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## THE ANCIENT WORLD

Anti-Semitism is not, as is often held, as old as <sup>the Jews</sup> Judaism ~~itself~~. As long as <sup>they</sup> Jews (1) occupied a homeland of their own, they encountered the normal hostility of rival powers, but nothing that could rigorously be called anti-Semitism. This development was reserved for the Dispersion - the Diaspora - and it is not until the third century B.C. that its presence [there] can be clearly discerned.

Israel's Exodus from Egypt in the thirteenth pre-Christian century has been called the "first pogrom", and some serious historians concede it an anti-Semitic character. And anti-Semitic it was if, and only if, in this instance one adheres to the etymology of the word. Egypt at that period had already developed a strong xenophobia, particularly with respect to the numerous Semitic tribes to the East that continued to covet her luxuriant Nile valley. The hated Hyksos had departed, leaving in their wake memories that any Semite on Egyptian soil would not fail to revive. "Behold the people of the children of Israel are numerous and stronger than us. Come, let us wisely oppress them, lest they multiply...and join with our enemies" (Ex. I, 9-10): The words of the oppressing Pharaoh betray the nervous national leader rather than the anti-Jewish oppressor.

The near-millennium extending from the Exodus to the age of Esdras and Nehemiah (fifth century <sup>BC</sup>) were years of painful spiritual and cultural formation. The people Moses <sup>had</sup> led to Canaan were forged

<sup>was</sup>  
 at length into a religious and social solidarity that subsequent millenia would not succeed in destroying. It was the age of the Torah or the Law. From the heights of Sinai the voice of Yahweh had thundered forth the principle of unity: "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before me" (Ex. 20:3); and the principle of election was made no less plain: "I have separated you from other people so that you be mine." (Lev. XX, 26). From these transcending propositions flowed a plethora of rituals, precepts, and customs that hedged Israel about and set her off as God's anointed among the nations. Israel could have no doubt: her segregation was the Will of Yahweh.

X As she passed through the turbulent periods of Judges,  
 Kings, and Prophets, the wide world paid her little attention. <sup>Israel</sup> Jews,  
 were, Parkes has pointed out, of all Semitic peoples the last to  
 become known to the Mediterranean world. As late as the fifth century  
 Herodotus, that preambulating pioneer of historiography who visited  
 many lands, including "the Palestine of Syria", found no reason to  
 make mention of them in his comprehensive history of the time. (1)  
 Obviously their theological claims and their ethnic exclusivism neither  
 interested nor irked the syncretistic polytheists of Antiquity as long  
 X as <sup>it</sup> worked itself out on Palestinian soil. Nor did they attract  
 X much notice during the first years of <sup>the</sup> Diaspora. At most these intro-  
 verted communities scattered among the nation <sup>s</sup> were regarded as mere  
 curiosities. Herodotus also visited Elephantine, yet failed to note

FOOTNOTES PAGE 2

1. There is some disagreement among scholars whether Herodotus meant the Jews in his expression "the ~~Jew~~ Syria of Palestine"... See Isaacs, Reinach.



in his <sup>History</sup> that the garrison there was Jewish. <sup>Note 4/10</sup> This Diaspora, <sup>a</sup> [nevertheless,] quietly making its entry into the ancient world, was the stage in preparation for the inevitable clash between the foresworn of Yahweh and the worshipers <sup>P</sup> of "strange gods".

The Diaspora began as early as the ninth century, <sup>BC</sup> The first egress appears to have taken place in the time of Achab, when some of his subjects were sent to the "free ports" of Damascus to pursue commercial opportunities there. (1) In the same century the first dispersion of Judaeans occurred when on the death of Amaziah, Judea was defeated by the Idumaeans and many were sold as slaves to the Ionians, who transported them to distant lands. (2) These expatriations set a pattern. From then on many forced deportations and emigrations undertaken for economic reasons or at the behest of colonizing governments fed the outflow from Palestine, which swelled the [proportions of] the Diaspora until it outranked in number and rivaled in importance the <sup>nucleus</sup> Palestinian center. Outstanding in this exodus was the Assyrian deportation of the ten tribes of the Kingdom of Israel in 722, from which they never returned, merging into the native population to leave no trace; also, the Babylonian exile of 586, from which <sup>the</sup> a majority of the expatriates, <sup>though</sup> released by Cyrus, refused to return, yet continued to maintain their religious and ethnic identity in their new home. Before the Christian era arrived, Babylonia, Egypt, and finally Rome had become important Jewish <sup>↑</sup> centers outside the homeland. From these the Diaspora fanned out not only to encircle the

FOOTNOTES PAGE 3

1. Ricciotti, 169.

2. Graitz I, 227.



FOOTNOTES PAGE 3 ?

1. Flavius Josephus, Hellenized Jewish historian of the first Christian century, is at great pains to ~~not~~ explain Judaism's dearth of notice by the Greek world. He <sup>Harmid</sup> explained that Jews, not occupying a mountainous country, were less involved in ~~commerce~~ commerce than others, <sup>as they</sup> leading a sheltered agricultural existence. See Contra Apion I, 12.
2. Flavius Josephus and in our own day Jules Isaacs (Genes de la Antisemitisme) disputing this, hold that Herodotus' "Syrians of Palestine" were Jews. See Reinach, No. 1.



entire Mediterranean but to reach as far as Persia, Armenia, Arabia, and Abyssinia in the East and Spain and Great Britain in the West. (1) Though there is considerable disagreement about its size, serious estimates place four million <sup>Jews</sup> in the Roman Empire in the first Christian century and another million in Babylonia, in which case the Diaspora outnumbered Palestinian Jewry four to one. All Jewry numbered probably eight million to constitute one-tenth of the population of the then known world. Strabo, the Cappadocian historian writing at the beginning of the Christian era, adds plausibility to such estimates with his claim that the Jews had "already penetrated every country, and it is not easy to find a place on earth that has not received them and felt their power." (Josephus, Ant. XIV, 7.2.). Christian missionaries, too, were to discover their <sup>then</sup> truth. The Acts report that at [the] Pentecost Jews "from every nation under the earth" were in Jerusalem (2:5, 9:11); and St. Paul found Jewish communities wherever he went. The oracle of the Sybil had almost come true: "Every land shall be full of thee, and every sea" (Orac. sib. III, 271).

Jews of the Diaspora, contrary to a widespread opinion, did not occupy a special position in the economic structure of the ancient world. Their distribution among the various areas of the economy reflected fairly closely the <sup>prevailing</sup> general pattern [of the economy]. <sup>Having</sup> Come from an agricultural nation, <sup>either</sup> often as slaves <sup>or as</sup> and colonizers; a very large number, probably a majority, were farmers. Some, especially those who emigrated voluntarily [<sup>41</sup> or came] to the Mediterranean cities, were engaged in commerce, but not in undue numbers. They peopled all

FOOTNOTES PAGE 4

1. Juster lists nearly 500 cities and towns in 33 countries of which evidence of a Jewish population has been found.

Les Juifs dans L'Empire Romain, I, p. 179-209.



the crafts and industries of ancient times and in early Christian times excelled and gained a monopoly in a few, for example, glasswork, weaving, and dyeing. As their separatism abated in Hellenic-Roman times, they entered the sciences and various professions and played a part in public functions, particularly tax-farming, and soldiery.

As it grew, the Diaspora assumed a religious and mystical significance. Although the condition of the "sons of Israel" outside Palestine, their "heritage of Yahweh," was regretted as abnormal, it was looked upon as a provisional but necessary condition attending the ingathering of Messianic times. [The] Deutero-Isaias had spoken clearly of a future era: "I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north: 'give up' and to the south 'keep not back, bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth'." (Isa. 43:6) And as Jewish proselytism met success in the Hellenic-Roman world, it identified itself with the "light to the nations", the [very] "servant of Yahweh" of the Scriptures (Isa. 49:6).

[Judaism's] <sup>of the Jews</sup> early contacts with Antiquity were generally harmonious. The reluctance of many of the exiled to return to Palestine after emancipation and the ever growing attraction Egypt and other Hellenized centers held for Palestinian Jews give adequate testimony of this. Moreover, the earliest literary references to Jews (fourth and third centuries, if totally ignorant of Judaism, were ~~not~~ not unfavorable. Theophrastus entertained strange notions of Jewish rites and called Jews a "race of philosopher." Clearchus of Clearcus of

Soli, a disciple of Aristotle, considered them "descendents of the philosophers of India," an opinion he also attributed to Aristotle himself. Megasthenus and Hermapus likewise considered them a species of foreign philosopher, the latter giving certain of Pythagoras' tenets a Jewish origin. (1)

The razing of the Temple in the Elephantine colony (Ca. 410) can hardly be seen as a truly anti-Semitic occurrence. Rather was it an act inspired of political motives and religious fanaticism. The Jewish garrison stationed there had been sent by Persian authorities somewhat prior to the fifth century to guard Persian interests. Naturally, the Egyptian inhabitants, resentful of Persian domination, harbored ill will against the representatives of their enemies. To make matters worse, the Jewish practice of sacrificing animals on the altars of Yahweh infuriated Egyptian priests who, worshipers' of the sacred ram, considered the Jewish rites sacrilegious.

Traditionally, the history of anti-Semitism has begun with the story of Aman, as told in the Book of Esther. The pertinent text doubtless describes an anti-Semitic episode. Aman, grand vizier of King Assuerus (Xerxes I, 485-465) of Persia, angered by the Jew Mordochai's refusal to "bend his knee to him," warns the king in these words: "There is a people scattered through all the provinces of thy Kingdom, and separated from one another, that use new laws and ceremonies, and moreover despise the King's ordinances." (III, 8). Serious question has been put on the historicity of this passage however. Most exegetes find Aman's complaint reflective of the

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Maccabean era of the second century but not of the Persian. For all that, the text is important for, even if postdated three centuries, it formulates succinctly the classical anti-Semitic reaction to Jewish refusal to co-mingle and worship national gods that was to reverberate throughout subsequent centuries.

With the rise of Hellenism following the conquests of Alexander the Great, Jews ceased to remain unnoticed. The Macedonian conqueror, pupil of Aristotle and diligent propagator of the Grecian mode of life, left behind him a world in rapid process of Hellenization. Against the background of this first universalization of culture, Jewish communities, now grown in size and influence, emerged in all their singularity. Unlike the rest of their Greco-Oriental and later Roman neighbors, Jews did not take their place in the cities and towns as average citizens. They still acknowledged Jerusalem as their holy city, where Yahweh's Temple stood, to which they sent a didrachma each year as a personal tax. Their God, the One True God, Invisible and Transcendent, refused to assume His place in the Pantheons of the Empire; and regarding their host countries as profane soil and their fellow citizens as children of error and superstition, they grouped themselves in a quarter of the city all their own. Hundreds of years before the term or legislation the reality was there - the "ghetto". To the proud heirs of Pericles, Aristotle, and Homer, these pretensions this self-sufficiency was an insufferable arrogance. Convinced, for their own part, that all that was not Greek was barbarian, they took

badly to such rival claims to superiority and privilege on the part of a people so politically and culturally undistinguished. The abyss separating the two mentalities, Yahwist, monotheism, and Hellenic polytheistic skepticism, would soon be apparent; the collision was a matter of time.

The first clear traces of specifically anti-Jewish sentiment appeared in the third century in Egypt. The place is not accidental. Egypt was not only the heart of the Diaspora but likewise the most advanced point of Hellenization outside Greece itself, a second Athens. Unsettled conditions in Palestine following Alexander's death increased Jewish deportations to Egypt and encouraged emigrations to that cradle of the Jewish nation, which had never ceased to sing its siren song to Israel. The chief recipient of the outflow was Alexandria, the new "emporium of the western world" (Strabo), founded by Alexander, fast becoming the commercial and intellectual capital of the world. Jews had been invited to populate the city by Alexander, and given a section for themselves in order to be able to live according to their Law. By the beginning of the Christian era, Jews occupied two-fifths of the city and reached 100,000 in number. They were permitted a senate of their own and an ethnarch, were active in commerce, possibly had a monopoly in grain and the navigation of the Nile, were prominent in tax-farming, and some had grown very wealthy - all in all, a status that did not endear them to the envious Greeks, Syrians, and Egyptians who sought after the same success and favors. Many of them were

doubtless unenviable characters, but on the whole they were only good Alexandrians, who, if we can believe the Emperor Hadrian's estimate of them, were not of the best sort: "Their one God is money; Christians adore it, Jews adore it, so does everybody else." (1) Some of the old Egyptian xenophobia, moreover, was still alive and Egyptians, discontent under Greek and Roman rules, took badly to the tolerance afforded Jews. But most of all Jewish refusal to accept common religious and social standards was resented by the deeply Hellenized population. These tensions existed from the founding of the city and continued to grow until Alexandria became the chief center of anti-Semitism in the ancient period.

The first reaction came from the pens of Alexandrian writers. It is, of course, difficult to determine to what extent their views were causative or merely reflective of the growing popular hostility, whether they made or were made by history. It seems probably that their opinions were both cause and result, one of the terms of a vicious circle, giving voice to general feelings while assisting in their creation.

Hecateus of Abdera, a Greek author of the early third century who wrote a history of Egypt, in an otherwise friendly but legendary account of Jewish origins and beliefs asserted that Moses "in remembrance of the exile of his people, instituted for them a misanthropic and inhospitable way of life." This theme of humiliating origins and misanthropy was picked up in the same century by Manetho, an Egyptian

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1. Quoted in Reinach, page 326, and questioned as to authenticity by Juster, Vol. II, (a footnote).



priest and historian, who embroidered it. Jews, Manetho wrote, were once Egyptian lepers and diseased, expelled by King Amenophis, and led by Moses, who taught them "not to adore the gods," nor "abstain from sacred animals," and to "have nothing to do with those not of their faith." It is likely that this account is not Manetho's invention but rather views current among historians of the time. Some of them must have been familiar with the biblical account of the Exodus, which their patriotism found too unflattering to its taste and turned to its own account. Manetho's contribution was merely the weight he added to these tales in his capacity as official historian. From this point on, the themes of leprous origins and misanthropy would rarely be absent from the litanies of pre-Christian anti-Semitism. They will show up in Chaeremon, Lysamachus, Posidonius, Appolonius Molon, and to be sure in the two catch-alls of Greek and Roman anti-Semitism respectively, Apion and Tacitus. The accusation of misanthropy will also be used against the early Christians.

In the second century literary anti-Semitism was sparse. Mnaseas of Patros holds the distinction of originating the fable that Jews adored a golden head of an ass. This charge, too, was destined to a long future and use against the Christians. Agatharchidus of Cnidus in his History of Asia marked the "ridiculous practices" of the Jews and the "absurdity of their Law," in particular, the observance of the Sabbath. He related mockingly how Ptolemy Lagus took Jerusalem in 320 without resistance on a Sabbath.

In the same century, history pushed ahead of the writers in the growing conflict between Hellas and Judea, as Jerusalem itself became the battleground. After Alexander, the change from Persian to Greek and finally Ptolemaic to Seleucid domination in Palestine exerted a corrosive influence on strict ethnico-religious separatism which Esdras and Nehemiah had succeeded in inculcating. Jewish merchants and tax collectors, in continuous contact with the Hellenized world about, brought home cosmopolitan notions anything but favorable to the prevalent <sup>Hasidean</sup> Hassidic doctrines of national election and holiness. These notions found numerous disciples in the homeland and also expression in the sacred writings: "Let us go and make a covenant with the heathens that are around us, for since we have departed from them many evils have befallen us." (I Macc. 1:12). The cause of the cosmopolitans was greatly aided by the final victory in 198 of the Seleucids, enthusiastic propagators of the Greek way of life. Encouraged, the Hellenists in Jerusalem lost no time introducing Greek customs into the body of Judaism. An extreme point was reached when the High Priest Jeshua assumed the Greek name Jason, placed Greek symbols in Jerusalem, and went out to offer Temple gifts at the Greek games near the city, where naked Jewish youths disported themselves in the Grecian manner. Onto such a scene strode the Seleucid Antiochus IV Epiphane, extravagant Hellenizer, to force a climax. Impatient with the progress of the Hellenists in Jerusalem he took the city, pillaging and slaughtering, entered the Holy of Holies, and dedicated the Temple to Jupiter Olympus. The

practice of Judaism was outlawed under the pain of death. The reaction of almost all Jews was violent. United behind the Maccabees the nation rose and broke the Seleucid yoke. For the first time since 586 Judaea enjoyed almost complete independence, which lasted almost 75 years.

The astounding Maccabean victory fired Jewish hearts everywhere with a new sense of independence and national pride, and helped to right the balance in the unequal struggle against Hellenism. In Palestine, the Hasmoneans launched an expansionist war, which set boundaries for the Jewish state not reached since the time of Solomon. One of them, John Hyrcanus, exported Judaism in his advances forcing neighboring countries to accept Judaism. In the Diaspora, the effects of the victory were hardly less palpable. Jews there had become thoroughly Hellenized in all but cult from the third century, and had replaced Hebrew and Aramaic with Greek as their tongue. Though they clung doggedly to their Law and customs, they were greatly impressed by the magnificence of the Hellenic world about them. Their cultural contribution--religion and morality, their Mosaism--was little known or appreciated, so they felt inferior and unaccomplished before the glories of Hellas. The Seleucid defeat at Jewish hands now lifted their spirits and instilled in them a new consciousness of their mission and importance, but also led to certain excesses that augmented pagan resentment.

In the Diaspora, Jews embarked, so to say, on an expansionist policy of their own along spiritual and cultural lines.

Setting their face against the Hellenizing process that threatened to engulf them, they launched a counter-attack. A first wave took the form of Messianic aspirations. It was the period of the Book of Daniel, the apocryphal Book of Enoch, and the Sibylline Oracles, which in differing ways sang the glories of Israel and envisioned her ultimate triumph over all nations under the septre of her Messiah. The new spirit also caught up Jewish historians, who, anxious to find a place for Judaism in the Olympian sun, elaborated Jewish accomplishments with considerable bias, depicting the Hebrews as the progenitors of all civilization and culture. To a degree Philo and Flavius Josephus in the first Christian century followed in this tradition. And among the philosophers, Aristobolus, a Judaeo-Alexandrian, did not hesitate to declare that Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Homer derived their ideas from an early Greek translation of the Bible. None of these, however, went as far as the falsifiers who by interpolating renowned pagan authors into their own texts, composing fictitious quotations from them, and attributing false authorship to entire works sought to enhance the stature of Judaism. The pseudo-Hecateus and pseudo-Aristeas are prominent examples of this kind of propaganda.

What were the effects of these efforts? They were resented, of course, but also appear to have succeeded to some degree. Conversions to Judaism began to soar in this period, and not all of them, especially among the cultured, can be accredited to daily

contacts with the Jewish populace. The maneuvers of these propagandists had the merit of drawing attention, if not to the exact nature and works of Mosaism, at least to its strength and singularity. The Synagogue and the Septuagint Bible (completed by this time), were there for further investigations. Moreover, many pagans of good heart, disillusioned by the spiritual poverty and moral mediocrity of Hellenism, were already prepared for the appeal of the pure monotheism and moralism toward which these writers pointed.

Great changes had taken place in Jewish thinking concerning proselytes since the days of Esdras and Nehemiah. Envy of Hellenism's triumph aroused in Jews, in and out of Palestine, the desire to claim spiritual and religious leadership in a world which clearly needed redemption and in which they felt dwarfed politically and culturally. Regarding herself now as the light and teacher of nations, Judaism took on a missionary and universalist outlook. Her doors were swung wide to all who knocked. Some entered as "true proselytes" to adopt the whole Law and circumcision while other demi-proselytes, called "Godfearers", or "devout", remained at the threshold, adopting only the Sabbath rest and a few other Jewish customs. The total influx must have been large, because by the Roman period the proselytes attracted considerable notice. Christ noticed the proselytizing zeal of the Scribes and Pharisees, who "compass land and sea to make one convert"

Josephus, prone to exaggeration, declared that, "the masses have

1. Antiquities, XIII, 21; III Mach. III 8;  
Contra Apion II, 47.



long since shown a keen desire to adopt our religious observances; and there is not one city, Greek or barbarian, nor a single nation, to which our custom of abstaining from work on the 7th day has not spread, and where the fasts and lighting of lamps and many of our prohibitions in the matter of food are not observed" (C. Apion II, 39). And in the first Christian century Seneca complained bitterly that the Jews "have so prevailed that they are accepted everywhere in the world: the conquered have given their laws to the conquerors." (quoted in St. Augustine, De civitate Dei, VI, 10).

As the last pre-Christian century approached, the situation of the Jews was nothing like what it had been a century or more before. Then a small, clannish people, they were now representatives of a conquering nation, numerous and pretentious, who threatened to rival the best efforts of Hellenic civilization both in spiritual influence and commerce. Hellas accepted the challenge in bad grace. In the cities where Jews were numerous, hostilities heightened. A suppression of Jews under Ptolemy Physcon in 146 is reported by Josephus but the account displays chauvinistic and arbitrary characteristics, and is questionable. Of greater certitude is the persecution in 88, reported by Jordanes (sixth century), but which Josephus places 40 years earlier. Regardless of the historicity or dates of these reports, Jewish-Gentile tensions were now at a breaking point.. Anti-Semitism was certainly involved, but on the other hand much of the disturbances may be attributed to reciprocal

political and commercial rivalries and to the behavior of Jews, who, Juster states, were "continuously in sedition" from the founding of the city. (1)

The chief pagan reaction again came from men of letters. This was understandable. Judaism's challenge was essentially ideological. The contest was less between flesh and blood than between Yahweh and Zeus, between the Greek masters of the Golden Age and Moses. Judaism's stubborn separatism, the pseudo-epigraphy of Jewish writers and the rise of the Jewish proselytism profoundly irked Greco-Oriental historians, philosophers, and clerics, who regarded themselves as guardians of Hellenic culture. Prominent among them were the Stoics and Sophists, mostly Alexandrian in residence or influence. The former, fervent proselytizers themselves, were alarmed by Jewish proselytism and its success; the latter, skeptical philosophers, resented Jewish manhandling of Grecian sources. The historians, meanwhile, thorough patriots, extolled their nations' exploits at the expense of these upstarts from Palestine. Few writers who refer to the Jews are favorable. Only Strabo, the historian, stands out by his respect for Judaism.

Posidonius, Stoic philosopher and historian of the first half of the last pagan century, took up where Hecateus and Manetho left off. In a historical work, he gave circulation through the mouths of Seleucid courtiers to the tales of Israel's expulsion from Egypt as lepers and described Jews as an "impious people, hated by the gods." He recalled Epiphane's alleged discovery of a statue of

1. Juster, II, 143.



a long-bearded man on an ass in the Temple of Jerusalem, blamed Moses for leading Jews into "misanthropy and perversity" and teaching them "laws contrary to humanity and justice." He related that when Epiphane violated the Holy of Holies he sacrificed an enormous pig on the altar and forced Jews to eat it. This reference to Jewish abhorrence of pork is Posidonius' sole original contribution to the anti-Semitic inventory, but it is one that will prove very durable.

Appolonios Molo, a famous rhetorician of this time who resided at Rhodes--where he taught both Cicero and Caesar--was the first to compose an entire work against the Jews, thus launching an endless chain of literature adversus Judaeos that has reached down to the present. All we possess of his work is found in a fragment of Polyhistor and a few summary references in Josephus' Contra Apion. As do most anti-Semitic writers, Molo repeats almost all charges of his predecessors: Jews are atheists, hate strangers, and practice absurd superstitions. His own contribution comprizes an attack on Jewish law, which he finds "lacking in truth and justice." For the rest, there are merely insults: Moses was a charlatan and impostor; Jews are cowardly, but also daring (Molo appears not to notice his contradiction), useless, demented, and "the most inept of all barbarians."

From Molo to Apion, the Mt. Everest of Greco-Oriental anti-Semitism, we enter the Christian era, passing but a few foothills. They are Lysimachus, Chaeremon, and Damocritus, all of the first part of the first Christian century. The first two merely added

details of their own making to Manetho's story of the Exodus.

Damocritus, in a book, On the Jews, after repeating Mnaseas' charge that Jews adore a golden head of an ass, goes on to state quite blandly that "every seven years they capture a stranger, lead him to their Temple, and immolate him by cutting his flesh into small pieces." The "ritual murder" accusation is born. It will be employed against early Christians and again against Jews into the very 20th century.

Apion, naturalized Alexandrian rhetorician, probably Stoic, takes his place in the history of anti-Semitism as the first of the titans. He acquired a fierce hatred of Jews of Alexandria, whose influence he resented. A vain and unreliable man, he also acquired the reputation of charlatan and braggart. Pliny reports Emperor Tiberius' opinion of him: Cymbalum mundi, the tom-tom of the universe. His attack on the Jews, found in his History of Egypt and a possible pamphlet on Alexandrian Jews, contained nothing that had not been said in substance before, but the wanton use he made of his material and the note of bitterness he added assures him his distinction. The Exodus story is retold, but to the lepers are added "blind and lame," and their number placed at 110,000. The Sabbath is explained as originating from a pelvic ailment suffered by the Jews fleeing Egypt, which forced them to rest on the seventh day. To the usual accusation of misanthropy is added the charge the Jews are held to take an oath "Not to assist strangers, especially Greeks". Jews are chided for not adoring the gods of the city, of

being seditionists, and ridiculed for sacrificing animals, abstaining from pork, and practicing circumcision. Jews, Apion tells, adore a golden head of an ass, as Antiochus Epiphane discovered in the Temple.

But Epiphane discovered more. Here in full is Josephus' account of Apion's version of the terrifying tale that Damocritus began.

. . .He (Apion) pretends that Antiochus found in the temple a man stretched upon a bed. Before him was a table laden with animal flesh, fish, and fowl. The man seemed in a stupor. When the king entered, he made a gesture of adoration, as if his salvation was at hand. Casting himself at his feet and lifting his right hand, he pleaded for his liberty. The king reassured him and asked why he was in this place and what the food signified. Then the man with tears and sighs pitifully narrated his adventure. He told, continues Apion, that he was Greek and that one day traveling in the countryside to earn his living he was suddenly stopped by strangers and taken to the temple. There he was enclosed in this place where no one could see him, and where he was given much to eat. At first this unexpected treatment caused him pleasure, but soon pleasure gave way to suspicion, and finally terror. In due course, by asking the servants who attended him, he learned that an ineffable law of the Jews commands that he be thus nourished, and that this was a custom which they practiced every year at a certain time. The Jews, he said, seize a Greek traveler, fatten him for a year, then at the end of this time lead him into the forest where they immolate him. His body is sacrificed according to prescribed rites and the Jews, tasting his entrails, swear everlasting enmity to Greeks. Then they cast the remains of their victim into a ditch. (C. Apion II, 8).

The piece is typically Apion. Damocritus' septennial ritual murder is now annual; it involves Greeks alone; and its horror is fully titillated. The perennial tale already enjoys its classical expression.

Josephus closes Apion's diatribe with his taunt that Jews fail to produce "men worthy of admiration, like Plato, Zeno, Cleantes,"

1. Contra Apion



a listing to which "he adds himself and congratulates Alexandria for possessing such a citizen." (Contra Apion II, 12).

Two Jewish champions entered the lists against Apion. Flavius Josephus wrote an entire work to answer calumnies against Jews, and devoted the second half to Apion. (1) He made no attempt therein to conceal his contempt for Apion: "a man without character who led the life of a huckster." (2) Philo, the great Jewish Platonist philosopher, confronted Apion in Rome in 39 A.D. In the wake of anti-Jewish riots in Alexandria under Flaccus he headed a delegation to plead the Jewish cause before Caligula. Apion, representing the anti-Semitic faction, had little trouble convincing the half-mad Emperor that the Jews' refusal to erect his statue in their Temples was adequate provocation of the brutal riots that had descended upon them. But here we are foursquare in the Roman period--another stage in the history of anti-Semitism that requires full attention.

After Apion Greek anti-Semitism was moribund. Political and cultural hegemony had passed to Rome, and the Hellenism lost much of its proud vigor. Henceforward, most Greek writers showed a new tolerance of Judaism, and even the anti-Semites among them adopted a temperate tone. Greek anti-Semitism has rejoined its beginnings when it saw Israel as a neutral oddity. Plutarch is characteristic. Full of misinformation about the Jews, he speculated concerning them with complete detachment. Celsus, in the second century, includes Christian and Jew alike in his disdain.

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1. Contra Apion
2. Contra Apion II, 1.



Even at this late date, he could not abide that the Jews "take pride in possessing a superior wisdom and are contemptuous of the society of other men." (Contra Celsum, V, 43). Greek anti-Semitism's last breath--a violent one--came in the third century from the Sophist, Philostratus takes us back for a moment to Molo and Apion: "That people have long since risen against humanity itself. They are men who have devised a misanthropic life, who share neither food nor drink with others...who are farther from us than Susa or Bactres or India...."

Greek anti-Semitism died as it lived, in reaction against Jewish separatism.

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Roman anti-Semitism, direct heir to the Greek, bore the stamp of its benefactor. The Roman conquest failed to change radically the cultural climate or social conditions of the Greco-Oriental world. Rome's political policies permitted its provinces to live according to their laws and customs, provided here hegemony was respected, and she herself, moreover, did not escape the toils of Hellenism. Greek opinion of Jews thus passed on to the Romans, and the socio-economic conditions that had favored anti-Semitism remained. Roman anti-Semitism, hence, was like its parent, more cultural than popular, and rarely political. It was also more complex.<sup>x</sup> Torrents of blood flowed in Judaeo-Roman conflicts, but these clashes were wars mutually provoked rather than anti-Semitic occurrences. The Maccabean spirit did not abate in Roman times, and Rome knew

how to discourage rebellions. On the other hand, Roman policy displayed a philo-Semitic tendency which further complicates the picture. Official favor toward Judaism and success of Jewish proselytism among Romans impress the historian of this era as much as the Judaeo-Roman wars and anti-Semitic reactions. Only the intellectuals remained wholly impervious to the appeal of Yahwism.

The most important new element in the Roman period of anti-Semitism was the Jewish community in Rome. A late comer in the Diaspora, it served as a small-scale model of all Jewry within the very shadow of the imperial palace, and thus assumed great importance in determining imperial policy and popular attitudes toward Jews. Though its beginnings are uncertain, it is likely that it was fed by legations sent by the Maccabees in the second century and by influxes of merchants from the Diaspora. On the occasion of Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C., many Jews were exported to Rome as slaves, later to be liberated. Before the opening of the Christian era, the community was very numerous--second only to Alexandria--and influential. Already in 59 B.C., Cicero in his plea Pro Flacco assumed that everybody knew "how numerous they are, their clanishness, their influence in the assemblies." Roman Jews enjoyed a vote in the assemblies and thanks to their cohesiveness became something of a political power. They entered into the business life of the city and some grew prosperous. They won many converts to their faith, and were endowed by the Emperors with many privileges. For these privileges they earned the hatred of

the envious populace, and for their proselytic gains, the enmity of the intellectuals and at times of the government.

The principal source of tension, however, was at bottom religious. Roman religion was ritualistic and intimately woven into the daily lives of the people. Images of the gods were in evidence in the home, the assemblies, the camps, and the streets; few acts, public or private, were without their supernatural counterpart. Romans were proud of their deities and rites, which they closely associated with the glory of Rome. They were tolerant of other religions to which they were hosts, but merciless to whatever threatened to undermine their cult. Under the praetor Pompilius (161) even the Greek philosophers were denied access to Rome. Moreover, they were unaccustomed to religious competition. The many foreign religionists within the boundaries of the Empire, content with their freedom of worship, found little difficulty accommodating themselves to the simple requirements: an inclination to Jupiter, abstention from activities correlative of the imperial cult.

But not so the Jews. Accommodate they would in all but cult. They, too, had a religion indeed more rigid and demanding than any other and equally entwined in their daily lives. Their Yahweh was a jealous God who struck no bargains. This intransigence placed the Roman authorities in a serious dilemma: either renounce their prized principle of toleration or grant special exemptions to the stubborn minority; in Juster's phrase: "persecution

or privilege." (1)

Roman realism held up. Jews were granted all privileges necessary for complete practice of their Yahwism not only in occupied Palestine but also in Rome and throughout the Diaspora. Indeed the entire history of Jewish-Roman relations comprizes little more than the story of these privileges, their origin and administration together with the conflicts or alliances that resulted.

Privileges were granted from Judea's first contacts with Rome in the Maccabean era. In 161 B.C. Jews were accorded the right to be judged according to their own laws and, soon after, this privilege was extended to all dominions allied with Rome under the sanction of imperial displeasure. Oddly, too, they were extended to all Jews, even those who were Roman citizens--but not to converts to Judaism. Besides this privilege, shared in common with other religions in the Empire, Jews were conceded unique favors of a kind to make the practice of their Yahwism possible, chiefly, exemption from certain external acts of the Roman cult and release from all secular activities on the Sabbath. Before the Christian era arrived, Judaism was recognized as the only religio licita in the Empire save the imperial cult itself.

Reasons have been sought by historians for this exceptional status, and many factors found to contribute; but the fundamental explanation seems to be psychological. Rome and Jerusalem both admired and feared one another. Jews appear to have preferred Roman domination to that of others, and more than once did they side

~~John of Sanjuster~~

1. *John* Juster I, 213 239



with Rome against her enemies; certainly they preferred Roman rule to that of Herod the Great, their Jewish-Idumean king. But they had learned to fear Roman brutality; and the specter of 2,000 Jews crucified by Varus within the view of Jerusalem was enough to keep the fear alive. Rome, for her part, seemed fascinated by the Jews' heroic adherence to their Yahwism. But the conqueror had learned to fear their rebellions. The Jewish War fought under Titus taxed her military might for four years. But beyond the mutual admiration and fear there existed little true understanding between these two radically different mentalities. Their relations were destined to be stormy.

The policies of the Empire reflect the ambivalence of its feelings. Though most Emperors were favorable to Jews, some were hostile. Julius Caesar, grateful for help received during the civil war, showered them with privileges. His concessions are considered by historians to be the Jews' Magna Charta in Antiquity, which subsequent Emperors had but more or less to renew. Roman Jews mourned Caesar bitterly at his death. Augustus, continued Caesar's policies and postponed distribution of grain to Jews whenever it fell upon the Sabbath. Tiberius, under the influence of Sejanus, his anti-Semitic minister of state, deported 4,000 Jews to Sardinia because of the malfeasance of a few, but renewed their privileges after Sejanus' death. Caligula attempted to impose Emperor worship in the Syn<sup>a</sup>gogues, but died before his mad venture could be enforced. Claudius treated Jews well, though may have

expelled some because of Jewish-Christian conflicts. (1)

The savage war which terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. would be expected to have destroyed Judaism's official status, but it did not. The only change in this respect was the conversion of the traditional Temple tax which Jews were permitted to send to Jerusalem into a fiscus iudaicus, a tax sent to the temple of Jupiter Capitoline in Rome. After the war the course of Judaeo-Roman relations were generally dependent upon the movements of Jewish messianism and proselytism. Still fired by apocalyptic visions of independence, Jews often rebelled, but more seriously under Trajan in 115 and Hadrian in 131. The latter uprising brought an end to Israel as an effective political force in Antiquity, although thereafter the Empire conceded the Jewish Patriarch the deference given heads of state. The final revolt was provoked by Hadrian's interdiction of Jewish cult and circumcision and the construction of a pagan city, Aelia Capitolina, in Jerusalem. The zealous Hellenizer, alarmed by the success of Jewish proselytising, intended to have done with Judaism for good. Jewish proselytism, born in the Alexandrian era, flowered under the Roman Eagle. The Roman government was always worried about it and took steps against it as early as 139 B.C., when the Praetor Hispalus expelled Jews from Rome because he "tried to corrupt Roman mores with the cult of Jupiter Sabazios." (2) In 19 B.C., the expulsion of 4,000 Jews, under Tiberius, was decreed because of their religious propaganda. Domitian, similarly motivated, placed a tax on being a

FOOTNOTES PAGE 26

1. The text in Suctonius affirming this expulsion is doubted by many because it appears in no other historian. See Acts (Ricc.).
2. An obvious confusion of Yahweh with the Syrian god.



Jew. Antonius the Pious, though he abolished Hadrian's ban on circumcision for Jews, left it in force for all others. Julius Severus also forbade conversions to Judaism.

Subsequent Emperors were generally well-disposed; their anti-Christian policies turning their hostilities in another direction. With the rise of Christianity, moreover, Jewish and proselytism considerably abated. (1)

Popular anti-Semitism, though not the outstanding feature of the Roman period, was nevertheless widespread and often intense. Throughout the Empire, the Jew's 'alien' character, his special imperial status, and his commercial competition earned for him the envy and resentment of the populace. In Rome, his privileges and influence were strongly resented but held in check by imperial protection. In Alexandria, former tensions had grown, but under the early Empire could not risk open expression. Under the unstable Caligula, the risk lessened, and an outbreak--the first real pogrom of history (38 A.D.)--occurred in Alexandria. Unsure of the Emperor's disposition, Flaccus, the prefect of the city, abetted the mob in their riotous clamor for the erection of the imperial statue in the Synagogues. Jews were stripped of their citizenship, mocked, and finally forced into one quarter of the city, even into the cemeteries and the beaches. Some were tortured and murdered. It was in the wake of these troubles that the delegations of Philo and Apion pleaded before Caligula in Rome, to the further humiliation of the Jews. (2)

**FOOTNOTES PAGE 27**

1. See Marcel Simon.
2. See page 20.



Disorders marred Jewish-Gentile relations in other cities where Jews were numerous, particularly under the reigns of Vespasian and Titus. In Antioch Jewish political rights were challenged and requests made to Rome to suppress them, and massacres of Jews took place. In Ephesus, Cyrenica and cities in Ionia there were outbreaks, but these were inspired by the refusal of Jews to participate in the pagan cult. In Caesarea--founded by Herod--disputes about political priority were rife and Jews frequently attacked; on one occasion, 20,000 were killed. Cities bordering on Palestine, such as, Damascus, Tyre, Ascalon, Ptolemais, Gadara, Hippus, and Scythopolis, where Jewish religious propaganda was active, Jew hate was strong and massacres were common. That anti-Semitism was involved in all of these attacks is certain; yet it is important to recognize the considerable part played by Jewish provocations and common rivalries.

The true anti-Semites of the Roman Empire were neither the Emperors nor the people, but the intelligentsia. Many of them took no notice of Israel, but among those who did Jews had few friends and many bitter enemies. A Varro might show a certain respect; a Pliny the Elder or Titus-Livy, neutrality; from the rest there was nothing but insult and contempt.

This phase of the story begins with the great voice of Cicero in 59 B.C. The renowned orator, apt pupil of Molo, carried back to Rome his Rhodesian master's prejudices, thus assuring the thread of continuity that bound Roman anti-Semitism to its Greek

antecedents. Occasion to express his feelings was presented him in a trial for the defense of a certain Flaccus, a prefect who had despoiled the Jewish treasury in his province in Asia Minor--a defense immortalized in his Pro Flacco. Before the court, he whispered his fear of the number, clannishness, and influence of the Jews. (1) and lauded Flaccus for having stood up to their "barbarous superstition." For, he orated, "their kind of religion and rites has nothing in common with the splendor of the Empire, the gravity of our name, and the institutions of our ancestors; all the more now that this people has shown through arms how they feel about our rule; and, conquered and enslaved, how little the immortal gods care for them." The Jews, he had remarked earlier before the Senate, are "born to servitude." History does not tell of the outcome of Flaccus' trial, but merely that Cicero was banished from Rome the following year.

The closing years of the last pre-Christian century saw literary anti-Semitism languish amid Horace's few sneers about Jewish proselytism and credulity; Tibullus and Ovid's jibes about the Sabbath rest; and historian Trogus Pompey's distortions of Jewish history. It is not until we reach Seneca in the following century that some of Cicero's rancor is again encountered. Fervent Stoic and patriot, Seneca railed against the prevalence of customs of that "most wicked nation" in Roman society. The Sabbath especially drew his ire: "to spend every seventh day without doing anything and thus lose one seventh part of life is contrary to a useful life."

1. See page .



The satirists and poets made minor contributions. Petronius indulged in sarcasms concerning circumcision and the Jews "reverence" for pork. Quintilian and Marcial's allusions were brief but cutting: to the former Jews were a "pernicious nation" and their faith a "superstition"; to the latter the circumcised Jews and the Sabbath were comparable to everything degrading. In the second Christian century, Juvenal, as if preparing for Tacitus, raised the pitch. Ruining the influence of the Judaizing father upon his children, he depicted the unhappy situation: Jews adore nothing but the clouds and the divinity of the sky; they make no distinction between human and porcine flesh. So the Judaized child is brought up in contempt of Roman laws; he learns, observes, and reveres only the Judaic law; that which Moses taught in a mysterious book: not to show the way to a traveler who does not practice the same rites, nor point out a well to the uncircumcised. All stems, he concludes, from the practice of passivity on the seventh day, from taking no part in the duties of life.

Ancient anti-Semitism reached its apogee in Tacitus. Indeed some would concede the title of greatest among the anti-Semite of all time. (1) It is undeniable, at all events, that in bitterness and breadth of attack the celebrated historian surpassed all competitors in Greco-Roman era. No previous charge is missing from his arsenal, except that of "ritual murder", in his day in service against the Christians. And the use he made of his material is indiscriminate, and never without a decoration all his own.

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1. Jules Isaac writes: "Tacitus is incontestably the most beautiful jewel in the crown of anti-Semitism, the most beautiful of all time." (Janesce de L'Antisemeti'sme,, p. 116).

Gen 2



Jewish origins are doubtful, Tacitus concedes, but the most widely accepted opinion--indubitably his own--is that Jews descended from lepers expelled from Egypt. From a desert region Moses, following a band of wild asses, led them to a spring of abundant water. From these traumatic happenings Tacitus deduced the chief rites of Judaism, "rites contrary to those of all other men." Jews practice a cult of the ass, which is "consecrated in Jewish temples," because it was this beast that led them from the desert to water. They abstain from pork in remembrance of their leprosy, a disease to which the pig, Tacitus thought, is subject. Their use of unleavened bread in their cult symbolizes the bread they stole in Egypt, and their Sabbath commemorates the day on which they escaped from Egypt and to which in their indolence they became attached. Their other institutions are "sinister, shameful, and have survived only because of their perversity."

Their prosperity, the historian continues, "stems from their obstinate solidarity, which contrasts with the implacable hatred they harbor toward the rest of men." They never eat with strangers and, though prone to debauchery, they abstain from commerce with strange women." Among them "nothing is illicit." Yea, "the first instruction they are given is to disdain the gods, abjure the fatherland, forget their parents, brothers, and children."

Suddenly, the tone changes, and another Tacitus emerges. Describing certain Jewish beliefs, he comes close to eulogy: Jews

consider killing "a single child" a crime; they believe in immortal life for those who die in battle (whence their disdain for death); their God is a supreme and eternal being, whence their intolerance of "any statue in the cities and especially in their temples, their adulation for kings..." Tacitus apparently has forgotten their cult of the ass, which is "consecrated in Jewish temples."

The lapse was momentary. Without delay the old Tacitus returns. What are the Jews? "Of all enslaved peoples the most contemptible...a loathsome people...at once full of superstition and hostile to all religious practice," a people whose "customs are absurd and sordid...." And finally the capital and summary charge: "All that we hold sacred is profane to them; all that is licit to them is impure to us."

After Tacitus, Roman literary anti-Semitism, much like its Greek counterpart after Apion, declined. A passing hostile reference or two by minor writers, that is all, with one final exception. As a last fanatical gesture of defiance from a paganism already in its death throes, Rutilius Namatianus, a poet of the fifth century, struck out at Judaism and its Christian offspring. Angered by a "querelous Jew" he met on his way, Rutilius vented his feelings against him in an elegiac poem versifying these terms: This Jew is "an unsociable animal, to whom all human nourishment is repugnant... We answered him with injuries deserving his ignoble race, a shameless nation that practices circumcision and has become the root of every imbecility...." With this the poet proceeds to an attack on

the Sabbath and other Jewish rites, and finally on that scourge which Judaism gave the world--Christianity.

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Roman anti-Semitism resembles its Greek parent enough for both to be considered a historical unit. The Roman phase may largely be seen as merely Greek anti-Semitism in new political circumstances. In both phases the same basic situation obtained: a proud, contemptuous conqueror in the face of a non-conformist, ~~pretentious~~ minority. Perhaps in the Roman era the situation was more acute. Even more than the Greeks before them the Romans were endowed with that hubris which cuts all foreign nations and groups to the size of barbarians. And Rome's civil and military greatness could only magnify the self-esteem inherited from Hellas. Her attitude toward Jews was predictable. What could these mighty conquerors, who considered even the Greeks barbarians, think of this negligible nation which, bereft of culture and accomplishments, deemed their Torah superior to the laws and letters of Roman genius? "Logically, the Roman had to be an anti-Semite," Jules Isaac says rightly.

Judaeo-Roman relations, nonetheless, were in many ways unique. They were distinguished by a system of privileges accorded Jewish worship, unparalleled in Jewish history; by savage wars born mainly of a wave of Jewish messianism that pulsed through Judaism from the Maccabees to Bar Kochba; and by Jewish proselytic efforts, stepped up under the Eagle, which aroused the wrath of the intelligentsia and some of the Emperors. For the rest, Roman and Greek

anti-Semitism were fairly indistinguishable.

Greco-Roman anti-Semitism, as a whole, similarly resembles and contrasts with the types that flourished in later epochs. That it shares a certain continuity and solidarity with other forms cannot be denied. All themes of perennial anti-Semitism are already here. Salo Baron observes accurately: "Almost every note in the cacaphony of medieval and modern anti-Semitism was sounded by the chorus of ancient writers;" (1) and Theodore Reinach, when he writes that Greco-Roman opinion of the Jews "contributes toward clarifying an entire historical development that reaches down to our own times." Christian controversialists will echo Tacitus' scoldings; medieval demagogues will employ Mnaseas; 'ritual murder' charge; and modern racists will put Apion to full use.

And yet despite these common themes, ancient anti-Semitism was sui generis and differed radically from other forms. It was not, for example, theological in the same sense that it was in early Christian times; indeed the ancient world was tolerant of theologies in its midst, provided their adherents rendered external respect to the imperial cult. It was not political or official as in medieval or modern times, but, contrarily, uniquely enjoyed governmental favor. It was not racial, as in the modern era; Jews were hated for their attitudes or activities, but never for their Jewishness.

Nor was it primarily economic, as the anti-Semite would find it in this and every era. Economic factors were prominent in

1. A Social and Religious History of the Jews, Vol. 1, p. 194.

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the anti-Semitism of Alexandria, the seaports, and the Greek cities, but they cannot be considered paramount. J. Juster who made an exhaustive study of the Greco-Roman period found no disproportion of Jews in commerce and found it possible to conclude that "never did a pagan author characterize Jews as merchants; never in the pagan epoch were the notions of Jew and merchant associated as if they belonged together. In this same epoch nothing indicates that they had any predilection for commerce." (1) A single warning to "beware of the Jews" by an Alexandrian merchant at a moment of Jewish-Gentile conflicts (2) and an accusation of monopolistic tactics on the part of Jewish grain merchants by Apion are hardly enough to compose a characteristic. (3) The same may be said of Jewish wealth. Some Jews who left the Diaspora were enormously wealthy and drew resentments, but the masses were of moderate means or poor, some of them beggars, many having begun life in the Diaspora as slaves. Economic anti-Semitism entered history after the pagan era had come to an end.

Greco-Roman anti-Semitism was essentially cultural. Though fundamentally religious in its Judaic aspects, from the pagan perspective it was a retort of nativistic intellectuals to the ideological challenge Judaism posed for the established order. The fundamental complaint about Jews' "disdain of the gods," "atheism," "impiety," and practice of the Sabbath was not so much an attack on Jewish religious tenets as a defense of the socio-political structure of pagan society, so intermingled with religion and mythology. Further, Jewish intolerance of pagan polytheism wounded their

1. J. Juster, II, p. 313-14.

2. J. Juster, Vol. 2, p. 312.

3. Apion



imperial pride, so inured to compliance from captive nations. In essence, ancient anti-Semitism was a foreseeable reaction to Jewish religio-social separatism, but a reaction that turned to anger and contempt. As a conspicuous and refractory minority, Jews fell prey to a phantasmogoria of charges against their cult, history, character, intelligence, and even their physical traits. Once singled out, they became the projecting point of every frustration of the pagan soul.

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It is possible to maximize or minimize the extent and import of ancient anti-Semitism, and the tendency to do one or the other has been manifest among historians. Maximize it do those who, failing to discriminate among various actions against Jews, construct the archetype of "eternal anti-Semitism," a supposedly inevitable negative reaction to Jews wherever they are. (1) In this perspective, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, the prophets of Israel, and all of Israel's Palestinean neighbors were infected with the anti-Semitic virus. A close scrutiny of the evidence, however, fails to trace its origin beyond the third century B.C., and prevents us, moreover, from placing its ancient manifestations on a par with the anti-Jewish paroxysms and hecatombs of medieval and modern times. (2)

It is possible likewise, to minimize it. This do those commenters who would lay all but total responsibility for anti-Semitism at the door of the Church. Of them Marcel Simon has accurately observed: "They tend, perhaps unconsciously, to make this purely literary anti-Semitism (of pagan antiquity) something artificial and in this way

1. Theodore Reinach states, for example, "anti-Semitism is as old as Judaism." (Article Juif in La Grande Encyclopedie; quoted by Isaac p. 31) and Msgr. Charles Journet in his Destinees D'Israel, P. 199-200) states, "Yahweh Himself in choosing the Jews as a unique ~~and theophoric~~ messianic and theophoric people would design them for the hostility of the world and pagan peoples, long before the Incarnation, long before the deicide (Ex. 1, 9; Esther E, III, 8) in Egypt in the 13th century and in Persia in the fifth before Christ, the ~~px~~ pogrom is already there."

2. Simon imputes this tendency to Juster and Parks (p. 263), to whom we might also add Isaacs.

2. L. Poliakov that Jews have lived for centuries in China, India, and perhaps also in Japan without stirring up anti-Semitic reactions. These Jewish communities apparently persisted for centuries loyal to their faith and in harmony with their neighbors, finally to become assimilated into the general populations. Poliakov comments that "other conditions are apparently required to assure the persistence and multiplication of the Jewish people in the midst of other nations."

Du Christ aux Juifs de Cour, pp. 29-32

acquit pagan opinion in order to cast upon the Church the whole responsibility." (1) Ancient anti-Semitism, though tardy and somewhat milder than its successors, was substantial and real, already providing an original capital upon which anti-Semites of later ages could generously draw.



1. These descriptions of Christians are found variously in Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, Minicius Felix, Marcus Aurelius, and others.



But long before pagan anti-Semitism died, a new conflict was in the making. The nascent Church, born of the Synagogue, proclaimed itself the continuation and fulfillment of Israel. Its Founder, of the House of David, had proclaimed that He was come "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mat. 10:6), "not to destroy but fulfill" (Mat. 5:17); but also announcing Himself as the sole way to the Father, asserting His priority to Abraham ( ), enjoined His disciples to go and "teach all nations" (Mat. 28:19). The new faith clearly contained both Judaic and trans-Judaic elements. Only future developments would determine to what extent they would harmonize or conflict, whether the trans-Judaic would become anti-Judaic and ultimately anti-Semitic.

For a moment, as the Synagogue looked upon the new movement as another Jewish sect and Christians still hoped that all Israel would enter the Church, there was peace. The first Christian Church, full of zeal and fervor, was a Jewish church, in leadership, in membership, and in worship; and it remained within the precincts of the Synagogue. The implications of the Gospel message (not yet fully written) soon made it clear that this arrangement was to be temporary. Hellenist Christians were driven from Jerusalem, and Stephen in the thundering tones of a prophet charged the people and their leaders of infidelity to Moses as well as Jesus. (Acts ) By private revelation Peter was instructed to accept the semi-proselyte, Cornelius, into the Church outside the Law (Acts, Ch. 10). The Council of Jerusalem decreed that Gentile converts were not to be held to the legal observances. St. Paul preached the inefficacy of the Law for both Jew and Gentile and, in face of

Jewish opposition turned to the Gentiles. (Rom. 1:16; 2,10-11)

Finally, at Antioch, Paul confronted Peter, Insisting that while Jewish Christians might practice the Law, only faith in Jesus Christ was necessary and adequate for salvation (Gal. 2:11-21). This was the final disposition of the matter. Judaeo-Christianity, thus rejected, could no longer serve but as a snare to Christian and Jew, alike, and become a source of conflict to both Church and Synagogue.

In mid-first century, St. Paul laid down the complete ground-plan of the Church's theology of Israel: The Law, transitory and preparatory in character, terminated in Christ; now a dead letter, its spirit is realized in Christ. Universal salvation is in faith in Christ, which is the fruit of grace. The burden of the Law is replaced by the hope and liberty of the Gospel (Gal. and Rom. passim). In his Epistle to the Romans (Ch. 9-11) this doctrine is completed. In summary: greatly grieving for his kinsmen, to save whom he would himself be anathema, the Apostle taught that if the Jews have sinned by their unbelief, God has not cast off his people. If they have stumbled, they have not fallen; in the fullness of time, they will return, and their reconciliation will be a golden age of the Church. The task of Christians is to be not high-minded regarding them but to provoke them to jealousy by what they have. Indeed Jews "are most dear for the sake of their fathers. For the gifts of God are without repentance." (11:29).

This Pauline doctrine of separation and benevolence founded the primary and authentic attitude of the Church toward the Synagogue. In the early years, as the Church worked out her severance from the parent body the anti-legal aspects of the doctrine were greatly

accentuated, and in time another less benevolent tradition was destined to overshadow the doctrine as a whole.

The Synagogue took to the Christian defection badly and in the emerging conflict struck the first blow. Stephen was killed, as were the two Jameses, though James the Just was killed through the action of the High Priest not of the majority of Jews, as Josephus carefully points out. Peter was forced out of Palestine by Agrippa's persecution, and Paul endured flagellations, imprisonments, detentions to Roman authorities, and threats of death at Jewish hands. (1) St. Barnabas' death at the hands of Jews of Cyprus is unanimously reported by the early hagiographers. Eusebius records that women who showed signs of converting were flagellated or stoned.

Nero's persecution of Christians in mid-first century was without doubt instigated by Jewish detentions. At the time Christians had not yet been distinguished from Jews by the Empire and could not have been persecuted as a body without having been singled out. The likely informer was Poppea, Nero's wife, a Jewish semi-proselyte, and her entourage. The motive imputed by St. Clement of Rome was "jealousy." (2)

Jewish anti-Christian hostility in this era was not universal. Gamaliel's neutrality is reported in the Acts: "Keep away from these men and let them alone. For if this plan or work is of men it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow it, else perhaps you may find yourselves fighting even against God." (6:38-9).

1. Acts and Pauline Epistles, *passim*.
2. Epistle to the Corinthians, Nos. 4 & 5. Though St. Clement does not explicitly mention the Jews, it is clearly inferred that they were at the foot of the Neronian persecution.



His viewpoint epitomized the general sentiment of Phariseism toward dissident sects. Toward the end of the century, Rabbi Eliezer looked benignly on Christianity and voiced his conviction that there was a place for Jesus in the world to come. (1) A century later Tertullian would tell of Jews offering Christians asylum in their Synagogues during persecutions. And there were cases, confirmed by archaeology, of Christian martyrs buried in Jewish cemeteries.

In sum, the picture of Jewish hostility in the early years is mixed. Jewish hostility, in other words, was strong but sporadic throughout this period, not a generalized attitude. St. Justin's complaint to Rabbi Trypho some time later: "You cannot harm us now, but whenever you could you did." (Dial. See Vernet, col. 1657) must be heeded but interpreted restrictively; Christian historians are prone to exaggerate the scope of early Jewish hatred, especially of the popular kind.

The Great war and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 proved critical for Judaeo-Christian relations. Before the War began in 66, Christians left Jerusalem for Pella there to remain for its duration. To Jews this seeming disloyalty caused great irritation, leaving no doubt in their minds that the new movement had dissociated itself not only from the practice of the Law but also from the Jewish nationalism. Christians, contrariwise, saw in the event the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy and a confirmation of their belief that the scepter had passed from Israel to the Church. The new awareness on both sides only tended to increase tensions.

1. See Jesus et Nazareth, J. Klausar, p. 41.



The definitive separation, on the Jewish side, occurred in the year 80 when the Sanhedrin at Jabne introduced a malediction into the Shemon Esre, recited thrice daily by Jews: "May the minim perish in an instant; may they be effaced from the book of life and not be counted among the just." Much controversy has centered upon this malediction and in particular upon the term minim. All agree that the prayer was introduced in order to weed out Judaeo-Christians from Synagogue services, that minim meant 'heretics' including Jewish Christians, and that in later centuries the term came to include all Christians. But many have denied that the word included Gentile Christians of the early centuries. Marcel Simon's investigation of pertinent Talmudic texts appears decisive. With him we may conclude that "the term applied early not only to apostate Jews, but also to Christianity of every nuance, which was considered the greatest apostasy from Judaism." {1}

At this same time, letters were sent by the Sanhedrin at Jabne to the Diaspora concerning the addition to the Shemon Esre and the attitude to be adopted vis a vis Christianity. The letters - also visits by 'apostles' - were part of an annual exchange between the Diaspora and the Sanhedrin usually dealing with financial and disciplinary matters. Three of the Fathers - St. Justin, Eusebius, and Sr. Jerome - give a notion of the content of the letters in question, which may be largely reconstructed: Jesus, a charlatan, was killed by the Jews, but his disciples stole his body and preached his resurrection, calling him the Son of God; Jews should have no dealings with his followers. The decision at Jabne promulgated by these letters to the Diaspora constituted a formal and final excommunication of Christians from the Synagogue.

1. Marcel Simon, Versus Israel, p. 144.



On the Christian side, the final separation took place more slowly. St. Paul had decided the issue doctrinally, but had allowed Jewish converts to continue practicing prescriptions of the Law, and adhered to them himself for fear of scandalizing his brethren.

(I Cor. 9,19). It is probable that this tolerance survived in the Church for many years after the death of the Apostle. In the mid-second century St. Justin still exhibits leniency toward such Judaizers, though in this he is exceptional. Even after the excommunication of Jabne, apparently, many Christians of Jewish parentage clung to the hope that their nation would eventually accept Jesus as its Messiah. It was not until 130 when a majority of Jews, including the influential Rabbi Akiba, hailed Bar Koshba as the Messiah, that their hopes were finally dashed.

In the last quarter of the first century the Christian attitude toward Judaism, until then forbearing and hopeful, stiffened. The hostility of the Synagogue and the refusal of Jews to enter the Church despite the apostolic preaching and the fall of Jerusalem was regarded more and more as blindness and malice.

Historians have paid much attention to the progressive change in tone that marked the attitude toward the Jews in the New Testament as it was written over the second half of the century, and some have sought to trace the roots of anti-Semitism to the sacred pages themselves. (1) Anti-Jewish texts are singled out in many parts of the New Testament, but particularly in St. John's Gospel, composed toward the end of the century, in which anti-Jewish episodes are multiplied and the phrase "the Jews" is used pejoratively. St. John has, in consequence, been called 'the father of anti-Semitism.' St. John's "anti-Semitism" is

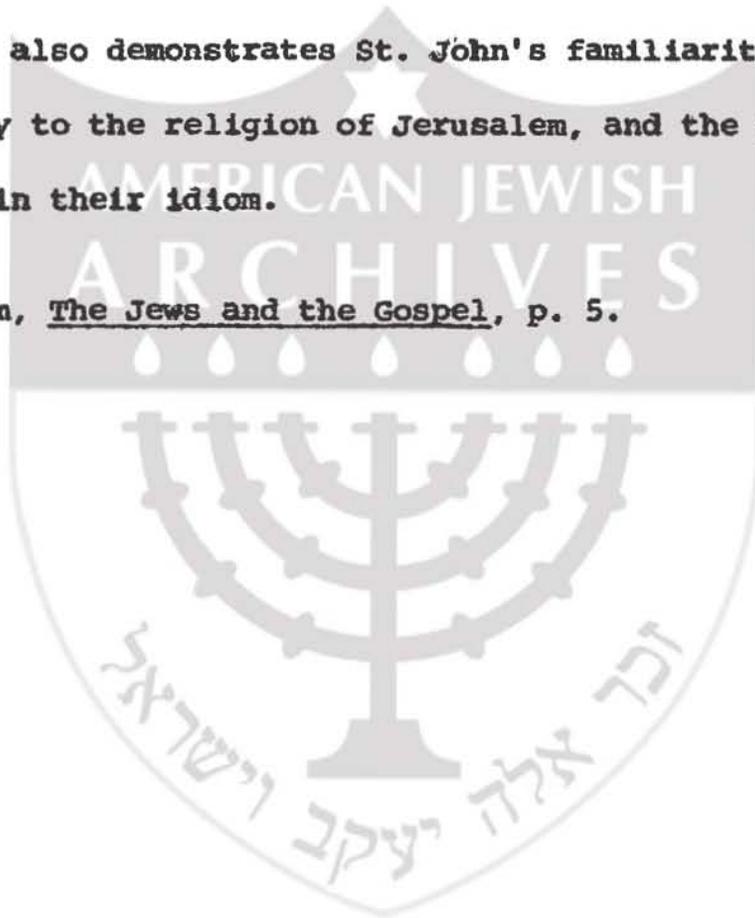
1. Prominent among these are: James Parkes, Jules Isaacs.

For a Catholic answer see The Jews and The Gospel, by Gregory Baum.



only apparent, however, as a strict analysis of his terminology will reveal. (1) His pejorative use of "the Jews" never involves the Jewish people as such. On some occasions we have a Jew addressing or fearing "the Jews" (13:33; 9:22), and there is, of course, the striking statement recorded only in John: "Salvation is of the Jews" (4:22). Whenever the phrase is employed in an injurious sense, the target is the enemies of Jesus, the Jewish leaders or clergy. On the other hand, there can be no question that St. John multiplies instances in which Jesus dealt harshly with his Jewish opponents. Here the influence of the composition date of the Gospel is manifest. Writing late in the century, St. John, unlike the synoptics, was aware that Jews as a nation had rejected Christ and the Church: "He came unto his own and his own received him not." (Jo. 1:11). He was, as Gregory Baum has commented, a Jewish prophet, "boiling with rage and indignation at the leaders of the Synagogue for having so tragically misled his own beloved people." (2) What is true of St. John may be in general repeated of the New Testament as a whole. Its progressive composition in the second half of the first century was accompanied by a worsening of Judaeo-Christian relations that could not but find reflection in its books, human documents as well as divine. We conclude with Father Baum: "There is no foundation for the accusation that a seed of contempt and hatred for the Jews can be found in the New Testament. The final redaction of some of the books of the New Testament may bear the marks of conflict between the young Church and the Synagogue, but no degradation of the Jewish people, no unjust accusation, no malevolent prophecy is ever suggested or implied." (3)

1. For such an analysis see Gregory Baum's The Jews and the Gospel, Chapter 4. Father Baum's book is an effort to answer Jules Isaacs' Jesus et Israel, in which Isaacs traces ulterior anti-Semitism to biblical texts.
2. Father Baum also demonstrates St. John's familiarity with the Qumran hostility to the religion of Jerusalem, and the possibility that he writes in their idiom.
3. Gregory Baum, The Jews and the Gospel, p. 5.



Of the Patristic literature of the late first century, only the Didache and the Pseudo-Barnabas concerned themselves with Judaism, and only the latter ex-professo. (1) The sole reference to Judaism in the Didache, which warns Christians that they should not have their fasts or prayers "coincide with those of the hypocrites," is ambiguous. Directed against Judaizers in the Church, it seems merely to adopt the terminology of St. John who in his Gospel repeatedly excoriates the Scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites ( ); on the other hand, it is possible, as some believe, that it refers to all Jews. The Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas, by recourse to the allegorical method of interpretation of the Old Testament, attempts to show how Jews misunderstood the Scriptures, which, the writer asserts, were never intended to be observed literally, since all in the Old Testament is but a prefiguring of Christ and the Church: "Do not heap sins upon yourselves by saying, 'Their Covenant is also ours. Ours, to be sure, but in the end they lost it.'" (2) With Pseudo-Barnabas' extreme allegorism we embark on a path from orthodoxy - a path that will find issue in Marcion, the Gnostic excommunicate of the second century, who made Yahweh into a Demiurge and rejected the Old Testament entirely. The limits of orthodoxy were now clearly drawn between which the Church must tread her perilous course - between Scylla of Marcionism and the Charybdis of Judaeo-Christianity.

As the second century opened, St. Ignatius of Antioch sent his fervent letters to Gentile communities to warn against heresy, in particular against Judaizing: There is no need of "obsolete practices" in Christian hope, for those who Judaize are like "tombstones and graves

1. We accept Lukyn Williams' placement of the Epistle prior to the year 100; other patrologists place it in the early second century.

2.



of the dead on which only the names of the dead are inscribed."

"Christianity," the saint wrote to the Magnesians, "did not believe in Judaism, but Judaism believed in Christianity." This last observation, together with Barnabas' theory of prefiguration, originated a fertile theme in the Patristic era: that the Church is, and always was, the true Israel.

The second and third centuries witnessed a widening of the struggle as both Church and Synagogue institutions raised their defenses and competed for the pagan soul, the former in increasingly difficult political conditions, the latter, after Hadrian, in generally improving ones. Christians outpaced the Jews in growth and assumed a more aggressive tone in controversy, as seeds of a more hostile theology concerning Jewish guilt and punishment appeared. Jews, angered by Christian claims and successes, indulged in occasional violence, circulated slanders, and participated to some extent in the persecutions of Christians.

It is a difficult period for the historian. To determine the true facts, their etiology and interaction, especially with respect to Jewish involvement in the persecution of Christians, is not easy; and many have proven unequal to the problem. In general, Jewish writers have exaggerated the Church's contribution to the emergent anti-Semitism, and Christian scholars have assumed too uncritically an unrelenting and implacable anti-Christian fury on the part of Jews. Parkes has attempted to right the unbalance in favor of the Jews by both inflating the extent of Christian provocation and explaining away Jewish misdemeanors. (1) Perhaps the safest guide is Marcel Simon, Jewish historian, who possibly more than any other has succeeded in reaching the necessary degree of

1. J. Parkes, The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue.



objectivity. Here is his estimate of the situation: "What role and responsibility have the Jews assumed in the persecutions of Christians? Certain authors have admitted quite uncritically that their part was considerable: Allard on the Catholic side, and Barnack on the Protestant are of this number. More recently, the question has been resumed and resolved in a very different sense by Mr. Parkes. Perhaps, giving way to the philo-Semitism which animates his whole work and in reaction against the opposite opinion, he has too readily exculpated the Jews." (1)

For the sake of clarity we shall inventory the accounts of Church and Synagogue separately. First the Jews.

In Christian sources, the charge of Jewish hate is unrelieved. In the second century, St. Justin in his Dialogue with Trypho returns again and again to the point. Here he confronts Trypho with the simple declaration, "You hate us;" there he states, "the Jews count us foes and enemies and like yourselves they kill and punish us whenever they have the power, as you may well believe." (2) In the next century, Tertullian labels Synagogues "seeding-grounds of calumnies against us"; and in the early fourth, Emperor Constantine said, "Let us have nothing to do with the most hostile Jews." Taken from many available, these accusations convey a notion of the extent and seriousness of the charge. The answer has been given that the accusers had constructed a theological abstraction of the Jew having little relation with reality, and entertained little or no contact with the real Jews. (3) The example of Origen is given. This writer, commenting on a passage of Deuteronomy (4) which could be symbolically construed to require hostility of Jews toward Christians, claimed that the Jews "rage against Christians with an insatiable fury."

1. See F. Vernet
2. See page 41.
3. James Parkes attributes much of the accusations against the Jews in these centuries to "theological exegesis and not on historical memory." Page 148.
4. See Parkes, p. 124.



Other such cases exist among the fathers.

There can be little doubt that in these early centuries a theological construct of the Jew was created, which by the time of St. John Chrysostom approximated that of Satan himself. Even so, it would be unrealistic to attempt to explain away all or most of Jewish hatred of Christianity thus. St. Justin and Origen were in close contact with living Rabbis; certainly they did not see all Jews through theological refraction; and Constantine, no theologian, must be conceded some independence of observation.

There are sufficient incidents of Jewish violence to show that the hatred was widespread and, if sporadic, often intense. In 117, under Trajan, Jewish heretics participated in the death of St. Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem. During his revolt, Bar Cochba massacred Christians who refused to deny Christ. In 155 at Smyrna, St. Polycarp was placed on a pyre, then stabbed, and the Jews, "according to their custom," in the words of the account of the Acta, actively assisted at the execution, after which they obtained the body of the martyr and burned it. In Smyrna, a century later, St. Pionius, burned under Decius, addressed the Jews among the crowd that derided him before his death:

I say this to you Jews...that if we are enemies, we are also human beings. Have any of you been injured by us? Have we caused you to be tortured? When have we unjustly persecuted? ~~When~~ have we harmed in speech? When have we cruelly dragged to torture? ...

It appears from this text that the Jews were not direct participants

in the martyrdom but rather its active supporters. The same may be said of the martyrdom of St. Philip of Heraclea and Hermes, the deacon, in 304. Many other charges of Jewish persecution in the Acta Sanctorum (1) are of too questionable historicity to be cited.

Jews of this time are accused by the Fathers of slander and stirring up Roman authorities against Christians. St. Justin makes the accusation more than once and complains to Trypho, "As far as it depended on you and others (pagans) every Christian is banished not only from his property but from the world itself, for you allow no Christian to live." (Dial. CX) Tertullian accused the Jews of having "attached infamy to the Name" during the interval between Tiberius and Vespasian, and called the Synagogues of his day "founts of persecution." Origen charged them with false reports of anthropagy and sensual orgies. And the Epistle of Diognetus declared that "Jews make way on Christians, while Gentiles also persecute them." On the basis of these testimonies Barnack concluded that Jews were "salesmen of calumny," and to a large measure responsible for the Christian persecutions.

Most offensive to Christians were Jewish insults to the person of Christ, about which St. Justin, Tertullian, Eusebius, Hippolytus, and Origen complained, and which Celsus, pagan anti-Christian philosopher, picked up to cast at Christians. Some of these insults are found in the Talmud - the Palestinean part of which was composed in the second and third centuries - and others were of popular currency. St. Justin relates that the Jews laughed at Jesus, cursed him, and insulted him, "as they are taught by their chiefs of the Synagogue after prayer." (2) Origen in his Contra Celsum provides a notion of

1. See Parkes, p. 123.
2. See Vernet, col. 1662.



the insults: Jesus, illegitimate son of Panthera, a Roman legionary, was a charlatan and a magician whom the Jews killed, and after whose death marvels were invented by his disciples concerning him. Other tales of a still lower grade circulated, in which Jesus figured as a bandit and one possessed. At a later age these obscenities were compiled in the infamous Sepher Toledot Jeschu (1).

2. Rabbinical opinion grew in animosity throughout this period, as the rapidly growing Church threatened Judaism's very existence. The hatred borne against Judaeo-Christian apostates was gradually extended to the Church itself, and before the fourth century arrived, she had become the "enemy par excellence" (2). Heathen or Samaritan was more acceptable than Christian. The famous Rabbi Tarphon of Jerusalem, for example, invited upon himself a curse if he did not burn Christian Scriptures regardless of the Divine Name therein, since Christians are worse than heathens. Rabbi Meir termed the Gospels "a revelation of sin."

Such, in short, is the picture of Jewish anti-Christianity. Are these testimonies to be accepted as evidence of a generalized and implacable fury of Jew against Christian? Most Christian historians believe so. Parkes, contrariwise, believes that Jewish hatred was restrained and well provoked by Christian theology. Simon, always careful, concedes the reality of much of the violence, the "high probability" of Jewish slanders, and with regard to the persecutions holds that "the few sure cases of active hostility do not, it seems, go beyond the realm of individual and local actions. It cannot be a question of

1. The Sepher Toledot Jeschu was

2. M. Simon



a general conspiracy of Judaism, nor of a determining role, but merely of actions of certain Jews, who abetted or stimulated popular hatred." (1) The last opinion, though reductive in tendency, appears closest to the truth. It seems undeniable, at all events, that the Synagogue's contribution to the conflict was considerable.

The Church's part in the struggle took for the most part the shape of a theological offensive. There is no evidence of active Christian violence. On the other hand, signs of rising irritation and seeds of a certain Judaeophobia are manifest. The refutation and discrediting of Judaism became more and more an essential element of the Church's missionary work.

The challenge Judaism posed for the Church did not become fully apparent until, in the wake of the traumatic events of 70 and 135, the Synagogue not only survived but retained its vitality and attraction. The Judaism that the Church claimed she had supplanted continued to co-exist and, more important, laid claim to the same sources of faith, asserted her anteriority and her title to the Scriptures. To the pagan mind, always impressed by antiquity, the Judaic case was a strong one. The Church's bid for acceptance as the third force, tertium genus, in the Empire, was not to be an easy one; and pagan writers like Theophilus of Antioch and Porphyry railed at her pretense to supplant the older religion. Her theologic task was more difficult still. All in steering a course between the extremes of Judaeo-Christianity and the anti-Judaism of Marcion and the Gnostics, she had to prove to the Gentiles, and to the Jews, that she was the true Israel, that Judaism was a usurper, a pretender that refused to abdicate a lost kingdom - and this

1. M. Simon, Verus Israel, p. 152.



from Judaic sources. (1)

Anti-Judaic writers developed these themes to the full. St. Justin, Tertullian, and Origen are the great names, but there are many more. Testimonies, or Scriptural armories adapted to refuting Jews from Old Testament sources, circulated from the start. The version of the Old Testament used by the Christian apologists was the Septant, the Jewish Greek version. The Rabbinate, claiming that Christian exegetes had mutilated the text for apologetical reasons, repudiated it and made several new translations in Hebrew. Christian polemicists returned the charge of textual suppressions by the Jews. (2)

The content of Christian anti-Judaic literature was fairly uniform. Whether written in the form of dialogue or theological treatise, all centered on the Messiahship of Christ, the abrogation of the Law, and the vocation of the Church. Its substance might be summarized thus: the Church antedates the old Israel, going back to the faith of Abraham, the sacrifice of Melchisedech, even to the promise made to Adam. Thus, the Church is a Church of the Gentiles, ecclesia ex gentibus, at once a "new people" and the original and "eternal Israel," whose origins coincide with that of humanity itself. The human soul is "naturally Christian" (Tertullian), and Christ is the Logos who "enlightens every man coming into this world." (Jo. 1:9). The Mosaic Law was only for the Jews, who for their unworthiness and cult of the golden calf were given the burden of the Law. The Mosaic ritualistic prescriptions hence were a yoke imposed upon the old Israel on account of her sins, and circumcision was merely a sign or

1. Some commenters have accused the Church of opportunism in her theological efforts, seeing in her theory of the True Israel ad hoc inventions geared to replace the Jews from their place of privilege in the Empire. Actually, Christian apologists were doubtless aware of St. John's Gospel's doctrine of Christ as the pre-existing Logos and of Christ's words: "Before Abraham was made, I am." (Jo. 8:58); and of St. Paul's description of the Law as "our pedagogue," a mere preparation for Christ, who is the "End of the Law." The Pseudo-Barnabas had already developed this theme to an extreme.

2. See St. Justin and the Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila.

means of singling out Jews for exclusion from Jerusalem (at the hands of Hadrian in 135). In brief, the Church and Israel are synonymous; and the Jews are an apostate nation, truant from their providential role of chosen people.

This doctrine the Jew naturally found infuriating, since it attacked Judaism at its very heart. The apologists, for their part, considered it essential to the Gospel message, some of whom unaware of the direction much of it was taking from the total Pauline perspective. All, moreover, did not speak to Jews with any special affection.

The most important and complete Christian source Adversus Judaeos of the second, if not of all early centuries, was the Dialogue with Trypho of St. Justin, a model of a type of Jewish-Christian discussions that would frequently appear throughout history, an example in this epoch of which was the lost Altercation of Jason and Papiscus, by the Greek writer, Ariston of Pella. Justin's Dialogue is doubtless the record of an actual discussion with a Rabbi, who some have thought, probably incorrectly, to be the well-known Rabbi Tarphon. St. Justin was apparently well acquainted with Jews and Judaism and is able to place in the mouth of his dialogist the chief arguments against Christianity of the Rabbinate of his time. He draws heavily on Old Testament texts and references to prove the Messiahship of Christ, concedes to the Law only a preparatory role, and complains somewhat bitterly of Jewish hatred. On the whole, the tone of the Dialogue is irenic and maintains a "high level of courteousness and fairness." (1) The work ends with both disputants voicing their friendship and

1. Lukyn Williams, Adversus Judaeos, p. 42.



promising prayers for one another. On the other hand, St. Justin is the first to give an expression to the thesis that Jewish misfortunes were the consequence of divine punishment for the death of Christ. Having referred to the exclusion of Jews from Jerusalem, their desolate lands and burned cities, Justin assured his Rabbi that the "tribulations were justly imposed upon you, for you have murdered the Just One." (xvi) St. Peter and St. Stephen refer to the murder of Christ but in a context of forgiveness. (Acts ).

The Epistle to Diognetus, of unknown authorship, instructs its Roman recipient that though Jews are right in their monotheism, their religious practice is a "superstition" and "folly," "things absurd and beneath every consideration." The Testament of the XII Patriarchs speaks more kindly and hopes for the conversion of Israel. The Clementine Recognitions and the Apocryphal Acts of Philip likewise shows no bitterness. Not so the Gospel of Peter, an apocryphal work of the first half of the second century, wherein a hostile spirit prevails. The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila (1) is noteworthy for its unique opinion that the book of Deuteronomy (meaning second-law), which is concerned with sacrifices and ceremonies of Judaism, was not inspired of God but man-made and hence never placed in the Ark of the Covenant. The unknown author discusses the death of Jesus at the hands of the Jews and their "rejection by God in favor of the Gentiles, applying to them the Gospel parable of the 'Unjust Steward,' but has nothing to say of divine punishment.

1. The Introduction and Epilogue of this work place it in the fifth century, but critics agree that both were added to the body of the work, which dates from the year 200. See Lukyn Williams, Adversus Judaeos, p. 67.



Tertullian's Adversus Judaeos is the first systematic attempt to refute Judaism. Less versed in Judaism than St. Justin, but probably familiar with his Dialogue and one or more of the Testimonies in circulation, the African apologist sets out methodically to demonstrate from Old Testament texts the desuetude of the entire Mosaic dispensation. Writing to protect Christians and convert Jews, his anti-Judaism is purely theological and lacking in acrimony.

Third century antiJudaica are dominated by St. Cyprian, St. Hippolytus, and Origen. Cyprian's contribution, Ad Quirinum, is no more than a compilation of Old Testament proofs of Christianity. It no doubt borrowed from earlier Testimonies, of which it is a model that was used for constructing later ones. Its chief interest for our purpose is its exemplification of the fact that in this era an exposition of the Catholic faith was considered to necessitate a detailed refutation of Judaism. The Ad Quirinum was not written against Jews or for Christian apologists, but for a wealthy layman who asked St. Cyprian for a short resume of the divine lessons in the Holy Scriptures. St. Hippolytus' Demonstratio Adversus Judaeos, of which only a fragment survives, is important in another direction. Therein Jews are addressed in the most brusque manner. They are told that though they boast of having killed Christ they should not forget that their misfortunes were the result. From a line of Psalm 69 Hippolytus deduces that Jews will always be slaves. For their past sins, he says, they have found pardon, but are now to be left desolate for killing the Son of their Benefactor. He warns of the ills "that will befall them in the future age on account

of the contumacy and audacity which they exhibited toward the Prince of Peace." No stronger animus than this is displayed in pre-fourth century Christian literature.

Origen returns the discussion to intellectual grounds. His critique of Judaism is located in his Contra Celsum, a polemical work against the pagan philosopher Celsus who, alarmed at the spread of Christianity, wrote a True Account, in which he collected and placed in the mouth of a Jew arguments current among contemporary Jewry, many of the most disrespectful kind. Well versed in pagan philosophy, the Sacred Scriptures, and Judaism - having personally debated with Rabbi Simlai - Origen answers Celsus ably. In so doing, he turns his attack on Judaism, which Celsus had befriended to his own ends. Christians, Origen argues, respect the Law more than Jews, who interpret it in a fabulous manner, and whose practices are now trifles; their rejection of Jesus has caused their present calamity and exile. Moreover, he states, "we can affirm in full confidence that the Jews will never recover their former condition, because they have committed the most abominable of crimes by plotting against the Savior of mankind..."

From this point on, as we enter the fourth century, this attribution to the Jews of divinely imposed and perpetual punishment - with implied social and political consequences - will color the thought of most Christian writers and Fathers, and the Pauline tradition of special affection for Israel and of her ultimate redintegration will fade into the background.

The anti-Judaism constructed by St. Justin, Tertullian,

St. Hippolytus, and Origen is found in varying proportions in numerous other writings of the first three centuries which deal with Judaism more or less in passing. St. Irenaeus refutes heresies of Judaic provenance in his Adversus Haereses; and in his Divinae Institutiones Lactantius draws distinction between Jews and Hebrews, asserting the latter to be early Christians. Three works falsely attributed to St. Cyprian are particularly interesting: an Adversus Judaeos, believed to be of Novatian, which blames the Jews for their sins and invites them to repentance; De Montibus Sina et Sion, a homily in which the Law is compared to the earth and the Gospel to heaven; a letter, Ad Vigilium, indicting Jews but hopeful of their "return." The general attitude toward Judaism in these works is moderate; their condemnations are usually tempered with a note of sadness and hopes for reunion. Perhaps the most remarkable of third century Christian writings is the Didascalia, a liturgical compendium in which Jews are held responsible for the death of Christ but referred to as "our brothers," and Christians are instructed to fast for them during the days of the Jewish Passover: "You will fast for our brothers who have not obeyed; even when they will hate us, you are obliged to call them brothers, because it is written in Isaiah, 'Call brothers those who hate us.'" (1) The Pauline quality here is unmistakable.

Other writings on Judaism of this period that have been lost include works by Miltiade, Serapion, Rhodotes, Zorphyr, and Artapanus. (2)

The volume and the fervid quality of all this literature invites its reader to assume on the part of the Church an intense

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1. Juster I, p. 310.

2. See Vernet.



preoccupation with Judaism, and to suspect that this was no purely academic discussion. The question arises: what lay behind the crescendo of indignation, what so alarmed these apologists and shepherds of souls? Why, indeed, should the Church, out-pacing Judaism in growth and strength, grow at the same time in fear and irritation toward a faltering foe? Did, in other words, the animus of much of this writing reflect a like general feeling among Christian populace, or contrariwise did it reflect inversely a degree of Jewish-Christian fraternization, or again a certain provocation on the part of Judaism? Obviously, an understanding of popular relations of Christians and Jews and the stance of the Synagogue is necessary to an understanding of the Christian polemic.

Traditionally it has been generally accepted that after the Palestinian catastrophes of 70 and 135 Judaism, in hostile reaction to imperial curbs (banning Jewish proselytizing) and to Gentiles generally (goyim) forsook her Hellenist tendencies, and rapidly retired into herself and soon after into her Talmudism. Msgr. Duchesne states the common view: "The religious life became quite closed, the era of liberal Jews, flirting with Hellenism and the government, was past and well past. No attempt is longer made to be well thought of by other peoples, or especially to recruit proselytes. This field is left open to the Nazarenes. Judaism withdraws into herself, becomes absorbed in the contemplation of the Law." (1) In recent years, this thesis has been re-examined and with particular force by M. Simon in a profound study (2) in which he amply demonstrates the highly influential and missionary character of Judaism into the highly influential and missionary character

1. Duchesne, Historie Ancienne de l'Eglise I, p. 568; quoted in Simon, Verus Israel, p. 315.
2. This Jewish author devotes his entire volume, Verus Israel, to a most thorough going investigation of this thesis.



of Judaism into the fifth century. The Church's debate with the Synagogue, it becomes clear, was by no means a purely intellectual affair, but rather the fruit of an intense and perilous rivalry with Judaism.

Throughout the entire Patristic era, in effect, Judaism posed a triple threat. Her unabated proselytizing, Jewish association with Christian heresies, and Judaizing tendencies in the Church caused the Church's theologian and pastors of souls grave concern. These additional evidences of vitality on the part of a faith they had declared superannuated and with which, moreover, the Church held profound doctrinal and liturgical ties, could only tend to exacerbate their feelings toward the Synagogue.

Judaeo-Christianity, we have seen, had been formally expelled by the Church at the Council of Jerusalem and by the Synagogue at Jabne in 80 (1); but, refusing to die, it continued to lead a complex and marginal existence within and without the confines of the Church. Condemned to an unorthodox career, it split off into many Judaeo-Christian heresies and into a variety of Judaistic tendencies in the Church.

Chief among the heresies Ebionism, which purported to weld faith in Christ and Yahwism. There is little agreement among apologists and heresiologists about its origin or etymology. Ebion, meaning "poor," was seen as a person by some, as a doctrine of poverty - of life or dogma - by others. Many moderns regard the heresy as no more than the fossilized survival of the earliest Jerusalemite form of Christianity, which with the development of dogma

1. P.



became ipso facto heretical. In any case, when St. Irenaeus used the term for the first time, there was no doubt about the Ebionites' heretical status. Not only did they require the complete practice of the Law, holding that Jesus was made Just by its observance, but denied Christ's divinity and virginal birth. St. Paul was completely rejected, and a single Gospel, derived probably from St. Matthew's, was accepted. In time, Ebionism verged toward Gnosticism, another heresy with Jewish associations. Other Jewish heretical groups held close relationship to Ebionism, chiefly Nazarenism. Orthodox Christians were called Nazarenes in the earliest days, but soon the word came to signify a Judaeo-Christian sect outside the bounds of the Church. St. Irenaeus noted that they turned toward Jerusalem during prayer, and St. Epiphanius, heresiologist of the third century, saw them as a milder form of Ebionite. There were also Elkasites, Symmachians, Cerentians, and more again, who partook of the general Ebionite doctrine. All were one on the necessity of total observance of the Law for all, but in Christology differences existed; for almost all Christ was but a superior human person, and Joseph was His father.

Though St. Irenaeus is wrong in labeling Simon Magus, Jewish Gnostic magician, as the father of all Gnostic systems, there can be no question of Jewish participation in the Gnosticism in early Christian times. Originally a pre-Christian, Oriental product, Gnosis (in the sense of "superior knowledge") became a Christian heresy when in the wake of its Hellenization Christian concepts and doctrines were brought within its purview. The Church's struggle against Gnosticism,

especially of the Jewish mold, was one of the primitive Church's bitterest. St. Peter faced it in Simon Magus; St. Paul met it in the figure of Cerenthus; and St. John encountered the Nicolaites (anti-nomian Jewish Gnostics) to whom he referred as the "Synagogue of Satan." (1)

In common with other forms, Jewish Gnosticism rejected faith in favor of philosophical speculation, hence repudiated the revelation of the Old Testament, but did not scruple to borrow terms and concepts from it. Some students relate Jewish Gnosticism to a general Jewish syncreticism that had always plagued Judaism, ever in contact with Oriental mystery cults or Greco-Roman speculation. From these contacts arose a certain Jewish type of thaumaturge or healer who was never far removed from the practice of magic and sorcery. Simon assures us that "the type of miraculous Rabbi is not peculiar to the ghettos of medieval and modern Europe; he is largely represented in the ancient world." (2)

The consorting of Christians with these Jewish practitioners was another worry of the Church Fathers and explains in part their frequent allusion to "Jewish superstition."

Still other heresies received Jewish support. Quartodecimanism comprised a schismatic group excommunicated by Pope Victor at the end of the second century for persisting in celebrating the Christian Easter simultaneously with the Jewish Passover on the 14th of Nisen. Jews have been suspected of involvement in the Donatist heresy, which threatened the orthodoxy of Christian imperial Rome in the late fourth century, and with Arianism, whose doctrines were akin to their monotheism; but their participation in these was an effort to embarrass the Church than a conviction. (3)

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- 1.
2. Verus Israel, quoted in Isaac.
3. See Simon: index.



A more serious worry to the Church than Jewish connivance in heresy was Judaic influence within the Church. It is not, of course, question of that legacy from Judaism the Church accepted to build much of her doctrine, morals, and liturgy, or to her early adherence to the Jewish calendar in marking her feasts, whose prototypes were Synagogal; but of the tendency among the Christian faithful to add to their life of worship, despite prohibitions of the Church leaders, certain observances and practices taken bodily from Judaism. This phenomenon, known as Judaizing, is to be carefully distinguished from the Judaeo-Christianity of the pre-Pauline Church and the heretical forms it subsequently took. This was Judaeo-Christianity of an attenuated sort flourishing in an otherwise perfectly orthodox setting. Some of the Fathers make this clear by their reference to "our Judaizers," nostris Judaisantes.

Judaizing proclivities made themselves felt from the first. St. Paul complained to the Galatians of those who apparently followed in his footsteps to refute him (1), and in the second century many of the Fathers warned against them, St. Justin distinguishing between those who imposed the Law on themselves and those who required it for all. The second group he considered heretical, but to the first he showed a certain leniency not conceded by the other Fathers. The Judaizing tendency took shape in many ways. Often it was no more than the superstitious use of Jewish amulets or hybrid Judaeo-Christian prayer formulas believed to have miraculous virtues. More often it was the practice of rites of the Synagogue, such as, ablutions, lighting candles, eating the pascal lamb or leaven bread, taking Jewish oaths,

1. Epistle to the Galatians,



asking Rabbinic blessings, or frequenting Synagogues. In some cases, it involved the complete observance of the Law. Judaizers fought the establishment of Sunday as the Christian day of rest as well as the dissociation of the date of Easter from that of the Jewish Passover, and after these issues were settled by the Church, many continued for some centuries to practice the older observance. St. John Chrysostom in the late fourth would complain bitterly: "You prefer to endure anything rather than break entirely with Jewish customs." (1)

Judaizing, apparently, was widespread long after the establishment of the Church under Constantine.

The majority of Judaizers were doubtless Jewish converts, but many Gentile Christians also found themselves attracted to Judaism and respectful of the authority of the Synagogue in matters of worship. Jews and Christians co-mingled freely in the period and must have felt a mutual affinity in face of the pagan population. The Synagogue, meanwhile, was not opposed to accepting Christians as well as pagans as semi-proselytes. The Church was not insensitive to the dangers of the situation, and as time went on Church leaders, fearful of apostasies and doubtless resentful of the continuing authority of the Synagogue, discouraged fraternization with Jews. On another level, certainly, were the intercourse some of the Fathers entertained with the Rabbis, whose authority in Scriptural studies was highly respected. St. Justin, St. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Aphraates, St. Ephraim, and especially St. Jerome had recourse to them to learn Hebrew or discuss interpretations. As a general rule, the Rabbinate excelled

1.



Christian scholars in the techniques of exegesis: indeed the allegorical method so popular among Christian apologists was aboriginally Jewish.

But the "Jewish contagion" was dangerous only to the extent that the doors of Judaism remained open to the Gentile world - and to the return of Jewish converts. These doors, in effect, were open. The fall of Jerusalem, far from stifling Judaism's missionary zeal, only served to bring further to the fore her universalist element, and Hadrian's ban on circumcision did not prove effective, nor was it strictly enforced. The Rabbinical attitude toward proselytes remained what it had been in the past, that is, divided between rigorists who, distrustful of proselytes, laid down rigid conditions of acceptance, and the more liberal, or Hellenists, who, considering Israel's missionary role a grave obligation, relaxed these conditions. That the latter attitude was the dominant one - though the former was slowly gaining the ascendancy - can be concluded from many testimonies in Jewish, pagan, and Christian sources. It would be possible to call on the Talmud, Horace, Juvenal, St. Justin, Tertullian, Origen, Chrysestom, and others again, as witnesses; and the Judaizing phenomenon itself may be presumed to presuppose some degree of proselytizing. It is unquestionable, in effect, that Jewish proselytic efforts were particularly strong late in the fourth century, and despite the losing competition with Christianity, continued into the next century. The canons of the early Councils and the civil codes of the fourth and fifth centuries will have much to say about conversions to Judaism.

In sum, in light of the crosscurrents of Jewish and Christian competition in the Patristic era, the rising pitch of anti-Jewish writings of the time take on a realism and meaning not evident in the texts. And the virulence of the fourth century anti-Judaica in particular will be incomprehensible without their consideration.

★

Did anti-Semitism exist in the Church during the first three centuries? Opinions diverge. It is difficult, for our part, to categorize as anti-Semitic: first, hostile writings or actions effectively provoked by Jews; second, theological treatises or teachings which expounded an anti-Judaism inherent to the essential Christological dogmas of the Church; third, indignation of writers gravely worried about the dangers Judaism posed for the Christian populace, often superficially Christianized; or, finally, a false image of the Jew gained more by faulty hermeneutics than by personal observation of real Jews. On the other hand, while most anti-Jewish efforts of these centuries fitted these four categories, certain excesses of another kind were also present: a stray insult in the Didache, St. Justin, and the Epistle to Diognetus; a generalized hostile feeling in the apocryphal Gospel of Peter and in St. Hippolytus: but that is about all. More important and ominous was the emergence of a teaching not yet fully formulated but clearly enunciated in St. Hippolytus and Origen: that Jews are a people accursed for their deicide who can never hope to escape from their misfortunes, which are willed of God. This thesis forms the unconscious roots of a tradition that will dominate Christian thinking

in the fourth century and contribute greatly thereafter to the cause of anti-Semitism.



## Chapter III

## FROM PAGAN TO CHRISTIAN EMPIRE

No century was, virtually, more fateful for Jewish-Christian relations than the fourth. The hour of the Constantinian revolution was at hand, and the shape that human events would take for another thousand years was rapidly crystallizing. For the Church it was the hour of triumph. Powerful in number and influence, she was now exalted as Church of State, in which role she would exert a dominant influence on political and social as well as religious institutions. It was a century in ferment, extraordinary in many ways. The pens of Jerome, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine brought the Patristic Age to full flower; the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople canonized the basic essentials of Catholic belief; and Christian monachism was born. It was also a time of peril. Heresies and Christological controversies raged; paganism casted up its final defiance in a Julian the Apostate; and the barbarians from the North were almost at the gate. Not least of all, Judaism, still uncowed, challenged the Church in her very foundations, and threatened to undermine her from within.

But behind her challenge, Judaism had already begun to agonize. Rabbinic learning had departed from Palestine and found a new center in Babylonia, and in the Empire she steadily lost ground in competition for the pagan soul. Under the new Christian Empire, her privileges were largely withdrawn, her proselytism was outlawed, and

in 425 her Patriarchate was abolished. Little choice was left her: either enter the Church or retire into the recesses of her Talmudism. The latter alternative was her choice, one she considered the price of survival, and which set for her a pattern of life that would characterize her until modern times. How high the price would be only the future would tell. For Judaism the fourth century was prelude to millennial misfortune.

The transition from Pagan to Christian Empire was swift, and its consequences for Judaism immediate. In 313, in the Edict of Milan Constantine conceded toleration to all cults, including Judaism; in 323, the Church was accorded a unique position of favor and privilege; and when, in 329, Constantine was converted on his deathbed, imperial legislation had already begun to echo the canon law of the Church in many areas, and none more clearly than in its anti-Judaic measures. By the beginning of the fifth century, the Jews position had greatly declined. His civil status was precarious, and the Jewish image had greatly deteriorated. At the close of the third century, the Jew was no more than a special type of heretic; at the end of the fourth, a semi-satanic figure, cursed by God and marked off by man.

The rapid deterioration of the Jewish image and status can be reduced to a few causes. The tempo of Jewish proselytism and Judaizing in the Church was, as we have seen, one. The influx of the Roman middle class into the Church was another. These converts brought with them the anti-Semitic opinions which classical antiquity had bequeathed, thus providing a historical link between the anti-Semitism of pagan and Christian times. A third may be seen in the method of Scriptural

interpretation of the time, which, based on belief in a rigidly verbal inspiration of the Sacred Books, took all the unflattering references to Jews in the Old Testament on face value. A low estimation of the Jews thus assumed - though erroneously - something of a dogmatic character. (1) The fourth and perhaps most decisive factor in the decline of the standing of the Jew was the predominance of what may be called the anti-Pauline tradition which considered Jews accursed for Christs' Crucifixion.

All the foregoing causes were afforded their fullest efficacy through the intermediary of the pens and pulpits of the Fathers and apologists of this and the early fifth centuries - the golden Patristic Age. As paganism passed away and the Christian heresies commenced to wane, these zealous and talented men of the Church looked more and more upon Judaism as the most pernicious threat to the Christian faith and the final roadblock to final Christian unity. They turned upon her with the greatest vigor. Generally, they took up the same themes as earlier writers but, feeling less than their predecessors the need to prove the rejection of Israel and the election of the Church - which reality seemed to confirm - and disturbed by the Synagogue's durability and the lure it held for many Christians, they concentrated their efforts to destroying the Jewish influence. Resort was made once again to the Old Testament, but this time in order to demonstrate the perversity of the Jew, to which purpose a multitude of passages from the Prophets, Psalms, and Historical Books seemed to lend themselves. Efforts to convert the Jew gave way to casting him

1. It is possible, as does Parkes, to overdraw the influence of such hermeneutics. in the destruction of the Jewish image of these centuries. Other factors founded in reality



in the role of an obdurate unbeliever who must give witness to the Church from without. And in the light of the Jews' continuing socio-political hardships certain New Testament texts which appeared to condemn Israel were reinterpreted to prove the inevitability of Jewish degradation. St. Paul's doctrine is, with rare exception, lost from view.

In the first half of the century, Eusebius, in two massive volumes, (1) presents a review of Jewish history founded on the distinction between "Hebrews" and "Jews," the first of which are considered primitive Christians, such as the Patriarchs; the latter, a less worthy people for whom the Law of Moses was a necessity. Circumcision, in this purview, was seen as a disgrace. Hilary of Poitiers, likewise, reworked the Jewish history to the purpose of proving Jews to be a perpetually perverse people, despised of God. Aphraates, a Syriac apologist, wrote to equip Christians against Judaizing practices, but in a milder vein, even displaying a certain Jewish influence in his own style of presentation. St. Ephraim, another Syriac, manifested an unfriendly spirit toward Judaism, which he embodied in his liturgical hymns. A pseudo-Ephraimic writer warns that whoever eats or mingles with the Jews becomes "comrades of the crucifiers." St. Cyril of Jerusalem, an ardent preacher, denounced the Jews from the pulpit and wrote offensively of the Jewish Patriarchs, whom he deemed of inferior status. And St. Epiphanius, a Jew by origin, and one of the great early heresiologists, analyzed Jewish-Christian heresies, and in so doing did not hide his feelings for one group, the Heredians, who are "real Jews because they are lazy and dishonest."

1. Eusebius,



In the second half of the century, the crescendo continued. St. Gregory of Nyssa, with characteristic eloquence, describes the Jews as "slayers of the Lord, murderers of the prophets, adversaries of God, haters of God, men who show contempt for the Lord, foes of grace, enemies of their fathers' faith, advocates of the devil, brood of vipers, slanders, scoffers, men whose minds are in darkness, leaven of the Pharisees, assembly of demons, sinners, wicked men, stoners, and haters of righteousness." (1) From this broad indictment we gather an excellent clue of the brand of exaggeration common to this fervid period. Even St. Jerome, whom a Rabbi had taught, calls Jews "serpents" and their Psalms "the braying of donkeys"; and asserts, "You must hate the Jews who insult Jesus Christ everyday in their synagogues."

But all of this is dwarfed by St. John Chrysostom, who, in the entire literature Adversus Judaeos up to his time stands without peer or parallel. The abandon of his attack surprises even in an age when rhetorical denunciation could be brutal indeed. The chief occasion of his ire was six sermons delivered in his See of Antioch, where Jews were numerous and influential and where apparently some of his flock were frequenting Synagogues and Jewish homes and probably indulging in Jewish amulets. The Saint was not one to meet such a situation with equanimity. Rigid of principle, a born reformer, and a fiery preacher, he threw the whole of his energy and talent into his purpose. How to accomplish it? There was one way: show up the Jews and the Synagogue in their true colors; engender in Christians a fear and disgust toward Judaism that would put an end to Judaizing. And what are the true colors of the

1. Malcolm Hay, p. 26.



Jews and their Synagogue? "A whole day would not suffice to enumerate the vices of the Jews," the orator assures us, "...and any name even the most horrible will never be worse than the Synagogue deserves." Despite the difficulty Chrysostom faces up to the task. How can Christians dare "have the slightest converse" with Jews, who are "...lustful, rapacious, greedy, perfidious bandits." Are they not "inveterate murderers, wreckers, men possessed by the devil"? Indeed, "debauchery and drunkenness has put them on the level of the lusty goat and the pig. They know only one thing, to satisfy their gullets, get drunk, to kill and maim one another...." Yea, they are worse than wild beasts, for "with their own hand they murder their offspring," Chrysostom continues, here basing his contention on Psalm XCVI, 37. They have all the vices, "Cupidity, rapine, betrayal of the poor, larceny,...They covet one another's wives..." Jews are pigs, wolves, goats, savage beasts,... so goes the litany of likenesses St. John's strews through his sermons to depict the Jewish image.

The Synagogue? A "circus," "worse than a brothel" "a repair of wild beasts" "the domicile of the devil - as is also the souls of the Jews." Indeed Jews worship the devil, and their feasts are unclean. The Synagogue is "an assembly of criminals...a den of thieves...a cavern of devils, an abyss of perdition."

These samplings selected from many convey a notion of St. John's attack. Yet all is not invective. These insults interlard large segments of reasonings, theological considerations, pleas, threats, and references. Behind the invective, in effect, lies a very clear theology of Judaism. It is doubtless this theology, moreover, more

than the vituperation that inflicted greatest injury on the image of the Jew.

Why are Jews degenerate? Because "they have assassinated the Son of God." This supreme crime lies at the roots of their degradation and woes. This crime, the orator goes on, they committed "not in ignorance but in full knowledge," obviously forgetting St. Peter's assurance to the Jews regarding the Crucifixion: "I know you did it from ignorance, as did your rulers." (Acts ) For this decide there is no pardon, for God "allows them no time for repentance," he declares, apparently forgetting St. Paul. Their dispersion and rejection was the work of God not the Caesars that harrassed them: "It was done by the wrath of God and His absolute rejection of you." God hates the Jews, and always hated the Jews, and on Judgment Day He will say to Judaizers, "Depart from Me, for you have had intercourse with my murderers." Vengeance is without end: "Your situation, O Jewish people, becomes more and more disastrous, and one cannot see showing on your foreheads the slightest ray of hope." It is the duty, therefore, of Christians to hate them: "He who has never enough of the love of Christ will never be finished fighting against those who hate Him." And Chrysostom himself gives the example: "I hate the Jews... I hate their Synagogue...."

Attempts have been made to understand, to explain Chrysostom's fury, and there is, of course, some room for attenuation. Oratorical exaggeration, genuine alarm at the extent of Judaizing among his flock, a low grade of Jew (and also Christian) at Antioch, a faulty use of Old Testament metaphors and symbols, undue influence by Julian the Apostate

is seemingly miraculous failure to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, a false reinterpretation of New Testament texts concerning Jewish punishment - such considerations contribute toward an understanding of his viewpoint and indignation. And one can agree with M. Simon that perhaps after his fire was spent Chrysostom saw the better of his anger. All this said, the Christian as well as the Jew can only deplore these sermons. They represent a grave lapse from Christian truth and morals that cannot be condoned even on the part of a great churchman and saint, otherwise so noble and spiritually sensitive. His lofty qualities, however, cannot, in the eye of the historian, save him from his niche in the pantheon of anti-Semitism. Even if, as Simon suggested, Chrysostom's hatred of the Jews died with his temper, the effects his preaching and writing had on both populace and clergy is no less deplorable. A general popular hatred of the Jew as yet in the future is now rapidly underway, and his invective would find its echo, loud and clear, in and out of the Church for centuries to come.

St. Augustine, almost contemporary of Chrysostom, presents a certain ambivalence toward Judaism. Adhering to the Pauline teaching of love for the Jews, but at a loss to understand their unbelief, their hatred of Christianity manifest in the Talmud, and their unending misfortunes, he often adopts terms toward them that are severe. Too urbane and aware of human weakness to hate or indulge in vituperation, he nevertheless allows his opposition to take expression in intellectual passion, so to say. A first part of his theology of Judaism is common to that of the other Fathers. Judaism, since Christ, is a corruption and inspired of Satan. The former children of election are now an

"avaricious and gross people, ever absorbed in material pleasures."  
 Their understanding of the Scriptures are carnal. They carry the weight of the death of the Saviour. "In your fathers you have killed the Christ," he tells the Jews. And it is clear that the divine malediction they called upon themselves has been heard.

Augustine's originality resides in his theory of the Jews as a witness-people. By this ingenious theological construction he attempted to solve the dilemma of Jewish survival as a people and their ever growing misfortunes. The role of the Jews, in his opinion, is still providential; they are at once witnesses to evil and to Christian truth, testes iniquitatis et veritatis nostrae. They subsist "for the salvation of the nation but not for their own." They witness, first, by their Scriptures and serve as "slave-librarian" of the Church; and they likewise give witness by their dispersion and their woes. Like to Cain, they carry a sign but are not to be killed. As in the Scriptures, so in reality the older brother will serve the younger.

And yet, despite all, Christians have duties toward Jews, to love them and to lead them to Christ. In his Tractatus Adversus Judaeos, recalling Chapter XI of the Epistle to the Romans he follows out St. Paul's thought: Jesus and the Apostles were Jews; the Law of Sinai was from God; and if Israel has been replaced, Jews are still called to repentance and to faith in Christ. "Thus," he concludes, "let us preach to the Jews, whenever we can, with a spirit of love...It is not for us to boast over them as branches broken off....We shall be able to say to them without exulting over them - though we exult in God - 'Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.'"

It is a misfortune of Christian history that Augustine's admirable reassertion of St. Paul did not receive the same hearing as his theology of the witness-people. The latter was destined to fame and to be employed for actions never envisaged by its author.

Other writings of the fourth and early fifth centuries concerned with Judaism are by comparison with those of the Fathers of minor importance. Two took the form of dialogue: the Dialogue of Athanasius and Zaccheus, a Greek writing, and Evagrius' Discussion Concerning the Law Between Simon a Jew and Theophilus a Christian, a Latin work written in the West, probably in Spain. The first follows the Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila fairly closely, and the second bears a resemblance to that of Papiscus and Jason. Their tone is earnest and amicable enough. In both, the conversion of the Jew is reported, and Evagrius' Discussion closes with a lengthy prayer of the newly converted Jew, the following portion of which is of particular interest for its sense of continuity of the Old and New Covenants:

"...Oh Lord Jesus, if I am worthy to have faith, strengthen me also for the full knowledge of Thyself. For Thou showest the way to them that wander, and callest home the lost, and raises the dead, and strengthenest the faithless in their faith, and to the blind Thou givest light in the eyes of their heart. Thou Thyself art the holy Tabernacle Who wast with our Fathers in the desert. Thou art the Candlestick, Thou the Golden Altar and the Shewbread, Thou the Altar and the willing Victim...."

The authenticity of the sudden conversion which conclude many of the dialogues and are multiplied in the Acts of the Martyrs are subject to question. Some may have been real, others of apologetical inspiration or interpolations.

1. For this section, see Lucyn Williams.



Of less irenic character are other works falsely attributed to Chrysostom and Augustine and a Treatise of Maximinus the Arian. They cover familiar territory to prove Christ's Divinity from Old Testament texts, combining a certain heavyhandedness with a sincere desire to win Jews to the Church. In all of them, Jews are equated with pagans and heretics as fitting subjects for their argumentations - evidence of the fundamentally theologic nature of their anti-Judaism.

A text of Sulpicius Severus, a Christian historian probably writing in Aquitania at the end of the fourth century, is important inasmuch as it shows how widespread the theme of divine punishment of the Jews had become: "The Jews were dispersed and punished throughout the world for no other reason than that they laid their wicked hands upon Christ." (1)

And yet Christian charity was not wholly absent from the Antijudaica of this high-tempered age. Even Chrysostom managed to admit that Jews possessed some moral qualities (2), and St. Augustine praised their fidelity to the Law. St. Ambrose acknowledged their chastity at a time when Jewish carnality was a stock-in-trade accusation, and St. Jerome saluted their generosity. Prayers for the Jews, long since a tradition, in the Church, were continued in this age. Jesus, who had wept for his beloved people and prayed a "father, forgive them" in which they must be included, was imitated by St. Stephen who died with this same prayer on his lips; by St. Paul who offered his own salvation for his brethren; and by St. Justin in his Dialogue. The Acts of the Martyrs present examples of martyrs praying during

1. Verus Israel, p. 91; Hay, p. 22.
2. Verus Israel, p. 272; Sermon 6. For all his part see Juster, p. 228 and 333.



their execution for their Jewish persecutors, such as Paul of Palestine (1); and the Didascalia prescribes the Paschal fast as intercession for the Jews. (1) In the fourth century this prayerful tradition continued. St. Jerome wrote, "the Synagogues are sepulchres in the desert...let us pray the Lord that these sepulchres rise;" and St. Leo the Great: "...he who was crucified by them prayed for them; let us also with the blessed apostle Paul lend our prayers." (1) Juster noticed that these prayers for the Jews decreased with time. (1) The apostolate of prayer for the Jews, however, will not die in the Church, but will falter in periods when the Pauline tradition languishes, only to enjoy a vigorous reflowering in modern times.

Of greater immediate import for the fate of the Jews than the opinions of the apologists and theologians of the Patristic era were the legislative measures taken by both Church and Empire. These were, in effect, the translation into statutory form of what the Patristic teaching seemed to call for. The latter diminished the Jewish image in the imperial as well as the popular mind; the legislation gave the diminution a socio-political dimension. In the case of the Church, some anti-Jewish legislation could be anticipated. As long as fraternizing among Christians and Jews and Judaizing among Christians were strong, posing a serious threat to the Faith, it is not surprising that these conditions found issue in the disciplinary canons of the Church councils. These anti-Jewish canons are in no way exceptional.

Already in 300 the Council of Elvira in Spain forbade

1. Eusebius Juster I, p. 228 & 333
  
1. Infra p.
  
1. See Juster I, p. 228 and 333; Verus Israel, p. 271 and 272.
  
1. See Juster I, p. 228 and 333; Verus Israel, p. 271 and 272.



Jewish-Christian marriages, except in the case of conversion of the Jewish party; banned close relations between Jewish-Christian communities; and prohibited Jewish blessings of the fields of Christians. (1) The Council of Antioch (341) prohibited celebration of the Passover with the Jews, an issue which the General Council of Nicaea (325) had formally decided, but which would not be practically closed for many years to come. The Council of Laodicea (360) grappled with the problem of Judaizing, apparently acute in the East, forbidding Christians to keep the Sabbath or to receive gifts or unleavened bread from Jewish festivals and "impieties." (1) Several Syrian and African canons of this century likewise legislated against taking part in these festivals and frequenting Synagogues. One of the African canons, conversely, warned against prohibiting Jews from attending Mass up to the end of the 'missa catechumenorum', a concession granted to all unbaptised persons. (1) All in all, the conciliar action of the Church appears restrained compared to the fulminations of some of the Fathers. Judaism was severely left alone except in those conditions where the faith of Christians was considered imperiled. J. Isaac's view that the early roots of the ghetto are discernible in these restrictive canons contain a partial truth. Both Christian and Jewish clergy feared comingling and attempted to quarantine their faithful. Actually, the ghetto's long roots sink deeply into pagan antiquity and into the nature of Judaism itself. (1)

The decline of Jewish status under the Christian empire presents a more complex development. The imperial government was now

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1. See Parkes, p. 174. Also Mansi.

1. See Parkes, p. 174 and Mansi.

1. Supra.



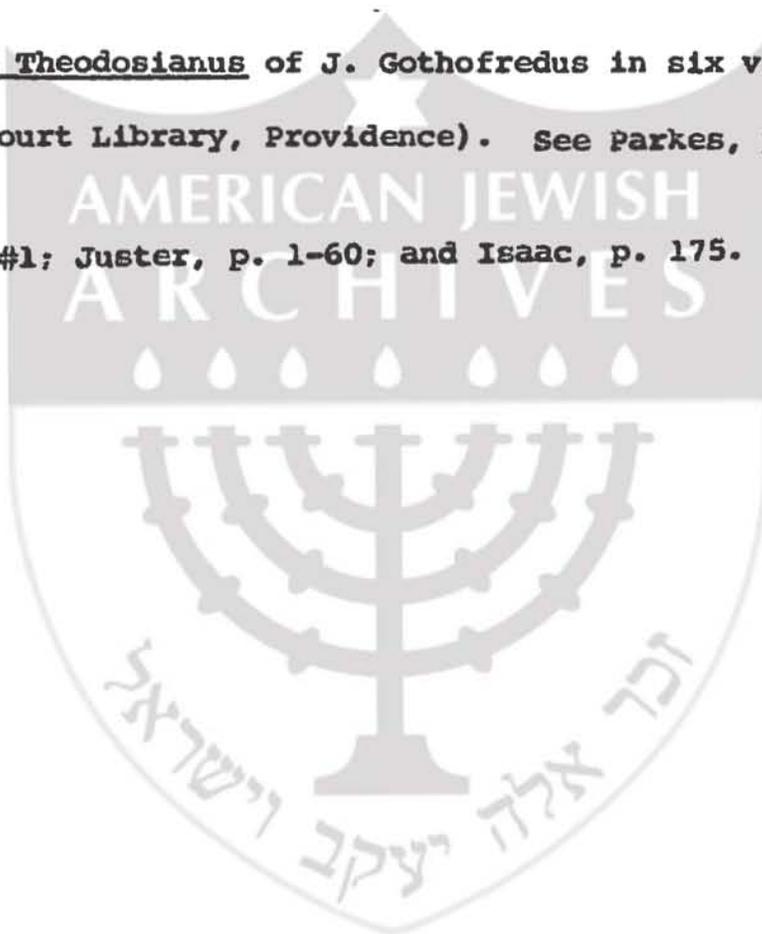
committed to the Church and her teachings, but was also bound to the Empire's historic traditions of tolerance and privilege for Judaism. This double commitment would not be an easy one to mediate. The main problem was now how to promote the interest of the Church but rather how to deal with Judaism, which had once been favored but was now considered - and had shown herself - an enemy of the Church. The task was facilitated, to some extent, by common agreement of both Church and state that Judaism had a right to exist and should enjoy a degree of liberty of cult. It was aggravated, on the other hand, when churchmen or populace, more zealous than others in combating the "Jewish evil," gave short shrift to the equities of the traditional law. The Emperors of the period, moreover, showed differing proportions of zeal both for promoting Christian interests and protecting Jewish rights. A Constantius, for example, though Arian, would prove himself more rigorous in legislating against Jews than did Constantine, his predecessor; Theodosius I would not withstand St. Ambrose's unlawful interference with imperial policy; but an Arcadius, perhaps exasperated by St. John Chrysostom's importunings, would exile him from his See at Antioch. (1) And a Julian would brutally attempt to wrest the Empire from its Christian commitment altogether. The time was not far off, however, when ecclesiastical and imperial legislation respecting Judaism would reflect one another faithfully.

The progress of this legislation throughout these years may be followed in the Theodosian Code, a compilation of all laws enacted from Constantine's reign until its eventual composition in 438. (1) Numerous

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1. The Emperors participation in St. John's disgrace is not certain but probable. See *Verus Israel*, p. 270.

2. Codex Theodosianus of J. Gothofredus in six volumes, Lugduni, MDCLXV (Court Library, Providence). See Parkes, p. 128 and Appendix #1; Juster, p. 1-60; and Isaac, p. 175.



statutes in this comprehensive legal corpus treat of Judaism and give a good indication of what Jewish-Christian relations were during the reigns of Constantine, Constantius, Gratian, Theodosius I, and Honorius in the Western province, and of Arcadius, and Theodosius II in the East. Though these statutes cannot be precisely systematized, three main categories are discernible: those which establish Judaism's basic rights and freedoms; those prohibiting specific injustices or violence against Jews or their cult; those prohibiting anti-Christian practices of Jews; and those which place restrictions on Jewish cult and activities. Though the last category is of more significance for our subject, and comprises the larger part of the legislation, contrary to the impression given by many historians, it is not characteristic of this legislation as a whole.

That Judaism remained a religio licita under the Christian Empire is clearly set forth in several statutes. Judaism is, we read, "not a prohibited sect," (1) Rather does it enjoy the right of excommunication for its members (2); its clergy are entitled to the same privileges as the Christian clergy (3); and its Patriarch is to be granted his proper privileges (until 425) (4). From this legal standing flow certain protections of the law: Jews who conduct themselves in peace, quiete, are not to be molested (5); they are not to be disturbed on the Sabbath and their feast days (6); their Synagogues are not to be attacked, violated, burned, or confiscated. Several statutes, especially in the reign of Theodosius II in the early fifth century, reiterate this injunction. (7)

1. Codex Theodosianus 16-8-9
2. Ibid. 16-8-8
3. Ibid. 16-8-13
4. Ibid. 16-8-15
5. Ibid. 16-10-24
6. Ibid. 16-5-44
7. Ibid. principally 7-8-2; 16-8-12; 16-8-25; 16-8-26; 18-8-21.



The existence of Jewish anti-Christian hostility and violence is evinced in several statutes, which forbid the stoning or use of violence against Jewish converts to the Church (1); interference with the Sacraments (2); burning the Holy Cross during the feast of Purim (3); and outraging Christianity (4).

There can be no question, however, that the Codex throws the bulk of its weight into the service of the Church. Christian proselytism is forthrightly favored by laws which ban conversions to Judaism (5). Such converts are rendered intestate (6) and, conversely, converted Jewish children are not disinherited by their parents (7). The law of Hadrian, long in desuetude, was thus re-enacted; Jewish proselytism was again a criminal action (8). One statute stands forth which permits Jewish converts to return to their Judaism (9), one that will be rarely obeyed in years to come. A series of progressively rigorous penalties proscribes the circumcision of slaves of Jewish owners. At first, slaves were forfeited; later the owner incurred the death penalty and confiscation of goods (10). From 384 on, a Jew was forbidden to buy a Christian slave (11), a prohibition repeated in 423 (12). The apparent tenacity of Jewish resistance to laws concerning slaves and the determination of the Empire to enforce them point to a problem with deep social and religious roots. Jews were prominent in slavetrading and also engaged in agriculture and industry, thus requiring the use of slaves. Motivated by proselytic zeal and a wish to avoid legal impurity incurred by household contact with the uncircumcised, they were in the habit of circumcising their slaves (13). The Church, from her side,

1. Codex Theodosianus 16-8-5
2. Ibid. 16-5-44
3. Ibid. 16-8-18
4. Ibid. 16-8-21
5. Ibid. 16-8-1; 16-8-7
6. Ibid. 16-7-3
7. Ibid. 16-8-28
8. Supra. p.
9. Codex: 16-8-23
10. Ibid. principally 16-9-1; 16-9-2; 16-9-4; 16-9-5
11. Ibid. 3-1-5
12. Ibid. 16-9-5
13. J. Isaacs, p. 179

was naturally alarmed by the many Jewish conversions obtained in this way. The Empire, sharing the worry of the Church, determined to put an end to the practice. The grave results for Jewry can be understood. Many were forced from agriculture and industry into smaller trades and crafts, but not without strong and prolonged resistance to the slavery laws.

Regulations concerning the construction and care of the Synagogues date from some time in the late fourth century (1). In 415 Patriarch Gamaliei was degraded for having constructed a new Synagogue without authorization, and the new Synagogue was destroyed. Further laws regulating the matter were enacted twice in 423, (2) one of them forbidding beautifying or repairing the Synagogue without permission. This latter measure was doubtless inspired by proselytic competition as well as for the benefit of Judaizers who frequented Synagogues.

Other restrictive legislation, known as privilegia odiosa, curtailed Jews' civil status. They were barred from public functions, such as, the army and positions in the imperial administration. (3) Marriages with Jews seen as "shameful" and "adulterous" unions were prohibited under the penalty of death. (4)

A law of 397 denied Jews the right of asylum granted by the Church (5). In the following year, Jewish tribunals, until then competent in all Jewish affairs, were invalidated for all matters not purely religious. (6) In 425, when the Patriarchate was abolished, the Jewish tax attached thereto was added to Jews' other taxes. (7) The several statutes requiring Jews to take part in the "decurionate," in contrast, have nothing of a discriminatory character, since they simply require

1. The earliest law is lost, but a reference in the work of a bishop of Verona (d. 380) seems to indicate the existence of such a law before 380. See Juster I, p. 469.
2. Codex: 16-8-27. Also see Juster, p. 471.
3. Isaacs, p. 183; Juster II, p. 276 and 243-764. C T 16-8-24
4. Codex: 16-8-6; 3-7-2.
5. Codex: 8-45-2
6. Ibid. 2-1-10
7. Juster II, 286-7; ~~Foot~~ Codex: 16-8-25.



Jews to assume a common function from which they had by exception been exempt by the Caesars. (1)

The solidarity of both religious and secular legislation and the influence of the first over the second in this period is quite clear. Despite the tempering force of traditional Roman law, the imperial legislation partook of the same spirit as the canons of the councils, which in many instances it implemented in the capacity of a "secular arm." Many offensive and denigrating reference to Jews and Judaism strewn throughout the Codex overflow the purely juridical state of mind, echoing like terminology of the canons. Judaism is referred to as a "wicked sect" (2), a "superstition"; its congregation, as a "sacriligious assembly" (3); and Jews are termed "abominable" (4); the usual designation of Christianity is that of the "venerable" (5). The ecclesiastical influence was progressive: M. Simon has noted throughout the Codex "a growing ascendancy of the religious over the political." (6)

More eloquent for the historian of anti-Semitism than the juridical development of Judaeo-Christian relations were the violences perpetrated by both Christian and Jew during these years. Hostilities were brutal and frequent. Blow was met by blow in a scandalous reciprocity of provocation.

Jews were accused of undying hatred of Christianity by many writers of the time. St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, Sozemenos, St. Simeon, Constantine, and even Julian speak, variously, of Jews as "eternal enemies" of the Cross, "perpetual enemies" of Christianity,

1. The "decurionate" was a form of tax-collecting that was unpopular with the Christian and Jew.
2. Nefaria Sectas Codex: 16-8-1  
Nefanda superstitio Codex: 16-9-4
3. Sacrilegi coetus: Ibid. 16-8-7
4. Abominandi Judaei: Ibid. 16-8-6
5. Venerandae Christinae religionis: Ibid. 16-8-13
6. Verus Israel, p. 267: "une imprise croissante da religieux sur de politique



possessed of a "inveterate hatred." (1) In effect, many reported happenings go to give substance to the accusations.

The Jews lived up to their reputation for sedition and tumult. Under Constantius, at Dioceserea in Palestine, they rose, massacred the Romans, and attempted to extend hostilities to the whole of Palestine. In reprisal they were massacred themselves, and Diocaesarea and other Jewish cities were destroyed. Under St. Athanasius, in Alexandria, Jews joined rioting Arians against the Saint, who was at once political and religious leader of the city. During Julian's short reign (361-2?) Jews aided the pagan reaction against the Christian Empire and, according to St. Athanasius, they burned several churches. (2) They took part in the Persian persecutions of Shapur II, in which Archbishop Simeon of Ctesiphon was killed. At Imnestar in 415, on the occasion of Purim celebrations, Jews, intoxicated by wine, fastened a Christian child to a Cross and murdered him. This monstrous act is reported by the historian Socrates, whose account some doubt but in view of the previous ban of 408 against insults to the Cross at Purim and the allowance of the Talmud for drinking at these celebrations to the point of incapability of distinguishing between the cries "Blessed be Mardoche!" and "Cursed be Haman!" (3) it appears probable. (4) In 436, in Imnestar, an Archdeacon was killed by Jews in an uprising. (5) Accusations of blasphemies against Christ and the Church continue at this time, and are found in St. Jerome, Theodoret, and the Codex. (6)

An uprising which, backfiring, brought the greatest woe to Jews was that of Alexandria under the Patriarchate of St. Cyril (ca. 414) recorded by Socrates. (7) Jews, aroused against a certain Christian

1. See Vernet, Vol. 1664-5; also J. Isaacs, p. 185. For Constantine see p.
2. St. Ambrose, Ep. 40. Section 15; Ꞟ P. L. 16-1107.
3. Isaacs, p. 185.
4. See Juster II, p 203-4.
5. For variance of views on all these happenings, see Juster II, p. 196-204; Vernet, Col. 1665; Isaacs, p. 184-5; Parkes, p. 185-7.
6. See Juster II, p. 207-9.
7. P. G. LSVII, Col. 759-766.



schoolmaster and threatened by St. Cyril, killed many Christians. On the morrow, Christians, encouraged by St. Cyril, attacked the Synagogues and killed as many Jews as they could find. The rest fled, putting an end to the age-old Alexandrian colony. (A few Jews were later allowed to return upon baptism, and Juster claims that a hundred years later some Jews reoccupied the city (1).)

The Christian record is no more enviable. Though Parkes claims it is worse, Simon observes that pogroms in this period are no more frequent than in the pagan era. With the exception of the savage murder of Hypatia, famous Jewish Neo-platonist philosopher, by fanatical Christian anchorites near Alexandria in 415, Christian anti-Jewish activities were limited to attacks upon Synagogues. They were numerous. Against these attacks, the law seemed impotent; from 373 to 423 no less than six laws were promulgated against them. Perhaps the most extraordinary and significant was that of Callinicum in Mesopotomia in 398, where a Christian mob, led by the bishop, incendiarized the Synagogue. The Emperor Theodosian ordered the Synagogue to be rebuilt by the bishop and the incendiarists to be punished. St. Ambrose intervened with a letter to the Emperor, (2) in which he vehemently chastized the Emperor for favoring the Synagogue, a place of unbelief, impiety, and insanity. Laws that protect them, the letter stated, are a wrong and should be annulled or disobeyed. The only reason he (St. Ambrose) did not burn the Synagogue of Milan is his own laziness. The imperial power, St. Ambrose asserts, must be used in the service of the faith. The Emperor, threatened with refusal of the Sacraments in the Cathedral itself, ceded before St. Ambrose, annulling his order. (3)

1. Juster II, p. 176.
2. P. L. SVI, p. 1101 ff.
3. See Juster I, p. 462; Parkes, p. 468; Isaacs, p. 166-7; Simon, p. 266-7.



Attacks continued in both provinces of the Empire throughout the end of the fourth and first half of the fifth centuries. In Dortona in Italy, with encouragement of the bishop, the Synagogue was destroyed and replaced by a Church. In Tipasa in Africa, the Synagogue was seized and turned into a Church. In Rome, the Synagogue was destroyed, but was ordered rebuilt by Maximius - an action to which St. Ambrose accredits his eventual downfall. At Antioch, the tomb of the Macchabees, with their relics, was converted into a Church. In the fifth century, in Edessa, a seizure took place, the bishop participating. In Magona in Minorcā, on the occasion of the feast of St. Stephen, a riot broke out during which the Synagogue was burned. About this period, Theodosius II ordered the restoration of a confiscated Synagogue, but was strongly reprimanded by St. Simon Stylites. This was also the time when in Palestine a group of monks under Barsauma, who in his youth had been hurt by the Jews, roved through Palestine, attacking Synagogues and occasionally massacring the Jews. (1)

Relations of Christians and Jews on the popular level apparently present a mixed character. That some degree of popular hostility to the Jews existed can be concluded from the attacks on Synagogues which, as M. Simon has pointed out, could not have been instigated by mere ecclesiastical fiat and without the aid of some strain of anti-Jewish feeling in the populace. (2) On the other hand, that a popular sympathy and respect for the Jews existed is equally certain. The close relations entertained by both peoples were, we have seen, a constant source of worry to their clergies. Jews,

1. See Parkes, p. 233, 236, 238; Isaacs, p. 190.
2. Verus Israel, P. 272-3.



actually, did not differ greatly from their neighbors in their habits and occupations. True, it was in this period that the accusation of Jewish addiction to commerce and cupidity was born. Saints Jerome, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria make the accusation.(1) But it does not seem that a disproportionate number of Jews were as yet in commerce or finance. The Patristic accusations are taken from polemical writings written from an ascetical point of view. (2) However, from this moment onward the Jews will be found in commercial enterprise in increasing proportions. The choice indeed was only partly theirs. The slavery laws, curial charges, exclusions from functions of government, the army, and the legal profession, and the incurrence of special taxes, all, drove them toward commerce in which they were proficient and their international connections in the Diaspora was of distinct aid. Jewish identification with commerce and finance was, nonetheless, still several centuries off.

By the middle of the fifth century the transformation of the Jewish situation was complete. The struggle with the Church was lost, Hellenistic Judaism was defunct; the national and cultural center was now in Babylonia; the Theodosian Code in the East and West fixed the limits beyond which Jews could not tread; and the Patriarchate was gone. In the eyes of the Church, the Jew was a guilt-laden unbeliever, resistant to grace, and destroyer of souls. To the Empire he was a citizen, protected by law, but merely tolerated, of second class. Before this menacing situation, the Synagogue was faced with a choice between further struggle with its concomitant risk of extinction or withdrawal into its Talmudic world wherein her spirit could be

1. Juster II, p. 312-3.

2. The Judaic attitude toward the earth and its goods differs from that of even Christian humanism (see Baron, Vol. I, p.           ), so that especially in the Patristic period when Christian asceticism and monasticism was in process of formation Jewish indulgence in earthly comforts appear to the Fathers as a laxity and a cupidity. See Juster II, p.           . Note this remark of St. Jerome: "The Jews...seek nothing but to have children, possess riches, and be healthy. They seek all earthly things, but think nothing of heavenly things: for this reason are they mercenaries." (Quoted in Juster II, p. 312. fn. 3) Lazave, Vol. II

preserved and the world outside ignored. The Babylonian Talmud, now complete, became her very heart and soul. Graetz, writing of this period, states: "For more than a thousand years the external world, nature and mankind, powers and events, were for the Jewish nation insignificant, non-essential, a mere phantom; the only true reality was the Talmud." (1) Jewish propaganda and proselytism will never fully disappear, but circumscribed by Talmudic legalism, they will be half-hearted as well as less successful. (2) A new era in the history of Judaism was at hand.

Did anti-Semitism exist in the Christian Empire? Was "Christian anti-Semitism" - a terminological contradiction in current use - a reality? An answer to these questions requires the same qualifications made for the first three centuries. (3) Essential theological differences, which for the Church necessarily entailed a rejection and critique of Judaism; legitimate defense against dangers to faith posed by Jews; and harsh words or deeds provoked by Jewish animosity or violence, all such, found in this period, cannot be termed anti-Semitic if the term is not to be emptied of meaning. Where these elements are present it is rather a question of anti-Judaism, an anti-Judaism which rejected Judaism as a way of salvation, not of an anti-Semitism which rejected her as a people. This anti-Judaism was purely theological. Perhaps the best evidence of the theological and non-anti-Semitic character of both the anti-Judaic teaching and legislation of the time was the relatively better position these conceded to Jews in contrast with heretics. Parks' motives cannot be suspect

1. *History of the Jews*, II, p. 634.
2. See *Verus Israel*, p. 437. (To be retained?)
3. See page 65.



when he writes: "Certainly so far as the fourth century is concerned, it was better to be a Jew than a heretic...(Anti-Jewish laws) were dictated as much by general conception as by specific hatred of the Jews, and even showed the Jew to be less hated than the heretic." Actually, heretics were exiled or executed and their books burned; Jews were protected by law and their Sacred Books revered. And upon baptism, Jews were accepted into the fold without qualification.

The customary attempt to explain this preference entirely as a result of the theological thesis that the Jews are a witness-people, destined to subsist, but in misery, in testimony to the Church, is unfounded. This theory was fully evolved only with St. Augustine, more than a century after the legislation of the Church and the Codex had commenced to protect and curb Jewish rights. There seems no sufficient reason to doubt the motives supplied in the Codex itself for Judaism's special status: respect for Judaism (1), a concession of tolerance (2), and the antiquity of Jewish privileges (3). The theologian will see in the preference a survival of the original Pauline tradition of Judaism's special estate. (4) The witness-people theory was actually a theological hypothesis constructed to account for the worsening of Judaism's status in face of the improving situation of the Church that took place simultaneously in the fourth and early fifth centuries; a hypothesis to which certain Scriptural texts seemed to lend themselves. It was a hypothesis quickly made into a matter of principle, whereby the relative situation of Church and Synagogue was to be preserved, if not further modified to the detriment of Judaism.

1. The witness-people theory, true, was first broached in Lactantius but gained no currency until Augustine's elaboration. See Isaacs, p. 168; also Juster I, p. 227.

2. Codex: 16-8-20

3. Ibid. 16-8-3 & 20.

4. Rom. IX to XI.



But over and above the Church's essentially theological anti-Judaism are there elements in this period that can be categorized as anti-Semitic? It would be difficult to deny it. They form, in fact, a heterogeneous complex. In the first place, though in new dress, pagan anti-Semitism lived on in the Christian populace, both in the plebs and the upper classes. Pogroms now became attacks on Synagogues, and old charges appeared in new theological setting. Jews were what the pagan authors said they were but for different reasons: their "impiety" or "atheism" was now their rejection of the Church; their "hatred of mankind," now their hatred of Christians; Jews were still carnal, but now because they rejected Christian asceticism; and so forth. Occasionally, a verbatim repetition occurs, as when St. John Chrysostom describes Jews in the terms of Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians, as the "pests of the universe." (1) The continuity between pagan anti-Semitism and Christian anti-Judaism is patent.

Further signs of anti-Semitism took the form of stretching orthodox Christian teachings. The Church's belief that Judaism, unfaithful to her calling, was rejected as a vessel of universal salvation, for example, was, by selective and figurative use of the Scriptures, converted into the theme that the Jews were always a wicked and despicable people, rejected by God from the beginning, and prepared as if by force for the murder of Christ. (2) The denunciations of Israel by the ancient prophets - their loving solicitude subtracted - were brought to bear, particularly by the apologists of the fourth century, upon contemporary Jewry without discrimination. Unnoticeably,

1. Verus Israel, p. 249
2. See Verus Israel, passim.



the ancient chastisement of the Jews as a religious instrument was visited upon all Jews, upon Jews as persons or a people, as, for example, in the vilification of a Chrysostom. The blackening of the Jews as an ethnic group thus became part of a particular type of apologetics and a method of combatting the Judaizing phenomenon.

The most ominous development for the history of anti-Semitism in Christian antiquity was without question the definitive elaboration of the theme of a divine curse or punishment for the Jews' role in the Crucifixion of Christ. (1) The theme, broached in the third century (2), reached its apogee in the fourth. Judaism's rapidly deteriorating socio-political situation gave more weight to the opinion that Israel's rejection as the vessel of salvation entailed an endless future of punitive socio-political conditions. St. John Chrysostom, whose influence was great, added much authority to this by making it central to his theology of Judaism (3). He was particularly impressed in this reference by the miraculous failure of Julian the Apostate to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem in 363. (4) This event, reported by all historians of the time, he interpreted as a direct intervention of God to perpetuate Judaism's punishment (5) and as a fulfillment of New Testament texts (6) which, clearly prophesying the fall of Jerusalem, were made to envisage an endless state of misery for the Jews. A study of Chrysostom's thought shows that this view, as in the case of other Fathers also, was not acquired by Scriptural exegesis, but "was a purely subjective conviction, indeed a posteriori proof based on the fact of Julian's failure." (7) After Chrysostom the theme gained wide

1. See p. . See also Poliakov op cit p. 39 ss. who accepts the designation of this doctrine as "theological anti-Semitism."
2. See p. .
3. On the influence of the Apostate's failure on another aspect of the subject, that is, the perpetual exile of the Jews, see the author's article in The Bridge, Vol. 3, p. 308 ss.
4. See PG 48:834, 835, and 888, and passim. See also Chrysostom's sixth sermon, passim. Verus Israel, p. 259.
5. It has been pointed out that the apologists who adopted this line of reasoning ignored the fact of the Church's own bitter conditions in the first three centuries, the origin of Judaism's dispersion several centuries before Christ, and also the continuing presence of Jews in Jerusalem and Palestine after the destructions of 70 and 135; see Simon op cit p. .
6. Principally, Mt. 24, 15-16; 23, 28-9; Lk. 21, 24.
7. Op cit p. 309. These words applied by the author to the origin of the belief in the perpetual exile of the Jews as a punishment for the Crucifixion may be repeated of the present theme.

currency and, although never a universal dogmatic tradition in the Church, seriously rivaled the primary Petrine and Pauline tradition of divine forgiveness of Israel's sin. (1) For centuries to come it would supply a pseudo-theological basis for myriad insults, superstitious fears, and atrocities against the Jews. Thanks to it misguided men, by a "blasphemous impersonation of Divine Providence," according to Maritain's eloquent phrase, (2) would consider themselves called to assist the Almighty in effectuating His curse, and free to indulge their hostilities with a divine seal of approval.

Finally, the anti-Semitism of this epoch was, as in the case of pagan antiquity, a reaction - reaction against a vibrant and aggressive Judaism with its resultant Judaizing among the Christian faithful. It is not an anti-Semitism to be rooted in the Scriptures or in orthodox Christian doctrine (3) but rather in pastoral efforts of alarmed shepherds of the flock, who in their daily ministrations, resorted to means all too human, to find, in M. Simon's apt description, a therapeutic against the Jewish contagion. (4)

1. See pp. .
2. J. Maritain (look up)
3. The commenters who root anti-Semitism in Christian Scripture and teaching fail to distinguish between essential and legitimate theological anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism.
4. "...Dans cette perspective, ou le mal juif est une contagion, l'antisemitisme represente une therapeutique." Verus Israel, p. 273.



semi-final

## Chapter IV

### SHIFTING FORTUNES

The Middle Ages do not mean the same thing to Christian and Jew. For the latter they not only began earlier and ended later but assumed a reverse direction to the general current of history. The earlier period, often called the Dark Age, was for Jews one of shifting fortunes but on the whole relatively tolerable. With the advent of the latter, the golden mediæval era, the dark night of Judaism began.

The earlier period, from the fifth to the eleventh century exhibited a world in travail. Confusion reigned as the old civilization and new barbaric elements strove to meld. The great Roman Empire in atrophy, ceaseless barbarian invasions, Persian wars, and Moslem encirclement - such were the elements of disarray from which the Church, sole adequate unifying principle extant, would mold the unity that would be Christian Europe. In the task she received aid from a mere handful of strong leaders, a Theodoric, Justinian, St. Gregory, a Charlemagne. In their absence - save St. Gregory - she often found the mantle of temporal as well as spiritual governance thrust upon her; in their presence, her spiritual authority infringed upon.

Judaism's situation presented a picture as chaotic as that of the times. Little can be said that applies to all Jewries or to the whole period. Hence the necessity of following the vagaries of Jewish fortunes from West to East, from Gaul to Spain, Persia to Arabia, where their prosperity or degradation depended as much on the will of king, pope, caliph, bishop, council, noble, or mob as on law.

Recalcitrant to the emerging social unity, Jews received special attention almost everywhere. Jewish-Gentile animosities were scattered through this period, but by and large relations on the popular and often the ecclesiastical and political level were good.

The thread of historical continuity leads, at this juncture, from Rome, now in barbarian hands, to Byzantium, where the old Empire still subsisted precariously under a rule of Emperors of a divine-right stamp, as interested in spiritual affairs as in things of state. Throughout the fifth century and into the sixth the Theodosian legislation regulated Jewish affairs, but not with complete success. Jews resented and opposed its restrictive statutes; Christians often ignored those protective of Jewish rights; and occasional disorders resulted.

Violence of Jews (1) against an archdeacon at Laodicea and a Samaritan uprising are reported. At Antioch many conflicts occurred, as this city replaced Alexandria as the center of Jewish-Gentile hostilities in the East. This was the time, moreover, when the "Blues" and the "Greens," rioting Christian factions, appeared on the scene, at whose hands Jews often suffered violence. During the reign of Emperor Zeno, they were massacred and their Synagogue at Daphne was burned together with the bones of their dead, a deed which prompted from the Emperor the remark that it would have been better to burn live Jews instead. Jews, meanwhile, were not inactive. Severus, the Patriarch of Antioch, confessed his "fear of the Jews" and complained of "their outrages." Jews, apparently, took advantage of the violent rivalry of the "Blues" and the "Greens" to indulge their vengeance of the moment

1. Caution is required in interpreting the word "Jew" here. Parkes tends to believe that the "Jews" in the Laodicea incident were Nestorians, but with little evidence. This was, in truth, a period when the term took on a pejorative and extended meaning. Nestorians and Monophysites of any origin were intentionally called "Jews." The figurative meaning of the word, begun at this epoch, would have a varied history reaching the present time. See Baron III, pp. 5-7; and Parkes, p. 239.



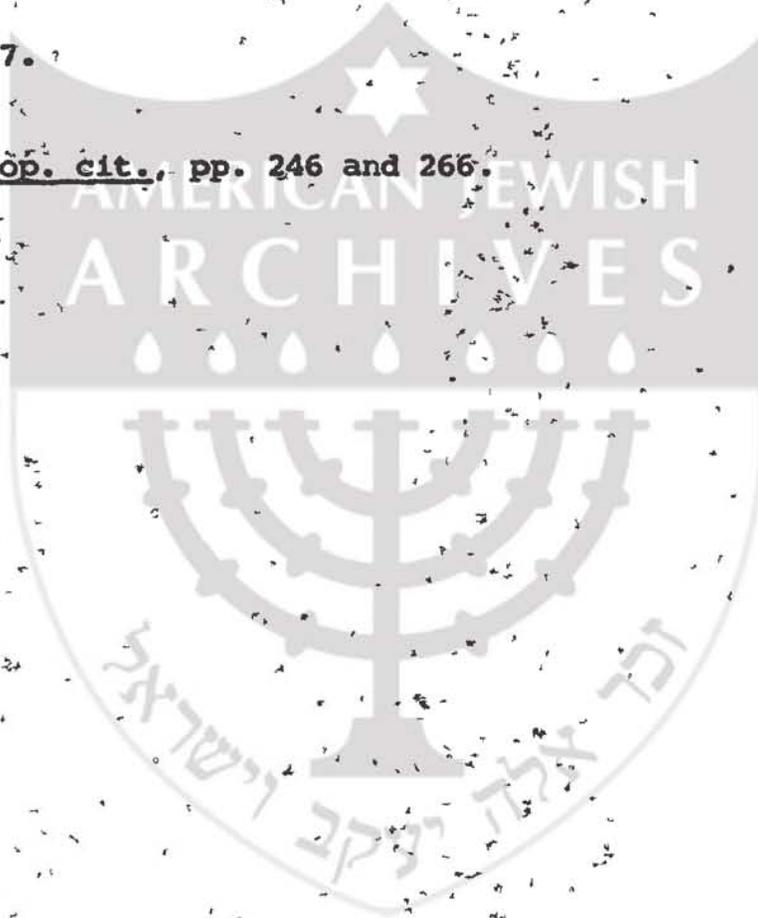
by taking sides. At the start of the sixth century, under Anastatius, Jews again were massacred by the "Greens" and their Synagogue was burned. Violence is recorded of Jews in Constantinople, who there too took sides in the intestine struggles of Christians. Attacks on Synagogues continued but apparently at a slower pace. John of Ephesus boasted of converting seven of them into Churches. And a monk of Amida named Sergius incited a mob and burned down a Synagogue, in the wake of which a veritable contest of Church and Synagogue burning and building ensued. A word here may be said of the monks of this period, who so offend the modern concept of the monastic. Apparently they surpassed all in anti-Jewish and anti-heretical violence. Neither Church nor state could restrain them. Emperors Arcadius and Theodosius II legislated against them in the Codes (1) in a fruitless effort to restrain them and keep them out of the cities. Though this brand of monastic lawlessness was peculiar to the early medieval East, unfortunately it found further sporadic examples until the beginning of modern times. (2)

Of paramount import for the destiny of Judaism was the formulation of the Justinian Code in the mid-sixth century. This legislation seriously aggravated the situation of Jews and their 'served' as inspiration not only for future anti-Jewish measures in the East, such as the Eclogues of Leo the Isaurian and the recensions of Basil in the eighth century, but even for others in the later medieval West. (3) Of the 50 odd statutes of the Theodosian Code touching Judaism Justinian retained less than half, eliminating many of those protective of Jewish

1. C. Theod. 16, 3, 1-2; C. Just. 1, 3, 32.

2. For the violences of this period see Juster II, p. 201; also I, p. 469; Parkes, pp. 243-4, 264, and 267; Isaacs, pp. 202-3 and 219; Graetz III, pp. 10-11 and 17.

3. See Parkes op. cit., pp. 246 and 266.



rights, notably, that conceding Judaism legal existence (1) - but also many of the insulting references to the Jewish religion. In almost all areas of Jewish life the Code entered further disabilities: the slavery laws were tightened (a Jew absolutely could not own a Christian slave); Jewish property rights were narrowed; Jews were barred from public functions, excepting the burdensome decurionate, and also from the practice of law; they were prevented from testifying against a Christian. (2)

The most extraordinary innovation of the Code was the hand it lay on Jewish cult. As Justinian, Emperor by divine-right, did for the Church, so he would do for the Synagogue: see that it functioned properly. The Synagogue must not celebrate their Passover before the Christian Easter. (Thus ended the concelebration of these feasts by Judaizers.) More remarkable again were the injunctions of the famous Novella 146 (3) whereby, in response to a suit by a Jewish party, the Emperor decreed that the Bible used in Synagogue services be read in Greek or the vernacular, not in Hebrew, as the traditionalist Rabbis would have it; that the Septuagint or the Aquila translations only be used; that the Mischna, or oral teaching, be eliminated; that those who disbelieve in the resurrection and last judgement or the existence of angels be excommunicated and put to death. Scholars interpret this fantastic incursion into theology differently: some, as a new frontier of anti-Jewish persecution (4); others, as an awkward but sincere attempt to make the Jews convert themselves. Thus, Parkes, who says quaintly: "His law is not 'anti-Semitic.' It is 'grandmotherly'...There is a

1. Supra, p.
2. See Justinian Code
3. See Juster I, pp. 369-77.
4. See Isaacs, pp. 201-2.



more truly Christian spirit behind it than there is behind most of the contemporary legislation. Toleration could not in that age be expected to go further." (1) Be that as it may, by such legislation Justinian prepared the way for encroachments on Jewish rights that its Theodosian predecessor would never have countenanced. Stripping Judaism of its explicit legality, he opened the way for abuses such as that in Borton in the North Africa in 335, where Judaism was outlawed, Synagogues closed, and Jews forced into baptism. Though exceptional, this action was an ominous precedent that left the Jew without legal recourse and reduced him to the level of the heretic, whose lot still compared unfavorably with that of the Jews. The banning of the Mischna, moreover, prefigured the burnings of the Talmud that the 13th century would usher in.

Justinian's excursions into theology did not bring the intended results; quite the contrary. Exasperated, Jews and Samaritans (who were more severely treated) made common cause and massacred Christians at Caesarea in 556 and destroyed their Churches, but were cruelly punished by Justinian's legate. A half century later, under Phocas, the Jews of Antioch killed many Christians, burned their bodies, and dragged the Patriarch Anastatius through the streets before killing him. Some observers exonerate the Jews in the murder of the Patriarch, but all accept their active participation. More serious was Jewish complicity in the Persian invasions of Kosru II in the reign of Heraclius at the beginning of the seventh century. Animated by vengeance against their traditional enemies, Rome and the Church,

1. See Parkes, pp. 253-4.



smarting under the oppressions of Justinian's Code, and hopeful of regaining control of the Holy City, they organized under Benjamin of Tiberias to join the Persian invader, aiding him to lay waste to Christian homes and churches and assisting at the fall of Jerusalem (614). Thirty thousand Christians are said to have perished and, though it is unquestionable that the Jews aided in the slaughter, it is doubtless legendary that they purchased thirty thousand from the Persians for the purpose of massacre. Following the fall of the City, Jews over-ran Palestine attacking Christians and their churches. At the behest of Jewish inhabitants of Tyre, an army of Jews marched on that city and during its seige destroyed many churches. The besieged Christians retaliated by beheading 100 Jews for every church destroyed.(1)

Jerusalem remained in Persian and Jewish hands for 14 years, until Heraclius retook it in 628. Disaffected by the Persian reluctance to concede them a greater rule of the City, Jews formed an alliance with Heraclius in his campaign to regain the Holy Land from the Persians. The alliance did not prevent him - released by the Patriarch Modestus from his oath not to punish the Jews for their anti-Christian violence - from executing many of them and reinstating the old ban on Jews in Jerusalem. In 632? he decreed that all Jews be baptised. This astounding attempt to solidarize the Empire by forced conversions brought its usual, opposite results. As the armies of Islam advanced on the Christian East, a few years later, Jews, baptised or not, received them as welcome avengers.

FOOTNOTES PAGE 99

1. See Parkes, pp. 257-263; Isaacs, pp. 210-16; Baron III, pp. 18-24; and Graetz III, pp. 18-23.



The practice of forced baptisms opened a new and depressing chapter in the history of Judaism and Christendom. Heraclius was not the first to try it in the East. His predecessors, Mauritius and Phocas, are accused of it, as are also his successors, Leo the Isaurian in the sixth century, Basil I in the ninth century, and Romanos I in the tenth. And the West will, we shall see, supply a listing of its own. Heraclius' motivation was primarily political. So closely knit to Christianity was the medieval socio-political order that Jewish disbelief was considered something of a crime against the state. Their connivance with the enemies of orthodox Christianity - Goths, Persians, and Muslims - tended to confirm this view. Convinced of his divine right to control consciences, possessed of a false notion of the efficacy of the sacraments, alarmed by the threat infidel nations posed on the Empire's borders, the Emperor proposed in desperation to impress upon his dominions by spiritual coercion a unity that persuasive measures had failed to achieve. The story is told that he had been warned through a dream that his Empire would be destroyed by an uncircumcised people. Turning upon the Jews, he was apparently oblivious of the uncircumcised Arabs all but at his gates. The results of his imposition of baptism were meager to his purpose. His Jewish subjects fell, as a consequence, into three categories: steadfast Jews willing to face death or exile rather than apostasize; tepid Jews happy to reap advantage as tepid Christians; and crypto-Jews who ever convinced of their Judaism simulated Christianity. The latter sided with the steadfast in moments of imperial crisis to join the Empire's

enemies, seeking relief from an observance they had never truly accepted. These early "Marranos" became a bane to the state and an abomination to the Church. The Church's opposition to forced baptisms had been made plain a generation earlier by Pope St. Gregory, who in a letter to the bishops of Arles and Marseilles, where it was reported that Jews were forced into baptism, wrote: "When anyone is brought to the baptismal font by compulsion rather than by the gentleness of instruction, and returns to his former superstition, he suffers the more grievous loss from the very cause that seemed to be his initiation into a new life." (1) The second general council of Nicaea later decreed that all baptised Jews who lapsed were to be treated as Jews, thus removing the temptation to simulate Christianity for advantage. The Church's prohibition, which was reiterated many times during the next millenium, seemed powerless against the deep medieval drive toward religious and cultural unity. The history of forced conversion would be long, heartrending, and bloodstained, and reach its high point many centuries later in Marranist Spain before coming to a close on the rise of the modern era.

From the seventh to the eleventh century Jewish stocks in the East continued to vary widely. Though Judaism was no longer explicitly recognized as a religio-licita, it remained nonetheless so in practice. The Justinian Code remained the chief basis of its rights and restraints, but further developments in the Eclogues of Leo stiffened restrictions on public office-holding, slave trading, and proselytism. Imperial policies also varied, stretching from the

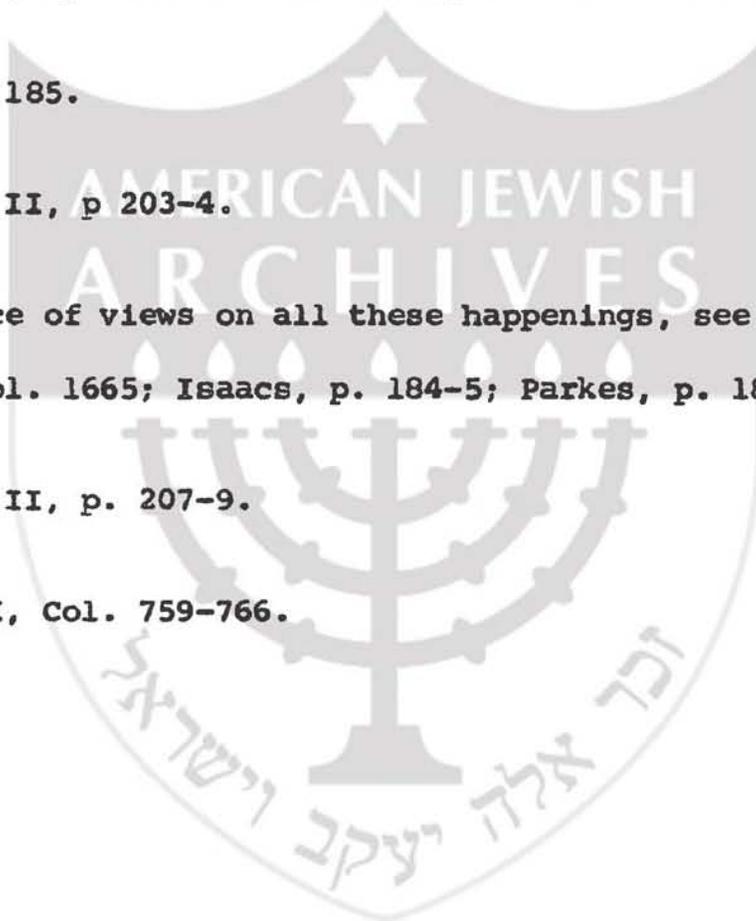
possessed of a "inveterate hatred." (1) In effect, many reported happenings go to give substance to the accusations.

The Jews lived up to their reputation for sedition and tumult. Under Constantius, at Dioceserea in Palestine, they rose, massacred the Romans, and attempted to extend hostilities to the whole of Palestine. In reprisal they were massacred themselves, and Diocaesarea and other Jewish cities were destroyed. Under St. Athanasius, in Alexandria, Jews joined rioting Arians against the Saint, who was at once political and religious leader of the city. During Julian's short reign (361-2?) Jews aided the pagan reaction against the Christian Empire and, according to St. Athanasius, they burned several churches. (2) They took part in the Persian persecutions of Shapur II, in which Archbishop Simeon of Ctesiphon was killed. At Imnestar in 415, on the occasion of Purim celebrations, Jews, intoxicated by wine, fastened a Christian child to a Cross and murdered him. This monstrous act is reported by the historian Socrates, whose account some doubt but in view of the previous ban of 408 against insults to the Cross at Purim and the allowance of the Talmud for drinking at these celebrations to the point of incapability of distinguishing between the cries "Blessed be Mardoche!" and "Cursed be Haman!" (3) it appears probable. (4) In 436, in Imnestar, an Archdeacon was killed by Jews in an uprising. (5) Accusations of blasphemies against Christ and the Church continue at this time, and are found in St. Jerome, Theodoret, and the Codex. (6)

An uprising which, backfiring, brought the greatest woe to Jews was that of Alexandria under the Patriarchate of St. Cyril (ca. 414) recorded by Socrates. (7) Jews, aroused against a certain Christian

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1. See Vernet, Vol. 1664-5; also J. Isaacs, p. 185. For Constantine see p.
2. St. Ambrose, Ep. 40. Section 15; Ʇ P. L. 16-1107.
3. Isaacs, p. 185.
4. See Juster II, p 203-4.
5. For variance of views on all these happenings, see Juster II, p. 196-204; Vernet, Col. 1665; Isaacs, p. 184-5; Parkes, p. 185-7.
6. See Juster II, p. 207-9.
7. P. G. LSVII, Col. 759-766.



schoolmaster and threatened by St. Cyril, killed many Christians. On the morrow, Christians, encouraged by St. Cyril, attacked the Synagogues and killed as many Jews as they could find. The rest fled, putting an end to the age-old Alexandrian colony. (A few Jews were later allowed to return upon baptism, and Juster claims that a hundred years later some Jews reoccupied the city (1).)

The Christian record is no more enviable. Though Parkes claims it is worse, Simon observes that pogroms in this period are no more frequent than in the pagan era. With the exception of the savage murder of Hypatia, famous Jewish Neo-platonist philosopher, by fanatical Christian anchorites near Alexandria in 415, Christian anti-Jewish activities were limited to attacks upon Synagogues. They were numerous. Against these attacks, the law seemed impotent; from 373 to 423 no less than six laws were promulgated against them. Perhaps the most extraordinary and significant was that of Callinicum in Mesopotomia in 398, where a Christian mob, led by the bishop, incendiarized the Synagogue. The Emperor Theodosian ordered the Synagogue to be rebuilt by the bishop and the incendiarists to be punished. St. Ambrose intervened with a letter to the Emperor, (2) in which he vehemently chastized the Emperor for favoring the Synagogue, a place of unbelief, impiety, and insanity. Laws that protect them, the letter stated, are a wrong and should be annulled or disobeyed. The only reason he (St. Ambrose) did not burn the Synagogue of Milan is his own laziness. The imperial power, St. Ambrose asserts, must be used in the service of the faith. The Emperor, threatened with refusal of the Sacraments in the Cathedral itself, ceded before St. Ambrose, annulling his order. (3)

1. Juster II, p. 176.
2. P. L. SVI, p. 1101 ff.
3. See Juster I, p. 462; Parkes, p. 468; Isaacs, p. 166-7; Simon, p. 266-7.



Attacks continued in both provinces of the Empire throughout the end of the fourth and first half of the fifth centuries. In Dortona in Italy, with encouragement of the bishop, the Synagogue was destroyed and replaced by a Church. In Tipasa in Africa, the Synagogue was seized and turned into a Church. In Rome, the Synagogue was destroyed, but was ordered rebuilt by Maximius - an action to which St. Ambrose accredits his eventual downfall. At Antioch, the tomb of the Macchabees, with their relics, was converted into a Church. In the fifth century, in Edessa, a seizure took place, the bishop participating. In Magona in Minorca, on the occasion of the feast of St. Stephen, a riot broke out during which the Synagogue was burned. About this period, Theodosius II ordered the restoration of a confiscated Synagogue, but was strongly reprimanded by St. Simon Stylites. This was also the time when in Palestine a group of monks under Barsauma, who in his youth had been hurt by the Jews, roved through Palestine, attacking Synagogues and occasionally massacring the Jews. (1)

Relations of Christians and Jews on the popular level apparently present a mixed character. That some degree of popular hostility to the Jews existed can be concluded from the attacks on Synagogues which, as M. Simon has pointed out, could not have been instigated by mere ecclesiastical fiat and without the aid of some strain of anti-Jewish feeling in the populace. (2) On the other hand, that a popular sympathy and respect for the Jews existed is equally certain. The close relations entertained by both peoples were, we have seen, a constant source of worry to their clergies. Jews,

1. See Parkes, p. 233, 236, 238; Isaacs, p. 190.
2. Verus Israel, P. 272-3.



actually, did not differ greatly from their neighbors in their habits and occupations. True, it was in this period that the accusation of Jewish addiction to commerce and cupidity was born. Saints Jerome, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria make the accusation.(1) But it does not seem that a disproportionate number of Jews were as yet in commerce or finance. The Patristic accusations are taken from polemical writings written from an ascetical point of view. (2) However, from this moment onward the Jews will be found in commercial enterprise in increasing proportions. The choice indeed was only partly theirs. The slavery laws, curial charges, exclusions from functions of government, the army, and the legal profession, and the incurrence of special taxes, all, drove them toward commerce in which they were proficient and their international connections in the Diaspora was of distinct aid. Jewish identification with commerce and finance was, nonetheless, still several centuries off.

By the middle of the fifth century the transformation of the Jewish situation was complete. The struggle with the Church was lost, Hellenistic Judaism was defunct; the national and cultural center was now in Babylonia; the Theodosian Code in the East and West fixed the limits beyond which Jews could not tread; and the Patriarchate was gone. In the eyes of the Church, the Jew was a guilt-laden unbeliever, resistant to grace, and destroyer of souls. To the Empire he was a citizen, protected by law, but merely tolerated, of second class. Before this menacing situation, the Synagogue was faced with a choice between further struggle with its concomitant risk of extinction or withdrawal into its Talmudic world wherein her spirit could be

1. Juster II, p. 312-3.

2. The Judaic attitude toward the earth and its goods differs from that of even Christian humanism (see Baron, Vol. I, p.           ), so that especially in the Patristic period when Christian asceticism and monasticism was in process of formation Jewish indulgence in earthly comforts appear to the Fathers as a laxity and a cupidity. See Juster II, p.           . Note this remark of St. Jerome: "The Jews...seek nothing but to have children, possess riches, and be healthy. They seek all earthly things, but think nothing of heavenly things: for this reason are they mercenaries." (Quoted in Juster II, p. 312. fn. 3) Lazave, Vol. II

preserved and the world outside ignored. The Babylonian Talmud, now complete, became her very heart and soul. Graetz, writing of this period, states: "For more than a thousand years the external world, nature and mankind, powers and events, were for the Jewish nation insignificant, non-essential, a mere phantom; the only true reality was the Talmud." (1) Jewish propaganda and proselytism will never fully disappear, but circumscribed by Talmudic legalism, they will be half-hearted as well as less successful. (2) A new era in the history of Judaism was at hand.

Did anti-Semitism exist in the Christian Empire? Was "Christian anti-Semitism" - a terminological contradiction in current use - a reality? An answer to these questions requires the same qualifications made for the first three centuries. (3) Essential theological differences, which for the Church necessarily entailed a rejection and critique of Judaism; legitimate defense against dangers to faith posed by Jews; and harsh words or deeds provoked by Jewish animosity or violence, all such, found in this period, cannot be termed anti-Semitic if the term is not to be emptied of meaning. Where these elements are present it is rather a question of anti-Judaism, an anti-Judaism which rejected Judaism as a way of salvation, not of an anti-Semitism which rejected her as a people. This anti-Judaism was purely theological. Perhaps the best evidence of the theological and non-anti-Semitic character of both the anti-Judaic teaching and legislation of the time was the relatively better position these conceded to Jews in contrast with heretics. Parks' motives cannot be suspect

1. *History of the Jews*, II, p. 634.
2. See *Verus Israel*, p. 437. (To be retained?)
3. See page 65.



when he writes: "Certainly so far as the fourth century is concerned, it was better to be a Jew than a heretic...(Anti-Jewish laws) were dictated as much by general conception as by specific hatred of the Jews, and even showed the Jew to be less hated than the heretic." Actually, heretics were exiled or executed and their books burned; Jews were protected by law and their Sacred Books revered. And upon baptism, Jews were accepted into the fold without qualification.

The customary attempt to explain this preference entirely as a result of the theological thesis that the Jews are a witness-people, destined to subsist, but in misery, in testimony to the Church, is unfounded. This theory was fully evolved only with St. Augustine, more than a century after the legislation of the Church and the Codex had commenced to protect and curb Jewish rights. There seems no sufficient reason to doubt the motives supplied in the Codex itself for Judaism's special status: respect for Judaism (1), a concession of tolerance (2), and the antiquity of Jewish privileges (3). The theologian will see in the preference a survival of the original Pauline tradition of Judaism's special estate. (4) The witness-people theory was actually a theological hypothesis constructed to account for the worsening of Judaism's status in face of the improving situation of the Church that took place simultaneously in the fourth and early fifth centuries; a hypothesis to which certain Scriptural texts seemed to lend themselves. It was a hypothesis quickly made into a matter of principle, whereby the relative situation of Church and Synagogue was to be preserved, if not further modified to the detriment of Judaism.

1. The witness-people theory, true, was first broached in Lactantius but gained no currency until Augustine's elaboration. See Isaacs, p. 168; also Juster I, p. 227.

2. Codex: 16-8-20

3. Ibid. 16-8-3 & 20.

4. Rom. IX to XI.



But over and above the Church's essentially theological anti-Judaism are there elements in this period that can be categorized as anti-Semitic? It would be difficult to deny it. They form, in fact, a heterogeneous complex. In the first place, though in new dress, pagan anti-Semitism lived on in the Christian populace, both in the plebs and the upper classes. Pogroms now became attacks on Synagogues, and old charges appeared in new theological setting. Jews were what the pagan authors said they were but for different reasons: their "impiety" or "atheism" was now their rejection of the Church; their "hatred of mankind," now their hatred of Christians; Jews were still carnal, but now because they rejected Christian asceticism; and so forth. Occasionally, a verbatim repetition occurs, as when St. John Chrysostom describes Jews in the terms of Claudius' letter to the Alexandrians, as the "pests of the universe." (1) The continuity between pagan anti-Semitism and Christian anti-Judaism is patent.

Further signs of anti-Semitism took the form of stretching orthodox Christian teachings. The Church's belief that Judaism, unfaithful to her calling, was rejected as a vessel of universal salvation, for example, was, by selective and figurative use of the Scriptures, converted into the theme that the Jews were always a wicked and despicable people, rejected by God from the beginning, and prepared as if by force for the murder of Christ. (2) The denunciations of Israel by the ancient prophets - their loving solicitude subtracted - were brought to bear, particularly by the apologists of the fourth century, upon contemporary Jewry without discrimination. Unnoticeably,

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1. Verus Israel, p. 249
2. See Verus Israel, passim.



the ancient chastisement of the Jews as a religious instrument was visited upon all Jews, upon Jews as persons or a people, as, for example, in the vilification of a Chrysostom. The blackening of the Jews as an ethnic group thus became part of a particular type of apologetics and a method of combatting the Judaizing phenomenon.

The most ominous development for the history of anti-Semitism in Christian antiquity was without question the definitive elaboration of the theme of a divine curse or punishment for the Jews' role in the Crucifixion of Christ. (1) The theme, broached in the third century (2), reached its apogee in the fourth. Judaism's rapidly deteriorating socio-political situation gave more weight to the opinion that Israel's rejection as the vessel of salvation entailed an endless future of punitive socio-political conditions. St. John Chrysostom, whose influence was great, added much authority to this by making it central to his theology of Judaism (3). He was particularly impressed in this reference by the miraculous failure of Julian the Apostate to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem in 363. (4) This event, reported by all historians of the time, he interpreted as a direct intervention of God to perpetuate Judaism's punishment (5) and as a fulfillment of New Testament texts (6) which, clearly prophesying the fall of Jerusalem, were made to envisage an endless state of misery for the Jews. A study of Chrysostom's thought shows that this view, as in the case of other Fathers also, was not acquired by Scriptural exegesis, but "was a purely subjective conviction, indeed a posteriori proof based on the fact of Julian's failure." (7) After Chrysostom the theme gained wide

1. See p. . See also Poliakov op cit p. 39 ss. who accepts the designation of this doctrine as "theological anti-Semitism."
2. See p. .
3. On the influence of the Apostate's failure on another aspect of the subject, that is, the perpetual exile of the Jews, see the author's article in The Bridge, Vol. 3, p. 308 ss.
4. See PG 48:834, 835, and 888, and passim. See also Chrysostom's sixth sermon, passim. Verus Israel, p. 259.
5. It has been pointed out that the apologists who adopted this line of reasoning ignored the fact of the Church's own bitter conditions in the first three centuries, the origin of Judaism's dispersion several centuries before Christ, and also the continuing presence of Jews in Jerusalem and Palestine after the destructions of 70 and 135; see Simon op cit p. .
6. Principally, Mt. 24, 15-16; 23, 28-9; Lk. 21, 24.
7. Op cit p. 309. These words applied by the author to the origin of the belief in the perpetual exile of the Jews as a punishment for the Crucifixion may be repeated of the present theme.

currency and, although never a universal dogmatic tradition in the Church, seriously rivaled the primary Petrine and Pauline tradition of divine forgiveness of Israel's sin. (1) For centuries to come it would supply a pseudo-theological basis for myriad insults, superstitious fears, and atrocities against the Jews. Thanks to it misguided men, by a "blasphemous impersonation of Divine Providence," according to Maritain's eloquent phrase, (2) would consider themselves called to assist the Almighty in effectuating His curse, and free to indulge their hostilities with a divine seal of approval.

Finally, the anti-Semitism of this epoch was, as in the case of pagan antiquity, a reaction - reaction against a vibrant and aggressive Judaism with its resultant Judaizing among the Christian faithful. It is not an anti-Semitism to be rooted in the Scriptures or in orthodox Christian doctrine (3) but rather in pastoral efforts of alarmed shepherds of the flock, who in their daily ministrations, resorted to means all too human, to find, in M. Simon's apt description, a therapeutic against the Jewish contagion. (4)

1. See pp. .
2. J. Maritain (look up)
3. The commenters who root anti-Semitism in Christian Scripture and teaching fail to distinguish between essential and legitimate theological anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism.
4. "...Dans cette perspective, ou le mal juif est une contagion, l'antisemitisme represente une therapeutique." Verus Israel, p. 273.



*semi-final*

Chapter IV

SHIFTING FORTUNES

The Middle Ages do not mean the same thing to Christian and Jew. For the latter they not only began earlier and ended later but assumed a reverse direction to the general current of history. The earlier period, often called the Dark Age, was for Jews one of shifting fortunes but on the whole relatively tolerable. With the advent of the latter, the golden medieval era, the dark night of Judaism began.

The earlier period, from the fifth to the eleventh century exhibited a world in travail. Confusion reigned as the old civilization and new barbaric elements strove to meld. The great Roman Empire in atrophy, ceaseless barbarian invasions, Persian wars, and Moslem encirclement - such were the elements of disarray from which the Church, sole adequate unifying principle extant, would mold the unity that would be Christian Europe. In the task she received aid from a mere handful of strong leaders, a Theodoric, Justinian, St. Gregory, a Charlemagne. In their absence - save St. Gregory - she often found the mantle of temporal as well as spiritual governance thrust upon her; in their presence, her spiritual authority infringed upon.

Judaism's situation presented a picture as chaotic as that of the times. Little can be said that applies to all Jewries or to the whole period. Hence the necessity of following the vagaries of Jewish fortunes from West to East, from Gaul to Spain, Persia to Arabia, where their prosperity or degradation depended as much on the will of king, pope, caliph, bishop, council, noble, or mob as on law.

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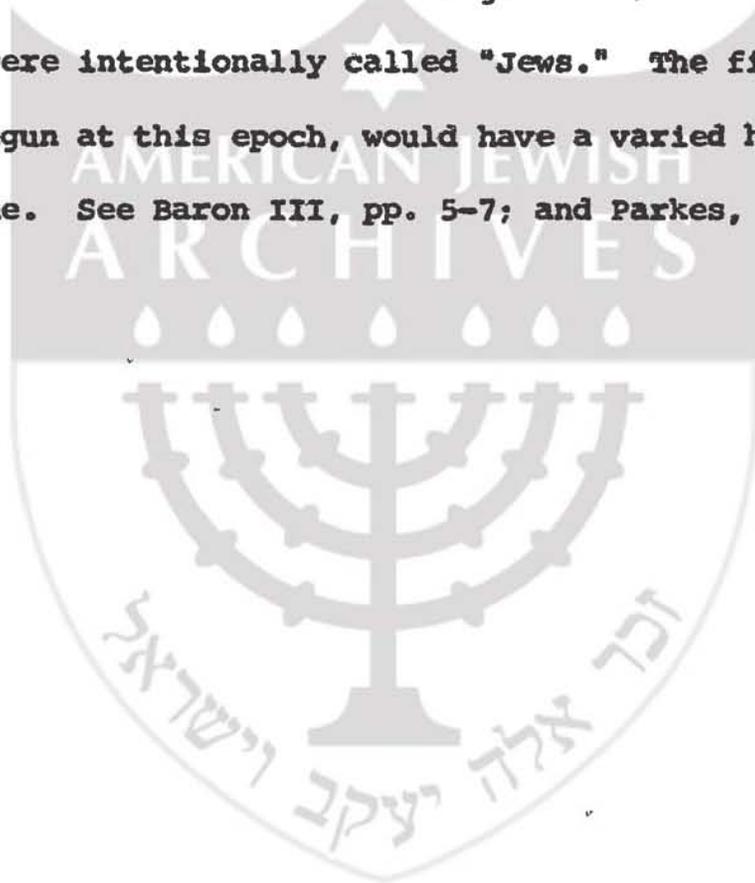
(P.L., P.G., M.E.H., Codes.)

Recalcitrant to the emerging social unity, Jews received special attention almost everywhere. Jewish-Gentile animosities were scattered through this period, but by and large relations on the popular and often the ecclesiastical and political level were good.

The thread of historical continuity leads, at this juncture, from Rome, now in barbarian hands, to Byzantium, where the old Empire still subsisted precariously under a rule of Emperors of a divine-right stamp, as interested in spiritual affairs as in things of state. Throughout the fifth century and into the sixth the Theodosian legislation regulated Jewish affairs, but not with complete success. Jews resented and opposed its restrictive statutes; Christians often ignored those protective of Jewish rights; and occasional disorders resulted.

Violence of Jews (1) against an archdeacon at Laodicea and a Samaritan uprising are reported. At Antioch many conflicts occurred, as this city replaced Alexandria as the center of Jewish-Gentile hostilities in the East. This was the time, moreover, when the "Blues" and the "Greens," rioting Christian factions, appeared on the scene, at whose hands Jews often suffered violence. During the reign of Emperor Zeno, they were massacred and their Synagogue at Daphne was burned together with the bones of their dead, a deed which prompted from the Emperor the remark that it would have been better to burn live Jews instead. Jews, meanwhile, were not inactive. Severus, the Patriarch of Antioch, confessed his "fear of the Jews" and complained of "their outrages." Jews, apparently, took advantage of the violent rivalry of the "Blues" and the "Greens" to indulge their vengeance of the moment

1. Caution is required in interpreting the word "Jew" here. Parkes tends to believe that the "Jews" in the Laodicea incident were Nestorians, but with little evidence. This was, in truth, a period when the term took on a pejorative and extended meaning. Nestorians and Monophysites of any origin were intentionally called "Jews." The figurative meaning of the word, begun at this epoch, would have a varied history reaching the present time. See Baron III, pp. 5-7; and Parkes, p. 239.



by taking sides. At the start of the sixth century, under Anastatius, Jews again were massacred by the "Greens" and their Synagogue was burned. Violence is recorded of Jews in Constantinople, who there too took sides in the intestine struggles of Christians. Attacks on Synagogues continued but apparently at a slower pace. John of Ephesus boasted of converting seven of them into Churches. And a monk of Amida named Sergius incited a mob and burned down a Synagogue, in the wake of which a veritable contest of Church and Synagogue burning and building ensued. A word here may be said of the monks of this period, who so offend the modern concept of the monastic. Apparently they surpassed all in anti-Jewish and anti-heretical violence. Neither Church nor state could restrain them. Emperors Arcadius and Theodosius II legislated against them in the Codes (1) in a fruitless effort to restrain them and keep them out of the cities. Though this brand of monastic lawlessness was peculiar to the early medieval East, unfortunately it found further sporadic examples until the beginning of modern times. (2)

Of paramount import for the destiny of Judaism was the formulation of the Justinian Code in the mid-sixth century. This legislation seriously aggravated the situation of Jews and their 'served' as inspiration not only for future anti-Jewish measures in the East, such as the Eclogues of Leo the Isaurian and the recensions of Basil in the eighth century, but even for others in the later medieval West. (3) Of the 50 odd statutes of the Theodosian Code touching Judaism Justinian retained less than half, eliminating many of those protective of Jewish

1. C. Theod. 16, 3, 1-2; C. Just. 1, 3, 32.
2. For the violences of this period see Juster II, p. 201; also I, p. 469; Parkes, pp. 243-4, 264, and 267; Isaacs, pp. 202-3 and 219; Graetz III, pp. 10-11 and 17.
3. See Parkes op. cit., pp. 246 and 266.



rights, notably, that conceding Judaism legal existence (1) - but also many of the insulting references to the Jewish religion. In almost all areas of Jewish life the Code entered further disabilities: the slavery laws were tightened (a Jew absolutely could not own a Christian slave); Jewish property rights were narrowed; Jews were barred from public functions, excepting the burdensome decurionate, and also from the practice of law; they were prevented from testifying against a Christian. (2)

The most extraordinary innovation of the Code was the hand it lay on Jewish cult. As Justinian, Emperor by divine-right, did for the Church, so he would do for the Synagogue: see that it functioned properly. The Synagogue must not celebrate their Passover before the Christian Easter. (Thus ended the concelebration of these feasts by Judaizers.) More remarkable again were the injunctions of the famous Novella 146 (3) whereby, in response to a suit by a Jewish party, the Emperor decreed that the Bible used in Synagogue services be read in Greek or the vernacular, not in Hebrew, as the traditionalist Rabbis would have it; that the Septuagint or the Aquila translations only be used; that the Mischna, or oral teaching, be eliminated; that those who disbelieve in the resurrection and last judgement or the existence of angels be excommunicated and put to death. Scholars interpret this fantastic incursion into theology differently: some, as a new frontier of anti-Jewish persecution (4); others, as an awkward but sincere attempt to make the Jews convert themselves. Thus, Parkes, who says quaintly: "His law is not 'anti-Semitic.' It is 'grandmotherly'...There is a

1. Supra, p.
2. See Justinian Code
3. See Juster I, pp. 369-77.
4. See Isaacs, pp. 201-2.



more truly Christian spirit behind it than there is behind most of the contemporary legislation. Toleration could not in that age be expected to go further." (1) Be that as it may, by such legislation Justinian prepared the way for encroachments on Jewish rights that its Theodosian predecessor would never have countenanced. Stripping Judaism of its explicit legality, he opened the way for abuses such as that in Borton in the North Africa in 335, where Judaism was outlawed, Synagogues closed, and Jews forced into baptism. Though exceptional, this action was an ominous precedent that left the Jew without legal recourse and reduced him to the level of the heretic, whose lot still compared unfavorably with that of the Jews. The banning of the Mischna, moreover, prefigured the burnings of the Talmud that the 13th century would usher in.

Justinian's excursions into theology did not bring the intended results; quite the contrary. Exasperated, Jews and Samaritans (who were more severely treated) made common cause and massacred Christians at Caesarea in 556 and destroyed their Churches, but were cruelly punished by Justinian's legate. A half century later, under Phocas, the Jews of Antioch killed many Christians, burned their bodies, and dragged the Patriarch Anastatius through the streets before killing him. Some observers exonerate the Jews in the murder of the Patriarch, but all accept their active participation. More serious was Jewish complicity in the Persian invasions of Kosru II in the reign of Heraclius at the beginning of the seventh century. Animated by vengeance against their traditional enemies, Rome and the Church,

1. See Parkes, pp. 253-4.



smarting under the oppressions of Justinian's Code, and hopeful of regaining control of the Holy City, they organized under Benjamin of Tiberias to join the Persian invader, aiding him to lay waste to Christian homes and churches and assisting at the fall of Jerusalem (614). Thirty thousand Christians are said to have perished and, though it is unquestionable that the Jews aided in the slaughter, it is doubtless legendary that they purchased thirty thousand from the Persians for the purpose of massacre. Following the fall of the City, Jews over-ran Palestine attacking Christians and their churches. At the behest of Jewish inhabitants of Tyre, an army of Jews marched on that city and during its seige destroyed many churches. The beseiged Christians retaliated by beheading 100 Jews for every church destroyed.(1)

Jerusalem remained in Persian and Jewish hands for 14 years, until Heraclius retook it in 628. Disaffected by the Persian reluctance to concede them a greater rule of the City, Jews formed an alliance with Heraclius in his campaign to regain the Holy Land from the Persians. The alliance did not prevent him - released by the Patriarch Modestus from his oath not to punish the Jews for their anti-Christian violence - from executing many of them and reinstating the old ban on Jews in Jerusalem. In 632? he decreed that all Jews be baptised. This astounding attempt to solidarize the Empire by forced conversions brought its usual, opposite results. As the armies of Islam advanced on the Christian East a few years later, Jews, baptised or not, received them as welcome avengers.

1. See Parkes, pp. 257-263; Isaacs, pp. 210-16; Baron III, pp. 18-24; and Graetz III, pp. 18-23.



The practice of forced baptisms opened a new and depressing chapter in the history of Judaism and Christendom. Heraclius was not the first to try it in the East. His predecessors, Mauritius and Phocas, are accused of it, as are also his successors, Leo the Isaurian in the sixth century, Basil I in the ninth century, and Romanos I in the tenth. And the West will, we shall see, supply a listing of its own. Heraclius' motivation was primarily political. So closely knit to Christianity was the medieval socio-political order that Jewish disbelief was considered something of a crime against the state. Their connivance with the enemies of orthodox Christianity - Goths, Persians, and Muslims - tended to confirm this view. Convinced of his divine right to control consciences, possessed of a false notion of the efficacy of the sacraments, alarmed by the threat infidel nations posed on the Empire's borders, the Emperor proposed in desperation to impress upon his dominions by spiritual coercion a unity that persuasive measures had failed to achieve. The story is told that he had been warned through a dream that his Empire would be destroyed by an uncircumcised people. Turning upon the Jews, he was apparently oblivious of the uncircumcised Arabs all but at his gates. The results of his imposition of baptism were meager to his purpose. His Jewish subjects fell, as a consequence, into three categories: steadfast Jews willing to face death or exile rather than apostasize; tepid Jews happy to reap advantage as tepid Christians; and crypto-Jews who ever convinced of their Judaism simulated Christianity. The latter sided with the steadfast in moments of imperial crisis to join the Empire's

enemies, seeking relief from an observance they had never truly accepted. These early "Marranos" became a bane to the state and an abomination to the Church. The Church's opposition to forced baptisms had been made plain a generation earlier by Pope St. Gregory, who in a letter to the bishops of Arles and Marseilles, where it was reported that Jews were forced into baptism, wrote: "When anyone is brought to the baptismal font by compulsion rather than by the gentleness of instruction, and returns to his former superstition, he suffers the more grievous loss from the very cause that seemed to be his initiation into a new life." (1) The second general council of Nicaea later decreed that all baptised Jews who lapsed were to be treated as Jews, thus removing the temptation to simulate Christianity for advantage. The Church's prohibition, which was reiterated many times during the next millenium, seemed powerless against the deep medieval drive toward religious and cultural unity. The history of forced conversion would be long, heartrending, and bloodstained, and reach its high point many centuries later in Marranist Spain before coming to a close on the rise of the modern era.

From the seventh to the eleventh century Jewish stocks in the East continued to vary widely. Though Judaism was no longer explicitly recognized as a religio-licita, it remained nonetheless so in practice. The Justinian Code remained the chief basis of its rights and restraints, but further developments in the Eclogues of Leo stiffened restrictions on public office-holding, slave trading, and proselytism. Imperial policies also varied, stretching from the

1. See Baron, Vol e, p. 28. Check out - Blumentranz, p. 105  
PL Epist. 1, 45 (47) PL 77, 509-11.



benevolence of a Michael II in the ninth century to the persecution of Romanos I in the following. The councils of the Church concern themselves little with the Jews, as if by their reticence to compensate for the preoccupation of the crown. Nevertheless, there are canonical prohibitions against Judaizing practices. Clergy and people were warned in the canons of Chalcedon and Trullanum against intimacies with Jews, and the second Council of Nicaea in the eighth century turned to the problem created by forced conversions. These canons make it evident that Jewish-Christian popular relations were close, Judaizing was not dead, and Judaism as both a religious and social force was still active.

We return to the mid-fifth century West, to the corpse of an Empire in the hands of Goths, Franks, Burgundians, Vandals, Lombards, and more. The picture of Jewish life here, even more than in the more centralized East, is highly porous, showing large gaps not only in space and time but, with rare exception, in documentation. Whence the necessity of centering our history about a few nodal points, about a few places and personages which, to all practical purposes, tell the whole story: the Italy of Theodoric and St. Gregory; Gaul and its Frankish kings and councils; Spain with visigoth kings and Toledan councils; the Carolingian Empire.

In general, the barbarian conquerors, minorities in their new lands, accepted the provisions of the Theodosian Code as the law of their kingdoms, those pertaining to Judaism along with the rest. Jews were considered Roman citizens, entitled to whatever the statutes

provided. Such was their situation in principle if not always in reality. No better exemplification of the principle was the case of the Jews of Italy under Theodoric and later under Pope Gregory I.

Theodoric, Ostrogothic conqueror of Italy and its surrounding territory, was endowed with a genuine fidelity to Roman Law, which he applied with complete impartiality. None were to discover this better than the Jews. Theodoric the Arian held Judaism in low esteem, as can be gauged from his comment to Jews requesting redress against violations of their rights: "Why, oh Jew, do you seek for earthly peace in your petition, when you are unable to find eternal peace?" (1) Yet he adhered firmly to the principle of toleration, which he enunciated in a letter to the Jews of Milan thus: "Those who stray from the right path in matters of faith are not to be denied the benefit of justice." (2) In the same letter we find his famous decree that "We are not to coerce in matters of religion, for no one is to be held against his will to believe." (3) Opportunities to test these principles were not lacking. At Ravenna, where a Synagogue was burned, when Jews, probably baptised by force, cast sacred hosts into the river. The Catholic population was ordered to rebuild the Synagogue and flog the culprits. In Rome another Synagogue was burned on some provocation that is uncertain. Theodoric scolded the Roman Senate for the happening and demanded that the guilty be punished. To the Milanese and Genoese Jews, who sought his protection, he ruled that Christian clerics are not to interfere in Jewish rights and, inversely, Jews are not to offend the rights of the Church. To some degree Theodoric's

1. Cassiodorus *Varia* III, 46; P.L. LXIX, p. 600. Parkes, p. 208.
2. Letter to the Jews of Milan, *ibid.*, V, 37; P.L. LXIX, p. 669. Parkes, p. 208.
3. *Ibid.* IV, 33; P.L. LXIX, p. 561. See Parkes, p. 209.



unusual sense of justice and rights may be accredited to his Catholic and well-educated secretary and adviser, Cassiodorus, whose sentiments of toleration may be found in some of his writings. (1)

Theodoric's Empire and rule collapsed upon his death, and shortly after the unruly Lombards commenced their harassment of the shattered Empire. How the Jews fared in Lombard hands is not known. Of much greater interest and importance for them was the rise to the Pontifical Throne at the end of the sixth century of a man who was to leave his mark on the history of the Jews as well as of the West. A former Roman aristocrat and monk, Pope Gregory I, called the Great, became as much the leader of the temporal as of the spiritual order. The Papacy had now come to its full prestige and, moreover, no one on the political scene appeared capable of maintaining law and order in this tumultuous period. Gregory's dealings with the Jews, deducible from more than 20 of the 800 letters that have survived, were a model of the justice and sagacity of his rule. His cardinal principle was that the law, as found in the Theodosian Code, should be strictly impartially applied. He wrote to Victor, the bishop of Palermo: "As nothing should be conceded to the Jews in their Synagogue that is not by law, so too to the rights that have been conceded they should suffer no prejudice." (2) First, Jewish legal rights are to be respected. Gregory forbade bishops to interfere in their internal affairs. To the Bishop of Naples he wrote that they are to be allowed to celebrate their feasts freely. (3) On several occasions when Synagogues were violated, the Pope intervened. To the Bishops of Terracina, Palermo,

1. See his Commentary on the Psalms; P.L. LXX, pp. 357 and 595
2. E.P.S. VIII, 25 and IX, 55, M.
3. Ep. XIII, 12, M.



and Calgari letters were sent ordering that the Synagogues be returned to the Jews or restored. The Bishop of Palermo was ordered to pay for a Synagogue that had already been consecrated as a Church. The contrast of this policy with that of St. Ambrose is striking. Salo Baron comments: "The fact that Gregory now threw the whole weight of his revered personality and exalted office behind the old imperial law and indirectly disavowed the famous bishop of Milan (Ambrose) whom he otherwise deeply admired and often imitated, contributed greatly to the re-establishment of that ancient compromise under which the European communities were enabled to carry on their accustomed religious worship." (1) Jews are not to be allowed to exceed the law, however. St. Gregory was adamant especially in the matter of holding or trading slaves. Jewish ruses to own and traffic in Christian slaves were not to be tolerated. (2) Here the Saint's motive was chiefly religious: It is an insult to Christ to allow simple souls (slaves) to fall into the superstitio judaica, or to be "trampled on by His enemies." (3)

St. Gregory's devotion to the justice and equity of Roman Law in no wise lessened his zeal for the conversion of Jews to Christianity. He vigorously opposed Judaizing tendencies, and exhorted his bishops to work tirelessly to win Jews to Christ, not by force or terror but by gentleness and persuasion: Baptisms or conversions are never to be forced; indeed, sincere conversions are wrought by preaching. (4) The Pope did not stop short, however, of material inducements to enter the Church, such as, reduction of rents and free baptismal robes, but

1. Op cit III, p. 30.

2. Ep. IX, 109 and 110, M.

3. See, for example, Ep. I, 10, M.

4. Ep. I, 47; I, 35; XIII, 12: P.L. 69, 561; also Ep. IX, 195 (6),  
P.L. 77, 944-5. See Parkes and Blumenkranz.



entertained no illusion about the quality of conversions thus obtained. He excused them on the grounds that if converts influenced in this manner entered the Church with a "doubtful faith," their children would receive baptism with a "more perfect faith." (1)

Curiously - at least from a modern perspective - St. Gregory's theology of Judaism, expounded in his homelies and Scriptural commentaries, little resembles the attitudes expressed in his letters. Jews, in the former, hew more closely to the fourth century image of the Jew as a dark, blind, and perverse unbeliever. Apparently, he felt constrained to adhere to the traditional image and to the consecrated method of Scriptural allegorizing in black and white extremes. The important point is that his allegiance to this tradition did not prevent his acceptance of the Pauline teaching of forgiveness and ultimate salvation of Israel or in practical dealing with real Jews approaching them with justice and love. No more could be expected from a Christian churchman in the sixth century. (2)

Pope Gregory's forthright affirmation of the original Pauline tradition and the validity of the Theodosian Code wielded, thanks to his immense authority, a permanent influence on Christian thinking for the rest of the Middle Ages, and formulated the basis of Catholic policy toward the Jews - alas often heeded more in principle than practice. Isaacs sums it well: "Pope Gregory the Great inaugurated with respect to the Jews a policy of humanity, equity, and relative protection, which does him honor, and will do honor to Popes after him; for a tradition was thus established from which many - but not all - would have

1. Ep. V, 7; P.L. 77, 729-30.
2. Isaacs, op. cit., pp. 287-8.



the goodness of mind and heart to find their inspiration. (1)

A highly tragic Jewish-Christian drama was played out in Visigoth Spain at this period. In the sixth century, under Arian kings, the affairs of the Jews were regulated by the Breviary of Alaric, a simplification of the Theodosian Code, which did not substantially change their previous situation. They had been in Spain a long time and grown numerous and wealthy. Much of the anti-Jewish statutes of the Code had fallen into desuetude, and others were often evaded by bribery, as several rulings of the kings and councils clearly show. The conversion of Reccared in 587 and the new sense of national solidarity which it engendered altered this state of affairs. The kingdom, the Church, and the majority of the people were now one; indeed, a species of theocratic rule shared by church and crown was formed. Against the new background Jews stood forth in their full difference, chiefly religious. Not surprisingly, anti-Jewish legislation commenced to be reinvoked.

The Third Council of Toledo in 589 forbade Jews from owning Christian slaves, marrying Christian women, and holding public office. Reccared, who gave his sanction to the Council's canons, received a letter of praise from Pope Gregory for taking a stand against perfidiam Judaeorum - the obdurate unbelief of Jews (2) - and congratulated him for refusing a large bribe offered him to negate the legislation.

1. Op. cit. p. 234.

2. See further discussion of the term perfidiam and its ulterior meanings on p. .



Jewish woes did not really begin until the reign of Sisebut in the early sixth century. This monarch struggling to free his territories from the threat of Byzantine imperialism, probably aware of Jewish "betrayals" in the East, and having attempted without success to enforce Reccared's ever evaded anti-Jewish laws, determined to have done with the Jewish problem once and for all. Jews were given an ultimatum: baptism or exile. Thunderstruck, many fled the country, but more again were converted - a later report places them at 90,000. (1) St. Isidore of Seville, ranking Spanish prelate, strongly condemned the action, commending Sisebut's zeal but not his intelligence. Sisebut died a few years later and left to IV Council of Toledo (633) the problem created by the numerous lapsed converts who were a scandal to the faithful. The Council, presided over by St. Isidore in the presence of King Sisinand, was as much a national assembly as a Church Synod - as were almost all of the 20 Toledan Councils. It ruled that force must not be used in baptism, the lapsed recipients of the Sacrament must nonetheless remain Christians and also avoid relations with unbaptised Jews, and that in cases where their children had been circumcised the children be taken from them for Christian education.

This last decision (canon 60) (2) opened another sad chapter in the history of Christendom. The removal of children from their non-believing parents occurred many times throughout the centuries and found exemplifications up to the 19th and 20th centuries in the Mortara and Finaly cases. Canonical justification of these actions usually reverted to canon 60 of IV Council of Toledo, which served as

1. Isaacs, op. cit. p. 241.

2. Mansi



a precedent throughout the Middle Ages and was incorporated into the corpus of canon law of Benedict XIV. The present Code (1917) makes no reference to the matter. The sixth century theologians obviously held that whoever did not openly manifest his opposition to baptism at the very moment of its administration were not truly forced, vere coacti, - even if death itself awaited such a manifestation - and therefore were validly baptised, incurring all the rights and duties of Christian life. Most theologians of today, more attentive to the subjective dispositions requisite for the Sacrament, would question the validity of Sisebut's baptisms, as was evinced by their treatment of the Finaly affair of 1953. (1)

The canons of the Council were not altogether effective, for we find Chintila in 636 resolving not to allow anyone but Catholics to remain in his kingdom, a decree sanctioned by VI Council of Toledo two years later. The Council also imposed an oath on all future kings to enforce Chintila's edict under the threat of Anathema and eternal fire and sent a letter to Pope Honorius, reproaching him for allowing lapsed Jewish converts in Rome to return to Judaism. (2) Chindaswith, Chintila's successor, similarly allowed baptised Jews to lapse and unbaptised Jews to return. But not so his son and successor, Recceswinth, who denounced the Jews before VIII Council of Toledo as a "pestilence" and "pollution" of his realm and called for increased severity toward them. Both the Crown and the Council accordingly agreed that the country should be rid of all unbelievers and blasphemers. Though the Council passed no new legislation concerning Jews, the king replaced the Breviary of Alaric with a body of laws of his own, which stripped

1. See *The Bridge*, Vol. I, pp.

2. Isaacs contests this, claiming that on the contrary the Council through a letter from St. Braulio to the Pope expressed indignation at his severity toward Jews. It is possible to reconcile both views, See Blumendranz, p. 115; also Baron, III, p. 40 and 248 fn.



Judaism of its rights and imposed humiliating punishments such as lashing and hair extraction for many misdemeanors. All Jews were forced to sign a placitum, a lengthy oath which rendered the practice of Judaism impossible. Violators of the placitum were to be burned or stoned, and Christians were warned against aiding or protecting Jews. The IX Council ruled that baptized Jews must spend all Jewish and Christian festivals in the presence of a bishop.

The summit of oppression was reached under Erwig (680-87), who enacted twenty-eight laws designed to make the existence of Jews and Judaizers intolerable: Jews were ordered to accept baptism; Jewish converts could undertake a journey only with a permit from a priest, were forced to listen to sermons by the clergy, and were forbidden to make any distinction among meats; evasions and bribes by Jews as well as lax enforcement by Christian authorities were prohibited; and blasphemies against the Christian faith were made punishable. The XII Council of Toledo confirmed these measures. Toward the end of the century, with Islam menacing his kingdom from North Africa, where many Jews had fled, King Egica, after first attempting to soften their lot, decreed, conjointly with the XVI Council of Tolédo, that the Jews desist from engaging in commerce and surrender all their property acquired from Christians. The XVII Council of Toledo, again in conjunction with the king, accused the Jews of conspiracy with their kin in North Africa, reduced them to perpetual slavery, and ordered all Jewish children above the age of seven taken from their parents for education by Christians.

King Witzig strove to alleviate the condition of the Jews and reconstruct his disintegrating realm, but too late; the hour of doom had struck. Under Torik the Muslim forces quickly overran Spain and in 711 the Visigoth kingdom was ended. Jubilant Jews welcomed them everywhere. That they aided their advance is not certain but highly probable. There were Christian defections to the invaders, too, that, for example, of Oppas, Archbishop of Seville. Indeed the frequent allusions to Christian connivance with Jews on the part of both authorities and populace in evading the law and the apparent success of Jewish bribes indicate at best a half-hearted acceptance of the regal and conciliar anti-Jewish program. The height of non-cooperation, if not of opposition, was reached under Erwig, who found it necessary to threaten priests with a fine and excommunication for laxity toward the anti-Jewish laws and commanded bishop to spy upon bishop.

By contrast with their Spanish correligionists the Jews of France lived in relative comfort. Little is known of their early days there, which go back at least to the time of the Roman Republic. In the Arian period of successive barbaric kingdoms - Ostrogothic, Visigothic, Burgundian, and Frankish - the Theodosian Code founded their rights, but its restrictive measures were not pressed. Several cities, Arles, Marseilles, and Narbonne (considered a part of Spain) became important Jewish centers of trade. But as Jewish affairs were left to the Councils of the Church, and the Code gradually lost ground to regional codes, Jewish activities were more closely scrutinized. The Council of Vannes forbade the clergy from eating with Jews on the

on the grounds that Jews considered food of Christians impure and would not reciprocate the invitation, thus humiliating Christians. Gondebaud the Burgundian banned marriages of Jews and Christians and prohibited physical attacks by Jews on Christians. The penalty for the latter was loss of a hand; if the victim was a priest, death. It is apparent from these rulings that personal relations between Christian and Jew were close and that Jews were in no sense cowered. They were ready not only to match blow for blow but on occasion strike the first one. The comment of B. Blumenkranz, a thorough student of this period, seems appropriate here: "Even the expulsions and other clearly characteristic violences inflicted on Jews by representatives of Christianity lose something of their horror when we discover that Jews, when conditions lent themselves, did not hesitate to have recourse to these measures themselves." (1) After the conversion of Clovis to the Church no immediate change took place in Jewish status, but the new unity of faith served as usual to single Jews for attention.

Numerous Councils of the sixth and early seventh centuries legislated on Jewish-Christian relations, the most important of which - to our purpose - were held in Orleans (five times), Epoane, Clermont, Macon, Rheims, Chalon sur Saone, and Paris. There was little substantially new in their canons. Most had to do with Christian slaves - the perennial problem - and many of these concerned the treatment and respect for the faith of Christian slaves as well as their release. Mixed marriages, eating with Jews, and Judaizing were prohibited; and Jews were barred from public office or holding authority over Christians. The motivation of this last was not, as many think,

1. B. Blumenkranz, Juifs et Chretiens dans le Monde Occidentale, p. xiv.



purely theological. So closely linked was the Christian faith to the socio-political structure that a Jewish civil functionaries appeared to be a contradiction in terms. Then there was always the danger to faith. All in all, the canons bespeak good Christian-Jewish relations and a number of influential Jewish communities in Merovingian France.

The Frankish Crown was more severe than the Councils. St. Gregory of Tours, chief chronicler of the period, recounts several instances of violence with royal complicity. (1) The Synagogue of Tours was destroyed, and when Jews sued for indemnification King Guntram refused. Clothaire II ruled that Jews could not enter military service or hold office. Childebert I forbade Jews from appearing in the street during Easter and against mocking Christians. This same monarch was involved in compulsory baptisms in Uzes in 558. St. Ferriol, bishop of Uzes, tried to convert Jews by persuasion and used to invite them to his home, for which he was denounced and jailed for three years by Childebert. Upon return to the diocese St. Ferriol gave the Jews the choice of baptism or exile. In Clermont in 557 another bishop, St. Avitus, set about converting Jews and succeeded with only one. As this convert marched toward the font, a resentful Jew cast malodorous oil on him. A riot ensued, which the bishop succeeded in quelling, but shortly after the Synagogue was destroyed. St. Avitus then offered the choice of baptism or exile. Five hundred conversions were reported, but many Jews had fled, and many of the baptised lapsed. In 582, Chilperic, whom Gregory calls "the Nero of France," enforced baptism, acting himself as godfather. One of his aides, Priscus,

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1. History of the Franks, Oxford, 1946. Gregory of Tours.



refused baptism even under the pressures of inducements and imprisonment. For his obstinacy Priscus was murdered by Phatir, a Jewish convert, but was avenged by the king and the people. Phatir was cruelly cut down as he left the Church where he had taken sanctuary. Forced conversions took place in Arles and Marseilles in the latter seventh century, for which, we have seen, Pope Gregory reproached their bishops. The most notorious example of forced conversion of the time was that perpetrated by King Dagobert in the early seventh century. All Jews in the kingdom were ordered to be baptized or depart. What was Dagobert's motive? Zeal for souls like that of Bishops Avitus and Ferriol? Or was it part and parcel of the general seventh century wave of anti-Jewish expulsions, a Frankish model of the pattern set by Heraclius in the East and Sisebut in Spain just a few years before? A generalized fear of Jews as a threat from within in the face of Persian and Arab aggression? It is not possible to know; possibly a mixture of all these. We know, at all events, that for 450 years after Dagobert's decree we hear nothing of Jews in the Frankish kingdom. (1)

The Muslim victory in Spain of 711 ushered into that country a period of Jewish prosperity and creativity which comprised the finest part of what has been deemed the golden age of Judaism in post-biblical times. Outside of Spain it saw the birth of Karaism, a Scripturally inspired challenge to Talmudism, the rise to quasi-monopoly of Jews in international commerce, and the conversion of the Khazar kingdom to Judaism. Of greater significance was the transfer

1. See Parkes, Issacs, Blumenkranz, Graetz, Milman



of spiritual hegemony from Babylonia to Spain where the golden age reached its apex in a Rabbinic, literary, and philosophical revival that would produce such greats as a Judah Halevi in poetry, Salomon ihn Gabirol in philosophy, and later the great Maimonides. Jewish-Arabic philosophical collaboration of this period constituted a foundation stone in the creation of medieval scholasticism. This meteoric surge of culture, alas, was prelude to disaster, the zenith of a trajectory that would by the end of the eleventh century plunge Judaism into a darkest night.

Jews generally fared better under non-Christian governance. So it was earlier in Persian lands, where after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 the great Judaic intellectual and spiritual centers flourished, Sura, Nahardea, and Pumbeditha. But all was not peace and light. Jewish religious particularism and involvement in politics would take its toll here as elsewhere. The Sassanid dynasty, under Magian influence, persecuted both Jew and Christian. Jewish dead were exhumed; Synagogues destroyed, and Jewish practices forbidden. At the end of the third century again under Shapur II there were troubles, and in the fifth and sixth centuries a series of persecutions occurred under Jazdegert II, Peroz, Kavadh I, and Hormizd IV. The schools were closed, the Sabbath prohibited, and various vexatious laws enacted. Despite these vexations long periods of peace and good relations endured. Jewish subjects supported the Persian cause against the Byzantine Empire and accompanied Khosru II in his campaigns against it. When <sup>Umar</sup> Umar was launching his attack on the

Persian Empire at the beginning of the seventh century, however, Jews had recently suffered molestation under Kavadh II and, weary of harassment, joined with Christians to help the Arab conqueror take the Persian throne.

Under the banner of Islam the same oscillating fortunes awaited Jews. They had been in Arabia since the era of the Captivity and enjoyed great influence there, particularly in Yemen, which for a while became Jewish, and also in Medina, the future scene of the Jewish Mohammedan struggles. Jews became so much a part of their surrounding culture and environment - in all but save religion - that they could be taken for natives. When Mohamed set forth to found his new religion, he incorporated many Jewish conceptions and practices into the new faith and, when he fled to Medina, his first followers were Jews and Judaizing Arabs. The Prophet held high hopes of converting all Jews and at first directed prayers toward Jerusalem. But soon he discovered that his hopes were vain. Many Jews openly derided his pretensions and misinterpretations of Judaism. Become frankly hostile, he ridiculed Judaism and headed an army against the Jews. Before his death he completely suppressed both Christianity and Judaism. Omar, his successor, expelled all Jews and Christians from Arabia. But when he extended his empire only to include them again, he laid down vexatious regulations, which comprised wearing a distinctive dress, a special tax, and a prohibition against riding a horse, and others again. But these regulations, were easily forgotten and ignored, as Jew and Arab made the best of their differences. Jews were obviously

happier under the Crescent than under the Cross. Affinities of race and culture were present under the first that were absent or reversed under the second.

The golden age of Judaism may well include, nonetheless, the Carolingian epoch. That extraordinary emergence from barbarism - an age of emancipation before its time - for a moment placed Jews on a level with Christians, indeed to some degree favored them. The restrictions of the old Code were all but forgotten, and new legislation sought to protect the Church from certain Jewish activities rather than curb Judaism. Already with Pepin an improved Jewish status is discernible, and with Charlemagne, it is quite clear. That great Catholic prince found no difficulty in safe-guarding the interests of the Church and maintaining friendly relations with Jews. Most of his Capitularies which deal with Jews were efforts to prevent offenses against Christians. Jews were forbidden to purchase Church treasures or receive the person of a Christian as a colateral in a business deal, and a special Judaic oath for juridical use was formulated. When he sent a delegation of three from his Empire to Harun al Rashid, Charlemagne included a Jew named Isaac, who alone survived the journey, bringing back with him a gift of the Eastern ruler to create a sensation in the West - an elephant.

The new status of tolerance is not fully evinced until the reign of Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's son and successor. Under this prince and his seductive wife, Judith of Bavaria, Jews enjoyed

a standing in society that they had not attained before in Christendom. They held positions of trust in the state, enjoyed equal juridical rights, were appreciated as merchants and importers of fancy products from the East, and held a high reputation in medicine. Louis himself retained one of them as his personal physician. This last distinction they held to their risk, for throughout the Middle Ages their successful cures were as often as not interpreted as sorcery and a lost patient, as in the case of Zedekiah the physician of Louis the Bald, as a poisoning. Louis the Pious, meanwhile, granted Jews letters of protection or diplomas, one of which asserted that apostolic teaching exhorts us to "follow divine mercy and make no distinction between faithful and infidel." (1) It was during Louis' reign that the Magister Judaeorum (Master of the Jews) first appeared, whose function was to guarantee Jewish rights, including freedom from violence, the right to employ Christians and purchase slaves abroad. The murder of a Jew was penalized by the fantastic fine of ten pounds of gold. The Emperor permitted Jews to refuse permission to slaves who wished to be baptized. Parkes is right in seeing this invasion of the missionary rights of the Church as a violent "insult to the Church" and a "foolish action" on the part of Jews who abused their favored position by recourse to it. (2) Toleration of such breadth was all but inconceivable in the ninth century and could only arouse violent reaction from the Church.

The reaction was not long in coming. On to the scene strode St. Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, a city where Jews enjoyed

1. Quoted in Isaac, p. 272.

2. See Parkes, Jews and the Medieval Community, p. 47. Jules Isaac's partial justification of the Emperor's permission on the grounds that baptism of slaves led to financial ruin for Jews since baptized slaves were freed, is unfounded. The Council of Macon established the price of 12 solidi for compensation to Jewish owners of converted slaves. Stt P.L. civ, Col. 103; also L. Williams, pp. 349-50.



to the full the privileges the Emperor had granted. St. Agobard, "probably the most cultured man of his time" (1) and a zealous churchman, was profoundly disturbed by the intimate social relations of Christians and Jews in his diocese and irate over the favors the Emperor had conceded Jews, particularly in slave ownership. (2) He was not unaware of the dangers to the Christian faith in the situation, dangers that were well substantiated by the sensational conversion to Judaism of the deacon Bodo, the Emperor's chaplain, in 639, a year before the death of both the Archbishop and the Emperor. Challenging the very concept of personal imperial law that the Carolingians had instituted, Agobard called for a reversion to the universal law of the Theodosian Code. The two stalwarts of Church and State, meanwhile, engaged in a bitter struggle over Jewish policy and the relative rights of Church and Empire which lasted two decades and in its course saw both deposed and reinstated in turn. Emperor ordered Bishop to desist from anti-Jewish preaching; Bishop ignored Emperor and urged fellow-bishops to disobey his pro-Jewish rulings. The victory in the end fell to the Emperor, who throughout the litigation supported Everard, his Magister Judaeorum, in his difficulties with the Archbishop. As the struggle progressed St. Agobard wrote four letters to the Emperor and a fifth to the Bishop of Narbonne, another area where Jews had lived from time immemorial in unusual freedom and prosperity. Two of the letters - veritable treatises - have earned a high place in medieval anti-Judaica, and have been given the titles, On the Insolence of the Jews and On Jewish Superstitions (3). In

1. Daniel Rops, The Church in the Dark Ages, p. 166.
2. The Archbishop's ire was roused when a heathen girl, baptized while a slave in a Jewish household and persecuted by her master, fled to the Archbishop for protection. The Archbishop offered payment to the owner for the loss of the slave, but a Jewish party, Everard, the Magister, and invoked Louis the Pious' ruling requiring the owner's consent for a baptism. Everard supported the Jewish complainants and ordered the girl returned.
3. De Insolentia Judaeorum and De Judaicis Superstitionibus, P.L., CIV, Col. 69-76 and 77-100. For the other letters see P.L., CIV, Col. 101-106; Col. 173-178; and Col. 107-114. For an analysis of Agobard's letters see L. Williams, op cit. 348-57.

these and his other letters St. Agobard covers the entire field of anti-Judaic polemic. Scripture and canon law are invoked to prove the subordination of the Jews. Jews are signalized as superstitious, blasphemers, and calumniators. The Saint was apparently aware of certain Jewish midrashim of gnostic and cabalistic character and also quotes passages from the infamous Sepher Toledot Jeshua - the first recorded evidence of this scurrilous tradition. (1) Jews are accused of cursing Christ, vaunting their royal favors before Christians, causing the change of market day from Saturday to another day to the detriment of Christian worship (2), building new Synagogues, stealing Christian children to be sold to Arab slavers, and more again. In his final letter to the Bishop of Narbonne, Agobard launches an attack on Judaism reminiscent of Saint John Chrysostom. Jews are charged with seducing Christian women through hatred, of being a stain on Christian society, a cursed people. He concludes: "Cursed be the fruits of their entrails, of their lands, of their flocks; cursed their cellars, their granneries, their shops, their food, and the crumbs of their tables." St. Agobard remains a controversial figure in the history of Judaeo-Christian relations: an ingrained anti-Semite for some, a candid and sincere prelate vindicating the rights of Christians against an aggressive and favored Jewry and a philo-Semitic ruler for others. It is possible in a wider perspective, it would seem, to praise his defense of Christian interests, to understand his medieval socio-political conceptions, yet regret his indulgence in the harsh tradition of the fourth century.

1. Infra, p.

2. For the debate on whether the change of market day hurt Sunday worship or not see L. Williams op. cit., pp. 354-5; see also Parkes, J.M.C., p. 52; and Isaacs, p. 279.



Under the reign of Charles the Bal, Louis' son, the drama was re-enacted, Bishop Amulo, Agobard's successor, now at grips with the Crown. Charles appreciated the commercial benefits Jews brought to his realm even more than his Carolingian predecessors and imposed a slightly smaller tax on Jewish merchants than on their Jewish competitors. (1) The Bishop inherited his predecessor's animus toward Jews. Thoroughly alarmed by Bodo's conversion and Jewish influence in his see, he was determined to avenge Agobard's humiliation by Louis' Court. Together with other Bishops of like mind he assisted at the Council of Meaux in 845, which reinstated many of the Theodosian restrictions; but Charles dissolved the Council. It reconvened in the following year in Paris, where most of the anti-Jewish legislation was omitted. Smarting under the reluctance of the King, Amulo addressed a letter to him, which prolonged St. Agobard's polemic but in a more detailed and formal manner. This letter, Liber (Contra Judaeos) (2) opens with the words "Detestable is the unbelief of the Jews" (Detestanda est perfidia Judaeorum) and proceeds through the traditional proofs from the Scriptures, Councils, and Fathers of the degradation of the Jews and the necessity of avoiding them. Jews are again charged with blasphemies and indignities against Christianity and Jewish tax collectors in far places, in remotoribus locis, are accused of using their powers to force impoverished Christians to apostasize. Amulo interlardes his asseverations with many abusive references to Judaism. The work, together with those of St. Agobard, holds a major place in the anti-Jewish literature of the second half-

1. See Graetz, III, p. 172 and Milman, op. cit., p. 282, fn. 3.
2. P.L. CXVI, 141-184. See L. William, op. cit., p. 358



Though Bishop Amulo fared no better with the Crown than did Agobard, Jewish fortunes were already showing signs of worsening. According to a letter ascribed to Bishop Remigius, Amulo's successor in Lyons, and addressed to the Emperor (1), a number of Jews were converted to Christianity, especially among the young. The reason the letter gave for the influx was that "every Sabbath the word of God is preached in the Synagogues by our brothers and priests." Unyielding Jews sent their children to Arles to avoid the eventuality of their converting, but the Bishop requested the Emperor - more sympathetic to the efforts of the Church than Charles - to see that these children at Arles were given opportunity to be baptized. Dispute exists as to the degree of voluntariness or force in these conversions. There was some pressure present apparently, but they do not appear to fit the category of forced baptisms. (2) It is clear, in any event, that Charles the Bald had represented a last outpost of the Carolingian age of equal rights for Jews. On his death they fell into the quicksands of feudalism, prey to every petty prince or sovereign who wished to exploit them. With the protecting Crown gone, they were more strangers than ever in society. In 897, as an example, Charles the Simple - monarch in name only - donated all the lands of the Jews to the Bishop of Narbonne. There was no recourse against the action. The Church was now the sole proponent of the protections and the restrictions of the Roman code. So whenever a churchman joined a prince in disregarding them, the Jew became more a possession than a person. Charles' action depriving them of their right to retain real

1. P.L., CXIX, 422.

2. For the dispute see Parkes, J.M.C., pp. 36-7 and J. Isaacs, op. cit., p. 315.



property was a major step toward their complete uprootedness. About this time Jews commenced to abandon agriculture and to inhabit towns, betaking themselves more and more into trade. (1) Moreover, the paternalism which the Carolingian Empire generally exercised toward the Jews may be seen as unwittingly laying the foundations of the medieval acceptance of Jews as royal serfs, servi camerae.

The ninth century was the scene of new forms of anti-Jewish indignities. They were ushered in by a series of charges of treason against Jews. In 848 they were accused of betraying the town of Bordeaux to the Norman pirates, but there is little evidence or likelihood that they did. The accusation that they betrayed Barcelona to the Moors is also improbable, since the Moors did not attack the town at this time. That they betrayed Toulouse to the Moors, as accused, is out of the question, the town having never been in the hands of the Moors. In the latter town they were punished for the betrayal nonetheless. A custom was established in retribution whereby once a year on Good Friday a Jew received a blow on the face before the Cathedral, a custom to last 300 years. A similar one appeared in Beziers, where on Palm Sunday after a sermon by the Bishop Jewish homes were stoned in punishment for the death of Christ. In 1160 Bishop William put an end to the atrocious custom. Possibly in this era also commenced the practice of manufacturing special mallets used in a Holy Week ritual to symbolize killing the Jews. Relics of the practice seem to have come down to the present time. (2)

1. See Parkes, Church & Synagogue

. Blumenkranz, p. 20.



The suppression of the genuflection during the liturgical prayer for Jews in the Good Friday Services, which has drawn copious comment in recent years, became an almost universally accepted in the ninth century. Though in no sense an indignity against Judaism, this sole liturgical omission amid eight other such genuflections was discriminatory and to some measure of anti-Judaic inspiration. The traditional explanation given for the omission was that the gesture by which Jews mocked Jesus at his scourging should not be repeated. (1) Msgr. John Oesterreicher in his study of the question has pointed out that the reasoning behind this explanation is neither historical nor Christian, since it was the Romans who mocked Jesus at His scourging and that, be that as it may, in a Christian view a genuflection of mockery need not prevent a genuflection of adoration. (2) The age-old issue, at all events, was laid at rest by a decree of the Congregation of Rites in 1956, which restored the genuflection, thus bringing to an end a source of offense and bad relations. The question has been asked: what caused the suppression of the genuflection in the first place - an action of the clergy or a prompting of the Christian people? To this question a marginal note of the Sacramentary of St. Vast of the tenth century gives an answer: "Hic nostrum nullus debet modo flectere corpus ob populi noxam ac pariter rabiem," which has been generally translated: "Here none of us (priests) is allowed to bend his body on account of the fault and fury of the people." Whence many scholars have judged that the suppression of the genuflection was motivated by a fear of Jew-hate of Christian people. (3) A quite

1. This explanation was first given by Amalarius in the ninth century. P.L. 105, 1027.
2. "Pro Perfidis Judaeis," Theological Studies, 1947. For a bibliography of this question see article of "Pro Perfidis Judaeis," Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J., The Bridge, Vol. II, pp. 212-223. See also Isaacs, op. cit., pp. 200-205; and Blumenkranz, op. cit., p. 90-2.
3. For example, Felix Vernet in his article "Judaisme," Dictionnaire de archeologic chretienne et de la liturgie (1928), VIII, 1, Col. 181; also Dom Leclerq, O.S.B. in "De quelques publications liturgiques recentes," Revue Benedictine, 30, (Maredsous, 1913), pp. 122-123.

different translation is given by Eric Peterson, joined by J. Isaacs, who refers the "fault" (noxam) and the "fury" (rabiem) to the Jewish people. (1) This, of course, provides the suppression with a different causation - the Christian clergy rather than the Christian populace. The latter translation, in truth, is more realistic, for at the time in question the view was still prevalent among the clergy that the Jews were furious with the Church and, on the other hand, relations between the Christian and Jewish people were good, especially in the Frankish Empire, where, Msgr. Oesterreicher points out, the suppression originated. (2)

The tenth century records an expulsion of Jews from Sens by the Archbishop and a response of Pope Leo VII to a question put him by the Archbishop of Mayence, whether Jews should be baptized or expelled. The Pope recommended that the Gospel be preached to them but in the case of obstinacy that they be expelled. (3)

The first millenium, as regards Jews, ends in silence. It is the time of the "Great Fear": the apocalyptic year 1000 approaches; the Musulmen are still at the gates; central government is gone; the Papacy is at a low ebb. The Jews seem to live quietly, withal, without a history - as if awaiting in stillness the terrible storm that approaches.

How characterize an epoch as heterogeneous as the second half-millennium? The difficulty is obvious. Spain and France, as an example, contrast as much as do East and West. And yet a judgement d'ensemble appears possible. Very simply, the status of the Jews - contrary to the opinion of those who find a rectilinear deterioration

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1. Eric Peterson, Ephemerides liturgica, 1936, p. 310, #64; and Isaacs, op. cit., pp. 303-4.

2. Op. cit., p. .

3. Blumenkranz, op. cit., p. 125, P.L. 132-1084-5.



of Jewish-Christian relations from the first - had improved. What Blumenkranz wrote of the Occident may be understood of the East, even though, thanks to Byzantine monks and Jewish complicity with Persia, hostility in some ways increased: "If our period (430-1096) is not altogether (en soi) a happy epoch for Jews, it nonetheless is by comparison with the one preceding, and more still, it must certainly be said, with the one which will follow it." (1) Hostility and violence there were, but in both East and West - save Spain - these were always temporary and topical. Popular relations were generally good; Jews were closely integrated into their societies, sharing the same language, customs, and professions. Their role in commerce in this era has been greatly exaggerated. They enjoyed no monopoly in trade, local or international. From the eighth century, true, they became prominent in trading, especially international, but attained a monopoly only in slavetrading, which they enjoyed until its disappearance in the eleventh century. There is as yet no reference to Jews as usurers. (2) The anti-Semitism of this era, in other words, was neither popular nor economic. Rather was it a juridical or legislative anti-Judaism with religious roots. Anti-Judaism, we say, not anti-Semitism, because the inspiration of both civil and canonical laws was chiefly theological. Jews were not opposed as persons or as a people. Heretics still fared worse than they. The Church was still seriously worried about the durability of Jewish influence in social and religious life, and sometimes resented Jewish affluence. Her fears indeed were not groundless. The Talmudic withdrawal of Judaism

1. Op. cit., p. XV.

2. See infra, p.



had never become complete. Many Jews, especially those who reached posts of influence in civic or economic spheres opened the door to the Christian world. (1) The legislation of both Church and state may, in effect, be seen as a defense against Jewish proselytism. The perennial laws against holding Christian slaves, holding governmental office, and Jewish-Christian intimacies were at base motivated more by religious zeal than civic sensibilities. The motivation for the greater part was of ecclesiastical provenance, but on occasion the civil ruler added his own contribution, whether of expediency or religious fanaticism. The policy of the Church remained substantially expressed in the Theodosian Code, and was given its classical expression by Pope Gregory I. This policy was often marred by excesses of language and interpretation deriving more from the hostile fourth century tradition than from the Pauline spirit or the Code. This dichotomy in the attitude of Churchmen will be fairly permanent. In this period opposite a Bishop Agobard must be set a Gregory; opposite Visigoth Spain, a Charlemagne.

A new anti-Jewish charge made its appearance in this era - treason. In the seventh century Jews conspired with Persia in the East and probably with the Muslims in the West. This complicity was sufficient to draw upon Jews a suspicion of treachery whenever the threat of invasion approached, even when little or no grounds for suspicion existed, as in the cases of the accusations at Bordeaux, Barcelona, and Toulouse. Every Jew a Judas, a betrayer, an international conniver - a new weapon for the anti-Jewish arsenal has been

1. For a good study of Jewish missionary activity in the West in this period, see Blumenkranz, op. cit., Part II, Ch. 2.



forged. It is a weapon that will play a potent part in the harrassments of Jews until the very 20th century, as it will in the woes about to descend upon the heads of the Jews in the centuries immediately to follow. (1)



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