Friendships Between Jews and Christians in Antiquity

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Unlikely friendships enjoy an enduringly honorable pedigree in popular culture.[1] Illustrations of this timeless aspiration abound, from Isaiah's wolf and lamb (Isa 11.6–7; 65.25) all the way to 21st century Hollywood's Shrek and Donkey, and beyond.[2] Even in the midst of polarizing politics, one may discover cordial bipartisan understanding. Republican President Ronald Reagan (1911–2004) was famously best of friends "after six o'clock" with Democratic Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill (1912–1994).[3] More recently, US Supreme Court Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933–2020) and Antonin Scalia (1936–2016) shared a fond personal friendship of "respect and affection" that included each other's Jewish and Italian Catholic families, even while sparing no blushes in "disdainful" public excoriation of each other's jurisprudence.[4]

But could individual Jews in antiquity similarly be friends with individual Christians? Their respective communities' mutual suspicion, animosity, and recrimination is exhaustively chronicled in scholarship about partings and boundaries, prejudice and supersession—a sorry tale of condemnatory virtue-signaling and aggressive political victories, purchased invariably at the cost of moral failure.

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[1] It is a particular pleasure and privilege to have this somewhat experimental essay included in a volume honoring Martin Goodman, my esteemed example and mentor in Oxford for the past 15 years. My topic may, I trust, signal a small tribute to Martin's indefatigable scholarly and interdisciplinary hospitality for far longer than that. For more than 35 years he has been a friend to successive Dean Ireland's Professors and their students—not least as the pioneer (with E.P. Sanders) and stalwart supporter of the M.Phil. in Judaism and Christianity in Graeco-Roman World, which it has been a delight to co-direct with him since I first came to Oxford in 2007.
I am grateful for comments and suggestions from the Editors, as well as from Jeremiah Coogan, Wolfram Kinzig and Artur Suski.

[2] His Yiddish name evidently identifies Shrek as Jewish, while Donkey's marriage to a dragon raises inevitable doubts on that front (cf. A. VanderMeer and J. VanderMeer, *The Kosher Guide to Imaginary Animals* [San Francisco: Tachyon Publications, 2010]).

[3] C. Matthews, *Tip and the Gipper: When Politics Worked* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 37 and *passim*.

[4] In her touching tribute, Ginsburg quotes Scalia's justification of their friendship to his conservative critics: "I attack ideas. I don't attack people. Some very good people have some very bad ideas. And if you can't separate the two, you gotta get another day job"; see R. B. Ginsburg, "Remembrance of Antonin Scalia," *Journal of Supreme Court History* 41, no. 3 (2016): 250.

Here my interest is more eclectic and down to earth. I use the term "friendships" deliberately in the plural and in a somewhat informal, undertheorized manner to denote agreeable social relations of mutual benefit—rather than, say, more collectively or abstractly, whether in a classical[5] or biblical and Jewish sense.[6] While reciprocity is indeed one constant and there are similarities with Aristotle's three types of friendship (for pleasure, for utility, or most perfectly for common virtue and love of the good[7]), true or exceptional friendship in the biblical texts prizes loyalty or intimacy above all—making disloyalty ("paying back evil for good") the particular mark of failed friendship.[8] While some friends are false or fickle, on the other hand the one who is loyal may well turn out to be the liminal or unlikely friend, like Jethro to Moses, Ruth to Naomi, David to Jonathan. Relational ("behavioral") parity is essential, but "inequality of wealth, social status, life stage, treaty status, or other personal characteristics does not preclude the establishment of a friendship".[9] Ben Sira's creative synthesis of biblical with non-Israelite antecedents (like Theognis) makes him more sceptical about unequal or false friends, but he nevertheless praises the benefit of friendship in the fear of God that is both cautious and faithful.[10]

Away from the declamations of officialdom, "the common people were much more friendly with each other than the leaders approved of," as James Parkes put it nearly 90 years ago.[11] To be sure, the indicators of such friendlier relations are rarely on the surface, and not all those Parkes himself adduces are historically compelling. Nevertheless, what matters in the following case studies is not their historicity (which is almost invariably beyond our grasp to establish), but the fact that, "official" opprobrium notwithstanding, the authors and their implied readers evidently found certain

[5] D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[6] S. M. Olyan, *Friendship in the Hebrew Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2017), 1–7, 107.
[7] διὰ τὸ χρήσιμον… δι' ἡδονήν… τελεία δ' ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν φιλία καὶ κατ' ἀρετὴν ὁμοίων: *Eth. Nic.* 8.3, 1156a10–14, 1156b6–9.
[8] Olyan, *Friendship,* 108.
[9] Olyan, *Friendship,* 113.
[10] See J. Corley, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship* (Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2002), 213-18 and *passim*.
[11] J. Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Antisemitism* (London: Soncino Press, 1934), 94.

friendly scenarios and relationships to be both plausible and meaningful. There were indeed episodes of open hostility and violence, and indications too of social separation and reinforced boundaries. However, as has often been noted, the interstices of documentable popular practices and their persistent official disapprobation nevertheless speak eloquently to another, more positive continuing reality. We will see this substantiated especially at the local and individual level.

Official strictures and suspicions against such relationships made the normative sources typically taciturn. It will not be possible here to distinguish thoroughgoing friendships from concrete, good neighborly relations: evidence of the latter will here serve as indicating at least the possibility of the former, while fully accepting that good neighborliness may depend on good fences for its success. I will omit consideration of friendships with Gentile "God-fearers" at Aphrodisias and elsewhere, most of whom will not have been Christian,[12] as well as of interfaith relations within a primary setting of proselytism, slavery, or marriage.

Following a brief glance at some of the earliest literary evidence, the following remarks will focus on a selection of friendships in Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Spain.[13]

Followers and Non-Followers in the New Testament

Not all friends of Jesus, or of his first followers, were Jesus-believers. Famously, little love is lost between the Jesus movement and "the Pharisees." And yet Luke, interestingly, has Pharisees who tip off Jesus about Herod's intention to kill him (13.31) while a series of others invite Jesus to their homes for meals in which conversation ranges from didactic instruction to open-ended controversy (Luke 7.36; 11.37; 14.1). While Jesus tends to get the better of his host rhetorically, conversation is

[12] The name "Gregorios" (1:44) suggests at least one likely Christian: see P. R. Trebilco, "Beyond 'The Parting of the Ways' Between Jews and Christians in Asia Minor to a Model of Variegated Interaction," in *Jews and Christians - Parting Ways in the First Two Centuries CE? Reflections on the Gains and Losses of a Model*, eds. J. Schröter et al. (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2021), 281–82.

[13] Cf. further R. G. Salinero, "A Broken Coexistence: Anti-Jewish Polemics and Religious Clashes in Late Roman Hispania," in *Jews and Christians in Antiquity: A Regional Perspective*, eds. P. Lanfranchi and J. Verheyden (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 267–280 (and others in that volume), advocating a geographically specific approach.

not invariably adversarial or constructed to bring about the other party's "conversion." He encourages one host to revise his practice of inviting his "friends (φίλους) or brothers or relatives and rich neighbors" to dinner on an assumption of reciprocity (Luke 14.12)—perhaps implying that the present invitation is a case in point and his host expects Jesus, too, to respond in kind?

Especially in the early chapters of Acts, Luke goes out of his way to stress not only the church's numerical growth and internal harmony, but also its popular favor with the people of Jerusalem (4.16–17; 5.13). Cautious tolerance is reported even on the part of the universally respected sage Gamaliel the Elder, who intervenes to save the lives of two apostles (5.33–39). Jesus-believers exercise a ministry of healing among a populace that seek them out for this reason, but with no intention of joining their cause (5.13). Even in more obviously confrontational settings, Jesus-believing protagonists in Acts address Jewish audiences politely as "brothers" or indeed "brothers and fathers" (22.1; cf. 23.1, 5–6).

Hints of constructive relationships are perhaps present even in the Gospel of John, notoriously unfriendly to non-followers among "the Jews." Most prosaically, Peter relies on a local disciple's acquaintance with the High Priest to gain access to his courtyard (18.15–16).[14] Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, engages Jesus in another somewhat didactic and open-ended conversation (3.1–10). Although evidently unpersuaded, he later throws his weight behind Jesus's right to a fair trial (7.50–51) and burial (19.39)—but unlike Joseph of Arimathea he is not "a secret disciple of Jesus" (19.38).

Christian-Jewish "Dialogues"?

Contact and controversy between Jews and Christians are now widely agreed to have continued far longer, and far more commonly, than earlier scholarship imagined. Older skepticism notwithstanding, this is attested by the enduringly popular literary representation of Christian-Jewish

[14] A medieval account invokes the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* to link this familiarity with the other disciple's service as fishmonger to the High Priest's court (A. F. J. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition* [Leiden: Brill, 1992], 144 No. LIV: *sepe portaverat pisces ad curias pontificium Anne et Cayphe*).

dialogue in both patristic and rabbinic sources. Extant Christian examples start perhaps in the second century with Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* and Aristo of Pella's *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus* (afforced by the 2011 publication of a new fragment[15]). These were followed in the third century by a dialogue text uncovered at Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. 17.2070), as well as by the late fourth-century *Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus* and fifth- or sixth-century examples between *Timothy and Aquila* or *Simon and Theophilus*.[16] Most of these compositions serve as a set-piece literary artifice for missionary or, more likely, internal apologetic purposes. The genre's implicit one-upmanship is self-evident in that the last word invariably belongs to the Christian interlocutor—just as it later belongs to the rabbi in the much shorter and possibly mimetic narratives of encounters with "philosophers" or *minim* ("heretics") in Talmud and Midrash.[17] The popularity of Christian-Jewish dialogues impressed even hostile outsiders such as Celsus, who considered the *Dialogue of Jason and Papiscus* patently incongruous and naively allegorizing (Origen, *C. Cels*. 4.52).

Two mitigating observations are important. First, the sheer frequency and longevity of these literary set-piece encounters calls into question any facile assumption that their stylized and triumphalist staging precludes any real-life interaction of this sort.[18] Recent critical discussion has

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[15] See H. Tolley, "The Jewish–Christian Dialogue Jason and Papiscus in Light of the Sinaiticus Fragment," *Harvard Theological Review* 114, no.1 (2021): 1–26 on MS Sinaiticus graecus 1807, pointing out *inter alia* similarities with Aristobulus and the *Epistle of Barnabas* and noting confirmation of a tradition of Lucan authorship.

[16] W. Varner, "On the Trail of Trypho: Two Fragmentary Jewish-Christian Dialogues from the Ancient Church," in *Christian Origins and Hellenistic Judaism: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, eds. A. W. Pitts and S. E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 559–562. Cf. W. C. Varner, *Ancient Jewish-Christian Dialogues: Athanasius and Zacchaeus, Simon and Theophilus, Timothy and Aquila. Introductions, Texts, and Translations* (Lewiston: Mellen Press, 2004); also L. Lahey, "Evidence for Jewish Believers in Christian-Jewish Dialogues through the Sixth Century (Excluding Justin)," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries*, eds. R. Hvalvik and O. Skarsaune (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 585–619 and P. W. van der Horst, "'You Christians Are Being Led Astray!' Some Notes on the Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus," in *Hebrew Texts in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Surroundings,* eds. K. Spronk and E. van Staalduine-Sulman (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 253 for other examples.

[17] Cf. M. Bar-Asher Siegal *Jewish-Christian Dialogues on Scripture in Late Antiquity: Heretic Narratives of the Babylonian Talmud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019). J. R. Labendz (*Socratic Torah: Non-Jews in Rabbinic Intellectual Culture* [Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2013], 173-90, 214-15) differentiates between the more open and flexible style of dialog in Palestinian sources and a more contentious and polemical characterization in the Babylonian Talmud.

[18] In favor of a real-life *Sitz im Leben* in some cases, see e.g. L. Lahey "Jewish Biblical Interpretation and Genuine Jewish-Christian Debate in 'The dialogue of Timothy and Aquila'," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 51 (2000): 281–296; L. Lahey, "Evidence for Jewish Believers in Christian-Jewish Dialogues through the Sixth Century (Excluding Justin)," in , Hvalvik and Skarsaune, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, 581–639; Varner, "On the Trail of Trypho," 221–224. P. Andrist, "Literary Distance and Complexity in Late Antique and Early Byzantine Dialogues Adversus Iudaeos," in *Dialogues and*

tended to allow for elements of greater historical plausibility (as distinct of course from historical factuality) behind some of these ancient exchanges. What matters here is not so much who said what or whether a particular dialogue even occurred—but that the author and his implied readership *believed* such interchange did or might occur.

This in turn does, secondly, introduce at least the possibility of actual Christian-Jewish relationships in the background of certain accounts. Justin admittedly seeks his Jewish counterpart's conversion and deploys him in key respects as his foil for a repeatedly rancorous argument. In contrast to many later set-piece dialogues (beginning with the second-century *Jason and Papiscus*), however, Trypho does not concede to Justin's argument, nor adopt his faith. Despite this, Trypho calls Justin a "friend" early on and again emphatically at the end,[19] while the reverse is even more common.[20] Indeed, the debate concludes on a note of distinct personal courtesy; Trypho and his associates wish Justin well on his journey and he in turn prays for them. Such evidence is decidedly elusive: does it constitute anything more than polite rhetorical *mise-en-scène* for a philosophical encounter? That said, the frequent recurrence of friendship language in Justin is perhaps made a little more intriguing by its scarcity in most later dialogues.[21]

Debates from Late Antiquity to Late Byzantium, eds. A. Cameron and N. Gaul (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2017), 54–55 rightly notes the puzzle of "unrealistic literary dialogues at a time when real debates were common."

[19] *Dial.* 8.4: φίλον γάρ σε ἤδη νενόμικα (P. Bobichon, ed., *Justin Martyr, Dialogue avec Tryphon: Edition critique*. Paradosis 47.1–2, 2 volumes [Fribourg: Academic Press, 2003]); μὴ ὄκνει ὡς φίλων ἡμῶν μεμνῆσθαι, ἐὰν ἀπαλλαγῇς, 142.1; cf. 63.1, 68.2.

[20] E.g. *Dial.* 10, 27, 28, 35, 48, 56, 60, 61, 62, 65, 68, 85, 121, 137, 142; cf. 72. Also "brothers" (ἀδελφοὶ), 58.3; 137.1; cf. 96.2.

[21] Two sixth-century exceptions are noteworthy. In *Dialogue of Archbishop Gregentius with Herban the Jew* set in Himyar (Yemen), the Jews do convert; but Herban earlier confirms that he has frequently read "your gospels" and discussed "your books" with a "dear Christian friend of mine." ἀγαπητῷ μου φίλῳ χριστιανῷ (ed. A. Berger, ed., *Life and Works of Saint Gregentios, Archbishop of Taphar: Introduction, Critical Edition and Translation* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006], 770; cf. *PG* 86.1, 765). In *De Gestis in Perside*, a "fictional and fanciful" (A. Cameron, "Flights of Fancy: Some Imaginary Debates in Late Antiquity," in *Christians Shaping Identity From the Roman Empire to Byzantium: Studies Inspired by Pauline Allen*, eds. G. D. Dunn and W. Mayer, [Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015], 392) dialogue set in a Sassanid context, antagonism erupts between the Jewish interlocutors after some convert but others do not. But the dialogue's Jewish umpire Aphroditianus successfully pleads for reconciliation, urging both sides "not to abandon ancient friendship" (μὴ καταλεῖψαι ἀρχαίαν φιλίαν) while respecting each other's freedom of worship in sincere love (ἡ μεν θρησκεία, ὡς ἄν τις θέλῃ, τῆς ἀγάπης ἀνυποκρίτου μενούσης). Everyone parts amicably "after saying the Alleluia in Hebrew together" τό τε ἀλληλούϊα ἑβραϊστὶ κοινῶς εἰπόντες (244b–245a E. Bratke, *Das sogenannte Religionsgespräch am Hof der Sasaniden* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899], 43). Cf. e.g. Andrist, "Literary Distance," 51–53; Lahey, "Evidence for Jewish Believers," 606–614).

A selection of localized Mediterranean case studies will serve to illustrate the wider potential for friendships between believers and Jewish non-believers in Jesus.

Caesarea

Origen

Origen (c. 185–254) visited Palestine c. 215 and returned around 231 to settle in Caesarea for the rest of his life. Here he encountered a prosperous polyglot community where the *Shema* was recited in Greek,[22] Jewish learning thrived, and Jews participated actively in public life. As a well-to-do intellectual of cosmopolitan cultural horizons, he built up a college and library devoted to the study of all philosophers and poets except the "atheists" (i.e. Epicureans), and whose doors were open to all: Christian or non-Christian, male or female (including, notably, females among the enslaved scribes in his scriptorium).[23]

In the course of producing biblical commentaries, his discovery of divergent Jewish and Christian texts of the Old Testament led Origen to seek out the guidance of successive Jewish teachers, beginning perhaps with the *Hebraeus* who instructed him in Alexandria.[24] Origen frequently declares that he has heard various unnamed "Jews" on one topic or another, perhaps at public lectures or disputations; but he is also "stirred up" in relation to "Ioullos [=Hillel?] the Patriarch" and unnamed Jewish sages over an interpretation of the Psalms.[25] He repeatedly recalls

[22] N. R. M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 11, n.42. For a recent appreciation of this seminal work see W. Horbury, "Origen and the Jews: Jewish-Greek and Jewish-Christian Relations," in *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire,* eds. J. K. Aitken and J. Carleton Paget (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 79–90.

[23] B. Bäbler, "Für Christen und Heiden, Männer und Frauen: Origenes' Bibliotheks- und Lehrinstitut in Caesarea," in *"Das Paradies ist ein Hörsaal für die Seelen: Religiöse Bildung in historischer Perspektive*", eds. P. Gemeinhardt and I. Tanaseanu-Döble (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 139–141, 144 and *passim*; cf. A. Grafton and M. H. Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2006). Gregory Thaumaturgus famously lauds these qualities of Origen in his farewell *Address of Thanksgiving to Origen* (P. Guyot and R. Klein, *Gregorius Thaumaturgus: Oratio prosphonetica ac panegyrica in Origenem = Dankrede an Origenes* [Freiburg: Herder, 1996]; trans. M. Slusser, *St. Gregory Thaumaturgus: Life and Works* [Washington: Catholic University of America Press], 1998).

[24] Cf. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews,* 25.

[25] Preface to *Commentary on Psalms*, *PG* 12.1056B: τὸ ὕστερον δὲ ἀνακινούμενος περί τινων λογίων Θεοῦ Ἰούλλῳ τῷ πατριάρχῃ, καί τινι τῶν χρηματιζόντων παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις σοφῶν, ἀκήκοα….

debates with unnamed Jewish scholars (e.g. *C. Cels.* 1.45, 55, 56). Occasional attempts to detect relationships with other identifiable rabbis like Hoshaia, Bar Kappara, Resh Lakish and Joshua b. Levi have remained speculative and unpersuasive,[26] but the sense of a shared intellectual environment is certainly just as relevant to the case of their younger contemporary Abbahu, as we will see. Notwithstanding a good deal of polemic in his writings, Origen evidently entertained numerous beneficial relationships with unconverted Jews. He was also quite prepared if necessary to defend Jews against pagan criticism, as he demonstrates in a wide range of articulate and knowledgeable counterarguments against Celsus's attacks on Judaism and the Old Testament (*C. Cels.* Book 3).

All of this eloquently illustrates that "debate with Jews and inquiry from them could go hand in hand."[27] Just as importantly for our purposes, the case of Origen illustrates that friendly relations on the individual level persisted, however uneasily, with polemics and denunciations at the more "official" level.[28] Notwithstanding the bilateral recriminations of officialdom in which he himself participated, Origen exemplifies an environment where, in their personal encounters, "Jews and Christians could live in close harmony and derive mutual benefit from their intercourse".[29]

Abbahu

By the end of the third century, Rabbi Abbahu (fl. c. 300) had become one of Caesarea's leading sages, portrayed in rabbinic literature as a public figure conversant in Greek culture and language, which he also taught to his daughters. He is described as famously devout, modest, and hospitable even to outsiders; at his death "the pillars of Caesarea wept."[30] While his view of Samaritans is

[26] See e.g. discussion in de Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 28; R. S Ascough,. "Christianity in Caesarea Maritima," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima,* eds. T. L. Donaldson (Waterloo, ON: Laurier University Press, 2000), 169–170.
[27] So Horbury, "Origen and the Jews," 90.
[28] Cf. e.g. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews,* 76; M. Murray, "Jews and Judaism in Caesarea Maritima," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima*, eds. T. L. Donaldson (Waterloo: Laurier University Press, 2000), 145.
[29] de Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, 135.
[30] *y. 'Abod. Zar*. 44d (=ed. Vilna 18a):בכן עמודיא דקיסרין.

reported as categorically negative (*b. Ḥul.* 6a), traditions about his approach to Christians tend to manifest a concern for good neighbors as much as good fences and feature surprisingly constructive exegetical conversations.[31] No specific individual friendships with Christians are documented, but amidst familiar polemics other conversations suggest a distinct hospitality to friendly social relations. (The preservation of these traditions in both Talmuds and Palestinian midrashim seems all the more significant in that the evidence for such friendships tends elsewhere more commonly to derive from Christian sources.[32])

Certain *minim* (here Gentile Christian officials?) reportedly trusted Abbahu's recommendation of the Babylonian Rav Safra as a great man and halakhic expert who merited a sustained tax break, but were then sorely disappointed to discover his ignorance of Scripture. In his defense, Abbahu affirmed that it was the experience of living in close engagement with Christians that had compelled Palestinian Jews, more than Babylonian ones, to occupy themselves with the study of Scripture.[33]

Unlike most of his more skeptical colleagues, Abbahu kept an open mind on the contentious question of whether Christian books containing the divine Name might be rescued on the Sabbath from a fire at a non-Jewish (probably Christian) study center.[34] Among the rabbis of different

[31] S. Assaf, "Abbahu," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 2.1 (2007): 228–229. W. Bacher, *Die Agada der palästinensischen Amoräer,* 3 vols. (Strasbourg: K.J. Trübner, 1892–1899),vol. 2: 115–118 surveys nine such conversations.
[32] But cf. further Labendz, *Socratic Torah,* 173-190; Bar-Asher Siegal, *Dialogues on Scripture*, 20-24.
[33] *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 4a: דשכיחינן גביכון רמינן אנפשין ומעיינן. Although some Gentile Christians do exercise civil service roles well before Abbahu, their position of authority here looks difficult to contextualize historically. P. S. Alexander, "Jewish Christians in Early Rabbinic Literature (2d to 5th Centuries)," in Hvalvik and Skarsaune, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, 693 finds this (Babylonian) passage to suggest Christian-Jewish dialogue in the Holy Land as "a significant factor in the creation of Palestinian Midrash," although he may somewhat underplay the importance of biblical interpretation in Babylonia (cf. W. Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998], 217). See further e.g. M. Niehoff, "Creatio ex Nihilo Theology in Genesis Rabbah in Light of Christian Exegesis," *Harvard Theological Review* 99, no.1 (2006): 37–64 on *creatio ex nihilo* and *Genesis Rabbah*, also with relevance to Caesarea; E. Grypeou and H. Spurling, eds. *The Exegetical Encounter Between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2009); Siegal, *Jewish-Christian Dialogues*.
[34] *b. Šabb*. 116a:אין ולאו ורפיא בידיה. Less plausibly, this much-debated institution (בי אבידן, House of Abidan?) has even been thought to be a Persian house of study (S. Shaked, "A Persian House of Study, A King's Secretary: Irano-Aramaic Notes." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 48, nos. 1–2 [1995]: 174–175).

generations cited in this connection, Samuel attended that center while Mar bar Joseph counted himself a member on friendly terms with it.[35]

Other encounters illustrate quite practical common concerns. A Gentile woman, presumably a Christian, thought Abbahu sufficiently sympathetic to her plight that she could approach him for release from a Nazirite vow. But since Gentiles are not subject to such vows in the first place, Abbahu indulged her by instructing his disciple Abimi bar Tobi to release her on a technicality (by invalidating the vow on the grounds of an "unforeseen circumstance," given that the case was null to begin with).[36] In another conversation with non-Jews, Abbahu supports his case for the viability of the seven-month-old fetus with a clever play on the Greek language.[37]

Jerome

Jerome (c. 345–420) was born in Strido, Dalmatia, and educated and baptized in Rome, before setting out for Palestine from an ascetic community at Aquileia around 374. Although never resident in Caesarea, he had contacts there and consulted its library for works like Origen's *Hexapla* and *Commentary on Psalms*.[38] During his initial stay in the desert of Chalcis, he learned Hebrew with the help of a Jewish convert to Christianity, before eventually settling at Bethlehem.[39] While he frequently singles out this first teacher who instructed him in the Scriptures, Jerome mentions at least four other Jews, some of whom he consulted specifically for his translation and exegesis of particular biblical books (e.g. Chronicles, Job, and Tobit).[40] Most famously, he hired a Jewish teacher by the name of Bar Ḥanina, who extensively conferred with him by night in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Jerome attributes this schedule to his teacher's "fear of the Jews" and thinks of him as a "second

[35] Mar bar Joseph: אנא מינייהו אנא, ולא מסתפינא מינייהו.
[36] *y. Nazir* 9.1, 57c (=42b ed Vilna): חדא נכרית אתת לגבי רבי אבהו אמר לאבימי בר טובי פוק ופתח לה בנולד.
[37] E.g. *Gen. Rab.* 14.2; 20.6; *Tanḥ. B.* Bamidbar 21 (אמר להם בלשון יוונית זיטא איפטא איטא אקטו).
[38] E.g. *Ep.* 34.1; *Vir. Ill.* 75; cf. Graves 2007, 93 citing *Comm. Tit.* 3:9; and *In Psal.* 1.
[39] *Ep.* 125.12 *cuidam fratri, qui ex Hebraeis crediderat, me in disciplinam dedi.*
[40] See M. Graves, *Jerome's Hebrew Philology: A Study Based on His Commentary on Jeremiah* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), 88 and n. 49 for additional references; n. 50 for the number of other teachers.

Nicodemus" (John 3.1–2).[41] In reality, the timing of these lessons would have suited both student and teacher in attempting to fly under the radar of their respective communities' public censure; nevertheless, Jerome did before long incur that of Rufinus.[42]

During his stay in Rome as Pope Damasus's personal secretary in the early 380s, Jerome evidently developed additional Jewish acquaintances: he mentions in passing that a *Hebraeus* friend unexpectedly dropped by with a large number of books borrowed from the synagogue.[43]

Jerome's extensive dependence on such friendly Jewish (and Jewish-Christian) teachers shows in part in his unusual familiarity with Jewish traditions, which despite fierce resistance in Christian circles he does not hesitate to insert into his resolution of exegetical questions.[44] Like Origen, he appears to see no conflict between frequent and appreciative close personal relations on the personal level while spouting hackneyed collective condemnations of Jews and Judaism in the same breath—e.g. as those who "persecute our Lord Jesus Christ in the synagogues of Satan."[45] Significantly, such familiarity may not just have come to him in Palestine but already in Aquileia, where in the 380s it was reported that quite a few Jews and pagans joined in public celebrations around the Easter vigil—"with mental delight even without the religious devotion."[46]

To be sure, this discussion of "Caesarea" barely scratches the surface of Christian-Jewish friendships in Palestine. Although of uncertain pertinence to our topic, one could, for example, consider the famous Galilean halakhic discussion between Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and the Jesus-

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[41] *Ep.* 84.3 (*PL* 22, 425 col. 745): *Timebat enim Judaeos, et mihi alterum exhibebat Nicodemum*.
[42] *Ep.* 84.3; see the defence in *Ruf.* 1.13, appealing to the precedent of Origen, Clement and Eusebius in relying on instruction of a *Hebraeus* (cf. Rufinus *Apol. Hier.* 2.32).
[43] *Ep.* 36.1 to Damasus.
[44] M. Graves, trans. *Jerome: Commentary on Jeremiah*, eds. C. A. Hall (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011). illustrates this with reference to the *Commentary on Jeremiah*. Cf. also *Ep.* 73.5 on the importance of presenting "the opinion of the Hebrews" to ears prepared to listen. W. Kinzig, "Jewish and 'Judaizing' Eschatologies in Jerome," in *Jewish Culture and Society Under the Christian Roman Empire,* eds. R. L. Kalmin and S. Schwartz (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 409–429 also argues for Jerome's substantive dependence on the commentaries of Apollinaris of Laodicea (c.310–90).
[45] *Ep*. 84.3: *Usque hodie enim persequuntur Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum in synagogis Satanae*.
[46] *Laetitia mentis si non ritu religionis*: Chromatius, *Sermon* 16.3 (CCSL 9A, 74), as quoted in W. Kinzig, "Juden und Christen in der Antike: Trennungen, Transformationen, Kontinuitäten und Annäherungen," in *Among Jews, Gentiles and Christians in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Studies in Honour of Professor Oskar Skarsaune on his 65th Birthday,* eds. R. Hvalvik and J. Kaufman (Trondheim: Tapir Academic Press, 2011), 153.

believer Jacob of Kfar Sikhnin, or healers like Eleazar Ben Dama.[47] Such relationships may also be tantalizingly if tendentiously annotated by patristic tales like that of Epiphanius, a non-Jewish native of the Land of Israel, about Joseph of Tiberias and his relationship with the Patriarch of Tiberias who showed an interest in Christian texts and healers.[48]

Such traditions from Caesarea and elsewhere in the Holy Land illustrate the extent to which, especially from the third to the early fifth centuries, individual friendly relationships facilitated continued Christian exegetical and cultural dependence on Jews, even when official boundaries began to be drawn with increasing sharpness as Christians gained political confidence and ascendancy.

Antioch

Elsewhere in Greater Syria, the metropolis of Antioch yields both more and rather less for our topic than Caesarea. The scholarly starting point for many discussions here is John Chrysostom's (c. 349–407) notorious invective in his eight *Discourses against* the Jews, now often retitled as *Discourses against Judaizing Christians*.[49] It has long been recognized that, for all of Chrysostom's hostile and colorful polemic, his tried and tested rhetorical stance takes as the primary object of his ire not Judaism or Jewish identity in general, but Antiochene Christianity and its close relations with Jews and Jewish practice (even if this in no way eliminates the implicit provocation of stark hostility to

[47] The Ben Dama story of *t. Ḥul.* 2.22–23 is repeated with variations at *y. Šabb*. 14, 14d; *y. 'Abod. Zar.* 2, 40d–41a; b. *'Abod. Zar.* 27b. Alexander, "Jewish Christians," 695 suggests that the implied acceptance of an effected cure at *y. Shab* 14, 14d may imply a softening of the "preferred rabbinic option" of outright refusal.

[48] On this story (Epiph. *Pan.* 30) see e.g. O. Skarsaune, "Evidence for Jewish Believers in Greek and Latin Patristic Literature," in Hvalvik and Skarsaune, eds., *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, 528–540 (also 555–56 on Socrates *Hist. Eccl.* 7.4, 38); also K. Greschat, "'Christi Siegel bricht den Zauber': die Macht des Kreuzeszeichens in der Geschichte vom comes Joseph von Tiberias; (Epiphanius von Salamis, Panarion 30)," in *Volksglaube im antiken Christentum*, eds. H. Grieser and A. Merkt (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009), 339–353. Its primary scope and context, however, are arguably proselytizing rather than relationally oriented.

[49] So e.g. P. W. Harkins, ed., *John Chrysostom: Discourses Against Judaizing Christians* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1979).

Judaism itself)[50]. There is, as Parkes already saw, "no single suggestion that the Jews were immoral or vicious; no suggestion that Christians were actually corrupted by the contact'.[51]

Instead, Chrysostom's ill-mannered rant eloquently attests the strength of what he rejects—the widespread pattern of friendly social and religious relations between two remarkably interconnected communities. Christians kept feasts and fasts in the synagogues for the great autumn festivals of Rosh Ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot (1.1.5), as well as Passover (3.3.6, 3.6.7; 4.4.4–5.4).[52] A woman was required by a fellow Christian to seal a business transaction by an apparently superior oath in the synagogue (1.3.4).

Chrysostom's concern at the widely intertwined lives of Christians and Jews was equally shared by church authorities in Asia Minor, including in Phrygia. The influential Council of Laodicea (c. 363) sought to ban Christians from Sabbath-keeping (Canon 29), celebrating festivals of the Jews or accepting gifts from them on such occasions (37), or indeed from eating their unleavened bread (38).[53] Meanwhile, by the late fourth century, Christians had long tended and perhaps appropriated the cult of the Maccabean martyrs, somewhat curiously translated to Antioch.[54]

Despite Chrysostom's best efforts, Antioch clearly showed very little inclination to effect a definitive "parting of the ways," even while Christianity gained political and cultural ascendancy during the fourth century. Chrysostom's own teacher Libanius of Antioch (314–393), a prominent rhetorician and friend of the Emperor Julian, fostered networks of acquaintance with both Jews and Christians and numbered several future church fathers among his students. He corresponded with

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[50] Cf. similarly the admonition in the Martyrdom of Pionius to (lapsed) Christians whom the Jews invited to synagogues for their protection (τίνας ὑμῶν ’Ιουδαῖοι καλοῦσιν εἰς συναγωγάς, 13.1 cf. 14.16). See E. Leigh Gibson, "Jewish Antagonism or Christian Polemic: The Case of the 'Martyrdom of Pionius'," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9, no.3 (2001): 352–354 and William Horbury's circumspect discussion ABOVE***, also in relation to *Origen*.

[51] Parkes, *The Conflict,* 164.

[52] The Quartodeciman dispute plausibly implies some such practice already in second-century Asia (*pace* Trebilco, "Beyond", 293-96).

[53] Cf. Trebilco, "Beyond," 279–80. Kinzig, "Juden und Christen," 140, n.36 notes that even as late as 692 the Council in Trullo (Constantinople) still deemed it necessary to prohibit common baths.

[54] For the development of this cult see e.g. J. Hahn, "The Veneration of the Maccabean Brothers in Fourth Century Antioch: Religious Competition, Martyrdom, and Innovation," in *Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith: Old Testament Faith Warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees) in Historical Perspective*, ed. G. Signori (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 79–104; cf. Kinzig, "Juden und Christen," 151.

Priscianus the Governor of Palestine on behalf of the Jewish community and expressed to the Jewish Patriarch (probably Gamaliel V) his distress at recent harassment of the Jewish people.[55] In such relationships with both intertwined communities, this public intellectual attached great importance "to friendship…, to the rule of law and justice, and to divinely inspired human community as the essential foundation for human welfare."[56]

Oxyrhynchus

Among the vast manuscript treasures recovered around the turn of the 20th century from the rubbish dump of the ancient Upper Egyptian city of Oxyrhynchus on the Nile have been relatively few texts of clearly Jewish origin or illustrative of Christian-Jewish relations.

One source of direct pertinence to the question of friendly personal contact is P.Oxy. 55.3203, a rental agreement in Greek that dates to June or July 400. The illiterate "Aurelius Yose son of Judah, a Jew" agrees to rent a ground floor hall and cellar in the house of two sisters who are both anchorite nuns, the lease being signed on his behalf by Aurelius Elias, quite plausibly another Jew.[57] The purpose of the rental is left unclear, but may be commercial or civic in nature.[58] Was this more than a business transaction? The documentation is evidently routine, unexceptional, and engaged without compulsion; the rent is set at a fair value comparable with other parts of city houses in this period.[59] And yet both the sisters' hospitality and Yose's willingness to become their tenant appear

[55] *Letters* 131, 160; see F. G. B. Millar, "Libanius and the Near East," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 26 (2007): 155–180; I. Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch. Greek Culture in the Roman World* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 237–238. E. G. Burr, "Libanius of Antioch in Relation to Christians and Christianity: The Evidence of Selected Letters," *Topoi: Orient-Occident Supplement 7: Mélanges A. F. Norman* (2006): 68–75 discusses ten letters illustrating his relationships with particular Christians.
[56] So rightly Burr, "Libanius of Antioch," 75.
[57] ll.6 (μοναχαῖς ἀποτακτικαῖς), 7, 25 (Αὐρήλιος Ἰωσὴ Ἰούδα [Ἰουδαῖως]).
[58] Nothing suggests a religious use (*pace* R. Mazza, "Documenti dall'Egitto relativi agli Ebrei (sec. V–VII)," *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 17 [2000]: 389).
[59] So L. H. Blumell, *Lettered Christians: Christians, Letters, and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 87, n.276, citing R. S. Bagnall , *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 277–278 (and critical of the more sceptical view of Christian-Jewish relations voiced by E. J. Epp, "The Jews and the Jewish Community in Oxyrhynchus: Socio-Religious Context for the New Testament Papyri," in *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism, 2: Collected Essays, 2006–2017* (Leiden: Brill, 2020 [=2006]), 32).

eloquent about the "ordinariness" of such interfaith transactions—not just individual marketplace encounters, but sustained contractual relations of mutual benefit.

Another, much later lease document confirms and deepens this impression. Dating to 567 CE, P.Oxy. 55.3805 features a certain Lazarus, evidently a representative of the Jewish community, seeking to rent rooms for a synagogue from prominent Christian property owners (the Apioni).[60] This could suggest that the Jewish community was relatively small and poor,[61] but no firm conclusions can be drawn. Even if it were to concern a confiscated Jewish property leased back to the synagogue, this transaction seems merrily to flout legislation prohibiting the sale or lease of property to Jews or heretics for religious purposes.[62] In this respect P.Oxy. 55.3805 goes beyond ordinary Christian-Jewish commercial transactions of the kind attested from the same time and place.[63] As late as the 6th century, the reality of friendly personal relationships between Jews and Christians at Oxyrhynchus evidently still trumped the increasingly restrictive diktats of ecclesial and political officialdom.[64]

Iberia

Two Iberian texts round out our brief survey. Neither of them identifies named friendships, but both illustrate their social prevalence in fourth-century Iberia.

Elvira

The date of the so-called Synod of Elvira is debated, but often placed around 303, although its canons may in several relevant cases date from later in the fourth or even the fifth century.[65] They

[60] Col. 5, l.56: δ(ιὰ) Λάζαρ Ἰουδαίου ὑ(πὲρ) ἐνοικίου τῆς συναγωγῆς.
[61] Mazza, "Documenti," 389–390.
[62] *Novella* 131.14 (545 CE), e.g. *in utroque casu expelli de possessionibus et substantiam eius applicari fisco*
[63] E.g. P.Oxy. 16.2019, l.20: payment receipt for "Enoch the Jew," Ἐνὼχ Ἰουδαίου.
[64] Cf. Mazza, "Documenti," 391, 394 ("la consuetudine, che faceva dimenticare la legislazione restrittiva e l'ostilità di una parte della cultura dominante nei confronti degli Ebrei").
[65] So e.g. P. Badot, "Historicité et actualité des canons disciplinaires du concile d'Elvire," *Augustinianum* 37 (1997): 311–325; M. J. Lázaro Sánchez, "L'état actuel de la recherche sur le concile d'Elvire," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 82, no.4 (2008): 517–546; J. Vilella, "The Pseudo-Iliberritan Canon Texts," *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 18 (2014): 210–259; contrast P. de Luis, "Elvira, Council of," *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity* 1 (2014): 797–798, who reflects an older state of scholarship.

have long been noted for their interest in moral or "halakhic" matters more than Christological or other doctrinal ones, and more specifically for their concern to put a stop to various inter-communal relationships on pain of at least temporary excommunication. Among the latter are giving one's Christian daughters in marriage to Jews or heretics (16), having one's harvest blessed by Jews (49) and eating with them (50), as well as adultery with Jewish women (78).

As suggested above for Chrysostom's Antioch and other Eastern locations like Laodicea, such prohibitions (like analogous rabbinic ones) speak eloquently to the close interfaith relationships that religious (and increasingly secular legal) authorities tried to curb or forbid. In the case of Elvira in particular, at least some of these practices must have been sufficiently prevalent to warrant the comparatively mild or even perfunctory penalties imposed on the parents of daughters married to Jews (who were often prominent, literate, and affluent[66]) or on clergy and lay Christians dining with Jews.[67] This latter custom attracted the attention of numerous other synods, both in the West and in the East.[68]

Menorca

Severus of Menorca's Epistle appears[69] to detail the miraculous but coercive (and thus illegal) conversion of all the Jews of that island in the year 418. Recent discussion has tended to see the letter

[66] Rightly noted by H. Sivan, "Rabbinics and Roman Law: Jewish-Gentile/Christian Marriage in Late Antiquity," *Revue des études juives* 156 (1997): 87–89. Cf. F. J. E. Boddens Hosang, *Establishing Boundaries: Christian-Jewish Relations in Early Council Texts and the Writings of Church Fathers* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 40–42.

[67] Cf. Sivan, "Rabbinics and Roman Law," 83. : Marrying a pagan causes "adultery of the soul" (*adulterium animae,* c. 15), and parents marrying their daughter to a pagan priest are permanently barred from communion (c. 17). By contrast, one should avoid marrying heretics or Jews that prevents a fellowship of faith (*nulla possit esse societas fideli cum infidele*), and parents in this case are excommunicated for five years (c.16). Christians dining with Jews are asked to abstain from communion as a way of correction (*ut debeat emendari,* c. 50).

[68] E.g. at the councils of Vannes (461–491), Agde (506?), Epaone (517), Mâcon (583), etc. In the East, objections were voiced not only by Chrysostom but by councils at Trullo (Constantinople, 692) and possibly even Nicaea (325). See discussion in Kinzig, "Juden und Christen," 139–140 and n.36; W. Kinzig,"Die Verpflichtungserklärungen der getauften Juden von Toledo aus den Jahren 637 und 654," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 53 (2019): 32, 35–37 still detects a comparable dynamic as late as mid–7th century Visigothic Toledo.

[69] Contrast D. Boyarin, "The Christian Invention of Judaism: The Theodosian Empire and the Rabbinic Refusal of Religion." *Representations* 85, no.1 (2004): 38 who recasts the narrative as the Christian hegemonic "invention" of Judaism as "religion." Cf. also M. Pearsall, *Indigni et peccatoris verbum: Christian Identity in the Epistula Severi* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 2016).

as in broad outline authentic, plausibly reflecting the early fifth century rather than much later events and circumstances.[70]

As in the previous Iberian example, what speaks most eloquently to our question of friendships is not the occasion of fresh conflict or hegemonic Christian innovation, but precisely what is said *en passant,* or grudgingly taken for granted, about the previous status quo. Prior to the stoking of religious tension and fanaticism that occasioned the events described in the letter, the modest but prominent and prosperous Jewish community in the town of Magona (Mahón) had enjoyed warm and cordial relations with their Christian neighbors, its leader Theodorus being the civic community's highly respected *defensor* and *patronus*.[71] Jews and Christians had routinely greeted one another and enjoyed a familiar acquaintance, holding each other in affection[72]—a state of affairs that to Severus now appears as unremarkable as it is lamentable. Open conflict erupted in the second decade of the fifth century because of the anti-Jewish zealotry accompanying the arrival on Menorca of the cult (and relics) of St. Stephen with a priest from Jerusalem. The result was the seizure and burning of the synagogue and apparently forcible conversion of the Jewish community—and with it, the resumption of civility only at the cost of interfaith friendships.

This evidence is necessarily tenuous, but its very ambivalence documents for fourth-century Spain a period of both popular assimilation and normative boundary-marking, when friendship at the personal level existed side by side with official rivalry.[73]

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[70] S. Bradbury, *Severus: Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 1996), 8–15 and *passim*; cf. e.g. W. Kinzig. "Review of Scott Bradbury, Severus of Menorca: Letter on the Conversion of the Jews (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press)," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49, no.1 (1998): 407–410; J. Amengual i Batle, *Judíos, católicos y herejes: el microcosmos balear de Seuerus de Menorca, Consentius y Orosius (413–321)* (Granada: Universidad de Granada etc., 2008); C. del.Valle Rodríguez, "La carta encíclica del obispo Severo de Menorca (a. 418)," in *La controversia judeocristiana en España: (desde los orígenes hasta el siglo XIII). Homenaje a Domingo Muñoz León* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1998), 66–67; more sceptically R. S. Kraemer, "Jewish Women's Resistance to Christianity in the Early Fifth Century: The Account of Severus, Bishop of Minorca," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 17, no.4 (2009): 635–665. S. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 198 rightly urges the distinction between authenticity and veracity.

[71] *qui non solum inter Iudaeos verum etiam inter Christianos eiusdem oppidi et censu et honore saeculi praecipuus erat* (6.1, Bradbury, ed., *Severus,* p.84).

[72] 5.1, Bradbury, ed., *Severus,* p.84: *salutationis officia…familiaritatis consuetudo…inveteratae species caritatis.*

[73] Cf. further Sivan, "Rabbinics and Roman Law."

Concluding Observations

A less restricted treatment of this many-tentacled topic would consider a much fuller body of both primary sources and scholarly discussion. The more eclectic soundings taken in this brief study have nevertheless suggested that even in otherwise challenging times, individual friendships between Christians and Jews often flourished in the third and fourth centuries, in both the Eastern and the Western Empire. To be sure, the recurring hints of personal friendship in our sources can never be understood in isolation from several powerful crosscurrents, including the shifting inequalities of power and public justice along with documented incidents of violent hostility—which may have numbered around 20 during the first three centuries after Constantine.[74] Adversarial measures in turn undoubtedly hastened Jewish marginalization and encouraged a classically diasporic response in the "tendency to form inward-turning, partly self-enclosed religious communities."[75] At the same time, however, such clarification of identitarian boundaries may well have grounded and reconstituted the confidence required to sustain good neighborly relations.[76]

And yet violent incidents were the exception, even amidst official polemic and especially in relations between individuals. Flashpoints aside, there is "abundant and continuous evidence of intimate social interaction" between Christians and Jews, which in both literatures makes complaints about a surfeit of intimacy far more vigorous than those about hostility.[77]

Among possible cases of additional interest would be a study of reported episodes in which Christians and Jews came to the aid of the other at a time of need. All the evidence suggests that Jews took no part in the great persecutions of the third and fourth centuries.[78] Instead, we have reports of Jews inviting Christians into synagogues (perhaps to avoid martyrdom) or helping secure

[74] See Kinzig, "Juden und Christen," 149–150 for an inventory of 20 episodes between 350 and 600, 14 of which he considers authentic.
[75] Schwartz 2001, 199; cf. 179–180.
[76] This dynamic is well captured by Kinzig, "Juden und Christen," 154, also with reference to Schwartz, *Imperialism*.
[77] So P. Fredriksen, "What 'Parting of the Ways'?: Jews, Gentiles, and the Ancient Mediterranean City," in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, eds. A. H. Becker and A. Y. Reed, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 60.
[78] Contrast claims e.g. in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 12.2; 13.1; 17.2; 18.1.

the burial of martyrs, sometimes in Jewish cemeteries.[79] On the other hand, Socrates of Constantinople (c. 380–450) gives an account of life-saving Christian assistance to the Jewish community in Crete endangered by a millenarian Mosaic impostor (ψευδομωϋσῆν) and charlatan.[80] John of Ephesus (507–586) reports that Christians at Amida on the Tigris attempted, somewhat self-interestedly and unsuccessfully, to intervene with their bishop in support of a Jewish community whose synagogue and library had been burned to the ground by a mad anti-Semitic Christian hermit.[81]

All in all, our brief study has found considerable scope for individual friendships between Jews and followers of Jesus, in the East as in the West, even in the face of hardening boundaries and hostile official pronouncements. The evidence documents friendly personal relations and everyday transactions, from shared meals to property leases, even where this required quietly ignoring official sanctions. But in addition, particularly in the "golden age" between Nicaea and Chalcedon, both inner- and inter-confessional exegetical discussions between Christians and Jews frequently reflect genuine common ground.[82] We saw in the examples of Origen, Abbahu, and Jerome the potential for debate and friendship forged over the study of the same scriptural texts. Irreducible disagreement about central confessional convictions and commitments co-existed with a united belief that there was indeed a truth to be sought and understood in divine revelation.[83] This marked out both the necessity of their separation and the scope for their friendships.

[79] Ambrose claimed in 393 to have brought to Milan the relics of the Christian master and slave Vitalis and Agricola, martyred in Bologna c. 304, after their rediscovery in the Jewish cemetery there (*Exhortatio Virginitatis* 1.8–9; PL 16, 338). Cf. conversely Trebilco, "Beyond," 283 on two Jewish burials in the Christian "Seven Sleepers" cemetery at Ephesus.
[80] *Hist. Eccl.* 7.38; Socrates's attempt to link this to a mass conversion does not seem to be borne out by his own story.
[81] Cf. Parkes, *The Conflict*, 263 and more fully Kinzig, "Juden und Christen," 129–131.
[82] Variously documented above, this point is also strongly articulated by Horbury 1998, 200–203 and *passim.*
[83] Cf. Soloveichik, M. Y. "No Friend in Jesus," *First Things* (2008). www.firstthings.com/article/2008/01/no-friend-in-jesus.

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