NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available

UMI
PLAYING A JEWISH GAME: GENTILE CHRISTIAN JUDAIZING IN THE FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES CE

by

Michele D. Murray

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of the Centre for the Study of Religion
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Michele D. Murray 2000
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

0-612-49992-8
Abstract

Playing a Jewish Game: Gentile Christian Judaizing in the First and Second Centuries C.E.
Doctor of Philosophy, 2000
Michele D. Murray
Centre for the Study of Religion
University of Toronto

Several strands of early Christian literature contain intriguing passages of criticism written by early Christians against what they perceived to be troubling situations in their communities. For example, the author of the Epistle of Barnabas vigorously criticizes several Jewish customs, including circumcision, food laws and Sabbath observance, and stresses that the Mosaic Law was never meant to be taken literally (9.4; 10.9; 15.6-8). In a similar vein, the author of the Book of Revelation castigates "those who say that they are Jews, and are not" as members of the "synagogue of Satan" in messages addressed to churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia (Rev. 2:9 and 3:9).

Most New Testament scholars have understood the hostility expressed in the above quotations to be directed towards Jewish Christians. Recently this interpretation has been challenged by a small number of scholars, led by Lloyd Gaston and John Gager (Gaston 1986; Gager 1985). They understand the "anti-Judaic" criticism of Jewish customs expressed in early Christian literature to be the reaction of ecclesiastical leaders to the strong attraction to Judaism and observance of Jewish customs exhibited by certain Gentile Christians from within their own communities. According to this understanding, the term "Judaizer" does not refer to the actions of Jews or Jewish Christians but rather to the actions of Gentiles. It is my contention that the Gager-Gaston-Wilson argument is a valid one.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and discuss relevant texts from the period of the early church that I have determined to be supportive of the Gentile Christian Judaizing theory of Gager and Gaston as applied to the regions of Syria and Asia Minor between c.
50 CE and 160 CE. Reactions to Gentile Christian Judaizers from early ecclesiastical leaders determined, to a significant extent, what constituted "proper" Christian behaviour. Warnings and criticism of Gentile Christian Judaizing reflects a determined effort on behalf of the church leadership to forge a Christian identity fully differentiated and distinct from Judaism and, ultimately, contributed to the eventual "parting of the ways" of Christianity and Judaism.
Acknowledgements

This dissertation is the product of many years of labour, and I am most grateful for the support I received during its writing. The three members of my committee, Professors Peter Richardson, John Corbett, and Leif Vaage, read various drafts of my work, correcting errors, providing references, and making helpful suggestions. I am indebted in particular to Peter Richardson, my thesis supervisor, who gave so generously of his time and expertise, consistently offering constructive criticism and timely words of encouragement. Fellowships from the University of Toronto contributed towards the necessary financial security, as did the opportunities afforded me to teach and T.A. by the Centre for the Study of Religion. I certainly could not have begun this project without the emotional and financial support of my parents, Roy and Lorie Murray. And I could not have completed this journey without the support of many friends and colleagues in Toronto and abroad, especially Joanna Dermenjian, Lisa Dermenjian, Ken Derry, Daniela Dueck, Phil Harland, Sheldon Lewkis, Lesley Lewis, Elaine Meyers, Tony Michael, Ruth Miller, Eric Miller, Roz Murray, Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, David Leis, Dana Sawchuk, and Fran Wolford. Finally, I would like to thank my life partner, Daniel Miller, for his insightful suggestions on early drafts, his listening ear, great sense of humour and encouragement — especially during my 3:30 AM anxiety attacks.
Table of Contents

ONE: Introduction 1
The Scope and Goals of This Study 4
Methodology 8
Implications of the Existence of Gentile Christian Judaizers 13

TWO: Review of Scholarship 14
Adolf von Harnack: The Rapid de-Judaization of Christianity 16
Walter Bauer's Challenge 24
Revision of Bauer's View 27
The Effects of World War II 30
Marcel Simon: Judaism As A Rival 32
Johannes Munck: Setting the Foundation 35
Rosemary Ruether: Christian Anti-Judaism 39
Lloyd Gaston and John Gager: Recent Scholarship on Gentile Christian Judaizing 41
Miriam Taylor: Gentile Christian Judaizing in the First and Second Centuries CE? 47

THREE: Gentile Attraction to Judaism in the Roman Empire in the First and Second Centuries CE 52
Gentile Attachment to Judaism in the First Century CE 52
The Appeal of Judaism Among the Powerful 58
How Attraction to Judaism Occurred 65
The Conversion of the Royal House of Adiabene 70

FOUR: Paul's Encounter with Gentile Christian Judaizing in Galatia 74
The Presence of Gentile Christian Judaizers in Galatia 75
To Whom Does Paul Address Galatians? 76
What is the meaning of Ἰουδαίζω in Gal. 2.14? 79
Who Compelled Gentile Christians in Galatia to Judaize? 83
Why Did Galatian Gentile Christians Judaize? 87
The Location of the Galatian Churches 92
Summary 94
Conclusion 94

FIVE: Evidence for Judaizing Among Gentile Christians in Syria 96
The Epistle of Barnabas 97
Provenance and Author 103
Chapter One
Introduction

Several strands of early Christian literature contain intriguing passages of criticism written by early Christians against what they perceived to be troubling situations in their communities. For example, in the Epistle of Barnabas, the author complains that "some" members of his congregation hold that "the covenant is both theirs and ours (ἡ διαθήκη ἡ ἐκείνων καὶ ἡμῶν)" (4.6); that is, these members believe that the covenant belonged equally to Jews and Christians. He warns his readers against joining their ranks and thereby "heaping up [their] sins" (4.7), and strongly asserts that the covenant "is ours," —it belongs to Christians, not Jews (4.7). In addition to these statements, the author of Barnabas vigorously criticizes several Jewish customs, including circumcision, food laws and Sabbath observance, and stresses that the Mosaic Law was never meant to be taken literally (9.4; 10.9; 15.6-8).

In one of his letters to various Christian communities located throughout Asia Minor, Ignatius issues the following warning to his readers in Philadelphia: "But if anyone interpret Judaism to you do not listen to him; for it is better to hear Christianity from the circumcised than Judaism from the uncircumcised" (Phil. 6.1). The author of the Book of Revelation castigates "those who say that they are Jews, and are not" as members of the "synagogue of Satan (συναγωγὴ τοῦ Σατάνα)" in messages addressed to churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia (Rev. 2:9 and 3:9).

Those who originally composed these passages, and those who read them, knew very well against whom the polemics were directed. This understanding, however, was lost over time. Most New Testament scholars have understood the hostility expressed in the above quotations to be directed towards Jewish Christians.1 This view rests on the

---

1 For convenience, throughout this dissertation I use the term "Jew" to refer to someone of Jewish origin who does not identify Jesus of Nazareth as one or more of the following: the Messiah, God's Son, or a divine being. The term "Jewish Christian" denotes someone of Jewish birth who does hold one or more of these beliefs.
assumption that the history and development of early Christianity was shaped primarily by conflict between two separate and distinct groups: Pauline Gentile Christians and certain Jewish Christians who regarded observance of the Mosaic law (including such practices as circumcision, Sabbath observance, the distinction between clean and unclean meats) as obligatory for all Christians, whether of Jewish or Gentile origin.2

According to this perspective, the initial success of the "Judaizers" — a term most frequently used by scholars to refer to those Jewish Christians who actively engaged in persuading non-Jews (usually Pauline Christians) to follow part or all of the Jewish law — provoked the strong opposition of Paul, whose animosity towards "Judaizers" is expressed in his letters, particularly the one addressed to the Galatian churches. Angry statements from post-Pauline ecclesiastical leaders akin to those cited above by Barnabas, Ignatius and the author of Revelation likewise are understood to be directed towards Jewish Christian "Judaizers" who put pressure on Gentile Christian members of the church to observe Torah.

Recently this interpretation has been challenged by a small number of scholars, led by Lloyd Gaston and John Gager (Gaston 1986: 33–44; Gager 1985). This group has argued that pagans often were attracted to the beliefs and practices of Judaism, and that Gentile Christians were among those attracted to Judaism. They have understood the "anti-Judaic" criticism of Jewish customs expressed in early Christian literature to be the reaction of ecclesiastical leaders to the strong attraction to Judaism and observance of Jewish customs exhibited by certain Gentile Christians from within their own communities. According to this understanding, the term "Judaizer" does not refer to the actions of Jews or Jewish Christians but rather to the actions of Gentiles.

In fact, this interpretation of the term is more consistent with its ancient usage. The verb "to Judaize," from which the noun "Judaizer" is derived, is a transliteration via Latin

---

2 I use the term "Gentile Christian" to denote Christians of Gentile/non-Jewish/pagan origin. The word "pagan" bears no derogatory meaning in this study, but is employed in the standard manner adopted by scholars of the ancient world to distinguish Jews and early Christians from others in the Greco-Roman world.
of the Greek verb *ioudaizein* (ιουδαίζειν). Shaye Cohen notes that in *War. 2.463*, Josephus uses the term to refer to Gentiles who "side with the Jews:" "For, though believing that they had rid themselves of the Jews, still each city had its Judaizers (τοὺς Ιουδαίζοντας), who aroused suspicion; and while they shrunk (sic) from killing offhand this equivocal element in their midst, they feared these neutrals as much as pronounced aliens." According to Josephus, Syrian authorities were aware of Gentiles who sympathized with the Jews to such an extent that they were seen as possible security hazards.

Cohen draws a useful comparison between *ioudaizein* and the verb *laikovizein*, which can mean to imitate the Lacedaemonians in manners, dress, etc., or to side with the Lacedaemonians (Cohen 1987: 418 note 27). He notes that "ancient Greek has many verbs that are compounds of the name of a region or ethnic group with the stem -izein. These verbs have three basic meanings: a) to give political support ... b) to adopt the customs ... and c) to speak a language. Some verbs have a combination of these meanings" (Cohen 1993: 31). This observation highlights the intransitive meaning of the verb and that the action of imitation is carried out by someone who is not originally or naturally a part of the group being imitated. Thus in the case of *ioudaizein*, it refers to the actions of Gentiles, not Jews.

This point is emphasized by Gaston, who notes that while the verb "to Judaize" sometimes was used to refer to the forced conversion of Gentiles to Judaism (Esther 8:17 LXX; Josephus, *War 2.454*), it more properly means "to live as a Jew, in accordance with Jewish customs" (Gaston 1986: 35). In other words, it describes the phenomenon of Gentiles' observing various components of the Mosaic law, such as keeping the Sabbath or certain food laws, without converting fully to Judaism (Gal. 2:14; Josephus, *War 2.463*; Plutarch, *Cic. 7.6*; *Acts of Pilate* 2.1; and Council of Laodicea, Canon 29; also Gaston 1986: 35 and Cohen 1989: 13-33). According to Cohen,
[a]side from a small number of passages in which ioudaizein might mean to give political support to the Jews..., the verb always means to adopt the customs and manners of the Jews..., it means to abstain from pork, to refrain from work on the Sabbath, or to attend synagogue. What makes Jews distinctive, and consequently what makes "judaizers" distinctive, is the observance of the ancestral laws of the Jews. (Cohen 1993: 32)

In accordance with its ancient use as an intransitive verb, then, the terms "Judaizing" and "Judaizer" ought to be used to denote the actions of Gentiles, not Jews or Jewish Christians. In the event that the Judaizer receives encouragement or feels pressure from others to "Judaize," the encouragement, as a transitive action, should not be referred to as "Judaizing," even if it is carried out by Gentile Christians who are already Judaizers in the proper intransitive sense (see Gaston 1986: 36).

The Scope and Goals of this Study

In the past, two assumptions often have been made concerning Gentile Christian Judaizing: 1) it was a phenomenon that existed only during the apostolic period, rapidly becoming a non-issue by the end of the first century due to the increasing presence of Gentiles in the church (Munck 1959: 134), or 2) it was a new development combatted by John Chrysostom in fourth century CE Antioch, as indicated in his vituperative sermons against Gentile Christian members of his church who attended synagogue and were attracted to Jewish customs and religious rites (Ruether 1974: 170; Taylor 1995).

Gager, Gaston, and more recently Stephen Wilson, however, argue that these are by no means secure assumptions. These scholars assert that the existence of Judaizing Gentile Christians was a prolonged phenomenon during the early period of Christianity (Gaston 1986: 33-44; Gager 1985; Wilson 1995). They argue that well beyond the period of nascent Christianity there were Gentile Christians who actively maintained ties with
Judaism and that these Christians combined a commitment to Christianity with adherence in varying degrees to Jewish practices, without viewing such behaviour as contradictory or problematic. Indeed, they suggest that certain Gentile Christians understood close ties with Judaism to be essential to living a proper Christian lifestyle. They contend that it was the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizers within Christian communities that prompted the anti-Judaic polemic written by ecclesiastical leaders, and that these leaders were compelled to discourage this Judaizing behaviour through the denigration of Jewish customs.³

The assertion that Gentile Christians who observed Jewish customs was a troublesome phenomenon for the early church has come under criticism from others. A recent opponent of the view is Miriam Taylor, who claims that evidence for the occurrence of Gentile Christian Judaizing in the early church simply does not exist prior to the Constantinian period (Taylor 1995: 30).⁴ It is my contention, however, that while critics such as Taylor raise issues that need to be (re)considered, the Gager-Gaston-Wilson argument is a valid one.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify and discuss relevant texts from the period of the early church that I have determined to be supportive of the Gentile Christian Judaizing theory of Gager and Gaston as applied to the regions of Syria and Asia Minor between c. 50 CE and 160 CE.⁵ This time-frame includes the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem,

³ Gager and Gager's argument concerning the existence of Judaizing Gentile Christians is a component in their larger hypothesis, which suggests that Paul believed that Jesus was a fulfillment of God's promises to the Gentiles, not to the Jews. Thus the Jews were not expected to accept Jesus; they were expected, however, to accept Gentiles who had faith in Jesus as equal participants in the covenant with God. Consequently, according to this view, Paul was not opposed to Torah observance for Jews or Jewish Christians; what he polemicized against was Gentile observance of Torah to attain righteousness (a polemic particularly evident in Galatians) (Gaston 1985; Gager 1985: 197-264). This hypothesis is often referred to as the "two covenant theory," and has come under recent criticism from scholars such as N. T. Wright (1992; particularly 1993), which will be discussed further in the review of scholarship in chapter two. While this dissertation may have implications for the "two covenant" theory, I wish to clarify that my focus is on the Gager-Gaston argument pertaining to the phenomenon of Gentile Christian Judaizers alone.

⁴ Further discussion of scholarly views on this issue will be presented during the review of scholarship in chapter two.

⁵ Prior to the writing of this dissertation, the decision was made to survey early Christian documents dating up to 200 CE. The reason why this study ends at 160 CE is because no extant documents relevant to this thesis were found between the period of 160 to 200 CE. My goal in this dissertation is to demonstrate that Gentile Christian Judaizing was not only a phenomenon encountered by Paul, but one that continued to be a factor for ecclesiastical leaders through the end of the first century CE and well into the second century CE (that is, during the earliest period of Christianity), thus it was not a new phenomenon that arose in the
the spread of Christianity beyond the borders of Israel to Syria and Asia Minor and the Bar Kochba revolt, all of which had a significant impact on Jewish-Christian interaction. The specific manner in which these texts are viewed as supportive will be fully explicated in the chapters that follow. This thesis will reconsider certain texts which have already been a part of the debate concerning the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizing and will introduce new documents relevant to the discussion. I contend that the cumulative evidence from these texts substantiates the hypothesis that Gentile Christian Judaizing occurred within early Syrian and Asia Minor Christian communities during the time period in question.

In fact, "Judaizing" — in its proper intransitive sense — was an issue in the Roman Empire during the first century CE according to both secular and ecclesiastical sources. Relevant evidence attesting to pagan attraction to Judaism will be explored in order to provide a context for the more specific investigation into Gentile Christian attraction to Judaism. For example, the comments of Juvenal, the skeptical Roman satirist who laments how a father's bad habits (e.g., observing the Sabbath and abstention from pork) are imitated by his son, who immerses himself even more deeply in Judaism, will receive discussion (The Sixteen Satires 14.96-106).6

As a phenomenon already recognizable in the first century CE, Judaizing was an issue with which the first generation of Christians had to contend, as indicated in New Testament literature. Evidence for the genesis and early manifestations of the phenomenon are found in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Paul vehemently argues that Gentiles should be free from Jewish custom because of their faith in Jesus. It is clear from his writing, however, that other Christians did not share his view. In Galatians 2, for example, Paul declares that justification comes through faith in Christ, "and not by the works of the Law" (Gal. 2:16), and rebukes Peter and Barnabas for compelling Gentiles to live like Jews.7 It

---

6 See below, chapter three.
7 It is Peter Richardson's view of the Galatian situation that set the stage for the Gaston-Gager argument concerning Gentile Christian Judaizers. Richardson asserts that while Paul's discussion of the Law contains
is my firm contention that in Galatia Paul grappled with the reality that certain Gentile Christian members of his congregations were attracted to Jewish religious customs, even to the point of observing them, and were encouraging fellow Gentile Christians to do likewise.

While Gaston, Gager and Wilson have considered evidence for Gentile Christian Judaizing from various geographical settings, they have not sufficiently considered whether variations exist among the textual evidence from these different regions. For example, Gager suggests that "Judaizing Christians" was a phenomenon that "seems to have been particularly prevalent and persistent in Syria, but it was by no means limited to one region of the Empire," and mentions that it occurred in Asia Minor as well, without commenting on the similarities or differences manifested in the two regions (Gager 1985: 132). Likewise Stephen Wilson concludes after his brief treatment of the topic that the problem of Gentile Christian Judaizing "seems to have been widespread in time and space" without expanding on possible distinctions visible among the different geographical settings (Wilson 1995: 166).

Given the pivotal study of Walter Bauer, Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerrei im ältesten Christentum (1934), which effectively demonstrated how the emergence and manifestations of early Christianity differed from one geographical area to the next, the local contexts of textual evidence and the variations among locales ought not to be ignored. The present study intends, in part, to address this lacuna by examining the phenomenon of Gentile Christian Judaizing as applied specifically to the two geographical domains of Syria and Asia Minor. Relevant variations observed in the evidence from each region, or the lack thereof, will be analyzed in the conclusion with a view to comprehending any particularities in the genesis and development of the phenomenon for each.

elements offensive to Jews and Jewish Christians, the polemic is not directed towards them; instead, "in Galatia, the opposition is primarily from Gentile Christians (who may have been circumcised as proselytes) encouraged by the intimidations of Jews" (1969: 96). Gaston's hypothesis that Paul endorsed Gentile Christianity without denying the continued legitimacy of Judaism (what is known as the "two-covenant" theory) is a further development of these ideas.
Methodology

Judaism and its religious customs appealed to many non-Jews in the Roman empire. Gentile Christians were among those attracted to Judaism and, as suggested above, this attraction to Judaism among non-Jewish Christians was the primary provocation for the anti-Jewish attitude in the early church. The classic example of this is the reaction of John Chrysostom to Gentile Christian Judaizers in his congregation, in which he delivers some of the most vehement anti-Jewish discourse on record, for example calling the synagogue a "whorehouse and a theatre" (*Eight Orations Against the Jews* I.3,4; Wilken 1983). The present study examines certain documents from the first and second centuries CE containing criticism of specific Jewish religious rites, written by ecclesiastical leaders to communities composed of Gentile Christians. I will argue that this criticism is best understood as the leaders' attempt to persuade Gentile Christian Judaizers in their communities to stop Judaizing, or to prevent Gentile Christians from engaging in such behaviour by rendering Judaism as invidious as possible.

During the first century of the common era there was an accelerating drive to define the adherents of this path as distinct from Judaism. Although the first Christians were primarily characterized by their perception of Jesus and his teachings as defining elements in their self-understanding, at this time that perception may not have been considered a sufficient distinguishing parameter by the early Christian leadership. There may, then, have been a strong perceived need on the part of church leaders to foster an identity further distinct by means of a dissociation from the Jewish customs followed by Christians of Gentile background, a membership which had been influenced by a predominantly Jewish cultural milieu in Syria and Asia Minor. In this thesis I will discuss the grounds for plausibility that 1) certain Gentiles who became embracers of Christ subscribed to some Jewish traditions and 2) that it was decidedly in the self-interest of the early Christian
leadership to instruct those members most devoted to those traditions to dispense with them.

At times the polemics were well qualified with respect to the intended target (for example, in Phil. 6.1, quoted above, Ignatius states explicitly that he does not wish to hear "Judaism from the uncircumcised;" in his Dialogue with Trypho, Justin Martyr inveighs against Gentile Christians who observe parts of the Mosaic law within his church community [47: 4]), but for the most part they were not. I contend that many polemics heretofore taken to be vague, anti-Jewish rhetoric were, in fact, addressed to the same audience and for the same purpose as Ignatius' and Justin's explicitly qualified warnings. That is, the criticism was directed towards Gentile believers in Christ who manifested what was considered by the contemporary leadership to be excessive attachment to Jewish custom.

Why these polemics were not typically as explicitly identified as to audience as those of Ignatius and Justin is a reflection of the undifferentiated or diffuse condition of Christian identity at that point in its development. The church leadership's warnings would have represented newly-formulated opinions in reaction to what they immediately viewed as excessive sustainment of Jewish tradition. Their motives, explored in the following chapters, were likely multifarious. Because these leaders were engaged in creating determinants of Christian identity, we are left with polemics lacking highly differentiated terminology. Highly-differentiated references (reflected, for example, in the fourth century CE anti-Jewish rhetoric of John Chrysostom, in which he vilifies the synagogue and explicitly instructs his Christian congregants not to attend services there) necessarily depend on a clear vision of what constituted "Christian" behaviour and what did not. They could have emerged only at a later date when defining parameters of what truly constituted normative Christian behaviour had crystallized.

As a result, the optimum methodology for investigating Gentile Christian Judaizing in this period is through analysis of the criticism leveled against Jewish customs, where it
can be determined that Gentile Christians would have comprised (at least) a major part of the community. As with most critical approaches to the New Testament, the methodology of mirror-reading is essential but considered controversial by some, and therefore needs to be applied with caution. The task of reconstruction of the socio-historical context is all the more challenging since we are dealing with polemical material, which can render the "mirror" distorted.

A few scholars have elucidated the inherent risks of mirror reading for Paul's letters, and observations which are generally relevant to this study may be drawn from their cautionary comments (Lyons 1985; Barclay 1987). For example, one factor that makes interpretation difficult is that the opponents of the author may not have embraced exactly what is nominally disputed by the latter in the documents. Indeed, in order to present the adversaries in a bad light and increase the efficacy of the vilification of them for readers, the author may have exaggerated or distorted the facts. Certain aspects of the dispute might be purposely polarized, and the descriptions of the opponent might be caricatured in the polemics. John Barclay points out a further potential pitfall of mirror reading: some scholars have tended to portray, for example, Paul's opponents using descriptions which make the latter sound suspiciously similar to the scholars' own theological adversaries: "I suspect this is why, in Protestant circles, Paul's opponents have so often been described as legalistic and mean-minded Jewish Christians, with a streak of fundamentalist biblicism: in

---

8 Gager argues that since it is often impossible for scholars to discern whether the proponents of Judaizing who are being criticized are Gentiles or Jews, this "should warn us that the difficulty is not lack of information but the distinction itself;" consequently, he uses the term "Judaizing Christians," to designate both Gentile and Jewish Christians who observe Torah (Gager 1985: 117). Gager does not exaggerate the difficulty of ascertaining whether the targets are of Jewish or Gentile origin, since criticism of Jewish customs, for example, can apply to either Gentile Christian Judaizers or Jewish Christians. Since it is particularly Gentile Christian Judaizing that this study is interested in, however, the texts surveyed later are those considered to be addressing congregations which are composed predominantly of Christians of Gentile origins. Gentile presence was determined in a variety of ways, sometimes through evidence provided by the text itself, such as warnings against returning to idolatrous worship, or becoming circumcised, and sometimes through external means, such as the lack of archaeological evidence for a Jewish community in the area of the document.

9 This methodology is also known as "reading against the grain," but for the remainder of this discussion will be referred to as "mirror reading."
exegeting and supporting Paul one can thereby hit out at Jews, Catholics and fundamentalists all at once!" (Barclay 1987: 81).

The shortcomings of the technique of mirror reading should not be exaggerated, however, since the approach can be effective if applied judiciously (Murphy-O'Connor 1996: 195; Barclay 1987). It would be imprudent to underestimate the distorting effects of polemic, yet it would be equally ill-advised to assume that an author would wholly misrepresent (or invent) the behaviour denounced in the text, particularly if the purpose of the text is to influence the behaviour of its readers in a specific way. If the author desired that his or her communication have an effect, s/he would need to write in such a way that his or her readers could recognize that to which s/he referred.

The alternative to a prudent application of mirror reading is that we would have to conclude that virtually nothing could be known about the historical circumstances in which the criticism in question was written. Rather than resorting to such a scholarly "agnosticism," we would subscribe to Barclay's view that when applied with caution and with certain "logical criteria," this methodology can be effective (Barclay 1987: 84). Among some of the precepts proposed by Barclay for specific application to Paul's writings are the following, which hold true for most of the material surveyed in this study: a) when an assertion is made, "we may assume that, at least, those to whom [the author] writes may be in danger of overlooking what [the author] asserts, and at most, someone has explicitly denied it," with a number of possible explanations in between these two options; b) if a denial is made, "we may assume that, at least, those whom [the author] addresses may be prone to regard what [the author] denies as true, and at most, someone has explicitly asserted it," again, with a number of possibilities in between; c) if a command is given "at least, those who receive it may be in danger of neglecting what [the author] commands, and at most they are deliberately flouting it," with a number of possibilities in between; and d) if a prohibition is made by an author, "there must be at least some perceived chance that what is prohibited may be done, and at most, someone has already
flagrantly disobeyed [the author]; but perhaps it is a case of action being performed in naive ignorance (or a host of other possibilities)* (Barclay 1987: 84, his emphases).  

Furthermore, Barclay suggests that: e) if the tone of the statement reflects "emphasis and urgency," the issue may be "an important and perhaps central issue," and f) if the author frequently refers to the same issue, "it is clearly important" (Barclay 1987: 84). He further advises that one should avoid basing an interpretation g) "on an ambiguous word or phrase (or on a contested textual problem)," or h) on a suspiciously distorted phrase, and i) one should "bring into play what other evidence we have for contemporary men and movements which could conceivably be the object" of the author's attack (Barclay 1987: 84).

In accordance with these stipulations, evidence that is determined to be pointing to a) the criticism of Gentile Christian Judaizing and b) the encouragement of Gentile Christian Judaizing in Syria and Asia Minor during the first and second centuries CE, will be explored in early church documents with a view to addressing the following questions: a) what motivated certain Gentile Christians to become Judaizers, b) who desired Gentile Christians to Judaize, and c) which Jewish customs were involved. Throughout this analysis, the socio-cultural and religious contexts of the texts will be re-examined in order to elucidate the sociological and historical circumstances behind the reaction to or encouragement of Gentile Christian Judaizing. The texts discussed will include canonical documents, both early (e.g., Galatians) and late (e.g., Revelation); non-canonical documents of an "orthodox" nature (e.g., Epistle of Barnabas, the Didache, the letters of Ignatius) as well as literature of a "heterodox" nature (e.g., Marcion's writing, the Pseudo-Clementine literature) and the Apologists (e.g., Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho, Melito's Peri Pascha).

10 In a similar vein, Gager suggests that "whenever we hear criticisms of specific observances in the Mosaic covenant we must suppose that they are being directed at least as much at Christians as at Jews" (Gager 1985: 154).
Implications of the Existence of Gentile Christian Judaizers

In a larger sense, this study is a contribution to the current interest in advancing new interpretations of the history of Judaism and Christianity and developing a more nuanced understanding of Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity. The awareness of Gentile Christian Judaizing provides another point to be considered on the continuum of Jewish-Christian relations. The reality of its existence complicates the field by adding another dimension to that relationship, for not only were there Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians within the early church but also Gentile Christians living like Jews. Their existence attests furthermore to the indistinct, fluid boundaries between Christians and Jews and how diverse and complex interactions between them were. Scholars need to be cautious about projecting modern notions of Jewish and Christian identity as distinct and rigid categories into antiquity, as this simply was not the situation in the first centuries of Christian history.

There are, moreover, implications for how to understand the emergence and development of the *adversus Judaeos* polemic discussed here. The "anti-Jewish" criticism in the passages from early Christian texts surveyed often has been interpreted to be expressions of conflict existent between Jews and Christians. This study clarifies the original context of the hostility, and argues that this material reflects tension among Christians, thereby reflecting an *intra-muros* debate.

Finally, an investigation into Gentile Christian Judaizing in antiquity inevitably pertains to the development of Christian identity. Reactions to this phenomenon from early ecclesiastical leaders determined, to a significant extent, what constituted "proper" Christian behaviour. Warnings and criticism of Gentile Christian Judaizing reflects a determined effort on behalf of the church leadership to forge a Christian identity fully differentiated and distinct from Judaism and, ultimately, contributed to the eventual "parting of the ways" of Christianity and Judaism.
Chapter Two
Review of Scholarship

If this survey of scholarship were to focus only on scholars specifically dealing with the phenomenon of Gentile Christian Judaizers, it would be a short review indeed. Evidence for Gentile Christians' voluntarily observing certain Jewish customs in antiquity did not receive serious attention from New Testament scholars until recently. This review has two objectives. The first of these is to highlight some of the changes in biblical scholarship regarding scholarly perceptions of Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity, changes which precipitated the recognition of lively and close interaction between Christians and Jews in the first two centuries of the Common Era. The second is to situate these changes in the political and social contexts in which the scholars under discussion wrote.

Until approximately thirty years ago, most Christian historians and theologians treated Judaism and Christianity as historically and conceptually separate movements with little in common.\footnote{This point is made by Anthony J. Saldarini 1992: 26, where he provides a succinct and insightful summary of how N.T. research has depicted Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity.} New Testament scholarship prior to the middle of the 1960s, and particularly before the Second World War, tended to describe the separation of Christianity from Judaism as taking place shortly after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, and both movements were treated as though their boundaries and identities were sharply defined in reaction to this traumatic event.

New Testament scholars perceived Judaism and Christianity to be virtually monolithic communities and tended to overlook the existence of diverse groups within each community. When they did address these groups, scholars frequently treated them as though they were epiphenomenal deviations from the authentic forms of each religion (Saldarini 1992: 16). Evidence for close interaction between Gentile Christians and Judaism in the early centuries of the Common Era was rarely acknowledged or seriously discussed. Christianity was presented as separate from Judaism, and Gentile Christianity
was presented as separate from Jewish Christianity, with the latter viewed as a heretical form of Christianity and the former anachronistically viewed as the orthodox or normative form of Christianity.

In contrast to this, the willingness of New Testament scholars of the past three or four decades to reexamine historical and literary evidence has produced scholarship which displays a more accurate understanding of the pluralism and rich diversity of each movement. Scholars realize that there was no such thing as normative first century Judaism or normative first century Christianity, but that each religious community expressed itself in a wide variety of ways in belief and practice. Definitions of the terms "orthodoxy" and "heresy" have significantly changed, as have scholarly perceptions of how the history of early Christianity developed and unfolded. There is now widespread understanding that in many geographical areas, "heresies" were actually the primary forms of Christianity.12 There is also acknowledgment of Jewish influence on the development of early Christianity, and exploration of the often intimate association between Jews and Christians beyond 70 CE. This dissertation addresses a heretofore neglected point of contact in that relationship.

In order to understand the changes in New Testament scholarship which facilitated the recognition among New Testament scholars of Gentile Christian Judaizers as one of many various Christian groups, I will discuss several topics pertaining to the nature of the history of Jewish-Christian relations and will highlight the paradigms and prejudices expressed by scholars representing different generations. In this chapter, for example, I will survey a number of different pre- and post- World War II scholarly positions regarding how much contact existed between Christianity and Judaism (especially between Gentile Christianity and Jewish Christianity) and whether Jews actively proselytized among Gentiles (particularly Gentile Christians).13 These issues are relevant to the present study

---

12 This is an important part of Walter Bauer's provocative thesis in Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity (1971), discussed later.
13 A discussion concerning whether Jews of the first and second centuries CE engaged in missionizing is undertaken in chapter three.
because for a long time scholars interpreted evidence of Gentile participation in Judaism as proof of aggressive Jewish missionizing rather than indicative of a genuine interest in Jewish customs on the part of Gentiles. Such a view was predicated in large part on their perception of Judaism as moribund and unattractive. Another topic that will be considered concomitantly is the question of whether early Christian documents, including the New Testament, contained anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic sentiment and against whom these sentiments would have been directed (Jews? Jewish Christians? Gentile Christian Judaizers?), or whether such rhetoric was simply a means of establishing Christian self-identity and did not necessarily target any one group associated with Judaism.14

Adolf von Harnack: The Rapid de-Judaization of Christianity

The idea that Gentile Christians in antiquity might be interested in Judaism was, to put it mildly, rather distant from the minds of most European New Testament scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, scholars of this period argue that quite the opposite occurred. Imbued with deep-seated animosity toward Jews, their portrayal of Judaism in antiquity is of a legalistic, unattractive religion quickly rejected by Christians. Jewish Christianity is seen as a movement rapidly repudiated by "orthodox" Gentile ecclesiastical leaders. Jews are described as being actively involved in pursuing potential converts, albeit not very successfully. Jewish failure to convert non-Jews is presented as conclusive proof that Judaism was not the "true religion."

During the early 1800s, the status of the Jews in Europe was changing as they sought political emancipation. In their attempt to integrate culturally, economically and politically into modern life, they met with a great deal of resistance. European intellectuals regarded the Jewish communities of Europe as morally corrupt, degenerate and hostile to

14 Miriam Taylor, whose monograph Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity (1995) is discussed below, argues that early Christian anti-Judaism had nothing to do with actual conflicts between Jews and Christians but was a solely theoretical exercise used by Christian leaders to construct their own world view and identity.
anyone outside their own communities. Rabbinic precepts were viewed as strange and uncivilized, and it was felt that these laws reinforced Jewish separation from the rest of society and caused them to bear animosity towards non-Jews. Even those who supported Jewish aspirations did not hold Jews in high opinion. For example, in an essay arguing for the granting of equal rights for Jews, German scholar Christian Wilhelm Von Dohm (1751-1820), who was active in Enlightenment circles of Berlin, states the following: "Let us concede that the Jews may be more morally corrupt than other nations... that their religious prejudice is more antisocial and clannish..." (Wilhelm Von Dohm 1980: 29).

By the late 1800s, the status of German Jews was as yet unstable and continued to be the subject of heated political debate. Anti-Semitic movements and political parties increased, with international conventions held in Dresden (1882), and in Chemnitz (1883) (Poliakov 1985: 22). Certain biblical scholars used data from the emerging discipline of archaeology as ammunition in their denigration of the Old Testament. For example, Assyriologist Friedrich Delitzsch caused a stir with his Babel oder Bibel (1902), where he argues not only that the Mosaic tradition was derived from Mesopotamia, but that the latter culture was superior to the former. The book was met with protestations from orthodox theologians "and rabbis spoke of the 'higher anti-Semitism' of higher biblical criticism" (Poliakov 1985: 26).

---

15 Former socialist Wilhelm Marr, who is credited with originating the term anti-Semitism, in 1879 comments on how Jewish financial investors generally emerged from the collapse of 1873 in a better fiscal situation than non-Jewish speculators: "They do not deserve any reproach. They have struggled for 1,800 years against the Western world. They have beaten it and subjugated it. We are the losers and it is natural that the winners should shout Vae victis. We are so Judeaized that we are beyond salvation and a brutal anti-Semitic explosion can only postpone the collapse of our Judaized society, but not prevent it. You will not be able to stop the great mission of Semitism. Jewish Caesarism, I am deeply convinced, is only a question of time..." (1879: 46 in Poliakov 1985: 17-18). Interestingly, Marr associates the notion of Jewish domination of German society with a "mission of Semitism." Pretending to address the Jews, Marr declares the following: "It is the distress of an enslaved people that speaks through my pen, of a people weeping under your yoke as you had wept under ours, but which, with the passage of time, you have put around our neck... You are the masters; we are the serfs. Finis Germaniae" (1879: 50 in Poliakov 1985: 18).

16 Poliakov notes that "Even an association against anti-Semitism, organized in 1891 with the participation of personalities such as the Mayor of Berlin Funk von Dessau, Theodor Mommsen, the biologist Rudolf Virchow, and even Gustav Freytag the author of the perfidious Soll und Haben, stated that its major goal was the reform of political practices and not the defense of the Jews" (Poliakov 1985: 25).
Adolf von Harnack's scholarship reflects the strong anti-Jewish sentiment typical of German philosophers and liberal biblical theologians of the late nineteenth century. He and other Lutheran scholars such as J. Wellhausen and E. Schürer "not only systematically depreciated the Judaism of the Diaspora, but went so far as occasionally to mark with a special sign the works of their Jewish colleagues in their bibliographies" (Poliakov 1985: 26). 17 The majority of contemporaneous N. T. theologians assumed that a progressive de-Judaization occurred as Christianity developed and as increasing numbers of Gentiles joined the movement during the first centuries of the Common Era. It will be shown that Harnack detrimentally contrasted Jewish missionaries with the more successful Christian missionaries who followed their lead and argued that by the middle of the second century CE Christianity and Judaism were not influenced by one another.

Harnack was very much a man of his time. His seminal work Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten was first published in 1902, and has had profound influence on histories of early Christianity since the turn of the century. 18 In the tradition of praeparatio evangelica found frequently in Christian historiography, Harnack argues that the development of Judaism prepared the Roman empire for Christianity. In his view, pre-Christian Judaism contributed to the eventual triumph of Christianity by founding religious communities, spreading knowledge of the Old Testament, influencing general habits of private worship, making a persuasive case for belief in monotheism, and engaging in proselytism of its religious ideas as a duty of faithful adherents (Harnack 1908a: 15).

Harnack stated that in the early centuries of the common era "[t]he adhesion of Greeks and Romans to Judaism ranged over the entire gamut of possible degrees, from the superstitious adoption of certain rites up to complete identification," adding that "God-fearing' pagans" were the majority, with actual converts "comparatively few in number".

---

17 According to Poliakov, "[i]n Germany anti-Semitism was led by the Lutherans, as in Austria and France it was led by the Catholics" (Poliakov 1985: 19).
18 James Moffatt's 1908 translation of the second German edition (1906) into English under the title The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries is used here.
(Harnack 1908a: 12). From Harnack's perspective, any evidence of Gentile interest in Jewish customs or observance of Jewish ritual was brought about through forceful Jewish proselytism, or pressure from Jewish Christians, not from Gentile initiative: "[t]he keenness of Jewish propaganda throughout the empire during the first century ... is also clear from the introduction of the Jewish week and Sabbath throughout the empire" (Harnack 1908a: 12 note 2).19 Shaye Cohen rightly points out that Harnack's presentation of Judaism as an active missionary religion is based more on his theological conceptions than on solid evidence. In Harnack's view, "Judaism is Christianity manqué. It tried to conquer the world, but, hobbled by its ethnocentrism and (later) its ritualism, was doomed to failure" (Cohen 1991: 168). According to Harnack, Christianity succeeded where Judaism failed.

Harnack admits that "[i]t is not quite clear how the Gentile mission arose," but goes on to suggest confidently that it was a gradual development whose "ground had been prepared already, by the inner condition of Judaism, i.e., by the process of decomposition within Judaism which made for universalism, as well as by the graduated system of the proselytes" (Harnack 1908a: 48, my emphasis). In Harnack's view, it was at Antioch in Syria that the Gentile Christian mission began in earnest (Harnack 1908a: 50). He expresses surprise that "there is no word of any opposition between Jewish and Gentile Christians at Antioch," and he assumes that "the local Jewish Christians, scattered and cosmopolitan as they were, must have joined the new community of Christians, who were free from the law, without more ado" (Harnack 1908a: 53 note 1).

As Harnack describes it, Gentile converts to Christianity did not struggle with questions about whether or not to observe the Mosiac law. The "Gentile Christian churches of Syria and Cilicia did not observe the law," for most of these "cosmopolitan converts" understood that "all the ceremonial part of the law was to be allegorically

19 Two other nineteenth century scholars who present the Jews of antiquity as actively participating in missionary efforts to secure converts to Judaism are E. Schürer 1973 (1890) and J. Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* 1958 (1897).
interpreted and understood in some moral sense" (Harnack 1908a: 54). He adds that "[t]he post-apostolic literature shows with particular clearness that this was the popular view taken by the Gentile Christians..." (Harnack 1908a: 54 note 4).20

From Harnack's perspective, Christianity and Judaism were separate, opposing movements, with impenetrable boundaries, particularly after 70 CE (Harnack 1908a: 18; Saldarini 1992: 25). By the second century CE, Gentile Christian churches predominated and were, "exposed to the double fire of local Jews and pagans," however "they had no relations with the Jewish Christians" (Harnack 1908b: 113 note 2). Indeed, by 180 CE the Catholic church had placed Jewish Christians "upon her roll of heretics" (Harnack 1908a: 63). Harnack writes that Jewish Christians, called "Ebionites," existed beyond the fourth century, in "districts along the Jordan and the Dead Sea" but they were, in his view, entirely inconsequential and made no impact on Gentile Christian churches (Harnack 1908b: 104). He suggests that they "... probably dragged out a wretched existence. The Gentile Christian bishops (even those of Palestine) and teachers rarely noticed them" (Harnack 1908b: 104).

Harnack closely adhered to Albrecht Ritschl’s analysis of early Christian groups.21 Ritschl’s viewpoint opposed the thesis promoted by F. C. Baur and the so-called "Tübingen School." Baur, who applied Hegelian principles to the study of early Christianity, argued that Paul was opposed by Jewish Christian adherents of Peter in Galatia, Corinth and Philippi. These opponents or "Judaizers," as he (incorrectly) called them, sought to impose circumcision and Torah observance on all Gentile converts to Christianity (Baur

20 An analysis of certain post-apostolic Syrian documents in chapter five demonstrates that the issue of Gentile Christian observance of Torah was far from settled and that the allegorical understanding of the law may not have been the "popular" view among Gentile Christians as Harnack suggests.
21 See A. Ritschl, Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche, 2nd ed. (1857), also Philip Hefner, "Baur Versus Ritschl on Early Christianity," Church History 31 (1962): 259-78. Ritschl began his career as an adherent of the Tübingen School and in the 1840s defended F. C. Baur's thesis that the conflict in the early church was between Gentile Christian Paulinists and Jewish Christian Petrinists, but by the late 1850s he had rejected the Tübingen doctrines. The "Ritschlian School" attracted a number of prominent Protestant scholars (Harnack among them) and was characterized by a focus on ethics, community and a rejection of metaphysics and religious experience. Harnack's espousal of Ritschlian views, for example in his Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte (1886-89; ET History of Dogma 1894-99) where he treats Christian teachings critically, provoked strong antagonism from conservative theologians.
1847; Baur 1853). Although Baur's representation of early Christianity as two monolithic groups (Jewish Christians and Pauline Christians) expressing contrary views engaged in struggle with one another was rejected rather early on as an oversimplification, his designation of Paul's opponents as Jewish Christian "Judaizers" was largely accepted and remains to this day the dominant understanding of the term "Judaizer."

Harnack, as noted above, agreed with Ritschl's argument that distinguished between two different groups of Jewish Christians: rigid, extreme Judaizers and temperate Jewish Christians. The first group was devoted to strictly observing Jewish law and avoided contact with Gentile Christians. This group vigorously opposed and persecuted Paul: "to crush him was their aim" (Harnack 1908a: 61). The other group, to which Peter and the other apostles belonged, had interaction with Gentile Christians and held a more flexible and moderate view. They agreed that Gentile Christians were to "abstain from flesh offered to idols, from tasting blood and things strangled, and from fornication" (Harnack 1908a: 61). Due to their interaction with Gentile Christians, "this Jewish Christianity did away with itself" (Harnack 1908a: 61). In the end, of course, "[n]either party count[ed] in the subsequent history of the church, owning to their numerical weakness" (Harnack 1908a: 62).²²

This latter group of Jewish Christians were awkwardly caught in the middle and "were always falling between two fires, for the Jews persecuted them with bitter hatred, while the Gentile church censured them as heretics — i.e., as non-Christians" (Harnack 1908a: 63-64).²³ Harnack declares that the "Gentile church stripped [Judaism] of

²² According to Harnack, the relationship between Jewish Christians and non-Jews became more strained as the result of the destruction of the Temple: "Undoubtedly the catastrophe decimated the exclusive Jewish Christianity of Palestine and drove a considerable number either back into Judaism or forward into the Catholic church" (Harnack 1908a: 63). Additionally, he states "[w]e do not know when Jewish Christians broke off, or were forced to break off, from all connection with the synagogues; we can only conjecture that if such connections lasted till about 70 A.D., they ceased then" (Harnack 1908a: 63 note 2).

²³ Harnack notes that Paul "held that the day of the Jews ... was past and gone, yet he neither could now could believe in a final repudiation of God's people..." and that this position was "a Pauline idiosyncrasy" (Harnack 1908a: 65). For the majority of Christians, who interpreted the content and obligations of "Old Testament religion" allegorically, Paul's view was unacceptable "since the legitimacy of the allegorical conception, and inferentially the legitimacy of the Gentile church in general, was called in question, if the Pauline view held good at any single point" (Harnack 1908a: 65). Harnack opines that "the attitude
everything; she took away its sacred book; herself but a transformation of Judaism, she cut off all connection with the parent religion," and he calls this a terrible "injustice" to Judaism (Harnack 1908a: 69). On the other hand, in a statement which Cohen rightfully observes is "certainly not history," Harnack maintains that viewed from a higher standpoint, the facts acquire a different complexion. By their rejection of Jesus, the Jewish people disowned their calling and dealt the death-blow to their own existence; their place was taken by Christians as the new People, who appropriated the whole tradition of Judaism, giving a fresh interpretation to any unserviceable materials in it, or else allowing them to drop ... All that Gentile Christianity did was to complete a process which had in fact commenced long ago within Judaism itself, viz., the process by which the Jewish religion was being inwardly emancipated and transformed into a religion for the world (die Entschränkung der jüdischen Religion und ihre Transformation zur Weltreligion)." (Harnack 1908a: 69-70; see Cohen 1991: 165)

Harnack understands the relationship between Paul and Jewish Christians to be one of opposition: many of the opponents Paul encountered on his missionary journeys were Jewish Christians trying to "win Gentiles to their own form of Christianity" (Harnack 1908a: 61).24

By the end of the first century, in Harnack's view, the Gentile church had virtually "cut off all connection with the parent religion," and by approximately 140 CE, the transition of Christianity to the 'Gentiles,' with its emancipation from Judaism, was complete...After the fall of Jerusalem there was no longer any Jewish counter-mission, apart from a few local efforts; on the contrary, Christians established themselves in the strongholds hitherto held by

---

24 The hostile reaction "on the part of Jews and Jewish Christians alike" is, according to Harnack, not surprising (Harnack 1908a: 57). They "hampered every step of Paul's work among the Gentiles... as a rule, whenever bloody persecutions are afoot in later days, the Jews are either in the background or the foreground" (Harnack 1908a: 58).
Jewish propaganda and Jewish proselytes. (Harnack 1908a: 69-70)

He notes that "[a]ttempts of the Jews to seduce Christians into apostasy are mentioned in literature, but not very often."25 In his Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte he states that as the church began to use the Old Testament as a source of rules and regulations, there were accusations of Judaizing (Harnack 1900a: 291).26 Harnack admits that some Christians were attracted to Judaism, mentioning Domnus, referred to in Eusebius' Hist. eccl. 6.21 as "a man who at the time of the persecution had fallen away from faith in Christ" to Jewish worship (Harnack 1908a: 70). He also notes that Celsus "knows Christians who desire to live as Jews according to Mosaic law" (Celsus, On the True Doctrine, 5.61 in Harnack 1900a: 298) and that Epiphanius, in Panarion 14.15, suggests that Aquila was a Christian who later converted to Judaism. Without either discussion or specifics, he states that Chrysostom fought against "the heretics" in Antioch (Harnack 1908b: 134).

Harnack's views concerning Judaism and the expansion of early Christianity correspond to contemporaneous liberal Protestant German historicism (White 1985/1986: 99; Kümmel 1972: 178). His liberal leaning is reflected in his admission that Jesus expected to return imminently, but that "the real content of Jesus' thought" was "faith alone in the present inwardness of God's kingdom" and in his assumption that "the disciples at a very early time abandoned Jesus' way of thinking in favor of a mere hope for the future," (Kümmel 1972: 178). He approached the New Testament with a critical mindset, but, as

---

25 Harnack explains that there was "one vital omission in the Jewish missionary preaching: viz., that no Gentile, in the first generation at least, could become a real son of Abraham. His rank before God remained inferior" and his future uncertain (Harnack 1908a: 13). Christian missionaries superseded Jewish efforts because in Christianity, Gentile converts were fully accepted; Christian missionaries won "thousands where the previous missionary preaching won but hundreds" (Harnack 1908a: 13). In his History of Dogma, Harnack states that "nearly all the Gentile Christian groups that we know are at one in the detachment of Christianity from empiric Judaism," and asserts that early Christian communities "were far superior to the synagogue in power of attraction" (Harnack 1900: 148-9). He surmises that "the great mass of the earliest Gentile Christians became Christians" because they had found in Christianity what they had formerly been looking for in Judaism, but had not found (Harnack 1900: 17).

26 The first edition was published in 1886; the ET of History of Dogma used here is that of the 3rd German edition (c. 1900), translated by Neil Buchanan (1961), vol. 1.
demonstrated above, was concurrently influenced by his theological views. Harnack, who opposed the emerging "History of Religions" school, viewed Christianity as isolated from its religious/historical environment, and located its essence in the teaching of Jesus, which he believed was preserved in its genuine form in the synoptic gospels (Kümmel 1972: 178).^27

While he recognized that the simple categories "Gentile Christianity" and "Jewish Christianity" did not sufficiently address the complicated situation that existed, Harnack fell short of discussing aspects of that complexity. His theological presupposition that Christianity superseded Judaism thwarted any serious recognition on his part of continued contact between Gentile Christianity and Judaism, whether in the form of Jewish customs, or Jewish practitioners.

**Walter Bauer's Challenge**

Walter Bauer's book *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzeri im altesten Christentum* (1934) is significant for New Testament scholars because of the revolutionary approach Bauer proposes for understanding early church history.^28 It is particularly his way of understanding extant Christian literary evidence that is important for a study on Judaizing Gentile Christians. Bauer's hypothesis undercuts the traditional view of how Christianity developed, creating a new paradigm through which future research would reflect more nuanced and accurate descriptions of nascent Christianity.

---

^27 The ET by T. B. Saunders, entitled *What is Christianity?*, was published in 1901 by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and Williams and Norgate, London. The translation used here is the new edition of Harper & Brothers, 1957, reprinted in 1978 in Gloucester, Mass, by Peter Smith. In his introduction to the 1957 edition of *What is Christianity?*, Rudolf Bultmann observes that "Though [Harnack's] conception of history is otherwise dominated to a great extent by the idea of evolution ... it is nevertheless quite clear that for him the Christian faith is neither a product of evolution, nor, as such, something with a history subject to development" (p. xiii).

^28 The German version of the book was reprinted with minor changes plus two additional essays by Georg Strecker in 1964. The English translation *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, used here, became available in 1971 and was edited by Robert A. Kraft and Gerhard Krodel.
Bauer challenges the traditional point of view that orthodoxy preceded heresy as the "purest" or most "genuine" form of Christianity while heresies were a later deviation from this (Bauer 1971: xxiii). He refutes the notion that Jesus revealed "pure doctrine" to his disciples, who faithfully preserved it. According to the "ecclesiastical view," after the death of the disciples, "obstacles" arise which cause true believers "to abandon the pure doctrine" and become heretics (Bauer 1971: xxiii). Bauer argues that diversity in Christian doctrine and practice existed before there was unity, and that the establishment of ecclesiastical orthodoxy was a gradual process. Furthermore, the texts that have survived from antiquity express what became known as the "orthodox" point of view because it is this point of view that eventually triumphed, defeating other, differing views. These defeated views, which attest to the diversity of early Christianity, were eventually suppressed and ultimately became known as heresies.

Based on the vehemence with which the "heretical" views were attacked, Bauer argues that they were initially more popular than what eventually became the mainstream view: "for a long time after the close of the post-apostolic age the sum total of consciously orthodox and anti-heretical Christians was numerically inferior to that of the "heretics"" (Bauer 1971: 231). He suggests that in certain geographic regions, some of these so-called "heresies" originally "were the only form of the new religion — that is, for those regions they were simply 'Christianity'" (Bauer 1971: xxii). He goes on to suggest that it is possible that it was, in fact, the adherents of these "heresies" who "looked down with hatred and scorn on the orthodox, who for them were the false believers" (Bauer 1971: xxii). The New Testament reflects the struggle ecclesiastical leaders had with heresies. Bauer's thesis highlights the fact that canonical texts do not express a doctrinal consensus, but preserve a spectrum of theological perspectives, ranging from Paul's views to those held by the Jewish Christian author of the Epistle of James. Moreover, a few of these expressions, such as Paul's letters and the Gospel of John, were identified — for a time at least — as heresies from the ecclesiastical perspective (Bauer 1971: 224-228; 205-212).
One of the most significant and influential aspects of Bauer's approach to understanding the slow formation of ecclesiastical orthodoxy is his emphasis on not only how the developmental process changed diachronically, but also on how the process differed from one geographical area to the next. As he puts it in his introduction: "What constitutes 'truth' in one generation can be out of date in the next — through progress, but also through retrogression into an earlier position. The actual situation in this region may not obtain in that one, and indeed, may never have had general currency" (Bauer 1971: xxii). He pursues this point by surveying evidence for the development of Christianity in several major geographical regions: Edessa, Egypt, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Crete, and Rome, demonstrating that the emergence and manifestations of early Christianity varied from one region to the next. The implications of Bauer's study have had extensive impact on the understanding of the development of early Christianity, as reflected in subsequent studies which focus on understanding the local context of textual evidence.29

With *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, Bauer disengages from the traditional understanding of how the early church developed and introduces a radically different reading of that history. By putting aside preconceived ideas regarding heresies, he argues that the heresies of the second century were not deviations from a unified faith, but representatives of the diversity that once characterized first century Christianity. Bauer brings to light the reality that many extant Christian texts represent the voices within Christianity that eventually gained the upper hand in the struggle for dominance.30 As such, these texts do not tell the whole story because they do not represent all of the voices in this struggle. They reflect solely the views endorsed by the "winners," reinforcing their perspective on how the development of Christianity occurred. Bauer strongly advocates

29 E.g., Kraabel (1971); Wilken (1976); Donfried and Richardson (1998). Bauer's thesis has also received much criticism, as demonstrated by Georg Strecker's appendix (later augmented by Robert A. Kraft) called "The Reception of the Book" (in Bauer 1971: 286-316) which surveys reviews and criticisms of *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. One of the most frequent criticisms is that Bauer too often argued from silence.

30 L. Michael White (1985/86: 121), observes that Bauer implicitly introduced "a model of expansion different from the 'great church' notion espoused by Harlack."
that in order to understand the diversity and vitality of nascent Christianity, it is the task of
the historian to allow the muted sides (that is, the suppressed voices of "heretics"), which
had been part of the variegated Christian movement, to be heard (Bauer 1971: xxi). His
thesis represents a significant contribution to understanding the development of Christianity
— one which needs to be more intentionally applied to modern scholarship.

Revision of Bauer’s View

Although Walter Bauer argued against the ecclesiastical version of church history and
advocated the existence of diversity in Christian doctrine and practice before there was
unity, he did not apply his thesis to the phenomenon of Jewish Christianity. Instead he
endorsed the ecclesiastical view that Jewish Christians were a heresy very early in the
development of Christianity — a view symptomatic, perhaps, of the year in which his
monograph first appeared (1934). Bauer avers that "Because of their inability to relate to a
development that took place on hellenized gentile soil, the Judaists soon became a heresy,
rejected with conviction by the gentile Christians" (Bauer 1971: 236).

The task of addressing the weakness in Bauer's understanding of Jewish
Christianity was taken up in 1964 by Georg Strecker in his appendix entitled "The Problem
of Jewish Christianity," added to Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity in that
year. He takes issue with Bauer's contention, mentioned above, that Jewish Christianity
soon became a heresy, advising that this understanding of the development of Jewish
Christianity is misconceived and needs to be amended. Strecker argues that "[n]ot only is
there 'significant diversity' within the gentile Christian situation, but the same holds true
for Jewish Christianity" (Strecker 1971: 285).

31 Other works on the topic of Jewish Christianity by Georg Strecker include the following: Das
Judenchristentum in den Pseudoklementinen (1958; 2nd ed. 1981), where he argues that scholars
frequently overestimate the effect of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE on Judaism and Jewish
Christianity; Strecker provides an extensive bibliography on Jewish Christianity at the end of "Le Judéo-
Expressing surprise that Walter Bauer does not refer to the phenomenon of Jewish Christianity to strengthen his thesis that the traditional understanding of ecclesiastical history is incorrect, Strecker points out that "it is not the gentile Christian 'ecclesiastical doctrine' that represents what is primary, but rather a Jewish Christian theology" (Strecker 1971: 241). He argues that by the end of the second century and beginning of the third century CE, "the western church had already forced Jewish Christianity into a fixed heresiological pattern" (Strecker 1971: 284). This pattern, which served the purposes of ecclesiastical orthodoxy, incorrectly presents Jewish Christianity as a self-contained heresy which was uniform in practice and structure and "does not do justice to the complex situation existing within legalistic Jewish Christianity" (Strecker 1971: 285).  

In his refutation of Bauer's view of Jewish Christianity, Strecker emphasizes the protean nature of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity to a greater degree than Bauer. He discusses the mutual development and effect of Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity, and how their relationship was extremely complex, noting, for example, that

[h]ellenistic Jewish Christianity does not represent a closed unity, but the transition from Jewish Christianity to gentile Christianity is fluid, as is shown on the one hand by the adoption of gentile Christian forms by Jewish Christians and on the other by the Judaizing of Christians from the gentile sphere. The latter process is not only to be assumed for the earliest period — as a result of the direct effects of the Jewish synagogue upon the development of gentile Christianity — but is also attested for the later period. (Strecker 1971: 243)

Significantly, Strecker acknowledges the existence of "Judaizing of Christians from the gentile sphere" both in the incipient stages of the development of Christianity as well as in the "later period," though he does not specify which time periods he means.

Many of the points Strecker makes in relation to Bauer's work pertaining to Jewish Christianity effectively can be applied to the phenomenon of Gentile Judaizing. In my view, Bauer does not sufficiently address the diversity existing within the history of the development of Gentile Christianity, particularly pertaining to the relationship of Gentile Christians to Judaism. The following notion, which suggests that Gentile Christians were repulsed by Jewish Christianity, needs to be revised: "As long as Jewish Christianity existed, gentile Christians who came into contact with it were offended by what they regarded as a Judaizing perversion of the Christian heritage..." (Bauer 1971: 201). Here Bauer's perspective is similar to Harnack's on the relationship (or lack thereof!) between Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christians.

In Bauer's view, Jewish ways were neither tempting nor attractive to Gentile Christians: "[b]ecause of their inability to relate to a development that took place on hellenized gentile soil, the Judaists soon became a heresy, rejected with conviction by the gentile Christians" (Bauer 1971: 236). Bauer sees the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE as the cause of the cessation of Gentile concern for observance of the Mosaic law: "the catastrophe in Palestine forever erased the demand that the gentile Christians of the diaspora should be circumcised and should to some extent observe the ceremonial law" (Bauer 1971: 87). The description of the development of Gentile Christianity as a systematic process of rejection of Judaism needs to be recognized as a point of view artificially imposed by ecclesiastical orthodoxy.

Strecker rightly criticizes Bauer for giving the impression that Jewish Christianity was quickly considered a heretical movement, rather than being an authentic and widespread expression of early Christianity. Although Bauer introduced a paradigm for viewing church history which affirms the existence of diverse Christian groups, his perspective on the attitude of Gentile Christians toward the Mosaic Law inadequately reflects the variety of attitudes existent during the first two centuries.
Just as Strecker applies Bauer's thesis to Jewish Christianity, so too Gentile Christianity needs to be seen in the context of Bauer's thesis in order for the complexity and fluidity in the relationship between Gentile Christianity and Judaism to be acknowledged. The rigid split between Gentile and Jewish Christians, as well as the impression advocated by Bauer and Harnack that Gentile Christians uniformly rejected all Jewish elements is inaccurate and in need of reassessment.

The Effects of World War II

James Parkes, writing in the 1930s through the 1960s, stands out as one of the earliest scholars of Jewish-Christian relations who called for a reassessment of the Christian attitude towards Judaism. His work drew attention to the lively interaction between Jews and Christians and how Christian teachings contributed towards antisemitism (Parkes [1934] 1985; [1936] 1960). Parkes delineates two presuppositions upon which the traditional Christian attitude was built: 1) the understanding that continuous spiritual degeneration within Judaism occurred between the return from the Babylonian exile and the appearance of Christ; and 2) the presumption that "post-Christian Judaism is without independent spiritual dynamic or vitality," as implied in the coinage of terms "Spät-Judentum," "bas-Judaisme," and "Late Judaism," all of which denote Judaism as passé (Parkes 1969: 6). Parkes realized that this interpretation of Judaism was "demonstrably false," and in his work, along with fellow British scholars G. F. Moore and A. Lukyn Williams, he argues against the traditional image of Judaism as weak, legalistic and altogether unappealing (Parkes 1969: 7).33

After World War II and the horror of the Holocaust, New Testament scholars began to examine the history of Jewish/Christian relations with heightened sensitivity as to how

---

33 Parkes' view regarding Jewish proselytes is as insightful as it is rare in its time: he suggests that converts to Judaism "were made by the attractive power of the local synagogue, not by trained missionaries going out singly or in groups to cities and regions where settled Jewish communities did not exist," (1969: 12). See G. F. Moore 1921: 197-254; 1927-30; also A. L. Williams 1935.
anti-Jewish teachings in the church had contributed to the Nazi attempt to destroy European Jewry. Since the middle of the 1960s, with the implementing of Vatican II, this issue has become the focus of introspective discussion and has led to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism in antiquity.\(^{34}\)

One of the most striking aspects of post-Holocaust New Testament scholarship is the effort taken to understand the Jewish environment in which the nascent Christian community emerged, and to recognize the importance and influence of Judaism in ways that past scholars such as Harnack never did.\(^{35}\) An increasing number of New Testament scholars, following Parkes' lead, have become aware that the unattractive image of Judaism was conceived from the standpoint of Christian theological presuppositions, and that the relationship between the church and the synagogue in antiquity requires reconsideration.

Through the process of reconstructing the Jewish matrix of early Christianity, N.T. scholars have elucidated first and second century Jewish beliefs and practices, and have highlighted the vitality and dynamism of Judaism during that period. The monograph which perhaps most exemplifies this modern change of perspective is the 1977 publication of E. P. Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977). Among his six objectives for the book, Sanders states that he seeks to "destroy the view of Rabbinic Judaism which is still prevalent in much, perhaps most, New Testament scholarship" (Sanders 1977: xii). He unveils the manner in which Christian scholars (particularly German scholars such as Weber, Schürer, Bousset, Billerbeck, and Bultmann) have anachronistically described Judaism using terms borrowed from Reformation rhetoric, portraying rabbinic Judaism as espousing the same type of doctrines of which Luther accused Rome.\(^{36}\)

---


\(^{36}\) Sanders undercut this post-Reformation theory of Jewish identity by suggesting a new theory of his own: "covenantal nomism." This theory emphasizes two foci crucial to Judaism: the Mosaic law and the
As Sanders himself emphasizes, his study is a continuation of a path begun fifty years earlier by George Foot Moore with his article "Christian Writers on Judaism," where Moore asserts in the opening line that "Christian interest in Jewish literature has always been apologetic or polemic rather than historical" (Moore 1921: 197). Moore suggests that in anti-Judaic apologies, such as Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, "the Jewish disputant is a man of straw," and that Justin, and other authors of Christian apologies, "did not write to convert Jews but to edify Christians, possibly also to convince Gentiles wavering between the rival propaganda of the synagogue and the church" (Moore 1921: 198). Moore critiques various 18th and 19th century scholars for their misconceived understanding and depiction of Judaism, advocating the need for a profound revision of how scholars view Judaism. His directive, however, was largely unheeded in subsequent scholarship.

**Marcel Simon: Judaism as a Rival**

Marcel Simon's pivotal treatment of Jewish-Christian relations from 135-425 CE in his *Verus Israel: Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'empire romain* was first published in 1948. There Simon argues against the traditional view that Judaism during the period of Christianity's expansion was ineffectual, insular and unattractive to outsiders, advocating instead that Judaism not only survived this period, but was "a real, active, and often successful competitor with Christianity" and that it was this rivalry that caused the friction between the two communities (Simon 1986: 385). His theory

covenant, with the understanding that the law is kept in order to express the covenantal relationship with God, not to earn that relationship.

37 Moore notes that "[n]o doubt there was abundance of real controversy between Jews and Christians, through which the apologists were acquainted with the points of their opponents' argument" (Moore 1921: 198). My discussion of Justin's *Dialogue* is below, chapter six.

38 A. L. Williams states that Christian writers in antiquity "blamed the obstinate Jews for not accepting the evidence which seemed to them so strong. But in reality, this was only because they themselves misconceived the case" (1935: 417).

39 The ET by H. McKeating by Oxford University Press, 1986, is used here.
profundely altered the perception of how Jews and Christians interacted in antiquity and has had an enduring effect on N.T. scholarship.

According to Simon, Jews and Christians were like "brothers ... ranged in enmity against each other in battle over an inheritance..." and this "explains the sharpness of the conflict, the violence of the hatred" (Simon 1986: xiii). Significantly, he acknowledges the existence of a continuum of sentiments and interaction among Jews and Christians; a rancorous attitude may have been held by the orthodox members of Christianity and Judaism toward one another, but other groups within each community maintained active contact and had more positive views of one another (Simon 1986: xiv).

Simon identifies Judaizing as an important phenomenon within Jewish/Christian relations, one which demonstrates the impact of Judaism on Christianity, and one which has been ignored by historians treating this period. He states that

[w]ithin the early Catholic Church itself there were a number of believers who, though they were not in the strict sense of the word heretical and did not form themselves into independent bodies, nevertheless took it upon themselves to keep some of the Mosaic rules. The importance and size of this minority varied from one area to another. As far as our information goes, such Christians were distinguished by no doctrinal peculiarities whatever... The conciliary canons and the writings of the fathers call such people 'Judaizers,' and condemn them. This is surely a second form of Jewish Christianity, more difficult by nature to pin down and define than the preceding form. The fact that it was not an organized and coherent body has insured that the majority of the manuals of Church history and of the history of doctrine pass over it in silence. It nevertheless represents an important manifestation of the impact of Judaism on early Christianity. Indeed, when we consider how widespread it was, we ought perhaps to judge it the most important manifestation of all. The historian has no right to ignore it. (Simon 1986: 239)

In his discussion of Judaizing, he asks an important question concerning whom anti-Jewish rhetoric was aimed at: "[W]as the anti-Jewish literature intended to convert the Jews, or to prevent Christians being converted by them?" (Simon 1986: 144). He notes
that John Chrysostom's sermons, which were full of virulent anti-Jewish rhetoric, were not directed at Jews but at Judaizing Christians; that is, they are for "internal consumption" within the Christian community (Simon 1986: 145).40

Like Harnack, Simon is persuaded that non-Jewish attraction to Judaism was the result of active Jewish proselytism, which he perceives to be vigorous and persistent. He maintains that "[t]he observance of Jewish ritual by gentiles implies as its precondition an effort on the part of the dispersed Jews to make themselves felt in the gentile world" and that by the fourth and fifth centuries CE when Jewish missionaries became less militant, "the attractive power of Judaism declined" (Simon 1986: 367). According to Simon, it was the success of Christian competition, not the two disasters for the Jews in 70 and 135 CE, that caused the eventual "withdrawal of Hellenistic Judaism" and "slackening of missionary effort" on the part of Jews (Simon 1986: 370). As an act of self-preservation and in reaction to Christians' proclamation that the Law was invalid, Simon suggests that the Jews rigorously began to impose Law observance, thereby reinforcing "the meshes of its protecting barrier" (Simon 1986: 374). This, according to Simon, made "proselytism extremely difficult" (Simon 1986: 375).41 He avers that Judaism's emphasis on ritual observance "expressed a rigorous particularism" that led to its defeat by Christianity in their rivalry over converts (Simon 1986: 379).

A measure of Christian triumphalistic sentiments reminiscent of earlier scholarship (e.g., Harnack) is detectable in some of Simon's statements regarding the "retrenchment" of Judaism, which he suggests occurred toward the end of the fourth century CE: "The poverty of its doctrine, the absence of the mystical element, the burden of ritual

40 Simon furthermore argues that theological controversy, as expressed in Aphraates and Eusebius, cannot "...properly be described as manifestations of anti-Semitism," since "[b]oth one and the other have Judaizing Christians just as much in mind, and perhaps even more in mind, than the Jews themselves. Ecclesiastical authorities could not be expected to encourage or even to tolerate practices that called in question the autonomy and integrity of Christianity" (Simon 1986: 401).
41 Simon suggests that Hellenistic Judaism "in its missionary endeavors, went out to meet the pagans. Conversions were the result of a mutual effort of adaptation. But from now on Israel was to demand of its recruits total commitment, and expected from them an effort it made no move to reciprocate" (Simon 1986: 376-77).
observances, all these go a long way to explain why Judaism was not long able to sustain its appeal to the gentiles in competition with the Christians* (Simon 1986: 379). In many respects, Simon's depiction of a competitive, robust Judaism corrects earlier portrayals which were heavily influenced by the theological prejudice of Christian historiographers. In other ways, particularly in his descriptions of the ultimate "success" of Christianity over "particularistic" (i.e. legalistic) Judaism, traces of prior prejudice are still present.

**Johannes Munck: Setting the Foundation**

One of the earliest scholars to countenance seriously the idea that some early Gentile Christians were attracted to Judaism and Jewish customs is Danish scholar Johannes Munck. His book *Paulus und die Heilsgeschichte* was originally published in 1954 and in 1959 it was translated into English under the title *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*. Munck makes a significant contribution towards a new understanding of the relationship between the church and the synagogue in the first century CE. He argues that Paul's opponents were not Jewish Christians, but Gentile Christians who wished to maintain certain Jewish customs because they thought that this was necessary to be a true Christian. He suggests that this phenomenon was the result of a) Paul's positive teachings about Jewish Christianity and Jerusalem, which made some Gentile Christians insecure about their status compared with that of Jewish Christians and b) Gentile Christians (particularly those who formerly had been interested in Judaism) reading the LXX on their own without Paul's guidance and becoming convinced that it was necessary to follow the Law to receive God's promises. His work is foundational to recent scholarship on Gentile Christian Judaizers by Lloyd Gaston and John Gager, and is fundamental to the hypothesis treated in this dissertation.

Munck argues vigorously against the point of view of the Tübingen School, led by F. C. Baur, regarding Paul and his relationship with the Jerusalem church. As discussed
earlier, according to this view there was opposition between Paul and the Jewish Christian church and between Gentile and Jewish Christians, "[t]he picture of Paul therefore becomes the picture of a lonely apostle, giving all his strength in the unparalleled effort of calling into life church after church of newly converted Gentiles, but losing those churches at once to the Judaizing emissaries from Jerusalem who follow hard on his heels" (Munck 1959: 70; Baur 1875). Paul's letter to the Galatians is used by advocates of the Tübingen view as the main source of proof for the existent animosity between Gentile and Jewish Christians.

Munck uses Galatians to present a very different picture of Paul's relationship with the Jerusalem church. He argues instead that Paul's struggles with the Galatian Christians have nothing to do with Jewish Christianity (Munck 1959: 87). He stipulates that the Judaizing opponents in Galatians are not Jewish Christians emissaries from the Jerusalem church, whose purpose it was to impose Jewish obligations on Gentile Christians. Rather, the Judaizers are Gentile Christians "agitating for Judaism among the Gentile Christian Galatians" (Munck 1959: 89, my emphasis).42 These Gentile Christians demand from their erroneous point of view that all the Gentiles who are received into the Church shall be circumcised and conform to the Law...they are not content, as Peter is, to take part peacefully in the life of the church. No, they raise a storm by refusing to accept the authority of the apostle to the Gentiles, putting the distant leaders of the Jerusalem church in his place, and wanting to have those leaders' Jewish practices accepted in all the Pauline churches, so that the Gentile Christians may thereby become true Christians. (Munck 1959: 124)

The Gentile Judaizers do not view Paul's teachings about salvation to be complete, and demand that his gospel be supplemented by instructions to observe Jewish customs (Munck 1959: 124). According to Munck, their argument was sufficiently compelling to unsettle deeply the congregations that Paul established, "partly in putting the churches into

42 The details of Munck's argument from Galatians will be discussed in chapter four.
a state of uncertainty, and partly in winning them over to themselves." (Munck 1959: 89).43
According to Munck, Gentile Christian Judaizing stemmed from a Gentile Christian sense of insecurity and inferiority regarding their salvation and status, particularly compared with Christians of Jewish origin. He contends that "[i]t was difficult for those Gentile Christians within the Church of Jews and Gentiles not to belong to Israel, but to be εἰς ἑβραῖον ὁμοθάρτωλοι. In their opinion indeed the Law justified (Gal. 5:4; cf. 3:2, 5, 11, 21), and the point was that they should have both Christ and the Law (Gal. 5:2-4; cf. 3:12)" (Munck 1959: 127-28). The Gentile Christian Judaizer "wants to be just as good as the Jewish Christian, whom he imagines in his ignorance to be at once Jew and Christian..." (Munck 1959: 128).

Munck argues that Gentile Christians did not Judaize as the result of pressure from Jewish Christians. A better explanation lies with the teachings of Paul, and with the Jewish Scriptures. Paul's missionary activities generated the Judaizing phenomenon, for "it is not till Christianity goes to the Gentiles and asks for faith in the Gospel that the question arises" about Gentile admission to the church (Munck 1959: 130).

Munck suggests that it was what Paul had taught them about Jewish Christians and Israel that initiated the Judaizing tendency among Gentile Christians.44 Paul spoke with "sympathy and understanding" about Jerusalem and the churches in Judea, "[t]hus the Gentile Christian churches had a sympathetic picture of the whole Jewish Christian world" (Munck 1959: 131). Gentile Christians converted under Paul would have learned from him to value and respect Jewish Christians and Jerusalem. As Munck suggests, "these two

43 Munck argues that the Judaizing opponents of Paul in Galatia were not Jewish Christians because Jewish Christians simply were not interested in converting Gentile Christians. He explains that there was a clear distinction between the plan of salvation held by Jewish Christians and that held by Gentile Christians. Since Jewish Christians believed that salvation would come to the Jews first and to the Gentiles second, Gentiles were not their immediate concern and thus the Jerusalem church did not advocate circumcision or any other obligations from the Mosaic law for Gentiles wishing to become Christians. Paul, on the other hand, held that salvation would come first to the Gentiles and then to the Jews, so Gentiles were his primary concern (Munck 1959: 120). Because their proselytizing strategies were so different, Munck insists that mixed communities of Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians were rare (Munck 1959: 123).
44 Munck explains that, "[w]hat the Gentile Christian churches know of Jewish Christianity they know only through Paul," not from Jewish Christians themselves (Munck 1959: 131).
lines along which Paul taught his Gentile Christian churches — to think lovingly of the Jewish Christians and the earliest disciples, and lovingly of God's chosen people ... are an important presupposition for the Judaizing movement" (Munck 1959: 131). For Gentile Christians, Jerusalem became the standard of true Christianity and "the cause is to be found in what Paul has reported about the original church and Jerusalem's importance in the past, present and future, and also in the idealization of the Jerusalem of that time on the basis of the Old Testament presentation of Jerusalem and Palestine" (Munck 1959: 134).

In addition to this, Pauline churches used the LXX "and here there are many utterances that make it appear as if God cared only for the physical Israel, and left other nations to their own devices" (Munck 1959: 132). The Gentile Christians could have discovered when they read the Old Testament that "only Israel, and not the Gentiles, had the title to God's salvation" (Munck 1959: 132). Or, maybe they did not question their inheritance of everything promised to Israel but from their reading of Jewish scriptures they comprehended that in order to be truly counted among the people of God, they needed to be circumcised and Law observant (Munck 1959: 132). While Paul was with the Gentile Christian communities, he taught them clearly and convincingly about the salvation of the Gentiles, but when Paul left them, they remained alone with the scriptures and began to doubt his words (Munck 1959: 132). How could the memory and influence of Paul's teaching during his brief visit with them endure the "constantly repeated witness" of the texts which they scrutinized "through the Jewish spectacles to which they had become accustomed through their former attendance at the synagogue?" (Munck 1959: 132).45

Munck believes that Judaizing was a phenomenon that existed only during the time of the apostles, for "[c]ertainly the Judaizers' demands of circumcision and observance of the Law are not put forward after the time of the apostles; but Jewish piety repeatedly finds

45 The background of some of the Gentile converts might have influenced their attitudes and views; Munck rightly suggests that prior to becoming Christians, some of the Gentiles might have attended synagogue services "and had learnt there to read the Old Testament as a Jewish book, so that when the Bible was used in these newly converted Gentile communities there was a great risk of misunderstandings; they could very easily drop into habitual Jewish ways of thought" (Munck 1959: 132, my emphasis).
expression within the Church, playing a large part even in sub-apostolic times" (Munck 1959: 134). He furthermore holds the view that the Judaizing movement, as a "Gentile Christian heresy" was "possible only in the Pauline churches" (Munck 1959: 134). While Munck offers a multitude of insightful comments about Judaizing Gentile Christians, his views about the duration and geographical location of the Judaizing phenomenon are uncharacteristically dubious. This study contends that the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizing extended well beyond apostolic times in the geographical regions of Syria and Asia Minor, not just in the Galatian Christian communities.

**Rosemary Ruether: Christian Anti-Judaism**

Perhaps as a means of expiation of guilt for the distorted depiction of Jews and Judaism in previous N.T. scholarship, some Christian scholars in recent decades have focussed on statements critical of Jews and Judaism in N.T. texts and have declared this literature to be thoroughly permeated by anti-Semitism. A. Roy Eckardt, for example, states that "[a]ll the learned exegesis in the world cannot negate the truth that there are elements not only of anti-Judaism but of antisemitism in the New Testament" (Eckardt 1967: 126). Certain N.T. scholars link anti-Jewish teachings and criticism perpetrated by Christian literature from the first and second centuries CE to modern day antisemitism. Franklin Littell, for example, sees a "red thread" tying Justin Martyr and Chrysostom to Auschwitz and Treblinka, stating that "Christendom was impregnated with hatred of the Jews" and this led to the Nazi actions against the Jews (Littell 1975: 5, 25, 49).

In her 1974 book *Faith and Fratricide*, Catholic theologian Rosemary Ruether argues that the source of anti-Semitism in Christian civilization is Christian theological anti-Judaism. In her view, the universality of the Christian claim that Jesus is the Savior of humankind means that other religions, including Judaism, are not legitimate. From

---

46 Elsewhere Munck states that "this Gentile Christian heresy" is met "only within the Galatian churches" (Munck 1959: 279-80).
Ruether's perspective, Paul was opposed to the Torah, and to Judaism generally: "Paul's position was unquestionably that of anti-Judaism ...[t]he polemic against 'the Jews' in Paul, as in the New Testament generally, is a rejection of Judaism, i.e., 'the Jews' as a religious community. Judaism for Paul is not only not an ongoing covenant of salvation where men continue to be related in true worship of God: it never was such a community of faith and grace" (Ruether 1976: 104, sic, her emphasis).

In order to rid Christianity of anti-Judaism Ruether recommends nothing short of a complete reconstruction of Christian theology, particularly christology. She suggests reading the Jesus tradition, including the resurrection, "in a paradigmatic and proleptic way" thus preventing the Church from "making the absolutistic claims about itself which are belied by its own history" (Ruether 1976: 250).

In Ruether's view, the phenomenon of Judaizing Christians belongs to the fourth century, when it was "a new development in the relationship of Christians to the synagogue" (Ruether 1974: 170). These Christians, who were "not necessarily of Jewish background," were "attracted to Jewish rites and traditions, while remaining within the mainstream Church, which now had become the official imperial religion" (Ruether 1974: 170). They did not attend synagogue in order to try to persuade Jews to convert to Christianity; they recognized it as the source of their Christian customs (Ruether 1974: 170). For these Christians, the synagogue was more appealing than the church, "[t]he clapping and good fellowship of the synagogue appear to have contrasted favorably with the growing pomp and long rhetorical sermons of the Church" (Ruether 1974: 171). Ruether states that the Judaizing movement was "a sincere, if eclectic, emotional attraction which continued the identification of Christian traditions with their Jewish foundations" (Ruether 1974: 171).

Ruether's view that christology is at the core of anti-Judaism has been challenged by certain scholars who argue that the causes of anti-Judaism are far more complicated. These scholars argue, similarly to Marcel Simon, that a vibrant, attractive Judaism was
another causal factor, as was the perdurance of Gentile Christian attachment to Judaism and Jewish ritual observance. Indeed, this study advocates that Gentile Christians who were attracted to Judaism provoked strong anti-Jewish reactions by ecclesiastical leaders who, through their criticism of Jews and Jewish customs, sought to dissuade members of their congregation from such behaviour.

Lloyd Gaston and John Gager: Recent Scholarship on Gentile Christian Judaizing

An alternative scholarly response to the Holocaust has been to reassess the post-reformation "traditional" understanding of Paul and his teachings, a response perhaps motivated by the desire to find a way for modern Jews and Christians to undertake an ecumenical dialogue. The traditional Protestant view depicts Paul as a Jewish apostate who rejected Jewish legalism and denied the validity of the Mosaic Law and Jewish covenant, advocating instead salvation by grace through faith rather than through works and thereby excluding Jews from membership in the house of God. In his Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays, Krister Stendahl criticizes this view of Paul, pointing out that "we all, in the West, and especially in the tradition of the Reformation, cannot help reading Paul through the experience of persons like Luther or Calvin" (Stendahl 1976: 12).

Stendahl maintains that this is the main reason for misunderstanding Paul as anti-Jewish, and asserts that Paul was a "very happy and successful Jew, one who can, even when he thinks about it from his Christian perspective, say in his Epistle to the Philippians: '...as to the righteousness under the law (I was) blameless'" (Phil. 3:6)(Stendahl 1976: 12).

In the past four decades there has been abundant attention and interest paid to Paul's positive words about the destiny of the Jews. Chapters 9-11 in his letter to the Romans have been one of the primary foci, where he asks "[H]as God rejected his people? By no
means!" (Rom. 11:1), and declares that "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26).47 As both Jewish and Christian scholars have reconsidered Paul's views of Israel and how he sought to achieve his goal of bringing Gentiles to God through Jesus, they have expressed a more positive evaluation of Paul's view of Judaism.48 They emphasize that Paul's mission was among Gentiles, not Jews, thus his letters with the antinomian directives targeted Gentile Christians, not people of Jewish birth (Krister Stendahl 1976; Lloyd Gaston 1985).

In his Paul and the Torah (1985), Lloyd Gaston builds on the ideas of Krister Stendahl (and, in certain respects, those of Johannes Munck), and argues that in order to understand accurately Paul's polemic against Judaism, recognition of the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizers in the communities to which he wrote is essential. According to Gaston, Paul was not antinomian, nor was he anti-Jewish. Paul believed that Gentiles achieved salvation through faith in Christ while Jews attained righteousness by faithfully observing the Law.49 Paul understood Jesus to be a fulfillment of God's promises to the Gentiles, not to the Jews. Gaston argues that in Paul's letters (particularly Galatians), he argues strongly against the necessity of Gentile observance of the Mosaic Law in order to attain righteousness, and faults fellow Jews for not accepting Gentiles as equal participants in the covenant with God through faith in Christ.

According to Gaston, Paul's criticism of Judaism comes not because Paul is against the Torah as such, but because he is counteringact the inclination of some of his Gentile Christian converts to live like Jews by observing certain Jewish customs, since they have

47 Leo Baecck (1958: 164) states that "[t]he eleventh chapter in the Letter to the Romans is the most moving thing Paul has ever written. The sincerity of this man, the depth of his feeling rooted in his Jewish people, are all revealed here."
49 This argumentation is referred to as the "dual covenants view." James Parkes espoused a similar perspective. As Jocz notes, "Parkes's theology operates on the premise of a double Covenant: two religions, two chosen peoples with different tasks and missions. Judaism can in no way be a substitute for Christianity, nor Christianity for Judaism. Both are right and both must acknowledge the rightness of the other" (Jocz 1981: 86; Parkes 1969: 12, 30). Roy A. Ekardt builds on Parkes's idea of the dual covenant: Both Judaism and Christianity serve different purposes, and both are equally legitimate. The Jews need the Torah, and the Gentiles need the Gospel, and Christian missionizing of Jews is completely unnecessary. The Christian is the "younger brother" who should not presume to imply that the elder brother "is not already a member of the household of salvation" (1967: 152f.).
come to understand that this behaviour is necessary to attain salvation. Just as John Chrysostom in the fourth century CE intends to dissuade Christians from attending synagogue services and keeping certain Jewish customs through his vilification of Jews and Jewish customs, so too the antinomistic and pejorative comments regarding ritual observance such as circumcision made by Paul target the problem of Gentile Judaizing.

Gaston argues that Paul's identity as an apostle to the Gentiles should be taken more seriously; similarly to Munck, he emphasizes that Paul's concern is with Gentile Christians and their issues (Gaston 1987: 23-25). Ignorance of this fact has led to the incorrect assumption that Paul addressed Jews in his letters, and that he polemicized against Jews and Judaism. Significantly, Gaston points out that many of the increasingly virulent anti-Jewish themes found in Christian documents in later centuries were laid down in first and second century Christian literature. Gaston suggests that

At least some of this development, however, must be understood as a misunderstanding by later generations of the polemic of earlier generations. At least some statements which were later understood to refer to Judaism or to Jews or to Jewish Christians were originally made to correct beliefs and practices of Gentile Christians. (Gaston 1986: 33, my emphasis)

In other words, what has been interpreted both by ecclesiastical leaders in antiquity and by modern scholars as a conflict between Jews and Christians actually may have been an inner-Christian controversy. Perhaps some of the references to "Judaizing" and some of the negative comments about Judaism and Jewish customs in Christian literature have unwillingly become the cause of vilification of Jews.50

In The Origins of Anti-Semitism (1985), John Gager applies Gaston's theory of the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizers in his argument against the consensus view that

50 In his article, "Judaism of the Uncircumcised in Ignatius and Related Writers," in S. G. Wilson 1986: 33-44, Gaston discusses several Christian texts which polemicize against Gentile Christian interest in Judaism (e.g., Rev. 2:9 and 3:9; Ignatius' letter to Philadelphia 6:1 and to Magnesia 10.3). A full discussion of these comments and other texts follows below in chapter six.
assumes Greco-Roman society was thoroughly permeated with anti-Semitism and that Gentile converts to Christianity incorporated this anti-Semitic perspective in their new faith. Gager understands Gentile Christian Judaizers to be one of the discrepant Gentile groups interested in Judaism in Roman society and, because of the negative response they received from leaders of Christian communities, they are one of the primary causes of anti-Jewish statements in Christian literature from the first two centuries of the Common Era.\(^{51}\)

Like Munck, Gager speculates about what motivated Gentile Christians to Judaize. He suggests that prior to becoming Christians, many Gentile converts to Christianity were attracted to Judaism. These individuals simply continued to live as they had been living, incorporating their adopted Jewish customs into their lives as Christians (Gager 1985: 112).\(^{52}\) Focussing on a theme emphasized by Marcel Simon, Gager asserts that the phenomenon of Judaizing among Gentile Christians prompted anti-Jewish reactions among ecclesiastical leaders (Gager 1985: 118).\(^{53}\) He sees Christian Judaizing and Christian anti-Judaism as "intricately intertwined though antithetical elements in that process" (Gager 1985: 114). The reaction to Judaizing Christians was strong, and as Gager says, "[f]or some ... the very existence of Judaizing Christians was tantamount to a denial of Christianity, or rather of Gentile Christianity," and those who behaved in this way were labeled heretics (Gager 1985: 188).\(^{54}\)

According to Gager, "Judaizing Christians were a common feature of the Christian landscape from the very beginning," especially in Syria and Asia Minor (Gager 1985: 132). Only when Christians began to identify their movement as something other than Jewish, says Gager, did Christian Judaizing emerge "for the first time in a clear light" (Gager 1985: 

---

\(^{51}\) In a confusing manner Gager incorrectly refers to both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians as "Judaizers," lumping both together under this category.

\(^{52}\) According to Gager, within the New Testament are passages which "convey a sense of the logic which seemed so apparent to the earliest Christian Judaizers" (Gager 1985: 133).

\(^{53}\) Gager says "No matter what form it took ... Judaizing among Christians regularly provoked anti-Jewish polemic on the part of ecclesiastical leaders" (Gager 1985: 118).

\(^{54}\) He identifies a functional similarity between Christian and pagan anti-Jewish polemic: both strove to prevent attachment to Judaism. "Both were bent on making Judaism seem unattractive to potential or actual converts and sympathizers" (Gager 1985: 118).
The persistence of Judaizing behaviour well into the second century CE and beyond continued to stoke the fires of anti-Jewish rhetoric "[l]ong after the intense ideological conflicts of the early decades" (Gager 1985: 118).

By taking seriously evidence indicating that some Gentile Christians maintained close ties with Judaism despite the reactions of ecclesiastical leaders, Gaston and Gager break with enduring consensus opinions regarding the rapid de-Judaization of Gentile Christianity, and provide a more nuanced paradigm for understanding the interaction, development and relationships of Judaism and Christianity in antiquity. This paradigm takes into account historical and literary data previously ignored or misinterpreted by N. T. scholars, and rejects the theory that Judaism had isolated itself from the wider Greco-Roman environment during the emergence of Christianity. The arguments proposed by Gager and Gaston regarding Judaizing and anti-Judaism in early Christian literature, however, have not escaped criticism.

N. T. Wright strongly objects to many of the points proposed by Gager and Gaston, particularly pertaining to the "dual covenant" aspect of their hypothesis. As noted in my introduction, this aspect of the Gager-Gaston argument is not the focus of the present study, but nevertheless Wright's criticism of this issue is a means of ascertaining his perspective of Paul. In a monograph in which he advocates that a "humble, paradoxical mission of Christians to Jews is still mandatory and appropriate" (1993: 255), Wright's perspective of Paul is imbued by theological presuppositions. He frequently stresses that

---

55 This statement raises difficult questions about when it became unacceptable for Gentile Christians to observe the Law, and who understood it to be so. My reading of the polemics against Gentile Christian Judaizers has convinced me that it was the leaders of the Christian communities, rather than the laity, who cared to distinguish the Christian movement from Judaism. According to Stark (1967: 48), "the function of a leader is to make a latent conflict conscious, to give form to a pre-existing movement, to impart direction to its energies, and to help it to focus on definite ends." It was the very reaction of ecclesiastical leaders to Judaizing within their communities that contributed towards making Christianity a movement, as Gager says, "something other than Jewish." I will argue in the ensuing chapters that it was precisely in the anti-Judaic polemic of ecclesiastical leaders of the first and second centuries CE that clarified what sort of lifestyle and behaviour was considered properly "Christian."

56 As Saldarini aptly puts it, in comparison with the typical scholarly portrayal of Judaism and Christianity in antiquity as separate religions with defined, impenetrable boundaries, "reality is not so uniform or tidy...Christian communities and writers of the first two centuries lived in varied relationships with Jewish communities" (Saldarini: 1992: 26).
Paul's theological argument was not inconsistent or contradictory, but "integrated" and "coherent" (1993: 174, 263, 266, etc.). He accounts for what has appeared to some scholars to be Paul's "muddle-headedness" and "arbitrary" arguments by contending that Paul's "over-arching (or underlying) scheme of thought is large and subtle enough to provide him with many varied starting-points depending on the argument to be advanced and the audience to be addressed" (1993: 260). The implication of Wright's discourse is that Paul's revelation was absolutely complete and of heavenly origin.

Wright's view of Pauline theology leaves no room for the transformation or development of his thought. Rather, Paul's theology was fully formulated at the beginning of his missionary activities, and apparently negligibly affected by the diverse socio-historical contexts or by the variegated opposition he encountered during his apostolic journeys. Consequently, Wright frequently employs quotations from one letter to illuminate passages in another, notwithstanding their differing destinations. He asserts, for example, that "Paul is arguing from the same basic theological premises" in Galatians, Romans, and 2 Corinthians, despite the differences in the particular circumstances in each community.57

In Wright's view, Paul understands Jesus to be Israel, and "because the Messiah represents Israel, he is able to take on himself Israel's curse and exhaust it" (1993: 151). As a result of Jesus' death, the covenant, which is deemed central to Paul's theology, is renewed (1993: 152). Wright argues that in Galatians, Romans and Philippians it is clear that Paul "has systematically transferred the privileges and attributes of 'Israel' to the Messiah and his people" (1993: 250).58 This position, asserts Wright, "in no way commits Paul to being anti-Semitic, or even anti-Judaic" (Wright 1993: 173). Expressing a perspective reminiscent of a much earlier period of scholarship, Wright strongly objects to

---

57. While Wright warns against the "reductionism that makes everything a matter of speculative theology..." he seems most opposed to "the reductionism that refuses to recognize a theological argument when (as in Galatians) it jumps up and bites the reader on the nose, insisting instead on everything in terms of sociological or cultural forces or agenda" (1993: 260).
58. Richardson notes that this perspective "flies in the face of Paul's reluctance — along with that of virtually all early Christian literature — to make this equation so precisely" (Richardson 1994: 233).
the approach of Gaston, Gager, Davies and Richardson regarding anti-Judaism in Christian literature:

[the whole post-Auschwitz determination to discover 'anti-Judaism' under every possible New Testament bush is no doubt a necessary reaction to the anti-Judaism endemic in much previous New Testament scholarship, but at the moment it is, frankly shedding just as much darkness on serious historical understanding as did its predecessor. (1993: 173-4)

Miriam Taylor: Gentile Christian Judaizing in the First and Second Centuries CE?

In her *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity* (1995), Miriam Taylor argues against Marcel Simon's view (which she refers to as "conflict theory") that Christians and Jews competed for power and proselytes in the Greco-Roman world, and that Christian anti-Judaism was a reaction to this rivalry (Taylor 1995: 2). In this monograph, a reworked version of her dissertation, Taylor explores the presuppositions and implications of the various explanations for the development of Christian anti-Judaism which she claims are based on Simon's model. She contends that once analyzed, these theories "reveal themselves to be based on dubious historical assumptions that lead to hasty and unjustified conclusions" (Taylor 1995: 4). One such theory, which she refers to as "defensive anti-Judaism," is the one espoused by Gaston and Gager above; that is, that the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizers in the first and second centuries CE provoked anti-Judaic reactions by ecclesiastical leaders who deemed Judaizing a threat to Christian identity and testified to the attractiveness of Judaism (Taylor 1995: 21).

Taylor claims that "misconceptions in modern scholarship about the judaizing phenomenon have led to a fundamental misrepresentation of anti-judaizing in the early church, and to a misunderstanding of the motivations behind it" (Taylor 1995: 26, her emphasis). The primary misconception about Judaizing, from her perspective, is that it
occurred at all during the early period of church history. She contends that early evidence for Judaizing among Gentile Christians is lacking, and that most evidence for this phenomenon is from the fourth century (e.g., John Chrysostom's vituperation against the Judaizers of his congregation) (Taylor 1995: 29). Miriam Taylor claims that scholars such as Meeks, Wilken, Gager and Gaston assume that if Judaism still managed to exert its influence over Christianity, through the intermediary of Judaizers in the fourth century, then the problem must have seemed all the more acute in the earlier period when the church was in a weaker position, and the synagogue in a relatively stronger one. I would argue that, to the contrary, such a progressive, uninterrupted development in Jewish-Christian relations cannot be assumed unless it is proven and backed by solid evidence. Such evidence is lacking. If anything, there seem to be more reasons for assuming a lack of continuity in the pre- and post-Constantinian periods. (Taylor 1995: 31)

She furthermore accuses scholars who argue that Judaizing occurred in the first and second centuries of dealing more with assumption than reality by suggesting that "[t]he sparseness of the evidence for Judaizing in the pre-Constantinian period has forced scholars to formulate their theories on the basis of the later evidence which is then read back and presumed to apply in the earlier period as well (Taylor 1995: 30)." Taylor's argument that "most of the main anti-Judaizers in the early church, whose writings are quoted to supplement the evidence found in Chrysostom, also date from the post-Constantinian period" will be challenged by this study, which will contend that literary evidence is available in documents which date from the first and second centuries CE.  

---

59 According to Taylor, some scholars mistakenly read second and third century literature "as a mere prelude to Chrysostom" and she adds "[i]f we do not assume a priori that these texts necessarily relate back to the influence and power of a living Judaism, then the Judaizing phenomenon that they reveal appears in quite a new light" (Taylor 1995: 32).

60 Taylor notes that Simon states that Judaizing has an "uninterrupted tradition" (Simon 1986: 330). She also mentions Gaston 1986b: 166; Gager 1983: 133; Shukster & Richardson 1986: 30-1, and Meeks and Wilken 1978:36 as scholars who assert the long-standing existence of Judaizers, including the period before Chrysostom. To this she objects, declaring that the above scholars "make this affirmation despite their admission that the lack of evidence from the earlier period severely restricts their findings, allowing them to do no more than speculate about active contact between Christians and Jews" (Taylor 1995: 30).
Taylor argues that Christian anti-Jewish polemic was for internal consumption alone, and provided the early church with "historically transmitted (and transmissible) symbols" (Taylor 1995: 54). It has no basis whatsoever in actual Jewish-Christian conflicts. She contends that there is no real evidence that debates between Jews and the Church Fathers (e.g., Justin Martyr) ever occurred, and asserts that "the Jewish oppressors portrayed in the church's literature represent an intellectual and not a literal reality" (Taylor 1995: 55). Consequently, she denies that Judaizing behaviour among Christians has anything to do with a living Jewish community, and contends that it certainly does not testify to the vitality and attractiveness of the Jewish community:

[t]o the extent that the Judaism portrayed by the church fathers is recognized as a figurative entity which emerges out of Christian theorizing about Christianity, it cannot simultaneously be interpreted as referring to a living Judaism from which useful information can be gleaned about Jewish-Christian interaction. Unfortunately, though, most scholars seem oblivious of the need to make interpretive choices of this kind. (Taylor 1995: 141)\(^6\)

For Taylor, Judaizing "does not necessarily imply an attraction to Judaism, just as anti-Judaizing does not necessarily imply a reaction to such an attraction," because both are "directed at something quite separate from Judaism" (Taylor 1995: 29). She goes on to suggest that "Judaizing appears to have been chiefly an internal phenomenon with no apparent connection either to the drawing power of contemporary Judaism, or to positive pressures exerted by the Jews" (Taylor 1995: 29).\(^6\) Throughout her study, she stresses that anti-Judaism is theoretical and symbolic in nature: it was an intellectual exercise, a way Christians worked out their issues. The anti-Jewish perspectives reflected in early Christian literature were theological points that served the theoretical process of identity

---

\(^6\) In Taylor's view, advocates of the conflict theory have missed the mark on this because they have been swayed by two trends in modern scholarship: 1) the emphasis on a deconfessional approach to early Christian literature which has effectively discouraged theological interpretation at all levels and 2) the application of "sophisticated theories of conflict" to interpret early church discourse (1995: 151-53).

\(^6\) Some of the "anti-Jewish" rhetoric in the documents that follow address Gentile Christians, not Jews, thus I agree with Taylor that this rhetoric was *intra muros*, but for a different reason than she.
formation in Christianity. According to Taylor, the Jews of anti-Jewish rhetoric in early Christian texts were symbolic, not real, thus this rhetoric is entirely abstract and reflects nothing about contemporaneous Jewish-Christian relations.

Taylor's comments stem from a desire to show that Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric was not directed towards actual situations or people, thereby mitigating the charge that early Christians were anti-Jewish. This is rather ironic, given the fact that she frequently reproaches advocates of the conflict theory for holding "Christianizing presuppositions" and for failing "to explain the continuing impact through the Christian centuries of the ideas these texts have perpetuated" (Taylor 1995: 196). Her argument that anti-Jewish rhetoric is theological and abstract is, ultimately, unpersuasive. As Alan Davies states, "[t]o say that early Christian anti-Judaism had no basis in Jewish-Christian conflicts during the patristic period is similar to saying that the white-devil myths of the Black Muslims of America have no basis in black-white conflicts in contemporary America" (Davies 1997: 236).

This dissertation addresses two important issues raised by Taylor as criticism of Gentile Christian Judaizing: 1) whether pre-Constantinian literary evidence attests to the Gager-Gaston-Wilson argument concerning the existence of the phenomenon of Gentile Christian Judaizing and 2) whether the existence of Judaizing might illuminate aspects of Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity. I will contend that "anti-Jewish" rhetoric was an ecclesiastical response to a concrete situation existent in certain early Christian communities, not a theological abstraction, and that this has implications for understanding Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity. But before turning to these concerns, we shall investigate the issue of pagan interest in Judaism in the Roman Empire during the first and

---

63 Laurence Broadhurst effectively highlights this contradiction in Taylor's approach in a recent paper presented at the CSBS meeting in Lennoxville, Quebec: "What betrays more investment in Christian theology: a theory that connects (even, in Taylor's words, reduces) furious anti-Judaism to a combination of social, political and religious competitions in an agonistic world, or a theory that reduces irate anti-Judaism to a complicated, theological, abstract, intra muros debate about the nature of a saviour and an inherited tradition? From a Christian perspective, which one is less desirable?" (Broadhurst 1999: 9).
second centuries CE and thereby provide a context for our specific interest in Gentile

*Christian* attraction to Judaism.
Chapter Three
Gentile Attraction to Judaism in the Roman Empire in the First and Second Centuries CE

Evidence indicates that the Jewish way of life had considerable appeal among pagans in the Roman Empire in the first and second centuries CE. As this chapter will demonstrate, extant textual and epigraphic data indicate that attraction to Judaism occurred in particular among the aristocratic class of Roman society. Intriguingly, there is evidence which indicates that the imperial family had consistent connections with Jews and Judaism throughout the first century CE. In the twofold purpose of this chapter, we shall first discuss the phenomenon of Gentile Judaizing in the Roman empire in the first and second centuries CE and then will deal with how pagans became attracted to Judaism and the complicated question of whether Judaism was a missionary religion. I contend that non-Jewish attraction to Judaism, expressed through full conversion or through the adoption of various Jewish customs by Gentiles, does not necessarily imply that Judaism had a clear missionary impulse which impelled individual Jews to draw others into their movement. What it does imply is simply that pagans were exposed to Jewish traditions and ways of life. This exposure occurred by means of interpersonal connections between Jews and Gentiles who lived in proximity to one another. Investigation of Gentile attraction to Judaism in the first and second centuries CE provides a context for our particular focus on the appeal of Judaism for Gentile Christians during this period.

Gentile Attachment to Judaism in the First Century CE

Literary evidence from the first and second centuries CE demonstrates that Gentiles converted to Judaism. Philo speaks warmly of converts, and how they should be welcomed into the fold as equals (Virtues 20.103-4). Josephus writes that Jews "were
constantly attracting to their religious ceremonies multitudes of Greeks, and these they had in some measure incorporated with themselves (κάκεινους τρόπω τινὶ μοίραν αὐτῶν πεποίητο)" (War 7.45) through conversion. He gives examples of converts to Judaism in the person of Fulvia, an aristocratic Roman woman (Ant. 18.81-82), and the members of the royal household of Adiabene (Ant. 20.17-96).

Roman writers also attest to Gentile conversion to Judaism. Dio Cassius writes that in 19 CE "the Jews had flocked to Rome in great numbers and were converting many of the natives to their ways (καὶ συχνοὺς τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἐς τὰ σφέτερα ἔθη μεθιστάντων)," so the emperor Tiberius banished most of them from Rome (Roman History 57.18.5a; also Tacitus, Annals 2.85; Josephus, Ant. 18.83-84). Tacitus states that "circumcision was adopted by [Jews] as a mark of difference from other men. Those who come over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise all gods, to disown their country, and set at nought parents, children, and brethren" (Histories 5.5).\(^6\) In a passage which has incorrectly been used as evidence for the existence of an aggressive Jewish missionary movement in Rome, Horace writes in Satires 1.4.142-3: "then would a big band of poets come to my aid — for we are the big majority — and we, like the Jews, will compel you to join our throng."\(^6\)

Epigraphic evidence from funerary inscriptions in Rome and Asia Minor records the existence of converts to Judaism. There are seven Jewish inscriptions from Rome that bear reference to proselytes (CIJ #68, 202, 222, 256, 462, 532 in Leon 1995 [1960]: 263ff.). One dated to the third or fourth century clearly identifies Crescens Sincerius Iud(a)eus as proselytos (CIJ #68; Noy 1993: 392, #491). Another inscription in Latin simply states

\(^6\) Segal argues that the statement attests "to the success that Judaism had in proselytism" (Segal 1990: 86). Tacitus' remark says nothing, however, about whether the Jews sought the converts or whether non-Jews came on their own initiative. Receiving converts is one thing; actively seeking them is another.

\(^6\) Stern (1980: 323) states that Horace's words imply "strong Jewish missionary activity in Rome." But there is nothing here about Jews compelling Gentiles to become Jewish. Cicero from the previous generation attests to how the Jews would use mass intimidation to get their way when law suits were in progress (Flac. 28). John Nolland argues that Horace does indeed attest to "the Jews pushing their point of view forward — but it is in the realm of politics and personal advantage that Horace sees this occurring, not in the realm of the propagation of religious ideas" (1979: 353).
Mannaci soror Crysidi dulcissime proselyte, "Mannacius, for his most sweet sister, Crysis, a proselyte" (Noy 1993: 199, #224; Leon 1989: 296, #222; Kraemer 1989: 38ff.; also Kraabel 1982: 445-464). It may have been customary for pagan converts to Judaism to take on a Jewish name in addition to their own, as is demonstrated in #523, an inscription which may date to the second century CE: "Veturia Paulla ... placed in her eternal home, who lived 86 years, 6 months, a proselyte for 16 years under the name of Sarah, mother of the synagogues of Campus and Volumnius. In peace her sleep." This woman apparently converted to Judaism at the age of seventy, and subsequently assumed leadership roles in two synagogues! (Kraemer 1988: 289; Noy 1993: 457, #577).

Evidence demonstrates that Gentiles not only underwent the full conversion process to Judaism, but that they expressed their attachment to Judaism through a variety of different behaviours (Cohen 1989: 13-33). A number of Gentiles observed a variety of Jewish customs and traditions and attended synagogue services without converting fully to Judaism. Inscriptions from Aphrodisias, Sardis and Miletus identify a group of people with exclusively Greek names as θεοσεβης or God-fearers (Reynolds and Tannenbaum 1987: 48-67; Siegert 1973: 109-64; CIJ # 228, 748). Though the term θεοσεβης has a double meaning in that it can refer either to Jews (i.e., a "pious" Jew) or to Gentiles, it seems in some of these cases to be referring to Gentiles who supported the Jewish community in some capacity (and perhaps attended synagogue meetings) without converting outright. A. T. Kraabel (1981: 113-26) has taken a strong position against the existence of a large number of "God-fearers" who attached themselves to the synagogues of Diaspora Judaism, arguing that there is no epigraphical evidence that proves the existence of Gentile adherents to Judaism.

The inscription discovered at what was the entrance of a soup kitchen in Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, dated to the early third century CE, is understood by many scholars to be such evidence and has quieted most of the skepticism concerning the existence of "God-fearers." In the inscription are two lists. The second list bears 52
names which are primarily Gentile (except, possibly, for Eusabbathios), and they are introduced by the words καὶ ὅσοι θεοσεβῆς (Reynolds and Tannenbaum 1987: 7). These Gentiles, nine of whom are also identified as city councillors (βουλ[ευτής]), apparently contributed to a soup kitchen, and as Murphy-O'Connor suggests, they were called θεοσεβῆς as "a gracious compliment to their moral character" and not necessarily as an indication that they participated in the synagogue (Murphy-O'Connor 1992: 423; Overman 1992: 145-52). The first list is introduced by the words "Below (are) listed the (members) of the decany of the students (or disciples or sages) of the law, also known as those who fervently (or continuously) praise God (Ὁι ὑποτεταγμένοι τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν φιλουμάθων τῶν κε παντευλογ (---ων)" (Reynolds and Tannenbaum 1987: 5), and is followed by names which are primarily Jewish (Murphy-O'Connor 1992: 421). Of these names, three are identified as proselytes, and two others with Gentile names (Emmonios and Antonios) are identified as θεοσεβῆς. Significantly, these two are distinguished from the three proselytes who have Jewish names, and they clearly were involved in the Jewish group devoted to study and prayer. Thus Emmonios and Antonios, were "God-fearers" — Gentiles who did not convert to Judaism but were participants in the synagogue (Murphy-O'Connor 1992: 423).

Josephus proudly asserts the dissemination of Jewish religious observances in the pagan world, declaring "there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the seventh day has not spread, and where the fasts and the lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of food are not observed" (Against Apion 2.282). In War 2.462-63 he describes the situation in Syrian cities just prior to the outbreak of the Jewish war against Rome in 66 CE:

66 As Feldman notes, "[t]he fact that Josephus singles out specific observances as having spread among non-Jews, citing as two of his four examples the laws pertaining to the Sabbath, apparently the most popular Jewish practice among the 'sympathizers,' and referring to many of the dietary laws (rather than all of them, the observance of which is required of converts) shows that we are dealing not with full proselytes but with 'sympathizers'" (Feldman 1993: 352). This statement of Josephus is discussed further in part two of this chapter.
The whole of Syria was a scene of frightful disorder; every city was divided into two camps, and the safety of one party lay in their anticipating the other. They passed their days in blood, their nights, yet more dreadful, in terror. For, though believing that they had rid themselves of the Jews, still each city had its Judaizers, who aroused suspicion (τοὺς Ἰουδαϊζοντας εἶχον ἐν ὑποψία); and while they shrank (sic) from killing offhand this equivocal element in their midst (καὶ τὸ παρ’ ἔκάστοις ἰσημερινοῦ), they feared these neutrals [or, better, "mixed"] as much as pronounced aliens (καὶ μεταγεγένον ὡς βεβαιῶς ἀλλόφυλον ἐφοβεῖτο).67

In between the "two camps" of Jews and Greeks in each city was the unpredictable, ambiguous group of Judaizers, whom the Syrian Greeks did not kill but did treat as though they were foreigners. These were a "mixed" element, Greek in origin but sympathetic to the Jews, and thus the Syrians treated them with suspicion. The Greek people of the city of Damascus encountered a similar problem. Planning to kill the Jews of their city, they assembled them in the gymnasium. In implementing their plan, "their only fear was of their own wives who, with few exceptions, had all become subject to (or been brought under) the Jewish religion (ὑπηγυμένας τῇ Ἰουδαϊκῇ θρησκείᾳ), and so their efforts were mainly directed to keeping the secret from them" (War 2.559-60).68

67 The Greek is difficult to understand at points in this section. This translation is that of Henry St. John Thackeray in the LCL. Cohen 1987: 416, following Otto Michel and Otto Bauernfeind 1959: 275, translates the last sentence as either "and it was feared as if it were truly foreign, although it was mixed," or "and the mixed element was feared as if it were truly foreign."

68 For ὑπηγυμένας τῇ Ἰουδαϊκῇ θρησκείᾳ, H. S. Thackeray renders "become converts to the Jewish Religion," but the context of the statement should dictate how the statement is understood. Thus the women, who are not part of the Jewish community and who remain married to their Gentile husbands, are more likely adherents to Judaism than converts (see Cohen 1987: 417). Margaret William's understanding of Josephus' use of the verb "to Judaize" (Ἰουδαίζειν) is not correct. She says that he used it "for those whose public life made them outwardly indistinguishable from Jews but whose avowed attachment to Judaism was somewhat suspect" (Williams 1988: 108). As an example, she points to Josephus' reference, discussed above, to the "non-Jewish residents of certain Syrian cities who practised a Jewish way of life but whose loyalty to their co-religionists on the eve of the Jewish War was a matter of doubt" (Williams 1988: 109). According to the text, however, it was the Syrians and not the Jews of the city who were suspicious of the Judaizers (War 2.559-60). The Syrians could not trust these Judaizers even though they, too, were Syrians. Williams refers to Josephus' description of Metilius as a Judaizer in War 2.454, and says that "Josephus' usage is congruent with that of other authors: the word is always used to describe people whose avowed attachment to Judaism was at best incomplete, at worst somewhat spurious..." (Williams 1988: 109 n. 66). There is nothing in Josephus' description of Metilius, however, that suggests the commander's promises to Judaize were doubted by the Jews. Williams certainly is correct about Judaizers not being fully observant, but her description of these peoples' attachment to Judaism as "spurious" is inaccurate. As
The Roman satirist Juvenal (c. 55-140 CE) criticizes the phenomenon of Gentile attraction to Judaism in his fourteenth satire. He bitterly laments how, frequently, children not only inherit the weaknesses of their parents, but are even more deeply affected by the inherited vice than the previous generation. At one point, he complains about the effect a Judaizing father has on his child:

Some, whose lot it was to have Sabbath-fearing fathers, worship nothing but clouds and the numen of the heavens, and think it as great a crime to eat pork, from which their parents abstained, as human flesh. They get themselves circumcised, and look down on Roman law, preferring instead to learn and honour and fear the Jewish commandments, whatever was handed down by Moses in that arcane tome of his — never to show the way to any but fellow-believers (If they ask where to get some water, find out if they're foreskinless). But their fathers were the culprits: they made every seventh day taboo for all life's business, dedicated to idleness. (Juvenal, Satires 14.96-106)

Juvenal provides a vivid and detailed description of two different positions within the spectrum of Gentile attraction to Judaism. While the father Judaized by means of observing a small number of Jewish rites (such as the Sabbath and abstention from eating pork), the son quite immerses himself in Judaism, to the point, perhaps, of making a full conversion (he becomes circumcised and honours the Jewish law). At first blush, Juvenal's problem with Judaism seems to be because it is foreign and anti-Roman (a barbara superstitio) and he gives expression to the negative attitude found in contemporary Roman literary circles regarding Jewish abstinence from pork, interaction with non-Jews, and the Sabbath (e.g., Tacitus, Histories 5.5). The satirist in particular mocks the fact that a son of a Roman would choose to observe Jewish law over and above

---

discussed in the introduction to this study, the meaning of "to Judaize" is the informal adoption of various Jewish customs by Gentiles, it does not refer to full conversion to Judaism. I am not aware of evidence which indicates that Jews were suspicious of Judaizers (one possibility is the Birkat ha-Minim, though the usual understanding is that this curse was directed towards Jewish Christians to prevent them from being presenters in synagogue, not towards Gentile Christians). Certainly when it comes to Gentile Christian Judaizers, the extant evidence reflects the phenomenon to be a Christian concern, not a Jewish one.
Roman law (Gager 1985: 58-59). From Juvenal's perspective, by their actions this father and son are traitors to law and order, the most essential components of Roman society. For him this behaviour is baffling and worthy of derision.

The Appeal of Judaism Among the Powerful

Judaism's appeal in the Roman Empire extended to people from the upper echelons of society. An inscription from Acmonia in Phrygia, dated to the 80s or 90s CE, refers to the restoration of a synagogue originally built by a woman named Julia Severa in the 50s or 60s CE (Trebilco 1991: 59; CIJ #766). From numismatic and epigraphic evidence, we learn that Julia Severa was involved in the Imperial cult of the city during the reign of Nero, serving as ἀρχιερεία, a high priestess, and an agonothete (Trebilco 1991: 59). Whether she was Jewish or not is uncertain, but given the fact that she was a priestess of a pagan cult, it is more likely that Julia Severa was a Gentile sympathizer "who was favourably disposed towards the Jews and built a synagogue as their patroness" rather than an apostate Jew who held an authoritative role in a pagan religion but nonetheless donated money to build a synagogue (Trebilco 1991: 59).69 That the Jewish community at Acmonia obtained the patronage of Julia Severa is significant, for she was clearly a woman of high standing. Her first husband, Servenius Capito, was a powerful man, and their son, L. Servenius Cornutus, served in the Senate under Nero and in 73 CE was legatus to the proconsul of Asia. Another relative of the family, C. Iulius Severus, served as a consul (Trebilco 1991: 59-60; Stern 1964: 158 note 24; Walton 1929: 44 f.). As Trebilco rightly suggests, "[s]he would have been a most distinguished and powerful patroness of the Jewish community and would no doubt have looked after the community's interests" (Trebilco 1991: 59).

Intriguingly, Luke 7:5 refers to a Gentile who built a synagogue. The Jews of Capernaum say that a centurion "loves our people and it is he who built our synagogue for

69 In addition, Trebilco sensibly expresses doubt that the Jewish community would have accepted money from an apostate Jew, let alone celebrate the donation through an inscription (Trebilco 1991: 59).
us." The parallel account in Matthew 8:5-13 does not mention a connection between the centurion and a synagogue. While the story as it appears in the gospel of Luke may not be historical, it reflects what Luke, writing in the final decades of the first century CE, thought plausible. Other examples of Gentiles from the upper class who are drawn to Judaism include the Ethiopian eunuch described in Acts 8:27. He "had come to Jerusalem to worship," and was a man of high standing who served as a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, "in charge of her entire treasury." A Roman centurion of the Italian Cohort named Cornelius is described by the author of Acts as ὁ ὀσιότερος τοῦ θεοῦ, "a devout man who feared God" (Acts 10:2). He was a man who "prayed constantly to God" (Acts 10:1-2) and was "well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation" (Acts 10:22).

Some caution is advisable, since part of Luke's agenda is to present Christianity as a movement benign to the Roman authorities, and this motive may underlie his identifying the first Gentile convert to Christianity as a Roman centurion. There is nothing in this story or the others, however, to indicate that the author thought that his readers would not have believed the Gentiles' connection to Judaism.

Certain senatorial families in the first century CE had connections with Judaism. Stern and Feldman conjecture that one possible Judaizer from the senatorial aristocracy was Pomponia Graecina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, who lived until about 83 CE (see Stern 1987: 383; Feldman 1993: 310). According to Tacitus, in 57 CE this "distinguished lady ... was accused of some foreign superstition (externae superstitionis rea) and handed over to her husband's judicial decision" (Ann. 13.32). The most that can be said about this piece of evidence, however, is that involvement in Judaism may be meant (Leon 1995 [1960]: 252). Fulvia, "a woman of high rank who had become a Jewish proselyte (τῶν ἐν ἀξιωματι γυναικῶν καὶ νομίμων προσεληλυθόντων τοῖς Ἰουδαϊκοῖς)," was swindled out of gold and purple which she intended for the temple in Jerusalem by a group of Jewish thieves (Ant. 18.81-82). Her husband Saturninus, who reported the incident to the Emperor Tiberius, may have been a member of the senate (Stern 1964: 161). A further
example of Jewish influence among leading administrators is found in Acts 13:6-12: by the story's conclusion, the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, has been convinced by Paul's words and becomes a Christian. But, significantly for our purposes, the proconsul is initially described by Luke as keeping company with Bar-Jesus, whom Luke describes as a Jewish false prophet.

Attraction to Judaism extended to certain members of the imperial families of Rome. Poppaea Sabina, initially the mistress and later the wife of Nero, used her influence on behalf of Jews on two occasions (Ant. 20.191; Life 16). In Ant. 20.195, Josephus describes Poppaea as a "θεοσεβής" who "pleaded on behalf of the Jews." There is much debate in scholarly circles over the degree to which Poppaea was attached to Judaism. The problem rests upon the interpretation of the word θεοσεβής. Many scholars understand this term to be synonymous with the Lukan references to "those who fear God" (φοβούμενοι τόν θεόν, Acts 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26) and "those who revere God" (σεβομένοι τόν θεόν, Acts 13:43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7). As noted in our discussion of the Aphrodisias inscription, the term θεοσεβής has a double meaning. It can refer to "pious" Jews or Gentiles, and to Gentile sympathizers who were attracted to Judaism and attached to the synagogue but did not fully convert.

The ambiguity of the term necessitates careful evaluation of its meaning according to the context in which the term is found (Murphy-O'Connor 1992: 418-24). Josephus calls Poppaea a "θεοσεβής" right after his description of how she had "pleaded on behalf of the Jews" (Ant. 20.195) regarding the wall erected by the Jews to block the invasive gaze of King Agrippa into the Temple. When Nero heard the case presented by both sides, he judged in favour of the Jews (Ant. 20.195). After stating this, Josephus immediately writes "in this he [Nero] showed favour to his wife Poppaea, who was a θεοσεβής (rendered "a worshipper of God" by Feldman 1965: 105)." Certainly the context of his comments about Poppaea in Ant. 20.195 suggests that in Josephus' view, Poppaea's intervention on behalf of the Jews was directly connected to her being a θεοσεβής. He
intends to describe her as a Gentile who is an adherent to Judaism, not as a convert to Judaism. Perhaps some would argue that allowance needs to be made for the possibility that this view of Poppaea was simply wishful thinking on the part of Josephus. But with both Nero and Poppaea held in very low esteem by the time Josephus wrote Antiquities, there would appear to be little benefit (either for Josephus himself, or for the reputation of Judaism) in making a spurious claim linking Poppaea with Judaism (also Mason 1996: 5).

If Poppaea found Judaism intriguing in some way, she certainly was not unique among upper class women. Luke mentions that the Jews in Pisidian Antioch "incited the devout women of high standing" (Acts 13: 50), and that "not a few of the leading women" were present in the synagogue at which Paul preached in Thessalonica (Acts 17: 4), as well as in a synagogue in Beroea (Acts 17:12). We have already referred to Fulvia, Julia Severa and the women of Damascus who were drawn to Judaism, all of whom were women of high social standing. Indeed, attraction to Judaism and attendance at synagogue meetings could very well have been "fashionable" activity for upper class pagan women in the first century CE (Henderson 1903: 467; Williams 1988: 111).

Another Jewish connection with the imperial family came via the relationship between Titus and Berenice, a great-granddaughter of Herod the Great and daughter of Agrippa I. Titus became smitten with her during his campaign against the Jews in 66-70.

---

70 In what may be a similar example of this thinking, Philo suggests that Petronius, the governor of Syria who refused to erect a statue of Caligula in the Jerusalem temple, was attracted to Judaism: "indeed it appears that he himself had some rudiments of Jewish philosophy and religion acquired either in early lessons in the past through his zeal for culture or after his appointment as governor in the countries where the Jews are very numerous in every city, Asia and Syria, or else because his own soul was so disposed, being drawn to things worthy of serious effort by a nature which listened to no voice nor dictation nor teaching but its own" (Philo, Legation to Gaius 33.245; Trans. F. H. Colson).

71 Another aristocratic woman who belongs to this list is Queen Helena of Adiabene. Her conversion (and that of her son) will be discussed later.

72 As Williams 1988: 111 notes, "as far as most of our ancient authorities were concerned, Poppaea was nothing if not obsessed with fashion." See Juvenal, Satire 6.462. Interestingly, in the apocryphal Acts of Pilate, the following statement is made: "You know that my wife is pious (θεοσεβής) and prefers to practice Judaism (λουδοχίζει) with you" (2.1). Perhaps aware of the phenomenon of noble Roman women being sympathetic to Judaism, the author makes Pilate's wife a Judaizer. There is little agreement among scholars as to when the document was written, but a date sometime in the late first or early second century CE for the story of Pilate's wife as a Judaizer, when an author would likely have had access to the four gospels and been familiar with Gentile attraction to Judaism, seems a reasonable proposal, especially if the reference to the "Acts of Pontius Pilate" in Justin Martyr's First Apology (1.35, 38) is indeed to this document.
CE, and in 75 CE, she came to Rome as his mistress (Tacitus, *History* 2.2; Suetonius, *Titus* 7; Dio Cassius 66.15, 18; see Cook 1951: 162-175). Her stay in Rome was tense, as she was not well-liked; "she was ostentatious, wore huge diamonds, and behaved in an arrogant fashion, claiming privileges which did not belong to her" (Benko 1971: 64; see Juvenal, *Satire* 6: 156; also Kraft 1971: 88). In *War*, Josephus emphasizes the Jewishness of Berenice and her brother Agrippa, with whom the historian had been in correspondence from Rome (*Life* 364-367). In *Antiquities*, he turns on them, hinting at the existence of an incestuous relationship between Berenice and her brother Agrippa (*Ant.* 20.145; Crook 1951: 163 note 9). Queen Berenice may have exerted a political influence in Rome unlikely to have won her supporters among the populace. Quintilian, during his discussion of biased judges who preside over cases "where their own interests were involved," reveals that "I myself, when I appeared on behalf of Queen Berenice, actually pleaded before her" (*Institutio* 4.1.19).73 According to Suetonius, Titus "sent Queen Berenice away from Rome, which was painful for both of them," presumably because their relationship had caused a stir in that city (*Titus* 7).

Gentile interest in Judaism continued to penetrate the highest aristocratic circles of the empire during the reign of the emperor Domitian (81-96 CE); the devastating loss of the Jews to the Romans in 70 CE did not quell interest in Judaism. Flavius Clemens, a Roman consul and cousin of the emperor Domitian, was executed in c. 95 CE and his wife Domitilla was banished. According to Dio Cassius, both were charged with "atheism (ἀθεότης), a charge on which many others who drifted (ἐξοχέλλοντες) into Jewish ways (τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἤθη) were condemned. Some of these were put to death, and

---

73 Berenice's sister Drusilla married Felix, a Roman governor of Judaea (*Ant.* 20.142-144). Agrippa II, the brother of the two sisters, had earlier refused to allow Drusilla to marry Epiphanes, the son of King Antiochus of Commagene, when Epiphanes refused to be circumcised (*Ant.* 20.139). Felix, apparently, did not undergo the rite, but Drusilla married him despite this and thereby, according to Josephus, "transgress[ed] the ancestral laws" (*Ant.* 20.143). After the death of Herod IV, who was both her uncle and her husband, Berenice married Polemo, the king of Cilicia, when he agreed to be circumcised (*Ant.* 20.145). Josephus states that she took this step in order to quell rumours that she and her brother had been involved in an incestuous relationship (*Ant.* 20.145-46).
the rest were at least deprived of their property" (*Roman History*, 67.14.2).

Prior to this, because he had no sons of his own, Domitian had named the two sons of Flavius and Domitilla as his successors, changing their names to Vespasian and Domitian (*Suetonius, Domitian* 15).

According to Benko, "[t]his incident holds particular interest for us since Judaism was a recognized religion and embracing 'Jewish customs' would not be subject to the death penalty. It is possible that the term 'Jewish customs' referred not to Judaism but to Christianity" (see Reicke 1965: 224-25; Benko 1971: 67). Indeed, Christian tradition presents Clemens and Domitilla as martyrs from the period of Domitian's persecution of the Christians. The earliest testimony is that of Eusebius, who presents Domitilla as the niece of Clemens instead of his wife, and explains that she was banished to the island of Ponita for being a Christian (*Eusebius, Hist. eccl.* 3.18, 4-5). The first source that presents Clemens as a Christian is that of Syncellus, written in the ninth century CE (Stern 1987: 381).

The term ἀθεότης was applied, in fact, both to Christianity and Judaism. In his *First Apology* Justin combats this charge being levelled against Christians, and in *Against Apion* 2.148 Josephus notes that Apollonius reviles Jews "as atheists" (ὡς ἀθέους) (Keresztes 1979: 262). As Leon and Feldman note, although Dio does not refer to Christians, it is certain that by his time (150-235 CE) he (and his epitomist) could distinguish between Jews and Christians (Feldman 1993: 332; Leon 1995 [1960]: 35). As Leon states, "[t]hat the well-known Christian catacomb of Domitilla was dug on the private estate of a certain Flavia Domitilla is an unquestioned fact. Still, the definite statement in Dio, a historian who surely knew the difference between Judaism and Christianity, seems to compel the conclusion that Clemens and Domitilla were convicted as Judaizers" (Leon

---

74 Benko 1971: 78 note 30: "the words are from Dio's epitomist Xiphilinus."
1995 [1960]: 35). It is, furthermore, significant that ancient Christian sources do not identify Clemens as a Christian (that is, not until the ninth century).

According to Suetonius, Domitian's agents collected the *fiscus Judaicus* "with a peculiar lack of mercy; and took proceedings not only against those who kept their Jewish origins a secret in order to avoid the tax, but against those who lived as Jews without professing Judaism" (*Domitian* 12). Two categories of people are delineated as targets for taxation: a) those who concealed their Jewish extraction and had not been paying the tax (*dissimulata origine imposita genti tributa non pependissent*); b) those who lived as Jews without professing Judaism (*improfessi Judaicam viverent vitam*). The first group included born Jews who felt themselves to be distant from Judaism and had not paid the tax to the fiscus; the second group included Gentiles who lived like Jews but had not fully converted to Judaism and hence did not consider themselves to be Jews. It is notable that Judaizers were a large enough group for Domitian to target for fiscal gain.

When Nerva succeeded Domitian in 96 CE, he instituted a more benevolent administration for gathering the Jewish tax. According to Dio Cassius, under his rule "no persons were permitted to accuse anybody ... of adopting the Jewish mode of life (τοῖς δὲ δὴ ἄλλοις ... οὔτε Ἰουδαῖοι βίου κατατιθέσαι τινὸς συνεχώρησε" (*Roman History* 68.1, 2). A special coin which reads FISCI IVDAICI CALVMNIA SVBLATA S.C., surrounding a date palm, the emblem of Judea, memorialized this action (Carson 1990: 35; Mattingly 1926: Plate VII. 124; Meshorer 1997: 131-32; Richardson 1983).}

---

75 Leon 1998 (1960): 35 states: "the fact that Clemens could be convicted on the ostensible charge of practicing Judaism would suggest that some effort was made to check Jewish proselytizing activity." suggesting that these Gentiles endured external Jewish pressure or persuasion. There is no indication here, however, of how Clemens and Domitilla became exposed to Judaism.

76 Keresztes suggests that "[t]hose 'protected' by this prohibition then had to be gentiles who had turned to Jewish life. They were probably protected only against religious persecution but not against a duty of paying tax to the *fiscus Judaicus*" (Keresztes 1979: 261).
Summary

Evidence shows that there was a considerable degree of Gentile attraction to Judaism in the first century CE, in Rome and other areas of the Roman Empire. This interest penetrated different social levels, including people from the general populace, but particularly those from the aristocratic class. It is especially intriguing that plausible Jewish connections can be traced to members of the families of three emperors: Nero (54-68 CE) via his mistress Poppaea; Titus (79-81 CE) through his association with Berenice, Herod the Great's granddaughter; and Domitian (81-96 CE) who condemned to death his cousin Flavius Clemens and banished his wife Domitilla, the parents of his successors and his closest surviving relatives, for being associated with Judaism. Perhaps the fact that Herod the Great's children and grandchildren were raised and educated in the imperial household in Rome contributed towards cultivating this connection with Judaism.

The evidence moreover demonstrates that attraction to Judaism was expressed in diverse ways. Wealthy Roman aristocrat Fulvia (Ant. 18.81-82) underwent conversion to Judaism. The θεοσεβὴς mentioned in the Aphrodisias inscription, and Julia Severa from Acmonia, stopped short of full conversion, and, perhaps in addition to other Jewish observances, were attached to the synagogue. Josephus and Juvenal note the pervasiveness of Gentile observance of a number of Jewish rituals (such as maintaining the Sabbath and food laws) in Against Apion 2.282 and The Sixteen Satires 14.96-106. The Damascen women in War 2.559-60 and Nero's mistress Poppaea furthermore expressed their respect for Judaism by siding with the Jews and supporting their causes.

How Attraction to Judaism Occurred

The question concerning whether Judaism was a "missionary religion" in terms of self-consciously seeking converts during the period of Christian origins has been at the centre
of much debate in recent times. Scholars such as McKnight and Goodman have argued persuasively that a distinction ought to be made between the passive reception of converts or interested pagans and the desire to convert the non-Jewish world to Judaism. Indeed, the presence of pagan attraction or association with Judaism in antiquity does not imply a strong missionary effort towards Gentiles by Jews. What it does imply is non-Jewish exposure to Jewish tradition.

I contend that pagan exposure to Jewish lifestyles primarily occurred through social networks and interpersonal connections between Gentiles and Jews rather than through self-conscious, aggressive tactics, as part of an institutionally organized missionary effort on the part of Jews. In his recent foray into the sphere of Christian origins in The Rise of Christianity, sociologist Rodney Stark asserts that "[t]he basis for successful conversionist movements is growth through social networks, through a structure of direct and intimate interpersonal attachments" (Stark 1996: 20, his emphasis). He further explains that "typically people do not seek a faith; they encounter one through their ties to other people who already accept this faith. In the end, accepting a new religion is part of conforming to the expectations and examples of one's family and friends" (Stark 1996: 56). In my view, Stark's comments are applicable to the phenomenon of pagan exposure, attraction and conversion to Judaism in antiquity.

Out of all of the examples cited above providing evidence of Gentile attraction to Judaism, six provide explanations as to how the pagan individuals discussed in each case came into contact with Judaism and it is on these that our discussion will focus. In the following table, five of the descriptions (a, c, d, e, f) suggest that exposure to Judaism

---


78 The most sensible approach to the question "Was Judaism a missionary religion?" is to narrow the application of the question to specific texts, persons and geographical locations (Mason 1996: 1ff.). Since an examination of all of the texts related to this issue is a dissertation unto itself, however, the ensuing discussion addresses the question in broader terms.

79 As McKnight correctly states: "Ancient Judaism is a diverse movement, and conversion is a local factor. One does not, in effect, convert to Judaism so much as one converts to a local display of Judaism (say, Sardisian, or Alexandrian Judaism with its own diversities)" (McKnight 1991: 7).
occurred through interpersonal attachments rather than impersonal mass campaigns for new converts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Person of non-Jewish Origin</th>
<th>Manifestation of Attraction or Association with Judaism</th>
<th>How Exposure to Judaism Might Have Occurred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Josephus, <em>War</em> 7.45</td>
<td>multitudes of Greeks</td>
<td>incorporation of Jewish customs</td>
<td>attraction to Jewish customs observed by Jews living in proximity&lt;sup&gt;80&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Dio Cassius, <em>Roman History</em> 57. 18.5a</td>
<td>Romans</td>
<td>conversion to Jewish ways</td>
<td>Jews who &quot;had flocked to Rome in great numbers&quot; to convert (and Jews were consequently banished by Tiberius)&lt;sup&gt;81&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Aphrodisias</td>
<td>Over 50 Gentiles</td>
<td>contribution to soup kitchen with Jews; conversion to Judaism; involvement in Jewish prayer group</td>
<td>involvement in civic duty with Jews; exposure by living in same city with Jews&lt;sup&gt;82&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<sup>80</sup> Josephus states that Jews "were constantly attracting to their religious ceremonies multitudes of Greeks, and these they had in some measure incorporated with themselves" (*War* 7.45). The statement implies that the Gentiles were attracted by the lifestyle maintained by the Jews living in their midst, not by any proselytizing efforts made by Jews to draw them in. As Goodman has observed, "[o]ne would expect a great deal to be said about such a mission in the works of Philo and Josephus if Jews wished all Gentiles to take so momentous a step. But in fact these authors have little about proselytes and nothing about a mission to win them" (Goodman 1992: 70-1).

<sup>81</sup> This statement, which explicitly offers aggressive Jewish proselytizing as a causal explanation for pagan connection to Judaism, is discussed below.

<sup>82</sup> The inscription provides evidence suggesting that Jews were an intimate part of the local society of Aphrodisias, where residents, both Jewish and Gentile, participated together to establish a soup-kitchen for the benefit of the poor of the city.

e. Tacitus, *History* Titus, Caesar, 2.2; Suetonius *Titus* 79-81 CE 7; Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 66. 15, 18


"worship nothing but clouds...", avoid eating pork, become circumcised in love with Berenice interpersonal relationship Ananias, a travelling Jewish merchant; an unnamed Jew who instructed Queen Helena; Eleazar from the Galilee, who came to pay respects to King

The only statement among these examples that indicates Jews aggressively sought new converts among pagans is "b." There are, however, a number of conundrums associated with this statement. Dio Cassius is said by John of Antioch (7th century CE) to have written the following in the early third century CE: "As the Jews flocked to Rome in great numbers and were converting many of the natives to their ways, he [Tiberius] banished most of them." (*History of Rome* 57.18.5a). While Dio Cassius states that the Jews were expelled for actively converting non-Jews to Judaism, this explanation is missing in earlier

---

83 Wolfgang Wiefel (1991: 99) states that the Jewish "tendency toward proselytism, still active in the second half of the [first] century, is described in these words by Juvenal." While Juvenal provides evidence for the dissemination of Jewish customs (including not eating pork, becoming circumcised, and observing the Sabbath) in Rome through parental influence, it does not tell us why or how the father became involved in Jewish practices in the first place. The last part, "never to show the way to any but fellow-believers," in fact suggests that the Jews were reluctant to share their "secrets" with non-Jews. McKnight suggests, in fact, that Juvenal's words can be taken as evidence that Judaism was not missionary in character (McKnight 1991: 113). In my view, Juvenal's description demonstrates how pagan attraction to Judaism was facilitated through intimate interpersonal connections with friends or, in this case, family members, who already were attached in some way to Judaism.

84 This story was not addressed in part A of this chapter, but will be discussed below.
historians Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius who do, however, comment on the expulsion. Josephus (Ant. 18.81-84) describes the rather curious story of how an aristocratic Roman proselyte called Fulvia (mentioned above) is cheated by unscrupulous Jews who are after her money and that this is the cause of the expulsion. It has been argued that Tacitus (Ann. 2.85), who reports on the proscription of Egyptian and Jewish rights and the expulsion of 4,000 enfranchised slaves "tainted with that superstition", simply did not know the real reason for the expulsion (Georgi 1987: 92-3). This would be very odd, since Tacitus was formerly a supervisor of foreign cults and would have been interested in precisely this type of reason for the event, thus if conversion were the cause, Tacitus is unlikely to have been ignorant of this. Suetonius, in Tiberius 36, also writes nothing about proselytizing tactics as the causal factor for the expulsion:

He abolished foreign cults, especially the Egyptian and the Jewish rites, compelling all who were addicted to such superstitions to burn their religious vestments and all their paraphernalia. Those of the Jews who were of military age he assigned to provinces of less healthy climate, ostensibly to serve in the army; the others of the same race or of similar beliefs he banished from the city, on pain of slavery for life if they did not obey.

The information attributed to Dio Cassius must be seen in light of descriptions given by other authors for the banishment of the Jews by Tiberius in 19 CE. He is the only one to suggest that non-Jewish interest in Judaism was caused by Jews actively seeking converts. Significantly, the statement itself is not found in the manuscript traditions of Dio Cassius, but only in one quotation by the seventh century Christian writer John of Antioch. As Goodman rightly suggests, if the statement is indeed a verbatim quotation from Dio Cassius (which is not certain), it is possible that it more accurately reflects Jewish involvement in missionary activities in the third century CE when Dio Cassius wrote rather than the situation in the first century CE (Goodman 1994: 83).85

85 Goodman notes that in Sifre to Deuteronomy 313 (on Deuteronomy 32:10), a rabbinic text which was probably compiled sometime in the third century, the patriarch Abraham is described as being so effective a
The Conversion of the Royal House of Adiabene

The story of the conversion of the royal house of Adiabene at Charax Spasinou ("f" in the table above) in the first half of first century CE is told proudly by Josephus in *Ant.* 20.34-48. It frequently is used by scholars as evidence for the existence of aggressive Jewish missionaries and proof that Judaism of antiquity organized self-conscious missionary efforts. The story need not necessarily be understood in this way, however, and in my view it more effectively illustrates how exposure of non-Jews to Judaism was generated naturally, through personal interaction between Jews and pagans.

Josephus describes how "a certain Jewish merchant named Ananias visited the king's wives and taught them to worship God after the manner of the Jewish tradition" (*Ant.* 20.34). Queen Helena "had likewise been instructed by another Jew and had been brought over to their laws" (δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἑλένην δυνάως ὑπ’ ἑτέρου τῶν Ἰουδαίων διδαχθεῖσαν εἰς τοὺς ἑκείνων μετακεκομίσθαι νόμους) (*Ant.* 20.35). Unfortunately, there is no further information offered concerning this Jewish instructor. Josephus states that "when Izates had learned that his mother was very much pleased with the Jewish religion, he was zealous to convert to it himself" (*Ant.* 20.38). As the result of his mother's interest, Izates became interested in converting to Judaism, and wished to become circumcised. Queen Helena persuaded him not to do so, however, because she feared that it would negatively impact his political prospects and the merchant Ananias agreed with Helena's council (*Ant.* 20.41). Despite this, Izates continued to desire to be circumcised, and when another Jew "named Eleazar, who came from Galilee and who had a reputation for being extremely strict when it came to the ancestral laws, urged him to carry out the rite" (*Ant.* 20.43), he did so.

missionary that he causes God to be known not only as king of earth but also of heaven. This third century document emphasizes his skill as a converter as one of the most important features of his career, whereas earlier writers such as Philo and Josephus stress Abraham's status as a pious convert, not converter. Sifre Deuteronomy, similar to the above statement attributed to Dio Cassius, may reflect an interest in missionary activity among Jews in the third century CE that is not found in the earlier centuries (Goodman 1994: 83).
While this narrative is evidence that individual Jews taught Gentiles about Judaism, it is imprudent to build a whole typology of organized missionary activity from it like that of the Christians described in Acts, as some scholars have done.\(^8\) In his description of the two Jewish teachers of the royal family, Josephus does not say anything about them travelling specifically to convert others to Judaism. Indeed, he describes Ananias as a merchant who was presumably on a business trip, and makes it clear that Eleazar had come to Adiabene to pay respects to the king's family (\textit{Ant.} 20.44; see Goodman 1992: 57; Goodman 1994: 84).

The story of the conversion in Adiabene is one which demonstrates how pagans might become exposed to Jewish traditions through interpersonal relations occurring as a result of business or social connections, and through travel. Lionel Casson describes how there was a multitude of travelers on Roman roads during the first and second centuries. These included "a never-ending flow of merchants, shipowners, bankers, buyers and their various agents" both on the sea and on the roads (Casson 1974: 129).\(^9\) Ananias and Eleazar travelled for business and social reasons, and along their way instructed interested non-Jews about Judaism.

**Summary**

Gentile attraction to Judaism does not imply a vigorous missionary effort by Jews, but simply exposure to Jewish lifestyles. Two modern examples of this are relevant to our discussion, one involving "indianizing" by non-native Americans, and the other regarding the attraction of African-Americans to the religion of Islam:

\(^8\) Louis Feldman, who strongly argues that Judaism in antiquity was a missionary religion, admits in a study on the topic that "[o]ne of the questions that has always puzzled students of Jewish proselytism is how to explain a movement of such magnitude when we do not know of any missionaries as such" (Feldman 1992: 33).

\(^9\) While trade and government comprised a large number of travelers, there were other reasons to be on the go, such as travelling for health reasons (to the sanctuaries of Asclepius or to the \textit{aque}, the mineral springs), to observe the international Greek games and spectacles sponsored by the Roman emperors (e.g., Titus inaugurated the Colosseum with 100 days of exhibitions), and for holiday (Casson 1974: 130-137).
European contact with native Americans produced a fairly widespread phenomenon of colonialists 'going Indian.' In some cases this involved an adoption process whereby the European became an 'Indian.' However, in other cases we find groups of Europeans taking on some native American rituals and ideas and calling themselves Indians... None of this is a result of active missionization by native Americans" (Pasto 1994: 5; Hallowel 1963).88

The adherence of African-Americans to Islam provides a similar example. Pasto observes that "although the impetus may have come from an Islamic missionary preacher, the development of the Nation of Islam was largely independent of mainstream Islam. There was never any major effort by other Muslims to convert Africans in America" (Pasto 1994: 5).

It is interesting to ponder whether the attachment of the aristocrats to Judaism (perhaps on account of a particular "fashion trend") had an effect on the subjects of the Roman empire. Did it serve as an example to be emulated by the masses? Perhaps the harsh reaction of Domitian towards Flavius Clemens and Domitilla stemmed from his fear that attraction to Judaism would spread if these two prominent Judaizers remained in Rome. According to Suetonius, Augustus praised Gaius his grandson for not worshipping in the temple in Jerusalem during his journey through the east (Augustus 93). Perhaps, as Cohen suggests, "the emperor felt that worship at the temple might encourage 'judaizing' among the Romans" (Cohen 1987: 415).

As Stark states, "the network assumption is not compatible with an image of proselytizers seeking out most converts along the streets and highways, or calling them forth from the crowds in the marketplaces" (Stark 1996: 56-57). In my view, non-Jewish attraction to Judaism was the result of Jews and Gentiles living in proximity to one another.

88 In an interesting modern parallel to our concerns about the definition of "to Judaize," Hallowel notes the following: "Indianize," in the sense of 'to adopt the ways of Indians,' is an Americanism dating back to the late seventeenth century. Cotton Mathers asked: "How much do our people Indianize?" While the word has sometimes been used in a collective sense, in its later usage it seems to have been employed primarily with reference to individuals who adopted the ways of Indians" (Hallowel 1963: 520).
The adoption of various Jewish practices simply occurred naturally through social contact as neighbours rather than through organized pursuit of converts by Jews.\textsuperscript{89} The dispersion of many Jewish communities throughout the Roman empire meant that Gentiles and Jews often shared the same cities. Gentiles had Jewish friends and maybe relatives, and there would have been opportunities to participate in Jewish festivals and to attend synagogue services. Pagan exposure to Judaism took place through informal contact made between Jews and Gentiles as neighbours who shared the same social world.

\textsuperscript{89} Perhaps the missionary impulse of early Christians should be questioned as well. The concept of the practice of Christian proselytism is taken from Acts, where the presentation of the spread of Christianity (primarily through Paul) serves the theological agenda of its author.
Chapter 4
Paul's Encounter with Gentile Christian Judaizing in Galatia

Paul's letters to Galatia abounds with polemics directed against what he perceives to be views discordant with his own. The frequently vehement tone of his arguments reveals that he understands these opposing views to represent very real threats to the Christian communities to which he writes and to his own identity as a leader of these communities. Whereas Paul's negative statements about certain aspects of the Jewish Law have been understood by later generations of Christians and scholars to have targeted Jews, Jewish Christians or Judaism, in the original context of the letter they were meant to correct the practices of Gentile Christians.

Paul's letters are occasional, that is, they were written in order to address historical circumstances and problems specific to individual communities. He and the recipients of his correspondence were well aware of the circumstances that prompted the letters. For modern readers, however, these details are largely opaque. The ambiguous nature of many of the details provided in the letters has led to a wide variety of scholarly reconstructions of the historical circumstances behind each of the letters, as well as numerous suggestions as to the origin and essence of each of the disagreements. In order to reconstruct the historical context of each of the letters, understanding the nature of the crisis reflected in each letter and what Paul's opponents might have argued is of pivotal importance. While Paul's rivals may indeed have written letters or speeches, they are not extant. The only access we have to the teachings and perspectives of Paul's adversaries, therefore, is through his criticism of them.

Using the method described in the introduction to this study, we shall investigate polemics against Gentile Christian Judaizing. The following treatment will focus on the parts of the letters containing Paul's polemics against his enemies in Galatians with the intention of reconstructing the identities and positions of these opponents. Of primary
importance to our inquiry is determining who desired that Gentile Christians observe certain Jewish customs, which aspects of Jewish life and practice were involved in this phenomenon, and why such observance appealed to some Gentile Christians.

The Presence of Gentile Christian Judaizers in Galatia

To paraphrase Shakespeare, something was rotten in the province of Galatia. The letter to the Galatians is one of Paul’s most emotionally charged pieces of correspondence with the struggling communities of early Christians in Asia Minor (Betz 1979: 11-12). The letter is also one of Paul’s earliest letters, probably written between c. 52-56 CE after the Jerusalem conference while Paul was at Ephesus (see Murphy-O’Connor 1996: 180; Roetzel 1998: 96). According to Paul, opponents have infiltrated the community and are compelling Gentile Christians to adhere to Jewish customs. Some of the Galatian Gentile Christians have submitted to circumcision and are observing other aspects of the Mosaic law as well. For Paul, this behaviour represents a fundamental threat to the truth regarding faith in Christ that he preached and under which most of the Gentiles in Galatia initially converted to Christianity.

While it is impossible to arrive at a complete picture of what each situation was like, in order to understand the circumstances addressed by Paul in his letters, and against whom he argues, we must attempt to understand the environment in which he writes. This means we must elaborate upon the particular sociological and historical contexts behind Paul’s comments to the Galatian community; we must, in the words of John Elliott, cultivate a “sociological imagination” in order to understand the socio-historical circumstances that

---

90 Where to place Galatians among Paul’s letters is a much debated issue among scholars. I identify the second Jerusalem visit mentioned in Gal. 2:1-10 with the “apostolic council” of Acts 15 and understand the letter to the Galatians to be written before his letters to Philippi and Rome. The tone of Galatians betrays an emotional, urgent, first-time response to the problem of Judaizing. That Galatians was written prior to Romans is evidenced by the fact that the latter is a more extensive and methodical piece of writing than Galatians, and reflects a more developed form of Paul’s thought. As Lightfoot states: “The Epistle to the Galatians stands in relation to the Roman letter, as the rough model to the finished statue” and is of a more “personal and fragmentary” form than Romans (Lightfoot 1910: 49).
prompted the writing of the letter to the Galatians (Elliott 1981: 5). In recent years, scholars have effectively applied social-scientific models to gain new insight into the Pauline corpus.91

It will be argued here that the accurate reconstruction of the crisis reflected in Galatians is one in which Gentile Christian Judaizers are among the primary agitators and opponents of Paul.92 Attention will be paid to Paul's argumentation against the teaching of his opponents in Galatians and, concomitantly the following issues will be investigated: 1) To whom does Paul address his letter?; 2) What is the meaning of 'Ἰουδαίους in Galatians 2:14?; 3) Who "compelled" Gentile Christians in Galatia to observe the Mosaic Law and 4) why did Gentile Christians in Galatia observe the Mosaic Law? In chapter one, where the hypothesis and chronological parameters of this dissertation were discussed, I suggested that Gentile Christian Judaizing was a sustained phenomenon from the beginning of Christianity through at least the second century CE. We now turn to the earliest pre-Constantinian evidence of Gentile Christian Judaizing by looking at Paul's reaction to this phenomenon in Galatia.

To Whom Does Paul Address Galatians?

Paul is incensed that members of the Galatian community, which he himself had founded, are deserting his own teachings "and are turning to a different gospel (εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον)" (1:6). The recipients of the letter had undergone initiatory baptism "into Christ" (3:27) and were once pagans "enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods" (4:8). They are now being confused by a corrupt version of that gospel (1:7). While the Galatians had rejoiced and warmly welcomed Paul when he initially came to stay with them, their enthusiasm towards him has apparently waned, for he asks: "What has become

91 For example John Gager (1975); Bruce Malina (1981); Howard Clark Kee (1989); Rodney Stark (1996).
of the good will you feel? For I testify that, had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me" (4:15). The letter furthermore reflects that male Gentile Christians in Galatia are being persuaded to become circumcised (2:3; 5:2-12; 6:12, 15). It is clear that the recipients of the letter are Gentile Christians, and that they are Paul's central focus.

In 5:2-3 we learn for the first time that, in turning from Paul's teaching and accepting a "different gospel," Gentile Christians are becoming circumcised.93 There he states: "Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you have yourselves circumcised (ὅτι ἐὰν περιτέμνησθε),94 Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I testify to every person who receives circumcision (παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτεμνομένῳ) that he is obliged to obey the entire law." Paul tries to convince the Galatians of the logical outcome of a decision to submit to circumcision: once they are circumcised, they are obligated to keep the whole law. Given that many Jews did not in fact keep the law in its entirety, Paul's statement is somewhat confusing.95 He is compelled to make the statement in 5:2-3 because he perceives the Galatian Gentile Christians to be unaware that if they become circumcised with the understanding that this step was necessary for their salvation, they have thereby become legally obligated to the rest of the law. The Gentile Christians were ignorant of the

---

93 This may have been hinted at earlier in the letter, for example in Gal. 3:3: "Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?"
94 According to Burton 1921: 273, "[t]he form of the conditional clause ἐὰν περιτεμνῆσθε, referring to a future possibility, reflects the fact that the question whether they will be circumcised is still pending. The use of the present tense, at first thought surprising, indicates that the apostle is not thinking of circumcision as a simple (possible future) fact, or result accomplished, but of the attempt or decision to be circumcised, the verb being substantially conative in force." Significantly, in his commentary on Galatians, J. B. Lightfoot states "... the present tense is more appropriate than the past. It is not the fact of their having been circumcised which St Paul condemns ... but the fact of their allowing themselves to be circumcised" (1890: 204, his emphasis).
95 E. P. Sanders endeavours to understand Paul's statement: "one can only hazard a guess as to the force of the threat that accepting circumcision would require keeping the whole law. There is good reason to think that, although observing the law was not burdensome to Jews, it appeared onerous and inconvenient to Gentiles. Paul's opponents may have adopted a policy of gradualism, requiring first some of the major commandments (circumcision, food, days), a policy which was probably not unique among Jewish missionaries. Paul may very well simply have been reminding his converts that, if they accepted circumcision, the consequence would be that they would have to begin living their lives according to a new set of rules for daily living" (Sanders 1983: 29). F. F. Bruce's suggestion regarding the meaning of Paul's statement better fits the context: "He who submits to circumcision as a legal requirement, necessary for salvation, accepts thereby the principle of salvation by law-keeping, and salvation by law-keeping implies salvation by keeping the whole law" (Bruce 1982: 230).
full significance of their action either because the people teaching the Galatians to become circumcised are themselves ignorant of what this step implies regarding Judaism, or because they are deliberately attempting to mislead the Galatians. In order to dissuade Gentile Christians in Galatia from submitting to circumcision, Paul argues that becoming circumcised is an indication of a desire to be "subject to the law" (4:21) and "justified by the law" (5:4).

Paul addresses his letter to Gentile Christians who are observing Jewish customs, and he understands this behaviour as an attempt to become justified through Jewish law and thereby compromising their faith in Jesus. In 6:12, Paul states: "It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised (οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι)..." And in 6:13, where Paul tells the Galatians that though the ones putting the pressure on the Gentiles to be circumcised do not keep the law themselves, they nevertheless "want you to be circumcised (θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι)." Paul’s adversaries "were now urging the Galatians to accept circumcision as the rite by which they could become sons of Abraham and participants in the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant" (Burton 1921: 274).

When Paul was with the Galatians last, they were "running well," but now their situation has completely changed and they are being prevented from "obeying the truth" (5:7). The introduction of a new teaching into the Galatian churches caused internal controversy and strife among members, for Paul warns members of the communities "if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another" (5:15). In Paul’s view, communal unity is of crucial importance, thus in his eyes the situation in the Galatian churches is dire indeed.

96 The remaining parts of the two verses, whose grammatical and exegetical problems have sparked much debate, will be addressed later in this chapter during discussion of the identity of the agitators who exercised the pressure.
The Meaning of 'Ιουδαίζειν in Galatians 2:14

In Gal. 2:11-14, Paul discusses the disagreement he had with Peter in Antioch. Up until τίνας ἀπὸ Ἰουκώμου came to Antioch, Peter ate with Gentiles (presumably Gentile Christians) but he ceased this contact with Gentiles out of fear of "the circumcised" (φόβοις τῶν ἐκ περιτομῆς) — a group of Jewish Christians from Jerusalem influenced by James. In Paul's view, Peter was aware of the truth (i.e. that Gentile Christians did not need to become law observant and that fellowship between Christians of Jewish origin and Gentile origin was harmless and in fact desirable) but was feigning obedience to the law (τὴν ὑποκρίσει) out of his concern for how the people of James would judge his interaction with Gentiles. Paul, deeply annoyed by Peter's inconsistent behaviour, tells how "the other Jews" collaborated with Peter by similarly withdrawing from sharing table fellowship with Gentile Christians, so that "even Barnabas" was influenced (verse 13). The consequence of the Jewish Christians' separation from the Gentile Christians was that the Gentile Christians in Antioch, with whom Peter initially ate, were put in an awkward position and felt pressured to observe Jewish law (i.e. to Judaize).

Peter, who acted out of fear according to Paul, may have been ignorant of the repercussions his behaviour would have on Gentile Christians.97

In verse 14, Paul reports that he asked Peter: "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

97 Burton brilliantly summarizes the importance of this section of the letter: "[t]he words ὀνομάζειν Ἰουδαίζειν are of crucial importance for the understanding of Paul's position. They show what he regarded as the significance if not the deliberate intent of Peter's conduct in refusing any longer to eat with the Gentile Christians. Under the circumstances this amounted not simply to maintaining the validity of the Jewish law for Jewish Christians, but involved the forcing of Jewish practices upon the Gentile Christians. By his refusal any longer to eat with them and by the adoption under his influence of the same course on the part of the Jewish members of the Antioch church, he left to the Gentiles no choice but either to conform to the Jewish law of foods, or suffer a line of division to be drawn through the church. It was this element of coercion brought to bear on the Gentile Christians that made the matter one of direct concern to Paul. Against efforts to maintain the observance of the Jewish law on the part of Jewish Christians, he would doubtless have had nothing to say so long as they were confined to Jewish communities, concerned the Jews only, and did not affect the Gentiles" (Burton 1921: 112). The events described in Gal. 2 may have been the genesis of the Gentile Christian Judaizing phenomenon in the region of Syria, which I will explore further in chapter five.
(ἀναγκάζεις ἰουδαιίζειν)?"98 Here we encounter a term pertinent to understanding what was occurring in Galatia, and to this study: ἰουδαιίζειν (to Judaize). As explained in chapter one, the meaning of this verb describes the phenomenon of Gentiles observing certain components of the Mosaic law without converting to Judaism (Gaston 1986: 35).

Esler argues that Paul's use of the term means "to become a Jew or to live like a Jew, but in either case to be circumcised, given the ways ... in which Paul ties the two situations together" (Esler 1994: 61). But, looking more broadly at the use of the term reveals that Judaizing does not necessarily entail circumcision though it may include it. Josephus' use of the term in War 2.454 shows that circumcision was not automatically assumed to be a part of Judaizing behaviour. There he describes how Metilius, the commander of the Roman garrison and sole survivor of a vicious battle, "saved his life by entreaties and promises to Judaize as far as circumcision (τοῦτον γὰρ ἰκετεύσαντα καὶ μέχρι περιτομῆς ἰουδαιίζειν)"99 To "Judaize," then, can refer to Gentiles who adopt some among a variety of Jewish customs, without necessarily undergoing circumcision.100

But the term "Judaizer" does not only refer to a non-Jew who observes Jewish customs. As was explained earlier, it also refers to Gentiles who side with the Jews. In War. 2.463, Josephus describes how Syrian authorities were aware of Gentiles in each

---

98 Esler 1994: 61: rightly suggests that ἰουδαιίζειν is "the culmination and climax of this whole historical interlude." Esler is confident that 2.15-21 is not part of what Paul said to Peter at Antioch. It is, however, impossible to determine this with any certainty.

99 Emphasis added. According to Shaye Cohen 1987: 416, "Metilius realized that 'judaising' was a broad concept, and was willing to go as far as circumcision, that is, conversion." It is not certain, however, that circumcision equalled conversion to Judaism during the first century. Circumcision was possibly only one of the steps for male converts to Judaism during the first century. In the argument between the schools of Shammai and Hillel concerning the degree of impurity of a convert from paganism, it is clear that proselyte immersion is another element in the conversion process (Pesah. 8.8; "Ed. 5.2"). It seems likelier that Christians copied an already existing Jewish practise than the other way around, and the debate between Shammai and Hillel in c. 80 CE seems to presuppose a well established rite. An offering at the Temple is understood to have been the third component of the conversion process, both for males and females. If this was practised, it obviously was carried out in the pre-70 period.

100 Two other non-Christian sources that use the term include Plutarch and the LXX version of the book of Esther. In Life of Cicero 7.6, Plutarch writes about a certain freedman named Caecilius "who was accused of Jewish practices (ἐνοχὸς τῶν ἰουδαιίζειν);" Esther 8.17 LXX states that "many of the Gentiles were circumcised and Judaized (καὶ ἰουδαιίζον) for fear of the Jews."
Syrian city (τοῦς Ἰουδαίους) who sympathized with the Jews (including observing Jewish practices?) to such an extent that they were seen as possible security hazards.  

In Galatians 2:11-14, Paul addresses Peter's behaviour and the consequences of his actions in Antioch. From Paul's perspective, by withdrawing from Gentile table-fellowship, Peter was sending a message to the Gentile believers of Antioch. The message to Antiochene Gentile Christians was that they were to Judaize (Ἰουδαίους), by observing the rules of kashrut, if not other Jewish practices in addition to this. One of the reasons why Paul includes the story of what transpired in Antioch between him and Peter is that he saw similarities between this and what was occurring in Galatia. In both places, Christians were behaving inconsistently with "the truth of the gospel" (2:14) (that is, that which Paul had taught them), with the result being Gentile Christian Judaizers.

Some of the Gentile Christians in Galatia were seeking justification through means other than faith alone; they were "deserting" Paul's teachings and turning to a different, perverted gospel (1:6,7) which involved submitting to pressure to "live like Jews" (2:14), including becoming circumcised (2:3; 5:2-12; 6:12,15) and observing other Jewish customs (4:10), while others contemplated doing so. Members of the community also

101 Other examples of the word "Judaizer" or "to Judaize" used in early Christian documents are found in Ign. Magn. 10:3 and Acts of Pilate 2:1; these will be discussed later.
102 Richardson 1969: 96-97: "Just as in Antioch some Jerusalem Christians prevented table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians, it may be that Jewish Christians in Galatia have similar scruples; thus they encourage Gentiles to be circumcised to remove all bars to fellowship (2:12); cf. 4:17f.; 5:8; 5:12, ironically; 6:13). The motivating factor in Antioch was fear of Jewish Christians; similarly Gentile Christians in Galatia (the main proponents of circumcision) are also acting from fear for their own security, for to be cut off from Jewish Christians would put them in a no-man's-land (2:12; cf. 6:12)."
103 Ester argues that Paul included the story of what transpired in Antioch because both in Antioch and Galatia, Gentiles were being pressured to undergo circumcision. But "to Judaize," as discussed above, does not necessarily include circumcision but the adoption of a range of Jewish customs in various degrees. I would suggest that a more precise interpretation is that in both places Gentiles were experiencing pressure to Judaize, and that in Galatia circumcision was involved while in Antioch the pressure revolved around following food laws.
104 Burton 1921: 112 states: "Paul forcibly sets forth Peter's inconsistency in compelling the Gentiles to follow the Jewish mode of life" (emphasis added).
105 In his letter to the Galatians, Paul differentiates between his opponents and the Gentile Christians in the Galatian community who are being targeted by his opponents, and to whom the letter is directed. He disdainfully addresses the former as "some" (1:7), "anyone" (1:9), "they" (4:17; 6:13), and "those" (6:12), and the latter as "you" (e.g. Gal. 3:1-5). Murphy-O'Connor understands Paul's enemies to be "Christians of Jewish origin, either by birth or by conversion" who come from Antioch, not Jerusalem (1996: 193). Later, however, he states that "[t]he group need not have been made up exclusively of Jewish Christians. The inclusion of a few Gentile Christians who had willingly accepted Judaization would have strengthened
were observing the Jewish calendar, "observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years" (4:10), and Paul fears that his work among them was in vain.\(^{106}\) In order to counteract this behaviour, Paul argues that "a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (2:16), and that justification comes through "faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law" (2:16). Paul saw further inconsistency in the fact that those who were putting pressure on the Gentiles to be circumcised were not following the laws themselves (6:13).

The occurrence of Judaizing in Antioch and in Galatia caused Paul tremendous pain because in both places it produced internal imbalance within the Christian community and caused a rift between Paul and the Galatians. In Antioch, Jewish Christians, by implication of their actions, intimidated Gentile Christians to live like Jews. In Galatia, Jewish Christians probably were factors again, but Gentile Christian Judaizers were the primary antagonists, as we shall now see.

---

the claim that what Paul had once preached in Galatia had been superseded by subsequent developments in Christianity" (1996: 194).

\(^{106}\) Galatians 4:10 states: "You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years (ἡμέρας παρατηρεῖσθαι καὶ μήνας καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἐνιαυτούς)." It is likely that the "days" referred to are the Sabbaths, the "months" are the monthly celebrations of the new moon, the "seasons" include the annual festivals of passover, Tabernacles etc., and the "years" are the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee (Lightfoot 1890: 171; Burton 1921: 232-3; Richardson 1969: 91 n. 2). Betz opines that this is a statement describing activities which are "not typical of Judaism, though they are known to both Judaism and paganism," and believes that "the description cannot be a summary of activities in which the Galatians are presently engaged, but in which they would be engaged once they took up Torah and circumcision" even though he admits that most witnesses present verse 10 as a statement of fact, and not as part of the previous question (Betz 1979: 217). In Betz's view, furthermore, the statement in verse 10 "gives us no clue to what the Galatians are presently doing. The cultic activities apply both to their pagan past and to their future life in Judaism, if they so choose. But these activities are not exclusively Jewish, as some commentators suggest, even if a wealth of material illustrating the attitude of intensive cultic scrupulousness can be found especially in Jewish apocalypticism and Qumran" (Betz 1979: 218). In my view, Betz is making the interpretation more complicated than it needs to be. The problem throughout the letter to the Galatians is Gentile observance of Jewish customs, and here Paul is once again arguing against such behaviour. Bruce's view is correct: "Paul is referring to news which he has just received, to the effect that the Galatians were actually adopting the Jewish calendar," 1982: 205.
Who Compelled Gentile Christians in Galatia to Judaize?

It is clear that those who are pressuring the Galatian Gentiles to submit to circumcision (and other Jewish customs) are fellow Christians, since Paul refers to their teachings as a "different gospel" (1:6). Paul states that his opponents "are confusing [the Galatians] and want to pervert the gospel of Christ" (1:7), that is, Paul's teaching. The fact that Paul's opponents are also believers in Jesus intensifies his anger and sense of betrayal. Verses 8 and 9 reflect the degree of Paul's anger at this "perversion" of the gospel: he casts a curse on whoever would "proclaim ... a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you" (1:8), and then repeats the curse in verse 9.

Most scholars of the modern period of biblical scholarship have viewed Paul's opponents to be Jewish Christians, probably from Judea, who urged Gentile Christians to keep the Jewish law (or in other words, convert to Judaism) in addition to confessing faith in Jesus as Messiah. F. C. Baur, in his 1845 monograph Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi, argued that Paul's opponents were zealous Jewish Christians from Jerusalem who disapproved of Paul's teachings and sought to impose the requirements of the law on Gentiles so that their conversion would be complete (and that they were the same "men from James" who caused problems in Antioch between Peter and Paul in 2:12). Baur's thesis (known as the "Tübingen hypothesis"), as noted above in chapter two, has had an enduring effect on modern scholarship.

---

107 This is consistent with Lewis Coser's theory on how social conflict functions, for the closer the ties between the opponents, the more intense the conflict between them will be (Coser 1956: 69).
108 See the thorough presentation of the various options offered by scholars from the patristic period through the modern period in "Research and Opinion Concerning the Opponents of Paul in Galatia: A Survey and A Reflection" in the unpublished dissertation of John Gale Hawkins (1971).
109 The ET used here is Paul: His Life and Works (1876).
110 J. B. Lightfoot (1890: 222), argued that Paul's adversaries in Galatia were Jewish Christians who did not have the support of the Jerusalem church; J. H. Ropes (1929: 27), following Wilhelm Lütgert (1919), suggested that Paul encounters two groups of opponents, a group of Gentiles who focussed on the part of Paul's teaching that was founded on Jewish elements, and a libertine, pneumatic group that took literally Paul's teaching on freedom; Burton 1921: 349; Walter Schmithals (1972: 29), maintained that Paul's opponents were Jewish Christian Gnostics; Betz 1979: 316 suggests that oí περιτεμνόμενοι should be understood as "the circumcised," the "same people whom [Paul] discusses in 6:12" whom Betz takes to be Jews; R. Jewett's thesis "that Jewish Christians in Judea were stimulated by Zealotic pressure into a
the letter itself strongly suggests that among the primary instigators causing problems among the Galatian Gentiles were non-Jews.\footnote{A. Neander (1847) first argued that the troublemakers were Gentile Christians who had submitted to the Mosaic law, including circumcision and then tried to convince Gentile Christians in Galatia to do the same, but (as noted by Hawkins 1971:22) this theory is usually associated with the work of Johannes Munck (1959), who argued that Gentile Christians applied the LXX to their own lives in order to become the people of God; other scholars who identify Paul's opponents as Gentiles who have accepted circumcision and are now pressuring others to be circumcised include Emmanuel Hirsch (1930: 192-97); Munck 1959: 87-90; Richardson 1969: 89 ff.}

The concluding paragraph of the letter (Galatians 6:11-18) is a postscript added by Paul in his own handwriting, consistent with letter-writing conventions of the time. The addition of an autographed postscript assured recipients that the letter was authentic, conveyed information that the sender forgot to include in the body of the letter, and most importantly for our purposes, the postscript summarized the significant points of the letter (Weima 1994: 160; Betz 1979: 312).\footnote{Paul's other postscripts are found in I Cor. 16:21, Philm. 19; Col. 4:18; II Thess. 3:17, if the last two are genuine.} The postscript is a crucial part of the letter, for it is in the postscript that some of the most revealing information about the identity of Paul's opponents in Galatia is discovered.\footnote{The argument for approaching the Galatians as a whole through the conclusion has convincingly been made by Peter Richardson 1969: 74-76. Jeffrey Weima likewise states that "every one of the closing conventions of 6:11-18 appears to have been adapted and reshaped to echo better the major tensions and essential concerns expressed throughout the letter" (1994: 160).}

Two of the most important verses are Galatians 6:12-13, where Paul writes: "It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised — only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ (12). Even the circumcised (όι περιτευμόνες) do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh" (13). The interpretation of these verses is complicated. Two crucial questions arise: a) who are "the circumcised" of verse 13, who argue for the circumcision of Galatian Gentiles, but are not obeying the law themselves? and b) are they the same people Paul refers to in verse 12, whose motivation...
for pressuring the Galatian Gentiles to become circumcised is the avoidance of persecution?"  

The existence of a textual variation in verse 13a makes answering these questions difficult, but not impossible. There is textual evidence both for the present participle ὁι περιτεμνόμενοι and for the perfect participle ὁι περιτεμνημένοι. Although the present appears in more manuscripts, the perfect is found in 𝔓46, a highly respected and early text. The perfect form ("those who have been circumcised") is likely a later scribal correction of the enigmatic present tense. The more difficult reading is the present tense (περιτεμνόμενοι), which renders the verse "Even those who receive circumcision [i.e., are being circumcised] do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh" and it is generally preferred as the more original reading. This decision is strengthened by the existence of the present tense of this verb in 5:2, 3 and 6:12, where its sense is "to get circumcised," or "to receive circumcision," (i.e. it refers to someone undergoing circumcision, rather than to a circumcised person [Burton 1921: 353]). Other parts of the letter also point to Gentile opponents. While Paul's bitter comment in 5:12: "I wish those who unsettle you would castrate themselves!" could apply to Jews, it is more effective and relevant to the situation if it applied to Gentiles who were voluntarily undergoing the circumcision process as adults.

---

114 Barclay reminds us not to "underestimate the distorting effects of polemic," and that Paul was "likely to caricature his opponents, especially in describing their motivation: were they really compelling the Galatians to be circumcised? And was it really only in order to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ?" (Barclay 1987: 75, his emphasis). And one could add, did Paul's opponents really not themselves keep the law? But again, as Barclay points out, Paul could not have completely garbled his account of his opponents, or the Galatians would not have known about whom he spoke.

115 The present participle is found in the following manuscripts: a A C D K P 33 88 104, etc., while the perfect participle is in 𝔓46 B Ψ 330 451 614 630 etc. 𝔓46 dates to about 200 CE and so is the earliest text.

116 Burton 1921: 353, states that "transcriptional probability favours" the present participle "since the perfect would have been a wholly unobjectionable reading;" also J. B. Lightfoot (1890: 223); Barclay 1988: 42, states that the perfect participle is "undoubtedly the weaker reading;" Metzger 1971: 598, concurs with this view.

117 Richardson 1969: 89 notes that "[t]here would then be irony coupled with sarcasm: they [the Gentiles undergoing circumcision] would be excluded from the fellowship of Temple worship which they seem to be so earnestly courting."
Were the Gentile Christians of verse 13, who have received circumcision and are not following the law, also the subject of verse 12? If verse 13a is understood to be parenthetic to verse 12, then it would not bear a polemical message, but an explanatory one, i.e. "circumcised people are not able to observe the law, so you Gentiles might as well not even think about becoming circumcised and following the law." But the points against understanding this verse to be parenthetic weigh in favour of its being polemical (Richardson 1969: 87). Both verses assert self-centred impetus behind the drive for the circumcision of Galatian Gentile Christians: "so that they may not be persecuted" (12b); "so that they may boast about your flesh" (13b). Paul does not introduce a new subject in 6:13, but is speaking out against the same group he polemizes in verse 12 and throughout the letter.

Among Paul's main opponents in Galatia, then, are circumcised Gentile Christians who are adding to their numbers new members from the Galatian church by persuading them to submit to circumcision. Were these Gentile Christian persuaders originally from Galatia, or did they come from outside of the area? This is difficult to ascertain. Might they be those Gentile Christians who initially became Judaizers in the Antioch area (described in Gal. 2), and then visited communities established by Paul with the purpose of countering his gospel by teaching fellow Gentile Christians to behave as they had? Whether the Gentile Christian Judaizers originated outside Galatia or not, it is clear that the problem very much became an internal Galatian issue, since some of the Galatian Gentile Christians became Judaizers. The situation was likely rather complicated. While the primary instigators of Judaizing were Gentile Christians (either originally from Galatia, or some other locale such as Antioch), Jewish Christians from outside the Galatian

---

118 Similarly Richardson 1969: 87.
119 One of the more obvious points is that if 13a and 13b were independent of one another, 13b would be "an unnecessary duplication of v. 12," see Richardson 1969: 87 for this and other points; also Burton 1921: 353-4, who logically argues that the people pressuring the Galatian Gentile Christians to submit to circumcision are the "principal subject of the discourse from the beginning of v. 12, and all possible ambiguity is excluded by the close parallelism between θέλουσιν υἱὸς περιτέμνεσθαι, v. 13b and ἀναγκάζουσιν υἱὸς περιτέμνεσθαι of v.12."
community (Jerusalem?, Antioch?) might have agitated the Galatian community as well (see Richardson 1969: 96; Murphy-O'Connor 1996: 193). Ultimately, of course, "the letter is not addressed to the troublemakers at all but to the Gentile Galatians," who were Judaizing, as Lloyd Gaston rightly observes (Gaston 1987: 81).

**Why Did Galatian Gentile Christians Judaize?**

Barclay's argument that Gentile Christians found the Judaizers' message appealing for sociological reasons is not persuasive. He argues that their conversion to Christianity entailed major cognitive and social readjustment: their relationships with "family, friends, fellow club members, business associates and civic authorities" were no doubt severely disrupted (Barclay 1988: 59). Because they distanced themselves from their pagan roots and at the same time were rejected by the local Jewish community, their social identity was precarious and insecure (Barclay 1988: 58). According to Barclay, it is understandable why Gentile converts would have found the Judaizers' message appealing.

From a sociological perspective, however, one would have to wonder why Gentiles would choose to convert to Christianity in the first place if it caused the high degree of cognitive readjustment and social displacement for new members that Barclay describes. Rodney Stark, for example, points out that "people will attempt to escape or resolve a marginal position" (Stark 1996: 52). Marginality is not a position that people would seek to have, but one that they would try to avoid.

Barclay postulates that "[b]y becoming proselytes the Galatians could hope to identify themselves with the local synagogues and thus hold at least a more understandable and recognizable place in society" (Barclay 1988: 60). Hall likewise proposes the following: "although not Jewish themselves, the early Gentile Christians in Galatia felt a particular kinship to the people of Israel and wanted the Jewish community to accept them as beloved and legitimized children" (Hall 1993: 80). But for these suggestions to be
accurate descriptions of the situation that obtained in Galatia, Gentile believers in Jesus would have needed to be cognizant of a marked difference between themselves and Jews. In my view, the relationship between the nascent Christian group and Judaism was more undifferentiated than what these scholars assume.

It is furthermore questionable whether Roman authorities would have been able to tell the difference between Jews and non-Jews at this point in time. Shaye Cohen argues that Jews living in the diaspora in antiquity were not easily distinguishable from non-Jews, if indeed any distinction could be made. That circumcision was understood to be a mark of Jewishness is reflected in the [mostly derisive] comments of Roman writers (see Cohen 1993: 13-14 for examples). Suetonius reports that the emperor Domitian (81-96 CE) issued a decree that not only distinguished Jews from non-Jews, but also "those who lived a Jewish life without registering (themselves as Jews)" and "those who concealed their origin and did not pay." If a Gentile man observed certain Jewish customs and followed certain Jewish laws and called himself a Jew, he was believed to be a Jew. Even sages of the rabbinic academy could not tell when Romans pretended to be Jews. Circumcision was at certain times for outsiders an indication of (male) Jewishness, but as Cohen points out, there is no evidence that Jews used circumcision as a means of checking for fellow "authentic" Jews (Cohen 1993: 21). Rather than social factors, the primary motivation for Galatian Gentile Christians to succumb to pressure from Paul's opponents to undergo circumcision pertained to theological issues.

Paul explains that the Judaizers are trying to persuade the Galatian Gentile Christians to become circumcised so that they could avoid persecution for "the cross of

120 Most scholars suggest that it was persecution from Jews that the opponents hoped to avoid by getting Gentiles to become circumcised. For example, Burton 1921: 349-50, suggests that the opponents would have suffered punishment "at the hands of their fellow-Jews as members of the Christian sect of the Jewish community, if they favoured or did not successfully oppose its anti-legalistic tendency." Bruce 1982: 269 agrees with R. Jewett's theory that it was "reprisals at the hands of Zealot-minded militants" that Paul's opponents hoped to avoid by persuading the Gentile Christians in Galatia.
121 Cohen 1993: 10: convincingly argues that "Jews and gentiles in antiquity were corporeally, visually, linguistically, and socially indistinguishable."
122 *Sipre, Deuteronomy* 344 (Finkelstein in Cohen 1993: 11).
Christ" (6:12), a term most logically understood as a reference to Christian teachings and lifestyle (Esler 1994: 55). In Galatians 4:17 Paul suggests other motivations for his opponents: "They make much of you but for no good purpose (ζηλοῦσιν ὑμᾶς οὐ καλῶς); they want to exclude you, so that you may make much of them (ἀλλὰ ἐκκλεῖσαι ὑμᾶς θέλουσιν, ἵνα αὐτοὺς ζηλοῦτε)." Paul here alludes to how his opponents were behaving towards his Gentile readers. ζηλόω can mean "to be deeply concerned about someone, court someone's favor" (BAGD 1979: 338). This might suggest that in Galatia, circumcised Christians of Gentile origin were paying special attention to fellow Gentiles. Perhaps they tried to convince them that becoming circumcised was crucial to being a true Christian and member of the people of God. At the same time, they may have argued that Gentile Christians who did not accept their teachings about circumcision would be "shut out" or "excluded" from the church (Schlier 1971: 212f.).123 Paul counters their argument in 4:21-5:1, where he tries to persuade the Galatian Gentile Christians that they "are children of the promise, like Isaac" (4:28), without having to yield to "a yoke of slavery" (5:1) by keeping the law. As Gaston avers, "Paul's argument is not against circumcision (or Judaism) as such, but for adult Gentiles to circumcise themselves would mean seeking to earn something and thus deny God's grace. Such Ishmael people are not heirs of the promise, for even if they are in a sense children of Abraham, they are not children of Sarah" (Gaston 1987: 90).

In Galatians 3:6 Paul abruptly introduces the topic of the blessing of Abraham and how people may share in it, and continues this discussion for the next two chapters. The nature of Paul's argument is in the form of a rebuttal and confirms that he was responding to an argument put forth by his opponents. They argued that in order to be admitted to the covenant of Abraham, and to share in God's promised blessings, it was necessary for Gentile men to undergo circumcision. This argument, primarily based on Genesis 12 and 17, would have been hard to resist. Genesis 17:14, for example, explicitly states "Any

123 Jerome Murphy-O'Connor argues that Paul's opponents are intruders from Antioch who "had the best interests of the Gentiles deeply at heart" (Murphy-O'Connor 1996: 193-194).
uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." The scriptures made it very clear that in order to be blessed by God it was necessary to be part of the Jewish people and this for males entailed becoming circumcised. Paul tries to counter this by arguing that it was Abraham's belief that made him acceptable to God, and so too Gentiles can be justified by faith (3:6-9).

The influence of the Judaizing Christians deeply unsettled the congregations established by Paul. They "succeeded partly in putting the churches into a state of uncertainty, and partly in winning them over to themselves" (Munck 1959: 89). Gentile Christian Judaizers may have attempted to persuade the Galatians that simply to believe in Jesus was not enough for them to be a part of the believing community: they had to do more to secure their membership in the community by observing Jewish customs, including circumcision for the men. Their appeal was clearly successful among the Galatian Christians; the urgency with which Paul writes is proof of that.

Gentile Christian Judaizers may have instilled a sense of insecurity within the Gentiles regarding their acceptability and status within the Christian community and in so doing insinuated that Paul's teachings were not trustworthy. Although at first Gentiles in Galatia accepted Paul's teaching about salvation through grace and life in the Spirit, they came to distrust his version by judging it to be incomplete. While they did not reject Paul's version of the gospel outright, they eventually believed that he had left some crucial parts out: his gospel lacked reference to circumcision and other obligations pertaining to the Mosaic Law, which the Gentile Christian Judaizers believed to be the full message taught by Jerusalem Christians (see Munck 1959: 90).

This distrust could have developed in different ways. It would have been quite natural for Gentile converts to conclude from reading Jewish scripture that circumcision was required of all who desired to be a part of the people of God.124 Perhaps Paul's

---

124 Munck rightfully points out the possible influence of the Jewish scriptures on Gentile Christians attracted to Judaizing: "we must not disregard the fact that the Old Testament, not only in its Christian-
discussions about the Jerusalem Jewish Christian community were misunderstood. As Gaston observes, "Paul always speaks of the Jerusalem church in positive terms" (Gaston 1987: 109), for example, he refers to leaders of the Jerusalem church as "apostles (Gal. 1:19, 2:8), and "pillars" (Gal. 2:9). This may have inadvertently created within Gentile Christians "a longing to be like the Jewish Christians there, who [were] imagined to be real Jews and Christians at the same time, and who preach[ed] circumcision and the observance of the Law" (Munck 1959: 279).125

The fact that some Christians did observe the Law may have added to their confusion, for Gentile Christians in Galatia may have thought that all Christians in Jerusalem were circumcised and followed the Law.126 Perhaps Paul had deliberately distorted his version of the gospel by dropping the circumcision requirement? Perhaps the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem had the more authoritative gospel? Gal. 5:11 suggests that Paul's Gentile Christian opponents declared that Paul's own teachings buttressed their cause. Here Paul claims "But my friends, why am I still being persecuted if I am still preaching circumcision? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed." This statement implies that Paul's opponents claimed that Paul (at one time or at present)

---

125 As Munck suggests, "It is quite understandable that the Gentile Christians could have doubts about the promises which Israel had received but which had not been fulfilled for Israel; how then could the promises be fulfilled for the Gentile Christians" since these Gentile Christians observed how most Jews rejected Paul's message and "only a part of the God-fearing Gentiles accepted baptism" and they may have "longed for Jerusalem, of which Paul spoke so warmly, where the Christians lived as Jews, formed a part of the chosen people, and at the same time believed in Christ" (Munck 1959: 133). Their conclusion might have been that it was "better and safer for a Gentile to become not merely a Christian but also a Jewish Christian" and thereby cover all the bases (Munck 1959: 133).

126 Paul understood circumcision of Gentile Christians to be not only unnecessary for them, but detrimental to their salvation. But what was his view concerning circumcision of the male children of Jewish Christians? Although arguing from silence is risky, given Paul's numerous and vigorous protestations regarding circumcision for Gentile Christians, his silence on the topic for Jewish Christians is striking and perhaps significant. If Jewish Christians continued to circumcise their sons, and Paul did not condemn this, it is plausible that Gentile Christians, who were members of communities founded by Paul, might have similarly desired to bear the external markings signifying a member of God's people. The reliance of Paul's Gentile converts to Christianity on the LXX for instruction, as discussed above, would have made undergoing circumcision (and observance of other Jewish customs as well) compelling and logical for them.
endorsed submission to circumcision (Bruce 1982: 236-37). It is understandable why they might have done so. By arguing that Paul himself endorsed circumcision for Gentiles, they could try to induce Gentiles who had been converted to Christianity by Paul and who may have been stubbornly refusing to be circumcised out of loyalty to Paul. Perhaps his adversaries cited Paul as support for their position by pointing out the fact that Paul himself was circumcised, so "why should he want to hold us back from this same mark of distinction; let us all be circumcised" (Richardson 1969: 90).

**The Location of the Galatian Churches**

Because the place name "Galatia" is ambiguous, there is uncertainty as to the location of the "Galatian churches" to which the letter is addressed (1:2). Galatia became a Roman province in 25 BCE, and included not only the ethnic district of Galatia, located north of the great inner plateau of Asia Minor, where Celtic tribespeople had settled, but also part of Pontus, Phrygia, Lycaonia, Pisidia, Paphlagonia and Isauria (Magie 1950: 453). The provincial boundaries included Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, listed in Acts 13 and 14 as the towns Paul had visited on his first missionary journey. There is uncertainty as to whether Paul's use of the term "Galatia" denoted only the ancient tribal territory (the North Galatia theory, which included the cities of Celtic north Galatia, Ancyra, Pessinus and

---

127 Betz 1979: 268 states, "[w]hat the Apostle has precisely in mind will in all likelihood always be hidden from our knowledge. Presumably, he refers to matters known to the Galatians as well as to himself, but unknown to us." Caution in interpretation is required here, since not every statement that Paul makes in this polemical letter is necessarily a response to an argument made by his adversaries. Barclay 1987: 80 correctly suggests that verse 11 "could also be no more than a simple contrast between Paul and his opponents, reminding the Galatians that he, Paul, is in a totally different category from them; in this case no explicit accusation need be posited (his emphasis)." Peder Borgen 1980: 85-102, postulates that this verse is Paul's response to people who perceived themselves to be Paul's associates in preaching the necessity of circumcision for converts to Christianity (also Borgen 1982: 37-46; Howard 1979: 7-11). Others have sensibly suggested that Paul's pre-Christian past is being referred to, perhaps when he preached circumcision as a Pharisee (Schoeps 1961: 219).

128 Gauls were members of Celtic tribes who had penetrated Anatolia early in the third century BCE from central Europe (Joukowsky 1996: 385). Tribal feeling and loyalty remained strong in the first century CE; Mitchell notes that "[t]he Celtic origins of the Galatian provincial community continued to be emphasized by its title, the *koînô* of Galatia or of the Galatians, in contrast to the other well-known provincial *koîna* in Asia Minor, which were associations of the Greeks in Asia and Bithynia respectively" (1993a: 100).
Tavium) or the provincial area, which would have encompassed the towns he visited (the South Galatia theory).\textsuperscript{129}

Unfortunately Paul does not supply an itinerary of his travels, thus one cannot be certain of exactly which churches and areas he visited. Acts does describe a missionary journey of Paul through the southern part of the province during which time churches were established in Lystra, Derbe, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch, and if "Galatia" can be interpreted in the broader sense, it is possible to suppose that these are the churches to which Paul is writing. If the narrower sense is correct — then we must locate the churches in the northern region where the nation of Galatians lived, and can only guess where the churches were or how they came to be established. Acts does not describe any visit of Paul to that area, but this certainly does not mean he never got there, given the fact that Luke only reported what he considered relevant to his purposes. The fact that Paul generally used geographical terms in the Roman sense creates the strong presumption that by 'the churches in Galatia' he is referring to churches located anywhere within the province, and thus the letter may indeed address the towns in the south. The fact that Greek funerary inscriptions from this time period were rare in the northern territory, "contrast[ing] sharply with the region immediately to the south, confirms the view that the majority of the rural population did not use Greek" and points in favour of the South Galatia theory, since the letter was written in Greek (Mitchell 1980: 1058).\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{129} Scholarly opinion is divided on the question. Supporters of the Northern hypothesis include Gaston 1987: 209 note 8; Murphy-O'Conor 1996: 162; and of the Southern hypothesis, Ramsay 1949 (1907); Richardson 1969; Bruce 1982: 55; Longnecker 1990: lxxxviii.

\textsuperscript{130} Mitchell, in 1993b: 4, note 14, further notes that "in the mid-first century it was normal to refer to the whole province, quite simply, as Galatia," for example, Eutropius from the late 20s BCE: "Galatia ... provincia facta est ... eam M. Lollius pro praetore administravit;" Rutilius Gallicus of the Neronian period is referred to as legatio provinciae Galaticae; L. Pupius Praesens in 53/4 CE is referred to as ἐπίτροπος ... Παλατίνης ἐπαρχείας.
Summary

In Galatia, certain Gentile members of the nascent Christian community were practising a variety of Jewish customs, including circumcision (2:3; 5:2-12; 6:12, 15), Sabbath observance (4:10) and various festivals (4:10). The primary source of this pressure was not coming from Jews, nor from Jewish Christians, but from Gentile Christian who had already submitted to circumcision and were trying to persuade fellow Gentile Christians to conform to their example.\textsuperscript{131} While the Judaizers compelling the Galatian Gentiles might have travelled to Galatia from elsewhere (such as Antioch, for example), their presence in Galatia was felt significantly in the community. They successfully penetrated the churches, transforming the problem into an internal Galatian struggle which deeply troubled Paul. In response to the situation, Paul makes negative statements about Torah observance which were meant to correct Gentile Christian behaviour, not to address Jews or Jewish Christians. With such criticism, Paul intended to persuade Gentile Christians to stop Judaizing. Such behaviour, however, did not cease. In chapter six we shall demonstrate that Gentile Christian Judaizers continued to be a problem for leaders of Christian communities in Asia Minor at a somewhat later period.

Conclusion

The submission of some of the Gentile Christian members of churches in Galatia to a teaching which encouraged Gentile observance of Jewish practices was a source of great consternation for Paul and aroused his emphatic condemnation. In an incident described in Gal. 2, we learn that Peter, Barnabas and other Jewish Christians in Antioch ceased eating with Gentile Christians out of fear of condemnation from representatives from the

\textsuperscript{131} As Richardson states, these "are the most natural avenue for encouraging fellow Gentiles to submit to the rite. They are in a most precarious position. Having made the decision to take the irremediable step to be circumcised, they tend to become staunch advocates of its necessity: 'I did it, so must you'" (1969: 97).
Jerusalem church. This action prompted Gentile Christians to Judaize (ιουδαιζειν) in order to regain fellowship with Peter, Barnabas, and the others. Gentile Christian Judaizing also occurred in Galatia. There, the primary proponents of this lifestyle were Gentile Christians who had already taken this step (perhaps in Antioch?).

Paul was deeply perturbed by the phenomenon of Gentile Christian Judaizing. From his perspective, these Gentiles compromised their faith in Jesus because they understood Judaizing to be necessary in order to attain salvation. In response, Paul denounced this teaching with a characteristic combination of sarcasm and acerbic wit. In so doing, he wrote some things about Jewish practices that would offend Jews, but which originally were directed towards Gentiles. His response to Judaizing behaviour initiated differentiation between nascent Christianity and Judaism. Evidence from later documents, however, indicates that Judaizing behaviour persisted within the early Christian community long after Paul's time.
Chapter 5
Evidence for Judaizing Among Gentile Christians in Syria

The genesis of Gentile Christian Judaizing in the region of Syria may perhaps be traced back to the incident in Antioch described by Paul in Galatians 2. Paul chastizes Peter for ceasing to eat with Gentile Christians out of fear of condemnation from the Jerusalem church, "for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction (φοβούμενος τούς ἐκ περιτομῆς)" (Gal. 2:12). According to Paul, "other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy (συνυπεκριθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι)" including Barnabas (Gal. 2:13), and this act of withdrawal from table fellowship exerted pressure on Gentile Christians in Antioch to Judaize (Ἰουδαίζειν) in order to regain association with Christians of Jewish origin (Gal. 2:14).132

The problem of Gentile Christian Judaizing in Syria was not restricted to the earliest members of the Christian community. In the fall of 386 and 387 CE, John Chrysostom, bishop of Antioch, preached sermons in which he produced some of the most vehement anti-Jewish rhetoric in Christian history (Wilken 1983). Some of these Gentile Christian Judaizers attended synagogue services and observed certain Jewish rituals including circumcision, dietary laws and rites of purification. In response to this, Chrysostom declared the synagogue to be "not only a whorehouse and a theatre; it is also a den of thieves and a haunt of wild animals... not the cave of a wild animal merely, but of an unclean wild animal," and stated that "[t]he Jews have no conception of [spiritual] things at all, but living for the lower nature, all agog for the here and now, no better disposed than pigs or goats, they live by the rule of debauchery and inordinate gluttony. Only one thing they understand: to gorge themselves and to get drunk" (Eight Orations Against the Jews I.3,4; PG 48, 847,848).

132 Peter, Barnabas and the others may have been perceived by Antiochian Gentile Christians to possess influence and authority, hence the Antiochian imitation of the actions of these Jewish Christians.
It is my contention that Gentile Christian Judaizing also occurred during the period between Paul and John Chrysostom. This chapter investigates three early Christian documents from the Syrian region which range in date from the late first century to the early/middle second century CE, whose authors or editors responded to or encouraged Gentile Christian Judaizing. The Epistle of Barnabas, the Didache, and the Pseudo-Clementine literature indicate that some Gentile Christians continued to be infatuated with Judaism and its rituals. Some of these Gentiles apparently did not even perceive a difference between themselves and Jews. Warnings reflected in Barnabas and the Didache to believers in Christ who maintained Jewish customs represent an effort on behalf of ecclesiastical leadership to create a distinct Christian identity, differentiated from Judaism and its practices. Although some of the material expresses a strong anti-Jewish sentiment and appears to be directed towards Jews, this was fundamentally an intra-muros debate which reveals more about internal Christian conditions and the fluidity of boundaries between Jews and Christians than about Jewish behaviour. Embedded within the literature of the Pseudo-Clementines are themes traced to the second century CE expressing explicit encouragement of Torah-observance among Gentile Christians and hostility towards Paul's "Law-less" gospel. The Christians promoting this position may be Jewish Christian, or perhaps Gentile Judaizers themselves.

**The Epistle of Barnabas**

Determining the date of the Epistle of Barnabas is a matter of continued scholarly debate. The approach to the question of date usually revolves around the interpretation of evidence pointing to contemporary events found within the epistle itself. The process of interpretation, usually fraught with uncertainty due to the arbitrary nature of the task, is further complicated in this case by the strong probability that the author of Barnabas (whom we will refer to as Barnabas) incorporated different sources into his epistle. It is
possible, however, to state with confidence that *Barnabas* was written after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 CE, to which it refers in 16.4. This is the first Christian document, as J. A. T. Robinson observes, to refer explicitly to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in the past tense (Robinson 1976: 313). Its *terminus ad quem* must be c. 130 CE, since surely an author such as Barnabas who was so interested in disparaging the Jews would have exploited the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt under Hadrian, had it already occurred (Lightfoot 1890: 505; Paget 1994: 9).

The following passage is considered crucial to the investigation of the date of the epistle:

(4) And the Prophet also says thus: 'Ten kingdoms shall reign upon the earth and there shall rise up after them a little king, who shall subdue three of the kings under one (τρεῖς ὑπ' ἑν τῶν βασιλέων). 5) Daniel says likewise concerning the same: 'And I beheld the fourth Beast, wicked and powerful and fiercer than all the beasts of the sea, and that ten horns sprang from it, and out of them a little excrescent horn (μικρὸν κέρας παραφυάδιον), and that it subdued under one three of the great horns.'(4.4-5)

Although only the second quotation is attributed to Daniel, both are from that book (verse 4 is from Dan. 7:24 and verse 5 from Dan. 7:7-8). Neither one is an exact rendering of any of the extant Greek texts of Daniel, in the LXX, Theodotion or the surviving papyri. Because it is clear Barnabas is using a source here, many scholars deem the verse not relevant to the question of date, arguing that it relates to historical circumstances in Daniel's time and does not reveal anything about contemporary events during the time of Barnabas. For example, Prigent and Kraft assert: *'[s]i'il est possible de proposer une exégèse de ces paragraphes, il faut bien se souvenir qu'on explique non pas l'édître de Barnabé, mais sa source*" (1971: 97; also Harnack 1897: 418f.; Prigent 1961). It does not seem prudent, however, to cast aside all hope of determining the time at which Barnabas wrote simply

---

133 Paget 1994: 10, observes "Both quotations constitute an abbreviation and, it would seem, a free rendering, of the passages in Daniel."
because he incorporated material from other sources into his writing. This is making the rather large assumption that the author did not select or in any way alter material to correspond to what he wished to communicate, but that he blindly or mechanically slotted material into the text. Indeed, the evidence suggests that Barnabas did alter his sources: no extant texts of Daniel contain the words παραφυάδιον (4.4) or υφ’ ἐν (4.4, 5). As Richardson and Shukster observe, "If we imagine that he was sensitive to the significance of his version, felt free to accept or reject what he found in his sources, and addressed it to some real situation, then it should be possible to determine its date" (Richardson and Shukster 1983: 31-32).

Scholars who are of the opinion that Barnabas selected and modified material from other sources so that it reflected his message have attempted to analyze 4:4-5 for information pertaining to the Sitz im Leben of Barnabas' contemporary situation. This is no easy task, since there are numerous ways to interpret the verses. Generally, the references in the prophesy to a "little king" (4.4) and "little excrescent horn" (4.5) are understood to refer to the Roman emperor who was in power at the time during which the epistle was composed — a leader of distinctively underwhelming stature who subdues three other leaders. Another passage used to date the epistle is Barn. 16.3-4:

3) Furthermore he says again, "Lo, they who destroyed this temple shall themselves build it." 4) That is happening now. For owing to the war it was destroyed by the enemy; at present even the servants of the enemy will build it up again (ὑπηρέται ἀνοικοδομήσουσιν αὐτόν).

---

134 Hippolytus, in De Antichristo has a reading of Dan. 7:8 with the word παραφυάδιον but does not have the other changes Barnabas does, and in Eusebius, Dem Ev 15 there is a reading of Daniel with καὶ τριὰ κέρατα υφ’ ἐνος συντριβομένα, but, as Paget notes, this parallel "is not exact." See Paget 1994: 10-14.

135 Paget 1994: 11, suggests that "the words υφ’ ἐν should be translated as 'at the same time' (approximating to the Latin 'simul'), indicating that the abasement of the three βασιλεῖαΙ κέρατα happens at a single stroke."
The above passage indicates that the expectation of the restoration of a temple existed during the time the epistle was written. Hvalvik's interpretation of this verse as "Now the very servants of their [the Jews'] enemies will build it again" and his view that this is a reference to Hadrian's building of the Aelia Capitolina is not consistent with the evidence (Hvalvik 1996: 21ff.). Barnabas adds ὑπηρέται to the LXX version of the text of Isaiah 49:17, thereby specifying that it is the servants of the enemy that are to rebuild the Temple. Since the reference to "enemy" is obviously Rome, it is odd that he would qualify this unless he intended to specify that the rebuilders were Romans and others (see Richardson and Shukster 1983: 37). Barnabas, moreover, refers to the rebuilding (ἀνακοσμομῆσουσιν) of the Temple, which makes the most sense if he meant the Jewish Temple as opposed to the first-time construction of a pagan temple.

The interpretation of the passage is complicated by the question of whether Barnabas referred to a spiritual temple or the actual Jewish temple in Jerusalem, and by the existence of textual variants in verse 4. The debate about whether Barnabas refers here to a spiritual temple or the Jerusalem Temple has long engaged scholars. Those who argue that he refers to a spiritual temple maintain that this interpretation best corresponds with the context of chapter 16 as a whole (Gunther 1976: 143-51; Kraft 1965: 42ff.; Prigent 1961: 71-83). But this is not an accurate understanding of the chapter. The spiritual temple is discussed, but not until verse 6, where there is a specific topic change marked by an emphatic ἐκ. Prior to this, the earthly, physical temple is the topic. Since verses 1 and 5 both refer to a physical temple, references to a spiritual temple in verses 3 and 4 would be disjointed and odd (also Paget 1994: 19).

---

137 LXX of Isaiah 49:17: καὶ ταύτα ὀικοδομήσειν ὑπ' ἅν καθηρέσῃς, καὶ οἱ ἐφημέροις σε ἐξελεύσονται ἐκ σοῦ.
138 Furthermore, as Paget states, "Had B[arnabas] been writing at a time when a pagan temple was being built on the holiest site of Judaism, given the anti-Jewish character of his epistle, he would surely have exploited that fact to the full" (Paget 1994: 25).
Another strong argument against understanding the reference to be a spiritual temple is the use of ὑπηρέται. For if the temple is spiritual, then the "servants of the enemy" would be Christians, and this is a most unlikely way for Barnabas to refer to Christians (also Paget 1994: 19). It makes more sense to suppose that Barnabas was writing at a time when there were expectations that the Jewish temple in Jerusalem would be rebuilt. He states that those who destroyed the temple (the Romans) would take part in rebuilding it in the future (ἀνοικοδομήσωσιν). The reference to the "servants of the enemy" (ὑπηρέται), then, is best understood to refer to Jews who are involved with the Romans in the rebuilding of the temple (Richardson and Shukster 1983: 37). Interestingly, 2 Baruch, a text which also is dated to the late first century CE, indicates anticipation of the rebuilding of the Temple in the near future (32.2-3).139

Richardson and Shukster persuasively argue that Nerva, who ruled from 96-98 CE, and brought the reign of the Flavian dynasty of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian to an end, is the "little king" and "excess horn" who was in power when the epistle was written.140 A coin, dated to 96 CE and minted by Nerva, bears the inscription fisci Iudaici calumnia sublata and should be translated "the pretence of the Jewish tax is suppressed" (Richardson and Shukster 1983: 44). It is not clear from this inscription exactly how Nerva modified the tax, but any alteration of former policies concerning the Jewish tax probably would have been a welcome relief for Jews. After the defeat of the Jews in 70 CE, Vespasian implemented a policy which Jews found profoundly humiliating: he applied the Jewish half-shekel Temple tax to finance the building of the pagan temple to Jupiter in Rome. Domitian made the collection process more oppressive by implementing a policy of collecting the fiscus not only from people who were born Jews but from anyone else who lived like a Jew, and sanctioned public scrutiny of potential contributors (Suetonius,

139 I am grateful to Prof. Peter Richardson for bringing this text to my attention.
140 Vespasian, who reigned after the three emperors Galba, Otho and Vitellius in the year 68-69 CE, is often considered a possibility but his successful political and military career hardly fits the "excess horn" criteria. On the other hand, Nerva came to power when Domitian was assassinated, and did not even have the support of the army. See Richardson and Shukster 1983: 40.
Domitian 12; see Smallwood 1976: 376-78; Williams 1990: 199). Richardson and Shukster observe that directly upon occupying the throne Nerva sought to distance himself from his harsh predecessor and they argue that the inscription on Nerva's coin may refer to the fact that he somehow made this taxation process less offensive — a move which would have been received wholeheartedly by Jews of the empire. Linking a midrashic tradition in Genesis Rabbah, which discusses the reintroduction of the Jewish Temple tax at a time when the Roman government agreed to the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple, to the reign of Nerva, Richardson and Shukster suggest that the hope for the restoration of the Temple of Jerusalem flourished while Nerva was emperor, and that it was against this background that Barnabas wrote his epistle (Richardson and Shukster 1983: 47ff.).

Modification of the fiscus Judaicus and the expectation of the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem would have generated a heightened sense of purpose and optimism among Jews living in Palestine and in the diaspora and no doubt would have had a profound impact on Christians. This fresh influx of confidence made an already strong and competent Judaism more attractive to some Gentile Christians who may already have been drawn to Jewish practices.141 Barnabas was dealing with a situation where certain members of his Gentile Christian community were, from his perspective, excessively attached to Judaism and to Jewish rites. He writes his epistle, therefore, in order to instill within his readers an understanding of the distinction between Christianity and Judaism, and that Christianity was superior. To this end, he argues that the Torah was never intended for literal application, not even for Jews.

141 As Paget suggests, "This may have encouraged some Christians, swept up by a general feeling of enthusiasm, and perhaps encouraged by Jewish missionaries, to adopt certain Jewish practices" (Paget 1994: 261).
Provenance and Author

The Epistle of Barnabas was clearly written in a geographical area where Judaism was predominant and where Christians came into contact with Jews. The author used Jewish terminology, for example referring to the "new law (καὶ νόμος νόμος) of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Barn. 2.6), and was aware of some obscure details of Jewish practices found only in the Mishnah. For example, Barn. 7.6 states that two goats "goodly and alike..." (καλοὺς καὶ ἄμοιους) were to be given as a burnt offering for sins. Lev. 16 does not state that the goats were to be alike, but m. Yoma 6.1 states: "the religious requirement concerning them is that the two of them be equivalent in appearance, height, and value." In 7.8 Barnabas discusses the binding of scarlet wool on the head of the scapegoat. Once again, this detail is not delineated in Lev. 16 but is found in m. Yoma 4.2. Since Barnabas did not draw his information from his understanding of the Tanach, he must have lived in an area where he had intimate contact with Jews and access to these details.142

Barn. 3.6 states: "So then, brethren, the long-suffering one foresaw that the people whom he prepared in his beloved should believe in guilelessness, and made all things plain to us beforehand that we should not be shipwrecked by conversion to their law (ινα μὴ προσφέρετε ως επήλυτοι τὸ ἐκείνων νόμω)."143 Paget notes that this verse "seems ... to take seriously the presence of Jews and their possible influence on Christian praxis" (Paget 1994: 58; Hvalvik 1996: 87).144 It is possible that some Christians were influenced by the Jewish hope of the rebuilding of the temple and became caught up in the possible eschatological implications of this and thus wished to be associated with the

142 William Horbury 1992: 332, notes that the author's literary dependence on "ultimately Jewish material" is also evident in the use of the Two Ways material in chapters 18-20 of the epistle.
143 This verse is key to an accurate understanding of the purpose of Barnabas and is discussed in greater detail below.
144 W. Horbury 1992: 226 states: "...there is a good case for supposing that the assimilation feared in iii 6 was encouraged not just by the attraction of the old paths and the more honoured society, but also by active propaganda." In my view, Barnabas is indeed responding defensively to a situation where Christians of his community are adopting Jewish customs, but there is no evidence in the epistle that Jews were actively pursuing Christians to engage in this type of behaviour (contra Hvalvik 1996: 268-321).
Jewish community by identifying their covenant with that of the Jews ([4.6]; Paget 1994: 68). It seems reasonable to situate the document in a strongly Jewish region, and that some among his community of Christians are attracted to and closely associated with Judaism.

Most scholars argue that the epistle has an Alexandrian provenance (e.g., Baur, Harnack, Daniélou, Kraft, Barnard, Muilenburg, Paget).145 The fact that the earliest witness to the epistle is Clement of Alexandria and that Barnabas applies allegorical interpretation to the Jewish law, which was a form of exegesis popular in Alexandria, is used as evidence to support the Alexandrian origin of Barnabas.146 Furthermore, Barn. 9.6 states that "every Syrian and Arab and all the priests of the idols have been circumcised," and while it is not true that every priest underwent circumcision, the fact that priests in Egypt were circumcised might mean that Barnabas knew this because he was a resident of Alexandria and that he simply extended what he knew about Egyptian priests to the whole Mediterranean area.147

This proposal recently has been challenged by scholars who argue that a more appropriate venue for the document is in Palestinian or Syrian territory.148 While the epistle may have been very familiar to Clement of Alexandria, this does not necessarily mean that it originated there. As Paget rightly states, "A document may be written in one place and acclaimed in another..." (Paget 1994: 32). Prigent furthermore notes: "Il faut ...remarquer que l'accent eschatologique si fortement marqué dans notre épître, ainsi que l'absence de toute théologie du logos sont assez mal explicables dans le cadre de

---

145 Hvalvik is of the view that "there is no secure basis for deciding the geographical place of origin and destination of Barnabas" (1996: 54).
146 Strom 2.20.116: "And how we say that the powers of the devil, and the unclean spirits sow into the sinner's soul requires no more words from me, on adding as a witness the apostolic Barnabas who speaks these words (οὖ μοι δὲι πλειόνων λόγων παραθεμένωι μάρτυν τὸν ἀποστολικόν Βαρνάβαν).
147 Horbury 1992: 329 n. 36 suggests further that the Syrians were disliked by the Greeks in Egypt, as the mocking of Agrippa I as a "Syrian king" in Philo, Flacc. 39 by the Alexandrians shows; the reference to "all the priests of the idols" can be understood to be Egyptian priests; "and the crowning absurdity of pride in circumcision here is the fact that 'even Egyptians' — particularly despised by Greeks and Jews in Egypt — are circumcised."
148 Prigent (1961) argues that Barnabas, in part, depended on early Christian testimonia from Syria; Richardson and Shukster (1986) postulate a location in Syria-Palestine for the writing of Barnabas.
l'hypothèse alexandrine" (Prigent and Kraft 1971: 21).\textsuperscript{149} Richardson and Shukster suggest that the word "Egyptians" might not be genuine based on structural grounds and that "the verse's emphasis on the circumcision of the Syrians and the Arabs at the expense of the Egyptians would seem to suggest Syro-Palestine as the epistle's likeliest place of origin" (Shukster and Richardson 1986: 20).\textsuperscript{150} The argument for a Syrian provenance is compelling.

Although ancient witnesses considered the author of the epistle to be Barnabas, the companion of Paul, the modern consensus is that this is not so.\textsuperscript{151} The fact that the epistle does not mention Barnabas anywhere in the text strongly implies that the ascription was secondary (Windisch 1920: 413). Barnabas appeals to his readers on the basis of his close relationship with them. In 1:1 he refers to them as "sons and daughters," and as "brethren" (2.10; 3.6; 4.14; 5.5; 6.15). He states that he will show them "...a few things, not as a teacher (οὐχ ὄς διδάσκαλος) but as one of yourselves..." (1.8; cf. 4.9) and in 4.6 makes a request "as being one of yourselves, and especially as loving you all above my own life."\textsuperscript{152} It seems that Barnabas wished to prepare his readers early in the epistle for receiving his advice by assuring them of his love for them and stressing that he was one of them. That he did not lack in self-confidence is indicated in his proclamation that "no one has heard a more excellent lesson from me, but I know that you are worthy" (9.9).

\textsuperscript{149} Prigent and Kraft 1971: 21, furthermore suggest that the exegetical interpretation of Barnabas is more similar to rabbinic Judaism than to Philo (esp. Barn. 7 and 8).
\textsuperscript{150} Wengst 1971: 114-118, argues for a provenance in Asia Minor. One of the reasons for this is that he claims to see similarities between Barnabas' theology and that of Ignatius' opponents in Philadelphia as reflected in Phil. 8.2: "If I find it not in the charters in the Gospel I do not believe;" that is, Barnabas and those against whom Ignatius struggles are people who were preoccupied with scriptural interpretation. I do not make a connection between Barnabas and Ignatius' opponents, but rather suggest that Barnabas and Ignatius both are fighting the phenomenon of Judaizing among Gentile Christians in their respective ecclesiastical communities. I will discuss Ignatius and his encounter with Gentile Christian Judaizing in chapter six.
\textsuperscript{151} Some of these ancient witnesses include: Clement: Strom 2.6.31; 2.7.35; 2.20.116; 5.10.63; Jerome: Vir. ill. 6; Origen: c. Cels. 1.63.
\textsuperscript{152} Also 4.9. This emphasis on his not being a teacher is somewhat unusual, since most writers wish to present themselves as established leaders who possess authority in order to garner respect for what they are writing. Perhaps Barnabas was influenced by the injunction found in Matt. 23:8: "But do not be called Rabbi; for one is your teacher and you are all brothers"?
Whether the author of the epistle was of Jewish or Gentile origin continues to be debated. The Jewish character of the document is raised in favour of a Jewish origin reflected in the use of the Two Ways material, the author's familiarity with extra-biblical Jewish traditions (as discussed above) and the Jewish exegetical method of *gematria*, among other things. On the other hand, Barnabas does not indicate that he has any sense of identity with the Jewish people whatsoever. He refers to historical Israel not as "us" or "we" but as "them" or "they" (see *Barn.* 3.6; 4.6; 8.7; 10.12; 13.1, 3; 14.5). He describes the idolatrous behaviour of the Jews in the desert and how Moses, in response, "cast the two tables out of his hands, and their covenant was broken" (καὶ σύνετριβῆ αὐτῶν ἡ διαθήκη) (4.8 emphasis added). This strongly suggests that *Barnabas* was written by a Gentile Christian (also Wilson 1995: 128). The epistle's acute anti-Judaism is also used as evidence that the author was Gentile, though this is by no means a hard and fast rule. According to Gedaliah Alon, Barnabas uses a source which combines extra-biblical material (*halachot* from the *midrash* and *haggadah*) with biblical stories and quotes it as if it all came from the Bible (Alon 1940-41: 35-37). Alon argues that Barnabas was a Gentile since the way he uses this material indicates that he lacked proper understanding of what he was quoting (Alon 1940-41: 37).

The evidence allows for strong arguments for either case, but my view is that the author of the epistle was a Gentile who was very familiar with Jewish tradition, probably through daily personal contact with Jews. The origin of some of the recipients of the letter is much more certain. Verses such as 3.6 (where Barnabas expresses concern over being "shipwrecked by conversion to their law"); 16.7 (which discusses the time "before we believed in God" and how "our heart ... was full of idolatry) and the centrality of

153 J. A. Robinson 1920: 24, suggests "It is the mind of an Alexandrian Jew, whose Judaism had helped him but little, and had been wholly abandoned in favour of the Christian faith which had really met the needs of his soul." L. W. Barnard 1966: 126, also suggests that Barnabas was "a converted Jew."

154 As Paget notes, the Gospels of Matthew and John and the letters of Paul are "salutary reminders" of the fact that anti-Judaic comments can come from Jewish authors (Paget 1994: 8).

155 Other Gentile Christians in antiquity who similarly experienced close familiarity with Judaism are the author of Luke/Acts, Ignatius, Diognetus and Justin Martyr.
conversion (chap. 9) suggest that at least some of the recipients of the epistle — that is, some of the members of the congregation about whom Barnabas was so concerned — were Gentile Christians (Robinson 1920: 4; Wilson 1995: 161). Barnabas warns his Gentile Christian readers against adopting Jewish customs regarding fasting, circumcision, food laws and the Sabbath. He attempts to persuade these members that the Jewish law was never meant to be interpreted literally, and that the covenant in fact never belonged to the Jews.

**Barnabas's Message: The Covenant is Ours (Not Theirs)**

Barnabas directly addresses what he considers a perturbing attitude held by some members of the community to which he writes:

> Take heed to yourselves now, and be not made like some, heaping up your sins and saying that the covenant is both theirs and ours (ἡ διαθήκη ἐκείνων καὶ ἡμῶν) (4.6). Now let us see whether this people or the former people is the heir, and whether the covenant is for us or for them (εἰ ἡ διαθήκη ἐἰς ἡμᾶς ἡ εἰς ἐκείνους) (13.1) But let us see whether the covenant which he swore to the fathers to give to the people — whether he has given it. (14.1)

Barnabas obviously felt very strongly about how members of his community understood the issue of the covenant since he brings it up in three different places in his letter. His differentiation between Christians and Jews for comparative purposes occurs frequently throughout the epistle, indicated by his contrast of the pronouns "we" and "us" with "they" and "them" (e.g., 2.9-10; 3.1, 3, 6; 4.7, 8; 5.2; 6.8; 7.5; 8.7; 9.1-4; 10.12; 13.1; 14.1, 4, 5; see Wilson 1995: 129; Hvalvik 1996: 137-39). The first time he

---

156 Kirsopp Lake's text is from a Greek translation of the later Latin text testamentum illorum et nostrum est. Nostrum est autem, quia illi. Although there is no Greek text as witness to this reading, it best fits the context and most scholars accept this reading (Paget 1994: 113-14; Hvalvik 1996: 90).
addresses the problem concerning the covenant in 4.6 indicates that it is a topic of importance to him and is one that has been discussed already among his readers. He warns them against following "some" who said that the covenant belongs to the Jews and to the Christians. Who are these people?

Stephen Wilson suggests three possibilities regarding their identity: liberal rabbis "who were willing to make room for Christians in the covenant relationship;" Jewish Christians "who in the eyes of the author conceded far too much to, and were prepared to share the covenantal privileges with, the Jews;" and Gentile Judaizers "committed to the Christian movement but not prepared to abandon Judaism or its ways altogether" (Wilson 1992: 612). There is no indication in the epistle that those promoting such a view are from outside the community; they seem instead to be members of the congregation. The polemical statement found in 3:6 provides insight into this issue:

So then, brethren, the long-suffering one foresaw that the people whom He prepared in his beloved should believe in guilelessness, and made all things plain to us beforehand that we should not be shipwrecked by conversion to their law (ἔνα μὴ προσφηνοσώμεθα ὡς ἐπηλυτοὶ τῷ ἐκείνων νόμῳ). (3.6)

There is a textual problem with the verse because the textual witnesses vacillate between ἐπηλυτοὶ (S) and προσῆλυτοι (H, L). The word ἐπηλυτος is not found elsewhere in early Christian literature, nor is it a frequently used word in Greek literature. It means "newcomer," or those who have "come lately, come after, as followers, imitators" (BAGD 1979: 285). Josephus does not use the term at all, but Philo uses it often to refer to a Gentile convert to Judaism, synonymous with προσῆλυτος. It has the same meaning here in Barnabas, where it implies conversion, so that there is little significant difference between the two textual variants. Lake is right to follow the codex Sinaiticus,

---

157 Philo uses it to refer to aliens elsewhere in Som. 1.160; Spec. Leg. 1.308; and to refer to proselytes in Vit. Mos. 1.7, 147, 148; Spec. Leg. 1.52, 53; 2.118, 119; Virt. 102, 103, 104, 182, 219.
since it is more likely that the Codex Constantinopolitanus reflects a "correction" of the less familiar word (ἐπηλυστος) with one that had become more familiar (προσηλυτος) than the other way around. It is possible, furthermore, that the phrase using ἐπηλυτος was written deliberately by Barnabas to provoke a comparison between a Gentile "imitating" (or converting to) Jewish law and an alien in a land that is not his or her own.

In 3.6 Barnabas polemizes against Gentiles converting to Jewish law since he would hardly refer to Jews converting to the Jewish law. His strong objection to this type of behaviour is reflected in his use of the verb προσηλυστεω, "to dash or beat against" (LSJ). This statement in 3.6 can be used to shed light on the context of the letter and the particular circumstances in which Barnabas wrote. Since the community seems to have consisted predominantly of Gentile Christians, and because Barnabas expresses urgent concern about the possible "conversion" of some of his Gentile members to Jewish law, the final option of Gentile Christian Judaizers suggested by Wilson seems to me to be the most likely. Barnabas was concerned about the difficult consequences of Christian adoption of Jewish law; the criticism of Jewish customs and interpretation of law found in the epistle were written to combat Gentile interest in these customs. Barnabas is afraid that some of his Gentile Christian readers might become persuaded by certain Gentile Christian Judaizers in the community that the covenant belongs to Jews and Christians equally (also 5.4). From Barnabas' perspective, by holding this view these people are

158 Furthermore it would be odd for him to warn Jewish Christians not to become converts to Jewish law. 159 So Paget concludes as well: "That he [the author] chooses to end this chapter with such an unambiguous warning against Christians becoming proselytes is significant for its overall interpretation" (1994: 110). Hvalvik states "Taken at face value, 3.6 clearly shows that Barnabas presupposes that Christians may be tempted to become adherents of Judaism," and that the attitude expressed in 4.6b ("the covenant is both theirs and ours") "reflects a theological position which removed the difference between the Church and the Synagogue" (Hvalvik 1996: 98, my emphasis). I would argue, however, that for some (most?) of the Christians in Barnabas' community "Judaism" and "Christianity" were undifferentiated; that is, those Gentile Christians who began practising "Jewish" customs did not perceive themselves as crossing any boundaries. It fell to Barnabas, as leader of the community, to teach his congregants about the distinction between Judaism and Christianity. 160 Again, this may not have been a conscious decision on the part of these Christians; that is, they may not have perceived themselves as belonging to something other than Judaism, and thus from their perspective did not cross any boundary lines. This is a slight departure from Wilson, who suggests that "there were Christians who had begun to rethink their relationship with Judaism, who wished to create room for coexistence within a single covenant, and who were attracted to Jewish ways" (Wilson 1995: 139).
"heaping up ... sins." In verse 7 he states clearly that the covenant "is ours" and goes on to explain that the Jews "lost" the covenant when they "turned to idols (ἐπὶ τὰ εἰδωλα)."

The second time he takes up the issue of the covenant occurs in 13.1, Barnabas raises the central question concerning whether the covenant belongs to the Christians (οὗτος ὁ λαός) or to the Jews (πρῶτος λαός), to us (εἰς ἡμᾶς) or to them (εἰς ἐκείνους) (13.1). His answer, of course, is that it belongs to the Christians. In 13.2-3 he employs the biblical story of Rebecca's children Jacob and Esau and how God chose one over the other as an analogy for the relationship between Jews and Christians, with the implication that God chose the Christians over the Jews, a common theme. He employs the biblical story in 13.4-6 of Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh and how the younger Ephraim was chosen for the blessing (from Genesis 48:13-20) to argue that the Christians were the blessed chosen people, not the Jews. Significantly, in his rendition of the story Barnabas does not even mention Manasseh, the older son who, in the LXX narrative, is blessed by Jacob with his left hand. The implication is that only the church ("Ephraim") is blessed, and that the Jews never were the chosen people (also Hvalvik 1996: 147-48). Barnabas continues to argue in chapter 14 that the Jews never did possess the covenant. It was given, "but they were not worthy to receive it because of their sins" (14.1). He then goes on to explain "how we received it" (14.4). The implication of this verse is that it is the Christians who possessed the covenant from the very beginning.

Many scholars argue that Barnabas is not writing against Judaism as a veritable and present enemy. Harnack, for example, states: "Von der praktischen Gefahr eines concreten Abfalles zum Judenthum sehe ich in dem Brief keine Spur" (Harnack 1958)

---

161 Barnabas uses the term λαός to refer to Israel four times (9.3; 10.2; 12.8; 16.5) and three times to refer to Christians (3.6; 5.7; 7.5). It is significant that he twice refers to Christians as τὸν λαὸν τὸν καινὸν (5.7; cf. 7.5). This reference to Christians as a "new people" is consistent with the author's goal of differentiating Christianity from Judaism for his readers and of his desire to persuade them that Christianity is superior to Judaism.
The debate is an academic one, where Judaism is an abstract entity of no particular relevance to Christians, and there is no actual contact made between the two communities. Windisch, one of the first scholars to employ a source critical approach to Barnabas, declares that the anti-Judaism in the epistle belongs to the inherited material incorporated into the epistle and thus does not represent Barnabas' polemic against Jews (Windisch 1920: 323). Windisch understands the purpose of the epistle to be for the edification of the community (Windisch 1920: 323). For Wengst, Barnabas' polemical statements about Jews militate against two positions, one of which he describes as "Normalchristentum" (Wengst 1971: 100). This "normal" Christian interpretation, which, according to Wengst is represented by the quotation in 4.6 about the covenant belonging to both Jews and Christians, accedes to the temporary validity of the Jewish covenant and law as part of the groundwork for the coming of Jesus, and was one with which Barnabas disagreed. The second position Barnabas polemicizes against is the Jewish literalist interpretation of scripture and thus his statements about Jews and Judaism were theoretical and did not pertain to actual Jews or Judaism; "sie sind alle vom eigenen Ansatz des Barnabas in seinem Schriftverständnis zu verstehen" (Wengst 1971: 101).

Scholars who maintain that the anti-Jewish statements in Barnabas derive more from theological abstractions than from social interaction tend to perceive post-70 CE Judaism and Christianity as separate movements with sharply defined boundaries, whose members rarely, or never, interacted (e.g., Harnack 1908a: 69-70). Recent studies contradict this understanding and argue that Jewish and Christian communities frequently intersected. These studies, and the urgent, personal tone of Barnabas, as well as the author's intimate knowledge of Jewish rites, repudiate arguments advocating that

---

162 Dibelius 1975(1926): 120, for example, states "Die Erörterung über das Judentum ist völlig akademisch."
163 The misconceived arguments proposed by these scholars remind me of Miriam Taylor's study (1995) briefly discussed in chapter two. Taylor likewise stresses that anti-Judaism is theoretical and symbolic in nature, and emphasizes that it is anchored in the theological perceptions of Christians rather than in actual social exchange among Jews and Christians.
164 See my discussion of recent scholarship which focusses on the interaction between Jews and Christians in chapter two.
Barnabas' statements concerning Judaism were merely theoretical. Barnabas' fixation on scripture in fact attests to his need to address what he perceived as the threatening influence of Judaism and Judaizers (also Wilson 1995: 137; Hvalvik 1996: 94). The content of Barnabas, and the author's focus on practices most associated with living Judaism, such as circumcision, food laws, sacrifices, Sabbath and fasting, provide further challenge to the arguments presented above.

Kraft contends that the epistle contains anti-cultic, not anti-Jewish sentiments and even suggests "we would do well to dismiss this term (anti-Jewish) altogether from the description of the epistle" (1962: 405). This statement is partially correct. On the one hand Barnabas' response addresses behaviour occurring among Gentile Christians within his own community and thus is not directed towards Jews, so in this sense his statements are not "anti-Jewish" as such. On the other hand, however, many parts of his response to Gentile Christian Judaizing would be offensive to Jews, and hence may be deemed "anti-Jewish." For example, at 2.9 Jews "are described as those who are deceived (πλανωμένους); at 3.6 conversion to 'their law' is equivalent to shipwreck; at 8.1 they are perfect in sin; at 8.7 things are clear to the Christians but obscure to them (see also 10.12); at 9.4 their belief that the command to circumcise was meant literally is attributed to the deception of an evil angel..." (Paget 1994: 56). Horbury's statement regarding Barnabas's

165 Hvalvik suggests that "[o]ne could ... say that his selection of topics seems to be dictated by Jewish rather than by Christian interests. In other words, it seems probable that Barnabas has chosen his topics due to external factors, namely the challenge represented by actual Jewish law observance" (Hvalvik 1996: 97). In my view, however, Barnabas' selection was significantly shaped by what was going on inside his own community; that is, among the Jewish observances he chose to speak about were those that some of his Gentile Christian congregation found particularly appealing.

166 Certain scholars (e.g., Windisch 1920: 322-23) who assert that Barnabas' attitude towards Judaism was completely derived from anti-Jewish testimonies incorporated into his writing, point to the discussion of sacrifices and offerings in the Epistle as evidence for the theoretical nature of Barnabas' argument with Judaism, since by the time he wrote, the Temple was destroyed and hence it was impossible for Jews to make sacrifices. It is true that Barnabas did use traditional material from other sources, however this does not prove that his struggle with Judaism was of an abstract nature. Justin Martyr likewise incorporates traditional sources into his corpus, and discusses sacrifices offered in the Temple (Dial. 15-22), even though he is aware that the Temple is destroyed and that Jewish sacrifices were impossible (Dial. 40). Certainly Justin's knowledge of Jews and Judaism was not confined to the theoretical, abstract level, despite his utilization of anachronistic material in his writing; nor was it so for Barnabas (see Hvalvik 1996: 94-95 and below, chapter six). Discussion of Temple sacrifice in the Epistle of Barnabas perhaps ought not to be considered anachronistic at all, given the fact that it was written during a time when the rebuilding of the Temple was anticipated (as argued above).
purpose is an accurate assessment of the purpose of the document: "The overriding necessity is to justify the position of 'us' vis-à-vis 'their' law, and to ward off the peril of assimilation to and absorption in the Jewish community" (Horbury 1992: 327; also Hvalvik 1996). The Christians to whom Barnabas writes are not sufficiently aware, from his perspective at least, of the differentiation between Christianity and Judaism.¹⁶⁷

Barnabas found himself face to face with what was for him an alarming possibility: that more members of his Christian community would adopt the view that the covenant belonged to both Jews and Christians. He was already aware of Gentile Christian Judaizers who claimed this understanding, and he sought to prevent further spread of their influence. His way of handling this was to persuade his readers that the covenant was the possession of Christians alone, and, more than that, the covenant never belonged to the Jews in the first place.

¹⁶⁷ The Epistle to Diognetus is an anonymous document of uncertain date and venue which I bring to this discussion because, like Barnabas, it directs intense animosity towards specific Jewish practices of worship, including Jewish sacrifice, food laws, the Sabbath, circumcision, and the Jewish festivals. Diognetus, a Gentile pagan, was "especially anxious to hear why the Christians do not worship in the same way as the Jews (μὴ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ Ἰουδαίοις)" (3.1, my emphasis). The author, seemingly intent on distinguishing Christian practices from Judaism, states that Christians avoid "the general silliness, deceit, fussiness and pride of the Jews (τῆς μὲν οὖν κοινῆς εἰκασίας καὶ ἀπάτης καὶ τῆς Ἰουδαίων πολυερμοσύνης καὶ ἀλαζονείας ὡς ὀρθος ἀλέχονται Χριστιανοί)" (4.6). Marrou argues that the author of the epistle views the separation between the church and the synagogue to have been accomplished and his Epistle to Diognetus is testimony to the animosity brought about by such a separation. Indeed, notes Marrou, among the anti-Semitic Christian literature "il y a peu de textes qui atteignent ce ton uniformément méprisant et cette violence dans l'insulte" (Marrou 1965: 114). In my view, however, the bitter, disparaging tone of the epistle suggests that the separation between Jews and Christians was not, from the perspective of the author, secure. The author asserts that Jewish "attention to the stars and moon, for the observance of months and days, and for their arbitrary distinctions between the changing seasons ordained by God, making some into feasts, and others into occasions of mourning; — who would regard this as a proof of piety, and not much more of foolishness? (4.5). Calling their behaviour δεισιδαιμονία (4.1); εἰσβολή (4.3); χλεύης ἐξίον (4.4), the author assumes that Diognetus does not need to learn from him that Jewish "scruples about food and superstition about the Sabbath, and their pride in circumcision and the sham of their fasting and feast of the new moon (καὶ τὴν τῆς νηστείας καὶ νομιμείας εἰρωνείαν) are ridiculous and unworthy of any argument" (4.1). It is significant that this anti-Jewish rhetoric was directed towards a Gentile audience. The need to ridicule Jewish observance perhaps derives from its being too closely intertwined with Christian behaviour and identity. As noted at the beginning of this note, there is no scholarly consensus regarding the provenance of this document. A Syrian setting is admittedly a rather speculative option, but that is no more uncertain, it seems to me, than any other possible location.
The Problem of Fasting

Using Isaiah 58:4-10, in chapter three of the epistle Barnabas criticizes the Jews for misunderstanding God's command to fast by interpreting it literally. The prophecy in Isaiah 58 was used at this time in Jewish circles to admonish a community prior to undertaking a fast (t. Ta'an. 1.8) and is still read on Yom Kippur (Meg. 31a). It is found in other Christian writings as a proof-text for explaining why Christians diverged from the Jewish custom of fasting, as in Justin's Dialogue with Trypho 15 and Clement Paid 3.90.1ff. The text is used polemically in Barnabas, particularly as the author addresses the discussion "to them (πρὸς αὐτούς)" (3.1) and then "to us (πρὸς ἡμᾶς)" (3.3). Clement introduces the same prophecy with περὶ νηστείας (Paid. 3.90.1) without the "us" and "them" designations and consequently lacks the polemical tone; Paget rightly suggests that "the absence of this polemical note in Clement might serve further to back up our polemical reading of the two chapters [of Barnabas]" (Paget 1994: 109).168

Horbury astutely observes that "the remarkable prominence of fasting in Barnabas iii corresponds not to its relatively modest place in the Pentateuchal laws, but to its high importance in contemporary Jewish custom" (Horbury 1992: 325; my emphasis). The observance of regular fasting by Jews is indicated in the New Testament (Mark 2:18; Luke 18:12) and other early Christian literature. For example the Didache, a text we will discuss below, confirms Jewish participation in bi-weekly fasts. In that document, Christians are warned "Let not your fasts be with the hypocrites, for they fast on Mondays and Thursdays, but do you fast on Wednesdays and Fridays" (8.1). This information coheres with later rabbinic regulations stipulated in m. Ta'an. 1.6; 2.9 and m. Meg. 3.6 about fasting on those particular days of the week.

168 Paget suggests that this is because Clement was writing when there were very few Jews living in Alexandria but when Barnabas wrote they were a significant and influential force in the city. I agree with Paget that the Epistle of Barnabas was written in circumstances where the author felt the presence of a powerful Jewish community but as argued earlier, I understand Syria to have been the venue.
Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* (c. 160 CE), makes some intriguing comments about the rite of fasting. Like Barnabas, Ptolemy decries the literal interpretation of the commandment and teaches that it should instead be understood as avoiding corrupt behaviour: "...He does not want us to keep a bodily fast, but a spiritual one, in which there is abstention from all iniquity" (33.5.13). Unlike Barnabas, however, Ptolemy admits that literal fasting is observed by members of his community and he furthermore admits that it can be a *positive action* under specific circumstances:

Even those of our religion, however, observe the fast of outward appearance, since, when it is done in a reasonable way, it can contribute something even to the soul, *when it is not kept in imitation of certain people* (ὅποτε μὴ τὰ διὰ τὴν πρὸς τινὸς μιμησίν γίνεται) or because of custom (μὴ διὰ τὸ ἔθος), or because of what day it is (μὴ διὰ τὴν ἡμέραν), as though a day were set <for the> purpose (33.5.13, my emphasis).

The way this is expressed suggests that at one point members of Ptolemy's community did fast "in imitation of certain people" since he finds it necessary to explicitly state that this type of fast is ineffective. The "certain people" who are imitated may be a reference to Jews whose custom it was to fast on specific days. Thus Ptolemy's instructions to Flora may be that literal fasting could be observed by Christians to the benefit of the soul, but not if it is done in imitation of Jews.170

---

169 The same spiritualization of fasting is found in the second century CE work of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Sim. 5.1.4-5.

170 Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora*, for which there is no consensus regarding its provenance, provides the author's position on the Mosaic law and discusses the significance of Jewish customs for Valentinians (Quispel 1966: 9; Grant 1946: 30). Claiming that he is following Jesus' instruction, Ptolemy divides the law into three, attributing one part of the three to God himself, and then divides this part into three again. The third part of this tripartite division he describes as "figurative and symbolic:" it is that component of God's law that has been "transposed from the level of the sensible and of appearance to that of the spiritual and invisible" by Jesus (33.5.2). Whoever read the letter would understand that the Jewish customs of offering sacrifices, performing circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, fasting in imitation of the Jews, abstaining from yeast during Passover, were not to be physically engaged in, but instead were to be understood as moral directives on how to live life as a Valentinian Christian. Perhaps Ptolemy's prescription of the literal interpretation of these commandments indicates that it was current practice among some Christians to observe these customs, while his prescription of a spiritual understanding of these customs reflects the attitude he hoped to instill among members of his community.
Barnabas is troubled by a real and influential Jewish presence. He feels it necessary to present the Christian interpretation of fasting, perhaps, like Ptolemy several years later, he is aware that some Gentile Christians from his community observed fasting in order to imitate the Jews.\footnote{Similarly Horbury 1992: 325: "Rebuttal of Christian Judaizing in respect of fasts, which was probably one object of the warning in Barnabas here, would therefore necessarily have been at the same time an attempt to neutralize the overshadowing presence of the Jewish community."}

**Circumcision: A Desirable Seal of Acceptance**

In chapter 9 Barnabas discusses the rite of circumcision and how the Jews misinterpreted the commandment of God by interpreting it literally. Circumcision of the foreskin, argues Barnabas, was never meant to be: the Jews "erred because an evil angel was misleading them (ὅτι ἄγγελος πονηρὸς ἐσόφιζεν αὐτοὺς)" (9.4). Neither Philo, nor Paul, nor even Marcion, present such a radical assertion that attributes the Jewish comprehension of the Torah to an evil angel. In 9.6 Barnabas appears to counter an argument he has heard from members of his own community: "But you will say, surely the people has received circumcision as a seal?" Perhaps there were some Gentile Christians who desired to become circumcised because they understood it to represent participation in the covenant of God, and hence an integral part of being a Christian. Hvalvik rightly suggests that Jews could argue that they — and not the Christians — worshipped God in the right way. And the Christians could easily be accused of neglecting God's requirements ... This was the kind of argument that Jews could use over against Christians, a reasoning which could easily impress Gentile Christians who had some knowledge of the Old Testament. (Hvalvik 1996: 99)

An argument advocating Torah observance as an essential dimension of behaviour for believers in Jesus would be all the more compelling coming from a Gentile Christian.
Judaizer. In 4.6 he warns his readers about not imitating others who stray from proper Christian behaviour, and in 5.4 he declares that "a man deserves to perish who has a knowledge of the way of righteousness, but turns aside into the way of darkness," which may also refer to Gentile Christian Judaizers from within the community.¹⁷²

Barnabas attempts to negate their desires to become circumcised by arguing that circumcision was not a seal of God's covenant (see Romans 11; Paget 1994: 164-5; Horbury 1992: 329). He claims that all Syrians, Arabs, priests of the idols and "even the Egyptians" undergo circumcision, therefore it was not a special sign representing membership in the covenantal community of the Jews.¹⁷³ True circumcision, according to Barnabas, was of "hardness of ... heart" (9.5). This section of the epistle indicates that Barnabas was aware that some Gentile Christians desired to be circumcised.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Interestingly, the author of the Epistle to Diognetus assumes that his readers are aware of the Jewish "pride in circumcision" (τὴν τῆς περιτομῆς αλαζονείαν) (4.1). He also asks: "And what does it deserve but ridicule of the mutilation of the flesh (τὴν μείωσιν τῆς σαρκὸς) as a proof of election, as if they were, for this reason, especially beloved by God?" (4.4). The phrase τὴν μείωσιν τῆς σαρκὸς is certainly a derogatory way to refer to circumcision, and reminds one of Paul's sarcastic "joke" about circumcision in Gal. 5:12. The author seeks to ridicule by referring to circumcision as τὴν μείωσιν τῆς σαρκὸς. He expresses no appreciation for the meaning circumcision has within Jewish belief and makes no attempt to interpret this ritual as having been replaced as "circumcision of the heart" in Christianity (Brindle 1975: 54ff.). He furthermore misrepresents the Jewish meaning of circumcision by suggesting that Jews believed they were loved by God as a result of this act.

¹⁷³ Philo states that "not only the Jews but also the Egyptians, Arabs, and Ethiopians and nearly all those who inhabit the southern regions near the torrid zone are circumcised," while "the nations which are in the northern regions... are not circumcised" Questions on Genesis 3.48. In Against Apion 2.141, Josephus states that the Egyptian priests were circumcised, while Jerome asserts that even in his day (the fifth century CE) Arabs practised circumcision. Shaye Cohen suggests that "we may assume that in the first century CE in portions of Asia Minor, Syria, Arabia, and perhaps Egypt, circumcision will not have been unusual and certainly will not have been a Jewish peculiarity" (1993: 19). The information concerning Jewish circumcision practices provided by Strabo is rather shocking, as he mentions female circumcision as among those practices. In Geog. 16.2.37, he describes how the successors of Moses practiced "circumcisions and excisions (καὶ αἱ περιτομαὶ καὶ αἱ έκτομαὶ)" and in 16.4.9 he describes how the Creophagi males "have their sexual glands mutilated and the women are excised in the Jewish fashion (καὶ αἱ γυναικεῖς Ἰουδαῖαις έκτετμέναι)." In Strabo's description of the Egyptians, he says the following: "One of the customs most zealously observed among the Egyptians is this, that they rear every child that is born, and circumcise the males, and excise the females, as is also customary among the Jews (καὶ τὰ θήλη έκτετμένην, ὀπερ καὶ τοῖς Ιουδαίοις νόμοις), who are also Egyptians in origin" (16.4.17). Was he mistaken?

¹⁷⁴ Likewise Paget, "It is probable that the chapter reflects a genuine fear on the part of [Barnabas] that some Christians wished to be circumcised (9:6)" (1994: 149).
The Laws of *Kashruth*

In chapter 10 Barnabas argues that the food laws were never intended for literal use, but for allegorical instruction regarding correct ethical behaviour. He states that "the ordinance of God is not abstinence from eating, but Moses spoke in the spirit (Μωϋσῆς δὲ ἐν πνεύματι ἐλάλησεν)" (10.2). In verse 9 he disparages the Jews by suggesting that their incorrect understanding of the law was due to a moral deficiency: "Moses received three doctrines concerning food and thus spoke of them in the Spirit; but they received them as really referring to food, owing to the lust of their flesh (ἐπιθυμίαν τῆς σαρκὸς)."

That Barnabas was facing challenges regarding interpretation of the food laws is apparent in the very last verse of chapter 10. There he states: "But how was it possible for them (ἐκεῖνοι) to understand or comprehend these things? But we (ἡμεῖς δὲ) having a righteous understanding of them announce the commandments as the Lord wished" (10.12). This is a polemical statement which, in its negative contrast of Jews with Christians, differentiates Christians from Jews.

In light of the author's expression of concern about members of his community being led astray by "conversion to their law" (3.6), it seems plausible that there was interest among Christians in applying literally Jewish laws of *kashruth* to their lives and that this inclination was part of the impetus for his discussion. Barnabas seeks to draw people away from a literal understanding of these laws by providing an innovative interpretation of them. These issues apparently were significant to his community. As Hvalvik suggests, "[t]he reason for dealing with these [food] laws is obvious. Together with circumcision and Sabbath observance, the food laws were probably the most significant hallmark of the Jews. It was thus a natural topic for an author fighting against Jewish law observance" (Hvalvik 1996: 187-88).
Sabbath Observance

Another issue of significance to Barnabas' community was that of Sabbath observance. His discussion of the Sabbath likely was prompted by his awareness that Christians in his community practised this custom. Once again he seeks to show how the Jewish interpretation of the commandment is incorrect. He argues that God ordered that the sabbath be sanctified "with pure hands and a pure heart" (15.1) and "If, then, anyone has at present the power to keep holy the day which God made holy by being pure in heart, we are altogether deceived" (ἐν πᾶσιν πεπλανήμεθα) (15.6) because this will only happen when the Lord returns (15.7). Paget suggests "we should interpret these words to mean that [Barnabas] was genuinely concerned that some in his community may have felt it possible to keep the sabbaths in such a way: in other words, they felt tempted to observe, or were already observing the Jewish sabbath" (Paget 1994: 169).

Hvalvik incorrectly argues that despite the author's reference to the celebration of the eighth day, "he is not arguing that the Sabbath has been replaced by the Lord's day" but instead seeks to demonstrate that God's commandment "relates to another Sabbath than the seventh day of the week," that is, the "cosmic Sabbath" (Hvalvik 1996: 126). While it is correct that Barnabas argues that the weekly Sabbaths, which are "not acceptable" (15.8), have been replaced by an eschatological Sabbath, he emphasizes that Christians have their own day of celebration, the "eighth day" (Sunday), which honours "the eighth day in which Jesus also rose from the dead..." and anticipates the "beginning of another world" (15.9, emphasis mine).

In his discussion of the Sabbath, Barnabas seeks to negate the Jewish understanding of what it meant to keep the Sabbath. The reason why he does this for a primarily Gentile Christian readership is because he desires to encourage Christians to
worship on Sunday instead of Saturday. Barnabas' community may not have been as aware of the distinction between or the significance of the two practices as was he.

Summary

The author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* criticizes Jewish interpretation of scripture and Jewish religious practices in order to dissuade members of his community from attraction to Judaism and from observing Jewish customs. In reaction to what he perceived to be excessive attachment to Judaism among his members, Barnabas juxtaposes Christian tradition and interpretation of the law against Jewish customs and interpretation of the law in order to: a) instruct his readers about the difference between Christianity and Judaism, and b) demonstrate the superiority of Christian behaviour and understanding. He aims to negate the validity of Jewish ritual by taking a radical interpretation of the Jewish law and argues that the Mosaic law was never supposed to be interpreted literally. Jews who lived according to the literal understanding of the law, therefore, were wrong, and Christians who found Jewish customs attractive and practised them, were also wrong.

Barnabas' anti-Judaism suggests that he perceived Judaism to be a threat to his community. He warns his Gentile Christian readers against becoming "shipwrecked by conversion" to Jewish law (3.6). Distressed that some from within his community understand the covenant to belong to both Christians and Jews, and thus do not differentiate sufficiently between Jewish and Christian behaviour, he warns others against being influenced by these individuals. "Take heed to yourselves," he anxiously advises (4.6).

*Barnabas* is best understood as a document written against a background of Jewish optimism that the Temple in Jerusalem would be rebuilt. The potential for fulfilling this Jewish longing probably heightened Gentile attraction to Judaism and provided a context for why some Gentile Christians were inclined to follow Jewish customs. Within the
*Epistle of Barnabas* there is direct criticism of Christians claiming that the covenant belonged to Christian and Jews, and indirect evidence for Christians: 1) observing the Jewish Sabbath; 2) following Jewish food laws; 3) undergoing circumcision; and 4) participating in Jewish fasts. Barnabas' theology is a result of the context in which he wrote. He denigrates Jewish religious practices because he fears that the Christians whom he addresses in his epistle found Jewish customs too attractive.

**The Didache**

Like Barnabas, the *Didache* reflects a deliberate attempt to encourage the practice of Christian rites in contradistinction to Jewish customs. One of the most perplexing documents in early Christian literature, it reflects a variety of internal inconsistencies. While there is wide agreement that this is a composite text, the question of the development of the document prior to its reaching its present form long has been a contentious topic. Early interpreters such as Harnack assumed a single author who brought together a number of traditions (Harnack 1884: 24-63) but this hypothesis is held by only a minority of modern scholars (e.g., Wengst 1984: 18-20). Most interpreters of the text, employing literary critical methods, propose different stages in the development of the text and then distinguish which texts fit into each particular stage. Audet, for example, suggests the *Didache* underwent four developmental stages, aside from the pre-existing Two Ways material (Audet 1958: 104-120) and others have suggested a variety of formulations (e.g., Rordorf & Tuilier 1978: 16; Niederwimmer 1989; Kraft 1965: 63-65). My interest is not in the various rhetorical stages of the text, but in its final form and particularly in the second century CE community that embraced it and found it meaningful.

Features of the *Didache* suggest that the community that used this document in its final form was predominantly Gentile. The framework of the Two Ways material is derived from the Jewish decalogue; ethical teachings from the decalogue and from Jewish
wisdom tradition are fitted into this structure (Jefford 1989: 142-145; Harnack 1884: 64; Audet 1958: 283; Niederwimmer 1989: 116-17). Among the admonitions are instructions not to engage in pederasty, magic, abortion, and infanticide (2.2; 5.1-2). These are best understood to be directed towards Gentiles from pagan backgrounds (Rordorf 1996: 155-156). The Jerusalem manuscript (*Hierosolymitanus 54*) of the Didache bears two successive titles. The first title is Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἄποστόλων (*"The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles"*). The second is Διδαχὴ κυρίων διὰ τῶν δώδεκα ἄποστόλων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (*"The Teaching of the Lord through the twelve apostles to the Gentiles"*). This second title in particular indicates that the tractate was eventually embraced by a community of predominantly Gentile Christians (Draper 1991: 362; Rordorf 1996: 155).

One of the characteristics of the document is its inconsistent attitude towards Judaism. On the one hand, the *Didache* in its present form is a very Jewish composition. The contents of chapters 1-6, for example, are thoroughly Jewish in style and content. As Kloppenborg has noted, the *Didache* argues from the decalogue and

the authority of the decalogue is not in dispute but is simply self-evident, and the author of this early Christian Two Ways document makes use of that authority. The fact that the framer of the document can do this implies that the text is edited and employed in an environment in which the authority of the Torah can be taken for granted.175

(Kloppenborg 1995: 102; see Jefford 1989: 91)

---

175 *Didache* 2.2ff. gives a list of prohibitions in the following sequence: murder (φονεύσεις), adultery (μοιχεύσεις), stealing (κλέψεις), coveting (ἐπιθυμήσεις), bearing false witness (ψευδομαρτυρήσεις). This follows the sequence of Ex. 20:13-16 in the Masoretic text and Deut. 5:17-21 in the Codex Alexandrinus; the same order is found in Matt. 19:18, though Matthew does not include ἐπιθυμήσεις (Jefford 1989: 55; Kloppenborg 1995: 92). The *Didache* inverts ἐπιθυμήσεις and ψευδομαρτυρήσεις and so the order is not exactly similar between the Masoretic text, the Codex Alexandrinus and the *Didache*. Despite this, the use of ὦ with the second person singular future indicative plus the way the list of prohibitions is presented without conjunctions, which is characteristic of the decalogue in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, make it "safe to assume that the reader of the *Didache* would have recognized the source" (Kloppenborg 1995: 100).
At the same time, however, in certain parts of the text, Christian rites are placed in explicit juxtaposition with Jewish practices. My contention is that at these points the text is combating Gentile Christian observance of Jewish customs within the church community.

**Venue and Date**

Egypt and Syria are usually offered as plausible venues for the location of writing. Kraft notes that "Christianity in general, and Eastern (including Egypt and Asia Minor) Christianity in particular, retained such more or less conscious vestiges of its Jewish heritage for decades and centuries after the 'victory' of Gentile Christianity" (Kraft 1965: 77). He favours a place of origin somewhere in Egypt, arguing "if Egypt seems somewhat more probable than Syria, it is because the later uses of the Didache tradition ... and the earliest textual evidence point most strongly to that area" (Kraft 1965: 77). This is not a compelling argument, however, since the reason why so many manuscripts were preserved in Egypt is due to its climate, so finding a manuscript there does not necessarily indicate the origin of the text. The reference in the text to wheat (bread) scattered on the mountains in the prayer (9:4) evokes imagery from somewhere other than Egyptian wheatflats. A Syrian provenance seems more likely, particularly in light of the literary connections existing between the Didache and other Syrian documents, and most commentators now opt for it (Audet 1958: 206; Rordorf and Tuilier 1978: 97; Draper 1996) or Syro-Palestine (Niederwimmer 1977). The Didache probably dates to the late first or early second century CE, with parts of it, such as the "Two Ways" material, perhaps from an earlier period.177

---

176 For example, Christians are encouraged to pray on Wednesdays and Fridays rather than with "the hypocrites," i.e. the Jews, on Mondays and Thursdays (8.1 ff.). This statement is discussed further below.

177 The "Two Ways" teaching may go back to a Jewish prototype, likely utilized in the instruction of Jewish proselytes. Audet dates the entire document to an earlier period (c. 50-60 CE) but such a view is not widely held (Audet 1958; Draper 1991).
The "Two Ways" Material

In chapters 1-6 is the lightly Christianized Jewish Two Ways material which is also found in the *Epistle of Barnabas* 18-20. Although there are differences in the order in which both texts present this material, there are so many exact agreements in wording between the two documents that many scholars have argued that one document depended on the other.178 The discovery of the *Manual of Discipline* at Qumran and its publication in 1951 made a significant impact on scholarly perception of the Two Ways material in the *Didache* and *Barnabas*. The "Two Angels" section of the *Manual* (1 QS 3.13-4.26) confirmed the idea that a Jewish document containing the Two Ways material probably circulated prior to and separately from *Barnabas* and the *Didache*. At present most scholars agree that the *Didache* and *Barnabas* used a common source (Jefford 1989: 23).

Draper suggests that the *Didache* is best understood as a set of instructions communicated in a community rule which was altered at various times "by trial and error, by erasing words or phrases, by inserting new words or phrases above the line or in the margin, which are later incorporated into the text," not unlike the alterations evidenced in the manuscript of the *Community Rule* of the Qumran Sect (Draper 1991: 349). This scenario allows for multiple authors, contradictions and inconsistencies in the text, a view which seems to fit the *Didache*. At several points material found in the *Didache* echoes material found in the Gospel of Matthew, and this has prompted much scholarly musing about whether the authors or editors of the *Didache* knew the Gospel of Matthew or shared the same traditions (Jefford 1989; Niederwimmer 1989). Draper has argued persuasively

178 Hamack (1884: 76-82) argued that the *Didache* derived from a Gentile Christian community which had separated itself completely from its Jewish roots, and obtained its Two Ways material from *Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Charles Taylor was the first to posit a common Jewish Vorlage for the *Didache* and *Barnabas* in his lectures in London in 1885, which were later published as C. Taylor, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (1886). Reversing Hamack's position, he argued that not only Barnabas and the *Shepherd* use the *Didache*, but so did Justin Martyr in his *Apologies*. Opinion was divided on this topic, with some scholars affirming Hamack's view that the *Didache* was dependent upon *Barnabas*, such as Adam Krawutzky 1884: 547-606 and Adolf Hilgenfeld 1884: 88-94; while others argued that *Barnabas* borrowed the Two Ways material from the *Didache*, such as Francis Xavier Funk 1905: 161-79. Taylor's argument caused Hamack to change his opinion, as reflected in Hamack 1886: 14, 27-30.
that the *Didache* and the Gospel of Matthew had a dialectic relationship, with both documents evolving together in the same community and significantly influencing one another. He suggests that they drew material from the same traditions, but eventually the Gospel of Matthew incorporated the issues addressed in the community rule, subordinating the rule to the gospel and thereby displacing the *Didache* (Draper 1991: 349).

Using the evidence of the Scrolls, Jean-Paul Audet argues persuasively that the Two Ways material in the first six chapters of the *Didache* was originally a Jewish treatise which had been Christianized by the author of the *Didache* (Audet 1952: 219-238). It was this Jewish treatise, and not the *Didache*, that was the source for the Two Ways material in the *Epistle of Barnabas* (Flusser 1996: 197). The source that the *Didache* and Barnabas used for the Two Ways material probably was similar to the *Docrina*, and originally used to instruct new Jewish converts (see Goodspeed 1945). Unlike the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Manual of Discipline*, the *Didache* does not set the Two Ways material within an eschatological context (also Kloppenborg 1995: 92).

**Other Material Influenced by Judaism**

Aside from the Two Ways material, the *Didache* in its final form retains other pieces of salient evidence of Jewish influence. Instructions in 6.2-3 are generally consistent with Jewish observance of *kashruth*, though with an allowance for leniency, perhaps for the non-Jewish origin of the readers to whom it is addressed. *Didache* 6.2-3 reads as follows:

1) See that no one make you to err from this way of the teaching, for he teaches you without God. 2a) For if you can bear the whole yoke of the Lord (ὁ λόγος τῶν ἀγίων), you will be perfect, 2b) but if you can not, do what you can (εἴ δ' οὐ δύνασαι, ὅ δ' ὑπάρχῃ, τοῦτο ποίει). 3) And concerning

---

179 Draper 1991: 349, notes that the *Didache* did not simply fall into disuse but "continued to be modified and used, particularly by the communities of the Apostolic Constitutions, the Liber Graduum and the Coptic and Ethiopic churches." John Kloppenborg suggests that *Did*. 16.2-8 reflects an apocalyptic tradition which Matthew later incorporated into his gospel (1979: 54-67).
food, bear what you can, but keep strictly from that which is offered to idols, for it is the worship of dead gods.

Verses 2 and 3 as such do not appear in other documents containing Two Ways material, and Draper understands this to be an indication that "it was found to be objectionable by redactors and compilators" (Draper 1991: 361). The subsequent verses (6.2-3), as Kraft observes, are connected "by [their] atmosphere of concession" (Kraft 1965: 161). Did. 1 and 2a present the ideal, and then this ideal is adapted to what apparently was a more pragmatic position (Kraft 1965: 61). According to 6.2, the ones who are perfect are those that "bear the whole yoke of the Lord (δὸλον τὸν ζυγὸν)" — but if that cannot be done, then they are instructed to "do what you can (εἰ δὲ οὐ δύνασθαι, ὁ δὲνη, τὸ τοῦτο ποίει)." According to 6.3, the ideal is to "keep strictly from that which is offered to idols, for it is the worship of dead gods" — "and concerning food, bear what you can." These verses, as they appear in the present form of the Didache, imply that there are two categories of Christians: those who attain the ideal, and those who do the best they can.

These verses stipulate that the minimal obligations of Gentile Christians towards the Mosaic Law are: 1) to do their best to keep the whole law and 2) to do their best to eat food which is kosher, but at the very least avoid eating meat which had been offered to idols (verse 3). The use of "yoke" in association with the Law is found in later Jewish literature. Tractate Gerim 1.2, for example, has the following varia lectio "if he (the future proselyte) says, 'I am not worthy to place my neck under the yoke of Him Who spoke and the world came into being, blessed be He,' they receive him forthwith, and if not he is dismissed and goes his way" (Cohen 1971: 603 n. 5; also Flusser 1996: 207). In m. Abot 3.5, R. Nehunya b. Haqqaneh states: "He that takes upon himself the yoke of the Law (המשכיב עליה כל תורת) from him shall be taken the yoke of the kingdom and the yoke of worldly care."\(^{180}\) Draper goes on to show how the word ζυγὸς ("yoke") refers to the

\(^{180}\) Draper asks the question, "why should any Christian document continue to advocate such a Jewish teaching?" and argues that the "yoke of the Lord" of 6.2 refers "to the Torah as interpreted by the Lord, i.e. by the Christian community under the influence of the Jesus tradition" (Draper 1991: 362, emphasis mine).
Torah four out of five times in the New Testament. In Matthew 11:29-30, the new "yoke of the Lord" is introduced as a law of Jesus which is much easier to bear than that of the Pharisees (Draper 1991: 365).

The section which begins at 7.1 and runs through until 8.3 deals with the issues of baptism, fasting and prayer — three significant practices in the Christian life essential for a new convert to follow. Did. 7.1 provides rules for baptism which mirror Jewish practices by stating that baptism is to take place in "running water" (ὕδατι ζωντι). Within Jewish practices of immersion for purity, the water to be used is νεπά νεν: "living" or fresh water (Klausner 1939: 157-164; Niederwimmer 1989: 161). The next verses compromise this instruction: "but if you have no running water, baptize in other water, and if you cannot in cold, then in warm" (7.2). Tuilier suggests that this concession was made because of the weather: "Le texte évoque vraisemblablement ici l'impossibilité d'utiliser l'eau froide à cause de la saison. En hiver, il fallait en effet chauffer l'eau baptismale" (Rordorf and Tuilier 1978: 171).

The Anti-Jewish Voice

The text in other respects betrays a strong desire to distance Christian practise from Jewish rites. Criticism addresses Christians who are manifesting what the leaders of the second century community deem to be excessive involvement in Jewish ritual behaviour. The community of the Didache is instructed to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays so as not to fast "with the hypocrites (μετὰ τῶν υποκριτῶν), for they fast on Mondays and

---

Such a question may be anachronistic, however, since the two ways material probably was incorporated originally by a community that was closely intertwined with Judaism and did not necessarily perceive itself to be differentiated from Judaism.

181 For example, Lev. 15:13 instructs a person with a discharge to "wash his clothes and bathe his body in fresh water (טפש ותחפושה)" cf. Num. 19:17 etc. Perhaps Jewish Christians initially "baptized" Gentile converts to Christianity in mikvaot.

182 While this is a commonsensical suggestion, this concession expresses less concern about appeasing Jewish sensibilities and strictly following Jewish tradition, perhaps at a time when Jewish membership within the Didache Christian community was diminishing.
Readers furthermore are prohibited from praying "as the hypocrites (οἱ ὑποκρίται)" (8.2). These prohibitions imply that "there must be at least some perceived chance that what is prohibited may be done, and at most, someone has already flagrantly disobeyed [the author]; but perhaps it is a case of action being performed in naive ignorance..." (Barclay 1987: 84; his emphasis). The desired outcome from the instructions given in chapter 8 was for members of the Didache community to conduct themselves differently from "the hypocrites." Who are the ὑποκρίται that the Didache community is being warned not to emulate?

Draper is probably correct when he asserts that "the term simply designates the Jewish opponents of the community" (Draper 1985: 279; Wilson 1995: 225; Niederwimmer 1989: 165-66). Monday and Thursday were the market days in Palestine, so many people would gather in towns and villages and would have been able to attend the synagogue and thus these days were chosen as fasting days (Bradshaw 1981: 19). We mentioned earlier in our discussion of Barnabas 3 that this statement in the Didache corresponds to rabbinic regulations given in the Mishnah (e.g., m. Ta' an. 1.6; 2.9, 12a; m. Meg. 3.6).

Rordorf and Tuilier insist that the "hypocrites" are Christians who pray as the Jews do; they simply cannot be Jews, for "Il serait surprenant qu'un écrit comme la Didachè, qui doit tant à la tradition judaïque, s'exprime d'une manière aussi violente à l'égard des Juifs" (Rordorf and Tuilier 1978: 36-37). It is true that if the "hypocrites" are not Christians, but Jews, a double message is indeed being communicated — but an inconsistent attitude towards Jewish tradition is one of the consistent aspects of the Didache! Wilson has pointed out that this text is an example of literature in which "evidence of Jewish influence goes hand in hand with a conscious distancing from, or even hostility toward, Judaism" (Wilson 1995: 224). Interestingly, the Didache Christians are not to behave like Jews, yet the instruction to fast on Mondays and Thursdays is still keeping within Jewish practices of fasting twice a week, and the instruction to pray three times a day falls right in line with the
Jewish custom of praying three times a day.\textsuperscript{183} The fact that \textit{Did.} 3.1 simply states "Pray thus three times a day" without specifying precisely when these prayers were to be offered suggests that the readers of the \textit{Didache} would have known the times at which to pray because they were aware of when the Jews traditionally offered their prayers (Bradshaw 1981: 26). Even the "innovated" Lord's Prayer that Christians are instructed to recite in 8.2 (which is almost identical with the Matthean version) is thoroughly Jewish.\textsuperscript{184}

The purpose of 8.1 is to promote fasting on different days from the Jews, probably because some Christians continued to fast on Mondays and Thursdays with Jews. The \textit{υπόκριται} of 8.1 are Jews, but the instruction not to fast with the \textit{υπόκριται} is directed toward members of the Christian community who are fasting with the Jews or might be tempted to do so. Rordorf, then, is primarily correct when he argues that "Le ch. 8 de la Didaché condamnerait donc ici l'attitude de certains chrétiens judaïsants, en dénonçant tout particulièrement le retour aux observances judaïques dans les communautés chrétiennes" (Rordorf and Tuilier 1978: 37).\textsuperscript{185} Instead of describing the behaviour as a "return" to Judaizing behaviour, as if these Christians had stopped observing Jewish practices for a time before they took them up again, it may be that some Gentiles from the Christian community consistently kept Jewish rites from the very beginning of their Christian experience, without viewing such behaviour as contradictory to their belief in Jesus or their identity as Christians.

Chapter 14 indicates that there was a need to differentiate between Christian and Jewish practices regarding the day of worship. \textit{Didache} 14.1 states: "On the Lord's Day of the Lord (\kappaυριακήν δὲ κυρίου) come together, break bread and hold Eucharist, after

\textsuperscript{183} For example, Dan. 6:10 and Ps. 55:17. Within Rabbinic Judaism the custom was prayer in the morning, afternoon, and evening, cf. \textit{Ber.} 4:1. But there were other Jewish traditions regarding times of prayer: the Theraputae, described by Philo in \textit{De Vita Contemplativa} 27, prayed twice daily, in the morning and the evening, and the Qumran sect also might have prayed only two times a day, cf. \textit{IQS} 10.1-3a and \textit{IQH} 12.4-7 in Vermes 1987: 76 and 197.

\textsuperscript{184} Wilson 1995: 225 observes: "That the Lord's Prayer is thoroughly Jewish in tone and content none would deny, though it is not patterned precisely on any Jewish prayer known to us." See also Bradshaw 1981: 27.

\textsuperscript{185} As far as I can tell, Rordorf uses the phrase "chrétiens judaïsants" to refer to Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians who observe Jewish law, without distinguishing between the two.
confessing your transgressions that your offering may be pure." The phrase κυριακὴν δὲ κυρίου is peculiar and seems to be redundant. The term κυριακὴ means "belonging to the Lord" or "the Lord's" and κυρίου means "of the Lord", so the phrase literally translated is "Lord's of the Lord" (Gingrich and Danker 1979: 458). The phrase is usually translated "on the Lord's Day of the Lord" (Kirsopp Lake 1985: 331) or "on the Lord's own day" (Bauckham 1982: 227) or "the Lord's Day" (Louth 1987: 197). The actual meaning of the phrase is ambiguous. Does it refer to Sunday? Does the redundant κυρίου make the term a reference to Easter?

Other ambiguous uses of κυριακὴ in documents from the late first and early second centuries CE include Ignatius' letter to the Magnesians 9.1 (κατὰ κυριακὴν ζῶντες) and the Gospel of Peter 9.35 and 12.50 (in both cases κυριακὴ appears without κυρίου). Evidence from the later second century can be more clearly understood to refer to Sunday. For example the second century CE document the Acts of Paul refers to Paul praying "on the Sabbath as the Lord's Day drew near" (ἐπερχομένης τῆς κυριακῆς), which cannot be understood as the annual celebration of Easter (Bauckham 1982: 229).186 The term ἡμέρα (τοῦ) κυρίου refers to the eschatological "Day of the Lord," which is probably the reason why κυριακήν ἡμέρα became established as the Christian term for Sunday, because a way to distinguish it from the eschatological Day of the Lord was necessary (Bauckham 1982: 225). By the late second century the word κυριακὸς came into common use as an alternative to τοῦ κυρίου and eventually κυριακὴ on its own was used to indicate Sunday (Bauckham 1982: 226).187

The redundant phrase κυριακὴν δὲ κυρίου in 14.1 serves as a means of emphasis: the Eucharist was to take place on Sunday, not on another day. The editor of the Didache deemed it necessary to stress this instruction because he was so disturbed by the

---

186 Bauckham 1982: 230: "[w]hile there is unambiguous evidence that Sunday was called κυριακὴ from the second half of the second century onwards, there is no unambiguous evidence that Easter was ever called simply κυριακή."

187 Bauckham 1982: 240, suggests that κυριακὴ was a technical term used for Sunday particularly in Syria and Asia Minor.
practice of Christians' observing the Jewish Sabbath (Louth 1987: 199; Stanton 1996: 176). That the keeping of the Sabbath by some Christians was problematic in the late first, and/or early second century CE in Syria is indicated, as we argued earlier, in Barn. 15.8-9, where the author attempts to negate the Jewish understanding of keeping the Sabbath in order to discourage Christians from observing this rite.

Summary

In its final form the Didache reflects divergent voices. Jewish influence is reflected in the Two Ways material, and in stipulations for minimal requirements regarding observance of Torah, including food laws, and also instructions concerning baptism in "living water." There are, furthermore, indications that Jewish influence concerning fasting and prayer continued within the Christian community, with some members maintaining attachment to Judaism and these rites. The text attempts to establish a clear demarcation between Christian and Jewish behaviour by prohibiting imitation of Jewish customs by Christians. This indicates that some members of the second century community were attracted to and perhaps practised certain Jewish customs such as prayer, fasting and Sabbath observance.

The Pseudo-Clementine Literature

The Pseudo-Clementine literature is a collection of Syrian documents that is dated to the fourth century and, like other documents we have investigated, contains earlier traditions. This literature describes the fictitious story of Clement of Rome's conversion to Christianity, his travels with the apostle Peter to cities along the Syrian coast, and his

---

188 Rordorf and Tuiller 1978: 65, postulate the following: "L'insistance du texte à ce sujet peut indiquer que le rédacteur de la Didaché polémise indirectement contre ceux qui voudraient maintenir l'usage du samedi pour les assemblées cultuelles."

189 As we will discuss in chapter six, worship on the Sabbath by Gentile Christians also occurred in Asia Minor.
reuniting with long-lost family members.190 The writings present an apologetic and systematic compendium of Christian doctrine and consist of two main components, the *Homilies* (H) and the *Recognitions* (R)(Strecker in Irmscher 1989: 485).191

These two components have so much material in common that it is believed that they derive from a basic source (G=*Grundschrift*). Similar to the Q hypothesis, G is a hypothetical document whose contents are deduced from what is common between H and R. This putative primary text was probably written in Syria early in the third century (Strecker 1991: 488). In turn, scholars have determined that this basic source depended on sources, one of which is the so-called *Kerygma Petraou* (Κηρύγματα Πέτρου), or "Preachings of Peter" (KP).192 This is a hypothetical document understood to be the gospel which was preached by Peter, and is usually dated to the second century and assigned a Syrian provenance (Strecker 1991: 219).193 Strecker reconstructs the KP from what he believes are the "introductory writings" to the KP, the *Epistula Petri* and the * Contestatio* (Strecker 1981: 137ff.; Strecker 1991: 488ff.).194

---

190 Unless otherwise indicated, the translation for the PC documents used here is that of Strecker in Schneemelcher 1991.
191 The original Greek of H is extant in two manuscripts from the 11th, 12th or 14th centuries, while the Greek rendition of R has been lost except for bits and pieces found in the literature of the church fathers. R does survive in Latin by Rufinus in the 5th century CE, plus there is a portion of R in a Syriac translation made a little earlier than the 5th century (Jones 1991: 1061).
192 Henry Dodwell was the first to argue that there was a source called "Kerygma Petraou" (Dodwell 1689: 440-442 in Jones 1982: 14). K. A. Credner argued that the *Homilies* express a different view and attempt to suppress the KP, while Mayerhoff suggested that the Pseudo-Clementines were not related to the KP (Credner 1832: 351ff and Mayerhoff 1835: 313-317 in Jones 1982: 15). Hilgenfeld averred that a different KP was embedded in the PC, and used the table of contents in R 3.75 to reconstruct the contents of the KP, and suggested that the source is found in R 1.27-72 and in parts of R 1-3 (Jones 1982: 15).
193 Schneemelcher dates the KP to the first half of the second century, stating "Egypt has doubtless to be accepted as its homeland, even although this conjecture is not strictly demonstrable" (1989: 34). Strecker's view, that the document originated in the area of Coele-Syria in c. 200 CE, is more convincing. He notes that the author quotes only Galatians and I Corinthians from the Pauline corpus, and observes that the Syrian compilation of the Pauline letters begins with these two letters. He argues that it was originally written in Greek, not Aramaic, "hence for its land of origin we may think of the Greek-speaking Syria which bordered on Osrhoene" (Strecker in Irmscher and Strecker 1989: 492-3).
194 For a recent comprehensive break-down of scholarly positions regarding the literary layers of this literature, see F. Stanley Jones 1985: 1-33, 63-95. Schoeps argues that the KP relies on the Ebionite "Acts of the Apostles" which Epiphanius mentions in Pan. 30.16. He argues that the KP was an anti-Marcionite document produced by Jewish Christians whom he identifies as Ebionites (he identifies all Jewish Christians as Ebionites!) (Schoeps 1969: 16-17).
While Strecker's presentation of these documents was widely accepted for an extended period of time, recently scholars have expressed skepticism regarding whether it is possible to detect independent sources embedded in the Pseudo-Clementines based on stylistic criteria and vocabulary (Lüdemann 1989: 169-70; Jones 1982: 1-33, 63-96; Jones 1995: 1-38). There is considerable disagreement about which material belongs to KP, however most scholars agree that the sources date to the second century CE (Smith 1985: 59; Wilson 1995: 152). While it may not be possible to outline the sources with great exactitude, it is possible to detect different themes and attitudes among them, and this is sufficient for our purposes (see Wilson 1995: 144).\textsuperscript{195} Two prominent themes found in this literature are a) a positive attitude towards Judaism and b) a negative assessment of Paul.

The KP is comprised of material in the Pseudo-Clementines which reflects Jewish Christian elements and concerns, including among them the Jewish Christian Contestatio and the Epistula Petri which are prefixed to the KP.\textsuperscript{196} One of the dominant elements in the Kerygmata is "the true prophet," who brought divine revelation by manifesting himself in a series of changing characters, including Adam (R. 1.47), Moses (H. 2.52) and Jesus (H. 3.17-19) (Strecker 1991: 107). The knowledge brought by the true prophet is identical with the Law of Moses; Moses passed it on to the seventy elders, and it is now in the possession of the Pharisees and scribes. These representatives of Judaism have been ineffectual in their teaching of the knowledge, however, and this necessitated the sending

\textsuperscript{195} Wilson points out that "[i]f the evidence is approached with extreme skepticism, it is always possible to throw doubt on its reliability. If it is approached more positively, then, even though subjected to a properly critical and cautious analysis, it is possible to piece together the broad outlines of various Jewish Christian groups" (Wilson 1995: 144). Likewise Lüdemann questions whether sources embedded within the Pseudo-Clementines can be specified with confidence, but recognizes that different themes can be differentiated within the work (Lüdemann 1989: 169).

\textsuperscript{196} The Contestatio and the Epistula Petri are fictitious texts. The Epistula Petri discuss the transmission of Peter's teachings to "bishop" James, and requests cautionary measures to prevent the falsification of the teaching by followers of the "hostile man" (Paul) (Strecker 1991: 106). The Contestatio describes the transmission of the Epistula Petri to seventy church elders, and the establishment of the required precautions (e.g., "we should pass on the books of his preachings... only to a good and religious candidate for the position of a teacher, a man who as one who has been circumcised is a believing Christian..." [1.1]).
of the true prophet Peter. Paul is presented as the antagonist to the true teaching, the negative syzygy-partner of Peter, and the representative of false female prophesy (Strecker 1991: 108). His proclamation of the termination of the law is understood to be a false doctrine (H. 11.35.4-6).

The KP reflects a milieu in which there was close association with Judaism and a Gnostic influence (Irmscher and Strecker 1989: 491). The attitude towards Jewish tradition reflected in this source is positive; Judaism is highly esteemed and is presented as an example to be imitated. As mentioned above, Jesus is understood to be the "true prophet" who earlier had manifested himself in Adam and Moses. Jesus' teachings are consistent with those of Moses in that they uphold the obligations associated with the Mosaic Law. There is a passage that seems to reflect a two-covenant theory, with one being revealed by Moses for the Jews and the other by Jesus for the Gentiles; "equally valid and equally valuable, the parallel covenants are efficacious for those who do not hate or oppose the other" (Wilson 1995: 152).

The passage is assigned to KP by Strecker:

It is therefore the peculiar gift bestowed by God upon the Hebrews, that they believe Moses, and the peculiar gift bestowed upon the Gentiles is that they love Jesus ... By which it is certainly declared, that the people of the Hebrews who were instructed out of the law, did not know Him; but the people of the Gentiles have acknowledged Jesus, and venerate him, ... But he who is of the Gentiles and who has it of God to believe Moses, ought also to have it of his own purpose to love Jesus also (R 4.5).

---

197 Female prophecy accompanies the true prophet throughout his various physical manifestations as a "negative, left-hand syzygy-partner" who leads all of her followers into error and death (J. 3.24.3f. in Strecker 1991: 107).
198 Wilson observes that even if the KP were fictitious, this passage is not necessarily later than the second century CE, for it "could represent a strain of Christian conviction that had deeper roots, and the parallel sentiment known to the author of Barnabas is one good reason for thinking this" (Wilson 1995: 152).
199 A stronger version is found in H 8.6-7 (see Strecker 1981: 164-65; Strecker 1971: 261; Wilson 1995: 151-52). According to Strecker, "the absence of an anti-Jewish polemic, which was so freely practiced in the 'great church' of the same period, also suggests that the Jewish Christianity of the Kerygma existed in close relationship to Judaism" (1971: 261).
As Wilson notes, the message expresses "a remarkably generous vision of salvation, which places Christianity and Judaism on a par. It is not precisely the same view as that of the Judaizers in Barnabas, who spoke of sharing one covenant rather than allowing for two covenants, but the underlying spirit is the same" (Wilson 1995: 141). This may represent the perspective of Gentile Judaizers themselves.

Another interesting dimension of this literature for our purposes is that the writing strongly advocates law-observance for Gentiles, and is hostile towards Pauline Christianity which does not require Gentiles to maintain Jewish customs. The texts express the author's anger over the fact that his views concerning the Mosaic law have been misrepresented, for the individual named "Simon" (a reference to the apostle Paul) has taught Gentiles that he and Peter agreed that they did not need to be observant. Gager rightly concludes that "the literary materials embedded in the Pseudo-Clementines reveal a stream of Christianity in close contact with contemporaneous Judaism, committed to the observance of the Mosaic commandments for all of its members, and constituted to a significant degree by Gentiles" (Gager 1985: 125).

Hostility towards Paul, Teacher of the "Lawless" Gospel

The Pseudo-Clementines describe hostile confrontations between the author's perspective (represented by "Peter") and his rival Simon Magus, who is described as a missionary to the Gentiles (H 2.17.3). Simon Magus is the magician who is introduced in the book of Acts 8:9-24 and later condemned by Christian heresiologists as the father of Gnosticism. Most scholars of the Pseudo-Clementine literature agree, however, that the name "Simon Magus" was added by later editors and that Paul was the original opponent of Peter (Meeks 1972: 178).

200 The author will be referred to as "Peter" in this discussion.
201 The description of "Simon" as a missionary to the Gentiles (H 2.17; 11.35), that he taught the Gentiles a "lawless and absurd doctrine" (H. 2.3), and where Peter's apostolicity is contrasted with that of
At several points in the writing, Peter expresses great distress over the fact that some Gentile Christians do not observe the Mosaic law. He argues passionately against Paul, whom he blames for the behaviour of these Gentile Christians. In his cover letter to James, Peter warns that "some from among the Gentiles have rejected my lawful preaching and have preferred a lawless and absurd doctrine of the man who is my enemy" (Epistle of Peter 2.1). Peter laments how even during his lifetime, certain people attempted
to distort my words by interpretations of many sorts, as if I taught the dissolution of the law and, although I was of this opinion, did not express it openly. But that may God forbid! For to do such a thing means to act contrary to the law of God which was made known by Moses and was confirmed by our Lord in its everlasting continuance. For he said: 'The heaven and the earth will pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall not pass away from the law.' (Ep. of Peter 2.4-5)

According to this text, Peter believes that Paul deliberately misrepresented his gospel by claiming that Peter does not expect Gentile Christians to observe the Mosaic law. Elsewhere Peter claims that "Simon" preaches "under pretext of the truth, in the name of our Lord, but actually is sowing error" (H 11.35.5 in Meeks 1972: 181).202

Paul's Damascus-road vision of Christ is denigrated by Peter, who declares that "one who puts his trust in a vision or an apparition or dream is in a precarious position, for he does not know what it is he is trusting. For it is possible that it is an evil demon or a deceitful spirit, pretending in the speeches to be what he is not" (H. 17.14.3 in Meeks 1972: 181). Paul was not a true apostle of Jesus, because he did not learn directly from Jesus, but through a vision, which was not reliable. In fact, its source was not God but evil. Peter states that "no one can see the incorporeal power of the Son or even of an angel. But if someone sees a vision, let him understand this to be an evil demon" (H. 17.16.4 in

Paul (17. 13-19), is a more appropriate portrayal of the historical Paul rather than Simon (Smith 1985: 59-61). 202 As Meeks notes, since Simon Magus did not preach "in the name of the Lord," the original Kerygymata could not have meant Simon (Meeks 1972: 181 note).
Meeks 1971: 182). A little later he asserts that "the fact that one sees visions and dreams and apparitions by no means assures that he is a religious person" (H. 17.17.5 in Meeks 1971: 182). It is clear from these descriptions that Paul is the intended enemy, particularly in the following: "So even if our Jesus did appear in a dream to you, making himself known and conversing with you, he did so in anger, speaking to an opponent. That is why he spoke to you through visions and dreams — through revelations which are external" (H. 17.19.1). Peter asks "Simon," "How could he have appeared to you, when your opinions are opposed to his teaching?" (H. 17.19.4). This text expresses the view that the lawless gospel taught by Paul contradicted what Jesus himself taught.203

As observed earlier, Paul's teaching is described as thoroughly false because he is a spiritual descendant of the false female prophet; he is "merely a helpmate of the feeble left hand (of God, i.e. the evil one)" (H 2.15.5). Peter describes the doctrine of the pairs of opposites or syzygies, explaining that "Simon" came first and went to be with the Gentiles, and that he, Peter, "came after him and followed him as the light follows darkness, knowledge ignorance, and healing sickness" (H 2.17.3). According to Peter, people were deceived by "Simon" because they were ignorant of the law of pairs of opposites:

as the true prophet has said, a false gospel must first come from an impostor and only then, after the destruction of the holy place, can a true gospel be sent forth for the correction of the sects that are to come... Since now, as has been said, many do not know this conformity of the syzygies with law, they do not know who this Simon, my forerunner, is. For were it known, no one would believe him. But now, as he remains unknown, confidence is wrongly placed in him. (H. 2.17.4; 18.1)

203 Strecker argues that this "anti-Paulinism" is not polemic against the "great church," and does not reflect a rift between Jewish Christianity and the ecclesiastical mainstream. The most that can be said is that "the author of this material is aware of Pauline teachings in his immediate environment or its wider setting" (Strecker 1971: 263). The picture of Paul presented in the KP is drawn primarily from written sources (the Pauline letters, the Book of Acts), and the anti-Pauline statements, suggests Strecker, function to explain the Jewish Christian legal system (Strecker 1971: 264).
It is interesting to note that, according to the above statement, Peter's "true" gospel is not the original gospel but is described as emerging subsequent to Paul's gospel. The fact that Jesus taught before both Peter and Paul is completely ignored as well. Here, the false gospel (i.e., that taught by Paul) must first come, and only afterwards can the true gospel (that of Peter) be revealed. This argument contradicts the other anti-Pauline theme discussed above, that laments how Paul came after Jesus and Peter and distorted both of their messages. The latter reflects more accurately the dissemination of Christianity (i.e., it originated with Jesus, followed by Peter and finally Paul). The anti-Pauline theme that describes Paul's document as the first, false gospel may be part of a rhetorical strategy. If the doctrine of syzygies dictates that Paul's gospel be preached first, the impact and success of his teaching is necessarily undermined, since the presence of Christians who follow his version of the gospel are part of a larger plan.204

The Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles: Historical Progenitors

J. Louis Martyn understands the Kerygmata Petrou to be a Jewish-Christian source written "for a community living in effective isolation from the emerging church of the west" (Martyn 1985: 311). The group understands itself to be obedient to the law revealed by Moses and endorsed by Jesus, including advocating a law-observant mission to Gentiles. Martyn suggests that "we have the probability that our Jewish-Christian authors give true reflections of second-century Law-observant missions to Gentiles, carried out independently of the Great Church," and he wonders whether "the evangelistic efforts portrayed in these second-century documents are descended from a Law-observant mission pursued by Jewish Christians in the first century" (Martyn 1985: 312).

204 This suggests that there were an appreciable number of "Pauline" Christians in the area (that is, Gentile Christians who did not practise the Law) to elicit a response from the author. Their presence was not necessarily exhaustive, since the existence of even one non-observant Gentile Christian may have been enough to prompt "Peter" the author to respond. It is likely that Gentile Christian Judaizers as well as non-observant Christians were present in the area.
In order to pursue this question, Martyn investigates whether there is a connection between the situation Paul addresses in his letter to the Galatians, and the Pseudo-Clementines. He suggests (mistakenly, in my view) that in Gal. 6.13 the opposing teachers are "circumcised Jews who preach circumcision to Gentiles as the act appropriate to the universal good news of God's Law" (Martyn 1985: 316). Martyn asserts that in Galatians Paul is responding to Jewish Christian teachers who are attempting to persuade the Gentiles to become circumcised and to follow the Law in order to become true "descendants of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). He notes that the Ascents of James (which he considers to be another Jewish-Christian source embedded in the Pseudo-Clementine literature), expresses the view that the "true line of religion extends from Abraham to his descendants," and that "indeed for the author of the Ascents God's blessing of Abraham provides the motivation for the Law-observant mission to Gentiles" (Martyn 1985: 320). Martyn admits that "we cannot be sure that the Teachers in Galatia are historical progenitors of the communities of Christian Jews we see reflected in the second-century sources cited," but he goes on to suggest that "[w]ith a high degree of probability we can say, however, that like the evangelists in those later communities the Teachers pursue their own Law-observant mission among Gentiles" (Martyn 1985: 323).

Summary

Martyn's thesis is intriguing. He is correct to point out that the Christian situation in the first century CE was not simply divided into Jewish Christians who kept the Mosaic law, and Gentile Christians who did not. There is strong evidence that some Gentile Christians combined a commitment to Christianity with adherence, in varying degrees, to Jewish practices. I have argued in chapter four that the situation in Galatia is even more complex than the one Martyn describes, for not only Jewish Christians but in particular circumcised Gentile Christians were putting pressure on Gentile Christians in Galatia to become
circumcised and follow the law. The *Kerygmata Petrou* is a document which urges Judaizing behaviour for Gentile Christians, and as such one can see a connection with the first century CE phenomenon encountered by Paul in Galatia (and Philippi).

Strecker stresses that "the Jewish Christianity of the *Kerygmata* should be understood in the context of Bauer's hypothesis," in that it had not cut itself off from the "great church" and was not "sectarian" in nature, but likely was "the sole representative of Christianity and the problem of its relationship to the 'great church' had not yet arisen" (Strecker 1971: 271). Strecker's point is an important one, and should also be applied to the understanding of Gentile Christian Judaizing. The observance of Jewish religious rites, for many Gentile Christians both in Syria (and in Asia Minor, as we will argue in the next chapter), was not necessarily, in its earlier manifestations, a "heretical" view, but was understood to be standard, regular, Christian behaviour.

**Conclusion**

Each of the documents examined in this chapter deal with Gentile Christian attraction to and observance of Jewish religious rites, and as such, are connected to one another. One of the themes detected in the Pseudo-Clementine literature promotes Gentile Christian Judaizing and another denounces the Law-free gospel of Paul. In contrast to this, the authors of the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Didache* discourage Gentile Christian attachment to Judaism by advocating the practice of Christian religious rites in opposition to Jewish customs.

It is plausible that the Torah-observant Gentile Christians generated by the instructions stipulated in the Pseudo-Clementines are precisely what the Syrian authors of *Barnabas* and the *Didache* struggle against. Barnabas and the author/editor of the *Didache* are aware of Gentiles in their respective communities whose interest in Judaism extended to the practice of a variety of Jewish rituals, such as fasting, circumcision, Sabbath observance, and *kashruth* in the case of Barnabas, and fasting, prayer and
Sabbath observance in the *Didache* community. Reactions of ecclesiastical leaders to Judaizing contributed towards creating a distinctive "Christian" identity and behaviour, since their criticism of unacceptable Jewish behaviour clarified, for members of their immediate communities and for generations of Christians who subsequently read these texts, what constituted "proper" Christian behaviour.

Gentile Christian attachment to Judaism continued to be a problematic phenomenon in Syrian Christian communities long after Peter, Barnabas and other Jewish Christians ceased eating with Gentile Christians in Antioch and prompted Judaizing behaviour in that city during the Pauline period (Gal. 2). In the following chapter we will investigate evidence for Gentile Christian Judaizing in Asia Minor, and among the documents we will discuss are the letters of Ignatius of Antioch. I contend that the content of two of his letters indicates that Ignatius encountered Judaizing Gentile Christians in Asia Minor while on his journey from Antioch to Rome during the early second century CE. In light of the evidence for the existence of Judaizing in Syria reflected in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Didache*, and the Pseudo-Clementines, however, it is possible that his confrontation with Judaizing in Asia Minor was not Ignatius' first, but that he was already cognizant of the phenomenon in Syria.
Chapter 6

Gentile Christian Judaizers in Asia Minor

Just as Barnabas struggled with Gentile Christian infatuation with Judaism, so too some twenty years later did Ignatius of Antioch. Ignatius' correspondence indicates that he encountered this perturbing phenomenon while travelling through various cities of Asia Minor, though, as mentioned in the last chapter, given the evidence for the manifestation of Gentile Christian Judaizing in Syria, it is plausible that his strong reaction reflected in his letters to Magnesia and Philadelphia represents the continuation of an ongoing struggle with Judaizing that began earlier in Antioch. On this it is impossible to be certain, however, for as I argue in this chapter, his letters bear details pertaining to Gentile Christian Judaizing in the Asia Minor communities alone.

That some Gentile Christians were attracted to Judaism and practised Jewish customs in Asia Minor Christian communities is indicated clearly in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho. Justin provides one of the most explicit references to Gentile Christian Judaizing in early church literature in a description of his congregation, proving that ecclesiastical leaders continued to grapple with the reality of the vitality of diaspora Judaism and its attraction for Christians in the middle of the second century CE. The compelling evidence for the existence of the phenomenon in Asia Minor found in the writings of Ignatius and Justin Martyr helps to elucidate two anomalous statements made in the Book of Revelation, another Asia Minor document written approximately twenty years earlier than the date of Ignatius' correspondence. It is my contention that these statements, which are usually understood to be polemic against Jews or Jewish Christian opponents, are better interpreted to be the author's reaction to Gentile Christian Judaizers. Since it is the earliest of the documents to be investigated in this chapter, it is with Revelation that our discussion begins.
The Book of Revelation

In the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation are obscure accusations embedded in letters addressed to two Asia Minor communities, Smyrna and Philadelphia. The author of Revelation accuses his opponents of falsifying their identification as Jews, for which he calls them members of a "synagogue of Satan" (2:9; 3:9). Scholars typically understand these statements to be Christian slander of local Jews, and so have viewed this as evidence that the Christian community represented by the Apocalypse of John was engaged in vigorous conflict with Jews and Judaism towards the end of Domitian's reign (c. 95 CE). It will be argued in this chapter that Gentile Christians who were attracted to Judaism and became attached to the synagogue are the target of the accusations in 2:9 and 3:9, and that instead of reflecting a struggle between Jews and Christians, these verses reflect an intra-Christian controversy.

Revelation 2:9 and 3:9

The accusations are found in two of the messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor that follow the introduction in the first chapter and come prior to the throne vision presented in chapters 4 and 5. The first accusation is taken from the letter to the angel of the Church in Smyrna:

I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander (βλασφημίαν) on the part of those who say that they are Jews and are not (τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι καὶ οὐκ), but are a synagogue of Satan (συναγωγή τοῦ Σατάνα). Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you

205 During the nineteenth century numerous scholars argued that Revelation was written while Nero was emperor, including Lightfoot (1890), B. F. Westcott, and F. J. A. Hort. John A. T. Robinson (1976) has recently revived the argument supporting a Neronian date. Most twentieth century scholars, however, hold that Revelation was written during Domitian's reign, and this is the date assumed in this study. A recent exception is John W. Marshall, who argues in his recent (unpublished) dissertation that the Apocalypse was written from Patmos during the Jewish war against Rome in 69 CE (Marshall 1997).
into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

The second is taken from the letter to the church in Philadelphia:

I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those of the synagogue of Satan (συναγωγής τοῦ Σατανᾶ) who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying (τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσίν ἄλλα πρεσβυνταί) — I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

In both letters, the author of Revelation accuses those who "say that they are Jews and are not" of committing "blasphemy" (βλασφημίαν) and lying, and identifies them as members of the "synagogue of Satan."206 This harsh reprimand conveys the author's anger and sense of betrayal at the actions of these people. The identity of "those who say that they are Jews and are not" is believed by most scholars to be a reference to local Jews in Smyrna and Philadelphia.

**Jewish Persecution of Christians?**

Many scholars view Rev. 2:9 as reflecting a situation in which Jews in Smyrna were delivering members of the Christian community into the hands of the Romans.207 Collins asserts the following:

---

206 Elsewhere in the document the term βλασφημία is used in reference to behaviour of the beast (cf. 13:1, 5, 6; 17:3) or in reference to the actions of people who curse God (16:9, 11, 21). See Thompson 1986: 149.

207 John Sweet, for example, writes that "Smyrna was a city of great wealth, second only to Pergamum as a centre of the emperor cult, and had a large Jewish community. The letter shows the church to be in imminent danger, from the Roman authorities probably, but at the instigation of the Jews..." (Sweet 1990: 84).
"In favor of understanding 'those who call themselves Jews' as members of the local Jewish community or synagogue in Smyrna is the juxtaposition of the reference to them with the prediction that some Christians in Smyrna will be detained in prison pending trial in the near future. This juxtaposition suggests that the 'synagogue of Satan' are instigators of legal action against the persons whom John is addressing." (Yarbro Collins 1986: 312-13)

For Yarbro Collins, it can only be Jews who would induce legal action against Christians. It is obvious to her that Gentile Christian Judaizers would not be a threat to other Christians: "No matter how strong the tension between an allegedly Judaizing Gentile Christian group and the group loyal to John the prophet, it is unlikely that members of one Christian party would accuse members of another Christian subgroup before local or Roman authorities. The former would be too vulnerable themselves to take such a step" (Yarbro Collins 1986: 313). Those who claim to be Jews and those who are perpetrating the persecution, however, are not necessarily the same people (Wilson 1995: 163). Nor is it clear why it makes any more sense that Jews from either Smyrna or Philadelphia would accuse Christians who imitated the Jewish lifestyle before local or Roman authorities, when they too were dependent on the Romans for their well-being and the right to live their own lives according to Jewish law.

Scholars who argue that Jewish persecution of Christians occurred in Asia Minor employ the book of Acts and the Martyrdom of Polycarp as evidence for such action (Schüessler Fiorenza 1973: 572; Yarbro Collins 1986: 313; Hemer 1986: 67; Sweet 1990: 85). These scholars believe that the Jews were allied with Rome and would denounce Christians, and with Jewish cooperation the Christians of Smyrna would be thrown into jail to await trial (Yarbro Collins 1985: 204). Schüessler Fiorenza, for example, argues that "[a]n example of this bitter hostility of the Jews against the Christians in Asia Minor can be seen in the decisive role that the Jews of Smyrna played in the martyrdom of Polycarp"
A closer look at the material typically used as evidence for the argument that the Jews persecuted Christians suggests that more caution needs to be used before drawing conclusions. For, as Sanders states, "the evidence that we do have of any kind of Jewish denunciation of Christians is limited, ambiguous, and inconclusive" (Sanders 1993: 186).

The evidence from Acts usually used as proof that denunciation of Christians occurred includes the account of Jewish accusation of Christian teachers before local authorities in Acts 17:6-8 or the Roman governor in Acts 18:12-17. But there are also accounts of Gentile accusations against Christians, for example Acts 19:21-40 which describes a riot in Ephesus led by the worshippers of Artemis and the account of Paul's and Silas' arrest in Philippi by the owners of the exorcised slave girl in Acts 16:19-24. This suggests that, at the time the author of Acts wrote his narrative, delation was a regular thing and anyone might accuse Christians or other people for a bit of money (Sanders 1993: 182). Sanders points out that the schematization of Paul's missionary activities in Acts, which has Paul going first to a synagogue, where he is eventually rejected, and then has him turning to Gentiles, who accept his message, is of questionable historical accuracy (Sanders 1993: 181). It fits into Luke's theme of wanting to show how God's salvation has gone from the Jews to the Gentiles in Christianity. Sanders justifiably concludes that "[f]rom both Revelation and Luke-Acts it is possible to glean some evidence about relations between Christians on the one hand and non-Christian Jews on the other. Clearly there is hostility and name-calling here, but there is in reality very little evidence of ... Jewish denunciation of Christians to Roman and civic authorities" (Sanders 1993: 186; also Hare 1967: 163; Simon 1986: 120).

The description of the martyrdom of Polycarp has numerous parallels to the circumstances surrounding the death of Jesus, rendering its historical value very doubtful.

---

208 Some scholars take this to the extreme and see "the Jews" as responsible for all opposition Christians experienced. For example, Frend 1984: 123ff states that "one only needs to peruse the later books of the New Testament and the apostolic fathers to realize that the churches were being perpetually harassed by enemies who could only be orthodox Jews and their allies."
For example, Polycarp "waited to be betrayed as also the Lord had done, that we too might become his imitators..." (1.2) and in 6.1, similarly to Jesus, he is betrayed by one of his own (a house slave). In 6.2, it is reported that the police captain (ἐξουσίαρχος) who brings Polycarp under arrest is called Herod, and in 8.1, Polycarp makes his entrance into the city riding an ass. In 12.3, the Jews cry out "with one accord" (ὁμοθυμαδόν) for Polycarp to be burned alive at the stake. As Sanders observes, "Maybe some Jews had something to do with Polycarp's martyrdom; I could not prove the contrary. But I certainly do not trust this account, and I have to question the historical acumen of those who do" (Sanders 1993: 319: footnote 95). The case for Jewish persecution of Christians in the form of accusing them before the Roman authorities is not as strong as some scholars would suggest.

"Those Who Say that They Are Jews and Are Not"

Other scholars argue that the conflict reflected here concerns the spiritual status of Christians and their possession of the Jewish heritage. The author of Revelation challenges the claim of Jews in Smyrna and Philadelphia to be Jews because he understands Christians to be the "true" Jews (Ramsay 1904/1994; Schüessler Fiorenza 1973; Sweet 1979/1990; Yarbro Collins 1985; Yarbro Collins 1986; Thompson 1986; Borgen 1993; Sanders 1993; Cohen 1993). Borgen expresses this in the following manner:

---

209 Kirsonn Lake makes the following rather naive suggestion: "The writer desires to bring out the points of resemblance to the Passion of Christ. The coincidences are remarkable, but none are in themselves at all improbable" (Lake 1985 [1912]: 319 n. 2). The cumulative effect of these "coincidences" makes the historicity of the description extremely improbable.

210 Sanders points out that "with one accord" is one of Luke's favorite terms (Sanders 1993: 319, n. 95).

211 As Wayne McCready noted in a recent (unpublished) CSBS paper, "It is hard to imagine why Jews in the mid second century would be concerned about Christians worshipping Polycarp and hence abandon[ing] Christ;" he suggests that "Jews play a minor but important role in a literary endeavour struggling with a self-definition process that is primarily if not exclusively Christian" (McCready 1999: 13-14). While McCready is probably correct that the text does not reflect "the historical situation of Jews at Smyrna" (McCready 1999: 12), I wonder how such a text may have affected existing Jewish/Christian relations in that city; for example, how did the reading of this document shape Christian perceptions of and attitudes towards their Jewish neighbours?
each group made an exclusive claim to be the legitimate owner of the Jewish traditions ... the Jews in the synagogue would make an exclusive claim on the basis of their understanding of the constitutive elements of the people of Israel, and as a result they would be inclined to persecute members of the ekklesia. Implicitly, John's formulations mean that the synagogues in Smyrna and Philadelphia are the ones that are in the process of pursuing persecutions against the members of the ekklesia, the true Jews. (Borgen, 1993: 211)²¹²

The argument that in 2:9 and 3:9 the author is asserting that Christians are the authentic 'Ιουδαίοι does not correspond, however, with the usual way Christians expressed their ownership of Israel's inheritance.

Over a period of approximately a century and half, Christians appropriated various Jewish terms (such as "people" [λαός], "elect," "brethren," etc.). The most significant term, "Israel," was appropriated more slowly; for a long time after other Jewish terms were used by Christians as self-designations, "Israel" continued to be applied to Jews in their "spiritual" capacity as the exclusive "people of God." The Christian claim to be the true, new people of God occurred gradually over a period of nearly two centuries. The idea is adumbrated in certain early documents, such as some of the Pauline letters (e.g., I Cor. 10:32) and the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 21:43) and Luke-Acts (e.g., 9:2). With the passage of time and their fading expectation that Jews would accept their message, Christians became bolder in their claims to the legacy of Israel. We have observed this forthrightness effectively demonstrated in the Epistle of Barnabas, for example, where the author asserts that the covenant in fact belonged to the Christians, and that it had never been

²¹² Yarbro Collins likewise argues that "the vilification in Rev 2:9 and 3:9 ... has a social function. On a basic level, it defines who the Christians are. They are the genuine Jews, the heirs of the promises to Israel" (Yarbro Collins 1986: 314). Yarbro Collins is correct that John's passionate outcry against the "synagogue of Satan" and "those who say that they are Jews and are not" in these two letters has to do with the establishment of self-identity. Whereas she is convinced that John's opponents are members of the local Jewish community or synagogue in Smyrna and Philadelphia, in my view the polemic is between two Christian groups. Expressing a similar argument to Yarbro Collins, Harvey 1996: 94 asserts: "Whilst it is possible that these people are gentiles who have 'Judaized' in some sense, it is more likely that they are ethnically 'Ἰουδαίοι but are being denied the use of their ancestral name in a polemic which asserts that Christians are "true Jews." Also Hemer 1986: 67.
inherited by the Jews. But even there, "Israel" is not equated with Christians or Christianity.\(^\text{213}\) The first explicit Christian claim that they had replaced the Jews as the true people of God occurred in the mid-second century CE, in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, where he forcefully argues that Christians were the "new Israel" (11.5; Richardson 1969: 9ff.).\(^\text{214}\)

The tendency in formulations expressing Christian appropriation of the Jewish heritage was to use the term "Israel" (as demonstrated by Justin), not the term "Jew." Thus the argument that Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 is in effect an assertion that "the Christians were now the true Jews" (Hemer 1986: 67) would be more compelling if these statements had used the term "Israel" rather than "Jew." The author's use of the word "Jew" (Ἰουδαίος) in both accusations in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 instead indicates that the issue at stake is ethnicity, not spiritual status.

The philosopher Epictetus, a contemporary of the author of Revelation, writes the following:

"Why, then, do you call yourself a Stoic, why do you deceive the multitude, why do you act the part of a Jew when you are Greek? Do you not see in what sense men are severally called Jew, Syrian, or Egyptian? For example, whenever we see a man facing two ways at once, we are in the habit of saying, 'he is not a Jew, he is only acting the part.' But when he adopts the attitude of mind of the man who has been baptized and has made his choice, then he both is a Jew in fact and is also called one. So we also are counterfeit 'Baptists,' ostensibly Jews, but in reality

\(^{213}\) For example, "For the scripture concerning him relates partly to Israel, partly to us [Christians]..." (Barn. 5.2; also 5.8, 6.7, 8.1, 3, 9.2 etc.).

\(^{214}\) Zeitlin gets the term correct but the momentum backwards when he suggests that after the Bar Kochba revolt, the Jews adopted the name Israel "because the Christians had held that they themselves were the true Israelis" (Zeitlin 1952: 377). In Jewish literature, "Israel" is the term used to indicate the "people of God." In Jewish documents where one segment's point of view opposes the rest of Judaism, it tends to claim that it is Israel. As Richardson notes, "[a]n exclusivist tendency within Judaism nearly always involves the implication that the particular group represented 'Israel'" (Richardson 1969: 217). For example, in 1 Maccabees, there are several places where polemics are directed against a segment of the population which follows the wrong leader or behaviour. 1 Macc. 1:11 states "in those days certain renegades came out from Israel and misled many (ἐξ Ἰσραήλ νῦν παράξενοι) " and 7:5 castigates those who were led by Alcimus as "the renegade and godless men of Israel (ἄνδρες καὶ ἀδικείς ἐξ Ἰσραήλ)," where ἐξ "implies both origin and separation, with more emphasis on the latter" (Richardson 1969: 218). In the Qumran documents the name of "Israel" is applied to the sect and there is the tendency to deny the name to those not considered part of this exclusivistic group (Richardson 1969: 228).
something else." (Arrian, *Dissertations of Epictetus* 2.19-21; Stern #254)

Epictetus, as Cohen notes, is "interested in the correct application of names, and knows of people who act the part of Jews, are called Jews, but are not Jews" (Cohen 1993: 34).

According to Epictetus, only when the person has decided to convert and undergo ritual immersion, is that person in fact a Jew. Up until that point, they are only "acting" the part of a Jew — behaviour which, unfortunately, Epictetus does not describe, but which probably involved maintaining Jewish customs in varying degrees. The author of Revelation employs the term "Jew" in the same way as Epictetus does, that is, to refer to Jewish ethnicity. The opponents in 2:9 and 3:9 are identified as part of the "synagogue of Satan," in Smyrna and Philadelphia, and they are claiming to be of Jewish ethnic identity, but they are not. The most logical and obvious interpretation of John's accusations, therefore, is that he was referring to Gentiles who falsely claimed to be Jews and followed a Jewish lifestyle (Gager 1985: 132; Gaston 1986: 42-43; Wilson 1995: 163).\(^\text{215}\)

While these Gentiles could have been non-Christian Gentiles, it would make more sense of the hostile tone of the accusations if the Judaizers were Christians. In his study on social conflict, Lewis Coser argues that the closer the ties are between two opposing groups, the more intense the conflict is: "If individuals witness the breaking away of one with whom they have shared cares and responsibilities of group life, they are likely to react in a more violent way against such 'disloyalty' than less involved members" (Coser, 1956: 69). John's strong condemnation of "those who say that they are Jews and are not" reveals the deep sense of betrayal and animosity that he feels towards this group of fellow Christians who have deviated from what he considers to be the "party line."\(^\text{216}\)

\(^\text{215}\) Indeed, the term 'Iou6aioi was applied to Gentiles who followed Jewish religious rites, as Dio Cassius reports at the end of the second century CE (66.1.4; see Wilson 1995: 359 note 84).

\(^\text{216}\) The demonic characterization of the opposing group in intramural disagreements is not unusual to find in Jewish and Christian literature (Borgen 1993: 204). For example, the Qumran sect condemns Jews who are not part of their community to be part of "the congregation of traitors" (CD 1.12) while in the War Rule the sons of light fight against "the company of the sons of darkness, the army of Satan" (1.1). The Thanksgiving Hymns furthermore state that their opponents are "an assembly of deceit, and a horde of"
letters to Philadelphia and Magnesia, which, as I shall demonstrate below, provide evidence for the existence of Judaizers in the same geographical area and time period as Revelation, reinforces the understanding of these Judaizers as Gentile Christians. The conflict reflected here is among Christians, who, perhaps at one time, were members of the same Christian congregation as the author.

**Why Did these Gentiles Judaize?**

Stephen Wilson makes an intriguing suggestion as to why Gentile Christians might have made such a decision: "Could it not be that some Christians in Asia Minor were identifying themselves with the Jews in order to avoid official harassment, given that the Jews had a more stable and established position in the Roman world?" (Wilson 1995: 163).217 Indeed, Eusebius claims that Domitian (81-96 CE) instituted a time of persecution of Christians and was worse than Nero "in enmity and hostility to God" (Hist. eccl. 3.17). Quoting Hegesippus, Eusebius tells the story of how in an attempt to get rid of all of the descendants of David, the grandsons of Jude (who was said to be the brother of Jesus) were brought before Domitian and when he saw that they were lowly farmers with callused, labour-hardened hands, he let them go "and issued orders terminating the persecution of the church" (Hist. eccl. 3.20). This story, if true, suggests that Christians experienced persecution during Domitian's reign.

The status of Christians under this emperor is far from certain, however, and the reports of his animosity towards the early church may well be gross exaggerations or legends concocted to improve the image of his successor. Leonard Thompson has recently

---

Satan" (2.22). In a letter to Smyrna, Ignatius warns fellow Christians that "he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop is serving the devil" (9.1; cf. Collins 1985: 210).

217 Kraft argues that Rev. 2:9 and 3:9 is a reference to a syncretistic Jewish-Christian group which was willing to compromise with the State and paganism. Kraft presumes widespread persecution and suggests that this group, which John obviously considered very threatening, refused the positive stance on martyrdom which John's community held, denied the reality and saving effect of the death and resurrection of Christ, and hid themselves among Jews in hope of escaping persecution Christians were undergoing at the time (Kraft 1974: 60-1; cf. Prigent 1981: 47).
expressed doubt about the veracity of the portrayal of Domitian as an evil tyrant by standard Roman sources, particularly the understanding that Domitian demanded to be called *dominus et deus noster* (Thompson 1986: 153-62). It seems, though, that some unrest did occur while Domitian was in power. The evidence provided by Pliny the Younger, for example, is direct and more reliable than that of Eusebius. In a letter to Trajan, Pliny reports that he encounters people who had ceased being Christians "two or more years previously, and some of them even twenty years ago" (*Ep. 10.96*). Twenty years prior to the time Pliny meets these ex-Christians (c. 113) would fall under the reign of Domitian, during which time perhaps persecution forced these individuals to stop professing their Christian faith. Perhaps, like Domnus who took sanctuary among the Jews during a time of persecution in the early third century CE (*Hist. eccl. 6.12*), certain Gentile Christians who feared local persecution took refuge during Domitian's reign by identifying themselves as Jews.

The Jews of Rome and the cities of Asia Minor (and Syria) enjoyed a number of legal privileges and at times attained social and economic distinction. Judaism had achieved recognition as a *religio licita* in Roman law when, in a period between 49-44 BCE, Julius Caesar prohibited all collegia within the empire except for the ones that had existed since antiquity, and Judaism was included among the exceptions. This policy was perpetuated by Augustus.218 Josephus furthermore quotes in *Antiquities* 14 from two important decrees. In the one to Sardis issued by Lucius Antonius, the son of Mark Antony, the Jews are granted the right to build their own place of prayer, to try their own cases, and to obtain approved food (*Ant. 14.235*). The other was issued by the people of Sardis themselves, and confirmed the right of Jews to gather in their own place of worship, to

---

218 Leonard Rutgers explains that Roman magistrates passed several decrees during the approximately fifty year period between Caesar and Augustus which facilitated unencumbered Jewish worship, including the right to "gather freely in *thiasoi*, observe the Sabbath and the Jewish festivals, send money to the temple in Jerusalem, and enjoy autonomy in their communal affairs," and in addition to this Jews were released from the obligation of serving in the Roman military (*Josephus, Ant.* 14.190-264; Rutgers 1998: 94). Josephus presents numerous decrees, issued during the reign of Augustus, which describe how Jews living in the Diaspora were able to collect and transport their Temple tax, and were not forced to attend court on the Sabbath.
have judicial authority among themselves, and to have appropriate food brought in by local market officials (Ant. 14.259-61). Jews living in Ephesus apparently ate kosher food, worshipped regularly, sent money to Jerusalem, and refused to perform public duties on the Sabbath (Ant. 14.226; cf. 14.263-4). Jews in Laodicea in Phrygia observed the Sabbath and other customs (Ant. 14.241-2) and in Miletus, Ionia, they kept the Sabbath, tithed their produce and kept other rites as well (Ant. 14.245). As Richardson observes, "[L]ocal communities of the Diaspora were able to preserve their way of life against the weight of opinion in many of the cities in which they settled, and they had official sanction for this preservation" (Richardson 1996: 96).

Wilson's suggestion assumes that Judaizing on the part of these Gentile Christians was a calculated decision to seek protection from Roman persecution. Certainly this may be how the author of Revelation perceived the situation. Whether their decision to live like Jews was taken prior to the outbreak of trouble, as a result of contact with Jews and attraction to Jewish customs, or as a result of persecution, is impossible to know from the text. Nor is it possible to know whether Gentile Christians would actually attain immunity from Roman hostility through Judaizing. The official sanction protecting Jewish communities described above may have been a powerful incentive for Gentile Christians, who perhaps were already inclined towards a Jewish lifestyle, to deepen their attachment to Torah during sporadic persecution of Christians by Roman authorities. The author of Revelation's perspective on the situation was that certain Gentile Christians called themselves Jews in order to avoid the difficulties associated with identifying oneself as a Christian. His sense of betrayal, and perhaps his fear that further defection by Christians

---

219 Richardson notes that the significance of these two decrees is that both "confirmed a range of rights, both were set in Sardis, one of the places that has remarkable archaeological evidence of a synagogue" (Richardson 1996: 96). That evidence attests to the existence of a prominent, wealthy Jewish community in Sardis. The largest excavated synagogue in the world, dating to the third and fourth centuries CE, was discovered in the heart of ancient Sardis (Kraabel 1971; Crawford 1990; Crawford 1996), and will be discussed further in chapter 7.

220 While expulsions of Jews from particular areas of the empire occurred in the first century CE (in 19 CE under Tiberius and in 41 CE under Claudius), they seemed not to affect negatively the position of Jews generally. See Rutgers 1998: 93-116.
seeking to avoid suffering would ensue, impelled him to categorize these defectors as members of the "synagogue of Satan."

Summary

If the correct interpretation of the references in Rev. 2:9 and 3:9 is that John is referring to Gentile Christians, then these accusations do not reflect a struggle between Jews and Christians, but a conflict among Christians.221 The author of the apocalypse expresses hostility towards a group of Gentile Christians who have adopted Jewish customs and call themselves Jews, perhaps in order to avoid persecution. From his perspective, this is unacceptable, perhaps because he fears how this will impact his own community which does suffer, and he fears that they too will compromise their convictions. John Gager aptly notes the irony in this scenario: "Here is a case of Gentile Christians calling themselves Jews — presumably because they behaved like Jews — being repudiated by another Christian, probably of Jewish birth, as a synagogue of Satan!" (Gager 1985: 132).

This understanding of the accusations is substantiated by other literary evidence from Asia Minor. A few years after John wrote his seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor, Ignatius wrote his seven letters to Asian churches. The two sets of letters share similar concerns, address the same or nearby locations in Asia and can be used to elucidate the situation both writers faced in Asia Minor (Gaston 1986: 42; contra Collins 1986: 312). I suggest that the "composite picture" resulting from Ignatius' writing (presented below) lends credence to the interpretation suggested above for Revelation 2:9 and 3:9, and indicates that Gentile Christian Judaizing was a persistent phenomenon in Asia Minor in the late first/early second century CE.

221 G. Lindeskog correctly suggests that Rev. 2:9 and 3:9 "eine Invektive gegen christliche Sekzierer ist" and that they should not be seen as anti-Judaic (Lindeskog 1986: 166).
Ignatius and Gentile Judaizers

Eusebius places the letters of Ignatius in the reign of Trajan (98-117 CE; Hist. eccl. 3.36) and for two reasons this seems to be an appropriate date. In his letters to Christian communities of Asia Minor, Ignatius defends the authority of the bishop of the local Christian community. The frequency of the requests for obedience of the bishop as well as the urgency of tone indicate that the office of bishop was not yet firmly established in the communities to which he writes, suggesting a relatively early date (such as the one Eusebius offers) for the writing of these letters (Bauer 1971: 70; Schoedel 1993: 289). Furthermore, the context of the letters, with their expression of Ignatius' desire to establish the administrative superiority of one bishop, best corresponds to a time of upheaval, for "as long as a harmonious spirit pervades the community, a council of those with similar status can take care of it without difficulty... according to the abilities of each" (Bauer 1971: 62). According to the letters of Pliny, which he wrote to the Emperor Trajan in c. 110-113 CE, Christians in Bithynia experienced a tumultuous and unstable situation, and it is possible that local unrest occurred in other areas of Asia Minor as well.

Asia Minor or Antioch? One Group or Two?

Some scholars believe that Ignatius' letters actually reveal more about the situation of Christian communities in Antioch than in Asia Minor. Paul Donahue, for example, argues that Ignatius simply applies his experience in Antioch to Asia Minor since "his responses to various problems are too consistent, too much a part of his own theological outlook, to have arisen on the spot, under such trying conditions" (Donahue 1978: 81-82; also Corwin 1960 and Bauer 1971: 67). On the other hand, Barrett argues that "on the whole, Ignatius

---

222 There are three recensions of Ignatius' work presently extant: the short, middle and long. It is the middle recension that is considered to be the authentic version by modern scholars, and is the one from which information about Ignatius is taken (Zahn 1873; Lightfoot 1989 [1889]; Schoedel 1993).
gives the impression that he is dealing with a situation that he has encountered on his travels in Asia, rather than with one he has long known and recalled from the days of his settled ministry in Antioch" (Barrett 1976: 240; also Molland 1954: 1ff. and Gaston 1986: 36).

It is possible that the opponents Ignatius encounters in Asia Minor were not new to him. Given the evidence for Judaizing Gentile Christians in late first century CE Syria, Ignatius may well have confronted Judaizing Gentile Christians already in his past in Syria. Schoedel observes that his arguments in the letters appear to be "more or less" prepared; perhaps this is because of previous encounters with Docetists and Judaizers in Antioch (Schoedel 1985: 11 note 62; Sanders 1993: 160). Statements made in Barnabas and the Didache discussed in chapter 5 certainly indicate that Judaizing among Gentile Christians was deemed very problematic by certain Syrian ecclesiastic leaders, and evidence from the Pseudo-Clementine literature demonstrates that Judaizing was encouraged by other church leaders. The detailed and vivid descriptions of the circumstances in Asia Minor provided by Ignatius in Magnesians and Philadelphians, however, strongly support the view that in these letters, Ignatius addresses tangible circumstances he met with on his journey through Asia Minor.

Further debate has ensued over whether Ignatius encounters two groups of heretics (Docetics and Judaizers) or one (Docetic Judaizers). Molland confidently states that "there can be no doubt ... that Ignatius accuses the same persons of Judaism as well as docetism," and indeed the majority of modern scholars seem to agree (Lightfoot 1989 (1889); Barrett 1976; Gaston 1986; Wilson 1995: 361 note 96). My impression, however, is that when Ignatius addresses the Judaizing Christians in Magnesians and Philadelphians, his criticism addresses Judaizing alone. What scholars have understood to be evidence of docetism in these letters is simply Ignatius worrying that the corollary of Judaizing will be non-belief in the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus (Schoedel 1993: 303). His letter to
the Smyrneans contains criticism against Docetics and a description of them which distinguishes them from Judaizers. Ignatius writes

There are some who ignorantly deny him, but rather were denied by him, being advocates of death rather than of the truth. There are they whom neither the prophecies nor the law of Moses persuaded, nor the gospel even until now, nor our own individual sufferings. For what does anyone profit me if he praise me but blaspheme my Lord, and do not confess that he was clothed in flesh? (Smyrn. 5.1)

These Docetics are not Judaizers, since Ignatius explicitly says that these people have no interest in the Mosaic law. On his journey through Asia Minor, Ignatius probably encountered (or heard about) different types of problematic behaviours and beliefs, with Judaizing Christians and Docetic Christians being two separate groups among them. His letters to the Magnesians and the Philadelphians contain evidence of Gentile Christian Judaizing and it is upon these letters that the following investigation will focus.223

The Letter to the Magnesians

Ignatius wrote his letter to Magnesia from Smyrna. While he did not personally visit the city of Magnesia, he did consult with representatives from that community (15.1), and had already viewed the situation in Philadelphia by the time he wrote to the Magnesians.

Magnesians 8-10 forms the core of the letter. In Magn. 8.1, Ignatius instructs his readers: "Be not led astray by strange doctrines or by old fables which are profitless. For if we are living until now according to Judaism (εἰ γὰρ μὲχρι νῦν κατὰ Ἰουδαϊσμὸν ζωῆς), we confess that we have not received grace." This is reminiscent of Paul's warning in Gal. 5:4: "You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from

---

223 Ignatius' letter to the Ephesians (9.1) states: "I have learnt, however, that some from elsewhere have stayed with you, who have evil doctrine." This statement is intriguing: could this be an indication that Gentile Judaizers had travelled to the city of Ephesus? Alas, there is no evidence in this letter pointing to the presence of Judaizers.
Christ; you have fallen away from grace." Ignatius's use of the phrase "living until now according to Judaism" can be understood in two different ways: a) he is referring to Christians from prior generations, such as Jesus' disciples, who were intimately involved with Judaism; or b) he is referring to contemporary Gentile Christian Judaizers who observe Jewish rituals. Taken in the context of this letter as a whole, as well as what we later learn from the letter to the Philadelphians, the latter option seems best. As Wilson suggests, Magn. 8.1 helps clarify the identity of the group of Gentile Judaizers:

It could refer to earlier generations of Christians who had been closely tied to Judaism, but it seems to refer to the Judaizers of Ignatius's day, that is, Gentiles, who formerly (and presently) lived like Jews and expounded Judaism ... Most obviously they would have been former God-fearers or sympathizers, who had been attached to the synagogue, had now joined the church, and had brought with them the predilections of their former existence. (Wilson 1995: 165)

Ignatius' instruction to his readers not to be "led astray by strange doctrines or by old fables which are profitless" (Magn. 8.1) is reminiscent of statements made in the Pastoral letters, which may be associated with the region of Asia Minor during the early second century CE. 224

224 Certain provocative verses in the Pastoral letters reflect the lively presence of Judaism, along with a distinct sense that it is being promoted within the Christian community, particularly among Gentiles. For example, the author of 1 Tim. warns his readers "not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies" (1:4) and also mentions that certain members have "deviated" from "a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith" (1:5) to engage in "meaningless talk, desiring to be teachers of the law (θέλοντες εἶναι νομοδιδάσκαλοι), without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions" (1:6-7; cf. Titus 3:9). The term νομοδιδάσκαλοι, which occurs elsewhere only in Luke 5:17 and in Acts 5:34, might best understood as referring to teachers of the Mosaic law, which connects the opponents with Judaism (also see 1:8-9). It may be significant that the subsequent part of the verse which states that these νομοδιδάσκαλοι do not understand "either what they say or the things about which they make assertions" (1:7b). The fact that Verse 7a states that they desired to be teachers of the law (θέλοντες εἶναι νομοδιδάσκαλοι) may indicate that these individuals had no real claim to the title or function of being a teacher of the law. Perhaps the reference is to Gentiles who cause turmoil in the Gentile Christian community because they seek to draw interest in the law but, from the author's perspective, are incompetent in their teaching of it. There may be evidence that at least one Jewish custom was observed in the community. The author's complaint that the opponents "demand abstinence from foods" in 1 Tim. 4:3 could refer to the practice of Jewish dietary laws (Ward 1974: 68). It is less clear, however, whether Gentile Christians or Jews (or Jewish Christians) are behind the promotion of Jewish customs. Titus 10 and 11 refer to "those of the circumcision (μολιστα οι εκ της περιποίησις)" who must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for sordid gain what is not right to
Ignatius equates "living according to Judaism" with living according to "strange" "old" and "profitless" doctrines (8.1). By asserting that the prophets "lived according to Jesus Christ," Ignatius denies them even their Jewishness:

For the divine prophets lived according to Jesus Christ. Therefore they were also persecuted, being inspired by his grace, to convince the disobedient that there is one God, who manifested himself through Jesus Christ his son, who is his Word proceeding from silence, who in all respects was well-pleasing to him that sent him. (*Magn.* 8.2)

Ignatius' Christianization of Judaism, which denies that Judaism made any contribution whatsoever toward the implementation of God's plan, is a rather extreme perspective. As Gager notes, "Clearly for Ignatius, Christianity has superseded Judaism and allows no room whatsoever for Jewish ritual observances" (Gager 1985: 129).

Ignatius implies that one of the Jewish rituals kept by the Judaizers of Magnesia was observance of the Sabbath:

If then they who walked in ancient customs came to a new hope, no longer living for the Sabbath, but for the Lord's Day (μηκέτι σαββατιζόντες, άλλά κατά κυριακήν ζωντές), on which also our life sprang up through him and his death, — though some deny him, and by this mystery we received faith, and for this reason also we suffer, that we may be found disciples of Jesus Christ our only teacher... (*Magn.* 9.1)

---

225 While Lightfoot understands this phrase to be an allusion to the Docetics who denied the reality of Jesus' death and resurrection (Lightfoot 1989: 130), it is more likely that this is a "purely parenthetical" expression and does not point to the presence of Docetic Christians (Schoedel 1985: 125; also Grant 1966: 63). The closest Ignatius comes to addressing Docetic beliefs in *Magnesians* is in 11.1, where he states that he wants his readers "to be convinced of the birth and passion and resurrection which took place at the time of Pontius Pilate; for these things were truly and certainly done by Jesus Christ..." But this is a warning in advance; that is, as Schoedel states, "the reason for writing disclosed by Ignatius is not that he wanted to criticize the Magnesians for actually having fallen prey to the erroneous opinions discussed but that he desired to warn them against possible dangers" (Schoedel 1985: 129). As noted above, it seems that Ignatius feared that the corollary of Judaizing was disbelief in the reality of Jesus' human existence.
Schoedel suggests that Ignatius is referring to the early disciples who became (Jewish) Christians (1985: 123), but in light of the radical Christianization of the prophets in the previous sentence (8.2), Ignatius is here probably referring to ancient Jews. Observance of the Sabbath is not explicit, but it is strongly implied (Bauer 1971: 88). According to Ignatius, then, if Jews described in the Hebrew scriptures were actually Christians and discontinued the observance of the Sabbath, then why should present-day Christians observe the Sabbath? Paul Trebilco suggests that Magn. 9.1-2 was probably prompted by pressure from some Christians in favour of Sabbath observance. Whilst many details of these passages are difficult to interpret, it is clear that Ignatius is talking about Christians in Magnesia who were observing Jewish customs. Ignatius does not say that they are converted Jews, and so, if we assume that the situation was comparable to the one at Philadelphia, we can suggest that again it was the uncircumcised who were also Judaizing here (Trebilco 1991: 28-9).

Jack Sanders has a different understanding of the situation. He suggests that the community at Magnesia included both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians and that it was Jewish Christians who continued to observe the Sabbath. This attempt by Jewish Christians "to be both Christians and Jews" troubled Gentile Magnesian Christians, who brought the matter to Ignatius's attention. Thus according to Sanders, it was Gentile Christians who "felt that the Jewish Christians should give up their Jewish ways" (Sanders 1993: 187). While Jewish Christians might have been present in Magnesia and might have had influence on non-Jewish members of the congregation, we shall argue that the evidence points towards Gentile Judaizing as the problematic phenomenon at Magnesia.

Miriam Taylor argues that "Ignatius' anti-Jewish passages are not injunctions against judaizing, but rather illustrative arguments directed at the dissenters to whom Ignatius addresses his main appeal" (Taylor 1995: 35). The problem, according to Taylor, was Docetic heretical Christians, not Judaizers. In Magn. 8.1, for example, Ignatius is not warning his readers about Judaizing or Judaism, but "is here drawing an illustrative parallel
between the 'vain doctrines' of the Docetists, and the way of 'Judaism' (Taylor 1995: 35). She furthermore asserts that "the reference to worship on the Sabbath is not a warning against 'Sabbing'; but once again, an illustrative comment describing the transformative power of Christ's advent" (Taylor 1995: 36). She claims that Ignatius could draw a parallel between Judaism and Docetism since "all Magnesian Christians would no doubt be familiar with the church's anti-Jewish tradition which held that the 'Jewish' way was abrogated, outdated, and constituted an admission that one was not inspired by the 'grace' of Christ" (Taylor 1995: 35). This is a rather bold assumption, since the cumulative evidence in both Magnesians and Philadelphians suggests precisely the opposite situation: that is, that Christians in these two cities were behaving in a way which indicated that they by no means considered the "Jewish way" to be nullified!

In fact, Ignatius in Magn. 10.3 explicitly discourages Judaizing. He writes: "It is monstrous (ἀτοπόν) to talk of Jesus Christ and to practise Judaism (Ἰουδαϊκός). For Christianity did not base its faith on Judaism, but Judaism on Christianity, and every tongue believing on God was brought together in it." Schoedel understands those who based their faith on Christianity to be a reference to "the first generation of Jewish Christians" (Schoedel 1985: 126); however, this verse is better understood to be another manifestation of Ignatius's radical Christianization of Jewish history, and an indication that he perceived the prophets to be Christians, not Jews (Grant 1966: 64). From a retrospective point of view, what Ignatius does in this statement is completely eliminate any historical contribution by Judaism by suggesting that Christianity is the foundational faith, not Judaism. He has essentially eliminated the need for Judaism: it is completely deleted from the "divine plan." Significantly, the statement indicates that Christians at Magnesia are "practising Judaism." As discussed more fully in the introduction in chapter one, the term Ἰουδαϊκός is a technical term used in reference to Gentiles who adopt certain Jewish customs without converting to Judaism (Gaston 1986: 35).
From Ignatius' perspective, the problems in Magnesia consisted of lack of support for the bishop and the holding of separate meetings (4.1; 7.1-2), and, more significantly, some Gentile members of the congregation were Judaizing (10.3; 8.1), which might have included keeping the Sabbath instead of, or in addition to, Sunday (9.1).

The Letter to the Philadelphians

Ignatius actually spent some time with the Philadelphian community (as indicated in Phld. 3.1; 7.1), and therefore was able personally to view the situation in that city. The first verse that is significant to our discussion of Gentile Christian Judaizers is the following:

"But if anyone interpret (ἐρμωνεύτη) Judaism to you do not listen to him; for it is better to hear Christianity from the circumcised than Judaism from the uncircumcised" (Phld. 6.1). The meaning of ἐρμωνεύω is "explain," "interpret," or "translate" (BAGD 1979: 310).

The reference to hearing "Christianity from the circumcised," probably indicates the presence of Jewish Christians. The most intriguing part of this statement is the last section, for it indicates that in Philadelphia there were Gentiles (the "uncircumcised") who "explained" or "interpreted" Judaism. Ignatius declares that Jews who explain Christianity are preferable to Gentiles who discuss Judaism. These Gentile Christians, as the first part of the statement suggests, were apparently approaching people within the community and "explaining" Judaism to them, which suggests that there was some proselytizing occurring (Lightfoot 1989: 264). To those who are approached by these people, Ignatius instructs: μὴ ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ (Phld. 6.1).

Wilson notes that this sentence indicates that "some (if not all) of the Judaizers were Gentile in origin" and that this is the "plain sense" of the statement (Wilson 1995: 164). Indeed, scholars who do not take this sentence at face value attempt to explain that Ignatius was referring to a Jewish group which, in an attempt to attract converts, dropped the circumcision requirement. Consequently, these scholars have offered some rather
bizarre explanations as to who this Jewish group was. Schweizer, for example, suggests that it was a group that had come under the influence of Pythagorean ideas (Schweizer 1976: 249), while Hoffmann suggests that those interpreting Judaism were Marcionites who were being critical of Judaism (Hoffmann 1984: 57-63). According to Barrett, "there was in Philadelphia a Jewish group, almost certainly unorthodox in its Judaism" and "we cannot expect to be well informed" about such "fringe groups" (Barrett 1976: 234-5).226 Donahue makes the odd suggestion that this statement does not mean that the Judaizing opponents were not circumcised, but that "the law-free gospel does not permit distinctions among Christians" (Donahue 1978: 89).

Schoedel concludes that "no one was actually recommending circumcision, and the issue had probably been injected into the debate by Ignatius under the influence of Pauline models" (Schoedel 1985: 203). But Schoedel need not offer this explanation since circumcision is simply not an issue. Nowhere else does Ignatius bring up the topic of circumcision, which surely he would have if he was concerned with it. As Wilson asserts, "the terms circumcision and uncircumcision in Phld. 6.1 are simply a convenient way of referring to Jews and Gentiles" (Wilson 1995: 164). The same distinction is used in Ephesians 2:11: "you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision..." and is also found in m. Nedairim 3.11 (cf. Marcus 1989: 67-81).227

What Ignatius means by "expounding Judaism" is not entirely clear: were these Gentiles promoting the observance of Jewish rites and customs? Some indication of their behaviour is given in Phld. 8.2, where Ignatius writes "For I heard some men saying, "if I find it not in the charters in the Gospel I do not believe (ἐὰν μὴ ἐν τοῖς ἀρχείοις εὑρω

226 Robert G. Hall discusses how the practice of epispasmm hit a plateau in the first century and suggests that "it is as likely that Ignatius speaks of Jews or Judaizers who thought circumcision unnecessary" (Hall 1988: 80).

227 Schoedel goes on to suggest that "we could assume that the gentile Christians would not have been circumcised because circumcision was not always required of proselytes" (Schoedel 1985: 202). In my view, however, it is unlikely that Ignatius is referring to proselytes actively seeking conversion to Judaism based on the other comments he makes about these opponents.
ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ οὐ πιστεύω," and when I said to them that it is in the Scripture, they answered me, 'that is exactly the question.' Ignatius is describing an argument he had with his opponents involving their dependence on the Hebrew scriptures for direction in what they believe. The statement should be understood as "If I do not find it (the point at issue) in the archives, I do not believe it (because it appears) in the Gospel" (Lightfoot 1889 (1989): 271ff.; Schoedel 1985: 207). It is generally agreed upon that the "charters" or "archives" refers to the Hebrew scriptures.228

The last line of 8.2, "that is exactly the question," may indicate that the opponents were not satisfied with Ignatius' attempt to prove his point from the Hebrew scriptures. He therefore appeals to "an even higher authority," Jesus Christ (Schoedel 1985: 208; Grant 1966: 106).229 Wilson suggests that "from the immediate context it is clear that 'expounding Judaism' did not involve promoting Judaism in general. Rather, the Judaizers had a particular view of the scriptures, and were especially inclined to dispute any Christian beliefs that they could not find in them (Phld. 8.1-2; 9.1)...." (Wilson 1995: 165).

According to Gaston, Ignatius' identification of "their teaching as 'Judaism' probably has to do more with their use of the LXX to support their doctrines than with their Christian worship on the Sabbath. The fact remains that this 'Judaism' is taught by the uncircumcised" (Gaston 1986: 38). Schoedel suggests that observance of Jewish customs such as circumcision or the Sabbath was not involved in Ignatius' struggle with his opponents in Philadelphia: "Perhaps, then, all that Ignatius means to say is that his opponents' preoccupation with Scripture prevented them from keeping Christ in the center of the theological stage to his satisfaction...." (Schoedel 1985: 209). It seems logical, however, that if these Gentiles relied on Jewish scripture to direct their behaviour, they would have been aware of the ritual obligations of the Mosaic law and might have felt

228 In his article on the topic, Schoedel points out how Josephus and Philo refer to the Jewish scriptures as "public records" (δόξανταςακόλουθοι) and that this "should remove any lingering doubt that Ignatius' opponents in Philadelphia could have referred to the Bible as 'archives'" (Schoedel 1978: 101).

229 Lightfoot unconvincingly argues that Phld. 8.2 is an attempt by Ignatius to combat Docetic opponents and suggests that the points at issue were the cross, death and resurrection of Jesus.
themselves obliged to carry out certain rituals. The ensuing dispute about scripture, therefore, likely involved the promotion of Judaism, specifically in terms of whether or not Christians should be obliged to keep Jewish customs.

Miriam Taylor is right to criticize Paul Donahue's identification of the opponents as Jewish Christians (Taylor 1995: 33; Donahue 1978). Christianity from Jews ("the circumcised") is not the focus, but Judaism from Gentiles ("the uncircumcised") is. As Lightfoot states: "In this case the teachers would be represented, not as Jewish Christians, but as Gentile Christians with strong Judaic tendencies. This seems the most natural interpretation..." (Lightfoot 1989 [1889]: 264). For Ignatius, furthermore, those who do not speak of Jesus Christ are "tombstones and sepulchers of the dead" (6.1). He does not take lightly the compromising of (his version of) Christianity.

That the Judaizers were part of the Christian community in Philadelphia is suggested in Phld. 7.1-2, where Ignatius describes how he was almost deceived by the Judaizers and that when he cried out that the bishop was to be obeyed, his cry was suspected as not being prompted by "the Spirit" but by his prior knowledge of the situation in the congregation. At any rate, it is clear that the Judaizers were at the Christian meeting when he gave his response and that they were part of the Christian community (Schoedel 1985: 205; Wilson 1995: 165). The closing of the letter indicates that Philo and Rheus Agathopous, two messengers who likely informed Ignatius that all was well in

---

230 This is opposite to C. K. Barrett's understanding of the statement; he suggests that "Ignatius was trapped in his own rhetoric: he meant to say that there was no harm in hearing Christianity from a Christian Jew, but having begun the sentence with ἀνακείσεσθαι he constructed a comparison that he did not really intend" (Barrett 1976: 234). Grant thinks that Ignatius "seems to have Gentile converts to Jewish Christianity in mind, not unlike those whom Paul describes as not keeping the law but advocating circumcision (Gal. 6: 13) or the Philippians of Revelation 3:9, who 'call themselves, but are not, Jews'" (Grant 1966: 103).

231 Wilson suggests that Ignatius "initially found their [the Judaizers'] arguments quite plausible." (Wilson 1995: 165).

232 Perhaps he was accused of sending people ahead of him as spies to see how the congregation was operating? The circumstances of Ignatius's arrest and subsequent journey through Asia Minor are rather baffling. It seems as though he had a large amount of freedom, given the fact that he was able to meet with Christians, and visit congregations, along the way. Did his ten Roman guards simply "escort" him in this journey? In Schoedel's view, "[t]here are features of the situation for which it is difficult to find exact analogies, for we do not often see life from the prisoner's point of view in antiquity. What we do know about such matters indicates that there is finally nothing impossible or seriously improbable here" (Schoedel 1985: 11).
Antioch (*Phld.* 10.1), were treated badly by some members of the Philadelphian congregation (11.1), indicating that Ignatius and those who thought like him were not completely accepted by the congregation. According to Schoedel, "It is now easier to understand why the freshly confident Ignatius must proceed as cautiously as he does in this letter. People in Philadelphia were still on good terms with Judaizers and their disapproval of the messengers (and of Ignatius himself) required rebuttal" (Schoedel 1985: 214). Judaizing probably was more troubling to Ignatius than to anyone else in the community. In fact, other members of the Philadelphian community may not have viewed such proclivities to be deviant at all.

The situation in Philadelphia, according to Ignatius, was one in which Gentile Christians were teaching Judaism (6.1) and were relying too heavily on the Hebrew scriptures (8.2). It furthermore seems that they held a separate Eucharist service (4.1) from the one in which Ignatius was involved. The specificity of his comments regarding the situation in Philadelphia reinforces the assertion that Ignatius was dealing with actual circumstances he encountered on his journey through Asia Minor, rather than simply projecting issues he had experienced in Antioch.

Summary

On his trip through Asia Minor, Ignatius encounters Judaizers in Philadelphia and hears about their existence in Magnesia. He expresses great concern about how this phenomenon has caused and will continue to cause divisiveness within the Christian congregations of these cities. Interestingly, in his struggle against Judaizers, Ignatius does not describe the Passion in a way which is hostile to the Jews (unlike Melito of Sardis or other apologists of the second century), and he does not vilify Jews in general. This is because Jews are not the problem — Gentile Christian Judaizers are.

---

233 Sanders makes the plausible suggestion that the existence of a separate eucharist implies concern for Jewish dietary laws (Sanders 1993: 189).
While it is true that Jews are not denounced generally by Ignatius, in his own way, however, he denies the Jewish scriptures and history any intrinsic validity. Just as Marcion, whose possible connection with Judaizing is discussed in the following chapter, did not allow for any contribution to Christianity by Judaism through his presentation of Christianity as completely separate from Judaism, with a different and superior God, different scriptures and different Messiah, Ignatius denies Judaism any worth or contribution as Judaism, because for him Jewish history is Christian history and Jewish prophets are Christian, such is the extent of his appropriation of things Jewish. In this, he does not recognize even a limited historical role for Judaism.234

Gentile Christians in Asia Minor may have continued with previous practices of Jewish rites from when they were God-fearers on the periphery of the synagogue: they simply did not change their lifestyle when they became Christians (Wilson 1995: 165; also Munier 1993: 406). Or, perhaps in the setting of a vibrant diaspora Judaism, Gentile Christians became exposed to Judaism through social interaction with Jews.235 Trebilco plausibly suggests that "[i]n the case of Philadelphia and Magnesia direct contact with local Jewish communities seems the most likely explanation for Gentiles who Judaized. Accordingly, we can suggest that in these two cities there were Jewish communities which were attractive to Christians and which had an impact on the Church" (Trebilco 1991: 29).

234 Donahue, who believes that Ignatius' opponents are Jewish Christians only, suggests that this group "traces its roots back to those who with Peter accepted the dictates from James; they accepted Gentile Christianity, but did not accord it equal status with Jewish Christianity; they did not believe that it had displaced Israel. In the end, this group was unable to preserve its theological identity; it was absorbed in a synthesis more influenced by Paul than by Peter" (Donahue 1993: 92-93). While in my view Donahue's identification of the opponents is mistaken, he might be on to something nonetheless. Perhaps the genesis of the Gentile Judaizing opponents whom Ignatius encounters in Asia Minor can be traced back to the group that opposed Paul in Galatia (especially Gal. 6).

235 As Munier points out, "L'histoire atteste l'importance de l'influence juive à Antioche, tout au long du IIe et du IIIe siècle, Théophile d'Antioche, à la fin du IIe siècle, la Didascalie, au début du IIIe en témoignent pour ce qui concerne la vie des communautés" (Munier 1993: 477).
Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*

Justin Martyr was born in Neapolis (ancient Shechem, modern Nablus) in Samaritan territory in about 100 CE (1. *Apol.* 1.1). He was brought up a Gentile and was not circumcised (*DiaL.* 28.2), appears not to have known Hebrew,\(^{236}\) and was not familiar with the Bible prior to his conversion to Christianity (*DiaL.* 2-8). The conversation between Justin and Trypho terminates with Justin indicating that he is soon setting sail (*DiaL.* 142.2), probably to Rome (Williams 1930: x).\(^{237}\) He was martyred in that city sometime between 162 and 168 CE, when Junius Rusticus was prefect of Rome (Harnack 1904: 274-84; Chadwick 1964-5: 278). Justin wrote the *Dialogue* sometime after the Bar Kochba revolt; we are told that Trypho was in Ephesus because he had fled from the revolt in Judea, and it is in Ephesus that the dialogue supposedly took place (1.3; 9.3; also Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 4.18.6). Possible dates for the document range from the mid-130s to c. 160 CE.

The *Dialogue with Trypho* describes a conversation between Justin and Trypho. Scholars have debated extensively whether this conversation actually took place and whether Trypho was a historical person. A. von Harnack is of the view that by the time Justin wrote, there was little or no exchange between Jews and Christians. The *Dialogue*, according to him, then, does not reflect a real polemic against the Jews, since by the time Justin wrote the battle had already been won by the Christians (Harnack 1913: 47-98). H. Chadwick suggests on the other hand that "we are being given an essentially veracious autobiography, even if Justin's memory, looking back some twenty years, is likely to have foreshortened and compressed the story. Like the rest of us, Justin is remembering the past in a way that the present requires" (Chadwick 1964-5: 280; Trakatellis 1986: 297). Barnard calls Trypho "a Hellenistic Jewish layman who combined the culture and inquiring

\(^{236}\) In *DiaL.* 125.1 Justin asks what the etymology of "Israel" is, receives no suggestions from the Jews in his presence, and proceeds to give an incorrect answer.

\(^{237}\) The English translation of the *Dialogue* in this chapter is that of A. L. Williams (1930).
spirit of the hellenistic world with a knowledge of traditional Jewish exegesis and haggadah. He has no knowledge of the Hebrew language but knows accurately the Septuagint version of the Old Testament" (Barnard 1964: 398). On the other hand, Goodenough considered Trypho to be "in many respects a straw man, who says the right thing in the right place" and who never truly challenges Justin or throws him off his argument (Goodenough 1923: 90).

The *Dialogue With Trypho* is not simply stylized fiction. Harold Remus points out how the narrative reflects the reality of Jewish/Christian contact:

Trypho has been warned by his community leaders not to enter into discussion with Christians (38.1; 112.4), indicating that such encounters were in fact occurring. Jews, says Justin, curse Christ and his followers in their synagogues (16.4; 47.4; 93.4; 133.6) and persecute those followers when given the power to do so (16.4; 95.4; 133.6 etc.),238 (Remus 1986: 73)

Horbury contends that "the subject of cursing crops up so many times, in varied ways but always with vehemence of expression, that it is natural to think that Justin himself, as well as his source, knew something of it" (Horbury 1992: 340).239

Whether or not the dialogue actually occurred and whether or not Trypho was a real person is not, for our purposes, a crucial matter. Stephen Wilson aptly suggests that what is more important is "whether Trypho is a plausible representation of at least one strain of Judaism and whether the *Dialogue* gives a proper sense of the issues and the arguments that would have concerned Jews and Christians engaged in debate in the mid-second century" (Wilson 1995: 260). The consensus is that the opinions exchanged in the *Dialogue* are realistic: Justin, for example, does appear to be knowledgeable about

---

238 Horbury 1992: 343 notes the parallel with the prohibition of contact with *minim* in *Tos Hullin* 2: 20-21.
239 Many scholars understand Justin's references to cursing in the synagogue as the contemporary practice of the *Birkat ha-Minim*, the imprecation against heretics added to the Eighteen Benedictions by the Yavnaen sages in the late first century CE. For example, S. Krauss 1893: 122-57; Herford 1903: 379-81; Moore 1920: 426-32; M. Simon, 1986: 234-36.
Judaism. He describes a phylactery (46.5); is familiar with post-biblical details about Jewish rituals on Yom Kippur (40.4); and is aware that the Septuagint is read during services in synagogue (72.3). He travelled extensively and so had opportunities to become familiar with different Jewish communities; Trypho may represent a combination of Judaism encountered by Justin (MacLennan 1990: 64 n. 62). Using Trypho as a tool, Justin brings up issues relevant to the relationship between Jews and Christians at that time.

The dialogue between Justin and Trypho is set in Ephesus, shortly after the Bar Kochba revolt. Strabo describes Ephesus as the greatest commercial centre of Asia Minor north of the Taurus range (Geog. 14.1.24). Although the remains of a synagogue are yet to be found in Ephesus itself, there is archaeological and literary evidence that Jewish communities flourished throughout Asia Minor during the second century CE. Two thousand Jewish families from Babylon were settled in Lydia and Phrygia by Antiochus III in about 210 BCE. The privileges granted them by Caesar's lieutenant Dolabella in 44 BCE (Ant. 14.225-27) were confirmed by the civic authorities and by Augustus and his lieutenants (Ant. 16.162-68, 172ff.) and it is likely that the Jewish community in Ephesus benefited from this political protection. MacLennan notes that "the Jews had a large community which apparently was not very cordial either to Paul or to Justin. Throughout the Dialogue, Trypho's Jewish companions laugh at Justin or walk away in amazement and disgust (see Dial. 16.4; 9.2; 8.2; 56; 122) (MacLennan 1990: 70)."

The environment in the metropolis of Ephesus was remarkably diverse. By the end of the first century, different Jewish groups called Ephesus home, and various Christian

---

240 C. Foss 1979: 3-4, describes Ephesus as "the greatest city of Roman Asia Minor ... It was the terminus of two great highways connecting the Aegean coast with the interior of Asia Minor and the lands to the east: the ancient Persian Royal Road, and the koine hodos, the main trade route of the Romans which led up the Maeander valley to the plateau ... In addition, Ephesus was a great seaport, the largest in the Aegean, a place where the trade routes of Asia Minor and the whole eastern Mediterranean met ... Under the Pax Romana, therefore, Ephesus had grown to become a great center of trade, finance and industry."

241 According to Foss "no synagogue has been located; the 'basilica' north of the Theater Gymnasium may have been one, but the evidence is slight," consisting of a Jewish lamp of either the second or third century CE which was found in this building (Foss 1979: 45 n. 47).
groups were also represented in the city, including disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:1-7) and converts instructed by Paul (Acts 19:8-10; Köster 1995: 133).

Christians are the "True Israel"

In Dial. 11.5 Justin proclaims: "For we are the true and spiritual Israelitish nation, and the race of Judah and of Jacob and Isaac and Abraham (Ἰσραήλιτικὸν γὰρ τὸ ἀληθινὸν, πνευματικὸν, καὶ Ἰουδα γένος καὶ Ἰακώβ καὶ Ἀβραάμ)" and in Dial. 119.5 "And we shall inherit the Holy Land together with Abraham, receiving our inheritance for a boundless eternity, as being children of Abraham because we have like faith with him" (cf. 123.7; 124.1; 135.3). Richardson observes that "Justin's dialogue with Trypho is the first time in Christian literature that such an explicit claim has been made" concerning Christians being the "true Israel" and thereby replacing the Jews (Richardson 1969: 9).

Justin's statement explicitly expresses a view which took time to develop and required a distinctive theological setting in order to occur. In Christian literature prior to the middle of the second century, the substitution of the Jews as the people of God by the Christian community is only implied. The tendency is present in the Gospel of Matthew, for example, but as Richardson notes, "this identification is difficult to attain for it is still an intra muros struggle. The Christian community is no longer tied to the institutions of Israel, but it shies away from making the rupture complete by transposing titles" (Richardson 1969: 189). There are likewise traces of the idea of the Church as the "new" or "true" Israel in 1 Peter, Hebrews and Pauline letters, but the complete appropriation of the term "Israel" is not reflected in any of the New Testament documents.

Justin's Dialogue reflects a very different understanding of the relationship. Expressed for the first time in extant Christian literature is the idea that Gentile believers in Jesus replaced the Jews as the chosen people of God. By the middle of the second century the hope that Jews would turn to Christianity in large numbers had waned; by their
rejection of the Gospel the Jews relinquished their inheritance and Gentile Christians claimed it.242 According to Richardson,

As long as the Church was viewed as a community gathered from Gentiles and Jews, it could not readily call itself 'Israel'. But when it was sharply separated from both, and when it had a theory that Judaism no longer stood in a continuity with Israel ante Christum, and when Gentiles not only could take over other titles but in some cases could claim exclusive rights to them, then the Church as an organizational entity could appropriate 'Israel.' (Richardson 1969: 204)

Christians and the Law

Trypho, in Dial. 10.3, expresses surprise that Christians say that they worship God and consider themselves "to be superior to other people" but do not separate themselves "in that you keep neither the feasts nor the sabbaths, nor have circumcision ... you yet hope to obtain some good from God, though you do not do His commandments." In one of his most severe claims, where he sides with Rome against the Jews, Justin states the following in Dial. 16.2:

For the circumcision according to the flesh, that was from Abraham, was given for a sign, that you should be separated from the other nations and us, and that you alone should suffer the things you are rightly suffering now, and that your lands should be desolate and your cities burned with fire, and that foreigners should eat up the fruits before your face, and none of you go up unto Jerusalem.

Justin argues that circumcision was commanded of the Jews to set them apart for suffering (also 28.4; 92.2-3; 137.1). He furthermore argues vehemently against the adoption of this practice by Christians: "You, indeed, who are circumcised in your flesh have need of our circumcision, but we, possessing this, have no need of that" (Dial. 19.2), since, if

242 Richardson 1969: 12 asserts that "by the middle of the second century the Church in its apologetic has effected a total transposition."
circumcision were necessary, God would not have created people prior to Abraham uncircumcised. Justin explains that Christians would be circumcised and keep the festivals and sabbaths "if we did not know the reason why it all was enjoined even on you, namely, because of your transgressions and hardness of heart" (Dial. 18.2).

Food laws, according to Justin's understanding, were given to the Jews because they tended to forget God: "He charged you too to abstain from certain foods, in order that even in your eating and drinking you may have God before your eyes, since you are prone and apt to depart from the knowledge of Him" (Dial. 20.1). And regarding the observance of Shabbat, this too was given as a sign "because of your sins and those of your fathers" (Dial. 21.1ff.). Elsewhere he writes: "In the same way He commanded offerings because of the sins of your people, and because of their idolatries, and not because He was in need of such" (Dial. 22.1ff.). According to Justin, it is no longer necessary to observe any of the law: "For if before Abraham there was no need of circumcision, and before Moses none of keeping the Sabbath, and of festivals, and of offerings, neither in like manner is there any need now, after the Son of God, Jesus Christ..." (Dial. 23.3).

Why Talk Torah to Gentiles?

Throughout the Dialogue, Justin argues that the Mosaic Law was created in order to address the moral weaknesses of the Jewish people, and that it was created for them alone: other peoples were not obligated to keep these commandments. Claudia Setzer raises the following important questions regarding the motivation behind the content of this document:

---

243 Justin argues that although Jesus was circumcised, he was not made righteous by this (Dial. 67.6).
244 In chapter 5 we discussed how Barnabas 10 interprets the food laws in an innovative, allegorical way by arguing that each restricted food represented a vice and each food permitted represented a moral virtue.
245 Richardson 1969: 10, remarks that there is "an unparalleled emphasis on the Gentiles as the heirs of these promises (particularly 109 ff.), whose 'otherness' is so stressed that a Gentile exclusiveness almost replaces the former Jewish exclusiveness." Cf. 119 ff.
Why did these debates take place? Justin is himself a Gentile and by the time of his writing, Christianity is largely Gentile. Why is he still arguing with Jews about who is the true Israel and whether or not the commandments should be observed? These do not seem to be issues which would interest the Roman government or the gentile populace in their evaluation of Jews. (Setzer 1994: 146)

In answer to these questions, Setzer offers the following: "The debate may represent simply the search for self-understanding and self-definition. Yet it is possible that Jews and Gentiles are competing for gentile converts" (Setzer 1994: 146). Although the latter proposal approaches the correct answer, neither of these explanations is accurate.

The reason why Justin deals with issues regarding the Law is because he was cognizant of the fact that Gentile Christians were interested in Torah observance. At the beginning of chapter 46, Trypho asks Justin the following question: "If some even now desire to live in accordance with the precepts of the Mosaic Law (βουλώνται φυλάσσοντες τὰ διὰ Μωσέως διαταχθέντα), and yet believe that the crucified Jesus is the Christ of God and that to him it has been given to judge without exception all men, and that his kingdom is eternal, could they also be saved (δύνανται καὶ αὐτοὶ σωθῆναι)?" In his response to the question, which extends into chapter 47, Justin delineates four different types of Christians (of both Jewish and Gentile origin) who follow the law, and discusses whether he deems them to be accepted ("saved") or not:

1. Jewish Christians who followed the law but continue to believe in Jesus and live with Christians without trying to convince them "either to receive circumcision like themselves, or to keep sabbath, or to observe other things of the same kind" are to be accepted (47.2).

2. Jewish Christians who believe in Christ but "in every way compel those who are of Gentile birth and believe on this Christ to live in accordance with the law appointed by Moses, or choose not to have communion with them that have such a life in common" are not accepted (47.3).
3. Gentile Christians "who follow their advice and live under the law, as well as keep their profession in the Christ of God will I suppose, perhaps [or probably] be saved (σωθήσεσθαι ἵσως ὑπολαμβάνω)" (47.4).

4. Former Gentile Christians who "once professed and recognized" Jesus as Messiah but "for some cause or other passed over (μεταβαίνω) into the life under the Law" and deny Jesus "cannot, I declare, in any wise be saved" (47.4).

Justin's response in numbers 3 and 4 indicates that he was familiar with the phenomenon of Gentile Christian Judaizing; that is, he indicates explicitly that he was aware that some Gentile Christians in his congregation observed Torah. Group number 3 practised the law and maintained Christian beliefs, while group number 4 defected from the Christian camp altogether to join the synagogue and live as Jews.246 Regarding these apostates, Stephen Wilson observes that "this is the clearest reference to such a group in early Christian sources" (Wilson 1995: 166).

It seems clear that Justin is commenting on issues with which he himself was personally familiar. Trypho's question, which precipitates this discussion, is in the conditional form (εὰν δὲ τινες), as are the other stipulations within the discussion. As Wilson reasonably suggests, "the conditional is perfectly normal on the lips of partners in a dialogue, and could still refer to types of Christian known to both" (Wilson 1995: 166).247 Skarsaune observes that Justin not only made use of traditional material in his writing but he added and expanded these texts and arguments when he deemed it necessary. He suggests that Justin "is ... very much on his own in the concluding chapters 46ff. concerning the observance of the Law by Jewish Christians" (Skarsaune 1987: 426).

---

246 Justin does not explicitly state that the members he describes in group 4 are Gentiles, but, as Stephen Wilson points out, "the context favours this view and, if he had Jewish Christians in mind, we might have expected him to say that they 'returned to' rather than 'switched over to' (μεταβαίνω) the Jewish community" (1992: 609 n. 16).

247 Wilson 1995: 166 postulates that: "the way in which he discusses the issue, and in particular the casual allusion to disagreements in the Christian community about how to evaluate and relate to Jewish Christians (Dial. 47.1-2), indicates most naturally a situation known to him firsthand, " so it was not a case of Justin applying what he knew from apostolic tradition to his contemporary situation.
It is significant that Justin accepts the observance of Mosaic law by Jewish Christians (as long as they do not try to persuade other Christians to do likewise) and by Gentile Christians (albeit reluctantly). It seems that he views Gentile Christians who observed Jewish customs as dissidents rather than apostates; that is, he considers them as erratic members of the community but members nonetheless, and deems them worthy of being saved. In his acceptance of Gentile Christian Judaizers as legitimately within the Christian fold, Justin demonstrates more tolerance than earlier Christian writers who encountered this phenomenon, such as Ignatius, the author of Revelation, and even Paul himself.

According to Justin, certain Gentile Christians (group 3) Judaize because they have been persuaded (πειθομένους αὐτοῖς) to live under the law (ἐπὶ τὴν ἐννομον πολιτείαν). In 47.3, he states: "But if any of your people, Trypho, profess their belief in Christ, and at the same time force the Christian Gentiles to follow the Law instituted through Moses, or refuse to share in communion with them this same common life, I certainly will also not approve of them." According to this statement, Gentile Christians Judaize because Jewish Christians convince them to. Perhaps these Jewish Christians threatened that they would not associate with the Gentiles unless they complied. Unfortunately Justin is less forthcoming regarding why certain Gentile Christian Judaizers abandon their faith and "switch over" to Judaism (group 4). He simply says that they do so "for some cause or other (ὅτι ινοῦν αἰτία)" (47.4).

Justin is obviously frustrated by continued law observance by Gentile Christians, and in order to impede the spread of the phenomenon he declares that he does not approve of Jewish Christians who attempted to influence Gentile Christians "to be circumcised like themselves, or to keep the Sabbath, or to perform any other similar acts" (Dial. 47.1).

249 Justin tells Trypho that Jewish Christians who do not try to persuade Gentile Christians to Judaize "will be saved;" a point of view which apparently was not held by some of Justin's Christian colleagues, some of whom refused to eat or converse with Jewish Christians (47.2).
This indicates that circumcision and Sabbath observance were among the Jewish rituals maintained by Gentile Christians in Justin's area. These two rites frequently are mentioned in connection with Gentile Christians in other Christian documents from Asia Minor, such as Galatians, Ignatius' letters to Magnesia and Colossians.\footnote{The letter to the Colossians, which deviates from the genuine Pauline letters in theology, vocabulary and style, was probably written about twenty years or so after Paul's death by someone familiar with the tradition and perhaps the letters of Paul (Roetzel 1998: 134-137). It contains warnings about yielding to teachings which promoted Jewish ritual practices, and since the community was predominantly Gentile (1:21, 27; 2:13, but particularly 3:5-7), if the teaching were accepted, Gentile Christian Judaizers would have resulted. Colossians 2:16, which states "Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths," implies that Gentile Christians who are not observing these Jewish practices are being denounced by advocates of such practices. The program being promoted in Colossae also encouraged the practice of circumcision. In 2:11-12, the author reminds his readers that they "were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ" and that this was achieved when they "were buried with him in baptism." The statement in 3:11 that "there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised" can also be understood as an attack intended to undermine the promotion of circumcision for Gentiles.} It is furthermore interesting to note, as Wilson observes, that Justin "is ... noticeably harsher in his judgment of those who propagate Jewish observance than of those Gentiles who succumb" (Wilson 1995: 166).

Justin describes a mixed community of Jewish and Gentile Christians with the following variations: 1) Christians (Justin does not specify whether they are of Gentile or Jewish origin) who refused fellowship with law-observant Jewish Christians; 2) law-observant Jewish Christians who were putting pressure on Gentile Christians to maintain some Jewish rituals; 3) some law-observant Jewish Christians (perhaps from the former group) who refused fellowship with Gentile Christians; 4) Jewish Christians who did not observe the law; 5) Gentiles who became Christians, began observing the law and eventually rejected Jesus as Messiah; 6) Gentile Christians who observed the law (i.e., Jewish Christian Judaizers); and 7) Gentile Christians who did not observe the law.

This description affords us a valuable glance into the constituencies of an early Christian community. Justin was personally familiar with a wide spectrum of conduct manifested by Christians of both Jewish and Gentile origin which he categorizes according to their acceptability for salvation. He is aware that some of them (described in number 5 above) became so enmeshed in Jewish practices that they eventually abandoned their faith.
in Christ, thereby straying beyond the limits of the Christian community altogether. These individuals, whom he declares "cannot ... in any wise be saved" (47.4), succumbed completely to Jewish ways. Perhaps this is precisely what other Christian leaders in both Asia Minor and Syria (such as Barnabas and Ignatius), feared and fought with such ferocity: that Gentiles who had faith in Jesus but began to observe Jewish customs would eventually abandon their belief in Christ and become Jewish converts.

The Audience of the Dialogue

The portrayal of the relationship between Jews and Christians that emerges from Justin's Dialogue With Trypho is complex and multi-dimensional. On the one hand Justin presents his Jewish partner in the debate as polite, gentle and open-minded, but on the other hand he frequently mentions the Jews cursing Jesus and believers in Jesus, and persecuting Christians. He takes the radical step of explicitly claiming the title "Israel," the chosen people of God, for Christians alone, and even appropriates Jewish scripture because, in his view, Jews do not understand it. He argues against Jewish ritual and attributes the bestowal of the Law by God on the Jews to their moral decrepitude, yet there remains within Justin hope for the salvation of the Jews. He does not completely abandon them to a horrible fate; in Dial. 32.2, for example, Justin states: "I hope that some one of you can be found to belong to [the seed] which ... is left over unto eternal salvation" (also 14.8; 35.8; 38.2; 39.2; 44.1; 102.7; 108.7). Most importantly for our purposes, Justin not only acknowledges that sometimes Gentile Christians succumbed to persuasion from fellow Jewish Christians to follow Jewish law, but he accepts Gentile Christian Judaizers as legitimate members of the ecclesiastical community.

A strong and vibrant Jewish presence existed in the Roman Empire, particularly in Asia Minor. Justin was faced with explaining the relationship between Christianity and Judaism to a Gentile audience which was familiar with and attracted to Judaism. In Dial.
23.3, Justin addresses Trypho "and those who wish to be proselytes (καὶ τοῖς
βουλομένοις προσηλύτοις γενέσθαι)," saying "[a]bide as you have been born
(μεῖνατε ὡς γεγένησθε)." This was the message Justin wished to communicate to
the Gentile Christian readers of his *Dialogue* who were attracted to Judaism: "Stay as you
are. Do not become circumcised, do not observe the Sabbath, or other rites of the law." 252

Summary

In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin describes a dichotomous Christian community
containing Christians of Jewish and Gentile origin both observing parts of the Mosaic law.
While he accepts Gentile Christian Judaizers as part of the legitimate ecclesiastical
community, he denies the salvation of those Gentile Christians who begin to maintain
certain Jewish customs and eventually abandon their faith. For these Gentiles, Christianity
is a transitional, temporary state between paganism and Judaism. Justin directs most of his
animosity and judgement towards Jewish Christians who, through their threats of ceasing
to associate with non-Judaizing Gentile Christians, compel Gentile Christians to observe
Jewish practices such as circumcision and the Sabbath. He disapproves of this process and
wishes to prevent its occurrence. In order to curtail their influence, Justin denies the
salvation of such Jewish Christians.

Interestingly, Justin does not deny the salvation of Gentile Christian Judaizers who
maintain their faith in Jesus. By grudgingly accepting them as members of the Christian
community, Justin is being more tolerant than several other early Christian writers who
deal with this phenomenon in Asia Minor. His tolerance likely was prompted by a self-

---

251 While Justin elsewhere uses the term προσηλύτος to refer to Jewish converts to Christianity (cf.
28.2; 123.5) here he refers to Jewish proselytes (cf. 122.1-123.2). See Skarsaune 1987: 258-9.
252 Skarsaune notes that "Trypho's friends become particularly engaged when Justin says that Is 42:6f does
not refer to the (Jewish) proselytes, *Dial.* 122.4: It looks as if they are personally involved!" (Skarsaune
1987: 258). He concludes that "It is a very reasonable surmise that the *Dialogue* itself is addressed
primarily to the same kind of people, or at least that these were the original addressees of the exegetical
exposition of the *Dialogue.*"
serving purpose: by accepting Gentile Christian Judaizers within the church Justin sought to prevent their Christian identity from being merely transitory. If welcomed within the Christian community, perhaps they would not become proselytes to Judaism.

**Conclusion**

Gentile Christian interest in Judaism angered the authors of these texts, prompting them to denigrate Jews and Judaism, a reaction which has contributed significantly to anti-Jewish attitudes among members of the early church. The Book of Revelation reflects a situation where Gentiles live like Jews and Ignatius encounters Gentile Christian Judaizers who wish to adhere to certain Jewish customs and ways of thinking within the church community. Gentile Christian Judaizing was such an urgent and troubling concern for Justin, that Gentile Christians with this proclivity are the primary readers towards which the *Dialogue* is directed. His aspiration for Gentile Christians was that they would remain as they were and not become Judaizers. If they did succumb in some measure to the persuasion of the Jewish Christians, he accepted them as legitimate members of the Christian community as long as they retained their faith in Christ.
Chapter 7
Marcion and Melito

The Asia Minor documents discussed in the last chapter each contain statements which directly connect Christians with Judaism or Jewish behaviour. In Rev. 2:9 and 3:9, Christians are accused of falsely identifying themselves as Jews and are called a "synagogue of Satan;" in Phld. 6.1, Ignatius indicates that he had been hearing "Judaism from the uncircumcised;" and in his Dialogue with Trypho, Justin describes how certain Gentile Christian members of his congregation "lived under the Law" (47.4). I have contended that each of these authors was responding to the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizing within their respective communities.

In this chapter I consider teachings promoted by two second century CE Christian leaders associated with the Asia Minor region, and I argue that the teachings and attitudes expressed by these leaders may have been shaped by exposure to Gentile Christian Judaizing. The evidence for this proposal is implicit rather than explicit, thus my argument is necessarily more speculative here than in previous chapters. The preponderance of evidence for the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizing as a problematic phenomenon for church leaders in Asia Minor, however, makes this understanding of the attitudes and teachings of Marcion and Melito at least as probable as other interpretations of their views.

Marcion

In his book on Marcion, Harnack states "Of course within the catholic tradition there was general agreement that the ceremonial law did not apply to Christians, but the validation of this principle was itself dubious, and beyond the principle itself there were the most painful divergences, even to the point of contradiction" (Harnack 1990 [1921]: 12). The
phenomenon of Gentile Christian attraction to Judaism may have been one of the "painful divergences" addressed by Marcion. Marcion's teachings assert the separation of Judaism and Christianity, in terms of deity, scriptures and Messiah, and while his views can be understood in other ways, reconsidering his attitude towards Judaism in light of the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizing elucidates in a new way the historical situation to which he may have responded.

Marcion's activity began in approximately 140 CE in Rome. He arrived there a wealthy ship owner or merchant seaman (nauclers; cf. Tertullian adv. Marc. 1.18; 3.6; 5.1; May 1987-88: 136-7), who had been born in approximately 100 CE.253 He was raised in Sinope, a port city on the Black Sea in the province of Pontus (Epiphanius, Panarion 42.1.3). Unfortunately, none of Marcion's own writings are extant and the only information we have about him is derived from his critics.254 Rather than cast aside these sources altogether, however, we must approach this material with suspicion, keeping in mind that the information received is from sources that rejected Marcion's teachings. May admits, despite his skepticism, that "the writing of the old witnesses must in any case serve as the substantial basis for the reconstruction of Marcion's doctrine" (May 1987-88: 134).255 Interestingly, the evidence portrays Marcion and his followers as leading moral, chaste lives of disciplined ascetics. Aside from the salacious story about how he had seduced a young woman in Sinope, there are no charges of immorality made against Marcion or his followers (R. S. Wilson 1980 [1933]: 73; S. G. Wilson 1995: 212).

253 Hoffmann argues that Marcion was born in c. 70 CE — thirty years earlier than the usually accepted chronology — suggesting that Polycarp, Ignatius and even the author of the Pastorals and 2 Peter combated the Marcionite movement. He states that "there is ... good reason to believe that the earliest anti-Marcionite polemic emanated from a particular circle of orthodoxy, in which Polycarp, Ignatius, and the author of the Pastorals, played key roles (Hoffmann 1984: 73). Wilson has pointed out the circular nature of this argument, "For it is the identification of the obscure heretics opposed by Ignatius et al. as Marcionites that proves that Marcion came earlier" (Wilson 1995: 377 note 52).

254 May notes that Tertullian, for example, "does not want to present the doctrine of his opponent in a documentary fashion, but wants to refute it. What at first glance appears to be a quotation is mostly only a critical discussion, often probably also snatched up, editorially enhanced, and - - not to be forgotten - - in every case translated from Greek" (May 1987-88: 140).

255 Michel Desjardins points out that the Church fathers "have often reproduced the words of their opponents far more extensively and probably far more literally than the author of Acts ever did of Paul" (Desjardins 1990: 10).
Among his adherents were many who were willing to suffer martyrdom (Eusebius, Eccles. hist. 5.16).

Some scholars have speculated that Marcion was of Jewish origin. Harnack asserts that Marcion's understanding of the messianic prophecies correspond to a Jewish perspective, and that "[o]ne detects nothing of the Hellenistic spirit in him, the Jewish expositions of the Old Testament are well known to him, and his entire attitude toward the Old Testament and Judaism can best be understood as one of resentment." He proposes that Marcion was born to parents who had converted to Judaism, and that after he converted to Christianity, Marcion resentfully disparaged his former faith (Harnack 1990 [1921]: 15). Hoffmann likewise postulates that Marcion was "a convert from the Jewish community in Pontus" (Hoffmann 1984: 29). There is little evidence, however, to substantiate this suggestion (see Wilson 1995: 218). Surely if it were correct that Marcion converted from Judaism to Christianity, Tertullian, Epiphanius or Irenaeus would not have overlooked mentioning this in their writing.

Separate Deities, Scriptures and Messiahs

Marcion taught that there were two gods: the deity that created the universe who was the god of the Jews, and the deity that Jesus introduced for the first time to the world, a higher god who was the god of the Christians. Tertullian explains that Marcion "had an unhealthy interest in the problem of evil — the origin of it — and his perceptions were numbed by the very excess of his curiosity" (adv. Marc. 1.2). Indeed, it seems that in his struggle to understand how a good god could have introduced evil into his creation, Marcion concluded that the creator of the world was an inferior deity who was a malevolent judge and prone to petty outbursts, not a loving god. This was the god of the Jews and author of the Hebrew scriptures. The other god, introduced to the world for the first time through
Jesus, was very different: this was a kind, peaceful and thoroughly good deity (cf. Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* 1.2; 1.6).

Marcion taught not only separation of Jewish and Christian gods, but also separation of Jewish and Christian scriptures. According to Tertullian, the *Antitheses* "are designed to show the conflict and disagreement of the Gospel and the law, so that from the diversity of principles between those two documents they may argue further for a diversity of gods..." (*adv. Marc.* 1.19). Marcion distinguished between two gods as a way to give "a rationale for the failure of the lesser God — for mankind in general and the Jews specifically — to recognize the redeemer ... the Creator is fickle and cruel in his dealings with mankind; but he is not explicitly culpable, being ignorant of the higher revelation" (Hoffmann 1984: 203). In fact, Tertullian states that "it is precisely this separation of Law and Gospel which has suggested a god of the Gospel, other than and in opposition to the God of the Law" (*adv. Marc.* 1.19), and that "the whole of the work he has done, including the prefixing of his *Antitheses*, he directs to the one purpose of setting up opposition between the Old Testament and the New, and thereby putting his Christ in separation from the Creator, as belonging to another god, and having no connection with the law and the prophets" (*adv. Marc.* 4.6).

Paul's letters, Luke's Gospel (altered to reflect the "true Gospel"), and Marcion's *Antitheses*, became the replacement for the rejected Hebrew scriptures for Marcionites. Marcion thereby created the first canon of scriptures, an action which prompted the orthodox church to differentiate between spurious and sacred scriptures, resulting in the construction of its own canon. R. J. Wilson notes that Marcion "found the orthodox church catholic in its syncretism and its universal mission, but with no authoritative book and no central, catholic doctrine. The reaction against Marcion gave it both" (Wilson 1980 [1933]: 178). It is ironic that Marcion's opposition to the church of the second century challenged the church to develop the very tools it would need in order to triumph over

---

256 Grant plausibly postulates that Marcion might have desired to distance Christianity from Judaism in light of the unsuccessful Jewish revolt under Bar Kochba (Grant 1959: 121-128).
Marcionism; "it is one of the curiosities of history that his work has established that which he thought to reject" (Wilson 1980 [1933]: 178).

In Marcion's view, Jesus gave his disciples the true gospel, but they had so distorted it that its true meaning was lost until Paul received his revelation. Paul was the only one who understood Jesus' message correctly, and, though his writings had been corrupted through interpolation, Marcion was able to restore the original texts (Grant 1984: 208). He selected Paul's epistle to the Galatians to be the first document in his collection. This is not a surprising choice, since out of the entire Pauline corpus, Galatians is the letter that directs the most hostility against the law and against Christians who wish to observe its precepts. From Marcion's perspective, in his letter to the Galatians Paul asserts his position and authority over against the Jewish Christian apostles who had distorted the Gospel (e.g., Gal. 1:1, 12, 16, 17, 19; 2:6, 11).

Marcion argues that the Jews in fact were not mistaken when they did not accept Jesus as Messiah, for Jesus was not their Messiah. According to Tertullian, Marcion's contention was that Jesus was not the Messiah of the Jews because "they would beyond doubt have recognized him and have treated him with all religious devotion if he had been their own" (adv. Marc. 3.6). The Jews were to await another Messiah. Jesus was not the redeemer of all the nations but "another Christ who is destined by God the Creator to come at some time still future for the re-establishment of the Jewish kingdom. Between these he sets up a great and absolute opposition, such as that between justice and kindness, between law and gospel, between Judaism and Christianity" (adv. Marc. 4.6). This may have been the way in which Marcion grappled with why the Jews did not accept Jesus as Messiah, yet continued to thrive. Stephen Wilson observes that Marcion's proposal so effectively addresses this issue that "[f]ar from being surprised at the appearance of

257 Tertullian correspondingly states that "We too claim that the primary epistle against Judaism is that addressed to the Galatians" (adv. Marc. 5.2).

258 This statement strongly implies that Marcion was of Gentile, not Jewish origin.
Marcion, we should perhaps be surprised that his enthusiastic and fairly numerous supporters were alone in coming to the same conclusion" (Wilson 1995: 220).

Like Ignatius, who sought the dissociation of Christianity from Judaism (Magn. 10.3; cf. also 8.1, 9.1 and Phld. 6.1, 8.2, 9.2), Marcion appears to have fought strongly against a close association of Christianity with Judaism, as is evident in the various changes he makes to the texts he used. For example, he deletes from Galatians chapter 3: 6-9 and 15-25, which discuss the close relationship between Christians and Abraham. Tertullian notes that "it becomes evident how much ... the heretic's diligence has erased the reference, I mean, to Abraham, in which the apostle affirms that we are by faith the sons of Abraham, and in accordance with that reference he here also has marked us off as sons of faith" (adv. Marc. 5.3). Hoffmann aptly proposes that from Marcion's perspective:

The mission of Paul was the prototype of his own attempt to preserve the message of Jesus concerning the unknown God from corruption by latter-day 'judaizers': bishops who had not yet been weaned from the law and continued to appeal to the OT as if it still counted for something; who spoke 'with authority' of 'a new law in Jesus Christ'; gave thanks 'for the knowledge of the past'; and declared that 'even Moses had spoken through the Spirit.' (Hoffmann 1984: 151)

Marcion understood himself to be engaged in the same struggle undertaken by Paul: to proclaim the true version of the Gospel of Jesus in an environment where the Christian message had been distorted by too close a connection with Judaism.

One report suggests that Marcion instructed his followers to fast on Saturday, the "time of rest for the God of the Jews ... lest we do what befits the God of the Jews" (Epiphanius, Panarion 42.3.4). Fasting was not an activity in which Jews engaged as part of Sabbath observance, thus if Marcion did initiate this action, his motivation may have been to convey the message that Christians were not to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest in imitation of the Jews. As already observed, maintenance of the Sabbath did occur in Asia Minor Christian communities (e.g., Ignatius, Magn. 9.1).
One of Marcion's contemporaries from Pontus provides evidence for Gentile attraction to Judaism. Aquila, the translator of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, was a Gentile who, according to tradition, was a relative of the Emperor Hadrian by marriage and converted to Christianity. Aquila is proof of the drawing power of Judaism: he eventually became a Jewish proselyte.

---

259 The plausibility that Marcion was reacting to Gentile interest in Judaism, and perhaps Gentile Christian Judaizing, is enhanced by the existence of evidence indicating that Jewish and Christian communities in his home province of Pontus were not isolated from one another in the first century CE. In fact, the relationship between Jews and Christians in this region of Marcion's development may well have been interactive and friendly (see Wilson 1995: 218). Marcion began to teach in Rome, not Pontus, but by the time he moved to Rome he was a man in his late thirties or early forties and thus many of his formative years presumably were spent in Pontus. The environment in that province and the nature of the state of Jewish/Christian relations is relevant, to our discussion of plausible influences on his life. Peter is addressed to Christians of Gentile and Jewish origin (1:14, 18; 4:3) in the areas of Pontus, Galatia, Cappodocia, Asia and Bithynia (1:1). The letter, probably written in the late first century CE, contains frequent usage of and allusion to the Hebrew scriptures and Jewish terminology, suggesting that the readers considered these writings authoritative and already had some exposure to them (e.g., Van Unnik 1962: 764). There are approximately forty-six quotations and allusions, including nine explicit quotations, thirteen to fifteen allusions, and twenty implicit allusions, with most of the references drawn from the LXX (Schutter 1989: 35-43). Lev. 19:2, for example, is quoted in I Peter 1:16 and paraphrased in 1:15, while I Peter 2:9-10 conflates references from Exodus 19:5-6 and Isaiah 43:20-1, calling the readers "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people (γένος ἐκλεκτόν, βασιλείαν ḵεράτευσα, ἐσός άγιον, λαός εἰς περιποίησιν)." Ernest Best observes that I Peter incorporates more scriptural quotations and allusions than Paul does in his letters (1977: 47). Perhaps some of the Gentile Christians in these areas were former God-fearers and thus were exposed to teaching on the Hebrew scriptures when they attended synagogue or mixed with Jews (Von Soden 1893: 111-12; Van Unnik 1962: 764; ibid. 1956-7: 81). Some of the recipients also might have been former converts to Judaism (Van Unnik 1962: 765). Peter Richardson 1969: 173, suggests that "it is a mixed Church, preponderantly Gentile with perhaps a good number previously being God-fearers or proselytes;" John Elliott 1981: 66, states: "it is likely that among their number were those pagans whose contact with Christianity was mediated through an earlier association with the synagogue as proselytes to Judaism. This is suggested by the attraction which the Christian movement had for such Gentile proselytes to Judaism in general, the knowledge and persuasive force of the Old Testament which I Peter assumes, the Greek version of the Old Testament which the letter quotes, and the use of metaphors for conversion which were common to Jewish as well as Christian missionary propaganda." W. L. Schutter 1989: 9, states inexplicably that "most addressees do not seem to have been Jews or proselytes" and then a few pages later expresses confusion over why so many scripture references were used for a letter directed to "non-Jews," as noted above. The preponderance of evidence for pagan attraction to Judaism (see above, chapter two), and more specifically, for Gentile Christian attraction to Judaism discussed in this study, ought to dispell scholarly puzzlement regarding texts like I Peter.

260 Epiphanius, De Mens. et pond., 14 says that Aquila was a Greek from Sinope, Pontus and a relation (πανεγραφή) of Hadrian by marriage. There are a number of Talmudic legends pertaining to a certain "Onkelos the Proselyte," a Tanna at the end of the first century CE. Frequently the name "Onkelos" and "Aquila" are interchanged. At Babylon, little was known about the proselyte Aquila, but Onkelos was well known in Talmudic tradition. Thus legends related to Aquila became associated with Onkelos. For example, b. Meg. 3a states that "Onkelos translated the Pentateuch into Aramaic according to the instructions of R. Eliezer and R. Joshua."
Summary

Although Marcion began his teaching in Rome, he grew up in Asia Minor where Gentile Christians continued to be infatuated with Judaism in the second century CE, as evidenced in Revelation, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho. Perhaps, like other ecclesiastical leaders associated with Asia Minor, Marcion was in part motivated in his teachings by an awareness of Christian attraction to Judaism. As Stephen Wilson suggests: "Conceding to Judaism their god, their scriptures, their messiah, and their kingdom would have solved in one bold move the dilemmas posed by the survival of Judaism, rival claims to a common scripture, and the attraction of Judaism to some Gentile Christians" (Wilson 1995: 220).

Melito's ΠΕΡΙ ΠΑΣΧΑ

While there is no direct evidence for Gentile Judaizers in any of Melito's extant writings, the existence of Gentile Christians attracted to Judaism may be a way of understanding certain aspects of his attitude towards Judaism evident in his Peri Pascha. Given that Gentile Judaizing is attested in Asia Minor, it is plausible that the phenomenon existed in the city of Sardis as well.

Melito, Bishop of Sardis, was a Quartodeciman. Quartodecimans, apparently populous throughout Asia Minor by the late second century CE, celebrated Easter on the same date as the Jewish Passover, the 14th of Nissan. Their manner of observance was of a Jewish nature, for they held a Seder in the same way as the Jews, and their leaders were

---

261 Stephen Wilson suggests that perhaps Marcion acted "in reaction to the kind of unrestrained allegorical exegesis found among some of his contemporaries (e.g., the author of Barnabas)" (Wilson 1995: 213). May suggests, on the other hand, that Marcion rejected an allegorical interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures since, "according to the ancient view, allegorization is not a method to be applied to random texts, but rather is only justifiable if the revelatory character and the sanctity of a text is established," but this seems to be an anachronistic perspective (May 1987-88: 147).
familiar with the Jewish customs of Passover (Werner 1966: 200).\textsuperscript{262} In contrast to churches in Asia Minor, Roman congregations and similarly churches in the western part of the Empire celebrated Easter one week after the Passover on Sunday, the day of the resurrection of Jesus. This difference in practice generated much dispute and tension among the proponents of each view (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl* 4.23-24).

Eusebius describes Melito, the Bishop of Sardis (*Hist. eccl* 4.25), as a champion of the Quartodeciman view who was a celibate ascetic and one of the luminaries of the church "who lived entirely in the Holy Spirit, and who lies in Sardis waiting for the visitation from heaven when he shall rise from the dead" (*Hist. eccl* 5.24). He lived about 120-185 CE, during the reign of emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE). He was a talented and prolific writer: Tertullian calls him an elegant and most eloquent spirit (*elegans et declamatorium ingenium*) (Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* 24), for whom Eusebius provides a long list of his works (4.25). Most of Melito's writing has been lost, except for a fragment from his *Apology*, which was addressed to the emperor, and the *Peri Pascha* (hereafter referred to as PP).\textsuperscript{263}

**The City of Sardis**

The PP was probably written in Sardis, Asia Minor (contra Hall 1979: xix). The Jewish community had a long history and deep roots in the Lydian city of Sardis. The earliest reference to a Jewish connection with the city may be in Obadiah 20, which refers to "Sepharad" as a place where exiled Jews sought refuge.\textsuperscript{264} Josephus reports that Antiochus III transplanted 200 Jewish families from Babylon to Phrygia and Lydia, whose capital was Sardis, to keep peace in the area in c. 210 BCE. Antiochus instructed that the

\textsuperscript{262} Werner states that "they were anything but Judaeo-Christians, most of them were gentiles through and through" (Werner 1966: 200), but as far as I am aware there is no evidence that "most" were Gentiles.

\textsuperscript{263} The translation and critical text used throughout this paper is that of Hall (1979).

\textsuperscript{264} At Sardis an early Lydian-Aramaic inscription, possibly dated to the fifth century BCE, bears the Aramaic form of the name of Sardis as סַרְדִּי (Hemer 1986: 135).
Jews "should ... use their own laws. And when you have brought them to the places mentioned, you shall give each of them a place to build a home and land to cultivate and plant with vines" (Ant. 12.147-53).

Josephus presents a series of documents which deal with requests on behalf of Jewish communities in Asia Minor for privileges from the Roman government. Three of these pertain to the city of Sardis.265 A letter from Lucius Antonius, son of Marcus, to "the magistrates, council and people of Sardis" reveals that the Jews of Sardis have had "from the earliest times ... an association (σύνοδος) of their own, in accordance with their native laws and a place (τόπος) of their own, in which they decide their affairs and controversies with one another" and the letter confirms that these privileges are to be maintained (Ant. 14.235). A decree "of the people of Sardis" which appears to be later than Antonius' letter, confirms the right of the Jews to "come together (συνάγωνται) and have a communal life (πολιτεύονται) and adjudicate suits among themselves, and that a place (τόπος) be given them in which they may gather together with their wives and children and offer their ancestral prayers and sacrifices to God" and it further instructs that special measures are to be taken to import food appropriate for the Jewish diet (Ant. 14.259-61). A letter from Gaius Norbanus Flaccus, proconsul, addressed to the magistrates and council of Sardis, states that the collection of the Jewish Temple tax "in accordance with their ancestral custom" is to continue undisturbed and interference is forbidden, no matter how large the sum (Ant. 16.171).

From these three documents, we learn that the Jews lived according to their own laws and customs, adjudicated their own affairs, and had their own designated "place" to meet, which may mean that they had their own building or simply that they gathered in an appointed place (see Richardson 1996: 90-109). They probably had their own market

265 There is a range of opinions concerning the authenticity of the letters and decrees presented by Josephus, with some scholars skeptical (such as Moehring 1975: 124-158 and Barclay 1996: 262-64) and others more accepting (Tcherikover 1970: 306-9; Smallwood 1976: 127-43; Rajak 1985: 19-35; Trebilco 1991: 8-19; Richardson 1996: 90-109). While Josephus' representation of these texts should not be accepted at face value, their content on the whole is probably genuine.
where imported kosher food could be sold, and they were able to collect the temple tax without restraint. In the period between these first century BCE documents and the third century CE, less evidence about the Jewish community at Sardis is available. A major earthquake ripped through the area in 17 CE, an event which Pliny describes as the greatest disaster in human memory (Natural History 2.86.200). Hemer notes that its recovery appears to have been rapid, for in 26 CE Sardis was one of the eleven Asian cities competing for the attainment of an imperial temple (Hemer 1986: 134).

By the third century CE the city appears to have regained most of its former splendor. Remarkable evidence attests to the existence of a prominent, wealthy Jewish community in the city. The largest excavated synagogue in the world, dating to the third and fourth centuries CE, was discovered in the heart of ancient Sardis (Kraabel 1971; Crawford 1996). In approximately the second half of the third century, the synagogue was created from part of the southeast section of an important civic building which housed a Roman bath and gymnasium (Seager 1983: 168; Crawford 1996: 40). Its placement as part of this important civic complex in the centre of the city is evidence that the Jewish community held an accepted and respected position in this mostly Gentile metropolis.

Multi-coloured mosaics attesting to the considerable wealth of the community date as early as the middle of the third century CE (Trebilco 1991: 42). Over eighty inscriptions concerning gifts of interior decorations and furnishings found inside the synagogue are mostly in Greek and indicate that a number of the Jewish congregants were of high social status. At least eight were members of the city council (βουλευταί), three were goldsmiths, one was a marble sculptor, and one a gem cutter (Trebilco 1991: 43-51; Noakes 1975: 245). The synagogue itself was never converted into a church but continued to function as a Jewish centre until the whole city was destroyed in the early seventh century CE.267

---

266 The author of Revelation may have drawn on the local memory of the disaster in some of that book's apocalyptic imagery (e.g. 6: 14-16; 8:8; 11:13; 16: 18-20) (Hemer 1986: 134).
267 The structure shows evidence of having undergone repairs until at least the middle of the sixth century, despite the 438 CE law of Theodosius II prohibiting the restoration and construction of synagogues. This
Most of the archaeological and epigraphical evidence attests to Jewish circumstances during a period rather later than the one in which we are interested. We can, however, cautiously extrapolate forward from Josephus' decrees and backwards from the excavated synagogue into the second century CE. There is one early fragment of a Hebrew inscription which reads "Beros" (i.e., "Verus"), which might represent an honorific inscription for the co-emperor Lucius Verus who ruled with Marcus Aurelius from 161-169 CE and visited Sardis in 166 CE. This inscription has been published only in English transliteration (Hansmann 1963: 43-44; Trebilco 1991: 44).

**268** The city erected a statue of Verus in the gymnasium in 166; perhaps the Jewish community similarly wished to honour him (Seager 1983: 171). This gesture, if it was indeed undertaken, would indicate that the Jewish community possessed an independent presence in the second century CE, as well as in the third and fourth.

The Christian church at Sardis received one of the seven letters of the Book of Revelation (Rev. 3:1-6), where it is challenged to "wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God." Archeological evidence from the fourth century suggests that the large Jewish and Christian communities of the city lived and worked side by side in a tolerant environment. In approximately 400 CE, a colonnade with 27 shops and residences was built contiguous to the synagogue, and objects discovered in these areas indicate that six shops belonged to Christians and ten to Jews (Crawford 1990; Crawford 1996: 40).

The period between the late first century CE when Revelation was written and the fourth century CE archaeological evidence again remains somewhat obscure. According to a fragment from Melito's *Apology* to the emperor Marcus Aurelius recorded in Eusebius, suggests, as Crawford asserts, "that actual relations between Christians and Jews were not as hostile as literary sources claim" (Crawford 1996: 44).

**269** Kraabel notes that "by the end of the first century A.D....a congregation had existed long enough to be compared (unfavorably) with the church of the past" (1971: 78).

**270** Ten others do not reveal the religious affiliation of their occupants, and one shop was left unexcavated for control purposes (Crawford 1996: 40).
Hist. eccl. 4.26, Christians were undergoing some form of persecution.\textsuperscript{271} The Peri Pascha may be able to shed some light into the relationship between Jews and Christians in the late second century CE.

The Peri Pascha and Melito's view of Jews and Judaism

In 1936 Prof. Campbell Bonner pieced together fragments from a codex in the British Museum and from the library at the University of Michigan and found that together they formulated the previously "lost" work by Melito called On the Passion (Hall 1979: xvii).\textsuperscript{272} Eusebius provides valuable, but enigmatic information regarding this document. For example, he states that Melito wrote two books on the Pascha (\(\tau \alpha \pi e\rho \iota \tau o\delta \pi \alpha \chi \alpha \delta \omicron \omicron \omega \)), but the work we have is undivided and seems to be complete (Hist. eccl. 4.26).\textsuperscript{273} Elsewhere he allegedly quotes from the beginning of the PP, but his words are not to be found in the extant version of the work (4.26). Despite these uncertainties, S. G. Hall reflects the scholarly consensus when he concludes that "while the exact relation of the homily to the two books On the Pascha reported by Eusebius remains uncertain, the difficulties are not substantial enough to call in question the authenticity of the homily" (Hall 1979: xxi).

\textsuperscript{271} Noakes (1975: 245), suggests that "there was constant strife between Jews and Christians in the province [of Asia Minor]" and mentions the alleged participation of Jews in the Martyrdom of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna. As we argued in chapter six, however, the death of Polycarp is described in such a way as to conform to the pattern of Jesus' death in the gospels, so that one learns nothing about Jews in Smyrna from this text. There is, furthermore, no evidence for "constant strife" between Jews and Christians in Asia Minor. In fact, the existence of Judaizing practices among Christians indicates that close interaction occurred between Jews and Christians in Asia Minor.

\textsuperscript{272} Hall further notes that the manuscript is in Greek, and other fragments in Greek, Syriac, and Coptic are extant. Werner 1966: 200, suggests that "it is an open question in which language the homily was first written" and seems to lean towards Syriac because the suffix-rhymes found in the homily are more natural in Syriac poetry than in Greek.

\textsuperscript{273} He also states that Clement of Alexandria quoted from Melito's book on the Pascha, and was in fact prompted to write his own book on the topic "because of" this work by Melito (4.26; 6.13). There are some scholars who argue that this suggests that Clement wrote to counter Melito in a polemical sense, and they conclude that Melito's work was a defence of Quartodeciman practices. This, however, casts doubt on whether our version of the PP is indeed by Melito, since it does not seem to have been written with the purpose of defending Quartodeciman practices. Hall 1979: xx, rightly suggests that the reference in Clement should not be taken as an indication that Clement wrote his work to attack Melito.
Melito expresses his views on Jews and Judaism in a decidedly unsubtle manner. In the beginning of the homily (sections 1-45), Melito discusses the story behind the Jewish Passover and describes the events of the exodus using highly dramatic narration.\textsuperscript{274} He probes the "strange mystery" of how Israel was protected from the destruction that befell Egypt and introduces the concept of "preliminary sketch" (προεντήμονα) which he uses throughout this first part of the homily in order to communicate his view of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Lines 217-218 read: "What is said and done is nothing, beloved, without a comparison and preliminary sketch." A "preliminary sketch," according to Melito, gives rise to the "future thing" (μέλλοντος) which will be "taller in height, and stronger in power," that is, an improvement on the preliminary sketch (lines 227-231).\textsuperscript{275} This encapsulates Melito's view of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity: Judaism served a purpose for a time, but it was a mere foreshadowing of the superior religion yet to come. Once Christianity did emerge, Judaism lost its value because it no longer served a function. He clearly states this in lines 235-240:

But when that of which it is the model arises, that which once bore the image of the future thing is itself destroyed as growing useless having yielded to what is truly real the image of it; and what once was precious becomes worthless when what is truly precious has been revealed.

Melito explains that Judaism, which served a valuable function in the past, has no value at present because its service has been rendered void.\textsuperscript{276} He is careful to express that Judaism made a significant contribution in a divinely ordered former time: "For to each

\textsuperscript{274} Halton 1970: 251 notes that "there is considerable theatricality in the description of the mourning scenes in Egypt" which is similar to Bacchic rites. For example, Melito describes how Egypt was devastated after every firstborn child had been killed, and depicts a frenzied mourning scene of "people beating themselves here, and wailing there" (line 120).

\textsuperscript{275} Analogous passages are found in the writings of Melito's contemporary, Maximus of Tyre, but the Peri Pascha is "la première œuvre chrétienne où nous trouvons l’usage de cette prose d’art. L’image elle-même est typiquement hellénistique" (Daniélou 1962: 286). Cf. also Barn. 1.7; 5.3; 17.2.

\textsuperscript{276} In his letter to the Galatians, Paul attributes a valuable but temporary function to the Jewish law when he states that "...the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are not longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith" (Gal. 3:24-26).
belongs a proper season: a proper time for the model, a proper time for the material, a proper time for the reality" (lines 241-244). Once reality emerged and the work was completed, the preliminary sketch was no longer necessary — nor was it desired.

Christianity was the "future thing" (μελλόντος), the "reality" (ἀληθεία), the "work" (ἔργος) that came, and Judaism was its "preliminary sketch" (προεκτήμονος) and "model" (τύπος): "You complete the work; you want that alone, you love that alone, because in it alone you see the pattern and the material and the reality" (lines 251-255).

While Melito's evaluation of Judaism was not entirely negative, his positive comments pertain only to Israel's past. Israel's present, in his view, is futile and hopeless.277

Christianity Replaces Judaism

In the present, Christianity and Christians alone are loved by God: the honoured position which once belonged to the Jews is now appropriated by the church. In lines 266-273, Melito explains how and why this change took place:

The model then was precious before the reality, and the parable was marvelous before the interpretation; that is, the people was precious before the church arose, and the law was marvelous before the gospel was elucidated. But when the church arose and the gospel took precedence, the model was made void, conceding its power to the reality, and law was fulfilled, conceding its power to the gospel.

This encapsulates Melito's view of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity: Judaism and its law were defunct, replaced by the church and the gospel. The Jewish people no longer held a special position before God. If any uncertainty remained about this, Melito dispels it unequivocally with characteristic forthrightness: "...the people was

277 Stephen Wilson 1995: 246, accurately observes: "insofar as the attributes of Judaism have continuing value it is by absorption into the Christian reality alone."
made void (ὁ λαός ἐκενώθη) when the church arose (τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀνασταθείσης)" (line 278). The implication is that Christians had secured the position formerly held by the Jews. This may have been a way of dealing with the continued existence of a vibrant Judaism.

Melito concludes his discussion of the Jewish Passover by declaring that it, too, had been replaced: "Once, the slaying of the sheep was precious, but it is worthless now (νῦν δὲ ἄτυχος) because of the salvation of the Lord" (lines 280-281). The death and blood of the lamb were no longer of value, for Jesus was now the Passover lamb and his death constituted the only valid Passover (lines 282-300). Melito provides a false etymology for the word πάσχα (that it comes from the Greek word meaning to suffer παθεῖν and suffering Πάσχειν) in order to forge a connection between the Passover and the suffering of Jesus.279 According to Melito, then, the Jews no longer legitimately celebrated Passover — the Christians did.

**Melito Charges the Jews with Deicide**

According to Melito, the Jews were responsible for every aspect of the crucifixion: they prepared "sharp nails" (ἡλους ὀξεῖς) and the false witnesses (line 555); they fed him vinegar and gall (δέξος καὶ μόστιγας) (line 557); they "brought forth scourges for his body and thorn for his head" (lines 559-60). Finally, Melito tells them, "you killed your Lord at the great feast" (line 565). From Melito's perspective, the tragedy is compounded by the fact that the Jews killed "the Lord," their very creator: he addresses the Jews, telling them they caused suffering to "[their] Sovereign, who formed [them], who made [them], who honoured [them], who called [them]'Israel'" (lines 584-588). It was Jesus who had

---

278 Melito usually employs the term λαός to refer to the Jewish nation. The one time that it refers to the new people, the Church (in lines 494-5), there are indications that the verses are not authentic, as one important textual witness (B) omits them altogether, and in another there is a lacuna in (L) (Noakes 1973: 249).

279 Hall 1979: 23 notes that "the false etymology of the Aramaic pascha, as if it came from the root of the Greek pdschein, is widespread in early Christianity."
guided them "from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Isaac and Jacob and the twelve patriarchs," into Egypt and out, and who had established them in their land, and then sent them prophets and set up their kings (lines 608-624). Melito proclaims "It is he that you killed" (line 631). The Jews killed "him whom the gentiles (τὰ ἔθνη) worshipped and the uncircumcised(ἀκροβυστοὶ) admired and foreigners (ἄλλοι) glorified" (lines 673-675).

In line 676, Melito claims "even Pilate washed his hands," which is consistent with the apologetic tendency, evident already in the gospels, to exonerate Pilate (and, therefore, the Roman government), and blame the Jews.280 This positive portrayal of Pilate is meant to represent a positive attitude towards Rome, one which is also evident in Melito's Apology to Marcus Aurelius where he implies that the success of the Roman Empire was a natural outgrowth of the infiltration of Christianity into the Empire (Hist. eccl. 4.26).

Melito is the first Christian writer unambiguously to accuse the Jews of deicide (Wilson 1995: 246):281

He who hung the earth is hanging;
he who fixed the heavens has been fixed;
he who fastened the universe has been fastened to a tree;
the Sovereign has been insulted;
the God has been murdered;
the King of Israel has been put to death by an Israelite right hand (lines 711-716)

His virulent polemic against the Jews does not distinguish between Jews of Jesus' time and those living during his own time, nor does he make a distinction between the leaders of the Jews and the rest of the Jewish people, as is found in the gospels, for example. For

---

280 K.W. Noakes 1975: 247, notes that Pilate "is mentioned only once, despite the great prominence given to the events of the Passion. Pilate's washing of his hands is given as an example of the exemplary behaviour of the Romans towards Jesus, in contrast to the ingratitude of the Jews." Cf. Matt. 27:24; the Gospel of Peter 1.1; the Acts of Pilate 9.4, 12.1.

281 As Wilson 1995: 248 observes, "the notion that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus had a long pedigree in Christian thinking, stretching back at least to the early accounts of Jesus' Passion. Prior to Melito, however, no one had made the accusation with such boldness and dramatic skill, and no one had transformed the 'crime' of the Jews from responsibility for the death of Jesus to responsibility for the death of God."
Melito, the term "Israel" refers to all Jews without distinction, and this makes his denunciation all the more destructive.

Were Gentile Judaizers Present?

What compelled Melito to strike out against the Jews in such an uncompromising way? The answers to this question are found by trying to understand the context in which Melito wrote and the circumstances he faced as a Christian living in Asia Minor in the middle of the second century. A. T. Kraabel, based on the evidence from the locale and size of the excavated synagogue from a later period, at one time argued that Melito's bitter attack responded to the fact that the Jews were in a wealthier, more prestigious position than the fledgling Christian group he represented in Sardis (Kraabel 1971: 83f.). By this account, the PP expressed Melito's frustration at lacking the same power his Jewish opponents had. Kraabel suggests that

[i]t is likely that some of the Sardis Christians in Melito's time were converted Jews or descendants of converted Jews, and that the relationship of Christianity to Judaism was a perennial issue. The Jews' attitude might have been one of hostility toward 'apostates' or one of openness; either way, in the face of such a large and powerful Jewish community Melito felt forced to adopt the stance demonstrated in the Peri Pascha. (Kraabel 1971: 84)

Noakes likewise suggests that "the intensity of Melito's polemic against Israel surely testifies to the antagonism between the Jewish and Christian communities in Sardis" (Noakes 1975: 246).

Wilson asserts that evidence may exist which reflects the mutual hostility between the Jewish community and the Christian community in Sardis which was the result of the socio-political scenario described by Kraabel. He observes that Melito's excursion to Jerusalem to find out information about the Jewish Bible is rather peculiar since consulting
the Jewish community at Sardis would have saved him a laborious trip. Even though diaspora communities primarily used the LXX for worship purposes, Wilson suggests that the information Melito sought regarding the number and arrangement of the books of the Hebrew scriptures would likely have been available from the Sardis community; the fact that Melito decided to go elsewhere might indicate the existence of rather intense mutual animosity between Christians and Jews in Sardis "which discouraged the informal exchange of information" and is expressed so forthrightly by Melito in the PP (Wilson 1995: 253). Wilson understands the cause of Melito's hostility to be strife existent between the communities. I suggest that Melito inveighs against the Jews in order to create distance between communities that were too closely intertwined.

Eusebius, who is our only source for information pertaining to Melito's trip, allegedly quotes from one of Melito's letters to "his brother in Christ," Onesimus, who had "repeatedly asked for extracts from the Law and the Prophets regarding the Saviour and the whole of our faith, and ... also wished to learn the precise facts about the ancient books, particularly their number and order" (Hist. eccl. 26.7). Melito states that he was "most anxious to do this ... so when I visited the east and arrived at the place where it all happened and the truth was proclaimed, I obtained precise information about the Old Testament books..." (Hist. eccl. 26.7). The letter indicates that Melito took a trip to Palestine and while he was there found information about the scriptures for his friend. The Jews of Sardis did not necessarily withhold information from Melito out of animosity towards Christians; it is likely that the only scriptures these Jews would have been personally familiar with was the LXX. When Rabbi Meir visited Asia Minor in the middle of the second century CE, there was not a single copy of the Megillah (the Book of Esther) in Hebrew to be found, and as a result he had to write it out from memory (Megillah 18b; see Feldman 1993: 72). It is plausible, therefore, that the Jews of Sardis were not certain themselves about the order of the books in Hebrew.282

282 Feldman notes that "the Judaism of Asia Minor was hardly learned ... there is no mention in the entire rabbinic corpus of even a single Torah academy in all of Asia Minor. Nor is there any mention in the
This journey to the east raises several questions. Why did Melito undertake such a trip? It is intriguing that he made this journey, but I do not think we can answer this question with any certainty. Melito describes his friend Onesimus, who presumably was of Gentile origin, as a devoted Christian, striving "with might and main to win eternal salvation" (Hist. eccl. 26.7). Was Onesimus a member of Melito's congregation in Sardis? Why was Onesimus interested in the ancient books in the first place, when he would have had easy access to the LXX order? Were there many others like him, who were interested in learning about the Hebrew Jewish Scriptures? These questions may be asked, but, alas, there are no forthcoming answers.

It is interesting to note how scholars readily extrapolate backwards from the third and fourth century archaeological evidence that points to the prominent position of the Jewish community, but neglect the evidence from that same time period which indicates that Christians and Jews intermixed along the street beside the synagogue and seemed to have had very good relations. If the one is often assumed to have been accurate for the second century CE (i.e., that Jews were in a prominent position), perhaps the other should as well (i.e., that Jews and Christians got along). Perhaps in the second century CE the Jews were a wealthy, powerful group in Sardis, but Jews and Christians lived and worked together in mutual respect and tolerance.

Might the anti-Jewish polemic that Melito expounds in his homily have been prompted not by Jews, but by Gentile Christians within his own community, who like Onesimus were interested in Judaism? Wilson suggests that while some of the Christians

---

Talmudic and midrashic writers of a single student from Asia Minor who studied in the academies of either Palestine or Babylonia during the entire Talmudic period (first through fifth centuries CE), when rabbinic Judaism was at its height, even though the Talmud usually gives the place of origin of those from abroad" (Feldman 1993: 72).

283 Another question is, where did he go in Palestine? This information unfortunately is not supplied. At this point in time, of course, Jerusalem was a pagan city.

284 It seems that Kraabel has changed his mind about these issues, for in a recent publication he admits that the PP "does not mean a Jewish-Christian conflict in late second century Sardis; there is no evidence from the Jewish side for that ... There is no firm evidence that Sardis Jews were even aware of Melito, or that a direct hostility of their part provoked his attacks" (in Overman 1992: 264; also see Norris 1986: 16ff.).
in Sardis may have been converts from Judaism, "there may also have been traffic in the other direction" (Wilson 1995: 253). This may have manifested itself in the form of Gentile Christian Judaizing, or, even more disturbing to a leader of a church, perhaps the outright conversion of Gentile Christians to Judaism, a phenomenon of which Justin Martyr, for one, was very much aware.

Summary

Melito's attempt to establish boundaries between Jews and Christians could be in reaction to an environment where Christians were exposed and attracted to Judaism. As Quartodecimans, the Gentile Christians of Melito's community were already in the habit of fusing their Christian practices with Jewish customs once every year at Passover; adopting additional Jewish rites might have seemed quite natural to them. Melito's manner of juxtaposing positive assessments of the behaviour of Gentiles with negative evaluations of the behaviour of "Israel" might have been an attempt to discourage Gentile Christians from adopting other Jewish customs by denigrating the Jews and discrediting Judaism. Since the phenomenon of Gentile Christian Judaizing in Asia Minor is explicitly attested to by Justin, the likelihood of such a phenomenon existing in Sardis in the middle of the second century CE is not unreasonable.

Conclusion

Marcion and Melito both fought against what they perceived to be objectionable linkages of Christianity with its parent religion. This is evident in the Marcionite teachings imposing a radical separation between the Jewish and Christian gods, scriptures, and messiahs, a program whose propagation would (he hoped) be hastened by certain textual alterations eliminating expression of close connection, for example, between believers in Jesus and
Abraham in Gal. 3: 6-9, 15-25. From Melito's perspective, Judaism had served a purpose for a time, but it was a mere foreshadowing of the superior religion to come. Once Christianity had emerged, Judaism and its Torah had lost all value. It was Christianity and Christians alone who would be loved by God, the honoured position which once belonged to the Jews now appropriated by the church.

Given the nature of their teachings and the preponderance of evidence for the existence of Gentile Christian Judaizing as a problematic phenomenon for church leaders in Asia Minor in the second century CE, the suggestion that Marcion and Melito responded to the presence of Gentile Christian Judaizers in their midst provides a plausible alternative interpretation of the historical context of their views which is at least worthy of consideration by scholars.
Chapter 8

Conclusion

Through exploration of a variety of first and second century CE Christian documents containing criticism of Jews, Judaism, and specific Jewish religious rites, this study has advanced the position that the phenomenon of Gentile Christian Judaizing is a heretofore neglected point on the continuum of Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity. It has been contended that the targets of the anti-Judaic content in these documents often included Gentile members of Christian communities who, from the perspective of the authors of these texts, were excessively attached to Jewish religious rites. These Gentile Christians combined a commitment to Christianity with adherence, in varying degrees, to Jewish practices, and did not view such behaviour to be incompatible with their faith. Ecclesiastical leaders were deeply troubled by Gentile Christian Judaizing in the regions of Asia Minor and Syria during the first two centuries of the Common Era.

An understanding of Gentile Christian Judaizing enriches our perception of the complexity of Jewish-Christian relations in the first and second centuries CE. The boundaries between nascent Christianity and Judaism remained fluid well beyond the period of Paul, who is sometimes incorrectly perceived to have successfully established a distinct Gentile Christian identity exclusive of Judaism. The reaction of ecclesiastical leaders towards Gentile Christian Judaizing helped to shape what constituted acceptable Christian behaviour and thus was a driving force in the forging of a Christian identity separate from Judaism. Gentile Christian Judaizing is a notable factor, therefore, within the broader issue of the "parting of the ways" of Judaism and Christianity and helps to elucidate our comprehension of that separation.
Why Gentile Christians Judaized

A wide variety of Jewish customs are raised for discussion in the literature surveyed, including circumcision, Sabbath observance, kashruth (food laws), fasting, new moon celebrations, festival gatherings and prayer. Those most frequently discussed in the literature covered here are circumcision, the Sabbath, and food laws — three rites which most effectively served to distinguish Jews from non-Jews.\(^\text{285}\)

From the literature surveyed here, it has emerged that there were a variety of factors motivating Gentile Christians to Judaize, none of which is mutually exclusive of others. In some cases, their own reading of the LXX may have persuaded Christians that in order to belong to the people of God they needed to observe the Mosaic law (e.g. the situation reflected in Galatians, Ignatius' letters). For those communities influenced by Paul, his speaking highly of Jewish Christians and Jerusalem in alluding to Hebrew scripture may have generated Judaizing behaviour among Gentile Christians. Some Gentiles may have brought an interest in Judaism with them when they became Christians and then simply continued to live in the manner to which they had grown accustomed prior to their conversion to Christianity.

Gentile Christians received encouragement and pressure to Judaize both from fellow Gentile Christians already engaged in Judaizing behaviour (likely the case in Galatians and Ignatius' letters to the Philadelphians and the Magnesians, and the Epistle of Barnabas), and from Jewish Christians (Galatians, Didache, Dialogue with Trypho, the Keryg mata Petrou in the Pseudo-Clementines, Colossians). Others perceived Judaism and/or the synagogue to possess security and confidence greater than that within their Christian communities, hence were motivated by feelings of insecurity and fear (Book of

\(^{285}\) Circumcision is discussed with respect to Gentile Christians in Galatians 2:3; 5:2-12; 6:12, 15; Colossians 2:11-12; 3:11; the Dialogue with Trypho 47.2, 4 and the Epistle of Barnabas 9.4. Sabbath observance is addressed in Galatians 4:10; Colossians 2:16; Magnesians 9.1-2 Justin's Dialogue 47.2, 4; the Didache 14.1; Barnabas 15.6-9 and observance of food laws in Colossians 2:16; the Didache 6.3 and Barnabas 10.2, 9.
Revelation, *Epistle of Barnabas*). In the Book of Revelation, letters sent to Smyrna and Philadelphia express hostility towards Gentile Christians who are in some fashion living like Jews, "pretending" to be Jews, perhaps to avoid persecution by local Roman authorities.286

There is no substantive evidence that non-Christian Jews were the instigators of such behaviour among Christians. Rather, as stated above, this study suggests that fellow Gentile Christians sometimes were the primary aggressors (such as in Galatia and possibly Philadelphia), while in other cases (*Didache*, possibly Colossae), Jewish Christians were the propagating party (or sometimes both Jewish and Gentile Christians, such as in Galatia). Did the Jewish Christians follow a policy of aggressive missionizing which they had learned as Jews? Likely not, for, as discussed earlier, there is no evidence for a standard missionary policy among Jews, though proselytizing by individuals may have occurred at certain times.287

In contradiction to the conclusions of Miriam Taylor, this study demonstrates that Christian leaders in the period between c. 50 and 160 CE were responding to a tangible, concrete reality of Gentile Christian attraction to Judaism and its rites. Pre-Constantinian evidence for Gentile Christian Judaizing is not lacking in the documents (contra Taylor 1995: 31). Furthermore, to substantiate this fact, one need not begin with John Chrysostom and work backwards, as she accuses scholars such as Gager, Gaston, Wilson, Shukster and Richardson of doing. Chrysostom stands as a rather late example of an ecclesiastical leader grappling with Gentile Christian Judaizers in his community, demonstrating the endurance of Judaizing's effect on Jewish-Christian relations in Antioch during the post-Constantinian period.

---

286 See above, chapter six.
287 Taylor argues that "[b]asing themselves primarily on post-Constantinian evidence," scholars "describe the judaizing phenomenon as one of the main problems posed for the church by a vital and aggressive Judaism" (Taylor 1995: 40). The phenomenon of Gentile Christian Judaizing indicates that Judaism was indeed "vital," but whether it was "aggressive" or not is more difficult to ascertain. See my discussion of how Gentiles were drawn to Judaism in chapter three.
The Local Situations

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul describes how Peter, Barnabas and Jewish Christians influenced by James compelled Gentile Christians to Judaize (Ἰουδαίζειν) by withholding table fellowship from them (2:14). Interestingly, despite the fact that this text is directed towards Christian communities in Asia Minor, it is here that we discover the earliest evidence of Gentile Christian Judaizing in Syria. This narrative in Galatians, furthermore, is the earliest recorded evidence of Gentile Christian Judaizing behaviour. It suggests that the practice began in Syria and spread from there into the diaspora, eventually reaching the Galatian region of Asia Minor. The genesis of Gentile Christian Judaizing is to be localized, then, in the cradle of the Christian movement where there was a strong Jewish presence.

The powerful presence of Judaism in the Syrian area is amply reflected in the documents originating from that region, and is evident even in that material discouraging Gentile Christian Judaizing. The authors/editors of the Epistle to Barnabas and the Didache seek to discourage Judaizing behaviour among their readers by juxtaposing Christian rites with Jewish customs. Asserting that the former are superior, they purposefully make derogatory observations about the latter. Despite the attempt to differentiate Christianity from Judaism, the Syrian texts nonetheless reflect a decisively Jewish tone. Barnabas aims to negate the validity of Jewish ritual by advancing the radical interpretation that Mosaic law was never supposed to be interpreted literally. For example, he discusses the rite of circumcision and how the Jews misinterpreted the divine commandment. Circumcision of the flesh, argues Barnabas, was never meant to be: the Jews "erred because an evil angel was misleading them (ὅτι ἄγγελος πονηρὸς ἐσόφιζεν αὐτούς)" (9.4). It is significant, however, that Barnabas seems to understand that for his community, the Law is an integral part of their self-identity. He does not state that the Law

---

288 See discussion above, chapter four.
289 See above, chapter three.
is evil, but rather that the Jewish *interpretation* of it was inspired by evil. He does not demand that his community utterly ignore or forget Torah, but rather that they view it differently.290

The author of the *Didache* attempts to establish a clear delineation between Christian and Jewish behaviour by prohibiting imitation of Jewish praxis by Christians. Nevertheless, the document betrays its Jewish roots in its use of the Two Ways material (chap(s). 1-6), particularly in its stipulations of minimal requirements regarding Torah observance, including avoidance of idolatrous food (6.3), instructions concerning baptism in "living water" (7.1), and prayer "three times a day" (8.3). The Pseudo-Clementine literature differs from all of the material analyzed in this study in explicitly *encouraging* the adoption of Jewish customs by Gentile Christians and, in the process, denigrating Paul's "lawless gospel" (H 11.35.5; H 2.15.5; H. 17.17.5, etc.). Moreover, a type of "two-covenant" theme is present, which treats Christianity and Judaism as equals, a view which may reflect the perspective of Gentile Judaizers themselves (R 4.5).291 In sum, even when their authors are attempting to establish boundaries between Jews and Christians, these Syrian documents reflect a Jewish voice.

The Asia Minor material is somewhat different from that of the Syrian documents. In the former texts there is a more forceful attempt made to dismiss completely Jewish law and history rather than simply undermine its worth by more subtle argumentation. Ignatius, for example, brazenly Christianizes Jewish history by asserting that the prophets "lived according to Jesus Christ" (*Magn.* 8.2).292 Indeed, he describes the Israelites/Jews in the Hebrew scriptures as having been, in actual fact, Christians who eventually discontinued the observance of the Sabbath: "they who walked in ancient customs came to a new hope, no longer living for the Sabbath, but for the Lord's Day (*μηκέτι*

---

290 The analysis of Barnabas occurs above in chapter five.
291 This theme is discussed in chapter five.
292 Barnabas' argument that the covenant belonged to the Christians and never to the Jews expresses a radical position not typical of the Syrian documents (13.1).
Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* propounds his view that Christians were a fully separate entity from Judaism. By the middle of the second century, the Christian hope that Jews would turn to their new movement in significant numbers had waned; by their rejection of the Gospel the Jews relinquished an inheritance that Gentile Christians claimed. Expressed for the first time in extant Christian literature is the idea that Gentile believers in Jesus had replaced the Jews as the chosen people of God. In *Dial.* 11.5 Justin proclaims: "For we are the true and spiritual Israelitish nation, and the race of Judah and of Jacob and Isaac and Abraham (Ἰσραήλιτικὸν γὰρ τὸ ἀληθινὸν, πνευματικὸν, καὶ Ἰούδα γένος καὶ Ἰσακώ καὶ Ἀβραάμ)." Throughout the *Dialogue*, Justin argues that the Mosaic Law was created in order to address the moral weaknesses of the Jewish people, and that it was created for them alone: other peoples were not obligated to keep these commandments. According to Justin, then, it had never been necessary to observe any of the Law, and that was now doubly so: "For if before Abraham there was no need of circumcision, and before Moses none of keeping the Sabbath, and of festivals, and of offerings, neither in like manner is there any need now, after the Son of God, Jesus Christ..." (*Dial.* 23.3).

Justin provides the most explicit evidence available for the presence of Gentile Christian Judaizers in his community, in stating that some Gentile Christians follow the advice of Jewish Christians and live under the law. As long as they continue to profess the Christ of God they probably will be saved (47.4); however, those who "passed over (μεταβαίνω) into the life under the Law" and deny Jesus, will not (47.4). Justin, then, is the first early Christian writer to describe explicitly Gentile Christian Judaizing and,

---

293 See above, chapter six.
exhibiting more tolerance than other early Christian writers in Asia Minor, he also is the 
first to accept them (albeit grudgingly) as legitimate members of the community.

Justin gives unambiguous expression to a fear shared by other ecclesiastical leaders: 
Gentile Christian Judaizers' abandoning their faith and becoming proselytes to Judaism. 
His tolerance of Gentile Christian Judaizing almost certainly was prompted by a desire to 
forestall certain Christians from replacing church adherence with synagogue attendance. If 
welcomed within the Christian community, perhaps they would not desert the fold.294

In line with Ignatius' quest for a complete dissociation of Christianity from Judaism 
(Magn. 10.3; cf. also 8.1, 9.1 and Phld. 6.1, 8.2, 9.2), both Marcion and Melito sought to 
 impose a radical delineation between Christianity and Judaism. Marcion taught that Jews 
and Christians had separate gods, scriptures, and messiahs.295 For Melito, the Jewish 
people no longer held any special position before God: "the people was made void (ὁ λαός 
 ἐκενώθη) when the church arose (τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀνασταθείσης)" (line 278).
Christians had secured the position formerly held by the Jews, and the degree of separation 
between Judaism and Christianity was such that Jews were accused of deicide; they were 
not only opponents of Christians, they were enemies of God.

The texts from Asia Minor reflect less integration of Jewish elements than in the 
Syrian evidence. Generally, Jewish praxis is denigrated in order to promote Christian 
customs, without a concomitant dependence on Jewish tradition in order to express 
Christian rites (such as that found in the Did. 8.1-2, for example, contra Ignatius Magn. 
8.1; 9.1). The Asia Minor material reflects an ecclesiastical leadership that is more 
confident and independent of Judaism, particularly in those texts which date to a later 
period than the Syrian documents (e.g., Justin, Marcion, Melito). There is otherwise no 
striking contrast among the documents from the two regions regarding the types of Jewish

294 Of course, the ultimate purpose of the Dialogue was to convince Gentile Christians not to Judaize. 
Full abstention was preferable to only passable conduct. See chapter six.
295 See chapter seven above.
customs observed by Gentile Christian Judaizers, which suggests that this phenomenon manifested itself in similar fashion in both areas.

One possible explanation for this difference between the Asia Minor documents and those written in Syria is the latter province's geographical proximity to Judea. Jews living in the Roman province of Syria were closer to the centre of Judaism and the Jerusalem temple, the primary institution and focus of Jewish worship until 70 CE. These factors may have contributed to a more prominent Jewish presence within Christian communities in Syria than in the more distant diaspora communities in Asia Minor. In addition to these geographical circumstances, Gentile attraction to Judaism had a long history in the city of Antioch, as has been discussed earlier. Local Jews in Antioch, according to Josephus, "were constantly attracting to their religious ceremonies multitudes of Greeks" in the pre-Christian period (War 7.45). Christian communities may have integrated more deeply a Jewish approach to worship and ritual, and thus were less able to promote Christian customs in non-Jewish ways and terminology than reflected in the Asia Minor material.

How Gentile Christian Judaizers Identified Themselves

Did the early Gentile Christians who observed the Sabbath or Jewish food laws consider themselves to be Christians behaving Jewishly? Did they, rather, consider themselves to be fully Jewish? Or perhaps a Christian-Jewish hybrid? Given the incomplete evidence available to us at present, it is simply not possible to know for certain what the Gentile Judaizing Christians were thinking or how they viewed themselves. Their voices are silent in the texts, and most of the evidence we do have comes from those who opposed Gentile Christian involvement in Judaizing behaviour and felt it undermined Christian identity.

296 In War 7.43 Josephus explains that Syria's proximity to Judea is why the largest concentration of Jewish people lived there.
My reading of the documents has convinced me that, for the most part, Gentile Christian Judaizers did not understand themselves to be straying outside of the boundaries of one group and into another. One reason why this would be an accurate assessment is that, according to the Pseudo-Clementines, Galatians, Barnabas, the letters of Ignatius, and Justin's Dialogue, it would appear that in its early stages Gentile Christian Judaizing was encouraged by Jewish Christians and other Gentile Christian Judaizers as constituting a normal part of being a Christian. In its earliest years, Gentile Judaizing did not challenge the sense of self-identity of Christians because Christianity was still perceived to be part of Judaism. Just as Jewish Christians initially were not considered by Jews to be outside the boundaries of Judaism, neither were early Gentile Christian Judaizers considered to be outside the boundaries of Christianity. Paul, the first Christian leader to denounce Gentile Judaizers, did not perceive the situation in Galatia to be one of Christians behaving "Jewishly." His view of the trouble at Galatia was that the behaviour of Judaizing Gentile Christians betrayed a lack of trust in Jesus, the dying, rising and soon-to-return saviour. Galatian Gentile Christians were being persuaded by "a different Gospel (ἐρημένον εὐαγγέλιον)" (1: 6, 7), a misguided movement but, at bottom, one not unrelated to his own.

By contrast, ecclesiastical leaders subsequent to Paul came to understand Gentile Christian Judaizing behaviour to be blurring the boundary lines between the Jewish and Christian communities. This perception developed gradually, influenced by a multitude of circumstances and, by all accounts, it affected the leaders rather than the laity. Possible explanations as to why Christian leaders ultimately viewed Gentile Christian Judaizing as a threat include a) the lack of Jewish acknowledgment of Jesus as an important figure in their self-understanding and the consequent influx of Gentiles into the Christian movement; b) the continued vibrancy of Judaism and c) the Bar Kochba revolt. Certain Gentile

297 As such, it fell to the leaders of the communities to instill a clear sense of differentiation between Judaism and Christianity in the minds of their congregants. It was they who were to create the determinants of Christian identity largely through their reaction to Judaizing.
Christians may have been perplexed by the fact that despite their rejection of Jesus, Judaism continued to flourish. Perhaps the Bar Kochba revolt in 132-135 CE, with its unabashed messianic dimension and its devastating consequences for the Jewish people, made the Christian leadership desirous of dissociating their movement from Jews, and consequently less tolerant of those Christians who observed Jewish customs. Due to these two developments, adherents to Christianity may have felt threatened by those within their own communities who maintained lifestyles similar to the Jews.

One of the fears of Christian community leaders generated by their observation of Gentile Christian Judaizing may have been that they would lose some of these Judaizers to Judaism; perhaps Gentiles who had faith in Jesus but had begun to observe Jewish customs would eventually abandon their belief in Christ and become full Jewish converts. This was not an unfounded fear, for, as described above, Justin Martyr was aware of precisely this phenomenon. In his Dialogue with Trypho, he describes a variegated community comprised of Christians of Jewish and Gentile origin both observing parts of the Mosaic law (47.2-4). We have seen that, while he accepts Gentile Christian Judaizers as part of the legitimate ecclesiastical community, he denies the salvation of those Gentile Christians who stray too far and ultimately abandon their Christian faith. Justin inveighs against these Gentiles, for whom Christianity is merely a transitional state between paganism and Judaism.

The Effect of Gentile Christian Judaizing on Jewish-Christian Relations

Throughout this study, it has been argued that critical statements ostensibly directed towards Jews, in their original context, were often directed towards Gentile Christians who lived like Jews. Ignatius writes a letter to the city of Magnesia, where he observes that Gentiles are "living according to Judaism," (Mag. 8:1) a lifestyle which apparently includes observing the Sabbath (Mag. 9:1). In his letter to Philadelphia, he states that he is hearing
Judaism interpreted by Gentiles, presumably Gentile Christians (Pld. 6:1). Ignatius admits that he was nearly deceived by them, and he appears to have stood alone in his protest against Judaizing. His letters reflect a supersessionary attitude towards Judaism and an attempt to nullify attraction to Jewish customs. He Christianizes Jewish history by asserting that the prophets "lived according to Jesus Christ" (Mag. 8:2) and that Christianity was the foundation for Judaism (Mag. 10:3). In so doing, he renders Jewish ritual observances derivative, hence largely meaningless.

Such Christian supersessionary claims were necessarily undermined by Gentile Christian Judaizing, but may also actually have been prompted by such Judaizing. In several of the documents studied (e.g., Barnabas, Didache, Magnesians, Justin's Dialogue, Marcion's writings, Melito's Peri Pascha) authors asserted the superiority of Christian interpretation of the law, or of Christian rites over corresponding Jewish understandings and practices. This was a strategy for a) differentiating between Judaism and Christianity as belief systems and b) demonstrating that Jewish ritual practices were absolutely passé. This discourse represented part of an internal debate among Christians, not between Christians and Jews. While the identification of Gentile Christian Judaizers in Syria and Asia Minor clarifies our understanding of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism in the first two centuries of the Common Era, it concurrently complicates the picture by adding another point on the continuum of relations between Jews and Christians, one that ought not to be neglected in future scholarship.


Benko, S. "The History of the Early Roman Empire." In *The Catacombs and the Colosseum*, ed.


Chadwick, H. "Justin Martyr's Defence of Christianity." The Bulletin of the John Rylands


Daniélou, J. "Figure and Événement chez Méliiton de Sardes." *Neotestamentica et Patristica* 6 (1962).


Feine, P. "Das Christentum Jesu und das Christentum der Apostel in ihrer Abgrenzung gegen die Religionsgeschichte." *Christentum und Zeitgeist* 1 (1904): 44-63.


Funk, F. X. *Doctrinae duodecim apostolorum, Canones ecclesiastici ac religiae doctrinae duarum viarum expositiones veteres.* Tübingen: Henrici Laupp, 1887.


1937.


Moule, C. F. D. *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957.


Pasto, J. "He is not really a Jew, he is only acting the part": Jewish and non-Jewish Identity in Antiquity." A paper delivered at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting, 1994.


Schlecht, J. Doctrina XII Apostolorum, die Apostellehre in der Liturgie der katholischen Kirche.
Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1901.


Van Unnik, W. C. "Christianity according to I Peter." The Expository Times 68 (1956-57).


