

***Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism.* By Annette Yoshiko Reed.
Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2022. xxviii+505. \$49.00 (paper).**

In *Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism*, Annette Yoshiko Reed profitably reads those sources traditionally referred to as “Jewish-Christian” on their own terms, challenging prior understandings of the texts themselves and the historiographical practices that led to the creation of the category, Jewish-Christianity. Reed’s stated goals are: (1) to raise awareness of these texts, with particular focus on the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* and *Homilies*; (2) to articulate scholarly groundwork for integrating these texts more fully into the study of Late Antique Judaism and Christianity, contextualizing them within their fourth-century Syrian milieu and challenging the normative claim that they merely represent a moment in “Christianity’s diminishing Jewishness” (p. xvi); and (3) to use the lens of Jewish-Christianity to interrogate our reading practices in the study of religion, examining how and why the category of “Jewish-Christianity” came to be and of what use it might be now.

Reed divides her collection of twelve essays, of which nine were previously published, into two parts. The first part, “Jewish-Christians’ and the Historiography of Early Jewish/Christian Relations,” analyzes Jewish-Christian texts for what they can tell us about the communities which produced them. This is a notable departure from earlier generations of scholarship, which used source critical methods to discern the underlying Christian layers of the texts, more interested in using these works to write a history of Patristic Christianity than in understanding the communities they represented. By critically re-reading these Christian scholarly frameworks, Reed undermines that presentist strain of thought, which assumed that Orthodox Christianity was the inevitable winner of Late Antique religious competition and sought to pin individual Jewish-Christian works on a spectrum between Christianity and Judaism. Instead, each essay in this section offers a messier but more capacious vision of Late Antique religious difference. In the process, each asks us to reconsider the structures we use to understand Late Antique religion. In this, Reed continues expert work that she has been pioneering for the last twenty years, problematizing our understanding of the divisions between Christianity and Judaism in Late Antiquity, beginning with *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity*, a 2003 collection edited with Adam Becker.

Each essay in Part I presents a different case study for reading Jewish-Christian texts to uncover information about the beliefs and practices that underlie them, while questioning and building on the scholarship that produced previous understandings. In Chapter One, Reed compares and contrasts how Pseudo-Clementine texts construct identity using Jesus’ relationship with Moses, the ethnic boundaries of Jewish peoplehood, and the implication both of these factors had on an individual’s salvific path. In Chapter Two, Reed takes a similarly comparative view to practices surrounding menstrual blood and water, including the *Didascalia apostolorum* in her analysis, which may have been produced by a community with knowledge of Rabbinic Judaism. In Chapter Three, Reed expands her view of Jewish-Christian texts to see what they can tell us about Jewish/Christian relations in Late Antiquity, asking us to recognize what all of these texts have in common, as well as their tremendous diversity. In Chapters Four and Five, Reed returns to questions of identity, using Jewish-Christian texts to investigate the construction of Jewish identity in the early Rabbinic period. And in Chapter Six, Reed argues for a viewing

the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies* as a counter-history to the historical work of Eusebius and similar efforts by the Rabbinic Sages, reading *Homilies* as an affirmation of its own community in resistance to the “orthodox” efforts of others. In this, Reed speaks to studies in both Jewish and Christian history.

In the second part of the book, “‘Jewish-Christianity’ in Jewish History and Jewish Studies,” Reed traces the genealogy of Jewish-Christianity as a scholarly category from the seventeenth century through to the present day, when the category has fallen into some disrepute as merely a scholarly construct. In doing this intellectual history, Reed’s aim is to revise and partially rehabilitate the category of Jewish-Christianity by demonstrating its usefulness in Jewish Studies. Her claim is not that it reflects a historical reality, but rather that it has utility as a construct that helps us to understand Jewish history both in the time of the Pseudo-Clementines and during the *Wissenschaft* period, clarifying Jewish history and historiography.

Each essay in Part II uses Jewish-Christian sources to respond to earlier scholarship on a particular topic in Jewish Studies. In Chapter Seven, Reed uses Jewish-Christian sources to demonstrate the profound diversity of early Jewish Messianism and question the position that the primary divider between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity was the issue of Jesus’ Messianic role. Both Chapters Eight and Eleven address lost or neglected materials. In Chapter Eight, Reed shows how the “lost” status of the *Epistle of Peter* has impacted scholarship around it, while in Chapter Ten, she shows how revisiting the neglected impact of Augustus Neander’s scholarship can reshape our understanding of Jewish-Christianity as a scholarly construct. In Chapters Nine and Ten, Reed argues that Jewish-Christian sources provide an important check on orderly theories of the Jewish intellectual development, whether on the subject of Rabbinic continuity with the Pharisees (Chapter Nine) or the evolution of Jewish mysticism (Chapter Ten). On both topics, earlier Christian and Jewish scholarship converged on similar grand narratives of linear intellectual progression.

While most of Reed’s book makes careful textual arguments for re-readings of both classical sources and past scholarship, in her epilogue she reflects on what questions might be answered by future scholarship. As such, she clarifies the limits of identity and religion as a frameworks for thinking about Late Antique communities. This is most clear in her critique of the Jewish-Christian binary, which appears nowhere in classical Rabbinic texts and is built on a Christian way of thinking. Reed challenges us to incorporate the diverse “*perspectives and positionings in Late Antiquity*” (p. 412) that she has articulated throughout this book into future studies of the period. Similarly, she insists we must diligently historicize modern scholarship, understanding its specificities before building on its work.

Jewish-Christianity and the History of Judaism is both comprehensive and readable. Reed’s writing communicates complicated ideas with clarity and ease. The subject matter is scholarly, and so the primary readership of this book would be students and academics interested in either fourth-century religious difference or an intellectual history of the study of religion. However, anyone interested in better understanding Judaism or Christianity would benefit from reading this book and internalizing the correctives it offers. In addition, the book contains several useful appendices, including a timeline of the periods under discussion and an annotated bibliography

of “Jewish-Christianity.” And, in a show of prescience, Reed’s thoughts in the epilogue on identity construction and identity politics in both Late Antiquity and the present have proved even more relevant in 2022 than when the book was initially published in 2018.

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