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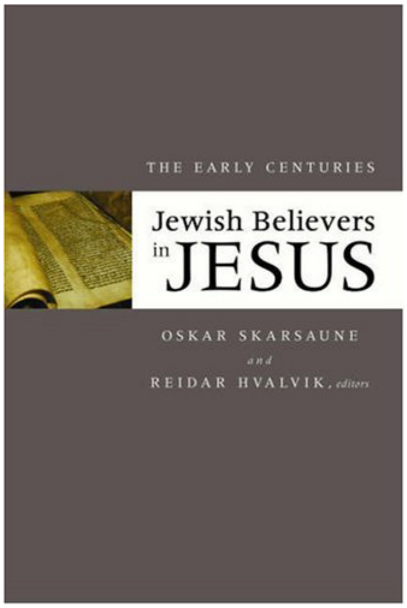

Skarsaune, Oskar, and Reidar Hvalvik, eds.

Jewish Believers in Jesus

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On a mosaic of the church of St. Sabina in Rome, built under Pope Celestine (422–432), there are two female figures next to a great historical inscription. Below one figure we can read: *eclesia* [*sic*] *e circumcisione*; below the other figure: *eclesia e gentibus*. Above the former is Peter, while above the latter is Paul. From this composition and from many others in Rome we can learn that there was in the fifth century still a certain notion that the church was originally divided in two. There were two brands of Christianity: a church of Jewish origin and one of Gentiles. And if there is a notion that there was a church of Jewish origin, one certainly realized that Judaism was the bedrock of Christianity. What was this church of Jewish origin, and how did this church fit into the process of emerging Christianity?

In scholarly literature of the last decennia, some important studies have appeared dealing with the emerging Christianity from different angles. Discussing the relations between Judaism and Christianity, James Dunn wrote *The Parting of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991), in which he tries to describe in an overview the way in which Christianity emerged as a religion distinct from its mother religion. Clearly echoing and challenging Dunn's book, Adam Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed edited *The Ways That Never*

Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (TSAJ 95; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

In the study of the process of emerging Christianity, the position of Jews who accepted Jesus' teachings is one of the more fascinating aspects. It is this aspect that is the theme of this collection of essays edited by the Norwegian scholar Oskar Skarsaune and his colleague, Reidar Hvalvik. In this collection the editors attempt to grasp the very complex phenomenon of how Jews during the first centuries of Christianity participated in both brands of Christianity.

Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries consists of six parts. In the first part are two chapters dealing with problems of definition, method, and sources. One of the most important questions is how one defines "Jewish believers in Jesus." According to quite a few scholars (e.g., Simon, Claude, Mimouni), the definition of a Jewish Christian was a Jew who believed in Jesus and at the same time continued to observe a halakic lifestyle. Skarsaune explains in the first article that the editors chose to focus on the criterion of ethnicity as a basis for their definition, not on ideology. He argues that one can find two types of Jewish adherents to Jesus' teachings: those Jews who believed in Jesus and at the same time abandoned their Jewish way of life; and Jews who believed in Jesus and at the same time continued to observe the Jewish way of life. Thus, Skarsaune is not only interested in those people of Jewish descent who observed Jewish halakah, but he wants to include in his research those Jews who became more or less "orthodox" Christians within mixed communities. After explaining his definition, he addresses some questions of theoretical and practical nature. For example, Skarsaune argues that his description "Jewish believer in Jesus" as well as the typification "Jewish Christian" are not only modern constructions, but he suggests that "Jewish believer (in Jesus)" can be used to encapsulate the terms most often used (5). However, he does not investigate the possibility of alternatives to be found in early Christian literature. In passing, he does pay attention to the important question of who can be considered to be Jewish.

Skarsaune also explains the different parts of the book in this first article book. He defines the task of their project as twofold. The editors wanted the authors to provide as much information as possible about Jewish followers of Jesus in the ancient sources. Because the sources are usually quite explicit in indicating when someone is Jewish by birth, this is the easiest part. However, the authors will also "identify some sources, fragments of sources, pieces of exegetical expositions, and the like, that *came from* Jewish believers, were *authored* by them" (17). Skarsaune realizes that this is a difficult task, but he says that "There is no reasonable doubt that the named and un-named Jewish believers of the New Testament writings in fact were Jewish believers" (17). Thus, when patristic sources say that some believers in Jesus were Jewish, there is no compelling reason to distrust that information. Skarsaune wants to go even further. He assumes that there were Jews who became "ordinary" Christians in a predominantly Gentile Christian surrounding. But when no one happens to indicate that this or that person is Jewish by birth, how do we know? Skarsaune wants to use knowledge of Hebrew and oral tradition as a cultural-linguistic criterion. Thus, while in part 2 of the book one can find articles on followers of Jesus from Jewish stock, in part 3 contains articles focusing "on those instances in which Jewish Christian authorship of quoted or used sources can be shown to be certain or probable"(20).

In the second article of this part, James Carleton Paget tries to trace the terms "Jewish Christian" and "Jewish Christianity" in the history of research (22–52). He looks for the origin of the term "Jewish Christian" and shows the various definitions used in scholarly literature. He concludes that a term such as "Jewish Christian" is to a certain extent tautologous and suggests that one could settle on a term such as "Torah observant," while at the same time introducing subcategories such as "Ebionite" (51).

After these introductory articles in part 1, one find in part 2 studies on a kind of "who's who" of the so-called Jewish believers in the New Testament and related material. Richard Bauckham tries to trace the Jewish followers of Jesus in the early Jerusalem community (55–95). Donald A. Hagner tries to describe Paul as a Jewish believer according to his letters (96–120), while Reidar Hvalvik deals with the picture of Paul according to the book of Acts (121–53). In a separate article he gives a prosopography of Jews in Acts who became followers of Jesus (154–78). In the next article the same author looks for Jewish followers of Jesus and other Jewish influences in the Roman church until the early second century (179–216). Peter Hirschberg (217–38) describes the significance given to Jewish believers in the Gospel of John and in Revelation.

As indicated above, one can find in the third part studies on the literary heritage of Jewish believers. Thus, Craig A. Evans tries to describe the Jewish Christian Gospel tradition (241–77). Starting with the Gospel of Matthew, he discusses extracanonical texts that are probably part of Jewish Gospels. Torleif Elgvin discusses Jewish Christian editing of Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (278–304), while Graham Stanton deals with Jewish Christian elements in the Pseudo-Clementine writings (305–24). The next two chapters belong together. In chapter 12 (325–78), Skarsaune concentrates on fragments of Jewish Christian literature purposely presented in the literature of a Greek or Latin father as quotes. In chapter 13 (379–416) he tries to determine what Jewish Christian sources, both written and oral, were used by some early and Latin fathers in writing their own works.

Part 4 deals with the literary evidence regarding alleged Jewish Christian groups such as the Ebionim and the Nazoreans. In chapter 14 (419–62) Skarsaune presents the Ebionites, while in chapter 15 Wolfram Kinzig describes the Nazoreans (463–87). In chapter 16, Gunnar af Hällström and Skarsaune try to evaluate Cerinthus, Elxai, and other alleged Jewish Christian teachers (488–502).

Other literary and archaeological evidence for Jewish believers is dealt with in part 5. One can find in this section another article by Skarsaune, where he looks for the traces of Jewish believers in Greek and Latin Literature (ch. 17; 505–67). Thus he investigates authors such as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Celsus, and, of course, Jerome. The Syriac literature is researched by Sten Hidal (ch. 18; 568–80). One can find important and sometimes even revealing views on the relations between Jews and Christians and thus also on those Jews who became followers of the teaching of Jesus in a very specific genre of literature: the *contra Iudaeos* dialogues. The most famous is the *Dialogue with Trypho* by Justin (ca. 160). These texts argue for the truth of Christianity based primarily on Old Testament prooftexts. Because Skarsaune already dealt with Justin, Lawrence Lahey discusses in chapter 19 (581–639) the other evidence that directly addresses the purposes and implications of Christian *contra Iudaeos* literature in the first six centuries. In chapter 20 (640–58) Anders Ekenberg discusses liturgical texts and church orders. In a long and interesting chapter (659–709), Philip S. Alexander tries to identify and to evaluate the references to Jewish Christians in the rabbinic texts. He argues that in the Tannaitic period it seems that the rabbis adopted a strategy of trying to separate rabbinical Jews and Jewish Christians. They mentioned Jewish disciples as little as possible. However, in Amoraic sources there are more identifiable references to Christianity. Stories of rabbis disputing with *minim* become more frequent. Alexander suggests that this could be an indication of the growing confidence of the rabbis (687). In the last chapter of this part (ch. 22; 710–41), James F. Strange reviews, quite critically, archeological research on alleged artifacts of Jewish Christianity. He argues that it is very difficult to know with any degree of certainty that Christianity, either in its early Gentile forms or in its Jewish forms, developed a recognizable iconography before the fourth century; no one can identify certain remains as Christian or as Jewish Christian.

In part 6, the last section, (745–81), Skarsaune tries to sketch a comprehensive picture. He argues that the different contributions may be compared to smaller and larger pieces of a fragmented and incompletely preserved historical jigsaw puzzle. He tries to sketch the basic features of the historical board on which we can place the pieces. He investigates questions such as how close Jews and Christians were in late antiquity and how many Jewish believers in Jesus there were. There are more than one hundred pages of bibliography (783–884). An index of modern authors, of subjects, and of ancient sources complete this voluminous collection.

In the introduction Skarsaune reveals that, if he had known the magnitude and difficulty of a project such as this, he certainly would have thought twice about undertaking this project. The result of his work is an impressive collection of material. There is a lot to learn, and New Testament as well as patristics scholars will find a lot of material to inspire new studies. As is to be expected in collections such as this and as is to be applauded, the points of view expressed in the various contributions often differ. As is to be expected also in such an impressive collection, there are some differences in quality between the essays. Some articles are more solid and convincing than others.

This makes reviewing difficult, and which reviewer is capable of assessing all the articles? There are not many scholars like Skarsaune, who manage to have scholarly knowledge on such different themes. That was the reason for the present reviewers to write this review as a joint venture. The first reviewer is a patristics scholar and ancient historian who is finishing her dissertation on Christian-Jewish relations in early council texts. The second is a New Testament scholar with Judaistic expertise. Even in such a joint venture, we can make only some notations on some of the articles in the book; we also realize that these notations are always relative, when dealing with so many articles with different angles.

The first notations concern the structure and content of the book. As said above, part 3 contains articles focusing “on those instances in which Jewish Christian authorship of quoted or used sources can be shown to be certain or probable” (20). It is in this context that the Gospel of Matthew receives special attention. Of course, it is quite clear that Matthew had been traditionally viewed as the most Jewish of the four New Testament Gospels, but we would expect a thorough discussion of these traditions. It is not enough to proclaim that the Jewishness of the Gospel is profound and systemic. On the one hand, we must ask whether it is at all possible to know whether Matthew really was Jewish. We can only assume that Matthew shapes his story about Jesus and his mission while voicing the concerns of his own audience. In the introduction, Skarsaune argues that there is a strong a priori probability of Jewish Christian origin for Christian text and traditions that are based on the Hebrew text of the Bible. However, Maarten J. J. Menken showed in a thorough and detailed analysis of the Old Testament quotations in Matthew that this Evangelist seems to use as quotations a biblical text that can be described as a revised LXX (*Matthew’s Bible: The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist* [BETL 173; Leuven: Peeters, 2004]). What does it mean that the writer of Matthew probably used the Greek Bible for his quotations? Could that be a contra-indication that he was Jewish? Of course not. We all know that Philo was a Jew who wrote in Greek. It only shows that it is not sufficient to say that the tradition says that Matthew wrote in Hebrew. In this context, we could ask the question again: How do we know that Matthew was Jewish? What can we learn about him from what we find in his Gospel?

On the other hand, we must ask? Why there is no attention paid to the Gospels of Mark or Luke? As one of the reviewers argued some years ago, we can assume a high esteem for Scripture and its interpretation in the communities for which Luke wrote (Bart J. Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture* [SNTA 14; Leuven: Peeters, 1989]). Could the fact that Luke uses hermeneutics reminiscent of the later rabbinic hermeneutics tell us something about the community for which he wrote? Jacob Jervell, for example, argued years ago that the key to understanding Luke-Acts is that it is not Gentile Christianity but Jewish Christian theology that is most influential in Luke-Acts ("The Mighty Minority," in Jervell, *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984], 26–51). According to Jervell, the idea that Luke-Acts, the two-volume work, is a product of Gentile Christianity is more based on the common view that it stems from the first great era of Gentile Christianity than on internal reasons (40). Jervell argues that the supposed Gentile-Christian author Luke presents to us more Jewish and Jewish Christian material than the majority of New Testament authors do. Jervell refers (40–41), for example, to elements such as the fact that Jesus is born in the bosom of the Torah (Luke 1–2) and that the resurrection of Jesus is defined as the hope of Israel (Acts 26:6–7; 24:15; 28:20). Thus, according to Jervell, Luke-Acts can teach us something about Jewish Christianity. This remarks leads to a specific question regarding the structure of this book: Why are Mark and Luke not discussed on their own? We would have preferred a discussion of all the existing New Testament literature with a more open research question. The editors could have chosen the canonical or the more or less historical perspective.

The plan of this volume is also at other places a little bit unexpected. Why start in chapter 3 by describing James as such a Jewish believer, while Paul is dealt with in the next chapter? Would it not be more logical to start with the Pauline writings as the oldest part of the New Testament? Also elsewhere the relations between Acts and the writings of Paul seem to us not balanced. An example seems to be the remark on Paul in Acts. Hvalvik describes the situation in Corinth according to Acts. He says that the development he describes is confirmed by Paul's letters to the church of Corinth. It is possible that we may read too much between the lines, but in our opinion the relations between these biblical books is different. It is Paul's letter that is the oldest document.

The passage mentioned here can also serve as an example of another notation to this book. The concept "Jewish believer" is used too broadly. Skarsaune argues that it is a term that can encapsulate the terms most often used. However, we are not so sure that it is wise to look for such a model. It is possible that with such a model one can no longer see the nuances used by Luke.

Hvalvik (133) stresses that in Acts 19:9 Luke depicts a break in Paul's relationship with the Jews in the synagogue. He says that the conflict started with opposition from the nonbelieving Jews. He argues that Paul reacted by withdrawing from the synagogue. He was separated from the disciples. According to Hvalvik, Luke depicts here the leave-taking of the Jesus-believers from the synagogue. After dealing with Acts 19, Hvalvik (134) turns to a story a little bit earlier in Acts and refers to Acts 18, where it is said that Paul left the synagogue. In this passage we hear about positive (18:4, 8) and negative reactions among Jews to Paul's preaching. This is an illustration that the preaching of the gospel caused division with the synagogue and led to the establishment of a new mixed community. Hvalvik rightly argues that nothing in this story indicates that Paul's break with the synagogue constituted a break with the Jews in general. He assumes that the fact that the Jewish believers left the synagogue had decisive consequences for them, such as separation from a social network and less possibility of living according to the Jewish customs. He even thinks that this decision furthered the assimilation of Jews into the Gentile Christian majority (35).

This seems to us slightly overstressing the evidence. Can we really conclude this from Acts? Another question is whether the designations used in this article concur with the data in Acts itself. What is the meaning of a designation such as "non-believing Jews" (133)? This designation seems to us already quite suggestive and even inept. Is it compatible with Luke's own terms for this category? It is quite clear that those Jews did believe. They believed in God.

As we saw above, Hvalvik stresses that Luke depicts in Acts 19:9 the leave-taking of the Jesus believers from the synagogue, but is it possible to reconstruct such a situation from the story told in Acts? Let us look at Acts 18:7, the other text mentioned by Hvalvik. Acts 18:7 says that Paul left the synagogue. In exegetical literature this and the preceding pronouncement combined with a gesture are seen as programmatic. In the interpretation of Luke-Acts, it is often suggested that Luke depicts a farewell to the Jews. Luke 4:16–30 is considered programmatic and a prefiguration of the negative reaction of the Jews in Acts, while Acts 13:46–47; 18:6; and 28:26–28 are seen as the three chief witnesses for the rejection thesis. However, as argued elsewhere, these harsh words against Israel are only understandable against the background of Scripture, where they are intended to provoke repentance (see, e.g. Bart J. Koet, "Paul in Rome [Acts 28,16–31]: A Farewell to Judaism?" in idem, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture*, 119–39).

In contrast to what one would expect after a final farewell from the Jews, in Acts 18:8 we hear of a positive response at Paul's appearance among Jews as well as among non-Jews (as is to be assumed, when Luke speaks of "many of the Corinthians"). We see that Paul stays in the confines and thus in the realm of the synagogue. Luke even says that in a very symbolic way: Paul went to the house that was next door to the synagogue; in fact, he says it even more precisely: having a common wall with the same synagogue (συνομοροῦσα). Luke seems to invent a new word combination to show Paul's closeness to the synagogue.[1] The fact that Luke shows that Paul remains spatially as near to the synagogue as possible is more or less a metaphor for his being as closely connected to the synagogue as can be and that thus Luke makes a point about Paul's desire for a continuing relation to Jews. Therefore, the Gentile mission is rooted in Scripture (see Isa 49:1–6). When Paul goes to the Gentiles, Luke shows that Paul stays as *close as possible to the synagogue*.[2]

In Acts 18 we encounter in a nutshell the theme of the book being reviewed here. The author of Luke uses a quite concrete image to depict symbolically the complex relation between Judaism and the movement of Jesus' disciples: They share the foundation, they even share to a certain extent the door, and in the meantime they live in different rooms. Using images to depict realities is sometimes less problematic than definitions describing phenomena. So, describing those followers of Jesus as Jewish believers of Jesus could be as problematic as using the designation "Jewish Christian." Although Skarsaune concedes that there is no set and fixed terminology in patristic sources, he claims that the designation "Jewish believer (in Jesus)" can be said to encapsulate the terms most used.

However, as Bauckham shows, we can gain some insight into the early church's understanding of itself from various designations it used of itself, such as "the Way," "the holy ones," "the *ekklēsia* of God," "the disciples," "brothers and sisters," and even "the Nazarenes." Using the terms of the New Testament to describe the followers of Jesus could help also to clarify what is typical for the Jewish followers of Jesus. It is not only specifically their believing in him, but also their being his *disciples*. They follow Jesus as their teacher.

We mentioned above that the third part of the book is devoted to "Jewish believers" in late antiquity. Now we turn to some remarks regarding this part. Chapter 19 focuses on the type of texts known as "dialogues." These are writings of a predominantly theological nature on doctrinal issues. They are a means with which to express a certain point of view in doctrinal controversies and are thus mostly polemical in nature. The Christian authors used classical examples to underline their argumentation. These classical dialogues were similar to those encountered in rabbinical circles, where there was a mixture of actual discussion and mostly theological literary argumentation. It is therefore interesting to note that the author of this chapter (Lahey) suggests that these works “arise from actual Christian-Jewish theological interaction,” while in the next paragraph he rightly states that “none of the dialogues is a complete transcript of a discussion” (582). He then focuses on a possible object for these discussions, suggesting that they were “not primarily catechetical and that they were directed towards an audience that did not need to be instructed in some essential elements of Christian morality” (584). He suggests that “it could also indicate a Jewish audience that would already share a great amount of Christian morality.” As an example, he uses part of one of John Chrysostom’s homilies. Yet who was the intended audience? We know that at least some of his homilies were directed toward a Christian audience who were attracted by the Jewish feasts and festivals.[3]

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[1] Using the TLG (Ibycus) Databank, we could not find this word in the whole Greek literature except here and in quotation from Acts 18 by John Chrystostom.

[2] Bart J. Koet, "As Close to the Synagogue as Can Be: Paul in Corinth (Acts 18, 1–18)," in: R. Bieringer, ed., *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 125; Leuven: Peeters, 1996), 397–415; now also idem, *Dreams and Scripture in Luke-Acts: Collected Essays* (CBET 43; Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 173–193, esp. 186.

As dialogues, especially in the first centuries, were for indulging in doctrinal discussions, it is not surprising that the topics are those that touch on central issues of the debate between Christians and others, in this case Jews—hence the topics discussed, such as the Trinity, messianism, and the traditional issues of law, circumcision, and Jesus as the Christ (see 585, where these topics are referred to specifically). What follows is a survey of dialogues after Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho* up to the sixth-century anonymous *Dialogue with the Jews*, a useful list of texts for those wishing further study on the topic. It is a pity that the author, although clearly well versed on the topic, has neglected to add the fundamental tome by Voss to his list of suggested further reading.[4] Further, the list of dialogues is confusing in that each text discussed is then indicated by an abbreviation. However, after ten pages it is impossible for the reader to remember these abbreviations, making it somewhat confusing reading in the latter part of the chapter.

The second part of the chapter investigates the role of these texts in later Christian-Jewish interaction. The author gives the impression of trying to find many different examples of an actual Jewish audience for these, mostly homiletic, texts. To underline his argument, he uses as possible evidence for this Jewish audience a canon from one of the councils of Toledo (c. 9, Toledo XII in 681). Yet the aforementioned examples of *Contra Iudaeos* texts are dialogues. The dialogues could be the result of a genuine encounter; on the other hand, this is never really clear. Council texts are a totally different type of source material.

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[3] R. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews* (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2004) 66–67; H. Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999) 320–21; M. B. Cunningham and P. Allen, *Preacher and Audience Studies in Early Christianity and Byzantine Homiletics* (vol. 1 of *A New History of the Sermon*; Leiden: Brill, 1998).

[4] B. R. Voss, *Der Dialog in der Frühchristlichen Literatur* (Munich: Fink, 1970); see also J. Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), esp. 103–4.

Dialogues are part of what can be indicated to be writings by Christian writers or church fathers. They may be categorized as "theological treatises."

The closeness of Christianity to Judaism, from which it issued, meant that during the period of extracting itself from its roots Christianity emphasized its position and as a result argued for a decrease in Judaism's relevance. It is therefore not surprising that Christianity used the same sources as Judaism to claim why Judaism had ceased in relevance: Scripture (Old Testament versus the New) and messianism (Jesus as the Messiah), to show that Christianity was the only authentic religion. Thus, anti-Jewish polemics were born, and gradually even the charge of deicide entered the debate. The result was the development of the theory of a lack of genuine belief of Jews, the accusation of deicide, the belief that the historical situation shows that God was punishing the Jews for their mistakes. These are the central themes of Christian anti-Jewish writings (see G. I. Langmuir, *History, Religion and Antisemitism* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990], 285). These thoughts mostly developed from the second century onwards, after 135 C.E. The idea of deicide developed after John wrote his Gospel in the late first century as it gradually became clear that the Jews would not follow Jesus (ibid., 288). The anti-Jewish writings existed after the first century in patristic polemics, now well known.[5] Occasionally the works were collected as testimonies or more complete monographs on a certain theme related to Jews.[6] Also used as a way of transmitting the message was the dialogue with a (possibly fictive) opponent. Homilies were occasionally used (e.g., Tertullian, *Adv. Iud.*; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*; John Chrysostom, *Adv. Iud*). All these writings start with Old Testament exegesis in order to instruct the listeners and readers about Judaism. Therefore, the majority of the anti-Jewish writings of this type (theological treatises) were to teach the Christian community that the church had replaced the synagogue, using all possible examples from Abraham onward. The themes were repetitive: Mosaic law was no longer valid and subsequent argument on the inferiority of Jewish law and cult to Christianity; Christianity as the true Israel; the new covenant; messianism completed in Jesus, and all this can be seen through the historical events showing that God was punishing the people.

Some scholars have indicated before that church father texts on the whole provide little concrete evidence for the actual contacts between Christians and Jews and that therefore other source material must be used. Archaeological evidence can provide useful additional information, although only together with evidence from other sources. On its own, archaeological material provides little information. What probably happened in antiquity was that people easily borrowed from others what they wished to use, without a genuine desire to connect closely to that religious group. This also happened in Judaism: Jews were involved in many aspects of non-Jewish daily life (theater, jobs etc.) around them without wishing to appropriate the religion. It is known that Jews were well integrated into late antique society. They used the same workshops as pagans for their sarcophagi, their synagogues were in accessible parts of the cities, and they held many different positions in society. Archeological evidence shows that Jews were buried in the same cemeteries as their Gentile neighbors, spoke Greek, had Greek names, yet would adhere to their Jewish religious practices (L. Rutgers, *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism* [CBET 20; Leuven: Peeters, 1998], esp. 15–44).

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[5] Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* (ca. 150; PG 6:471ff.), Melito of Sardis on the Easter date (late second century), the second- to third-century Tertullian and his *Adversus Iudaeos* (PL 2:633ff.) and *Adv. Marcion.* (PL 2, 1107ff.), to Eusebius of Caesarea's *Demonstr. Evang.* (PG 22:9ff.).

[6] See, e.g., M. C. Albl, "*And Scripture Cannot be Broken*"*: The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (NovTSup 96; Leiden: Brill, 1999).

Councils are meetings attended by representatives of a number of individual churches to resolve problems in common, often on doctrinal or disciplinary issues. Council texts can give a good insight into the life of the church at the time.[7] Church council rulings had little judicial control over Jews. Church rulings on Judaism were directed against the Christian faithful where they were in contact with Jews or were accused of judaizing practices. Rulings against Jews occur mostly where they were in touch with Christians. Eventually, the church leaders felt this contact was too close in all areas and started issuing rulings against Jews alone. This happened mostly from the sixth century onward, when political and religious relations were close.[8]

What we therefore see is that church Father writings, dialogues or homilies, must be studied within their historical framework, and supplemented with evidence from other literary and nonliterary material. That the situation was far more complex than suggested can especially be seen the literary and archeological material for this period (late antiquity). The relationship between Christians and Jews was far closer, friendlier, and more natural for a far longer period than church fathers preferred to see. At times there is a difference between what Christian writings suggest and the actual situation on the ground, while at times these do seem to agree (see Chrysostom and Antioch). The best option is to study as many sources as possible in order to arrive at a more complete picture. Whether or not conversion was an issue, Christian writings do indicate a close relationship between the two groups, as Lahey, the author of this last section, rightly concludes (637).

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[7] That council texts refer not only to theoretical cases can be seen in the fact that the situations discussed are also found in similar descriptions in church father texts and, e.g., Theophanes' *Chronographia* (PG 108). See also, on the issue of re-creating society from ancient legal texts, J.-J. Aubert and B. Sirks, eds., *Speculum Iuris Roman Law as a Reflection of Social and Economic Life in Antiquity* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2005) esp. 169. See Rutgers, *Hidden Heritage*, 209–19, on the problems of using the Theodosian Code as a historical source. The Theodosian Code is a Roman legal code and consists, as is usual in Roman law, of a compilation of older and newer legislation. That it is difficult to discern the actual situation from this text is obvious, yet the fact that the various legislation against, e.g., proselytism continues shows that at least the faith was still attractive to non-Jews. This can only be enhanced by the archaeological evidence put forward by the author.

[8] See from the sixth century onwards the council rulings against the Jews, e.g., at Toledo and in Gaul. See also my work on late antiquity and Christian-Jewish relations (Elizabeth Boddens Hosang, "Establishing Boundaries," Ph.D. thesis, University of Tilburg, forthcoming, 2008).

At several places in the book we were a little surprised about the way Jewish elements were described. For example, P. S. Alexander writes that, as rabbinic influence grew, the nonrabbinic groups, including the Jewish Christians, must have found themselves beleaguered, increasingly "ghettoized" (679). Although the term is in quotation marks, in this way it is suggested that it was the Jews (who later were to live in ghettos) who first drove Jewish Christians into the ghetto. Of course, we also have some wishes. On page 571 it is mentioned that the Gospel of Thomas is seen as belonging to the Syriac tradition. Sten Hidal argues that the Jewish character must not be exaggerated nor the gnostic one, but there is also literature suggesting that there is quite some Jewish-Christian material in Thomas.[9] We were also surprised at the lack of focus on liturgical issues.[10]

In a tome such as this, it is absolutely necessary to discuss the exact meaning of the Greek word πιστεύω. As each classical dictionary teaches us, it is not always necessary to translate it by "to believe." The well-known Liddell, Scott, and Jones lexicon lists as possible meanings "trust," "put faith in," and "rely on" (1407). Although the word "believing" is crucial for this book, as is clear from its title, there is no discussion of the meaning of πιστεύω. "Coming to faith" (e.g., 158, 163, 189) as a description of what is happening in the New Testament context is quite a particular translation and may be even somewhat anachronistic.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that the abundance of source material will be of great use to anyone wishing to investigate these topics or periods. The material provided will lead to further study of "Jewish believers" or may help one to find another designation for this group of Jewish disciples of Jesus.

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[9] See, e.g., Margaretha Lelyveld, *Les logia de la vie dans l' Évangile selon Thomas : A la recherche d'une tradition et d'une rédaction* (NHS 34 ; Leiden: Brill, 1987).

[10] G. Rouwhorst, "Christlicher Gottesdienst und der Gottesdienst Israels. Forschungsgeschichte, historische Interaktionen, Theologie," in M. Klöckener, A. Häussling, and R. Messner, *Theologie des Gottesdienstes* (Gottesdienst der Kirche, Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft 2.2; Regensburg, 2008), 489–570.