

**Peter Schäfer**

***Anziehung und Abstoßung: Juden und Christen  
in den ersten Jahrhunderten ihrer Begegnung /  
Attraction and Repulsion: Jews and Christians  
in the First Centuries of Their Encounter***

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In recent years, views of the development of the relations between Judaism and Christianity have been changing dramatically. An early rupture between the two had been assumed almost as a given, until a much more complicated and gradual “Parting of the Ways” was widely accepted, even leading to the provocatively-titled book *The Ways that Never Parted* (Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). Schäfer has been an important and authoritative voice in this debate. He has argued that rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity developed in response to each other (*The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

The slim volume under review (in German, with English translation on facing pages) contains Schäfer’s lecture when he received the prestigious 2014 “Dr. Leopold Lucas-Preis” at the University of Tübingen, in which he develops his thesis further. He notes that Rabbi Leopold Lucas (1872-1943) had written on Jewish history, systematically using primary sources from both rabbinic and patristic traditions, a pioneering effort at the time. Schäfer places his own work on the same trajectory.

For the present volume, he uses divergent but related developments in Jewish and Christian Enoch traditions as test cases. After briefly reviewing the image of Enoch in Genesis (MT and LXX), he passes to the “non-canonical” Enoch. In the first and perhaps earliest part of the Ethiopic Book of Enoch (*1 En.*), the protagonist mediates between God and the fallen angels. Thus, Schäfer notes, a gap between the accounts of Genesis 5 and 6 is closed (pp. 22-25). The so-called “Similitudes of Enoch” (*1 En.* 37-71), commonly dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE / CE, go one step further and have Enoch addressed (by God himself or by an angel) as an exalted Son of Man (*1 En.* 71:14-17). Schäfer concludes, “[t]his text

leaves no doubt that the Son of Man Enoch is the Messiah," drawing a connection with the question about the messiahship of Jesus in Mk 14:61-62 par. (p. 26).

After noting the favorable portrayal of Enoch in Ben Sira and the Wisdom of Solomon, Schäfer looks at "the rabbinic Enoch." He finds that the only midrash that deals in some detail with Enoch's fate is found in *Genesis Rabbah* 25:1 (on Gen 5:24). Here different rabbis are cited as saying that "Enoch was a hypocrite, sometimes righteous, sometimes wicked" and that "he was not inscribed in the scroll of the righteous but in the scroll of the wicked" (p. 32). Various rabbis even argue against the heretics (*minim*) and against a Roman matron that Enoch died a natural death. Schäfer does not attempt to identify the interlocutors of the rabbis but cautiously remarks "that we may not necessarily be dealing here with groups whose detachment from Judaism was a universally recognized fact. And this holds (especially) true for the Christianity that was establishing itself ever more vigorously at the time of our midrash (around 300 C.E.)" (p. 38).

In contrast to rabbinic pronouncements, Christian interpretation of Enoch is decidedly favorable, in keeping with earlier Jewish traditions. Yet, in this view, first attested in Heb 11:5 (cf. Jude 14), Enoch's rapture was only completed through the death and resurrection of Jesus. This line of thought continues for example in Tertullian (ca. 200). For him, Enoch becomes a model for Christians, for he lived without circumcision or Sabbath observance. Furthermore, Enoch and Elijah, who had ascended to heaven without passing through death, return to earth so that "by their blood they may extinguish the Antichrist" (p. 44). Schäfer notes that other pre-Nicaean authors offer similar interpretations and concludes that "[o]n the background of this Christian interpretation of the Enoch myth, one may well suspect that the wrath of the rabbis of *Genesis Rabbah* is directed against Christians, or more cautiously formulated, Christianizing circles" (p. 46).

Rabbinic literature after *Genesis Rabbah* is largely silent about Enoch, but the Third / Hebrew Book of Enoch (*3 En.*), a mystical work composed between 600 and 900 C.E., relates the transformation of Enoch into the exalted angelic figure of Metatron, who is called *YHWH ha-qatan* ("The lesser [or: 'young'] God"). This figure is discussed in the Babylonian Talmud in a polemic between Rav Idith and a heretic (*b. San.* 38b). The rabbi, denying any positive role for Metatron, here fights against a position similar to that of the (Jewish) author(s) of *3 Enoch*. This conflict reaches a head in the story of Elisha b. Avuyah, who during his journey through the heavens encounters Metatron, seated on a throne, and asks "Perhaps, God forbid, there are two powers [in heaven]!?" In rabbinic tradition, even to consider the possibility of the existence of a second divine figure is an unforgivable sin, which makes Elisha a heretic (*b. Hag.* 15a). Thus, Jewish ideas that had developed further in Christianity could be reclaimed in Jewish mysticism, as the example of the "lesser / young God" in *3 Enoch* shows. Schäfer concludes that the new findings of a much more complex, and for a long time fluid, relationship between Judaism and Christianity "could and should be applied fruitfully for that which we today call Christian-Jewish dialogue" (p. 68).

One may wonder why Enoch could be viewed so negatively in rabbinic tradition, whereas his frequent companion, the prophet Elijah, apparently suffered no

such fate, despite his popularity in Christianity. One may also ask why Schäfer does not engage in any discussion of the work of Gabriele Boccaccini and the Enoch Seminar, but in a public lecture, this may be understandable. Overall, Schäfer's well-documented thesis is both stimulating and convincing.

The final part of the book (pp. 76-117) contains an address by editor Jürgen Kampmann at the same award ceremony. He first discusses Rabbi Lucas' pioneering work in the scientific study of Judaism and his tragic death in the Theresienstadt concentration camp. He then introduces the recipient of the Dr. Leopold Lucas Junior Scholar Prize, Paul Silas Peterson, and his book *The Early Hans Urs von Balthasar: Historical Contexts and Intellectual Formation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), based on a dissertation in Systematic Theology. Finally, the address concludes with an appreciation of Peter Schäfer's research, teaching, and publications in broad areas of Jewish studies, most recently with a focus on mutual influences of Judaism and Christianity. A list of past recipients of the Lucas Prize (pp. 119-120) concludes the volume.