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***Cristianos, judíos y gentiles. Reflexiones sobre la construcción de la identidad durante la Antigüedad Tardía*, ed. RODRIGO LAHAM COHEN, ESTEBAN NOCE, Instituto Multidisciplinario de Historia y Ciencias Humanas, Buenos Aires 2021, pp. 146.**

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, Analia 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 city¹. 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

¹ However, the issues concerning the problem of self-identification of the Antiochene Christians and the separation of the community from the Jewish influence in the writings of John Chrysostom have already been summarized. For example, cf.: J. ILUK, *Żydowska politeja i Kościół w imperium rzymskim u schyłku antyku*, vol. I, *Jana Chryzostoma kapłana Antiochii mowy przeciwko judaizantom i Żydom*, vol. II, *Żydowska antyewangelia, antyczna tradycja i nowożytnie trwanie*, Gdańsk 2006–2010; św. JAN CHRYSOSTOM, *Mowy przeciwko judaizantom i Żydom. Przeciwno Żydom i Hellenom*, trans., ed. J. ILUK, *Kra-ków 2007* [= ŻMT, 41].

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*. Using the Latin originals and translations of Maximus' 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 expressions 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 synagogue was destroyed and an attempt was made to forcibly convert Jewish believers to Christianity (p. 79–101). The author raised the issue of the status of Jews and the local Jewish community in Menorca, elements of anti-Jewish propaganda appearing in Christian polemics, and, after describing the circumstances of the burning of the house of prayer, he also addressed the issue 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 Birkler, continues the threads of the Jewish-Christian 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 interpretation 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 'arguing' against the archetype of the representative of the Mosaic faith.

Julietta 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 tension between traditional religion of the Romans and Christianity, in the works of such late antique grammarians and encyclopaedists as Macrobius, Servius, and, above all, Fabius Plancius Fulgentius. The work of the latter, entitled: *Expositio continentiae Virgilianae secundum philosophos morales*, 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 epigraphic 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 rabbinsation, associated with the emergence of the influence of rabbinic Judaism from the East, primarily Palestine. Unfortunately, the article 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 communities of followers of the Mosaic religion in Italy.

Some critical observations. In the context of Andrea Simonassi Lyon's text on the writings 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 Fredriksen². 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 century³. 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. Becker⁴, which appeared nearly twenty years ago⁵. 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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² P. FREDRIKSEN, *Roman Christianity and the Post-Roman West: The Social Correlates of the Contra Iudaeos Tradition*, [in:] *Jews, Christians, and the Roman Empire. The Poetics of Power in Late Antiquity*, ed. N.B. DOHRMANN, A.Y. REED, Philadelphia 2013 [= JCC], p. 249–266.

³ A. DĘBIŃSKI, *Polityka ustawodawcza rzymskich cesarzy chrześcijańskich w sprawach religijnych*, Lublin 2020, p. 183–211; M. PIECHOCKA-KŁOS, *Późnorzymskie ustawodawstwo państwowe przeciw Żydom (IV–V wieku). Egzemplifikacja na podstawie ograniczeń praw obywatelskich*, SNT 11, 2016, p. 109–122. The calls for the protection of Jews and Jewish places of prayer appearing in imperial codifications were often linked to the persecution of Jews by Christian communities. It is therefore difficult to speak here of effective state protection of religion, although of course similar formulations can be found in official edicts. For a balanced treatment of this issue, cf. for example: J. IŁUK, *Chrześcijańska i żydowska politeja w późnorzymskim państwie (IV–V wiek)*, SSH 12, 2006, p. 9–31. Cf. also the traditional approach to Jews evident in the Roman state, for example in: A. KOWALCZYK, *Jak długo judaizm postrzegany był jako superstitio w pogańskim Imperium Romanum*, AUL.FH 92, 2014, p. 7–20.

⁴ *The Ways That Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. A.H. BECKER, A.Y. REED, Tübingen 2003 [= TSAJ, 95].

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.

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Błażej Cecota (Piotrków Trybunalski)*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4746-0325>

* Piotrków Academy in Piotrków Trybunalski

