

Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire in Late Antiquity, by Andrew S. Jacobs. Divinations Rereading Late Ancient Religion series. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2004. xiv, 249 pp. \$55.00 US (cloth).

Over the past sixty years, essentially in the wake of the Holocaust, there has been a growing debate within the academy of religious studies on the subject of Jewish-Christian relations in antiquity. While the nature of this debate revolves around a number of issues, one that has become prominent in recent decades has to do with the accuracy of Christian depictions of their Jewish counterparts. Are these depictions "real" and do they allow for some sort of historical reconstruction, or are they merely "rhetorical" and actually tell us more about Christians than they do about the Jews they are describing? Due to a lack of pertinent Jewish sources scholars are forced to rely almost exclusively on Christian sources, to broach this subject and not surprisingly, due to the nature of the source material, no firm consensus exists in scholarship.

It is within this diverse array of scholarly opinion that Andrew S. Jacobs seeks to move the debate forward with his work, *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire in Late Antiquity*. Focusing on the geographic area of the "Holy Land" in the late antique period (300-550 CE) Jacobs tries to show that Christianity was in the process of constructing a new totalizing discourse of imperial power, not just in the written word, but also in its emerging architecture and accumulation of sacred space. Jacobs notes that these new developments within Christianity are relatively uncharted ground for elucidating Jewish-Christian relations, but that they have the potential to be quite fruitful if examined in the right light. Drawing extensively on post-colonial criticism, Jacobs tries to show that despite Christianity's emerging imperial discourse, wherein Jews are pushed to the extreme margins, this discourse may actually reveal many weaknesses, uncertainties, and even fissures within Christianity, which suggests that Jews likely constructed a firm posture of resistance to the new Christian Empire in the Holy Land.

Jacobs divides his work into two parts. In the first half, he focuses on "Knowledge," the alleged Christian knowledge about Jews through how they were presenting Jews in their various writings. Here Jacobs looks primarily at four prolific Christian authors of the fourth and early fifth centuries: Eusebius of Caesarea, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius of Salamis, and Jerome. Jacobs shows that these writers largely represented Jews as inferior or even deviant, and that in the case of Jerome this was especially ironic given that Jerome relied so extensively on Jews to instruct him in Hebrew so he could produce his biblical commentaries and finally his Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible for the Vulgate. In the second half of the work, Jacobs moves on to the subject of "Power" to show how Christianity displayed its authority over the Jews. This was not only done through various literary pursuits where Christians were depicted as triumphing over Jews in matters of divine favour, but was also shown through the vast building campaign initiated in the Holy Land and especially in Jerusalem where Christian buildings sprang up everywhere, sometimes right over Jewish

ones.

The final chapter of Jacobs's book represents a departure in his analysis as he directly enters the fray of the modern debate surrounding Jewish-Christian relations in order to stake out the contribution of his work. Jacobs believes post-colonial criticism has much to offer the debate and that its employment yields two important insights that are significant and ought to be seriously considered. First, he argues that the debate surrounding "rhetoric" and "reality" is somewhat inappropriate given that it is virtually impossible to separate the two. Second, he asserts that scholars need to be more focused on studying the mechanics of how the "other," usually the Jew, is constructed. In Jacobs's opinion this kind of study will yield much sounder analysis and will also move the debate forward from its fixation on uncovering historical realities.

Jacobs's work has many fine points. His study is clearly laid out, well-researched and referenced, and certainly thought provoking as it takes a novel approach to the subject matter through the use of post-colonial criticism. However, notwithstanding these strengths, the work also contains a few weaknesses. A minor, yet conspicuous, problem with the work has to do with the title, "Remains of the Jews." In the book, Jacobs never actually deals with any authentically "Jewish" remains, literary or otherwise. While he does acknowledge this in his work and points out that he is interested primarily in Christian constructions of Jews, his analysis would have sometimes benefited from the inclusion of at least a few *real* Jewish remains. While Jacobs convincingly shows that a new type of discourse emerged within Christianity in the fourth century, one that bespoke total knowledge and power, Jacobs has not solidly demonstrated that this new discourse necessarily reveals as much about Jewish resistance to Christian imperialism as he supposes. Likewise, he is periodically guilty of reading far too much into certain Christian texts and consequently draws some rather tenuous conclusions about them (for example, Bordeaux Pilgrim), especially about what they purportedly reveal about Jews even when Jews are hardly mentioned in certain of these texts.

Despite these few problems with the work, on the whole Jacobs's analysis is fairly sound and convincing. Since the time of Constantine a noticeable shift had occurred in Christian discourse, one that dripped of complete knowledge and power, and since this time Christians had sought to claim the Holy Land as their own through steady emigration and through various building projects. Within this vast Christian campaign it is possible to get periodic glimpses of Jewish-Christian relations in the Holy Land, and what these glimpses may reveal is that Jews were not only offering resistance to certain aspects of this Christian campaign, but were even periodically thriving in this new Christian Empire.

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