Robert E. Winn, *Eusebius of Emesa: Church and Theology in the Mid-Fourth Century* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011). Pp. xii + 277; $69.95.

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Eusebius of Emesa (modern Homs in Syria) lived primarily in the first half of the fourth century (ca. 300–ca. 359), making him a slightly earlier contemporary of Ephrem the Syrian, as well as of some of the great theologians of the Greek Church. He was born in Edessa but, unlike Ephrem, received a Greek education, studying in the great centers of the time: Caesarea, Antioch and Alexandria. Soon after he reached the age of forty—having already evaded appointment to the see of Alexandria, and perhaps Antioch too—he was named bishop of Emesa. He was the author of a number of sermons and biblical commentaries, as well as several lost polemical tracts (according to Jerome, Epiphanius and Theodoret). Unfortunately, due at least in part to his having been variously associated with Arianism, Sabellianism and astral cults, none of the Greek originals of his works has survived apart from some fragments in later *Catenae*. His *Commentary on the Octateuch* was recently discovered complete in a single Armenian manuscript (attributed to Cyril of Alexandria), with fragments of the original surviving in later *Catenae* and in the commentaries of Išôdad of Merw (see review of F. Petit, *et al.*, in *Hugoye* 15.1 [2012]).

The sermons of Eusebius have come down to us only in Latin and Armenian translations, though only a few actually survive in both. In the early 1950's Eligius M. Buytaert published critical editions of all twenty-nine of the extant Latin sermons of Eusebius, and just five years later Fr. Nersēs Akinian of the Mekhitarist Brotherhood in Vienna completed his edition of the eight sermons that have survived in Armenian translation. Nearly all subsequent study has concentrated on the questions of authorship and transmission of these two corpora; what little study has been directed to the theology of this corpus has been almost entirely based on a small selection of the Latin sermons. These two factors alone make the volume under review here all the more welcome. Winn has provided us with the first systematic study of the contents of the complete corpus of Eusebius' extant sermons.

Winn opens with a chapter situating Eusebius in the context of his times, describing the various places he spent time and the influence they seem to have had on him: Edessa, Antioch, Alexandria and Emesa (ch. 1). Next he combs these sermons to highlight that Eusebius, like many of his contemporaries, was manifestly well trained in the rhetorical arts (ch. 2). In the next four chapters, Winn explicates the main theological themes that he finds in Eusebius' sermons; he does so under four main headings (ch. 3–6): 1. the nature of the world and of humanity; 2. the nature of God; 3. the humanity and divinity of Christ; and 4. the church and asceticism.

And, as Winn argues very persuasively, these are not simply four themes subjectively selected from these sermons as favorite or even prominent, but in fact they constitute the four most fundamental components of the primary aim of Eusebius' sermons: to lay out for his flock those identifying characteristics that distinguish a member of the fourth-century Christian church from members of the other religious groups, not only in cosmopolitan Emesa but in the wider Late Antique Roman world. Winn does not presume that this agenda is unique to Eusebius, but he does a very nice job of demonstrating just how Eusebius goes about it, replete with numerous illustrative quotations from the sermons.

Winn begins by culling those elements of the sermons that demonstrate how Eusebius sets out a clear hierarchy of creation that moves from inert rocks and minerals at the bottom, to plants, animals, humans, angels and, finally, to God himself, from senseless corporeal objects to the incorporeal God, showing that incorporeal is much better than corporeal and is that which distinguishes the Christian God from all other gods. This incorporeality was of such fundamental importance for Eusebius that he went so far as to eschew all the 'corporeal' analogies for the Trinity of which his contemporaries were so fond; for Eusebius these analogies were illegitimate right from the start: nothing material can explain the immaterial. On the basis of this shared incorporeality Eusebius, unlike nearly all his contemporaries, had no trouble in boldly maintaining the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

This incorporeality then chose to become more directly involved in the world, even 'becoming flesh' in the person of Jesus Christ, though Eusebius goes on at great length to argue that this

does not mean that the Godhood turned into flesh but that, alluding to John 1:14, it 'tented' in the body of Jesus, though not in the way later to be associated with the East Syrian (formerly known as Nestorian) Church. Winn here discusses the short Armenian sermon *De cruce passionis*, in which Eusebius best develops his *logos-sarx* christology in strong opposition to that of Paul of Samosata. Eusebius is here, of course, representative of the pre-Chalcedonian 'fluid' description of the nature of Christ, as were several of his contemporaries, including—perhaps, especially—Ephrem.

But, of necessity for Eusebius, what distinguishes a Christian from everyone else is not simply beliefs about the nature of the divinity, but also the manner in which the Christian conducts his life. In his sermons, Eusebius vigorously tries to promote the *angelikos bios*—gaining not a little opposition in the process—constantly urging his flock to live out their lives in a rigorous ascetical, if not virginal, manner. To live a life of radical, manifest virtue will also serve to demarcate his congregation from Jews, pagans, and heretics.

As I have with other such books, I might here venture to express the hope that Winn might also some day provide a complete translation of this corpus of Eusebius' sermons—he already provides generous samples of quotations. While I do indeed harbor such a hope there are, alas, just enough questionable and/or erroneously translated phrases (though nothing significant enough to alter his general thesis) to caution me from expressing such a wish here. Just two quick examples: in his introduction (p. 22), Winn adduces a passage from one of the Armenian sermons to suggest that Eusebius likely had knowledge of the famous story of the King Abgar Ukkama, translating the phrase "because [God] revives kings." As the text in his footnote makes clear the verb here is a future, and should actually be translated, "because [God] will revive [i.e., resurrect] kings"; the full passage is clearly alluding to the final resurrection, not to any past figure. In the final chapter, in discussing the asceticism required to endure persecution, he brings forth a line from another homily that he translates "although incredible, Christians remain faithful even at the very point of death" (p. 230). While perhaps defensible, the phrase "although incredible" is probably better rendered by "on behalf of / for the sake of *the faith*"; the preposition in question can be rendered either way depending on context, but the presence of

the article on *hawatots'* suggests Eusebius is speaking of the specific faith Christians hold, not just a general and vague "belief." A less stringent use of "was" and "were" in favor of a past progressive tense in English would also help make less stilted many of his translations from both Armenian and Latin. But fortunately such instances are not that numerous.

While Winn did not provide us with a complete translation, he did publish a very significant study that sets out clearly the essential elements of a very important, and heretofore relatively unexplored corpus of sermons (especially those in Armenian); Winn has done much to help bring Eusebius back from an obscurity he never deserved and has helped to restore him to a more prominent position in the church of the fourth century. So much so that he has also laid some important groundwork, in the opinion of this reviewer, for a reassessment of the nascent (so-called) School of Antioch. That Eusebius played a not insignificant role in the development of Antiochian christology is beyond doubt; that he was largely influenced by his teachers Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea is also beyond doubt. Scholars have long been uneasy with the terminology of Antiochian and Alexandrian schools, terms that are less helpful the more black and white they are painted. Eusebius then might be a key to unraveling the threads that Frances Young and others have recently noted of Antiochian allegory and of Alexandrian literalism. But again, this was not the purpose of Winn's monograph, rather it is a possible next step based on such a sound and fundamental study.