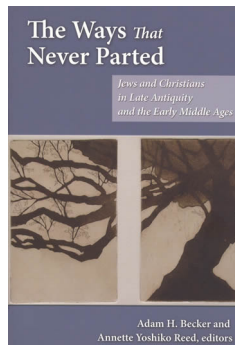


○ **REVIEW OF ADAM H. BECKER AND ANNETTE YOSHIKO REED (EDS), *THE WAYS THAT NEVER PARTED: JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES* (MINNEAPOLIS: FORTRESS, 2007)**

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This volume is a paperback edition of a 2003 volume published by J.C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck). The essays are derived from a joint Oxford-Princeton research partnership held in 2002 and centers upon the complexities of the relationship between Jews and Christians through the early centuries. The central premise of the book is that there never was a clear and clean break between Christianity and Judaism. In the new preface to this paperback edition Becker and Reed set out their purpose as being to demonstrate the inadequacies of any monolithic model of Jewish-Christian relations that fails to interact with the socio-cultural and discursive specificities that shaped interaction in various cultural contexts, geographical locals, and social strata. In their words, one can no longer ‘assume that there was a single historical moment after which the texts, beliefs, and practices of Jews became irrelevant to those of their Christian contemporaries – nor the converse’ (p. xi). They seek to undermine a scholarly paradigm that tells a simple story of ‘increased separation and isolation’ (p. xii).

In the opening chapter ‘Introduction: Traditional Models and New Directions’ by A.Y. Reed and A.H. Becker, the editors set forth their volume as a challenge to the view that there was an early, decisive, and single division between Jews and Christians. As such they reject the ‘master narrative’ whereby the Jesus movement and rabbinic Judaism emerged from a diverse second temple Judaism but that the two became separate, institutionalized religions after the Bar Kochba revolt of 135 CE. While they admit that some aspects of the partings model can prove helpful in dealing with certain aspects of the relationship between Jews and Christians, they nonetheless question its heuristic value and historical verisimilitude.

Paula Fredriksen in ‘What ‘Parting of the Ways?’’ negates the validity of an irretrievable and unambiguous break down of Jewish-Christian relations. Instead of following the historiography

of the *contra Iudaeos* tradition of orthodox Christianity, she advocates looking at the social context of Jews in the Mediterranean cities in want of approximating the dynamics between Jews, Christians, and pagans. For Fredriksen the Jews of antiquity were unique for the exclusivity of their adherence to their ancestral customs over and against the pluralism of the Hellenistic *polis*. It remained an exclusivity that was exceptional, occasionally derided by the patriotic cultural elites, but tolerated by pagans. Hellenistic Judaism was able to co-exist in pagan cities not due to a proselytizing mission but because Judaism was permeable and able to accommodate itself to life in the Mediterranean cities and could accommodate Gentiles as adherents and sympathizers. Aggressive proselytism was inhibited by the desire not to disturb the socio-religious ecosystem in which the Jews were a minority. In a surprising move, Fredriksen argues that orthodox claims of Jews fermenting persecution of Christians ‘reveals the rhetorical and retrospective nature of these indictments’ (p. 58). She bases that on: (1) Charges of Jewish persecution arise from the *contra Iudaeos* tradition of orthodox Christianity; (2) In the case of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* it is unrealistic that Jews would draw attention to Christian indifference towards the imperial cult when they themselves were conspicuous for their lack of participation in the same cult; and (3) there is continued evidence for intimate relations between Jews and Christian neighbours. Thus, Fredriksen asserts that Christian authors have inferred persecution from polemics. Apart from the fact that Fredriksen ignores Paul, Josephus, Acts, and Revelation for first-century evidence of violent confrontations between Jews and Christians, I would respond by pointing out that her first point commits a genetic fallacy by confusing the veracity of a report with its source. On the second point, there is nothing altogether unbelievable about one group with legal status denouncing another group without legal status. The Jewish failure to observe the imperial cult was impious but exceptional in the Roman world whereas the Gentile Christian’s failure to observe the cult was treasonous. Pointing out as much would be an effective way of neutralizing a religious competitor. As for Fredriksen’s third point, this only shows that persecution was not necessarily universal or normative. Jewish and Christian relationships were variegated across diverse times and places and could oscillate between outright hostility, non-violent rivalry, and amicability. Fredriksen’s view is that certain Christian ideologues wanted to facilitate and fast track a parting between Jews and Christians, but it was an objective that was never achieved.

Daniel Boyarin’s contribution ‘Semantic Differences; or, ‘Judaism’/‘Christianity’” probes the linguistic grounds for differentiating these two religions from one another. Boyarin notes how certain identity signifiers often emerge in semantic opposition to other terms. So for instance, the opposite of *Medismos* (Persian way of life) is the *Hellenismos* (Greek way of life) and that can be set against the *Ioudaismos* (Judean way of life). It was only after the advent of *Christianmos* as a conception of religionization that *Ioudaismos* could be seen as its religious antithesis. Before then *Ioudaismos* was more ethnically centred and ‘Christians’ belong in the semantic operation of Jewish sects like Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. Thus if ‘Judaism’ as a religious entity only came into existence as a response to the religion of Christianity it is pointless from a linguistic vantage point to speak of a separation between Christianity and Judaism. He writes: ‘One might say that Judaism and Christianity were invented in order to explain the fact that there were Jews and Christians’ (p. 77). Yet I remain unconvinced that it was Christianity that instigated the separation of cult from culture and then fostered the origin of ‘religion’ upon which the religion of Judaism was signified over and against Christianity and foistered upon Jews. *Ioudaismos* was considered a *religio* or a *thrēskeia* in the pre-Christian era long before Jesus, Paul, Luke, or John.

What is more, Paul could contrast his current way of life as Christ's apostle to the Gentiles with his former way of life in *Ioudaismos* (Gal. 1.13). While Paul could conceivably be contrasting his current *messianic* way of life in Judaism with his former *pharisaic* way of life in Judaism, it is clear that what is crucial for him is being *en Christō* rather than being in *en Ioudaismō*. Boyarin does try to nuance his position by speaking of the cultural complexities and religious elements of *Ioudaismos*, he refers to proto-Christians and proto-Jews of the second and third centuries, and he admits to the realities of separate social groupings as well. But on the whole one wonders whether his appeal to the metaphor of wave-theory, the hybridity of language, and membership gradience becomes a smokescreen for concealing a real Jewish-Christian division rather than an effective explanation of the emerging identities and social dynamics of 'Christianity' and 'Judaism'.

Robert Kraft provides a short and sober study on 'Weighing of the Parts: Pivots and Pitfalls in the Study of Early Judaisms and their Early Christian Offspring'. Kraft acknowledges that the ways did indeed part by the fourth century but cautions against a monolithic and unilateral representation of this process with all of its historical and social complexities. The problem of the definition of 'Jew' and 'Christian' is hampered by the diversity of these religions. It is important then to weigh or study the constituent elements of each religious identity and take into account the self-designations and self-identities of various individuals and sub-groups within them. He writes that: 'For our 'Parting of the Ways' and/or 'Weighing of the Parts' perspectives, historical self-identification (explicit or suspected) may force the modern scholar to develop new categories and vocabularies that are more satisfactory for the task' (p. 91). While that is easier said than done, such an approach will lead away from mono-directional models of Jewish-Christian relations and provide a more fully fleshed out understanding of the various processes out of which classical Judaism and classical Christianity shaped themselves and even become gradually dominant and definitionally mutually exclusive by the fourth century.

Andrew S. Jacobs' contribution is 'The Lion and the Lamb: Reconsidering Jewish-Christian Relations in Antiquity' which uses the Lion/Lamb metaphor to describe much of Jewish-Christian interactions in the ancient past. Jacobs' main issue is the tension that arises if one regards Christian accounts of Jewish polemic as 'rhetoric' or 'reality'. If one regards it as 'rhetoric' it can lead to the view that Christian authors imagined Jewish polemics since Judaism was a has-been religion sapped of all vitality and posed no real threat to the universal religion of Christianity (e.g. Adolf von Harnack). Alternatively, if one maintains that there was a reality behind the polemic that arose out of a genuine conflict between Jews and Christians it presents Judaism potentially as a vociferous and aggressive counter-point to Christianity (e.g. Marcel Simon). Jacobs' own solution is an analysis of Jewish-Christian relations in the Holy Land itself via postcolonial criticism where he looks at colonial mimicry (Origen), imperial hybridity (Jerome), the inscription of domination (the Piacenza Pilgrim), and the ultimate instability of imperialist discourses (the Christian monk Stratigios). In the end Jacobs provides a means of ethically informing historiography on Jewish-Christian relations. Jacobs uses postcolonial criticism to illustrate the ideological nature of Jewish-Christian texts, which illustrate how Jews and Christians constructed their world.

Martin Goodman gives a largely diagrammatic presentation in his chapter on 'Modeling the 'Parting of the Ways''. Importantly he introduces the factor of perspectives (ancient and modern scholarly one's) about how a parting was perceived. How pagan outsiders perceive Jewish-Christian relations might well be different from how Jews and Christians perceived them (and then

we have to ask: which Jews and which Christians?). Along this line, Goodman offers a series of diagrams that are, in his own words, 'inexact representations of an allusive reality' (p. 120). The diagrams include: (1) Standard view of the 'parting of the ways'; (2) Different datings of the 'parting of the ways'; (3) Jews and Christians as seen by pagans in antiquity; (4) Rabbinic view of the 'parting of the ways'; (5) Eusebius' view of the 'parting of the ways'; (6) Social relationships: Jews and Christians; (7) Self-perceptions; (8) Attitudes to boundaries; (9) Viewed from outside (first to fourth century). This last diagram seems to demonstrate Goodman's own position and it visually depicts the complexity of Judaism and Christianities in the first four centuries of the Common Era and displays the varied convergence and divergence of various Christian groups with Judaism in the sphere of the wider Graeco-Roman world. Goodman's largely pictorial contribution is worth the price of the book itself.

David Frankfurter engages the subject of overlaps between Jewish and Christian self-definition in his essay, 'Beyond 'Jewish Christianity': Continuing Religious Sub-Cultures of the Second and Third Centuries and Their Documents'. Frankfurter is interested in documents that provide evidence of how Christ-devotion existed in frameworks that were essentially Jewish in orientation. As such he examines the Pseudepigrapha which he believes contains Christian documents from a prophetic or priestly tradition as opposed to Jewish documents that have been simply redacted by Christians (in this regard one should also consult the works of Jim Davilla). Frankfurter cites examples from the Ascension of Isaiah, 5 and 6 Ezra, and Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. It is his contention that these documents provide incidences of Christ-devotion within the belief system of 'Judaism's deeply informed practice, sense of social boundaries, and the discourse of authority' (p. 142). In Frankfurter's mind this demonstrates 'some ways in which Jewish culture continued to embrace Christ-worship and Christ-worship continued to embrace Jewish practice and identity' (p. 143). I think this is sound and would only add the qualifications of: (1) doubts about the provenance, sources, and redaction of the Pseudepigrapha (there might genuinely have been Jewish documents edited and copied by Christians); and (2) the question as to whether some forms of Christ-devotion transgressed and even exceeded the boundaries of some expressions of Jewish monotheism.

The piece by E. Leigh Gibson entitled 'The Jews and Christians in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*: Entangled or Parted Ways?' looks at Jewish-Christian relations in second century Smyrna. Leigh contends that the negative account of the Jews in the death of Polycarp is not about active Jewish hostility against Christians but rather the narrative is *really* about a Jesus-following community struggling with its Jewish inheritance and the authors/redactors target their Jewish polemic against Christian Judaizers. Leigh's textual analysis of *Mart. Pol.* is detailed and commendable. Still I cannot help but be a little suspicious when scholars posit a world-behind-the-text so that debates with/about 'A' on the surface of the text are really ciphers for debates with/about 'B' in a pan-textual setting. That is not to say that the picture of the Jews in *Mart. Pol.* is either historical or unembellished, but I am finding it hard to digest the tacit assumption of the volume that there never was any significant Jewish antagonism and aggression against Christians. The reality of inter-religious relations that we find in most cultures where religious identities collide tends to be a little more complex and volatile than this.

Amram Tropper examines the subject of early Christian and Rabbinic succession lists in 'Tractate *Avot* and Early Christian Succession Lists'. Tropper offers a comparative analysis between the Rabbinic chain of transmission in the tractate *Avot* and the apostolic succession

lists as they appear in several roughly contemporary Christian writings. It is noted that the lists are used in a similar manner to legitimate certain authorities within two burgeoning religious movements.

Annette Yoshiko Reed looks at the continuation of 'Jewish Christianity' in her essay entitled "Jewish Christianity' after the 'Parting of the Ways'". Reed argues that Jewish Christianity did not fall off the map or gradually disappear but continued to exist well after the second century. She examines the Pseudo-Clementine literature to show that 'Jew' and 'Christian' were not perceived as mutually-exclusive religious identities and the text testifies to the existence of groups from the fourth century who were interested in identifying their faith-in-Jesus-as-Messiah within the sphere of the Jewish religion. This certainly does prove that interactions between Jews and Christians did not cease in the second century and that issues of Jewish and Christian identity were negotiated differently in diverse social, intellectual, and geographical milieux. I am not so sure, however, that this constitutes a platform of evidence that establishes that the ways never parted. Regardless of how some Jewish Christians identified their identity vis-à-vis non-Jesus believing Jews and Jesus believing Gentiles, their position was regarded as anomalous by many Jews and Christians. The struggle of Jewish Christian identity can be likened to how children struggle to simultaneously identify with both of their parents in the case of separation over irreconcilable differences. That aside, Reed's paper is an excellent study on the complexity of Jewish Christianity leading up to and within the fourth century.

Alison Salvesen tackles the subject of 'A Convergence of the Ways? The Judaizing of Christian Scripture by Origen and Jerome' where she draws attention to the fact that links were periodically established between Christian authors and the sacred texts of Judaism. The link between Christians and the Old Testament enabled Christians to maintain the antiquity of their faith and traditions and this (over and against utilization of philosophical schemes from the Greco-Roman world) meant that Christianity remained in some form of relationship to Judaism. Christian authors were interested in what books and in what translation the Jews regarded certain writings as authoritative. Christian scholars of the Antiochene tradition identified with Jewish hermeneutical approaches to their own Christian Scripture and others such as Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius were interested in the preservation of Jewish traditions for their own particular use. Salvesen points out that the biblical scholarship of Origen and Jerome, both writing from Palestine, kept Christians in dialogue with Judaism and its sacred traditions and they contributed to the foundations of Christian Hebraism in future generations.

The topic covered by Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra is 'Whose Fast Is It? The Ember Day of September and Yom Kippur' that posits the origin of the Christian festival of Ember Day from a Jewish day of celebration. Stökl rejects the view that the feast originated as a transformed feast of Yom Kippur or from a fourth century Roman Christian who gained inspiration for the idea from the Old Testament. In his mind the problem with both views is that they presuppose a certain conception of the 'parting of the ways' and postulate the feast as a subsequent development. Stökl proposes that Roman Christians observed Yom Kippur and this provides a Jewish origin for the festival. The thesis is quite plausible though ultimately unproveable. The focus on ritual rather than doctrine is a good place to start in searching for the self-identities and boundaries of religious communities. I would also concur with Stökl that Jewish Christianity in Rome represents an under studied field of research. A few things clearly mar Stökl's study. First, to deduce from Acts 27:9 that Luke wrote for a (second-century?) Roman audience who observed Yom Kippur is too

weak to constitute a premise in his argument. Second, I remain perplexed (like several essays in this volume) as to how this undermines the ‘conventional’ view of the parting of the ways. Some Christians (of Gentile or Jewish backgrounds) probably observed Jewish feasts and fasts over the course of several centuries in the Common Era and this may have impacted in some form on other Christian liturgical calendars. But this does nothing to determine that ‘Christianity’ and ‘Judaism’ were separate religious entities well-before the fourth century. The fact that Christians Christianized a pagan festival and called it Christmas, should not lead us to conclude that ancient views of Christianity and paganism as two religious alternatives are somehow skewed.

Naomi Koltun-Fromm addresses ‘Zipporah’s Complaint: Moses is Not Conscientious in the Deed! Exegetical Traditions of Moses’ Celibacy’ which describes how biblical passages and extra traditions of Moses and celibacy were treated in Jewish and Christian writings. For both traditions Moses was central to sexual practice and spiritual pursuit.

Ra‘anan Boustan’s contribution is entitled ‘Rabbi Ishmael’s Miraculous Conception: Jewish Redemption History in Anti-Christian Polemic’. This essay focuses on the life of Rabbi Ishmael in the medieval work *The Story of the Ten Martyrs* where Ishmael’s birth, ascent to heaven, and redemptive death are all recounted in the context of Byzantine culture. Boustan subsequently argues that this hagiographical account of Rabbi Ishmael suggests that Christian iconoclasts borrowed heavily from Jewish criticism of imagery in worship and the story itself demonstrates an appropriation of salient elements of Christian theology by its Jewish authors.

The subject of ‘Jews and Heretics – A Category Error?’ is pursued by Averil Cameron. The association of Jews and heretics in Christian heresiologies is noted from Justin Martyr to the Byzantine period and this is not only a categorical error but marks out that a ‘more insidious process is going on’ (p. 346) whereby both groups are made to partake of the same characteristics. Christian apologists and heresiologists would habitually include the beliefs and philosophies of the Jews as among those aberrant beliefs that required correction, reproof, and rejection. That was of course part of the Graeco-Roman environment where Christianity competed with other religions. In Cameron’s opinion these writers were sustained by their dogged unwillingness to accept that the ways had never parted and by their own determination they endeavored to make sure that it actually did. While she does an excellent job of cataloguing some instances of Christian deviant labeling of the Jews, I believe that this last point is overstated since I cannot imagine several patristic authors striving to prove what most simply assumed, viz., that Christianity and Judaism had become separate religions.

John Gager commences his essay ‘Did Jewish Christians See the Rise of Islam?’ with a discussion on whether or not the Muslim treatise ‘Abd al-Jabbar had as its source a Jewish Christian text or community from the fifth century since the collection seems to include many elements that could be said to reflect the viewpoint of Jewish Christianity. Gager himself is sympathetic to the view of P. Crone that the Muslim treatise reflects a renaissance of Jewish Christianity during the Byzantine era where Jewish Christianity reemerged in an intermediary milieu between Byzantine Christianity and Islam. The whole discussion is largely an entrance into a wider debate about the parting of the ways by Gager. Gager warns, firstly, of studying and researching too narrowly and consequently Jewish scholars are often ignorant of Islam and specialists in New Testament are often ignorant of Patristics, etc. Secondly, we need to be aware of how ‘master narratives’ can distort the evidence and impose an artificial grid on to the data, e.g. such as the view that Jewish Christianity vanished in the early second century. According to Gager the

master narrative that we need to be free from is the narrative of the New Testament itself and in particular that of the Book of Acts. Gager gives a number of examples as to where scholarship has moved on from the portrait in Acts. The problem here is that the master narrative which Gager rightly resists is more the product of New Testament interpreters than the New Testament itself. Let me give two examples of Gager's 'revisions': (1) 'The early, Torah-observant followers of Jesus and their successors were not uniform in belief or practice' (p. 366) which seems fairly evident to me based on Gal. 2.11–15, Jas. 2.14–21, Acts 15, and Rom. 14.1–15.7. (2) He maintains also that 'the image of Peter' and his 'abandonment of Jewish observances (Acts 11), reflects not historical reality but the theological interests of Acts and its author' (p. 368). But again, turning to Galatians 2 there is ample evidence to show that Peter ate with Gentiles and even at times lived like a Gentile to the point of invoking the ire from certain men from James. That does not require Peter renouncing the laws of *kasbrut* but only of a degree of liberality in Gentile company, a position not unparalleled in the Diaspora. I do agree with Gager though that when speaking of the parting of the ways, the question must always be prefaced with 'from whom?' We must also be wary of creative storytelling written by the victors particularly when it relates to later Christian rhetoric of its triumph over and superiority to Judaism. Of course reading 'against the grain' (p. 369) as Gager suggests can lead to formulating another master narrative that is equally inaccurate and insidious. The most common one nowadays refers to the innocent pluralism of early Christianity that was ruined by the power-hungry machinations of a later proto-orthodox oligarchy. Where Gager is clearly right is that the fact of the existence of Jewish Christians and Christian Judaizers means that any telling of Jewish and Christian relationships will have a high degree of complexity about it and will go well beyond any bifurcation of 'them' and 'us'. But in the end I still have to resist the view that the continued existence of Christian Judaizers proves that there never really was any substantial partings for ordinary Christians because (by analogy) the existence of Anglo-Catholics does not mean that the Church of England never separated from Rome. Ecclesial political realities may not always carry over into piety, liturgy, and theology of all Christians, but they are realities nonetheless.

The final paper is by Adam H. Becker and is entitled, 'Beyond the Spatial and Temporal Lines: Questioning the 'Parting of the Ways' Outside the Roman Empire'. Becker looks at material that is located geographically and temporally outside of the Roman Empire. He points out that the church of the East under the Sassanian rule never experienced the solidifying of Jewish-Christians divisions as occurred under Constantine. He does admit that the traditional model possesses some value in describing areas in the era following the Arab conquests that witnessed the production of anti-Jewish writings by Christians motivated by an attempt to reaffirm religious differences amidst a new political dynamic. Becker also finds reasons for Christians and Jews possessing 'shared discourses' such as the rationality of *kalm* and Arabic language that enabled dialogue and discussion, and even if it was aimed at differentiating their faiths from each other it still required some common ground for interaction to exist. Becker's conclusion is a suitable one for his essay and for the entire book:

The evidence, a sample of which was used in this paper, puts into question the possibility of our speaking of a simple 'Parting of the Ways' without constantly having to qualify our terms. There were, in fact, many 'partings,' and they happened in different places at different times in different ways; furthermore,

the Jewish and Christian communities continued to be intertwined in certain ways at certain times. However, with so many qualifications appended to its meaning, perhaps the expression the 'Parting of the Ways' is not particularly useful for characterizing the trajectory of Jewish-Christian relations at any time in any place. Models can only be refined so far before they collapse in upon themselves. If we are to maintain the metaphor of 'the ways,' then in the end, it seems, they were ways that never parted (p. 392).

While certain depictions of the relationship between Jews and Christians and the relationship between them in the first and second centuries has been often caricatured rather than argued, one still wonders if the contributors to this volume caricature much of the scholarship that they criticize. For instance, James Dunn's apparently theological approach to the parting is far more sociologically nuanced than what many give him credit for. And in the latest edition of Dunn's *The Parting of the Ways* he attaches more significance to events leading up to the reign of Constantine in adversely affecting Jewish and Christian attitudes towards one another. Another problem I have is that the definition of the parting that the contributors criticize seems to presuppose some kind of absolute division that forever segregated Jews and Christians from one another. But several, if not most, proponents of a parting between Judaism and Christianity (e.g. J.D.G. Dunn and G. Jossa) never define the parting in such absolute terms. That Jews and Christians remained in dialogue with one another, influenced one another, and even remained in a cultural and theological symbiotic relationship does not count against an actual parting of the ways (divorced couples can still be on good terms but they are nonetheless divorced). For instance, the fact that Protestants and Catholics remained in dialogue with one another, sometimes borrowed from each other, intermarried, and even pursued close relationships in some places does not prove that there never was a Reformation. While there was no single event that caused a once-and-for-all division between Jews and Christians, we can still see a number of ruptures from the time of the historical Jesus to the time of Constantine that effected a gradual separation into two distinct religious entities with distinct self-identities and competed against each other to be the true heirs of a common religious heritage. The advent of supersessionism by Christians, the denouncement of Jewish Christians as *minim* by post-70/135 CE Pharisaic/Rabbinic leaders, the Christian taxonomy of the world into pagans, Jews, and Christians, the vitriolic polemics and even violence between the two groups, as well as persecution of Christians and not of Jews by pagan authorities (e.g. during the Neronian persecution) suggests that a division of sorts was indeed apparent to many by the second half of the first century. That is not to say that all relations were hostile, or that Jewish Christianity vanished at 70 CE, or that 135 CE was the most significant rupture, it only means that competing identities and converging interests ran simultaneously at some points and in some locales. While a volume of this kind can foster good inter-faith relations, it does not necessarily translate into good history. Still, the volume does lead us to question whether 'parting of the ways' has become a too theologically loaded phrase to use. What is more, we are rightly encouraged to seek out other horizons like the eastern church and the post-Islamic conquest period in order to see what they contribute to the study of Jews and Christians in antiquity. All in all Becker and Reed with their contributors lead us to search out for a more comprehensive and convincing way of explicating the relationship between Jews and Christians in antiquity.