



# ODKRYWANIE SENSU I WARTOŚCI

pod redakcją  
Barbary Bogotełbskiej  
i Moniki Worsowicz

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WYDAWNICTWO  
UNIWERSYTETU  
ŁÓDZKIEGO

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Kolejny tom interdyscyplinarnych studiów, łączących różne dziedziny twórczości i różne dyskursy, ukazuje się w 30-lecie działalności Ośrodka Badawczego Myśli Chrześcijańskiej Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego i obejmuje prace badaczy z trzech ośrodków akademickich: Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego i Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Autorzy w ramach spotkań naukowych dzielili się swoimi przemyśleniami, opiniami i rezultatami badań dotyczących historii, ale i współczesnej kondycji chrześcijaństwa.

W prezentowanym zbiorze tytułowe odkrywanie sensu i wartości jest ilustrowane przykładami różnych tekstów kultury. Zwraca też uwagę wielość interpretacji tematu przewodniego zbioru. Myśl chrześcijańska – co potwierdzają prace – jest bowiem wciąż źródłem twórczej inspiracji.

Zapraszamy Państwa do lektury. Oby podjęte w tomie zagadnienia zrodziły nowe pytania i refleksje.

*Redaktorki*

## ||| Introduction

Christians and Jews live in the same world, under the same skies. For the last two millennia they have shared a history, at once with each other and alienated from one another. For a long time, the Jewish-Christian relationship was one of confrontation and theological warfare, with sad consequences for the Jewish people. The relationship was not dialogical but an interchange of monologues. In the beginning of the Christian era, Jews and Christians were brothers, separated but within one family, discussing points of religious commitment: the missionship of Jesus, his divine vocation, the concept of the Messiah, the Christ. The separation later on progressed in a number of stages.

The first one was a theological misunderstanding, that is, Paul's one-sided view of Israel, developed and restated by Church Fathers and medieval thinkers. Israel was denied a role in God's design; Christianity was the new Israel, the fulfillment of hope. This denial was based on a theology, the "teaching of contempt" (Jules Isaac, in a book of that title), which negated Israel's mission, a view which led to violence and the separation of the Jewish community from society at large. The teaching was a denial of the Jewish testimony, the right to be different in the witness to God. Another aspect of separation was political, the recognition and acceptance of Christianity by Constantine (fourth century), establishing Christian religious supremacy in the Western world. The fate of Jews was thereby stamped for many centuries, imposing upon them second class citizenship, alienating them from European history and condemning them to prejudice and persecution.

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## ||| Church Fathers

The existence of Jews who supported Jesus' messianic claims is documented throughout the literature of the early Church Fathers, but there is a considerable degree of confusion or ambiguity on the groups described<sup>1</sup>. The early Church Fathers<sup>2</sup> often present a somewhat convoluted picture of groups of Jews who believed in Jesus and often to apply one term to identify various groups. The information found in the patristic literature complicates the task of the modern reader hoping to construct a reasonable picture of Jewish groups which embraced Jesus' messianic claims in the post Bar Cochba period<sup>3</sup>. Part of the complexity can be seen in the manner that the Church Fathers referred to Jews who supported Jesus' messianic claims.

For example, Justin Martyr (100–163/67) appears to have known about several different groups made up of Jewish Jesus believers but does not assign a name which notes the supposed differences between them. Irenaeus of Lyons wrote about the Ebionites, but in contrast to other writers did not perceive distinctions in this group. Likewise, Tertullian (155–222) and Hippolytus of Rome (170–235) do not distinguish between one type of Jewish group which believed in Jesus and another. Like Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian is focused much more on the threat from heresy than on that of the Jews. While Marcion accuses the Church of being too Jewish, Tertullian affirms the basic continuity of the Old and New Testaments, and points out that Christ upheld the Sabbath and other Jewish practice, since he came “not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.”

Origen (185–254) does record differentiation between Jews who supported Jesus' messianic claims within the general term of Ebionites.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Hruby, *Juden und Judentum bei den Kirchenvätern*, Zurich 1971.

<sup>2</sup> The early church fathers and apologists lived and wrote in the second and third centuries (Apostolic Fathers). Early Christianity covers the period from its origins (c. 30–36) until the First Council of Nicæa (325). This period is typically divided into the Apostolic Age (c. 30–100) and the Ante-Nicene Period (c. 100–325).

<sup>3</sup> The revolt in Judea broke out in 132 C.E., probably in response to the emperor Hadrian's empirewide ban on circumcision, his attempt to establish a Greco-Roman city (*Aelia Capitolina*) where the Jewish holy city had stood, and his intention to build a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the site of the previous Jerusalem Temple. The leader of the revolt, bar Kosiba, called bar Kochba (“Son of the Star,” a messianic title, cf. Num 24:17) by his supporters, but bar Koziba (“Son of the Lie” = “Liar”) by his detractors, also failed. See J. Ciecieląg, *Powstanie Bar Kochby 132–135 po Chr.*, Zabrze 2008.

The most significant distinctions between groups of Jews who supported Jesus' messianic claims are provided by Epiphanius of Salamis (315–403), who noted the existence of Ebionites, Nazarenes, and Elkasites<sup>4</sup>.

### || Justin Martyr and Jewish Followers of Jesus

The first description outside of Ignatius' general comments denigrating Judaism and Jewish observance among Christians at the end of the first century is found in the writings of Justin Martyr, a Church Father of the second century. Justin's record on the matter is known as the *Dialogue with Trypho*<sup>5</sup>. Justin describes an individual named Trypho as a Jewish refugee escaping the onslaught of Roman punitive actions against Jews following the failed Bar Cochba revolt (132–135). There has been some speculation on the actual existence of Trypho and whether Trypho is, in fact, nothing more than a straw man conceived by Justin to engage in philosophical debate on the messiahship of Jesus and the collective Jewish rejection of that idea. Whatever the case, it appears reasonably sure that Justin's dialogue does it present some valid knowledge of the existence of Jews who supported Jesus' messianic claims, and of distinctions between them.

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<sup>4</sup> Josephus reports four main schools of Judaism: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. The earliest followers of Jesus were known as Nazarenes, and perhaps later, Ebionites, and form an important part of the picture of Palestinian Jewish groups in late 2nd Temple times. The Ebionite/Nazarene movement was made up of mostly Jewish/Israelite followers of John the Baptizer and later Jesus, who were concentrated in Palestine and surrounding regions and led by "James the Just" (the oldest brother of Jesus), and flourished between the years 30–80 C.E. Ebionites were in theological conflict with other streams of early Christianity. As a result, our knowledge of them is fragmentary, originating primarily from the polemics of the early Church Fathers. So the term Nazarene is probably the best and broadest term for the movement, while Ebionite (Poor Ones) was used as well, along with a whole list of other terms: Saints, Children of Light, the Way, New Covenanters, et al. Later, when Christianity developed in the 3rd and 4th centuries and gradually lost its Jewish roots and heritage, largely severing its Palestinian connections, Roman Catholic Church historians began to refer to Ebionites and Nazarenes as two separate groups. For further reading, see H.-J. Schoeps, *Jewish Christianity*, Philadelphia 1969; A.F.J. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, Leiden 1992.

<sup>5</sup> B. Altaner, A. Stuiber, *Patrologia. Życie, pisma i nauka Ojców Kościoła*, tłum. P. Pachciarek, Warszawa 1990, pp. 130–131; Th. Stylianopoulos, *Justin Martyr and the Mosaic Law*, Missoula, MT 1975.