

## THE LATIN TALMUD AND ITS TRANSLATORS *Thibaud de Sézanne vs. Nicholas Donin?*\*

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The translation of hundreds of Talmudic passages known as the *Extractiones de Talmud*, which belongs to the context of the Paris disputation in 1240, is one of the most outstanding textual witnesses to Christian-Jewish polemic during the Middle Ages. The first to draw attention to the *Extractiones de Talmud* and the materials that accompany it was Isidore Loeb.<sup>1</sup> In a series of articles entitled “La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud,” he analysed the different components of the most important of the manuscripts that preserve the text, namely ms. lat. 16558 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. To this, Chen Merchavia added a detailed examination of the Latin Talmud, identifying all its Talmudic passages, which are drawn, for the most part, from the Bavli.<sup>2</sup> However, many questions remain regarding this groundbreaking document and its history, such as its authorship. Recently this issue has been tackled by Gilbert Dahan, who in a very inspiring article argues for the converted Dominican Thibaud de Sézanne as one of the translators of the Talmudic corpus, categorically discarding at the same time Nicholas Donin because of his allegedly low intellectual profile.<sup>3</sup> In this paper I would like to revise this thesis, which has been generally accepted in modern scholarship.<sup>4</sup> I will therefore first present Dahan’s argument; secondly I will offer a different interpretation of his proof-text. Then I will test my interpretation against a further sample of texts which are not discussed by Dahan. The result will be a novel account of the different phases of the translation process of the Latin Talmud and of the complex relations among the various components of the Paris manuscript.

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<sup>1</sup> I. Loeb, “La controverse de 1240 sur le Talmud,” *Revue des études juives* 1 (1880), pp. 247-261; 2 (1881), pp. 248-270; 3 (1881), pp. 39-57.

<sup>2</sup> C. Merchavia, *The Church Versus Talmudic and Midrashic Literature (500-1248)* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Bialik, 1970), in particular pp. 364-418.

<sup>3</sup> G. Dahan, “Les traductions latines de Thibaud de Sézanne,” in Id. - É. Nicolas (eds.), *Le brûlement du Talmud à Paris 1242-1244* (Paris: Cerf, 1999), pp. 95-120, see also Id., “Un dossier latin de textes de Rashi autour de la controverse de 1240,” *Revue des études juives* 151 (1992), pp. 321-336.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., R. Chazan in J. Friedman - J. Connell Hoff - Id., *The Trial of the Talmud: Paris, 1240* (Toronto: PIMS, 2012), p. 17.

1. *The Starting Point: Avoda Zara, 3b*

In order to substantiate his argument in favour of Thibaud de Sézanne, Gilbert Dahan compares a passage from Avoda Zara 3b in the Latin Talmud with the same passage taken from the *Pharetra fidei* which is attributed to Thibaud.<sup>5</sup> The passage in question, which deals with God's occupation during the twelve hours of the day, reads as follows in these two texts:

Latin Talmud	Thibaud's <i>Pharetra</i>
Dicit rbi Iuda: .xii. horae sunt diei.	Quaerit Avenay: Rabi Iuda, quid sit opus Dei? Respondit Iudas: Horae diei .xii. sunt.
In tribus primis sedet Deus et studet in lege.	Primis tribus horis sedet Deus et studet in Talmud.
In tribus secundis sedet et iudicat totum mundum. Et quando videt quod totus mundus reus est, <u>gallice audecot</u> , surgit a sede iudicii et residet super sedem misericordiae.	Secundis tribus horis sedet prae duabus sedibus et iudicat totum mundum. Et cum videt mundum condemnatum, surgit a sede iustitiae et sedet in sede misericordiae.
In tribus aliis sedet et pascit <u>vel regit</u> totum mundum, a cornibus bubalorum usque ad ova pedicularum <u>vel a rinocerote usque ad pulices</u> .	Tertiis tribus horis sedet et pascit totum mundum, de rinoceronte usque ad pulicem.
In tribus ultimis sedet et ludit cum Leviathan, sicut scriptum est: "Draco iste quem creasti ad ludendum in eo" [Ps 103:26].	Quartis tribus horis sedet et ludit cum Leviathan, sicut dicit psalmus: "Draco iste quem formasti ad illudendum ei" [Ps 103:26]. [...]
Quaerit rbi Aha a rab Naaman: A tempore destructionis domus sanctuarii, a quo non fuit risus coram Deo – unde habetur hoc, sicut scriptum est: "Et vocavit Dominus, Deus exercituum, in die illa ad fletum et ad planctum" [Isa 22:12] –, quid facit in tribus quartis ultimis horis?	Item dicit rabi Aha ad rabi Naaman: Scito quod non fuit risus coram Deo a tempore desertionis templi. Vnde Isaias .xxii.: "Vocabit Deus in die illa ad fletum et planctum et calvitium et ad cingulum sacci" [Isa 22:12] [...]

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. Dahan, "Traductions latines," pp. 104-106. For the *Pharetra* see also C. Cardelle de Hartmann, "Drei Schriften mit dem Titel 'Pharetra fidei'," *Aschkenas* 11 (2001), pp. 327-349, and Ead., "El *Dialogus pro ecclesia contra synagogam* impreso por Pablo Hurus: autoría, fecha y transmisión manuscrita," *Sefarad* 62 (2000), pp. 3-19.

<p>Sedet et docet pueros de domo magistri, <u>id est qui decesserunt dum adhuc doce- rentur parvuli</u>, sicut scriptum est: “Quem docebit scientiam et quem intelligere faci- et audire? Ablactatos a lacte, avulsos ab uberibus.” [Isa 28:9]<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>Item quaerit rabi Isaac a rabi Iuda: Quid facit Deus ne tristetur? Et respondit: Sedet et docet in Talmud eos qui moriun- tur parvuli et indocti.<sup>7</sup></p>
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As Dahan points out, the two texts reveal striking similarities, among which one can highlight the expression “de rinocero(n)te usque ad pulicem/s,” i.e. God feeds all of creation, from the smallest to the largest of its creatures. The Talmud, as it has come down to us, does not speak of rhinoceroses and fleas, but of “the horned buffalo” (מִקְרָנִי רֵאמִים) and “the brood of louses” (בִּיצֵי כְנִים), i.e. the alternative translation given by the Latin Talmud translation, which is the standard rendering in later Latin Talmud translations too, as that by Ramon Martí.<sup>8</sup>

This apparently unique translation, which is underscored in the Paris manuscript along with other expressions, may indeed be considered strong philological evidence for the mutual dependence of the Latin Talmud and Thibaud’s *Pharetra*. Yet, a closer look at the Paris manuscript and the other texts it contains shows that this is a premature conclusion. One should recall that the Paris manuscript offers two versions of the Latin Talmud translation: first, the one from which Dahan’s quote is taken, which is arranged by the purportedly blasphemous doctrines, and, second, one which follows the order of the Talmudic tractates themselves.<sup>9</sup> For the sake of brevity I shall call the first of these the thematic and the second the sequential translation.

As Isidore Loeb has stated, a codicological analysis of the Paris manuscript suggests that the thematic translation was added to the codex;<sup>10</sup> for this reason, as well as for the logical sequence of the two versions, it seems

<sup>6</sup> MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558, f. 16va-b. The underscoring in this and the following quotations is from the manuscript.

<sup>7</sup> MS Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, 1530, f. 57v.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the same passage in R. Martini, *Pugio fidei... cum observationibus Josephi de Voisin, et introductione Jo. Benedicti Carpovi...* (Lipsiae: Lanckisch, 1687, reprint Farnborough: Gregg, 1967), p. 930: “Dixit R. Iuda, dixit Rab: Duodecim horae sunt in die; tribus primis sedet sanctus benedictus, et exercet se in lege. Secundis sedet, et iudicat totum mundum; postquam vero videt, quod totus mundus reus est in iudicio, descendit a solio iudicii, et sedet super solum misericordiae. Tertiis sedet, et cibatur totum mundum a cornibus unicornium usque ad lentes pediculorum. Quartis sedet, et ludit cum leviathan, sicut dictum est Ps. 104, v. 26: ‘Leviathanem istum formasti, ut ludas cum ipso.’” For a useful concordance of Talmudic passages in the *Extractiones* and the *Pugio*, see C. Merchavia, “*Pugio fidei*: An Index of Citations,” in A. Mirsky - A. Grossman - Y. Kaplan (eds.), *Exile and Diaspora. Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Hebrew; Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute/Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 203-234.

<sup>9</sup> The two versions fill ff. 1ra-96ra and 97ra-206rb, respectively, of MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558.

<sup>10</sup> Loeb, “Controverse,” 1 (1880), p. 249. An *in situ* inspection of the manuscript in Paris has confirmed Loeb’s view.

highly plausible to consider the sequential Talmud translation first in time. For our purpose this means that the comparison between the Latin Talmud and the *Pharetra*, as we have just drawn it, is methodologically weak and needs to be repeated on the basis of the sequential translation.

## 2. *The Translation of Avoda Zara 3b Revisited*

If we turn our attention to the sequential translation of the Talmud, the passage from Avoda Zara 3b presents itself in a different light:

Dicit rby Iuda: .xii. horae sunt diei. In tribus primis sedet sanctus – benedictus sit ipse – et studet in lege. In secundis tribus sedet et iudicat totum mundum. Quando videt quod totus mundus reus est, surgit a sede iudicii et sedet super sedem misericordiae. In tribus aliis sedet et pascit totum mundum, *a cornibus bubalorum usque ad ova pediculorum*. In tribus ultimis sedet et ludit cum leviathan, sicut scriptum est: “Draco iste quem formasti ad ludendum in eo” [Ps 103:26]. Dicit rab Naaman: A die qua templum destructum fuit, non fuit risus coram Deo. Vnde habetur hoc, quia scriptum est: “Et vocavit Dominus, Deus exercituum, in die illa ad fletum” etc. [Isa 22:12]. In tribus ergo ultimis, quid facit? Sedet et docet pueros, sicut scriptum est: “Quem docebit scientiam? Quem intelligere faciet auditum? Ablactatos a lacte, avulsos ab uberibus.” [Isa 28:9]<sup>11</sup>

At least two observations apply to this original rendering of Avoda Zara, 3b as compared to its rendering in the thematic translation: in the first place the translation “de rinocero(n)te usque ad pulicem/s” does not appear in the original sequential translation, which instead offers the standard rendering “a cornibus bubalorum usque ad ova pediculorum”. Thus, the most striking coincidence between the Latin Talmud translation and Thibaud’s *Pharetra* does not hold for the original Latin Talmud. This raises the question as to the origin of this peculiar translation. In order to give an answer to this question, a second observation is pertinent: for not only is “de rinocero(n)te usque ad pulicem/s” absent from the sequential Latin Talmud, but also other expressions are missing or differ in this translation, in particular all those which appear as underlined in the thematic translation, i.e. the vernacular gloss “gallice audecot” explaining the Latin “reus est,” and the additions “vel regit” and “id est qui decesserunt dum adhuc docerentur parvuli”. It seems plausible to maintain that the differences between the two Talmud translations contained in the Paris manuscript go back to a common source; and as a matter of fact this common source is not difficult to identify, since it is included as well in the Paris manuscript, namely in its second part, which gathers the 35 Articles

<sup>11</sup> MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558, f. 186ra. Italics in this and the following quotations are mine.

against the Talmud that Nicholas Donin had sent in the late 1230s to Pope Gregory IX, as well as further materials.<sup>12</sup>

The passage from Avoda Zara 3b is neatly translated in Article 22 of Nicholas's list, which addresses the alleged error that according to the Jews "God engages every day in study, teaching children who die without being instructed in such knowledge". Here we read:

Hoc legitur in Iessuhot, in macecta de Avoza zara quod interpretatur servitium peregrinum, in primo perec, ubi dicitur: .xii. horae sunt diei. In tribus primis sedet Deus et myaude, id est studet, in lege; in tribus secundis sedet et iudicat totum mundum; quando videt quod totum saeculum reum est, gallice audecoz, surgit a sede iustitiae et sedet in sede misericordiae; in tertiis sedet et regit, id est pascit, totum saeculum *a rinoceronte usque ad pulices*; in quartis sedet et ludit cum leviathan, sicut dicitur in psalmo: "Leviathan istum creasti ad ludendum in eo" [Ps 103:26]. Quærit Aha a rab Nahaman: A tempore desertionis templi, a quo non fuit risus coram Domino? Sicut dicit rby Isaac: Sicut scriptum est: "Et vocavit Dominus, Deus exercituum, in die illa ad fletum et ad planctum" etc. [Isa 22:12]. In tribus quartis horis quid facit? Sedet et docet pueros de domo magistri, id est qui decedunt dum docerentur adhuc parvuli, sicut scriptum est: "Quem docebit scientiam et quem intelligere faciet auditum? Ablactatos a lacte et fortes ab uberibus." [Isa 28:9]<sup>13</sup>

Nicholas Donin's rendering seems in fact to be at the origin of the translation "de rinocero(n)te usque ad pulicem/s,"<sup>14</sup> which, absent from the sequential translation, is introduced as a doublet in the thematic translation. Also many of the remaining differences between the thematic and the sequential translation of the Talmud can be accounted for on the grounds of Nicholas's rendering, among them the vernacular paraphrase "gallice audecoz" or "audecot," the addition "vel regit" and the explanation concerning infant death. There are even parallels in the underlining of some of these terms. This is by no means an isolated case: as a matter of fact, many passages which feature in both Talmud translations as well as in Nicholas's list of errors occur in the very same way, that is, the thematic translation tends to add material to the sequential translation, which is taken from Nicholas's list. The following text from Yevamot 63a is but one example among many.

<sup>12</sup> Nicholas's list features on ff. 211va-217vb of MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558. Folia 224va-230rb contain translations of glosses by Rashi, ff. 230vb-231va, the so-called "confessions" of two French rabbis from the Talmud trial, etc.

<sup>13</sup> MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558, f. 215va-b. The text has been edited in Loeb, "Controverse," 3 (1881), p. 44. A modern English translation can be consulted in Friedman, *Trial*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>14</sup> He may have been inspired by the Vulgate: Job 39:9 translates "רִנּוֹס" as "rinoceros". I owe this observation to Ursula Ragacs.

The sequential translation has:

Dicit rby Eleazar: Quid est hoc quod scriptum est: “Hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis et caro de carne mea”? [Gen 2:23] Per hoc potestis discere quod Adam coiit cum omnibus animalibus domesticis et silvestribus et non refriguit animus eius donec Eva fuit ei data.<sup>15</sup>

For which the thematic translation has:

Dicit rby Eleazar: Quid est: “Hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis et caro de carne mea”? [Gen 2:23] Docet quod venit super omne animal domesticum et feram, id est coiit cum illis, nec refriguit animus eius donec Eva fuit ei parata. Glossa Salomonis: Hoc nunc, ergo aliis vicibus servivit, id est coiit, et non ascenderunt in animum eius.<sup>16</sup>

Again, the substantial differences of both versions can be explained very satisfactorily by considering Nicholas’s list, Article 34 of which reads as follows:

Dicentes Adam cum omnibus brutis et serpentem cum Eva coisse. De Adam legitur in libro Nassym, in macecta levamot, ibi dicit rby Eleazar: Quid est quod scriptum est: “Hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis et caro de carne mea”? [Gen 2:23] Docet quod venit super omne animal et feram, nec fuit refrigidatus eius animus donec fuit ei parata Eva. Glossa Salomonis: Hoc nunc, ergo aliis vicibus servivit, coiit cum illis, et non ascenderunt in animum eius, id est non placuerunt ei.<sup>17</sup>

The vague phrase “Per hoc potestis discere quod Adam coiit...” from the sequential translation is replaced in the thematic translation by the more assertive “Docet quod venit super omne animal domesticum et feram, id est coiit cum illis” from Nicholas, “Eva data” becomes “Eva parata,” as in Nicholas, and the gloss by Rashi from Nicholas is incorporated into the thematic Talmud translation as well. Again, there are coincidences in the underlining in Nicholas’s list and the thematic translation of the Talmud.

It is obvious, therefore, that the thematic translation of the Talmud was prepared by someone who compared the original sequential version with the 35 Articles by Nicholas Donin. He emulated Donin’s model by rearranging the sequential Talmud translation according to subjects of controversy, just as Nicholas had done, while incorporating at the same time material from Donin’s list into the thematic Talmud translation that he was putting

<sup>15</sup> MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558, f. 197ra.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibi*, f. 70ra.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibi*, f. 217va-b. Also in Loeb, “Controverse,” 3 (1881), p. 54. English translation in Friedman, *Trial*, p. 120.

together. This relation among the two Talmud translations and Nicholas's list rules out, in my opinion, the possible authorship of the Talmud translation by Thibaud de Sézanne, since the textual similarities that exist between his *Pharetra* and the thematic translation of the Talmud must ultimately be traced back to Nicholas's list, in particular the translation "de rinocero(n)te usque ad pulicem/s," which features both in the *Pharetra* and the thematic translation, while it is absent from the original sequential translation. Moreover, Nicholas's list also accounts for some differences that Dahan identified between the thematic translation and the *Pharetra*,<sup>18</sup> such as, for instance, the fact that the Talmud translation speaks of "destructio domus" where the *Pharetra* gives "desertio templi" along with Nicholas, and that "sedes iudicii" from the Talmud translation appears as "sedes iustitiae" in both the *Pharetra* and the 35 Articles.

### 3. A Test Case: The Translation of *Hullin 60b*

In support of my argument I shall present and discuss another Talmudic passage which features likewise in the Latin Talmud, in the *Pharetra* and in Nicholas's list, namely *Hullin 60b*, where God, having created the sun and the moon, tells the latter to reduce its size, and immediately afterwards asks for atonement for his decision.

Latin Talmud (sequ.)	Thibaud's <i>Pharetra</i>	Nicholas, Article 15
<p>Dicit rby Simeon: Scriptum est: "Et fecit Deus duo magna luminaria," et iterum: "Lumen maius" et "lumen minus" [Gen 1:16]. Dixit luna coram sancto, benedictus sit ipse: Domine saeculi, <i>non decet duos reges servire uni coronae</i>.<sup>19</sup> Dixit ei Deus: Vade, minora te ipsam. Respondit luna: Domine saeculi, quia dixi coram te verbum decens, minorabo me? Dixitque Deus: Vade et praesis diei et nocti.</p>	<p><i>Asserunt etiam Dominum multum peccasse</i>, sicut legitur in Cezer Cazassym, id est in tertio, super hoc verbo Gen. I: "Fecit Deus duo luminaria magna" [Gen 1:16], id est solem et lunam. Igitur dicit rabbi Anaya: Dixit luna coram Deo: <i>Est possibile duobus regibus uti una corona</i>, id est mihi et soli una gloria? Dicit ei Deus: Vade, minora te ipsam. Dicit luna: Domine Deus, numquid quia dixi hoc verbum mi-</p>	<p><u><i>Asserunt etiam Dominum peccasse. Hoc legitur in Kazassym, in macecta Sirassim, in perec Illu terefod, id est istae raptae.</i></u> Scriptum est: "Fecit Deus duo magna luminaria," et scriptum est: "Luminare magnum" et "luminare parvum" [Gen 1:16]. Dixit luna coram sancto, benedictus sit ipse, <u>coram Deo</u>: Domine saeculi, <i>est possibile duobus regibus quod serviant uni coronae?</i> Dixit ei Deus: Vade</p>

<sup>18</sup> Cfr. Dahan, "Traductions latines," p. 105.

<sup>19</sup> Cfr. Matt 6,24: "Nemo potest duobus dominis servire." Cfr. Luke 16:13.

Quae ait: <i>Domine saeculi, quae utilitas est candelae in die?</i> <sup>20</sup>	norabo me? Dicit ei Deus: Vade et praesis nocti. Dicit luna: <i>Quid valet candela in meridie?</i> <sup>21</sup>	et minora te ipsam. Dixit coram eo: Domine saeculi, quia dixi coram te verbum decens, minorabo me? Dixit ei Deus: Vade et praesis diei et nocti. Dixit ei: <i>Quid valor candelae ad meridiem?</i> <sup>22</sup>
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Most remarkable is the fact that both the *Pharetra* and Nicholas place this translation under the same heading, namely that the Jews affirm that God sinned: Nicholas's "Asserunt etiam Dominum peccasse" is vigorously echoed by Thibaud's "Asserunt etiam Dominum multum peccasse," which is absent from the sequential Talmud translation. Also, the moon's claim that two kings should not serve one crown is formulated in both Nicholas's and Thibaud's text as a question: "Est possibile...?," whereas in the Latin Talmud it appears phrased differently, that is, as an affirmation: "Non decet...". And finally, the rendering of the very last sentence shows important verbal coincidences between the *Pharetra* and Nicholas's list as against the Latin Talmud: Nicholas's list as well as the *Pharetra* use forms of "valor"/"valere" as against "utilitas" in the Latin Talmud, and "meridies" as against "dies".

It is certainly true that in this passage there also exist parallelisms between Nicholas's list and the Talmud translation, such as the expressions "verbum decens" and "praesis diei (et nocti)".<sup>23</sup> In fact in the margin of the sequential translation we find an addition from the same hand that wrote the text itself; it reads: "blasphemia in macecta Sirassim, in perec Illu terefod,

<sup>20</sup> MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558, f. 205va.

<sup>21</sup> MS München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 16061, f. 131ra-b. This text from the *Pharetra* is discussed in Cardelle de Hartmann, "Drei Schriften," p. 332.

<sup>22</sup> MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558, f. 214vb. Also in Loeb, "Controverse," 3 (1881), p. 39. English translation in Friedman, *Trial*, p. 120.

<sup>23</sup> Ramon Martí's and Jerónimo de Santa Fe's translations may be compared; both show that these renderings are by no means the only ones possible. The *Pugio*, p. 931, has: "R. Simeon filius Passi obiecit: scriptum est Genes. 1, v. 16: 'Et fecit Deus duo luminaria magna'; et scriptum est ibidem: 'Et luminare minus'. Dixit luna coram facie Dei sancti benedicti, domine mundi: Estne possibile ut duo reges utantur una corona? Dixit ei Deus sanctus benedictus, ito, et minorare. Dixit coram facie eius: Domine mundi, quare, cum dixerim coram te verbum rectum, minorabor? Dixit ei: Et ad gubernandum in die et nocte. Quale dominium? Lucernae in meridie quae utilitas?" Jerónimo's *De iudaicis erroribus ex Talmut* reads: "Supra illud Genesis: 'Fecitque Deus duo luminaria magna', dicit Rabbi Simon: In hora creationis, aequales erant sol et luna; sed venit luna coram Deo, dicens: Domine, numquid bonum est quod duobus regibus uno diademate serviat? Et Deus dixit: Vade, minora te ipsam. Et ipsa: Dominus Deus, quia rationabiliter locuta sum, ideo iubet minorari me? Et sic in maxima maestitia posita est." M. Orfali, *El tratado "De iudaicis erroribus ex Talmut" de Jerónimo de Santa Fe: Introducción general, estudio y análisis de las fuentes* (PhD dissertation; Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1983), p. 126 (for a concordance of talmudic passages in the *Extractiones*, the *Pugio* and the *De iudaicis erroribus* see pp. 254-256).



id est istae raptae,” i.e. the bibliographical reference provided by Nicholas at the beginning of his text. This reference as well as the coincidences between Nicholas and the Talmud translation suggest that at this place Nicholas’s list was consulted already when writing down the sequential translation of the Talmud.<sup>24</sup> Since both the *Pharetra* and the Talmud translations are drawing here on Nicholas’s as a common source, the relation between the three texts is complex. This notwithstanding, the shared elements of Nicholas’s and Thibaud’s texts, such as the common heading, which distinguish both texts from the sequential translation of the Talmud, clearly establish the dependence of the *Phartera* on Nicholas’s list, and rule out the possibility that the *Pharetra* is drawing on the Talmud translation. Thus, also this second example shows that there is no evidence to make of Thibaud de Sézanne the author of the Latin Talmud. The two texts from the *Pharetra* that have been scrutinized, Avoda Zara 3b and Hullin 60b, turn out to be much closer to Nicholas’s list than to the Latin Talmud. Of course Thibaud may have used different sources for his *Pharetra*, which he probably also compared with the original text of the Talmud, but one can hardly recognize in him the translator of the Latin Talmud.

#### 4. Conclusion: Nicholas Donin, Translator of the Talmud

While the examination above has shown that the author of the *Pharetra* cannot be credited with the Latin Talmud translation, it leads at the same time to reconsidering the role of Nicholas Donin. As the two examples from Avoda Zara 3b and Hullin 60b evidence, both the sequential Talmud translation and its subsequent thematic rearrangement display additions and modification which go back to Nicholas’s list, or at least clear reminiscences thereof. Hence it is evident that the Talmud translation was compared with Nicholas’s list: this was done in a more cursory manner already for the sequential translation, and in a very systematic one, either by the same person or by someone else, for the thematic translation, which incorporates material not only from Nicholas’s list but also from the section of Rashi’s quotations from the second part of the Paris manuscript.<sup>25</sup> This collation fits very well the much-

<sup>24</sup> The thematic translation is of little help in this case, since it abbreviates the passage and refers the reader to the Talmudic tract in the sequential translation.

<sup>25</sup> For instance, on f. 32vb of the thematic translation where the following gloss by Rashi from f. 224vb is included: “Dicit Salomon in glossis suis quod Deus creavit totum mundum in duabus litteris nominis sui, quod est IA.” It is missing from the sequential translation, f. 205va. For the glosses, see in addition to Dahan, “Dossier latin,” P. Capelli, “Rashi nella controversia parigina sul Talmud del 1240,” in M. Milani - M. Zappella (eds.), *Ricerzare la sapienza di tutti gli antichi (Sir 39,1). Miscellanea in onore di Gian Luigi Prato* (Bologna: Ed. Dehoniane, 2013), pp. 441-448, and G. Hasselhoff, “Rashi for Latin Readers: The Translations of Paris, 1240. With an Edition of the Excerpts from Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy,” in Id. - K.M. Stünkel (eds.), *Transcending Words: The Language of Religious Contact Between Buddhists, Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Premodern Times* (Bochum: Winkler, 2015), pp. 103-110.

quoted account in the prologue of the Latin Talmud translation,<sup>26</sup> where the anonymous compiler explains that he had the Talmud translated twice: one translation of “many long and important” Talmudic texts was prepared first, and another one more recently; and though they were done by independent translators, these are said to have agreed in their renderings, thus confirming the reliability of the translators as well as their translations. The compiler tells us:

Deus autem duos sibi providit interpretes catholicos in hebraea lingua quam plurimum eruditos. Hoc autem fidelitatis eorum infallibile mihi praestitit argumentum, quod, cum multa magna et notabilia de praedictis libris diversis temporibus, posteriore ignorante quae vel qualiter, ab ore prioris interpretis transtuleram, etsi propter difficultatem et obscuritatem hebraici, quandoque variaverint verba, eadem tamen sententiam et sensum tenuerunt.<sup>27</sup>

This parallel translation process implies that at some point the anonymous compiler compared two independent corpora of Latin Talmudic translations. This is precisely the relation that we see between the different layers of the Latin Talmud and Nicholas’s list. Nothing more natural, therefore, than to consider Nicholas as one of the two translators to whom the anonymous compiler refers, namely the one who translated Talmudic passages in the past, that is, for his list of accusations against the Jews.

Even if one were not to accept my philological argument, the conclusion, namely that Nicholas is the first translator referred to, is unquestionable. In a passage from the prologue of the second part of our manuscript, which seems to have been overlooked so far,<sup>28</sup> things are spelled out very clearly. Here the anonymous compiler explains that in order to strengthen his claims against the Jews, he wishes to add some texts that were translated from the Talmud five or six years before “ex ore alterius interpretis,” that is, from the mouth of *the other* translator, which he identifies as “Nicolaus dictus de Rupella”:

Quoniam in ore duorum vel trium testium stat omne verbum [Mt 18:16, Dt 19:15] ad maiorem praecedentium firmitatem et certitudinem, quaedam

<sup>26</sup> Quoted by Dahan, this text was edited by E. Klibansky, “Beziehungen des christlichen Mittelalters zum Judentum. I. Zur Talmudkenntnis des christlichen Mittelalters,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 77 (1933), pp. 456-462, and more recently by Merchavia, *Church*, pp. 455-459.

<sup>27</sup> MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558, f. 9ra. Translation: “God sent me two Catholic translators who were very learned in the Hebrew language. It was an unquestionable proof of their reliability for me that, having translated from the mouth of the first translator many important passages from the aforesaid books, this translation, as well as that of the second translator, who did not know what had been translated previously, and how it had been rendered – they both expressed the same opinions and yielded the same sense, though they sometimes used different words because of the difficulty and obscurity of the Hebrew language.”

<sup>28</sup> An exception is E. Panella in T. Kaeppli - Id., *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi* (4 vols.; Rome: Ad S. Sabinae - Istituto storico domenicano, 1970-1993), vol. IV, p. 296.

repetere, quaedam superaddere utile iudicavi quae ex ore alterius interpretis sunt translata quinque vel sex annis prius, licet hic ponantur posterius. [...] Anno enim ab incarnatione Domini .mccxxxvi. circiter, Pater misericordiarum iudaeum quemdam nomine Nicolaum dictum de Rupella vocavit ad fidem, in hebraeo plurimum eruditum etiam secundum testimonium iudaeorum, ita ut in natura et grammatica sermonis hebraici vix sibi similem inveniret. Hic accessit ad sedem apostolicam et bonae memoriae Gregorio Papae [sc. Gregorius IX, 1227-1241], pontificatus eius anno xii<sup>o</sup> [sc. 1239], praedictorum librorum nefandam detexit malitiam et quosdam specialiter expressit articulos [...].<sup>29</sup>

Thus, there is no question that Nicholas Donin is one of the two translators of the Latin Talmud, or rather, as our philological analysis has revealed, that his list of errors is a direct source text for the final redaction of the *Extractiones de Talmud*. The passage even allows us to establish a chronology for the translation of the Talmud: if Nicholas addressed Pope Gregory in the twelfth year of his pontificate, that is in 1239, and this event predates the Talmud translation by five or six years, we arrive at the years 1244 or 1245 for the compilation of our dossier.<sup>30</sup>

As to the “second” translator, who has to be credited with the bulk of the work, his identity still has to be determined,<sup>31</sup> but, as it has been argued, it can hardly be Thibaud de Sézanne. Of course this is a preliminary conclusion which will have to be checked carefully against the results of our on-going edition project of the extant manuscripts of the Latin Talmud.<sup>32</sup> Yet, for the time being, it fits the textual evidence and allows us to understand better the making of the Latin Talmud.

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<sup>29</sup> Cfr. MS Paris, BnF, lat. 16558, f. 211rb. Translation: “Since from the mouth of two or three witnesses every word receives more and more firmness and certainty, I thought it useful to repeat and to add some passages which were translated *from the mouth of the other translator* some five or six years before, even though here they are given at the end. [...] Around the year 1236 of the Incarnation of our Lord, the Father of mercies called to the faith a certain Jew, named Nicholas of La Rochelle, who was so knowledgeable in Hebrew, even according to the Jews, that one could hardly find anybody who knew so much of the nature and grammar of the Hebrew language as he did. He addressed himself to the Apostolic See and pointed out to Pope Gregory of happy memory in the twelfth year of his pontificate the impious wickedness of the aforesaid books, and in particular of some Articles [...]”

<sup>30</sup> For a similar dating, even though on different grounds, see A. Charansonnet, *L’université, l’Eglise et l’Etat dans les sermons du cardinal Eudes de Châteauroux (1190?-1273)* (PhD dissertation; 3 vols.; Lyon: Université de Lyon 2, 2001), vol. 1/1, p. 88, n. 279: “Je note que dans le ms. [16558] Eudes est nommé évêque de Tusculum [...], c’est la preuve qu’il a fait rédiger le ms. sous sa forme définitive fin 1244 au plus tôt, puisqu’il ne devient cardinal-évêque qu’au mai de cette année.”

<sup>31</sup> Dahan, “Les traductions latines,” p. 100 suggests Henry of Cologne as the second translator, which is a possibility that deserves further inquiry.

<sup>32</sup> For further information, see: <http://pages.uab.cat/lattal/>

## ABSTRACT

*This article asks for the authorship of the first and most comprehensive Latin translation of Talmudic passages, aptly entitled *Extractiones de Talmud*. While philological analysis of key passages clearly rules out the possibility of Thibaud de Sézanne – the author of the very popular *Pharetra fidei* – as a translator of the *Extractiones*, it shows at the same time that they are, at least in their second version, very dependent on Nicholas Donin's 35 accusations against the Talmud, which the Jewish convert presented in 1239 to Pope Gregory IX. In addition, the article establishes a precise dating of the *Extractiones* which were translated in 1244/45, thus placing them after the Talmud trial and its burning in 1241/42.*