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The Aura of an Alphabet: Interpreting the Hebrew Gospels in Ramon Martí's *Dagger of Faith* (1278)

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Abstract

The writing of the Catalan Dominican Ramon Martí (d. after 1284), well-known for its use of non-Christian sources, is one of the most striking examples of the medieval Dominican interest in the study of Arabic and Hebrew as a means of reading and exploiting Jewish and Muslim scriptures. This paper focuses on one aspect of Martí's writing that bears directly on his concept of "foreign" scriptures and their place in polemical argument: his citation of New Testament passages in Hebrew translation in his final work, the *Dagger of Faith* (*Pugio fidei*, from 1278). Rather than relying on faulty seventeenth-century printed editions of the *Dagger*, as previous scholars have done, I will bring forth new examples from the manuscript tradition to consider Martí's use of language and script. I will argue that he did not draw his citations from some previous Hebrew Gospels translation, but rather that he chose deliberately to translate his New Testament citations into Hebrew for polemical purposes. His translations reflect an important aspect of his overall polemical strategy, namely, his use of "foreign" scripts as markers of both textual authority and scriptural authenticity.

Keywords

Hebrew New Testament – Jewish-Christian polemics – Medieval Dominicans – Ramon Martí – *Pugio fidei* – Dagger of Faith

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The authority associated with a medieval *auctor* — the name of a cited source or proof text — depended on the authenticity of the texts attributed to that *auctor*'s name. The *auctor* was the embodiment of *auctoritas*, and as such was trusted as a source of knowledge that was considered true and authentic (Minnis 1988:10–12). In Christian polemical writing in Latin, the concept of *auctoritas*, traditionally based solely on biblical *testimonia*, began to expand dramatically in the twelfth century with the introduction of secular texts of philosophy, initiating a shift to argumentation based on *ratione et auctoritate*, on both reason and authoritative textual proof. By the second half of the thirteenth century, this expansion of the concept of *auctoritas* in polemical writing, which itself can be understood as part of a broader shift in the meaning of the medieval *auctor* in light of new Aristotelian ideas about the “effective cause” of a text (Minnis 1988:28–29), came to involve the invocation as textual *auctoritates* of those texts considered authoritative by Jews and Muslims, but not Christians, such as the Talmud, Qur’ān, Midrashic exegesis, and collections of Muslim traditions about the sayings of Muḥammad known as *hadīth*.¹ This use of non-Christian texts as *auctoritates* evinced the growing desire by Christian polemicists for authenticity, even if it meant citing non-Christian sources.

This use of non-Christian texts as *auctoritates* was most common among a handful of writers from the Dominican order, which was founded in 1215 as a reaction to the Christian heretical movements of Provence. A number of early Dominicans embraced language study as a key part of their modus operandi: the first Master General after Dominic himself, Jordan de Saxony, stated in 1236 that friars ought to learn the languages of those to whom they preached.² Less than two decades later, Master Humbert of Romans specified that this should include Arabic and Hebrew.³ Between 1266 and 1302, small Dominican groups interested in learning these languages were organized throughout the

¹ On this “expansion” of *auctoritas* in polemical writing, see Dahan 1990:440–476 and Szpiech 2013:62–76. My remarks about *auctoritas* in these opening paragraphs, and also part of my conclusion below, reiterate and slightly alter my similar remarks in the opening and conclusion of Szpiech 2012:171–173, 186–187 and in Szpiech 2013:130–134.

² *Monemus quod in omnibus provinciis et conventibus fratres linguas addiscant illorum quibus sunt propinguui [sic]* (We order that in all provinces and convents, Friars learn the languages of those around them) (*Acta capitulorum generalium* 9).

³ *Curandum est ut aliqui Fratres idonei insident in locis idoneis ad linguam arabicam, hebraicam, graecam et barbaras addiscendas* (It should be seen to that some suitable Friars labor (*lit.* “sweat”) in suitable places in learning Arabic, Hebrew, Greek, and foreign tongues) (Humbert of Romans, 1888–1889:187–188).

Crown of Aragon from Barcelona in the north to Murcia in the south.⁴ Such efforts, encouraged by Master General Ramon de Penyafort (d. 1275), followed the advice of Pope Gregory I (the Great) to appeal to non-Christians to accept Christian truth on the basis of “authorities, reasons, and blandishments rather than asperities.”⁵

Christian interest in foreign Scriptures and languages developed, not surprisingly, around the same time as Jewish interest in Christian writing. While Jewish knowledge of Christian scriptures seems to predate the medieval period, sustained attention to and direct citation of Christian texts are only found in later centuries. Discussion of Jesus in the Babylonian Talmud shows, according to Peter Schäfer, a clear knowledge of all four canonical New Testament Gospels (2007:123), but more explicit references to the New Testament only begin to appear in medieval works from before the tenth century, such as the *Account of the Disputation of the Priest* (*Qiṣṣat Mujaḍalat al-Usquf*) and the *Life Story of Jesus* (*Toledot Yeshu*). Such citations and allusions become much more common in the twelfth century. Hebrew texts such as Jacob ben Reuben's *Book of the Wars of the Lord* (*Sefer Milḥamot Ha-Shem*, from ca. 1170) and the twelfth-century Hebrew translation of the *Qiṣṣat* as *The Book of Nestor the Priest* (*Sefer Nestor Ha-Komer*), followed by thirteenth-century texts such as Joseph ben Nathan Official's *Book of Joseph the Zealot* (*Sefer Yosef Ha-Meḳanne'*) and the *Nizzahon Vetus* (ca. 1280), all contain numerous direct citations of the New Testament in Hebrew.⁶ Nevertheless, there are no complete Hebrew translations of any New Testament books that are known from before the fourteenth century, when the Iberian Jewish philosopher Shem Tov Isaac Ibn Shaprūṭ included a full translation of the book of Matthew in Hebrew in his anti-Christian polemic, *Touchstone* (*Even Bohan*), from ca. 1380–1385. Similarly, there are no complete Hebrew translations of all four Gospels together from before the fifteenth century, when a translation was made from Catalan (Hames 2012:286). Scholars have given much attention to Ibn Shaprūṭ's Hebrew version of Matthew, with

⁴ On the history of such movements, see Coll 1944, 1945, 1946, and Vose 2009:104–115.

⁵ In his highly influential *Summa de Paenitentia*, Penyafort stated: *Debent, sicut ait Gregorius, tam iudaei quam sarraceni auctoritatibus, rationibus et blandimentis, potius quam asperitatisbus, ad fidem christianam de novo suscipiendam provocari* (Jews as well as Muslims should, as Gregory [the Great] says, be provoked to take up... the Christian faith with authorities, reasons, and blandishments rather than asperities) (1976:309).

⁶ On ben Reuben's citation of the New Testament, see Levy 2004 and Rosenthal 1962, as well as the edition of the text edited by Rosenthal 1962–1963. On citations in the Nestor text, see the introduction by Lasker and Stroumsa 1996, vol. 1. For a comparison and study of the citations of Matthew in anti-Christian Hebrew polemics, see Ochs 2013. For a brief overview of Hebrew Gospel translations, see Proverbio 2000.

some, such as Pinchas Lapide, suggesting that Ibn Shaprūt made the translation himself, and others, such as George Howard and Libby Garshowitz, arguing that he relied on an earlier, now unknown, translation made by someone else.⁷ The key issue at stake in this debate is when and where the first translations of the Gospels into Hebrew were produced.

This line of research, as well as the work on the other sources of citations of the Hebrew Gospels, deals with Jewish anti-Christian writing. Separate source material relating to the Gospels in Hebrew can also be identified within the Christian tradition, in the very sources associated with Dominican interest in Hebrew and Arabic texts. It is the purpose of this essay to consider the earliest example known from this Christian tradition, the approximately ten citations of the Gospels given in Hebrew translation in the thirteenth-century anti-Jewish polemic *Dagger of Faith* (*Pugio fidei*, 1278) by the Catalan Dominican, Ramon Martí (d. after 1284). In examining this material, I will proffer new evidence found only in the manuscript tradition that helps shed light on the question of Martí's role in translation and his alleged use of an existing Hebrew translation. On the one hand, if Martí could be shown to have used a pre-existing translation of the New Testament in Hebrew, this would impact the discussion of Ibn Shaprūt's version of Matthew and its possible sources. On the other hand, if Martí could be shown to have made the translations himself, as I believe he can, it would largely exclude his material from the discussion of medieval Jewish versions of the New Testament and give evidence of the development of two separate but contemporary traditions that pursued the translation of the New Testament into Hebrew.

I propose that the evidence in the manuscript tradition, including identical omissions in the Hebrew and Latin and one instance where Martí translates the same verse differently in two places, confirms the hypotheses of earlier scholars that the Hebrew Gospel citations in the *Dagger of Faith* are the work of Martí or his copyist and are not drawn from an earlier tradition. Martí was a veritable polyglot, well known for his impressive manipulation of non-Christian sources, and his work represents the epitome of Dominican attention to Hebrew and Arabic. In this light, I argue that Martí's citations of the New Testament in Hebrew are very relevant for analyzing his particular philosophy of language and polemical argumentation and are best understood as a reflection of the larger process of the transformation of *auctoritas* that

⁷ On Ibn Shaprūt's Hebrew Matthew, see Garshowitz 1993; Hewitt 2000; Horbury 1983; Niclós 1999; Rosenthal 1962; and Lapide 1974. For the edition of the text, see Garshowitz 1974 and Howard 1987.

accompanied the Dominican confrontation with foreign language and non-Christian scriptures.

Marti's New Testament Citations in Hebrew

The presence of Martí's citations from the New Testament in Hebrew is not something unknown in scholarship on the *Dagger of Faith*. Notice of it goes back to the nineteenth century, when Jacob Neubauer pointed out such citations in passing (1888:100). Since that time, abundant research has been conducted on Martí and on the *Dagger* in particular, but only a little work has been done on Martí's Hebrew Gospels citations. In 1929, Alexander Marx speculated, on the basis of the Leipzig 1687 edition of the text, that Martí's translations were taken from an existing Hebrew translation of the Gospels (1929:271), a theory repeated by later scholars including Judah Rosenthal (1962:50) and, more recently, George Howard (1987:178). In 1976, Pinchas Lapide not only offered some new evidence on the question — adding four new examples he encountered in the Paris 1651 edition (the first full printing, on which the Leipzig 1687 edition was based) — but he also questioned Marx's hypothesis that the text was copied from an existing Hebrew translation (1984:14–16). By comparing Martí's citations to other known Hebrew Gospels texts, Lapide suggested that Martí may have made his own translations. Although he does not offer definitive proof, he nevertheless claims that the “cumulative weight” of the evidence pieced together by scholars “makes it almost certain that the author of the *Dagger of Faith* is probably the first Christian Hebraist known to us by name to have translated any substantial part of the New Testament into Hebrew” (Lapide 1984:16). The question of Martí's role in translating the Gospels into Hebrew was posed again as recently as 2012 by Harvey Hames (2012:289).

All of the earlier studies of Martí's citations, including Lapide's, are of limited value because they do not take into account the manuscript evidence but instead rely on the faulty seventeenth-century printed editions of the text. In the same year that Lapide published his arguments about Martí's citations, Chen Merchavia published an important article stressing the necessity of direct consultation of the manuscripts of the *Dagger of Faith* and citing the many errors and omissions in the printed editions (1976:283–288). In particular, he pointed out numerous details found only in the oldest manuscript, Paris Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405 (henceforth called G). Since Merchavia's article, comparison of manuscript G with other surviving manuscripts of the *Dagger* containing Hebrew text (C=University of Coimbra 720; S=University of Salamanca 2352; L=Museo Diocesano dell'Ogliastre, Lanusei,

Sardinia; Bas=University of Basel A XII 9–11; R=Paris BN Mazarine 796)⁸ has led various scholars to suggest that G is the most original and complete manuscript, probably even being an autograph copy elaborated by Martí himself, although a full stemma has yet to be constructed for the *Dagger*.⁹ As mentioned, the text was printed twice in the seventeenth century, in 1651 in Paris (here p) and in 1687 in Leipzig (here l), but neither printing is based directly on G or its near copies (Szpiech 2011:76–80; Hasselhoff 2013).

Comparing the p and l editions, Lapide pointed out the following citations given by Martí in both editions in both Latin and Hebrew: Matthew 2.1–12 (visitation of the Magi to Jesus), 3.13–15 (baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist), and Mark 16.15–16 (Jesus appearing to his disciples after his resurrection). He also found the following citations in edition p only in both Latin and Hebrew: Matthew 4.17 (“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near”) and 19.29 (“Those who leave families or fields for my sake will receive a hundredfold back”), Luke 6.20 (“Blessed are the poor”), and Romans 14.17 (“The kingdom of God is not food or drink but righteousness and peace”). Consideration of the manuscript tradition provides evidence for all of these citations (although as I will discuss below, Matthew 1.7–8 is omitted) but also reveals three additional sections that contain fifteen new verses, including Luke 1.26–28, 30–32, 34–38, and 46–48 (The Annunciation and the first lines of the Magnificat; see images 1 and 2) and John 19.36 (image 4). In addition, a second citation of Matthew 4.17 can be found in both the manuscript and printed editions, although it has previously

⁸ Mauro Perani has recently discovered a two-folio fragment of another manuscript of the *Dagger* that was bound within an early printed book in the Museo Diocesano dell’Ogliastra in Lanusei, Sardinia (“L”). I have found that it is clearly connected to the Salamanca manuscript S, having the same layout and including corrections that appear based on the text of S. Because the short fragment does not contain any New Testament material, it is not of direct relevance here. See Perani 2009:57–59 and plates 16a–b after p. 368.

⁹ Recently, Damien Travelletti discovered a number of marginal comments and insertions written in the first person and directed to a copyist, providing further support for seeing G as an autograph copy written by Martí himself (Travelletti 2011:74–77). For a recent study based directly on manuscript G, see Bobichon forthcoming. Bobichon is also preparing an exhaustive study of this manuscript, which is not yet in press. A full list of manuscripts and editions is given in Appendix 1 of this article, but see also the preliminary study by Fumagalli 1986; Hasselhoff 2002, 2013; and especially Hasselhoff’s introduction to his partial translation in Martí 2014. An edition of G is currently under preparation by Hasselhoff, Szpiech, Bobichon, and Ann Giletti (Rome). My thanks to Bobichon and Hasselhoff for sharing their texts ahead of publication.

gone unnoticed (image 7).¹⁰ Finally, all of the material already known to scholars is found in vocalized form in the three medieval manuscripts (G, S, C), whereas both of the later manuscripts Bas and R, as well as the editions p and l, lack this vocalization (images 3-6).

This material is significant for a number of reasons. Not only does it nearly double the amount of evidence known about Martí's citation of the New Testament in Hebrew, but it also adds many key details to the discussion, details that, I believe, prove that Martí was not citing from a previously existing Hebrew translation. Also, whereas the verses already known were mostly from Matthew with a few from Mark, most of the other verses found only in the manuscripts are from Luke and also include a verse from a hitherto unrepresented book, John, showing that Martí actually cited from all four Gospels in Hebrew translation.

From a distance, Martí's citations of the New Testament in Hebrew can all be seen to cluster in the third and last section of the third and last part of the *Dagger*, which is dedicated to proving, on the basis of Jewish authoritative texts, the redemption of humanity through Jesus' Incarnation, Virgin Birth, Passion, and Resurrection. The citations given in Hebrew and Latin in this section are not the only references to the New Testament in the *Dagger* or even the only such references in this section of part three of the work.¹¹ They seem to cluster between G folios 281r and 336r, but four other New Testament references that are interspersed throughout these folios are given only in Latin. Although references to the Hebrew Bible, Talmud, and other rabbinical writings far outnumber citations of the New Testament — the Tanakh is cited thousands of times and the Talmud many hundreds — the work includes approximately seventy citations of the New Testament, of which over half are found in the third part of the work. The translation of these citations into Hebrew occurs in only some of these passages and even includes some passages already cited elsewhere without Hebrew translation. This raises the questions of what function these translated passages may have had in the text and what meaning can be ascribed to them, questions I will address in detail below.

Before turning to the larger question of Martí's logic in including this Hebrew material in his text, it is first necessary to consider if Martí is translating the passages himself or if he is drawing on an established Jewish translation of the text. Most of what is found in the hitherto unexamined examples in the manuscripts supports what Lapide had already noticed about the Hebrew verses that he analyzed in the printed editions, namely, that details from

¹⁰ A full list of verses and their sources is given in Appendix 2. Images are given in Appendix 3.

¹¹ For an overview of the work and its contents, see Chazan 1989:115–120 and Cohen 1982:129–156.

Marti's language rule out his use of an earlier Jewish translation. For example, Lapide had noticed that in the examples drawn from the printed editions, the name of Jesus is given as the masculine name *Yeshu'a*, whereas virtually all medieval Jewish writers who cite the New Testament give *Yeshu*, perhaps in order to avoid suggesting the connotation of "salvation" (*yeshu'ah*).¹² The manuscript evidence yields even more evidence to support this line of reasoning. Not only is *Yeshu* almost never given in the *Dagger*, as Lapide has noted, but also in the New Testament verses where he believes *yeshu'a* has been given, the manuscripts almost always read *yeshu'ah*, literally, "salvation." Such a loose translation of Jesus' name — which gives the feminine noun with a final *heh* rather than a masculine name — is even more strongly Christological than Lapide first suspected, and would be unthinkable as the name for Jesus in a medieval Jewish translation. Its consistent appearance in the manuscripts of the *Dagger* show that either the source of the Hebrew New Testament passages is not Jewish, or that the name has been changed every time it was copied.

Besides the fact that none of Martí's translations repeats parallel verses cited in earlier anti-Jewish works (*Book of Nestor the Priest*, *Wars of the Lord*, *Life Story of Jesus*, etc.) — a point previously suggested by Judah Rosenthal on the basis of only one example (1962:49–50, 54–55) — the Hebrew text itself reflects a Christian perspective in some of its details.¹³ Lapide has identified various Latinisms and curiously translated Hebrew phrases that point to Martí's Christian perspective, such as the translation of "Magi" as "Kings wise in the stars" (*melakim ḥakhamim ba-kokhavim*) (1984:14–15). To these details, we can add others based on the manuscripts. In his citation of Matthew 2.6, which is actually a rendering of Micah 5.1 (5.2 in the Vulgate), Martí's Hebrew is a translation of Matthew's version rather than a rendering of the verse being cited. A Hebrew translation of this passage would logically substitute the original verse from Micah, as Jacob ben Reuben did in his discussion in *Wars of the Lord* a century before Martí (1962–1963:130) and Ibn Shaprūṭ did a century after him (a fact on which Ibn Shaprūṭ himself commented) (Howard 1995:7 and 174 n. 2).¹⁴

¹² The *Life of Jesus* suggests that Jesus' name was changed from Yehoshua to *Yeshu* when he became a heretic because the latter name, made up of three letters in Hebrew, expresses an acronym for "may his name and memory be obliterated" (*yimah shemo ve-zikro*) (Krauss 1902:68).

¹³ For additional examples, one can compare Jacob ben Reuben's citation of Matthew 2.11 (1962–1963:69) or the citation of Luke 1.28–32 in the *Nizzahon Vetus* (Berger 1979: 126, 144).

¹⁴ In examining a fifteenth-century Hebrew translation of the Gospels, Hames points to similar examples of the translator ignoring the original Hebrew when rendering citations of the Hebrew Bible that are quoted or paraphrased within the verses of the New Testament, concluding that the translator was probably Christian (Hames 2012:295–296).

Various other examples can be found in the manuscript passages of Luke 1. For example, in translating Luke 1.35 (“He will be called son of God”), the *Dagger* reads *yiqare’ ben ha-El*, a literal translation. The phrase “son of God” appears only once in the Hebrew Bible, in an Aramaic passage in Daniel 3.25, where it is rendered as *bar Elohim*. The related phrase “sons of God” appears in various places (Genesis 6.2, 6.4; Job 1.6, 2.1, 38.4; and Psalms 29.1, 89.7), where it is consistently rendered as *benei Elohim*. A Hebrew translator of this phrase would be more likely to echo these references than to invent a new turn of phrase that does not echo Old Testament language. Jacob ben Reuben and Ibn Shaprūṭ, for example, both render “Son of God” in Matthew 4.3 as *ben Elokim*, using *Elokim* as a more pious rendering that avoids directly naming *Elohim* (Howard 1987:12; Levy 2004:31).¹⁵ Martí’s *ben ha-El* stands out as a strange and telling choice.

Another revealing example found in both the passages already known in the published editions and in those I have found in the manuscripts involves parallel omissions in Latin and Hebrew. In citing Luke 1.26–38, Martí shortens the Latin in two places by omitting verses 29, 33, and the second half of 32, inserting “etc.” (edition I only prints “etc.” for verse 29, but manuscript G includes it in both cases). The Hebrew mirrors this by omitting these verses and inserting the Hebrew letters *vav* and *gimel* (for *ve-gomer*, to mean “etc.”) in these places. The same phenomenon can be found in the citation of Matthew 2.1–12, where Martí omits 2.7–8, a fact also mirrored in the Hebrew in both the edition and manuscripts. This detail is proof that the Hebrew was written with reference to the Latin, rather than copied from an existing translation, and that someone involved in the production of the manuscript knew both languages. Since neither the Hebrew passage of Luke nor any of these particular details is found in the printed edition, this parallel omission is a new fact emerging from direct analysis of the manuscripts.

Even more significant is the fact that all of the medieval *Dagger* manuscripts, including G, vocalize the Hebrew versions of the New Testament. This is an obvious clue that the work is not that of a medieval Jew. Ibn Shaprūṭ does not vocalize his version of Matthew, nor does ben Reuben include vocalization in his citations. One of the most curious facts about the vocalization in G in particular is that it also includes Masoretic punctuation marks (*niqqud*), stress marks such as the *meteg*, and cantillation accent marks (*te’amim*), akin to neumes, such as the *atnah*, *silluq*, and *sof pasuq* (see, for example, G folio 281r,

Lapide’s comment (1984:15) about Martí’s addition of the name Micah to the phrase *per prophetam* in Matthew 2.5 is based only on the printed editions, but it is not applicable to the original text in the surviving manuscripts where “Micah” is not added.

¹⁵ Some manuscripts of ben Reuben read *ben Elohim*. See Levy 2004:31, n. 147.

lines 1–4, given in Appendix 3). Such details, which aid in the pronunciation, chanting, and recitation of text, are normally reserved for the Hebrew Bible (and on occasion, the Mishnah) and would never be found in a Jewish translation of the New Testament. As I will indicate below, however, such details can be explained by Martí's own interest in reproducing (or fabricating) citations that reflected as closely as possible his notion of a Hebrew understanding of authoritative texts.

One last example that suggests very strongly that Martí was not copying his text from an existing Hebrew version of the New Testament is not only found in the manuscripts but is also found in the print editions of the text, albeit in an unmarked and unindexed passage. On G folio 336r, Martí cites Matthew 4.17, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near,” which he had previously cited on folio 300r and which he cites a third time farther down on folio 336r. While this last reference lacks any Hebrew translation, the first two citations include it. Comparison of the two (in G, which is different in some details from R and p) shows that Martí translated the text differently in each case. In the first, he writes ‘asu teshuvah ki qarbah malkhut ha-shamaim, but in the second, he changes the verse slightly, writing ‘asu teshuvah ki qarav malkhut shamaim. This drops the definite article and also ungrammatically alters the verb form from feminine (*qarbah*) to masculine (*qarav*), although it modifies the vocalization to match the change in conjugation. While omitting the definite article could conceivably represent a scribal error — such an error seems to be present in the version of this passage found in C, in which the final *heh* is left off of *teshuvah* and the final *tav* is left off of *malkhut* — the change in vocalization that goes along with the change in conjugated form shows that the writing was not done thoughtlessly. The type of error and the variety of text it gives rise to suggest that Martí was not copying directly from a written text but was translating the text into Hebrew *ad hoc* as he composed the *Dagger*. This interpretation is in line with Martí's other translation practices, in which he regularly translates the same rabbinical passages in slightly different ways in different parts of the *Dagger*.

These facts thus exclude Martí's evidence from any consideration of the history of Jewish translation of the New Testament, although the *Dagger* does offer a fascinating parallel case for comparison. Later writers who cite the New Testament in Hebrew, including Jewish writers such as Ibn Shaprut and converts such as Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid, may have known Martí's work, but they do not cite directly from it. Abner/Alfonso's work (discussed below) cites different New Testament verses from Martí, while Ibn Shaprut's version of Matthew is different from any passages from Matthew cited in the *Dagger of Faith*. The fifteenth-century translation found within Vatican ms

ebr. 100 was based on a Catalan version and seems unconnected with Martí's work.¹⁶ Martí's translations must be seen, as Lapide asserted, as the first example in a long line of Christian Hebraism rather than a link in an older chain of Jewish anti-Christian writing.

Martí's Philosophy of Language and Authority

Because these Hebrew passages only represent a relatively minor part of the occasional New Testament references found throughout the text of the *Dagger*, it is not clear what their purpose and meaning are. Why did Martí choose to translate the text into Hebrew in some places and not others? I believe that we can best explain Martí's motives in including these New Testament passages in Hebrew by putting them in the context of Dominican interest in foreign language study and by comparing them to Martí's other practices of transcription and transliteration, which are evident throughout the *Dagger* as well as in a few places in Martí's 1267 anti-Jewish work, the *Muzzle for the Jews* (*Capistrum Iudeorum*). In both of these works, Martí evinces a careful attention to original source material from Hebrew and, in a few cases, from Arabic as well. This attention stands in contrast to Martí's treatment of Muslim sources in Arabic in his earlier works written in the 1250s against Islam, including his *On the Sect of Muhammad* (*De seta Machometi*) and the *Explanation of the Apostle's Creed* (*Explanatio simboli apostolorum*).¹⁷

Martí's comments about language in both the *Muzzle* and *Dagger* suggest that the form of his citations was, for him, a means of responding to the potential doubts of his listeners or readers. In the opening of the *Muzzle*, he discusses the Christian use of the Bible and rabbinical texts as proofs. He specifically lists ways that Jews "question the truth concerning a text," chief among which is by saying *non sic haberi in Hebreo* (it is not thus in Hebrew). Against this, he claims to take special care to translate everything from Hebrew "word

¹⁶ For a brief discussion of Ibn Shaprut's possible knowledge of Martí and his work, see Niclós 1999:396–401. For the few examples of citations of the New Testament in Hebrew by Abner of Burgos/Alfonso of Valladolid, see Hecht 1993:371 (fol. 23b) and 423 (fol. 47b). For an example of Moses Ha-Kohen of Tordesillas who (responding to Abner/Alfonso) cited one of the same verses that Martí had cited (Matthew 2:11) but in a different Hebrew translation, see Shamir 1972, 2:43. For other translations cited by Profiat Duran, see Duran 1981:28 (Mark 16:16), 49–50 (Matthew 2:1–12). On Vatican MS ebr. 100, see Hames 2012.

¹⁷ On the *Explanation*, see March 1908. On the *On the Sect*, see Hernando i Delgado 1983. For a consideration of the evolution of Martí's citation habits, see Szpiech 2012.

for word" and to cite only "from . . . books that are authentic among them [the Jews]" (Martí 1990, 1:54).¹⁸ He makes similar remarks in the *Dagger of Faith*: "As often as possible, I will translate the truth, word for word, of those [passages] found in the Hebrew" (Martí 1687:4).¹⁹ Although his biblical citations in Latin do show consideration of the Latin Vulgate, they do not follow it consistently. In fact, they regularly deviate in syntax and word order, seemingly in an effort to render better the original Hebrew text.²⁰

His sense of anxiety over the authenticity of his proofs is palpable, and he even comes to express doubt over his own use of Latin. It would be even better, he muses, to write his polemics "not only in Latin but also in Hebrew." For those friars or preachers who would use his book as a source of arguments and proofs in oral debates with Jews, it would be best that "one have the knowledge of reading Hebrew [aloud], even if he cannot understand it" (Martí 1990, 1:56).²¹ Martí thus specifically addresses the role of the original language in his

¹⁸ *Duobus autem modis Iudei circa textum veritatem impugnant, vel subterfugiunt, vel suam contra eum ingerunt falsitatem, scilicet, vel dicendo non sic haberi in Hebraeo... Auctoritates igitur istas, cum Dei auxilio, verbum ex verbo transferam... collegi in Talmud, et ex aliis libris authenticis apud eos, quaedam dicta magistrorum suorum antiquorum inducentium vel exponentium auctoritates huiusmodi...* (There are two ways that the Jews impugn the accuracy of a text, either by using subterfuge or by introducing their own false ideas against it, namely, by saying that it is not thus in Hebrew... With the help of God, therefore, I will translate these authorities word for word... I have collected from the Talmud and from other books held to be authentic among them certain sayings of their ancient teachers who adduce or expound authorities of this type ...).

¹⁹ *Ut eorum quae apud Hebreos sunt, ex verbo in verbum, quotiescumque servari hoc poterit, transferam veritatem.*

²⁰ To get an accurate sense of Martí's use of the Vulgate, one must avoid comparison with the seventeenth-century editions, which seem to insert changes back into the text, and, instead, compare directly with the Sainte-Geneviève manuscript G. To cite just one example of a change by Martí, we can cite his citation of Proverbs 23:29, which begins, "Who has woe? Who has sorrow?" (*Le-mi 'oi, le-mi 'avoi*, which might be freely translated as "Who has 'alas'? Who has 'alack?'"). Many medieval Latin versions interpret '*avoi*' as a conflation of '*av*' (father) and '*oi*', and thus mistranslate this verse as *cui vae cuius patri vae* (To whom woe? To whose father woe?). Martí avoids this distorted reading, translating the text more carefully as *cui vae cui heu* (Who has "woe"? Who has "oh"?). See G, fol. 8r; cf. l. 199.

²¹ *Optimum erit si istud opusculum non solum in Latino, sed etiam in Hebraeo, et scientia legendi, etsi non intelligendi Hebraicum habeatur* (It will be best if this treatise [be written] not only in Latin, but also in Hebrew, and that one have the knowledge of reading Hebrew, even if he cannot understand it). On the question of Martí's commitment to "missionizing," see Hames 2004 and Vose 2009:122–140.

polemical argumentation, noting that it is a specific technique for responding to Jewish responses to Christian arguments. Here, he not only names his post-biblical sources as *auctoritates* and specifies that they come “from books authentic among them” (*ex libris authenticis apud eos*) (Martí 1687:2; cf. Martí 1687:510, 808, 859), but he also specifically addresses the problem posed by their “authentic” perspective of doubt by recognizing, for the first time in his writing, the importance of original languages. With these comments, he points to his increasing belief that the cited authorities themselves — and their authentic form as copied faithfully by him in the original languages — have more impact on the validity of a polemical argument than his interpretation of them.

Marti’s linguistic strategy can be compared to that of Abner of Burgos (ca. 1265–ca. 1347), a Castilian polemical author known as Alfonso of Valladolid after his conversion to Christianity late in life. Abner/Alfonso was known for composing a number of anti-Jewish polemics that resembled Martí’s in their use of Hebrew sources such as the Torah and Talmud and their avoidance of Christian authorities. Abner/Alfonso is unique, however, in the fact that he composed all of his works in Hebrew and avoided using Latin altogether. It is interesting to note that Ibn Shaprut responded directly to Abner/Alfonso in book fifteen of his *Touchstone*, the same work that contains his Hebrew rendition of Matthew.²² While Abner/Alfonso’s citations of the New Testament are even fewer than Martí’s, they constitute a further example of the use of language as a marker of authenticity and authority. Although he did not rely directly on Martí’s texts, Abner/Alfonso clearly follows in his legacy and seems to represent the fulfillment of Martí’s dream that, in speaking to Jews, “it would be best” to write in Hebrew directly.²³

However, Martí’s remarks about language and translation were meant to explain his practice of citing and translating to Latin various works that were originally written in Hebrew. What light do they shed on his decision to translate some of his Latin citations *into* Hebrew? I believe this question can be addressed by pointing to other examples of the philosophy of linguistic authenticity at work in his writing. Martí’s ideas in fact led him to make a number of difficult choices about the meaning of “authentic” language in the *Dagger*. On the very same folio as the first example of the New Testament

²² For a critical edition and translation of the introduction, list of contents, and book one of the *Touchstone*, see Niclós 1997.

²³ For a consideration of Abner/Alfonso’s use of language as a strategy of authority, see Szpiech 2010, 2013:143–173. On his citations of the New Testament in Hebrew, see above, n. 16.

cited in Hebrew, for example, one can also find an even more curious set of citations: selections from the Qur'ān and *hadīth* (traditions about the Prophet Muḥammad) given in both Latin translation and in Arabic, but in an Arabic written in Hebrew script with Tiberian Hebrew vocalization.²⁴ Although Martí cites some of these same verses, all of which have to do with Jesus and Mary, in his earlier anti-Muslim works, he does so only in Latin. Similarly, in earlier parts of the *Dagger*, he cites numerous passages of Arabic philosophy as well as another selection from the Qur'ān (Martí 1687:365–366; Cf. G fol. 65v), but gives all of these citations in Latin translation only. As far as I have been able to determine, Martí's citations of the Qur'ān in part three of the *Dagger* represent the earliest example of Arabic writing given in Hebrew characters in a western Christian manuscript.

It is in this context that I believe one must interpret Martí's erratic citations of the New Testament in Hebrew, which similarly seem to represent the earliest such translations found in a Christian manuscript. What sense can we make of these examples of translation and transliteration, especially in light of our argument that Martí's language use reflects his polemical strategy of establishing the authority of his text through his appeal to authenticity? From a literal perspective, neither the Hebrew translations of the New Testament nor the Arabic passages from the Qur'ān transliterated into Hebrew characters represent the "original" or "most authentic" forms of these texts. Nevertheless, both examples do provide examples of Martí's philosophy of language in the context of his polemical project. In marshaling Arabic authorities against Jews, he chose to give them not in the form most authentic to Muslims, but in the form in which an Arabic-speaking Jew might approach the Qur'ān. Similarly, in offering citations of the New Testament, he conceded more authority to his citations as *auctoritates* by putting them on a par with those Hebrew proof texts considered "authentic among them."

At the same time, the transliteration of the Qur'ān into Hebrew characters might represent an attempt to approximate (in legible Hebrew letters) a phonetic rendering of the text as it might sound when read aloud. The presence of pronunciation and stress marks in G in the Hebrew Gospels passages and in a few places of the Qur'ān in Hebrew characters offers further support to

²⁴ It should be noted that these passages do not constitute an example of what is commonly termed "Judeo-Arabic" — a Middle Arabic register or dialect, usually written in Hebrew characters, particular to Jews — but rather represent a case of Classical (Qur'ānic) Arabic transliterated into Hebrew letters. For an edition, translation, and study of both the Arabic citations and the Latin translation, as well as the Latin citations given in part two of the *Dagger*, see Szpiech 2011.

this interpretation. Equally notable is that Martí even includes some of the original Arabic text — the same text already given in Hebrew characters on the right side of the folio — in *transliterated* form within the Latin translation on the left side, further suggesting the importance of representing the sound of the original text, even within the translation itself.²⁵ In any case, all of the citations given in Hebrew translation or transliteration reflect content in support of a Christian interpretation of history and salvation, making these verses prime candidates for *proving* Christianity to be true on the basis of Hebrew, or Hebrew-like, authority.

One final point that might help explain Martí's citation practices concerns the order in which the sections of the *Dagger* were composed. As noted, all of the translations into Hebrew (as well as the Arabic text transliterated into Hebrew letters) appear in the final section of the text, and thus it is possible that Martí decided to begin translating and transliterating his material late in the composition process. That some manuscripts circulated with only parts one and two of the text suggests, as Görge Hasselhoff has noted, the existence of a "Pugio parvus," a shorter, earlier version of the *Dagger* possibly derived from the Latin text of Martí's *Explanation and Muzzle* (Hasselhoff 2002:138). If this is the case, the choice to translate and transliterate even non-Hebrew texts might be seen as a final stage in Martí's philosophy of language, the culmination of his pursuit of textual authority based on what might seem "authentic among them."

Conclusion

Like Martí's peculiar citations of the Qur'ān in Hebrew characters and the New Testament in Hebrew translation, his citations throughout the *Dagger* are guided by a conception of language that sees Hebrew language and letters as markers of authenticity and vehicles of polemical authority. In his translation of Latin into Hebrew and his transliteration of Arabic text into Hebrew characters, he does not simply proffer the imagined knowledge of his polemical enemy. By expressing these non-Jewish authorities in a Hebrew guise, a guise that is inherently non-Christian but still comprehensible and suggestive of a

²⁵ The transliterated section, not reproduced in the printed editions but present in various manuscripts, reads *erat ipsa min al-qanitín id est de illis quae amant silencium* (She [i.e. Mary] was *min al-qānitín*, that is, from among those who love silence). See G, fol. 281v; C, fol. 230v; and S, fol. 217r.

Jewish text, he also aims to simulate the imagined perspective of the imagined Jewish enemy by evoking the authority of an “original” (in this case, non-Latin and non-Christian) text. One might imagine Martí is attempting to approximate an *experience* of an imagined Jewish listener or reader of original scriptures in purportedly “original” scripts, such as can be found in earlier Hebrew anti-Christian polemics.

“Language difference,” as Joseph Errington has stated, is not simply an expression of human diversity or a manifestation of religious or cultural independence but a vehicle of power that historically has “figured in the creation of human hierarchies” (2008:5). As David Damrosch has put it, “alphabets and other scripts . . . serve as key indices of cultural identity, often as battle-fields of independence or interdependence” (2007:196). For Ramon Martí, whose translation of New Testament verses into Hebrew stands between the anti-Christian attacks of twelfth-century texts such as the *Wars of the Lord* of Jacob ben Reuben or the Hebrew *Book of Nestor the Priest* and thirteenth-century attacks such as Shem Tov Isaac Ibn Shaprut’s *Touchstone*, translation into Hebrew served in this way as an answer to earlier Jewish criticism and a preemptory riposte to an imagined Jewish incredulity. Martí’s project was, in other words, not simply one of translation or transliteration but of theological argument in graphic form. In expressing key Christological passages from the Gospels, translation served as a polemical tool, and the Hebrew alphabet began, for Martí, to take the place of the imagined hermeneutical Jew of earlier Christian theology. In the context of supersessionist polemic, script and language had the power to evoke the elusive aura of authentic identity, and language itself began to serve as a new theological witness to the historical triumph of Christianity, a dangerous weapon in a war of words.

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Appendix 1

Manuscripts and Editions of the *Pugio fidei* (according to Hasselhoff 2013; Szpiech 2011 76–80)²⁶

1. G=Paris Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève MS 1405. 430 folios. 13th century. The only medieval manuscript that contains all three parts in both Hebrew and Latin. Probably an autograph copy.
2. S=Salamanca. Biblioteca Universitaria MS 2352. 291 folios. Possibly 14th century. Contains second and third parts in Hebrew and Latin.
3. C=Coimbra Biblioteca Geral da Universidade MS 720. 331 folios. 14th or 15th century. Contains second and third parts in Latin and Hebrew. Contains a few citations of the Bible in Castilian and space has been left throughout to add more Castilian translations next to all Hebrew and Latin citations of the Bible.
4. P2=Paris Bibliothèque Nationale MS 3357, folios 2v–23iv. 14th or 15th century. Only contains I.1–I.12.12 and III.3.1–III.3.6.5 with no Hebrew, although a space has been left for it.
5. P1=París Bibliothèque Nationale MS 3356. 100 folios. 15th century. Contains first and second parts and no Hebrew text.
6. T=Tarragona Biblioteca Provincial MS 89. 340 folios. 1437–1438. Belonged to the monastery of Santes Creus. Contains all three parts but no Hebrew.
7. Mc=Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliotek MS CLM 24158. 206 folios. 15th century. Italian origin. Contains all three parts but lacks Hebrew and ends in the middle of III.3.21.
8. E=Escorial MS K.II.19. Folios 1–84. 1405. Contains first and second parts only and lacks Hebrew text.
9. D=Toulouse Bibliothèque Municipale MS 219. 90 folios. 1405. Contains first and second parts only and lacks Hebrew.
10. H=Sevilla, Capitular y Colombina MS 56–2–14 (*olim* 82–1–7 and Y–132–17). Folios 1–122v. Before 1453. Contains first and second parts only and lacks Hebrew.
11. L=Lanusei, Sardinia, Museo Diocesano dell’Ogliastra. One fragmentary folio (two sides) found within an early-modern binding. Contains Hebrew and Latin text from II.3.9–11. Appears to be a copy of S.
12. Bas=Universität Basel MS A XII 9–11. 17th century. Contains all three parts in Latin and Hebrew. Copied for the Christian Hebraist Johannes Buxtorf. A close, perhaps direct, copy of G.

²⁶ To avoid confusion, I am here following the abbreviations given in Hasselhoff 2013 rather than my original abbreviations proposed in Szpiech 2011.

13. R=Paris Bibliothèque de la Mazarine MS 796 (2138). 17th century (1650–1651). Contains all three parts in Latin and Hebrew. A copy of the lost manuscript of Foix (F) that served as the basis of the p edition.
- 14–20. Lost or unknown copies: A=Avignon, Bibliotheca romanorum pontificum, ms 1653; V=Avignon, Bibliotheca romanorum pontificum, ms 1654; B=Barcelona, Santa Catarina; F=Foix, Collège de Foix; M=Mallorca; Bol=Bologna, Convento de San Domenico 340; N=Naples, Convento de San Domenico
21. p=Paris 1651 edition. An amalgam of F, B, M, and N.
22. I = Leipzig 1687 edition, based on Paris 1651. Facsimile 1967. Best known of all copies.

Appendix 2

New Testament verses given in Hebrew Translation in the *Pugio fidei*
 (Folio/page numbers are given in parentheses; Bold text indicates material only in the manuscripts; * indicates material not considered in earlier studies)

1. *Luke 1.46–48 (G:281r; C:230r; S:216v; Bas:II249r)
2. *Luke 1.26–28, 30–32, 34–38 (G:282v; C:231r; S:217v; Bas:II251r)
3. Matthew 2.1–6, 9–12 (G:298r; C:241r; S:229r–v; Bas:III18r–v; R:1265–1266; p:603; l:772)
4. Matthew 4.17, 19.29 (G:300r; C:242v; S:231r; Bas:III20v; R:1273; p:606; l:776)
5. *Matthew 4.17 (different version) (G:336r; C:267v; S:256v; Bas:III65v; R:1370; p:643; l:825)
6. Luke 6.20 (G:300r; C:242v; S:231r; Bas:III20v; R:1273; p:606)
7. Romans 14.17 (G:300r; C:242v; S:231r; Bas:III20v; R:1273; p:606)
8. *John 19.36 (G:300r; C:242v; S:231r; Bas:III20v)
9. Matthew 3.13–15 (G:330v–331r; C:264r; S:253v; Bas:III57v–58r; R:1355; p:638; l:818)
10. Mark 16.15–16 (G:331r; C:264r; S:253v; Bas:III57v–58r; R:1355–6; p:638; l:818)

Appendix 3

Images of manuscript G (© Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Paris; used with permission)

1. Fol. 281r (Luke 1.46–48)
2. Fol. 282v (Luke 1.26–38)
3. Fol. 298r (Matthew 2.1–6, 9–12)

4. Fol. 300r (Matthew 19.29; Luke 6.20; Matthew 4.17; Romans 14.17; John 19.36)
5. Fol. 330v (Matthew 3.13–15 [part])
6. Fol. 331r (Matthew 3.15 [end]; Mark 16.15–16)
7. Fol. 336r (Matthew 4.17 [alternate version])

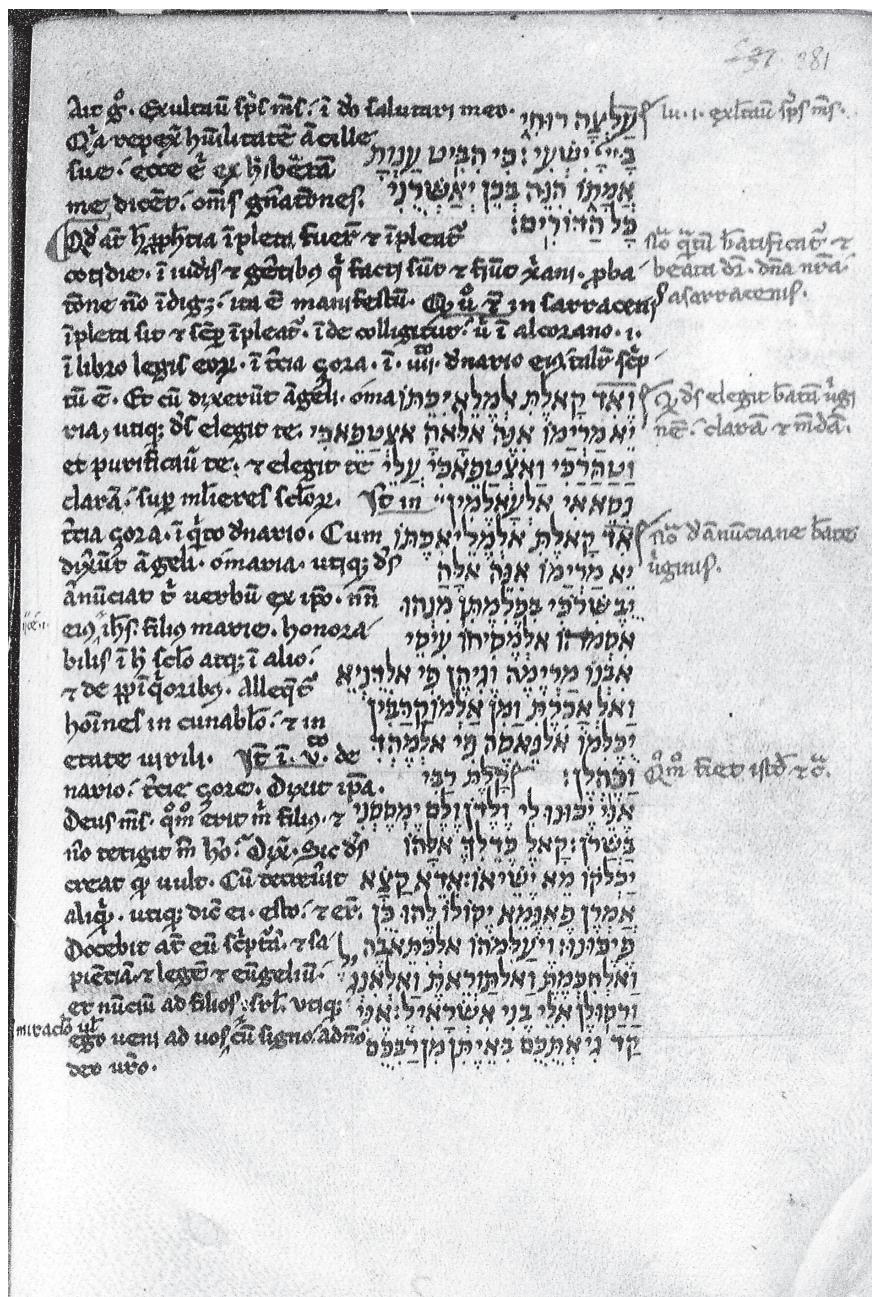


FIGURE 1

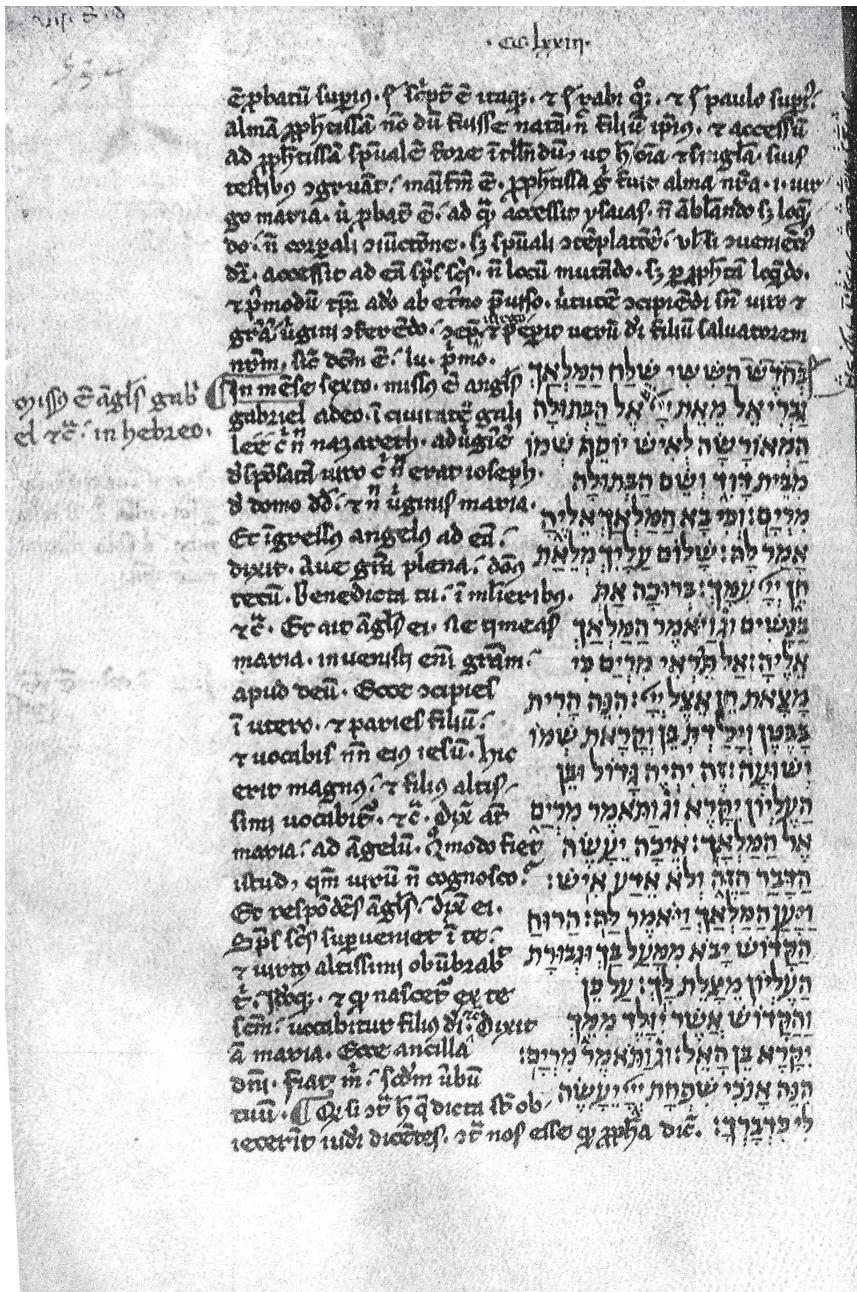


FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3

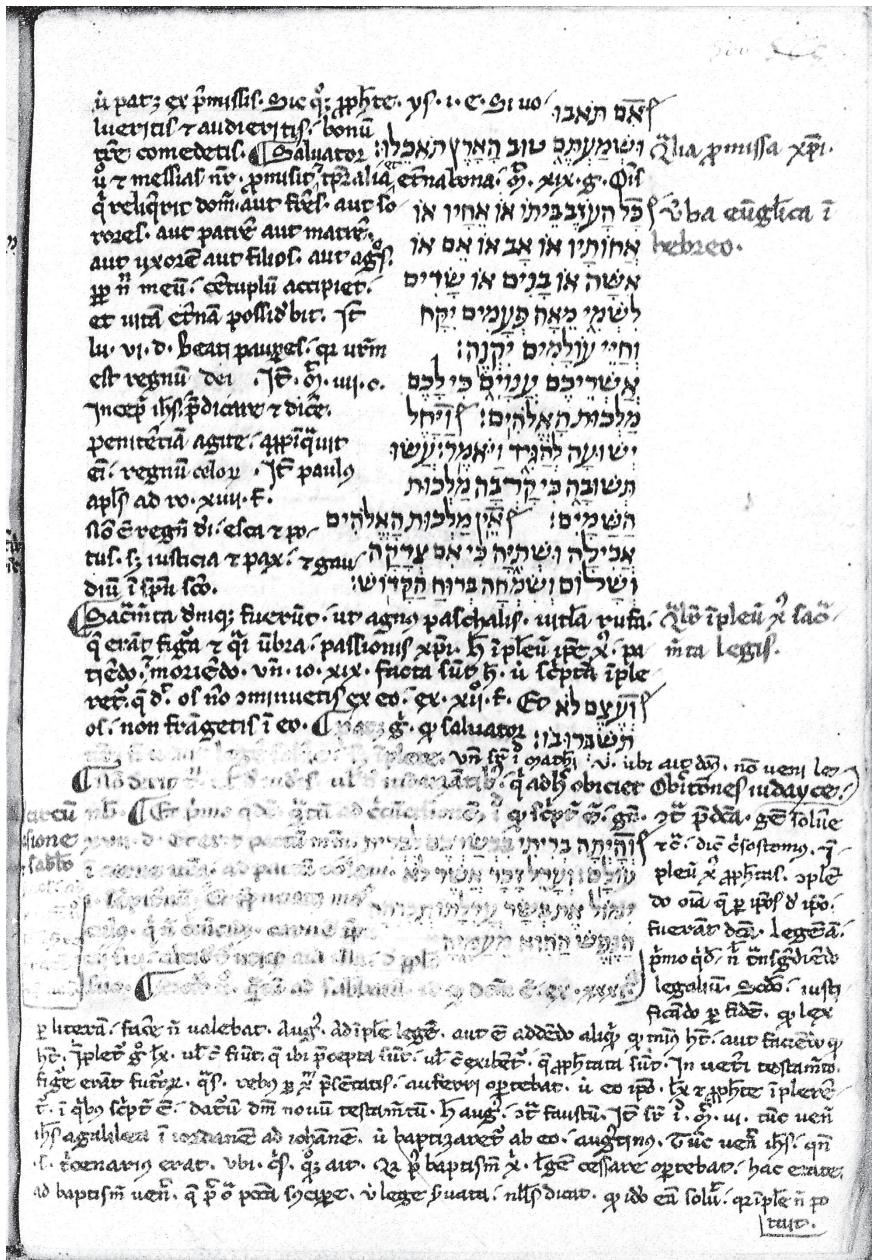


FIGURE 4

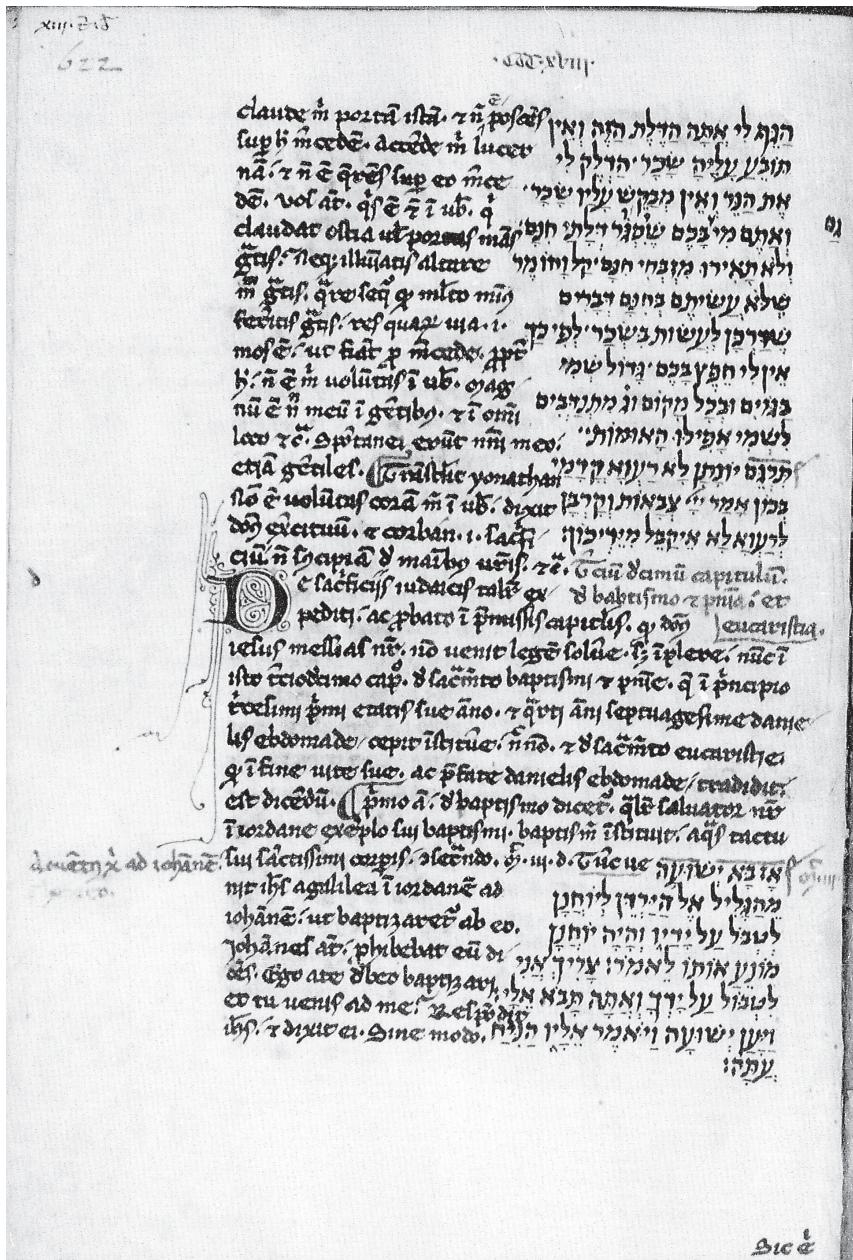


FIGURE 5

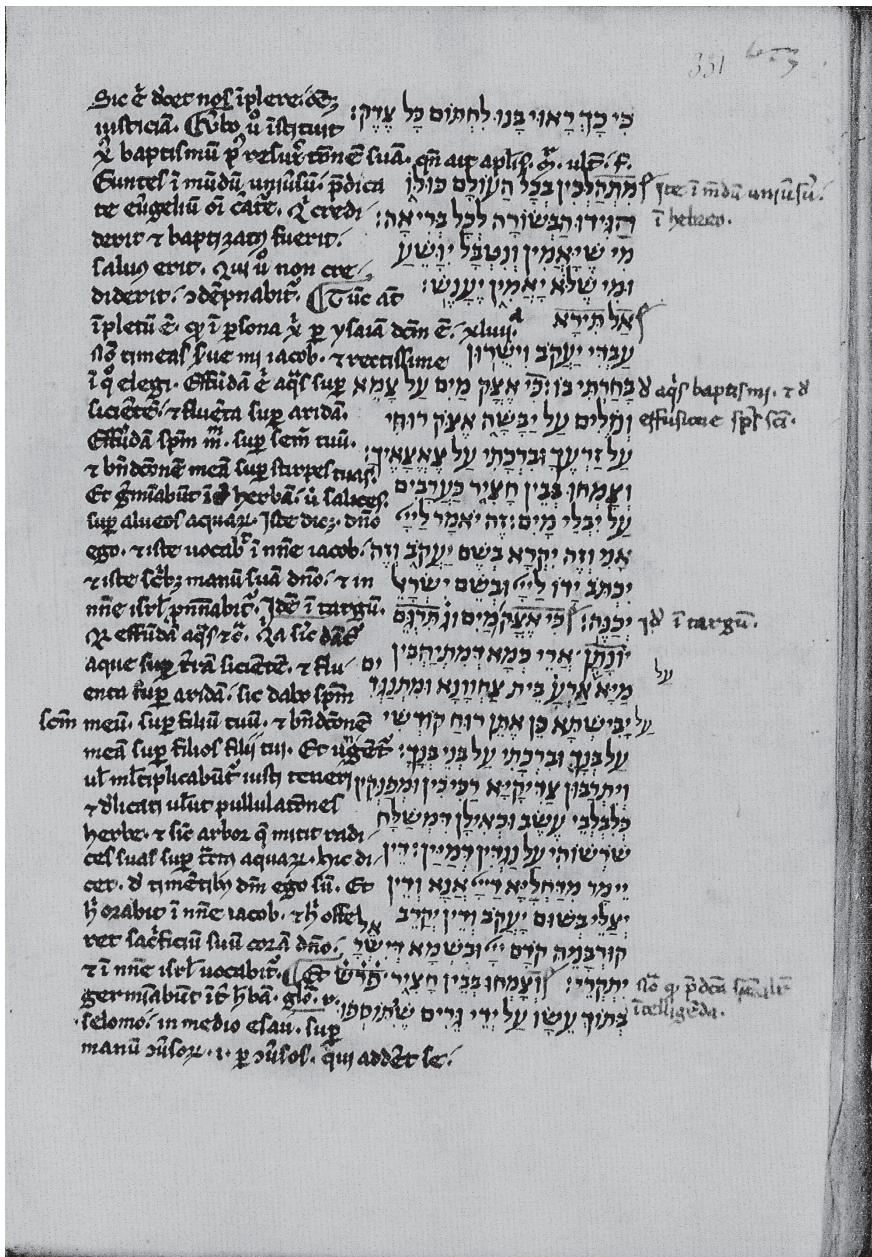


FIGURE 6

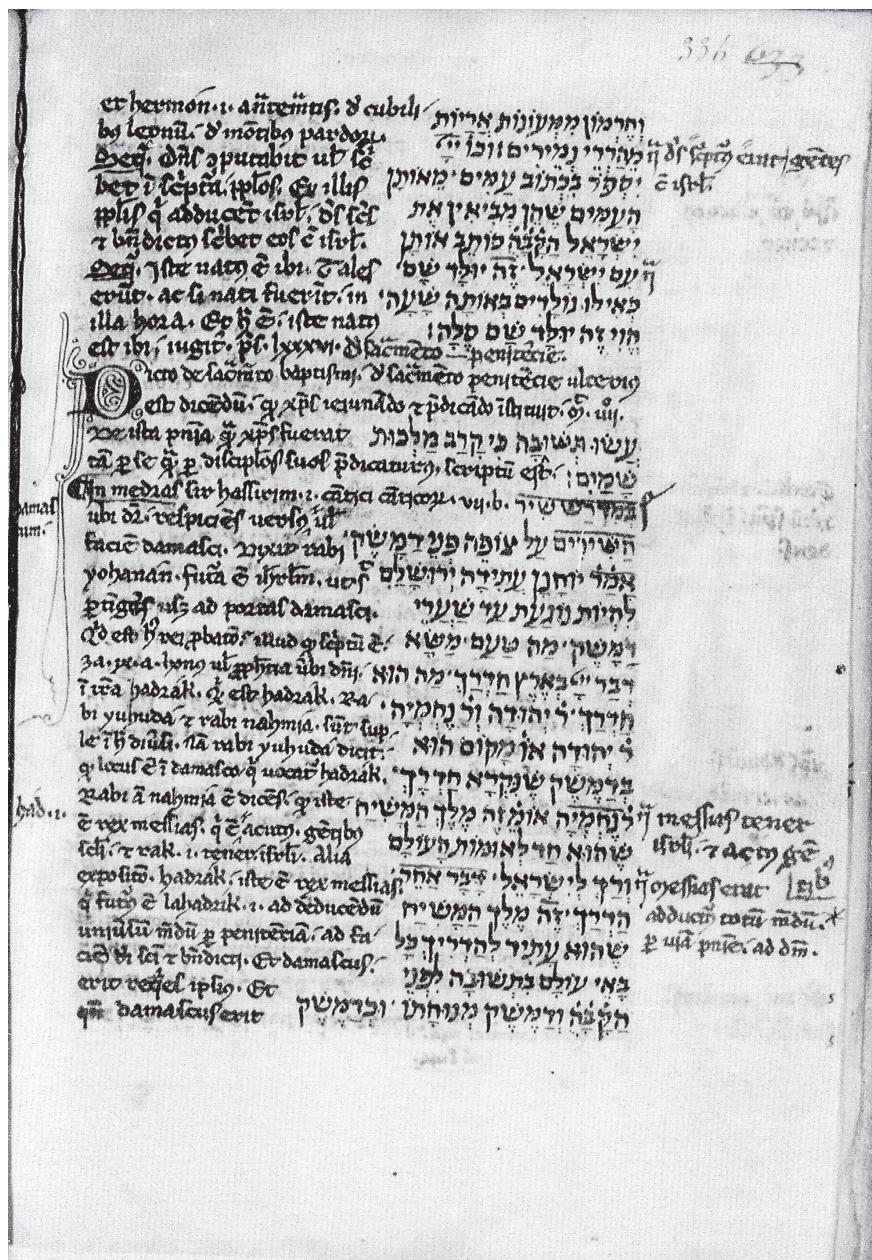


FIGURE 7