

Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann
Studies in Jewish History and Culture 20

Anders Gerdmar

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese umfangreiche Studie bietet einen informativen Überblick über antisemitische Tendenzen in der neutestamentlichen Exegese in Deutschland zwischen 1750 und 1950. Der schwedische Autor erforscht, was bekannte Exegeten über die Juden und das Judentum gesagt haben, wie Geschichtsschreibung angewandt wird und wie man mit dem Problem der Kontinuität und Diskontinuität umgeht. Er analysiert ebenfalls, weshalb sie sagten, was sie sagten, wobei er versucht, die Ansichten über die Juden und das Judentum innerhalb der symbolischen Welt eines jeden einzelnen Wissenschaftlers zu verstehen. Gerdmar berücksichtigt auch eine mögliche Beziehung zwischen der symbolischen Welt und einer Legitimierung des kollektiven Umgangs mit den Juden und dem Judentum. Das vorliegende Werk ist eine bedeutende Studie zur Geschichte neutestamentlicher Wissenschaft und, etwas allgemeiner, zur Rolle und zu den Gefahren von Ideologie in der Theologie.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude très complète et érudite fait le tour de la question des tendances antisémites dans les études consacrées au Nouveau Testament entre 1750 et 1950. L'auteur, un Suédois, considère ce que d'éminents exégètes ont dit sur les Juifs et sur le judaïsme, comment ils ont utilisé l'historiographie et comment ils ont abordé la question de la continuité et de la discontinuité. Il cherche à déterminer pourquoi ils ont dit ce qu'ils ont dit et tente de comprendre le point de vue de chaque spécialiste sur les Juifs et le judaïsme en fonction du monde symbolique de celui-ci. Il examine aussi le lien susceptible d'exister entre monde symbolique et légitimation du traitement réservé aux Israélites et au judaïsme dans la société. C'est là une contribution importante à l'histoire de l'étude académique du Nouveau Testament. De plus, l'ouvrage met en évidence, de manière plus générale quel rôle jouent les idéologies en théologie et quels dangers elles représentent.

SUMMARY

This comprehensive study offers an erudite survey of anti-Semitic tendencies in German New Testament exegesis between 1750 and 1950. The Swedish author inquires what prominent exegetes said about Jews and Judaism, how historiography is used and how the problem of continuity-discontinuity is dealt with. He also examines why they said what they said, attempting to understand the views on Jews and Judaism within the symbolic world of each scholar. Gerdmar also considers the possible link

between symbolic world and the legitimation of societal treatment of Jews and Judaism. This is an important study of the history of New Testament scholarship and, more generally, of the role and dangers of ideology in theology.

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A number of recent studies have focused on the role that national and Nazi ideological lore played in New Testament scholarship during the period of the German Third Reich and the two decades previously. The scope of the present substantial monograph by Swedish scholar Anders Gerdmar is more comprehensive. Gerdmar focuses on a wider era and places what happened under the influence of nationalism and the ideology of the *Deutsche Christen* in the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century in a larger context.

In an introductory chapter Gerdmar discusses definitions of anti-Semitism, explains the choice and delimitation of materials and the purposes of his study. His quest is to find out 'how various positions on Jews and Judaism were theologically justified, and how Jews and Judaism were constructed in the biblical interpretation of German Protestantism, from the dawn of modernity to the years after the Holocaust' (2). He goes on to say:

The focus is... on the overarching paradigms, thought structures and models used in exegesis, such as characterisations of Jews and Judaism, historiographical models used to describe the relationship between Judaism and early Christianity, and the place of Jews and Judaism in the respective world-views or symbolic worlds (4).

The study consists of three stages:

Firstly, it looks at what the exegetes said about Jews and Judaism, especially the characterisation of Jews and Judaism, how historiography is used and how the problem of continuity-discontinuity is dealt with. Secondly, it examines why they said what they said, attempting to understand the views on Jews and Judaism within the symbolic world of each scholar. Thirdly, it considers the possible link between symbolic world and legitimation of societal treatment of Jews and Judaism (577, detailed description on 9–12).

Part one is devoted to Enlightenment exegesis and the Jews. After a survey of developments from Deism to De Wette, Gerdmar covers Johann S. Semler, Johann G. Herder, Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher and Wilhelm M. L. de Wette. This is followed by a brief survey of the Jews in Enlightenment exegesis from Baur to Ritschl and then a detailed treatment of Ferdinand C. Baur, David F. Strauss and Albrecht Ritschl. Under the heading 'The History of Religions School and the Jews – a Historical Turn?' Johannes Weiß and Wilhelm Bousset are discussed.

Part two describes exegesis from the perspective of salvation history and the Jews, covering Friedrich Tholuck, Johann T. Beck, Franz Delitzsch, Hermann L.

Strack and Adolf Schlatter. In this tradition, Jews were seen as objects of conversionist activities, although, at the same time, the strongest defenders of the Jews often came from the missionaries themselves. Gerdmar observes that 'the fact that Jews of a heroic, biblical history are given a prominent place does not guarantee a positive attitude to contemporary Jews' (193).

Part three examines the positions that prominent German form critics (Karl L. Schmidt, Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann) held vis-à-vis the Jews. The *fourth part* surveys Nazi exegesis and the Jews. After a brief introduction, the discussion includes Gerhard Kittel and Walter Grundmann ('Towards a non-Jewish Jesus'). These two exegetes may have been those most influenced by nationalism and National Socialism, but they were by no means the only exegetes to be 'seduced' by Nazi ideology.

This instructive volume closes with an analysis. Gerdmar argues that there is ample evidence

that these exegetes' views on Jews and Judaism are a complex combination of research tradition, theological currents, cultural conceptions of Jews as well as political ideas and considerations; and ultimately the views are formed out of the personal symbolic world and ethos of the exegete (577).

Gerdmar concludes:

Hence none of the research traditions is innocent when it comes to legitimising anti-Semitism. However, the study does not justify tainting entire traditions with anti-Semitism, whether they be Enlightenment or salvation-historical, liberal or conservative. What is essential is to understand the thought structures that open or close the door to anti-Semitism, since there is often a link between the place of the 'symbolic Jew' and the social and political treatment of the 'real Jew' (578).

Gerdmar has covered a wide field and offers a sensitive and, by and large, persuasive analysis of latent and open anti-Judaism in German theology, which also had a strong influence on theology elsewhere. Obviously, other scholars with similar tendencies had to be omitted in this broad survey. By closing his examination with Kittel and Grundmann (about 1950), it is easy to assume that theological anti-Judaism has been overcome. While this is by and large true in German theology under the impact of the Holocaust and the post-war Jewish-Christian dialogue, it is still necessary to inquire whether anti-Judaism (albeit in different, more subtle forms) still lingers on.

Editor: See also Jochen Eber, 'Das „Volkstestament der Deutschen“: „Die Botschaft Gottes“ – ein deutsch-christliches Neues Testament im Dritten Reich', *European Journal of Theology* 18 (2009) 29-46.

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Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart Band 4: Ereignisse, Dekrete, Kontroversen
Wolfgang Benz (ed.)

München: Saur; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011; xv + 492S.,
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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Band vier dieses neuen Handbuchs des Antisemitismus behandelt Ereignisse, Dekrete und Kontroversen rund um den Antisemitismus, aber auch um seine Überwindung. Der zeitliche Schwerpunkt liegt auf Neuzeit und Gegenwart. Eine Reihe von Einträgen gilt Formen von Antisemitismus, die eine spezifisch christliche Komponente haben. Der Band hilft dabei den gegenwärtigen Antisemitismus sowie die Holocaust in einen größeren Rahmen zu verorten.

SUMMARY

Volume four of this new manual of Anti-Semitism deals with events, decrees and controversies concerning Anti-Semitism, but also with overcoming it. The time frame concentrates on modernity and the present. A series of articles deals with forms of Anti-Semitism which have specifically Christian elements. The present volume enables placing both present Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust within a larger frame.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce quatrième volume d'un nouveau manuel consacré à l'antisémitisme traite aussi bien de l'antisémitisme que des efforts faits pour le contrecarrer, en présentant des événements, des décrets et des controverses relatives à ce phénomène. Il se concentre sur l'époque de la modernité et l'époque actuelle. Une série d'articles consacrés aux formes prises par l'antisémitisme révèle des éléments spécifiquement chrétiens. Ce volume permet de replacer l'antisémitisme actuel ainsi que la shoah dans un cadre plus large.

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Nach den Bänden *Antisemitismus in Ländern und Regionen* (Band 1), zu *Personen* (Band 2) und zu *Begriffen, Theorien und Ideologien* (Band 4) widmet sich der vorliegende vierte Band des Handbuchs des Antisemitismus konkreten *Ereignissen, Dekreten und Kontroversen*. Er „informiert über Ereignisse und Affären, über legislative Maßnahmen und politische Proklamationen, über Skandale, Exzesse, Debatten, Prozesse, die Manifestationen von Judenfeindschaft waren, die darauf bezogen oder dadurch ausgelöst wurden ...“ (v). Dazu gehören legislative Judenfeindschaft und auf Juden bezogene Gesetzgebung, öffentliche Debatten, etwa über das Schächten, verschiedene Ritualmordvorwürfe und unterschiedliche Formen von Gewalt gegenüber Juden:

Exzessive Gewalt gegen Juden wurde in der Geschichte Europas oft geübt und ideologisch vor-