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Lydia M. Walker

Western Michigan University, lydia.m.baber@wmich.edu

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A Fourteenth-Century Augustinian Approach to the Jews in Riccoldo da Monte Croce's Ad nationes orientales

By Lydia M. Walker

The common description of the Christian attitude towards the Jews in the high and later Middle Ages is one of eventual and steady deterioration. The progressive decline of Jewish liberties and the rise of anti-Semitism, coming into greater development after the Rhineland massacres of 1096 and brought to its zenith with the expulsions from England (1290) and France (1306), have been attributed to a “changing theological and anthropological understanding of the Jew.”¹ As Michael Frassetto points out “the *topos* of the Jew was something less than human and that this position of hostility gained further expression in texts of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.”² However, prior to these changes, the long-standing Christian theological interpretation of how the Jews fit into God’s plan, and consequently how they should be handled socially, was set in Late Antiquity by Augustine of Hippo (354-430). He developed what is now called the “doctrine of Jewish witness” which stated that the Jews’ continued presence in Christian society held a two-fold purpose for the divine economy of salvation: both their preservation of the prophecies of the Old Testament and their dispersion by the Romans verified the truth of the New Testament; therefore, they should not be annihilated.³ This “doctrine of Jewish witness” persisted in the Christian theological understanding of the Jews in the Middle Ages, but it has been argued that the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries mark the end of the Augustinian stance and the rise of the condemnation of Talmudic Judaism, consequently leading to the assessment that the Jews no longer deserved toleration or privilege.⁴ This paper employs the

¹ Michael Frassetto, “Introduction: Christian and Jews in the Middle Ages,” in *Christian Attitudes toward the Jews in the Middle Ages: A Casebook* (New York: Routledge, 2007), xiii.

² Frassetto, xiii, xvii.

³ Jeremy Cohen, “‘Slay them not’: Augustine and the Jews in Modern Scholarship,” *Medieval Encounters* 4/1 (1998): 78-92, at 79. Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: a Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 211. Fredriksen argues that in the face of those who assigned no value to the Jewish Scriptures, “[Augustine] reimagined the relationship of God and Israel, and thus he reimagined as well the relationship of his church, past and present, to the Jews,” 211.

⁴ One of the major contributions to this theory is Jeremy Cohen’s *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982). Recent works that combat the uniform idea of medieval intolerance include Mark D. Meyerson, *A Jewish Renaissance in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton

Dominican Riccoldo da Monte Croce's missionary manual, *Ad nationes orientales* (*To the Eastern Nations*), as evidence for the continued presence of the Augustinian strain of thinking about the status of the Jews in the fourteenth century.⁵ I will focus specifically on Riccoldo's typical employment of Augustine and also how this pertains to Riccoldo's discussion of the Jews' role in killing Christ.

Riccoldo da Monte Croce (d.1320) was an educated Florentine Dominican preacher who traveled as a pilgrim and missionary in the Middle East between the years c.1288 to 1300. He traveled amidst a time of uncertainty in the East. The Mongols loomed on the horizon, inspiring fear, intrigue, and hope in the imaginations of the West. Their perceived roles in Christian eschatology vacillated between the anticipation of conversion and, therefore, hope that they could serve as an ally to the West, to apocalyptic fears of their conversion to Islam.⁶ Upon his arrival in Baghdad in 1288, Riccoldo was greeted by the Nestorian Patriarch Mar Yabhalaha III and was warmly welcomed by the Muslim community; it was at this location where he began a translation of the Qur'ān (abandoned in 1290).⁷ It was also from this location that Riccoldo later learned about the death of thirty of his fellow Dominican brothers and the Patriarch Nicholas by the hands of the Mamluks at the fall of Acre (1291) and about the Ilkhanate's leader, Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam in 1294.⁸ It was the fall of Acre that served as the fatal blow to the western toehold in the Holy Land and this expulsion realistically ended both political and spiritual hopes for Jerusalem. The conversion of the Mongols also was not without surprise. As noted by Leopold, "The Ilkans appeared to have deliberately fostered the impression of their Christian conversion in hope of securing assistance . . . playing on the optimistic responses of the west."⁹ A few years later Riccoldo made his getaway disguised as a camel driver after being accosted by newly converted Mongolian Muslims.¹⁰ He returned around 1300 to Italy to face a papal inquiry regarding his identification of the Eastern Christians as heretics.¹¹ Riccoldo completed two works during his travels: the *Itinerarium* (Itinerary), in which we can read about his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and *Epistolae*

University Press, 2004); Jonathan M. Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); and Robert E. Lerner, *The Feast of Saint Abraham: Medieval Millenarians and the Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

⁵ Riccoldo da Monte Croce, *Libelli ad nationes orientales* (1300), ed. Kurt Villads Jensen, transcribed from Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, Manoscritti, Conventi Soppressi, MS C 8.1173, created Spring 1998, <http://www1.sdu.dk/Hum/kvj/Riccoldo/index.html>. All translations from this text are my own. *Ad nationes orientales* survives in its entirety in three Latin manuscripts which are housed in Oxford's Bodleian Library, the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence, and the Cathedral Library in Oviedo.

⁶ See Felicitas Schmieder, "Cum hora undecima: The Incorporation of Asia into the *Orbis Christianus*," in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, ed. Guyda Armstrong and Ian N. Wood (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 259-65.

⁷ L. Michael Spath, "Riccoldo da Monte Croce: Medieval Pilgrim and Traveler to the Heart of Islam," *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 1/1 (1999): 83-84; Marshall W. Baldwin, "Missions to the East in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton, vol. 5 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 464.

⁸ René Kappler, *Pérégrination en Terre Sainte et au Proche Orient: Texte Latin et Traduction. Lettres sur la chute de Saint-Jean d'Acre: Traduction*, Textes et traductions des classiques français du Moyen Âge, 4 (Paris: Champion, 1997), 9.

⁹ Anthony Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land* (Burlington, VA: Ashgate, 2000), 117.

¹⁰ Reinhold Röhrich, ed. "Epistolae V de perditione Acconis 1291 Fratris Ricoldi de Monte Crucis," in *Archives de l'Orient latin*, vol. 2 (1884), 88-89.

¹¹ Stefano Orlandi, 'Necrologio' di S. Maria Novella, vol. 1 (Florence: Santa Maria Novella, 1955), 37-38.

ad ecclesiam triumphantem (Letters to the Church Triumphant), which reveals his emotional turmoil and retrospection on the Fall of Acre (1291). He produced two works after his return which includes his *Contra legem Sarracenorum* (Against the Law of the Saracens), a polemical disputation against Islam, and *Ad nationes orientales* (To the Eastern Nations), which endeavors to be a missionary handbook and is the focus of this paper.¹²

In his missionary manual, Riccoldo outlines the theological differences among the Eastern Christians, Jews, and Mongols; this text of 244 folia includes a unique patchwork of theology, practical guidance, and a small measure of personal observations. Each of the sections aims at educating missionaries about the core tenets of religion for each group and how they might be converted. In Riccoldo's travel narrative (*Itinerarium*), he claims that after leaving the city of Tabriz in modern day Iran, he journeyed to the city of Mosul in modern day Iraq, where he engaged the large Jewish community in public debates and also presented sermons in their synagogue.¹³ This experience may have informed the section on the Jews in his missionary manual. In this section, his combination of scripture, classical authorities like Augustine and Jerome, and selections of medieval authors like Petrus Comestor and Ramon Martí, creates a work that in many ways conforms to traditional ideology of the Jews as inferior to Christians and yet also departs from the aggressive content and style expected in the fourteenth century.¹⁴ He does not try to convince or warn Christians about the spiritual or temporal danger of the Jews; the work lacks a virulent tone or exempla which construct a monstrous image of the Jews and instead it focuses primarily on differences found in their theology. Riccoldo's perspective on the Jews by no means reflects a utopian attitude of tolerance; however, his approach appears more measured and evenhanded than those of his contemporaries and he retains hope for their present conversion.

Riccoldo starts the lengthy section (fourteen folios) on the Jews by calling attention to their supposed misunderstanding of the Law of the Old Testament and their rejection of the New Testament. He claims that the two points on which Jews remain separate from the Catholic faith are that "they say that Christ has not yet come, and the time of promise has not been fulfilled . . . [and] they say that in fact Christ is not actually God or the Son of God."¹⁵ Riccoldo states that the truth of Christ's advent can be proven to the Jews with three key pieces of evidence: Jacob's

¹² Kappler, 10. Riccoldo also completed a commentary on Aristotle prior to his journey that is entitled *Super perybermenias*. Currently no edition of this exists. A recent French translation of both the *Littere* and *Liber peregrinationis* was completed in 1997 by Kappler. An Italian translation of *Contra legem Sarracenorum* was completed in 1992 by Giuseppe Rizzardi (Firenze: Nardini Editore, 1992). An online Italian translation of *Ad nationes orientales* was recently completed by Emilio Panella O.P., "Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, OP, *Libellus Ad nationes orientales*," last modified November 2008, <http://www.e-theca.net/emiliopanella/riccoldo2/adno.htm>.

¹³ Marshall W. Baldwin, "Missions to the East in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton, vol. 5 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 464.

¹⁴ Robert Ian Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 4.

¹⁵ Riccoldo, 227v. "*Sequitur de iudeis . . . quod nec intellectum legis Dei habent, nec legem plenam. Non enim recipiunt nouum testamentum. Causa uero est, quia expresse et manifestissime continet illa duo, in quibus discordant a nobis, immo a ueritate: Unum est quia dicunt, Christus nondum uenit, et non est completum tempus promissionis. Aliud est quia dicunt, quod non erit uere Deus uel Filius Dei.*"

prophecy, Daniel's revelation, and the Jews' experience of captivity.¹⁶ For each of these three proofs Riccoldo employs Augustine's *City of God*, but most representative of his Augustinian tendency are his interpretations of Jacob's prophecy and the Jews' captivity, the latter of which he believes is a result of their role in killing Christ.

The exposition of Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49:10 was a stock component of the polemicist's arsenal.¹⁷ As Riccoldo cites it, it states: "The scepter will not be taken away from Judah, nor a ruler from his thigh until the one who is to be sent will come and he will be the expectation of the nations."¹⁸ Riccoldo argues that this prophecy was fulfilled because the Jews have had neither kingdom nor power since Jesus' coming.¹⁹ In order to build this argument, he relies heavily on Augustine's interpretation of the Jews' history in Book 18, Chapter 45 of the *City of God*. Specifically, Riccoldo employs Augustine's summary of the leadership of the Jews; this includes the patriarchs, judges, kings, leaders and rulers (both temporal and spiritual), and finally (up to the time of Herod) priests, whose authority, both Riccoldo and Augustine believe, was abolished with the coming of Christ.²⁰ One of Riccoldo's (and Augustine's) central proofs for the end of the "scepter of the Jews" is their dispersion throughout every kingdom; as Riccoldo says, "[F]rom India to Spain, they have been disseminated through every kingdom of the Gentiles."²¹ And again in the same vein he states:

And always there were, that is in the tribe of Judah, men worthy of supremacy and honor, just as David [who] even as a boy killed the giant Goliath; however, after the coming of Christ no remarkable or distinguished thing is found among the tribe of Judah, and especially after their captivity brought about by the Romans, the tribes are mixed, because they scattered and they sold them, that is thirty for one silver coin.²²

¹⁶ Riccoldo, 227v. "Circa primum sciendum est, quod Christus iam uenit, quod patet precipue ex tribus, que sunt in prophetia Iacob, reuelacio Daniel, et experientia captiuitatis."

¹⁷ Gilbert Dahan, *The Christian Polemic against the Jews in the Middle Ages*, trans. Jody Gladding (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 87, 114.

¹⁸ Riccoldo, 229r. "Non auferetur sceptrum de Iuda et dux de femore eius donec ueniat qui mittendus est et ipse erit expectatio gentium."

¹⁹ Riccoldo, 229r. "Et utrumque iam factum et completum est. Nam et regnum iudeorum defecit et ad fidem gentes Deus uocauit . . . nam post aduentum Christi nec regna habuerunt nec regem."

²⁰ Riccoldo, 229r. "Nam iudei primo habuerunt patriarchas secundo iudices tertio reges quarto duces et rectores populi temporales et spirituales summos sacerdotes qui populum rexerunt usque ad Herodem Ascalonitam . . . Quo tempore natus est Christus. Postquam nec regem habuerunt nec ducem generalem nec iudicem." He directly quotes Augustine and the *Historica Scholastica* at the end of this discussion on 232u, "Et hec omnia habentur aperte in Historiis Scolasticis in principio noui testamenti; et Augustinus De ciuitate Dei libro 18 capitulo 45. Igitur Christus aut nondum est incarnatus, quod tenent iudei, aut oportuit eum uenire quingentis annis ante quam ueniret, quod nullus omnino dicit."

²¹ Riccoldo, 232r. "Nam ab India usque in Yspaniam, per omnia regna gentium disseminati sunt."

²² Riccoldo, 237r. "Et semper fuerunt ibi, id est in tribu Iudam, uiri digni principatu et honore, sicut David [qui] etiam puer occidit Goliath gigantem, I Reg. 17[4ss] etc. Post aduentum autem Christi nulla notabilis excellentia inuenitur in tribu Iudam, et precipue in captiuitate facta per romanos commixte sunt tribus, quia disperserunt eos et uendiderunt, uidelicet 30 pro uno denario."

This quotation echoes the *The City of God* which states: “they were dispersed all over the world—for indeed there is no part of the earth where they are not to be found”²³ Riccoldo ties up this argument on the scepter with a brief mention of the textual traditions or corruptions that translate the “scepter” as the practice of Sabbath or circumcision. It is important to note that he does not attribute these or other textual differences to malicious falsification by the Jews.²⁴ He includes here Augustine’s famous claim for why God spared the Jews; namely he did so in order “to corroborate the faith so that the world would know about us that we did not invent those prophets which we say wrote about Christ.”²⁵ He admonishes his readers in the conclusion of the discussion about the scepter of the Jews, reminding them of the difficulty of this passage.²⁶ Riccoldo suggests that if this complicated argument is not intelligently grasped it could easily trip up a novice, and if it is mastered it could serve as one the more effective lines of argumentation; it would appear that for Riccoldo, understanding Augustine’s interpretation of this prophecy is key.

Riccoldo, also in agreement with Augustine, believes that the Jews’ dispersion and bondage are their penalty for denying and killing Christ. In his opinion, their punishment serves as clear proof of the advent of Christ and of his divinity rather than proof of any inherent evil in them. For example, Riccoldo claims that the intense bondage the Jews have suffered, and still suffer, can only be attributed to their extreme punishment for killing and denying Christ.²⁷

No other reason is able to be rendered, no other sin is able to be discovered among the Jews that could be the cause for this current bondage which is so humiliating, so dangerous, so universal, so tedious, which already has continued for almost 1300 years, than because they refused and killed Christ Truly the sin regarding the murder of Christ was infinitely more important than other prior sins. The state of bondage has not concluded for that failing generation, because their sons and daughters are still in the same faithlessness, nor will the bondage end, unless they would return to Christ.²⁸

²³ Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 18:46.

²⁴ Irven M. Resnick, “The Falsification of Scripture and Medieval Christian and Jewish Polemics,” *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996): 351. Resnick explains that the idea of a Jewish conspiracy to corrupt the Hebrew text took on “new life in the thirteenth century” under the influence of the “growing familiarity with talmudic sources,” 371, 373. Riccoldo does not reflect this idea of a Jewish conspiracy, but instead quotes Jerome: “*Nam sicut dicit Ieronimus in prologo Desiderii mei: ‘Ubi cumque sacratum aliquid Scriptura testatur de Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto, aut aliter interpretati sunt, aut omnino tacuerunt.’*” Riccoldo, 230u.

²⁵ Riccoldo, 237u. “*Dominus enim eos reseruat ad confirmationem fidei ut sciat mundus quod nos de nostro non confinximus ea que dicimus prophetas de Christo scripsisse Augustinus De ciuitate Dei libro XVIII capitulo XLV.*” This is actually from 18:46.

²⁶ Riccoldo, 237u. “*Enumeratis igitur pluribus opinionibus super auctoritatem difficilem prudens et pius lector eligat illam que uideatur magis catholica et intellectum suum conformet Sacre Scripture. Numquam uero Sacram Scripturam trahat ad suam imaginationem. Non enim est magnum quod Sacra Scriptura nostrum intellectum excedat.*”

²⁷ Riccoldo, 229u. “*In aduentu enim Christi ablatum est regnum translatum sacerdotium, mutatum est sacrificium et uocate sunt gentes ad fidem.*”

²⁸ Riccoldo, 229u-30r. “*Nulla enim alia causa potest reddi nullum aliud peccatum potest inueniri in iudeis quod sit causa presentis captiuitatis que fuit tam contumeliosa tam periculosa tam uniuersalis tam longa que iam durauit fere Mccctis annis quam quia negauerunt Christum et occiderunt Peccatum uero de occisione Christi in infinitum fuit grauius aliis peccatis*

Riccoldo focuses on describing the perils of the Jews' lives, its harshness and danger, rather than relating the details of the treachery of their presumed sin. He chooses instead to expose the enormity of their sin by emphasizing the tragedy of their bondage. Riccoldo's use of Augustine's "doctrine of witness" concentrates less on the Jews' preservation of the Old Testament and more on the witness that their bondage offers.²⁹

Again addressing the captivity of the Jews, Riccoldo rejects their claim that this bondage is only a result of habitual sin, stating, "But they have not committed a sin more serious or equal . . . except that they killed Christ."³⁰ He then interprets the promise of God for the Jews found in Deuteronomy as hope that their sufferings will end if they would repent and turn to Christ:

They repented from all other sin, but this sin they do not repent from nor acknowledge. But if they would repent God would faithfully release them just as he promised them in Deut. 30, "When . . . you will turn back to your Lord; the Lord God will restore you from your bondage and will have mercy on you, and in turn will gather you from all the nations in which previously you were scattered."³¹

Riccoldo takes the common theme of repentance and restoration found in the Hebrew Bible and refashions it as the impetus of the Jews' conversion to Christianity.

Although Riccoldo blames the Jews for deicide, their foreknowledge about his divinity is a trickier matter. He states that God wanted the divine mystery of Christ's identity to be kept a secret from the Jews, because if they knew they would not have wanted to crucify the Lord; he suggests, however, that this does not acquit them of their crime because their ignorance was owing to their hatred and envy of Christ.³² Previous authors, such as Augustine, also believed Christ's crucifixion was committed in ignorance, but it has been argued that in the thirteenth century "Christian theologians began to argue that the Jewish leadership knew exactly who Jesus was and killed him nonetheless—or, more precisely, for that very reason!"³³ Riccoldo does not include these details; nor does he dwell on this quandary. His cursory glance delicately balances between acceptance of a death that God ordained and ascribing guilt for the crime to the Jews. He spends more time discussing the captivity and dispersal of the Jews as evidence of their punishment than

prioribus. Nec deficiente illa etate terminatus est reatus captiuitatis quia filii et nepotes eorum adhuc sunt in eadem perfidia nec terminabitur captiuitas nisi reuertantur ad Christum."

²⁹ It has been suggested that when Augustine's twin functions of preservation of the Hebrew Bible and witnessing to the truth of New Testament prophecies by their own bondage were reduced to the latter, the Augustinian model of toleration for the Jews was weakened. Resnick, 380.

³⁰ Riccoldo, 238u. "*Sed grauiora non commiserunt nec equalia sicut supra patuit nisi quia occiderunt Christum et propter hoc acerrime incomparabiliter affliguntur quia occiderunt Christum.*"

³¹ Riccoldo, 238u. "*Secundo quia de omni alio peccato penitent sed de isto nec penitent nec recognoscunt. Quod si facerent Deus eis pie remitteret sicut promisit eis Deut. XXX Cum . . . reducet te Dominus Deus tuus de captiuitate tua ac miserebitur tui et rursum congregabit te de cunctis populis in quos te ante dispersit,*" (paraphrased from Deut. 30:1-3).

³² Riccoldo, 230u. "*Uoluit etiam Deus quod celaretur mysterium diuinum in Christo donec passio completeretur. Si enim cognouissent numquam Dominum glorie crucifixissent. Nec tamen iudei totaliter excusantur propter ignorantiam quia fuit ignorantia ex odio et inuidia quam habuerunt ad Christum.*"

³³ Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 339.

on their supposed crime. He accepts the foundation set by Augustine's interpretation of the blindness of the Jews, but adds to this that God blinded them because of their own misbehavior.

Augustine is not the only authority that Riccoldo relies on, but it is worth noting that his attitude is more congruent to that fourth century bishop than to many other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Dominicans. For example, Riccoldo's tone stands in stark contrast to one of the key authors he relies for his interpretations of Jewish scripture and history, the Catalan Dominican theologian Ramon Martí (d. 1285) who stated in his *Capistrum Iudaeorum* (The Muzzle of the Jews):

[W]hat do you think the devil can accomplish through the Jews, who are so numerous, almost all educated and most adept at trickery, so well-endowed from the good life and usuries allowed them by Christians, so loved by princes on account of the services they provide and the flatteries they spew forth, so scattered and dispersed throughout the world, so secretive in their deceptions that they display a remarkable appearance of being truthful?!³⁴

Martí composed his *Capistrum Iudaeorum* in 1267 shortly after the Disputation of Barcelona (1263). The forced debate between Friar Pablo Christiani and Rabbi Moses ben Nahman of Gerona, in Barcelona under the aegis of King James I of Aragon, served as an arena to test the new missionizing strategy that employed Talmudic sources to convert the Jews.³⁵ In 1264, James I assigned Martí as one of the Dominicans in charge of expunging the offensive passages from the Talmud.³⁶ Unique to Martí's work was the exploitation of rabbinical literature to prove Christian truths.³⁷ The *Capistrum* has been identified as "a handbook for Christian disputants and missionaries."³⁸ This is the very work that Riccoldo repeatedly uses for this section (especially for exegesis of the Hebrew Bible) and yet the descriptions of the Jews are very different. There are no references to their undeserved and power hungry "good life," or apocalyptic fears of the Jews' attempts to undermine the world as vessels of the devil; on the contrary Riccoldo refers to their state as *captiuitas*. Riccoldo restricts his application of Martí's work to its comprehensive knowledge of rabbinic literature; while leaving behind the vitriolic tone. Compare Riccoldo's previous treatment of Gen. 49:10, which focused on the captivity of the Jews, with Martí's, "From these things which we have adduced from the Talmud it is clear that the messiah must have come for all those whom sin or stupidity or malice does not blind. And thus, by the grace of God, the perfidy of the Jews is struck down by its own arrows and strangled by its own noose."³⁹ It is curious that the *Capistrum* has been identified as a handbook for missionaries to persuade Jews, rather than simply a shrewd, thorough, and methodical rejection of Judaism. The close chronology of its

³⁴ Ramon Martí, *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, 2:24-27, trans. Jeremy Cohen in *Living Letters*, 348-349.

³⁵ Robert Chazan, "From Friar Paul to Friar Raymond: The Development of Innovative Missionizing Argumentation," *Harvard Theological Review*, 76/3 (1983): 294; Robert Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond: The Disputation of 1263 and Its Aftermath* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 55; Sholomo Simonsohn, *The Apostolic See and the Jews: History* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1991), 309-313.

³⁶ Simonsohn, 313.

³⁷ Cohen, 343.

³⁸ Cohen, 346.

³⁹ Martí 1:88, trans. Cohen, 348.

composition to the passions roused by the public Disputation of Barcelona (1263) could account for the aggressive attitude in Martí's work, whereas Riccoldo's experiences left him less threatened by the Jews. The public nature of the Disputation and especially the reality of an uncertain victor required both sides to compose and disseminate their version of the debate. It was also imperative for the Christians to prove the usefulness of the new polemical strategies aimed at the Talmud. Martí was operating under these directives, whereas Riccoldo's debates with the Jews were neither recorded, nor under the same public scrutiny.

Robert Chazan describes the evolution in the treatment of the Jews by the Church in the fourth century, characterized by both their protection and social restriction, to the thirteenth century, which he characterizes as exhibiting a "heightened concern over the potential for harmful behavior (of the Jews)."⁴⁰ This heightened concern is apparent in *Capistrum* but not *Ad nationes orientales*. The disparity of these two works, both identified as handbooks for missionaries, invites the question: how should we characterize missionary handbooks? It appears Riccoldo extracted specific selections of Martí's systematic arguments, together with their theological evidence, but left behind the apocalyptic and virulent tone of anti-Judaism. While Riccoldo employed thirteenth-century works to construct his arguments, his tone is more aligned with the Augustinian tradition, which he may have valued as a more persuasive approach based on his missionary experience.

Riccoldo's section on the Jews is not only similar to Augustine in its tone, but also in what it leaves out—namely a discussion of the Talmud. In Riccoldo's treatment of the prophecy of Daniel 9:23-4 we see one of only two direct yet brief references to the Talmud.

Therefore, they say that Christ had been born, when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans or after the fire, but thus far he remains hidden or at an earthly paradise or at a remote island. Also certain people say he is hidden in Rome among the lepers, but that he will appear at the end of the world. This is also clearly considered in the Talmud.⁴¹

This passage is a paraphrase of part of Ramon Martí's *Capistrum* (2:11); however, Riccoldo does not condemn the rabbis of the Talmud for their insanity as Martí does.⁴² The paucity of references to the Talmud in Riccoldo's work is interesting because it is reported to have been at the forefront of the polemic against the Jews in the 1230s and the 1240s, but finds its roots in the twelfth century; as Resnick states: "[W]ith increasing frequency, attacks on the Talmud would become an integral part of polemical literature from this point on."⁴³ For Riccoldo's interpretation of the prophecy in Daniel 9:23-24 he also cites Petrus Alfonsi's *Dialogus Contra Iudeos* (Dialogue against the Jews). This complicated negotiation of arithmetic breaks down the predicted years before the

⁴⁰ Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond*, 20-22.

⁴¹ Riccoldo, 233r. "*Dicunt igitur Christum natum fuisse quando destructum fuisse templum a romanis uel post a caldeis sed adhuc latitat uel in paradiso terrestri uel in insulis remotis. Et quidam dicunt eum latitare Rome inter leprosos, sed apparebit in fine mundi. Et hoc habetur expresse in Talmud.*"

⁴² Martí, 2:58, 2:84, 2:116, 2:156-159, trans. Cohen, 349.

⁴³ Chazan, *Barcelona and Beyond*, 83; see also Petrus Alfonsi, *Dialogue against the Jews*, trans. Irvn Michael Resnick, *Fathers of the Church*, vol. 8 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 33; Cohen, 317-319.

advent of the Messiah and involves the theory that the prophecy was not referring to the years from Daniel to the time of Christ, but rather from Daniel to Cyrus who rebuilt Jerusalem.⁴⁴ When interpreting Hebrew Bible prophecies like this one, Riccoldo often relies on the works of Ramon Martí, Petrus Alfonsi, and also on Petrus Comestor's *Scholastice Historia* (Scholastic History). These may be sources that he relied on during his own journey and from which he could extract specific evidence to graft into his own work. However, as seen with Martí, he employs Petrus Alfonsi selectively.

Petrus Alfonsi, who served as court physician to King Alfonso I, converted from Judaism and was baptized in 1106 in Huesca; soon after he wrote his *Dialogi Contra Iudeos* (1109) which has been called the “single most important anti-Jewish text of the Latin Middle Ages.”⁴⁵ As John Tolan states: “The number of surviving manuscripts (seventy-nine), their wide distribution across Latin Europe, and the frequent citation of the *Dialogi* by medieval writers—all make the work the preeminent anti-Jewish text of the Latin Middle Ages.”⁴⁶ A central feature of Alfonsi's *Dialogi* was its criticism of the Talmud, and the text played a key role in the increasingly aggressive Christian stance against it. As Cohen states “Alfonsi was the first medieval Christian writer to employ rabbinic texts in his anti-Jewish polemic in any extensive or systematic fashion.”⁴⁷ The doctrines of the Talmud are one of the three main errors that Petrus lists for his dissatisfaction with Judaism; especially the anthropomorphisms applied to God.⁴⁸

There are similarities between Alfonsi's famous work and Riccoldo's section on the Jews. Both have a civil tone and both blame the Jews' diaspora on their having killed Christ; however, Petrus claims that the Jews committed this deicide aware of Jesus' divinity, whereas Riccoldo retains a more Augustinian view that the Jews were blinded by God.⁴⁹ Most importantly, Riccoldo does not incorporate Alfonsi's heightened focus on the erroneous nature of Jewish texts. It is difficult to determine the degree of Riccoldo's familiarity with Alfonsi's work. This text could have been part of Riccoldo's Dominican training. Humbert of Romans recommended this work for preachers in his *De praedicatione sanctae crucis contra Saracenos* (Regarding preaching of the holy cross against the Saracens) (ca. 1266-68); however, other authors, like Martí, employed the *Dialogi* and therefore

⁴⁴ Riccoldo, 229u. “non dicit de eodem Christo sed de Cyro quem Deus appellat christum Is. 45. Cuius scilicet precepto cepit reedificari Ierusalem.” This argument is seen in Martí's *Capistrum* 4:14-15 and 4:28.

⁴⁵ John V. Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 9-11. See also Alfonsi; and Cohen, 202. Alfonsi continued to England where he translated Arabic works of science into Latin and possibly served as a court physician to King Henry I.

⁴⁶ Tolan, 95, 116-123. A selection of the authors that employed this text for their own works include Peter the Venerable of Cluny in his *Adversus Iudaeorum inuentatam duritiem* (1143), Theobald of Saxony's *Pharetra fidei contra Iudaeos*, and Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum historiale* (1246-53).

⁴⁷ Cohen, 207-10. Cohen admits, “I have usually had to suffice with a rather hurried review, intended more to downplay his [Petrus's] significance in the medieval history of the Jewish-Christian debate, especially when compared with Christian polemicists of the thirteenth century.”

⁴⁸ Cohen, 203.

⁴⁹ Tolan, 12, 17; Cohen 212-217. While acknowledging Alfonsi's distinction between “the praiseworthy Jewish sages who preceded Jesus and the deceitful ones who followed him,” Cohen disagrees with Tolan's interpretation of Alfonsi. Cohen suggests that Alfonsi does not plainly state that the Jews knew Christ's identity and therefore were heretics, but rather emphasizes their ignorance in this act. He concludes that Alfonsi exposed “absurdities of rabbinic literature,” but retained the Pauline and Augustinian attitude towards the Jews.

Riccoldo could have obtained knowledge of this work through a secondary source.⁵⁰ The incorporation of the *Dialogi* in *Ad nationes orientales* is limited, but provides insight into the continued employment of Alfonsi's work; as Tolan states, "each scribe or author who used the text in turn transformed it into something different, something that suited his own interests and prejudices."⁵¹ For Riccoldo the *Dialogi*, like Marti's *Capistrum*, was a reference to be used for Hebrew Bible exegesis, but he chooses to leave out the animosity towards the Talmud. It has also been noted, however, that "after the middle of the thirteenth century, most medieval popes displayed little or no interest in rabbinic Judaism and its post-biblical literature."⁵² Riccoldo perhaps reflects this abated interest by including only two citations of the Talmud, both of which make their way into his work through secondary sources. He neither expounds on these citations nor makes them an integral part of his argument. Therefore, Riccoldo's limited attack against the Talmud as heretical questions the longevity, and more importantly, the uniform use of this strategy.

While this paper has revealed only a small fraction of the overall content of the section on the Jews in *Ad nationes orientales*, Riccoldo's repeated use of Augustine, specifically his focus on the Jews' dispersion as a witness of Christ's advent and divinity, provides an interesting viewpoint on the Jews in the early fourteenth century. More importantly, however, it questions the idea of a homogeneous mendicant stance regarding the Jews; if we question the fixity of the "victim," we should equally challenge the supposed uniformity of the mendicant "persecutor."⁵³ His selective use of Augustine and Ramon Marti show his familiarity with both the longstanding and contemporaneous issues against the Jews, but also reveals his preference for a more Augustinian stance. Salient to further research is the issue of genre. For example, is Riccoldo's attitude about the Jews found in this missionary manual congruent with his travel narrative or does it widely differ as does his treatment of the Muslims? Also, if we accept, as Riccoldo claims, that he interacted with Jewish communities, are the Jews of his text to be regarded as a reflection of his experience or merely constructions that continue in the vein of classical rhetorical strategy?⁵⁴ Considerations of Riccoldo's treatment of the Jews enriches the field of research regarding the use of Augustine's "doctrine of witness" in the later Middle Ages and adds to the complexity of what modern scholarship suggests is the steady and uniform progression of religious intolerance.

Lydia M. Walker holds a master of arts degree in medieval studies from Western Michigan University and is currently pursuing a master of arts in comparative religion at the same institution. Elizabeth Black, who recently completed a Ph.D. in the French department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, edited this paper.

⁵⁰ Tolan, 108, 114. In *Pugio Fidei* Ramon Marti uses Alfonsi's Trinitarian argument and cites him specifically. See also Edward Tracy Brett, *Humbert of Romans: His Life and Views of Thirteenth-Century Society* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984), 167-175.

⁵¹ Tolan, 131.

⁵² Cohen, 333.

⁵³ Jonathan M. Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2007), 9. Elukin challenges the interpretation of the Jewish experience as one of uninterrupted victimization, but still displays generalizations of the mendicants as persecutors, if not the very source of persecution.

⁵⁴ Fredriksen, 227.

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EDITOR

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The Newberry Center for Renaissance Studies

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Anupam Basu
*Department of English,
University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Matthew Maletz
*Department of History,
Northern Illinois University*

Elizabeth Black
*Department of French,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Brad Mollmann
*Department of History
Tulane University*

Andrew Bozio
Department of English, University of Michigan

Renée Anne Poulin
*Department of French and Italian
University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Glen Doris
Department of History, University of Aberdeen

John Walters
Department of English, Indiana University

David Hitchcock
Department of History, University of Warwick



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