

radical conversion, Kofsky collects a couple of hints for his suggestion that 'an outward Chalcedonian veneer' covered an inward monophysitism. His intriguing hypothesis would also explain how leading monophysite figures could become part of the Chalcedonian Sanctoale.

Somehow related to the thrust of Regnault's paper but not reaching the same depth, Yakov Ashkenazi's 'Sophists and Priests in Late Antique Gaza According to Choricus the Rhetor' (195-208) focuses on the relationship between the ecclesiastical administration in the city and pagan and Christian society, especially the famous school of Gaza.

Finally, Rina Talgam, in 'The *Ekphrasis Eikonos* of Procopius of Gaza: The Depiction of Mythological Themes in Palestine and Arabia During the Fifth and Sixth Centuries' (209-34), compares the depiction of pagan mythological elements in Christian and Jewish mosaics from Gaza (sophisticated composition), Sheikh Zuweid in Sinai (simple reproduction), Madaba and Sepphoris (degeneration).

In general, the quality of the papers is very high and the editors have carefully selected the various contributions. Some readers might have preferred a more detailed introduction that puts the papers in the context of current research. Also cross-references from one paper to another are lacking, most probably due to the missed opportunity of a face-to-face debate. I wonder if the quality and the interconnectedness of the collection could perhaps have been further improved by pre-distributing the papers among the 'participants'.

The main weaknesses of the book are of a technical nature. An index of subjects, scholars or sources would have been much appreciated for such a rich book, especially by time-constrained readers. For example, scholars of Jewish history might be interested in the countless references to Jews and Jewish life in Gaza and Byzantine Palestine without wishing to read through the entire book. Another drawback is the decision in favor of selected bibliographies at the end of each article instead of a cumulative bibliography at the end of the book. These selected bibliographies tend to be repetitive. An updated comprehensive bibliography on Christian Gaza remains a *desideratum*.

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Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Greco-Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. viii + 370 pp. ISBN 0 19 926289 6.

Judith Lieu has made important contributions to the study of identity patterns in the Greco-Roman world. Her present book, distinguished by a thorough and insightful analysis of wide-ranging literary evidence and suggestions raised in earlier research, will undoubtedly become a key point of reference for any further discussion of the issue. The investigation of Christian self-perceptions is conducted here *vis-à-vis* alternative — Jewish, Greek and Roman — patterns of constructed identities; the book's contribution to the study of Jewish perceptions of identity is especially noteworthy.

Besides the Introduction and Conclusions, the book comprises eight chapters: 'Text and Identity', 'History, Memory, and the Invention of Tradition', 'Boundaries', 'The Grammar of Practice', 'Embodiment and Gender', 'Space and Place', 'The Christian Race' and 'The Other'. As some texts and strategies turn out to be relevant to more than one aspect of the boundary drawing process, a certain overlap of discussion is inevitable. This review will therefore address a number of core topics rather than each chapter separately.

The problems connected to the textual character of the evidence naturally constitute one of the author's *foci* throughout the book. Lieu cautions against presupposing a defined community behind every composition, elaborating on key aspects of the newly created texts: both as reflecting the process of self-definition and as influencing its further phases. Following her predecessors, the

author reaches the conclusion that the thrust of development of New Testament literature was that these texts should act as a primary hermeneutical key for the preservation and interpretation (and thus for the appropriation) of Jewish Scripture. The variegated nature of attempts to construct identity is highlighted, precluding the misleading dichotomy between 'canonical' and 'apocryphal' NT writings.

If, with regard to religious ideas, Jewish Scripture remains the point of reference for most early Christian writers, the *genre* of the Gospels is perceived as having been negotiated mainly with the Greco-Roman cultural milieu or, alternatively, as one that is *sui generis*. This neat division allows the author to outline the double-track strategy of 'identity negotiations'. However, conscious adoption of literary biblical patterns should not be ruled out; Lieu herself is ready to discern the phenomenon in Luke-Acts.

Exegetic appropriation of the older texts results in an all-encompassing worldview that allows Gentile Christians to read biblical narratives as their own story — involving polemical boundary drawing vis-à-vis competing Jewish claims. It pertains as well to more recent, post-destruction Jewish compositions appropriated by Christians even when devoid of any christological elements. According to Lieu's analysis, the claim for a common root in Abraham — first elaborated by Paul and further developed by Barnabas and second-century apologists — emerges as a crucial boundary-drawing tool, ensuring that Judaism and Christianity will be mutually exclusive. One may add that an analogous appropriation was employed with regard to the initial (i.e. Jewish-Christian) strata of the early Christian tradition — also resulting in the eventual exclusion of competing claimants.

Paradoxically, the mechanism of selective remembering, allowing Jewish claims to inheritance to be ruled out, builds on earlier strategies employed in the Jewish claims to antiquity vis-à-vis the Greeks, where an emphasis on 'barbarian pride' sometimes served as a complementary motif. In this context, awareness of the multi-ethnic composition of the movement finds expression in the distinction drawn between Gentile ἔθνη and Christian ἐθνικός. Alternative perceptions in line with Greco-Roman ethnic identity constructions are also attested: instead of competing with Jews for Abrahamic descent, some authors position Christians as a 'third race' with its own father-founder — Jesus. Lieu, however, suggests that this latter avenue remained marginal: while remembering Jesus was certainly central to early Christians, the scholar observes a lack of historical continuity between Jesus and particular communities presupposed, for example, in the Synoptic Gospels. Even in Paul and the *Didache*, where the communities are clearly represented, there is almost no attempt to legitimize their differentiated worldview through its ascription to Jesus. The attempt of Luke-Acts to create continuity — on the one hand between Jesus and Christian communities and on the other backward to the biblical past — represents of course a clear exception. To my mind, this idiosyncratic *tour-de-force* of boundary-making, duly registered by Lieu, deserves more detailed investigation.

The boundaries resulting from human interaction and negotiation are far from being 'fixed' or stable; the texts under discussion bear witness to existing paths of infiltration as much as to (desperate?) attempts to establish lines of demarcation. Lieu outlines the multi-staged process of 'othering' with similar strategies employed vis-à-vis pagans, Jews and then competing Christian claimants to a common identity — with Qumran providing an instructive point of reference for this later stage of 'internal othering'.

Perceptions of religious law and articles of faith are among the core identity-markers discussed by Lieu. The former provide an opportunity to outline conflicting trajectories of Christian boundary-drawing (e.g., pro-Pauline vs. anti-Pauline) — against the background of mirroring accusations, concerning morals and mores, put forward by Jewish, Greek and Roman authors, respectively. Approaches discussed are of considerable diversity; even idolatry, a persistent boundary marker, does not always feature in Christians' attempts at distancing themselves from the pagans. The author outlines an instructive trajectory from Christian adoption of Jewish

negative appraisal of Gentile morals, to Diaspora-flavored lenience with regard to external ritual, to enhancement of Jewish 'otherness' to the Greco-Roman world, conditioned by an eschatological 'heavenly citizenship' (a comparison with Qumranic and post-destruction Jewish apocalyptic writings could be fruitful here). This latter stance is paradoxically complemented by the renunciation of Jewish anti-social particularism and — in defiance of territorial identity markers — arguing for belonging to society everywhere. The latter strategy is shown to be similar to that of earlier Hellenistic Jewish authors — no wonder that outside pagan observers and rabbis had difficulty distinguishing Christians from Jews and Gentile Christians from other Gentiles.

It may seem that all this ambiguity disappears when we try to establish Christian identity on faith rather than on deeds. Especially in view of a Christian claim for new revelation — another boundary-marker touched on by Lieu (in this case, too, a closer look at the Book of Acts with its thorough emphasis on the gift of the Holy Spirit could have contributed to the discussion). However, as Lieu demonstrates, even faith in Jesus Christ might have been a problematic boundary marker. First, from the very beginning of the Jesus movement the emphasis on faith was complemented, and thus contested, by an appeal to scripturally sanctioned models of righteous behavior. Second, particular articles of faith were part of polemical negotiation — with outsiders as well as 'others' from within. In fact, the recurring appeals to the certainties of eschatological faith may bear witness to their actual fissility, indicating a range of sets of belief into which would-be Christians were 'converted'. This, together with a number of other factors, prompts the author to conclude that looking back, neither the historian nor the theologian can define on the basis of just one set of clear boundaries who the early Christians were. There seems to be an instructive gap between the researcher, empowered with the ability to observe that definitions are constantly contested and boundaries redrawn, and early Christians themselves, at least some of whom presumably managed to form a self-perception, all ambiguities notwithstanding.

As part of the identity construction process the labels — both those ascribed to Christians from outside and those suggested from within — are discussed. Lieu analyzes the issue against the background of the world that took an interest in definitions of 'Greek-ness', 'Roman-ness', 'Barbarian-ness' and 'Jewish-ness', with variegated designations of and by different Jewish groups of the period. She outlines the postponed and somewhat reluctant emergence of *Χριστιανός* as an identity designator, and efforts on the one hand to avoid antisocial connotations and on the other to make the designation more specific by connecting it with the profession of faith in martyrdom. Even after *Χριστιανός* became an ultimate and non-negotiable identity label, the need to exclude 'heretics' engendered further amendments.

The stance of early Christian texts on martyrdom as well as gender- and body-related identity markers constitute another focus of Lieu's study. The complex nature of identity negotiation is again emphasized — negotiation that undeniably had as its core point of reference Christ's bodily suffering, but also related to competing Greek, Roman and Jewish elites' perceptions of the male-ness-femaleness conundrum.

Lieu's study is distinguished by a diligent use of insights from contemporary discussions of modern perceptions of identity — ethnic and otherwise. Future studies may profit from looking closely at one more modern attempt at the construction of identity. I have in mind variegated groups of contemporary Jewish claimants for Jesus tradition some of which (e.g., so-called Messianic Jews in Israel) are engaged in conscious two-track boundary drawing vis-à-vis the Jewish world on the one hand and the Christian Church on the other, sometimes perceived as an unduly 'Graeco-Roman appropriation' of the New Testament. With all its limitations, this latest exercise in identity-construction may turn out to be at least as instructive and stimulating for the topic under discussion as other modern phenomena related to in the book.