



**Dariusz Spychała**  
(Bydgoszcz)

**BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND GROTESQUE:  
HOW WOJCIECH SADY UNDERSTANDS THE  
HISTORY OF RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND  
SCIENCE**

Wojciech Sady, *Dzieje religii, filozofii i nauki. Od Talesa z Miletu do Mahometa* [The History of Religion, Philosophy, and Science: Thales of Miletus to Mohammed], Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2010, 672 p.

In 2010 Marek Derewiecki, a well-known Polish publishing house which specializes mostly in philosophy, published Wojciech Sady's "Dzieje religii, filozofii i nauki" ["The History of Religion, Philosophy, and Science"] in the series Fundamenta. Studia z historii filozofii [Fundamenta. Studies in the History of Philosophy]<sup>1</sup>. The book was co-financed by the Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, which suggests that it was intended as a textbook for high school and university students. Both the intended use and the publication in a publishing house which contributed so much to the development

---

<sup>1</sup>Since the philosophical series from Kęty changed the publishing house (Antyk was divided into two independent publishing houses), I will make an exception and provide the publisher's names in this footnote. Cf. e.g.: W. Beierwaltes, *Platonizm w chrześcijaństwie*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2003, Fundamenta XXXIII; B. Dembiński, *Późny Platon i Stara Akademia*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2010, Fundamenta LXIII; R. Flacelière, *Historia literatury greckiej*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2004, Fundamenta XL; P. Hadot, *Twierdza wewnętrzna. Wprowadzenie do „Rozmyślań” Marka Aureliusza*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2004, Fundamenta XXXVI; idem, *Plotyn albo prostota spojrzenia*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2004, Fundamenta XXXIX; R. Heinzmann, *Filozofia średniowiecza*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 1999, A. Kijewska, *Filozof i jego muzy. Antropologia Boecjusza-jej źródła i recepcja*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2011, Fundamenta LXVI; K. Löwith, *Historia powszechna i dzieje zbawienia. Teologiczne przesłanki filozofii dziejów*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2002, Fundamenta XXXII; W. Seńko, *Jak rozumieć filozofię średniowieczną*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2001; T.A. Szlezak, *O nowej interpretacji platońskich dialogów*, Wydawnictwo ANTYK Marek Derewiecki, Kęty 2005, Fundamenta XLII.

of philosophical and historical research should ensure a high academic level of the book.

The origin of religions, their situation in antiquity and the history of science with the focus on how the views of the most prominent philosophers of the ancient world were shaped and how the philosophical schools were created are among the most widely discussed problems both in the international and Polish historical research<sup>2</sup>. However, the book written by Wojciech Sady is an example of a fairly

---

<sup>2</sup>See e.g.: J. Stevenson (ed.), *A New Eusebius. Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*, London 1987; M. Banaszak, *Historia Kościoła Katolickiego 1: Starożytność*, Warszawa 1986; 2: *Średniowiecze*, Warszawa 1987; J.D. Bernal, *Nauka w dziejach*, Warszawa 1957; W. Burkert, *Starożytne kultury misteryjne*, Kraków 2007; idem, *Stwarzanie świętości. Ślady biologii we wczesnych wierzeniach religijnych*, Kraków 2006; W.H. Carroll, *Historia chrześcijaństwa 1: Narodziny chrześcijaństwa*, Wrocław 2009; H. Chadwick, *Historia rozłamu Kościoła wschodniego i zachodniego. Od czasów apostołskich do soboru florenckiego*, Kraków 2009; M. Clagett, *Greek Science in Antiquity*, London 1957; J. Stevenson (ed.), *Creeds, councils and controversies. Documents illustrative of the history of the Church A. D. 337–461*, London 1976; J. Daniélou, H.I. Marrou, *Historia Kościoła 1. Od początków do roku 600*, Warszawa 1984; idem, *Teologia judeochrześcijańska. Historia doktryn chrześcijańskich przed soborem nicejskim*, MT 39, Kraków 2002; T. Dowley (ed.), *Historia chrześcijaństwa*, Warszawa 2002; E. Dassmann, *Kirchengeschichte I, Ausbreitung, Leben und Lehre der Kirche in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Stuttgart–Berlin–Köln 1991; idem, *Kirchengeschichte II/2. Theologie und innerkirchliches Leben bis zum Ausgang der Spätantike*, Stuttgart–Berlin–Köln 1999; M. Eliade, *Historia wierzeń i idei religijnych 1: Od epoki kamiennej do misterii eleuzyńskich*, Warszawa 1988; 2: *Od Gautamy Buddy do początków chrześcijaństwa*, Warszawa 1994; 3: *Od Mahometa do wieku Reform*, Warszawa 1997; B. Filarska, *Początki architektury chrześcijańskiej*, Lublin 1983; eadem, *Początki sztuki chrześcijańskiej*, Lublin 1986; works of J. Gnilla: *Jezus z Nazaretu*, Kraków 2005; *Pierwsi chrześcijanie. Źródła i początki Kościoła*, Kraków 2004; *Teologia Nowego Testamentu*, Kraków 2002; *Piotr i Rzym. Obraz Piotra w pierwszych dwu wiekach*, Kraków 2002; *Paweł z Tarsu. Apostoł i świadek*, Kraków 2001; A. Hastings (ed.), *Historia chrześcijaństwa*, Warszawa 2002; W. Jaeger, *Teologia wczesnych filozofów greckich*, Kraków 2007; A. Jankowski, *Rozwój chrystologii Nowego Testamentu*, MT 46, Kraków 2005; E. Jastrzębowska, *Sztuka wczesnochrześcijańska*, Kraków 2008; B. Kumor, *Historia Kościoła 1: Starożytność chrześcijańska*, Lublin 2001; G.E.R. Lloyd, *Nauka grecka od Talesa do Arystotelesa*, Warszawa 1998; idem, *Nauka grecka po Arystotelesie*, Warszawa 1998; S. Łucarz, *Grób czy świątynia? Problematyka cielesności w antropologii Klemensa Aleksandryjskiego*, Kraków 2007; D. Musiał, *Antyczne korzenie chrześcijaństwa*, Warszawa 2001; H. Pietras, *Początki teologii Kościoła*, MT 28, Kraków 2000; the author mentions the works of G. Reale in the introduction on page 6: G. Reale, *Historia filozofii starożytnej*, but he does not explain how many volumes he used which is why I have listed the titles of all of them: vol. 1: *Od początków do Sokratesa*, Lublin 1999; vol. 2: *Platon i Arystoteles*, Lublin 2001; vol. 3: *Systemy epoki hellenistycznej*, Lublin 1999; vol. 4: *Szkoły epoki Cesarstwa*, Lublin 1999; vol. 5: *Słownik. Indeksy i bibliografia*, Lublin 2002; F. Ruggiero, *Szaleństwo chrześcijan. Paganie wobec chrześcijaństwa w pierwszych pięciu wiekach*, Kraków 2007; K. Schatz, *Sobory powszechne. Punkty zwrotne w historii Kościoła*, Kraków 2001; W. Schuller, *Griechische Geschichte 1: 3. überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage*,

rare synthesis which brings together such distant spheres of human life as religion, philosophy, and science.

The book consists of an introduction, twenty three chapters, a list of references, and a name index. There is no subject index, which makes it more difficult to use this comprehensive work. In my research, I focus on the mutual relations of Christianity and ancient culture, and that is why I was particularly interested in how these problems are presented in the book.

The work under review draws on a fairly wide selection of sources. The concept of the book forced the author to refer to sources from disciplines as distant as religion, philosophy, and science. As the list of references at the end of the work suggests, Sady used most of the available works written by Ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. Unfortunately, not all the sources are included in the list of references as the principles of bibliographical description would require. Instead of that, they are scattered in the text of the book which makes the work of the reviewer much more difficult. Furthermore, in some cases the author decided to discuss only a narrow selection of source texts. That is the case with Plato's Letters, which by the way are not included in the list at the end of the book. Surprisingly, Sady mentioned only the Seventh Letter although he should have discussed the remaining twelve as well, especially while describing the developments in Syracuse<sup>3</sup>. The choice of sources related to religious problems is even worse. For instance, the author does not refer to any texts while presenting Ancient Egyptian beliefs. At this point, he could have used either the texts translated by T. Andrzejewski<sup>4</sup> or numerous sourcebooks published outside Poland<sup>5</sup>. On page 310, the author men-

---

München 1991, especially pages: 26–29, 59–103, 147–164, 170–171; M. Simon, *Cywilizacja wczesnego chrześcijaństwa*, Warszawa 1992; E. Wipszycka, *Kościół w świecie późnego antyku*, Warszawa 1994; J. Keller (ed.), *Zarys dziejów religii*, Warszawa 1986.

<sup>3</sup>B. McGinn, *Obecność Boga. Historia mistyki chrześcijańskiej. Fundamenty mistyki (do V wieku)*, Kraków 2009, *Mysterion*, p. 30–31: the author does not know for sure who wrote the letter but he is convinced that the letter “can give us an insight into the historical context in which the great philosopher formulated his ideas”; M. Maykowska, *Wstęp, [in:] Platon, Listy*, Warszawa 1987, p. VII–XIV, argues that the Seventh Letter which according to Wojciech Sady is questionable, was probably composed by Plato, p. XXVI–XXVIII; E. Voegelin, *Platon*, Warszawa 2009, p. 34–43, 339, 345.

<sup>4</sup>T. Andrzejewski, *Księga Umarłych kapłana-pisarza Neferhotepa*, Kraków 1951; idem, *Księga Umarłych piastunki Kai*, Warszawa 1951; idem, *Opowiadania egipskie*, Warszawa 1958; idem, *Pieśni rozweselające serce*, Warszawa 1963.

<sup>5</sup>A.W. Budge, *The Liturgy of Funerary Offering*, New York 1990; idem, *The Teaching of Amenemope*, London 1924; A. Erman, *Ein Denkmal memphitischen Theologie*, Berlin

tions a work on Moses, written by Sigmund Freud who supposedly argued that the Jewish legislator “was in fact Egyptian”. Using such an argument, even just as a hypothesis, is — with all due respect to Freud’s medical competences — arrant nonsense. Sady needed this assumption to justify his thesis about Moses continuing the religious ideas of Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten) who, according to the author, introduced monotheism in Egypt<sup>6</sup>. This approach is not entirely consistent with the widely held belief that the reality was more complex<sup>7</sup>. Even Wiesław Bator, who supports the theory about the monotheistic reform of Akhenaten, does not fail to notice the temples of Heliopolitan Re and Maat<sup>8</sup>. These would indicate henotheism rather than monotheism. While the reform of Akhenaten is described quite correctly despite the above reservations, the same cannot be said about Sady’s description of the origins of Judaism. On page 302, at the beginning of his depiction of Judaism, Sady explains first that the passage about the origins of the Bible is based solely on “what is known from scientific research”, and then adds that he “presents Bible stories and the beliefs they comprise”. Furthermore, he adds rather peculiarly that “regardless of the extent to which the text is true when read literally”, it had an impact on the development of Western civilization. While there cannot be any doubt about the influence on Western civilization, the remaining part of this statement raises many doubts. First, it is not clear what the author means when he writes that “the text is true”. If he is convinced that religious texts should be understood literally, he decides to ignore many centuries of research in this field, i.e. the development of biblical studies. In the conclusions drawn from the presented Bible excerpts, Sady does not refer to any publications from the field of biblical research although there is a great deal of them. Therefore, he is sometimes

---

1911; G. Roeder, *Die ägyptische Religion in Texten und Bildern 1–4*, Stuttgart–Zürich 1959.

<sup>6</sup>P. Johnson, *Historia Żydów*, Kraków 2004, p. 16, 36–40, 43; K. Pilarczyk, *Religia Izraela*, [in:] idem, J. Drabina (eds.), *Religie starożytnego Bliskiego Wschodu*, Kraków 2008, p. 381–382; N.M. Sarna, H. Shanks, *Izrael w Egipcie. Pobyt w Egipcie i wyjście*, [in:] idem, (eds.), *Starożytny Izrael. Od Abrahama do zburzenia świątyni jerozolimskiej przez Rzymian*, transl. by W. Chrostowski, Warszawa 2007, p. 70–98.

<sup>7</sup>See e.g.: W. Bator, *Religia starożytnego Egiptu*, Kraków 2004, *Mała Biblioteka Religii*, p. 26, 86–91; J. Tyldesley, *Nefertiti. Słoneczna królowa Egiptu*, p. 82–94; A. Ziółkowski, *Historia Powszechna. Starożytność*, Warszawa 2009, argues that Akhenaten’s reform was the first monotheism in the history and it brought about a certain shift of focus in the Heliopolitan theology.

<sup>8</sup>W. Bator, *Religia*, p. 87; J. Tyldesley, *Nefertiti*, p. 94: notes that the worship of gods such as Bes and Toeris was tolerated under the rule of Akhenaten.

led astray or tries to reinvent the wheel<sup>9</sup>. No wonder then that Sady's inferences are sometimes inaccurate. On the next page we read that "a story was written in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century BC in Jude: a history of a nation that was taken care of by a deity known as Yahweh. Yahweh liked the smell of animals burnt in his honor, was jealous, and would become ruthless whenever Judeans (Jews) turned to other idols". Based on this quote, one may conclude that this form of offering to the gods was exceptional in the ancient civilizations, whereas in fact it was a common practice. Instead of providing boring explanations in this review, I recommend reading the books listed in the footnote<sup>10</sup>. Further, on page 310, Sady argues that "Abraham's descendants probably were not monotheists for another few centuries". He refers to the initial phase of this religion as 'henotheistic'. Here the term 'monolatry' (i.e. the worship of one deity without denying that other gods may exist and take care of foreign tribes<sup>11</sup>) would be more correct. In defense of the author, it should be stated that the difference between monolatry and henotheism seems to be small to non-experts. The author does not refer to any source texts not only in his description of Judaism but also in the part about the religion of Persia, with the exception of Chapter 10 where the Avesta is mentioned in the main body of

---

<sup>9</sup>See e.g.: W.F. Albright, *The Biblical Period from Abraham to Ezra*, New York 1963; P.K. Mc Carter jr, R.S. Hendel, *Okres patriarchalny. Abraham. Izaak i Jakub*, [in:] H. Shanks (ed.) *Starożytny Izrael*, p. 25–67; Ch. Dohmen, G. Stemberger, *Hermeneutyka Biblii żydowskiej i Starożytnego Testamentu*, MT 59, Kraków 2008; J.A. Fitzmyer, *Pismo duszą teologii*, MT 14, Kraków 1997; W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, London 1984; M. Gilbert, *Mądrość Salomona 1–2*, MT 37–38, Kraków 2002; W.J. Harrington, *Klucz do Biblii*, Warszawa 2012; T. Hergesel, *Rozumieć Biblię. Stary Testament*, Kraków 1992; H. Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Philadelphia 1982; S.M. Miller, R.V. Huber, *Historia pisma. Dzieje powstania i odczytywania Pisma Świętego*, Warszawa 2005; S. Pines, *The Jewish Christians of the Early Centuries of Christianity according to new Source*, Jerusalem 1966; J. van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, New Haven 1975; E.A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible, Garden City–New York 1964.

<sup>10</sup>J.M. Hall, *Historia Grecji archaicznej, ok. 1200–479 p.n.e.*, Kraków 2011, p. 90–94; K. Kerényi, *Eleusis. Archetypowy obraz matki i córki*, Kraków 2004; B. Kupis, *Historia religii w starożytnej Grecji*, Warszawa 1989, p. 31–66, 187–237; A. Mrozek, *Jak Jehu wyrugował Baala (2 Krl 10, 18–28) — deuteronomistyczny paradygmat konfliktu religijnego?*, [in:] M. Münich, Ł. Niesiołowski-Spanó (eds.), *Starożytna Palestyna — Między Wschodem a Zachodem. Studia historico-biblica 1*, Lublin 2008, p. 66–72; S. Oświęcimski, *Zeus daje tylko znak, Apollo wiezczy osobiście. Starożytne wróżbiarstwo greckie*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1989, p. 7–9, and in particular p. 34–46 where hieroscopy, empyromancy, and campnomancy (methods of using animals offered in sacrifice) are described; R. Rosół, *Wschodnie korzenie kultu Apollona. Studium lingwistyczno-historyczne*, Kraków 2010, p. 69–77.

<sup>11</sup>A. Mrozek, *Jak Jehu*, p. 61–72; K. Pilarczyk, *Religia Izraela*, p. 380; E. Sakowicz, *Henoteizm*, [in:] J. Walkusz (ed.), *Encyklopedia katolicka 6*, Lublin 1993, col. 682–683.

text on page 322. The list of references could have included e.g. “Czyciele ognia, czasu i szatana” [“The Worshipers of Fire, Time and Satan”] by Andrzej Sarwa or the book by Mary Boyce<sup>12</sup> which is available in Polish translation. Furthermore, English translations could be of use as the author should not be expected to know Persian. This includes publications such as “The Avestan Hymn to Mithra and The Zend-Avesta”, as well as “Old Persian, Grammar, Texts, Lexicon”: a fundamental work written by R.G. Kent and published in New Haven in 1953, which provides translations of almost all inscriptions dating back to the times of the Achaemenid Empire which were available in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the book under review is rather an example of popular science than scientific writing, these sources would be more than enough. The insufficient literature that the author refers to in the descriptions of both Egyptian and Persian religions is particularly outrageous because on the basis of these descriptions, he advances theses about the great impact of these religions on Judaism and, subsequently, on Christianity<sup>13</sup>.

Hence, it is not clear what such far-reaching conclusions are based on. The influence of the Persian religion (Zoroastrianism) could be perhaps identified in the beliefs of the Qumran community but even in this case it is not as obvious as implied by Sady on page 343<sup>14</sup>. Here, it should be emphasized that the list of refer-

---

<sup>12</sup>See M. Boyce, *Zaratusztrianie. Wiara i życie*, Łódź 1988; A. Sarwa, *Czyciele ognia, czasu i szatana. Zaświaty w religiach Iranu*, Sandomierz 2006, the latter is intended for the general public.

<sup>13</sup>For more information about the origins of Christianity see: D.E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, Grand Rapids 1983; M. Banaszak, *Historia*, p. 20–23, 38–39, 51–53; C.K. Barret, *Church, Ministry and Sacraments in the New Testament*, Exeter 1985; N. Brox, *Der erste Petrusbrief*, Zürich–Vluyn 1979; J.T. Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church: Public Services and Offices in the Early Christian Communities*, New York 1992; H. von Campenhausen, *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Tübingen 1953; H. Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great*, Oxford 2001; L. Goppelt, *Les Origines de l'Église. Christianisme et judaïsme aux deux premiers siècles*, Paris 1961; M. Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*, New York 1981.

<sup>14</sup>For more information about Qumran and the Iranian influence see e.g. H. Stegemann, *Eseńczycy z Qumran. Jan Chrzciciel i Jezus*, Kraków, Mogilany 2002, p. 45–246; S. Mędała, *Aktualny stan badań problematyki qumrańskiej*, [in:] W. Tyloch, *Rękopisy z Qumran nad Morzem Martwym*, Warszawa 2001, p. 50–78; idem, *Wprowadzenie do literatury międzytestamentalnej*, Kraków 1994, p. 10–29; P. Muchowski, *Komentarze do rękopisów znad Morza Martwego*, Poznań 2005, p. 37–38, 41–54; W. Myszor, *Wprowadzenie*, [in:] G. Quispel, *Gnoza*, Warszawa 1988, p. 11–25, 36–46; K. Rudolph, *Gnoza*, Kraków 2003, p. 43–44, 277, 376; for an enthusiastic view on such influences see e.g. A. Welburn, *Początki chrześcijaństwa. Esseńskie misterium, gnostyckie objawienie, chrześcijańska wizja*, Warszawa 1998, p. 34–53.

ences does not include any monographs about Persian and Egyptian religions either. It is so because in the book there are very few references to any publications other than source texts. The author refers only to the following books: G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, M. Schofield, "Filozofia przedsokratejska" ["The Presocratic Philosophers"], Warszawa 1999; J. Gajda, "Pitagorejczycy" ["The Pythagoreans"], Warszawa 1996; eadem, "Sofiści" ["The Sophists"], Warszawa 1989; M. Michalski, "Antologia literatury partrystycznej", t. 1–2 ["The Anthology of Partristic Literature", vol. 1–2], Warszawa 1975, 1982; and a book by G. Reale and S. Freud the title of which is not given. The absence of books such as "Nauka grecka od Talesa do Arystotelesa" ["Early Greek Science: Thales to Aristotle"] and "Nauka grecka po Arystotelesie" ["Greek Science after Aristotle"] by G.E.R. Lloyd, which correspond with the beginning of the reviewed book, is also surprising. The author provides a partial explanation of his approach in the introduction. On page 4, he admits that "the texts about the history of philosophy and science [...] are based on available monographs, and to a small extent on own reading and reflections of the author". One could conclude, quite astonishingly, that the author did not really think his selection of sources through. Is this perhaps an overinterpretation of the reviewer? It seems it is not the case as this conclusion suggests itself immediately. Going back to the problem of source texts though, both Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Hagigah and the Jerusalem Talmud are mentioned in the description of Judaism in Chapter 17. However, both texts are not included in the list of references, like many others. Including all the mentioned source texts and monographs in the list of references is crucial and shows if the author has mastered the methodology of research or not. On the other hand, on page 317 the author points out rightly that the historicity of David and Solomon raises many doubts. However, Sady sometimes draws inferences about the views of various authors from some of their works only. The part about Philo of Alexandria is a good example. Sady does not mention such works as "On the Eternity of the World, On Mating with the Preliminary Studies, That the Worse Is Wont to Attack the Better, Flaccus", and others. It is common knowledge that Philo wrote 35 works that have survived to the present day, and probably five more that unfortunately have not survived till our times<sup>15</sup>. Drawing conclusions from a narrow selection of works written by any author is not quite

---

<sup>15</sup>Hier. Vir. ill. 11; L. Joachimowicz, Filon-filozof alegoryzujący, [in:] Filon Aleksandryjski, Pisma, transl. by L. Joachimowicz, Warszawa 1986, p. 15–16; S. Matuszewski, Filozofia Filona z Aleksandrii i jej wpływ na chrześcijaństwo, Warszawa 1962; J.M. Szymusiak, M. Starowieyski, Filon Aleksandryjski, [in:] eodsem, Słownik wczesnochrześcijańskiego piśmiennictwa, Poznań 1971, p. 159.

consistent with the methodology of historical research, unless authors state clearly that they are interested in the selected works only. In his analysis of the origins of Christianity, which starts on page 343, Sady, for some unexplained reason, consistently refers to the Jewish communities which profess Christianity as 'Jewish Christians' (*żydochrześcijanie*). This seems pointless, considering that the term 'Judeo-Christians' (*judeochrześcijanie*) is commonly used by researchers all over the world, and also by most Polish specialists<sup>16</sup>. In the case of travels and views of St. Paul (p. 346–363) on the other hand, Sady should familiarize himself e.g. with the works written by W. Rakocy and J. Gnilka, which are available in Polish libraries. This would allow the author to avoid further mistakes<sup>17</sup>. The same concerns the part about the teaching of Jesus and the apostolic activity. Furthermore, contrary to what the author implies, it is uncertain whether Tertullian officially joined the Montanist Church<sup>18</sup>. Similarly, the existence of the law introduced by Septimius Severus which would impose a ban on admitting new members to the Church (p. 468) is questionable<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, as opposed to Sady's clear-cut statement, it is

---

<sup>16</sup>See J. Daniélou, *Teologia judeochrześcijańska*; idem, *Études d'exégèse judéo-chrétienne (Les Testimonia)*, Paris 1966; E. Dassmann, *Kirchengeschichte I*, p. 58; J. Keller, *Chrześcijaństwo pierwotne*, [in:] idem, *Zarys*, p. 593; H. Pietras, *Początki*, p. 14, 23, 129, 151, 229, 276, 376; idem, *Eschatologia Kościoła pierwszych wieków*, MT 55, Kraków 2007, p. 28, 32, 54: the author refers to the pagans who accepted Christianity as 'ethno-Christians' (*etnochrześcijanie*) but then he uses the term 'Judeo-Christians' in reference to converted Jews, which does not seem very logical as the same term is applied to the ethos; M. Simonetti, *Między dosłownością a alegorią. Przyczynek do historii egzegezy patrystycznej*, MT 26, Kraków 2000, p. 25; F. Szulc, *Struktura teologii judeochrześcijańskiej. Studium metodologiczne w świetle badań J. Daniélou SJ*, MT 47, Kraków 2005.

<sup>17</sup>J. Gnilka, *Jezus z Nazaretu*; idem, *Pierwsi chrześcijanie*; idem, *Teologia Nowego Testamentu*; idem, *Piotr i Rzym*; idem, *Paweł z Tarsu*; W. Rakocy, *Paweł Apostoł. Chronologia życia i pism*, Częstochowa 2008.

<sup>18</sup>E. Schulz-Flügel, *Tertullian. Theologie als Recht*, [in:] W. Geerlings (ed.), *Theologien der christlichen Antike. Eine Einführung*, Darmstadt 2002, p. 13–17; J. Słomka, *Nowe proroctwo. Historia i doktryna montanizmu*, Katowice 2007, *Studia Antiquitatis Christianae, Series Nova* 4, p. 121–150: argues that the writer from Carthage did not break off with the Church.

<sup>19</sup>SHA, *Sewer*, 17: „*Judaeos fieri sub gravi poena vetuit, idem etiam de christianis sanxit*”; Euz. HE, VI. 1; M.F. Baslez, *Prześladowania w starożytności. Ofiary, bohaterowie, męczennicy*, Kraków 2009, p. 301; E. Dal Covolo, *I Severi e il cristianesimo. Ricerche sull' ambiente storico-istituzionale delle origini cristiane tra il secondo e il terzo secolo*, Roma 1989, p. 9, 38–43; T. Kotula, *Septymiusz Sewerus. Cesarz z Lepcis Magna*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1986, p. 134; I. Lewandowski, *Historiografia rzymska*, Poznań 2007, p. 406; H. Szelest, *Przedmowa*, [in:] *Historycy Cesarstwa Rzymskiego. Żywoty cesarzy od Hadriana do Numeriana*, Warszawa 1966, p. 13–22.



not certain if Origen really committed an act of self-mutilation and if he was a student of the philosopher Ammonius Saccas<sup>20</sup>. Such inaccuracies may arise due to the author's lack of knowledge of source texts, not to mention monographs and analyses. In the bibliography of the chapters devoted to Christianity and the monastic movement, Sady fails to include: "The Apophthegmata Patrum", "Ascetic Writings" by Anthony the Great, almost all works of St. Athanasius the Great and Origen, "The Ecclesiastical History" of Sozomen, most works of Saint Jerome with the exception of "To Pammachius against John of Jerusalem" and "Letter 124 to Avitus", "The Conferences" of John Cassian, "The Lausiatic History" by Palladius of Galatia, "The Ecclesiastical History" of Socrates Scholasticus, "The Chronicle" of Sulpicius Severus, "The Testament, The History of Monks in Egypt" and "Pachomiana latina" by Shenoute the Great. The author does not mention Dorotheus of Gaza and his ascetic writings, Evagrius Scholasticus's "The Ecclesiastical History", Philip of Side's "Christian History, The Ecclesiastical History" of Philostorgius, "The Ecclesiastical History" of Gelasius of Cyzicus, "The Ecclesiastical History" of Hesychius of Jerusalem, "The Ecclesiastical History" of John of Ephesus, "The Chronicle" of John, Bishop of Nikiu, "De Mortibus Persecutorum" by Lactantius, "The Ecclesiastical History" of Theodorus Lector, most works written by Eusebius, Epiphanius of Salamis, John Damascene, Cassiodorus, Theodoret of Cyrus, Zacharias Rhetor, almost all works by Rufinus of Aquileia. Furthermore, Sady does not refer to the work of Evagrius Ponticus, a monastic writer who focused on the problems of ascetic life. Egeria, with her Pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, is yet another author who is clearly missing here. Sady mentions only one book which is a collection of ecclesiastical documents adopted at synods and councils<sup>21</sup>. He may not like ecclesiastical sources but why he does not mention Ammianus Marcellinus, Sextus Aurelius Victor, Eutropius Festus, and Zosimos will remain his secret. This list of absent sources could be longer but it seems that the above-mentioned texts are enough to make a point. Comparing the information about Christianity with historical facts, we should have a look at page 532 where the author writes about Donatism. Contrary to the presently prevailing view that the conflict that caused

---

<sup>20</sup>Euz. HE VI, 8, 1–6, 19, 5–11; H. Crouzel, *Orygenes*, Bydgoszcz 1996, p. 35–39.

<sup>21</sup>That is: *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych. Tekst grecki, łaciński, polski (325–787)*, A. Baron, H. Pietras (eds.), *ŻMT* 24, Kraków 2001; among texts available in the Polish translation there are also: *Dokumenty synodów od 50 do 381 roku*, A. Baron, H. Pietras (eds.), *ŻMT* 37, Kraków 2006; *Dokumenty synodów od 381 do 431 roku*, A. Baron, H. Pietras (eds.), *ŻMT* 52, Kraków 2010; *Księgi pokutne. Tekst łaciński, grecki i polski*, A. Baron, H. Pietras (eds.), *ŻMT* 58, Kraków 2011. English-language publications have been listed in footnote 2.

the division of the African Church was predominantly of religious nature, Sady argues that “the Donatist Church attracted Berbers and other tribes that had inhabited this area for centuries and were dissatisfied with the Roman rule. Since most landowners were settlers from Italy, Donatism became a movement of the poor against the rich”<sup>22</sup>. In his presentation of the development of Arianism on pages 536–537, Sady simplifies the problem. He argues namely that emperors hesitated about their choice of religious policy. Such a description is adequate only if referring to Constantine the Great and Constantius II. One should not conclude though that Constantine the Great and Constantius II had the same views on theology. Any biography of Constantine the Great or any Ecclesiastical History would be enough to show that the emperor, while nearing his end, was striving for the rehabilitation of Arius in the Church on condition that the Alexandrian heresiarch would sign the terms of Nicaea<sup>23</sup>, which he nota bene did. Constantius II, on the other hand, was first in favor of all movements directed against Nicaea, then opted for Homoiousianism, and later on for a short period of time supported Anomeism, which was the only consistent exponent of Arius’s ideas<sup>24</sup>. In the end, the emperor decided for Homeism, which had nothing in common with Arianism. Homeism was also supported by Valens<sup>25</sup>. Nevertheless, the author deserves praise for having written that Julian the Apostate persecuted Christians. This view, presented on page 537, is quite rare nowadays. Since in this part of Sady’s book nearly every piece of information should be either discussed or corrected, I will focus only on other three controversial opinions. First, while discussing the Council of Chalcedon

---

<sup>22</sup>M.F. Baslez, *Prześladowania w starożytności*, p. 387–389, 391–395, 398, 401–405; T. Kotula, *Afryka Północna w starożytności*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1972, p. 493–503: the author of this publication argues that “the institution of the Donastic Church cannot be considered as a form of a political and social protest against the reality”; E. Wipszycka, *Kościół*, p. 145–151.

<sup>23</sup>See M. Banaszak, *Historia* 1, p. 130–133; K. Bihlmeyer, H. Tüchle, *Historia Kościoła 1: Starożytność chrześcijańska*, Warszawa 1971, p. 215; E. Dassmann, *Kirchengeschichte* II, p. 31–35; E. Schwartz, *Kaiser Constantin und die Christliche Kirche*, Darmstadt 1969, p. 127–158; D. Spychała, *Cesarze rzymscy a arianizm od Konstantyna Wielkiego do Teodozjusza Wielkiego (312–395)*, Poznań 2007, p. 24–26, 30–32, 51–57.

<sup>24</sup>See e.g. E. Dassmann, *Kirchengeschichte* II/2, p. 24–47; R.P.C. Hanson, *The search for the Christian Doctrine of God. The Arian controversy* 318–381, p. 116–117, 125, 127, 328, 346, 370, 439, 586–588, 598–636; T.A. Kopecek, *A history of Neo-Arianism*, Cambridge 1979, p. 1–543; M. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, p. 46–55, 253–266; Roma 1975; D. Spychała, *Arianizm*, p. 17–36; M. Wiles, *Archetypal heresy. Arianism through the centuries*, Oxford 1996, p. 1–47.

<sup>25</sup>H.Ch. Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer. Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, Tübingen 1988, p. 1, 60, 64, 72, 75, 83–84.

(p. 596), the author referred to another council which took place in 431 in Ephesus. The council fathers agreed namely that Pope Celestine I and Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, would co-chair the council. According to the author, this is a case of an 'inspired falsification' since the pope did not actually attend the council. The author seems to be unaware of the fact that popes did not attend any councils although these were sometimes officially chaired by papal envoys: legates<sup>26</sup>. As a matter of fact, such delegates represented not only the pope but also those bishops who were not able to come to the council in person for various reasons. Back at that time, such a replacement was equally valid as the actual presence of a given hierarch. By no means was it a falsification. Secondly, although the author certainly knows that the term 'sect' (sekta) means a philosophical school or a current and was coined to describe the differences between philosophers, he still applies it to Christian denominations instead of philosophical schools. Thirdly, the word 'fanatic' (fanatyk) has its roots also in the pagan cults in Asian Minor. Hence, it was not used only in reference to the attitude of believing Christians, as implied by the author.

Overall, the editorial quality of the book is high. In particular, the cover design and proofreading deserve praise. As befits a textbook, complex problems are explained in an accessible and clear way. Unfortunately, the author permitted his own sympathies and antipathies to show through, which is particularly noticeable in his attitude towards revealed religions such as Judaism and Christianity. As pointed out above, these antipathies sometimes stem from the lack of knowledge. The way Sady handles source texts, i.e. describing them while discussing a given author and including only fragmentary information in the list of references at the end of the work, is questionable as well. As described above, it makes it hard to tell which bibliographic sources were actually used by the author. When Sady corrects the foregoing mistakes, for which not only he but also the size of the publication is to blame, the book could be considered a valuable reference.

---

<sup>26</sup>DSP 1, p. 217, note 64: the council was chaired by Cyril who passed himself off as a delegate of the Bishop of Rome; K. Schatz, *Sobory powszechne. Punkty zwrotne w historii Kościoła*, Kraków 2001, p. 8–12, 26–30, 40–42, 49–50, 54–57; idem, *Prymat papieski od początków do współczesności*, Kraków 2004, p. 37–38, 42–51.