

## The Jews in the Late Roman Empire

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It was formerly assumed that Judaism ceased to relate to Graeco-Roman society after the destruction of the Temple in 70 and the banning of Jews from Jerusalem after Bar Kochba's defeat in 135. 'Hated and despised by the world, Israel turned in on herself. *Perishuth*, "unsociability", became a social requirement', Ernest Renan had written.<sup>1</sup> Harnack wrote in 1908: 'It seems to me unquestionable that Judaism henceforth slackened her tie with Hellenism, in order to drop it altogether as time went on.'<sup>2</sup> Louis Duchesne wrote in 1909: 'The day of liberal Jews who coquetted with Hellenism and with the government was past and gone for good. There was no longer any reason to stand well with other nations ... The Jews retired within themselves.'<sup>3</sup>

During this century, scholars have come to recognise that Judaism after 135 won standing in pagan society and found ways of sharing in its culture, attracted sympathizers and achieved credit with the Roman authorities on which it could draw even after Christianity became established in 312. Historians, above all Marcel Simon,<sup>4</sup> have constructed a new picture from the evidence of the Church Fathers and the Mishnah and Talmud. Recent archaeological discoveries have enriched it further. But among non-specialists, the old arguments for an inward-looking Judaism after 135 linger. In this essay, after some words about the setting, I shall try to answer them in the light of modern knowledge, and conclude by attempting to put into perspective the hostility between Christians and Jews under the Christian emperors.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Histoire des origines du christianisme*, vol. 5, Évangiles (Paris 1861-83) 5.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity* (London 1908) 13, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Louis Duchesne, *The Early History of the Christian Church from its Foundation to the End of the Fourth Century*, English translation of the fourth edition, I (London 1909) 412-3.

<sup>4</sup> *Verus Israel, A study of the relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (AD 135-425)*, 1964, translated by H. McKeating (Littman Library, Oxford, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Nicholas de Lange (Cambridge), for his help and encouragement after reading the first draft of this article, composed in 1992. Soon after, Fergus Millar (Oxford) published 'The Jews of the Graeco-Roman Diaspora between paganism and Christianity, AD 312-438', *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (Routledge: London and New York 1992) 97-123. He has

Tourists can now walk through a metropolis of the late Roman empire, Ephesus.<sup>6</sup> They can see that it belonged to a plural society. The theatre, racecourse, public library, gymnasium, monuments, statues and temples attest the continuing strength of Greek classical civilisation. The Roman governor resided in this provincial capital; part of the racecourse was adapted for Roman-style gladiatorial and wild-beast shows. St Paul, who stayed here for two years, alluded to these shows when he told his Ephesian converts to 'put on the whole armour of God',<sup>7</sup> and claimed to have 'fought with beasts at Ephesus'.<sup>8</sup> Mary was believed to have settled there with St John. After 312, a church of St John was built over his grave, and one of St Mary on the site of a secular building destroyed by fire. But pagan cults continued. Alongside Heracles, Bacchus and Athena, the reliefs of the 'temple of Hadrian' portray the Christian emperor Theodosius I, who closed no temples before 391.<sup>9</sup>

Ephesus' synagogue and Jewish burial-ground have not yet been found, though two gravestones exist, one of Marcus Mussius 'the priest' (doubtless a Mordecai Moses Cohen) and one of a chief physician. 'They live', say the inscriptions. 'The Jews care for their graves.'<sup>10</sup> That Theodosius I, less anti-Jewish than anti-pagan, sought to preserve existing synagogues<sup>11</sup> is confirmed by the discovery of a third-century synagogue at nearby Sardis, which was repaired at the same time as Hadrian's temple was deconsecrated and partly demolished, and remained in use until the seventh century. Now reconstructed by American archaeologists, it is spacious and splendid.<sup>12</sup> Its proud position next to the impos-

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now greatly helped me by alerting me to work done in the last five years. My thanks are also due to David Milson of my own Oxford college. Erich Gruen (Berkeley) gave valuable advice on rewriting.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Klein, *Ephesus, Führer durch die Ruinenstadt und ihre Geschichte*<sup>5</sup> (Vienna 1964); George Bean, *Aegean Turkey, an Archaeological Guide* (London 1966) 160-84; Erich Lessing, Wolfgang Oberleitner, *Ephesos, Weltstadt der Antike* (Vienna and Heidelberg 1978); Ekrem Akurgal, *Ancient Civilizations and Ruins of Turkey*<sup>2</sup> (Istanbul 1978) 142-70, 378-84; Helmut Koester (ed.), *Ephesos, Metropolis of Asia* (Harvard Theological Studies, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 6:10-18.

<sup>8</sup> I Corinthians 15:32.

<sup>9</sup> Now thought to have been dedicated to Aphrodite, but certainly still a pagan shrine when the Theodosius relief was set up. Close by, the Temple of the Flavian Sebastoi (Vespasian and Titus) continued until its destruction c.400. Stefan Karwiese in Koester (n. 6), 313.

<sup>10</sup> *Inscripfen von Ephesus*, nos. 1676, 1677.

<sup>11</sup> See below, note 212.

<sup>12</sup> G.M.A. Hanfmann, 'The Ninth Campaign at Sardis', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 187 (1967) 27-32. A.R. Seager and A. T. Kraabel,

ing gymnasium contrasts with the medieval synagogue half-hidden in a side-street of Worms, and the modest Old-New Synagogue of Prague in its Jewish quarter. All but one of the Sardis synagogue's inscriptions are in Greek, bearing the names of twenty-seven male benefactors, nine of whom were city councillors and three officials of the Roman provincial administration. One of the benefactors is a θεοσεβής, 'God-fearer'. In Miletus, another city of the province, is an inscription reserving seats in the fifth row of the theatre 'for the Jews also called God-fearers' — presumably in error for 'the Jews and God-fearers'.<sup>13</sup> God-fearers, as we shall see, were probably the synagogue's gentile associates.<sup>14</sup> They will have come not only for vulgar entertainment but for classical plays: Euripides was still popular.

Antioch in Syria, where Christians first received their name,<sup>15</sup> housed a similarly plural society. Scenes from Euripides figure among the themes, all pagan, of its wonderful mosaic floors, now in the museum.<sup>16</sup> Otherwise, little remains of the harmoniously planned city, with its paved main street between double colonnades. But Antioch's history has been fully studied.<sup>17</sup> Here Libanius, who had supported the emperor Julian's attempt to restore paganism in 361-3, taught Greek rhetoric to St John Chrysostom in c. 367. Chrysostom later lifted phrases from Libanius' encomium of Julian to praise the Christian monks.<sup>18</sup> Jews, according to Josephus, had enjoyed full rights and security here since Antioch's foundation, surviving crises in 175/164 B.C. and 70:<sup>19</sup> 'they constantly attracted to their worship multitudes of Greeks, and in some measure assimilated them.'<sup>20</sup> Chrysostom's anti-Jewish sermons, delivered in 386 in the vain hope of deterring his Christian congregation from this attraction, followed classical precepts

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'The Synagogue and the Jewish Community' in G.M.A. Hanfmann (ed.), *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1983) ch. 9.

<sup>13</sup> For τόπος Ειουδαίων τῶν καὶ θεοσεβῶν, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* = *CIJ* 748, we should surely read τόπος Ειουδαίων καὶ τῶν θεοσεβῶν. Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias, Greek Inscriptions with Commentary* (Cambridge 1987) 81.

<sup>14</sup> See below, nn. 118-120.

<sup>15</sup> Acts 11:26.

<sup>16</sup> Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J. 1947). Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews, Rhetoric and Reality in the late 4th century* (Berkeley 1983) 16-17.

<sup>17</sup> Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch from Seleucus to the Arab Conquests* (Princeton, N.J. 1961). J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1972).

<sup>18</sup> Libanius, *Orations* xii 94, 101, xiii 44; Chrysostom, *Comparison of King and Monk* 3, *Patrologia Graeca* (= PG) XLVII 388-9. Wilken (n. 16), 112.

<sup>19</sup> *Against Apion* ii 39, *Jewish War* (= *BJ*) vii 43-62, 100.

<sup>20</sup> Josephus, *BJ* vii 45.

of invective.<sup>21</sup> Ancient audiences enjoyed invective as an art form without taking it too seriously. We cannot share their taste, and our revulsion is strengthened by knowing that Chrysostom turned against his old teacher.<sup>22</sup> In pleasant contrast is the reaction to a letter from Libanius by St Gregory of Nyssa. He read Libanius' letter aloud to his friends: it was above all riches, he wrote in reply, quoting a lost passage of Pindar.<sup>23</sup>

At Antioch was the tomb of the seven Maccabee brothers, their mother and the scribe Eleazar, martyred under Antiochus IV in 167 B.C. for refusing to eat pork.<sup>24</sup> Christians went on pilgrimages there. Chrysostom preached at the Maccabee Festival.<sup>25</sup> Nothing remains of this tomb, or of the synagogues where, to Chrysostom's dismay, Christians resorted for oath-taking.<sup>26</sup> But inscriptions in the mosaic floor of the synagogue in neighbouring Apamea, one of which invokes 'blessing on all', name the leaders of the Antiochene synagogue in 391. Some names are biblical, such as Isaac, Phineas and Saul. Others are pure Greek, such as Theodorus and Eusebius.<sup>27</sup> This last, 'Pious', was also the name of two contemporary Christian saints and of Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea and church historian. The blessing on all did not prevent Christians from taking over the site for a church in the more intolerant fifth century, an instance of the wrongful appropriations mentioned in Theodosius II's decree of 423.<sup>28</sup>

These Antiochene Jews had family tombs in the Holy Land at Beth She'arim, as did other Jews of the Dispersion. Here, in what was left to the Jews of their homeland, Semitic names preponderate, but 80% of the inscriptions are Greek,<sup>29</sup> and there is much Hellenic imagery, including a sarcophagus relief of Leda with Zeus disguised as a swan.<sup>30</sup> Rabbi Judah I the Prince (c.135-220) resided here for a time; his successors as Patriarchs, leaders of Jewry throughout the Empire, had

<sup>21</sup> Wilken (n. 16), 112-123.

<sup>22</sup> *On St Babylas the Martyr, against Julian and the Gentiles* 2.18, PG L 560-5.

<sup>23</sup> *Letter 14*, PG XLVI 1050-3.

<sup>24</sup> II Maccabees 7.

<sup>25</sup> 'On the Maccabees', *Homilies* 1-3, PG L 617-28.

<sup>26</sup> *Explanation of Psalm viii*, ch. 3, 5, PG LV 109, 112.

<sup>27</sup> Wayne A. Meeks and Robert L. Wilken, *Jews and Christians in Antioch*, (Society of Biblical Literature, Sources for Biblical Study 13, Missoula, Montana 1978) 53-54, nos. 1-3.

<sup>28</sup> See note 212.

<sup>29</sup> Only in two catacombs of the 2nd/3rd centuries does Hebrew predominate: No. 14, which may have been Rabbi Judah's family vault, and No. 20, inscribed with many rabbinical names. Nicholas de Lange, 'The Revival of the Hebrew Language in the Third Century CE', *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 3 (1996) 342-58.

<sup>30</sup> N. Avigad, *Cemetery of Beth She'arim III* (Jerusalem 1976); M. Avi-Yonah, 'The Leda sarcophagus from Beth She'arim', *Art in Ancient Palestine* (Jerusalem 1981) 251-69.

their seat not far away in Tiberias on Lake Galilee. They must have approved. We can guess what Antioch's lost synagogues were like. Excavations show that Near Eastern synagogues, from the third century to the seventh, were embellished with varied and attractive Hellenistic art. Most sensational was the discovery in 1932-5 of the frescoes of the synagogue of Dura-Europus, a border town on the Euphrates. They date from 244.<sup>31</sup> The earliest known synagogues had been restricted to non-figurative decoration. 'Our lawgiver', says Josephus, 'has forbidden the making of images of any living creature.'<sup>32</sup> That was a strict interpretation of the Second Commandment: 'Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth below, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.'<sup>33</sup> But according to a more liberal interpretation as ancient as Solomon's temple,<sup>34</sup> representational art is acceptable, provided that God is not portrayed and the images of living creatures are not worshipped. Synagogue frescoes were allowed from the third century onwards. 'In the time of Rabbi Joḥanan [b. Nappaḥa, c.180-c.279],' says the Palestinian Talmud, 'they began to paint on the walls, and [the sages] did not stop them.'<sup>35</sup>

In Dura's paintings, now in the Damascus museum, we can admire the human portrayals, vibrant with Hellenistic feeling, which tell the chief stories of biblical history. The central panel shows Orpheus charming the beasts with his music. At Ḥammath-Tiberias (El Ḥammeh), also near the patriarchal residence, a fourth-century synagogue has a mosaic floor showing the sun-god in his chariot, in the centre of a zodiacal circle.<sup>36</sup> Of course the Jews did not worship Orpheus and the sun-god. They chose the legend of Orpheus for its symbolism — harmony coming to a savage world — and the sun-god as a calendar ornament. The newly-discovered mosaic floor of the synagogue of Galilean Sephoris, dating

<sup>31</sup> C. H. Kraeling, *The Synagogue*, Part I of *The Excavations at Dura-Europus conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters, Final Report* (New Haven 1956). Pierre Prigent, *Le judaïsme et l'image* (Tübingen 1990) 174-263. Orpheus: Prigent fig. 43, p. 187.

<sup>32</sup> *Against Apion* ii 75. Cf. *Autobiography* 65, *Antiquities of the Jews* (= *AJ*) xv 276, xvii 151, xviii 55.

<sup>33</sup> Exodus 20:4-5. cf. Leviticus 19:4, 26:1; Deuteronomy 5:8-9, 27:15.

<sup>34</sup> I Kings 6:23-28; 7:25,29,36.

<sup>35</sup> *J. 'bhōdāh Zārāh* 3.3.II[D]. Citations from the Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud (J.) have been taken from (ed.) Jacob Neusner, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel* (Chicago 1982-).

<sup>36</sup> M. Dothan, 'The Synagogue of Ḥammath-Tiberias' in L.I. Levine, *Ancient Synagogues revealed* (Jerusalem 1981) 63-9. Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel* (= *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 7<sup>o</sup> Abt., 1. Band, 2. Abschnitt B, Lieferung 4), (Leiden 1988), pl. 71.

from the early fifth century, depicts biblical scenes — the angels' visit to Abraham and Sarah, the binding of Isaac, the consecration of Aaron — and a circle with human figures to represent the zodiacal constellations, in the centre of which is the sun-god in his four-horse chariot — but the god is shown as an orb with rays.<sup>37</sup> In the sixth century the sun-god is depicted anthropomorphically at the centre of zodiacal circles on mosaic floors of synagogues, at Beth Alpha under Mount Gilboa, and 'Ain Duq near Jericho. By then paganism in Palestine was extinct and its gods had no worshippers left. Close to patriarchal Tiberias is the Capernaum synagogue, now re-dated to the fourth century, built over the paving-stones of an earlier one where Jesus may have preached. It has carved stone imagery not only of Jewish motifs such as branched candlesticks, but also of pagan ones such as cupids carrying festoons. The Patriarchs cannot have objected. Only much later were the carvings mutilated by Jews who had reverted to the severer line.<sup>38</sup>

Our evidence for the Jews of Rome itself comes from the mouldering catacombs where they buried their dead between the late second and early fifth centuries. Nothing remains above ground of the buildings belonging to that community of perhaps fifty thousand souls, grouped in at least eleven autonomous congregations, and mostly crowded into tenement buildings in the slums. Crude painted and scratched epitaphs, often mis-spelt, record the short and simple annals of the poor, touching in their affection. The most recent study<sup>39</sup> has proved that these Jews were not living in isolation, despite the omnipresence of symbols such as the seven-branched candlestick, Torah shrine, ram's horn, palm branch and citrus fruit. Three-fourths of the 595 known inscriptions<sup>40</sup> are in Greek, a quarter in Latin, with a negligible amount of Hebrew: little more than the formula שלום על ישראל (Peace to Israel) or just שלום (peace). They reflect exactly the same Greek and Latin linguistic usages as among non-Jews.<sup>41</sup> There were no Jewish dialect forms, though there was some divergence in choice of epithets from non-Jewish Greek (though not Latin) funerary inscriptions. Semitic names betoken Jewish identity, such as that of Beturia (*sic* for Veturia) Paula who chose to be called Sara when converted to Judaism at seventy, and

<sup>37</sup> Ze'ev Weiss, Ehud Netzer, *Promise and Redemption, A synagogue mosaic from Sepphoris* (Jerusalem 1996).

<sup>38</sup> G. Orfali, *Capharnaïm et ses ruines* (1922). E.L. Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece* (1934). E.R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period I* (1953) 181-92.

<sup>39</sup> Leonard Victor Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome* (Leiden, New York, Köln 1995) corrects and supplements but does not replace Harry J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (1960, updated edition with introduction and appendix by Caroline A. Osiek, Peabody, Mass. 1995).

<sup>40</sup> Leon (n. 39), 263-346.

<sup>41</sup> Leon (n. 39), 67-92; Rutgers (n. 39), 176-209.



died at eighty-six as 'mother' of two synagogues.<sup>42</sup> But these amount only to 13.5% of the total, compared with 39.5% Greek and 47% Latin names. All three types were used indiscriminately within the same families. Ten Flavii and five Aelii unselfconsciously bore the family names of the hated emperors Titus and Hadrian; names derived from pagan deities, but evidently no longer felt as pagan, include Aphrodisia, Dionysias and Jovinus.<sup>43</sup>

A minority could afford finely incised marble plaques, even carved sarcophagi. These, now mostly in the Terme Museum and the Jewish Room of the Lateran Museum, have motifs which show their provenance from workshops catering for non-Jews.<sup>44</sup> We note a sarcophagus slab with two winged Victories holding a tondo for which for a pagan customer would have ordered a relief portrait, but showing a seven-branched candlestick instead.<sup>45</sup> Thirteen fragments of goblets, with Jewish symbols in gold leaf between two layers of glass, were evidently stuck into the plaster as grave markers, having served for festive occasions while unbroken. To judge by their style, they are the work of craftsmen who made 'gold glasses' for pagans and Christians also.<sup>46</sup> Two painted funeral chambers connected with the Via Appia catacomb display a winged Victory placing a garland on a nude youth, and the goddess Fortuna.<sup>47</sup>

Jewish inscriptions from elsewhere in the Western Empire similarly reflect local linguistic usage and interaction with non-Jews.<sup>48</sup> Among the 75 inscriptions of Italian Venusia are the Greek epitaphs of Marcellus and Auxelianus, who held the synagogue distinction of πατήρ πατέρων 'father of fathers', and as *patrōni* were the official protectors and spokesmen of the entire town.<sup>49</sup> Greek as well as Latin is common in Italy, Sicily, Malta and Spain, Latin only in Sardinia (7 inscriptions) and Gaul (4). Most revealing is the *Letter of Severus*, an encyclical in which the bishop of Minorca reported the conversion of the 540 Jews of the town of Magona in February 418.<sup>50</sup> The arrival on tour of the newly-discovered relics of St Stephen had spurred Minorca's Christians to unprecedented fervour. 'Not only was our old habit of easy acquaintance [with the

<sup>42</sup> Leon (n. 39), No. 523.

<sup>43</sup> Leon (n. 39), 93-121; Rutgers (n. 39), 139-75.

<sup>44</sup> Rutgers (n. 39), 77-81.

<sup>45</sup> Goodenough (n. 38), II 26-27; Leon (n. 39), 211-2, fig. 44.

<sup>46</sup> Leon (n. 39), 81-5; Rutgers (n. 39), 81-5.

<sup>47</sup> Goodenough (n. 38), II 17-20, III 737-56; Leon (n. 39), 204-5.

<sup>48</sup> David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe* (= *JJWE*), Volume 1: Italy (excluding the City of Rome), Spain and Gaul (Cambridge 1993). L.V. Rutgers, 'Interaction and its Limits: Some Notes on the Jews of Sicily in Late Antiquity', *ZPE* 115 (1997) 245-56.

<sup>49</sup> *JJWE* i 114, 115 (= *CIJ* i<sup>2</sup> 619b, c.)

<sup>50</sup> Severus of Minorca, *Letter on the Conversion of the Jews*, edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Notes by Scott Bradbury (Oxford 1996).

Jews] disrupted, but the harmful display of our inveterate affection was transformed into temporary hatred.<sup>51</sup> The Jews were terrorised into compliance after a stone-throwing riot and the burning of their synagogue. Theodorus, ruler of the synagogue and ‘father of fathers’, gave in after initial resistance, followed by most of his congregation, and soon after by those who had tried but failed to hide in the countryside or escape by sea. The unabashed bishop took credit for having demanded no work from Magona’s Jews on a Sabbath but only a public disputation, for no one having been hurt except a would-be looter, for the timely retrieval and later restoration to the Jews of their silver and holy books, and for the fact that they were now rebuilding their synagogue as a church at their own expense.

Minorca’s Jews and Christians prove to have had much in common. On 2 February 418, just before certain Jewish women cast the first stones, the bishop led a Christian procession to the synagogue singing the ninth psalm, ‘and the throng of Jews also began to sing it with a wondrous sweetness.’<sup>52</sup> The leading Jews had high social standing. Theodorus owned estates in Majorca. He was, the bishop writes, ‘pre-eminent in both wealth and worldly honour not only among the Jews, but also among the Christians of that town. Among the Jews he was a teacher of the Law, and, if I may use their own [Greek] expression, *pater pateron*. In the town he had already fulfilled all the duties of the town council and served as *defensor*, and even now he is considered the *patronus* of the municipality.’<sup>53</sup> His brother Meletius, a refugee from the invasions in Spain, was married to ‘the most noble lady’ Artemisia, who at first spiritedly refused conversion. Her father was Count Litorius: he was to be Roman commander of Hun cavalry in Gaul in 435-7, and as *magister utriusque militiae* suffer defeat by the Visigoths near Toulouse in 439.<sup>54</sup> By 418, another Jewish notable, Caecilianus, had been elected *defensor* to succeed Theodorus.<sup>55</sup>

So there is ample evidence for an outward-looking Judaism. Why did scholars ever think it was unsociable and out of touch with the Graeco-Roman world?

Several reasons once seemed compelling. One was the crushing scale of the defeat of the Jewish revolts. The gospels tell how Christ wept for the coming fate of Jerusalem: ‘There shall not be left one stone upon the other.’<sup>56</sup> That prophecy was not fulfilled literally, which surely argues for its genuineness. The Wailing Wall survives: stone course upon course of the Temple’s exposed foun-

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<sup>51</sup> *Epistula Severi* 5.

<sup>52</sup> *Op. cit.* 13.2.

<sup>53</sup> *Op. cit.* 6.1-3.

<sup>54</sup> *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* ii s.v. Litorius; Bradbury (n. 50), 34-6.

<sup>55</sup> *Epistula Severi* 19.6.

<sup>56</sup> Mark 13:2, Luke 19:44, 21:6.



dations. But the obliteration of the Temple itself was never reversed. The only attempt to rebuild it, by Julian in 361-3, came to nothing. After 135, Jerusalem was rebuilt as a Roman colony, Aelia Capitolina. Jews were forbidden to live there, and statues of Hadrian and Jupiter were set up on the Temple Mount. Christian emperors after 312 did not reverse the ban. Christians cast the humiliation of the Jews in their teeth.<sup>57</sup> A second reason why Judaism could now have been expected to become inward-looking was the series of decrees against circumcision and conversion of non-Jews, invoking grim penalties, that begins with Hadrian.<sup>58</sup> Thirdly, Jewish literature in Greek, flourishing before 135 and intelligible to non-Jews, seems to have run dry. Instead, there were the Mishnah and Talmud, compiled by Jews for Jews in Hebrew and Aramaic, elaborating arguments on how most scrupulously to keep the Jewish Law.

None of these points holds good today. Let us deal with them one by one. The loss of the Temple would have been disastrous if sacrifice had been essential to Judaism, as it was to paganism. If pagans cannot have temples and offer sacrifice, their gods cannot be expected to give anything in return. In the fifteenth century B.C. the young pharaoh Tutankhamun, when restoring Egypt's cults to Egypt after the defeat of Akhnaton's monotheism, had proclaimed:

Now when his majesty appeared as king, the temples of the gods and goddesses ... had gone to pieces. Their shrines had become desolate, had become mounds overgrown with weeds. Their sanctuaries were as if they had never been. Their halls were a footpath. The land was topsy-turvy, and the gods turned their backs upon this land ... If one prayed to a god to seek counsel from him, he would never come at all. If one made supplication to a goddess, she would never come at all.<sup>59</sup>

Identical notions held sway among the pagans of the Graeco-Roman world, nearly two millennia after Tutankhamun had been buried and forgotten. Pagans had no creed. Jews and Christians upbraided them for the disgraceful myths about their gods; but they were not obliged to believe that Zeus had raped Leda by turning himself into a swan, or indeed to assert any dogma about the nature of the Divine. All that pagans wanted, whether philosophers or peasants, was permission to continue their traditional rites and sacrifices to ensure divine goodwill. For this, Symmachus and his fellow-senators at Rome pleaded in vain with Theodosius I. Their failure after 391 caused paganism to wither away, except in

<sup>57</sup> E.g. Augustine, *Explanation of Psalm lviii* 21, *Patrologia Latina* (= PL) XXXVI 705.

<sup>58</sup> Listed in *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, edited with Introductions, Translations, and Commentary by Amnon Linder (Detroit, Michigan 1987). See notes 93, 94, 98, 107, 108, 109, 123.

<sup>59</sup> 'Karnak stele 34183 in the Cairo Museum', translated by J. Bennett in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 25 (1939) 8-15.

remote places such as Philae in the far south of Egypt, where the temple of Isis was not turned into a church until 577.

Yet the God of the Jews had needed no temple in the days of Abraham and Moses. There was no question of His losing interest in His worshippers after the second temple was destroyed. And orthodox Jews insisted that no sacrifices should be made to God anywhere else. There had been controversy about the temple in Egyptian Leontopolis, established by the High Priest Onias in c.170 B.C. and closed in 73.<sup>60</sup> It was because of their rival shrine on Mount Gerizim that the Samaritans were not recognised as true Jews by the Jewish majority.<sup>61</sup> After the Temple's destruction, the fifth of the Mishnah's six *Sedarim* or 'Orders' was devoted to recording the details of the sacrificial cult and even the measurements of the Temple, for when they should again be needed in the fullness of time. Regular reading of the Pentateuch reminded Jews of the Mosaic laws for their priests and sacrifices; but these were, for the foreseeable future, dead letters in that there could be no priesthood or sacrifice outside the Temple. Paradoxically, the Temple's monopoly of sacrificial ritual ensured the survival of Judaism, for it had already forced Jews living at a distance to develop their non-sacrificial religious life. Their mainstay of prayer and teaching had been the synagogues, proliferating wherever Jews were settled. There had even been synagogues in Jerusalem itself while the Temple was thriving.<sup>62</sup> After its destruction, synagogue life continued without a break.

Solomon, the builder of the first Temple, had said to God: 'Behold, Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!'<sup>63</sup> God said to Hosea: 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings'.<sup>64</sup> Micah asks: 'Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, and with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? ... He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?'<sup>65</sup> Jesus echoed Solomon's words and invoked the prophecy of Hosea while the second Temple

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<sup>60</sup> Josephus, *AJ* xiii 65-73, *BJ* vii 423-36.

<sup>61</sup> John 4:9, 20. Rabbi Ishmael b. Rabbi José said to them: "You do not bow down to that mountain itself, but rather to idols buried under it!" J. *ʿabhōdāh Zārāh* 5:4 [III.V].

<sup>62</sup> E. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, 2nd ed. by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M.D. Goodman (1973-85) II 427-39. Martin Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D. 132-212* (Totowa 1983) 85-7.

<sup>63</sup> II Chronicles 6:18.

<sup>64</sup> Hosea 6:6, quoted by Matthew 12:7.

<sup>65</sup> Micah 6:6-8.

was still standing.<sup>66</sup> After its fall, 'Rabbi Joḥanan ben Zakkai was coming from Jerusalem. Rabbi Joshua ben Ḥananiah followed and beheld the Temple in ruins. "Woe unto us!" Rabbi Joshua cried. "For the place where the iniquities of Israel were atoned is destroyed!" "My son," said Rabbi Joḥanan, "do not grieve. We have another atonement as effective; and that is acts of loving-kindness, as it is stated 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice'"<sup>67</sup>

The defeats of 70 and 135 indeed strengthened the Jews by giving them unity. Jerusalem fell, Josephus claimed, by Divine Providence because of the nation's lack of concord.<sup>68</sup> He wrote of the 'four philosophies': Pharisee, Sadducee, Zealot and Essene.<sup>69</sup> Quarrelling between Sadducees and Pharisees flared up easily, on one occasion to St Paul's advantage.<sup>70</sup> The priestly Sadducees never enjoyed the prestige of a true aristocracy,<sup>71</sup> and disappeared, unmourned, with the destruction of the Temple. The Zealot revolutionaries, with a guerilla/terrorist wing, were no more heard of after Rome's crushing victory, though we hear an ugly story of bandits waylaying travellers and forcibly circumcising them.<sup>72</sup> There was no trace left of the monk-like Essenes in the late empire, when the Church Fathers denounced the Jews' worldliness on the assumption that ascetics were unknown among them. The synagogues were all in the Pharisaic tradition. For Origen and Jerome, when they take issue against Judaism, 'the Pharisees' are still in being.<sup>73</sup>

The new unity was embodied by the Patriarch in Galilee, occupying an office hereditary in the House of Hillel, and respected by the Roman authorities as chief of all Jewry. His 'apostles', שליחים, sent in all directions to the Jews of the Dispersion, must have exercised religious and political influence besides collecting taxes.<sup>74</sup> Rabbi Me'ir, an apostle of Rabbi Judah I the Prince (c.135-220), died in Asia while on a mission. From his friendship with Avnimos ha-Gardi, identified

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<sup>66</sup> Matthew 12:6-7.

<sup>67</sup> *B. 'abôth d' Rabbi Nāthān* A 20a. Citations from the Babylonian Talmud (*B.*) have been taken from (ed.) I. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud* (London 1935-1965).

<sup>68</sup> *BJ* iv 388, vi 109.

<sup>69</sup> *AJ* xviii 11-25.

<sup>70</sup> Acts 23:6-7.

<sup>71</sup> Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea, the Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome A.D. 66-70* (Cambridge 1987) 44 and *passim*.

<sup>72</sup> Hippolytus, *Philosophoumena* ix 26.

<sup>73</sup> Nicholas de Lange, *Origen and the Jews, studies in Jewish-Christian relations in third-century Palestine* (Cambridge 1976) 35.

<sup>74</sup> S. Safrai and M. Stern (ed.), *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Assen 1974) 184-215. De Lange (n. 73), 33-35.

with the Cynic philosopher Oenomaus of Gadara, a critic of gods<sup>75</sup> and oracles,<sup>76</sup> the Galilean rabbis obtained some notion of Greek philosophy.<sup>77</sup>

The Jews won new respect among pagans. Until 135, Jewish aspirations for an independent state had been a political threat to Roman rule. Nascent Christianity was not; the accusation of incendiarism that led to Nero's persecution in Rome in 64 was false.<sup>78</sup> Once Jews were seen to have abandoned the fight for an independent state, the political threat disappeared. But was there not a religious threat in their refusal to worship, even to acknowledge, the pagan gods? The Greeks of first-century Alexandria thought so.<sup>79</sup> Apion, pupil of the prolific scholar Didymus 'Brazen-Guts' and Head of the Alexandrian school, led an anti-Jewish deputation to Rome in 40 and wrote denying the antiquity of the Jews.<sup>80</sup> But in c. 95/100 Josephus' *Against Apion* refuted him conclusively. Some degree of antiquity was acknowledged even by the hostile and ill-informed Tacitus.<sup>81</sup> Growing acknowledgment dispelled fear. The sky would not fall if these peculiar people rejected the pagan gods, since they had done so for ages. Instead, their traditions induced awe. In c.150, the initiator of a bogus snake-cult in Abonoteichus on the Black Sea impressed the credulous by running into the market-place naked, wearing a gilded loin-cloth, and feigning inspired words in what passed for Hebrew.<sup>82</sup> The magical power of Hebrew was used for spells.<sup>83</sup> It was the jumped-up Christians whom pagans now saw as a religious threat. Christians had no excuse for denouncing the sacrifices of their pagan forbears and thus provoking the wrath of Heaven.<sup>84</sup> At Smyrna in 155, a mob of pagans and Jews demanded the martyrdom of the octogenarian Bishop Polycarp, 'teacher of Asia, father of Christians, destroyer of our gods!'<sup>85</sup> The Patriarchate's interces-

<sup>75</sup> Julian, *Orationes* vi 199, vii 109.

<sup>76</sup> Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* v 21.4, vi 7.27.

<sup>77</sup> *B. Ḥʿgīgā* 15b, 77b, *Genesis Rabbah* 65:20, *Exodus Rabbah* 13. Reynolds and Tannenbaum (n. 13), 81.

<sup>78</sup> Tacitus, *Annals* xv 44.

<sup>79</sup> They speak for themselves in the *Acts of the Alexandrian Martyrs*, (ed.) Herbert Musurillo (Oxford 1954).

<sup>80</sup> *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker (FGH)* 616. I. Lévy, *Latomus* 5 (1946) 331.

<sup>81</sup> Of various false accounts he prefers one dating Moses to Pharaoh Bocchoris of the eighth century B.C., *Histories* v 4. Jewish ritual customs 'antiquitate defenduntur', v. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Lucian, *Alexander the false prophet* 13.

<sup>83</sup> Simon (n. 4), 339-68.

<sup>84</sup> G.E.M. de Ste Croix, 'Why were the Christians persecuted?', *Past and Present* 26 (1963) 3-38, 27 (1964) 28-33.

<sup>85</sup> Herbert Musurillo (ed.), *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford 1972), 1 (Polycarp) 12-13.

sions with the Roman authorities brought results. Jews joined the civic establishment. A rescript of Septimius Severus (193/211) allowed them to hold office as town councillors without compromising their faith.<sup>86</sup>

But how could Judaism survive the gruesome penalties for circumcision? Examination shows these to have been more spasmodic and less sweeping than appears at first sight. Hadrian's prohibition of circumcision throughout the empire, even of Jews by Jews, claimed some martyrs<sup>87</sup> — but surprisingly few.<sup>88</sup> Circumcision of proselytes was still commonplace during his reign,<sup>89</sup> perhaps because the decree was ambiguously drafted.<sup>90</sup> His milder successor readmitted circumcision for the sons of Jews but not for non-Jews,<sup>91</sup> as is confirmed by the papyri recording requests for special permission for circumcision by Egyptian priests.<sup>92</sup> In Palestine in 202, Septimius Severus 'forbade people to become Jews under heavy penalties.'<sup>93</sup> This must be the prohibition of circumcision spelt out by the jurists Paul and Marcian.<sup>94</sup> But the emperor Elagabalus (218-222), himself a Syrian priest, abrogated the law and circumcised himself.<sup>95</sup> Though his was a freak reign, his successor Alexander Severus (222-235) can hardly have reversed the abrogation, for he is said to have reaffirmed Jewish privileges, earned the nickname 'Syrian synagogue ruler' from his Antiochene and Alexandrian detractors, and venerated a statue of Abraham in his private chapel.<sup>96</sup> Paul's note probably antedates Elagabalus, who banished him; and the rulings recorded by Marcian are from Septimius Severus' time. After Constan-

<sup>86</sup> "Without infringing their superstition", *Digest* 50.2.3.3, quoting Ulpian = Linder (n. 58), 2.

<sup>87</sup> See below at nn. 208-10.

<sup>88</sup> 'The Ten Martyrs' of Hadrian's time are not all of them easy to substantiate, so late and unreliable are the Midrashic legends, M.D. Herr, s.v., *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 15 (1971) 1006-8.

<sup>89</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 8.4, 23.3-5, 123.1, *PG* VI 493, 528, 761. The dramatic date is during or soon after 135.

<sup>90</sup> F. Mary Smallwood, 'The Legislation of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius against Circumcision', *Latomus* 18 (1959) 334-47.

<sup>91</sup> Antoninus Pius (138/161): Jews permitted to circumcise their sons; those who circumcise someone not of that faith to be punished as castrators, *Digest* xlviii 8.4.11, quoting Modestin = Linder (n. 58), 1.

<sup>92</sup> Ulrich Wilcken, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 2 (1902) 4-13, *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde* I 128, II 102, nos. 74-77.

<sup>93</sup> *Historia Augusta*, 'Septimius Severus' 17.1, Linder (n. 58), 1, note 3.

<sup>94</sup> Roman citizens who have had themselves or their slaves circumcised to be relegated to an island and lose their property; death for the responsible surgeon; Jews who circumcise non-Jewish slaves to be banished or executed, Paul, *Sentences* v 22.3-4 = Linder (n. 58), 6; cf. Marcian in *Digest* xlviii 8.3.5.

<sup>95</sup> *Historia Augusta*, 'Antoninus Elagabalus' 7.2, Dio Cassius lxxx 11.1.

<sup>96</sup> *Historia Augusta*, 'Alexander Severus', 22.4, 28.7, 29.2.

tine's rescripts of 335 and 339<sup>97</sup> against Jews circumcising non-Jewish slaves, there follows a long interval, including decades of rule by Arian emperors, during which the prohibition may have been a dead letter. Only under Theodosius II, in 417 and 423, was it renewed, with no reference to precedent.<sup>98</sup> We now find, for the first time, express permission for Jews to own Christian slaves, provided they remained Christian.<sup>99</sup>

Imperial rescripts, sent to governors in different parts of the empire, often at their request, may have gone unnoticed in other parts.<sup>100</sup> They did not automatically apply to free cities of the empire. When and where they were valid, there was no public prosecutor to enforce them. To invoke any decree against anyone, a private prosecution by a freeman was needed. So an act of circumcision among consenting persons would normally remain unpunished.

Hadrian's motive may have been misplaced humanitarianism: eager to prevent enforced castration, he perhaps lacked the patience to learn the true nature of circumcision. Christian emperors knew better, for the church commemorates the circumcision of Jesus.<sup>101</sup> Their concern was at first only to prevent Jews from making co-religionists of their slaves, as the owners felt they must, for fear of being served ritually impure food and having their secrets reported to non-Jews. (That is why the 'white Jews' of Cochin were later to turn their willing Indian servants into 'black Jews'.) Buying a gentile slave would 'bring him under the wings of Heaven'.<sup>102</sup> A compliant slave would keep quiet. One who refused cir-

<sup>97</sup> Constantine (Constantinople, 21 Oct. 335, for Carthage): A Jew who buys and circumcises a Christian slave or one of any other sect must free him. Jews forbidden to harass converts to Christianity. *C.Th.* xvi 8.5, *C.Th.* xvi 9.1, *Const.Sir.* 4 = Linder (n. 58), 10. Constantine II (13 Aug. 339, for Italy): A Jew who buys a non-Jewish slave shall lose him to the Treasury. If he circumcises one, he shall suffer capital punishment and the slave shall be freed. *C.Th.* xvi 8.6, *C.Th.* xvi 9.2, *C.J.* i 10.1 (339) = Linder (n. 58), 11.

<sup>98</sup> Theodosius II (Constantinople, 10 April 417, for the East): Jews may not acquire Christian slaves, on pain of having to free them. A Jew may continue to own a Christian slave already bought, or inherit one, but is punishable by death and confiscation of goods for converting/circumcising him. *C.Th.* xvi 9.4, *C.J.* i 10.1 = Linder (n. 58), 44. Theodosius II (Constantinople, 8 June 423, for the East): Banishment and confiscation of goods for circumcising a Christian. *C.Th.* xvi 8.27, *C.Th.* xvi 5.60, *C.Th.* xvi 10.24, *C.J.* i 11.6 = Linder (n. 58), 49.

<sup>99</sup> Honorius (Ravenna, 6 Nov. 415, to the teacher Annas and the Heads of the Jews), *C.Th.* xvi 9. 3 = Linder (n. 58), 42. But eventually Justinian (Constantinople 527/534) forbade Jews, pagans and heretics to own Christian slaves, *C.J.* i 10. 2 = Linder (n. 58), 59.

<sup>100</sup> E.g. Honorius' decree of 409 on *defensores*, unobserved in Minorca in 418, pp. 8 and 22.

<sup>101</sup> Luke 2:21-24. The Circumcision of Christ is celebrated every 1st January.

<sup>102</sup> *J.* <sup>a</sup> *bhōdāh Zārāh* 1:4 [V.E].



cumcision should not be kept too long — according to Rabbi ‘Aqiba, not at all.<sup>103</sup> Force did not enter the rabbis’ minds. Was it ever tried? If so, how easily could the victim find a freeman to take his case to law? We never find such cases brought, even by public-spirited bishops.

Non-servile proselytes are mentioned, and their status freely discussed, in the Talmud.<sup>104</sup> One was Aquila of Sinope, a pagan who first became a Christian and subsequently a circumcised Jew. He was supposedly a kinsman of Hadrian.<sup>105</sup> His literal Greek translation of scripture went far to supersede the Septuagint among Jews.<sup>106</sup> Constantine in 329,<sup>107</sup> and Constantius II in 353,<sup>108</sup> sought to penalise Christians who voluntarily joined in Jewish worship or became Jews. But they did not threaten the Jews who let them join. Punishment for Jews circumcising free proselytes was not revived until 423.<sup>109</sup>

The Jews were not desperate for these converts. Christians have a duty to convert non-Christians. Salvation can only come through Christ, according to the fourth gospel and St Paul. The risen Christ is said to have told his followers to ‘go and teach all nations’.<sup>110</sup> Jews have no such commandment.<sup>111</sup> Circumcision, sabbath-keeping, Jewish feasts and fasts, ritual and dietary laws — these were not incumbent on non-Jews, as all Jews and most Christians agreed. Jews certainly believed that gentiles should worship the one God, give up idolatry, and observe the simple morality revealed to all mankind, and in particular to Noah,

<sup>103</sup> *B. Y<sup>e</sup>bhāmōth* 48b.

<sup>104</sup> E.g. *J. Y<sup>e</sup>bhāmōth* viii 1 [8D], *J. Kiddūshin* 14 [64D], *J. ‘ābhōdāh Zārāh* i 9 [40B], *B. Berākōth* 28a, *B. Y<sup>e</sup>bhāmōth* 46b.

<sup>105</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* iii 21.1, *PG* VII 946. Epiphanius, *Weights and Measures* 14, *PG* XLIII 261. Talmudic legend relates him to Titus, *B. Gitṭin* 56b, *B. ‘ābhōdāh Zārāh* 55.

<sup>106</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* v 8.10. His version corrected Isaiah 7:14 to “behold, a young woman shall conceive”, and was used by the Ebionites, Irenaeus *Against Heresies* iii 21.1, *PG* VII 945.

<sup>107</sup> Constantine (Bergulae, Thrace, 18 Oct. 329, to the East) forbids Jews to harass converts to Christianity, and imposes penalties on anyone of the people who approaches their sect and joins their conventicles, *C.Th.* xvi 8.1, *C.J.* i 9.3 = Linder (n. 58), 8.

<sup>108</sup> Constantius II (Milan, 3 July 353, for the East) orders that Christians who “become Jews and join sacrilegious assemblies” should lose their property, *C.Th.* xvi 8. 7, *C.J.* i 7. 1 = Linder (n. 58), 12.

<sup>109</sup> See note 98.

<sup>110</sup> Mark 16:15.

<sup>111</sup> But Jewish attitudes to proselytism have varied: see now Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion, Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1994).

long before the first Jew, Abraham.<sup>112</sup> But one could worship God and observe the Noachite commandments without becoming a Jew. The universalist passages in Old Testament prophecy, most signally Second Isaiah's prediction that all nations will eventually worship God alone, stop short of making Jews of all mankind. 'Israel needs proselytes as it needs a sore!' exclaimed Rabbi Hēlbo.<sup>113</sup> But the claims of Judaism were such that someone wishing to participate fully could not be refused. Before committing himself to circumcision, he was warned that as a full Jew he might face persecution and would be bound under penalties to keep the entire Law.<sup>114</sup> Then he was to be treated with courtesy and generosity, as in every way a descendant of Abraham.<sup>115</sup> A woman aspiring to Judaism for marriage<sup>116</sup> or out of conviction, like Ruth the Moabitess long ago, had only to sit in water up to her neck, while sages stood outside to give instruction<sup>117</sup> — no harsh imposition in a warm climate.

There was a half-way house for sympathizers with Judaism who shrank from circumcision, as we now know from a third-century stele discovered in 1985 in Aphrodisias, in Western Asia Minor. It records the individuals connected with a *Patella*, evidently a soup-kitchen attached to the local synagogue.<sup>118</sup> These include three proselytes and fifty-four 'God-fearers', mostly with Greco-Roman names, practising various trades. Nine are town councillors. Almost certainly they were uncircumcised pagans attending synagogue worship. Such attenders had been addressed by St Paul in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch: 'Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.'<sup>119</sup> We have noticed the theatre seats reserved at Miletus for God-fearers; they appear in inscriptions in other cities.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Genesis 9:1-7, but this falls short of an adequate moral law. Various rabbis added various prohibitions: *Sanhedrin* 56a-60 is the *locus classicus*. P.L. Biberfeld, *Das noachidische Urrecht* (1937). R. Loewe (ed.), *Studies in Memory of Leon Roth* (1966) 125-31, 136-44.

<sup>113</sup> *B. Yēbhāmōth* 47b.

<sup>114</sup> *B. Yēbhāmōth* 47a, *B. Gērim* 60a.

<sup>115</sup> *B. Gērim* 61b. Martin Goodman, 'Proselytising in Rabbinic Judaism', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 40 (1989) 175-85.

<sup>116</sup> Constantine II (13 Aug. 339, for Italy) ruled only against Jews consorting extra-maritally with female public slaves, *C.Th.* xvi 8.6, *C.Th.* xvi 9.2, *C.J.* i 10.1 = Linder (n. 58), 11. Christian-Jewish marriages were not forbidden until Theodosius I (Thessalonica, 14 March 388, for the East), *C.Th.* iii 7.2, *C.Th.* ix 7.5, *C.J.* i 9.6 = Linder (n. 58), 18.

<sup>117</sup> *B. Yēbhāmōth* 47b

<sup>118</sup> Reynolds and Tannenbaum (n. 13).

<sup>119</sup> Acts 13:16.

<sup>120</sup> E.g. a manumission inscription of Panticapaeum in the Crimea, *CIJ* 1<sup>2</sup> 683: τῆς συναγωγῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ θεοσσεβῶν, "the synagogue of the Jews and the God-Fearers". H. Bellen, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 8/9 (1965/6)

They correspond to the Talmud's 'Heaven-fearers' and 'resident proselytes', uncircumcised sympathizers with Judaism, the extent of whose obligations the sages debate.<sup>121</sup> Abraham himself had not undergone circumcision until ninety-nine years old.<sup>122</sup> There was a parallel arrangement among Christians, many of whom did not accept baptism until adulthood, but as catechumens, 'listeners', attended service while excluded from communion. St Augustine, though of a fervently Christian mother, was baptized only at thirty-three. It looks as though Jews and Christians were competing for the same souls. The decrees of 339 and 353 did not put the Jews out of business, for we find western rescripts issued again in 383, 407 and 409 against 'participators in Jewish rites' and *caelicolae*, 'Heaven-worshippers'.<sup>123</sup>

The absence of new Jewish literature in Greek during the late Roman empire remains puzzling. There had been a great output previously. It had perhaps done its work. No second Josephus was required to prove the antiquity of the Jews, though Origen (246/8) still had to emphasize, against Celsus (177/180),<sup>124</sup> that Moses antedated the earliest Greek writings.<sup>125</sup> Philo's allegorical approach to the Old Testament may not originally have met a strong need outside Alexandria, whose Jewish life never fully recovered from the crushing of the 115-7 revolt. Allegorization was taken over by Origen and his Christian successors. The last Jewish apocryphal works in Greek, Baruch and IV Maccabees, are believed to illustrate the Jewish reaction to the destruction of the Temple.<sup>126</sup> Once that terrible event was well in the past and the scriptural canon finally established, there can have been no call for more such writings. There were no more Jewish romances in Greek, such as *Joseph and Asenath*. But the numerous middle-empire pagan romances, and that of the Christian Heliodorus, had no successors in the

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171-6, B. Lifschitz, *Revue Biblique* 79 (1969) 96, L. Robert, *Bulletin Épi-graphique* (1969) 52, 405.

<sup>121</sup> Reynolds & Tannenbaum (n. 13), 44-66.

<sup>122</sup> Genesis 17:24, *B. Gêrim* 61b.

<sup>123</sup> Gratian (21 May 383, for Italy): Christians forbidden to participate in Jewish, pagan or Manichean rites. *C.Th.* xvi 7.3, *C.J.* i 7.2 = Linder (n. 58), 16. Honorius (Rome, 25 November 407, for Italy and Africa): Against Heretics, Heaven-worshippers and Pagans. *C.Th.* xvi 5.43, *C.Th.* xvi 10.19, *C.J.* i 9.12 = Linder (n. 58), 35. Honorius (Ravenna, 1 April 409, for Italy): Against Heaven-worshippers, Jewish proselytism, and profanation of Sunday. *C.Th.* xvi 8.19, *C.Th.* ii 8.25, *C.J.* i 9.12 = Linder (n. 58), 39.

<sup>124</sup> 'Celsus', the long-dead author of the anti-Christian treatise with which Origen took issue, was misidentified by him according to Michael Frede, 'Celsus' attack on the Christians', in J. Barnes and M.T. Griffin (ed.), *Philosophia Togata II* (Oxford 1997) 218-40.

<sup>125</sup> *Against Celsus* iv 21, vi 7, vii 28, *PG* XI 1056, 1297, 1460.

<sup>126</sup> Simon (n. 4), 6-9, 46-9.

fourth century either. Indeed, apart from Libanius, the Church Fathers and their opponent Julian, that century produced little Greek literature of any kind.

By contrast, there was a new flowering of pagan Latin writing. This was the age of Ammianus Marcellinus, Ausonius and Claudian. In the west, education was based on the Latin classics: Augustine, taught Greek badly, failed to learn it.<sup>127</sup> Two Jewish literary works in Latin do survive from the fourth century.<sup>128</sup> One is the *Collatio Legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum*, under whose sixteen *tituli* (titles) laws are quoted from the Pentateuch (not in St Jerome's translation) and compared with a variety of rulings by Roman jurists and imperial constitutions.<sup>129</sup> It is certainly of fourth-century date.<sup>130</sup> Since hardly any of these Mosaic laws were of practical interest to Christians, who studied them, as we shall see, for their spiritual significance,<sup>131</sup> we may be sure that the compiler was a Jew, writing for Jews who used the Mosaic law among themselves, but had to take account of Roman law in disputes with non-Jews and when applying to the Roman authorities.<sup>132</sup> Another Latin work that may date from the fourth century is the surviving first part of *The Letter of Annas to Seneca*, published in 1984, which begins by praising the one God and goes on to attack attempts to understand the world without knowledge of God, wrong views of immortality, and idol-worship.<sup>133</sup> It appears to be Jewish apologia intended for readers to whom the Septuagint, Josephus and Philo were unknown.

We have seen that Jews throughout the Empire used current Greek and, in the west, Latin.<sup>134</sup> In Palestine, where Aramaic continued side by side with Greek,

<sup>127</sup> *Confessions* i 13.20.

<sup>128</sup> Rutgers (n. 39), 210-59.

<sup>129</sup> E. Volterra (ed.), *Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Memorie* 6.3.1 (1930).

<sup>130</sup> Rutgers (n. 39), 215-6. The latest imperial constitutions cited are of 315 and 392. But since the *Collatio* refers to practices abolished in 324 and 342, the reference to 392 may belong to an interpolation. Rutgers (n. 39), 216.

<sup>131</sup> See below.

<sup>132</sup> A Jewish woman had recourse to Roman law when petitioning the Governor of Arabia in a guardianship case in 124-133: Papyrus Yadin 18, discussed in N. Lewis, R. Katzoff and J. C. Greenfield, 'Papyrus Yadin 18: I. Text, Translation, and notes; II. Legal Commentary; III. The Aramaic Subscription', *Israel Exploration Journal* 37 (1987) 229-50. A. Wasserstein, 'A Marriage Contract from the Province of Arabia Nova: Notes on Papyrus Yadin 18', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 80 (1989) 93-130. Hannah Cotton, 'The Guardianship of Jesus son of Babatha: Roman and Local Law in the Province of Arabia', *JRS* 83 (1993) 94-108; 'The Guardian (ἐπίτροπος) of a Woman in the Documents from the Judaea Desert', *ZPE* 118 (1997) 267-74.

<sup>133</sup> B. Bischoff, *Anecdota Novissima. Texte des vierten bis sechzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart 1984) 1-9.

<sup>134</sup> See above at nn. 40-43.

Hebrew was revived for literary purposes in the third century.<sup>135</sup> But Greek continued to be widely employed even for synagogue worship. A long dispute about whether the sacred books should be read in Hebrew alone, or in Greek as well, was settled in favour of Greek by Justinian in 553.<sup>136</sup> Jews increasingly drew on the Greek classical legacy. The three literary quotations in St Paul's Epistles are a meagre harvest.<sup>137</sup> Origen, when Celsus describes a Jew quoting Euripides, comments 'Jews are by no means well-read in Greek literature.'<sup>138</sup> But in 393 the patriarch Gamaliel VI, as appears from eight letters written to him by Libanius, was at home in the Greek classics and wanted a secular education in rhetoric for his son. Alas, he dropped out of the course and travelled. Libanius interceded for him: 'perhaps it will be good for him to see many cities, as it was for Odysseus'. Another letter asks forgiveness for Libanius' ex-pupil Hilarius, whom the Patriarch's complaints had unseated from the governorship of Palestine. These, Libanius says, were doubtless deserved; 'but pray be Achilles to his Telephus, and by your kindness heal the results of anger.'<sup>139</sup> Libanius was wise to be emollient. The Patriarch, styled 'renowned and illustrious' in an imperial rescript of 392,<sup>140</sup> exerted such influence that his anger brought about the execution of another provincial governor, Hesychius, in c.395.<sup>141</sup> Here is a prince of Israel who is the reverse of despised and shut off from the outside world. Libanius' allusions, admittedly, were not recondite. The *Odyssey's* first lines were among the most quoted in Greek literature, and Euripides' *Telephus*, now lost, was one of his most popular tragedies.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Pious Hebrew formulae are found on Sicilian tombstones in the fourth century; but datable Hebrew inscriptions remain sparse throughout the Dispersion until the ninth century, when Hebrew literature received a new lease of life. Nicholas de Lange, 'The Hebrew Language in the European Diaspora', in Benjamin Isaac, Aharon Oppenheimer (ed.), *Te'uda XII, Studies on the Jewish Diaspora in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Tel Aviv 1996) 111-37.

<sup>136</sup> *Novella* 146 (8 February 553), Linder (n. 58), 402-11.

<sup>137</sup> Acts 17:28 (Aratus), I Corinthians 15:33 (Menander), Titus 1:12 (Epimenides). Defending Paul's education, Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* iii 17, PG LXVI 424 makes as much of them as he can.

<sup>138</sup> Origen, *Against Celsus* ii 34, PG XI 853. We do not know who or when Celsus was according to Michael Frede in J. Barnes and M.T. Griffin (ed.) (n. 124).

<sup>139</sup> *Letters* 1098 and 1105. Translations: Meeks and Wilken (n. 27), 62-3.

<sup>140</sup> Attributed to Theodosius I but actually by Valentinian II (Constantinople, 17 April 392, for the East): *C.Th.* xvi 8.8 = Linder (n. 58), 20.

<sup>141</sup> Jerome, *Letter* 57 (to Pammachius) 3, *PL* XXII 570.

<sup>142</sup> Note the extensive parody in Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 430-556.

The Palestinian Talmud confirms the interest that rabbis might have in giving their children a Greek education.<sup>143</sup> It was not to displace the Torah. Rabbi Joshua had indeed said that a person should teach Greek to his son ‘at that hour that is neither day nor night, as is written [in Scripture], “but recite it [i.e. the Torah] day and night”.’ But other sages were quick to argue that this did not rule out the teaching of Greek to one’s sons altogether, for they adduced Deuteronomy 30:9 to show that one may study a trade, even if this takes time away from Torah study, and the same must go for Greek. What about daughters? Here we have a characteristically humorous dialogue. ‘Rabbi Abbāhū (c. 300) in the name of Rabbi Joḥanan [b. Nappaḥa]: “It is permitted for a person to teach his daughter Greek, because this is deemed an adornment for her.” When Simeon bar Vah heard this, he said, “Since [Abbāhū] wished to teach his daughters [Greek], he attributed his opinion to Rabbi Joḥanan.” [Rabbi Abbāhū replied] “May some evil befall me if I didn’t hear that teaching directly from Rabbi Joḥanan!”’<sup>144</sup>

His daughter must have enjoyed her Greek lessons with Rabbi Abbāhū, well-liked by the Roman authorities in Caesarea and so affable that no one could ever greet him first, not even a pagan in the market.<sup>145</sup> This brings us to an important aspect of the Mishnah and Talmud. Though judaeocentric, they by no means inculcated surly hostility to gentiles. The tractate <sup>a</sup>*bhōdāh Zārāh* (Idolatry) teaches Jews how to practise neighbourliness while not compromising their principles. In New Testament times, St Peter is reported as saying ‘it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation.’<sup>146</sup> The society in which such a claim was plausible was one in which a Jew need never meet a pagan. But pagans were now everywhere in the Holy Land. Rules had to be evolved to avoid contamination by idolatry; but the outcome was that Jews could live on terms of courtesy with their neighbours. A pagan, Proclus, had asked Rabbi Gamaliel II (of Jamnia, who died before 117) why he had no objection to bathing in the Baths of Aphrodite at Acre. He answered: ‘... I came not within her limits; she came within mine! They do not say “Let us make a bath for Aphrodite”, but “Let us make an Aphrodite as an adornment for the bath” ... This goddess stands at the mouth of the gutter and everyone makes water before her’.<sup>147</sup> This principle was contested; but we find it ap-

<sup>143</sup> S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine, Studies in the Life and Manners of Jewish Palestine in the II-IV Centuries C.E.* (New York 1942).

<sup>144</sup> *J. Pēah* 1.1.[VII.A-H], in pleasant contrast to the declaration in 1817 by the boorish German patriot, ‘Turnvater’ Jahn: “He who lets his daughter learn French does no better than one who teaches her whoredom!” Heinrich von Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte* II (1882, repr. Leipzig 1927) 385.

<sup>145</sup> *B. B<sup>e</sup>rākōth* 17b.

<sup>146</sup> Acts 10:28.

<sup>147</sup> *M. <sup>a</sup>bhōdāh Zārāh* 3.4.



plied to other occasions of daily life, such as trading or shopping. An idol over a shop, with a symbol of power such as a sword or crown, should deter a Jew,<sup>148</sup> but not one with an object of common use.<sup>149</sup> If passing an idol-carrying procession, he had only to close his eyes.<sup>150</sup> The Jews' *modus vivendi* with pagans was, at its best, suffused with charity. They were advised to contribute to their charities, visit their sick, comfort them in mourning, bury their dead, and bring in their utensils 'on account of peace'.<sup>151</sup>

We cannot pretend that relations between Jews and Christians were equally friendly. The Mishnah and Talmud are almost silent about Jesus and Christianity, presumably because hostile comments were subsequently deleted or disguised. Christian writers see as enemies from the beginning 'the synagogues, sources of persecution, where the apostles were scourged'.<sup>152</sup> 'The Jews kill and punish us whenever they have the power', says Justin, asserting acts of cruelty by Bar-Kochba in 132-135.<sup>153</sup> We have seen them joining with pagans to demand St Polycarp's martyrdom in 155. Jews do not hate idolators, says Origen (246/8), 'but are swept by insatiable hatred against Christians, who have everywhere abandoned idols and turned to God'<sup>154</sup> Christian resentment persisted after 312. But governmental anti-Jewish measures came late. Constantine almost at once decreed that Jews might remain as town councillors.<sup>155</sup> When this became a burden, their clergy were allowed to escape it for most of the fourth century.<sup>156</sup> Only in the fifth were Jews progressively excluded from state service in the Western<sup>157</sup> and Eastern Empires.<sup>158</sup> In 412, Archbishop Cyril prevailed against

<sup>148</sup> *J.* 'a *bhōdāh Zārāh* 3:1 [III P,Q].

<sup>149</sup> *J.* 'a *bhōdāh Zārāh* 3:1 [IV B].

<sup>150</sup> *M.* 'a *bhōdāh Zārāh* 3:11 [II A-G].

<sup>151</sup> *J.* 'a *bhōdāh Zārāh* 1:3 [IIIA] (*T. Giṭṭin* 3:13-14).

<sup>152</sup> Tertullian, *Against the scorpion-sting of the Gnostics* 10, *PL* I 143.

<sup>153</sup> *Apology I for the Christians* i 31, *PG* VI 376.

<sup>154</sup> *Homily I on Psalm xxxvi*, *PG* XII 1321 (in Latin).

<sup>155</sup> Constantine (11 Dec. 312, for Cologne), *C. Th.* xvi 8.3 = Linder (n. 58), 7.

<sup>156</sup> Constantine (Constantinople, 29 Nov., 1 Dec. 330) granted exemption to Jewish clergy throughout the empire, *C. Th.* xvi 8.9 = Linder (n. 58), 9. This was countermanded by Gratian (18 or 19 April 383, for Italy), *C. Th.* xii 1. 99-100, *C. J.* i 9.5 = Linder (n. 58), 15 (18 or 19 April 383). Exemption was again granted by Arcadius (1 July 397, for the East), *C. Th.* xvi 8.13 = Linder (n. 58), 27, but refused by Honorius (Milan 13 Sept. or Feb. 398, for Italy and Africa), *C. Th.* xii 1.157, *C. Th.* xii 1.158, *C. J.* x 32. 49 = Linder (n. 58), 29. Arcadius (28 or 30 Dec. 399, for the East) enforced the Jews' responsibilities as town councillors, *C. Th.* xii 1.165, *C. J.* i 9.10 = Linder (n. 58), 31.

<sup>157</sup> Honorius (Rome, 22 April 404, for Gaul) deprived Jews of the office of *agentes in rebus* (agents of affairs), *C. Th.* xvi 8.16 = Linder (n. 58), 33. In Ravenna (10 March 418, for Italy) he debarred them from careers in the *militia* (imperial administration), but not from legal practice, *C. Th.* xvi 8.24 = Linder (n. 58), 45.

the prefect Orestes in expelling the Jews from Alexandria.<sup>159</sup> The abolition of the Patriarchate in 415<sup>160</sup> perhaps afforded tax relief to the Jews of the Dispersion,<sup>161</sup> but only until 429.<sup>162</sup> It surely impaired their unity. In 415, 423 and 438 Theodosius forbade the building of new synagogues in the East.<sup>163</sup>

Christianity won converts from Judaism. Constantine in 339 sought to prevent Jews from harassing them.<sup>164</sup> Jewish fathers gave their young children piggy-backs,<sup>165</sup> but must often have been inflexible to those who apostatized when grown-up, to judge by a western rescript of 426 protecting them from disinheritance.<sup>166</sup> There is no evidence for Jews and Christians in the same family maintaining good relations, as there is for pagans and Christians of the Roman nobility;<sup>167</sup> but we know all too little about family and communal life in the Jewish Dispersion. A measure for Egypt of 397 granted the Jews the right to claim back fraudulent converts; this was confirmed for Italy in 416.<sup>168</sup>

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Galla Placidia, in the name of Valentinian III (Aquileia, 9 July/6 Aug. 425, for Gaul, Rome and Africa), expelled Jews and pagans from legal practice and the imperial administration, and expressed the wish that no Christians should be in their service, *Const.Sir.* 6, *C.Th.* xvi 2.46-7, *C.Th.* xvi 5.62-4, = Linder (n. 58), 51.

158 Theodosius II (Constantinople, 31 Jan. 438) excluded Jews from all *administraciones et dignitates*, *Nov.Th.* 3, *C.J.* i 9.19 = Linder (n. 58), 34.

159 Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* vii 13, *PG* LXVII 760-4. Cedrenus, *Ecclesiastical History* 1195f., *PG* CXXI 640. Theophanes, *Chronography* 127.

160 Theodosius II (Constantinople, 20 Oct. 415, for the East), *C.Th.* xvi 8.22, *C.J.* i 9.15 = Linder (n. 58), 41.

161 Possibly because of Jewish complaints, Honorius (Milan, 11 April 399, for Italy) had withdrawn permission from the Patriarchs to tax Jews, *C.Th.* xvi 8. 14 = Linder (n. 58), 30. But later (Rome, 25 July 404, for Italy and Africa) he renewed the permission to do so, *C.Th.* xvi 8. 17 = Linder (n. 58), 34.

162 Theodosius II (Constantinople, 30 May 429) ordered patriarchal taxes to go to the imperial treasury, *C.Th.* xvi 8.29, *C.J.* i 9.17 = Linder (n. 58), 53.

163 Theodosius II at Constantinople: 20 Oct. 415, for the East: *C.Th.* xvi 8.22, *C.J.* i 9.15 = Linder (n. 58), 41. 15 Feb. 423, for the East: *C.Th.* xvi 8.25 = Linder (n. 58), 47. 31 Jan. 438, for the East: *Nov.Th.* 3, *C.J.* i 9.18, *C.J.* i 7.5 = Linder (n. 58), 54.

164 See above, n. 107.

165 Jerome, *On Isaiah* 50, 22-3, *PL* XXIV 473.

166 [Galla Placidia in the name of] Valentinian III (from Aquileia, 7 or 8 Apr. 426, for Italy), *C.Th.* xvi 8.28, *C.Th.* xvi 7.7, *C.J.* i 7.4 = Linder (n. 58), 52.

167 P.R.L. Brown, 'Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman Aristocracy', *JRS* 51 (1961) 1-11.

168 Arcadius (Constantinople, 17 June 397, for Egypt): Measures against fraudulent Jewish professions of conversion to Christianity, *C.Th.* ix 45.2, *C.J.* i 12.1 = Linder (n. 58), 26. Honorius (Ravenna, 24 Sept. 416, to the teacher Annas and

The church's main concerns, however, were not about the Jews. First came the struggle against paganism, culminating in the suppression of pagan rites in 391, and continuing with the demolition of the less conspicuous temples<sup>169</sup> and the exclusion of pagans, along with Jews, from state service. Next came the struggle against heresy. Catholic Orthodoxy — we may use this expression, for during this period Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy were theologically united and differed only in language and customs — was only intermittently dominant and endlessly on the defensive against other brands of Christianity. Arian emperors ruled from Constantinople almost continuously from 337 to 378. Antioch in the 360s had three Christian denominations and an Arian bishop.<sup>170</sup> The Arians presented a far greater challenge than the Jews. Athanasius, the valiant archbishop of Alexandria, thrice exiled by Arians to the west, mentions Jews only in passing as their allies.<sup>171</sup> The victory of Catholic Orthodoxy under Theodosius I was deceptive. The imperial writ did not run automatically in the beleaguered west. Honorius decreed in 409 that the prefects should appoint as *defensores civitatis* men 'imbued with the sacred mysteries of the orthodox faith', after nomination by the local bishop and clergy, the chief landowners and the town councillors.<sup>172</sup> But we have seen that in Minorca a Jewish notable was *defensor* in 418.<sup>173</sup> Soon, the Western Empire was to succumb to the Arian Vandals and Goths. Its Jews, at least in the short term, benefited. The Ostrogoth Theodoric, ruler of Italy from 493 to 526, proclaimed full toleration,<sup>174</sup> and supported the Jews 'to render the country independent of the wealth and commerce of the Greeks.'<sup>175</sup> The Eastern Empire, while able to enforce the exclusion of Jews from state office, was crumbling during the long inertia of Theodosius II (408-450), and, in the Holy Land at least, could not uphold his prohibition of new synagogues.

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the Heads of the synagogues): Permission for return of fraudulent Jewish converts to Judaism, *C.Th.* xvi 8. 23 = Linder (n. 58), 43.

<sup>169</sup> Arcadius (Damascus, 10 July 399, for the East) allowed the demolition of pagan temples in country districts, *C.Th.* xvi 710. 16. Pagans were subject to a series of discriminatory decrees, as were Jews.

<sup>170</sup> Wilken (n. 16), 12.

<sup>171</sup> In 335, Jews were hostile witnesses at the inquiry at Tyre into Athanasius' alleged incitement of sacrilege in the Mareotis, *Apologia against the Arians* 83, *PG XXV* 396. In 339, when the Arian Gregory forcibly took over the archbishopric of Alexandria, Athanasius says Jews and pagans invaded the churches with swords and sticks, *Encyclical Letter* 3, *PG XXV* 228.

<sup>172</sup> *C.J.* i 55.8.

<sup>173</sup> See above at n. 55.

<sup>174</sup> Cassiodorus, *Variae ii*, *Letter i* 27, *PL LXIX* 561.

<sup>175</sup> *Edictum Theodorici (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Leges Nationum Germanicarum I. 5. 145ff.)* 143.

Reciprocal enmity of the orthodox on both sides is not the whole story. Hunting for Christian allusions in the Talmud is a risky sport; but some weight attaches to the theory that the Talmud's פושעי ישראל, *Posh'ei Yisrael* ('Jewish sinners'), were full Jews who thought Jesus the Messiah.<sup>176</sup> Jerome mentions the *Minei* 'among the synagogues of the East, and condemned by the Pharisees'.<sup>177</sup> The *Minim* of the Talmud are trouble-makers of varying complexion. But twice they are identifiable with Jews influenced by Christianity. In the second century, a certain Jacob attempted to heal Rabbi Eleazar ben Damah from a snake-bite in the name of Jeshua' ben Pantera (as the Jews called Jesus).<sup>178</sup> But another rabbi intervened to prevent this, and Rabbi Eleazar died. The moral is 'one must have no fellowship with the *Minim*, neither to let oneself be healed by them, nor to gain even one hour of life'.<sup>179</sup> The other story concerns Rabbi Abbāhū who taught his daughter Greek. That affable sage did not shun fellowship with the *Minim*, but recommended to them his protégé, Rabbi Saphra, as a salaried teacher. One day they asked him to explain Amos 3:2: 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities'. 'If one is in anger', they asked, 'does one vent it on one's friend?' The protégé was at a loss, and his hearers tormented him. But Rabbi Abbāhū intervened to explain that a creditor will accept of his friend payment little by little, but of his enemy in one sum.<sup>180</sup> The *Minim* had been invoking what for Christians was a *locus classicus*, forecasting God's punishment of the Jews for denying Christ.

Christian sources are outspoken about judaizing sects claiming to be Christian. Our difficulty in tracking them down is that the heresy-hunter of the fourth century, Epiphanius, was a dunderhead. One despairs of making sense of his Heresy 18, the *Nasaraioi*, as contrasted with Heresy 29, the *Nazōraioi*, when there are already several meanings of *Nazarēnos*. But his *Nazōraioi* are probably the Ebionites (Hebrew אַבְיוֹנִים, 'poor men') described elsewhere, especially in the more intelligent Irenaeus' *Against Heresies* (c. 177). We are told that these were Christians insisting on the full rigour of the Jewish Law, rejecting Paul and possessing only one gospel, St Matthew in Hebrew. They are said to have held that Jesus had become the Son of God through the Holy Spirit at His baptism.

176 A. Marmorstein, 'Judaism and Christianity in the Middle of the Third Century', *Hebrew Union College Annual* 10 (1935) 223-63.

177 *Letter 75 (to Augustine from Jerome)* 12, PL XXXIII 257.

178 Origen reports a Jewish notion that Jesus was really the son of an adulterous union with Παυθήρα, a Roman soldier, *Contra Celsum* i 28, 32, PG XI 721.

179 B. <sup>a</sup>*bhōdāh Zārāh* 27b.

180 B. <sup>a</sup>*bhōdāh Zārāh* 4a.

Some rejected the Virgin Birth.<sup>181</sup> Possibly they were descended from the apostolic Jerusalem Church which had wished to retain circumcision (Acts 15:1-5); but the name may well have been applied to other independent groups of Christians, not Jewish by descent, who valued Jewish customs. By the end of the second century they had probably moved away from predominantly Jewish areas to Caesarea, Gaza, Transjordan and Southern Syria.<sup>182</sup>

Most remarkable is the extent of judaizing among mainstream Christians. In sublimely difficult language, St Paul had pleaded that the Jewish Law had been 'the shadow of things to come'.<sup>183</sup> It was 'the pedagogue to lead us to Christ'.<sup>184</sup> (A pedagogue is not the Authorised Version's 'schoolmaster' but a slave protecting a boy on his way to school.) The pedagogue was no longer needed. Christ is 'the End of the Law'.<sup>185</sup> But for four centuries Christian judaizers persisted: Jewish converts unwilling to discard previous customs, gentiles hankering after the Law from which Christ had said that no jot or tittle should pass.<sup>186</sup> Origen's thoughtful arguments in mid-third-century Caesarea, Chrysostom's brilliant invective in Antioch in 386, Jerome's peevish denunciation from Bethlehem in 404 and Augustine's tussle with Aptus of African Tusruta in 418<sup>187</sup> all deal with the same problem.

It was linked with the sharing by Christians in the religious and social life of their Jewish neighbours. Origen argued in church on Sunday against what his hearers had heard from the Jews on Saturday.<sup>188</sup> In the mid-fourth century, the Synod of Laodicea and the *Apostolic Canons* prohibited Christians from resting on the Sabbath, joining in Jewish festivals, accepting festival gifts and unleavened bread, entering synagogues and praying in them, and lighting sabbath lamps

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<sup>181</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* iii 27-28, vi 17.1. Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* 47, PG VI 577. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* i 26.2, iii 6.1, v 1.3, PL VII 686-7, 919-20, 1122-3. H.J. Schoeps, 'Ebionite Christianity', *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 4 (1953) 219-24, J.A. Fitzmeyer, *Theological Studies* 16 (1955) 335-72.

<sup>182</sup> Schoeps (n. 181), Fitzmeyer (n. 181). Joan E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places, The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford 1993) argues against deriving from Ebionite tradition the fourth-century identification of Christian holy places.

<sup>183</sup> Colossians 11:16-17, 52.

<sup>184</sup> Galatians 3:23-5.

<sup>185</sup> Romans 10:4.

<sup>186</sup> Matthew 5:17-18.

<sup>187</sup> Augustine, *Letter* 196 (to Asellicus) 16, PL XXXIII 898. Possidius, *Life of Augustine* vii 13.8, PL XXXII 504.

<sup>188</sup> "If you produce today in church what you learned yesterday from the Jews, you are eating yesterday's sacrificial meat. But remember that the Lawgiver said the oblation of first-fruits should be fresh!" *Homily on Leviticus* v 8, PG XII 459.

for Jews.<sup>189</sup> That, and more, was what Chrysostom upbraided Christians for doing in Antioch.<sup>190</sup>

Jerome urged Augustine to greater severity. St Paul had rebuked St Peter for imposing the Jewish Law on gentiles,<sup>191</sup> but had observed it himself and circumcised Timothy.<sup>192</sup> So Augustine took Paul to mean that 'no one should forbid Jews from judaizing, although Christian teaching would not compel them to do so'.<sup>193</sup> 'Circumcision should not benefit gentiles, nor yet tell against Jews. Hence [Paul] judged that gentiles should not be held to the Law, nor Jews deterred from it.'<sup>194</sup> Jerome, in an overbearing letter, insisted that Jewish converts must abandon the Law 'or it is we whom they will turn into Jews.'<sup>195</sup> Augustine capitulated.<sup>196</sup>

How widespread judaizing was among Christians appears in striking survivals. In modern Greek, the days of the week are the Lord's Day, then Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth, Παρασκευή (Preparation) and Σάββατον (Sabbath). Many Greeks must once have solemnly prepared on Friday for a Jewish-type Sabbath. In parts of Sardinia, Friday is *cena pura*<sup>197</sup> (pure supper), recalling the Jewish sabbath meal held after nightfall on Friday. The Paschal Controversy ended with the date of the Christian Easter dissociated from the Jewish Passover on 14 Nisan; but the Greek word for Easter, Πάσχα, still corresponds to the Hebrew for Passover, פֶּסַח, *Peṣah*.

In the most important respect, the Church never abandoned its Jewish heritage. The religion of the New Testament remained firmly rooted in the Old. The Books of the Law were regularly read in churches as well as synagogues. 'What need to read this out in church?' Origen was asked. 'What are the laws of the Jews to us?' 'Let us turn to the Lord,' he replied, 'that He may take from us the veil of the letter, that Moses may appear to us not deformed but glorious.'<sup>198</sup> The Jews, unable to see beyond the letter, were held to understand the Old Testament 'carnally', too blind to see that it foreshadowed and prophesied Christ's coming. But they were its acknowledged custodians, for the learned among them knew Hebrew, which few Christians, besides Origen and Jerome, ever studied.

<sup>189</sup> *Laodicean Canons* 29, 37, 38, C.J. von Hefele — H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles* (Paris 1907) 1015, 1019. *Apostolic Canons* 44, 70, 71, Hefele<sup>2</sup> I 820, 822.

<sup>190</sup> Wilken (n. 16), 73-79.

<sup>191</sup> Galatians 2:11-14.

<sup>192</sup> Acts 16:3.

<sup>193</sup> *Letter* 82 (to Jerome) 10, *PL* XXXIII 279.

<sup>194</sup> *On Mendacity* 8 (ch. v), *PL* XL 492.

<sup>195</sup> *Letter* 75 (to Augustine from Jerome, 404) 4-11, *PL* XXXIII 252-7.

<sup>196</sup> *Letter* 82 (to Jerome, 405), *PL* XXXIII 275-91.

<sup>197</sup> *Chenabura* or *chenaura* in Central Sardinia, *cenabara* in the South.

<sup>198</sup> *Homily on Numbers* vii 2, *PG* XII 7.



Anyone doubting that those scriptural prophecies were authentic could be referred to the Jews. 'God has provided that the people which is an enemy to our faith should be the witness to our truth.'<sup>199</sup> The correspondence between St Augustine and St Jerome mentions a comic incident at Oea, modern Tripoli in Libya. Its Christian congregation rioted when their bishop read from Jerome's new translation that the prophet Jonah had sat outside Nineveh under an 'ivy tree'. They appealed to the local Jews, who said it was a tree of gourds, *cucurbitae* in Latin. To Jerome's mortification, the local Jews were right.<sup>200</sup>

The pluralist age was one of increasing conflict. Let us hope that some of the atrocity stories were false: that the Jews of Imnestar never did crucify a Christian boy during the Purim festival,<sup>201</sup> or the pagan schoolboys of Arethusa toss a bishop up and down and jab him with their styluses when already shorn of his ears.<sup>202</sup> But, well before 391, Christians were certainly destroying temples and images.<sup>203</sup> Libanius pleaded with Theodosius I to stop them.<sup>204</sup> If a Palestinian Jew came across a fragment of a pagan image, he was free to take it if it was non-figurative, but not a hand or foot.<sup>205</sup> In 388, a bishop incited monks to destroy the synagogue of Callinicum on the Euphrates, to the disgust of Theodosius I's general Timasio, but the satisfaction of St Ambrose, who in distant Milan urged the Emperor not to have it rebuilt.<sup>206</sup> Rescripts of 408 and 415 in east and west seek to protect Catholic worshippers from harassment by Jews, alone or with other adversaries.<sup>207</sup>

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- <sup>199</sup> Augustine, *On the Consensus of the Evangelists* i 40 (ch.xxvi), *PL* XXXV 1060. Cf. *Letter* 137 (to Volusianus) 16 (ch. iv), *PL* XXXIII 525. *Explanation of Psalm lxi* 14, *PL* XXXVI 739. *On Faith in things that are not seen* 9 (ch. vi), *PL* XL 179.
- <sup>200</sup> Jerome, *Letter* 71 (to Jerome from Augustine) 5, *PL* XXXIII 242-3. Jerome, *Letter* 75 (to Augustine) 22, *PL* XXXIII 263. J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome, His Life, Writings and Controversies* (London 1975) 266.
- <sup>201</sup> Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* vii 16, *PG* LXVII 770-1. Cassiodorus, *Tripartite History* xi 13, *PL* LXIX 1195. Theophanes, *Chronography* 83 de Boor.
- <sup>202</sup> Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* v 10, *PG* LXVII 1245.
- <sup>203</sup> G. Fowden, 'Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Roman Empire', *Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1978) 53-78.
- <sup>204</sup> 'For the temples', *Oration* xxx.
- <sup>205</sup> *M. <sup>a</sup>bhōdāh Zārāh* 3:2.
- <sup>206</sup> Ambrose, *Letter* 40 (to Theodosius I) 23, *PL* XVI 1109-10, *Letter* 41 (to his sister) 27, *PL* XVI 1120-1.
- <sup>207</sup> Theodosius II (Constantinople, 29 May 408, to the East) forbade Jews to mock Christianity at the Purim Festival, *C.Th.* xvi 8.18, *C.J.* i 9.11 = Linder (n. 58), 36. Honorius (Ravenna, 24 Nov. 408, to Africa) forbade Jews, Donatists and Heretics to disrupt Catholic sacraments, *C.Th.* i xvi 5.44 = Linder (n. 58), 37. Honorius (Ravenna, 15 Jan. 415, to Italy, Illyricum and Africa) forbade Jews, Donatists, Heretics and Pagans to harass Catholics, *Const.Sir.* 14, *C.Th.* xvi 5.43, *C.Th.* xvi 2.31, *C.Th.* xvi 5.46, *C.J.* i 3.10 = Linder (n. 58), 38.

But there were no horrors on the scale of the twentieth century. The conflict of faiths had nothing to do with economic envy or racialism. Fourth-century history has few martyrs to compare with the 'glorious army' who gave their lives for the Christian faith before 312, or with the Jewish martyrs of Hadrian's time: Rabbi 'Aqiba who died under torture, pronouncing 'Hear, o Israel' with a smile on his lips,<sup>208</sup> Hananiah b. Teradyon, burnt for publicly teaching the Torah,<sup>209</sup> and Rabbi José b. Halputa who 'gave his life for the rite of circumcision in Laodicea.'<sup>210</sup> The abolition of pagan rites caused little bloodshed. And for all their new disabilities, the Jews survived. 'They are not killed', said St Augustine, 'they are necessary for believing gentiles.'<sup>211</sup> Their existing synagogues, festivals and sabbaths were officially protected.<sup>212</sup> Theirs became the only tolerated non-Christian religion, held to be God-given under the Old Dispensation;<sup>213</sup> its stiff-necked devotees would be converted to the New before<sup>214</sup> or on<sup>215</sup> the Last Day, thus completing God's grand design for mankind.

'Things have come to a pretty pass', Lord Melbourne quipped, 'when religion is allowed to invade the sphere of private life.' In the late empire it had not completely done so. Rabbi Me'ir ruled against Jews going to theatres or races because the entertainments there were in honour of idols.<sup>216</sup> The Antiochene Jews whom Chrysostom reviled for backing dancers and 'being wounded for chario-

208 B. *Berākōth* 16b

209 B. *Sanhedrīn* 32b, B. <sup>a</sup>*bhōdāh Zārāh* 17b-18a, *Šiphrah Deut.* 307.

210 J. <sup>a</sup>*bhōdāh Zārāh* 3:1 [II.P].

211 *Explanation of Psalm lviii* 12-14, *Sermon* i 21, *PL XXXVI* 705.

212 Rescripts protecting synagogues: Theodosius I (Constantinople, 29 Sept. 393, for the East), *C.Th.* ii 1.10, *C.Th.* xvi 8.9 = Linder (n. 58), 21. Arcadius (Constantinople, 17 June 397, for Illyricum), *C.Th.* xvi 8. 12 = Linder (n. 58), 25. Theodosius II (Constantinople, 6 Aug. 420, for Illyricum), *C.Th.* xvi 8.21, *C.J.* i 9.14 = Linder (n. 58), 46. Theodosius II (Constantinople, 9 Apr. 423, for the East), *C.Th.* xvi 8.26, *C.Th.* xvi 9.5, *C.J.* i 9.16 = Linder (n. 58), 48. Honorius (Ravenna, 26 July 412, for Italy) protected synagogues, Jewish sabbaths and feast days, *C.Th.* xvi 8.20, *C.Th.* ii 8.26, *C.Th.* viii 8.8, *C.J.* i 9.13 = Linder (n. 58), 40. Theodosius II (Constantinople, 15 Feb. 423, for the East) ordered compensation to be made for wrongfully alienated synagogue property; existing synagogues to be protected in future, but no new ones built, *C.Th.* xvi 8.25 = Linder (n. 58), 47. Theodosius II (Constantinople, 31 Jan. 438, for the East): new synagogues should not be built, but old ones may be repaired, *Nov.Th.* 3, *C.J.* i 9.18, *C.J.* i 7.5 = Linder (n. 58), 54.

213 Augustine, *Tractate against the Jews* 9, *PL XLII* 58. *Against Faustus* x 3, *PL XLII* 244. *Explanation of Psalm lviii*, *Sermon* ii 2, *PL XLII* 707.

214 Basil, *Letter* 45 (to a lapsed monk), *PG XXXII* 369.

215 Augustine, *City of God* xx 30, 3, *PL XLI* 706.

216 J. <sup>a</sup>*bhōdāh Zārāh* 1:7 [I.E], B. <sup>a</sup>*bhōdāh Zārāh* 18b.

teers'<sup>217</sup> were ignorant or heedless of this ruling. Christians could be just as keen on chariot-races.<sup>218</sup> A hermit's blessing once brought Christian horses to victory.<sup>219</sup> Shared wordly pleasures mitigate religious antipathy: Jews and Christians must sometimes have been wounded for the same charioteers. Rabbi Nathan conceded that Jews might attend gladiatorial shows if they shouted to spare the life of the loser.<sup>220</sup> A rescript of 425, to keep Sunday special, assumes that Jews frequented theatres and racecourses.<sup>221</sup>

The Church Fathers' antagonism to the Jews is a painful inheritance for modern Christians.<sup>222</sup> But there is also a not wholly incongruous legacy of goodwill.<sup>223</sup> Clement of Alexandria, evaluating classical traditions in the light of the Bible, wrote not a word against the Jews. Origen never forgot that Christians shared with them a common history, the same scriptures, the same Father in Heaven.<sup>224</sup> Even Chrysostom recognized that conversions could only be won by 'persuasion, reason and gentleness'.<sup>225</sup> Augustine ends his *Tractate against the Jews* with an injunction to speak to them in love and humility, without boasting or insults.<sup>226</sup>

Justin Martyr's *Dialogue* with Trypho the Jew stands almost at the beginning of patristic literature. It is conducted in terms of respect and affection, on the basis of a common interest in Greek philosophy. Trypho asks searching questions and on parting concedes no more than that he will ponder Justin's arguments.<sup>227</sup> It was the same common interest that drew me to Addi Wasserstein in 1962-3 when he was my kind and generous professor at Leicester University. I am glad I did not, like Justin, monopolize the conversation. He never did so himself. Drawing him out was a delight. From him I gained insights into Greek philosophy that Oxford had not vouchsafed, and, for the first time in my life (I

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<sup>217</sup> *Against the Jews* i 4, PG XLVIII 848.

<sup>218</sup> Chrysostom, *Homily 58 on John 9:17*, PG LIX 320.

<sup>219</sup> Jerome, *Life of Hilarion* 20, PL XXIII 37.

<sup>220</sup> *J. 'a bhōdāh Zārāh* 1:7 [I.I]

<sup>221</sup> Theodosius II (1 Feb. 425, for the East) forbade theatres and racecourse entertainment on Sundays and Christian festivals, also to Jews and pagans, *C.Th.* xv 5.5 = Linder (n. 58), 50.

<sup>222</sup> Dr James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: a study in the origins of antisemitism* (London 1934).

<sup>223</sup> A. Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos, A Bird's eye view of Christian apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge 1935), "compiled to help ... win Jews to Christ ... or at least, to protect Christians against the arguments of their Jewish neighbours", does not deny Parkes' thesis but claims to complement it.

<sup>224</sup> De Lange (n. 73), 135.

<sup>225</sup> *On St Babylas the Martyr, against Julian and the Gentiles* 3, PG L 537.

<sup>226</sup> 8.51, PL XLII 51.

<sup>227</sup> PG VI 472-799.

should have known better) a measure of understanding of the value of his religion for today's world. The humane learning and shining integrity of this 'Israelite without guile' will continue to bear fruit, bringing closer the reconciliation between faiths and peoples for which we pray.

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