

Article

Race, Ethnicity and Family in Late Antique Judaism and Early Christianity

Markus Vinzent

Max Weber Centre, University of Erfurt, 99085 Erfurt, Germany; markusvinzent@gmail.com

Abstract: Race, Ethnicity, Judaism and Christianity are problematic labels, and so is family. Recent postcolonial approaches have attempted to deconstruct them, not without facing the inherent paradox of the danger of re-essentialising them. This paper approaches these concepts retrospectively to show the complexities and to warn of their anachronistic use.

Keywords: race; ethnicity; Judaism; Christianity; family

1. Race, Ethnicity, Judaism and Christianity: A Postcolonial Reading

Though much has been written about race and about family over the past decades of postcolonial studies,¹ this methodological perspective is still underrepresented in early Christian and Patristic studies.² While ‘Christian’s perpetuation of a dichotomy between a universalist, supersessionist Christianity (as the lone true religion) and a particularist, sometimes ethnic, sometimes religious Judaism’ seems to have been widely overcome, ethnicity as an important basis for Christian triumphalism has been highlighted. (Berzon 2018). On the other hand, the topic of race as well as that of family (Osiek 1996; Strange 1996; Balch 2003; Hezser 2019) has already been studied in some detail in the past, most famously reflected together by the well-known New Testament scholar from Oslo University, Halvor Moxnes. (Moxnes 1997, 2009). Yet beyond New Testament studies, for the combination of race and family in early Christianity, there is certainly still a gap in scholarship³ which even this introductory paper can only highlight and touch upon. Without willing to fill this gap too quickly, let me add a word of caution in applying postcolonial critical theories to this topic and field. As will become quickly clear, neither the concept of ‘race’ nor that of ‘family’—and the difference between these modern concepts and what is seen as their equivalents in antiquity has been noted in scholarship⁴—, let alone the combination of the two, are topics that would spring to one’s mind when reading early Christian material and reflecting upon it. Even though they do appear in the sources, focusing on them makes me feel uneasy.⁵

Having been born into a post-WWII German family where even playing cowboys with toy guns was forbidden, and grown up in a divided country which, for a long time, had great difficulties to face the millions of people who had lost their lives because of Nazi politics and the scars that this ideology had left for decades in a post-Nazi society, even after the Nazis had been overthrown by the anti-Nazi alliance of powers, the combination of race and family reminds me of my youth, when I was browsing with curiosity through the Nazi propaganda albums of cigarette stickers that my grandfather had collected.⁶ True, my father told me about the terrible division in his own family about the differing positions towards the Nazis and their crimes. He himself carried a deep mark in his face, because he had suffered an injury from his older brother who had attacked him, because my father had uttered criticism against Hitler. And yet, these stickers of white supremacy, couched in the display of the Führer being cheered by idealised peasant family members in their Heimat, are still vividly in front of my eyes, reminding me of skimming through these



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folders where no space was left empty with my dad's stories in my heart that spoke of shame, suffering and disgust.

Surely, postcolonialism is the critical theory of colonial power strategies, one of the most gruesome having been that of Nazi Germans, but as all wars are waged on the same level field where the enemy is engaged, as one can now see in the war of Russia against Ukraine, it can hardly rid itself of underpinning the ideologies that it combats.⁷ Hence, approaching our topic retrospectively (Vinzent 2019), we need to acknowledge that already the linking of race and family is deeply problematic and continues to evoke an ill-minded connection which meant murder and brutal death for millions of Jews, and also for other human beings that were racially and politically persecuted and measured against stereotypes of Nazi-family ideologies to which the leading people of the party rarely lived up. We only need to take the Führer himself, who remained unmarried, or Joseph Goebbels, who was married to Magda Behrend-Friedländer, the girl adopted by the Jewish merchant Richard Friedländer and former second wife of the industrialist Günther Quandt. Being married to Goebbels since 19 December 1931, Magda not only gave birth to six children (Helga, Hilde, Holde, Hedda, Heide and Helmut) but she also advanced to become the quasi 'First Lady' of the so-called 'Third Reich', closely related to Adolf Hitler, giving broadcasts on 'The German Mother' and making her children appear in propaganda films representing the 'pure Arians', combining race and family ideology. She also brought her son Harald (1921–1967) from her previous marriage into the household with Goebbels, and his step-brother Herbert Quandt stayed there, in love with his new half-siblings, and yet, except for their father Günther and her mother Magda, none of the Quandt sons entered the party—hence Goebbels as Reichspropagandaminister accommodated and accepted three sons of his wife into his household that never joined his NSDAP. Moreover, his wife, together with her six small children between 4 and 12 years old, followed Hitler and Goebbels into the Bunker during the last days of the war, and before Magda committed suicide, she killed all her six children that she had with Goebbels—a barbarous act for which Herbert Quandt could never forgive her.

Rather than focusing on race and family and the connection between the two, in what follows an attempt is made to deconstruct their ideological foundation, talking of ethnicity instead of the term race (which I cannot pronounce without those nightmarish visions of my youth), looking at the role that family has in it, and argue against an ontologizing of any such concepts, for which early Christian sources provide a rather rich material. As with ethnicity, the discussion will also show that family is dissolving into a maze of identities.⁸

2. Ethnic and Family Identities

Being Jewish—being Christian: Against stereotyping⁹.

Marcel Simon, in his famous *Verus Israel* (1964, trans. 1986), spoke of 'an unacknowledged assumption' that, from early on in the history of Christianity, Christianity existed as a distinct entity, different and separated from Judaism, as a Church that 'directed her attention exclusively to the gentiles, whilst Judaism became indifferent to everything outside herself, so that there was not the least occasion for contact between the two'.¹⁰

According to Simon, one of the major proponents of this view was the Protestant Church historian and Patristic scholar Adolf von Harnack:

At the same time as he [Harnack] notes our almost total ignorance of the fortunes of Hellenistic Judaism after the destruction of the temple, he takes this event as the turning point: the diaspora itself would 'from this moment at the latest' have relaxed its ties with Greek culture, soon to break them altogether. As for Palestinian Judaism, it would already before A.D. 70, in condemning Greek culture, have repudiated the universalistic idea. Harnack can in consequence affirm elsewhere that by the end of the first century there was virtually no more contact between the gentile Church and the Synagogue. (Simon 1986)

Against this early divide and mutual ignorance between Judaism and Christianity, Simon draws up what had been achieved in—especially Jewish—research prior to him writing his own book. On this basis, he then develops his views that only with the end of the so-called Bar Kokhba war did the two ‘entities’ become visible. (Simon 1986).

Now, ‘when was . . . Christianity born as a particular current within Judaism’, when did it constitute itself as a ‘religion different and separate from the Jewish religion’? Schnelle rightly notes that the answer is ‘almost always affected by ideological evaluations’ (Schnelle 2019, p. 289). Was it, as he and Harnack suggested, shortly after the first Jewish war in 70 CE, or after the second one in 135 CE, as Simon believes? A third answer is given by Giorgio Jossa in the book that he opened with these two questions, to which he answers:

When Paul states: ‘There is neither Jew nor Greek [. . .] for you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (*Gal.* 3:28; cfr. *Rom.* 10:12; *1 Cor.* 12:13; *Col.* 3:11), does this mean that he is perfectly aware that he now belongs to a new social group that will later be defined as a *τρίτον γένος*, a *tertium genus*, alongside the traditional ones of the Jews and the Greeks, or does he merely express the position of a person who is still ‘a radical Jew’? And when he hints at his past behaviour in ‘Judaism’ and Luke and John indicate the ‘Jews’ as having primary responsibility for the death of Jesus, do they really express through this the completed separation of the Christian group from its Jewish origins or do they bear witness to a conflict that is still entirely within Judaism, between a new group of Jews and the authorities of the synagogue?¹¹

Jossa concludes that the separation between Judaism and Christianity ‘did not begin only with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70, but already with the preaching of Paul (and even before him, by the Hellenists) to the Jews of the Diaspora and to the Gentiles’ (Jossa 2006, p. 13), especially, as he thinks, because ‘Christian communities (above all the Pauline ones) . . . had never been part of Judaism because they were born outside the synagogue . . . In certain ways that history had really begun already with the birth of a Christian community after the death of Jesus, if not in the very preaching of the prophet of Nazareth.’¹²

Jossa’s results have been received with some reluctance when it comes to his interpretation of evidence (Bird 2008; Mimouni 2008). The designation ‘Christians’ in *Acts* 11:26 (Jossa 2006, pp. 126–27), for example, Jossa takes as a self-designation of Christians, whereas Michael Bird contends that ‘the term “Christians” seems to be predominantly a derogatory title (i.d., “sycophants of Christ”) and does not become an actual self-designation until the time of Ignatius of Antioch’.¹³ Likewise, when Paul’s remark in *Phil.* 3:20 that the believer’s ‘urban community’ is ‘in heaven’ is taken as saying ‘the disciples of Christ did not belong to an urban community of Jews or of Gentiles’, it is hard to see why this should create ‘a clear separation from the synagogue’. At best, it created a separation between any earthly or worldly ‘urban’ community and an eschatological heavenly one (Jossa 2006, pp. 100–1). Bird, therefore, mentions three *addenda* and *corrigenda* to Jossa’s findings: ‘(1) The fact that Paul tried to “win the Jew” (*1 Cor* 9:20), that the gospel was for the “Jew first” (*Rom* 1:16; 2:9–10), and his experience of synagogue punishments (*2 Cor* 11:24) would all suggest that Luke’s portrait of Paul as missionizing among Jews and Gentiles is probably correct. That implies that his churches did include, in some locations, a mixture of Jewish and Gentile adherents. (2) Paul rejected the imposition of the Torah upon his Gentile converts; nonetheless, it seems clear from the collection that Paul took up for the saints in Jerusalem that he wanted his converts to stay in a positive relationship with the Jerusalem church and thus with Judaism. (3) It is difficult to see the social reality of the Pauline churches as entirely independent of Judaism when their language, symbols, and scriptures remained firmly indebted to them.’ (Bird 2008). He, therefore, questions amongst other things ‘whether there actually were Christian communities absolutely independent of Judaism prior to 70 C.E.’, pointing to the fact that ‘in the Pauline correspondence it is precisely issues related to Jewish law, Jewish identity, and Jewish theology that persistently arise’, topics that

presuppose a Jewish audience or readers of a Jewish background (Bird 2008). Similarly, Christoph W. Stenschke finds it ‘questionable to speak of a Christianity of “exclusively Greek origin” (9)’ (Stenschke 2012, p. 105). ‘If it was Christian at all’, he adds, ‘it cannot have been of *exclusively Greek origin*’ (Stenschke 2012, p. 105). In addition, despite ‘still influential voices vigorously denying that the Apostle was still a Jew, Jörg Frey has made a strong case that Paul ‘even as an apostle . . . did not cease to view himself as a member of the Jewish community’ (Frey 2007, p. 304). Furthermore, Simon C. Mimouni sharpens this position by stating that ‘the entire Christian movement during the first and the second centuries were “Jewish”, which does not exclude the ‘Greek’ presence that has become more and more dominant’, (Mimouni 2008, p. 596). See also (Mimouni 2004, pp. 464–65) and that therefore ‘all Christians until the years 100–150’ were Jews, whether or not they were born Jewish, while he like Simon sees the years 135–150, the aftermath of the so-called Bar Kokhba war, as the ‘epoque when the conflicts of identity and status between Christians of Jewish origin and those of non-Jewish origin broke out’ (Mimouni 2004, p. 466) (my own trans.). The identity clash, however, did not only happen between those who were born Jewish and those who were born non-Jewish, with the latter only wanting to be a ‘third genus’—rather, people, irrespective of how they were born, started to define themselves as Christians, some independent of Jews as Aristides, some maintaining antithetical links to Judaism as Marcion and his pupils, others continuing to observe parts of the Torah as Ptolemaius, others following the Jewish prophets in reading them as foretellers of Jesus Christ as Ignatius in the seven letters collection, Justin or Irenaeus.

Daniel Boyarin drew the conclusion that the second century apologists created the divide between orthodoxy and heresy and provided the discourse that separated out Judaism and Christianity (Boyarin 2004, p. 2). According to him, there were no ‘preexistent different entities . . . that came (gradually or suddenly) to enact their difference in a “parting of the ways”’—but the Christian heresiologists were ‘the anatomizers of heresy and heresies’, with ‘their Jewish counterparts’ being ‘the Rabbis’ (Boyarin 2004, p. 2).

Scholarship still remains divided on the question of when Christianity, or at least some Christians, developed their distinct identity, a prerogative for the existence of Christian apologetics and heresiologists.¹⁴ Like Boyarin (although less radical than him), the majority of scholars are critical of an anachronistic assumption of an early divide between Jews and Christians, especially in the light of more recent deeper reflections on the notions of ‘Judaism’/‘Jewishness’ and ‘Christianity’/‘Christian’.¹⁵ The debate about these abstract terms, their coming into existence and the use of them tells a lot about the question of an ethnic understanding of what it meant to be a Jew and whether being called or calling oneself a Christian was an ethnic description. If we want to understand these terms from a historical perspective, at least as far as hermeneutically possible, we have to be aware of the danger that in specifying what ‘Christianity’ is, we are neither ending up in a distorted deconstruction nor in an artificial re-construction of the notion and concept of ‘Judaism’.¹⁶ Instead, we have to understand these generalizing terms in broad, albeit not contoured senses,¹⁷ particularly as the earliest time that they appear combined is in Marcion of Sinope’s *Antitheses*, in his preface to his ‘New Testament’, in the year 144 CE.¹⁸

The term ‘Judaism’ alone is already attested earlier. ‘As is often noted, the term usually so translated, ἰουδαϊσμός, first appears in the Maccabean literature . . . [and] there is a perhaps unsurprising irony in that it is in this period, when it becomes textually legitimate to speak of “the Jews”, that the rich diversity of what “Jews” did, thought, believed, and organized becomes most visible, provoking a continuing debate as to what, if anything, constituted the core of Jewish identity’ (Lieu 2004, p. 18). Yet, it is precisely in these books of the *Maccabees* where we see the process of differentiation and acculturation reflected, not unrelated to family matters. For example, in 1 *Maccabees* 1:11, we read about ‘lawless men’ who ‘came forth from Israel, and misled many’ saying: ‘Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles round about us, for since we separated from them many evils have come upon us.’ In contrast, 2 *Maccabees* 2:21 refers for the first time to ‘Judaismos’ and 4:13 to

‘Hellenismos’ and warns of the adoption of Greek ways of conducting one’s life (Levin 1998, p. 101).

That there was sometimes and in some places a dichotomy between Jews and non-Jews, at least in the eyes and minds of some Jews, but also of non-Jews, cannot only be seen from the Torah, and from later Rabbinic literature which ‘is filled with statements that contrast “Israel” with “the nations”’ (Cohen 1999, p. 1), but also from Hellenistic Jewish writings. We will talk about Paul a little later who, after 2 Maccabees, is the first author ‘to use the word “Judaismos”’ again.¹⁹ Famously, the *Letter of Aristeas* states:

Now our Lawgiver being a wise man and specially endowed by God to understand all things, took a comprehensive view of each particular detail, and fenced us round with impregnable ramparts and walls of iron, that we might not mingle at all with any of the other nations, but remain pure in body and soul, free from all vain imaginations, worshiping the one Almighty God above the whole creation.²⁰

Greek-speaking Jews such as Philo of Alexandria know of similar self-differentiation from people in their environment, when he states that ‘both Alexandria and the whole of Egypt had two kinds of inhabitants, us and them’,²¹ meaning Jews, and Egyptians or Greeks. Yet, likewise, he “not only recognized multiple Jewish ethnic identifications; he insisted on them as an essential attribute of Jews” (Ibid., p. 86). Similarly, Josephus ‘often refers to “us Jews”, in the first-person plural, and contrasts Jews with “gentiles”’,²² setting ‘Egyptians’ ‘in polar opposition’ to ‘Judaean’.²³

Not very different from these Jewish voices are those of learned Greco-Romans.²⁴ ‘Writers such as Cicero, Horace and Suetonius refer to collective action’ by Jews, ‘clearly regarded . . . as a separate and distinctive section of Roman society . . . long before the time of the mass influxes of Jewish slaves’. (Noy 2000, p. 36). And ‘pagan ethnographers and Latin satirists complained of Jewish separateness (*amixia*) and of their being socially aloof (*akoinônētoi*), of their impiety in refusing to honor the gods of the majority (*asebeia*), and of their ‘foreigner-hating lifestyle’ (*miso xenos bios* or *misanthrōpia*; cf Tacitus’ *adversus omnes alios hostile odium*, ‘hostile hatred against all outsiders’, Hist 5.5.1).’²⁵ Yet, Paula Frederiksen, with reference to B. Isaac, cautions us to make too much out of these ‘ethnic stereotyping’, noticing that it was ‘routinely levelled . . . at all foreigners’ (Ibid., p. 23); (Isaac 2005). Archaeology supports claims about Jewish separateness; however, only to a certain extent when, for example in the Egyptian city of Tlos a burial organization of ‘Judaean’ is known (‘us Judaean’)²⁶ who’s founders all carry Greek or Greco-Egyptian names:

Ptolemy son of Leukios of Tlos erected at his own expense this tomb from the foundations, himself and on behalf of his son, Ptolemy the second, son of Leukios, on the occasion of the completion of the archonship among us Judaean, so that it [the tomb] shall be for all the Judaean, and no one else is allowed to be buried in it. If anyone shall be discovered burying someone, he shall owe to the people of Tlos [a fine of x amount of money].²⁷

The inscription clearly strengthens the close relation between family and cult relationships, but it does not seem to be one of family, cult and ethnicity. First, Ptolemy—in itself a rather Greek name and not exactly an obvious choice for a Judaean given their history²⁸—who erects this tomb is the son of a Greek-named inhabitant Leukios, who still lives together with his son in the Egyptian village of Tlos. The family tomb shows the family network as a socially extended inclusion of ‘all the Judaean’, but also of ‘the people of Tlos’. That this village was not solely made up of Jews is indicated by the possibility that non-Jews could or even possibly wanted to be buried in the same grounds. And yet, neither the family itself nor simply the Jews of Tlos are the beneficiary of the fine to be paid for a transgression of the social cult barrier, it is ‘the people of Tlos’. The existence of both boundary settings and relational tax, commercial, financial and social extensions only suggests that the cross-over between ‘Judaean’ and non-Jews, as well as language-

oriented ethnic, cultural and social mixtures, were the given, a form of proximity that only necessitated the erection of cult barriers, as attested in this inscription.

Similarly, when we move from Egypt to Palestine, we can see, for example, from the governance structure of the Galilean cities that they display ‘a unique local character’, ‘they were not Roman cities in the full sense, but they emulated Roman urban administration and construction . . . a kind of compromise between the autochthonous settlement and the Roman urban system’ (Safrai 2014, p. 297). Apparently, the Great Revolt of the first Jewish war led to ‘a process of polarization’, so that ‘the communities that were moderate became *poleis* for all extents and purposes, with a gentile administration and a dominant non-Jewish population. And the rural communities became Jewish with no signs (or minimum signs) of Hellenization. The intermediate agents disappeared from the internal political arena’ (Safrai 2014, p. 298).

Hence, especially in towns and cities, ‘as the rich and variegated remains of Hellenistic Jewish culture, both inscriptional and literary, attest (as do other pagan complaints about fellow pagans who Judaize), Jews participated vigorously in majority culture socially, politically, and intellectually. In many ways, *except for their general demurral regarding public pagan cult*—Jews were *not* all that separate. A high degree of social integration coexisted, for them as for other ethnic groups, with religious—better, ethnic—distinctiveness’ (Frederiksen 2014, p. 23).

What made somebody ‘Jewish’? Answering this question by solely referring to the Rabbinic *halakha* (born of a Jewish mother²⁹; converted according to the procedure, established and ‘overseen by the appropriate Rabbinic authorities’: ‘instruction in and acceptance of the Torah’, ‘circumcision [for males]’, ‘ritual immersion [for both males and females]’, ‘the offering of a sacrifice’; a status, ‘once acquired [which] cannot subsequently be lost’³⁰) is anachronistic. As specialists in the field assert, Jewish identity in antiquity was elusive and uncertain for two simple reasons. First, there was no single or simple definition of *Jew* in antiquity. Indeed, the Greek word *Ioudaios*, usually translated as ‘Jews’, often is better translated as ‘Judean’, and the concepts ‘Jew’ and ‘Judean’, in turn, need clarification. Second, there were few mechanisms in antiquity that would have provided empirical or ‘objective’ criteria by which to determine who was ‘really’ a Jew and who was not. Jewishness was a subjective identity, constructed by the individual him/herself, other Jews, other gentiles and the state.³¹

Nevertheless, Daniel R. Schwartz, asking the question ‘which English word comes closest to what the ancient Greek or Roman understood when he or she heard *Ioudaios*?’ is of the opinion that ‘Jewish identity in antiquity was anything but unambiguous’, and thinks that ‘Judean’ indicates rather the geographic descent, whereas ‘Jew’ is broader. (Schwartz 2007, pp. 5, 21–22). Perhaps it was precisely the overlap between the geographical notion and that of cult practice that differentiates being ‘Jewish’ from, for example, being ‘Syrian’. Noy points out that ‘No-one “became” a Syrian however fervently they worshipped Jupiter Dolichenus, but people who publicly adopted the Jewish religion became Jews, whatever their original background. Thus, it was possible to be an African Jew or a Syrian Jew, and such double labels are occasionally found in the inscriptions’ (Noy 2000, p. 255).

Outward appearances of people seem, however, to have contributed to the difficulty of defining identities:

Jews and gentiles in antiquity were corporeally, visually, linguistically, and socially indistinguishable (Cohen 1999, p. 37) . . . we may assume that in the first century C.E. 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.³²

In addition, Simon Mimouni has pointed to M *Nedarim* III 11 and deduced from this text that ‘at the beginning of the 2nd century CE the Jewish nation was composed of circumcised, but also of non-circumcised people’ (Mimouni 2007, p. 146). A legal definition might be one way of approaching what is meant to being Jewish, as Jewish communities

sought a legal position and gain privileges in the Roman Empire, as, for example, the entitlement to form a legal organisation that were offered by various cities (Wander 1998, pp. 21–28). To gain or preserve such status, a functioning Jewish legal representation and jurisdiction was needed (Kippenberg 1991), and to personally partake of such privileges, it was essential to define oneself as being Jewish. To point out his human credentials, Paul claimed to have been circumcised, that he derived from the people of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, that he was born from Hebrew parents: ‘I was circumcised on the eighth day, from the people of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. I lived according to the law as a Pharisee’ (Phil. 3:5), ‘I am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin’ (Rom. 11:1), ‘born of a woman, born under the law’ [Gal. 4:4]) which made him ‘Jewish’ in contrast to the Gentiles (‘we are Jewish by birth and not Gentile’, Gal. 2:15).³³ In these self-descriptions, Paul demonstrates the intertwining of genealogy that pertains to cult and ethnic traditions (‘people of Israel’, ‘tribe of Benjamin’, ‘Hebrew of Hebrews’), to family genealogy (‘born of a woman . . . under the law’), combined with allegiance to subgroups (‘as a Pharisee’).³⁴ ‘Birth’ brings in again the family basis of such self-identity markers, yet understood not as the modern nuclear family, but as the extended family that roots itself in a tribe and a people.

Likewise, Luke claims that both John the Baptist and Jesus were circumcised according to the Torah, although none of the Synoptics make Jesus speak about circumcision.³⁵ With regards to family bonds, Jesus is already painted as being indifferent by Marcion in his gospel (*Ev 8:20–21)³⁶, broadening family ties to the believers in his God, whereas the Synoptic Gospels radicalize his attitude up to being brisk towards his family (Mk 3:31–35; 3:28–30; Matt 12:46–50; Lk 2:41–51; 11:27–28; *Ev 11:27–18; GTh 79). This rejection was stretched even further in the Gospel of Thomas, where Jesus points out that only his audience are his brothers and his mother and that these only would ‘enter the Kingdom’ of his Father (GTh 99).

Being Jewish, being Christian, being Roman, or what?

To understand antique self-identifying better, we may also look at the social environment of Jews and Christians: What made somebody a ‘Roman’, an ‘Egyptian’ or a ‘Hellene’? Is it geographical origin, ethnicity, family links, culture, religion, language or a cluster of these?

For Romans, self-definition was even more complicated than for Jews and Christians. If we leave aside ‘Romanness’ and concentrate on being a Roman citizen, being Roman is more than a purely legal and political phenomenon, as Roman citizenship extends into the social, cultural and historical spheres (Gardner 1993, pp. 1–2). Roman citizens were members of the *Cives Romani*, be it with full rights (*optimo iure*), including the rights to vote (*ius suffragiorum*) and to hold office (*ius honorum*), or without these (*ius non optimo iure*). It touches heavily on kinship, blood and descent (Dench 2005, p. 258, and family, and it includes the rights of property (*ius commercii*)³⁷ and that of marriage (*ius connubii*). Somebody who was not a Roman citizen, but who was free, was called a foreigner (*peregrinus*), even if he had come ‘from a family which had lived in Rome for generations, speak only Latin, and have no known kin outside Rome’ (Noy 2000, p. 1). The Roman citizen, conversely, ‘might know no Latin, never visit Rome and have no dealings with anyone who did, but was inherited’ (Noy 2000, p. 1), as is known, for example, from Acts 22:27–28, where Paul is said to claim for himself that he has been born a Roman citizen, while the Roman commanding officer in Jerusalem admits that he acquired citizenship only through paying a large sum of money. The possibility to gain Roman citizenship had already been extended during the first two centuries to people being born outside the capital. Already in the 4th c. BC, the Romans had granted their surrounding ‘Latins’ certain rights (*ius Latii*), for example, the right of property (although not of marriage). As these were legal and political rather than racial, ethnic, religious or cultural terms, so was the concept of a ‘Roman citizen’. This is shown in the fact that ‘unlike the rest of the Greco-Roman world, Romans normally gave slaves citizenship upon manumission’ (Gardner 1993, p. 7). And although the magistrates had to be involved at some point for manumission to result in the creation of a new citizen, the

initiative for manumission rested with an individual Roman, the slave's owner, and the role of the state's officers, for much of the history of the institution, appears to have amounted to little more than acquiescing in the owner's action, without imposing any restrictions or controls (Gardner 1993, p. 7).

Most of the time, these 'owners' were, of course, the 'Fathers of a family'; the family extended to the slaves, who depended on it.

In addition, military recruitment and that of German bodyguards added to the mix of Roman citizens, which went far beyond families, cities, regions and ethnicities. With between 10,000 and 30,000 German soldiers present in Rome alone during the first to the third centuries CE, we can see the impact of the military on the cultural composition of Romans. These bodyguards, who formed the *collegium Germanorum*—their name indicating their geographic, if not (diverse) ethnic origin—with their 'burial area above what became the SS. Pietro e Marcellino catacomb' at Rome, were given 'Latin rights on enrolment and citizenship on discharge' (Noy 2000, p. 21). This granting of citizenship was further broadened from the reign of Augustus, which underlines the legal, more than the cultural or ethnic, character of becoming and being a Roman citizen.

How important it was to be a Roman citizen can be seen from the opposite side, as most designations for foreigners were pejorative (*alienigenus, externus, barbarus*), 'only *peregrinus, provincialis* and *transmarinus* seem normally to have been value-free' (Noy 2000, p. 22). Legal rather than ethnic descriptions of inhabitants of Rome were further developed during the so-called Second Sophistic into a global Roman ideology, according to which the inhabitants of the empire 'willingly exchanged their various parochial identities for the universal identity of Romanness' (Richter 2011, p. 4), as, for example, expressed by the atticizing Greek rhetor and writer Aelius Aristides:

You [Romans] have brought it about that 'Roman' is not the name of a city but of a common genus, and this genus is not one among many, but a compensation for all the others. For you do not divide the genus into Greek and Barbarian . . . rather, you have divided the genus into Romans and non-Romans. To such a degree you have expanded the name of your city.³⁸

Such a broad understanding of 'Romaness' consciously surmounts city- and family-centrism, language and ethnic definitions and barriers and provides a blueprint for the Jewish Greco-Roman cult practice to which the label 'Christian' becomes attached. This mid-second century address to the emperor Antoninus Pius can be read as a devout submission of a Greek rhetor to an all dominating Roman power³⁹ which, as we will see, is not being subscribed to by all subjects of it. Yet, it also represents a broad stream of intellectuals who 'imagined the human community as a unified, homogenous whole composed of a diversity of parts' (Richter 2011, p. 4), a 'community of cities',⁴⁰ that transgresses even these regionalized identities. Despite the strong 'Roman' marker, the Empire never developed into a rigorously centralized state, based on ethnical or cultural terms. Instead, cities, provinces, tribes and cultural communities remained autonomous in many ways. Even later, during its Christian times, Rome never formed a unity of language and belief, too deep was the divide between the Western Latin, the Eastern Greek, the Egyptian, Syriac, Armenian and other language speaking parts, let alone all the regional identities with their dialects, iconographic and religious worlds.

Late antiquity very similar to today knew of varying forms and layers of identity within different contexts, 'a self-definition need not be the same as a designation or category applied from outside', and even the 'self-definition' could change according to circumstances and needs (Thompson 2001, p. 304; Noy 2000, p. 10). Dorothy J. Thompson delivers examples from late antique Egypt, which she illustrates by 'the situation of immigrants to the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century':

A self-styled Neapolitan or Sicilian may be designated Italian for more official purposes; a Welshman or Scot will carry a British or, now, a European passport. And with any designation, the connotations may also differ for those who bear it

and those who use it. The context in which a term is employed is crucial to its meaning. (Thompson 2001, p. 304)

Similarly, outside the Jewish, Christian and Roman confines, we meet a non-, no-longer- or rather rarely ethnic understanding of what previously were geographical and ethnic identifiers. ‘The description of someone as *Africanus* might mean only that he came from the province of Africa, not that he felt more “African” than “Roman” ... The habit of giving slaves an ethnic name seems to have been fairly common, but some such names acquired wider popularity, e.g., Gallus was the cognomen of many people who certainly had no connection with Gaul’ (Noy 2000, p. 6). Meanwhile, ‘Hellenes’ and ‘Egyptians’ were originally designations for people who came from or were rooted in the respective areas and who lived side by side in Hellenic cities with Hellenes being in dominating positions (Gehrke 2003, p. 188). Already by the 2nd c. BCE, the meaning is shifting to people using a particular language and having a specific social status. ‘Individuals variously designated as Hellenes and Egyptians may have actually belonged to the same household’, as Jonathan M. Hall and Koen Goudriaan have shown (Hall 2002; Goudriaan 1988, p. 46). Despite geographical labels (Thompson 2001, p. 306), ‘it was ultimately the primary language that an individual spoke that proved decisive to whether he or she was classified a Hellene or an Egyptian’⁴¹ and to which social class she or he belonged. Moreover, it fostered the barrier between non-Latin speaking foreigners and others, as Latin was the sole official language, ‘including proceedings in the courts and official announcements’ (Noy 2000, p. 36).

Although language was ‘only one symptom of a change in habits, in the social functions performed and the groupings one preferred to join’, it was a decisive factor in determining social identity (Goudriaan 1988, p. 91). As we can learn from Polybios, as far as the fragmentary state of what is preserved of his work allows for (34, 14), the lines of divisions in major cities were drawn differently from rural places when he classified the inhabitants of Alexandria socially into Egyptians, mercenaries and Alexandrians, with the latter being Hellenes ‘at root’, because of ‘the common habits (*ethos*) of the Hellenes’, even if he regarded them as being intermingled (*migades*) with the others (Hall 2002, p. 222). What accounts for Egyptians and Hellenes, the partial overlapping, while still having distinct identities, can also be seen in Jews and Hellenes,⁴² as far as our scant, scattered and fragmented evidence allows us to judge.⁴³ Although, for example, ‘in third-century fiscal registers from the Arsinoite village of Trikomia’ Jews appear as ‘Hellenes’, Jews still distinguish themselves either through allegiance to their specific legal reference system, the Torah, or the resulting religious culture (Hall 2002, p. 222), despite them speaking different languages and originating from or living in different and distant geographical areas.⁴⁴

Identifications such as ‘Roman’, ‘Jew’ and later ‘Christian’ are, therefore, complex phenomena. What is called a ‘Jew’ or a ‘Christian’ was, indeed, diverse, anything but clear-cut, the communities ‘extremely permeable ... due to the visibility of ancient religious celebration generally’ (Frederiksen 2003, p. 51), and made up of immensely diverse geographical and conceptual traditions in Palestine-Israel and beyond. In addition, Jews, as any other inhabitant of Greek and Asian cities, were shaped by local traditions and the overarching centralized power of a Roman political system with centres in Alexandria, Antioch, Rome and elsewhere. For a long time, the Temple in Jerusalem was a core feature for many Jews, as was the High Priest, the chairman of the ‘not-easily-defined Jewish national council, called the Sanhedrin’ (Choi 2013, p. 117; Goodman 1987, pp. 113–15). And even though both the Temple and the office of High Priest seem to have been lost in the two Jewish wars, the hope for their restoration had not ceased, neither amongst Jews nor amongst Christians (Choi 2013, pp. 173–75). Here again, we see the impact of influential families and their networks that dominated the scene, a phenomenon that remained so even after the fall of the Temple in the year 70 CE. While the High Priesthood had already been ‘no longer hereditary’, and ‘family connections and influence [had] played a large part in many appointments’ with two families alone (that of Boethus and that of Ananus—both Latin family names) having ‘provided about half the High Priests from Herod’s accession

until A.D. 66' (Smallwood 1962, pp. 14–15), the anticipation, as Josephus writes in the 90s, was widespread that once the Temple would be rebuilt, the High Priests were supposed to return.⁴⁵ In Josephus' famous summary of the Law in *Contra Apionem* 2.193–8 'he included the Temple cult as the first item in the list of the essentials of Jewish worship' (Goodman 1992, p. 28). Close links existed to Sadducees and Hasmonaeans, and also Essenes were present in Jerusalem, and in the country, Samaritans had their territorially centred worship, while Pharisees were only on the rise (Bickerman 1988, pp. 133–76). People with allegiance to various legal school traditions met in a multitude of regionally sub-structured and socially and culturally fractioned and often mutually hostile synagogue communities of like-minded or same-tongued members, and people from a whole host of backgrounds joined up in similar social, cultural and geographical milieus. Rabbinic Judaism with its Aramaic orientation did not dominate Judaism before the third to the fifth centuries of our era and was already the product of the mutual part-segregation of Jews and Christians in a then more visibly Christianized and Hellenized Roman empire (See C. Hezser (1993, 1997); S. Schwartz (2001)). Even then, Jews had tried, with only limited success, to shake off Greek traditions and promote an Aramaic-based counter-byzantine practice (De Lange 2009) against the background of a Christian Greco-Roman institutionalized cult which had lost some of its Hebrew and Aramaic Jewish roots.

Looking backwards, we need to be careful not to import our modern and contemporary views of distinct world religions and -isms into those early centuries of Late Antiquity, even though it seems hardly possible to rid us entirely of those distinct 'isms' which we are familiar with today (Schäfer 2010; Vinzent 2016). And yet, Christians' own '-ism', '-ness' or '-ity' had not been coined during the first century; none of the protagonists, Jesus Paul or anyone from the first and the first decades of the second century, knew her- or himself to be 'Christian'. The first who came up not only with the idea of Christians being a novel entity, but also with the designation 'Christianity' as opposed to 'Judaism' was, as mentioned before and shown in earlier studies, the Roman teacher Marcion, who had come from Sinope to the capital in the aftermath of the second Jewish war.⁴⁶

3. Ethnicity and Family in Early Christianity

Modern scholars admit that 'there is a fundamental tension in the NT portrait of the family' (Osiek 1996, p. 2). As already indicated before, the portrait of Jesus ranges from his indifference towards his family to a brisk rejection of it. His followers are asked to renounce 'houses, brothers, sisters, fathers, mother, children, and fields' (Matt 19:27–29; Mk 10:28–30; see *Ev 18:28–30; Lk 18:28–30). We are even told that Jesus brings division into families so that 'brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death' (Matt 10:21; Mk 13:12; see *Ev 21:16; Lk 21:16; GTh 55, 101). Additionally, called to follow Jesus, one 'is not to look back to say good-bye' (*Ev 9:59–60; Lk 9:59–60; Matt 8:21–22). On the other hand, we find 'famous household codes' as 'the lightning rod for an ethos of peaceful domestic existence in which all members acknowledge their position' (Osiek 1996, p. 2) which is hierarchic (or better "kyriarchal") (Schüssler Fiorenza 2009, p. 9) and patriarchal (Schnelle 2019, pp. 256–58). This 'ethos of private household' extended even 'to church community life and civic responsibility', so that one revered 'one another as fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers' (1 Tim 5:1; 1 Pet 5:5) (Osiek 1996, p. 2). An answer to this tension is not provided by ordering these types into a historical line of development, but rather accepting that family in either Roman, Jewish or Christian contexts is a rather loose concept as race and ethnicity have shown to be.⁴⁷ The English term 'family' has even 'no exact ancient Greek equivalent' (Pomeroy 2020, p. 155). Instead of retrojecting contemporary Euro-American stereotypes of social relations with their hierarchical gender relations into antiquity, Peskowitz suggested to think of family as 'a plural concept' which encompasses 'various forms . . . characterized by varied arrangements and configurations' (Peskowitz 2020, p. 14). As can be seen by the above household codes, family relations were often subject to outside influences and regulations, irrespective in which religious or political environment they existed. 'Augustus instituted

laws aimed at regulating family sexual moralities, the *lex de maritandis ordinibus* (18 BCE) and the *lex Papia Poppaea* (9 CE)', to encourage 'higher rates of familial reproduction . . . tannaitic Sages similarly contain their visions of, and interventions into the regulation of, family life' (Peskowitz 2020, p. 17), as did early Christian authors. Similarly, family and ethnicity converge, but also remain distant, depending on the perspective we chose. When we look at conceptualizations of the readers of Paul and the apologists of the mid-second century, we can clearly detect 'a supra-ethnic model of kinship in Christ' (Berzon 2018, p. 208). which combines the two divergent tendencies mentioned before. It is a distancing from the Greco-Roman and Jewish 'patrilineal kinship model' (Hodge 2007, pp. 3, 23), but is by no means a non-ethnic conceptualisation of Christian life.⁴⁸ As we can see from Aristides of Athens, he creates different genealogical ethnic narratives to distinguish Christians from Greeks (and Egyptians) and Jews—interestingly without indicating any distancing from Romans.⁴⁹ A different picture emerges when we move away from apologetics and look at tomb inscriptions.

Here, we note that family and ethnicity are often important, but less genealogically consistent as, when deviating from enumerating numbers of successive generations of a family that practice the same profession:⁵⁰

In the second year of the dictatorship of C. Caesar,
with M. Antonius as *magister equitum* [47 BCE],
the site of the tomb was bought from Q. Modius L. f. Qui. 24 feet wide, 24 feet deep.
C. Numitorius C.l. Nicanor, by birth a Theban, eye doctor.
Numitoria C.l. Philumina, by birth a Phrygian.
C. Numitorius C.l. Stabilio, by birth a native slave.
P. Opitreius C.l. Butas, by birth a Smyrnan.
They built the foundation. In their tomb is buried:
Numitoria C.l. Erotis, by birth a Carthaginian.
Q. Numitorius C.l. Isio is buried there.⁵¹

Though not a Christian family tomb, this example from Rome shows the mix of geographical backgrounds (Roman, Egyptian, Phrygian, Smyrnan, Carthaginian) and social status (eye doctor, native slave) which defies an ethnically bound family structure. Apparently bought from a Roman citizen, a number of relatives contributed to the building, an eye doctor from Theban with presumably his wife from Phrygia. We find that a freed slave, a Smyrnan man and two family members are resting there, and a Carthaginian woman and, presumably, her Roman husband. All in all, it shows, how North-African Roman provincials, those from Asia Minor and Egypt, seem to be related, not forgetting about their geographic, perhaps ethnic, backgrounds, and yet they are joined around this tomb.

Without claiming that this example is representative for later early Christian social environments, it is interesting to note that in his criticism of the Roman teacher and business owner Marcion of Sinope in Asia Minor, Tertullian picks up the opening of Marcion's Gospel. Here, against the mirror-Gospel of Luke, Jesus is not born to a couple in Bethlehem, but derives straight 'from above'. Tertullian scorns this, by emphasizing the importance of both family and ethnicity:

The Jewish race was from the beginning so clearly distinguished into tribes and communes and families and households, that no man could easily be of unknown descent, at least from the recent census of Augustus, of which perhaps the records were still on display. But Marcion's Jesus—yet there could be no doubt that one had been born, who was seen to be a man—he indeed, not having been born, could have had in the public records no note of his descent, but would have had to be reckoned as one from among those persons who in some way or other were classed as unknown.⁵²

To Tertullian, it is clear that somebody who has no records, and cannot prove family and ethnic links, is a nobody, classed as 'unknown'. Social standing, therefore, is linked

to both family and ethnicity. These two descriptors are linked, despite what is said in the Gospels, as shown before, and yet they rather are trumpeted by the apologetic rhetorician to become both markers of identity and foundations of authority that delineate from being nobody, less as a border between different ethnicities. As in the tomb inscription, it was important to belong to a specific city or region, yet not necessarily to a specific one (which does not deny different standings of cities and regions—we only need to look at the hierarchical importance of Roman citizenship), in order to count as somebody. This seems to even be true for Chrysostom in the fourth century, when he, however, turns this into an argument quite contrary to Tertullian, claiming that Jesus' otherness is proof for the power of his message and the success against the odds:

'One should once introduce somebody not just in a people, a city, a town or a community, but into a small family who is hated by all family members. Yet, this person wants to turn away from them from the beloved ones, from father, wife and children; would this person not very soon be dismembered, even before he has opened his mouth? And if there even were trouble between husband and wife, would one not stone him, before he has come through the door? If he is then also scorned, makes annoying demands, reminds the others of virtues and has to fight against a majority of enemies, is it not obvious that he is going to be surrendered? What, now, is impossible in a family, this Christ has been able to do in the entire world by introducing his medical doctors into the world despite abysses, fiery furnaces, chasms and cliffs.'⁵³

In short, the core terms of 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'family', just like 'Judaism' and 'Christianity' are labels that particularly served apologists to mark out a vast and highly unrecognizable landscape in order to establish demarcations and provide grounds for identity claims. Researching such phenomena, postcolonial approaches that refocus on these terms can hardly remove the dangers to fall precisely into those traps that they wanted to overcome.

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Notes

¹ With older lit. (Almeida 1999; Peterson 2020).

² "L'adjectif postcolonial peut encore susciter des interrogations, dans tous les cas parmi les spécialistes de la Bible", so Valerie Nicolet-Anderson (2013). See also C. Harker (2018). See also the work of my former colleague and friend R.S. Sugirtharajah, for example, his *The Bible and Empire. Postcolonial Explorations* (Sugirtharajah 2005). For early Christian studies, see D. Wilhite (2011, 2014); A. Urbano (2013). For further lit. on race and kinship see (Berzon 2018; Vinzent 2017). Still, today, there are only a few attempts to approach early Christian studies and Patristics—outside the field of the New Testament—applying postcolonial theories, see the successful example of (Niehoff 2019).

³ An important entry into the topic has been provided by the edited volume by (Nasrallah and Fiorenza 2009). For insights into the ambiguity of gender in Early Christianity, see B. Stefaniw (2010).

⁴ See the literature in (Berzon 2018).

⁵ Even with all the caveats, as, for example, noted by Buell (2009, pp. 164–65, 172–74): "'Race' as a Haunted Concept", as I will explain in the next paragraph, I have great difficulties to retroject these terms into late antiquity; they are haunting me.

⁶ See on this understudied propaganda medium (Zeichmann 2010).

⁷ See the criticism voiced against and acknowledged by (Said 2019). See also (Pouillon 2015; Said and Jhally 2014; Elmarsafy 2013).

⁸ See, for a later period, D. Nirenberg, "Race and Religion" (Nirenberg 2021, 2009).

⁹ See, for a paper that supports what is said here, C.M. Baker (2009, pp. 79–99). See also A. Jacobs (2012).

¹⁰ (Simon 1986). Certainly more reflected, yet still subscribing to the idea that at the latest with Paul, 'early Christianity' developed 'as an independent movement' with 'its own identity', is (Schnelle 2019, p. 289).

¹¹ (Jossa 2006, p. 1) Schnelle, too, sees the 'subsystem of early Christianity shaped by Paul' as meeting all the criteria for the creation of a new movement with its own identity (Schnelle 2019, p. 289).

- Ibid.; see for a similar view the Jewish voice in the mentioned book by (Maccoby 1986).
- (Bird 2008). The problem, however, arises how to date Ignatius. The early dating of Ignatius to around the year 110 AD led, for example, James Dunn to state that ‘the period between the Jewish revolts (70–132) ... (may have been) the hinge on which major issues hung and decisive events turned’ in the development of Christian self-identity; see his preface in (Dunn 1992, pp. ix–x).
- See the long debate about the parting of the ways, for example, A. Yoshiko Reed (2005).
- See (Choi 2013, p. 184). See also the more recent study by (Barton and Boyarin 2016).
- See (Lieu 1996, pp. 1–2). She has pointed out this danger; see a more recently differentiated view by (Schwartz 2001, pp. 10–11; Hagner 2012, pp. 386–89).
- See (van Aarde 2006, p. 354). Contourlessness was, then, a criticism voiced against Boyarin, for example by (Boustani 2006). Boustani sees Christianity and Judaism (but also the various Judaisms) in Boyarin becoming ‘peculiarly bloodless linguistic constructs’.
- Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 6,1.3: “Certe enim totum quod elaboravit etiam *Antitheses* praestruendo in hoc cogit, ut veteris et novi testamenti diversitatem constituat, proinde Christum suum a creatore separatum, ut dei alterius, ut alienum legis et prophetarum ... Constituit Marcion alium esse Christum qui Tiberianis temporibus a deo quondam ignoto revelatus sit in salutem omnium gentium, alium qui a deo creatore in restitutionem Iudaici status sit destinatus quandoque venturus. Inter hos magnam et omnem differentiam scindit, quantam inter iustum et bonum, quantam inter legem et evangelium, quantam inter Iudaismum et Christianismum.”
- Gal.* 1:13–4; (Boin 2014, p. 181).
- Letter of Aristeas* 139–40, trans. R.H. Charles.
- Philo, *Ad Flac.* 43. See more on Philo in (Baker 2009, pp. 86–91). Even though I agree with most of what is being said in this important paper, I would stress Philo’s self-awareness of being different more than it is been done there, without reading him as “asserting an expressly, even exclusively, ‘Jewish/Judean’ ethnicity” (ibid., p. 90) either.
- (Cohen 1999, p. 1). Josephus, *Ant.* XX pp. 157, 259. 262.
- (Barclay 2004, p. 126). See also (Mason 2007). Mason strongly advocates speaking of Judeans rather than Jews. I am grateful to Guy Stroumsa for pointing me to this article. He added that to him ‘the systematic use of Judean is not very helpful heuristically’ (email of 6 May 2005). To this comes the observation by Bloch that “neither Greek nor Latin distinguished between ‘Jew’ and ‘Judean’”, R. Bloch (2021), “Jew or Judean: The Latin Evidence”, 232.
- This link is also seen by R. Bloch (2021), “Jew or Judean: The Latin Evidence”, 238: “To the Romans the Jews were a strange people, often viewed as a foreign people, but one among many. It is only with the arrival of Christianity that the *Iudaei* become a topic of special importance”.
- (Frederiksen 2014, pp. 18–19). See also R. Bloch (2021), “Jew or Judean: The Latin Evidence”, pp. 233–40.
- On the interchangeable use of “Jews” and “Judeans” and the discussion of whether to distinguish between both, see R. Bloch (2021), “Jew or Judean: The Latin Evidence”.
- CIJ* 757; *Tituli Asiae Minoris* II 2, no. 612; trans. (Cohen 1999, pp. 1–2 (altered)).
- I owe this remark to Jessica van ‘t Westeinde (2023) (Bonn), to whom I am grateful for numerous valuable suggestions and corrections.
- ‘Whether matrilineal or patrilineal, the genealogical principle in a sense begs the question, since it presupposes that at least some ancestors are simply *known* to have been Jews’, so (Skarsaune 2007, p. 11).
- (Alexander 1992, p. 4). See on the halakic answer as anachronism (Skarsaune 2007, p. 11).
- (Cohen 1999, p. 3). Cohen exemplifies it, for example, with regards to Herod who’s ‘Jewishness is a function of the meanings we impute to the word *Ioudaios*. Herod was either a Jew or a non-Jew—or both’ (ibid.); on this topic, see (Williams 2013, pp. 24–29 (lit.), 25). She (even more clearly than Cohen) asserts that the term *Ioudaios* ‘simply cannot be translated *invariably* as Judean’. ‘Overwhelmingly ... the word was socio-religious ... all the individuals, bar one, described as *Ioudaios/a* in the epitaphs from the Jewish catacombs at Rome, for instance, had been either proselytes or immigrants. That suggested that the application of the epithet to them was an attempt by those who commemorated them to stress that they really had belonged to the Jewish community and indeed had been worthy members of it’. See further C.M. Baker (2009, pp. 82–86).
- (Cohen 1999, p. 46) See (Mimouni 2007, pp. 1–4). He mentions the Egyptian priests, the depiction of circumcised men in the valley of Amouq in Syria from around 2800 BC, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Arabs, Phenicians, Jews.
- See (Cohen 1999, pp. 263–73; Mimouni 2008, pp. 595–96). Similar is (Jossa 2010, p. 474).
- For a detailed study with further lit., see M. Cromhout (2009), “Paul’s ‘former conduct in the Judean way of life’ (Gal 1:13) ... or not?”
- For John, see *Luke* 1:59; for Jesus, *Luke* 2:21; on the silence of the Synoptics and the allusion in *John* 7:22–3, see (Mimouni 2007, pp. 159, 243–46). We have to note (see ibid.) the liturgical feast of Jesus’ circumcision on 14 January in the Latin and Greek tradition; earlier on it was celebrated on 1 January (as in the Latin West), attested from the 6th or 7th c.
- I adopt here the abbreviation, introduced for Marcion’s Gospel by (Klinghardt 2021).

- See the research that is now undertaken in a sub-project, led by Jörg Rüpke and myself within the broader research on “structural change of property”, SFB 294 Structural Change of Property (sfb294-eigentum.de) (17 March 2023).
- Aelius Aristides, *To Rome* 63.
- See on this A. Lampinen (2023), “Condemning Mobility: Nativist and Exclusionist Rhetoric in the Second-Century ‘Sophistic’ Discourse on Human Movement”; I. Männlein-Robert (2019), “Move Your Self: Mobility and Migration of Greek Intellectuals to Rome”.
- Aelius Aristides, *To Rome* 92. On this, see (Wander 1998, pp. 17–19).
- (Hall 2002, p. 222). See on Egypt, S. R. Huebner et al. (2020).
- (Gruen 1998). Gruen (over-)stresses harmony and non-distinctiveness between Jews and Non-Jews, cf. (Barclay 1999). Barclay shows with regards to Egypt, Cyrenaica, Syria, Asia and Rome the wide variety of the spectrum between highly and moderately assimilated Jews and those who insisted on a binary contrast between ‘Jews’ and ‘the nations’, between ‘persecuted Jews’ and ‘proud’ and ‘detestable and lawless’ Gentiles; see also (Schwartz 2000, p. 354). He takes a balanced view between Gruen and Barclay, supported by (Rutgers and Rutgers 1998, p. 94). He states: ‘Jews, unlike for example Syrians, seem to have kept a strong sense of ethnic identity and were not readily absorbed into Roman society’—although we might question the characterization ‘ethnic’.
- ‘Ancient Jews were not interested in preserving it, and—apart from Eusebius in his *Praeparatio evangelica*—just about no one else was either’ (ibid, pp. 350–51 further lit.), so (Schwartz 2000, p. 350).
- (Rutgers and Rutgers 1998, pp. 165–66). He shows the great similarity of Jewish funerary inscriptions in locales separated one from another by thousands of miles, ibid, p. 134, that of the architecture of synagogues, despite the varying local building techniques.
- Joseph., *C. Ap.* II, pp. 193–95.
- Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 33,8: ‘John has been set as a sort of dividing-line between old things and new, a line at which Judaism should cease and Christianity should begin . . . by the action of an alien power there came about this cessation of the law and the prophets, and the inception of that gospel in which is the kingdom of God, Christ himself.’ ‘*Ioannem constitutum inter vetera et nova, ad quem desineret Iudaismus et a quo inciperet Christianismus, . . . ab alia virtute facta sit sedatio legis et prophetarum, et initiatio evangelii in quo est dei regnum, Christus ipse.*’ See also Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 6,3: ‘. . . *quantam inter Iudaismum et Christianismum*’; Lieu 1996), 266: ‘While the formulation may be Tertullian’s own, he is clearly borrowing the key terms from his opponent. Neither Judaism nor Christianity are found in Irenaeus, nor in Justin, two of Tertullian’s principal sources, and they appear together only in Books IV and V of the *Adv. Marc.*, which were written at the final stage of the work when Tertullian first had access to Marcion’s *Antitheses*.’ From here, we can find it again in *IgnRom.* 3,3; *IgnMagn.* 10,1,3, *IgnPhilad.* 6,1 and in *Mart.Pol.* 10,1 (see below) a.o. See, with more details (Vinzent 2020; 2021).
- See for the Roman context (Bradley 1991), and for the Jewish one (Peskowitz 2020).
- Against Hodge is this highlighted by (Berzon 2018).
- See on Aristides (Simpson 2017; Vinzent 2019; Buell 2005, p. 46).
- On the latter, see (Pomeroy 2020, pp. 161–62).
- AE (1972), 14, quoted in (Noy 2000, p. ix).
- Tert., *Adv. Marc.* IV 36,8: ‘Tam distincta fuit a primordio Iudaea gens per tribus et populos et familias et domos, ut nemo facile ignorari de genere potuisset, vel de recentibus Augustianis censibus, adhuc tunc fortasse pendentibus. Iesus autem Marcionis (et natus non dubitaretur qui homo videbatur) utique, qua non natus, nullam potuerat generis sui in publico habuisse notitiam, sed erat unus aliqui deputandus ex iis qui quoquo modo ignoti habebantur.’
- Chrysost., *In Matthaeum homiliae* LXXV 3 (own trans.).

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