PART THREE

THEOLOGY AND HISTORY
REFLECTIONS ON THE EXPLORATION OF JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN LITURGY FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF A SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY OF LITURGY

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The focus of Christian liturgical studies that no longer ignore past and present forms of Jewish liturgy, but are instead deliberately aware of these forms and take them into consideration is by nature on the exploration of the historical correlations between particular texts, prayers and songs, sacred areas, feasts, and celebrations in both religions (cf. Gerhards 2003, 183–211 esp. 186–194). Questions regarding the origin, development, influence, and differences between the Christian and Jewish liturgy are the main concern in this regard. However, these reflections shall concern themselves more with the theological relevance of Jewish-Christian liturgical research, which must be considered an important supplement to historical liturgical studies of the interrelations between Jewish and Christian liturgy.

Before considering the question of the necessity of Christian liturgical studies reflecting in theological terms on past and present forms of Jewish liturgy, there follow some brief remarks on the characteristics of a systematic theological consideration of the Christian liturgy. A concrete example of the hermeneutics of the Eucharistic celebration and the Passover will subsequently illustrate the theological location of Christian liturgy in the biblical and Jewish tradition. This will be followed by a short ascertainment based on the Council decree ‘Nostra Aetate’ and finally some liturgical theological views of Jewish-Christian liturgical research.

1 On the Scope of Systematic Liturgical Studies

This is not the appropriate place to declare the Christian liturgy to be a pneumatically affected encounter between God and humankind in its relationship to the Holy Scripture and the tradition of the Church as a locus theologicus (cf. Grillo 2006). It should, however, be considered that the Christian liturgy is neither a ‘prayed dogma’ nor an obvious