

GILBERT CRISPIN, ALAN OF LILLE,
AND JACOB BEN REUBEN:

A Study in the Transmission of Medieval Polemic

BY DAVID BERGER

ONE of the most influential medieval polemics against the Jews was Gilbert Crispin's *Disputatio Iudaei et Christiani*, which was written in the late eleventh century and may reflect a genuine discussion between Crispin and a Jewish disputant.¹ However, the dependence of the third book of Alan of Lille's *Contra Haereticos*² upon Crispin's disputation has not been widely recognized. Blumenkranz, for example, in discussing the impact of Crispin's work in the twelfth century, noted the resemblance between the *Disputatio* and the *Dialogus inter Christianum et Iudeum* ascribed to William of Champeaux,³ but made no mention of the far closer relationship between Crispin and Alan.⁴ Vasoli, in a special study of the *Contra Haereticos*, also overlooked the major source of book three.⁵ Even d'Alverny, who noted the relationship between the two works, did not give a precise indication of its extent. Alan, she writes, "was inspired in large measure by the *Disputatio* of Gilbert Crispin and reproduced entire passages of this work."⁶ In fact, just under forty percent of Alan's polemic is copied almost word for word from Crispin or a previous digest of Crispin.

The following table indicates the passages which Alan copied:

Alan (<i>PL</i> 210)	Crispin (<i>Blumenkranz's ed.</i>)
Column 401. Lines 16-22 ⁷ = Page 33. Lines 15-19	
407.20-409.13	= 28.12-33.8
409.14-410.6	= 34.30-36.23
410.43-411.9	= 34.7-28
411.12-53	= 37.9-39.4
413.38-414.5	= 43.7-26
414.20-43	= 46.13-47.4
416.8-22	= 59.7-60.1 ⁸

¹ The work was edited by B. Blumenkranz, Utrecht, 1956 = *PL* CLIX, 1005-1036. (All references will be to Blumenkranz's edition.) See also Blumenkranz, *Les Auteurs Chrétiens Latins du Moyen Age sur les Juifs et le Judaïsme* (Paris, La Haye, 1962), pp. 279-287.

² *De Fide Catholica Contra Haereticos*, *PL* CCX, 305-430 (*Liber Tertius Contra Judeos*, cc. 399-422). On its late twelfth century date, see below, note 23.

³ *PL* CLXIII, 1045-1072.

⁴ *Disputatio*, introd., p. 17. Blumenkranz's comments are very similar to those of J. de Ghellinck, *L'essor de la Littérature Latine au XII^e Siècle* (Paris, 1946), p. 164.

⁵ Cesare Vasoli, "Il *Contra Haereticos* di Alano di Lilla," *Bulletino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano* LXXV (1963), 123-172, esp. 171-2.

⁶ Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, *Alan de Lille: Textes Inédits, avec une introduction sur sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris, 1965), p. 161.

⁷ In determining line numbers in *PL*, the lines in chapter headings have been counted.

⁸ This passage contains an alleged Jewish suggestion that the famous 'almah of Isaiah vii 14 means hidden (*abscondita*). See also Crispin, p. 55, and Alan, c. 415. R. Werblowsky has presented an interesting argument that this is not a genuine Jewish interpretation and that it raises serious questions

416.30–417.24 = 51.17–52.24
 418.14–419.48 = 48.12–50.33⁹

Certain significant and rather obvious corollaries result from the recognition of the nature and extent of this dependence. First of all, the utmost caution must be exercised in drawing any conclusions about Alan's thought from the material in these passages; a man who is copying an argument mechanically may include expressions and even ideas which are not fully consonant with what he would have written on his own. Secondly, the text of Alan's work can be corrected in several places once his source is known, particularly since we possess a good critical edition of that source.¹⁰ Finally — and here we tread upon much more dangerous ground — we may be justified in wondering whether the remainder of Alan's work might not also be dependent upon an earlier, written polemic. As we shall see, there may be reason to believe that passages from Crispin's disputation were included in a polemical collection that also contained other material; if Alan used such a collection, then other parts of his work might be dependent upon other sections of his source.¹¹ This suggestion, however, must remain in the realm of speculation.

One of the passages in Crispin which was reproduced by Alan deals with the allegorical interpretation of Pentateuchal law. This issue was, of course, central to the Jewish-Christian debate, and Christians had argued the case for allegory since New Testament times.¹² What is particularly important about this passage, however, is the hitherto unnoticed fact that it was translated into Hebrew in one of the earliest (and perhaps the very earliest) anti-Christian polemics written by a European Jew — Jacob ben Reuben's *Milhamot HaShem* (*Wars of the Lord*).¹³

Milhamot HaShem was probably written in Provence in 1170,¹⁴ and it contains an epoch-making translation and critique of sections of Matthew. No earlier

about the genuineness of the discussion in Crispin's work; see his "Crispin's Disputation," *Journal of Jewish Studies* xi (1960), 69–77. It is, of course, not impossible that a Jew should have presented such an interpretation even though it is not attested in Jewish sources, but it is certainly true that the references to this interpretation in Alan and in Peter of Blois' *Contra Perfidiam Judaeorum*, PL ccvii, 841 (neither of which is noted by Werblowsky) are a reflection of Crispin and not of actual Jewish arguments.

⁹ It is possible that Alan 404.24–29 is based upon Crispin 52.26–53.2, but this may be coincidence.

¹⁰ In the first parallel passage, for example, Alan's "nugantes" (401.18) is probably a corruption of the phrase in Crispin (33.16–17) in which "negando" appears. See also below, note 32.

¹¹ The most important lines of Alan's third book come at the end of Chapter 10 (c. 410), where a Talmudic passage is cited for the first time to prove the truth of Christianity. See Ch. Merchavia, *HaTalmud BiRe'i HaNazrut* (Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 214–217. In light of the minimal effort that Alan put into the composition of this section of the *Contra Haereticos*, it appears likely that this information came his way by accident (perhaps through a convert) or that it was already recorded in the source from which he was copying.

¹² Cf. Hebrews 10.1. In general, see B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, 1964), pp. 1–26 and *passim*; M. Simon, *Verus Israel* (Paris, 1948), pp. 104–117, 177–184; Blumenkranz, *Die Judenpredigt Augustins* (Basel, 1946), pp. 130–145.

¹³ This work was edited by Judah Rosenthal (Jerusalem, 1963).

¹⁴ See Rosenthal's introduction, p. viii.

Hebrew translation of the New Testament from Latin is known with the exception of two small fragments of poor quality, and while we cannot be certain that Jacob did not use an earlier translation, Rosenthal's feeling that he did not is certainly supported by the fact that an additional translation can now be identified in his work.¹⁵

Indeed, it appears that Jacob ben Reuben can now be credited with breaking even more new ground in the translation of Latin into Hebrew, for the passage to be discussed below may constitute the earliest translation into Hebrew of any section of a medieval Latin work. It is clear, at any rate, that no complete Latin work was translated into Hebrew before 1170, and thus Jacob may own the twin distinctions of being the first Jew to translate both a substantial passage of a medieval Latin work and sections of the Latin New Testament into Hebrew.¹⁶

In his introduction, Jacob ben Reuben informs us that his Christian interlocutor "took in his hand a book by the scholars of their early generations who established their error (i.e., Christianity) firmly. These were three authors; the first was Jerome, the second Augustine, and the third Paul. These three founded, sought out, and established (cf. Ecc. xii 9) the basis of the entire error and set it up. But Gregory prepared instruments for them" (i.e., he added to the system founded by the other three).¹⁷ Now, this statement could refer to a manuscript containing three separate books, but this does not seem likely. First of all, the reference to a book (lit., "one book") does not really give such an impression. Secondly, a manuscript containing a work of Jerome followed by a work of Augustine followed by a Pauline epistle would be rather surprising. Thirdly, the reference to Gregory leaves an ambiguity as to whether or not he too was represented in this "book." In addition, Jacob ben Reuben later quotes a passage from Paul which is nowhere in the New Testament and a passage from Jerome which neither the editor of *Milhamot HaShem* nor I have been able to locate in Jerome's works.¹⁸ Finally and most important, the material from Crispin shows

¹⁵ See J. Rosenthal, "Targum shel HaBesorah 'al Pi Matti LeYa'aqov ben Reuben," *Tarbiz*, xxxii.1 (1962), 48-66, esp. 50-51.

¹⁶ On Hebrew translations of medieval Latin works, see M. Steinschneider, *Die Hebraeischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher* (Berlin, 1898), pp. 461 ff., 616 ff., and 775 ff. Cf. also Charles Singer, "The Jewish Factor in Medieval Thought," in *The Legacy of Israel*, ed. by E. Bevan and C. J. Singer (Oxford, 1927), pp. 173-314, and A. S. Halkin, "Translation and Translators (Medieval)," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Jerusalem, 1971, vol. xv, cc. 1318-1329, esp. c. 1324. H. Gollancz (*The Ethical Treatises of Berachya*, London, 1902, introduction) dated Berechiah HaNakdan's free paraphrase of Adelard of Bath's *Quaestiones Naturales* before 1170; see, however, the critical remarks in the *Revue des Études Juives* 46 (1903), pp. 285-288. (Gollancz himself thought that Berechiah's work was based on a French translation rather than the Latin original.) Most recent writers date Berechiah in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, thus placing his paraphrase later than *Milhamot HaShem*. See, for example, W. T. H. Jackson in his introduction to M. Hadas, *Fables of a Jewish Aesop*, New York and London, 1967, and A. M. Habermann in his introduction to *Mishlei Shu'alim*, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1946, p. vi, and in his articles on Berechiah in the *Enziqlopediyah Ierit* and the *Encyclopedia Judaica*. It should also be noted that aside from Boethius (see Steinschneider, p. 466), Crispin may be the first medieval Christian to have had a portion of his work translated into Hebrew at any time during the middle ages.

¹⁷ *Milhamot HaShem*, p. 5.

¹⁸ See *Milhamot HaShem*, pp. 26-7, 28-9. Rosenthal (p. 27, n. 8) does supply a reference to Jerome, but he means only that it deals with the same general subject matter as the passage quoted by Jacob.

either that Jacob's disputant provided him with an additional book that we were not told about in the introduction or that the same book contained this material as well, and there is a concrete indication that the latter alternative is the correct one. One of the selections from Crispin is repeated, and its second appearance (where the language is closest to that of our Latin text) is separated from the main body of the Crispin passage by the quotation from "Jerome" and is followed immediately by the quotation from "Paul."¹⁹ On balance, then, it appears likely that the book shown to Jacob was a collection of polemical and exegetical material taken from various authors which did not always identify its sources and which occasionally contained inaccurate ascriptions. The possibility that Alan of Lille used a source similar to that of Jacob ben Reuben cannot be dismissed out of hand; in any event, there is concrete evidence for believing that Jacob's text sheds light on otherwise unattested readings in Alan's source, although the relationship between their texts is certainly more hypothetical than the clearcut citations of Crispin in *Milhamot HaShem*.

The passage translated by Jacob contains a short introduction, four questions intended to prove the necessity of allegorical interpretation, and a concluding paragraph.

Introductory Passage:

Crispin (p. 29):

Primum itaque legem bonam et a deo datam dicimus, tenemus, astruimus. Ac proinde, quicquid in ea scriptum est, diuino sensu intellectum suis temporibus obseruatum et obseruandum esse sancimus. Diuino quidem sensu legis mandata intelligenda esse dicimus, quia, si humano ea omnia sensu et ad litteram accipimus, multa sibi inuicem aduersantia et multum repugnantia uidemus.

Alan (col. 407):

Ad haec primo respondemus legem esse bonam, et a Deo datam dicimus, ac ideo quidquid in ea scriptum est, diuino sensu intellectum, suis temporibus obseruatum et obseruandum esse sentimus; ea vero diuino intellectu intelligenda erant, quae si ad litteram accipimus, multa sibi repugnantia videmus.

Jacob ben Reuben (p. 24):²⁰

The beginning of my statement is to establish in truth and strengthen with validity the proposition that all the words of Moses are true and correct to one who understands them, that his Torah and testimony are faithful, and his word is valid. Intelligent men should examine the words with intellect and observe all the commandments in their time, for if we will examine the words of the Torah only according to the letter, many things will appear difficult to us.²¹

Jacob's translation here probably reflects a slightly different Latin text from the ones we have, although he may have simply added some rhetorical flourishes

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-29. See below, note 34.

²⁰ The translations from *Milhamot HaShem* are my own; they have generally been kept as literal as possible in order to facilitate a direct comparison with the Latin.

²¹ Hahiloti ledabber bitehillat devaray leqayyem beqiyum ha'emet ulehazzeq behizzuq hayosher ki kol divrei Mosheh amitiyyim unekhoim lamevin, vetorato ve'eduto ne'emanah, umillato nekhonah. Veyesh lamaskilim lehitbonen badevarim mitokh hasekheh velishmor be'ittam kol hamzivot, ki im lo nitbonen bedivrei hatorah akh kefi hamiktav, yiqshu 'alenu devarim rabbim.

on his own. The main point, in any case, is that the law was indeed revealed by God but that it must be understood allegorically because a literal reading produces contradictions.²²

The one peculiarity in Jacob's translation comes in his final phrase, but this can be accounted for by a misunderstanding of the text reflected in Alan. Jacob's translation says, "If we will examine the words of the Torah only according to the letter, many things will appear difficult to us." The Latin text, on the other hand, means, "If we accept (the commandments of the law) according to the letter, we will see many things contradictory (lit., repugnant) to one another (multa sibi repugnantia videmus)." Jacob apparently took "sibi" to mean "to ourselves" rather than "to one another" and thus misinterpreted the final phrase. This misinterpretation, however, is significant because it is possible only on the basis of Alan's text; Crispin's more elaborate statement (with its "sibi invicem adversantia") does not lend itself to Jacob's explanation. It follows, then, that Alan's shorter version reflects not his own abridgement but rather a shorter text which he had before him.²³

Question 1:

Crispin (pp. 29-30):

Cum enim peracta creatione mundi Moyses dicat: Vidit deus cuncta que fecerat et erant ualde bona, quomodo in discretione animalium postea scribit hec munda et illa animalia esse inmunda, his uti permittit, illa non solum tangere, sed eum, qui tetigerit, morte multari et puniri mandat? Quod enim est inmundum, quomodo est ualde bonum? Vbi enim cuncta nominavit et ualde bona esse cuncta dixit, neque hoc neque illud animal exceptit. Quomodo igitur deus cuncta creavit ualde bona animalia, et postea uetat comedi hec uel illa animalia, et causam reddit dicens, ea esse inmunda animalia? Nec solum ea prohibuit, que sui natura homini ad uescendum noxia sunt, uerum et multa, que gustu iocunda et usu eque salubria ad comedendum existunt. Aliquid ergo sacramenti hec in se continent, que licet a deo dicta sint tamen a se ad litteram inuicem omnino dissident.

Alan (col. 407):

Cum enim Moyses dicat: Vidit Deus cuncta quae fecerat, et erant ualde bona, quid est quod in lege quaedam dicantur munda, quaedam immunda? Ad litteram quidem non est inmundum, quoniam est ualde bonum: nec solum ea prohibentur in lege, quae sui natura nociva sunt homini ad uescendum, uerum etiam quae gestu (read: gustu) iucunda, et aequae salubria ad comedendum existunt. Aliquid ergo sacramenti haec in se continent, quae, licet a Deo dicta sint, tamen a se inuicem ad litteram omnino dissident.

Jacob ben Reuben (pp. 24-25):

Moses also wrote in his book, "And God saw everything that he had made, and,

²² For this general argument in earlier Christian polemic, cf. Blumenkranz's references in his notes *ad loc.*, in his *Juifs et Chrétiens dans le Monde Occidental, 430-1096* (Paris, 1960), p. 240, and in his *Auteurs*, p. 98.

²³ It should be noted here that Jacob wrote before Alan, and so the Hebrew cannot be a reflection of Alan's work. See Vasoli, *op. cit.*, p. 135, for the estimate that Alan wrote *Contra Haereticos* between 1185 and 1195. Jacob's inclusion of Crispin's second question, which Alan omitted, is a further indication that he did not use *Contra Haereticos* or any work dependent upon it. (The fact that Alan's work is a product of his stay in southern France is also relevant to the suggestion of a relationship between his text and the one used by Jacob.)

behold, it was very good" (Genesis i 31). He thus included all his creatures — everything that he had made both above and below — in the category of "very good." Elsewhere, however, in distinguishing between animals, he wrote, "These are they which are unclean to you" (Leviticus xi 31), "These may you eat" (Lev. xi 9). Moreover, with regard to the impure animals, he did not warn against eating alone but also against touching, as it is written, "Whosoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening" (Lev. xi 24). Now, how can those animals which are so disgusting in the eyes of the creator that they are impure to the touch have been included in the category of "very good"? For where he wrote, "And he saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good," once he said "very good" he did not leave anything out. Now, if you examine the Torah according to the letter alone, you should wonder how the creator could have made all the animals "very good" and then declared some pure and others impure. And he did not declare those animals impure which are harmful to man by nature; rather, he prohibited many which are very good to eat. Consequently, we should understand some symbol and allegory in these words. Even though God said them, according to the letter their meanings are inconsistent with one another in accordance with the shell of the statement. It is therefore proper for a man to go into the matter deeply, to penetrate the depths of the intellect, and to reach the heights of knowledge.²⁴

The basic argument in this passage is that a literal understanding of the prohibition of certain animals as impure contradicts the statement that "God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. i 31). As Rosenthal points out, this alleged contradiction was cited for the same purpose by Novatian and Petrus Alfonsi.²⁵ An even more elaborate use of the same argument is found in a work by Isidore of Seville in which he systematically emphasized the discovery of contradictions as a justification for allegory.²⁶

²⁴ 'Od katav Mosheh besifro: Vayar Elohim et kol asher 'asah vehinneḥ tov me'od, vehevi kol yeẓurav bikhelal tov me'od, kol hanivra'im ma'lah umattah asher 'asah. Uvemaqom aḥer beḥilluq habehemot katav: Elleh hateme'im lakhem, et zeh tokhelu. Uvateme'ot lo ba lehazhir ba'akhilah levad akh gam ken bemagga', shene'emar, Kol hanogea' benivlatam yitma 'ad ha'arev. Ve'elleh asher nim'asu be'enei habore lihyotam teme'im lemagga' ha'adam, eikh nikhlelu bikhelal tov me'od? Ki bamaqom shekatav, Vayar et kol asher 'asah vehinneḥ tov me'od, be'amro tov me'od lo hish'ir davar lehozi min hakelal. Veyesh 'alekha litmoah, im titbonen batorah kefi hamikhtav levad, eikh yaẓar habore kol habehemot tovot me'od, ve'aḥarei ken tiher et elleh vetimme et elleh? Velo timme habore habehemot hamazziqot la'adam be'ad hatoledet, akh rabbot mehen asher asar aḥar shehen tovot me'od le'ekhol. 'Al ken yesh lanu lehavin badevarim ha'elleh dimyon umashal. Af 'al pi shehabore amaram, kefi hamikhtav ein pitronam shaveh zeh 'im zeh be'inyan qelippat hama'amar. Akh ya'ut la'adam lavo betokh ha'omeq valaredet bemordei meẓulot hasekkel ulehagbiah begovhei madda'.

Rosenthal placed a comma after *vetimme et elleh* and a question mark after *hatoledet*. This punctuation, however, is inherently dubious and is definitively ruled out by the Latin source.

²⁵ Novatian, *De Cibis Judaicis*, PL III, 956; Petrus Alfonsi, *Dialogus*, PL CLVII, 667. In the same note (*Milhamot HaShem*, p. 27, n. 8), Rosenthal refers to Crispin's use of this one argument, which he was familiar with through the brief summary in A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos* (Cambridge, 1935), p. 376.

²⁶ See Isidore's *Liber de Variis Quaestionibus Adversus Judaeos seu Ceteros Infideles* (mistakenly attributed to Raban Maur), ed. by E. Martène and U. Durand, *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum* v (Paris, 1717), ch. 54, 58, col. 517–19, 529. (I have been unable to obtain the critical edition of A. C. Vega and A. E. Anspach [Escorial, 1940].) For an instance of extensive verbatim copying from Isidore in an anti-Jewish polemic, cf. his *Questiones in Leviticum*, PL LXXXIII, 336–339, with Peter Damian's *Dialogus*, PL CXLV, 57 ff.; see my "St. Peter Damian: His Attitude Toward the Jews and the Old Testament," *Yavneh Review*, iv (1965), pp. 80–112.

Aside from Jacob's reversal of the order of Crispin's first two questions²⁷ and his supplying of several verses which may or may not have been in his source, there are at least two textual problems here which deserve further discussion.

First of all, Jacob ben Reuben may have afforded us the opportunity of actually correcting a difficult text in Crispin. The last part of Crispin's first sentence (which is not found in Alan's work) means, "Why . . . did he permit these animals while he not only [prohibited] touching the others but commanded that one who touched them be punished by death?" Blumenkranz has already noted the necessity of introducing the verb "prohibited" in order to make sense of this sentence, but there remains an additional difficulty; there is, in fact, no death penalty mentioned in the Pentateuch for one who touches an impure animal.

Now, Jacob's translation reads as follows: "With regard to the impure animals, he did not warn against eating alone but also against touching." It is extremely tempting to suggest that a phrase rather than just a word dropped out of the text of Crispin and that the section about the death penalty was added by an early copyist in order to complete a meaningless sentence. Specifically, I propose the following: The original text read, ". . . illa non solum comedere vetat sed etiam tangere" (while he not only prohibited eating the others but also touching them). The words "comedere vetat sed etiam" dropped out, and what was left simply meant, ". . . while not only touching the others." (It must be kept in mind that we have to assume that "vetat" dropped out in any case.) A copyist surveying this shambles might have automatically supplied the word "prohibited" in his mind and not realized the need to write it down, but the phrase "not only" required some additional section in the sentence; i.e., Moses not only prohibited touching impure animals, but also did something else, even more extreme than that. Presumably that something else was the imposition of the death penalty upon the transgressor. Thus, it is possible that Jacob ben Reuben has preserved a correct reading in Crispin which is corrupted in all the known manuscripts of the *Disputatio*.

A second, less significant but rather interesting textual question is raised by Jacob's translation of the last sentence in Crispin and Alan. The Latin means, ". . . granted that these things were said by God, nevertheless, according to the letter they differ from one another (*a se invicem*) entirely." Jacob's translation is peculiar and redundant: "Even though God said them, according to the letter their meanings are inconsistent with one another in accordance with the shell of the statement." "According to the letter" and "in accordance with the shell of the statement" seem blatantly repetitious and extremely awkward. Placing the comma after "letter" in order to minimize the redundancy does not appear to help much and is in any case ruled out by the Latin where "ad litteram" (according to the letter) clearly belongs with the second part of the sentence. Moreover, the phrase "the shell of the statement" is simply missing from the Latin entirely.

The fact is, however, that Jacob was almost certainly working with basically the same Latin text that we have, and his translation is a result of one simple

²⁷ Alan cannot help us on this point because he omits Crispin's second question entirely.

misreading. He (or the man who copied the text he was using) read "inuicem" (one another) as "in nucem" (in accordance with a nut). Now, an unbroken nut was used in twelfth-century polemic as a symbol of literal interpretation; the allegorical meaning was like the kernel of a nut which could be reached only if the shell were broken.²⁸ On the basis of this misreading, therefore, Jacob had his redundancy in the Latin text: ". . . tamen a se ad litteram in nucem omnino dissident" (nevertheless, they differ from each entirely according to the letter, in accordance with the nut).²⁹

Question 2:

Crispin (p. 30):

Item scimus quia dixit deus ad Adam: Ecce, dedi uobis omnem herbam afferentem semen super terram et uniuersa ligna, que habent in semetipsis sementem generis sui, ut sint uobis in escam. Qua igitur ratione deus dedit primo homini uniuersa ligna in escam et statim postea prohibuit, ne de ligno scientie boni et mali sumat in escam? Vbi uniuersaliter uniuersa ligna concessa homini commendat, nullum exceptum lignum fuisse insinuat. Non igitur absque mysterio id accipiendum est.

Alan:

Omitted

Jacob ben Reuben (p. 24):

For we have seen that Moses wrote in the book of Genesis that the creator told Adam, "You may eat of all the trees of the garden" (Genesis ii 16). Now, when he told him "of all the trees of the garden" he left nothing out; he kept nothing from him and permitted whatever he desired. In the next verse, however, he told him, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it, for on the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen. ii 17). Now, look into this matter and pay close attention. If we are to understand these verses only according to the letter, how can you reconcile the two of them in a straightforward manner? Your own eyes can see (if you are prepared to admit the truth) that when the creator told Adam, "You may eat of all the trees of the garden," once he said "of all the trees" he did not leave over a single tree of all the trees of the garden to be added. Nevertheless, he subsequently prohibited to him the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which had been among the other trees of the garden and thus permitted to him. I therefore maintain that the Torah was given for the understanding of other matters and different interpretations which are not superficially evident from the verses.³⁰

²⁸ See the *Dialogus inter Christianum et Iudaeum* ascribed to William of Champeaux, PL CLXIII, 1048-9:

Christ. Propono te tenere nucem in manu tua.

Jud. Fiat, teneo nucem.

Christ. Si hanc nucem infractam ederes, forsitan te strangulares.

Jud. Utique cito contingeret.

Christ. Ergo nux integra non est bona ad comedendum.

Jud. Utique.

Christ. Prius ergo oportet testam frangere et sic peruenire ad nucleum.

Jud. Nullatenus aliter esse potest.

Christ. Audi igitur: non potes nucem integram edere utiliter, nec peruenire ad nucleum nisi prius testa fragatur, sicut non potes peruenire ad novam legem nisi vetus lex conquassetur.

²⁹ The elimination of "invicem" does not distort the remainder of the sentence because "a se" alone is sufficient to convey the meaning "from one another."

³⁰ Ki ken ra'inu shekatav Mosheh besefer Bereshit asher amar habore la'adam: Mikol 'ez hagan

The essential argument here is that God first gave man all trees for food and then apparently contradicted himself by prohibiting the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The precise texts, however, are somewhat different, and the major difference may give us a clue as to why Alan omitted this argument entirely.

The verse quoted by Crispin to show that Adam was given all trees for food is Genesis i, 29; in Genesis ii, 17, however, the tree of knowledge is forbidden. This, Crispin argues, constitutes a contradiction. In *Milhamot HaShem*, on the other hand, the verse cited to show that all trees were permitted to Adam is Genesis ii, 16 (“You may eat of all the trees of the garden”); the alleged contradiction is, therefore, in the very next verse, which prohibits eating from the tree of knowledge.

There is little doubt that the text used by Jacob reflects the efforts of an overly eager copyist (influenced, perhaps, by Crispin’s “statim postea prohibuit”) to “improve” his text by making the contradiction come immediately after the first verse quoted. The truth is, of course, that this change completely vitiated whatever force the original question may have had, because the obvious response is that Gen. ii, 17 does not contradict but simply qualifies ii, 16. As Jacob points out in his answer, you simply cannot write two things at the same time.³¹

Now, Alan of Lille was not in the habit of omitting significant sections in the middle of a passage that he copied, and his omission of one of Crispin’s four questions is very peculiar. This omission, however, can be explained very easily if we assume that Alan had before him the same text as Jacob ben Reuben. He left out this question because, in the form in which he had it, it was simply ridiculous.

Question 3:

Crispin (pp. 30–31):

In Exodo, inter alia precepta de faciendo altari, dominus Moysi ita precepit: Altare de terra facietis mihi et offeretis super illud holocausta et pacifica uestra. Et de qua materie alia fieri liceret et quomodo, ita subdidit: Quod si de lapidibus illud edificare uoueris, de non sectis lapidibus illud edificabis. In expletione autem tabernaculi et uasorum atque utensilium tabernaculi ita legitur: Fecit Moyses altare thimiamatis de lignis sethim habens per quadrum singulos cubitos et in altitudine duos. Et post pauca: Fecit et altare holocausti de lignis sethim quinque cubitorum per quadrum et trium in altitudine. Non temerario quidem ausu seu presumptione fiebat, quod tam discreta dimensione altitudinis et quadrature fiebat. Item post aliquanta: Fudit bases eneas in introitu tabernaculi et altare eneam cum craticula sua. Item in fine: Candelabrum stabit cum lucernis suis et altare aureum in quo adoletur incensum coram archa testimonii. Quo-

akhol tokhel, vekha'asher amar lo mikol 'ez hagan lo shiyyer kelum velo mana' mimmennu davar akh shehittir lo hakol kehefzo. Uvamiqra hasheni amar elav: Ume'ez hada'at tov vara' lo tokhal mimmennu ki beyom akhalekha mimmennu mot tamut. Ve'attah re'eh vehitbonen vesim libbekha ledavar zeh, im lo naskil bamiqra'ot ha'elohim akh kefi hamikhtav, eikh tukhal leyashsher et shenehem bederekh yesharah? Sheharei 'einekha ro'ot, im tahpoz lehodot 'al ha'emet, ki be'emor habore el ha'adam, Mikol 'ez hagan akhol tokhel, keivan she'amar mikol ha'ez lo hinniah 'ez ehad mikol 'azei hagan lerabbot, ve'aharei ken hizhiro 'al 'ez hada'at tov vara' shehayah bikhelal she'ar 'azei hagan shehuttar lo. Al ken amarti shenittenah hatorah lehaskil 'inyanim aherim ufanim aherot shelo nir'eh la'ayin min hakatuv.

³¹ *Milhamot HaShem*, p. 32.

modo ergo dominus iubet, ut altare de terra faciatis et super illud holocausta uestra offeratis, econtra Moyses fecit altare thimiamatis ligneum et fecit altare holocausti ligneum, fecit altare eneam, fecit et aureum, fecit aliquando etiam et lapideum? Multum itaque aduersum uidetur, ut aliud et aliter quam dominus per Moysen iubet ab ipso Moysae agatur. Altius ergo quam littera sonat et hec accipi oportet.

Alan (col. 407–8):

In exordio³² autem, inter alia praecepta, de faciendo altari Dominus Moysi ibi ita praecipit: Altare de terra faciatis mihi; in sequentibus autem legitur sic: Fecit itaque Moyses altare thymiamatis de lignis setim. Et alibi: Fundavit bases aeneas in introitu tabernaculi. Multum itaque aduersum videtur, ut aliud et aliter quam Dominus per Moysen iubet, ab ipso Moysae agatur. Aliter ergo quam littera sonat hoc accipi oportet.

Jacob ben Reuben (p. 25):

The creator also commanded Moses among the other laws: “An altar of earth shall you make unto me, and shall sacrifice thereon your burnt-offerings and your peace-offerings” (Exodus xx 21). And at that point he taught him in what way he should make all the other altars that he would make, as it is written, “If you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones” (Exod. xx 22). But when he came to the construction of the tabernacle, Moses made the altar of gold and the altar of brass. Now, with respect to one of the altars it says, “And he made the altar of incense of acacia-wood: a cubit was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, foursquare; and two cubits was the height thereof; the horns thereof were of one piece with it. And he overlaid it with pure gold” (Exod. xxxvii 25–26). And afterwards it says, “And he made the altar of burnt-offering of acacia wood: five cubits was the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof, foursquare, and three cubits the height thereof. And he made the horns thereof upon the four corners of it; the horns thereof were of one piece with it; and he overlaid it with brass” (Exod. xxxviii 1–2). Now, on the basis of all this I ask you why Moses acted in this manner. After all, I have already noted that the creator told him, “An altar of earth shall you make unto me,” and that he warned him, “If you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones.” In light of this, why did Moses do all these things? And for what reason did he make one a cubit in length and a cubit in breadth, foursquare, and the other five cubits in length and five cubits in breadth? Now, this is a very difficult thing, that we should say of Moses, who was the most faithful of all the prophets, that he did that which the creator did not command him. If you will argue that the creator did command him to do this but it was not recorded since Scripture is generally concise, then this matter would be even more difficult, for we would be asserting that the creator, blessed be he, goes back on his word. I have therefore told you that everything is to be understood allegorically and not in accordance with the letter at all, lest we lose our way and walk in darkness.³³

³² Read “Exodo” in light of Crispin.

³³ ‘Od zivvah habore leMosheh bishe’ar haḥuqqim: Mizbaḥ adamah ta’aseh li vezavaḥta ‘alav et ‘olotekha ve’et shelamekha, vesham moreh ‘alav be’eizeh ‘inyan ya’aseh kol hamizbeḥot ha’āherim asher ya’aseh, kemo shekatuv, Ve’im mizbaḥ avanim ta’aseh li lo tivneh etheh gazit. Vekha’asher higgia’ lema’aseh hamishkan ba Mosheh ve’asah mizbaḥ hazahav umizbaḥ haneḥoshet. Uvamizbeaḥ ha’eḥad omer: Vaya’as et mizbaḥ haqetoret ‘azei shittim ammah orko ve’ammah roḥbo ravua’ ve’ammatayim qomato mimmennu hayu qarnotav vayeẓaf oto zahav tahor. Ve’āharei ken amar: Vaya’as et mizbaḥ ha’olah ‘azei shittim ḥamesh ammot orko veḥamesh ammot roḥbo ravua’ veshalosh ammot qomato vaya’as qarnotav ‘al arba’ pinnotav mimmennu hayu qarnotav vayeẓaf oto neḥoshet. Umikol zeh ani sho’el elekha lammah ‘asah Mosheh ken. Shekevar ra’iti she’amar elav habore, Mizbaḥ adamah ta’aseh li, vera’iti shehizhiro, Ve’im mizbaḥ avanim ta’aseh li lo tivneh etheh gazit. Ve’āharei ken mah ra’ah Mosheh she’asah et kol elleh? Ume’eizeh ta’am ‘asah ha’eḥad ammah orko ve’ammah roḥbo ravua’, veba’eḥad ḥamesh ammot orko veḥamesh ammot roḥbo? Vedavar qasheh

The basic elements of this question are that God commanded Moses to make an altar of earth (Exodus xx 21–22), and yet Moses later made altars of wood and metal (Exodus xxxvii 25; xxxviii 1, 30; xl 4–5). With some changes in order and with the elaboration of an argument implicit in the *Disputatio*, Jacob ben Reuben's text is very close to that of Crispin. Alan's shorter version is probably his own condensation of the essential points of the argument.

Question 4:

Crispin (p. 31):

Rursum, cum ea omnia humanis usibus deum creasse Moyses dicat, eaque omnia homini subdidisse comemoret, ut presit, inquit, piscibus maris, uolatilibus celi, animantibus terre et omni reptili quod mouetur in terra, cur postea uetat, ne homo aret in boue et asino? Onus aliud, quodcunque tibi placet, asino imponere licet, et ponere iugum boui cum asino quare non licet? Ad pascua ducere bouem cum asino licebit, in pascuis ea simul esse et compasci lex permittit, et arare ea simul prohibet et interdicat. Si autem propterea uetat, quia hoc animal immundum lex dicit, quare circa illud cetera, que dicta sunt, permittit, solum arare excipit? Equus in lege animal immundum esse perhibetur et alia multa, nec tamen arare bouem cum equo uel alio animali immundo in lege prohibetur.

Alan (col. 408):

Item, ad litteram quomodo stare potest, quod Deus prohibet: Ne homo aret in bove et asino? Onus aliud quodcunque tibi placet asino imponere, non vetat lex, et ponere iugum cum asino, quasi non licet, cum ad pascua bovem cum asino ducere licet, in pascuis simul esse, et compasci permittit lex, et arare simul prohibet, et interdicat. Si auctor propterea haec vetat, quia hoc animal immundum esse perhibetur, cur non etiam arare bovem cum equo vel alio animali immundo prohibetur in lege?

Jacob ben Reuben (pp. 27–28):³⁴

The creator said, "You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together" (Deuteronomy xxii 10). Thus, he prohibited only plowing. With respect to another burden, the creator did not take pity upon it, but with respect to a yoke, he prohibited you from tying it together with an ass. However, when they graze, he permitted that an ox and an ass be together, but while plowing this is a serious prohibition. Now, if the ass was prohibited by the creator because it is an impure animal, why did he permit an ox and an ass to graze together? He should have prohibited even standing and grazing, and yet he prohibited only plowing. With respect to a horse, the Torah says that it is an impure animal, and so too with respect to a mule and many other animals; nevertheless, the creator did not prohibit them from plowing with an ox nor the ox with any other animal except the ass.³⁵

hu me'od shenomar miMosheh shehayah navi ne'eman 'al kol hanevi'im sheya'aseh mah shelo zivvahu habore. Ve'im tomar shehabore zivvahu velo nikhtav, vederekh hakatuv leqazzer, kol sheken yiqsheh hadavar yoter, ki nomar mehaboro sheyahazor bedibburo. 'Al ken amarti elekha shehakol nittan lehavin be'inyan mashal velo kefi hamikhtav kelal, pen nit'eh banativ venelekh baqoshekh.

³⁴ This passage from *Milhamot HaShem* is taken from the section which presumably gives the Christian interpretation of these verses; in fact, the Christian question is reiterated here in a form closer to that of Crispin and Alan than the form in which it first appears in *Milhamot HaShem* (p. 26). Even Jacob's initial formulation, however, is quite close to the text given here.

³⁵ Amar habore, Lo taharosh beshor uvaḥamor yaḥdav, ve'asar haḥarishah levad, ule'inyan massa aḥer lo ḥas habore 'alav, akh le'inyan 'ol asar lekha shelo tiqshor oto 'im haḥamor. Aval ka'asher yir'u hittir lekha sheyihyu hashor vevaḥamor yaḥdav, uve'et haḥarishah hu issur gadol. Ve'im ne'esar

In Crispin, this is a two-part argument. First of all, the Bible says that man would rule over the animals of the earth (Genesis i 26), and then it prohibits plowing with an ox and an ass together (Deuteronomy xxii 10). This is an alleged contradiction of the sort that this passage has been discussing all along. Crispin then continues with a series of logical arguments designed to show that the prohibition in Deuteronomy is inherently implausible. Why is only plowing prohibited? And if an ox may not plow with an ass because the latter is an impure animal, why was the ass singled out? There are, after all, quite a number of additional impure animals.

Both Jacob and Alan present only the logical arguments and omit the contradiction entirely. Here again Jacob's text probably reveals that the citation of Genesis i 26 was missing from Alan's source. This would have been a reasonable conjecture even without Jacob's translation; it is, after all, unlikely that Alan would have omitted the contradiction on his own since the basic character of this passage leads one to expect the citation of contradictions. Nevertheless, it is only *Milhamot HaShem* which enables us to make this assertion with some confidence.³⁶

Concluding Passage:

Crispin (pp. 31-32)

Hanc non solum in his que dicta sunt mandatis, sed in quampluribus aliis legalibus ceremoniis contrarietatem uidemus, nisi ea competenti sensu intellexerimus. Discreto itaque et diuino sensu hec discutienda et intelligenda sunt, quia fieri non potest, ut ad litteram sumpta ea omnia impleantur. Si uero legem debito sensu accipimus, omnia legis mandata debita obseruatione obseruare poterimus, quedam ad litteram et sine ullo figurarum uelamine dicta esse accipiendo, quedam uero ad figuram et profundo figurarum uelamine adumbrata esse intelligendo. Quedam ad tempus obseruari iussa sunt, quedam sine ulla temporum determinatione obseruanda sunt. Que enim sacramenti alicuius prenunciatiua erant et ueritatis future figura, suo tempore manifestata rei atque ueritatis presentia, oportuit, ut eorum remaneret prenunciatio et figura. Nam sicut ipso usu loquendi uerborum utimur uicissitudinibus, dicendo 'erit', quamdiu futurum est, et ipsum 'erit' prorsus omittentes in presenti 'est' assumimus, quidque ipsum iam preterisse significantes utimur 'fuit', sic in rebus prenunciatiuis alicuius sacramenti, ubi presens manifestatur sacramentum, eius iam superfluo seruaretur seu figura seu signum.

Alan (col. 408):

Hanc non solum in iis quæ dicta sunt mandatis, sed etiam in pluribus aliis legalibus cæremoniis contrarietatem uidemus, nisi ea competenti sensu intellexerimus. Discreto itaque et diuino sensu hæc intelligenda sunt et discutienda. Si uero legem debito sensu accipimus, omnia legis mandata debita obseruatione obseruare poterimus; quaedam ad litteram et sine ullo figurarum uelamine dicta esse accipiendo, quaedam ad figuram

lekha haḥamor me'et habore ba'avur shehi behemah teme'ah, maddua' hittir sheyir'u yaḥdav hashor vehaḥamor? Hayah lo le'esor afilu hama'amad vehamir'eh, velo asar ki im haḥarishah leuaddah. Umehasus amrah hatorah shehi behemah teme'ah umehapered umibehemot aḥerot rabbot, ve'af 'al pi ken lo asaram habore laḥarosh 'im shor veshor 'im behemah aḥeret ḥuẓ mehaḥamor.

³⁶ Christian questions concerning the inherent logic of Biblical commandments in order to set up allegorical exegesis are quoted in other Jewish polemics as well. See Meir ben Simon of Narbonne, *Milhemet Mizrah*, Parma ms., pp. 46a-47a; *Nizzahon Vetus*, in J. Wagenseil, *Tela Ignea Satanæ* (Altdorf, 1681), II, pp. 10, 19.

et profundo velamine obumbrata esse intelligendo: quaedam ad tempus observari jussa sunt, quaedam sine ulla temporum determinatione. Quae enim alicujus sacramenti praenuntiativa erant, et veritatis figuram faterentur, suo tempore, manifestata rei atque veritatis praesentia, oportuit ut eorum non remaneret praenuntiatio et figura. Nam sicut ipso suo loquendi sensu utimur verborum vicissitudinibus, dicendo, erit, quandiu futurum est ipsum quod erit; prorsus omittentes in praesenti, et assumendo, est; cumque ipsum jam praeteriisse significantes utimur, fuit: sic in rebus praenuntiativis alicujus sacramenti, ubi praesens manifestatur sacramentum, ejus jam superflue servaretur figura, seu signum.

Jacob ben Reuben (p. 28):

Similar strange things can be found in many places in the Torah of Moses. It is therefore proper to interpret and understand in accordance with the profundity of the human intellect, for if we should examine it on the basis of the letter alone, it could never be observed. If, on the other hand, we understand the Torah as it is proper to understand it, we shall be able to observe all the commandments as they are, some just as they are written without any symbolism at all, and others through allegory and symbol. Some were commanded to be observed for all time and have no time limit, while others were commanded to be observed for a fixed time. With regard to those which were commanded for a fixed time, once that time has passed, the commandment has been abolished, just as a man usually says of an event which is to take place in the future, "It will be," for it has not yet come, while after it has come it becomes something which already "was." Such is the case with regard to most of the commandments in the Torah of Moses, which were said for a fixed time; after that time has passed, it is only proper that they be abolished.³⁷

This passage is almost identical in the three works. It maintains that there are many other difficulties in the Law if it is interpreted literally and that the commandments may be divided into two groups — some which can be taken literally and others which must be understood allegorically. This was a time-honored position in Christian thought although it raised problems which Jews did not hesitate to exploit.³⁸

We have seen, then, the existence of an unsuspected Hebrew translation of a selection of Gilbert Crispin's *Disputatio* which may be the first Hebrew translation of any section of a medieval Latin work. Moreover, this translation may reveal the existence of a polemical collection which circulated in France in the twelfth century and contained extensive quotations from Crispin. In at least one in-

³⁷ Vekhidevarim elleh shehem teimah yesh berov meqomot betorat Mosheh. 'Al ken ya'ut lefaresh ulehavin me'omeq sekhel ha'adam, ki im lo nitbonen bo raq kefi hamikhtav, lo yitqayyem le'olam. Akh im naskil hatorah asher ya'ut lehaskil, nukhal leqayyem kol hamizvot kullan ka'asher hen, ha'aḥerot beli shum dimyon ba'olam ka'asher hen ketuvot, vaha'aḥerot bemashal vedimyon. Ha'aḥerot nitzavvu lishmor kol hayamim, she'ein lahem zeman, vaha'aḥerot nitzavvu lishmor lizeman qavua'. Ve'otan shenitzavvu lizeman qavua', aḥar she'avar hazeman nitbattelah hamizvah, kemo she'adam ragil lomar midavar she'atid lihyot "yihyeh," she'adayn lo ba, ve'aḥar sheba shav hadavar lihyot "hayah." Vekhen rov hamizvot shene'emru betorat Mosheh lizeman qavua', aḥar she'avar hazeman din hu sheyevattelu otam.

³⁸ Cf. Euler of Lyon, PL L, 781, and Leo the Great, PL LIV, 88–9. For the Jewish argument against allegory, see appendix 3 of my dissertation, *The Nizḥon Vetus: A Critical Edition, with an Introduction and Commentary on the First Part*, Columbia University, 1970.

stance, these quotations have apparently preserved a reading in the *Disputatio* which has been distorted in all the known manuscripts. Furthermore, it is at least possible that Alan of Lille used a similar collection of polemic in writing the third book of his *Contra Haereticos*; at the very least, this translation reveals variant readings which probably underlie Alan's version and which are preserved in no other source. Finally, we may conclude that the impact of Gilbert Crispin on the Jewish-Christian debate in the twelfth century was truly pervasive and exceeded even the generous estimates that have hitherto prevailed.

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