

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES

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Jewish Christianity Reconsidered: Rethinking Ancient Groups and Texts. Edited by **Matt Jackson-McCabe**. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2007. x + 391 pp. \$35.00 cloth.

This collection embodies paradox. While wrestling with the troubling methodological questions that provoked its editor to organize the Society of Biblical Literature's Jewish Christianity Consultation in 2005, its introduction and first chapter leave no doubt about Jackson-McCabe's inclination to deconstruct the Consultation's namesake category, ultimately rendering the term Jewish Christianity too ambiguous and potentially damaging to be useful. By design, Jackson-McCabe's contributors apply their specific expertise to various test cases, divided into two sections, with Part 1, "Groups," presenting Craig C. Hill on the Jerusalem Church, Jerry L. Sumney on Paul's opponents, and Petri Luomanen on the Ebionites and Nazarenes. Part 2, "Texts," includes William Arnal's study of the Q source, Warren Carter on the Gospel of Matthew, Raimo Hakola on John's Gospel, Patrick J. Hartin on the letter of James, John W. Marshall on the Apocalypse, Jonathan A. Draper on the *Didache*, and F. Stanley Jones on the Pseudo-Clementines. The contributors exemplify the range of strategies applied to phenomena labeled Jewish Christian. In another paradox, and perhaps also by design, these essays actually succeed in embodying the very problems that ignited Jackson-McCabe's critique of the category. For this juxtaposition of theoretical problematization and test-case exemplification, scholars of Christian origins owe Jackson-McCabe their thanks.

Jackson-McCabe's introduction and first chapter establish the problem; there has never been a workable consensus definition of Jewish Christianity, or a consensus identification of its relevant data, sociological or textual. From F. C. Baur to the present, Jackson-McCabe traces the category's development, identifying its major enduring tendencies, perhaps most damaging Baur's oppositional pair, Jewish particularism versus Christian universalism. This opposition easily correlated with the Reformation opposition between works and faith. These threads wind their way through Ritschl's counterattack, a spectrum of family resemblances connecting a range of various groups to which is applied the descriptor "Jewish," to Harnack's insistence on an unbridgeable gap between the category's constituent elements, or finally to its opposite in Jean Daniélou's distinction between the Christian message and

the Jewish cultural medium that transmits it. Ritschl's formulations reflecting the proportions of Jewish to Christian constituents in whatever mixture is labeled Jewish Christian survive in Hans Joachim Schoeps's descriptions of a group's or text's location within a spectrum ranging from "Great Church" Jewish Christians who accepted Paul to the Ebionites with their low Christology and demand for proselytization. As Jackson-McCabe makes clear, this strategy raises the basic question of precisely how much of the Jewish (usually Torah observance) has to be mixed with the Christian before one can rightly label any phenomenon Jewish Christian or Christian Jewish. Going further, Jackson-McCabe points out that even with such a formulation, we cannot assume that to the degree that something has been identified as Jewish, it must necessarily to that degree be particularistic; it is possible, contrary to common assumption, Jackson-McCabe argues, that the category Jewish may itself include the universal as well as the particular (22–23). In the end, his own contributions to the collection confirm one's impression that Jackson-McCabe would include himself among those who "question the utility of the category 'Jewish Christianity' at all" (3).

Overall, for those not attuned to the technical discourse peculiar to a particular test case, these essays provide helpful overviews of the *status quaestionis* along with many important insights into the relevant problems. For those familiar, several of the essays either restate or provide limited extensions of the author's previous work; for example, in one case, the author cites no less than fifteen of his own previous publications. More important, however, is the way each contributor has responded to his editor's challenge to reconsider the focal category. Given present limitations, specific examples will necessarily suffice. The notes and bibliography reveal an interesting correlate between the degree to which a contributor problematizes the category and the depth of his engagement with theoretical issues.

Contributions like Jones's, for example, in his essay on the Pseudo-Clementines, simply acknowledge the category's inadequacies, but because they find nothing better, continue to use it. Hill takes some pause over the category in his discussion of the Jerusalem Church, admitting the difficulty with the presupposition of two distinct constituents, Jewish and Christian. Yet he also assumes that inclusion in the category is a factor of the proportion of these primary constituents in the mixture. Consequently, taking for granted something we can call "Jewish," Hill's solution is to devise a set of criteria against which to measure the degree of "Jewishness" in a particular phenomenon before classifying it Jewish Christianity. Unfortunately, despite Hill's more serious engagement with theoretical questions, the circularity of this approach is obvious, as is Hill's repetition of problems that Jackson-McCabe lays out in the first chapter.

In contrast, Carter's study of Matthew seriously engages theoretical issues, critiquing the presupposition of "fixed or essential features" in the formation of the category as inadequate to the diversity of religion and to the gospel's social location within the Roman Empire (156). Acknowledging the ambiguities and fluidity of social borders, Carter prefers to ask how groups form, maintain, and contest boundaries. Nevertheless, for Carter, Matthew is a Jewish Christian text; he makes the designation a matter of the balance between continuity and discontinuity with Judaism. Yet in describing nothing in Matthew that trespasses Judaism, Carter's analysis actually questions the usefulness of the term Christian applied to Matthew.

While Carter demonstrates the kind of care needed in categorical choices, his essay does exemplify some of the lingering problems. For instance, while Carter's insistence on contextualizing Matthew in the Roman Empire suggests the relevance of post-colonial critique to the reconsideration of Jewish Christianity, surprisingly, given the subject, none of the contributors introduces post-colonial theory. It is also surprising that most of the contributors ignore the obviously relevant "Parting of the Ways" bibliography. Despite the questions left by his contributors, Jackson-McCabe has truly succeeded in providing historians of early Christianity a much-needed "point of entry into this complex and controversial subject" (5). His theoretically sophisticated presentation of the problem more than sufficiently prepares the reader to place the various test cases in the broader discourse about Jewish Christianity.

James Constantine Hanges
Miami University

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Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy. By **David G. Hunter**. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
xx + 317 pp. \$99.00 cloth.

Among the preponderance of studies on late ancient Christian asceticism, anti-ascetic tendencies have received relatively little attention. Rather, figures such as Jovinian are frequently cast as not only unpopular, but unmistakably heretical. David Hunter hopes to address this misrepresentation of the complicated development of ascetic orthodoxy by detailing the range of ascetic positions held in the first four centuries C.E. In so doing, Hunter demonstrates that "Jovinian stood much closer to the centre of the Christian