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Playing a Jewish Game: Gentile Christian Judaizing in the
First and Second Centuries CE (review)

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“biography of Amos” is to ridicule the prophet by suggesting “that he did not live up to his role” (p. 197). Amos’s second biography (the revised book of Amos) later on corrects the Deuteronomist’s negative portrait, vindicating Amos and exaggerating his significance by suggesting that he foretold Israel’s fall.

Wood’s study contains some valuable exegetical insights as well as helpful observations on the linking of individual passages and the development of themes throughout the book. However, her general thesis is not convincing, and scholars may find her lack of engagement with alternative explanations irritating. Having criticized redaction critics for failing to adduce objective criteria for their diachronic proposals, Wood never even attempts to offer any such criteria for her own distinction between Amos’s original song cycle and subsequent editorial material. Although she often follows previous scholarship, the current situation in Old Testament studies where the results of twentieth-century form and redaction criticism have come under increased scrutiny calls for significantly more methodological reflection than Wood provides.

Another fundamental weakness of Wood’s investigation lies in her focus on Greek poetic traditions to the exclusion of ancient Near Eastern prophetic parallels. To establish that Greek poetic traditions are closer to biblical prophecy than the prophetic texts discovered throughout the ancient Near East would require a sustained historical and cross-cultural study of Mediterranean and ancient Near Eastern poetic/prophetic traditions that goes far beyond the limited focus of Wood’s study.

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Playing a Jewish Game: Gentile Christian Judaizing in the First and Second Centuries CE, by Michele Murray. *Studies in Christianity and Judaism/Études sur le christianisme et le judaïsme* 13. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2004. 240 pp. \$44.95.

The present study represents a revised version of Michele Murray’s doctoral dissertation completed at the University of Toronto. The book is a contribution to the ongoing field of research that no longer treats early Christianity as a movement distinct from Judaism. Rather, as Murray emphasizes, recent scholarship has highlighted the ongoing interaction between Judaism and Christianity in the first two centuries CE (p. 1). Much of the impetus for this rethinking of Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity emerges from contemporary post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian dialogue, both in a scholarly and non-scholarly environment.

Murray treats one of the most contentious issues in Jewish-Christian relations both in antiquity and up to the modern period—the abundance of anti-Jewish rhetoric (Murray's terminology) in the New Testament and early Christian literature. Previous scholarship has understood this phenomenon as a by-product of the "parting of the ways" between Judaism and Christianity. Namely, as Christianity pulled further away from Judaism, it felt compelled to distance itself theologically and ideologically from Judaism. Likewise, as Jewish Christians continued to advocate observance of Jewish law, Christian leaders needed to further dissociate nascent Christianity from Judaism.

Murray's study argues for nothing less than a paradigm shift in the understanding of this phenomenon. She re-contextualizes a large amount of this anti-Jewish rhetoric, arguing that it should not be understood as directed toward Jews (or even Jewish Christians), but rather against Gentile Christian judaizers. This term refers to Gentile Christians who adhered to some Jewish practices while maintaining a commitment to Christianity (p. 2). Murray argues that Gentile Christians' practicing Jewish customs and rites was especially disturbing to early Christian leaders. In particular, they found these Gentiles "playing a Jewish game" to be "dangerously blurring the boundaries between Christianity and Judaism," and therefore attempted to suppress it (p. 2). Thus, the intense anti-Jewish rhetoric found in the New Testament and early Christian literature merely represents the efforts of Christian leaders to discourage Gentile Christians from observing Jewish law and to condemn those Gentile Christians actively promoting this lifestyle among fellow Gentile Christians.

In unpacking this thesis, Murray explores three different but closely related issues. First, she identifies the historical reality of Gentile Christians adhering to various aspects of Jewish law. Second, she seeks to demonstrate that the motivation for this behavior came from fellow Gentile Christians, not from Jewish Christians. Finally, she attempts to frame the anti-Jewish rhetoric throughout the New Testament and early Christian literature as a direct response to this behavior on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities. In order to fulfill this task, Murray marshals evidence of anti-Jewish rhetoric that comes from texts presumably addressed to a Gentile Christian audience, attempting to reconstruct their socio-historical context. She isolates three distinct geographic areas for this sort of investigation: Galatia (based solely on Paul's letter to the Galatians), Syria (based on the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Didache*, and the Pseudo-Clementine literature), and Asia Minor (based on Revelation, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Marcion, and Melito).

Murray cogently demonstrates that a large number of Gentile Christians adhered to various aspects of Jewish law. Indeed, it is this aspect of the study that makes the largest contribution to the study of early Christianity and its

relationship to Judaism. The arrangement of the evidence into geographic regions allows Murray to isolate and identify different judaizing trends within their cultural and historical context. In addition, she frames her discussion of this evidence by inquiring about the nature of Judaism's appeal to Gentiles in Late Antiquity. She devotes an entire chapter to non-Christian Gentile attraction to Judaism (ch. 2) and often directs her attention to considering the reasons for Gentile Christian observance of Jewish law (pp. 36–39, 81, 117–122).

Murray is less successful in demonstrating that the major impetus for Gentile Christian judaizing came from fellow Gentile Christians. This claim is made with considerable force with respect to Paul's letter to the Galatians (pp. 35–36) and the *Epistle of Barnabas* (pp. 50–51). However, Murray's treatment of the other bodies of literature is often uneven and does not always reveal enough about the socio-historical context of these texts. Without this full picture, it is extremely difficult to contend that Gentile Christian judaizers were influenced by fellow Gentile Christians (and not Jews or Jewish Christians) and that these two groups were in fact the target of much of the anti-Judaism that abounds in the discussed literature. It seems certain that many ecclesiastical authorities were concerned with Gentile Christian judaizing and likely took measures to thwart it. Murray is certainly correct that this may lie behind some of the anti-Jewish sentiment in the apostolic writers. However, to disengage Paul and the other ecclesiastical authorities discussed from their otherwise clear anti-Jewish persuasion by making the sweeping claim that the anti-Jewish rhetoric has nothing to do with Jewish-Christian relations is surely excessive.

Murray's study is an excellent example of the type of post-Holocaust scholarship that is re-envisioning Jewish-Christian relations in Late Antiquity. In this case, Murray points to a previously ignored significant point of contact between the two religions. Murray succeeds in providing an informed and thorough study of Gentile Christian judaizers that likely serves as a harbinger of future trajectories in the study of the relationship between early Christianity and Judaism.

Errata

p. 63: missing space between "R. Nehunya b. Haqanneh" and "states."

p. 63: the Hebrew letter bet is written as a kaf.

pp. 54, 64: Mishna cited incorrectly ("*m. Meg. 31a*," "*m. Ta'an. 12a*") as if it were the Babylonian Talmud.

pp. 78, 212: The War Scroll is cited as if it were the Damascus Document.

p. 157, n. 1: Lightfoot, 1910 should be Lightfoot, 1890.

p. 212: The Thanksgiving Psalms are indexed with the Rule of the Community.

passim: the publication date for J. G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism* is cited throughout the book as 1985, while in the bibliography it is 1983.

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Nietzsche and Zion, by Jacob Golomb. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004. 274 pp. \$39.95.

The connections between the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and the initial proponents of Zionism would appear, at first glance, to be an unpromising topic for investigation. Although since the end of the Second World War Nietzsche scholars have emphasized his opposition to antisemitism, he was recruited for the Nazi cause and identified with the regime's ideology both inside and outside Germany from 1933 to 1945. Anti-Jewish sentiments are infrequent in his published writings, but they can be found in unpublished remarks, especially during the late 1860s and early 1870s, when he was part of Richard Wagner's entourage. He appears to have shared for a time Wagner's belief that Jews were responsible for the ills of the modern world. For example, in his address "Socrates and Tragedy" from 1870, he identifies Socratism, which would become a key term with a negative valence in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), with "the Jewish Press." Even after his break with Wagner in 1876, one still finds occasional lapses, such as the anti-Jewish doggerel, probably aimed at Paul Rée and included in a letter from 20 August 1883. In his published works we could note that *The Birth of Tragedy* contains an unflattering contrast between the Semitic, feminine, passive myth, and the Aryan, masculine, heroic myth, while in his later writings, the ancient Jews are excoriated as the priestly, rancorous caste that inaugurated slave morality. Nietzsche does make more generous comments about the Jews and Judaism, but he also appears to have adopted certain prejudices, such as the Jewish ability to secure world domination (*Beyond Good and Evil* #251) or the association between Jews and bankers (SW 13: 642). Even his opposition to antisemitism was motivated less by an understanding and appreciation of the Jews than by an aversion to the Christian, nationalist, collectivist mentality of these anti-Jewish crusaders of the 1880s.

Despite Nietzsche's less than affirmative attitude toward Jews and his distaste for nationalist, collectivist undertakings, Jacob Golomb has been able to demonstrate that he was of central importance for several of the most