

Acknowledgments

This is a project I have been sneaking up on in some sense ever since I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago in the 1990s. What eventually became a dissertation, “Logos and Law in the Letter of James,” was initially supposed to have been only one section of one chapter of a study arguing that the Letter of James was better interpreted as an expression of early Judaism—albeit one with great interest in a messiah, Jesus—than as a “Jewish Christianity.” My intention was to use James as a sort of case study in the problem of the category Jewish Christianity. Disentangling the complex exegetical issues surrounding James, however, became a job in itself. I continued thinking about the larger problem, though, and eventually came back around to it some years later in an edited volume called *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered*. I was shocked—though also intrigued—to find my work there interpreted in some quarters as a defense of the category. I continued to dig more deeply into where this notion of “Jewish Christianity” came from, how it became so embedded in the scholarly imagination, and how our understanding of Jewish and Christian antiquity might look different without it.

Some of the published results of those efforts have been incorporated in one way or another into the present study. An essay published under the title “The Invention of Jewish Christianity in John’s Toland’s *Nazarenus*” in *The Rediscovery of Jewish Christianity: From Toland to Baur* (ed. F. Stanley Jones; Society of Biblical Literature, 2012) has been revised and integrated into Chapter 1. The treatment of Thomas Morgan in Chapter 2 represents a condensed and more substantially reworked version of another study published in that same volume as “‘Jewish Christianity’ and ‘Christian Deism’ in Thomas Morgan’s *The Moral Philosopher*.” The analyses of the Ebionites and of the so-called Nazoraean exegesis of Isaiah

in Chapter 6 draw freely on an essay titled “Ebionites and Nazoraeans: Christians or Jews?” that I wrote at the invitation of Hershel Shanks for a volume called *Partings: How Judaism and Christianity Became Two* (Biblical Archaeology Society, 2013). I am grateful to the publishers of these works for their permission to use this material here.

When John Collins asked whether I would be interested in producing a volume on Jewish Christianity for the Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library, I jumped at the chance to work through the issues more systematically. I am exceedingly grateful to him for the invitation—and for not balking when I came back with a proposal that was more critical history of a modern interpretive construct than analysis of an ancient phenomenon. I also owe him tremendous thanks for his patience as I wrote it, and for shepherding the whole project from start to finish. The anonymous reviewers of the initial proposal were invaluable in pushing me both conceptually and at the level of detail as I was first thinking through the project. The anonymous reviewers of the full manuscript likewise gave immensely important feedback that resulted, I hope, in a clearer, stronger argument. I am deeply grateful to them and to the book’s editor, John Kloppenborg, for their exacting and insightful readings of the manuscript. It goes without saying that all remaining errors and problems are my responsibility alone.

Everyone at Yale University Press has been a pleasure to work with, including Jennifer Banks, Piyali Bhattacharya, Eric Brandt, Whitney Schumacher, and Ann-Marie Imbornoni. Susan Laity provided a number of helpful suggestions that led to an improved manuscript. I am especially indebted to Jessie Dolch for her expert copyediting, and to Katherine Ulrich for her careful indexing. Above all, I cannot thank Heather Gold enough for giving me the time and space I needed to follow the project where it led me, and for reliably wise counsel at many critical junctures along the way.

It goes without saying that I owe a great debt to many scholars, past and present, named and unnamed, who have explored the same or related problems before me. By its nature, this study engages extensively in a critical analysis (of some, at least) of their work. I have undertaken this with no small trepidation. Doing my best to understand other people’s writings, ancient and modern alike, I have found evidence time and again of intellects far more capacious than mine; of philological abilities and sheer breadths of knowledge surpassing anything I will ever hope to accomplish. I have spent considerable time, for example, with the writings of F. C. Baur. The more I read him, and read about him, the more I marvel. The same goes

for any number of the other authors treated in these pages, including not least those contemporary scholars with whom I engage extensively in later parts of the book. A special word of thanks goes to Annette Yoshiko Reed for generously sharing with me the page proofs of her outstanding collection *Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism*, which made it possible for me to account for it in Chapter 5. I have learned a great deal from her, as well as from F. Stanley Jones, Petri Luomanen, Daniel Boyarin, Edwin Broadhead, and the many other contributors to the Society of Biblical Literature's Jewish Christianity/Christian Judaism section. A number of the ideas published here were first presented to this group, and I have benefited greatly from the constructive criticism I received there. I hope I have done justice to these and other writers in my attempt to engage critically, in turn, with their work.

Different kinds of thanks are owed to a number of others. I have long suspected that if scholarly reconstructions are too complicated or convoluted to convey to intelligent and interested people who do not also happen to be specialists, then something is probably wrong. I am grateful to my students at Cleveland State University for feedback on ideas I have tried out in the classroom. I also benefited from the illuminating interactions that resulted from invitations to speak to the truly remarkable people of both Beth El—The Heights Synagogue in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and the Community of St. Peter's in Cleveland during the writing of this book. I must also thank my colleagues in CSU's Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion for their ongoing interest and support, especially those on the comparative religion side of the house—Sucharita Adluri, Stephen Cory, and Steve Taysom—and our former chair (and now dean), Allyson Robichaud.

This book is dedicated in part to those who were there when I first started thinking about the problem of Jewish Christianity in earnest, and who have shaped my thinking about it in innumerable ways both direct and indirect. This goes first of all for my teachers and mentors at the University of Chicago: Hans Dieter Betz, Adela Yarbro Collins, John J. Collins, Arthur Droge, and the late Arthur W. H. Adkins. Equally important, however, are the other students whose time in Swift Hall overlapped with my own. There are too many to name here, but a few deserve special mention. Jim Hanges, Chris Mount, and Dale Walker remain my most regular conversation partners on matters of scholarship as well as dear friends. Chris in particular read the entire manuscript with his characteristically incisive

and insightful eye at a crucial point in its development and provided extremely helpful feedback for which I am beyond grateful. Bert Harrill, Paul Holloway, and Clare Rothschild have likewise been trusted colleagues and supportive friends in many ways for many years.

Finally, the book is also dedicated to my family. The McCabes, Boysels, and Jacksons have provided constant support and encouragement—and much needed laughter and relief—for years, not least those spent writing this book. This goes most especially for A.J. and Jeremy, who have lived with this project as much as I have, and who have contributed immeasurably to it. Jeremy has been a source of more strength and pure joy than he can possibly know. The same is true of A.J., who could envision the completion of this book even (and especially) in moments when I could not, and who, much more importantly, changed my life forever and infinitely for the better when she decided to travel with me to Chicago those many years ago.

Jewish Christianity

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