## Daniel Boyarin, *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion,* (New Brunswick – Camden – Newark NJ – London: Rutgers University Press, 2019), pp. xiii+219.

by *Luca Arcari*

In debating the terms at the core of this book—*Ioudaismos*, *Iudaismus*, *Yahadut*, *Yiddishkayt*, *Judentum*, *Judaism*—Boyarin (henceforth B.) starts, among others, from Annette Yoshiko Reeds' statements about our Academic categories for describing past (but also contemporary!) "othernesses:"

> Today, "Apocalypticism" and "Mysticism" are no longer taken for granted as neutral or universal categories of historical and comparative analysis. As with many other rubrics once common in Religious Studies – such as "Gnosticism," "esotericism," "paganism," "magic," "superstition," and even/especially "religion" – both categories were subject to reassessment, destabilization, and deconstruction, especially since the 1970s.[1]

In this same vein, in their recent book entitled *Imagine No Religion*, Carlin Barton and B. himself have argued philologically what many scholars had already partially showed, i.e. that there is no term or even set of terms in Greek or Latin that is able to describe what we today mean with the modern word "[Jewish] religion."[2]

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[1] Annette Yoshiko Reeds, "Categorization, Collection, and the Construction of Continuity. 1 Enoch and 3 Enoch in and Beyond 'Apocalypticism' and 'Mysticism'," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 29/3 (2017): 268-311; 268.

[2] *Imagine No Religion. How Modern Categories Hide Ancient Realities*, eds. Carlin A. Barton and Daniel Boyarin, (Bronx: Fordham University Press, 2016). Concerning the terminological/epistemological problem evoked by Carlin A. Barton and Daniel Boyarin (as well as by Brent Nongbri, among others, in his *Before Religion. A History of a Modern Concept* [New Haven: University of Yale Press, 2013]), Anders Klostergaad Petersen has recently remarked: "I sympathize with the overall argument and the injunction to abandon the term religion in translations of (any) ancient texts. That said, however, I also have some severe queries with the argument. To be crude, one could argue that the authors are carrying coal to Newcastle. For a scholar in the study of religion it is an old truth that there can be no term 'religion' in the pre-modern world. This is the basic argument of Max Weber in his seminal *Zwischenbetrachtung* (see Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I*, [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1963, 536-573]), and one may add the central contention of Durkheim as well. A century ago Weber emphasized how the invention of "religion" presupposed the detraction of the phenomenon from the wider cultural sphere—something dated by Weber to modernity. One could draw a distinction in the ancient world between the sacred and the profane, the latter designating diminishing degrees

With this new book, B. continues his explorations in the same direction. His main aim, here, is at demonstrating "that 'Judaism' as a name that Jews use is just such an 'ism' of modern invention" (p. 11). In B.'s eyes, if Judaism is a modern term, it implies that using it to refer to the past is the product of an anachronistic bias in which ancient Jewish forms of life and our modern conception of religion are found to be improperly associated.

As clearly emerges from the last statement, a key concept in B.'s deconstructionist journey is that of "form(s) of life":

> In investigating a language, we are investigating a form of life. A form of life that has no word that means "religion" cannot have religion in it nor can there be a 'Judaism' without a word that refers to it (p. 25).

In the first part of the book, B. develops further Steve Mason's positions against the meaningful usage of the term "Judaism" in antiquity.[3] More precisely, B. emphasizes that there is no "Judaism" as the name of a "religion" in antiquity. Discussing Jonathan Z. Smith's assertion that "religion is a product of the scholar's study,"[4] B. maintains, for example, that for their modern cultural formation, historians have constructed separate realms called "religion" and "politics;" polarizations of this kind—B. states—basically emerge as inadequate to look into the complex forms of life that are attributable to ancient and medieval Jewish organizations and descriptions concerning a particular world.

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of sacredness (*pro-fanum*) but never something categorically secular. I find it striking that this central contention of emerging sociology a century ago has neither been taken into consideration by Barton and Boyarin nor by Nongbri. Ultimately, I claim that their argument affirms Weber's and Durkheim's view, but from the perspective of early sociology it is pouring new wine into old wineskins" (Anders Klostergaard Petersen, in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, June 14, 2017, https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2017/2017.06.14 (*l.a.* June 8, 2020). I want to emphasize, here, that in dealing with the cultural universes of Judaism, it is important to abandon Christian-modern evaluations of the concept of religion, going further academic debates about the proper category definition of religion (which always remains a semantic "maneuver" of re-definition carried out on a western term). B.'s deconstructive *gesture* is particularly important because it makes patently clear that Judaism was often interpreted in light of Christian and/or modern theological/teleological hegemonic evaluations. Let us be aware of the historic implications of this interpretive operation in the field of Jewish studies, also taking into account that B. is an American Orthodox Jew.

[3] See especially Steve Mason, "Jews, Judeans, Judaizing, Judaism. Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38/4-5 (2007): 457-512.

[4] Jonathan Z. Smith, *Relating Religion. Essays in the Study of Religion*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 17.

In discussing the famous passages in 2 Maccabees where the Greek term *Ioudaismos* firstly appears (see 2:21; 8:1; 14:38), B. maintains that if in the same text (see 4:13) the presence of *Hellenismos* functions as "acting like a Greek and being loyal to the Greek cause," *Ioudaismos* would be then seen "as a natural back-formed opposite to indicate acting loyally to the Jewish way of life and polity" (p. 43). B. vigorously states that *Ioudaismos* "means exactly what it ought to—namely, vied with one another in the activity, the doing of acts of dedication to the ways of the Judeans and partisanship for their cause against their oppressors, the 'barbarians'" (pp. 44-5). What substantially emerges in the text of 2 Maccabees, is a discursive Greek-centred reinvention of "Judaism" according to which there is not "the slightest shred of evidence for 'religion' and 'politics' as separate spheres in ancient Judaea" (p. 48).

B.'s interpretation of 2 Maccabees seems to explain the usage of *Ioudaismos* in the Pauline epistles as well (cf. especially Gal 1:13-14; see also 1 Cor 1:20-24, 9:20; 23:31; etc.). When in Gal 1:13-14 Paul says formerly he was very advanced in *Ioudaismos*, he is surely not referring to an abstract category or an institution but the practicing of Jewish ways of loyalty to the traditional practices of Jews, the same forms of life described by his contemporary Josephus as "the ancestral [traditions] of the *Ioudaioi*" (*Jewish Antiquities*, 20.41 and passim). Moreover Paul, in spite of the discursive dimension that is implicit in his usage of words like *Hellenismos* and/or *Ioudaismos*, refers "to the doing (especially the zealous conduct) of a life committed to keeping the Mitzvot or commandments, this designated as 'Judaizing' in much the same way that writing Greek properly might be designated as 'Hellenizing'!" (p. 51).

However, the case of Josephus' writings appears even more indicative. The historian's preference for the term *nomos*, as a kind of keyword for identifying various Jewish forms of life (for example, see *Against Apion*, 2:145-147.291-294), shows "a way far more expansive than our notion of law would predict" (p. 58). For Josephus, *nomos* incorporates civil and criminal law, the organization of government, plus cultic practice including Temple and private observance, and also beliefs about YHWH; his assembling all of these elements thus demonstrate the insufficiency of an improper (*i.e.* modern) separation of such categories in describing a specific Jewish representation of the world.
B. states also that Josephus uses various lexical items to describe the Judean way of life, recognizing it as a whole systemic entity; yet Josephus avoids defining such a complex unity with the noun "Judaism." How does Josephus interpret, if indeed

he does, the Judean form of life? B. emphasizes that for our historian Judeans "do not have a unique way of referring to themselves that marks them off from all the other species of Peoples in the world as a genus unto themselves;" according to Josephus, Judeans have regarded themselves as one of the family of nations. More precisely, and following Mason's interpretation about this, B. recognizes that "there won't be any Judaism or any word for it in a Jewish language for many centuries" (p. 59).

In the following section of his book, B. analyses, among other questions, the term *yahadut* as we found it in some medieval sources; this seems at first glance an abstract noun roughly parallel with modern Judaism, but B.'s analysis stands, as always, like a corrosive antidote to similar automatisms. The results of B.'s terminological analysis suggest two sets of usages that sometimes overlap. In juridical contexts, *yahadut* alludes to the status of being a Jew, of being a member of Israel as a juridical entity. If the origins of this usage are not clear, it is attested fairly early in medieval rabbinic sources, first of all as the designation of the purpose of an immersion in the *mikva* (for example, see the very late Midrash Sekhel Tov, Rabbi Menahem ben Shlomo, 1138), or as the indication for the status of Jewry itself (so that Abram was Abraham's name in *goyut*, and Abraham in *yahadut*, as we read in the anthology of commentaries on the Torah from the Tosafists of twelfth- to fourteenth-century Rhineland and northern France). The second set of usages is found especially in homiletic Rabbinic contexts. There, *yahadut* is used generically to allude to a practiced commitment to worship YHWH and loyalty to the founding practices of the Jews, to the Torah; not, therefore, much different from the *Ioudaismos* that B. has explored in the preceding section of his book.[5] B. concludes that in none of the scoured texts "does *yahadut* ever refer to an abstraction on the order of the 'Jewish religion' or even 'Jewish culture' as it does today" (p. 101). If in the fifteenth century, B. continues to find significant uses of *yahadut* that follow and develop its earlier significance, in the beginnings of the early modern period he glimpses indications that other usages of the word are developing more or less clearly. An important role in such a terminological/conceptual shift, according to B., was presumably played by the quotation of what is almost surely a corruption in Rashi's (1040-1105) commentary

[5] B. brings to mind Rashi's (1040-1105) commentary to Sanhedrin 74b, a slightly later commentator on the Talmud, the RI"D (1165-1240), the exegetical activity carried out by Rav Sherira Gaon (906-1006), where we find—among others—a seemingly clean expression like *torat hayahadut*, and the collection of Esther Rabba (esp. 7:11): see pp. 82-85.

to Sanhedrin 74b.[6] Concerning the last aspect, anyway, B. underlines that toward the end of the early modern period in Jewish culture appear "further indications that some traditionalist Jewish intellectuals are beginning to utilize the distinction religious/secular in a fashion not entirely unlike their Christian and Western European contemporaries" (pp. 101-102).

The last section of the book follows the story of the formation of the idea/word "Judaism" "née (Christian Latin) *Iudaismus* in the Ekklesia and its very belated entry into Jewish parlance, thus precipitating the existence of modern Judaism in all its variety" (p. 102). B. embraces the thesis that "Judaism" as an abstraction in antiquity is a "Christian term of art invented initially for purposes of the formation of Christian orthodoxy" (p. 105) and/or theology. Here the question of "religion" is paramount, and B. takes us back to his earlier essay "Semantic Differences; or, 'Judaism'/ 'Christianity'," published in 2003.[7] In this essay, and with some variances in his book, B. argues that the stable category of "religion" was invented by Christians to distinguish themselves from the various other ancient practices in their midst; basically, B. looks at religion as a Christian-discursive invention, and if Judaism, as we know it, is a religion, then Christianity proceeded to invent it through a very stratified and complex discursive process. It is important to stress here that such a discursive march was pursued also in the following periods, often by transposing and modifying theological discourses in the scientific considerations about religion(s); what Kocku von Stuckrad has labelled as the "scientification of religion"[8] has favored the process by which Jews

[6] The context of this passage is that in which Jews are instructed by the Mishna that they must be willing to die as martyrs even for a "light *mitzva*." The Talmud glosses the "light *mitzva*" with the Aramaic term *'arqɔta demesana*, concerning which Rashi comments: "the shoe lace, for if it is the way of the Gentiles to tie like so and of Israel to do it differently, for example if there is an aspect of *yahadut* in the matter, and it is the way of Israel to be modest, even this difference where there is no *mitzva* at all but just a customary practice, he ought to be martyred in front of other Israel" (engl. transl. by B., p. 82). B. recalls that this text is cited as such by several later commentators without further explication. "The text of Rashi, as it stands, however, is barely construable and I, very gingerly, suggest that the text of Rashi that has come down to us is corrupt and should read [...] 'an aspect of *yehirut*:' arrogance, pride, or showing of *in the alleged Gentile practice*. This fits the context perfectly as it is a direct contrast to the alleged 'modesty' of the Israelite practice. Without this emendation, moreover, the text makes no sense, leaving out the crucial point—namely, that the Gentile practice is 'show-offy', while Jews are allegedly modest" (pp. 82-83).

[7] Daniel Boyarin, "Semantic Differences; or, 'Judaism'/'Christianity'," in *The Ways that Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Adam Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2003), 65–85.

[8] Kocku von Stuckrad, *The Scientification of Religion. An Historical Study of Discursive Change, 1800–2000*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

have appropriated a theological Christian invention as an instrument of self-definition.

In the last section of his book, B. starts from the presence of Judaism in the Theodosian Code, but, from this, he takes some steps farther back in history in order to show the discursive "roots" of that theological-legal iceberg we found in the late-antique *Codex*. B. analyses the usage of *Ioudaismos* in Ignatius of Antioch's epistles (2nd cent. CE), in Epiphanius' and Jerome's writings (4th-5th cent. CE), as well as in other Latin theologians of late-antique Christianity, going far beyond David Nirenberg's approach according to which "anti-Judaism" was an hermeneutical *gesture* carried out by Christian theologians as regards a kind of anti-version of themselves.[9] For B. there are no differences between "Judaism" and "anti-Judaism", as "Judaism" itself is an "anti" category. It stands always as the "wrong religion" that highlights a Christian worldview. B. follows such a posture not only in the obvious polemical contexts of the Middle Ages, but already in the discursive productions of the late-antique Church Fathers as well as in their relative Jewish "incorporations" according to the "Westernization" that is implicit in the cultural program of the so-called *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[10]

If we look at Clifford Geertz's operative definition of "religion," it clearly emerges that B.'s claims against modernizations and/or theologizations of Judaism stand as a kind of political/militant program against all undue retro-projections arising from *our* ways of seeing otherness. Geertz has clearly recalled scholars' attention on the opportunities offered by an open, well-balanced and contextual definition of religion: he defines religion interpretively as a cultural system of a society with a system of symbols that acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations by formulating conceptions of the general order of existence in which one discovers one's significance, imbuing these conceptions with an aura of factuality so the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.[11] This would be the very conclusion of the matter, had B. not proffered pointed connections between power and discourse, or also the stratified ways by which

[9] David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism. The Western Tradition*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013).

[10] On the key role assumed by the so-called *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the process of "Westernization" of Judaism, see *Wissenschaft des Judentums Beyond Tradition. Jewish Scholarship on the Sacred Texts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, eds. Dorothea Salzer, Chanan Gafni and Hanan Harif, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

[11] Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in Id., *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*, (repr. ed. London: Fontana Press, 1993), 87-125.

hegemonic discourses create "realities" under which discursive "objects" are somehow forced to undergo.[12]

B. tries to recognize and distinguish historical objects in order to illuminate our own predicaments. Through the investigation of the past, B. aims at understanding the present, or at showing "the different ways that human beings—and, paradoxically, especially those we see as our ancestors—have chosen to pursue their existence as humans" (p. 8). B. underlines that such an approach is not discrepant with Foucauldian practice, especially because he also looked for the radical otherness and the genealogies of modern formations. B.'s project is not to be formulated as even an attempt at an "objective" and true depiction of the other's form of life; indeed, in B.'s eyes, the very form of the questions "Does *Ioudaismos* mean 'the religion Judaism'?" or even "What does *Ioudaismos* mean?" is generated from the present. If some "natives" would consider this quite an uninteresting set of questions and continue to confirm the validity of their language and forms of life, the presentist vantage offered in B.'s book enables the "other" language to function as a "language game," one that enables us to

> envisage a world in which people's natural reactions are different in certain striking ways from ours [...], or in which people's powers of surveying things was greater or lesser than with us. Reflection on the language-games that might be played in such circumstances by such people helps us to

[12] For Antonio Gramsci's definition of "(cultural) hegemony," see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 7-10. Summarizing Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Timothy Mitchell has underlined its dimension of "Non-violent form(s) of control exercised through the whole range of dominant cultural institutions and social practices, from schooling, museums, and political parties to religious practice, architectural forms, and the mass media" (Timothy Mitchell, "Everyday Metaphors of Power," *Theory and Society* 19 [1990]: 545-77). While Mitchell has highlighted mechanisms of hegemony, Daniel Miller has emphasized its "cosmological" dimension: hegemony often emerges as a normative and universal pattern entirely based on assumptions constructed (or invented) as traditional and, as a consequence, monolithic (see Daniel Miller, "The Limits of Dominance," in *Domination and Resistance*, eds. Daniel Miller, Michael Rowlands and Christopher Tilley, [London: Unwin Hyman, 1989], 63-79). Hegemony deliberately obliterates what is particular and contingent, assuming a specific "tradition" as the unique way in both perceiving the world and mapping the universe (and the place of men in it). "Tradition" separates inside from outside, normal from aberrant; its logic legitimizes claims about truth and authority. Pierre Bourdieu has named such an invisible logic *doxa*, "the sum total of the theses tacitly posited on the hither side of all inquiry" (Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice, [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977], 168).

> shake the grip of the thought that our concepts are the only possible ones, or that they are uniquely correct.[13]

It is important to note that the reasoning behind these considerations underlies the significance of Ludwig Wittgenstein's contribution about "a change from a conception of meaning as representation to a view that looks to use as the crux of the matter" (p. 22). B.'s "theoretical" approach aims at avoiding the dogmatism that adheres to us when we do not realize that it is dogmatism; B. claims for an historiographical theory leading to *askesis*, a journey that helps us learn not to look at other languages with lenses entirely constructed on our own cultural milieu. Following Talal Asad's statements, B. reinforces the view according to which "the attribution of implicit meanings to an alien practice regardless of whether they are acknowledged by its agents is a characteristic form of theological exercise, with an ancient history;"[14] this means that the statement "Judaism exists" makes no ontological sense and only has meaning in a language in which the word "Judaism" (or an equivalent) exists. It would follow that any talk of "Judaism" in antiquity, or in the Middle Ages for that matter,

> is *eo ipso* an ideological intervention, an assertion of the timelessness of the Christian concept "Judaism," a Form in the Platonic sense that can exist without anyone knowing that it does. Since to "imagine a language means to imagine a form of life,"[15] a language that has no word "Judaism" has no Judaism as part of the form of life (p. 154).

If that of "Judaism" is a discursive invention—more specifically, a Christian invention, it follows that it is involved in a complex network of various collateral communicative acts. What I mean is that every discursive creation is not isolated, but lives and interacts with other components that support it. This clearly emerges from an early Christian text that is not covered by B.'s analysis.

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[13] *Wittgenstein. Understanding and Meaning. Part I, Essays*, eds. G. P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker, (Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations 1; Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 61. B. considers history as that which we strive to write ourselves out of, looking for the differences, which doesn't necessarily imply ruptures. B. adds also that the search for difference has to be predicated on sameness as well; in doing so, B. finds Anna Wierzbicka, *Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words. English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*, (Oxford Studies in Anthropological Linguistics; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 22-23 very useful on the necessity for extensive analytical work to decide what is the same and what different.

[14] Talal Asad, "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology," in *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 161.

[15] This is a quotation from Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, § 19.

Countering actions depicted as expressions of a particular Jewish form of life, the author of the Revelation of John (at the end of the 1st cent. CE) provides *his* answer: it is not possible to believe in Jesus and, at the same time, to implement forms of cultic mixture. In this discursive framework, I explain also John's attacks against forms of competing cultic leaderships; among these, the refusal of meats sacrificed to idols (Rev 2:6.14—15.20) and the polemics against female forms of visionary authority (2:20—23), appear both expressions of a corruption of what the seer of Patmos considers as the "true" cultic practices. The so-called Balaamites do not see feeding on meat sacrificed to the idols as a problem, and this tolerance pushes the seer of Patmos to accuse them of prostitution (2:14). The prophetess Jezebel also seems to support a similar tendency (2:20) and she is accused of "fornication" (with the same association that we find in 2:14). Balaamites are considered close to Nicolaites (2:25), and here we have a further reference to the *ekklēsia* of Ephesus (2:6) for its hatred towards the "works of Nicolaites, which I also despise." In this framework, the stigmatization against those who "say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan" (2:9; 3:9), emerges as an explicit reference to those who claim their Jewish origin despite their refusal of the faith in Jesus as it is proclaimed by John. As a whole, the author of Revelation claims for himself a "conservative" cultic identity—or a cultic identity actually "re-invented" as conservative—, that is contrary to any form of dialogue with surrounding hegemonic cultic backgrounds; but such an explicit refusal does not immediately mean that the seer is not sensitive as regards a "Jewish" self-definition as an instrument of orientation in a particular world; it remains over the discursive polemical attacks, but somehow it justifies and informs them.[16]

A very similar case, although on a different discursive plane, is that of Ignatius of Antioch, as clearly emerges especially from B.'s reconstruction. Writing of Ignatius' letters, B. suggests that

> *Ioudaismos* no longer means observance of the law as it did in Paul but a broader sense of Jewish 'doings' including verbal ones. In other words, for him (*i.e.* Ignatius) *Christianismos* and *Ioudaismos* are two *doxas*, two

[16] I have analyzed the Revelation of John according to such a view in other essays: see Luca Arcari, *"Una donna avvolta nel sole" (Apoc 12,1). Le raffigurazioni femminili nell'Apocalisse di Giovanni alla luce della letteratura apocalittica giudaica*, (Padova: EMP, 2008), 237-79; see also Id., "'This Must be the Place (or Not?).' The Seven Letters of Revelation (Rev 2-3) and the Honoray Market of Urban Spaces in First-Century Asia Minor," in *Religion in the Roman Empire* 7/2 (2021), shortly to be published.

> theological positions, a wrong one, and a right one, a wrong interpretation of the legacy of the prophets, and a right one (p. 155).

If, as B. does, it is correct to emphasize the fact that *Ioudaismos* in Ignatius does not seem to mean what it means in other Christian theologians of and before his time—namely the "false views and misguided practice," or "insisting especially on the ritual requirements of that system," as it emerges also, but not only, in the Revelation of John—, it follows that the discursive creation of "Judaism" is located at the core of a very stratified network of other correlated discursive components, at the base of which we find an implicit consideration concerning what "Judaism" really means in opposition to its "deviation," or to what is represented as a false definition of Judaism itself. In summary, we can say that since "Judaism" helps Christianity self-identify as the truth, and thus as "religion," it follows that Christianity simply becomes a "true Judaism," in opposition to what is discursively constructed as (a false) Judaism.

Ignatius is really emblematic about this. In his *Letter to the Philadelphians*, he emphasizes that *Christianismos* consists of "speaking of Jesus Christ," of the Gospel—still oral—while *Ioudaismos* is devoting oneself to the study of Scripture. Ignatius' opponents are those who say "Unless in the archives I find (it), in the gospel I do not believe (it)" (*Philadelphians* 8:2), so they are people for whom Gospel is *always* anchored in Scriptural (the Scripture they had, the Torah, and all textual materials related to it) exegesis. If they—in Ignatius' view—do not put Christ first, they are practicing *Ioudaismos*, or, in other terms, if they cannot ground their practices in Jewish Scriptures (the "archives") they do not believe in the Gospel that is orally announced. It is not totally clear if what Ignatius calls *Ioudaismos* refers to those who simply deny as a part of the Gospel itself anything of the history of Jesus that contradicts Scripture or isn't grounded in the Israel (*i.e.* speaking *of* Israel) textual materials.[17] But what emerges is that we are looking at a technician of discourse who is confronting the discursive practices of invention and/or re-invention of otherness in order to define his authority positions *hic et nunc*. Apart from the oral primacy claimed by Ignatius, his own writing ability

[17] See the comprehensive essay by Enrico Norelli, "Ignazio di Antiochia combatte veramente dei cristiani giudaizzanti?," in *Verus Israel. Nuove prospettive sul giudeocristianesimo. Atti del colloquio di Torino (4-5 novembre 1999)*, eds. Giovanni Filoramo and Claudio Gianotto, (Brescia: Paideia, 2001), 220-264. For a new comprehensive approach to the figure of Ignatius of Antioch according to a "retrospective analysis," see Markus Vinzent, *Writing the History of Early Christianity. From Reception to Retrospection,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 266-446.

testifies to the fact that we are in presence of a writing technician who opposes other (perceived) competitive abilities of the same kind; basically, we find ourselves in a communicative universe around which techniques of the discourse—that are in one way or another mirrors of particular communicative elites of the 2nd century—gravitate.

We come back then to how discourse creates "realities" that are likely to be incorporated by the people who constitute the same objects of these (realities) and which are assumed as instruments of orientation in a specific world. If as is almost universally accepted, between the 1st and the 2nd century there are "Christians" who came from "Judaism," in other words "Christians" who are "Jews," or perhaps better put, "Jews" who are "Christians," it means that discursive forms of definition of otherness are well-known and, somehow, embodied by people who recognize themselves as "part" of that discourse. One key trope across these considerations is the inter-discursive connection between "eliteness" (or "sub-eliteness") and other "power/knowledge" regimes.[18] With Christian inventions of Judaism we are looking at a historically framed discussion of a self-defining category, a theological/obliterating view rooted in elitist claims to truth and superiority, which also blurred or confused the boundaries between people, positions and traditional social status. As Ignatius shows, representational resources such as reading and writing were central to the production and dissemination of his opposition between *Ioudaismos* and *Christianismos*.

One cannot fail to be reminded of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "distinction."[19] Elites (and sub-elites) are those within a "field of power" who have considerable social, economic, cultural, and/or symbolic capital. It is not by chance that Bourdieu conceptualized elites relative to the power they have over others (to define tastes through consumption, association, or disposition), underscoring also how there is a constant struggle among elites for the relative strength of the resource they most firmly control.

Polemics regarding concepts of "Judaism" and/or "Christianity," especially in antiquity (but not only!), involve struggles both for leadership *within* specific fields and for dominance *across* fields, with the realm of public (or para-public) communication representing a shared competitive arena. Communicative

[18] See especially Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume I*, (New York: Random House, 1978).

[19] See especially Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

competition, however, requires some degree of public involvement, creating a variety of opportunities for those individuals which are outside of the traditional elite realm to structure partially the actions and behaviors of both the same elites and the dominated; such opportunities take the form of mechanisms of constraint. New discourses or new declinations of previous self-defining discourses within networked communication (like that devised by both Paul and Ignatius), in this sense, suggest an increased capacity of individuals outside the traditional communicative elites of the Roman empire to participate in the symbolic production of group identities in a partially mutated world, and thus to exercise their capacity for social constraint in a more individual manner.[20]

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**How to quote this article:**
Luca Arcari, Discussion of *Judaism: The Genealogy of a Modern Notion,* by Daniel Boyarin, *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History, Journal of the Fondazione CDEC*, n. 17, September 2020
DOI: 10.48248/issn.2037-741X/1726

[20] I adapt here Timothy Kersey's statements found in *Constrained Elitism and Contemporary Democratic Theory*, (New York, London: Routledge, 2016), 49. For the study of early Christian texts and/or groups in this direction, see Jörg Rüpke, *Pantheon. A New History of Roman Religion*, (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2018), esp. 329-358.