The reviewed publication consists of an introduction (p. 5–8), information on the authors (p. 9–11) and eight articles. The book is the product of two grants, received by the editors of the publication, and concerning Adversus Iudaeos type literature in late antiquity and the way in which Christians and Jews constructed socio-religious identity using the idea of an enemy to their own community between the first and seventh centuries. Admittedly, the publication is not without a basic critical apparatus, with footnotes and a bibliography for each article, however, one will not find here summaries in any of the congressional languages, nor keywords and, most significantly, indexes, which we would be used to by European scholarly publication standards.

The first article (p. 11–23), written by Mariano Splendido, deals with a passage from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 16.16–24), in which it is described how St Paul is said to have freed one of his female slaves from demon-possession. A close analysis of this short story provides an opportunity to discuss the problems the first Christians had in implementing their demands in a society with a certain structure, and their noticeable concession to the laws of that society, such as the treatment of slavery. In the second text of the publication, Analía V. Sapere provided a survey of the Jewish issues evident in Plutarch’s writings (p. 25–45), particularly in the surviving part of the Quaestiones Convivales. Through detailed analysis, she was able to demonstrate both the author’s unpreparedness and ignorance, beyond the widely known issues of the functioning of food prohibitions among the Jews, and the methods of Hellenisation of the Mosaic religion to make it more comprehensible to Roman and Greek readers. In the third chapter, Andrea Simonassi Lyon took a closer look at the writings of John Chrysostom concerning both Judaism and the believers of the Mosaic religion themselves living in Antioch (p. 47–61), indicating that the Jews of the city became only a pretext, as it were, for the creation of the figure of the ‘rhetorical Jew’, used for polemic, reformatted for the purpose of reinforcing the process of self-identification of the Antiochene Christians in opposition to the multi-faith nature of the ancient city. An important value of the text is the summary of research on the functioning of the Jewish community in Antioch.

The patristic deliberations continue in the following fourth chapter, where Esteban Noce...
uses the *de facto* legacy of Maximus of Turin to
discuss the question of the nomenclature used
in reference to non-Christians (p. 63–77),
pointing out the extremely rare use of the word
*paganus* in comparison to *gentilis* or *gens*. Us-
ing the Latin originals and translations of Maxi-
mus' sermons as an example, the author showed
that, although the term *paganus* is extremely
rare in them (less than one per cent of cases),
in translations into modern languages the term
pagan is used in up to twenty per cent of cases.
This was because translators replaced expres-
sions such as *gentilis, gentilitas, gens, natio* or
*populus* with the word mentioned, considering
them equivalent in the given context of use. The
second part of the text is devoted, among other
things, to a discussion of the different meanings
of the word *paganus* itself and its origins in plain
or even vulgar language, as well as to issues of
depreciation through language of a particular
social group.

With the fifth chapter by Raúl González
Salinero, we return to the subjects of the status of
Jews in Late Antique societies, in the context
of the events in Menorca in 418, when a syna-
gogue was destroyed and an attempt was made
to forcibly convert Jewish believers to Chris-
tianity (p. 79–101). The author raised the issue
of the status of Jews and the local Jewish com-
munity in Menorca, elements of anti-Jewish prop-
aganda appearing in Christian polemics, and,
after describing the circumstances of the burning
of the house of prayer, he also addressed the is-
 sue of so-called crypto-Judaism, a term which,
according to him, can be applied not only to
events in the history of late medieval Spain, but
also to the late imperial and Visigothic periods.

The sixth article, written jointly by Anders-
Christian Jacobsen and Margrethe Kamille Birk-
ler, continues the threads of the Jewish-Christi-
ian polemic, this time in the context of the
legacy of St Augustine of Hippo (p. 103–114).
The authors provide both a historiographical
outline of the problem and their own interpreta-
tion of selected writings of the Church Father,
from which a rather complex picture emerges
– on the one hand, St Augustine subscribes
to anti-Jewish rhetoric, while on the other,
there are calls in his texts for the protection of
the Jews and their important role in the divine
plan. Certainly the most interesting reflections
are those of the authors attempting to answer
the question of whether the Saint of Hippo
was in fact polemicizing against the Jews living
in North Africa, or whether he was merely ‘ar-
guing’ against the archetype of the representa-
tive of the Mosaic faith.

Julieta Cardigni, on the other hand, in
the seventh chapter (p. 115–130), took up,
in a somewhat essay-like manner, the theme of
self-identification, in the context of the ten-
sion between traditional religion of the Romans
and Christianity, in the works of such late an-
tique grammarians and encyclopaedists as Mac-
rubius, Servius, and, above all, Fabius Plancia-
des Fulgentius. The work of the latter, entitled:
*Expositio continentiae Virgilianae secundum phi-
losophos moralis*, in which Fulgentius probably
tried to explain the *Aeneid* in a way acceptable
to Christians, became the focus of the main
investigation presented in the article. The final
text of the monograph, authored by one of the
book’s editors Rodrigo Laham Cohen, presents
a reflection on the relationship between given
names and social identity using the example of
the Jews (p. 131–146) in the context of epi-
graphic studies carried out in Jewish cemeteries
in Italy, including the cities of Venosa (Venusia)
and Taranto (Tarentum). Analyses of the names
or inscriptions left on tombstones in catacombs
and cemeteries make it possible, among other
things, to observe the progressive Latinisation
of Jewish communities in the first centuries after
Christ and then, after the fall of the empire, the
reverse process, called in the text re-Judaisation,
or rabinisation, associated with the emergence
of the influence of rabbinic Judaism from the
East, primarily Palestine. Unfortunately, the ar-
ticle does not explore the relationship between
the collapse of the structures of the Roman state
and the process observed by the author of the
recovery of Jewish identity by local communi-
ties of followers of the Mosaic religion in Italy.

Some critical observations. In the context
of Andrea Simonassi Lyon’s text on the writ-
ings of John Chrysostom, it is necessary to raise
the question concerning the positive situation
of the Jews in Roman legislation of the fourth
to fifth century, a view taken by the author from Paula Fredriksen\(^2\). Such an expression is difficult to comprehend in view of the legal restrictions related to matrimonial issues or access to official positions that we find in the imperial edicts of the turn of the fourth to fifth century\(^3\). The author’s intuition about the identification problems between some Christians and Jewish believers in the first centuries of the operation of faith in Jesus Christ is most valid, especially in an environment such as that of Antioch, it is all the more difficult to understand the absence of the fundamental work on similar issues edited by Annette Yoshiko Reed and Adam H. Becker\(^4\), which appeared nearly twenty years ago\(^5\). The second text on Christian-Jewish relations, by Raúl González Salinero, is also worth mentioning at this point. It should be noted that virtually the entirety of this publication, including the conclusions concerning the status of the Jewish community in Menorca, is based solely on the Epistula Severi (Letter on the Conversion of the Jews). The author did not refer at any length to the debate on the authenticity of the source, mentioning only that *superfluo reproducir de nuevo toda la argumentación que ha conducido en los últimos años al consenso historiográfico sobre este punto* (p. 81, note 22). However, it may have been worth including dissenting voices suggesting that the work may be a later forgery, legitimising actions against the Jews in the seventh century. More significantly, it seems that the author allows himself some conjecture towards Bishop Severus’ intentions, interpreting parts of the letter as evidence that the clergyman was convinced that *le resulta imposible persuadir a los sabios judíos para que abracen el cristianismo porque reconoce su propia inferioridad en la ciencia escrituraria* (p. 93). It is difficult to regard such a sentence as an argument based on hard source evidence. At the same time, the author’s argument on p. 93–95, in which he astutely observes that the imperial legislation, officially defending Jewish places of worship, de facto recognised the effects of the Christians’ destruction of such places, should be regarded as an important voice in the discussion on the protection of Jews by the emperors already cited above.

In conclusion, in spite of a few polemical remarks, it should be considered that the texts collected in the volume appear to be important contributions to the study of Christian-Jewish relations and should be used in the development of further publications on this topic.

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\(^5\) In Polish, this issue was comprehensively treated by: M. Rosik, *Kościół a synagoga (30–313 po Chr.) na rozdrożu*, Wrocław 2016, especially p. 411–498.
Secondary Literature


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