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'CHRISTIANISED REASON'?

ABELARD, HIS PEERS AND THEIR JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUES

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I JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS AND THE *DIALOGUE*

This paper will examine the *Dialogus inter philosophum, Iudaeum et christianum* (*Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew, and a Christian*) written by Peter Abelard (1079-1142) in the context of the intellectual relations between Jews and Christians in the early to mid-twelfth century.¹

Scholars variously describe the twelfth century as a time of 'renaissance'² or 'renewal'.³ Whatever it is called, the period from the end of the eleventh century up to the first half of the twelfth century saw an era of significant economic growth and social change in Christian Europe. In addition, this period saw an increasing sophistication in intellectual endeavour and a rise in Christian anti-Jewish polemic.⁴ Abulafia, in her study of Christians and Jews in this twelfth century 'renaissance', argues that philosophical concepts concerning reason were 'Christianised' so that they could be used to strengthen and further define Christian doctrine in order to exclude Jews from the norms of Christian society.⁵ She distinguishes her study from that of Moore, who theorises that a newly-educated *literati* denigrated Jews in the twelfth

¹ R. Thomas (ed.), *Dialogus inter philosophum, Iudaeum et christianum*, Textcritische edition, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1970; J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Cursus Completus Series Latina* (PL), 178, cols 1609-1682. For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to Payer's translation in Peter Abelard, *A Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew, and a Christian*, P. J. Payer (tr.), Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1979 (hereafter *Dialogue*). Further, I will not deal with the controversy surrounding the dating of the *Dialogue*; a useful summary of the competing views is to be found in C. J. Mews, 'Peter Abelard and the Enigma of Dialogue', *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration Before the Enlightenment*, J.C. Laursen and C. J. Nederman (eds.), University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1998, pp. 26-27.

² C.H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1927.

³ R.L. Benson, G. Constable and C.D. Lanham (eds.), *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1982.

⁴ D. Berger, 'Mission to the Jews and Jewish-Christian Contacts in the Polemical Literature of the High Middle Ages', *American Historical Review*, vol. 91, 1986, pp. 576-591, 577. See also J. Cohen, 'Scholarship and Intolerance in the Medieval Academy: The Study and Evaluation of Judaism in European Christendom', *American Historical Review*, vol. 91, 1906, pp. 592-613, 593 and R. Moore, *Jews and Christians in the Life and Thought of Hugh of St. Victor*, Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1995, pp. 2-7 and 9-15. For a study of the parallel development of anti-Christian Jewish polemic in the commentaries of Rashbam, see E. Touitou, 'La Renaissance du 12e siècle et l'exégèse biblique de Rashbam', *Archives Juives*, vol. 20, nos. 1 & 2, 1984, pp. 3-12.

⁵ A. S. Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, Routledge, London, 1995, pp. 123-135.

century because they perceived a threat by Jews to the *literati's* status as administrators.⁶ In contrast, Abulafia argues that the threat posed by Jews was that 'many of their criticisms of Christianity were uncomfortably similar to the growing number of questions which began to be asked by inquiring minds within the Church'.⁷

This paper will firstly examine the genre of the philosophical dialogue typified in the works of Anselm and modified in the hands of a number of Abelard's twelfth century contemporaries, namely Peter Damian, Gilbert Crispin, Pseudo-William of Champeaux, Hildebart of Lavardin, Guibert of Nogent, Odo of Cambrai, Peter Alfonsi and Rupert of Deutz.⁸ It will then analyse the *Dialogue* of Abelard, focussing on the first dialogue between the Jew and the philosopher. From this, I will deduce something of the uniqueness of Abelard, when seen in the context of his own works and those of his peers, and determine whether he and they are exponents of Abulafia's 'Christianised reason'.

II ST ANSELM AND THE TRADITION OF PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE

The genre of the philosophical dialogue as a means of developing one's ideas began in the late eleventh century in the writing of Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109).⁹ Comparing Abelard's *Dialogue* with the dialogues inspired by Anselm enables us to appreciate the extent of Abelard's originality. In Anselm's early treatises, such as *De veritate* (*On Truth*), *De casu diaboli* (*On the Reason for the Devil*), *De Libertate arbitrii* (*On Free Judgment*) and *De grammatico* (*On Grammar*), which were composed between approximately 1080 and 1085, the format was that of a conversation between master and pupil which was modelled on the early dialogues of Augustine.¹⁰ Anselm established the precedent of discussing issues 'from reason alone', but his concern was not so much to elicit ideas from different points of view as to bring out the inherent logic of his own conclusions.

The use of the word *ratio* ('reason') by Abelard and his contemporaries is linked to Abulafia's description of the 'Christianisation of reason'. In contrast to modern notions of 'reason', which perceive it in a secular and atheistic sense, twelfth century thinkers saw God as the supreme embodiment of reason. Thus the increasing interest in the study of classical texts, particularly Patristic and Stoic writings, led to the

⁶ R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1987, pp. 33-57.

⁷ Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 135.

⁸ See A. L. Williams, *'Adversus Judaeos': A Bird's-Eye View of Christian 'Apologiae' Until the Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1935; Moore, *Hugh of St. Victor*, pp. 9-15.

⁹ Note also the dialogues of Alcuin in the late eighth and early ninth century: Alcuin, *Disputatio de Rhetorica et de Virtutibus sapientissimi Regis Karli et Albini Magistri*, in W. S. Howell, (tr. and ed.), *The Rhetoric of Alcuin and Charlemagne*, Russell & Russell, New York, 1965, pp. 65-158.

¹⁰ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 28.

notion that such works would assist in finding truth.¹¹ The concern of this paper is to what extent writers used such a concept of reason to question their own faith; that is, to what extent they were prepared to go beyond the institutional doctrine of the Church in their use of reason.

Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* (*Why the God Man*), completed in 1098, was written in the form of a dialogue between Anselm and his friend and pupil Boso, and had a didactic function.¹² *Cur Deus Homo* sought to demonstrate the truth of human redemption and the sinfulness of human nature and in it Boso served as the mouthpiece of the *infideles* ('unbelievers'). A number of scholars, most recently Southern, have claimed that the unbelievers referred to Jews, or possibly Muslims.¹³ However Abulafia disagrees, on the basis that Anselm's letters concerning Jews betray very few references to contemporary Jews or Jewish-Christian debates.¹⁴ In addition, she points out that the fundamental difference between the believers and the unbelievers was that the former believed and while believing searched for an understanding of what they believed, whereas the latter group allowed itself to suspend belief until it understood. Therefore both groups were at least nominally Christian;¹⁵ and thus the disbelief that Anselm combated was of those who were at least nominally Christian. Although Anselm hoped his process of reasoning would convince Jews and pagans of the necessity of the Incarnation, his ideas were not formed in dialogue with them.

This refusal to engage in debate with non-believers is evident even in the *Disputatio* (*Disputation*) between a Christian and a Gentile.¹⁶ In what is ostensibly an attempt to test the ideas of redemption and sin from *Why the God Man* in non-Christian argumentation, it becomes apparent that this is not so. Although not developed with the same subtlety as his *Why the God Man*, the underlying argument of the *Disputatio* is the same: given the sinfulness of man, who was quite unable to restore himself by his

¹¹ Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, pp. 23-33.

¹² Anselm, *Anselm of Canterbury*, vol. 3: *Two Letters Concerning Roscelin, The Incarnation of the Word, Why God Became Man, The Virgin Conception and Original Sin, The Procession of the Holy Spirit, Three Letters on the Sacraments*, J. Hopkins and H. Richardson (eds. and trans.), Edwin Mellen Press, Toronto, 1976, pp. 39-137.

¹³ R.W. Southern, *St. Anselm. A Portrait in a Landscape*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, pp.198-202.

¹⁴ A.S. Abulafia. 'St. Anselm and those Outside the Church', in D. Loades and K. Walsh (eds.) *Faith and Unity: Christian Political Experience, Studies in Church History*, Subsidia, 6, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990, pp. 11-37.

¹⁵ Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 43.

¹⁶ Mews attributes this work to Anselm, noting the work had previously been absent from critical editions of Anselmian texts: C. J. Mews, 'St. Anselm and Roscelin: Some New Texts and their Implications. I. The *De incarnatione Verbi* and the *Disputatio inter Christianum et gentilem*', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age*, vol. 58, 1991, pp. 55-97, 86-99 (text), hereafter cited as *Disputatio*. Compare Abulafia, who attributes the text to Pseudo-Anselm: *Jews and Christians*, p.74.

own efforts, the only person who could redeem mankind was someone who was sinless, namely a man who was also God. The Christian successfully follows the directive of the gentile to argue that God became man, without recourse to scriptural authority.¹⁷ Although, in doing so, he twice alludes to Anselm's exhortation to faith, derived from Isaiah 7: 9 ('Unless you believe, you shall not understand'),¹⁸ this was not use of scriptural authority but an assertion of the priority of faith over understanding. Thus, while Anselm had established a new point of departure in insisting that all theological inquiry be based on reason alone, rather than on written authority which might not be acceptable to all parties, he never questioned the fundamental Augustinian assumptions about the sinfulness of man and the priority of faith over understanding.

It should be noted that Anselm's dialogue and, indeed, the genre of the philosophical dialogue which his writings inspired, were not reports of actual dialogues between Christians and non-believers, but artificial positions put forward on behalf of these parties.¹⁹ As will be seen, the non-Christian figure is contrived. He is the 'straw man' to be confuted. These uses of the dialogue genre made Anselm an exponent of what Abulafia has termed 'Christianised reason', that is the use of reason to marginalise Jews.

III SOME TWELFTH CENTURY INFLUENCES

It is now necessary to turn to Abelard's contemporaries and examine their use of 'Christianised reason'. In the development of the genre of philosophical dialogue between Jews and Christians, Funkenstein identifies four evolutionary stages: the first relies on the standard selection of testimonies from the Scriptures; the second utilises reason, rather than Scripture; the third uses the Talmud against the Jews; and the fourth uses the Talmud to prove to Jews the truth of Christianity.²⁰ My study goes beyond that of Funkenstein's, for of the eight writers discussed below, he deals only with Peter Alfonsi.

1. Peter Damian

An example of the first stage of argumentation occurred in the works of Peter Damian (1007-1072). Peter authored two anti-Jewish treatises which reiterated the scriptural testimonies and their established patristic interpretations: the *Antilogus contra Judaeos* (*Rebuttal Against the Jews*) and his *Dialogus inter Iudeum requirentem* (*Dialogue with an Inquiring*

¹⁷ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 86.

¹⁸ Mews, 'Anselm and Roscelin', p. 90.

¹⁹ Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 73.

²⁰ A. Funkenstein, 'Basic Types of Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages', *Viator*, vol. 2, 1971, pp. 373-382.

Jew).²¹ Significantly, he believed that his biblical citations would refute Jewish arguments:

If you wish to be a soldier of Christ and fight for him courageously, then take up arms ... against the vices of the flesh, the contrivances of the devil – an enemy who will clearly never die – rather than against the Jews, who will soon be virtually destroyed from the face of the earth.²²

He did, however, agree to provide the material for his *Rebuttal*, since silence would cause doubts in Christian minds, and, in addition, Jews might be converted by well-presented Christian arguments.²³

2. Gilbert Crispin

A further exponent of Funkenstein's first stage of Jewish-Christian debate is Gilbert Crispin (1046-1117). Gilbert, abbot of Westminster from 1085 to 1117, was a former pupil of Anselm and wrote the *Disputatio Iudei et Christiani* (*Dispute of a Jew and a Christian*) in 1092/3.²⁴ This work, which came to receive popular support throughout the twelfth century, took the form of conversations between Gilbert and a Jew.²⁵ As in the Anselmian model, the figure taking issue with the Christian viewpoint was an artificial one, as was the dialogue itself. At the outset of the discussion, Gilbert emphasised the friendly spirit in which the dispute was conducted: 'As often as we got together we soon had a conversation in a friendly spirit about the Scriptures and our faith'.²⁶ When the Jew opened the debate, he confirmed the spirit of tolerance which was to follow: 'Since Christians claim that you are learned in letters and ready with the faculty of speaking, I should like you to deal with me in a tolerant spirit'.²⁷ Thus, Gilbert consciously distanced himself from the anti-Jewish invective characteristic of Peter Damian and appeared to embrace a new spirit of tolerance brought on by the

²¹ PL 145, cols 41-56 and cols 57-68.

²² PL 145, col. 41; quoted in Berger, 'Mission to the Jews', p. 580.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Gilbert Crispin, *The Works of Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster*, A.S. Abulafia and G.R. Evans (eds.), *Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi*, vol. 8, Oxford University Press, London, 1986, pp. 8-53.

²⁵ A.S. Abulafia, 'The *ars disputandi* of Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster (1085-1117)', in C.M. Cappon (ed.), *Ad fontes. Opstellen aangeboden aan Professor Dr.C van der Kieft*, Verloven, Amsterdam, 1984, pp. 139-152 and A. S. Abulafia, 'An Attempt by Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster, at Rational Argument in the Jewish-Christian Debate', *Studia Monastica*, vol. 26, 1984, pp.55-74.

²⁶ Gilbert Crispin, *Works of Gilbert Crispin*, p.9.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.10.

increasingly frequent contacts and intellectual exchanges between Christians and Jews.²⁸ Further, in contrast to Anselm, Gilbert broke new ground in his preparedness to engage in dialogue directly with non-Christians.²⁹ However, like Peter Damian, this dialogue is grounded on the use of scriptural authority to proselytise against the Jewish position.

Gilbert's *Disputatio Christiani cum gentili* (*Dispute of a Christian with a Gentile*) attempted a logical proof of Christianity without recourse to scriptural citation.³⁰ It was between two philosophers 'of great fame, but following different paths'; one a gentile and the other a Christian, who were engaged in a dispute on the worship of the one God.³¹ Although Gilbert introduced the figure of the gentile to raise objections to Christian doctrine on the basis of reason alone,³² he nevertheless made reference to Scripture in justifying his argument of the Trinity.³³ The *Dispute of a Christian with a Gentile* concluded with the gentile abandoning the discussion, when his place was taken by a disciple willing to learn, rather than argue, the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity.³⁴ Thus, for all of Gilbert's admiration of Anselm's use of reason, he was at his best when referring to the authority of Scripture. Further, unlike Anselm and, as previously demonstrated in his *Dispute of a Christian and a Jew*, Gilbert used reason as a tool to engage in debate with non-Christians. However, similarly to Anselm, dialogue in the hands of Gilbert meant demonstration of the truth of a certain point of view.

3. Pseudo-William of Champeaux

Other scholars were also prepared to engage in debate with non-Christians, using both reason and Scripture. One example was the Jewish-Christian disputation linked to the 'School at Laon'³⁵ entitled *Dialogus inter Christianum et Iudeum de fide Catholica* (*Dialogue of a Christian and a Jew about the Catholic Faith*) (1123-1148), which has been incorrectly

²⁸ Abulafia, 'An Attempt by Gilbert Crispin', pp. 55-74 *passim*; J. Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Jewish-Christian Relations in Medieval and Modern Times*, Oxford, 1971, p. 106.

²⁹ C. Gale, 'From Dialogue to Disputation: St. Anselm and his Students on Disbelief, in *Tjurrunga: An Australasian Benedictine Review*, vol. 44, 1993, pp. 71-86, 74; Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 79.

³⁰ Gilbert Crispin, *Works of Gilbert Crispin*, pp. 61-87.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 62.

³² Abulafia, 'An Attempt by Gilbert Crispin', pp. 56-57.

³³ Gilbert Crispin, *Works of Gilbert Crispin*, p. 39. See A.S. Abulafia, 'Jewish-Christian Disputations and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance', *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 15, 1989, pp. 105-125 and Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 78.

³⁴ Gilbert Crispin *Works of Gilbert Crispin*, p. 62.

³⁵ Valerie Flint distinguishes 'the school of Laon' to 'the school at Laon': V. Flint, 'The "School of Laon": A Reconsideration', in V. Flint (ed.), *Ideas in the Medieval West: Texts and their Contexts*, Variorum Reprints, London, 1988, I, pp. 89-110; V. Flint, 'Anti-Jewish Literature and Attitudes in the Twelfth Century', in Flint (ed.), *Ideas in the Medieval West*, XIV, pp. 39-57, 183-205, 186-187.

ascribed to William of Champeaux.³⁶ The disputation borrowed heavily from both Gilbert Crispin and Anselm, and much use was made of scriptural authority.³⁷ The tone of the debate was sharper than Gilbert's treatise: the Jew of Pseudo-William's debate was argued into a corner with nothing left to oppose the wealth of evidence from nature and authority presented by the Christian.³⁸ Abulafia believes this was due to the 'cut and thrust' atmosphere of the schools (William founded the School of St. Victor in 1108), which differed from the quiet, reflective method Gilbert had inherited from Anselm.³⁹ Thus, the harshness of school polemics injected a hostile tone into Jewish-Christian debate.

In addition, reason was used in the first half of the debate (in the form of evidence taken from nature) and put to polemical use against the Jews. Thus, Pseudo-William's Jew asked his Christian counterpart how the author of nature could have a mother, for conceiving without the seed of man was plainly unnatural. The Christian retorted that the divine author of nature could, in fact, do things that went against nature, and to prove the point he cited a number of Old Testament miracles in which Jews believed, such as the burning bush.⁴⁰ In addition, the Christian explained that the Virgin Birth was similar to everyday occurrences; Mary remained a Virgin in the same way that a glass did not break when a sun's rays shone through it.⁴¹ Thus, Pseudo-William used a simile from nature to argue Christian doctrine on a rational basis, although such a simile had its basis in Scripture.

Finally, following a discussion of the status of the Law of Moses, original sin, the Virgin Birth and the Trinity, the Jew agreed to open his heart to what the Christian had to say and was able to accept the arguments the Christian would put to him concerning the Incarnation in the second half of the dialogue.⁴² Thus a further difference to Gilbert's disputations becomes apparent, for the last half of the dialogue was less of a Jewish-Christian debate than an exposition on the necessity of the Incarnation and a full discussion of free will and the fall of Satan and man.

4. Hildebert of Lavardin and Guibert of Nogent

Utilising examples from nature to an even greater extent, Hildebert of Lavardin (1056-1133) composed two sermons which highlighted the contrast between unreasonable,

³⁶ PL 163, cols 1045-1072. For a discussion of the authorship of this work, see Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 81; Berger, 'Mission', p. 582.

³⁷ Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 81.

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ *ibid.* For an analysis of the greater urgency of purpose with which the 'School at Laon' directed itself towards Jewish beliefs, see Flint, 'The "School of Laon"', pp. 106-107 and Flint, 'Anti-Jewish literature', p. 187.

⁴⁰ Exodus 3:2; Numbers 17:23.

⁴¹ PL 163, cols 1054-1055; translated in Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 82.

⁴² PL 163, cols 1060-1072; Abulafia, 'Jewish-Christian disputations', pp. 108, 118-121; Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 81.

carnal Jews and rational, spiritual Christians.⁴³ Guibert of Nogent (1055-c.11125) in his *Tractatus de incarnatione contra Iudaeos* (*Treatise against the Jews on the Incarnation*) (c.1111) also attempted to convince Jews of the credibility of the Virgin Birth by citing natural phenomena which were visible to Jew and Christian alike.⁴⁴ Again, such natural phenomena were proven to exist by their appearance in Scripture.

5. Odo of Cambrai

A change in emphasis from nature to an examination of the internal coherency of Jewish Scripture is evident in Odo of Cambrai (c. 1050-1113) and his *Disputatio contra Iudeum Leone nomine de adventu Christi* (*Disputation against a Jew named Leo about the Coming of Christ*) (1106-1113).⁴⁵ This may be seen as a prototype of Funkenstein's third stage of Jewish-Christian debate: the use of the Talmud against the Jews. In addition to citing examples from nature, like Hildebert and Guibert, Odo reproduced Anselm's careful reasoning from *Why the God Man* in this explanation of the Incarnation, which attempts to convince Leo the Jew to become a Christian. However despite Leo's admission that he had no logical counter to Odo's arguments, he persisted in his refusal to become a Christian on the basis that he was not prepared to give up his holy Law.⁴⁶ Thus, Odo claimed, it was his Law which prevented the Jew from employing his reason. This point is confirmed in the second part of the disputation, when Odo implied that the Jews' failure to comprehend the Virgin Birth demonstrated their lack of reason.⁴⁷ Odo proceeded to take a Christological interpretation of Jewish Law, comparing the sensual nature of its determination of uncleanness (especially notions such as the 'obscene' womb of Mary),⁴⁸ to the judicious use of reason in the Gospel of Christ and the teaching of his apostles.⁴⁹ Thus, Odo contrasted Jewish sense perception in Jewish Scripture to Christian rational understanding in the Bible.

6. Peter Alfonsi

An example of a more sophisticated use of the Talmud against the Jews in Jewish-Christian debate occurred in the *Dialogus Petri et Moysi Judei* (*Dialogue with Peter and Moses the Jew*) (c.1108-1110) of Peter Alfonsi (c.1060-c.1140).⁵⁰ Peter wrote his disputation as an exchange between his former Jewish self, Moses and his present Christian state, with the main purpose of justifying his own conversion and forging a new rational

⁴³ See Sermon 5: PL 171, cols 806-811 and Sermon 7: PL 171, cols 813-814.

⁴⁴ PL 156, cols 489-528. See Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, pp. 81-83.

⁴⁵ PL 160, cols 1103-1112.

⁴⁶ PL 160, col. 1109.

⁴⁷ PL 160, cols 1111-1112.

⁴⁸ PL 160, col 1110.

⁴⁹ PL 160, cols 1111-1112.

⁵⁰ PL 157, cols 535-672. Tolan provides this date: J. Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi and His Medieval Readers*, University press of Florida, Gainesville, 1993, p. 13 n. 1.

basis for Christian theology. Unlike Odo, who criticised Jews' blind obedience to the Old Law, Peter took objection to the new heretical law of the Jews, the Talmud.⁵¹ In his determination to prove that his understanding of the Jewish Scriptures was superior to that even of the rabbis, he selected rabbinical exegeses from the Talmud and subjected them to scrutiny in light of their concurrence or otherwise with reason. Peter accused the rabbis of attributing to God a type of corporeality⁵² that was absurd to Peter, since God was the Creator himself and had not been created.⁵³ He demonstrated this by quoting a number of *aggadi* (narrative) sections of the Talmud which referred to God in anthropomorphic language. In one piece, for example, God is said to have wept over the captivity of the Jew.⁵⁴ Similarly, literal interpretation of biblical verses which referred to God's body, such as Exodus 33:23 ('you shall see my back parts: but my face you cannot see'), were considered to be false and at odds with reason.⁵⁵ Thus Peter relied on reason alone for a large part of his argumentation against Judaism.

However in the event that authority clashed with reason, Peter maintained that it was necessary to move away from the letter of the text and turn to allegory.⁵⁶ For example, when asked by Moses why the concept of the Incarnation did not destroy that of the Trinity, Peter answered that, like fire, one perceived light without heat and heat without light, even though both are integral components of fire.⁵⁷ In the same way, Peter continued, Christ the Son was incarnated without being separate in essence from the Father and the Holy Spirit. Moses then sought proof of this, and Peter provided proof from Scripture. Thus, unlike Anselm, Peter believed the Incarnation was not explicable by reason alone, although reason did not dispute it. His message here was twofold: firstly, that Christianity was more rational than Judaism and that the Jews were wrong to believe their rabbis when such teachings ran contrary to nature. Like Pseudo-William, Hildebert and Guibert, he looked to natural phenomena to explain Christian doctrine. Second, although Peter believed reason could prove the existence of the Creator and the Trinity, proof of the Incarnation was to be found in Scripture.⁵⁸ Thus, Peter Alfonsi perceived natural allegory within the concept of reason, which, in concert with the authority of Scripture, proved Christian truth.

⁵¹ Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, p. 12.

⁵² PL 157, col. 543; Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, pp. 22-23.

⁵³ PL 157, cols 553-560.

⁵⁴ PL 157, cols 541-550.

⁵⁵ PL 157, col. 541.

⁵⁶ PL 157, cols 552-553; see also Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, pp. 92 and 100.

⁵⁷ PL 157, cols 617-618; Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, p. 39.

⁵⁸ PL 157, cols 606-607; see Tolan, *Petrus Alfonsi*, pp. 39-40 and Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 92.

7. Rupert of Deutz

Rupert of Deutz (c.1075-1129) also used Scripture, namely the Bible, extensively in his *Anulus sive dialogus inter Christianum et Iudeum* (*Ring or Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew*) (c.1126).⁵⁹ Attributing the crime of killing Christ to the Jews, Rupert argued that this was carried out on account of the Jew's insatiable greed – not, as had traditionally been argued, out of their ignorance of his status as the Messiah.⁶⁰ But Rupert went further than merely attributing Christ's death to the Jews. In their eagerness to keep what they believed to be God's salvation for themselves, Jews were intentionally unwilling to accept the idea that Jesus Christ had come to save the whole of mankind.⁶¹ Thus, Rupert used the Bible to compare the idea of the universality of Christianity to the particularity of Judaism; explicit polemic, rather than reason, guided him.

The Anselmian tradition of anti-Jewish philosophical dialogue was manifest in a number of twelfth century texts. Peter Damian fell within the first stage of Funkenstein's classification, by his use of scriptural authority in an attempt to show Jews their theological errors. Gilbert Crispin exemplified both the first and second stages of Funkenstein's schema, using both scriptural authority and reason. Reason still relied on faith as setting the parameters for rational theological debate, which could allow only a pre-determined Christological conclusion. Pseudo-William of Champeaux, Hildebert of Lavardin and Guibert of Nogent extended reason as a polemical tool by citing examples from nature as demonstrative of Christians truths such as the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth; such analogies, however, relied upon Scripture for proof of their existence. Although Langmuir would seem to argue that twelfth century thinkers suppressed empirical evidence when faced with apparent incongruities between nature and faith, Pseudo-William and Hildebert seem instead to exhibit a desire to compare natural processes with central doctrines of the Church in a genuine belief in the similarity of the two.⁶² Employing different approaches, Odo of Cambrai, Peter Alfonsi and Rupert of Deutz contrasted Jewish and Christian Scriptural authority, concluding the superiority of the latter. Although perhaps reaching the third or fourth of Funkenstein's evolutionary stages, clearly their concerns were more with bolstering internal faith than with conversion.

⁵⁹ PL 170, cols 559-610; Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 119 n. 64; J. H. van Hengen, *Rupert of Deutz*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983, *passim*.

⁶⁰ J. Cohen, 'The Jews as the Killers of Christ in the Latin Tradition, from Augustine to the Friars', *Traditio*, vol. 39, 1983, pp. 1-16.

⁶¹ PL 170, cols 570-577; Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 121 n. 75.

⁶² G.I. Langmuir, *History, Religion and Antisemitism*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1990, pp. 275-305; G. I. Langmuir, *Towards a Definition of Antisemitism*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1990, pp. 100-183.

Thus, the use of reason by Abelard's contemporaries was varied: in the hands of some, it was not completely separate from Scriptural authority, particularly in the use of natural similes and the dependence on faith; in the hands of others, its use analysed the internal coherency of Jewish texts and distinguished them from Christian Scripture. Therefore, the examples I have used suggest that Abulafia's label of 'Christianised reason' does not adequately portray the complexity and variety of anti-Judaic writings in the dialogical genre. We shall now turn to Abelard's *Dialogue* to see if it, too, forms another 'variety' of the use of reason in the dialogical genre.

IV THE DIALOGUE

The *Dialogue* is made up of two distinct conversations, or *collationes* (conferences), one of a philosopher with a Jew, the second of a philosopher with a Christian. They are introduced by a preface in which the narrator, Abelard himself, describes how he dreamed that he was asked by three individuals to adjudicate their debate about which path to take to supreme truth.

1. The First Conference: the Philosopher and the Jew

In the first conference, Abelard sets up the debate between the Jew and the philosopher, not to establish the superiority of one position over the other, but in order to set out the rationale for Jewish observance of the Law and the arguments from reason that it was not essential to submit to these obligations.⁶³ As the dialogue unfolds, Abelard's place amongst his Anselmian contemporaries and their use of 'Christianised reason' becomes apparent.

The philosopher opens the first debate, echoing the concerns Odo expressed of the Jew Leo by asking of the Jew whether it was rationality or upbringing which led him to his faith.⁶⁴ The Jew concedes 'kin and custom' may have led Jews to their faith initially, but 'now reason rather than opinion keeps us here.'⁶⁵

a. *The Jew*

The Jew then explains that Jews keep their faith because their Law was given to them by God, and therefore it should not be disobeyed. He argues that it was reasonable to believe the Law was given by God because this cannot be refuted⁶⁶ and furthermore, it was reasonable that God saw fit to instruct and restrain malice amongst his people by fear of punishment, through a written law. Finally, he argues that the Jewish Law was older than any other law and so was likely to have been given by God.⁶⁷ The Jew

⁶³ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 27.

⁶⁴ *Dialogue*, pp. 23-25.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 31.

concludes on the less rational note that it was not right to question a people's motive for following a law given to them by God; either a specific accusation ought be levelled against the Law or else criticism must fail.⁶⁸ In further explanation of the reasons why Jews keep their faith, the Jew points to the rewards that should follow for the hardships undergone on God's behalf. These hardships include the social circumstances of the Jews, including their persecution by pagans and Christians through the ages and their observance of the precepts of the Law, especially circumcision.⁶⁹

Abelard's presentation of the Jew as an intelligent, reflective commentator employing reason shows a 'semi-enlightened tolerance' for the position of the Jews,⁷⁰ which the Jew highlights in a long description of their persecution at the hands of Christians and Muslims.⁷¹ It is unknown but probable that Abelard drew on his knowledge of contemporary Jewish practice and belief in depicting the position of Jews in the *Dialogue*. Unlike Guibert, Abelard did not seek to marginalise Jews as thieves on the basis of their practice of usury. No doubt he was aware of the circumstances which had forced Jews into money-lending, although Abelard's 'reason' for Jews not owning real property does not mention that they could not take the Christian oaths which were implicit in feudal or manorial tenure. Furthermore, his own recorded contacts with Judaism included once listening to a Jew commenting on the text of the Kings, and his appreciation of the Jewish point of view was highlighted by his recommendation to the sisters of the Paraclete that they learn Hebrew in order to better understand the Scriptures.⁷² In addition, his personal contacts with Jews at Paris indicate he had a certain knowledge of Hebrew.⁷³

Informal contacts between Jewish and Christian scholars were becoming increasingly frequent during this period, and an atmosphere of friendly argumentation is said to have existed.⁷⁴ Whilst Abelard may have had informal contacts with Jews along with other scholars of his era, however, there is little to suggest he was able to utilise Jewish authorities for the third and fourth evolutionary stages suggested by Funkenstein, namely using the Talmud both to criticise the Jewish beliefs and to

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 32-34.

⁷⁰ P.K. Spade, in Peter Abelard, *Ethical Writings: His Ethics or 'Know Yourself' and His Dialogue between a Philosopher, a Jew and a Christian*, P. K. Spade (tr.) and M. M. Adams (intro.), Hackett, Indianapolis, 1995, pp. vii-xxvi, xi.

⁷¹ *Dialogue*, p. 33.

⁷² B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1983, pp. 77-79.

⁷³ A. Grabois, 'The *Hebraica Veritas* and Jewish-Christian Intellectual Relations in the Twelfth Century', *Speculum*, vol. 50, 1975, pp. 613-634, 617 n. 20.

⁷⁴ C. Roth, 'European Jewry in the Dark Ages: A Revised Picture', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1950-1951, pp. 151-169; B. Hamilton, *Religion in the Medieval West*, Edward Arnold, London, 1986, pp. 145-146. See *supra* in my discussion of Gilbert Crispin under 'Some Twelfth century Influences'.

highlight the superiority of Christian truth. Indeed, the *Dialogue* does not appear to manifest an interest in Hebrew wording, or even in traditional Jewish biblical exegesis.⁷⁵

b. *The philosopher's response*

The philosopher responds by way of a lengthy dissertation as to why the Jewish Law is contrary to reason. His first argument is that there is no need for the Law when the natural law is sufficient. In addition, the precepts of the Jewish Law were imposed on the Jewish people despite the adequacy of the natural law to provide for salvation, without circumcision and other Jewish rites.⁷⁶ As will be seen in the second dialogue, this type of argument was unique in its focus on the natural law as a common denominator in Christianity and Judaism, while at the same time being an irrevocable divide between the two.

The philosopher's second argument focuses on the sacrament of circumcision and the lack of necessity for it. Abelard's philosopher argues that Abraham, one of the foremost Jewish patriarchs, merited the Promised Land and the multiplication of his seed by virtue of his obedience to God, which was demonstrated by his preparedness to sacrifice his son, rather than by the rite of circumcision.⁷⁷ In addition, circumcision was an irrational practice since its institution created the threat of damnation should someone be uncircumcised; a danger which did not previously exist.⁷⁸ This and the philosopher's previous argument recall Rupert of Deutz's argument that the particularistic outlook of Judaism, manifested by the sacrament of circumcision, forced them to deny the universal outlook of Christianity which offered even Jews – if they were open to its acceptance – salvation.⁷⁹ It also demonstrates a knowledge of the Torah, though not to the extent evident in Peter Alfonsi's polemics.

A third argument put forward by the philosopher was that the Lord promised the Jews an earthly reward only, rather than a spiritual reward in the form of beatitude.⁸⁰ Even if the Law granted earthly rewards, the philosopher continued, it was clear the Jews had not received such benefits, as testified by the Jew's soliloquy on the hardships his race had suffered. Accordingly, the logic of the philosopher persists, the Jews have either not obeyed their Law or the one who promised them the reward was in error.⁸¹ In addition, the philosopher observes that a close study of the Law, and even

⁷⁵ H. Leibeschutz, 'The Significance of Judaism in Peter Abelard's *Dialogus*', *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 12, nos. 1-2, 1961, pp. 1-18, 13.

⁷⁶ *Dialogue*, p. 37.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 33.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ Abulafia, *Christians and Jews*, p. 126.

⁸⁰ PL 156, cols 489-528.

⁸¹ *Dialogue*, p. 39.

the writings on Moses, makes no mention of a promise of beatitude, or non-earthly reward, for the observances of the Law.⁸²

The philosopher concludes his discussion of the irrationality of Jewish Law, in comparison to the natural law which preceded it, by pointing out that the 'works', or precepts of the Mosaic Law have, in any event, been lost, since the Jews have lost the Promised Land outside which they cannot fulfil the Law. This argument recalls the patristic anti-Judaic writings which justified the dispersal of the Jews as an eternal punishment for killing Christ, exemplified in Peter Damian's treatise and evident too in the polemic of Rupert of Deutz.⁸³

c. *The Jew's rebuttal*

The Jew responds to the philosopher by explaining the social and religious function of circumcision.⁸⁴ Although conceding that the natural law may be sufficient to make the Judaic Law unnecessary, he points out that circumcision and other precepts of the Law are useful in protecting the Jewish religion and in preventing evil.⁸⁵

The Jew, in addition, rebuts the conventional criticism that observance of the Law confers only material reward.⁸⁶ In fact the Law, by the sacrament of circumcision, provided for an eternal covenant between Jews and the Lord, an 'everlasting reward'.⁸⁷ Abelard's Jew explains that to pledge eternal beatitude to the Jews as they fled Egypt would have been superfluous, since they were a 'carnal and rebellious people' who were more convinced by material promises made by the Lord.⁸⁸ Furthermore, responding to the philosopher's argument that circumcision is confined only to 'those who are of Abraham's seed', the Jew observes that this sacrament extends also to 'those who were not of his stock', namely other Semitic races, such as Arabs.⁸⁹

Jolivet has suggested that Abelard's philosopher is himself an Arab, modelled on contemporary rationalist Mohammedan Ibn Badja (Avempace to the Latins) whose reputation was known to Peter the Venerable.⁹⁰ However, given that the *Dialogue* was probably written before this time, and the contrast in the type of material produced by the two scholars, Abelard is more likely to have obtained a knowledge of the characteristics of this Arab philosopher from other sources. Indeed, it appears he had a

⁸² *ibid.*, p. 40.

⁸³ See Cohen, 'Jews as the Killers of Christ', p. 3.

⁸⁴ *Dialogue*, pp. 45-46.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 53-55.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 58.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 51.

⁹⁰ Jolivet, 'Abélard et le philosophe (Occident et Islam au douzième siècle)', *Révue de l'histoire des religions*, vol. 164, 1963, pp. 181-189.

considerable knowledge of Arab learning (including medicine, astrology and philosophy) from other writers of that era.⁹¹

Finally, the Jew addresses the issue of the sufficiency of the natural law. In his opinion, 'the Law itself commands the perfect love of God and neighbour which you [the philosopher] claim comprises the natural law.'⁹² Thus he concludes the Law is perfect in its extension to love of neighbour and God and its sufficiency for salvific purposes. Here Abelard raises the argument that the essence of the Jewish Law is the same as the natural law of the philosophers, that is the precept of perfect love.⁹³

This is the last word of the Jew in his debate with the Christian. He has seemingly addressed the nub of the argumentation directed against his faith, although Leibeschutz argues that the Jew might have mentioned that the Law was meant to fit the Jewish nation for a special religious task, namely the conversion of all gentiles, and that their exclusivity was by way of a paradigmatic, rather than an exclusionary, example.⁹⁴ Such an omission may have been deliberate, as Abelard's philosopher would have had difficulty in countering this point.

d. *The philosopher's final word*

The philosopher again responds, but this time in a manner very different from his previous reply. Dealing with the alleged perfection of the Jewish Law, the philosopher refutes this on the basis that additions had been made to the Law, particularly in respect of matters having a clear utility.⁹⁵ Abelard foreshadows the discussion of the degrees of virtue in the second dialogue, when the philosopher questions the rationality of a Law which proscribes any action which is more or less than the command of Moses and therefore ostensibly provides that all who observe it are equal in merit. Furthermore, if indeed the Jewish Law was perfect, there would be no need for the purification of sins through sacrifices or the external works.⁹⁶

Here Abelard is harking back to arguments concerning the carnality and sensuality of the Jews that had been raised by such polemicists as Rupert of Deutz and Gilbert Crispin. His philosopher, like Rupert and Gilbert, criticises such beliefs on the basis of reason, not authority. For what sin does a man incur from suffering a flow of semen? asks the philosopher. Or what sin does a woman commit in giving birth? The Jewish Law deems such acts unclean, and so, the philosopher concludes, the precepts of the Law relating to purification are 'more adapted to a certain respectability of this life than to the salvation of the soul'.⁹⁷ In addition, obvious 'sins', such as murder or

⁹¹ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 41.

⁹² *Dialogue*, p. 56.

⁹³ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 33.

⁹⁴ Leibeschutz, 'The Significance of Judaism', p. 6.

⁹⁵ *Dialogue*, pp. 66-67.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 69.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 70.

adultery, are punishable by death, rather than providing the chance for salvation. The philosopher's discussion of sin here lacks the distinction between a will to sin, which was not itself sinful, and the deliberate consent to such a will, which was sinful in the *Ethics*.⁹⁸ Its absence is explicable on the basis that the aim of the *Dialogue* is not so much psychological as doctrinal.

Finally, the philosopher confirms his earlier view that the Jewish Law promises no concept of eternal beatitude. He ends the first conference with a statement that, even if the Law was received from God, its unchanging nature ill-equips it to deal with the meaning of virtues discussed in moral philosophy.⁹⁹ Implicitly, this last point is fatal to the Jew's case, as the absence of a system of promising eternal beatitude can in no way satisfy the philosopher's quest for supreme truth. Thus Abelard has presented Judaism as a pre-philosophic religion which precedes the stage of the perfect revelation of Christianity.

Abelard has used reason, through the mouthpiece of the philosopher, to demonstrate that Judaism has no rational basis. His use of reason is, however, less 'Christianised', in the sense of conforming to institutional orthodoxy, than a searching and detailed quest for the supreme truth.

2. The Second Conference: the Philosopher and the Christian

In the second conference, Abelard investigates the relationship between the discipline of ethics, which is the concern of philosophers that deals with how the supreme good is to be attained, and divinity, which is the concern of Christians and deals with the supreme good itself.¹⁰⁰

This part of the *Dialogue* pursues more fully the idea that philosophers and Christians share a common commitment to reason, in contrast to Judaism. Abelard, through the protagonists of the philosopher and the Christian, identifies Christianity as a truly rational religion and rebuts those who considered that the Christian faith precludes rational inquiry. The philosopher takes the opportunity to contrast what he perceives as the reasoned approach of Christianity with the sensuality of the Jews: 'Surely the Jews alone, since they are animals and sensual and are imbued with no philosophy whereby they are able to discuss reasoned arguments, are moved to faith only by the miracles of external deeds...'.¹⁰¹

In addition, the philosopher criticises those who seek solace for their lack of skill, by adopting Pope Gregory's saying: 'Faith has no merit for which human reason

⁹⁸ D. E. Luscombe (ed.), *Peter Abelard's Ethics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, p. 14.

⁹⁹ *Dialogue*, pp. 64-71. R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, vol. 1 *Foundations*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, p. 115.

¹⁰⁰ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 27. See the introduction by Adams in Peter Abelard, *Ethical Writings*, pp. vii-xxvi.

¹⁰¹ *Dialogue*, p. 78.

offers proof.¹⁰² So too, the Christian in the *Dialogue* fully agrees with the complaints of the philosopher concerning those who refuse to reason about their beliefs.¹⁰³ This echoes a theme Abelard reinforced in the revised introduction to the second book of his *Theology of the 'Schoolmen'*.¹⁰⁴ In that work, as in the *Dialogue*,¹⁰⁵ Abelard pointed out that if Gregory's axiom meant that rational inquiry into faith was not permissible, there would logically be no place for the Christian to provide any kind of response or criticism relating to a matter of faith. In addition, the philosopher echoes passages in the prologue to *Yes and No* which criticise blind reliance on the judgments of others as authoritative:

In every philosophical disputation authority is thought to hold last place or no place at all to such an extent that it is shameful for those who trust in their own powers and scorn the refuge of another's wealth, to adduce arguments based on judgment of a matter [extrinsic judgment], namely on authority.¹⁰⁶

Thus, Abelard is arguing not so much for toleration, as for the cause of rational discussion.

V THE SINGULARITY OF ABELARD

The major difference between the debates in Abelard's *Dialogue* and those in earlier dialogues lies in the role of the philosopher. Whilst refusing to use the philosopher merely to point out the truth of the Christian position, as in the Anselmian dialogues, Abelard has him elicit truth from different points of view.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, by not placing the Jew and Christian in direct opposition in the same dialogue, Abelard avoided the anti-Jewish dialogue genre exemplified by Gilbert Crispin and subsequent *adversus Judaeos* dialogues. Furthermore, the method Abelard employs is the dialectical paradigm set out in his preface to *Yes and No*, where apparently contradictory statements were gathered together for appraisal by the reader, with the sole admonition that no rash judgment be made about them.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² *ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁰⁴ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 35.

¹⁰⁵ *Dialogue*, pp. 80-81.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 83. On the outmodedness of the argument from authority in the twelfth century, see C. Radding, *A World Made by Men: Cognition and Society, 400-1200*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1985, pp. 204-206, 256.

¹⁰⁷ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 31.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Abelard, *Sic et Non*, B. Boyer and R. McKeon (eds), University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1976-1977, p. 89ff.

The *Dialogue* also demonstrates how Abelard constructed his argument in the form of an open-ended dialogue. The method of argument he employed militated against any final solution. This lack of a firm conclusion is characteristic of his thought, and is evident in his *Theology of the 'Schoolmen'*, in which he states that he was not expounding truth, but 'the sense of our opinion'.¹⁰⁹ Also in the *Sic et Non* Abelard encourages the student to regard uncertainty as a challenge: 'for by doubting we come to inquire, and by inquiring we perceive the truth'.¹¹⁰ Judgment on the questions under debate is left to the reader, rather than being imposed by Abelard himself. This open-ended quality of Abelard's work contrasted sharply with Anselm of Laon and William of Champeaux, who were celebrated for providing definitive opinions on a wide range of doctrinal questions; and who did not review the wide range of texts and ideas which Abelard dealt with in his dialogue. Nonetheless, Abelard's underlying intellectual concerns were fundamentally the same as those of Anselm and Crispin: to lay out a rational framework indicating the authority of Christian doctrine.¹¹¹ Thus, although Abelard was never explicitly concerned with the right of alternative groups to hold dissenting views, he was prepared to enter into dialogue beyond the traditional norms defined by Christian culture; that is, he dared to engage in dialogue which questioned, and possibly threatened, fundamental Christian doctrine.

The subject matter dealt with by Abelard provides a clear example of how this greater preparedness for dialogue resulted in more penetrating debate than that of his contemporaries. Anselm and Gilbert Crispin never questioned traditional assumptions about the sinfulness of human nature.¹¹² In his *Why the God Man*, Anselm allowed Boso to voice his disagreement with the notion that the devil enjoyed legitimate rights over mankind but without questioning the reality of this bondage.¹¹³ Abelard's initial assumption in the *Dialogue*, in contrast with the traditional view of Augustine, was that humans were not flawed by original sin.¹¹⁴ Thus, the ethical precepts of the Jewish Law were fundamentally the same as those of the natural law observed by the philosopher.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, Abelard's treatment of sin had the effect of including the Jew in the dialogue, rather than excluding him from it, and so ensuring discussion continued past the point of 'safety', in respect to Christian doctrinal debate.

In addition, the Jewish-Christian disputes of Gilbert Crispin and other Anselmians were preoccupied with demystifying the doctrine of the Incarnation against rational doubt, whilst Abelard's overwhelming concern was with the supreme good.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 42.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 39.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ Anselm, *Anselm of Canterbury*, pp. 76-81.

¹¹⁴ St Augustine, *City of God*, H. Bettenson (tr.), Penguin, London, 1986, p. 689.

¹¹⁵ Mews, 'Peter Abelard', p. 39.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

Accordingly, Abelard drew together the common ground that was the goal of philosopher, Jew and Christian alike, namely the goal of understanding the supreme good.

Abelard's belief in the capacity of rational discussion to arrive at a greater understanding of any subject, in particular the differences between Jews, Christians and pagans, demonstrates his enthusiasm for the process of dialogue. Although often remembered by his critics for his mastery of dialectic in public disputation, it would be incorrect to think that he saw dialectic as an end in itself. As the *Dialogue* attempts to demonstrate, dialectic was a tool in the service of truth.¹¹⁷ This paper has provided an analysis of certain Jewish-Christian writings in the first half of the twelfth century in Western Europe. Like other writers in the Anselmian tradition, Abelard sought to lay out a rational framework indicating the authority of Christian doctrine. Yet the *Dialogue* exhibits unique characteristics which distinguish it from the use of 'Christianised reason' described by Abulafia and make it another 'variety' of reason in anti-Judaic dialogues. Thus, although Abelard's *Dialogue* seeks to elicit truth from a synthesis of philosophy and Christian belief, this 'reason' is open-ended, militating against a final answer, and it questions traditional Christian doctrine. Abelard's work distinguished itself by its realisation that the search for truth was without end.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* p. 42.

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