

JESURUN (Jessurun, Yeshurun), descendants of a Marrano family who fled the Spanish Inquisition and settled mainly in Amsterdam and Hamburg. The Hamburg branch is best known for Isaac b. Abraham Ḥayyim *Jesurun (d. 1655), rabbi of Hamburg's Portuguese community. He was succeeded by ISAAC JESURUN, formerly of Venice, who was installed as *hakham* in the fall of 1656. During the same period JOSEPH JESURUN (d. 1660) headed Hamburg's Talmud Torah congregation. Joseph was the brother of ISAAC JESURUN of Ragusa (see *Dubrovnik), who was sentenced in the *blood libel of 1622 and freed when several of the judges who had condemned him died suddenly. SARAH (b. c. 1602), daughter of Amsterdam's renowned Reuel *Jesurun, married Moses Gideon Abudiente of Lisbon and lived in Hamburg. The name DAVID JESURUN appears on a list of Judaizers residing in Hamburg, which a spy for the Lisbon Inquisition drew up in 1644.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Roth, Marranos, 313; idem, in: ZGJD, 2 (1930), 228–36; H. Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe* (1958), index s.v. *Jessurun*.

[Aaron Lichtenstein]

JESURUN (Jessurun), ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM ḤAYYIM (d. 1655), *hakham* of the Portuguese community of Hamburg, Germany. His *Panim Ḥadashot* (Venice, 1651) deals with halakhic rulings following Joseph *Caro, and provides a detailed guide to *halakhot* in the Mishnah and the Talmud, and the rulings of the *posekim*. His *Livro da Providência Divina* ("Book on Divine Providence") appeared in Amsterdam in 1663. He published or edited *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* attributed to Samuel Aboab (Steinschneider, Cat Bod, 1128).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kayserling, *Bibl.*, 53; H. Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe* (1958), index.

JESURUN, REUEL (formerly **Paulo de Pina**; c. 1575–1634), Portuguese Marrano. Born in Lisbon of a *New Christian family, Paulo set out for Rome in 1599, intending to join a Christian order there. En route he called on the Marrano physician Elijah Montalto, a friend of his family residing at Leghorn, Italy. After Montalto had persuaded him to return to Judaism, Paulo went back to Lisbon, embarking for Brazil in 1601 in the company of the confirmed Judaizer Diego Gomez (Abraham Cohen) *Lobato. Moving to *Amsterdam in 1604, he openly espoused Judaism, taking the biblical name Reuel Jesurun. Devoting himself to the Beth Jacob congregation, he served as administrator of the Talmud Torah rabbinical school during 1616. A man of considerable literary talent, he composed *Diálogo dos montes* (published in 1767), a dramatic poem in praise of Judaism which was first read in the Beth Jacob synagogue on Shavuot 5384 (1624). The poem was translated from Portuguese to English by Philip Polack and appeared in *The American Sephardi*, vol. 4, nos. 1–2 (Autumn, 1970), 48–88. The Beth Jacob archive contains Jesurun's initial account of Amsterdam's historic Jewish cemetery, which he helped to establish. There he interred his benefactor Elijah Montalto, who

had died in 1616 in France and been embalmed by his royal patrons. Jesurun himself died in Altona.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Roth, Marranos, 313–6; J. Meijer, in: ESN, s.v. *Parnassim*; W.C. Pieterse, *Livro de Bet Haim do Kahal Kados de Bet Yahacob* (1970).

JESUS (d. 30 C.E.), whom Christianity sees as its founder and object of faith, was a Jew who lived toward the end of the Second Commonwealth period. The martyrdom of his brother James is narrated by Josephus (Ant. 20:200–3), but the passage in the same work (18:63–64) speaking about the life and death of Jesus was either rewritten by a Christian or represents a Christian interpolation. The first Roman authors to mention Jesus are Tacitus and Suetonius. The historicity of Jesus is proved by the very nature of the records in the New Testament, especially the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The Gospels are records about the life of Jesus. John's Gospel is more a treatise reflecting the theology of its author than a biography of Jesus, but Matthew, Mark, and Luke present a reasonably faithful picture of Jesus as a Jew of his time. The picture of Jesus contained in them is not so much of a redeemer of mankind as of a Jewish miracle maker and preacher. The Jesus portrayed in these three Gospels is, therefore, the historical Jesus.

The Gospels

The precise date of the composition of the Gospels is not known, but all four were written before 100 C.E. and it is certain that Matthew, Mark, and Luke are interdependent. Scholars call these three the Synoptic Gospels because they can be written in parallel columns, such form being called synopsis. It is generally accepted that the main substance of the Synoptic Gospels comes from two sources: an old account of the life of Jesus which is reproduced by Mark, and a collection of Jesus' sayings used in conjunction with the old account by Matthew and Luke. Most scholars today identify the old account that lies behind Mark with the known Gospel of Mark, but a serious analysis, based especially upon the supposed Hebrew original, shows that Mark had entirely rewritten the material. It may be assumed, therefore, that the old account, and not the revision, was known to both Luke and Matthew. According to R. Lindsey (see bibliography), Matthew and Luke, besides drawing upon the sayings, also drew directly upon the old account; the editor of Mark used Luke for his version, and Matthew, besides using the old account, often drew also upon Mark. Lindsey's conclusions are also supported by other arguments.

Both of the chief sources of the Synoptic Gospels, the old account, and the collection of Jesus' sayings, were produced in the primitive Christian congregation in Jerusalem, and were translated into Greek from Aramaic or Hebrew. They contained the picture of Jesus as seen by the disciples who knew him. The present Gospels are redactions of these two sources, which were often changed as a result of ecclesiastical tendencies. This becomes especially clear in the description of

Jesus' trial and crucifixion in which all Gospel writers to some degree exaggerate Jewish "guilt" and minimize Pilate's involvement. As the tension between the *Church and the Synagogue grew, Christians were not interested in stressing the fact that the founder of their faith was executed by a Roman magistrate. But even in the case of Jesus' trial, as in other instances, advance toward historical reality can be made by comparing the sources according to principles of literary criticism and in conjunction with the study of the Judaism of the time.

The Name, Birth, and Death Date of Jesus

Jesus is the common Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua. Jesus' father, Joseph, his mother, Mary (in Heb. Miriam), and his brothers, James (in Heb., Jacob), Joses (Joseph), Judah, and Simon (Mark. 6:3) likewise bore very popular Hebrew names. Jesus also had sisters, but their number and names are unknown. Jesus Christ means "Jesus the Messiah" and according to Jewish belief, the Messiah was to be a descendant of David. Both Matthew (1:2–16) and Luke (3:23–38) provide a genealogy leading back to David, but the two genealogies agree only from Abraham down to David. Thus, it is evident that both genealogies were constructed to show Jesus' Davidic descent, because the early Christian community believed that he was the Messiah. Matthew and Luke set Jesus' birth in *Bethlehem, the city of David's birth. This motif is made comprehensible if it is assumed that many believed the Messiah would also be born in Bethlehem, an assumption clearly seen in John 7:41–42, which, telling of some who denied that Jesus is the Messiah, says: "Is the Christ (Messiah) to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" John therefore knew neither that Jesus had been born in Bethlehem nor that he was descended from David. The home of Jesus and his family was *Nazareth in Galilee and it is possible that he was born there.

The story of Jesus' birth from the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit without an earthly father exists in the two independent literary versions of Matthew and Luke. It is not to be found in Mark or John, who both begin their Gospel with Jesus' baptism by *John the Baptist. Jesus' virgin birth is not presupposed in other parts of the *New Testament. Apart from Matthew and Luke, the first to mention the virgin birth is Ignatius of Antiochia (d. 107). According to Luke's data, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist either in 27/28 or 28/29 C.E., when he was about the age of 30. On the evidence in the first three Gospels, the period between his baptism and crucifixion comprised no more than one year; although according to John it ran to two or even three years. It seems that on the point of the duration of Jesus' public ministry the Synoptic Gospels are to be trusted. Most probably, then, Jesus was baptized in 28/29 and died in the year 30 C.E.

Jesus' Family and Circle

Jesus's father, Joseph, was a carpenter in Nazareth and it is almost certain that he died before Jesus was baptized. All the

Gospels state that there was a tension between Jesus and his family, although after Jesus' death his family overcame their disbelief and took an honorable place in the young Jewish-Christian community. Jesus' brother, James, became the head of the Christian congregation in Jerusalem and when he was murdered by a Sadducean high priest (62 C.E.) for the faith in his brother, he was succeeded by Simon, a cousin of Jesus. Grandsons of Jesus' brother, Judah, lived until the reign of Trajan and were leaders of Christian churches apparently in Galilee.

John the Baptist, who baptized Jesus in the river Jordan, was an important religious Jewish personality; he is recorded in Josephus (Ant. 18:116–9) as well as the New Testament. From Josephus it is seen that John's baptismal theology was identical with that of the *Essenes. According to the Gospels, in the moment of Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon him and a voice from heaven proclaimed his election. When he left John the Baptist, Jesus did not return to Nazareth, but preached in the area northwest of the Sea of Galilee. Later, after his unsuccessful visit to his native Nazareth, he returned again to the district around *Capernaum, performed miraculous healings, and proclaimed the Kingdom of Heaven. From his closest disciples he appointed 12 *apostles to be, at the Last Judgment, judges of the 12 tribes of Israel. After the death of Jesus the 12 apostles provided the leadership for the Jerusalem Church.

The Arrest of Jesus

Meanwhile, Herod Antipas, who had beheaded John the Baptist, also wanted to kill Jesus, whom he saw as the heir of the Baptist, but Jesus wanted to die in Jerusalem, which was reputed for "killing the prophets" (Luke 13:34). With Passover drawing near, Jesus decided to make a pilgrimage to the Temple at Jerusalem. There he openly predicted the future destruction of the Temple and the overthrow of the Temple hierarchy. According to the sources, he even tried to drive out the traders from the precincts of the Temple, saying, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers" (Luke 19:45–6). These actions precipitated the catastrophe. The Sadducean priesthood, despised by everyone, found its one support in the Temple, and Jesus not only attacked them but even publicly predicted the destruction of their Temple. The first three Gospels indicate that Jesus' last supper was the paschal meal. When night had fallen he reclined at the table with the 12 apostles and said: "With all my heart I have longed to eat this paschal lamb with you before I die, for I tell you: I will never eat it again until I eat it anew in the Kingdom of God." He took a cup of wine, recited the benediction over it and said: "take it and share it among you; for I tell you, I will not again drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new in the Kingdom of God." He took bread, recited the blessing over it and said: "This is my body" (cf. Luke 22:15–19). Thus Jesus' Passover meal under the shadow of death became the origin of the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist.

After the festive meal, Jesus left the city together with his disciples and went to the nearby Mount of Olives, to the garden of Gethsemane. There, although he had foreseen the danger of his death, he prayed for his life (Luke 22:39–46). One of the 12 apostles, Judas Iscariot, had already betrayed him from unknown motives. Judas had gone to the high priests and told them he would deliver Jesus to them and they had promised to give him money (Mark 14:10–11). The Temple guard, accompanied by Judas Iscariot, arrested Jesus and took him to the high priest.

The “Trial” and Crucifixion

The Gospels in their present form contain descriptions of the so-called “trial” of Jesus rewritten in a way making them improbable from the historical point of view. Nevertheless, a literary analysis of the sources is capable of revealing a closer approximation of the reality. In the first three Gospels, the Pharisees are not mentioned in connection with the trial, and in John, only once (18:3). Luke (22:66) and Matthew (26:59) explicitly mention the Sanhedrin once, and Mark mentions it twice (14:55; 15:1). In the whole of Luke – not just in his description of the Passion – there is no mention of the Sanhedrin’s verdict against Jesus, and John records nothing about an assembly of the Sanhedrin before which Jesus appeared. Thus it seems very probable that no session of the Sanhedrin took place in the house of the high priest where Jesus was in custody and that the “chief priests and elders and scribes” who assembled there were members of the Temple committee (see also Luke 20:1): the elders were apparently the elders of the Temple and the scribes were the Temple secretaries. The deliverance of Jesus into the hands of the Romans was, it seems, the work of the Sadducean “high priests,” who are often mentioned alone in the story. A man suspected of being a messianic pretender could be delivered to the Romans without a verdict of the Jewish high court. In addition, the high priests were interested in getting rid of Jesus, who had spoken against them and had predicted the destruction of the Temple. The Roman governor *Pontius Pilate ultimately had Jesus executed in the Roman way, by crucifixion. All the Gospels indicate that on the third day after the crucifixion Jesus’ tomb was found empty. According to Mark an angel announced that Jesus had risen, and the other Gospels state that Jesus appeared before his believers after his death.

Jesus and the Jewish Background

The tension between the Church and the Synagogue often caused the Gospels, by means of new interpretations and later emendations, to evoke the impression that there was a necessary rift between Jesus and the Jewish way of life under the law. The first three Gospels, however, portray Jesus as a Jew who was faithful to the current practice of the law. On the matter of washing hands (Mark 7:5) and plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23 ff.), it was the disciples, not the master, who were less strict in their observance of the law. According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus did not heal by physical means on the

Sabbath but only by words, healing through speech having always been permitted on the Sabbath, even when the illness was not dangerous. The Gospels provide sufficient evidence to the effect that Jesus did not oppose any prescription of the Written or Oral Mosaic Law, and that he even performed Jewish religious commandments. On all of the foregoing points the less historical John differs from the first three Gospels.

The wording of the Gospels exaggerates the clashes between Jesus and the *Pharisees. This becomes evident after an analysis of Jesus’ sayings which are a more faithful preservation than are the tendentious descriptions of the situation in which the sayings were uttered. Jesus’ major polemical sayings against the Pharisees describe them as hypocrites, an accusation occurring not only in the Essene Dead Sea Scrolls and, indirectly, in a saying of the Sadducean king, Alexander Yannai, but also in rabbinic literature, which is an expression of true Pharisaism. In general, Jesus’ polemical sayings against the Pharisees were far meeker than the Essene attacks and not sharper than similar utterances in the talmudic sources. Jesus was sufficiently Pharisaic in general outlook to consider the Pharisees as true heirs and successors of Moses. Although Jesus would probably not have defined himself as a Pharisee, his beliefs, especially his moral beliefs, are similar to the Pharisaic school of Hillel which stresses the love of God and neighbor. Jesus, however, pushed this precept much further than did the Jews of his time and taught that a man must love even his enemies. Others preached mutual love and blessing one’s persecutors, but the command to love one’s enemies is uniquely characteristic of Jesus and he is in fact the only one to utter this commandment in the whole of the New Testament.

The liberal Pharisaic school of Hillel was not unhappy to see gentiles become Jews. In contrast, the school of Shammai made conversion as difficult as possible because it had grave reservations about proselytism, most of which Jesus shared (Matt. 23:15). As a rule he even did not heal non-Jews. It should be noted that none of the rabbinical documents says that one should not heal a non-Jew.

In beliefs and way of life, Jesus was closer to the Pharisees than to the *Essenes. He accepted, however, a part of the Essene social outlook. Although Jesus was not a social revolutionary, the social implications of his message are stronger than that of the rabbis. Like the Essenes, Jesus also regarded all possessions as a threat to true piety and held poverty, humility, purity of heart, and simplicity to be the essential religious virtues. Jesus, as did the Essenes, had an awareness of and affection for the social outcast and the oppressed. The Essene author of the *Thanksgiving Scroll (18:14–15) promises salvation to the humble, to the oppressed in spirit, and to those who mourn, while Jesus in the first three beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount promises the Kingdom of Heaven to “the poor in spirit” to “those who mourn,” and to “the meek” (Matt. 5:3–5). Moreover, Jesus’ rule “Do not resist one who is evil” (Matt. 5:39) has clear parallels in the Essene Dead Sea Scrolls.

Jesus as the Messiah

The early Christian Church believed Jesus to be the expected *Messiah of Israel, and he is described as such in the New Testament; but whether Jesus thought himself to be the Messiah is by no means clear. Throughout the New Testament there are indications that Jesus had seen himself as a prophet. The Ebionites and Nazarenes, *Jewish Christian sects, both ranked Jesus among the prophets and stressed his prophetic role. Jesus himself apparently never used the word "Messiah," and always spoke of the "Son of Man" in the third person, as though he himself were not identical with that person. The "Son of Man" originally appears in the Book of Daniel (7:9–14) as the man-like judge of the Last Days. Jesus based his account of the "Son of Man" on the original biblical description of a superhuman, heavenly sublimity, who, seated upon the throne of God, will judge the whole human race. In Jewish literature of the Second Commonwealth, the "Son of Man" is frequently identified with the Messiah and it is probable that Jesus used the phrase in this way too. In his own lifetime, it is certain that Jesus became accepted by many as the Messiah. The substance of many sayings make it obvious that Jesus did not always refer to the coming "Son of Man" in the third person simply to conceal his identity, but because Jesus actually did not believe himself to be the Messiah. Yet other apparently authentic sayings of Jesus can be understood only if it is assumed that Jesus thought himself to be the "Son of Man." Thus Jesus' understanding of himself as the Messiah was probably inconsistent, or at first he was waiting for the Messiah, but at the end, he held the conviction that he himself was the Messiah.

In the faith of the Church, Jesus, the Jewish prophet from Galilee, became the object of a drama which could bring salvation to pious spectators. This drama developed from two roots: Jesus' conception of himself as being uniquely near to his Heavenly Father, his message about the coming of the "Son of Man," and other Jewish mythical and messianic doctrines; the other root was Jesus' tragic death, interpreted in terms of Jewish concepts about the expiatory power of martyrdom. If, as Christians believe, the martyr was at the same time the Messiah, then his death has a cosmic importance. Through the teachings of Jesus, as well as through other channels, the Jewish moral message entered Christianity. Thus the historical Jesus has served as a bridge between Judaism and Christianity, as well as one of the causes for their separation.

[David Flusser]

In Talmud and Midrash

Statements in rabbinic literature that explicitly mention Jesus by name or that allude to him and to his actions are few. Nothing has been transmitted in the names of the rabbis from the early half of the first century. Even those statements dating from the second century are to be regarded as reflecting the knowledge and views of Jews of that time about Christians and Jesus, which derived in part from contemporary Christian sources. They were partly a reaction to the image of Jesus

as it had crystallized in the Christian tradition. Apparently, the beginnings of Christianity attracted no greater attention than did the many other sects that sprang up toward the close of the Temple period, and it is certain that the incidents connected with its founder were not at the center of events of the time, as the Gospels would lead one to believe.

Beginning with the Basle edition of the Talmud (1578–80), those passages in which Jesus was mentioned, as well as other statements alluding to Christianity, were deleted from most editions of the Babylonian Talmud by the Christian censors or even by internal Jewish censorship. These deletions were later collected in special compilations and in manuscripts (cf. R.N.N. Rabbinowicz, *Maamar al Hadpasat ha-Talmud* (1952), 28n.26). From the stories about Jesus in the Babylonian Talmud, it is evident that he was regarded as a rabbinical student who had strayed into evil ways: "May we produce no son or pupil who disgraces himself like Jesus the Nazarene" (Ber. 17b; Sanh. 103a; cf. Dik. Sof. ad loc.). The rabbis were not certain of his time or his activities. Thus he is described as a pupil of *Joshua b. Peraḥyah (Sanh. 107b; see Dik. Sof. ad loc.).

In the Middle Ages, *Jehiel of Paris claimed that there was no connection between Jesus, the pupil of Joshua b. Peraḥyah and Jesus the Nazarene (*Vikku'ah*, ed. by R. Margalio (1928), 16f.). In one *baraita* Jesus appears as a sorcerer and enticer who led people astray. "They hanged Jesus on the eve of Passover. Forty days earlier a proclamation was issued that he was to be stoned for practicing sorcery and for enticing and leading Israel astray." "Let anyone who can speak in his favor come forward." "Nothing in his favor was discovered and they hanged him on the eve of Passover." The date given for the hanging, the 14th of Nisan, agrees with the date given in John 19:14. (In the Gospels the date given is the first day of the festival which is the 15th day of Nisan.) In conformity with the *halakhah* (Sanh. 7:4) he was sentenced to stoning, the penalty for enticing, leading astray, or practicing sorcery. After the stoning he was hanged, since all who are put to death by stoning are subsequently hanged, according to R. Eliezer who often transmits ancient *halakhah* (Sanh. 6:4). Jesus was crucified, i.e., hanged alive, "as is done by the non-Jewish government" (Sif. Deut. 221). In the talmudic account, however, his death conforms with the death penalty of the *bet din* as prescribed by the *halakhah* (see *Crucifixion).

Later conditions are reflected in the story of *Onkelos the proselyte who raised Titus, Balaam, and Jesus from the dead to ask their advice whether he should become a proselyte. Whereas Balaam said, "Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all their days forever" (Deut. 23:7), Jesus answered, "Seek their peace, seek not their evil, whoever hurts them is as if hurting the pupil of his eye." The Talmud itself emphasizes the difference between Jesus and Balaam by adding, "Come and see the difference between infidel Israelites and the idol-worshiping gentile prophets" (Git. 57a, in uncensored editions). The purpose of the story is to show that

Jesus warned against persecuting Jews and forbade their oppression. It can only be understood in the context of an era in which such a warning was already important, namely the fourth century.

These are all the stories about Jesus in the Talmud. Whenever his name is mentioned elsewhere, it is in connection with his disciples. It speaks about "Jesus the Nazarene having had five disciples, Matthew, Nakai, Nazar, Boneh, and Thodah," all of whom were put to death. For each of them a verse is cited in which his name is mentioned and his execution hinted at (Sanh. 43a; Dik. Sof. ad loc.; Yal. Mak. to Isa. 11:1). Only two of them, Matthew and Tadi (Thaddaeus) can be identified with certainty as the apostles. Besides these there is mention of Jacob of Kefar Sama who came in the name of Jesus b. Pantira to cure *Eleazar b. Dama of a snake bite but was prevented by Ishmael (Tosef., Hul. 2:22; TJ, Shab. 14:4, 14d; TJ, Av. Zar. 2:2, 40d). Since this Jacob was a contemporary of Ishmael, he could not be a disciple of Jesus but at the most a disciple of his disciple. It is also very doubtful whether he can be identified with Jacob of Kefar Sakhnayya of whom Eliezer told Akiva that he had transmitted to him a sectarian teaching in the name of Jesus (Tosef., Hul. 2:24; Av. Zar. 17a; Eccles. R. 1:8, no. 3). This Jacob, too, merely transmitted a teaching he had heard in the name of Jesus and one cannot assume that he knew him. He certainly cannot be identified with Jacob, the brother of Jesus.

In both accounts the father of Jesus is called Pantira. Epiphanius reports that Pantira was another name of Jacob, the father of Joseph, father of Jesus (*Adversus Haereses* 3:78, 7). It is possible that this statement should be regarded as an answer to the assertion of the Jews which is also mentioned by Origen. He mentions that Celsus heard from a Jew that Miriam had been divorced by her husband who suspected her of adultery, and that Jesus was born as the result of her secret affair with a Roman soldier, Panthera (Πανθηρα; *Contra Celsum* 1:28, 32). In the Tosefta there is no suggestion of anything disparaging in the name Pantira, but it is found in the statement of a third-century Babylonian *amora*, a young contemporary of Celsus, where it is connected with the name *Ben Stada. Ben Stada is mentioned in the Tosefta (Shab. 11:15) and in the Babylonian Talmud (Sanh. 67a; Dik. Sof. ad loc.). The reading is "And thus they did to Ben Stada in Lydda and hanged him on the eve of Passover." This reading has been taken to refer to Jesus, but there is no basis in tannaitic literature for this identification. When Eliezer referred to Jesus he called him by name.

Since the time of Geiger (JZWL, 6 (1868), 31–37) various scholars have tried to view the name Balaam, occurring in many *aggadot*, as a pseudonym for Jesus. They find their proof in the passage: "A certain sectarian said to Ḥanina 'Have you heard how old Balaam was?' He replied 'It is not actually stated, but since it is written 'Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days' [Ps. 55:24] he must have been 33 or 34'. He rejoined 'You have spoken correctly; I personally have seen Balaam's Chronicle, in which it is stated, 'Balaam

the lame was 33 years of age when Phinehas the robber killed him' [Sanh. 106b].'" On the basis that Jesus lived about 33 years and is called a sectarian, it was maintained that Balaam's Chronicle is none other than the Gospels and "Phinehas the robber" Pontius Pilate. However, it is impossible to imagine that a Christian would ask a Jew how old Jesus was, and call the Gospel Balaam's Chronicle or that Pontius Pilate, who is not mentioned even once in the whole of rabbinic literature, should be referred to as Phinehas the robber. The sectarian referred to was merely a member of a Gnostic sect who was testing whether Ḥanina could answer a question which is not answered in the Torah. Balaam's Chronicle was an apocryphal book on Balaam. These books often adopted an unfavorable attitude to the patriarchs and the prophets and it was possible that Phinehas of the Bible was called in them Phinehas the robber. Efforts to find allusions to Jesus and his disciples in the Mishnah (Sanh. 10:2; Avot 5:19) have no basis at all in the sources. Nor can one justify the conjecture that the word "Such a one" (Heb. *peloni*) used by Ben Azzai (Yev. 4:13) refers to Jesus. The *tannaim* did not ascribe an illegitimate birth to Jesus and had they done so they had no reason to conceal it, any more than the *amoraim* later did. Similarly one cannot say that the pupils of Eliezer had Jesus in mind when they asked their master the cryptic questions, "Has such a one a portion in the world to come? Has a bastard a portion in the world to come?" (Yoma 86b).

Polemics directed against the Christian dogmas that Jesus was the Messiah, the son of God, and God, are found in homilies and sayings of *amoraim* in the third and fourth centuries. Some of these homilies are merely a reply to the Christological interpretations of the *Church Fathers, who sought to find proof and supports for their teachings in the Scriptures. The words of Ḥiyya b. Abba, "If the son of the harlot says to you there are two gods, say to him 'I am He of the Red Sea; I am He of Sinai'" (PR 21:100), are directed against Christian dualism (the doctrine of the Trinity not yet having been accepted in the third century). The expression "son of a harlot" has a dual meaning, referring to Jesus in person, and to his heretical teaching, i.e., "son of heresy." Simeon b. Lakish, a contemporary of Origen, explained the verse "Alas who shall live after God hath appointed him" (Num. 24:23) to mean "Woe for him who resurrects himself with the title god" (Sanh. 106a). *Abbahu, who lived in Caesarea and had many disputes with heretics, explained Balaam's words, "God is not a man that He should lie; Neither the son of man that He should repent" (Num. 23:19) in a way that left no doubt about whom it was directed against, "If a man says to you, I am god, he lies; [if he says] I am the son of man, he shall regret it; [if he says] I shall rise to heaven, he says but he shall not fulfill it" (TJ, Ta'an. 2:1, 65b; Sanh. 106a; Dik. Sof. ad loc.). In this interpretation, Abbahu represents Balaam as rebuking and warning the gentiles not to be ensnared by the new religion, in the same way as his fellow citizen, the Church Father Origen, puts Christological teachings into Balaam's mouth (see his commentary on Num. 15:4). These teachings are also

contradicted by Balaam in a homily to Eleazar ha-Kappar (Yal. Num., ed. Salonika, 765, from where it was published in Jellinek's *Beit ha-Midrash*, 5 (1967³), 208). Most of it, however, is by a fourth-century preacher who had already witnessed the spread of Christianity in Caesarea.

A polemic of the amoraic era is also found in the story of Rabban Gamaliel and his sister *Imma Shalom (Shab. 116aff.), but it cannot be regarded as authentic. It contains no quotation from any early version of "the words of Jesus," but parodies the words of Matthew. The *tanna* and his wife ridicule their neighbor, the "philosopher" – who is simply a Christian teacher – criticizing the contradictions in the teaching of Jesus, which on the one hand appears as a different law, while on the other Jesus himself says, "I have come neither to diminish the law of Moses, nor to add to it" (cf. Matt. 5:17, "think not that I am come to destroy but to fulfill"). As an example of "another Torah," a quotation is brought from the *Avon Gilyon* ("sinful margin," a disparaging name for *Evangelion*, Gospel in Greek): "Son and daughter inherit alike." No such statement occurs in the Gospels. It is possible that the statement of the philosopher that a daughter does not inherit was intended to cast doubt on the messianic status of Jesus, whose claim to be the Messiah was dependent on his Davidic descent. If he was of virgin birth, that descent could only have been on his mother's side.

[*Encyclopaedia Hebraica*]

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JETHRO (Heb. יֶתְרוֹ, יִתְרֹ), Midianite priest and father-in-law of *Moses. Jethro had seven daughters who served as his shepherdesses. When Moses fled from Egypt he came to the well

in Midian where he witnessed local shepherds mistreating the girls. He saved them and watered their flocks for them. In return, Jethro welcomed Moses into his home and gave him one of his daughters, *Zipporah, as a wife. He also appointed Moses as shepherd of his flocks (Ex. 2:16–21; 3:1). Jethro is next mentioned after the incident of the burning bush when Moses, having decided to return to Egypt, asked and received his father-in-law's permission to do so (4:18).

After the Exodus from Egypt, when the Israelites had arrived in the vicinity of Sinai, Jethro brought Zipporah, whom Moses had divorced, along with her two sons to Moses. Although no mention is made of Moses' reconciliation with his wife, we learn that Jethro received a most honorable welcome. He expressed his delight at the deliverance of Israel, blessed YHWH and praised Him as "greater than all gods," and brought sacrifices to Him, afterward partaking of a meal with Aaron and all the elders of Israel (18:1–12). The following day, Jethro advised Moses on the reorganization of the judicial system and returned to his own land (18:13–23, 27). The narratives about Jethro have raised many problems. He is given this name in Exodus 3:1; 4:18; 18:1–2, 5–6, 12. However, he is called Reuel in Exodus 2:18 and in Numbers 10:29 as well, while Judges 4:11 refers to Hobab as the father-in-law of Moses. In the former passage, Moses asked Hobab to act as a guide for the Israelites through the wilderness. His final reply is not given there, but from Judges 4:11 it would seem that he allowed himself to be persuaded. Another difficulty lies in the fact that the Pentateuch describes Moses' father-in-law as a Midianite, whereas he is elsewhere termed a Kenite (Judg. 1:16; 4:11).

Varying solutions have been suggested to account for the conflicting data (for traditional account see below). Some modern scholars assign Hobab to the J source and Jethro to the E document. "Reuel their father" in Exodus 2:18 would then either be a misunderstanding of Numbers 10:29 or refer to the grandfather of the shepherdesses. Others take Jethro and Reuel to be one and the same person and regard Hobab as the son, a solution that requires the emendation of Judges 4:11. In the opinion of W.F. Albright, the Jethro-Reuel-Hobab traditions are quite homogeneous. The roles of Jethro and Hobab are so different as to preclude identity. The former is an old man who already had seven grown daughters when Moses arrived in Midian and who gave Moses in the wilderness the kind of advice that could only be the product of mature wisdom. Hobab is a young, vigorous man who could withstand the rigors of acting as a guide in the wilderness wanderings. He is, therefore, not the father-in-law, but the son-in-law of Moses, and *hoten* in Numbers 10:29 and Judges 4:11 should be read *hatan*. Reuel is the name of the clan to which both Jethro and Hobab belonged (cf. Gen. 36:10, 13; 1 Chron. 1:35, 37), and Exodus 2:18 should read, "they returned to Jethro, son of Reuel (i.e., the Reuelite), their father." Finally, the epithet "Kenite" is not in contradiction to Midianite, since it is an occupational, not an ethnic, term meaning a "metalworker, smith," as in Aramaic and Arabic (cf. Gen. 4:22). But the solution appears