

JAMES CARLETON PAGET

Jews, Christians  
and Jewish Christians  
in Antiquity

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen*

*zum Neuen Testament*

251

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**Mohr Siebeck**

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and Jewish Christians in Antiquity

Mohr Siebeck

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For my children, Emily, Hope and Harry, with thanks  
for all that they are and will be



## Preface

Collections of essays are often dubious things, and I reserve the right to a less-than-adequate defence of this one to some introductory remarks, which follow this preface.

I would like to thank the following for extending help, of various kinds, in the production of this work: the editor of the series in which the volume appears, Prof. Jörg Frey; the editorial staff at Mohr Siebeck, in particular Dr. Henning Ziebritzki; and Frau Ilse König; Di Hakala for outstanding editorial and computational assistance, carried out with great efficiency, intelligence, assiduity well beyond the call of duty and always with an enviable cheerfulness and patience, especially in the face of my lamentable technophobia; Dave Goode for his patient help with computational matters; Philip Alexander, Susanna Avery-Quash, Markus Bockmuehl, Nicholas de Lange, Judith Lieu and Annette Yoshiko Reed for reading one or more of the unpublished chapters and making helpful, and sometimes detailed, comments on their contents; William Horbury for reading almost everything in this volume, for giving so generously of his immense, yet lightly held, erudition, and for being such a stalwart and immensely encouraging friend (together with his wife, Kathy) over many years; Simon Gathercole for reading all the unpublished chapters, for helping in the reformatting of others, work well beyond the call of duty in a very busy schedule, and for his greatly valued and stimulating friendship; Andrew Chester, my colleague for many years, and with whom I have shared in much fruitful discussion; the late Graham Stanton for the encouragement he gave me to produce this collection, for his wonderful friendship, and for the remarkable example of courage and resilience he gave all who knew him over a considerable period of debilitating and painful illness; to the Master, Fellows and staff of Peterhouse, not least the bursar, Richard Grigson, for all the help and kindness they have afforded me over many years; and for the great friendship of Susanna Avery-Quash, John Bew, Petà Dunstan, Mari Jones, Magnus Ryan, Brendan Simms and Anita Bunyan, and Alexander Studholme; and, last but not least, my family.

I wish to dedicate this book, in spite of its many grave shortcomings, to my children. I hope that they will never have reason to make use of it for anything other than a door stop (surely the legitimate fate, and most useful

function, of many an academic book, and *certainly* of this one), but that they will see its dedication as a testimony to their father's love for them.

Cambridge, March 2010

James Carleton Paget

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## Abbreviations

Abbreviations used throughout the book for both ancient texts, periodicals, reference works and serials are almost entirely according to those given in P. H. Alexander *et al.* (eds.), *The SBL Handbook of Style: for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999). The few exceptions to these will be spelt out in the individual bibliographies.



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The collection of essays brought together in this volume span a period of some nineteen years, and range from the shorter article on a quite specific subject to the longer, discursive piece. Nine have been previously published; three are published here for the first time. The published pieces have been minimally edited with some new bibliography added, and known mistakes eradicated. While the essays do not form a coherent collection in the sense that the sum of their parts constitutes a self-standing, interconnected argument, bringing them together under one roof seems justified on a number of grounds. The first is practical: most of these essays have appeared in journals or sometimes rather inaccessible collective volumes. To place them in a single volume serves the purpose of making them more easily available to the interested scholar. Such an assertion, however, merely begs the question whether it is worth making this particular set of essays more accessible. Whatever justification might exist for this lies partly in the claim that the collection focuses upon subjects, which have elicited intense and fruitful discussion in recent times. These are, in order, Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity, Jewish Christianity, and Judaism in the second century. Some central points in the debate about these matters will be noted below, and it will, I hope, become clear to the reader that the recent stimulus given to their investigation by a range of scholars is significant. In different ways each of the essays in this volume seeks to interact with elements of the debate about these three subjects, and to sharpen discussion of them.

Another partial justification lies in the argument that the three subjects upon which it focuses, as well as being important in their own right, are interconnected, and have become increasingly so in more recent debate. So, for instance, Daniel Boyarin contends that precisely because, according to him, one cannot talk about Jews and Christians as self-contained definable groups in the first three centuries C.E. (or possibly ever in the sense that there is an essence of being a Jew or a Christian somehow distinct from the perspective of the person doing the defining), the term 'Jewish

Christian' or 'Jewish Christianity' has no meaning.<sup>1</sup> Whether Boyarin's radical thesis is right or not, it is true that one's understanding of the definition of Jew and Christian, and so the extent to which one can differentiate between them, will inevitably intrude upon one's understanding of the term 'Jewish Christian', a point which in a variety of ways has been accepted by scholars since the middle of the nineteenth century. After all, one needs to understand when the term is meaningful, and one can only do that if one has a view about when the categories, Jew and Christian, are distinguishable one from another.<sup>2</sup> It is also the case that if we adopt Boyarin's new paradigm of Jewish-Christian relations, alluded to above, our view of the importance of those designated 'Jewish Christian' will be significantly altered – rather than seeing them as a group of individuals whose significance wanes at a very early stage in Christian history, a victim of the so-called 'parting of the ways' between Judaism and Christianity, they become individuals who are less marginalised than at first appeared.<sup>3</sup>

The connection of these two subjects, however conceived, to the third, Judaism in the second century, is less obvious, and yet this subject is significant for both. First, it is the case that the earliest *adversus Judaeos* texts appear in the second century, that is, it can be argued that it is only from the second century onwards that some Christians sought in a conscious way to engage with the question of 'Judaism', or put differently, it was only in the second century, for whatever reason, that Christians began to seek to define the Jew as they sought in some senses to define themselves. Secondly, and related to the first point, it was only in the same period that some Christian writers began to pronounce heretical, a term which first comes into being in the second century, those Christians whom they thought too Jewish, and to give them names such as Ebionite. That is, it was in the second century that what scholarship has come to call 'Jewish Christianity' first came explicitly to be a subject of discussion amongst some and the cause of censure amongst others. Investigation of both of these points will necessarily involve discussion of Judaism in the second century, and in a variety of ways, may be said to impact upon discussion of that subject. Was there anything, for instance, about the development of Judaism in this period insofar as we can speak about such an entity, which led to the two developments we have outlined, namely the beginnings of

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<sup>1</sup> See Boyarin 2009. He also believes it has no meaning because it is a category created by heresiologists. However, that is only the case by implication, for the word 'Jewish Christian' is a neologism dating from the sixteenth century. On this, see below.

<sup>2</sup> See Skarsaune and Hvalvik 2007, 748-50; and Reed 2003 and 2008, for scholars who have made much of the relevance of Boyarin's view of Jewish-Christian relations for the study of Jewish Christianity.

<sup>3</sup> See Reed 2003.

the *adversus Iudaeos* tradition, and of the criticism of those called ‘Jewish Christians’?

An initial claim, then, can be made for the interconnectedness of the subjects of this book, and by extension, the coherence, broadly conceived, of the medley of essays gathered in this volume.

## Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity

Recent discussion of Jewish-Christian relations has in part been preoccupied with a critical examination of the paradigm of the so-called ‘parting of the ways.’<sup>4</sup> In brief this view, associated in particular with James Parkes,<sup>5</sup> and given magisterial expression by Marcel Simon,<sup>6</sup> emphasised the Jewish origins of Christianity and argued that Christians remained initially within the Jewish fold, Judaism understood as a diverse and variegated entity in the first century. But as a result of the Jewish revolts of 66-70 and 132-5, the hostility of the emerging rabbinic movement to Christians, given partial expression in the so-called *Birkath ha-minim*, or Twelfth Benediction of the *Amidah*, which had the effect of excluding Christians from the synagogue, and the Christian commitment to a Gentile mission, the ways of the two religions parted, probably some time in the early second century, although a number of advocates of this view prefer to speak in terms of ‘partings’ rather than a single, particular ‘parting’.<sup>7</sup> The popularity of this paradigm, consciously a response to scholarship of an earlier era on Judaism, which had tended to argue a supersessionist case in which Jesus emerged in a Judaism in decay, and Christians almost immediately became part of a separate movement, can be variously explained. Part of it has to do with its neatness; part to do with the fact that it is in most of its forms palatable to both Jews and Christians; and part to do with its ecumenical potential.<sup>8</sup>

Those who have criticised this model have done so from a variety of angles.<sup>9</sup> Some have questioned it from a factual perspective, drawing attention to evidence, literary and archaeological, which would contradict the

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<sup>4</sup> See Jacobs 2008. His succinct and helpful review of the *status quaestionis* begins with attacks upon this approach to Jewish-Christian relations. For other critiques, see Lieu 2002; Becker and Reed 2003; Boyarin 2004; Fonrobert 2005.

<sup>5</sup> See Parkes 1934.

<sup>6</sup> See Simon 1986.

<sup>7</sup> Dunn 1991.

<sup>8</sup> For the historical context of Parkes’ views and an explanation of the popularity of the ‘parting’ model, see Becker and Reed 2003, 7-16; and Lieu 2002.

<sup>9</sup> For significant critical engagement, see Boyarin 1999; 2003; 2004; Fonrobert 2001; Lieu 2003; Becker and Reed 2003; and Jacobs 2008.

idea of an early, and universal, parting.<sup>10</sup> Particularly criticised are the views of those who would attribute importance to the so-called *Birkath ha-minim* as a means of effecting separation, and who would accordingly assume a kind of monolithic Judaism under the hegemony of the rabbis.<sup>11</sup> Such a Judaism did not exist, nor did a monolithic Christianity.<sup>12</sup> Both, at least for some time, were varied entities with loose authority structures, an observation, which has obvious implications for the question of when, how and in what circumstances they ‘parted’. This has led in turn to a call for less generalised and abstract talk of parting, and a stronger interest in limited, micro-geographical studies of the phenomenon.<sup>13</sup> Also criticised, and related to the points made above, is the assumption, implicit in the ‘partings’ model, that interaction between the Jews and Christians was limited and exceptional. Above all else critics of the ‘partings’ model want to emphasise ‘meaningful convergence’, convergences which often follow ‘partings’; and see this as much more the norm than the exception.<sup>14</sup> These types of observation have emerged from a close attention to questions of identity. In this context scholars argue that it is wrong to think about self-contained, clearly definable *entities* called Judaism and Christianity, something which a ‘partings’ model can be said to assume. Yes, there were people at the time who thought one could speak of these two entities, but these so-called separatists, whose most important early representative is often taken to be Justin Martyr (although it is Ignatius who first uses the two terms ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’ – interestingly, Justin does not use either term), on the one hand, and the evolving rabbinate, on the other, are seeking to create something which did not exist at the time they wrote.<sup>15</sup> In this view it is precisely the existence of the *adversus Judaeos* tradition, in some senses the embodiment of separatist tendencies, which is taken as proof of the existence of a more complex ‘blurred’ view of Christian/Jew-

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<sup>10</sup> See Rutgers 1992; and Lieu 2002

<sup>11</sup> For a review of some important work on this vexed subject, see van der Horst 1994. For a detailed engagement with the subject, see Tepler 2007. For a recent defence of the earliness of the version of the *Birkat* and its relevance to questions of separation, see Marcus 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Becker and Reed in their introduction to Becker and Reed 2003.

<sup>13</sup> See Lieu 2002, 18: “The problem with the model of the ‘partings of the ways’ is that ... it operates essentially with the abstract or universal conception of each religion, Judaism and Christianity, when what we know about is the local and specific. I would suggest that the abstract or universal is, certainly for our period, problematic. What we need is a more nuanced analysis of the local and specific before we seek to develop models which will set them within a more comprehensive overview.”

<sup>14</sup> Becker and Reed 2003, 23.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Separatists’, of course, are taken to be responsible for the construction of ‘master narratives’ which scholars, unknowingly sometimes, have followed. On this, see Gager 2003, 368; and Reed 2008, here discussing Eusebius.

ish difference on the ground, the argument being that an emphasis on difference only occurs because enough people do not see such difference.<sup>16</sup> This kind of view also emerges from a suspicion of all forms of essentialism, which would assert that there is something which, almost metaphysically, makes a Christian a Christian or a Jew a Jew. So Daniel Boyarin, one of the most radical participants in the current debate, has written: “Even if we grant the statistical dominance ... of the separatists ... are there sets of features that absolutely define who is a Jew and who is a Christian in such wise that the two categories will not seriously overlap, irrespective of the numbers of members of the blurring sets? I think not.”<sup>17</sup> For Boyarin, we should no longer think of Jews and Christians in the ancient period, at least up until the time of Constantine, but rather of various types of Jews occupying different positions along a Judaeo-Christian continuum, stretching at one end from Jews who had no belief in Jesus to Marcion, at the other end, who denied the validity of the Old Testament with the middle a kind of complex blur.<sup>18</sup> It was only when Christianity became the state religion, in the time of Constantine, that the vision of the separatists could be aligned to state power and become the norm,<sup>19</sup> a norm, which involved the creation of two religions, Christianity and its opposite, Judaism, or the separating out of ‘religion’ from other parts of life, which one might call civic, cultural and ethnic.<sup>20</sup> Of course, in response to part of this evolving alternative vision, some might argue that a Christian can be defined as someone who is a disciple of Christ, but to this Boyarin responds by noting that such a “feature hardly captures enough richness and depth to produce an interesting category, for in so many ways groups that follow Jesus and

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<sup>16</sup> See Fonrobert 2005, 254: “It is perhaps this inability to control the borderland (between Judaism and Christianity) that finally accounts for the anti-Jewish rhetoric in early Christianity.”

<sup>17</sup> Boyarin 2003, 78.

<sup>18</sup> Boyarin further elucidates what he is trying to convey by referring to the model of dialect study. He writes (Boyarin 2003, 76), “I am not claiming an undifferentiated ‘Judaism’ that formed itself into Judaism and Christianity through the borrowing of various religious traits but rather an assortment of religious dialects throughout the Jewish world that gradually developed structure as clusters through diffusion and were eventually organized as languages (religions) through processes very much analogous to those by which national languages, such as French and Italian, were also formed.”

<sup>19</sup> See Boyarin 2009, 28: “I suggest ... that there is no nontheological and nonanachronistic way at all to distinguish Christianity from Judaism until institutions are in place that make and enforce that distinction, and even then, we know precious little about what the nonelite and nonchattering classes were thinking and doing.”

<sup>20</sup> Boyarin owes aspects of this thesis to the work of Seth Schwartz who in Schwartz 2001 had argued that the emergence of post-Constantinian Christianity had led to the creation, by imitation, of the Jewish religion.

groups that ignore him are similar to each other”,<sup>21</sup> here developing observations about the shared culture of Jews and Christians. Boyarin’s views are, as stated, at the radical, and more theoretical, end of those who would seek to criticise the ‘partings’ model, but he embodies, in striking ways, many of their assumptions and tendencies.

In all of this, then, the ‘partings’ paradigm appears at once historically and hermeneutically naive, and in need of a considerable overhaul.<sup>22</sup> That does not mean that a new paradigm has emerged, although some have sought to create one.<sup>23</sup> So the title of Becker and Reed’s multi-authored volume, *The Ways that Never Parted*, contains a variety of approaches to the subject, as the authors themselves admit. The title of the volume is provocative, but is understood by the editors in a number of ways. First, as a challenge to the convention that no meaningful convergence between Jews and Christians occurred. Secondly, to suggest that Jews and Christians may have been engaged in the task of ‘parting’ throughout Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, *precisely because* the two never really parted during that period with the degree of decisiveness or finality needed to render either tradition irrelevant to the self-definition of the other, or to make participation in both unattractive or inconceivable (or as they state on the same page that they were meaningfully intertwined).<sup>24</sup> None of the above would appear to carry the radical implications that the title might be seen to have (although Boyarin’s contribution comes closest to endorsing these, at least for the ancient period). What might be said to bind together scholars of this new tendency is a call to look at the relevant primary material again and ask: “What happens when we approach our evidence from a different perspective, treating the ‘parting of the ways’ as a principle that needs to be proved rather than presupposed?”<sup>25</sup>

In commenting on this development in recent study, we should note that much of what has been outlined above is to be welcomed in that it has sent us back to what we thought was established, and made it seem less so. Texts, for instance, that we once believed to be easy to define as Jewish or Christian, are shown to be less easily described in such a way;<sup>26</sup> and this

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<sup>21</sup> Boyarin 2003, 80. Also Lieu 2004, 1-26.

<sup>22</sup> See Becker and Reed 2003, 2, who refer to “its methodological paucity, its inadequacy as an historical account, and its inability to explain much of our primary evidence.”

<sup>23</sup> Note Boyarin’s use of recent theories about dialects and the formation of language, as well as his own use of wave theory. See n. 18 above.

<sup>24</sup> Becker and Reed 2003, 22-3.

<sup>25</sup> Becker and Reed 2003, 22.

<sup>26</sup> On this, see Frankfurter 2003, who analyses a number of texts which are generally held to be of Jewish origin but then appropriated by Christians, and asks the question: “What happens in the discussion of these texts if one abandons the category ‘Christian’ –

has necessarily led to a sharpening of thinking. Divisions, which we took to be inevitable, appear less so. Texts which some held to describe a state of separation, such as the *adversus Judaeos* texts, are held to be trying to create one in the face of opposition both direct and indirect.

Skepticism about the ‘partings’ model has, I would contend, emerged from a combination of factors. One of these has been new discoveries, either of texts, such as Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hekhalot literature, or inscriptions and other archaeological evidence, reflection upon which has led a number of scholars to question monolithic views of Jewish identity, and to emphasise its diversity in the ancient period (sometimes by drawing attention to known texts like the Old Testament pseudepigrapha), and the relative lack of influence of the rabbis.<sup>27</sup> Similar emphases are reflected in the study of early Christianity,<sup>28</sup> though here perhaps less as a result of new discoveries. All of this has led to the adoption of generally less institutional views of both ‘religions’.<sup>29</sup> However, it is also important, I would suggest, to see aspects of this new approach to Jewish-Christian relations as emerging from an ever-growing influence of aspects of post-modern thought upon early Christian studies and Judaism.<sup>30</sup> This is seen in the

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as a distinct stage in these texts’ composition and, implicitly, as a distinct religious mentality? What if we were to look at these texts, rather, as the work of continuous communities of halakically-observant Jewish groups ... that incorporated Jesus into their cosmologies and liturgies, while retaining an essentially Jewish, or even priestly, self-definition?” (Frankfurter 2003, 134-5). Note also Davila 2005, who, taking up a suggestion of Robert Kraft, seeks to look again at the whole question of how we might seek to define a pseudepigraphon as Jewish or Christian. It should, of course, be noted that the issue of the Jewish or Christian provenance of a text had been openly discussed for many years in relation to works such as *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *The Lives of the Prophets*, and even Revelation. Followers of the more recent trend outlined above have simply extended the debate on this matter to encompass more and different texts.

<sup>27</sup> Although, see Horbury 1998, 3f., who, while asserting that “diversity rather than unity in the Jewish practice and belief of the Second Temple period has been repeatedly discerned and stressed in the last thirty years”, goes on to show how the debate about a diverse or more uniform Judaism goes back as far as W. Bousset in the early twentieth century, and can be seen in the reaction to G. F. Moore’s assertion about the existence of a common pattern within rabbinic and pre-rabbinic literature, found in his *Judaism in the first centuries of the Christian era, the age of the Tannaim*, published between 1927 and 30.

<sup>28</sup> Note especially the importance of Bauer’s *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Bauer 1971; originally published in 1934), for the study of early Christianity.

<sup>29</sup> Lieu 2002, 26, talks about ‘de-institutionalisation.’ She writes: “Once we de-institutionalise our understanding of Jewish communities, once we remove the synagogue, understood much as some Christians speak of the church, from the centre of our perception of their essential identity, with what are we left?”

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of the significance of aspects of post-modernity for the study of early church history, see Clarke 2008.

general suspicion of ‘master narratives’, the related interest in recovering lost voices or little noted witnesses, in taking seriously the constructed character of identity, particularly as this manifests itself in texts, in paying greater attention to local differences in the manifestations of Judaism and Christianity rather than in engaging in general stories with teleologies, and in a flight from what some have termed ‘positivistic historicism’.<sup>31</sup>

Secondly, it is important to note that some of the observations out of which the criticism of the ‘parting of the ways’ paradigm emerged have always been a part of the discussion. So, for instance, many scholars have sought to emphasise the continuities between Judaism and Christianity, the shared culture of the two faiths, in particular as a result of Christian and Jewish commitment to what the former came to call the Old Testament. Here similarities between Jews and Christians are seen both in terms of shared methods of interpretation as well as common exegetical traditions. Some of these same scholars, who emphasise this shared culture, interestingly, are committed to a version of the ‘parting of the ways’ paradigm.<sup>32</sup> It need not be assumed, therefore, that a commitment to this apparently discredited paradigm excludes the idea of convergence. In this context it is interesting to note that what possibly divides these scholars from those who attack the paradigm of ‘parting of the ways’ as this relates to issues of convergence, is that the latter see such convergences as having implications for questions of identity, of having repercussions for the extent to which we can talk of Judaism or Christianity as self-contained entities, for our understanding of the meaning of ‘separation’. The former generally do not, and indeed sometimes their views about ‘convergence’, however un-

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<sup>31</sup> For some elements of this, see Boyarin 1999; 2004; Gager 2003; Lieu 2004; Jacobson 2008. Annette Reed, in correspondence with me, preferred the term ‘post-structural’ for what I have termed ‘post-modern’, in particular highlighting the indebtedness of this broadly new approach to Jewish-Christian relations to “Saussurian linguistics and its extension by Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Derrida et al.”, although she goes on to note that they also reflect other streams of thinking about identity-construction in psychology, sociology, and historiography.

<sup>32</sup> An example, one amongst many, would be the Cambridge scholar, William Horbury. Almost more than any other British scholar he has sought to emphasise cultural continuities between Christianity and Judaism, both in terms of scriptural interpretation, and shared emphases (e.g. messianism). And yet he is keener than some to emphasise evidence for separation from a relatively early stage in Christian history. On all of this, see various essays in Horbury 1998. This point is implicitly made in Becker and Reed 2003 where a number of the contributors appear to assume a form of the ‘parting’ paradigm while playing up the significance of convergence.

derstood,<sup>33</sup> can appear to depend upon the idea that there were assured boundaries between Jews and Christians.

Thirdly, the unease that critics of the ‘parting of the ways’ paradigm feel at its apparent failure to take sufficient account of the complexity of issues of identity and of the fact of convergence between Jews and Christians, leads many of them, to varying degrees, to question the idea that we can, at least until Constantine, legitimately talk about Jews and Christians. This reaches its strongest expression in the work of Boyarin where legitimacy can only be attached to the designation ‘Judaeo-Christianity’, but it is there, in possibly less clear form, in a number of other writers. The question that arises in the face of this relates to the meaning of such assertions. Is this a point which has its origin in a suspicion of essentialism? Or is it something that emerges from the evidence? After all, while we might doubt that there was something called ‘Judaism’ and something called ‘Christianity’ in the period preceding Constantine, and indeed afterwards, if we are assuming the existence of such things in the abstract, there were people who called themselves Jews and people who called themselves Christians and these people did not regard themselves as a single group.<sup>34</sup> Some would say that it is only such self-identifying Christians or Jews to whom we can, in any meaningful way, apply the terms; and that even then, we are dealing with individual perspectives on the subject rather than clearly articulated general definitions.<sup>35</sup> It is interesting in this context to take note of the pagan evidence (questions relating to the Christian evidence will be dealt with below). The witnesses here are not thick on the ground, and they are often very limited in what they do say. They are, nevertheless, striking. Nero, we are told by Tacitus, was apparently able to differentiate between Jews and Christians as early as 64 C.E., at least in the city of Rome. Tacitus himself, writing some fifty years after this event, acknowledges the origins of the Christian movement in Judea but does not go on to associate it with the Jewish *ethnos*, stating that the movement began in Judea and then moved to Rome (*Annales* 15.44).<sup>36</sup> Strikingly also, given his negative opinions of the Christians, he never mentions their association with the Jews in what most take to be his strongly polemical account of the

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<sup>33</sup> Convergence can be understood in a number of ways. So in relation to exegesis it could be taken to imply: (i) independent development of shared traditions; (ii) a shared culture of exegesis; (iii) direct influence of one exegete upon another.

<sup>34</sup> See Kalmin in Burrus, Kalmin, Lapin and Marcus 2006, 19.

<sup>35</sup> See Williams 2009, 41. On the question of perspective, see Goodman 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Some think that Tacitus, possibly writing in the wake of the Trajanic revolt of 115-117, deliberately associates Christians with Jews here so as to pour more opprobrium upon them. See Lieu 2002, 21. However, this, seems unlikely not only because Tacitus makes no attempt to exploit their ‘Judean’ association; but also because it makes little sense of the mention of their movement to Rome where Jews had been for some time.

latter in his *Histories* (*Hist.* 5.1-13). Suetonius, while possibly failing to differentiate Christians from Jews, understood as the followers of ‘Chrestus’, in his notoriously unclear notice about the expulsion from Rome of the Jews by Claudius in the *Life of Claudius* 25.4,<sup>37</sup> in his other notice about Christians (*Nero* 16.2), makes no reference to their Jewish associations. A similar observation can be made about Pliny the Younger’s famous letter to Trajan (*Ep.* 10.96). The Christians, insofar as they are described in that precious epistolary token, are simply associated with worship of Christ and certain customs, but not with Jews or Judaism.<sup>38</sup> Celsus, writing somewhat later, can affirm that Christians are apostates from Judaism (*Cels.* 2.1), here at least giving unambiguous evidence of an association with Jews; and Tertullian refers to pagans who slander the Christians as “the third race” (*Nat.* 1.1), possibly taking up a Christian self-designation, which differentiated between themselves, Jews and pagans, but which was obviously accepted by a wider public.<sup>39</sup> *Prima facie*, then, such evidence would appear to show that to some outsiders, Christians had an identity separate from that associated with Jews, and precisely because this is the view of those looking in from outside, it should be taken seriously.<sup>40</sup> In response to such an observation, it could be argued that a figure like Celsus may be adopting the viewpoint of a Jewish separatist; and that by extension all of the utterances of the above inevitably reflect a particular perspective, or even ignorance. Added to that it should be noted that not all pagan witnesses reflect, so apparently unambiguously, the separatist position implicit or explicit, in the examples cited above. Galen, the well-known medical writer, speaks of the “school of Moses and Christ”, and

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<sup>37</sup> Judge 2008, 436.

<sup>38</sup> Benko 1985, tried to argue that the test given to recanting Christians bears some likeness to tests given to Jews (*B.J.* 7.50-1), and so, therefore, the passage should be read as implying an identification of the Christians with the Jews. For criticism of this view, see Lieu 2002, 22, who, following others, makes the point that the language is closer to that used to describe other non-Jewish groups. See also Judge 2008, 435-6.

<sup>39</sup> For references to Christians as a ‘third race’, either directly or by implication, see *inter alia* *Kerygma Petrou* Fragment 2, although the phrase here could refer to a third type of worship; *Diognetus* 1.1 where Christians are differentiated from Jews and Greeks, although there is no reference to them as a third race. The derogatory reference in Suetonius, *Nero* 16.2, to Christians as a *genus* might point to an originally negative use adapted by Christians.

<sup>40</sup> “The official position is clear, and remained so for the next two centuries. Incomprehensible as the activities of Christians were, they could be tolerated providing (as Romans) they did not abandon their national duty of sacrifice to the Roman gods. The Romans had always understood and accepted that this was impossible for Jews, for whom exemption was secured. Why did they not, see that Christians stood in the same tradition, and were often themselves Jews into the bargain? There is no hint that anyone ever tried to suggest such a solution” (Judge 2008, 436).

elsewhere of the “followers of Moses and Christ” (*de Puls. Diff.* 2.4 and 3.3 respectively); and Lucian, in describing the Christian group whom the religious quack, Peregrinus, succeeds in duping, presents them in a manner that some have construed as strongly Jewish (*Peregrinus* 11-13).<sup>41</sup> These counter examples are, however, not as telling as some suggest. Lucian is describing a group in Palestine, so aspects of his description are understandable in that context (and in any case he nowhere calls those Peregrinus dupes Jews – they are clearly Christians – and he did know of Jews); and one could argue that Galen does differentiate between the two groups, but simply without using the terms ‘Jew’ and ‘Christian’. One might respond by noting that the singular ‘school’ implies something unified; but in this context we should note that Galen’s reference to a ‘school’ is simply an acknowledgement of a shared culture; and that his retention of separate names (of Moses and of Christ) indicates a clear sense of their separateness at a social level.<sup>42</sup> Into this bag of evidence we may also want to place the reforms of the *fiscus judaicus* under Nerva, which may have had the effect of making plain who identified with the Jewish community (the absence of extant evidence for Christians paying the *fiscus* may be further proof of social separation, and indeed of a particular cause of such a phenomenon),<sup>43</sup> as well as the fact of persecution of Christians (and not Jews) by Romans, which could have served to encourage a sense of separateness on the part of some non-Christian Jews.

Scholars who object to the ‘partings’ paradigm would not necessarily find the points made above too problematic for their position. That there are people who designate themselves Jews and Christians is not so important to them, not least because such people may have understood their Jewishness and their Christianity differently, some attributing considerable importance to it, and others not, especially in relation to differences with

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<sup>41</sup> It is a weakness of Judge’s robust essay (Judge 2008) that he fails to address the relevant evidence from Lucian and Galen. Reference could also be made to the passage in Epictetus, cited by Arrian in *Epict. diss.* 1.22.4, where Epictetus argues that if one is not deemed simply to be playing the part of a Jew, one must be baptised. Because of the reference to baptism rather than circumcision, some have taken Epictetus to be referring to Christians but as Jews. For a variety of reasons such an interpretation seems unlikely, not only because of its erroneous view about the exclusive association of baptism with Christian, rather than Jewish, initiation, but also because on the one occasion where Epictetus appears to be referring to Christians, he calls them “Galileans”. See Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 4.7.6, and the discussion of Stern 1980, 541 and 543-4.

<sup>42</sup> Note in this respect the comment in the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 8.5 to the effect that there is absolute convergence between the teachings of Moses and Christ. “For, there being one teaching by both (Moses and Jesus understood), God accepts him who has believed either of these.” For two contrasting accounts of the pagan evidence as it relates to Jewish and Christian identity, see Lieu 2002, 21-4, and Judge 2008.

<sup>43</sup> See Goodman 1989.

other groups (that is, between themselves and pagans, heretics, Marcionites etc.). Furthermore, and related to this, some might want to differentiate between the terms ‘Jew’ and ‘Christian’, on the one hand, and ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’, on the other. The former terms are clearly the kind of thing with which one can identify oneself; the latter are not, for when authors use these terms, they “are engaged in constructing conceptual frameworks, in which these categories and their relation to each other in turn serve to configure reality in new ways.”<sup>44</sup> Ignatius, then, may early on refer to something he calls ‘Ioudaismos’ and something he calls ‘Christianismos’ (Ign. *Magn.* 10.1, 3; Ign. *Phld.* 6.1), but these are constructed concepts in which one term depends for its meaning upon the other, and which are constantly in a state of flux. To try to define their essence is to engage in an unrealistic exercise.

Fourthly, and related to the previous point, the view that “elite authors remained so preoccupied with, and so vehement about, the boundaries between ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’ precisely because these boundaries were still being constructed, negotiated, contested and blurred ‘on the ground’ ...”, raises a number of questions.<sup>45</sup> For instance, how might we prove that such writers are seeking to create a reality (of separation) rather than, at least in part, giving expression to one? This is, of course, a complex task; and there may be as much pressure on those who would claim that such boundary-concerned works do reflect a reality, as upon those who would claim the opposite, to justify their view. Part of the approach of non-separatist scholars lies in emphasising evidence, minority evidence in this instance, which appears to contradict the kind of vision that the boundary-makers, like Justin, want to create;<sup>46</sup> and by asserting that there exist

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<sup>44</sup> Williams 2009, 42. See also Lieu 2004, 306-7. After mentioning these terms (Judaism and Christianity), she writes, “... although rooted in the language of (a very small minority of) our texts, the conceptual baggage these terms carry belongs rather more to our contemporary agenda. Far too frequently recent scholarly discussion has forgotten this, and slips ... from speaking of ‘Jews’ and ‘Christians’, to conceptualizing and fixing ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’ as if these, at least, required no further definition.”

<sup>45</sup> For he calls to read such texts “against the grain”, see also Gager 2003, 369: “Thus we have no choice but to read against the grain.” Note also Lieu’s observation that “systemic ‘othering’ was ... a textual achievement.” (Lieu 2004, 308).

<sup>46</sup> Note the strong words of Gager: “Once we look behind the historical and theological smoke screen released by these elites, what we find among what I will call ‘ordinary Christians’ is plenty of evidence to suggest that for them there was no such parting at all.” But how much evidence is plenty of evidence? Gager refers his reader to his own book of some eighteen years earlier (Gager 1985) where he emphasises a number of sources which apparently support his position (John Chrysostom, *Adversus Iudaeos*; some pertinent texts from Syria; Ignatius of Antioch; and Paul). In many ways the problem here lies in how we weight these texts, especially Chrysostom’s work. For Gager Chrysostom appears to give voice to an ongoing and significant presence of non-

clear disjunctions between assertions that such authors as Justin make in texts and the reality which some authors experienced “on the ground”.<sup>47</sup> So it would be wrong to argue that such a mistrust of early *adversus Judaeos* texts is simply the result of a type of mirror-reading, that is, a view that these ‘separatist’ texts only speak the way they do because they oppose a conflicting opinion of the way things are. But on occasion it may seem to some that elements of the case made are exaggerated. So, if Justin is the man who tries, for the first time to create Judaism and Christianity (although, interestingly, he does not, as previously noted, use these terms) and he does so by artificially emphasising their absolute difference, why should he have taken the apparently liberal position he did on the issue of Jews who continue to obey the Jewish Torah when they convert to Christianity (*Dial.* 47)? Interestingly, he contrasts his view on this matter with the apparent *opinio communis*, which seems to be in favour of harsher treatment of such individuals, implying, interestingly, that ‘separatism’ as an ideal precedes his own time. Such an observation implies questions about the extent to which Justin is the kind of innovative separatist some scholars, especially Boyarin, assume him to be, although for the latter Justin’s distinctiveness partially lies in the way in which he seeks to define Judaism in the process of defining heresy.

This raises the important question of weighting; or expressed as a question, is it possible to affirm that separatists were from an early stage the most influential members of the Christian and Jewish communities? The answer is clearly ‘yes’ if we take seriously the texts which have come down to us, both within the New Testament, where, interestingly, on a number of occasions, separatism is a measure associated with Jews, and one which Christians resent,<sup>48</sup> and outside of it (*Barnabas*; Ignatius; Melito). But, as we have indicated, suspicion about the representative character of received texts is precisely the problem; and many of these texts could be said to ‘protest too much’. What other courses lie open to us if we wish to answer this question? Recently, Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra has argued that one way forward lies in analysing the contents of libraries and looking at the distribution of the remains of texts which might be described as ‘core’ (the

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separatists within the church whereas for others the best explanation for Chrysostom’s outburst lies in the circumstances of the time when large number of new converts were entering the church, converts who were unaware of the separate nature of Judaism and Christianity. For further discussion of Chrysostom’s work, see Kinzig 1991; and Fonrobert 2005, 237-43.

<sup>47</sup> See Lieu 2002, 25.

<sup>48</sup> See especially John 9:22. For this point, see Horbury 1998, 13, who notes that “(e)ternal impulses towards separation ... impinged on Christians from the majority Jewish community long before the Christians themselves were ready to envisage such separate existence.”

LXX), ‘shared’ (apocryphal and related texts), and ‘group-specific’. Where group-specific texts appear to be in the majority, then we can, so Stökl Ben Ezra argues, assume something approaching separation. Stökl Ben Ezra first engages in a test of the remains at Qumran, by far and away the most substantially intact ancient library for which we have material evidence. He shows how the distribution of the books preserved here point to a substantially Jewish identity for the group. Turning to the Christian evidence, he notes that nothing comparable to Qumran survives but that a test can be carried out on the basis of all surviving Christian papyri, all of which come from Egypt. On the basis of the statistics produced, Stökl Ben Ezra is able to state that “our only papyrological evidence speaks so far in favor of a developed independent Christian identity quite early on.”<sup>49</sup>

Scholars may question some of the assumptions upon which Stökl Ben Ezra’s article is based;<sup>50</sup> and papyrologists will need to examine his claims with their expert eye. Also open to critical scrutiny is his definition of what constitutes a ‘group specific’ Christian text, especially in the light of all that we have discussed above. However, Stökl Ben Ezra has at least gone some way to indicating an alternative and possibly less controversial way of approaching the question of ‘the partings’ than simply arguing about the representative or accurate character of the received literary tradition. That it tends to a more conservative position on the matter is interesting.<sup>51</sup>

Related to this point is a fifth one. If it is only the elite who are arguing for boundaries, or if such individuals misrepresent the reality of the situation as they actually experience it, a reality, which is altogether more complex, a criss-crossing of muddy paths, which only the expert tracker can make sense of,<sup>52</sup> then we have to ask how it was that the lucubrations of such a group came, relatively quickly, to be the reality, and to dictate how Jewish-Christian relations turned out. As Kalmin notes, in his critique of Boyarin’s *Border Lines*: “He (Boyarin) never satisfactorily answers the question of how we move from the production of a few intellectuals to the beliefs and practices of the overwhelming majority of Jews and Chris-

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<sup>49</sup> Stökl Ben Ezra 2009, 186.

<sup>50</sup> These are: that “there exists a relation between a group’s identity and its library”; that “there is a correlation between accidental survival and representativeness;” and that it is legitimate to draw general conclusions from specifically Egyptian evidence. All of these issues are addressed by Stökl Ben Ezra.

<sup>51</sup> Note the cautious way he summarizes his conclusion: “That form of Christianity, whose textual identity largely relied on its own group-specific texts, was most probably numerically more important than that form of Christianity, whose textual identity was similar to a Jewish sect such as Qumran or presumably Jewish Christianity.” (Stökl Ben Ezra 2009, 186. Also note his use of the colours of the rainbow analogy).

<sup>52</sup> Lieu 2002, 29.

tians.”<sup>53</sup> Surely the writings of the elite had some effect, that is, they did help in the *actual* formation of boundaries, and no doubt they helped because they reflected a developing reality. Of course, in all of this I am not excluding the reasonable assumption that boundary-formers, if we might use that term, were engaged in an interpretative process, that their presentation of the views, opinions and profile of a ‘Jew’ and a ‘Christian’ were subjective in a very real sense, and that they concealed a more complex reality, in the same way as a more complex reality is concealed beneath the political tags of ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ as these are used in the United States.<sup>54</sup> I simply wish to assert a more complex interaction between these opinion formers and those whose opinions they were trying to form.

Another point relates to questions of difference and their role in the whole reconstruction of the history of Jewish-Christian relations. A positive effect of the ‘ways that never parted’ paradigm has been to play up continuities, and often to see efforts at constructing difference to be artificial. This is most obviously the case in Daniel Boyarin’s intriguing discussion of Justin’s use of binitarian theology.<sup>55</sup> It is Boyarin’s claim that Justin’s view that Jews do not hold binitarian views, that Jewish difference can be located especially at this point, is a constructed one, and that it intentionally misrepresents Jewish opinion, for in Boyarin’s opinion, Jews in general did entertain a Logos, and so implicitly, binitarian, theology. It is only the rabbis, in response, or apparently in response, to Christianity who begin to make such opinions heretical with their attack upon those who entertain the idea of there being ‘two powers in heaven’. Boyarin’s thesis is contentious. The sources on which he bases his wide-ranging conclusions about Jewish binitarianism are problematic, as is his reading of the prologue of John’s Gospel in terms of a kind of history of Jewish binitarianism.<sup>56</sup> If Jews did not entertain binitarian theology to the extent suggested by Boyarin, then is the connection between them less obvious than Boyarin contends, and the view, to quote Boyarin himself, that Jews and Christians were joined at the hip<sup>57</sup> less compelling? And what might the role of such difference have been in dividing Christ-believers amongst Jews from non-Christian believers? This matter, of course, has been the subject of massive debate amongst Christian and Jewish scholars with various opinions expressed. But the question it raises, namely about the extent to which Christianity was divisive in early Christian history is vital. Boyarin’s attempt to

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<sup>53</sup> Kalmin in Burrus, Kalmin, Lapin, and Marcus 2006, 15.

<sup>54</sup> I owe this opinion to Annette Yoshiko Reed in email correspondence.

<sup>55</sup> Boyarin 2004, 89-150.

<sup>56</sup> Boyarin 2004, 89-111. For an intelligent and convincing critique of this interpretation, see Marcus in Burrus, Kalmin, Lapin, and Marcus 2006, 27-9.

<sup>57</sup> Boyarin 2004, 5.

dampen its impact by assuming its shared character remains unproven (although the very fact of the shared character of the beliefs, but a difference of opinion on the identity of the Logos, might have served to aggravate relations). This does not mean that even if we can prove the divisiveness of the issue, we have thereby demonstrated the separateness of Judaism and Christianity. Questions of authority and uniformity are raised as well as some others, but in such discussion we should not lose sight of the issue of difference.<sup>58</sup> Such observations also apply to the question of the ever-increasing Gentile profile of the developing church. Would not non-Christian Jews have seen that as problematic? And even if that may not have led to a casting out of Christians from the non-Christian Jewish fold, could it not have led to a drifting away, particularly when these Gentiles would not have observed distinctive Jewish laws?<sup>59</sup>

Another question concerns the relationship of social separation (that is, the view that Jews and Christians could be identified as different) and ideological separation. When we turn to many of the extant sources which talk about Jews and Christians, it would not seem unreasonable to assume on many occasions that Jews and Christians lived separately. But living separately is not the same as being different ideologically. So, for instance, when Galen refers to the “school of Moses and of Christ”, to which reference has already been made, is he doing no more than acknowledging social separateness, but pointing up ideological convergence?<sup>60</sup> And if so,

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<sup>58</sup> For the importance of Christology for separation, see Hurtado 2003; and from a different angle, Horbury 1998, 12. Although taking issue with Hurtado’s view that early Christology was ‘deviant’ in relation to known Jewish speculation about a range of mediatorial figures, Horbury still argues that the claim that Jesus was the Messiah “defined Christians sharply as a group with separate meetings and a distinct allegiance.” Corresponding claims about the true Israel would simply have served to make this sense of difference more acute.

<sup>59</sup> Goodman 2007, 512-38, argues strongly for the view that Christians were largely responsible for separating from non-Christian Jews, and not vice-versa. Part of his thesis is dependent upon the view that Christians whom we know of never call themselves Jews, an observation which inclines him to the view that they consciously sought to avoid the term. Such avoidance was understandable given the strong unpopularity of Jews in the period following 70 C.E. and the fall of Jerusalem. Goodman’s thesis does not take enough account of places in the New Testament where Jewish exclusion of Christians is implied, or places both in the New Testament and later sources where an association with Jews is not held to be undesirable. For a critique of Goodman’s work, see Carleton Paget 2009.

<sup>60</sup> “Yet, for the outsider, doctrinal issues must have seemed to put the two groups close together, depending perhaps on one’s sensitivity to the significance of abstruse doctrinal debate.” (Lieu 2002, 23). A vague parallel to that of Galen might be found in Josephus. In referring to Christians, he can at one point assume that they are a separate group (his description of them in the much discussed *Testimonium Flavianum*, as a tribe or *φῦλον* at *A.J.* 18.64, implies separation. If he had used the term *αἵρεσις*, or school of

how does that impact upon issues of separation considered more generally? How, in short, are we to define separation?

The points raised above in response to the criticism of the ‘parting of the ways’ paradigm are not attempts to reinstate that paradigm. Rather they are attempts to question what has become its alternative and a few of the assumptions which support it. In some senses the word ‘alternative’ misrepresents the scholars opposed to the old paradigm. For instance, some are intent on doing no more than correcting the apparent, but not always self-evident, assumption of the paradigm that Christianity and Judaism developed without reference to each other. Others, by contrast, are keen to take on the whole separateness issue, and by extension the question of the legitimacy of talking about Judaism and Christianity; and even this group of scholars may differ in the degree to which they argue that case. So, for instance, there seems to be a difference between the way Boyarin approaches this question with his claim that until Constantine only Judaeo-Christianity existed, and Reed and Becker’s understanding of the matter. They question separateness as a category because of issues of convergence but they do not appear to adopt as radical a position on the appropriateness of the terms ‘Jew’ and ‘Christian’ through the creation of the category ‘Judaeo-Christianity’. And one may be able to distinguish this position from the one adopted by Lieu.<sup>61</sup>

Much of this debate, of course, boils down to issues of perspective, as Martin Goodman has noted,<sup>62</sup> and this is the case not just when we come to consider the ancient evidence, but also when we come to consider those studying the ancient evidence, many of whom may be operating with different understandings of identity, and in turn, of separation. My own view is a mildly separatist one, that is, I hold to the thesis that relatively early on, for whatever reason,<sup>63</sup> whether by design or not, Jews and Christians

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thought, as he does when discussing the Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and the ‘fourth philosophy’, he would have indicated much more clearly that they were a movement within Judaism); but at another (his almost certainly authentic account of the death of James where the fact that James is the brother of Jesus is acknowledged but there is no sense in which he is anything other than a Jew [*A.J.* 20.200]) can imply that he understands them as Jews. Here, of course, the difference may be accounted for by reference to different sources emanating from different periods and/or places.

<sup>61</sup> See Lieu 1996.

<sup>62</sup> Goodman 2003. See also Lieu 2004, 305. In commenting on why the debate about the relationship of Judaism and Christianity has largely failed to arrive at a consensus, she states that “much depends on whether the respondent is a hypothetical Jew, Christian, or pagan of the time, or is the contemporary scholar, or even the believer, both the latter having the benefits of hindsight and of subsequent history.”

<sup>63</sup> I doubt, as many have argued, that the first Jewish revolt and the Bar Kokhba revolt played a formative role in separation. Certainly the former must have considerably weakened the status and importance of the Jerusalem community of Christians, and the ap-

were, in the main, discernible groups occupying different spaces for the purposes of worship (broadly social separation), and were perceived as different (in this context we should note the importance of the pagan evidence cited earlier in this piece), but that such a reality did not exclude interaction and convergence, nor the observation that those who worried about such interaction and convergence, sought in different and contrasting ways to articulate and construct what they thought that difference consisted in, while others played down difference. Moreover, I do not doubt, and do not think that my position excludes, the possibility that there were groups of people marked by a certain ‘religious lability’, groups, for instance, who may originally have been Jews but had failed to sever their family ties, or felt at ease moving between both communities, a point implied in comments made by Origen, by the canons of Elvira and Laodicea in the fourth century, by John Chrysostom’s attack on Judaizing Christians, and by some ecclesiastical legislation.<sup>64</sup> Also my conclusion is general, and does not seek to play down the possibility that even the proposed mild form of separatism was less in evidence in some places (for instance, the Persian Empire), than it was elsewhere. Such a view, it seems to me at least, takes seriously the evidence for the existence of different Christian and Jewish communities, observed as such by a medley of outsiders, while at the same time not indulging in some essentialist vision of how and in what way Jews and Christians differed, or being too rigid in how important they perceived that difference

I think it is correct to suggest that the debate I have outlined above, with all its complexity and lack of certitude, constitutes the most significant recent development in the discussion of ancient Jewish-Christian relations. It relates in various ways to another aspect of the subject, namely the question of Jewish-Christian interaction albeit in a somewhat complex way. Lying at the centre of this question, as with the one we have just been dealing

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parent failure of Christians to participate in either revolt may have served to antagonise relations between some non-Christian Jews and Christian Jews resident in Palestine (we hear from Justin of explicit instances of tension in the Bar Kokhba revolt). But Christian objection to the revolts may have reflected a significant aspect of Jewish opinion, a point made plain by the failure of either revolt to elicit much Jewish support beyond the confines of Palestine. I doubt also that institutional moves, such as the alleged publication of the Twelfth Benediction of the *Amidah*, were as important as some have traditionally contended, though we should not dismiss the possibility that in certain places where rabbis had some authority, and where the prayer was operative, it played some role in dividing Christian from Jew (on this see Marcus 2009). The process I would suggest was determined by local factors and not straightforwardly linear. Its causes may have arisen because of non-Christian Jewish hostility to Christians, but may also have arisen through the less easily described drift of Christians from the local synagogue, already implied in the writings of Paul.

<sup>64</sup> This point is made by Schwartz 2001, 184.

with, is the issue of sources. Do the sources we possess allow us to assume that Christians and Jews in fact took an interest in each other, that they were in fact in *viva voce* contact? Or are the relevant sources deceptive in this regard, and in fact evidence of no more than how Jews and Christians imagined each other? This debate has a long history stretching back to the late nineteenth century to A. von Harnack who argued strongly that in most cases where Christians argued *adversus Judaeos* they were arguing *adversus gentes*. In support of his thesis Harnack pointed to the stereotypical manner in which the Jews were presented and the repetitive character of much of the material. The thesis also arose from his own assumption, already referred to, that Judaism, or *Spätjudentum*, as he put it, was hardly worthy of debating with, so insignificant and inward-looking had it become. The subject of 'Judaism' was only relevant to Christians, so Harnack claimed, insofar as it impinged upon the debate Christians were having with Gentiles.<sup>65</sup> Refutations of Harnack's view were presented by J. Juster,<sup>66</sup> and more influentially, by Marcel Simon. Simon argued that Harnack's explanation of the existence of *adversus Judaeos* literature was less than convincing. Why not simply have literature *adversus gentes* if the intended audience were the Gentiles? More particularly, Simon attempted to show that Christians could not ignore Jews, who far from being members of an ailing and depleted body, were part of a vigorous movement intent upon proselytising Gentiles, and so inevitably involved in a conflict with Christians. In such a setting literature *adversus Judaeos* became necessary. In more recent times Harnack's position, which continued to have its advocates, has resurrected itself, in admittedly different, and more radical, guise in the work of Rosemary Radford Ruether<sup>67</sup> and Miriam Taylor.<sup>68</sup> In distinctive ways both argue for the thesis that much Christian *adversus Judaeos* literature is best accounted for by reference to tendencies in Christian theology; and in the work of Taylor the point is made that attempts to argue for the reactive character of the Christian anti-Jewish tradition too easily assume that Jews merited the polemic they received.<sup>69</sup> Others have sought a mediating position in which Christian comments about Jews are seen to be a complex cocktail of 'image and reality'.<sup>70</sup>

The difficulty in all of this is not only the obvious rhetorical setting of much anti-Jewish Christian writing, but the relative absence of any relevant Jewish literature, with the exception of the large corpus of rabbinic

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<sup>65</sup> See Harnack 1883.

<sup>66</sup> Juster 1914.

<sup>67</sup> Ruether 1974.

<sup>68</sup> Taylor 1995.

<sup>69</sup> Taylor 1995, 196.

<sup>70</sup> Lieu 1996.

material, much of which is quite late, and most of which refers irregularly to Christians. This latter point is important because without Jewish sources we are unable to ‘fact check’ as one scholar has aptly put it, that is, we are unable to determine whether what we are being told about Judaism in anti-Jewish Christian works, or even non-polemical works, accords with the ‘facts’. And what sources we do have, in the main rabbinic, carry with them their own difficulties, in part bound up with the degree to which we deem them ‘representative’ of Judaism more widely. Scholars do, of course, make attempts to tie in what we read in Christian sources with the Jewish material, but their ‘results’ are often subjects of dispute.

Three further points need to be made: recent times have seen a growing interest in trying to indicate the shared culture of Jews and Christians, in particular as this relates to scriptural interpretation.<sup>71</sup> The aim of much of this work is to indicate the liveliness of contact between Christian and Jew, and much interesting work has been done. But there remain cautious voices who are clear that the existence of such common traditions need not imply contact, and that there are differences between Jews and Christians in the biblical texts they use;<sup>72</sup> and the manner in which they use them.<sup>73</sup> So, for instance, Martin Hengel has argued for the essentially Christian character of the Septuagintal collection of books, and maintained that perfervid Christian usage of that collection led to a growing dissatisfaction amongst Jews with this particular biblical version.<sup>74</sup> Others, however, have argued for an ongoing respect for the Septuagint amongst Jews and for the essentially Jewish character of the collection seeking, *inter alia*, to correct what they take to be a one-sided interpretation of rabbinic evidence for a negative attitude to the Septuagint, and to argue, here in part anticipating trends in the study of Jewish-Christian relations, that “the evident wish to possess the scriptures revered by the Jews would have hindered Christian adoption of a strikingly non-Jewish collection.”<sup>75</sup>

The second point relates to archaeological evidence. Such evidence has been used in a variety of ways. At one level some have sought to emphasise how the existence of a large public building like the synagogue at Sardis indicates how it would have been almost impossible for the Christians to ignore the Jewish community, a community whose self-confidence and opulence are plainly evidenced in the grandeur of the excavated building.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Stemberger 1996; Horbury 1998.

<sup>72</sup> Stemberger 1996, commented upon by Horbury 1998, 26-7; and 200-25.

<sup>73</sup> For a list of these perceived differences and a critique of an emphasis on contrast, see Reed 2007.

<sup>74</sup> Hengel 1994.

<sup>75</sup> Horbury 1998, 32. He provides further arguments for holding the Septuagintal collection of books to be Jewish.

<sup>76</sup> See Kraabel 1983, and many others.

At another level finds in various parts of the western empire, which imply the proximity of Jewish and Christian communities in various cities<sup>77</sup> as well as the use of the same cemeteries<sup>78</sup> and reuse of artefacts used by one group by another group without obliterating distinctive symbols, which betrayed ownership by the former,<sup>79</sup> have been used to support the likelihood of interaction and exchange, and the accuracy of the 'official' picture of Jewish-Christian relations presented in well-known patristic literature.<sup>80</sup> Of course, much of the evidence cited is ambiguous, and can lead different scholars to quite different conclusions,<sup>81</sup> but the fact it can at times stand in tension with the implication of the more familiar textual sources is at least of note.

The third point worth noting concerns the relationship of this discussion to the 'partings' debate outlined above. To many who oppose the 'partings' paradigm, convergence, cross-fertilisation, in essence contact, is an assumption of their critical position (in fact for some contact might not quite be the appropriate term for it could be said to assume contact between clearly defined entities and it is precisely their point that the entities discussed are not clearly defined, and that the boundaries between them are constantly being negotiated). Many of these scholars would, of course, be sympathetic to a reading of the *adversus Judaeos* literature in terms, which emphasises the artificiality of what we find in these texts, even if with different purposes. But they would be far keener to press home evidence of convergence and interaction as it manifests itself elsewhere, not simply in

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<sup>77</sup> See Crawford 1988, 40-3, who draws attention to the fact that the colonnade proximate to the Sardis synagogue, and built about 400 C.E., contained ten shops owned by Christians and six by Jews, some of which were next to each other.

<sup>78</sup> See Rutgers 1992, 109-15. He points to evidence of shared cemeteries at Venosa, Taranto, S. Antioco, Thessaloniki, several sites in Asia Minor, Alexandria, Carthage and Edessa, amongst others. He notes that "(i)n an area of life where good care and proper procedures were of prime importance (such as burial), people must have acted very consciously." That Jews did not mind being buried alongside non-Jews is an indication of more peaceable and involved relations than might be indicated in the literary sources.

<sup>79</sup> See Crawford 1988, 42, who notes the existence in one of what he assumes to be the Jewish shops of Sardis of a weighing device which still retains a Christian cross on it. By contrast, he goes on to argue, pagan symbols were removed from artefacts acquired by Jews and Christians.

<sup>80</sup> So, see Crawford 1988, 38: "Archaeology, however, provides somewhat of a corrective (to evidence of anti-Semitic attitudes amongst Christians)"; and more forcibly, Rutgers 1992, 115: "Their (Jews' and Christians') lives were hardly affected by the sterile patristic discussions as to which faith really constituted *Verus Israel*."

<sup>81</sup> "Usually, material remains can establish only the bare fact of proximity or coexistence, leaving the analyst to fill in the quality of such spatial relations, often with highly contradictory conclusions. Stones can only tell so much of the story, and, eventually, the historian will find herself turning to the fraught literary remains of Christians." (Jacobs 2008, 174).

terms of Christians being influenced by Jews but vice-versa.<sup>82</sup> That is, for them Miriam Taylor and others assume a hermetically sealed sense of separation between the two where Jews by and large ignore Christians, while Christians argue abstractly with Jews of their own creation. These assumptions they take to be in need of considerable revision, while accepting the constructed character of many of the elite texts' presentations of Jews.

The recent debate about Jewish-Christian relations discussed above has served to complicate what was thought to be a well understood subject. Where, in broad terms, it was once argued that a coherent narrative of the Jewish-Christian schism could be told, involving a moment or moments of separation, and the establishment of clearly defined entities, Judaism and Christianity, recognised as such by insiders and outsiders alike, now a growing number of scholars argue against moments of separation and for less clear boundaries between movements who can only with difficulty, and possibly not at all, be referred to as Judaism and Christianity, these understood to be fixed entities with core beliefs. Flux, fluidity, convergence, blur, negotiation, porousness, these have, to some at least, become the buzz words in the study of the subject. In many ways this movement away from a narrative with an end, caused by significant events on the way, is itself the result of developments in the study of ancient Judaism and Christianity, and a straightforward admission on the part of some that the sources available to us are "fraught and complex" (Jacobs 2008), and do not allow us to gain a properly objective view from the 'ground'. Of course, such an observation can on occasion fall both ways, whether we are engaged in discussion of elite sources and the extent to which they reflect reality or not, especially the reality of separation, or the consequences of the Constantinian settlement, for example. And there is also a sense, following from this remark, of the weight of importance one attributes to various pieces of evidence. What is clear is that the evidence will not sit easily with any one interpretation, even if the present author prefers a thesis in favour of what he has termed a mild form of separatism.

In various ways the essays reprinted here interact with aspects of the debate I have outlined above. In the first essay, "Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity", by way of a review article of Miriam Taylor's work of 1995, I seek to present the arguments in favour of seeing Christian anti-Jewish literature as in some sense reflective of aspects of Jewish-Christian interaction, while appreciating the complexities involved in presenting such a case. The two essays, which follow argue the same case, in the first in relation to a particular verse in the *Epistle of Barnabas*; and in the second to the writings of Clement of Alexandria.

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<sup>82</sup> See, for instance, Stökl Ben Ezra 2003.

The three pieces, which follow on messianism, Jews and Christians in Alexandria, and proselytism, might be said to come under the general heading of ideological continuity, or convergence, if one prefers that term. The first of these addresses the role of messianism amongst Jews and Christians in Egypt and asks to what extent these are reflective one of the other. There is a sense, of course, in which Christian messianism is at once antagonistic to non-Christian Jewish messianism precisely in its identification of Jesus as the Messiah. In this regard, it is reasonable to see the possibly messianic Jewish revolt of 115-117 C.E., sometimes referred to as the Trajanic revolt, as decisively dividing Christians and non-Christian Jews in Egypt. But, as the essay attempts to show, continuities of an ideological kind exist, not only in the assertions made by Jews and Christians in Egypt about what attributes and actions were expected of the Messiah, but also in the apparent ambivalence towards messianic categories, as evidenced in Philo from the Jewish side, and his later Christian successor, Origen. The second looks at Jews and Christians in the city of Alexandria, and in particular at the image of the city, which emerges from each of the traditions. More often than not the image we are presented with is implicit rather than explicit, especially in the work of the famous Christian writers, Clement and Origen. These writers as well as Aristobulus and Philo imply an intellectual place in which biblical and Hellenic culture can be seen to come together. However, there is also a sense of the city as a place of temptations and debauchery, and of violence, where the mob remains a threat, and where revolt becomes a reality. In this seamier image of the city Jews and Christians come close to some pagan views of the city, as seen in the second-century Dio Chrysostom's *Oration* 32. The third piece is a point-by-point response to Martin Goodman's, *Mission and Conversion* which presented the bold thesis that Christians introduced a new concept into the ancient world, that of proselytic mission understood as the self-conscious pursuit of converts. In the article an attempt is made to show why such a thesis seems to be a tendentious reading of the available evidence. This piece is more generally relevant to the discussion of Jewish-Christian relations in that it is directly concerned with the complex issue of missionary competition between Jews and Christians.<sup>83</sup>

The last two essays deal with evidence for Jewish comment on Christianity. As noted above, such evidence is in very short supply relative to Christian comment, and is often created by the mirror reading of relevant Christian texts or the discovery of apparently genuine anti-Christian Jewish traditions in the same literature. In the first of these two contributions, and the longest piece in the volume, I deal with two notorious passages in

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<sup>83</sup> Publications written subsequent to the appearance of this article have divided quite evenly on the central question.

Josephus, which comment upon two central characters in the history of the earliest manifestation of the Christian movement, Jesus and his brother, James. Much of the article is taken up with a detailed review of conflicting theories about the original content, if any, of in particular the passage about Jesus, the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum*. In the process of the study the point is made, in an extended form at the end of the article, that many of the difficulties connected with the passage emerge from the fact that much of the discussion, directly or indirectly, pertains to assumptions about Jewish-Christian relations at the time Josephus wrote. One's decision as to what to include or not in a mooted version of the *Testimonium*, in the face of the absence of compelling textual evidence, will inevitably be related to what one deems it possible for a non-Christian Jew, like Josephus, who lived at the end of the first century, to write about the founding figure of Christianity. The second piece concerns itself with evidence for Jewish knowledge of the Christian Gospels. Much of the relevant evidence is covered as this appears in Jewish and Christian sources, and a tentative case is made for the existence of a Jewish anti-gospel before the fourth century.

### Jewish Christianity

The discussion of Jewish Christianity has, from its inception, always been contested. Recent developments in a variety of areas related to ancient Jewish and Christian history, in particular concerning the discussion of Jewish-Christian relations, as described above, have only served to make the subject more controversial. In this context pressing questions have been asked about the viability of the term, the identity of Jewish Christians (are they to be considered as Jews or Christians, or something else?), and their place in traditional histories of ancient Christianity and Judaism, where they are more often than not seen as relics or fossils of an earlier apostolic and sub-apostolic age, but where, if one accepts the view of the leakiness and fluidity of the boundaries, which divided Jews from Christians, their position can be seen as less transgressive than some have assumed.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> "If we can no longer presume that 'Jew' and 'Christian' were firmly established as mutually-exclusive religious identities by the close of the second century C.E., then we cannot also assume as a matter of course that the so-called 'Jewish Christians' of Late Antiquity were transgressing a clear-cut boundary between 'normative' Judaism and 'normative' Christianity or forging a hybrid identity based on universally accepted notions of 'Jew' and 'Christian'." (Reed 2003, 202).

A central question in much discussion of this subject relates to the problem of definition. Recent engagement with the subject has tended, in a slightly different guise, to repeat many of the definitions of an earlier age. In general it might be said that J. Daniélou's understanding of the term as somehow describing a theological atmosphere continues to have its advocates.<sup>85</sup> So many is the place in a book about early Christian theology where we will find the adjective 'Jewish Christian' used to describe something Jewish-sounding in a Christian text (for want of a better term). Such usage may not imply an endorsement of Daniélou's wider thesis of a Jewish-Christian period in the church's history, or his view that this can somehow be defined as a movement,<sup>86</sup> but in its tendency to see some concepts as 'Jewish Christian', it comes close to something that Daniélou would recognise.<sup>87</sup>

More popular, however, has been a narrower definition which associates the term with those, normally assumed to be of Jewish birth, who insist on continuing observance of distinctive Jewish laws such as circumcision, Sabbath, the food laws etc.<sup>88</sup> Sometimes such a definition can be aligned to particular Christologies as well as some sort of 'genealogical' relationship to the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem; and frequently scholars who adopt this definition argue, here reflecting the old position of F. C. Baur, that what they describe is a significant movement within the church. However, many eschew such specificity on the grounds that the theological profiles developed do not always accord with the views attributed to those Christians who appear to adopt distinctive Jewish practices, and that establishing a genealogical link of these Jewish Christian groups with the earliest Jerusalem community is fraught with difficulty. Preference is expressed for the acceptance of 'Jewish Christianities' whose common inheritance lays in aspects of their behaviour (observance of distinctive Jewish laws) but who vary in the ideological positions they adopt.

And yet such a definition presents a number of problems. First, it remains unclear which parts of the law should be kept in order to make someone a Jewish Christian. In addition to this, and following the work of J. Z. Smith,<sup>89</sup> It has been asked whether there is not something inherently problematic about identifying a single trait as "the hard core of a given class of religion ... for inasmuch as religions are subject to change over time, there is neither a theoretical basis nor an empirical warrant for the

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<sup>85</sup> See Daniélou 1964.

<sup>86</sup> Criticisms of Daniélou's work are found in many places. For a recent one, see Jackson-McCabe 2007.

<sup>87</sup> Mimouni and Jones 2001. Note the varied character of the essays there.

<sup>88</sup> See Mimouni 1998, 70, for one recent expression of such a definition.

<sup>89</sup> See Smith 1990 and 1996.

assumption that any given ancestral trait would persist in any given descendant.”<sup>90</sup> This has led Smith and others to argue that classification should be ‘polythetic’, that is, that classes should be viewed in terms of sets of traits, many of which are possessed by many members of the same class, but with no single one necessary for inclusion. Thirdly, and possibly less obviously, some have noted that such a definition “does not adequately address the basic problem highlighted by post-Holocaust scholarship, namely the rationale for including any given ancient group or text within the class ‘Christianity’ rather than ‘Judaism.’”<sup>91</sup> This point obviously has its roots in an understanding of the diversity of ancient Judaism, and the capacity for people called Jews to entertain high opinions of Jesus without ceasing to be Jews.

Against this background, the editors of what is up to this point, the most detailed book on the subject yet written, have decided to use the term “Jewish believer in Jesus”.<sup>92</sup> Insisting on origin as the determinative criterion in establishing the group, has the advantage that it appears to pick up on ideas already found in the relevant primary literature where on occasion Christian authors describe people as ‘believing Jews.’<sup>93</sup> Moreover, in these instances their Jewishness appears to be exclusively bound up with their origins, or as Skarsaune and Hvalvik put it, “ethnicity is the sole criterion for the adjective ‘Jewish.’”<sup>94</sup>

In response, however, to this attempt at redefinition, one is inevitably led to ask if we are actually defining anything meaningful. Skarsaune and Hvalvik are aware of this problem and address it directly by asserting that for the “Jewish and Christian leadership”, left undefined, Jewish believers were always in some sense a problem. Unlike Gentile believers they were perceived by the Jewish leadership as apostate; and regarded by the Christian leadership as special and/or problematic. “The Jewish believers themselves could, by the very nature of things, hardly be totally unaffected by these outside evaluations. As believers in Jesus they had, in one way or other, to relate to the fact of their Jewishness. They were hardly ever allowed not to.”<sup>95</sup> What, then, is meaningful about the category is precisely that the Jewishness it describes is problematic and a clear factor in the view of both the Jewish believer and leadership figures of the Jewish and Christian communities viewing them. Hvalvik and Skarsaune accept that

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<sup>90</sup> Jackson-McCabe 2007, 36.

<sup>91</sup> Jackson-McCabe 2007, 35.

<sup>92</sup> See Skarsaune and Hvalvik 2007.

<sup>93</sup> The relevant passages are listed in Skarsaune and Hvalvik 2007, 5-6.

<sup>94</sup> Skarsaune and Hvalvik 2007, 7. Interestingly, they do not abandon the term ‘Jewish Christian’, using it to refer to those of Jewish origin who continue to lead their life in accordance with Jewish practices. See *ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 7-8.

their thesis may fall foul of those who deny a clear distinction between Jew and Christian at this early stage in Christian history, but they argue that those who sought to police the border between the two, namely the leaders of both groups, eventually did win out. “Those who crossed the border or who settled on it could hardly be unaware that the emerging and gradually dominant leadership of their respective religious communities defined them as people trying to combine incompatible identities.”<sup>96</sup> All of this raises questions about the identification of the ‘leadership’ described;<sup>97</sup> and the degree to which either group of leaders would have seen the difficulty with these individuals explicitly in terms of their Jewishness and in what way (the mere fact of it? Some manifestation of it?). It is, of course, well known that insofar as ‘Jewishness’ was felt by leaders of the Christian community to be a problematic characteristic of followers of Christ, it was more often than not associated with their observance of certain Jewish laws, and not ethnicity. Moreover, the number of texts Hvalvik and Skarsaune can point to which actually refer to Christians in terms of their origins is quite small;<sup>98</sup> and only in one case can one demonstrate that the author who reports their existence notes that their origin as ethnic Jews is an issue, and in this context not because it is problematic to him.<sup>99</sup> We can no doubt speculate about how Jewish believers related to their Jewishness insofar as they even thought about it in a conscious way; but explicit evidence is rare – in fact our extant sources are uninterested in questions of ethnic origins, at least as that question is perceived in the present. Skarsaune and Hvalvik admit at least the first part of the criticism when they concede that if “we were to limit the ancient evidence on Jewish believers in Jesus to those passages that explicitly speak about them, the story of Jewish believers would be rather slim ...”<sup>100</sup> In the face of this observation they seek to create criteria for establishing the Jewish origins of a believer, the most important of which is a demonstration of competence in things Jewish, which they admit is not fool-proof, a point which becomes clear

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>97</sup> See Boyarin 2009, 31-2. He notes that Skarsaune and Hvalvik fail to define what they mean by ‘Jewish leadership’; or to take seriously the fact that the category to which they are referring are not ‘apostates’ but *minim*, that is, deviant Jews. Similarly, he objects to allowing the leadership to define the entity.

<sup>98</sup> Only eight references are cited to (ibid. 5-6), of which four come from Origen, *Cels.* 2.1. The passages are referred to as a selection but it is a selection from a very small pool.

<sup>99</sup> This is the passage from Origen’s *Contra Celsum* mentioned above, and here Origen introduces them as a riposte to Celsus’ claim that Christianity is an apostate movement from Judaism.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 18.

when we examine Skarsaune's own chapters in the volume on what for want of better term we might call implicit Jewish believers.

So in the end the real difficulty with Skarsaune and Hvalvik's conception of Jewish believers is not that it fails to refer to a known reality – it obviously does, and one to which on occasion Christian and Jewish sources refer – but that it is difficult for a variety of reasons to know how important the origin of such people was, both to themselves and to others. Moreover, establishing criteria for determining who might belong to such a reality is almost impossible; and we have, in the end, to wonder that even if we think we can extend our information about such people beyond the places where their Jewish origin is explicitly mentioned whether we have in fact defined something worth defining.<sup>101</sup> However, in this context we should note that what is deemed 'worth defining' may be determined to some extent by a Bauresque quest for a party or some broadly unified ideology.

In the face of this malaise some have announced the need to do away with the term; and to those who doubt the helpfulness or indeed the accuracy of talking about Judaism and Christianity in this period, the term is in any case meaningless.<sup>102</sup> Those who have expressed themselves skeptical of current definitions, and on occasion have announced that there has been almost no progress in the study of the subject, have, in spite of their sharply expressed reservations, sought to argue for the ongoing significance of the subject. So Jackson-McCabe, in his introduction to the multi-authored volume of 2007 entitled *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered*, has asserted that the ancient groups who have given rise to the terms 'Jewish Christian' and 'Jewish Christianity' "(i)nasmuch as they exhibit traits associated with *either* Judaism *or* Christianity as these categories are traditionally conceived ... challenge us to rethink received wisdom about the boundaries that define and separate these classes and the extent to which the appeal to them is helpful for the historical redescription of religions in antiquity."<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Boyarin 2009, 33, thinks that there is something worthwhile in taking seriously the interaction between groups of Jewish and groups of Gentile origin, but does not address the issue of how we might identify these groups.

<sup>102</sup> Boyarin 2009, 29: "... an historical understanding that obviates the categories of Judaism and Christianity (for some purposes until the mid-second century and for others until the fourth) will certainly have no use whatever for the category of Jewish Christianity, implying as it does, precisely what the historical account denies." And: "I am suggesting that the problem is not how to define Jewish Christianity, but why we should be using such a category at all?" Also note Skarsaune, summarising Boyarin's take on the term, in Skarsaune and Hvalvik 2007, 747: "Talking about a Jewish Christian before Constantine is to make use of an artificial category, because the components of the term are artificial."

<sup>103</sup> Jackson-McCabe 2007, 37.

Similarly, Annette Yoshiko Reed has argued for the retention of the term as “heuristic for unsettling modern scholarly assumptions about the mutual exclusivity of ‘Jewish’ and ‘Christian’ identities in Late Antiquity.” However, in contrast to Jackson-McCabe, she has gone on to be more assertive about what she means by the term.<sup>104</sup> If ‘Jewish Christian’ is used in the sense outlined by Reed, it can be applied to sources (a) which exhibit more and different ‘Jewish’ features than we typically associate with early and late antique Christianity, (b) which were shaped in meaningful ways by direct contact with post-Christian Judaism (especially rabbinic Judaism), and/or (c) which self-consciously adopt a Jewish identity and/or self-consciously seek to recover elements of Christianity’s Jewish heritage which other sectors of the church rejected. This flexible approach to the definition of the term attempts to avoid the imposition of any single image of Jewish Christianity on our sources as well as the problematic equation of Jewish ethnicity with specific proclivities. Such an approach also allows for the inclusion of many more sources as ‘Jewish Christian’ than is normal (the essay in which she argues for these things is devoted to a discussion of some apocryphal sources), and might be thought by some to possess the ‘polythetic’ quality thought by some to be desirable.<sup>105</sup> That stated, some might ask whether it is always easy to identify the kind of characteristics, which Reed has described. What amount of Jewishness is required to make something Jewish Christian (how much Jewishness do we “typically associate with early and late antique Christianity”, especially if we adopt a strongly critical attitude towards the idea that such categories exist, at least before Constantine, in any meaningful way)? In circumstances where we can establish that the author of a text has borrowed, what degree of ‘borrowing’ is necessary to make something Jewish Christian as opposed to Christian? And if we can determine that, why not call the phenomenon ‘Jewish’ or ‘Christian’ rather than a combination of the two? And how does one deal with a text which borrows heavily, or supposedly does, from Judaism but denies any relationship with Judaism? And can we be clear what *self-conscious* adoption of a Jewish identity might be? In correspondence Reed has noted that the term has some meaning, in relation to the criteria mentioned, when applied to a text like the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* for here, she argues, Christian/apostolic can be un-

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<sup>104</sup> For the first instance of this point, see Reed 2003, 190-1, n. 5, where it is described as a ‘heuristic irritant’. Much of what is reported below is found in its pre-print form on the web. See Reed forthcoming in the bibliography.

<sup>105</sup> In the end there are not that many texts which emerge as Jewish Christian on this definition (*Apocalypse of Peter*, *Protevangelium of James*, *Didascalia apostolorum*, *Book of the Cock*, *Clem. Rec.* 1.27-71, the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, *Gospel of Hebrews*, *Gospel of Nazarenes*, *Gospel of Ebionites*, *Testament of Abraham* and *Testament of Job* in their final forms).

derstood as Jewish/non-Greek, which contrasts strongly with a text like Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* where Christian/apostolic is clearly non-Jewish/Greek.<sup>106</sup> But we might wonder about the helpfulness of her criteria in relation to a text like the *Didascalia apostolorum*. While it shares much in common with Judaism, however conceived, it appears consciously to distinguish itself and what it is advocating from things associated with Jews, including certain halakhic requirements. In what sense, then, is such a text Jewish Christian except in the sense that it has a Jewish character to it (one could argue that it *self-consciously* does not adopt a Jewish character)?<sup>107</sup> Here we might wonder whether the last of the three characteristics outlined by Reed should be an optional extra.<sup>108</sup>

It has been stated that in typical histories of Jewish Christianity, the tendency is to assume that, as Christianity and Judaism went their own ways, so Jewish Christianity, hated by both sides, became a minority movement, and subsequently a relic. To some, then, Jewish Christians, however defined, have become unfortunate victims of the 'partings' paradigm. Annette Yoshiko Reed has been one of those who have sought to press home this point most emphatically. As she writes, here in the context of a discussion of the *Pseudo-Clementines*: "... the scholarly approach to the 'Jewish Christianity' of the *Pseudo-Clementine* literature has been inextricably shaped by the broader tendency to treat post-70/post-135 survival of 'Jewish Christianity' as merely a footnote to a narrative about early Christian history in which its alleged demise functions as a necessary contrast to the triumphant rise of 'Gentile Christianity' and as a necessary corollary of the parting of the Ways with Judaism."<sup>109</sup> But if we cannot assume that Judaism and Christianity were firmly established by the close of second century, then we cannot assume as a matter of course that so-called Jewish Christians of Late Antiquity were transgressing a clear-cut boundary between normative Judaism and normative Christianity and were, as a consequence, a minority phenomenon. Similar points have been made by John Gager.<sup>110</sup> The latter, while attacking the deleterious effects of certain

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<sup>106</sup> See Reed 2008.

<sup>107</sup> See Fonrobert 2001 for a subtle attempt to argue for the Jewish Christian character of the *Didascalia*.

<sup>108</sup> There is little doubt that the text opposes individuals, including specifically women, who appear to retain certain practices from their non-Christian Jewish past. See further Fonrobert 2005, 250.

<sup>109</sup> Reed 2003, 201. The kind of sentiment Reed is criticising is well exemplified in an essay penned by the present author: "What is clear is that excluded from both Church and synagogue ... it (Jewish Christianity) declined dramatically ... Evidence for the existence of such (Jewish Christian) sects beyond the fifth century is almost non-existent ..." (Carleton Paget 1998, 750).

<sup>110</sup> Gager 2003, esp. 366-72.

‘master narratives’ about Judaism and Christianity on the study of Jewish Christianity, has sought to play up extant evidence for the phenomenon, including Islamic material from the ninth century and later.<sup>111</sup> In more recent times Reed has sought to develop her views, in this instance, as noted above, through a comparison of Eusebius’ account of Christian origins and that of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, contrasting the supersessionist approach to Christianity’s Jewish origins, evidenced in Eusebius, and the much more eirenic approach of the Homilist where Jewish origins are accepted and Judaism accorded a legitimate, ongoing place in history.<sup>112</sup> Reed suggests that the popularity of the *Homilies* indicates the widespread character of his opinions, and the fact that Eusebius’ vision was a contested one.<sup>113</sup> In such a thesis Reed appears to be operating with the more flexible definition of Jewish Christianity, already referred to above; and in part what she is seeking to argue has less to do with creating a clear definition of the word ‘Jewish Christian’ and more with seeking to raise questions about older models of Jewish-Christian engagement and interaction in the period following Bar Kokhba. In this context, and here I write as an interpreter of Reed’s work, rather than on the basis of anything she has explicitly stated, Jewish Christianity becomes another way of undermining those models, almost an umbrella term for much that is explicitly the concern for those who belong to the group of scholars who would prefer to speak, with different emphases, about the ways that never parted.<sup>114</sup> In such a discussion we are a long way from defining a group or party.<sup>115</sup>

Another approach, possibly more reductionist, is to cast aside the term ‘Jewish Christian’ with all its difficulties and ambiguities (something we had already observed in the work of Skarsaune and Hvalvik), and replace it with something like ‘Torah-observing’ Christians. Such an approach would have the effect of focusing study upon those named groups sometimes

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<sup>111</sup> Note the discussion of this material, albeit brief, on pp. 371-2 of this volume.

<sup>112</sup> See Reed 2008.

<sup>113</sup> “(I)f Jewish Christianity was ... so marginalized after the ‘parting of the Ways’ and thus so irrelevant to the majority of Christians, why would a fourth-century Christian wish to rework and transmit this material in the first place? And, more puzzling still, why would Rufinus translate it into Latin?” (Reed 2003, 224). Note also the contrast that Strecker 1958, 260, draws between John Chrysostom’s tract *Against the Judaizing Christians*, and the writings of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*.

<sup>114</sup> In email correspondence, Professor Reed confirmed some of this, writing that the term served to loosen “some of the assumptions that are already in the process of being exposed as inadequate for our data”; and that the term points to “the limits of imposing any single notion of ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’ on different times and places.”

<sup>115</sup> We are possibly closer to such a thing in John Gager’s defence of the ongoing vitality of Jewish Christianity. He seems to operate with a narrower definition of the term, broadly along the lines of law-observing Christians, and traces their ongoing existence well into the Byzantine period. See Gager 2003.

called by scholars ‘Jewish Christian sects’, as well as Judaisers and others. Such a move could be construed as similar to what Michael Williams recommends when he exhorts scholars to disband with the word ‘Gnostic’ and replace it with ‘biblical demiurgical traditions.’<sup>116</sup> While such a move would appear to commend itself, not least in its abandonment of a very difficult term, and its replacement with something altogether less problematic, again we must wonder whether we are defining anything worth defining, even when we have managed to agree on what we might understand by the word ‘Torah-observing.’<sup>117</sup>

Some might think that in the end scholarship on the vexed subject of Jewish Christianity is best served by accepting the impossibility of the term while at the same time acknowledging its unavoidability. Retaining the term because it serves to challenge scholarly assumptions about the mutual exclusivity of Judaism and Christianity in antiquity is fair enough, even if the challenge hardly takes us much further down the road to a clear, or even satisfyingly blurred, definition; and one might contend that what the term Jewish Christianity apparently challenges can be challenged without the need to preserve so troublesome a term. Nevertheless, scholars continue to have a sense that there are some people in the ancient world who, while professing belief in Jesus, adopt a profile which looks distinctly Jewish, and description of whom is not well served by either declaring them Christian or Jewish. The difficulty lies in formulating with any precision a term which best describes them (at least from our perspective – the term, after all, is a neologism introduced some time in the sixteenth century); and possibly we should admit that the word ‘Jewish Christian’ remains the best, even if an inadequate, way of doing such a thing.

The two essays in this section of the volume are broadly historiographic in content. In the first of these I attempt to show how the definition of the terms ‘Jewish Christian’/‘Jewish Christianity’ was from the beginnings of its usage, possibly some time in the sixteenth century, a matter of dispute, and how different scholars, for a variety of reasons, used the term to describe different phenomena, and that in the process of scholarly discussion a complex and inconsistently applied secondary vocabulary grew around

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<sup>116</sup> Williams 1996.

<sup>117</sup> But Reed is anxious about such a procedure because it would limit our understanding of the fluidity and hybridity of self-definition to places where an ancient witness comments on someone else’s identity. This, in Reed’s view, would simply predetermine the conclusion that all fluidity and hybridity is heterodox, a point that obviously contradicts her own and others’ views of the nature of ancient Christian and Jewish identity as in the process of formation and of its nature fluid. However, by examining such groups would we not simply be examining one form of hybridity without necessarily excluding other forms, or excluding a more nuanced and complex view of Jewish and Christian self-understanding?

the terms. I try and demonstrate how in a number of ways, aspects of that confused scholarly heritage prevail in the current debate about the terms and their meaning. The second essay is an examination of recent research on the Ebionites. I begin by expressing surprise that this so-called 'Jewish Christian' sect has not been the subject of a full-length published book in English, not least because in the history of scholarship the term was, and sometimes is, used synonymously with 'Jewish Christian', and it is about Ebionites, of the Jewish Christian sects, that we ostensibly know the most. One possible explanation, I suggest, lies in the fact that the question of the sources relating to the Ebionites is so contested, and part of the essay surveys this complex problem, in particular Epiphanius' account in his *Panarion*. Other sections examine the origins of the term (it was probably originally a self-designation deriving from Aramaic, used by Christians of Jewish origin who dwelt in Palestine, which over time, and as knowledge of its origins ceased to exist, came to be applied more generally to groups who adopted Jewish practices and entertained apparently unorthodox christological opinions), the opinions of the sect, its history (here some scepticism is shown towards theories, which would suggest that Ebionism underwent reform or ideological change, suggestions which in part at least, arise from a desire to explain the apparent difference between early accounts of the Ebionites, deriving from Irenaeus and Hippolytus, and subsequently, Origen, and Epiphanius) as well as claims that the sect went on existing well beyond the fifth century. Towards the end of the essay, I engage with Daniel Boyarin's point that what is interesting about the Ebionites (and Jewish Christians more generally) is not that they existed but why it was that Christian writers sought at such length, and quite late, to polemise against them. In part the answer, Boyarin claims, lies in these writers' desire to expose hybrids who challenged their attempts to create a pure Christianity, and its opposite, a pure Judaism. I note how such a thesis has the effect both of making later accounts of Ebionites almost entirely theoretical, and of failing to take seriously a writer like Epiphanius' view of the *general* hybridity of Ebionites, that is, Epiphanius does not present them as just hybrids of Judaism and Christianity. In different ways, and through a more specifically-oriented study, the essay addresses a number of central questions in the study of Jewish Christianity.

### Judaism in the second century

Second century Jewish history can be construed as significant. It witnessed, after all, two Jewish revolts against Rome, the end of Jerusalem as a Jewish city and Palestine as a predominantly Jewish province. It saw the

beginnings of the rising power of the rabbinate, and almost culminated in the production of the seminal text of the movement, the Mishnah. In the same period important new versions of the Greek bible were written; and some Christians, conscious of the fact that they belonged to a group, which was developing a distinct identity, began to write tracts *adversus Judaeos*, either, as we have noted above, because they wished to create a border between what they conceived of as Christianity and Judaism, or to give expression to something that was already happening.

And yet the apparent importance of the century for Jews could be said to be in inverse proportion to the amount of evidence we have about it. Greek evidence, relatively profuse for the preceding period, appears to dry up; and evidence in Hebrew, specifically the Mishnah, is thought to inform us only minimally about the life of the majority of Jews. Although, as noted above, Christians wrote about Jews, normally in a polemical context, such evidence has been thought by many to cast an only very partial light upon Jewish the Jewish community and its concerns. This lack of evidence, however, has not deterred scholars from developing overarching views about this period. Some of these are what is generally termed ‘lachrymose’, that is, the view is taken that in the aftermath of the Trajanic and Bar Kokhba revolts, Jews became culturally isolated and dependent upon an influential rabbinate. More recently, Seth Schwartz, in a much cited work of 2001, and containing distant lachrymose chimes, without being straightforwardly lachrymose, has argued that the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 and the failure of the Bar Kokhba revolt, led to an almost complete collapse of pre-70 Jewish life in Palestine, with only the rabbis standing out as an exception. It was only, according to him, in the fourth and fifth centuries that something like a Jewish revival or a re-judaisation of Jews, began. Much of what Schwartz argues is dependent upon his interpretation of extant archaeological evidence, especially in towns, which we can assume to have had a large Jewish population; on what he argues are the natural consequence of Roman annexation of Palestine; on the place or indeed absence of Jews from the legal texts of the Romans until the fourth century; and his own construction of the central elements of the pre-70 Jewish polity, which he sees as shattered in the wake of successive revolts and their consequences. Martin Goodman, in an equally ambitious book, has argued that the century witnessed an ongoing growth in anti-Jewish sentiment amongst the Romans, a process which had its origin in the propaganda of the Flavian dynasty following the fall of Jerusalem in 70, and its culmination in the founding of the *colonia* of Aelia Capitolina on the site of the old Jewish Jerusalem, the banning of Jews from that city and the renaming of the province as *Palaestina* rather than Judea. Goodman’s thesis, which posits some improvement in Jewish-

Roman relations towards the end of the century, also takes into its ambit the growth of Christianity. For Goodman it is precisely the fact of Roman hatred of Jews, which leads Christians to distance themselves from association with Judaism, in part, therefore, accounting for the advent of *adversus Judaeos* literature in the period.

While Schwartz and Goodman present variant, but generally negative, readings of the fate of Jews in the second century, others, by contrast, have eked out more positive and optimistic typologies for the century. In these Jews are neither isolated, nor down-trodden, but rather they appear as integrated and confident members of a flourishing western (and eastern) Diaspora. Such views, which have reached their most influential form in works by Marcel Simon and, more particularly, A. T. Kraabel, derive their strength from surviving literary evidence, especially Christian material, and from archaeology, especially the surviving remains of synagogues, and Jewish inscriptions.

Most recently, Edrei and Mendels have argued, at least implicitly, that the second century witnessed to the sharpening of an already existent division between an eastern, and rabbinic-dominated, Diaspora, and western one, where rabbinic influence was negligible.<sup>118</sup> The consequences of such a division, they contend, were that the western Diaspora soon became prey to the developing ideology of Christianity, while the eastern retained a more robustly Jewish profile.

In the first of the two essays, which form this third section of the volume, I attempt to re-examine the century against these contrasting typologies. Amongst other things I challenge the vision of Jewish history in this period which speaks about it in terms of rabbinization, and tends to underestimate the important evidence we have for ongoing Greek literary life in the western Diaspora. In addition to listing what evidence exists for the writing of Greek works, questions are raised about the possibility of the ongoing Jewish transmission of the LXX, the apocrypha, and well-known Hellenistic Jewish authors, questions which, it is hoped, expose a number of prejudices about post-Bar Kokhba Jewish history. In pursuing such a course, I reflect a recent scholarly trend, which seeks, in a variety of ways, to reinstate the place of Jewish-Hellenistic culture in the second century and beyond.<sup>119</sup>

Other evidence for Jewish life is examined, in the process of which the conflicting typologies for the century are critiqued. While generally sympathetic to the more positive view of the experiences of the Jewish in this period, in particular in the western Diaspora, I draw attention to the fact that often these conclusions, particularly those based upon archaeological

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<sup>118</sup> Edrei and Mendels 2007 and 2008.

<sup>119</sup> For the most recent expression of such a view, see Rajak 2009.

evidence, are not justified, not least because the implications of the evidence cited is ambiguous. In some senses, therefore, the view is taken that to speak in generalities about such a period, whether in lachrymose vein, or more sanguine tones, is impossible. The evidence, in spite of the bold assertions of past and more recent scholarship, will not allow it.

The final essay in the volume seeks to rekindle an old thesis about the Jewish origins of an intriguing section of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* (*Hom.* 4-6). Much of the essay is taken up with the technical business of proving the case as well as examining the ideological profile of the source. The conclusion, namely that the relevant text is part of a Jewish apology from the middle second century, again raises questions about the understanding of Judaism in this intriguing period, especially as these arise in current historiography. The source, which both betrays solid grounding in Greek *paideia*, while at the same time adopting a strikingly negative view of the latter, can be seen as supporting and challenging the kinds of typologies of the century outlined in the first essay of this final section, although it is noted that any extrapolations from what would appear to be an incomplete version of a larger work preserved by a Christian author, should be made with great caution.

## Conclusion

The essays presented in this volume, then, address a number of significant themes upon which abundant comment has been passed. In general rather than arriving at new and unambiguous theories concerning these, they have tended to highlight difficulties. Such a tendency might be thought to be the result of a certain lack of imagination or of intelligence, or both, and this may indeed be true. It also, however, results from the strong conviction, made clear, I hope, in my necessarily limited review of recent scholarly work on these themes, that the fragmentary and sometimes vague evidence at our disposal, does not sit easily with definite conclusions. Against such a background it is my conviction that an important aim of the scholar should lie in presenting the entangled difficulties of his or her subject with clarity, in charting the complex territory with the skills of a well-trained cartographer. The hope, possibly forlorn, is that in the process he or she not only informs but also stimulates. If I have managed to do both of these things, then I will have succeeded in my aim in publishing these essays.

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