

Riemer Roukema / Hagit Amirav (ed.)

# The 'New Testament' as a Polemical Tool

Studies in Ancient Christian  
Anti-Jewish Rhetoric and Beliefs



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Riemer Roukema / Hagit Amirav

## Introduction

In Late Antiquity, the Christian view of the Jews was ambiguous, to put it mildly. Christianity had started as a small, new branch of Judaism, but soon its original Jewish identity had been generally eclipsed by the Gentile perspective of the Jews as another nation with another religion which, albeit legally legitimate, was outdated and obsolete. “Mainstream”, Gentile Christianity had gratefully accepted the Jewish Scriptures as the source of stories, prescriptions, prayers, and prophecies that had predicted and moulded its own persuasions and piety. Occasionally, Christians had friendly and reverential relations with contemporaneous Jews, but in general, a critical or rather hostile attitude toward them prevailed.

In October 2013 a conference was held in Groningen that focused on the use of the writings of the “New Testament” in this tensional and polemical relationship. The use of the term “New Testament” was not meant in its sense of a canonical collection, but referred to the writings that gained recognition from an early stage and thus influenced later authors. In some papers, moreover, Old Testament texts and traditions were discussed as well. The conference, hosted by the Protestant Theological University, was the fifth annual meeting of the collaborators of the series *Novum Testamentum Patristicum*, based at the University of Regensburg, in collaboration with Hagit Amirav’s Project on Patristic Exegesis, “The Christian Appropriation of the Jewish Scriptures”, which was funded by the European Research Council between 2008 and 2014. The present volume contains the collection of papers presented in the conference and worked out for publication. We shall briefly introduce them in an alphabetical order.

The contribution by Martin Albl gives a general, systematic introduction to the huge variety of opinions that ancient Christian authors held on Jews and Judaism, either critical and polemical, or more appreciative. He discusses, e. g., the so-called *adversus Iudaeos* literature and its intended readership, the Christian distinction between the ‘three races’ of Pagans, Jews, and Christians, and between Jews and their pre-Mosaic ancestors, the presumed purposes of the Mosaic law, its Christian, spiritual interpretation and supersession by the “law of Christ”, the polemical or, incidentally, non-polemical role of the Jews in Christ’s passion, the unfortunate fate of contemporary Jews due to their rejection of Christ, the Christian feeling that Jews were arrogant, but also their positive role as keepers of the Scriptures, the recognition of their high moral

plane, as well as the recognition that Jesus and his disciples were Jewish, and that many Jews in the past had become followers of Christ, and to conclude, the use of the term “Jewish” for non-orthodox Christians. This broad survey is filled with numerous references from authors writing in Greek, Latin, and Syriac.

The contribution by Hagit Amirav and Cornelis Hoogerwerf focuses on the form of polemical discourses, in order to explore the rhetorical and technical arsenal which the ancient Christian exegete had at his disposal. First they discuss how Biblical exegesis was involved in polemics: it established an authoritative discourse concerning the right way of explaining the sacred texts over against “heretics”, “pagans” and Jews. They argue that in this context, the Antiochene approach of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia used Paul and his literary legacy as a key methodological element that directed their interpretation of the Old Testament and attempted, at least as far as their exegetical technique was concerned, to discredit the Alexandrian approach, which embraced allegorical interpretation. They then turn to another kind of polemical discourse which is found in some of the homilies of John Chrysostom, also a pupil of Diodore. The infamous *Discourses against the Jews*, although they quickly shift to rhetoric of invectives and abuse, display Paul as the supreme teacher and pedagogue, who legitimises the lofty theological principles involved. The militant and undiplomatic tone is not surprising, as it belongs to the basic forms of classical rhetoric. However, they note that Chrysostom strategically employs the persona of Paul and his writings as a rhetorical tool to provide the audience with an authoritative frame of reference.

Harald Buchinger analyses Bishop Melito of Sardes’ polemical Paschal homily, in which the death of Christ, for which the Jews are blamed, is paralleled with their Passover celebration. First he argues that this homily does not hint at any particular elements of the contemporaneous Jewish Paschal liturgy, but merely refers to its description in the book of Exodus. Second, he clarifies why he disagrees with the view that Melito’s severe anti-Judaism was inspired by social tensions with the local Jewish community. Instead, he maintains that the bishop’s polemics had a theological motivation. As regards Melito’s biblical hermeneutics, Buchinger discusses the typological interpretation of the Old Testament expressed in the homily, which, in fact, entails its complete devaluation in favour of the truth and reality of Christ. This implies that the Jewish religion has become void and useless and its temple has been destroyed as a consequence of the Jews’ murder of Christ. Likewise, although the precise contents of Melito’s “New Testament” cannot be established, his writings demonstrate that he accepts a bipartite Bible, the second part of which clearly surpasses and supersedes the first part. This implies that in this homily New Testament traditions are alluded to in order to show their superiority over the Old Testament and to blame Israel for its ungratefulness for Christ’s passion. Buchinger concludes that this homily testifies to the

coherence between Melito's excessive theological anti-Judaism and his reception of the emerging New Testament.

The paper delivered by James Carleton Paget focuses on the *Epistle of Barnabas*, which, as he argues, holds a very peculiar, critical, and even separatist position towards the Jewish religion. He rightly observes that strictly speaking it would be difficult to discuss the author's use of the New Testament for his view of Judaism, since it is not sure how far he knew the writings that were eventually included in the New Testament collection; but in spite of this *caveat* Carleton Paget still brings up most relevant observations concerning *Barnabas'* relationship with the Gospel of Matthew, the Pauline epistles including the epistle to the Hebrews, and the Gospel of John. He argues that such texts may reflect *Barnabas'* literary and cultural background, and that they expressed their influence upon him in complex and not always easily discernible ways. Since *Barnabas'* anti-Jewish ideas lack coherence and contain several tensions, Carleton Paget concludes that this writing cannot be set in a particular trajectory, but that it emerged from a medley of conflicting traditions.

The next paper by Maya Goldberg studies Theodore of Mopsuestia's ideas on divine *paideia* in the Syriac fragments of his commentary on Paul's epistle to the Galatians. The notion that a divine pedagogical principle underlines the Hebrew Bible was one of the most important guidelines in Theodore of Mopsuestia's exegesis, and his strong appreciation for Paul's writings was repeatedly expressed in his exegesis. Given the fact that not all of Theodore's exegesis on the Old Testament survived in full in the original language, Goldberg's study takes advantage of two invaluable sources in order to explore Theodore's notion of divine *paideia*: the sixth-century Latin translation of Theodore's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and the anonymous East-Syrian commentary on the same epistle preserved in Diyarbakir 22, a manuscript which is currently being edited and translated in part. The latter, which in effect is a compilation of writings of different commentators, incorporates a dominant Theodorean source that allows us to partially reconstruct the Syriac translation of Theodore's commentary. Goldberg, therefore, explores the paideic idea on two distinct levels: first, through a look into Theodore's interpretation of passages from the Epistle to the Galatians concerning pertinent biblical stories, to assess his view on the pedagogic role of the pre-salvific period in the divine plan; and second, a textual analysis and comparison of the two exegetical sources, offering an overview of the transmission of Theodore's ideas in the East-Syrian tradition. The important contribution of this paper to the overarching theme of the volume lies in the observation that according to Theodore, a central figure in Antiochene exegesis, the New Testament was not intended to replace, or appropriate the Old, but to finalize it and begin a new chapter. His exegetical emphasis was firmly rooted in a positive conviction regarding the goodness of God and the divine providence, which was bestowed upon the faithful Christians.

Wolfgang Grünstäudl discusses Justin Martyr's reception or rather non-reception of New Testament texts that have a strong anti-Jewish potential. Although the details of Justin's knowledge of "New Testament" texts are not completely clear, it seems certain that he knew the Gospel of Matthew and most likely that he also knew the Gospel of John. Grünstäudl notes that according to Justin the Christians had superseded the Jews as God's people. Given this stern position, Grünstäudl wonders why, then, Justin does not quote or refer to the alleged saying of the Jews present at Jesus' trial, "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matt 27:25). He proposes four answers, the last of which he seems to prefer. He considers that in Justin's view the hardening of the Jewish people had been predicted long before, which would not correspond to a voluntary and recent acceptance of the divine punishment. The other text that Grünstäudl discusses because of its non-reception, is Jesus' saying to "the Jews", "you are from [your] father, the devil" (John 8:44). He argues that Justin considered the Jews as the devil's servants, not his children, so that this text seemingly fitted well into his anti-Jewish discourse, though in reality it did not.

In his paper, Hans van Loon presents his study of Cyril of Alexandria's use of New Testament texts in relation to his evaluation of the Jews and the understanding of their Scriptures. Like many bishops and other interpreters before him, Cyril holds that after Christ's ministry the Old Testament laws were abrogated and have been replaced by the "worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23) related to Christ. However, in Cyril's view the Old Testament remains valuable if the shadows and types that it contains are interpreted spiritually. Van Loon demonstrates that Cyril is very critical about both the Jewish leaders of Christ's days and the Jews of his own time because of their lack of faith in him and their literal interpretation of their Scriptures. At the beginning of his episcopate this attitude may have been reinforced by the strong Jewish presence in the city which may have made Judaism seductive to Christians. In his numerous writings Cyril quotes many New Testament texts (e.g. Matt. 23; 27:25) that, in his view, endorse his standpoint. Like other Christian authors, Cyril regards the fall of Jerusalem under the Romans as God's sentence on the Jews' for their rejection of Christ. Van Loon also points to Cyril's expectation, based on Rom 9–11, of the conversion of Jews both in his own days and particularly at the end of time. In the last part of his paper he describes a violent clash between Jews and Christians in the beginning of Cyril's episcopate, in which the bishop played an invigorating role, after which many Jews had to leave Alexandria. Van Loon concludes that Cyril's hermeneutics and interpretation of New Testament texts may well have formed the breeding ground for his outburst against contemporary Jews.

By way of comparison with contemporaneous writings by authors belonging to "mainstream" Christian tradition, the contribution by Gerard P. Luttikhuis deals with the alleged anti-Jewish interpretation of Scripture in several early Christian Gnostic texts of the Nag Hammadi Codices and Codex

Tchacos. Since in such writings, especially those that rewrite Genesis 1–6, the Old Testament God is described in most negative and derogatory terms, namely as an inferior, incompetent, ignorant, jealous, and wicked Creator of the material world, it is often assumed that this view reveals the Gnostics' anti-Jewish sentiments; or, in Hans Jonas' term, their "(metaphysical) anti-Semitism". Others think that the Gnostic myths actually originated from Jews who were disappointed in their own God and religious traditions and did not want to remain Jews anymore. Luttikhuizen has another interpretation of the negative image of the Old Testament God in Gnostic myths. He argues that Gnostic Christians were already acquainted with the contemporaneous Middle-Platonic view of a transcendent, meta-cosmic God and a lower cosmic Demiurge, so that, subsequently, it was evident for them to identify the Old Testament God with the latter deity. The author further maintains that their polemical, negative view of the Demiurge was not in the first place directed against the Jews, but against other Christians who appreciated the Old Testament and believed in its God as the Creator of heaven and earth. He demonstrates that his analysis of the Gnostic interpretation of Old Testament traditions agrees with the perspective in which ecclesiastical authors like Irenaeus and (pseudo) Hippolytus looked at their Gnostic contemporaries.

In his paper, Alban Massie focuses on Augustine of Hippo's interpretation of John 1:17, "The Law was given through Moses, grace and the truth came through Jesus Christ." First, he observes that in Augustine's 124 *Treatises on the Gospel of John* the Jews are regularly criticised because of their lack of faith in Christ and his divinity. To be sure, this criticism is inspired by the Gospel itself. Augustine blames the Jews for their literal understanding of the Scriptures and for being carnal and spiritually blind, although he is aware that this is not true for all of them, insofar as they believe in Christ. However, Massie also notes that many of Augustine's unpleasant characterisations of the Jews are in fact directed against Donatists and Manichaeans. In his work against the Manichaean bishop Faustus, who wrote *capitula* against the Jewish superstition, that is, against the reading of the Old Testament in Catholic churches, Augustine develops his understanding of John 1:17. Against the Manichaean interpretation of this verse as a proof text for the opposition between the two Testaments, he reads it as a testimony to their continuity and harmony, in the sense of announcement and accomplishment. Next, Massie moves to the third and only one of Augustine's *Treatises on the Gospel of John* in which John 1:17 is interpreted. Here Christ is characterised as the physician who heals by giving grace, contrary to the law that did not heal and under which people were guilty and sick. Augustine speaks of the law as a preparation for grace, which confirms his view of a process and continuity between the Old Testament law and grace by Christ.

The following two papers assess the ancient Christian interpretation of two particular texts, both from the Gospel of Matthew, that have an anti-Jewish potential. Brian J. Matz's study deals with Jesus' warning against the

leaven of the Pharisees, i. e. their teaching (Matt 16:6, 12); the parallel of Matt 16:6 in Luke 12:1 is also considered. The authors and anonymous writings whose 26 quotations, references or allusions to these texts Matz lists are the *Testimony of Truth* (Nag Hammadi Codex IX, 3), Tertullian, Origen, the *Didascalia apostolorum*, Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, Epiphanius of Salamis, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, Augustine of Hippo, and Theodoret of Cyrus. He observes that, with the exception of Origen's remark that the text may be understood as a warning against the material way of life of the Jews, all other applications do not concern Jews, but Christians who, according to the respective authors, were misguided in their teaching or beliefs. According to Matz, the exegetical tools applied by the authors consisted of key word associations with other texts about leaven; associations with the authors' own theological concerns; hermeneutical associations with similar ideas in other texts; and socio-ethical associations concerning the Christians' lifestyle and moral attitude. Matz illustrates each of these tools by examples from the texts listed before. He concludes that, notwithstanding the anti-Jewish potential of Matt 16:6-12, this passage provided early Christian interpreters with an opportunity to demonstrate a greater concern with the beliefs and lifestyle of their *own* audience.

The next paper by Martin Meiser focuses on the early reception of the "terrible text" to which some other papers also refer, Matt 27:25, the alleged saying of the Jewish bystanders of Jesus' trial, "His blood be on us and on our children." The author notes that ancient authors considered this a real pronouncement, not a fictional polemical text written by the evangelist. First providing a brief overview of the reception of this text during the second century, he moves on to discuss in detail Origen's and Eusebius of Caesarea's interpretations of Matt 27:25 and the contemporaneous conviction that the fate of the Jews was the direct result of their rejection of Jesus, as it was expressed in this cry. Taking into account the wider context of anti-Jewish legislation, tensions between Jews and Christians as described by Christian historiographers, and the attractiveness of Judaism for some of the Christians, Meiser also discusses other authors from various regions and their respective interpretations of Matt 27:25. These include Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Aphrahat, Ephrem the Syrian, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, and the *Gospel of Gamaliel*. The author pays attention to the reinforcing negative formulas by which Matt 27:25 is introduced, and to its Old Testament pre-texts, mainly from the Psalms and the Prophets, to demonstrate the context of the quotations. He also investigates whether other biblical texts, e. g. Jesus' prayer for forgiveness in Luke 23:34 and Paul's expectation of the redemption of Israel according to Rom 11:25-6, did not function as obstacles to the harsh interpretation of Matt 27:25. He concludes that apparently the tension was hardly felt, or the milder texts were applied to the Jews who believed in Christ.

Origen of Alexandria's works are studied in the paper authored by Riemer Roukema which concludes this volume. He begins his investigation with Origen's expectation of God's restitution of the whole of creation, the *apokatastasis*, in which the difference between Jews and Gentiles does not play any role since all souls are have the same potential to return to God and to submit to Christ. For his own time, however, Origen clearly distinguishes between Jews and Gentiles and between non-Christian Jews and Christians. From Philo of Alexandria and the apostle Paul he learned to interpret the Old Testament not only literally, but also – and sometimes only – spiritually. Thus he could uphold the relevance of the Jewish Scriptures for Christians, in response to Gnostics and Marcionites. One might observe, however, that through his spiritual, Christian interpretations in Paul's wake Origen disinherits the Jews. Next, Roukema discusses several of Origen's concrete interpretations of New Testament texts that have an anti-Jewish potential. He demonstrates that Origen does not always exploit this potential but often applies their critical contents to Christians or to human beings in general; Origen is particularly critical of Christians who did not agree with his spiritual interpretations and stuck to the literal sense, which he considered Jewish. In other cases, e.g. in his references to Matt 23:29–36 and 27:25, Origen does elaborate the anti-Jewish potential, as if all non-Christian Jews were responsible for the murder of the prophets and of Christ – for which reason the Romans had expelled them from Jerusalem and destroyed its temple. To conclude, Roukema discusses Origen's personal contacts with Jews and the New Testament texts that inform both his appreciation of their zeal for God and his pity for their literal observance of the Mosaic Law.

In conclusion, we see that ancient Christian authors did indeed exploit New Testament texts that have an anti-Jewish potential in order to express and underpin their critical and even derogatory attitude to Jews who did not believe in Christ. This conclusion is not new, but inevitable in a conference and volume devoted to this theme. An important qualification is, however, that in ancient Christian writings critical texts that could be applied to contemporaneous Jews were also, or even only, applied to Christians. In several studies we see that seemingly derogatory judgments on Jews or their religion were actually directed at Christians adhering to other traditions. Furthermore, besides critical assessments of Jews and their religion we occasionally also find appreciation of their piety and preservation of the Scriptures. In historical and theological research the different aspects of this varied heritage of the positions of ancient Christians towards Jews need to be taken into account.

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The editors

Zwolle and Leiden, November 2016

Martin C. Albl

# Ancient Christian Authors on Jews and Judaism

## 1. Introduction: limiting the scope

It is obvious that one cannot do full justice to a topic as broad as “Ancient Christian Authors on Jews and Judaism” in the space of a single presentation. It may be useful, however, to address certain aspects of this broad topic. In the following contribution I propose to sketch out a portrait of some common characterisations of Jews and Judaism found in early orthodox Christian theological writings. The following paragraphs further define the limits of my approach.

I limit my focus primarily to Christian theological texts of the first five centuries CE, with some reference to later works (e. g., by the eighth-century author John Damascene) which preserve earlier traditions. I thus address neither evidence for popular-level Christian attitudes towards Jews and Judaism (e. g., as found in inscriptions or popular papyri) nor evidence of “official” views of Jews and Judaism (e. g., as found in proclamations of church synods or councils or from imperial pronouncements on the legal status of Jews). Within the Christian theological writings, I focus primarily on texts addressed directly to Jewish readers: the so-called *adversus Iudaeos* literature.

I shall also not deal directly with historical questions that have dominated much recent scholarship on this literature. Two closely related questions have been central:

1. To what extent do ancient Christian writings on the Jews reflect actual social interaction between Christian and Jewish communities, and to what extent do these writings reflect a rhetorical or theological construction of an idealised Jewish opponent?
2. Were these works intended for Jewish readers or was their real audience non-Jewish? More specifically, can we determine that texts ostensibly written for a Jewish audience were actually written as (a) apologetic works aimed at followers of Greco-Roman religions (“pagans”); (b) polemical works directed towards fellow Christians whose theological views were deemed heretical; (c) polemical or instructional works aimed at fellow Christians attracted to Judaism (“Judaisers”), or (d) instructional works for Christians of the author’s own faith community?

I plan, rather, to present the main lines of a consistent portrait of Jews and Judaism as found in the major anti-Jewish Christian writers of the first centuries of Christianity. These consistent theological patterns range across Greek, Latin, and Syriac authors. I shall argue that this portrait is constructed in order to demonstrate a single, decisive theological point: God's covenant relationship with the Jewish people, together with the Law of that covenant, have come to end; God's new covenant with the Christian people and the new Law of Christ have taken their place.

In this understanding, then, the covenant with God and the covenant Law define who the Jews are as a people.

## 2. Who are the Jews? Covenant and Law

Following Scripture, authors such as Augustine (354–430) accept that the Jewish people are descended from Abraham: “it is from the line of Abraham that the Israelite race derives its origin, in respect of physical descent” (*Civ.* 17.1).<sup>1</sup> The second-century *Apology of Aristides* (2.32 Syriac; cf. 14.1 Greek) also states that the Jews “trace the origin of their race from Abraham.”<sup>2</sup> Augustine (*Civ.* 16.3, 10–11) adds that the ancestors of the Jews can also be traced further back to the descendants of Shem, including Heber (see Gen 10:21–5), after whom the Hebrew language is named.

Another tradition, however, emphasises that the Jews come into existence as a people through their covenants with God; the defining covenant being the Mosaic one. Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260–c. 340) asserts, “Judaism” (ἰουδαϊσμός) would be correctly defined as the “polity constituted according to the Law of Moses” (πολιτεία διατεταγμένη κατὰ τὴν Μωσέως νόμον) “dependent on the one omnipotent God” (*Dem. ev.* 1.2.2 [12]).<sup>3</sup> Eusebius' definition reflects the close connection between ethnic identity and religion (especially religion as expressed in cultic worship) in the ancient Mediterranean world.<sup>4</sup>

1 Latin text: B. Dombart/A. Kalb (ed.), *De civitate Dei Libri XI–XII* (CCSL 47; Turnhout: Brepols, 1955); English translation (ET): H. Bettenson (trans.), *Concerning The City of God against the Pagans* (London: Penguin, 1984). Dates of authors and works are taken from F.L. Cross/E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

2 Armenian, Syriac, and Greek text: B. Pouderon/M.-J. Pierre (ed.), *Aristide Apologie* (SC 470; Paris: Cerf, 2003); ET: ANF 9, 263–79. See also *Ps.-Clem. Rec.* 32.1.

3 Greek text: I. A. Heikel (ed.), *Eusebius' Werke vol. 6: Die Demonstratio Evangelica* (GCS 23; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913); ET: W.J. Ferrar (trans.), *The Proof of the Gospel being the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea* (2 vol.; London: SPCK; repr., *Eusebius The Proof of the Gospel. Volumes I and II* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001).

4 On the connection between cultic worship and ethnic identity, see P. Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2010) 6–7.

This focus on God's covenants leads Christians to understand Jews within a tripartite division of history:

1. *Age of the Patriarchs*: beginning with creation, this age ends either with the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham (Gen 17) or with the Mosaic covenant;
2. *Age of the Law*: beginning with Abraham / Moses until the coming of the Messiah Jesus;
3. *The New Age*: beginning with the new covenant established with the coming of the Messiah Jesus.

Ephrem (c. 306–73) uses circumcision, understood as a sign of God's covenant, to demarcate the three stages of history: (1) the beginning times before circumcision; (2) the “middle” period of circumcision; (3) the last period, beginning with the coming of Jesus the Messiah (*Hymn. Her.* 26.5).<sup>5</sup>

For Eusebius, it is clear that biblical figures who lived before Moses cannot be called “Jews.” These “friends of God” (θεοφιλεῖς), including Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, and the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are properly called neither Jews nor Greeks, but are in fact Christians (*Dem. ev.* 1.2.3–10 [12–14]; 1.5.20 [12]); they belong to a “third form of religion midway between Judaism and Hellenism ... the most ancient and most venerable of all religions” (*Dem. ev.* 1.2.9 [14]).

Eusebius further distinguishes between “Hebrews” and “Jews”. Hebrews are the ancestors of the Jews and take their name from Eber, ancestor of Abraham; “Jews” take their name from Judah, ancestor of the tribe of Judah (*Praep. ev.* 7.6.1–4).<sup>6</sup> Inconsistently, Eusebius maintains this distinction even after the time of Moses. He refers to prophets such as Isaiah (*Praep. ev.* 7.11.9) as well as the philosophers Philo (*Praep. ev.* 7.12.14) and Aristobulus (*Praep. ev.* 7.13.7) as “Hebrews”.<sup>7</sup> The apostle Paul and the evangelist John are also called “Hebrews” (*Praep. ev.* 11.19.2). One perhaps sees here an effort to

5 Ephrem. Syriac text: E. Beck (ed.), *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen contra Haereses* (2 vol.; CSCO 169–70, CSCO.S 76–7; Louvain: Durbecq, 1957). Jacob of Sarug (c. 451–521) also uses the three ages schema, beginning from the circumcision of Abraham (*Hom.* 2.93–4). Ephrem is not consistent: at times the first age begins with Abraham, at other times it begins with the circumcision of the Mosaic law. See C. Shephardson, *Anti-Judaism and Christian Orthodoxy: Ephrem's Hymns in Fourth-century Syria* (PatMS 20; Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 77 n. 29.

6 Greek text: G. Schroeder (trans.), and E. des Places (ed.), *La preparation évangélique. Livre VII* (SC 215; Paris: Cerf, 1975); ET: E.H. Gifford, *Preparation for the Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903).

7 See A. Kofsky, “Eusebius of Caesarea and the Christian-Jewish Polemic”, in O. Limor/G.G. Stroumsa (ed.), *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (TSMJ 10; Tübingen: Mohr, 1996) 59–83, esp. 75–7. Eusebius is in fact inconsistent in his terminology, as he also refers to Philo, Josephus, and Aristobulus as Jewish (*Praep. ev.* 8.10–12).

distinguish between a “holy seed” or “remnant” in Israel who believed in Christ, and the majority of Jews who do not believe.<sup>8</sup>

One sees the tendency to downplay the “Jewishness” of the pre-Mosaic ancestors in other authors. Lactantius (c. 250–c. 325) refers to the pre-Mosaic generation who went down into Egypt as “our ancestors (*maiores nostri*) who were the leaders (*principes*) of the Hebrews” (*Inst.* 4.10.5).<sup>9</sup> Lactantius (*Inst.* 4.10.14) also asserts that the people were called Hebrews until after the exodus from Egypt, at which point they were called “Jews”.

Eusebius’ claim that the pre-Mosaic righteous were Christians, not Jews, serves two purposes: (1) it shows that Christianity is not (as both Jews and pagan critics claimed) a recent innovation, but rather is rooted in antiquity, and (2) it shows that God’s covenant with the Jewish people was relegated to a certain time (the “middle period” in Ephrem’s schema).<sup>10</sup> Other Christian writers do not emphasise the strict distinction between Hebrew and Jew employed by Eusebius. All agree, however, on the point that the pre-Mosaic patriarchs were able to be right with God without following the commandments of the Mosaic Law, demonstrating that the Mosaic Law had only a temporary validity. The dominant Christian tendency, then, is to associate “Jews” with the Mosaic covenant.

In light of this tripartite division of salvation history, the task of the *adversus Iudaeos* literature is twofold:

1. To demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the Messiah prophesied in Scripture, who is to inaugurate a new covenant that has universal significance and thus begin the new age.
2. To demonstrate that, in light of the new covenant and new age inaugurated by Jesus, the Jewish people’s relationship with God, based on the Mosaic covenant and Law, is no longer valid.

### 3. The *adversus Iudaeos* Literature

Within early Christian writing is a recognisable body of literature known as the *adversus Iudaeos* writings.<sup>11</sup> As the label suggests, these texts are essentially

8 On the concept of a “holy seed” in Israel, see Shephardson, *Ephrem’s Hymns*, 81, 89.

9 Latin text: P. Monat (ed.), *Lactance: Institutions Divines, Livre IV* (SC 377; Paris: Cerf, 1992); ET: ANF 7, 9–223.

10 On claims that Christianity originated in antiquity, see M. Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire 135–425* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1996) 78–85.

11 For detailed overviews of this anti-Jewish literary tradition, see A.L. Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos: A Bird’s-Eye View of the Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935) and H. Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Iudaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.–11. Jh.)* (4th ed.; EHS.T 172; Frankfurt: Peter Lang,

polemical: they are aimed at establishing the truth of Christian claims regarding Jesus and the covenant status of Jews and Christians over against Jewish objections. The actual target of this literature, however, is demonstrably wider. *Adversus Iudaeos* writings could be aimed at a pagan audience, inner Christian opponents, or for the instruction of an orthodox audience. They are thus essentially a product of developing orthodox Christianity.<sup>12</sup>

The typical method of argument in the *adversus Iudaeos* literature is to present Scriptural proof-texts, or *testimonia*, as prophetic proofs for the orthodox positions, since Scripture is taken to be the common ground for debating Jewish and Christian positions. The tradition took a variety of literary forms.

1. *The testimonia collection* (TC). This is arguably the earliest form of anti-Jewish literature.<sup>13</sup> The classic TC form consists of a series of headings summarising basic Christian beliefs; placed under each heading are a series of Old Testament quotations that function as proof-texts for that belief. Exegetical comments occasionally accompany the *testimonia*. Cyprian of Carthage's *To Quirinus: Testimonies against the Jews*, written in 248, is the earliest extant example of the TC, but such collections were in use long before Cyprian's time.<sup>14</sup> Justin (c. 100–c. 165), for example, certainly drew on TCs in his *1 Apology* and *Dialogue with Trypho*.<sup>15</sup> Later examples of the form are Ps.-Gregory of Nyssa's *Testimonies against the Jews* (written c. 400), and Isidore of Seville's (c. 560–636) *Contra Iudaeos*.<sup>16</sup>
2. *The dialogue*. The earliest witness to this form is apparently the *Dispute (ἀντιλογία) of Jason and Papiscus*, written around 140 in Greek, but no longer extant.<sup>17</sup> The best known of the dialogues, Justin's *Dialogue with*

1999). For a briefer overview, see R.R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Crossroad, 1974) 118–21.

12 An exception is the *Contra Iudaeos* of the Arian bishop Maximinus; see Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Iudaeos Texte*, 331–3. Text: C. Turner, "St. Maximus of Turin *Contra Iudaeos*", *JTS* 20 (1919) 289–310.

13 On TCs as the earliest form of anti-Jewish literature, see Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos*, 3–13 and Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 118.

14 Cyprian: Latin text: R. Weber (ed.), *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera Vol. I: Ad Quirinum; Ad Fortunatum* (CCSL 3/1; Turnhout: Brepols, 1972); ET: ANF 5, 507–28. For further evidence of TCs in the early patristic era and already in the New Testament, see M.C. Albl, 'And Scripture Cannot Be Broken': *The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections* (NovTSup 96; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 97–132, 159–285.

15 For detailed evidence of Justin's use of *testimonia* sources, see O. Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition. Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (NovTSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1987).

16 Ps.-Gregory: Greek text and ET: M.C. Albl (trans.), *Ps.-Gregory of Nyssa: Testimonies against the Jews* (SBL Writings from the Greco-Roman World 8; Atlanta/Leiden: SBL/Brill, 2004). Isidore: Latin text: PL 83, 449–538.

17 See Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos*, 28; Schreckenberg, *Adversus-Iudaeos-Texte*, 180. The philosopher Celsus refers to it in his *True Discourse*, written ca. 178 CE (see Origen *Cels.* 4.52). It is

- Trypho*, apparently drew on *Jason and Papiscus* as a source.<sup>18</sup> The Latin dialogue tradition is witnessed in two early fifth-century Latin dialogues: *The Dialogue on the Law between Simon a Jew and Theophilus a Christian* and *The Discussions of Zacchaeus the Christian and Apollonius the Philosopher*.<sup>19</sup> The later Greek tradition continued with the *Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus* (*Dial. A.Z.*; c. 400) and the sixth-century *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* (*Dial. T.A.*).<sup>20</sup>
3. *The sermon*. In the Greek tradition, John Chrysostom's (c. 347–407) *Discourses against Judaizing Christians* is the most famous example.<sup>21</sup> In Syriac, both Isaac of Antioch (fifth century) and Jacob of Sarug (c. 451–521) wrote *Homilies against the Jews*.<sup>22</sup>
  4. *The treatise*. The treatise may be on a specific topic (e. g., Novatian's [third century] "On Jewish Foods" regarding the food laws or Aphrahat's [early fourth century] "On Circumcision"), or a more global reply to Jewish objections (e. g., Tertullian's [c. 160–225] *Against the Jews*; Hippolytus's [c. 170–c. 236] *A Demonstration* (ἀποδεικτικὴ) *against the Jews*; or Augustine's *Against the Jews*).<sup>23</sup>

attributed to Aristo of Pella and was translated into Latin by the end of the third century (Williams, *Adversus Iudaeos*, 28–9).

- 18 Greek text: M. Marcovich (ed.), *Iustini Martyris Apologiae pro Christianis. Dialogus cum Tryphone* (PTS 38; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994); ET: ANF 1, 194–270. On Justin's use of *Jason and Papiscus*, see Skarsaune, *Proof from Prophecy*, 234, 242.
- 19 *Simon and Theophilus*: Latin text: E. Bratke (ed.), *Evagrii Altercatio Legis inter Simonem Iudaeum et Theophilum Christianum* (CSEL 45; Scriptorum Ecclesiastici Minores Saec. IV. V. VI.; Vindobona/Lipsia: Tempsky/Freytag, 1904); ET: W. Varner (trans.), *Ancient Jewish-Christian Dialogues: Athanasius and Zacchaeus, Simon and Theophilus, Timothy and Aquila. Introductions, Texts, and Translations* (SBEC 58; Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen, 2004). *Zacchaeus and Apollonius*: Latin text: PL 20, 1071–82.
- 20 *Athanasius and Zacchaeus*: Text: F.C. Conybeare (ed.), *The Dialogues of Athanasius and Zacchaeus and Timothy and Aquila* (Anecdota Oxoniensia; Classical Series, Part 8; Oxford: Clarendon, 1898); see now P. Andrist, "Le dialogue d'Athanase et Zachée: étude des sources et du contexte littéraire" (Ph.D. diss., University of Geneva, 2001). ET: Varner, *Jewish-Christian Dialogues. Timothy and Aquila*: Text: Conybeare, *Dialogues*; see now L.L. Lahey, "The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila: Critical Greek Text and English Translation of the Short Recension with an Introduction including a Source-critical Study" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2000); ET: Varner, *Jewish-Christian Dialogues*.
- 21 Greek text: PG 48, 843–942; ET: P.W. Harkins (trans.), *Saint John Chrysostom: Discourses against Judaizing Christians* (FaCh 68; Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 1979).
- 22 Isaac of Antioch: Syriac text and ET in S. Kazan (ed. and trans.), "Isaac of Antioch's *Homily against the Jews*", *OrChr* 45 (1961) 30–53. Jacob of Sarug: Syriac text and French translation: M. Albert (ed. and trans.), *Jacques de Saroug Homélie contre les Juifs* (PO 38/1; Turnhout: Brepols, 1976).
- 23 Novatian: Latin text: G.F. Diercks (ed.), *Novatiani Opera* (CCSL 4; Turnhout: Brepols, 1972), 89–101; ET: ANF 5, 645–50. Tertullian: Latin text: H. Tränkle (ed.), *Q.S.F. Tertulliani Adversus Iudaeos: Mit Einleitung und kritischem Kommentar* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1964); ET: ANF 3, 151–73. Aphrahat: Syriac text in J. Parisot (ed.), *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes* (PS 1–2; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1894, 1907); critical ed. and French translation: M.-J. Pierre (ed. and trans.), *Aphraate le Sage Persan: Les Exposés* (2 vols.; SC 349, 359; Paris: Cerf, 1988); ET: A.

Important examples of anti-Jewish polemic are also found in literature and literary forms outside the *adversus Iudaeos* literature proper, such as the second-century *Epistle of Barnabas*.<sup>24</sup> Other Christian writings contain discrete sections of anti-Jewish polemic, including apologetical works such as the *Epistle of Diognetus* (2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century) and the *Apology of Aristides*.<sup>25</sup> Anti-Jewish sections are found in presentations of Christian theology: John Damascene (c. 660–750) includes a short polemic against Sabbath observation (4.23 [96]) and circumcision (4.25 [98]) in his *On Orthodox Faith*; a Christological section of Lactantius's summary of the Christian faith (*Inst.* 4.10–21), is liberally laced with anti-Jewish polemic; Prudentius' (348–c. 410) poem on the Incarnation has a section on the Jews' rejection of Jesus (*Apoth.* 503–51); Athanasius's (c. 296–373) *On the Incarnation* (33–40) also features a section refuting the objections of Jews.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4. Christian Presuppositions in Addressing Judaism

The orthodox Christian understanding of Jews in early Christian literature is governed by several presuppositions:

1. Scriptural (“Old Testament”) accounts are accepted as accurate historical portrayals of Jewish history as well as an accurate storehouse of prophecies about their future. One sees this view, for example, in Augustine's *City of God*, Books 16–17, where he takes the biblical text as a straightforward account of Israel's history, as well as a source of prophecies concerning the relationship of Judaism and Christianity (cf. *Ps.-Clem. Rec.* 1.27–39).
2. Eusebius' definition of Jews and Judaism is widely accepted: they are a

Lehto (trans.), *The Demonstrations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage* (Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 27; Piscataway NJ: Gorgias, 2010). Hippolytus: Greek text: PG 10, 787–94; ET: ANF 5, 219–21. Augustine: Latin text: PL 42, 51–67; ET: M. Liguori, “In Answer to the Jews (*Adversus Iudaeos*)”, in R.J. Deferrari (ed.), *Saint Augustine: Treatises on Marriage and other Subjects* (FaCh 27; Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1955) 391–414. Liguori (pp. 387–8) refers to a debate on the genre of Augustine's *Against the Jews*; many scholars classify it as a sermon.

24 Greek text and ET in B.D. Ehrman (ed. and trans.), *The Apostolic Fathers Volume II* (LCL 25; Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) 12–83.

25 Diognetus: Greek text and ET: B.D. Ehrman (ed. and trans.), *Apostolic Fathers Volume II* 130–59.

26 See Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 120–1. John Damascene: Greek text: B. Kotter (ed.), *Die Schriften von Johannes von Damaskus 2: Expositio Fidei* (PTS 12; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973); ET: F.C. Chase (trans.), *Saint John of Damascus: Writings* (FaCh 37; New York: Fathers of the Church, 1958). Prudentius: Latin text: M.P. Cunningham (ed.), *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis Carmina* (CCSL 126; Turnhout: Brepols, 1966) 73–115; ET: H.J. Thomson (trans.), *Prudentius* (LCL 387, 398; Harvard University Press, 1949). Athanasius: Greek text: C. Kannengiesser (ed.), *Sur l'Incarnation du Verbe* (SC 199; Paris: Cerf, 1973); ET: *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 4, 31–67.

- people defined by their covenant relationship with God, including the Mosaic Law. To be a Jew means to be one who follows the Law of Moses.
3. Contemporary Jews are understood not only as direct descendants of biblical Jews, they are largely identified with biblical Jews. Contemporary Jews are commonly held to be responsible for the actions of biblical Jews.
  4. The God of the Jews is the same as the God of the Christians.<sup>27</sup>
  5. Because God has established a new covenant relationship with humanity through Christ, God's special covenant with Israel has come to end, and its Law is no longer salvific.

One should note, however, that a writer such as Augustine (*Adv. Jud.* 8 [11]) is more subtle in his assessment of the relationship between contemporary and biblical Jews: “those [contemporary Jews] who make these charges against us have inherited the bitterness of their parents, who gave the Lord gall for his food ... They themselves have become full of gall and bitterness”, and “you, in the person of your parents (*in parentibus vestris*), have killed Christ.” Despite these distinctions, the end result is the same: contemporary Jews are responsible for the actions of their ancestors.

## 5. Jews between Pagans and Christians: The Three Race Schema

One strand of thought, found in early Christian apologies addressed to pagans, conceives of Christians as a “third race” (τρίτον γένος) over against Jews and pagans (see *Preaching of Peter* frag. 2b; *Diogn.* 2; *Apol. Arist.* 2.2).<sup>28</sup>

The basis in this schema for differentiating the “races” is not along ethnic lines, but rather on their respective knowledge and worship of God. Worship in the manner of “the Greeks” is associated with idolatry. The Jews are recognised as correctly believing in one God, but are criticised for worshipping him in the wrong way. Jews are thus considered to be on a higher moral plane than pagans, but lack proper understanding and thus proper worship of God – essentially a criticism of the inadequacy of the Mosaic Law.

The *Letter to Diognetus* (3–4) criticises Jewish worship as essentially irrational and superstitious: Jews offer sacrifices, although God does not need them; they distinguish between foods, despite the fact that God created all

27 See Justin, *Dial.* 11.1; Origen, *Princ.* 1.4; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.15.1; Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.* 2; *Marc.* 1.19; Aphrahat, *Dem.* 11.11.

28 *Preaching of Peter*: Greek text: E. von Dobschütz (ed.), *Das Kerygma Petri kritisch untersucht* (TU XI/1, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1893); ET: W. Schneemelcher (trans.), *New Testament Apocrypha* (2 vol.; rev. ed.; Cambridge/Louisville KY: J. Clarke & Co./Westminster J. Knox, 2003 [German original 1989–90]) 2.34–41. The Syriac and Armenian versions of the *Apology* have a four-fold schema: “barbarians” (the Syriac transliterates the Greek βάρβαρος), Greeks, Jews, and Christians.

food for human use; their practice of circumcision is a pointless mutilation of the body.

The Syriac version of the *Apology of Aristides*, in affirming the Jewish belief in one God, presents one of the most positive descriptions of Jewish belief and actions extant in early Christian literature:

The Jews then say that God is one, the Creator of all, and omnipotent; and that it is not right that any other should be worshipped except this God alone. And herein they appear to approach the truth more than all the nations, especially in that they worship God and not His works. And they imitate God by the philanthropy (lit.: “love of humans” ܠܘܘܐܝܢܐ) which prevails among them; for they have compassion on the poor, and they release the captives, and bury the dead, and do such things as these, which are acceptable before God and well-pleasing also to men – which (customs) they have received from their forefathers (*Apol. Arist.* 14).<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, continues *Aristides*, they err in their worship of God: in their celebration of sabbaths and feasts, they think they are serving God, but are actually worshipping angels. The second-century *Preaching of Peter* (frag. 2c) likewise criticises them for “worshipping angels and archangels, the months and the moon” (cf. Origen, *Cels.* 5.6).

Eusebius (*Dem. ev.* 1.6.62 [22c]) also reflects this tripartite schema, dividing worshippers into three groups:

1. Pagans (“Greeks” Ἕλληνες): “the completely idolatrous, who have fallen into the errors of polytheism”;
2. Jews: “Those of the circumcision, who by the aid of Moses have reached the first step of holiness”;
3. Christians: “Those who have ascended by the stair of Gospel teaching”.

In his commentary on John 4:22, partially preserved in Origen’s *Commentary on John*, the Valentinian Heracleon (fl. 145–80) refers to the *Preaching of Peter*’s warning against worshipping like the Jews or the pagans (*Comm. Jo.* 13.17.104).<sup>30</sup> Heracleon correlates this distinction with the Gnostic division of humanity into *hylics* (those completely immersed in the world of the senses; associated with pagans), *psychics* (the “natural” person, associated with the Jews), and the *pneumatics* (associated with the Gnostic elect).<sup>31</sup> The general assessment of the Jews within the “three races” schema

29 ANF 9, 263–79. This positive appraisal is completely lacking in the preserved Greek of this section.

30 Greek text: E. Preuschen (ed.) and C. Blanc (trans.), *Origène: Commentaire sur saint Jean, Tome III* (Livre XIII) (SC 222; Paris: Cerf, 1975, 2006); ET: R.E. Heine (trans.), *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel according to John Books 13–32* (FaCh 89; Washington DC: Catholic University Press, 1993).

31 See E.H. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon’s Commentary on John* (SBLMS 17; Nashville TN: Abingdon, 1973) 89–90. The *Tripartite Tractate* appears to make this same distinction, referring to “the things which came forth from the <race> of the Hebrews,

is that they are ethically and religiously superior to the pagans, but on a lower level than Christians.

## 6. Distinctions within the Law: “Natural law” and the “Second Law”

Since Christians define Jews by their covenant with God and thus the covenant Law, it is unsurprising that much attention is focused on the nature of this Law. The Christian attitude was ambiguous. On the one hand, orthodox theologians upheld the validity of the Law as given by God (here rejecting various gnostic views that attributed the Law to a “lesser” god) and as an enduring part of Christian scripture (here objecting to the rejection of the Old Testament by Marcion and others). On the other hand, they insisted on the limitations and, ultimately, the irrelevance of the Mosaic Law in light of the new covenant in Christ.

Many early Christians found distinctions within the Mosaic Law. Irenaeus, writing in the last quarter of the second century, illustrates one approach: the distinction between the Decalogue (received by Moses as a reinforcement of the ‘natural precepts’ (*naturalia praecepta*) that are implanted in all humans) and the cultic and purity commandments that were placed on the Jews after their worship of the golden calf. These latter commandments are a “yoke of bondage” (*jugum servitutis*) foretold in Ezek 20:25, “I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live” (*Haer.* 4.15.1).<sup>32</sup>

This same basic distinction is found in the third-century *Didascalia Apostolorum* (chap. 26), Aphrahat (*Dem.* 15.8; mid-fourth century), and the late fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions* (1.6; 6.19–22, using the *Didascalia* as a source).<sup>33</sup> The *Didascalia* (26) asserts, “The Law therefore is indissoluble (*indestructibilis*); but the Second Legislation is temporary (*temporalis*), and is dissoluble. Now the Law consists of the Ten Words and the Judgments.” The first legislation did not refer to “distinction of meats, nor incensings, nor offerings of sacrifices and burnt offerings.” Justin (*Dial.* 45.3) witnesses this

things which were written by the hylics (ϢΥΛΗ) who speak in the fashion of the Greeks (110.23–5). Coptic text and ET: H.W. Attridge/E.H. Pagels in H.W. Attridge (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex)* (NHS 22–3; Leiden: Brill, 1985) 192–337.

32 Latin and Greek text: A. Rousseau (ed.), *Irénee de Lyon Contre les hérésies Livre IV* (SC 100; Paris: Cerf, 1965); ET: *ANF* 1, 315–567; Irenaeus interprets Deut 5:22 to mean that God originally gave Moses the Decalogue only, written on the two stone tablets.

33 *Didascalia*: Syriac: A. Vööbus (ed. and trans.), *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* (CSCO 401–2 and 407–8, CSCO.S 175–6, 179–80; Louvain: Secrétariat du CSCO, 1979); Latin: F.X. Funk (ed.), *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum* (Paderborn: F. Schoeningh, 1905); ET: R.H. Connolly (trans.), *Didascalia Apostolorum: The Syriac Version Translated and accompanied by the Verona Latin Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929). *Apostolic Constitutions*: Text: M. Metzger (ed.), *Les Constitutions Apostoliques* (SC 320, 329, 336; Paris: Cerf, 1985–7); ET: J. Donaldson (trans.), *ANF* 7, 871–1108.

distinction as well, contrasting “what in the Law of Moses is naturally good” (τὰ φύσει καλά) with “what was appointed to be performed by reason of the hardness of the people’s hearts.”<sup>34</sup>

A common early Christian understanding is that at first Moses gave the people the Ten Commandments alone and only after the people committed apostasy by worshipping the golden calf (Exod 32) was the cultic Law imposed upon them (Irenaeus *Haer.* 4.15.1; *Didasc.* 26; *Apos. Con.* 6.20; *Ps.-Clem. Rec.* 1.35–6; Isaac of Antioch *Hom.* 2.89–92).<sup>35</sup>

The fifth-century *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* (3.12) offers a variation on the theme of the “second legislation”. In the context of an initial discussion between a Christian and a Jew on the limitations of the canon to be used in their debate, the Christian speaker asserts that the Book of Deuteronomy was “not dictated through the mouth of God” but rather “was the law given a second time through Moses (διὰ Μωυσέως δευτερονομηθέν). (Therefore, it was not placed in the *aron*, that is, the Ark of the Covenant).”<sup>36</sup>

More radical distinctions were also made. The *Ps.-Clementine Homilies* (written in the first decades of the fourth century, likely in Syria) states, “for the Scriptures have had joined to them many falsehoods against God” (2.38; cf. 2.38–41; 3.9–10, 17, 42–57).<sup>37</sup>

Gnostic writers incorporated these distinctions within the Law into their own systems. In his *Letter to Flora* (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century), Ptolemy, of the “Italian” Valentinian school, divides the Law into three parts: (1) that given by the creator god (demiurge); (2) that given directly by Moses himself; (3) that given by the elders of the people (33.4.1–2).<sup>38</sup> The Law of the creator god is further subdivided into three: (1) “pure (καθαράν) legislation not interwoven with evil”, i. e., the Ten Commandments, but imperfect (μη ἔχοντες τὸ τέλειον) (33.5.3); (2) the legislation “interwoven with the inferior and with injustice”

34 Cf. also Ephrem, *Diat.* 14.18. On the “second law” see H. Bietenhard, “Deuterosis”, *RAC* 3 (1957) 842–9; on the cultic/ethical distinction, see W. Horbury, “Old Testament Interpretation in the Writings of the Church Fathers”, in M.J. Mulder (ed.), *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988; repr., Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 2004) 760–1.

35 *Ps.-Clem. Rec.*: Latin: B. Rehm/G. Strecker (ed.), *Die Pseudoklementinen II: Rekognitionen in Rufins Übersetzung* (3rd ed.; GCS; Berlin: Akademie, 1992); Syriac text: F.S. Jones (ed.), *The Syriac Pseudo-Clementines: An Early Version of the First Christian Novel* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014); ET: ANF 8, 75–211.

36 On the date, see Varner, *Jewish-Christian Dialogues*, 4–5.

37 On the date, see Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* 2.185. Homily 2 describes how passages portraying God as having human weaknesses such as forgetfulness are spurious. Text: B. Rehm/G. Strecker (ed.), *Die Pseudoklementinen I: Homilien* (3rd ed.; GCS; Berlin: Akademie, 1992). ET: ANF 8, 215–346.

38 Greek text: G. Quispel (ed.), *Lettre à Flora* (2nd ed.; SC 24; Paris: Cerf, 1966). ET in B. Layton (trans.), *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 308–15. As an example of a commandment of Moses, Ptolemy cites Matt 19:6–8, where Jesus teaches that Moses allowed divorce “because of the hardness of their hearts” (33.4.4–5).