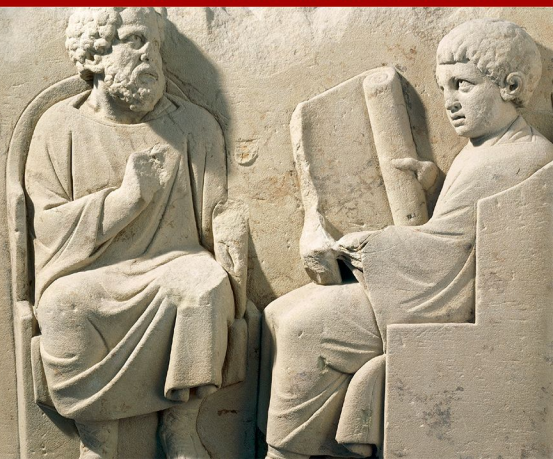


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PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA
AND THE CONSTRUCTION
OF JEWISHNESS IN EARLY
CHRISTIAN WRITINGS

Jennifer Otto

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Philo of Alexandria and the
Construction of Jewishness in
Early Christian Writings

JENNIFER OTTO

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Abbreviations

Works of Philo

<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abrahamo (On Abraham)</i>
<i>Aet.</i>	<i>De Aeternitate Mundi (On the Eternity of the World)</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De Agricultura (On Husbandry)</i>
<i>Anim.</i>	<i>De Animalibus (On Animals)</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>De Cherubim (On the Cherubim)</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>De Confusione Linguarum (On the Confusion of Tongues)</i>
<i>Congr.</i>	<i>De Congressu Eruditionis Gratia (On Mating with the Preliminary Studies)</i>
<i>Contempl.</i>	<i>De Vita Contemplativa (On the Contemplative Life)</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	<i>De Decalogo (On the Decalogue)</i>
<i>Det.</i>	<i>Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Soleat (That the Worse is Wont to Attack the Better)</i>
<i>Deus</i>	<i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis (On the Unchangeableness of God)</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	<i>De Ebrietate (On Drunkenness)</i>
<i>Flacc.</i>	<i>In Flaccum (Flaccus)</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De Fuga et Inventione (On Flight and Finding)</i>
<i>Gig.</i>	<i>De Gigantibus (On the Giants)</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres Sit (Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?)</i>
<i>Hypoth.</i>	<i>Hypothetica</i>
<i>Jos.</i>	<i>De Josepho (On Joseph)</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legum Allegoriae (The Allegories of the Laws)</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium (Embassy to Gaius)</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	<i>De Migratione Abrahami (On the Migration of Abraham)</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>De Vita Mosis (On the Life of Moses)</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De Mutatione Nominum (On the Change of Names)</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	<i>De Opificio Mundi (On the Creation of the World)</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>De Plantatione (On Noah's Work as a Planter)</i>
<i>Post.</i>	<i>De Posteritate Caini (On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile)</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	<i>De Praemiis et Poenis (On Rewards and Punishments)</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	<i>Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit (Every Good Man is Free)</i>
<i>Prov.</i>	<i>De Providentia (On Providence)</i>
<i>QE</i>	<i>Quaestiones in Exodum (Questions on Exodus)</i>
<i>QG</i>	<i>Quaestiones in Genesim (Questions on Genesis)</i>

<i>Sacr.</i>	<i>De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini (On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain)</i>
<i>Sobr.</i>	<i>De Sobrietate (On Sobriety)</i>
<i>Somn.</i>	<i>De Somniis (On Dreams)</i>
<i>Spec.</i>	<i>De Specialibus Legibus (On the Special Laws)</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	<i>De Virtutibus (On the Virtues)</i>

Works of Clement

<i>Protr.</i>	<i>Protreptikos</i>
<i>Paed.</i>	<i>Paedagogus</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromateis</i>
<i>QDS</i>	<i>Quis Dives Salvetur? (Who is the Rich Man Who is Saved?)</i>
<i>Exc.</i>	<i>Excerpta ex Theodoto</i>
<i>Ecl.</i>	<i>Eclogae Propheticae</i>

Works of Origen

<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>Comm. Jo.</i>	<i>Commentarii in Evangelium Joannis</i>
<i>Comm. Matt.</i>	<i>Commentarium in Evangelium Matthaei</i>
<i>Comm. Rom.</i>	<i>Commentarii in Romanos</i>
<i>Hom. Lev.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Leviticum</i>
<i>Hom. Num.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Numeros</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	<i>De principiis (On First Principles)</i>
<i>Sel. Ezech.</i>	<i>Selecta in Ezechielem</i>

Works of Eusebius

<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>PE</i>	<i>Preparatio Evangelica</i>
<i>DE</i>	<i>Demonstratio Evangelica</i>
<i>CH</i>	<i>Chronicon</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Martyrs of Palestine</i>

Other Abbreviations

<i>ANF</i>	<i>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
<i>BGL</i>	<i>Bibliothek der Griechischen Literatur</i>
<i>CPJ</i>	V. A. Tcherikover and A. Fuks, eds, <i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i> , vols. 1–3 (Cambridge, MA: 1964–75)
<i>ER</i>	<i>The Encyclopedia of Religion</i>
<i>FOTC</i>	<i>Fathers of the Church</i>

GCS	Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>J ECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>ODCC</i>	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church</i>
<i>RGG</i>	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuses</i>
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SP	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
<i>SPhA</i>	<i>Studia Philonica Annual</i>
VC	<i>Vigilae Christianae</i>

Introduction

The writings of Philo of Alexandria, the first-century statesman, philosopher, and prolific interpreter of the Jewish scriptures, survived antiquity and are extant today because they were read and copied by Christians. Although Philo earns a favorable mention from the Jewish apologist and historian Josephus within decades of his death, the next surviving reference to him by a Jewish author dates to the Italian Renaissance.¹ Between the first and sixteenth centuries stands a long Christian reception tradition, first definitively attested in the works of Clement.² Writing and teaching in Alexandria from c.180 CE until his flight to Jerusalem around 202, Clement mentions Philo in his largest surviving work, the *Stromateis*, on four occasions and includes scores

¹ “It was not until the late 16th century that Jews started to take notice of him again, stimulated by the printing of his works both in the original Greek and in Latin translations. By far the most interesting account was given by the Italian Jew, Azariah de’ Rossi, who gives an analysis of Philo’s thought in his *Me’or ‘Enayim* (Light of the Eyes) published in his native town Mantua in 1573.” David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 32. Possible instances of Philonic influence on Rabbinic writings are evaluated by David Winston’s “Philo and Rabbinic Literature,” in Adam Kamesar, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 231–55.

² Philo’s *logos* theology and moral-allegorical interpretation of the law of Moses are frequently cited as possible influences on earlier Christians, including the anonymous authors of the prologue to the Gospel of John, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and early Christian teachers including Justin Martyr, Basilides, and Valentinus. Clement, however, is the earliest to mention Philo by name and to cite his works. See Roland Deines and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, eds, *Philo und das Neue Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, chs 2 and 3; Birger Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 82–99; Stefan Nordgaard Svendsen, *Allegory Transformed: The Appropriation of Philonic Hermeneutics in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Harold W. Attridge, “Philo and John: Two Riffs on One Logos,” *SPhA* 17 (2005): 103–17.

of unacknowledged Philonic borrowings in his corpus.³ Clement's familiarity with Philo's writings was shared by his fellow Alexandrian and possible student, Origen.⁴ Philo's name comes up three times in Origen's surviving corpus, twice in *Contra Celsum* and once in the *Commentary on Matthew*, while several dozen Philonic borrowings are left unattributed. When Origen relocated from Alexandria to Caesarea Maritima, he brought his copies of Philo's texts with him, where they later found a place in the library curated by Pamphilus and his more famous student, Eusebius. Eusebius scatters mentions of Philo across his corpus, excerpting him at length in book 2 of *Historia Ecclesiastica* and books 7 and 12 of *Preparatio Evangelica*. Eusebius's successor as bishop of Caesarea, Photius, had Philo's treatises copied from papyrus into parchment codices, from which the medieval Greek manuscripts that stand behind the modern critical editions descend.⁵

The fact that early Christians read and preserved Philo's works while their Jewish contemporaries did not has been noted frequently by students of Christian origins.⁶ The reception of Philo in the Christian

³ The possible citations and reminiscences of Philo in the *Stromateis* identified in the critical edition of Stählin are evaluated by Anniewies van den Hoek in *Clement of Alexandria and his Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

⁴ Eusebius's *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6 is the earliest source to claim that Origen studied under Clement. Origen himself never claims Clement as a teacher, nor does he mention him in his surviving works. Clement's relocation to Jerusalem around 202, when Origen was still a teenager, limits the duration of his possible study with Clement. Nevertheless, Joseph Trigg contends that "it is inconceivable that he did not come under Clement's influence . . . the continuity in their thought is so marked that it could not be coincidental." Joseph Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1983), 54.

⁵ Numerous Greek manuscripts dating from the tenth through fourteenth centuries form the bulk of the ancient witnesses to Philo. In addition to these manuscripts, Cohn and Wendland had access to the Coptos Papyrus, dated to the third century, which preserves the continuous text of *Sacr.* and *Her.* There is also a sizeable corpus of Philonic manuscripts preserved in Armenian, including the only extant witnesses to *Quaestiones in Genesim*, *Quaestiones in Exodum*, *De providentia*, and *De animalibus*. For further details on the transmission of the Philonic corpus, see James R. Royse, "The Works of Philo," *Cambridge Companion to Philo*, 62–4.

⁶ Gregory Sterling suggests that "Early Christians thought that anyone who wrote as Philo did must have been a Christian." Sterling, "The Place of Philo of Alexandria in the Study of Christian Origins," *Philo und das Neue Testament*, 22. Commenting on Clement's use of Philo, James Carleton Paget suggests that, since Clement never refers to Philo as a Jew, "perhaps that knowledge of Philo's Jewish roots had disappeared." Paget, "Clement of Alexandria and the Jews," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51 (1998): 86–97, 94. Against the theory of Philo's Christianization, Jörg Ulrich argues specifically of Eusebius that "An keiner Stelle wird die Person des Philo selbst durch Eusebius

tradition has been most squarely addressed by David T. Runia, in particular in his monograph, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey*.⁷ Following a detailed examination of Philonic borrowings in Christian writings through the age of Augustine, Runia suggests that, by the beginning of the fourth century, Philo had been “Christianized” and was regarded as an “honorary Church Father.”⁸ Yet in spite of this Christianization, Runia maintains that the Christians who consulted Philo’s works were “well aware that Philo is a Jew who lived at the very beginning of the Christian Church.”⁹ Runia pauses to appreciate how counterintuitive it is that Philo the Jew was “adopted” by the Christian tradition. Given that, “from the outset Christianity engaged in continuous and not seldom acrimonious rivalry with its ‘mother-religion,’” Runia asks, “is it not remarkable and quite unexpected that Philo the Alexandrian Jew should have been accepted within Christianity to the extent that we have observed?”¹⁰

Curiously, however, none of the early Christian witnesses to Philo refer to him as “the Alexandrian Jew.” Clement, the first in the Christian

christlich ‘vereinnahmt’; Philo von Alexandrien bleibt bei Euseb stets ‘Hebräer’ und ‘Jude’,” Ulrich, *Euseb von Caesarea und die Juden: Studien Zur Rolle Der Juden in Der Theologie Des Eusebius Von Caesarea* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 97–8.

⁷ Published in 1993, Runia’s study assembles more than a century’s worth of scholarship charting Philo’s influence on early Christian thinkers scattered throughout the secondary literature and is the only book-length study to evaluate the role of Philo diachronically through Christian literature. Prior to Runia’s monograph, the most comprehensive overview of Philo’s portrayal and influence in early Christian literature was J. Edgar Bruns’s short article “*Philo Christianus*: The Debris of a Legend,” *HTR* 66 (1973): 141–5. Hindy Najman contributes a short piece on Philo’s Christian reception, “The Writings and Reception of Philo of Alexandria,” in Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Peter Ochs, David Novak, and Michael Singer, eds, *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000), 99–106. Gottfried Shimanowski’s 2002 article “Philo als Prophet, Philo als Christ, Philo als Bischof,” in Folker Siegert, ed., *Grenzgänge: Menschen und Schicksale zwischen jüdischer, christlicher und deutscher Identität* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2002), discusses the roles Philo is assigned in post-Nicene Christian writings, following Runia closely.

⁸ This assertion is reiterated throughout Runia’s study: “It was because of this process of ‘adoption’ that a large proportion of his writings have survived to this day. I wish to commence my survey of Philo’s fate in the Christian tradition with a brief account of the story of Philo’s Christianization,” *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 1; “Philo has in fact been adopted as an honorary church father. For this reason he had a place in Origen’s library, and, as a direct result of this inclusion, his works have survived to this day,” 125; “We saw how Philo was adopted as an honorary Church father *avant la lettre*,” 344.

⁹ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 6.

¹⁰ Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 344.

tradition to cite Philo's works openly, refers to him twice as a Pythagorean. Origen, who mentions Philo by name only three times in his extensive corpus, makes far more frequent reference to him in the guise of an anonymous "predecessor." Eusebius, who invokes Philo on many more occasions than does Clement or Origen, most often refers to Philo as a "Hebrew."

What are we to make of the fact that Philo's early Christian readers employ epithets other than *Ioudaios*, most often translated as "Jew," when they refer to him and his work?¹¹ In the pages that follow, I will argue that early Christian invocations of Philo are best understood not as attempts simply to "adopt" an illustrious Jew into the Christian fold. Rather, I suggest that these citations of Philo reveal ongoing efforts by Christians to conceptualize and demarcate the difference between two emerging but fluid collective identities, "Christianness" and "Jewishness."¹²

¹¹ The question of how to translate *Ioudaios* has been debated for several decades. A. T. Kraabel warns against a too-hasty equivalence between *Ioudaios* and Jew, as in some situations the term might be better translated as "Judaean" as an indicator of geographic origin. This concern is particularly valid for the interpretation of epigraphic evidence. See Kraabel, "The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 445–64; Ross Kraemer argues that the term *Ioudaios* "may also indicate pagan adherence to Judaism," or that *Iudaios/Ioudaia* may have been used as a proper name. See Kraemer, "The Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," in J. Andrew Overman and Robert S. MacLennan, eds., *Diaspora Jews and Judaism* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 311–30. Shaye J. Cohen argues that the term *Ioudaios* shifted from a geographic/ethnic to a political or cultural/religious referent during the Hasmonean period. See Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Uncertainties, Varieties* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), ch. 3. Steve Mason rejects Cohen's shift from a geographic/ethnic to a cultural/religious one, arguing that "the *Ioudaioi* were understood until late antiquity as an ethnic group comparable to other ethnic groups, with their distinctive laws, traditions, customs, and God," and therefore rejecting the modern translation "Jew," with its religious connotations, for the ethnic denonym "Judaean." See Mason, "Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457–512, 457.

¹² I will often use the terms "Christianness" and "Jewishness" rather than "Christianity" and "Judaism," which carry the anachronistic connotation of being "religions," in order to refer to the larger complex of beliefs, texts, laws, and practices that were understood in the early centuries CE to be peculiar to Christians and Jews by both those who considered themselves to be Christians and Jews and by outside observers. The content of both "Christianness" and "Jewishness" is therefore variable and subjective. Shaye J. D. Cohen provides a helpful articulation: "Jewishness, like most—perhaps all—other identities, is imagined; it has no empirical, objective, verifiable reality to which we can point and over which we can exclaim, 'This is it!' Jewishness is in the mind." Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*, 5.

In his seminal essay “Differential Equations: On Constructing the Other,” Jonathan Z. Smith identifies the articulation and elision of difference as a ubiquitous preoccupation of human culture. “Culture-itself,” Smith posits, “is constituted by the double process of both making differences and relativizing those very same distinctions. One of our fundamental social projects appears to be our collective capacity to think of, and to think away, the differences we create.”¹³ The most meaningful—and therefore the most unsettling—of differences are those that distinguish “us” not from the exotically foreign, but from those to whom we are most similar. In Smith’s words,

while difference or “otherness” may be perceived as being either like-us or not-like-us, it becomes most problematic when it is too-much-like-us or when it claims to be-us. It is here that the real urgency of theories of the “other” emerges, called forth not so much by a requirement to place difference, but rather by an effort to situate ourselves. This, then, is not a matter of the “far” but preeminently of the “near.” The deepest intellectual issues are not based upon perceptions of alterity, but, rather, of similarity, at times, even, of identity.¹⁴

While Smith argues his thesis using data derived from modern anthropological studies, he suggests that its implications are particularly relevant for understanding difference-making between and within religious communities.¹⁵ Following Smith’s insight, the central question this book seeks to answer, then, is not why Philo “the Alexandrian Jew” was “adopted” by the adherents of the new religion, “Christianity.” Rather, this study explores the ways in which invocations of Philo reveal early Christian attempts both to “think of” and “think away” continuities and distinctive features of their Christian-ness in relation to the beliefs and practices of their “near-others,” the Jews. Via an analysis of early Christian portrayals of Philo, we will discover a variety of different ways that Christians expressed their similarity to—and distinctiveness from—both Jews and other “proximate others” among whom they lived, worked, studied, and argued in the cities of the Roman Empire.

¹³ Jonathan Z. Smith, “Differential Equations: On Constructing the Other.” Annual University Lecture in Religion, March 5, 1992 (Tempe, AZ: Department of Religious Studies, Arizona State University, 1992). Reprinted in Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 230–50, 242.

¹⁴ Smith, “Differential Equations,” 245.

¹⁵ “The issue of problematic similarity or identity seems to be particularly prevalent in religious discourse and imagination.” Smith, “Differential Equations,” 245.

PHILO AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

In recent years, scholars investigating early Judaism and early Christianity have become increasingly attentive to the fluidity and diversity of both Christian and Jewish belief and practice in the early centuries of the Common Era. In particular, the claim that a fully formed Christianity decisively “parted ways” from Judaism already in the first century CE has attracted significant suspicion and scrutiny. The “Parting of the Ways” model finds early articulations in James Parkes’s *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (1934)¹⁶ and Marcel Simon’s *Verus Israel* (1964).¹⁷ Challenging the supercessionist model dominant in Christian scholarship prior to the Second World War, which understood nascent Christianity to have quickly broken free of a Judaism grown stale and legalistic,¹⁸ Simon emphasized Christianity’s Jewish roots, arguing that it remained a minority expression of Judaism for more than a generation. According to Simon, it was the Jewish revolts of 66–70 CE that resulted in a decisive split between church and synagogue. The exact date and cause of the split between Christians and Jews is a question of debate among “separatists,” with some preferring a date close to the time of Paul and others defending a relatively late separation resulting from the Bar Kokhba revolts in 135.¹⁹ After this pivotal rupture, Judaism and Christianity developed separately; their only contact consisted in their fierce

¹⁶ James Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study of the Origins of Anti-Semitism* (London: Soncino Press, 1964). Parkes uses the metaphor of the “parting of the ways” in the title of the third chapter of his groundbreaking monograph.

¹⁷ Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: Étude sur les Relations entre Chrétiens et Juifs dans l’Empire Romain (135–425)* (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1964).

¹⁸ So Frederick Foakes-Jackson, dating the *Letter of Barnabas* to the wake of the destruction of the temple, argues that the epistle “marks however an important stage in the relations of Judaism and Christianity. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews hints that the time is coming when Christians must part company with the Jews, and in Barnabas we see that this has come to pass.” *The History of the Christian Church from the Earliest Times to A.D. 461* (New York: Doran, 1924), 99.

¹⁹ Parkes identified the *Birkat ha-minim*, or Twelfth Benediction of the *Amidah*, as evidence of Rabbinic efforts to exclude (Judaean-)Christians from the synagogues by the end of the first century, thus confirming their continued presence in Jewish worship up to that point. While contending that “there is no reason to suppose that all simultaneously came to the same conclusion,” Parkes reasons that “we may, however, accept the date of the malediction as that affecting the majority of those concerned,” fixing the decade 80–90 CE as marking the final separation between Church and Synagogue. Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church with the Synagogue*, 77–9. The difficulty of equating the *minim* with (Judaean-)Christians is elucidated in

competition for converts and legitimacy in the eyes of Greco-Roman elites, with Christianity eventually emerging victorious.

Judith Lieu's 1995 essay, "The Parting of the Ways: Theological Construct or Historical Reality?" was one of the first to challenge the model, which had become "a truism which needs no justification."²⁰ Emphasizing that the "Parting of the Ways" metaphor is, in fact, a model, "and only one among a number of possible models of the changing relationship between Judaism and Christianity in the first two centuries CE," Lieu argued that the "Parting of the Ways" works best not as a description of a historical process but as (Christian) theological apologetic.²¹ Lieu's follow-up monograph, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century*, analyses a range of second-century Christian texts hailing from Asia Minor for their presentations of Jews and Judaism, catching in the reflection of the constructed "other" an image of the Christian self.²² Although the Christian authors Lieu surveys fiercely argue for the "otherness" of Jews, her study reveals the intimacy and continuity of interaction between these Christians and their Jewish opponents, so that "pagan writers who still confused the two religions may have been representative of some popular perception even among adherents of the two religions." She continues, "Contemporary, and not just 'Old Testament,' Judaism continued in the second century to be part of the immediate religious, literary, and social world of early Christianity."²³ Lieu affirms that, in spite of its often inchoate theological and social manifestations, "even from the New Testament period there is a consciousness of being a single body, *the church*,"

Reuven Kimelman, "Birkat Ha Minim and the Lack of Evidence for an Anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity," in E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten, and Alan Mendelson, eds, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition*, ii. *Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 226–44. Yaakov Teppler gives a fresh defence to the equation of the *minim* with Christians in *Birkat HaMinim: Jews and Christian in Conflict in the Ancient World* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007). Ruth Langer defends Kimelman's argument that the *minim* cannot be equated with the Christians in *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 26. See also Joel Marcus, "Birkat ha-minim Revisited," *NTS* 55 (2009): 523–51.

²⁰ Judith Lieu, "The Parting of the Ways: Theological Construct or Historical Reality?," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 17 (1995): 101–19. Reprinted in *Neither Jew Nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), 11.

²¹ Lieu, *Neither Jew Nor Greek?*, 15–18.

²² Judith Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 1–3.

²³ Lieu, *Image and Reality*, 12.

and acknowledges that “whatever the fuzziness at the edges, the use of the term *Ioudaioi* without apology both in pagan literature and in Jewish inscriptions implies a coherent perception from outside and from within”; what made the one different from the other, however, remained contested.²⁴

Daniel Boyarin has pressed Lieu’s critique further. Describing the relationship between nascent Judaism and Christianity using the biblical image of Rebecca’s twins, he argues that the two religions had an unusually long period of gestation, contending that they did not emerge fully formed and separate until the fourth century. During the first three centuries of the Common Era, the embryos that would become orthodox Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism “jostled in the womb” of a “complex religious family.”²⁵ Rather than speaking of Judaism and Christianity as separate religions, Boyarin proposes that in this period “Judaean-Christianity” existed as a “single circulatory system,” a continuum of beliefs and practices without a firm boundary. Lacking a singular, authoritative decision-making body, Christians continued to contest the criteria for determining which practices were legitimately Christian and which were to be rejected as lapses into Jewishness. Only in the fourth century, when Emperor Constantine invested the ecumenical Councils with the power to police the borders of orthodoxy, did firm and legally enforceable boundaries between Christian and Jewish identity emerge. “In short,” Boyarin argues, “without the power of the Orthodox Church and the Rabbis to declare people heretics and outside the system—‘neither Jews nor Christians,’ in Jerome’s words, in his famous letter to Augustine, it remains impossible to declare phenomenologically who is a Jew and who is a Christian.”²⁶

²⁴ Lieu, *Image and Reality*, 19–20.

²⁵ Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 6. He elaborates, “The image suggests that for at least the first three centuries of their common lives, Judaism in all of its forms and Christianity in all of its forms were part of one complex religious family, twins in a womb, contending with each other for identity and precedence, but sharing to a large extent the same spiritual food, as well. It was the birth of the hegemonic Catholic Church, however, that seems finally to have precipitated the consolidation of rabbinic Judaism as Jewish orthodoxy, with all its rivals, including the so-called Jewish Christianities, apparently largely vanquished. It was then that Judaism and Christianity finally emerged from the womb as genuinely independent children of Rebecca.”

²⁶ Daniel Boyarin, “Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism,” *J ECS* 6 (1998): 577–627, 584.

The “Parting of the Ways” model is further challenged from a number of perspectives in the essays collected by Annette Yoshiko Reed and Adam H. Becker in their provocatively titled book, *The Ways that Never Parted*.²⁷ Becker and Reed approach Judaism and Christianity “as traditions that remained intertwined long after the Second Temple had fallen and the dust had settled from the Jewish revolts against Rome,” paying particular attention to “points of intersection, sites of interaction, and dynamics of interchange” between the two traditions.²⁸ Becker and Reed’s articulation affirms that, by the second century, it was possible for an individual to identify as a Jew but not a Christian (or, conversely, as a Christian but not a Jew). Nevertheless, they resist the essentialism and assertion of clear differentiation between “Christianity” and “Judaism” in the second century that the Parting of the Ways model takes for granted. Many of the contributors to Becker and Reed’s collection share the suspicion that the opinions preserved in the writings of the invariably elite male ecclesial leaders do not reflect the lived realities of everyday Christians and Jews. As a consequence, they suggest that those texts that assert the clear distinction of Christian from Jew most insistently may in fact be more interested in prescribing proper belief and practice than in describing actual social, theological, and liturgical boundaries.²⁹ Assertions such as we find in Ignatius’s *Letter to the Magnesians* that “it is utterly absurd to profess Jesus Christ and to practice Judaism” may be better understood as indicating that some members of the Magnesian community would have argued the opposite.³⁰

²⁷ Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds, *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003; repr. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

²⁸ Becker and Reed, “Introduction,” *The Ways that Never Parted*, 3.

²⁹ See e.g. the argument of Paula Fredriksen: “Despite the tendencies of imperial law, the eruptions of anti-Jewish (and anti-pagan, and anti-heretical) violence, the increasingly strident tone and obsessive repetition of orthodox anti-Jewish rhetoric, the evidence—indeed, precisely this evidence—points in the other direction: on the ground, the ways were not separating, certainly not fast enough and consistently enough to please the ideologues.” Paula Fredriksen, “What Parting of the Ways?” in *The Ways that Never Parted*, 35–64, 61.

³⁰ Ignatius, *Magn.* 10: ἄτοπὸν ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν λαλεῖν καὶ ἰουδαΐζειν. Steve Mason has argued that the Greek verb ἰουδαΐζω, parallel to other ἵζω verbs such as λακωνίζω or ἀττικίζω, does not mean “to practice Judaism,” as it is often rendered by English translators, but to go over to, adopt, or align with Jewish people and their practices. See Mason, “Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism,” 462.

Synthesizing the results of the past two decades of research, Tobias Nicklas has recently highlighted the variability of the boundaries drawn by Christians and Jews that separated the one from the other.³¹ He identifies the “Christ-event” of the first century as a catalyst, inspiring some first-century Jews to begin to reinterpret their system of lifestyle and beliefs in its wake. The results of this reinterpretation, however, were anything but uniform. Rather, Nicklas contends, “the re-organizations of the system took shape in very different manners.”³² In order adequately to acknowledge this variability, Nicklas advocates that interpreters “try to develop images of the past which are complex enough to at least understand better what we cannot grasp as a whole anymore.”³³ In an attempt to draw just such an image, Nicklas suggests that scholars abandon the familiar model of the “Parting of the Ways” as a tree with two large branches diverging at a single point from a shared trunk in favour of another arboreal image:

Perhaps we could better use the image of a very robust bush without just one long trunk, but with a lot of bigger and smaller, stronger and weaker branches, who not only influence each other’s growing in many ways, but partly blocking each other in their mutual way to catch as much as possible from the sun . . . If we look at it from a certain distance we have the image that this bush is cut into two main parts, but as soon as we look closer we see that there are many more divisions, but there have always been veins connecting the different parts of this plant.³⁴

Although the critics of the Parting of the Ways model are not themselves without critics,³⁵ their efforts have succeeded in complicating

³¹ Tobias Nicklas, *Jews and Christians? Second Century “Christian” Perspectives on the “Parting of the Ways”* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

³² Nicklas, *Jews and Christians?*, 219.

³³ Nicklas, *Jews and Christians?*, 220.

³⁴ Nicklas, *Jews and Christians?*, 223.

³⁵ In his review of recent “critical examinations of the Parting paradigm,” James Carleton Paget, describing himself as a “mild separatist,” raises five objections to the alternative hermeneutic of “continuity and convergence” championed in various forms by Boyarin, Lieu, Becker, and Reed. Chief among his complaints is that their critique owes much, perhaps too much, to the influences of post-modern thinkers including Levi-Strauss, Foucault, and Derrida, which he identifies in their “general suspicion in ‘master-narratives,’ the related interest in recovering lost voices or little noted witnesses, in taking seriously the constructed character of identity, particularly as it manifests itself in texts, in paying greater attention to local differences in the manifestations of Judaism and Christianity rather than in engaging in general stories with teleologies, and in a flight from what some have termed ‘positivistic historicism.’” Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 8. Paget clarifies, however, that his criticism is not a defense of the old

narratives that assume Judaism and Christianity were clearly defined and mutually exclusive entities prior to the accession of Constantine. In this light, Runia's contention that "we must never lose sight of the fact that Philo was a Jew and was recognized as such" by his Christian readers becomes problematic, as it assumes that a stable and essentialized concept of "the Jew" was shared among Philo's early Christian commentators and remains intuitive to modern readers.³⁶ To say that Philo's Christian readers knew him to be "a Jew" and not a "Christian" requires us to ask further, what was it about Philo that made him Jewish in their eyes?

WHO IS A JEW? PHILO'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN IOUDAIOT AND ISRAEL

Before we begin our consideration of early Christian constructions of Philo and his relationship to Jewishness, let us briefly consider what Philo himself had to say about the topic. As Ellen Birnbaum has shown, the definition of Jewishness operative in Philo's own thought is not as straightforward as modern readers might expect. In *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews and Proselytes*, Birnbaum observes that Philo does not use the terms *Israel* (Israel) and *Ioudaioi* (Jews) interchangeably. Via word studies and a close reading of Philo's

paradigm, adding that the contributions of Boyarin et al. "are to be welcomed in that they have sent us back to what we thought was established, and made it seem less so." Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians*, 6–24.

³⁶ Runia, "Philo and the Church Fathers," *Cambridge Companion to Philo*, 229. The influence of Marcel Simon's *Verus Israel*, which envisions a conflict primarily between clearly differentiated groups of "Jews" and "Christians" rather than among groups and individuals contesting the boundaries of Judaism and Christianity, is detectable in the way Runia frames Philo's place in Jewish-Christian relations: "A further aspect of our theme that will often be specifically addressed is what Philo's reception in Christian writers tells us about the relation between Jews and Christians in the period of the early Church. As we have already observed, Philo is sometimes regarded as virtually a Church Father, sometimes as very much a Jew. This difference in perspective must be placed against the background of the often very strained relations between the two religions and their adherents during this period. In this context the act of specifically adducing Philo's name, or conversely of deliberately concealing it, can have special significance." Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 36.

treatises, she demonstrates that the two terms do not usually occur in the same treatise. Moreover, Philo employs the word *Israel* most frequently in the treatises that comprise his *Allegorical Commentary*, which Birnbaum contends was written with an elite, highly educated segment of the Jewish audience in mind. In these treatises, Philo interprets Israel according to its Hebrew etymology, which he then translates into Greek as *horōn theon*, “seeing God.”³⁷ From this interpretation, he understands biblical references to Israel to designate individuals who possess an elite spiritual or mystical capability to experience a vision of God. This capability may be inborn or attained through philosophical study and practice. On the other hand, Philo writes of *Ioudaioi* in his *Exposition of the Law*, writings that Birnbaum suggests were intended for a more general Jewish readership. In these treatises, *Ioudaioi* are praised as the discrete social group that follows the laws of Moses and thus alone properly worships the one true God.

Theoretically, Philo opens both designations to individuals who were not born into the Jewish people. The “membership requirements” for the two groups, however, differ. Proselytes, Birnbaum claims, seek to become Jews, not members of Israel. She observes, “Philo mentions that proselytes leave behind mythical inventions, polytheistic beliefs, ancestral customs, family, friends, and country and come over to the one true God, truth, piety, virtue, the laws, and a new polity.”³⁸ In contrast, “because the distinguishing mark of ‘Israel’ is its ability to see God, it would seem that anyone who qualifies—whether Jew or non-Jew—may be considered part of ‘Israel.’” Birnbaum continues, “Philo speaks quite admiringly of non-Jews like the Persian Magi and other unnamed sages from Greek and foreign lands. Although he never calls these people ‘Israel’ or speaks of them as seeing God per se, his description of them would lead one to think that they meet the requirements for belonging.”

According to Birnbaum’s reading, Philo has no concept of “Israel according to the flesh”; membership in Israel is determined purely by spiritual capability. Jews as a people therefore have no inherent claim to the title Israel. She contends,

³⁷ Philo, *Mut.* 81.

³⁸ Ellen Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo’s Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes*. Brown Judaic Studies (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996), 196.