

The Medieval Latin Talmud and the Tale of the Jew and the Gentile in Albert the Great's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke

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Exempla, i.e., brief tales or anecdotes, were collected in medieval *libri exemplorum*. Among preachers and theologians, *exempla* enjoyed enormous popularity and were often introduced to sermons or written commentaries both to entertain and to strengthen a moral lesson.¹ They were also utilized by encyclopedists and natural philosophers, for whom tales drawn from the natural world and from animal behavior in particular could convey an important lesson. Below, we will examine Albert the Great's (d. 1280) treatment of Luke 10.27-28, in which Albert introduces

¹ For thirteenth-century collections of *exempla*, see Victoria Smirnova, *Medieval Exempla in Transition. Caesarius of Heisterbach's Dialogus Miraculorum and its Readers* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2023). Albert's Dominican confrère and student, Thomas of Cantimpré, also utilized *exempla* extensively. For discussion, see *Das Bonum universale de apibus des Thomas von Cantimpré als Gemeinschaftsentwurf. Analyse, Edition, Übersetzung, Kommentar. Teilband 1: Analyse und Anhänge; Teilband 2: Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, ed. and trans. Julia Burkhardt (Regensburg: Schnell + Steiner, 2020), 1: 39-50. See also Baudouin Van den Abeele, "L'allégorie animale dans les encyclopédies latines du Moyen Âge," In *L'animal exemplaire au Moyen Âge, V^e-XV^e siècles*, ed. Jacques Berlioz, Marie-Anne Polo de Beaulieu and Pascal Collomb (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 1999), 123-143. For a collection of *exempla* drawn especially from the work of Bartholomew the Englishman's *De proprietatibus rerum* and from medieval bestiaries, see *Thesaurus Exemplorum*, fasc. 3: *La Tabula Exemplorum secundum ordinem alphabeti*, ed. J. Th. Welter (Paris and Toulouse: Anciennes Libraires Marqueste et Bouquet-Morainville, 1926). For *exempla* collected by Etienne de Bourbon, see, *Anecdotes Historiques, Légendes et Apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Étienne de Bourbon*, ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1877). For *exempla* in the sermons of Jacques de Vitry, see *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry*, ed. Thomas Frederick Crane (London: The Folk-Lore Society, 1890). For modern research aides, see the *Index exemplorum: a Handbook of medieval Religious Tales*, ed. F.C. Tubach, vols. 86-87 (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1969). For the motif of an ungrateful Jew who steals the horse lent to him by a Christian (discussed below with reference to Albert the Great's Lucan commentary), see Tubach, #2289. It is listed as motif W.154.19 in the *Motif-Index of Medieval Spanish Folk Narratives*, ed. Harriet Goldberg, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies*, 162 (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies. 1998) and John Esten Keller, *Motif index of Mediaeval Spanish Exempla* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1949), 66, W154.19; available online: <https://archive.org/details/motifindexofmedi0000kell/page/66/mode/2up>. Also see the *Thesaurus exemplorum medii aevi (ThEMA)* database, <http://thema.huma-num.fr/>.

an exemplum incorrectly attributed to Aristotle that was transferred to medieval Christendom via Philip of Tripoli's translation of the *Secretum secretorum*. We will see that Albert not only subtly changes his source text, but also that its use in his Lucan commentary reflects an increasingly harsh Christian polemic against the Talmud and its Jewish defenders. Relying upon the (mis)identification of Christians with *goyim* in the Latin translation of Talmud texts, Albert's text likely strengthened the conviction among medieval Latin Christians that the Jews' Law excluded their Christian neighbors from the sphere of moral concern and that therefore Judaism was a persistent threat to Christendom.

1. An Exemplum from the *Secretum secretorum* in Albert the Great's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke (*Super Lucam*)

After having completed commentaries upon the works of Pseudo-Dionysius and Aristotle, Albert the Great composed numerous biblical commentaries, including commentaries on many Old Testament texts and all four Gospel texts. In Albert's commentary on the Gospel of Luke (*Super Lucam*; ca. 1264-68) he introduces a tale from Pseudo-Aristotle's book of advice for Alexander the Great, the *De regimine dominorum*.² Albert refers to this pseudo-Aristotelian text numerous times across his literary corpus: in the fourth book of his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* (ca. 1249); then, in his *Super Dionysii epistulas* (1250), in *De somno et vigilia*, (1256), in his *Ethica* (ca. 1262), in his *De animalibus* (ca. 1263), in his *Topica* (ca. 1264), and in his *Politica* (after 1264).³ In his Lucan commentary, he turned to the *De regimine dominorum* for an anti-Jewish trope in order to demonstrate a moral lesson. Yet, as we will show below, Albert's version departs from his source for *De regimine dominorum*, viz. Philip of Tripoli's Latin translation of the *Secretum Secretorum*.

Albert's account in *Super Lucam* follows Jesus's instructions to one "expert in the Law" (*legisperitus*; Lk. 10.25, Vulg.) that, to obtain eternal life, one should "love...one's neighbor as oneself," leading the man to inquire: "who is my neighbor?" (Lk. 10.27-28). In response Jesus introduces the parable of the Good Samaritan, who offers aid to a man who had been attacked, left for dead, and abandoned by both a priest and a Levite. This provides the context, then, for Albert's introduction of the tale of the Jew and the Gentile, which proposes to elucidate the

² For the chronology of Albert's works, see, Henryk Anzulewicz, "Zeittafel," in *Albertus Magnus und sein System der Wissenschaften*, ed. Albertus-Magnus-Institut (Münster: Aschendorff, 2011), 28-31.

³ *Super IV libros Sententiarum* 4, dist. 29, art. 2, ed. Auguste Borgnet, vol. 30 (Paris: L. Vivès, 1893-4), 202a; *Super Dionysii Mysticum Theologiam et Epistulas*, ed. Paul Simon, Ed. Colon. 37/2 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1978), 508; *De somno et vigilia* 1.1.8 and 1.2.7, ed. Auguste Borgnet, vol. 9 (Paris: L. Vivès, 1890), pp.134b and 149b; [Ethica 1.7.1, ed. Auguste Borgnet, vol. 7 \(Paris: L. Vivès, 1891\), p.105b](#); [Ethica 4.2.8, p.307b](#); [Ethica 4.3.1, p.447a](#); *De animalibus* 7.2.5.134, ed. Hermann Stadler, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters 15 and 16 (Münster: Aschendorfsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1916-20), 15: 553; *Topica* 6.7.1, ed. Auguste Borgnet, vol. 2 (Paris: L. Vivès, 1890), 475b; and, *Politica* 4.13, ed. Auguste Borgnet, vol. 8 (Paris: L. Vivès, 1891), 413a; *Politica* 5.8, 541b; and *Politica* 6.4, 589b.

Jews' conviction that one's "neighbor" only applies to other Jews, excluding the rest of humanity from the sphere of moral concern. Albert's account is as follows:

Aristotle relates for Alexander in book one of *De regimine dominorum* an account quite similar in every respect, concerning a Jew and a Gentile, commanding Alexander never to trust a Jew. Indeed, this is the tale: a Jew and a Gentile made a journey through the desert. The Jew was on foot, and the Gentile was carried on an ass [*jumentum*]. When the Jew began to falter, the Gentile fed him and gave him drink from his own wineskins. Then while travelling together, each inquired of the other which laws of religion [*leges*] they accept. The Gentile said that it is his religious law to keep faith with all people, and to bestow kindness, and to show mercy. The Jew, on the other hand, said that it is his religious law to keep faith with none but his kinsman [*contribuli*], to show gratitude for kindness to no one unless he be of his religious law, and to show mercy to no one who is not from his own stock [*caro*]. Finally, after the Jew had become exhausted, the Gentile placed him on the ass with food and drink, but he [the Jew] immediately drove the ass away with the necessities, having left the Gentile behind to the dangers of the desert. But God, who avenges iniquities, set a wild beast upon the Jew, which pinned down and disabled the one who had been thrown from the ass. And in this way the Gentile, who was set back upon the ass, was saved from the dangers of the desert. But when the Gentile reproached the Jew, [asking] why he showed no gratitude for the kindnesses, and why he had chosen to return evil [*malum*] for good, he held out the religious law as an excuse, saying: It is part of his religious law that evils [*mala*] should be served up to foreigners even if they had received kindness from them. In contrast, the Apostle said at Romans 12.17: "To no man rendering evil for evil. Providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men." And at 1 Cor. 10.32: "Be without offence to the Jews, and to the Gentiles, and to the church of God."⁴

⁴ Similem fere in omnibus historiam narrat Alexandro Aristoteles in libro I de *Regimine, Dominorum*, de Iudaeo et Gentili, praecipiens Alexandro ne umquam confidat de Iudaeo. Est autem haec historia: Iudaeus et Gentilis iter fecerunt per desertum: Iudaeus pede, et Gentilis in jumento subvectus. Cum autem Iudaeus deficeret, Gentilis cibavit eum, et de utribus suis potavit. Itinerantes autem ab invicem quaesiverunt quibus legibus uterentur. Gentilis dixit suam esse legem, omnibus hominibus fidem tenere, beneficia impendere, misericordiam exhibere. Econtra Iudaeus dixit suam esse legem, nulli fidem tenere nisi contribuli, nulli grates pro beneficiis exhibere nisi suae esset legis, nulli etiam misericordiam facere nisi carni suae. Tandem lassato Iudaeo positus est a Gentili in jumento cum esculento et poculento, qui statim abegit jumentum cum necessariis, dimisso Gentili in periculis deserti. Sed ultro iniquitatum Deus misit bestiam contra Iudaeum, quae dejectum de jumento prostravit et debilitavit: et sic Gentilis in jumento repositus, a periculis deserti salvatus est. Cum autem improperearet Gentilis Iudaeo cur ingratus beneficiis, malum pro bono reddere voluisset, in excusationem praetendit legem, dicens: Hoc esse suae legis, quod alienigenis mala essent impendenda, etiam si beneficia essent recepta ab eis: contra quod dicit Apostolus, ad Roman. XII, 17: *Nulli malum pro malo reddentes: providentes bona non tantum coram Deo, sed etiam coram omnibus hominibus*. I ad Corinth. X, 32: *Sine offensione estote Iudaeis, et Gentibus, et Ecclesia Dei*. Albertus Magnus, *In Evangelium Lucae*, 10.32. pars 2, cap. 10, ed. Auguste Borgnet, vol. 23 (Paris: L. Vivès, 1895), 65b. All translations are my own, unless indicated otherwise.

2. *De regimine dominorum* and the *Secretum Secretorum*

The *De regimine dominorum*⁵ represents part of the larger *Secretum Secretorum*. The *Secretum secretorum* first entered the Latin world ca. 1120 in a short version most likely translated by John of Seville.⁶ A long version of the *Secretum secretorum* entered the Latin world in a translation prepared by Philip of Tripoli ca. 1230.⁷ It seems that Philip's translation made its way to the imperial court of Frederick II before 1235 and to the papal court of Gregory IX as well.⁸ The oldest datable copy of Philip's translation is found in the personal notebook of the papal agent Albert Behaim (ca. 1190-1260), which is extant today as Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 2574b.⁹ Albert Behaim likely had this copy made for his own use during or shortly after the Council of Lyon in 1245.¹⁰ As early as 1249 Albert the Great refers to the *Secretum secretorum* (which he always cites as *De regimine dominorum*) in his commentary on book 4 of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. Although Albert had commented in Paris on books 1 and 3 of the *Sentences* in 1243 and completed book 2 there in 1246, it was in Cologne, to which he had returned in 1248, that he finished his commentary to book 4 of the *Sentences* in 1249 at the

⁵ For the variety of titles attached to this part of the work, including *De regimine principum*, *Speculum regum*, *Speculum morale regium*, *Speculum regis*, etc., see Steven J. Williams, "The Pseudo-Aristotelian Secret of Secrets as a Mirror of Princes: A Cautionary Tale," in *A Critical Companion to the 'Mirror for Princes' Literature*, Reading Medieval Sources, 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2022): 376-402.

⁶ For the identity of John of Seville and the claim that he was the translator of the text, see Steven J. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 31-45.

⁷ For Philip's translation activity, see Steven J. Williams, "Philip of Tripoli's Translation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum* Viewed within the Context of Intellectual Activity in the Crusader Levant," in *Occident et Proche-Orient: contacts scientifiques au temps des Croisades: actes du colloque de Louvain-la-Neuve, 24 et 25 mars 1997*, ed. Isabelle Draelants, Anne Tihon, and Baudouin van den Abeele (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 79-94. Although Philip translated from an Arabic exemplar, Gaster argued that he also had before him a longer Hebrew version based on the Arabic text. See Moris Gaster, *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha and Samaritan Archaeology*, 3 vols. (New York: KTAV, 1971), 742-813 (748). Gaster's studies originally appeared as "The Hebrew Version of the 'Secretum Secretorum,' a Mediaeval Treatise Ascribed to Aristotle. II. Translation," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1908), 111-162; and idem "The Hebrew Version of the 'Secretum Secretorum,' a Mediaeval Treatise Ascribed to Aristotle. Introduction," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1908), 1065-1084.

⁸ Steven J. Williams, "The Early Circulation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian Secret of Secrets in the West: the Papal and Imperial Courts," in *Micrologus. Natura, scienze e società medievali, II: La scienze alla corte di Federico II* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994), 127-144; idem, *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages*, 138.

⁹ Albert Behaim, *Das Brief- und Memorialbuch des Albert Behaim*, ed. Thomas Frenz and Peter Herde, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Briefe des späteren Mittelalters, 1 (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 2000), 258-339.

¹⁰ Pavlína Cermanová, "The Circulation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum* in the scholarly Centers of the Medieval Czech Lands," in *Studying the Arts in Late Medieval Bohemia: Production, Reception and Transmission of Knowledge*, ed. Ota Pavliček, Studia Artistarum, 48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 135-53 (137).

Dominican priory of the Holy Cross, where he spent many years of his life.¹¹ By 1250, to be sure, Philip of Tripoli's translation of the *Secretum secretorum* had become available to scholars at the University of Paris. Roger Bacon also produced a copy of the text at Oxford between 1275-1280, under the title *Secretum Secretorum Aristotilis* or *De regimine principum regum et dominorum*.¹² Even before Bacon prepared his copy, Jacob van Maerlant had produced a rhymed translation into Dutch of the *Secretum secretorum* (*Heimelijkheid der Heimelijkheden*; ca. 1266) for Count Floris V of Holland and Zeeland.¹³ Numerous translations will appear in other vernaculars as well.¹⁴

One finds in Philip of Tripoli's translation of the *Secretum secretorum* a tale of a Jew and a Magus which appears to be the basis for Albert the Great's treatment of it in his *Super Lucam*.¹⁵ Yet there are also some differences and, absent a Latin source of the *Secretum secretorum* corresponding to Albert's text, it seems likely that Albert himself introduced changes stemming both from the *Glossa ordinaria* and the Latin translation of Talmudic texts that was prepared in Paris ca. 1245. Albert's departure from the text found in the *Secretum secretorum* is apparent from a comparison with Albert Behaim's copy, wherein the tale appears as follows:

And take care lest there happen to you what happened to two men who are said to have been companions on a single journey, one of whom was an eastern Magus but the other a Jew! The Magus rode on a mule, which he raised to do

¹¹ The Dominican priory was approximately ½ mile from the medieval Jewish quarter in Cologne, suggesting that Albert may have had contact with Cologne's relatively large Jewish population. For Albert's possible quotidian contacts with Jews, see Irvn M. Resnick, "Albert and His Jewish Contemporaries: Paris, Cologne, and Regensburg," forthcoming in *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 38 (2027).

¹² Steven J. Williams, "The Pseudo-Aristotelian Secret of Secrets as a Mirror of Princes: A Cautionary Tale," 392; idem, "Roger Bacon and the *Secret of Secrets*," in *Roger Bacon and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays*, ed. J. Hackett (Leiden, 1998), 365–393 (372). For Bacon's text, see *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, fasc. 5: *Secretum secretorum cum glossis et notulis*, ed. Robert Steele (Oxford: Clarendon, 1920), 1-175. A transcription is available online: https://www.arabic-latin-corporus.philosophie.uni-wuerzburg.de/text/Ps-Aris_Secretum_PhT_la.index.xhtml.

¹³ For the tale of the Magus ("een wise van Orient") and the Jew ("een Jode") in this text, see *Jacob van Maerlant's Heimelijkheid der Heimelijkheden*, ed. Andries Anton Verdenius (Amsterdam; Uitgever: A.H. Kruyt, 1917), 181-85, vs. 1933-2090. Available online: <https://archive.org/details/jacobvanmaerlant00maer/page/n5/mode/2up>, accessed on September 18, 2025.

¹⁴ For medieval French translations, see Denis Lorée, *Édition commentée du Secret des Secrets du Pseudo-Aristote. Littératures*. Ph.D. diss.; Université Rennes 2, 2012. Available online: <https://theses.hal.science/tel-00754357/file/2012theseLoreeD.pdf>. For medieval German translations, see especially Reinhold Möller, *Hiltgart von Hürnheim, Mittelhochdeutsche Prosäübersetzung des Secretum Secretorum*, Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters, 56 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1963). The Latin text, the *Narratio de Iudeo et Mago*, is found in cap. 69, 140-42, although no corresponding passage is found in the German translation of the *Secretum secretorum* (ca. 1282) produced by the Cistercian nun Hiltgart von Hürnheim of the convent of Zimmern in south Germany.

¹⁵ For the tale of the Magus and the Jew in earlier Arabic (e.g., the *Rasā'il of the Ikhwān al-Safā*) and Persian sources, see Mahmoud Manzalaoui, "The Pseudo-Aristotelian 'Kitāb Sirr al-asrār'. Facts and Problems," *Oriens* 23/24 (1974): 147-257 (esp. 175, 183, and 234). Williams notes that the tale of the Magi and the Jew appeared in a revised longer form in the East (later translated by Philip of Tripoli) ca. 1100; see *The Secret of Secrets*, 29-30.

his will [*ad placitum suum*], which carried all the necessities that a traveler requires; but the Jew walked on foot, having neither food nor other necessary things. While, therefore, they conversed on the journey, the Magus said to the Jew: “What is your religious law [*lex*] and what is your faith [*fides*]?” The Jew answered: “I believe that there is one God in heaven, whom I worship, and I await from him the good of my soul and the reward for those who share my law and my faith with me. And it is my belief that it is allowed for me to shed the blood of one who differs from me in faith and in my religious law, and take his money and his possessions [*accidens*], that is, his wife, kindred, and parents. Moreover, a curse upon me if I keep faith with him or aid him or if I show him mercy or spare him.” Thereupon he said to the Magus, “I have described for you my religious law and my faith. Tell me, then, the specifics of your faith and law.” To which the Magus replied: “these are my Faith, belief and religious law: I wish for the good especially for myself and for the children of my race [*filiis generis mei*]. And I refuse [to do] ill to any creature of God, neither to these that follow my law nor to those who differ from me in that. And I believe in guarding justice and mercy for every living being, and no injustice pleases me. It seems to me, moreover, if some evil should befall any living being whatsoever, that that evil will affect me and pain me. I strive, moreover, to bring prosperity, health, safety, [and] blessedness to all people, universally.” Then the Jew said to him: “What if an injustice and offence should befall you?” To which the Magus [said], “I know that God in heaven is just, good, wise, and is one from whom nothing is hidden, nothing is secret, nothing is entirely hidden of those things that lie hidden in his creatures, who rewards the good according to their good acts, but repays the evildoers and the transgressors in accord with their acts of transgression.” To which the Jew [replied]: “Why then do you not practice your religious law? Why do you not confirm your faith with deeds?” The Magus asked: “How do you mean?” To whom the Jew [replied]: “Behold, I am from the children of your race [*filiis tui generis*], and you see that I am walking on foot, fatigued, hungry, and you are riding [*eques*], contented and at rest.” To which the Magus [replied]: “That is true.” And, getting off the mule, he opened his travel bag and fed him and gave him drink; then he had him ride his mount.” But after the Jew properly secured himself for riding, he spurred on [*iunxit calcaria*]¹⁶ leaving behind the Magus as he hastened off. Then the latter began to shout and to cry out: “Wait for me, because I am ruined!” But the Jew said: “Did I not inform you of my religious law and its demand? And I want, likewise, to act in accord with it.” Then he made the mule hurry, and the Magus, following its tracks, said: “O Jew, don’t abandon

¹⁶ For a similar use of *calcaria*, cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Variant Version of His Historia Regum Britanniae* 9.8, ed. Jacob Hammer, The Mediaeval Academy of America Publication, 17 (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951), 160, ln. 274. Available online: https://cdn.ymaws.com/sites/www.medievalacademy.org/resource/resmgr/maa_books_online/hammer_0057_bkmrkdpdf.pdf, accessed 9/10/2025.

me to this desert, lest I be killed by lions and die from severe hunger and painful thirst! Have pity on me just as I did on you.” But the Jew did not look back nor did he pay attention to the things he said, nor did he stop, until he was hidden from view.” But when the Magus was desperate for help, he was reminded of the perfection of his religious law and of his faith and of that which he had said to the Jew, namely, that in heaven there is a just Judge, from whom nothing is hidden, and there is no secret that is hidden among his creatures. Lifting his head to heaven he said: “My God, you know that I have believed in you, in your law and your commandments, [and] I have sanctified you just as you have recognized. Confirm, then, my praise for you before the Jew!” After having said these things, the Magus had not gone far and behold! He found the Jew thrown by the mule and prostrate on the ground, with a broken leg and an injured neck; the mule, however, stood at a distance, standing opposite [him]. When he saw the Magus, he [the mule] knew his lord and approached him, owing to his training.¹⁷ Therefore, mounting him [the mule] and abandoning the Jew in the throes of death, he withdrew. But the Jew cried out: “Dearest brother, for God’s sake have mercy on me, seeing that I am broken and dying and that I am in need of [your] pity! Have mercy on me and practice your religious law, which conferred upon you the victory by which you have vanquished me!” Then the Magus began to accuse him, saying: “You, O evil one, sinned against me; you abandoned me without mercy.” To which the Jew [said]: “Do not reproach me for the past, because I revealed to you that this is my religious law and my faith, in which I have been raised, and I found my parents and venerable elders strictly adhering to this law!” Then did the Magus have mercy on him, and he carried him behind him until he arrived at his destination, and delivered him, who expired after a few days, over to his race. But the king, hearing about the deeds of this Magus of this city, had him summoned and, on account of his pious deeds and the goodness of his religious law, made him his own bailiff. And this is the outcome of this, Praise God.¹⁸

In general, as Thorndike indicated a century ago, the Magus is depicted far more favorably than the Jew: the Magus does not represent a magician in a pejorative sense (cf. Ex. 8.7 and 8.18, Vulg.) so much as a Persian sage who preserves his faith in God and displays mercy, whereas the selfish Jew expresses enmity and hatred toward all those who are not Jews.¹⁹ In some versions of the tale, the Magus is replaced with a Philosopher; in others, with a Saracen.²⁰ In Albert’s commentary

¹⁷ Perhaps meant to recall Isa. 1.3: “The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel has not known me, and my people has not understood.”

¹⁸ Albert Behaim, *Das Brief- und Memorialbuch des Albert Behaim*, 325-27.

¹⁹ Lynn Thorndike, “The Latin Pseudo-Aristotle and Medieval Occult Science,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 21.2 (1922): 229-58 (258).

²⁰ See *Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum*, eds. Robert Steele with Glossary by T. Henderson, Early English Text Society, extra series 74, vol. 1: Text and Glossary (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1898). The Tale of the Philosopher and the Jew appears in an English translation from a French text ca. 1422, *The Gouvernance of Prynces*, cap. 28, 165-67. Available online: <https://archive.org/details/threeproseversions01steeuoft/page/128/mode/2up>. In Cambrai, Bibl. mun. 959

on Luke, the tale introduces a Jew and a Gentile, and this identification is reproduced later in the popular *Summa praedicatorum*²¹ by the English Dominican John Bromyard,²² which Bromyard had likely completed by 1348.²³

3. Albert the Great's Tale of the Jew and the Gentile

Albert surely paraphrased the exemplum of the Jew and the Magus found in the *Secretum secretorum* translated by Philip of Tripoli. Albert's account is more compressed and concludes with a moral drawn from Pauline texts. Some subtle changes appear in the tale, however: as already noted, Albert's text substitutes Gentile, *Gentilis*, for *Magus*. This presents two possibilities: either Albert consciously modified his received text to replace *Magus* with *Gentilis*, or Albert's source text already contained this alteration. The latter possibility is unsupported, however, by the earliest copy of Philip of Tripoli's translation prepared for Albert Behaim or by Roger Bacon's copy prepared a few decades later. I have found no other thirteenth-century text of the tale which, like Albert's, identifies the protagonist as a *Gentilis*.

It seems far more likely then, that Albert the Great is himself responsible for substituting *Gentilis* for *Magus*. It is unclear why Albert would have substituted *Gentilis* for *Magus*, since the Magi or Three Kings, who came to Bethlehem at the time of Jesus's birth (Matt. 2.2), were intimately linked to the city of Cologne, where Albert composed his commentary on Luke. The Cologne Archbishop Rainald of Dassel (d. 1167) had obtained the relics of the Magi or Three Kings from Milan and translated them to the Cologne Cathedral on July 24, 1164.²⁴ Rainald's

the Magus is replaced by a Saracen. For the text, see Denis Lorée, *Édition commentée du Secret des Secrets du Pseudo-Aristote. Littératures*. Ph.D. diss.; Université Rennes 2, 2012, 79. Available online: <https://theses.hal.science/tel-00754357/file/2012theseLoreeD.pdf>.

²¹ For this text's popularity, see Alexander William Holland, *John Bromyard's Summa Praedicatorum: An Exploration of Late-Medieval Falsity Through a Fourteenth-Century Preaching Handbook* (Ph.D. diss.; University of Kent, 2018). Available online: <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/68440/1/282Main%20Text.pdf>.

²² John Bromyard, *Summa praedicatorum*, Prima pars, *Lex*, 3, (2 vols.; Venice: Apud Dominicum Nicolinum, 1586), 442vb-443ra;

<https://archive.org/details/JohnBromyardSummaPraedicatorumParsPrima1586/page/n3/mode/2up>, accessed September 22, 2025. Despite the shared reference to a Jew and a Gentile, Bromyard's Latin text often departs from Albert the Great's: e.g., Bromyard introduces his tale with reference to its source in Alfonsus' book ("Alfonsus in lib. suo"), perhaps a reference to Petrus Alphonsi, whose *Dialogue against the Jews* cites a *Book of Secrets* (*Secretis secretorum*), although not Ps. Aristotle's *Secretum secretorum*. For its identification, see Alfred Büchler, "A Twelfth-Century Physician's Desk book: The *Secreta secretorum* of Petrus Alphonsi quondam Moses Sephardi," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 37.2 (1986): 206-212.

²³ For the date of the text, see Leonard Boyle "The Date of the *Summa Praedicatorum* of John Bromyard," *Speculum* 48.3 (1973): 533-37 (534).

²⁴ *Annales Egmondani*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptorum*, 16 (Hannover: Hahn, 1859), 464-65. For the details of the translation of the relics to Cologne, see *Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1: 84. According to tradition, Rainald of Dassel brought the relics of the Maccabees to Cologne as well. These are found today in Sankt Andreas Kirche in Cologne,

successor, Archbishop Philip von Heinsberg of Cologne (d. 1191), enshrined the relics in a gold reliquary that made Cologne an important European pilgrimage destination. Before the end of the twelfth century, a collection of written legends about the Magi was housed in the Cologne cathedral that would provide the basis for the fourteenth-century *History of the Three Kings* (*Historia trium regum*) by the Carmelite friar, John of Hildesheim.²⁵

The Magi, then, were a source of enormous pride for the citizens of Cologne as well as for the Church as a whole. In his discussion of the Magi within his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, which “runs thirty-five times the length of the evangelist’s own report,”²⁶ Albert reserves the term “Magi” almost exclusively for the Three Wise Men from the East who learned of the birth of Jesus, King of the Jews, from signs in the heavens and hurried to Jerusalem to pay homage to him. Albert then follows Ps. Chrysostom’s *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum* which associated the term *magi* with the Magusean people (*Magusei*), who devoted themselves to the study of all things beautiful and divine, and therefore enjoyed high esteem. Albert adds an etymology for *magi* derived from *magni* or great, and notes that the Church proclaims that they were kings (*reges*).²⁷

Who is the Gentile? Generally in Albert’s works a Gentile is a heathen or pagan, that is, a non-Jew who either has no knowledge of God, does not believe in God, or follows idols.²⁸ But a marginal comment to Matthew 2.2 in the *Glossa ordinaria* notes that the three Magi “signify the gentile people, begotten from the three sons of Noah, coming to the faith of Christ.”²⁹ By the fourth century, Church

enshrined in a gold reliquary very much like the one that contains the relics of the Three Kings, albeit on a smaller scale.

²⁵ For the English and Latin text, see *The Three Kings of Cologne. An Early English Translation of the “Historia Trium Regum” by John of Hildesheim*, ed. and trans. Carl Horstmann (London: Early English Text Society, 1886), 206-312. Available online: <https://archive.org/details/threekingsofcoloo0000joan/page/n23/mode/2up> (accessed on 14 May 2025).

²⁶ David J. Collins, “Scholastics, Stars, and Magi: Albert the Great on Matthew 2,” in *The Sacred and the Sinister*, ed. David J. Collins (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), 257-78 (257).

²⁷ Albertus Magnus, *In Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, ed. Augusté Borgnet, vol. 20 (Paris: Vivès, 1893), 61. <http://albertusmagnus.uwaterloo.ca/PDFs/Borgnet-volumen%2020.pdf>. Cf. Henryk Anzulewicz, “Magie im Verständnis Alberts des Großen,” in *Mots médiévaux offerts à Ruedi Imbach*, ed. Iñigo Atucha, Dragos Calma, Catherine König-Pralong, and Irene Zavattero, Textes et Etudes du Moyen Âge, 57 (Porto: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d’Études Médiévales, 2011), 423-428 (427-28). Albert’s Dominican confrère, Hugh of St. Cher (d. 1263) proposes a similar etymology, viz., that *magi* is derived from *magnitudo*. See his *In Evangelium secundum Mattheum 2.2*, in *Biblia cum postilla: Sexta pars huius operis in se co[n]tinens postillam d[omi]ni Hugonis Cardinalis sup[er] quatuor evangelis*, fol. 6v (Basel: Koberger, 1501-1502);

<https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb00026104?page=16.17>, accessed on September 18, 2025. Hugh, who had taught theology and canon law at the University of Paris, was prior provincial for the Dominican Order in France during Albert’s studies there.

²⁸ Henryk Anzulewicz, “Albertus Magnus über die *Philosophi theologizantes* und die natürlichen Voraussetzungen postmortaler Glückseligkeit: Versuch einer Bestandsaufnahme,” in *Paganism in the Middle Ages. Threat and Fascination*, ed. Carlos Steel, John Marenbon, and Werner Verbeke (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), 55-83 (56).

²⁹ “Tres magi significant gentilem populum de tribus filiis Noe procreatum ad fidem Christi venientem.” A likely source for this remark seems to be Anselm of Laon, *Ennarationes in Evangelium Matthaei*, 2

tradition also recorded that after returning to their homelands the three Magi were baptized by the Apostle Thomas and adopted the Christian faith.³⁰ Albert, citing [Pseudo-] Chrysostom, also remarked that when they had returned to their own country the Magi attached themselves to one of the disciples of Jesus and converted many others to Christianity, and that the Magi themselves later became bishops and martyrs.³¹ Perhaps their baptism suggested to Albert the plausible substitution of *Gentilis* for *Magus* with the *Gentilis* referring to a Christian rather than a pagan, which better suited Albert's purpose in his commentary. But there may have been another reason: by about 1240, the Marbach Annals (*Annales Marbacenses*) noted that when the Mongol armies appeared in the East in 1222, although the Jews of Cologne rejoiced, Christians in Cologne feared that the Mongol army would descend upon their city to repatriate the relics of the "Three Magi [who] were born of their race (*tres Magos de gente eorum natos*)."³² The Marbach Annals identified the Magi, then, as belonging to a race of savage barbarians, viz. the Mongols, and specifically located this tradition in Cologne. Such characterization would contradict the positive characterization of the Magus in the exemplum, however, and could provide a plausible motive for Albert's substitution of *Gentilis* for *Magus*. The reasons for Albert's alteration notwithstanding, later Christian authors accepted the change: for example, John Bromyard will make the same substitution in his fourteenth-century manual for preachers, the *Summa praedicatorum*. Moreover, the identification of the *Gentilis* as a Christian in the tale will become explicit in fifteenth-century English and Spanish versions of the exemplum which introduce a "Cristen man" and a Jew.³³ Consequently, since I have found no earlier text that

(PL 162: 1257B-C). See the *Glossae Scripturae Sacrae-electronicae (Gloss-e)* https://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?id=liber&numLivre=55&chapitre=55_2#55_marg216, accessed September 18, 2025. This gloss is also found in Hugh of St. Cher's *Commentary on Matt.* 2.2, fol. 7v, <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb00026104?page=18,19> accessed on September 18, 2025.

³⁰ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, 1: 34. For discussion, see Brent Christopher Landau, *The Sages and the Star-Child: An Introduction to the Revelation of the Magi, An Ancient Christian Apocryphon* (Ph.D. diss.; Harvard University, 2008). Available online: [file:///C:/Users/hyx398/Downloads/The Sages and the Star Child An Introduc.pdf](file:///C:/Users/hyx398/Downloads/The_Sages_and_the_Star_Child_An_Introduc.pdf).

³¹ Albertus Magnus, *In Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, ed. Augusté Borgnet, 61. Cf. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, 1: 79. Jacobus also describes the translation of their relics to Cologne where "they are honored by the people with great veneration and devotion." *The Golden Legend*, 1: 84.

³² *Annales Marbacenses*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores*, 17 (Hannover: Hahn, 1861), 175.

Available online: https://www.dmg.de/mgh_ss_17/index.htm#page/174/mode/lup (accessed on 14 May 2025). Although the text indicates that "Certain ones say" that the *Magi* stem from the Mongol race, it also connects Jews and Mongols; the latter were often depicted in thirteenth-century sources as having arisen from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. See Irven M. Resnick, "Mongols, Apocalyptic Messianism, and Later Medieval Christian Fears of Mass Conversion to Judaism," *Histories* 5.36 (2025): 1-16; <https://doi.org/10.3390/HISTORIES5030036>.

³³ *Secretum Secretorum. Nine English Versions*, ed. M.A. Manzalaoui, Early English Text Society no. 276, vol. 1: Text (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 81-83 (but cf. in the same volume the mid-15th C. English translation by Johannes de Caritate, bk. 4, cap. 11, which introduces an "oriental wycche, or wyse man" and a Jew; 190-92). For a fifteenth-century Spanish version treating a Jew and a

substitutes *Gentilis* for *Magus*, it seems that Albert introduced this change himself and that, perhaps owing to the special veneration accorded the Three Magi in Cologne, thereafter the *Gentilis* signified Christians as a whole.

4. Christians as Gentiles in the Talmud

Albert may have been led to make this substitution not only from the equation of the Magi with the gentiles in the *Glossa ordinaria* or with the Mongols in the Marbach Annals, however, but also from his encounter with the Latin translation of the Talmud, in which *goy-gentilis-christianus* are treated as interchangeable.³⁴ Albert had become well-acquainted with the Talmud translation through his role on the Parisian commission appointed by Odo of Châteauroux to examine it for blasphemy and “countless errors.”³⁵ Albert’s signature appears on the commission’s 1248 judicial decision that condemned the Talmud,³⁶ and it is likely that he carried a copy of the *Extractiones de Talmud* with him when he returned to Cologne later that year.³⁷ Moreover, as Fidora points out, of the 41 ecclesiastics charged by Odo of Châteauroux with examining the Talmud, Albert appears to be the first to quote the Latin translation of Talmud passages in his own compositions prepared

“wise Christian from the East,” see Clemente Sanchez de Vercial, *Libro de los exenplos por a, b, c*, ed. John Esten Keller (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1961), 162–63.

³⁴ Cf. *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum*, ed. Ulisse Cecini, Óscar Luis de la Cruz Palma, Alexander Fidora and Isaac Lampurlanes Farre, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 291A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 423, s.v. *goy*. Also, see Isaac Lampurlanés Farré, *Excerptum de Talmud* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), representing an abridgment of the *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum* and likely produced soon thereafter. Routinely this text identifies a *Goy* as a Christian (*Goy—id est christianus*); see, for example, *Excerptum de Talmud* 5, vv. 2, 5–8, 160.

³⁵ For the text that includes Albert as signatory, see Heinrich Denifle, ed. *Chartularium universitatis Parisiensis*, 4 vols. (Paris: Delalain, 1889–97), 1: 209, no. 178. For Odo’s chief complaints against the Talmud, see David Behrman, “*Volumina vilissima*, A Sermon of Eudes de Châteauroux on the Jews and their Talmud,” in *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris 1242–1244*, ed. by Gilbert Dahan (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999), 191–209.

³⁶ For Albert’s role, see Alexander Fidora, *Albertus Magnus und der Talmud*, Lectio Albertina, 20 (Münster i. W.: Aschendorff Verlag, 2020); and Irven M. Resnick, “Talmud, *Talmudisti*, and Albert the Great,” *Viator* 33 (2002): 69–86.

³⁷ For the claim that Albert carried a copy of the *Extractiones* (or parts of it) with him to Cologne, see Fidora, *Albertus Magnus und der Talmud*, 32. Two translations were prepared: one that followed the order of texts in the Talmud, and one that organized the materials thematically and which was the basis for the condemnation. For the latter, see *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum*, ed. Ulisse Cecini, Óscar Luis de la Cruz Palma, Alexander Fidora and Isaac Lampurlanes Farre, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 291A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021); for the former, see *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem sequentialem*, ed. Ulisse Cecini and Óscar Luis de la Cruz Palma, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 291 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019). The *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum* would also serve as the basis for an epitome likely produced soon thereafter in Paris; cf. Isaac Lampurlanés Farré, *Excerptum de Talmud*, 78 and 96. For discussion of those who contributed to the Latin translation of the Talmud, see Alexander Fidora, Ulisse Cecini, and Óscar Luis de la Cruz Palma, “Origen, versiones y autoría de la traducción latina del Talmud (ca. 1245),” in *La Latinidad medieval. Estudios hispánicos 2022*, ed. Estrella Pérez Rodríguez, Alberto Alonso Guardo (Florence: SISMEL, 2023), 341–60. For its possible Hebrew source manuscripts, see Ulisse Cecini, “The *Extractiones de Talmud* and their Relationship to the Hebrew Talmud Manuscripts of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence (MS Magl. Coll. II.I.7, 8 and 9),” *Sefarad* 77.1 (2017): 91–115.

in Paris or later in Cologne in the 1240s.³⁸ Subsequently, in his commentary to Matt. 5.43—upon which he labored from 1257-1264—Albert attributes to rabbinic sages “Rab Vasse and Rab Joshua and Rab Johanne and other scribes...” an egregious error that is responsible for the Jews ‘carnal’ misunderstanding, based on the text of Ex. 23.22, that the commandment to “Love your neighbor, etc.” does not require one to love one who is *not* one’s neighbor, but rather to hate one’s enemies.³⁹ According to Matthew 5:43-44, however, although it has been said that, “You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy,” Jesus replies, “But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.” Indeed, every human being is our neighbor. The command to love one’s neighbor, Albert insists, is the end and model of all the commandments—*finis et forma omnium mandatorum*—but it is badly misinterpreted by the Jews. Exposure to the Latin translation of the Talmud led some of Albert’s contemporaries, however, to complain that Jews are raised from birth to hate Christians or *goyim*, even cursing Christians daily in their synagogue liturgy,⁴⁰ and feel no kinship with them.⁴¹ Albert’s confrère and contemporary Hugh of St.

³⁸ Alexander Fidora, “Albert the Great and the Latin Talmud,” in *Appropriation, Interpretation and Criticism: Philosophical and Theological Exchanges between the Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Intellectual Traditions*, ed. Alexander Fidora and Nicola Polloni (Barcelona and Rome: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d’Études Médiévales, 2017), 121-36 (133); idem, “The Influence of the *Extractiones de Talmud* on Anti-Jewish Sermons from the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries,” in *The Talmud in Dispute During the High Middle Ages*, ed. Alexander Fidora and Gorge Hasselhoff (Bellaterra: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2019), 235-47 (236).

³⁹ Albertus Magnus, *Super Matthaëum* 5.43, ed. Bernhard Schmidt, Ed. Colon. 21/1 (Münster i. W.: Aschendorff, 1987), 160, 20f. Beryl Smalley noted that attempts to identify further these rabbinic interpreters mentioned by Albert have been unsuccessful, but only illustrate “Albert’s knack of pickling up odd bits of information or misinformation wherever he could find them.” Smalley, *The Gospels in the Schools c. 1100–c.1280* (London – Ronceverte, The Hambledon Press, 1985), 286. Yet Alexander Fidora has argued plausibly that Albert’s “Rab Vasse” could be a misspelling of Nasse or Asse or Ashi, whose names do appear in the *Extractiones de Talmud* dossier. Alexander Fidora, “Albert the Great and the Latin Talmud,” 130.

⁴⁰ This is the thirtieth of Nicholas Donin’s thirty-five accusations against the Talmud, which Donin submitted to Pope Gregory IX. See *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, trans. John Friedman and Jean Connell Hoff, with historical essay by Robert Chazan (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012), 118-19. For R. Yehiel’s response that the *Birkat HaMinim*, the so-called “Benediction of the Heretics” which is part of the daily prayer service, is not directed against “students of Jesus” as *minim* but rather Jews who believe in the Torah but not the Talmud, see *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, 154. For historical background, see Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For another thirteenth-century condemnation of the Jews’ “blessing” of the *minim*, see *Der Passau Anonymus. Ein Sammelwerk über Ketzer, Juden, Antichrist aus der Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Alexander Patschovsky, *Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica* 22 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1968), 3.27, 180. For late medieval legislation under Fernand I that demanded that Jews delete the prayer against the *minim* from the synagogue liturgy, see *The Tortosa Disputation. Regesta of Documents from the Archivo de la Corona de Aragón Fernando I 1412-1416*, Sources for the History of the Jews in Spain, 6, compiled by Gemma Escribà, ed. Yom Tov Assis (Jerusalem: Henk Schussheim Memorial Series, 1998), ix-x.

⁴¹ Cf. Kurt Schubert, “Das christlich-jüdische Religionsgespräch am 12. und 13. Jahrhundert,” in *Die Juden in ihrer mittelalterlichen Umwelt*, ed. Alfred Ebenbauer and Klaus Zatloukal (Cologne: Böhlau, 1991): 223-250 (esp. 247-49). Deena Copeland Klepper, *The Insight of Unbelievers: Nicholas of Lyra*

Cher (d. 1263), who, after his teaching career at the University of Paris in the 1230s, later became the Dominican prior provincial of France while Albert was in Paris, remarked in his commentary on Luke 10.29ff. that a Jew believes that only another Jew is his neighbor; those belonging to other nations are foreigners or strangers [*alieni*], which is the basis for the Jews' claim that although they are not permitted to lend money at interest to another Jew, they may lend to a foreigner, that is, to a gentile or Christian.⁴² Only Albert, however, attributes the Jews' misunderstanding to the Talmud's sages, who are held responsible for equating *goy-gentilis-christianus*.

The later thirteenth-century compilation of Jewish anti-Christian polemical motifs, the *Nizzahon Vetus*, reveals the extent to which medieval Jews were sensitive to the Christian complaint. It insists that Moses the giver of Torah accepted that "You may take interest on loans to a Gentile, but do not take any on loans to your brother (Deut. 23.21)." In response to the Christian contention that they too are brothers to the Jews and that therefore Jews should not take interest from them, the *Nizzahon Vetus* responds instead that although in the distant past their (Edomite) 'ancestors' were brothers to the Jews,⁴³ "now, however, they have disqualified themselves and are considered strangers, for when the Temple was destroyed they did not come to help..." Furthermore, because they are uncircumcised, "they [Christians] consider themselves foreigners".⁴⁴ Moreover, as David Berger notes, another medieval Jewish source rejects the Christian argument "that if all righteous

and Christian Reading of Jewish Text in the Later Middle Ages (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 105-106. Peter the Venerable had complained already ca. 1146 that Jews hate Christians more than all other peoples. See his *Against the Inveterate Obduracy of the Jews*, 5, trans. Irven M. Resnick, *Fathers of the Church, Mediaeval Continuation*, 14 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013), 232. Peter is also the first Latin Christian to identify the Talmud by name. See Irven M. Resnick, "Peter the Venerable on the Talmud, the Jews, and Islam," *Medieval Encounters* 24 (2018): 510-529.

⁴² Hugh of St. Cher, *In Evangelium secundum Lucam* 10.29ff., in *Biblia cum postilla: Sexta pars huius operis in se cof[n]tinens postillam d[omi]ni Hugonis Cardinalis sup[er] quattuor evangelis*, fol. 6v (Basel: Koberger, 1501-1502), fol. 194v, <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb00026104?page=392,393> accessed on September 23, 2025. For contemporary Jewish sources that offer justifications for lending money to Christians—based in part on the claim that they are not "brothers" to the Jews—see Hannah Trautner-Kromann, "Jewish Polemics against Christianity and the Christians in Northern and Southern France from 1100-1300," *Nordisk Judaistik/Scandinavian Jewish Studies* 7, 2 (1986): 71-83 (esp. 76-79); Haym Soloveitchik, "The Jewish Attitude in the High and Late Middle Ages," in *Credito e usura fra teologia, diritto e amministrazione: linguaggi a confronto (sec. XII-XVI)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 115-127. King Louis IX had forbidden Jewish moneylending, at least in northern France, from 1235, which elicited complaints from Jewish contemporaries. See Robert Chazan, "A Jewish Complaint to Saint Louis," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 45 (1974): 287-305.

⁴³ For Christians as descended from Edom (and not from Jacob/Israel) see *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus*, §145-46, ed. and trans. David Berger (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 153, 155 (Hebrew, 95-96, 98).

⁴⁴ *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages*, §123, 133 (Hebrew, 81).

men are called children of God, then Christians and Jews are brothers,” and concludes instead that “this claim is rather surprising in light of the fact that Christians usually call Jews dogs.”⁴⁵

Despite the insistence of R. Yehiel of Paris in the Hebrew account of the Parisian Disputation of 1240 that Christians are not *goyim*, i.e., the pagan gentiles mentioned in the Talmud,⁴⁶ Christians had become convinced that the Jews regarded Talmudic *dicta* treating *goyim* or gentiles as applicable to them. As such, the *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum* clearly announces that the terms “*goy*...and *goyim*...are usually restricted to Christians.”⁴⁷ Passages in the *Extractiones* originating in a Latin translation of the *Liber Krubot*,⁴⁸ which contains religious poems or *piyyutim* that are part of the medieval synagogue liturgy, also equate *goyim* with Christians.⁴⁹ Moreover, as passages from the *Nizzahon Vetus* reveal, Jews and Christians were very much in disagreement over whether Christians should be viewed as ‘neighbors’ or ‘brothers’ to the Jews, with very practical consequences for Jewish moneylenders, and with implications for the moral obligations Jews have toward Christians.

The accounts of the Parisian Disputation of 1240 and the Latin translation of Talmud texts leave no doubt but that, based on the allegations of Nicholas Donin in the Thirty-Five articles drawn from the Talmud that he prepared for Pope Gregory IX, Jews were believed to harbor homicidal intent toward *goyim*-gentiles, i.e.,

⁴⁵ *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages*, 291, 19-20. For “dogs” in polemical usage, see Kenneth Stow, *Jewish Dogs: An Image and Its Interpreters* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Elliott Horowitz, “Circumcised Dogs from Matthew to Marlowe,” *Prooftexts* 27.3 (2007): 531-545; Irven M. Resnick, “Good Dog/Bad Dog: Dogs and Medieval Religious Polemics,” *Enarratio* 18 (2015): 70-97. One may observe too, however, that the Latin translation of material from the Talmud identifies a *goy* with a dog, thereby reasserting the kinship! See *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum*, 5.11, 66; Isaac Lampurlanés Farré, *Excerptum de Talmud*, 161.

⁴⁶ *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, 149, 151-52.

⁴⁷ *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum*, Praef. 19, 6 and 5, 65: “*goy*...et *goyim*...ad christianos usu restringuntur.”

⁴⁸ *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum*, 5.85-107b, 79-83. For this collection of *piyyutim*, see Wout van Bekkum, “The Latin Talmud and *Liber Krubot*: The Religious Hymns of Benjamin bar Samuel in MS Paris BNF Lat. 16558,” in *The Talmud in Dispute During the High Middle Ages*, ed. Alexander Fidora and Görg Hasselhoff (Bellatera: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2019), 171-218.

⁴⁹ *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum*, 5.31, p. 49 and 5.104, p. 82, which proclaims that “*goyim* credunt in Iesu Nazareno, ...hic habes quod *goyim* dicuntur christiani.” Raymund Martin identifies *goyim* more correctly according to the Jews as anyone who is not a Jew, that is, all gentiles. *Capistrum Iudaeorum*, pars 1, 2.2, ed. and trans. Adolfo Robles Sierra, *Corpus Islamo-Christianum* 3/1, 2 vols. (Würzburg-Altenberg: Echter Verlag, 1990-93) 1:72. But other Christian polemicists, like the converted Jew Hieronymus de Sancta Fide (d. ca. 1419), treated all talmudic references to idolaters and *goyim* as referring to Christians. See Moisés Orfali, “Hieronymus de Sancta Fide and His Use of Sanhedrin,” in *The Talmud in Dispute During the High Middle Ages*, ed. Alexander Fidora and Görg Hasselhoff (Bellatera: Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2019), 249-66 (256-57).

Christians: “And you say that a gentile may be put to death,⁵⁰ ... and it is permissible to rob and steal the funds of the gentile and to mislead him.”⁵¹ As David Berger remarks regarding the Talmud controversy in Paris ca. 1240, “the most dangerous argument of all was Donin’s collection of Talmudic laws that discriminate against gentiles,”⁵² which included numerous passages that treated Gentile-Christians as deserving of mistreatment or death. The theme of the Jews’ homicidal hatred for Christians is also underscored in the *Errores Iudaeorum* attributed to Theobald of Sézanne, a Jewish convert who became a sub-prior at the Dominican priory of St. Jacques in Paris, where Albert had been in residence before he returned to Cologne in 1248, and who was also a signatory to the condemnation of the Talmud in 1248.⁵³ Theobald remarks in a chapter titled “On Hatred against Christ and Christians” that according to the rabbis of the Talmud “the best of the Christians ought to be slain ...” and therefore it is particularly foolish to allow Jewish communities to grow within Christendom.⁵⁴ The Jews’ hatred toward Christians, for Theobald, may perhaps be traced to their understanding of their origins. In a chapter “On the Jews’ errors regarding the Act of the first Creation,” Theobald maintains that Jews do not share the same original ancestors with Christians. Although Christians are descended from Adam and Eve, Jews are descended from Adam and Lilith, suggesting a theory of polygenesis that underscored the Jews’ alleged conviction that Christians are not their “neighbors” or brethren.⁵⁵ This line of argument would only serve to strengthen the conviction among Christians that contemporary Jews and Judaism were a persistent threat to Christendom.

Albert’s exemplum of the Jew and the Gentile offers corroboration, since “The Jew...said that it is his religious law to keep faith with none but those of his own religion [*contribuli*], ... and to show mercy to no one who is not from his own

⁵⁰ *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum*, 5.31, pp. 36-37, and 5.107, pp. 70-71, 82-83; *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, pp. 108-109. For a response to the alleged hatred of Jews for Christians, see the translation of the Hebrew *Disputation of Rabbi Yehiel of Paris*, in *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, 145-52.

⁵¹ *The Trial of the Talmud. Paris, 1240*, 146. For the allegation that the Talmud instructs Jews not to return lost articles to *goyim*, cf. *Extractiones de Talmud per ordinem thematicum*, 5.19-20, p. 68 and 5.23, p. 69. This last text adds that from this the “Talmud proves that it is fitting for a Jew to deceive a Christian and to steal his goods and keep found items.” (“per hoc probat Talmud quod licet iudaeo decipere christianum et sua auferre et inventa retinere.”)

⁵² David Berger, “How, When, and to what Degrees was the Jewish-Christian Debate Transformed in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,” in *Jews and Christians in Thirteenth-Century France*, ed. Elishéva Baumgarten and Judah D. Galinsky (Springer: 2015), pp. 123-37 (129).

⁵³ See Theobald of Sézanne, *Obiectiones in dicta Talmud seductoris* (Strassburg: Johann Prüss, ca. 1488), accessed on September 20, 2025 at

<https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb11303497?page=10,11>. This text is also known as the *Errores Iudaeorum*. For questions of its authorship, see Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, “Drei Schriften mit dem Titel *Pharetra fidei*,” *Aschkenas. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Juden* 11.2 (2001): 327-49. The *Passau anonymous* extravagantly credits Theobald too with having translated part of the Talmud; see *Der Passau Anonymus*, 3.20, p. 178.

⁵⁴ Theobald of Sézanne, *Obiectiones in dicta Talmud seductoris*, <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb11303497?page=10,11> accessed on September 24, 2025.

⁵⁵ Theobald of Sézanne, *Obiectiones in dicta Talmud seductoris*, <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb11303497?page=12,13>, accessed on October 1, 2025.

stock.” Furthermore, the Jew proclaims that “[it is] his religious law that evils [*mala*] should be served up to foreigners even if they had received kindness from them.” In contrast, Albert cites Romans 12.17: “To no man rendering evil for evil. Providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men.”

In more practical terms, this ‘religious law’ that encourages the Jew to mischief against non-Jews will often be cited in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Latin polemics against the Talmud. Hebrew sources took note of this as well: R. Meir ben Simon ha-Meili’s *Holy War* (*Milhemet Mizvah*), composed in Provence in the mid- to late thirteenth century by this halakhist from Narbonne, records that Archbishop Guy of Narbonne, who later reigned as Pope Clement IV (1265-68), complained that “it is written in your Talmud that robbery of the gentile, theft from the gentile, and the gentile’s funds are permitted to you. Also concerning the return of lost articles, you say that such goods belong to you and need not be returned to their owners.”⁵⁶ A similar accusation is found in a second Parisian public disputation that occurs after the Barcelona disputation in 1263 and over several years from 1269-73.⁵⁷ There once more Jews are accused of violating the precept to love one’s [Gentile] neighbor, slaying him instead.⁵⁸

This complaint is repeated in Abner de Burgos’ (ca. 1261-ca. 1348) *Sefer Milhamot Adonai* (*Book of the Wars of the Lord*; not after 1321). After his conversion to Christianity from Judaism, whence he would be known as Alfonso de Valladolid, he or an associate translated the work into Castilian as the *Libro de las batallas del Señor*. Abner de Burgos insists that each Jew observes a law that commands him to slay Christians and take their goods. Neither is a Jew required to return a lost article to a Christian, nor to release him from his debt, nor treat him with love, but only to slay him according to the law.⁵⁹ This same accusation is present in his *Moreh ha-Zedek* (*Teacher of Righteousness*), which only survives in a contemporary translation under the title *Mostrador de justicia*, where the author alleges that Jews “are prohibited by our law...from showing them [i.e., Christians] any kindness at all. They know that we are commanded by our law to kill them and make them lose their property and not to return what they have lost.”⁶⁰

5. Conclusion

Nearly identical versions of the tale of the Jew and the Magus from the *Secretum secretorum* will appear in the French Dominican Johannes Gobii’s *Scala coeli*

⁵⁶ *Milhemet Mizvah*, 214b (Biblioteca Palatina Parma MS. 2749), quoted in Robert Chazan, “Archbishop Guy Fulcodi of Narbonne and His Jews,” *Revue des études juives* 132-4 (1973): 587-94 (592).

⁵⁷ Joseph Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris. Un chapitre dans la polémique entre chrétiens et juifs au Moyen Age* (Paris and Louvain: Editions E. Peeters, 1994), 17.

⁵⁸ Shatzmiller, *La deuxième controverse de Paris*, Appendix 4, 37.

⁵⁹ Carlos del Valle, “El libro de las Batallas de Dios, de Abner de Burgos,” in *Polémica judeo-cristiana. Estudios*, ed. Carlos del Valle (Madrid: Aben Ezra, 1992), 75-120 (118).

⁶⁰ Quoted from Ryan Szpiech, “Carnal Israel? The Medieval Conceit of Jews as Organs in the Social Body,” in *The Hermeneutical Jew: Essays on Inter-Religious Encounters in Honour of Jeremy Cohen*, ed. by Ram Ben-Shalom and Yosi Yisraeli (Turnhout: Brepols, 2025), 255-84 (264).

(ca. 1323-30);⁶¹ in an abridged Anglo-Norman version from a fourteenth-century manuscript (British Museum MS. Royal 20 B.v.);⁶² in the Ricardian recension of John Gower's *Confessio amantis*, completed ca. 1390-93;⁶³ in the "Ashmole version" of the text found in MS Ashmole 396 from ca. 1445;⁶⁴ and in the *Fortalicium fidei* by the Franciscan Alphonso de Spina,⁶⁵ completed ca. 1464. Albert's exemplum, however, which replaces the Magus with a Gentile, and which will be reproduced a century later in the Dominican John Bromyard's *Summa praedicationum*, confirms and strengthens the perception left from the Talmud controversy that Jews eye Gentiles-Christians with disdain and that the Jews' (mis)understanding of their 'religious law' directs them specifically to mistreat and abuse Christians, stealing their goods and abandoning them to death. In this way, a tale found first in Philip of Tripoli's Latin translation of the *Secretum secretorum*—whose oldest datable copy was produced for Albert Behaim ca. 1245—that recorded an encounter between a Jew and a Magus, would be developed to confirm the worst prejudices of Christian readers in the years after the Talmud controversy in Paris ca. 1240. The tale of the Magus and the Jew clearly depicted Jews as inimical to non-Jews. Following the substitution of *Gentilis* for the original *Magus*, and with the understanding that the Jews' Talmud identifies Christians as gentiles deserving of mistreatment, this exemplum attributed to [Pseudo-] Aristotle would reinforce the conviction that contemporary Jews and Judaism were especially committed to a violent assault upon Christians and their possessions.

⁶¹ Johannes Gobii, *Scala coeli*, ed. Polo de Beaulieu Marie Anne (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1991). The passage can be found at <https://thema.huma-num.fr/exempla/TE019672>, accessed 9/5/2025.

⁶² Oliver A. Beckerlegge, "An Abridged Anglo-Norman Version of the 'Secretum Secretorum,'" *Medieval Aevum* 13 (1944): 1-17 (13-14).

⁶³ *The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. G.C. Macaulay, *The English Works (Confessio Amantis, Lib. V. 1971—Lib. VIII; and In Praise of Peace)*, bk. 7, cap. 9 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1901), 321, Ins. 3208-3360; available online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/71433/71433-h/71433-h.htm#Page_233, accessed 9/4/2025. For a modern English translation, see Brian Gastle, Catherine Carter, and Andrew Galloway, "'The Lover's Confession': A Translation of John Gower's 'Confessio Amantis,'" *TEAMS Varia*, 9 (Western Michigan University: Medieval Institute Publications/Arc Humanities Press, 2024), 518-21.

Available online: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?params=/context/mip_teamsvaria/article/1008/&path_info=VARIA_Gastle_Confessio_BOOKBLOCK_final.pdf, accessed 9/6/2025.

⁶⁴ *Secretum Secretorum. Nine English Versions*, xxvii and 81-83.

⁶⁵ *Fortalicium fidei*, bk 3, Consideratio 7, crudelitas 17, fols. 150-51 (Nuremberg [?]: Antonius Koberger, 1494).

Available online: https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_suVxAvfy1hoC/page/n317/mode/2up accessed 9/4/2025, accessed 9/5/2025.