3. Cf. A. van Heijst, *Models of Charitable Care: Catholic Nuns and Children in their Care in Amsterdam, 1852–2002*, Leiden: Brill, 2008.

4. H. Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought*, New York: Penguin Books, 1993 (1961), pp. 1–16.

5. F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihre Verächtern* (=Krit. Gesamtausg. 1/12), Berlin: De Gruyter 1995, pp. 1–321 (1799); for what follows, I used the English translation by Richard Crouter: *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultural Despisers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006 (1988).

6. Cf. E. Borgman/B. Philipsen/L. ten Kate, 'A Triptych on Schleiermacher's "On Religion"', *Literature and Theology* 21 (2007), 381–416.

7. Vattimo's view on religion seems to be clearly influenced by Schleiermacher; see esp. 'La trace de la trace', in: *La religion: Séminaire de Capri*, ed. J. Derrida/G. Vattimo, Paris: Seuil 1996, pp. 87–104. Vattimo wrote extensively on Schleiermacher in *Schleiermacher, filosofo dell'interpretazione*, Milan: Nursia, 1968.

8. Crouter, in his translation of Schleiermacher's *On Religion* (see note 5 above), p. 113, n. 12, gives the bibliographic references to the discussion about Schleiermacher's position *vis-à-vis* Judaism and the Jews.

9. Cf. P. Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948, pp. 161–81.

I. General Survey

The Multiple Heritages in Christianity: Jerusalem versus Athens?

RAFAEL AGUIRRE

I. East and West in the Bible

At the time land was distributed (Gen. 10; Jubilees 8–9) the descendants of Japheth were assigned the towns of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean islands, those of Ham the lands of southern Egypt and Ethiopia. Between the two the descendants of Shem, the forbears of the Hebrews, settled. There is a large dose of ethnocentrism, but the Bible takes up a historical memory that has a fundamental importance in its linkage with that small strip of land flanking the eastern end of the Mediterranean, whose names alone point to conflict: Israel, Judah, Palestine, Holy Land. It is a land of passage and subject to the fortunes of the empires to the north – Assyria, Babylon, Persia – and to the south – Egypt. Isaiah calls Israel 'a third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth' (19.24). The Bible is the product of a continuous mingling of cultures over the course of many centuries; it is the condensation of the collective memory of a people that has continually developed its social identity, partly through history but largely through myth, in contact with the empires that have dominated that little strip of land, small and poor but with great strategic value. Being a melting pot of civilizations meant that in that portion of the planet religious consciousness reached a special maturity.

There was a period of quite outstanding importance starting in the third century BC and ending in the third AD, in which the identity of Judaism and Christianity as we know them today was forged, distinguishing them from each other and from pagan society. There was new historical influence coming in from the west and the north. Current research indicates that, in fact, the relationship between the biblical world and the Greek world dates

from very ancient times. According to M. L. West,[1] eastern influence is obvious in Greece in all periods and in the most diverse spheres. Hesiod, the Iliad, the Odyssey, Greek myths and poetry all have contacts with the literature of the Near East. The opposition brought out by some authors,[2] even quite recently, between Greek and Semitic thought, was grossly exaggerated and made with the purpose of justifying the negative and conservative attitude of the biblical religions to the culture of modernity.

When Alexander the Great conquered the Persians (333 BC), this gave rise to a new Greek culture through its relationship with the East: Hellenism. He overthrew the Persian empire, apparently moved south through Palestine, conquered Egypt, and reached India. This meant that Greek spread eastward as a *lingua franca*, led to new cities being founded, and widened the influence of the philosophical schools – neo-Platonic, Stoic, Epicurean, and Cynic. But Alexander respected the ancient Eastern civilizations that in turn influenced classical Greek culture. The cult of the emperor, Oriental in origin, was to move into the Hellenic world and from there to the Roman. The mystery cults (Cybele and Attis in Asia Minor, Adonis in Syria, Mythras in Persia, Osiris in Egypt) found a favourable climate in the West. The national gods, who had proved unable to save their peoples, lost prestige, but the conquerors did not provide a faith to take their place. The crisis of the national gods provoked a longing for a God who would save individuals. Under Alexander's successors, the Ptolemys in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria, and later under the new rulers, the Romans, the development of Hellenism continued as a process of religious and cultural crossbreeding, with very varied contributions, favoured by the great degree of social mobility existing in the Mediterranean basin.

II. The Judaism of the diaspora

Hellenism affected the whole of Judaism, including that of Palestine, but its influence was greatest among Jews of the diaspora, who were very numerous, perhaps as many as seven million according to some calculations. There was an eastern diaspora, around Babylon, which became most important in the second and third centuries AD, but which has hardly been taken account of in earlier periods, for lack of evidence, though it was energetic and creative, as the Qumran texts show. The Hellenic Judaism of the Mediterranean basin kept its identity, but with a general approach of openness to Hellenic culture. It used Greek to the extent of having translated the Bible into that language (the Septuagint) in the second century BC in the great Hellenist centre of Alexandria. That city produced the best representative of

we might call 'the Jewish Enlightenment', the philosopher Philo, who undertook to reconcile the Jewish faith and biblical interpretation with the Greek mentality.

The method he used was allegorical, which enabled him to avoid the difficulties the text presented to a philosophical mind. Of course it has to be said that Philo's legacy, especially his biblical allegories, was taken up and developed not by Jews but by Christians. Clement and Origen were to found one of the first Christian schools in Alexandria and were to base their interpretation of Christianity in the intellectual tradition of Philo.

Jews normally enjoyed the respect of the public authorities, which generally allowed them to govern themselves and live by their own laws, as well as to send copious sums of money to the Temple of Jerusalem. Their relationship with pagan society was another matter, with differing reactions. An important sector of this society was attracted by Jewish monotheism and their strict morality: 'proselytes' (converts to Judaism) and 'God-fearers' (sympathizers who could take part in worship). The first pagan Christians were recruited from these groups because Christianity struck them as a more convenient form of Judaism since it no longer imposed circumcision or the rules governing legal purity. But orthodox Jews, who distinguished themselves from the rest, particularly through dietary laws and matrimonial endogamy, earned the hostility of much of society, which saw them as misanthropes, 'enemies of the human race'. Flavius Josephus records a very high number of violent conflicts taking place in his time between Jewish communities and the surrounding pagan society.[3]

The Persian period saw the forging of Jewish identity, amidst more difficulties than is often thought. Together with tendencies to ethnic adherence and the strengthening of barriers between ethnic groups, there were also more universalist tendencies, which did not disappear and even found their way into the Bible. Very soon, Hellenism with its omnipresent force posed the understanding of Jewish identity anew, and various responses were made:[4] some stressed the Mosaic law; others looked to the Wisdom books for a grounding of the law in universal values (Letter of Aristeas, Wisdom of Solomon, Sibylline Oracles); at times identity was based on a glorious past and on exaltation of the nation itself (Chronicles, Esther–Nehemiah); another source of Jewish identity relied on a higher revelation granted to Abraham, Moses, or another figure, going beyond the laws of nature (Pseudo-Orphic Fragment, Testament of Job, Testament of Abraham, 2 Enoch).

III. Jews and Christians faced with Hellenism

There are three key factors at the outset of Christianity: the exceptional personality of Jesus with its unique outcome and the messianic project promoted in his name; Judaism, extremely plural in the first century, embarked on a quest for its own identity and showing a great capacity for reinterpreting its own traditions; Hellenism, with its cultural and religious exuberance – reciprocally induced – with universalist and intimist tendencies.

Paradoxically, the Jesus movement started in Palestine as a reaction against Hellenization, against the style of urban civilization the Herodians were bringing into Galilee. Very soon, however, given the inclusive nature of the Jesus movement (addressed not to an elite of the pure but to *the whole of Israel*, including its most stigmatized sectors) and its quarrel with Pharisaism, it spread in the diaspora and to the Gentiles, appearing as a Judaism with an extraordinary capacity for integrating. It arose as a development of traditions existing in the Jewish people since the third century BC, in much the same way as Pharisaic Judaism developed traditions going back to well before the Synod of Yavneh (*c.* 90 AD).

The Greek translation of the Septuagint had a decisive importance. It meant a Hellenization of Judaism, but also a Judaization of Hellenism. The Septuagint brings together texts that had been translated over a long period of time, and it is notable that its version of the Pentateuch is more Hellenistic than those produced later, which are more literalistic. This reflects the evolution of Jewish society, which, from a frank opening out to Hellenism in third-century-BC Alexandria, moved back to the traditional and nationalist values of the Palestine of the Hasmoneans in the second and first centuries BC.[5] In this period of extraordinary ebullience, when there was still no biblical canon, a major quantity of para-biblical literature was produced, much of it in the Syro-Babylonian diaspora (Tobias, Esther, Daniel, the Book of the Vigilantes, the Testament of Abraham, the legends of Susannah, 1 Enoch, and others).

Such books were accepted in the Greek-speaking diaspora, perhaps because they spoke to current concerns there, such as the attitude to sovereigns and to foreign cults. Some of these works were incorporated into the Septuagint, which Christians came to regard as their own Bible. Its early content fluctuated, though it always included 'the Law and the Prophets'. Our versions of the Septuagint have reached us through Christian codices of the fourth and fifth centuries, which remove the possibility of an Alexandrian canon on which the Christian canon would depend. On the other hand, it was also Christians who preserved and handed on many of the Jewish apocryphal books, especially anything containing references to the pre-Flood Patriarchs (Abraham, Noah, Enoch, the Egyptian Moses) and with a more universal outlook. Nevertheless, the halakic literature prominent in Qumran and that centred on David and Moses as legislator was rejected by the Christians. The Jewish literature that sought new channels of religious experience in the revelations attributed to the founding figures of the biblical tradition was to be warmly welcomed among Jewish Christians, who could thereby situate Jesus magnificently as definitive revealer.

Finally, Christian Judaism in general was to be much more receptive of the internal pluralism of Judaism. It would incorporate Samaritans, Hellenists, Pharisees, Essenes, Sadducees, Priests, Zealots; its great capacity for absorption was both an enrichment and a source of conflict and was also expressed in its acceptance of a broad spread of books as scriptures and in its openness to Hellenism. A good case in point is the book of Wisdom, written in Greek and thoroughly Hellenized, dating from the first century BC, which Christians adopted as sacred scripture by the device of attributing it to Solomon. While the Jewish current that finally forged Christian identity developed the universalism, apocalyptic, and plurality of the Jewish tradition and the opening to Hellenism, the Pharisaic tendency took a contrary direction, falling back on its Semitic identity: it promoted another, more literalistic, Greek translation of the Old Testament (Theodocion, Áquila, Symmachus) stressing the legal foundation and the sacred history of Israel. By the end of the second century a normative Christianity can be said to be in place (with a consciousness of possessing, besides the Hebrew scriptures, its own equally sacred books, which form a fairly clearly differentiated body; the terms 'Christianity' and 'Judaism' were by then widely used), as has a normative Judaism (the Mishna had been compiled, and Judaism was unified around the Pharisaic tendency). Both contrasting identities had emerged incorporating and developing earlier traditions of the Jewish people; Christian and Judaic identities arose as different interpretations of the Jewish tradition and its approach to Hellenism.

Christianity was not the Hellenization of Judaism, as Harnack claimed, but it is certainly true that Jewish enlightenment, or – if preferred – the Hellenized and cosmopolitan Judaism of Alexandria, was to have its continuation in Christianity. This arose out of the Jewish matrix and had its specificity in belief in Jesus as the Messiah and the hope for his messianic kingdom, but Hellenist influence was uppermost in its ideological and organizational configuration. Let me pick some examples out of such a complex and debated subject. In Paul there are two key metaphors taken from Hellenism. The word *ekklesia* to denote the body of Christian faithful in a

city had its antecedent in the Greek use of this word for the assembly of free citizens.[6] A certain political claim is at work here, with the conviction that Christians have their own 'citizenship in heaven' (Phil. 3.20). Paul's image of 'the body' to refer to the *ekklesia* is taken from the common Greek image of the body to refer to the State.[7] And it seems undeniable that Paul made use of images and expressions taken from the mystery religions when speaking of baptism, specifically in the identification of Christians with Christ, with whom they die and rise again in the rite. In general it can be said that Christians were very soon having recourse to neo-Platonic philosophy to interpret their beliefs, while at the same time there was a growing acceptance of popular morality based on Stoicism, as can be seen in the 'domestic codes', for example.[8] The famous Johannine *Logos* may have its origins in Jewish speculations on the *memrá Yhwh*, but it very quickly became loaded with the full significance of this word in Greek philosophy.

The very literary genres most particular to Christians also stem from this confluence of the Jewish and Hellenic worlds. Biography, unknown in the Old Testament, is characteristic of Hellenism (*vita, bios*). Current interpretation accepts that the Gospels are a special form of *Vita*, as this was understood in antiquity, but with one special feature: the life of Jesus is interpreted theologically, in the tradition of the Jewish scriptures. 'The very form of the Gospels shows that they are riding between Judaism and non-Jewish culture.'[9] The other great literary genre of early Christianity – letters – has its model not in Judaism but in Hellenism, since letters of Plato, of Cicero, and of the Cynics were in circulation. The formal language of the New Testament shows that early Christianity should be situated on the frontier between Jewish and non-Jewish culture.[10]

IV. Christianity as 'hybridation'

The social sciences now use the category of 'hybridation', which has become very useful in describing Christianity in its earliest days.[11] Hybridation means 'socio-cultural processes in which differing structures or practices, which existed in separate form, combine to generate new structures, objects, and practices'.[12] Hybridation allows open and plural readings of historical conjunctions, and in multi-dimensional conflicts aspires to find possibilities of living together that completely set aside policies of ethnic cleansing. There are factors that encourage hybridation, such as cross-border communities or cities whose inhabitants come from diverse ethnicities and places of origin.

The communities we know best from the New Testament are the Pauline ones, and in them we find people from widely differing cultural back-

grounds. 'Jews' and 'Greeks' in effect define cultural identities[13] – the meaning is not the same as in 'Jews and gentiles' – that would normally have been antagonists in the society of the time, certainly using derogatory stereotypes of each other and often ending in open clashes. The way people from such different backgrounds lived together in the Christian communities was a real historical novelty. How can it be explained? Social psychology has studied various approaches to reducing conflict between groups:[14] the most effective is to increase group affiliation to higher levels in the community, thereby relativizing original identities and making them more compatible. So Paul stresses that the faithful are re-clothed in Christ, are one in Christ, are children of God, to the point where ethnic, social, and gender differences appear to be non-existent (Gal. 3.27–8).

There is an important observation to be made, however: this process of re-categorization does not claim to abolish original identities, which could exacerbate ethnic prejudices. It is interesting to note that 'Hebrews' and 'Hellenists' kept these names even when they shared communion in the same church in Jerusalem (Acts 6.1; Gal. 2.9 is still more striking, since it speaks of 'Gentiles' and 'circumcised', both being Christians). This cultural hybridation and multi-ethnic co-existence, made possible through endo-group re-categorization and inseparable from one another, gave rise to a social reality destined to achieve great success in later years but whose origins are already visible in the New Testament: the Church made up of Christians of the 'circumcision faction' and Gentiles, of Jews, Greeks, and barbarians, which combined the legacies of Athens and of Jerusalem. Paul asks the Corinthians to 'Give no offence to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God' (1 Cor. 10.32). This is a key text: alongside the ethnic identities (Jew, Greek) there is a separate social grouping in which these identities have been relativized and can be harmonized because they generate another social identity that is stronger through faith in Christ. This is 'the Church of God' as *tertium genus*,[15] as an integrating hybrid with its own structures and practices.

It is precisely the rise of a consciousness of a new social identity that explains the writing of the Acts of the Apostles, which from a literary standpoint continue biblical historiography but in tone are much closer to the Greco-Roman. History was being made when there was a specific and recognizable social group. The Acts set out to legitimate a Christian Church in which the table is shared by people from widely varied backgrounds seeking to combine the Semitic legacy with the Greek, to be recognized as inheritors of both the Jewish and the Greek traditions.[16]

Processes of hybridation and intermingling generally produce conflicts: some identities are incapable of being taken in; reactions can produce

exacerbations of identity as readily as dissolution of one's identity. Pharisaic Judaism, as we have seen, reacted by closing in on itself and reaffirming its Semitic identity. Within Christianity there were strict Judeo-Christian tendencies, which accepted Jesus to a certain extent but could not accept extending Jewish identity to the point of living together with Greeks and pagans. At the other end of the spectrum, there was the massively powerful surge of Gnosticism, which involved dissolving Christian identity in a world of Hellenistic and Eastern speculations. By the end of the second century, we find a striking variety of Christian traditions, each recognizing the others (Synoptic, Johannine, Pauline, Petrine, and other Christianities) and each, in different ways, hybrid products of Jerusalem and Athens, with faith in Jesus Christ as the catalyst. This is what we might term 'proto-orthodoxy'.

V. 'Pure' bodies as the outcome of successful intermingling

I have had recourse to an inevitable typification and simplification of a complex process, of which many different aspects can be singled out, but to conclude I shall set out some reflections, bearing in mind that study of the past is done from specific viewpoints and in the light of present-day requirements:

(a) The Messianic movement initiated by Jesus and in which he became the key point of reference demonstrated a great capacity for adoption and acceptance, both of varieties of Judaism and Hellenic elements. The fact that both belonged to the Mediterranean world made hybridation between them easier. The social identity of Christianity is the product of a complex and conflictive historical process.

(b) Religious bodies tend to claim a 'purity' deriving from a particular tradition or from heavenly revelations. In reality, Christian 'proto-orthodoxy', in evidence by the end of the second century, is a hybridation that was imposed through society. It was a viable and plural social identity, which responded to social needs and made the future of the Christian groups possible.

(c) Historical studies encounter difficulties when they tackle the mythic version a group gives of its origins. In the case of Christianity, such studies do not destroy faith, but they do mature it and make it more critical, through showing the contingency of the borders by which the group defines itself.

(d) The hybridation of the earliest Christianity had an enormous success, which was consolidated in the 'orthodoxy' of the following centuries (the first and decisive councils). But this success can turn into an obstacle insofar as this way of understanding Christian identity lives on when the culture it responds to has disappeared. The great challenge facing the Christianity of our time is to hybridize with the culture of modernity and non-Western

cultures, which means re-formulating its identity, without invalidating it, to make it relevant to new social contexts. Faith in Christ gave his first followers great freedom and insights with which to formulate a new identity based on the Jewish (or Greek or barbarian) culture from which it stemmed. It would be a massive error to sacralized this form of identity by regarding it as immune to the vicissitudes of history.

Translated by Paul Burns

Notes

1. M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon. West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*, Oxford, 1997.
2. T. Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*, New York, 1970; C. Tresmontant, *Ensayo sobre el pensamiento hebreo*, Madrid, 1962.
3. These conflicts are studied in detail in C. D. Stanley, 'Neither Jew nor 'Greek: Ethnic Conflict in Graeco-Roman Society', *JSNT* 64 (1996), 101–24.
4. J. J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem. Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, Grand Rapids, 2000; J. Trebolle, 'La identitdad de judíos y cristianos a través de sus respectivos escritos', in E. Múñizz and R. Grijalvo (eds), *Del Coliseo al Vaticano. Claves del cristianismo primitivo*, Seville, 2005, pp. 79–85.
5. J. Trebolle, *La Biblia judía y la Biblia cristiana*, Madrid, 1993, p. 335.
6. J. Becker, *Pablo. El apóstol de los paganos*, Salamanca, 1996, pp. 506–7; E. W. and W. Stegemann, *Historia social del cristianismo primitivo*, Estella, 2001, pp. 355–9.
7. C. Gil, 'De la casa a la ciudad: criterios para comprender la relevancia de las asambleas paulinas en 1 Cor.', *Didaskalia* XXXVIII (2008), 42–3.
8. R. Aguirre, *Del movimiento de Jesús a la iglesia cristiana. Ensayo sociológico sobre el cristianismo primitivo*, Estella, 1998, pp. 111–4.
9. G. Theissen, *El Nuevo Testamento. Historia, literatura, religión*, Santander, 2002, p. 39.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
11. 'Hybridation' is preferable to 'acculturation', which implies a relationship of dominance of one culture over another, and to 'assimilation', which implies acceptance by the dominated of the basic models of the dominant.
12. N. García Canclini, 'Noticias recientes sobre la hibridación', *Transcultural Music Review* 7 (2203), at http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/trans7/canclini. htm, p. 2.
13. Rom. 1.6; 2.9–10; 3.10; 1 Cor. 1.22; 10.32; 12.13; Gal. 3.28.
14. P. Esler, *Conflicto e identidad en la carta a los Romanos* (Estella, 2006), brilliantly sets out and applies these studies; cf. esp. pp. 39–66.
15. Tertullian, *Ad Gentes* 1, 8; Aristides, *Apol.* 2, 2; Clement, *Stromata* 5.41, 6; *Diognetus* 5–6.
16. D. E. Aune, *El Nuevo Testamento en su entorno literario*, Bilbao, 1993, pp. 180–3.