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## Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to which is Appended a Correction of my *Border Lines*)

DANIEL BOYARIN

Reflections occasioned by

OSKAR SKARSAUNE and REIDAR HVALVIK, eds.

*Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007. Pp. xxx + 930.

MATT JACKSON-MCCABE, ed. *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered: Rethinking Ancient Groups and Texts*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2007. Pp. x + 389.

IT IS NOT *just* to be clever that I have appropriated Michael Williams's title;<sup>1</sup> I want to suggest that the argument for dismantling the one (Gnosticism) is startlingly similar to the argument for dismantling the other (Jewish Christianity). Adding Karen King's important insights into the comparative mix,<sup>2</sup> I would say that the term "Jewish Christianity" always functions as a term of art in a modernist heresiology: It is a marker of the too Jewish side of the Goldilocks fairytale that is "ordinary" Christianity, to cite for the moment Oskar Skarsaune's heresiological terminology.<sup>3</sup> I propose that any definition of "Jewish Christianity" implies an entire theory of the development of early Christianity and Judaism,<sup>4</sup> and I will

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1. Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, N.J., 1996).

2. Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003).

3. "Ordinary," in his parlance, functions as "proto-orthodox," or "mainstream" in other writers. To his credit, Skarsaune has pledged to stop using this term in future.

4. Annette Yoshiko Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' after the 'Parting of the Ways': Approaches to Historiography and Self-Definition in the Pseudo-

sketch out such a theory that, if accepted, virtually precludes, in my opinion, any continued scholarly usefulness for the term. Two recent essays introducing two volumes of new thinking on the topic of *sogennante* Jewish-Christianity exemplify for me the pitfalls of using this terminology itself, even in the hands of very critical writers indeed. My case for abandoning this term is an argument in three movements. In the first movement, I will present evidence and discuss evidence already given for the claim that there is never in premodern times a term that non-Christian Jews use to refer to their “religion,” that *Ioudaismos* is, indeed, not a religion (this term to be defined), and that consequently it cannot be hyphenated in any meaningful way. In the second movement, I will try to show that the self-understanding of Christians of Christianity as a religion was slow developing as well<sup>5</sup> and that a term such as “Jewish Christian” (or rather its ancient equivalents, Nazorean, Ebionite) was part and parcel of that development itself and thus *eo ipso*, and not merely factitiously, a heresiological term of art. In the third movement, I will try to show that even the most critical, modern, and best-willed usages of the term in scholarship devolve willy-nilly to heresiology. If my arguments be accepted, there should be as little justification for continued use of the term “Jewish Christianity” as a scholarly designation as there is for the term “heresy” itself (except as the very object of heresiological discourse).

#### 1. THERE IS NO JUDAISM

It seems highly significant that there is no word in premodern Jewish parlance that means “Judaism.” When the term *Ioudaismos* appears in non-Christian Jewish writing—to my knowledge only in 2 Maccabees—it doesn’t mean Judaism the religion but the entire complex of loyalties and practices that mark off the people of Israel; after that, it is used as the name of the Jewish religion only by writers who do not identify themselves with and by that name at all, until, it would seem, well into the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> It might seem, then, that Judaism has not, until some time in modernity, existed at all, that whatever moderns might be tempted to abstract out, to disembed from the culture of Jews and call

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Clementines,” in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. A. H. Becker and A. Y. Reed (Tübingen, 2003), 189.

5. Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York, 2005).

6. John J. Collins, “Cult and Culture: The Limits of Hellenization in Judea,” in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, ed. J. J. Collins and G. Sterling (Notre Dame, Ind., 2000), 39.

their religion, was not so disembedded nor ascribed particular status by Jews until very recently.

In a recent article, Steve Mason has decisively demonstrated that which other scholars (including the writer of these lines) have been bruiting about in the last few years, namely, that there is no “native” term that means “Judaism” in any language used by Jews of themselves until modernity,<sup>7</sup> and, moreover that the term *Ioudaioi* is almost never, if ever, used by people to refer to themselves as “Jews.”<sup>8</sup> In a fascinating and

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7. Daniel Boyarin, “Semantic Differences: Linguistics and ‘the Parting of the Ways,’” in *The Ways That Never Parted*, 68, adumbrating at least some of Mason’s points.

8. Steve Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38.4–5 (2007): 457–512. I want to register a minor protest, however, at one point that is hardly Mason’s “fault.” I think the time has come to stop using the terms “emic” and “etic” to mean internal (=subjective) and external (=objective) categories of analysis of cultures, whether present or past (Mason, “Jews,” 458–59.). These terms, produced out of the structural linguistic opposition between “phonemic” and “phonetic” distinctions, bear no analogy whatsoever to internal and external or subjective and objective. Phonemic distinctions are distinctions that make a difference of meaning within a given language, while phonetic distinctions are simply distinctions in sound that make no difference within that language. Thus in Chinese pitch is phonemic, while in English it isn’t. Length of consonants is phonemic in Italian but again is not in English. Phonemic distinctions are observable from the “outside”; indeed one of the first tasks of a classical structural description of a language was for the researcher to make, through observation, a list of the phonemes of the language. As such they are just as objective and repeatable as a list of phonetic differences, and they are the only important categories for describing that language. Phonetic differences, while they may be interesting to acousticians, have no role in the making of meaning in the language. Accordingly the sort of distinction (questionable anyway) that is meant to be captured by the terms “emic” and “etic” bears no comparison to the origin of these neologisms. A given culture may make distinctions that are not spoken of (that are tacit) or insist that it makes distinctions that “on the ground” don’t seem to operate. Such discrepancies are well known to ethnographers, but this too hardly marks an opposition between subjective and objective or insiders’ and outsiders’ perspectives. One would have to demonstrate *in either case* on the basis of the same kind of evidence whether or not a distinction or category is operative within the culture and thus phonemic, as it were; if it isn’t, it is as meaningless for that culture as differences in pitch are for speakers of English. For us to impose a category on an ancient culture, a category such as a “religion” called “Judaism,” would not be “etic” but simply false, unless it can be shown that the category operated within that culture, in which case it would be “emic.” The “emic” and the “etic” are not modes of analysis at all but a distinction within a linguistic cultural system between significant differences and differences which make no difference. In the human sciences only the “emic” (whether tacit or not) is sig-

compelling demonstration, Mason shows that the term *Ioudaismos/Iudaismus* only comes to mean “Judaism” in the mid-third century (with the Latin actually preceding the Greek), when the practices and beliefs of the Jews are separated polemically by Tertullian from their landedness, their history, “all that had made it compelling to Judaizers,” and *Iudaismus* means now “an ossified system flash-frozen with the arrival of Jesus.”<sup>9</sup> Mason shows, moreover, that Tertullian’s usage of *Iudaismus*, in contrast with *Christianismus*, “strips away all that was different in Judaeen culture—its position among ancient peoples, ancestral traditions, laws and customs, constitution, aristocracy, priesthood, philosophical schools—abstracting only an impoverished *belief system*”<sup>10</sup>—an impoverishment that persists, I would suggest, up through today’s references to Judaism as a faith! This is not, of course, a historically accurate representation of the state of the Jewish people at the time (after all a certain heyday of Palestinian Jewish life, the time of the Mishnah), as Mason shows eloquently. His explanation for Tertullian’s new usage is equally convincing: “By about 200 C.E. the Church was making headway as a popular move-

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nificant, and the terms, therefore, should be simply abandoned as hopelessly misleading. If we don’t know whether a category was significant in an ancient culture or not, we just don’t know, and nothing about “emic” or “etic” “modes of analysis” can change this. Terminology, however, is a pretty good clue. A language that lacks a distinction between “gay” and “straight” might very well be supposed, for instance, to indicate a culture that probably does not see this—for us, frequently fatal—distinction as significant. All of this supports Mason’s argument in his paper; I merely intend here to pickle a red herring, in hopes that it stays pickled. One of the values of research of the sort that Mason pursued is to expose “false friends,” words that sound to us when encountered in ancient texts as if they mean what they mean today—“Judaism,” for example. The problem of translation remains of course a separate issue. A propos, at another point, I think that this false distinction, emic/etic, confuses Mason’s reading of the excellent Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1997). Hall’s discussion of ethnic identity as being a matter of shared genealogy is not about “facts,” i.e., *sogenannte* “etic,” but precisely about certain constructions of group identity and identification through narratives of shared genealogy (*pace* Mason, “Jews,” 483, n. 57). Hall is not confusing any putative emic/etic boundary, but it is that boundary that confuses. This is not to say that modern analytic categories, such as gender or identity, should not be used in the analysis of ancient cultures but these analytic categories should be tools for exhibiting what is actually happening in the culture (and what not) whether by that name or another and not ahistorical categories that are simply assumed to be there for every culture. To do so would be to make the sort of category mistake that would make Sambian boys who *all* fellate adult males into “homosexuals.”

9. Mason, “Jews,” 473.

10. *Ibid.*, 472.

ment, or a constellation of loosely related movements. In that atmosphere, in which internal and external self-definition remained a paramount concern, Tertullian and others felt strong enough to jettison earlier attempts at accommodating their faith to existing categories, especially efforts to portray themselves as Judaeans, and to see commitment to Christ as *sui generis*. Rather than admitting the definitive status of the established forms and responding defensively, they began to project the hybrid form of *Christianismus* on the other groups to facilitate polemical contrast (σύνγκριστος). The most important group for Christian self-definition had always been the *Ioudaioi*, and so they were the groups most conspicuously reduced to such treatment, which generated a static and systemic abstraction called *Ἰουδαϊσμός/Iudaismus*.<sup>11</sup> The clear and critical conclusion to be drawn from this argument is consonant with my thesis in *Border Lines* that “Judaism” as the name of a “religion” is a product of Christianity in its attempts to establish a separate identity from something else which they call “Judaism,” a project that begins no earlier than the mid-second century and only in certain quarters (notably Asia Minor), gathers strength in the third century, and comes to fruition in the processes around before and following the Council of Nicaea.<sup>12</sup> It should be remembered, however, that this is a Christian meaning of *Ioudaismos/Iudaismus*, not a “Jewish” one, nor even a non-Jewish one, as Mason shows, adducing the usage of *Ioudaioi/Iudaei* in parallel with other ethonyms in ancient writers, “pagan” and Jewish, while *Christianismos/mus* is paralleled with the names for mystery cults.<sup>13</sup> Where I disagree with Mason is in his acceptance of Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s conclusion that “early western civilization was on the verge, at the time of Lactantius [d. ca. 325 C.E.], of taking a decisive step in the formulation of an elaborate, comprehensive, philosophic concept of *religio*. However, it did not take it. The matter was virtually dropped, to lie dormant for a thousand years,”<sup>14</sup> to which Mason comments decisively: “It is only western modernity that knows this cate-

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11. *Ibid.*, 476.

12. I am happy to admit (less happy to have to) that the theses of *Border Lines* are not entirely clear and uncontaminated with various forms of inconsistency and even a measure of self-contradiction precisely on the question of a putative rabbinic response to these developments. See, *inter alia*, all four essays in Virginia Burrus et al., “Boyarin’s Work: A Critical Assessment,” *Henoch* 28 (2006): 7–30, for confirmation of my errors. In an appendix below, I hope to make at least a partial correction.

13. Mason, “Jews,” 489–93.

14. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (London, 1978), 488.

gory of religion.”<sup>15</sup> In the next section of my argument that “Jewish Christianity” and its ancient terminological counterparts are simply and only heresiological terms of art, I will present evidence that Smith (and thus Mason) is wrong on precisely this point, for not only did a robust notion of “religion” exist in Christian writers, it was necessary for the existence of a transethnic Christendom. Moreover, the construction of ancient versions of “Jewish Christianity” was an important part of the production of that notion.

## 2. “RELIGIONS” WERE INVENTED IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

Mason himself has given us the material for a hypothesis. First of all, to sum up, he has shown how by the third century Christian writers are using both *Ioudaismos/Iudaismus* and *Christianismos/sus* to refer to belief systems abstractable from cultural systems as a whole. Second, he has argued that the later meanings of “religion”—the allegedly modern ones—are prepared for in antiquity by the concept of a “philosophy” as a system of beliefs and practices “voluntarily” adopted and maintained.<sup>16</sup> These two elements, I strongly suggest, led to a late ancient development of something quite close to our modern notion of religion.

At the end of the fourth century and in the first quarter of the fifth century, we can find several texts attesting how Christianity’s new notion of self-definition via “religious” alliance was gradually replacing self-definition via kinship, language, and land.<sup>17</sup> These texts, belonging to very different genres, indeed to entirely different spheres of discourse—heresiology, historiography, and law—can nevertheless be read as symptoms of an epistemic shift of great importance. As Andrew Jacobs describes the discourse of the late fourth and early fifth centuries, “Certainly this universe of discourses engendered different means of establishing normativity: the disciplinary practices of Roman law, for instance, operated in a manner quite distinct from the intellectual inculcation of historiography or the ritualized enactment of orthodoxy. Nevertheless,

15. Mason, “Jews,” 489.

16. This is not to imply that not adopting or maintaining such a system didn’t have negative consequences; “voluntary” here is not necessarily voluntary.

17. Hal A. Drake, “Lambs into Lions: Explaining Early Christian Intolerance,” *Past and Present* 153 (1996): 25. Drake’s theory is germane to the hypothesis of this article. Limberis argues that for second-generation Christians this process was reversed (Vasiliki Limberis, “‘Religion’ as the Cipher for Identity: The Cases of Emperor Julian, Libanius, and Gregory Nazianzus,” *Harvard Theological Review* 93.4 [2000]: 377). I am not entirely persuaded by her argument on this point but do not wish to entirely disallow it, either.

the common goal of this discursive universe was the reorganization of significant aspects of life under a single, totalized, imperial Christian rubric."<sup>18</sup>

This construction of "Christianness" primarily involved the invention of *Christianity* as a religion, disembedded, in Seth Schwartz's words, from other cultural practices and identifying markers.<sup>19</sup> Susanna Elm shows that late fourth-century Christians were already committed to the idea of religions and even understood quite well the difference between religious definition and other modes of identity formation.<sup>20</sup> She finds evidence for this claim as early as Julian, "the Apostate" who formed his religion, "Hellenism," in the 360s on the model of Christianity, but as we will see, there is evidence that goes back at least as far as Eusebius in the first half of the century.<sup>21</sup> Julian insists that only one who believes in "Hellenism" can understand it and teach it, as justification for his denial of the right to teach philosophy to Christian teachers.<sup>22</sup> Vasiliki Limberis emphasizes how, for all Julian's hatred of Christianity, his religiosity has been deeply structured by the model of Christianity.<sup>23</sup> As Limberis puts it: "Christians had never been barred from letters. Not only was this an effective political tool to stymie Christians, it had the remarkable effect of inventing a

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18. Andrew S. Jacobs, "The Imperial Construction of the Jew in the Early Christian Holy Land" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2001), 28–29. I cite the dissertation here, and the published book elsewhere, as this particular formulation did not make it intact into the book.

19. Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society from 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton, N.J., 2001), 179.

20. "According to Gregory, a word need not have a permanent semantic field or be inextricably linked to a precise 'historical' reference point, and 'religion' is not a defining characteristic of culture," Susanna Elm, "Orthodoxy and the True Philosophical Life: Julian and Gregory of Nazianzus," *Studia Patristica* 37 (2001): 83.

21. Susanna Elm, "Hellenism and Historiography: Gregory of Nazianzus and Julian in Dialogue," in *The Cultural Turn in Late Ancient Studies: Gender, Asceticism, and Historiography*, ed. D. B. Martin and P. Cox Miller (Durham, N.C., 2005), 261–62. See also Limberis, "Cipher," 383.

22. Although Gideon Foerster and Yoram Tsafir, "Nysa-Scythopolis—A New Inscription and the Titles of the City on Its Coins," *Israel Numismatic Journal* 9 (1986/87): 53–58, has been cited as relevant in this context, it seems to me not so. Even accepting the interpretation of the publishers of this inscription that the unique designation of Scythopolis as "one of Coele Syria's Greek cities" was to insist on the "Hellenic-Pagan" character of the city owing to a threat posed by its mixed population of Jews and Samaritans, we still need not conclude that "Hellenic" here means the religion.

23. Limberis, "Cipher," 378, 382, and throughout cf. Mason, "Jews," 499, who doesn't see how truly "Christian," as it were, Julian is.

new religion and religious identity for people in the Roman empire."<sup>24</sup> I would slightly modify Limberis's formulation by noting that Julian did not so much invent a new religion as participate in the invention of a new notion of religion as a category and as a regime of power/knowledge. She writes: "In particular, Julian echoes Christianity's *modus operandi* by turning pagan practices into a formal institution that one must join."<sup>25</sup> Mason has written of the Hasmonean period that "the analogue *Hellene* does not undergo a change of translation, but still means 'Greek' with all of its complicated meanings in play . . . the analogy breaks down if 'Hellenene' does not become a *religious* term as 'Ιουδαίος is said to do. Why change the translation of *Ioudaios* alone?"<sup>26</sup> True enough. But clearly for Julian, a *half a millenium later* in the fourth century (and we will see for some Christian writers as well at that time), "Hellenism" no longer has anything to do with being Greek per se but is indeed the name for a "religion!"<sup>27</sup> By that time, the correct translation for Hellenism *in those writers* is something like "paganism," while again *in those Christian writers*, the correct translation of *Ioudaismos* and *Ioudaioi* and their Latin equivalents would be "Judaism" and "Jews." The great fourth-century Cappadocian theologian Gregory Nazianzen contested Julian's edict precisely on these terms, denying that "Hellenism" was a religion:

But I am obliged to speak again about the word . . . Hellenism to what does the word apply, what does one mean by it? . . . Do you want to pretend that Hellenism means a religion, or, and the evidence seems to point that way, does it mean a people, and the language invented by this nation . . . If Hellenism is a religion, show us from which place and what priests it has received its rules . . . Because the fact that the same people use the Greek language who also profess Greek religion does not mean that the words belong therefore to the religion, and that we therefore are naturally excluded from using them. This is not a logical conclusion, and does not agree with your own logicians. Simply

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24. Limberis, "Cipher," 386.

25. *Ibid.*, 399. I accept Limberis's assent to Asad's critique of Geertz but nevertheless see much more continuity and a shift toward something that could be called "religion" in the modern sense taking place precisely in these fourth-century echoes of Christianity.

26. Mason, "Jews," 495.

27. See too G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: Mich., 1990), 9–12. Cf. Mason's own comments on Julian which do not contradict this point, while, nonetheless, making a different one ("Jews," 498–99).

because two realities encounter each other does not mean that they are confluent, i.e. identical.<sup>28</sup>

Nazianzen denied the legitimacy of Hellenism as a religion but he clearly knew what a religion is, and Christianity is not the only member of the genus. He has some sort of definition of the object “religion” in mind here, distinct from and in binary semiotic opposition to *ethnos*, which belies the commonplace that such definitions are an early modern product, or worse an artificial product of the modern scholar’s study.<sup>29</sup>

Gregory knew precisely “what kinds of affirmation, of meaning, must be identified with practice in order for it to qualify as religion:”<sup>30</sup> it must have received its rules from some place (as in from some book?; Gregory surely doesn’t mean a geographical place, for that would be playing into Julian’s hands) and some priests. The concept of religion is not dependent, as is sometimes claimed, on the Enlightenment assumption that religion is simply a natural faculty of all human groups, that all humans have religion. While Gregory of Nazianzen’s definition of *religion*, is, of course, quite different from the Enlightenment one (a difference oddly homologous to the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism), he nevertheless clearly has a notion of religion as an idea that can be abstracted from any particular manifestation of it. For Gregory, different peoples have different religions (some right and some wrong), and some folks have none.

Whichever way the “evidence pointed” for Nazianzen, it is clear, as Elm demonstrates, that for Julian, “Hellenism” was indeed *a* religion. Gregory affords a definition of religion as clear as that of later comparatists (although quite different from them). A religion is something that has priests, rites, rules, and sacrifices. It is absolutely clear, moreover, from Gregory’s discourse that, for this Christian, “the emergence of religion as a discrete category of human experience—religion’s *disembedding*,” in Schwartz’s terms,<sup>31</sup> has taken place fully and finally, as he explicitly separates religion from ethnicity/language. As Schwartz writes, “religion” is *not* a dependent variable of *ethnos*; indeed, almost the opposite is the

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28. *Oration* 4.5 and 96–109, cited in Elm, “Orthodoxy,” 82–83. See also Limberis, “Cipher,” 395, on this passage.

29. Cf., e.g., Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, Md., 1993), 40–41.

30. *Ibid.*, 45.

31. Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 179.

case.<sup>32</sup> One does not practice Christianity because one is a Christian but one is a Christian because one practices Christianity (exactly the opposite of the situation for Jews). It is striking to note that of all the names that early Christians used to define themselves—*ethnos*, *laos*, *politea*, *genus*,

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32. I want to make clear that my argument here does not contradict the work of Denise Kimber Buell, “Race and Universalism in Early Christianity,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10.4 (2002): 429–68, and *Why This New Race*. Buell’s compelling analysis of second- and third-century texts indicates early Christianity’s struggle to find a mode of identity, with notions of Christianness as a new *ethnos/genos* being very prevalent indeed. However, Buell herself marks a shift that takes place in the fourth century: “Beginning in the fourth century, ethnic reasoning serves to naturalize the equation of Christianness with gentleness, or Romanness, in part through the oppositional construction of non-Jewish non-Christians as ‘pagans’” (Buell, “Race,” 465). It is about that time, as well, that Jews start referring to Christians *tout court* as gentiles (lit. “the Nations of the World”). I would argue, however, that such a classification marks the undoing of an “ethno/racial” definition of Christianness, insofar as in general throughout the fourth century “pagans” were understood to be just as Roman as Christians. “Pagan” surely did not constitute an ethnic or racial designation but a religious one. Even in the earlier writings considered by Buell, where Christianity is defined as an *ethnos* or a *genos*, these terms are the dependent variables of “faith.” In other words, that which constituted membership in the new “race” was a set of beliefs (and practices, to be sure) that were constitutive of a religious identity, not, for instance, shared history, shared language, shared foodways, and the like. Buell argues elegantly that Christian universalism should not be seen in opposition to or against the background of a putative Jewish particularism: “Seeing that early Christians defined themselves in and through race requires us to dismantle an oppositional definition of Christianness and Jewishness on the basis of race or ethnicity. Doing so may also contribute to resisting periodizations that mark an early and decisive split between Christianities and Judaisms. Not only do many early Christians define themselves as a people, even competing for the same name—Israel—but early Christians adapt and appropriate existing forms of Jewish universalism in formulating their own universalizing strategies in the Roman period . . . Since ethnic reasoning also resonates with non-Jewish cultural practices of self-definition, it offers an analytic point of entry that treats both Jewish and non-Jewish frames of reference as integrally part of Christian self-definition, not as its ‘background’” (Buell, “Race,” 467). At the same time, notwithstanding Buell’s reference to Isaiah as “emphasizing attachment to Yahweh as defining membership in Israel,” I would suggest that the notion of “orthodoxy” as defining membership in the Christian community and the feints in that direction in rabbinic literature that define orthodoxy as the criterion for membership in Israel represent a “new thing.” That new thing would ultimately be called “religion.” I would argue then that while ethnic reasoning continues in Christendom in the formation of “national” Christianities, “Christianity” itself is not longer taken as a race or *ethnos* starting from this period.

*natio*—none of them signifies a “religion” per se.<sup>33</sup> It is certainly significant, then, that by the fourth century other terms appear: *thrōskeia*, *theosebeia*, *religio*, as names for a group.<sup>34</sup> A corollary of this is that language itself shifted its function as identity marker. As Claudine Dauphin has argued, by the fifth century linguistic identity was tied to religious affiliation and identity, and not to geographic or genealogical identification.<sup>35</sup>

Gregory, in the course of arguing that Hellenism is not a religion, at the same time exposes the conditions that would enable some entity other than Christianity to lay claim to that name. Before Julian, other fourth-century Christian writers had no problem naming “Hellenism” a religion, thus, I expect, providing Julian with the very model he was later to turn against the Christians. Eusebius of Caesarea, the first church historian and an important theologian in his own right,<sup>36</sup> could write, “I have already said before in the *Preparation*[<sup>37</sup>] how Christianity is something that is neither Hellenism nor Judaism, but which has its own particular characteristic religion [ὁ Χριστιανισμὸς οὔτε Ἑλληνισμὸς τις ἔστιν οὔτε Ἰουδαϊσμός, οἰκείον δέ τίνα φέρων χαρακτῆρα θεοσεβείας],”<sup>38</sup> the implication being that both Hellenism and Judaism have, as well, their own characteristic forms of piety (however, to be sure, wrong-headed ones). He also writes:

This compels us to conceive some other ideal of religion [θεοσεβείας], by which they [the ancient Patriarchs] must have guided their lives. Would not this be exactly that third form of religion midway between Judaism and Hellenism, which I have already deduced as the most

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33. List in Buell, *Why This New Race*, 2.

34. To be sure, all of these terms exist earlier. They are not, however, used as the name for the category to which a group belongs then but rather, as Buell emphasizes, as one of the indicia of group belonging. Hence the need, earlier on, for Christianity to define itself as a *genos*. For discussion of the relevance of the *Epistle to Diognetus* on this very point, see Buell, *Why This New Race*, 30–31. I would like to mark here, however, that I am in complete agreement with Buell’s point that these terms do not refer solely to belief but indict a wide range of speech and other practices, Buell, *Why This New Race*, 60.

35. Claudine Dauphin, *La Palestine byzantine: Peuplement et populations* (Oxford, 1998), 133–55. See also the discussion in Jacobs, “Imperial Construction,” 75–100.

36. J. Rebecca Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius* (Oxford, 1993), 82.

37. Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel*, trans. E. H. Gifford (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1981).

38. Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel*, ed. and trans. W. J. Ferrar (London, 1920), 1.2 (11–12). The translation here, however, is my own.

ancient and venerable of all religions, and which has been preached of late to all nations through our Saviour . . . The convert from Hellenism to Christianity does not land in Judaism, nor does one who rejects the Jewish worship become ipso facto a Greek.<sup>39</sup>

Here we find in Eusebius a clear articulation of Judaism, Hellenism, and Christianity as “religions.” There is something called “religion,” which takes different “forms.” This represents a significant conceptual shift from the earlier uses of the term *religio* in antique sources, in which a *religio* is an appropriate single act of worship, not a conceptual or even practical system separate from culture and politics, and in which there is, therefore, not something called “religion” at all, no substance that we could discover and look at in its different forms.

The fullest expression of this conceptual shift may be located in the heresiology of Epiphanius (fl. early fifth c.), although his terminology is not entirely clear (even, apparently, to him). For him, not only “Hellenism” and “Judaism” but also “Scythianism” and even “Barbarianism” are no longer the names of ethnic entities<sup>40</sup> but of “heresies,” that is, religions other than orthodox Christianity.<sup>41</sup> Although Epiphanius’s use of the term is confusing and perhaps confused,<sup>42</sup> apparently what he means by “heresies” is often what other writers of his time call “religions”: “[Hellenism originated with Egyptians, Babylonians and Phrygians], and it now confused [men’s] ways.”<sup>43</sup> It is important to see that Epiphanius’s comment is a transformation of a verse from the Pauline literature, as he himself informs us.<sup>44</sup> In Colossians 3.11 we find “Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.”<sup>45</sup> This is a lovely index of the semantic

39. Eusebius, *Proof*, 1.2 (14).

40. Which is not, of course, to claim that the notion of ethnic identity is a stable and fixed one either. See Hall, *Ethnic Identity*.

41. *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis, Book I, Sections 1–46*, trans. F. Williams (Leiden, 1987), 16–50. Cf., however, Eusebius’s *Demonstratio evangelica* 1.2.1 (Eusebius, *Proof*, 9).

42. Young, “Epiphanius.”

43. *Panarion*, 17–18. In another part of the Christian world, Frankfurter points out, for the fifth-century Coptic abbot Shenoute “*Hellēne* did not carry the sense of ethnically ‘Greek’ and therefore different from ‘Egyptian,’ but simply ‘pagan’—‘not Christian’” (David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* [Princeton, N. J., 1998], 79).

44. *Panarion*, 9.

45. Cf. Andrew S. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire in Late Antiquity* (Stanford, Calif., 2004), 44–45.

shift. For pseudo-Paul, these designations are obviously not the names of religious formations but of various ethnic and cultural groupings,<sup>46</sup> whereas for Epiphanius they are the names of “heresies,” by which he means groups divided and constituted by religious differences fully dis-embedded from ethnicities: How, otherwise, could the religion called “Hellenism” have originated with the Egyptians?<sup>47</sup> Astonishingly, Epiphanius’s “Hellenism” seems to have nothing to do with the Greeks; it is Epiphanius’s name for what other writers would call “paganism.” Epiphanius, not surprisingly, defines “the topic of the Jews’ religion” as “the subject of their beliefs.”<sup>48</sup> For an Epiphanius, as for Gregory, a major category (if not the only one) for dividing human beings into groups is “the subject of their beliefs,” hence the power/knowledge regime of “religion.” The system of identities had been completely transformed during the period extending from the first to the fifth centuries. The systemic change resulting in religious difference as a modality of identity that began, I would suggest, with the heresiological work of Christians such as Justin Martyr works itself out through the fourth century and is closely intertwined with the triumph of orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is thus not only a discourse for the production of difference within, but functions as a category to make and mark the border between Christianity and its proximate other religions, particularly a Judaism that it is, in part, inventing.

Along with such a semantic development of self-understanding of *Christianismus* (and by privation, *Judaismus*, *Paganismus*) as a belief system comes the need for an idea of orthodoxy to mark out the borders of who is in and who out. I am using “orthodoxy” in the sense referred to by Rowan Williams when he wrote, “‘Orthodoxy’ is a way that a ‘religion,’ separated from the locativity of ethnic or geocultural self-definition as Christianity was, asks itself: ‘[H]ow, if at all, is one to identify the ‘centre’ of [our] religious tradition? At what point and why do we start speaking about ‘a religion?’”<sup>49</sup> As I have written above, Mason demonstrates that

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46. For a highly salient and crystal clear delineation of these terms, *ethnic* and *cultural*, see Jonathan M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago, 2002), esp. 9–19.

47. As has been noted by previous scholars, for Epiphanius “heresy” is a much more capacious and even baggy-monster category than for most writers (Aline Pourkier, *L’Hérésiologie chez Épiphane de Salamine* [Paris, 1992], 85–87; Young, “Epiphanius”). See the discussion in Jacobs, *Remains*, 44–54.

48. *Panarion*, 24.

49. Rowan Williams, “Does It Make Sense to Speak of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy?” in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. R. Williams (Cambridge, 1989), 3.

for Christian writers of the third century, *Ioudaïsmos/Iudaismus* refers to a belief system (and especially a frozen and dead one). This is often interpreted by Mason in general as part and parcel of the rhetoric of supersession, of God's abandonment of the Jews.<sup>50</sup> However, in at least one place, he himself has given us the clues toward a much richer explanation of this usage. To recite briefly: "Rather than admitting the definitive status of the established forms and responding defensively, they began to project the hybrid form of *Christianismus* on the other groups to facilitate polemical contrast (σύνκρισις). The most important group for Christian self-definition had always been the *Ioudaioi*, and so they were the groups most conspicuously reduced to such treatment, which generated a static and systemic abstraction called *Ἰουδαϊσμός/Iudaismus*."<sup>51</sup>

The production of the new category of "religions" does not imply that many elements of what would form religions did not exist before this time but rather that the particular aggregation of verbal and other practices that would be named now as constituting a religion only came into being as a discrete category as Christianization itself.<sup>52</sup> Important contributors to the invention of religion would seem to be philosophical schools, collegia, mystery cults, which when combined with the notional concept of exclusive identity (by which I mean belonging/not belonging) added up to the beginnings of orthodoxy, declarations of correct-opinion (orthodoxa) as being definitive of who's in and who's out of the group. "Religion," as pointed out recently by Denis Gu  non, "is constituted as the difference between religions."<sup>53</sup> Christianity, in constituting itself as a religion, needed religious difference—Judaism—to be its Other, the religion that is false. This development of the notion of orthodoxy (not the content of orthodoxy) had a great impact on the Jews as well. Again, as Schwartz has astutely noted, the invention of religion "had a direct impact on the Jewish culture of Late Antiquity because the Jewish communities *appropriated* much from the Christian societies around them."<sup>54</sup>

I have argued at length in *Border Lines* that there was an at least incipient form of such orthodoxy developing among the rabbis of the late sec-

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50. See, e.g., Mason, "Jews," 504.

51. *Ibid.*, 476.

52. For a similar argument with respect to the emergence of sexuality as such a discrete category, see David M. Halperin, "How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 6.1 (2000): 87–123. This must be distinguished, however, from the concept of precursor.

53. Denis Gu  non, *Hypoth  ses sur l'Europe: Un essai de philosophie* (Belfort, 2000), 117.

54. Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 179.

ond and third centuries in Palestine as well.<sup>55</sup> In the finally hegemonic formulation of rabbinic Judaism in the Babylonian Talmud, however, the rabbis rejected this option, proposing instead the distinct ecclesiological principle: “An Israelite, even if he [*šic*] sins, remains an Israelite [one remains a part of a Jewish or Israelite people whether or not one adheres to the Torah, subscribes to its major precepts, or affiliates with the community].” Whatever its original meaning, this sentence was understood throughout classical rabbinic Judaism as indicating that one cannot cease to be a Jew even via apostasy,<sup>56</sup> but remnants and relics of Judaism as a religion remain dormant (at least) within the culture as a whole and can be (and are) activated at various times as well. It is only owing to this historical development that we speak, for instance, of the “non-Jewish Jew.” This thesis should not in any way, shape, or form be construed as a claim for greater tolerance of diversity among Jews than Christians.<sup>57</sup>

Hegemonic Christian discourse thus produced Judaism and Paganism (such as that of Julian) as other religions precisely in order to cordon off Christianity in a purification and crystallization of its essence as a bounded entity. Julian cleverly reverses this procedure and turns it against Christianity. In at least one reading of Julian’s “Against the Galileans,” the point of that work is to *reinst*ate a binary opposition between Greek and Jew, Hellenism and Judaism, by inscribing Christianity as a hybrid. Eusebius’s claim that the one who leaves Hellenism does not land in Judaism and the reverse now constitutes an argument that Christianity is a monstrous hybrid, a mooncalf:

For if any man should wish to examine into the truth concerning you, he will find that your impiety is compounded of the rashness of the Jews and the indifference and vulgarity of the Gentiles. for from both sides you have drawn what is by no means their best but their inferior teaching, and so have made for yourselves a border of wickedness.<sup>58</sup>

Julian further writes: “It is worth while . . . to compare what is said about the divine among the Hellenes and Hebrews; and finally to enquire of

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55. For some correctives in response to critics of the account given in the book, see appendix below.

56. For instance, a Jew who “converts” to another religion does not have to convert back but only repent his/her sins in order to be accepted in the community again.

57. As I think some of my critics have misconstrued me as saying or implying.

58. Julian, “Against the Galileans,” pp. 313–433 in *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, trans. W. C. F. Wright, (London,, 1913), 389.

those who are neither Hellenes nor Jews, but belong to the sect of the Galileans."<sup>59</sup> Julian, as dedicated as any Christian orthodox writer to policing borderlines, bitterly reproaches the "Galileans" for contending that they are Israelites and argues that they are no such thing, neither Jews nor Greeks but impure hybrids.<sup>60</sup> Here Julian sounds very much like Jerome when the latter declares that those who think they are both Jews and Christians are neither, or Epiphanius when he refers to the Ebionites as "nothing." This would make Julian's project structurally identical to the projects of the Christian heresiologists who, at about the same time, were rendering Christianity and Judaism in their "orthodox" forms the pure terms of a binary opposition with the "Judaizing" Christians, the hybrids who must be excluded from the semiotic system, being "monsters." I suggest, then, a deeper explanation of Julian's insistence that you cannot mix Hellenism with Christianity. It is not only that Hellenism and Christianity are separate religions that, by definition, cannot be mixed with each other, but even more that Christianity is always already (if you will) an admixture, a syncretism. Julian wants to reinstate the binary of Jew and Greek. He provides, therefore, another instance of the discursive form that I am arguing for in the Christian texts of his time, a horror of supposed hybrids. To recapitulate, in Julian's very formation of *Hellenism*, as a religious difference, he mirrors the efforts of the orthodox churchmen. This is another instantiation of the point made above by Limberis.<sup>61</sup> As he protects the borders between *Hellenism* and *Judaism* by excluding *Christianity* as a hybrid, Julian seems unwittingly to smuggle Christian ideas into his very attempt to outlaw Christianity.

There is a new moment in fifth-century Christian heresiological discourse. Where in previous times the general move was to name Christian heretics "Jews" (a motif that continues alongside the "new" one),<sup>62</sup> only

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59. *Ibid.*, 319–21.

60. *Ibid.*, 393–95. Fascinatingly, this perspective gives us another way of understanding Julian's intention to allow the temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt. A large part of his polemic consists, as we have seen, of charges that Christians are nothing, since they have abandoned Hellenism but not become Jews, given that they do not follow the Torah. He imagines a Christian answering him that the Jews, too, do not sacrifice as they are enjoined ("Against the Galileans," 405–7). What better way to refute this Christian counter-claim and demonstrate that the only reason that Jews do not sacrifice is that they have no temple, than to help them rebuild their temple and reinstitute the sacrifices?

61. Wright points out that Julian has Christ-like figures in his own theology ("Against the Galileans," 315).

62. For a useful collection of such instances, see Paula Fredriksen, "What 'Parting of the Ways': Jews, Gentiles, and the Ancient Mediterranean City," in *The Ways That Never Parted*, 38, n. 6. Tertullian calls Marcion a Jew!

at this time (notably in Epiphanius and Jerome) is distinguishing Judaizing heretics from orthodox Jews central to the Christian discursive project.<sup>63</sup> As one piece of evidence for this claim, I would adduce an explosion of heresiological interest in the “Jewish-Christian heresies” of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites at this time. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, J. K. L. Gieseler already recognized that “the brightest moment in the history of these two groups doubtless falls about the year 400 A.D., at which time we have the best accounts concerning them.”<sup>64</sup> Given that, in fact, it seems unlikely that these sects truly flourished at this particular time,<sup>65</sup> we need to discover other ways of understanding this striking literary flowering. The Ebionites and Nazoreans, in my reading, function much as the mythical “trickster” figures of many religions, in that precisely by transgressing borders that the culture establishes, they reify those boundaries.<sup>66</sup> The discourse of the “Judaizing heretics” thus performs this very function of reinforcing the binaries.<sup>67</sup>

The purpose of Epiphanius’s discourse on the Ebionites and Nazarenes is to participate in the imperial project of control of (in this case) Palestine by “identifying and reifying the . . . religions.” Epiphanius explicitly indicates that this is his purpose by writing of Ebion, the (imaginary) heresiarch-founder of the sect:

But since he is practically midway between all the sects, he is nothing. The words of scripture, ‘I was almost in all evil, in the midst of the church and synagogue’ [Prov 5.14], are fulfilled in him. For he is Samaritan, but rejects the name with disgust. And while professing to be

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63. Justin’s discussion of Jewish heresies is a different move from this, as analyzed in Daniel Boyarin, “Justin Martyr Invents Judaism,” *Church History* 70.3 (2001): 427–61.

64. Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler, “Über die Nazaräer und Ebioniten,” *Archiv für alte und neue Kirchengeschichte* 4.2 (1819): 279, *apud* Glenn Alan Koch, “A Critical Investigation of Epiphanius’ Knowledge of the Ebionites: A Translation and Critical Discussion of *Panarion* 30” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1976), 10.

65. Günter Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land: Palestine in the Fourth Century* (Edinburgh, 1999), 80, writes: “It seems that there were no significant Jewish-Christian communities left in Palestine itself, and the primary problem for the wider church was the attraction of Judaism for the members of Gentile Christianity.”

66. Nathaniel Deutsch, *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1999), 19.

67. For a related position, see Reed, “Jewish Christianity,” *The Ways That Never Parted*, 203.

a Jew, he is the opposite of Jews—though he does agree with them in part.<sup>68</sup>

In a rare moment of midrashic wit (which one hesitates to attribute to Epiphanius himself), the verse of Proverbs is read to mean that I was in all evil, because I was in the midst (between) the church and the synagogue. Epiphanius's declaration that the Ebionites "are nothing," especially when put next to Jerome's famous declaration that the Nazarenes think that they are Christians and Jews, but in reality are neither, strongly recalls for me the insistence in the modern period that the people of southern Africa have no religion, not because they are not Christians, but because they are not pagans.<sup>69</sup> Suddenly it seems important to these two writers to assert a difference between Judaizing heretics and Jews. The ascription of existence to the "hybrids" assumes (and thus assures) the existence of nonhybrid, "pure" religions. Heresiology is not only, as it is usually figured, the insistence on some (or another) right doctrine but on a discourse of the pure as opposed to the hybrid, a discourse that then requires the hybrid as its opposite term. The discourse of race as analyzed by Homi Bhabha proves helpful: "The exertions of the 'official knowledges' of colonialism—pseudo-scientific, typological, legal-administrative, eugenicist—are imbricated at the point of their production of meaning and power with the fantasy that dramatizes the impossible desire for a pure, undifferentiated origin."<sup>70</sup> We need only substitute "heresiological" for "eugenicist" in this sentence to arrive at a major thesis of this article. If, on one level, as I have tried to express, orthodox Judaism is produced as the abject of Christian heresiology, and orthodox Christianity as the abject of Jewish heresiology, on yet another level, the "heretics" and the *minim* are discursively (and perhaps literally) the same folks: they constitute the impossible desire of which Bhabha speaks.

Jerome, Epiphanius's younger contemporary, is the other most prolific writer about "Jewish-Christians" in antiquity.<sup>71</sup> Jacobs reads Jerome's Hebrew knowledge as an important part of the "colonialist" project of the Theodosian age.<sup>72</sup> I want to focus here on only one aspect of Jerome's

68. *Panarion*, 120.

69. David Chidester, *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa* (Charlottesville, Va., 1996), 11–16.

70. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), 71.

71. For a useful (if methodologically uncritical) summary of the material, see Ray A. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity: From the End of the New Testament Period until Its Disappearance in the Fourth Century* (Jerusalem, 1992), 48–70.

72. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*, 59–60 (and see entire chapter).

discourse about Jews, his discussions of the “Jewish-Christians.” Hillel Newman has recently argued that Jerome’s discourse about the Judaizers and Nazarenes is more or less constructed out of whole cloth.<sup>73</sup> It thus sharply raises the question of motivation, for, as historian Marc Bloch notes, “[T]o establish the fact of forgery is not enough. It is further necessary to discover its motivations . . . Above all, a fraud is, in its way, a piece of evidence.”<sup>74</sup> I would suggest that Jerome, in general a much clearer thinker than Epiphanius, moves in the same direction but with greater lucidity. For him, it is absolutely unambiguous that rabbinic Judaism is *not* a Christian heresy but a separate religion. The *Mischlinge* thus explicitly mark out the space of illegitimacy, of no religion:

In our own day there exists a sect among the Jews throughout all the synagogues of the East, which is called the sect of the Minei, and is even now condemned by the Pharisees. The adherents to this sect are known commonly as Nazarenes; they believe in Christ the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary; and they say that He who suffered under Pontius Pilate and rose again, is the same as the one in whom we believe. But while they desire to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither the one nor the other.<sup>75</sup>

This proclamation of Jerome’s comes in the context of his discussion with Augustine about Galatians 2, in which Augustine, disallowing the notion that the apostles dissimulated when they kept Jewish practices, suggests that their “Jewish-Christianity” was legitimate. Jerome responds vigorously, understanding the “danger” of such notions to totalizing Imperial orthodoxy.<sup>76</sup> What is new here is not, obviously, the condemnation of the “Jewish-Christian” heretics but that the Christian author condemns them, in addition, for not being Jews: He thus implicitly marks the existence and legitimacy of a “true” Jewish religion alongside Christianity,

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73. Hillel Newman, “Jerome’s Judaizers,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9.4 (2001).

74. Marc Bloch, *The Historian’s Craft: Reflections on the Nature and Uses of History and the Techniques and Methods of Those Who Write It* (New York, 1953), 93.

75. usque hodie per totas orientis synagogas inter Iudaeos heresis est, quae dicitur Minaeorum, et a pharisaeis huc usque damnatur, quos uulgo Nazaraeos nuncupant, qui credunt in Christum, filium dei natum de Maria uirgine, et eum dicunt esse, qui sub Pontio Pilato et passus est et resurrexit, in quem et nos credimus, sed, dum uolunt et Iudaei esse et Christiani, nec Iudaei sunt nec Christiani. Jerome, *Correspondence*, ed. I. Hilberg, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 55 (Vienna, 1996), 381–82.

76. See the discussion in Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*, 89–96 (esp. 93–94).

as opposed to the falsities of the *Mischlinge*. This move parallels, then, Epiphanius's insistence that the Ebionites are "nothing." Pushing Jacobs's interpretation a bit further, I would suggest that Jerome's insistence on translating from the Hebrew is both an instance of control of the Jew (Jacobs's point) and also the very marking out of the Jews as "absolute other" to Christianity. I think that it is not going too far to see here a reflection of a social and political process like that David Chidester remarks in an entirely different historical moment, "The discovery of an indigenous religious system on southern African frontiers depended upon colonial conquest and domination. Once contained under colonial control, an indigenous population was found to have its own religious system."<sup>77</sup> Following out the logic of this statement suggests that there may have been a similar nexus between the containment of the Jews under the colonial eye of the Christian empire and the discovery/invention of Judaism as a religion. Looked at from the other direction, the assertion of the existence of a fully separate-from-Christianity "orthodox" Judaism functioned for Christian orthodoxy as a guarantee of the Christian's own bounded and coherent identity and thus furthered the project of imperial control, as marked out by Jacobs. The discursive processes in the situation of Christian empire are very different from the projects of mutual self-definition that I have elsewhere explored.<sup>78</sup> Jerome's famous statement just cited above that the Nazoreans are neither Jews nor Christians<sup>79</sup> is emblematic of the normative and prescriptive — not descriptive — nature of such categories, which of course, become descriptive insofar as the prescription is adhered to, no more or less.

This interpretation adds something to that of Jacobs, who writes that "among the deviant figures of Christian discourse we often find the Jew, the 'proximate other' used to produce the hierarchical space between the Christian and the non-Christian."<sup>80</sup> I am suggesting that the heretic can also be read as a proximate Other, producing a hierarchical space between the Christian and the Jew. This point is at least partially anticipated by Jacobs himself when he writes that "Jews exist as the paradigmatic 'to-be-known' in the overwhelming project of conceptualizing the 'all in all' of orthodoxy. This comes out most clearly in the [Epi-

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77. Chidester, *Savage*, 19.

78. Boyarin, "Justin Martyr Invents Judaism," *Church History* 70.3 (2001): 427–61.

79. Jerome, *Correspondence*, 381–82.

80. Jacobs, "Imperial Construction," 30 (once again, this concise formulation doesn't exist in the published book).

phanian] accounts of ‘Jewish-Christian’ heresies.”<sup>81</sup> One way of spinning this would be to see heresiology as central to the production of Judaism as the “pure other” of Christian orthodoxy, while the other way of interpreting it would be to see Judaism as essential to the production of orthodoxy over-against heresy. My point is that both of these moments in an oscillating analysis are equally important and valid. Seen in this light, the very notion of “Jewish Christians” (not by that name, of course but as “Judaizing Christians”) is crucial in the formation of Christianity as the universal and imperial religion of the late Roman empire and, later on, of European Christendom as well.

### 3. “JEWISH-CHRISTIANITY” IS A TERM OF ART OF MODERN HERESIOLOGY

I begin this section with some reflections of Matt Jackson-McCabe from his programmatic essay at the beginning of *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered*:

The category has generally been construed by scholars, and mostly unreflectively so, as a subclass of Christianity. Two critical if typically unspoken assumptions undergird this notion of a Jewish *Christianity*. The first is that, even if the name itself had not yet been coined, a religion that can usefully be distinguished from Judaism as Christianity was in fact in existence immediately in the wake of Jesus’ death, if not already within his own lifetime. The second is that those ancient groups who seem from our perspective to sit on the borderline between Judaism and Christianity are nonetheless better understood as examples of the latter. Serious questions have been raised regarding both of these assumptions in recent scholarship.<sup>82</sup>

Jackson-McCabe then correctly specifies that “particularly important for the question of Jewish Christianity in all this has been the realization that much of what has traditionally been associated with Christianity in particular was actually characteristic of other first-century Jewish movements as well.”<sup>83</sup> I would go further than this (and have), arguing that

81. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*, 46.

82. Matt Jackson-McCabe, “What’s in a Name?: The Problem of ‘Jewish Christianity,’” in *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered: Rethinking Ancient Groups and Texts*, ed. M. Jackson-McCabe (Minneapolis, Minn., 2007), 29.

83. *Ibid.*, 29. Matt Jackson-McCabe has generously read a draft of this essay (after it was presented as a paper at the SBL in November of 2007) and states that I have misunderstood his intention, that he, indeed, substantially agrees with my argument here. Let my argument, then, be not against him (which it certainly

everything that has traditionally been identified as Christianity in particular existed in some non-Jesus Jewish movements of the first century and later as well. I suggest, therefore, that there is no nontheological or nonanachronistic way at all to distinguish Christianity from Judaism until institutions are in place that make and enforce this distinction, and even then, we know precious little about what the nonelite and nonchattering classes were thinking or doing. In my work, I have tried to show that there is at least some reason to think that, in fact, vast numbers of people around the empire made no such firm distinctions at all until fairly late in the story. I want to make clear now that it is (almost) equally impossible to speak of Judaism nontheologically or in a nonbackshadowing way either until institutions are formed which can enforce this distinction and then with the same caveats. What does this approach do to the category of Jewish Christianity?

Jackson-McCabe rightly notes that there are scholars who have recently suggested abandoning the name "Jewish Christianity" and even "Christian Judaism," substituting rather such alternative terms as a "Jesus-movement" or "Jesus-believing Jews," "Christ-believers," or "apostolic Judaism," but then cavils, "Whether employing the adjective 'Christian' or not, however, this new approach suffers from some of the same basic problems that have plagued the more traditional formulations. There is no more agreement among these scholars about the criteria that allow one to distinguish 'Christian (or Jesus-believing, etc.) Judaism' from 'Christianity,' or regarding the specific body of data relevant to the category, than there has been in the case of Jewish Christianity." If, however, we follow the intent of at least some of these scholars, we certainly included, this objection rather misses the point, which is precisely not to distinguish between these and other Christians but between these and other Jews; the only two categories, when divided by this criterion, are between Jews who believed in Jesus in some sense or another and Jews who did not. The entire question has been shifted entirely; it is no longer a dogmatic question of distinctions within Christianity between orthodox and heterodox, or even between different varieties of orthodoxy as Cardinal Daniélou would have it, but between different types of Jews, proselytes, and *theoseboumenoi*, and *gerim* (resident aliens, who were required to keep precisely the laws marked out in Acts for gentile followers of Jesus,

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was not in any case) but against a misunderstanding that his formulation in that essay made possible for this reader and against the voices of those other scholars who do, indeed, object to abandoning the term "Jewish Christianity." I am grateful to Prof. Jackson-McCabe for his generous intervention and our conversation.

as pointed out by Hill).<sup>84</sup> One relevant taxon for such descriptions is Jesus-belief but it is no longer clear that even this is the most interesting or perspicacious way of thinking about different Jewish groups. The whole enterprise is no longer ecclesiocentric and so the category of Jewish Christianity is completely evacuated of meaning. It is not enough to point out, as Jackson-McCabe is careful to do, that different scholars have different understandings of the new terminologies but rather one must mark that radical shift in perspective from the heresy model. Anything less is to continue to commit the theologically founded anachronism of seeing Jews (and thus Jewish Jesus folk also) as more or less “Jewish” insofar as they approach the religion of the rabbis (which was also much more heterogeneous than we had thought). Seen from this perspective, which may indeed be a jaundiced or otherwise distorted one, continuing to use the term and concept “Jewish Christianity” is simply to reject, explicitly or implicitly, the work of scholars who have rethought genealogies of Judaism and Christianity that render the term meaningless and to perpetuate—I would argue—ecclesiological and heresiological categories, relatively unquestioned for centuries because both Jews and Christians were comfortable with the social distinctions they enforced. In other words, I am suggesting that while the category of Jewish Christianity has shifted its meaning along with shifts in the understanding of the relation of Judaism to Christianity, a historical understanding that obviates the categories of Judaism and Christianity (for some purposes until the mid-second century and for others until the fourth) will certainly have no use whatever for the category of Jewish Christianity, implying, as it does, precisely what the revisionist historical account denies.

I am suggesting that the problem is not how to define Jewish Christianity, but why we should be using such a category at all? What work does it do? What work could it possibly do, other than to delineate Judaism from Christianity rhetorically or possibly to distinguish between Christians who insist that they are not Jews and Christians who make no such declarations? The choice of terminology has consequences. In his clear-thinking and commendable paper on the Jerusalem church, Craig Hill prefers to continue to use the term “Jewish Christianity” over “Christian Judaism,” arguing that “in part, this is a retrospective judgment that takes into account the eventual split between the two religions.

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84. Craig C. Hill, “The Jerusalem Church,” in *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered*, 50. For a convincing argument that *Ioudaismos* even in a third-century “Jewish” inscription means having adhered to the ways of the Jews or converted and not an abstract system such that we would refer to it as “Judaism,” see Mason, “Jews,” 476–77.

Just as important, it factors in the existence of Gentile Christianity, whose legitimacy was formally recognized by the Jerusalem church. (Gentile Christians were not considered Jews, so ‘Judaism’ is not the overarching category.)”<sup>85</sup> There seem to me here a few undertheorized category assumptions that are problematic from my point of view, namely, (1) the assumption that the precipitate of whatever split there can be imagined between Judaism and Christianity was between two religions and (2) that there was a religion called Judaism to which those who were not Jews did not belong. These two assumptions result precisely from the “retrospective judgment” to which Hill admits that he is committed, according to which (but again from an admitted Christian perspective) there end up being two religions, one called Christianity and one called Judaism. However, as I have argued at length (in an argument that I would think needs at least to be refuted before we can go on with business as usual), the lack of an appellation for Christianity before at least the invention of the term in Antioch in the early second century, and even after that in most of the world until much later, is not a mere gap in the lexicon but an essential cultural fact. It is, moreover, no coincidence that the first uses of the term *Ioudaïsmos* to mean a religious phenomenon in any sense of the word also stem from Antioch and refer to believers in Jesus who don’t believe rightly, according to Ignatius. Speaking historically, then, Judaism is the name of a group of Christians, anathematized from the very beginning of the name by gentiles trying to establish their legitimacy and the exclusive legitimacy of their antidocetic theologies and anti-Torah-based practices. What can Jewish Christianity mean? As interesting as Hill’s essay is, his assumptions lead him to the false (from my point of view) assumption that there is a separate religion that can be called Christianity even before Paul comes on the scene, *a fortiori* afterward.<sup>86</sup> Assumptions that lead good scholars to such conclusions need to be examined from the ground up.

All this, I should emphasize once again, is not to impugn the scholarship of Craig Hill—but to suggest an entirely different way of framing and thinking about that excellent scholarship itself. Let me put the question differently: Even assuming for a moment that Hurtado is right—and Hill follows him—that worship of a figure like Jesus is absolutely unique within Judaism to the groups who worshipped Jesus, on what grounds could we consider this a new or different species of the genus religions? The rabbis introduced innovations no less dramatic vis-à-vis earlier Israe-

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85. Hill, “The Jerusalem Church,” 41.

86. *Ibid.*, 55.

lite, and even Jewish (by which I mean belonging to Yehud), religious practices but no one is tempted to call them a different “religion.” Even supposing that it is unique, why should worship of Jesus, constitute a different religion? And further, why should it constitute one even prior to the actual existence of the practice, such that we would know that the practitioners were entering into the category of Christians when they embarked on such practice? Is there a Platonic Idea of Christianity hovering somewhere in the ontosphere?

The volume edited by Skarsaune and Hvalvik starts out seemingly with a much more radical change in perspective, with its title, “Jewish Believers in Jesus,”<sup>87</sup> which would seem, at least at first glance, as an attempt to displace the category of Jewish Christianity. After a fairly elaborate opening statement, in which the editors make clear that they are not talking about a category of Christianity but a category of Christians, that is, believers in Jesus (whatever their Christian practice and belief) who are of Jewish ethnic background, they nevertheless retain the term “Jewish Christian” to mean those of that group who “maintain a Jewish way of life.” But, then, somewhat confusingly Skarsaune writes, as well, “we will use the adjective ‘Jewish Christian’ as applying to all categories of Jewish believers.”<sup>88</sup> In any case, whatever the terminology, the emphasis is firmly on the ethnicity of the believers in question and not the form of their Christianity. This, it is suggested and supported, is in line with ancient usages as well. Here the problems (as admitted) begin. Skarsaune asks why the category defined by ethnicity should be of theological significance and answers that this is because the so-called Jewish leadership defined Christians who were Jews as apostates but not gentile Christians, and “seen from this perspective, the question of ethnicity was a question of the utmost theological significance.”<sup>89</sup> But there are several problems with this statement: First of all, this would render it a question of Jewish theology, not Christian theology, assuming, of course as the editors do, that these can be distinguished at the time. Second, there is no definition of what “Jewish leadership” is being talked about, nor when, nor where: rabbis in third-century Palestine, in sixth-century Babylonia, Pharisees of the first century, James the Just, Josephus? Finally, Jewish “believers”—oh what a theologically loaded term that is when unqualified and means believers in Christ; clearly “ordinary” Jews are not believers—in

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87. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody, Mass., 2007).

88. *Ibid.*, 5.

89. *Ibid.*, 7.

Jesus were not called apostates to the best of my knowledge but *minim*, which means something like heretics or sectarians, i.e., adherents of a deviant form of Judaism and not non-Jews. For the earlier rabbis, so-called gentile Christians seem to be simply gentiles (to the extent that they were aware of such a phenomenon at all) and for later Babylonian rabbis, *minim*, as well. Thus, while I do agree with the point that having Jewish ethnicity made a difference in early Christianity, including of the Pauline variety (but who knows until when?), it remains a major methodological error to define the difference it made in terms of the ideological pronouncements of the leaders of certain groups within both Christian and non-Christian Judaism. Inter alia, it involves the same kind of anachronistic reification of categories that we have seen above. As Skarsaune writes, “The bottom line regarding Jewish identity, then, is that people who considered themselves Jewish and were considered to be Jewish by the Jewish community were Jewish.”<sup>90</sup> This passage itself can be read in two ways: either that Jews are those who are recognized as such by a Jewish community as ethnic Jews and thus subject to apostasy, or, Jews are those who are recognized by a Jewish community as having remained within the community. The first definition is less problematical than the second for obvious reasons. It has the virtue, at least, of less obviously importing and imposing normative categories. However, given that non-Christian Jews rarely (at best) called themselves *Ioudaioi*, and that Christian Jews seemed to have used the term for someone other than themselves, and that at least some non-Jewish Christians used it to mean heretical Christians and others simply to mean those people whom we’re likely today to call Jews, we’re in trouble here too.

To his credit, Skarsaune clearly recognizes that “normative definitions of clear-cut religious boundaries established by religious leaders among Jews and Christians” by which Jews cannot be Christians and Christians cannot be Jews, should not be accepted by historical scholarship.<sup>91</sup> At the same time, however, his view remains the view from “orthodox Christianity,” such that he can write that some Jews became “ordinary”—his scare quotes—Christians, assuming a norm in which gentile Christians are predominant. Where and when would that have been? Not, of course, that I am doubting that there were such places, at least from the middle of the second century, but I am insisting that the question of the “ordinariness” of any given type of Christian is either a historically specific time-

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90. Ibid., 13.

91. Ibid., 14.

and-space bound question, or a purely normative one: “ordinary” being a politer substitute for orthodox.

The bottom line is that there seems to me to be only one valuable distinction to be made here, based, as shown by Skarsaune in his introductory chapter, on ancient sources, and that is between Christians who had come from the Jewish world (self-identified as Jews = *ek tw̄n Iou-đaiwn*) and those who came from the gentiles (*ek tw̄n ethnwn*). Studying the history of the radical innovation of gentile Christianity (not “normal” Christianity with or without scare quotes), the history of interaction between Christians and Christian groups around this ethnic difference, and the ultimate religious effects of this interaction in the constitution of the so-called orthodox church, seems to me a most worthy scholarly project, not entirely unlike the project of Cardinal Daniélou. A second most worthy project involves the evidence for followers of Jesus who continued to observe the Torah or newly came to observe the Torah and the different varieties of such Christians at different times as well as of those Christians who abandoned the Law, even the minimal requirements imposed, as it were, by the gentile Christian author of Acts on his fellow gentiles, not entirely unlike the project of Schoeps. Neither of these projects is served in any way by what I hope to have shown is the *heresiological* term, “Jewish Christianity.”<sup>92</sup>

#### APPENDIX: BORDER CORRECTION

In *Border Lines* I argued that the Mishnah shows evidence of the development of an “orthodoxy,” that is a development of a notion of a Judaism as an “orthodoxy.” I suggested, moreover, that this was plausibly explained as a response to the Christian developments. This is an argument from *Border Lines* that has been sharply criticized for very good reasons, and it needs correction as I see now.<sup>93</sup> In this appendix, I will summarily modify what seem to me now erroneous aspects of that thesis but try to show that a variation of it can improve its acceptability and that the larger

92. Cf. Reed, “Jewish Christianity,” 190–91, n. 5, with whom I quite definitely disagree on this one point. Hardly, in my view, a provocation to scholars (or believers) to examine their givens with respect the so-called Judaism and Christianity, I find as I hope to have shown that the term “Jewish Christian” supports such givens. That said, I agree with most of the rest of Reed’s arguments, per se. If I read rightly, David Frankfurter, “Beyond ‘Jewish Christianity’: Continuing Religious Sub-Cultures of the Second and Third Centuries and Their Documents,” in *The Ways That Never Parted*, 131–43, would tend to support my argument from several points of view.

93. Burrus et al., “Boyarin’s Work”

claims of the book are thus strengthened. The evidence for the development of a virtual orthodoxy as definitional for Judaism, that is, the representation of Judaism as a religion in the Mishnah, stands up in my view, and I will not rehearse it here. While continuing to reject Le Boulluec's theory that the notion of heresy developed in Christian circles owing to the impact of the rabbinic concepts and institutions,<sup>94</sup> based, as it is, on antiquated conceptions of the antiquity of such rabbinic developments), I would now repudiate my own contrary notion that this nascent orthodoxy develops in the Mishnah owing to Christian impact.<sup>95</sup> For one thing, as pointed out correctly by my critics, the two are way too close in time (and Christianity still so insignificant in terms of power) for it to have directly impacted the early rabbis.<sup>96</sup> I would suggest now rather that we see in both such scholastic Christian writers as Justin and in the equally scholastic producers of the Mishnah the impact of the philosophical schools and their own developing notions of orthodoxy and authority, as well as the coming together of other cultural discourses into the aggregate discourse of orthodoxy.<sup>97</sup> The shift in the meaning of *haeresis* from the

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94. Alain Le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque II<sup>e</sup>-III<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1985), 90.

95. Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia, 2004), 3–4, 75–76.

96. See on this point Amram D. Tropper, "Tractate Avot and Early Christian Succession Lists," in *The Ways That Never Parted*, 179, citing the, as usual, insightful J. Z. Smith that in comparative analysis "the question is not 'which is first?; but why both, at more or less the same time?'" (Jonathan Z. Smith, *Druidgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* [Chicago, 1990], 114). I must insist, however, that my abortive notion that the rabbis got the idea of orthodoxy in response to Christianity (see comment in Tropper, "Succession Lists," 178, n. 56) was never intended, nor should it be read, as a disparagement of Christianity (as Joel Marcus most starkly represented it: the Christians developed a disease, the Jews caught it for a while, then shook it off). "Orthodoxy" is to be taken as neutral a term as "church" or "bishop" or "Jewish people," no more, no less and not the name for an intrinsically evil institution. Similarly, I don't think that characterizing Christianity as not embedded in the same way as Jewishness in specific cultural identification is necessarily an enhancement of the former over the latter, *pace* Buell, *Why This New Race*, 61, although I'll grant it frequently (perhaps most frequently) is. My own *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley, Calif., 1994) was explicitly intended as a disruption of the idea that universalism is *eo ipso* superior to so-called particularism.

97. Élie Bickerman [Elias Bickerman], "La Chaîne de la tradition pharisienne," *Revue biblique* 59.1 (1952): 44–54; John Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy* (Göttingen, 1978), 357–58; Albert I. Baumgarten, "The Pharisaic Paradosis," *Harvard Theological Review* 80 (1987): 63–77 all remain crucial for this point. See too

choice of a philosophical school to an untrue one, a heresy, as documented by Le Boulluec,<sup>98</sup> could be construed as, in part, a product of the general biblical notion of one God and hence one truth about God when brought together with philosophical claims (such as those of Plato) to search for and perhaps find the Truth, as well as with the social institutions of the philosophical schools and the collegia. Amram Tropper has nicely characterized the last point, writing that “a succession, as popularly understood in the classicizing atmosphere of the Second Sophistic, . . . outlined the transmission of proper doctrine over the course of history. The founder’s successors continue his legacy and viewed the interpretation of his writings as the unfolding of his ideas. In a scholastic or intellectual succession list, the central factor was the belief that the founder’s heirs transmitted proper doctrine.”<sup>99</sup>

The correct generalization seems now to me not at all that the Christian idea of orthodoxy and its supporting apostolic succession lists influence the rabbis but rather that these ideas developed in parallel within the two communities and served similar functions initially. For the Christians, this was of establishing an identity different from pagans and Jews, while for the rabbis it was that of establishing bounds on an identity that wanted separation from Christians. However, where for the nascent Church the use of such a model and the incipient notion of “heresy” that it offered was necessary for Christian self-definition owing to the lack of a Christian ethnos and the need for some new mode of self-definition (à la Rowan Williams and Mason in re Tertullian), rudimentary notions of heresy and orthodoxy were never crucial for rabbinic self-definition<sup>100</sup> and ultimately fell into desuetude largely owing to the fact that “Judaism” was supported by a vigorous and ongoing ethnic identity. One of the strongest pieces of evidence for this point remains the shift in the meaning of *minim* from something like sectarians or heretics in the tannaitic period to simply gentiles/Christians in the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>101</sup> I remain committed to, and find nothing to contradict, my claim that the

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Tropper, “Succession Lists,” 167, on the revival of the succession list genre in the second and third centuries. See especially Buell, *Why This New Race*, 61.

98. Le Boulluec, *La notion*, 90. This is a vitally important text underused by American scholars. I remain grateful to Virginia Burrus, who insisted that I read it.

99. Tropper, “Succession Lists,” 166.

100. To which conclusion Tropper, “Succession Lists,” esp. 180–88 (in response to my earlier work), may, I think, usefully be compared.

101. Richard Kalmin, “Christians and Heretics in Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity,” *Harvard Theological Review* 87.2 (1994): 155–69.

definition of “Judaism” as a religion served ongoing Christian discursive and polemical needs that were manifested in such documents as the Theodosian Code as well as some late ancient Christian narratives of the conversion of Jews.<sup>102</sup> That Christian identification of Judaism as a religion has had ongoing and complex effects on Jewish self-definition, then, from Late Antiquity and until modernity but never, until modernity, has it issued in a notion of Judaism as a “faith.”

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102. Daniel Boyarin, “The Christian Invention of Judaism: The Theodosian Empire and the Rabbinic Refusal of Religion,” *Representations* 85 (2004): 21–57.