Saadia's polemic against the Karaites, which helped launch his own literary career, ironically generated a virtual outpouring of theological response on the part of Karaite thinkers. One of the most outspoken of the Karaite critics of Saadia and rabbinic Judaism was Solomon ben Yeruḥam (ca. 910 to after 960). Solomon's principal work was a polemical epistle, written in rhymed quatrains in Hebrew, and possibly in Arabic as well, entitled *Book of the Wars of the Lord* (*Sefer Milḥamot ha-Shem*). His arguments against the Fayyumite (Saadia) concern the validity of the oral law of the rabbis, especially the lack of unanimity among the rabbis of the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud*.

READING 3-15

I have discovered in my heart another argument,
A handsome one, and majestic enough
To be placed as a crown for the Karaites,
To be their ornament, pride, and glory.
I have looked again into the six divisions of the Mishnah,
And behold, they represent the words of modern men.
There are no majestic signs and miracles in them,
And they lack the formula: "And the Lord spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron."
I therefore put them aside, and I said, There is no true Law in them,
For the Law is set forth in a different manner,
In a majestic display of prophets, of signs, and of miracles;
Yet all this majestic beauty we do not see in the whole Mishnah. . . .
I have set the six divisions of the Mishnah before me,
And I looked at them carefully with mine eyes.
And I saw that they are very contradictory in content,
This one Mishnaic scholar declares a thing to be forbidden to the people of Israel, while that one declares it to be permitted.
My thoughts therefore answer me,
And most of my reflections declare unto me,
That there is in it no Law of logic,
Nor the Law of Moses the Wise.
I said, Perhaps one of the two did not know the right way,
Wherefore he did not know how to reason it out with his companion;
Perhaps the truth lies with his companion;
Let me look into his words; perchance I will find relief from my perplexity.
But instead I found there other men—
Sometimes they say, "Others say,"
While anon the scholars issue a decision,
Agreeing neither with the one nor with the other, but contradicting both.

Had I been among them—I say, had I been among them—
I would not have accepted the words of these "others" and "scholars."
Rather would I have weighed the word of the Lord with them,
And I would have judged accordingly every word which they had contrived. . . .
Hearken unto me and I will speak further:
If thou shouldst say, "This took place in the days of the Prophets and in the days of Ezra";
Why is there no mention in it of these Prophets
In the same manner as the names of the Prophets are recorded throughout Scripture?
Be silent, and I will teach thee wisdom,
If it be thy desire to learn wisdom.
It is written: *The Law of the Lord is perfect*
What profit be there for us, then, in the written Mishnah?
Moreover, if the Talmud originated with our master Moses,
What profit is there for us in "another view,"
And what can a third and a fourth view teach us,
When they tell us first that the interpretation of this problem in law is thus-and-so, and then proceed to explain it with "another view?"
The truth stands upon one view only,
For this is so in the wisdom of all mankind,
And right counsel cannot be based upon two contradictory things.
Now in this one thing he has fallen down and cannot stand up:
If the Talmud is composed of the words of prophets,
Why are contradictory views found in it?
Now it is evident that this view of Sa'adiah's is foolishness, and the words of fools.
So testify all mankind.

AGOBARD OF LYONS' COMPLAINTS ABOUT JEWISH INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

By the ninth century firm evidence exists for Jewish settlement in western Europe. In the Carolingian period Charlemagne and his son, Louis the Pious, made a special effort to attract Jewish merchants to their northern French and German lands. Jews were offered a stipulated legal status within Christian society and the benefit of physical protection in return for the fiscal and administrative benefits they provided feudal lords and, later, the kings.

Church officials soon realized that, solely on the basis of mutual economic self-interest, the Jews were fashioning a favorable relationship with ruling Christian authorities, who appeared oblivious to existing theologi-