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Markus Tiwald
Markus Öhler (Eds.)

Parting of the Ways

The Variegated Ways of Separations between Jews and Christians

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Parting of the Ways

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Markus Tiwald and Markus Öhler
October 2023

"Parting of the Ways" – A Problematic Metaphor

Introduction to the Volume

Markus Tiwald, Markus Öhler

Abstract

In the last decade, the question of the so-called "parting of the ways" between "Jews" and "Christians" has become one of the most crucial topics of New Testament exegesis. Today, most scholars would agree that the "parting of the ways" did not occur in one place at a specific time but was a long process that took place in different locations at different times and for different reasons, not concluding before the fourth century. This book represents a collection of papers presented at a conference convened in Vienna (Austria) in 2022 and consists of five main chapters: Jewish Identity and the Parting of the Ways, The Apostle Paul, The Gospels, Non-Canonical and Patristic Texts, Systematic-Theological Considerations Concerning the Parting of the Ways.

Keywords

Parting of the Ways; Early Judaism; Early Christianity; Jewish-Christian Dialogue; Historical Jesus; Apostle Paul

1. The Metaphor of "Parting Ways"

In the last decade, the question of the so-called "parting of the ways"[1] between "Jews"[2] and "Christians" has become one of the most crucial topics of New Testament exegesis. This is so not only because of the question's intrinsic value for Jewish-Christian dialogue, but even more because our perception

1 For a detailed *status questions* on the "parting of the ways", see the edited volume of Schröter/Edsall/Verheyden, Parting (especially: Schröter/Edsall/Verheyden, Introduction, 1–10); further, the special issue of EvTh 80 (2020) *Parting of the Ways. Die Trennung der Wege von Juden und Christen in der neueren Forschung*; or the monograph of Tiwald, Frühjudentum, especially 28–51.

2 Concerning the question, whether to translate Ἰουδαῖοι with "Jews" or "Judeans", see Öhler, Judäer, 157–185, and Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 24. For the use of "Christians", see Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 26–54.

of the New Testament scriptures has been completely changed by the emerging consensus that the beginnings of what we today call "Christianity" were fully embedded in early Judaism in the first century CE. Today, most scholars would agree that the "parting of the ways" did not occur in one place at a specific time, but was a long process that took place in different locations at different times and for different reasons, not concluding before the fourth century.[3] The expression "parting of the ways" has established itself as the catchphrase for these complex processes of divisions between "Jews" and "Christians". However, the metaphor is problematic. The imagery was coined some thirty years ago by the late James D. G. Dunn in his ground-breaking, yet now outdated, book *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London 1991). Dunn explicitly refers to *partings* in the plural form because the process of parting occurred in many places at many times and under various circumstances. Nevertheless, Dunn still underestimated the pluriformity of "Jewish" or "Christian" "identity markers". Even so, the metaphor of "parting ways" has stuck, even if a more fitting image would be "a criss-crossing of muddy tracks"[4] or "a multi-lane highway".[5] T. Nicklas has proposed the imagery of a "dance", where partners interact in a variety of steps, to-and-fro, advancing towards each other or getting further away from their partner.[6] Still, we must admit that none of these metaphors are a perfect fit. Even the imagery of a dance assumes two precisely defined partners with regular steps. Yet, according to current reconstructions, "Christianity" was not an independent partner in juxtaposition to early Judaism, but was in its beginnings part of it. There were therefore not two precisely defined entities that could figure as "dance partners". Consequently, the question about when "Christianity" emerged as an entity in its own right, thereby separating from "Judaism", is a question of fierce debate. In their introduction to the edited volume *Jews and Christians – Parting Ways in the First Two Centuries CE?*, J. Schröter, B. E. Edsall, and J. Verheyden therefore conclude: "While the metaphor of 'parting ways' can be questioned, then, it is also seen to be useful in helping to describe the historical processes of the formation of Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity."[7] In his search for a better image, M. Konradt concludes: "Maybe, for the time being, we should work without a new metaphor because of its inherent tendency to reduce complexity and just

3 Cf. Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 28–51.
4 Lieu, Parting, 31–49.
5 Reinhartz, Fork, 280–295.
6 Nicklas, Parting, 37f.
7 Schröter/Edsall/Verheyden, Introduction, 5. Cf. also Markschies, Way, 11–32.

try to describe the complex processes, developments and multi-faceted relations as differentiated and nuanced as possible."[8] The editors of this volume have decided to retain the metaphor in the title of the volume while also insisting on the pluriformity of these processes: *Parting of the Ways: The Variegated Ways of Separation between Jews and Christians*.

Another deficiency of the metaphor, "parting of the ways", is that the common features of Jewish and Christian beliefs were for a long time stronger than those factors which led to multifaceted processes of parting. Accordingly, this volume wants not only to highlight the pluriformity of separation(s), but even more to insist on the shared roots of both groups. Accordingly, these results might give a boost to modern Jewish-Christian dialogue. The inclusion of systematic theologians into the discussion is an additional enrichment of this volume.

The editors and contributors to this volume have benefitted from a plethora of publications on the "parting of the ways": The most recent are the edited volume of J. Schröter, B. E. Edsall, and J. Verheyden, *Jews and Christians – Parting Ways in the First Two Centuries CE?* (*BZNW 253, Berlin 2021*), which sums up the results of a conference held in Berlin in 2019, and the special issue of the journal *Evangelische Theologie* 2020 with the title *Parting of the Ways. Die Trennung der Wege von Juden und Christen in der neueren Forschung*. Another volume was edited by L. Baron, J. Hicks-Keeton, and M. Thiessen, *The Ways That Often Parted. Essays in Honor of Joel Marcus* (*ECIL SBLECL 24, Atlanta 2018*). In it, reference is made to earlier works that were dedicated to this topic from similar points of view: J. D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways. Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (*London 1991*); D. Boyarin, *Border Lines. The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (*Philadelphia 2004*); further *E. K. Broadhead, Jewish Ways of Following Jesus. Redrawing the Religious Map of Antiquity* (*WUNT 266, Tübingen 2010*). The programmatic title of the volume edited by A. Becker and A. Y. Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (*TSAJ 95, Tübingen 2003*), might even suggest that there was no parting at all. From the introduction to their volume, however, it becomes clear that its provocative title only intended to underline that both ways "remained intertwined long after the Second Temple had fallen, and the dust had settled from the Jewish revolts against Rome"[9] – a laudable and convincing position. Nevertheless, the metaphor of "ways that never parted" is likely to be problematic, given that many Jews today understandably become nervous when non-Jewish Christians claim to be

8 Konradt, Matthew, 145.

9 Becker/Reed, Ways, 3.

"Jews". Such tendencies might spring from good intentions, but they are misled inasmuch as they end in the cultural appropriation by Christians of that which properly belongs to Jews. Christians must respect that there has been a "parting of the ways". Even if Christianity is historically linked to its Jewish roots, it must nevertheless respect the autonomy of today's Judaism.

The view that the "parting of the ways" was ongoing until the fourth century has also triggered a backlash. In 2018, S. J. D. Cohen, in his article *The Ways That Parted: Jews, Christians, and Jewish-Christians, ca. 100–150 CE*, maintained that, "by the early second century CE Jews (that is, ethnic Jews who do not believe in Christ) and Christians (that is, ethnic gentiles who do believe in Christ) constituted separate communities" and that in this time "absent conversion, the boundaries between the Jewish and the Christian communities were clear enough and stable enough. As the century proceeded, the boundary would become ever clearer and ever more stable."[10] For U. Schnelle, *Die getrennten Wege von Römern, Juden und Christen. Religionspolitik im 1. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (*Tübingen 2019*), the "parting of the ways" was already completed with the circumcision-free mission of Paul.[11] By contrast, K. Ehrensperger concludes, "Paul remained firmly rooted within Jewish tradition, was Torah observant, called to proclaim the gospel to the non-Jewish nations."[12] Such diverging positions clearly show that there is still need for more discussion – an aim that this book pursues.

2. The Present Volume

This book represents a collection of the papers presented at the conference *Parting of the Ways: The Variegated Ways of Separation between Jews and Christians*, convened in Vienna, Austria from 5–8 September 2022, by the editors Markus Tiwald and Markus Öhler. The volume consists of five main chapters:

10 Cohen, Ways, 335.

11 Schnelle, Wege, 187: "Nach einer diffusen Anfangsphase (ca. 30–50 n. Chr.), in der Identitäten noch nicht geklärt und erst gefunden werden mussten, kann mit der paulinischen Theologie und Missionsarbeit vom Christentum als einer eigenständigen und erkennbaren Bewegung gesprochen werden. Alle Versuche, die Bedeutung des Paulus zu minimieren und Trennungsprozesse erst ab dem 2. Jahrhundert zuzulassen, können nur als unhistorisch bezeichnet werden, denn: Der Apostel schuf mit seiner beschneidungsfreien Völkermission Tatsachen, hinter die niemand mehr zurückkonnte!"

12 Ehrensperger, Perspektive, 455.

– Jewish Identity and the Parting of the Ways
– The Apostle Paul and the Parting of the Ways
– The Gospels and the Parting of the Ways
– The Parting of the Ways in Non-Canonical and Patristic Texts
– Systematic-Theological Considerations Concerning the Parting of the Ways

2.1 *Jewish Identity and the Parting of the Ways*

Marianne Grohmann (*Vienna*)*: Group Identities in Ezra and Nehemiah*: The primary focus of Marianne Grohmann's paper is on illustrations from the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, which demonstrate the blending of ethnic and religious elements, and on the seamless continuity between pre-exilic and post-exilic Israel. These examples shed light on the ongoing identity of Israel throughout different historical periods. With a special focus on the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, Grohmann demonstrates that the loss of political sovereignty in biblical Israel during the Babylonian exile does not imply that its identity was subsequently shaped solely by religion. On the contrary, the ethnic significance attached to both designations ensures a continuous sense of identity from pre-exilic to post-exilic periods. This interplay of ethnic and religious connotations highlights the enduring and multifaceted nature of Israel's identity throughout its historical development.

Karin Heder Zetterholm (*Lund*)*: Jesus-Oriented Groups and the Emergence of a Rabbinic Jewish Identity*: In her essay, Karin Heder Zetterholm contends that the rise of rabbinic Judaism was significantly influenced by the presence of Jesus-oriented groups, which posed a challenge to Jewish identity and self-perception. She shows that the discomfort arising from gentile attachment to Israel's God and engagement with the Torah, and the redefining of the boundaries of Judaism to exclude Jesus-oriented Jews, found in certain early rabbinic texts, were responses to the alternative vision of Israel's calling presented by the Jesus movement. The alignment of "internal others" (Jesus-oriented Jews) with "external others" (Jesus-oriented gentiles) in promoting an alternative understanding of Israel's covenantal identity led non-Jesus-oriented Jews to redefine Jewish identity in terms more aligned with rabbinic Judaism. In this way, the challenge posed by the Jesus movement played a significant role in the development of rabbinic Judaism and its emphasis on a distinct Jewish identity.

Günter Stemberger (*Vienna*)*: Continued Contacts between Jews and Christians: Knowledge of Rabbinic Traditions in Christian Texts and Vice Versa:* Evidence for continuing contacts between Jews and Christians, not only polemical, but also

in friendly exchange, can be found in many fields: in liturgy, religious literature, but also in architecture with parallel developments in the design and decoration of churches and synagogues. Stemberger's contribution limits itself to the field of literature, namely, to traces of rabbinic traditions in Christian writings and traces of Christian traditions (mainly the New Testament) in rabbinic literature. The birth story of Jesus in Matthew (Mt 1:18–25) and the birth story of Moses in the Babylonian Talmud (bSotah 12a) gives reason to assume that the authors behind the Talmudic text knew the Christian story and countered it with a parallel story about the birth of Moses. On the other hand, the earliest clear reference to Jesus is found in tḤullin 2:22. R. Eleazar ben Dama was bitten by a snake. Jacob of Kefar Sama came to heal him in the name of Jesus son of Pantera. But R. Yishmael did not allow it. One should rather die than be healed in the name of Jesus. That Jesus is called the son of Panthera is mentioned already by Celsus, thus certainly early. Generally, in discussions with Christians, Jews could learn certain Christian traditions, normally in oral form. Frequently the Christians themselves, knew their texts from the liturgy and religious instruction without ever having read a written gospel. Such examples demonstrate that, also in the Late Roman, Byzantine and early Islamic period, contacts and mutual influences between Christians and Jews never completely ceased.

Jodi Magness (*Chapel Hill/North Carolina*)*: The Late Antique Synagogue at Capernaum: Was It Really a Congregation of Minim?* In a 2014 article, Benjamin Arubas and Rina Talgam claim that the white limestone synagogue at Capernaum – which they say was constructed in the third century and rebuilt after the earthquake of 363 CE – served a community of Jews who, due to their contacts with Christian pilgrims to the site, are called *minim* (non-conforming Jews or Jewish-Christians). Their argument collapses if the white limestone synagogue dates to the sixth century, as the archaeological evidence indicates. Magness' paper shows that the often-mentioned references for *minim* in Capernaum, i.e., Epiphanius, Egeria, and Qohelet Rabbah, do not provide historically reliable evidence of a community of *minim* at Capernaum. Therefore, even apart from considerations of the archaeological evidence (specifically, the dating of the white limestone synagogue and the domus ecclesia), relying on these sources to argue for the presence of minim at Capernaum is fundamentally flawed and is based on a series of modern scholarly assumptions and interpretive leaps.

2.2 *The Apostle Paul and the Parting of the Ways*

Markus Tiwald (Vienna): The "Works of the Law": The Transformation of Jewish Identity Markers and the Parting of the Ways: The expression *identity marker(s) of Judaism* was coined by J. D. G. Dunn, albeit in a way seen as outdated today. Dunn underestimated the pluriformity of Second Temple Judaism when he defined the "The Four Pillars of Second Temple Judaism" ("monotheism", "election", "covenant focussed in Torah", and "land focussed in Temple") as fixed unities. According to Dunn, by the end of the second Jewish revolt, early Christianity had redefined each of these four axioms to a degree unacceptable to what he calls "mainstream Judaism". In contrast to this, the most recent research has shown that neither a "normative Judaism" nor a "common Judaism" and not even a "mainstream Judaism" existed in the first century CE. Thus, rivalling groups, such as Sadducees, Pharisees, or Qumranites, campaigned for *diverging identity markers*, especially in Torah- and Temple-related matters. Especially in the person of Paul of Tarsus we can see how such *identity markers* could change in the lifespan of the former Pharisee and later apostle of Christ. Tiwald identifies Paul's rejection of the "works of the law" (Gal 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10; Rom 3:20–21) as a rejection of ritual, cultic, and purity-based matters of the Jewish Torah, which did not abrogate the Torah as such. Thus, he identifies Paul as standing in one particular trajectory, together with the *radical allegorizers* that Philo mentions in *De migratione Abrahami*. According to this interpretation, Paul's attitude towards the law during his time as a follower of Jesus represents a possible – albeit quite liberal – interpretation of the ritual, cultic, and purity-based matters of the Jewish Torah, within the broad range of diverse Torah interpretations in multifaceted early Judaism.

Kathy Ehrensperger (Potsdam): Identity Transformation in Christ: Struggling with "Εργα νόμου' in Paul: Kathy Ehrensperger argues that Paul does not engage in a critique of any facet of his fellow Jews' way of life. The terms he employs, namely, νόμος, ἔργον, and δίκαιος/δικαιοσύνη, pertain to certain aspects of observing the νόμος, particularly the performance of rituals. Thus, ἔργα νόμου means the act of carrying out rituals in connection with a deity. In Greek and Roman traditions, the divine-human relationship revolved around offering the gods their proper due by meticulously performing rituals to ensure the gods' favour and benevolence toward humans. Paul, however, emphasizes that for non-Jews, being in right relationship with the God of Israel depends solely on God's initiative rather than human efforts. As they were anticipated to embrace their ethnic identity as non-Jews, it naturally followed that their way of life would differ from that of the Jews. Within the dynamic interplay of shared attributes and distinctions, non-Jews who embraced Christ were inherently

linked to the Jewish people. Therefore, the interplay of common elements and distinctions formed the core of the connection between Jews and non-Jews.

Christina Eschner (Berlin), Paul and the Galatians as "Children" of Abraham: The Law as Space of Salvation in Ancient Judaism and Paul: After a thorough consideration of Paul's Letter to the Galatians Christina Eschner asserts that, in terms of adhering to the practical aspects of the Law, believers in Christ and Jews were able to coexist for an extended duration. However, when it comes to the purpose and role attributed to the Law, Paul unmistakably diverges from the prevailing perspective found in ancient Judaism. He accomplishes this by reassigning essential functions connected to the Law in ancient Judaism to either faith or Christ. The apostle emphasizes the notion of salvation by faith, tracing it back to Abraham, to underscore that even the Jews cannot achieve it through any means other than *pistis*. The descendants of Abraham are typically identified as believers. Thus, Christ enables the seamless continuation of the same trust that Abraham had, but now in an eschatological perspective. It is faith that upholds the continuity between Judaism and Christianity.

2.3 *The Gospels and the Parting of the Ways*

Christoph Heil (Graz): The Sayings Source Q and the Parting of the Ways underscores the broad consensus that Q thinks and formulates completely within Jewish categories. However, where Q positions itself in the wide spectrum of Second Temple Judaism is a still debated issue. To approach this question, Heil sheds light on some crucial passages in Q, e.g., the word κρίνειν in Q 22:28, 30, the parable on the invited dinner guests in Q 14:16–21, 23, the polemics against "this generation" in Q 10:21, as well as topics like covenant, Torah, circumcision, Sabbath, kashrut, and tithing in Q. In his conclusion, he notes that the Q group understood itself as Jewish: the members of the Q group were ethnically and religiously Ἰουδαῖοι, (even if the term does not occur in Q). Q is silent on land, circumcision, and sabbath, but every *argumentum e silentio* can be used in both directions, and the absence of some Jewish identity markers in Q can support a Jewish context where this is not necessary to note explicitly. Nevertheless, Q's attitude towards the temple and as well as its explicit high Christology make it probable that the Q group was not really at ease with the large majority of Israel. The relationship was not broken, to be sure. However, there were cracks which could – and did – widen.

Matthias Konradt (Heidelberg): Matthew's Ethics and the Complex Processes of Differentiation and Separation of the Matthean Communities from Judaism: Matthew's ethics – of which reference to the Torah is a significant part – bear witness to the Jewish roots and context of the evangelist and his communities.

At the same time, however, there is a formative Christological dimension in Matthean ethics which sets it apart from all other forms of early Jewish ethics and provides the basis for its reception in Gentile communities. Jesus' own fulfillment of the Torah and the prophets includes both his teaching *and his own Torah practice*. When, for example, Jesus justifies his turning to sinners with a quotation from Hos 6:6 (Matt 9:13), he intimates that this is not contrary to the Torah, but part of his true fulfillment of it, which serves as a guideline for his disciples. The social location of the Matthean Christ-believers should thus not be considered exclusively in terms of their belonging to Judaism. Instead, a multi-perspective approach suggests itself. With very few exceptions, the aspect of the Matthean communities' relations within the Christ-believing movement has been given short shrift in recent research with its strong focus on the relation to Judaism. But these two aspects ought to be connected with one another. With its probable impact on the life of the members of the Christ-believing communities, Matthew's ethics supports this claim. If this is correct, it is indeed necessary to move beyond the new perspective on "Matthew within Judaism" and to connect it with a "Matthew within emergent Christianity"-perspective.

Stefan Schreiber (*Augsburg*)*: Finding Their Own Way in a Jewish Environment: The Letters* (*and Gospel*) *of John and the Parting of the Ways* describes the "Antichrist group" (1 John pointedly calls the opponents "antichrists") not as an inner-Christian conflict, but one between two specific groups within the Jewish culture. The conflict arose about group identity, more precisely, about the confession of Jesus as the Messiah, the unique representative, revealer and messenger of God for the salvation of the world. Since individual groups, which until then had been part of the (Jewish) Johannine circle, rejected this confession, a split occurred. Thus, 1 John is a testimony of an inner-Jewish struggle. Compared to John's Gospel, 1 John documents a more advanced stage in the process of distancing between the Johannine circle and the synagogues. While in the Gospel the polemic against "the Jews" and the danger of exclusion from the synagogue because of confessing Jesus as Messiah point to the *beginning* of a process of distancing, 1 John does not talk about "Jews" anymore and focuses on its own identity. A discussion about Jewish identity markers no longer matters. The split of the Johannine circle, only hinted at in the Gospel (John 6:60–71), is a threatening reality in 1 John. The Johannine circle is already living at a greater distance from the local synagogues, without having left the wide area of Judaism.

Hildegard Scherer (*Essen*)*: Not Χριστιανοί: Group Designations by Christ Believers in the New Testament*: In her analysis of the designations given to Christ

believers, Hildegard Scherer demonstrates that assigning certain labels to one group does not necessarily imply a denial of those designations to others. Often, they serve as a way for the in-group to cope with issues related to their status. Terms such as "the way" or "the assembly of God" function at the level of intra-group competition within the framework of Israel. Ephesians even shows a blending of these designations when Jesus followers, especially from non-Jewish backgrounds, attempt to integrate themselves into the categories of God's chosen people. More problematic designations might apply to larger groups or the covenant itself. However, the categories used in the New Testament are never equated with Israel nor do they seek to supersede Israel as the people of God. Instead, they exist alongside and within the framework of Israel's identity and covenant, offering distinct expressions of faith and devotion.

2.4 *The Parting of the Ways in Non-Canonical and Patristic Texts*

Lutz Doering (*Münster*)*: The Didache and the Parting of the Ways* reviews some aspects of the Didache's literary structure and source-critical questions and then comments on its genre and the two selected topics of fasting and prayer in *Did.* 8.1–3, with a view to what the Didache might contribute to the issue of the so-called "Parting of the Ways". *Did.* 8.1–3 positions the readership of the text against some Jews, labelled "hypocrites". The latter were most likely somehow related to the Pharisees or their ("proto-rabbinic") heirs, with respect to the regular weekdays for voluntary fasting and the text to be said at the thrice-daily fixed prayer. We witness a deliberately divergent, demarcating practice, which however appears to *establish distance* more than express it. There is no setting off from "the Jews" or from any practice generically labelled as "Jewish". Instead, the sobriquet *continues and yet develops* terminology familiar from the Gospel of Matthew. In both cases (fasting and prayer), the position in the Didache seems to reflect more developed, time-bound practice when compared with the Gospel of Matthew, and reacts to it, displaying a usage of the sobriquet "hypocrites" that seems to be more solidified and providing *later* evidence than Matthew. The community to which the Didache is addressed seems to be made up of Jewish and gentile believers in Christ. Their practice of baptism (*Did.* 7.1–4) and eucharist (*Did.* 9.1–5), while certainly creating an insider-outsider distinction, does not mark a general departure "from Judaism". The Didache erects boundaries against those it calls "hypocrites", but in so doing, shows that the ways have not (yet) fully "parted" between this mixed community and these "hypocrites", let alone "the Jews" more generally.

Paul Foster (*Edinburgh*)*: Ignatius of Antioch. Redefining Identities and Creating Irreversible Separation*: Ignatius does not hold Ἰουδαϊσμός in high regard. In fact, quite the opposite, he sees it as having found its fulfilment in Christ, and thus having served its purpose as pointing to the coming of Christ principally through its prophetic writings. Beyond that, he considers Judaism to be essentially defunct, without soteriological value, and without value as a religious system. He is strident in his rebuttal of any form of reverting to its practices, beliefs, or forms of scriptural interpretation. Yet, despite the ferocity of this rejection, it is not certain that Ignatius was actually responding to ethnic Jews who were not believers in Christ. Rather, the target of his rhetoric appears to have been individuals who in some way claimed a connection with the Jesus movement and were likely at some level members of the communities of Christ believers in Magnesia and Philadelphia. Alongside this, the issues to which Ignatius responds in his two letters that use the term Ἰουδαϊσμός suggest that the situations in Magnesia and Philadelphia were different, and that there was no single group responsible for the teachings that Ignatius rejected in these two locations. When he does mention Jewish figures such as the patriarchs or the prophets, they are presented as proleptically being followers of Christ. The prophetic scriptures of Judaism are viewed as an anticipation of the gospel. This may be considered a usurpation of Jewish traditions, or even as a type of supersessionism. For Foster it is clear that Ignatius' writings reflect considerable and irreversible distance between Christianity in the early second century and post Temple destruction Judaism. That does not mean the same degree of separation had occurred in all locations in the Mediterranean world. However, the evidence that Ignatius supplies reflects a circumstance in which Christianity had emerged as a movement with its own beliefs and structures that were separate and distinct from contemporary Judaism.

Markus Öhler (*Vienna*)*: Judaism and Christianity in the Epistles of Ignatius: Reflections on Contextualisation in the 2nd century CE*: The definition of the terms "Judaism" and "Christianity" is usually traced back to Ignatius of Antioch. In his letters to Christ believers in Magnesia and Philadelphia, the question of identity formation is addressed in detail. Attempts at sharp demarcation predominate, in which Jewish traditions are devalued. In the process, the terms Χριστιανισμός and Ἰουδαϊσμός are coined, the concepts still used today to determine belonging. The question arises, however, whether this clear terminology (as well as the also used terms σαββατίζειν and ἰουδαΐζειν) actually goes back to the Antiochian bishop Ignatius and the years 114/117, or whether the passages under discussion were written in a later period. Indeed, a comparison with the

other evidence for these expressions shows that they are only used from the middle of the 2nd century onwards to define the relationship of Christianity to Judaism. A clear affinity with Tertullian's polemic against Marcion becomes evident. A plausible explanation for this might be that the terminological proximity between Ignatius, whose letters could also have been written in the middle of the 2nd century, and Marcion was based on a broader tradition.

Agnethe Siquans (*Vienna*)*: Jewish Scriptural Interpretation and Ritual Practice in Origen's Homilies on Leviticus*: Agnethe Siquans employs Origen's Homilies on Leviticus as an example to illustrate a certain perspective on Jewish scriptural interpretation, as well as an understanding of the importance and meaning of ritual practices. Origen's interpretative strategies often draw parallels with Jewish traditions and his engagement with their approaches showcases the complexity and fluidity of scriptural interpretation in his time. While he may reject certain aspects associated with Judaism, his hermeneutical approach reflects a noteworthy convergence with Jewish exegetical methods. Overall, he presents his interpretation as a seamless and coherent way of engaging with the Scriptures, encouraging his audience to embrace it as a guiding principle to shape their beliefs and practices.

Hans Förster (*Vienna*)*: Parted by Nature or by Translation? Translation Choices in the Vulgate New Testament as a Factor in Perceptions of the "Parting of the Ways"*: Hans Förster explores how a Latin understanding of the text of the New Testament was initially introduced and still persists in modern translations. Through that Latin understanding, a sense of separation and hostility between Christianity and Judaism is introduced into New Testament translations that is not present to the same extent in the original Greek text. Examples from the Gospels of John (8:43; 12:40) and Luke (20:20) and Paul's Letter to the Romans (14:14) show how important a careful evaluation of translational choices is. To this end, Förster offers concise suggestions on the potential implications for New Testament studies and its approach to translating the text that lead to a deeper understanding of its meaning and theological positions.

2.5 *Systematic-Theological Considerations Concerning the Parting of the Ways*

Jan-Heiner Tück (*Vienna*)*: "Consubstantial with the Father": Did the Council of Nicaea neglect the Jewish roots of Christianity?*: Jan-Heiner Tück devotes his essay to the question whether the Council of Nicaea neglected the Jewish roots of Christianity. He suggests a cautious approach when discussing a transformation that exhibits both moments of continuity and moments of

discontinuity occurring simultaneously. To comprehend this intricate transformation, it is advisable to focus more intently on the traditions of Hellenic Judaism. Additionally, delving into how Greek philosophical concepts were embraced and applied in the interpretation of the Arian controversy could provide valuable insights. According to Tück's reconstruction, the concept of pre-existent mediators and ideas of incarnation are not an original invention of Christian theology. Instead, it can be traced back to a Jewish heritage. In both Judaism and Christianity, there are theological perspectives on the indwelling and condescension of God.

Christian Danz (Vienna): Jesus the Judean and Jesus the Christ: Systematic-Theological Considerations: Christian Danz asks whether the intricate perspective on the origins of the Christian religion, which has emerged in contemporary historical discussions, can be integrated into systematic theology, provided that a clear theological distinction between Christianity and Judaism is upheld. His approach rejects an all-encompassing assimilation of Judaism into Christianity. Instead, it posits that the essence of the Christian religion lies in the preservation and transmission of the religious memory of Jesus Christ. Building on this foundation, the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology are expounded in a manner that respects and acknowledges the distinctiveness and independence of Judaism. Christianity does not merely augment the existing concept of God that it shares with Judaism. By incorporating Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit into the divine framework, Christianity fundamentally alters the perception of what constitutes religion, distinguishing it from Judaism.

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PART I

Jewish Identity and the Parting of the Ways

Group Identities in Ezra-Nehemia

Marianne Grohmann (*Vienna*)

Abstract

The article focuses on examples from the book of Ezra-Nehemia mentioning the self-designations "Israel" and "*yᵉhûdîm*" ("Judeans"/"Jews"). The biblical texts reflect a combination of ethnic and religious identity, and an interest in establishing continuity between pre-exilic Israel and post-exilic Judaism. While the plurality of Judaisms and fluid definitions of identity are recognized for the Second Temple period, it makes sense to apply such flexible identity markers to Israel in pre-exilic and post-exilic times as well. These discussions about different aspects of self-understanding mark the starting point of ongoing discussions during the long process of the "parting of the ways."

Keywords

Ezra; Nehemia; Israel; Judaism; Yehud

1. Continuity between pre-exilic Israel and post-exilic Judaism

It has become a scholarly convention to speak about biblical Israel in the pre-exilic period and Judaism starting from the Babylonian exile and the post-exilic, Persian and Hellenistic periods.

> [...] the differentiation between (ancient) Israel and Judaism is a matter of convenience among historians, carried out in order better to arrange the different epochs of the Old Testament people and its successors. [...] To fix the limits of both these terms therefore is a matter of modern definition. It had become convenient to speak of Israelites in the sense of an ethnic and political unity, bound by geographical facts, united by a joint cultus. Jews, however, are members of a community dispersed in the *galuth* without joint political or cultic activities, united by obedience towards a Torah or Halakhah which is complete in itself. If the centre of Israelite life was the temple, the centre of Jewish life is the synagogue.[1]

1 Koch, Ezra, 197.

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In research on the identity of biblical Israel, the writings of Julius Wellhausen about "the way from a nation with a 'national' faith in YHWH to the individualization of a more complex stage of religion"[2] have been very influential – often combined with an unfavorable connotation of the term "Judaism" as legalistic and negative.[3]

The Jewish Hebrew Bible scholar Marc Brettler is among those who questions this distinction. He is aware that the term "Jew" is an anachronism for pre-exilic Israel. It is obvious that the Greek term "Ιουδαϊσμός" was formed in Hellenistic times (2 Macc 2:21; 2 Macc 8:1). The encounter between the society of biblical Israel and Hellenistic and Roman culture constitutes the background of "Judaism."[4] Nevertheless, Marc Brettler finds it necessary to use the term "Judaism" for pre-exilic Israel as well, as it stresses the continuity between biblical Israel and postexilic Judaism.[5] The Babylonian exile and the postexilic period are essential to the formation of Judean and Jewish identity. Nevertheless, although important identity markers such as the Sabbath and circumcision were discussed and formed in these periods, they have a complex history that has its beginnings in pre-exilic times.[6] There is no question that Judaism in these periods is polyphonous, a consensus that has given rise to the neologism "Judaisms" or "Judentümer."[7] While the plurality of Judaisms and fluid definitions of identity are recognized for the Second Temple period,[8] Marc Brettler proposes applying such flexible self-understandings for pre-exilic Israel as well.[9]

An element inherent in these discussions is the relationship between religious or ritual aspects of identity and ethnic or political ones. The shift in terminology from biblical Israel to Judaism can be combined with the

2 Hartenstein, Beginnings, 295.

3 Examples are listed, e.g., in Klein, Anti-Judaism. Meyer, Entstehung, 221, describes the development in the Persian period as reduction of nationality and state to the religion of Judaism. See Karrer, Ringen, 148, for a discussion.

4 Fraade, Judaism, 1054–1055; Maier, Judentum, 19.

5 Brettler, Judaism, 430.

6 Brettler, Judaism, 436–438.

7 Blenkinsopp, Judaism, 228; Levin, Entstehung, 14; Bortz, Identität, 257.

8 Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 17–18, questions the designation "Second Temple Judaism" and prefers "Frühjudentum," in opposition to the negative connotations of "Spätjudentum." It is obvious that all of these terms have their problems, yet I understand the Second Temple period in a comprehensive way, starting from the Persian period.

9 Brettler, Judaism, 432–433. Brettler refers to what Kraemer, Tuna, 162, says about inscriptional evidence for Judaism: "We must also keep in mind the fluidity of ancient social relations when considering inscriptions that may seem incongruous to us. In some cases the incongruity […] may reflect […] ancient self-understandings that do not make much sense in the modern world."

development from an ethnic, geographical or political entity to a religious or cultic community. However, research of recent decades has shown that the categories "ethnic" and "religious" are blurred in biblical Israel in many ways and cannot be depicted as a development (or transformation) from one to the other.[10] Indeed, ancient Israel repeatedly reconstituted its identity in different phases of its history.[11] The arc from "ancient Israel" to Judaism at the turn of the millennium covers a period of 1000 years. As such, the self-understanding of "ancient Israel" is subject to historical change and includes elements of continuity as well as discontinuity. The designations "Israel" and "Judah" show different emphases of ethnic and religious components, but both aspects are always present. Social and ethno-political aspects are connected with religion in the self-understanding of "Israel" as a people in relationship to YHWH. As religion is not a separate domain of life in antiquity, religious and political history correlate:

> The [...] forms of official Israelite religion and the religion of the national entity correspond closely to the changing political forms of the nation and thus reveal the intimate connection between religious and political history.[12]

The concepts of ancient "Israel" and "Judah" – as represented in the Hebrew Bible – show a close relationship between YHWH, the "God of Israel"[13], and Israel as the "people of YHWH", and therefore a link between the "ethnic" and "religious" dimensions.

This article focuses on examples from the book of Ezra-Nehemia to illustrate the combination of ethnic and religious aspects as well as the continuity between pre-exilic and post-exilic Israel.

2. The Names "Israel" and יְהוּדִים *yᵉhûdîm* ("Judeans"/"Jews") in the Book of Ezra-Nehemia

A consensus has emerged in Hebrew Bible scholarship that the 5th to the 2nd century BCE, i.e., the Persian and the Hellenistic periods, represent a pivotal time, indeed the formative periods both of Judaism and of the Hebrew

10 Blum, Volk, 25.

11 Ben-Eliyahu, Identity, 17 et al., hints at the special dynamic relationship between ethnic and geographical self-understanding both in biblical texts and in rabbinic literature.

12 Miller, Religion, 79.

13 Stahl, God, evaluates the use of the title "God of Israel" (אלהי ישראל) in the Hebrew Bible.

Bible.[14] The book of Ezra-Nehemia is an important source for these periods. It is not possible here to answer the questions around its exact historical dating. Recent years have seen a gradual shift away from dating it in the Persian period, situating it closer and closer to Hellenistic times. Like every biblical book, it has undergone a long redaction process, containing older elements that might have their origin in the early Persian period, until redaction in Hellenistic times. While former generations were more optimistic about the close relationship between the authors of the book and the events they tell of, in recent years a growing number of researchers have argued that some parts of the book are a retrojection to the early Persian time, having their origins in the early Hellenistic period (i.e., the second half of the 4th century BCE).[15]

By using the name "Israel" for the entire people, those who remained in Juda and Jerusalem as well as those who lived in the Gola and returned, the book of Ezra-Nehemia stresses the continuity between pre-exilic Israel and the post-exilic community. Kristin Weingart has convincingly shown that the name "Israel" did not lose its ethnic meaning in post-exilic times. The relationship to the system of 12 tribes and the identification with Juda are self-evident. In the book of Ezra-Nehemia, the addressee is Israel, in continuity from pre-exilic times through the exile and beyond. Remembering the giving of the Torah is an important factor in emphasizing this continuity, but the religious connotation of Israel does not replace its ethnic one.[16]

In the term יהודים as well, different aspects of meaning are mingled: the tribe and territory of Juda, the political entity of the Persian province Yehud, and religious connotations. This presents several problems: The terms יהודים, "Judeans," and "Jews" have different connotations in the biblical texts and during the following history, and the English or German translations are not exact equivalents. According to Hebrew-German lexica of the Hebrew Bible, the term יהודים can mean both "Judeans" and "Jews." Some lexica and translations do not assign these two meanings to specific biblical texts, others divide them into pre-exilic "Judeans" and post-exilic "Jews".[17]

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14 Levin, Entstehung, 3; 17.

15 Blenkinsopp, Judaism, 230; Levin, Entstehung, 16; Hieke, Bücher, 39.

16 Weingart, Stämmevolk, 288–290.

17 Karrer, Ringen, 147–149. The designation יהודים also occurs in other texts of the Hebrew Bible, most of which are considered to be late: Zech; young parts of Jeremia; Dan; many times in Esther; and Neh. It is a term for "Judeans" living both in Juda and in the Diaspora. It aims at an identification in opposition to other people. In Jeremiah, for instance, the inhabitants of Juda and Jerusalem have other names: "house of Juda" in Jer 3:18; 36:3 or "inhabitants of Jerusalem" in Jer 17:25. "Judeans" (יהודים) is reserved for Judeans in Egypt (Jer 43:9; 44:1) and in other neighbouring countries of Juda (Jer 40:11f.). It designates "Judeans" in distinction from other people, e.g., Chaldeans (Jer 38:19; 43:3; 34:9). In

2.1 *Nehemiah's "Memoir" ("the first person account" of Neh 1–7*; 11–13*)*

The ethnic understanding of יהודים as a people, linking Judeans living inside and outside Juda, is of high conceptual relevance in the book of Nehemiah (and in the Aramaic texts in Ezra 4:6–6:15).[18] In Nehemiah's 1st person Memoir (Neh 1–7*; 11–13*),[19] the Israel-name is not used often (only in Neh 1:6; 2:10; 13:18, 26). Its meaning is identical with the designation יהודים, mentioned more often in Nehemiah,[20] e.g., in Neh 1:2, 3:

> [2] וַיָּבֹא חֲנָנִי אֶחָד מֵאַחַי הוּא וַאֲנָשִׁים מִיהוּדָה וָאֶשְׁאֲלֵם עַל־הַיְּהוּדִים **הַפְּלֵיטָה אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁאֲרוּ מִן־הַשִּׁבְי** וְעַל־יְרוּשָׁלִָם׃
> [3] וַיֹּאמְרוּ לִי **הַנִּשְׁאָרִים אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁאֲרוּ מִן־הַשִּׁבְי** שָׁם בַּמְּדִינָה בְּרָעָה גְדֹלָה וּבְחֶרְפָּה וְחוֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלִַם מְפֹרֶצֶת וּשְׁעָרֶיהָ נִצְּתוּ בָאֵשׁ׃ (BHQ)
>
> [2] One of my brothers, Hanani, came with certain **men from Judah**; and I asked them about **the Jews [Judeans] that survived [those who escaped], those who had escaped [remained from] the captivity**, and about Jerusalem.
> [3] They replied, "**The survivors [those who remained] there in the province who escaped [remained from] captivity** are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been destroyed by fire." (NRSV)

In this text, Nehemiah, who lives in Babylon, asks Hanani, who has arrived from Juda, about Judeans in Juda and Jerusalem. The relative clause in V. 2–3 (אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁאֲרוּ מִן־הַשִּׁבְי) indicates that "the survivors" (V. 2: הַפְּלֵיטָה) or "the remnants" (V. 3: הַנִּשְׁאָרִים) are not the only group. The sentence is ambiguous. It can indicate both the survivors among the exiles in Babylon and the people who remained in Juda and have not been deported at all.[21] It is not necessary to decide for one of these options, because Nehemiah's "report" sees all these groups unified in the name יהודים: the Judeans living in different places, in Juda and Jerusalem (Neh 1:2; 2:16 et al.), in Babylon (Neh 5:8) and in the province Samaria (Neh 4:6). The distinction between returning people and the people who stayed in Juda has no relevance in Nehemiah's report. As descendants

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a similar way in 2 Kgs 1:6 and Dan 3:8, 12 Judeans outside of Juda, in Eilath and Babylon, are named יהודים. Zech 8:23 develops the vision of a positive relationship of Judeans with other people, who follow them at their כנף ("garment seam"). Here, the language hints at another connotation of יהודים. In a comparable way, the papyri of Elephantine show that the members of the military colony who lived outside of Juda named themselves יהודים.

18 Karrer, Ringen, 149–150.

19 It has been discussed whether this memorandum of Nehemiah is the oldest part of the Ezra-Nehemiah book. Irrespective of this issue, the literary shape of the 1st person account invites readers to identify with Nehemiah: Hieke, Bücher, 155.

20 Weingart, Stämmevolk, 68.

21 Karrer, Ringen, 152–153. Among others, Hieke, Bücher, 157, and Rom-Shiloni, Inclusivity, 36, argue in favour of the first option: יהודים as the people returning from the exile.

of the former kingdom of Juda, the Judeans form a genealogical and ethnic entity.[22]

This mixture of ethnic and religious connotations is valid for the designation "Israel" as well: The religious aspect of the name "Israel" is visible, for example, in Nehemiah's prayer in Neh 1:5–11. Additionally, the episode in Neh 13:15–18, in which Nehemiah talks about people who do not keep Sabbath properly, shows that ethnic and religious aspects are linked. The "people of Juda and Jerusalem" (בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה וּבִירוּשָׁלִָם; Neh 13:16) bring God's wrath upon "Israel" by profaning (חלל) the Sabbath (Neh 13:18). Again, remembering the ancestors (אבות) aims at establishing continuity between pre- and postexilic Israel.

16 וְהַצֹּרִים יָשְׁבוּ בָהּ מְבִיאִים דָּאג וְכָל־מֶכֶר וּמֹכְרִים בַּשַּׁבָּת לִ**בְנֵי יְהוּדָה** וּבִירוּשָׁלִָם׃
17 וָאָרִיבָה אֶת **חֹרֵי יְהוּדָה** וָאֹמְרָה לָהֶם מָה־הַדָּבָר הָרָע הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹשִׂים וּמְחַלְּלִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת׃
18 הֲלוֹא כֹה עָשׂוּ אֲבֹתֵיכֶם וַיָּבֵא אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ אֵת כָּל־הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת וְעַל הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְאַתֶּם מוֹסִיפִים חָרוֹן עַל־**יִשְׂרָאֵל** לְחַלֵּל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת׃ (BHQ)

16 Tyrians also, who lived in the city, brought in fish and all kinds of merchandise and sold them on the sabbath to **the people of Judah**, and in Jerusalem.
17 Then I remonstrated with **the nobles of Judah** and said to them, "What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the sabbath day?
18 Did not your ancestors act in this way, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring more wrath on **Israel** by profaning the sabbath." (NRSV)

Nevertheless, the name "Israel" is not reserved for religious meaning alone. In Neh 2:10 it has a political connotation, framing Nehemiah's task of restoration and ordering the province Yehud:

וַיִּשְׁמַע סַנְבַלַּט הַחֹרֹנִי וְטוֹבִיָּה הָעֶבֶד הָעַמֹּנִי וַיֵּרַע לָהֶם רָעָה גְדֹלָה אֲשֶׁר־בָּא אָדָם לְבַקֵּשׁ **טוֹבָה לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**׃

When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek **the welfare of the people of Israel**.

These examples show that the religious connotation of the name "Israel" – when used in Nehemiah's report – does not substitute its ethnic meaning. Its use is synonymous with the name יהודים ("Judeans"/"Jews"). Both designations emphasize continuity to pre-exilic Israel.[23]

22 Weingart, Stämmevolk, 68–70.
23 Weingart, Stämmevolk, 71.

2.2 *The Ezra Narratives* (*Ezra *1–6; 7–10; Neh 8–10*)

While the Nehemiah memoir prefers the designation יהודים ("Judeans"/"Jews") for the inhabitants of the province Yehud,[24] the Ezra narratives use mainly "Israel."[25] They identify Israel and the Gola, the Diaspora (Ezra 3:11; 4:3; Neh 8:1 et al.): "According to Ezra-Nehemiah only one Israelite community exists in the land of Israel: that of returned exiles!"[26] Their Israel starts in the Gola and contains those who stay in the Gola and those who return to Juda. It consists of the tribes Juda and Benjamin, as well as priests and Levites (Ezra 3:5).[27] The Ezra-narratives conceptualize Israel in demarcation from the inhabitants of the former northern kingdom, the Samarians – without mentioning them explicitly (Ezra 4:1–3).[28] The fact that the system of the 12 tribes is not mentioned can be interpreted in different ways: either texts like Ezra 6:16–17 and 8:35 presuppose it as self-evident, and Juda, Benjamin and Levi represent "all Israel" (כל ישראל),[29] or Israel is intentionally conceptualized as the unity of Juda and Benjamin, rejecting the system of the 12 tribes.[30]

For instance, in Ezra 5:1, we find the name יהודים for persons who live in the Persian province of Yehud, in close relationship to the God of Israel:

> וְהִתְנַבִּי חַגַּי נְבִיָּאה וּזְכַרְיָה בַר־עִדּוֹא נְבִיאַיָּא עַל־**יְהוּדָיֵא** דִּי בִיהוּד וּבִירוּשְׁלֶם בְּשֻׁם אֱלָהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲלֵיהוֹן׃
>
> Now the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews [Judeans] who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel who was over them (NRSV).

In the narratives about Ezra, we find the name "Israel" for both: the people (in an almost "secular" sense of the "laypeople",[31] alongside groups with clearly defined religious tasks at the temple), and in a context stressing the religious aspects, for example in Ezra 7:6–7:

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24 Häusl, Andere, 113.

25 According to Rothenbusch, Auseinandersetzung, 111–112; 127–128, this terminological difference indicates a historical development from older texts (in the Nehemia-Memoir; 5th century BCE) to younger texts (in the Ezra-narratives and lists; 4th century BCE).

26 Japhet, People, 108.

27 Weingart, Stämmevolk, 73–74.

28 Weingart, Israelite, 159–160; Hensel, Juda, 301–302; 474. This exclusive view is not the only one in the Hebrew Bible. Other texts, e.g., in the book of Chronicles, reflect an inclusive perspective, integrating the Samarians: Weingart, Israelite, 163–169.

29 Weingart, Israelite, 171.

30 Bortz, Identität, 258–259; 275.

31 Karrer, Ringen, 73, calls them "secular", Weingart, Stämmevolk, 289, "Laien" ("laypersons").

6 הוּא עֶזְרָא עָלָה מִבָּבֶל וְהוּא־סֹפֵר מָהִיר בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן יְהוָה **אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** וַיִּתֶּן־לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ כְּיַד־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו עָלָיו כֹּל בַּקָּשָׁתוֹ׃
7 וַיַּעֲלוּ **מִבְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִן־הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם וְהַמְשֹׁרְרִים וְהַשֹּׁעֲרִים וְהַנְּתִינִים** אֶל־יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם בִּשְׁנַת־שֶׁבַע לְאַרְתַּחְשַׁסְתְּא הַמֶּלֶךְ׃ (BHQ)

6 This Ezra went up from Babylonia. He was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses that the LORD **the God of Israel** had given; and the king granted him all that he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was upon him.
7 **Some of the people of Israel, and some of the priests and Levites, the singers and gatekeepers, and the temple servants** also went up to Jerusalem, in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes (NRSV).

Taken together, the phrasing מִבְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל ("Some of the people of Israel") in Ezra 7:7 and the מ ("some") introducing every group suggest that some of the people remained in the Gola. As in V. 6, the name "Israel" occurs in texts which highlight the importance of the Tora, also in continuation of this text, in Ezra 7:10, 11:

10 כִּי עֶזְרָא הֵכִין לְבָבוֹ לִדְרוֹשׁ אֶת־**תּוֹרַת יְהוָה** וְלַעֲשׂוֹת וּלְלַמֵּד **בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל חֹק** וּמִשְׁפָּט׃
11 וְזֶה פַּרְשֶׁגֶן הָאִגֶּרֶת אֲשֶׁר נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ אַרְתַּחְשַׁסְתְּא לְעֶזְרָא הַכֹּהֵן הַסֹּפֵר סֹפֵר דִּבְרֵי **מִצְוֹת־יְהוָה** וְחֻקָּיו עַל־**יִשְׂרָאֵל**׃ (BHQ)

10 For Ezra had set his heart to study **the law** of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach the statutes **and ordinances in Israel**.
11 This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave to the priest Ezra, the scribe, a scholar of the text of the **commandments** of the LORD and his **statutes** for **Israel**. (NRSV)

In a similar way, Neh 8:1 addresses Israel as recipients of the Torah, the teachings of YHWH, the God of Israel, given through Moses:

וַיֵּאָסְפוּ כָל־הָעָם כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד אֶל־הָרְחוֹב אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמָּיִם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְעֶזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר לְהָבִיא אֶת־סֵפֶר **תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה** אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־**יִשְׂרָאֵל**׃

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the **law** of Moses, which the LORD had given to **Israel**. (NRSV)

This link between Torah and Israel can also be found in special instructions for the feast of Succot in Neh 8:13–18 (especially in V. 14 and 17). Thus, all these texts emphasize the continuity between pre-exilic Israel as recipients of the Torah and the post-exilic Judeans.[32] They show different emphases between ethnic

32 Karrer, Ringen, 74–76.

and religious identities, but both aspects are always present. The Gola functions as the central point of reference or orientation ("Orientierungszentrum").[33]

2.3 *The Lists of Returnees* (*Ezra 2//Neh 7*)

It has been and remains a subject of discussion whether Ezra 2 is integrated well in the narrative Ezra 1–3,[34] or whether this list is a secondary addition,[35] likely from Hellenistic times. The lists of returning people are introduced as אַנְשֵׁי עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל ("the people of Israel") in Ezra 2:1–2 (and Neh 7:7).

> [1] וְאֵלֶּה **בְּנֵי הַמְּדִינָה הָעֹלִים מִשִּׁבְיֵ הַגּוֹלָה** אֲשֶׁר הֶגְלָה נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּוּר מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל לְבָבֶל וַיָּשׁוּבוּ לִירוּשָׁלַם וִיהוּדָה **אִישׁ לְעִירוֹ**׃
> [2] אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ עִם־זְרֻבָּבֶל יֵשׁוּעַ נְחֶמְיָה שְׂרָיָה רְעֵלָיָה מָרְדֳּכַי בִּלְשָׁן מִסְפֶּר בִּגְוַי רְחוּם בַּעֲנָה מִסְפַּר **אַנְשֵׁי עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל**׃(BHQ)
>
> [1] Now these were **the people of the province** who came from those captive exiles whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried captive to Babylonia; they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, all to their own towns.
> [2] They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah.
> The number of the Israelite people (NRSV).

This headline to the following lists implies that all "people of the province" whom Nebukadnezar deported returned and that they live "everyone in his town". The first part of the list, V. 2b–35, enumerates the laypersons,[36] containing names of families linked with places. The fact that these places were not inhabited in early Persian times serves as an argument for dating this list to Hellenistic times.[37] However, it is not clear whether these places are authentic or part of a theological Israel.[38] V. 36–58 list the families of priests, Levites, singers, doorkeepers, temple servants – people with tasks pertaining to the temple. The names of the persons mentioned have various origins (Hebrew, Aramaic,

33 Häusl, Andere, 106. This "diasporization" continues in rabbinic literature: cf. Cordoni, Identity, 123.

34 Bortz, Identität, 227; 275.

35 Weingart, Stämmevolk, 81. Another possibility, proposed by Heckl, Neuanfang, 58–81, is that the list pre-existed as a separate source and has been integrated into the narrative. Two facts might serve as hints that this frame was formulated when integrating an already existing list into the narrative context: for one, the order of the groups in the summarizing verse Ezra 2:70 does not correspond to the enumeration in the list; for another, "in their towns" (בְּעָרֵיהֶם) is repeated.

36 Karrer, Ringen, 79, calls them "die säkulare Bevölkerung im Unterschied zum Kultpersonal."

37 Finkelstein, Archaeology, 14; Weingart, Stämmevolk, 83.

38 Bortz, Identität, 249.

Akkadian, Persian, Egyptian).[39] Only a few of a total of about 100 names have a Yahwistic theophorous element, for example, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, and Tobiah. V. 59–60 mentions people from the Babylonian exile whose ancestry from "Israel" is uncertain. Thus, these lists might hint at the multi-ethnic and multi-religious population in the Persian province Yehud.[40]

This is a list of the inhabitants of the province of Juda, presented as the list of returning people and as the list of "entire Israel". It is formed in parallel to the recruiting lists in Num 1–4; 26, designed in the style of an administrative document claiming high reliability. Its function might be comparable to community lists from Qumran or Damascus documenting the affiliation of its members to an exclusive group.[41]

In the summarizing verse of Ezra 2:70, which – together with the heading Ezra 2:1–2 – frames the list, the groups are mentioned again: priests, Levites, "some of the people" (the laypersons), and groups connected to the temple:

וַיֵּשְׁבוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם וּמִן־הָעָם וְהַמְשֹׁרְרִים וְהַשּׁוֹעֲרִים וְהַנְּתִינִים בְּעָרֵיהֶם **וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל** בְּעָרֵיהֶם׃

> The priests, the Levites, and some of the people lived in Jerusalem and its vicinity; and the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants lived in their towns, and **all Israel** in their towns (NRSV).

All of these groups, that is, laypersons and those connected with professional religious tasks around the temple (about a tenth of the returning people), are comprehended as "all Israel" (כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל), as the entity that returned from exile. Altogether, the list in Ezra 2//Neh 7 is an example of the ethnic component remaining in the self-understanding of the "Judeans" as "Israel" and cannot serve as argument for a mere religious community in post-exilic Yehud.[42]

3. Predispositions for the Parting of the Ways[43]

As we have seen, both names, "Israel" and יהודים "Judeans/Jews", have multiple connotations in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah. The fact that biblical Israel has lost its political identity as a state due to the Babylonian exile does not mean

39 Bortz, Identität, 273.

40 Becking, Ezra, 64–65.

41 Bortz, Identität, 204; 273–274.

42 Weingart, Stämmevolk, 81.

43 As a metaphor, the term "parting of the ways" has come to designate the complex process between 2nd and 4th century CE that led to the separation between Judaism and Christianity: Gabrielson, Ways, 178.

that its identity is constructed only via religion. Instead, the ethnic connotation of both designations guaranteed continuity from pre-exilic to post-exilic times.[44] The religious aspect, the self-understanding as people of YHWH, the God of Israel, is always inherent.

Wellhausen's statement about Israel returning from the exile not as a nation but as a "religious sect"[45] is still very influential. For instance, Blenkinsopp (2009) proposed the thesis that a "sectarian element" was present in early Judaism as well as in early Christianity, and that this element enabled continuity to the Second Temple period.[46] However, this view does not pay enough attention to the complex mixture of Israel's self-understanding as an ethnic and religious entity.

As is well-known, Second Temple Judaism is a multifaceted phenomenon. Different groups of society are depicted in the texts. The plural designation "Judaisms" makes sense to comprehend this plurality. Although the book of Ezra-Nehemiah claims to represent "all Israel", it represents only part of the spectrum. As a case in point, the complex history of the Samaritans with their own temple is an example of this diversity and might hint at the fact that "the parting of the ways most probably was the result of a long process of independent developments."[47]

In the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, two persons are offered as models for identification. Ezra and Nehemiah represent contrasting profiles but are motivated by the same attitude, which has its origin in the Babylonian diaspora: Nehemia as an "Israelite", a layman governor of the province, and Ezra the priest (Ezra 2:70; 7:7; Neh 11:3 et al.).[48] They represent the group of the returnees, in proximity to the Ezechiel-school. They aim at implementing their religious agenda, a life according to the Torah, in combination with ethnic genealogy. The texts ascribed to them reflect processes of identity formation and demarcation.

In the literature of the Second Temple period, Ezra's role is amplified: he is introduced, for example, as "high priest" in 3 Ezra (3 Ezra 9:39–40, 49). Rabbinic texts ascribe to him a high status,[49] one much higher than that of Nehemiah. According to the Babylonian Talmud (bShab. 123b), Nehemiah is one of the "men of the Great Assembly." Ezra is presented as a second Moses who gave

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44 According to Häusl, Andere, 106, ethnic identity combines elements of a common historical experience, the geographic aspect of different countries of origin, and genealogical aspects.

45 Wellhausen, Prolegomena, 28; Weingart, Stämmevolk, 26–27.

46 Blenkinsopp, Judaism, 11; 229–230 et al.

47 Becking, Ezra, 117.

48 Blenkinsopp, Judaism, 180.

49 Blenkinsopp, Judaism, 176.

Israel the Tora a second time (bSanh. 21b). From the rabbinic point of view, the post-exilic time is a time of transition. Ezra guarantees continuity between the period of the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic times.[50]

Many different groups claim continuity to biblical Israel. It has been recognized many times that the model of a "double exit" ("doppelter Ausgang" or "zweifache Nachgeschichte") of the Hebrew Bible in Judaism and Christianity is a simplification:[51] the developments were complex, the entities "Judaism" and "Christianity" do not exist in the Second Temple period, and the model suggests a symmetry that does not correspond to the historic reality. Nevertheless, it is important to see that the texts of the Hebrew Bible are open to various interpretations. Every single reader of the text and every community has emphasized different aspects of the manifold possibilities contained in the texts of the Hebrew Bible. This process already begins in inner-biblical interpretation and enables continuity between biblical Israel and Judaism.

As an argument in the discussions of the parting of the ways, the development from ethnic identity markers to mere religious ones does not apply to the book of Ezra-Nehemiah. Instead, it shows a mixture of ethnic and religious identity, and an interest in establishing continuity between pre-exilic and post-exilic Israel. These discussions about different aspects of self-understanding continue during the long process of the "parting of the ways."

50 Porton, Ezra, 305–306.

51 Rendtorff, Bedeutung, 62–63; Koch, Ausgang, 240–241; Dohmen, Text, 12–13.

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Jesus-Oriented Groups and the Emergence of a Rabbinic Jewish Identity

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Abstract

This essay argues that an important factor behind the emergence of a rabbinic form of Judaism was a challenge to Jewish identity and self-understanding posed by Jesus-oriented groups who had appropriated essential aspects of Jewish self-understanding. The unease with gentile attachment to Israel's God and involvement with the Torah, and the reconfiguration of the boundaries of Judaism to exclude Jesus-oriented Jews that we see in some early rabbinic texts appear to reflect a need to re-establish Israel's identity in the wake of the Jesus movement's construction of a competing identity of the people of God. That "internal others" (Jesus-oriented Jews) aligned themselves with "external others" (Jesus-oriented gentiles) to promote a different understanding of Israel's covenantal identity eventually led non-Jesus-oriented Jews to redefine Jewish identity in rabbinic terms.

Keywords

Rabbinic Judaism; Christianity; gentiles; Jesus-oriented Jews; Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions 1.27–71

1. Introduction

While much earlier scholarship assumed that impact went in one direction only – from Judaism to Christianity – it is being increasingly acknowledged that influence seems to have gone in both directions and that Judaism and Christianity shaped each other, both through polemic and non-polemic interaction.[1] It is also becoming clear that the formation and development of rabbinic

1 See Schäfer, Jesus; Boyarin, Border Lines.

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Judaism was a lengthy process that occurred not only as a consequence of the destruction of the Second Temple but also in response to Christianity.[2]

This essay argues that an important factor behind the emergence of rabbinic Judaism was the challenge to Jewish identity and self-understanding posed by Jesus-oriented groups. More specifically, it proposes that the unease with gentile attachment to Israel's God and involvement with the Torah, and the reconfiguration of the boundaries of Judaism to exclude Jesus-oriented Jews that we see in some early rabbinic texts was, at least in part, a response to a challenge to Jewish self-understanding posed by the Jesus movement's construction of a competing vision of Israel's calling, and above all, its construction of an alternative identity of the people of God. The self-alignment of "internal others"[3] (Jesus-oriented Jews) with "external others" (Jesus-oriented gentiles), to promote a different understanding of Israel's covenantal identity, eventually led non-Jesus-oriented Jews to redefine Jewish identity in rabbinic terms.

Sociologists have long noted that when a society's identity is questioned and as a result becomes unstable, that society needs to reestablish its identity. This is done by creating boundaries – social, religious, cultural, or ideological – to clearly demarcate who belongs to the group and who does not.[4] Adiel Schremer has proposed that the need, expressed in early rabbinic texts, to erect ideological boundaries and promote group cohesion was the result of an identity crisis in the wake of the destruction of the second temple in 70 and the failure of the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 135 CE.[5] These political and military failures, he argues, were the major cause of an identity crisis, leading to an effort to define the boundaries of the community by labelling certain groups as heretics and excluding them from Jewish society.[6] While building on Schremer's insights, I suggest that the identity crisis was in large part a result of the appropriation of Jewish covenantal identity by Jesus-oriented groups and their construction of an alternative identity of the people of God. Of course, this is not to say that the wars against the Romans and the destruction of the temple did not also influence the formation of rabbinic Judaism.

Many adherents to the early Jewish Jesus movement seem to have believed that, with the end of days, God had purified the gentiles so that they could join the people of God without becoming Jews, provided they were committed

2 For the slow emergence of the rabbinic movement, see Hezser, Structure. For examples of Christian influence on rabbinic Judaism, see Yuval, Nations.

3 Hayes, Other, defines "internal others" as "members of [a] group that would contest the group's identity or construct it in a different way". (p. 243)

4 See, e.g., Erikson, Puritans.

5 Schremer, Brothers.

6 Schremer, Brothers, 16–17, 25–68.

to observing the commandments that the Torah prescribes for non-Israelites, thus safeguarding the purity of the community (Acts 15:19–20, 29 and Lev 17–18).[7] Concern with the salvation of gentiles was not an invention by the Jesus movement and first-century Jews generally seem to have been quite open to gentiles.[8] However, with their claim that the people of God had been reconfigured to include Jesus-believing gentiles *as gentiles*, Jesus-oriented groups had planted a seed that would destabilize the traditional identification of the Jewish people with biblical Israel and involved non-Jews in a debate that would otherwise have been an internal Jewish affair. There seems to have been a distinction between "Israel" (only Jews) and the people of God (Jews and Jesus-believing gentiles) that was upheld in the early Jesus movement (1 Cor 7:17–24; Gal 3:28; Rom 15:10; Acts 15:19–21, 28–29),[9] but by the mid-second century the idea that gentile followers of Jesus had acquired *the same status as Jews*, and *together with Israel* now constituted the people of God, had in some circles evolved into the claim that the *Jews had been rejected by God*. According to this idea, they had been *replaced* by Jesus-believers, who now constituted the true Israel (*verus Israel*), to whom God's blessings and promises had been transferred.[10]

This was no mere theological controversy but a claim that struck at the very core of Jewish self-understanding. As Paula Fredriksen and Matthew Thiessen point out, in antiquity peoplehood (or, what we might designate "ethnicity") was perceived in terms of kinship. Gods and their peoples formed families. The relationship was upheld through specific protocols of worship, known

7 See Thiessen, Conversion, 123–141; Oliver, Torah, 365–398.

8 Interest in the salvation of non-Jews is widespread in Second Temple Jewish literature. In many of the relevant texts, equal status between Jews and gentiles is envisioned by downplaying the specific requirements and traits connected to God's covenant with Israel and by advocating a number of ethical commandments that apply equally to all humankind; see Donaldson, Judaism and the Gentiles.

9 See also Fredriksen/Thiessen, Paul, 371–388, esp. 383–384; Thiessen, Conversion, 123–124; 140–141; Oliver, Torah, 365–398.

10 An early proponent of this view was Justin: "We have been led to God through this crucified Christ and we are the true spiritual Israel, and the descendants of Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, who, though uncircumcised, was approved and blessed by God because of his faith and was called the father of many nations" (*Dial.* 11.5; cf. *Dial.* 123.9; 135.3); See Richardson, Israel, and Harvey, Israel, 253–254; Simon, Israel, 170–173. Other ancient authors, such as Barnabas and Tertullian, argued that God's covenant with the Jews was annulled and his promises transferred to Christians; see Harvey, Israel, 251–252; Hayward, Interpretations, 344–345; Simon, Israel, 78–79. Rabbinic awareness of the claim of some Jesus-oriented groups to constitute "Israel" is evidenced in later rabbinic texts like Songs Rab. 7:3; Tanh. Ki Tissa 34. See also Tanh. Vayyera 6 (ed. Buber); Pesiq. Rab. 5; Exod. Rab. 47:1.

as "ancestral customs." What we call "religions" were ethnically embedded. Israel's customs and relationship to their God were defining aspects of their ethnic identity.[11] Thus, the Jesus movement's claims regarding the identity of the people of God, and the later reconfiguration of Israel by authors such as Justin, would have been seen as an appropriation of a major aspect of Jewish identity and the ancestral customs which came with it. I suggest that some non-Jesus-oriented Jews responded to the challenges posed by the development within Jesus-oriented groups by re-drawing the boundaries of Judaism so as to exclude the latter (both Jews and gentiles), and by introducing new practices designed to distinguish rabbinic Jews from Jesus-oriented Jews and the gentiles associated with them.[12] The new customs focused in particular on commensality and foodstuff, matters that are especially significant for the formation of group identity.[13]

In what follows, I focus on a few passages from early rabbinic texts, mainly but not exclusively from the Sifre, which exhibit a preoccupation with the boundaries of Israel and express unease with gentile attachment to the God of Israel and involvement with the Torah. I suggest that these texts indicate a sense of challenge to Israel's identity generated by the appropriation of major aspects of Jewish self-understanding on the part of Jesus-oriented groups and their partly Torah-observant gentile adherents. Furthermore, I propose viewing the emphasis these texts put on Israel's distinction from gentiles, and their effort to redraw the boundaries of Judaism to exclude Jesus-oriented Jews, as responses to that challenge. In closing, I suggest that the Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions (1.27–71) may be seen as representing an insider voice of Jesus-oriented Jews in late second and early third century Roman Palestine.

It has been noted before that some passages from the Sifre and Mekhilta (late third century rabbinic commentaries on Deuteronomy and Exodus respectively) polemicize against "Christians."[14] However, I wish to highlight here that it is not a question of Jews arguing against "Christians" as separate, independent entities. Rather, it is a matter of one group of Jews (rabbinic-to-be)

11 Fredriksen/Thiessen, Paul, 372–374.

12 Berger/Luckmann, Construction, observe that a threat posed by an alternative symbolic universe that may appear attractive to members of one's own group is likely to be countered by modifications of the tradition.

13 Kraemer, Eating, and Rosenblum, Food, argue that the new customs introduced by the early rabbinic movement were designed to differentiate rabbinic Jews from other Jews, but they do not consider the possibility that Jesus-oriented Jews may have been among these other Jews.

14 See Fraade, Tradition, 25–68 and references on 265 n. 35; Stern, Parables, 42–80, esp. 61. For responses to Christians in the Mekhilta, see Hirshman, Rivalry.

attempting to distinguish themselves from another group (Jesus-oriented Jews and gentiles), who laid equal claims to Jewish self-understanding and covenantal identity. As the term "Christians" obscures the fact that the separation process between Jesus-oriented groups (Jews and gentiles) and non-Jesus-oriented Jews was in part a development that took place within Judaism, I will instead refer to the Jesus-followers of the early centuries CE as "Jesus-oriented groups."

2. Jesus-Oriented Groups and Gentile Attraction to Israel's God

The Sifre's expansions of the biblical account of God's election of Israel and the giving of the Torah are curiously preoccupied with "the nations of the world" (non-Jews), said to have been approached by God and offered the Torah before God turned to Israel. These non-Jewish nations are depicted in quite negative terms,[15] and Israel's distinction from them is stressed. Israel alone among the nations are said to have accepted the Torah at Sinai, where God's voice, visible as tongues of fire, encircled the people, separating them from the nations.[16] Because the nations rejected the Torah when God offered it to them,[17] they have no right to it and no share in the special relationship with God enjoyed by Israel through the Torah, according to the Sifre. The nations are portrayed as utterly hopeless and incapable of keeping even the few commandments given to all humankind through Noah.[18] Still, they envy Israel their position as the recipients of the Torah and are attracted to Israel's God and way of life, an attraction seen by some to jeopardize Israel's unique relationship with their God:

> Similarly, the nations of the world would ask Israel, "How is your beloved better than another" (Songs 5:9), that you are killed for his sake, as it is said, "Therefore

15 The Sifre contains 69 negative references to the "nations" and only six neutral. The Mekhilta has 40 negative references. By comparison, the other midrashic collections from the tannaitic period contain only eight negative references to the "nations" (Sifre Numbers) and 19 (Sifra) respectively; see Fraade, Tradition, 228 n. 229.

16 Sifre §343–345 on Deut 33:1–4. Cf. §313 (on Deut 32:10) according to which Israel are bound to God through their constant interpretation of his word; see Fraade, Tradition, 25–68.

17 The tradition that God gave the Torah to Israel only after having offered it to the nations of the world is widespread. For more and later parallels, see Fraade, Tradition, 197 n. 38.

18 Sifre §343; Cf. Mek. R. Ishmael Bahodesh 5 (Lauterbach vol. 2, 234–236), Fraade, Tradition, 32–36.

> do maidens love you [unto death]" (Songs 1:3)?[19] And it also says, "It is for your sake that we are slain all day long" (Ps 44:23). You are all beautiful, you are all heroic. Come and mingle with us." And Israel replied, "Let us tell you a little of his praise and you will recognize him, My beloved is clear-skinned and ruddy [...] (Songs 5:10–16)." When the nations of the world heard of his beauty and the praise of the Holy One, blessed be He, they said to Israel: "Let us come with you, as it is said, Whither has your beloved gone, o fairest of women? Whither has your beloved turned? Let us seek him with you?" (Songs 6:1). What does Israel reply? "You have no portion in him, I am my beloved's and my beloved "is mine" (Songs 6:3).[20]

As Steven Fraade notes, this passage seems to be saying that gentile interest in Israel's God ("Let us come with you") is no less threatening to Israel's identity than the risk of assimilation ("Come and mingle with us").[21] What might have prompted this sense of threat posed by the nations joining Israel in the second or early third century? According to Schremer, the identity crisis reflected here was a result of the military and political defeat at the hands of the Romans in 70 and 135, and he sees in the question placed in the mouth of the nations ("How is your beloved better than another that you are killed for his sake?"), a reflection of religious doubts among the rabbis themselves.[22] I wonder, though, whether the fear of identity loss reflected here was not as much, or even more, provoked by Jesus-oriented groups and the extent to which gentiles through them were brought closer to Jews and Judaism.

Pagans had been present in Jewish synagogues since before the common era, adopting as much or as little of Jewish worship and practice as they wished.[23] However, the situation changed with the Jesus movement's demand that gentile adherents abstain from all things connected to the cult of the gods, from ingesting blood and strangled animals, and from sexual relations prohibited by the Jewish scriptures (Acts 15:19–21, 28–29, 21:25; cf. 1 Cor 5:1–2; 6:9–10; Gal 5:19–21). As they were no longer free to engage in pagan cults, and thus could not participate fully in the Greco-Roman life permeated with libations and sacrifices to the gods, these non-Jewish Jesus-adherents would have been

19 עלמות (maidens) read as על מות (unto death); see Fraade, Tradition, 203 n. 70.

20 Sifre §343 on Deut 33:2 (ed. Finkelstein, 399). Unless otherwise noted translations of rabbinic sources are my own. Translations of biblical verses are taken from the Jewish Publication Society Hebrew-English Tanakh.

21 Fraade, Tradition, 43.

22 Schremer, Brothers, 40–42.

23 Fredriksen/Irshai, Anti-Judaism, 977–1034, esp. 987–988. These pagan sympathizers are often designated "God-fearers". Ancient sources mention their adoption of dietary restrictions and the observance of Sabbath and other festivals; Lieu, Race, 175–197. For epigraphical evidence, see Trebilco, Communities, 152–164.

more invested in the Jesus movement and their identity increasingly defined by it. The prohibition to worship other gods also meant that exclusive allegiance to the God of Israel would no longer have been a distinguishing mark for Jews only. While some Jews may have welcomed this change among gentile sympathizers, others might have feared repercussions from the Roman authorities and a blurring of Jewish and gentile identities.[24] The demands that the Jesus movement made on gentiles would have brought them closer to a Jewish way of life and would have made their behavior appear "jew*ish*," as Mark Nanos puts it,[25] a development that would have affected Jews also. Thus, I do not think that we should dismiss out of hand the possibility that the words put in the mouth of the nations in the story above reflect a historical reality in which some gentiles were perceived as attaching themselves so closely to Israel's God as to challenge the special relationship that Israel enjoyed with their God.

3. A Response to the Challenge

In response, some non-Jesus-oriented Jews felt a need to insist that the Torah, the sign of the covenant between Israel and their God, was the exclusive possession of Israel. The Sifre's comment on Deut 33:4 ("Moses gave us the Torah as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob") reads as follows:

> Moses commanded us the Torah as the heritage [מורשה] of the congregation of Jacob. [Deut 33:4] This command is only for us, it is only for our sake [...]
> Another interpretation of the heritage [מורשה] of the congregation of Jacob: Read not "heritage" [מורשה] but "betrothed" [מאורשה].[26] This teaches that the Torah is betrothed to Israel and is like a married woman with respect to the nations of the world, as it says, "Can a man rake embers into his bosom without burning his clothes? Can a man walk on live coal without scorching his feet? It is

24 As pointed out by Fredriksen and Irshai, Anti-Judaism, 987–988, for pagans, multiple religious allegiances were standard and unproblematic as long as they did not involve the abandonment of Greco-Roman gods and cults. Such an arrangement was likely convenient for Jews who considered exclusive allegiance to the God of Israel as the defining privilege of Israel.

25 Nanos, Non-Jews, 26–53. Speaking of "Jewish non-Jews" rather than "Christian gentiles," he wishes to highlight that the early Jesus movement brought non-Jews "into a Jewish way of life, into Judaism, into Jewish synagogues," even as they remained non-Jews. See also Fredriksen, Judaizing.

26 Some manuscripts have מאורסה, which is a more radical alteration of the word "heritage", but a correct spelling of "betrothed;" see Fraade, Tradition, 221 n. 175.

> the same with one who sleeps with his fellow's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished." (Prov 6:27–29)[27]

Fraade proposes that the nations, whose involvement with the Torah is likened to adultery, may have been Christians who engaged in the study of the Bible "without submitting to its (rabbinically understood) covenantal stipulations," or pagans who attended the synagogue to hear the Torah taught but without committing themselves to its commandments.[28] He recognizes that the negative preoccupation with the "nations of the world" likely reflects the historical circumstances of third-century Palestine, but is hesitant to identify the nations of the world too firmly with "Christians," preferring to see in the Sifre Israel's need to confront both Rome (pagans) and the church (Christians).[29] While it may be wise not reduce the commentary to a polemical response to one specific group only, it would seem that the "nations" in this case refers primarily to non-Jewish adherents of Jesus-oriented groups, who not only studied the Torah but had also adopted some of its commandments.[30] Torah observant Jesus-oriented gentiles, who like Jews were committed to the exclusive worship of the God of Israel and claimed to be equal partners in the covenant (or even to constitute the "true Israel"), would have posed much more of a threat to Jewish self-understanding and identity than pagans who remained committed to their own cults even if they had chosen to also worship the God of Israel. Moreover, Jesus-oriented groups had adopted the Jewish scriptures as

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27 Sifre §345 (ed. Finkelstein, 402).

28 Fraade, Tradition, 58.

29 Fraade, Tradition, 67–68. Scholars debate whether "the nations of the world" refer specifically to "Christians," in particular "gentile Christians" (Boyarin, Lines, 137), or to pagans more generally (Schremer, Brothers, 82–84). From a rabbinic perspective, however, the defining aspect of both would have been that they were not Jews. It is not surprising, then, that the term as used in rabbinic literature in some instances seems to refer to Jesus-oriented gentiles and in others to pagans.

30 From the constant outbursts by Jesus-oriented leaders of the second–fourth centuries against observance of the Mosaic law, we know that many non-Jewish Jesus-adherents indeed kept a level of Torah observance, and that their authorities found this deeply disturbing (Ignatius [*Magn.* 8.1; 10.3] , Irenaeus [*Epid.* 89], and Justin [*Dial.* 47]). Origen urges the members of his congregation not to discuss in church what they had learned from the Jews in the synagogue the day before and not to eat meals in both places (*Hom. Lev.* 5.8; *Sel. Exod.* 12.46), and Chrysostom complains of Christians who keep the Sabbath, go to synagogue, celebrate Passover and Sukkot; see Fredriksen, Duck, 30, n. 17. The fourth-century councils of Elvira and Laodicea likewise suggest that some Jesus-adherents went well beyond the commandments of the Apostolic Decree in their adoption of Jewish practices, fasting with Jews, keeping the Sabbath (and working on Sunday), celebrating Jewish festivals, eating unleavened bread at Easter; Wilken, John, 71–72 and references there.

their own and claimed to have the correct interpretation of them, which would have made it more urgent to protect the Torah from Jesus followers than from pagans who made no such claims. From the perspective of non-Jesus-oriented Jews, Jesus-oriented gentiles were not part of the covenant of which the Torah was the sign. Observance of commandments outside the legally defined commitment that the covenant constituted may have been seen as infringing on Israel's privileges and as blurring the boundary between Jews and gentiles. Incidentally, some Jesus-oriented Jews, such as the Pharisees in Acts 15:1, 5 and perhaps Matthew, would probably have agreed.

A response to Sabbath observance by non-Jews – in my view, likely Jesus-adherents – is found in a passage from the Mekhilta. Commenting on Exod 31:16–17 ("The Israelite people shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout the ages as a covenant for all time: it shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel"), the Mekhilta adds, "but not between me and the nations of the world."[31] Given what we know about Torah observance by Jesus followers in the second and third centuries, I am inclined to see in "the nations of the world" a reference to Jesus-oriented gentiles, but without drawing too firm a line between them and non-Jews in general.[32]

It is essential to note, however, that rabbinic Judaism was not monolithic and that tannaitic literature includes a strand of traditions according to which God had intended the Torah for all humanity and in which Torah observance by gentiles is praised.[33] Moreover, the repeated prohibitions by Christian leaders and church councils against attending synagogue services, celebrating Jewish holidays, eating and associating with Jews,[34] seem to suggest that many Jewish assemblies continued to welcome Jesus-adherents and, we may assume, felt no threat to their identity. It may well be the case that the unease with gentile involvement with the Torah and the need to redraw the boundaries of Judaism so as to exclude Jesus-following Jews and gentiles that we find in a text to be discussed below was felt only among some non-Jesus-oriented Jews. The idea

31 Mek. R. Ishmael Shabb. 1.

32 Cf. Hirshman, Rivalry, 57, who, in light of the polemical language of the passage as a whole, sees it as a reaction to "Christian" claims. One might object that Jubilees displays a similar concern with identity markers distinguishing Israel from non-Jews and that accordingly such a concern does not require the presence of Jesus-oriented gentiles. This is true, but while the Mekhilta's reference to "the nations" may also include pagans, non-Jewish Sabbath observers posing a serious challenge to Jewish identity in the second and third centuries would likely have been Jesus-adherents.

33 These traditions are considered to belong to the school associated with R. Ishmael and are found in the Mekhilta, Sifre to Numbers, and Mekhilta de Arayot, a source preserved in Sifra but seen as deriving from the R. Ishmael school; see Hirshman, Universalism, 101–115.

34 See FN 30 above.

that the Torah was exclusively for Jews was obviously not universally accepted, even within the rabbinic movement. Interestingly, however, this is the view we find in later rabbinic literature and the position that would eventually prevail.[35] It appears likely that it was precisely the claims of Jesus-oriented groups and the semi-Jewish behavior among their gentile adherents that led to this development.

The Sifre's next expansion establishes the Torah as Israel's birthright and the heritage of *all* Israelites by virtue of their being Jacob's descendants:

> Another interpretation [of "the heritage of the congregation of Jacob"]. Do not read "betrothed" [מאורשה] but "heritage" [מורשה]. This teaches that the Torah is the inheritance [מורשה] of Israel. A parable: To what may this be compared? To the son of kings who when young was taken captive to a country across the sea. Should he desire to return even after a hundred years, he need not be embarrassed to do so because he can say, "I am returning to my inheritance" [ירושתי]. Similarly, a rabbi [תלמיד חכם] who separated himself from the words of Torah and went after other things [דברים אחרים] can return without shame even after a hundred years, because he can say, "I am returning to my heritage" [ירושתי]. Therefore it is said, "the heritage [מורשה] of the congregation of Jacob".[36]

As Fraade notes, the meaning "betrothed" stresses that the Torah is *only* for Israel, whereas the meaning "heritage" underscores that it belongs to *all* Israelites. The "betrothed" and the "heritage" aspects emphasize different, but complementary, qualities of Israel's relationship to the Torah. While the "betrothed" aspect defines Israel's relation to the Torah in legally obligatory terms that preclude a similar relationship to the Torah on the part of "the nations," the "heritage" aspect stresses that all Israelites, even if they have abandoned the Torah and involved themselves with the ancestral customs of other peoples, can always return to it, since it is theirs by inheritance.[37] In addition, the meaning "betrothed" stresses Israel's active acceptance of and involvement with the Torah, while the sense "heritage" underscores the unconditional share

35 Hirshman, Universalism, 115. See bAvod. Zar. 2a–3b and bSanh. 59b where the following reworking of the tradition from Sifre is found: "R. Yohanan said: A gentile [*oved kokahvim*] who engages in Torah is liable to the death penalty, as it is said, *Moses commanded us the Torah, as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob* (Deut 33:4), a 'heritage' for us and not for them. According to the one who says 'heritage,' the prohibition against involvement in the Torah is included in the prohibition of robbery, as a gentile who engages in Torah robs the Jewish people of it. According to the one who says 'betrothed,' the punishment is like that of one who engages in intercourse with a betrothed young woman, which is execution by stoning."

36 Sifre §345 (ed. Finkelstein, 402).

37 Fraade, Tradition, 56–60.

in the Torah that all Israelites have by virtue of being descendants of Jacob. Although speculative, one might venture that the latter aspect was also meant to counter the claim made by some Jesus-oriented groups that God's people had been reconfigured and only included those Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah. Against such a view, our passage insists that the Torah, the sign of God's covenant with his people, belongs to all of Jacob's descendants regardless of their beliefs and, as their birthright, it is always theirs to return to.

It is important to point out that it was not the inclusion of gentiles by Jesus-oriented groups *per se* that bothered the author/redactor of these passages in the Sifre, but rather that they were included in the covenant *as gentiles*, that is, without first being transformed into Jews. The rabbinic movement also welcomed non-Jews, but it included them through conversion, a procedure whereby the non-Jew not only pledged exclusive allegiance to the God of Israel but also joined the Jewish *ethnos*. Unconvinced that the Jesus event signified a divine transformation of the gentiles, non-Jesus-oriented Jews insisted that, in order to be included in the covenant with Israel's God, gentiles needed to adopt *all* of Israel's ancestral customs and become Jews (cf. the Jesus-believing Pharisees in Acts 15:5).

4. Separating from Jesus-Oriented Groups

That Jesus-oriented groups were indeed perceived as a threat is evident from the hostility towards them in Tosefta Ḥullin, a passage where the context allows us to identify those referred to as *minim* as Jesus-oriented Jews:[38]

> Meat found in the hand of a gentile is permitted for gain, but [if it is found] in the hand of a *min*, it is prohibited for gain. That which comes out of the house of a *min*[39] is the meat of sacrifices to the dead, for they have said: The slaughtering by a *min* is idolatry, their bread is the bread of a Samaritan,[40] their wine is

38 *Min*, the term by which the rabbis refer to Jews who in their opinion held heretical views, is quite broad and can include all sorts of individuals and groups of which the rabbis did not approve. Yet the two stories about encounters between rabbis and Jesus followers that immediately follow allow us in this case to identify the *minim* as Jesus followers. For a recent discussion of *minim* in tannaitic literature, see Grossberg, Heresy, 50–88. For the relation between *minim* and "Christians," see Schremer, Brothers, 87–99; Burns, Schism, 159–208. For the later development and *minim* in the Talmud; see Bar-Asher Siegal, Dialogues, 1–25.

39 Reading *mi-beit ha-min* instead of *mi-beit 'avodah zarah* of the Vienna MS; see Alexander, Believers, 677.

40 The bread of Samaritans is likened to pig-meat in mŠeb. 8:10.

> the wine of libation, their fruits are untithed, and their books are the books of diviners, and their children are mamzerim. One should not sell to them, nor buy from them. One should not take from them, nor give to them. One should not teach their sons a craft. One should not be healed by them, either financially or medically.[41]

Noting the exaggerated claims about *minim*, and the call to treat them with a stringency not applied even to gentiles, scholars commonly see this passage as a polemical attempt to establish boundaries by excluding Jesus-oriented Jews from Jewish society. The reason for this attempt is presumed to be fear that their version of Judaism might appeal to other Jews with whom they would have been in daily contact.[42] Indeed, the two stories about encounters between rabbis and Jesus-oriented Jews which follow immediately after this passage testify to close proximity and contact between Jesus-oriented Jews and other Jews in the Galilee (tḤullin 2:24). As Adiel Schremer points out, the call for a boycott of *minim* here probably does not reflect an established view of Jesus-followers as heretics but is rather an attempt to introduce the idea. Stigmatizing them as *minim* would marginalize them, and in the end make outsiders of a group claiming to be insiders.[43] Still, it does not quite explain why this particular rival vision of Judaism would be so dangerous as to warrant the total exclusion of its adherents.

Given the diversity of Judaism also post-70, recent scholarship has rightly rejected the traditional idea that belief in Jesus as the Messiah would have been incompatible with a Jewish worldview or identity in antiquity. There is no reason, as Daniel Boyarin notes, "why believing that Jesus was the Messiah would be considered as beyond the pale of rabbinic Judaism, any more than Rabbi Akiva's belief in Bar Kokhba as Messiah rendered him a heretic."[44] In fact, Jewish sources from the first century BCE/CE, such as the Similitudes of Enoch, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch include traditions about the Messiah and the messianic age that are not much different from those of some New Testament texts.[45] One finds in early rabbinic literature, writes Annette Yoshiko Reed,

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41 tḤullin 2:20–21 (ed. Zuckermandel, 503). A similar move to redraw the boundaries of Judaism/Israel so as to exclude Jesus-oriented Jews is found in mSanh. 10:1. On this passage see Yuval, Israel, 114–138.

42 Alexander, Believers, 678; Boyarin, Dying, 22–41; Schäfer, Jesus, 41–62. It represents, says Schäfer, "an (early) attempt to establish boundaries, to delineate Judaism by eliminating heretics—in this particular case clearly heretics belonging to a group that defined itself by its belief in Jesus from Nazareth". (60)

43 See Schremer, Brothers, 70–72, 91–94.

44 Boyarin, Dying, 17.

45 See Reed, Messianism, 23–62, esp. 34.

"nothing akin to the explicit emphasis on messianic belief as a boundary between religions."[46] Indeed, a typical trait of rabbinic literature is the coexistence of different opinions and, although some texts testify to occasional excommunications, rabbinic Judaism generally prefers to be inclusive.

Neither are there any specific complaints about the practices of the Jesus-oriented Jews of the Tosefta passage. On the contrary, the wide-ranging accusation of idolatry may actually indicate the absence of any concrete objections to their practice with regard to the method of slaughter and preparation of bread and wine – a resort to rhetoric to compensate for the lack of factual arguments. What then, was the problem with Jesus-oriented Jews?

Again, I would argue that it was the threat they posed to Jewish identity and group cohesion as a result of their decision to incorporate gentile outsiders without first making them Jews, gentiles who over time would consolidate their position in the movement at the expense of Jews. From a non-Jesus-oriented Jewish perspective, the development whereby Jesus-oriented Jews and gentiles had appropriated for themselves essential aspects of Jewish covenantal identity called for a redefinition of Israel that would exclude them. Presumably, Jesus-oriented Jews were indistinguishable from other Jews,[47] and as social identity theorists have observed, it is those one resembles the most whom it is most urgent to reject by clarifying where differences exist and establishing points of difference.[48]

5. Jesus-Oriented Jews in Roman Palestine

Do we have any evidence for the presence of Jesus-oriented Jews in third- and fourth- century Roman Palestine, apart from a few rabbinic sources and mentions by some of the church fathers?[49] Some scholars have suggested that

46 Reed, Messianism, 34.

47 On the indistinguishability of Jesus-oriented Jews and rabbinic Jews, as attested in early rabbinic texts, see Burns, Schism, 176, 189.

48 Brewer, Self, 475–482, esp. 478. Brewer notes that distinctiveness and maintenance of clear boundaries that differentiate members of a group from members of a different group are essential for groups to survive. Cf. Coser, Functions, 68 (quoting Simmel): "[W]here enough similarities continue to make confusions and blurred borderlines possible, points of difference need an emphasis not justified by the issue but only by the danger of confusion," and Schremer, Brothers, 94–97, who likewise notes that a separation becomes necessary precisely in cases where it is difficult to distinguish between "them" and "us."

49 In the third century, Origen, residing in Caesarea, mentions "Jews who believe in Jesus and have not left the law of their fathers, for they live according to it" (*Cels.* 2.1); in the fourth century Jerome speaks of "Jews who believe in Christ" (*Epist.* 112.13) and "want to

Rec. 1.27–71, preserved in the fourth-century Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions but considered an independent source from the late second or early third century, provides evidence of a Jesus-oriented Jewish community.[50] Composed in Greek, possibly in Judaea, the work appears to be an attempt, by a Jewish Jesus-follower who saw in the coming of Jesus the goal and fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, to convince fellow Jews with arguments from the Jewish scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.[51] Although we do not know if the author was ethnically Jewish, the concern with the land identified as Judaea, the praise of Hebrew as the original tongue of humankind (1.30.5), the mention of Abraham as the ancestor of "our race, the Hebrews, who are also called the Jews" (1.32.1), suggests a Jewish self-identity on the part of both author and audience.[52] While not necessarily evidence for a separate community of Jewish Jesus-adherents, it is tempting to see *Rec.* 1.27–71 as an insider voice of Jesus-followers with a Jewish identity.

Recognitions 1.27–71 consists of a brief review of the main events in Israel's history, from creation to the advent of Jesus (1.27–39), followed by a more detailed account of the activities of the apostles after the death and resurrection of Jesus (1.39–71), which appears to be a revision of selected traditions form the Book of Acts.[53] The author is aware of the mission to the gentiles, said to have come about only because not all Jews embraced Jesus (1.42.1),[54]

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be both Jews and Christians." They "believe in Christ and keep all the commandments of the Law" (*Sit.* 112), cited in Wilken, John, 70–71.

50 Stanton, Elements, 305–324 sees *Rec.* 1.27–71 as "'a foundation narrative' of a community of Jewish believers in Jesus" and "one of our most important pieces of evidence for Jewish believers in Jesus" (322); Van Voorst, James, assumes a community of law-observant Jesus-believing Jews behind the text.

51 Jones, Source, 3–4; 159–167 considers the author to be a Jewish Christian writing in Judaea ca. 200 and Burns, Schism, 150 sees it as having been written by a Jewish author for Jewish readers in Palestine during the late second century. Except for a few fragments, the original Greek is lost. The text survives in Latin and Syriac translations and some fragments in Armenian. For the Latin text, see Rehm, Pseudoklementinen and for the Syriac, Lagarde, Clementis. A parallel translation of the Latin and Syriac versions, as well as the Armenian fragments, is found in Jones, Source. For a translation from Syriac, see also Jones, Pseudo-Clementines.

52 Cf. Reed, Christianity, 189–231, esp. 204–205, 210–212. For a survey of the *status quaestionis* on the issue of the presence of Jesus-oriented Jews in the Galilee during the early centuries CE; see Cirafesi, Christ-Followers, 293–327. Cirafesi argues for the existence of Jesus-oriented Jews in the Galilee, although not, *nota bene*, as a separate group.

53 Jubilees is an important source for the survey of Israel's history, while the second part draws on the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and above all, on Acts; see Jones, Source, 138–142 and Jones, Pseudo-Clementines, 207–229, 230–251.

54 The approach to the gentile mission in *Rec.* 1.27–71 is ambivalent, and the Latin and Syriac translations differ. While the Latin version simply states that "the saving proclamation

but is more interested in persuading Jews that Jesus is the Messiah (1.50.1–4), taking care to portray the Jesus-followers as a Jewish group alongside priests, Sadducees, and Pharisees. Promoting a vision of Judaism with Jesus as its center, the author describes Jesus as the prophet predicted by Moses and stresses the continuity between the two. Jesus has come to complete the mission begun by Moses (1.36.2; 1.37.2), and to replace the sacrifices which Moses had reluctantly allowed with baptism "for the forgiveness of sins" (1.39.1–2). However, as both a prophet and the Messiah, Jesus is greater than Moses:

> The fact is that we assert not that he is equal to Moses but rather that he is greater than Moses. For what Moses was, a prophet, Jesus is too; but what Jesus is, the Christ, Moses is not. Thus, what Moses is, Jesus is too; but what Jesus is, Moses is not. (*Syr.* 1.59.2–3)[55]

At the same time, he is anxious to downplay any differences between Jews who believe that Jesus is the Messiah and Jews who do not, emphasizing that the only thing that distinguishes the Jesus-followers from other Jews, referred to as "those among our people who do not believe," is the former's view that Jesus is the Messiah:

> They [the priests] were frequently sending and asking us to speak with them about Jesus, whether he is the prophet who was foretold by Moses, that is, the eternal Christ. For concerning this alone is there a difference between us who believe in Jesus and those among our people who do not believe. (*Syr.* 1.43.1–2; cf. 1.50.5)[56]

Interestingly, *Rec.* 1.27–71 presents the Jesus group in much the same way that tḤullin 2:20–24 describes followers of Jesus, namely as Jews who are found in close proximity to rabbinic Jews, and whose teachings appeal to Jews outside their own group. Like the Tosefta passage, the author of *Rec.* 1.27–71 has some harsh things to say about Jews who disagree with him – those who do not embrace Jesus as the Messiah (1.39.3–1.40.2) – but he still seems to entertain

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of the kingdom of God was sent out into the whole world" because all Jews had not embraced Jesus as the Messiah, the Syriac translation describes this development as a "confusion". (1.42.1)

55 Translations of *Rec.* 1.27–71 are adapted from Jones, Source.

56 The Latin version has: *de hoc enim solo nobis qui credimus in Iesum, adversum non credentes Iudaeos videtur esse differentia* ("For only in this regard does there seem to be a difference between us who believe in Jesus and Jews who do not believe." Jones, Source, 73 translates "between us who believe in Jesus and the unbelieving Jews," but this carries a negative connotation not conveyed by the Latin.

hope that they will be persuaded and, in the end, saved.[57] *Recognitions* 1.27–71 includes a number of traditions that also appear in rabbinic texts, and based on these shared traditions, scholars have pondered the relationship between the author of *Rec*. 1.27–71 and rabbinic Jews. Albert Baumgarten has suggested that the Jesus-oriented groups described in the Pseudo-Clementines were in close proximity and maintained intellectual contact with rabbinic Jews,[58] and more recently, Jonathan Bourgel has proposed that *Rec*. 1.27–71 was composed by Jewish believers in Jesus, who were also committed to rabbinic tradition.[59]

Thus, *Rec*. 1.27–71 presents an alternative, Jesus-centered vision of Judaism but does not provide explicit evidence of an alliance between Jesus-oriented Jews and gentiles who together promote a different understanding of the make-up of the people of God. While it is possible that the focus on Jews in *Rec*. 1.27–71 indicates that, even as late as the early third century, Jesus's messiahship remained for some an internal Jewish affair, the many traditions that the work shares with Justin seems to suggest close contact with and influence from Jesus-oriented gentiles.[60] Thus, another way of interpreting the concern to present the dispute about Jesus's messiahship as an internal Jewish debate, and the emphasis on the significance of Jesus for Jews, is to see it as an attempt to reclaim Jesus for Judaism at a time when the influence of gentile Jesus-adherents was growing and the Jewishness of the Jesus movement was being contested. Mark Kinzer notes that the idea of the Jesus movement as an internal Jewish phenomenon seems to have been challenged in both Jewish and non-Jewish spheres already at the time of the composition of Acts.[61] If so, some Jesus-oriented Jews may have wanted to reclaim Jesus and the Jesus movement as Jewish phenomena with utmost significance for Jews. If understood in this way, *Rec*. 1.27–71 may reflect a Jewish reaction to increasing gentile hegemony within Jesus-oriented groups.

Regardless of how we interpret the evidence of *Rec*. 1.27–71, the alliance between Jews and gentiles among many Jesus-followers and their claim to have appropriated the covenantal identity of Israel, would have been known to non-Jesus-oriented Jews and may explain why some of them, at least, regarded Jesus-oriented Jews with profound suspicion. Had it not been for the challenge to Jewish identity and group cohesion, perceived in the close relationship of

57 *Rec*. 1.27–71 also testifies to animosity from Jews outside of its own group, mentioning rage against them among the Jews who do not believe. (1.53.1)

58 Baumgarten, Evidence, 39–50, esp. 47.

59 Bourgel, Holders, 171–200, esp. 174, 198–199. For ideas and traditions shared with rabbinic Jews, see 188–198.

60 For examples, see Jones, Source, 149.

61 Kinzer, Jerusalem.

Jesus-oriented Jews to non-Jews, Jesus-centeredness may well have remained an orientation within Judaism. As Schremer suggests, we probably see in tḤullin the beginning of a deliberate effort to *make* Jesus-orientation incompatible with Jewishness and Judaism, and in *Rec.* 1.27–71, I would add, we possibly see a resistance to it. Differences over theology became part of Jewish and Christian self-identities only at a later stage, when they served to further consolidate and legitimate a split that had occurred for other reasons.

In sum, I have suggested that alongside the need to adapt Jewish tradition to a life without a temple, an important factor behind the emergence of the rabbinic movement was a need to separate from Jesus-oriented groups because of the challenge they were perceived to pose to Jewish identity as a consequence of their appropriation of essential aspects of Jewish self-understanding. The concern that we find in some third-century rabbinic texts, to define Israel as all those, but only those, who accepted the Torah at Sinai, and the insistence that the Torah and the Sabbath are the exclusive possession of Israel, appears to reflect a need to re-establish Israel's identity in the wake of the blurring of the boundary between Jews and gentiles by Jesus-oriented interpretations of Judaism, which incorporated gentiles in the covenantal relationship between Israel and their God. Paradoxically, the Jewish Jesus movement's mission to the gentiles made some non-Jesus-oriented Jews turn away from the concern with gentiles and their salvation and focus instead on Israel, defined in rabbinic terms.

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Continued Contacts between Jews and Christians

Knowledge of Rabbinic Traditions in Christian Texts and Vice Versa

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Abstract

The essay offers a brief survey of early rabbinic reactions to Jesus and the New Testament and of early Christian knowledge of rabbinic literature. The first Jewish texts clearly referring to Jesus (healing in his name) comes from the Tosefta (3rd c.). A reworking of Jesus' birth-story is to be found in the Palestinian Talmud; a much more extensive reaction to Christian traditions is found in the Babylonian Talmud which is not only much later, but where in a non-Christian environment rabbis felt less restrained in their polemical reaction to Christian traditions and ironically, even satirically, rewriting them. On the other side, Christians knew of extra-biblical Jewish traditions (called *deuterosis*), but concrete rabbinic texts became known to them only rather late, leading up to the Talmud disputations of the 13th century.

Keywords

Birth of the Messiah; Jesus execution; Tosefta; Talmud; Talmud Disputations

1. Introduction

For a long time, the classical position on the parting of the ways between Jews and Christians was that it had occurred in the late first century with the so-called synod of Yavneh (by now generally considered a fiction), or, at the latest, with the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132/5. Over the last few decades this position has been overcome and replaced by the thesis of a long, drawn-out process, extending over centuries and varying from country to country. It was mainly, but not only, Daniel Boyarin who in many publications contributed to this change,[1] which by now has become nearly common-place.

Evidence for continuing contacts between Jews and Christians, not only polemical, but also in friendly exchange, can be found in many fields: liturgy,

1 Above all, Boyarin, Border.

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religious literature, but also architecture, with parallel developments in the design and decoration of churches and synagogues. Here, I shall limit myself to the field of literature, that is, to traces of rabbinic traditions in Christian writings and of Christian traditions (mainly the New Testament) in rabbinic literature.

2. Christian Knowledge of Rabbinic Traditions

My starting point in the time of the New Testament precedes and therefore belongs only indirectly to the history of the parting of the ways. The search for parallels between the NT and rabbinic tradition has a long history – I mention only John Lightfoot, Paul Billerbeck, and more recently Roger David Aus, David Instone-Brewer and Herbert Basser.[2] A long-standing theory was that every Jewish tradition in the New Testament must be pre-Christian, because after the assumed early split between Judaism and Christianity, later Jewish, mainly rabbinic, ideas and traditions were no longer received by Christians. Especially targumic traditions were, and still are, frequently considered to be pre-Christian.[3] The literary history of the Targumim is much too complicated to be discussed in this context. Here I limit myself to one example: the birth story of Jesus in Matthew (Matt 1:18–25) and that of Moses in the Babylonian Talmud (bSotah 12a). The Talmud expands Exod 2:1: "And there went a man of the house of Levi:"

> Where did he go? R. Judah b. Zebina said that he went in the counsel of his daughter. A Tanna taught: Amram was the greatest man of his generation; when he saw that the wicked Pharaoh had decreed "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river", he said: In vain do we labour. He arose and divorced his wife. All [the Israelites] thereupon arose and divorced their wives.

However, his daughter Miriam – still a small child – tells him that his decree is more severe than Pharaoh's. It is not only against the males, but against males and females, and has effects in this world and the world to come. Unlike Pharaoh's decree, the decree of Amram, who is righteous (צדיק), will certainly be fulfilled. At his daughter's advice,

2 Lightfoot, Horae; Billerbeck, Kommentar; Aus, Matthew; Basser, Gospel; Instone-Brewer, Traditions.

3 See McNamara, New Testament, 260: "These texts [the Palestinian Targum], even as we now have them, may be taken to represent substantially the liturgical paraphrase of the NT period." A methodically careful collection, but still inviting the search for Second Temple origins of at least some targumic traditions, is Legrand/Joosten, Targums.

> He arose and took his wife back; and they all arose and took their wives back [...] "She hid him three months" (Exod 2:2) [She was able to do this] because the Egyptians only counted [the period of her pregnancy] from the time that she had been taken back, but she was then already pregnant three months. (transl. A. Cohen in the Soncino English Babylonian Talmud, slightly adapted)

This may be compared to Matt 1:18–24:

> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, *being a righteous man* (δίκαιος ὢν) and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace (καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν δειγματίσαι), planned to dismiss her quietly. But [...] an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." [...] When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife. (NRSV)

Parallels between these two texts have been noted quite frequently: for example, the quiet divorce of one's wife, Amram and Joseph as just men, the intervention of Miriam (still a small child) comparable to that of an angel in Joseph's dream, and the men then taking back their pregnant wives. The most systematic comparison has been undertaken by Roger David Aus, who considers "the latter haggadic narrative as the main source from which Matthew borrowed for his portrayal of the marital relationship between Joseph and Mary."[4] Aus assumes that the rabbinic parallels reflect a much older tradition, known already in NT-times. But how could these traditions have survived many centuries without leaving the slightest trace in rabbinic literature?[5] Instead of claiming an extremely reliable oral tradition bridging so many centuries, it is much more reasonable to assume that the authors behind the Talmudic text knew the Christian story and countered it with a parallel story about the birth of Moses.[6]

It is mainly in Palestine, Syria and Babylonia that Christian authors could have been in regular contact with Jews and could have known rabbinic writings. The first author regularly quoted in this context is *Justin Martyr*, born in Samaria (Flavia Neapolis) in ca. 100 CE, who in his writings displays personal knowledge of contemporary Judaism. Yet, in spite of his Palestinian origins,

4 Aus, Matthew, 71.

5 BSotah is to be dated in the sixth century, if not later; the other parallels quoted by Aus, e.g. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and the first half of Exodus Rabbah, are even later.

6 For more detail see Stemberger, Mose, 24–27;61–66.

this is not the early rabbinic Judaism, but the Hellenistic tradition. Justin does not seem to have known Hebrew or Aramaic. Interpretations of biblical texts attributed to Trypho are sometimes clearly non-rabbinic. Where his interpretations have rabbinic parallels (e.g. Gen 49:10–11 and Num 24:17), there are also pre-Christian Jewish parallels from Qumran. Contacts with the world of nascent rabbinism cannot be shown. Justin himself says (*Dial.* 112.4; cf. 38.1) that Jewish teachers warned their fellow Jews not to enter into debate with Christians. If Justin could debate with Jews, they were most probably Diaspora Jews. The proposal to identify Trypho with R. Tarfon, is completely unlikely.[7]

The next Christian author to be mentioned is *Origen*. He moved to Caesarea in about 230 and remained there for most of the rest of his life († 254). Having already been interested in Judaism, especially in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish exegesis, he now had the chance to learn much firsthand by participation in disputes and through contacts with Jewish acquaintances. Since Greek was widely used among Jews as the lingua franca, the active knowledge of Hebrew was not necessary for this purpose. The exact degree of his personal knowledge of Jews and contacts with them remains open to dispute. The only Jew he mentions by name is "Ioullos the patriarch" (Sel. Ps. 1, PG 12, 1056B), perhaps "the head of a local community."[8] Origen also mentions "one with the title of Sage among the Jews" (*Cels.* 1.45; cf. 1.55). Attempts to identify Origen's rabbinic contacts with known talmudic Rabbis have not been successful, although it is quite possible that Origen was acquainted with R. Hoshaya, who taught in Caesarea at the same time as Origen. Some of his Jewish informants were converts to Christianity, as Origen himself sometimes explicitly says. For his great text-critical enterprise of the Hexapla, Origen certainly needed help from Jews, or converts from Judaism, copyists competent enough in Hebrew to correctly transcribe the texts. Many contacts between Origen's exegesis and Jewish interpretation can be accounted for by Origen's acquaintance with earlier (pre-Christian) Jewish literature. But there remain quite a number of instances which are best explained by direct exchange with Jews known to him.

Nicholas de Lange states about Origen: "In general it may be assumed that the Tannaitic literature as a whole was available to him, and in a fuller form than that in which it has come down to us". This statement goes beyond the limits of what can be demonstrated, but one can fully agree with de Lange "that […] there is enough evidence to prove that Origen does preserve aggadic

7 See Rokéah, Justin, 20–21;29–42.

8 De Lange, Origen, 24; see also Jacobs, Institution, 255–258.

material not found in earlier Greek sources."[9] No Christian exegete before Origen made so much use of Jewish exegetical methods and tradition.

Although the rabbinic school of Caesarea still continued to thrive in the time of *Eusebius*, and Eusebius considered Origen his teacher, his contacts with Jews seem to have been much more limited, although some of his informants may have been rabbis. This may be due to the changed position of the Christian Church. He quotes a teacher of the Jews (ὁ τῶν Ἰουδαίων διδάσκαλος: Comm. Isa. 2.15 to 39,1–2 GCS 9,245), but need not have heard his interpretation in person. Sometimes he criticises Jewish interpretations as δευτερώσεις. However, he attributes such teachings even to Josephus (h.e. 6.18.36). Thus, not all of these Jewish interpretations derive from the rabbinic period. There certainly are points of contact between Eusebius' exegesis and rabbinic literature. Some of the interpretations Eusebius quotes as Jewish are known only from rabbinic sources, but they are comparatively few and not clear evidence of his personal contacts with contemporary Jews.[10]

Epiphanius of Salamis (ca. 315–405) came from Eleutheropolis in the South of Palestine and remained in close contact with Palestine. He is the first author who unequivocally refers to the *birkat ha-minim*. He writes: "Three times a day they say that God may curse the Nazarenes" (*Pan.* 2.9, GCS 25, 332). He clearly knew some rabbinic traditions which he, too, called δευτερώσεις – a designation which, according to him, was Jewish and most likely refers to the Mishnah, since among the four δευτερώσεις he mentions two named after Aqiva and Judah. However, the whole passage is very garbled and reveals no direct knowledge (*Pan.* 33.9, GCS 25, 459–460; cf. *Pan.* 15.2, GCS 25, 209–210). His personal contacts with Jews may have been very limited.

In the case of *Jerome*, who from 386 until his death in 420 lived in the Holy Land, our documentation is much better. He writes extensively about his efforts to gather every bit of Jewish information that might be of use in the translation and interpretation of the Bible. He also frequently refers to his Jewish teachers. One has to be cautious even where he explicitly refers to a Jewish source: too frequently such references are copied from earlier Christian texts. Many of the interpretations which Jerome claims to have heard from his Jewish teachers were in reality copied from Origen, Eusebius and other authors.[11] During his decades in Palestine, Jerome hardly ever left the region of Bethlehem/Jerusalem where – officially at least – Jews were not allowed to reside. The occasions when Jerome could contact Jews (not Jewish Christians) were thus

9 De Lange, Origen, 8.131–132; see also Stemberger, Ebraismo.

10 For a general survey see Ulrich, Euseb.

11 Thus already Bardy, Jérôme. See also Stemberger, Hieronymus.

severely limited, but he could have learnt much from Christian visitors who were in contact with Jews. At least some of his Jewish teachers may have been baptized Jews. Even the teacher from Tiberias, whom Jerome mentions in the preface to Chronicles, "legis quondam doctorem, qui apud Hebraeos admirationi habebatur" (PL 29, 423), may have been a former Jew. There is no doubt that Jerome was very well acquainted with Jewish exegetical traditions (many of them known only from later rabbinic texts). We know much less about the exact sources of his knowledge. Against Stefan Rebenich, it is most unlikely that "Jerome had direct access to Rabbinic literature."[12] Most rabbinic texts in his time were still transmitted orally and certainly did not circulate outside of Rabbinic groups.

It would be wrong to limit our search to literary sources. Judaizing Christians who frequented the synagogues may have been a source of information. This must have been rather common, as is clear from John Chrysostom and his sermons against the Jews which, to a large extent, are due to the ongoing competition between synagogue and church, even in late fourth century Antioch. For Palestine, however, this phenomenon is hardly documented.[13]

This is not the place for a detailed discussion of *Syriac authors* and their contacts with Jewish sources. The strong affinity of Syriac exegesis with Jewish approaches to the biblical text makes it extremely difficult to document their personal relationship with Jewish teachers. To give only one example, I mention *Aphrahat* and his Demonstrationes from the middle of the fourth century. *Aphrahat* lived in Mar Mattai, close to present-day Mossul, thus far away from the Jewish and rabbinic centres much more to the south of Mesopotamia. Louis Ginzberg called *Aphrahat* "a docile pupil of the Jews," fully dependant on rabbinic interpretation.[14] Jacob Neusner, on the other hand, completely denied *Aphrahat's* contacts with contemporary rabbinic Judaism.[15] If one compares larger thematic connections rather than single passages, there are many topics which can hardly be understood without assuming a certain knowledge of the other side's tradition. There are passages in *Aphrahat* (for example on Israel's election in spite of its present persecution) which can nearly be read as a virtual dialogue between *Aphrahat* and the Jewish side. As Naomi Koltun-Fromm

12 Rebenich, Jerome, 58.

13 Newman, Judaizers, 446: "Jerome's silence on the subject of genuine Judaizing in Palestine, where opportunities for interreligious contact were certainly not lacking, is all the more striking when we consider the far more substantial evidence for the existence of Judaizing Christians elsewhere, most notably in Antioch." As Newman demonstrates, Jerome uses the term Judaizantes mainly to defame all millenarians.

14 Ginzberg, Aphrahat, 664.

15 Neusner, Aphrahat, 144–149;187–195.

correctly states, *Aphrahat's* writings "indicate an awareness of – if not an acquaintance with – rabbinic exegesis, though [...] his knowledge may not come directly from rabbinic sources".[16]

We are confronted with similar problems in the case of *Aphrahat's* younger contemporary, *Ephrem*. There are many parallels between *Ephrem* and rabbinic exegesis, but it is practically impossible to demonstrate direct dependence on rabbinic writings. Even richer in Jewish traditions is the Syriac Cave of Treasures (6th c.). However, here again the evaluation of the parallels remains very problematic. In spite of so many problems of detail, the general impression of continued contacts between Jews and Christians remains and cannot be done away with.

3. Rabbinic Knowledge of Christian Traditions

In the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, there was nearly a consensus that the rabbis already knew the gospels and other parts of the New Testament in the period of the Mishnah. Tannaitic texts speaking of "foreign books" (*sefarim ha-ḥiṣonim*: whoever reads in them has no part in the world to come, mSanh. 10:1), of "heretical" books (*sifre minim*) or of *gilyonim* (which do not render the hands impure: tYadayim 2:13), were taken to refer to the gospels and other Christian books. Thus the rabbis were supposed to have rejected the part of the New Testament known to them already in the period of Yavneh.

Many understand the term *gilyonim* as a short form of *evangelyonim*, the later Hebrew term for gospels. However, Karl Georg Kuhn already demonstrated decades ago that *gilayon* simply means the "margin" or the first page of a scroll without text.[17] Thus the phrase says that these parts of a Torah scroll, or books of the Torah (*sefarim*) written by *minim*, people not following the rabbinic form of Judaism, do not participate in the holiness of the liturgical copies of the Torah. For this reason, they do not impart uncleanness to hands, nor are they saved from a fire on a Sabbath. It is only in the Bavli (bSanhedrin 116a–b) that *gilyonim* is clearly a short form of *evangelyonim*, the later Hebrew name for the gospels.

The earliest clear reference to Jesus is encountered in tḤullin 2:22. R. Eleazar ben Dama was bitten by a snake. Jacob of Kefar Sama came to heal him in the name of Jesus son of Pantera. But R. Yishmael did not allow it. One should die rather than be healed in the name of Jesus. Celsus already mentions that Jesus

16 Koltun-Fromm, Conversation, 9.

17 Kuhn, Giljônîm.

is called the son of Pantera (Origen, *Cels.* 1.32–33, SVigChr 33–35). The title is thus certainly early.

Another rabbinic passage frequently studied in recent years is yBerakhot 2:4 5a (cf. Ekha Rabbati 1:16) on the birth of the Messiah:

> It happened to a Jew who was plowing in the valley of Arbel that his ox was bellowing. An Arab passed by and heard the bellowing of the ox. He said to him: Jew, Jew, unharness your ox, unharness your plow because the Temple was destroyed. The ox bellowed a second time. He said: Jew, Jew, harness your ox, fix your plow because King Messiah has been born. He said to him: What is his name? Menaḥem. He said to him: What is his father's name? Ḥizqiah. He said to him: Where is he? He said to him: At the king's palace in Bethlehem in Judea. He went and sold his ox and plow and made himself a vendor of baby linens. He went to towns and left towns until he came to that town. All the women bought from him but the mother of Menaḥem did not buy. He heard the women say: Menaḥem's mother, Menaḥem's mother, come and buy for your son! She said: I would rather strangle him like a hater of Israel because he was born on the day the Temple was destroyed. He said to her: I like him, because for him it was destroyed and for him it will be rebuilt. She said to him, I have no money. He said to her, that does not bother me, come and buy for him! If you have nothing with you today, I shall return another day and I will take it then. After some time he went up to that town and said to her: How is your baby doing? She said to him: After you had seen me there came storms and raised him and tore him from my hands. (transl. Guggenheimer 212–213)

It is only here that the mother of the Messiah plays a role in rabbinic texts (the Sefer Zerubbabel where she is also named, is a Hebrew apocalypse and not directly rabbinic). The connection with the birth of Jesus in Matt 2 was noted long ago. Peter Schäfer regards it as "complete and ironical inversion of the New Testament [...] a parody of the New Testament infant story."[18] The interpretation of details remains open, but the story (not necessarily the text) of Matt 2 as well as that of Luke 2:7 ("she wrapped him in bands of cloth") are clearly well known to the rabbis.

Much more concentrated are the references to the NT in the Babylonian Talmud, because it was less problematic to react against Christianity outside of the Christian context of Palestine, but also because the Bavli is much later and was redacted in the Islamic period.[19]

The story of bShab. 116a–b is well known, where Imma Shalom and her brother Rabban Gamaliel ridiculed a certain philosopher in her neighbourhood who bore the good name of not taking bribes. Imma Shalom "brought

18 Schäfer, Jesus, 231; see also Himmelfarb, Mother.

19 For a possibly much earlier anti-Christian Babylonian text see Brodsky, Jesus.

him a gold lamp and said to him, 'I want to take my share in the estate of my father.' He said to them, 'Divide it.'" But Gamaliel and Imma Shalom tell him that this is against the Torah: "When there is a son, a daughter doesn't inherit" (cf. Num 27:8). The philosopher answered: "the Torah of Moses has been taken away from you, and the Torah of the Gospel (ʿawon gilayon) has been given to you, in which it is written: The son and daughter inherit equally." However, when Gamaliel brought him an ass from Libya on the next day, the philosopher said:

> I have turned to the end of the book, where it is written, "I, the Gospel, haven't come to diminish the Torah of Moses, nor have I come to add to the Torah of Moses," (cf. Mt 5,17) and it is written therein, "a daughter doesn't inherit in a case where there is a son."

The text clearly rewrites an earlier neutral version (PesK 15:9) in the interests of anti-Christian polemics. It shows a knowledge of Matt 5:17 – not at the time of Gamaliel around 100 CE, but at the time of the redaction of the Bavli.[20]

Another text, again frequently analysed, concerns the trial and execution of Jesus and of his disciples (bSanh. 43a):

> On the eve of the Passover Jesus the Nazarene was hanged. And a herald went forth before him 40 days (heralding): Jesus the Nazarene is going forth to be stoned because he practiced sorcery and instigated Israel (to idolatry). Whoever knows anything in his defense, may come and state it. But since they did not find anything in his defense, they hanged him on (Sabbath eve and) the eve of Passover!

Against the objection that Jesus certainly was not one for whom a defense could be made, the text states: "With Jesus the Nazarene it was different, for he was close to the government."[21]

It is obvious that many details in this brief account do not agree with the gospels. The text may be understood as the rabbinic version of the accusations which were raised against Jesus. The miracles told in the gospels were considered the products of magic; the teaching of Jesus was regarded by the rabbis as a call to a life against the Torah. The stoning would be the punishment for the crime of which Jesus was culpable in the eyes of the rabbis. But the text insists on the fact that they "hanged" (*tela'uhu*) Jesus. In context it is clear that the corpse of the person that had been executed is in view (Deut 21:22), but the same word may also mean the crucifixion (thus already in Qumran, 4QpHab

20 Zellentin, Parodies, 137–166 (following his translation 146–147).

21 See Schäfer, Jesus, 63–74 (his translation).

3–4 I,7). In later anti-Christian polemics, Jesus is frequently called *ha-taluy*, the hanged-one.

The date of the execution, "the day before Pesah", is in agreement with John 19:14 ("Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover"). That Jesus was "close to the government", might recall John 19:12: "Pilate tried to release him". Thus, the knowledge of the accounts of the gospels behind this deliberate transformation of the Christian story cannot be denied.

The rabbinic text continues with a passage on the disciples of Jesus. "Jesus the Nazarene had five disciples, and these are they: Mattai, Naqqai, Netzer, Buni, and Toda". All of them are condemned to death. There is no doubt that the rabbis knew the name of Matthew, perhaps also those of Thaddeus or of Nicodemus. The reduction of the disciples of Jesus to five persons may be due to rabbinic parallels, for example, mAvot 2:8 on the five disciples of Johanan ben Zakkai, or bSanh. 13b–14a on the five disciples of R. Aqiva. We may assume that some rabbis in Babylonia knew of some disciples of Jesus, perhaps venerated as martyrs in Babylonian Christian communities, since the Talmud speaks of their execution. All this does not necessarily imply the knowledge of Christian texts, but certainly contacts with Christians in Babylonia.[22]

Jews could learn certain Christian traditions in discussions with Christians, normally in oral form. Frequently, the Christians with whom they were in contact knew their texts from the liturgy and religious instruction, without ever having read a written gospel. This explains why one almost never finds a quotation that comes close to the literal wording of the gospels, with Matt 5:17 being exception. But the central ideas of Christian doctrine were increasingly known to Jews, and many rabbinic texts may be read as an answer to such doctrines, sometimes misunderstood, distorted or intentionally modified.

Clear knowledge of the written Text of the Gospel of Matthew is first documented in the Arabic "Account of the Disputation of the Priest" (*Qissat Mujādalat al-Usquf*, 8th/9th c.). Its Hebrew translation, *Sefer Nestor ha-Komer*, became better known. The author was probably a Christian convert to Judaism. The book was widely used in medieval Jewish polemics against Christianity. In his *Sefer Milhamot ha-Shem* (around 1170, Southern France), Jacob ben Ruben added to it many texts from Matthew, translated from the Latin text. A full translation of the Gospel into Hebrew dates from the 14th century.[23]

22 Schäfer, Jesus, 75–81.

23 Ochs, Matthaeus, offers an excellent full presentation of the reception of Matthew in Jewish tradition.

On the Christian side, the first authors who had some knowledge of the Talmud, were Agobard and Amulo of Lyon (9th c.). However, concrete and substantial texts of the Talmud only became known in the context of the Disputation of Paris (1240), convened by King Louis IX (also known as Louis the Saint) at the demand of pope Gregory IX, to whom Nicholas Donin, a Jewish convert, had presented a list of 35 arguments against the Talmud. At the end of the disputation, the Talmud was condemned and innumerable Hebrew manuscripts were burned in Paris in 1242. The Talmudic extracts collected in this context were subsequently translated into Latin.[24] These later developments, of course, show Jewish-Christian contacts in quite another context and atmosphere than in the Late Roman, Byzantine and early Islamic period. Nevertheless, they demonstrate that contacts and mutual influences between Christians and Jews never completely ceased.

24 These Latin translations have only recently been edited and published in two volumes by Cecini/de la Cruz Palma. For the broader historical context see Fidora/Hasselhoff, Talmud.

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The Late Antique Synagogue at Capernaum

Was It Really a Congregation of Minim?

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Abstract

In a 2014 article, Benjamin Arubas and Rina Talgam claim that the white limestone synagogue at Capernaum – which they say was constructed in the third century and rebuilt after the earthquake of 363 CE – served a community of Jews who are called minim in rabbinic literature due to their contacts with Christian pilgrims to the site. In this paper, I consider the literary evidence for minim at Capernaum cited by Arubas and Talgam in support of their argument.

Keywords

Capernaum; minim; synagogue; Egeria; Piacenza Pilgrim; Galilee

1. Introduction

In a 2014 article, Benjamin Arubas and Rina Talgam claim that the white limestone synagogue at Capernaum – which they say was constructed in the third century and rebuilt after the earthquake of 363 CE – served a community of Jews who are called minim in rabbinic literature due to their contacts with Christian pilgrims to the site. They identify the black basalt podium on which the limestone synagogue sits as the remains of a first century CE synagogue "of the type recently discovered at nearby Magdala" and state that "Jesus apparently taught and preached in this kind of building, as mentioned in the New Testament" – implying that this is the synagogue of the centurion mentioned in Luke 7:1–5.[1] Although according to Arubas and Talgam, the remains of the first century synagogue were removed or buried under the white limestone synagogue, they believe that Capernaum's importance in Christian tradition, including the Gospel references to Jesus preaching in its synagogue, led Christian emperors to finance the building's reconstruction after the

1 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 268; also see p. 241.

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earthquake of 363. This "eliminated the opposition to the transformation of the House of St. Peter into a focus for Christian pilgrimage and reduced the tension between Jews and Christians who began to visit the place."[2] Arubas and Talgam consider the addition of an apse to the octagonal building above the traditional site of the House of St. Peter as evidence that, in the fifth century, it served not as a church but as a "memorial octagon." Therefore, by the sixth century Christianity became dominant at Capernaum, when, they suggest, there may have been "a gradual process of Christianization of the inhabitants of Capernaum."[3] In this paper, I consider the literary evidence for minim at Capernaum cited by Arubas and Talgam in support of their argument.

Before proceeding, I wish to note that Arubas and Talgam's association of the white limestone synagogue with minim at Capernaum is predicated on dating the building to the third-fourth centuries. Their argument collapses if the white limestone synagogue dates to the sixth century, as the archaeological evidence indicates.[4] Furthermore, the size and decoration of the Huqoq synagogue, which is dated to the late fourth century-early fifth century by C14 as well as pottery and coins, contradict Arubas and Talgam's characterization of the Capernaum synagogue as "clashing" with the "relative modesty" of other Galilean type synagogues.[5] This is crucial because their claim is motivated by a desire to explain "why an extremely wealthy and extravagant synagogue [was] erected in Capernaum rather than in any other village of Jewish Galilee?"[6] Because such a monumental synagogue does not accord with Arubas and Talgam's view of Galilean Judaism in late antiquity, they associate it with non-normative Jews (minim). Martin Goodman has made a similar suggestion about the Sardis synagogue.[7] In contrast, I would argue that these synagogues are not exceptional; to the contrary, the Capernaum synagogue is representative of the so-called Galilean type. In my opinion, the white limestone synagogue at Capernaum was built after a long period of experimentation and development in local synagogue architecture and art. It is not that the Capernaum and Sardis synagogues are exceptional and therefore were associated with non-normative Jews; rather, these buildings do not conform with our preconceived notions about late antique Jews and Judaism.

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2 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 269.

3 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 269.

4 See Magness, Synagogue; Magness, Pottery. Similarly, as I show in a forthcoming paper (to be published as part of the Schweich Lectures), the octagonal church was built no earlier than ca. 600 CE, not in the fifth century.

5 See Magness/et al., Huqoq.

6 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 240.

7 Goodman, Jews.

2. A Community of Minim at Capernaum: the Literary Evidence

Arubas and Talgam's article focuses on the white limestone synagogue, which they connect to a community of minim at Capernaum in the fourth century. In support, they cite the story of Joseph the Comes in Epiphanius' *Panarion*, Egeria's description of her visit to Capernaum, and *Qohelet Rabbah*, a midrashic text. Let us consider each of these sources in turn.

The *Panarion* was composed between 374–377 by Epiphanius, a native of Eleutheropolis (Beit Guvrin) in Judea who became the bishop of Salamis on Cyprus.[8] In it, he tells the story of Joseph the Comes, a Jew from Tiberias who converted to Christianity and attempted to spread Christianity in Lower Galilee by building Catholic churches:[9]

> This Josephus was awarded the rank of count by the Emperor himself, and was authorized to build a church for Christ in Tiberias itself, and in Diocaesarea, Capernaum and the other towns.[10]
>
> Josephus asked nothing of the emperor but this very great favor – permission by imperial rescript to build Christ's churches in the Jewish towns and villages where no one had ever been able to found churches, since there are no Greeks, Samaritans or Christians among the population. This 'rule' of having no gentiles among them is observed especially at Tiberias, Diocaesarea, Sepphoris, Nazareth and Capernaum.[11]

Although they acknowledge that that many scholars question the historical accuracy of Epiphanius' account, Arubas and Talgam attempt to show that his report of the construction of churches at these sites is reliable. They identify a church in Tiberias that was excavated by Moshe Hartal and Edna Amos in 2007 as the one Joseph is said to have built in place of the Hadrianeum:[12]

> After receiving the letter and the authorization along with his title, Josephus came to Tiberias [...] And so he began to build in Tiberias. There was a very large temple in the town already, I think they may have called it the Adrianeum. The citizens may have been trying to restore this Adrianeum, which was standing unfinished, for a public bath. When Josephus found this he took the opportunity from it; and as he found that there were already four walls raised to some height, made of stones four feet long, he began the erection of a church at that point [...] Though they harmed the man on many occasions, he [Joseph] eventually

8 Williams, Panarion, xiii–xiv, xx; Rubin, Joseph, 105.

9 Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.4, 1–12, 10. Goranson, Joseph, 338, notes that Epiphanius did not consider non-Catholics Christians.

10 Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.4, 1 (from Williams, Panarion, 134); see Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 241–243.

11 Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.11, 9–10 (from Williams, Panarion, 140).

12 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 241–243.

> restored part of the temple at Tiberias and finished a small church. He left then and came to Scythopolis and made it his home. However, he completed buildings in Diocaesarea and certain other towns.[13]

Although no excavation report on the Tiberias church has been published, Arubas and Talgam identify it as the one built by Joseph, stating, "The dating [of the church] to the second half of the 4th century is supported by epigraphic evidence that has been analyzed by Leah Di Segni."[14] However, the lack of publication combined with the absence of any evidence that this was the site of the Hadrianeum make it impossible to prove that this church dates to the time when Joseph supposedly lived, let alone establish its association with any such figure. Furthermore, although on the Israel Antiquities Authority website the church is said to date to the "fourth-fifth centuries CE," a 2015 article states that its "earliest phase has been dated to the fifth century according to the fine mosaics."[15] And finally, whereas Epiphanius describes Joseph's church in Tiberias as "small," the excavated church is a large, three-aisled basilica measuring 30 x 30 meters.[16] Therefore, the available evidence contradicts the association of this church with Joseph, even if we assume that this part of Epiphanius' account is historically reliable. As Rehav Rubin notes, it is unlikely that Epiphanius would have described the church as small had Joseph succeeded in his mission.[17]

There is even less archaeological evidence at the other sites. At Sepphoris, Arubas and Talgam point to a large church near a major intersection while acknowledging that the excavator, Zeev Weiss, dates it to the late fifth-sixth centuries – long after Joseph's time. Although there could be earlier remains or phases below (as they propose), the absence of any such evidence means that there is no basis for associating this church with Joseph. In fact, Arubas and Talgam qualify that "while Epiphanius clearly states that the churches planned in Tiberias and Sepphoris were indeed constructed, he does not indicate whether those intended for Nazareth and Capernaum were ever built by Joseph."[18] And indeed, the only church Joseph is said to have built is the small one in Tiberias, although Epiphanius mentions that "he completed buildings

13 Epiphanius, *Pan*. 30.11, 9–10, 12.1–3, 9 (from Williams, Panarion, 140–141).

14 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 270 n. 28.

15 http://www.antiquities.org.il/Article_eng.aspx?sec_id=25&subj_id=240&id=1273&hist=1 (access: 25.08.22); Cytryn-Silverman, Tiberias, 199.

16 Cytryn-Silverman, Tiberias, 199.

17 Rubin, Joseph, 113.

18 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 243.

in Diocaesarea and certain other towns."[19] This suggests that whether or not the story is fictional, Lower Galilee in the mid-fourth century remained overwhelmingly Jewish.[20]

For Capernaum, Arubas and Talgam rely on the testimony of Egeria, a Christian pilgrim who visited the Holy Land ca. 381–384:[21] "There is also the synagogue where the Lord cured a man possessed by the devil. The way in is up many stairs, and it is made of dressed stone."[22] They identify the white limestone synagogue as the one that Egeria saw, and, despite a lack of archaeological evidence, reconstruct the staircase that she describes as extending along the entire south façade. They claim that the original staircase was replaced by the current narrow porch in the fifth century, when (they say), the eastern courtyard was added to the synagogue hall.[23] Of course, it is impossible to know if the synagogue and steps mentioned by Egeria were indeed a synagogue. Arubas and Talgam's interpretation relies on a hypothetical staircase associated with a building (the white limestone synagogue) which archaeological evidence indicates did not exist in Egeria's time.

Around 570 CE, the Piacenza Pilgrim mentions a church on the site of the house of St. Peter but does not refer to the synagogue: "Also we came to Capernaum, and went into the house of Blessed Peter, which is now a basilica."[24] Arubas and Talgam speculate that the Piacenza Pilgrim ignored the synagogue because he regarded "the synagogue and the church as a single Christian complex," indicating that the supposed community of "minim" had converted to Christianity by then.[25] However, Arubas and Talgam suggest that since early Christian pilgrims used the term basilica to denote churches in general and not a specific type of building, the pilgrim's reference could be to the octagonal church alone.[26] It is also possible that the Piacenza Pilgrim's omission of the synagogue at Capernaum simply reflects a lack of interest or is an example of a reference to a site that he never visited but copied later from other guidebooks. The latter possibility seems likely in light of the passage's dryness and brevity, which contrast with the Piacenza Pilgrim's detailed and lively description of Nazareth:

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19 Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.9 (from Williams, Panarion, 141).
20 Rubin, Joseph, 105.
21 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 243–244; Wilkinson, Travels, 3.
22 Peter the Deacon's Book on the Holy Places, V 2; from Wilkinson, Travels, 196.
23 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 244–245.
24 V 163.7 (from Wilkinson, Pilgrims, 81).
25 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 243, 266.
26 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 266. See Ousterhout, Temple, 51.

> We traveled on to the city of Nazareth, where many miracles take place. In the synagogue there is kept the book in which the Lord wrote his ABC, and in this synagogue there is the bench on which he sat with the other children. Christians can lift the bench and move it about, but the Jews are completely unable to move it, and cannot drag it outside. The house of Saint Mary is now a basilica, and her clothes are the cause of frequent miracles. The Jewesses of that city are better-looking than any other Jewesses in the whole country. They declare that this is Saint Mary's gift to them, for they also say that she was a relation of theirs. Though there is no love lost between Jews and Christians these women are full of kindness.[27]

No less problematic is Arubas and Talgam's use of Egeria's account, which survives in only one incomplete manuscript.[28] Nazareth and Capernaum are mentioned in a part of the account that is preserved only in a twelfth century work by Peter the Deacon, a monk and librarian of Monte Cassino.[29] John Wilkinson indicates with italics that the reference to Nazareth embedded in Egeria's account seems to come from the twelfth century source: "*Inside the city* [*Nazareth*] *the synagogue where the Lord read the book of Isaiah is now a church, but the spring from which Holy Mary used to take water is outside the village*."[30] Although Wilkinson's use of Roman letters instead of italics indicates that the passage about Capernaum "may come from Egeria," he qualifies that "Peter, however, has a practice of slipping short passages of one source into longer passages from another, and it is by no means possible to guarantee that all the passages here shown in roman are from Egeria in all their details."[31] Indeed, Philip Mayerson has demonstrated that Peter the Deacon's description of Clysma "is in no way an accurate historical description of the site during the fourth or the fifth century".[32] This is important because Wilkinson says the section of Peter's work that includes Clysma preserves many traces of Egeria's style.[33] In contrast, Mayerson concludes that most of Peter the Deacon's account of Clysma likely derives not from Egeria but from a sixth century or later traveler.[34] Thus, it is impossible to know whether the descriptions of Nazareth and Capernaum

27 VV 161–162.5 (from Wilkinson, Pilgrims, 79–81).

28 Wilkinson, Travels, 7; Mayerson, Egeria, 61.

29 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 244; Wilkinson, Travels, 8, 179.

30 Peter the Deacon's Book on the Holy Places T (from Wilkinson, Travels, 193–194; see p. 180 for the use of italics to indicate passages from the twelfth century).

31 Wilkinson, Travels, 180.

32 Mayerson, Egeria, 61.

33 Wilkinson, Travels, 179 including n. 4, referring to section Y; on p. 205 n. 3, he says, "At this point Egeria's journey to Sinai begins, in the course of which her own manuscript becomes available."

34 Mayerson, Egeria, 64.

in Peter the Deacon's work derive from Egeria – and, even if they do, whether they are exact reproductions of the original lost text or additions from later unidentified sources.

Much of Arubas and Talgam's argument hinges on two passages in Qohelet (or Ecclesiastes) Rabbah that refer to the inhabitants of Capernaum as minim and sinners (1:8; 7:26).

1:8

חֲנִינָא בֶּן אֲחִי רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֲזַל לֵהֲדָה כְּפַר נַחוּם, וַעֲבָדוּן לֵיהּ מִינָאֵי מַלָּה וְעָלוֹן יָתֵיב רָכֵיב חֲמָרָא בְּשַׁבַּתָּא, אֲזַל לְגַבֵּיהּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ חֲבִיבֵיהּ וִיהַב עֲלוֹי מְשַׁח וְאִיתַּסִּי. אֲמַר לֵיהּ כֵּיוָן דְּאִיתְעַר בָּךְ חַמְרָא דְּהַהוּא רַשִׁיעָא לֵית אַתְּ יָכֵיל שְׁרֵי בְּאַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל, נְחַת לֵיהּ מִן תַּמָּן לְבָבֶל וּדְמַךְ תַּמָּן בִּשְׁלָמֵיהּ.

This passage tells the story of Rabbi Joshua's nephew Hanina, who transgressed the Sabbath by riding an ass after being put under a spell by minim at Capernaum. Hanina goes to Rabbi Joshua, who anoints him with oil and says, "Since the ass of that wicked one has roused itself against you, you cannot remain in the land of Israel any longer."[35]

7:26

רַבִּי אִיסִּי דְּקֵיסָרִין פָּתַר קְרָיֵיהּ בְּמִינוּת, טוֹב, זֶה רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר. וְחוֹטֵא, זֶה יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ כְּפַר נְבוּרְיָא. דָּבָר אַחֵר, טוֹב, זֶה אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן דָּמָא. וְחוֹטֵא, זֶה יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ כְּפַר סָאמָא. דָּבָר אַחֵר, טוֹב, זֶה חֲנַנְיָא בֶּן אֲחִי רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ. וְחוֹטֵא, אֵלּוּ בְּנֵי כְּפַר נַחוּם. דָּבָר אַחֵר, טוֹב, זֶה יְהוּדָה בֶּן נְקוֹסָא. וְחוֹטֵא, אֵלּוּ הַמִּינִים.

In this passage, Rabbi Issi of Qisrin, a fourth century sage, provides an exegesis on Ecclesiastes 7:26 by citing examples of righteous men and sinners (minim).[36] One of these is Hanina, the nephew of Rabbi Joshua, who he

35 From https://www.sefaria.org/Kohelet_Rabbah.1.8.4?lang=bi (access: 11.09.2022), which translates this passage: "Ḥanina the son of Rabbi Yehoshua's brother went toward Kefar Naḥum, and the heretics cast a spell on him, and they lifted him and placed him on a donkey on Shabbat. He went to [Rabbi] Yehoshua his uncle, and he placed oil on him, and he was cured. He said to him: 'Since the donkey of that wicked one rose against you, you cannot dwell in the Land of Israel'." See the critical edition by Hirschman, Midrash, 76–79 (lines 361–364); also see Taylor, Christians, 25.

36 From https://www.sefaria.org/Kohelet_Rabbah.7.26.3?lang=bi (access: 11.09.2022), which translates this passage: "Rabbi Isi of Caesarea interpreted the verse regarding heresy. 'Good' – this is Rabbi Elazar, 'but a sinner' – this is Yaakov of the village of Nevurya. Alternatively, 'good' – this is Elazar ben Dama, 'but a sinner' – this is Yaakov of the village of Sama. Alternatively, 'good' – this is Ḥananya, son of Rabbi Yehoshua's brother, 'but a sinner' – these are the residents of the village of Naḥum. Alternatively, 'good' – this is Yehuda ben Nekosa, 'but a sinner' – these are the heretics." See the critical edition by Kiperwasser, Midrishei, 122–125 (lines 901–905) (with a different version of the text).

contrasts with the sinful people of Capernaum. Arubas and Talgam conclude that "The parallelism between these two verses suggests that Capernaum was a village of *Minnim*" by the second to fourth centuries, based on the names of the sages mentioned in them.[37] At the same time, they note Epiphanius' statement that no pagans, Samaritans, or Christians lived in Capernaum.[38] They also cannot account for the discovery of an Aramaic dedicatory inscription by a Jew from Capernaum named Yose ben Dostai in the fifth century synagogue at Hammath Gader.[39]

Citing Qohelet Rabbah as a source for minim at Capernaum in the fourth century is problematic as it is impossible to prove the association of these traditions with figures who are assumed to have lived in the second and fourth centuries. For example, regarding the first passage (1:8), Arubas and Talgam acknowledge that "Judging by the protagonists' names, this story took place in the 2nd century, *although it may serve to demonstrate the mindset of a later period*."[40] In fact, Qohelet Rabbah dates to the seventh or eighth century.[41] Reuven Kiperwasser describes the work as "an edited composition made up of heterogeneous elements" mixed with authentic amoraic material, "making it difficult to disentangle these various strands of the text."[42] Therefore, it is impossible to determine if the references to minim at Capernaum have any basis in an earlier historical reality. This is important because Arubas and Talgam's argument about minim at Capernaum in the fourth century, which they connect to the white limestone synagogue, hinges on the two passages in Qohelet Rabbah.

3. Jewish-Christians at Capernaum: the Bagatti-Testa Hypothesis

Arubas and Talgam are not the first to argue for the presence of minim at Sepphoris, Tiberias, and Capernaum in the fourth century based on a conflation of these sources. For example, Stephen Goranson notes that "three of the four places mentioned by Epiphanius as Joseph's church-building

According to Kiperwasser (p. 124), only the first sentence of this passage can be attributed to Rabbi Isi, while the rest was added by the editor.

37 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 246.

38 Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.11, 10; Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 246.

39 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 246; Naveh, Stone, 57–60, no. 33.

40 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 246 (my emphasis).

41 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 245, date it to the seventh century; Gottlieb/Williams, Midrash, 43, date it to the eighth century.

42 Kiperwasser, Redaction, 276–277.

goals – all had Jewish Christian *minim*, according to the rabbis."[43] However, neither Epiphanius nor Egeria refers to Jewish-Christians at Capernaum. To the contrary, their testimony indicates only Jewish presence (as Arubas and Talgam note):

> Josephus asked nothing of the emperor but this very great favor – permission by imperial rescript to build Christ's churches in the Jewish towns and villages where no one had ever been able to found churches, since there are no Greeks, Samaritans or Christians among the population. This 'rule' of having no gentiles among them is observed especially at Tiberias, Diocaesarea, Sepphoris, Nazareth and Capernaum.[44]

The assumption that Jewish-Christian minim lived at Capernaum in the fourth century is based on the correspondence of references noted by Goranson. The fact that Joseph is said to have chosen Capernaum, Tiberias, and Sepphoris as suitable places for the establishment of churches has suggested to scholars that these communities included "Jewish Christians," who are then identified with the minim at Capernaum and Sepphoris mentioned in rabbinic literature. As Joan Taylor notes, rabbinic sources mention minim at four places in Galilee: Sepphoris, Kefar Shikhin/Samma, Kefar Naburaya, and Capernaum.[45] Visits by Egeria and the Piacenza Pilgrim to synagogues at Capernaum and Nazareth attest to robust interaction between Jews and Christians and are thought to provide a setting for groups described as "Jewish-Christians" or minim due to their deviant beliefs or practices.[46]

In fact, Arubas and Talgam's claim is a modified version of what Taylor has dubbed the Bagatti-Testa hypothesis, because it was developed by the Franciscan scholars Bellarmino Bagatti and Emmanuele Testa. As Taylor explains, Bagatti and Testa "argue that many Christian holy places are genuine because Jewish-Christians identified and preserved sites which were meaningful in the life of Jesus, from the time of his ministry without interruption until the fourth century. These sites were then appropriated by the mainstream 'Gentile' Church when the emperor Constantine began establishing Christian shrines in Palestine."[47] In support, advocates of the Bagatti-Testa hypothesis cite references to minim in rabbinic literature and to heretical groups such as Ebionites and Nazoraeans in patristic literature.[48] Much of the focus has been

43 Goranson, Joseph, 339; notice that he identifies the minim as "Jewish-Christian."
44 Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.11, 9–10 (from Williams, Panarion, 140). See Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 246.
45 Taylor, Christians, 25.
46 Arubas/Talgam, Jews, 244–245; Taylor, Christians, 293.
47 Taylor, Christians, 1.
48 Taylor, Christians, 2.

on the remains of a "domus ecclesia" under the octagonal church at Capernaum, which the excavators claim was venerated by Jewish-Christians from the first century CE on as the house of St. Peter, citing graffiti scratched on the walls.[49] This identification is based on the reference in Qohelet Rabbah (1.8) to minim at Capernaum, who the excavators assume are Jewish-Christians.[50] Taylor, however, shows that the graffiti do not appear to be Jewish-Christian, and argues that the archaeological evidence indicates a fourth century date for this structure, which she proposes is the church constructed by Joseph.[51] She concludes that before the fourth century, Capernaum was an entirely Jewish town: "If Jewish-Christians continued to dwell at Capernaum past the first century, they have left no traces."[52] However, an analysis of the archaeological evidence indicates that the domus ecclesia dates to the fifth century or later.[53]

As noted above, our literary sources – Epiphanius' *Panarion*, Egeria's testimony, the Piacenza Pilgrim, and Qohelet Rabbah – do not support the assumption that there was a community of minim or Jewish-Christians at Capernaum in the fourth century. As the only two urban centers in Roman-Byzantine Galilee, Tiberias and Sepphoris are named in these sources because they had mixed populations.[54] Capernaum and Nazareth are singled out because they were Jewish towns that attracted large numbers of Christian pilgrims due to their connections to Jesus. We cannot assume that the references to minim in Qohelet Rabbah tell us anything more than what the rabbinic editors/redactors of the seventh-eighth centuries thought. No less important is the lack of consensus among scholars about the definition of minim – a term that apparently had different meanings in different contexts and at different times.[55] As Stuart Miller demonstrates, the minim mentioned in the two passages in Qohelet could easily be identified as pagans, not Jewish-Christians.[56] Taylor reminds us that, "References to *minim* in rabbinic literature are impossible to fit into one neat category [...] *Minut* was anything which deviated from the community norms laid down by the rabbis."[57] And, as Shaye Cohen says, "The

49 Taylor, Christians, 276, 284, notes the contradiction that the Jewish-Christians are assumed to be pilgrims, not local residents.

50 Taylor, Christians, 276.

51 Taylor, Christians, 288.

52 Taylor, Christians, 294.

53 My analysis of the evidence is forthcoming in the Schweich Lectures.

54 Taylor, Christians, 30–31; Miller, Minim, 401.

55 For discussions, see, e.g., Goodman, Judaism, 163–173; Boyarin, Lines, 177, who notes that "the 'minim' frequently seem to have understood themselves as perfectly orthodox rabbinic Jews, even as they are represented in rabbinic literature itself."

56 Miller, Minim, 383–385 n. 30.

57 Taylor, Christians, 28, 30; also see Miller, Minim, 401.

rabbis lumped together all those who questioned Rabbinic Judaism. It made no difference to the rabbis whether their opponents were Gentile Christians, Jewish Christians, Gnostics of any variety, pagans, or dissident Jews; all of them, to the exasperation of later scholars, were called *minim*. From the rabbinic perspective they are all the same."[58] Because minim does not necessarily denote Jews who adopted Christian beliefs or practices, there is no basis for identifying the minim at Capernaum mentioned in literary sources as Jewish-Christians, nor is there any means of determining why the rabbis disapproved of them.[59]

4. Conclusion

As this discussion indicates, Epiphanius, Egeria, and Qohelet Rabbah do not provide historically reliable evidence of a community of minim (nonconforming Jews or Jewish-Christians) at Capernaum. Therefore, even without taking into account the archaeological evidence – specifically, the dating of the white limestone synagogue and the domus ecclesia – relying on these sources to argue for the presence of minim at Capernaum is fundamentally flawed and is based on a series of modern scholarly assumptions and interpretive leaps.

58 Cohen, Virgin, 537. However, Boyarin, Lines, 222, argues that from the fourth century on, minut denoted Christianity rather than a Jewish heresy.

59 See Taylor, Christians, 25, 276.

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PART II

The Apostle Paul and the Parting of the Ways

The "Works of the Law"

The Transformation of Jewish Identity Markers and the Parting of the Ways

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Abstract

The expression *identity marker(s) of Judaism* was coined by J. D. G. Dunn, albeit in a way seen as outdated today. Latest research has shown that neither a "normative Judaism" nor a "common Judaism" and not even a "mainstream Judaism" existed in the first century CE. The period of early Judaism was characterized by fierce debates as to how the will of God should be interpreted. Rivalling groups – like Sadducees, Pharisees, or Qumranites – campaigned for diverging identity markers. The author suggests that the phrase "works of the law" in Rom 3:20–22 focusses on ritual, cultic, and purity-based matters of the Jewish Torah. Such aspects could be interpreted in diverging ways – as the halachic letter 4QMMT (Qumran) demonstrates. Paul's attitude towards the law during his time as a disciple of Jesus represents a possible – albeit quite liberal – interpretation of of the Jewish Torah within the broad range of diverse Torah interpretations in multifaceted early Judaism.

Keywords

Works of the Law; Pauline Theology; Parting of the Ways; Early Judaism; Qumran

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the question of the so-called "parting of the ways"[1] between Jews and Christians[2] has become one of the most crucial issues of New Testament exegesis. This is so, not only because of the question's essential importance for Jewish-Christian dialogue, but even more because our

1 For a detailed *status quaestionis* on the "parting of the ways" see the edited volume of Schröter/Edsall/Verheyden, Parting (especially: Schröter/Edsall/Verheyden, Introduction, 1–10); the special issue of EvTh 80 (2020) on the Parting of the Ways; the monograph of Tiwald, Parting. Concerning the problematic metaphor of "parting ways" see the introduction to this volume.

2 For the expressions "Jews" and "Christians" see below.

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perception of the New Testament scriptures has been thoroughly transformed by the newly emerging consensus that the beginnings of what we today call "Christianity" were inextricably embedded in the early Judaism of the first century CE. Today we know that the "parting of the ways" of Jews and Christians did not occur at one place at a specific time, but was a long process that took place at different locations at different times and for different reasons and was not consummated before the fourth century.[3] Thanks to the *New Perspective on Paul* and the *Paul within Judaism-Perspective*,[4] "[t]oday it is widely agreed that Paul's mission and theology have to be understood as working within 1st-century Judaism."[5]

2. Early Judaism and Its Identity Markers

In Jewish texts, the ancient "Greek term Ἰουδαϊσμός does not refer to 'Judaism' as […] a religion, but to a specific way of defending Jewish faith in the one God, the temple, and the Torah […]."[6] Nevertheless, one should not go as far as Steve Mason, who has proposed to translate Ἰουδαῖοι only ethnically as "Judaeans",[7] because already according to 2 Macc 9:17 one could convert to "Judaism" or depart from it (2 Macc 6:1–9). In Josephus, *Ant.* 20.38–43 Queen Helena from Adiabene and her son Izates († 55 CE) want to convert to Judaism.[8] Izates asks what might be necessary for εἶναι βεβαίως Ἰουδαῖος, "being an authentic Jew".

3 Cf. Tiwald, Parting, 28–51. Thus, a better metaphor than the imagery of "parting ways" would be "a criss-crossing of muddy tracks" (Lieu, Parting, 31–49), or "a multi-lane highway" (Reinhartz, Fork, 280–295). Nevertheless, Konradt, Matthew, 145, notes: "Maybe, for the time being, we should work without a new metaphor because of its inherent tendency to reduce complexity and just try to describe the complex processes, developments and multi-faceted relations as differentiated and nuanced as possible."

4 For a detailed overview of both perspectives see: Ehrensperger, Perspektive, 455–464, and Schröter, Paul, 89–119.

5 Schröter, Paul, 89. Contextualizing Paul's theology and reading it against the backdrop of early Judaism in the first century CE is also the summons of the *Paul within Judaism-Perspective*. Cf. the programmatic title of the edited volume of Nanos/Zetterholm, Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle. Further: Nanos, Introduction, 9, and Ehrensperger, Perspektive, 457.

6 Schröter, Paul, 98. Cf. Ehrensperger, Perspektive, 461: "[…] aber nicht eine Glaubensfrage im modernen Sinn, sondern eine Frage der Loyalität und Praxis, unlösbar eingewoben in unzählige soziale Netzwerke, von Familie, Clan, Dorf, Stadt, Kolonie, Ethnie über Handelsvereinigungen und letztlich dem Imperium Romanum insgesamt."

7 Mason, Jews, 457–512. Cf. the discussion in Öhler, Geschichte, 14–15; Frey, Juden, 339–377; Reinhartz, Gospel, 467; Schröter/Edsall/Verheyden, Introduction, 2.

8 Cf. Broer, Konversion, 133–162.

His question focusses on τοῖς Ἰουδαίων ἔθεσιν, "on the customs of Jews". Here we have first hints that the *identity markers* of an ἔθνος ("a people associated with a place and its customs"[9]) are increasingly starting to take on religious traits.[10] Nevertheless, we must not forget that "Judaism" in the first century was primarily defined by practicing certain *identity markers*.

The expression *identity marker(s) of Judaism* was coined by J. D. G. Dunn, albeit in a way seen as outdated today. In his seminal article "The New Perspective on Paul" (originally 1982),[11] he relies heavily on E. P. Sanders' work "Paul and Palestinian Judaism" (1977),[12] where Sanders characterized first-century Palestinian Judaism as "covenantal nomism".[13] It is laudable that Sanders – and in his wake Dunn – have put an end to the caricature of Judaism as a religion of "legalistic works-righteousness"[14] that earns God's mercy by mechanically observing a fixed compendium of commandments. Nevertheless, Sanders' and Dunn's works do not go far enough. Both postulate a certain uniformity in the Judaism of Paul's time: Sanders argues for a "common Judaism"[15] to which he puts Paul in contrast – and Dunn is right in criticising this.[16] Yet Dunn for his part underestimates the pluriformity of Second Temple Judaism when he defines the "The Four Pillars of Second Temple Judaism" ("monotheism", "election", "covenant focussed in Torah", and "land focussed in Temple")[17] as fixed unities in early Judaism. According to Dunn, "by the end of the second Jewish revolt" early Christianity had redefined each of these four axioms "in greater or less degree – at any rate, to a degree unacceptable to mainstream Judaism".[18] In contrast to this, the latest research has shown that neither a "normative Judaism" nor a "common Judaism" and

9 So rightly Mason, Jews, 511.

10 Cf. Bremmer, Ioudaismos, 57–87, especially 57: "*Ioudaismos* ist dabei der ältere Begriff, der sich allmählich von der Charakterisierung einer bestimmten Form judäischer Lebensweise zu einer statischeren Bedeutung entwickelte, die dem modernen Begriff 'Judentum' näherkommt."

11 Dunn, Perspective. This article from 1982 was included in Dunn, Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians, London 1990, 183–214; more recently in Dunn, Paul, 89–110. The quotations here follow this latest edition from 2005.

12 Cf. Dunn, Perspective, 90–91.

13 Cf. Dunn, Perspective, 92–93; Sanders, Paul, 75.

14 Dunn, Perspective, 94.

15 Sanders, Judaism, 47. See the critique by Hezser, Torah, 134–135, of Sanders' "common Judaism". Cf. the extensive analysis on early Judaism's pluriformity: Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 20–23.

16 Dunn, Perspective, 94–95.

17 Dunn, Partings, 24–48.

18 Dunn, Partings, 318 (italics in original) and 48.

not even a "mainstream Judaism" existed in the first century CE.[19] The whole period of early Judaism (from third century BCE to the end of the second century CE) was characterized by fierce debates as to how the will of God should be correctly interpreted. Nonetheless, Dunn's general assumption that certain *identity markers* formed the core of Jewish life[20] is still valid, even if we have to conclude that such Jewish identity markers could be interpreted and lived out in many different ways. Thus, rival groups – such as the Sadducees, Pharisees, or Qumranites – advocated for *diverging identity markers* especially in Torah- and Temple-related matters. While the Sadducees concentrated on the Temple in Jerusalem, the Qumranites spiritualized temple service by forming a מקדש אדם, a temple of living persons, to substitute the expiatory function of the temple with their own liturgies.[21] The Pharisees took a different approach by "democratizing" the purity prescriptions of temple priests: they transferred the purity regulations for temple priests into their own private homes.[22] Modern archaeology has detected traces of a so-called *household Judaism*,[23] characterized by the use of *miqwa'ot* (ritual baths), stone vessels (which are immune to ritual contamination), and further purity features in the sphere of the private household. Yotam Adler notes:

> The Early Roman period (63 BCE–135 CE) witnessed a surge in the number of ritual baths throughout the country, with the vast majority discovered to date (over seven hundred) deriving from the period spanning from the first century BCE until the Bar Kokhba revolt of 132–135 CE.[24]

19 Cf. Stemberger, Mainstream, 205; Neusner, Literature, 119. Definitions of "typical Jewish" identity markers are "either too general to mean much (monotheism) or too abstract to form an intelligible statement" (Neusner, Literature, 119). Also, the reference to holy scriptures seems problematic: "Nothing separated the individual currents of Judaism more than the common Bible" (Stemberger, Mainstream, 203). In early Judaism there was a still ongoing debate about which books should be reckoned as holy scripture (cf. Tiwald, Parting, 295–302), and diverging interpretations of Torah and Prophets.

20 Dunn, Parting, 99: "These identity markers identified Jewishness because they were seen by the Jews themselves as fundamental observances of the covenant." If one would like to avoid the expression *identity makers*, one could also talk about *Torah-based-regulations*.

21 Cf. Maier, Bausymbolik, 103–106.

22 Neusner, Judentum, 24–25: "Die Pharisäer forderten daher für sich selbst und darum in gleicher Weise für alle Juden den Status und die Verpflichtungen der Tempelpriester. Der Tisch im Haus eines jeden Juden ist wie der Tisch des Herrn im Jerusalemer Tempel."

23 Cf. Berlin, Life, 417–470. Likewise: Adler, Purity, passim; Charlesworth, Temple, 395–442; Jensen, Purity, 3–34; Amit/Adler, Observance, 121–143.

24 Adler, Purity (online).

The term *household Judaism* was coined by Andrea Berlin. She writes: "From the early-mid first century BCE., Jews adopted what I call 'household Judaism' – using *mikva'ot* as well as locally manufactured oil, wine, and cooking vessels – in order to incorporate a religious sensibility into their daily lives."[25] In the same timespan we also notice the peculiar emergence of soft chalkstone vessels, jars, cups, bowls, mugs. These materials are immune to ritual impurity according to mKelim 10:1; mOholot 5:5; 6:1; mPerah 5:5; mYadayim 1:2.

> Chalkstone vessels first appear in the archaeological record during the second half of the first century BCE and continued to enjoy widespread popularity until the quelling of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE, after which the phenomenon almost completely disappears from the archaeological record.[26]

The extension of temple purity to daily life was not only a Pharisaic feature but corresponds with Qumranite ideas as well. As we learn from such texts as the *Temple Scroll* and the *Damascus Document*, the strict regulations of purity reserved for the priests (e.g., Exod 30:19 and 40:31) and Levites (Num 8:6–7) were extended to daily life.[27] Josephus mentions ritual washings before meals (*B.J.* 2.129–133), "they go, after a pure manner, into the dining room, as into a certain holy temple" (αὐτοί τε καθαροὶ καθάπερ εἰς ἅγιόν τι τέμενος παραγίνονται τὸ δειπνητήριον). The multitude of *miqwa'ot* found in Qumran corroborates this view. Especially the agenda of the Pharisees, who enjoyed great sympathy among the population, seems to have also triggered a broader impact in non-Pharisaic circles.[28] Remarkably enough, these purity regulations only applied to sites in *Eretz Yisra'el*, as Jodi Magness concludes: "no definite examples of *miqwa'ot* and not a single chalk stone vessel have been found at any diaspora site."[29] But even in *Eretz Yisra'el* the Jewish society was far from uniform, as Andrea Berlin has shown:

> In country villas and in the Upper City of Jerusalem, wealthy Jews embraced the use of decorated table vessels, Italian-style cooking pans, and foreign modes

25 Berlin, Life, 417.

26 Adler, Purity (online). Or to say it with Jensen, Purity, 34: "household purity grew to the extent it did with ritual baths, stone utensils and even oil lamps made of holy Jerusalem-clay."

27 Cf. Charlesworth, Temple, 396.

28 Cf. Stemberger, Pharisäer, 74: "Es mag durchaus zutreffen, dass in diesem Punkt die Pharisäer treibende Kraft einer Entwicklung des Judentums der damaligen Zeit gewesen sind, die aber doch schon weitere Kreise erfasst hat."

29 Magness, Purity, 39. Cf. Magness, Purity 56: "In other words, *miqwa'ot* and chalk stone vessels were used for purity observance in connection with cultic laws that apply only to the Land of Israel."

> of dining. […]. These sorts of remains are rare or absent in rural Judea, Jewish Galilee, and Gaulanitis. The archaeological evidence thus provides an eyewitness view of a population strongly unified in religious practices but sharply divided by cultural ethic.[30]

3. The "Works of the Law"

The ominous phrase in Paul's letter to the Romans 3:20–22 reads:

> 20 For "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου), for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. 21 But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets (μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν),22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. […] 28 For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law (χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου).

Much ink has been spilled over the question as to how one should interpret the Pauline mention of "works of the law".[31] In traditional exegesis, this phrase was used to demonstrate Paul's "abrogation of the Torah", an interpretation that today thankfully is outdated: firstly, because Rom 3:21 mentions the attestation by the law and the prophets (μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν), and secondly because the context in Gal 1–4, where the ἔργα νόμου (Gal 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10) are also mentioned, clearly hints towards an interpretation of cultic precepts and purity matters linked to the Torah – especially food laws and circumcision.[32] An interpretation of the ἔργα νόμου in the sense of ritual matters seems to be favoured by the mention of מעשי התורה in 4QMMT^{e} (= 4Q398 Frg. 14 II, 3).[33] Not only linguistically,[34] but also from context and meaning, the מעשי התורה seem to be comparable to the ἔργα νόμου, as Lutz Doering and Jörg Frey have successfully demonstrated.[35] Both texts are written in an epistolary

30 Berlin, Life, 417–418.

31 For a survey of research on this topic see Frey, Contextualizing, 746–753.

32 Cf. Tiwald, Glaube, 165–175. This was already observed by Dunn, Perspective, 98, who maintains "that by 'works of law' Paul intended his readers to think of particular observances of the law like circumcision and the food law." According to Rom 14:14–20, dietary matters also formed part of the purity regulations.

33 For the latest research on 4QMMT see numerous and valuable contributions in the edited volume of Kratz, Interpreting. In this volume, see the critical edition of the text by Kratz, Text, 31–53.

34 The LXX translates 193 of 223 mentions of מעשה with ἔργον and 193 of 223 mentions of תורה with νόμος (Abegg, 4QMMT, 205).

35 Doering, 4QMMT, 69–87, and Frey, Contextualizing, 753–759.

context, both texts mention something being "reckoned as righteousness", both texts have a reference to the Deuteronomic blessings and curses (in 4QMMT C13–17 [C ii 12–15] and in Gal 3:10–14). But most important seems to be:

> In MMT, the term מעשי התורה (*maʿᵃśê hat-tora*), especially with the supplement מקצת (*miqṣat*) is clearly related to the list of halakhot presented in part B, which are mostly concerned about the boundaries between pure and impure. This may confirm the idea that ἔργα νόμου in Gal 2 also refers to boundary markers [...].[36]

In Gal 1–4 the questions of purity regulations are crucial. When Cephas rejects table-fellowship with non-Jewish Christians because of purity matters, this certainly constitutes a boundary marker. But – as 4QMMT clearly demonstrates – such halakhic boundary markers could be seen quite differently in Israel. Most probably, 4QMMT was a letter sent to the High Priest in Jerusalem by the Teacher of Righteousness to persuade him of his own purity regulations.[37] These halakhot were so crucial for the Teacher of Righteousness that they served as a boundary marker. The Qumranites had broken off community with the Temple in Jerusalem because they considered the temple cult to be impure.[38] In Qumran, such boundary markers not only served as a means to exclude the other groups, but also to draw lines *inside their own community*. Even if the expression מעשי התורה ("works of the law") is missing in the rest of the Qumran manuscripts, we repeatedly can find the expression מעשי בתורה ("works *in* the law"). According to the community rule (4Q258 [= 4QS^{d}] Frg. 1 Kol. II.1–7 [cf. 1QS V.21–VI.7]) each member's "works in the law" were meticulously recorded and lead to a strict hierarchy in the community. This corresponds with Josephus, *B.J.* 2.150, who also mentions such a ranking in the *yachad*. At this point, we should be cautious of not falling back into the anti-Jewish stereotypes of Christian theology: the presumed "Christian religion of grace" in opposition to the caricature of ancient Judaism as a "religion of mechanically performed works in the law". I think that the temptation of mechanically classifying persons is not only immanent in every religion, but also in each and every society. From my own training as a psychotherapist, I know that such patterns are common for human identity-building. Nevertheless, devaluing or excluding others is certainly the most questionable

36 Frey, Contextualizing, 758.

37 Cf. the interpretation of García Martínez, Temple, 444, who dates the *Urschrift* of 4QMMT "towards the mid-second century BCE." Kratz, Introduction, 22 states that "4QMMT should be dated around the end of the second or beginning of the first century BCE." Concerning theories about the context in which 4QMMT originated, see the overview in Kratz, Introduction, 3–30.

38 Cf. Maier, Testamenten, 40–41; Frevel, Geschichte, 395.

way of establishing identity markers. Besides, we must not forget that Paul also acted intolerantly in the Antioch Incident. He scolded Cephas publicly and accused Barnabas of hypocrisy (Gal 2:13–14). Thus, we are well advised to leave behind the old pitfalls of simplistic classifications and to put these boundary and identity markers back into the social framework of their time. A new look at the biography of Paul might be helpful in accomplishing this.

4. Identity Markers in the Life of Paul

Shaul – who later would become the κλητὸς ἀπόστολος (Rom 1:1) of Christ – was born in the Diaspora city Tarsus (Acts 22:3; cf. Gal 1:21, where Cilicia could be *totum pro parte* for Tarsus). According to Phil 3:5, Paul was Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων (cf. 2 Cor 11:22; Gal 1:13–24; Rom 11:1–29). This means that he stood in close relationship to *Eretz Yisra'el*.[39] Nevertheless, the notion of Acts 23:6 that Paul was "a son of Pharisees" seems exaggerated, since Pharisees only lived in the Land of Israel and not in the Diaspora, as Günter Stemberger convincingly has shown.[40] But perhaps Paul had relatives in Jerusalem. Acts 23:16 mentions a nephew of Paul there. It seems quite probable that Paul's grandparents or great-grandparents had been deported as slaves to Tarsus, perhaps in the course of Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BCE. As freed slaves Paul's ancestors would have merited Roman citizenship. According to Acts 22:28 Paul was born a Roman citizen.[41] Thus, Paul might have grown up in Tarsus and only later in life come into contact with the Pharisees, most probably during a visit in Jerusalem as Günter Stemberger has suggested.[42] As we have already seen, in the Diaspora we have no traces of *household Judaism*. Nevertheless, the questions of kashrut were also matter of debate. In Tob 1:10–11 Tobit's fellow Jews eat from the food of the Gentiles, but Tobit himself refrains from doing so. In Jdt 12:1–4, 15–19 Judith eats her own food at the table of Holofernes. And in Jos. Asen. 7:1 Joseph avoids sitting at the same table with the Egyptians.[43]

39 For a detailed discussion of the term Ἑβραῖος see Tiwald, Hebräer, 177–183.

40 Stemberger, Pharisäer, 112–113; Stemberger, Paul, 65–81. Consequently, Acts 22:3 also exaggerates: Luke wants to make his readers believe that Paul was already raised in Jerusalem, as the word ἀνατεθραμμένος indicates (cf. van Unnik, Tarsus, 259–320). Luke wants to depict "his Paul" as very closely connected to Jerusalem and Pharisaic customs. For a detailed discussion, see Tiwald, Hebräer, 167–184.

41 Philo mentions in *Legat.* 155 freed Jewish slaves in Rome having Roman citizenship. Acts 6:9 even mentions "some of the so called synagogue of the Freedmen" (τινες τῶν ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τῆς λεγομένης Λιβερτίνων, lat. *libertinus*, "freed").

42 Stemberger, Pharisäer, 112; see also: Stemberger, Paul, 66–67; Tiwald, Hebräer, 412–415.

43 Cf. Barclay, Jews, 434–437; Schröter, Paul, 108.

All three books most probably were written outside of Israel to underline that Jews should observe purity rules also in the Diaspora. The necessity of underscoring the value of purity rules shows that some Diaspora Jews had adopted a more "liberal"[44] view regarding such precepts. The Letter of Aristeas 128 already mentions that "many" (πολλοί) questioned the strict food laws of Jews. Günter Stemberger has maintained that these πολλοί might also have contained liberal Jews who criticised what they considered too strict rules of kashrut.[45] *Let. Aris.* 128 here uses the word περιεργία – superfluous "works" of ritual observance (here the word stem ἔργον is also present). *Let. Aris.* 143–150 finally defends the purity rules by explaining them as training for an ethically correct behaviour. Here Jewish kashrut is interpreted in a metaphorical way by pointing to an ethical agenda.[46] 150 years later, the same discussions still surface in Philo's *De migratione Abrahami*. In § 89–93 he criticises the *radical allegorizers*.[47] These were ultra-liberal Jews who practiced a merely spiritual and ethical fulfilment of Torah-rules. They consider circumcision metaphorically as merely "an emblem of the excision of pleasures and of all the passions" (*Migr.* 92) and the Sabbath simply as a day of philosophical reasoning. Philo himself has put forward this kind of metaphorical interpretation with ethical implications, but he still advocates the observance of bodily circumcision and of correct Sabbatical rest. On the one hand he defends his allegorical interpretation, on the other he insists on still maintaining ritual observance. For this, Philo resorts to the distinction between the spiritual sense, which he names the "soul (ψυχή) of the commandments", and the literal sense, which he names the "body (σῶμα) of the commandments".[48] The spiritual sense clearly is more "noble" than the literal fulfilment. However, because the body is the abode of the soul, we also have to fulfil the "bodily"/ritual meaning of the Torah. Thus, while Philo criticises the εὐχέρεια ("levity" *Migr.* 89) of the *radical allegorizers*, he nevertheless admits that these persons are still fellow Jews. Paul's interpretation of the law ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι ("spiritual and not literal" Rom 2:29) adopts patterns similar to the *radical allegorizers*. Such a liberal interpretation was seemingly

44 For the somewhat sketchy formulations "liberal" and "conservative" cf. the remarks in Tiwald, Parting, 185–186.

45 Stemberger, Dekalog, 92.

46 Perhaps this interpretation was already prepared by Aristobulos in the second century BCE. Cf. Niehoff, Philo, 152.

47 For the *radical allegorizers*, see: Doering, Schabbat, 348; Löhr, Speisenfrage, 22–23; Niehoff, Einführung, 17–20. Unlike Niehoff, I do not assume that Paul had abrogated his Jewish identity.

48 Thus, he writes in *Migr.* 93: ἀλλὰ χρὴ ταῦτα μὲν σώματι ἐοικέναι νομίζειν, ψυχῇ δὲ ἐκεῖνα – "But it is right to think that this class of things resembles the body, and the other class the soul." This distinction reflects Stoic ethics, as Niehoff, Philo, 149–170, has shown.

more widespread among Diaspora Jews than is generally recognized. In the already mentioned *conversion of Izates* (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.34–36)[49] the Diaspora Jew Ananias judges that the circumcision does not form part of the πάτρια τῶν Ἰουδαίων ("the paternal commandments of the Jews"). In the dramaturgy of Josephus, this view is instantly corrected by the Jew Eleazar, who fervently advocates for Izates' circumcision. Matthias Konradt has recently argued that, in this passage, Josephus criticises liberal Jews who share Ananias' position, that converts do not have to undergo circumcision.[50] Here the question of the πάτρια τῶν Ἰουδαίων becomes important. Josephus mentions in *Ant.* 13.297 that the Pharisees – unlike the Sadducees – derive their interpretation of God's will ἐκ παραδόσεως τῶν πατέρων ("out of the traditions of the forefathers"). And in Gal 1:14 Paul underlines that, during his time as a Pharisee, he was zealous in the observance of the "traditions of my fathers" (τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων). The Pauline "works of the law" were most probably focused on such special traditions of the Jews and were mainly linked to matters of ritual observance and purity. Even though we must bear in mind that there was no strict separation between ritual and ethical purity in early Judaism, Philo's discussion with the *radical allegorizers* makes clear that, in liberal circles of early Judaism, purity matters were reduced to ethical precepts. Likewise, Paul sees the fulfilment of Torah in the double commandment of love (Rom 13:8): "the one who loves another has fulfilled the law" (cf. Gal 5:14). This finds a parallel in Philo, *Spec.* 2.63, who identifies the two κεφάλαια ("head commandments") as "the regulating of one's conduct towards God by the rules of piety and holiness, and of one's conduct towards men by the rules of humanity and justice."[51] Paul uses the same word stem when he writes that all the laws "are summed up (ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται) in this word, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Rom 13:9). Like Philo, Paul advocates the primacy of the double commandment of love. Unlike Philo – but in accordance with the *radical allegorizers* – he holds the opinion that ritual observance is no longer necessary. If it is right that Paul was not born as the "son of Pharisees", as Acts 23:6 wishes us to believe, but as a Jew in the liberal climate of the Diaspora, then he might have grown up in a Jewish environment where such liberal ideas circulated. His first "conversion", then, might have taken place in the course of a visit in Jerusalem, where he went from being a liberal Diaspora Jew to what he calls κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος (Phil 3:5). By fulfilling the Pharisaic boundary markers in a blameless way (ἄμεμπτος, Phil 3:6), he certainly came into conflict with the liberal way that

49 Cf. Nanos, Izates, 105–152.

50 Konradt, Kontext, 25; Tiwald, Beschneidung, 223–240.

51 Cf. Niehoff, Philo, 151–154.

the group around Stephen (Acts 6 calls them "Hellenists", liberal Jews from the Diaspora) interpreted Jewish identity markers: κατὰ ζῆλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, "as to zeal, a persecutor of the church". In Phil 3:8 he declares that, as follower of Jesus, he now regards these identity markers "as rubbish" (σκύβαλα). As we can detect from Rom 11:1, where Paul calls himself "an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin", he did not abrogate his Jewish identity, but only changed the identity markers linked to his Jewishness. In the exceedingly diverse forms of early Judaism such identity markers could be lived out in very different ways. Thus, the Qumranites accuse the temple priests of having defiled the Temple in Jerusalem and scold the Pharisees for being "seekers of smooth shings" (דורשי החלקות, *dorsche ha-ḥalaqot*). This is obviously a play on words, insinuating that the Pharisees have transformed their *halakhot* (הלכות) into a smooth doctrine that cannot compete with the strict rules of Qumran. Intriguingly enough, Paul mirrors this variety of Jewish identity markers in his own person and history. With his first conversion he goes from being a liberal Diaspora Jew to strict Pharisaic observance. In this time, he fervently fights against what he most probably had himself been before his conversion – a liberal Diaspora Jew, like Stephen. After Paul's (what I now would call) "second conversion" (his encounter with Jesus), he does not go from being a Jew to being a Christian (as often maintained). Rather, he returns to the liberal interpretation of Jewish identity markers that he had known since his childhood in Tarsus. Sometime later, he himself becomes a disciple of the "Hellenists" who had fled from Jerusalem to Antioch, as Acts 11:19–26 reports.

5. Jewish Identity Markers

As we have seen, in early Judaism a whole plethora of diverging identity markers were possible. Different groups (Sadducees, Pharisees, Qumranites) had diverging ideas as to how purity matters should be lived out. Nevertheless, there were some tendencies that divided the Diaspora from *Eretz Yisra'el*. In particular, the growing influence of the already mentioned *household Judaism*, in which purity matters were extended into the private household, was not as strong in the Diaspora. In *Eretz Yisra'el*, by contrast, we can detect "restorative" tendencies that served as a means to sharpen the contours of Jewish identity in distinction to the Roman and Hellenistic way of life. These tendencies culminated under the reign of Agrippa I. (37–44 CE), who successfully reunited the whole territory of his grandfather Herod the Great. His restorative policy also contained a religious agenda, consisting of strengthening purity rules and the

temple cult, as Josephus, *Ant.* 19.331 exemplifies: "he loved to live continually at Jerusalem, and was exactly careful in the observance of the laws of his country (τὰ πάτρια – the paternal commandments). He therefore kept himself entirely pure; nor did any day pass over his head without its appointed sacrifice." In addition, mSotah 7:8a refers to the piety of the king and his acceptance by the high priest.[52] This is consistent with Acts 12:1–4: "He [sc. Agrippa I.] had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also." We should not make the mistake of interpreting this text as an action of "Jews" against "Christians". Rather, we should see in it a strategy of Agrippa to please the Sadducees by clamping down on a temple-critical group of Jewish believers in Jesus. Jesus' prophetic claim to the temple (wrongly attributed as "cleansing of the temple")[53] had triggered the Sadducees' enmity against his followers. We have to bear in mind that, after the execution of James the brother of Jesus in 62 CE by the Sadducean high priest Ananos II., the Pharisees took sides with James against the Sadducees, as Josephus, *Ant.* 20.200 reports.[54] Here two inner-Jewish groups, both critical of the temple, stand united against the temple-based group of Sadducees. However, it is not a matter of juxtaposing of "Jews" and "Christians". In this climate of restoration and national enthusiasm, liberal views, as put forth by the circle of Stephen, clearly were not welcome. Stephen and the other "Hellenists" (as Acts 6 names them) were liberal Jews from the Diaspora, who combined Jesus' temple criticism with their own agenda. In Acts 6:13–14 Stephen is accused of "talking against this holy place (= the temple) and the law." He is charged further with "changing the traditions (ἔθη/*ethē*) which Moses gave to us." When Luke uses the word ἔθος/*ethos*, he always refers to cultic traditions (Luke 1:9: priests; 2:42: Pessach; Acts 15:1: circumcision). It is therefore very likely that only the ritual aspects of temple worship are criticized in Acts 6:14, but not the temple itself. This proves to be correct when we read Acts 7:42. Here Stephen quotes Amos 5:25–27 with the purpose of postulating a temple service without sacrifices: in its 40 years of wandering in the desert, Israel did not offer any sacrifices to God. Hence, sacrifices might not be necessary for God. Stephen's reasoning based on Acts 7 connects this argument

52 Here we have to note that this was the side of Agrippa I. that he presented towards Jews. Towards non-Jews he embodied the liberal Hellenistic emperor, who did not refrain from claiming divine honours for himself – as Josephus, *Ant.* 19.343–350 and Acts 12:19–23 identically confirm.

53 For Jesus' prophetic action in the temple see Tiwald, Einzug, 460–467.

54 Actually, Josephus here does not name the Pharisees, but he names those περὶ τοὺς νόμους ἀκριβεῖς ("according to the laws the most diligent"), which certainly refers to the Pharisees (cf. Stemberger, Pharisäer, 86).

to a second one: a temple worship consisting of sacrifices is likewise unnecessary, because (here Acts 7:48–50 quotes Isa 66:1–2) "the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands (ἐν χειροποιήτοις)." This argument can already be found in Philo, *Spec*. 1.66–67: the "highest and truest temple of God" is, according to Stoic philosophy, the "universal world" (σύμπαντα κόσμον/*sympanta kosmon*); the temple in Jerusalem, which is only made by human hands (χειρόκμητον/*cheirokmēton*), is only given the second place.[55] Furthermore, in *Somn*. 1.215 Philo mentions the rational soul (λογικὴ ψυχή/*logikē psychē*) as being the temple of God, in which the real, true man takes the position of the priest. Philo thus not only spiritualized temple service, he also "democratized" it. Every soul is a temple, and every true man is priest. It is quite probable that Stephen and the "Hellenists" wanted to reform temple worship in such a spiritualized way, in other words, by turning temple worship into a sort of synagogue prayer, which also granted access to Gentiles.[56] Mark 11:17 quotes Jesus' temple prophecy with the words of Isa 56:7 (LXX): "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations." These liberal views were not well received in the conservative climate of Jerusalem. The "Hellenists" were driven out of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1) because of their reinterpretation of the Torah and of temple worship. Notably, the conservative "Hebrews" remained in Jerusalem. Thus, the line of separation did not run between "Jews" and "Christians", but between liberal and conservative attitudes in the observance of Jewish identity markers. Later on, the "Hellenist" Philip begins the mission to the Samaritans and baptizes the Ethiopian. These events prepare the way for the mission to the Gentiles that did not require circumcision. According to Acts 11:20, this mission began in Antioch, being initiated by the "Hellenists" who had been driven out of Jerusalem. It seems quite likely that the "Hellenists" can be placed on the same trajectory as the *radical allegorizers*. Later on, these ideas were adopted by the apostle Paul, who passed his years of missionary-apprenticeship in Antioch.

6. Paul: A Jew Within Judaism

As we have seen, Paul never abrogated his Jewish identity. On the contrary, he even insisted on having the *right* interpretation of the Torah. Nevertheless, Torah observance could be interpreted in many diverging ways amid the variegated forms of early Judaism. The question as to whether Paul was

55 For Philo and the temple see Niehoff, Philo, 165–170.

56 Theißen, Hellenisten, 335.

Torah-observant depends very much on the position of the observer.[57] As we have seen, as far as the Qumranites were concerned, neither the temple priests nor the Pharisees were following the right Torah. And Paul himself changed his attitude towards the right interpretation of the law, albeit never abrogating the Torah as such. The *Paul within Judaism-Perspective*[58] certainly is right in affirming that Paul never urged Jews to abandon their ritual identity markers, such as circumcision and food laws (Rom 2:25; 1 Cor 7:18; Gal 2:8). But I would not go as far as to say that Paul's teachings had no consequences for Judaism itself, or that his letters were addressed only to non-Jews.[59] What seems crucial to me is the question whether Paul himself still observed kashrut and the dietary precepts of the Torah. Most probably he did when he was together with other Jews, and he did not when he was together with non-Jews (cf. 1 Cor 9:20–21: "To the Jews I became as a Jew […] To those outside the law I became as one outside the law"). Clearly, the whole pluriformity of early Jewish law-observance is mirrored in the person of Paul. Perhaps the eschatological perspective can be helpful in understanding this seemingly ambivalent attitude. Kathy Ehrensperger observes that Paul's teachings have to be read against the backdrop of eschatological expectations: In eschatological times all the nations would convert to the God of Israel.[60] For Paul, but also for the Jewish Jesus-believers in Jerusalem, these expectations had now become reality. Thus, the Council of Jerusalem (Gal 2:2–10; Acts 15) permitted Paul's mission to the Gentiles without circumcision. Nevertheless, this mission was never "law-free", for Paul maintains that the double commandment of love constitutes the complete fulfilment of the law (Rom 13:8; Gal 5:14).[61] More conservative circles in early Judaism would have criticised this approach (as also Philo criticised the *radical allegorizers*

57 Cf. Schröter, Paul, 113.

58 Cf. the precise summary of Ehrensperger, Perspektive, 455–464.

59 Pace Ehrensperger, Perspektive, 459; Nanos, Introduction, 3; Zetterholm, Paul, 48. The letter to the Romans definitely also includes the Jewish Jesus-believers in Rome, as we can see from the mention of Prisca and Aquila in Rom 16:3.

60 Ehrensperger, Perspektive, 460.

61 Cf. Nanos, Myth, 1–21, who criticises the "The Myth of the 'Law-Free' Paul". He rightly observes: "[…] Gentile Christ-followers must be proselyte-conversion free. They do not undertake the 'works/actions of Torah' that create Jewish religio-ethnic identity and thus they are not under Torah; they do not become Israelites, although they become enslaved to the love of neighbor that is the essence of Torah, and thus Israelite covenant life (Gal 5:13–14)." See also Fredriksen, Law-Free, 649, who notes that Paul "insisted that his pagans conform their new behavior precisely to the mandates of Jewish worship, the first table of the law: no other gods, and no idols. Further, he explicitly urges the law's second table on the community at Rome (Rom 13:9–10): no adultery, no murder, no theft, no coveting: loving the neighbor fulfils the law's second table […]"

and the Qumranites scolded the Pharisees). However, given the eschatological expectations, Cephas and James give their approval to such a mission. The decision that Paul should become the apostle to the nations while Peter should remain the apostle to the circumcised (Gal 2:8) was certainly a provisional arrangement, made in expectation of the imminent Parousia.[62] The Incident at Antioch is then a subsequent problem. The Council in Jerusalem had not come to a decision concerning purity regulations for mixed communities. In his own record, Paul does not mention the rules from Acts 15:28–29. These were later amendments to make common meals in mixed communities possible. Even if the decisions of the Jerusalem Council later became a milestone in the *parting of the ways*, we cannot make Paul (or Cephas) responsible for those later developments. In addition, the fall of Jerusalem – and with it the loss of the centre for Jewish believers in Jesus – constituted a further milestone in this trajectory. But Paul could not have foreseen any of these events and thus cannot be made responsible for the *parting of the ways*. According to this interpretation, Paul's attitude towards the law during his time as a follower of Jesus represents one possible – albeit quite liberal – interpretation of the ritual, cultic, and purity-based matters of the Jewish Torah, within the broad range of diverse Torah interpretations of a multifaceted early Judaism.

62 For the Jerusalem Council and the Antioch incident see: Tiwald, Parting, 239–243; Theobald, Christus, 98–99; Konradt, Datierung, 19–39.

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Identity Transformation in Christ

Struggling with "Ἔργα νόμου' in Paul

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Abstract

Paul addresses non-Jews in his letters thus his emphasis that ἔργα νόμου do not lead to δίκαιοσύνη is meant to clarify something for them. The phrase might well resonate with significant aspects of their former lives as pagans, when they worshipped their gods by performing rituals as required by deities, in order to be right with them. However, to perform a ritual in order to win the favor of the God of Israel would be a misunderstanding of God's call, as this would base the relationship on works rather than grace. Non-Jews are called to orient their lives in Christ on the law in response to God's grace, not to win his favor. Thus, Paul's stance against ἔργα νόμου tries to address an issue of cultural misunderstanding for non-Jews in Christ, but Jewish Torah observance is not in view here at all. Thus ἔργα νόμου hardly played the decisive role in the parting of the ways.

Keywords

Works of Law; Rituals; Cultural Translation; Identity Transformation

1. Introduction

Do we really know what we are talking about when we are discussing ἔργα νόμου in the Pauline letters? Since Calvin noted that "It is a matter of doubt, even among the learned what the works of law mean,"[1] this seems to be a legitimate question. The answers have been different – already in the second century and continue to differ ever since.[2] The key issue in relation to the question of the parting of the ways or the ways that never parted, is whether these ἔργα νόμου mark the separation of the Christ-movement from "Judaism". In light of the current debates concerning the concepts of religion, ethnicity, and notions

1 Commentary on Romans, at 3:20.

2 Cf. Thomas, Law.

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of belonging for the period, the question of the parting of the ways or the ways that never parted needs to be re-considered as well. What or who is actually parting or not parting?[3] Clearly, if the concept of religion in the modern sense is anachronistic, there can be no parting or not parting of Christianity and Judaism, as these entities did not exist.[4] The debates concerning "Ioudaismos" point in a similar direction – if this is not Judaism in the modern sense, then what is the meaning of this -ismos?[5] And then there is the question of the actors in these events. There are Jews, convinced of messianic events inaugurated by Christ Jesus, there are Jews not convinced of this, there are also non-Jews convinced of this and that this had implications for them; and there are non-Jews who could not see any meaning in this, or if anything at all, only troubles caused by some people in the realm of Jewish groups. These are just examples of aspects that need to be considered, as they are intertwined in a network of interactions beyond any cause-and-effect notions. The question of the parting of the ways or the ways that never parted arises from the perspective of developments after the early centuries CE when eventually different traditions of belonging emerged in some kind of institutionalized forms.[6] If the entities under discussion did not exist, how could they have or have not parted? The arguments on both sides of these debates, whether the ways never parted or parted early cannot all be merely refuted: if the entities Judaism and Christianity did not exist, they could not have parted;[7] if non-Jewish Christ-followers never were Jews, they never were part of the Jewish people so were separate anyway and therefore could not have parted.[8] This is not to deny that there were discussions of differentiation going on between different groups of people, Jewish, non-Jewish, Christ-following or not, but to conceptualize these in terms of "parting" or "not parting" may not grasp the complexity of the processes.

In light of this, the question whether ἔργα νόμου were markers or a decisive aspect for the parting of the ways may be missing the point. Nevertheless, the question of what was at stake in Paul's strong arguments against ἔργα νόμου is important as the history of interpretation demonstrates.

3 On this see also the volume Schröter/Edsall/Verheyden, Jews.
4 Nongbri, Religion; Barton/Boyarin, Religion.
5 See the debate after the publication of Steve Mason's article Jews, Reinhartz, Jews, and also Boyarin, Judaism.
6 On the importance of the aspect of institutions see Runesson, Paul.
7 Becker/Reed, Introduction, Fredriksen, Parting.
8 Cohen, Ways; Schnelle, Wege; Runesson, Together.

2. Ἔργα νόμου and Cultural Translation

The Pauline letters are evidence of an inter-cultural communication process. Paul is a cultural go-between, a messenger at the crossroads. This implies that more than one socio-cultural and socio-linguistic context is involved when we are trying to assess what Paul might have been talking about: Jewish as well as non-Jewish ones.[9] Whatever Paul sets out to consider, he does so as a Greek speaking Jew, circumcised on the eighth day, an Israelite, of the tribe of Benjamin, Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the νόμος, a Pharisee.[10] And it is likewise evident that he addresses non-Jews,[11] in keeping with what he perceives to be his calling according to Rom 1:5–6:

> δι᾽ οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, **6** ἐν οἷς ἐστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (through whom we received the gift and apostleship for the response of trust/loyalty to his name among all the nations, among those also you are, called by Jesus Christ).

He understands his task as evoking a response of trust in God from people from the nations on account of Christ. This is his rationale for addressing non-Jewish Christ-followers also in Rome although he has not been the one who initially had been the mediator of the messianic message to them.

The echo-chamber or cultural encyclopedias involved in this mediation process are multiple. There is, no doubt, the social, political, and symbolic Jewish world evident in Greek Jewish literature throughout.[12] I consider this to be the world in which Paul is rooted and remains embedded before as well as after his calling experience. It provides the primary context in all considerations of potential meanings of the Pauline discourse.[13] However, since he is addressing non-Jews, the echo chamber and cultural encyclopedias of his addressees

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9 I am not reviving the Judaism/Hellenism debate here, but emphasize as elsewhere that in a multilingual context of diverse cultures as was prevalent in the Roman empire, differences in cultural codes and encyclopedias need to be taken seriously. See Ehrensperger, Paul, 105–139; also Barton/Boyarin, Religion, 123–134.

10 Ehrensperger, Law; Ehrensperger, Paulus; Fredriksen, Paul.

11 For a consistent reading of Romans in light of this see Campbell, Romans; Fredriksen, Apostle; also Schröter, Paul.

12 Rajak, Translation, Ehrensperger, Paul,140–148.

13 The significance of 4QMMT for illuminating Paul's reasoning is limited in my view. Although it demonstrates that the compound is rooted in the context of Jewish debates concerning living according to the Torah/νόμος, in 4QMMT we have evidence of an inner-Jewish debate, whereas in the letters of Paul we have documents of transcultural translation processes. For a recent overview of the debate, see Frey, Works. See also Nanos' discussion of 4QMMT in his Re-framing Paul's Opposition, 95.

are equally relevant. To be intelligible for his audience, what Paul writes must resonate at least to some extent with their social and symbolic worlds. As in any translation process, cultural and linguistic, the cultural encyclopedias that resonate with terms rather than mere terms translated, are decisive in the transmission of translated content. This is the case also where a language used as a lingua franca is involved.[14] Loss and gain in translation are to be expected, need to be considered, discerned, critically discussed, but they should not be deplored, since they are unavoidable.

The issue of ἔργα νόμου is one of the themes to be considered in light of the cultural translation process in which Paul is involved. Ἔργα νόμου are a topic where the expected response to God's call through Christ by those from the nations is in view. But it is by far not the only, maybe not even the most significant topic, certainly not for all or everywhere, otherwise Paul would have addressed it in all of his letters. Significantly however, it can only be found in Galatians and Romans. And even here actually only six times in Galatians, and twice in Romans (plus 1x τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου [2:15]). Admittedly if the term ἔξ ἔργων is included that number is slightly increased – adding five occurrences in Romans.

For the purpose of this contribution, I will focus on the occurrences in Romans. I will not deal with τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου as I think this requires a separate consideration.

In this contribution I will explore the assumption, that the phrases ἔργα νόμου and ἔξ/χωρὶς ἔργων are technical terms which express a specific aspect of living according to the Jewish νόμος.[15]

In the two passages where the full phrase occurs in Romans (3:20, 28), Paul denies that ἔξ ἔργων νόμου something can be achieved or happen, referred to as δικαιοῦσθαι. That Paul denies that Christ-followers from the nations can achieve δίκαιοσύνη by ἔργα νόμου presupposes that what is denied actually might be assumed by some whether by the addressees, or more widely.[16] There must have been people who were of the view that ἔξ ἔργα νόμου δικαιοσύνη could be achieved, hence Paul's rebuke (in Rom 4:2 and 4:6; 9:30–32 and also

14 This has been demonstrated in linguistic research of the use of English as a lingua franca and can be applied to Greek of the Hellenistic period. See Ehrensperger, Paul, 39–162.

15 Another trajectory to pursue is the absence of the phrase in the Pastorals or other later letters. This may indicate that the matter was not a problem anymore in the second generation. And what appears to be a polemical response to Paul in the letter of James may be reconsidered as well in light of the interpretation proposed here.

16 I consider Paul to be addressing real issues among Christ-followers in Rome, hence I do not think that he deals with this issue of ἔργα νόμου as a hypothetical option over against δίκαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως.

in Gal 2:16 a similar constellation of ἔξ ἔργων [νόμου] and δίκαιος-terminology is found). And of course, there is the repeated affirmation that such δίκαιοσύνη can be arrived at only via πίστις. Thus, we have four terms in these passages which are obviously interrelated – there is something – ἔργα νόμου – which does not lead to a supposed goal, that is, δικαιοσύνη, and something else, that is, πίστις/πιστεύειν which does. I will not enter a detailed discussion about the meaning of πίστις/πιστεύειν here, but just note that πίστις should not be translated as "belief" or "faith" but as "loyalty" or "trust".[17] In what follows I will focus on the other three terms and their respective cultural encyclopedias, that is, νόμος, ἔργα, and δικαιοσύνη.

3. Νόμος, Greek, Roman, and Jewish

Νόμος here only concerns us insofar as it is part of the compound ἔργα νόμου. The ἔργα qualified with the genitive are related to this νόμος. The common translations of νόμος as 'law' may restrict its meaning too narrowly to legal aspects of the term. Since the term νόμος in both Greek as well as in Jewish-Greek tradition tends to encompass something that can be rendered more widely as tradition, custom, it is possible that Paul also used it in this sense. This also includes written traditions, but is not only or exclusively related to these. Accordingly, the term νόμος is used to express the way certain things are done in a place, in a certain cultural sphere.[18] This includes areas such as cult and rituals as well as behavior towards neighbors and strangers. For this there are written and unwritten traditions, and rules, but these include far more than what is understood today by "laws".

It is thus no surprise that in Josephus, the term is clearly not limited to the written νόμος/Torah. The νόμοι that are characteristic and binding for Jewish life include, for example, in Josephus, *Ant.* 3.224–286 (about offerings) more than what is recorded in writing in the νόμος/Torah. According to Josephus, however, all these regulations are part of the Mosaic 'law' without distinction (Josephus, *Ant.* 3.286). Thus, he writes "Everything I have written down as Moses left it, leaving out all unnecessary embellishments, nor adding anything that Moses would not have established." (Josephus, *Ant.* 4.196). As Steve Mason affirms, Josephus does not distinguish between written text and contemporary traditions and practices.[19] For him, everything is part of the Mosaic "law"

17 Cf. Ehrensperger, Paul, 160–174. Fredriksen, Paul, 121, Campbell, Romans, 32.

18 Zartaloudis, Birth, 3–120, Lupu, Laws, 5, Wishart, Nomos, 57.

19 Mason, Josephus, 98–100.

and correspondingly authoritative. Daniel Boyarin presents a similar view. He proposes to translate νόμος in Josephus' work consistently with "Jewish way of life". This is not the place to discuss whether this is appropriate throughout in Josephus' case. But Boyarin shows that this translation opens up a way of not reducing Jewish traditions to the legal realm of law. He emphasizes that the term νόμος encompasses areas that are referred to or circumscribed by other terms in different languages and cultures.[20] Such insights could also be helpful in understanding Paul's use of the term. It is not a question of rendering νόμος in the Pauline letters consistently with "Jewish way of life". This is ruled out by expressions like νόμος τῆς ἁμαρτίας' (Rom 7:23). But it is quite probable that also for Paul νόμος stands for more than the written traditions, rules and laws, and certainly not merely for law in a legal sense. For Paul, too, it can be assumed that νόμος in most cases includes something like Jewish traditions and customs as a whole, unless he is the one exception in the context of first century "Judaism".

For a Jewish audience the term νόμος then would have resonated with all of these aspects as God's gift of guidance and teaching for a life lived in relation to the one God who bound himself in trust and loyalty to this people by calling them into being by grace. This surely is what would have resonated with Paul's mentioning of νόμος. As the Jewish way of life this can include laws, but it is far more than laws – it is ordering life at a communal and individual level, the Jewish constitution, as Josephus and Philo assert.[21] The Jews'/Israel's response consists in φυλάσσειν the νόμος, also referred to as "the way of the Lord". It can specifically also refer to φυλάσσειν the Shabbat, or festivals (LXX Exod 12:24; 15:26; 19:5; Lev 19:3, 19, 37; Deut 5:1, 10 etc.). And whilst this included that the people Israel should act (ποιεῖν) according to the νόμος/Torah generally, this general observance of the Torah is nowhere referred to with the terminology of ἔργον/ἐργάζομαι in the LXX.

But Paul is writing to non-Jews who now also relate to the one God, as their God, in an anticipatory move acknowledging the God of Israel as the God of all humankind, even of all of creation, above, on earth and below (Phil 2:10). They acknowledge this God as those called from the nations through Christ. Since they should remain non-Jews it is evident that the Torah/νόμος, that is, the Jewish way of life, is not for them. Nevertheless, in addressing them Paul affirms all sorts of things about the νόμος/Torah. When he rhetorically asks "do we nullify/render ineffective the νόμος by this πίστις?" He confirms "Far from that! On the contrary – we uphold the νόμος" (Rom 3:19). And further he

20 Barton/Boyarin, Imagine,158–159.

21 See e.g. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.145–147; Philo, *Opif.*143.

clearly asserts that 'the νόμος is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.' (7:12) and 'For we know that the νόμος is spiritual' (7:14). Thus, also a Christ-follower from the nations can and is supposed to fulfil the νόμος – as in Rom 13:8 "for the one who loves another has fulfilled (πεπλήρωκεν) the νόμος." And in Rom 13:10 he asserts that "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling (πλήρωμα) of the νόμος".[22] Moreover, Christ-followers from the nations shall do all sorts of things in relation to each other which amounts actually to an analogy to doing the νόμος, even performing λατρέια (the technical word for cult performance, Rom 12:1). Thus, relating to each other, and to the one God is νόμος/Torah-oriented, also for those from the nations in Christ. Doing the νόμος or acting according to the νόμος is thus explicitly expected from Christ-followers from the nations.[23] But consistent with the LXX use, Paul never refers to keeping or doing the νόμος generally with ἔργον, ἐργάζομαι terminology. The verbs used with regard to the νόμος in this respect are ποιέω (Rom 2:13, 14; Gal 5:14), πράσσω (Rom 2:25), φυλάσσω (Rom 2:25), and πληρόω or πλήρωμα (Rom 8:4; 13:8, 10; Gal 5:14; 6:13).[24] This indicates that the phrase ἔργα νόμου most likely does not generally refer to the "doing of Torah" or doing of the νόμος as such – as "not the hearers of the νόμος are right with God but the doers of the νόμος (ποιηταὶ νόμου) will be made right" (2:13). This renders it evident in my view that ἔργα νόμου cannot mean, as has been asserted so widely, "doing the Law" or "works of Law" generally. Obviously then Paul does not warn his addressees against 'keeping Torah' in general with his opposition against their performing ἔργα νόμου. This is not an argument against keeping the νόμος/Torah, God's gift and guidance, for Jews, and now to some extent also for non-Jews in Christ. Paul's arguments against ἔργα νόμου are not set up against Jewish ways of relating to God. It must refer to something more specific.

Some clues may be found in other Hebrew terms which in the LXX are translated with νόμος, such as ὁ νόμος τοῦ πασχα (Ex 12:43), which renders חֻקַּת הַפֶּסַח. translated in the NRSV not as the "law" but as the ordinance of the Passover. However, in Leviticus the specific rules/norms concerning sacrifices, and related rituals are predominantly referred to with the term Torah, translated in the LXX as νόμος. In these instances, it is clear that these "laws" refer to the way,

22 We should note that the admonition to love that is, not to act evil upon a neighbor is expressed with the verb ἐργάζομαι in this verse!

23 Cf. Fredriksen, Paul, 158.

24 It is necessary to keep in mind that all of these activities were body oriented. Individual bodies enacted the observance of Torah, as part of the social body of the people. To observe Torah was not a mere intellectual acknowledgement, but could not be separated from the bodies, individual bodies as well as social bodies who together were the people who expressed their observance and thus trust in God through bodily performance.

or the rules by which rituals should be performed. Thus, the term νόμος/Torah can mean guidance for ritual performance as well as social interaction, in the sense of constitution (πολίτευμα, Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.145–147).

This coheres with a specific characteristic attributed to Pharisees by Josephus, namely that they are οἱ μετὰ ἀκριβείας δοκοῦντες ἐξηγεῖσθαι τὰ νόμιμα (excellent experts of the rules/laws *B.J.* 2.162). Paul Mandel has demonstrated that the exact exegesis of the νόμος and the precise meticulous knowledge of the νόμιμα by the Pharisees does not refer to their precise observance and interpretation of the laws, but indicates that they know and transmit the meaning of rules and laws, especially with regard to cultic practices. He notes that

> the Septuagint renders the term תּוֹרָת, used in the description of the ritual guidance given by the priests in Lev. 14:57, as ἐξηγήσασθαι. And it is in this sense that Josephus uses the term to denote the function of the Pharisees [...] whose knowledge of the *patrioi nomoi* is emphasized as being accurate and precise.[25]

Pharisees were thus not excellent exegetes of the scriptures in the modern sense, but they were experts when it comes to knowing how to perform rituals, that is, how to appropriately worship the one God (Josephus, *B.J.* 2.162; *Ant.* 18.15). Since Paul was a Pharisee, this is precisely his area of expertise. He is a κάτα νόμον Φαρισαῖος (Phil 3:5b)[26] and as such an expert as far as the rules and rituals involved in worshipping the God of Israel are concerned.

That the term νόμος in Jewish Greek literature encompasses more than written traditions as well as more than mere "laws" is not a Jewish peculiarity. An analogy can be found in discussions concerning the use of νόμος generally in Greek texts as noted above.[27] Thus rules for specific purposes had to be labelled as such, as e.g. so-called "sacred laws" of Ancient Greece. It has been noted that the term refers to a wide array of different kinds of texts and inscriptions, which all use the term ἱερόι νόμοι. Similar to texts of Jewish tradition this seems to indicate that customs and traditions concerning cult related rituals as well as appropriate social interactions would be referred to with the term νόμος. It thus has been suggested to translate ἱερόι νόμοι with "ritual norms" rather than as "sacred laws".[28] Similar records exist also in Roman tradition (more on this below).[29] In any case, the Roman addressees of Paul would have been familiar with rules or norms or laws concerning the performance of rituals in everyday

25 Mandel, Exegesis; Stavrianopoulou, Interventions, 35f. 45.
26 See Ehrensperger, Paulus; also Fredriksen, Paul.
27 See Zartaloudis, Nomos.
28 Carbon/Pirenne-Delforge, Codifying, 145–152.
29 Scheid, Romulus.

life as well as at special occasions. This may indicate – as has been noted in numerous publications about the so-called ritual and moral laws – that there are different aspects of the νόμος/Torah that need to be considered here.

Having established that νόμος may have meant more than a written code in the different cultural traditions that need to be considered when trying to understand what Paul might have wished to communicate to his addressees, I will now turn to the term ἔργον especially as part of the compound ἔργα νόμου and explore what might have resonated with it for Greek speaking Jews, followed by considering this similarly for the non-Jewish addressees of Paul.

4. Ἔργα in Jewish Greek Terminology

Of course, ἔργον and related terms is used in various contexts to express that something is being done, achieved, or had an effect. But there are also indications of a more specific, technical use of ἔργον and related terms in the LXX when performances of cultic rites in the Temple are in view. Such a use is found in a significant number of LXX passages. Thus, in Exod 23:24 LXX it is stated οὐ προσκυνήσεις τοῖς θεοῖς αὐτῶν οὐδὲ μὴ λατρεύσῃς αὐτοῖς· οὐ ποιήσεις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν (you shall not bow down to their gods in worship or follow their practices, JPS). In Numbers there is overflowing evidence of this particular technical use. I will only mention a few here as examples. Thus in Num 3:7 it says καὶ φυλάξουσιν τὰς φυλακὰς αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς φυλακὰς τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ ἔναντι τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τῆς σκηνῆς (They shall perform duties for him and for the whole community before the Tent of Meeting, doing the work of the Tabernacle, JPS); in Num 4:3 ἀπὸ εἴκοσι καὶ πέντε ἐτῶν καὶ ἐπάνω καὶ ἕως πεντήκοντα ἐτῶν, πᾶς ὁ εἰσπορευόμενος λειτουργεῖν ποιῆσαι πάντα τὰ ἔργα ἐν τῇ σκηνῇ τοῦ μαρτυρίου (from twenty-five years old and upward until fifty years, every one that goes in to minister, to do all the works in the tent of witness); Num 4:16 states that ἐπίσκοπος Ελεαζαρ υἱὸς Ααρων τοῦ ἱερέως· τὸ ἔλαιον τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ τὸ θυμίαμα τῆς συνθέσεως καὶ ἡ θυσία ἡ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν καὶ τὸ ἔλαιον τῆς χρίσεως, ἡ ἐπισκοπὴ ὅλης τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ ὅσα ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔργοις (The overseer is Eleazar son of Aaron the priest—the oil of the light and the incense of the mixture and the daily sacrifice and the anointing oil—the oversight of the entire tent and as many things that are in it in the holy place, in all the works. NETS).[30] In 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles again an accumulation of respective terminology occurs as e.g. in 1 Chr 9:31 where a certain Mattathias, a Levite is entrusted with the tasks (works) of the sacrifices καὶ

30 Cf. also Num 4:23, 33, 39, 47; 7:5; 8:11, 15, 19, 26; Deut; 1 Kgs 18:36; 1 Chr 9:19.

Ματταθιας ἐκ τῶν Λευιτῶν (οὗτος ὁ πρωτότοκος τῷ Σαλωμ τῷ Κορίτῃ) ἐν τῇ πίστει ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῆς θυσίας τοῦ τηγάνου τοῦ μεγάλου ἱερέως, (And Mattathias, one of the Levites (this one was the firstborn of Salom the Korite), was in a position of trust over the tasks of sacrifice relating to the great priest's frying–pan, NETS).[31] Also in Wisdom (e.g. Wis 12:3–4) indications to such a technical use of ἔργα in the sense of ritual performance can be found, although here not in relation to officially sanctioned sacrifices but negatively in relation to witchcraft: μισήσας ἐπὶ τῷ ἔχθιστα πράσσειν, ἔργα φαρμακειῶν καὶ τελετὰς ἀνοσίους (the ancient inhabitants of your holy land you hated for their hostile doing, their rites/works of magic, and unholy rituals).[32]

As Mark Nanos has demonstrated Josephus also uses the term for the ritual of circumcision (*Ant*. 20.17–48), and sees Paul's use of the term in the same vein as referring in particular to the act, that is, ritual of circumcision. This is certainly one of the rituals in view but I do not think exclusively.[33]

Philo uses the term ἱερουργία composed evidently of ἵερος and ἔργον with reference to the Temple service in Jerusalem, that is, to specifics of the 'work' or rituals which have to be performed there (e.g. *Ebr.* 18, *Plant.* 107, *Spec.* 1.96). And ἱερουργέω θυσία in *Migr.* 67 is the technical phrase for serving as a priest or performing priestly services, that is, sacrifices.[34] These examples demonstrate that in Jewish Greek tradition a use of ἔργα as a technical term for cult performance can be found.

The performance of these ἔργα is part of observing the νόμος, acting according to the νόμος. But this terminology is restricted to cult and ritual performance rather than being a general term which refers to doing or observing the νόμος /Torah as noted above.

As previously noted, the term νόμος in Jewish Greek as in Greek more generally, cannot be restricted to a legal code of law. Torah/Νόμος in Jewish Greek understanding specifically refers broadly to the Jewish way of life. Part of this Jewish way of life includes doing ἔργα according to the νόμος in the technical sense of performing cultic offerings in the Temple in Jerusalem. This is what Paul refers to as λατρεία – ('to them belong the λατρεία' Rom 9:4). Josephus also refers to the cult practices of pagans with the term ἔργα when he states that 'τά τε ἄλλα πάνθ' ὅσα ἦν αὐτοῖς πάτρια παρέντες ἐμιμοῦντο τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν ἔργα' (neglecting all the customs that belonged to their own country, they imitated

31 Further exemplary passages are 1 Chr 23:24, 28; 2 Chr 4:6; 23:18; 29:34–35; 35:2; Neh 10:33–34; Mic 6:16.

32 Cf. also 1 En 1:9; 99:9.

33 See Nanos excellent and detailed discussion in his Re-Framing Paul's Opposition, esp. 85–90.

34 In *Cher.* 94 the completion of a sacrifice is rendered with ἀπεργάζομαι θυσίας.

the practices/works of the other nations *Ant.* 12.241). Paul too refers to the practices at temples in 1 Cor 9:13 in technically accurate terminology Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ τὰ ἱερὰ ἐργαζόμενοι τὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐσθίουσιν (Do you not know that those who perform rites at the temple eat from the temple).[35]

Thus, ἔργα are practices of λατρεία, but clearly and beyond any doubt this cult performance does not establish the right relationship with God. The performance of the cult in the Temple in Jerusalem is a way of honoring the God in response to his calling the people Israel into being as his people. This response, the performance of ἔργα in the context of λατρεία (which only happens in the Temple) does not render this people δίκαιος with God. This is stated e.g. by Josephus who has Salomon pray

> "ἔργοις μέν", εἶπεν, οὐ δυνατὸν ἀνθρώποις ἀποδοῦναι θεῷ χάριν ὑπὲρ ὧν εὖ πεπόνθασιν· ἀπροσδεὲς γὰρ τὸ θεῖον ἁπάντων καὶ κρεῖττον τοιαύτης ἀμοιβῆς· ᾧ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων ὑπὸ σοῦ, δέσποτα, κρείττονες γεγόναμεν, τούτῳ τὴν σὴν εὐλογεῖν μεγαλειότητα καὶ περὶ τῶν ὑπηργμένων εἰς τὸν ἡμέτερον οἶκον καὶ τὸν Ἑβραίων εὐχαριστεῖν ἀνάγκη.
>
> (It is not possible for humans to return by works sufficient thanks to God for his benefits bestowed upon them, for the Deity stands in need of nothing, and is above any such requital; but so far as we have been made superior, O Lord, to other animals by you, it becomes us to bless your Majesty, and it is necessary for us to give thanks to you for what you has bestowed upon our house, and upon the Hebrew people. (*Ant.* 8.111))

The Jewish way of life generally is a way of giving thanks in response or ὑπακοή to the call of God. He had called Israel into existence, and committed himself in this call to them as their God. The initiative for this relationship is not on the human but on God's side. Thus, the performance of any rites or ἔργα νόμου is a response and does not establish this relationship and hence does not render humans right (δίκαιος) with God.

For Jews who lived in cities and villages around the Mediterranean the main cult activities were performed in a place they considered the center of the world, that is, the Temple in Jerusalem, a place they possibly had hardly ever seen with their own eyes.[36] They had a link to this place and the performance of the sacrificial cult rituals there through the payment of the half shekel, the reading of respective passages of the written traditions, and possibly reports from pilgrims.[37]But that was about it. This indirect link to sacrificial practices marks a major difference to their host cultures as is emphasized e.g. by Philo,

35 See Naiden, Signals, 287.

36 Philo, *Flacc.* 46; cf. Fraade, Temple, 240–163, Honigman, Serving, 86, 119.

37 See e.g. Trotter, Home, also Trotter, Identity.

'In the next place, he does not permit those who desire to perform sacrifices in their own houses to do so, but he orders all men to rise up, even from the furthest boundaries of the earth, and to come to this temple, by which command he is at the same time testing their dispositions most severely.' (*Spec.* 1.68). Sacrifices, that is offerings with all that went with it, processions of singing, instrumental music, dancing, prayers, holding banquets, carrying statues, holding contests etc., were not performed by Jews in the Diaspora in relation to their God. This marked them as decisively different. Significantly they in all likelihood also did not actively participate in the neighborhood cults of their host cities or rural communities, nor did they actively participate in the official cults of the cities and the empire, as expressions of honoring the respective deities. They possibly would have been present at public and neighborhood celebrations, granted that they could do so without being considered to thereby be involved in idolatry.[38] This was a grey zone, in that what did or did not constitute idolatry was a matter of debate and needed to be negotiated in different contexts and situations.[39] It may have been perceived differently by different people and communities, as is evident in the Mishna Tractate Avodah Zara.

Cult performances expressing the honoring of a deity were of decisive importance for the social fabric of societies of antiquity, including Roman society, throughout the different strata.[40] In addition to the official city and state cult, the cults of the domestic and compital *Lares* were not only prevalent, but of highest importance among lower class inhabitants of Rome, hence the city was full of respective shrines. It was the way peace and well-being of the house, /*domus*/οἶκος, of the street corner, and the neighborhood/*vicus* was guaranteed. By giving the gods what they were due these in return would grant what people needed, health, prosperity, happiness, marital bliss, etc.[41] Jews most likely did not participate in these rites actively.[42] And in the neighborhood, it is difficult to envisage that their girls would have donated their dolls at a compital shrine upon marriage, or their boys would have left their *bulla* there when they grew up and became men.[43] From the perspective of their pious neighbors at the street corner Jews really seemed to behave like atheists. This was odd, very odd, but to some extent nevertheless accepted, albeit not without interruptions.

38 Cf. Fredriksen, Irshai, Include Me Out, 118; also Fredriksen, Augustine, 20–25.
39 For more details see Ehrensperger, Paul, 206–209.
40 Naiden, Signals, 280.
41 See the excellent analysis by Flower, Lares.
42 Cf. Philo, *Spec.* 1.60–63.
43 Flower, Lares, 83–84.

It cannot be ruled out, that in the place of the central dimension of offerings to a deity at a cultic space/altar, i.e. sacrificing cakes, flowers, incense, and occasionally, meat, there existed Jewish practices of honoring their God outside of Jerusalem about which we know rather little.[44] Although synagogue gatherings were described by Philo and Josephus as philosophical schools it should not be excluded that there, as well as in the home, singing, praying, lightening of candles, banqueting at festivals, were ways of honoring the God of Israel outside Jerusalem.[45] Such practices are often referred to as 'worshipping', without differentiating these from the cult practices performed at temples. Philo for instance makes it clear, despite his use of sacrificial language, that practices such as hymn signing were not equivalent to offerings or sacrifices as understood in their host cultures. He occasionally refers to hymns and thanksgivings as θυσία (*Spec.* 1.272) but considers it necessary to clarify that this should not be understood as a gift to God, arguing that like a judge he does not take gifts from those who come to the tribunal; this would amount to bribery or corruption. Since God is most all-sufficient he has no need for anything. (*Spec.* 1.277). The fact that Philo feels compelled to clarify that this is not something that God needs indicates that it might have been understood differently.[46]

5. Ἔργα (νόμου) – Resonating with Greek and Roman Cultural Codes

If ἔργα is a technical term for performing rituals in response to God's call in Jewish perception, rather than expressing νόμος/Torah observance generally, the question arises what would have resonated with this term in the echo chamber of non-Jews? The norm with which the Christ-followers from the nations were familiar was that of cult practices in relation to local and translocal deities on a daily basis. In order to establish and maintain the right relationship with the gods the cultic rites had to be performed, and they had to be performed correctly, according to the norm or νόμος.[47] In order to be right with the gods the rites had to be performed right. Cult performance was the bodily enactment of the relationship with the deity.[48] It involved individual bodies, social bodies such as families, or cult groups as well as political or civic

44 Ehrensperger, Paul, 186–189, Ilan, Issues.

45 Philo, *Contempl.* 80–84.

46 As one could expect in a context of χάρις ἀντὶ χάριτος or "do ut des" of Greek euergetism and Roman benefaction or patronage systems.

47 See e.g. Scheid, Religion, 30. Stavrianopoulou, Interventions, 32.

48 Mylonopoupols, Sanctuaries,71–84.

bodies as these in addition to the all-important cult practices in the house, and neighborhood or families, were sponsors and performers of cult, i.e. to protect a πόλις, a *colonia* or even the *imperium* as a whole.

Especially according to Roman understanding, the peace with the deity concerned was at stake in each activity which in modern perceptions is summarized as offering/sacrifice whether fruit, cakes, flowers, incense, meat, or a combination of these. There was no one term designating all aspects which formed part of cult performances. The performance could be called *rem divinam/res divinas facere* or *sacra facere* in Latin, or ἱερὸ or θυσίαις ποιεῖν in Greek.[49] The performance of individual parts of the entire cultic performance could be rendered as *facere*. Thus, initial rituals of an offering could be referred to as *ture at vino facere*, meaning roughly 'to do with frankincense and wine'.[50] The actual performance of the ritual was expressed with terms of doing (facere, ποιεῖν). More research is required in this area, but the recent discussion of an inscription of unknown location by Karatas indicates that ἐργ- related terminology was used in Greek inscriptions, in the same technical sense that it is also found in Greek Jewish literature. The inscription addresses issues of dress codes allowed or forbidden in the cult of Demeter Thesmophoros, and indicates that if the dress is not consecrated appropriately this has a negative effect on the ἔργον, i.e. the ritual.[51] This clearly is a technical use of the term ἔργον, which would have been the echo chamber of Paul's non-Jewish addressees.

The right performance of the cult was crucial to secure the acceptance of the activity by the deity. It had to be further scrutinized through the inspection of the entrails if an animal was offered. If the respective signs were not positive, or if a mistake in the course of the performance occurred, the entire performance had to be repeated.[52] As noted, the doing right with the gods

49 A negative example is provided by Plato in *Leg.* 10.910b: ἱερά τε καὶ βωμοὺς ἐν ἰδίαις οἰκίαις ἱδρυόμενοι, λάθρᾳ τοὺς θεοὺς ἵλεως οἰόμενοι ποιεῖν θυσίαις τε καὶ εὐχαῖς, εἰς ἄπειρον τὴν ἀδικίαν αὐξάνοντες αὑτοῖς τε ἐγκλήματα πρὸς θεῶν ποιῶνται καὶ τοῖς ἐπιτρέπουσιν, οὗσιν αὐτῶν βελτίοσιν, καὶ πᾶσα οὕτως ἡ πόλις ἀπολαύῃ τῶν ἀσεβῶν τρόπον τινὰ δικαίως. The impious establish shrines and altars in private houses. They think to win over the gods in secret, by means of sacrifices and prayers. They pile up injustice with no limit and bring down divine accusations upon themselves and those who are better than they are but tolerate them. The whole community is "rewarded," thanks to the impious, and justly, too.

50 Cancik-Lindemaier, Tun, 60–61.

51 For a detailed discussion of this inscription see Karatas, Cults, 464–466.

52 Cf. Pliny, the elder notes concerning the reading of prayers during a procession "to prevent any of the terms being skipped or inverted, someone first reads the formula from what is written, while another supervisor has the task of monitoring its accuracy, and yet a third must ensure that silence is observed.' *Nat.* 28.11. Also Valerius Maximus *Val. Max.* 1.1.8. Cf. also Stavrianopoulou, Competence.

was decisive for securing the wellbeing of individuals, as well as social entities, from family and clan, to neighborhood/*vicus*, to city/*urbs*, πόλις, and *imperium*. Thus, John Scheid noted that for Romans, belief was deed; the cult performance served to affirm the hierarchy between humans and gods with the human side taking the initiative.[53] The Roman perception of the relation to the divine world has also been described as a contractual relationship of "do ut des", (I give so that you may give).[54] Thus "a sacrifice resembles a contract, it acquires a judicial component – my gift commits the god, morally at any rate, to giving me something in return."[55] Of course there were also philosophically sophisticated perceptions of divine-human relations, and critical voices over against simplistic perceptions,[56] but what I am interested in here is the practical level of everyday life of all social classes, including slaves, rather than elite philosophical notions. The relationship between humans and deities was one of conditional reciprocity not so much in order to force the deity but as a structuring principle of the communication between the human and the divine world.[57] The Latin and Greek terms lex or νόμος referred to the rules or norms according to which a particular cultic ritual had to be performed.[58] Even though a cult could have been established at the initiative of a deity, the ritual was performed at the initiative of the human side, thus establishing or at least trying to establish or maintain the orderly relationship with the divine. The performing of the ritual according to the lex/νόμος was vital in order to be right with the divine. The Latin and Greek terminology as well as respective literary sources indicate clearly that there were technical terms and phrases referring to cult performances in relation to the gods, including ἔργον and νόμος.[59] In the case of Roman and Greek understanding the duty of establishing and maintaining this relation was on the human side – to be right with the gods, that is to show piety (pietas/εὐσέβεια) one had to perform the ritual according to leges/νόμοι – and one had to perform them above all, correctly. Pietas/εὐσέβεια was expressed through ritual performance according to the customs and norms, that is, through ἔργα νόμου.

This is the difference, the "theological" difference between Greek, Roman, and Jewish understandings. The former perceived the divine-human relationship in analogy to the benefaction or patronage systems of "do ut des" which

53 Scheid, Croire, 275. Also Ando, Matter, 13–14.
54 Or in Greek perception as χάρις ἀντὶ χάριτος principle. Cf. Van der Horst, Charity, 119.
55 Rüpke, Religion, 149; Naiden, Signals, 282.
56 Cf. Cicero, *Leg.* 2.6–7.
57 Mylonopoulos, Opferrituale, 207; Iles Johnston, Oracles; Stowers, Religion, 40.
58 For a discussion of Greek ritual norms see e.g. Carbon/Pirenne-Delforge, Codifying.
59 See also Peels, Hosios, 144–148.

structured these societies. It was appropriate and right/justified to give to the gods respect and honor expressed in the offerings they were due.[60] The right action (cult performance) rendered one right (δίκαιος) with the gods. At least this is how some Jewish contemporaries of Paul understood Roman and Greek tradition. Josephus writes in *Against Apion*

> The gods who are slaves of human beings, now working as builders for pay, now tending the herds and others bound like criminals in a bronze prison [...] some have cast terror and fear, even frenzy and deceit [...] into the nature and form of a god and they have persuaded cities even to sacrifice to the more auspicious of them. Thus they find it absolutely necessary to recognize some of the gods as givers of good things but call others apotropaic and then move them [...] with presents and gifts since they expect to come to terrible harm if they do not give them their pay. (*C. Ap*. 2.247–249)

And Philo warns that proselytes are at risk of using language and concepts they had learned (and which are wrong) in relation to the one God (*Spec*. 1.53).[61] Whether these perceptions do justice to Roman and Greek traditions in their respective self-understanding is not the issue here. But it is evident that at least two Jews of the first century, Philo and Josephus, perceived their host cultures' way of relating to their deities in the manner of a "do ut des" relationship in which the performance of sacrificial rites (ἔργα) according to custom and tradition (νόμοι) played a crucial role. The likelihood that Paul had a similar perception should not be excluded.

6. The "Achievement" – Δικαιοσύνη

It is evident then, that in the perception of some people, especially from the nations, the right relationship with the gods required the performance of ἔργα – according to respective rules (νόμοι). To be εὐσεβής as distinct from being ἀσεβής such ἔργα would be of vital importance to guarantee the well-being of family, neighborhood, city, and society. When considered in light of the all-pervasive presence of deities, and the necessary performances to care for their needs (and thus for the needs of the performers), one can easily

60 See Ehrensperger, ἐυσέβεια, 203–206.

61 Προστάττει δὲ μή, παρόσον αὐτοῖς ἰσονομίαν καὶ ἰσοτέλειαν ἐπηλύταις παρέχει κατεγνωκόσι τοῦ πατρῴου καὶ προγονικοῦ τύφου, στομαργίᾳ χρήσασθαι καὶ ἀχαλίνῳ γλώσσῃ βλασφημοῦντας οὓς ἕτεροι νομίζουσι θεούς, ἵνα μὴ κἀκεῖνοι διακινηθέντες ἃ μὴ θέμις φθέγξωνται κατὰ τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος· ἀγνοίᾳ γὰρ τῆς διαφορᾶς, ἅτε τὸ ψεῦδος ὡς ἀληθὲς προμαθόντες ἐκ παίδων καὶ σύντροφον ἔχοντες, ἐξαμαρτήσονται.

imagine that it might have been seen as being strange, an anomaly, even folly, not to perform such ἔργα, for a deity. This is what one did in relation to these divine beings who populated heaven and earth and the underworld. One had to be εὐσεβής – that is, right with the gods by honoring them in the right way, in order not to attract their anger over a contractual arrangement not fulfilled. Gods had the right to be served, and in order to be looked upon favorably by them, that is, to be justified (δικαιωθήσεται) by them, duties had to be fulfilled over against them. This was ἐυσέβεια. Significantly Paul never uses the term ἐυσέβεια in his letters. Since this and its Latin equivalent *pietas* are such prominent terms in Paul's contemporary socio-cultural and political context, the omission is telling. It is most likely a conscious omission by Paul to avoid misunderstandings on the part of his addressees – similar to Philo's concern mentioned above.

I think Paul's arguments against the performance of ἔργα νόμου by his non-Jewish addressees should be seen in relation to Greek and Roman perceptions and practices of divine-human relationships. Since his addressees are most likely used to aim at being εὐσεβής/*pius* by performing rites/νόμοι in order to be right/δίκαιος with the gods – he warns them, that the performance of such rites, even though being Jewish rites, does precisely not lead to what they might be trying to achieve, namely to be right/ δίκαιος with the God of Israel.[62]

It is important to note what Paul does not say. He does not say that the addressees should not do ἔργα νόμου, that is perform rituals, as ie singing hymns, praying, possibly dancing, nor does he say anything against the sacrificial cult performances in the Temple in Jerusalem. All he says is that ἔργα νόμου do not render one right with God and do not lead to a person being judged favorably. In my view this means that he emphasizes that the initiative to the relationship between God and humans is not triggered by human cult activity.

This is evident clearly in Jewish tradition. The performance of cult is a way of honoring the God who called his people Israel into being, but it does not make anybody right with God. God called his people by grace (χάρις). Although a text of a later period, this notion can be found e.g. in Mekhilta de Rabbi Yishmael

> "You have led forth in lovingkindness (chesed)": You have done chesed with us, for we were without deeds, viz. (Isaiah 63:7) "The lovingkindnesses of the L*rd will I proclaim, etc.", (Psalms 89:2) "The lovingkindnesses of the L*rd will I ever sing, etc." And the world in its very beginning was built only with chesed,

62 Paul uses for this relationship the term δικαιοσύνη /δίκαιος, which is the term mainly used as the opposite of ἀσεβής in the LXX. A person who is not ἀσεβής is δίκαιος in most LXX passages as distinct from the term εὐσεβής prevalent in other contexts (LXX Gen 18:23, 25; Ps 1:4–6; 10:5; 57:11; Prov 12:10; Hab 1:13; Isa 5:23).

> viz. (Psalms 89:3) "I said that the world (with) chesed will be built." "this people whom You have redeemed": For all the world is Yours, and You have no people but Israel, viz. (Isaiah 43:21) "This people have I created for Myself, etc."[63]

Like Israel those from the nations are now called by God through Christ in his overflowing grace (χάρις/chesed) into this relationship, called to respond with their whole lives in ὑπακοὴ πίστεως, by listening trust. But Paul seems to be concerned that his addressees might be confused about this. Certainly, in Galatians he addresses such a confusion particularly with regard to the rite of circumcision for adult men.[64] In Romans there is no indication that circumcision of non-Jewish Christ-followers would have been a specific issue. However, Paul still feels the need to address ἔργα νόμου in this letter (and as noted not in any of the others). It seems to be a very understandable confusion given the cultural practices and the cultural encyclopedias the addressees were socialized in and that dominated their everyday lives. The arguments against the performance of ἔργα νόμου are not against the performance of rituals per se. Of course, the response to the call of God has to be expressed in λογικὴν λατρέιαν (Rom 12:1), in fulfilling the νόμος/Torah (Rom 13:10), but also by eating the κυριακὸν δεῖπνον (1 Cor 11:20), praying and prophesying (1 Cor 11:4–5), speaking in tongues (1 Cor 14:2–16), singing hymns (1 Cor 14:26). Nor does Paul argue against doing good works, to the contrary, he emphasizes that one should 'share abundantly in every good work' (2 Cor 9:8), even in Galatians, each one should consider their own 'deed' (ὁ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος) rather than judging others (Gal 6:4). Just what should be achieved through these practices and performances has to be understood in the vein that corresponds to the preeminent grace and faithfulness of the God of Israel who in Paul's perception has committed himself out of grace in Christ now also to the nations (as he had before and still is to the people Israel).

And there is one aspect Paul seems to be clear about in as much as his people Israel remains his people Israel – the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the legislation/constitution, the promises and the λάτρεια belong to them without any question (Rom 9:4–5). The cult performance in the Temple in Jerusalem, λάτρεια, is one of the Jewish ways of responding to the call. So whatever rites are performed there according to the νόμος/Torah – whatever ἔργα νόμου are done there are done by Jews in response to God's call. This is what those from the nations in Christ need to understand: no ἔργα νόμου can effect δικαιοσύνη.

63 MekhY 15.13. Cf. also Plietzsch, Sache.

64 See discussion in Nanos, Re-Framing.

Israel is called by God into being. They belong to him not because of any achievement or deeds. So equally now at the dawning of the age to come, the non-Jews are called into God's realm of belonging, not based on achievements or the performance of ἔργα νόμου but through Christ. In as much as Israel's identity as God's people is rooted in nothing but God's grace so is the identity of those from the nations in Christ rooted in nothing but God's grace. No ἔργα νόμου can effect this transformation. God's grace is at the core of their transformation from 'sinners from the nations' (ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἁμαρτωλοί, Gal 2:15) to people who now are sanctified (1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; 1 Thess 5:23) and thus also belong to God.

7. Conclusions

In what ways if any did the issue of ἔργα νόμου contribute to the parting of the ways or the ways that never parted? As indicated at the beginning of this article, no straight answer to this question could be expected. In light of the analysis of the key terms involved, in Paul's arguments, namely νόμος, ἔργον, and δίκαιος/δικαιοσύνη and the different cultural encyclopedias resonating with these, it has become evident that Paul is not arguing against any aspect of the way of life of his fellow Jews. It has become evident that the terminology involved refers to specific aspects of doing the νόμος, namely the performance of rituals. The performance of ἔργα νόμου is thus a technical expression for performing rituals in relation to a deity. This is the case in Jewish as well as in Greek and Roman traditions. As this was an activity which permeated all aspects of peoples' lives in antiquity, it is something with which Jews as well as non-Jews would have been very familiar. However, the familiar language would have resonated differently, given their different traditions.

Since Paul is addressing non-Jews in Christ, it is evident that his opposition to ἔργα νόμου to achieve δικαιοσύνη must have been relevant specifically to their life as Christ-followers. As demonstrated, the divine-human relationship and performance of rituals in Greek and Roman traditions was structured similarly to the benefaction or patronage system of these societies. Giving the gods what they were due by performing the rituals correctly was considered necessary to secure the deities' benevolence towards humans. Rituals (ἔργα) needed to be performed according to the νόμος in order to be in right standing (δίκαιος) with the deity. Over against such a perception of the role of the performance of ἔργα νόμου in the divine-human relationship Paul insists that the only way to be right (δίκαιος) with the God of Israel, is on God's initiative, that is his call. He had called Israel into being in his grace, and now at the dawning of the

messianic age through Christ also those from the nations. The response to this call is trust, for Jews and non-Jews, expressed in a way of life that found guidance in the νόμος/Torah.

Paul's arguments against trying to achieve δικαιοσύνη by doing ἔργα νόμου is directed at a misunderstanding by non-Jews in Christ, who were familiar with ἔργα νόμου language from their previous lives as pagans, and might infer the wrong conclusions about their relationship with the God of Israel, who in and through Christ now also had committed himself in his grace to them. They were expected to transform their lives oriented broadly on the νόμος/Torah, but not in order to achieve right standing with God, but in response to God's call. Since they were expected to respond in their ethnic status as those who they were, that is non-Jews, or eschatological gentiles, their way of life could not be the same as the way of life of Jews. The νόμος/Torah provided the common ground for Jews whether in Christ or not, and also for non-Jews in Christ as guidance for their lives in relation to the one God who had called them both. This they had in common in their respective ways of life. But this common ground necessarily had different implications for them, in that their embodiment of the commonality in their respective ways of life in relation to this God had to be that of Jews and non-Jews respectively. In the interplay of commonality and difference non-Jews in Christ were intrinsically bound to the Jewish people. Thus, commonality and difference were from the beginnings at the heart of the relationship of Jews and non-Jews to each other, and to the one God of Israel.

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Paul and the Galatians as "Children" of Abraham

The Continuity of Faith in Salvation History in Judaism and Christianity

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Abstract

Many scholars argue that according to Paul, Christ had overcome and abolished the Law, so the "Parting of the Ways" already began with the apostle. They also interpret Gal 3–4 in this way. However, in this passage Paul is not concerned with the Law as such but with the soteriological role of the Law in particular. The central question is this: who belongs to the children of God and thus to those who gain righteousness and salvation? Paul rejects any relevance of the Law. Faith is the only criterion. This has always been true – also for Judaism. For Paul it is therefore faith that upholds the continuity between Judaism and Christianity in the history of salvation. Thus, with regard to the function of the Law, Paul deviates from the view that was widespread in ancient Judaism. Yet with respect to the actual practice of the Law, believers in Christ and Jews can be seen to coexist for a longer period of time.

Keywords

Paul; Galatians 3–4; Abraham; Faith; Law; Children of God

1. Introduction

The question of the "Parting of the Ways" has long been a topic of research. Particularly in recent years it has met with great interest. This topic is closely connected to matters of the Jewish Law and its significance in early Christian communities. This is especially true for Paul. As is well known, there have been several paradigm shifts in the study of Paul's view of the Jewish Law and his relationship to Judaism. I will only mention two particularly significant insights here. I begin with the so-called "New Perspective on Paul".[1] Since its emergence in the 1980s, it has had a decisive impact on Pauline research. It was primarily directed against the Lutheran interpretation of Paul, according

1 For a brief overview of the New Perspective, cf. Frey, Judentum, 85–96; Eschner, Essen, 15–18.

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to which the Jews sought to *earn* salvation through their own efforts and by means of the Law. This Lutheran understanding extended to everyone who wanted to become righteous through good works. Yet both E. P. Sanders and James Dunn came to the conclusion that Jews did not regard the Law as a means of salvation at all. Instead, the significance of the Law was mainly of a social kind. Dunn in particular emphasised that the Law functioned both to establish identity and to demarcate oneself from others. Thus, the Law was an identity and a boundary marker.[2] It was precisely this delimiting function of the Law that Paul actually criticised, since it contradicted his view of the universal salvation of human beings in Christ.[3] Therefore, Paul does not criticise righteousness by works but the pursuit of separation, which would make the integration of the gentiles into the people of God impossible.

It has remained controversial within the New Perspective whether or not Paul's theology marks a break with Judaism.[4] According to Dunn, Paul does not reject the Law in its entirety but only those commands that were particularly aimed at separating the Jews from the gentiles, thus especially circumcision, the Sabbath, and the food laws.[5] These are called "works of the Law".[6] Dunn therefore held that Paul did not break with Judaism but that a process of growing apart had begun. As a result, the Parting of the Ways could be traced back to Paul, but its actual date would fall between AD 70–135.[7] In contrast, Sanders finds this break already in Paul, who rejected the entire Law, a view that has been advocated quite frequently in research. According to this view, Paul thought that Christ had overcome and abolished the Law, which means that the Parting of the Ways already occurred with him. In this way, Udo Schnelle also regards Paul to belong sociologically within the context of early Christianity's separation from Judaism.[8] Michael Wolter is of a similar opinion in his monograph on Paul.[9]

In recent years (especially since 2015), a second important paradigm shift has occurred in Pauline research. A new line of researchers has come to emphasise conversely that Paul remained completely within Judaism.

2 Cf. Frey, Judentum, 88–89; Wolter, Perspektiven, 22–26.

3 On the universal dimension, cf. Rom 1:16–17; 3:21–23, 27–30; 10:12–13.

4 Cf. Frey, Judentum, 91–97, regarding the debates around and development of the New Perspective.

5 On this difference between Dunn and Sanders, cf. Dunn, Perspective, 211–212; id., Galatians, 135–138.

6 There is some dispute on whether the expression ἔργα νόμου refers to the entire Law or to specific requirements of the Law, particularly the so-called *boundary markers* (thus Bachmann, Bemerkungen, 281–287, contra Landmesser).

7 Dunn, Partings, 230–243.

8 Cf. Schnelle, Paulus, 167–174.

9 Cf. Wolter, Paul, 299, 392–395; id., Perspektiven, 28–29.

These include especially Mark D. Nanos,[10] Paula Fredriksen,[11] and Magnus Zetterholm.[12] The main thesis of this movement is summed up in the formula "Paul within Judaism".[13] Like the New Perspective, it also focuses particularly on the question of the role of the Law in Paul. Yet it comes to the opposite conclusion: Paul did not at all resolve the Law in his writings.[14] Fredriksen, for example, argues the following: Paul's criticism of the Law is directed *solely* against obliging the gentiles to keep the Law, but not against Jewish Christians observing the Law.[15] On the whole, the Law and faith are not opposed. Even the formula δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως does not allow for such a juxtaposition. It does not describe justification by faith but in fact includes the Law. Therefore, it means "right behaviour according to the Law on account of steadfast attachment to the gospel".[16] Overall, according to this stream of research, Paul and the Pauline congregations are not entities outside of Judaism. The "Parting of the Ways between Judaism and Christianity" is thus not a direct consequence of the Pauline mission.

In view of these different opinions, the question arises as to which is accurate. In order to reply most sufficiently, I will in the following examine a few texts on the Law in Galatians more closely. My leading question is what can be drawn from them regarding the matter of Paul's Jewish identity.

2. *Believers* as Children of Abraham

Throughout the letter to the Galatians, faith and the Law are juxtaposed as two alternative modes of life (2:16; 3:2; 5:6). The Law is not discussed for its own sake, because Galatians is not primarily concerned with whether one should keep the Law. Instead, it addresses the fundamental issue of the status of the

10 Cf. Nanos, Introduction, 1. Also cf. id., Paul *and* Judaism, as his well as several volumes on the matter: Paul within Judaism (ed. with M. Zetterholm); Reading Paul; Reading Corinthians; Reading Romans.

11 Cf. Fredriksen, Nations; ead., Question; ead., Apostle (on the Law esp. 94–130); ead., Convert.

12 Zetterholm is the co-editor of the volume "Paul within Judaism", together with Nanos; cf. also his own contribution to this volume: State.

13 Cf. also Boccaccini, Introduction.

14 Against a fundamental abolition of Jewish traditions by Paul, cf. also Frey, Judentum, 71–85; id., Identity. Moreover, cf. Tomson, Law; id., Place.

15 Cf. Fredriksen, Apostle, 108–130.

16 Fredriksen, Question, 194 (she mainly refers to Rom 13:8–14). However, Rom 13 only portrays a limited use of individual demands of the Law, or specifically of love. Moreover, Fredriksen's paraphrase on the expression "righteousness by faith" is hardly appropriate.

believers from the nations and, more specifically, how to justify it theologically. Therefore, the central question of the letter to the Galatians is: who belongs to the children of God and thus to those who gain righteousness and salvation? The children of God are, more precisely, the children of Abraham, who share in his promises (cf. 3:16). Several times Paul speaks both of the υἱοὶ θεοῦ (3:26; 4:7) and the υἱοὶ Ἀβραάμ (3:7; cf. 3:29) alongside each other. These passages are particularly concerned with whether circumcision plays a role with regard to belonging to these groups. Accordingly, for both expressions the masculine sense "sons of God" or "sons of Abraham" is most intuitive, even if women, meaning daughters of Abraham, are certainly included.[17] Therefore, I will refer to the "children of God" or the "children of Abraham". Paul identifies the children of God with the children of Abraham as shown in Gal 3:26–29: at first, he calls those who are in Christ "children of God" (3:26). Then, he also calls those who belong to Christ the "seed of Abraham", meaning his descendants (3:29).

The children of God or Abraham are clearly those who will gain salvation, because unlike the others, they will receive the inheritance (3:29; 4:7). However, Paul and his opponents differ on whether circumcision and the Law play a role in determining who the children of Abraham are. Apparently, the Christ-believing Jews in Galatia who opposed Paul affirmed a role for circumcision, since he characterises them as those who do not observe the Law themselves (6:13) but demand circumcision (5:2; 6:12–13) and possibly also the observance of the Jewish calendar (cf. 4:10).

Therefore, they considered the Law to be a characteristic of God's people. In holding this view, Paul's opponents fall in line with a long Jewish tradition. The Hebrew Bible already attributes a particular significance to the Law for Israel's special status in relation to the nations.[18] Yet, while Israel's status originates in God's actions – that is, in its election as his holy people – this election causes Israel's obligation to the Law. This connection appears in Deut 7:6–11 (NRSVue), for example:

> (6) For you are a people holy to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. […] (9) Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, (10) and who repays in their own person those who reject him. He does not delay but repays in their own person those who reject him. (11) Therefore, observe diligently the commandment – the statutes and the ordinances – that I am commanding you today. (cf. Deut 14:1–2, 21)

17 Thus Zimmermann, Gott, 1 n. 1.

18 Cf. Eschner, Essen, 48–51.

This general statement about the Law also finds expression in more specific commandments. Leviticus 20:24–26 establishes basic food laws and prohibitions as a means of *separating Israel from the nations*:

> (24) […] I am the LORD your God; *I have separated* (בדל hif.) *you from the peoples.* (25) *You shall therefore separate* (בדל hif.) *the clean beast from the unclean,* and the unclean bird from the clean; You shall not bring abomination on yourselves by animal or by bird or by anything with which the ground teems, *which I have separated* (בדל hif.) *from you as unclean.* (26) *You shall be holy to me, for* I the LORD am holy, and *I have separated* (בדל hif.) *you from the other peoples to be mine*.[19]

In verse 25 Israel is told to distinguish the permitted animals from the forbidden animals. Verses 24 and 26 refer to God as the one who distinguished Israel from the nations, that they may be his own people. Both times, the same Hebrew verb is used (בדל hif.). Moreover, at the beginning of verse 26 Israel is called to be or become holy (cf. Lev 11:44–45).

These passages show that Israel's special position as a holy people requires a certain behaviour that is appropriate to God's holiness. The Law serves this purpose – to explicate what conducting oneself in accordance with God's holiness looks like.

Later, in the Hellenistic and imperial periods, the Jewish Law was an integral means of demarcating the people of God from foreign nations. This is especially true for diaspora Judaism.[20]

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul does not speak of the people of God but of the children of God.[21] The description of the relationship between God and human beings as the relationship of a father to his children apparently originated in the time of the Babylonian exile.[22] Now what, according to Paul, is the purpose of the Law with regard to the children of God?

Paul denies that the Law characterised the children of God at all. According to him, the Law is not a factor in determining who belongs to the children of God. Paul explains this in detail in Gal 3–4. Here Paul uses *Abraham* as the

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19 My translation (based on NRSVue) and italics.

20 Cf. Eschner, Essen, 59–106. Cf. also Delling, Bewältigung.

21 In contrast to Luke, the "people of God" does not seem to be a central category for Paul. It appears several times in quotations (Rom 9:25–26 = Hos 2:25; 2:1; 2 Cor 6:16 = Lev 26:12; cf. also Rom 10:21 = Isa 65:2; Rom 11:1–2 = Ps 93:14 LXX; Rom 15:10 = Deut 32:43; 1 Cor 10:7 = Exod 32:6; 1 Cor 14:21 = Isa 28:11–12), but otherwise he more often refers to the "children" of God (υἱοί: Gal 3:7, 26; 4:6–7; Rom 8:14, 19; 9:26; 2 Cor 6:18 [cf. Isa 43:6]; τέκνα: Rom 8:16–17; 9:8; Phil 2:15; Gal 4:25, 31). Besides that, he speaks of "Israel" (Rom 9:6, 27, 31; 10:19, 21; 11:2, 7, 25–26; 1 Cor 10:18; 2 Cor 3:7, 13; Gal 6:16; Phil 3:5).

22 Cf. Deut 14:1; 32:5–6, 18–19; Isa 43:6; 45:11; 63:8.

central figure of his argument (3:6–29; 4:21–31). The passage centres around the question of the specific conditions under which people may share in God's promises to Abraham (cf. Gen 12:3; 13:15; 18:18; 22:17–18). The promise (Gal 3:16–18) is closely connected to the justification (Gal 3:21) and blessing of Abraham (Gal 3:14).[23] Paul emphasises in a striking way that Abraham himself was justified by faith. Thus, in Gal 3:6 Paul states, with a scriptural quotation from Gen 15:6 LXX, "Just as Abraham *believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness*" (cf. Rom 4:3, 22 with vv. 9–10). The conclusion Paul draws from Abraham's justification by faith in Gal 3:7 is this: "so, you see, those who are of faith,[24] these[25] are sons of Abraham" (γινώσκετε ἄρα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ πίστεως, οὗτοι υἱοί εἰσιν Ἀβραάμ). This means: not those who are of the works of the Law (cf. 3:10) are the children of Abraham. Rather, "those who are determined by faith, they are the true children of Abraham." They receive the promise on the same basis as Abraham did – on the basis of faith (ἵνα ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, 3:22; cf. 3:14).[26] The same applies to justification and the blessing, both of which belong closely together with the promise. Those who are of faith are blessed along with the faithful Abraham (ὥστε οἱ ἐκ πίστεως εὐλογοῦνται σὺν τῷ πιστῷ Ἀβραάμ, 3:9). And, according to Gal 3:24, it is on the basis of faith that people are justified (ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν). The consequence with regard to the gentiles is that God makes the nations righteous through faith (3:8a). This confirms Scripture, since, according to Gen 18:18, "in Abraham all nations are to be blessed" (3:8b). More precisely, the blessing promised to Abraham is granted to the nations in Christ Jesus (3:13–14). This was made possible by Christ's death, which freed them from the curse of the Law. Moreover, it results in their receiving the Holy Spirit through faith, which is appropriated to them as a promised gift (3:13–14).[27] This has already become a reality among the Galatians through the preaching of faith (cf. 3:2, 5).

Overall, the Law and the promise are mutually exclusive for Paul. He emphasises that the promise came before the Law, which therefore cannot abrogate the promise (3:17). Paul proves this by comparing the promise with a will: once a will has become legally binding, no one can invalidate it afterwards, or add

23 On this, cf. also the connection between justification and blessing (Gal 3:8–9).

24 On the use of ἐκ with the genitive to indicate that which a person is determined by, cf. Zerwick, Greek, §134–135.

25 Cf. the special emphasis by the use of the anaphoric οὗτοι.

26 According to Rom 4, Abraham became the father of the uncircumcised and the circumcised through faith (4:11–12, 16). The focus here is that Abraham was justified when he was not even circumcised (4:10) and that nothing changed through circumcision.

27 The "we" in Gal 3:14 includes both Jewish and gentile Christians; thus also Rohde, Galater, 145. According to him, both final clauses are parallel.

to it (3:15). The Law, however, was only given 430 years after God's promise to Abraham (3:17). The inheritance, meaning participation in salvation, therefore only exists through the promise (cf. Rom 4:13–14). Accordingly, Paul states in Gal 3:18, "for if the inheritance is by the Law, it is no longer by the promise."

If the Law has no significance for whether people participate in the promise, or for justification, what then is its function? Paul explains this in Gal 3:19–25. Here, he further devalues the Law. He had already stated that the Law is secondary to the promise, given the time that it was instated (3:17). Now he adds two more differences: firstly, the Law was mediated through angels and through the hand of a mediator (3:19–20) – thus, it is not directly from God. Secondly, the validity of the Law is temporally limited (3:21–25). More precisely, Paul describes the Law as a guardian, a *paidagogos* (3:24–25). These guardians were slaves who were responsible for raising the sons of the family to behave properly (not for teaching).[28] Analogously, the Law has the role of controlling and positively influencing people's behaviour. It is supposed to prevent transgressions and therefore limit sin. This is probably the meaning of Gal 3:19 stating that the Law was added for the sake of transgressions.[29] According to Paul, this only applies to an intermediate period between Moses and the coming of the descendant, Jesus Christ (3:19, 23–25). However, if the Law only has a temporary function, it is not significant for determining who the children of Abraham are. Likewise, it is also not decisive for their participation in the promise God made to Abraham. Therefore, with Gal 3:19–25, Paul further reinforces his previous statements (cf. 3:2, 15, 17–18).

But how exactly do the Galatians get to share in the promises God made to Abraham? This question arises particularly because Paul stated in Gal 3:16 that the promise does not apply to many descendants but only to the one seed of Abraham, Christ (Gen 22:17–18 LXX; cf. Gal 3:19). Paul answers this question in Gal 3:26–29. First, he states that the addressees are *children of God in Christ through faith* (3:26). He substantiates this by referring back to the

28 Cf. Young, Paidagogos, 157–165; Lull, Law, 491–492. Most scholars argue for a negative assessment of the Law by use of the metaphor, such as Tolmie, Force, 409–413; Eckstein, Verheißung, 215–216; Sänger, Gesetz, 259–260. In contrast, Burchard, Versuch, 197–202, argues that the imagery underlines the positive function of the Law. The recent commentary by von der Osten-Sacken warns against mapping various perceptions of the *paidagogos* onto the Law since the metaphor was only meant to convey the guarding function of the Law (Galatien, 169–170).

29 Thus Hahn, Theologie II, 351. Cf. also Wolter, Paul, 348–349: "on account of transgressions" means first of all that the Law should make transgressions visible, but at the same time that it should prevent them. Yet some also interpret Gal 3:19 in the sense of "the Law provokes transgressions" in correspondence to Rom 7:8 (thus Vielhauer, Geschichte, 117; Schnelle, Einleitung, 130: "Das Gesetz dient allein der Sündenprovokation").

inclusive effect of baptism. Those who have been baptised into Christ (εἰς Χριστόν) henceforth are one in Christ Jesus (3:28) and belong to Christ (3:29). As such, they are Abraham's seed and consequently also heirs.[30] Thus, the gentile Galatians participate in the promises made to Abraham in Christ (cf. 3:14), because by being baptised they belong to Christ as the one descendant of Abraham.

In Gal 4:1–7, Paul once again addresses the Law in connection with the matter of sonship. He calls the one who is subject to the Law "under-age" (4:1, 3). This connects back to Gal 3:24 as the one who is subject to a *paidagogos* is under-age. The role of the *paidagogos* became obsolete with the coming of age of the son. Paul is now concerned with the under-age heir who, although a son, is in his opinion no different from a slave. This is so because of the legal situation of the minor with regard to coming into his inheritance. If the father dies while the son is still under-age, the son is initially subject to (cf. ὑπό in 3:25; 4:2) a guardian until he reaches a certain age set by the father.[31] Here, Paul takes up the Roman legal practice of the *tutela impuberis*. In doing so, he does not merely refer to a son still having to wait for his inheritance. Rather, he evaluates the situation in such a way that those under the Law are really slaves (4:1) who first need to become sons (4:5). This represents another similarity with Gal 3:24, as being under a *paidagogos* was frequently thought of as a slave existence, too.[32] According to Paul, people outside of Christ are subject to the powers of this world (4:3), to other gods (4:8–9), or to the Law (3:23; 4:4–5; cf. also 4:21; 5:18; Rom 6:14–15; 1 Cor 9:20; also Rom 7:6).

Therefore, in order to have control over the inheritance, those who are subject to the Law must first be freed from its dominion. This was achieved by God sending his Son. It seems this act of sending included Christ taking upon himself the judgement of the Law as a substitute.[33] It is therefore not possible for those under the Law to simply reach the appropriate age and thereby control over their inherited property – as is actually the case with the *tutela impuberis*. Instead, the Christ event is necessary for this. Through this event a person is not only freed from the Law but also adopted as God's son (4:5).[34] The logic

30 Paul closely links Gal 3:16 and 3:28–29 by employing εἷς in both statements: the believers are *one* in Christ and thus the seed of Abraham, who is only *one*, namely Christ (cf. Konradt, Ethik, 73–75).

31 Here, Paul shows the influence of a legal practice in some provinces, according to which the time of coming of age was determined by the father and not generally by the legislator.

32 Cf. Plato, *Leg.* 808e; *Lys.* 208e–209a; cf. Young, Paidagogos, 168–169, 174.

33 Cf. Gal 3:10, 13. For more details, cf. Eschner, Konzeption.

34 Cf. Liddell/Scott/Jones, Lexicon, *s. v.* υἱοθεσία (italics in original): "*adoption as a son*" (with reference to Nicolaus of Damascus, *Vit. Caes.* 130.18); "in a religious sense, πνεῦμα

thus runs as follows: Christ is the Son of God, and because of their inclusion into him the believers are adopted children and thus no longer slaves (οὐκέτι in 4:7; cf. 3:25). But unlike the Law-abiding Jews, who are under-age heirs and, as it were, servants of the Law, the believers as children of God are now indeed heirs (4:7).[35] Paul has thus taken up the theme of Abraham from Gal 3:6–29.

He does so once more in Gal 4:21–31. More precisely, Paul argues here with reference to Abraham's sons. One son, Ishmael, is the son of a slave woman, the other, Isaac, was born of a free woman "through a promise". This passage also aims to argue that those who are free from the Law are the heirs of the promise. Thus, Paul interprets the two women as founders of two covenants: Hagar, the slave woman, stands for the service to the Law. In contrast to this, Sarah is an image for those who are free from the Law.[36] Here, Paul emphasises that only Isaac as the son of the free woman receives an inheritance (4:30). As a result, Christ-believers are now just like Isaac (cf. 4:22) children of the free (cf. 4:26, 31), and thus children of the promise (4:28; cf. Rom 9:7–8). In this way, Paul deepens what he had already said in Gal 3:6–4:7.

What, then, is Paul's goal in Gal 3–4? Overall, Paul aims to prove the following: even though the predominantly gentile Christian addressees of the letter to the Galatians remained uncircumcised after they turned to Christ (4:8–9; 5:2–3; 6:12–13),[37] they are now the children of God or the heirs of Abraham without the "works of the Law". This is because belonging to the children of God only comes by faith. Paul demonstrates this in two ways: on the one hand, he employs positive statements to identify the children of God with the descendants or heirs of Abraham and defines them as the believers (3:7) or the baptised (3:29). On the other hand, Paul explains that the Law has no relevance to the inheritance but ultimately stands in its way. For those who are under the Law are under-age and as such have no power over their inheritance. They are slaves of the Law, who must first be set free by Christ and become children of God. This clearly shows that, according to Paul, one cannot be under

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υἱοθεσίας" (with reference to Rom 8:15, 23; Gal 4:5). In Gal 4:5, the second final clause is dependent on the first. The "we" in Gal 4:5 means the believers made up of Jews and gentiles (cf. Rohde, Galater, 172).

35 On the process of adoption and receiving the inheritance as its consequence, cf. also Rom 8:14–17.

36 More specifically, Paul identifies Hagar with Sinai, because she serves (i.e. service to the Law), and with the present earthly Jerusalem, since Hagar had conceived Ishmael with Abraham in the way of the flesh, that is, in the normal way. In contrast, Sarah, the free woman, corresponds to the heavenly Jerusalem, because her son was born due to God's special intervention ("according to the Spirit").

37 References such as Gal 3:2–3, 13–14, 23–24; 4:2, 5; 5:1 do not necessarily have to refer to Jewish Christians but can in principle also be explained by the doctrine of justification.

the Law and be a son of God at the same time. Those who are of the Law are therefore, according to Paul, not the children of God or heirs at all. This also explains why in Gal 4:17 Paul accuses his opponents, who demand obedience to the Law, of wanting to exclude the Galatians from the community (ζηλοῦσιν ὑμᾶς οὐ καλῶς, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκκλεῖσαι ὑμᾶς θέλουσιν).[38] For if the Galatians joined Paul's Jewish-Christian opponents, they would thereby lose their already existing membership in the children of God. They would again become those who serve the evil forces (4:9 with 4:3).

In summary, in Gal 3–4 Paul integrates the uncircumcised Christ followers into his definition of the children of Abraham. What does this mean with regard to Paul's relationship to Judaism? Abraham is a prominent figure in the Hebrew Bible and in Judaism.[39] But Paul does precisely *not* claim Abraham as the progenitor of the Jews in a physical sense. Rather, Jews are also children of Abraham only through faith.[40] Abraham himself became what he is – the father of those who will be saved – only because of his trust in God. Isaac was not born naturally but through the Spirit. Thus, the "children of Abraham" is a spiritual entity.[41] Only those believers who do not see the Torah as necessary for salvation are in the line of Isaac and therefore share in the inheritance. In contrast, the Law means servitude. This is hardly compatible with the definition of God's people by means of circumcision and the Law as it appears in many ancient Jewish writings.

3. The Shift of the Space of Salvation from the Law to Christ

A similar tendency can also be observed for the concept that salvation is attained in a specific place. Various ancient Jewish writings describe the Law in a concrete spatial sense as a building.[42] This idea appears in great detail in the

38 Cf. Passow, Handwörterbuch, *s. v.* ἐκκλείω b: "von einer Gemeinschaft ausschliessen"; cf. Danker, Lexicon, *s. v.* ἐκκλείω 1: "to exclude or withdraw from fellowship".

39 Cf. Köckert, Abraham.

40 Cf. Rom 4:12 where Paul mentions bodily descent but argues that this also necessitates imitating Abraham with regards to his faith. Cf. thus Rom 9:6–13. According to Matt 3:8–9/Luke 3:9, bodily descent from Abraham is not sufficient for salvation, but fruits of repentance are required.

41 Cf. Rom 8:14: ὅσοι γὰρ πνεύματι θεοῦ ἄγονται, οὗτοι υἱοὶ θεοῦ εἰσιν.

42 On the Law as a wall, cf. for the first time Prov 28:4 LXX; also Philo, *Virt.* 186: the wise man is fenced off (i.e. protected) by an indestructible wall, namely his fear of God (τείχει πεφραγμένος ἀκαθαιρέτῳ, θεοσεβείᾳ), the fear of God being the sacred laws (182) (cf. Faust, Pax, 119). Cf. also CD 20:25–27; Lev. Rab. 1:3, 10 (for these and further references, cf. Smith, Traditions, 91–92).

Letter of Aristeas, a (Jewish) letter[43] that was probably written in the second century BC.[44] There, in the context of the interpretation of Jewish customs by the high priest Eleazar (cf. *Let. Aris.* 128–171), it says:

> (139) Moses fenced us around with unbroken palisades and with iron walls (περιέφραξεν ἡμᾶς ἀδιακόποις χάραξι καὶ σιδηροῖς τείχεσιν) so that we might not intermingle at all with any other nations (ὅπως μηθενὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐθνῶν ἐπιμισγώμεθα κατὰ μηδέν), being pure in both body and soul (ἁγνοὶ καθεστῶτες κατὰ σῶμα καὶ κατὰ ψυχήν), having been set free from vain opinions, revering the only and powerful God above all of the entire creation.[45]

Here, the Jewish Law (and specifically the Jewish food laws; cf. 142) is portrayed as a *wall between Jews and gentiles*. It is meant to prevent the Jews from dealing with the gentiles. The Jews are in a segregated sphere, strictly separated from the sphere of the gentiles. Such a spatial separation of the Jews from the gentiles here appears as particularly positive. It preserves the good condition of the Jews. More precisely, the wall serves to maintain the piety and righteousness of the Jews[46] and primarily to *protect them from committing idolatry*.[47] Moreover, in this context the Law belongs to God very closely. For besides the Law, the

43 Aristeas presents himself as an outsider to Judaism (cf. above all *Let. Aris.* 16). Yet it is unclear whether this is fictitious and whether, therefore, Aristeas is a Jewish author after all (for arguments, cf. Brodersen, Aristeas, 7–42, esp. 9–11, with reference to earlier scholars who suggest a Jewish authorship; similarly also Oegema, Unterweisung, 53). In contrast to the one-sided evaluation of the Letter of Aristeas as a document addressed to non-Jews that promotes Judaism, scholars have increasingly been assessing its central significance to lie in the self-assurance of the Alexandrian community's own identity (thus Feldmeier, Weise, 34; following him esp. Schimanowski, Aristeasbrief, 61–64).

44 The Letter of Aristeas is mostly dated to the second half of the second century BC, esp. between 127–118 BC; cf. Meisner, Aristeasbrief, 43; Nickelsburg, Aristeas, 75–80 (between 130–100 BC); cf. also Feldmeier, Weise, 20; Walter, Literatur, 83–85; Woschitz, Parabiblica, 175; Oegema, Unterweisung, 56. Others, however, hold to an earlier dating to 200–170 BC (Shutt, Aristeas, 8–9, following Jellicoe and Orlinsky; cf. also Orth, Ptolemaios) or even before (cf. Rappaport, Aristeas). In contrast, Graetz, Abfassungszeit, 303–305, suggests a late dating to the time of the emperor Tiberius.

45 Translation by Wright, Aristeas, 257.

46 Thus, according to Eleazar the Law is primarily about piety and justice: διαστειλάμενος οὖν τὰ τῆς εὐσεβείας καὶ δικαιοσύνης πρῶτον ὁ νομοθέτης ἡμῶν (*Let. Aris.* 131). At the heart of the allegorical interpretation of the food commandments is righteousness (144–149, 163–166, 168–169).

47 Cf. also Delling, Bewältigung, 24–25, who regards the purpose of the dietary laws to be the demarcation of the Jews. Similarly, Weber, Gesetz, 133–134, emphasises at the same time that the vicarious role of the Jews for the whole of humanity averts exclusivism.

writings of ancient Judaism also portray God himself,[48] or God's glory,[49] as a shielding wall that offers the Law-abiding Jews protection from dangers such as eschatological tribulations.

Paul, too, takes up this spatial concept of salvation and the Law as the letter to the Galatians clearly shows (cf. also Rom 5:1–2). Thus, in Gal 2:18 Paul speaks of the building up and tearing down of the Law. This statement is reminiscent of the Jewish texts in which the Law is described as a wall. Yet unlike the Jewish texts, Paul regards the *tearing down* of the wall of the Law as something good that should not be undone.

Furthermore, Paul also speaks of justification and thus of salvation ἐν Χριστῷ.[50] In principle, it is possible to understand this expression in an instrumental sense as "through Christ".[51] However, Paul uses the expression ἐν Χριστῷ several times in the basic spatial meaning of "in Christ", especially in Galatians (3:28; cf. 2:4; 3:14; 5:6). In view of this, an understanding in a spatial sense

48 Cf. on this the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch, a Jewish document probably written in the late first century or early second century; more precisely between the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in AD 70 and the Bar Kokhba revolt in AD 132–135 (2 Bar 32:1): "But as for you, if ye prepare your hearts, so as to sow in them the fruits of the law, it shall protect you in that time in which the Mighty One is to shake the whole creation" (translation by Charles, Apocrypha, 499). In contrast, Klijn, 2 Baruch, 631, translates with God as the subject: "he shall protect you". On God as a protective wall, cf. also Wis 5:15–16 according to which God will protect the righteous with his right hand (σκεπάσει) and shield them with his arm (ὑπερασπιεῖ). According to Sib. Or. 3.689–709 God will judge all with war, sword, fire, and cataclysms of rain, but his sons he will shield (σκεπάσειε), encircling them with a wall of flaming fire (κύκλοθεν ὡσεὶ τεῖχος ἔχων πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο, 705–706; thus already Zech 2:9).

49 Thus in 4 Ezra, which originated around AD 100 (cf. Schreiner, Esra, 301–302): "(7:119) For what good is it to us, if an immortal time has been promised to us, but we have done deeds that bring death? (120) And what good is it that an everlasting hope has been promised to us, but we have miserably failed? (121) Or that safe and healthful habitations have been reserved for us, but we have lived wickedly? (122) Or that the glory of the Most High will defend (*protegere*) those who have led a pure life, but we have walked in the most wicked ways?" (translation by Hogan, 4 Ezra, 1637).

50 On δικαιόω ἐν with Christ, cf. esp. Gal 2:17; 2 Cor 5:21; moreover with related terms Rom 5:9; 1 Cor 6:11. On the use of ἐν Χριστῷ in similar statements on salvation, cf. esp. 2 Cor 5:19 where Paul employs ἐν Χριστῷ with a statement on reconciliation, as well as Rom 3:24: δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι *διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*.

51 Cf. Blass/Debrunner/Rehkopf, Grammatik, §195,1e, where δικαιοῦν (-οῦσθαι) plus ἐν with the dative is translated as "rechtfertigen durch". For an instrumental understanding of ἐν Χριστῷ in Gal 2:17, cf. Oepke, Galater, 86, 92 with n. 228; similarly also Burton, Galatians, 124. Cf. also Longenecker, Galatians, 81, 88–89, who suggests "by Christ". Wolter largely denies a spatial reading of ἐν Χριστῷ; he interprets Gal 2:17 instrumentally (Paul, 230–231).

becomes all the more plausible for the statements on justification ἐν Χριστῷ.[52] Christ is therefore a place where believers gain righteousness.

In addition, Paul occasionally combines the expression ἐν νόμῳ, meaning "in the Law", with the verb "to justify" (cf. Gal 3:11; 5:4).[53] But he strictly rejects justification in the Law. Therefore, according to Paul, the Law is precisely not a place where righteousness and salvation abide. Moreover, the place of the Law does not belong to God as closely as seen in the early Jewish writings. Instead, Christ and the grace of God belong together, whereas the Law is strictly opposed to both, as shown in Gal 5:4. Here, Paul calls on the Galatians not to turn to the Law, as Paul's opponents demand of them. This would have the most negative consequences imaginable: "you who want to be justified in the Law[54] have cut yourselves off from Christ;[55] you have fallen away from grace" (κατηργήθητε ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, οἵτινες ἐν νόμῳ δικαιοῦσθε, τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε).[56] According to Paul, therefore, the Law and the grace of God are two alternative spaces, and salvation is only found in the space of grace.

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52 For a reading of ἐν Χριστῷ in Gal 2:17 in the sense of "in Christ", cf. Duncan, Galatians, 64; Beyer, Galater, 19; Schlier, Galater, 87, 93; Lührmann, Galater, 41; Betz, Galatians, 119–120; Mußner, Galaterbrief, 133, 176; Rohde, Galater, 101, 113; Matera, Galatians, 95; Dunn, Galatians, 131, 141; Martyn, Galatians, 246; Becker, Galater, 37; Eckey, Galaterbrief, 129; cf. also Witherington III, Galatians, 185, who, however, translates "by Christ" (169). Some also paraphrase their translation "in Christ" instrumentally (cf. esp. Vouga, Galater, 51, 60; also Borse, Galater, 111: "'in Christus', d.h. durch den Glauben und ohne Gesetzeswerke"; similarly Klaiber, Galaterbrief, 75). For a local and instrumental reading, cf. Fung, Galatians, 119. Lietzmann, Galater, 14, interprets as "in der Gemeinschaft mit Christus".

53 On δικαιόω plus ἐν νόμῳ, cf. Gal 3:11; 5:4; cf. also 3:21 *v. l.*; Acts 13:38–39.

54 In Gal 4:21 Paul states that his addressees were "wanting to be under the Law" (οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι). The present tense of δικαιόω here must be understood in the sense of "they are currently in the process of doing it" and is therefore conative, cf. Blass/Debrunner/Rehkopf, Grammatik, §319$_2$.

55 Κατηργήθητε is firstly to be understood as a passive of the use of καταργέω, "to render ineffective/useless, to take away its effectiveness", in the sense of "to lose its effectiveness, to become ineffective". Initially, the use in the passive voice with reference to people here appears strange (it is more frequent with objects, cf. Rom 4:14; 6:6; 1 Cor 13:8, 10–11; 2 Cor 3:7, 11, 13–14; Gal 5:11). Yet a similar use is found in Rom 7:2, 6 in connection with an ἀπό phrase (without also in 1 Cor 2:6; 15:26). The phrasing in Rom 7:2, 6 clearly shows that καταργέομαι ἀπό denotes the removal of a bond. There, the phrase stands in contrast to ἡ γὰρ ὕπανδρος γυνὴ τῷ ζῶντι ἀνδρὶ δέδεται νόμῳ (7:2) and ἐν ᾧ κατειχόμεθα (7:6). This suggests an understanding of Gal 5:4 in analogy with Rom 7:2, 6, according to which "they" have become those who have lost their connection with Christ.

56 Paul specifies the loss of connection with Christ as a departure from grace, cf. the parenthetical connection of τῆς χάριτος ἐξεπέσατε with the chiastic word order of the genitive and verb compared to Gal 5:4a. Cf. Eschner, Essen, 427–428.

All in all, this means Paul takes up the concept of a place of salvation that was common in ancient Judaism, but makes decisive changes to it. According to the Jewish texts, staying in the area of the Law is highly positive. It makes justice possible and offers protection. Yet, according to Paul, it is not the Law but Christ who is the place of salvation.[57] The function of a protective space has therefore passed from the Law to Christ. The deeper reason lies in the fact that Paul understands the death and resurrection of Christ as the central events of salvation (cf. Gal 2:20–21). With Christ, meaning with the one who died and was raised from the dead, God creates a new space of salvation. As a result, a person (Christ) now has the function of a protective space.

How does this relate to Paul's view of the Law? The spatial conception of the Law shows well what his actual problem with it is. The issue is not the observance of the Law in itself but the *separation of the Jews from the gentiles associated with the Law*. *The wall of the Law*, which in Judaism is a protective wall, is Paul's actual point of criticism. It is precisely this division of Jews and gentiles that no longer exists in Christ because he is a place of salvation available to all people. For, in Christ, the difference between Jews and Greeks is no longer of any importance (Gal 3:28; cf. also 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13). Thus, the spatial conception of the Law confirms the results of the so-called "New Perspective".

Does this mean, however, that Paul generally abolishes the Law, or central Jewish commandments, as the New Perspective argued? One needs to differentiate more carefully when inquiring about Paul's stance on the Jewish Law: he says about himself that the Law no longer has any power over him, but that he has submitted himself to the lordship of Christ (Gal 2:19–20; cf. also Phil 3:4–9). Moreover, the time of the Law had reached its end with Christ (cf. Rom 10:4; Gal 3:23–25; cf. also Rom 7:4, 6).[58] Nevertheless, Paul does not abolish the Law for Jewish Christians in general. For example, Jewish Christians may continue to observe the Jewish dietary laws (cf. especially Rom 14:14). However, they may not do so with the claim of a special position as opposed to the gentiles.[59] An observance of the Law in which the Law may (continue to) represent a wall to the gentiles and gentile Christians is completely out of the question for Paul.[60]

57 Regarding how people get into this place, cf. Breytenbach, Taufen.

58 Cf. Wolter, Ende, esp. 364–365.

59 This would ultimately mean that the gentile Christians would also have to be circumcised in order to be equal to the Jewish Christians.

60 For more details on this, cf. Eschner, Essen, 657.

The justified concern of the movement around "Paul-within-Judaism" is that the tension between the apostle and the Jewish Law is far smaller than earlier researchers have advocated. Even after their turning to Christ some of the Jewish Christians will certainly have held on to the Jewish customs that were familiar to them from childhood.[61] According to Paul, Jewish Christians apparently only have to change so far as not to prevent fellowship with gentile Christians, meaning the Law must not create any hurdles for the latter. Paul does not specify what exactly he expects from Jewish Christ-believers in order to enable fellowship in the Christian congregation. Whether Paul goes so far as to demand that the Jewish Christians themselves transgress the Law for the purpose of fellowship with gentile Christians cannot be said with certainty. Galatians 2:11–14 could indicate this, but it could also mean that the Jewish Christians are by no means allowed to force the gentile Christians to keep the Law (ἰουδαΐζειν in 2:14).[62] Then again, in Rom 14:1–15:13 he demands of the gentile Christians that they be considerate of the Jewish Christians. However, Fredriksen's hypothesis that in Paul the Law and faith are not opposed but that faith includes the Law is refuted by the passages in Galatians. They show that, although the promise, faith, and grace belong closely together, they are opposed to the Law. Reading Paul's letters in the way Fredriksen does means taking the tension out of them. In any case, one of Paul's decisive restrictions of the significance of the Law in ancient Judaism is that, according to him, the Law no longer functions to separate Jews and gentiles in the community of believers.[63] Therefore, it is essential to be more precise than generally claiming a dissolution of the Law or of individual laws such as the food laws.[64] Instead and more accurately, Paul dissolves the protective, and central, function of the Law that separates the Jews from the nations. Consequently, it is the spatial conception of the Law that best reveals Paul's stance on it. Accordingly, one must distinguish much more between the regulations of the Law and their function than previous researchers have done. This is true of both the New Perspective and the "Paul-within-Judaism" movement.

61 They were Jews who would not have simply abandoned the Law merely because of the inclusion of the gentiles.

62 Cf. Eschner, Essen, 429–447.

63 In contemporary Judaism, one cannot distinguish between the observance of the Law per se and observance of the Law with the aim of holiness and separation.

64 As for example, Heil, Speisegebote, esp. 304, who concludes that Paul rejects the food laws because the purpose of the food laws – the purity and holiness of the individual and the congregation – has already been made a reality through Christ.

4. Paul and Israel

What does this mean for Israel and God's election of it? This question arises because ancient Judaism evaluated the Law positively as a covenant sign and an expression of Israel's election. Traditionally, election, the covenant or circumcision, and the Law form a unity in Judaism.[65] Yet, according to Paul, this unity does not exist in this way. Does Galatians reveal how Paul evaluates Israel's situation and how he assesses the relationship between believers in Christ and the people of Israel? A closer look at the end of Galatians is necessary. In Gal 6:15–16 Paul speaks of Israel within a peace greeting:[66] "(15) for neither circumcision nor foreskin (i.e. uncircumcision) is anything, but a new creation. (16) And for those who walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, *and* (or: *and that is*) upon the Israel of God (εἰρήνη ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔλεος καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ)!"

Researchers have mostly thought that Paul was referring to believers in Christ as "Israel" here.[67] In that case, the καί in front of ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ is interpreted as a καί *explicativum*, thus identifying the two parts with each other. The believers from the nations and from Israel then take the place of, and thus replace, the Jews as Israel. Many scholars have advocated this view, for example in the sense that Paul claims the church is the *new* Israel or the *renewed people of God*.[68]

Galatians 3–4, with its redefinitions, does allow the general impression that Paul similarly gave a new definition for Israel in Gal 6:16. Accordingly, Israel (meaning the Jews) would be replaced by the church. Yet Paul always employs "Israel" and its derivatives with reference to the Jewish people.[69] Therefore, some exegetes claim a literal understanding of "Israel" in Gal 6:16, as in all of the other places where Ἰσραήλ is mentioned. The καί then has the common additive sense "and". As a result, the expression "Israel of God" addresses the

65 Thus, the discussion of the Law in Galatians cannot be reduced to sociological issues (as is the tendency of the New Perspective) but also carries the dimension of the theology of election.

66 The expression "peace over Israel" appears several times in the Hebrew Bible, cf. Ps 125:5; 128:6.

67 Thus Kraus, Volk, 251–252; Sänger, Verhältnis, 457, 460; Rohde, Galater, 278; Wolter, Paul, 91–92, 295, 402–403, 432; id., Römer, 49. For more advocates, cf. Bachmann, Kirche, 161 n. 12; Zimmermann, Kirche, 131 n. 32; Meiser, Galater, 306 n. 100.

68 In this sense of supersessionism, esp. Bell, Call, 178–179. Cf. also Roloff, Kirche, 125–126, 130.

69 For Ἰσραήλ, cf. (besides Gal 6:16) Rom 9:6, 27, 31; 10:19, 21; 11:2, 7, 25–26; 1 Cor 10:18; 2 Cor 3:7, 13; Phil 3:5; for Ἰσραηλίτης, cf. Rom 9:4; 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22. Cf. also Bachmann, Kirche, 173; id., Bemerkungen, 290; Eastman, Israel, 367–368.

Jews as a new group apart from the Christ-believers.[70] The trailing position of καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ is in fact striking.[71] Such an extension to persons beyond the circle of addressees does indeed appear in some ancient Jewish letters.[72] As a result, it would be typical of the genre. Another argument for a reference to Israel is that mercy is exactly what Israel receives according to Rom 11:31–32.

In any case, even if in Gal 6:16 "Israel" refers to the Jews, it still represents a decisive reinterpretation. Just before, Paul has once again stated that circumcision is not a criterion for belonging to the community of salvation (6:15; cf. 3:28; 5:6). Accordingly, the distinction between Israel and the nations in salvation history is abolished in Christ. Therefore, "Israel" in Gal 6:16 refers to the Jewish people, but this does not imply a concept of the circumcised as the eschatological people of God. The affirmation in Gal 6:16 could therefore be a concluding conciliatory gesture after the long, pugnacious passages of the letter that earned it the description *Kampfbrief*. Thus, according to Paul, Israel does not have a share in the inheritance per se, but his desire is that it receives mercy.

Such an interpretation would also explain why Paul speaks of the "children of God" instead of using the more common term "people of God".[73] The expression "people of God" is traditionally very close to the term "Israel" (cf. Rom 11:1–2), suggesting the identification of the "people of God" with Israel. By using the category of the "children of God", Paul keeps them distinct from the "Israel of God". Accordingly, the "sons of Abraham" (3:7) should not immediately be understood as "Israel".[74]

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70 For "Israel" in Gal 6:16 as a reference to the Jews (including Jewish Christians), cf. e.g. Bachmann, Kirche, esp. 168–171, 185; id., Bemerkungen, 287–294 (for more advocates, cf. 278 n. 3); Zimmermann, Kirche, 132–134 (with reference to, among others, Lindemann, Mußner, Bruce in n. 34); thus also Richardson, Stendahl, Schaller, and Eastman (according to Bachmann, Perspective, 36, with reference to 4QMMT C31–32 and PapMur. 42.7). Cf. also von der Osten-Sacken, Galatien, 314–316; Meiser, Galater, 306–308.

71 When listing two differing objects one would rather expect εἰρήνη καὶ ἔλεος ἐπ' αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ.

72 For references, cf. Doering, Letters, 54, 74–75, 78.

73 In view of this, the title of Kraus's book "Das Volk Gottes" is misleading.

74 This is overlooked when scholars interpret Paul's statements to advocate Christ-believers taking the place of Israel. But it is also not sufficiently accurate to hold that, for Paul, there is only one people of God (i.e. Israel) to which the Jewish believers in Christ always belonged, whereas the non-Jewish believers have been added. For in this case, at the very least, it would mean Paul annulled the congruence of Israel and Judaism, because no longer do only Jews belong to Israel (cf. for example Wolter, Paul, 295–296).

As a result, according to Paul, the gentiles do not become "Israel" through faith, thereby replacing it.[75] Instead, through faith they become children of Abraham and as such belong to the family of God. This is not the same as becoming a Jew.[76] That Paul redefines Jewishness to include gentiles in the people of God cannot, therefore, be established with certainty.[77]

5. Conclusion

As far as the actual practice of the Law is concerned, believers in Christ and Jews can be seen to coexist for a lengthy period of time. This is of course pertinent to Paul's relationship to Judaism. Yet, with regard to the function associated with the Law, Paul definitely deviates from the view of the Law that was widespread in ancient Judaism. In doing so, he transfers central functions associated with the Law in ancient Judaism to faith or to Christ. Paul himself, however, would probably object vehemently to this construal. In his opinion, his definition of the children of God represents a tradition deeply rooted in Judaism. This is clearly seen in his use of the figure of Abraham in his argument. He appeals to Abraham primarily because he thinks that faith is or should be the decisive

75 This is particularly emphasised by Neubrand, Paulus, esp. 373, 375–376. However, she does not sufficiently take into account the difference between Israel and the descendants of Abraham when she states that those who believe in Christ come alongside – and do not replace – Israel as equals and therefore must be seen as descendants of Abraham by analogy with Israel. The fact that Abraham is the father also of the non-(Christ-)believing Jews is not within the scope of Gal 3–4 and Rom 4.

76 Thiessen is right in this. He refers to the parable of the olive tree: even after the grafting the break in the tree is still visible (Paul, 120; cf. Rom 11:24). Generally, he thinks Paul had not a constructivist conception of Jewishness but understood Jewishness and gentileness in essentialist terms. This essentialist line of thinking can also be found, for example, in Jubilees and 4QFlor (id., Conversion, 81–82, 104). The consequence of this is that someone who is circumcised after the eighth day can no longer be circumcised in a manner that is relevant to the covenant (cf. ibid., 82–86; id., Paul, 7). Since one can no longer become a Jew through later circumcision, it is of no use, so that for Paul the integration of the gentiles into the community of salvation must take place through faith (ibid., 162). However, Thiessen overlooks that, according to Paul, even in Judaism and from the very beginning faith is the decisive criterion for belonging to the community of salvation (see below).

77 According to Bekken, Paul interprets Abraham in such a way that he became the first proselyte *through faith*. Thus, the Galatians would also become *proselytes, that is, Jewish*, without circumcision (Negotiation, 162, 164, 279–283). Yet in this, Bekken clearly goes beyond Paul's writings, for neither the terminology of the Law nor the term "proselyte" (also with reference to his descendants) occur in Paul's references to Abraham.

criterion in Judaism as well. By tracing salvation by faith back to Abraham, Paul underlines that even the Jews cannot attain salvation in any other way than through faith. This has always been true, also for Judaism, even before the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ began. According to Paul's own definition, the heirs of Abraham are in general defined as the believers (i.e. those who trust in God), and Christ-believers are integrated into this definition. Therefore, faith in Christ does not bring about something new. Rather, Christ allows the seamless continuation of the trust of Abraham in an eschatological way. For Paul, faith is the constant in God's saving action towards the Jews and the Christ-believers. Thus, it is also faith that upholds the continuity between Judaism and Christianity in the history of salvation.[78] Through the particular way in which Paul regards salvation to take place in both Judaism and Christianity, Abraham indeed becomes a unifying figure for both Jews and Christ-believers.

Paul's recourse to Abraham as the central figure of his argument demonstrates two things: on the one hand, it shows how firmly he himself is rooted in the Jewish tradition and the central significance it continues to have for him, despite the decisive importance of the Christ event. On the other hand, in comparison to Jewish references to Abraham, Paul innovates when he states that the gentiles receive a share in Abraham's blessing *without observing the Law*. In this, Paul also differs from Philo, whose interpretation of Abraham is – within the broad spectrum of Abrahamic images in early Judaism[79] – otherwise quite close to Paul's. Philo, too, strongly emphasises the faith of Abraham. But he still ties God's promise to the patriarchs on the condition of observing the Law of Moses.[80] From the apostle's perspective, therefore, it is applicable to speak of "Paul within Judaism". Yet, according to ancient Judaism, this

78 For an extensive rebuttal of the common proposition of discontinuity, cf. du Toit, Glaube, 341–348, esp. 343–344. He assumes not only a historical but also a factual continuity between Israel and those who believe in Christ. This means Israel was by no means lost in the time between Abraham and Christ. On the contrary, Jewish people were saved during this time, not, however, on the basis of the Law but, like Abraham, on the basis of faith (cf. Rom 4:12). An important indicator for this interpretation is the absolute use of πίστις without the article in Gal 3:24, which does not have to be interpreted exclusively in terms of the eschatological faith in Christ (thus du Toit, Glaube, 344).

79 Cf. Mühling, Abraham.

80 A universalistic tendency can also be detected in Philo's interpretation of Abraham. Yet the larger framework is not that of God's action in salvation history but concerns the question of a universally valid ethos (Konradt, Kinder, 32–38, 44–48). Cf. also Bekken, Negotiation, 3–4.

already represents a new and different interpretation and, therefore, a significant development towards the Parting of the Ways.[81] At the same time, however, it should always be noted that Paul is not concerned here with the Law as such but specifically with a salvation-historical or soteriological role of the Law. Paul rejects that the Law plays any such role.[82] The reduction of the topic of the Law to this one question may have been the precise cause of so much reservation among contemporary Jews. At the same time, however, it shows that Paul stands firmly within Judaism with regard to everything else. This applies both to the practice of the Law and his conviction that the Law is God's will.[83]

81 The question of whether Paul and his mission can be located within Judaism depends on the observer, cf. Donaldson, Paul.

82 At most, the Law has an indirect significance for salvation by pointing people to their sinfulness and thus to faith (cf. Gal 3:24).

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PART III

The Gospels and the Parting of the Ways

The Sayings Gospel Q and the Parting of the Ways

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Abstract

Q – like Jesus – thinks and formulates completely within Judean categories. However, it is a still debated issue, where Q positions itself in the wide spectrum of Judean ways of life. To clarify this issue, the paper first looks at the problem of defining ancient Judean identity or better: possible Judean identities. In the main section, this will be applied to the Q document. Then the conclusions about Q's relationship to Israel and its consequences for contemporary Christian-Jewish dialogue will be presented.

The Q community saw itself as the followers of the Son of Man and claimed to be the only legitimate guardian of the theological tradition of Israel. This by itself did not mean a parting with Judaism, but the possibility of doing so was given. The "Parting of the Ways" was a long and nonlinear process, and without explicitly driving it, Q already provided some early signposts.

Keywords

Israel; Torah; Identity; Q; Polemics; Judgment

1. Introduction

According to the Two Document Hypothesis the Sayings Gospel Q is not only an important tradition for Matthew and Luke, but it presents a theological profile of its own at a very early stage of the Jesus movement. Therefore, it is very appropriate also to consult Q on the question of a "Parting of the Ways".[1]

There is a very broad consensus that Q – like Jesus – thinks and formulates completely within Jewish, or better: Judean categories. However, where Q positions itself in the wide spectrum of Judean ways of life is still a debated question. To clarify this issue, we will first look briefly at the problem of defining ancient Judean identity, or better yet, possible Judean identities. In the main

1 On the concept of the "Parting of the Ways", compare inter alia Fonrobert, Judaizers; Krauter, Parting; Nicklas, Parting; Reed, Parting; Schröter/Edsall/Verheyden, Introduction; Standhartinger, Parting; Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 28–51.

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section of the paper this will then be applied to the Q document, which is quoted according to *The Critical Edition of Q*.[2] Then – again in condensed form – the conclusions about Q's relationship to Israel and its consequences for contemporary Christian-Jewish dialogue will be presented.

2. "How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?" (Shaye J. D. Cohen)

Cohen, Boyarin, Mason and others have pointed out that Ἰουδαῖος is above all an ethnic category and not a religious one and that a "Jewish religion" in antiquity is hard to define.[3] For instance, in the prologue to his book "The Beginnings of Jewishness" (1999), Cohen writes,

> Jewishness, like most – perhaps all – other identities, is imagined; it has no empirical, objective, verifiable reality to which we can point and over which we can exclaim, "This is it!" Jewishness is in the mind.[4]

Accordingly, one of Cohen's essays in the volume is devoted to the difficult question, "How Do You Know a Jew in Antiquity When You See One?"[5]

To be sure, the definition of a "normative" or "common" ancient Jewishness is highly controversial,[6] but when Greek and Roman authors wrote about Judeans / Jews, they describe a separate group which presupposes some form of identity markers. Hence the observation of Goodman, and recently Van Maaren, that there are limits and boundaries to ancient Jewishness, seems sensible.[7] Disputes around those borders took place in relation to these issues:

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2 Robinson/Hoffmann/Kloppenborg (eds.), Edition; Robinson/Hoffmann/Kloppenborg (eds.), Gospel.

3 Boyarin, Judaism; Cohen, Beginnings, especially 69–106, 341–349; Mason, Jews. Compare also Goodblatt, Varieties; Hakola, Identities. For the differentiation of an ethnic and a religious understanding of Ἰουδαῖος, compare additionally Cohen, Ioudaios; Cromhout, Jesus, 2–5; Koch, Geschichte, 622–630; Öhler, Geschichte, 14.

4 Cohen, Beginnings, 5. Cohen shows (Beginnings, 3) both that Jewish identity in antiquity was difficult to grasp, given the lack of a single or simple definition of Ἰουδαῖος and the lack of empirical or "objective" criteria for determining who was a Jew.

5 Cohen, Beginnings, 25–68.

6 Compare Collins, Stage; Stemberger, Judaism; Stemberger, Pluriformität. According to Doering (Judaism, 543), "early Judaism has come to be appreciated as variegated, and it has become difficult to pitch Jesus and early Christians 'against the normative Judaism' of their time". For my own short review of the discussion compare Heil, Spruchevangelium, 91–93.

7 Goodman, History, 159–198; Van Maaren, Boundaries. Accordingly, Doering (Judaism, 543–544) refuses to speak of "Judaisms" in the plural, since "such a notion is in danger of losing

monotheism, the election of Israel, the covenant, the Torah, the promised land and the temple.[8] If we attempt to see how Q relates to those topics regarding Judean identity, a finding that is as complete as possible will be necessary. One or two features alone are not sufficient for a convincing picture. In the following section, therefore, the aim is to give a rather comprehensive overview of possible Jewish features in Q and their reception in the formation of Q's own profile.[9] Not all issues mentioned above are relevant. For example, Q does not refer to the promised land and monotheism is simply presupposed.[10]

3. Jewish Features in Q

3.1 *Israel and "this Generation"*

The word Ἰουδαῖος does not occur in Q, but the honorary title[11] "Israel", for the people of God, occurs twice in Q. It first occurs in Q 7:9[12] in Jesus' amazed comment on the faith of a centurion in Capernaum. The centurion trusted in the authority (ἐξουσία) of Jesus to perform a distance healing of his boy (παῖς). On hearing this, Jesus said to his followers: "I tell you: Not even in Israel have I found such faith (πίστις)." The surprising faith of a person outside of Israel shames[13] all Israelites. This strategy, of lamenting the Israelites' lack of trust in Jesus by referring to Gentiles, will be repeated over and over again in Q. This

sight of the integrating aspects of the varieties of early Judaism". Also Stemberger (Judaism) asks for "A Unity beyond Systems and Parties" in the last section of his essay; here he mentions "the basic convictions grounded in the Bible and common to all groups and currents – monotheism, God's active presence in history, the election of Israel as people and country, elementary ethical principles etc." (407)

8 Compare the list of "elements of Judean identity" in Öhler, Geschichte, 55–62. Similarly Schnelle, Years, 58–60.

9 Compare Joseph, Messiah; Smith, Difference; Tiwald, Gott; Tiwald, Place; Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 371–373; Tiwald, Logienquelle, 94–116. 169–172; Tiwald, Source; Tuckett, Sayings, 219–231. What Stemberger (Pluriformität, 32) says about the historical Jesus applies in a similar way to Q: "Die von ihm oder seinem Umfeld vertretenen Lehren, v.a. seine Positionen zum Gesetz der Tora und seiner Anwendung in der täglichen Praxis gewinnen zwar durch ihre Kombination ein sehr eigenständiges Profil, in ihren Einzelelementen aber ragen sie kaum aus dem Rahmen des damals Möglichen oder Üblichen hinaus. Erst das große Mosaik, das die vielen Einzelheiten in den Aussagen und Erzählungen über Jesus ergeben, hebt ihn über das im Judentum seiner Zeit Mögliche hinaus."

10 Compare Q 4:8; 16:13 and Heil, Lukas, 270–271.

11 Compare Harvey, Israel; Thiel, "Israel"; Staples, Idea.

12 For the reconstruction compare Johnson, Q 7:1–10.

13 Compare Kloppenborg, Problems, 220. Approvingly adopted by Tiwald, Logienquelle, 113–114.

is the case in the woes against the Galilean towns of Chorazin and Bethsaida, which are compared with Tyre and Sidon (Q 10:13–14).[14] At the last judgment, the queen of the South and the Ninevite men will condemn "this generation", a designation for the unbelieving part of Israel (Q 11:31–32).[15]

The second instance of the word "Israel" in Q is Q 22:28, 30,[16] the closing text of Q which, in *The Critical Edition of Q*, is titled with "You Will Judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel". This title represents the conventional understanding of κρίνω in the sentence as "to judge".[17] For instance, Zeller wrote in his commentary on Q,

> Such sinister threats may not be very congenial to us. But it heralds an upheaval of a kind we can only dimly imagine. The bond with Jesus and his word suddenly becomes more important for the Q-people than the bond with their own people, who saw themselves as the people of God.[18]

However, there is a growing dissent about this. Horsley already understood κρίνειν in the sense of "liberating / redeeming / establishing justice for".[19] In the same vein, Theißen saw Q's message of salvation for Israel in this pasage, because the saying predicts the return of the twelve tribes from the dispersion. He understands κρίνω not in the sense of punishing or even destroying,

14 Compare Heil, Zukunft, 186; Scherer, Königsvolk, 270–272; Zeller, Jesus, 197 ("definitive words of judgement").

15 Compare Heil, Zukunft, 187.

16 For the reconstruction compare Hoffmann, Q 22:28, 30.

17 Compare the use of κρίνω and κρίμα Q 6:37: "Do not pass judgment, so you are not judged. ⟦For with what judgment you pass judgment, you will be judged.⟧". See also the use of κρίσις and κατακρίνω in Q 11:31–32 and the use of κριτής in Q 11:19.

18 Zeller, Kommentar, 88: "Solche finsteren Drohungen mögen uns wenig sympathisch sein. Aber es kündigt sich darin ein Umbruch an, wie wir ihn uns nur noch schwach vorstellen können. Die Bindung an Jesus und sein Wort wird für die Q-Leute auf einmal wichtiger als die Verbundenheit mit dem eigenen Volk, das sich als das Volk Gottes verstand." Hoffmann, Herrscher, 264, goes even further and writes, "Das Logion Q 22,30 markiert mit der Gerichtsankündigung über ganz Israel einen Endpunkt. Es bedeutet den Abschied von Israel." Similarly Broer, Einleitung, 78: "Israel scheint von der Q-Gemeinde in seiner Gesamtheit aufgrund seiner Ablehnung der Q-Boten und ihrer Botschaft abgeschrieben zu sein und steht nicht mehr im Horizont des missionarischen Denkens von Q." Schnelle, Years, 365, leaves the question open: "Whether Israel is finally rejected according to Q, one cannot say with certainty, for the intensity of the conflict can indicate continuing proximity or increasing alienation and ultimate separation." Similarly Schnelle, Wege, 65–66 n. 25.

19 Horsley, Jesus, 203–206. Similarly Bazzana, Q 22:28–30; Tiwald, Source, 172–175. Scherer, Königsvolk, 171–176, also tends towards this interpretation.

but points to Psalms of Solomon 17:26 where the Messiah judges a sanctified people free from all evil:[20]

> He will gather a holy people whom he will lead in righteousness and he will judge (κρινεῖ) the tribes of the people that have been made holy by the Lord their God.

Theißen himself, however, also refers to Psalms of Solomon 17:29 where κρίνειν is used with the usual understanding.

> [29] He will judge (κρινεῖ) peoples and nations in the wisdom of his righteousness.

Therefore, it is not convincing to propose a different meaning of the verb three verses earlier. The common meaning of κρίνειν as "judging" should be accepted in Q 22:28, 30 as well.[21]

Also relevant for our topic are the texts in Q 13:24–14:23, which are grouped together under the theme "crisis in Israel". Q 13:24–27 will be mentioned below in the paragraph on Torah (2.3.1), and Q 13:34–35 will be treated below under the heading "Jerusalem and the Temple" (2.5). Here the focus is on two other units.

First, in Q 13:29, 28 there is a reference to the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion (Isa 2; Micah 4). However, while the nations will recline with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the contemporaries of Jesus, who reject his proclamation, are excluded.[22] Incidentally, this text shows that Q imagines a prophetic and eschatological inclusion of the nations. While the Q group is not engaged in a present mission to the nations, there is an openness for universalism in the imminent future when the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ breaks in.[23]

Second, in the parable about the invited dinner guests in Q 14:16–21, 23, the invited guests decline the invitation. "Then the householder, enraged, said to his slave: Go out on the roads, and whomever you find, invite, so that my house may be filled" (Q 14:21, 23). In Q, the second invitation to those "on the roads" does not address pagans, but marginalized Jews. The originally invited guests probably refer to the pious Jews of good standing who decline the invitation of God's prophet Jesus. Then his call goes out to the margins, to the *am-ha-arez*.[24]

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20 Theißen, Gospels, 222 with n. 46.

21 Compare Heil, Lukas, 210; Heil, Zukunft, 194; Labahn, Gekommene, 177–178, 410–412, 538–540.

22 Compare Heil, Zukunft, 189.

23 Compare Heil, Lukas, 333–334; Reinbold, Propaganda, 228–229.

24 Compare Heil, Lukas, 90–93; Heil, Zukunft, 192–193.

This interpretation is supported by Q 10:21,[25] where Jesus praises the Father "for you hid these things from sages and the learned and disclosed them to children."

Those "others", who remain closed to the Q message, are also designated with the phrase "this generation" which has its origin in Deuteronomistic and apocalyptic language.[26] In Q 7:31–35, "this generation" responds inadequately both to John the Baptist and to Jesus.[27] In Q 11:16, 29–32, "this evil generation" is said to demand a sign, but there will be no other sign than the Son of Man who functions like Jonah for the Ninevites. Further, "this generation" will be condemned at the judgment by Gentiles like the queen of the South and the Ninevite men. The pericope Q 11:49–51[28] ends with the conclusion, "An accounting will be required of this generation!" In this text, Q uses the Early Jewish concept of the violent fate of the prophets who were persecuted and even killed when they preached repentance.[29]

In conclusion, the designation "this generation" is used in Q for Jewish contemporaries of Jesus who rejected his proclamation. Q's mission to them has not been very successful and has ended largely in failure.[30] Therefore, there is a clear distance between the Q group and the large majority of Israel.

The polemics against "this generation" served to strengthen the identity of Q's own group. The negative formulations followed conventional patterns and remained within the usual framework.[31] A completely different view on the polemics and the judgment texts in Q is offered by Theißen who interprets those texts as part of the mission to Israel and as a provocation to faith.[32] In

25 Compare Tiwald, Source, 95–96.

26 Compare Bork, Raumsemantik, 270–277; Bormann, Theologie, 220–221; Heil, Zukunft, 187; Labahn, Gekommene, 412–424; Scherer, Königsvolk, 168–171; Tiwald, Logienquelle, 107–109; Tiwald, Source, 201–202.

27 Compare Hölscher, Matthäus, 201–235.

28 For the reconstruction compare Jolliffe, Q 11:46b, 52, 47–51.

29 Compare Heil, Lukas, 69; Tiwald, Source, 199. Also compare the criticism by Jervis, Suffering.

30 Compare Heil, Lukas, 326; Kloppenborg, Problems, 176; Lührmann, Redaktion, 87–88, 93: "Der Gegensatz zu Israel ist nicht mehr wie teilweise in der Tradition ein Gegensatz zu seinen Führern, sondern er ist generell ausgedehnt auf das ganze Israel, 'dieses Geschlecht'. […] Für Israel bleibt nur das Gericht."

31 Compare Johnson, Testament, 539: "By the measure of Hellenistic conventions, and certainly by the measure of contemporary Jewish polemic, the NT's slander against fellow Jews is remarkably mild." An overview of the "art of insult" in ancient Latin literature is provided by Pausch, Niedertracht.

32 Theißen, Entstehung, 64, 66–67. Similarly already Schelkle (Israel, 13–14) on Q 3:7–9, 17: "Im Sinne von Q ist das eine Mahnung an Israel, sich der Jüngergemeinde Jesu anzuschließen."

a similar vein, Tuckett views the judgment warnings in Q 12:39–40, 42–46 and 17:23–37 as not directed to insiders but to outsiders. According to him, Q tries to warn those

> who […] may be unaware of the threat that is hanging over them. But then […] the whole point of the teaching given here is to try to alert such people to the reality that is threatening them, and presumably to seek to change them in such a way that they are not annihilated, or destroyed, in any coming future cataclysmic event.[33]

In another variant of interpretation, Tiwald sees a "protreptic" intention in Q, but directed to insiders.[34] This is an unconventional use of the term "protreptic" which usually means causing someone to turn from an outsider to an insider position. Anyway, a certain scepticism remains as to whether Q's judgment language functioned as an overall advertising invitation.[35] According to Aune, a λόγος προτρεπτικός characteristically consists of three features,

(*1*) *a negative section centering on the critique of rival sources of knowledge, ways of living, or schools of thought that reject philosophy;* (*2*) *a positive section in which the truth claims of philosophical knowledge, schools of thought, and ways of living are presented, praised, and defended;* (*3*) *an optional section, consisting of a personal appeal to the hearer, inviting the immediate accepting of the exhortation.*[36]

To be sure, the negative section of a λόγος προτρεπτικός "included a strong component of ἀποτρέπειν ('dissuasion') and ἐλέγχειν ('censure') […], aimed at freeing the person from erroneous beliefs and practices".[37] However, the hurtful and exclusionary sharpness of the polemics in Q does not appear to be compatible with the intention of winning over those thus addressed to one's own group.

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33 Tuckett, Apocalyptic, 120. Kloppenborg, Problems, 177, agrees.

34 Tiwald, Valeur, 137: "Die Aussagen sind also *protreptisch-performativer* Natur, sie sollen *konnotativ* den Gläubigen Mut und Hoffnung machen, nicht aber *informativ-denotativ* eine Verdammung über die Ungläubigen aussprechen"; Tiwald, Weisheit, 89; Tiwald, Logienquelle, 101–103; Tiwald, Source, 25, 173–174.

35 Compare Heil, Zukunft, 186, 195; Verheyden, Jugement.

36 Aune, Literature, 385. Compare Alieva, Protreptic; Berger, Formen, 276–279; Berger, Gattungen, 1138–1141; Kotzé, Protreptik.

37 Aune, Literature, 384.

In its final redaction form – probably to be dated around 70 CE[38] – Q redefines Israel in an apocalyptic manner. There is a division in Israel between the pious and the sinners, between those who follow the message of Jesus and the Q-messengers, and those who do not.[39] The announcements of judgment on those who do not display less and less missionary commitment.

3.2 *Covenant*

The word διαθήκη does not occur in Q. However, Richard Horsley proposes that Q 6:20–49 functions as constituting the "new covenant" of the Q community.[40] This thesis has not gained a following, since Q seems to follow apocalyptic thinking which reduces the importance of belonging to the covenant. This is made clear in Q 3:8 where John the Baptist says,

> Do not presume to tell yourselves: We have as forefather Abraham! For I tell you: God can produce children for Abraham right out of these rocks![41]

3.3 *Torah*

It is common wisdom to emphasize the diversity of the understanding of Torah in Early Judaism.[42] This should be kept in mind as we go through the relevant texts in Q.

3.3.1 Νόμος in Q 16:16–17 and ἀνομία in Q 13:27

The word νόμος occurs in Q only in 16:16 and 16:17. Q 16:18 also treats a topic of the Torah, but without using the word νόμος. [see below 3.3.3]

In Q 16:16, the familiar formulation "the Torah and the prophets" is used. However, with John and Jesus a new entity appears, the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. More on this in section 2.3.3.

It is likely that the Q redaction formulated Q 16:17, which emphasizes the eternal validity of the complete Torah, as a clarification of Q 16:16.[43]

The unit Q 13:24–27 tells a short story about those who remain outside after the householder has locked the door.[44] The outsiders say: "We ate in your

38 Compare Heil, Einleitung, 21–22; Heil, Lukas, 9–10. Tiwald, Source, 22, dates Q to the early sixties of the first century CE and before 66 CE.

39 Compare Tiwald, Weisheit.

40 Horsley, Performance.

41 Compare Tiwald, Source, 51–52.

42 Collins, Torah; Lehnardt, Tora; Najman, Torah; Sheinfeld, Nomos; Tiwald, Gesetz, 295–298; Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 287–295; Vroom, Authority; Zahn, Torah.

43 Compare Heil, Lukas, 129; Kloppenborg, Problems, 216; Tiwald, Source, 114–116; Wohlthat, Gültigkeit.

44 Compare Tiwald, Source, 144–147.

presence and drank, and it was in our streets you taught." And the κύριος replies: "I do not know you! Get away from me, you who do lawlessness (ἀνομία). Here the opponents of Jesus are characterized as lawless which, for Q, means not doing what Jesus taught in their streets (Q 13:26; compare Q 6:46–49).[45]

3.3.2 Circumcision and Sabbath

Q mentions neither circumcision nor the Sabbath,[46] but it seems very probable that the Q community still practiced both – and kashrut which is our next point.[47]

3.3.3 Kashrut

In Q 10:7–8, the missionaries of the Q group are advised to eat and drink in foreign houses and towns "whatever they provide" and "what is set before you". This is probably a dispensation from Jewish dietary laws, but more as a mental preparation for the possibility that the missionaries are invited into a Gentile home.[48]

In the second woe to the Pharisees (Q 11:39b, 41),[49] they are criticized as purifying the outside of the cup and dish, "but inside they are full of plunder and dissipation". This seems to be a critique of overemphasizing outer purity and neglecting inner purity.[50] In the fourth woe to the Pharisees (Q 11:44),[51] they are compared to "indistinct tombs, and the people walking on top are unaware".

In conclusion, kashrut is not directly challenged in Q, it is presupposed, but not emphasized. However, Q takes issue with a preference for ritual purity compared to moral purity.

3.3.4 Tithing

In the first woe to the Pharisees in Q 11:42,[52] the Pharisees are criticized that they tithe mint, dill and cumin, but give up justice, mercy and faithfulness.

45 Compare Heil, Spruchevangelium, 169.

46 *The Critical Edition of Q* does not include Matt 12:11 par. Luke 14:5, which reflects a rhetorical question about a saving action on a Sabbath. Compare Heil, Lukas, 74–79.

47 Compare Kloppenborg, Problems, 220.

48 Ebner, Einleitung, 106. Similarly Scherer, Königsvolk, 196. In contrast, Tiwald, Source, 91, and Zeller, Jesus, 209, do not think this is an option. Further scholarly positions are listed in Heil, Ablehnung, 271–272.

49 For the reconstruction see Jolliffe, Q 11:39a, 42, 39b, 41, 43–44.

50 Compare Eschner, Essen, 632–638; Heil, Ablehnung, 110–111; Schnelle, Years, 365; Tiwald, Source, 121–122.

51 For the reconstruction see Jolliffe, Q 11:39a, 42, 39b, 41, 43–44.

52 For the reconstruction see Jolliffe, Q 11:39a, 42, 39b, 41, 43–44.

"But these one had to do, without giving up those." This remark makes it clear that Q does not reject tithing, but that ritual purity should go hand in hand with moral purity.

In view of the data that has been presented up to now, the large majority of scholars in Q research agree that Q is very positive, and even conservative, regarding the Torah's authority.[53] Hoffmann, for instance, wrote in 2001,

> Q claims to serve the Torah by passing on Jesus' instructions. If the Torah theme appears only 'in passing' in Q, this does not indicate a distancing from the Torah, but rather makes it clear that – despite all criticism of contemporary Judaism – the Torah is a self-evident prerequisite for the proclamation and theological reflection of the Q group. We are still moving in an unbroken Jewish and Jewish-Christian milieu; the juxtaposition of Torah and Gospel is evidently not an issue for Q.[54]

In the same vein, Luz notes,

> In Q almost all traditions of Jesus critical of the law are missing; one appears to have understood Jesus' preaching more as a new approach to the law that fundamentally remains valid (Q 11:39–42; 16:17).[55]

Recently this view, which is also shared by Tiwald,[56] was repeated by Regev who writes,

> Unlike Mark, Q lacks disputes on legal matters such as the Sabbath and purity laws. There is no trace of overt criticism of the Torah. When the subject arises, Q underscores the complete authority and validity of the Torah. Scholars usually claim that in Q Jesus obeys the Law and does not dispute it.[57]

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53 Compare Catchpole, Quest, 229–255; Dautzenberg, Gesetzeskritik, 122–128; Dettwiler, Source; Ebner, Einleitung, 106–107; Kloppenborg, Problems, 204–221; Loader, Attitude, 390–431; Räisänen, Gesetz, 848; Tiwald, Himmel; Tuckett, Q, the Law; Tuckett, Q, 393–424 (424: In Q the attitude to the Law is "strongly conservative").

54 Hoffmann, Mutmaßungen, 286: "Q erhebt den Anspruch mit der Weitergabe der Weisungen Jesu gerade der Tora zu dienen. Wenn die Tora-Thematik in Q nur 'am Rande' auftritt, indiziert dies nicht eine Distanzierung von der Tora, es macht vielmehr deutlich, dass – bei aller Kritik am zeitgenössischen Judentum – die Tora selbstverständliche Voraussetzung der Verkündigung und theologischen Reflexion der Q-Gruppe ist. Wir bewegen uns noch in einem ungebrochen jüdisch-judenchristlichen Milieu, die Gegenüberstellung von Tora und Evangelium ist für Q offensichtlich kein Thema."

55 Luz, Matthew 1–7, 43.

56 Tiwald, Gesetz, 302–303; Tiwald, Logienquelle, 94–95.

57 Regev, Temple, 127.

3.3.5 "Complete authority and validity of the Torah" in Q (Regev)? Four Caveats

Regarding this sweeping and superficial interpretation, four caveats need to be put forward.

a) In the parable of the houses built on rock or sand in Q 6:47–49, the criterion in the last judgment is not the practice of Torah, but the hearing of and acting on the sayings of Jesus. Kloppenborg aptly sums up this pericope as follows, "Salvation is a matter of obeying Jesus' words (6:46–49), not of maintaining oneself within the framework of the covenant."[58]

b) In Q 9:59–60, the request of a prospective disciple is reported, "Master, permit me first to go and bury my father." Jesus answers him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead." This implies a relativization of the fourth commandment in the decalogue ("honor your father and your mother"). The positive reaction to the call to discipleship overrules a divine commandment from the Ten Words.[59]

c) In Q 16:16, the Torah and the Prophets are somehow limited "until John". Beginning with John something new happens. "The kingdom of God is violated and the violent plunder it." The βασιλεία does not replace the Torah and the Prophets, but beginning with John and Jesus there is a new, eschatological entity which qualifies the Tora and the Prophets accordingly.[60]

d) Finally, Q 16:18[61] clearly contradicts the regulation in Deut 24:1–3. However, Mal 2:14–16, the Damascus Document (4:20–21), and the Temple Scroll (57:17–19) provide some evidence that divorce and remarriage was not accepted by all Judeans. However, the unconditional rejection of divorce and remarriage seems to be a deviation from common Judean practice.[62]

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58 Kloppenborg, Problems, 217. Similarly Schnelle, Years, 365: "The criterion for the judgment is unambiguously the acceptance or rejection of Jesus's message of the kingdom of God." Of course, Tiwald, Source, 69, appropriately emphasizes, "Seeing the foundation as Jesus' words does not mean competition to the values of the Torah." Similarly Scherer, Königsvolk, 355–359. However, Q explicitly mentions the words of Jesus. Compliance with them is in the foreground as a criterion for life and death.

59 Compare Heil, Spruchevangelium, 93–117; Tiwald, Source, 83–84. According to Scherer, Königsvolk, 379–380, the conflict with the fourth commandment does not play an important role here.

60 Compare Tiwald, Source, 77–80.

61 Compare Doering, Divorce.

62 Compare Doering, Judaism, 546; Heil, Lukas, 130–132. For an attempt to minimize the difference between Q 16:18 and early Judaism, compare Junker, Scheidungslogion; Stemberger, Pluriformität, 29; Tiwald, Source, 117–120.

In conclusion, therefore, it seems necessary to nuance the common view that Q conveys a very affirming acceptance of the Torah. Q grants high authority to the Torah, to be sure, but this authority is now transformed into the "eschatological Torah of the Son of Man", as Kosch has formulated it.[63]

3.4 *Scripture*

The interpretation of Scripture can provide interesting insights into the growth of a distinct Christ-believing identity, but this is not necessarily so, as Taschl-Erber has shown in her 2017 *Habilitationsschrift*.[64] In Q there are some allusions to Scripture,[65] but it is only in the temptations narrative Q 4:1–13[66] (Deut 8:3; Ps 91:11–12; Deut 6:16; 6:13a = 10:20a) and in Q 7:27[67] (Exod 23:20; Mal 3:1) that we have clear quotations. However, the manner in which Scripture is used in Q does not seem to make a difference compared to other Jewish Scripture interpretation.[68]

3.5 *Jerusalem and the Temple*

Q mentions Jerusalem only twice, in Q 4:9[69] (the second temptation) and Q 13:34–35.[70] This already indicates that the Galilean traditions, which were edited in Q, did not have much interest in Jerusalem.[71] There was probably also a certain tension between Galilee and Judah in Q, as Reed assumes.[72] Incidentally, this makes the composition of Q in Jerusalem – as proposed by Frenschkowski and Joseph[73] – very unlikely.

In both mentions of Jerusalem in Q, there is also reference to the temple – ἱερόν in Q 4:9 and οἶκος in Q 13:35. In addition, the temple is also mentioned in Q 11:51 (ναός).[74]

Among those references, Q 13:34–35 is very important. In Q 13:34a the motif of the violent fate of the prophets is employed. In Q 13:34b the refusal

63 Kosch, Tora. Compare Heil, Ablehnung, 267–268; Heil, Lukas, 318–320; Heil, Spruchevangelium, 87–90.
64 Taschl-Erber, Schriftauslegung.
65 Compare Q 7:22 with allusions to Isa 26:19; 29:18–19; 35:5–6; 42:7, 18; 61:1.
66 For the reconstruction see Carruth/Robinson, Q 4:1–13, 16.
67 Compare Hölscher, Matthäus, 167–169.
68 Compare Foster, Authority; Frenschkowski, Schriftgelehrten; Heil, Lukas, 311–315; Tiwald, Source, 185–195; Tuckett, Sayings, 196–218; Vaage, Scripture.
69 For the reconstruction see Carruth/Robinson, Q 4:1–13, 16.
70 For the reconstruction see Johnson, Q 13:34–35.
71 Compare Heil, Lukas, 66–67; Labahn, Gekommene, 473–475, 544.
72 Reed, Map.
73 Frenschkowski, Galiläa; Joseph, Jesus.
74 Compare Heil, Lukas, 67–68; Labahn, Gekommene, 499–500.

of Jerusalem's children is described. Then in Q 13:35a it is said that the Temple ("your house") is forsaken: Ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν.[75] The saying ends in Q 13:35b with a reference to Psalm 118:26a (LXX 117:26a),

> I tell you: You will not see me until the time comes when you say: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

This could mean that those who have rejected Jesus will get a second chance and will greet Jesus with Psalm 118.[76] This is not very likely if one considers the context in Q which does not know a saving judgment. When Jerusalem's children will recite Psalm 118, it will be too late.[77]

3.6 *Synagogues*

Q mentions συναγωγαί twice, in Q 11:43 and Q 12:11, as normal and self-evident Jewish institutions. There is no distancing subtone,[78] but the scenario in Q 12:11 ("when they bring you before synagogues, do not be anxious about how or what you are to say") is not one of friendly exchange but of accusation, persecution, and possible punishment.[79]

3.7 *The Son of Man and the Christology of Q*

The Son of Man Christology,[80] and Q's Christology in general, is very explicit. Just as the doing of Jesus' words is relevant in the last judgment in in Q 6:47–49 (compare above 2.3.5), so also, according to Q 12:8–9, confessing or denying Jesus, the Son of Man, in public will have corresponding consequences "before the angels", that is in the judgment.[81] A rather "high Christology" is also visible in Q 10:22, 23b–24.[82] Q 10:22 reads,

> Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and to whomever the Son chooses to reveal him.

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75 Compare Isa 1:7–8.

76 Compare Bork, Raumsemantik, 278; Labahn, Gekommene, 474–475; Scherer, Königsvolk, 176–181; Theißen, Entstehung, 65; Tiwald, Source, 149–150.

77 Compare Heil, Zukunft, 190–192.

78 Compare Reinbold, Propaganda, 24.

79 Compare Scherer, Königsvolk, 264. Against Tiwald, Source, 133.

80 Compare Bormann, Theologie, 221–222; Heil, Lukas, 289–295; Labahn, Gekommene, 271–292.

81 For the reconstruction see Hoffmann et al., Q 12:8–12.

82 Compare Tiwald, Source, 96–98.

We have already pointed to Q 9:59–60 [see 2.3.5]. A last text in this regard is Q 11:20, where Jesus is described as casting out demons "by the finger of God", which means that the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ has come.

Goodman concludes a chapter on the "limits of variety" in ancient Judaism with the "curious" fact that, despite the variety, in the end there was a parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity. "The only element of early Christianity which seems to have been without parallel elsewhere in first-century Judaism was the founding of a new religious movement in the name of a leader after his death."[83] Of course, Goodman also points out the role of Paul and the developments in the second and third centuries. However, it seems very probable that the all prevailing importance of Jesus, as earthly and heavenly Son of Man in Q, is the root element of the alienation between the Q community and their other Jewish contemporaries.

Although in recent years Boyarin and Schäfer have tried to close the gap between ancient Jewish and Christ-believing theologies by pointing to binary concepts of God in Philo, the Hebrew Book of Enoch, and other texts,[84] there are no real parallels to the Christology of Q in ancient Jewish texts. Of course, there is a long way from a deviant Christology to a separation from Judaism, but we have here another element that contributed to the historical development.

4. Conclusion and Outlook: Q and Israel – Not an Easy Relationship

A first, easy conclusion is that the Q group understood itself as Jewish.[85] The members of the Q group are ethnically and religiously Ἰουδαῖοι, although the term does not occur in Q. The only recent Q scholar who disagrees is Fleddermann, who argues that the author of Q is a Gentile Christian writing for other Gentile Christians.[86] However, his interpretations of the texts presented above are not convincing. Therefore, the very broad consensus is to be preferred, which Ebner describes in terms of an "intact Jewish matrix" in

83 Goodman, History, 197. Goodman also points out (Goodman, History, 183) that there are only rare references to the Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran scrolls and the name of the Teacher is not given. One may add that the Teacher has no function in the eschatological judgement.

84 Compare the overview in Doering, Judaism, 550–551.

85 Arnal, Q, 138 with reference to Q 6:33–34 and 12:30: "The people responsible for the document identify themselves as Jews (though not using this particular term), and at no point does it appear that they cease doing so."

86 Fleddermann, Q, 163–166.

Q.[87] Q does not illustrate a break with Judaism or a "parting of the ways", as Kloppenborg has recently demonstrated.[88]

However, this very broad conclusion leads to the tricky and difficult question of where, in the broad ancient Jewish spectrum, Q should be located. First, we have seen that Q is silent on land, circumcision, and sabbath. Of course, every *argumentum e silentio* can be used in both directions. The absence of some Jewish identity markers in Q can thus support a Jewish context in which it is not necessary to explicitly note or indicate that the author(s) of Q no longer insist on them. Second, there are some features, such as Kashrut, tithing, and the use of scripture, where Q shows some profile, as in the emphasis on moral purity. Yet this profile is not really in conflict with other texts of Judean provenance. However, the expectation that the Q group will judge the twelve tribes of Israel, the polemics against "this generation", and the Jerusalem Temple and the explicit, "high" Christology make it probable that the Q group was not really at ease with the large majority of Israel.[89] The relationship was not broken, to be sure, but there were cracks which could – and did – widen.

In Christian-Jewish dialogue today, the Apostle Paul is very a non-topic, since his Christology and his polemics are considered destructive unhelpful. On the other hand, the Jewish Rabbi Jesus and the Gospels are considered positive topics which promise constructive conversations between Christians and Jews. In this context, a regret is sometimes voiced that Q, as a still very Jewish picture of Jesus and his proclamation, is not included in Christian-Jewish dialogue. Colleagues such as Lampe, Siegert and myself have indicated that there is a certain desideratum in research regarding Q's role for a better Christian-Jewish understanding.[90] This is the case, and recent research in the Jewish features of Q can well illustrate the Jewish origins of Christianity. However, as was pointed out earlier, it is necessary to pour some water into the wine. Q's Christology is very explicit, and the absolute position of the Son of Man leads at some points – not yet coherently – to a relativization of some important features

87 Ebner, Spruchquelle, 105, 107. Approvingly quoted in Tiwald, Gesetz, 302–303; Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 372. Similarly Reinbold, Propaganda, 24–26.

88 Kloppenborg, Parting.

89 Compare Cromhout, Jesus, 5–6: "The Judeanism of Q was a radically redefined 'covenantal nomism.' […] Q presupposes a community whose Judean ethnicity was in (re) construction. Most of the cultural features demonstrate a strong element of discontinuity with traditional Judean identity (= covenantal nomism)."

90 Heil, Einleitung, 28; Lampe, Streitkultur; Siegert, Theologie, 29 n. 30: "Was in der jüdisch-christlichen Forschung noch intensiver auszuwerten bliebe, ist die Quelle Q, die m.E. einen vorchristlichen (wenn auch nicht vorösterlichen) Jesus präsentiert."

of Judean identity.[91] Therefore, one should not engage in the wishful thinking that a model of an early Jewish-Christian theology without conflicts and tensions can be found in Q.

Further, Q is much closer to its later receptions in Matthew[92] and Luke[93] than to all other known Jewish theologies.[94] A special continuity to the theology of Q is shown in the Gospel of Matthew, about which Konradt writes,

> Matthew by no means understands Israel and the church as competing communities. […] Matthew does not […] connect the beginning of the church with the replacement of Israel. To be sure, however, the faith of the disciples that they are followers of the Messiah implies the claim of the church to be the only legitimate guardian of the theological tradition of Israel.[95]

Admittedly, Q does not use the terms Χριστός and ἐκκλησία, but the Q community saw itself as the followers of the Son of Man and claimed to be the only legitimate guardian of the theological tradition of Israel. Of course, this alone did not mean a parting with Judaism, but the possibility of doing so was given. The "Parting of the Ways" was a long and nonlinear process,[96] and without explicitly driving it, the Sayings Gospel Q already provided some early signposts – no more and no less.[97]

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91 Schnelle, Years, 365–366, overstretches the evidence when he ascribes to Q "its own identity, with which Judaism is no longer really compatible".

92 Compare Foster, Q; Frenschkowski, Matthäus; Hölscher, Matthäus, especially 359–364; Konradt, Gospel, 21; Tuckett, Q and the Gospel of Matthew.

93 Compare Heil, Lukas; Heil, Zukunft.

94 Schnelle, Wege, 9, 55, 64, 132, 189, points out that there is not a single piece of evidence for a positive appreciation of any form of Jewish Christianity by Judaism.

95 Konradt, Gospel, 13.

96 Compare Doering, Judaism, 555: "Parting was an extended and variegated process, depending on place, time, and perspective." Similarly Tiwald, Parting, 697; Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 50; Tiwald, Jahrhunderte, 39. Here, as in other socio-religious developments, the phenomenon of a "simultaneity of the non-simultaneous" ("die Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen") can be observed. This concept was coined – not invented – by Ernst Bloch; compare Bloch, Erbschaft, 104–160 ("Ungleichzeitigkeit und Pflicht zu ihrer Dialektik").

97 Compare Dunn, Christianity 3, 609: "Within Jewish communities in the period prior to 70, there is evidence of plenty of strains and stresses between Jewish believers in Jesus and other Jews. But clear and explicit reference to a parting of the ways between Jews and Christians, as having already happened, […] there is not." Dunn repeats this judgement for late first-century Christian literature on p. 649.

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Matthew's Ethics and the Complex Processes of Differentiation and Separation of the Matthean Communities from Judaism

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Abstract

In the last decades, the thesis that Matthew and his communities have to be located within Judaism has developed into a major new perspective on Matthew. There are strong reasons for this approach. The evidence, however, is more complex, since, e.g., the connections to other Christ-believing groups have to be considered as a significant part of the Matthean communities' social relations as well. At first sight, Matthew's ethics appears to be one of the most important features that closely connect the Matthean communities with their Jewish parent body, because the Torah is a main pillar of Matthew's ethical orientation. Matthew, however, interprets the Torah in a manner that paves the way for the admission of Gentiles *as Gentiles* to the Christ-believing community. Moreover, a second main pillar of Matthean Ethics, the imitation of Jesus, has to be given due weight.

Keywords

Matthean Ethics; Matthew and Judaism; Torah; imitation of Jesus

1. Introduction

Matthew's relation to Judaism is a complex matter, which was controversially discussed in Matthean scholarship in the last decades.[1] Since the nineties with the important monographs by Andrew Overman and Anthony Saldarini,[2] there has been a – still growing – tendency to identify the social location of

1 For an overview of the key issues in this debate and an attempt to identify the central interpretive problems that underlie the different positions, see Konradt, Context. – I thank John Van Maaren and Aaron Schmidt for proofreading the text.

2 Overman, Gospel; Saldarini, Community.

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the Gospel of Matthew as within Judaism,[3] whatever this means in detail. In 2020 Anders Runesson and Daniel Gurtner edited a volume with exactly this title: "Matthew within Judaism. Israel and the Nations in the First Gospel". In analogy to recent research on Paul, one could speak of a "new perspective on Matthew". As with the new perspective on Paul, however, no overall consensus has been reached; there are still dissenting voices which reject the localization of Matthew within Judaism.[4] And as with the new perspective on Paul, it seems to be time to move beyond the new perspective. In this paper, I will illustrate this with regard to Matthean ethics.

At first sight, Matthew's ethics appears to be one of the most important features that closely connect the Matthean communities with their Jewish parent body, if one follows the currently prevalent understanding of Matthew's Torah ethics. At closer inspection, however, the evidence forms a more complex image. My paper divides into three sections. First, I will briefly summarize my point of view concerning Matthew's relation to Judaism. As a result, the simplistic binary logic of the debate, whether Matthew and his communities can still be located *within* or are already to be placed *outside* of Judaism, whether they still move on the same path or whether their ways have parted, will be questioned. I will then turn to examine Matthew's ethics, which I will do in two sections because there are two main pillars which can be succinctly labeled as fulfilling the Torah on the one hand and following and imitating Jesus on the other hand.[5]

2. Matthew's Relation to Judaism

The thesis that Matthew and his communities are to be located within Judaism is based on a number of good reasons. There are indeed strong indications for a Jewish milieu of Matthew and the social location of his communities. The following does not intend to be exhaustive, but will only highlight some characteristic points:

1. Matthew narrates his story of Jesus continuously in the light of Israel's Scriptures. The Gospel of Matthew does not only contain a large number of marked citations, of which the fulfillment citations (1:23; 2:15, 18, 23;

3 See, e.g., Sim, Gospel; Runesson, Wrath; Kampen, Matthew, and with nuances Konradt, Israel.

4 See, e.g., Foster, Community, 78–79, 253 and elsewhere; Deines, Jesus, 305–307.

5 In the following, I will take up, further develop, and connect some thoughts that I unfolded in previous publications. See esp. Konradt, Following; Konradt, Judaism; Konradt, Matthew; Konradt, Ethik, 260–322; Konradt, Context.

4:15–16; 8:17; 12:18–21; 13:35; 21:5; 27:9–10) constitute just one particularly characteristic example,[6] but also numerous unmarked citations and verbal as well as conceptual allusions.[7] Thereby, references to the Scriptures of Israel do not only serve Christological purposes, but also illuminate the conflict between Jesus and the authorities[8] and they are of great importance in Matthew's endeavor to justify the universality of salvation.[9] In light of the high density of the citations and allusions, the thesis suggests itself that Matthew's Jesus story is the result of a long process of reflection by a Jewish-Christian group centered around (or, in any case, including) the evangelist – a group that, on the one hand, articulated in their gatherings the Jesus tradition that had been passed down to them (already containing scriptural quotations and allusions) and, on the other hand, intensively and independently read and reflected upon the Scripture. With regard to textual pragmatics, the numerous appeals to the Scriptures of Israel in Matthew emerge as an extremely important part of the evangelist's communicative strategy in view of the conflict with the Pharisee-dominated synagogue: They serve to reassure the addressees that the Christ-believing *ecclesia* is the true custodian of the theological traditions of Israel.

2. The second aspect is closely related to the first. Matthew emphatically presents his Jesus story as the continuation of Israel's salvation-historical story, as indicated already in the very beginning of the Gospel with the phrase βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, which connects the Jesus story with βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς and βίβλος γενέσεως ἀνθρώπων in Gen 2:4 and 5:1, and in the ensuing genealogy in 1:2–17. The periodization of the genealogy into 3 x 14 generations points to the notion that Israel's history runs its course towards Jesus, its intended goal. This implies that the continuation of Israel's salvation-historical story is also at the center of the self-understanding of Matthew's *ecclesia*.
3. Unlike Mark, Matthew stresses the Davidic messiahship of Jesus (1:1, 18–25; 9:27–31; 12:22–24; 15:21–28; 20:29–34; 21:1–17; 22:41–46)[10] and thus ties into a traditional thread of Jewish messianic expectations (cf. Pss. Sol. 17; 18; 4Q161 Frags. 8–10 11–25; 4Q174 Frags. 1i+21+2 10–13; 4Q252 V,3–5

6 Cf. Senior, Lure, esp. 103–114.

7 For a concise overview, see Konradt, Scripture.

8 Cf. Konradt, Scripture, 222–225 and, focusing on the motif of innocent blood, Vortisch, Blut.

9 Cf. Ziethe, Namen, passim.

10 For a detailed analysis of Matthew's emphasis on Jesus' Davidic messiahship, see Konradt, Israel, 17–49.

et al.),[11] although he gives it a new twist by focusing Jesus' Davidic messiahship on his healing ministry.[12] Moreover, Matthew connects his unfolding of Jesus' Davidic messiahship with his emphasis on Jesus turning particularly to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24).[13] Jesus is Israel's shepherd, who was promised in the Scriptures of Israel (2:6).

4. The interpretation of the Torah is a central and indispensable part of Matthew's ethics (cf. below).
5. Concerning Jesus' messianic authority and his interpretation of the Torah, Matthew depicts a sharp conflict with the Jewish authorities, especially with the Pharisees. The intensity with which the conflict with the Jewish leaders is carried out suggests that these debates are of *current* significance for Matthew.[14] In this context, it is of utmost importance to consider the role of the Galilean crowds, because Matthew's interest in distinguishing the crowds from the authorities can only be sufficiently explained with the assumption that this reflects the situation of Matthew's congregations as well: Matthew and his allies still try to convince their Jewish contemporaries of the message of Christ.[15]
6. Matthew's references to "their" or "your synagogues" (4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; 23:34) has often been taken as indicating a position outside of Judaism.[16] This, however, is a premature conclusion. It undoubtedly cannot be denied that the *ecclesia* does have its own meetings and its own organizational structure and that at least some passages, in which the phrasing "their/your synagogues" occurs, indicate distance. In 12:9 and 23:34 the synagogues are identified as the synagogues of the Pharisees, and 10:17 and 23:34 speak about the flogging of disciples in their synagogues. At the same time, however, the flogging implies that the Christ-believers were still visiting the synagogues. The ecclesial meetings do not substitute synagogue attendance, but they coexist with one another.[17]
7. A major concern of Matthew is to mediate his strong emphasis on Jesus' turning to Israel and the eschatological restitution of God's people with the universal relevance of Jesus' ministry. In my monograph "Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew", I argued

11 On Early Jewish royal messianic expectations, see Schreiber, Gesalbter, esp. 145–389.
12 Cf. Novakovic, Messiah.
13 On the programmatic focus on Israel in Jesus' earthly ministry, see Konradt, Israel, 49–74.
14 Cf. Saldarini, Community, 46–52; Konradt, Israel, 355–360.
15 On the role of the crowds, see Konradt, Crowds. Cf. also the detailed analysis of Cousland, Crowds.
16 See, e.g., Luz, Evangelium I, 96–97; Stanton, Gospel, 128–129; Viljoen, Matthew 675–676.
17 For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Konradt, Judaism, 129–132.

> that Matthew's narrative Christology is connected with his presentation of Jesus' two-stage mission first to Israel and then to the Gentiles. That is, the double unfolding of Jesus' messianic identity as Son of David and Son of God, is interconnected with the narrative move from the exclusive turning of the Davidic messiah to Israel during his earthly ministry (and the corresponding limitation of the pre-Easter mission of the disciples to Israel in Matthew 10) to the universal post-Easter mission to the Gentiles. This post-Easter mission is Christologically grounded in the universal relevance of Jesus' salvific death, his resurrection and his exaltation to universal Lordship, as it is stated by the Risen One in 28:18: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." This is definitely the climax of Matthew's story. It is correct to criticize some radical approaches among the new perspective on Matthew at exactly this point, that the relevance of the ending of Matthew is underestimated in them. On the other hand, this ending does not overshadow the whole previous narrative as meaningless. On the contrary! Matthew's emphasis on Israel's special salvation-historical position can be sufficiently understood only on the basis of the *current relevance* of this perspective. For Matthew, Israel is not replaced by the church, but the church is formed *in Israel*. The universal mission does not supersede the mission to Israel, but extends the outreach by including the Gentiles. It must also be emphasized that Matthew's narrative concept implies that Gentile believers who enter a Matthean congregation get to know the Jesus story in a form which points out the special role of Israel.[18] Matthew's universalism is clearly a variant form of Jewish universalism. In light of current debates among proponents of the "Matthew within Judaism"-perspective, it is important to emphasize this point: Matthew's universalism does in no way speak against hearing Matthew as a Jewish voice.

This last aspect, however, also points to the other side of the coin: Matthew clearly supports the inclusion of Gentiles into the congregation. It is difficult or even impossible to exactly quantify the Gentile Christians in Matthean communities at the time of the writing of the Gospel. One can only say that Matthew's endeavor to mediate between the specific role of Israel and the universal dimension of the salvation that Jesus brought indicates that the justification of the inclusion of the Gentiles was of great *current* significance in Matthew's context.[19] This seems to reflect that Matthew saw himself

18 Cf. Senior, Worlds, 19–20.

19 It is telling that in this thematic context too, arguing with the Scriptures of Israel is of utmost importance in the Gospel of Matthew. Cf. Ziethe, Namen.

confronted with community members who had some reservations against the expansion of mission beyond the borders of Israel as the people of God.[20] But it is impossible to know whether Matthew tries to initiate a new mission or defends an established practice against objections that have newly emerged – for example in the wake of the influx of Christ-believing Jews from Judea who have fled because of the Jewish-Roman war. Be that as it may, it is theologically important that, for Matthew, Gentile Christians are not proselytes. The great commission in Matt 28:18–20 does not mention circumcision and, contrary to the claims of David Sim and a few others,[21] does not imply it either.[22] It is hard to deny that this would gradually change the social identity of the Matthean communities.

On this basis, the introductory remark on the new perspective on Matthew can be taken up. It is necessary to move beyond the new perspective with its focus on locating Matthew within Judaism for at least two reasons. First, the focus on the relation of Matthew and his communities to the Jewish parent body tended to neglect other aspects of Matthew's and his communities' social relations – to other branches or manifestations of the Christ-believing movement but also to their pagan social environment as well as wider political contexts. Second, the intention to clearly locate Matthew and his communities *within Judaism*, is rooted in the binary logic of the classical *intra* or *extra muros*-debate. This alternative, however, is to some extent a question of (ancient and contemporary) perspective: From one perspective the group is clearly located within Judaism, from another perspective there might be some doubts. Matthew himself certainly did not regard his theological agenda as a turning away from the faith of Israel but rather claimed that his communities are *the* legitimate custodians and trustees of Israel's theological traditions. Moreover, socially, Judaism is apparently his primary life context. On the other hand, Jesus' building of his *ecclesia* (16:18), which begins with the sending of the eleven to all nations (28:18–20), has a universal orientation from its beginning so that the *ecclesia* is – at least conceptually – not merely conceived as a community of salvation *in Israel*. To factor in the probable perspective of Matthew's Pharisaic opponents at this point: It is rather unlikely or at least can be strongly doubted that the Pharisees viewed the Christ-believing Matthean communities as still being a form of Judaism, though one that was flawed

20 Cf. Senior, Worlds, 19; Slee, Church, 134; Foster, Community, 20; Balabanski, Mission, 170–171; Konradt, Israel, 365–366.

21 See Sim, Gospel, 251–254, furthermore, e.g., Slee, Church, 141–144; Runesson, Wrath, 31–36.

22 For the arguments which make the assumption that circumcision is presupposed in 28:19–20 highly improbable, see Konradt, Context, 19–31.

in their eyes, if there were (a significant number of) uncircumcised Gentile Christians in it.[23] The *muri* thus turn out to be "cognitive wandering dunes".[24] This leads to a more fundamental objection: The binary thinking of the *intra* or *extra muros*-debate is problematic in itself, since it tends to reduce the complexity of the historical circumstances in which the Gospel of Matthew came to be. A multi-faceted approach is needed,[25] which is suitable to adequately conceive the complex coexistence of facets of (deep) integration into, and interconnectedness with the Jewish parent body on the one hand, and strong indicators for organizational and institutional autonomy on the other, and which can integrate aspects of mutual influences and productive competition between the "church" and the "synagogue" as an important part of the more comprehensive network of social relations of the Matthean communities that, as mentioned above, includes the connection to other Christ-believing groups (at other places).

The insufficiency of the simple alternative of locating Matthew either within or outside of Judaism implies a questioning of the suitability of the "Parting of the Ways"-metaphor for the reflection on the relation of early Christ-believing groups and Judaism as well,[26] since the "Parting of the Ways"-approach also essentially operates within a binary logic; a Christ-believing group is either still walking on the same path with other Jews or their ways have parted. This binary logic is further burdened by the suggestion of monodirectionality:

23 To underline this, one can point to the following observation with regard to the repeated motif of the Matthean Jesus' withdrawal after conflicts with his Pharisaic opponents in 12:15 and 15:21. In both instances, a text follows that points to the universal dimension of salvation: the formula quotation from Isa 42:1–4^{LXX} in 12:18–21 which twice refers to the nations (12:18, 21, on the relevance of this quotations for the Easter expansion of the salvific turning to all nations, see Ziethe, Namen, 265–288 and Konradt, Israel, 276–280) and the healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter (on this, see Konradt, Matthew, 238–242). The option to interpret this as a withdrawal from *Israel* to the benefit of the other nations is – apart from its inconsistency with Matthew's overall theological agenda – already made impossible by the fact that 12:15 speaks of the ἀκολουθεῖν of ὄχλοι πολλοί. But the "repetition of this 'scheme' could reflect the fact that in the distance of the Matthean community to the Pharisees (and the synagogue dominated by them), the openness of the *ecclesia* for persons from the nations constituted an important factor. For this, reference could also be made to the fact that with Sabbath and food halakah in 12.1–14; 15.1–20 the concern is with important Jewish identity markers" (Konradt, Context, 31–32, note 123).

24 Thus the apt description by Backhaus, Himmelsherrschaft, 79 (in German: "kognitive Wanderdünen").

25 Cf. on this Konradt, Judaism.

26 For an early critique, see Lieu, Partings. See further the discussion in Reinhartz, Fork, esp. 281–288 and Reed/Becker, Introduction, 16–24.

a once-shared path is bifurcated into two ways that diverge from that point on. The evidence, however, presents itself as much more complex than that, and there are different aspects pointing to different directions. Moreover, the "Parting of the Ways"-model tends to treat the relationship between the Matthean communities and the Jewish parent body solely in isolation from other aspects of the communities' social relations. Due to these considerations, the title of my paper is "Matthew's Ethics and the Complex Processes of Differentiation and Separation" instead of "Matthew's Ethics and the Parting of the Ways".

In the following two sections, I will turn to the ethical orientation that Matthew wants to impart to his audience. My thesis is that the way of life, which the evangelist expects from the members of the Christ-believing communities, mirrors the complexity of the social identity outlined above.

3. The Torah in Matthew and Matthew's Openness to the Integration of Gentiles

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' ethical instruction is explicitly related to the Torah. In the overall structure of Matthew's Jesus story, the Sermon on the Mount is part of Matthew's systematic presentation of Jesus' ministry in 4:17–11:1, the first main section of the Gospel after the prologue. Thereby, Jesus' ministry is emphatically presented as oriented towards Israel. According to 4:23, Jesus taught in the synagogues, proclaimed the good news of the kingdom and healed every disease and every sickness among the people, ἐν τῷ λαῷ, as a result of which large crowds followed him. According to 4:25, these crowds come from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and from beyond the Jordan. With this geographical data, Matthew gives a sketch of the "land of Israel" (2:20–21) from a biblical perspective in the sense of the settlement area of the twelve tribes (cf. Josh 13–19) or, *cum grano salis*, "from Dan to Beersheba" (Judg 20:1; 1 Sam 3:20 and elsewhere).[27] Matthew thus says that large crowds from all of Israel follow Jesus and – as representatives of all Israel[28] – are the audience of the Sermon on the Mount. There is thus a clear connection between the audience of the Sermon on the Mount and its focus on Torah-related instruction. In the Sermon on the Mount, the true meaning and intention of God's proclamation of his will, which Israel has once received on Mount Sinai, is revealed by Israel's messiah Jesus and thus with ultimate authority to the present

27 Cf. Lohfink, Bergpredigt, 155–157; Cousland, Crowds, 53–68; Konradt, Israel, 50–52 et al.
28 Cf. Lohfink, Bergpredigt, 157; Konradt, Ethik, 268–269.

generation of Israel. In short, the Sermon on the Mount has to be read within the Israel-theological horizon of its narrative context.

This is underlined by the insight that Jesus' instruction in no way undermines the authority of the Torah but confirms it. In current Matthean scholarship, it is the majority-view that the antitheses are not against the Torah – this option is ruled out already by the programmatic statements in 5:17–19. In 5:21–48, Jesus' interpretation is rather presented against the background of an insufficient understanding of the Torah, which in Matthew's polemic is ascribed to the scribes and Pharisees. According to the Matthean Jesus, they understand the commandments too literally, or reduce their true meaning by limiting their scope.[29] The authority the Matthean Jesus claims for himself in Matt 5 is extraordinary, but nothing which could define a break with Judaism. Moreover, the interpretations of the Torah in Jesus' antitheses have an individual character, but at the same time they are also deeply embedded in Early Jewish traditions of Torah-centered ethical admonition.[30] The antitheses can thus be taken as a strong indicator in favor of the "Matthew within Judaism"-position.

However, this is not the whole story. While Matthew confirms the validity of every stroke in the Torah in 5:18, he also sets priorities among the commandments. There are less important commandments, as 5:19 makes clear, and there are the weightier matters of the law, τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου (23:23). His hermeneutical principle is encapsulated in the statement "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" from Hos 6:6, which is quoted twice, in 9:13 and 12:7. Again, such a weighing of the commandments is obviously not without parallels in early Judaism,[31] but we still have to factor in other aspects. According to 5:19, those who relax one of the least of the commandments will be called least in the kingdom. If this is taken as stated, it implies that they will still enter it. This reading is confirmed by its perfect harmony with another passage in Matthew's Gospel, the dialogue with a rich man in 19:16–22. In the Matthean version, the question of the man – what he must do so that he may obtain eternal life – is directly answered: "Keep the commandments." The dialogue, however, continues with the further question: "Which ones?" Now, Jesus does not answer "all", but he quotes commandments from the Decalogue, which are all related

29 For a detailed justification of this approach, see Konradt, Fulfillment. For an attempt to downplay the importance of the Torah, see Deines, Law.

30 For an illustration of this, see Konradt, Decalogue, 108–112, 116–119, 120–123 with regard to the first, the second and the fourth antithesis, Zerbe, Non-Retaliation, 34–173 and Davis, Lex Talionis, 55–72 with regard to the fifth antithesis and Konradt, Feindesliebe, 351–363 with regard to the sixth antithesis.

31 Cf. the short overview in Konradt, Ethik, 36–39. On Early Jewish Torah instruction, see Niebuhr, Gesetz and Niebuhr, Tora.

to interpersonal behavior, and the love-commandment. Read in context, this evidently implies that these are the commandments that are actually relevant from a soteriological point of view, while others are not compulsory. Moreover, there is an obvious overlap between the commandments quoted in Matt 19 and those interpreted radically in 5:21–48: Do not murder, do not commit adultery, love your neighbor as yourself. In the light of 5:20, it is the practice of *these* commandments *on the basis of Jesus' interpretation* which meets the requirements of the "better righteousness" as the prerequisite for entering the kingdom of heaven. Matthew's description of the last judgment in 25:31–46 with its concentration on deeds of mercy fits seamlessly into this picture.

Once again, one must stress that, at least to some extent, there are similar tendencies in some parts of variegated early Judaism. In Josephus' summary of the law in the second book of *Contra Apionem* (190–218), there is a clear emphasis on social commandments. The same can be said about the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. In Pseudo-Phocylides, the whole area of ritual laws is missing. Of course, this is necessary because of the pseudepigraphic fiction behind this writing. Nevertheless, this demonstrates that Diaspora Jews could express their ethical convictions with such a concentration on the social sphere, and it has to be emphasized that despite the pseudepigraphic fiction, there is a clear interaction with Torah sections in Pseudo-Phocylides, such as the Decalogue or Leviticus 19.[32] Philo presents the Torah as *the* universal law for mankind in his so called *expositio legis*,[33] and with reference to Abraham and Tamar, he emphatically demonstrates his openness for proselytes (*Virt.* 211–222). It would be a fruitful endeavor not just to show *that* Matthew adheres to the Torah, but to embed the specifics of Matthew's Torah-understanding within the spectrum of early Judaism by detailed analysis of various approaches to the Torah in early Judaism.

Moving one step forward, however, we can point out an important implication of Matthew's Torah hermeneutics. The central notion of hierarchy among the commandments, the emphasis on love, mercy and the second table of the Decalogue and the soteriological dimension of this emphasis are of core significance for the universal mission since it paves the way for the admission of Gentiles *as Gentiles* to the Christ-believing community. There is an interconnectedness between the Matthean Jesus' interpretation of the Torah and the inclusion of Gentiles. When Jesus commissions his followers to make people of all nations into disciples by baptizing them and by teaching them to obey everything that he has commanded them (28:19–20), this obviously entails a

32 On Josephus' summary of the law and on PseudPhoc, cf. Niebuhr, Gesetz, 5–72.

33 Cf. Martens, God, esp. 83–130; Konradt, Tora.

reference back to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Disciples from the nations are thus obligated to keep the Torah, since Jesus has emphatically confirmed its validity in 5:17–19. At the same time, the unfolding of the fulfillment of the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew is clearly concentrated on the radical interpretation of social commandments, whereas, as shown above, it is a negligible factor in terms of soteriology to more or less ignore ritual commandments. The great commission in Matt 28 thus implies that Israel's Torah, as it is interpreted with ultimate authority in the Sermon on the Mount in front of the Jewish crowds, is also the Torah for the nations. In the Sermon on the Mount itself, this universal dimension is explicitly stated in the identification of Jesus' followers as "the salt of the earth" (5:13) and "the light of the world" (5:14). Of course, one can once again refer to Philo's understanding of the Torah as a related approach, but despite his openness for proselytes, his explanation of the Torah is not connected to a *programmatic* missionary outreach to Gentiles.

To sum up: Matthew's Torah-related ethics clearly points to the Jewish roots and – in connection with the still existent conflict with the Pharisees – to the context of the Matthean communities. It thus indicates that Matthew and his communities should be located within Judaism. But at the same time, we observe the nucleus for a development that took full shape in the prominent role of the Gospel of Matthew in the Early Church of the first centuries. Matthew's Torah-related ethics could be adopted in the increasingly Gentile church because Matthew himself interpreted Israel's Torah in a way that was suitable for the nations as well. Furthermore, this aspect is strongly supported by another core aspect of Matthew's ethics, which in recent research was improprietously neglected, the imitation of Jesus.

4. The Imitation of Jesus

In Matthew's ethics, Jesus is not only *the* teacher and interpreter of the Torah, but he also serves as an ethical *exemplum* for his disciples, which mirrors a core aspect of Greco-Roman ethics.[34] To avoid misunderstandings, it must be emphasized that Torah-instruction and imitation of Jesus are not two areas that are clearly demarcated from one another. They belong closely together; there are flowing transitions and overlaps. An approach to Matthean ethics, however, that focuses exclusively on the interpretation of the law and the

34 Cf., e.g., Langlands, Ethics.

prophets does not adequately mirror the significance of the imitation of Jesus in the Matthean ethics.

If one asks how the topic of the Torah, prominently exposed in the Sermon on the Mount, is further developed in the ensuing narrative, one has to state that this topic remains present in explicit form only in two respects: in debates or controversies with outsiders, wherein, with the sole exception of the rich man in 19:16–22, Jesus' discussion partners are always the Jewish authorities who are hostile to him (12:1–14; 15:1–20; 19:3–9; 22:34–40), and in the public[35] discourse against the scribes and Pharisees in Matt 23, where the three middle woes in particular polemicize against the scribes and Pharisees. In the specific teachings of the disciples, there are implicit references to the Torah, for example the reference to Lev 19:17–18 in Matt 18:15,[36] but nowhere do we find an explicit appeal to the Torah and a discussion about the proper understanding of a Torah commandment.

Moreover, if one surveys the narrative complex in Matt 16:21–20:34, which is structured by the three passion predictions (16:21; 17:22–23; 20:17–19), it is conspicuous that the instructions to the disciples move to the center (16:24–28; 18:1–35; 19:10–12; 19:23–20:16; 20:25–28). The meaning of this focus emerges from the narrative context. After the initial presentation of Jesus' ministry in 4:17–11:1, the issue of response to Jesus' works comes more strongly to the fore in 11:2–16:20. Thereby, Matthew distinguishes between the hostility of the authorities, the interest of the crowds, and the positive reaction of the disciples which culminates in Peter's confession of Jesus' messiahship and divine sonship (16:16, cf. 14:33). As a response to this, the Matthean Jesus looks ahead to the building of the church in 16:17–19. Then, in 16:21–20:34, Jesus, in anticipation of his impending passion, gives his disciples – who form the nucleus of the church that is to emerge after Easter – instructions, which are essential for the shaping of the ecclesial fellowship.

In terms of content, one can observe that those aspects gain importance, in which Jesus' own way of life – such as his merciful turn to sinners,[37] his humbleness and his attitude of serving others – is of paradigmatic relevance for the ethical orientation of his disciples. At the beginning of the main section in 16:21–20:34, Jesus admonishes his disciples to be ready to take up their cross (16:24–28). Near the end of this section, the paradigmatic significance of Jesus' life orientation is concisely summarized in 20:28: Whoever wants to be great among the disciples is to be the servant of the others, "just as the Son of

35 According to Matt 23:1, the addressees are not only the disciples, but also the crowds.

36 On this, see Konradt, Whoever, 396–399.

37 On this, see Konradt, Blessed, 139–146.

Man has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Instead of Mark's causative "for" (γάρ, Mark 10:45), Matthew uses the comparative particle "as" (ὥσπερ) to point out that the way Jesus lived his life is not only the reason but also the benchmark for the disciples' own life-orientation. Discipleship to Jesus has its core purpose in serving others according to the model of Jesus.

Viewed in its context, 20:28 takes up the ethos of humbleness, as it is brought forward in Matt 18, which is the second important ethical discourse in Matthew's Gospel next to the Sermon on the Mount. It is important to emphasize this aspect. There is not only one central ethical speech in Matthew, but two. In Matt 18, the ethos of humbleness is programmatically introduced in the opening scene in verses 1–4: In his reaction to the disciples' question "who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (V. 1), Jesus presents a child to his disciples as a mark of orientation: "Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (V. 3). In the following discourse, the ethos of humbleness is predominantly illustrated by the right attitude toward sinners – that is, the call for unlimited readiness to forgive.[38] Analogous to the Sermon on the Mount within the paradigmatic presentation of Jesus' ministry *in Israel* (4:23: ἐν τῷ λαῷ; 9:33: ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ) in 4:23–9:35, the discourse in Matt 18 is thematically closely related to its narrative context in 16:21–20:34, in which Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, to the passion. On his way to the cross, Jesus abstains from manifesting his power that belongs to him as Son of God (cf., e.g., 26:52–54) and he walks the path of humbleness to save "the many" from their sins (20:28; 26:28). This means that lowliness and his commitment to the sinners are the central characteristics of Jesus' passion. Viewed within this horizon, the ethos of lowliness and forgiveness which is unfolded in Matthew 18 appears as the ethical implication of the path that Jesus walked in his suffering. To put it succinctly, it is a piece of applied Christology. What is disclosed to the disciples is how a person lives when they submit themselves to the rule of Jesus as the gentle messiah (cf. 11:28–30)[39] who rules by serving.

There is thus a second main pillar in Matthean ethics besides the important area of the interpretation of the Torah. In his contribution to the "Matthew within Judaism"-volume mentioned above, Loren Stuckenbruck referred to the role of the Teacher of Righteousness in some Dead Sea Scrolls, namely in the

38 For a more detailed analysis of Matt 18 and its relevance for Matthean ethics, see Konradt, Whoever.

39 Due to space limits, I can only briefly point to the important section in 11:28–30, which, compositionally, shows itself to be the start of the shift of emphasis outlined above. For a detailed analysis of the passage and its relevance for Matthean ethics, see Konradt, Yoke.

Damascus Document and some pescharim, as a close relative to Jesus' role in the Gospel of Matthew.[40] There are indeed strong resemblances regarding the centrality of an authoritative figure of the past[41] and the corresponding self-authorizing strategies in Matthew and the Dead Sea Scrolls. One can therefore argue that this comparison underlines Matthew's embeddedness in the Early Jewish world. But there is also something else at stake in the Gospel of Matthew, which transcends the role of the Teacher of Righteousness, since walking in Jesus' footsteps by taking up one's cross, being humble and encountering sinners with an unlimited readiness to forgive is an integral part and the ethical side of the salvific relation with Jesus as the Emmanuel. In addition to the interplay between the Matthean Jesus' interpretation of the Torah and the inclusion of Gentiles, this mimetic dimension of the Christian way of life according to Matthew sheds light on the Janus-faced character of the Gospel of Matthew with regard to the processes of differentiation and, ultimately, separation of Judaism and emerging Christianity. Although in terms of history of religion, the Gospel of Matthew can and should be read thoroughly as an important Jewish document, its theological agenda simultaneously contains the nucleus for the development of Christianity as a religion separated from Judaism, including one of the most Jewish features of Matthean theology, its ethics. The way the Torah is interpreted is closely connected with the universal dimension of Matthew's Gospel, with the inclusion of Gentiles into the community, and this is strongly underlined by the shift of the ethical focus to the imitation of Jesus in the second main part of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew's ethics is not only Torah-related ethics.

5. Conclusions

With its significant Torah-related dimension, Matthew's ethics bear witness to the Jewish roots and context of the evangelist and his communities. But at the same time, there is a formative Christological dimension in Matthean ethics which sets it apart from all other forms of Early Jewish ethics and provides the basis for its reception in Gentile communities. This is all the more true given that the Christological dimension does not exhaust itself in the role of Jesus as the only and ultimate interpreter of the Torah who emphasizes the social commandments and interprets them in a radical way. For Matthew, Jesus is also

40 Stuckenbruck, Function.

41 With regard to the Teacher of Righteousness, there is, however, a debate, whether this figure really refers to an individual historical person (cf. Kratz, Teacher).

the ultimate model to follow and imitate. Finally, Jesus' own fulfillment of the Torah and the prophets includes both his teaching *and his own Torah practice*. When, for example, Jesus justifies his turning to sinners with a quotation from Hos 6:6 in Matt 9:13, he intimates that this is not contrary to the Torah, but part of his true fulfillment of the Torah, which serves as a guideline for his disciples. The consequence of this aspect is evident: At least to a large extent, the Torah practice demanded of the disciples can be regarded as part of the imitation of Jesus as well, which insofar emerges even as the overarching dimension of Matthean ethics.

Moreover, the Christological orientation of Matthean ethics is obviously connected with a social dimension. Matthean believers in Christ share the orientation toward the Christ event as a *central* aspect of their own identity with other groups in other places in the ancient Mediterranean, with whom they are in contact. This means that the significant others for Matthew are not only other local Jewish groups but also other Christ-believing communities in the oikoumene. Thus, the social location of the Matthean Christ-believers should not be considered exclusively in terms of their belonging to Judaism. Instead, a multi-perspective approach suggests itself. With very few exceptions,[42] the aspect of the Matthean communities' relations within the Christ-believing movement has been given short shrift in recent research with its strong focus on the relation to Judaism. But these two aspects ought to be connected with one another. Matthew's ethics with its probable impact on the life of the members of the Christ-believing communities supports this claim. If this is correct, it is indeed necessary to move beyond the new perspective on "Matthew within Judaism" and to connect it with a "Matthew within emergent Christianity"-perspective.

42 See, e.g., Culpepper, Place.

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Finding Their Own Way in a Jewish Environment

The Letters (and Gospel) of John and the Parting of the Ways

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Abstract

The article asks whether in the Gospel of John and especially in the Epistles of John a separation of the Johannine communities from Judaism can already be discerned. It demonstrates on the basis of the relevant passages 1 John 2:18–25, 4:1–3 and 2 John 7 that the conflict with the competitors in the Epistles (which are set after the Gospel) is still fought out in the inner-Jewish sphere. While a separation from Judaism has not yet taken place, essential aspects concerning the formation of a distinctive identity are found in 1 John. This is evidenced by the conviction that Jesus is the Messiah of God, the forgiveness of sins, the group-specific application of the Torah, and the formation of a specific tradition. The last point recapitulates how 1 John undertakes a demarcation of its own group from the majority of Jews. We see the effort to find one's own way within being Jewish.

Keywords

Gospel of John; Epistles of John; competitors; intra-Jewish conflict; identity formation

1. Introduction

The term "parting of the ways"[1] is related to the fundamental issue of separation processes between followers of Christ and other Jews. It is important not to think of a division between two abstract entities, "Judaism" and "Christianity", but concretely between local synagogues and their associated Christ groups. What is decisive today is the historical insight that no early, uniform separation of these entities can be assumed, but rather a continuous coexistence and

1 Landmark works are Dunn, Partings; Dunn, Jews. Cf. Lieu, Parting; Frey, Paulus, 257–278. On a recent evaluation, cf. the articles in Schröter/Edsall/Verheyden, Parting; and in EvTh 80 (2020) (thematic issue on the "Parting of the Ways".

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close relationship at least until the 2nd century (and in part much longer).[2] Thus, we have to assume multiple processes of demarcation between local Christ groups and Jewish synagogues that vary considerably in place and time. While separation has already taken place in one location, in another location close affiliation with the Jewish community is still a matter of course.

This paper looks for traces in the Johannine writings pointing to processes of demarcation and separation. In this context, separation can be understood as comprising a variety of processes of turning away and distancing, but also of breaking off contact and hostility. Therefore, it is important not to ask for a single point in time of separation, but for particular events, processes and phases of developments. In doing so, I assume the Letters and the Gospel of John are telling us something about the world and the situation in which they were written and read. In other words, I assume the referentiality of these writings: They refer to their historical context, to extra-textual realities, events, persons and social structures. In general, the text genre "letter" is characterized by direct situational references, which is especially true for everyday letters (documentary letters, like 2 and 3 John), but also for literary letters (like 1 John).[3] The Gospel also provides insights into its historical situation at some points that clearly go beyond the narrated world.

2. Conflict with "the Jews" in the Gospel of John as a Starting Point

The starting point is the conflicts described in John's Gospel, expressing processes of rejection. The narrative repeatedly presents Jesus in conflict with his Jewish contemporaries about his function as Messiah and revealer of God (e.g., John 7:26–27,31,41–43; also 5:18; 6:42; 10:33; 19:7). Johannine scholarship widely assumes that these narrated conflicts primarily reflect a confrontation of post-Easter Johannine communities with their Jewish environment. However, what is at stake is whether these conflicts are still going on at the time of the narrative, that is, at the time of the composition of the Gospel. In this context, three striking passages tell us about an impending exclusion from the synagogue of those Jews who profess Jesus as the Messiah. Within these passages John 9:22, 12:42 and 16:2 use the highly unusual expression ἀποσυνάγωγος, meaning

2 Cf. Nicklas, Jews.

3 On the discussion about the referentiality of the Johannine writings and the existence of a Johannine community cf. Klauck, Community.

something like "one who is excluded from the synagogue," i.e. the local assembly as a public Jewish institution.[4]

In 9:22, the parents of the man born blind whom Jesus had healed do not make a confession for fear of 'the Jews' who had agreed, "If anyone confesses that this one (sc. Jesus) is the Christ, he will be made an ἀποσυνάγωγος." This is a declaration of intent, but in the case of the healed man it is translated into action: "they threw him out" (ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω; 9:34), because he maintains that Jesus has shown himself to be "of God" by the healing (9:33). In the situation narrated, the *anxiety* about an imminent expulsion prevails. This concern is also reflected in the note in John 12:42 where Jews in leading positions who actually believed in Jesus are said not to confess him publicly lest they become ἀποσυνάγωγοι. In the milieu of the earthly Jesus in the villages and towns of Galilee and Judea, where mainly Jews were living, exclusion from the synagogue was not very realistic. (Although exclusion from the local public assembly of a village would be conceivable in principle, it presupposes already advanced dislocations.) Thus, the third passage, John 16:2, is instructive: In his great farewell discourse, Jesus takes a look at the time after his death and announces to his disciples that in the future other Jews "will make you ἀποσυνάγωγοι." The text addresses the situation of the later community and articulates experiences from the time of John's Gospel itself.[5] In the situation of Diaspora Judaism, synagogue exclusion was conceivable – at least in theory – and could have serious consequences: The ones who were excluded risked losing the privileges of the synagogues in their cities, such as exemption from military service and worship of the gods, or observance of the Sabbath. And they risked losing essential social relationships. The passages considered reflect a process of mutual distancing and incipient demarcation.

However, for the majority of Johannine scholars, the conflict with 'the Jews' is already a matter of history at the time of John's Gospel: The separation between the Johannine circle and the Jewish synagogues dates back to the past. This assessment is based primarily on literary-critical models, which assume that the Gospel of John was composed in three stages up to its final shape. For the final edition, a community situation is postulated different from the conflict with the synagogue. New, *inner-Christian* conflicts are suspected in the Johannine circle, ignited by Christological questions, e.g. about the corporality of Jesus. Thus, the (mostly unspoken) conclusion must be that the

4 On this understanding of synagogue cf. Cirafesi, John, 274–278, who stresses that whoever is excluded from the assembly was not ejected from "Judaism".

5 Cf. the tensions in John 6:52–66. Joseph of Arimathea does not openly confess Jesus for "fear of the Jews" (John 19:38), and Nicodemus comes to him by night. (3:2)

"parting of the ways" is already well advanced or completed. I am critical of such stage models for methodological reasons concerning the difficulty of distinguishing different editing layers from each other according to clear criteria.[6]

An example of this is Jürgen Becker, who postulates in 2004 a far advanced separation of the Johannine communities from Judaism: Already in the Gospel of John a development of the community can be recognized, "which had already distanced itself a good deal organizationally and theologically from Judaism after the exclusion from the synagogue".[7] He claims that by the time of 1 John "the synagogal period of the Johannine community has long since been completed"; the communities live "as an independent association without significant contacts with Judaism".[8] Judaism, for Becker, is opposed by a clearly separated "Christianity". (226)

Jörg Frey in 2013 assumes the shared history to be somewhat longer. Parts of the Johannine circle were connected with the local synagogue until clearly after the year 70 CE, and only after that a separation took place.[9] At the time of both the Gospel and Letters of John, however, the circle was significantly dominated by Gentile Christians, and the separation from the synagogue had taken place some time before, the process of separation being evident in the ἀποσυνάγωγος statements (John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). According to Frey, the *fiscus Judaicus* was an "essential factor for the further separation between the local synagogue and the followers of Jesus who were still associated with it until then",[10] because now a publicly visible decision was required concerning affiliation with Judaism.

Numerous other scholars assume that by the time (of the final editing) of John's Gospel, the separation of the Johannine circle from the (local) synagogue had already occurred some time ago.[11] But does the text really reveal such a development? It seems more plausible to me, along with some scholars, to assume behind the narrated conflict an actual confrontation of the (Jewish)

6 A tendency towards the unity of the Gospel of John I have substantiated in: Schreiber, Vita.

7 Becker, Christentum, 225 ("das sich nach dem Synagogenausschluss bereits ein gutes Stück organisatorisch und theologisch vom Judentum entfernt hatte"; ET: S. S.).

8 Becker, Christentum, 210 (dass "die synagogale Zeit der joh[hanneischen] Gemeinde längst abgeschlossen ist"; 225 ("als unabhängiger Verband ohne nennenswerte Kontakte zum Judentum").

9 Frey, Paulus, 251–254, 257, 277. Cf. Frey, Juden.

10 Frey, Paulus, 271–275, citation 274 ("ein ganz wesentlicher Faktor für das weitere Auseinandertreten der lokalen Synagoge und der bis dato noch mit ihr verbundenen Jesusnachfolger"). On the *fiscus Judaicus* and the parting of the ways see Heemstra, Fiscus, esp. 190–211.

11 For many, cf. Schnelle, Einleitung, 558–561; Hengel, Frage, 300; Popkes, Polemik, 348–349.

Johannine circle with the local Jewish synagogues.[12] This is where the Letters of John come into play.

3. The Letters of John and the History of the Johannine Circle

I presume with the majority of current scholars that the Letters of John – at least 1 John – were written a short time, perhaps a year or two, after the Gospel and originate from the same group of authors as the Gospel.[13] In my opinion, 1 John's use of Johannine tradition is better explained if this tradition was already available in the written form of John's Gospel.

In some passages of John's Letters there is a confrontation with competitors. If this conflict could be identified as *intra-Jewish*, it would also shed light on the circumstances of the Gospel. However, for a long time exegetes have understood the opponents of John's letters as schismatics within the communities. Thus, as in the final stage of the Gospel, an *inner-Christian* conflict was assumed. Yet, there is no agreement on defining the opponents in terms of the history-of-religions. The proposals range from Gnostics to Docetists and representatives of a separation Christology (partly connected with Kerinth) to Ultra-Johanneans.[14] The model of a Johannine community that split due to a conflict about the correct understanding of the joint heritage, i.e., the Johannine tradition, is widespread.[15] Assuming this split is usually connected – more or less clearly – with constructing a "history of the Johannine community":[16] While (a form of) the Gospel was still located in a conflict with the synagogue about the Messiahship of Jesus and allowed for different interpretations, 1 John reflects a later phase in which this conflict was overcome and a new front of opponents arose, located within the community and representing a

12 Fundamental are Martyn, History; Brown, Community; Wengst, Gemeinde; now Wengst, Johannesevangelium, 13–22. Most recently, Cirafesi, John, who underlines the continuing affiliation with "Judaism".

13 Cf. Klauck, Johannesbrief, 46–47; Culpepper, Relationship. Anders Schnelle, Johannesbriefe, 15–19; cf. Schnelle, Reihenfolge.

14 Surveys of research are provided by Brown, Epistles, 47–68; Klauck, Johannesbrief, 34–42; more recently by Streett, They, 5–111; v. Heyden, Doketismus, 55–64; Müller, Johannesbriefe, 294–308.

15 Cf. the account in Kügler, Johannesbrief, 552–553.

16 A seminal concept was offered by Brown, Epistles; cf. Heckel, Briefe, 187–189. Overview: de Boer, Story. Against this, most recently Méndez, Community, with the unconvincing assumption that the Gospel and Letters of John are a series of forgeries.

Christological heresy (docetism, separation Christology).[17] Rainer Metzner, for example, thinks that in 1 John it is no longer the Jews who stand for the "world", as in John's Gospel, but the dissidents (and thus seems to presuppose a separation from the synagogue);[18] the conflict with the Docetic false teachers has replaced the conflict with the synagogue from John's Gospel.[19]

More recently, however, a model widely held prior to the 20th century,[20] before being supplanted by the history of religions school, has regained importance, namely, locating 1 John within an *inner-Jewish* conflict. The competitors are determined as Jews or Jewish Christians who want to live their Jewishness consistently despite their orientation to Christ. This sheds a very different light on the history of the Johannine community than assuming an inner-Christian schism. Representatives of this model are Terry Griffith (2002), Ben Witherington (2006), Matthew Jensen (2012), Birger Olsson in his 2013 commentary, Wichard v. Heyden (2014), and, most extensively, Daniel Streett in 2011.[21] As early as 1999, Kurt Erlemann located the conflict of 1 John in the separation process between Jews and Christians.[22]

In 2012 Matthew Jensen saw 1 John situated in "an intra-Jewish disagreement over the identity of Jesus".[23] However, Jensen used the category "True Israel", which according to 1 John is only the Christ-followers: The turning away from "us" in 1 John 2:19 is a turning away from Israel – "the 'us' of 2:19 refers to Israel" (113), and for 2:18 it holds "that the antichrists could be identified as faithless Jews who were denying that Jesus is the Christ and so leaving the True Israel". (115) "When Jewish people denied that Jesus was the Christ, they left true Judaism".[24] With this the ways basically have already parted. Two observations speak against Jensen's thesis: (1) Nowhere does 1 John use

17 Other studies completely disregard the historical context and understand the rivals only as an inner-textual construction: Neufeld, Texts; Schmid, Gegner; Lieu, Us or You; Witetschek, Pappkameraden; Hakola, Reception, 42–44.

18 Metzner, Verständnis, 306.

19 Metzner, Verständnis, 315–322.

20 Authors are cited in Streett, They, 93 note 373 and 101 note 417. One of the last authors was Wurm, Irrlehrer.

21 Griffith, Idols, esp. 1, 149–191; Witherington, Letters, 401–404, 407–409, 427–431, 493–495, 523–524; Jensen, Resurrection, 104–135; Olsson, Commentary, 251, 268–270, 332–337; v. Heyden, Doketismus, 97–181; Streett, They, 132–357, conclusion 358–360.

22 Erlemann, 1 Joh.

23 Jensen, Resurrection, 104–135, citation 109.

24 Jensen, Resurrection, 134. He supports his claim with contemporary Jewish or Christian texts that supposedly deny other Jews true Jewishness (e.g., the Sadducee, Pharisee, and Essene parties according to Josephus) (120–130), but he takes too undifferentiated an approach.

the categories of true or false Israel; its intention is not to deny Jewishness to other Jews, but to distinguish itself from other Jews in order to strengthen its own confession of Jesus as Christ. (2) Jensen overlooks the fact that there is a third group, the "Antichrist group," which moves away from the Johannine circle back to common Jewishness. (I use the term "common Jewishness" as a linguistic device to indicate that the Johannine group differs from the Jewish groups in its social environment, without being able to define these groups more precisely.)

Which model is more appropriate for explanation – an inner-Christian or inner-Jewish conflict – is, of course, a matter of interpreting the relevant texts. For methodological reasons, I focus on 1 John 2:18–25 and 4:1–3 (along with 2 John 7), the two passages where competitors are explicitly mentioned and a concrete conflict is presented. This is to avoid that by an uncontrollable "mirror reading" slogans or positions of the opponents are discovered even in passages of the letters that are not marked as such.[25]

4. Determining the Competitors: The Antichrist Group

4.1 *The Antichrist Group in 1 John 2:18–25*

1 John 2:18–25 provides the first clear reference to a group of competitors in the course of 1 John. In the context of an end-time scenario – it is "last hour" – 1 John 2:18 invokes the addressees' knowledge about the coming of an ἀντίχριστος of whom they have heard. The figure of an end-time adversary of God, a powerful counter-ruler to God and his Christ, is known from early Jewish and Christian apocalyptic contexts.[26] The term Antichrist is not attested before and beside the Letters of John (1 John 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 John 7), so it is certainly a deliberate choice here. If we take its literal meaning ("Counter-christ"),[27] it not only represents a counter-figure to Christ as God's eschatological co-ruler, but also shows a direct reference to the object at the heart of the conflict, the question whether Jesus is the Messiah who will powerfully prevail. With rhetorical skill, 2:18 applies the term to the competitors: As ἀντίχριστοι they are qualified

25 On this concentration, see also Lieu, John, 10–12,16; Streett, They, 118–131.

26 Cf. Klauck, Johannesbrief, 147–151; Schreiber, Offenbarung, 575–577; Schreiber, Brief, 153–169; Streett, They, 144–145.

27 The prefix ἀντι- here does not denote the substitution of the Messiah, but the opposition to him. Cf. Schnelle, Johannesbriefe, 102; Streett, They, 144.

negatively and at the same time determined in content – they reject (Jesus as) the Christ.[28] The following assertions will illustrate this.

1 John 2:19 says of the competitors: "They went out from us" (ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθαν). Accordingly, they were once part of the Johannine circle, but then turned away from it on their own initiative. They can be recognized as a distinguishable group, which I call "Antichrist group", using the keyword from 2:18. However, "going out" in 2:19 does not mean a lack of contact. On the contrary, the author must take great pains to show that the competitors never really belonged to the Johannine circle because otherwise they would have stayed. (2:19) Even after their departure, the parties maintained close contact.[29] For those who stay, the split meant a challenge to their own identity.

In 2:22, the real issue is revealed: "that Jesus is the Christ" (ὅτι Ἰησοῦς [...] ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός). The one who denies this is called a "liar" and equated with the "Antichrist" mentioned above. "The Christ," ὁ Χριστός, is used as a title (Messiah), as it frequently is in the Johannine writings, and goes back to early Jewish ideas of a Messiah.[30] The term "Antichrist" expresses the opposition to confessing Jesus as this Messiah. Because the Messiah is the representative of God, the Antichrist is determined as the one "who denies the Father and the Son". The Messianic Son embodies access to God, and it is only through the agency of the Son that God can be known as the Father, as 2:23 points out: "whoever confesses the Son also has the Father." Accordingly, whoever denies the Son also denies the Father. The conflict, therefore, is ignited by the confession that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God, the unique representative and revealer of the God of Israel. This confession also takes center stage in the Gospel of John (John 1:20,41; 4:25–26; 20:31) and, in its Johannine climax (e.g. 10:30 "I and the Father are one"), leads to the conflict with other Jews (John 7:26–27, 31, 41–43). That some have left the group of disciples because of the high Christology is reminiscent of the situation in John 6:60–71 where quite a few disciples of Jesus leave the group because of Jesus' Christological claims.[31] All of this takes place in a Jewish environment.

28 Closest to the ἀντίχριστοι is the term ψευδόχριστοι (false messiahs) in Mark 13:22 // Matt 24:24 (along with ψευδοπροφῆται, false prophets).

29 According to Wengst, Häresie, 12–13, no clear separation has yet taken place and no final clarification of the situation has yet been reached.

30 Cf. Schreiber, Anfänge, 12–31, 66–68, 102–103. "Son" in this context is to be understood as a royal (Ps 2:6–7; 2 Sam 7:12–16), a Messianic (4Q174 III 10–13) title.

31 Cf. also Jesus' dispute with Jews who had originally joined him about his role as the unique representative of God in John 8:31–59. – On the background of John 6:60–71 cf. Theobald, Häresie.

Confessing Jesus as the unique Messiah or Son of God is central in 1 John (5:1,5; 4:15). 1 John 2:24 defines this confession as "what you have heard from the beginning"; this echoes the opening of the letter in 1:1 and defines the confession as the central content of the Johannine tradition. The competitors who do not share the confession (any longer) place themselves out of this tradition. Even more: According to 1 John 2:26, the Antichrist group "deceives" or "leads astray" the addressees, who are thus unsettled in their conviction of Jesus as the Messiah. This points once again to former members of the Johannine circle, Jews (or sympathizers) who do not want to change their traditional Jewishness fundamentally by believing that in Jesus as Messiah a new access is opened to the God of Israel.

4.2 *The Antichrist Group in 1 John 4:1–3 (and 2 John 7)*

The second reference to the Antichrist group is not until 1 John 4:1–3. 4:1 calls for the testing of the spirits and warns, "Many false prophets have gone out into the world." The "spirit of the Antichrist" mentioned in 4:3 indicates that the competitors in view are the same as in 1 John 2.[32] 4:2 renders the criterion for identifying the "spirit of God": "Every spirit that confesses Jesus as Christ, who has come in the flesh (ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα), is of God".[33] I have to justify this translation. As for syntax, the verb ὁμολογέω can be constructed with a double accusative (BDR § 157.2), which is also attested in Rom 10:9 ("confess Jesus as Lord") and John 9:22 ("confess him [Jesus] as Christ"). In the confessional language of the first Christians, the predicative accusative is always a noun (and not an attributive participle). In χριστός the semantics of the title Messiah is still to be heard.[34] The participle "come" is then an addition to the predicative accusative "Christ"[35] and refers – in the perfect tense – to the earthly coming of Jesus.

1 John 4:2 takes up the confession to Jesus as Messiah from 2:22, but supplements it with "who has come in the flesh." Thus 1 John reacts, probably in its own words, to the objection of the Antichrist group. The prepositional phrase

32 In contrast, Streett, They, 250–254 identifies the pseudoprophets as a group distinct from the competitors in 2:19: Jewish itinerant prophets who refuse to confess Jesus as the Messiah.

33 On this translation see also Menken, Secessionists, 126–127; Neufeld, Texts, 71; Schmid, Gegner, 167; Griffith, Idols, 187; Witherington, Letters, 524; Jensen, Resurrection, 149–152; Olsson, Commentary, 198–199, 335–336.

34 Cf. Streett, They, 241f.; Jensen, Resurrection, 151. – 1 John 2:22; 5:1 clearly emphasizes the confession "that Jesus is the Christ."

35 Cf. BDR § 412 on the adjectival use of the participle, which corresponds to a relative clause (cf. Luke 6:48: "he is like a man who built a house [ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδομοῦντι οἰκίαν]").

ἐν σαρκί is to be understood modally and denotes the manner in which the Messiah Jesus exists.[36] In Israel's scriptures, "flesh" denotes the creaturely, threatened, and mortal existence of humans. "All flesh is like grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades […]", one reads in Isa 40:6–7.[37] The Johannine circle is convinced that the Messiah Jesus shared in the weakness and threat of man; he "became flesh" (John 1:14). Included is his violent death, which is given a soteriological relevance by 1 John (1:7; 5:6–8; cf. John 6:51–58); God sent his Son as reconciliation for the sins (1 John 2:2; 4:9–10).

"He who has come in the flesh" reveals a conflict about different concepts of the Messiah. Up for discussion is the human side of the Messiah Jesus, because according to the known early Jewish concepts, the Messiah was to appear as a powerful (heavenly) figure who enforces God's good rule for the people of Israel in God's authority and with supernatural means of power.[38] "In the flesh" indicates the position of the competitors: Because Jesus appeared "in the flesh," as a weak man subject to death, and did not prevail against Israel's enemies, he cannot be the Messiah. Such a Messiah was rejected vigorously by Jewish contemporaries according to John 5:18; 6:42; 7:27,31; 10:33; 19:7. The Antichrist group may have left the Johannine circle influenced by such a rejection.

1 John 4:2, 5 assigns the competitors to the sphere of the "world", the remoteness from God (cf. 2:15–17). John 8:23 could say to "the Jews" who question Jesus: "You are of this world". The reproach is clear: whoever does not acknowledge Jesus as Christ loses God and belongs to the "world" – even if s/he is a Jew. The term "world" suggests social and economic factors in the background. Jewish synagogues usually were well integrated into the urban societies of the

36 Cf. Klauck, Johannesbrief, 233. Thus, the focus is not on the incarnation per se, which would be indicated by "into the flesh" (εἰς σάρκα).

37 The LXX offers many instances where πάσα σάρξ (Hebrew *kol-basar*) refers to humans as transient creatures, e.g., Gen 6:12; Ps 65:3; 145:21; Isa 40:5; 49:26; Zech 2:17; Dan 2:11. Cf. Gal 2:16; Rom 3:20; John 1:13, 14; 3:6; 6:63; 8:15; 17:2; 1 John 2:16. – In the NT, "flesh" primarily refers to Jesus' humanity: Rom 1:3; 8:3; 9:5; 2 Cor 5:16; Col 1:22; Eph 3:14; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 5:7; 10:20; 1 Pet 3:18; 4:1. At no point an anti-docetic thrust is apparent. – Jensen, Resurrection, 158–170, interprets the phrase "come in the flesh" differently as "a reference to the resurrection appearances of Jesus in the sphere of humanity" (169), using intertextual references to the appearance narratives in John 20:19–21:14 as his rationale. However, the verb ἔρχομαι ("to come") cannot carry the burden of proof given its general and varied semantics.

38 Cf. Schreiber, Anfänge, 30. This is also true of 4 Esr 7:28 where the Anointed One establishes a 400-year period of salvation, even though he then dies along with all creation (7:29) before God himself begins his eternal reign with the final judgment (7:30–38) (cf. Schreiber, Anfänge, 28).

Eastern Mediterranean. Did the competitors want to maintain this integration? Did they want to continue to share in the privileges often granted to the synagogues, such as exemption from sacrifice to the gods and emperors and from military service, or permission to keep the Sabbath and the purity commandments? Did they thus want to come to terms with their environment for the sake of economic advantages (cf. 1 John 2:16; 3:17)?[39] The Johannine circle, on the other hand, might be less well integrated into the urban world, once it has distanced itself from the synagogues.

2 John 7 takes up the Antichrist motif and repeats the reproach of 4:2 almost verbatim, except that the participle ἐρχόμενον (ἐν σαρκί) is here in the present tense: "the Christ, who *comes* in the flesh." The present tense is probably used because the way Jesus lived *basically* shapes the image of the Messiah for 1 John. The dispute about this also determines the argument with the competitors here.[40] When 2 John 9 warns about "anyone who goes forth (ὁ προάγων) and does not abide in the teaching of Christ,"[41] it becomes apparent once again that the competitors are former members of the Johannine circle who have turned away. 2 John 10 demands strict separation from the competitors: "do not receive him into your house and do not offer him greetings." This shows the close personal contacts that Christ groups and Antichrist groups still have. Perhaps it is not so clear at first glance who still belongs to the Johannine circle and its teachings and who no longer does.

I can only note in passing that the much-discussed passage 1 John 5:6–8 (Jesus Christ "came by water and blood") cannot be evaluated for the question of competitors, as if "water" and "blood" were directed against a docetic doctrine.[42] The text gives no indication of polemically speaking about competitors at all, and its emphasis on the testimony of the three elements water, blood, and spirit shows the rhetorical function of strengthening the addressees in their conviction of Christ, the son of God.

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39 1 John 2:16 criticizes the "boasting of possessions" on the part of those who "are in the world"; 3:17 denounces the hard-hearted behavior of those who have "the possessions of the world" but close their eyes to the needy brother and sister. Cf. Klauck, Johannesbrief, 33.

40 According to Jensen, Jesus, the phrases in the perfect and present tense respectively are largely synonymous. In contrast, Strecker, Johannesbriefe, 335–337 relates 2 John 7 to the future and interprets it as "die chiliastische Vorstellung eines messianischen Zwischenreiches". (336)

41 Mostly προάγω is translated as "go beyond", "progress", "move forward" etc. What is meant, however, is not an "advanced" doctrine, but, as opposed to "staying," a leaving behind one's own tradition. On the problem of translation see Streett, They, 349–353, who translates as "going forth".

42 An overview of research is given by Streett, They, 258–299.

4.3 *Some Results*

If the construction of the Antichrist group proposed above is valid, there is no inner-Christian conflict and no conflict of "Christians" with "Judaism", but between two specific groups within the Jewish culture. The conflict arose about group identity, more precisely about the confession of Jesus as the Messiah, as the unique representative, revealer and messenger of God for the salvation of the world. Since individual groups (1 John pointedly calls them "antichrists"), which until then had been part of the (Jewish) Johannine circle, rejected this confession, a split occurred.

We can only guess why the Antichrist group turned away. Starting from the conflict with "the Jews" in John's Gospel, we can assume a development within the circle increasingly distancing it from the local Jewish synagogues. The teaching about Jesus as Christ took on exclusive features (John 10:30: "I and the Father are one"), which may have caused rejection among the rest of the Jewish community. The Antichrist group could no longer support this development. Theologically, Israel's notion of God is at stake if Jesus as Messiah represents the unique access to God. In order to overcome the distance to the Jewish community, the Antichrist group approached common Jewishness again.

In doing so, the group is unlikely to have lost interest in Jesus, but probably understood him in a more low-threshold way, perhaps as a Jewish wisdom teacher or prophet, for which there are hints in the Johannine tradition (e.g., John 3:1–21; 4:19; 4:46–54; 6:5–14). In this sense, one could speak of "Jesuan Jews" understanding Jesus not as the Messiah in all authority of God, but as an outstanding Jewish teacher and prophet. This allowed the group to continue living smoothly as part of the local Jewish communities.

5. Identity Formation in 1 John

If one classifies the Antichrist group as Jews who turned back from the Johannine circle to the synagogue, closeness and at the same time distance of the circle to its Jewish environment become apparent. In this final section, I will use four topics to illustrate how 1 John develops a distinct profile for his group within its Jewish horizon.

5.1 *Jesus as Messiah and the Image of God*

As we have seen from the conflict with the Antichrist group, the conviction that Jesus is the Messiah shaped the identity of the Johannine group. The Johannine tradition conceives Jesus, the Christ, as exclusive access to the God of Israel. Fellowship with the Father is tied to fellowship with the Son: "Everyone who

denies the Son also does not have the Father; he who confesses the Son also has the Father" (1 John 2:23). This distinctive Christology gives 1 John a profile of his own within his Jewish culture.[43] But this identity is a *Jewish* identity, which demarcates itself from other Jews without breaking off community. In this way, the letter stabilizes the identity of his addressees in the face of critical inquiries inevitably raised against it on the part of other Jews.

Being convinced that the vulnerable human Jesus is the Messiah ("in the flesh") leads to a new focus concerning the image of God. 1 John does not emphasize the powerful God surrounded by heavenly hosts, but the loving God. It is the specific character of Jesus the Messiah that allows to understand God as the embodiment of "love": "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). God's love is demonstrated in the mission of his Son in favor of human salvation (3:1; 4:7–9), specifically in his death (3:16; 4:10).

5.2 *Forgiveness of Sins*

Like other Jewish writings of its time, 1 John 1:5–2:2 addresses the forgiveness of sins by God. In Jewish tradition, only God forgives sins. God's patience, mercy and grace hold out the prospect of forgiveness to the people of Israel who cannot live without sin and guilt.[44] In this way, God proves faithful on the basis of his covenant with Israel (Ex 34:6–7; Deut 7:9; 32:4; Jer 42:5; Mic 7:18–20).

1 John 1:9 takes up this image of God by defining God as "faithful and just" (πιστὸς καὶ δίκαιος) and thus refers back to the theology of the covenant. Here, "just" does not refer to the legal judgment, but rather, as a complement to "faithful," means the saving care, the mercy of God.[45] However, 1 John integrates the mission of Christ into this image of God by giving it a specific accent. Forgiveness is now mediated by Christ: "the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin" (1:7); in the death of his Son, God himself grants forgiveness. According to 1 John 2:1, God forgives sins through the intercession of Jesus Christ. By the mission of his Son, God shows his love and gives "reconciliation" (ἱλασμός) for our sins (4:10; cf. 2:2). Accordingly, 3:1; 4:9–10 specify the basic theological idea of God's mercy as God's love.

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43 Cf. John 5:23: "Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father", and John 8:19: "If you knew me, you would know my Father also".

44 On this see Doering, Gnade; cf. Barclay, Paul, 194–308.

45 On God's righteousness as saving care, cf. Ps 98:2–3; 1 Sam 12:7; Mic 6:5; Isa 56:1; CD XX 19–21; 1QH VI 15–16; 4 Esr 8:36; also Ps 40:11; 71:15; 1QS XI 2–3, 12–15; Isa 45:8; 46:13; 51:5; 59:16–18; 1 En. 53:7; Rom 3:24–25. Israel's covenant theology is emphasized by Olsson, Commentary, 307–313.

5.3 *Application of the Torah*

There is no explicit discussion of Torah application in John's letters. Yet, when 1 John 3:4 describes sinning as "unlawfulness" or "lawlessness" (ἀνομία), it presupposes the validity of the law, the Torah. 5:2–3 parallels love for God and keeping his commandments (ἐντολαί), steering toward a specific interpretation or application of the Torah.

Of special interest are the passages where 1 John mentions God's "commandments" (ἐντολαί) in the plural (that is, the Torah commandments which God gave to Moses at Sinai),[46] but then in the immediate context speaks of the commandment of brotherly and sisterly love in the singular (2:3–4, 7–8; 3:11–18, 23–24; 4:7–5:3). The "new commandment", the love command, so prominent in 1 John,[47] is part of the Jesus tradition in John 13:34–35 and 15:12 and suitable for summarizing the ethical commandments of the Torah. As a commandment, it contains the interpretation of God's will as revealed through Jesus. In John 13:34–35, the love command is established by Jesus, and at the same time Jesus is the motivating example for its fulfillment.[48] Jesus also functions as the model for the fulfillment of God's commandments in 1 John 2:6. The author now "writes" (2:8) what Jesus has given. In the context of contemporary Jewish Torah-interpretations, the love command sums up 1 John's own Torah application, its Torah hermeneutic. In concentrating the commandments of the Torah in brotherly love it provides a hermeneutical key: Interpersonal behavior within the group is strongly emphasized; other parts of the Torah become less important. The love command strengthens the identity of the group by holding the community together and delimiting it from the outside. Paul developed a comparable Torah hermeneutics in Rom 13:8–10 and Gal 5:14 as a summary of the Torah in the command to love one's neighbor from Lev 19:18.[49]

The passage in 1 John 3:23 summarizes the Torah hermeneutics of 1 John in a double principle. The verse phrases God's "commandment" in terms of "trusting in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and loving one another". The devotion to the God of Israel, the trust in him, now comes to pass in his Messiah Jesus, and loving one another in the Johannine circle is the ethical demand. This combination in 3:23, the specific formulation, and the reference to Christ can be considered as an application of the OT commands to love God and one's neighbor given by God to Israel when he made the covenant with his people

46 Cf. Prov 4:5; Sir 1:26; 29:1; 35:2; 37:12; 1 Cor 7:19; Matt 19:17; Rev 12:17; 14:12; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.120.

47 1 John 2:7–10; 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11–12, 21.

48 On this, see Konradt, Ethik, 397.

49 For this see Schreiber, Law.

at mount Sinai (Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18).[50] These commands are connected in Mark 12:30 (par.) as the so-called double love command. The application of the Torah in 1 John 3:23 consists in a double concentration: love for God is concentrated in trust in the Messiah Jesus, love for one's neighbor in the commandment to brotherly love. These two commandments serve as a double principle which guides the interpretation of the entire Torah within Johannine tradition.

Nowhere does 1 John assert an end to the validity of the Torah or a substitution of the Torah by Christ. In principle, the Torah remains the orientation for life and behavior. So what 1 John intends is a specific application of the Torah based on Christ's love command.

5.4 *Formation of a Specific Tradition*

1 John reveals a pronounced intent to form its own tradition. In 1:1–4, a "we" group identifies itself as a witness and proclaimer of the Johannine tradition and, in this capacity, makes contact with the addressees in the letter. As a bearer of tradition, it unfolds the joint identity from its own Johannine tradition. On the one hand, it draws on personal experience and witnessing, and on the other, it emphasizes the transmission of the message, testimony and proclamation.[51] This shows the historical situation of the second or third generation of Christ followers, who must preserve and transmit tradition. It is still a *Jewish* tradition, even if it has its own profile. The conscious formation of a distinct tradition shows the autonomy of a movement. Being aware of this, 1 John emphasizes the continuing affiliation with Judaism by urging the addressees in the final sentence of the letter in 5:21 to beware of "idols" (εἴδωλα). As Jews, they should continue to clearly distinguish themselves from the pagan world.

Such a tradition does not necessarily have to be divisive, but (in retrospect) it probably was. At the time of 1 John, the Johannine circle is in the midst of a process of self-discovery, demanding a reassurance and substantiation of its own way.

6. Demarcation and Finding the Own Way: A Summary

(1) If the competitors in 1 John are defined as Christian heretics, like most scholars do until today, the parting of the ways between the Johannine circle

50 Olsson, Commentary, 116, also sees the connection to these OT passages without evaluating them for a Torah hermeneutic. – Regarding John's Gospel, Cirafesi, John, 182–184 emphasizes its *Jewish* interpretation of the Torah.

51 Cf. Heckel, Historisierung; Schnelle, Johannesbriefe, 62–63, 68.

and the Jewish community might be seen as terminated in 1 John. However, if we identify the competitors as Jews, former members of the Johannine circle having turned away, we realize that 1 John is a testimony of an inner-Jewish conversation. In this context, we encounter attributions of one's identity, group formations and demarcations.

(2) At the heart of the confrontation with the competitors, according to 1 John, is the conviction that access to God (the God of Israel!) is now centered on Jesus, the Messiah. The Johannine circle gains its profile from the question about the Messiah. However, this is connected with a distinctive image of God and a deviant behavior compared to common Jewishness. Such behavior results, for example, from believing that forgiveness of sins is now obtained in Christ, so that instead of performing rituals of forgiveness and purification such as ablutions, one prayed to Christ. Deviant behavior in particular has a high potential for conflict, possibly leading to exclusion from a group.[52]

(3) Compared to John's Gospel, 1 John documents a more advanced stage in the process of distancing between the Johannine circle and the synagogues. While in the Gospel the polemic against "the Jews" and the danger of exclusion from the synagogue because of confessing Jesus as Messiah point to the *beginning* of a process of distancing,[53] 1 John does not talk about "Jews" anymore and focuses on its own identity. A discussion about Jewish identity markers no longer matters. The split of the Johannine circle, only hinted at in the Gospel (John 6:60–71), is a threatening reality in 1 John. The Johannine circle is already living at a greater distance from the local synagogues, without having left the wide area of Judaism. This distance is also evident in 1 John's contrasting his own group collectively with all other people, the "world", without differentiating between Jewish people and people from the nations.[54]

(4) External factors may have increased the distance. A numerical growth of the circle may have provoked a reaction from the synagogues. The *fiscus Judaicus*, the tax that according to Josephus was to be paid by all Jews in the Roman Empire after the Jewish-Roman war was lost, may have forced decisions. The *fiscus* amounting to two drachmas replaced the former Jewish temple tax

52 John Kloppenborg has shown, on the basis of Jewish and pagan associations, that in the case of exclusions from an association "in virtually all instances disruptive or deviant behaviour was the grounds for exclusion, rather than holding to certain beliefs" (Kloppenborg, Disaffiliation, 8). According to de Boer, Expulsion, 367–391, the Sabbath problem in John 5:9–16; 7:22–24; 9:8–34 ultimately triggered the exclusion of Jesus' followers from the synagogue (and not the confession of Jesus as Messiah). However, the two cannot be separated: The confession forms the basis for a changed practice.

53 Cf. Frey, Paulus, 257, who thinks of the beginning of a separation.

54 1 John 2:2, 15–17; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 3–5, 9, 14, 17; 5:4–5, 19; 2 John 7.

and was paid to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus as a symbol of godly Roman rule.[55] By this tax, affiliation with an urban synagogue became a public matter and no longer rested solely in one's own discretion or (tacit) acceptance of the synagogue. In case of doubt, a decision had to be made, which either reinforced the distinction from the local synagogue or the affiliation with it. However, we do not find concrete indications of this in 1 John.

(5) 1 John illustrates how a Christ group struggles to find its identity and develop its own profile. The letter represents a position within Judaism that distinguishes the group from the majority and shows a strong tendency towards autonomy. This group finds itself in a process of demarcation, with the boundaries of the group still fluid and yet to be negotiated. Gray areas remain, demanding delimitations of identity – be it on the part of the Johannine circle, be it on the part of the synagogues.

Whether these developments *necessarily* led to the parting of the ways, I do not dare to decide. However, 1 John clearly moves into a direction that *in fact* reinforces the distinction. That this direction *has* led to the parting of the ways, was a matter of history.

55 Sources: Josephus, *B.J.* 7.218; Cassius Dio 65.7.2; term: Suetonius, *Dom.* 12.2. On the historical circumstances Heemstra, Fiscus, 1–104 (159–189 on John's Gospel). According to Frey, Paulus, 271–275, the *fiscus Judaicus* was an "essential factor for the further separation of the local synagogue and the followers of Jesus who were still connected to it" (274: "ganz wesentlicher Faktor für das weitere Auseinandertreten der lokalen Synagoge und der bis dato noch mit ihr verbundenen Jesusnachfolger").

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Not Χριστιανοί

Group Designations by Christ Believers in the New Testament

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Abstract

The New Testament testifies to self-designations and self-conceptions of early groups of Christ believers. They understand themselves as "the way", "ekklesia", (part of the) "people of God", "God's temple" or addressees of God's covenant. But how are these self-conceptions related to an overarching concept of Israel? Paradigmatic texts imply that they are used on the level of competing groups or define the conviction of belonging to God's people, but are not meant to exclude others from or substitute Israel as God's people.

Keywords

self-designations; covenant; ekklesia; way; Israel

"[…] and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians'" (Acts 11:26).[1] "Christians" has become the name of those who belong to a so-called world religion, as separate from "Judaism", although, according to Luke's story, this designation was not even their invention.[2] As the categories "Jewish/Judaic"[3] and "Christian"[4] operate successfully today, the "parting of the ways" discourse often centers on them. But, as is evident from the designation "Christians", this is not what the groups behind the NT readily applied to

1 All biblical quotations are taken from NRSV, if not stated otherwise.

2 According to Marguerat, Apostelgeschichte, 451, the name was most probably given by outsiders, but whether it originated from imperial institutions or from somewhere else in the population cannot be decided. Cf. also Vogel, Jüdisch, 431, who mentions "the believers" as example of a self-designation in use. Also 1 Peter 4:16 is most probably an outsider designation, cf. Müller, Petrusbrief, 349f.; Vahrenhorst, Petrus, 182f.; Trebilco, Self-designations, 283–285.

3 The range of the terms is debated, cf. e.g. Öhler, Judäer.

4 Cf. the overview of research history by Gabrielson, Parting, who in the end problematizes the categories and defines fields of observation for multifaceted processes. Vogel, Jüdisch, 419.431, problematizes the terminology.

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themselves. Thus, the question arises how else they thought about themselves, and how their self-conceptions related to the overarching concept of "Israel". In my short sketch on the topic, I would like to discuss texts that might be paradigmatic for the intragroup self-conceptions of the early Christ believers, and at the same time, crucial for their relation to Israel. But first some thoughts about social categorization as such are in order.

1. Social Categorization

Identification is the answer to the question of who one is. If people identify as a group or as belonging to a group, this becomes evident by the group category they use. However, the process of social identification and categorization is multifaceted. It must be remembered that social categorization is dependent on context and interests.[5] Every person uses a repository of group memberships. He or she may identify according to language groups or nationalities, to regions, religions, to cultural preferences or associations. The one or the other designation is applied in accordance with a given context. In one context, persons may belong to the same group. In other contexts, however, they belong to different, even antagonistic groups. Apart from that, social identification operates in different layers,[6] with groups being differentiated into subgroups.

If the "parting of the ways" is defined as an active process, then two groups have separated from each other. After having understood themselves as belonging to the same category, they begin to define themselves as (at least) two different entities on an equal level, which is expressed by different, mutually exclusive self-designations. Yet it might be the case that the separation of groups is not their own view, but one introduced from the outside.[7] Group boundaries are to be negotiated as occasion arises, especially if, as in the context of Israel, there are no official representatives to characterize groups for insiders and outsiders and against competing groups. Thus, three levels of social identification are to be set apart: first, categorization by the group members themselves, then, categorization by competing groups, and finally, categorization by outsiders with no claims to belong to the same group.

5 Cf. e.g. Morf, Selbst, 154f.; Scherer, Königsvolk, 110 (taxonomy also).

6 Cf. Nicklas, Diversität, 449f., who asks for emic descriptions.

7 Trebilco, Self-designations, 10, differentiates insider-, outsider-, and "outward-facing" designations.

2. Israel – the People of God

As a common identifier, which preceded any parting of the ways, the most probable category in the 1st century seems to be "Israel". This group understands itself as being in touch with the God of Israel, who chose and guided her through history. Nevertheless, what it means in practice to behave like God's people Israel is under severe dispute in the 1st century CE. Different groups define boundaries and practices of Israel and exclude those who deviate from them.

One telling example are the ancient Samaritans. According to an inscription from Delos (150–50 BCE),[8] they call themselves "Israelites" and modify the designation by "offering to the holy mount Garizim", whereas other Israelites offer in Jerusalem.[9] On the other hand, Josephus writes in *Ant.* 11.341, that it was pure opportunism when Samaritans referred to descent from Ephraim and Manasse in order to participate in a positive perception of the Judaeans. Otherwise, they would deny any relation to Israel. Josephus mentions a familial concept of Israel consisting of twelve tribes by the twelve sons of Jacob/Israel. The idea of tribes as subgroups of Israel allows differentiation and negotiation of distance among the descendants.

As can be seen in this example, viewed from the outside and globally, everyone who claims membership of Israel and accepts the One God of Israel might be categorized as "Israel". Internally, there might be severe controversies about what it means for the one or the other to belong to Israel proper. "Israel", the people of God, is an overarching concept which is applied and realized in different ways not only in the 1st century CE. Thus, it is a matter of discourse. Competing groups mark themselves out as "Israel" by different practices and beliefs. Any given group may be convinced that it is the best version of Israel in its time and place. However, there is no means to prohibit other groups from thinking the same of themselves.

3. Self-designations by Christ Believers

Some self-designations of early Christ believers are clearly subordinate to Israel. For example, Mark has the movement appear in terms of a philosophical school

8 IJO, Ach 67.

9 This is an inside perspective in a diaspora self-presentation by inscription, maybe in a context where the Samaritans wished to show common ground as well as difference from the Judaeans, cf. Van den Horst, Samaritans, 5.

with Jesus as teacher and his followers as disciples.[10] The term "Christians" can also be compatible with Israel or the Jews/Judaeans. In Acts 16:20, for example, Luke has the Roman accusers of Paul and Silas categorize them as Ἰουδαῖοι, despite their having just appealed to the name of Jesus. "Christians" could be perceived as a special and disputed branch of Ἰουδαῖοι categorized by allegiance to a leader named Christ. This group could be singled out in the Roman cities and even persecuted. "The Jews" could oppose them. However, they did so as a competing group who, by historical circumstances, appeared more numerous, more powerful and thus more representative to outsiders. In the following paragraphs, I would like to concentrate on the more ambiguous concepts and examine their relation to Israel, whether they operate on a subgroup or on a competitive level.

3.1 *"The Way"*

The "way", as a designation of a group[11], appears three times in Acts. First, the narrator of Acts reports the letters of the high priest to Damascus which entitle Paul to arrest τινας [...] τῆς ὁδοῦ ὄντας/"those who belonged to the way" (Acts 9:2). As an object of persecution, "the way" appears again in Paul's retrospective in Acts 22:4. Thus, "the way" is presented as an old, Jerusalem-based designation. Yet already in the narrative of Acts, it is only one among several designations for the Jesus group. In the preceding verse, the narrator chooses to call the group "the disciples of the Lord" (cf. 9:10, 19); the disciple Hananias refers to the group members in Jerusalem as "the saints" and "those who call your [Christ's] name" (9:13f., 21).

According to Paul Trebilco[12], the desgination "the way" was coined by the Jesus movement, not taken over from Qumran groups, nor introduced by Luke. He proposes a reference to Isa 40:3: after "the way" has been prepared by John, Christ is the way with which his followers identify. After the designation was used in the early days of the movement, it was dropped in the Greco-Roman environment since it was not concise enough.

The relation to Jesus is made clear by the context. According to Wilfried Eisele,[13] the specific connotation of "the way" unfolds in the context of Luke-Acts, where the author already applies the motif in the infancy narrative and extends it in his *Reisebericht* (Luke 9:51–19:27/48) with its focus on the

10 Cf. Ebner, Wanderprediger.

11 Trebilco, Self-designations, 247, also includes Acts 19:9, 23 as group designations, but this seems to me ambiguous; cf. Eisele, Ethos, 205: "Bezeichnung für das Christsein". Apart from the group designation, "the way" can signify, e.g., content to be taught (Acts 18:25f.).

12 Cf. Trebilco, Self-designations, 253–271.

13 Eisele, Ethos.

succession of the disciples. In the beginning, the way as persecuted by Paul signified a certain way of life that dropped cultic prescriptions for non-Israel members.[14] Eisele thinks there was a strong and universal claim of "the way" to be the absolute one.[15] But this seems typical for insiders who think of themselves as presenting the best version of life according to the will of God.

In Acts 24, the outside view of "the way" is formulated by the Jerusalem authorities. The high priest's lawyer (24:5) attributes to it the status of a αἵρεσις, that is, a distinctive group for which the authorities feel responsible and thus pressed to prevent further riot. The designation is reminiscent of Josephus' presentation of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes as αἱρέσεις, that is, distinctive groups within Israel (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.171). Insider and outsider perspectives merge in Paul's presentation (Acts 24:14): He calls "the way" what the others call αἵρεσις, but it is his mode of serving the God of the fathers while believing everything written in the law and the prophets. "The way" is one option for putting the convictions of Israel into practice. For insiders it is the ultimate way. For outsiders it is just one more concurrent subgroup.[16] Yet, even for insiders, it is clearly rooted in belief in the One God and finds legitimacy by the common ground of the Scriptures. This implicitly leaves room for other interpretations of affiliation to "Israel", working with the consciousness of a common history.

3.2 *ἐκκλησία and Designations from Salvation History*

The self-designation as ἐκκλησία/assembly is familiar from the NT letters. It requires a twofold approach, depending on an application of ἐκκλησίαι in the plural or ἐκκλησία in singular. Assemblies in the plural are attested in the Pauline letters, as the assemblies of Galatia (Gal 1:2), the assembly in the house of Priska and Aquila, Philemon (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Phlm 2) and others. The "assembly of God" can be related to a certain polis, like the one "in Corinth" (1 Cor 1:2). Paul teaches "everywhere in every assembly» (1 Cor 4:17; cf. 1 Cor 7:17). According to 1 Cor 14:23, the whole assembly (ἐκκλησία ὅλη) can gather in one place. The prototype of this assembly is the political assembly of the Greek

14 Eisele, Ethos, 220: "eine ganz bestimmte christliche Lebensweise, in der Judenchristen eine so weite Auslegung der Tora praktizieren, dass bekehrte Heiden keine bestimmten jüdischen Kultvorschriften einhalten müssen, um mit ihnen in der christlichen Gemeinde zusammenzuleben".

15 Cf. Eisele, Ethos, 223.

16 Differently Trebilco, Self-Designations, 270, thinks that αἵρεσις is presented by Luke as unfitting.

cities.[17] As an organizational entity in a certain limited space, assemblies of believers in Jesus, in the plural, are clearly subordinate to an entity like Israel.

Nevertheless, it has been discussed whether the term ἐκκλησία could have been taken over from the Septuagint, where it denotes the assembly of the people of Israel. The term would then operate on an inclusive level. However, it has to be noted that the ἐκκλησία is not the same as Israel, but means Israel as congregated in one place,[18] doing or perceiving things at the same time. Apart from gathering in an assembly, the group members can scatter to their own places and perceive or do things as individuals. In some instances, the group of Jesus believers is called ἐκκλησία in the singular in an encompassing sense which might substitute or compete with Israel. The contested passages are Matt 16:18 and Eph 1:22.

In Matt 16:18, Jesus promises to build an ἐκκλησία in the singular (μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν) on Peter, the rock. At first glance, one might think of substitution. But the assembly is not qualified as God's assembly, but by the personal pronoun as the assembly of Jesus, as a group which Jesus has gathered. In Matthew's context, it is very clear that other groups claim a similar status.[19] The Pharisees, like Peter, obtain the "keys of the kingdom" (Matt 23:13). In Matthew's time, they are much more visible as representatives of Israel than the tiny flock of Jesus followers, and they are not disclaimed or substituted in Matthew's Gospel. On the contrary, there is still common ground when the Jesus of Matthew advises his followers, "do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do" (Matt 23:3). To sceptics from the outside, the assembly of Jesus needs to be presented as a legitimate interpretation of Israel, and from the inside it is obviously presented as the best choice. But this was not intended to negate the Pharisees or other members of Israel, which, at the time of writing, would have been an unrealistic idea.

In the letter to the Ephesians, ἐκκλησία is used alongside other designations from salvation history. As can be seen from Eph 1:22f., the assembly of Ephesians is universal and singular:[20] "And he has put all things under his feet

17 For the historical background cf., e.g., Repschinski, Ekklesia, 347–349, and Trebilco, Self-designations, 165–169.

18 Cf. e.g. Repschinski, Ekklesia, 349, for the assembly denotation.

19 Cf. Repschinski, Ekklesia, 364, for the context of competition. Repschinski understands Jesus as antitype to Moses, and the ekklesia of the Immanuel as ekklesia of God. However, cf. Konradt, Matthew, 130–132, who differentiates between the institutional form of the Matthean Christ groups and their connection to Jewish discourse and different groups.

20 According to Gerber, Braut, 218, Ephesians was formative to this unifying concept: "Es soll die Vorstellung von einer einzigen Gemeinschaft der Glaubenden jenseits der Versammlungen in Ortsgemeinden erst mittels Metaphern kommunikabel machen – und so performativ in die Welt setzen."

and has made him the overarching[21] head for the church (τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ), which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all[22]" (adapted from NRSV). The ἐκκλησία is closely related to Christ, as a bride to her bridegroom (Eph 5:23–32) and as the body to the head.

Ephesians applies further terms from salvation history to its addressees.[23] They are blessed by God (1:3), chosen from the beginnings of creation to be holy and blameless (1:4), preselected for adoption (1:5), chosen by lot (1:11) and future heirs (1:14). But these designations are by no means meant as a substitution of the people of God or as the establishment of a second people of God. As the second chapter makes clear, Ephesians addresses believers who were previously not part of Israel,[24] "[…] Gentiles by birth, called 'the uncircumcision' […] aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise" (2:11f.). However, insofar as Ephesians claims that the addressees are joined with God's people of old,[25] it attests to a "merging of the ways"[26]:

> [14] […] in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. [15] He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, thus making peace, [16] and might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it […]." (adapted from NRSV)

Of course, this is the insider perspective. When the Paul of Ephesians attributes designations like these to his readers, he increases their status before God. Contrary to that, competing groups might not accept that Christ is the universal head of creation and that, by being connected to him, everyone

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21 Gerber, Braut, 206, points to the comparative meaning of the phrase: "*alles überragendes* Haupt".

22 Which means that the church is filled by Christ, cf. Gerber, Braut, 207.

23 Cf. similar Röhser, Erwählung, 106: "volle prädestinatianische Integration aller Christusgläubigen in den Kreis der Erwählten, Erlösten und Erlosten". Cf. Röhser, Erwählung, 90–92, for the OT (Deut 7:6; 14:2) and early Jewish background of election.

24 Gerber, Braut, 220, points to the phenomenon of construed readers in a literary strategy, who might differ from the audience in the real world.

25 Against Greever, Nature, who reads the text as abolishing the old covenant and constituting a new covenant people. He reads that abolishing the law is abolishing a "law covenant" (85) and that only believers constitute the "new man". (86) But according to V. 16, "both" are reconciled to God, the old and the new, which can easily be understood as integrative. A "new man" might be created by integrating, not abolishing the predecessors. Moreover, to claim that Christ has done something is different from claiming that everyone has to believe in Christ.

26 Cf. Sellin, Epheser, 200: "sie sind denen, die schon immer nahe waren, gleichgestellt, also mit dieser Gruppe vereinigt".

belongs to the people of God without distinction. For competing groups, this might have been grounds for declaring that Christians were no longer part of Israel proper.

A similar discourse on status comes to the fore in 1 Peter, where further terminology from salvation history is applied. The addressees are called ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις διασπορᾶς, chosen and diaspora[27] (1 Peter 1:1). The holiness of Lev 19:2 is applied to them in 1:15f. In 1 Peter 2:9f. , λαός terminology and designations from Scripture[28] are applied:

> 9 But you are a chosen lineage, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (ἔθνος ἅγιον), a people for his ownership (λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν), in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people (λαὸς θεοῦ) […]. (adapted from NRSV)

Since 1 Peter addresses a group at the margins of society, which is under severe pressure,[29] the designations are part of a coping strategy.[30] 1 Peter tries to turn the perspective to God and the value of the group as God's holy chosen people deserving God's eternal loyalty, which overarches the distress of the precarious situation. No direct claim is made that the addressees were God's people in an exclusive way.[31] There is room for others to belong to God's people as well. Competing groups are not in the focus of 1 Peter.

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27 Guttenberger, Volk, 130–135, points out that especially the diaspora concept is peculiar to Jewish identity in which the addressees participate.

28 These stem from Isa 43:20; Exod 19:5f. and Hos 2:25. According to Friedeman, Design, the arrangement is due to rhythmic and poetic reasons.

29 Sibley, Theology, argues for a purely Jewish audience, i.e., that among the mixed communities only the Jews were addressed and everything in 1 Peter was compatible with a Jewish-only audience. Vahrenhorst, Petrus, 30, however, argues for non-Jewish addressees: The biblical quotations do not necessarily presuppose a public that is well-read in the Scriptures; 1 Petr 4:3 mentions ethne and idolatry as characteristics of the past. To my mind, the weakness of Sibley's argument is how to separate a Jewish readership in mixed congregations, since the situation described in the letter applies to Christ believers in general, not only to those rooted in Israel beforehand in a special way.

30 Cf. Horrell, Race, 141f., who mentions the acquisition of high status in the situation of crisis and observes that the Israel designations are used by the Christian group, but not denied to Israel. Also Vahrenhorst, Petrus, 33: "Die Israelekklesiologie des 1Petr hat eine erkennbar seelsorgliche und paränetische Funktion: Sie führt der Leserschaft vor Augen, dass sie als Gottes Eigentumsvolk von der Umwelt unterschieden ist und dass sie diese Unterschiedenheit auch bejahen und bewusst leben soll.".

31 Against Parker, Church, according to whom "Peter presents the church as the renewed, eschatological, antitypical Israel ". (42) To my mind, "the church" in a global sense is not

Likewise, 1 Peter 5:2 defines the scope of the leaders as "to tend the flock of God that is in your charge". Notably, God's flock is not universal, and the shepherds are not claiming authority over all of it. They are confined to a group which is personally entrusted to them. The people of God is divided into several flocks with several shepherds. When 1 Peter 5:9 adopts a universal perspective, it names the sufferings "that your brothers and sisters in all the world (τῇ ἐν κόσμῳ ὑμῶν ἀδελφότητι) are undergoing." The relation among the members is made explicit, but not their relation to other groups. Maybe the Christ believers are under stronger pressure than other groups of Israel. They are connected to each other in a familial, not in an ethos-like sense. This leaves room for the ongoing validity of a comprehensive concept of Israel.

While the aforementioned designations from salvation history did not operate in an exclusive way, but stressed the conviction that former non-Israelites could achieve the status of Israelites, concepts from cultic contexts, like the temple metaphor, might draw stronger boundaries.

3.3 *Cultic Terms: Temple and Covenant*[32]

At the origins of the New Testament temple metaphor stands 1 Cor 3:16:

> [16] Do you not know that you are God's temple (ναὸς θεοῦ) and that God's Spirit dwells in you? [17] If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

The assembly is understood as God's *naos* – the inner room of the Temple – inhabited by the Spirit. This is not necessarily delegitimizing the still existing Jerusalem temple.[33] Rather, the claim is that the presence of God is not limited to Jerusalem, that it can be conceptualized differently. Paul's immediate context, however, is not cultus, but status. The community inhabited by the spirit is as valuable as a temple, it is sacrosanct and may not be damaged without incurring divine revenge. Where the pneuma is received by and inhabits any addressee (cf. Rom 8:11), God's presence is extended. But the notion of the manifold presence of God is not a Christian invention. It was already part of the tradition in 1 Kgs 8:27 or Wis 7:25, 27, and later on appropriated by Christ believers for their theological ends.

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in the focus of 1 Peter; and if any antitypical reading was intended, the designations would be determined by an article.

32 One might wonder whether the covenant topic would not be better placed among the salvation history terms, but in the cultic context of Hebrew's construct of Jesus as the heavenly high priest and the ultimate victim, cultic connotations prevail.

33 Cf. Wilk, Korinther, 51, with reference to Rom 9:4, Acts 18:18–22, 21:23–26, Rom 15:16, 19.

In my opinion, the metaphor in 1 Corinthians works on the same level as the λαός terminology in 1 Peter. The Christians are a temple, not the temple. The same goes for Eph 2:21, where it is stated that the group is built into a holy temple (εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ), and in a similar way 1 Peter 2:5 (οἶκος πνευματικὸς). If these letters date to a time after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, it is still more plausible that groups were negotiating the presence of God in alternative ways and were applying the temple metaphor in a flexible way.

Some variation on the cultic concept is found in Hebr 8:7–13, certainly the most profiled pericope which contrasts a former and a new covenant. As Jesus the heavenly priest is its mediator of atonement by his sacrifice, the covenant of Hebrews has cultic implications. Social implications become visible when the covenant addressees, who are meant to benefit from God's presence, come into view. In Hebrews, a so-called first[34] and earthly covenant is vanishing, being finalized by Christ's new, singular and heavenly act. Christ gives a better covenant, as the old one was blemished. Does this mean that the new covenant also has new addressees, that is, Christ-believers over against Israel of old, or at least those groups who were still adherents of the Jerusalem temple and its cult?

Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31 at length, where the addressees of old and new covenant are nearly identical. Whereas the traditional covenant was given to the house of Judah and of Israel, the new one is for the house of Israel only. In the new covenant, God will show mercy to the sins of the people and forget them (V. 11). As a consequence, it is neither the addressees nor the standards of the covenant which have changed, but God's way of coping with transgressions. In the context of Hebrews, the covenant ritual of the temple is no longer necessary due to God's promise of mercy. There is no substitution of the covenant people, but two modes of being in touch with God which both reach the same status of freedom from sin.[35] With Christ's sacrifice, the former mode becomes "outdated", in the sense of no longer being necessary. Thus, the former covenant serves as metonymy for the Jerusalem temple cult.[36] If the letter was written after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE,[37] the interpretation of the death of Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice might be one of

34 Kraus, Verhältnis, 240, underlines that "old" covenant is not used in a technical sense.

35 Cf. Backhaus, Hebräerbrief, 296: "Der Mangel des ersten Bundes liegt allein in dieser soteriologischen Unzulänglichkeit (of being earthly, HS). Er liegt also keineswegs in der ethischen Disposition des Heilsvolks Israel, dessen Bundesbruch, dessen notorischer Verstockung oder Glaubensverweigerung." Backhaus, Hebräerbrief, 300f., for the unbroken continuity of the Israel covenant.

36 Cf. Backhaus, Hebräerbrief, 299f.; Kraus, Verhältnis, 238–244.247.

37 Cf. Karrer, Hebräerbrief, 495f.

the many ways of coping with the loss of the ritual, by finding alternatives in Scripture. Hebrews claims nothing like a split in the holy people or a lack of atonement for the "old" covenant group. Hebrews does not think in terms of a competition between "us" and "them".[38] Thus, its arguments work well *intra muros* and align themselves to biblical and contemporary reflections on the status of the Jerusalem temple cult.[39]

Some digression might be in order with respect to 2 Cor 3:1–18, with its new covenant terminology, although it does not focus on cult and sacrifice, but on Tora reading.[40] 2 Cor 3:7f. is a conclusion *a minore ad maius*, which clearly states that what is called "ministry of death" was in glory. The pragmatic aim of the pericope is to legitimize Paul's ministry by favorable comparison with Moses.[41] In order to be outdone by Paul, the covenant of Moses needs to be still valid and precious.[42] If it is called τὸ καταργούμενον (V. 11), then this can be read as a lack of perception in comparison to the brighter glory.[43] The "new" covenant is not opposed to the old one by content,[44] but is its eschatological[45] counterpart. It is well founded in the Jeremiah promise and thus deeply rooted in the Scriptures of Israel, as a covenant from the same god to the same people, but according to Paul there is a split between those gifted by the spirit and those who are not. For some, the promise of Jeremiah has come true, but

38 Hebr 13:10–14 might be read in this way. Backhaus, Hebräerbrief, 470f., reads V. 10 to the effect that the servants are those who do not believe in Christ. But this is not necessarily so. As the sacrifice of Christ is the final sacrifice of the day of atonement, which was not eaten but holly burnt (cf. also Backhaus, Hebräerbrief, 471), nobody at all was entitled to eat from it. V. 12 says that the blood of Christ is meant to sanctify the people without any difference.

39 Cf. Karrer, Hebräerbrief, 494, who pleads for such a reading vis-á-vis non-Jewish addressees; Kraus, Verhältnis, 246–248, points to parallels in the Qumran literature as example of an *intra muros* discourse.

40 Since 1 Cor 11:25 is more open to interpretation and does not work so strongly with contrasts, I will focus on 2 Cor.

41 Cf. Avemarie, Notion, 68f.

42 This could get lost from view when the contrast of V. 6 was seen in isolation, cf. Schmeller, Korinther, 186.231.

43 Cf. Schmeller, Korinther, 209f.

44 Cf. Avemarie, Notion, 70–77, who collects the arguments against a supersessionist understanding of the "new" convenant and of the verb "to vanish" and draws the lines to other Pauline statements on the persistence of the covenant; he reads V. 14 as the vanishing of the veil, leading to Israel's perception of the glory via the Tora.

45 For this aspect cf. Hafemann, Moses, esp. 179: "For Paul, eschatology and ecclesiology therefore merge. At this stage in redemptive history the church is the eschatological remnant of God's people, who exist in continuity with the faithful remnant throughout Israel's history and whose existence anticipates the future redemption of Israel and the nations […].

there are groups of listeners to the "old covenant" for whom it has not yet.[46] Nevertheless, the old covenant people is in no way replaced.

Close readings of the texts might foster an integrative view and explain the rhetorical conditions of such argumentative moves. But the covenant texts seem to me to be the most explosive ones for supersessionist readings, as they clearly conceptualize groups on a λαός level. They clearly set apart entities on the same levels as "the old" over against "the new".[47]

4. Conclusion

As the analysis of the group designations of Christ believers has shown, to apply certain designations to one group does not necessarily mean to deny them to others. As in 1 Peter or 1 Corinthians, the context is not that of drawing boundaries to other groups, but of ingroup coping with status problems. As self-designations, "the way" or "the assembly of God" operate on the level of group competition under the roof of Israel, Ephesians even demonstrates a merging of the ways when Jesus followers, especially those from the nations, try to write themselves into the categories of God's chosen people. More dangerous designations operate on the broadest level of people or covenant. But, as far as I can see, the categories used in the New Testament are never set on the same level as Israel or seek to replace Israel, the people of God.

46 Esler, Corinthians, 131, attributes the sharp contrasts (cf. 122) to Paul's coping with opponents in Corinth and writes that "[…] Paul is communicating a radical dualism between the old and new covenants […], and that he is doing so with his opponents in Corinth firmly in view; or, in social identity terms, that he is espousing a pronounced ingroup/outgroup differentiation between his version of the Christ-movement and the ethnically Judean version that they represent." He thinks of competing groups, but to my mind, they compete under the roof of Israel.

47 For examples of modern supersessionist readings cf. Kraus, Verhältnis, 233–235. He argues that the categories of Christian and Jewish are anachronistic (235–237).

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PART IV

The Parting of the Ways in Non-Canonical and Patristic Texts

The Didache and the Parting of the Ways

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Abstract

The article briefly reviews some aspects of the literary structure and source-critical questions of the Didache, comments on its genre, and discusses in detail the two selected topics of fasting and prayer in *Did*. 8.1–3, with a view to what the Didache might contribute to the issue of the so-called "Parting of the Ways". It is argued that the Didache, directed at a Christ-believing group composed of both Jews and gentiles, attempts to establish boundaries vis-à-vis a specific group of Jews polemically called "hypocrites" which bears some relation with pre-70 CE Pharisees, and that this conversely shows that "the ways" between the Didache group "and Judaism" have not fully parted.

Keywords

Didache; Fasting; Prayer; Jewish Christianity; Pharisees; Eighteen Benedictions

1. Introduction

The text known in scholarship as the "Didache" was first published by Philotheos Bryennios in 1883 on the basis of an eleventh-century Greek manuscript.[1] This manuscript has been assigned the siglum "Hierosolymitanus 54" or "H", since it is now kept in Jerusalem, in the Library of the Convent of the Holy Sepulchre (Panagios Taphos), which belongs to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate. Ever since the publication of this text, its literary structure, its use of sources, and as a source for other texts, its genre, and its place in nascent Christianity have been intensely debated. With a view to what the Didache might contribute to the issue of the so-called "Parting of the Ways", the present paper undertakes the following analysis: first, it briefly reviews some aspects of the literary structure and source-critical questions, before commenting on its genre and the two selected topics of fasting and prayer in *Did*. 8.1–3. At first

1 Bryennios, Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων. At the time of its "discovery" by Bryennios, the manuscript was kept in Constantinople.

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glance, the Didache seems highly relevant for this matter, not only because it provides early evidence for the "ways" metaphor by featuring an early "two-ways doctrine",[2] but, more importantly, because it seems to integrate "Jewish" traditions with teaching directed at "gentiles". Harnack once famously stated, "The Διδαχή has finally brought us light."[3] In what ways might this apply to the questions underlying this volume?

Let us start with a brief presentation of some of the main features of the Didache. The text is extant in its entirety only in the aforementioned Greek manuscript H from 1056. The quality of the text varies, as can be seen in comparison with Greek and Coptic fragments extant for small passages of text.[4] The Didache, or parts of it, were also incorporated into subsequent works. It appears in book 7 of the *Apostolic Constitutions* (§§ 1–32; end of 4th century), in part augmented, in part reworded. Parts of chaps. 11–13 and 8 are incorporated in the Ethiopic translation of the *Alexandrian Sinodos* (or *Canones ecclesiastici*).[5] Parallels to the two-ways doctrine are found in other works: *Did.* 1.1–4.8 (though notably without the *sectio evangelica*, *Did.* 1.3b–2.1) find a parallel in the Greek *Apostolic Church Order*.[6] It is debated whether the latter directly depends on the Didache (thus Adolf Harnack and Klaus Wengst) or not (thus Kurt Niederwimmer).[7] A two-ways section comparable to that of the Didache appears also in the *Doctrina apostolorum*, extant in Latin in two manuscripts. Scholars tend to think that this is the translation of the Greek two-ways teaching which was the kind of text that the Didachist (the redactor of the Didache) used when adopting the two ways. A variant of the two-ways

2 As Christoph Markschies has commented somewhat tongue-in-cheek: Markschies, Metaphors, 18–19.

3 Harnack, Lehre 2 [= Prolegomena], 94: "Die Διδαχή hat uns endlich Licht gebracht", here with reference to the position of apostles, prophets, and teachers in early Christianity.

4 While H is our main witness for the Didache, it does not always show the best text in passages for which comparison is possible. A brief section is attested by P. Oxy. 1782 from the late 4th century, covering *Did.* 1.3b–4a and 2.7b–3.2a. There is also a Coptic translation of *Did.* 10.3b–12.2a from the late 4th/early 5th century (BM Or. 9271), as well as a more remotely related Georgian translation of the Didache of debated age. Cf. Niederwimmer, Didache, 33–45.

5 Cf. Steimer, Vertex, 11–13 (on the Ethiopic *Sinodos*: 14 n. 28). Cf. also Niederwimmer, Didache, 45–55 (who additionally lists the Arabic *Life of Shenoude*, the Pseudo-Athanasian *Syntagma Doctrinae* and the related *Fides Patrum*; according to Steimer, Vertex, 12 n. 15, these do not represent an independent stage of the transmission of the two ways); Tuillier, Didache.

6 Or *Constitutiones ecclesiasticae apostolorum*. The material of *Did.* 1–4 is also found in the so-called *Epitome* related to the *Apostolic Church Order* (Steimer, avoiding the term *Epitome* here, calls it "O").

7 Cf. Harnack, Lehre, 210–211; Wengst, Didache, 7–11; against these, Niederwimmer, Didache, 51–54.

teaching is also present in *Barn.* 18–21. The latter is now often seen as going back to a similar tradition and not as being directly dependent on the Didache, or vice versa. While it is difficult to date the Didache, the proximity to the Gospel of Matthew, the limited development of offices, and the apparent presence of Jewish, or Jewish-Christian, traditions speak for a date towards the end of the first century CE, or around 100 CE.

Structurally, the Didache is a compilation of different sections: (1) *Did.* 1.1–6.1 is the "two-ways" doctrine. It is arguably based on a Jewish *Vorlage*, probably similar to the two ways extant in Latin in the *Doctrina apostolorum*.[8] Into this *Vorlage*, a section clearly featuring Gospel tradition has been inserted, the so-called *sectio evangelica* (*Did.* 1.3b–2.1). It is debated when this happened. Some scholars argue that the *sectio evangelica* was interpolated after the composition of the Didache.[9] Others, like Niederwimmer, claim that it was the Didachist who inserted the section. I shall argue that this section fits well with the incipit, "The teaching of the Lord through the twelve apostles to the gentiles", which I consider original to the work, too. Thus, I follow Niederwimmer in assuming that it is the Didachist who is responsible for the insertion.[10] (2) Chaps. 7–10 contain "liturgical" instructions: on baptism, on fasting and prayer (on which more later), and on the eucharist. These passages seem to reflect tradition that the Didachist has adopted and put together, with few additions.[11] (3) Chaps. 11–15 deal with itinerant teachers, prophets, participation in the eucharist as dependent on confession and reconciliation, the choice of bishops and deacons, and instructions on reproof, probably with a higher share of the Didachist's own, updating contribution.[12] (4) Chap. 16 is an eschatological coda, taken up by the Didachist and redacted slightly.[13]

There has been considerable debate on the question whether the Didache had one title (and which one precisely), or two titles, or none. This might be important for the kind of text the Didache claims to be, which might in turn be relevant for the text's self-positioning regarding any "parting" of "ways". Manuscript H appears to deploy two titles, a short one and a long one. The

8 Cf. Niederwimmer, Didache, 49–50; van de Sandt/Flusser, Didache, 61–63.

9 E.g. Wengst, Didache, 19–20. This builds on Wengst's view that the *Apostolic Church Order* quotes the Didache and not a different variant of the two ways (see above); Wengst also assumes, with Layton, Sources, that the *sectio evangelica* depends on the Shepherd of Hermas as well as the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

10 Cf. Niederwimmer, Didache, 68.

11 Cf. Niederwimmer, Didache, 69.

12 Cf. Niederwimmer, Didache, 69–70. Niederwimmer calls this section the "church order" part ("'kirchenrechtlichen' Teil"), although the aptitude of the term is debated, see below. The term "rules for the community" might be better suited.

13 Cf. Niederwimmer, Didache, 70.

short one is Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων, "Teaching of the twelve apostles"; the long one, Διδαχὴ κυρίου διὰ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, "Teaching of the Lord, through the twelve apostles, to the gentiles". Earlier scholars such as Harnack deemed the short title a condensation of the longer one.[14] However, based on references in patristic literature,[15] Jean-Paul Audet claimed that the proper title was simply Διδαχὴ τῶν ἀποστόλων, "Teaching of the apostles".[16] Some scholars have further argued that this could be but a secondary accrual, since *Did.* 11.3–6 uses a different concept of "apostles" (that of an itinerant apostle), and that the composition could not tolerate such different notions of "apostles". Building on research along these lines by Philip Vielhauer or Klaus Wengst,[17] Bruno Steimer vehemently denied that the Didache had any title at all. He claimed that the text constitutes the voice of "the community" that describes its present reality.[18] More recently, however, scholars have moved away from such a position. The brief titles referred to in patristic literature could indeed be abbreviations inspired by titles like Πράξεις (τῶν) ἀποστόλων, "Acts of the Apostles". The specification "Teaching of the *twelve* apostles" would make excellent sense as a title, thereby distinguishing these apostles from the notion of recent itinerant apostles as referred to in chap. 11. Rather than simply restating current practice by "the community", as Steimer thought, this would suggest a text with an *authoritative instruction* on certain issues of communal organization and practice. A title containing the term διδαχή ("teaching") would also be supported by internal references in the text, such as *Did.* 1.3; 2.1; 6.1; 11.2 (only H). Nancy Pardee has pointed out that the two-ways doctrine in *Barn.* 18.1 is similarly introduced by the phrase "another lesson *and teaching*" (ἑτέραν γνῶσιν καὶ διδαχήν; cf. also Acts 2:42).[19]

In an important contribution, Dietrich-Alex Koch forcefully argued[20] that the Didache, as an early church order addressed to a variegated group of churches rather than one individual church, was in need of authorization.

14 Cf. Harnack, Lehre, 30–31; similarly – though with his own explanation of the abridgement – Knopf, Lehre, 4.

15 E.g., τῶν ἀποστόλων αἱ λεγόμεναι Διδαχαί (Eusebius), Διδαχὴ καλουμένη τῶν ἀποστόλων (Athanasius), *doctrina apostolorum* (Rufinus; so also the *Doctrina Apostolorum* [thus Cod. Mellic. 597; Cod. Lat. Monac. 6264: *De doctrina apostolorum*]).

16 Cf. Audet, Didachè, 91–98.

17 Vielhauer, Geschichte, 723–725; Wengst, Didache, 66.

18 Steimer, Vertex, 20–27. In doing so, however, Steimer primarily wishes to dismiss attempts to secure "apostolic" authority for the Didache, or part of it, and wishes to emphasize its pseudepigraphical character – aspects which the present writer can fully support.

19 Pardee, Genre, 111–112. However, Pardee favours (105–123) the *incipit* or so-called "long title" as the original title; for criticism see the following.

20 Koch, Debatte.

"Teaching of the twelve apostles" would readily serve this need. Moreover, following a suggestion by Bryennios, Koch correctly pointed out that the so-called "long title", Διδαχὴ κυρίου διὰ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ("Teaching of the Lord, through the twelve apostles, to the gentiles"), is not a title at all, at least not in our single textual witness, manuscript H. Rather, it is the introduction to the two-ways teaching. Koch has drawn attention to the fact that this remark is visibly set off from the title in manuscript H (which is framed by a tetracolon and a tricolon), and is itself continued in the same line by the text from *Did.* 1.1,[21] from which it is separated merely by a semicolon. Thus, according to Koch, the "two ways" in the Didache are presented as a baptismal catechesis for people from a non-Jewish context (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, "to the gentiles"), while the *entire* composition has a *mixed, Jewish and Gentile Christ-believing community* in view. I find this suggestion plausible in view of some of the traditions discussed presently. However, I would prefer speaking of a "community rule" rather than a "church order", thereby partly suggesting an analogy with the Community Rule from Qumran as a "Jewish" text,[22] and partly trying to avoid an anachronistic transfer of a later "Christian" text type to the Didache,[23]

21 Cf. Koch, Debatte, 271–275 (image p. 273). The image featuring the title and introduction of the *Didache* in manuscript H can now be accessed through the Library of Congress website: https://tile.loc.gov/image-services/iiif/service:amed:amedmonastery:00279389694-jo:0078/full/pct:50/0/default.jpg (access: 8 Apr 2024).

22 Since 1QS has become known to scholars there have been attempts to compare it with the Didache, e.g. by Audet, Affinités; Audet, Didachè, *passim*; Pardee, Genre, 49–50. However, the focus has been on the "two-ways" doctrine, often with insufficient distinction between "two ways" and "two spirits". Otherwise, references to Rule Texts such as 1QS and 1QSa have been fairly brief; cf. Niederwimmer, Didache, 14 n. 11 ("Man denke an 1QS und 1QSa"); Garleff, Identität, 97, who points out that, contrary to 1QS, there are no sanctions in the Didache. A verse-by-verse commentary that, in general, attempts to *dissociate* the Didache from the Qumran texts and points to its proximity to "Pharisaic" traditions is Draper, Commentary. What is largely a desideratum in Didache studies is consideration of recent redactional-critical study of the S texts from Qumran, which has shown redactional growth of the various sections of the "Community Rule" (e.g. Metso, Development; Schofield, Qumran); this may well be compared with the breadth of topics and their connection in the Didache. Pardee's reference to "origins in Judaism as a genre comprised of parenesis communicating the interpretation of Torah for everyday life" (Genre, 189) hardly does justice to the insights the Qumran Rule texts might provide.

23 Cf. e.g. Pardee, Genre, 189: "Neither a *church order* nor simply a compilation of sources from a variety of genres, the *Didache* shows within itself the development of the genre *didache* in the early Church." Cf. also Rordorf/Tuilier, Didachè, 21 n. 2: The classification as "le premier 'règlement ecclésiastique' […] rapproche trop l'ouvrage du genre littéraire des écrits apostoliques postérieurs comme la *Didascalie des apôtres* […]". On the right track is Niederwimmer, Didache, 66: "eine Art Regel-Schrift".

which however is clearly a parent of such later church orders.[24] Hence, the position of this text relative to what we call the Parting of the Ways appears to be of supreme interest.

2. *Did.* 1–6 and *Did.* 7

Let us briefly spell out the results of this discussion for the interpretation of *Did.* 1–6 and 7. *Did.* 6.1 is the remainder of the original conclusion of the "two-ways" treatise for gentile believers, as is shown by the Latin *Doctrina Apostolorum*: "See to it that no one leads you astray from this way of the teaching, for (such a person) teaches you without (regard for) God." The Didachist seems to have replaced the continuation of this conclusion in the *Doctrina Apostolorum* with *Did.* 6.2–3: "(2) For if you are able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect. But if you are not able, then do what you can. (3) Now, concerning food, bear what you are able; but from meat sacrificed to idols keep strictly away, for it is worship of dead gods." As I have argued elsewhere,[25] "the whole yoke of the Lord" is most likely *the Torah as interpreted by Christ, the Lord*, since, as we have seen, *kyrios* in the introduction to the "two-ways" doctrine refers to Christ, not to God. This is therefore a stance similar to that in the Gospel of Matthew. There, Jesus' interpretation of the Torah in the so-called "Antitheses" (for which a better name might be "Sayings of Torah Instruction", because they deal with Jesus' teaching of Torah)[26] is prefaced by the saying of Matt 5:17–20 about the fulfilment of the Law and the righteousness exceeding that of scribes and Pharisees. The conclusion to the "Antitheses" calls the addressees to "be perfect". It is important to emphasize that "the whole yoke of the Lord" is *not* merely the teaching of the *sectio evangelica* (*Did.* 1.3b–2.1), which shows close resemblance with the Sermon on the Mount, but a *notion of the Torah in total as interpreted by Christ*. This is recognizable by the phrase, "But if you are not able, then do what you can", and by the continuation, extending this maxim to food laws as part of the *wider* requirements of the Torah, *not* limited to the subjects of the *sectio evangelica*. A more stringent approach is taken specifically toward meat sacrificed to idols. All of this suggests that *Did.* 6.2–3 is best interpreted as an epilogue that closes the instruction on the two ways to believers from the *gentiles*.

In the continuation, the remark in *Did.* 7.1 ("now, concerning baptism, baptize as follows; after you have said all these things beforehand [ταῦτα πάντα

24 As Steimer, Vertex, *passim*, has aptly shown.

25 Doering, Reflection.

26 Cf. Doering, "Ihr", where I also refer to similar suggestions.

προειπόντες], baptize [...]")[27] suggests that chapters 1–6 were similarly used as a baptismal catechesis to neophytes *from the gentiles*. Assuming that *Jewish* Christ-believers underwent baptism as well,[28] it is unclear what catechesis – if any – they would have received in advance of their baptism. One might see in the focus on instruction of gentiles *a certain shift in focus towards non-Jews* in the communities addressed in the Didache, although one should not conclude too much from the absence of pre-baptismal teaching for Jewish Christ-believers.[29]

3. Fasting on Proper Days

Let us now move to chapter 8, where we find a significant statement about fasting on proper days, possibly drawn to this spot by the mention of "fasting" in relation to baptism in *Did.* 7.4:[30]

> Αἱ δὲ νηστεῖαι ὑμῶν μὴ ἔστωσαν μετὰ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν· νηστεύουσι γὰρ δευτέρᾳ σαββάτων καὶ πέμπτῃ, ὑμεῖς δὲ νηστεύσατε τετράδα καὶ παρασκευήν. (*Did.* 8.1)

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27 The phrase ταῦτα πάντα προειπόντες, βαπτίσατε, "after you have said all these things beforehand, baptize", is missing from the rendering in the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

28 Rordorf suggested that the triadic ("trinitarian") baptismal formula in *Did.* 7.1 (and without articles in 7.3) "has been imposed after the transition of the passage from the Jewish-Christian mission to the Gentile-Christian mission", while *Did.* 9.5 (baptism "in the name of the Lord") "has preserved the most ancient baptismal formula", apparently going back to the Jewish-Christian mission. Rordorf, Baptism, 217–218; cf. Rordorf/Tuilier, Didachè, 170 n. 4; cf. also Vööbus, Traditions, 36–39, who assumes that the triadic formula was a secondary encroachment in both the Didache and Matt 28:19 (!), a view that has been met with little favour in more recent Matthean scholarship; cf. the brief discussion of similar suggestions in Davies/Allison, Matthew, 684 n. 41. Moreover, while the baptismal formula has apparently developed from baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38; 10:48) or "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16; 19:5) to a triadic formula (cf. Matt 28:19), this does not mean that the triadic formula would not have been used for the baptism of Jewish Christ-believers. Cf. Lindemann, Taufpraxis, 780; Niederwimmer, Didache, 160–161 with nn. 11–12. As to Matt 28:19, M. Konradt comments that the mention of God in baptism "ist aber auch im Fall von christusgläubigen Juden insofern nicht bedeutungslos, als es um den Bezug auf Gott geht, wie er sich durch die Sendung Jesu zu erkennen gegeben hat": Konradt, Matthäus, 464.

29 Cf. Koch, Debatte, 288, who thinks that native Jews did not need instruction in the Torah. This might be correct with respect to such issues as food laws. But what about the Torah *as interpreted by Christ*, including, but not being limited to, the *sectio evangelica*? We can still assume that such instruction might have happened, although it would not have been referred to in this document.

30 Cf. Niederwimmer, Didache, 165. It is unclear whether the wording is taken verbatim by the Didachist from his tradition; Niederwimmer, Didache, 69 thinks it is traditional. But it is also presented as a command by the Didachist. – The text follows H.

> Let your fasts not be together with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and on the fifth (day) of the week; you, however, should fast on the fourth (day) and on the preparation (day). (*Did.* 8.1)

Here we see the reflection of a divergent practice which points to a familiarity, both on the part of the Didache and its implied audience, with a group of people labelled "hypocrites" and the Didache's desire to mark off the ordained practice from that of this group. We note the thoroughly Jewish designation of the weekdays, for instance the "second (day) of the week" (δευτέρα σαββάτων) and the "(day of) preparation" (παρασκευή), that is, for the Sabbath. Who are the "hypocrites"? This term appears seventeen times in the New Testament and is especially frequent in the Gospel of Matthew.[31] While we cannot be sure that the Didache knows the Gospel of Matthew textually,[32] it is nevertheless a claim argued by scholars, with weighty reasons.[33] Even though this question cannot be resolved here, we note an undeniable connection between these two works,[34] and we shall see that the Didache represents what seems to me the more developed form of the material under discussion in this paper. In sum, it seems likely that there is some comparability in the use of "hypocrites" in both texts.

However, we should also note the differences. Matt 6:16, which also deals with fasting, makes this clear: "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites (ὡς οἱ ὑποκριταί), for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting." Instead, Jesus tells the audience of his Sermon on

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31 Ten times without a synoptic parallel (Matt 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 23:13, 23, 25, 27, 29; 24:51), once modifying Mark's αὐτῶν τὴν ὑπόκρισιν (Matt 22:18; Mark 12:15), once with a parallel in Mark (Matt 15:7; Mark 7:6), and once with a parallel in Luke (Matt 7:5; Luke 6:42); there is a further occurrence without parallel in Luke 13:15.

32 Some scholars, such as Jonathan Draper, even think that the Didache might represent the earlier form of a tradition common to both. Cf. Draper, Matthew, esp. 239–241; Draper, Didache, 20: The earliest form of the Didache is older than the Gospel of Matthew but it has grown together with the latter and was later replaced by Matthew. However, against this cf., e.g., Lindemann, Taufpraxis, 769: "[…] die These, das Matthäusevangelium habe die Didache 'ersetzt', ist angesichts der unterschiedlichen Textgattungen unwahrscheinlich". Van de Sandt/Flusser, Didache, 35–48, 49 with n. 131 argue for the Didache's use of Jesus tradition independent of Matthew (and Luke).

33 Cf. Tuckett, Tradition (Didache knows both Matthew and Luke); Kloppenborg, Synoptics (*Did.* 1.3b–2.1 knows Luke and either Matthew or Q). Cf. also Köhler, Rezeption, 30–39: the Didache's dependence on Matthew is "probable" (30) for *Did.* 8.1–2 and "quite possible" (36) for *Did.* 9.5; 11.7; 13.1–2; 15.3–4. Garleff, Identität, 199–206 argues from a sociohistorical perspective for an intertextual reference to Matthew made in the Didache.

34 Cf. the observations and questions set out in van der Sandt, Introduction, although, as will become clear, I do not share van de Sandt's social-religious location of both Matthew and the Didache as no longer embedded within Judaism.

the Mount, they should put oil on their heads and wash their faces, so that the Father who sees in secret might reward them. Thus, while the hypocrites' fasting practice is critiqued in Matthew, the point is not their fasting on specific days but their mode of fasting (cf. ὡς), specifically its outward display. In addition, there is the issue of prayer, to be discussed more fully later. The audience of the Sermon is again asked not to be "like the hypocrites" (Matt 6:5). Once again, this is similar to the Didache. However, while the latter appears to target the contents of prayer (see presently), Matthew accuses the "hypocrites" of ostensibly praying in the synagogues and street corners. He has Jesus tell the audience that they should go into their chamber and pray to the Father who is in secret. To summarize so far: we have similarities in terminology or sobriquet ("hypocrites") and topic (fasting, prayer), but the precise criticism and the suggested solution differ.

Matthew goes on to apply the term "hypocrite" six times to the "scribes and Pharisees" (γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι; Matt 23:13, 15, 23, 27, 29). They are reproached in particular for observing minute laws whilst neglecting the "weightier things of the law", and for maintaining outward practices whilst failing to match this with inward purity. According to Matt 23:2, the "scribes and Pharisees" are sitting on the "seat of Moses". They thus claim, and are apparently accepted by some part of the Jewish population as being competent, to teach the people in matters of Jewish law. The Gospel of Matthew seems to concur with this ("do whatever they teach you and follow it"), although it has been suggested that this is an ironic expression, or one not to be taken literally, since Matt 5:20–48 appears also to criticize the teaching of the Pharisees, while Matt 23:8 regards Jesus as the only teacher of the addressees.[35] If so, such a remark may serve to highlight the contrast in Matt 23:3–4 that they do not practice what they teach and are unwilling to lift a finger to move the burdens they place on others.

It is likely that in these polemics we witness processes of reorganization in post-70 CE Judaism. While some scholars see here the rise of early rabbinic Judaism *tout court*,[36] others have cautioned that it took considerable time before rabbinic Judaism consolidated itself, and that the reference must be to

35 Cf. Konradt, Matthäus, 355 ("ironische Aussage […] als Widerlager für V. 3b").

36 Thus, e.g., Becker, Kathedra, arguing that (a) "scribes and Pharisees" mirrors *sofrim* and *ḥakhamim* as rabbinic self-designations for the Yavnean period (18–23) and that (b) by the time of Rn. Gamaliel II as *nasi'* of the *beit din* the *ḥakhamim* played a leading role in the life of the people (23–42). The latter point seems too optimistic from the point of view of current scholarship on the rabbinic movement, see below, n. 39.

(historical) Pharisees after 70 CE.[37] However, I wonder whether these distinctions can be made so clearly. Matthew himself does not seem to identify this group sharply as (historical) Pharisees. Rather, he is the only evangelist who lumps together "scribes and Pharisees" here,[38] perhaps reflecting some reconfiguration of groups after 70 CE. Moreover, although I deem the view convincing that rabbinic Judaism was initially a network of like-minded scholars[39] and only later emerged as a dominant form of Judaism, it cannot be denied that there are *some* connections and continuities between the former Pharisees and the rabbis, as we shall also see in the following discussion. It therefore seems likely that, in the mirror of Matthew's polemic, we see the formation of a group, post-seventy CE, that is related to pre-seventy Pharisaism and, at the same time, belongs to the (pre-)history of rabbinic Judaism.

Can we say more about the development of this group and the respective placement of Matthew and the Didache in relation to it? When comparing the use of "hypocrite" in Matthew and in the Didache, it emerges that Matthew's use of the term is closer to the original notion of "acting", "pretending", while the two redactional occurrences in the Didache appear to be more detached from this notion.[40] It may be suggested that use of this term became more stereotypical, that it increasingly became a polemical designation applied to opponents perceived as similar in the related milieus of Matthew and the Didache. As a *Kampfwort*, the term "hypocrite" thus appears to target *one specific group* within Judaism with which the communities implied in Matthew and the Didache were in competition.[41] Therefore, there is no basis for the

37 Thus, with differences in detail, Deines, Pharisees, 119 n. 21 (who speaks of "ongoing conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees and still alive when the gospels were written"); Runesson, Matthew, 467–468 (assuming that the Matthean community was a messianic Pharisaic sect in conflict with other Pharisees).

38 Cf. Mark 12:38: "scribes"; Luke 11:42–43: "Pharisees"; 11:46: "lawyers".

39 Cf. Hezser, Structure.

40 The use of the stem ὑποκριτ- in the edited "two ways" section of the Didache shows some of the prehistory and context of the term: *Did.* 2.6 warns against becoming a hypocrite, 4.12 calls for hating all hypocrisy and all that is not pleasing to the Lord, and 5.1 reckons hypocrisies with the way of death.

41 Niederwimmer, Didache, 166–167 with n. 4 mentions three options for the referent of "hypocrites": Jews in general, the Pharisees, or "the pious of Israel"; he tends towards the latter. My own view is that the Didache targets a group related to the Pharisees that views itself as the new pious Jews. Cf. Tomson, Evidence, 135, 139–141, although I differ in details of historical explanation, see below. See also Draper, Self-Definition, 233; Draper, Matthew, 230–235 (although Draper thinks the Didache might predate Matthew, see below). Contra Knopf, Lehre, 23: "schroff antijüdisch"; also contra van de Sandt/Flusser, Didache, who see "the pious Jews" or even "the Jews" targeted by the Didache (32), and "hypocrites" as "a general reference to (pious) Jews" (292, note the parentheses), see following note.

claim, made by David Flusser, Huub van de Sandt and others, that the *Didache* already reflects a clear self-distancing "from Judaism" and a generally "anti-Judaic" stance.[42]

This is corroborated by an analysis of the practices linked with the "hypocrites" in the Didache, namely fasting and praying. First, then, fasting: As we have seen, the "hypocrites" are said to fast on the second and fifth day of the week, that is, Mondays and Thursdays. For early evidence for the custom of twice-weekly fasting, one may look to Luke 18:12, which would corroborate the link with the Pharisees and their successors, respectively. There, the Pharisee says, "I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income" (νηστεύω δὶς τοῦ σαββάτου, ἀποδεκατῶ πάντα ὅσα κτῶμαι). The issue of this, as it seems, specifically Pharisaic practice[43] is private fasting, albeit on a particular number of occasions per week. Fixed weekdays are not mentioned here. Around 375 CE, Epiphanius of Salamis states that the Pharisees "fasted twice a week, on the second and fifth days" (*Pan*. 16.1.5, trans. Williams). However, it is doubtful whether this late text can be taken as indicative of the practice of historical "Pharisees". Though it might derive its information from some Jewish source, historical contextualization of that information remains difficult. We do not know when precisely the practice of fasting on Monday and Thursday originated.[44] Tertullian, in the early third century, speaks of a Jewish fast "certainly celebrated everywhere" (*Iudaicum certe ieiunium ubique celebratur*; *Jejun*. 16.6) though he does not

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Rordorf/Tuilier, Didachè, 37, in turn, think that the term in the Didache refers specifically to "certains chrétiens judaïsants" who returned "aux observances judaïques dans les communautés chrétiennes". This depends on the view of Rordorf/Tuilier that the Didache in general probably addresses *gentile* believers (21). This is not the view adopted here.

42 Cf. van de Sandt/Flusser, Didache, 32: "clear indications of a community having distanced itself from Judaism". Somewhat more cautious is Niederwimmer, Didache, 166: "setzt – auf der einen Seite – noch einen engen Kontakt der hier in Erscheinung tretenden Gemeinden mit der jüdischen Umwelt voraus. Auf der anderen Seite fordert der Text die Annahme, daß die Gemeinden im Begriffe sind, sich aus dem Religionsverband Israels zu lösen, – oder sich schon gelöst haben." However, the more specific the use of "hypocrites" is, the less general is the distancing "from the religious union of Israel" (whatever this means).

43 Cf. Stern, Time, 672: "probably a Pharisaic sectarian practice".

44 Cf. Lieu, Epiphanius, esp. 516, 524. Epiphanius, *Pan*. 19.5.6 thinks that the Pharisees disappeared sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem. Tomson, Evidence, 136 is of the opinion that the market days connected with fasting (see below) persisted "till the fall of Beitar in 135 CE", though he notes that the custom of fasting on these days "remains intact after that date". It is difficult to connect this, as Tomson does (Evidence, 135) with the remark in Epiphanius. Building on Tomson, Zangenberg takes Epiphanius to confirm that Monday and Thursday "were common Jewish fasting days according to the Rabbis, even before 135", which is an odd statement: Zangenberg, Milieu, 55.

specify any days. The custom of private fasting in general is old. It is mentioned, for example, in Tob 12:8, Jdt 8:6, and Pss. Sol. 3:8. In the New Testament we find individuals who fast: the widowed prophetess Hannah in the Temple, day and night (Luke 2:36–37), or John the Baptist (Matt 11:18). Together with prayer, fasting seems to have played a role in both repentance and mourning. Since Jesus and his disciples think of themselves as a wedding party, the disciples do not fast when Jesus is present, in contrast to the disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees (Mark 2:18–20 par.). However, after Jesus' departure his disciples will fast. In Matt 6 fasting, prayer, and almsgiving figure as good works that are to be maintained, though without ostentatiousness.

Can we shed light on the origins of fasting on Monday and Thursday? To answer this question, we must turn to rabbinic literature that provides details which can cautiously be compared with the Didache.[45] According to rabbinic texts starting with the Mishnah, fasts during periods of drought take place precisely on Monday and Thursday. They are, in fact, taken as sets of *three*: Monday, Thursday, *and the following Monday*; the Mishnah, in mTaan. 2:9, ordains that for *public* fasts the sequence should always start on a Monday. According to mTaan. 1:4–5, if rain is absent until the 17th of Cheshvan these fasts should begin as fasts of *individuals*; if until Kislev, three *public* fasts are decreed. In the Tosefta, in tTaan. 2:4, we read explicitly that "Monday and Thursday have been set aside for a public fast".[46] At any rate, this passage connects the fast days with the *market days* in cities and towns, during which *courts sat and the Torah was read*,[47] apparently for those who on Sabbath had no one in their village who could interpret it. The question is whether *individual fasts throughout the whole year* were also scheduled on Mondays and Thursday. Gedalyahu Alon argued this, pointing out two parallel passages in the Jerusalem Talmud, yTaan. 1:6 [64c] and yPes. 4:1 [30d] : "on Monday and

45 According to mTaan. 4:3, the members of the *ma'amadot*, ordinary Israelites, would fast *from Monday to Thursday* in the week of service of the priestly rotation with which they were associated (the statement is missing from Codex Kaufmann); cf. bTaan. 27b. These passages give reasons why Friday and Sunday were exempt from fasting (because of their proximity to Sabbath; cf. for Friday already Jdt 8:6), but it is unclear what role, if any, this tradition played for the origin of the *twice-weekly* fast on Monday and Thursday.

46 Thus ms. Vienna (יום שיני וחמשי הוחדו לתענית צבור), similarly ms. London and Alfasi. Less sensibly, ms. Erfurt: "Monday and Thursday an *individual* sits for a *public* fast" (יום שני ויום חמישי יחיד יושב בתענית ציבור). – For a medley of rabbinic texts regarding fasting cf. [Strack/] Billerbeck, Kommentar II, 241–244.

47 For court sessions in towns on Mondays and Thursday, see mKet. 1:1. For the reading of the Torah and – by extension and under certain circumstances – the Esther Scroll on these days (called יום הכניסה, "assembly day"), see mMeg. 1:1–3; tMeg. 1:2; yMeg. 1:3 [70b]; bMeg. 2a etc.

Thursday it is not common practice [sc. to refrain from labour], until the end of a public fast it is common practice" (בַּתְּרֵייָא וּבַחֲמִשְׁתָּא אֵינוֹ מִנְהָג עַד דְּיִתְפַּנֵּי תַּעֲנִיתָא מִנְהָג). Thus, Alon suggests a *distinction* between public fasts and, by inference, individual fasts on Monday and Thursday.[48] Furthermore, bTaan. 12a, the conclusion to Megillat Taanit as preserved in the Bavli, also speaks of an individual who has taken upon himself a fast on Monday and Thursday throughout the year (though some mss. and early prints add: "and Monday").[49] Other late evidence comes from Tan. B. *Wa-yera* (94) and Tractate *Soferim* 21:1, according to which "students fast in it [sc. the month of Nisan] on Monday and Thursday and Monday, because of the desecration of the Name and because of the honour of the Torah which has been burnt". This is explicitly said to be a private act of modesty and not a public fast. Alon thinks that the additional Monday does not represent the original reading. However, it may be asked whether this particular evidence says anything about months *other* than Nisan. In general, it is unclear what proof is provided by the references in the Talmudim for the time of the Didache. Regarding the development of fast-days, it might be the case that we see here a practice for which the Didache is the earliest explicit evidence, and which is attested only much later in rabbinic literature. It is worth emphasizing, however, that – contrary to the claim made in a part of the research literature[50] – the passage in the Didache, like the references in yTaan. 1:6 [64c] , yPes. 4:1 [30d] , and bTaan. 12a, has *voluntary individual fasting* in view, *not* public fasting, even though it occurs on publicly relevant days (on which – in times of draught, not mentioned in the Didache – public fasts could also be decreed).

In sum, the evidence from the Didache does not point to an early practice of fasting *uniformly* observed by "the Jews" on these two days. The wording in the Didache appears to point, first, to a specific group targeted as "the hypocrites" and, second, to the regular days of fasting by individuals from this group, not public fasts. On the other hand, such a practice must have been sufficiently

48 Alon, Halacha, 142–143. Alon's discussion of the Talmudic passages can be found in Alon, Elucidation.

49 Thus ms. Vatican 134; early prints of Pesaro and (ed. princ.) Venice. The Vilna ed. puts "and Monday" in parentheses. See the evidence compiled at the Hachi Garsinan – Bavli site hosted by the Friedberg Jewish Manuscript Society (https://bavli.genizah.org, access: 8 Apr 2024).

50 Such as Draper, Self-Definition, 233–234 (more appositely, however, Draper, Matthew, 231, where the fasting in *Did.* 8.1 is contrasted with "fasting called publicly to respond to a particular crisis"); Del Verme, Didache, 173 (although he is right to point to the understanding as obligatory, "public" fast in the subsequent church orders dependent on the *Didache*). Correctly, Niederwimmer, Didache, 166–167: "Privatfasten"! Cf. also Schürer, History, 483–484; van de Sandt/Flusser, Didache, 292–293.

known or observed to warrant a remark and to advise on a competing practice, potentially already in the tradition underlying the Didache. In this respect, it would be plausible if these fast days coincided with the market and assembly days – these would be times when individual Jews gathered might be perceived as fasting.[51] Torah study and fasting is mentioned together elsewhere too.[52] Over against a group probably bearing some resemblance to, and relation with, the Pharisees, the Didache ordains a competing day for the fasts of individuals in the milieu envisioned by the text. Why precisely Wednesday and Friday are chosen is difficult to say. Sunday, referenced in *Did*. 14.1 as the day of breaking bread (κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ κυρίου, "on the Lord's [sc. day] of the Lord", an odd wording), would have been out of the question, and it might be significant for our topic that Shabbat – celebrated as a day of joy by most Jews – is not chosen as a fast day either, although Knopf argues that it is avoided due to its proximity to Sunday.[53] If these two days are avoided, Friday may suggest itself as the *second* of the two fast days.[54] However, why Wednesday rather than Tuesday was chosen as the *first* one remains unclear. I do not see how it can be explained by the role of Wednesday as start of the 364-day year, as recently suggested again by Peter Tomson.[55] At any rate, readers of the Didache are called

51 For the periodic market days in Palestine, see Rosenfeld/Menirav, Markets, 43–45. The authors think that the market days in towns and cities did not disappear in the second century CE (as has been argued by others) but continued to be in existence alongside the markets in villages, which apparently took place on Fridays.

52 Cf. Gilat, Fasting: bPes. 68b; bBes. 15b: R. Eliezer is quoted as saying that, on a holiday, a human being would only be able to either eat and drink or sit and learn.

53 Cf. Knopf, Lehre, 23.

54 Knopf, Lehre, 23 and Niederwimmer, Didache, 167 point out that the reference to Friday as the day of Jesus' death is only made later in Christian sources. This matches the fairly late evidence for the *triduum*.

55 Building on insights by Audet, Peter Tomson has suggested that Wednesday and Friday, as special days in the 364-day calendar, were ordained as fast days by the Didachist because he knew that the Pharisees opposed this calendar; cf. Tomson, Evidence, 136–137. This suggestion ultimately goes back to a theory by Annie Jaubert who claimed that Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday were the liturgically emphasized days in this calendar (Jaubert, date, 13–75). However, this theory is no longer tenable: not all festivals of this calendar fall on these three days; the only holiday falling on a Friday in the Qumran version of the calendar is Yom Kippur, while the intercalary days of this calendar, and of course the slaughtering of the Passover animal on 14 Nisan, fall on a Tuesday. The only instance of an emphasis of a particular weekday apart from the Sabbath is in fact Wednesday as the beginning of the year, correlated with the first shining of the moon in creation week (4Q320 1 i 1–3; 4Q319 4 10–11); all the other festivals simply fall into place by their dates within the months. It remains very doubtful indeed that the Didachist would have referred to this tradition of the beginning of the year by his choice of Wednesday as one of the two fast days.

to observe fast days other than those of the "hypocrites", not "the Jews" in general. Let us now move to the next issue, which is prayer.

4. Praying as the Lord Commanded

In the next two verses of the Didache we find a statement about praying:[56]

> μηδὲ προσεύχεσθε ὡς οἱ ὑποκριταί, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἐκέλευσεν ὁ κύριος ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ αὐτοῦ, οὕτως προσεύχεσθε· Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου, ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς. τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον, καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν, καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ· ὅτι σοῦ ἐστιν ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. 3 Τρὶς τῆς ἡμέρας οὕτω προσεύχεσθε. (*Did*. 8.2–3)
>
> Nor should you pray like the hypocrites. Instead, pray like this, just as the Lord commanded in his gospel: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors; and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one; for yours is the power and the glory forever." 3 Pray like this three times a day. (*Did*. 8.2–3)

From these two verses it is clear that the Didache instructs the readers to pray the Lord's Prayer instead of the "hypocrites" prayer. It is not explained what the latter is. This is apparently sufficiently clear to the first readers. Significantly, the Lord's Prayer should be said three times a day, which is clearly not what is envisaged in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (with whose form of the Lord's Prayer the one in the Didache has greater resemblance than with that in Luke).[57] Theoretically, it is possible that "three times a day" is a reflection of prayer times as mentioned in Ps 55:18 and Dan 6:11, 14, where the thrice-daily voluntary prayer of pious individuals is referenced. However, there is no evidence that this was widely established practice anywhere in the Second Temple period. On the other hand, recent study has shown that Qumran prayer texts know certain patterns of fixed prayer at the turning points of the luminaries,

56 The text follows H.

57 Although, to be sure, it is not identical with the form in Matthew, and it is questionable whether it depends on Matthew, or, if so, whether it depends on the *text* of Matthew rather than the *tradition* of the Lord's Prayer as represented in Matthew. Cf. Rordorf/Tuilier, Didachè, 86–87 (although with a problematic view of Matthew as being "hostile" to Jews, Rordorf/Tuilier, Didachè, 36–37). For a "synoptic" overview of the Lord's Prayer in the Didache, Matthew, and Luke see Niederwimmer, Didache, 169.

either in the morning and evening (thus Esther Chazon, Daniel Falk) or additionally also at midday and midnight (thus Jeremy Penner).[58] Either way, however, these earlier fixed prayers would not add up to "three times a day" and might be, first and foremost, a liturgical response to the "cosmic clock" and a representation of the community with angels.[59]

It may therefore be suggested that the advice of the Didache matches and is in competition with the number of times the "hypocrites" *themselves* prayed. Now, it is well known that the *'amidah* prayer – the Eighteen Benedictions – *is indeed* said three times a day. In this respect, recent research has shed new light on the historical context. Building on studies by Ezra Fleischer and at the same time modifying his conclusions, Ruth Langer and others have shown that the Eighteen Benedictions as a fixed, obligatory prayer cannot be assumed for the Second Temple period. Instead, it was an innovation from the time between the late first and the middle of the second century CE, building on earlier formulae and showing textual fluidity into late antiquity.[60] While the fixing of the number of prayer times is "perhaps early",[61] the precise timing of the three prayers is still discussed by Tannaim of the third and fourth generation (middle to second half of the second century CE); morning and afternoon prayer correspond to the former morning and afternoon *tamid*, with the evening prayer forming an ostensible addition, for which it was difficult to give a precise timing.[62] Hence, the Didache passage might be considered an important non-rabbinic witness to the origins of fixed, obligatory Jewish prayer three times a day. In short, we suggest seeing in *Did.* 8.2–3 a competition with the beginnings of the developing thrice-daily *'amidah* prayer. Whether this competition has anything to do with the introduction of the *birkat ha-minim* into the *'amidah*, as Tomson suggests,[63] is unclear and would depend on an early

58 Cf., on the one hand, Falk, Daily, 100–102, 106; Chazon, Pray, 44; on the other, Penner, Patterns, 141–164. Prayer at the turning points of the luminaries is similar to, though not necessarily identical with, the practice of fixed-time prayer when rising from sleep and going to bed (cf. Deut 6:7; Penner, Patterns, 73–99, who discusses critically the question whether it was the *Shema' Israel* that was prayed at these times).

59 Thus Penner, Patterns, 135–136.

60 Cf. Fleischer, Beginnings, esp. 402–414; Fleischer, *Shemone Esre*. Cf. the qualifications and modifications in Langer, Revisiting; Langer/Sarason, Re-Examining.

61 Langer/Sarason, Re-Examining, 218, although they note that Rn. Gamaliel (II) in mBer. 4:3 merely speaks of "every day".

62 See mBer. 4:1 (attributed to R. Judah); tBer. 4:1–2 (R. Judah; R. Eleazar b. Jose, referring to his father, R. Jose b. Halafta).

63 Cf. Tomson, Evidence, 138–141.

date of this prayer section, which has been questioned by other scholars.[64] Again, we note that the prayer rejected is not that of "the Jews" but that of "the hypocrites", which may be seen as a sobriquet used by disaffected though not yet separate groups.

5. Conclusions

Did. 8.1–3 positions the readership of the text against some Jews, labelled "hypocrites", who were most likely somehow related to the Pharisees or their ("proto-rabbinic") heirs. It does so with respect to the regular weekdays for voluntary fasting and the text to be said at the thrice-daily fixed prayer. We witness a deliberately divergent, demarcating practice, which however appears to *establish distance* more than expressing it. There is no setting off from "the Jews" or from any practice generically labelled as "Jewish". Instead, the sobriquet *continues and yet develops* terminology familiar from the Gospel of Matthew. In both cases – fasting and prayer – the position in the Didache seems to reflect a more developed, time-bound practice than the Gospel of Matthew, to which it reacts, displaying a usage of the sobriquet "hypocrites" that seems to be more solidified and providing, in my view, *later* evidence than Matthew. The community to which the Didache is addressed seems to be made up of Jewish and gentile believers in Christ. Their practice of baptism (*Did.* 7.1–4) and the eucharist (*Did.* 9.1–5), while certainly creating an insider-outsider distinction,[65] does not mark a general departure "from Judaism". The Didache erects boundaries against those it calls "hypocrites", but in so doing shows that the ways have not (yet) fully "parted" between this mixed community and these "hypocrites", let alone "the Jews" more generally.

64 Thus, Langer, Cursing, esp. 33–39, questions an early date for the *Birkat ha-minim*, its wide distribution, and its reflection in early Christian sources.

65 See esp. *Did.* 9.5; cf. 10.5.

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Ignatius of Antioch

Redefining Identities and Creating Irreversible Separation

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Abstract

This chapter discusses Ignatius comments and rhetoric in relation to Judaism and Judaizing practices within communities to which he wrote. It is noted that the topic of "Judaism" is largely confined to two of his authentic letters – the Epistle to the Magnesians and the Epistle to the Philadelphians. The analysis suggests different issues in these two locations. In Magnesia a tendency to embrace Jewish practices in Philadelphia adopting Jewish hermeneutical approaches to scripture. For this reason, it is difficult to speak of a single unified set of opponents to whom Ignatius responds in regard to the adoption of Jewish practices or scriptural interpretations.

Keywords

Ignatius; Judaism; Magnesians; Philadelphians; opponents

1. Introduction

Above all else, Ignatius of Antioch is famous for dying – or at least for talking about his impending death in various letters as he was transported to Rome for execution.[1] The exigencies of his situation caused him to reflect on his approaching fate. However, he was not limited to contemplating just that life-ending circumstance. Throughout his corpus of writings, with passionate clarity alongside at times reductive dichotomies, Ignatius expressed views that he saw as being pressing for nascent Jesus communities in western Asia Minor and beyond. His motivation, at least in part, appears to have been to guarantee the survival of these communities in a form that preserved correct beliefs and structures as he understood them. It is within this context that one encounters

1 This point is made by Michael Holmes. His edition of the Greek text of the middle recension is used throughout this discussion, although there is a need for a new critical text of the middle recension. See Holmes, athers.

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Ignatius' comments concerning the relationship between Christianity, still in its first century of existence, and the parent religion of Judaism from which it emerged.

Ignatius certainly was not the first Christ believer to attempt to navigate this complex issue. More than half a century earlier, Paul, the champion of law-free gentile inclusion in the Jesus movement, had reflected extensively on that topic although certainly not to the satisfaction of all Christ believers. In his writings, Ignatius addresses related issues. His reflections are not as extensive as those of Paul, nor in fact are they as theologically nuanced. However, those differences are themselves reflective of developments with the Jesus movement. Nonetheless, even accounting for such contextual factors, it is obvious that some fundamental differences of outlook remained in regard to the way the relationship between Judaism and Christianity was understood by various adherents to the Jesus movements. This led Ignatius to address some aspects of this topic with a combination of theological clarity and rhetorical stridency. For Ignatius, this was certainly not a neutral or dispassionate intellectual exercise or debate. The preservation of what he saw as being doctrinally correct Christianity was fundamentally at stake.

This discussion of Ignatius' thinking concerning the relationship between Christianity and Judaism will precede in four stages. First, the primary evidence drawn from the letters of the middle recension that addresses the topic will be discussed. Second, having assembled this evidence, an evaluation will be undertaken that attempts to reconstruct the basis of Ignatius' concerns. Third, the discussion will offer some reflections in light of this evidence on whether in the corpus of his letters Ignatius was responding to one group or two groups of opponents. Fourth, some overall conclusions will be offered that reflect on Ignatius' role in the so-called "parting of the ways" process.

2. Ignatius' Statements on Judaism and its Traditions

Ignatius perspectives on Judaism are found both in statements that explicitly address the topic, and also detected implicitly in passages where Ignatius when discussing other topics draws upon ideas or scriptural texts which are drawn from Jewish traditions. In this way, Ignatius presents a complex relationship with Judaism and its traditions. This is in fact reflective of many of the perspectives in the wider expressions of the Christian movement, with very few adopting the radical and total rejection of Judaism espoused by Marcion and his followers or embracing Judaism and its traditions more fully as perhaps was the case of communities that stood behind the so-called Jewish-Christian gospels.

Yet, one must be careful not to reduce Judaism itself to a single or monolithic phenomenon. While this might not necessitate recourse to cumbersome plurals such as "Judaisms" or "Christianities", while speaking of overarching single entities it is still necessary to acknowledge the variegated expressions of larger overarching Christianity or Judaism, especially as both movements were in a phase of self-definition or redefinition during the early decades of the second century.

2.1 *Ignatius' Epistle to the Ephesians*

In Ignatius' longest letter, *Ephesians*, there is nothing that explicitly deals with the topic of Judaism. Rather, Ignatius central concerns are to advocate for a ecclesiology based on a threefold pattern of ministry focused on the episcopal authority of a single bishop and to tackle what are seen as various false christological teachings which might be described as docetic in nature.[2] In particular, Löhr notes that "passages from Ign. *Eph.* and Ign. *Trall.* make it advisable to speak of an antidocetic point to the Christology of the Ignatian letters."[3] Alongside these emphases which are discussed at length, the *Letter to the Ephesians* only fleetingly reflects any indebtedness to Jewish traditions and even at points these are debatable.

Discussing the nature of the eucharist, Ignatius states, ἐὰν μή τις ᾖ ἐντὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, ὑστερεῖται τοῦ ἄρτου ⸂τοῦ θεοῦ⸃ (Ign. *Eph.* 5.2). The combination of terms θυσιαστήριον and ἄρτος while not common in the LXX, does occur on a number of occasion (LXX 1 Kgs 7:34; 2 Chr 4:19; Mal 1:7; 2 Macc 10:3). It is not being suggested that Ignatius is drawing directly on any of these passages, in fact quite the opposite. Rather, it is noted that the LXX reflects the association of bread being present on the altar or within the sanctuary, θυσιαστήριον. However, whether or not there is any antecedent to this imagery in the Jewish scriptures, there is little doubt that Ignatius has reshaped this to reflect Christian ritual practices and his understanding of ecclesiology and eucharist. As Schoedel observes, the Ephesians could scarcely be said to be "within" a physical altar in any intelligible sense; and the term is used symbolically by Polycarp (*Phil.* 4.3) and elsewhere in Ignatius (*Mag* 7.2; *Trall.* 7.2; probably *Phdl.* 4. For the latter passages it appears that the altar is the church, but it is also closely linked with Christ, the ministry, the unified worship. The appropriateness of the term was probably suggested by the idea that prayer is true sacrifice.[4]

2 See Jefford, Reading, 58–59.

3 Löhr, Epistles, 110.

4 Schoedel, Ignatius, 55.

Regardless of which suggestion represents the correct referent for θυσιαστήριον, it is obvious that it does not denote the altar in the Jerusalem Temple, or in any other Jewish sanctuary. While Ignatius might be utilising the religious language of Judaism, he is imbuing it with Christian meaning in a manner that essentially makes the term devoid of its denotation in the context of Jewish traditions.

In the next verse, Ignatius appears to reveal his indebtedness to Jewish tradition. Describing the arrogance of people who have separated themselves from what he sees as the legitimate Christian meeting, to prove his assertion he states, γέγραπται γάρ· Ὑπερηφάνοις ὁ θεὸς ἀντιτάσσεται (Ign. *Eph.* 5.3). As is often noted, this is a loose citation of Prov 3:34, κύριος ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται, with the κύριος being replaced by ὁ θεός (Ign. *Eph.* 5.3).[5] However, caution is required here. Although this is the only place in the middle recension of Ignatius' letters where there is a citation of the Jewish scriptures and a citation formula, γέγραπται γάρ, is used, it is not necessarily the case that Ignatius was drawing directly on the text of Proverbs. This aphorism is also cited in Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5; *1 Clem.* 30.2, which are all perhaps roughly contemporaneous with Ignatius if not earlier. Furthermore, as Inge observes with these three examples as well as with Ignatius "in all alike Θεός or ὁ Θεός takes the place of the Κύριος of the LXX; but Ignatius alone puts ὑπερηφάνοις first in the sentence."[6] Given that the form of the saying using ὁ θεός had wide currency in Christian circles, it might be the case that Ignatius simply drew the saying from usage within his own religious circle in either oral or textual form, rather that deriving it directly from the Jewish scriptures.[7] Here again the evidence is ambiguous. Moreover, it reveals little that is definitive about Ignatius' wider attitude towards Judaism and its traditions.

2.2 *Ignatius' Epistle to the Magnesians*

By contrast with the slender evidence concerning Ignatius' attitude to Judaism in his letter to the *Ephesians*, in his epistle addressed to believers in Magnesia, Ignatius provides much more detailed comments concerning Jews and Judaism. While there is a greater volume of relevant material, it is contained in a short section of the letter, Ign. *Magn.* 8–10. As was the case with the letter addressed to the Ephesians, Ignatius' letter to the *Magnesians* was written to a group he had not visited. Rather, he had been informed of the circumstances of the Christian community in that city by members of the delegation sent to

5 Foster, Epistles, 162.

6 Inge, Ignatius, 76.

7 Foster, Epistles, 163.

meet him in Smyrna. The delegation comprised Damas the bishop, the presbyters Bassus and Apollonius, and the deacon Zotion (Ign. *Magn.* 2.1). According to Ignatius, the impetus for writing came from the report of the Magnesians' well-ordered love directed towards God (Ign. *Magn.* 1.1). Ignatius commends unity and obedience to the youthful bishop Damas. Whether this is a reflection of a problem in this regard, or simply a wider concern that Ignatius expresses about ecclesial structure is difficult to determine. Later in the epistle, Ignatius speaks of the reality of Jesus' human existence,

> I want to forewarn you not to get snagged on the hooks of worthless opinions but instead to be fully convinced about the birth and the suffering and the resurrection that took place during the governorship of Pontius Pilate. These things were truly and most assuredly done by Jesus Christ, our hope, from which may none of you ever be turned aside. (Ign. *Magn.* 11.1)

The semi-credal statement is framed by some important contextual clues that reveal the purpose behind this statement. Ignatius described this as an attempt to forewarn them, θέλω προφυλάσσεσθαι ὑμᾶς. This builds upon the immediately preceding statement that this exhortation is written "not because I have learned that any of you are like that" (Ign. *Magn.* 10.1). These twin statements suggest that the warning was both protective and pre-emptive. The tone here is strikingly different to that surrounding the semi-credal statement in Ign. *Eph.* 7.2. In that context, Ignatius speaks with far greater specificity when he describes those who "carry about the name with evil deceit" and describes such people as "rabid dogs" who must be guarded against since their bite is nearly incurable (Ign. *Eph.* 7.1). Schoedel describes these individuals and the threat they posed in the following terms, "the description suggests that they were reasonably attractive teachers. Their movement from place to place reminds us of the "apostles" and "prophets" of *Didache* 11–13, and it may be that they simply posed problems for established local leaders. But doctrinal issues – specifically docetism – may also have involved."[8] It is the case that elsewhere Ignatius can warn his readers of what are presented as possible dangers (cf. Ign. *Trall.* 8.1; Ign. *Smyrn.* 4.1), even when those threats seem to have taken hold to some extent. Here, it is not simply the warning of a potentially threat, but also the lack of specificity about opponents that leads to the conclusion that in witing to the Magnesians, Ignatius was making them aware of a general problem among neighbouring groups which they had not yet experienced themselves first hand.

8 Schoedel, Ignatius, 59.

It is also clear that with Ign. *Magn.* 11.1 there is a change in topic from the preceding section (Ign. *Magn.* 8–10). In that earlier section, Ignatius directly addresses the challenge that observance of Jewish practices poses for the nascent Christian community in Magnesia. This section as a whole reflects Ignatius' most sustained and thoroughgoing treatment of the relationship between Christian and Judaism in his letter corpus. Ignatius' rhetoric communicates the danger of the threat that he is about to introduce. He warns his readers against "strange doctrines and antiquated myths", which are things that he describes as being useless: Μὴ πλανᾶσθε ταῖς ἑτεροδοξίαις μηδὲ μυθεύμασιν τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἀνωφελέσιν οὖσιν (Ign. *Magn.* 8.1). Therefore, prior to referencing the issue at hand Ignatius signals to his readers that he is about to address an issue which could imperil them. In this way, the seriousness of the topic that is about to be introduced is signalled to readers prior to the specific issue being mentioned. As a rhetorical strategy, Ignatius is seeking assent from his readers not to associate worthless practices or to be misled by false teaching before introducing the behaviour which may be appealing to some of the believers in Magnesia.

The behaviour that Ignatius cautions against is the tendency to continue to associate with and to adopt Jewish practices. This concern was also expressed by other Christian leaders for several centuries after Ignatius. Thus, in the eighth homily of Chrysostom's *Eight Orations Against Judaizing Christians* (387–388 CE) he warns against any syncretism between Christian faith with either pagan or Jewish religious practices. Hence, he writes,

> If any of you, whether you are here present or not, shall go to the spectacle of the Trumpets, or rush off to the synagogue, or go up to the shrine of Matrona, or take part in fasting, or share in the Sabbath, or observe any other Jewish ritual great or small, I call heaven and earth as my witnesses that I am guiltless of the blood of all of you (Chrysostom *Adv. Jud.* 8.1)

Here Chrysostom shows that the tendency among certain Christ believers to engage in Jewish practices or to attend synagogue meetings still persisted into the late fourth century. Ignatius is not as fulsome or descriptive as Chrysostom, but despite his brevity and writing more than two and half centuries earlier, he appears to address a similar issue. Ignatius addresses the following warning to the Magnesians: εἰ γὰρ μέχρι νῦν κατὰ Ἰουδαϊσμὸν ζῶμεν, ὁμολογοῦμεν χάριν μὴ εἰληφέναι (Ign. *Magn.* 8.1). In some ways, although Ignatius is more succinct in his statement it is more radically polarizing. He equates 'living according to Judaism' with making a confession 'to have not received grace' (Ign. *Magn.* 8.1). In his own terms, for Ignatius continuance in Jewish practices is a demonstration that grace is not the possession of those who adopt such behaviours. It is

well known that Paul draws an antithetical contrast between law and grace. It is noticeable that for Ignatius it is Judaism itself that stands in opposition to grace.[9] Thus, for Ignatius it is not simply the nomistic mechanism of expressing the Jewish faith that stands in opposition to a new mode of faith based on χάρις, rather it is the whole system of Judaism that is opposed to Christianity which is designated through what is seen as the distinguishing idea of grace.

Yet the position Ignatius sets out in regard to contemporary Judaism creates an interpretative problem not only for Ignatius, but also for other Christians of the period who adopted a similar perspective. The scriptures of the Old Testament were viewed as texts which announced the coming of God's messiah and foretold specific details of the life of Jesus. For this reason, a different view of the value of these texts and their authors was required that differentiated them from the perspective on contemporary Judaism. Ignatius adopts a not unfamiliar move in early Christianity. He presents the prophets as figures who anticipated the coming of Christ and hence who were in some sense proleptic Christians. In this vein Ignatius states that οἱ γὰρ θειότατοι προφῆται κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἔζησαν (Ign. *Magn.* 8.2). What 'living according to Christ Jesus' entails is explained in part. Here Ignatius returns to the concept of grace as a defining and distinctive feature of the Christian faith. He claims that what marked the prophets as proleptic followers of Christ was the fact that they were inspired "by his grace" (Ign. *Magn.* 8.2). Moreover, according to Ignatius, it was this dependence on Christ's grace, that caused them to be persecuted. The reference to the persecution of the prophets likely has a dual function. First, the prophets are portrayed as figures who, in solidarity with Christ, shared rejection and suffering at the hands of their own contemporary Jews. Secondly, the experience of suffering was also central to Ignatius' immediate existence. Therefore, he implicitly places himself in connection with the prophets as one inspired by grace and as a means by which God might reveal himself through Christ. In essence, this presentation of the prophets as proto-Christians significantly weakens the continuity between the Jesus movement and Judaism, or even at some level historical Israel. Those aspects of the parent religion where Ignatius finds merit are stripped of links with Judaism and are instead redefined both as anticipatory of Christianity while also being simultaneously rejected and persecuted by Judaism. Thus, as Robinson observes, "Ignatius does not recognize a family relationship to Judaism."[10]

9 Schoedel also makes this observation when he states, "we may observe in this connection that Ignatius speaks of Judaism where Paul would have more naturally have spoken of the law." Schoedel, Ignatius, 119.

10 Robinson, Ignatius, 210.

However, following on from this presentation of the prophets as proto-Christians in some sense, Ignatius describes certain individuals who previously "had lived according to ancient practices" (Ign. *Magn.* 9.1). Given the further reference to the prophets later in the paragraph (Ign. *Magn.* 9.2) it is possible to understand that these individuals living according to ancient practices were likewise the same prophetic figures, and this is the view taken by a number of scholars.[11] The difficulty with this view is that Ignatius describes these individuals as having left behind those ancient practices and instead their practice is "no longer keeping the sabbath but living in accordance with the Lord's day, on which our life also arose through him" (Ign. *Magn.* 9.1). This seem to suggest that these individuals who lived according to "ancient practices" are not in fact the prophets mentioned at the end of this section. Rather, it appears that Ignatius opens this section by looking back to the early stages of the Jesus movement with a specific reference to those who had been born Jews came to be adherents to the Jesus movement. Schoedel comes to the same judgment when he states that "Ignatius now turns to the early Christians who abandoned their allegiance to Judaism."[12] Moreover, Lightfoot notes that the use of κυριακή as technical term demonstrating that such a change in attitude "could not possibly have been predicted of the prophets."[13] If this is correct, then it may well be that those who Ignatius accuses of continuing to live as Jews differentiated themselves by, among other things, their ongoing observance of the Jewish sabbath. This view is reinforced by Ignatius' selection of vocabulary. Ignatius says of this first generation of believers in Christ who had originally conducted themselves according to ancient practices, that they were μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες or "no longer sabbatizing" (Ign. *Magn.* 9.1). This terminology appears to denote a distinctive component of the larger tendency to Judaize which is criticized in the same context (Ign. *Magn.* 10.3). As Bauckham observes, "Ignatius uses 'sabbatizing' as a term representative of Jewish practices in general, a very natural usage in view of the distinctiveness and prominence of the Sabbath in Judaism."[14] Therefore, the terms in which Ignatius frames his statements suggest that he was criticizing the practices of some believers in the Magnesian community who continued to observe the Sabbath and presumably observed other Jewish religious practices, although no other specific practice is explicitly mentioned.

11 See Hilgenfeld, Ignatii, 280; Molland, Heretics, 3.

12 Schoedel, Ignatius, 123.

13 Lightfoot, Fathers, 128.

14 Bauckham, Sabbath, 260.

It is at this point in his argument that Ignatius returns to the prophets as an illustrative example of the correct attitude to be exhibited towards Christ. While Ignatius does not claim that they had abandoned Sabbath observance, he does call the prophets "his [Christ's] disciples in the Spirit" (Ign. *Magn.* 9.2). He links this observation to observance to the Lord's Day, κυριακή, through the idea that Christ's resurrection took place on this day of the week. Thus Ignatius states it was on the Lord's day that "our life also arose" (Ign. *Magn.* 9.1). Then he notes that the prophets who patiently waited for Christ, were raised by him (Ign. *Magn.* 9.2). Consequently, the Lord's day is of significance to the prophets not because they observed it rather than the Sabbath, but because it was on the Lord's day that their expectant waiting came to an end when they Christ "raised them from the dead when he came" (Ign. *Magn.* 9.2). Here one sees the early development of part of the so-called harrowing of hell tradition in which Christ after his crucifixion made proclamation to the prophets and Old Testament believers in the underworld, and released them from the bondage of death at his own resurrection on the Lord's day.[15] Thus, Ignatius not only claims that contemporary believers no longer participate in Sabbath observance, he also bases the change to observing the Lord's day on its status as the day when Christ rose. Extrapolating from this perspective, Ignatius returns to the topic of Old Testament prophets. He reasons that as spiritual disciples they benefitted from Christ's resurrection on the Lord's by being raised from dead themselves. The consequence of this argument is that Ignatius both rejects "sabbatizing" as compatible with the Christian faith, and also, he further develops his argument that the prophets are best understood as proto-Christians rather than being aligned with contemporary Judaism.

In the final paragraph of this section of the letter, Ignatius issues a number of hortatory injunctions to his addressees. First, he presents a negatively formulated hortatory injunction, μὴ οὖν ἀναισθητῶμεν τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ (Ign. *Magn.* 10.1). Here Ignatius equates the adoption of Jewish practices by his addressees as tantamount to a rejection of divine goodness. In many ways this statement is equivalent to the claim that living is accordance with Judaism is a demonstration of not having received grace (Ign. *Magn.* 8.1). Next Ignatius makes a statement which initially appears disconnected from the flow of the argument, as well as a normative understanding of divine prerogatives in action, ἂν γὰρ ἡμᾶς μιμήσηται καθὰ πράσσομεν, οὐκέτι ἐσμέν (Ign. *Magn.* 10.1). Here, Ignatius seeks to extract two things from this hypothetical scenario. First, if the condition were to pertain of the divine imitation of humanity, all hope

15 For a further discussion on the development of the idea of the harrowing of hell in early Christian texts see Foster, Gospel, 424–429.

would be lost. It is difficult to determine whether there is a specific action in mind, such as the vacillating behaviour of Christ-believers imitating Jewish practices. Alternatively, the statement might be made for a second reason. It is humans who should imitate Christ by becoming his followers, that is, in Ignatius' terms, learning "to live according to Christianity" (Ign. *Magn*. 10.1, and by implication not according to Judaism (Ign. *Magn*. 8.1). Schoedel perceives this to be the implicit logic of Ignatius' argument.

The argument of the first two sentences apparently runs as follows: to Judaize is to ignore God's goodness (that is, to rely on something other than the death and resurrection of Christ): if God should imitate such neglect on our part, we are very badly off indeed. In short, Ignatius indirectly threatens divine punishment. To avert it, the Magnesians are to become "disciples" of Christ (see on Ign. *Magn.* 9.1) and are to live "according to Christianity"; no other name (such as "Judaism") is to be adopted (cf. Ign. *Magn*. 8.1).[16]

In this vein, these statements are consistent with the overall flow of the argument. One is to maintain a singular and exclusive commitment to Christianity as Ignatius defines it, and conversely to reject any tendency towards embracing Jewish practices such as Sabbath observance.

The next stage of Ignatius' rebuttal of Judaism involves a claim which may have not been entirely convincing in some sections of second century Mediterranean culture. In a society that valued the antiquity of traditions or religious practices, Ignatius tries to make the case that more recent Christianity surpasses older Judaism. He seeks to make this point not drawing attention to the relative chronological duration of the two movements, by utilising the twin biological and culinary comparison with yeast. He describes the former religion as decayed, likening it to τὴν κακὴν ζύμην, τὴν παλαιωθεῖσαν καὶ ἐνοξίσασαν (Ign. *Magn*. 10.2). The description of the original yeast as "old and sour", requires replacement, renewal and rejuvenation. Ignatius simply states that the replacement yeast is Jesus Christ himself, νέαν ζύμην, ὅς ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (Ign. *Magn*. 10.2). This reveals, that for Ignatius, the entire new religious system is predicated on Jesus Christ. That is why he exhorts his readers to "be salted with him" and consequently he sees any additional mixing as an adulteration of the purity of Christianity.

In finalizing his argument, Ignatius presents his overarching conclusion, but he buttresses this conclusion with what are presented as observational facts. The conclusion is both stark and absolute, ἄτοπόν ἐστιν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν λαλεῖν καὶ ἰουδαΐζειν (Ign. *Magn*. 10.3). For Ignatius it is completely misplaced on the one hand to speak of Christ, while on the other embracing Judaizing tendencies. Such actions cannot be aligned since, according to Ignatius, they

16 Schoedel, Ignatius, 126.

are fundamentally antithetical. The supplementary argument that Ignatius employs to support this concluding statement is dependent on the temporal sequencing of the two religious movements. It is stated that "Christianity did not believe in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity" Ign. *Magn.* 10.3). This seems to entail more than temporal sequence. Also, more is implied than seeing Christianity as some kind of evolution of Judaism. Instead, Ignatius envisages a more radical transformation. Judaism, like old yeast has soured and become unproductive. By contrast, belief in Christ is something fresh and growing. Recognizing this necessitates, for Ignatius, seeing Judaism as obsolete and ceasing to have power to mediate relationship between the human and the divine. This is indeed a radical replacement and largely supercessionist understanding of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Given these presuppositions it is perhaps understandably, on his terms, why Ignatius sees Judaizing both as a threat to cohesive Christian faith and also as being the antithesis receiving grace and being ignorant of divine goodness. Such stridency is characteristic of Ignatius when he viewed the truth of Christianity, in the form he advocated, being at stake.

2.3 *Ignatius' Epistle to the Philadelphians*

The comments on Judaism are more diffuse in the *Epistle to the Philadelphians*. Yet, despite Ignatius' comments being scattered throughout the letter, the sentiments are largely unified. While some of the sentiments expressed when addressing the Philadelphians use similar rhetoric to that found in *Magnesians*, a close reading reveals that the underlying problem is not identical even if both situations are said to represent a tendency to adopt Ἰουδαϊσμός.[17]

The topic of the correct attitude towards and engagement with contemporary Judaism is introduced by a statement concerning the status of the historic prophets. Having just declared the importance of the apostles for the church (Ign. *Phld.* 5.1), Ignatius looks back beyond the horizon of the first generation of Christian leaders. He informs the Philadelphians that believers 'love the prophets' (Ign. *Phld.* 5.2). Ignatius provides three reasons why the prophets should be loved by contemporary believers. Namely, they anticipated the gospel, they hoped and waited for Christ's appearance, and by their act of believing they were saved (Ign. *Phld.* 5.2).[18] In this manner Ignatius redefines the religious allegiance and status of the prophets, breaking any link with

17 For instance, for the use of the terminology Ἰουδαϊσμός, see Ign. *Magn.* 8.1; 10.3 [twice]; Ign. *Phld.* 6.1 [twice].

18 Ignatius states these three factors in the following manner διὰ τὸ καὶ αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον κατηγγελκέναι καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐλπίζειν καὶ αὐτὸν ἀναμένειν ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσώθησαν (Ign. *Phld.* 5.2).

contemporary Judaism and instead claiming that these historic figures are actually aligned with Christ believers. Thus, they are said to be part of the unity that Christ created, ἐν ἑνότητι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὄντες (Ign. *Phld.* 5.2). In this way, Ignatius creates a new ontological status for the prophets. He stops short of claiming that the can be labelled as "Christians." However, his placement of them within "the unity of Jesus Christ" is very close to attributing the label χριστιανός. While not applying the term "Christian", Ignatius does uses ingroup sociolect to describe the prophets when he describes them as ἅγιοι, worthy of both love and admiration (Ign. *Phld.* 5.2).[19] Trebilco notes that the term has "a clear insider-boundary marking function."[20] As such, Ignatius has no reservation about locating the prophets inside that boundary and as co-participants in the identity as adherents to Christ, or to use his own description as those who partake "in the unity of Jesus Christ". To reinforce this identification of the prophets as sharing in the unity of those who believe in Jesus, Ignatius makes his final statement concerning the identity of the prophets in this context. He states that the prophets are "approved by Jesus Christ and included in the gospel of our shared hope" (Ign. *Phld.* 5.2).[21] In regard to the shared common hope enjoyed by the prophets, Schoedel states that "they are in harmony with the gospel and receive their significance from the events associated with Jesus Christ".[22] While Ignatius does not primarily articulate his soteriology in Pauline terms, the language of "gospel" and of "hope" recalls some of Paul's key terms and thus reflects the type of hope for which the prophets waited.

It is difficult to imagine a more fulsome way in which Ignatius could have asserted that the historic prophets shared the same status in relation to Christ as do his own contemporary believers. In fact, according to Ignatius, the only thing that separates them is the fact the temporal horizon in that the lived before the appearing of Christ. However, Ignatius is at great pains to show that in itself is not a barrier to their full participation in Christ centred unity. Given that the term ἑνότης "unity" (or ἕνωσις "union") is fundamental to the way in which Ignatius views functioning and authentic Christ communities (Ign. *Eph.* 4.2; 5.2; Ign. *Magn.* 1.2; Ign. *Phld.* 5.2; 8.1; 9.1), by placing prophets

19 The term ἅγιος is used sixty times in the New Testament to denote believers in Jesus, with the terminology being prominent in the Pauline letters and Revelation (fifty-two times). For a substantial discussion of the term ἅγιοι as a mode of self-identification in the early Jesus movement see Trebilco, Self-designations, 122–163.

20 Trebilco, Self-designations, 163.

21 He writes, ὑπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεμαρτυρημένοι καὶ συνηριθμημένοι ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τῆς κοινῆς ἐλπίδος (Ign. *Phld.* 5.2).

22 Schoedel, Ignatius, 202.

within that unity he advocates that they are full and equal members of that community of belief.

Having discussed the status of the prophets by claiming them to be believers in Jesus, Ignatius next turns to the issue of contemporary Judaism. It is interesting to note that in this context Ignatius does not identify any specific practices characteristic of Judaism, nor does he suggest that the Philadelphians might be engaging in Sabbath observance or other Jewish practices. Rather, what is described is the acquisition of knowledge from Jewish sources. Thus Ignatius, in his uncompromising style writes,

> But if anyone expounds Judaism to you, do not listen to him. For it is better to hear about Christianity from a man who is circumcised than about Judaism from one who is not. But if either of them fails to speak about Jesus Christ, I look on them as tombstones and graves of the dead, upon which only the names of people are inscribed. (Ign. *Phld.* 6.1)[23]

In stark opposition to his positive comments concerning the historic prophets, his statements concerning contemporary Judaism are condemnatory, and instead views it as being spiritually necrotising. As is often the case when rhetoric is florid, it is difficult to measure the connection with reality. Ignatius warns the Philadelphian believers against even giving a hearing to those who seek to explain Judaism. From Ignatius perspective learning about Christianity from any source is better than learning about Judaism. Here he draws a contrast that repudiates learning about Judaism from an uncircumcised person, ἄμεινον γάρ ἐστιν παρὰ ἀνδρὸς περιτομὴν ἔχοντος Χριστιανισμὸν ἀκούειν ἢ παρὰ ἀκροβύστου Ἰουδαϊσμόν (Ign. *Phld.* 6.1). It is difficult to move beyond this written statement to reconstruct the reality on the ground in second century Philadelphia. Is the whole statement a hypothetical rhetorical flourish, or are both clauses reflections of reality? Were there circumcised people, Jews or Jewish converts to Christianity, teaching the Christian faith, while at the same time gentile or uncircumcised Christ believers were teaching aspects of Judaism? Such stark alternatives are probably both too absolute and also unhelpful. The reality was almost certainly far more complex, and Ignatius' statement might be a mix of reality and rhetoric. Ignatius' central concern throughout this section appears to be a warning against receiving what he describes as Jewish interpretations that presumably do not read scriptural texts christologically. In part, this might

23 Ἐὰν δέ τις Ἰουδαϊσμὸν ἑρμηνεύῃ ὑμῖν, μὴ ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ. ἄμεινον γάρ ἐστιν παρὰ ἀνδρὸς περιτομὴν ἔχοντος Χριστιανισμὸν ἀκούειν ἢ παρὰ ἀκροβύστου Ἰουδαϊσμόν. ἐὰν δὲ ἀμφότεροι περὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μὴ λαλῶσιν, οὗτοι ἐμοὶ στῆλαί εἰσιν καὶ τάφοι νεκρῶν, ἐφ' οἷς γέγραπται μόνον ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων. (Ign. *Phld.* 6.1)

explain why Ignatius is so enamoured with the prophets. Within Jesus communities, their writings proved to be the most malleable for reading through a christological lens. This appears to be what stands behind Ignatius' comments later in the letter about a failure to find reference to Christ in "the archives" (Ign. *Phld*. 8.2). Therefore, given the repeated and sustained concern about a correct and christological reading of Jewish scriptures – the writings of the prophets and the archives – there appears to be some hermeneutical issue in Philadelphia that is troubling Ignatius. He characterizes this as being taught Judaism by uncircumcised people.

By contrast, the statement that "it is better to hear about Christianity from a man who is circumcised" (Ign. *Phld*. 6.1), is not repeated elsewhere. This is more likely a rhetorical stratagem. In presenting what is probably a hypothetical *reductio ad absurdum*, Ignatius expresses his preference for the admittedly unlikely scenario of a Jew teaching Christianity, over what is currently occurring in some form in Philadelphia – namely people who profess Christian faith teaching what Ignatius represents as Jewish interpretations. Schoedel, however, argues that the term ἀμφότεροι in the following clause suggests that the case of a circumcised Jewish Christian teaching Christianity is also a reality in Philadelphia.[24] While that possibility cannot be excluded, and one has to acknowledge the existence of Jewish Christians more widely who held to a form of faith in Jesus, it is not necessarily the case that this was the reality in Philadelphia. Given that Ignatius does not return to the topic of circumcised people who teach Christianity in other contexts, it is perhaps a more natural inference that the reference to "both" or "either of them", occurs for logical completeness rather than as an expression of reality. Instead, his main point is that anybody who does provide instruction about Jesus Christ is an unreliable teacher. In fact, worse than that, they cause the spiritual deaths of those who follow their mortifying teaching. Therefore, Ignatius states that all that will be recorded on their tombstones are the names of those who follow their teaching and hence participate in their death rather than in the life which teaching about Christ brings.

From these statements it is clear that Ignatius saw any form of instruction that did not have a thoroughly christological focus as being defective. Thus, it seems to be the case, if one might create an overly sharp dichotomy, that the concern with Judaism in Philadelphia was not primarily about embracing

24 Schoedel writes, "it may be, however, that we should take Ignatius more literally and recognize that when he refers to "both of them" (ἀμφότεροι) in the third sentence, he has in mind the two groups precisely as they are mentioned in the second sentence." Schoedel, Ignatius, 202.

Jewish practices, but adopting Jewish ideas. In particular, this may have been related to some kind of hermeneutic interpretation of scripture that was not christological in a thoroughgoing manner. This is a point to which Ignatius will return a little later in the letter.

At this point, Ignatius interrupts his train of thought to do two things. First, he gives a general warning against evil and an exhortation for the group to be united (Ign. *Phld.* 6.2). Second, defends his actions while he was in Philadelphia (μεταξὺ ὤν "being among you", Ign. *Phld.* 7.1),[25] apparently against the accusation that he had been put-up to the task of defending the authority of the threefold leadership of bishop, presbyters and deacons: "there were those who suspected that I said these things because I knew in advance about the division caused by certain people" (Ign. *Phld.* 7.2). Among other things, this reveals that Ignatius had first-hand knowledge of the situation in Philadelphia. Therefore, his characterization of some type of adherence to Jewish interpretation of scripture is likely to be more solidly grounded in the reality of the situation in Philadelphia, in comparison with his critique of Judaizing in Magnesia where he relied on reports of others.

Having defended the integrity of his own actions while in Philadelphia, Ignatius returns to his exhortation to give exclusive preference to "the teaching of Christ" (Ign. *Phld.* 8.2). In a somewhat opaque description, he describes the antithesis of reliance on Christ-centred teaching in the following terms:

> For I heard some people say, "If I do not find it in the archives, I do not believe it in the gospel." And when I said to them, "It is written," they answered me, "That is precisely the question." But for me, the "archives" are Jesus Christ, the unalterable archives are his cross and death and his resurrection and the faith that comes through him; by these things I want, through your prayers, to be justified. (Ign. *Phld.* 8.1)

Here, Ignatius states that the opinions he reports are views that he heard expressed while he was in Philadelphia. Those promulgating the alternative hermeneutic appear to demand that interpretations expressed about "the gospel" must be supported by statements found "in the archives", ἐν τοῖς ἀρχείοις. The term ἀρχείον is not standard terminology among early Christian writers, and even here Ignatius reports it as being the formulation used by those whom he opposes. The non-standard nature of the terminology has led to a variety of suggestions concerning the referent of the term in this context.[26] However, the consensus is that is that the expression ἐν τοῖς ἀρχείοις was employed by certain

25 See the discussion in Lightfoot, Fathers, 267.

26 For a summary of the major options see Schoedel, Ignatius, 97–98.

members of the Christian community in Philadelphia to refer to the Jewish scriptures. This understanding of the terminology has a long history. Lightfoot argued for this understanding:

> The meaning here is as follows. The opponents of Ignatius refuse to defer to any modern writings, whether Gospels or Epistles, as a stand of truth; they will submit only to such documents as have been preserved in the archives of the Jews, or in other words, only to the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus ἀρχεῖα and εὐαγγέλιον are opposed as the Old Testament and the New.[27]

This is the interpretation accepted by most recent commentators.[28] The opponents required corroboration between the Jewish scriptures and the gospels in order to accept some point of interpretation. Ignatius response to his interlocutors appears to have been terse, and from their perspective unhelpful. Ignatius simply asserted the opposite. Namely that the views he expressed were written in the Jewish scriptures. Thus, his response is to declare, "[i]t is written." This points to the fact that the impasse was due to a different hermeneutic or interpretative outlook. As Grant observes, the opponents "did not accept his Old Testament exegesis, probably the kind indicated in Ign. *Magn.* 8.2–9.2 and about to be set forth here in chapter 9."[29] Precisely what the opponents found objectionable in Ignatius' interpretative practices is not described. This might not be a case of Ignatius trying to hide a hermeneutic approach which he could not refute. Rather, it appears that Ignatius found the basis on which his opponents argued to be untenable, that their premises were irreconcilable with his own, and hence he could only view them as perverse readers of the scriptures. For Ignatius it was a non-negotiable starting point that the writings of the prophets and other scriptures spoke about Christ. For his opponents, "that is precisely the question" that they required Ignatius to answer. However, for Ignatius the christocentric perspective of the Jewish scriptures was so axiomatic that it defied proof and was self-evident. Thus, the only retort Ignatius provides is the claim of Christic identity, ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀρχεῖά ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (Ign. *Phld.* 8.1). In this way, the christological centre of Ignatius' hermeneutic approach becomes more explicit when he co-opts and glosses his opponents' terminology of the ἀρχεῖα. On the one hand he appears to intensify his opponents' commitment to Jewish scripture with the expression τὰ ἄθικτα ἀρχεῖα, "the unalterable" or "the inviolable archives." However, any sense that the expression is used to find common ground is immediately dispelled. Ignatius states that what makes the archives inviolable is that they

27 Lightfoot, Fathers, 267.

28 For instance, see Grant, Ignatius, 106.

29 Grant, Ignatius, 106.

consist of the cross, death and resurrection of Christ. Therefore, in response to the opponents' critique of his interpretative practices, Ignatius retorts with a stronger and more uncompromising statement of his own position. That is, the Jewish scriptures self-evidently attest to Christ and the key elements of the gospel as Ignatius understands it.

The argument continues with perspectives reminiscent of the Epistle to the Hebrews (cf. Heb 4:14–5:10), but without any extensive citation of the text. Ignatius main goals appears to affirm what he sees as helpful elements that are contained in the Jewish scriptures, to again assert that key figures in those scriptures participate with contemporary believers in the new divine unity, while simultaneously making those prior things subservient to the new order that pertains in Christ. Consequently, Ignatius' statements concerning the superiority of the high priest over the wider body of priests participates in this type of rhetorical argument, but it is lacking an explicit step in its logic. Nowhere does Ignatius overtly state that the high priest in his argument is Jesus. This type of identification was known elsewhere in early Christian writings. The author of Hebrews in particular employs such language: "Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession" (Heb 3:1); "we have a great high priest who passed through the heavens, Jesus the son of God" (Heb 4:14). It is unnecessary to determine whether or not Ignatius derived this imagery directly from Hebrews.[30] Regardless of the source of this idea, it is clear that Ignatius assumes his readers will see that he is describing Jesus as high priest,[31] since he equates the high priest's access to the holy of holies with the one described as "the door of the Father" disclosing the hidden things of God and also being the figure through who "Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the prophets and the apostles and the church enter in" (Ign. *Phld.* 9.1). Therefore, in this section of his argument Ignatius makes two key points. First, Jesus is the true high priest who grants access to God. Second, not only the generations subsequent to Christ gain divine access through his hieratic role, but also that access is granted to the patriarchs and the prophets who are presented as true followers of Christ. Moreover, from these observations Ignatius draws his own

30 Inge presents a balanced assessment of the possibility. He states: "It is no doubt true that no other book in the N.T. develops the idea of Christ as High Priest, and that Clement of Rome, who also uses it [...] shows knowledge of Hebrews; but the comparison may well have been suggested to Ignatius from other sources are the resemblance does not seem close enough to justify the degree of confidence which Lightfoot expresses." Inge, Ignatius, 75.

31 Lightfoot sees this identification as being obvious. He states, "The contrast here is between the Levitical priesthood, and the great High-priest of the Gospel, i.e., between the old and new dispensations. This is recognised by most commentators, and indeed is so directly demanded by the context, that it is strange any other interpretation should have been maintained." Lightfoot, Fathers, 274.

conclusion in regard to the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and contemporary believers. He concludes by making the statement that πάντα ταῦτα εἰς ἑνότητα θεοῦ (Ign. *Phld*. 9.1). Although the theme of unity is a key concern of Ignatius and the term ἑνότης at times is used almost like a catchword, it appearance in this context should not be overlooked or minimised. This statement of former and contemporary figures sharing in the unity of God may be intended as more than a mere statement of fact. It is likely that Ignatius wanted this to function as a factor that would motivate his interlocutors to accept his view that his christological reading of the Jewish scriptures resulted in the faithful of all ages being brought into the unity of God's presence. Of course, it is unlikely that those who disagreed with Ignatius were so easily persuaded.

The next part of the discussion is a reiteration of Ignatius' understanding of the relationship between the gospel and the Jewish prophetic scriptures. Ignatius declares that the "amazing" or "remarkable" (ἐξαίρετος) aspect of the gospel is that it communicates in a direct manner the soteriological actions achieved in Christ. While these descriptions of these actions form part of the anti-docetic rhetoric in some of Ignatius' other letters, here the purpose is markedly different. Ignatius does not develop the simple descriptions of the coming, suffering and resurrection of Jesus. They are simply stated as distinctives of the gospel, and hence as forming the lens through which the Jewish scriptures are to be read. Schoedel summarises Ignatius logic in the following manner. "Ignatius is stressing the fact that for all practical purposes the christological understanding of scripture suffices. What the prophets announced has in fact appeared. The Christ has come. Preoccupation with Scripture from other points of view is irrelevant."[32] Hence, at least to his own satisfaction, Ignatius has rebutted the hermeneutical approach of those at Philadelphia who did not read the Jewish scriptures in a thoroughgoing christological manner. While the evidence does not exist that would reveal whether any of those targeted by these arguments changes their views, it can be stated that Ignatius' understanding is largely reflective, albeit an only partially developed articulation, of later Christian approaches to interpreting the Jewish scriptures.

3. An Evaluation of Ignatius' Statements on Judaism

The comments that Ignatius makes regarding Jews, Judaism, and Jewish modes of interpreting scripture are found only in two of the seven letters of the middle recension – namely *Magnesians* and *Philadelphians*. At times there has

32 Schoedel, Ignatius 211.

been a tendency to synthesize these statements to present a single overarching issue (or even "heresy") that Ignatius is confronting in regard to Judaism in his letters. Such a facile synthesis should be resisted for two reasons. First, the towns of Magnesia and Philadelphia were geographically distant being separated by approximately 100 km in a straight line, but following ancient roads perhaps requiring a journey of approximately 150 km.[33] Second, and of greater significance the specific problems and situations being countered in the two letters appear to reflect a different set of problems. Admittedly, perhaps as a rhetorical convenience, Ignatius does describe the issues being addressed in the two locations using the term Ἰουδαϊσμός in both letters (Ign. *Magn*. 8.1; 10.3 [twice]; Ign. *Phld*. 6.1 [twice]). For argumentative purpose, there appears to be value in Ignatius labelling the situations he responds to at Magnesia and Philadelphia with what is from his perspective the same pejorative descriptor. However, although the details he provides are limited, what information he provides appears to suggest two different set of circumstances. While they may share the general similarity that in some aspect they can be linked to a "Jewish" outlook, there appears to be a greater divergence in the details of the problem. It is, however, notable that Ignatius employs some overlapping rhetorical strategies to respond to what he sees as problems stemming from Judaism. Notwithstanding that observation, the two situations in Magnesia and Philadelphia appear to be divergent and this it is suggested do not represent a unified group behind responses.

While not drawing a rigid dichotomy between the two modes, the difference between the situations in Magnesia and Philadelphia can perhaps be understood as the difference between behaviours and beliefs. When Ignatius gives a partial description of the what he perceives to be the underlying issue in Magnesia he rejects a pattern of behaviour that depends on living in "accordance with ancient practices" and "keeping the Sabbath" (Ign. *Magn*. 9.1). By contrast, Ignatius instructs his addressees "to live in accordance with Christianity" (Ign. *Magn*. 10.1) and to observe "the Lord's day" (Ign. *Magn*. 9.1). By contrast, the problem addressed in Philadelphia while also described as an expression of Ἰουδαϊσμός, is different in nature. There is nothing in the content of the letter to the Philadelphians to suggest that any in that community were engaging in typical boundary marking Jewish practices such as Sabbath observance, maintaining food laws, and circumcision of male children. Rather, what is described appear to be a hermeneutical issue, which centres on the

33 The ancient site of Magnesia on the Maeander is found at modern Tekin in Turkey, and Philadelphia is now the location of Alaşehir, Manisa, Turkey.

correct way to read Jewish scriptures and the manner in which to understand Christian writings and beliefs in relation to those scriptures.

The "Judaism" with which Ignatius is concerned does not appear to stem directly from ethnic Judaean non-Christ believers. Rather, his concern appears to be with those who identify as members of the Christ communities he addresses. Therefore, from Ignatius' perspective, the problems that arise are largely internal to those groups.[34] Certain group members in both Magnesia and Philadelphia are seen as promoting ideas or practices that had their origin in Jewish circles, and it is Ignatius who describes those perspectives as akin to adopting Judaism. Even Ignatius' cryptic comments in regard to not giving a hearing to those who seek to explain Judaism puts forward a complex a probably hypothetical case. When Ignatius writes, "it is better to hear about Christianity from a man who is circumcised than about Judaism from a man who is not" (Ign. *Phld*. 6.1) not only is the first interlocutor probably imagined, he is also a strange example of a Jew. Ignatius envisages the possibility of a circumcised Jew teaching Christianity. His point is that this hypothetical, and somewhat bizarre scenario would be more palatable than what is actually happening, namely Christ-believers teaching and advocating Ἰουδαϊσμός to members of the Philadelphian Christ community.

There is a further piece of evidence from outside the Ignatian corpus that might prove helpful for understanding the background to the issue being addressed in Philadelphia. The sixth of the seven letters addressed to the churches in Asia Minor in Revelation is directed to the assembly of Christ believers in Philadelphia (Rev 3:7–13).[35] In that letter, embedded in the wider text of Revelation, it must be admitted that the language is enigmatic and actually at times opaque. It is in that context that the author of this letter writes:

> ἰδοὺ διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται. ἰδοὺ ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἥξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου καὶ γνῶσιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε. (Rev 3:9)

It is no longer possible to identify the institution or the adherents that belong to what is labelled as "the synagogue of Satan". It is, however, striking that the author of Revelation says of these people that they "say they are Jews, but are not." Perhaps, like the possible situation behind Ignatius' *Letter to the Philadelphians*, those described in Revelation might have been non-ethnically Jewish Christ believers who claimed to represent a purified form of Judaism,

34 As Schoedel observes, "It is important to note that Ignatius is more harshly disposed to Christians of whom he disapproves than he is to pagans." Schoedel, Ignatius, 12.

35 For a detailed treatment of these seven letters see Hemmer, Churches.

perhaps based on a pristine interpretation of Jewish scriptures. However, most commentators have interpreted these comments as being directed against actual Jews whom the author denounces because their actions are not consonant with Judaism (cf. Rev 2:9). For instance, Koester states that,

> The opponents from the synagogue claimed to be Jews, but Revelation insists this is not true (3:9). Some interpreters have wondered whether the opponents were Gentiles who followed a few Jewish practices or were heterodox Christians [...] But the most plausible view is that they claimed to be Jews because of the usual factors of kinship, circumcision, Sabbath observance, meal practices, and the rejection of polytheism.[36]

If this latter view is correct, it provides important contextual information that is suggestive of the likely source for the Jewish interpretative perspectives being adopted among some who identified with the Christ community in Philadelphia. Consequently, it appears that some "uncircumcised" individuals, perhaps members of the Christ community in Philadelphia, were influenced by Jews in the city who were not Christ believers. Ignatius' opponents rejected his christological claims and challenged those who held such views to prove their case from the Jewish scriptures.[37]

The implications of this varied evidence are significant. First, at the time when Ignatius wrote, there appears to be little solid evidence for the presence of ethnic non-Christ believing Jews attempting to teach Christ believers to adopt Jewish practices or to accept Jewish modes of scriptural interpretation. The "Judaism" which Ignatius critiques might have had a long history within certain Christ believing communities, or alternatively it be a more recent phenomenon deriving from a certain antiquarian fascination with tradition. In his uncompromising manner, Ignatius does nothing to understand or accommodate such views. He rejects them outright and views them as a surrender of the core of the Christian faith. To bolster his argument, at least to his own satisfaction, he makes what may have already developed as a standard Christian response. The faithful who trusted in God prior to the coming of Christ were in some sense proleptic Christians. This is stated as being especially true of the prophets who foretold Christ's appearance and redemptive work (Ign. *Magn.* 8.2; Ign. *Phld.* 5.2). This form of reasoning is found in a similar form in the Epistle of Barnabas (*Barn.* 5.6). Ignatius also adds a chronological argument when addressing the Magnesians. He argues that Judaism came to believe in Christianity, so therefore, it would now be anomalous if Christians were

36 Koester, Revelation, 239.

37 Hemmer, Churches, 169.

to believe is Judaism (Ign. *Magn.* 10.3). In this way, Ignatius responds on two fronts. First, the true faithful who lived prior to Christ in some sense already believed in him. Second, since Christian is the development from Judaism, it would be incongruous to revert to the former and less effective form of belief. In one sense, both these arguments are thoroughly christological for Ignatius. Correct belief is always focused on Christ, and all scripture finds its fulfilment, purpose and meaning when given a christological interpretation. In response, his opponents demanded that he demonstrate his claims from the archives. However, Ignatius rejected this challenge outright. His response was more fundamental. The scriptures should be read christologically, in which case their christological meaning would be established. While the circularity of such an argument would not have been persuasive to those advocating the opposing hermeneutical approach, nonetheless its correctness was self-evident to Ignatius. It is for this reason that after rejecting the views of his opponents that he not only reasserts his christological beliefs (Ign. *Phld.* 9.2), but yet again claims that the patriarchs and prophets were part of the church, since "the beloved prophets preached in anticipation of him [Christ]" (Ign. *Phld.* 9.2). Hence, for Ignatius the root cause of the incorrect reading of Jewish scriptures is symptomatic of a deeper malady, namely not understanding the distinctive christological claims enshrined in the gospel.

4. How Many Groups of Opponents was Ignatius Confronting in his Letters?

The number of groups of opponents to whom Ignatius responded in his letters has been a perennial question within Ignatian studies for well over a century. Lightfoot is perhaps the earliest and best known advocate for the view in support of a single group of opponents whom he labelled as, "Doceto-judaism."[38] By contrast, on the basis of the assumed incompatibility of docetism and Judaism, Richardson supported the notion of two separate groups.[39] More recently, Robinson has evaluated the debate between those who advocating one group with Judaeo-docetic tendencies and those favouring two groups, with either a docetic christology or a proclivity to Judaize, in the following manner.

What is primarily at issue is whether one group could have had both a docetic and a Judaizing character, for both perspectives seem to be explicitly

38 See Lightfoot, Fathers, 125.

39 Richardson, Christianity.

confronted and condemned in Ignatius's letters. In certain passages Ignatius seems to object to unambiguous Judaizing tendencies; in other passages he seems to object to tendencies that are just as unambiguously docetic. On this point almost everyone agrees. Further, individual letters seem to be focused on one or the other of these problems, not on both. What is at dispute is a handful of the passages that seem to suggest a mixture of these ideas: sometimes seemingly anti-docetic language is used against what appear to be Judaizing opponents, and in several passages anti-Judaizing language is used against opponents who are more clearly docetic.[40]

The latter scenario of anti-Judaizing rhetoric directed against docetic opponents is described by Robinson as "the least significant piece in the puzzle."[41] The reason for this is those supporting that interpretation appeal to the same passages (Ign. *Magn.* 8–11 and Ign. *Phld.* 8–9) that are typical characterized as predominantly refuting Judaizing tendencies with subsidiary anti-docetic language, and then reverse the order to see these passages as primarily opposing doceticism while employing anti-Jewish rhetoric. Obviously if one synthetic type of opposition is understood, then the difference is one of degree. Namely, is the tendency to adopt a docetic christology more prominent than the impetus to adopt Jewish practices or *vice versa*? Further muddying the waters, there has been a notable tendency to draw the spectre of "gnosticism" into this already confusing mix.[42]

Furthermore, in some ways the problem of enumerating the number of opponents or opposing groups depends both on certain perspectival decisions and the way in which one classifies and categorises such groups. At times Ignatius can speak in strict binary terms where Christianity stands against the collective of all the forces united in its opposition to it. This form of rhetoric is employed especially when discussing those who do not identify as Christian, "Christianity is greatest when it is hated by the world" (Ign. *Rom.* 3.3). When, however, Ignatius speaks against those causing internal dissension within the communities to which he writes, he tends to employ similar rhetorical strategies across multiple letters. Thus, in both the *Trallians* and *Smyrnaeans* Ignatius responds to those accused of denying the reality of Christ's incarnation and sufferings by arguing that these torments happened in reality not just in appearance as his opponents suggested, and then turning the key term of the argument back on the opponents to suggest that they are the ones who exist in appearance only: αὐτοὶ ὄντες τὸ δοκεῖν / αὐτοὶ τὸ δοκεῖν ὄντες (Ign. *Trall.* 10.1/

40 Robinson, Ignatius, 114.

41 Robinson, Ignatius, 114, n. 97.

42 For instance, see Rudolph, Gnosis, 165.

Ign. *Smyrn.* 2.1). In these two cases not only is the rhetoric directed against the opponents virtually identical, but also this retort is directed against the same problem of the denial of the physical reality of Christ's sufferings. In some ways the views of the opponents mentioned in the *Letter to the Ephesians* are not as easy to determine. However, in response to those whom Ignatius labels as κύνες λυσσῶντες, "mad" or "rabid dogs" (Ign. *Eph.* 7.1), the response involves stating one of the well-known semi-credal statements that affirms both veracity of the incarnation and the reality of the physical sufferings of Christ.

> There is only one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, God in man, true life in death, both from Mary and from God, first subject to suffering and then beyond it, Jesus Christ our Lord. (Ign. *Eph.* 7.2)

While the connection is not as explicit as is the case of the situations in both Tralles and Smyrna, nonetheless there does appear to be a significant degree of similarity. However, it is also the case that there must obviously have been differences in the way these "docetic" issues manifested themselves in the three cities of Ephesus, Tralles, and Smyrna. Moreover, it is not entirely possible to tell if those responsible for such docetic ideas were the same people, or were representative of a larger connected movement, or whether these ideas had sprung up independently in each location.

In favour of some kind of connection is the relatively close geographical proximity of these three places, with Ephesus occupying some kind of medial point. Smyrna is approximately 65 km north-north-west of Ephesus, and Tralles is about 45 km west-south-west of Ephesus. Therefore, each city could have been reach from any other with relative ease and using well established direct routes. However, while Ignatius affirms the reality of the incarnation as a rhetorical tool in all three of these letters, the circumstances in Ephesus described by Ignatius suggest that docetic teachings had not taken hold among the believers in that location. If Ignatius' comments are taken at face-value, then he describes the prior circumstances in Ephesus in the following terms: "I have learned that certain people from elsewhere have passed your way with evil doctrine, but you did not allow them to sow it among you" (Ign. *Eph.* 9.1). Thus, Vall states "Ignatius knows that heretical teachers have already passed through Ephesus, and he is pleased to learn that the church refused to give them a hearing."[43] This reflects two things. First, the issue of docetism was not as pressing in Ephesus as it was in Tralles and Smyrna. This accounts for the tone in the *Letter to the Ephesians* being more irenic.[44] Second, and more

43 Vall, Learning, 74.

44 This difference in tone is noted by Vall. He states of Ephesians, "In many respects it is the most 'neutral' and comprehensive presentation of Ignatius's theology." Vall, Learning, 74.

importantly for this discussion, Ignatius reveals the peripatetic nature of those promoting docetic teachings. Therefore, it may well be the case that the same group of people was advocating docetic ideas in Ephesus, Tralles, and Smyrna. From what the respective letters suggest, these teachers had gained some kind of more permanent hearing in Tralles and Smyrna. In turn, this suggests that the docetic group was more unified and hence it more likely reflects a single problem, albeit with its own local difference in the various locations where it took root.

When it comes to understanding the situations in relation to opponents described in the letters addressed to Magnesia and Philadelphia, the first thing to note is that Ignatius rhetorical responses accuse both of becoming entangled with Ἰουδαϊσμός. So at least, for rhetorical purposes, these two problems can be labelled in the same manner. It is there, however, that the similarities largely seem to end. Unlike the case of the false teachers who had passed through Ephesus promoting docetic ideas, there is no evidence within Ignatius' writings that supports the notion of a mobile group of teachers promoting Jewish practices. However, Vall takes it as axiomatic that the problems experienced at Magnesia and Philadelphia were largely the same. He states as "a firm point of departure" that, "Ignatius actually encountered a group of Judaizers within the community at Philadelphia and had reason to believe, presumably on the testimony of Bishop Demas, that similar teachings and practices also threatened the church at Magnesia."[45] While agreeing with the first part of the statement concerning a first-hand encounter at Philadelphia with a group whose views are rejected and labelled as Ἰουδαϊσμός, the second part of the statement is far less certain. Ignatius, knowledge of the situation in Magnesia is mediated through Demas, but the issue appears to centre on the adoption of certain Jewish practices, such as Sabbath observance. By contrast, in Philadelphia the issue relates to the question of the correct way to interpret Jewish scriptures and from what is stated in letter it has little if anything to do with the adoption of Jewish practices.

Notwithstanding this, for rhetorical purposes Ignatius can label both situations as instances of Ἰουδαϊσμός and moreover in both arguments present the prophets as proleptic followers of Christ. Consequently, one could fairly argue that at a rhetorical level Ignatius speaks of two sets of opponents throughout his letters. On the one hand the docetic teachers described in *Ephesians, Trallians*, and *Smyrnaeans*, and on the other hand those accused of Ἰουδαϊσμός in *Magnesians* and *Philadelphians*. Therefore, based on an assessment of Ignatius' polemical rhetoric it is possible to speak of two sets of opponents.

45 Vall, Learning, 70.

However, when one considers the circumstances that Ignatius reflects behind those vehement rhetorical retorts, the reality appears somewhat different. While there is a basis for considering the docetic teachings as stemming from a common group at some level, the same cannot be said about the situations in Magnesia and Philadelphia. Here while the same label is applied to these two situations the details are markedly different, and there is little evidence of any connection between those being opposed in these two different locations.

Discussing Ignatius' opponents, Lookadoo has noted the care that must be exercised when comparing the opponents in both Philadelphia and Magnesia. In regard to those opposed in Philadelphia, both in letter and in person, Lookadoo states "Ignatius describes a Jewish group in Philadelphia with whom he differs about the relationship between scriptural interpretation and the gospel."[46] It remains unclear whether Lookadoo conceives of these opponents as circumcised from Jews outside the Philadelphian Christ community or members of the Christ community in Philadelphia who were persuaded by Jewish modes of scriptural hermeneutics.[47] He appears to lean towards the former view. However, perhaps it is more plausible to view this as an internal matter. In part, this is supported by the fact that Ignatius heard these views himself while visiting the Philadelphian community. It is further supported by the observation that Ignatius typical reserves his harshest rhetoric for those troubling the unity of the church from within.

So how many groups of opponents was Ignatius confronting? At one level that depends on how one categorizes the types of problems that are described in the letters. There appears little to support the idea of a single Doceteo-judaism of the type envisaged by Lightfoot apart from a slight mixture of Ignatius' typical christological affirmations in letters where he is responding to the problem of Ἰουδαϊσμός. Consequently, this may favour support for the hypothesis of two groups of opponents with a separate and unified group of travelling teachers of docetism and a separate group of Judaizing opponents. Ignatius' own rhetoric lends support to this notion. However, a closer examination of the two letters that deal with Judaizing tendencies suggest that different problems are being described and that such teachings were not being circulated by a single group. Thus, the tendency to embrace Ἰουδαϊσμός in both Magnesia and Philadelphia should not necessarily be conflated into a single entity. Hence it might in fact be better to speak of three types of opposition, or maybe it is even more responsible to take the situations described in each letter as unique to its own geographical setting.

46 Lookadoo, High Priest, 57.

47 Lookadoo, High Priest, 38–45.

5. Concluding Observations

Ignatius does not hold Ἰουδαϊσμός in high regard. In fact, quite the opposite, he sees it as having found its fulfilment in Christ, and thus having served its purpose as pointing to the coming of Christ principally through its prophetic writings. Beyond that, he considers Judaism to be essentially defunct, without soteriological value, and without value as a religious system. He is strident in his rebuttal of any form of reverting to its practices, beliefs, or forms of scriptural interpretation.

Yet, despite the ferocity of this rejection, it is not certain that Ignatius was actually responding to ethnic Jews who were not believers in Christ. Rather, the target of his rhetoric appears to have been individuals who in some way claimed a connection with the Jesus movement and were likely at some level members of the communities of Christ believers in Magnesia and Philadelphia. Alongside this, the issues to which Ignatius responds in his two letters that use the term Ἰουδαϊσμός suggest that the situations in Magnesia and Philadelphia were different, and that there was no single group responsible for the teachings that Ignatius rejected in these two locations.

For Ignatius, those who belonged to the communities to which he wrote were to define their identity solely on the basis of their relationship to Christ that affirmed the type of incarnational christology described at various points in his letters and through an obedience to the ecclesial leadership structures based on the hierarchy of bishop, presbyters, and deacons. Overall, Ignatius' understanding of faith and the communities that were focused on devotion to Christ is articulated with little reference to Judaism. When he does mention Jewish figures such as the patriarchs or the prophets, they are presented as being proleptically followers of Christ and the prophetic scriptures of Judaism are viewed as an anticipation of the gospel. This may be considered a usurpation of Jewish traditions, or even as a type of supersessionism. It is not necessary to disagree with that assessment. However, what is clear is that Ignatius' writings reflect considerable and irreversible distance between Christianity in the early second century and post Temple destruction Judaism. That does not mean the same degree of separation had occurred in all locations in the Mediterranean world. However, the evidence that Ignatius supplies reflects a circumstance in which Christianity had emerged as a movement with its own beliefs and structures that were separate and discrete from contemporary Judaism. Ignatius did not to create this separation, it was already part of the socio-religious environment that he inhabited. However, he was certainly a person that supported such a separation and he viewed Judaism and Christianity as distinct entities, with the former having little to contribute to the latter.

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Judaism and Christianity in the Epistles of Ignatius

Reflections on Contextualisation in the 2nd Century CE

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Abstract

The contribution is dedicated to the question of how the statements in Ignatius' letters can be placed in the context of theological developments in the second century. First, the relevant passages from the letters to the communities in Magnesia (8:1–10:3) and Philadelphia (5:2–6:1 and 8:2–9:2) are discussed in more detail. In a second step, the use of central terms from the Ignatius letters such as Christianismos, Iudaismos, iudaizein and sabbatizein is examined. The result shows that the texts attributed to Ignatius are for the most part very early evidence for the use of these terms and that the closest parallels can be dated to the middle of the second century (Martyrium Polycarpi, Marcion, Justin), but that some of them are only encountered at the turn to the third (Clement, Tertullian). This points to a dating of the letters in the middle of the 2nd century.

Keywords

Ignatius; Marcion; Christianismos; Judaismos; Sabbath; Tertullian

1. Introduction

The question of the date or authenticity of Ignatius' letters is, as is well known, controversial.[1] Besides the majority view, that the seven letters of the middle recension are authentic writings of the Antiochian bishop from the time between 114 and 117 CE,[2] other options have emerged. The view that the letters are authentic is often linked to a slightly later dating in the 2nd quarter of the

1 An excellent overview on the debate can be found in Lookadoo, Date and Authenticity.

2 E.g. Bauer/Paulsen, Briefe, 4; Schoedel, Ignatius, 7; Löhr, Briefe, 108–109.

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2nd century CE.[3] However, the authenticity of the seven letters is also strongly disputed in whole or in part.[4]

The question of the Ignatius's position, or that of the letters, in the "Parting of the Ways" has, as far as I can tell, so far not been discussed intensively in this debate. To fill in a part of this gap in the ongoing discussion, I begin by examining Ignatius's statements in the letters to the Magnesians and to the Philadelphians. Then I discuss the use of the central terms *Judaismos*, *Christianismos*, *judaizein* and *sabbatizein* in Christian literature of the 2nd century CE. The result of this approach is that, from this point of view as well, the early dating of the letters is problematic.

2. Judaism and Christianity in the Ignatian Letters

2.1 *Ignatius to the Magnesians 8.1–10.3*

Judaismos is referred to in Ign. *Magn.* 8.1a as deviant teaching (ἑτεροδοξία) and old fables (μυθεύματα παλαιοῖ). The keyword παλαιός is especially important here: in 8.1a it is the old "stories",[5] in 9.1a the walking in "old circumstances" (παλαιὰ πράγματα), and in 10.2a the "leaven grown old" (ζύμη παλαιωθεῖσαν).[6] The designation "outdated" is intended to motivate the addressees to no longer pay attention to these things.

It is only in the next sentence that "the old" is connected with Judaismos: "If we have lived according to Judaismos until now" (εἰ γὰρ μέχρι νῦν κατὰ Ἰουδαϊσμὸν ζῶμεν).[7] Of course, even if not all believers had previously considered Judaismos important, they should now share the view that it is a thing of the past. The observance of the Sabbath is given in 9.1b as an example of the adoption of Jewish practice. It stands pars pro toto for an orientation towards

3 See e.g. Foster, Epistles, 88–89; 106–107; Koch, Geschichte, 439–440; Barnes, Date; Stewart, Docetists.

4 See Hübner, Thesen, 44–72; Lechner, Ignatius. See also the articles of Lechner/Lössl/Prostmeier Briefe. According to Eurell, Ignatius, 191–196, only the Letter to the Romans is an authentic writing by Ignatius.

5 The term μύθευμα is not attested in the LXX, in the New Testament or in other Early Christian Literature, although it is not seldom in ancient Greek literature; see Lieu, Image, 28.

6 According to Ign. *Eph.* 19.3, the old regime was eradicated (παλαιὰ βασιλεία), which in context does not seem to refer to Judaism. But already here it becomes clear that the old is that which has passed away and been overcome by Christ.

7 Some manuscripts have κατὰ νόμον Ἰουδαϊσμὸν (Mediceo-Laurentianus) or νόμον Ἰουδαικόν (according to the manuscripts of the Greek longer recension and the Armenian manuscripts). κατὰ Ἰουδαϊσμόν is not attested in a Greek manuscript, it corresponds to the Latin tradition; see Fischer, Väter, 166 (Apparat); Schoedel, Ignatius, 119 n.7.

Jewish culture and religion.[8] This example is probably motivated here by the fact that earlier in the letter the issue was participation in the assembly (Ign. *Magn.* 7.1–2).[9]

The orientation towards Judaism, the letter continues, is in opposition to a status in grace (χάρις).[10] This view is justified theologically in terms of history. Even the scriptural prophets of the LXX did not live κατὰ Ἰουδαϊσμόν, but κατὰ Χριστόν.[11] The author explains this quite bold claim by saying that the prophets were already filled with that very grace when they taught to convince the "disobedient". By the latter are meant non-Jews who were taught the doctrine "God is one" (8.2c).[12]

A special group of believers is then envisioned in 9.1. These had turned from the old conditions (life according to the Sabbath rules (σαββατίζειν)) to the new hope (life κατὰ κυριακήν). The traditional scheme of "then and now" recurs here, albeit in a form specifically aimed at Judaismos. The change from the 1st person to the 3rd person signals that it is Jews who became Christians who are spoken of here. If *they* do not keep the Sabbath, how could any of the addressees do so?[13]

Instead of observing the Sabbath, Christ believers live κατὰ κυριακήν (9.1b).[14] This shift had already been indicated by the prophets (8.2a). The background of this claim is presumably the criticism of the Sabbath in Isa 1:13–14.[15] Yet there are still those who falsely keep the Sabbath, alongside or instead of the Lord's Day, which Ignatius naturally regards as an identity-forming feature of Christianity (10.1c–3b). The behaviour of Christians must be in accordance with "Christianism" (κατὰ Χριστιανισμός 10.1c). Only the person who is truly a

8 Differently McKay, Sabbath, 181: According to her, Ignatius would have declared Sabbath observance to be the decisive mark of religious affiliation.

9 See also Heil, Ignatios, 210.

10 On this, see e.g., Arnold, Justification, 52–53. Where one would expect νόμος in Pauline theology, Ignatius thus places Judaismos, as textual criticism also shows. Lieu, Image, 29: "Ignatius opposes not law and grace but Judaism and grace."

11 On this, see esp. Col 2:8 and also Rom 15:5; 2 Cor 5:16; Ign. *Eph.* 1.3; Ign. *Trall.* 2.1; Ign. *Phld.* 3.2.

12 For alternative readings, see Lieu, Image, 33.

13 See also Heil, Herrentag, 205.

14 On the textual form, which is actually an emendation from the Latin tradition (*dominicam*), see Heil, Herrentag, 205–207; differently, e.g., Leonhard, Pesach, 124–129. The connection between the Lord's Day and the Resurrection is also found, as in Ignatius, in the Epistle of Barnabas (*Barn.* 15.9) and in Justin (1 *Apol.* 67).

15 See also Uebele, Verführer, 63; on the whole discussion, see McKay, Sabbath, 180. On the use of Isaiah 1:13–14 in 2nd century literature, see below.

Christian belongs to God,[16] but he or she must also lead his or her life accordingly, i.e., must refrain from σαββατίζειν or living a life κατὰ Ἰουδαϊσμόν.

In a reference to 1 Cor 5:7–8,[17] the metaphor of leaven is used in 10:2a–c. Judaism is the old, corrupt leaven, Christ the new. The implication is that believers are the dough whose scent (ἡ ὀσμή) depends on the quality of the leaven. The incorporation of Jewish practices of piety is qualified as unnatural: "It is a contradiction to say Jesus Christ and to Judaise" (10:3a).

The author sees the justification of all these assertions about Judaismos in the salvation-historical sequence Judaismos → Christianismos (10:3b.c). Judaismos "became a believer" (ἐπίστευσεν) in Christianismos. Even though Judaismos and Christianismos can respectively be understood as specific kinds of piety, culture and lifestyle to which one subscribes, there is more in play here. Judaismos and Christianismos are active subjects who behave in a certain way. There is already an understanding of "Judaism" and "Christianity" as clearly identifiable formations here.

In terms of salvation history, the author thus arranges things in such a way that, according to God's plan of redemption, the disciples and many other early Christians were once Jews, but have left that behind. Any ethnic dimension of Judaism is abandoned here. Judaism has become a believer in the Christian religion. Previously Jewish – and now Christian – believers demonstrate to the non-Jewish Christians who are oriented towards Judaismos just how wrong their view is. They came to believe in Christianismos and therefore left Judaismos behind. This move is of course not possible in the opposite direction.[18] If Judaismos has become a believer in Christianismos, and this corresponds to God's will for salvation, Judaismos has lost its justification.[19] A return to it, or the reception of specifically Jewish religiosity (ἰουδαΐζειν), is therefore contradictory (ἄτοπον), because it undoes what has already become historically clear (10:3d): the goal is the assembly of "every believing tongue" as Christianismos.[20]

16 The reference to the self-designation as Χριστιανός is, in my opinion, directed to the ὄνομα in 10:1d.

17 On this, see e.g. Merz, Selbstauslegung, 157–158.

18 Lieu, Image, 33: "[…] whereas Ignatius sees no connection between Christianism and 'docetism', he does recognise one between Judaism and Christianism, even while denying the possibility that any relationship might be reciprocal."

19 The narrower definition, according to which it is exclusively a matter of Christians, is therefore not accurate; but see Bremmer, Ioudaismos, 66.

20 The phrase πᾶσα γλῶσσα […] συνήχθη might be a reminiscence of Isa 45:23 or Rom 14:11 (cf. Phil 2:11) or Isa 66:18; cf. Schoedel, Ignatius, 126–127.

This reinterpretation of Judaismos, as an exclusively religious connotation, reinforces the central concern of the passage under discussion – the warning against the adoption of Jewish practices. By erasing the ethnic connotation, the religious dimension of the argument is brought to the fore. For if Christianismos has no ethnic dimension, neither can the superseded Judaismos, if it is to function as the antipode from which one must strictly distinguish oneself.

2.2 *Ignatius to the Philadelphians 5.2–6.1 and 8.2–9.2*

Similarly to Ign. *Magn.* 8.2 and 9.2, the author of the letter to the assembly in Philadelphia refers to the (Old Testament) prophets (Ign. *Phld.* 5.2). After exhorting the addressees to pray for themselves, he abruptly tells them, "Let us also love the prophets" (καὶ τοὺς προφήτας δὲ ἀγαπῶμεν). For the preaching of the scriptural prophets had already been oriented towards the Gospel and they hoped in the Christ. They were saved as believers and are saints.[21]

The treatment of Judaismos begins in 6.1a with the author imagining a τις (cf. Ign. *Phld.* 3.3; 8.2; Ign. *Eph.* 5.2; 8.1; cf. Ign. *Magn.* 10.2). Judaismos is "explained" by a person, though it is clear that this is done with the intention to win people over, possibly through scriptural interpretation. But Judaismos is more than a matter of the interpretation of Scripture.[22] Here, too, Judaismos is first and foremost the orientation towards Jewish religious practice. The addressees are to stay away from this.[23]

The conveyance of Judaismos is further explained in 6.1b, but this time with regard to those who explain it. The idea is expressed, that an uncircumcised person (ἀκορβύστος) could speak of Judaismos. Very probably, this is a (fictitious) Christ believer from the nations.[24] Such Christians – that is, those who "say Jesus Christ and Judaise" (Ign. *Magn.* 10.3c) – are after all also targeted in Ign. *Magn.* 9.1 and 10.3.

As an alternative, the author mentions a "man who has circumcision" and speaks of Christianismos.[25] Circumcision is mentioned here as a distinguishing feature because it expresses most clearly what Judaismos is.[26] But whether the man is a Judean or a proselyte is left open. What is most important is that

21 On this, see e.g., Nicklas, Jews, 126–127.

22 For a different view, see Bauer/Paulsen, Briefe des Ignatius, 83; Schoedel, Ignatius, 203; Uebele, Verführer, 81–82; Boyarin, Apartheid, 14.

23 See also, Robinson, Ignatius, 151.

24 See e.g., Bauer/Paulsen, Briefe, 83; Schoedel, Ignatius, 202; Boyarin, Apartheid, 15.

25 With Schoedel, Ignatius, 202, one can discern "some difficulty even here", which Ignatius has with a Judaeo-Christian communication of Christianity.

26 There is no demand for circumcision by followers of Judaism in view here; see Isacson, Letter, 122; differently Schoedel, Ignatius, 203; Uebele, Verführer, 81.

the man speaks of life κατὰ Χριστιανισμόν (cf. Ign. *Magn.* 10.1c). The bottom line is that only what is said matters, not who says it. For if Christ is not at all the subject matter, the talk is empty, as if coming from stones or graven images (Ign. *Phld.* 6.1d). The subsequent warning against the evil arts and snares of the prince of this aeon (6.2a) consequently places Judaismos within the sphere of the devil's workings. Soliciting an orientation towards Jewish religious practices is diabolical because it renders Agape powerless and destroys unity (6.2b.c).

After the author has once again invoked unity (Ign. *Phld.* 7.1–8.1), he returns to the Scriptures and their interpreters in a somewhat cryptic way (8.2–9.2). First, he centres on "the teaching of Christ" as a principle of action: πράσσειν [...] κατὰ χριστομαθίαν (Ign. *Phld.* 8.2). In the following, a fictional dialogue deals with the interpretation of the ἀρχεῖα ("deeds"). A claim is put into the mouths of nameless persons: "If I do not find (it) in the documents, I do not believe in the Gospel" (ἐὰν μὴ ἐν τοῖς ἀρχείοις εὕρω ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ οὐ πιστεύω). This is fiction along the lines of diatribe.[27]

In 8.2d, by contrast, he states that his ἀρχεῖα are Jesus Christ, that is, have Christ as their content. He is referring to written documents, probably writings of the LXX, which are available in the congregations. This is indicated above all by the short γέγραπται, with which the objection of the opponents is met. This word is usually used to introduce quotations from Scripture.[28] The dialogue itself, then, revolves around scriptural interpretation. While the opponents emphasise that the gospel must be derived from Scripture, Ignatius stresses the fundamental primacy of the gospel. The content of his ἀρχεῖα is the cross, death, resurrection and the πίστις made possible by Christ.[29] Against the (fictitious) opponents, the author thus sets a reading of Scripture that comes from the Gospel. The bottom line, then, is that the author does give importance to Scripture, but only insofar as it also confirms the Christ event and faith. Where Scripture does not do this, the Christ event is the basis of faith.

This is continued in 9.1, where the assessment of priests and the high priest is shaped against this background. The priests stand for the Old Testament

27 For a different interpretation see Schoedel, Ignatius, 207; Isacson, Letter, 148–149.

28 Ign. *Eph.* 5.3 contains a quote from Prov 3:34 and Ign. *Magn.* 12 one from Prov 18:17; cf. Lookadoo, Ignatios, 208–209.

29 For this reason alone, it can be ruled out that there is a written Gospel in the archive; cf. also Schoedel, Ignatius, 208. When the author affirms that the scriptures, which are authoritative for him, remained untouched, he wants to underline that they were not falsified by anyone.

scriptures, while the high priest is of course Christ.[30] The priests had their justification (they are qualified as καλοί), but the high priest is better (κρεῖσσον). Only through him are the mysteries of God accessible, for it is Christ who is designated as the "door to the Father" (9.1b). However, it is not only Christians who enter by this door, but also the patriarchs, prophets and apostles. For in Christ – in the Gospel – is contained the transcendent: the coming, suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ (9:2a). The prophets had spoken about him; now, in the Gospel, salvation is complete and everlasting (9.2b–c). This is essentially the role already ascribed to the prophets in Ign. *Magn.* 8 and Ign. *Phld.* 5.2, and it is consistent with the idea that Judaismos became a believer in Christianismos (Ign. *Magn.* 10.3).

It remains questionable which opposing position is in view here. It is obviously not a matter of defending Scripture against attacks. In other words, it is not against Marcion. Rather, the author is taking a stand against people who deny a Christological interpretation of Scripture and think that their testimony is to be read independently of the Gospel. If one interprets the fictitious statement of the opponents, ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ οὐ πιστεύω, as "I do not believe the gospel", it becomes apparent that there is no inner-Christian dispute, since faith in the gospel would necessarily be the common basis.[31] The remarks thus align with Justin's argument against Trypho. The opponents in Ign. *Phld.* 8.2 do not trust in the gospel because it cannot be proven to them from Scripture. They are not Christians, they are Jews or proselytes.

2.3 *Other Brief Comments*

Ign. *Rom.* also speaks of Christians and Christianismos. According to Ign. *Rom.* 3.2, Ignatius hopes that, through his martyrdom, he will be able to demonstrate his appellation "Christian" (Χριστιανός) to all (cf. also Ign. *Pol.* 7.3). Thus he will be remembered as (truly) faithful, even when he is no longer to be seen. Something similar is true of Christianity (Ign. *Rom.* 3.3): It is not a matter of persuasion, but something inherently great.[32]

30 In view of this, it seems possible to me that the author is referring to the high priest Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but the designation of Christ as ἀρχιερεύς plays a role in other writings as well (*1 Clem.* 36.1; 61.3; 64.1; Mart. Pol. 14.3; Mart. Pol 12.2 and more); cf. Bauer/Paulsen, Briefe, 86.

31 For a different point of view see Boyarin, Apartheid, 15; Schoedel, Ignatius, 207; also Isacson, Letter, 147–148; differently Bauer/Paulsen, Briefe, 85–86; Uebele, Verführer, 77.

32 In Ign. *Rom.* 3 the connection between Χριστιανός and Χριστιανισμός is obvious and it is not necessary to assume that the term Χριστιανισμός (or also Χριστιανός) was already known in Rome at the time of writing.

Only in Ign. *Smyrn.* 1.2 do Ἰουδαῖοι occur, who are mentioned here as a complementary element to the nations (ἔθνη). The one body of His (Christ's) Church is composed of both. Also in Ign. *Smyrn.* there is a certain parallel to the statements discussed above, albeit with a slightly different focus. According to Ign. *Smyrn.* 5.1 there is a group of people (τινες) who deny Christ. The context contains a polemic against persons who understand the death of Christ as having happened "in appearance" (τὸ δοκεῖν), whereas Ignatius presents his own coming death as definitely real (4.2). Christ, the perfect man, is denied by the τινες. Neither are they persuaded by the prophets, by the law of Moses, by the gospel, nor by the sufferings which Christians endure. It is therefore a position that denies the corporality of Christ (5.2). Neither Scripture nor the Gospel have any effect on these people. Significant for our question is, among other things, that Ignatius grants Scripture (which here includes the Torah) a function in the work of persuasion. Thus it is not surprising when, in Ign. *Smyrn.* 7.2, he instructs his audience to "pay attention to the prophets, but especially to the Gospel" (προσέχειν δὲ τοῖς προφήταις ἐξαιρέτως δὲ τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ).[33]

2.4 *Conclusions*

1) Only a few passages from Ignatius' seven letters even deal with Judaism. It is not a central theme!
2) It does not follow from the epistolary situation, or from the location of the addressees of Ign. *Magn*. and Ign. *Phld.* that Judaismos was a special topic there. Neither Magnesia nor Philadelphia were known for a particularly strong Jewish minority, nor were they a centre of Jewish Christianity.
3) Judaismos occurs only in connection with Christianismos (Ign. *Magn.* 8–10; Ign. *Phld.* 6), while Christianismos also occurs independently of it (Ign. *Rom.* 3.3).
4) The relationship between the two terms is described as succession. Even where assignments such as old and new or bad and (implicitly) good are encountered, they can be placed in the scheme formulated in Ign. *Magn.* 10.3: Judaismos came to faith in Christianismos. This is also evident in the interpretation of Scripture, according to which the prophets were already speaking in Christ's direction and even living according to Christianismos. Thus, for the author, Christianity is so superior to Judaism that Judaism no longer has any meaning. Grace can be found exclusively in the Christian faith, which proves itself in a life according to Christianismos.

33 See on that Nicklas, Jews, 128–129.

5) The traditional definition of Judaismos as an orientation towards Jewish culture and religion, which foregrounds practice above all, is determinative. However, the traditional definition is undermined where Judaismos becomes the acting subject and believer in Christianismos. Christianismos is also primarily understood as a principle of action, but at the same time, it is also thought of as an acting subject.[34]
6) Religious practice is generally regarded as a proof of faith, but with respect to Judaism, the specifics of the letters remain undefined, apart from the Sabbath. The author does not seem to want his readers to realise all that is possible.
7) The author not only had those Christians in mind who adopted Jewish practices such as Sabbath observance, but also wanted to present Christianismos as fundamentally superior to Judaismos.

3. Conceptual and Theological Contexts of the 2nd Century

In the following, I address a few topics that have proved essential for interpreting Ignatius' letters: the use and definition of *Christianismos* and *Judaismos* as well as the terms *judaizein* and *sabbatizein*.[35]

3.1 *Christianismos*

The use of Χριστιανισμός in Ign. *Magn.* 10.1.3; Ign. *Rom.* 3.3; Ign. *Phld.* 6.1 is unique in all writings of the first half of the 2nd century. It is therefore often assumed that Ignatius of Antioch coined the term.[36] The expression is otherwise encountered in the 2nd century CE only in the Martyrium Polycarpi (Mart. Pol. 10.1).[37] In the latter text, the λόγος τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ corresponds to a philosophy. It is significant, on the one hand, that the opposition Judaismos/Christianismos does not appear in Mart. Pol. On the other hand, the use in Mart. Pol. 10.1 suggests that the author took this expression for granted. The

34 For a different view see e.g. Niebuhr, Judentum, 232: "'Judentum' bei Paulus ebenso wie 'Judentum' und 'Christentum' bei Ignatius bezeichnen nicht Religionsgemeinschaften oder Glaubenssysteme, sondern Lebensweisen."

35 I do not here examine Ignatius' hermeneutics of Scripture in greater detail. For a comprehensive discussion of that topic, see Nicklas, Jews, 124–129.

36 See, e.g., Schoedel, Ignatius, 126 n.1; Robinson, Ignatius, 203 n.1; Lieu, Marcion, 410.

37 The sentence Χριστιανός εἰμι. εἰ δὲ θέλεις τὸν τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ μαθεῖν λόγον, δὸς ἡμέραν καὶ ἄκουσον is preserverd in Euseb (h.e. 4.15.21) as well as in the menologies; see Buschmann, Martyrium, 26.

term was definitely known in Asia Minor around 155/156 CE,[38] or if Mart. Pol. is dated later, in 160/170s.[39]

It is not until the early 3rd century that the term Christianismos reappears. It occurs once in Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* 7.1.1.3). Tertullian uses the expression in his writing against the heretics, where he contrasts philosophy and "dialectical Christianity" (*dialecticum Christianismum*; PrH 7:11). In *Marc.* the term is used five times and, in my view, there is nothing to suggest that Tertullian took it over from Marcion.[40] In *Marc.* 4.6.3, for example, it is a schematisation made up by Tertullian. The rift that Marcion opened between the creator God and the unknown God of Christ was similar to that between "just and gracious, law and gospel, Judaism and Christianity" (*quantam inter iustum et bonum, quantam inter legem et evangelium, quantam inter Iudaismum et Christianismum*).[41] It is striking that all references to *Christianismos* in *adversus Marcionem* take the form of an antithesis to Judaism, both as an opposition and as a succession of one to the other. This is an obvious parallel to the remarks of Ignatius[42] and is all the more important because, as we shall see below, *Judaismos* was also anything but common in the 2nd century CE.

3.2 *Judaismos*

In recent decades, there has been intense discussion around the conceptual history of the expression *Judaismos*.[43] In 2 Macc 2:21; 8:1; 14:38, it is a parallel term to Ἑλληνισμός (cf. 2 Macc 4:13) and describes the orientation of one's lifestyle according to the customs of the Judean ethnos. It would therefore be misleading to restrict its definition to a "Judaism" with only religious

38 For 155/156 CE as the date of Polycarp's death, see Buschmann, Martyrium, 39–40; Parvis, Martyrdom, 127–132.

39 In particular, the discussion of a Montanist longing for martyrdom, which is conducted because of the Phrygian Quintus in Mart. Pol. 4, could refer to the 170s; see Bremmer, Ioudaismos, 75. Moss, Myth, 104, argues that it is a text from the middle of the 3rd century CE.; see also Holtzmann's earlier discussion in, Johannes, 214.

40 For a different view, see Lieu, Image, 266–267; Bremmer, Ioudaismos, 75; but compare Lieu, Marcion, 409: "Each of the occurrences in Tertullian's writing can be ascribed to himself [...] The only indication that Tertullian might be drawing on earlier debates would be Ignatius of Antioch, who makes an uncompromising separation of 'Judaism' from 'Christianity'."

41 Further attestations are *Marc.* 4.33.8; 5.3.5; 5.4.8; 5.6.10.

42 See also, Lieu, Image, 266; Bremmer, Ioudaismos, 75.

43 See, e.g., Mason, Jews; Bremmer, Ioudaismos, 60–63; Öhler, Judäer, 157–185.

connotations (cf. also 4 Macc 4:26). A similar usage is found in Paul in Gal 1:13–14 and in two clearly later Jewish inscriptions.[44]

In the 2nd century CE, an additional usage develops, which reveals an understanding of *Judaismos* as "only" a religious attitude beyond ethnic determinations. Like Christian faith, or Christianismos, Judaismos is a religion.[45] The community of proponents of this religion thus becomes Judaism, as we can see in Ignatius, when he writes that *Judaismos* "believed" in Christianismos (Ign. *Magn.* 10.3).

The term *Judaismos* occurs nowhere else in Christian literature of the 2nd century, apart from its only other occurrence in Tertullian (*Adv. Jud.* 9.3; *Pud.* 17.11; *Res.* 50.7). For him, *Iudaismus* clearly stands outside of salvation, its essential characteristic being circumcision (cf. Ign. *Phld.* 6.1).[46] We see therefore that, for Tertullian, *Iudaismus* is a clearly definable group of people. That is, it is Judaism as a religion held by a certain community. This view is also evident in the mentions of *Iudaismus* in *adversus Marcionem* (among others *Marc.* 1.20; 3.22.3; 4.11.1; 5.1.8; 5.5.1; cf. *Adv. Jud.* 3.6). Here, too, in spite of the focus on the practice of life, at issue is a complete change from one movement to another, from Judaism to Christianity.

That the term Ἰουδαισμός was also known to Marcion can be seen, among other things, from *Marc.* 4.4.4, for Tertullian actually seems to quote him:

> Marcion by his Antitheses accuses [the Gospel of Luke] of having been falsified by the upholders of Judaism with a view to its being combined in one body with the law and the prophets.[47]

The defenders of Judaism whom Marcion attacked were probably not Jews but Christians, whom he accused of adhering to Judaism by reading the Scriptures (cf. also 5.3.1).[48] That Marcion spoke of *Judaismos* as belonging to the past was

44 IJO I Macc 1 (Stobi, 2./3. cent. CE): Polycharmos […] ὁ πατὴρ τῆς ἐν Στόβοις συναγωγῆς ὃς πολειτευσάμενος πᾶσαν πολειτείαν κατὰ τὸν ἰουδαϊσμὸν […]; JIWE II 584 (Rome, 4. cent. CE): Cattia Amias, who lived ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσῷ.

45 See Boyarin, Semantic, 71: "*Ioudaismos* in the sense of 'Judaism' could only appear after *Christianismos* had appeared", and 72: "When Christianity separated religious belief and practice from *Romanitas*, cult from culture, Judaism as a religion came into the world as well."

46 See Lieu, Marcion, 409.

47 *Marcion per Antitheses suas arguit ut interpolatum a protectoribus Iudaismi ad concorporationem legis et prophetarum* (text and translation in Evans, Tertullian, 268f.). Even people like Ignatius would belong to it as well as the author of the Epistle of Barnabas or Justin.

48 See Lieu, Marcion, 74.

suggested already by Gal 1:13–14, which worked for him as a general principle in dealing with Judaism.

3.3 *Judaizein*

The LXX uses ἰουδαΐζειν only in the 1st century BC version of Esth 8:17: many from the nations underwent circumcision for fear of the Ἰουδαίοι καὶ ἰουδάϊζον.[49] Josephus also connects circumcision and ἰουδαΐζειν (*B.J.* 2.454.463).[50] As with similar formulations (among others, ἑλληνίζειν, αἰγυπτιάζειν), the expression signified/signifies the turn to a different nation, to its customs and cults. The only instance of the verb in the New Testament, in Gal 2:14, contains no other connotations: the non-Jewish members of the Antiochian ecclesia are forced – by the behaviour of Christ believers of Judaean origin – to ἰουδαΐζειν in order to maintain table fellowship.

Apart from Ignatius, ἰουδαΐζειν is not found in the literature of the 2nd century AD, although the expression would have been decidedly appropriate for Justin. Clement of Alexandria regards a connection to philosophy or Judaism as analogous (φιλοσοφεῖν ἢ ἰουδαΐζειν; *Strom.* 7.15.89.3). The expression is subsequently used exclusively by Christian authors.[51]

In the matter itself, namely in the rejection of any adoption of Jewish religious practice, the Epistles of Ignatius agree with a broad current of emerging Christianity. From the Pastorals to the Epistle of Barnabas, from Justin to Marcion, views are put forward which, to varying degrees, sharply reject Jewish practice, right down to the whole of Judaism. However, apart from Ignatius, the word ἰουδαΐζειν is not used for this purpose.

3.4 *Sabbatizein*

The term σαββατίζειν, found in Ign. *Magn.* 9.1b, is used much less frequently than constructions with the noun σάββατον. The verbum occurs in the LXX (Exod 16:30; Lev 23:32; 26:34–35; 2 Chr 36:21; 3 Esr 1:55; 2 Macc 6:6), but does not appear in the New Testament or in other writings of the Apostolic Fathers. It is not until Justin that it is used in his dialogue with Trypho. There it is regularly found in connection with other regulations of the Law such as circumcision, the observance of feast times, or purity regulations which do not concern Christ believers (*Dial.* 10.1; 23.3; 26.1; 46.2; 47.2; 92.2.4).[52] In the Gospel of Thomas, on the other hand, Jesus exhorts the disciples to observe the

49 About the same age, or even older, is the use of ἰουδαΐσειν (sic!) in Theodotus or Alexander Polyhistor (fragment 4, transmitted in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 9.22.5).

50 See also Plut. *Cic.* 7.6.

51 On the authors from the 2nd–6th century CE, see Albl, Authors, 15–56.

52 However, σαββατίζειν is also used to describe the Sabbath in a positive way (*Dial.* 12.3).

Sabbath (EvThom 27b).[53] Later evidence for σαββατίζειν is found in Clement of Alexandria (*Strom* 1.1.13.1) and Tertullian (*Adv. Jud.* 4.2: sabbatizare).

The disputes about the Sabbath already began with Jesus of Nazareth's interpretation and practice of the Torah.[54] In the Gospels, the meaning of the Sabbath is re-qualified in the light of Christology (cf. e.g. Mk 2:28 par.). It is striking, however, that in the epistolary literature of early Christianity, which is not sparing in exhortations to proper living, the Sabbath plays almost no role, with the exception of Col 2:16.

Indeed, the question of whether the Sabbath should, or may, play any role at all is not addressed until the Epistle of Barnabas (130/132 AD). Its 15th chapter contains an allegorical interpretation of the Sabbath in relation to the eschatological time of salvation and rest.[55] By means of Isa 1:13, the real Sabbath practice is disavowed (cf. also *Barn.* 2.5), while the coming peace is expected as a prerequisite for the eighth day, the day of resurrection. This also implies a criticism of any form of Sabbath observance by Jews and even more so by Christ believers.

In Diognetus's work, which may have been written in Alexandria at the end of the 2nd century AD,[56] the Sabbath is addressed together with Jewish dietary rules, circumcision, fasting and the celebration of the new moon (Diogn. 4.1–3). A practice of the Sabbath by Christians is not in view in this text. For a "pneumatic" interpretation of the Sabbath commandment, see Ptolemy's letter to Flora (mid-2nd century AD): God's intention had been that one refrain from evil works (5.12).[57] The Sabbath is one of the elements of Jewish religiosity that is repeatedly addressed in Justin's dialogue with Trypho. Justin accuses his Jewish opponent of not having understood the Sabbath correctly.[58] Neither God (29.3) nor the elements (23.3) rest on the Sabbath. Therefore, it is no longer the Sabbath that counts, but the eighth day (24.1; 138.1), the first day of the week (ἡ μία τῶν σαββάτων 41.4). Isa 1:13 also supports Justin's rejection of the Sabbath (*1 Apol.* 37.5). In his view, the true observance of the Sabbath is not on a particular day of the week, but daily (*Dial.* 12.3).

Finally, for Tertullian, as in the Epistle of Barnabas and Justin, Sabbath observance plays a role in differentiation from the Jews, among other things with reference to Isa 1:13 (*Apol.* 21.2; *Idol.* 14.6; *Adv. Jud.* 4.2; *Marc.* 4.12.4). In opposition to Marcion, Tertullian defends the Old Testament Sabbath commandment and elaborately shows that Christ, though Lord of the Sabbath,

53 In P. Oxy. 1 verso ll.4–11.

54 See, among others, Doering, Schabbat, 398–478.

55 On this see, e.g., McKay, Sabbath, 183–188; Prostmeier, Barnabasbrief, 474–501.

56 See Lona, Schrift, 223–224.

57 The letter is included in Epiphanius, *Pan.* 33.3–7.

58 For a broad range of argumentation, see *Dial.* 11.2; 18.2; 19.6; 23.3; 26.1; 27.2–5.

kept it (*Marc.* 4.12). This alone demonstrates that the Sabbath commandment is divine (cf. also *Marc.* 4.12.15). According to a quotation in Epiphanius (*Pan.* 42.3.4), Marcion had demanded fasting on the Sabbath in order not to celebrate the God of the Jews.

4. Placing the Epistles of Ignatius within the Parting of the Ways

By examining the relevant statements of Ignatius' letters and the use of four central terms in early Christianity, I think it has become clear that Ignatius is embedded in an environment that points more to the second half of the second century than to its beginning. The references to the Epistle of Barnabas, to Marcion, Justin, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian are very close to this later phase of emerging Christianity, when a positioning towards Judaism and the observance of Jewish rites by Christ believers became more and more important.

In substance, these texts agree with few exceptions: the adoption of Jewish practices is to be rejected and Jewish worship of God is deficient. Christianity has taken its place, with Christianity and Judaism profiled as opposites. Thus, in my opinion, the specific use of Ἰουδαισμός as an expression for "Judaism" can only be found in Christian authors who profile *Judaismos* and *Christianismos* as opposing religions, or rather, religions that replace each other.

Where the dating of the Ignatian letters is concerned, further arguments can be adduced, from what has been shown above, which point to a setting in the middle or second half of the 2nd century. On the one hand, the central terms of Ignatius' letters are largely absent from texts of the early 2nd century. And on the other hand, there is a striking proximity to Tertullian's polemic against Marcion. The latter, of course, does not necessarily mean that the Ignatian letters are a forgery of the late 2nd century or later. In my opinion, it is also conceivable that the terminological proximity is based on a tradition that was taken up in Rome by Marcion and could actually go back to the letters of Ignatius. For when the martyr Ignatius came to Rome, perhaps in the 150s under Antoninus Pius,[59] his views on Judaismos and Christianismos could have become known in there.[60] However, his prescriptions only became popular towards the end of the 2nd century, when the separation of large parts of Christianity and Judaism was already taking on very definite forms.

59 On persecution under Antoninus Pius, see Keresztes, Antoninus Pius.

60 If the letters were dated in the 130s, Marcion could have already become acquainted with them in Asia Minor.

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Jewish Scriptural Interpretation and Ritual Practice in Origen's Homilies on Leviticus

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Abstract

Origen (185–ca. 253) was one of the earliest and most prolific interpreters of the Bible in early Christianity. He adapted Hellenistic and Jewish methods of text interpretation to the needs of the Christian community. In his Homilies on Leviticus, he explains the cultic prescription of the biblical book to his Christian audience in Caesarea. His spiritual interpretation aims at the edification of his hearers and their progress in their spiritual lives. He develops his interpretation in explicit contrast to a Jewish interpretation which he defines as literal and non-spiritual. With this demarcation he primarily addresses Christians who criticise his spiritual hermeneutics. Thus he tries to construct a clear borderline between Christian and Jewish biblical interpretation. Whereas he rejects a literal understanding of the ritual laws in Leviticus as "Jewish," he nevertheless aims at the concrete social and religious practice of his Christian audience.

Keywords

Origen; Leviticus; reception of the Bible; religious practice

1. Introduction

An issue which is often connected to the parting of the ways between Jews and Christians, and to the different perspectives of the two, is the observation that Christians were devoted to the development of doctrine and concerned about orthodoxy, whereas Jewish communities and rabbis were concerned about ritual practice, and thus about orthopraxy, more than faith and dogma. Schiffman states that "the primary emphasis of Judaism is on the fulfilment of commandments and not on faith."[1] Horbury maintains that the exegetical rules of the church fathers "were naturally often also rules of belief."[2] Moreover, "[e]xegesis

1 Schiffman, Crossroads, 140.

2 Horbury, Interpretation, 763.

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in the fourth and fifth centuries was correspondingly marked by the doctrinal question"[3] of Christology. Augustine presents his treatise on scriptural interpretation using the title "On Christian doctrine" (*De doctrina christiana*). As Bernhard Lang summarises: "Theology is biblical interpretation."[4]

The developing Christian doctrine as well as certain basic hermeneutic assumptions, such as the inspiration of Scripture, formed the interpretation of the Bible, and vice versa. However, exegesis was also closely connected to the socio-cultural setting of the exegetes and their hearers or readers. Not only the beliefs of the Christian communities, but also their religious practice was a crucial factor for the interpretation of the Bible. Part of this exegetical practice is the differentiation and separation from Jewish interpretation. This process had not yet been finished by the middle of the third century when Origen (185–ca. 253) held his homilies in Caesarea. "Only [in the fourth century] did church fathers [...] and the rabbis of Palestine have the institutional mechanisms to impose firm boundaries."[5] In the first three Christian centuries, the process of fixing these boundaries was still in progress.

"Traditionally Christianity has defined itself in opposition to Judaism: a central element of its self-assertion has been that it is not Judaism."[6] This implies that there was a close relationship between Jews and Christians which included the area of scriptural interpretation as well.[7] Jewish and Christian groups in Origen's times read the same Bible and Christians held the Hebrew Scriptures in high esteem.[8] The formation of Christian identity in the first centuries was closely connected to the development of a specific Christian interpretation of the Scriptures. For this task, "Christian tradition had many resources on which to draw, but exegetical tools were often borrowed from Jews, who had first tackled the problem of interpreting the ancient writings of their ancestors for their own times and religions, often in quite varied ways."[9] Christian biblical interpretation was built on the basis of Hellenistic and Jewish (Hellenistic as well as rabbinic) textual interpretation. The proximity between Christian and Jewish groups, with regard to the biblical text and the methods of interpretation, brought along the need for drawing boundaries to "Jewish"

3 Horbury, Interpretation, 730.

4 Lang, Bibelkommentare, 59: "Theologie ist Bibelauslegung."

5 Becker/Reed, Introduction, 17.

6 Alexander, Parting, 1.

7 For this relationship, cf. e.g. De Lange, Origen; Hirshman, Rivalry; Horbury, Jews; Kamesar, Midrash; Kessler, Encounter; Kinzig, Non-Separation; Stemberger, Contacts; Stemberger, Dialogkultur.

8 Cf. Gallagher, Hebrew Scripture.

9 Salvesen, Convergence, 234.

exegesis in order to establish a clearly defined and recognizable "Christian" reading of the texts. As Jonathan Z. Smith puts it, "The problem is not alterity, but similarity – at times, even identity."[10] Christians were thus defining their identity in demarcation from Jews (and vice versa).[11] The larger environment was pagan, however, and neither Jews nor Christians were in politically powerful positions at that time. "Judaism and Christianity at that period were not in a position where the one could or did oppress the other, and that made a great difference. Both communities lived energetically by their religious traditions in a world that was dominated by pagans."[12] Origen also fought at this front, as his *Contra Celsum* shows. But the delimitation from Jewish interpretation and religious practice was a difficult challenge, because of their proximity.[13] Many people did not recognise and accept the strict border between the Christian and the Jewish. "Moreover, even then on the level of popular piety there was a wider overlap between Church and Synagogue at least until the end of the fourth century, but probably far beyond."[14] Thus, these borderlines still had to be defined and defended.

In the following, I will use the example of Origen's Homilies on Leviticus to demonstrate his stance towards Jewish scriptural interpretation and the significance and understanding of ritual practice. Origen held 16 homilies on the liturgical lectures of Leviticus between 245 and 250 in Caesarea in Greek. They were written down by stenographers and later translated into Latin by Rufinus of Aquileia (403–405).[15] Rufinus himself admitted that he had not translated the homilies, especially the Homilies on Leviticus, literally, but in the form of an explanation.[16] According to Heine, Rufinus reproduced the content of Origen's homilies correctly, though not the wording.[17] An exception are "theological statements regarding the Trinity and the resurrection of the body."[18] Whether Rufinus perhaps also altered statements about Jews cannot be concluded from the extant sources. What we read in Origen's homilies about Jews and Jewish interpretation of the Scriptures fits in well with the overall picture of Origen's writings. Besides, it is likely that Origen knew rabbinic traditions on

10 Smith, Difference, 47.
11 Cf. the contributions in Siquans, Construction.
12 McGuckin, Origen, 4f.
13 In Origen's Homilies on Leviticus, pagans or pagan interpretation do not play any role in the discourse.
14 Kinzig, Non-Separation, 29.
15 For the origin and the transmission of the Homilies on Leviticus, cf. Siquans, Homilien, 44–52. For the circumstances of Origen's homilies cf. Nautin, Origène, 100–191.
16 Cf. Rufinus, *Orig. Comm. Rom.*, epil. 1 (CCSL 20, 276).
17 For Rufinus' translation of Origen's homilies, cf. Heine, Origen, 30–40.
18 Heine, Origen, 38.

the interpretation of Leviticus and that the later rabbinic redactors of Vayikra Rabbah knew Origen's interpretation.[19]

Like other church fathers, Origen often accuses Jews of literal adherence to the "Law," whereas he assumes that Christians correctly perceive the commandments as spiritual. Several times in his Homilies on Leviticus, he quotes Paul (Rom 7:14): "The law is spiritual." A literal observance of the commandments, especially the cultic ones, is rejected as outdated, non-spiritual, earthly, fleshly, and certainly wrong. "Christian exegetes could rarely, if ever, exclude from their minds a conviction that an exegesis that was not Christological could not be spiritual."[20]

Although Origen rejects everything "Jewish" or "Judaizing," his interpretation of Scripture is very close to Jewish exegesis, not only to Philo's allegorical interpretation, but also to a rabbinic and midrashic reading of the Bible.[21] "He was at pains to discover as much as he could about Jewish biblical exegesis, and he incorporated in his work numerous Jewish traditions about the interpretation of particular passages and also extra-biblical Jewish legends, aggadoth, for some of which he is our only authority."[22] Origen is one of the church fathers who learned much from Jewish biblical interpretation and, at the same time, set up a clear boundary to a Jewish reading of the Bible. "It was Origen's dilemma that as a theologian he must condemn the Jews while as a scholar and exegete he depended on them."[23]

The boundary that Origin established is in fact a line between "literal" and "spiritual," which he by definition equated with "Jewish" and "Christian" respectively. Origen establishes this boundary to justify his spiritual interpretation of Scripture, which was not undisputed among his fellow Christians. Although Origen contributed to the development of Christian dogma, his primary focus in his biblical interpretation was the spiritual edification and the spiritual progress of his addressees. A large part of Origen's biblical interpretation was given in homilies. Homilies have a didactic intention and want to affect the hearers' (religious) lives. "The spiritual reading of the Bible is, in effect, Origen thinks, a kind of *imitatio Christi* in relation to Christ's understanding of the Law."[24] Origen aimed at the spiritual and religious practice of his Christian audience. Whereas he criticises the Jewish insistence on a literal observance of the ritual laws, he nevertheless considers religious practice as relevant for Christians.

19 Cf. Wilken, Origen's Homilies; Hirshman, Origen.
20 Loewe, Midrashim, 501.
21 Cf. e.g. De Lange, Origen; Niehoff, Origen's Commentary; Runia, Philo.
22 De Lange, Origen, 13.
23 De Lange, Origen, 31.
24 Heine, Reading, 142.

2. Origen and the Jewish Understanding of Scripture, especially Leviticus

Right at the beginning of his first homily, Origen defends his hermeneutic program for the interpretation of Leviticus.

> As 'in the Last Days,' the Word of God, which was clothed with the flesh of Mary, proceeded into this world. What was seen in him was one thing; what was understood was something else. For the sight of his flesh was open for all to see, but the knowledge of his divinity was given to the few, even the elect. So also when the Word of God was brought to humans through the Prophets and the Lawgiver, it was not brought without proper clothing. For just as there it was covered with the veil of flesh, so here with the veil of the letter, so that indeed the letter is seen as flesh but the spiritual sense hiding within is perceived as divinity. Such, therefore, is what we now find as we go through the book of Leviticus, in which the sacrificial rites, the diversity of offerings, and even the ministries of the priests are described. But perchance the worthy and the unworthy see and hear these things according to the letter, which is, as it were, the flesh of the Word of God and the clothing of its divinity. But 'blessed are those eyes' which inwardly see the divine spirit that is concealed in the veil of the letter; and blessed are they who bring clean ears of the inner person to hear these things. Otherwise, they will perceive openly 'the letter which kills' in these words. (2) For if I also should follow the simple understanding, as certain ones among us do, without using in their terms of ridicule the stratagems of language or the cloud of allegory, I would draw out the voice of the Lawgiver. I, myself a man of the Church, living under the faith of Christ and placed in the midst of the Church, am compelled by the authority of the divine precept to sacrifice calves and lambs and to offer fine wheat flour with incense and oil.[25]

Origen accepts the biblical law as the inspired word of God which is authoritative and binding also for Christians. The only question for him is how it should be interpreted and fulfilled in a Christian's life. He makes clear that only a spiritual understanding is adequate and rational. In this introduction he mentions Christians, "certain ones among us" (*quosdam nostrorum*), who read the Bible literally and thus consider books like Leviticus irrelevant for Christians. He does not speak about Jews or Judaizers here, but usually they are the ones who are accused of a literal understanding of the law which Origen vehemently rejects.[26]

Origen mentions Jews and Israel frequently in his homilies.[27] As his main concern is the correct understanding of the Bible, in most cases Jews are

25 *Hom. Lev*. 1.1. Barkley, Origen, 29f. (Baehrens, Origenes, 280f.).

26 Cf. e.g. *Hom. Lev.* 3.3; 4.7; 5.1; 7.5 and 6; 16.1 and 2; 10.1 et al.

27 Cf. fn. 26 and *Hom. Lev*. 3.3; 5.12; 6.1; 12.4 et al.

mentioned in connection with literal interpretation, for example in *Hom. Lev.* 4.7, where he accuses them of "following the letter." That the Jews are *sequentes litteram* is, of course, as De Lange said, an "exaggerated and one-sided characterisation of the Jewish attitude."[28] However, Origen's addressees are not Jews, but Christians who possibly adhere to a literal reading of biblical texts. He wants to convince them of the inadequacy of this hermeneutic and of the spiritual interpretation as the only appropriate one. Where he deems it necessary, he also refers to Jews in order to argue against a literal interpretation, as in *Hom. Lev*. 6.1:

> It is particularly true in these things which were read now either about the priestly clothing or the consecration of the high priest in which certain things of this sort are said, that also exclude completely that carnal Israel from an historical interpretation (*ut etiam illum ipsum carnalem Istrahel ab historica intelligentia penitus excludant*). Because of this, we must strive to explain these things not by the power of human thinking but by prayers and supplications poured out to God.[29]

According to Origen, not even the Jews understand what Leviticus says about priestly vestment and the ordination of the high priest in a literal manner. With this statement he corroborates his argument for a spiritual understanding of the commandments. At the same time, this implies that Jews usually understand Leviticus literally. The designation "carnal Israel" makes clear on which side of the boundary line Origen positions the Jews: as opposite of spiritual and thus opposite of Christian. However, this is the only passage in the Homilies on Leviticus where the existence of a non-literal Jewish interpretation is suggested.[30] Generally, Origen constructs an opposition of spiritual Christian and literal Jewish exegesis. This implies that he denies Christianity to Christians who read the Bible literally.

However, there are passages where Origen finds some sense in the "letter" of the Bible. The literal sense which he so often neglects or denigrates is the basis for the "higher" senses. The system of the three senses of Scripture – literal, ethical, and spiritual – is, in Origen's practice, in fact a twofold sense: the literal

28 De Lange, Origen, 106.

29 Barkley, Origen, 116 (Baehrens, Origenes, 359).

30 There is a rabbinic interpretation of Leviticus which is not halakhic. The midrash Vayikra Rabbah, dating to the fifth or sixth century, provides a non-literal, allegorical Jewish interpretation of Leviticus. Cf. Hirshman, Origen; Wilken, Origen's Homilies.

and the non-literal.[31] The ethical teaching may also lie in the literal sense, as we see in the following passage:

> If they who are weak and incapable of the deeper mystery are edified by the letter (*si qui infirmi sunt et incapaces profundioris mysterii, aedificentur ex littera*), let them understand that if anyone 'neglects the teachings of the Lord and lies to his neighbor over a deposit, or by a partnership, or by robbery,' he is declared guilty of a great sin. But let this be absent from the Church of God, that I should believe someone to be in this assembly of the saints who behaves so unfortunately that he denies his 'neighbor's deposit' or contaminates 'the partnership' by fraud, or destroys another, or receives things stolen from another and swears against his conscience. God forbid, I say, that I should think these things of some one of the faithful. For I say boldly concerning you that 'you did not so learn Christ' nor 'were you so taught.' (Eph 4:20, 21) Besides, the Law itself does not teach these things to the saints and the faithful. Do you want to know that these are not said about the saints and the faithful? Hear the Apostle when he distinguishes between them. 'The Law was not laid down for the just but for the unjust and for those not subject, for the wicked and the impure, for the father killers and for the mother killers,' (1 Tim 1:9f.) and for those similar to these. Because, therefore, for such men as this the Apostle says 'the Law was imposed,' the Church of God, having left behind the letter, is built up to greater holiness by the spirit (*relicta aliis littera sanctius aedificetur ab spiritu*), since heaven forbid that it would ever be polluted with such misdeeds.[32]

In this interpretation of Lev 6:2, we encounter Origen's high esteem for the law once again. After the quotation of Lev 6:1–5, he starts with the explanation of the literal meaning which provides an ethical guideline for social behaviour. In the following paragraphs, Origen develops a spiritual interpretation, starting from the notion that the "deposit" is the soul that God has given to the humans. The literal sense is relevant only for those who are "weak and incapable of the deeper mystery." These are Christians, not Jews. Origen presupposes that there are three categories of Christians, or three stages on the road to spiritual perfection. There are the "physical," the "psychical" and the "spiritual" persons.[33] Not all Christians are able to understand the mystical sense of Scripture. But they are part of the church; body, soul, and spirit belong together. In the same way, the literal, ethical, and spiritual interpretation of Scripture belong together, although there is a clear hierarchy. It is obvious that Origen esteems

31 Cf. Lubac, Geist, 215: "[D]ie Schrift enthält grundlegend nur zwei Bedeutungen: die buchstäbliche und die geistliche, und auch diese beiden bilden eine Kontinuität und keinen Gegensatz."

32 *Hom. Lev.* 4.2. Barkley, Origen, 71 (Baehrens, Origenes, 317). For the relevance of the historical sense see also *Hom. Lev*. 3.2.

33 For this threefold anthropology cf. Crouzel, Origène, 112–117; Torjesen, Procedure, 39–43.

the spiritual much more than the bodily and literal. However, spiritual purity cannot be achieved without bodily purity.[34] In the case of Lev 6:2, it is a matter of course that Christians do not lie or rob their neighbours' goods. According to Paul, the law is given for the unjust and Christians have left their sins behind. Therefore, they have left the letter of the law behind. Nevertheless, Origen repeats this admonition. Correct ethical behaviour is determined as Christian, the teaching of Christ, as he says. His vehement rejection of the idea that anybody in the church would do such things implies that not all Christians had actually achieved this "Christian" level of ethics, or some had fallen back to their previous sins (which were usually pagan, not Jewish).

As has become clear, the boundaries run within the Christian community, not between Christians and Jews. The claim that the Jews are the "friends of the letter" (*amici litterae*)[35] is of course based on their halakhic reading of the law, but at the same time the construction of an identity marker. This drawing of boundaries is addressed to the Christian community itself, not to the Jews. But all who do not understand the law in Leviticus spiritually are defined as "Jews" and thus as "the others."

It fits in well with this concept that Origen warns his audience against a literal interpretation of the New Testament, too (*Hom. Lev.* 7.5):

> For even in the Gospels, it is 'the letter' that 'kills.' [2 Cor 3:6] Not only in the Old Testament is 'the letter that kills' found; there is also in the New Testament 'the letter that kills' that one who does not spiritually perceive what is said. For, if you follow according to the letter that which is said, 'Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood,' [John 6:53] this 'letter kills.' Do you want me to bring out of the gospel for you another 'letter' that 'kills'? He says, 'Let the one who does not have a sword sell his tunic and buy a sword.' [Luke 22:36] Behold, this is the letter of the gospel, but 'it kills.' But, if you take it spiritually, it does not kill, but there is in it 'a spirit that gives life.' [2 Cor 3:6][36]

Thus, the gospel was also understood literally by certain Christians. Origen rejects such a reading and its consequences as not adequate to the biblical text and to a Christian understanding.

It is interesting, though, that in the case of Yom Kippur, Origen accepts the relevance of the literal sense without any polemics. The "Day of Atonement" combines ethical and ritual elements, and atonement is important for all sinners (*Hom. Lev*. 9.1). Although he assumes that the letter is meaningful also to Christians, he considers the spiritual sense as the higher one.

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34 Cf. *Hom. Lev.* 1.5; 6.5.

35 Cf. e.g. *Hom. Lev*. 16.6 where the "friends of the letter" are Jews *and* Christians.

36 *Hom. Lev*. 7.5. Barkley, Origen, 146 (Baehrens, Origenes, 387).

In other passages he clearly describes the Jews as the advocates of a literal and wrong understanding of the law. He shows that such a literal understanding is irrational and reduces it to absurdity. In *Hom. Lev*. 4.7, Origen interprets Lev 6:14–18, the prescription of a certain sacrifice. At the end, the text says: "everyone who touches them [the pieces of the sacrifice] will be sanctified." (Lev 6:18) For Origen, this makes no sense according to the letter. He wants to convince his audience of the absurdity of a literal meaning:

> But if we now want to inquire about those different persons who are 'Jews in appearance,' (*in manifesto Iudaei*) [Rom 2:28] for what reason this was said in this way or that in another way, let them satisfy us with a complete response: it seemed good to the Lawgiver that no one discuss it with his Lord. Withdrawing, moreover, from this last word to those in other places, let us ask that they say how 'anyone who touches the sacrifice of the saints will be sanctified.' If a murderer touches it, if a profane person, if an adulterer, if an impure one, will that person be sanctified? For it did not leave out anyone, but said 'everyone who touches them will be sanctified.' Let us suppose that now the whole of their Temple was standing, that offerings were being presented, sacrifices were being consumed. Someone wicked, unclean, impure entered the Temple, found the flesh that was set forth from the sacrifice, and touched it. Will he immediately be pronounced sanctified? Certainly in no way either the nature of the thing or the truth of the religion (*uel rei natura uel ueritas religionis*) admits of this meaning. Therefore, we must return to the evangelical and apostolic exposition so that the Law can be understood. For unless the gospel shall have taken the veil from the face of Moses, [cf. 2 Cor 3:14] it is not possible for his face to be seen nor his meaning to be understood. See, therefore how, in the Church of the Apostles, the disciples stand by these things which Moses wrote and defend them because they can be fulfilled and were reasonably written. But let the Jewish teachers, in following the letter, make these things both impossible and irrational. (*Iudaeorum uero doctors et impossibilia haec et irrationabilia sequentes litteram faciant*.)[37]

Here the Jews are placed in explicit and direct opposition to the church. The "absurd" literal interpretation is ascribed to the Jews. The correct, rational, and "unveiled" understanding is maintained as the Christian one. As so often, Origen is referring to Paul and quotes from his letters. Paul is certainly the most important hermeneutical key for Origen's reading of the law. That "the law is spiritual," as Paul claims in Rom 7:14, is Origen's basic assumption. The interpretation that Origen imputes to the Jews is characterized as "impossible and irrational," *impossibilia et irrationabilia*. This is what the Jewish teachers make of the text, not what the text says in Origen's view. Through such arguments Origen wants to prove that the "Jewish" observance of the law, that is to say the demand for the strict observance in the literal sense, is irrational and must

37 Barkley, Origen, 81 (Baehrens, Origenes, 326f.). Cf. *Hom. Lev*. 7.6.

not be followed by Christians. Christians are rational, spiritual, and thus non-Jewish. What Origen says about Jews in his homilies does not necessarily correspond to actual Jewish practice and interpretation at his time.

But obviously there were Christians who kept the laws. In *Hom. Lev*. 10.2, Origen criticises the observance of Jewish days of fasting by Christians. He warns these people that when they keep particular laws, they are obliged to keep all of them. As in homily 9, he speaks about the Day of Atonement. Here his argument is slightly different: because of the sacrifice of Christ, no more atonement is necessary for Christians.

> Therefore, for us, that is, we who are not 'enslaved to the shadow and copy' [Hebr. 8:5] but to truth, there is this day of atonement on which forgiveness of sins was given to us when 'Christ our Passover was sacrificed.' [1 Cor 5:7] Therefore, having known the truth, 'how can we turn again to the weak and worthless elements of this world to which again you want to be enslaved anew, observing days and months and seasons and years?' [Gal 4:9f.][38]

Keeping the law means "being enslaved to the shadow and copy." Instead, as Origen says in *Hom. Lev.* 13.1, Christians instead know "the truth itself, not the shadow and the image of the truth."[39] But not every Christian is capable of this truth:

> But those who cannot grasp the clearness itself of God nor observe the whole splendor of the truth with an attentive mind, hear about the festivals second hand from those who had learned first; and since the distinctive character of the investigation has given to the first the truth of things, the hearer alone bears the shadow of the truth to the second. Conscious of this mystery, the Apostle used to say about the Jews, 'They serve a shadow and a copy of the heavenly.' [Heb 8:5][40]

The truth was first given to the Jews, but they only perceive it as "a shadow and a copy," not reality. With Paul, Origen defines the Jews as servants of the "shadows" and thus the anti-types of the Christians.

3. Ritual Practice and its Understanding by Origen

The challenge of interpreting Leviticus are the many lengthy and detailed commandments concerning sacrifices. In Origen's time the temple in Jerusalem

38 Barkley, Origen, 205 (Baehrens, Origenes, 443).

39 Barkley, Origen, 232 (Baehrens, Origenes, 467): *ueritas ipsa, non umbra et imago ueritatis*.

40 *Hom. Lev.* 13.1. Barkley, Origen, 232 (Baehrens, Origenes, 467).

and its cult no longer existed. For Christians, Christ is the sacrifice who sacrificed himself once for all, as Heb 7:27 says. That the sacrifices in Leviticus are the types of Christ's sacrifice, is one of the basic ideas of Origen's interpretation. He takes this idea from the letter to the Hebrews which he quotes very often.

> Paul, therefore, writing to the Hebrews, those, of course, who were indeed reading the Law and had meditated on these things and were examining them well but lacked understanding as to how the sacrifices should be understood, says this: 'For Jesus did not enter into a sanctuary made with human hands, a copy of the real one, but into heaven itself to appear now for us before the face of God.' [Heb 9:24] And again he says about the offerings, 'For he did this once when he offered himself as an offering.' [Heb 7:27] But why do we seek testimonies from these one by one? If anyone examines the entire epistle written to the Hebrews and especially this place where he compares the high priest of the Law to the high priest of the promise, about whom it was written, 'You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek,' [Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6] he will find how this entire passage of the Apostle shows those things which were written in the Law are 'copies' and 'forms' of living and true things (*exemplaria et formas ostendit esse rerum uiuarum et uerarum illa, quae in lege scripta sunt*).[41]

The spiritual interpretation of sacrifice is not only related to Christ, but also to Christians. Sacrifices are then understood as individual inner processes on the spiritual way. This spiritual practice, however, manifests itself in the body, in the form of physical asceticism. Origen localises this practice on a moral level, which the following interpretation from *Hom. Lev*. 1.5, part of an interpretation of Lev 1:2–9, shows:

> But if you wish to understand these things *in the moral sense*, then you have 'a calf' which you ought to offer. The 'calf' is your flesh and it is indeed exceedingly proud. If you wish to present it as an offering to the Lord, then you keep it spotless and pure, bring it 'to the door of the Tent,' that is, where it can hear the divine books. Your offering should be 'a male.' It should not know a female; it should *avoid concupiscence*; it should *shun weakness*. It should require *nothing dissolute or perverted*. And also, 'place your hand upon your offering' that it may be acceptable to the Lord. Kill it 'before the Lord,' that is, place a bridle of *continence* on it and do not remove the hand of *discipline* from it just as that one placed the hand on his own flesh, that one who said, 'I torture my body and subject it to slavery lest, perchance, when I have preached to others, I should myself become reprobate.' [1 Cor 9:27] And kill it 'before the Lord' mortifying without wavering your 'limbs' 'which are upon the earth.' [Col 3:5] And 'the sons of Aaron the priest' should offer its blood. The priest, and his sons, is *in you the mind* which is also its understanding in you who are rightly called a priest and

41 *Hom. Lev*. 9.2. Barkley, Origen, 178 (Baehrens, Origenes, 419).

> 'sons of a priest,' for they are the only ones who *perceive God and are capable of the knowledge of God*. Therefore, the divine word desires that *you offer your flesh to God in purity with reasonable understanding*, as the Apostle says, 'A living offering, holy, pleasing to God, your reasonable service.' [Rom 12:1] To offer blood on the altar through the priest or the sons of the priest is *to be made pure both in body and spirit*.[42]

The practice of sacrifice is thus moralised and individualised.[43] The physical asceticism which Origen demands is inseparably connected to a process of spiritual progress. Body and spirit belong together. The sacrifice is thus understood spiritually, though not without a strong physical aspect.

Another important point is Origen's understanding of "eating" as the study of Scripture.[44] Sacrifices usually are of meat, flour or oil. It is interesting that Origen's spiritual interpretation of food in the context of sacrifice most often refers, not to the Eucharist, but to the Word, the Logos, as well as God's word in the Scriptures.[45]

Homily 5.8 deals with a certain prescription concerning the salutary offering, again relating meat to words, in this case teaching:

> The flesh, which is allotted to the priests from the sacrifices, is 'the word of God' that they teach in the Church. For this they are reminded by the mystical figures that, when they have begun to bring the word to the people, they do not bring 'yesterday's.' They do not declare things that are old according to the letter, but through the grace of God they always bring new things and always find the spiritual. For if you bring that which you learned from the Jews yesterday into the Church today, that is to eat the meat of yesterday's sacrifice.[46]

This passage does not polemicize against Jewish ritual observance, but – once again – against Jewish teaching and interpretation of Scripture. Like Jewish sacrifices, Jewish teaching is qualified as "yesterday's," as out of date, a rather harsh verdict, as the law prohibits "yesterday's meat." The backdrop of this polemic is the wide-spread practice of some Christians to attend the synagogue on Saturday and the church on Sunday.[47] Origen wants to prevent this

42 *Hom. Lev.* 1.5. Barkley, Origen, 37 (italics added; Baehrens, Origenes, 287).

43 This is not remarkable, as Wilken, Origen's Homilies, 90, states: "Yet, what is noteworthy about Origen's on Leviticus homilies is not that Origen makes Leviticus' cultic language moral, but that he makes Christian moral discourse cultic."

44 Cf. Siquans, Speise.

45 Buchinger, Pascha, 865; vgl. Tzvetkova-Glaser, Pentateuchauslegung, 261–263.

46 Barkley, Origen, 104f. (Baehrens, Origenes, 348f.).

47 Cf. Paget, Anti-Judaism, 209f., with further examples of Christians crossing the borders to Judaism.

habit and discredits Jewish teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath as prohibited "yesterday's meat."

Also, prescriptions about pure and impure food are interpreted with reference to studying and teaching the word of God, as the next example from *Hom. Lev.* 7.6 shows. The subject of this homily is the distinction of clean and unclean animals according to Lev 11.

> Therefore, let us first see who these are that 'chew the cud and part the hoof' [Lev 11:3] which it calls clean. I think that one is said to chew the cud who pays heed to knowledge and 'meditates day and night on the Law of the Lord.' [Ps 1:2] But hear how it was stated in the text: 'Whatever parts the hoof and chews of the cud.' [Lev 11:3] Therefore, 'he chews the cud' who applies those things which he reads according to the letter to the spiritual sense and he ascends from the lowest and visible to the invisible and higher things. But if you meditate on the divine law and you apply what you read to a precise and spiritual understanding, but your life and your deeds are not such that they have the capacity for distinguishing between the present life and the future, between this age and 'the age to come,' [Eph 2:7] unless you discern and separate these things with the proper reason, you are a confused camel, who, when you receive understanding from meditation of the divine law, you do not divide nor separate the present and the future and do not discern 'the narrow path' from 'the wide path.' [Matt 7:13f.].[48]

Origen develops his favourite theme in several steps. Chewing the cud means reading the Holy Scriptures. First, he advises to read the Bible regularly and continually. Then he demands as a second chewing the progress from literal to spiritual understanding. In the end, he focuses on Christian life as the consequence of reading and understanding Scripture. In the following, the homily further develops the topic of correspondence between knowledge and life, theory and practice. In this context Origen addresses the social aspect of Christian life. In the preceding passage, *Hom. Lev*. 7.5, he speaks about supplying clean or unclean food to one's neighbour.

> Therefore, as we said, every person has some food within him from which, if indeed it is good and 'from the good treasure of his heart he brings forth good,' [Luke 6:45] he may supply pure food to his neighbor. But if he is evil and 'brings forth evil,' he supplies unclean food to his neighbor. For anyone who is innocent and led by the heart can be seen as a sheep, a clean animal. He can furnish the hearers clean food as a sheep which is a clean animal. It is the same in the others. For this reason, every person, as we said, when he speaks to his neighbor and either he does him good or harms him by his words, the animal is made either

48 Barkley, Origen, 148 (Baehrens, Origenes, 389).

> clean or unclean by him. From these we are taught either to use the clean ones or to abstain from the unclean ones.[49]

Origen makes clear that the good and bad food that people bring forth are words which exert a good or bad influence on others. It is his advice to distance oneself from the latter because they can lead others to sin. Origen's spiritual interpretation of the ritual prescriptions concerning sacrifices and laws about clean and unclean food is not only concerned with faith and knowledge, but with Christian practice.

For Origen, there is no question that the law is authoritative and valid for Christians, too. His question is rather what the authority and validity of the law means. Origen's instrument to retain the validity of Leviticus and its law for Christians is a spiritual interpretation which is inseparable from an ethical understanding of the ritual commandments. This spiritual interpretation does not only refer to the inner life of the Christians but also to their social behaviour. It is not something merely interior and invisible, but is or should be perceivable in everyday life.

Nicholas de Lange wrote that "There was a fundamental difference between the Christian and the rabbinic attitude to the law; the Rabbis were concerned to make the laws practicable, and relevant to the times in which they lived, while Origen had no time at all for the Mosaic law as law, and uncompromisingly rejected the halakhic refinements of the Rabbis."[50] In my view, Origen *had* time for the law as law, and he struggled to interpret it in a way which was applicable to Christian life.

4. Conclusion: Origen and the Parting of the Ways

Origen is one of the earliest Christian interpreters of the Bible and the most prolific one. Although some of his teachings (or alleged teachings) were later condemned, his interpretation of Scripture influenced later Christian exegetes, for example Gregory of Nyssa and Jerome. He could not rely on an existing ready-made system, but he took up Philo's and Clement's allegorical interpretation of the Bible[51] and developed it according to his ideas of Christianity. With his interpretation of Scripture he wanted to promote a spiritual, Christian way of life.

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49 Barkley, Origen, 147 (Baehrens, Origenes, 387f.).

50 De Lange, Origen, 96.

51 Cf. Paget, Exegesis, 479.

As Markus Tiwald writes: "It is anachronistic to assume that there are already two distinct 'religions' at this time. Rather, it is a matter of different *identity markers* that are brought into play."[52] These are not descriptions of reality, but ways of constructing identity. As Megan H. Williams puts it,

> when our texts use the categories 'Judaism,' 'Christianity,' and their like (and here we are speaking of Christian literature, since only Christian writers use this particular constellation of terms), their authors are engaged in constructing conceptual frameworks, in which those categories and their relation to each other in turn serve to configure reality in new ways.[53]

What Origen says about "Jews" is far from a realistic image of contemporary Jewish men and women. "Early Christians sought to define themselves against the Jewish Other, constructing a category, 'Judaism', that at times only marginally if at all described the beliefs and practices of real Jews."[54] One of the most important identity markers in Origen's definition of Christians and Jews is the way of interpreting the Bible and its consequences for Christian or Jewish practice. Interpretation of Scripture is the means to shape the life of his Christian hearers and readers. Origen's construct obviously does not correspond to the reality in his times, but he preaches it as an ideal he strives for and recommends to his audience, an audience who might not yet be aware of the differences and boundaries he draws.

52 Tiwald, Frühjudentum, 52: "Die Annahme, hier bereits zwei fest voneinander abgegrenzte 'Religionen' vorliegen zu haben, ist anachronistisch. Es handelt sich vielmehr um unterschiedliche *identity markers*, die hier ins Spiel gebracht werden."

53 Williams, No More, 42.

54 Satlow, Influence, 42.

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Parted by Nature or by Translation?

Translation Choices in the Vulgate New Testament as a Factor in Perceptions of the "Parting of the Ways"

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Abstract

A parting of ways may be discovered in New Testament texts. It is far more pronounced in modern translations than in the equivalent Greek texts. This seems to be connected with translational choices introduced by the Vulgate and perpetuated by modern dictionaries. Paul, for example, appears to abolish Jewish dietary laws in Romans. However, if an isomorphic participle is no longer translated as middle but rather as passive voice, he appears instead to be following contemporary Halakhic teaching concerning food laws. As a consequence, New Testament studies need to consider their approach to translation carefully: it appears there may have been a tendency towards being excessively interpretative.

Keywords

New Testament; Vulgate; Translational Choice; Parting of Ways; Dictionaries

1. Introduction

Christianity's critical and often polemical distance from Jewish identity is one of the roots of European anti-Judaism and has contributed to violence against Jews. Quotes from the New Testament have been appropriated for Nazi propaganda, thereby helping to create an anti-Jewish atmosphere which made crimes against humanity possible.[1] Building on the New Testament, Jesus has been cast as the "inimical other" vis-à-vis "Judaism".[2] This painful history has

1 Kierspel, Jews, 8: "Nazis used the Fourth Gospel as 'a favourite text-book of anti-Jewish propaganda.'"

2 Admittedly, the term "Judaism" is problematic; this contribution uses the term to denote not only a religion, but "the entire complex of loyalties and practices that mark off the people of Israel"; cf. Boyarin, Border, 8.

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in its aftermath contributed to shifting perceptions of Jesus and his ministry, which has led to a major paradigm shift in Christianity's relation to the Jewish community. Part of this paradigm shift is the perception of the origins of Christianity: Christianity has changed its perception of its own roots. A century ago, it would have been impossible to see Jesus as a "Jew among Jews". Instead, Jesus was seen as "The Aryan Jesus".[3] In contrast, there is general agreement today that Jesus was a Jewish teacher in a Jewish environment.

In recent times, this altered perspective has made it rather fashionable to publish books which have both words, "Jesus" and "Jew", in their titles.[4] It appears – to translate the title of a German book written by a German Rabbi into English – that "Jesus the Jew has finally been brought back home".[5] The altered perspective sees Jesus as a Jew interacting with other Jews in a Jewish environment.[6] Jesus discussed – at least in the stories handed down in the New Testament – religious questions mostly with Jewish dialogue partners.

Since Jesus and his first followers were Jews, the question has evolved as to when this "Jewish sect", which saw Jesus as the Messiah, parted ways with its roots, and when, as Christianity, it became a religion separate from its originally Jewish identity.[7] Only after such a parting of ways can Christianity be discerned as a distinct religion. To attain such independence, Christianity needs both the self-awareness of a religion and characteristics that make it distinguishable as such from Jewish religious practices. Arguably, strong polemics against "Jews" in the New Testament might indicate a growing awareness of Christianity's own identity. Furthermore, the abolition of "Jewish identity markers" makes Christianity definitely discernible as different from Jews and their way of venerating the God of Israel. As recorded in the New Testament, the apostle Paul has been credited with leaving these identity markers behind. A parting of ways may thus be traced back to New Testament writings. This poses problems for the reconstruction of the underlying historical events. The notion has evolved that the "parting of ways" is a process which took place over a lengthy period of time and that it was different in different places.[8] In this

3 Heschel, Jesus.

4 Cf., for example, Baltes, Jesus; Reck, Jude, Schröter, Jesus.

5 Homolka, Heimholung.

6 In this context the word "Jew" is used since it comprises both the ethnic and the religious aspect of a person.

7 It is possibly problematic (see the contribution of Christian Danz in this volume) to describe the Jewish way of venerating God as a "religion", since Jewish religious identity has many facets, including (among others) ethnicity; consequently, the terms "Jewish faith" and "Jewish identity" are used in this contribution to summarize a set of identity markers which comprise the aforementioned aspects and include the veneration of the God of Israel.

8 Cf., for example, the introduction of Markus Tiwald, "Works of the Law" to this volume.

volume, the contribution on the Didache points out, among other things, that one should abstain from meat offered to idols (εἰδωλόθυτον).[9] The Didache was written approximately half a century after Paul's writings and, consequently, it could be seen as a step backwards: Paul seems to abolish all food laws while the Didache appears to follow the decision of the Apostles' convent and the agreement reached there (cf. Acts 15:29).

This situation may be described as historically incoherent. Texts of the New Testament (which are the earliest extant Christian texts) indeed seem often to stress a notion of distance and enmity between Jesus and his Jewish dialogue partners. On the other hand, later texts (like the Didache) are less distanced from Jewish practices. The notion of enmity, which is detectible in New Testament writings, seems to arise – at least in part – from later translational choices. Arguably, it is possible to trace the introduction of such a notion of distance, and even enmity, through the Latin translation into modern translations. Jerome built his translation, the Vulgate, on extant Latin translations, composing the "Bible in common tongue" at a time when Christianity had already parted ways with its Jewish roots. As a separate religion, fourth century Christianity clearly distinguished itself from its Jewish roots. There exists, for example, an entire Latin tractate dating to the fifth century which uses quotes from the "Old Testament" in order to show that the Jewish faith and identity are obsolete (*Altercatio ecclesiae et synagogae*).[10] Jerome and other Christian authorities used the Bible to demonstrate that the Jewish faith (the "old covenant") has been replaced by Christianity (the "new covenant"). This understanding of the Bible is known as a supersessionist interpretation. For example, Jerome uses the prophet Jonah in this context to show that salvation has moved from the Jews to Christianity. He interprets the plant which gives shadow to Jonah and then withers (Jonah 4:5–9) as a symbol for Jewish religious identity: that faith has withered and Christianity has replaced it in salvation history.[11] Adele Reinhartz comments on such interpretations: "[…] in the cosmological tale, God, through Jesus, expels Jews from the eternal covenant with him."[12]

It should come as no surprise that this perspective, shaped as it is by a separation between Christianity and its Jewish roots, influenced translational choices in the Latin Bible. It is a truism that every translation is an interpretation. Perceptions about the fundamental meaning of a text influence its

9 Cf. the contribution of Lutz Doering in this volume.

10 For the edition, see Hillgarth, Altercatio.

11 Jerome, *Comm. Jon.* 4.6 quoted in Fürst, Origenes, 321–322.

12 Reinhartz, Cast, 422.

translation and the translational tendencies at work therein.[13] New Testament writings repeatedly use a verb meaning "to interpret" (ἑρμηνεύω) to denote the conversion of words from one language into another.[14] Human translation is connected with understanding a text. And every act of understanding a written document is an interpretation of the words which make up a text.

In the late fourth and early fifth centuries, the interpretive framework for understanding the New Testament within Latin Christianity was its supersessionist theology. This supersessionist theology is by its very nature anti-Jewish.

It also should come as no surprise that Martin Luther did not correct such translational choices when translating the New Testament. Two reasons for this may be mentioned. Martin Luther was embedded in late medieval theology – which was supersessionist – and thus in late medieval anti-Judaism. Christianity was at this time the dominant religion. Jewish practice was, at best, tolerated or, at worst, even pushed towards eradication. Martin Luther is known for his pronounced anti-Jewish position. This alone makes it improbable that he would notice, let alone correct, translational choices introducing such notions. In addition, Martin Luther was actually deeply influenced by the Vulgate. His entire translational method and the tools he used perpetuate a Latin influence in his translation. It has been suggested that Martin Luther's Greek may not have been sufficient to understand fully the Greek of Paul's letters.[15] Arguably, he is far more dependent on the Vulgate and its tendencies than is commonly held.[16]

It may, however, come as a surprise that modern translations of the New Testament still appear to be under the influence of a Latin understanding of the text of the New Testament. This influence seems to preserve the "parting of ways" even in modern translations of the New Testament.

The first section of this chapter will deal with the way such influence was introduced into and continues to exist in modern translations. The second section will offer examples of where the Latin interpretation of the New Testament introduces a notion of distance and enmity, which does not exist in the same way in the Greek text. Christian identity is thereby constructed as the "inimical other" which has parted with Jewish identity and Jewish identity markers. The

13 Eco, Mouse, 123: "If in order to translate one must make a series of hypotheses about the deep sense and the purposes of a text, then translation is certainly a form of interpretation – at least insofar as it depends on a series of previous interpretations. However, to say that translation is a form of interpretation does not imply that interpretation is a form of translation. No logically educated mind would say so."

14 John 1:42; 9:7; Hebr 7:2.

15 Cf. Dibbelt, Verdeutschung, 329.

16 Cf. Bornkamm, Vorlagen for this suggestion.

conclusion offers some brief suggestions as to what this might mean for New Testament studies and its way of translating the text.

2. Linguistic Tools and the Latin Interpretation of the New Testament

The study of New Testament Greek has evolved into a separate discipline, creating specialized dictionaries and grammars dealing exclusively with the New Testament.[17] The core philological research into the New Testament that has come down to us was undertaken at a time when Latin was *the* scholarly language. As a consequence, authoritative dictionaries of the New Testament were produced as Greek-Latin dictionaries. The Greek-Latin glossary of the *Complutensian Polyglot* of 1522 is a product of the earliest research of this kind. Over time, many such Greek-Latin dictionaries were produced.[18] Karl Grimm's dictionary is outstanding because of its lasting influence on authoritative Greek-German and Greek-English dictionaries. Grimm acknowledges in his introduction that, for the Latin lexical equivalents of Greek words, he relies heavily on the Latin translation of the New Testament (Vulgate).[19] The lexical equivalents of the authoritative New Testament dictionary Bauer-Aland[20] can be traced back to Grimm's dictionary and are, therefore, dependent on lexical choices of the Vulgate. Transmission takes place via the research history. Walter Bauer's dictionary makes use of Preuschen's lexicon, which closely follows Grimm's Greek-Latin dictionary of the New Testament. Translating the Latin words of a Greek-Latin dictionary into German has the effect of turning Bauer-Aland's standard dictionary into a tool that introduces the semantics of Latin lexical choices into contemporary New Testament research. Numerous revisions of the dictionary concern solely the addition of new references, whilst the semantics of the lexical choices were never the subject of scholarly scrutiny. The editors of the "fundamentally revised" Bauer/Aland (6th ed. 1988) state that a revision of the lexical choices "would have produced a totally

17 This does not preclude the fact that they may make recourse to sources outside the New Testament.

18 Pasor, Lexicon is the first lexicon dedicated to the New Testament; for a history of New Testament Lexicography, cf. Lee, History.

19 Grimm, Lexicon, VIII: *Omnino latinae translationis, quae Vulgata dicitur, longe saepius rationem habui quam qui ante me lexica N. Ti adornaverunt*. "In principle, I have made use of the Latin translation, which is called Vulgate, far more than those who have made New Testament lexica before me."

20 Through its translation into English (BDAG), it has had an impact on New Testament translations into many languages.

new dictionary. This would no longer have been 'the Bauer.'"[21] Consequently, all lexical choices of Bauer (1928; based on Grimm 1868) are still considered "state of the art". With this decision, Bauer/Aland introduces the Vulgate, as authoritative interpretation of the semantics of the Greek text, into what is probably the most widely used and authoritative dictionary of the Greek New Testament. The user is thereby forced to apply the Latin interpretation of the New Testament to the Greek text. Even if the Greek text is used for translation, the lexical choices of the dictionary tend to recreate the translational decisions of the Vulgate. The English version of the Bauer has actually been revised on the basis of the Greek-English dictionary of Thayer, which is also dependent on the Vulgate: Grimm's dictionary was converted into a Greek-English dictionary, which became known as the "Thayer".[22] The lexical choices given in such English dictionaries are therefore dependent on translational equivalents of the Vulgate. Where the lexical choices of the Vulgate introduce an interpretive tendency, this tendency slips into the Greek-English dictionary.

Arguably, the so called TDNT ("Theological Dictionary of the New Testament"), also known as "the Kittel", can be seen as a dictionary without a similar genealogy. The introduction of a notion of distance and enmity between Christianity and "Judaism" – and such a notion of distance arguably characterizes the Vulgate – can also be documented in this monumental dictionary. The same holds true also for grammars like the standard grammar of Blass and Debrunner in its current revision by Rehkopf.[23]

Arguably, if one uses such tools to translate the New Testament, these tools help to reproduce the Latin interpretation of the New Testament. This would not be a problem if the Latin translation of the New Testament was a faithful translation. It could, however, become a problem if there are interpretive choices or even an interpretive tendency that characterizes this translation.

The next section will adduce arguments that there is such a tendency and that this tendency sharpens the difference between Jesus and his followers,

21 Bauer/Aland, Wörterbuch, VII: "Angesichts der geschilderten weitgehenden Revision des gesamten Belegmaterials haben wir uns die Beantwortung der Frage, wie mit den Übersetzungen Bauers zu verfahren sei, nicht leicht gemacht. Es zeigte sich jedoch bald, daß nach den Gesetzen, unter denen diese Neubearbeitung steht, nur in Frage kam, Bauers Übersetzungen beizubehalten und sie lediglich, wie geschehen, behutsam zu modernisieren bzw. gelegentlich zu korrigieren. Eine völlige Neufassung würde ein gänzlich neues Lexikon ergeben haben, das nicht mehr das Bauersche Wörterbuch wäre."

22 Thayer, Lexicon.

23 Cf. Blass/Debrunner, Grammatik.

on the one hand, and Jews and Jewish identity, on the other, introducing the notion of a "parting of ways" into modern translations of this authoritative text. The introduction of such an interpretive notion may be connected with matters of syntax and grammatical features like mode, voice and tense of a verb or with lexical semantics.

3. Translational Choices and Their Importance

3.1 *Joined by Grammar and Separated by Translation*

The Gospel of John is commonly seen as the youngest of the four canonical Gospels. This is in part connected with the notion of distance and even a sense of enmity which this text attests. Jesus addresses his Jewish audience in this Gospel repeatedly in a harsh and even polemical manner. This seems to indicate a late text written at a time when ways had already parted.

One such sentence may be found in John 8:43. There Jesus declares that his Jewish audience is unable to hear his message. The NRSV offers here: "Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word." The phrasing of the Good News Translation (GNT) is even harsher: "Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to listen to my message." And the New International Version introduces here a notion of divine predestination: "Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say."

Taken literally, Jesus indicates here that the proclamation of the good news among Jews amounts to a waste of time. They are "unable to hear". The Greek text as presented in current critical editions is a straightforward combination of a rhetorical question and the answer given by a skilled rhetor: διὰ τί τὴν λαλιὰν τὴν ἐμὴν οὐ γινώσκετε; ὅτι οὐ δύνασθε ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐμόν. The meaning of this statement may be understood as a proclamation of a negative predestination: Jesus tells the members of his audience that they will not be part of the chosen community.

It is worth mentioning in this context a peculiarity of punctuation of Greek manuscripts: the question mark does not exist in Greek manuscripts from the first millennium. It appears as a punctuation mark in Latin manuscripts of the Carolingian age. Manuscripts of the Vulgate like Codex Colbertinus have here: *quare loquellam meam non cognoscitis? quia non potestis audire sermonem meum*. This punctuation may also be found in Erasmus' editions. Erasmus' critical text influenced Martin Luther's translation. A systematic study of the structure of John 8:43 shows the punctuation to be in contradistinction to

comparable structures. Commonly, the Greek conjunction ὅτι *extends* a question.[24] Based on comparable examples, a Latin rendering of John 8:43 which preserves the grammatical structure of the Greek text should be: *quare loquellam meam non cognoscitis? quare non potestis audire sermonem meum*? This could be rendered in English as follows: "Why do you not understand what I say? Why can't you accept my word?" This translation indicates Jesus to be in a deep argument with his Jewish audience. There is no indication of a negative predestination. On the contrary, Jesus invites his audience to listen to his message. Consequently, sentences that have been separated contrary to Greek grammar here introduce a notion of distance, and the semblance of a parting of ways, into the Greek text.[25] The following admonition might be admissible here: what grammar has joined together let no translation put asunder. Consequently, John 8:43 should receive punctuation in accordance with Greek grammar.

3.2 *Joined by Translation and Separated by Grammar*

The impression that the Jews are "unable to hear" surfaces again in the next example from the Gospel of John (John 12:40). This impression is again, it seems, imposed by translation. In this case, a main sentence is added to a longer subclause, thereby transforming the meaning of the text. The example concerns an extremely problematic passage, which has for many centuries contributed to violence against Jews. It is especially problematic since it is a quote from Jewish scripture (Isa 6:10). Translational choices create the impression that it is the God of Israel who has rejected the people of Israel. This passage has given rise to the typology of *Ecclesia* und *Synagoga*. Artwork that renders this typology visible uses two women as representatives of the two institutions. Church triumphant and crushed synagogue stand side by side. The Church bears the crown and the synagogue is blindfolded, her heart pierced by a sword. The text reads as follows (NRSV): "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn – and I would heal them." A variety of articles in TDNT strongly support the traditional understanding: "In Jn.12:40 God is expressly called the author of the hardening."[26]

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24 Cf., for example, Gen 12:18 LXX: καλέσας δὲ Φαραω τὸν Αβραμ εἶπεν· τί τοῦτο ἐποίησάς μοι, ὅτι οὐκ ἀπήγγειλάς μοι ὅτι γυνή σού ἐστιν; NETS offers: "Now when Pharao had called Abram he said, 'What is this you have done to me, that you did not tell me that she is your wife?'" The Vulgata offers here: *vocavitque Pharao Abram et dixit ei quidnam est quod fecisti mihi quare non indicasti quod uxor tua esset*.

25 For full documentation cf. Förster, Funktion.

26 Schmidt/Schmidt, πωρόω κτλ, 1026.

According to such an understanding, it is the God of Israel who has hardened the hearts and blinded the eyes of his people and will not heal them. A look at the Greek text shows that the verbs of the negated sub-clause differ in mode, tense and person from the last sentence:[27] The verbs of the sub-clause are third person subjunctive aorists. The verb of the last sentence is first person indicative future. Grammatically, this sentence is not part of the sub-clause.[28] Interestingly enough, there is a well attested textual variant which offers the last verb as first person subjunctive aorist. The Vulgate uses the subjunctive to translate the last verb. Arguably, this transforms the text even in the case of the Greek subjunctive. The first person singular subjunctive may be used in Greek as hortative. In the Vulgate of the New Testament, only the first person plural is used as *coniunctivus hortativus*.[29] Thus, it is of minor importance as far as the meaning is concerned whether the last sentence should be translated as "and then I will heal them" or "and then let me heal them!". Both translational possibilities offer hope that God's saving hand will play a role. However, the subjunctive first person singular is not used in the Vulgate as hortative. By translating the mode as subjunctive, the Vulgate turns the last main sentence into a subclause, thereby transforming the meaning of the text. Artwork exhibiting the symbolism of *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga* was widespeard in the regions that constituted the Latin world in medieval times. In contrast, there appears to be no such artwork in the Greek east. This reinforces the impression that the notion of distance was introduced by the Vulgate.

In this case translation has united what grammar would keep separate. The Greek text offers salvation, the Latin text and, based on it, modern translations offer a negative predestination. In addition, if translated according to Greek grammar, there is one who has blinded the eyes and another who offers salvation. This is nothing new: Origen already commented on this.[30] Arguably, Jesus' ministry was not really successful – to put it mildly. He, like many prophets before him, did not encounter "open ears" – hence the "blinded eyes". The quote from Isaiah may, therefore, be seen as a statement of fact and as a proof that Jesus is a true prophet. But his failure does not as such prevent God from putting matters right.

Such translational choices rarely come under scrutiny since grammars also state that a main clause in the future tense may "extend" a preceding ἵνα-clause.

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27 The text of John 12:40 is: *τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπώρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.*

28 For a detailed analysis of the grammatical problem cf. Förster, Vorschlag.

29 See Förster, Luther, 201f.

30 Origen, *Comm. Jo.*, frag. 92 (in catenis).

It has escaped notice that this holds true only for main clauses which follow a positive sub-clause. To attach a positive main clause to a preceding sub-clause which is *negated* (!) completely changes the meaning of the text. It may be mentioned here that such use of Jewish scriptures in the translations of the Gospel of John is an obstacle for the interreligious dialogue of Christianity and the Jewish community. The symbol of the crushed synagogue graphically illustrates a distance between Christianity and Jewish religious practice. The Jewish scholar Adele Reinhartz makes an allusion to this verse in the title of one of her books: "Cast out of the Covenant." In its newest print run (10.2021) the revised *Lutherbibel* (2017) offers a footnote suggesting the possibility of an alternative to the traditional translation. Arguably, this could and should be done in all translations. These examples indicate that translations of the Gospel of John exhibit a strong notion of otherness.

3.3 *"Literal" Translational Equivalents and Semantic Transformation*

One might reasonably expect a literal translation to be close to the source text. This expectation may – at least in some cases – be wide off the mark. A case in point might be the translation of ἐγκάθετος as *insidiator* in the version of the Vulgate of Luke 20:20.

Formally, this translation has the semblance of an extremely literal rendering: both words are compounds consisting of a preposition (ἐν/*in*) and a stem which is related to a group of lexemes signifying the act of "sitting" (ἐν, κατά, ἵημι and *in, sedere*). Thus, both words appear to be related somehow to the act of "sitting in a place", which is – also in English – different from a "sit-in" (which may, however, also be a form of sitting). The semantics differ dramatically. The perceived negative connotation of this word becomes obvious if one looks at translations. The translational equivalent is "spy" (NRSV, KJV) or "suborned persons" (Darby). Both choices follow Grimm's lexicon and its impact on modern dictionaries. The entry in Grimm's dictionary reads (p. 112): *subornatus ad insidias faciendas*; *insidiator*. The information in BDAG (edn. of 2001) is a simple translation of Grimm (p. 272): "[…] *hired to lie in wait*, subst. ἐγκάθετοι *spies* […]."

A close semantic study reveals the semantics to be strikingly different. The Latin word *insidiator* indeed describes "insidious" persons who do harm to others. In contrast, the Greek word describes loyal followers of a party and allies in situations of danger.[31]

The perception of this word has a decisive influence on the translation of Luke 20:20. The Greek text of Luke 20:20 is: Καὶ παρατηρήσαντες ἀπέστειλαν

31 For a full semantic analysis, cf. Förster, Quod, 44–52.

ἐγκαθέτους ὑποκρινομένους ἑαυτοὺς δικαίους εἶναι, ἵνα ἐπιλάβωνται αὐτοῦ λόγου, ὥστε παραδοῦναι αὐτὸν τῇ ἀρχῇ καὶ τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος. The GNT offers here: "Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be sincere. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said, so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor." Arguably, the Greek text can also be translated as follows: "Observing closely, they sent loyal persons pretending to be pious Jews, in order to get him to voice an answer, so that they could hand him over to the power and authority of the governor." Jesus, a Jew, interacts here with representatives of the Jewish authorities. In Talmudic times it is a favorite past-time to watch rabbis discuss difficult problems of the Law. The onlookers decide on the basis of the argument who is the winner of the discussion.[32]

Consequently, one could suggest the following historical setting for Luke 20:20. The political situation might be described as explosive: the Jewish authorities are at the brink of losing their authority even in the temple precinct. They fear stoning (Luke 20:6) while Jesus declines to give a definite answer to their question. In this volatile situation loyal adherents of the Jewish authorities step forward and ask a highly difficult question, which is relevant to pious Jews of Jesus' time. The question of paying taxes is a religious question and had already triggered riots at the beginning of the first century CE. The translation of δίκαιος as "sincere" obfuscates the fact that this Greek word translates in the Septuagint the Hebrew word צדיק. A "pretense at being sincere" is something very different from "play-acting to be pious Jews". They ask this question in order to compel Jesus to give an answer. Luke 20:23 uses the term πανουργία to qualify this behavior. It is rendered in the NRSV and KJV as "craftiness". This implies a duplicity and trickery. Arguably, however, the Greek text might acknowledge an act of prudence. This word occurs in Proverbs 1:4 and renders the Hebrew term ערמה. In Proverbs 1:4 the translational equivalents for this word are "subtlety" (KJV), "clever" (GNT) or "shrewdness" (NRSV). The difference between "subtlety" and "trickery" is apparent.

It can thus be argued that the Gospel acknowledges here that this is a clever (and legitimate) question to which Jesus has an answer. Again, BDAG offers lexical equivalents for this word which contain negative semantics (p. 754): "[…] in our lit. exclusively, in an unfavorable sense (rascally, evil) *cunning, craftiness, trickery*, lit. 'readiness to do everything'." In this case BDAG actually

32 Rubenstein, Culture, 40: "The position of both sages within the academic hierarchy depends on their capacity to object and respond. Rav Kahana is progressively relegated for failing to come up with objections and promoted when he objects, while R. Yohanan is demoted each time he cannot respond."

deviates from Grimm's entry, which still contains the positive connotation as offered in the Septuagint (p. 325): "[…] in bonam partem *prudentia, dexteritas in rebus aggrediendis et gerendis*, Prov. 1, 4. 8, 5. Sir. 31, 10 […]." Interestingly enough, the Vulgate offers for πανουργία in Prov 1:14 *astutia* and in Luke 20:23 *dolus*. The Latin word *astutia* has a very positive meaning, whilst the semantics of *dolus* are quite different. As in Luke 20:20, the semantics of the lexical equivalents also decisively contribute, in Luke 20:23, to the perception of ways already parted.

In light of the comment in BDAG, concerning "our lit(erature)", there are quite good grounds for disagreement. It is surely not outlandish to treat the Septuagint as part of "our" literature – Paul actually quotes the Septuagint as Scripture. However, TDNT expressly notes in its entry for πανουργία: "The NT uses the word group only negatively. […] Here, and in all our findings, it is evident how remote the NT is from the positive development in the LXX."[33] According to the semantics of the word πανουργία in the Septuagint, Luke's Gospel actually seems to acknowledge the difficulty of the question. This underscores the prudence of Jesus' answer.

One may summarize: standard translations of this passage follow the semantics of the Vulgate. This distinguishes Jesus as the "good teacher" from devious and deceptive representatives of Jewish authorities. For Jerome and the Vulgate, the ways have parted. A translation that takes into consideration the semantics of the Greek words indicates a situation where a parting is not part of the picture.

3.4 *The Perception of Paul's Teaching on the Validity of the Dietary Law*

In Rom 14:14, Paul appears to declare the precepts of Jewish dietary Law to be a question of personal preference. The GNT offers here: "I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean."[34] It should come as a surprise that the underlying Greek word for "unclean" is κοινός. The translation of this word as "unclean" is – again – supported by BDAG, which suggests for Rom 14:14 (p. 352): "*nothing is unclean of itself.*" Grimm's dictionary offers no translation for Rom 14:14 and points out Jewish usage of this word (p. 239): "[…] ex usu a nativis Graecis alieno *vulgaris*, a Judaeis opp. *τῷ ἁγίῳ*,

33 Bauernfeind, πανουργία, 726.

34 Cf. als KJV: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." See further NRSV: "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean."

ἡγιασμένῳ, *καθαρῷ*, hinc *profanus* […]." Christina Eschner has pointed out that, with reference to food, κοινός is very different from ἀκαθαρτός.[35] There are a lot of things which are unclean for Jews and may, therefore, never be eaten by them (such as pork). In contrast, "commonality" or "profanity" concerns food which could theoretically be "clean", if correctly prepared. This Halakhic difference is obscured in modern translations, but the Vulgate preserves this meaning, rendering Rom 14:14 as: *scio et confido in Domino Iesu quia nihil commune per ipsum nisi ei qui existimat quid commune esse illi commune est*.

Standard translation thus places Paul outside Jewish practice. Foodstuffs are "unclean" (or, following the Vulgate, "common") if a person perceives them as "unclean". In contrast, Halakhic teaching may describe foodstuffs as "common" if they have been prepared with disregard to the regulations of the Law. Consequently, such comestibles are "common" for a Jew and, therefore, not edible – this regulation does not discuss the consumption of such foodstuffs by non-Jews. This is an objective category prescribed by the Law. In this case, the devil is in the details of Greek verbal forms. The Greek text has here (Rom 14:14): οἶδα καὶ πέπεισμαι ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ ὅτι οὐδὲν κοινὸν δι' ἑαυτοῦ, εἰ μὴ τῷ λογιζομένῳ τι κοινὸν εἶναι, ἐκείνῳ κοινόν. Traditionally, the participle τῷ λογιζομένῳ is taken to be middle voice and rendered into Latin as a relative clause (*ei qui existimat*). In this case modern lexical equivalents for λογίζομαι are (BDAG, p. 598: "[…] to hold a view about someth., *think, believe, be of the opinion*."). This is based on the entry in Grimm's dictionary (p. 259): "*puto, existimo, judico* […]". TDNT supports this understanding of the verb λογίζομαι: "Things are otherwise in Paul. Here we have a radical break with his Jewish religious practices at the very point of the understanding of λογίζεσθαι."[36]

In the present tense, the middle voice is isomorphic with the passive voice. Thus, the following translation is a possibility: "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is *common* in itself; but it is *common* for *anyone to whom it is reckoned* that something is *common*." This rendering translates the participle in the passive voice (and renders the word κοινός as "common"), thereby deviating in a very fundamental way from modern understanding and the Latin rendering. In this translation, Paul stands firmly on the side of Jewish dietary laws, suggesting that the "profanity" is an imputed category. Paul acknowledges here what he states in Galatians (Gal 5:3): "Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law." Arguably, dietary laws are an important part of the Law. Since Paul argues in Galatians that the Law rules over every circumcised person, standard

35 Eschner, Essen, 89.

36 Heidland, λογίζομαι, 290.

translation of Rom 14:14 introduces a notion which contradicts such a statement in a very fundamental way. This does not happen when one understands the participle in the passive voice. To put it succinctly: in Rom 14:14 the question of the "Law-free Gospel" hangs by the thread of an isomorphic form which may indicate Paul's full agreement with Jewish dietary laws. If translated as passive, then Paul exhorts the gentiles among the Roman addressees to respect that a circumcised person is bound to keep the law. This appears to be in direct contradiction with Rom 14:20 (GNT): "Do not, because of food, destroy what God has done. All foods may be eaten, but it is wrong to eat anything that will cause someone else to fall into sin." I have recently argued that standard translation of the nominal sentence in this verse (πάντα μὲν καθαρά) is in clear contradiction with the functioning of nominal sentences with the word πᾶς.[37] The following translation is likely closer to Greek grammar: "Do not, because of food, destroy what God has done. Naturally all clean foodstuff! Other things? They are evil for the person who eats and causes offense." Because of Paul's perceived abolition of such Jewish "identity markers", William Wrede named him the "second founder" of Christianity.[38] Arguably, the abolition of these identity markers has been read into the text of Paul's letter to the Romans. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul describes his identity as "Pharisee" (Phil 3:5). Translating the participle in Rom 14:14 as passive voice indicates that Paul fundamentally respected Jewish dietary laws. As the purported second founder of Christianity, Paul will have parted ways with his Jewish roots. As an observant Pharisee, however, Paul will not have left his Jewish identity behind when he confessed Jesus as the Christ.[39]

The historical question of whether Paul parted ways with his Jewish identity is directly connected to, and even decided by, the way the text is translated. A more philologically accurate translation of Rom 14:14 reconciles Paul with his Jewish roots and sets aside the notion of the "Law-free Gospel". Instead, Paul's teaching in Romans can be translated, in accordance with Greek semantics and grammar, to place him in agreement with the Apostles' decree in Acts 15:29. He appears to be even more careful, which would be typical of a Pharisee, as for example in the discussions between Jesus and Pharisees about the washing of hands before eating bread (cf., for instance, Mk 7:1–15).

37 Förster, Wasser.

38 Wrede, Paul, 180.

39 This is an allusion to Stefan Schreiber's contribution in this volume and his translation of 1 John 4:2.

4. Conclusions

Certain passages of the Gospels create the impression that Jesus aggressively attacks his Jewish audience. This impression holds true especially for the Gospel of John. A few examples indicate that translational choices play a far more prominent role in the construction of this antagonism than is commonly acknowledged. In the instances offered here, Greek grammar and semantic analyses of Greek words suggest far less antagonistic translations of the Greek text. The quote from Isaiah 6:10 in John 12:40 has inspired the typology of *ecclesia* and *synagoga*, graphically indicating the supersessionist use of Jewish scripture by Christianity. Such typology is a definite indication of ways that have parted. There have been attempts to replace such a typology with a positive artistic rendering depicting both women as learned and in dialogue with each other. For example, a sculpture in this form was commissioned by a Catholic University in the USA, indicating a new relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish community.[40] This new relationship gives support to the suggestion, offered here, that it is time to stop reading the parting of ways into scripture. The Catholic *Einheitsübersetzung* (in its revision of 2016) offers "und ich sie nicht heile" at the end of John 12:40. Philological accuracy makes it necessary to criticize the insertion of the negation, "nicht". No extant manuscript attests the negation in this sentence. Consequently, the insertion is a translational choice which changes the meaning from a positive notion "und ich werde sie heilen" to a rather negative one. Such translations should take the revised *Lutherbibel* as a role model (cf. above) and at least acknowledge in a footnote that (philologically debatable) translational choices change the text in a decisive way. Arguably, it is not the Gospel of John but rather translational practice and traditional interpretation which introduce into the text an irreconcilable rift between the community of John's Gospel and its Jewish roots. This observation has major implications for the place of the Gospel of John in the history of ways that parted. It places the Gospel of John within the very discussion which Stefan Schreiber details in this volume as a possible scenario of the First Letter of John: a discussion among Jews, some of whom believe in Jesus as the Christ while others disagree.

In the last decades, the discussion of Paul and his "Christian identity" has moved away from a final parting of ways with his Jewish roots to the interpretive possibility of Paul's attempt to reconcile his Jewish identity with his understanding of Jesus Christ. Indeed, Paul describes himself as (Phil 3:5; NRSV):

40 Nathan, Re-membering, 177, mentions the sculpture *Synagoga and Ecclesia in Our Time* by Joshua Koffman, which has been commissioned by St. Joseph's University at Philadelphia.

"circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee." Based on his letters, traditional Christian interpretation of Pauline teaching arrived at a "Law-free" Gospel. The abolishment of Jewish "identity markers" is in direct contradistinction to Jewish religious law and puts Paul in direct conflict with his identity as Pharisee. Shayna Sheinfield's recent statement indicates a changed interpretation which takes Paul's Jewish roots into consideration: "[…] what Galatians does not state is that Paul rejected the law for himself, or even for other Christ-following Jews."[41] It is within this understanding of Paul's position that Jens Schröter suggested the possibility of reconciling the traditional translation of Rom 14:14 with Jewish customs.[42] Arguably, there is no need to reconcile Paul's position with Jewish positions, if the participle in Rom 14:14 is translated in the passive voice. It appears at least feasible that a person who describes himself as a Pharisee would argue Halakhic law in line with pharisaic interpretation. This would suggest also for Paul that the perception of his theological positions might be thoroughly influenced by Latin interpretation and translation. Michael Bachmann recently suggested: "Because the apostle, using the syntagm 'works of the law,' is concerned with such halakhot, it is *at least now, in 2018, high time to take seriously the New Perspective on Paul*."[43] Indeed, Paul's position concerning such Halakhic teachings seems to be distinct from the medieval Christian understanding of Paul. Arguably, Paul's argumentation within Halakhic concepts might become more visible if philological observations are allowed to call into question traditional translational choices. This would, however, mean acknowledging that the philological tools of New Testament studies could be tainted by tradition and Latin interpretation in a way that introduces theological distortions into translational choices of important passages from the New Testament. The notion of a "parting of ways" is introduced in many instances into New Testament translations by translational choices of the Vulgate which have found their way into modern dictionaries, grammars and editions of the New Testament. In order to understand its own authoritative text better, New Testament studies should consider parting ways with the prejudiced tools of the trade. As long as the Vulgate is unwittingly reproduced by means of such tools, New Testament translations may miss the point, thereby rendering its message pointless.

41 Sheinfield, Nomos, 70.

42 Schröter, Paul, 112: "In any case, Paul's position is not aimed at abolishing Jewish food laws. Instead, he develops the view 'that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean' (Rom 14:14) – a perception that can be reconciled with Jewish attitudes towards purity."

43 Bachmann, Moment, 43.

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PART V

Systematical-Theological Considerations Concerning the Parting of the Ways

"Consubstantial with the Father"

Did the Council of Nicaea Neglect the Jewish Roots of Christianity?

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Abstract

Through the dogmatic definition that the Son is "consubstantial with the Father", the Council of Nicaea made a hermeneutical point that brought the parting of the ways to conclusion with respect to the doctrine of God and Christology. As a liturgical confession, the dogma continues to shape the memorial culture of Christian communities of faith. To this day, the Incarnation and the Trinity are regarded as markers of difference in the dialogue between Judaism and Christianity. Dealing with the theology of Arius and the answer of the Council of Nicaea, the article reflects on Jewish roots of Christianity and the concept of Homoousia. It points out that pre-existent mediators and ideas of incarnation are not a Christian theological invention, but a Jewish heritage. Moreover, the expectation that the Messiah/Christ would be a god-man, was part of Jewish tradition. The article concludes that in the concept of homoousia Jewishs roots are brought to the fore in a distinct manner.

Keywords

Homoousia; Nicaea; Hellenisation of Christianity; Jewish roots of Christology

I.

The zenith of French deconstructivism has passed. What has remained is the inveterate suspicion of binary codes such as "true" and "false" or "good" and "evil". What has also remained is a heightened awareness of shifts in meaning in the use of language. Essentialist attributions have since been considered under-complex. One could call the insight that the semantics of the terms "Jewish" and "Christian" was fluid for a long time, that there were phenomena of crossover until the 4th/5th century, the fruit of the tree of deconstructionism and classify the research under the label *Parting of the Ways* accordingly. There was something that, from a later point of view, should not have existed: on the one hand, there were Jews who regarded Jesus as the Son of God, and

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yet adhered to a Torah-observant lifestyle; on the other hand, there were Christians who professed Christ and at the same time celebrated the Sabbath, ate kosher and were circumcised. With the development of orthodox confessions and corresponding religious institutions that sanctioned deviations from orthodoxy, the "both-Jews-and-Christians" of the first three centuries increasingly came under suspicion of heterodoxy.

Postmodern thinkers such as Michel Foucault have pointed out that leading categories of the political order are expressions of power constellations. This also applies to the faith community of the church. In the field of theology, the heightened awareness of dispositives of power draws attention to the binary code of "heresy" and "orthodoxy", allowing us to enquire after those religious elites who possess the sovereignty of defining that which is considered orthodox and that which is not. In the context of the parting of the ways, it is significant that, in addition to distinctive religious practices (Sabbath, circumcision, dietary laws), the question of God and Christology became central to the discourse on orthodoxy. The first Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 was an assembly of bishops gathered at the invitation of the Emperor Constantine, the highest representative of political power. The bishops excommunicated Arius for his Christological subordinationism. Would things have been different, if Constantine had clearly sided with Arius from the beginning? Would Christological subordinationism, which is still considered heterodox today, have been considered orthodox then? Would the Nicene Creed then have been defined differently? And would a subordinationist creed have caused a less distinct separation from Judaism? Did not Athanasius already call Arius a "Jew"[1] with defamatory intent? These are confusing questions for dogma historiography, which is always in danger of doing the victor's historiography and passing over heretics, as corpses in the ditch of history, without appreciating their productive impulses.

II.

To speak about the Council of Nicaea and the "parting of the ways" comes with the risk of falling into the dogmatic trap of presenting the definition that the Son is consubstantial with the Father as the sealing of the parting of the ways of the two communities of faith. But in doing so, two other important

1 Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.8 (MG 26, 25c); 3.27–28; 380c–384b and more. Before that, Alexander of Alexandria already raised the accusation of Judaising, cf. *Urk.* 14.4 (Opitz, Athanasius 2, 20,5–7). For more on this background, cf. Lorenz, Arius, 141–179.

points would be overlooked. One is the Council's decision to settle the *Easter controversy* that had been simmering since the 2nd century and to disconnect the date of the 14th of Nisan from the Jewish calendar once and for all.[2] As a result, the Church and the synagogue no longer celebrate Easter and Pesach on the same date. It would be a doctrinal narrowing of the interpretation of the Council to disregard this parting of the ways where the liturgical calendar is concerned. It is a change of course that deeply intervenes in the order of feast times and drives the memorial culture of the two faith communities apart. Pesach, the Jewish feast of the commemoration of the Exodus, and Easter, the Christian high feast of the resurrection of the Lord, the "Paschal Lamb", have since been celebrated on different dates, as if they had nothing to do with each other. The *lex orandi* of the Church was thus inscribed with a blatant disregard for Israel.

The second point, which I do not want to omit, concerns the *theological-political* setting of the Council of Nicaea. Constantine (c. 280–337) is the first Roman emperor[3] to have turned from the pagan henotheism of Sol to openly side with the Christians. He attributes the successful battle against Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in 312 to the favour of the Christian God. With the Milan Agreement of 313 (misleadingly often referred to as the "Edict"), Constantine ends the era of persecution of Christians, strengthens the role of the bishops, and supports the Church with financial contributions. In 325, he also summons the assembly of over 200 bishops in order to solve the Arian controversy. However, it would be wrong to impute theological or even subtle Christological interests to him.[4] Rather, the pontifex maximus pursued the political intention

2 The Easter dispute dealt with the question whether Easter should be celebrated on the 14th of Nisan, the day of the first full moon of spring, even if it is a working day (quartodecimanic practice; representative: Polycarp of Smyrna), or whether Easter, the feast of the Resurrection of the Lord, should always be celebrated on the Lord's Day (Roman tradition, representative: Victor I, who rejects the quartodeciman practice as heterodox – an approach opposed by Irenaeus of Lyons in his Letters of Peace). At the Council of Nicaea, the Sunday celebration of Easter in the manner of the Roman tradition is established for the whole Church. Cf. Bienert, Osterfeststreit, 1171–1173. For the background, cf. Heid, Rom, 5–26. Against the quartodeciman practice, the Council of Nicaea ruled: "Easter is to be celebrated on the Sunday after the first full moon of spring; if this full moon falls on a Sunday, the Easter celebration is to be celebrated only on the following Sunday."

3 Cf. Bardill, Constantine; Girardet, Kaiser; Odahl, Constantine.

4 Constantine clearly underestimated the significance of the controversy between Arius and his bishop Alexander of Alexandria. In his letter to the two opponents, he wrote: "For while you quarrelsomely debate among yourselves about unimportant and the most unimportant questions, it is neither in order nor at all in accordance with divine statute that so great a people of God, which should be governed by your intellect, should be divided" (Eusebius, *Laud. Const.* II.71.1).

of supporting the unity of the Roman Empire through the unity of the Church. That which is usually called the "Constantinian turn" in fact constitutes a political power shift in favour of the Church. This continued under Theodosius, who elevated Christianity to the status of state religion – historical processes that are always detrimental to the synagogue when anti-Jewish thought or practice takes hold in the Church.

III.

Now these undogmatic preliminary considerations should not make us forget that the topic of this contribution is the dogmatic definition of the Council of Nicaea. In the context of *the parting of the ways*, the question must be examined whether the definition that the Son is "consubstantial with the Father" causes the Jewish roots of Christology to recede. At the very least, the question arises, whether the conciliar confessional formula perhaps follows the Pauline dialectic. Instead of unifying Judaism and Christianity, this dialectic increasingly deleted the Jewish heritage in the course of history.[5] After all, the term "homoousia" is not biblical and draws on Greek ontology to define the relationship between Father and Son. Does the definition of "homoousia" alienate the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a Hellenistic way, or is it a translation into the philosophical horizon in a way that corresponds with the biblical sources? The foundational problematic issues are certain dogma-historical categories such as "Judaisation" and "Hellenisation". But what is it that constitutes their semantics? Are they used descriptively or normatively? Which epistemological intentions are fundamental to the problem? Should the early Church Councils be criticized as a Hellenistic falsification of the Gospel, or is the reception of Greek philosophy to be defended as a legitimate development of Christian theology? It is clear that, if used as fixed templates, the categories "Judaisation" and "Hellenisation" do not do justice to the multi-layered process of *parting of the ways*. Martin Hengel, but also Daniel Boyarin, Peter Schäfer, and many

5 Cf. Lyotard, Bindestrich, 32–33: "The line drawn by Paul between Abraham and Jesus also crosses out the tradition going back to Abraham, but in his own name. Dialectic comes into play here. Through this basic dialectical trait, which is even more emphatic in Paul's preaching than in its significance for the written and orally transmitted law (which is now considered ineffective), the hyphen connecting Christianity to the Jewish tradition is broken, is overthrown. Paul is a Jew, he is a citizen of the Roman Empire, he is from Tarsus in Cilicia, which means that he is steeped in Greek culture. In preaching Jesus, he presents an anomaly: a Jew who conducts dialectic against Judaism, or conversely: a Greek concerned with revelation."

others, have pointed out in different ways[6] that there are already attempts at synthesis and complex conceptual transfers in Hellenistic Judaism. Ideas presented in Greek Logos philosophy are used for the interpretation of the biblical heritage. Philo of Alexandria presents a typical example of such interpretations, but binitarian speculations about Wisdom or the Word of God (*memrah adonai*) as personalized figures beside God may illustrate this as well. I would therefore like to present the following hypothesis for discussion:

> *Through the dogmatic definition that the Son is "consubstantial with the Father", the Council of Nicaea made a hermeneutical point that brought the parting of the ways to conclusion with respect to the doctrine of God and Christology. As a liturgical confession, the dogma continues to shape the memorial culture of Christian communities of faith. Whoever recites the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed in the liturgy, stating that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who is "consubstantial with the Father", is considered orthodox. To this day, the Incarnation and the Trinity are regarded as markers of difference in the dialogue between Judaism and Christianity. What should be accentuated, however, is that the Jewish roots of Christianity are hidden by the concept of Homoousia, but not forgotten. Much rather, these roots are brought to the fore in a distinct manner.*

In order to make this thesis plausible, I will first deal with the theology of Arius, then with the answer of the Council of Nicaea. Subsequently, I will develop my thesis in greater detail.

IV.

The inculturation of the Gospel reached a critical stage with Arius (256–336), who was active in Alexandria as an eloquent preacher and astute exegete. His theology is conceptualised as Christology.[7] He tried to contemporise faith in Jesus Christ by basing his Christology on the cosmological scheme of Neoplatonism.[8] Within this scheme, one may distinguish three stages:

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6 Hengel, Judentum. The assumption that a distinction between a Hellenised, Alexandrian form of Judaism and a non-Hellenised, Palestinian form of Judaism is possible, is a fallacy.

7 Cf. Lorenz, Arius, 66: Arius' "peculiarity lies in Christology, in the assertion that, through grace and in consideration of his moral achievement, a creature was made into a son by God and endowed with divine dignity. From this Christology, Arius himself reports that he calls God the only Unbegotten, the only One without beginning, the only Eternal One."

8 Böhm, Christologie, 198 and 208, assumes that Arius' thinking was influenced by Plotinus and Porphyrius.

(1) the divine Oneness, which is radically transcendent and without relation;
(2) the principle of mediation from which all that is emerges – the demiurge;
(3) the multiplicity of material being.

Arius recapitulates this cosmological scheme, identifying the first dimension with God, to whom he ascribes the attributes of unity, immutability, and transcendence. An abyss separates Him from the Logos, the Son, who – like the mediator of creation or demiurge – is radically subordinate to Him, as can be inferred from the surviving fragment of *Thalia*: "The Father is *foreign* to the Son, since He is without origin. Know that the unity (*monas*) was, but the duality (*dyas*) was not before it came into existence. As long as the Son does not exist, God is not Father."[9] According to Arius, the Son does not have eternity, he belongs to the realm of creation. For this subordination of the Son, Arius cites biblical evidence. In the book of Proverbs, we read, "The Lord *created me* as the beginning of his ways" (Prov 8:22 LXX: *ektisen me*). Wisdom is therefore a preexistent but created entity. Arius identifies Wisdom with the Logos or Son and sees Prov 8:22 as biblical proof for his subordinationist Christology. The Letter to the Hebrews also offers a reference to the Son's having come into existence: "He has become so much more exalted – *kreton genomena* – than the angels" (Heb 1:4).[10] Other passages stem from the Gospel of John: "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). The verse, "This is eternal life, to know you, the only true God" (John 17:3, cf. Luke 18:19), seemingly confirms the exclusive divinity of the Father. Finally, Arius underlines the humanity of Jesus: growth, hunger, thirst, not knowing the future, and psychological sufferings such as fear and abandonment (cf. Luke 2:52; Matt 4:2; John 4:6; 19:28, etc.). Changeability and suffering belong to being human, but changeability and suffering cannot belong to God, they would impair His perfection and sovereignty. Therefore, Arius concludes, the Son must belong to the sphere of the creaturely (it is apparent that Arius does not yet have the later distinction between human and divine nature in mind). The axiom of apathy forbids an ontological association of the Son, who had suffered and died, with God. Charles Taylor remarks:

> This was one of the points of tension with Greek thought where the struggle was the most intense. Because it was essential to the educated, philosophical concept of God that he be beyond emotion, that he be apathes. The tremendous difficulty was to connect the Jesus on the cross, crying out in pain, with a God, one of whose defining characteristics was apatheia. This was one of the motives

9 Opitz, Athanasius, 242, 27–243,1; Grillmeier, Jesus I, 363.

10 Acts 2:36: "Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." Col 1:15: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."

> for the Aryan refusal of identification of Christ and God. The ensuing struggles over the Trinity and Christology were attempts to resolve this tension.[11]

Let us summarise: drawing on an ensemble of scriptural statements, Arius denies the divinity of the Son. He does so with the intention of protecting *the unity and transcendence of God*, which is, after all, both the heritage of Israel's biblical monotheism (cf. Deut 6:4; Isa 45:5) and of Greek philosophy in its various manifestations. Arius therefore teaches the ontological inferiority of the Son to the Father, but at the same time calls him – as do Philo of Alexandria[12] and Justin Martyr – the "second God" (*deuteros theos*). This ontological and temporal enervation of the Son also affects the theological basis of the dialogue about God, the Father. God *is* not the Father and cannot be, if the Son is not co-eternal with Him, but is portrayed as radically different from Him. At most, God can then be spoken of as Father in the mode of inauthentic imagery, since He created the Son in order to effect creation through him through him.[13] Thus, although the Son is to be regarded as a subordinate mediator of creation, he is not a mediator of revelation.

Arius has attempted to translate the faith of the Church in Jesus Christ into the horizon of Platonist thought. That which is handed down in the Gospels about Jesus in the form of a narration, that which is doxologically testified to in confessions and hymns about the Kyrios, Redeemer and Son, had to be transferred into the conceptual worlds of Greek philosophy on the occasion of the inculturation of the Gospel. Arius resorts to the cosmological scheme of Neoplatonism and transfers it to Christology, omitting the transformation that is factually required. In doing so, he exposes the New-Testament statements about the divinity of the Son. This questioning precipitates a crisis for the Church's faith in Christ and demands clarification.

V.

In 325, Constantine summoned an empire-wide synod to the imperial summer residence at Nicaea to seek a consensual clarification. The overwhelming

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11 Taylor, Age, 278.

12 Even though Arius uses formulations similar to those of Philo of Alexandria, the decisive difference is that Arius draws a sharp line between God and the Logos-Son, which is not the case with Philo. Cf. Lorenz, Arius, 103–106.

13 Arius writes: "For our sake he [the Son] was created, that God might create us through him as through an organon; and he would not exist if God had not willed to create us." Quoted from Grillmeier, Jesus I, 370.

majority of the council participants – the numbers vary between 200 and 318 bishops – came from the East, only a few from the West. Apart from supporters of Arius and followers of his opponent Alexander of Alexandria, there was a third group of synod members who represented an intermediate position. The council was inaugurated in the presence of the emperor and the legates of the bishop of Rome. After the majority of the synodal participants rejected a formula of faith proposed by the Arians, the council proclaimed a creed into which four clarifications were inserted (DH 125); it adopted an anti-Arian formula of condemnation (DH 126), different canons (DH 127–129), and a synodal letter rejecting the teaching of Arius (DH 130).

It is a hermeneutical principle of the interpretation of council statements to start with the condemnations. They reveal the intention of the statement. The Council of Nicaea imposes anathema on those "who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable' – they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church." (DH 126) Arius' teaching that the pre-existent Son had a temporal beginning and was created by God was consequently rejected by the council.

The positive teaching of the Council can be taken from the preceding creed. In the article of faith on God the Father, Arius' justified concern not to infringe on the confession of the one God is first affirmed. It says: "We believe in *one* God, Father, Almighty, Creator of all that is visible and invisible." (DH 125) In the article on the Son, four anti-Arian interpolations are then inserted which deserve theological attention, since they place the Son ontologically on the side of the only God:

> We believe [...] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, only begotten of the Father, that is, *of the essence of the Father* [1], God from God, light from light, *true God from true God* [2], *begotten, not made* [3], *consubstantial with the Father* [4], through whom were made all things that are in heaven and that are on earth, who for our sakes and for the sake of our salvation came down and became flesh and man [...]. (DH 125)

In order to adequately understand the extended confession, let us briefly comment on the interpolations. The *first* insertion, "of the essence of the Father", specifies the biblical statement that Jesus Christ is "begotten of the Father as the only begotten". In John's Gospel, Jesus is repeatedly referred to as the "only begotten" (cf. John 1:18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). Both expressions – Son of God and only-begotten – express the being-with-God of Jesus Christ, but could well be interpreted in the sense of Arius, who calls the Son the first creature before

all creation. To exclude this, the Council adds that the Son comes "from the substance of the Father". Thus, the Son is set apart from the rest of creation, which was created *ex nihilo*. He shares the essence of the Father and is not *subordinate* to God, but *equal* to Him.[14]

The *second* interpolation, "true God from true God", likewise underlines the divinity of the Son. The first two provisions "God of God, Light of Light" could be interpreted in an Arian sense. From the time of Justin onwards, it was not unusual to call the Mediator of creation the "second God".[15] The predicate of being "*true* God", on the other hand, states that the Son does not have an ontologically inferior position, as Arius teaches. If the Son is true God from true God then he must be ontologically co-equal with the Father.

The *third* interpolation, "begotten, not made," sets the thesis of the coeternity of the Logos against the Arian exegesis of Prov 8:22–25. The Council thus once again opposes the view that the Son was created or that he came into being. Before Nicaea, the expressions 'beget' (Gr. *gennao*) and 'become' (Gr. *gignomai*) were used in the same sense. Nor does Arius distinguish them when he notes, "Before he [the Son] was begotten or created [...] he was not, since he was not unbegotten."[16] The Council here introduces a conceptual distinction when it teaches: *the Son is begotten and yet unbegotten*! This statement is only theologically meaningful, if the concept of begetting is deprived of any temporal and physical connotation.[17] The Council's definition is thus close to the Hebrew text of Prov 8:22, which understands the verb *qanah* in the sense of "to acquire". The LXX, on the other hand, disambiguates the verse according to the understanding of monotheism and translates it as *ktizein* – "to create". The father begets the son from eternity, as Origen had taught with recourse to Ps 2:7 – "My son you are, today I have begotten you".[18] Accordingly, the Son

14 The recourse to the terminology of essence was felt by the council Fathers themselves to be in need of explanation. According to a Council report by Alexander of Alexandria, the Synod Fathers first looked for a biblical expression to express the divinity of the Son. When they did not find a suitable term, they adopted the Greek speech of "essence" (*ousia*) in order to reject Arius' statement that the Son was foreign to the Father in essence.

15 Cf. Menke, Jesus, 234–35.

16 Schönborn, Gott,75.

17 Eusebius of Caesarea still wrote: "It is not right to say that the Son came forth from the Father in the manner of the procreation of living beings among us, beings from beings with suffering and greatest separation. For the Divine is wholly indivisible, cannot be cut up, taken apart, cut out, not put together, not diminish" (Eusebius, *Dem. ev.* 5.1).

18 Origen, *Tract. in Ioh.*, 1.29.204: "For there is no evening with God, as I consider, and there is no morning, nothing but time that stretches out, along with His unbeginning and unseen life. The day is to-day with Him in which the Son was begotten, and thus the beginning of His birth is not found, as neither is the day of it." Thümmel, Origenes Johanneskommentar,

belongs to the reality of God from eternity. Thus, however, the concept of God is decisively changed. God is no longer to be thought of as an *unattached unity*, but as a *being in relationship*. Father and Son both belong to the concept of God. With this definition, the Council of Nicaea brings about the decisive *transformation of the Greek concept of God*, in which the essence of God had been conceived of as free of any relationship.

This transformation is terminologically clarified in the *fourth* interpolation, when it is said that the Son is "consubstantial with the Father". This refutation of Christological subordinationism simultaneously acts as a correction of triadic cosmology in accordance with biblical creation theology. The area 'in-between', in which Arius places the Logos as an entity 'in-between', is eliminated by the definition of the essential equality of Father and Son. At the same time, any figurative attenuation, as encountered in the description of the Son as a "second God", is rejected. According to Arius, the Son is "alien" to the Father, "unlike" him and not "consubstantial".[19] The Council, on the other hand, takes a stand when it uses the non-biblical concept of consubstantiality to bring the biblical statements about the Son (cf. John 10:30; 16:15, Phil 2:6) into a new horizon of thought. The Son has always belonged within the concept of God, he is co-eternal with the Father. This however implies that the Father has been the Father of the Son from eternity. The title of Father is not figuratively attributed to God, it has an anchor in the reality of God. "To call God 'Father' does not imply addressing something contingent in Him, as is the case with man," Christoph Schönborn notes, adding, "God *is* Father, he is the only one who truly is Father."[20]

VI.

We cannot avoid the question, whether the Gospel is falsified by interweaving a non-biblical concept into the creed, or whether the definition of *homoousios* provides a clarification of genuinely biblical statements within a new horizon of understanding. The answer to this question, however, is unavoidably linked to the debate about the Hellenization of Christianity. The category of Hellenization is by no means self-evident, as was already indicated in the introduction. In its theological use, *descriptive* and *normative* aspects are

81. Cf. also Origen, *Princ.* 1.2.2; 3.5.3; 4.4.1; Ambrose, *Fid. Grat.* 5.1.25. English translation: https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/origen-john1.html (access: 03.08.2023).

19 Opitz, Athanasius II, 242, 16–17; Cf. Grillmeier, Jesus I, 368, 409.

20 Schönborn, Gott, 76.

all too often mixed. Descriptions of the inculturation of the Gospel into the Hellenistic horizon of thought and understanding mostly take place, whether explicitly or not, under evaluative presuppositions, either being considered as the legitimate or even necessary development of biblical impulses (Alois Grillmeier, Joseph Ratzinger) or as illegitimate apostasy from the Gospel (Adolf von Harnack). The narrative of developmental history, which allows the passage from the Christological sovereign titles of the New Testament, via the Logos-Christology of the apologists, to lead logically into the Christological definitions of the early Church councils, hardly does justice to the complexity of the process and largely ignores the formation of Rabbinic Judaism and its reflections.[21] Conversely, the blanket accusation of Hellenization does not seem appropriate, since the Council of Nicaea de-Hellenized the faith insofar as it rejected Arius' uncritical adoption of the Neoplatonic scheme of thought. Even if the interpretive category of Hellenization is semantically blurred and mostly narrowly focused on systematic-theological problems of the doctrine of God and Christology (with the effect that other important transformation processes in the area of education, ethos, or discipline remain underexposed),[22] it could seem inappriopriate to renounce the use of the term altogether.[23] The thesis advocated is that the adoption of Hellenistic terminology by the Council of Nicaea proceeds according to *the model of a connection in contradiction*.

The creed uses the Greek terminology of essence. At the same time, however, it transcends the Greek horizon of thought, since the definition of *homoousia* makes something conceivable that was previously unthinkable. The divine Oneness, the ultimate Reality of all realities, is not a neuter without relation, not an eternal solitude. Rather,

> by defining that Father and Son are consubstantial, the Greek concept of God is unlocked through Greek means of thought and the abstract monotheism of the philosophical doctrine of God is opened towards the biblical sentence 'God is love'. Nicaea adds that it belongs to the essence of God to be relation; the category of relation, which in the substance ontology of Aristotle only has accidental rank, is thereby upgraded to such an extent that Joseph Ratzinger has spoken of a 'revolution in the concept of God'.[24]

This statement from 2008 needs to be adapted today. The Council introduces relation into the concept of God when it states that *God is God in the relation between Father and Son*. This contrasts with Arius' radically transcendent

21 Cf. Markschies, Erforschung, esp. 263–64.

22 Markschies, Hellenisierung, 397–436.

23 Thus Essen, Hellenisierung.

24 Tück, Sohn, 163.

and indeterminate concept of God. As such, it also connects with statements of Hellenistic Judaism, which likewise places God in relation to pre-worldly entities such as Wisdom, *memrah*, the Son of Man, or other entities. This represents a continuity with the Jewish roots of Christianity, which is mostly overlooked in dogmatic textbooks.[25] At the same time, the definition of the Council assumes that the Son is co-eternal and co-essential with the Father. Unlike the asymmetrical conceptions of Arius, the pre-Nicene theology, or the binitarian understanding of Hellenistic Judaism, the Council determines the relation between the two as symmetrical. This is a moment of discontinuity that has its roots in the New Testament statements about the Son. The Nicene Creed also differs from Jewish faith and Rabbinic religious philosophy in considering the Logos the only and perfect mediator of creation. In its own development, Rabbinic theology will furthermore differ from the Nicene confession by refusing to restrict the notion of essential likeness to a particular person. Not a single human being can become consubstantial with God, but all human beings are destined to do so. Emanuel Levinas illustrates this with the idea of messianism.[26]

Instead of describing the definition of Nicaea, in accordance with Joseph Ratzinger, as a "revolution in the concept of God",[27] I would therefore speak more cautiously of a *transformation* characterised by simultaneous moments of continuity and discontinuity. In order to gain understanding of this transformation, one should pay greater attention to the traditions of Hellenic Judaism, and furthermore to the reception of ideas of Greek philosophy in the interpretation of the Arian controversy. This shifts the scope of dogma-historical reconstruction. Researchers such as Friedo Ricken, Alois Grillmeier, Leo Scheffczyk, among others, have explained the theology of Arius mainly according to the cosmological scheme of Platonism. In contrast to this, one should state more clearly that his Christological subordinationism may well fit "binitarian" figures of thought found in Hellenistic Judaism. In addition to the book of Proverbs cited by Arius, one should also keep in mind the other reference passages described by Peter Schäfer and Daniel Boyarin as "two powers in heaven".[28] They offer opportunities of connection towards the theology of

25 Müller, Dogmatik, 331–336; Ruhstorfer, Christologie, 205–208.

26 Cf. Levinas, Menschwerdung; cf. Madragule Badi, Inkarnation, 97–135.

27 Ratzinger, Einführung, 168. Geza Vermes also calls the concept of homousia a "revolutionary new formula". Vermes, Beginnings, 234. Daniel Boyarin resolutely opposes the narrative that only the post-Easter community invented a high Christology. Cf. Boyarin, Gospels.

28 Schäfer, Götter; Boyarin, Gospels.

Arius, which establishes a hierarchical gradation between Father and Son (and Spirit).

But what about Nicaea and post-Nicene theology? Does it neglect the Jewish roots of Christology? Geza Vermes represents such a theory of decadence when he notes, "The theologians carried on to underplay the image of Jesus of Nazareth, the itinerant preacher who in days long gone by was criss-crossing the rocky paths of Galilee, preaching the imminent arrival of the day of the Lord, and to overstress instead his shiny new identity as the consubstantial, co-eternal and co-equal only-begotten Son of God the Father."[29] This criticism exhorts Christology in the wake of the early Church councils not to forget the Galilean nuances of the Gospels. Jesus research by Jewish scholars and the work of the *third quest* have taken the blindfold off speculative Christologies and rightly reminded us of Jesus' Jewishness.[30] At the same time, the narrative of the simple itinerant preacher, speculatively reshaped by early Church-council Christology, is, for all its catchiness, open to criticism. It underestimates the fact that speculative theologies also existed in Hellenistic Judaism. Pre-existent mediators and ideas of incarnation are not a Christian theological invention, but a Jewish heritage. As Daniel Boyarin has reminded us, "The reasons that many Jews came to believe that Jesus was divine was because they were already expecting that the Messiah/Christ would be a god-man. *This expectation was part and parcel of Jewish tradition*."[31] Paul, who in his proclamation of the Gospel assumes the identity of the earthly Jesus with the exalted Christ, likewise stands in this tradition. For him, as a Jew who believes in Christ, pre-existence and Parousia are one.[32] This component of Jewish tradition is preserved in the definition of the Council of Nicaea. However, just as there are theologies of God's indwelling and condescension in Judaism, there are theologies of incarnation and kenosis in Christianity. Both agree in understanding God not as an a-personal transcendent force, but as God turned to man(kind). In this sense, the concept of *homoousia*, while obscuring the Jewish roots of Christology, has not forgotten them, but has brought them to bear in a specific way.

29 Vermes, Beginnings, 234.

30 The study of Hoping, Jesus aus Galiläa, has the benefit of highlighting the Jewishness of Jesus in its Christology.

31 Boyarin, Gospels, 56 (emphasis in the original).

32 Cf. Schnelle, Paulus, 11.

VII. Postscript

Dogma in its function as a hermeneutical point of closure is an irritant for postmodern philosophies. They would like to place a question mark beyond the full-stop and celebrate the deconstruction of stable semantics. In their anti-dogmatic tendency, however, they stealthily exalt indeterminacy to the ultimate determination. Indeterminacy however cannot be a satisfying dogmatic category, considering that God's mystery itself has not remained indeterminate, but has approached historic reality. Speaking about Jesus Christ as God's Son therefore does not represent a theopoetic cipher, anthropogenic setting, or pious fiction, but a revelation-theological datum. The dogmatic definition of Nicaea states this. For the memorial culture of Christianity, however, the importance of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan confession can hardly be underestimated.

The theological-political interest of Emperor Constantine, however, was subversively undermined by the decision of the Council of Nicaea. One God – one emperor – one empire, this triad is challenged by Trinitarian theology, which conceives God as God in symmetrical relations. This touches on Erik Peterson's thesis that the Trinitarian concept of God has abolished any form of political theology – a thesis that can only be mentioned here, but cannot be explored any further.

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Jesus the Judean and Jesus the Christ

Systematical-Theological Considerations on the Relationship between Judaism and Christianity

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Abstract

Against the background of recent historical research on Jesus, which places Jesus in the ancient Judea of the Second Temple, this article addresses the relationship between Judaism and Christianity from a systematic perspective. According to the thesis of the article, Christian theology only reaches a positive appreciation of the Jewish religion if it renounces religion-spanning concepts such as the concept of religion or God and names a theological difference between the two religions. For dogmatic Christology this means that it is a descriptive element of the Christian religion and cannot be transferred to the Jewish religion. On this basis, systematic theology can take into account in Christology the results of recent historical Jesus research without appropriating Judaism.

Keywords

Christology; historical Jesus research; systematic theology; religious pluralism

1. Introduction

"What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity."[1] Michel Foucault's remark about the disparity of historical beginnings and the perspectivity of constructions of origins, is also observable in the historical beginnings of the Christian religion. According to all we know historically, Jesus of Nazareth and his early followers were Judeans from the Second Temple period. In complex historical processes of overlap, attraction, and repulsion that have spanned over centuries, Judaism and Christianity emerged simultaneously as

1 Foucault, Nietzsche, 142.

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distinct religions.[2] Any current study of their relationship must start from the fact that both religions have differentiated into independent religions. What do the historical views of the beginnings of the Christian religion – the placement of Jesus and his followers, not excluding Paul,[3] in the discourses on Judean identities at the time of the Second Temple – mean for a systematic theology? The Christian religion also refers to Jesus of Nazareth. With him, Christianity enters history. How can it, the Christian religion, account for the disparity at its point of origin, that Jesus was a Judean and that in Christianity he is the Christ?

This is the question that will occupy the following considerations. The thesis I would like to present is: an inclusion of the complex view of the beginnings of the Christian religion, which has been worked out by the recent historical debates, into systematic theology is only possible if, at the same time, a theological difference between both religions is maintained.[4] Only under this condition can Judaism be recognized as an independent religion and its appropriation and sublimation be avoided. The structure of my presentation results from the indicated set of problems. I begin with the systematic problems that arise from the inclusion of Judaism, in the form of Jesus of Nazareth, in the Christian religion. These attempts are based on a concept of religion or God that encompasses both religions and is necessarily connected with an inclusivist appropriation of Judaism. Then, in the second section, I propose to dispense with a general concept of religion in systematic theology and to understand the Christian religion as the transmission of the religious memory of Jesus Christ. In the concluding third section, the doctrine of the Trinity as well as Christology are outlined on this basis in such a way that the autonomy of Judaism is preserved and recognized.

2. Jesus the Judean as Part of the Christian Religion?

Theological conceptions whose intention is to offer a redefinition of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity usually start from a theoretical framework that encompasses both religions. However, such cross-religious conceptions, such as the concept of religion or the concept of God, are not without problems. Not only do they cancel out the distinctive features of both religions, but they also lead to an appropriation and disparagement of Judaism

2 Cf. Schäfer, Jesus; Schäfer, Geburt; Boyarin, Evangelien, 33–39.

3 Cf. Frederiksen, God, 193–212.

4 Cf. Danz, Jesus, 197–207; Wittekind, Transzendenz, 159–182.

by Christianity. I explain this thesis briefly in the following.[5] I limit myself to two aspects: first, the difficulties connected with a general concept of God or religion, and then the inclusion of the Jewish religion into the Christian one in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth.

First, if one starts from a general concept of God or religion, which covers the Jewish and Christian religions, then both religions appear as historical particularities of an overarching generality. What such a theological construction achieves is to make both religions basically equal in value. They each have a share in the same "religious" or "divine" that is manifested or represented in them. Thus, Judaism and Christianity are not distinguished by their theological substance (*Gehalt*) that is the same in both, but solely by their determinate contents, images, and symbolic forms. Since the same theological substance is articulated in them, that is, since they are representations of the same divine or religious substrate, the different forms of Judaism and Christianity are merely variable historical disguises of a common essence that underlies them. The historical forms in which both religions exist are thus merely inessential surfaces. That which they represent, regardless of their differences, is the same divine.

Such a model, as elaborated by so-called Israel theology and religion-theological pluralism, is not without its problems. First of all, it cancels out the historical particularity of Judaism and Christianity. Both religions are seen as variations of the same. With Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, Christianity adds two new elements to a general idea of God shared by both religions. Just like the Torah in Judaism, Christ represents God in Christianity.[6] Yet can the determinate contents of both religions, through which they differ, really be understood as inessential surfaces? The self-understanding (*Selbstsicht*) of Judaism and Christianity, their identity as particular religions, depends on their respective concretized carriers of revelation, which symbolize transcendence in a differentiated way. The notion that, behind their conceptions of God and through their symbols, both religions refer to the selfsame divine transcendence is a theological perspective that formulates a model of their equality. But the theological model of the one indeterminate divine behind the particular images of the God of Judaism and Christianity stands in tension with the self-understanding of both religions.[7]

If, on the other hand, one does not postulate a general transcendence behind the concrete images of the God of Judaism and Christianity on the level

5 Cf. Danz, Jesus, 7–89.

6 Cf. Hick, Interpretation; P. Schmidt-Leukel, Pluralism; Stosch, Theologie.

7 Cf. Danz, Pluralismus, 106–119; Heim, Depth, 219–247.

of theology, then the only possibility left is to start from the Christian religion and its idea of God.[8] This procedure takes into account the uncircumventability (*Unhintergehbarkeit*) of the self-understanding in theology. If, however, one transfers the Christian idea of God to the Jewish religion, then it is no longer it is unclear how its appropriation and consequently degradation to a mere precursor of Christianity could be avoided. For if it is the Christian God who reveals himself in the Jewish religion, then the latter can only be a kind of unwitting Christianity in disguise, of which only the theology that works out such an inclusivist construction is aware. There is also no avoiding the inclusivist problem via a trinitarian mode that reserves Jesus Christ for the Christians and brings God the Father and the Holy Spirit into play as universal revelation media for other religions.[9] For, in the Christian religion, God and the Holy Spirit are themselves already christologically determined.

Let us come to the second aspect. Does not Jesus of Nazareth connect both religions? Does not the Christian religion, by referring to Jesus Christ, also refer to Judaism, given that he was a Judean?[10] Looking at the question on the historical level, Jesus of Nazareth was a Judean from the Second Temple period and belongs to Judean religious history. But how can this be incorporated into the Christian religion's self-understanding without an appropriation of Judaism? Just like Judaism, Christianity has developed into an independent religion. The identity of the Christian religion depends on its reference to Jesus Christ. By referring to him, the Christian religion presents itself as an independent religion. If one includes the Jewish religion in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth in the self-understanding of the Christian religion, then Judaism becomes a component of Christianity. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is an element of the Christian religion that does not exist in the Jewish religion.

The two discussed ways of readjusting the relationship between Judaism and Christianity against the background of historical research do not arrive at a real recognition of the Jewish religion by the Christian one. The reason for this lies in their cross-religious conceptions. Their inclusivism dissolves the independence of Judaism, since they eliminate from the beginning any theological difference between the two religions. If no theological difference can be named between them, then Judaism cannot be recognized as an independent religion either. From this dilemma arises the demand to renounce cross-religious conceptions in Christian theology.

8 So most recently Bernhardt, Jesus.

9 Cf. Bernhardt, Ende, 219–225.

10 Cf. Meyer, Jesus.

3. The Christian Religion as the Transmission of the Memory of Jesus Christ

Systematic theology constructs the self-understanding of the Christian religion. A scientific systematic theology that works in a methodologically controlled way can only address the Christian self-understanding.[11] Its concept of religion refers to this and – so it is suggested here – not to other religions.[12] Only by renouncing a general concept of religion and limiting the concept of religion to Christianity is it possible for theology to recognize that other religions already understand what religion is differently than the Christian religion. Religions are not particularizations of a general structure underlying them. Each has its own understanding of what religion is. Only in this way can they be independent religions. What does this mean for the understanding of the Christian religion and its relationship to Judaism? How does it appear in the self-understanding of the Christian religion?

The Christian religion consists in the transmission of the memory of Jesus Christ in Christian-religious communication.[13] It emerges as a religion solely in the religious *use* that people make of this memory in religious communication. In place of the classical alternative for justifying the Christian tradition (the person of Jesus Christ on the one hand, the kerygma on the other), a three-pole communication event takes place here. The Christian religion is constituted when the memory of Jesus Christ is appropriated and symbolically articulated by people as religion. It is therefore dependent on a determined religious tradition, but it only comes into being in its appropriation and representation, that is, in the Christian-religious use that is made of it.

With this approach, the fact that Jesus of Nazareth belonged to the ancient Judaism of the Second Temple Period, and that the transmission of his memory took place in the context of Jewish religious history, can be taken up and conceded in systematic theology. In this horizon, the memory of Jesus was transmitted as a communicative memory and this was finally processed into a social memory in the Gospel productions.[14] Although these processes construct identities of believers in Christ and function as symbolic memory in the Christian religion, the New Testament Gospels can also be read without difficulty as contributions to intra-Jewish debates about self-understanding.[15]

11 Cf. Danz, Theologie, 139–154.
12 Cf. Danz, Diversity, 101–113.
13 Cf. Danz, Jesus, 158–166; Danz, Geist, 118–130.
14 Cf. Huebenthal, Markusevangelium; Becker, Birth.
15 Cf. Boyarin, Evangelien.

This draws attention to the fact that the difference between Judaism and Christianity does not lie exclusively on the level of content. The same texts can be understood, and without anything change of their contentd, both Jewishly and Christianly. Their difference depends exclusively on their use. It is in this use that Christian or Jewish religion first comes into being.

Because the Christian religion consists in the transmission of the memory of Jesus Christ, it refers back to Jesus Christ. As a religion, it originates in the Christian-religious use of this memory in communication. If the Christian religion depends on the Christian-religious use of the memory of Jesus Christ, then Jesus as the Christ exists as its origin in Christianity alone. Jesus Christ is not a historical presupposition of the Christian religion from which it could be derived and which exists independently of it. He is a component of it, constituted together with it as its origin. In the Christian religion, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of the world. Just as the New Testament Gospels in the Christian religion represent Christianity, so also Jesus Christ in the Christian religion represents Christianity. On the level of the self-understanding of the Christian religion, that is, in its reference to Jesus Christ, other religions and their truth do not appear at all. The reason for this is that it constitutes itself as a religion solely in the appropriation and representation of the memory of Jesus Christ, that is, in an act of identification. Whatever the contents of Christian-religious communication, in the Christian religion they have the function of representing the Christian religion itself. What does this mean for the relationship between Judaism and Christianity? To this we now turn.

4. Christological Identity of Christianity and Recognition of Judaism

A recognition of Judaism as an independent religion is, as we have seen, only possible for a Christian theology if it renounces the constructions of cross-religious unity that dissolve the differences between the religions. Systematic theology refers to the Christian religion and describes its transparent functioning as a religion from its self-understanding. Its object is not the historical form of the Christian religion, but the transparent and self-referential Christian-religious use of the memory of Jesus Christ, in which it exists as a religion and which cannot be derived from the historically transmitted tradition. Precisely this, the religious use of communication that cannot be derived from tradition, is described by the theological concept of revelation. Systematic theology explicates its circular structure with the doctrine of the Trinity. In doing so, it describes the specificity of the Christian religion, but

not a general concept of religion that could be transferred to other religions such as Judaism. But can such an interpretation still take into account and acknowledge that, historically speaking, Jesus of Nazareth and his early followers belong to debates about Judean self-understanding of the Second Temple Period?

Even a systematic-theological account of the Christian religion cannot ignore the fact that both Jesus of Nazareth and his early followers shared the Jewish faith in God. But neither can it abstract from the fact that, by complex processes, Judaism and Christianity differentiated themselves as independent religions, each developing its own view of faith in God. However, it remains theologically unsatisfactory to explain the differences between the two religions by contingent historical circumstances. This does not go far enough, because Christianity has developed a new and different – but not the true! – understanding of religion when compared to Judaism. Christianity does not simply add new content to a concept of God that it shares with Judaism. By including Jesus Christ as well as the Holy Spirit in the idea of God, its conception of religion is, on the whole, different than that of Judaism. In Christianity, religion depends on the individual appropriation and symbolic representation of God. This is exactly the content of the inclusion of Jesus Christ as well as the Spirit in the thought of God. The understanding of God bound to the memory of Jesus Christ is a component of the notion of God. The doctrine of the Trinity and Christology thus describe the specificity of the Christian religion. They represent the Christian religion and its inner functioning as a religion. For, as a religion, Christianity arises solely in the individual appropriation and symbolic articulation of the memory of Jesus Christ.

The identity of the Christian religion depends on Christology, that is, on Jesus Christ as the bearer of revelation.[16] But Christ is not simply an object or content in the Christian religion. Nor is dogmatic Christology exhausted in the construction of a God-Man. Rather, Christology, like the doctrine of the Trinity, is a level of theological reflection that constructs the Christian religion in order to be able to grasp and describe theologically the transparent functioning of the Christian religion. Consequently, the determinate contents of the Christian religion have a reflexive rather than representational function. In and for the Christian religion, God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit describe themselves, namely, their existing in the Christian-religious use of the memory of

16 The identity of the Christian religion establishes itself anew in each case, in the appropriation of the memory of Jesus Christ, by designating itself. Consequently, identity is to be understood in the sense of a dynamic identity or, with Paul Ricœur, as *ipse* and not as *item*. Cf. Ricœur, Gedächtnis, 131.

Jesus Christ. But the religious understanding and use of this memory is not derivable from the memory itself. The memory of Jesus Christ handed down in culture can be understood at any time both non-religiously and in other religious terms, without changing anything in its content.

By limiting itself to the self-understanding of the Christian religion and not transferring it to other religions, a systematic theology recognizes not only that Judaism is an independent religion with its own system of signs, but also that what religion is is constructed and understood differently in Judaism than in Christianity. It cannot be the task of a systematic theology to justify Judaism and its truth or validity. For, on the one hand, Judaism does not depend on Christianity or on a Christian theology for its own existence as a religion. And, on the other hand, any theological justification would amount to a Christian appropriation of Judaism, since it would eliminate the theological difference on which the latter's independence depends. Consequently, an encounter at eye level, and thus an exchange between the two religions which is free from appropriations, will only come about if overarching theological constructs of unity are renounced and differences are not leveled out. This might also be the point of Foucault's suggestion, mentioned at the beginning, that at the "historical beginning of things" one does not come across "the inviolable identity of their origin", but rather "the dissension of other things […]", the "disparity".

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The essays collected in this volume are the proceedings of an international conference held in Vienna (Austria) in September 2022 on the "parting of the ways" between Jews and Christians. They demonstrate that the beginnings of what we today call "Christianity" were fully embedded in early Judaism in the first century CE. The 18 chapters of this collection span from considerations about early Jewish identity/identities (Tiwald/Öhler, Grohmann, Magness) to Pauline theology (Tiwald, Ehrensperger, Eschner), the Sayings Source (Heil), the Gospels of Matthew (Konradt), Johannine and Biblical theology (Schreiber, Scherer, Förster), the Didache (Doering) to Ignatius of Antioch (Foster, Öhler), Origen (Siquans), and the Rabbis (Stemberger). The volume ends with systematic-theological considerations on the "parting of the ways" and perspectives of Jewish-Christian dialogue (Tück, Danz).

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