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"Anti-Judaism on the Way from Judaism to Christianity", Peter Landesmann, Frankfurt am Main 2012 : [recenzja]

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Peter Landesmann, *Anti-Judaism on the Way from Judaism to Christianity* (Wiener Vorlesungen: Forschungen 5; Peter Lang: Frankfurt am Main et al., 2012). Pp. 121 + VIII. \$33.95. ISBN 978-3-631-62132-5 (Softcover).

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Peter Landesmann is an associated professor of the Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Vienna, but Jewish studies is not one and only field of his research. In 1952, he graduated as engineer from the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in the capital of Austria. Then, in 1994, he obtained his PhD in Judaic Studies. In 2001, he became a Doctor of Protestant Theology, and in 2007 in Catholic Theology. The book of Peter Landesmann entitled *Anti-Judaism on the Way from Judaism to Christianity* can be counted among the scholarly studies about the “parting of the ways” between Judaism and Christianity. In the last two decades several excellent books concerning this topic appeared. Some of them can be listed here: *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135* (ed. J.D.G. Dunn) (Wiissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 66; Tübingen 1992); *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* (ed. P. Borgen – S. Giversen) (Peabody 1997); A.H. Becker – A.Y. Reed, *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Text and Studies in the Ancient Judaism 95; Tübingen 2003); J. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London 2006); *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism: A Parallel History of Their Origins and Early Development* (ed. H. Shanks) (Washington, DC 2011); P. Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus. How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Oxford 2012).

The book by Landesmann is preface with some reflections on the Wiener Vorlesungen, in which it originates. The initiative of Wiener Vorlesungen was born in 1987 and until now many of the best scholars in the world give their speeches at Vienna City Hall. This initiative is flanked by nine series of books, one of them being the Wiener Vorlesungen: Forschung, in which the voume by Landesmann is published.

Landesmann begins his analyses with the important statement: “If we strive to indentify the difference between Christian religious belief and Judaism, it can be found in the contradictory perception of the person of Jesus. The issue that marked the beginning of the parting of the ways was messianity of Jesus. We need to analyze the differing trends in Judaism that spawned the belief that God had sent a Redeemer in the person of the Messiah if we are to understand the origins of the term” (p. 3). This statement is absolutely true. Analyses of the differing trends in Judaism concerning the Messiah are needed, even necessary. The problem is that the book by Landesmann contains rather an elenchus of topics differentiating Christianity from Judaism, than real analyses of these topics. Nevertheless, a reader has to admit that the elenchus itself is quite well elaborated. We can find here most of the New Testament themes, which are crucial for the Christian-Jewish debate and which finally resulted in the “parting of the ways” between the two religions. Of course, the author mentions only those trends within Judaism that played a decisive role in molding Christianity.

The starting point for considering the split between Church and Synagogue is for Landesmann the case of “Mary’s virgin birth”, sustained by Christians (the author means virgin birth of Jesus, obviously). Referring to Matthew 1:18-23, Landesmann pays attention to the quote from Isaiah 7:14 within this pericope. Christians interpreted this quotation according to the LXX version (*parthenos*), that is, according to the translation made by Jews in the 3rd or 2nd century B.C.E. In rabbinic Judaism, the Septuagint was not enumerated into the Jewish canon of Scriptures. According to Matthew, Mary was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18). The Holy Spirit is mentioned several times in the Hebrew Bible (Isaiah 63:10-11; Psalm 51:11; Exodus 31:2-3; Numbers 24:2), but in Judaism His role was understood in quite a different way than in Christianity (the Jews attributed to the divine spirit first of all the power of prophetic announcements). Hopes for the future are also different for Christians and for Jews. In the New Testament Jesus is seen as the Messiah, while Jews are still waiting for His coming.

The next part of Landesmann’s book is dedicated to the titles given by God to agents acting on His behalf (pp. 18-25): angels, the Son of Man, the Messiah as a King and descendent of David, the Son of God. The author presents not only the biblical passages (and the interpretation of those passages given by Christians and Jews), but he also quotes the apocryphal literature and the sectarian texts from Qumran. Then, he pays attention to Christian and Jewish doctrine of wisdom and the understanding of the term “logos” in the Hebrew Bible, Greek philosophy, in Philo of Alexandria and in John the evangelist. To understand the parting of the ways between Church and

Synagogue is to understand the statements made by Jesus about Judaism. This problem is dedicated the next part of the reviewed book (pp. 34-37). Landesmann quotes especially some passages from Matthew and John. Then, he draws attention to the titles given Jesus, such as the Rabbi, the Teacher, the Prophet, the High Priest, the King, the Savior, the Lord, the mediator between God and the people, the Son of Man and the Messiah (the two last titles are reflected on once again, but from another point of view; cf. pp. 18-24), the Lamb of God, the second and last Adam, the “logos” and the God. Reader has to appreciate this chapter of Landesmann’s book, because the author in a very short, but precise way describes the role of the titles bestowed on Jesus not only in the New Testament, but also in the patristic literature.

In the next part of his reflections, the author takes into consideration the question of Jesus’ crucifixion (“Why was Jesus crucified?”), giving it respectively Jewish (pp. 57-58) and Christian (p. 59) interpretation. The passages quoted from Josephus Flavius are very helpful to understand the Jewish point of view on Jesus’ death on the cross. Next, several pages are dedicated to the resurrection of Jesus (pp. 60-66). The author not only presents the New Testament testimonies about the resurrection, but also shows the way of understanding the fact of the empty tomb by the Fathers of the Church. Landesmann shows the Gospel text on the rise Christ in the larger perspective of Greek and apocryphal literature on the raising from the dead (*1 Enoch, The Book of Jubilees, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, The Apocalypse of Zephaniah, The Apocalypse of Abraham, The Fourth Book of the Sybilline Oracles*).

Naturally, the next topic after the resurrection of Jesus is the expectation of his imminent reappearance, with the special attention paid to the delay of return (pp. 67-68). Other topics discussed in the book are: the redemption, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins through baptism, peace, the story of Jesus’ congregation after his crucifixion (around 30 AD), the problem of gentiles entering the Church, the problem of meat sacrificed to idols and the question of circumcision. Exposing these themes, Landesmann interprets first of all the New Testament passages and then compares them with the data derived from Jewish traditions. He is conscious of the fact, that some of these topics were problematic not only in the Jewish-Christian debate, but also within the Christian community (e.g. circumcision or meat sacrificed to idols). Finally, the tension between Jews and Jewish Christians resulted in the disassociation of the Jews from the community of the believers in Christ. Then, the split between Jewish Christians and Judaism became the fact.

Landensmann's book contains three and a half pages of bibliography (pp. 106-109), mainly in English and German. The author also added the abbreviations of biblical books which suggests that he did not intend to write an elaborated theological work (the theologians are pretty familiar with the abbreviations of the book of the Bible, as well as with the abbreviations of non-canonical books, pseudo-epigraphic books, and works of Philo or rabbinical treatises). Instead of giving footnotes on every page of the book, the reader finds endnotes, being the last part of the book. The work also contains several illustrations, e.g. the mosaic from the apse of St. Zeno's Chapel in Santa Prassede in Rome, the fresco "Crucifixion" by Fra Angelico, the mosaics from the western wall of the Basilica of Santa Sabina in Rome, the mosaic in the apse of Santa Prudenziana in Rome, and two mosaics from the chapel on the Mount Nebo.

Concluding, the book by Peter Landesmann is not – as one could expect – an analytical study of themes that caused the controversy between Christians and Jews and in effect led to the split between the Church and Synagogue. It is rather a rich elenchus of topics that raised this controversy. As such, the book can be very useful for the beginners in research on the "parting of the ways", for theologians and historians as well.