ra	18a
TM 33v/66vb	12b ¹⁷
TM45r/75ra	10a ¹⁸
I2 498 / 93vb	See TB <i>Sanhedrin</i> M187v*
TMB 329	12a
Hagigah	
M35r	13a
M42r	14a
M89r	14b
M111r	12b
M118v	See <i>Bava Kamma</i> M118v
M123v	13b
M124r	13a
M160v	11b
M183v	13a ¹⁹
M223v	12b
M298r	13b
TM H14r	14b
TM 15v/47ra	14b

TM 24v/52rb	12b
TM 56v/85rb	12b
Yebamot	
M54r	46a
M250r	82b
M250v	82b
M253v	17a
TM H64r	63b ²⁰
TMB 360	102b
Ketubbot	
TM H9a	2b, 3a, 56a, 79v ²¹
TM H63b	92b; 95a ²²
TMB 326	23:1
Nedarim	
M314v	Passsim
Sotah	
M74v	TB <i>Sanhedrin</i> . 38b
M152r*	49a ²³
M289v	48b ²⁴
M290r	48b ²⁵
Gittin	
M240v*	60a
TM 53v/82vb	60a ²⁶
Kiddushin	
M161r	72b
M193v	54b
M310r	22b
Baba Kamma	
M118v*	41b
M300r	113b-114a
M326v	113b-114a
TM H 63v	112b
Baba Mezia	
M37v	59a-b
M111r	85b
M240v*	33a ²⁷

M290v	85b
M330v	84a
TM 33a/66rb	33a ²⁸
TM 49v/79rb	85b
TM H62v	100b; 5a ²⁹
Baba Batra	
M58r	75b
M63v	15a
M81v	75b
M143r	25a ³⁰
M144r*	75b
M154r	75b
M219v*	3b
M220r	4a
M261v-262r	75b
M269v	3b
TM 19v/49va	25a
TM 22v/51ra	75b
TM 24r/51vb	75b
TM 38r/70vb	158b ³¹
TM 39r/71va-b	75a
TM 39v/72ra	75b
TM 41r/73rb	3b
TM H62v	30b
Sanhedrin	
M29v	64a
M29v-30r*	102b
M37v	90a
M74v*	38b ³²
M40r	99a
M57v	98a
M65r	64a
M82r	93a
M86v	3b, 6b ³³
M87v	TB <i>Shevu'oth</i> 35a-b
M95v	98a ³⁴
M118r	107a
M119r	65b
M127v	98b
M130v*	90a ³⁵
M144r	90a
M149r	98a

M152v*	98a
M154v	94a
M158r	94a
M164r	94a
M169r	93b
M169v	98b
M170v	98a
M171r	93b
M172v	89b
M185r	98a
M187v*	92b ³⁶
M189v	97b and 98b
M192v	65a
M205v	103b
M206r	97b
M219v	94a
M220v	98a
M224r	38a
M226r	97b
M229r	97b
M231r	107b
M233v	97b
M234r	97b
M234v	94a
M239r	93a
M242v	111b, 24a
M250r*	110b
M253v*	90a
M255r	97b
M256r	98b ³⁷
M256v	97b
M269v	5a
M276r*	38a, 97b
M277r	91b ³⁸
M284r	94a
M288r	98b
M288v	99a
M289r	92a ³⁹
M290v *	97b
M319r	46b
M326v*	24a
M328r	38b
TM 22r/50vb	107a
TM 22v/50vb	102b
TM 23r/51rv	91b

TM 24r/51vb	46b
TM 25r/52rb	38b
TM 28v/54ra	98a
TM 32r	110b
TM C64a	98a
TM 32b/65vb	111a
TM 33b/66va	24a
TM 34r/67rb	24a
TM 39v/72ra	97b
TM 41r/73rb	5a
TM 42r/74ra	98b
TM 43a/74vb	38b
TM H43v	97b
TM H44r	94a
TM H44v	See M256r
TM 48r-v /78vb	97a-b
TM 49r/78vb	98a
TM 49v/79rb	97b-98a
TM 49v/79va	38a; 97b
TM 52r/81va	TB <i>Yoma</i> 69b
TM 55v/84vb	97b-98a
TM 56r/85ra	38a ⁴⁰
TM 56v/85rb-va	98a ⁴¹
TM 57r-v/ 85vb-86ra	97b; 99a
TM 58v/ 86va-b	98a; 113b
TM58v/87ra	38a; 97a; 98a
TM 59r-v/ 87ra-vb	97a-98b
TM 60r-v/ 88ra-b	97a; 38b
TM H64r	98a
TM H64v	111a
I2 489/94rb	98a
I2 493/96va	94a
I3 43/97va	97b ⁴²
I3 43/97vb	97b-98a
I3 44/98va	110b; 98a
I3 44/98vb	97b
I3 44	98a ⁴³
TMB 326	91a
TMB 327	97b
TMB 341	43a

TMB 344	101b
TMB 346	29a; 98a
TMB 348	107b; 98a
TMB 351	98a
TMB 352	98a
TMB 353	98b
TMB 355	97b
TMB 358	98b
TMB 359	98b-99a
Shevuot	
M87v	35a-b ⁴⁴
M150r	14a, 15a-b ⁴⁵
TM H63v	31a
Avodah Zarah	
M36r*	9a ⁴⁶
M46v	5a-b
M74r*	5a
M83v	42b
M196*	19b
M200v	9a
M211v	9a
M214v	9a
M223r	5a ⁴⁷
M270r	10a
M299r	43b
M300r	5b-7b
M333r	55a
TM 35r/68ra	19b
TM 55v/84vb	9b
TM 56v/85rb	5a
TMB 344	19b
Chullin	
M52v	17a
M131v	91b
M164r	6b-7a
M326v	13a-b ⁴⁸
M337r	7a
Arakhin	
M215r	15a?
TM 13r/45va	17b
TM H14v	15b ⁴⁹

Tamid	
M282v*	29a
TM 44r	29a
Niddah	
M63r	61b ⁵⁰
TM 31r	61b
Minor Tractates	
Avot de R. Nathan (A)	
M241r	Ch. 5, on <i>Pirkei Avot</i> I.3 ⁵¹
Megilat Taanit	
M246v	3
TM 47a / 77a	3 ⁵²
Il 613/91va	See TM 47a / 77a
Midrashim	
Mekhilta de-R. Ishmael	
M29v	Pisha' 5
M104v	Pisha' 5
M175r	Pisha' 7
M175v	Pisha' 5
M300r	Beshallah 2 ⁵³
TM 22v/51ra	Pisha' 5
TM 24r/51vb-52ra	Ba-Chodesh 11
Sifre on Deut.	
M56r	47
M118r*	31
TM 22r/50vb	31
TMB 350	154
Sifre on Numbers	
M54r*	65-71
M118r	99

Sifra	
M83r	Be-Huqotai 1:3
TM 11a/43rb	19:18
Midrash Rabbah	
Genesis	
M47r	21:6
M47v*	21:9
M48r	21:8; 21:7
M58r	44:22 ⁵⁴
M58v	13:2
M61r	35:3
M74r	9:7
M74v	19:4, 9:5
M75v*	8:8
M76v	21:9
M77v	21:9; 48:8; 44:22 ⁵⁵
M80v	98:2?; 68:12; 68:11; 68:12
M82v	56:11;
M83r	17:4; 78:4
M87r	12:5
M93r*	13:6
M98v	21:8-9
M99v	8:1
M101r-v*	24:2
M101v	14:8
M105r	12:5
M106v	See <i>Iggeret Joshua Ben Levi</i>
M107r	20:1
M107v	44:5
M109v	??
M110r	8:10
M111r	13:6
M111v	12:11
M113r-v*	24:4
M113v	1:4; 96 ⁵⁶
M120v	44:8?
M122v	4:4
M127r	1:4
M128v	14:3; 23:6

M129r-v*	8:3, 8:8
M133v	10:7; 44:11?; 12:7
M134r	51:2
M135v	27:1?
M137r	48:14 ⁵⁷
M137v	53:2; 20:6;
M138r	50:2; 49:7
M150r	43:6
M150v	95:3 ⁵⁸
M151r	95:3
M161r	??
M171v	44:5
M179v	1:4 ⁵⁹
M212v	80:10
M215r	39:13
M221r	69:7
M222v	24:4
M226r	97:3/ 20:9 ⁶⁰
M227r-v*	24:2
M227v-228r*	9:3
M244r	<i>Lam. Rab. 2:4</i> ⁶¹
M248v	42:3
M249r	97
M254v	97?
M260v	96:5
M262v*	99:6
M263r*	2:5, 56:10
M263v	93:12; 69:7
M271v	6:9/97:4
M274v*	12:6
M289r	12:6
M293r	65:1
M301v	26:5
M302r	98:9
M304r	95:2
M309r	11:5
M310r	18:5 bis
M323r	34:9
M324r	94:9 ⁶²
M337r*	60:8
TM 19r-v/ 49ra-b	8:3
TM 19v/49ra	8:8
TM 24v/52rb	19:4
TM 28r/54rb	13:2

TM 30r56va	21:6
TM 30r/56va	21:9
TM H31v	44:5
TM 38r/70vb	96:5
TM 41r/73rb	?? ⁶³
TM 44v	99:6
TM 45v/ 75ra-b	2:5
TM 46r/76ra	2:5, 56:10
TM 46r/76rb	69:7
TM 56r-v/ 85ra	24:4; 24:2
TM 58r-v/ 86va	60:8
TM 60v/88va	20:9
I1 616	44:17 ⁶⁴
I3 44/98rb	44:18
TMB 327	See I1 616
TMB 333	21:1
TMB 343	75:5
Exodus	
M40r	28:6
M48v	29:4
M53v	30:19
M54r	19:5
M64r	1:17; 1:13
M75r-v	29:1 ⁶⁵
M82v	23:15
M84v	30:24
M119v	32:2
M122r	2:5
M121v*	See M75r-v
M123r	29:2, 33:1
M129v	See M75r-v
M130r*	See M75r-v
M152v	23:15
M163r	32:9
M189r	25:12
M193r	25:12
M217v	1:7
M227r	28:6
M228v	28:6
M257v	15:21
M267r	15:21
M280v*	See <i>Lev. Rab.</i> M280v
M295v	30:3?

M303r	15:2
M304r	30:3?/25:10-11
M305v	47:9
M332v	1:17/98:4
TM 11r/43ra	30:15
TM H19r	3:6
TM 22v/51ra	33:1
TM 48r/78rb	30:24
TM 59r/87ra	5:17
TM H64v	28:4
I3 43/97ra	See <i>Lev. Rab.</i> I3 43/97ra
TMB 348	28:12
Leviticus	
M43v	13:3
M49r	9:7
M50r	13:3
M51v	13:3?
M53r	22:8
M59r	??
M61v	13:3
M76v	4:6
M81r	36:4
M82v	9:3
M83r*	11:1
M101r	18:1
M101v	11:1
M106v	20:12 ⁶⁶
M111v	??; 31:1 ⁶⁷
M114r	23:6 Cf. M229v
M120v	28:5
M123r	2:2 ⁶⁸
M127r*	20:2
M148r	5:7
M219v	1:3 ⁶⁹
M222r	15:1 ⁷⁰
M222v	18:1
M227v	15:1 ⁷¹
M229v	23:6 ⁷²
M230r	34:8
M240v	?? ⁷³
M269r	18:5??
M279v	13:5
M280r*	6:5

M280v*	13:2 or 14:2? ⁷⁴
M300r	13:2
M306v	19:1
M310r	32:5 ⁷⁵
M310v*	32:5
M315r	See <i>Lam. Rab</i> M315r
TM 22v/51ra	30:9
TM 24v/52rb	36:4
TM 25r/52rb	11:1
TM 27v/53vb	13:3
TM 48r/78ra	6:5
TM 56v/85rb	18:1
TM H64r	15:1
I3 43/97ra	34:8
Numbers	
TM H63v	11:7
Song of Songs	
M38r*	1:2 §2
M44v	1:2 §15
M65v	7:8 §14 ⁷⁶
M74r	1:2 §16
M83v	1:1 §11
M107r	2:1 §3
M113v	?? ⁷⁷
M118v	5:2 §1
M128r	6.9 §5
M143r*	3:10 §2
M310r	4.12 §25
TM 19v/49va	3:10 §2
TM 27v/54vb	1:2 §4
TM H31v	1:14 §2, 2:8 §3
TM 52r/ 81va	7:1
TM 54r/83rb	1:2 §2
TM 54a/83rb	1:2 §2
I3 43/97vb	8:14 §1
Ruth	
M189v	5:6
M254r	Pro:3 bis
I2 498 / 94ra	5:6 ⁷⁸

Lament.	
M23r	See M218v
M49r	2:1 §2
M114v	9:10 ⁷⁹
M128r	??
M154r	1:16 §51
M176v	??
M208v	??
M209r	1:16 §51
M218v	1:16 §51
M244r*	2:2 §4 ⁸⁰
M244v	3:20
M286r	See <i>Pesikta</i> <i>Rabbati</i> M286
M315r*	1:13 §41 ⁸¹
M342v	2:3 §6
TM 49r/78vb	2:4
Ecclesiastes	
M31r	7:13 §1
M44v	2:1 §1
M49v	1:11 §1
M134v	5:7 §1
M166r	Not in 1:10
M167v	11:6 §1 ⁸²
M224r	12:1 §1
TM 27v/53vb	2:1 §1
Tanḥuma⁸³	
Yelamdeinu	
M51v	Pinehas 12
M53r	Shofetim 9
M55r	??
M83v	Bereshit 34
M330v	??
TM 11r/43rb	Shofetim 9
TM H64v	Balak 20
I3 43/97vb	Beḥuqotai 56b
TMB 354	70a
Midrash	
Psalms	
M33r	2§8; 50§1 Cf 86v

M57v	22 §32
M74r*	92 §14
M81r	90 §5 ⁸⁴
M84v*	31 §2
M86v	50 §1 Cf. 33r
M108r	18 §29
M109r	41 §4?
M113v	16 §2
M119r	91 §4 ⁸⁵
M122r	24 §5
M145r	24 §10
M147v	116 §8
M152v*	87:6
M159r	2 §9
M189r	10 §2
M206r	9 §2 ⁸⁶
M222r*	87 §6
M231v*	87 §6
M260v	36 §8
M262r	36 §6/87 §3
M262v	107 §4 ⁸⁷
M263v	30 §6
M275r	18 §36, 87 §6
M286v	24 §10
M289r	2 §10
M299r	25 §10
M324v	??
M326r	??
M338r	10 §8
M340v	87 §6
TM 16r-47ra	50 §1
TM 25r/52va	50 §5
TM 28r/54ra	91 §4
TM 37v/70rb	36 §8
TM 39r/71vb	9 §2 ⁸⁸
TM 40r/72va	36 §6
TM 41v/73vb	87 §6
TM 45a/75ra	107 ⁸⁹
TM 46r-v/ 76va	30 §6
TM 50r/79va	87 §6
TM 57r/85va	10 §2
TM H64b	18:36
I3 44/98rb	91:§4 ⁹⁰
TMB 354	11
TMB 358	18:51

TMB 359	87:8
TMB 360	1:2
Midrash Proverbs	
M30r	22:6; See <i>Alphabet of Ben Sira</i> M30r
M35v	1:2
M45v	19:21
M49v	9:2 ⁹¹
M87v	14:1 ⁹²
M154v	19:21
M223v	22:6; See <i>Alphabet of Ben Sira</i> M223v
TM 49r/79ra	19:21 ⁹³
TM 58a/86va	22:6; See <i>Alphabet of Ben Sira</i> M223v
Midrash ha-Gadol	
M104r	2 p. 57-8
M163v, 165r	2 p. 57-8
M198r	2 p. 57-8
TM 24r/52ra	2 p. 57-8 ⁹⁴
Pesikta Rabbati	
M261r*	28:1
M286r*	28:1
TM 38v/71rb	28:1
Yalkut Shimoni	
M262v*	786 ⁹⁵
M263v*	115; 956 ⁹⁶
TM 45a/75ra	786
TM 46r/76ra	115; 756
TM 50r/ 79va	2: 164

Petirat Mosheh Rabbenu	
M262r*	<i>Ozar Midrashim</i> 384-5
TM 39r/71va	See M262r
Seder Olam Rab.	
M200r	30:10
M200v	30:10
M253r	29:1
M264r	20:23
M270r	30:10?
TM 45r/75ra	30
I 1 606/90rb	28
Pirke Heikhalot	
M223v	6:2 ⁹⁷
TM 57a / 85vb	6:2 ⁹⁸
Lekah Tov	
I2 489/94ra	Num., Balak 130a
TMB 344	Deut. 51:1
Scroll of Antiochus	
TM 44r	<i>Ozar Midrashim</i> 185-89
Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer⁹⁹	
M46v	40:2
M47v	12:1
M74v	13:3
M98v	13:4
M101v	11:2
M102v	12:1
M109v	13:1-2
M110r	14:3; 22:2 ¹⁰⁰
M110v	7:2
M161r	39:1 ¹⁰¹
M217r	39:1. Cf. 161r

M217v	39:1
M230r	40:2
M253r	11:3
TM 57a/85vb	See <i>Pirkei Heikhalot</i>
TM 20r/49vb	3
TM 30v/57ra	12:1
TM 57r/85vb	See <i>Pirkei Heikhalot</i>
Seder Eliyahu Rabah	
M32r	??
M50v	See <i>Ozar Midrashim</i>
M51v	See <i>Ozar Midrashim</i>
M64r	<i>Tanhuma</i> (Buber) wayyetse 10
M64v	<i>Tanhuma</i> (Buber) Toldot Simon 20
M81v	<i>Tanhuma</i> (Buber) Toldot Simon 20
M83v	??
M84r	11?
M92v	??
M106r	<i>Pirkei R. Eliezer</i> 3?
M107v	Ch 19? (111)
M108r*	Ch 6 (123)
M142v	??
M152v	2 (6-7)?
M154v	See <i>Ozar ha-Midrashim</i>
M167r	Dn 9:26
M168v	22 (126)
M169v	??
M171r	??
M175v	??
M188v-189r	See <i>Midrash Iggeret ha-Mashiah</i>
M189v	<i>Ten Signs?</i>
M223v	2 (6)?
M232v	Ch 2 (p. 6)

M234r	See M189
M235v	14?
M240v	??
M249r	??
M253r	??
M259r	<i>Ozar Midrashim</i> 163
M271r	??
M278v	??
M288r	??
M289v	??
M300r	??
M302r	??
TM 31v	Ch. 6
TM 36v/69va	See M259r
TM 44v	Ch. 2 (6a)
TM 54r/84rb	Ch. 2 (6a)
I 2 498 /94ra	See M188v-189r
TMB 341	Ch. 22? (121?)
TMB 354	Ch. 2 (6a)
Midrash Iggeret ha- Mashiah and Midrash on Ten Kings	
M188r*	See <i>Ozar Midrashim</i> 389 and 466 ¹⁰²
M189v	See M188r
M190r	See M188r
TM 34r/68rb	See M188r
TM 55v/84rb	<i>Ozar Midrashim</i> 466
I 2 498/94ra	See M188r
Ecclesiastic./ Sirach	
M42r	See TB <i>Hagiga</i> 13a; <i>Sirach</i> 3:21- 2;
M108r	See M42r

Alphabet of Ben Sira	
M23r	Yassim 253-4
M30r	Yassim 272 ¹⁰³
M221v	Yassim 253-4
M223v	Yassim 272
TM 58a/86va	Yassim 272 ⁵³
Iggeret R. Joshua b. Levi	
M106v-107r*	<i>Ozar Midrashim</i> 213
M233r	See M107r
M234r*	See M107r
TM 28v/54rb	See M107r
TM 55v/84va	See M107r
TM H64a	See M107r
I 3 43/97rb	See M107r
TMB 355	See M107r
Sefer Josippon/ben Gurion¹⁰⁴	Flusser ed.
M28r	--
M30v	3?
M220v	1:148-9
M237r	1:48
M246v	1:116
M272r	1:66-8
M286r	1:122
M286v	1:410-16; ?? ¹⁰⁵
TM 46v/76vb	1:116
TM 47v/77vb	1:122? ¹⁰⁶
TM 50r-v/80ra	??
TM 53r/82rb	1:410-16
I 1 615/90rb	1:48
I 1 612/91va	1:260-62?
I 1 612/92ra	1:267
TMB 331	1:48
TMB 340	1:260-64?
TMB 342	1:267
TMB 344	1:122

“Book of 12 signs”	
M234r	<i>Ten Signs?</i> ¹⁰⁷
TM 42v/74rb	See M234r
TM 42v/74va	See M234r
Book of Zerubabel	
M221v	See Abraham Ibn Ezra
M245v	Even-Shmuel, <i>Midreshey Ge'ullah</i> 76-7.
Rashi	
M39r	On Dt 8:3
M68r	On I Chron 28:4?
M95v	??
M150r	On Ne 12:31
M189r	On Dn 7:25 and San 97b
M191r	On Dn 12:11
M191v-192r	On Dn 9:25-7
M196v*	On Dn 8:14, etc.
M207v	On Dn 12:7-8
M208r	On Dn 12:13
M208v	On Dn, passim
M237r	On Dn 11:2
M246v	Passim
M248r	On Obad 1:20
M253r	On Ezra 2:64
M256v	On Ezek 48:35
M257v	-
M288v	On San. 99a
M290r	??
M305v	On Dt 5:20
M322v	On Gn 7:2
TM 26v/53va	On Ex 3:15
TM 39v/72ra	On Ezek 48:30
TM 42r/74ra	On Dan 9:25
I1 615	On Dan 7:6?
I1 615/90rb-va	On Dan 7:5
I1 613/91ra	On Zac 1:8, 6:1
I1 612/91vb	On Jer 49:7
I2 485/92ra	On Dan 12:11

I2 486/92va	On Dan 9:27
I2 486/92vb	On TB <i>Sanhedrin</i> 97b
I2 490/94va-b	On Dan 12:11
I2 491/95rb	On Dan 9:27
I2 493/96va	On Dan 11:20
TMB 331	On Dan 7:8
TMB 338	On Dan 11:21
Abraham Bar Hiyya	
M74r	<i>Megillat ha-Megalleh</i> III ¹⁰⁸
M111v	<i>Hegyon ha-nefesh</i> I ¹⁰⁹
M187r	<i>Megillat ha-Megalleh</i> IV ¹¹⁰
M189v	<i>Megillat ha-Megalleh</i> , IV ¹¹¹
M195r	See M187r
M196v*	<i>Megillat ha-Megalleh</i> IV ¹¹²
M199r*	<i>Megillat ha-Megalleh</i> IV ¹¹³
M208r	<i>Megillat ha-Megalleh</i> IV
M234v	<i>Megillat ha-Megalleh</i> V ¹¹⁴
M276r	See M234v
O11d	<i>Megillat ha-Megalleh</i> III ¹¹⁵
I2 489/94rb	See M199r
I2 492/96rb	See M199r
Abraham ben David of Posquières	
M92r	On Ecl 3:21
Abraham ben Ezra	
M14v	--
M33r	--
M43v??	??
M44r	On Is 59:20-21

M51r	On Job 40?
M51v	??
M52v	??
M59v	On Is 51:6
M75r	On Gen 1:1
M76v	On Gn 3:24
M85r	<i>Yesod Morah 11-12</i> ¹¹⁶
M85v	<i>Yesod Morah 11;</i> Long Commentary on Ex. 33:21
M86r	<i>Sefer Yesod Morah 11</i>
M91r	Dt 18:17-18
M109r	--
M120v	On Lv 23:11?
M154v	On Is 9:6
M188v	On Dn 12:11
M189r	On Dan 7:25
M195v	On Dn 8:23
M198v	On Dn 8:23
M210v	??
M211r	??
M217r	??
M217v	On Gn 46:9
M221v	??
M238v	??
M248v	Obad 1:11
M249r	On Gen 27:40
M264v	??
M267r	??
M295r	(lost) Commentary on Decalogue
M297r	On Ex 20:3?
M298r	On Ex 20:4?
M298v	??
M301v	On Gn 1:28
M303v	On Ex 16:5, 16:27?
M305r	On Ex 20:8, Dt 5:12?
M306r	On Dt 5:14-15
M309r	??
M330r	??
TM17a/48ra*	On Gen 1:1 ¹¹⁷

TM 22rb/51ra	<i>Yesod Morah 12;</i> Long Commentary on Ex 33:21
TM 26v/53rb	On Gn 20:13
TM 45v/75va	On Ne 2:13
TM 51v/81ra	On Is 66:17
I1 614/91ra	On Gen 27:40
I2 488/94ra	On Dan 12:11
I2 490/95ra	On Dan 9:25
I2 493/96va	On Dan 11:30
TMB 331	On Dan 6:1
TMB 338	On Gen 27:40
Abraham ibn Daud	(Heb./Eng.)
M177r	16-17/23
M185v	3-5/6-8
M187v	9?/14?
M188v	9?/14?
M196r	9?/14?
M200r	9/14
M201r	16/22
M204r	7/11
M212r	??
M212v	??
M219v	15?/21?
M221v	22-23/29-30
M233v	37/48
M241r	12/18
M241v*	12/17
M242r	9/14; 17-18/24? ¹¹⁸
M248v	22-23/30 ¹¹⁹
M269v	Ch 2?
TM 35r/68ra	9/14
TM 41r/73ra	16/22-3
I1 612/92ra	??
I2 488/93vb	9/14
I2 488/94ra	9/14
Bahya Ibn Paquda	
Hovot ha- Levavot (al-Hidaya ila Fara'id al-Qulub)	
M111v	1F

Jonah ibn Janah	
M188r	<i>Sefer ha-Shorashim</i>
M195v	<i>Sefer ha-Shorashim</i>
TMB 328	<i>Sefer ha-Shorashim</i>
David Kimḥi	
M44r	On Is 59:20-21
M51r	On Job 12:7?
M65r	On Is 65:3; 1:29
M65v	On Is 66:17
M66r	On Is 66:17
M66v	??
M69v	On Mal 3:1, 4:4
M93r*	On Is 25:8
M150r	On Ne 12:31
M151v	On Is 66:21
M154v	<i>Sefer Miklol</i>
M156v	On Is 7:16
M167r	On Is 52:13
M188r	<i>Sefer Miklol</i>
M192v	On Joel 2:20?
M202v	On II Kings 24:25?
M208v	--
M213v	On I Sam 13:1
M215v	On Joshua 14:7, 4:6
M223r	On Is 14:1
M246v	On Ez 25:14
M250v	<i>Sefer Miklol</i>
M251r	On Is 59:16
M255r	On Ez 43:18-20
M255v	On Ez 43:11
M264r	On Hos 1:2, 3:1
M267v	On Ez 12:23
M270v	On Za 6:15
M274v*	On Jer 31:29
M277r*	On Is 25:8
M277v	On Mi 5:6
M284v	On Is 18:2
M289r*	On Is 25:8

M295r	??
M296r	--
TM 27r/53va	On Mal 3:1
TM 28v/57vb*	On Is 25:8
TM 29v/58ra	On Is 60:1
TM 33b/66va	On Zech 5:6
TM 39v/72ra	On Hos 2:16
TM 39v/72rb	On Hos 2:25
TM 43v	On Joel 4:1-2
TM 445v/75va	On Is 9:6
TM 47r/77ra	On Jer 49:20
TM 47r/77rb	On Ez 25:14
TM 50v-51r/80va	On Is 66:17
TM 51v/81ra	On Is 57:5
TM 51v/81ra-b	On Is 66:17; 65:13; 65:16
TM 52r/81rb	On Is 1:29; 57:5
TM 52v/82rb	On Is 66:23
TM H64r	On Ps 32:6
I1 612/91vb	On Ez 25:14
I2 490/95ra	On Dan 11:31 ¹²⁰
TMB 354	On Mal 3:22, 3:1
Joseph Kimhi	
M45r	On Jer 3:16
M145r	On Is 42:1-4
M151v	On Is 66:21
M155v	On Is 7:16
M186v	On Dn 11:31, 12:7
M187r	On Dn 12:7
M188v	??
M189v	On Dan 12:7
M190r	On Dan 12:7
M191r	On Dan 11:31
M192r	On Dan 9:25-27
M208v	??
M271r	On Hos 10:14
M280v	See Petrus Alfonsi
I2 486/92vb	On Dan 7:25?

Moses ben samuel Chikitilla	
M154v	On Dan 12:7
M278v	On Za 9:10
M279v	On Is 11:6
M288r	On Za 9:9
Moses de leon	
M330r	Now-lost letter against Karaites ¹²¹
Maimonides	
M14v	--
M30v	--
M32v*	<i>Eight Chapters</i> 6 (English 36)
M33r	--
M39r	<i>Guide</i> III.24
M42r*	<i>Guide</i> 1:32
M52v	<i>Guide</i> III.32
M53r	<i>Guide</i> III.32
M54v	<i>Guide</i> III.43?
M55r	??
M57r	??
M58v	??
M66r	<i>Guide</i> 3.33
M82r*	<i>Guide</i> 1.69
M86r	<i>Guide</i> 1.72
M91r	<i>Epistle on Resurrection</i>
M105v	<i>Guide</i> 1.2
M109r	<i>Guide</i> 1.46?
M111r	<i>Guide</i> 1.70
M112r	<i>Guide</i> 1.74 ¹²²
M117v	<i>Eight Chapters</i> 1
M123v	<i>Guide</i> 3.1-4, I.2
M124r-v	<i>Guide</i> 1.7
M125v	<i>Guide</i> 1.7
M126v	<i>Guide</i> 3.14
M127v	??
M137r	<i>Guide</i> 2.45, 47
M140r	<i>Guide</i> 1.61-64, 62
M145v	Nahmanides, <i>Vikuaḥ</i> (16) ¹²³

M160v	??
M165v	??
M173v	<i>Guide</i> 3.24
M175r	<i>Guide</i> 3.46
M182v	<i>Guide</i> 3.32
M184v	??
M183v*	<i>Guide</i> 1:32
M197v	??
M199r	<i>Mishneh Torah, Shofetim, Melakhim</i> 11:4; <i>Letter to Yemen</i> , par. 10
M223v	<i>Guide</i> 1.70
M228r	<i>Guide</i> 1.70
M230v	??
M235r	<i>Epistle to Yemen</i> 3 (122)
M268v	<i>Guide</i>
M276r	See M235r.
M277r	??
M279v	<i>Guide</i> 3.11
M280v	<i>Mishneh Torah Shofetim, Melakhim</i> 12:1
M281r	<i>Mishneh Torah Shofetim, Melakhim</i> 11.3; <i>Maamar Tehiyyat ha-Metim</i>
M282r	<i>Guide</i> 2.29
M288v	See M145v
M290v	<i>Mishneh Torah Shofetim, Melakhim</i> 11-12)
M295r	<i>Sefer ha-Mizvot?</i>
M296r	<i>Guide</i> 3.31 ¹²⁴
M297r	<i>Mishneh Torah Madda'</i> ; <i>Sefer ha-Mizvot</i>
M298r	<i>Guide</i> 3.1-4 (Cf. M123v)
M308v	??
M310r	<i>Mishneh Torah Qedushah, 'Issure</i>

	<i>Bi'ah</i> 21:9 (Cf. <i>Guide</i> 3.49)
M313v	<i>Mishneh Torah Qedushah, Ma'akhalot Asurot</i> Cf <i>Guide</i> 3.48
M316r	<i>Guide</i> 3.32
M331v	<i>Guide</i> 2.26-28
TM 10v/43ra*	<i>Guide</i> 3:54
TM C44rb	??
TM 12r/44vb	<i>Guide</i> 3.28
TM 13r/45va	Letter to Jonathan of Lunel, LX
TM 14r/46rb	<i>Guide</i> 1.74; Cf. <i>Mostrador</i> 112r
TM 17v/48vb*	<i>Guide</i> 1.52
TM 18r/48vb	<i>Guide</i> 2 introduction and 2.13
TM 19v-20r/49va	<i>Guide</i> 1.52-3
TM 20v/49vb	<i>Guide</i> 1.69
TM C56ra-b	
TM 49r/79ra	<i>Mishneh Torah Shofetim, Melakhim, 12:2</i>
TM 51r/80vb	<i>Guide</i> 3.33
TM 49r/79ra	<i>Mishneh Torah Shofetim, Melakhim 12</i>
TM 51r/80vb	<i>Guide</i> 3:33
I2 493/96rb	See M199r
TMB 351	<i>Guide</i> Intro.
Nachman.	
M23r	See M222r
M51v	??
M64v	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 312?
M167r	??
M169r-v	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 306-7
M177r	??
M190r	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 313-314
M196r	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 313-314 <i>Sefer ha-Ge'ulah</i>
M196v	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 313-314

M208v	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 314
M222r	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 306
M223v*	See <i>Pirke Heikhalot</i>
M230r	??
M279v	Discourse on "Law of the Eternal is Perfect" 71-3
M281r	See M279v
M282r	See M279v
M288v	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 308
M289r	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 309
TM 35r/68ra	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 313-314
TM 42r/74ra	<i>Vikuaḥ</i> 313
TM 57r/85vb	See <i>Pirke Heikhalot</i>
I2 491/95ra	See M196r
TMB 347	<i>Sefer ha-Ge'ulah</i>
Saadya ben Joseph	
M128r	--
M179r	On Ps 45:7
M189r	<i>Book of Beliefs</i> VIII:3, p. 296-8
M199r	See A. Bar Hiyya
M208v	<i>Book of Beliefs</i> VII:3, p. 270
M264v	On Hos 2:3 and Ex 33:19
M303v	On Ex 16:1
M42r/74ra	On Dan 9:25
I2 488/94ra	<i>Beliefs and Opinions</i> 8:3 p. 298
L 5v	<i>Beliefs and Opinions</i> 2:5-7, pp. 103-9
Samuel Ha-Nagid	
M57r.	<i>Sefer Hikheta Gavrata</i>
M268v	??

M274r	See M268v
M287v	--
TM 53v-54r/83ra	<i>Sefer Hikheta Gavrata</i>
Sefer Nestor ha-Komer	
M70v	<i>Sefer Nestor ha-Komer</i> ¹²⁵ § 35-36, 70
M71v	Ibid., §35-36, 70
M141v	Ibid., §28a ¹²⁶
M142r	Ibid., §28a
M201r	<i>Toledot Yeshu</i>
M12v	4:12
Aristotle:	
M73v	<i>De Anima</i>
M77r (de alma)	<i>De Anima</i>
M85r	<i>De Caelo</i> 1.3?
M85v	See M140v
M87v	<i>Metaphysics</i>
M99v (de alma)	<i>De Anima</i> 3:5
M103v	??
M111v	<i>De Anima</i>
M117v	<i>De Anima</i> 3.5
M121r	<i>Physics</i> 1.7
M124r	??
M126r	<i>Physics</i> 8.1 <i>Metaphysics</i> 7.6; Cf. Maimonides <i>Guide</i> II.intro. (Hecht)
M127r	<i>De Caelo</i> 1:3
M131v	See M121 r and M140v
M135v (metaphysics)	See M140v
M140v	<i>Metaphysics</i> 5.2
M228r	<i>De Anima</i> 3:5
TM 12v/45ra	<i>Nic. Eth.</i> 1.1-2, 9; 2.2
TM 16r/47rb	<i>De Anima</i> 3.5
TM 20a/49va	<i>Metaphysics</i> 5.2. Cf. <i>Mostrador</i>

	M140v
TM 21a/50ra	<i>Physics</i> 1.7
TM 23v/51va	<i>De Anima</i> 3.5
Plato/ Plotinus	
M74v	<i>Enneads</i> 5.1.6, 5.8.9 ¹²⁷
M85r	<i>Laws</i> 10; <i>Enneads</i> 5.1.10
M129r	<i>Enneads</i> 5.1.6 and 10
M139r	<i>Enneads</i> 5.1.6?, 5.1.10
M140r	<i>Enneads</i> 5.1.6 and 10
TM 20v/50ra	<i>Enneads</i> 5.1.6, and 10
Euclid	
M166r	<i>Elements</i> X
Galen	
M85v	<i>On My Own Opinions</i>
M112r	<i>On My Own Opinions</i>
M118r	Averroes, <i>Tahāfut</i>
TM 22a/50vb	See M112r and M118r
Themistios	
M39r	??
M117v	<i>On De Anima</i> 100.37
M119r	See M117v
M121r	See M117v
M122v	??
TM 21v/50va	See M117v
TM 23v/51va	See M117v (Hecht)
Alexander of Aphrodisias	
M85r	<i>On De Anima</i> 80; <i>Mantissa</i> 106

M117v	See M85r
M111v	See M85r
TM 21v/21vb	On De Anima 80; <i>Mantissa</i> 106 ¹²⁸
Augustine	
M109r	<i>Tractatus in Ioh.?</i>
M143r ¹²⁹	<i>Ennarationes in Pslamos</i> 4.8 ¹³⁰
M181v	??
M182r	<i>Tractatus in Ioh.</i> XXVI, 1; <i>Sermo</i> CXXXI, 1.
M121v ¹³¹	<i>De Civitate Dei</i> Bk 11, ch 24-27
Bede	
M102r	<i>De ratione temporum</i> xliii ¹³²
M304v	Ibid. xlvii
M307r	See M304v
M307v	See M304v
M308r	See M304v
M308v	See M304v
Boethius	
M119r	<i>Consolatio</i> III, P10.85
M140r	<i>Consolatio</i> passim, but especially III
M144r	<i>Consolatio</i> III, P10.85
St Gregory	
M41r	??
Jerome	
M16v	<i>Vulgata</i> Dt 29:29, Ex 21:6 (Cf 66v)
M19v	<i>Vulgata</i> Ex 3:14, Dt 29:5-6
M25r	<i>Vulgata</i> Mi 4:7, Joel 3:20

M66v	See M16v
M68v	<i>Vulgata</i> 29:29
M133r	See M19v
M153v	<i>Vulgata</i> Is 9:6
M154v	<i>Vulgata</i> Is 9:6
M258r	See M25r
M260r	<i>Vulgata</i> various (e.g. Dt 29:29, Ex 21:6.)
Petrus Alfonsi	
M140r	<i>Dialogus</i> VI ¹³³
M280v*	<i>Dialogus</i> IX
Saint Sylvester Legend	
M20r	Jacobo de Voragine, <i>Legenda Aurea</i> XII? ¹³⁴
M143v	See M20r
M168r	See M20r
Santa Catarina*	
M140r*	Jacobo de Voragine, <i>Legenda Aurea</i> CLXVIII
Thomas Aquinas	
M102r	Aquinas in <i>Summa Theologica</i> , I.102 ob. 1 ¹³⁵
M116v*	<i>Summa Theologica</i> III.48?
M147r	<i>Summa Theologica</i> , various (I.39.1-2, III.2.1, III.2.6, etc)

NOTES

¹ Cf. T.J *Demai* 1:3 (21d), *Genesis Rabbah* 60:8; Cf. the *Teshuvot la-Meharef* 54b/83vb and Abner/Alfonso's third polemical letter, Rosenthal 44 / Ms. 6423 98va.

² Abner's text does not match the Talmud, which reads "eighty thousand" and not "four thousand thousand". Cf. *Lamentations Rabbah* for f. 244r

³ Cf. M125r.

⁴ Also *Midrash Tanhuma*, Vayakel 2 (Hecht).

⁵ Also TB *Shabbat* 63a, 151b, *Pesaḥim* 68a, *Sanhedrin* 91v (Hecht).

⁶ Also TB *Pesaḥim* 8a, 103b; *Nazir* 23a; *Bava Kamma* 78v; *Horayot* 10b; *Zebachim* 60a; *Menaknot* 38b; *Temurah* 5a (Hecht).

⁷ Also TB *Megillah* 25a (Hecht).

⁸ Also TB *Hullin* 77b (Hecht).

⁹ Also TB *Sanhedrin* 7a, *Megillah* 14b (Hecht).

¹⁰ Also TJ *Demai* 1:3, TJ *Shekalim* 5:1.

¹¹ Cf. *Targum Neofiti* Gen. 49:2. See also Baer, "The Kabbalistic Doctrine" 288.

¹² Listed by Abner as "Sukkah".

¹³ Mentioned as "Shabbat".

¹⁴ Cf. TB *Sanhedrin* 38b.

¹⁵ Also *Sifre Deut.* 45 (Hecht).

¹⁶ See also *Ten Signs* (listed under "Book of 12 signs", above), and various similar apocalyptic sources.

¹⁷ Also TB *Sotah* 8b, *Gen Rabbah* 9:13, *Ex Rabbah* 25:13, *Tanhuma* Beshalach 2, etc. (Hecht 214 n. 596).

¹⁸ Also TB *Arakhin* 32b (Hecht).

¹⁹ See also *Sirach* 3:21-2

²⁰ Also TB *Niddah* 13b (Hecht).

²¹ Also TB *Bava Mezia* 110a, *Bava Batra* 12b, 172a, *Arakhin* 23b (Hecht).

²² Also TB *Bava Kamma* 8a-b (Hecht).

²³ Abner lists this as Sukkah.

²⁴ Abner lists this as Sukkah.

²⁵ Abner lists this as Sukkah.

²⁶ Also TB *Kiddushin* 65a and *Bava Mezia* 3b.

²⁷ See also TB *Bava Mezia*, TM33r.

²⁸ Hecht notes that this appears in a number of places, including *Lamentations Rabbah* 4:7, *Leviticus Rabbah* 21:1, and others. See Hecht 213 n. 584.

²⁹ Also TB *Ketubbot* 108b; *Shabuot* 38b, 40a; *Bava Kamma* 35b (Hecht).

³⁰ Also *Song of Songs Rabbah* 3:10 (Hecht).

³¹ A very similar passage is found in the M260v, but the Talmud citation is lacking.

³² Abner lists this as "Sotah". Mettmann, in vol. I, lists it as such, but in vol. II includes it in the index under Sukkah.

³³ Cf. TM17r/48ra. Also in *Pirkei Avot* 5:5 and TB *Berakhot* 6a (Hecht).

³⁴ Abner attributes R. Abba's words to Rab.

³⁵ Cf. TB *Avodah Zarah* 17b-18a.

³⁶ Listed as TB *Megillah*. Cf. Abner/Alfonso's second polemical letter, Rosenthal 488 / Ms 6423 93vb.

³⁷ Also in TB *Berakhot* 4a and *Sotah* 36a (Hecht, 252).

³⁸ Abner seems to conflate various statements here.

³⁹ Abner translates "pueblo" rather than "dust."

⁴⁰ Also TB *Sanhedrin* 97a, 98a, 98b, *Yebamot* 62a, *Shabbat* 139a, *Yoma* 10a (Hecht).

⁴¹ Also *Tanna deve Eliyahu Zuta* 16 and *Pesikta Rabbati* 15:15 (Hecht)

⁴² Also *Avodah Zarah* 9a and *Eliyahu Rabbah* 6-7.

⁴³ Also TJ *Taanit* 1:1 (Rosenthal)

⁴⁴ Abner lists this as TB *Sanhedrin*

⁴⁵ See Rashi on Ne 12:31

⁴⁶ Cf. Baer, "Abner aus Burgos" (1929) 24 and Liebermann, *Shkiin* 6.

⁴⁷ Cf. TB *Yebamot* 62b

⁴⁸ Abner inverts the idea in this passage

⁴⁹ Also *Leviticus Rabbah* and a similar statement in *Zohar*, III (Hecht)

⁵⁰ Talmud does not say it was R. Jose as Abner does, only "our rabbis", but Cf. TB *Pesahim* 40b and *Avodah Zarah* 66a.

⁵¹ Cf. *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan*. New Haven: Yale, 1955. pp. 39 and 231.

⁵² See edition by Zvi Lichtenstein, 319, 328. See also Hecht, 263 n. 876 and Rosenthal, "From Sefer Alfonso" 613 n. 3.

⁵³ On Ex 14:7. These words are attributed to R. Simeon b. Yoḥai.

⁵⁴ Abner, perhaps mistakenly, attributes to R. Judan what R. Judan is reporting R. Joḥanan b. Zakkai said.

⁵⁵ Cf. M58r.

⁵⁶ Quoted as *Song of Songs Rabbah*.

⁵⁷ Abner attributes this to R. Judan, but the text does not match.

⁵⁸ R. Simeon b. Yoḥai's words also in 61:1.

⁵⁹ This does not include Ps 45:7, which is only quoted in *Genesis Rabbah*. 99:8.

⁶⁰ Abner translates "Parnasah" as "gobierno"

⁶¹ *Lamentations Rabbah* says eighty, not eight hundred, thousand.

⁶² Cf. *Genesis Rabbah* 97.

⁶³ Neither Hecht nor I could find this reference. This passage is repeated in M269r, but is not attributed to *Genesis Rabbah*.

⁶⁴ Rosenthal notes this general idea is also found in *Mekhilta* to Ex 20:15, *Midrash ha-Gadol* to Gen 15:11, and *Mekhilta de R. Shimon b. Yoḥai* to Ex 20:6, but given Abner/Alfonso's reliance on *Genesis Rabbah*, this seems like the most likely source.

⁶⁵ Cf. TM17v/48rb. Also *Genesis Rabbah* 8:9 and TJ *Berakhot* 9:1 and TB *Sanhedrin* 38b (Hecht).

⁶⁶ Abner attributes the words of Abba b. Abina to Abba b. Kahana.

⁶⁷ Abner attributes the words of R. Ammi to R. Huna.

⁶⁸ This text differs from Abner's summary.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Exodus Rabbah* 40:4.

⁷⁰ Cf. Gen. R. 24:4.

⁷¹ Cf. Gen. R. 24:2, 4.

⁷² The text reads "lily," not "rose." Cf. M114r.

⁷³ Possibly TJ *Nedarim* and TB *Gittin*

⁷⁴ Cf. *Pugio Fide* p. 570.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Song of Songs Rabbah* 4:12 §25.

⁷⁶ Abner translates "yetsarim" as "diablos." Cf. TB *Berakhot* 61a.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Genesis Rabbah*. 96 and *Lamentations Rabbah* 9:10.

⁷⁸ Also Midrash *Ḥazita* (Rosenthal).

⁷⁹ Cf. M113v and *Genesis Rabbah* 96

⁸⁰ Listed as *Genesis Rabbah*, see listing above for *Genesis Rabbah* and *Talmud Yerushalmi* M244r.

⁸¹ Abner lists this as *Leviticus Rabbah*.

⁸² Abner conflates two statements here.

⁸³ References are to the standard edition (Constantinople 1520, etc).

⁸⁴ This is the opinion of R. Abin.

⁸⁵ See Hecht 196 n. 496. Cf. *Pesikta Rab. XXII*.

⁸⁶ I have only been able to find these words attributed to "R. Samuel".

⁸⁷ See also *Yalkut Shimoni* .

⁸⁸ Also in *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 12:10 (Hecht).

⁸⁹ See also *Yalkut Shimoni*

⁹⁰ Also *Pesikta Rabbati* 22,k 114b (Rosenthal)

⁹¹ Abner attributes the statement of R. Eleazar to "Hatanbion."

⁹² Also *Exodus Rabbah* 1:22. Cf. TM16v/47vb (Hecht).

⁹³ Hecht also notes Midrash *Hupat Eliyahu*.

⁹⁴ Gershenzon 264 n. 42 also points to Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* VI:424-5, n. 105, which has a full list of the many sources for this legend.

⁹⁵ See Hecht 254 n. 821.

⁹⁶ See Hecht 258 n. 848.

⁹⁷ Cf. the *Vikuah* (*Kitvei* 1:310/Maccoby 117). See Hecht 297 n. 1078. For the original text, see *Heikhalot Rabbati* in *Ozar Midrashim*, 113; *Batei Midrashot*, ed. Wertheimer (Jerusalem: Ktab Wasephr), I: 75.

⁹⁸ Listed in the *Teshuvot* as "Pirque Rrabi Eliezer"

⁹⁹ Chapter numbers correspond to the Warsaw edition of 1852 (reprinted in Jerusalem, 1970). Paragraph numbers follow the system assigned by Miguel Pérez Fernández in his edition, *Los capítulos de Rabbi Eliezer*. Valencia: Biblioteca Midráshica, 1984.

¹⁰⁰ Abner follows some Mss. attributing this statement to "Rrabi" only; Some Mss. specify this to be R. Meir. See the edition of Pérez Fernández, p. 168, Note h).

¹⁰¹ The text cited by Abner appears only in certain manuscripts. See the edition of Pérez Fernández, p. 273, Note c.

¹⁰² In the *Teshuvot*, this is listed as *Eliyahu Rabbah*. Hecht notes it cannot be found there, but gives the sources listed. Rosenthal also lists the same claim in the second polemical letter as *Midrash of Ten Kings* (see second letter 498 n. 15)

¹⁰³ This text is taken from *Midrash on Proverbs* 22:6, "להכיהא ברמזא ולשטיא בכורמזא" and does not precisely match the Castilian translation. It is not found in all extant versions of the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*. See Yassif 272.

¹⁰⁴ This section remains unfinished.

¹⁰⁵ Hecht also could not identify this in TM50r.

¹⁰⁶ As Hecht notes, this is not exact. See 264 n. 884.

¹⁰⁷ *Midreshey ge'ullah*, 315-317.

¹⁰⁸ Guttman 62 / Millàs I Vallicrosa 103; Cf *Minhat* 11d. .

¹⁰⁹ Wigoder 46-7.

¹¹⁰ Guttman 90 / Millàs I Vallicrosa 147.

¹¹¹ Guttman 104 / Millàs I Vallicrosa 169. Cf. Second Polemical I, Rosenthal 489 / Ms 6423 94rb.

¹¹² Guttman 89-90 / Millàs I Vallicrosa 145-148

¹¹³ Guttman 95, 98 / Millàs I Vallicrosa 155, 161. Cf. Abner/Alfonso's second polemical letter, Rosenthal 492 / Ms 6423 94rb.

¹¹⁴ Guttman 145-146 / Millàs I Vallicrosa 236-239.

¹¹⁵ Guttman 62 / Millàs I Vallicrosa 103; Cf. Mostraodor 74r.

¹¹⁶ As Hecht notes, this is a conflation of passages, including parts from his commentary on Ex 33:21 (177).

¹¹⁷ See Gershenzon *A Study* 236 n. 27

¹¹⁸ See Cohen's explanation on 222.

¹¹⁹ This reference does not match the real content of this section.

¹²⁰ Kimḥi is following Ibn Ezra on Dan 9:25 (Rosenthal).

¹²¹ No other mention of this card by Moses of Leon is known

¹²² See also *Libro de la ley* 4r.

¹²³ The original source of this statement is in Maimonides's Commentary on TB *Sanhedrin* XI, his commentary on the *Mishnah* (Introduction to *Heleq*) and his *Ma'amar Teḥiyat ha-metim*, ch. 6. See Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial* 131.

¹²⁴ The statement cited by Abner/Alfonso seems to be from this chapter, but the meaning has been distorted. Maimonides does not say here that the reason for the commandments is not known, but only that "there are people who find it difficult to give a reason for any of the commandments and consider it right to assume that the commandments and prohibitions have no rational basis."

¹²⁵ See Daniel J. Lasker and Sarah Stroumsa, *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest*.

¹²⁶ The presence of this citation seems to suggest that Abner/Alfonso consulted the Hebrew, not the Arabic version of the text, as this argument is not found in the latter. It is also possible that Abner/Alfonso's source was Jacob ben Reuben's *Sefer Milḥamot ha-Shem*, which does contain this material. See Lasker and Stroumsa, *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest* I: 145.

¹²⁷ See also *Libro de la ley* 10r-v.

¹²⁸ Hecht notes these references, and observes that Avicenna does not hold these views (174 n. 396).

¹²⁹ Also in *Libro de la ley* 10r and *Teshuvot la-meḥaref* (Castilian) 49va and 50va and (Hebrew) 19b and 21b.

¹³⁰ See *The Soliloquies of St. Augustine*, ed. T. Gilligan (New York: Cosmopolitan, 1943), I, 1, 3, p. 7; *Ennarationes in Psalmos* 4.8. (XXXXX). Identified by Gershenzon, *A Study* 142 n. 12.

¹³¹ Also in *Libro de la ley* 5v.

¹³² Quoted in Strabo's commentary on Gen 2:8, and by Aquinas in *Summa Theologica*, prim pars, Q. 102, ob. 1

¹³³ *Patrologia Latina* 157: 606ff.

¹³⁴ See discussion of the Silvester Legend in Chapter four, above.

¹³⁵ Cf. Bede M102r

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¹ For a detailed discussion of the other Castilian manuscripts of this work (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, MS 864; El Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio, MS p.ij.21; and El Escorial, Biblioteca del Monasterio, MS h.ij.3), see Carpenter, 1987. For a discussion of the Portuguese version, see Cepeda, "Uma versão portuguesa..."

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