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CHAPTER 8

JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

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8.1 Approaches

A concise narrative of the 'split' between ancient Judaism and Christianity persists in modern scholarship. This narrative has its roots in a theologically conditioned, supersessionist reading of the New Testament, in which the messianic salvation rejected by the Jews was taken up by Gentile believers and became the distinct religion of 'the Christians' (Acts 11:26). A less overtly theological permutation of this narrative endures in secular academia (although note Lieu 1994). Commonly, and somewhat romantically, referred to as the 'parting of the ways' (Dunn 1991 and 1992; Lieu 1994; Becker and Reed 2003b), this account describes how inner-sectarian debate over Jesus's messiahship, combined with the trauma of Jewish revolts in the first and second centuries, led those more universalist members of the Jesus movement to splinter off from 'mainstream' Judaism (solidifying, according to many followers of this model, into nascent rabbinism during the same period) (Segal 1986).

Students of this 'parting of the ways' attend to various 'moments' as important way-stations on this path to definitive division: the expulsion of Jesus-believing Jews from the synagogues; the repercussions of the first and second Jewish Wars (Goodman 1989); even the fourth-century legalization and institutionalization of 'orthodox' Christianity following Constantine the Great and the Council of Nicaea.

I would like to thank Annette Yoshiko Reed and Rebecca Krawiec for reading through a draft of this chapter and offering valuable comments and suggestions.
have been identified as 'points of no return' on the parting of the ways (Ruether 1972; Boyarin 2003: 66). From that point on (whatever point is identified), this view teaches, relations between the distinctive religions of Jews and Christians were rare and usually competitive in nature.

As Adam Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed have recently explained, both historically and theologically minded students of early Christianity find common cause in subscribing to this 'parting of the ways' model:

[T]he metaphor of 'parted ways' allows for both Judaism and Christianity to be approached as authentic religions in their own right, with equally strong links to the biblical and Second Temple Jewish heritage they share. . . . Moreover, the notion of the 'Parting of the Ways' fits well with contemporary ecumenical concerns, providing a foundation for inter-religious dialogue and buttressing popular appeals to a common 'Judeo-Christian' ethic.

(Becker and Reed 2003b: 15–16)

That is, the 'parting of the ways' is a clear yet benign metaphor that allows each religion to maintain a robust history and a common genealogy, just connected enough to justify ongoing, friendly relations, but not so connected that the distinctive tradition of each religion becomes too blurred. This amicable model, however, rests on several contestable presuppositions.

In order to be sure that the ways have parted, we must be able to recognize a twin set of distinctive ideological destinations called 'Judaism' and 'Christianity'. Yet how do we, at a remove of several centuries, determine who was a Jew and who was a Christian? One option is to rely on such authoritative (and, ultimately, triumphant) sources as 'the rabbis' and 'the fathers'. Such reliance, however, risks reifying normative discourses that were by no means universally acknowledged in the first centuries CE. Another option is to take the word of anyone claiming the identity 'Jew' and 'Christian' and reconstruct more expansive 'Judaisms' and 'Christianities'; in this case, though, we risk ending up with categories so broad and amorphous as to be ultimately unhelpful. What would it mean to speak of a non-Jewish Christianity that embraces both Marcionites and Ebionites? How do we envision the boundaries of a non-Gentile Judaism whose members might be substantively indistinguishable from their Gentile neighbours (S. J. D. Cohen 1993)? And how do we locate those groups that seem to confound any boundary-making, such as Gentile 'Godfearers' frequenting synagogues, or those groups that scholars dub 'Jewish Christians' who stubbornly resist classification (Fredriksen 2003: 49–51; Reed 2003: 188–96, 219–21)? Without secure, historically identifiable groups, the parting ways could lead us off a conceptual cliff.

This historiographic uncertainty leads directly to a methodological quandary facing, to some degree, all students of the history of religions. To imagine 'parting ways' is to envision religions as stable entities developing coherently over time, occasionally shedding unsuccessful 'mutations' (heresies) like so many exotic, extinct religious Neanderthals. This kind of evolutionary view of religions emerged
in the nineteenth century, 'scientifically' rewriting what were at root colonialist discourses of theological self-description (Chidester 2000). The sources at hand in the study of ancient Judaism and Christianity, insisting as they do on the providentially guided triumph of 'true' religion (orthodoxy), make this evolutionary model, while historiographically perilous, also especially tempting. Yet, since the work of Walter Bauer (1971; German original 1934), students of early Christianity especially have learned to mistrust overly monolithic models of orthodox development.

An additional problematic assumption of the 'parting of the ways' is the relative rarity and enmity of 'Jewish-Christian relations' in antiquity. This downplaying of ongoing and complex interactions between Jews and Christians is ultimately the result of centuries-long debates over how to balance the rhetorical and historical aspects of our ancient sources. These debates have serious historiographic and ethical implications. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was no attempt to reconstruct 'Jewish-Christian relations', because most prominent historiograhs believed that there were no such relations. Judaism, following the advent of Christ and the destruction of the Temple, was a failed world religion withering on the vine (Harnack 1965: 70–1). For scholars such as Adolf von Harnack, the 'parting of the ways' had Christians taking the only open road, while Spätjudentum ('late Judaism') ran off the rails into a ditch (Harnack 1883: 59–91; S. J. D. Cohen 1991). Furthermore, the listless failure of Judaism meant that Christians must have been focused rather on their more vibrant 'pagan' rivals. Any Christian writings about Jews, therefore, were a literary smokescreen: there was nothing to be learned about Jews and Christians from the writings of the early church.

While some of Harnack's contemporaries protested against the overtly supersessionist vision of lively Christianity leaving a crippled Judaism in the dust (see Jacobs 2003: 100), it took the shattering events of the Second World War, and the traumatized aftermath of the Holocaust, to bring a sea change to the study of Jews and Christians (Gager 1985: 13). Scholars realized that the assertion of ancient Judaism's spiritual vacuity might have been motivated by more than impartial scholarship, and might further have licensed violence—both theological and literal—against contemporary Jews. A new study of 'Jewish-Christian relations' emerged to rectify this historiographic and ethical lapse. Soon after the War appeared Marcel Simon's Verus Israel, reversing the terms of Harnack's sceptical supersessionism (Simon 1986; Baumgarten 1999). Judaism was no longer moribund, but vigorous; Christian writings about Jews were no longer rhetorical ciphers, but realistic reflections of an ongoing and spirited confrontation between the two religions (Simon 1986: 369). Simon and his fellow travellers reimagined a 'parting of the ways' that set Judaism and Christianity on equally broad boulevards of development, with the roads frequently, and spectacularly, crossing. In recent decades, this hopeful scholarship of recovery and reinvigoration of Judaism has coincided with a broader ethical concern for multiculturalism.
Miriam Taylor’s *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity* (1995) challenged Simon’s ‘conflict theory’ (her characterization of Simon’s especially dynamic vision of Jewish–Christian relations): could not such a reading, she asked, be used to blame Jews for the violence perpetrated against them throughout history? Could any Jewish provocation possibly justify the virulence of Christian rhetoric and animus toward the Jews? She proposed, instead, a return to reading Christian literature on Jews as rhetorical devices that conveyed symbolic information about Christian theology. The lives and minds of the Jews themselves perforce remained a mystery (although she did not return to Harnack’s historical pessimism with regard to Jewish vitality), but Christians must maintain responsibility for their own rhetorical violence (Taylor 1995: 195). While the ways certainly parted, only the rocky and troubling Christian road remained visible from our historical vantage point.

Taylor’s claims have crystallized an ongoing debate among a variety of scholars committed both ethically and historiographically to the recovery of real, vivacious Jews coexisting with Christians (Carleton Paget 1997; Shoemaker 1999). Few scholars assert that all of our sources can read as positive evidence for the messy, but ultimately ‘real’, experience of early Jews and Christians (see Fredriksen 2003); rather, most try to steer a middle ground between ‘image’ and ‘reality’ in order to bracket off clearly hyperbolic Christian rhetoric from the kernels of historical interaction embedded within our sources (De Lange 1976; Wilken 1983; Lieu 1996). Throughout the course of this debate, the intersection of historiographic and ethical claims in the studies of ancient Jews and Christians becomes apparent: the robustness of Judaism in the first centuries CE is linked directly with our interpretations of the reality of Jews encoded in the early Christian writings. To read Jews in Christian texts as ‘mere rhetoric’ is either to claim the triumph of Christian supersession and the fallibility of ancient Judaism (so Harnack) or to privilege the deeply encoded ‘symbolic anti-Judaism’ that pervades all such Christian writings (so Taylor). Conversely, to read Christian evidence for Jews as reflective of a ‘real situation’ is both to posit the vitality of ancient Judaism and possibly to concede a concrete basis for Christian vitriol (see Cameron 1994 and Horowitz 1998).

### 8.2 Sources

The tangle of historiographic and ethical issues embedded in the study of Jewish–Christian relations must be confronted by any student hoping to do productive work in this area. It is rare to find an early Christian text that does not speak about Jews and Judaism, and usually in a highly charged (although multifaceted) manner. The present challenge for the historian of early Jewish–Christian relations is to
juggle the rhetorical bias of our sources and the academic desire for an unbiased analysis of history. A fair-minded student of early Christianity might seek to avoid unduly internalizing early Christian prejudice by turning to non-Christian sources for balance: surely any anti-Jewish sting of our Christian texts might be tempered by gaining perspective from the 'other side'? Some early studies have sought to 'fact check' Christian sources in this manner (e.g. Bardy 1925; Ginzberg 1935), but caution is still warranted (Baskin 1985: 56–9). First, the quantity and quality of Jewish sources in the first five centuries CE are monumentally dwarfed by what we have from the Christian side: after the textual riches of first-century Judaism (the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Josephus) comes a sudden quiet from Mediterranean Jewry. Historians of Judaism have made valiant efforts to fill in that lacuna with lesser-known texts, epigraphic and other inscriptive remains, and archaeological witnesses (Rutgers 1992, 1995; Braun 1998), but the rising crescendo of Christian voices still risks drowning out these Jewish remains.

One significant body of Jewish texts surviving from this period is, of course, the rabbinic corpus: the Mishnah and Tosefta from the third centuries, early midrashim, the Talmudic compilations from Palestine and Mesopotamia, as well as scattered, related liturgical, poetic, and apocalyptic texts from the pre-Islamic period (Strack and Stemberger 1992; Neusner 1999). These sources present their own obstacles to 'balancing' out the Christian voice (but see Segal 1991). In the first place, while we might imagine the slow interpenetration of rabbinic Jewish authority into the synagogues of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern diaspora, there is no clear evidence that rabbinic Judaism was the norm outside of the circle of sages and disciples before the Islamic period (Schwartz 2001: 103–28; Boyarin 2004: 151–201). To make rabbinism the voice of ancient Judaism, therefore, is to slip into an anachronistic essentialism that uncritically takes up the normative discourse of the rabbis themselves.

Even when we can reasonably theorize some form of contact between the sages of Palestine and Christians (as in the case of Origen of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Jerome: Urbach 1971; Kimelman 1980; Blowers 1988; Lapin 1996; Hollerich 1999: 147–53), rabbinic texts do not treat Christianity with the same obsessiveness as Christians speak of Judaism (the scandalous tales about Jesus compiled in the Sefer toldot Yeshu represent a much later crystallization of scattered rabbinic folklore: Biale 1999: 131–6). When Christianity appears in the rabbinic writings, or in poetical or apocalyptic texts, it is thickly veiled and coded, or lumped together with the panoply of 'heresies' (minim) that serve for the theoretical and rhetorical construction of rabbinism (Kalmin 1994; Himmelfarb 1990; Wheeler 1991; Biale 1999). It is, of course, interesting to find this compounded, even deliberate silence on the rabbinic side in late antiquity, but interpreting that silence can prove frustrating.

Lacking any significant narrative discussion of Christians by Jews, some scholars have turned to more oblique modes of 'contact' that might be gauged from both sides, such as very promising recent work on the possibilities of competitive
biblical interpretation (e.g. Baskin 1985; Visotzky 1995; Hirshman 1996). These studies not only demonstrate the likelihood of intellectual interaction (both adversarial and, it has been suggested, co-operative), they also provide a useful corrective to the segregated paths depicted by the ‘parting of the ways’. Yet, even as these valuable contributions to intellectual and cultural histories provide us with new, broad-brush views of the exegetical contacts between elite Jews and Christians, they still do not provide a full-blooded social history of Jewish–Christian relations.

Some students of late antiquity have turned to material remains as a way of ameliorating the partiality of Christian sources and the paucity of Jewish sources. Historians have made strides in reconstructing varieties of ancient Judaism from the wealth of late ancient evidence from synagogues across the Mediterranean and ancient Near East (Rutgers 1995; Schwartz 2001: 203–89). The physical remains of Jews and Christians, often discovered in tantalizing proximity, suggest contacts and relations between the two groups throughout the late ancient Mediterranean. Certainly the thick material presence of Jews in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East (some estimates calculate Jews comprising as much as 7–8 per cent of the population of the Roman Empire; Hopkins 1998: 212–16) belies the notion that Jews and Christians walked on parted ways that only rarely crossed (Meyers 1988; North 1992). Yet, as critical histories of archaeology demonstrate, even the analysis of stones and bones often entangles the analyst in questions of bias, presupposition, and hermeneutical uncertainty (so argue the proponents of ‘postprocessual archaeology’). Usually, material remains can establish only the bare fact of proximity or coexistence, leaving the analyst to fill in the quality of such spatial relations, often with highly contradictory conclusions. Stones can only tell so much of the story, and, eventually, the historian will find herself turning to the fraught literary remains of Christians.

It is difficult to catalogue the number and contents of Christian writings that deal with Jews and Judaism, because the topic is so ubiquitous. From the second century onward, many Christians (who so self-identify) used the category of ‘Jews’, along with its conceptual double, ‘the Greeks’ or ‘the Gentiles’, as totalizing rubrics by which to shape a new world-view. Among early examples are the Epistle to Diognetus 5 and Aristides’s Apology 2. Pauline universalizing language of ‘neither Jew nor Greek’ by the fourth century had become a classificatory lens through which to fashion a global religious topography (Eusebius, Praep. 1. 5. 12 and Dem. 1. 2. 1). Within this Christian totalizing discourse, the ‘Jew’ appears with such frequency as to risk blurring any historical focus. In order to sharpen our angle of approach, it is perhaps worth attempting some classification of our sources.

First, it is important to distinguish between pre-Constantinian and post-Constantinian sources. By the end of the fourth century, the interests of Christian institutions had begun to merge—fitfully and not without drama, to be sure—with the political interests of the Roman Empire. (A similar merging of religious and
political interests also took place in the Persian Sasanian Empire, with comparable effects on relations between Zoroastrians and Jews (Neusner 1970). Briefly, a Christian thinking and writing about Jews in the second century operated from a very different political and social position than his counterpart three centuries later, when the full weight of Roman imperial authority potentially lay behind his words and ideas. A student of early Jewish–Christian relations must attend differently to texts such as the Epistle of Barnabas, Justin Martyr’s Dialogue with Trypho, or Tertullian’s Against the Jews than she would Ephrem’s anti-Jewish hymns or the biblical commentaries of Jerome or Cyril of Alexandria.

Next, we can begin to ask how Jews function in various Christian texts. Some of the earliest Christian writings posit Jews as religious adversaries. This apologetic literature, supposedly written in ‘defence’ of the new faith of the Christians, constructs a spiritual world under siege, both literal and metaphorical. Jews appear aligned in a sinister fashion with Rome in second-century martyrlogies (see the Martyrologies of Polycarp and Pionius, and Gibson 2001, 2003) and as a source of the ill-informed rumours and slanders necessitating response in apologetic texts (e.g. Tertullian, Apol. 7). An apologetic subgenre of texts ‘in response to Jews’ (adversus Iudaeos) emerged in the third century in the Latin West (e.g. Tertullian, Ad Iud.; Lukyn 1935), and compilations of biblical testimonia allegedly written to answer Jewish debates proliferated across the Mediterranean (e.g. Cyprian, Testimonies for Quirinus; Albl 2004).

For more positivist historians, the representation of Jews as adversaries encodes a social reality: that Jews, who enjoyed official public status in the Roman Empire, were on the attack against Christians (although not with the literal violence conveyed in martyr texts). They prayed against Christians, met them acrimoniously in the marketplace of religious ideas, and even cheered as they were tortured and executed by unsympathetic Roman authorities (Gibson 2001, 2003; North 1992). A different historical reading finds in all of these texts rhetorical construction with little or no basis in reality: Christians projected their own fears and dissatisfactions on to the Jews (already encoded as ‘the bad guys’ by a particular reading of the gospels), and we learn nothing of historical interest from these highly literary constructions.

Even accepting the latter, more pessimistic view, however, the historian of Jewish–Christian relations should not despair of attaining some glimpse into ancient lives and ideas. We can shift our focus away from reconstructing the immediate motives for the creation and consumption of these texts, and look instead to their ‘afterlife’: how would Christians, instructed by these adversarial accounts of Jews, potentially interact with ‘real’ Jews the next time they left the house? Patterned on real conflicts, or concocted from a stew of unfair stereotypes, the adversarial and apologetic literature of the first Christian centuries constituted formative texts, scripting world-views and even future interactions and, in this sense, they can tell us something historically ‘real’ about Jewish–Christian relations.
We can use the same approach with even more literary narrative sources, in which Jews function as ‘characters’ patently crafted to convey Christian ideas. Beginning in the second century, Christians wrote about their ‘dialogues’ with Jews (Justin Martyr’s *Dial.* is the earliest complete text; on later texts see Varner 2005 and Lahey 2006). Although some Christians do mention holding public and private debates with Jews (Tertullian, *Ad Iud.* 1; Origen, *Letter to Africanus,* 1. 9, and *Cels.* 1. 44; Jerome, *Preface to the Book of Psalms*), scholars debate how much we can distil the perspective of actual Jews from such Christian texts (Harnack 1883; Olster 1994; Horner 2001). Nonetheless, these texts may provide a window into the evolving parameters within which Jews and Christians might plausibly interact. Even the most highly literary and fantastic of creations in which Jews figure as characters, such as the hagiographic literature of the fourth and fifth centuries, may be read not as direct windows into what specific Jews did, but how Jews in general might be perceived by their Christian neighbours. A host of texts, for instance, related to the discovery (*inventario*) of relics portray Jewish characters as integral to the recovery of a sacred past (Drijvers and Drijvers 1997; Limor 1996; Jacobs 2004: 174–91); few scholars credit the existence of these convenient Jewish figures at the discovery of the True Cross or Mary’s robe, but we can appreciate the degree to which hagiography gave Christians a lens through which to bring their own world, and the Jews within it, into focus. We can even begin to consider the ways in which Jews—otherwise falling into historical silence—might likewise have taken up and played with the roles scripted for them in Christian texts.

As part of this rich textual mosaic we can even include those texts in which Jews appear as a cipher: homilies and biblical commentaries in which Jews function as the metaphorical symbol of wilful unbelief (Wilken 1971) and heresiological sources in which ‘Judaizing’ signals inappropriate beliefs about the full divinity of Christ (Lorenz 1980; Burrus 2002). Even when ‘the Jew’ stands as a Christian metaphor, we can sense the patterns of the manner in which Christians defined their place in a newly Christian world, and the solidifying role they constructed for Jews in that world. Even from the most rhetorical of Christian literature, we can still hope to gain a sense of the possibilities of historical relations between Jews and Christians.

Just as we might derive from these metaphorical depictions of Jews rough contours of social history, so too we must endeavour to recall that even the most mundane and ‘realistic’ of Christian texts are ideological and rhetorical products. For instance, Jews figure significantly in the narrative of the first Christian histories. Eusebius enshrines the supersessionist ‘parting of the ways’ in his *Ecclesiastical History,* and his successors in the Latin West and Greek East ( Rufinus of Aquileia, Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, Theodoret of Cyrrhus) continue to integrate Jews into their heavily theological historical narratives of the dovetailing of orthodoxy and empire, with Jews cast as the impious and politically disloyal ‘others’. These authors...
carefully frame Christian communal identity through a re-conceptualization of 'the past', and so should not be read as simple factual accounts. Though we should carefully weigh the historical details of these accounts, their broad, prescriptive framing of Jewish-Christian relations can be understood, along with our other sources, as producing, as opposed to recording, a particular brand of reality. We can likewise approach the legislation regarding Jews from the post-Constantinian period, particularly those laws contained in the codes of the arch-orthodox emperors Theodosius II and Justinian I. Historians continue to debate the historical value of imperial legislation, which was often repetitious, contradictory, and difficult to enforce. The 'matter-of-fact' quality of legislation on Jews (see e.g. various laws concerning Jews in Theodosian Code, book 16, and Justinianic Code, book 1, as well as Theodosius II's Novella 3 and Justinian's Novella 146) presents us, again, with an opportunity to parse the subtle ways in which Christian rhetoric constructed a real world for its Christian, as well as its Jewish, subjects (Bachrach 1985; Linder 1987).

We can achieve a further sense of how this constructed worldview could shape both Christian and Jewish reality through those writings in which Jews function as the subject of debate between Christians: for instance, in the homilies of John Chrysostom (usually referred to as 'Against the Jews' but ostensibly directed against Judaizing Christians), who rails against Christians who frequent the local synagogue for festivals and oath-taking (Wilken 1983); or in the controversy between Jerome and Rufinus and, a little later, the correspondence between Jerome and Augustine in which Jerome is taken to task for consulting with and learning Hebrew and midrash from Palestinian Jews (Jacobs 2004: 83–96). In the course of Jerome's defence, he utters the memorable line that may very well encapsulate the multifaceted ways in which Christians constructed Jews into their world-view: 'If it is expedient to hate any people and to detest any nation, I have a notable hatred for the circumcised; even now they persecute our Lord Jesus Christ in the synagogues of Satan. Yet can anyone object to me for having had a Jew as a teacher?' (Ep. 84. 3. 3) The contradictions of desire and loathing that mark Jerome's peculiar—and yet, increasingly, representative—view of 'Jewish-Christian relations' is also visible in a cautionary tale told to Jerome by his peevish correspondent Augustine.

Jerome's new translation of the book of Jonah, executed in iuxta Hebraeos ('according to the Hebrews' or 'according to the Jews'), was read out in a small North African village. Upon reaching Jerome's new translation of a single word—'ivy' instead of 'gourd' (Jonah 4: 6)—the assembled congregation burst out in anger, accusing the translation of being impiously 'Judaised' and thus inappropriate for church reading. At that point the beleaguered bishop brought in a group of local Jews, who treacherously sided with the rabble-rousers against Jerome's more authentic Jewish retranslation (Augustine, Ep. 71. 3. 5; see Fürst 1999). How should the student of Jewish-Christian relations interpret this group of North African Jews summoned
by a small-town bishop? Do they represent a casual and amicable détente between the two communities, or the fearful minority serving at the pleasure of Christian masters? Is their response genuine and helpful, or sly and deliberately subversive? Any single answer that seeks definitively to pin down historical details would drain this anecdote of its richer cultural significance: the inscription of complex, even contradictory, motives, fears, and desires at the core of these tangled inter-religious contacts. It is worth noting that the teller of this story, Augustine of Hippo Regius, would leave as his own legacy in western ‘Jewish–Christian relations’ the dubious ‘witness theology’: Jews remain in this Christian world to bear witness both to the truth of scriptures (as, perhaps, in this little story) and to the suffering inflicted on those who hear and reject the salvation of Christ (J. Cohen 1998; 1999: 19–67).

Despite the productive multiplicity of our sources, scholars are often tempted to distil Jewish–Christian relations to a single theme: ‘rhetorical excess’ or ‘real-life conflict’ or ‘parted ways’. Such irresolvable anxieties emerge out of a scholarly tension that haunts much of the project of history writing: the desire for certainty about the past combined with a suspicion of the truth-claims of our primary sources (Clark 2004). The study of Jews and Christians in late antiquity makes this tense longing even more acute, conditioned as it has been by ideological, theological, and philosophical insistence on separation, segregation, and self-definition reaching all the way back to the early Jews and Christians themselves. Yet the particular circumstances of this sub-discipline of early Christian (and, in perhaps another Handbook, early Jewish) studies also provide an opportunity for the scholar critically and productively to engage with this persistent academic anxiety. Over the course of the first Christian centuries, as the political and cultural positions of Christians fluctuated and transmuted, Christians constructed a complex series of relationships with their Jewish neighbours. They scripted these complexities through a variety of texts, ranging from the fanciful to the mundane, resulting in a mutable and unstable matrix of the possibilities of ‘Jewish–Christian relations’.

If any observation could be said to define the cultural, intellectual, and social contexts of late antiquity, it is that the various discourses of stability (‘Hellenism’, ‘imperium’, ‘Romanitas’) frequently masked deep-rooted and complex fluidities (Bowersock 1990; Cameron 1991; Ando 2000). The implications of this observation are slowly beginning to take hold in the study of Jews and Christians in this period, as much recent, engaging work on ancient Jews and Christians has moved to overcome facile assumptions of stable religious and inter-religious identities (S. J. D. Cohen 1999; Fonrobert 2000, 2001; Boyarin 2004). Even as we take seriously the desire of many ancient Christian and Jews for secure self-definition and differentiation from ‘others’, we must also understand these desires as a species of self-fashioning rhetoric: ‘true’ in the sense that they work materially to shape the worldview of Jews and Christians, even if they are not ‘factual’ in the sense that we directly recover from such historical remains an unmediated past.
Notes

1. The debated theory of an ‘expulsion’ of the Jesus movement from first- or second-century synagogues rests on a confluence of interpretations of the Gospel of John (see Jn 9: 22, 12: 42, and 16: 2); ambiguous references in Justin Martyr, Origen, Epiphanius, and Jerome; and speculation on the origins and functions of the rabbinic *birkat haminim* (Kimelman 1981; Horbury 1982).

2. For more detail on this material, see Becker and Reed (2003b) and Jacobs (2003).

3. Take, for example, the long, strange history of interpretation of the monumental synagogue of Capernaum built ‘down the street’ from the church of St Peter (Jacobs 1999: 363–5).

4. Even the identification of literary remains as ‘Christian’ is fraught (see above on essentialism). For the purposes of approaching ‘Jewish–Christian relations’, we can focus on written sources operating from a self-consciously Christian and non-Jewish perspective. The question of so-called Jewish Christians who (according to Christian sources, at least) claimed to be both Jewish and Christian, (see Jerome, Ep. 112. 13) is left aside for now, but see Reed (2003: 189–96).

Suggested Reading

Primary sources

It is difficult to find an early Christian text that does not mention Jews or Judaism. Williams (1935) remains a helpful collection of texts written explicitly *adversus Judaeos* (against Judaism), balanced by the critical survey of Baskin (1985). In addition, some primary sources repeatedly surface in the study of early Jewish–Christian relations and provide important touchstones for any work in the discipline (sources found below in the references are listed only by title; for all others, date and publisher of a good, recent translation are given where available): Melito of Sardis’s *Paschal Homily* in *On Pascha*, trans. and ed. Alistair Stewart-Sykes (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Press, 1999); Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue*; much discussion of Jews and Judaism is found in Origen’s *Cels.*, as well as his *Letter to Africanus* and his homilies and commentaries (many translated in ANF); Tertullian’s *Against the Jews*, which laid groundwork for much of the Latin genre, up to Augustine’s treatise of the same name; Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Praep.*, as well as his *Hist. eccl.*; the Syriac author Aphrahat’s select *Demonstrations* against Judaism, trans. and commented on by Jacob Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism: The Christian–Jewish Argument in Fourth-Century Iran* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971); John Chrysostom’s homilies *Against the Judaizers*; Jerome’s various translations, commentaries, and correspondences; and Augustine’s development of the ‘witness-theology’ in *City of God*, 18, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 2003).

Secondary sources

Many modern secondary sources continue to be influential—in terms of both historical content and methodological criticism—and should provide ample groundwork for the student of early Christianity. As most of these works are found in the references below, I give them only by author and year. Baskin (1985) provides a still useful analysis of important
work that has been done, and remains to be done, in the field; Becker and Reed (2003a, b) contains both a helpful overview and several important, individual studies on the topic. Important general and specific studies to begin with are Boyarin (2004); De Lange (1976); Fredriksen (2003); Gager (1983); Lieu (1992, 1994, 1996); Simon (1986); Wilken (1971, 1983).

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