

## Closeness and Distance: Towards a New Description of Jewish-Christian Relations<sup>1</sup>

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It is a long-standing tradition not only in historiography to describe the relations between Jews and Christians as a history of Christian hostility towards the Jews, which is usually called anti-Judaism and/or antisemitism.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper I would like to examine this aspect of historical hermeneutics and propose an alternative approach to this area of historical research. I will, therefore, proceed in three steps. My first step is to describe what I see as the methodological status quo and its history. In a second section I would like to examine some points of criticism which have been raised against this status quo, points which I consider valid, although I now tend to disagree with the hermeneutical conclusions drawn from this criticism. Finally, I would like to outline a new way of describing Jewish-Christian relations.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is the result of numerous conversations within the *Sonderforschungsreich 534 'Judentum und Christentum. Konstituierung und Differenzierung in Antike und Gegenwart'* at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn, which is funded by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (German Research Council; further information: <http://www.uni-bonn.de/sfb534>). In particular, it was inspired by discussions with my colleague Professor Moshe Zimmermann and our collaborators Dr. Oded Heilbrunner and Matthias Schmidt (Jerusalem) and Oliver Bertrams, Görg Hasselhoff and PD Dr. Hermut Löhr (Bonn). The conclusions are mine. A slightly extended German version of this paper has appeared in the proceedings of a symposium held in Bonn in October 2001: Wolfram Kinzig/Cornelia Kück (eds.), *Judentum und Christentum zwischen Konfrontation und Faszination: Ansätze zu einer neuen Beschreibung jüdisch-christlicher Beziehungen*, Stuttgart etc. 2002, pp. 9–27.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this paper I make no distinction between these terms. They both designate hostile attitudes by non-Jews towards Jews on account of their Jewishness. Cf., however, below. For a detailed discussion of the problems involved cf., e.g., Johannes Heil, "Antijudaismus" und "Antisemitismus": Begriffe als Bedeutungsträger, *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 6 (1997), pp. 92–114.

## I.

Modern research on hatred against the Jews has by and large differentiated between three stages of antisemitism: first pre-Christian, Graeco-Roman antisemitism, the extent of which is highly controversial; followed by Christian anti-Judaism, which is often seen as dominated by religious factors and, finally, racially-oriented antisemitism, which developed some time in the nineteenth century. Much of the discussion has revolved around the question as to if and how these phenomena are related. At the same time, however, it is usually assumed that anti-Judaism or antisemitism is the hermeneutical key to understanding Jewish-Christian relations.<sup>3</sup>

Ever since the emergence of modern antisemitism, research on Jewish-Christian relations has been dominated by the view that anti-Jewish attitudes of non-Jews accompanied Judaism from a very early stage. In volume five of his famous *Roman History*, first published in 1885, Theodor Mommsen claimed that 'hatred of Jews and Jew-baiting are as old as the Diaspora itself'.<sup>4</sup> He saw fundamental opposition between the faith, the law and the culture of rabbinical Judaism and the hellenized

<sup>3</sup> For a possible connection between Graeco-Roman and early Christian antisemitism cf., e.g., Guy G. Stroumsa, 'From Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism in Early Christianity?', in: id./Ora Limor (eds.), *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, Tübingen 1996, pp. 1–26; Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, Mass./London 1997, esp. pp. 197–211 and below n. 8 with further references. For modern antisemitism and Christian anti-Judaism see, e.g., the survey by Christhard Hoffmann, 'Christlicher Antijudaismus und moderner Antisemitismus: Zusammenhänge und Differenzen als Problem der historischen Antisemitismusforschung', in: Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz (ed.), *Christlicher Antijudaismus und Antisemitismus: Theologische und kirchliche Programme Deutscher Christen*, Frankfurt am Main 1994 (Arnoldshainer Texte 85), pp. 293–318, esp. 305 ff; Heil, op. cit. (n. 2); Joseph Dan/Peter Schäfer/Berndt Schaller/Jörg Thierfelder/Christofer Frey, art. 'Antisemitismus/Antijudaismus', in: *RGG*, fourth ed., vol. I, 1998, cols. 556–574, 569–572 (Thierfelder), 572–574 (Frey).

<sup>4</sup> Theodor Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, vol. V: Die Provinzen von Caesar bis Diocletian, Berlin 1885, p. 519: 'Der Judenhass und die Judenhetzen sind so alt wie die Diaspora selbst' (I owe this quotation to Schäfer, op. cit. [n. 3], p. 1). This statement is repeated verbatim without, however, an acknowledgement of its source in August Bludau, *Juden und Judenverfolgungen im alten Alexandrien*, Münster i. W. 1906, p. 44. Konrad Zacher opened his article on 'Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus im klassischen Alterthum' (*Preussische Jahrbücher* 94 [1898], pp. 1–24) by saying: 'Der Antisemitismus, im weitesten Sinne gefaßt als feindliche Gesinnung oder Bethätigung gegen jüdische Mitbürger, ist so alt wie das Judentum selbst und die jüdische Diaspora; aber seine Erscheinungsformen und Motive sind sehr verschieden nach Zeiten und Völkern' (p. 1). – For what follows cf. esp. Christhard Hoffmann, *Juden und Judentum im Werk deutscher Althistoriker des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, Leiden etc. 1988 (Studies in Judaism in Modern Times 9), pp. 222–228 and passim.

Gentile world which made the 'inevitable' co-existence of Jews and non-Jews 'intolerable'.

'Not only was there no attempt at reaching a compromise in those centuries, but the more its necessity became apparent, the more its implementation was deferred. This resentment, this haughtiness, this contempt, however, became so engrained that they were indeed the inevitable growth sprouting from a possibly equally inevitable seed; but the inheritance of those times still weighs upon mankind today.'<sup>5</sup>

Shortly after Mommsen the first comprehensive surveys of ancient anti-semitism appeared. They aimed at showing the allegedly new phenomenon of antisemitism in, as it were, 'historical perspective' in order 'to further the understanding of contemporary events by historical comparison and by analysing common traits and differences between the situations then and now.'<sup>6</sup> In the first half of the last century these studies were quite often related to discussions around the 'Jewish question' and some were later clearly influenced by Nazi ideology.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> 'Das Zusammenleben der Juden und Nichtjuden erwies sich mehr und mehr als ebenso unvermeidlich wie unter den gegebenen Verhältnissen unerträglich; der Gegensatz in Glaube, Recht und Sitte verschärfte sich und die gegenseitige Hoffart wie der gegenseitige Hass wirkten nach beiden Seiten hin sittlich zerrüttend. Die Ausgleichung wurde in diesen Jahrhunderten nicht bloss nicht gefördert, sondern ihre Verwirklichung immer weiter in die Ferne gerückt, je mehr ihre Nothwendigkeit sich herausstellte. Diese Erbitterung, diese Hoffart, diese Verachtung, wie sie damals sich festsetzten, sind freilich nur das unvermeidliche Aufgehen einer vielleicht nicht minder unvermeidlichen Saat; aber die Erbschaft dieser Zeiten lastet auf der Menschheit noch heute' (Mommsen, op. cit. [n. 4], pp. 551 f.).

<sup>6</sup> Hoffmann, op. cit. (n. 4), p. 22: 'Die ersten zusammenfassenden Darstellungen des Antisemitismus in der Antike [...] sind so überwiegend aus der Intention entstanden, ein neues Phänomen in "historischer Beleuchtung" zu zeigen, um durch den historischen Vergleich und die Analyse von Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden zwischen damals und heute zur Urteilsbildung über die zeitgenössischen Verhältnisse beizutragen.' In this context Hoffmann refers to Zacher, op. cit. (n. 4); Felix Stähelin, *Der Antisemitismus des Altertums in seiner Entstehung und Entwicklung*, Winterthur 1905 (Wissenschaftliche Beilage zum Programm des Gymnasium und der Industrieschule Winterthur. Schuljahr 1905/1906); Bludau, op. cit. (n. 4).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Alex Bein, *The Jewish Question. Biography of a World Problem*, London/Toronto 1990. Interestingly enough, Bein seems to share Mommsen's view. Cf., e. g., p. 13: 'It will be the task of the historical analysis attempted here to trace the reasons why hatred and persecution of the Jews have come into being and keep arising anew, and to ascertain the effects and repercussions produced by them. In the widest sense it is thus a problem of the Jews living with the nations and the nations with the Jews. We shall have to ask this question: How were the opinions, images, and stereotypical notions of the Jews formed, along with the fearful or hateful accusations against them with all their ramifications and repercussions, the reactions they produced on the part of those concerned – that seemingly inextricable tangle of prejudices and fears, often by no means onesided, which we regard as the core of the Jewish question?' Why does Bein perceive 'the coexistence of the Jews with the Gentiles and of the Gentiles with the

After 1945 the subject was again taken up by a number of scholars, albeit for different reasons, the most recent example being Peter Schäfer's monograph on *Judeophobia*.<sup>8</sup> In this debate there have been basically two schools of thought, a 'substantialist' interpretation and a 'functionalist' model. The 'substantialists' assume antisemitism to be a result of the distinctiveness of the Jews with regard to the nature of their religion, which has led to their separation from other social groups. The 'functionalists', however, see ancient antisemitism as a product of concrete political conflicts or economic crises.<sup>9</sup> In addition, similarities and differences between pagan antisemitism and the Christian hatred of the Jews have been discussed.<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly enough, after the Second World War and the Holocaust the hypothesis of antisemitism as the dominant factor in the development of Jewish-Gentile relations in toto was overlaid by a second hypothesis according to which the emergence of Christianity brought a new and somehow more threatening quality to antisemitism.<sup>11</sup> The transition between the first and the second stages of the history of antisemitism was now often interpreted by both Jewish and Christian scholars in such a way that the blame for a supposed aggravation of the phenomenon was squarely placed on Christianity. The development of a specifically *Christian* theology and *Christian* practice was largely held responsible for the emergence of a specific kind of Christian antisemitism that was thought to have been the decisive determining factor in the interactions between Jews and Christians over the centuries.<sup>12</sup>

To quote but one example for this kind of approach: in his recent history of antisemitism Robert S. Wistrich first warns against overstating the historical significance of antisemitism:

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Jews' a priori as a 'problem' and *identify* it with the 'hatred and persecution of the Jews'?

<sup>8</sup> Schäfer, op. cit. (n. 3). As regards the discussion of this book and the hermeneutic models introduced below cf. also Robert Goldenberg, 'On the Origins of Anti-Semitism and the Problem of Blaming the Victim', *JSQ* 6 (1999), pp. 251–260; Christine Hayes, 'Judeophobia: Peter Schäfer on the Origins of Anti-Semitism', *ibid.*, pp. 261–273; Peter Schäfer, 'Response to Christine Hayes and Robert Goldenberg', *ibid.*, pp. 274–281.

<sup>9</sup> The distinction was first made by Hoffmann, op. cit. (n. 4), pp. 224ff; see now also Schäfer, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 2–6.

<sup>10</sup> Cf., e.g., Nicholas de Lange, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Ancient Evidence and Modern Interpretations*, in: Sander L. Gilman/Steven T. Katz (eds.), *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, New York/London 1991, pp. 21–37.

<sup>11</sup> Before 1945 one of the notable exceptions was James Parkes with his famous book: *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism*, London 1934 (New York 1977).

<sup>12</sup> For what follows cf. also John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, New York/Oxford 1983, pp. 13–34; Schäfer, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 5f.

‘Antisemitism is *not* a natural, metahistorical or a metaphysical phenomenon whose essence has remained unchanged throughout all its manifestations over the centuries. Nor is it an intrinsic part of the psychic structure of Gentiles, a kind of microbe or virus which invariably attacks non-Jews, provoking the “eternal hatred” for the “eternal people”. Such a theory [...] is quite unhistorical.’<sup>13</sup>

These qualifications and caveats notwithstanding, Wistrich goes on to describe the history of Jewish-Christian relations in precisely these ‘unhistorical’ terms. Not only is antisemitism one of the hermeneutical key categories for Wistrich’s interpretation of the interactions between Judaism and its surrounding cultures and religions; it is precisely *Christian* anti-Judaism and antisemitism which added ‘a wholly new theological and *metaphysical* dimension to antisemitism which was absent in its pagan forerunners and quite distinct from the stigmatising or persecution of other minority groups’.<sup>14</sup> Through the writings of the Church Fathers and the hegemony of Christian religion and culture in the Middle Ages the formation of a ‘hostile collective stereotype of a Jewish people bearing the mark of Cain, a nation of Christ-killers and infidels in league with the Devil, became deeply embedded in the Western psyche following the massacres of Jews during the Crusades.’

‘During the next few centuries, new and even more irrational myths were added, that of the Jew as a ritual murderer, desecrator of the Host wafer, an agent of Antichrist, usurer, sorcerer and vampire. As Christianity spread among all the peoples of Europe, this devastating image crystallised until it was an integral part of European and Western culture, a fact which more than any other accounts for the pervasiveness of antisemitism to this day.’<sup>15</sup>

Wistrich is by no means the only champion of this kind of historical approach. The ‘cloud of witnesses’ could easily be expanded to include scholars such as Rosemary Ruether<sup>16</sup>, Nicholas de Lange,<sup>17</sup> John Gager<sup>18</sup>,

<sup>13</sup> Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred*, London 1991, pp. XVI–XVII.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit. (n. 13), p. XIX (emphasis in the original).

<sup>15</sup> Op. cit. (n. 13), p. XIX–XX.

<sup>16</sup> Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Antisemitism*, Minneapolis 1974 (German tr. *Nächstenliebe und Brudermord: Die theologischen Wurzeln des Antisemitismus*, Munich 1978 [Abhandlungen zum jüdisch-christlichen Dialog 7]).

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas de Lange, art. ‘Antisemitismus, IV. Alte Kirche’, in: *TRE*, vol. III, 1978, pp. 128–137, esp. 128: ‘Während der vorchristliche Antijudaismus sporadisch, örtlich begrenzt, inoffiziell und (abgesehen von der ägyptischen Spielart und ihren Ablegern) nicht ideologisch fundiert war, ist der christliche, zumindest seit etwa der Zeit Konstantins, *dauerhaft, universal, offiziell geschürt, grundsätzlich und durch ein ideologisches System untermauert.*’ (my emphasis).

<sup>18</sup> Gager, op. cit. (n. 12).

Sander L. Gilman and Steven T. Katz<sup>19</sup>, and, more recently, Daniel Goldhagen, although they admittedly argue from very different perspectives.<sup>20</sup> Goldhagen opens chapter two of his controversial book *Hitler's Willing Executioners*: "European antisemitism is a corollary of Christianity."<sup>21</sup> This tendency is still felt in the most recent history of the Jews in Europe.<sup>22</sup>

Now, there is no doubt that Christian anti-Judaism is the most obvious feature when one describes the history of Jewish-Christian rela-

<sup>19</sup> See their evaluation of modern antisemitism in their introductory essay to Gilman/Katz, op. cit. (n. 10), pp. 1–37 which is strongly reminiscent of Wistrich: 'The rhetoric of European anti-Semitism can be found within the continuity of Christianity's image of the Jew. It is Christianity which provides all of the vocabularies of difference in Western Europe and North America, whether it is in the most overt "religious" language or in the secularized language of modern science. For it is not merely that the Jew is the obvious Other for the European, whether the citizen of the Roman Empire or of the Federal Republic of Germany. Anti-Semitism is central to Western culture as the rhetoric of European culture is Christianized, even in its most secular form. This made the negative image of difference of the Jew found in the Gospel into the central referent for all definitions of difference in the West' (p. 18).

<sup>20</sup> The same also applies to popular accounts of Jewish-Christian relations. Cf., e.g., Gerhard Czermak, *Christen gegen Juden: Geschichte einer Verfolgung. Von der Antike zum Holocaust, von 1945 bis heute*, second ed., Reinbek bei Hamburg 1997, p. 19: "Die Geschichte des Verhältnisses der Christen (Mehrheit) zu den Juden (Minderheit) ist im wesentlichen eine des sogenannten Antisemitismus."

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, New York 1996, p. 49 (German tr. *Hitlers willige Vollstrecker: Ganz gewöhnliche Deutsche und der Holocaust*, Berlin 1996, p. 71). On Goldhagen's ignorance of Christian anti-Judaism cf. the review by Klaus Beckmann, *KZG* 10 (1997), pp. 213–217.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Elke-Vera Kotowski/Julius H. Schoeps/Hiltrud Wallenborn (eds.), *Handbuch zur Geschichte der Juden in Europa*, 2 vols., Darmstadt 2001, esp. vol. II, pp. 365–424 (chapter on *Judenfeindschaft*). In his contribution on *Antijudaismus* Winfried Frey writes: 'Hier soll das Augenmerk auf den Antijudaismus gerichtet sein, jene Form der Feindschaft von Christen gegenüber Juden, die, in der frühen Zeit des Christentums, zum Teil schon in den ältesten Texten begründet, in langen Jahrhunderten in unterschiedlicher Häufigkeit und Intensität produziert, rezipiert, verändert und verändert tradiert wurde, die auch in der Neuzeit weiterwirkte, partiell vom Antisemitismus adaptiert und amalgamiert wurde, aber auch in den christlichen religiösen Gemeinschaften bis heute, relativ unabhängig vom Antisemitismus, oft sogar unerkannt und unbegriffen von den Gläubigen, weiterlebt' (p. 369). Although Frey has to admit, that there were periods of peaceful coexistence, this has no consequences for his overall view that anti-Judaism was 'inherent to Christianity from the beginning and omnipresent' and could be 'reactivated' at any time: 'Der Antijudaismus war [...] dem Christentum von Anfang an inhärent, und er war allgegenwärtig. Doch gab es in den verschiedenen Regionen Europas Epochen, in denen er politisch und sozial weniger wirksam war, Epochen, in denen sogar eine, wenn auch immer fragile Concivilitas zwischen Christen und Juden, insbesondere der Oberschicht, möglich war, und Epochen, in denen er aktualisiert wurde und so das "normale" Nebeneinander von Christen und Juden – in dem von Augustinus und dem christlichen Staatsverständnis vorgegebenen Rahmen – zum Schaden der Judenheit abrupt beendet werden und in Vertreibung und Mord umschlagen konnte' (p. 374).

tions. Yet it seems to me that Wistrich *et alii* present us with a picture of these relations which is far too simplistic.

In what follows I am not interested whether and in what way the emergence and rise of Christianity can be said to have aggravated the phenomenon of antisemitism. What matters for the purpose of this paper is that the majority of scholars studying this phenomenon agree in seeing antisemitism as the key hermeneutical category in understanding Jewish-Christian relations, a view which I consider incorrect given the variety of evidence available to us.

Antisemitism owes its career and its tenacity as a hermeneutical category after 1945 to two principal factors. One is, of course, the shattering historical experience of the Holocaust and its utter inhumanity which, it was thought, could only be explained by assuming a long and gradually strengthening tradition of anti-Jewish hatred in German society, as it were, culminating in the mass murder of the concentration camps. If I am not entirely mistaken, even those scholars who have questioned the importance of antisemitism in the development of the idea of an *Endlösung* have hardly ever denied that antisemitism was indeed the decisive principle guiding Christian attitudes towards the Jews.

A reassessment of the true importance of antisemitism in the development of Jewish-Christian relations has also been hampered by the fact that the academic disciplines involved work largely independent of each other. Ancient historians are interested in ancient history and tend to analyse Christian antisemitism in relation to pagan antisemitism. Medievalists usually concentrate either on the antisemitism of Christian institutions such as the Papacy or the friars, or on anti-Jewish polemics by scholastic theologians or, again, on corresponding popular sentiments expressed within their period. Modern historians, both Jewish and Christian, have by and large focussed on the rise of racial antisemitism and its relation to the older religious anti-Judaism. Christian theologians, however, often have a certain inclination towards 'grand hypotheses' covering the whole of the history of Christian theology, unless they share this tendency towards specialization. Yet they then frequently lack a certain sense of historical discrimination. The discipline of Jewish history, on the other hand, dominated as it is by Jewish scholars, has again followed the rules of an academic language game of its own. At best papers by scholars from these various disciplines are bound together in one volume which then usually yields an inconsistent and confusing picture.

This is why the assumption that the history of Jewish-Christian relations ought indeed to be described primarily in terms of non-Jewish antagonism towards the Jews has by and large never been seriously

questioned. Antisemitism continues to be the dominant paradigm by which this history is understood.

## II.

There have, however, been dissenting voices, the most famous of these being the German-Jewish historian Hans-Joachim Schoeps. In his seminal book on *Philosemitismus im Barock* Schoeps remarked: "The history of antisemitism has been repeatedly written, that of philosemitism never."<sup>23</sup> In various publications Schoeps gave a sketch of this philosemitism.<sup>24</sup> Schoeps' idea that the history of antisemitism had to be supplemented and balanced by a history of philosemitism was as such nothing new. In fact, strangely enough Schoeps' own sketch of that history was based on an earlier survey of 'Judaizers' by the Nazi historian Wilhelm Grau which had appeared in the journal *Weltkampf* in 1942.<sup>25</sup> And as early as 1930 an article 'Philosemitismus' from the pen of Sigbert Feuchtwanger was included in the *Jüdisches Lexikon*, which offered a first attempt at classifying various forms of philosemitism.<sup>26</sup> Ever since, several suggestions have been made to supplement the traditional view of Jewish-Christians relations as a history of Christian hatred of the Jews by surveys of friendly attitudes towards Jews and Judaism. For one reason or another, however, none of these books has done full justice to its chosen topic.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock: Religions- und geistesgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Tübingen 1952, p. 1. Cf. by the same: 'Der Philosemitismus des 17. Jahrhunderts (Religions- und geistesgeschichtliche Untersuchungen)', *ZRGG* 1 (1948), pp. 19–34, 245–269, 327–334, esp. p. 19. For what follows cf. also my study 'Philosemitismus, Teil I: Zur Geschichte des Begriffs', *ZKG* 105 (1994), pp. 202–228; 'Teil II: Zur historiographischen Verwendung des Begriffs', *ibid.*, pp. 361–383.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *id.*, *Barocke Juden, Christen, Judenchristen*, Bern/München 1965; *id.*, *Deutsche Geistesgeschichte*, vol. II: Das Zeitalter des Barock. Zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung, Mainz 1978, esp. pp. 261–299.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Grau, 'Die innere Auflösung des europäischen Antijudaismus in den Jahrhunderten vor der Emanzipation', *Weltkampf – Die Judenfrage in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 1942, pp. 1–16, 131–141, 200–212. On Grau cf. Helmut Heiber, Walter Frank and sein Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands, Stuttgart 1966 (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte 13), *passim*. For the relationship between Grau and Schoeps see Martin Friedrich, *Zwischen Abwehr und Bekehrung: Die Stellung der deutschen evangelischen Theologie zum Judentum im 17. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen 1988 (BHT 72), p. 10 and n. 83. However, Grau did not use the term philosemitism.

<sup>26</sup> Sigbert Feuchtwanger, art. 'Philosemitismus', in: *JL*, vol. IV/1, 1930, cols. 910–914.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. especially Alan Edelstein, *An Unacknowledged Harmony: Philo-Semitism and the Survival of European Jewry*, Westport, Conn./London 1982 (Contributions in Eth-



This alternative view is not without its problems either. Especially in German-speaking countries the term 'philosemitism' itself carries anti-Jewish overtones for many people. More importantly, however, it is very difficult to describe the phenomenon as such. The difficulty becomes clear when we look at Feuchtwanger's classification, which includes the young Luther and Theodor Mommsen and even representatives of a mission to the Jews.

Leaving aside the latter, from what we know today I find it problematic to see the young Luther and Mommsen as philosemites, unless we want to call philosemitism the sheer absence of antisemitism.<sup>28</sup> Yet

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nic Studies 4); Solomon Rappaport, *Jew and Gentile: The Philo-Semitic Aspect*, New York 1980. As regards the problems involved with both these books cf. Kinzig, op. cit. (n. 23), pp. 202f. and n. 4.

<sup>28</sup> There is, of course, a vast amount of literature on Luther's attitude towards the Jews. The most useful source book is perhaps Walther Bienert, *Martin Luther und die Juden: Ein Quellenbuch mit zeitgenössischen Illustrationen, mit Einführungen und Erläuterungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1982. On Mommsen cf. Hoffmann, op. cit. (n. 4), pp. 87–132; Jürgen Malitz, Mommsen, 'Caesar und die Juden', in: Hubert Cancik/Hermann Lichtenberger/Peter Schäfer (eds.), *Geschichte – Tradition – Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, three vols., Tübingen 1996, vol. II, pp. 371–387; Stefan Rebenich, *Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack: Wissenschaft und Politik im Berlin des ausgehenden 19. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin/New York 1997, pp. 346–364. – The same criticism has been raised against Edelstein's book. In his review David Vital has even doubted that there is such a thing as philosemitism; cf. *AHR* 88 (1983), pp. 972f. For similar views see Kinzig, op. cit. (n. 23), p. 206 n. 14. – However, I do think and indeed have repeatedly stated in print that it is possible to write such a history of philosemitism. Cf., e.g., the stimulating essay by David S. Katz, 'The Phenomenon of Philo-Semitism', in: Diana Wood (ed.), *Christianity and Judaism: Papers Read at the 1991 Summer Meeting and the 1992 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, Oxford 1992 (Studies in Church History 29), pp. 327–361. In recent years numerous studies on individuals and events within this history have been published. My list given in op. cit. (n. 23), p. 205 n. 12. needs now to be supplemented by, e.g., Cornelius Streiter (ed.), *Tau im Drahtgeflecht: Philosemitische Lyrik nichtjüdischer Autoren*, Rothenburg ob der Tauber 1961; Sholom J. Kahn, 'Mark Twain's Philosemitism: "Concerning the Jews"', *Mark Twain Journal* 23/2 (1985), pp. 18–25; Rodler F. Morris, *From Weimar Philosemite to Nazi Apologist: The Case of Walter Bloem*, Lewiston etc. 1988 (Studies in German thought and history 7); David S. Katz, 'Philo-Semitism in the Radical Tradition: Henry Jessey, Morgan Llwyd, and Jacob Boehme', in: Johannes van den Berg/Ernestine G. E. van der Wall (eds.), *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century: Studies and Documents* Dordrecht etc. 1988 (Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Idées 119), pp. 195–199; Marian Mushkat, *Philo-semitic and anti-Jewish attitudes in post-Holocaust Poland*, Lewiston etc. 1992 (Symposium series 33); Friedrich Niewöhner, art. 'Philo-Semitismus', in: *EKL*, third ed., vol. III, 1992, cols. 1191–1194; Michael Waldbaur, *Anti- und Philosemitismus in der Literatur nach 1945: Eine Methodenarbeit mit exemplarischen Einzelinterpretationen*, unpublished Magisterarbeit, University of Munich 1993 (*non vidi*); Étienne Fouilloux, 'Naissance d'un philosémitisme catholique?', in: André Kaspi (ed.), *Les Cahiers de la Shoah. Conférences et séminaires sur l'histoire de la Shoah*, Université de Paris I 1994–95, Paris 1995, S. 35–50; Alan Levenson, 'Philo-semitic discourse in imperial Germany', *Jewish Social*

neither is it sufficient to deal with them in a history of antisemitism as an example of a gradually 'hardening mind', as in the case of Luther, or to see them solely as a 'counter-reaction' against antisemitism, as in the case of Mommsen. Since both the young Luther and Mommsen may, therefore, be termed neither anti- nor philosemites, they should be accorded a place *in their own right* in a history of Jewish-Christian relations.

### III.

The fact that we do not really know what to do with figures such as these in describing Jewish-Christian relations points to a fundamental dilemma of historical hermeneutics. In this field we tend to operate with dichotomic distinctions which are then mostly applied to Christian actions against Jews and Jewish responses: Christians *act* and Jews *respond*. The actions and their responses may be hostile (as in the case of antisemitism and, perhaps, some forms of Zionism) or they may be friendly (as in the case of philosemitism and Jewish assimilation). Both antisemitism and philosemitism and related phenomena on the Jewish side are quite often characterised by a common fascination with the other religion which may express itself in either a friendly or a hostile fashion.<sup>29</sup>

Prominent support has arisen for this view of things, too. Amos Funkenstein expressed it in the following manner:

"The Jews have always been, and remain, a *mysterium tremendum et fascinatum* to the Christian Church. The preoccupation with the phenomenon

Studies N. S. 2 (1995/96), pp. 25–53; Wolfram Kinzig, 'Philosemitismus angesichts des Endes? Bemerkungen zu einem vergessenen Kapitel jüdisch-christlicher Beziehungen in der Alten Kirche', in: Athina Lexutt/Vicco von Bülow (eds.), *Kaum zu glauben: Von der Häresie und dem Umgang mit ihr*, Rheinbach 1998 (Arbeiten zur Theologiegeschichte 5), S. 59–95; William D. Rubinstein/Hilary L. Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-speaking World for Jews, 1840–1939*, Houndmills, Basingstoke 1999; Wolfram Kinzig, 'Jewish and Jewish-Christian Eschatologies in Jerome', forthcoming in: Richard Kalmin/Seth Schwartz (eds.), *Proceedings of the Conference 'Jewish Palestine under Christian Emperors', New York, March 2000*. – In this respect the term 'Judaizing' and its implications must be taken into account, too. Cf. Róbert Dán, "Judaizare": The Career of a Term, in: Róbert Dán/Antal Pirnát (eds.), *Antitritarianism in the Second Half of the 16th Century*, Budapest/Leiden 1982 (Studia Humanitatis 5), pp. 25–34; Gilbert Dagron, 'Judaïser', *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), pp. 359–380; Vincent Déroche, art. 'Judaizantes', in: *RAC*, vol. XIX, 1999, cols. 130–142; Shaye D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, Berkeley, Calif. 1999 (Hellenistic Culture and Society 31), esp. pp. 175–197.

<sup>29</sup> For some theoretical reflections on this hypothesis cf. esp. Kinzig, op. cit. (n. 23).

of Judaism and of continuous Jewish existence belongs to the very essence and self-definition of Christianity as a historical religion. But, contrary to common opinion, I hasten to add that the ambivalence of fascination and rejection is equally characteristic of the Jewish attitude toward Christianity more than toward any other religion, including Islam.”<sup>30</sup>

I still acknowledge the importance of this research. At the same time, over the past years I have become increasingly convinced that we have to go even further than that. For in order to describe the complexities of Jewish-Christian relations it is not sufficient to operate with hermeneutical dichotomies such as that of antisemitism vs. philosemitism. The ‘grey area’ between these extremes is much too large and too diffuse either to be ignored or to be classified under one of these headings. Moreover, this terminology is ‘directional’ in that it presupposes a relationship between Judaism and Christianity which is seen precisely as action-response in whatever direction. Yet what about those situations in which Christians simply ignored Jews and Jews ignored Christians, although they lived side by side? Or where there was a day-to-day interaction between these religious groups which does not conform to the action-response type?

Let me illustrate what I mean by choosing some well-known examples. John Chrysostom’s *Discourses against the Jews* are often quoted as evidence for Christian antisemitism in late antiquity.<sup>31</sup> Now it is true that Chrysostom was no friend of the Jews and that in these sermons he overstepped all boundaries of common decency. Yet the historical situation in Antioch in the second half of the fourth century, such as can be reconstructed on the basis of these sermons, shows a picture which markedly differs from Chrysostom’s hostile attitude:<sup>32</sup> John Chrysostom felt obliged to preach against Judaism precisely *because* relations between Jews and Christians were very friendly. Christians took part in synagogue services, they observed the Jewish fasting and the Sabbath and

<sup>30</sup> Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions in Jewish History*, Berkeley, Calif. etc. 1993, p. 312.

<sup>31</sup> Edition in PG 48. Annotated translations by Paul W. Harkins, *Saint John Chrysostom – Discourses against Judaizing Christians*, Washington, D. C. 1979 (FCh 68); Johannes Chrysostomus, *Acht Reden gegen Juden*. Eingeleitet und erläutert von Rudolf Brändle, übersetzt von Verena Jegher-Bucher, Stuttgart 1995 (BGL 41). Cf. most recently Wendy Pradels/Rudolf Brändle/Martin Heimgartner, ‘Das bisher vermisste Textstück in Johannes Chrysostomus, Adversus Judaeos, Oratio 2’, *ZAC* 5 (2001), pp. 23–49.

<sup>32</sup> For what follows see the references in my article “Non-Separation”: Closeness and Co-operation Between Jews and Christians in the Fourth Century’, *VigChr* 45 (1991), pp. 27–53, 35–41. In addition, Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century*, Berkeley etc. 1983 (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 4), pp. 66–94.

celebrated Jewish feasts. Many people went to the synagogue, hoping to get cured by means of incubation. Oaths were sworn in the synagogue, since it was considered particularly sacred. Some people were even circumcised, without, however, actually converting to Judaism. If this is not antisemitism, can we, then, speak here of philosemitism? I doubt it, for judging from the complaints of many Church Fathers, Christian syncretism usually included not only Jewish, but also pagan rituals and customs.<sup>33</sup> Christian 'Judaizing' in late antiquity is, therefore, no unique attitude towards Jews; rather, we also have to allow for a considerable degree of 'paganizing'. In addition, owing to the nature of our evidence, we have information about the Christians only – would it not be reasonable to assume that Jewish behaviour towards the Christians was, on the whole, equally friendly just as it was towards pagans<sup>34</sup>? The persistence of a variety of Jewish-Christian groups throughout late antiquity<sup>35</sup> as well as the occurrence of intermarriage<sup>36</sup> appear to strengthen this assumption.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. in general Ch. Guignebert, 'Les demi-chrétiens et leur place dans l'Église antique', *RHR* 88 (1923), pp. 65–102; Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*, Oxford 1933, pp. 156–163; Gustave Bardy, *La conversion au christianisme durant les premiers siècles*, Paris 1949 (Théologie 15), pp. 329–351 (German tr. *Menschen werden Christen: Das Drama der Bekehrung in den ersten Jahrhunderten*, Freiburg 1988); Winfried Daut, 'Die "halben Christen" unter den Konvertiten und Gebildeten des 4. und 5. Jahrhunderts', *ZMW* 55 (1971), pp. 171–188; Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism: An Intellectual Biography*, Oxford 1981, pp. 28f; Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A. D. 100–400)*, New Haven/London 1984, esp. pp. 74–85; Wolfram Kinzig, "'Trample upon me..." The Sophists Asterius and Hecebolius – Turncoats in the Fourth Century A. D.', in: Lionel R. Wickham/Caroline P. Bammel (eds.), *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead*, Leiden 1993 (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 19), pp. 92–111; id., 'War der Neuplatoniker Porphyrius ursprünglich Christ?', in: Manuel Baumbach/Helga Köhler/Adolf Martin Ritter (eds.), *Mousopolos Stephanos: Festschrift für Herwig Görgemanns*, Heidelberg 1998, pp. 320–332; id., 'Zur (Un)Modernität der Spätantike: Ein Essay zu Anlaß und Leitgedanken eines Symposiums', in: Angelika Dörfler-Dierken/Wolfram Kinzig/Markus Vinzent (eds.), *Christen und Nichtchristen in Spätantike, Neuzeit und Gegenwart: Beginn und Ende des Konstantinischen Zeitalters. Internationales Kolloquium aus Anlaß des 65. Geburtstages von Professor Dr. Adolf Martin Ritter*, Mandelbachtal/Cambridge 2001 (Texts and Studies in the History of Theology 6), pp. 5–21. – For Antioch cf. Brändle/Jegher-Bucher, op. cit. (n. 31), pp. 49 ff.

<sup>34</sup> For Jewish 'paganizing' see e. g. Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian*, Princeton, New Jersey 1993, esp. pp. 65–69, 74; Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion. Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire*, Oxford 1994 (paperback ed. 1995), pp. 51 f, 117–120, who, however, seeks to downplay the phenomenon.

<sup>35</sup> On ancient Jewish Christianity cf. Simon C. Mimouni, *Le judéo-christianisme ancien*, Paris 1998 (Patrimoines); Günter Stemberger, art. 'Judenchristen', in: *RAC*, vol. XIX, 1999, cols. 228–245.

<sup>36</sup> Cf., e. g., Feldman, op. cit. (n. 34), pp. 77–79; Karl Leo Noethlichs, *Das Judentum und der römische Staat: Minderheitenpolitik im antiken Rom*, Darmstadt 1996, pp. 104f,

A second example comes from the famous *Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* by the bishop Severus of Minorca which was written in 418.<sup>37</sup> This letter describes an anti-Jewish pogrom ensuing from an attempt by the bishop to convert the Jews of the Minorcan town of Magona. Again, this letter has been used as evidence for Christian hostilities towards the Jews in late antiquity. And again, this is no doubt true. At the same time, however, we also learn from this epistle that for some considerable time there had been two thriving religious communities co-existing on the island, the Christians having their religious centre in Jamona (modern Ciudadela) and the Jews in Magona (modern Mahón). In our histories of Jewish-Christian relations, however, Menorca usually only figures in the chapter dealing with antisemitism in late antique Spain and *not* in the chapter on Jewish-Christian co-existence, even though we must assume that Jews and Christians had been living side by side without any major problems, precisely because bishop Severus deemed it necessary to recount the *change* in this relatively peaceful situation.<sup>38</sup>

Moving on to the Middle Ages, a similar case could be made for medieval Spain. We are used to looking at the Jewish expulsion from Spain in 1492 as another example of anti-Jewish measures by Christian rulers. Yet we must not forget that in the High Middle Ages the Spanish Jews specifically had been allowed to occupy an important economic and social role and developed a complex social structure, 'which included aristocratic elements, religious and economic élites, artisans, and even farmers.' Until the fourteenth century some Jews 'were allowed to exercise authority over Christians, as tax-farmers and collectors. Others were allowed to hold land and often worked it. Business and social relations between Jews and Christians were clearly frequent, both in the bigger and the smaller towns.'<sup>39</sup>

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119–122, 130; Hagith Sivan, 'Rabbinic and Roman Law: Jewish-Gentile/Christian Marriage in Late Antiquity', *REJ* 156 (1997), pp. 59–100; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*, Berkeley, Calif. 1999 (Hellenistic Culture and Society 31), pp. 241–307; Karl Leo Noethlichs, *Die Juden im christlichen Imperium Romanum (4.–6. Jahrhundert)*, Berlin 2001 (Studienbücher Geschichte und Kultur der Alten Welt), pp. 85, 110, 118, 165, 168 f.

<sup>37</sup> *Severus of Minorca – Letter on the Conversion of the Jews*. Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Notes by Scott Bradbury, Oxford 1996 (Oxford Early Christian Texts). See also my review in: *JThS* 49 (1998), pp. 407–410

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Bradbury, *op. cit.* (n. 37), pp. 25–43, esp. 39–43.

<sup>39</sup> John Edwards, *The Jews in Christian Europe 1400–1700*, second ed., London/New York 1991, pp. 26f. A vivid account of the situation in Aragon is found in Yom Tov Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry: Community and Society in the Crown of Aragon, 1213–1327*, London/Portland, OR 1997 (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization).

Finally, an example taken from modern intellectual thought. Much of the reflection on the essence of Judaism in Germany at the beginning of last century was triggered by Adolf von Harnack's famous lectures on *The Essence of Christianity*,<sup>40</sup> the most notable example being, of course, Leo Baeck's (indirect) reply in his *Essence of Judaism*.<sup>41</sup> In recent scholarship Harnack has repeatedly been accused of an anti-Jewish stance and even of downright antisemitism. I have tried to show elsewhere that, even though it is true that Harnack's picture of Judaism at the time of Jesus was influenced by a negative view of Pharisaism, Harnack consistently rejected all forms of racial antisemitism. What is more interesting, however, is his ignorance of and lack of interest in the Judaism of his own times.<sup>42</sup> Although Berlin at the time had the largest Jewish population in Germany, Harnack simply did not know many Jews (apart from a number of highly assimilated bankers and industrialists, some of whom had converted to Christianity). In addition, he possessed no more than a superficial knowledge of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* which by that time had produced historical works of admirable scholarship.

What are we to do, then, with Harnack in the history of Jewish-Christian relations? Demonstrably, he was no antisemite; but equally demonstrably, he was no philosemite either. And yet he cannot simply be passed over, because he wrote extensively on Jews and Judaism and because these writings had a considerable impact on German-Jewish thought.

In conclusion, we have to become much more aware of the fact that the relations between Jews and Christians were not exclusively defined by resentment and downright hatred or, alternatively, by Christian admiration for and envy of Jewish education and intellectual achievements and converse phenomena on the Jewish side, but that the picture was more varied and, if you like, more colourful. Now this is, of course, no new insight. In fact, in the only history of Jewish-Christian relations

<sup>40</sup> Adolf Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums: Sechzehn Vorlesungen vor Studierenden aller Facultäten im Wintersemester 1899/1900 an der Universität Berlin*, Leipzig 1900. The best edition is by Trutz Rendtorff, Gütersloh 1999. Cf. Wolfram Kinzig, 'Harnack heute: Neuere Forschungen zu seiner Biographie und dem "Wesen des Christentums"', *ThIZ* 126 (2001), cols. 473–500.

<sup>41</sup> Leo Baeck, *Das Wesen des Judentums*, Berlin 1905 (Schriften der Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums); fourth ed. Frankfurt a. M. 1926; critical edition (on the basis of the fourth ed.) by Albert H. Friedlander and Bertold Klappert, Gütersloh 1998 (*Leo Baeck Werke*, vol. I).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Wolfram Kinzig, "'This is not anti-Semitism; this is Christianity': Juden und Judentum bei Adolf von Harnack', forthcoming in: Hermut Löhr (ed.), *Das Bild des Anderen: Selbstwahrnehmung und Fremdwahrnehmung zwischen Judentum und Christentum*, Paderborn 2002.

which to my knowledge has so far been published – it is simply called *Kirche und Synagoge* and has, unfortunately, never been translated into English<sup>43</sup> – its editors Karl Heinrich Rengstorf and Siegfried von Kortzfleisch emphasized more than thirty years ago that their book was ‘not just a history of Christian antisemitism’, because such an approach would have distorted history:

‘Especially the Jewish scholars among the collaborators [in the project] persistently pointed out that the relationship between Christians and Jews has always been ambivalent.’

What is missing in the traditional picture, according to Rengstorf and von Kortzfleisch, are those who aimed at conversion in a mission to the Jews. Yet they aimed ultimately at abolishing Judaism altogether. More importantly, those ‘forces’ had hitherto been neglected which strove to ‘preserve Judaism as “*heilsgeschichtlich* factor”’.<sup>44</sup> Although at the time this joint enterprise by Jewish and Christian scholars was a major step forward, we find here once again a strangely reductionist view of the history of Jewish-Christian relations, which in its historical outlook is guided by inapposite theological considerations. It is not surprising, therefore, that the authors narrowed their subject down to aspects of religion and Church history.<sup>45</sup>

Yet in many places Christians and Jews have lived side by side without being interested in converting or preserving each other for whatever

<sup>43</sup> Karl Heinrich Rengstorf/Siegfried von Kortzfleisch, *Kirche und Synagoge: Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden*. Darstellung und Quellen, 2 vols., Stuttgart 1968/70 (repr. Munich 1988 [dtv 4478]). – In addition cf. Stanley E. Porter/Brook W. R. Pearson (eds.), *Christian-Jewish Relations through the Centuries*, Sheffield 2000 (*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*. Supplement series 192/Roehampton papers 6) which contains the proceedings of a conference held in London in 1999.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 19f: ‘Was dabei entstand, ist nicht einfach eine Geschichte des christlichen Antisemitismus. Ein solcher Ansatz hätte die Geschichte ebenfalls verzerrt. Gerade jüdische Gelehrte unter den Mitarbeitern wiesen hartnäckig darauf hin, daß das Verhältnis der Christen zu den Juden immer ambivalent geblieben sei. Zwar wurde das Judentum kaum je als gleichrangiger Partner anerkannt; aber neben denen, die versuchten, die Juden zu missionieren – was praktisch der Aufhebung des Judentums gleichkäme –, gab es auch Kräfte, die darauf bedacht waren, das Judentum als eine “*heilsgeschichtliche Größe*” zu erhalten. Dieser Widerspruch durfte nicht aufgelöst, er mußte dargestellt werden.’

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 20: ‘Die Art, wie hier gefragt wird, macht zugleich deutlich, daß es auch nicht beabsichtigt war, eine Geschichte des Judentums im Abendland mit all ihren politischen, kulturellen und sozialen Problemen zu bieten. Das Buch hat seinen Schwerpunkt *beim religions- und kirchengeschichtlichen Aspekt* der Geschichte. Politische, kulturelle und soziale Momente werden allerdings insoweit berücksichtigt, als sie in einem unmittelbaren Zusammenhang mit den religiösen Fragen stehen’ (my emphasis).

reason. They did not take much notice of each other or took each other's existence for granted. These situations of *convivencia*, however, are quite often passed over in the sources, precisely because the people producing these sources paid no attention to them. There is, then, a methodological problem involved here. How can we describe a historical situation for which we have no evidence? This problem becomes the more difficult the further we go back in time. I do not think, however, that it is insurmountable. As far as antiquity, the period I am most interested in, is concerned, there are two criteria by which such a state of *convivencia* may be discerned. First, we may assume that relations were unproblematic in a given place, if (a) we know from either literary or archaeological evidence that a large Jewish population was present in this place and (b) if our non-Jewish sources by and large mention it only casually or not at all. Such is the case, it appears to me, in most of the large cities throughout the Roman Empire even under Christian rulers at least until the end of the fourth century.<sup>46</sup>

Secondly, there are those cases where (a) again we know that a large Jewish population was present in a given place and where (b) our non-Jewish sources warn their readers not to have any close dealings with Jews. Here we may safely assume that there was a certain amount of contact and interaction between Jews and Christians which must not yet imply a downright philosemitism, as we have seen in the Antiochene community to which John Chrysostom preached his *Discourses against the Jews*.

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<sup>46</sup> In this respect the debate between Louis H. Feldman and Leonard Rutgers has to be taken into account; see Feldman, op. cit. (n. 34), esp. 342–382; Leonard Victor Rutgers, 'Attitudes to Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period: Reflections on Feldman's *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*', *JQR* 85 (1995), pp. 361–395 (also in: id., *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism*, Leuven 1998 (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 20), pp. 199–234) and Feldman's response in his 'Reflections on Rutgers's "Attitudes to Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period"', *JQR* 86 (1995), pp. 153–170. In addition, e.g., Gager, op. cit. (n. 12), pp. 92–101; Shaye J. D. Cohen/Ernest S. Frerichs (eds.), *Diasporas in Antiquity*, Atlanta, Ga. 1993 (Brown Judaic Studies 288); Noethlichs, op. cit. (n. ), esp. pp. 84–88. For Rome as the largest ancient city see, e.g., Leonard Victor Rutgers, *The Jews in Late Ancient Rome: Evidence of Cultural Interaction in the Roman Diaspora*, Leiden etc. 1995 (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 126). For Antioch see, e.g., Wilken, op. cit. (n. ), pp. 34–65; Brändle/Jegher-Bucher, op. cit. (n. ), pp. 44–57. For Sardis and Caesarea cf. Gager, op. cit. (n. ), pp. 98–101. For the situation in Palestine cf. Günter Stemberger, *Juden und Christen im Heiligen Land: Palästina unter Konstantin und Theodosius*, Munich 1987 (English tr. *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land. Palestine in the Fourth Century*, Edinburgh 2000) and now Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B. C. E. to 640 C. E.*, Princeton/Oxford 2001 (Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the Ancient to the Modern World).



This means, however, that research in this field becomes both much more difficult and, it seems to me, much more exciting, for we need further studies in areas such as social history, *Frömmigkeitsgeschichte* and *Mentalitätsgeschichte*, and we have to begin to relate those studies that do exist in these areas to what we know about the existence of Jewish communities in a Christian environment.

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The recent terrible events in the United States have thrown the work of those studying interreligious affairs into sharp relief. They have, once again, made it clear that the task of the student of Jewish-Christian relations has not just historical, but also ethical dimensions. In taking these dimensions into account we must not play down religious differences in order to paint a glossy picture of religious harmony, as some no doubt well-meaning Christian theologians have done over the last decades. Conversely, we must not describe interactions between our two religions in terms of conflict where there was none. Instead, what is called for is simple and honest stock-taking: if we agree that the relationship between Judaism and Christianity constitutes an area of historical research in its own right, distinct from the history of Judaism and from Church history per se, we can only tackle this area by asking at what times and in what places Jews and Christians had dealings with each other, what these dealings looked like and what causes brought about changes in the status quo. For this stock-taking we have to develop a whole new kind of historical hermeneutics and a new vocabulary. We have to think in terms of closeness and distance and of convergence and divergence between Judaism and Christianity. We have to consider how these categories relate to our traditional terms of antisemitism and philosemitism – an area of reflection which is rather complex and which I cannot even begin to tackle within the scope of such a short paper. Finally, we have to compare the range of interaction between these communities with their respective dealings with both dissenters in their own ranks and with other religions and communities, not just Graeco-Roman cults but also oriental religions, especially Islam.

It seems to me that by this wider approach atrocities that have happened in the past are not minimized; instead their monstrosity comes into even sharper focus. At the same time it may also become clear that, historically speaking, there have always been alternatives to antipathy, hatred and violence even in the troubled history of Jewish-Christian relations. Yet the full picture of this history still remains to be painted.