INTRODUCTION

Baruch Teutonici, Jewish resident of Toulouse in southern France, was a desperate man in the summer of 1320. On the fifteenth of June he survived the devastating experience of being dragged from his study by an angry mob of Christian rioters, pushed through narrow streets past lifeless bodies of friends and neighbors and thrust into the imposing brick and stone cathedral of St. Stephen. There he was forced to accept baptism at knife point. A month later, Baruch stood before an inquisitorial tribunal trying to explain why he wanted permission from bishop Jacques Fournier to reject his baptism and return to the Jewish faith. After weeks of testimony and deliberation, Baruch’s request was denied and he began to receive formal instruction in the beliefs of Christianity. By the end of September, he had publicly resigned himself to living the rest of his life as a Christian named John.1

Baruch’s case was tragic, but by the early fourteenth century incidents of violence against Jews – including forced conversions – were hardly a novelty in the Christian-dominated lands of western Europe. Historians such as R.I. Moore have suggested various factors which led to the emergence of a “persecuting society” in the medieval west, one in which Jews, Muslims and others deemed to be outside the normative boundaries of Christian society increasingly came to face persecution from their neighbors.2 Whatever the causes, such a society can clearly be said to have existed by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. As Baruch knew firsthand, persecution took both legal and extra-legal forms. It could aim to


remove offending “alien” bodies by a whole variety of means, ranging from murder and physical expulsion to more or less peaceful efforts to promote conversion. Baruch managed to avoid death in 1320 only to face a ritualized obliteration of his Jewish identity by means of baptism and conversion, at first through naked force and finally (if the inquisition’s evidence is to be believed on this point) through a long process of preaching and catechesis. Whether Baruch ultimately became John willingly as a result of successful Christian proselytism, or despairingly, having exhausted all avenues for appeal, remains a matter for conjecture.\footnote{According to the inquisition register, Baruch protested that “he did not know what the Christians believed and why they believed … unless, therefore, it could be shown through his Law and Prophets that what the Christians believe is in accordance with the Law and the Prophets, he would not want to believe in or hold to the Christian faith and would rather die than give up Judaism” (Grayzel, “Confession,” 114). Bishop Fournier agreed to explain Christian theological principles in a series of debates; these are described in some detail and consistently depict Baruch as a vigorous advocate for Judaism. Still, in the inquisitors’ version of events the Jew was eventually brought around to a full and voluntary conversion. Grayzel is understandably skeptical, arguing that Baruch simply gave up after stalling for as long as he could (Grayzel, “Confession,” 103).}

There is more to the story, however. In the course of his testimony, Baruch mentioned several Christians who had expressed sympathy for his plight and others from whom he expected to receive protection. These included the Dominican friar Raymond of Junac, lieutenant to the Lord Inquisitor of Toulouse, whose advice was sought by Baruch and his friends after news of attacks on nearby Jewish communities first reached their city. In the midst of Baruch’s own ordeal, he claimed to have asked his tormentors to take him to the local Dominican convent – where he hoped to find a friar named Jacob Alamanni, “thinking to himself that if he could come into the hands of the said friar, who was a good friend of his, he would be saved from death without being baptized.”\footnote{Baruch’s trial was to determine whether Baruch ultimately became John willingly as a result of successful Christian proselytism, or despairingly, having exhausted all avenues for appeal, remains a matter for conjecture. Grayzel is understandably skeptical, arguing that Baruch simply gave up after stalling for as long as he could (Grayzel, “Confession,” 103).}

Of course Baruch may have exaggerated the extent of his friendship with the Dominicans to ingratiate himself with the court. Nevertheless it seems that he saw the friars at least potentially as allies who would oppose attempts to secure irregular forced conversions.\footnote{Grayzel’s assumption that Alamanni was German, like Baruch, is incorrect – Alamanni is a common Occitan regional name. Jacob Alemanni (Jayme Aleman), perhaps the same man, served as Aragonese Provincial Prior from 1315–1320 (F. Diago, Historia de la Provincia de Aragón de la Orden de Predicadores [Barcelona, 1599; repr. Valencia, 1999], fols. 271–v).}

We are thus presented with a complex situation. Some Christians in this period obviously felt justified in trying to rid their world of religious “outsiders” by any means necessary. Others, like Jacques Fournier, did not reject coercion in religious matters as long as this was kept within established legal bounds (the whole point of Baruch’s trial was to determine
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whether he should be legally considered a duly baptized Christian, subject to compulsory indoctrination and acceptance of Christian dogmas; if he was still a Jew then the inquisitors would have little or no jurisdiction over him). Among the latter, there were still further divisions. Fournier, a busy Church official who would later become pope Benedict XII, was willing to devote a great deal of energy to completing Baruch’s conversion through theological argumentation. He may have done so in the hope that other Jews could be similarly swayed to accept Christianity. Yet Dominican friars such as Raymond of Junac and Jacob Alamanni played no role in preaching to their non-Christian neighbors; at least nothing was said to that effect in the trial testimony, and Baruch’s belief that friar Jacob would actually intervene to prevent his baptism certainly suggests that he did not see his “friend” as an over-zealous missionary.

This book examines the different ways in which members of an influential organization within the medieval Latin Church, the Dominican Order of Friars Preacher (OP), chose to interact with their non-Christian contemporaries. In particular, it asks whether, how and to what extent Dominican friars in the foundational first century of their Order’s existence actually dedicated themselves to converting, persecuting or otherwise interfering with Jewish and Muslim populations in the multicultural lands of the western Mediterranean basin. How typical, for example, were friars Raymond of Junac and Jacob Alamanni with their apparently benevolent laissez-faire attitude toward Jews like Baruch? Were such approaches liable to change over time or in different circumstances? What were the ideological and practical factors underlying the friars’ decisions? The topic is complex but important, providing as it does one of the keys to understanding medieval inter-religious and majority–minority relationships generally.

The Toulouse friars’ apparent lack of missionary fervor might strike modern observers as odd, clashing as it does with their Order’s nearly ubiquitous reputation. The Dominicans have long held a special interest for scholars concerned with the history of interactions between religious communities in the later Middle Ages. Along with the Franciscans, they have at times been presented as the “missionary” arm par excellence of the medieval Latin Church – a band of highly trained and innovative scholar-preachers dedicated to the conversion of all heretics, Muslims,

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* Baruch claimed that “he wielded no slight authority among the Jews of those parts,” and so his (allegedly) voluntary conversion might have been expected to serve as a model for others. A Jew named “Master David” was indeed present during the disputations as Baruch’s translator and religious advisor; several unnamed “recently baptized Jews” were similarly present in addition to the regular Christian officials, all of whom could have repeated the substance of the debate to other audiences (Grayzel, “Confession,” 114).
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Jews and pagans to the one “true” religion of orthodox Roman Catholic Christianity. Where brute force might characterize crusaders’ approaches to religious Others in the Holy Land, on the Iberian frontier or in combat against home-grown heretics, the legacy of the mendicant friars has offered a more intellectual alternative. A succinct but detailed statement of the Preachers’ presumed emphasis on study and dialogue is provided by fr. William Hinnebusch OP in the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*:

Considering the evangelization of the pagans an essential part of the order’s apostolate, Dominic sent missionaries to the frontiers of Europe … By 1225 the friars were in touch with the Moors and Jews of Spain and had gone into northern Africa. As a prerequisite for their missionary work they studied the oriental languages … Urged by Raymond of Peñafort, the Spanish province established language schools at Tunis, Murcia, Játiva, and Barcelona … Not only language schools but also books helped the missionaries. Thomas Aquinas wrote his *Summa contra gentiles* partly to assist friars who were preparing for the missions … Raymond Martini, an outstanding orientalist, prepared treatises, especially *Pugio fidei* and *Capistrum judaeorum*, to aid the friars in their contacts with the Jews. Pablo Cristiani, a converted Jew, debated with his former coreligionists.7

Here we have the main pillars on which the medieval friars’ reputation for missionary work has been based. Further research by scholars such as Robert Chazan, Benjamin Kedar, Robert I. Burns and John Tolan has helped to clarify details of this work, insofar as it can be reconstructed from the available evidence.8 An important variation on the theme was also advanced by Jeremy Cohen, who argued in *The Friars and the Jews* that medieval Dominicans (and their close associates the Franciscans) developed a new concept of rabbinic Judaism as heresy. For these friars old rationales for tolerance could now be abandoned; their goal was henceforth the total elimination of Jews from Christian Europe. This could be achieved through conversion, but Cohen suggested that many friars were also content to fan the flames of religious hatred – working hand in glove with crusaders, inquisitors and the marauding Pastoureaux rioters of Baruch’s day to use violence where words failed.9

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9 J. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews* (Ithaca, 1982). Cohen does not discuss the Pastoureaux specifically, as his focus is on the thirteenth century. Nor does he focus on Dominican attitudes toward Islam, though these are discussed to some extent in his analysis of Raymond Penyafort’s policies in the Crown of Aragon (pp. 106–7).
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Dominicans of the Iberian peninsula, and in particular those active in the eastern Iberian lands collectively known as the Crown of Aragon, have provided scholars with their most important examples of Christian approaches to Jews and Muslims in the “persecuting society” of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This is in part because medieval Iberia presents a setting in which friars actually did find themselves facing significant Jewish and Muslim populations on a regular basis. If ever missionary ideals were to be worked out in practice, here was the opportunity. Researchers have therefore turned again and again to examine the careers of outstanding and intriguing Dominicans who can be shown to have had some degree of antagonistic contact with non-Christians in the region: in particular the above-mentioned Raymond Penyafort (Peñafort), Raymond Martini and Paul (Pablo) Christiani.

Penyafort, Martini and Christiani (among others) will be discussed at length in the following chapters, but I will also suggest that excessive attention to such exceptional characters has tended to distort the historical goals and activities of the medieval Dominican Order as a whole. Previous scholarship has tended to focus almost exclusively on a small body of polemical and apologetic writings associated with these friars, while important background details and contexts have been overlooked. It is only by closely studying all aspects of a period – its political, social and economic concerns as well as its religious ideals as stated in particular genres of literature – that one can hope to obtain a clearer understanding of Jewish–Dominican and Muslim–Dominican relations.

It is for this reason that I too have chosen to focus on the Dominican Order in its Iberian and broader western Mediterranean context. The Spanish Province of the Dominicans, and especially that portion which was to become the separate Province of Aragon after 1300, does indeed provide an important and relatively well-documented opportunity for a case study. The Province comprised intricate networks of friars who encountered Christians, Jews and Muslims in a variety of contexts. It will be noted, of course, that I do not intend to limit my study very rigidly to the geographical or politically defined Crown of Aragon, as my opening reference to Baruch of Toulouse (a city very much separated from the Arago–Catalan sphere of political influence by 1320 yet still related in cultural terms) should make clear. It was one of the Dominicans’ distinctive features that they were mobile and in regular contact with neighboring or even far-flung convents – thus Toulouse and Thomas Aquinas will be almost as much a part of this study as Barcelona and Raymond Martini.

The Franciscan Order offers an alternative avenue for analysis, though it does not occupy quite as emblematic a place in the historiography of Christian–Jewish and Christian–Muslim relations as the Dominican. I am
indebted to the important work of scholars such as E. Randolph Daniel and Jill Webster who have covered that particular field. The enigmatic “doctor of missions” Raymond Llull, with all his Franciscan connections, was also closely related to the Dominicans and cannot be ignored, having generated plenty of specialized studies. These will be considered in their place. Similarly, I have taken into account a wealth of scholarship on contemporary mendicant missions to the Muslim and Mongol East, which provide important points of reference and comparison for the western Mediterranean experience.

Dominican activities in eastern Iberia, south-western France and the closely related North African Maghrib nevertheless remain the focus of this book. These lands witnessed a remarkable shift in the thirteenth century, as Christian forces gained territory and maritime dominance at the expense of Muslim rulers (the process known somewhat anachronistically as the reconquista). The king of Aragon’s conquest of Mallorca (1230) and Valencia (1238) were two major milestones; like Castile’s seizure of Cordoba (1236) and Seville (1248) these established Christian regimes as leading powers in the region. They also hastened the decline of the Almohad caliphate which had previously dominated western Muslim territories on both sides of the Mediterranean. The result was a virtually unprecedented period in which Christian rulers began to rule over large populations of Muslims as well as Jews. As it happened, this thirteenth-century transition also coincided with the creation of the Dominican Order; it thus offers a rather special circumstance in which the first few generations of Iberian Friars Preacher were obliged to find their way and invent their own roles. It was a troubled yet exciting and intriguing time, when all possibilities were open.


The complexities of this term are analysed in J. O’Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia, 2003), esp. 3–22.

Muslims had already been under Aragonese domination in the Ebro valley for over a century before the fall of Mallorca. Such mudéjars were also present in Castile, Sicily and the Levant (see J. Powell, ed., *Muslims under Latin Rule*, 1100–1300 [Princeton, 1990]). The scale of subject Muslim population at Valencia, which continued to dwarf that of the immigrating Christians for generations to come, remains anomalous. Jewish status under Christian rule was also well established, yet subject to change in this new context.
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Conversions did occur in this setting, as they always have when different faith communities come into sustained contact with one another. Furthermore, some medieval Christians did entertain hopes that mass conversions were imminent — whether regionally as a result of political maneuvering, or globally as part of the divinely ordained sequence of apocalyptic events. Yet my research has revealed little if any evidence to suggest that medieval Dominicans encouraged such conversions by engaging in widespread or sustained campaigns of proselytism. Dominicans and other representatives of the institutional Latin Church in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries simply did not see conversion of Muslims or Jews as a significant part of their undertaking at the local level. Instead, when they took notice of local non-Christians at all, it was because they were concerned that fluidity of religious identity and experience should be more strictly limited and controlled.

Far from encouraging conversions, in other words, the medieval Church of the *reconquista* era sought for the most part to discourage over-familiar contacts from forming across religious divides. Policies of partial segregation were adopted in some cases. The writings and even verbal utterances of Jews and Muslims might be examined to ensure that they did not endanger Christians or the Christian faith by casting aspersions or raising theological doubts. If these measures did not suffice, polemics and apologetics might be composed and preached to challenge the unbelievers and defend the claims of Christianity for the benefit of the faithful. Medieval Dominicans were among the chief architects and executors of such efforts to protect the Christian community — their flock, as they saw it, or “the Lord’s Vineyard” — from any possible blight as a result of excessive exposure to unbelievers. From Christian Toulouse, Montpellier and Barcelona to newly colonized Valencia and Mallorca, and even in Muslim-ruled cities like Marrakesh and Tunis with their small Christian minorities, the Friars Preacher adapted their methods to local circumstances. In some areas Christian beliefs were considered secure enough to permit lesser degrees of division and scrutiny. Always, however, the friars’ primary aim was the protection and nurturing of the faithful rather than conversion of unbelievers.

My challenge to established notions of a medieval Dominican “missionary” movement will be presented on the basis of primary-source evidence in the chapters that follow, but it is also important to consider the historiographical origins of the more traditional view. A consensus that the Middle Ages were an important period for Dominican missionizing has developed over time. It began in the sixteenth century, when Dominicans (as well as Franciscans and, later, Jesuits) were first beginning to travel among previously unknown peoples in Africa, the
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Americas and Asia. Colonial conditions in some of these areas resulted in mass conversions, challenging friars like Bartolomé de las Casas to address the theology of mission with a growing sense of urgency. Newly developed humanist proselytizing techniques were even brought back to Spain itself, where they were briefly tried on Valencian Moriscos under archbishop Juan de Ribera (1568–1611).

It was at precisely this same time that Dominican scholars began to undertake their first systematic studies of the Order’s history. At the end of the sixteenth century, curious friars were turning to long-forgotten archival records in a quest for evidence of their predecessors’ noteworthy achievements. Fired by the spirit of the times, these early modern Dominican researchers were naturally interested in finding medieval precedents for their own missionary activity. The Valencian friar Francisco Diago in particular saw mission as one of his Province’s special callings, and he soon discovered signs to confirm that his forefathers in the Crown of Aragon had enjoyed a long and glorious history of preaching to Jews and Muslims. His harvest of evidence for such missions was poor and hard-won, consisting of no more than a few references to language study, visits to Africa and polemical exercises (a few written treatises and at least one public debate). It was enough, however, to ground the seemingly uncontroversial assumption that missionary work had always been a central element in the friars’ lives.

Dominican mission history as initiated by Diago thus rested on a “maximalist” approach which has dominated the field ever since. Less a methodology than a tendency, maximalist research here involves careful sifting of available evidence in order to find any possible traces of mendicant involvement in mission work. Anti-Jewish disputations, anti-Islamic polemical tracts, programs for the study of oriental languages, visits to Muslim rulers – all have been marshaled to support the unquestioned idea that medieval Dominican missionary ventures must have flourished. Over the centuries, these evidentiary points have been passed down as loci communes, well known to every specialist. Having surveyed the resulting compilations, and with due regard for the fragmentary nature of surviving documentation, scholars working from a maximalist perspective further posit that these points represent merely the tip of an evangelical iceberg. For every known episode of language study or disputation, one

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14 See for example Las Casas’ De unico vocationis modo omnium gentium ad veram religionem (tr. F. Sullivan, The Only Way [New York, 1992]).
16 All the points made by Hinnebusch in the passage cited above, for example, were already identified in Diago’s Historia.
can imagine that there must have been many more incidents that simply failed to be recorded.

The resulting myth remains powerful, for it fits well with a number of narratives. First of all, and as originally formulated, it contributes to the Dominicans’ self-image as an intellectual vanguard at the forefront of Christian missions to unbelievers.\(^{17}\) In less positive terms, the same formulation was accepted by Edward Said when he identified the friars’ studies as representing the first stage of Western Orientalism.\(^{18}\) For other observers the missions were relatively hopeful instances of medieval Christians transcending religious hatred to bring their gospel message to Muslims and others in a spirit of peace (if not understanding).\(^{19}\) The friars’ presumed goal of eliminating religious difference by converting non–Christians has also been related to their wider role in the elaboration of a persecuting, inquisitorial and ultimately anti–Semitic society in medieval Europe.\(^{20}\) The friars’ putative missionary activity thus forms a key part of discussions ranging from general medieval histories and histories of the Dominican Order to studies specifically examining Christian tolerance or intolerance of Jews, Muslims and other non–Christian peoples. Since the phenomenon of mendicant mission lends itself to so many interpretations, there has been little cause to question its existence in the first place.

Without seeking to overcompensate by adopting a “minimalist” position, I have revisited these *loci communes* in a more skeptical fashion by paying closer attention to their historical context. Rather than seeing isolated individuals and incidents as evidence of long-term realities, I suggest that they should most often be studied as discrete characters and events occurring in the midst of changing political, socio-economic, theological and intellectual circumstances. Taking these circumstances into consideration can reveal motivations and meanings behind any given episode of Dominican contact with Muslims and Jews which may

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\(^{17}\) See for example the Dominican J.M. Coll’s polemically tinged articles, written in the wake of the Spanish Civil War, on “Escuelas de lenguas orientales en los siglos XIII y XIV” in *AST* 17–20 (1944–7) and “San Raymundo de Peñaafort y las Misiones del Norte Africano en la Edad Media” in *Missionalia Hispanica* 5 (1948), 417–57. A similar triumphalist (and colonialist) tendency can be found among Franciscans: A. López, *Obispos en el Africa septentrional desde el siglo XIII* (Tangier, 1941). Hinnebusch’s more balanced position, already clear in his *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* article, is elaborated in his two-volume *The History of the Dominican Order* (Staten Island, 1966).


\(^{20}\) Heinrich Graetz, pioneer of nineteenth-century Jewish history, already wrote of “gloomy and evil-minded” friars like Raymond Penyafort, dedicated to the conversion of Muslims and Jews because of their hatred for unbelievers (*History of the Jews* [1863; tr. B. Loewy, Philadelphia, 1864], vol. III, 597–605). Jeremy Cohen’s work has greatly refined this approach.
have little to do with proselytism. Such a methodology has already been adopted by several researchers working with the rich archival resources of the Crown of Aragon, though none has yet undertaken a close study of the Dominicans.21

My approach also stresses the importance of textual context. The medieval Dominicans’ archival, narrative and other records must be read as much as possible in their entirety, as self-representations that convey a sense of their authors’ own ideals, priorities and experiences. Instead of merely highlighting references to Dominican contacts with Muslims and Jews, I ask how these references fit into the larger framework of the friars’ writings. Are they really signs pointing to a widespread phenomenon of missionary preaching? To what degree did the commitment of resources to missionary ventures actually emerge as an issue within the Order? What other dimensions to the friars’ work among Muslim and Jewish populations may have been emphasized at the time? The answers to these questions reveal the mirage-like quality of modern appeals to an iceberg of missionary activity.

Records compiled by the first generations of Dominican friars, while in some instances surviving only in fragmentary form, substantially and accurately represent the reality of their work as they perceived it. The friars carefully recorded their deployments of manpower, educational and textual resources. They ensured the preservation of documents concerning their legal rights and financial dealings. They also compiled accounts intended to publicize exemplary achievements claimed by the Order and its saints. Finally, they expressed their theological ideals in written form. Taken together, these sources clearly illustrate the Dominicans’ world as they saw it: an imagined landscape of pastors and flocks, vineyards and cultivators, withered deserts of infidelity and well-armed fortresses of faith. In such a world non-Christians were potentially threatening, but more often inconsequential and utterly marginal.

The Crown of Aragon boasts an exceptionally good fund of sources for the study of medieval Dominicans, especially when compared with neighboring regions such as Castile or Provence.22 The kingdom itself is unique in medieval Europe for having maintained a large-scale royal archive on paper from an early date, thus providing extensive background material

21 I have been much influenced by David Nirenberg’s discussion of methodology in Communities, 3–17. Recent work by R.I. Burns, Jill Webster, Brian Catlos and others in this field continues to demonstrate the value of detailed and localized social histories based on archival research.