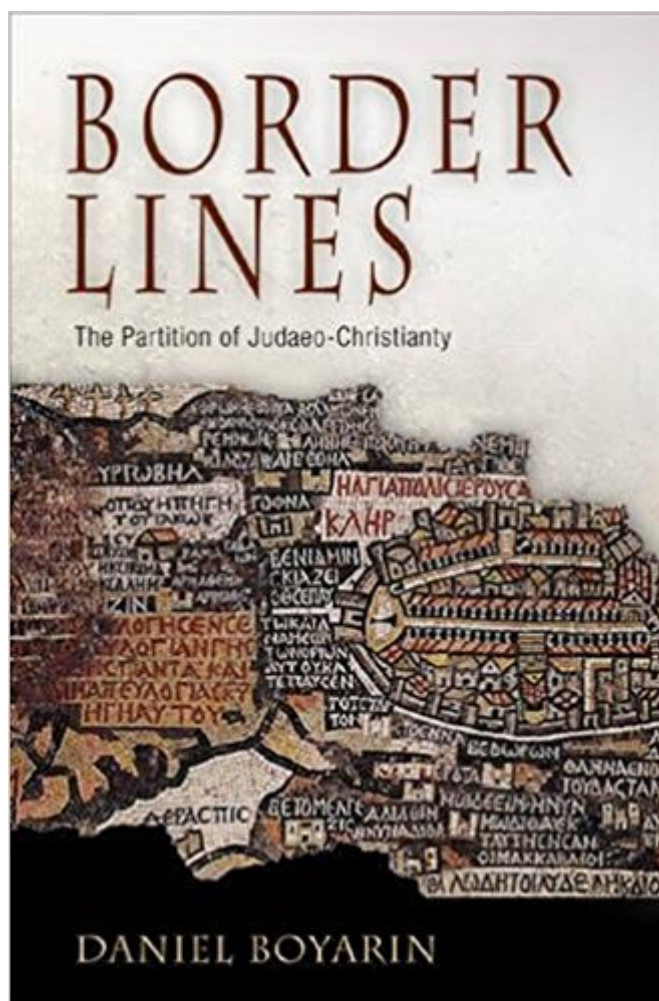


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Border Lines: The Partition Of Judaeo-Christianity (Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion)



Synopsis

The historical separation between Judaism and Christianity is often figured as a clearly defined break of a single entity into two separate religions. Following this model, there would have been one religion known as Judaism before the birth of Christ, which then took on a hybrid identity. Even before its subsequent division, certain beliefs and practices of this composite would have been identifiable as Christian or Jewish. In *Border Lines*, however, Daniel Boyarin makes a striking case for a very different way of thinking about the historical development that is the partition of Judaeo-Christianity. There were no characteristics or features that could be described as uniquely Jewish or Christian in late antiquity, Boyarin argues. Rather, Jesus-following Jews and Jews who did not follow Jesus lived on a cultural map in which beliefs, such as that in a second divine being, and practices, such as keeping kosher or maintaining the Sabbath, were widely and variably distributed. The ultimate distinctions between Judaism and Christianity were imposed from above by "border-makers," heresiologists anxious to construct a discrete identity for Christianity. By defining some beliefs and practices as Christian and others as Jewish or heretical, they moved ideas, behaviors, and people to one side or another of an artificial border—and, Boyarin significantly contends, invented the very notion of religion.

Book Information

Series: Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion

Paperback: 392 pages

Publisher: University of Pennsylvania Press (October 26, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0812219864

ISBN-13: 978-0812219869

Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 6.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 16 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #201,006 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #75 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Judaism](#) #161 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > History](#) #197 in [Books > History > World > Religious > Judaism](#)

Customer Reviews

"Boyarin proposes that by constructing the categories of religious orthodoxy and heresy, second-century Gentile Christians created the concept of religion which pervades the Western world

to this day. The work is intensely provocative and innovative and is destined to take its proper place as a modern classic among Boyarin's previous works."•Shofar"Encourages us to see historic Christianity as but one expression of a universalistic potential in Jewish monotheism. . . . In a fruitful career not yet nearly over, *Border Lines*, the culmination of many years of work, may well remain Daniel Boyarin's masterpiece."•Jack Miles, *Commonweal*"Boyarin's book challenges the ordinary usage of the terms 'Judaism' and 'Christianity' and juxtaposes the formation of orthodoxy as it is formulated within rabbinic tradition and among Christians of the patristic period. His bold thesis will no doubt prove controversial and important."•Elaine Pagels, author of *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*

Daniel Boyarin is the Taubman Professor of Talmudic Culture in the Departments of Near Eastern Studies and Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity*, *Judaism and A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*, and other books.

Border Lines is the richest and most stimulating book I have read in years--and I've read some excellent ones. But this one breaks new ground for me, theologically and intellectually. For the first time, I can really see "Christianity" in its a fully "Jewish" milieu, as a "school" which had much in common with other "schools", especially regarding the Logos and Two Powers in Heaven. It was not just Philo who expounded the Logos: there was a whole context out of which these ideas arose and were shaped and debated and taught. And then, as both "Judaism" and "Christianity" chose normative identities which repudiated the other AS Other, that common ground was lost. To my mind, Boyarin has recaptured it, in all its rich possibilities. Boyarin's elucidation of the Prologue of John as a midrash almost took my breath away, it was so brilliant and illuminating. I would read it for that alone. This absolutely stupendous book is a truly seminal contribution to human knowledge and understanding, for both Jews and Christians. And it bears re-reading, as one pass-through of this very demanding and scholarly book would not be enough to absorb it. But it's my desert island book for sure!

Written in high academic language, with all the consequent political correctness called for by that. The extra hoops jumped through diminish clarity to some degree. Despite that, this book explores the fascinating story of how Judaism and Christianity became distinct, since at one time they weren't going under those names and weren't separate. If I understand Dr. Boyarin's thesis, here. Covering

related territory but less academic in presentation is his book "The Jewish Gospels."

This book is quite well in the area of the exploration of the division between Judaism and Christianity. It is written from the perspective of an Orthodox Jew. I have very minimal experience with Judaism and thought that Boyarin's insights on the developments of Rabbinic Judaism revealed much more than I used to know. What I really found interesting was his expansion on Segal's "Two Powers" in Heaven doctrine that occurred in earlier versions of Judaism but later became condemned. He calls this Jewish "binitarianism". Many today often claim that the early Jews were rather "unitarian" but Boyarin dismisses this. This is not to say there weren't unitarian Jews but that unitarianism for them was not a fundamental part of their theology as it is now. Boyarin is a Talmudic scholar. As such, his understanding of patristic theology is a little bit wanting at times. For instance, he hints that Nicaea did away with "Logos" theology especially in St Athanasius. But St Athanasius was also involved in the Alexandrian school of theology from Origen which also espoused the "deuteros theos" theology as well. The Logos theology is generally a part, not exclusive, of Trinitarian theology then.

An excellent book on the history of religion, showing how arbitrary are the lines between early Christianity and Judaism. The main insight of the book is that the division was primarily the invention of people who benefited from the idea of division, i.e. Religion at its most drearily typical.

excellent copy

One of the most hopeful and helpful resources to build an historical bridge between the church and the synagogue; between Christians and Jewish folk. Excellent!

Good quality

a very good research and reinterpretation of christianism

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