

Articulate first century Mediterranean society, Jewish and Christian included, expressly favoured harmonious order in society, in individuals, in communication, and in thought. Its common basis was the patriarchal family, the rule of law, rational self-control, and rational thought. Yet there was also resistance to oppressive and unjust order in all spheres; and while law could be held educative, yet there were substantial first century critiques of law, not just Paul's, and awareness that judicial procedures could be chaotic and biased. Strands of such dissidence appear in Jesus and in Paul, with significant relevance for any understanding of the early Christian movement(s) and contemporary Judaism(s) in Graeco-Roman context, but also with important implications for any practical reflections and application.

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