VIOLENCE AND AUTHORITY IN EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA’S ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

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SCHOOL OF ARTS, LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
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# List of Abbreviations

Journal abbreviations are taken from l’Annee Philologique.

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<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td><em>Analecta Bollandiana</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>ANRW</td>
<td><em>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</em></td>
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<td>ChHist</td>
<td><em>Church History</em></td>
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<td>CQ</td>
<td><em>Classical Quarterly</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>CRAI</td>
<td><em>Comptes rendus de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>EThL</td>
<td><em>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>GRBS</td>
<td><em>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>HThR</td>
<td><em>Harvard Theological Review</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Historia</td>
<td><em>Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td><em>Journal of Biblical Literature</em></td>
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<td>JECS</td>
<td><em>Journal of Early Christian Studies</em></td>
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<td>JRS</td>
<td><em>Journal of Roman Studies</em></td>
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<td>JTS</td>
<td><em>Journal of Theological Studies</em></td>
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<td>P&amp;P</td>
<td><em>Past &amp; Present</em></td>
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<td>RAC</td>
<td><em>Rivista di archeologia cristiana</em></td>
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<td>SO</td>
<td><em>Symbolae Osloenses</em></td>
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<td>VigChr</td>
<td><em>Vigiliae Christianae</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>ZKG</td>
<td><em>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>ZPE</td>
<td><em>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</em></td>
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Abstract

‘Violence and Authority in Eusebius of Caesarea’s Ecclesiastical History’, a thesis submitted to The University of Manchester by James Corke-Webster for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on the 7th March 2013.

The first Christian historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, wrote his pioneering Ecclesiastical History in the early 4th century, just after the western emperor Constantine’s “conversion” to Christianity. It was a history born of Eusebius’ present and designed for the future. Reading Eusebius and the Ecclesiastical History within the second sophistic movement, I argue that Eusebius’ picture of Christian history appropriated the past to fundamentally re-imagine the essence of Christian authority. Eusebius’ descriptions of past Christians used them as exemplars of a new model of Christian leadership designed for his 4th century context. Eusebius was writing in the first place for the Christian clergy; elite provincial Christians who shared the mores and stereotypes of their elite non-Christian neighbours. He therefore presented a model of Christian authority not based around the extreme violence of martyrdom and asceticism which had characterised the charismatic heroes of earlier 2nd and 3rd century Christian literature. It was based instead on a traditional elite rhetoric of temperance, learned through paideia and manifested in care for dependents. Around this thread Eusebius built his Empire-wide church.
No portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
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Acknowledgements

This dissertation owes much to its own scholarly ecclesia. I have acquired debts and gratitudes not nearly adequately expressed in the brief lines below, and others that cannot be put so easily on paper. Suffice it to say that this dissertation not only would have been very different without the input of those around me; it simply would not have existed at all.

I am grateful in the first place to those who guided me down this scholarly path. Tom Greggs, Mark Edwards, Rebecca Flemming and Christopher Kelly all steered me to this project with sure hands and kind insights, even if Eusebius’ name never came up in our conversations. I am grateful to Nicholas King for showing me the holy land, and supporting me during a period when I thought I could go no further. Rupert Wingate-Saul knew that I would get to this point long before I did. It is one of the great privileges of my life that I did my doctorate as part of Prof. Kate Cooper’s “Constantine’s Dream” Project at the University of Manchester. I owe thanks to the ESRC and RCUK for funding my work, and to Jamie Wood, Dirk Rohmann, Riccardo Bof and Melissa Markauskas in the Centre for Late Antiquity, who have explored late, very late and not so late antiquity with me, and shown endless patience when my knowledge fell short of my enthusiasm. I owe Melissa too for her help with footnotes and bibliography formatting, a debt whose size only she knows.

I am grateful to my doctoral panel, Alison Sharrock and Roberta Mazza, for their comments on and encouragement with numerous drafts and plans over the past four years. To Roberta in particular I owe my new infatuation with papyrology, which grew from her work with the John Rylands Library Papyri Collection, my love of which will be testified to by the many friends I repeatedly drag there. To the other staff of the Manchester Classics Department I am grateful for conversation and encouragement, in particular to Polly Low, who has answered my many inane questions with patience and humour. I feel lucky to have been part of a Classics Department that not only excels in academic rigour but works so hard to make its members feel part of a social whole. It is a quality that often goes unremarked, but which deserves equal praise.

To the Classicists, Stevie Spiegel, Jessica Dixon, Peter Maskell and Veronica Wood especially, and the History kids, both actual and honorary, in particular Ed Owens, Jim Greenhalgh, Kat Fennelly, Maarten Walraven, Ninja Freeling, Ben Wilcock, Tom Sharp, Sheona Davies, Carina Spaulding, Patrick Doyle and the others, with whom I never spent as much time as I should, I owe both thanks and an apology. Their friendship and persistence in the face of my perpetual anti-sociability were, and are, a constant source of joy. Gregory Price and Mark McCulloch shared with me a home I fondly remember, and did their best to save me from myself.
Most of all, Kate Cooper, my supervisor and friend, has made both a better scholar and a better person. She has consistently pushed me to do and be better, always up to but never beyond the threshold of my capacities. She has shown me both the great joy and the brimming potential of the ancient world, and in the energy and brilliance of her own work she has provided an inspirational model for what is possible. She has given me something to believe in, and I doubt I will ever be able to repay properly either the belief she has shown in me or the time she has invested. But I will try.

I have spent the last year in the intellectually stimulating climate of the University of California, Berkeley. I am grateful to the US-UK Fulbright Commission for the Fulbright Postgraduate Award which made this possible, to Monique Aronsohn and Michael Scott-Kline for all they did to organise it, and to the other members of my international Fulbright cohort who are a source of inspiration both hugely enabling and deeply humbling. In Berkeley itself, I am grateful to the Classics Department for making my move so easy and my stay so enriching, and in particular to Todd Hickey, who not only invited me into the welcoming world of the Centre of the Tebtunis Papyri, but who has been endlessly patient when this thesis has kept me from the seductions of the papyri.

I am especially grateful to the inhabitants of the AHMA Group, who found me in their Lounge one day in September and have been kind enough not to ask me leave yet. Working there has meant too that I have been privileged to finish this dissertation in the company of David DeVore, whose own wonderful project on Eusebius is also nearing completion. It is a testament to both David’s depth of scholarship and his generosity of spirit that often, in days filled with reading and research, I learnt most from conversations with him as the sun set on the hills outside the Lounge’s windows. The references in this dissertation’s footnotes do not do justice to the contribution to my work he has made.

In 1648 University Avenue I have found a home from home. For their regular attempts to stop Eusebius becoming my only friend, and their support, both emotional and physical, when I have tried to do too much in too short a time, I thank Zak Manfredi, Michael Kowen, Lisa Eberle, Sam Zeitlin, Brendan Haug, Caroline Cheung and Nick Barrow-Williams.

Material in this dissertation has been delivered in papers in numerous workshops, conferences and lectures. To the audiences in Manchester, London, Oxford, Cambridge, Göttingen, Exeter, Princeton, Chicago, Toronto and Berkeley who have patiently listened to, corrected and supplemented my work, I am grateful. I owe what knowledge of German I have to two very happy summer stints at the Universität Wien, whose faculty and students provided both funding and friendship.

Finally, MJ and DT, the only people to have been with me the whole way, right up to proof-reading the final version. I am humbled by your constant support, correction,
encouragement, and love. If I do not see you as much as perhaps I should, it is because, as a great man once said, knowing that you can always come home often means you do not need to.

Thank you.
Introduction: Violence and Authority in Eusebius of Caesarea’s Ecclesiastical History

The written history of early Christianity began just as the first period of Christian history was drawing to an end. The first Christian historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, wrote his pioneering Ecclesiastical History in the early 4th century, just after the western emperor Constantine’s “conversion” to Christianity. Eusebius was looking back on a religion’s stuttering birth; 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. But Eusebius himself was a Roman citizen in a highly Romanised provincial capital, steeped in both the traditional Hellenised education of the Roman elite and the highly intellectual Alexandrian-Caesarean strain of Christianity. As he wrote, the interests of church and Empire were moving into alignment. His picture of the Christian past was born of his present.

It was also a picture designed for the future. Reading Eusebius and the Ecclesiastical History within the second sophistic movement, I argue that Eusebius’ picture of Christian history appropriated the past to fundamentally re-imagine the essence of Christian authority. Eusebius’ descriptions of past Christians used them as exemplars of a new model of Christian leadership designed for his 4th century context. Eusebius was writing in the first place for the Christian clergy; elite provincial Christians who shared the mores and stereotypes of their elite non-Christian neighbours. He therefore presented a model of Christian authority not based around the extreme violence of martyrdom and asceticism which had characterised the charismatic heroes of earlier 2nd and 3rd century Christian literature. It was based instead on a traditional elite
rhetoric of temperance, learned through paideia and manifested in care for dependents.

Around this thread Eusebius built his Empire-wide church.

I. Eusebius of Caesarea and the Ecclesiastical History

Eusebius of Caesarea is remembered as the author of the *Ecclesiastical History*, our first narrative history of early Christianity, a vast ten-book enterprise that traces the church’s rise from the apostles in the 1st century to the conversion of Constantine in the early 4th. That text remains our prime source for this period, and Eusebius’ curious “magpie historiography” – his penchant for excerption and quotation – has encouraged pervasive and continuing uncritical use of the *Ecclesiastical History*. But the *Ecclesiastical History* cannot be separated from either its author or its context. It is a text of Eusebius, of Caesarea and of the 4th century moment.

Eusebius of Caesarea was not just a historian. He was a Christian, a Greek, a Roman, an academic, a theologian, a writer, a bishop and a politician. His literary oeuvre was vast, and crossed multiple genres. Though the *Ecclesiastical History* garners most attention, it was the exception rather than the rule, a rare narrative amidst biblical commentaries, apologetic texts, place name directories, pedagogical material, panegyric, etc. We know little about Eusebius’ life, but the few details we have all tie Eusebius closely to Caesarea, a provincial city of the eastern Empire in northern Palestine, and so it is with this city we must begin.1

Caesarea was the provincial capital of *Syria Palaestina*, the seat of both the Roman governor and the financial procurator.² It was founded by Herod the Great in the 1ˢᵗ century BC, and from its inception was a highly Romanised city (reflected in its name).³ Herod’s building projects included a temple dedicated to Rome and Augustus (e.g. Josephus, *Jewish War* 1.414).⁴ The harbour Herod built afforded excellent trade links in the Mediterranean, and the archaeological record attests the cosmopolitan diversity one expects of a harbour town.⁵ Caesarea’s fortunes fell with those of Palestine during the Jewish Revolt, but the city was re-founded by Vespasian as a Roman colony (e.g. Pliny, *Natural History* 5.14.69).⁶ In the early 3ʳᵈ century it acquired the title of *Metropolis Palaestinae* because of its administrative prominence. A population estimate of one hundred thousand has been made for our period.⁷ Though Latin was still used for public inscriptions, by Eusebius’ time the dominant language for private inscriptions was Greek.⁸ In other words, Caesarea was a typical Romanised town of the eastern Empire.

Like those other towns, Caesarea was run by local Greek-speaking elites, and it is in that stratum of society we must place Eusebius. These were all Roman citizens (both since it gained the status of a colony under Vespasian, and regardless following Caracalla’s 212 declaration of universal citizenship) and shared the literary, Hellenised *paideia* common to the Empire’s Romanised elite. Caesarea’s reputation as a centre for

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³ For a good survey of the city’s development, see Kenneth G. Holm et al., *King Herod’s Dream: Caesarea on the Sea* (New York: Norton, 1988), for our period, see 155-200.
⁵ Kevin Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum/Getty Publications, 2003), 132, however notes that the harbour was gradually silting up through late antiquity.
⁶ 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.
⁷ Holm et al., *King Herod’s Dream*, 174.
education and scholarship was well-established (e.g. Apollonius of Tyana Letter 11). In Caesarea there was of course also a strong Jewish and Christian presence, given its proximity to both religions’ geographical origins. But though they had their own traditions and texts, Eusebius and his fellow Christian elite shared the paideia of their non-Christian contemporaries. On the simplest level, for example, Eusebius’ writings are evidence that he could write a high standard of Greek, and of his expansive and technical vocabulary. He was also well-versed in many of the prose genres of non-Christian antiquity.

We do not know exactly when Eusebius was born, but most estimates place his birth in the early 260s. The first concrete details of his life concern his education (Life of Constantine 4.35.3). Eusebius was educated in the Caesarean Christian school of one Pamphilus (MP 4.6-8), who we will meet on numerous occasions. This school was based on the scholarly tradition of the great academic mind of 3rd century Christianity, Origen of Alexandria, who had relocated to Caesarea in his later years (EH 6.26.1). The school provided a literary education based on a detailed knowledge of scripture, teaching principles of exegesis, commentary, scholarship and book production. Eusebius took this education to heart; indeed if his later collaborations with his teacher are any indication, he was the school’s star pupil. Caesarea was the perfect location for

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9 See Hayim Lapin, "Jewish and Christian Academies in Roman Palestine," in Raban and Holum, Caesarea Maritima. Lapin notes though that ‘While the Christianity of Origen and Eusebius faced outward toward the world of classical philosophy and literature (however ambivalently), Palestinian rabbis appear to have faced inward toward the local Aramaic-speaking Jewish populations of Palestine’ [511].
12 Eusebius had co-authored a Defence of Origen with Pamphilus during the “Diocletianic Persecution” (EH 6.23.4; 6.33.4; 6.34.4). He was also later remembered as “Eusebius Pamphili” (e.g. Socrates, Ecclesiastical History 1.8).
these activities, since it had an impressive library which can be traced back to the 2nd century, and which was boosted by Origen’s arrival, and Pamphilus’ subsequent archival activities. We also know that Eusebius had inherited the Caesarean episcopal see by 314/315.

We can now imagine Eusebius in the Caesarean library beginning his historical enterprise. But when exactly he began this process, and when he finished it, are harder to ascertain. The Ecclesiastical History is not a unitary publication, but was produced in a series of editions. Differences between editions are observable in the extant translations and manuscripts. Moreover, the dating of the editions must also be placed in relation to Eusebius’ earlier Chronicle and the two recensions of his Martyrs of Palestine, an account of the effects of the recent “Diocletianic Persecution” (303-313; 311 in Palestine) in his home country. Debate over dating has been fierce and intricate, but is now reasonably settled. Most scholars now acquiesce to the consensus position first proposed by Richard Burgess. The following summary is drawn largely from Burgess’ seminal 1997 article.


14 The date of succession is determined by the date of the Tyrian Oration, given by Eusebius as bishop of Caesarea and preserved in Book 10 of the Ecclesiastical History.


Eusebius’ earliest literary project was his *Defence of Origen*, which he wrote together with his mentor Pamphilus while the latter was in prison during the Diocletianic persecution (303-311 in Palestine). When Pamphilus died, Eusebius wrote the sixth book alone (*HE* 6.33.4; cf. Photius, *Bibliotheca* 117, 118). He also wrote a *Life of Pamphilus*, no longer extant (*EH* 6.32.3). His next project was his *Chronicle*, which Burgess argues must have been produced after 306, most likely started in mid-308 and completed after May 311. In that year too, when persecution ceased (temporarily) in April following the Edict of Toleration, Eusebius wrote *The Martyrs of Palestine*.

He then turned his attention to the first edition of the *Ecclesiastical History*, published in 313/4. This comprised the first seven books, the preface to Book 8, an abbreviated version of *The Martyrs of Palestine* (the so-called short recension), Galerius’ edict, the so-called “appendix” and Book 9. Eusebius issued a second edition in 315/316.

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18 A good timeline is found in Carriker, *Library*, 37-38.

19 *The Martyrs of Palestine* has an intriguing status as the stepping stone from Eusebius’ earlier biographical and chronological endeavours to the vast project of narrative history that combined the two. On reading *The Martyrs of Palestine* as a prolegomenon to the *Ecclesiastical History*, see James Corke-Webster, "Author and Authority: Literary Representations of Moral Authority in Eusebius of Caesarea’s *The Martyrs of Palestine,*" in *Martyrdom in Late Antiquity (300–400 AD): History and Discourse, Tradition and Religious Identity*, eds. Peter Gemeinhardt and Johan Leemans (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2012).

20 Burgess, "Dates and Editions," 482, 495. *The Martyrs of Palestine* has therefore been transmitted in two recensions. 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 *Ecclesiastical 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 either in the Syriac or Rufinus’ translations of the *Ecclesiastical 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 H. Delehaye, "Eusebii Caesariensis De Martyribus Palaestinae Longioris Libelli Fragmenta," *AB* 16 (1897). The Syriac version, partially available in Stephen Assemani, *Acta Sanctorum martyrum orientalium et occidentalium* (Roma: Città del Vaticano, 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 & Norgate, 1861). The Syriac translator appears to have 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 Palestinae* (Syriac translation) 7, 7-9, 9,” *The Classical Journal* 98, no. 4 (2003)). Numerous textual issues indicate that the short recension was an abridgement of the long. For details, see Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, vol. 2, 46-50.
this he replaced the short recension of *The Martyrs of Palestine* with the current Book 8, encompassing a greater geographical span.22 Timothy Barnes suggests that Eusebius also added six letters of Licinius and Constantine from 313/314 as an appendix.23 A further, third edition was circulated in 324/5, motivated by the emperor Licinius’ fall from grace. All positive comments on Licinius were removed, and Barnes suggests that the six letters were removed and replaced with the speech on the basilica at Tyre in Book 10. This edition also added a brief description of Licinius’ actions against Christians and his defeat by Constantine (*EH* 10.8–9). Most of Book 10 therefore stands apart from the rest of the *Ecclesiastical History*, composed a decade later.24 Finally, after May 326 Eusebius produced a final edition, in which Constantine’s son Crispus’ name was removed after his death (*EH* 10.9.4 & 10.9.6).

The *Ecclesiastical History* was thus largely written between 311 and 315, but not finished until 325. Its production spans Constantine’s reign. It can therefore broadly be called a text of the Constantinian revolution. By the time the *Ecclesiastical History* was finished, the Roman Empire, and particularly Christianity’s place within it, had changed dramatically. Constantine’s rise, the Edicts of Toleration and Milan, and Constantine’s rule successively improved Christianity’s status. Christianity emerged from the mass of

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21 Burgess also suggests that at this point the long recension of *The Martyrs of Palestine* was lightly edited and issued in a second edition (Burgess thinks Eusebius spent little time on revisions, "Dates and Editions," 503). One problem with this sequence is that in a passing phrase in the 315/316 edition of the *Ecclesiastical History* Eusebius indicates that he will produce his account of Caesarean martyrs in the future (*EH* 8.13.7). Burgess 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 (following the Edict of Milan), had already decided to incorporate a shorter version into the *Ecclesiastical History*. The long recension was thus only needed again after the short recension had been replaced by the current Book 8 in 315/316, hence its eventual publication then.

22 That the short recension was once where Book 8 stands now was the original suggestion of Richard Laqueur, *Eusebius als Historiker seiner Zeit* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter & Co., 1929), championed by Barnes, "Some Inconsistencies," 470-71.


24 Book 10 is marked as an addition by a dedication (*EH* 10.1.2).
other religious groups, voluntary associations and organisations in the Roman Empire competing for resources and attention. The Christians, who at the start of the century had found themselves the objects of persecution, by 325 stood securely behind the Christian emperor of a Christian Empire. The church was moving into alignment with the mechanisms of the Roman Empire.

Perhaps the most crucial question is who Eusebius wrote the *Ecclesiastical History* for. This is two-pronged – of what intellectual level and what allegiance was his audience? Suggestions range between two poles. On the one hand, Doron Mendels has argued that,

‘most of what he [Eusebius] wrote was meant for a “simple” audience, not for an elite of intellectuals of any kind…Who were these simple people for whom he had to write in simplistic terms? Probably Gentiles and Jews who were interested in Christianity, people who were still hesitating about crossing the frontier into the domain of Christianity.’

Mendels’ suggested audience is relatively uneducated non-Christians. Marie Verdoner on the other hand, assessing Eusebius’ implied audience from a narratological perspective, argues the exact opposite; that Eusebius was writing for well-educated Christians.

‘Der Leser wird durch Aussagen wie diese als Teilnehmer intellektueller Dispute einbezogen und fast als mit dem Erzähler gleichgestellt angesehen... Das Bild vom Erzähler wird durch andere Mechanismen gestaltet; es besteht kein Zweifel, dass der Erzähler sich als ein gelehrter Vertreter des „wahren“ Christentums versteht.’

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There are numerous reasons to favour Verdoner. Firstly, Eusebius’ complex Greek syntax means that the *Ecclesiastical History* would not have been an easy read.

Secondly, a copy would not have come cheap. David DeVore’s forthcoming dissertation estimates the cost of a single codex copy at approximately fifty-six denarii for a “second quality” hand, and sixty nine for a high quality one.\(^{27}\) At a time when typical daily wages were one or two denarii, we begin to see the difficulties in positing a “simple” audience, since education and status went hand in hand.\(^{28}\) Thirdly, Verdoner has persuasively demonstrated that Eusebius’ rhetoric both assumes both his reader’s familiarity with the Christian scriptures, and their valuation of them. The *Ecclesiastical History* repeatedly demonstrates ‘der starken christentumsinternen Fokalisierung.’\(^{29}\)

Fourthly, Eusebius states that he is writing for a Christian audience (e.g. *EH* 8.2.3; 7.18.1). We must imagine an elite Christian reader.

Ancient publishing practice allows us to narrow this down further. Ancient books moved in small, gradually widening circles of *literati*. A book’s dedicatee received the first copy.\(^{30}\) Beyond that, it might pass to other interested parties in the social spheres of either author or dedicatee. If a reader liked a book, they might commission their own or another’s slave to copy it. The process of expanding readership was of course


\(^{28}\) Most books in antiquity circulated among friends, and were copied as desired, rather than being purchased. But this assumes not only the ownership of slaves, but participation in elite literary circles.

\(^{29}\) Verdoner, “Überlegungen Zum Adressaten,” 369: ‘Dieser nicht aussergewöhnliche Sprachegebrauch ist Ausdruck einer Perspektivierung, die den Leser die Sache aus der Sicht der Christen sehen lässt.’

exponential; once two copies of a book exist, the chances of it being passed on double, and so on. But circulation begins with a single recipient.

Who was the Ecclesiastical History’s initial recipient? Books 1-9, the first edition, do not have an addressee. But Book 10 is dedicated to bishop Paulinus of Tyre. Eusebius says that, ‘we will inscribe this to you, my most holy Paulinus, declaring you the seal of the entire enterprise (σοι τούτον ἐπιγράψομεν, ἱερώτατε μοι Παυλίνε, ὁσπερ ἐπισφράγισμά σε τῆς ὅλης ὑποθέσεως ἄναβοώμενοι), EH 10.1-2.’ Though this is in Book 10, Eusebius’ reference to ‘the whole enterprise (τῆς ὅλης ὑποθέσεως)’ may indicate that this dedication encompasses the whole Ecclesiastical History. At least the final edition then was given first to an episcopal colleague.31

The one reader we can identify then was an elite, Christian cleric, and its subsequent readers would have moved in the same circles. But how are we to imagine such a cleric? Discussions of the Ecclesiastical History’s audience have presented a simplistic binary between “insiders” and “outsiders”. But this masks the complexity of ancient identities. Eusebius is writing for elite Christians. But elite Christians were also Greek-educated Roman citizens.32 Throughout this thesis I will use the language of “Christian” and “non-Christian” rather than pitting Christian against some conception of “Greek”, “Roman” or “Graeco-Roman”.33 Eusebius’ clerical audience were participants in the highly literate culture of elite provincial Greeks under Rome, and therefore shared many

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31 David DeVore has pointed out to me that Eusebius’ Onomasticon is also addressed to Paulinus, and that the Preparation for the Gospel and Demonstration of the Gospel are also both addressed to a bishop, Theodotus of Laodicea.
32 This is increasingly realised, though its consequences are rarely treated fully. Susanna Elm, Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Gregory of Nazianzus, Emperor Julian, and the Christianization of the Late Roman Elites (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012) argues this to great effect. The opening lines read: ‘This is a book about two powerful, enduring, and competing visions of universalism in the fourth century: Christianity and the Roman Empire. Yet, I will argue that these visions were in fact one, since Christianity was essentially Roman’ (1).
33 I use “Jewish” and “pagan” only when Eusebius distinguishes between the two.
of the traditions, stereotypes and prejudices we normally attribute to pagan outsiders. This is the audience for whom the *Ecclesiastical History*’s vision of the Christian past is designed.

These are the circumstances of Eusebius and his *Ecclesiastical History* as best we can reconstruct them from limited evidence. But past scholarship on the *Ecclesiastical History* has failed to take all elements of this into account. 20\textsuperscript{th} century assumptions that the *Ecclesiastical History* was a kind of imperial history were tied to critiques of Eusebius as Constantinian court historian and theologian.\textsuperscript{34} But this failed to consider Eusebius’ provincial status, a writer on the edge of the Empire looking in, with minimal contact with Constantine. When this was eventually realised, two concurrent assessments of Eusebius emerged. One saw him as an honest, if not altogether successful, historian, and thus valued the *Ecclesiastical History* as an uncomplicated attempt to record the past accurately. The other saw in Eusebius a manipulative apologist, carefully selecting and omitting material to produce a highly coloured picture of the past, and thus treated the *Ecclesiastical History* with suspicion. But both treated Eusebius as compiler rather than writer, and failed to take account of the depth of his literary education and the significance of his status as a provincial Greek writer under the Roman hegemony. As Eusebius’ rhetorical capacities are increasingly realised under the impetus of postmodernism, attention has begun to turn to the *Ecclesiastical History* as text. But it still remains to take this appreciation of Eusebius’ literary skill and tie it back into an appreciation of his context and intended audience. It is precisely Eusebius’ elite, educated, provincial Christian audience, I suggest, that motivates his mobilisation

\textsuperscript{34} The scholarship on Eusebius is vast, and I focus here only on modern scholarship, the *Ecclesiastical History* specifically, and the most prominent commentators only. For a survey of earlier reception see Verdoner, *Narrated Reality*, 4-8. I omit too theological commentaries on Eusebius.
of a rhetoric of legitimate authority based upon self-control, education and care for dependents.

II. History of Scholarship on the *Ecclesiastical History*

Much early 20th century criticism of the *Ecclesiastical History* was determined by low opinions of another Eusebian work, his *Life of Constantine*. Dissatisfaction with the fawning attitude adopted there led scholars to condemn Eusebius. Though others expressed similar views, it is Burckhardt’s stigma of Eusebius as ‘der erste durch und durch unredliche Geschichtsschreiber des Alterhums’ which has resonated through the subsequent century.35 This set the tone for Eusebian scholarship in two ways. Firstly, scholars’ prime interest has been in assessing Eusebius’ reliability (effectively testing Burckhardt’s hypothesis). Secondly, much work has viewed Eusebius in tandem with Constantine, seeing him as a gateway to the emperor, and the *Ecclesiastical History* as imperial flattery.

This trend in scholarship reached its pinnacle in Timothy Barnes’ *Constantine and Eusebius*. Barnes sought to answer both issues in one. In pointing to Eusebius’ position in Caesarea, and divorcing Eusebius from Constantine, whom Barnes says Eusebius met at most five times, Barnes sought to transform Eusebius from court theologian into honest, reliable historian.36 On the basis of Eusebius’ independence, Barnes affirmed ‘the evident care and honesty of his scholarship’.37 He felt assured that, ‘the

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36 Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 266.
37 Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 141. Barnes notes deficiencies in Eusebius’ history, but assigns them to his working method (suggesting for example that Eusebius left spaces in his dictation for scribes
Ecclesiastical History will always be an indispensable quarry for historians of early Christianity and of the Roman Empire.  

At the same time Barnes reached these conclusions, Robert Grant approached the Ecclesiastical History in a different way. Where Barnes affirmed Eusebius’ trustworthiness, Grant concluded that, ‘Eusebius can never be trusted if contradicted by a more reliable witness, hardly ever even if not contradicted’. The Ecclesiastical History, he says, ‘contains a judicious mixture of authentic record with a good deal of suppression of fact and occasional outright lies’. Grant’s work was ahead of its time in recognising Eusebius’ stake in the text. But it was Barnes’ picture that moulded scholarly consensus.

This is in part because their work coincided with a period of intense energy nailing down the dating and publication history of the Ecclesiastical History. The concern to understand the sequence of editions was motivated in some circles by a desire to trace the changes Eusebius made, and therefore map his evolving attitudes. Such an attempt became Robert Grant’s main project, and his 1980 Eusebius as Church Historian represents the most comprehensive attempt to trace Eusebius’ evolving thought. While the question of dating was resolved, the issue of Eusebian editing is fraught with difficulties given the paucity of the data. Barnes responded powerfully to Grant’s suggestions, pointing out that much of his evidence was inconclusive, and the attempt to fill. Barnes also criticises Eusebius when he fails to include information Barnes himself wishes to know (e.g. Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, 138).

38 Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, 140.
40 An early pioneering attempt was made by Laqueur, Eusebius als Historiker.
trace Eusebian editing has largely been abandoned.\textsuperscript{42} It is in large part the failure of this enterprise that has led to the hegemony of Barnes’ views in the last thirty years, and the neglect of Grant’s insights on the difficulties of treating Eusebius as honest documentary historian.

A consensus position subsequently emerged which acknowledged some Eusebian selection, but essentially affirmed Eusebius’ reliability and continuing value for reconstructive history. The introduction to Harold Attridge and Gohei Hata’s 1992 collection of essays reflects this.

‘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.’\textsuperscript{43}

The essays in this volume either use the \textit{Ecclesiastical History} as a source for reconstructing Christian history, or use other evidence to add to its picture.\textsuperscript{44} There is little consideration of what the \textit{Ecclesiastical History} itself is trying to do. It is Burckhardt’s and Barnes’ twin legacy that Eusebius is read in terms of his reliability as a historian. But this neglects Eusebius’ engagement in the literary culture of Greek provincial elites.

This was in part because there persisted an unflattering assessment of Eusebius’ literary abilities. This stemmed from Photius’ dismissal of Eusebius in the 9\textsuperscript{th} century: ‘his style

\textsuperscript{42} Barnes, “Some Inconsistencies.” William Tabbernee, ‘Eusebius’ Theology of Persecution’: As Seen in the Various Editions of His \textit{Church History},” \textit{JECS} 5 (1997), though has recently described Eusebius’ theological development in a well-received article.

\textsuperscript{43} Attridge and Hata, \textit{Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism}, 15.

\textsuperscript{44} Criticism of Eusebius also stems from his “static” history. I do not address this here, but it is I think connected to his educational focus. See most recently Tessa Morgan, “Eusebius of Caesarea and Christian Historiography,” \textit{Athenaeum} 93, no. 1 (2005).
is neither agreeable nor brilliant, but he was a man of great learning (Τὴν δὲ φράσιν οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδαμον οὔτε ἡδός οὔτε λαμπρότητι χαίρων. Πολυμαθής δὲ ἐστίν ὁ ἀνήρ),

*Bibliotheca* 13.45 Eusebius has never really escaped this stigma. Andrew Louth’s introduction to Geoffrey Williamson’s popular translation of the *Ecclesiastical History* warns that, ‘Such writing is enormously valuable to have, though tedious to read’.46 This condemnation is tied to a conviction that the *Ecclesiastical History* is not true history – collage not narrative – and that Eusebius is ‘rather a compiler of extracts than a writer of history’.47

Very recent studies however have revealed a literary sophistication that easily equals Eusebius’ skill as a collector. This has gone hand in hand with a desire to redress a narrow focus on just Eusebius’ narrative writings. Recent scholarship has attempted to shift attention onto his other works, arguing that a well-rounded appreciation of Eusebius can only come from studying his entire literary oeuvre, in which narrative history is the exception rather than the rule.48 It is only now that this awareness of Eusebius’ sophistication is being turned back on the *Ecclesiastical History*. My own study continues this trend.

The gradual evolution of appreciations of the literary qualities of the *Ecclesiastical History* began in Monika Gödecke’s 1987 *Geschichte als Mythos*, which read it as constructing a particular Eusebian ideology for a Christian audience. Lorenzo Perrone expressed disappointment with the neglect of Eusebius’ literary novelty in 1996, and stressed the variety of Eusebius’ works as evidence of his literary capacities. Though noting that ‘the formal aspects of Eusebius’ work leave a lot to be desired’, he says too that ‘the bishop of Caesarea occasionally proved that he was able to do better than he normally did’; a damnation with faint praise that Perrone says holds true ‘at least partly or tentatively, also for the contemporary supplements to the *Ecclesiastical History* (bks. 8-10).’ Doron Mendels’ 1999 study *The Media Revolution of Christianity* is less tentative. It highlights the *Ecclesiastical History*’s narrative complexity by suggesting it be read as “media history”. In suggesting that Eusebius acted like a modern news editor, selecting and manipulating his sources to tailor stories to his readers, Mendels emphasises both the care taken over narrative construction and Eusebius’ audience-awareness. Erica Carotenuto’s close analysis of *The Martyrs of Palestine* concluded that Eusebius was capable even of fabrication. She demonstrates convincingly that he generates a story in chapter 11 of *The Martyrs of Palestine* using recycled material from elsewhere in that text and from Origen’s *On the Principles*. Joseph Verheyden’s survey article on *The Martyrs of Palestine* does not go quite so far, but nevertheless highlights

50 Lorenzo Perrone, “Eusebius of Caesarea as a Christian Writer,” in Raban and Holm, *Caesarea Maritima*.
52 Mendels, *Media Revolution*. Mendels believes that Eusebius manipulates his material in pursuit of publicity. There are numerous reasons for questioning this, which will be addressed as I progress.
its rhetorical aspects. These works helped establish incontrovertibly that Eusebius’ narrative writings are as much literary as historical enterprises.

The most extensive such approach is Marie Verdoner’s *Narrated Reality: The Historia ecclesiastica of Eusebius of Caesarea*. Verdoner applies the principles of narratology to the *Ecclesiastical History*. She gives priority to the text in and of itself, with particular ‘sensitivity towards the unsaid, the implicit, or even the repressed’. Verdoner’s work goes further than any previous scholarship in paying attention to Eusebius’ narrative and the “historical space” it implies. However, its focus on the text as text means that Eusebius and his context are somewhat lost. Building upon this new awareness of Eusebius’ writings’ rhetorical sophistication, and tying it into a concrete understanding of the *Ecclesiastical History*’s early 4th century context, I ask why Eusebius wrote this history at this moment.

### III. Eusebius and the Second Sophistic

In the introduction to their recent edited collection *Reconsidering Eusebius*, Sabrina Inowlocki & Claudio Zamagni comment that, ‘The influence of post-modern studies has contributed to see Eusebius as an active participant in the construction of late antique history, theology and literature.’ This most recent trend in Eusebian studies places the Christian historian within the second sophistic.

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The second sophistic is a broad term that encompasses a plethora of individuals, materials and approaches. Though the term derives from Philostratus, who used it to refer to a resurgence in display oratory, its use has broadened to refer to a new literary sophistication amongst the Greek elites of the imperial period. The influence of post-modernism has led to the term being applied to authors in this period who play with intertextuality, allusiveness, linguistic subtlety and literary self-consciousness. More concretely, their literary products are read as part of ongoing identity negotiations of provincial Greek elites struggling to define themselves under Roman hegemony. As Tim Whitmarsh summarises, ‘The extant literature of the period was the fundamental vehicle of self-definition for the urban elites of the eastern Empire’. It is important to realise that such literary sophism was neither empty nor idle. This has two facets. Firstly, the second sophistic encompasses the idea that paideia – elite education – was based on elite Greek literature. With paideia went power. Competition between imperial men determined both resource allocation and position, and was based upon competition rooted in the degree and depth of one’s paideia. Secondly, rhetoric and imagery were a means of concrete governance. Since Fergus Millar’s 1977 *The Emperor in the Roman World*, scholars have agreed that concrete Roman provincial

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57 For a survey of the questions and historiography surrounding the term, see Tim Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3-22. I use the term here broadly to refer to the elite literary culture of provincial Greeks under Rome, and its role as a vehicle for identity negotiation and construction. My reading of Eusebius does not require this second sophistic labelling, but I have found it a useful tool for understanding his context and literary project.  
administration was thin on the ground. With such a small administrative network, such a vast empire’s continuation relied on the construction of ideologies that favoured its hegemony. Provincial literature thus had a very real role in running the provinces.

Second sophistic literature could encourage provincial populaces to cultivate Roman values and accept Roman ideologies, and itself serve as a means to Roman power. On the other hand it could cultivate resistance. This literature was the medium by which provincial identity, and readers’ attitudes to Rome in particular, were cultivated.

The second sophistic encompasses imperial Christian literature too. Much of this was produced by elite Greeks, and struggled to situate Christians under Roman hegemony. Christian texts can also be read as providing identities for their readers and actively constructing the future. I will return to detailed sophistic readings of early Christian literature in the chapters that follow. For now, I note simply that Christian participation in the second sophistic remained as true in late antiquity as earlier. As Averil Cameron says, ‘Since everything conspired to make of the fourth century a time when rhetoric did indeed convey power, Christians needed to make it their own’. But this appreciation has not yet spread to Eusebius’ historical writing (Cameron’s own attitude to Eusebius is ambiguous). This dissertation proposes that we read Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History within this late antique landscape of literature and loyalty.

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65 Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 140: ‘It is perhaps surprising that Christian history – history written from the Christian point of view, that is, not the more specialised history of the church – is
Amongst Eusebian scholars, debate over Eusebius’ place in the second sophistic has centred on his disputed authorship of the Against Hierocles. That text is a response to Hierocles’ Lover of Truth, which had set up Philostratus’ Apollonius of Tyana as a rival to Jesus. Eusebius not only criticises its content but also critiques it on the grounds of genre, and in effect attacks Philostratus’ original Life of Apollonius of Tyana too. The Against Hierocles’ rhetorical ease speaks well of its author’s literary culture. Timothy Barnes continues to argue strongly against the attribution of this text to Eusebius of Caesarea, calling it one of ‘two serious subsidiary causes of the persistent misunderstandings surrounding Eusebius.’ Barnes writes as if the authorship of the Against Hierocles has been settled, stating that it was shown to be by a different Eusebius in 1992 (the work is unreferenced at this point; but revealed later to be Thomas Hägg). Barnes’ confidence is misplaced. The question of authorship is still live, and scholarly consensus favours Eusebian authorship. This is further encouragement to read Eusebius sophistically.


67 Barnes, “Eusebius of Caesarea,” 1. The other is the uncritical assumption that Eusebius was close to Constantine.

68 Barnes, “Eusebius of Caesarea,” 11[n52], citing Thomas Hägg, "Hierocles the Lover of Truth and Eusebius the Sophist," SO 67 (1992). Barnes also discussed this in a review article; Timothy D. Barnes, “Monotheists All?,” Phoenix 55, no. 1/2 (2001). Interestingly, Hägg’s article seeks only to reopen the debate, and notes in conclusion that ‘The above considerations are of course not enough to prove the inauthenticity of the CH’ [149].

The second sophistic normally refers to the first three centuries AD, but as was noted above the term has expanded in range.\textsuperscript{70} It now commonly incorporates late antiquity too.\textsuperscript{71} It is thus entirely legitimate to consider Eusebius within the movement. He shares too many of the second sophistic’s earlier representatives’ characteristics. He was a well-educated Greek Christian living under Rome in Caesarea, and therefore geographically and socially a member of the provincial elite. He was writing during a period of political uncertainty in the early 4\textsuperscript{th} century, after the wide-ranging reforms of the tetrarchy and the “Diocletianic Persecution”, and in the immediate aftermath of the western emperor’s conversion to Christianity (known to Eusebius when he wrote; see EH 9.9.2). As the terms on which the Empire functioned shifted and settled, Christianity faced a changing status under Roman hegemony. Verdener sums this up:

“We written at the beginning of this as it were “Constantinian turn”, Eusebius’ \textit{historia ecclesiastica} holds a key position for understanding some crucial aspects of the Christians coming to terms with this development. In \textit{historia ecclesiastica} positions of central importance to early Christianity can be seen, as well as glimpses of a new agenda which came to dominate the following period of time. Thus a development of central importance to Christianity in late antiquity is contained within the \textit{historia ecclesiastica}, constituting the work as a textual monument, successful in creating a historical reality by narrating it, thereby contributing to the shaping of the self-understanding of the Christians.”\textsuperscript{72}

Read sophistically then, Eusebius’ creative narration does not simply represent the church’s past; it responds to its context of production by seeking to construct the future.

\textsuperscript{70} Philostratus himself places no strict chronological boundaries on the term, although he clearly intends a focus on imperial Greece.

\textsuperscript{71} The term “Third Sophistic” has been mooted for the later period. The term used need not overly concern us here; though I like the attention the term draws to the later texts and writers, I am sympathetic to the concerns of Lieve Van Hoof, "Greek Rhetoric and the Later Roman Empire. The Bubble of the “Third Sophistic”," \textit{AntTard} 18 (2010), who bemoans that the term has been used by continental scholars in a way that ‘has confirmed the image of classicizing Greek literature in late Antiquity as static, moribund, and no longer engaged or influential in society’ [212]. Van Hoof appeals instead for readings of late antique texts through the lens of the second sophistic to emphasise continuity, a request with which I am happy to comply. The value of the term “Third Sophistic” continues to be debated; see the recent panel “Intellectual Culture in the 3rd century CE: Philosophy, Religion, and Rhetoric between the 2nd and 3rd Sophistic” at the APA Conference, January, 2013, which discussed Eusebius among others.

\textsuperscript{72} Verdener, \textit{Narrated Reality}, 1.
Since so much second sophistic literature had at its heart the relationship of author and audience to Rome, it is appropriate here to consider Eusebius’ attitude. Again, his Caesarean context is crucial. As noted above, Caesarea was a highly Romanised city, and had been so from an early stage. Eusebius was in his late 40s or 50s when he wrote the *Ecclesiastical 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 under Diocletian, an event Eusebius saw as the anomalous behaviour of a tyrant. Eusebius thus had a positive attitude towards Rome. This fact was traditionally surmised from his *Tricennial Oration* in particular, which first expresses the idea of the one Roman emperor as the one delegate of the one God. But Eusebius’ positive attitude to Rome was not dependent on Constantine’s conversion. Eusebius was an elite Roman citizen from a highly Romanised provincial capital. He nursed no natural antipathy to Rome. This is an important platform on which the investigation of Eusebius’ attitude towards legitimate authority and its engagement with violence must begin.

IV. Eusebius’ “Life of Origen”

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73 On the attitude to Rome of local Caesarean elites, which fits that suggested here for Eusebius, see e.g. Hannah M. Cotton and Werner Eck, “A New Inscription From *Caesarea Maritima* and the Local Elite of *Caesarea Maritima*,” in *What Athens Has To Do With Jerusalem: Essays on Classical, Jewish, and Early Christian Art and Archaeology in Honour of Gideon Foster*, ed. Leonard V. Rutgers (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), using epigraphic evidence.

74 Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 104.

75 See in particular Michael Hollerich, “Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First “Court Theologian”,” *Church History* 59 (1990).

76 Dissent is voiced by Aaron Johnson, whose *Ethnicity and Argument* argues that Eusebius’ *Preparation for the Gospel* cultivates at best ambivalence towards Rome. This argument has been challenged by David DeVore, “Rome and Christ as Civilizers in Eusebius’ Apologetic Works” (presentation, NAPS conference, Chicago, May 25, 2012).
In analysing Eusebius’ attitude to legitimate authority we will repeatedly encounter the figure of Origen, the 3rd century Alexandrian Christian whose writings had wrestled with many of the questions on authority which Eusebius also faced. Origen was the great theorist of Christian virginity, and had written too an *Exhortation to Martyrdom* which described the ideal Christian martyr. As we have already seen, Eusebius was educated in the school of Pamphilus, which continued the educational traditions Origen had begun in Caesarea. Eusebius lists countless works of Origen’s, many of which he had clearly read (e.g. *EH* 6.24.1-3; 6.32.1-3, 6.36.2-4). In order to develop his own comparatively moderate assessment of Christian authority, Eusebius had to engage with Origen and his more extreme views. He does so most clearly in Book 6, in a series of biographical stories about Origen often referred to as his “Life of Origen”.

The history of scholarship on these stories matches that of the *Ecclesiastical History* more generally. Though early criticism raised doubts about Eusebius’ potential apologetic aims, it was eclipsed by a subsequent surge of scholarship reading Eusebius uncritically with the aim of revealing the historical Origen. Pierre Nautin’s seminal work, echoed in England by Joseph Trigg, demonstrated more careful analysis of these stories. But Nautin’s enterprise was fundamentally source-critical, and saw Eusebius primarily as a compiler and transparent historian. This approach had no interest in

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77 See e.g. Carriker, *Library*; Grafton and Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book*.
81 Nautin, *Origène*, 98: ‘il écrit l’histoire avec une âme assez simple et naïve pour que son texte reste transparent’. 

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Eusebius’ own project, and at most posited some slight apologetic tendency to defend Origen.\textsuperscript{82}

Robert Grant’s work recognised the Book 6 stories’ potential for accessing Eusebius’ views on authority in the \textit{Ecclesiastical History}.\textsuperscript{83} He says, ‘What he [Eusebius] has done, in company at first with Pamphilus, is to arrange these materials in such a way as to provide an apologetic biography, in part responding to charges against Origen, in part portraying him as a hero of Christian intellectualism.’\textsuperscript{84} In this comment we see both the value of Grant’s work and its limitations. In the reference to Christian intellectualism we see an indication that these stories are key to Eusebius’ own views on authority. But Grant remains hindered by his twin assumptions that Eusebius was just a compiler (‘arrange these materials’) and the assumption that Eusebius has only apologetic motives.

More recently, scholars of ancient biography have furthered this trend. Considering Eusebius’ \textit{Against Hierocles}, Patricia Cox Miller comments that for Eusebius ‘the biographer was free to use exaggeration in developing his portrait so long as he maintained at least the semblance of historical truth’.\textsuperscript{85} She sees Eusebius “Life of Origen” as the result of ‘the biographer’s creative license’.\textsuperscript{86} Simon Swain takes this

\textsuperscript{82} Henri Crouzel, \textit{Origen}, trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1989 [orig. 1985]), though a substantial contribution to studies of Origen, represents a regressive step in attitudes towards Eusebius. Writing after Nautin, he rejects his attempts at criticism, saying, ‘While recognizing that there are certainly some interesting insights in this book [Nautin’s], we do not agree in many cases with the criticisms expressed of Eusebius and other sources, which seem to us contrived…’ \textsuperscript{1}


\textsuperscript{84} Grant, “Eusebius and His Lives of Origen,” 639.


\textsuperscript{86} Miller, \textit{Biography}, 76. See too the first volume in the “Biblioteca di Adamantius” series, Adele Monaci Castagno, ed. \textit{La biografia di origene fra storia e agiografia. Atti del VI Convegno di Studi del Gruppo
further in the initial contribution to his and Mark Edwards’ collection of essays on ancient biography. He notes that ‘Eusebius’ portrait of Origen…is not about Origen, but uses him to present to us the history and doctrine of the Church through the times he lived in and the events he experienced (as these are seen by Eusebius in his time).’  

Swain’s insight here is crucial in recognising that the “Life of Origen” is a window to Eusebius’ own attitudes, born of his 4th century context. I will try to build on this approach by repeatedly returning to these stories as a way to access Eusebius’ critical stance toward the views of his intellectual ancestor, and his own views on what constitutes legitimate authority.

Two recent studies have made headway in tracing Eusebius’ own attitude to Christian authority in his “Life of Origen”. Thomas Ferguson’s 2005 *The Past is Prologue* and Elizabeth Penland’s as yet unpublished dissertation, "Martyrs as Philosophers", argue that the Book 6 stories are central to Eusebius’ elevation of the Caesarean-Alexandrian school tradition.  

Chapter 2 will engage with this thesis in more detail.

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I. Simon Swain, “Biography and Biographic in the Literature of the Roman Empire,” in *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* eds. Mark Edwards and Simon Swain (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 18. See too the recent assertion of Joseph Verheyden, “Origen in the Making: Reading between (and behind) the Lines of Eusebius’ “Life of Origen” (HE 6),” in *Origeniana Decima: Origen as Writer* eds. Sylwia Kaczmarek and Henryk Pietras (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 715, that “there is more to this “Life” than a mere interest in historical research on the part of Eusebius or the wish to provide the reader with a handy standard biography of a very important person that was dear to the author”.

However, both of these works assume that Eusebius was merely a slavish imitator and eulogist of Origen. But this, I suggest, is historically unlikely. Origen was an extreme figure, and his treatment of Christian authority tends to valorise radical behaviour. Moreover, recent scholarship has revealed that the Origenist controversy of the late 4th and 5th century was presaged as early as the late 3rd century by concerns over Origen’s ideas. By the time he wrote the *Ecclesiastical History* Eusebius had already co-authored the *Defence of Origen*, responding to circulating accusations against Origen’s life and theology, perhaps made by confessors in the Palestinian mines (Photius, *Bibliotheca* 118). The second half of the *Defence* responds to a specific set of charges (*Defence* 87-188). It notes too that these accusations were not just being spoken, but had been written down (*Defence* 16). There seems to have been substantial anti-Origenist sentiments in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries.

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89 See e.g. Charles Kannengiesser, "Eusebius of Caesarea, Origenist," in Attridge and Hata, *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*. I note with pleasure Perrone, "Eusebius,” 530, explicitly disagreeing with Kannengiesser and suggesting that ‘Eusebius’ conduct is therefore a sign of a new atmosphere in the Christian intellectual society of the fourth century, which reflects a clear tendency to distance itself from the Origenistic heritage’. But this is a largely isolated comment. 89 89 See for example the debate between Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, and Tim Vivian, *St. Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988). See also Ferguson, *Past is Prologue*, 22-29, on Eusebius’ inheritance of disputes concerning Origen, although he too concludes that Eusebius simply defends Origen. 89 89 Scholars disagree about who these detractors are. Nautin, *Origène*, 134-44, argues for an anti-Origen circle in Caesarea using the confessors to attack Pamphilus. Eric Junod, *Pamphile de Césarée, Apologie pour Origène. Suivi de Rufin D’Aquilée: Sur la falsification des livres d’Origène*. Vol. 464, Sources Chrétiennes. (Paris: Cerf, 2002), 81-5, on the other hand, suggests that these confessors are Egyptians. Rowan Williams, "Dammosa haereditas: Pamphilus’ Apology and the Reputation of Origen," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramo zum 8. Juli 1993*, eds. Hanns C. Brennecke, Ernest L. Grasmück, and Christoph Markschies (Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1993), 160-4, synthesises these two positions. He suggests 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. On Williams’ picture, the successors of those bishops who had condemned Paul had forbidden study of Origen’s writings. Williams suggests that Egyptian confessors encountered confessors from Caesarea and Cappadocia in the mines, and adopted their hostility towards Origen. The accusations Pamphilus is reacting against then were inspired by the bishops of Syria and Asia but reflect local concerns phrased in the language of Alexandrian theology. This is the position taken too by Scheck, *Apology for Origen*, 6-8. 89 89 Listed in Scheck, *Apology for Origen*, 20-21. Since the *Defence* only exists in Rufinus’ Latin translation, there is a constant potential that Rufinus has altered Pamphilus’ original. The list of charges is an area of particular concern. Williams, "Dammosa haereditas," believes the list reflects Rufinus’ 4th century concerns; Scheck, *Apology for Origen*, 21-22, disagrees. 89 89 Jerome, *Defence Against Rufinus* 1.11, reports that in Book 6 of the *Defence of Origen* (which Eusebius wrote alone) Eusebius refers to Methodius as one such to have written against Origen.
For Eusebius in the early 4th century these would have been a real concern. Pamphilus’ *Defence* acknowledges that those against whom he is writing not only impugn Origen, but ‘take up hostilities against those who read them [Origen’s writings] (adversum eos qui haec legunt hostiles inimicitias sumere), *Defence* 1.’ Since Pamphilus and Eusebius were sitting on Origen’s library, they were prime targets for such accusations. Simple hero-worship on Eusebius’ part would have been imprudent; indeed the *Defence*’s beginning speaks disparagingly of ‘the simpler brothers who are devoted to Origen with excessive affection (aliquibus simplicioribus et propensiore adfectu diligentibus virum), *Defence* 2.’ Eusebius is his own man. His construction of a more moderate brand of Christian authority was necessarily formed in part in response to Origen’s own thinking, which privileged charismatic and volatile forms of authority.

It is with the “Life of Origen” then that I begin my reassessment of Eusebius’ presentation of Christian authority in the *Ecclesiastical History*. Eduard Schwartz commented in 1908 that the *Ecclesiastical History* was not properly a history of the church but ‘zur Geschichte der ἔκκλησιαστικοὶ ἄνδρες, der Bischöfe, kirchlichen Schriftsteller, Märtyrer’. This insight has rarely been appreciated, but a forthcoming article of David DeVore will argue persuasively that the *Ecclesiastical History* comes closer to intellectual biography than most other genres. The *Ecclesiastical History* is in essence a string of biographical pearls strung out across Christianity’s three hundred year history. It is therefore appropriate to begin a reassessment of the *Ecclesiastical History* from a detailed reading of one such biographical episode.

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V. A Rhetoric of Legitimate Authority

The *Ecclesiastical History* is a narrative designed by its elite, Christian author, a provincial Roman citizen with a traditional Hellenised education, for an audience of Christian leaders who shared his elite status and prejudices. As Hayden White has pointed out, ‘narrative in general, from the folktale to the novel, from the annals to the fully realised “history”, has to do with the topics of law, legality, legitimacy, or, more generally, *authority*. It is authority that I suggest lies behind the way Eusebius has written this narrative. This thesis argues that the *Ecclesiastical History* is a vehicle for Eusebius to present a new generation of 4th century Christian clerics with his ideas on legitimate authority. Looking back on a past where Christianity’s heroes were often marked for an extreme charisma based on violent acts of asceticism and martyrdom, Eusebius reinvents those figures so that they conform instead to a more moderate rhetoric of temperance, in line with traditional elite judgements of legitimate authority.

At the very start of the *Ecclesiastical History*, in his programmatic introduction,

Eusebius announces his intention to record:

‘The successions of the holy apostles, together with also the times which have come to pass from our Saviour to our day, and the many things which 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 lead it magnificently, and the many who in each generation either in unwritten or written form maintained the divine discourse.’

Τὰς τῶν ἱερῶν ἁποστόλων διαδοχὰς σὺν καὶ τοὺς ἅπε τῆς σωτήρος ἡμῶν καὶ eis ἡμᾶς διανυσμένους χρόνοις, ὡσα τε καὶ πηλίκα πραγματευθήσαι κατὰ τὸν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν ἱστοριῶν λέγεται, καὶ ὅσοι ταύτης διαπρεπῶς ἐν ταῖς μάλλον ἐπισημνόταταις παροικίαις ἦγησαντο τε καὶ προεστησαν, ὡσα τε κατὰ γενεάν ἐκάστην ἀγράφους ἢ καὶ διὰ συγγραμμάτων τὸν θείον ἐπρέσβεωσαν λόγον, *EH* 1.1.1.

It is the leaders of the Christian community who take centre stage, and it is for this reason that Eusebius’ history contains so much biographical material. But beyond that famous introduction, in a neglected passage that follows, I suggest he sets out programmatically those leaders’ characteristics.

‘...the Christian man, through the knowledge and instruction of Christ, is prominent in self-control and righteousness, in patient endurance of life and in manliness of virtue, and in his confession of the one and only God, above all...’

τὸν Χριστιανὸν ἄνδρα διὰ τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ γνώσεως καὶ διδασκαλίας σωφροσύνη καὶ
dικαιοσύνη καρτερία τε βίου καὶ ἀρετῆς ἄνδρεια εὐσεβείας τε ὀμολογία ἕνος καὶ μόνου
tοῦ ἐπὶ πάντων θεοῦ διαπρέπειν, EH 1.4.7.

It is here that a reading of Eusebius within the second sophistic pays dividends. Kate Cooper, building on Helen North’s concept of a “rhetoric of sophrosyne” and Jack Winkler’s use of that motif, has highlighted the significance of a rhetoric of (in)temperance in descriptions of elite male behaviour in second sophistic literature.97

In ancient society, descriptions of “private”98 behaviour were a key means of assessing suitability for public office. In societies characterised by “zero-sum competition”, casting aspersions upon the domestic capabilities of others, and defending and advertising your own, was crucial.99 Cooper hypothesises that a desire either to promote or denigrate a man’s ability to wield authority in public lies behind the characterisation of protagonists’ private behaviour in many ancient writings. It is this approach I bring to

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99 Cooper, "Insinuations," 152.
Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, understood not only as a creatively constructed narrative, but as a mission statement of legitimate church leadership.

If we read Eusebius in this light, in the above passage from Book 1 he is indicating the eligibility of Christian men for the episcopacy via precisely such a rhetoric of temperance. The virtue of self-control (σωφροσύνη) is given pride of place. It comes through knowledge and instruction and, as we shall see repeatedly, is wielded for the benefit of the Christian community. Eusebius’ assessment of legitimate Christian authority is therefore based on a rhetoric of temperance, gained through *paideia* and manifested in care for dependents. This reimagines the temperamental, charismatic authority of the church’s early heroes of resistance.

We will see in the following chapters that when Eusebius’ lays out his new vision of legitimate Christian authority, he is actually reigning in the volatile traditions of renunciation, ascetic self-mortification and martyrdom he has long been believed to underscore. Each chapter sets out a different aspect of Eusebius’ rhetoric of temperance, fleshing out an aspect of the programmatic passage above. Chapter 1 considers his conception of piety (εὐζεβεία), and in particular its importance to the family. Chapter 2 considers Eusebius’ portrayal of Christian asceticism as based on self-control (σωφροσύνη). Here too the importance of the διδασκαλία, the Christian teaching tradition, will be prominent. Chapter 3 considers the importance of Christian knowledge (γνῶσις) to Eusebius’ vision of the Christian cleric. Chapter 4 looks in more detail at
Eusebius’ reinvention of the Christian martyr, and so teases out the connotations of the Christian man’s endurance in life (καρπερία βίου).\(^{100}\)

Eusebius’ picture of authority figures of the past was built upon these four elements. It was a picture Eusebius built from his Christian inheritance, but which moved beyond it, muting its extreme elements in response to traditional elite conceptions of legitimate authority. By these means Eusebius produced a powerful vision of the church and its leaders ready to take their place in the new dispensation of the early 4\(^{\text{th}}\) C, when Christian and civic authority had the potential to become one and the same.

\(^{100}\) A phrase which seems to have double meaning, since in discussing martyrdoms Eusebius both highlights perseverance under torture, and praises those who avoid martyrdom and thus literally “persevere in life”.
1. Parental Authority: Piety, Education, and the Christian Household

Abstract: Eusebius’ stories about martyrdom often concern the family, and parent-child relationships in particular. In these stories, he makes use of Maccabean imagery. Origen too had used Maccabean motifs extensively in his Exhortation to Martyrdom. Where Origen used them to advocate renunciation of family ties, I argue that Eusebius uses this imagery in a directly contrary manner to that of Origen and previous Christian martyr literature. He does so to assert the value of family solidarity, and the family’s role in Christian education. Eusebius’ narrative encourages its Christian readership to move beyond the negative attitude to family encouraged by much 2nd and 3rd century martyr literature. It is also written in response to elite prejudices about Christian family impiety. Not only do Eusebius’ Christians demonstrate traditional Roman family values; they do so at moments when their non-Christian counterparts fail to do so. Christians are therefore painted as inheritors of those Roman family values.

I. Origen’s Childhood

Eusebius’ “Life of Origen” in Book 6 of the Ecclesiastical History begins with two stories about Origen’s childhood. These are as fascinating as they are unexpected. Book 5 has ended with a discussion of the writings of earlier Christian authors. There is no warning that we are about to shift into detailed family anecdote; moreover childhood stories were relatively infrequent in ancient biography.Gregory Thaumaturgus, who also memorialised Origen in his Oration and Panegyric Addressed to Origen, states

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101 Note though their preponderance in Christian apocryphal literature; the Infancy Gospel of Thomas being the best known example.
specifically that he will not discuss Origen’s youth or education: ‘And it is not his family or bodily training that I am about to praise (Οὐχὶ δὲ γένος οὖσς ἀνατροφὰς σώματος ἐπανέσων ἔρχομαι), Oration 2’. 102 Eusebius on the other hand declares that ‘The facts about Origen even out of his baby clothes, so to speak, seem to me worthy of mention (Ὠριγένους καὶ τὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν ὡς εἰπεῖν σπαργάνων ἄξιομηνήσειν μοι εἶναι δοκεῖ), EH 6.2.2’. The two stories he tells detail Origen’s relationship with his parents; one concerning his mother and one his father.

The first story told about Origen tells of his desire to be martyred and his mother’s efforts to thwart him. Eusebius tells us how Origen’s father Leonidas was martyred under Severus in 202/3.103 Origen, though ‘still very much a child (ἐτὶ κομιδῆ παιδὸς ὑπάξρνληνο), EH 6.2.3’,104 was eager to be martyred with him, and rushes to join his father. He is prevented however by his mother. She initially tries to persuade him not to abandon his family, begging him to think of her feelings. Failing to convince him, she hides all his clothes and thus renders him housebound. Foiled, Origen contents himself with writing to his father, encouraging him in his martyrdom.

This story flows into a second, which gives a vivid picture of Origen’s loving instruction by his father. This story is a flashback, since on the narrative’s chronology

102 Translation taken from Arthur C. Coxe et al., eds., Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius the Great, Julius Africanus, Anatolius and Minor Writers, Methodius, Arnobius, vol. 6, Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D.325 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971 [orig. 1885, repr. 1971]), suitably modified. Gregory means that he is concerned with the divine in Origen, not his ordinary human beginnings. The attribution of this panegyric to Gregory is debated. See the disagreement between Nautin, Origéne, 155-61, 83-97, and Henri Crouzel, Remerciement à Origène: suivi de La lettre d’Origène à Grégoire (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969); restated in Henri Crouzel, “Faut-il voir trois personages en Grégoire le Thaumaturge,” Gregorianum 60 (1979), and in Crouzel, Origen, 2[n2].

103 For more on this “persecution”, see most recently Enrico Dal Covolo, “Quando Severo scatenò una persecuzione contro le chiese…” La persecuzione del 202 ad Alessandria,” in Monaci Castagno, La biografia di origene.

his father is now in prison awaiting death. It paints a detailed and tender picture of
Origen’s relationship with his father. Its prime concern is Leonidas’ education of his
son. Eusebius tells us that Origen ‘was trained in the divine writings since when he was
still a boy (ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς ἔξ ἔτη παιδὸς ἐνησκημένος),’ \textsuperscript{105} \textit{EH} 6.2.7’ precisely
because ‘his father made them no secondary matter of attention for him, in addition to
the standard education (τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῷ πρὸς τῇ τῶν ἐγκυκλίων παιδεία καὶ τούτων οὐ
κατὰ πάρεργον τῇ φροντίδα πεποιημένου)’. This stress upon education is accompanied
by a striking affection (which only increases the reader’s pathos, since they know
Leonidas is soon to die). In a touching tableau Eusebius describes how Leonidas,
‗standing over the sleeping boy and exposing his chest, they say, as if a divine spirit
were enshrined inside it, kissed it reverently and thought himself blessed with a good
child (ἐπιστάντα δὲ ἥδη πολλάκις καθευδόντι τῷ παιδὶ γυμνόδαι μὲν αὐτοῦ τὰ στέρνα
φασίν, ὡσπερ δὲ θείου πνεύματος ἐνδὸν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀφιερωμένου, φυλήσαι τε σεβασμίως
καὶ τῆς εὐτεκνίας μακάριον ἐαυτὸν ἡγήσασθαι, \textit{HE} 6.2.11)’. Eusebius’ story then
reverts to its original chronology. Leonidas dies and we move on to the start of Origen’s
career.

These two stories have attracted much scholarly attention. Until relatively recently it
was by scholars interested in Origen rather than Eusebius. Most have debated their
authenticity, and tried to connect the details of Origen’s youth to the sentiments of his
own writings. Little work has discussed Eusebius’ stance; even less has discussed these
stories’ relationship to the \textit{Ecclesiastical History} as a whole.

\textsuperscript{105} The Greek term for “train” here, ἐνησκημένος, comes from the root ἐνασκέω, from which derives our
term “asceticism”. Eusebius’ use of this term and his attitude towards asceticism will be studied in
Chapter 2. I note here that the term is used in this instance for literary study.
Eugène de Faye repeats Eusebius’ childhood account without acknowledging that it is Eusebius’, even adding hypothetical details (‘He was perhaps seven or eight years of age when his father Leonidas, and all his family, became Christians, so that Origen was brought up in a family of ardent neophytes’).\(^\text{106}\) Cadiou too reads these stories uncritically, and uses them as explanatory fodder for a subsequent discussion of Origen’s thought. Moreover, Eusebius is not mentioned; instead we read repeatedly phrases such as, ‘There is a story that...’\(^\text{107}\) Danielou does note Eusebian authorship, and the potential for hagiographical exaggeration, but nevertheless claims these childhood stories are ‘substantially true and of value’\(^\text{108}\)

Pierre Nautin is more sceptical. He states, for example, that the association of Origen’s father with the Alexandrian martyr Leonidas is almost certainly legendary.\(^\text{109}\) He also identifies the second story as oral tradition, and thus concludes: ‘Cette tradition ne mérite aucune confiance, car personne, à l’époque d’Eusèbe, ne pouvait prétendre avoir connu Origène à cet âge.’ But he immediately notes too, ‘Mais on a supposé que le future martyr n’avait pas manqué de donner à son fils une solide instruction religieuse.’\(^\text{110}\) Nautin’s interest is in these stories’ value for reconstructing Origen’s life; Eusebius is ascribed little agency. Trigg follows Nautin, saying of the story of Leonidas kissing Origen that, ‘Even if not reliable, such stories indicate the impression Origen had on others’.\(^\text{111}\)

Crouzel takes a sideways swipe at historians who have questioned these stories (Nautin being prime in his sights), who are ‘apparently unaccustomed to

\(^{106}\) de Faye, *Origen and his Work*, 23.

\(^{107}\) E.g. Cadiou, *Origen*, 1. Cadiou says too that ‘Leonidas, the father of Origen, was a man well instructed in the Christian religion and, besides, was the possessor of a library of rare manuscripts.’ This seems to stretch Eusebius’ evidence.

\(^{108}\) Daniélou, *Origen*, 5-7. He does note that Eusebius’ desire to record Origen’s childhood stories is ‘just a little disturbing’ [5], but does not expand on this opaque comment.

\(^{109}\) Nautin, *Origène*, 31-32.

\(^{110}\) Nautin, *Origène*, 35.

\(^{111}\) Trigg, *Origen*, 3-5, at 3.
ancient rhetoric and thinking its highly hagiographical tone unauthentic.’ Crouzel concludes instead that ‘it does not follow from this hagiographical tone that we should brand as fabrication everything that Eusebius tells us’.  

More recently the childhood stories’ significance within Eusebius’ own project has been increasingly appreciated. Hornschuh and Grant have suggested that the childhood stories, and the father’s kiss in particular, are part of Eusebius’ “Hellenisation” of Origen, but do not discuss them in much detail. This theme is complicated by Patricia Cox Miller. She has a dual interest: ‘Two issues will dominate this chapter: one concerns the extent to which we can know the historical Origen; the other concerns the Eusebian Origen and the materials, both historical and imagined, used to create him.’ Crucially, Cox Miller notes the stories’ programmatic nature: these stories ‘establish the thematic structure of the entire biography’. These stories’ structural importance is indeed crucial. They are not given such prominence accidentally; they set out programmatically Eusebius’ attitudes in the rest of Book 6 and beyond.

All this scholarship though assumes that Eusebius’ presentation of Origen’s enthusiasm for martyrdom is uniformly positive. I argue that crucial parts of Eusebius’ narrative construction have been missed, and thus that Eusebius’ ambivalence has gone unnoticed too.

Little scholarship has addressed Eusebius’ attitude to the family. Elizabeth Clark’s essay on women in the Ecclesiastical History addresses some maternal figures, but her

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112 Crouzel, Origen, 5-8.
114 Miller, Biography, 73.
focus is on gender rather than the family. Cornelia Horn’s 2011 article does discuss some Eusebian material concerning children. It is to Horn’s credit that she reads this material as shedding light on Eusebius’ rhetorical purposes. But she believes that the Ecclesiastical History advocates ‘the transformation of ancient family ideals’, and that in it ‘the visions of expectations of ancient family life and the contributions of parents and children were radically reshaped and recreated into a new reality’. As will become clear I strongly disagree with this assessment. It is flawed in part because Horn’s conclusions about the Ecclesiastical History as a whole are based on scattered evidence from its first half only. The majority, and the most interesting, of the material concerning children is in Book 6 and later. It is to the wonderful subtlety of this Book 6 material that I now turn.

II. Reading Behind the Lines

Careful reading of Origen’s abortive martyrdom attempt reveals that Eusebius does not simply celebrate Origen’s enthusiasm. This is apparent first and foremost in Eusebius’ attitude to Origen’s mother, who prevents his martyrdom and is unambiguously praised for doing so. She, and not her overzealous son, is the story’s hero.

‘And he was close to his departure from life being not far off, had not divine and heavenly foresight, for the help of the many and acting through his mother, hindered him and stood in the way of his eagerness. She first begged him with words, exhorting him to spare her maternal disposition towards him, but watching him rising to a more vehement pitch when he learnt that his father had been seized and was being guarded in

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115 Elizabeth Clark, “Eusebius on Women in Early Church History,” in Attridge and Hata, Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism.

The relative stances taken towards the actions of mother and son reveal Eusebius’ sympathies. The mother’s action is not undertaken independently; it is the result of ‘divine and heavenly foresight (θείας καὶ οὐρανίου προνοίας)’. Her action has divine support. The implication is that her son’s does not. Over and against his mother’s entreaties Origen was simply ‘rising to a more vehement pitch (σφοδρότερον δ’ ἐπιτείναντα)’. I note too that it is only at this stage that he learns that his father is in prison; Origen’s desire for martyrdom was not originally motivated by solidarity with his father, but simply by the desire for death. Once he knows of his father’s plight, Origen is ‘entirely consumed by his impulse for martyrdom (ὁλος ἐγίνετο τῆς περὶ τὸ μαρτυρίον ὀρμῆς). The language here – σφοδ-, ἐπιτε-, ὁλο-, ὄρμ- – is emphatic. Origen’s insensitive impulse is extreme and contrasts unfavourably with his mother’s pleas.

Eusebius introduces the story in a similar manner. He tells how ‘such a passion for martyrdom possessed Origen’s soul that he leapt at the chance to be in danger, and rushed forward eagerly to enter the contest (ἔρως τοσοῦτος μαρτυρίου τὴν Ὀργίγνου, ἐτι κομιδὴ παιδὸς ὑπάρχοντος, κατεῖχε ψυχήν, ὡς ὁμός τοῖς κινδύνοις χωρεῖν προσηδὰν τε καὶ ὀρμᾶν ἐπὶ τὸν ἁγώνα προδόμως ἔχειν), EH 6.2.3.’ The language is repetitive and implies excess. The term ἔρως is rare in the Ecclesiastical History, and is
not the term normally used when Eusebius talks about the passion of martyrs.\textsuperscript{117} It suggests Origen’s zeal is beyond the ordinary, and it is clear from Eusebius’ praise of the mother that it is here inappropriate. Where his mother is inspired by divine providence acting for ‘the help of the many’, he is possessed only by personal desire.

As further evidence for Eusebian ambivalence, I note that Origen’s enthusiasm for martyrdom is described in similar terms to his later ill-advised self-castration (see Chapter 2). His abortive martyrdom is ‘the first sign of Origen’s childlike sagacity (τούτο πρῶτον τῆς Ὀριγένους παιδικῆς ἀγχονοίας), \textit{EH} 6.2.6’; his castration ‘went overboard in an example of an immature and impetuous mind (φρενὸς μὲν ἄτελοῦς καὶ νεανικῆς...μέγιστον δεῖγμα περιέχον), \textit{EH} 6.8.1.’ There too we find strong language (ὀρμ- et al., see Chapter 2). That his mother can prevent him only with a gesture as ridiculous as hiding his clothes lends the episode a farcical element, and hints that Origen’s intentions are faintly laughable. Eusebius implicitly criticises Origen’s desire to renounce his family and be martyred, and praises his mother as a rational heroine when she prevents him.

Confirmation of Eusebius’ subtle ambivalence comes when we realise that an ancient Christian audience would be alerted to two intertexts. The first is the story of the Maccabean mother and her sons; the second, more intriguingly, is Origen’s own use of that story a century before in his \textit{Exhortation to Martyrdom}. Eusebius makes use of the story of the Maccabean mother in a manner directly contrary to that in which Origen had used it.

\textsuperscript{117} Ἐρως and its declinable forms appear only three other times in the \textit{Ecclesiastical History}: once as a proper name (\textit{EH} 4.20.1), and twice as passion for philosophy, of which one refers to Origen and his teaching of pupils (\textit{EH} 6.30.1), and one to the early disciples leading up to Clement of Rome (\textit{EH} 3.37.2). These data, and similar throughout this dissertation, were based on online searches of the TLG.
The Maccabean story was a much-repeated tale in Judaeo-Christian communities. It told 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. The elderly Eleazar is hauled before the ruler first, resists and dies. He is followed by seven anonymous brothers, who are tortured and die in descending age order in front of their mother, also anonymous. Having encouraged her sons, the mother herself is killed.

These stories find their most famous form in 2 Maccabees and 4 Maccabees. The earliest extant written form of this story is in 2 Maccabees 6.18-31 and 7, written probably between 124 BC and the first half of the 1st century AD. The account claims to be condensing the history of Jason of Cyrene, but there may have been other unknown sources too. This section of 2 Maccabees becomes the focus of 4 Maccabees, which will concern us more. This is a later text of even more uncertain date (there is no consensus, and hypotheses span from the mid-1st century BC to beyond the mid-2nd century AD). 4 Maccabees is a more philosophical discussion of the same core stories. Its central concern is the primacy of reason over passion, and the author employs the Maccabean martyrs to illustrate the point. The mother takes on prominence here, as the text concludes with a lengthy encomium praising her.

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118 The bibliography on the origins, dating and sources of 2 and 4 Maccabees is vast, and need not overly concern us here since our interest is in their later reception. But for summaries of these issues see: Jan W. van Henten, The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People: A Study of 2 and 4 Maccabees (Leiden: Brill, 1997); David A. deSilva, 4 Maccabees, Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998). For a particularly detailed summary of scholarship on the dating of 4 Maccabees, see Stephen D. Moore and Janice C. Anderson, “Taking it Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees,” JBL 177, no. 2 (1998): 251 [n4].

119 “I could prove to you from many and various examples that reason is dominant over the emotions, but I can demonstrate it best from the noble bravery of those who died for the sake of virtue, Eleazar and the seven brothers and their mother” (4 Maccabees 1.7). NRSV translation for biblical quotation used throughout, suitably modified.
The original intentions of these texts’ authors are less pertinent for my purposes than their later adoption by Christian authors. Linguistic and symbolic parallels have been identified in many Christian writings. Language echoing 4 Maccabees, in particular concerning sacrificial death, is used in New Testament writings discussing Jesus’ Passion. deSilva tentatively suggests that 4 Maccabees may have been a significant influence on the Judaisers with whom Paul contended. The parallels between this text and the Pastoral Epistles have also been noted, and deSilva discusses its influence on Hebrews. Frend, van Henten and Perler have all discussed 4 Maccabees’ influence on Ignatius’ conception of his martyrdom. Similar parallels have been drawn with both The Martyrdom of Polycarp and The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienna to the Church in Smyrna. The recurring appearance of Maccabean motifs in these martyrological texts is thus well-documented.

The use of Maccabean motifs by subsequent Christian thinkers however is less well explored. R. B. Townshend in his 1913 study of 4 Maccabees discusses their use in Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Augustine and Leo the Great.

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121 deSilva, 4 Maccabees, 154.


124 See also the critical study by Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, Christian Memories of the Maccabean Martyrs (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), which uses Maccabean imagery to explore the subordination and “colonisation” of Judaism in Christian supersessionist thought.

early date W. Metcalfe published a note listing parallels between 4 Maccabees and Origen’s Exhortation to Martyrdom.126 D. Winslow published a very short survey of the use of the Maccabean motif in Cyprian, Origen, Augustine and Gregory.127 Origen’s use of it, which will concern us below, is dealt with not only in Metcalfe and Winslow, but also briefly in studies of the Exhortation itself,128 and in a recent lengthy article by deSilva.129 Amid this literature, very little attention has been paid to Christian writers’ conception of the Maccabean family or mother in particular, although deSilva’s article has redressed the balance somewhat.130 Eusebius’ use of Maccabean motifs has never been addressed.131

Eusebius’ story about a mother persuading her son in the context of martyrdom would probably have been enough to evoke Maccabean traditions. A number of other details strengthen the association. Origen’s mother, in contrast to his father Leonidas, remains unnamed, like the Maccabean mother.132 Even more striking is Eusebius’ passing remark that after his father’s death Origen ‘was left bereft together with his mother and

126 William Metcalfe, "Origen’s Exhortation to Martyrdom and 4 Maccabees," JTS 22, no. 3 (1921).
129 deSilva, "An Example."
130 Jan W. van Henten is engaged in a longstanding project on the interaction of Jewish and early Christian martyrlogies, which includes a survey of quotations and allusions to the Maccabean story in early Christian literature, but his final results are as yet unpublished. See e.g. Jan W. van Henten, "The Passio Perpetua and Jewish Martyrdom: The Motif of Motherly Love," in Perpetua’s Passions: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Passio Perpetua et Felicitas, eds. Jan N. Bremmer and Marco Formisano (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 118.
131 Hilhorst mentions Eusebius’ The Martyrs of Palestine as one example of post-Diocletianic Christian texts in which he sees a particular feature of 4 Maccabees (the characterisation of persecutors as tyrants). See Hilhorst, “Fourth Maccabees,” 112. I discuss this feature in chapter 4.132 Tessa Rajak attributes this anonymity to a desire in Jewish martyrlogy to ‘curb 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 Swain and Edwards, Portraits, 57-58. 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 16th C; see also Townshend, "Fourth Book of Maccabees," 660-62. I note too though 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).
younger brothers, six of them, when he was not yet seventeen years old (ἕρημος ἅμα μητρὶ καὶ βραχυτέροις ὀδελφοῖς τὸν ἄριθμον ἕξ, ἐπτακαϊδέκατον ὡς πλήρες ἕτος ἄγων, καταλείπεται), EH 6.2.12.’ A single mother and seven sons in the context of martyrdom is a clear reference to the Maccabean story.133

We can go further. Eusebius’ telling of the story evokes 4 Maccabees in particular. We know Eusebius knew 4 Maccabees because he mentions it explicitly. Moreover his mistaken attribution of it to Josephus and brief discussion of its contents indicate more than a passing familiarity (EH 3.10.6-7). The prominence Eusebius gives the mother is characteristic of 4 Maccabees rather than 2 Maccabees. More tellingly, in placing this diversion on Origen’s education by his father after the latter’s death (out of chronological sequence) Eusebius follows the exact model of 4 Maccabees, which concludes with a speech by the mother relating her seven sons’ instruction by their father.134 Eusebius’ language too hints at intertextuality with 4 Maccabees. In the very first sentence of Book 6, for example, Eusebius uses the phrase ‘athletes of piety (ἡὕλ ὑπὲξ εὐζεβείαο ἀζιεη῵λ), EH 6.1.1’, highly characteristic of 4 Maccabees. All this flags up for the alert reader this intended inter-text.

Eusebius is not simply using 4 Maccabees alone though. His use of it is, I suggest, a response to his own intellectual predecessor Origen’s comparable use a century before. Before looking in more detail at Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History then, we must begin with Origen’s own writings. Origen makes extensive use of the Maccabean mother and her sons in his Exhortation to Martyrdom. This text was written in 235/6 as an

133 There are no independent references to Origen’s brothers, although see the unreferenced statement of Trigg, The Bible, 10, 30, that Origen was ‘the oldest of nine children’; I am unclear on what this is based.
134 On the sudden appearance of the father and his role as educator, see in particular D’Angelo, “Εὐσεβεία,” 156.
encouragement for two of his associates in Caesarea, Protoctetus, a presbyter, and Origen’s own patron Ambrose. The catalyst for writing was Maximinus Thrax’s accession in 235 and, according to Eusebius, the ensuing persecution (EH 6.28.1).

Encouraging the two to stand firm, Origen’s *Exhortation* discusses the requirements of successful martyrdom, and uses the Maccabean martyrs as a lengthy case study (*Exhortation* 23-27).

There has been some debate over which written narratives of the Maccabean story Origen used. Winslow assumes Origen had 2 Maccabees alone, and the accuracy of Origen’s quotations demonstrates that he certainly had a copy of that text. But did he have more than one version? Origen indicates that his subject matter is ‘described in the books of Maccabees (ἐν τοῖς Μακκαβαϊκοῖς ἀναγραφέντες), *Exhortation* 23.’ In addition, numerous similarities of language, phrasing and structure indicate that the *Exhortation* is influenced directly or indirectly by 4 Maccabees. deSilva notes that when Winslow attributes Origen’s athletic imagery to 2 Maccabees but identifies as original his emphasis on the martyrs’ freedom, he misses that athletic imagery and freedom were already combined in 4 Maccabees. Metcalfe had listed other such parallels as early as 1921, including the phraseology τὸ μητρικὸν…πῦρ and τὸ πρὸς θεόν φίλτρον, found in Origen and 4 Maccabees but not in 2 Maccabees 6-7. Most importantly, the language of piety (ἐὐζεβεία) in Origen’s *Exhortation* is found throughout 4 Maccabees, but not at all in 2 Maccabees 6-7. Townshend calls this term ‘the keynote of his [the author of 4

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135 Winslow, “Maccabean Martyrs.” See also Hartmann, “Origène et la théologie du martyre.”
139 Noted, for example, by Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées*, 96[n182].
Maccabees’ whole book’, it appears more times in 4 Maccabees than in the entire rest of the Septuagint. Origen also uses the phrase ‘athletes of piety (τῶν τῆς εὐσεβείας ἀθλητῶν), e.g. Exhortation 23.’ As with Eusebius, the weight of attention paid to the mother indicates 4 Maccabees’s influence. Origen’s discussion builds to an encomium to the mother, rather like 4 Maccabees. It is therefore probable that Origen had both 2 Maccabees and 4 Maccabees in mind when writing his Exhortation.

One of Origen’s key points in the Exhortation is the importance of the martyr rejecting those things that concerned him most in life. In a list of conditions for Christian martyrdom, Origen asserts that ‘we have fulfilled the measure of the confession (ἐπιεξώσακεν τὸ μέτρον τῆς ὁμολογίας), Exhortation 11’ only when we are ‘not distracted or held even by affection for our children or for their mother or for one of those whom we regard as our dearest friends in this life, so as to value their possession and to prize our earthly life (ἐτὶ δὲ εἰ μὴ περιελκοίμεθα περισσώμενοι καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς περὶ τὰ τέκνα ἢ τὴν τοῦτων μιτέρα ἢ τινὰ τῶν νομιξομένων εἶναι ἐν τῷ βίῳ φιλτάτων φιλοστοργίας πρὸς τὴν κτῆσιν ἢ πρὸς τὸ ζῆν τοῦτο).’ The successful martyr must ‘turn away from all these ties and become wholly dedicated to God and to living in his company and presence (ἄλλ’ ὀλὰ ταῦτα ἀποστραφέντες ὅλοι γενοίμεθα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῆς μετ’ αὐτοῦ καὶ παρ’ αὐτοῦ ζωῆς).’ This is reiterated throughout the Exhortation, and family is repeatedly the prime example of such ties (e.g. Exhortation 14-16, 50). The family unit is for Origen a hindrance to martyrdom which must be overcome.

140 Townshend, “Fourth Book of Maccabees,” 663.
141 deSilva, “An Example,” 353, having summarised the available evidence, concludes that, ‘While the value of any one of these pieces of evidence could be disputed, the accumulation of data strongly suggests that Origen read both 2 and 4 Maccabees, and that he incorporated a substantial amount of vocabulary, imagery, and thought from the latter both in his retelling of the story of 2 Maccabees 6-7 in particular and in his exhortation to Ambrose and Protoctetus in general’.
It is to illustrate precisely this point that Origen employs Maccabean imagery.\textsuperscript{142} He states, ‘I believe that this story which I have quoted from Scripture in abbreviated form is most valuable to our purpose (νομίζω δὲ καὶ ταῦτα χρησιμωτάτα πρός τό προκείμενον ἐπιτεμόμενος ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς παρατεθείσθαι), Exhortation 27.’ This value is precisely that it demonstrates the principle of renunciation: ‘It enables us to see how piety and love for God, in face of the most painful agonies and the severest torments, is far more powerful than any other bond of affection (ἐν ἰδίωμεν, δόσον δύναται κατὰ τὸν τραχυτάτων πόνων καὶ τῶν βαρυτάτων βασάνων εὐσέβεια καὶ τὸ πρὸς θεόν φίλτρον παντὸς φίλτρον καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν πλείον δύναμον).’ Such bonds of affection, by which he means familial love, are subsequently described as ‘human weakness (ἀνθρωπίνη ἁπλέων)’. In the martyr this weakness is ‘exiled and altogether driven out of our soul and is rendered entirely impotent (ὑπεξοξήνο ἀπὸ ὑαὶν οὐράνια καὶ οὐδὲ κατὰ ποσόν ἐνεργεῖν δυναμένη)’. The repeated language of renunciation is pronounced, and Origen concludes his discussion of the Maccabees on this note:\textsuperscript{143}

Origen in fact makes renunciation more pronounced than it was originally in 4 Maccabees. The term φίλτρο-, identified as early as Metcalfe as a parallel between 4 Maccabees and Origen’s Exhortation (and infrequent in Origen’s other works),\textsuperscript{144} is actually used slightly differently in both. In Origen it is used with the clear intention to prioritise love for God over love for the family. In 4 Maccabees on the three occasions it is used it refers simply to love between family members (4 Maccabees 13.19; 13.27; 15.3). Origen has thus inherited this phrase from 4 Maccabees, but uses it to emphasise

\textsuperscript{142} See deSilva, “An Example,” 350: ‘Origen thus uses a topic highlighted by the author of 4 Maccabees in regard to the general ethical achievement of the Torah-observant, and the Maccabean martyrs in particular, to speak of an essential obstacle to be overcome by Christian martyrs…’

\textsuperscript{143} Winslow, “Maccabean Martyrs,” 78, agrees that, ‘His [Origen’s] conclusions are simple: love for God and human weakness cannot dwell together, while true piety and devotion are the equal of any adversary.’

\textsuperscript{144} Metcalfe, “Origen’s Exhortation,” 269.
the priority of the martyr’s relationship with God over that with his family, which was not the term’s purpose in its original context. Origen appropriates 4 Maccabees for his own aims, using it to stress the necessity of renouncing family ties. This is particularly apparent in his climactic eulogy to the Maccabean mother.

‘At that moment one could have seen how the mother of these heroes, for her hope in God, bravely bore the torments and deaths of her sons. For the dew of piety and the breath of holiness did not allow to be kindled within her the maternal instinct which in most mothers faced with such severe pains would have been a burning fire…’

‘Ἡν δὲ τότε τὴν μητέρα τῶν τοσοῦτον ἴδεν „εὐψήχως“ φέροσαν „διὰ τάς ἐπὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐλπίδας“ τοῖς πόνοις καὶ τοὺς θανάτους τῶν υἱῶν· ὅροι γὰρ εὐσεβείας καὶ πνεῦμα ὀσίότητος οὐκ εἶχον ἀνάπτεσθαι ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις αὐτῆς τὸ μητρικὸν καὶ ἐν πολλὰς ἁναφελήμονον ὡς ἐπὶ βαρυτάτοις κακοῖς πῦρ…, Exhortation 27.

Firstly, we must note Origen’s distinctive phraseology. The unnamed mother is the object of divine inspiration rather than an active agent. It is ‘the dew of piety (δρόσοι…εὐσεβείαις)’ and ‘the breath of holiness (πνεῦμα ὀσίότητος)’ which ‘did not allow to be kindled (οὐκ εἴον ἀνάπτεσθαι)’ her maternal instinct. This phrasing gives prominence to divine action. I will return to this when looking at Eusebius’ language below. Secondly, the father of the Maccabees is completely absent. Origen ignores him. Thirdly, this description of the Maccabean mother is closely modelled on 4 Maccabees.145 In 4 Maccabees we read,

‘The lions surrounding Daniel were not so savage, nor was the raging fiery furnace of Mishael so intensely hot, as was her innate parental love, inflamed as she saw her seven sons tortured in such varied ways. But the mother quenched so many and such great emotions by pious reason…’

καὶ οὐ̃ς οὕτως οἱ πεῖ Δανιηλ ἐλέοντες ἦσαν ἄγριοι οὐδὲ ἡ Μισαηλ ἐκρήγαγμεν κάμινος λαβροτάτω πυρί ὡς ἡ τῆς φιλοτεχνίας περικάμεν ἐκείνην φῶς ὁράσαν αὐτῆς οὕτως ποικίλως βασανιζόμενους τοὺς ἐπὶ υἱῶς ἀλλὰ τῷ λογισμῷ τῆς εὐσεβείας κατέσβεσεν τα τοσάκτα καὶ τηλικατά πάθη ἡ μήτηρ…, 4 Maccabees 16.3-4.

145 Noted by e.g. Ziadé, Les martyrs Maccabées, 99; deSilva, "An Example," 348-49.
Again, Origen has foregrounded renunciation. deSilva notes but dismisses a difference between 4 Maccabees and Origen’s Exhortation here: ‘There is a significant difference in that Origen claims that piety prevented the maternal fire from being kindled in the mother, while the author of 4 Maccabees speaks of the mother feeling the pain of this fire fully, but nevertheless “quenching it by means of pious reasoning’. This difference, however, pales before the commonalities…’

This merits more attention though, since Origen’s changes indicate his priorities. Where in 4 Maccabees reason triumphs over the fire of parental love, in Origen that same love is not even permitted to begin burning. Elsewhere the author of 4 Maccabees emphasises the strength of the mother’s love for her children (e.g. 4 Maccabees 15.9-10). The mother’s enthusiasm for her sons’ martyrdoms is not a rejection of her love for them, but a further demonstration of that love and concern for their future. Hence in 4 Maccabees 15.3 we read, ‘She loved piety more, the piety that preserves them for eternal life according to God’s promise (τὴν εὐσέβειαν μᾶλλον ἡγάπησεν τὴν σώζοναν εἰς αἰώνιαν ζωὴν κατὰ θεόν)’. Her encouragement of their dying exemplifies her continued affection, since eternal life is superior to temporary deliverance. For Origen though family affection must be completely renounced.

Origen’s innovative use of 4 Maccabees is still clearer when we consider the interactions of the Maccabean brothers. 4 Maccabees repeatedly emphasises their solidarity. The first (9.23), third (10.1-3), fourth (10.15), sixth (11.13-16) and seventh (12.16) brothers all either exhort the others to follow their lead or state that they were educated with and share the values of their siblings. The first brother’s words in

146 deSilva, "An Example," 349.
particular bear repeating: “‘Imitate me, brothers,” he said. “Do not leave your post in my struggle or renounce our courageous family ties” (Μηκήζαζζέ κε, ἀδειθνί, ιέγσλ, κή κνπ η žeηλ ἀ
g῵λα ιεηπνηαθηήζεηε κεδὲ ἐμνκόζεζζέ κνπ ηὴλ ηᾹο εὐςπρίαο ἀδειθόηεηα). The brothers are repeatedly said to be linked by shared upbringing and education, and to be dying with and for each other. This mutual encouragement has disappeared in Origen’s retelling. The solidarity of the family was, I suggest, counterproductive for Origen’s purposes. It was not however for Eusebius, as we will see below.

That Origen does not mention the Maccabean mother’s own demise also illustrates his priorities. In his telling, the mother’s role is simply to encourage her children’s deaths and separation. In both 2 and 4 Maccabees though, the mother’s own death is a prominent feature. In 2 Maccabees 7:41 the mother’s death is simply recorded; in the longer discussion of 4 Maccabees 17 her voluntary death upon a pyre is discussed at greater length. The subsequent discussion again emphasises the family’s solidarity (4 Maccabees 17:1-24). Origen omits this.

Similarly, the differing discussions of the martyrs’ future post-mortem in 4 Maccabees and Origen’s Exhortation reveal their disparate interests. 4 Maccabees confirms the reunion of the Maccabean family: ‘the sons of Abraham with their victorious mother are gathered together into the chorus of the fathers (οι δė Αβξακηαῖη παῖδεο σūν τῇ ἀθλοφόρο μητρί εἰς πατέρων χορόν συναγελάζωνται), 4 Maccabees 18.23. Origen’s promise of reward though gives little regard to the specific nuclear family: ‘Notice at the same time the gravity of the scripture which promises multiplication, even to a

148 See also 4 Maccabees 17.5. deSilva comments on this in e.g. deSilva, ”The Perfection of “Love for Offspring”,” 266.
hundred times, of brothers, children, parents, land, and homes (Ἀμα δὲ καὶ τήρει τὸ
σεμινὸν τῆς γραφῆς πολυπλασιασμὸν καὶ ἑκατονταπλασιασμὸν ύπισχυομένης ἀδελφῶν
καὶ τέκνων καὶ γονέων καὶ ἄγρων καὶ οἰκίων), Exhortation 16.' Contrary to 4
Maccabees, Origen has no interest in the future of the Maccabean family unit.

Origen’s renunciation-directed use of 4 Maccabees is evidenced at the linguistic level
too, in particular regarding the term εὐσεβεία. Mary Rose D’Angelo has argued that
where εὐσεβεία usually has connotations of religious duty and devotion to the divine, in
4 Maccabees it also indicates familial duty and affection. She suggests that in 4
Maccabees, ‘it [the martyrs’ piety] is expressed in their family relationship, their loyalty
and love for each other and for their mother and hers for them’.¹⁴⁹ This, she suggests,
aligns εὐσεβεία with the Roman value of pietas. Though D’Angelo does not cite him
directly, Richard Saller’s work on the Roman family is pertinent.¹⁵⁰ Where traditional
pictures of the Roman father had focused on his authoritarian function, Saller argues
that the ideal Roman father was better characterised by a mutual affection and
reciprocal regard for his family. Saller states that, ‘pietas was not associated, first and
foremost, with filial submission and obedience... it was a reciprocal obligation owed by
all family members, including the father, to all others’.¹⁵¹ In its presentation of the
whole family’s ‘love and loyalty for each other’, 4 Maccabees is reminiscent of Saller’s
familial ideal.

¹⁴⁹ D’Angelo, “Εὐσεβεία,” 150.
¹⁵⁰ See e.g. Richard Saller and Brent D. Shaw, "Tombstones and Roman Family Relations in the
Principate: Civilians, Soldiers and Slaves," JRS 74 (1984); Richard Saller, "Familia, Domus, and the
Roman Conception of the Family," Phoenix 38 (1984); Richard Saller, "Patria potestas and the
Stereotype of the Roman Family," Continuity and Change 1 (1986); Richard Saller, "Pietas, Obligation,
and Authority in the Roman Family," in Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte: Festschrift für
Karl Christ zum 65. Geburstag eds. Peter Kneissl and Volker Losemann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche
Buchgesellschaft, 1988); Richard Saller, "Roman Kinship: Structure and Sentiment," in The Roman
Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space eds. Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press,
1999).
In Origen’s version of the story, in keeping with the loss of family solidarity the language of piety has also shifted. Origen has removed the family values D’Angelo sees as integral to the term. Origen uses εὐζέβεια and its various declinable forms thirteen times in the Exhortation, in none of which it has a positive connotation of family duty. Usually, in keeping with his desire that the martyr be focused entirely on the divine, it refers explicitly to love and duty towards God alone.152 Typical, for example, is this, ‘But why did our Maker implant in us a longing for religious communion with him (τί δέ καὶ ὁ κατασκευάζων ἡμᾶς ἐνεποίη πόθον τῆς πρός αὐτὸν εὑσεβείας καὶ κοινωνίας), Exhortation 47.’153 For Origen, εὐσεβεία in the context of martyrdom has none of the concern for family characteristic of 4 Maccabees. As we shall see, it is very different too from Eusebius’ use of the same term.

Origen’s central theme in the Exhortation is renunciation, exemplified in the severance of family ties. He uses the story of the Maccabees to this end, against the intentions of the author of 4 Maccabees. Since Eusebius had inherited Origen’s library in Caesarea, when he wrote the Ecclesiastical History he had access to both Origen’s own texts and many of his sources.154 Eusebius knew Origen’s Exhortation (EH 6.28.1),155 but tells us nothing of its contents. I ascribe this neglect to Eusebius’ discomfort with that text, primarily Origen’s stress on family renunciation. Most interestingly, Eusebius’ story

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152 D’Angelo, “Εὐζέβεια,” 140, notes this as the standard use in contemporary Greek texts.
153 Origen’s other uses of the term are found in chapters 5 (x3), 23 (x3), 27 (x3), 25, 29, 42 and 47.
154 Carriker, Library, 162, notes that in EH 6.25.2 in a list of canonical Hebrew Scriptures inherited from Origen, ‘The last work in the list is τὰ Μακκαβαῖα, probably 1 Maccabees, though it is evident that Eusebius also knew the other Maccabean books, 2 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees, and 4 Maccabees.’ It is interesting to speculate that Eusebius had Origen’s own copy of 4 Maccabees, perhaps complete with Origen’s annotations.
155 For Eusebius’ collection of Origen’s works (though without explicit discussion of the Exhortation), see Carriker, Library, 235-43, also 308.
about Origen himself and his mother not only appeals to Maccabean imagery, but alludes to Origen’s own story about the Maccabean mother.

This is most apparent in Eusebius’ and Origen’s respective treatments of the mother figures. As in both the original Maccabean story and Origen’s retelling, in Eusebius’ story the mother remains the heroine. But now it is for acting in a manner directly contrary to the Maccabean mother. Whereas the latter encourages her children’s martyrdoms, in Eusebius’ story Origen’s mother prevents her son’s death and is praised for doing so. Whereas in Origen’s Exhortation divine agency enabled the Maccabean mother to overcome her ‘maternal instinct (τὸ μητρικὸν)’, here Origen’s own mother’s ‘maternal disposition (τῆς…μητρικῆς διαθέσεως)’ is supported by ‘divine and heavenly foresight (θείας καὶ οὐρανίου προνοίας τῆς)’ in preventing the boy’s martyrdom.

Eusebius here seems closer to the original intentions of 4 Maccabees. In 4 Maccabees 13.19 for example, we read, ‘You are not ignorant of the affection of family ties, which the divine and all-wise Providence has bequeathed through the fathers to their descendants and which was implanted in the mother’s womb (οὐκ ἀγνοεῖτε δὲ τὰ τῆς ἀδελφότητος φύλτρα, ἀπερ ἡ θεία καὶ πάνσοφος πρόνοια διὰ πατέρων τοῖς γεννωμένοις ἐμέρισεν καὶ διὰ τῆς μητρώας φυτεύσασα γαστρός)’. In both 4 Maccabees and the Ecclesiastical History, divine foresight (τῆς θείας…προνοίας and ἡ θεία πάνσοφος πρόνοια respectively) supports maternal affection within the family and strengthens family ties. This is in direct contrast to Origen’s insistence on the renunciation of family ties. Eusebius picks up different elements of 4 Maccabees from Origen, and in a manner opposed to him.
Eusebius’ sparing use of the term εὐσεβεία also deserves comment. This language, distinctive of 4 Maccabees, is also a common Eusebian term found in its cognate forms exactly one hundred times in the Ecclesiastical History. We have already encountered the phrase ‘athletes of piety’ (εὐσεβείας ἄθλουτῶν) in Eusebius’ introduction to the story (Leonidas, Origen’s father, is one such athlete). But then, tellingly, Eusebius refrains from using εὐσεβ- language for the remainder of the story. He returns to it though immediately afterwards in discussing the martyrdoms of Origen’s own pupils (EH 6.4.3, discussed in Chapter 4). Eusebius seems to deliberately avoid describing Origen thus, whose desire to abandon his family does not conform to the familial loyalty that 4 Maccabees and Eusebius thought integral to the term. Eusebius steps back from Origen’s contrary usage, and reimbues the term with the familial implications it had in 4 Maccabees.

In a fascinating passage, Eusebius seems to acknowledge Origen’s own opinions on martyrdom and the family, while distancing himself from them. With his clothes hidden, and unable to venture outside, ‘since there was nothing else left for him to do (ὡς οὐδὲν ἄλλο πρᾶττειν αὐτῷ παρῆν)’, Origen sent to his father, according to Eusebius, ‘an exhortatory letter concerning martyrdom (προτρεπτικωτάτην περὶ μαρτυρίου ἐπιστολήν), EH 6.2.6.’ In this he advises him, ‘‘Be careful that you do not consider any other option on our account” (ἔπεξε μὴ δι’ ἡμᾶς ἄλλο τι φρονήσῃς’’. This cannot fail to recall Origen’s actual Exhortation to Martyrdom (ΕΙΣ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΟΝ ΠΡΟΤΡΕΠΤΙΚΟΣ), which contains precisely this advice on family renunciation.

Eusebius then states that this was ‘the first sign of Origen’s childlike sagacity and genuine disposition concerning godliness (τοῦτο πρῶτον τῆς Ὀριγένους παιδικῆς ἀγχυνοίας καὶ περὶ τὴν θεοσέβειαν γνησιωτάτης διαθέσεως ... τεκμήριον), EH 6.2.6.’
Eusebius’ writing here simultaneously reveals his respect for and distance from Origen. Firstly, Origen’s advice is born of ‘rising eagerness on account of his age (της προθυμίας ὑπὲρ τήν ἡλικίαν ἐπιτευνομένης)’. We already know that Origen’s youthful zeal was intemperate. Eusebius’ unambiguous support of Origen’s mother in opposing her son’s zeal is fresh in the readers’ minds; soon they will read about the unwise castration attempt as well. Secondly, ―piety‖ here is not εὐσεβεία but the variant θεοσέβειαν, indicating piety specifically towards God. Such narrow piety was characteristic, as we have seen, of Origen’s attitude to martyrdom in his Exhortation. Eusebius here qualifies his praise of Origen by his careful use, or lack thereof, of Maccabean imagery and language.

In telling this childhood story then, Eusebius uses Maccabean imagery in a context where neither mother nor son are martyred, and where the mother is praised for preventing martyrdom. The effect is to question Origen’s principle of renunciation. Thanks to the actions of the mother in Eusebius’ story, the family unit is not broken. In smothering her impetuous son’s desire, Origen’s mother acts exactly as Eusebius himself does symbolically, in using the Maccabean motif to construct a picture of Origen which “smothers” how Origen himself had used it. There is no overt criticism of Origen here, nor does Eusebius inaccurately record his opinions. But the story is constructed so the reader knows that Eusebius questions Origen’s extreme views, and suggests the reader doubt them too.

Eusebius’ motives are revealed by the second childhood anecdote. The surprisingly lengthy description of Origen’s relationship with his father Leonidas is the climax to the story and, I suggest, the explanation of the earlier part. First, I note that Leonidas’
affectionate relationship is not accidental. Cox Miller notes that the story in which Leonidas kisses Origen’s breast is ‘the most unusual of the childhood stories’, and concludes that it ‘functions as a revelation of the theocentric nature of the philosopher’, and contributes to Eusebius’ wider project to draw upon both “pagan” and Christian imagery in constructing a “Janus-faced” Origen.\(^{156}\) I note instead two points. The first is that one of the associations of kissing in early Christianity is as a means of venerating martyrs.\(^{157}\) Since Origen has just failed in his attempt to be martyred while his father, who kisses him, will not, Eusebius may intend an ironic nod to his reader.\(^{158}\) This may be further evidence of Eusebius’ subtle ambivalence. Secondly and more importantly, this image of Leonidas and Origen is reminiscent of Richard Saller’s picture of the ideal relationship between Roman father and son. I suggest Eusebius constructs this passage to create this impression.

Second, this affection is directly linked to Leonidas’ education of his son. Eusebius emphasises the father’s importance in this regard. Invariably, we are told, before Origen’s normal lessons his father ‘led him to be learned in holy subjects, exacting from him each day thorough learnings and recitals (αὐτὸν... μελέτης ἐνήγεν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἐνασκείσαται παιδευμασιν, ἐκμαθήσεις καὶ ἀπαγγελλάς ἡμέρας ἐκόστης αὐτὸν εἰσπραττόμενος), \textit{EH} 6.2.8.’ Origen became dissatisfied with surface readings, and ‘sought something more and nosed around already at that age for deeper considerations (ζητεῖν δὲ τὶ πλέον καὶ βαθυτέρας ἡδῆ ἔξ ἐκείνου πολυπραγμομενῆς θεωρίας), \textit{EH} 6.2.9’, and as a result ‘brought problems to his father (πράγματα παρέχειν τῷ πατρί).’ His

\(^{156}\) Miller, \textit{Biography}, 81; Grant, "Early Alexandrian Christianity," 134; Hornschuh, "Das Leben des Origenes," 5-6.

\(^{157}\) See Karl-Martin Hofmann, \textit{Philema Hagion} (Gütersloh: Verlag C. Bertelsmann, 1938), 74-76. Miller, \textit{Biography}, 84, refers to this but does not comment on its significance.

\(^{158}\) This is particularly interesting since many of Hofmann’s own examples of the kiss venerating martyrs are from Eusebius’ writings, including \textit{EH} 6.3.4 where Origen kisses his own soon-to-be-martyred pupils.
father’s reaction is noteworthy. On the one hand, his father ‘seemingly rebuked him to his face, exhorting him to seek nothing beyond his age, and not beyond the obvious parts of the meaning (ἐκεῖνος δὲ τῷ μὲν δοκεῖν εἰς πρόσωπον ἑπέπληττεν αὐτῷ, μηδὲν ὑπὲρ ἡλικίαν μηδὲ τῆς προφανοῦς διανοιας περαιτέρῳ τι ἐμητεῖν παραιτών), EH 6.2.10.’ On the other hand, ‘privately, by himself, rejoicing greatly, he gave the highest thanks to the god responsible for all goods, that he thought him worthy to become the father of such a child (ἰδίως δὲ παρ’ ἑαπήῳ τὰ μεγάλα γεγεζώς τὴν μεγίστην ὁμολόγης τῷ πάντων ἀγαθῶν αἰτίῳ ὁεῦ χάριν, ὅτι δὴ αὐτὸν τοιοῦδε πατέρα γενέσθαι παιδὸς ἡξίωσεν’).

Eusebius’ picture manages to convey again that Origen’s youthful zeal and extreme behaviour were inappropriate, but also simultaneously to praise Leonidas’ parenting, and stress that his parental authority and affection are tied to his son’s successful education.

Eusebius’ emphasis on upbringing and education borrows motifs from 4 Maccabees which Origen did not use. Leonidas combines the figures of Eleazar, the old man who dies before the brothers, and their actual father. In 4 Maccabees 9.6 the boys refer to Eleazar, who has just died, as ‘our aged instructor (ὁ παϊδευτής ἢμῶν γέρων)’. The mother’s speech describes at length how, ‘While he was still with you, he taught you the law and the prophets (ὅς ἐδίδαζεν ὑμᾶς ἐτί ὁν σὺν ὑμῖν τὸν νόμον καὶ τοὺς προφήτας), 4 Maccabees 18.10’, and lists his teaching’s scriptural content.159 Eusebius’ story echoes the education-focused conclusion of 4 Maccabees (note that scripture was also the focus of Leonidas’ teaching) but places greater emphasis upon it.

159 The authenticity of 4 Maccabees 18 has provoked debate because it breaks the chronological sequence (also because of the patriarchal limits placed on the mother). For a summary of the literature see Moore and Anderson, "Taking it Like a Man," 270. Current consensus supports the passage’s authenticity, though this need not concern us here. As D’Angelo, ”Ἐντύλικα,” 152[n51], says, even if it is not original, ‘the speech deserves attention as a very important reading of the work of the whole…”
In fact, 4 Maccabees has a strong focus throughout on the impact of shared upbringing and education on the family’s behaviour in this crisis. We read in 4 Maccabees 13.24 for example, ‘Since they had been educated by the same law and trained in the same virtues and brought up in right living they loved one another all the more (νόμῳ γὰρ τῷ αὐτῷ παιδευθέντες καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς ἐξασκήσαντες ἁρετὰς καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ συντραφέντες βίῳ μᾶλλον ἕαντος ηγάστον)’. Family solidarity, crucial in 4 Maccabees, derives from shared education. When Origen used 4 Maccabees he ignored the father, and the family history, both of which were for him simply hurdles to be overcome. Eusebius highlights these elements. Where Origen focuses on the renunciation of the family, Eusebius highlights its lasting value, primarily because of its importance as a locus for education. This Eusebian focus is not limited to this anecdote.

III. The Family in the *Ecclesiastical History*

These insights into the family’s importance for Eusebius can serve as a spur to reassess the *Ecclesiastical History* more widely. In doing so we will find further positive value ascribed to family solidarity, similar use of εὐσεβεία, and assertions of the family’s educational merit. Finally, in the other examples here considered, Eusebius does not praise Christian familial piety in isolation, but contrasts it with non-Christian – both “Jewish” and “pagan” – behaviour.160

160 Again, to stress, I am not suggesting that these were distinct categories, nor lending my approval to the use of this language in modern discussions. These groups not only overlapped but evolved together (see Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 5). I am here noting Eusebius’ attempt to distinguish the behaviour of the three groups and elevate that of the Christian “race” above the other two. See further Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*.  

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The Book 6 stories about Origen are not the only place we glimpse the literary spectres of the Maccabean martyrs. In Book 8, while describing the effects of the Diocletianic persecution at Antioch, Eusebius tells of a mother and two daughters about whom ‘much envy was aroused (πολύς ὁ περὶ αὐτὰς κινούμενος φθόνος), EH 8.12.3.’ In consequence, that envy ‘summoned them to Antioch where they were caught in nets of soldiers (ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν ἐκάλεσα δικτύων τε ἣδη στρατιωτικῶν εἰς ἐπιβέβλητο).’ The mother, identified only as ‘A certain holy woman, amazing in the virtue of the soul but in her body a woman (τις ιερὰ καὶ θαυμασία τὴν τής ψυχῆς ἀρετῆ, τὸ δὲ σῶμα γυνῆ),’ fearing ‘the most unendurable of all terrible things, the threat of sexual violation (τὸ τε πάντων δεινῶν καὶ ἀφοριστότερον, πορνείας ἀπειλῆ),’ ‘recommended both for herself and for the girls that they should not submit to hear even a little of these things (μηδὲ ἄκρους ὀσίν ὑπομένειν δεῖ ἀκοῦσαι ἑαυτῇ τε καὶ ταῖς κόρας παρακελευσαμένη).’ She suggests that they martyr themselves together. The three of them ‘together agreed in mind (ὁμοῦ τῇ γνώμῃ συνθέμεναι), EH 8.12.4’, and having arranged their clothing modestly, drowned themselves.

Various elements here evoke Maccabean motifs. Again, a mother persuading her children to martyr themselves is evocative in itself. Both mother and daughters are again unnamed, and Antioch had strong Maccabean links. The mother is described as ‘celebrated in other respects by all among those in Antioch for wealth and race and honour (τὰ ἄλλα τῶν ἑπ’ Ἀντιόχειας πλοῦτῳ καὶ γένει καὶ εὐδοξίᾳ παρὰ πᾶσι

161 They are perhaps identifiable with Domnina, Bernike and Proskoke 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 Eusebius of Caesarea, but that he deliberately omitted them. John Chrysostom also delivers a sermon concerning them in the later 4th C. However, further confusion arises since Ambrose also mentions one Pelagia’s mother and sisters from Antioch who died by drowning (On Virgins 3.7.34). For discussion see e.g. Wendy Mayer and Neil Bronwen, eds., St. John Chrysostom. The Cult of the Saints: Select Homilies and Letters (Crestwood, NY.: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2006), 155.

162 For a summary of scholarship, see e.g. deSilva, 4 Maccabees, 19.
βεβοημένη’ and her daughters as ‘conspicuous in freshness and prime of body (τῆ τοῦ σώματος ὁρα καὶ ἀκμῆ διαπρεποσών)’. These descriptions are comparable with those in 4 Maccabees 8.3, where the seven sons are ‘handsome, modest, noble, and accomplished in every way (καλοὶ τε καὶ αἰδήμοις καὶ γενναῖοι καὶ ἐν παντὶ χαρίεντες)’. Furthermore, just as the mother and daughters in Eusebius’ story fear bodily abuse, so too the Maccabean mother eventually ‘threw herself into the flames so that no one might touch her body (ἵλα κηςαυζεηελ ηηο ηνῦ ζώκαηνο αὐηῥο ἔξξηςε θαηὰ η῅ο ππξ᾵ο), 4 Maccabees 17.1.’ For Eusebius’ readers, as in the Book 6 stories, these cumulative echoes would have recalled the Maccabean stories.

In this case the martyrdoms are successful, but family solidarity remains the key concern. In contrast to Origen’s Exhortation, Maccabean imagery is used to emphasise that the integrity of the family unit is preserved even in death. Not only do the girls die having listened to their mother’s advice, but their mother dies with them (a feature of 4 Maccabees omitted in Origen’s Exhortation). The mother is said explicitly to have ‘educated in the ordinances of piety (θεσμοῖς εὖσεβείας ἀναθρεψαμένη), EH 8.12.3’ her two daughters. I note again not only the value of the household as the locus of education, but that εὖσεβεία refers to both divine and familial piety. It thus conforms to the definition D’Angelo marks as characteristic of 4 Maccabees, but which Origen had rejected. The girls are martyred because of their piety, but their piety also means that the family unit is not broken. Though the narrative outcome is different, Eusebius’ message is the same.

Elsewhere in the Ecclesiastical History Eusebius portrays renunciation of family as “un-Christian”, typical of both Jewish and “pagan” behaviour in times of crisis. Eusebius’
quotations from Josephus’ account of the Jewish War detail poor family relationships.163 The famine that accompanies the war is described as being so bad because it ‘destroys nothing so much as shame (οὐδὲν δ’ ὀντὸς ἀπόλλουσιν ὡς αἰδώς), EH 3.6.5.’ This is clarified by reference to famine’s erosion of family piety: ‘Women from husbands, children from fathers, and the most pitiable thing, mothers from infants – they all snatched food from their very mouths (γυναῖκες γονὶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ παιδικοὶ πατέρων καὶ, τὸ ὀἰκτρότατον, μητέρες νηπίων ἐξήρπαζον ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν στομάτων τὰς τροφὰς), EH 3.6.7.’ We read further that ‘when their dearest were wasting away in their arms, there was no shame in taking away the drops of life from them (τῶν φιλτάτων ἐν χερσὶ μαρανσομένων οὐκ ἴν φειδώ τοὺς τοῦ ζῆν ἀφελέσθαι σταλαγμοῦς).’ The fragmentation of the family unit is mourned here.

Eusebius’s selections from Josephus stick with the familial theme. 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 (οὐδὲ τῖς ἡν ὡκτος παλιὰς ἡ νηπίων, ἀλλὰ συνεπαιροντες τὰ παιδία τῶν ψυμών ἐκκρεμάμενα κατέσειον εἰς ἔδαφος), EH 3.6.7.’ Relatives were not buried, partly from physical weakness but also from selfish fear of contagion (EH 3.6.12). Eusebius summarises appositely: ‘famine got the better of affections (ὁ λυμὸς ἠλεγχε τὰ πάθη), EH 3.6.13’. The horrific climax, ‘awful to tell; unbelievable to hear (φρυκτὸν μὲν εἰπεῖν, ἀπιστὸν δ’ ἀκοῦσαι), EH 3.6.20’, comes in the lengthy tale of another Jewish mother, also ‘distinguished for her family and wealth (διὰ γένους καὶ πλούτου ἐπίσημος), EH 3.6.21’ (compare both the Maccabean mother and the

mother of the two daughters above). But this Jewish mother does not echo their piety. Named Mary, she ‘took anger as her adviser together with necessity and diverted from nature (σύμβουλον λαβοῦσα τὴν ὀργὴν μετὰ τῆς ἀνάγκης, ἐπὶ τὴν φύσιν ἐχώρει, EH 3.6.23.’ She roasts and eats her child. When Jewish rioters discover her, demand to share her food and then balk when they discover its origin, she mocks them for their piety (εὐσεβεία), EH 3.6.26.’ This sick joke rests upon the familial connotations of εὐσεβεία. This outrage to piety provides ‘the final piece of the disasters of the Jews (ὁ μόνος ἐλλείπων ταῖς Ιουδαίων συμφοραῖς), EH 3.6.24.’ Eusebius makes neglect and antagonism towards family members the centrepiece of this lengthy critique.

Eusebius’ selective quotations from a letter of Dionysius of Alexandria describing a plague in Alexandria in 252 apply the same stereotype to “pagans”. Their behaviour too is condemned precisely because they reject the ties of family and community that Christians revere. Christians are characterised during this plague for their ‘surpassing charity and brotherly love (δῆ ὑπεξβάλλει ἀγάπη καὶ φιλαδελφίαν), EH 7.22.7’, since ‘they had no thought for themselves but stayed with others (ἄφειδον ἔκακας ἔκακας καὶ ἀλλήλων ἐχόμενοι).’ Many were so selfless that they ‘infected themselves with the suffering of others and drawing the disease from their neighbours upon themselves readily wiped out their pains (τοῦ παρ’ ἐτέρων ἀναπηπτόμενοι πάθους καὶ τὴν νόσον ἐφ’ ἐκατούροις ἐλκυοντες ἀπὸ τῶν πλήσιον καὶ ἐκόντες ἀναμισσόμενοι τὰς ἀληθινὰς).’ Many Christian leaders died this way, a mode of death which Eusebius says ‘arose because of great piety and strong faith (διὰ πολλὴν εὐσεβείαν καὶ πίστιν ἰσχυρὰν γινόμενον), EH 7.22.8’ and furthermore which ‘seemed not inferior to martyrdom

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164 As was noted above [n132], traditionally only infamous Greek women were named.
(μηδὲν ἀφοδεῖν μαρτυρίου δοκεῖν).

We find εὐσέβεια here again, clearly referring to care and duty towards those around one, rather than simply towards the divine.

Against this Christian altruism, Eusebius quotes from Dionysius that ‘the nations were the exact opposite (τὰ δὲ γε ἐδοξην πᾶν τοὐναντίον).’ It is precisely poor behaviour towards family members that marks their lack of piety. We read that ‘They both push away those starting to get sick and flee from their loved ones (καὶ νοσεῖν ἀρχομένους ἀπωθοῦντο καὶ ἀπέφευγον τοὺς φιλτάτους), EH 7.22.10.’ Furthermore, they ‘threw those half-dead into the streets and treated the unburied corpses like refuse (ταῖς ὁδοῖς ἔρριπτον ἡμιθνήτας καὶ νεκροὺς ἀτάφρους ἀπεσκυβαλίζοντο).’ The “pagans”, like the Jews, are contrasted with the Christians because they fail to behave piously, best marked by behaviour towards one’s nearest and dearest.

IV. Reclaiming the Family

Eusebius’ concern for the solidarity of the family unit and the validity of parental authority are a product of his 4th century context, and a response to earlier attitudes, including Origen’s Exhortation (which is itself characteristic of a wider attitude to the family in 2nd and 3rd century Christianity). To understand Eusebius’ attitude then we must briefly survey early Christian attitudes towards the family, focusing on the parent-child relationship.

165 This passage is interesting in light of Chapter 4, where I argue that Eusebius consistently values care of the community over martyrdom. It is interesting that here he describes death from disease, earned through the care of others, as equivalent to martyrdom.

166 Winslow, “Maccabean Martyrs,” 79, which comments on this for Origen and the other 3rd and 4th century figures he considers.
From its earliest days, Christianity was marked by two broad attitudes towards the family, one positive and one negative. Both have 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). But the canon is rich too in anti-familial sentiment, best represented by Jesus’ 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). Such comment is not limited to the canonical; non-canonical texts too provide rich evidence of opposing views. Many of these passages became proof-texts for ongoing wranglings over the family in later Christian writings.

The second of these threads, which viewed the family with antipathy, is well represented in the 2nd and 3rd century Christian martyr acta. Recent scholarship on these fascinating narratives has warned against over-generalisation. They were produced with a great diversity of time and space, and must be read with an eye to regionality. Nevertheless, in many of them family rejection features prominently. Evidence for this...

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168 The lessening in importance of the biological family is tied to the increasing emphasis on the church as the Christian family, and its use of familial language. See e.g. Reidar Aasgaard, "Brotherhood in Plutarch and Paul: Its Role and Character," in Moxnes, Constructing Early Christian Families; 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.
171 See e.g. Bradley, "Sacrificing the Family," 153: ‘through the vehicle of martyrdom Christianity promoted familial discord in a way that was new, and not at all part of Roman family experience in the pre-Christian epoch.’
has been previously collected, and needs no detailed rehearsing here.\(^{173}\) In numerous martyr \textit{acta} Christian allegiance breaks up marriages (\textit{The Martyrdom of Ptolemaeus and Lucius}), sparks sibling disputes (\textit{The Martyrdom of Marian and James}, \(^{174}\) \textit{The Acts of Phileas, The Passion of the Abitinian Martyrs}), and tears children from their parents (\textit{The Acts of Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonicê, The Martyrdom of Marian and James, The Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius, The Martyrdom of Irenaeus, The Acts of Paul and Thecla}).\(^{175}\) The recurring message conveyed to readers is that loyalty to Christ trumps loyalty to biological family.

This is not simply an elevation of the divine; it is a denigration too of the Roman family. For example, the early 3\textsuperscript{rd} century \textit{Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas} preserves a supposed diary account, which records Perpetua’s experiences leading up to and during a trial before the Roman governor of Carthage.\(^{176}\) A prime focus is her father’s threefold appearance, and her threefold rejection of him. Their first altercation is particularly interesting. After her arrest, Perpetua’s father ‘kept trying to talk me into renouncing my faith: because of his love for me, he wanted to lead me astray (uerbis euertere cupiret et deicere pro sua affectione perseueraret), \textit{The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas} 3.'\(^{177}\) When Perpetua asserts the inevitability of her Christianity, ‘That word upset Father so much that he lunged at me, as if to pluck out my eyes. But


\(^{174}\) Note in particular the Maccabean imagery when Marian’s mother rejoices in her son’s death, a usage in line with that of Origen. See Bradley, ‘Sacrificing the Family’, 162.

\(^{175}\) Eusebius mentions only one of these, \textit{The Acts of Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonicê}, and as we shall see in Chapter 4, this is the martyr narrative about which he says least.


\(^{177}\) Translation from Joseph Farrell and Craig Williams in Bremmer and Formisano, \textit{Perpetua’s Passions}, 14-23.
he only managed to shake me up. Then he left, defeated, and the ruses of Satan along with him (tunc pater motus hoc uerbo mittit se in me ut oculos mihi erueret, sed uexuavit tantum et profectus est uictus cum argumentis diaboli).’ This recognises the seductive appeal of a father’s love and presents it as demonic. The text asserts the importance of renouncing family. When Perpetua does so, her father becomes violent, as if proving the wisdom of her choice. There is a deep suspicion here of the Roman pater. Behind the father lies the family. Her father appeals to her to ‘Think of your brothers. Think of your mother and your aunt. Think of your own son (aspice fratres tuos: aspice matrem tuam et materteram: aspice filium tuum), The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas 5.’ Perpetua ignores the appeal. In rejecting her father she renounces her entire family, and is praised for doing so. Such renunciation is characteristic of many such martyr narratives.

It is into this world-renouncing tenor of 2nd and 3rd century martyr acta that we should place Origen’s belief, expressed in his Exhortation, that renouncing earthly ties (best illustrated by the family) underlies successful martyrdom and Christian piety. The work’s title indicates its design to encourage individuals in martyrdom. Like the 2nd and 3rd century martyr acta, it provides identity models for resistance.178 Trigg notes that, ‘he [Origen] did not feel at all inclined to moderate the world-denying tenor of early Christian ethics’. In the Exhortation Origen rejects social reproduction in favour of heavenly reward, like other martyr literature of his time. We have seen that Eusebius reacts against Origen here, but he is reacting in truth to a wider mentality in early Christian literature.

178 The actual threat to Christianity posed by Maximin is debatable. Regardless of the reality, Origen’s rhetorical stance assumes an immediate threat, and clearly envisages would-be-martyr readers. See also deSilva, "An Example," 337-38.
V. The Christian Face of the Roman Parent

Eusebius’ attitude to the family clearly fits within the more positive of the two broad trends in Christian literature. That so much of his pro-familial material, discussed above, occurs in the context of martyrdom suggests too that he adopts this positive stance in deliberate reaction to the martyr literature of preceding centuries which had championed the negative. This change in attitude is born of a change in circumstances. The rhetoric of renunciation, provoked in earlier centuries by subaltern status and appropriate to the disillusionment and other-worldly focus that status bred, was of no use to Eusebius in the early 4th century. Eusebius’ discussions of the family do not espouse resistance, rejection or renunciation. Instead they have become vehicles for an affirmation of the importance of the Christian family unit. Eusebius asserts that family is not to be discarded even at the moment when divine loyalty is most pressing.

It is no coincidence that Eusebius’ picture of Origen’s father fits Richard Saller’s ideal of the sympathetic Roman pater. The antagonistic Roman pater of texts like The Martyrdom of Perpetua, a figure of suspicion for many Christians, with a hold of the Christian child that the latter had to break, is gone. In his place is an affectionate pater, willing and able to enter into a relationship of reciprocity with his child, concerned above all for their education.179 The demonstration of traditional piety by Christian parents in the Ecclesiastical History is contrasted with non-Christian behaviour. In Eusebius’ family stories his audience encounters Christian heroes imagined in

179 Like 4 Maccabees, Eusebius does not unduly upset gender hierarchies. There the mother’s final speech submits her to her husband. Here Origen’s mother fails to persuade his son by normal means; Leonidas as father and tutor remains the dominant authority figure. Origen’s parents also conform to the traditional Roman family’s division of labour, with mother concerned for cura and father for tutela. In Book 8 the mother’s concern for sexual honour was also a key attribute of the Roman mater familias; see e.g. Richard Saller, "Pater Familias, Mater Familias, and the Gendered Semantics of the Roman Household," Classical Philology 94, no. 2 (1999): 193-96.
traditional Roman terms, over and against the non-Christian Romans who fail to meet those standards. The implication is that Christians have become the true exemplars of traditional Roman familial piety.\footnote{D’Angelo, “Εὐσέβεια,” 157, suggests that 4 Maccabees too demonstrates ‘a familial piety that fulfils and surpasses Roman standards’.

\footnote{Translation from Henry Chadwick, Origen: Contra Celsum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).}

Further, in his assertion that Christians exemplify traditional elite values Eusebius is, I suggest, not simply responding to earlier Christian attitudes. He is also responding to the reception those attitudes elicited from non-Christians. The negative comments of Christianity’s elite detractors often focus on its negative impact on the family. Two such aspersions are particularly pertinent. The first is the accusation that Christians lured children from their families. This is perhaps best expressed by Celsus, the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century conservative critic of Christianity against whom Origen’s Against Celsus was written. Celsus rails that,

‘...whenever they [wool-workers, cloggers, laundry-workers and yokels] get hold of children in private and some stupid women with them, they let out some astounding statements as, for example, that they must not pay any attention to their father and school-teachers, but must obey them ... they should leave father and their schoolmasters, and go along with the women and little children who are their playfellows to the wooldressers shop, or to the cobblers or the washerwoman’s shop, that they may learn perfection...

\textquote[\textit{Against Celsus} 3.55.] \textit{ἐπειδὰ ἄλα δὲ \tauὸν παιδὸν αὐτῶν ἰόδη λάβωνται καὶ γυναῖκων τινῶν σὺν αὐτῶς ἀνοίητων, θεωρῶσιν ἄττα διεξάγοντας, ὡς ὡρ χρη προσέχειν τὸ πατρὶ καὶ τοῖς διδασκάλοις σφί̂ε̂ δὲ πείθεσθαι ... χρῆναι αὐτῶς ἀφεμένους τοῦ πατρὸς τε καὶ τῶν διδασκάλων ἕνας σὺν τοῖς γυναῖκοις καὶ τοῖς συμπαξίουσι παιδαρίοις εἰς τὴν γυναικώνητιν ἢ τὸ σκυτείν ἢ τὸ κναφεῖν, ἵνα τὸ τέλειον λάβοσι, Against Celsus 3.55.\footnote{Translation from Henry Chadwick, Origen: Contra Celsum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).}’

Celsus expresses common elite concerns with Christianity and its potential for subversion. The Empire’s elite were worried about precisely that phenomenon which the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} century martyr acta celebrate – the erosion of the \textit{domus}.
The second common anti-Christian aspersion is that of incest. Many Christian sources cite this as a common hysterical accusation directed against them. It is mentioned in *The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna*, which is preserved in Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, and which refers to ‘Thyestean dinner parties and Oedipodean mingling (Θυέστεια δείπνα καὶ Οἰδίποδείους μίξεις), *EH* 5.1.14.’ We find similar accusations in Athenagoras (*A Plea for the Christians* 3.1), Minucius Felix (*Octavius* 9, ostensibly citing Fronto), Justin Martyr (*Apology* 1.26; *Dialogue with Trypho* 1.199), Tertullian (*Apology* 9.8), Clement (*Miscellanies* 3.1.3) and Origen (*Against Celsus* 6.27). These accusations cause Eusebius to bemoan ‘the profane and disgusting thing about us spread about among the unbelievers at that time, that we enjoy unlawful intercourse with our mothers and sisters (τὴν περὶ ἡμῶν παρὰ τοῖς τότε ἀπίστοις ὑπόνοιαν δυσσεβῆ καὶ ἀτοπωτάτην διαδίδοσθαι, ὡς δὴ ἀθεμίτοις πρὸς μητέρας καὶ ἀδελφὰς μίξεσιν ... χρωμένον), *EH* 4.7.11.’ Eusebius was thus well aware that suspicions about Christianity’s impact on the family encompassed sexual impropriety.182

If the *Ecclesiastical History*’s depiction of parental authority is read as a response to such prejudices, unusual aspects of the text acquire new significance. First, the Book 6 story can be read as a direct contradiction of Celsus’ comment above. Eusebius’ story of Christian “private” influence on children gives us not a stupid Christian woman telling a child to ignore his non-Christian father and leave home, but a demonstrably resourceful Christian woman telling a child not to abandon his family and not to waste the education received from his father (also his schoolteacher). The same is also true,

182 On these accusations, see most recently Bart Wagemakers, “Incest, Infanticide, and Cannibalism: AntiChristian Imputations in the Roman Empire,” *Greece & Rome* 57, no. 2 (2010).
mutatis mutandis, for the unnamed mother in Book 8. Eusebius’ stories actively dispel these concerns about the impact of Christianity – and Christian women in particular\textsuperscript{183} – on the family.\textsuperscript{184}

Second, read against the backdrop of incest accusations, Origen’s modesty in refusing to go outside naked has fresh purchase. Even more telling is Leonidas’ chaste kiss upon Origen’s chest. Stephen Benko’s classic \textit{Pagan Rome and the Early Christians} dedicates an entire chapter to the Christian penchant for kissing, and its potential for (mis)interpretation. Most worrying for non-Christian onlookers, he suggests, was the Christian tendency to kiss on the lips, an action never free of erotic undertones.\textsuperscript{185} When Leonidas kisses his son, he does so ‘reverently (σεβασμίως)’, and on his chest (στέρνυ). He also does so explicitly because it was as if there was a divine spirit in Origen’s chest. Eusebius goes out of his way to emphasise the lack of sexual overtones. This is the chaste kiss given to the philosopher. We might compare the sophist Prohaeresius in Eunapius’ \textit{Lives of the Sophists} 489, who so delights the crowd listening to him lecture in Rome that ‘all who were present licked the sophist’s breast as though it were the statue of some god (τὰ στέρνα τοῦ σοφιστοῦ περιλιχμησάμενοι καθάπερ ἄγαλματος}


\textsuperscript{184} The parallels to Celsus’ specific formulation are not, I suggest, coincidental. Though there is no space to consider this systematically here, in a future article I wish to suggest that the \textit{Ecclesiastical History} is in part written as a response to Celsus. Apart from other such parallels, I note too that in many cases Origen’s own response to Celsus’ elite critique of Christianity would have seemed weak to such an elite audience, since he effectively confirms some of Celsus’ stereotypes (noted too by e.g. James Francis, \textit{Subversive Virtue: Asceticism and Authority in the Second-Century Pagan World} (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 157. I note too that Aaron Johnson’s 2006 \textit{Ethnicity and Argument} withdraws from the usual position that we should read the Preparation for the Gospel as directed against Porphyry, and Sebastian Morlet goes further in his "Eusebius’ Polemic Against Porphyry: A Reassessment,” in Inowlocki and Zamagni, \textit{Reconsidering Eusebius}, arguing that much of both the Preparation and the Demonstration answer arguments made by Celsus. This is also the reason I focus in this dissertation on the criticisms of Celsus rather than a later author like Porphyry; though Celsus was a 2\textsuperscript{nd} century writer, his criticisms clearly still resounded well into the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century when Origen wrote the \textit{Against Celsus}, and Eusebius has been shown to be responding to Celsus in his other writings.

ἐνθέου πάντες οἱ παρόντες.

Again, the Book 8 story of the unnamed mother and her daughters emphasises their shared modesty. Even as they prepared to die they ‘dressed their bodies in garments in an orderly fashion (τά τε σώματα περιστείλασαν κοσμίως τοῖς περιβλήμασιν), EH 8.12.4.’ Eusebius’ family stories seem tailor-made to assuage traditional elite fears of Christian sexual immorality.

Beyond this, it is important to realise that in second sophistic literature, discussions of the family have more far-reaching implications. The family was both the key unit of Roman society, and a common literary metaphor representing the “state”. Eve Marie Lassen notes that, ‘…since the family formed an important social unit and held a prominent place in Roman tradition, metaphors of the family had the capacity to form very powerful, and to the Romans meaningful, images’. Most of the five extant Greek novels, for example, end with the protagonists’ reunion with their families and a happy marriage. This has been read as a symbolic affirmation of the family unit’s worth and thus, for Greek provincial readers, of the worth of the Roman state. Attitudes towards the family in much imperial Greek literature therefore provide hints as to those texts’ attitude towards Rome.

Marie Rose D’Angelo reads 4 Maccabees in similar fashion. I discussed above her argument that 4 Maccabees paints the nine Jewish martyrs as exemplifying εὐσέβεια aligned with Roman pietas. But D’Angelo argues further that this is a historically contingent choice. Pietas was the key virtue in Augustus’ public programme of moral

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188 Kate Cooper, The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 21-44.
reform. It was prominent on Augustan virtue lists and key to his self-presentation as *pater patriae*. These cultural and moral reforms were central to the maintenance of the Empire, which was held together by a shared “familial” bond to the emperor and a cultural and ethical programme stemming from him.\(^{189}\) This was particularly true in the provinces, which lends weight to D’Angelo’s suggestion.\(^{190}\) D’Angelo suggests that *4 Maccabees* affirms and presents as imitable the values of post-Augustan Rome and its hegemony. She states, ‘The display of familial orthodoxy, particularly as incumbent on women, offers a guarantee of the moral and religious excellence of the [provincial Jewish] community, and a basis of apologetic appeal to emperors, governors and all in authority’.\(^{191}\) In *4 Maccabees*, like the novels, the presentation of family is representative of a wider assimilative stance towards Empire.\(^{192}\)

The family unit has equal and opposite symbolic force in the sophistic Christian martyr literature, considered above in section IV, which encourages its audience to reject the family. To continue with Perpetua as exemplar, it has been recently suggested that her threefold rejection of her father is a deliberate precursor to and premonition of her confrontation with Hilarianus, the Roman governor in Carthage.\(^{193}\) Such renunciations in martyr narratives are a symbolic rejection of the current earthly reality and the Roman state that dominates it. Family renunciation is a refusal of social reproduction; death is a preferable goal to education, marriage and family life. Where the five Greek

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\(^{189}\) See e.g. Beth Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2003), 61, see also 158-86.


\(^{191}\) D’Angelo, “Εὐσεβεία,” 141, see also 145-7.

\(^{192}\) The circumstances of 4 Maccabees’ production continue to be hotly debated. That both Origen and Eusebius found a source of imagery for very different purposes in *4 Maccabees* is indicative of its multi-valency. On this see D’Angelo: ‘One of the reasons that 4 Maccabees is so difficult to date is that it might equally well rally the Jews against imperial force during the crisis of 41 or 117-118, or help them appeal to a more complaisant gentle world in less turbulent periods’, D’Angelo, “Εὐσεβεία,” 157.

\(^{193}\) See in particular Cooper, “A Father.”
novels end in marriage, affirming the status quo, the martyr acta end in death, rejecting it. Such literature was profoundly subversive. As Kate Cooper puts it, ‘Left unchecked, rival cognitions could destabilise a social system’.\textsuperscript{194} The literary motif of family renunciation is therefore symbolic of a more far-reaching rejection of Roman society.

The centrality of the Roman \textit{domus} to the Empire’s operation, and its importance as a symbolic literary metaphor, must impact how we read Eusebius’ attitude to the family and parental authority. Eusebius realignment of Christianity’s priorities regarding the \textit{domus} is a guide to his wider intentions. I suggest that Eusebius’ vision of Christianity and its leadership also aligns them towards the Roman hegemony. We will see this clearly when we come to consider martyrdom in Chapter 4. But it is worth remembering at this stage that these attitudes cultivated in literature have real power. The inherited ideal of \textit{pietas} was the key means by which Roman families, with their ‘core activities of production and reproduction’, were practically regulated day by day.\textsuperscript{195} Eusebius’ reaffirmation of familial piety strengthened the mechanisms of Empire.

Moreover, Eusebius’ carefully constructed history makes a claim about Christians’ role within those mechanisms. As we saw in the Introduction, men in the Roman Empire were judged on whether their attitude conformed to a rhetoric of temperance. One important aspect of this was the \textit{pater familias}’ attitude towards his household. Kate Cooper has shown that the public/private divide imposed by modern scholars on antiquity masks a reality where much of what we consider “public” actually came

\textsuperscript{194} Cooper, “Closely Watched Households,” 8. “Rival cognitions” are defined as ‘interpretations of hierarchy favouring the subject position of the subordinate’.

\textsuperscript{195} Cooper, “Closely Watched Households,” 26; noting too though the legal safeguards regulating the \textit{domus}. 

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within the purview of the “sphere of private influence”.\footnote{Cooper, “Closely Watched Households,” 24-31.} A man’s “private”, family life was directly relevant for considering his “public” life. Richard Saller’s ideal of the Roman father was one yardstick against which Roman men were judged worthy of public office. By impugning the poor behaviour of Jews and “pagans” towards their families, and showcasing the exemplary behaviour of the Christians, Eusebius seems to declare that the latter are those most suited for public office.

One final observation points us towards Chapter 2. Eusebius’ concern for the family’s continuing validity is strongly tied to its educative potential. The brief anecdote from Book 8 focuses on the daughters’ education by and obedience to their mother. The aspect of Origen’s childhood that Eusebius foregrounds, and the aspect of \textit{4 Maccabees} he echoes most strongly, is the would-be martyrs’ prior education by their parents. Origen’s parents’ authority also stems from their encouragement of Origen’s intellectual pursuits. His father Leonidas’ value is not as martyr but as educator. His mother is praised because she preserved him ‘for the help of the many (εἰο ηὴλ πιείζησλ ὀθέιεηαλ’)’. This phrase is crucial. To what can it refer except the vast intellectual and pastoral contribution to the Christian community with which almost all of Eusebius’ subsequent discussion of Origen is concerned? These early childhood stories point forward to what concerns Eusebius most in Origen’s career. Origen’s authority, like his father’s, will be contained in his intellectual and literary abilities, not his flirtations with violence.\footnote{I note that the upshot of Origen’s abortive martyrdom attempt is his first pastoral epistle.} This will be true when we come to his death, but it is true too in his lengthy career, to the early stages of which we must now turn.
2. Ascetic Authority: Renunciation, Training and the Christian School

Abstract: Eusebius’ positive attitude to asceticism is often assumed, but closer inspection reveals ambivalence. Ascetic behaviour is applauded only when it furthers education or study, and provides concrete benefit to the wider Christian community. When it becomes extreme, or proves detrimental to the community, Eusebius is more critical. He promotes instead a brand of intellectual, philosophical asceticism characterised by self-control. Eusebius envisages two paths for Christian life, with asceticism only appropriate to one (the more elite, and only when it serves those on the second, mainstream, path). Eusebius inherits his “philosophical asceticism” from his Alexandrian legacy, and his intellectual focus in particular from Origen. But his ethic of self-control tempers Origen’s famous ascetic zeal and often seems closer to his more liberal predecessor Clement. I suggest that Eusebius is influenced by traditional elite suspicion of ascetic behaviour and its associations with isolationism, misanthropy and subversion. He therefore distances Christian authority from violent asceticism, and foregrounds self-control, its basis in paideia, and its impact on the community, hence his focus on Christian schools.

I. Origen’s Ascetic Impulse

When we left him in Eusebius’ narrative, Origen was struggling with the twin disappointments of his father’s death and his own frustrated attempt to join him. More immediately pressing though was the burden of care for his family (EH 6.2.13). Since his father’s property had been confiscated, Origen takes up teaching to provide for
himself and his family. It is his education that saves his family from poverty. After his father’s death, ‘he dedicated himself entirely to a training around those texts, with the result that he had a sufficient grounding in grammatical matters (τῇ περὶ τούς λόγους ἀσκήσει ὅλον ἐπιδοὺς ἑαυτόν, ὡς καὶ παρασκευήν ἐπὶ τὰ γραμματικὰ μετρίαν ἔχειν), EH 6.2.15’ and thereby ‘acquired the necessities of life, liberally for his age, (εὐπόξεη ἡ ἀλαγθαίσλ ὡ ἐλ ἐθείλῃ τῇ ἡλικίᾳ, δαςηι῵ο).’ His father’s education is the basis of an ἀσκήσις – a training – that provides a career.

Eusebius’ Origen was born and raised to teach. By the time Origen is eighteen, a year after his father’s death, Eusebius reports that he is presiding over the catechetical school in Alexandria (EH 6.3.3). As pupil numbers increase, Origen’s lifestyle becomes increasingly spartan. He decides to limit his attentions to scripture and, divesting himself of his non-Christian literature, lives on the daily four obol pittance from their sale (EH 6.3.9). This marks the start of increasingly dramatic behaviour characterised not just by poverty but by self-mortification too.

Origen’s physical renunciation begins ‘in fasting exercises (ἐλ ἀζηηίαηο γπκλαζίνηο)’. We learn that ‘for many years he abandoned the enjoyment of wine or of other things beyond necessary sustenance (οἶνου χρήσεως καὶ τῶν ἄλλων παρὰ τὴν ἀναγκαίαν τροφῆν πλείστος ἐτεσιν ἀπεσχημένος), EH 6.3.12.’ Eusebius tells us too that Origen deprived himself ‘by moderating his sleep pattern, never having any truck with bedding, but making his bed on the ground because of his eagerness (μεμετρημένοις τοῖς κατὰ τὸν ὕπνον καυροῖς, οὐ μεταλαμβάνειν οὐδ’ ὅλως ἐπὶ στρωμνῆς, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τοῦδαφος διὰ σπουδῆς ἐποιεῖτο), EH 6.3.9.’ His renunciation begins at home, but soon extends outwards. He took two New Testament exhortations literally, ‘both that exhorting one
not to have two cloaks or use sandals, and not to be worn down with thoughts about the future (περὶ τοῦ μὴ δύο χιτῶνας μηδ’ ὑπόδημας χρῆσθαι παρανοώνας μηδὲ μὴν ταῖς περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος χρόνου φροντίσειν καταπρίβεσθαι), *EH* 6.3.10.’ As a result, ‘he trod the earth using nothing, not even a sandal (γῆν πεπαθεθήναι μηδενὶ μηδαμὸς κεχρημένος ὑπόδηματι), *EH* 6.3.12’, and endured ‘cold and nakedness (ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι), *EH* 6.3.11’. Eusebius states too that Origen ‘shook off himself all the slime of youthful desires (πάσας ὕλας νεωτερικῶν ἐπιθυμίων ἕως τοῦ περιαρούμενος), *EH* 6.3.9.’ This culminates in his decision to castrate himself. Eusebius gives twin motives for this act; on the one hand to avert any suspicion arising from him teaching women; on the other because he was following *Matthew* 19:12’ exhortation (*EH* 6.8.1).198

Origen’s behaviour is marked by physical renunciation (fasting, sleep deprivation, limited clothing), sexual abstinence and voluntary poverty. These three activities represent a complete ascetic lifestyle by traditional definitions.199

Most scholarship has assumed Eusebius’ positive attitude here. Eugène de Faye, who elsewhere does not comment on Eusebius’ role as a source, does so when he reaches...

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198 ‘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.’ Scholarly opinion is divided over whether Origen did castrate himself. Origen himself condemns the practice in his exegesis of Matthew 19:12. For both sides of the argument see Richard P. C. Hanson, “A Note on Origen’s Self-Mutilation,” *VigChr* 20 (1966); Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Jon F. Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988); Daniel F. Caner, “The Practice and Prohibition of Self-Castration in Early Christianity,” *VigChr* 51 (1997).

199 Defining asceticism is notoriously difficult. The definition of Reinhaar Staats, “Asceticism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, eds. Erwin Fahlbusch, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and David B. Barrett (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 131, serves my purposes well: ‘It [asceticism] rests on the voluntary decision of individuals and entails the temporary or indefinite renunciation of certain pleasures or activities that are otherwise available, all in order to achieve a suprapersonal goal’. Walter O. Kaelber, “Asceticism,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, vol. 1 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 527, lists fasting, sexual continence, poverty, seclusion and self-inflicted pain (both physical and mental). I do not reject the recent attempts at a more positive definition of Kallistos Ware, “The Way of the Ascetics: Negative or Affirmative?,” in *Asceticism*, eds. Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); indeed as we shall see Eusebius’ treatment of asceticism conforms well to these. But my concern is with Eusebius’ attitudes to violent practices, so I am focusing on renunciatory practices.
Origen’s ascetic activity because he is uncomfortable with the story, and implies that its reliability is questionable (‘Is this information reliable, has he heard it from Pamphilus for instance? We do not know’). 200 Cadiou follows Eusebius’ account but does not indicate Eusebian transmission. He makes clear, from his reference to ‘Origen’s account of the matter’ but with quotation of Eusebius, that he views Eusebius as a passive transmitter of earlier material. 201 Danielou acknowledges Eusebius as a source, and when relating Origen’s self-castration even brushes with acknowledging the author’s discomfort. But he quickly asserts, ‘But the essential thing to note at the moment is that he [Origen] chose to base his life on the Gospel counsels...’ 202

Nautin finds Eusebius’ account of Origen’s lifestyle largely believable here but sees some hagiographical elements, and certainly does not admit any ambivalence. In particular I note the following: ‘mais quatre oboles par jour c'est à peine de quoi ne pas mourir de faim: voilà la condition à laquelle il s'était réduit par amour de la Parole de Dieu’. 203 But this implies Origen’s asceticism was a side-effect of poverty, which is not the impression Eusebius’ text gives, as we shall see. Nautin mentions the self-castration only to record that he thinks a letter of Alexander of Jerusalem and Theoctistus of Caesarea to Pontian in Rome its likely source, but does not discuss the tenor of the description. 204 Joseph Trigg states simply that ‘Origen did not refer to this imprudent act in any of his own writings that have come down to us, but Eusebius’ testimony about it must be reliable.’ 205

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200 de Faye, Origen and his Work, 25-26. This is the only occasion on which de Faye mentions Eusebius.
201 Cadiou, Origen, 24-25, 26. Cadiou ascribes the castration either to Origen’s reading of Philo’s Evil Often Attacks Good and the Sentences of Sextus, or to his impatience at continually delayed martyrdom.
202 Daniélou, Origen, 13.
203 Nautin, Origène, 40-41, on 40.
205 Trigg, The Bible, 54.
Crouzel also reads the account largely straightforwardly. However, on the self-castration, he notes that the second of the two reasons Eusebius provides is contradicted by a later comment that Origen tried to cover up the act. He notes too that it seems incredible that the church could have approved the act (as the bishop Demetrius appears to do in Eusebius’ narrative) since castration was illegal under Roman law. Having acknowledged these difficulties however, Crouzel stops short of questioning Eusebius’ account. In a footnote he asserts that, ‘Eusebius who is an ardent supporter of Origen can be believed even more readily when he reports something to the discredit of his hero, showing that his zeal was unbalanced.’ Amidst the discomfort of these scholars, there is little awareness of Eusebius’ own discomfort.

Eusebius is often cited in studies of Christian asceticism as evidence for ascetic currents in early Christianity, both in its “orthodox” and its “heterodox” manifestations. The Ecclesiastical History is mined for quotations from earlier authors, and discussion of its contents focuses largely on the passages about Origen and the account of the Therapeutae, quoted from Philo’s On the Contemplative Life, which I will discuss below. But there has been no assessment of Eusebius’ own attitude towards asceticism. This is attributable in part to the wider neglect of Eusebius as author, and in part to the focus on the later 4th and 5th centuries in Christian asceticism studies.

206 Crouzel, Origen, 8-10.
207 Crouzel, Origen, 9[n32].
208 Note that 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. For more on Eusebius and “orthodoxy”/“heresy”, see the seminal treatment of Walter Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity, eds. Robert A. Craft and Gerhard Krodel, trans. a team from the Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins (London: SCM Press, 1972 [orig. 1934, repr. 1964, English trans. 1971, repr. 1972]); and more recently Willing, Eusebius von Cäsarea.
The exception to this neglect is Peter Brown’s *The Body and Society*, which remains the seminal treatment of early Christian sexual asceticism. Brown briefly discusses Eusebius at the end of the first half of his book. Like most other scholars, Brown reads Eusebius as a mouthpiece of Christian tradition, assigning Eusebius no literary agency. Furthermore, he characterises Eusebius as an ‘admirer of Origen’ and so implicitly imputes to him his predecessor’s ascetic enthusiasm. But his discussion focuses on a key passage from the *Demonstration of the Gospel*, which merits consideration.

‘Therefore two ways of life were ordained by Christ for his community. One transcends nature and is beyond public, human society, 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, 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 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 judgments of true piety and in the disposition of a cleansed soul, and moreover in virtuous words and deeds. With these they appease the deity and perform their religious service on behalf of themselves and of their race. So then was established the perfect manner of Christian society. And the other lower and more human way is the sort that allows self-controlled 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 is assigned to these, giving appropriate help to such a life, 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 of the Gospel.’


211 The Greek ὁφέλεια allows twin interpretations – “advantage” or “assistance”. My translation here follows Eusebius usual use of ὁφέλεια; the alternative would read ‘attaching a corresponding advantage to this life’ which would stress further the value of the second path.
I suggest reading this passage as an introduction to, rather than the last word on,
Eusebius’ attitude towards asceticism. There is clearly an enthusiasm for asceticism here. But equally clear in the very fact of the two ways is that Eusebius perceives alternatives. These diverging paths are an instructive start for a more extensive and nuanced assessment. They encourage us to begin our search with both ambivalence and dual paths in mind.

A more recent study to consider Eusebius’ opinions on asceticism is Elizabeth Penland’s doctoral thesis. Though she does not discuss Origen’s Book 6 behaviour in detail, she suggests that his lifestyle was the model for the pupils of Pamphilus’ school in The Martyrs of Palestine. She suggests that asceticism was the foundation of the Alexandrian-Caesarean lifestyle Eusebius was promoting.\(^{213}\) She is almost certainly correct, and right to highlight the school tradition’s importance, to which I will return.

There is though a further aspect to her argument about which we should be more circumspect. Because her focus is on The Martyrs of Palestine, Penland argues that for

\(^{213}\) Penland, "Martyrs as Philosophers", 108; Elizabeth C. Penland, "Eusebius Philosophus? School Activity at Caesarea through the Lens of the Martyrs," in Inowlocki and Zamagni, Reconsidering Eusebius, 95.
Eusebius asceticism was ‘a direct preparation for martyrdom’. On one level, this is true. The word ἀζθήζησις implies training and, since Plato’s Phaedo, philosophy was often perceived as a training for death. In addition, many (though not all) of the martyrs in the Ecclesiastical History and The Martyrs of Palestine demonstrate ascetic tendencies. But the word ‘direct’ should give us pause. Just because ascetic behaviour enables a martyr to endure suffering, does not mean its role was to do so. The latter position, to which Penland seems inclined, invokes an older thesis of Maureen Tilley. Tilley used analysis of the mechanics of torture to argue that renunciatory practices enabled Christians to induce hysterical fugue states which rendered torture bearable. Moreover, she suggested that the Christians practiced asceticism for this purpose, beginning to fast immediately official action against them seemed imminent. I suggest that this is a misleading model for reading Eusebius’ attitude to asceticism.

In this chapter, I will nuance the assumption that Eusebius was straightforwardly positive about asceticism. Closer analysis of the Book 6 stories reveals the complexity of Eusebius’ attitudes, which can then be seen writ large through the Ecclesiastical History. I will both explain the reasons for his enthusiasm, and identify and explain those occasions when he is ambivalent. I will also look closely at the relationship between the violence of asceticism and martyrdom in Eusebius, since the thesis of direct preparation misunderstands his attitude to both. In concluding I will expand upon the twin paths of the Demonstration of the Gospel passage.

II. Revealing Ambivalence

216 Tilley, “Ascetic Body,” 471.
An entirely positive reading of Eusebius’ picture of Origen’s asceticism in Book 6 misses significant nuance. As with Origen’s enthusiasm for renunciation in Chapter 1, I suggest that Eusebius gives only qualified approval of the ascetic impulse.

Firstly, Origen’s ascetic acts are not praised in and of themselves. Rather, Eusebius affirms ‘the most virtuous works of the truest philosophy (τὰ… ἔργα… γνησιωτάτης φιλοσοφίας κατορθώματα) EH 6.3.6-7.’ The language of philosophy recurs throughout (EH 6.3.9 twice; 6.3.13). Eusebius praises Origen’s asceticism when it is connected with his philosophy. Elaborating, he says that ‘they say his manner was demonstrated to be the same as his message, and his message the same as his manner (οἱ οὖν γοῦν τὸν λόγον, τοιόνδε, φασίν, τὸν τρόπον καὶ οἱ οὖν τὸν τρόπον, τοιόνδε τὸν λόγον ἐπεδείξατο).’ As in Chapter 1, Eusebius’ focus is on study. He notes that, ‘Origen filled the whole day with considerable efforts of training, and through the greater part of the night also dedicated himself to the studies of the divine writings (καὶ διὰ πᾶς ἡμέρας μὲν ἡμέρας οὐ σμικροῦς ἄσκήσεως καμάτους ἀναπτυχθεῖς λόγον, καὶ τῆς νυκτὸς δὲ τὸν πλείονα χρόνον ταῖς τῶν θείων γραφῶν ἐαυτὸν ἀναπτύξαις μελέτας) EH 6.3.9.’ Origen’s asceticism feeds his study.

It also enhances his teaching: ‘by presenting such examples of a philosophical life to those watching, he similarly inspired many of his pupils to a zeal resembling his own (τοιαῦτα δὴ φιλοσόφου βίου τοῖς θεωμένοις παρέχων ὑποδείγματα, εἰκότως ἐπὶ τὸν ὁμοίους αὐτῷ ζηλοῦν πλείους παρόρμα τὸν φοιτητῶν), EH 6.3.13; see also EH 6.3.7.’

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217 An allusion to Socratic principles, as noted by Miller, Biography, 87. This echoes the language of the Demonstration of the Gospel passage above: ‘in pious words and deeds (τοῖς καὶ ἄρετην ἔργος τε καὶ λόγος), DE 1.8.2.’
Herein lies the second important element of ascetic behaviour for Eusebius. It can benefit the wider Christian community.

Alongside this praise however sits a cooler attitude. Elsewhere Eusebius’ presentation reveals a distinct ambivalence to self-mortification. Eusebius praises Origen’s lifestyle before he begins his physical asceticism as well as afterwards (EH 6.3.6-7). Further, the renunciatory attitudes of Origen’s youth appear mitigated in Eusebius’ later descriptions. Though he stopped teaching anything but scripture at this stage, Eusebius reports later that Origen taught many people classic non-Christian texts, because ‘from them was to be had a not insignificant advantage for these people as a preface and preparation for the divine writings (οὐ μικρὰν αὐτοῖς ἔσεσθαι φάσκων ἐξ ἐκείνων ἐπιτηδειώτητα εἰς τὴν τῶν θείων γραφῶν θεωρίαν τε καὶ παρασκευήν), EH 6.18.4.’ Eusebius notes too that Origen ‘considered a training in worldly and philosophical learning especially a necessity for himself (ὅτεν μάλιστα καὶ ἑαυτῷ ἀναγκαῖαν ἡγήσατο τὴν περὶ τὰ κοσμικὰ καὶ φιλόσοφα μαθήματα ἁσκήσιν), EH 6.8.4.’ On Eusebius’ picture Origen’s later life is not marked by the same extremes as his youth.

I note too that Eusebius’ description of Origen’s ascetic enthusiasm bears comparison with that of his comparable enthusiasm for martyrdom. Here, as there, Origen is said to ‘again demonstrate an eagerness beyond his age (καὶ μείζονι τῆς ἡλικίας προθυμίᾳ χρόμενος), EH 6.3.11’; here, as there, Eusebius’ ambivalence is apparent. Just as Eusebius’ sympathies were not with Origen when he desired premature martyrdom, so we begin to suspect that they are similarly distant here.
As Origen’s asceticism intensifies, Eusebius’ language becomes more ambivalent. Origen’s behaviour loses moderation; he persisted in cold and nakedness ‘to the furthest degree (ἐις ἄκρον), EH 6.3.11’, and ‘pushed himself through excessive poverty’ (ὑπερβαλλούσης ἀκτημοσύνης ἐλαύνον).’ We learn further that Origen’s fasting risks his health: ‘he fell into the danger of undermining and destroying his chest (ἐις κίνδυνον ἀνατροπῆς καὶ διαφθορᾶς τοῦ θώρακος περιπεσεῖν), EH 6.3.12.’ Eusebius’ Greek is forceful; the negative associations of the language palpable - κίνδυνον, ἀνατροπῆς, διαφθορᾶς.\(^{218}\) Lampe notes too that the patristic usage of περιπέπτω includes as primary and secondary meanings “fall into, meet with something evil” and “come to grief over”.\(^{219}\) As Origen’s behaviour abandons moderation and strays into extremes, Eusebius’ language becomes increasingly negative.

The cause of Eusebius’ discomfort is clear. Immediately following this language of excess, Eusebius notes that Origen’s behaviour affected others badly, since ‘he terrified those around him to the greatest degree, grieving those countless people begging him to share their property (τοὺς ἀμφ’ αὐτὸν εἰς τὰ μάλιστα κατέπληττεν, μυρίους μὲν λυπῶν εὐχομένους αὐτῷ κοινωνεῖν τῶν ὑπαρχόντων), EH 6.3.11.’ Eusebius’ language is again emphatic. Not only are καταπλῆσσω and λοῦσσω negative terms - the latter unambiguously so – but the former is qualified by μάλιστα and the latter by μυρίους. Eusebius’ ambivalence seems primarily motivated by the harmful effect Origen’s behaviour had on others.

\(^{218}\) I note too that in describing Origen’s abstention from food and wine, Eusebius uses the term ἀπεσχημένος. 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.

\(^{219}\) Lampe, Patristic Greek Lexicon, 1069.
Eusebius’ implicit discomfort is clearest when he describes Origen’s most extreme act, his self-castration. Eusebius introduces this as a ‘rash act (τοῦ τολμήματος), EH 6.8.3.’

That we should read τολμάω in a negative sense is confirmed by its next independent appearance in EH 6.8.5 where it is unambiguously used to criticise its subject, bishop Demetrius of Alexandria (who we will meet properly in Chapter 3).

Eusebius says too that in doing this Origen interpreted Matthew 19:12 in ‘too simple and too impetuous a way (ἀπλούστερον καὶ νεανικότερον), EH 6.8.2.’ While Eusebius notes that this demonstrated ‘faith and self-control (πίστεως...καὶ σωφροσύνης), EH 6.8.1’, he says that it also indicated ‘an immature and impetuous mind (φρενὸς μὲν ἀτέλοῦς καὶ νεανικῆς).’ Lampe lists as an example of the meaning “imperfect” another Eusebian instance of ἀτελ-. In saying that Origen ‘was stirred up to take the saviour’s message to its extreme end point (τὴν σωτηρίαν φοινὴν ἔργοις ἐπιτελέσαι ὀρμήθη), EH 6.8.2’, we again see the strong language - ὀρμᾶω, ἐπιτελέω – indicative of a lack of moderation. Eusebius’ does not celebrate Origen’s self-castration. He excuses it.

The aftermath of Origen’s castration confirms the importance to Eusebius of the effect of Origen’s asceticism in the community. Firstly, Origen tried to ‘escape the notice of most of his students around him (τοῦς πολλοῦς τῶν ἀμφ' αὐτὸν γνωρίμων διαλαβέειν

220 The reference is part of the chapter heading, but these are demonstrably Eusebian; see e.g. Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, 124 (Barnes does allow that they might be by a literary executor on 324[n129]).

221 ‘Demetrius, finding no other accusations, produced the terrible slander of this act which had happened to him long ago in his youth, and dared (τολμήματος) to include in the accusations those who advanced him to the presbytery, EH 6.8.5.’


223 Lampe, Patristic Greek Lexicon, 256, listing Ecclesiastical Theology 3.15.

224 Much later in Book 8, when celebrating one Dorotheus, Eusebius stresses that he was a eunuch ‘by nature (φύσιν)’, and again that he had ‘been so from his very birth (παρθενός ἐξ αὐτῆς γενέσεως), EH 7.32.3.’ This may well be a reference back to the story about Origen. We could also read it as reminiscent of Clement’s adoption from Stoic philosophy of ideal behaviour being “life by nature”.

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That Origen tried to hide the deed indicates it was illicit or shameful. Secondly, Origen’s bishop, Demetrius, tolerates Origen’s act only as long as it positively enforces his work as a teacher; ‘he encouraged him not to be afraid, and urged him now more than ever to cling to his work of instruction (θαρρεῖν παρακελεύεται, καὶ νῦν μᾶλλον ἔχεσθαι αὐτὸν τοῦ τῆς κατηχήσεως ἐργοῦ παρομῇ), EH 6.8.3.’ As before, Eusebius’ interest in asceticism is in the benefit to the community, in particular the Christian school, rather than to the individual.

Closer inspection of Origen’s extreme ascetic phase in Book 6 reveals nuance in Eusebius’ attitude rather than blanket approval. We can summarise our findings using a tripartite division of physical deprivation, sexual abstinence, and voluntary poverty. Physical hardships like fasting, limited sleep etc. are praised in so far as they fuel study and teaching. The same is true of celibacy. However, Eusebius becomes uncomfortable when these activities are taken to extremes. As in Chapter 1, Eusebius’ language usually stops short of outright condemnation, as he pays due filial piety to his intellectual ancestor, but the Greek reader would not fail to notice his ambivalence.

Eusebius seems to approve most of Origen’s voluntary poverty; his language reveals neither doubt nor qualification. But it is noteworthy that Eusebius’ Origen does not simply give his possessions away. He receives a token four obols a day in return. The distinction is crucial, because it renders Origen self-sufficient. Eusebius comments explicitly that Origen did this ‘in order that he might not become reliant on the help of others (ὡς δὲν μὴ γένοιτο τῆς παρ’ ἑτέρων ἐπικουρίας ἐνδεής), EH 6.3.9.’ Eusebius’ approval is evident in his comment that this was done ‘with proper consideration

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225 Translating γνωρίσων as ‘students’ rather than ‘acquaintances’ provides further evidence that this extreme act was not to be imitated.
His voluntary poverty does not include begging or reliance on alms; again, moderation is key. Furthermore, it is interesting that the behaviour most beneficial to others, those on the second of the two paths in the *Demonstration* passage above, is the one most favoured by Eusebius. Those on the first path are to be guides of those on the second; I propose that asceticism be read in this light too, not simply for Eusebius’ picture of Origen but in the *Ecclesiastical History* more widely.

Nowhere in this description is there any reference to Origen’s asceticism as training for martyrdom. Nor is it linked to Origen’s future tortures (discussed in Chapter 4). There is no evidence here to suggest Eusebius viewed Origen’s asceticism as designed to enable him to endure martyrdom. These initial conclusions provide a basic set of hypotheses to carry forward into a survey of asceticism in the *Ecclesiastical History*.

III. Asceticism in the *Ecclesiastical History*

Eusebius’ picture of Origen in Book 6 is a microcosm of his wider attitudes in the *Ecclesiastical History*. While a positive attitude to asceticism is found, it is not universal. Asceticism is praised as long as it is moderate, linked to academic pursuits and adduces some community benefit. Asceticism is appropriate only to the first of the two paths laid out in the *Demonstration*, and only when it enables those on that first path to lead and serve those on the second. I treat the three categories used above – physical hardship, sexual abstinence and voluntary poverty – in turn.

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226 In contrast, I note, to his other ascetic acts.
The physical hardship most often referred to by Eusebius is fasting. In certain circumstances it is celebrated. It is just one of the hardships endured by James the Just. Eusebius quotes from Hēgesippus that James ‘drank neither wine nor spirits, and did not eat animals (οἶνον καὶ σίκερα οὐκ ἔπινεν οὐδὲ ἔμυσυζον ἔφαγεν), EH 2.23.5.’ In addition, he ‘did not take a razor to his head or anoint himself with oil, and did not indulge in bathing (ξυρόν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἁνέβη, ἔλαιον οὐκ ἠλείψατο καὶ βαλανείῳ οὐκ ἐχρήσατο).’ He also ‘did not wear wool, but linen, garments (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔρεον ἐφόρει, ἄλλα σινδόνας), EH 2.23.6.’ Eusebius describes these practices as ‘the summit of philosophy and godliness which he pursued in his life (ἀκρότητα ἡς μετῆκε κατὰ τὸν βίον φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ θεοσεβείας), EH 2.23.2.’ The claim to a philosophical life is repeated for numerous clerics throughout the Ecclesiastical History and, as with Origen, combines an ascetic lifestyle with intellectual pursuits.227 By using the language of philosophy for James the Just’s fasting, Eusebius transforms an originally Jewish practice into one aspect of a philosophic life constructed, as we shall see, along Stoic lines.

Furthermore, James’ ascetic practices are of value because ‘by this alone was it possible for him to enter the holy places (τούτῳ μόνῳ ἔξην εἰς τὰ ἁγία εἰσέλθα), EH 2.23.6’ where he could ask ‘for forgiveness for the people (ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ ἄφεσιν),’ something he did so often that his knees grew hard from kneeling. Community benefit is emphasised. We are told that James’ actions earned him the name ‘“Oblias”, which in Greek is “The Protection of the People” (ὠβλίας, ὁ ἐστιν Ἑλληνιστῆ περιοχῆ τοῦ λαοῦ), EH 2.23.7.’ James asceticism puts him on the first of the Demonstration’s twin paths. Its value is that it enables him to act as a priest of those on the second.

227 See e.g. Narcissus bishop of Jerusalem (EH 6.9.4-6, 6.10.1), Meletius bishop of Pontus (EH 7.32.28), Achillas, presbyter at Alexandria (EH 7.32.30), Lucian, presbyter at Antioch (EH 9.6.3), Paulinus bishop of Tyre, EH 10.4.2.
Fasting is not always viewed positively in the Ecclesiastical History though. Montanus, founder of the Phrygian heresy, is condemned along with his fellow founder in quotations from Apollonius not just for ‘their false prophecies’ (αὐτῶν προφητείας υπευθείς), EH 5.18.1’, but also for their ‘manner of life (τὸν ὁμοθετῆσας). Montanus is labeled as ‘the one framing laws about fasting’ (ὁ λειτουργός οὐσίων ἁπάθετας), EH 5.18.2.’ The Encratite sect are criticised in a quotation from Irenaeus because ‘they introduced abstinence from things called by them animate, showing ingratitude to the God who made all things’ (καὶ τῶν λειτουργῶν παρ’ αὐτοῖς ἐμψύχων ἁπάθετας ζητήσας), EH 4.29.2.’ Fasting is as easily associated with heresy as orthodoxy.228

The most revealing critique of fasting is the story of Alicibiades. In Book 5, having finished quoting the account of the Lyons martyrs, Eusebius suddenly appends another anecdote from the same account, particularly ‘worthy of remembrance (κλήκει ἀμίαλ), EH 5.3.1.’229 It tells of one Alcibiades, who ‘was living an exceedingly squalid life (πάλπ αὐρκεξὸλ βηνῦληνο βίνλ), EH 5.3.2.’ This is qualified as referring to Alcibiades’ insistence on ‘partaking of nothing whatsoever except bread and water only (μηδενῶς

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228 Fasting also appears in two unusual quotations in the Ecclesiastical History. In a quotation from Irenaeus, group fasting effects resurrection (EH 5.7.2). In a story quoted from Clement the apostle John restores a wayward Christian boy to the community by means of continual fastings (νηρτῶν συναγωνιζόμενος), EH 3.23.19.’ On the penitential role of fasting in earlier Christian tradition, see Finn, Asceticism, 34-57. These two examples differ from most other ascetic material in the Ecclesiastical History, which follows a philosophical model.

229 The level 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 (in press): with bibliography. Eusebian editing is more likely in the later segments, see Winrich A. Löhr, "Der Brief der Gemeinden von Lyon und Vienne," in Oecumenica et Patristica: Festschrift für Wilhelm Schneemelcher zum 75. Geburtstag ed. Papandreou Damaskinos (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1989). I note with approval that Herbert Musurillo, "The Problem of Ascetical Fasting in the Greek Patristic Writers," Traditio 12 (1956): 61, notes in passing, ‘What Alcibiades’ reason for his austere diet was, is not clear from the context; and in fact one cannot be sure that Eusebius has not slightly tampered with the account in order to make it conform with his own ideas.’
Thrown into prison, he continues fasting. He is eventually dissuaded by one Attalus, to whom it was revealed in a dream that ‘Alcibiades was not doing well by not partaking in the creations of God (ὅτι μὴ καλῶς ποιοὶ ὁ Ἀλκιβιάδης μὴ χρώμενος τοῖς κτίσμασι τοῦ θεοῦ); cf. EH 4.29.2 above.’ Eusebius prominently excerpts a story where fasting is condemned. Moreover, it is condemned in a situation where martyrdom is imminent, casting doubt on Penland’s thesis that asceticism was intended as a direct training for martyrdom. Even more interesting is that Alcibiades’ fasting is condemned because he ‘was leaving behind him a kind of stumbling block for others (ἀλλως τύπον σκανδάλου ὑπολειπόμενος).’

Alcibiades’ extreme asceticism sets a bad example. We are reminded again of the Demonstration passage. The ascetic life is not for all. We see here either the ill-advised efforts of one on the second path, or the failure of one on the first path to act as a worthy priest to those on the second.

I turn now to Eusebius’ attitude towards sexual continence. Like almost all Christian authors, Eusebius is conservative in his sexual ethics. But this does not translate into a strong enthusiasm for sexual renunciation. Eusebius celebrates marriage as much as

230 Alcibiades is neglected in many treatments of this document. He is not included at all in Herbert Musurillo’s preservation of the text of this letter in Herbert Musurillo, The Acts of the Christian Martyrs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972 [repr. 2000]). Nor is he mentioned in Freund, Martyrdom and Persecution; Paul Keresztes, “The Massacre at Lugdunum in 177 A.D.,” Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte 16, no. 1 (1967); or 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). More recently he has been discussed in the context of determining redaction in the text; see Löhr, “Der Brief” and Moss, Ancient Christian Martyrdom, 104-06. It is not clear whether Alcibiades is killed or not. His ambiguous “martyr” status is perhaps a reason for this neglect. I suspect too that it is the incongruity of Eusebius’ comment, and the lack of interest in Eusebius’ own attitudes, that has muted scholarly comment.

231 The reference to a stumbling block in the context of eating might bring to mind 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. The parallel might seem to suggest that Eusebius really affirms Alcibiades’ fasting, but it should be noted that the Greek in 1 Corinthians is πρόσκομα, whereas Eusebius, perhaps deliberately, uses σκανδάλου instead. Most importantly, in both cases the author is concerned with the effect of the action upon others, rather than the action itself.
celibacy. Again, we find due consideration for the twin paths of Christian life, and the ambivalence towards extreme ascetic behaviour that implies.

Eusebius’ moderate position is clear in his transmission of a 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 (πολλὰ δὲ περὶ γάμου καὶ ἁγνείας τοῖς αὐτοῖς παρανεῖ), EH 4.23.6.’ He exhorts them to readmit fallen Christians into their midst. A second letter, to Pinytus alone, urges him ‘not to place an oppressive and compulsory burden concerning chastity on the brothers, and to take account of the weakness of many (μὴ βαρὖ φορτίον ἐπάναγκες τὸ περὶ ἁγνείας τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐπιτιθέναι, τῆς δὲ τῶν πολλῶν καταστοχάζονται ἁθενείας), EH 4.23.7.’ Dionysius urges against too rigorous an asceticism. Pinytus’ reply praises Dionysius, but requests ‘harder sustenance (στερροτέρας…τροφῆς), EH 4.23.8’, lest his flock ‘slip away in the end while growing old, by lingering under the milky teachings of childish guidance (ὦς μὴ διὰ τέλους τοῖς γάλακτοδέσιν ἐνδιαιτρίβοντες λόγοις τῇ νηπιώδει ἁγωγῇ λάθοιον καταγηράσαντες).’

Eusebius does not take sides, and praises both bishops. We find another example of the Demonstration’s maxim. Sexual continence is praised, but it is made clear that it is not appropriate, and should not be enforced, for the whole congregation.

Eusebius praises numerous virgins in the Ecclesiastical History, a number of whom are martyred. One of Origen’s pupils, the martyr Potamiaena, inspired by her teacher ‘to a comparable zeal (ἐπὶ τὸν ὄμοιον…ξῆλον), EH 6.3.13’, is praised for ‘both chastity and virginity of body (τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἁγνείας τε καὶ παρθενίας), EH 6.5.2.’ The term for

232 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.
chastity here, ἁγλεία, is not a frequent Eusebian term; it is used only five other times in the *Ecclesiastical History*. There are however numerous places where cognates of παρθένος are used. A number are found in the letters of Dionysius of Alexandria describing the mid-3rd century troubles under Decius, including ‘the most admirable old virgin Apollonia (τὴν θαυμασιωτάτην τότε παρθένον πρεσβύτην Ἀπολλωνίαν, *EH* 6.41.7’, and ‘the holy virgin Ammonarion’ (Ἀκκσλάξηόλ ἡ ιε αγία παρθένος), *EH* 6.41.18.’ Penland details further virginal martyrs in *The Martyrs of Palestine*. However, Eusebius gives little detail about their sexual asceticism, and make no explicit tie between it and their martyrdom. As if to confirm this, there are also married martyrs; the most prominent being the apostle Peter’s wife (*EH* 3.30.1). Celibacy is not a prerequisite for successful martyrdom.

With others, sexual status is unclear. Further martyrs are also described as chaste (e.g. an unnamed woman in Alexandria, *EH* 8.14.15; another in Rome, *EH* 8.14.16). The term used is σοφροσύνη. Though often misunderstood as implying celibacy, originally it implied the opposite. Best translated as “temperance” or “self-control”, σοφροσύνη was applicable to celibate and married alike, and was a favoured Eusebian term. One woman in Rome for example is married and described as ‘the most noble and most self-controlled wife of all those in Rome (ἡ ἐπὶ Ῥώμης εὑγενεστάτη … και σωφρονεστάτη γυνὴ πασῶν), *EH* 8.14.16, see also 4.17.2-4; 8.12.3.’ There is nothing to suggest that these women practice celibacy. Chastity could be affirmed without requiring the

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233 Two others are in the correspondence of Dionysius of Corinth discussed above, where Eusebius’ own opinion is unclear. One is in a quotation of Josephus referring to baptism as purifying the body (*EH* 1.11.5). Another is in the account of the Therapeutae, discussed below. Another is in the Book 10 panegyric, talking mystically about the people of God (*EH* 10.4.65). It seems to be used largely as a synonym for virginity, and often appears alongside παρθένος.

234 Penland, “Martyrs as Philosophers”, 38-9 on Apphianus; 95-105 on the “Virgins of God”.

235 For a definition that makes this distinction clear, see Kate Cooper, “Chastity,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, vol. 3 (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 1557. The standard longer treatment is North, *Sophrosyne*.

236 See *EH* 1.4.7; 2.13.7; 4.7.14; 4.6.8; 1.4.6; 9.5.7; 8.14.15; 9.10.1; 10.4.4; 10.4.65.
extremity of celibacy. As we shall see, Eusebius celebrates marriage to the same degree as celibacy, if not more so.

When we read descriptions of celibacy in the *Ecclesiastical History*, we normally need not look far for equal praise of marriage. The early Christian Nicolaus’ children, for example, are praised for their sexual asceticism – his daughters ‘grew old as virgins (καταγηρᾶσαι παρθένους), *EH* 3.29.3’ and his son ‘maintained his innocence (ἀφθορον δὲ διαμεῖναι)’. But Nicolaus himself is praised for having only slept with one woman, his wife. Eusebius says that by so doing, he ‘taught self-control in the face of those pleasures that are eagerly pursued (ἡ ἐγκράτεια τῶν περισπουδάς- τῶν ἡδονῶν τὸ παραχρᾶσθαι τῇ σαρκί ἐδίδοσκεν).’ The term for self-control is not σωφροσύνη but ἐγκράτει -. Though often used by previous authors to refer to strict sexual asceticism, it is used by Eusebius of a married man. This semantic use is interesting and I shall return to it. I simply note here that Eusebius’ interest is in self-control, in or out of marriage; celibacy was not required.

Celibacy is rarely Eusebius’ chief concern. He recites a series of mutually contradictory traditions regarding the marital status of Philip’s daughters. Quoting Clement, Eusebius states that Philip ‘married his daughters off to husbands (τὰς θυγατέρας ἀνδράσιν ἐξέδωκεν), *EH* 3.30.1.’ But he immediately preserves a separate tradition of Polycrates which references Philip’s ‘two daughters who grew old as virgins (δύν θυγατέρες αὐτοῦ γεγηρακοῦν παρθένοι), *EH* 3.31.3’ and the third ‘who lived in the Holy Spirit (ἐν ἁγίῳ

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237 This is the only occurrence of ἀφθορ- in the *Ecclesiastical History*. It is used only once too in the *Preparation for the Gospel*, where it is used in a metaphor for virginity (*PE* 3.3.7).

238 The traditional distinction and potential opposition between σωφροσύνη and ἐγκράτει is summarised in Cooper, *Virgin and the Bride*, 56.

239 Eusebius uses this term five times. Apart from that here, two occurrences are in naming the “Encratites”, a sect that renounce marriage of whom Eusebius disapproved. In the other two sexual ethics are not being discussed, and it seems to refer to general self-discipline (*EH* 9.6.3 and *EH* 2.17.16). This is discussed further below.
πνεύματι πολιτευσμένη).’ The distinction between the three daughters is unclear.

Eusebius quotes from Acts too concerning Philip’s ‘four virgin daughters (παρθένοι θυγατέρες τέσσαρες), EH 3.31.5.’ There is a discrepancy here, certainly of number, and potentially of sexual status. Eusebius either does not notice, or is disinterested. When he refers to Philip’s daughters subsequently he does not mention their marital status (see EH 3.37.1; 3.39.9; 5.17.3). Alternatively, we have here another reference to so-called chaste marriage.

In fact, Eusebius seems keener to affirm marriage. Philip’s daughters were initially introduced to demonstrate that Philip had daughters at all, against those rejecting marriage. Numerous heretics are criticised for doing just that. Citing Irenaeus, Eusebius condemns ‘those called Encratites (οἱ καλούμενοι Ἐγκρατεῖς), EH 4.28.1’ for introducing ‘a strange and destructive false notion into the world we live in (ξένην τε καὶ φθοριμαίαν νευδοδοξίαν…τῷ βίῳ).’ We learn that ‘they preached “un-marriage” (ἀγαμίαν ἐκήρυξαν), EH 4.29.2.’ This, like fasting above, is condemned for its implied attitude to the divine: ‘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 (ἀθετοῦντες τὴν ἄρχαίαν πλάσιν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡρέμα κατηγοροῦντες τοῦ ἄρρην καὶ θήλυ εἰς γένεσιν ἀνθρώπων πεποιηκότος)’. Marriage and sexual activity are defended because of the

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240 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. Jensen sees these conflicting sources as evidence of the conflict in early Christianity over asceticism’s value.

241 Jensen, God’s Self-Confident Daughters, 17, comments that ‘Eusebius himself seems to have no particular interest in this question’.

242 Tatian is also criticised for implementing schism, further alienating Eusebius, whose interest is always primarily in the community’s welfare: he ‘broke away from the church (ἀποστασάς τῆς ἐκκλησίας), EH 4.30.3’ and ‘formed a school with a distinctive character of its own (ίδιον χαρακτῆρα διδάσκαλείου συνεστήσατο)’. 104
necessity of reproduction.\textsuperscript{243} Tatian, founder of the En克拉ites, ‘publicly proclaimed marriage to be destruction and fornication (γάμον τε φθορὰν καὶ πορνείαν… ἀναγορεύσας), \textit{EH} 4.29.3’, a view shared by the heretics Marcion and Satorinus. Montanus, criticised for his fasting laws above, is condemned too as ‘the man who teaches dissolutions of marriages (ὅ διδάξας λύσεις γάμων), \textit{EH} 5.18.2.’ Extreme sexual asceticism is as often a marker of wrong practice as of right.\textsuperscript{244} If it leads mainstream Christians astray, it does not conform to the first of Eusebius’ two paths.

I turn finally to Eusebius’ attitude to voluntary poverty. Of all ascetic practices, Eusebius is most enthusiastic about this. In the correspondence between Dionysius and Pinytus discussed above, it is noteworthy that the uncontroversial section concerns donations to churches (\textit{EH} 4.32.10). As with fasting, Eusebius has no interest in renunciation for its own sake. He praises it in the context of the philosophical life of study. For example, Pierius, a presbyter in Alexandria, is praised for ‘his life’s poverty and his philosophical learnings (ἀθηήκνη βίῳ θαὶ καζήκαζηλ θηινζόθνηο), \textit{EH} 7.32.27.’ Eusebius’ early description of Christians in the \textit{Ecclesiastical History} is programmatic. He suggests that their ‘vehement love of philosophy (σφοδροτέρῳ φιλοσοφίᾳ ἔρωτι), \textit{EH} 3.37.2’ was evidenced in their ‘distributing their possessions to those in need (ἐνδεέειν νέμοντες τὰς οὐσίας)’. Giving things up is less important for Eusebius than giving them away.

As with fasting and celibacy, voluntary poverty done wrong brings condemnation.

Montanus’ heresy, criticised above for its extreme attitudes to fasting and celibacy, also

\textsuperscript{243} Eusebius notes also that ‘they speak against the salvation of the first-formed (ἀντιλέγοντι τε τῇ τοῦ προτοπλάστου σωτηρίᾳ). This is interesting and open to interpretation. The implication however is that salvation is tied into marriage and procreation.

\textsuperscript{244} Montanism is also criticised for claiming virginity for its famous prophetesses, despite them having left husbands, for which they are also implicitly condemned (\textit{EH} 5.18.4).
abused alms collection. Rather than distributing alms to the needy, Montanus and his followers collected them ‘not only from the rich but also from poor people and orphans and widows (ἡ μόνον παρὰ πλούσιων, ἄλλα καὶ παρὰ πτωχῶν καὶ ὀρφανῶν καὶ χηρῶν), EH 5.18.7.’ This failure of pastoral care again brings condemnation.

Eusebius has neither interest in the solitary ascetic, nor patience when asceticism breeds schism. Ascetic behaviour is praised when the collective benefits, and condemned when it suffers. Eusebius is most positive about voluntary poverty, I suggest, precisely because it is the ascetic activity where the communal gain is most evident. It most clearly evidences the twin-paths of the Demonstration, with the asceticism of the first path supporting the second.

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One case study illustrates all these tendencies. In Book 2 Eusebius includes an account of the Therapeutae, a 1st century community living outside Alexandria. This mixed gender community were ‘united through a most philosophical and vehement training (συνέστη δὲ ἀσκήσεως φιλοσοφωτάτης τε καὶ σφοδρωτάτης), EH 2.16.2.’ They were originally described by Philo in his On the Contemplative Life, and Eusebius in quoting him claims them as Christian. Extensive debate has raged over whether this group was Jewish or Christian. Most scholars now accept they were not Christian; more

interesting is Eusebius’ insistence that they were. Sabrina Inowlocki argues that Eusebius’ account is a *demonstratio* in three parts, directed against non-Christian objections stressing the Therapeutae’s Jewishness. She shows how Eusebius carefully edits Philo’s account to further Christianise them. I suggest Eusebius works so hard to claim them as Christian because they demonstrate precisely the intellectual, communal asceticism he treasured.

The Therapeutae’s asceticism was tied to learning: ‘The whole time from dawn to dusk is a training for them. For engaging with the sacred writings they philosophise, interpreting their hereditary philosophy allegorically (τὸ δ’ ἐξ ἐωθινοῦ μέχρις ἐσπέρας διάστημα σύμπαν αὐτοῖς ἐστὶν ἀσκήσις. ἐντυγχάνοντες γὰρ τοῖς ἰεροῖς γράμμασιν φιλοσοφοῦσιν τὴν πάτριον φιλοσοφίαν ἀλληγοροῦντες), EH 2.17.10.’ The language of


Eusebius’ claim is so insist as to draw attention. The account is structured around repeated assertions of its accuracy, and attempts to anticipate readers’ objections. In introducing Philo Eusebius assures us that ‘from the very start he denies that he will add even one thing beyond the truth or from himself to those he was about to relate (πρὸ τοῦ τί μπορεῖ περί τῆς ἀλήθείας οὐκ ἔχει καὶ ἦς λαοῦ προσθήκη αὐτῶν ἵνα ἐστὶν ἑμᾶς ἀξιόλογος), EH 2.17.3.’ Recognising that the Therapeutae are nowhere called Christians in Philo, Eusebius asserts that either ‘he [Philo] gave them this name himself, inscribing a name appropriate to the lifestyle of these people (ἐμ ἑαπηνῦ ηαύηελ αὐηνῖο ἐπηηέζεηηαη ηὴλ πξνζεγνξίαλ, ἐπηγξάςαο ηῶ ηξόπῳ η῵λ ἀλδξ῵λ ηνὔλνκα), EH 2.17.4’, or ‘the first of them actually even called themselves this from the start, when the name of the Christians was by no means being applied in every place (καὶ ὄντος τοῦτ’ αὐτοῖς ἐκάλουν κατ’ ἀρχὰς οἱ πρῶτοι, μηδὲν οἱ Χριστιανοὶ πιὸ προσφήσιμος ἀνὰ πάντα τῶν ἀποκρυφισμένων). He then cuts off further discussion of this troublesome point: ‘it is not necessary to continue discussion (οὐ τι ποι διετέλεσθαι ἀναγκαῖον).’ Halfway through he addresses his audience directly: ‘if it seems to someone that the words spoken by himself were not of the life according to the Gospel, but that the things said are able to be fitted also to other [ways of life], let him be persuaded by his [Philo’s] following words (εἰ δὲ τῷ μη δοκεῖ τῇ αὑτῇ ἐναοείνα ἐνα οἷον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πολεμεῖς, δύνασθαι δὲ καὶ ἄλλους παρὰ τοὺς διδασκόμενους ἀρμῆττες, πεπεθείκαν καὶ ἄπα τῶν ἐξής αὐτοῦ φωνῆς), EH 2.17.15.’ The sceptical reader is told that ‘if he is unprejudiced he will gain indisputable testimony about this thing (ἄναμφητον, εἰ εὐγλειμνήση, κοιμίσατα τὴν περὶ τοῦτο μαρτυρίαν)’. Subsequently Eusebius insists again that ‘if someone were still hardened, disbeliefing these things, let this man put aside his disbelief being persuaded by these clear demonstrations (εἰ δ’ ἐπὶ τούτως ἀντίλεγον τις ἐπὶ σκληρύνατο, καὶ οὕτως ἀπαλλατέαθε τῆς δυσπιστίας, ἄναμφητα πιστεύσῃς ἀποδείξεω), EH 2.17.18.’ Eusebius ends his account with a categorical assertion: ‘And that Philo wrote these things referring to the first heralds of the teaching of the Gospel and the customs received at the very start from the apostles, is clear to everyone (ὅτι δ’ ἐπὶ τούτους ἀντίλεγον τις ἐπὶ σκληρύνατο, καὶ οὕτως ἀπαλλατέαθε τῆς δυσπιστίας, ἄναμφητα πιστεύσῃς ἀποδείξεω), EH 2.17.24.’

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philosophy is emphasised here and explicitly textual. Eusebius excerpts from Philo those sections where ascetic practices are tied to learning. Of fasting, for example, we read that, ‘No one among them would take food or drink before sunset, since they judge philosophising worthy of the light, and the needs of the body of the darkness (σιτίων ἢ ποτόν οὐδεὶς ἂν αὐτῶν προσενέγκαιτο πρὸ ἡλίου δύσεως, ἐπεὶ τὸ μὲν φιλοσοφεῖν ἄξιον φωτὸς κρίνουσιν εἶναι, σκότους δὲ τὰς τοῦ σώματος ἀνάγκας), E H 2.17.16.’ There is a direct correlation between renunciation and study. Those wishing to study more fast longer: ‘Some even think of nourishment only every three days, those in whom there is established a greater desire for knowledge (ἐνιοί δὲ καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ύπομιμνήσκονται τροφῆς, οἱς πλείοιο ὁ πόθος ἐπιστήμης ἐνίδρυται), E H 2.17.17’, others can ‘endure for double that time, and scarcely taste food for six days (πρὸς διπλασίονα χρόνον ἀντέχειν καὶ μόγις δὴ ἐξ ἡμερῶν ἀπογεύεσθαι τροφῆς ἀναγκαῖας)’ because they ‘luxuriate in wisdom, feasting richly and ungrudgingly on a rich supply of doctrines (τρωφᾶσθαι ὑπὸ σοφίας ἐστιώμενοι πλουσίως καὶ ἀφθόνως τὰ δόγματα χορηγούσης)’.

Asceticism fuels disciplined study.

Of the women among the Therapeutae, ‘the greatest number were aged virgins, guarding their chastity not from necessity, like some of the priestesses among the Greeks, but rather from a voluntary resolution (αἱ πλεῖσται γηραλέαι παρθένοι τυγχάνουσιν, τὴν ἁγνείαν οὐκ ἀνάγκη, καθάπερ ἐνιαί τὸν παρ’ Ἐλλησιν ἱερεῖν, φυλάξασαι μᾶλλον ἢ καθ’ ἐκούσιον γνώμην), E H 2.17.19.’ Their sexual asceticism is tied to ‘zeal and longing for wisdom (ζηλοῦν καὶ πόθον σοφίας)’. Celibacy enables cohabitation and enhances study. I note too their superiority to non-Christians.
The Therapeutic academic lifestyle is also communal. The Therapeutae live and study together, and the two activities support one another. For example, when discussing the original psalms of the community, Eusebius notes that studying Scripture, ‘they do not simply contemplate, but also compose songs and hymns to God (οὐ θεωροῦσι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ποιοῦσιν ἃσματα καὶ ὄμνους εἰς τὸν θεὸν), EH 2.17.13.’ Later, it is stressed that these ‘new psalms (νέους αὐτοῦς…ψαλμοῦς)’ are used particularly in communal worship, sung in rounds (EH 2.17.22). We are reminded of the matching words and deeds of Origen. The Therapeutae have a concrete impact on others too. Their name is attributed to their ‘healing and attending to the souls of those who came to them, freeing them in the manner of doctors from the sufferings that result from vice (τὸ τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν προσιόντων αὐτοῖς τῶν ἀπὸ κακίας παθῶν ἵπτρῶν δίκην ἀπαλλάττωντας ἀκείσθαι καὶ θεραπεύειν), EH 2.17.3.’ Again, the asceticism of the higher Christian life is to the benefit of the second.

Another element of the Therapeutae’s communal lifestyle is shared property. In his approval of communal poverty, Eusebius privileges this as the first thing he notes about them. Introducing Philo’s account, he states that ‘he witnesses in the first place the renunciation of property, saying that those beginning to philosophise give up possession of their property to their relations (ἐν πρώτοις τὴν ἀπόταξιν αὐτοῖς τῆς οὐσίας μαρτυρεῖ, φάσκων ἀρχιμένους φιλοσοφεῖν ἔξιστασθαι τοῖς προσήκουσι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων), EH 2.17.5.’ Renunciation of property is here the first step in the philosophical life. Eusebius equates the Therapeutae’s actions with those of the early

250 Kofsky and Inowlocki note that in Eusebius’ Demonstration of the Gospel the Psalms are said to be the Christians’ favoured prophetic book; see Kofsky, Against Paganism, 154; Inowlocki, “Interpretatio Christiana,” 316. Note too that in Eusebius’ quotation of the Pliny-Trajan correspondence, their early-morning chorus of hymns is a defining feature (EH 3.33.1).

251 In classical Greek this meant the “separate assessment” of resources for tribute; in Christian circles it came to mean “renunciation”. Lampe, Patristic Greek Lexicon, 216.
Christians in Acts. He quotes how, ‘all the distinguished among the apostles sold off their possessions and resources and shared among everyone as each had need, so that there was no one in need among them (πάντες οί τῶν ἀποστόλων γνώριμοι τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις διωπτηράσκοντες ἐμέριζον ἀπασίν καθ’ ὁ ἐν τίς χρείαν εἶχεν, ὡς μηδὲ εἴναι τινα ἐνδεχὴ παρ’ αὐτοῖς), EH 2.17.6.’ In equating the two though, Eusebius alters Philo’s meaning. 252 Eusebius equates the Therapeutae giving their goods to relatives, with the early Christians sharing their property. Philo was commenting on renouncing property; Eusebius on sharing it. For Eusebius renunciation is itself meaningless; it is what renunciation enables that matters. In addition, since only the rich have to renounce their property, and do so to help the poor, we see again the two paths of Christian life.

The Therapeutae also provide further evidence that asceticism is not a direct training for martyrdom for Eusebius, since there is no threat to their community and no thought of future suffering. The Therapeutae represent a perfect exemplum of Eusebius’ approach to asceticism. Physical hardships, celibacy and renunciation of property are part of a self-controlled lifestyle, tied to academic study and manifested in service to others.

IV. The Ascetic Tradition

Though there is a vast literature surrounding early Christian asceticism, less attention has been paid to the pre-Constantinian period than the rise of monasticism and the desert fathers in the 4th and 5th centuries. However, asceticism was a source of controversy from Christianity’s earliest days. The following sketch will be necessarily

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252 This is noted by Inowlocki, "Interpretatio Christiana," 315, although she misses its significance.
brief, and will focus on Eusebius’ immediate inheritance – the Alexandrian tradition, represented most importantly by Clement and Origen.

When Christianity emerged blinking out of Judaism into the Hellenistic Mediterranean world of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, it could draw on rich ascetic traditions from both. As it grew though, it began to fragment. The plethora of early Christianities soon developed a plethora of attitudes to asceticism, the diversity of which is well-documented in the first ten chapters of Peter Brown’s *The Body and Society*. Many early Christian attitudes towards asceticism were heavily influenced by Judaism, where asceticism fed penance, prayer and mourning. At the same time, many of these communities were concerned to distance themselves from their Jewish forbears. 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.

A sea change occurs with Clement of Alexandria. Clement represented a shift towards traditional Stoic conceptions of asceticism as self-control. In this he was

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256 Discussed in Brown, *Body and Society*, 124. As far as we can tell (from the fragments preserved by Eusebius) it seems that Hegesippus also attempted to relate Christian asceticism to the Greek philosophical tradition. This is interesting, since Eusebius is elsewhere influenced by Hegesippus.
indebted to his Alexandrian predecessor Philo, who had already fused Middle Platonic ideas to Jewish traditions. Clement was steeped in traditional elite learning, having studied under six teachers (*Miscellanies* 1.11.2), and written an *Exhortation to the Greeks* in which he calls non-Christians to listen to Christianity, the true philosophy.\(^{257}\) In so doing he attributes to Christianity an asceticism similar to traditional philosophies.

Clement was particularly influenced by Stoicism, and its pursuit of *apatheia*, the absence of violent passions.\(^{258}\) The Stoics had inherited from Cynicism the idea of a “life according to nature”, but tempered the Cynic extremes. They lived instead by an ethic of moderation, always seeking the middle ground in pursuit of rational self-control, or *sophrosune*. They obtained it via spiritual exercises. Pierre Hadot’s seminal *Philosophy as a Way of Life* argues that ancient philosophies advocated not simply sets of teachings but ‘a mode of existing-in-the-world’.\(^{259}\) Mental and physical exercises enabled the philosopher to internalise a sect’s teaching and act in accordance with it. Hadot notes that the transition to Christian asceticism was so easy for Christians like Clement precisely because pre-existing Greek and Roman philosophical traditions were already marked by such *askesis*.\(^{260}\) It was this model of asceticism characterised by *sophrosune* that Clement co-opted.

Clement is often described as a Christian moderate because of this Stoic ethic of moderation. He was writing for elite, educated circles, and provides an ethic tailored to his conservative audience’s needs. As Brown says, ‘Clement’s writings communicated a sense of the God-given importance of every moment of daily life, and especially of the life of the household.’261 This is evident in his attitude to fasting, which switches between Stoic assertions that food is irrelevant (The Teacher 2.1) and concrete advice that food be plain and simple (Selections of the Prophets 14.2).262 Clement’s attitude is hard to pin down because of the eclectic nature of his corpus, in particular the jumbled Miscellanies, but his message is primarily one of self-control.263

On sexual ethics, Clement’s attitude is again hard to present simply, since most of his extant discussion is in Miscellanies 3.264 Clement affirmed both celibacy and chaste marriage. He conceded too that sex within marriage was a great temptation.265 In this he was similar to most other early Christian writers (e.g. Tertullian or Cyprian). He is distinctive however for his positivity about marriage, defending it against the heretical Encratites who rejected it.266 Whether he preferred celibacy to marriage has been the subject of some debate; most recently Henny Hägg has argued convincingly that if

261 Brown, Body and Society, 126-27.
262 Citations and discussion in Musurillo, "Problem of Ascetical Fasting," 13-14, 17, 49-50. Musurillo also discusses Clement’s treatment of fasting in a spiritual sense [38].
264 Clement did write treatises On Marriage and On Continence, but these are not extant.
266 The Encratites in Clement are best understood not as a coherent heretical institution but as a number of individuals and groups sharing similarly extreme views on sexual ethics. See e.g. Henny Fiskå Hägg, "Continence and Marriage: The Concept of Enkrateia in Clement of Alexandria," SO 81, no. 1 (2006): 130.
Clement favoured one over the other it was probably marriage. In part this is because marriage trains the human soul by providing opportunities for practicing self-control.

Clement’s attitude to voluntary poverty is clearest in his treatise *Who is the rich man that shall be saved?*, a discussion of the story of the rich young man in *Matthew* 19:21. In that story, Jesus advises a would-be disciple that he must give away his possessions. Clement reassures his wealthy and worried Alexandrian Christians that they need not renounce their wealth. We read, ‘He [Jesus] does not, as some conceive off-hand, bid him throw away the substance he possessed, and abandon his property (οὐχ ὁ προχείρως δέχονταί τινες, τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν οὐσίαν ἀπορρίσαι προστάσει καὶ ἀποστήμαι τῶν χρημάτων), *Who is the rich man that shall be saved?* 11.1.’ Clement argues instead that property and substance here refer to the negative passions that accompany wealth; ‘his excitement and morbid feeling about it, the anxieties, which are the thorns of existence, which choke the seed of life (τὴν περὶ αὐτὰ πτοίαν καὶ νόσον, τὰς μερίμνας, τὰς ἀκάνθας τοῦ βίου, αἱ τὸ σπέρμα τῆς ζωῆς συμπνίγουσιν), *Who is the rich man that shall be saved?* 11.2.’ Clement insists that voluntary poverty in itself has no special merit: ‘it is no great thing or desirable to be destitute of wealth, if without a special object (οὔτε γὰρ μέγα καὶ ἔμμοντο τὸ τηνύλλας ἀπορεῖν χρημάτων), *Who is the rich man that shall be saved?* 11.3; see also 14.5.’ The rich man’s passions must be cut off, not his moneybag. As with marriage, Clement demonstrates a liberal attitude.

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268 Hägg, "Continence and Marriage," 137.

Most interesting is Clement’s rationale. The rich man should keep his wealth because it is the means to help others.

‘How could one give food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and shelter the houseless, for not doing which He threatens with fire and the outer darkness, if each man first divested himself of all these things?’

"Who is the rich man that shall be saved?" 13.4.

Whether we read this as a clever get-out clause for the wealthy or as sincere, the instrumentality is noteworthy. As Finn puts it, for Clement, ‘What matters is how things are used rather than what is possessed.’ Pastoral care is more important than the ascetic act itself; Clement’s ideal Christian, the gnostic, is not isolated but at the service of others (e.g. The Teacher 3.7.38.3).

The next great figure of Christian asceticism was Origen. Where Finn identifies a basically ‘defensive pattern’ in Clement, where ‘ascetic virtue is trumpeted, vice decried, and yet much is permitted’, Origen’s views are stricter. Origen embraced Clement’s adoption of traditional philosophical asceticism. But he develops it into a narrative of personal struggle towards salvation. In Origen as never previously, asceticism is the armour in the soul’s fight for restraint over appetite (a key battleground in Satan and Christ’s cosmic battle in salvation history). Origen also ties asceticism to study. Asceticism strengthens scriptural study, which prepares the Christian for the

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270 Finn, Asceticism, 96.
271 Moreschini and Norelli, Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature, 267.
272 Finn, Asceticism, 96.
ultimate vision of God.273 Fasting, for example, brings deeper knowledge of Scripture.274

Origen’s asceticism was thus stricter than Clement’s. This is particularly true on sexual renunciation. Origen too affirms the value of both celibacy and marriage, but the latter is clearly secondary.275 In fact (though he does not seem entirely consistent) Origen implies disapproval of sex in and of itself. In his Commentry 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 because the parts below the waist symbolise sexual intercourse… (ἡνίοχος πῦρ ἢν, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀσφύος ἕπι τά κάτω) πῦρ ἢν· ἡνα δηλώσῃ, ὅτι οἱ ἐν γεννήσει τυχάνοντες σῦτοι δέονται πυρός. Ὁσφύς γάρ γεννήσεως σύμβολον), Homily 1 on Ezekiel 3’. The implication is that even sex for procreation merits punishment, and renders Origen’s acceptance of marriage elsewhere somewhat grudging. This reveals the strength of Origen’s commitment to a violent asceticism.

Renunciation of property is a particularly good place to compare Origen and Clement, since we also have Origen’s exegesis of the story of the rich young man in Matthew 19. Origen reads this passage in the opposite sense from Clement. Though famed for his allegorical exegesis, here Origen insists on a literal reading. In his Commentary on Matthew 19.18, preserved only in Jerome’s Latin translation, Origen insists that we rid ourselves of wealth.276 Origen takes Clement’s appropriation of models of philosophical

273 Finn, Asceticism, 100-02; see too Brown, Body and Society, 163-68.
asceticism to its intellectual extreme. In so doing though he demonstrates a stricter attitude to specific ascetic practices.

V. A Temperate School

Eusebius’ attitude to asceticism clearly stands firmly within the Alexandrian tradition. His view of asceticism as self-controlled moderation values the philosophical tradition both Clement and Origen espoused. His rewriting of the Christian past presents its ascetic tendencies as always having been philosophical. With James the Just, for example, Eusebius appropriates originally Jewish ascetic behaviour – fasting as preparation for intercession – as evidence of a philosophical life. With the Therapeutae, Philo had made their asceticism philosophical already; Eusebius makes it the paradigm of the original Christian philosophical lifestyle. He notes that ‘having set down beforehand self-control like a kind of foundation for the soul, they build up upon it other virtues (ἐγκράτειαν ἔσπερ τινὰ θεμέλιον προκαταβαλλόμενοι τῇ ψυχῇ, τὰς ἄλλας ἐποικοδομοῦσιν ἀρετὰς), EH 2.17.16.’ I note here too the recurrence of ἐγκράτεια, used by Eusebius above to refer to chastity within marriage, rather than celibacy. The Therapeutae’s asceticism is understood as control of passions and moderation.

In the strong intellectual – especially textual – bent of his ascetic interest, Eusebius is Origen’s heir. Again, this is apparent in his treatment of the Therapeutae, where their study is understood in an Alexandrian mode. When ‘engaging with the sacred writings they philosophise, interpreting their hereditary philosophy allegorically (ἐντυγχάνοντες γὰρ τοῖς ἱεροῖς γράμμασιν φιλοσοφοῦσιν τὴν πάτριον φιλοσοφίαν ἄλληγοροῦντες), EH
2.17.10.’ Eusebius elaborates that ‘they look down beyond the words as through a mirror upon the beautiful manifestations of the things perceived (ὡς διὰ κατόπτρου τῶν ὅνομάτων ἐξαίσια κάλλη νοημάτων ἐμφανόμενα καταδόσα), EH 2.17.20.’ The Therapeutæ’s asceticism is tied to allegorical exegesis, associated with Alexandria and Origen especially.

Thus far Eusebius was in line with his Alexandrian forebears. As in Chapter 1 however, Eusebius both steps back from and forges beyond his inheritance. In particular, he does not share Origen’s penchant for extreme asceticism. Even leaving the potential self-castration aside, Origen was one of the most forceful ascetic voices of antiquity. Eusebius though offers a qualified enthusiasm, promoting asceticism for the Christian elite as long as it supports and does not impede other Christians. The language of excess used to describe Origen’s behaviour in Book 6 contrasts tellingly with the ethic of moderation Eusebius espouses elsewhere. This is particularly apparent in Eusebius’ treatment of sexual ethics, where he displays more interest in temperance than celibacy. Origen was the great theorist of Christian virginity, but his writings flirt with devaluing marriage. That was characteristic of the heretical, and Eusebius’ allegiances are clear.277

In fact, Eusebius’ stance in the marriage-celibacy debate seems closer to Clement. Eusebius quotes Clement repeatedly in this regard; certainly far more than he quotes Origen. For example, when Eusebius stresses the married status of the apostles, he cites Clement to note that Peter and Philip produced children, and claim Paul’s ‘yoke-fellow (σῶζον), EH 3.30.1’ as his wife. Clement’s list of married apostles was originally

277 Francis, Subversive Virtue, 179, in a quotation we might apply to Eusebius, says, ‘In the long term, it would be up to bishops and theologians, leaders and intellectuals with an interest in established society and the empire, to do something themselves about the Christian radicals if their own hopes of a Christian Empire were to be fulfilled’.
compiled ‘because of those rejecting marriage (διὰ τοῦ ἀθετοῦντας τὸν γάμον)’;

Eusebius quotes it for the same purpose.

Eusebius’ and Clement’s use of ἔγκρατεια is also similar. Hägg notes that in Clement it is not always easy to distinguish between ἔγκρατεια and σωφροσύνη. Clement expands ἔγκρατεια’s semantic range, using it in the general sense of “self-control”.278 Eusebius does not use the term enough for us to draw firm conclusions, but his usage appears similar. Quoting Philo on the Therapeutae he uses ἔγκρατεια broadly for self-control, as a basic, foundational virtue (EH 2.17.16). Its two instances in the longer recension of The Martyrs of Palestine too, describing the young man Apphianus, both conform to this (MPal LR 4.3.13; 4.7.2). In his interest in self-control above a specific lifestyle, his affirmation of celibacy but desire to defend marriage, and his concern that the Christian mainstream not be over-burdened, Eusebius echoes Clement.279

With renunciation of property too we see echoes of Clement in Eusebius. Eusebius’ enthusiasm seems prima facie closer to Origen’s disdain for worldly possessions than to Clement’s insistence that the Christian need not renounce his wealth. But Clement’s and Origen’s respective motivations reveal Eusebius as again closer to Clement. Origen praised alms-giving because the prayers of the alms’ recipients accrued virtue to the giver, and furthered his pursuit of divine knowledge.280 For Clement the justification for not renouncing wealth was that without it one would have nothing left to give the poor and needy. Eusebius is concerned in the Ecclesiastical History with neither the

279 Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians, 359, states ‘After Clement, no Christian author wrote anything so positive about the married state’. Eusebius bucks that trend.
280 Finn, Asceticism, 103, citing Origen’s Commentary on Matthew 25.17.
individual’s heavenly quest nor heavenly reward, but with the practical distribution of goods to needy Christians. In this he seems close to Clement.

These teasing similarities with Clement should not surprise us. Clement’s ethic was directed at the educated elite of Hellenised Roman society, for whom Eusebius was also writing. With asceticism as with the family, Eusebius’ presentation of Christian ascetics can be fruitfully read as responding to traditional stereotypes.

For the educated elite, ascetic behaviour marked distance from the norm. It was characteristic of ancient philosophers, who held a privileged position as commentators on the fringes of society looking in. An acceptable ascetic ethic was characterised by self-control. From the 2nd century AD Stoicism became almost synonymous with the mainstream elite, a brand of “elite philosophy” whose interests were aligned with those of society’s power-brokers. But asceticism was also a marker of the deeply mistrusted goes – the magician or wonderworker. Two characteristics of asceticism were most frequently criticised. One was lack of moderation. As James Francis puts it, ‘the performance of ostentatious feats of physical asceticism is unbecoming to the philosopher’. It is no coincidence that the Cynics, whose behaviour was the most extreme among ancient philosophers, were dismissed as “dogs”. Their behaviour marked them as unpalatable. When Celsus compares the Christians to ‘begging priests of Cybele and soothsayers (πιστεύοντας μητραγόρτας καὶ τερατοσκόπους), Against Celsus 1.9’, it is exactly this prejudice he preys on.

281 See e.g. Francis, Subversive Virtue, 4.
282 Francis, Subversive Virtue, 16, discussing Epictetus’ On Askesis. Francis’ discussion ranges through a variety of 2nd century evidence, including Musonius Rufus, Seneca, Lucian and Philostratus. See too Brown, Body and Society, 27, 103.
283 See e.g. Francis, Subversive Virtue, 64-77.
Secondly, the ascetic could be criticised for isolationism. Though the majority of ancient philosophical schools urged the good philosopher to engage in the wider community, the aloof stereotype expressed by Aristophanes in *The Clouds* remained.\(^{284}\) Two of the most common criticisms levelled at Christianity too by elite detractors were isolationism and misanthropy. Tacitus for example, in one of the earliest non-Christian references to Christianity, says that they were convicted under Nero for ‘hatred of the human race ( odio humani generis), *Annals* 15.44.’\(^{285}\) Celsus too labels the Christians ‘people who wall themselves off and break away from the rest of mankind ( ἀποτελεῖον ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἀπορρηγνύτων ἀπὸ τῶν ζωντῶν ἀνθρώπων), *Against Celsus* 8.2.’\(^{286}\) Christians were tainted by precisely these elite prejudices.

The combination of extreme behaviour and isolationism meant that ascetic behaviour was a marker of political resistance. As Brown’s famous title insists, the body was a microcosm of ancient society. The transformation of one’s attitude to the body meant a transformation of one’s attitude to society.\(^{287}\) The extreme acts of the Cynics, for example, went hand in hand with a rejection of the status quo.\(^{288}\) James Francis captures this succinctly in *Subversive Virtue*:

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\(^{284}\) This is not to say that ancient philosophers were in reality isolationist. Pierre Hadot’s infuriation that ancient philosophy is viewed that way is palpable: ‘Ancient philosophy was always a philosophy practised in a group, whether in the case of Pythagorean communities, Platonic love, Epicurean friendship, or Stoic spiritual direction. Ancient philosophy required a common effort, community of research, mutual assistance, and spiritual support. Above all, philosophers – even, in the last analysis, the Epicureans – never gave up having an effect on their cities, transforming society, and serving their citizens, who frequently afforded them praise, the vestiges of which are preserved for us by inscriptions.’ Hadot, *Philosophy*, 274. Hadot’s irritation is if anything proof of the ancient stereotype’s tenacity, which continues to skew contemporary ideas.


\(^{286}\) Clement’s and Origen’s attitudes to asceticism differ on precisely this point. Brown characterises both appositely. He says of Clement that his ideal Christian, the true Gnostic, was ‘to be no recluse. He was an active teacher, even an “administrator”’ (Brown, *Body and Society*, 131). In Origen’s writings, on the other hand, ‘we already breathe the changeless air of the desert’ (Brown, *Body and Society*, 161).


\(^{288}\) E.g. Hadot, *Philosophy*, 103.
‘The heart of the issue is that rigorous asceticism was deviant, and deviance was dangerous. Strident, and often obstreperous, practitioners of physical asceticism were deemed suspect by the political, social, and cultural authorities of the age, and such apprehension put the practice of physical asceticism under a cloud of suspicion generally. This mistrust of ascetics stemmed from their being perceived as radicals expressing discontent with the status quo, advocating norms and values antithetical to the accepted social and political order, and claiming a personal authority independent of the traditional controls of their society and culture. Put simply, they were seen as a threat to the continued and peaceful existence of the Roman Empire.’

Celsius makes exactly this leap from isolationism to subversion when he follows up his characterisation of Christians as walled off with the charge that Christianity ‘is a rebellious utterance (στάσεως εἶναι φωνήν); see too 3.5; 8.17; 8.49.’ Elsewhere he describes Jesus as ‘the author of their sedition (αὐτοῖς τῆς στάσεως ἀρχηγήτης), Against Celsus 8.14.’ Distrust of extreme behaviour and misanthropy stems from concerns about social dissent.

This cultural currency, I suggest, is the basis of Eusebius’ ascetic ambivalence. It was the normal ambivalence of the well-educated, elite Roman man. Eusebius’ picture of Christian authority thus simultaneously celebrates Christian asceticism, a priority of his predecessor Origen, and distances itself from those violent extremes which carried associations of political resistance inappropriate for his own 4th century context.

Eusebius’ claim that Christianity be considered a philosophy is itself a claim to respectability. In addition, when Eusebius’ Christian philosophers excel beyond their pagan predecessors, it is in ways that dispel precisely these stereotypes. Justin Martyr, defending Christianity ‘in the dress of a philosopher (ἐν φιλοσόφου σχήματι), EH 4.11.8, see also 4.16.2’, ‘exposed the philosophers as gluttons and cheats (λίγνους

Francis, Subversive Virtue, xiii-xiv.
290 In his Demonstration of the Gospel 3.6.8 Eusebius presents Jesus himself as ‘a prince of philosophers (φιλοσόφων ὁ πρῶτος).’
Justin is compared explicitly to Crescens, described as ‘unphilosophical and world-loving (ἀφιλοσόφου και φιλοκόμπου), EH 4.16.3’, and as ‘emulating the life and manner carrying the Cynic name (τὸν φερόνωμον δ’ οὖτος τῇ Κυνικῇ προσηγορίᾳ βίον τε και τρόπον ἐξήλου), EH 4.16.1.’ The comparison with Cynicism is telling. I recall here too the importance for Eusebius of Origen remaining self-sufficient (EH 6.3.9). Begging was a mark of extreme asceticism and Cynicism in particular. Eusebius distances the Christian philosopher from precisely this model of the ascetic.

Moreover, Eusebius’ ascetics cannot be accused of misanthropy, since their behaviour is community-directed. In his description of Justin vis-à-vis Crescens, Eusebius describes how Justin’s philosophy had contributed to the church: he ‘has left us very many memoirs of a cultured mind keenly interested in divine things, which are replete with profitable matter of every kind (Πλεῖστα δὲ οὖτος καταλέλοιπεν ἡμῖν πεπαιδευμένης διανοιάς καὶ περὶ τὰ θεῖα ἑσπουδακυίας ὑπομνήματα, πάσης ὦφελείας ἐμπλεα), EH 4.18.1.’

The language of ὦφελεί- is characteristically Eusebian. It is no coincidence that Eusebius’ favourite ascetic practice is voluntary poverty, that which best enabled communal living. His praise of the Therapeutae’s celibacy too celebrates that it enables them to live and study together. The perfect Christian lifestyle of the Demonstratio enables the elect to act as priests for the rest of the Christian race.

Eusebius’ omissions from Philo’s picture of the Therapeutae also reveal his attempts to avoid these stereotypes. Eusebius is explicit about his selection: ‘it seemed necessary to pick out those things through which are demonstrated the characteristics of

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291 For the connection of ascetic activity and community contribution see e.g. Pamphilus (EH 7.32.25), Pierius and Meletius (EH 7.32.26-28), Peter of Alexandria (EH 7.32.31), and Potamiaena (EH 6.5.7).
ecclesiastical conduct (ἐκεῖνα δ’ ἀναγκαῖοι ἐφάνη δεῖν ἀναλέξασθαι, δι’ ὧν τὰ χαρακτηριστικά τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἀγωγῆς ύποτίθεται), EH 2.17.4.’ ‘Ecclesiastical conduct (τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς)’ is particularly interesting – Eusebius uses the Therapeutae as an example of communal Christian behaviour. Many of Eusebius’ omissions can be assigned to abridgement, and we must be careful with arguments from silence. But one example seems especially significant. Where the majority of Eusebius’ cuts are large blocks, in describing the decision of the Therapeutae to leave the city Eusebius omits a single clause – the accusation against them of a ‘crude, deliberate hatred of mankind (ὁμὴν ἐπὶ τετηρομένην μισονθροπίαν), VC 20.1.’292 I suggest that Eusebius works to dissociate Christian authority figures from charges of misanthropy.

Eusebius’ ambivalent attitude to asceticism reflects the ambivalence of the educated elite. His vision of the church is one aligned with traditional values, and its ascetics avoid the two pitfalls of the ascetic-gone-wrong, excess and self-service, and the subversion they implied. We can usefully employ again the work of Kate Cooper and its discussion of the value of a rhetoric of (in)temperance in assessing the validity of ancient men for office. In her 1996 monograph, Cooper discusses how in ancient literature sexual temperance was one aspect of the index by which the claims to power of male protagonists were measured. The key was moderation.293 Just as sexual licence was a mark of illegitimacy, so too was the other extreme. It is for this reason that Eusebius distances himself from Origen’s extreme asceticism. Elites looking at Origen would have seen extravagant behaviour dripping with the suspicion of subversion.294

293 Cooper, Virgin and the Bride, 12.
294 They might well have been justified in drawing that conclusion. As Brown, Body and Society, 170, says: ‘Refusal to marry mirrored the right of the human being, the possessor of a pre-existent, utterly free soul, not to surrender its liberty to the pressures placed upon the person by society. Origen was quite prepared to draw this consequence. Social and physical mingled inextricably in his thought. Behind the
For Eusebius, elite Christian behaviour is self-controlled, and directed not towards personal development, but the benefit of the second tier of Christians.

Eusebius championed a model of self-controlled asceticism, connected to study and evidenced in communal living and altruism. To do so he merged his Alexandrian philosophical inheritance with the picture of communal living he found in an earlier stratum of Christian tradition. But to impute traditional respectability to the model he needed to establish its antiquity. The Therapeutae proved perfect for this, and this is one reason Eusebius is so keen to appropriate them as Christian. He establishes them as the fledgling form of his own Alexandrian-Caesarean school tradition, the flagship for his model of elite Christian ascetic life.

Numerous hints show that Eusebius links the Therapeutae and the Alexandrian-Caesarean tradition. The Therapeutae narrative succeeds a story about Mark’s arrival in Egypt, and places them near Alexandria (EH 2.17.7). Eusebius introduces Philo’s account by saying that the Jewish author, ‘records the lifestyle of the ascetics among us as accurately as possible (τὸν βιον τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν ἀσκητῶν ὡς ἐν μάλιστα ἀκριβέστατα ἰστορῶν), EH 2.17.2.’ He says again, ‘We believe that these clear and incontrovertible excerpts of Philo concern the way of things among us (ταύτας τοῦ Φίλωνος σαφεῖς καὶ ἀναντιρήτους περὶ τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς ὑπάρχειν ἡγούμεθα λέξεις), EH 2.17.17.’ The Caesarean-Alexandrian allegorical sense of scripture was one ‘which this household [the Therapeutæ] began to study differently (ὁξεατο διαφερόντως ἢ οἰκία αὐτή definition imposed upon the body by the spirit, there lay the definition imposed on the person, through the body, by society.’


296 Noted by Grant, Eusebius as Church Historian, 52-53; Inowlocki, “Interpretatio Christiana,” 324-26; Ferguson, Past is Prologue, 16; and Penland, “Eusebius Philosopher?,” 96.
The Therapeutae’s activities are ‘exercises which are also still now performed out of habit in our day (διατριβὰς καὶ τὰς ἔξ ἔθους ἔτι καὶ χῦν πρὸς ἣμῶν ἐπιτελουμένας ἡσκήσεις), EH 2.17.21’, and their habits ‘the self-same manner of life preserved to this point by us alone (ἀυτὸν ὁν καὶ εἰς δεόρο τετήρηται παρὰ μόνοις ἤμων τότον), EH 2.17.22.’ Their self-composed hymns are described as ‘the hymns accustomed to be read among us (τοὺς τε λέγεσθαι εἰσθάνα τρός ἡμῶν ὧμους), EH 2.17.22.’ The Therapeutae encompassed both male and female members, true of both Origen’s and Pamphilus’ schools (EH 6.4.3 and 6.8.3; see also Jerome’s quotation of Eusebius’ lost Life of Pamphilus in Against Rufinus 1.9). The Therapeutae are the Caesarean-Alexandrian school in fledgling form, and establish the antiquity of the model of conservative, communal Christian asceticism Eusebius wished to promote.

This has been noticed most recently by Penland, who points out that,

‘…the weaving together of the Marcan Christians with Philo’s Therapeutae and the establishment of Alexandrian Christianity HE (II.16-17) as ascetic, apostolic, and philosophical, makes much more sense when one moves ahead a few centuries to look at the fourth-century portraits of the Martyrs. Eusebius depicts his own school and other figures in the martyrs as communal, ascetic, philosophical Christians. The literary lineage of ascetic intellectual Alexandrian Christianity presented in the HE seems to delineate features of ascetic intellectual Caesarean Christianity that Eusebius cherished.’

This chapter has established the details of, and motivations behind, this “communal, ascetic and philosophical” lifestyle. Mention of Penland’s work however also allows us to nuance our understanding of the link between asceticism and martyrdom. Penland’s focus on The Martyrs of Palestine dictates that she understands collective, philosophical

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297 Inowlocki notes that Eusebius modifies 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; see Inowlocki, “Interpretatio Christiana,” 309, 317. I note too that Philo does not ascribe the Therapeutae precedence in this practice (On the Contemplative Life 10.78) – this is Eusebius’ addition (EH 2.17.20). In so doing he claims allegorical exegesis as an originally Christian reading practice, rather than as inherited from non-Christian predecessors.

asceticism as a direct training for death. And asceticism certainly serves martyrs well in the *Ecclesiastical History*. As we will see in Chapter 4, martyrdom can prove the value of a life of self-control. But asceticism is never undertaken with martyrdom in mind. With Alcibiades it even hinders successful martyrdom. There is no mention of the psychological benefits of the violence of asceticism, no sign of Maureen Tilley’s fugue states or mental distancing tactics, and no explicit link between the violence of asceticism and of martyrdom. Moreover, ascetic training is not limited to periods of persecution. The discussion of the Therapeutae is free from external threat, and Eusebius’ Caesarean school predated persecution. Eusebius’ asceticism was practiced in peacetime as well as crisis; it was a way of life, not of death.

We can now return to the programmatic statement of the *Demonstration* with fresh eyes. We have found the twin paths evidenced throughout the *Ecclesiastical History*. The first, the perfect Christian life practiced by Christian leaders and teachers, is marked by an asceticism conceived on the Stoic model of self-control and moderation. Their asceticism is tied to study and together these two provide the ‘virtuous words and deeds (τοῖς κατ’ ἀρετὴν ἔργοις τε καὶ λόγοις’) by which they exercise their priesthood over the wider Christian community. The asceticism of the few means the majority can ‘have the benefit of the teaching of the Gospel (τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς ἀπολαύσεως διδασκαλίας’).

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299 The one case in which asceticism seems to prepare for martyrdom is in the account of the Lyons martyrs, when one Attalus is described as ‘ready because of his good conscience, since he was genuinely practiced in the Christian system (ἐτύμως ἀγαθά νοησείς διὰ τὸ εὐσυνείδητον, ἐπειδὴ γνησίως ἐν τῇ Χριστιανῇ συνήτεξε γεγομασμένος ἦν), *EH* 5.1.43.’ However, this is the same Attalus that prevents Alcibiades from fasting in prison, and additionally, neither *εὐσυνείδητον* nor *συνήτεξε* is used elsewhere in the *Ecclesiastical History* for ascetic training (the former is a Eusebian hapax; cognates of the latter appear at *EH* 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, 7.25.25).

300 As it is in Tilley, "Ascetic Body," 471: ‘Christian communities would begin fasting as soon as they realised that police action was imminent’.
In fact, the two-path model may itself be motivated by traditional elite mores. The Stoic philosophers of the 2nd century were most comfortable with asceticism when it was intended for the very few. 301 The Vestal Virgins, whose virginity was deliberately exceptional, are indicative of the traditional Roman attitude. 302 In one move Eusebius’ elegant dichotomy preserves the value of Christian asceticism so cherished by Origen, while divesting it of both the heavy burden of universal application and the lurking suspicion of social subversion. It fits it instead to a rhetoric of intellectual and pastoral self-mastery that marks legitimate authority.

Chapter 1 began with Origen at home, and concluded with the household’s importance as a locus for education. In this chapter we have moved forward to Origen’s early teaching career in the Alexandrian school. The weight placed on intellectual asceticism and the communal, educational setting is not insignificant. It represents the respectable institutionalisation of a behaviour associated, in the elite mindset, with subversion. It is to that process of institutionalisation, and Origen’s later career, we now turn.

301 See Francis’ discussion of Philostratus’ portrait of Apollonius; Francis, Subversive Virtue, 101, 107; and Brown, Body and Society, 8.
302 See e.g. Mary Beard, ”The Sexual Status of Vestal Virgins,” JRS 70 (1980).
3. Intellectual Authority: Charisma, Clergy and Christian Networks

Abstract: Eusebius’ picture of Christian leadership is based upon intellectual prowess, pastoral care and an ability to defend the community against schism. In addition, intellectual authority always acts in harmony with clerical, institutional authority (which requires white-washing of past conflict). Finally, Eusebius’ Christian leaders are linked to one another, and to prominent leaders in the Empire, over both time and space. Eusebius’ model of intellectual authority is inherited from the Alexandrian tradition, and in particular from Origen. Eusebius emphasises that it is precisely the Christian leader’s academic abilities that enable him to care for and defend the community. Where Origen envisaged a “charismatic intellectual” independent of institutional authority, Eusebius institutionalises intellectuals in the Ecclesiastical History, including Origen himself. Finally, Eusebius makes institutionalised intellectual authority the keystone of a vast network of Christian leaders. These vertical and horizontal threads are the key to Eusebius’ literary project to paint the church as an institution of temporal and geographical continuity, and of note within the Empire. In so doing Eusebius again responds to elite prejudices about Christianity.

I. Origen’s Scholarly Career

Origen’s early experience in the school of Alexandria blossomed into a long and successful career as a Christian teacher and public intellectual. Eusebius regales us with a seemingly endless list of Origen’s teaching, writing, preaching and of those he debated or held audiences with over next half century. As chapter builds on chapter we
see the fulfilment of the “help for the many” forecast in his youth, and which his early
career catalysed.

As Eusebius tells it, almost immediately he starts to teach in Alexandria Origen takes
over the catechetical school (EH 6.3.1). He excels in the role. He teaches ‘everyone
coming to him, unguardedly, all through the night and day, (ἐὰς ἄπαντας ἀφυλάκτως
tοὺς προσώπους νύκτωρ καὶ μεθ’ ἡμέραν), EH 6.8.6.’ Studying and teaching consume
his life; he ‘dedicated his entire leisure time without hesitation to divine subjects of
learning and to those coming to him to learn (τοῖς θείοις ἀόκνως μαθήμασιν καὶ τοῖς ὡς
αὐτῶν φοιτῶσιν τὴν πάσαν ἀνατιθείσι σχολήν)’. Teaching and study are his core
activities for the rest of his life.

Origen’s focus turns properly to research ten years after he begins teaching. In the reign
of Caracalla (211-217), distracted by excessive teaching, he allocates half his duties to
Heraclas, picked from his students. With Heraclas taking over introductory courses,
Origen teaches only senior students, and is free to pursue research. Eusebius relates how
Origen engaged in ‘such highly technical scrutiny of the divine writings (τῶν θείων
λόγων ἀπηκριβωμένη ἐξέτασις), EH 6.16.1’ that ‘he learnt the Hebrew tongue (καὶ τὴν
Ἑβραϊδα γλώτταν ἐκμαθεῖν), EH 6.16.1.’ Here Eusebius gives a lengthy discussion of
Origen’s work on the Hexapla and Tetrapla (versions of the Old Testament with six and
four editions or translations respectively in parallel columns). Later in life, with
Ambrose as a patron, his scholarship is fueled by a healthy staff: seven shorthand
writers, seven copyist and female scribes (EH 6.23.1-2). Origen begins producing

303 Eusebius reports that the LXX, Aquila’s, Symmachus’ and Theodotion’s translations formed the
Tetrapla. Symmachus’ he got from a woman named Juliana, who inherited it from Symmachus himself.
Origen hunted out alternative translations besides these, finding one at Nicopolis near Actium and another
whose origin is not recorded. The Hexapla of the Psalms has seven translations, one of which came from
a jar at Jericho (EH 6.16.1-7.17.1).
biblical commentaries, and his productivity goes into overdrive. Book 6 is punctuated by lengthy lists of his treatises and correspondences (EH 6.24.1-3; 6.25.1-14; 6.32.1-3; 6.36.1-4). Eusebius foregrounds Origen’s academic and literary prowess.

Alongside these intellectual labours, Eusebius emphasises Origen’s continuing pastoral efforts. I considered this in the previous chapter, and it needs little repeating. But I note, for example, that in a period of “persecution”, when a number of his pupils are martyred, Eusebius comments on the fame Origen garnered ‘because he demonstrated both a warm greeting and enthusiasm towards all the holy martyrs, both known and unknown (δι’ ἣν ἐνεδείκνυ τοῦ οἶκου τοὺς ἁγίους ἁγνώτας τε καὶ γνωρίμους μάρτυρας δεξίωσιν τε καὶ προθυμίαν), EH 6.3.3.’ I will return to this incident in Chapter 4; for now I note Origen’s active engagement with the Christian community.

This is further emphasised in Origen’s work defending the community’s boundaries from schism and heresy. The first heretic he reforms is his future patron Ambrose. Previously a Valentinian, Ambrose was ‘corrected by the truth conveyed by Origen (πρὸς τῆς ὑπὸ Ωρηγένους προσβεβομένης ἁληθείας ἐλέγχεις), EH 6.18.1’ and so ‘moved over to the message of the orthodox church (τῷ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ὀρθοδοξίας προστίθεται λόγῳ).’ From these beginnings Origen’s ability not only to refute heretics, but to reintegrate them into the community, becomes a prominent feature of Eusebius’ narrative.304 Beryllus, bishop of Bostra, is one such wayward Christian (EH 6.33.1-3); see also an unnamed group in Arabia (EH 6.37.1) and the Helkesaites (EH 6.38.1). Eusebius regularly celebrates Origen’s role as defender of the faith.

304 See n208.
As his career progresses, according to Eusebius, Origen develops an international reputation. With his fame spreading, he begins to receive visitors from Palestine and abroad. Some, including ‘many others of the educated (ἄλλοι δὲ πλείους τὸν ἄπο παιδείας), EH 6.18.2’, come ‘to test his competency in the holy writings (πείραν τῆς ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς λόγοις ἰκανότητος τάνδρος). Others come ‘to be educated by him (πρὸς αὐτὸν παιδευόμενοι), EH 6.18.2; see also 6.30.1.’ His curriculum encompasses both Christian and non-Christian learning (EH 6.8.3-4; 6.18.2). Among these foreigners, perhaps the most notable is the emperor Caracalla’s mother, Mammæa. Described as ‘a most God-fearing woman (ζενζεβεζηάηε γπλή), EH 6.21.3’, she summons and escorts Origen in order, like his other visitors, to test him. He stays with her and ‘shows her many things towards the glory of the lord and of the virtue of the divine teaching (πλεῖστά τε δόσα εἰς τὴν τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν καὶ τῆς τοῦ θείου διδασκαλίας ἀρετῆς ἐπιδειξάμενος), EH 6.21.4.’ His interactions with Mammæa mark Origen’s emergence on the greatest stage.

This also marks the beginning of Origen’s career on the road.305 After a rapid trip to Arabia (EH 6.19.15), he makes his first significant visit to Palestine. While Origen is there Alexander of Jerusalem and Theoctistos of Caesarea ask him ‘to lecture and explain the divine writings publicly in the church (διώκεσθαι τὰς τὸς θείας ἐρμηνεύειν γραφὰς ἐπὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς ἐκκλησίας), EH 6.19.16.’306 This seems to cause bishop Demetrius distress back in Alexandria, since Eusebius records that the two Palestinian

305 Eusebius does note before this that Origen had been in Jericho under Antoninus, where he found one of the translations that formed his Hexapla (EH 6.16.3); see n303.
306 When Origen arrives in Palestine, he ἐν Καηζαξείᾳ δὲ ηὰο δηαηξηβὰο ἐπνηεῖην. One reading of this could be ‘he established a school in Caesarea’. However, on the narrative’s chronology this seems to be only a preliminary trip to Caesarea, so the translation ‘he spent some time in Caesarea’ seems preferable. But it is interesting that Eusebius leaves this ambiguous.
bishops write to ‘make their defence (ἀπολογοῦνται), EH 6.19.17.’ Origen returns to
Alexandria and continues teaching.

Origen’s next visit to Caesarea is not so fortuitous. Alexander and Theoctistos both
‘attend to him the entire time, like to a teacher alone (τὸν πάντα χρόνον προσανέχοντες
αὐτῷ, οἷα διδασκάλω μόνῳ), EH 6.27.1’, and would rather he expound the scriptures
than they.307 While there Origen ‘took up the laying on of hands for the presbyterate of
Caesarea from the bishops there (πρεσβείου χειροθεσίαν ἐν Καισαρείᾳ πρὸς τῶν τῆς
ἐπισκόπων ἀναλαμβάνει), EH 6.23.4.’ This seems to have been a problem. Eusebius
mentions ‘The agitations at this time concerning him and the opinions about these
disturbances amongst those set over the churches (τὰ μὲν οἱ ἐπὶ τοῦτο περὶ αὐτοῦ
κεκινημένα τὰ τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς κυνηγεῖσιν δεδομένα τοῖς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν προεστῶσιν).’
Almost all scholarship identifies here a major rift between Origen and Demetrius.

The nature of this conflict however is unclear. Joseph Trigg suggests that there was
always tension between the two.308 We know of the rift from sources independent of
Eusebius too. A letter of Origen to Alexander of Jerusalem defending his beliefs and
practices seems to imply that serious concerns were being stirred up against him.309
These stemmed from Demetrius, who seems to have got most other churches on side,
including Pontian of Rome (see Photius, Bibliotheca 118; Jerome, Letter 33). Alexander
though was reassured by Origen’s reply, and wrote in Origen’s defence to Pontian.

307 The Greek is ambiguous. We could take προσανέχοντες as “rely”, and assume that the two bishops
rely on Origen to take up their teaching loads. Alternatively, reading “devote oneself to” suggests that
they take him as their only teacher. Both translations demonstrate the respect afforded Origen. But the
first renders Demetrius’ subsequent displeasure, discussed below, more legitimate. The two other uses of
the term in the Ecclesiastical History suggest that the second reading is more likely. Eusebius may
therefore intend this ambiguity to make their action seem less extreme, and Demetrius’ reaction
excessive.
308 Trigg, The Bible, 53, 76, 140.
309 See Nautin, Lettres, 126-29. It is this letter which many scholars believe lies behind Eusebius’ account
of Origen’s life.
Trigg and Nautin also note that Alexander wrote back to Origen expressing his affection and recalling their mutual teacher.\footnote{Trigg, \textit{The Bible}, 139; Nautin, \textit{Lettres}, 129-32; Nautin, \textit{Origéne}, 134. This letter is actually included by Eusebius not here, in connection with the controversy, but much earlier, discussing Clement (\textit{EH} 6.14.8-9). I consider it in detail below.} Whatever the realities of the dispute, Origen moves to Caesarea in 232 in what seems to be a permanent relocation (\textit{EH} 6.26.1).

Now based in Caesarea, Origen’s prime occupation does not change. He keeps teaching, and the flow of foreigners continues (\textit{EH} 6.30.1.) His research, correspondence and community troubleshooting also remain steady. Eusebius refers at this point to the complete list of Origen’s works, included in Eusebius’ already completed (but sadly not extant) \textit{Life of Pamphilus} (\textit{EH} 6.32.3). It is only at this late stage, with Origen over sixty, that he ‘entrusted shorthand writers to take down the lectures spoken by him in public (τὰς ἐπὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ λεγομένας αὐτῷ διαλέξεις ταχυγράφους μεταλαβέν ἐπιτρέψαι), \textit{EH} 6.36.1’, something to which he had ‘never formerly consented (οὓς πρότερον ποτε … γενέσθαι συγκεκριμένα).’ Origen lives the remainder of his life in Caesarea - the famed teacher in exile; an international scholar in the provinces.

As in previous chapters, we can consider briefly how previous scholarship has read this account. Much of it has elicited less comment than the stories of his childhood or adolescence, but Origen’s rift with Demetrius has occasioned significant discussion. Most scholarship has posited a clash between Origen’s authority as an independent figure, and Demetrius’ attempts to shore up the institutional authority of the Alexandrian episcopate. Cadiou for example says that ‘the privileges of educated Christians were thrown into direct opposition to ecclesiastical authority’.\footnote{Cadiou, \textit{Origen}, 316-17.}
discussion hedges its bets by listing several potential causes: personal, theological and institutional:

‘It seems that Demetrius was not satisfied with the direction Origen’s activities had taken and that he was growing uneasy at the extent of his influence. Perhaps he distrusted his ideas as well. The distinction between the teaching conveyed through hierarchical channels and the teaching given by the didaskaloí, a distinction found as early as the second century, came in again here, too.’

Hornschuh demonstrated that before Demetrius the leaders of the church in Alexandria were presbyter-teachers, but that Demetrius began to formalise the episcopal institution. The rift with Origen fits into this negotiation over the nature of Alexandrian church leadership. Nautin follows Eusebius’ account closely, judging it to be based on Origen’s autobiographical description, and other contemporary letters. He does however note some Eusebian agency, commenting that, ‘Il tient aussi à protéger le plus possible la mémoire d'Origène. Il ne veut pas apprendre sa condamnation à ceux de ses lecteurs qui pourraient l'ignorer. Quant à ceux qui la connaissaient déjà, il les invite à lire ce qu'il a écrit antérieurement pour la défense du grand exégète.’ Trigg again largely follows Nautin, but discusses the rift between Demetrius and Origen in more detail, describing it as ‘a conflict between an organiser and an intellectual’, implying it revolved around the issue of legitimate authority.

Crouzel’s account of the rift accepts Eusebius’ picture, but suggests there might have been doctrinal motivations too. Importantly, where Crouzel uses independent evidence – even from the Defence – there is no attempt to explain why Eusebius might

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312 Daniélou, Origen, 23.
313 Hornschuh, "Das Leben des Origenes," 198-205.
314 Nautin, Origène, 60-61; and see also 55; both citing his Lettres, 121-26.
315 Trigg, The Bible, 130.
316 Crouzel, Origen, 17-24.
have omitted information he likely knew. Robert Grant on the other hand does address this, and suggests that the dispute in reality had a theological grounding, which Eusebius suppressed: ‘In Origen’s own time Demetrius of Alexandria saw heretical implications in it [the speculative, philosophy-orientated theology that had long flourished at Alexandria and Caesarea]; Eusebius does his best to obscure the fact.’

This represents an important insight, but one which has not been followed up, and which Grant himself was unable to carry further because of his unwillingness to treat Eusebius as anything more than a compiler. It is to the detail of Eusebius’ narration of this period of Origen’s life and the conflict with Demetrius to which I now turn.

II. Untold Stories

Close attention to Eusebius’ role as selector, editor and writer reveals that his picture of Origen’s life is stylised to highlight a particular model of Christian leadership. Eusebius himself says that he has been selective: ‘the elders in our time passed down many things about Origen in memory, which I have decided to pass over as not relevant to our appointed business (καὶ ἄλλα μὲν οὖν μυρία Ὀριγένους πέρι μνήμη παραδιδόασιν τῶν καθ’ ἡμᾶς οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, ἀ καὶ παρῆσαι μοι δοκῶ, οὐ τῆς ἐνεστώσης ἐχόμενα πράγματειάς), EH 6.33.4.’ Three things in Eusebius’ selective sketch of Origen are distinctive: the value of Origen’s intellectual qualities, his status in relation to the church institution, and his relationship with other leaders, both Christian and non-Christian.

317 Grant, "Early Alexandrian Christianity," 133.
First, as in Chapter 2, Eusebius highlights Origen’s academic qualities. Here as there though, his intellectualism has concrete results for the community. His teaching, for example, is for ‘the help of the brothers (τὴν εἰς τοὺς ἁδελφοὺς ὠθέιεηαλ), EH 6.14.11’, repeating a distinctively Eusebian phrase. Here too we have added a new string to Origen’s bow, as the front line of the community’s defence against heretics. Eusebius makes it clear that Origen is only able to refute heretics because of his academic abilities. It is because of them that so many heretics he debates are restored to the community (the only way truly to repair schism).

Scholarship feeds community defence. Eusebius’ detailed discussion of Origen’s Hexapla (EH 6.16.1-6.17.1) leads into a eulogy on Origen’s ability to refute heretics (EH 6.18.1-2). When the Valentinian Ambrose talks with Origen it is ‘as if his thinking had been illuminated by light (ὡς ἄν υπὸ φωτὸς καταναγασθεὶς τὴν διάνοιαν), EH 6.18.1.’ It is Origen’s capacity for intellectual insight that saves Ambrose. Interestingly, Ambrose then becomes Origen’s intellectual patron. With Beryllus, Eusebius emphasises that Origen, ‘tested what mindset he had (τίνα νοῦν ἔχοι, ἀποσειρώμενος), EH 6.33.2’, and then reformed him, ‘persuading him with reasoning (λογισμῷ τε πείσας)’. The Arabian dissension is calmed because Origen ‘mustered arguments in public concerning the matter in question, and thus it was brought about that the opinions of those formerly fallen changed (κινήσας τε λόγους ἐπὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ περὶ τοῦ ζητουμένου, ὥς μετατεθήναι τὰς τῶν πρότερον ἐσφαλμένων διανοιαῖς), EH 6.37.1.’ Origen defends the community because he can out-reason heretics.

The second issue is Eusebius’ portrayal of Origen’s relationship with institutional authority. Scholars are so accustomed to thinking of Origen as heroic agent that they
miss the agency of those around him. Origen’s actions are repeatedly taken on behalf of
the Christian community, and at the direct behest of its official leaders. For example,
Eusebius consistently stresses that Origen’s teaching is performed on behalf of the
ecclesiastical institution. At the start of Origen’s career Eusebius asserts that ‘the
occupation of teaching was left to him alone by Demetrius, chosen as leader of the
community (αὐτῷ μόνῳ τῆς τοῦ κατηχεῖν διατριβής ὑπὸ Δημητρίου τοῦ τῆς ἐκκλησίας
προεστῶτος ἐπιτετραμμένης), EH 6.3.8.’ After Origen’s self-castration too, as we
saw in Chapter 2, Demetrius urges him to continue teaching (EH 6.8.3). Similarly,
Eusebius later reiterates that, ‘Demetrius the bishop there was still urging him on and
even entreatying him at that time (Δημητρίου τὸν τηδὲ ἐπισκόπου ἐτι τότε παρορμώντος
αὐτὸν καὶ μόνον οὐχὶ ἀντιβολοῦντος’). Origen repeatedly returns to Alexandria at
Demetrius’ insistence (EH 6.19.15; 6.19.19). His teaching in Palestine too is at the
bishops’ invitation (EH 6.19.16; 6.27.1). Origen teaches at the request and pleasure of
clerics.

His extensive travel too is almost always in response to the requests or demands of
others. Origen goes to Arabia because the governor asked Demetrius ‘that he send
Origen with all speed (ὡς ἂν μετὰ σπουδῆς ἀπάσης τὸν Ὀριγένην πέμψωειν), EH
6.19.15.’ Later he is ‘dispatched to Greece because of the urgency of clerical affairs
(ἐπειγούσης χρείας ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἐνεκα πραγμάτων ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα στειλάμενος)
EH 6.23.4.’ His appearance at councils and synods is most often in response to
summons. He goes to Arabia to attend a synod because he ‘was again called (πάλιν
Ὀριγένης παρακληθεὶς), EH 6.37.1; see also EH 6.33.2.’ Origen acts not simply in the

318 Noted by Grant, “Early Alexandrian Christianity,” 134: ‘His [Origen’s] teaching, never secret, was
always encouraged by episcopal authority [on Eusebius’ picture].
319 Miller, Biography, 97, suggests that Eusebius presents the reader with dual, contradictory,
explanations for the origins of Eusebius’ teaching career.
interests of the church, but with the blessing of and under the control of its appointed officials.

Moreover, Origen’s own status is unclear in the Ecclesiastical History. I suggest that Eusebius’s portrait is carefully constructed to suggest clerical status for Origen. During the initial discussions of Origen’s teaching career, Eusebius breaks the narrative sequence to jump forward in time. As part of this flash-forward, the reader learns that ‘a little while later (οὖν μικρὸν … ὃστερον), EH 6.8.6’, Origen’s abilities became so famed that two bishops, ‘deeming Origen worthy of privilege and the highest honour, ordained him to the presbyterate by laying on of hands (προσβείον τὸν Ὁριγένην καὶ τῇ ἄνωτάτῳ τιμῇ ἄξιον εἶναι δοκιμάσαντες, χεῖρας εἰς πρεσβυτέρου αὐτῷ τεθείκασιν), EH 6.8.4.’ The story is told in the context of Origen’s castration, in large part because it comes back to haunt him. But the flash-forward also means that the reader knows from very early that Origen is destined for the clergy.

In fact, Eusebius continuously blurs the lines between Origen’s status as teacher and as presbyter. The reader is encouraged to treat Origen’s academic virtues as qualifications for ordination. Before Origen’s ordination, we read that while visiting Palestine the bishops there ‘left it to him to do the interpretations of the divine writings and the rest of the ecclesiastical discourse (τὰ τῆς τῶν θείων γραφῶν ἐρμηνείας καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ λόγου πράττειν συνεχόρουν), EH 6.27.1.’ The use of both συνεχώρουν and ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ is noteworthy. The bishops concede to him something that was properly theirs. We have already seen how Origen is treated by these bishops as a

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320 As Grant, “Early Alexandrian Christianity,” 134-5, says: ‘he [the historian] must not be seduced by Eusebius’ apparently chronological sequences. At key points it is absolutely certain that the sequence has been violated.’
superior. I note too that after Origen’s ordination to the presbyterate, Eusebius never tells us that his ordination is revoked. As far as the *Ecclesiastical History*’s reader is concerned, Origen remains a presbyter.

Finally on this second major tendency in Eusebius’ picture, Eusebius minimises conflict between Origen and Demetrius. This is one reason scholars have such difficulty reconstructing the rift. If Origen’s own writings are anything to go by, this was a period of significant turmoil. But Eusebius not only gives little “airtime” to the rift; when he does discuss it he paints it as petty grievance only. He hints at it first when discussing Origen’s self-castration. Demetrius is said then to be surprised but supportive. However, Eusebius says that years later Demetrius ‘tried to write to the bishops throughout the known world on the grounds that this deed was especially disgusting (τοῖς ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐπισκόπους καταχράσεως ὡς ἀτοπωτάτου τοῦ πραξθέντος ἑπειράτο), *EH* 6.8.4’ and ‘spread horrible slander (πράξεως δεινὴν ποιεῖται διαβολήν), *EH* 6.8.5.’

Eusebius’ writing is subtle here. Firstly, before ordination is even an issue, Eusebius’ readers are encouraged to think the dispute’s cause is in doubt. Demetrius raised the castration, ‘done long ago in his childhood (τῆς πάλαι ἐν παιδὶ γεγνήθης αὐτῶ ἡ ἀλήθεια), *EH* 6.33.2.’ If we read that Origen was summoned ‘with others’, this is simply another example of Origen acting in accordance with the wishes of bishops (Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, vol. 1, 202, translate it this way). But if we read instead (with Arthur McGiffert, *Eusebius. The Ecclesiastical History*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 1, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series (Buffalo, NY.: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1890), 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 (ὑπὲρ πάντα ἄριστον καὶ κύριον μου καὶ ἀδελφόν, *EH* 6.14.8-9.’

Photius, *Bibliotheca* 118, records from Pamphilus’ *Apology* that at the synod called upon Origen’s return to Alexandria, Origen was exiled but allowed to keep his priesthood, but that later Demetrius and other Egyptian bishops stripped him of it. The *Ecclesiastical History* omits this.

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

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321 I note too the ambiguity of the following: ‘and at this time, after many bishops had made investigations and had dialogues with the man, Origen was summoned with others (ἐπὶ τοῖς πλείστοις ἐπισκόποις ζητήσεις καὶ διαλόγους πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα πεποιημένον, μὴ ἔτερον παρακληθεῖς Ὡριγένης), *EH* 6.33.2.’ If we read that Origen was summoned ‘with others’, this is simply another example of Origen acting in accordance with the wishes of bishops (Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, vol. 1, 202, translate it this way). But if we read instead (with Arthur McGiffert, *Eusebius. The Ecclesiastical History*, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 1, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series (Buffalo, NY.: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1890), 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 (ὑπὲρ πάντα ἄριστον καὶ κύριον μου καὶ ἀδελφόν, *EH* 6.14.8-9.’

322 Photius, *Bibliotheca* 118, records from Pamphilus’ *Apology* that at the synod called upon Origen’s return to Alexandria, Origen was exiled but allowed to keep his priesthood, but that later Demetrius and other Egyptian bishops stripped him of it. The *Ecclesiastical History* omits this.

323 The preface to his *Commentary on John*, one of the first things he wrote after moving to Caesarea, is highly embittered, and refers to his own departure from Alexandria as an escape from Egypt on the biblical model.
When he comes to Origen’s first trip to Caesarea and the first disagreement, Eusebius says little. There is an implication in _EH_ 6.19.16-17 that Demetrius was unhappy with the invitation proffered to Origen to preach. Nautin argues that Eusebius’ language is based on Origen’s own description of the conflict in his _Commentary on John_ 6.2. But Eusebius never actually mentions a conflict here. He says only that Alexander and Theoctistos write ‘to defend themselves (ἀπολογοῦνται)’. The original accusation is omitted. Eusebius instead gives the rebuttal:

‘And he adds 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 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 Synadus Theodorus by Atticus, of the blessed brothers. And this is also likely to be true in other places, but we do not know about them.’

324 I have discussed elsewhere this tendency to emphasise personal failings of authority figures so as not to denigrate the institutions those individuals represent. See Corke-Webster, “Author and Authority.”

325 Nautin, _Origène_, 366-68.

326 Nautin, _Lettres_, 121-22, points out correctly 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. He suggests subsequently that the letter was addressed to Pontian of Rome [124-126].

327 Trigg, _The Bible_, 130, suggests that the warfare in Alexandria which originally prompted Origen’s trip to Caesarea was “the fury of Demetrius” rather than the fury of Caracalla. If so, Eusebius certainly intimates no such thing.

328 We see here recurring use of ὅφελεξία·
Eusebius employs a number of techniques to influence the reader here. Firstly, Demetrius’ complaint is not presented in its original form, but framed in the letter that rejected it. Secondly, the use of ‘he adds (προσέθηκεν)’ suggests that there were further reasons not discussed here. Third, the section he does quote asserts strongly that any objection would be unfounded, citing numerous precedents. Demetrius’ position is made to look not only obviously incorrect, but faintly farcical. Eusebius frames the letter, and closes the section, by simply stating that Demetrius recalled Origen to Alexandria where he resumed teaching. There is apparently no lasting ill-feeling, and this letter marks closure. On Eusebius’ picture this was a storm in a teacup, forgotten as soon as raised.

When the storm proper arrives, Eusebius is similarly evasive. He acknowledges that Origen’s official ordination to the presbyterate sparked some tension, as we saw above. But he does not discuss it in any detail. Demetrius is not even mentioned by name, and the nature of or reason for any rift remains unclear. Photius, relying on Pamphilus’ Apology, records 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 (Bibliotheca 118). Eusebius makes no mention of this here. Origen’s move to Caesarea a few chapters later is related without any hint that it is even connected to

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329 Noted by Nautin, Lettres, 122.
330 Trigg, The Bible, 135, following Eusebius’ caricaturing of Demetrius, speculates that ‘Demetrius’ memory was probably failing him in his old age since the same thing had almost certainly occurred at Alexandria, at least before he became bishop there.’
331 I note that that the verb ὁκηὶείλ used here is not that used above for “discourse” (e.g. διαλέγεζζαι and ἑξεκελεύεηλ in EH 6.19.16). ὁκηὶείλ 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. See too n.307.
the dispute (EH 6.26.1).\textsuperscript{332} It is followed by a note recording Demetrius’ death.\textsuperscript{333}

Robert Grant points out that excluding Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia and Achaea, every church in the eastern world approved of Demetrius’ actions against Origen (e.g. Jerome, \textit{Epistle} 33.5).\textsuperscript{334} Eusebius though makes little of it. Similarly Eusebius cites the letter from Alexander to Origen (\textit{EH} 6.14.8-9), but not Origen’s original letter to which this was a response, in which Origen defended himself against accusations likely made by Demetrius. Eusebius minimises their conflict.

This is not the only conflict surrounding Origen so whitewashed by Eusebius. Heraclas, the bishop who succeeds Demetrius at Alexandria (\textit{EH} 6.26.1) is described by Trigg as ‘just as implacable an enemy as Demetrius himself had been’, on the basis of Photius (\textit{Ten Questions and their Answers} 9).\textsuperscript{335} In the \textit{Ecclesiastical History} though, Heraclas is simply Origen’s pupil, highly rated by his teacher and chosen by him as his successor. Methodius, a prominent church leader of the later 3\textsuperscript{rd} century who criticised Origen extensively, is entirely neglected by Eusebius. Peter of Alexandria’s criticisms of Origen are also ignored.\textsuperscript{336} Eusebius’ picture of the relationship between Origen and Dionysius too presents a harmonious teacher-pupil/master-protégé relationship. But independent evidence indicates a more fractious one.\textsuperscript{337} Close studies of Dionysius’ extant writings indicate that despite Origenistic influence, Dionysius’ writings vary.

\textsuperscript{332} Trigg, \textit{The Bible}, 137, again following Eusebius, suggests that Origen had already decided to leave Alexandria permanently before this occurred.

\textsuperscript{333} Grant, “Eusebius and His Lives of Origen,” 644, suggests that Eusebius hints that Demetrius’ death resulted from his unjust treatment of Origen.

\textsuperscript{334} Grant, “Early Alexandrian Christianity,” 135.

\textsuperscript{335} Trigg, \textit{The Bible}, 140.

\textsuperscript{336} Noted by Grant, “Early Alexandrian Christianity,” 133, 42. But see Vivian, \textit{St. Peter of Alexandria}, 88-138, especially 26, who is cautious about how far one can label Peter “anti-Origenist”.

\textsuperscript{337} Though Eusebius preserves most of our material from Dionysius, he is also quoted by Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea and John of Damascus. Two fragments of his letters were also discovered at the turn of the century in the Valarshapat library in Russian Armenia; see Frederick C. Conybeare, “Dionysius of Alexandria: Newly Discovered Letters to Popes Stephen and Xystus,” \textit{English Historical Review} 25 (1910).
greatly from Origen’s. Miller summarises as follows, ‘D. attaches himself to the rhetorical tradition and so may be called the exegete from the school of the rhetor. Origen stands as the exegete from the schools of the philosophers’.338 Dionysius’ writings suggest neither a close dependency on nor adherence to Origen.

There is also no reference to Origen in Dionysius’ extant works, whereas Heraclas is mentioned in dispatches (To Philemon 54.1). In addition, Dionysius’ silence when Origen needed defence has troubled some scholars. Harnack concluded that ‘er aber doch kein so schlechthin unbedingter Verehrer des Origenes gewesen ist, wie Eusebius es war’.339 Charles Feltoe found it ‘ominous that after the death of Bishop Demetrius… we hear of no effort on the part of Dionysius or of any other pupil to obtain his [Origen’s] recall’. Feltoe consoled himself with the suggestion that Dionysius wrote to Origen during the latter’s sufferings, and to Theotecnus in Caesarea praising his master.340 Miller finds no such solace, and concludes that Dionysius must be classed as ‘belonging to the anti-Origen party’.341 Most recently, Wolfgang Bienert’s lengthy study concluded that Dionysius was an anti-Origenist, divorced from Origen politically and doctrinally, and that it was Eusebius who painted the pro-Origenist picture of Dionysius.342 Certainly there is no hint of distance between Dionysius and Origen in the Ecclesiastical History. Eusebius papers over numerous cracks in Origen’s relationship with clerics.

338 Philip Sheridan Miller, Studies in Dionysius the Great of Alexandria (Erlangen: Junge & Sohn, 1933), 35.
339 von Harnack, Geschichte, 59. This dissertation indicates that not even Eusebius can be considered an “unqualified admirer”.
341 Miller, Studies, 57.
These four facets of Eusebius’ picture of Origen’s career – that his teaching is at the behest of the institutional church, that his travel is always in response to institutional summons or demand, the blurring of his own status as teacher or cleric, and the downplaying of his rifts with Demetrius and others – all suggest that Eusebius is tying Origen closely into spheres of official church authority. We can describe this either as Eusebius’ intellectualisation of the church, or his institutionalisation of the intelligentsia.

We now turn to the third distinctive aspect of Eusebius’ presentation of Origen. Eusebius’ account establishes Origen as the hub of a network of church leaders spanning time, through educational links, and space, through epistolary correspondence. It connects him to the educated elite throughout the Empire, both Christian and non-Christian. I will treat the ties of pedagogy first. Origen both educates Heraclas and elects him as his successor in the Alexandrian catechetical school, and Heraclas eventually inherits the see there too (EH 6.26.1). Origen is also Dionysius’ teacher, who inherits the school when Heraclas is promoted, and subsequently the see also (EH 6.35.1). Gregory and his brother Athenodore are ‘thought worthy of the bishopric of the churches throughout Pontus (ἐπηζθνπ῅ο η῵λ θαηὰ Πόληνλ ἐθθιεζη῵λ ἀμησζ῅λαη)’ because ‘for five whole years they remained with him [Origen] and were brought to such improvement concerning divine matters (πέληε δὲ ὅιιηο ἔηεζηλ αὐηῶ ζπγγελόκελνη, ηνζαύηελ ἀπελέγθαλην πεξὶ ηὰ ζεῖα βειηίσζηλ), EH 6.30.1, see also 7.14.1.’ Eusebius notes Origen’s pupils in positions of authority throughout the Empire.

This network is furthered by frequent excurses on other Christian leaders in Book 6. These have drawn criticism from scholars with low opinions of Eusebius’
organizational skills. I suggest instead that we read them as a deliberate matrix constructed around Origen. The first such excursus, for example, treats Clement of Alexandria, whom we have met in the previous chapter. Eusebius tells us that Clement ‘led the catechesis in Alexandria up to such a time that Origen was also among his pupils (τῆς κατ’ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν κατηχήσεως εἰς ἐκεῖνο τοῦ καροῦ καθηγεῖτο, ὡς καὶ τὸν Ὄριγένην τῶν φοιτητῶν γενέσθαι αὐτοῦ), EH 6.6.1.’ Origen is placed in a line of succession. A later digression lists Clement’s works and gives quotations from his writings, as Eusebius does for Origen (EH 6.13.1-6.14.7). Like Origen, Clement was known primarily as a writer and intellectual, and as with Origen Eusebius highlights his pastoral qualities. Eusebius quotes a letter of Alexander to the Christians in Antioch describing him not only as being ‘virtuous (ἐλαξέηνπ), EH 6.11.6’ but as ‘having supported and strengthened the community of the lord (ἐπεζηήξημέλ ηε ηὲ ηὔμεζελ ηὴλ ηνῦ θπξίνπ ἐθθιεζίαλ).’ Like Origen Clement too is institutionalised. Not only is he said to be ‘approved (δοκίμου)’, but Alexander notes that, ‘I have sent these writings to you, my lords and brothers, through Clement the blessed presbyter (ταῦτα δὲ ύμῖν, κύριοι μου ἀδέλφοι, τὰ γράμματα ἀπέστειλα διὰ Κλήμεντος τοῦ μικαρίου πρεσβυτέρου).’ There is no independent evidence that Clement was a cleric, and as we shall see below, his own writings show little interest in institutional matters. As with Origen, Eusebius is suggestive about Clement’s clerical status.

Clement in turn is said to be a pupil of Pantaenus, for which claim Eusebius cites Clement’s own writing (EH 5.11.2). Eusebius has previously characterised Pantaenus

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343 Labelled as ‘digressions’ by Grant, "Eusebius and His Lives of Origen," 639 [n13]. More recent assessments have identified Eusebian motivations behind them. Ferguson, Past is Prologue, 27-29, suggests that the insertion of the Jerusalem episcopal succession in EH 6.8.6-6.9.3 is intended to establish the legitimacy of Alexander’s succession, and thus to defend Origen: ‘Eusebius shows the unquestioned orthodoxy, legitimacy, and succession of a bishop who ordained Origen as well as defended his teaching as a layman’.

344 Few have gone as far as Cadiou, Origen, 4, who speculates that Clement’s teaching was influenced by conversations with an older Origen about the teaching the latter had received from him earlier in life.
with the characteristically Eusebian blend of academic and pastoral excellence: he has both ‘explained for posterity the treasures of the divine teachings in a living voice and written forms (ζώση φωνή καὶ διὰ συγγραμμάτων τοὺς τῶν θείων δογμάτων θησαυροὺς ὑπομνηματικῶς), EH 5.10.4’, and performed ‘many good deeds (πολλοῖς κατορθώμασι)’. Eusebius states too that Pantaenus ‘at the end of his life led the school at Alexandria (ἐπὶ τοῦ κατ᾽ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τελευτῶν ἤγεται διδασκαλείου)’, which Clement inherits from him. Eusebius works hard to draw Pantaenus into his pedagogical web.

Independent evidence suggests that Eusebius is constructing a solid-seeming intellectual genealogy out of rather more fragile historical connections. Eusebius’ portrayal of the relationship between Pantaenus, Clement and Origen has received more attention than most of Eusebius’ writing because of scholarly interest in the Alexandrian school.\(^\text{345}\) Pantaenus is a shadowy figure; most of what we know is in Eusebius.\(^\text{346}\) What Clement tells us of him though seems to contradict Eusebius; Clement says for example that Pantaenus left no writings (Miscellanies 1.1.11). Similarly, there is little evidence that Clement was Origen’s teacher; Origen’s own writings never mention Clement.\(^\text{347}\) It is extremely unlikely that either Pantaenus or Clement was the head of an official school in Alexandria, or that their schools were linked. As Gustave Bardy argued persuasively in 1937, both were more likely private teachers of Christian philosophy, separate from


\(^{346}\) Clement mentions Pantaenus with a possessive pronoun in his Prophetic Eclogues, but that he was his teacher is only in Eusebius, who references Clement’s lost Outlines.

\(^{347}\) Explaining this omission, Edgar Goodspeed and Robert M. Grant, A History of Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 128, argue that Origen disapproved of Clement because he avoided martyrdom. But as we have seen in Chapter 1, and will see in Chapter 4, this would be hugely hypocritical.
whatever mechanisms for catechism existed in Alexandria. Bardy argues that it is only
with Origen that we see the existence of a formal institution combining basic Christian
instruction with advanced theological reflection, and even this picture is largely based
on Eusebius. 348 Eusebius’ picture though paints Pantaenus, Clement and Origen as
alike: all academics, both prolific and virtuous, noted for their pastoral capacities and
successive heads of an institutionally recognised Christian school.

As well as being placed at the centre of this pedagogical lineage, Origen is at the centre
of a vast epistolary network. Drawing literary threads between church leaders is one of
Eusebius’ favourite pastimes. 349 Origen is in correspondence with martyrs (EH 6.2.1;
6.28.1), bishops (EH 6.14.10-9; 6.19.19; 6.36.3-4); for apologetic reasons (EH 6.19.12-
14) regarding doctrinal matters (EH 6.31.1), and for pastoral purposes (EH 6.39.5).
Eusebius says that, ‘we have tried to gather together as many of these as possible, more
than a hundred, and have catalogued them by splicing them into their own books so that
they might no longer be scattered (ὁν ὀπόσας ... συναγαγεῖν δεδουνῆμεθα, ἐν ἴδιας
tόμων περιγραφῶς, ώς ἂν μηκέτι διαρρίπτοιτο, κατελέξαμεν, τὸν ἑκατὸν ἄριθμὸν
ὑπεξβαλνύζας), EH 6.36.3.’ Origen’s life from birth to death is marked by
correspondence.

348 For example Bardy, "Aux origines," 90: ‘Origène est le premier qui en transforme le but et l’auditoire.
A ce titre, il mérite le nom de fondateur.’ Grant, "Early Alexandrian Christianity," coming at the question
from a different (Pythagorean) angle, reached similar conclusions. This has been questioned recently by
those wishing 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); Henny Fiskå
Hägg, Clement of Alexandria and The beginnings of Christian Apophaticism: Knowing the Unknownable
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 55-59, who argues based on van den Hoek. This regressive
position rests not only upon the refusal to acknowledge Eusebius’ literary capacities, but upon the
questionable assumption that Christian Alexandrian writings indicate the presence of a scriptorium, that a
scriptorium means a library, and that a library means a school; see van den Hoek, "How Alexandrian,"
191. This position has itself been critiqued by Kim Haines-Eitzen, "Imagining the Alexandrian Library
and a Bookish Christianity," in Reading New Testament Papyri in Context, eds. Claire Clivaz and Jean
349 Noted by van den Hoek, "‘Catechetical” School", 61.
One passage is particularly illuminating, because it combines pedagogical and epistolary ties. Eusebius quotes another letter of Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem. He introduces 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 (πάλιν δ’ ὁ δηλωθεὶς Ἀλέξανδρος τοῦ Κλήμεντος, ἥμα δὲ καὶ τοῦ Πανταίνον ἐν τινὶ πρὸς Ὀρηγένην ἐπιστολῆ ἐπηζηνιῆ κλεκνλεύεη, ὡς δὴ γνωρίμων αὐτῷ γενομένοι τοῦ ἀνδρῶν), EH 6.14.8.’ The letter is cited as evidence that the affection between contemporaries could be passed down to their pupils:

‘For this was the will of God, as you know, in order that the friendship which has arisen amongst our predecessors might stay inviolate, and rather might be 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 benefactor, and any other like them, if there is such. I became acquainted with you through these men, in all things best and my lord and brother.’

Alexander, writing to Origen, references their mutual connections to Pantaenus and Clement in the prior generation, implying they have inherited not only their intellectual authority but also their friendship. Such ties materialise in letters like this one. These literary threads weave throughout the Book 6 stories, and create a matrix around Origen. I note too that Eusebius again makes little distinction in authority or status between Origen and a bishop here. The implication is that they write to each other as intellectual equals.

350 Discussed in Nautin, Lettres, 129-32.
351 This passage is also the only explicit extant reference to Clement and Origen being acquainted. But I note that this passage does not unequivocally make Origen Clement’s pupil.
352 As well as being further evidence for Eusebius’ privileging of intellectual authority, and blurring of Origen’s role (see n321), there may also be implications here for his attitude to Jerusalem as 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, Past is Prologue.
clerics. The bishop of Jerusalem here addresses Origen, a teacher at Alexandria and later a presbyter at Caesarea, as his ‘lord (κύριον)’. Origen is a hub of this Empire-wide network of intellectual churchmen, united by pedagogical succession and epistolary correspondence.

There is one further element to this network. Origen’s ties, both the pedagogical and the epistolary are not simply with Christians. They are also with elite non-Christians (though some become Christian after interacting with Origen). We have already encountered examples of this. Among Origen’s pupils, ‘not a few of the most distinguished philosophers eagerly paid attention to him, being educated by him, in addition to divine things, one might almost say, also in the matters of outsiders’ philosophy (φιλοσόφων τε τῶν μάλιστα ἐπιφανῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι διὰ σπουδῆς αὐτῶ προσεῖχον, μόνον οὕτω πρὸς τοὺς θείους καὶ τὰ τῆς ἔξωθεν φιλοσοφίας πρὸς αὐτῶ παιδευόμενοι), EH 6.18.2.’ Eusebius makes a rare quote from Origen’s own writings to the effect that his pupils included ‘those coming from Greek learning and most of all from philosophies (οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν Ἕλληνικῶν μαθημάτων καὶ μᾶλιστα τῶν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ), EH 6.19.12.’ Origen teaches both Christian and non-Christian elites.

As regards horizontal ties, we have seen already Origen’s interactions with the uppermost echelons of imperial society. In the Book 6 stories he keeps the company of both governors (EH 6.19.15) and the imperial family (EH 6.21.4). His correspondence too extends to such as these. Eusebius tells us that ‘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 (φέρεται δὲ αὐτῶ καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν βασιλέα Φίλιππον ἐπιστολὴ καὶ ἄλλῃ πρὸς τὴν τοῦτον γαμετήν Σευήραν διάφοραι τε ἄλλαι πρὸς διαφόρους), EH
6.36.3.’ His contemporaries in the Greek philosophical schools also ‘sometimes
dedicated their treatises to him (τοτε μεν αυτο προσφωνοντων τους ἐαυτον λόγους).
EH 6.19.1.’ Moreover ‘we find frequent mention of the man in their writings (ὅν ἐν
συγγράμμασιν πολλήν μνήμην εὑρομεν τοῦ ἰνδρός).’ Origen moves freely between the
learned, be they churchmen, philosophers or governors.

We can draw three conclusions from Eusebius’ portrayal of Origen’s career. His focus
upon Origen’s intellectual qualities, noted in Chapter 2, continues. Here, as there,
Eusebius ensures that this is no isolated scholarship, but a practical intelligence that has
congrue effects in the community. In particular, he engages heretics on intellectual
grounds. Secondly, Eusebius institutionalises Origen. Not only does Origen work in line
with episcopal demands; Eusebius presents him as essentially a cleric. Furthermore, the
clash of intellectual and episcopal authority that scholars have envisaged between
Origen and Demetrius is not Eusebius’ picture. Eusebius minimises and trivialises their
conflict. Thirdly, Eusebius’ picture puts Origen at the centre of an extensive network of
Christian and non-Christian leaders. This is a network of both horizontal (geographical,
via letters) and vertical (chronological, via education) ties. As in previous chapters,
these Book 6 stories serve as a lens through which to view the Ecclesiastical History as
a whole.

III. Scholarship and Leadership in the Ecclesiastical History

353 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.
All three tendencies extend beyond these Book 6 stories. As we noted in Chapter 2, the *Ecclesiastical History* is filled with intellectual Christians, whose academic merits are matched by their pastoral endeavours. They are also marked for prodigious literary output. As with Origen, it is their intellectual qualities that render them effective in the community. There are numerous examples of this throughout the *Ecclesiastical History*, some of which we have assessed in Chapter 2. Certain cases deserve closer attention.

Anatolius and Eusebius, successive bishops of Laodicea are examples of how intellectual abilities allow clerics to protect the community. Both are originally Alexandrians, and Anatolius is a man who ‘because of his discourses and education in the philosophy of the Greeks had achieved pre-eminence among the most esteemed among us (λόγων δ’ ἐνεκα καὶ παιδείας τῆς Ἑλλήνων φιλοσοφίας τε τὰ πρῶτα τῶν μάλιστα καθ’ ἡμᾶς δοκιμωτάτων ἀπειθηνεγμένος), *EH* 7.32.6; see also 7.32.13.’ On the basis of these the Alexandrians ask him to organise an Aristotelian school. Eusebius (of Caesarea) then tells a lengthy story about the siege of the Pyrucheum in Alexandria, where Anatolius’ and Eusebius’ (of Laodicea’s) combined intelligence saves the city’s inhabitants.354 They concoct an elaborate plan to sneak the inhabitants – Christians first – out of the city (*EH* 7.32.8-11). Once the people escaped they found that ‘Eusebius [of Laodicea] received them all, and in the manner of a father and doctor he revived those distressed from the long siege through all foresight and service (τοῦς πάντας ύπωδεχόμενος ὁ Ἑυσέβιος πατρός καὶ ἰατροῦ δίκην κεκακωμένους ἐκ τῆς μακρᾶς πολιορκίας διὰ πάσης προνοίας καὶ θεραπείας ἀνεκτάτο), *EH* 7.32.11.’ In this last

354 We might compare Anatolius’ ability to ‘look after the [Christian] household (οἰκονομεῖται), *EH* 7.32.8’ with the discussions of plague in Chapter 1, where both Jews and “pagans” fail to care for one another during famine, over and against Christians who, like Anatolius, do. The language of the household here also fits that paradigm.
phrase, ‘foresight and servive (προνοίας καὶ θεραπείας)’, we see how the community benefits from its leaders’ combination of intelligence and altruism.

Theodotus, another bishop of Laodicea, also illustrates how academic quality and pastoral care align. Eusebius notes how Theodotus ‘had achieved pre-eminence in the expertise of healing bodies, and of caring for souls (ιατρικῆς μὲν γὰρ σωμάτων ἄπεφερε τὰ πρῶτα τῆς ἐπιστήμης, ψυχῶν δὲ θεραπευτικῆς). EH 7.32.23.’ These are clarified as referring to his ‘genuineness, benevolence, eagerness and sympathy for those that needed help from him (φιλανθρωπίας γνησιότητος συμπαθείας σπουδῆς τῶν τῆς παρ’ αὐτοῦ δεομένων ὀφελείας ἔνεκεν)’ and his ‘deep training in the divine learnings (πολὺ δὲ ἤν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ περὶ τὰ θεῖα μαθήματα συνησκιμένον)’ respectively. Again we see study and pastoral care combined (marked by the oft-repeated term ὀφελεία). Intellectualism feeds community care.

That this twin focus is the key to Eusebius’ assessment of legitimate church leadership is emphasised when we learn that even a heretic (admittedly one who sees sense) is praised in quotation by Eusebius in so far as he is both an intellectual and cares for his flock. One Nepos is praised for ‘his faith and love of labour and study with the writings and plentiful psalmody (τῆς τε πίστεως καὶ τῆς φιλοπονίας καὶ τῆς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς διατριβῆς καὶ τῆς πολλῆς ψαλμῳδίας), EH 7.24.4.’ Through his intellectual abilities ‘many of the brothers up till now have been cheered (μέχρι νῦν πολλοὶ τῶν ἁδελφῶν εὐθυμοῦνται)’. His followers too are praised for ‘their steadfastness, love of truth, speed to follow and intelligence (καὶ τὸ εὐσταθῆς καὶ τὸ φιλάληθες καὶ τὸ εὐπαρακολούθητον καὶ συνετῶν), EH 7.24.8.’ Similarly, Beryllus, bishop of the Arabians at Bostra, a heretic eventually corrected by Origen, is praised because ‘he left
behind together with letters, diverse and beautiful compositions (σὺν ἐπιστολαῖς καὶ συγγραμμάτων διαφόρους φιλοκαλίας καταλέλοιπεν), \textit{EH} 6.20.2.’ Even in those whose views are ultimately proved erroneous, Eusebius can praise the twin qualities of intelligence and pastoral care he valorised.

The best example of Eusebius’ twin stress is Dionysius of Alexandria. We first meet Dionysius when we are told that he inherited the Alexandrian catechetical school from Heraclas (who was promoted to the see of Alexandria when Demetrius died). Dionysius too is a pupil of Origen (\textit{EH} 6.29.4), and is part of the pedagogical lineage examined above. Dionysius dominates the rest of Book 6 and the majority of Book 7. Much is quotation of Dionysius’ own writing. Eusebius’ picture of Dionysius echoes that of Origen, in particular the stress given to the practical effects of his education in the community.

Dionysius enters the stage as the “Life of Origen” ends. From the start it is his writings and their effects on the community that interest Eusebius. Dionysius repairs schism in his own community with letters when various factions were spread through the city (\textit{EH} 7.21.1.) Plague follows schism, and Dionysius again comforts his flock in writing (\textit{EH} 7.22.1-10). Book 6 ends with a catalogue of Dionysius’ works (\textit{EH} 6.46.1-5), some discharged for pastoral benefit, some for bishops and leaders in crisis. Eusebius’ final comment in Book 6 reads: ‘conversing with many others similarly through letters, he has left behind diverse aids for those still now eagerly working with his writings (ἄιινηο δὲ πιείνζηλ ὁκνίσο δηὰ γξακκάησλ ὁκηιήζαο, πνηθίιαο ηνῖο ἔηη λῦλ ζπνπδὴλ πεξὶ ηνὺο ιόγνπο αὐηνῦ πνηνπκέλνηο ηνῖο, \textit{EH} 6.46.6.’\textsuperscript{355} This is very similar

\textsuperscript{355} Carriker, following Lawlor, believes this constituted the bundle of fourteen documents on the Novatianist controversy Eusebius had in the Caesarean library; Carriker, \textit{Library}, 201. Carriker picks up
to Eusebius’ penultimate comment about Origen, (EH 6.39.4; discussed in Chapter 4; notice in particular the repetition of ὑφελείας).

As with Origen, Dionysius’ academic qualities prove vital for countering heretics. In the Novatianist schism Dionysius largely restores church harmony by sending Novatian letters noted for their rhetorical qualities (EH 6.45.1).\(^{356}\) In addition, he is invited by other bishops to attend the synod at Antioch discussing the issue (EH 6.46.3). Dionysius’ letters also solve the baptismal and Sabellian controversies (EH 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 (ἐπέζηεηιά ηηλα, ὡο ἐδπλήζελ, παξαζρόληνο η καζενῦ, δηδαζθαιηθώηεξνλ ὑθεγνύκελνο) EH 7.6.1.’ Eusebius highlights that it is the in-depth intellectual engagement that proves crucial. He comments that in another letter, to bishop Xystus in Rome, ‘through a lengthy demonstration he [Dionysius] extends a discussion concerning the question set out (δηὰ καθξ᾵ο ἀπνδείμεσο ηὸλ πεξὶ ηνῦ ὑπνθεηκέλνπ δεηήκαηνο παξαηείλεη ιόγνλ), EH 7.9.6.’ As with Origen, Dionysius’ intellectualism renders him effective in countering heresy.

The importance of academic training for confounding heretics is made explicit in Dionysius’ writing On Promises, written against Nepos, bishop in Egypt. Nepos had written a work embracing a form of chiliasm entitled Refutation of the Allegorists. Eusebius quotes Dionysius on how being able to engage intellectually with heretical doctrine is essential:

\(^{356}\) Dionysius’ writings’ rhetorical qualities have been closely examined; see Miller, Studies.
‘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.’

Dionysius’ words, excerpted by Eusebius, justify Eusebius’ insistence upon the importance of Christian leaders possessing intellectual authority. A bishop requires the intellectual and literary abilities to engage with an intelligent heretic to protect his flock, especially the ‘simpler brothers (τούς ἄπλουστέρους ἄδελφους)’. To exercise proper pastoral care, one must refute heretics on an intellectual level; to reach one’s flock one must be able to respond to written treatises in kind.

In the controversy that follows, we see Dionysius in action. He is brought Nepos’ book, so seemingly intelligent that it was ‘like some unconquerable weapon or wall (ὅς τι óπλον καὶ τείχος ἄμαχον), EH 7.24.7.’ Dionysius accordingly, being a scholar, records that ‘settling with them for three days continually from morning until evening, I tried to set what was written there right (συγκαθισθείς αὐτοῖς τριῶν ἔξις ἡμερῶν ἐξ ἐκ μέχρις ἐσπέρας, διευθύνειν ἐπειράθην τὰ γεγραμμένα).’ Complex academic debate ensues (EH 7.24.8). Finally, the schismatic who has championed Nepos’ work concedes the debate, being ‘sufficiently convinced by the counterarguments (ὡς ἴκανος ὑπὸ τῶν

357 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. EH 6.46.1-5).
358 I note that this language echoes that of Pamphilus’ and Eusebius’ co-authored Defence of Origen 18.
ἀντιλεχθέντων ἡρημένως), EH 7.24.9.’ It is this long academic wrangling that achieves ‘agreement and conciliation to all (τῇ πρὸς πάντας συγκαταβάσει καὶ συνδιαθέσει).’ Christian leaders for Eusebius need to be of such intellectual calibre in order to carry out their pastoral duties.

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Secondly, as with Origen, the Ecclesiastical History as a whole institutionalises the authority of the intellectual. We see this best in an example of Eusebian editing, in Dionysius’ third letter on baptism, addressed to the Roman presbyter Philemon. Eusebius quotes three brief extracts from a letter he admits contains much more material. Eusebius’ careful excerpting shows him asserting the validity of intellectual authority but immediately institutionalising it.

Eusebius’ first extract seeks to excuse Dionysius’ study of ‘the treatises and traditions of the heretics (τοῖς συντάγμασιν καὶ ταῖς παραδόσεσιν τῶν αἵρετικῶν), EH 7.7.1.’ He has risked ‘staining my soul for a brief time (χρηματών μὲν μου πρὸς ὀλίγον τὴν ψυχήν)’ because it is only by academic study, as we saw above, that heretics can be refuted. By studying their texts he was ‘taking from them this advantage – the refuting of them for myself (ὅνημι δ’ ὅν ἰᾶπ’ αὐτῶν ταύτην λαμβάνων, τὸ ἐξελέγχειν αὐτοὺς παρ’ ἐμαυτῷ).’ Dionysius assures the reader that this activity was validated by a divine vision, which commanded, ‘Take on everything that happens to come into your hands, for you are equipped to test and amend each thing (πᾶσιν ἐντύγχανε οἶς ἐν εἰς χεῖρας λάβοις· διευθύνειν γὰρ ἐκαστα καὶ δοκιμάζειν ἰκανός εἶ), EH 7.7.3.’ This brief quotation affirms academic study for a bishop as essential to counter heresy.
Eusebius’ then skips ahead in the letter. His second extract affirms that this academic study was not only divinely inspired, but also ratified by current church hierarchies.

Eusebius’ selective editing means that having validated intellectual authority, the very next sentence continues: ‘this rule and principle I myself received from our blessed father Heraclas (τοῦτον ἐγὼ τὸν κανόνα καὶ τὸν τύπον παρὰ τοῦ μακαρίου πάπα ἡμῶν Ἡρακλᾶ παρέλαβον), EH 7.7.4.’ Intellectual authority is immediately institutionally validated.

Eusebius now skips forward in the letter again. His third quotation emphasises that Dionysius’ attitude was not just approved by the contemporary church, but by church tradition too. Dionysius affirms that this was not a new practice in Africa, ‘but 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 (αὖθις καὶ πρὸ πολλοῦ κατὰ τοὺς πρὸ ἡμῶν ἐπισκόπους ἐν ταῖς πολυανθρωποτάταις ἐκκλησίαις καὶ ταῖς συνόδοις τῶν ἀδελφῶν, ἐν Ἰκονίῳ καὶ Συνάδοις καὶ παρὰ πολλοῖς, τοῦτο ἔδοξεν), EH 7.7.5.’ This threefold quotation demonstrates the power of Eusebius’ editing. The three successive quotes dissect the Christian leader’s authority. The ability to counter heresy derives primarily from intellectual study, which is divinely approved. But immediately Eusebius asserts that this is affirmed by Dionysius’ predecessor in the Alexandrian see, Heraclas, and by older and geographically diverse church tradition.

Furthermore, as with Origen, Eusebius often blurs distinctions between intellectual and institutional authority. It is precisely the appointed officials of the church that are
marked for their intelligence and education. The churches literati are also its clergy. Intellectual and pastoral epithets are by far the most common for clerics throughout, and bishops are commonly noted for their literary productions. Dionysius of course was bishop of Alexandria for seventeen years (EH 7.28.3). There are too many other examples to document here. But if we take Book 7 as an example, we find Dionysius of Rome (EH 7.7.6), Malchion, presbyter of the sophists (EH 7.29.1-2). Dorotheus, presbyter of Antioch (EH 7.32.2), Pamphilus, Eusebius’ mentor and a presbyter in Caesarea (EH 7.32.25), Pierius, presbyter at Alexandria (EH 7.32.27-30), Anatolius bishop of Laodicea (EH 7.32.6-19) and Theodotus, bishop of Laodicea (EH 7.32.23) described thus. Of Theodotus, a doctor, Eusebius says that ‘by these actions [the combination of book learning and pastoral care] the man proved his right to the lordly name and the episcopate (πράγμασιν αὐτοῖς ἀνήρ καὶ τὸ κύριον ὄνομα καὶ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἐπαληθεύσας)’. Intellectual and pastoral authority is treated as a criterion for the episcopacy.

That Eusebius’ insists the clergy be marked by intellectual and pastoral authority is evident when he castigates those bishops who fail to meet his standards. The bad bishop is he who fails in intelligence and altruism. The Novatianist schism serves as an illustrative case study. Novatus, a presbyter at Rome who seizes the bishopric (EH 6.43.5), receives perhaps the most hostile reception in the Ecclesiastical History. Numerous chapters are dedicated to character assassination, and Eusebius quotes the correspondence of two other bishops criticising him. Part of the complaint, quoted from Cornelius of Rome, is his sudden appearance as a bishop, ‘as if tossed into our midst from some machine (ὖσερ ἐκ μαγγάνου τινὸς εἰς τὸ μέσον ρίψεις), EH 6.43.7.’ This is made clearer when Cornelius asks, ‘in which deeds or which acts of citizenship did he
become confident that he could lay claim to the episcopate? Was it because he been brought up in the church from the beginning? No (τίσιν ἔργοις ἢ τίσιν πολιτείαις τεθορηκὼς ἀντεποιήθη τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς. ἃρα γε δία τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀνεστράφθαι... ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν), EH 6.43.13.’ This upbringing in the church refers, I suggest, to the education in Christian schools Eusebius emphasises throughout.

In the second place what kinds of ‘deeds’ or ‘acts of citizenship’ are referred to here? That it is pastoral care for his community is clear from the other material criticising Novatus. Dionysius of Alexandria explains his ‘hatred (ἀπεχθανόμεθα), EH 7.8.1’ for Novatus on the basis that ‘he divided the church and drew several of the brothers into impiety and blasphemy (διακόψαντι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ τινὰς τῶν ἄδελφων εἰς ἁσβείας καὶ βλασφημίας ἐλεύσαντι).’ Eusebius characterises Novatus as one ‘harbouring contempt (τῇ... ἄρθεὶς ὑπερηφανίᾳ), EH 6.43.1’ for those who lapse during “persecution”, and as holding ‘a brother-hating and inhuman opinion (τῇ μισαδέλφῳ καὶ ἀπανθρωποτάτῃ γνώμῃ).’ Worse, during a crisis he ‘denied that he was a presbyter (πρεσβύτερον εἶναι ἑαυτὸν ἁρνησάμενος), EH 6.43.16.’ He ‘departed in anger (χαλεπαίνοντα ἀπέλευσε’) 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 (βοηθῆσας τοῖς ἁδελφοῖς ὅσα θέμις καὶ ὅσα δυνατῶν πρεσβυτέρῳ κινδυνεύουσιν ἁδελφοῖς καὶ ἐπικουρίας δεομένοις βοηθεῖν)’. Providing pastoral support marks the presbyter’s role, and in failing to do so Novatus rejects the office. 359

359 I note too that Novatus, failing in his pastoral duties, declares himself ‘to be an adherent of another philosophy (ἐπέρας γὰρ ἐνα τῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ ἔραστης), EH 6.43.16.’ This fits well the discussion of Christian philosophy in Chapter 2.
This is particularly interesting when we compare Eusebius and Dionysius’ presentation of Novatus 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 Christians, bore their burdens and supported them (*To Novatus* 13.8). It is precisely these qualities that Novatus is denied in the *Ecclesiastical History*, since in failing to demonstrate them Novatus conforms to the stereotype of illegitimate authority Eusebius constructs there.

In addition, Novatus acquires the episcopate due to a spurious ordination by three other bishops. Eusebius quotes Cornelius in saying these came from ‘some small and very insignificant part of Italy (εἰς βραχὺ τι μέρος καὶ ἐλάχιστον τῆς Ἰταλίας), *EH* 6.43.8-9’, and were ‘rustic and very simple-minded men (ἄνθρωπος ἀγρόικος καὶ ἀπλοῦστάτους)’. He reiterates that they were deceived by Novatus’ trickery because they were ‘rather simple-minded about the deceits and villainies of the wicked (ἀπλουστέρους περὶ τὰς τῶν πονηρῶν μηχανὰς τε καὶ ῥᾳδιωμοίρας), *EH* 6.43.9.’ The implication, I suggest, is that they fail as bishops because they are not up to the intellectual standard needed in Eusebius’ eyes. When bishops fail intellectually, there go schism and heresy.

It is a characteristic of the *Ecclesiastical History* too that Eusebius often omits disagreements between church leaders. For example, Eusebius makes no mention of criticism of Dionysius of Alexandria by Dionysius of Rome. In fact, Eusebius simply records praise of the latter by the former (*EH* 7.7.6). But in Athanasius’ *On the Opinions of Dionysius*, the indication is that the Roman Dionysius vigorously attacked

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361 Noted by Grant, "Early Alexandrian Christianíty," 142.
the theology of the Alexandrian. Such inter-episcopal disagreement is often omitted in the *Ecclesiastical History*; when it is included - in the case of major heresy, for example - it is solved by the intellectual impetus of one of the many academically-minded bishops. That so many heretics and schismatics are restored to the church is part of Eusebius’ institutionalisation of intellectual authority.

This is true too for episcopal elections. Eusebius presents an almost uniformly trouble-free picture of church succession. Those points at which he admits controversy are normally part of more serious crises (e.g. the Novatian schism) and are solved in the same manner as heretical opinions above. Even Eusebius’ terminology is homogenising. Everett Ferguson shows that Eusebius utilises none of the nuanced language for different means of election found in other writers. These complexities disappear in Eusebius; it is simply an easy transfer of office between like-minded academics, with the newcomer often the pupil or disciple of the older. This brings us to the third and final characteristic – Eusebius’ Christian network.

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The pedagogical and epistolary net we identified in the Book 6 stories weaves through the whole of the *Ecclesiastical History*. Particularly prominent for the vertical ties of educational succession are the Christian schools, and the threads that link teacher and pupil. Pantaenus, Clement, Origen, Heraclas, Dionysius are named as heads of the Christian catechetical school in Alexandria, and Pamphilus headed its Caesarean spinoff. Beyond Dionysius, Heraclas, Gregory and his brother Athenadore are all pupils

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of Origen, and rise to episcopal sees. Theotecnus too, bishop of Caesarea is identified as ‘of the school of Origen (τῆς δ’ Ὠριγένους διατριβῆς καὶ οὐτος ἦ), EH 7.14.1.’ One Anatolius also set up an Aristotelian school (EH 7.32.7). The schools that enable pedagogical ties are prominent in the Ecclesiastical History.

Eusebius works hard to tie the prominent figures of earliest Christianity together too. He notes that Clement, bishop of Rome, was a companion of Paul (EH 3.4.10; 3.15.1); so too was Dionysius of Athens (EH 4.23.3), a fact Eusebius notes is recorded in writings of Dionysius of Corinth (EH 3.4.11). Polycarp too was a ‘disciple of the apostles (τῶν ἀποστόλων ὁμολογητῆς), EH 3.36.1; see also 4.14.3-4.’ Eusebius notes that Papias was ‘both a hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp (ὁ Ἰωάννου μὲν ἀκουστής, Πολυκάρπου δὲ ἔταξεν), EH 3.39.1’; this is quoted from a document of Irenaeus. Hegesippus is said to have associated with numerous bishops, all united in their opinions (EH 4.22.1-5). Tatian is a disciple of Justin (EH 4.29.1). At the point at which he records Irenaeus’ inheritance of the see of Lyons, Eusebius notes, ‘We have learned that this man was a disciple of Polycarp at a young age (Πολυκάρπου δὲ τοῦτον ἀκουστής γενέσθαι κατὰ τὴν νέαν ἐμανθάνομεν ἣλκίαν), EH 5.5.8; see also 5.20.1.’

Eusebius says that ‘again he [Irenaeus] mentions his association with Polycarp (αὐτὸς τῆς ἁμα Πολυκάρπῳ συνοισίας αὐτοῦ ἐμνημονεύει), EH 5.20.4.’ The quotation that follows simply records how Irenaeus observed Polycarp in Asia (EH 5.20.6). As with Pantaenus, Clement and Origen, it is Eusebius who implies a close association here.

The letters that characterised Origen’s career are also pervasive throughout the Ecclesiastical History. Dionysius of Alexandria engages in a vast correspondence. He sends letters for pastoral, anti-heretical and anti-schismatic purposes (EH 6.44.1-6;
Epistolary ties are rife in the *Ecclesiastical History*’s early books too. The first letter-writer of the church in the *Ecclesiastical History* is actually Jesus himself, who exchanges letters with Abgar, toparch of Edessa (*EH* 1.13.1-20; discussed in detail in Chapter 4). Among the apostles, Peter and Paul are noted for their epistles (*EH* 3.1-7; 2.15.2); so too is James the brother of Jesus (*EH* 2.23.25). Clement of Rome is marked repeatedly for a famous epistle to the Corinthian church (*EH* 3.16.1; 3.38.1; 4.23.11; 5.6.3). Ignatius (*EH* 3.36.15; 3.38.1) and Polycarp (*EH* 3.36.13-15) are both primarily characterised as bishops and letter-writers. Dionysius of Corinth too writes numerous letters (*EH* 4.23.1-12).

The narratives of the martyrdom of Polycarp (*EH* 4.15.1-46), the account of the martyrs in Lyons and Vienne (*EH* 5.1.2-5.3.1) and the martyrdom of Pionius (*EH* 4.15.47) are all letters sent between churches. Eusebius suggests the latter is delivered by Irenaeus, then a presbyter and later a bishop, and contains a recommendation on his behalf (*EH* 6.4.1-2). Polycarp sent many letters both for support and criticism (*EH* 4.14.8-9); this is noted too by Irenaeus (*EH* 5.24.8) who was himself a regular correspondent (*EH* 5.20.1; 5.24.11; 5.24.18). Many of these letters engage with and solve doctrinal or schismatic disputes. One of Irenaeus’ correspondents, Victor, found his mailbox bursting with letters from Polycrates (*EH* 3.31.2; 5.24.1).\(^{363}\) Clement wrote on behalf of the church in Rome to the Corinthians to settle dissension (*EH* 5.6.3). Serapion, bishop in Antioch, writes against the Phrygian heresy in a private letter, in which Eusebius notes he also mentions the writings of Apolinarius against the same heresy (*EH* 5.19.1).

\(^{363}\) Polycrates is apparently one of eight brothers, all of whom are bishops (*EH* 5.24.6).
Eusebius epitomises this epistolary matrix when he says in a sweeping statement, ‘More learned men of the church flourished at this time, of whom also their letters, which they wrote to one another, preserved up till this point, are easy to find (’Ἥκμαζον δὲ κατὰ τοῦτο πλείους λόγιοι καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικοὶ ἄνδρες, ὃν καὶ ἐπιστολὰς, ἃς πρὸς ἀλλήλους διεξάρτησον, ἔτι νῦν σφοξμένας εὑρεῖν εὕρησον), EH 6.20.1.’ Letter-writing, and the harmony it allows, are a mark of Eusebius’ church leaders. It is a habit passed down through the pedagogical links which Eusebius works to tie and tighten between the scattered figures of the first few centuries.

This lattice of interconnections creates a powerful impression of empire-wide conformity. The church is a unified body across space and time. This is well-illustrated in Eusebius’ treatment of church synods. Whenever he describes a synod Eusebius’ stresses above all the whole community united against an isolated minority. Often this united front is manifested in a published letter co-authored by multiple bishops. Eusebius tells us little of synods’ proceedings. By focusing only on the positive result and the unanimous decisions, Eusebius is able to paint a picture of ecclesiastical harmony. Any crack in community consensus is portrayed as isolated, tiny and easily repaired; a lone individual’s straying quickly remedied by the unified wisdom of the institution.

The proceedings against an incumbent bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, provide a good example. When Paul’s views are questioned, Eusebius states that ‘the rest of the pastors of the churches from all over, came together as against a corruptor of the flock

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364 Mendels suggests that Eusebius avoids discussing the details of heretical doctrine in order not to provide them with free publicity; ‘he understood that a concise and derogatory description of a heresy (not in the words of the authoritative synod itself) would be more effective in alienating his audience from false doctrine’, Mendels, Media Revolution, 155.
of Christ, and all made haste to Antioch (οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ποιμένες ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν ὡς ἐπὶ λυμεῶν τῆς Χριστοῦ ποιμνῆς συνήμες, οἱ πάντες ἐπὶ τὴν Αντιόχειαν σπεύδοντες), EH 7.27.2.’ I note firstly that ποιμένες combines the meanings of pastor and teacher, appropriate given Eusebius’ insistence that the clergy are marked for their intellectual capacities, particularly in anti-heretical circumstances. Secondly, Eusebius emphasises how the episcopal collective unites against a lone voice. Eusebius lists the eight most prominent attendant bishops and their sees, then notes that there were countless others there too, all ‘brought together for the same cause (τῆς αὐτῆς ἑνεκεν αἰτίας ... συνκροτηθέντας), EH 7.28.1.’ These descriptions of unity are all Eusebius tells us about this synod.

A second synod against Paul occurs in 269, again ‘with an exceedingly large number of bishops (πλείστων ὅσων ἐπισκόπων), EH 7.29.1.’ Paul was ‘clearly condemned of heterodoxy by all (περὶ ἀπάντων ἢδη σαφῶς καταγνωσθεὶς ἑτεροδοξοί)’ and summarily excommunicated. Eusebius stresses that the assembled bishops ‘then honed a single letter from a common mind (Μία δὴ ἐπὶ θνηλ῅ο γλώκ … δηαραξάμαληεο ἐπηζηνιῃλ), EH 7.30.1.’ This one document was ‘sent throughout all the provinces (ἐπὶ πάζαο δηαπέκπνληαη ηὰο ἐπαξρίαο)’. The letter, quoted by Eusebius, stresses its collective authorship and intended Empire-wide audience (EH 7.30.2-5). Eusebius also excerpts the very end, which reports Paul’s unanimous expulsion and the appointment of his successor, one Domnus son of Demetrian. The letter concludes: ‘we have made it clear to you so that you write to this man, and receive letters of communion from him (ἐδειώζακέλ ηε ὑκῖλ, ὅπσο ηνύ ηῳ γξάθεηε θαὶ παξὰ ηνύηνπ ηὰ θνηλσληθὰ δέρεζζε γξάκκαηα), EH 7.30.17.’ This letter encourages further threads of epistolary correspondence (see also EH 5.19.3-4; 5.24.8).
This intellectual unity is captured perfectly when Eusebius describes the multiple synods that settle the date of Easter. These decide the matter by ‘all, of one mind, through letters between every place, enacting an ecclesiastical decision (πάντες τε μιᾷ γνώμῃ δι’ ἐπιστολῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν δόγμα τοῖς πανταχόσε διετυπωντο), EH 5.23.2; see also 5.25.1-2.’ Eusebius then lists councils – in Palestine, Rome, Pontus, Gaul, Osrhoène – and personal letters, all of which, he says, ‘published the same opinion and judgment, and cast the same vote (οἱ μίαν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν δόξαν τε καὶ κρίσιν ἐξενηγεμένοι, τὴν αὐτὴν τέθειται ψήφον), EH 5.23.3.’ Further down Eusebius quotes the Palestinian synod’s statement:

‘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 days 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.’

This is an excellent example of the importance of such gatherings as statements of the church’s unity, and the role of letters in assuring harmonious practice. This letter is a document produced from a synod and thus signed by multiple bishops, whom Eusebius lists. It refers to other synods in different places which have reached the same decision. The decisions are communicated by letters. Synods are the public face of the church’s unity; letters the means of ensuring it.

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365 I note too the pre-eminence afforded Palestine here.
As with Origen, this network is not exclusive to Christians. At key points Eusebius emphasises that the educated Christian elite are engaging with their contemporaries in the upper echelons of the imperial administration or the philosophical schools. Various early Christian intellectuals write apologies – defences of Christianity – addressed to emperors. Quadratus (EH 4.3.1-3; also mentioned as a bishop in the letters of Dionysius of Corinth in EH 4.23.3), Aristides (EH 4.3.3), Justin (EH 4.8.3; 4.11.11-4.21.1; 4.18.2), Melito of Sardis (EH 4.13.8; 4.26.1; 4.26-5-11) and Bardesanes (EH 4.30.2) all write for imperial eyes. One Roman governor called Serennius Granianus reportedly writes a letter on the Christians’ behalf to the emperor Hadrian (EH 4.8.6; 4.9.1). Hadrian and Antoninus are both quoted by Eusebius as engaging with these Christian apologies (EH 4.9.1-3; 4.13.2-7). Christians engage intellectually with the highest echelons of Empire from Christianity’s earliest days.

One other example is particularly apposite. Eusebius cites Tertullian’s Apology for the Faith, which he notes was ‘delivered to the Roman Senate (Ῥομαικὴν τῇ συγκλήτῳ προσφονήσας), EH 5.5.5’ as mentioning letters of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, which describe how his army was saved by Christian prayers (EH 5.5.6). Tertullian has been introduced earlier as one who ‘had investigated the laws of the Romans thoroughly, and in other respects too was held in high esteem, and one of those most notable in Rome (οὗς Ῥωμαίων νόμους ἥκριτοκός, ἀνὴρ τά τε ἄλλα ἐνδοξῶς καὶ τῶν μᾶλιστα ἐπὶ Ῥώμης λαμπρῶν), EH 2.2.4.’ Tertullian, an elite, educated Christian, addressed the Senate and discussed how the most academic of emperors had written about the Christians. Another emperor is drawn into this elite literary web. Eusebius works to draw such flimsy historical ties into a tight literary picture.
We have therefore seen all three tendencies observed in the Book 6 Origen stories evidenced throughout the *Ecclesiastical History*. First, Eusebius repeatedly praises leadership based upon academic ability. Moreover, it is precisely these academic abilities that enable their wielders to care for and protect the Christian community. Second, Eusebius’ intellectual authority is institutionalised. It is the qualification for clerical office. Third, these academically- and pastorally-minded clerics are linked throughout the *Ecclesiastical History* in space and time by education and correspondence. The “institutionalised intellectual” is one means by which Eusebius collects the diverse individuals of the Christian past into his image of one unified, unchanging institution. We have therefore not only identified a distinctive Eusebian model of authority here; we have identified a structural principle of his writing. To try to understand this we must, as previously, view it against earlier Christian thinking.

IV. Church Traditions

The development of models of authority in the early church, and in particular the development of an institution based upon the authority of episcopal office rather than charisma, is a classic historiographical question, and cannot be treated fully here. Hans von Campenhausen, in the landmark treatment of the topic, notes ‘a marked formalisation of the concept of office, and a stress on the rights and jurisdiction which attach to the office as such and are no longer simply based on the functions which the bishop performs as administrator, judiciary, and spiritual focus of the church’s life’. On the classic view the history of the church witnesses a gradual and inevitable

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transition from Christ’s charismatic authority to the institutionalised authority of the “Catholic Church”. This is often judged to be formalised by the mid-3rd century.

Claudia Rapp more recently has complicated this image of inevitable transition (often conceived pejoratively as decline), and argues instead for fluctuations over time in the relative weightings of a tripartite division of spiritual, ascetic and pragmatic authority. She sees ‘the fluidity of the definition of the episcopal role’ throughout our period and on into late antiquity. As in previous chapters, we must identify Eusebius’ presentation not as the inevitable culmination of a teleological development over the preceding three centuries, but as a unique presentation that owed much to, but was distinct from, a complex landscape of diverse earlier attitudes.

The proof passage for most later discussions of church leadership is 1 Timothy 3-4, which emphasises the importance of a bishop managing his household virtuously (see also Titus 1:5-9). The role of the cleric here is primarily administrative. 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. The same administrative focus is found in the early 2nd century Didache. Bishops and deacons are responsible for day-to-day affairs, whereas prophets and teachers are to manage a congregation’s spiritual and pastoral well-being. In the writings of Ignatius the bishop

367 Rapp, Holy Bishops, 6-7.
368 While I acknowledge Rapp’s categories’ value as a lens to assess the diverse material from the early and late antique church, I have not employed them here. This is because this thesis is a discussion of Eusebius’ presentation of authority, and Rapp’s division does not map well onto Eusebius’ picture. For example, Rapp’s defines ascetic authority as fundamentally self-directed virtuous efforts, and pragmatic as virtuous efforts directed at others (Rapp, Holy Bishops, 16-17). We have already seen in Chapter 2 how Eusebius’ vision of asceticism is outwardly, not inwardly, directed. In fact, as we will see below, Rapp’s categories prove a useful foil against which to see Eusebius’ stylisations.
369 E.g. Rapp, Holy Bishops, 23.
370 We are also dealing here with the phenomenon identified above in Chapter 1, whereby the capacity of Roman men for public office was judged among their peers by their “private” life, and their capacity to manage their household and elicit willing reciprocity from their dependents (wives, children and slaves).
acquires prominence over presbyters and deacons, and takes responsibility for the community’s pastoral welfare and liturgical affairs. In the subsequent Apostolic Tradition ascribed to Hippolytus we meet a liturgical understanding of the episcopate, as well as a description of the process of episcopal appointment, and the idea of apostolic succession. It is at this point, it has been suggested, that we get a distinction of office from individual, and the capacity for authority to be invested in the latter.\footnote{For a useful walk-through of this early material see Rapp, \textit{Holy Bishops}, 24-29. For older but longer discussions, see von Campenhausen, \textit{Ecclesiastical Authority}.}

The early 3\textsuperscript{rd} century Didascalia preserves a more systematic engagement with these questions. It is here we see the clerical life considered as a career. Financial donations are to pay a bishop’s salary, and the bishop is the administrator of charity to widows and children. There is also a lengthy discussion of the bishop’s right and duty to administer penance. His ability to do so is dependent on his personal conduct. It is in the Didascalia too that we encounter an emphasis on the importance of constant scriptural reading for the bishop as preparation for preaching.\footnote{Rapp, \textit{Holy Bishops}, 29-32.}

The Alexandrians had a different approach to church leadership. Clement displays a relative lack of interest in the figure of the bishop.\footnote{Rapp, \textit{Holy Bishops}, 34-35. Rapp’s discussion of Clement includes discussion of the text \textit{On Virginity}, which she mistakenly attributes to Clement of Alexandria thought is in fact by Pseudo-Clement of Rome, and dates to the later 3\textsuperscript{rd} century. Rapp’s point about Clement’s disinterest still stands, however; Clement rarely discusses anywhere in his writings the mechanisms of an institutional church, and seems to have had little to do with them.} Clement’s interest is in Christian teachers; the inheritors of the prophetic role of the church’s earliest days. These spirit-bearers are for Clement the true gnostics, and the congregation’s elite. This is an elite based above all on knowledge, and the capacity to relay it. Insofar as he talks about clergy, he makes a distinction between true priests and priests by ordination.
It is their possession of the spirit, and the *gnosis* that marks that, which characterise the former.\textsuperscript{374}

A similar privileging of the intellectual is found in Origen’s thought, though Origen takes it further.\textsuperscript{375} Where in Clement it bred a relative disinterest in the clergy, in Origen we find intellectual authority envisaged in contrast to the institutional clergy.\textsuperscript{376} Joseph Trigg distinguishes two elements to Origen’s thought here. First, that ‘Origen’s understanding of authority is distinctive in the Christian tradition: he validates charisma in terms of intellectual gifts acquired through open-minded and disciplined study’.\textsuperscript{377} Origen’s model of authority is “charismatic” in that it is acquired directly from God, is not mediated through human ordination or other procedures, elicits free obedience, mediates God’s word and can belong only to individuals.\textsuperscript{378} As with his treatment of asceticism, there is a strong intellectual focus.\textsuperscript{379} For Origen the capacity for intellectual insight based on study is the basis of claims to authority.

\textsuperscript{374} As we saw above, it is questionable to what extent Clement interacted with clerics; he may well have been a private teacher of Christian philosophy, in which case his disinterest in the institution would be natural. It is unclear to what extent there even was a developed clergy in Clement’s time in Alexandria.\textsuperscript{375} This was noted as early as Richard P. C. Hanson, “Origen's Doctrine of Tradition,” *JTS* 49 (1948): 22-23.\textsuperscript{376} Discussed most systematically by Trigg, *The Bible*, 140-47; see also Joseph W. Trigg, "The Charismatic Intellectual: Origen's Understanding of Religious Leadership," *Church History* 50, no. 1 (1981). There is no extant treatise by Origen on the topic, but Trigg has reconstructed his opinions by focusing on passages where Origen discusses 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*, 63-64.\textsuperscript{377} Trigg, "Charismatic Intellectual,” 19.\textsuperscript{378} Trigg defines “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*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Dunker and Hombolt, 1892).\textsuperscript{379} Trigg, "Charismatic Intellectual," 10-11. For example, Trigg argues that Origen’s allegorical discussion of the Jewish priesthood in his *Commentary on Leviticus* sees priests as experts in interpreting the word of God, a skill gained through study. He reads the sacrificial act as an allegory for textual interpretation, so that ‘the Levitical priesthood comes to symbolise a moral and intellectual elite of inspired teachers of Scripture’. It is their capacity for spiritual insight rather than their title that bestows authority. The apostles too are models of inspired exegesis.
Second, Trigg argues that Origen’s “charismatic intellectual” is a deliberate reaction against institutionalised claims to authority Origen thought illegitimate. This is not to say that Origen was opposed to the church; in fact he considered himself a “churchman” (e.g. Homilies on Luke 16.1; Homilies on Joshua 9.8; Homilies on Leviticus 1.1). But he did oppose the model of inherited episcopal authority that was developing in his time. Trigg suggests that as part of this development of succession models, the symbols of both priest and apostle had been appropriated by the institutional episcopate. Origen’s insistence on the charismatic and thus independent nature of intellectual authority was an alternative model. Trigg states that Origen ‘developed a radically “charismatic” ideology of religious authority with which to confront the “official” ideology of the bishops.’

Origen does not reject bishops, but he insists that their authority comes from their intellectual merits rather than from their elected title. Bishops only have episcopal authority if they demonstrate intellectual abilities. Similarly, if anyone else demonstrates such abilities, they too can claim “episcopal” authority. The rightful holders of Christian authority are as often hidden within the congregation as they are the preaching clerics (e.g. Homilies on Numbers 2.1). This is a de facto challenge to the developing institutional hierarchies of the mid-3rd century.

This challenge is perhaps clearest in Origen’s discussion of Matthew 16:13-20, where Jesus commits the keys to the kingdom of heaven to Peter. Origen affirms 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 (Commentary

Those bishops claiming Peter’s authority do so legitimately only if they display the same way of life and intelligence as Peter (since for Origen Jesus bestows authority on Peter because of his moment of wisdom in the Transfiguration). Without these qualities, their claim is groundless, regardless of their official position.

Origen, unlike Clement, is also openly critical of some of those currently occupying episcopal sees. In a barbed comment, often read as directed at Demetrius and others with whom he clashed, Origen says that a misguided bishop, ‘is inflated with arrogance, not understanding the intention of the scriptures, and, being so inflated, has fallen to the judgement of the devil (οὗτος τετύφωται μη ἐπιστάμενος τὸ βουλήμα τῶν γραφῶν, καὶ τυφωθεὶς ἐμπέπτωκεν εἰς τὸ τοῦ διαβόλου κρίμα), Commentary on Matthew 12.14.’ He criticises such clerics, among other things, for aspiring to the clergy ‘for the sake of a little prestige (διὰ τὸ δοξάριον), Against Celsus 3.9’ since clerics are now received by ‘even rich men and persons in positions of honour, and ladies of refinement and high birth (καὶ πλούσιοι καὶ τινὲς τῶν ἐν ἄξιώμασι καὶ γόναια τὰ ἁβρὰ καὶ εὐγενῆ).’ As Claudia Rapp says, ‘This is in tune with Origen’s general tendency to expose the worldliness of the church as an institution.’ Only intellectual authority guarantees good Christian leadership, and needs no formal validation to legitimate it. It is this independence that renders Origen’s model ‘a doctrine which is radically subversive of institutional stability’.

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381 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 was still being negotiated. This seems plausible, since as we have seen the bishop’s role in penitential discipline is not found earlier than the Didascalia.

382 Rapp, Holy Bishops, 35, see also 96-97.

V. Eusebius and the Christian Church

As in the previous chapter, it is clear that Eusebius’ prioritisation of intellectual authority fits firmly in the Alexandrian tradition, especially as represented by Origen. As with asceticism, Eusebius emphasises the importance of academic study for effective pastoral care and community defence. This was I suggest in part a response to widespread suspicion among other Christians of the philosophical, esoteric brand of Christianity prevalent in Alexandria and Caesarea. His insistence on the concrete value of intellectual pursuits thus rehabilitates his Origenistic heritage. In addition, as in Chapter 2, it may also be a response to elite prejudices against the isolated philosopher.

However, as Origen’s attitudes to church leadership had evolved from Clement’s, so too Eusebius takes a step beyond Origen. Eusebius both does justice to his Origenistic heritage while moulding it into his 4th century rhetoric of legitimate authority. For Origen, the free obedience of the student to the teacher was vital, and Eusebius does not neglect this - he stresses that students sought out Origen for teaching purely on merit. But simultaneously Origen’s teaching is repeatedly painted as responsive to Demetrius’ instructions, and Origen himself is drawn into the official church hierarchy. We saw above how Origen’s writings criticise worldly clerics for visiting wealthy women. But in foregrounding Origen’s visit to Mammæa, the mother of the emperor, Eusebius has Origen do exactly this. Eusebius resists Origen’s desire that the charismatic intellectual stand independent of institutional authority. Eusebius was fully committed to that institution, its clergy and their succession, and was unhappy with a model of authority conceived against it.

384 We know Eusebius had read Origen’s Commentary on Matthew since he cites it in EH 6.25.3. See Carriker, Library, 238.
385 See e.g. Grant, “Early Alexandrian Christianity,” 133.
In the Book 6 stories about Origen and beyond, Eusebius blurs the line between intellectual and institutional authority. The numerous independent thinkers and teachers of the church’s history are bound into its clergy. Eusebius’ intellectuals are thus not independent. They are either validated by the institution or members of it. Each intellectual cleric is bound together with other like-minded intellectuals, who educate them, ordain them and affirm their actions. Many are products of the church’s educational system, which we saw Eusebius promote in Chapter 2. Elite education is a prerequisite for successful episcopacy in the Ecclesiastical History. This may seem obvious, but it contrasts with the picture that emerges from independent sources. Claudia Rapp, for example, notes that ‘Beyond functional literacy, the church did not attribute much importance to the level of education of its bishops. Indeed, it did not foster the foundation of educational institutions, analogous to today’s seminaries, with the specific purpose of training future clergy.’

Eusebius’ picture of the church portrays the exact opposite.

An excellent example of the importance of the school tradition for Eusebius’ model of church leadership is found in the climax of his discussion of the Therapeutae, his proto-Christian school. We read, ‘In addition to these things he writes about the manner of

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386 Rapp, Holy Bishops, 179.

387 While Rapp’s evidence is generally good, she here cites Eusebius, saying that ‘Malchion, for example, the head of a school of rhetoric in Antioch at the end of the third century, was only a priest. Eusebius mentions his educational credentials only in passing, while emphasizing that Malchion owed his appointment to the priesthood to “the surpassing sincerity of his faith in Christ”’; Rapp, Holy Bishops, 179. I cannot agree with this assessment. First, why does Eusebius mention Malchion’s education at all, if not to celebrate it? Second, the sheer weight of information pertaining to education in the Ecclesiastical History makes Rapp’s inclusion of him in the general tendency she has identified impossible. Rapp says shortly afterwards that ‘Some of the students at the schools in Alexandria and Antioch later joined the clergy, but only a small number of those reached the episcopate;’ In terms of the total pupils going through those schools in reality that might be true. But it is precisely those that do become ordained that Eusebius highlights.

leadership of those entrusted with the ecclesiastical public services, both the duties of
the deaconate and those of the pre-eminent bishop, highest of all (πρὸς τὸ τοῦτος γράφει
tὸν τῆς προστασίας τρόπον τῶν τὰς ἐκκλησιαστικὰς λειτουργίας ἐγκεχειρησμένων
dιακονίας τε καὶ τὰς ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἀνωτάτω τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς προεδρίας), EH 2.17.23.’ There
is nothing comparable in Philo’s On the Contemplative Life. I note τὰς ἐκκλησιαστικὰς
here, a phrase we have met before. Eusebius makes clerics the climax of his discussion
of the first Christian school, revealing the school’s role in his model of Christian
leadership and the picture of the church it enables.

Here, I suggest, is the reason for the prominence of schools, and the Alexandrian-
Caesarean school in particular, in the Ecclesiastical History, and it is a master stroke. It
is via pedagogical succession that Eusebius can merge intellectual authority with
institutional authority. Education in an institutional school foregrounds the intellectual
qualities he thinks essential to successful Christian leadership, while allowing them to
be passed down in official succession. The Christian school fuses two different models
of legitimate authority to produce institutionalised intellectual clerics. Each
demonstrates the intellectual qualities needed for effective leadership, but each is also
tied into a chain of succession.

Eusebius also goes beyond Clement and Origen because his project is different, and his
vision grander. Eusebius’ model of institutionalised intellectual authority is the
cornerstone of his unified, consistent, and Empire-wide church. That Eusebius desired
this has been suggested before. Walter Bauer argued that Eusebius applied an
‘ecclesiastical colouring’ to his picture of earliest Christianity, and erased from the
historical record the variety of early Christianities.\textsuperscript{389} Bauer’s response was to set the
\textit{Ecclesiastical History} aside and use only independent evidence. He therefore did not
address the means by which Eusebius achieves this homogenisation, or his reasons for
doing so. I suggest that Eusebius homogenises Christian history by weaving a network
in time and space via dual threads of pedagogical succession and epistolary
correspondence, based upon his intellectual model of church authority.

As well as stressing the sheer volume of Christian leaders’ epistolary output, Eusebius
fastidiously records the addressees of all correspondence. Each letter sent and received
ties a thread between geographically distant communities. Each major city of the
Empire has a bishop; these bishops are demonstrably all in communication. The weight
of correspondence in the \textit{Ecclesiastical History} creates a tightly woven web that spans
the Empire from Lyons to Edessa.\textsuperscript{390} Doron Mendels highlights this picture of constant
communication, envisaging bishoprics as local managers in a wider institution.\textsuperscript{391} The
letters allow geographical conformity. The ties of pedagogical succession, and
reminders that correspondents of previous generations have passed the epistolary habit
to their students and successors, mean that Eusebius’ church is not only unified and
orthodox across geographical borders, but has been so for three hundred years.\textsuperscript{392}
Eusebius’ picture of the church is founded on education and correspondence.

\textsuperscript{389} Bauer, \textit{Orthodoxy and Heresy}, 4.
\textsuperscript{390} It is interesting, for example, to see the prevalence of references to Eusebius’ \textit{Ecclesiastical History} in
the footnotes of Helmut Koester’s discussion of Christian authority and the epistolary genre; see Helmut
\textsuperscript{391} Mendels, \textit{Media Revolution}, 157. As elsewhere though, it is very difficult to tell whether Mendels is
referring to Eusebius’ rhetorical picture of the episcopate or to the reality he believes Eusebius was
representing.
\textsuperscript{392} Mentioned briefly by Grant, \textit{Eusebius as Church Historian}, 52.
As in previous chapters, I suggest that this model of church leadership is also a response to elite prejudices, and negative stereotypes of the Christians in particular. Christianity had been repeatedly characterised by elite non-Christians as a religion of the uneducated. Celsus ‘characterised Christianity as an inadequate philosophical-theological system, and Christians as a community of intellectually inferior people.’ 393 He alleged that Christianity celebrated its own ignorance, declaring that ‘the wisdom in the world is an evil, and foolishness a good thing! (Καθὸλ ἡ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ σοφία ἁγαθόν ἐ’ ἡ μορία), Against Celsus 1.9; see too 1.13; 1.27.’ Galen too criticised Christianity and Judaism for being based upon faith rather than reason, and treated Christianity as an inferior philosophy. 394 To many elite non-Christian observers, Christianity had no academic merit.

Connected to this was the assumption that Christians were society’s dregs. This lay behind and was a consequence of Christianity’s lack of intellectual value. Celsus claims that Jesus had associated with deadbeats and rustics. His successors, the Christians, hope that ‘no one educated, no one wise, no one sensible draw near (μηδείς προσίτω πεπαιδευμένος, μηδείς σοφός, μηδείς φρόνιμος), Against Celsus 3.44’, whom they are anyway too afraid to approach (e.g. Against Celsus 3.44; see too 3.50; 3.52). Instead Christianity attracts the ‘ignorant, or unintelligent, or uninstructed, or foolish (εἴ τις ἁμαθής, εἴ τις ἁνόητος, εἴ τις ἀπαίδευτος, εἴ τις νήπιος), Against Celsus 3.44; see too 1.2; 1.23; 3.18; 3.55.’ Since Christianity had no academic merit, its representatives had no intelligence, and vice versa. Christians are ‘wool-workers, cobblers, laundry-workers, and the most illiterate and bucolic yokels (ἐριουργοὺς καὶ σκυττόμους καὶ

393 Benko, Pagan Rome, 148.
We have already met a third pertinent stereotype in Chapter 2; misanthropy (e.g. \textit{Against Celsus} 8.2). This ties into a fourth; that the Christians were fractured, disparate and disagreeable. In the early Christian document \textit{1 Clement} for example, which Eusebius possessed (\textit{EH} 3.16.1; 3.38.1; 4.23.11; 5.6.3), the author says that ‘this very rumour [of community division] has reached not only us, but those also who are unconnected with us (Καὶ αὕτη ἡ ἀκοή οὐ μόνον εἰς ἡμᾶς ἔχωρησεν, ἄλλα καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἔτεροκληνεῖς ὑπάρχοντας ἄφ’ ἡμῶν), \textit{1 Clement} 47.’\textsuperscript{395} Celsus too comments on Christianity’s lack of unity and Christians’ refusal to cooperate. He describes them as ‘a cluster of bats or ants coming out of a nest, or frogs holding council around a marsh or worms assembling in some filthy corner, disagreeing with one another about which of them are the worse sinners (νυκτερίδων ὀρμαθῇ ἢ μύρμηξιν ἐκ καλλὰς προελθοῦσιν ἢ βατράχιος περὶ τέλμα συνεδρεύουσιν ἢ σκώληξιν ἐν βορβόρων γωνίᾳ ἐκκλησιάζουσι καὶ πρὸς ἄλληλους διαφερομένους, τίνες αὐτῶν ἔχειν ἁμαρτωλότεροι), \textit{Against Celsus} 4.23.’ Such were the concerns of the elite. Eusebius’ and Pamphilus’ co-authored \textit{Defence of Origen} also worries about how Christian in-fighting looks to non-Christians (\textit{Defence} 17). It is no coincidence that it is precisely these concerns that Eusebius’ model of church leadership assuages.

In these four stereotypes we find the backdrop against which Eusebius constructs his model of church leadership. His Christians are not stupid or naive. They are intellectuals of the highest calibre. Nor is his Christianity an inferior philosophy. It is the true

philosophy, as we saw in Chapter 2. The Christian clergy move in the same sphere as the non-Christian intellectual elite and are afforded respect by them. Origen ‘was heralded amongst the Greeks themselves as a great philosopher (μέγαν καὶ παρ’ αὐτοῖς Ἐλλησιν φιλόσοφον τὸν ἄνδρα κηρύττεσθαι), EH 6.18.3.’ Moreover, the non-Christian elite come to him for education ‘not only in divine matters but those of the outside philosophy (μόνον οὐχὶ πρὸς τοῖς θείοις καὶ τὰ τῆς ἔξωθεν φιλοσοφίας), EH 6.18.2.’ This point is confirmed by quotation from the non-Christian philosopher Porphyry (EH 6.19.5).396 Origen and those in the network around him are Christian leaders the intellectual elite can respect. They are the intellectual elite. This fits the idea of Christians inheriting traditional values seen in previous chapters.

Secondly, Eusebius’ Christian literati are already moving in the spheres of the intellectual elite and of imperial authority. While Celsus’ caricature of Jesus had him associating only with the dregs of society, Eusebius’ Jesus exchanges correspondence with the non-Christian king Abgar. Where Celsus’ Christian teachers sneak children away to workshops to teach them, Eusebius’ are invited to converse with governors and members of the imperial family. Thirdly, Eusebius’ vast network has Christian academics communicating openly with both each other and their non-Christian counterparts. There are no small, secret meetings here. Eusebius’ synods are vast, open and recorded in documents readily available to the reader. This is no closeted operation but a vast network of communication and administration that rivals the Empire’s

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396 Eusebius quotes from Porphyry to great effect (EH 6.19.2-9) since Porphyry had criticised Origen for falling into Christianity later, rather than been raised so by his parents, a point Eusebius has already convinced his reader is demonstrably untrue.
own. Christians share in the mechanisms of education, patronage and communication that characterised the Empire’s elite. Fourthly, Eusebius’ emphasis upon the church’s unity, and his whitewashing of internal disputes, may be a response to perceptions of Christian fragmentation. Celsus caricatures Christian gatherings as dark dens of disagreement; Eusebius’ synods are shining havens of harmony. Eusebius’ picture of the church exudes unity of purpose above all.

In Eusebius’ picture of Origen’s later career, we have travelled with him on a rise to international prominence. Origen, the naked boy stranded in his mother’s house, and the immature and overly-zealous adolescent, has become a prominent member of the Christian clergy, and a public intellectual. So famous is Origen that he moves freely not only in the highest echelons of the church, but in those of the imperial administration too. It is to such interactions with the representatives of Empire that we now turn in the final chapter of Origen’s life, and his eventual death.

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4. Mortal Authority: Martyrdom, Flight and the Christian Community

Abstract: This chapter argues that Eusebius values future contribution to the Christian community higher than a violent death. This is expressed in his praise of flight from persecution, especially for teachers and leaders. In addition, when describing successful martyrdom, Eusebius highlights endurance and pastoral care above violent witness and resistance. This reimagining of the martyr goes hand in hand with his depiction of judges and governors, the representatives of imperial authority. Eusebius inherited his comfort with flight from his Alexandrian heritage, but in his shift towards the celebration of endurance and pastoral qualities rather than violent resistance towards Rome, he again moulds his inheritance to his 4th century context. Eusebius fundamentally realigns Christian conceptions of the authority of the martyr. Martyrs are no longer symbols of violent resistance to Rome, but an opportunity to celebrate the model of self-controlled Christian leadership constructed throughout the Ecclesiastical History.

I. Origen’s Death

Eusebius’ Book 6 stories about Origen end with the latter’s sufferings under the emperor Decius. As Eusebius tells it, Decius succeeds Philip in 249 and immediately initiates a persecution against the Christians. After recording the death of three other

398 This “persecution” has been much studied. Though the details needs not concern us here, the use of papyrological evidence to cast doubt upon Eusebius’ literary picture is illustrative of the caution with which we should read the Ecclesiastical History. See in particular James Rives, “The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire,” JRS 89 (1999); Reinhard Selinger, The Mid-Third Century Persecutions of Decius and Valerian (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002); AnneMarie Luijendijk, Greetings in the
clerics, Eusebius turns his attention to Origen. This final appearance of his Alexandrian predecessor deserves quoting in full:

‘The sort of things, and how many, that happened to Origen during the persecution, and of what sort was the endpoint he reached, 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 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 fire and threats and as many things as were inflicted by his enemies, and the kind of end that fell to him, 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 for those in need of restoration, the many letters of the man comprise an unconcealed and at the same time accurate account.’

Almost all scholars have assumed an uncomplicated celebration of martyrdom here.

Eugène de Faye speaks of the life-long ‘inflexible constancy’ of which Origen’s suffering under Decius furnished a final example. Cadiou repeats Eusebius’ narrative, without acknowledging the source, as evidence of Origen’s behaviour during crisis. Danielou quotes Eusebius’ account in full and notes that ‘These letters are not extant, but Eusebius had handled them and we can trust what he says about them.’

399 de Faye, Origen and his Work, 172.
400 Cadiou, Origen, 14-17.
401 Daniélou, Origen, 26.
and Trigg have little to say other than relaying the account; Crouzel too affirms it.\textsuperscript{402} Crouzel does note the judge’s strange desire to keep Origen alive, but attributes it to his ‘hoping to obtain from this most celebrated of Christians an apostasy that would have a widespread effect.’\textsuperscript{403}

This reading of Origen’s demise fits wider assumptions about Eusebius’ enthusiasm for martyrdom. The \textit{Ecclesiastical History} contains much material on martyrdom, from Stephen’s stoning (\textit{EH} 2.1.1) to Licinius’ mistreatment of Christians before Constantine’s intervention (\textit{EH} 10.8.1-10.9.5). Books 1-5 quote extensively from previous martyr narratives, notably \textit{The Martyrdom of Polycarp} and \textit{The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna}. Eusebius also indicates that he has previously made a \textit{Collection of Ancient Martyrdoms}, which has not survived (e.g. \textit{EH} 4.15.47; 5.pr.2; 5.4.3; 5.21.4). It supposedly included \textit{The Martyrdom of Polycarp}, \textit{The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna}, \textit{The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions}, \textit{The Acts of Apollonius}, \textit{The Acts of Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonicè} and potentially the \textit{Acts of Metrodorus}. Eusebius quotes too from letters of Dionysius and Phileas concerning martyrdom, and includes an account from Justin. He also wrote \textit{The Martyrs of Palestine}, detailing local martyrdoms under Diocletian, the short recension of which was once part of the \textit{Ecclesiastical History}. Finally, Eusebius lists martyrdom as a theme in his programmatic introduction (\textit{EH} 1.1.3).

Perhaps because its importance to the \textit{Ecclesiastical History} seems obvious, there has been little critical engagement with Eusebius’ own views on martyrdom. More

\textsuperscript{403} Crouzel, \textit{Origen}, 35.
commonly, both material he excerpts and that which he writes for himself are used for reconstructive purposes.  

But why does Eusebius include the material he does and why does he exclude the rest? Why does he compose his own martyr narratives in the way he does? Answers to these questions have been infrequent and unsatisfactory.

Timothy Barnes’ 1981 Constantine and Eusebius, for example, demonstrates a characteristic split in insight. On the one hand Barnes saw, as few others have, that ‘For him [Eusebius] it was persecution, not (as for moderns) the triumph of Christianity, which represented the aberration from the predictable course of history and thus required an explanation.’

This is an important observation, and one to which I will return. Further, it was Barnes who demonstrated that The Martyrs of Palestine was ‘less a history of the persecution in Palestine than a memorial to the friends of Eusebius who died for their faith.’ On the other hand, Barnes’ unwillingness to recognise Eusebius’ capacity for sophistic writing means he paid little attention to the detail of Eusebius’ stories. We must still ask how Eusebius’ representation of martyrs is affected by his unusual attitude towards persecution.

Doron Mendels, who offered an early corrective to such neglect of Eusebius’ literary capacities, did assess Eusebius’ writing on martyrdom in closer detail. He argued that Eusebius’ interest in martyrdom stemmed from his desire to include material for

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404 See for example Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, 298-306 (using the letters of Dionysius, preserved only in the Ecclesiastical History, to describe the “Decian persecution”); and 51-92 (using Eusebius’ own writing to describe the “Diocletianic Persecution”).

405 Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, 136.

406 Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, 155. See too Yoshiaki Sato’s suggestion that Eusebius was suffering from ‘psychological conflict and existential self-hatred’); a kind of post-traumatic stress-disorder. See Yoshiaki Sato, “Martyrdom and Apostasy,” in Attridge and Hata, Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism, 621.

407 His narrative of the Great Persecution, for example, reads much like Frend’s; Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, 148-63.
“publicity”, which would advertise the church to outsiders.\footnote{E.g. Mendels, \textit{Media Revolution}, 101.} While the motivation was admirable, the thesis proved untenable. As was discussed in the Introduction, Mendels’ assessment of Eusebius’ audience as non-Christians is problematic. In addition, a focus on publicity fails to explain much of the martyrdom material Eusebius included – where there is often little focus on public venue or large audience – or the omission of other material.\footnote{For example, why is the Pionius account, in which the martyr speaks before numerous audiences – Greeks, Jews, women, pagan priests, authorities – not quoted in greater detail? Mendels argues that Eusebius chose Polycarp because he was more famous (Mendels, \textit{Media Revolution}, 69). But Eusebius himself calls Pionius ‘a much talked about martyr (πεξηβόεηνο κάξηπο … Πηόληο), \textit{EH} 4.15.47’; he was certainly more famous than the martyrs from Lyons, for example. The argument that Eusebius chose famous martyrs also risks circularity. Many of Eusebius’ martyrs were unknown, and Mendels therefore claims that ‘It is probable that Eusebius created some of the celebrities he mentions in his accounts’. But if Eusebius has made them famous, they were not so before, and cannot have been selected on that basis. In fact, Mendels, \textit{Media Revolution}, 89, admits he is unclear why Eusebius has included some of Dionysius’ letters.} Eusebius’ attitude to martyrdom is not motivated primarily by publicity.

Joseph Verheyden’s recent article on \textit{The Martyrs of Palestine}, like Mendels’ book, acknowledges neglect of that text, and in particular of its rhetorical qualities. Its most important contribution, noted in the Introduction, is the progress it makes in recognising Eusebius’ literary capacities. As such it stands as a valuable prolegomenon to this chapter.\footnote{Verheyden, "Pain and Glory," 353-35.} As regards Eusebius and martyrdom, its conclusions are more modest. Verheyden concludes that the real value of \textit{The Martyrs of Palestine}, ‘an epic that stages many stars’,\footnote{Verheyden, "Pain and Glory," 390.} is its apparent anti-climax, where the death of its main hero, Pamphilus, is hardly discussed. Verheyden ascribes this to Eusebius’ belief that ‘the whole is greater than the individual accounts’, and to the fact that the real hero is the place, Caesarea.\footnote{Verheyden, "Pain and Glory," 391.} Both are valuable conclusions. But Verheyden again assumes a straightforward celebration of martyrdom for Eusebius. But if we lay that assumption
aside, we can see instead the role of the martyr for Eusebius, as exemplar of the rhetoric of self-control, *paideia* and care for dependents seen above.

I contend that Eusebius does not share the unproblematic celebration of martyrdom familiar from much 2nd and 3rd century Christian literature. That he made a *Collection of Ancient Martyrdoms* early in his career does not mean that he thought all its contents appropriate to his new historical work. In fact his selectivity in quoting from it suggests that he did not. I propose a re-evaluation of Eusebius’ portrayal of martyrdoms, and of how that presentation differs from previous portrayals. In the brief account of Origen’s torture and death in Book 6 we find latent clues to Eusebius’ wider views. Alerted to them by this Book 6 lens, we will find them writ large throughout the *Ecclesiastical History*.

II. Going Out with a Whimper

Origen’s martyrdom is not a triumphant climax. Our impression of the end of Origen’s life is in fact rather blurred. Photius for example, reporting on Eusebius’ and Pamphilus’ *Apologetic for Origen*, reports two traditions of Origen’s death. In one he was martyred during the Decian persecution; in the other (which Photius favours, see *Bibliotheca* 118, 92b) he lived on until the time of Gallus and Volusian. This second tradition also depends on Eusebius, since he reports at the start of Book 7 that ‘Origen at this point, having fulfilled one shy of seventy years of life, died’ (Ὠξηγέλεο ἐλ ηνύῃῳ ἑλὸο δένληα ἀπνπιήζαο ἔηε, ηειεπηᾶ), *EH* 7.1.1.⁴¹³ The exact circumstances of his death are opaque in the *Ecclesiastical History*. Robert Grant sees in the use of

⁴¹³ Jerome also places his death a few years later, apparently in Tyre (*On Illustrious Men* 54).
τελευτή and τέλος in the Book 6 passage residual traces of Eusebian editing, and argues that in an earlier edition this passage described Origen’s death, but that this was subsequently removed.414 Regardless, in our current text Origen’s life ends with a whimper, not a bang.

More importantly, the account of his suffering and witness under Decius is paid comparatively little attention. Considering the time and space dedicated in the last thirty-nine chapters to Origen’s career, his death is somewhat short-changed. Even at the last Eusebius seems to shift the focus away from Origen’s death and towards his literary output and its value for supporting the community: ‘the sorts of sayings he left after these things, filled with help for those in need of restoration (ὅπως τε μετὰ ταῦτα καταλείπει φωνᾶς καὶ αὐτᾶς πλήρεις τοῖς ἀναλήψεως δεομένοις ὡφελείας, EH 6.39.5)’. For the reader of the rest of the “Life of Origen” this comes as no surprise, and in fact is delightfully cyclic. The biography ends, as it began, with thwarted martyrdom.

Eusebius’ praise of Origen’s mother for hindering his over-zealous desire for martyrdom ‘for the help of the many (εἰς τὴν πλείστων ὡφελείαν)’, and Origen’s subsequent letter to his father, find echo here in Origen’s letters ‘filled with help for those in need of restoration (πλήρεις τοῖς ἀναλήψεως δεομένοις ὡφελείας)’. Just as his desire for suffering was condemned in his youth because it would have prevented his community contribution, so his actual suffering and witness are discussed only in so far as they provide pastoral literature for the community.

414 He argues too that the Book 6 account seems to build to a climax but then peters out. See Grant, “Eusebius and His Lives of Origen,” 647-48; Grant, Eusebius as Church Historian, 78-79. This has been disputed, by Barnes, “Some Inconsistencies,” 474-75. Nautin, Origène, 97-98, argues that Eusebius’ opinion changed between writing the Defence, where he recorded Origen’s death under Decius (according to Photius, Bibliotheca 118) and the Ecclesiastical History, because he had discovered the letters mentioned here.
Moreover, the passage describing the martyrdom is itself actually a long list of events and qualities that Eusebius’ will not discuss, but which are found in ‘the many letters of the man [which] comprise an unconcealed and simultaneously accurate account (πλείστως ὁσων τονόρος ἐπιστολαὶ ταληθὲς ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀκριβὲς περιέχουσιν).’ This entire “martyr narrative” is a eulogy to Origen’s literary output.

In fact, Eusebius justifies Origen’s avoidance of martyrdom throughout his life on the grounds of his intellectual, literary and pastoral abilities. Origen apparently repeatedly found himself in violent circumstances at the end of the 2nd century and in the first half of the 3rd. In his first teaching position at Alexandria, a number of his pupils are martyred during “persecution” under the governor of Alexandria, Aquila (EH 6.3.3). Eusebius tells us that Origen ‘was with the holy martyrs not only while they were in prison, and not just up to their final condemnations, but also after this death sentence, as they were led away (οὐ μόνον γὰρ ἐν δεσμοῖς τυχανοῦσιν, οὐδὲ μέχρις ὑστάτης ἀποφάσεως ἀνακρινόμενος συνήν, ἀλλὰ καὶ μετὰ ταύτην ἀπαγομένος τῇ ἐπὶ θανάτῳ τοῖς ἀγίοις μάρτυσιν), EH 6.3.4.’ His presence riles the crowd, and Eusebius reports that ‘he was close to being stoned to death (μικροῦ δεῖν κατέλειψεν).’ This language echoes his near-death experience as a seventeen-year-old, discussed in Chapter 1, where Eusebius writes that ‘he was close to his departure from life being not far off (ἠδὴ γέ τοι

415 The circumstances of this persecution under Septimius Severus are odd. Origen’s blatant flaunting of his Christianity without censure is one reason scholars have argued that this persecution was directed only against catechumens. Trigg, The Bible, 53, comments for example that, ‘It seems as if the policy prevailing among Roman authorities during the reign of Septimius Severus did not envisage eradicating Christianity but preventing its propagation. For this reason the persecution would not ordinarily endanger someone who had grown up as a Christian, as Origen had, but would threaten new converts and those who instructed them in the faith.’ Numerous other scholars agree; see also Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, 319-22, 41[n138]; Stuart G. Hall, "Women among the Early Martyrs," in Martyrs and Martyrologies, ed. Diana Wood, vol. 30 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 19; John A. McGuckin, "Martyr Devotion in the Alexandrian School: Origen to Athanasius," in Martyrs and Martyrologies, ed. Diana Wood (1993), 36. This seems a strange policy, and the evidence for the persecution is limited to Eusebius, The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas, and the Augustan History.
Origen’s avoidance of martyrdom for the second time is not simply described in similar language to the first. It is excused on the same grounds, by recourse to divine agency. He escaped ‘incredibly, absolutely with the help of the divine right hand (τῆς θείας δεξιάς βοηθοῦ καθάπαξ τυγχάνων παραδόξως διεδίδρασκεν), EH 6.3.5.’ In reiterating this, Eusebius sets the tone for the rest of the biography: ‘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 (ἡ δ’ αὐτὴ θεία καὶ οὐράνιος χάρις ἃλλοτε πάλιν καὶ πάλιν καὶ οὐδ’ ἐστὶν ὁσάκις εἰπεῖν... τηνικαῦτα ἐπιβουλευόμενον αὐτὸν διεφύλαττεν)’. Origen’s avoidance of martyrdom is not the exception; it is the rule.

As in his eventual martyrdom, the focus of this passage is not on the opportunity for martyrdom, but for pastoral care. It is an opportunity Origen grasps. We learn that ‘he acquired a name famous among all those rushing forward out of faith because he demonstrated both a warm greeting and enthusiasm to all the holy martyrs, both known and unknown (καὶ ἂν εὐηχῆς καὶ ηὐθείᾳ καὶ χαρῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἁγιωσείᾳ), EH 6.3.3.’ Eusebius’ language deserves closer attention. Origen’s celebrated qualities are his ‘warm greeting and enthusiasm (δεξιωσίν τε καὶ προθυμίαν)’. The term προθυμία had often been used in the context of martyrdom to describe martyrs’ enthusiasm for death; here Eusebius uses it when martyrdom is avoided. In fact Origen’s προθυμία is directly contrasted with ‘all

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416 Hornschuh, "Das Leben des Origenes," 9-15, suggests that this contributes to the theios aner motif, and that the point of the story is Origen’s triumph over political opponents. More recently Miller, Biography, 76-80 has echoed this.
those rushing forward from the faith (πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως ὀρμομένοις).

Similarly, when Eusebius says later that divine grace repeatedly saved Origen ‘because of his great enthusiasm and generosity concerning the word of Christ (τῆς ὁγαν περὶ τὸν Χριστοῦ λόγον προθυμίας τε καὶ παρρησίας ἐνεκεν), EH 6.3.5’, the connotations of pastoral kindness replace those of eagerness for death. The use here when Origen avoids martyrdom suggests that Eusebius intends this connotation of “pastoral enthusiasm” more widely.

The same is potentially true of παρρησίας too. Where παρρησία was a classic term for “outspokenness” or “boldness of speech” in earlier martyr acta (a quality inherited from the philosophers), it can also imply “liberality” or “lavishness”. Its use here, when martyrdom is avoided, indicates that Eusebius intends this broader sense. Eusebius imbues classic martyrological language with pastoral connotations. The impression for the reader is that Origen’s contribution to church life, in particular educating the next generation, is valued above potential violent witness and death.

The pattern of Origen’s life is now set. Subsequently, while Origen was at work on his Hexapla, ‘no small war was rekindled in the city (οὐ σμικρὸν κατὰ πόλιν ἀναρρητισθέντος πολέμου), EH 6.19.16.’ Origen immediately retreats: ‘slipping out from Alexandria he went to Palestine (ὑπεμειζὼν Ἀιαμαλείας, ἤει μὲν ἐπὶ Παλαιστίνης)’. As before, Eusebius passes no negative judgement. It also comes as no surprise that his escape enables him to ‘both lecture and explain the divine writings

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417 Lawlor and Oulton, Eusebius, vol. 1, 179, translate this as ‘all those who were of the faith’, neglecting ὀρμομένοις entirely; McGiffert, Eusebius, 251, as ‘the leaders in the faith’. Neither translation is satisfactory; the Greek implies that Origen gained a reputation for supporting martyrs among the martyrs themselves. The standard translations omit this distinction, and therefore obscure the contrast between martyrs and “support staff” which Eusebius, I suggest, is keen to bring out.

418 This is normally thought to be the “fury of Caracella”, although as we saw in Chapter 3, Trigg, The Bible, 130, considered it evidence of bishop Demetrius’ early antagonism towards Origen. See n327.
publicly in the church (διαλέγεσθαι τάς τε θείας ἐρμηνεύειν γραφάς ἐπὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς ἐκκλησίας), *EH* 6.19.16." Once again, avoidance of martyrdom is justified because of the benefits of Origen’s career to the Christian community.

Again, during Origen’s most productive phase, while working with Ambrose in Caesarea, Maximinus Thrax’s accession heralds a period of violence (235-238). With almost structural predictability, this is for Eusebius an occasion only to note Origen’s combined skills of writing and pastoral encouragement. It provides the catalyst for Origen to write his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, but he himself appears uninvolved.

Eusebius comments only that Origen mentions its date in his letters and his *Expositions on John* 22 (*EH* 6.28.1). Again, Eusebius values Origen’s writings during and about persecution, not his experience of it.

Flight from persecution is thus characteristic of Origen from his childhood on. Patricia Cox Miller refers to the phenomenon of “extending the akme” in ancient biography, when childhood stories demonstrate that the subject’s characteristic attributes as an adult were exhibited as a child. That Eusebius intends this seems clear when, discussing Porphyry’s supposed lies about Origen, he asserts that, ‘the teachings relating to Christ from his parents were preserved by Origen, as the earlier parts of this history made clear (Ὡριγένει τὰ τῆς κατὰ Χριστὸν διδασκαλίας ἐκ προγόνων ἐσώξετο, ὥς καὶ τὰ τῆς πρόσθεν ἱστορίας ἐδήλου), *EH* 6.19.10.’ But this means too that his

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419 If the translation ‘he established a school in Caesarea’ for ἐλ Καηζαξείᾳ δὲ ηὰο δηαηξ ἐπνεῖην is preferred, then this would further highlight the avoidance of martyrdom for educational reasons. See n306.

420 Swain, “Biography and Biographic,” 30, too suggests that ‘The idea that Origen’s Christianity was lifelong and unflinching certainly responds to a classic biographical desire to demonstrate unchanging character. The use of childhood information is part of this’. While I do not entirely agree that Eusebius intended to demonstrate Origen’s “unchanging character” in all respects, it is certainly true that the childhood stories are programmatic, and that it was important for Eusebius to establish that Origen’s Christianity and his Christian education originated from his family.
childhood escape from martyrdom, and the epistolary encouragement of his father it
provokes, is also intended to be programmatic. Eusebius was not interested in Origen’s
opportunities for violent resistance to Rome. The lack of focus on his eventual death
then, and the focus even there on his literary and pastoral achievements, should not
surprise us.

Furthermore, the details of Origen’s actual martyrdom reveal a number of characteristic
Eusebian features. As well as Origen’s capacity for pastoral support, the other quality
emphasised is Origen’s endurance. Twice Eusebius stresses ‘the sort and numbers of
things (οἶα καὶ ὅσα) which Origen ‘stood firm under (ὑπέκεηλε’). He emphasises too
how the devil attacked him ‘by both device and might (πάση τε μηχανὴ καὶ δυνάμει),’
and how he ‘bore steadfastly (καρτερῶς ἣνεχκέν)’ prison, the rack, fire and threats.
Noticeably absent is any vocal engagement with the Roman official. Origen is a figure
of passive endurance rather than active resistance.

The characterisation of Origen’s opponents is also of note. First, Origen is battling with
the devil as much as with the agents of Empire. Second, the Roman official is marked
for his cruelty: ‘with the judge resisting with all his strength actually killing him by any
means (μηδαμὸς αὐτὸν ἄνελεὶν παντὶ σθένει τοῦ δικαστοῦ ἐνθείκως ἐνστάντος).’
He keeps him alive so that he suffers more. The stylisations of both martyr and of state
official here are characteristic of Eusebian martyr stories.

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421 It has been suggested to me in conversation by Christer Bruun that one could read this as the judge
attempting to keep him alive by trying to elicit via torture an act of sacrifice and/or apostasy. Crouzel,
Origen, 35, also reads it this way. It seems to me though that the use of παντὶ σθένει implies physical
exertion, and thus that the reading that the judge is actively causing pain is preferable. This is also
supported, as we shall see, by other Eusebian portraits of officials.
There is more to be learned about Eusebius’ attitude to martyrdom in those passages immediately preceding Origen’s suffering. Before we hear about Origen’s ills under Decius we learn about the deaths of two other Christian literati. Alexander the bishop in Jerusalem ‘was tried in prison, crowned in ripe old age and with stately grey hair (δεσμωτηρίου πειράται, λιπαρῷ γήρει καὶ σεμνῇ πολλῇ κατεστεμένος), EH 6.39.2’, and eventually ‘fell asleep in prison (ἐπὶ τῆς εἰρκτῆς κομηθέντος), EH 6.39.3; see also EH 6.46.4.’ Alexander we have met before; he was one of the bishops that ordained Origen. He is noteworthy too because he established the library of Jerusalem that Eusebius used for his research (EH 6.20.1). Another bishop, Babylus of Antioch, also ‘died in prison after his confession (μετὰ ὀμολογίαν ἐν δεσμωτηρίῳ μεταλαξαντος), EH 6.39.4.’ It is of interest that Eusebius pays so little attention to their deaths. Moreover, Eusebius emphasises that Alexander, bishop and leader, is only martyred at a great age. The same is true of course of Origen himself. The implication is that the best martyrdom is the one that caps a long life of community care and leadership, rather than the one that cuts it short.

Eusebius’ treatment of Origen’s martyrdom provides a lens with which to look at Eusebius’ attitude to martyrdom more broadly. The following characteristics are indicated. First, Eusebius seems to praise flight from persecution, especially when it allows teaching and pastoral care of the Christian community. Second, even in his description of actual martyrdoms, these qualities are highlighted, and Eusebius seems to realign the classic language of martyrdom towards such pastoral connotations. His descriptions of martyrs are also marked by their passive endurance under torture, with little space given to oppositional dialogue with their combatants. Third, the representative of authority seems to be personally engaged in the conflicts, and exhibits
unreasonable behaviour and a desire to inflict pain. We will find all of these characteristics repeated throughout Eusebius’ narrative writings.

III. Martyrdom in the *Ecclesiastical History*

All three Eusebian characteristics are found throughout the *Ecclesiastical History*. I begin with the acceptance and praise of flight on intellectual and pastoral grounds. Almost the first thing we are told about Dionysius of Alexandria is a quoted apology for his avoidance of the Decian “persecution”. His flight is again attributed to divine will: ‘And I shall speak facing God, and he himself knows if I lie. I have made my escape not at all by my own motivation but by that of God (ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ λαλῶ, καὶ αὐτὸς οἶδεν εἰ ψεύδομαι· οὐδεμίαν ἐπʼ ἐμαυτοῦ βαλλόμενος οὐδὲ ἄθεεὶ πεποίημαι τὴν φυγήν), *EH* 6.40.1.’ Dionysius tells how once before too he waited at home for three days in vain for a Roman *frumentarius* who failed to find him because he ‘became blighted by blindness (ἀνξαζίᾳ δὲ εἴρεην), *EH* 6.40.2.’ On the fourth day Dionysius did flee, but he stresses repeatedly that this was not his decision: ‘I was ordered to move myself elsewhere and guided incredibly by God (κελεύσαντός μοι μεταστήναι τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παραδόξως ὀδοποιήσαντος), *EH* 6.40.3.’ Again, avoidance of martyrdom is divinely encouraged.

As with Origen, the justification for flight is Dionysius’ future value for the community. Eusebius’ editing emphasises this. The final sentence of this quotation reads: ‘And that that act arose from the providence of God, later affairs made clear, in which we perhaps

422 Miller, *Studies*, 59, suggests that Eusebius disapproves of Dionysius' flight from "persecution", and that the introduction of this material is intended as a contrast to Origen's endurance under torture which preceded it. But as we have seen, Eusebius elsewhere frequently celebrates Origen’s escape from violence and “persecution”.
became useful to some (καὶ ὅτι τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ προνοίας ἔργον ἐκεῖνο γέγονεν, τὰ έξῆς ἔδήλωσεν, ἐν οἷς τάχα τισὶν γεγόναμεν χρῆσιμοι’). Apart from the reiteration of divine agency, we also have an echo of Eusebius’ comment that Origen avoided death for ‘the help of the many (εἰς τὴν πλείστων ὑφέλεων), EH 6.2.4.’ In both cases, Eusebius excuses and encourages avoiding violent witness in favour of the greater contribution still to be made by these community leaders.

The “later affairs” mentioned by Dionysius refer to his actions during the Valerian “persecution”, detailed in subsequent letters of Dionysius excerpted by Eusebius in Book 7. Eusebius introduces them as ‘the sort of things which together with others he himself undertook because of piety towards the god of all (οἱ σὺν ἑτέροις ὁ αὐτός διὰ τὴν εἰς τὸν ὅλον θεὸν εὐσέβειαν ὑπέστη), EH 7.11.1.’ Two things need noting. The first is that Dionysius acts here, as he does throughout, with others. Eusebius paints a man rooted in his community and supportive of those around him. Second, we meet here the familiar εὐσέβεια. It is thus unsurprising that Dionysius’ actions in what follows are concerned primarily with the welfare of others. The phrase may also have some familial implication here. That we are to read Dionysius as a good head of household is perhaps implied in his dependents’ reaction to his arrest. One Timothy, who excelled in ‘household management (οἰκονομίας), EH 6.40.5’, is so visibly distraught at his master’s arrest that encountering ‘one of the country-dwellers (τίς τῶν χωριτῶν)’ the latter 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. Are these the workers of Dionysius’ estates; are we to read here the affection of the well-treated worker to the kindly master? We cannot be sure. But the implication, I think, is that Dionysius is a further example of the Christian *pater familias* who elicits warm affection from his dependents.

Dionysius’ relationship to his dependents is in view too when he is later exiled. Initially annoyed at the move to a grim area (Colluthion in the Mareotian nome; *EH* 7.11.15-16), he 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, and those dearest to us (*συνεχόστερον τῆς τῶν ὅντως ἄγαπητῶν καὶ οἰκειοτάτων καὶ φιλτάτων ἰδιως ἀπολαυσμένων*), *EH* 7.11.17.’ As we saw in Chapter 1, portrayal as a sympathetic *pater familias* is a feature of Eusebius’ presentation of Christian authority figures, and one we will meet again below.

Much of Eusebius’ subsequent quotation deals with the pastoral actions for which Dionysius has been providentially preserved. In a letter to a fellow bishop Germanus, who 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 (*EH* 7.11.3-5). The he bans Dionysius too from organising the Christian community (*EH* 7.11.10). Eusebius then skips ahead to the next part of the letter that interests 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”

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424 Aemilianus features in a number of papyri, which indicate he acted as a prefect between 257 and 261 but only held this position officially between late summer 259 and May 261. See Timothy D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 56-57, 93.
Dionysius is successful in marshalling the community from exile. As a result of his efforts ‘a large community came to live with us in Cephrus, both brothers following us from the city, and those from Egypt (ἐν δὲ τῇ Κεφροί καὶ πολλὴ συνεπεδήμησεν ἡμῖν ἐκκλησία, τὸν μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως ἀδελφῶν ἑπομένων, τὸν δὲ συνιόντων ἀπ’ Αἰγύπτου), EH 7.11.12.’ That it is these pastoral efforts which justify Dionysius’ divine preservation is confirmed 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 (θὰ ὥζπεξ ηνύηνπ ἑλεθελ ἀπαγαγὼλ ἥκ᾵ο πξὸο αὐηνὺο ὁ ζεόο, ἐπεὶ ηὴλ δηαθνλίαλ ἐπιεξώζακελ, πάιηλ ἀπαγήνρελ), EH 7.11.14.’ As with Origen, future pastoral efforts justify flight from martyrdom.

As with Origen, most of Eusebius’ attention is directed at Dionysius’ literary and pastoral output. Book 6 concludes with a list of Dionysius’ literary accomplishments (EH 6.46.2-6; see too 7.9.6, 7.20.1-7.22.2, 7.22.11-12, 7.26.1-3). The final words read, ‘consorting with many others similarly through letters, he has left behind diverse aids for those still now eagerly working with his discourses (ἄιινηο δὲ πιείνζηλ ὁκνίσο δηὰ γξακκάησλ ὁκηιήζαο, πνηθίιαο ηνῖο ἔηη λῦλ ζπνπδὴλ πεξὶ ηνὺο ιόγνπο ἀὐηνῦ πνηνπκέλνηο θαηαιέινηπελ ὥθειείαο), EH 6.46.6.’ This is extremely similar to Eusebius’ final comment on Origen in Book 6; I note in particular the repetition of ὥθειείαο (EH 6.39.4). Again as with Origen, Eusebius’ penultimate comment on
Dionysius concerns his literary legacy: ‘he has left behind for us various letters also to this person [Basilides, bishop in the Pentapolis] (διαφόρος δ’ ἡμῖν [τε] καὶ πρὸς τοῦτον καταλέλοιπεν ἐπιστολάς), EH 7.26.3.’ At the key transitional moments in the Ecclesiastical History, it is the literary legacies of Christian leaders with which Eusebius leaves his readers.

There are numerous other individuals in the Ecclesiastical History whose flight from persecution escapes castigation. Eusebius says he became aware of one Meletius, bishop of the churches in Pontus, when ‘during the time of the persecution he was fleeing in the regions of Palestine for seven whole years (τοῖς κατὰ Παλαιστίνην κλήμασιν διαδιδράσκοντα ἐφ’ ὅλοις ἔτεσιν ἐπτά) EH 7.32.28.’ This passes without condemnation; indeed Eusebius praises ‘the virtues of his life (τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς … τοῦ βίου)’. Moreover, Meletius was ‘the most skilful and the most learned in all intellectual knowledge (ἐπὶ πάσαις λογικαῖς ἐπιστήμαις τὸν τεχνικότατον καὶ λογιώτατον)’ and ‘perfect in all kinds of discourses (τὸν κατὰ πάντα λόγιαν ἄνεκα τελεώτατον), EH 7.32.27.’ Importantly, it is his ‘great experience and great learning (πολυπειρίας τε καὶ πολυμαθείας)’ which catch Eusebius’ eye, qualities presumably dependent on time gained by avoiding martyrdom.

Eusebius’ attitude to flight from persecution is evidenced too in Books 1-5. We saw above that Eusebius mentions five early Christian martyr acta in his Collection of Ancient Martyrdoms. But he selects The Martyrdom of Polycarp and The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna for extensive quotation.

425 Eusebius notes that ‘those of learning called him [Meletius] “the honey of Attica” (τὸ μέλι τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἐκάλουν αὐτὸν οἱ ἀπὸ παιδείας)’. The nickname is interesting, as are those that use it. Are οἱ ἀπὸ παιδείας simply those in possession of paideia? Or are they those of his paideia; i.e. those educated by Meletius himself? If these are his pupils, what are we to make of the nickname? Is he the honey of Attica because he is a particularly “sweet” teacher? Perhaps we have here further praise of the good pater.
summarises *The Acts of Apollonius* and *The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions*, and only mentions *The Acts of Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonicē* and the *Acts of Metrodorus*. I suggest that the Eusebian tendencies we have identified help explain this selection.

Polycarp, for example, initially flees from martyrdom. Though he desired to remain in Smyrna, ‘persuaded by those around him entreatng, begging that he slip away, he departed for a farm not far from the city (πεισθέντα γε μὴν ἁντιβολούσι τοῖς ἁμφ’ αὐτόν καὶ ὡς ἦν ὑπεξέλθοι παρακάλούσι, προελθεῖν εἰς οὐ πόρρω διεστώτα τῆς πόλεως ἀγγέλο), *EH* 4.15.9.’ He then flees a second time (*EH* 4.15.11). Moreover, the subsequent period is occupied with continuous prayer in which ‘he asked for peace for the churches throughout the whole occupied world (εἰρήνην ἐξατούμενον ταῖς ἀνὰ πάσαιν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐκκλησίας); see also *EH* 4.15.14.’ Polycarp is thus characterised at least initially by flight without censure; flight which allows time for intercession for the Christian community.

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426 Lawlor, “On the Use,” 137, suggests that Pionius held special interest for Eusebius, and so this narrative received a summary rather than merely a mention.

427 Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 25, suggests that Eusebius omits material on the basis of length, apologetics and edification. Lawlor, “On the Use,” 136, argued that when Eusebius used one work from one of the nineteen different bound collections he possessed, he always listed the other texts bound with it, regardless of relevance.

428 Eusebius’ comfort with flight can be usefully supplemented by his attitude towards the *lapsi* (those Christians who apostatised during persecution). This cannot be treated fully in the space available. But it is worth noting that Eusebius, both in his selection and framing of inherited material and in his own writing, demonstrates considerable sympathy for the *lapsi*. For example, *The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna* contains much positive material (*EH* 5.1.25-6; 5.1.45-46; 5.2.6-7), and Eusebius’ own summarizing conclusion comments on precisely this (*EH* 5.2.8). Eusebius’ summary of *The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions* characterises it as containing ‘greetings for those who had fallen to temptation during the persecution (τὰς πρὸς τοὺς ὑποπεπτεκότας τῷ κατὰ τὸν διωγμὸν παρασκευὰς δεξίωσες, *EH* 4.15.47.’ The independent transmission refers to Christians who have visited Jewish synagogues (*The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions* 13.1); the implication for the casual reader of the *Ecclesiastical History* though is that these have apostatised before Roman authorities. Similarly, the letters of Dionysius at the end of Book 6 build to a discussion of the Novatian schism, which revolved in part around a discussion of how confessors were advocating for the *lapsi* (e.g. *EH* 6.42.5). Novatian, who as we saw in chapter 3 is roundly criticised, takes a hard-line approach to the *lapsi*; Dionysius’ and Eusebius’ twin sympathies are clear. The story of Serapion the recanter who was preserved until he obtained release and his sin was blotted out (*EH* 6.44.2-6), or the story of John the Apostle and the boy saved from a life of criminality (*EH* 3.23.5-19), quoted
In addition, Polycarp dies ‘in his old age (τῷ τῆς ἡλικίας αὐτοῦ παλαιῷ) EH 4.15.13.’

As we saw above, Eusebius prefers Christian leaders to die so. The bishop Pothinus too in *The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna* was ‘over ninety years old (ὑπὲξ τὰ ἐνενήκοντα ἐτη τῆς ἡλικίας), EH 5.1.29’; one Symeon, bishop of Jerusalem, is martyred at one hundred and twenty years old (EH 3.32.3; 3.32.6); and Faustus the presbyter died ‘in relative old age and full of days (γηραιὸς κομιδῆ καὶ πλήρης ἡμερῶν), EH 7.11.26.’ Their deaths come after long lives, and more importantly, long careers.429

The other side to Eusebius’ comfort and even praise of flight is his discomfort with so-called “voluntary martyrdom.”430 Here lies a further possible reason for his inclusion of *The Martyrdom of Polycarp.* Comparison with the story’s alternative redaction – commonly called the Pseudo-Pionian version – reveals that Eusebius’ version expands the warning given over one Quintus, a young overly-enthusiastic Christian who volunteers for martyrdom and then apostasises.431 The pseudo-Pionian version reads, ‘This is the reason, brothers, that we do not approve of those who come forward of themselves: this is not the teaching of the Gospel (διὰ τούτο οὖν, ἀδέλφοι, οὐκ ἐπαινούμεν τοὺς προσιόντας ἐαυτοῖς, ἐπειδὴ οὐχ οὕτως διδάσκει τὸ εὐαγγέλιον), The

from Clement’s *Who is the rich man to be saved?*, both have a similar tenor, as does the panegyric addressed by Eusebius to Paulinus (EH 10.4.35-6).

429 Slightly different, but with the same point, I think, is the story of Jesus’ surviving relatives, the grandsons of his brother Judas, who though arrested by Domitian are not martyred and become church leaders (EH 3.20.1-6).


Martyrdom of Polycarp 4.’ Eusebius expands this to: ‘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 an example to all that one ought not to dare such things irreverently or foolhardily (ἐδήλην δὲ τούτον ὁ τῆς προειρημένης γραφῆς λόγος προπετέστερον ἄλλ᾽ οὐ κατ᾽ εὐλάβειαν ἐπιπηδήσας τῷ δικαστήριῳ σὺν ἑτέροις, ἀλόντα δ᾽ ὅν ὁμος καταφανὲς ὑπόδειγμα τοῖς πᾶσιν παρασχεῖν, δτι μὴ δέοι τοῖς τοιοῦτοις ρουσκινδύνως καὶ ἀνευλαβῶς ἐπιτολμᾶν), EH 4.15.8.’ I note the recurrence of τολμά - language, which as we saw in Chapter 2 has negative connotations for Eusebius. Eusebius highlights the disapproval of those who seek martyrdom unprovoked.

This disapproval of voluntary martyrdom can also explain Eusebius’ neglect of The Martyrdom of Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonice (EH 4.15.48). This story exists in two other recensions, a Greek and a Latin; Eusebius seems to have known the Greek.432 In this version, Agathonice is a bystander who watches Carpus and Papyrus be tried and die, and subsequently throws herself onto the stake. This voluntary martyrdom has been edited out in the Latin recension; there Agathonice is called before the proconsul in orderly fashion like the others. Eusebius’ neglect of this martyr narrative in his Ecclesiastical History may stem from a similar discomfort with unprovoked voluntary martyrdom.433

432 The relationship between the Greek and Latin recensions is difficult. Musurillo, Acts, xv, believes the Greek to be original; note however Stuart Hall’s judgement that the Latin looks earlier (in particular the proconsul’s interrogation), and that both might be variants of a lost original; Hall, “Women among the Early Martyrs,” 10.
433 Suggested too by Grant, Eusebius as Church Historian, 124; Grant, “Eusebius and the Martyrs of Gaul,” 131.
A final anecdote reveals how deeply embedded is Eusebius’ focus on literary and pastoral ability over and above violent death. We have seen that it goes back to the earliest days of the church. But in fact it extends to Jesus himself. It is a remarkable but little remarked on fact that Eusebius pays little attention to the crucifixion in the *Ecclesiastical History* (mentioned only in a quotation from Josephus in *EH* 1.11.8, and briefly in *EH* 1.13.19). The final parts of Book 1 recall Jesus’ ministry (*EH* 1.10.1-6) and the call of his disciples (*EH* 1.10.7, 1.12.1-5). But it ends not with a lengthy discussion of crucifixion or resurrection but with the so-called “Abgar correspondence” between Jesus and king Abgar of Edessa. At this key moment, with the history of the church proper primed to begin, Eusebius shows us neither Jesus on the cross nor resurrected triumphant. He shows him writing letters. This is symptomatic of Eusebius’ attitudes towards authority.

Eusebius’ Abgar story runs as follows. Jesus’ fame reached king Abgar, who was suffering from an incurable disease. Abgar wrote to Jesus inviting him to Edessa, where in return for a cure, he would be protected from the Jews. Jesus replies with a letter, in which he declines to visit (citing his upcoming engagements in Jerusalem) but promises to send a disciple. After Jesus’ death, the apostle Thomas is moved by divine impulse to send Thaddaeus (also known as Judas Thomas), one of the seventy disciples of *Luke* 10:1-24, to Edessa. Escorted to Abgar he cures him along with another at his court, Abdu son of Abdu. Newly converted, Abgar gathers his citizens to hear Thaddaeus preach.

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434 Thaddaeus appears to be Eusebius’ translation of the Syriac name Addai, though not a linguistically correct one; see Hendrik J. W. Drijvers, “Facts and Problems in Early Syriac Speaking Christianity,” *Second Century* 2, no. 3 (1982): 160.
This pericope’s inclusion requires explanation. Eusebius has little interest elsewhere in Syriac Christianity; his *Ecclesiastical History* is a history of Christianity within the Roman Empire.\(^{435}\) Moreover this vignette’s placing is significant. It could easily have fitted into Book 2, which continues the tales of the earliest disciples and in which Thaddeus’ healing of Abgar would have sat better chronologically. The account is in fact mentioned there in brief (*EH* 2.1.6-7). Timothy Barnes has suggested on the basis of precisely this chronological anomaly that the Abgar correspondence was perhaps not in the *Ecclesiastical History*’s first edition.\(^{436}\) But I suggest that the Abgar correspondence is placed at the end of Book 1 deliberately. Eusebius’ final words in Book 1 read: ‘Let these things be set down here by me, in their proper place, in writing, translated literally from the Syriac language, and not to no purpose (ἂ καὶ οὐκ εἰς ἄχρηστον πρὸς λέξιν ἐκ τῆς Σύρων μεταβληθέντα φονής ἑνταῦθ᾿ μοι καὶ ἑνταῦθι καὶ αὐτῷ κείσθω), *EH* 1.13.22.’ What purpose then? I suggest that it is to focus the audience’s attention on Jesus’ pastoral care and epistolary legacy rather than his death. Jesus is the first member of that network of Christian leaders marked by epistolary pastoral care set out in Chapter 3. Correspondingly little attention is paid to his proto-martyrdom.\(^{437}\)

The story focuses on Jesus’ epistolary correspondence. Eusebius quotes both Abgar’s initial letter and Jesus’ response before appending an account of Thaddaeus’ mission in Edessa. His claim to have found these in the archives in Edessa serves as a frame story for the letters: ‘But there is nothing like hearing these letters, taken from the archives by us and translated into these words from the Syriac tongue in the following manner

\(^{435}\) Sebastian Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity," in Attridge and Hata, *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, 212. Elsewhere Eusebius mentions in passing Bardesanes the Syrian (*EH* 4.30.1-3) and the Christianisation of Armenia (*EH* 9.8.2). I am grateful to David DeVore for pointing these out to me.

\(^{436}\) Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 129-30, see also 346[n15]: ‘Eusebius describes how Thaddaeus went to Edessa after the Ascension (13.11ff.): the preface to Book Two states “let us now consider the events after his ascension” (2, praef. 2).’

\(^{437}\) This provides a whole new angle on the *imitatio Christi* motif common in early Christian literature, since Eusebius’ model of Christ is different from the norm.
νὐδὲ λὲ νἷν λὲ θαὶ αὐη῵λ ἐπαθνῦζαη η῵λ ἐπηζηνι῵λ, ἀπὸ η῵λ ἀξρείσλ ἟κῖλ ἀλαιεθζεηζ῵λ θαὶ ηόλδε αὐη

ηreadystatechange ηξόπνλ

EH 1.13.5.’ This correspondence’s authenticity has been much discussed. The details need not concern us; in brief, it seems likely that Eusebius preserves a document written no earlier than the late 3rd or early 4th C, perhaps believing it to be older. 438

There is certainly no other reference to the legend until the late 4th century. 439 More important for our purposes, Eusebius’ makes Jesus’ written response the jewel in the story’s crown, and the climax of Book 1.

438 The Abgar legend is found only in Eusebius, a later text called the Teaching of Addai (an early 5th century Syriac work extant in a manuscript dating probably from 500AD) and some fragmentary Greek papyri scraps; see Rolf Peppermüller, “Griechische Papyrusfragmente der Doctrina Addai,” VigChr 25 (1971). A number of scholars have attempted to find a historical kernel in this basic narrative common to Eusebius and the Teaching of Addai, normally basing their theories around a conversion of Abgar VIII (“Abgar the Great”) towards the end of the 2nd century, which has been transferred back to Abgar V (“Abgar the Black”) in the 1st century, perhaps in order to give Syrian Christianity apostolic foundations. This theory was most famously expounded by Francis C. Burkitt, Early Eastern Christianity (London: John Murray, 1904). Burkitt himself modified his opinion in a later article; Francis C. Burkitt, “Tatian’s Diatessaron and the Dutch Harmonies,” JTS 25 (1924). See also Henry E. W. Turner, Patterns of Christian Truth (London: Mowbray, 1954); Leslie W. Barnard, “The Origins and Emergence of the Church in Edessa during the First Two Centuries A.D.” VigChr 22 (1968); Joshua B. Segal, “When did Christianity come to Edessa,” in Middle East Studies and Libraries: A Felicitation Volume for Professor J.D. Pearson ed. Barry C. Bloomfield (London: Mansell, 1980), for an approach in terms of ancient Middle Eastern communication and trade; John J. Gunther, “The Meaning and Origin of the Name “Judas Thomas”,” Le Muséon 93 (1980), Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians, 279-80, leans in the direction of accepting this theory, though cautiously. The alternative position holds that the text is a 3rd or 4th century fiction. It was held most famously by Bauer, Orthodoxy and Heresy, who maintained the document was pure fantasy. Not all those in agreement have expressed the point so forcefully. See also, Helmut Koester, "ΤΝΩΜΑΙ ΔΙΑΦΟΡΟΙ: The Origin and Nature of Diversification in the History of Early Christianity," HThR 58 (1965); Hendrik J. W. Drijvers, Cults and Beliefs at Edessa (Leiden: Brill, 1980); Hendrik J. W. Drijvers, "The Persistence of Pagan Cults and Practices in Christian Syria," in East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period, Dumbarton Oaks Symposium, eds. Nina G. Garsoian, Thomas F. Mathews, and Robert W. Thomson (Washington, DC.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1980); Drijvers, "Facts and Problems.;" Hendrik J. W. Drijvers, "Jews and Christians at Edessa," Journal of Jewish Studies 36 (1985). In particular, it has been suggested that the Abgar correspondence is a deliberate response to the claims of Manichaem in Edessa; for example by Drijvers, "Facts and Problems," 160-66.

439 This is in the diary of Egeria in 384. The story is mentioned in neither the mid-6th century Chronicle of Edessa (a text which drew on the town archives in which the Abgar document was apparently stored) nor the 6th century writings of Ephrem, who lived in Edessa for ten years at the end of his life. There is also no material record of Christianity for 2nd or 3rd century Syria. See Brock, “Eusebius and Syriac Christianity,” 221-29.
That Jesus’ written response is key for Eusebius is highlighted by comparison of his version of the account with another extant version, the Teaching of Addai. 440 Most significant, in the Teaching of Addai, though the content is almost identical, Jesus’ reply is an oral message, not a written letter. 442 This oral reply is written down by Hanan, an archivist, and delivered to the king with a portrait of Jesus (f. 3b – f. 4a in Howard’s text). Moreover, in Eusebius’ account it is precisely the Eusebian framing sentences that indicates an epistolary correspondence. Eusebius tells us that when Abgar wrote to him Jesus ‘did not accept the invitation, but did deem him worthy of a personal letter (ὁ δὲ μὴ τότε καλοῦντι ὑπακούσας, ἐπιστολῆς γονὸν αὐτῶν ἰδίας καταξίων), EH 1.13.3.’ Furthermore, he introduces Jesus’ reply as ‘THE WRITTEN RESPONSE OF JESUS, THROUGH ANANIAS THE COURIER, TO ABGAR THE TOPARCH (TA ΑΝΤΙΓΡΑΦΕΝΤΑ ΥΠΟ ΗΣΟΥ ΔΙΑ ΑΝΑΝΙΟΥ ΤΑΧΥΔΡΟΜΟΥ ΤΟΠΑΡΧΗ ΑΒΓΑΡΩΙ), EH 1.13.9.’ Eusebius makes Jesus a letter-writer, and the letter the vehicle of his authority. In doing so he draws attention away from Jesus’ violent death and ideas of his authority based upon it. This is programmatic for the Ecclesiastical History.

440 For the Syriac text and a translation see George Howard, The Teaching of Addai (Chico, CA.: Scholars Press, 1981). Brock prints the two texts in adjacent columns; see Brock, “Eusebius and Syriac Christianity,” 215-21. That the two are independent is based on the fact, for example, that the Syriac is different from the Syriac translation of Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History, which is unlikely to have been the basis for the 4th century Teaching of Addai. Most scholars assume that The Teaching of Addai preserves the original Syriac document Eusebius used as his source; see e.g. Drijvers, “Facts and Problems,” 160.

441 The only other significant difference is that in the Teaching of Addai a blessing on the city of Edessa (f. 3b) is appended to Jesus’ reply.

442 The state of the extant evidence means that we cannot be completely sure that the original Syriac document did not have a written reply from Jesus, subsequently turned into an oral reply in the much later Teaching of Addai. More likely though is that this epistolary edit is Eusebian, given his interest in the letter format. For the direct comparison see Brock, “Eusebius and Syriac Christianity,” 214; noted too by Drijvers, “Facts and Problems,” 162. Drijvers concludes that, “The alternative of letter or oral reply is no fundamental question. A dictation given by Jesus and written down by Hanan differs only slightly from a written answer”. I suggest this difference is far more significant than this allows.

443 Though Lawlor and Oulton’s translation of Eusebius’ quotation of the Syriac seems to refer to a written response (Lawlor and Oulton, Eusebius, vol. 1, 30: ‘An apostle of Jesus is come hither, even as He wrote to thee’ and ‘he suspected that it was he of whom Jesus wrote’, EH 1.13.11-12), in both cases they translate the ἐπέστειλέν misleadingly, which could as easily refer to the original oral response as to a written one.

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The second and third Eusebian tendencies noted above were the emphasis placed on Origen’s quiet endurance and pastoral care, and the inhumane anger of the judge before whom he is arraigned. This dynamic between martyr and official is characteristic of the *Ecclesiastical History*. It too is a useful criterion for explaining Eusebius’ selection of pre-existing martyr material for inclusion.

*The Martyrdom of Polycarp* is marked by Polycarp’s passivity and a refusal to engage in debate. When he hears of persecution, he ‘remains undisturbed, preserving a tranquil and steadfast disposition (ἀηάξαρνλ μεῖναι, εὐζηαζὲο ηὸ ἤζνο θαὶ ἀθίλεηνλ θπιάμαληα), *EH* 4.15.4.’ When challenged to hold forth on the Christian faith, typical of earlier martyr narratives, Polycarp refuses (*EH* 4.15.22). He is also mistreated by those officials arresting him (*EH* 4.15.16). In *The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna* too, when Pothinus the bishop is given a platform to teach, he refuses, saying only ‘If you are worthy, you will come to know’ (‘ἐὰλ ᾖο ἄμηνο, γλώζῃ‖), *EH* 5.1.31.’ Sanctus the deacon also refuses to say anything to the authorities other than the fact of his Christianity (*EH* 5.1.20). The other Lyons martyrs hardly speak. Pothinus also dies quietly in prison at a great age (*EH* 5.1.31). State officials are here characterised by great anger (*EH* 5.1.9-10; 5.1.29-31; 5.1.50; 5.1.53-4; 5.1.57-58); martyrs by their quiet endurance (*EH* 5.1.6-7; 5.1.11; 5.1.16; 5.1.18-24; 5.1.36; 5.1.38-9; 5.1.51-54; 5.1.56) and mutual support (*EH* 5.1.9; 5.1.28; 5.1.35; 5.1.41; 5.1.46;
5.1.55; 5.2.5-8). The selection of these two texts for extensive quotation is explicable on these grounds. 444

The lack of these characteristics may explain Eusebius’ neglect in the *Ecclesiastical History* of the other martyr narratives from his *Collection*. In both independent recensions of *The Martyrdom of Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonicê* protagonists’ speeches are prominent; this is perhaps a reason Eusebius chose not to discuss it in any detail. The same is true of *The Martyrdom of Pionius the Presbyter and his Companions*. The independent transmission is dominated by extended dialogue between Pionius and Polemon the temple verger, a notary, and the proconsul Quintillian in turn. The same is true of the Roman Apollonius’ martyrdom (*EH* 5.21.2-5). The two alternate versions of the story, one Greek and one Armenian, are both dominated by substantial apologetic speeches, which Eusebius notes were in whichever version he had before him (*EH* 5.21.5). 445 Eusebius chooses to omit stories where martyrs engage in extended apologetic debate with Roman state officials. 446 What Eusebius does highlight here is of interest; he notes how Apollonius was ‘a man proclaimed among those of the faith for

444 The Eusebian characteristics of *The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna* are detailed in Corke-Webster, “A Literary Historian.”

445 The independent Greek version is a likely later recension, dating probably from the 5th or 6th century AD, edited in light of Eusebius. In this version, Apollonius is Alexandrian not Roman, and his speech mocking pagans singles out Athenians, Cretans, Egyptians, Syrians etc; but not Romans. Where Eusebius refers to a law whereby the informer’s legs are broken; there the magistrate orders that Apollonius’ legs be broken. In both cases Eusebius’ version seems more accurate. Tigidius Perennis was praetorian prefect at Rome from 180-185 AD, and the breaking of Apollonius’ legs seems illogical. For further discussion, see Musurillo, *Acts*, xxiii-xxv; Mendels, *Media Revolution*, 83. The independent Armenian version is rather better, but is still a later text. Frederick C. Conybeare, The Armenian *Apology and Acts of Apollonius and Other Monuments of Early Christianity* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1896), 32-33, thinks that the Armenian recension is the original, dating from the 2nd century AD, and that this was the narrative Eusebius had before him. Grant thinks that Eusebius has freely summarised an original, which the Armenian version may be close to, and that the Greek version has built on this: ‘We conclude that the description of the *Acts of Apollonius* in 5.21 owes almost everything to Eusebius’ own ideas as to what such *Acts* should have contained’, Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 120-21.

446 Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 120, reached a similar conclusion: ‘For the purpose of the *Church History* he [Eusebius] was not concerned with the apologetic sections which constitute much of the Armenian and Greek *Acts*.’ See too Judith Lieu, “The Audience of Apologetics: The Problem of the Martyr Acts,” in *Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom*, eds. Jakob Engberg, Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen, and Anders Klostergaard Petersen (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 212.
his education and his philosophy’ (ἂνδρα τῶν τότε πιστῶν ἐπὶ παιδείᾳ καὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ βεβοημένον), EH 5.21.2.’ The qualities of church leadership examined in the preceding chapters are more important to Eusebius than conflict with imperial authority.

Eusebius’ distaste for martyrs’ extended apologetic and preference for endurance and altruism is perhaps witnessed too in his version of the tale of Potamiaena and Basilides which Eusebius tells in Book 6 (EH 6.5.2). In a version of that story likely not dependent on Eusebius, preserved in Palladius’ Lausiac History,447 dialogue between Potamiaena and the judge is prominent. In Eusebius’ version there is no sign of it. Eusebius’ account focuses instead on Basilides’ and Potamiaena’s mutual support and encouragement.

Eusebius’ discussion of Ignatius conforms to this model too. Though he discusses and celebrates Ignatius’ martyrdom, Eusebius dedicates as much time to extolling his pastoral qualities and letter corpus. He notes how ‘he strengthened the communities he stopped in city by city through his verbal interactions and his exhortations (τὰς κατὰ πόλιν αἷς ἐπεδήμει, παροικίας ταῖς διὰ λόγων ὁμιλίαις τε καὶ προτροπαῖς ἐπιρροοννύς), EH 3.36.4.’ In addition, Ignatius had the foresight to write this exhortative advice down: ‘He thought it necessary to attest it in writing then, and to give it lasting form, for purposes of preservation (ὑπὲρ ἀσφαλείας καὶ ἐγγράφως ἢ ἡ δοὺ μαρτυρόμενος διατυποῦσθαι ἀναγκαίον ἥγεῖτο).’ Eusebius’ final comment on his letter corpus is telling: ‘they encompass faith and endurance and every edification pertaining to our lord (περιέχουσι γὰρ πίστιν καὶ ὑπομονήν καὶ πᾶσαν οἰκοδομήν τὴν εἰς τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν

447 Palladius’ text was written in 419 or 420 AD. See further Robert T. Meyer, Palladius: The Lausiac History (Westminster, MD.: Newman Press, 1965), 7. In Palladius’ version, Potamiaena is a slave, and dies under Maximian the persecutor; in Eusebius it is under Septimius Severus.
Ignatius is celebrated not just for his martyrdom – characterised here by endurance – but his writings’ value to the community.

The best place to see Eusebius’ characterisations of martyr-state official interaction is in *The Martyrs of Palestine*, the account of “persecution” in Palestine which was part of an earlier edition of the *Ecclesiastical History*. I will take as a representative example the climactic martyrdom of Eusebius’ own teacher, Pamphilus, and his companions.448 Pamphilus’ martyrdom is supposedly the text’s climax, but when it arrives, rather like Origen’s, it is subdued. We are told very little about either Pamphilus’ interactions with the Roman governor, Firmilian, or his death. Instead, the focus is on Pamphilus’ intellectual and pastoral qualities. This is the paradigm of Eusebius’ ideal martyr.

When we first meet him, we learn that he ‘engaged fully with the education revered by the Greeks and furnished himself with that connected to both the divine teachings and the divinely inspired writings (παιδείας γὰρ ούτος τῆς παρ’ Ἑλλησθα θαυμαξομένης οὐ μετρίως ἦπτο τῇ τε κατὰ τὰ θεία δόγματα καὶ τὰς θεοπνεύστους γραφάς), *MP* 11.1e L.R.’ Again, he is praised for his ‘quick wits and wisdom (ζύλεζίλ ηε θαὶ ζνθίαλ)’.

When Eusebius returns to Pamphilus a little later and provides a second introduction, he highlights his altruism: ‘giving up his inheritance to those destitute, he distributed it all among the disabled and the dispossessed, and himself lived a life of poverty, seeking inspired philosophy through most patient training (ἀποδόμενος γῇ τοι τά εἰς αύτόν ἐκ προγόνων ἦκοντα γυμνοίς, πηροίς καὶ πένησιν τὰ πάντα διένειμεν, αύτός δὲ ἐν ἀκτήμονι διήγε βίῳ, δὲ ἀσκήσεως καρτερικωτάτης τὴν ἔνθεον μετιῶν φιλοσοφίαν), *MP*

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448 I have dealt with the martyr narratives in the long recension of *The Martyrs of Palestine* more fully in Corke-Webster, “Author and Authority.”
Eusebius delights that Pamphilus (Πάμ-φιλός) ‘lives up to his given name (ἐπαληθεύων τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν), MP 11.2 LR’, since he is ‘truly dear and agreeable to everyone (πάντων ὡς ἀληθῶς φίλος τε καὶ προσήγορος).’ In both his intellectualism and altruism he is a true Eusebian martyr.

Since Pamphilus’ death is muted, his companions gain prominence. They are afforded equal attention, and Eusebius states explicitly that he considers this group of twelve martyrs exemplary (MP 11.1b-i LR). It is no surprise that they are marked by the twin virtues of endurance and care for others. In introducing them, Eusebius stresses their ‘endurance of tortures (τῆς τῶν βασάνων ὑπομονής), MP 11.1h LR’, and ‘the many-born acts of hardiness of each in turn (τὰς κατὰ μέρος ἐκάστου πολυτλήτους ἀνδρείας), MP 11.1k LR’ which Eusebius goes on to describe. A brief survey of the group reveals many of the characteristics familiar to us. Valens was ‘honoured with old age and sacred grey hair (γεραιὰ καὶ ἱεροπρέπει πολιτ τετμημένος), MP 11.4 LR’, ‘by his very appearance a revered and holy elder (αὐτὴ τε προσόγει σημνος καὶ ἱερὸς πρεσβύτης)’, ‘expert in the divine writings (τῶν θείων γραφῶν … εἰδήμων)’ and ‘a deacon of the community of Aelia (διάκονος δὲ … τῆς Ἀελιέων ἐκκλησίας).’ Porphyry and Theodolous we will meet in more detail below. Five more of those martyred with Pamphilus are Egyptians arrested because they were ministering to other Christians suffering in the mines (MP 11.6 LR).

Perhaps the best example of a Eusebian martyr is Seleucus. Seleucus is a Cappadocian soldier known for his physical excellence: ‘he exceeded the others in the very bloom

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449 Noted by Verheyden, "Pain and Glory," 390-91. 450 Commenting on a large group of martyrs with brief individual details is a favoured Eusebian technique (e.g. EH 6.4.1-3; 6.39.1-42.1; 7.12.1; 8.6.1-6). This is also a feature of The Letter of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna (EH 5.1.1-3.3).
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 (αὐτῆς ἡλικίας τε γὰρ καὶ ρώμη σώματος μεγέθει τε καὶ ἰσχύος ἄρετῆ πλεῖστον ὅσον τοὺς λοιπούς ἐπλεονέκτει, καὶ τὴν πρόσωπον δὲ αὐτῆς περίβλεπτος ἦν τοῖς πᾶσι), MP 11.21 LR. Again, ‘his entire form was admirable because of its beauty of shape and greatness (τὸ τε πᾶν ἔδῶς ἀξιάγαστον μεγέθους ἕνεκα καὶ εὐμορφίας).’ However, Eusebius makes clear that though a perfect physical specimen, it is not Seleucus’ physical attributes that qualify him for martyrdom. Rather, on leaving the army he becomes an ascetic and,

‘as a bishop and steward cared for destitute orphans and unsupported widows and those worn out by poverty and sickness, and in the manner of a father or guardian took onto himself the labours and miseries of all those cast aside. For which reason, as was to be expected, he was judged worthy of perfection through martyrdom by a God who rejoices in such things more than in sacrifices through smoke and blood.’

...ὁρθάν ἐξήκσλ θαὶ ρεξ῵λ ἀπεξηζηάησλ ἐπὶ ήε ἐλ πελίᾳ θαὶ ἀζζελεία θαὴαπνλνπκέλσλ ἐπίζθνπόο ἐπίζθνπόο ηηο νἷα θαὶ θξνληηζηὴο ἐπηκεινύκελνο παηξόο ηε θαὶ θεδεκόλνο δίθελ ἐξήκσλ θαὶ ἄπεξξηκκέλσλ ἁπάλησλ θαὶ ηὰο θαθνπαζεία θαὶ θεδεκόλνο· ἐξελεύκελνο ἞μηώζε ἦειεηώζεσο, MP LR 11.22.

I note not only that Seleucus’ behaviour as an ascetic conforms to that pastorally-motivated first path of Christian life considered in detail in Chapter 2, but also that Seleucus’ actions are akin to those of a father, imagery considered in Chapter 1 and to which I will return below. Most importantly, it is precisely his pastoral care for the vulnerable (ὁρθάν ἐρήμων καὶ χηρῶν ἀπεριστάτων τῶν τε ἐν πενίας καὶ ἀσθενείας ἀπερριμένων) that marks him as a likely martyr, not his suitability for conflict. This is characteristic of Eusebian martyrs.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁵¹ It is interesting that one Paul of Jamnia, described as ‘reckless and boiling over with the spirit (θερμοφυγόστατος καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ζεῦν άνήρ), MP 11.5 LR,’ is the martyr Eusebius tells us least about; he is not mentioned again. We might compare the relative lack of attention paid to one Aedesius (MP LR 5.2-3).
Set against these martyrs is the Roman governor Firmilian. In classic Eusebian style he is described as an ‘irritable judge, becoming unruly and greatly angered and oblivious to reason (ὁ δηθαζηὴο ἀγαλαθηηθ῵ο θαὶ κάια ὀξγίισο ζθαδѧδσλ θαὶ ηὸλ ινγηζκὸλ ἀπνξνύκελνο), MP 11.1m, LR.’ Eusebius’ language is emphatic: Firmilian physically spasms (σφαδѧζον) through irritation (ἅγανακτικός) and rage (ὅγγίλος) and is out of his mind (τὸν λογισμὸν ἀπορούμενος). Unable to control his emotions, his rage is manifested in the cruel variety of tortures he deploys. Further on Firmilian again ‘became unruly, because he was at a loss (ἀπαρά脱发ελ ἐζθάδαδελ), MP 11.12 LR.’ The circumstances are revealing. He is confused because the spokesman of five Egyptians arraigned before him insists he is from Jerusalem, and when pushed characterises it as ‘the country of the Christians alone (μόνον ... τὸν Χριστιανὸν ... πατρίδα), MP 11.11 LR.’ Firmilian, apparently confused by the name “Jerusalem” (the Roman name for the city being Aelia), thinks that ‘the Christians had perhaps founded for themselves somewhere a city inimical and hostile to Rome (ἔχθραν καὶ Ῥωμαίος πολεμίαν τάχα που συστήσασθαι ἑαυτοῖς πόλιν Χριστιανὸς), MP 11.12 LR.’ Firmilian’s rage is based on his belief that the Christians are setting themselves up against Rome; Eusebius makes it clear he is mistaken. Neither the martyrs nor the Christians generally are opposed to Rome. This is crucial for Eusebius.

One tableau in particular demonstrates Eusebius’ intended dynamic between martyr and judge. As Firmilian sentences Pamphilus and the others, Porphyry, of Pamphilus’ own household, shouts from the crowd in protest demanding the bodies for burial. Porphyry

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452 Eusebius first introduces 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.

453 This episode, and the manner in which Eusebius has crafted it, are the subject of Carotenuto, “Five Egyptians,” an excellent but understudied article discussed in the Introduction.

454 The oddity of a Roman governor not knowing the local name of such a prominent city should encourage us in reading these stories as literary constructions as much as historical reminiscences.
is introduced briefly at the start of the chapter 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, and lacked nothing as a reflection of his master in all things (τὸ μὲν δοκεῖν τοῦ 
Παμφίλου γεγονός οἰκήτης, διαθέσει γε μὴν ἀδελφοῦ καὶ μᾶλλον γνησίου παιδὸς 
διεννηυχῶς οὐδὲν ἢ ἐλλείπων τῆς πρὸς τὸν δεσπότην κατὰ πάντα μιμήσεως), MP 11.1f 
L.R.’ At the moment of his fateful interruption he is described again as ‘the blessed one, 
a true nursling of Pamphilus, not fully eighteen years old (ὁ μικάριος, θρέμμα γνήσιον 
Παμφίλου οὖθ’ ὅλων ὄκτωκαίδεκα ἐτῶν), MP 11.15 L.R.’ He seems to have been a pupil 
of Pamphilus as well as his slave; he was ‘experienced in the skill of penmanship 
(καλλιγραφικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἐμπειροῦ)’ and marked for his ‘self-control and manners 
(σωφροσύνης δὲ ἔνεκα καὶ τρόπων)’. His behaviour is moreover typical of one 
‘educated by such a great man (ὑπὸ τηλικῶδε ἀνδρὶ συνησικημένος)’. Though a servant, 
he is also a pupil, and painted by Eusebius as a son.

Pamphilus’ positive relationship with Porphyry is contrasted with Firmilian’s. After 
Porphyry speaks, we read that the governor ‘was not a man but a beast, but more fierce 
than any beast, and neither appreciated the reasonableness of the request nor made a 
concession to the boy for his age (ὅ δὲ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλὰ θήρ καὶ θηρίου παντὸς 
ἀγριώτερος, μήτε τῆς αἰτίας τὸ εὐλόγον ἀποδεξάμενος μήτε τῷ τῆς ἡλικίας 
ἀπονείμας νέῳ συγγνώμην), MP 11.16 L.R.’ It is Porphyry, the youngest martyr, who 
suffers the most gruesome torture, since Firmilian ‘possessed only mercilessness and 
inhumanity (παράμοιον δὲ τὸ ἀνηλεῖξ καὶ ἀπάνθρωπον κεκτήμενος), MP 11.18 L.R.’ 
Firmilian’s actions are bestial (θήρ καὶ θηρίου παντὸς ἀγριώτερος) precisely because he 
did not treat the child as a child (τῷ τῆς ἡλικίας...νέῳ). Pamphilus and Firmilian’s 
respective treatments of the boy stand in striking contrast.
A subsequent martyr completes the picture. Theodoulos, ‘a revered and pious old man (σεμνός τις καὶ θεοσεβής... πρεσβύτης), 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,455 he was ‘brought to his master, and provoked him to anger more than the others (προσάγεται τῷ δεσπότῃ, μᾶλλον τε αὐτὸν τῶν ἄλλων ἐπ’ ὀργῇν ὀξύνας)’ and so is martyred. Where Porphyry is an insignificant slave of Pamphilus, but was treated and therefore acted like a loving son, Firmilian treats his own chief steward with only rage. Eusebius’ careful construction means that the reader cannot help contrast Pamphilus and Firmilian here.

To summarise, we have found the three distinguishing characteristics of Eusebius’ presentation of martyrdom and persecution throughout the Ecclesiastical History. First, that flight from persecution was acceptable, even praiseworthy, when it enabled Christian teaching and leadership. When teachers or leaders are martyred, Eusebius emphasises their great age, and that their deaths come at the end of long lives and careers. Second, Eusebius highlights martyrs’ qualities of pastoral care and endurance rather than active and vocal resistance to Empire. Third, Eusebius presents opposite the martyrs state officials characterised by rage and intolerance. To understand this distinctive presentation we need again to review earlier Christian thinking, on which Eusebius was building and to which he was reacting.

IV. Violent Traditions

455 See n157.
Martyrdom is prominent in the extant Christian literature of the 1st to 3rd centuries. As we saw in Chapter 1, recent scholarship has increasingly read martyr literature as cultivating a Christian mentality of resistance. But it is worth briefly surveying this material, since there is significant variety within it – unsurprising given the diversity of time and place at which it was written – which will be useful in contextualising Eusebius’ attitudes.

The origins of Christian martyrdom as a topos are a tortured topic, and I do not propose to engage with it here. Many martrological themes are present in 1st and early 2nd century Christian literature – the New Testament canon, apocryphal literature (e.g. *The Shepherd of Hermas*), the letters of Ignatius etc. Much of this material is considered proto-martyrological, and its potential origins in Jewish or “pagan” ideas continue to be discussed. Martyrdom is also a prominent theme in the writings of the 2nd century “apologists”. These writings were as much about identity as defence; martyrdom is

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456 Judith Perkins 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 seeking different solutions to similar perceived problems of life under Roman hegemony. See e.g. Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities*. 457 See in particular the recent cautions of Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*. 458 There are three main positions. The first, represented best by Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, argues that Christianity’s model of martyrdom can be traced to Jewish, Greek and Roman roots. Glen Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), suggests instead that Christian ideas of martyrdom were largely without precedent. Finally, Boyarin, *Dying for God*, argues that it is misleading to talk about Christianity and Judaism as distinct entities in this period; rather “Christianity” and “Judaism” developed into the entities we know at this time in response to each other. Martyrdom is one facet of this evolution. Boyarin, *Dying for God*, 130, also notes that Bowersock and Frend are agreed in assuming the authenticity of Eusebius’ reports, about which Boyarin is admirably more sceptical. 459 Their name refers to their perceived participation in a wider group of those writing in defence of their traditions. The Christian apologists wrote “defences” of Christianity against perceived opponents. Some are addressed to Roman governors and even the emperor himself (see e.g. Justin Martyr’s *First Apology* and *Second Apology*). On this Christian apologetic literature see e.g. William Schoedel, “Apologetic Literature and Ambassadorial Activities,” *HThR* 82 (1989); Averil Cameron, “Apologetics in the Roman Empire – A Genre of Intolerance,” in *Humana Sapi: études d'Antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini* ed. Jean-Michel Carrie and Rita Lizzi Testa (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2002); Jörg Ulrich et al., eds., *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2009). There is no space here to properly address Eusebius’ engagement with the apologists, many of whom he had read. I hope to address it in a future article.
one means of giving Christianity a distinctive identity in the crowded ancient "marketplace."\(^{460}\)

Amidst the apologists, the loudest voice discussing martyrdom was Tertullian’s.\(^{461}\) In the late 2\(^{nd}\) century, this North African Christian celebrated the martyrs, arguing famously that ‘the blood of the martyrs is seed (semen est sanguis Christianorum), Apology 50.12.’ By this he meant that the public deaths of the Christians were having the opposite effect to that intended by the Roman authorities (since in Tertullian’s view their aim was to suppress Christianity). The martyrs’ public bravery was gaining them support, not losing it. Tertullian presents Christian martyrs as using the publicity of their executions in the arena as a stage for a powerful gesture of resistance.

The martyr acta echo this antagonistic tone;\(^{462}\) indeed Tertullian has been proposed as the author of perhaps the most famous martyr narrative, The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas.\(^{463}\) These narratives of the arrest, torture and death of early Christians have already been discussed. Read within the second sophistic, they were constructed to challenge the Roman Empire’s claim to hegemony. They sought to appropriate the cultural dynamics of the Roman arena. Since Foucault’s theories of authority and humility appeared in 1977 a series of publications has outlined how the punishment of criminals in such a public setting was supposed to both humiliate the criminal and further establish the authority of the punishing state.\(^{464}\) As Maureen Tilley argued, the

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\(^{462}\) On the similarities and differences between the apologetic writings and the martyr acta see Lieu, "Audience of Apologetics."

\(^{463}\) A thesis adopted most recently by Perkins, Roman Imperial Identities, 159-71.

Christian martyr’s ability to endure torture and subsequent embrace of death eliminated this humiliation and so implicitly challenged the state’s authority. Kate Cooper has pinpointed how this challenge worked. Since the martyr’s declaration of the superiority of Christianity was vindicated by the persistence of their claim to truth under torture (the Roman method of testing truth claims), the competing claim of the official – of the superiority of the Roman hegemony – came under scrutiny instead. These martyr narratives questioned the legitimacy of the whole Roman enterprise, and ultimately invalidated it.

For this reason in numerous 2nd and 3rd century martyr narratives the focus is on the violent contest between martyr and governor. Martyrs are conceived as violent, charismatic competitors. State officials on the other hand are remarkably neutral figures. This is because they serve simply as mouthpieces for the Roman establishment. The defeat of the state official is the defeat of the Roman imperial system as a whole. The characterisations of both martyr and state official are integral to this “resistance literature”.

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Tilley, "Ascetic Body."

Cooper, "Voice of the Victim."

See also Robin Darling Young, *In Procession Before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2001); Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004): 35: ‘Indeed, from the Christian point of view, the commemorative practices associated with the production of “martyrdom” were a major defense of the borders of “Christianness”, and that defense necessarily involved the production of a Roman imperial other whose political and cultural dominance bore the caricaturing stamp of oppositionality.’

Jill Harries, "Constructing the Judge: Judicial Accountability and the Culture of Criticism in Late Antiquity,” in *Constructing Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Richard Miles (London: Routledge, 1999), 225, notes the remarkably neutral treatment of Roman officials in 2nd and 3rd century Christian martyr literature.

The dating, status and authenticity of the martyr *acta* are currently undergoing a thorough reassessment, since many of these conclusions have not been reviewed since the Bollandists. The most prominent conclusion thus far is a powerful redating of *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*; Candida Moss, "On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the Martyrdom of Polycarp in the History of Christianity," *Early Christianity* 1, no. 4 (2010). See too my own more tentative discussion of *The Letter*
The publicity, triumph and valorisation of these martyrs imbued them with powerful voices. To return to the example of The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas discussed in Chapter 1, it is clear that the author(s) of the accounts appended to her diary was 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 the priest and teacher to arbitrate their dispute: “Reconcile us, since you have departed and have left us like this.” And we said to them, “Are you not our father and you our priest, that you throw yourselves at our feet?” (Et miserunt se ad pedes nobis et dixerunt: “Componite inter nos, quia existis, et sic nos reliquistis”. Et diximus illis: “Non tu es papa noster et tu presbyter, ut vos ad pedes nobis mittatis?”). The author suggests that incumbent martyrs have authority to intervene in practical church disputes. Martyrs were powerful but unstable literary symbols, and could be appropriated as authoritative voices.470

There is however another side to early Christian attitudes to martyrdom which has received less attention. The extant literature preserves a minority tradition less comfortable with the prevalence and powerful connotations of martyrdom. Few authors ever went so far as to argue against martyrdom. But where extreme voices like Ignatius or Tertullian insisted on martyrdom’s importance to the Christian disciple’s life and the authority of the martyr’s voice, moderates were more cautious. This alternative attitude was predominantly found in the Alexandrian tradition.

of the Churches in Lyons and Vienne to the Church in Smyrna; Corke-Webster, “A Literary Historian.” My own sense is that this work will highlight the mid-3rd century Decian “persecution” as the crux moment for early Christian martyrdom.

470 See further e.g. Frederick Klawiter, “The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution in Developing the Priestly Authority of Women in Early Christianity: A Case Study of Montanism,” Church History 49 (1980).
Clement expresses this most clearly. Annewies van den Hoek for example speaks of Clement’s ‘ambivalence and caution about martyrdom’. This was an opinion developed in response to what he perceived as over-enthusiasm within certain church factions. Clement quietly drops, for example, the established motif in earlier martyr literature that the martyr could anticipate significant heavenly reward. He argued too that a focus only on witness in death ignored the value of “living witness”. He did not disregard the value of witness in death, but shifted emphasis onto the day-to-day witness of the life lived according to Christian principles. In his *Stromateis* we read,

'If the confession to God is martyrdom, each soul which has lived purely in the knowledge of God, which has obeyed the commandments, is a witness both by life and word, in whatever way it may be released from the body, shedding faith as blood along its whole life till its departure (εἰ τοῖν ἓ πρὸς θεόν ὡμολογία μαρτυρία ἔστι, πᾶσα ἡ καθαρὸς πολιτευσαμένη ψυχή μετ’ ἑπταγόνως τοῦ θεοῦ, ἡ ταῖς ἐντολαῖς ὑπακοήμου, μάρτυς ἔστι καὶ βίω καὶ λόγῳ, ὅπως ποτὲ τοῦ σώματος ἀπαλλάττεται, οὗν ἁμα τὴν πίστιν ἀνὰ τὸν βιον ἅπαντα, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τὴν ἔξοδον, προχέβοσα), *Stromateis* 4.4.15.4.'

For Clement, an exclusive focus on witness in death was wrong-headed if it came at the expense of valuing Christian life.

This was partially picked up by Origen, though this is not commonly recognised. A limited focus on just the *Exhortation* has led to skewed views of Origen’s exclusive...
enthusiasm for violent death. And it is certainly true, as we saw in Chapter 1, that when the course of martyrdom is set, Origen will brook no distraction. But recent scholarship has assessed Origen’s corpus more comprehensively and come to a more nuanced view of his overall attitude. Though Origen celebrates martyrdom, he views it as the preserve of the elite. He is also comfortable with flight from persecution, as his discussion of Matthew 10:23 makes clear. More interesting for our purposes is his motivation: ‘if a Christian were to run away, he would not do so for cowardice, but because he was keeping the commandment of his Master and preserving himself free from harm that others might be helped to gain salvation (τῆς Χριστιανότητος, οὐ διὰ δειλίαν φεύγει, ἀλλὰ τηρῶν ἐντολήν τοῦ διδάσκαλου καὶ ἐαυτὸν φυλάττον καθαρὸν ἕτερων ὑφελπῆσομένων σωτηρία), Against Celsus 8.44.’ Origen implies here that the Christian can legitimately flee if other Christians will gain.

Some scholars have even suggested that Origen echoes Clement’s two-tiered life-and-death model of martyrdom. Certainly the term martyrria and its cognates have broader connotations for him than just violent death. A key proof text is Exhortation 21, where Origen demarcates open and secret martyrdom. Open martyrdom is usually assumed to

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476 This is prominent in Pamela Bright, "Origenian Understanding of Martyrdom and its Biblical Framework," in Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy, eds. Charles Kannengiesser and William L. Petersen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Nancy R. Heisey, "Origen the Egyptian: A Literary and Historical Consideration of the Egyptian Background in Origen’s Writings on Martyrdom" (Ph.D. diss, Temple University, 2000); Bedouwijn Dehandschutter, "Origen and the Episode on Stephen in the Book of Acts," in Somon and Heidl, Origeniana Nona. McGuckin, "Martyr Devotion" narrows the group of Christians for whom in Origen’s eyes martyrdom is suitable even further

477 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.

478 More than that, Origen disapproves of voluntary martyrdom. Dehandschutter, "Episode on Stephen", reveals that he uses feminine and passive traits when discussing the topic.
refer to violent death, but to what secret martyrdom refers is less clear.⁴⁷⁹ Crouzel is representative when, without detailed discussion, he suggests secret martyrdom is the Christian’s desire for martyrdom.⁴⁸⁰ But the most thorough analysis of Origen’s language is Jordan Smith’s recent dissertation, "Testify: Origen, Martyria, and the Christian Life", unique for its comprehensive survey of Origen’s entire extant corpus.⁴⁸¹ Smith argues that in fact neither type necessitates death. Based on an analysis of the surrounding context of Exhortation 21, he argues that secret martyrdom refers to an individual’s beliefs and faith in God, and open martyrdom to its public manifestation. The superiority of open martyrdom is thus its effect on others, not its violence. Smith argues that Origen is concerned throughout his treatment of martyria with publicity and the communal benefit of “witness”.⁴⁸²

Alexandria was not the only place to temper enthusiasm of martyrdom. Even in Carthage, a hotspot for early Christian martyrs and martyrologists, one voice sounds a note of discomfort. The letters of the bishop Cyprian reveal a struggle in his community after the Decian “persecution”. Cyprian had left the city during the crisis, and upon his return found his authority challenged by the charisma of the “confessors” (Christians who had confessed their Christianity before the authorities but lived to tell the tale). These were readmitting lapsed Christians to the community on their own authority. Cyprian’s writings reveal his struggle to claw back his own authority while not disparaging their confession. He warns the confessors about speaking out of turn, and affirms that their authority is subordinated to the bishop’s (e.g. De Unitate 21; see also

⁴⁷⁹ Rizzi, “Origen on Martyrdom,” 469-76, disputes this dichotomy, arguing that there is only “bloody martyrdom” for Origen.
⁴⁸⁰ This idea was pioneered but not explored by Crouzel, *Origen*. See also Yong Seok Chung, “Following in Christ’s Footsteps: The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ in Origen’s Spirituality” (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1994), 126-31.
De Lapsi 17-20. There were then less enthusiastic voices within early Christian discourse on martyrdom.

V. The Authority of the Martyrs

Eusebius’ treatment of martyrdom both fits within and steps beyond this complex landscape. In the first place, it is evident that he has inherited the Alexandrian toleration of flight from persecution. Eusebius’ frequent acceptance and praise of those who flee echoes Clement’s and Origen’s similar attitudes. In Eusebius, flight is regularly justified for the Christian literati on the basis of future community contribution, something that was nascent in Origen’s writings. The authority of the institutionalised intellectual, those guides of the Christian life and pillars of the Christian church considered in Chapters 2 and 3, is valued higher than that of violent witness. This is another reason why the idea that asceticism serves as direct training for martyrdom in the Ecclesiastical History is misleading; martyrdom is simply not the prime goal. This too is why those Christian leaders whose martyrdoms Eusebius celebrates die in their great old age, at the end of long careers.

Eusebius’ characterisations of martyrs must also be understood in light of earlier Christian traditions. Two explanations present themselves. First, Eusebius’ focus upon pastoral care and endurance is in contrast to the focus upon violent resistance in earlier martyr narratives. In most of the martyr acta, as we have seen, the martyrs were symbols of resistance, at a time when many Christians perceived the Empire

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antagonistically. In the 4th century, the mechanisms of the Roman state were increasingly working in the church’s favour, and Eusebius had little interest in undermining them. His martyr narratives are not spaces for the cultivation of resistance. Instead, they are an opportunity to highlight endurance and concern for others. These are values more useful for Eusebius’ 4th century audience. This is more understandable if we see the martyr as a symbol of commitment rather than of resistance. Perceived thus, the martyr is a vehicle for the affirmation of values. Eusebius has simply realigned which values are affirmed; altruism and endurance have replaced vocal resistance. The martyrs are the affirmation of the model of self-controlled authority, gained through paideia and manifested in care for dependents, which Eusebius champions in the Ecclesiastical History.

Second, Eusebius may have been aware of the dangers inherent in the martyrs’ volatile charisma. The extent to which Eusebius knew Cyprian’s struggles with the confessors in 3rd century Carthage is unclear. But he was aware of Dionysius’ concerns about almost the same problem (EH 6.42.5–6). Eusebius had also responded to criticisms against Origen made by confessors in the Palestinian mines (Photius, Bibliotheca 118). He may well have appreciated the potential threat posed to institutional authority by the martyrs’ charisma. Their power and voice could be as easily mobilised against the church as for it. This became a problem in the later 4th century; Michael

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484 Lieu, “Audience of Apologetics,” 214, notes that ‘the dramatic structure of the Martyr Acta… opposes in vivid pictorial form two choices or loyalties, two power structures – as is vividly expressed by the closing paragraph of The Martyrdom of Polycarp (22)’ It is telling that this final paragraph is omitted in Eusebius’ version.
485 I recall here too how Eusebius, quoting from Dionysius, says that the deaths of those Christians who had died during the plague through caring for the sick ‘seemed not inferior to martyrdom (μηδὲν ἄξοδεῖν μαρτυρίου δοκεῖν), EH 7.22.8.’
486 Eusebius certainly does not know Cyprian’s writings well. He makes reference to him only briefly, and shows little awareness of his extensive corpus.
487 Discussed, for example, in Rapp, Holy Bishops, 97.
488 For discussion, and in particular for Nautin’s suggestion that an anti-Origen party in Caesarea was trying to capitalise on the confessors’ authority, see n91.
Gaddis notes how ‘the recusants, Christians who stood up to the emperor’s will, did not accept the language of peace and unity. They justified their resistance through a different paradigm, invoking concepts of martyrdom inherited from the pagan persecutions of the past’. 489 It may have been with an awareness of these dangers that Eusebius reimagines the martyrs. By focusing on their passive endurance he mutes the potential for anti-imperial appropriation. The mediaevalist Felice Lifshitz comments that, ‘Eusebius thus raised the profile of martyrs for the Christian faith when they might otherwise have been forgotten but also exercised preventative damage control lest the martyrs serve as rallying points against his beloved empire’. 490

A third explanation arises if, as in previous chapters, we consider non-Christian perceptions of Christian martyrdom. Though it tells us nothing about the frequency of the phenomenon, it is noteworthy that of the eleven “pagan” authors who comment on Christianity between 110 and 210, all but one mentions their propensity for martyrdom. 491 Space prevents a systematic assessment, but a few examples indicate the atmosphere Eusebius would have encountered in educated elite circles. It is unsurprising that in Lucian’s satirical The Passing of Peregrinus, a text which focuses above all on fascination with death, the Christians are condemned because ‘they think

489 Michael Gaddis, There is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 70-71. We might compare Ambrose’s mobilization of martyrs in his confrontation with imperial authority; see e.g. Neil McLynn, Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 181-219. For further discussions of the later mobilization 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, no. 3 (1999); Lucy Grig, Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity (Liverpool: Duckworth, 2004); Dayna S. Kalleres, "Imagining Martyrdom During Theodosian Peace: John Chrysostom and the Problem of the Judaizers,” in Engberg, Eriksen and Klostergaard, Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom.


lightly of death and most of them surrender to it voluntarily (καταφρονοῦσιν τοῦ θανάτου καὶ ἐκόντες αὐτοὺς ἐπιδιδόσαιν οἱ πολλοὶ), The Passing of Peregrinus 13.'

As we have seen, Eusebius’ distaste for “voluntary martyrdom” distances Christianity from precisely such accusations.

Instructive too are further criticisms of Christianity by Celsus. Particularly interesting is Celsus’ characterisation of martyrdom as a kind of madness: ‘some have been overcome by madness on the spot; others have declared what they have done; others have made an end of themselves (οἱ μὲν ἐκφρονεὶς αὐτοῦ ταύτη κρατηθέντες οἱ δὲ ἐξαγγείλαντες ἃ ἔδρασαν οἱ δὲ σφαῖς αὐτοὺς ἀπειρασμένοι), Against Celsus 8.45.’ I note too that the few positive “pagan” comments concerning Christianity are sympathetic to martyrdom understood philosophically (e.g. Epictetus Discourses 4.7.1-6). It is therefore unsurprising that Eusebius, in line with the Alexandrian tradition, focused on the self-control and endurance of the martyr. It would be difficult, for example, to class Eusebian martyrs as mad, especially since those state officials torturing them are acting without reason or self control.

We have seen three plausible motivations for Eusebius’ reimagining of the authority of the martyrs. But we must explain too the shift in Eusebius’ characterisations of state officials. Eusebius’ caricatured, bestial figures stand in sharp contrast to the calm, reasonable arbitrators of earlier martyr narratives. This shift, I suggest, allows a crucial change in dynamic. In earlier Christian martyr literature the interaction between state official and martyr was conceived as a conflict between mutually opposed world-views.

The neutral Roman officials were simply mouthpieces of the system, and their failure was thus a failure of the whole imperial criminal justice system and the ideology it supported. In Eusebius’ accounts, the angry, unreasonable officials are blatantly unfit for public office and thus bad representatives of the state. The state mechanisms themselves are thus damaged less by Eusebius’ martyr stories, which condemn only examples of bad authority figures, but not the viability of the Empire as a whole.

Eusebius’ stylised depiction of state officials is therefore one facet of the little-noted phenomenon I discussed above. As Timothy Barnes, one of the few scholars to mark it, says,

‘[Eusebius] presented persecution as a rare and unusual phenomenon which reflected not any underlying hostility by an established order toward a potentially subversive religion but the machinations of the devil, the moral depravity of a Roman emperor, or the envy of despicable individuals.’

493 Eusebius’ presentation of state officials fits within this tendency. Eusebius’ picture of the past does not simply mute Christian opposition to Rome; it also absolves Rome of blame for any mistreatment of the Christians. Eusebius is tearing down the barriers to seeing “Christian” and “Roman” as aligned, for an audience that likely thought of themselves as both. Eusebius’ picture eases the alignment of church and Empire as they manoeuvre onto parallel tracks in the early 4th century.

Close attention to exactly how Eusebius realigns the dynamic between martyr and state official sheds further light on how his audience is to imagine this 4th century transition. We have seen in previous chapters that Eusebius presents Christians as inheritors of

Roman values. The same, I suggest, is true here. To understand this we need to turn briefly to traditions of Roman official authority. I will discuss both the Roman judge and the Roman leader, since in martyr narratives Christians are commonly tried under the *cognitio ex ordine* process, and so are often judged by proconsuls.\(^{494}\) These are both legal judges and, as governors, local representatives of the emperor and his authority.

The authority of the ideal Roman *iudex* was marked by self-control and rationality. Leanne Bablitz has drawn attention to the passivity of the Roman judge: his role is primarily as listener. If a contest occurs, it is between defendants or advocates – the judge should not be a part of the courtroom contest.\(^{495}\) Jill Harries notes that the ideal judge should act fairly and avoid cruel or threatening behaviour.\(^{496}\) In the exercise of their authority they can order violent action if the situation demands, but it must be done without emotion. In late antique legal codes, if it could be demonstrated that he had acted in anger a judge could be held liable for injustice.\(^{497}\) William Harris too in his 2002 survey of ancient anger notes that controlling temper was integral to the imperial conception of positive official authority.\(^{498}\) Though matters become more complicated in late antiquity, self-control remained the prime marker of authority for a judge.\(^{499}\) It was also, in the eastern empire at least, a key component of “manliness”.\(^{500}\) This is

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\(^{495}\) Leanne Bablitz, *Actors and Audience in the Roman Courtroom* (London: Routledge, 2007), 89-90. Entry to the *album iudicum*, the list of judges, was in part dependent on a character examination, but the details of this have not survived [92].

\(^{496}\) Harries, “Constructing the Judge,” 219.

\(^{497}\) Harries, “Constructing the Judge,” 222.


\(^{499}\) See in particular the discussion of anger and decorum in Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 48-58.

intimately tied to the image of the emperor propagated by Augustus: ‘From Augustus’
time onwards, the positive or negative character of a Roman ruler – and of a potential
ruler – could be signalled by his control over his anger, or the lack of it. Calm self-
control was the first key attribute of the good Roman judge.

Turning to the ideal image of the Roman leader, we can only understand his moral
authority if we appreciate the close connections with ideals of the Roman pater.
Weinstock’s 1971 classic Divus Julius traced the link between parenthood and political
authority back to the award of the title parens patriae to Cicero. The same title was later
taken by Augustus, who subsequently received the related title pater patriae, which
became standard for many successive emperors. Weinstock argued that the title was an
expression of the emperor’s unlimited political power, since he had complete authority
over his subjects as the Roman father did over his son. As we saw in Chapter 1
though, Richard Saller’s work has transformed our understanding of how the Romans
idealised family relationships. Ideal paternal authority was based not around a father’s
absolute power but his ability to elicit obedience in reciprocal, affectionate
relationships.

501 Harris, Restraining Rage, 248, see also 111-16, 220-21, 41, 61.
passing the importance of the affectionate side to the father in the emperor’s love for his people, but
concentrates on the authoritarian implications and the unsymmetrical nature of the relationship it implied.
See also Andreas Alföldi, Der Vater des Vaterlanders im Römischen Denken (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 48-49.
503 See especially Richard Saller, "Corporal Punishment, Authority, and Obedience in the Roman
Press, 1991 [repr. 2004]).
This shift in our conception of the Roman father’s authority has impacted our understanding of the use of paternal imagery in describing Roman leaders.\textsuperscript{504} Eve Marie Lassen notes that in Cicero’s or Pliny’s treatments of the father-leader synergy it is specifically the father’s temperance that is associated with the ideal official.\textsuperscript{505} Of the paternal characteristics attributed to Augustus, the most common was paternal \textit{clementia}, and this virtue featured prominently in early imperial “propaganda”. It is precisely this ability of the Roman father to elicit obedience based on mutual affection rather than violent discipline that we find most commonly in discussions of Roman officials. This attitude towards one’s dependents is bound up with the good leader’s self-control (e.g. Juvenal \textit{Satires} 8.87-89). Harris observes that the good ruler should restrain his anger towards his subjects as the good father curbs his anger towards wife and children.\textsuperscript{506} The ideal Roman leader was characterised by a self-control that engendered calm, reciprocal dealings with his dependents.

At this point we can return to what was hinted at at the end of Chapter 1. If the qualities of the good leader are those of the good father, it follows that a leader can be judged by his ability to demonstrate the characteristics of the good Roman \textit{pater}. We have already encountered Kate Cooper’s discussion of the importance of a rhetoric of temperance and intemperance in literary descriptions of elite men jostling for position in ancient society. This was particularly true of a man’s perceived relationship with his children. In a more

\textsuperscript{504} Lassen, "Roman Family," 111: ‘By integrating the family metaphors – the metaphors of father and son in particular – into the political and administrative system, some of the attitudes and ideals connected with the family were transferred to the attitudes and ideals connected with certain public offices’.

\textsuperscript{505} When Cicero gained the title \textit{pares patriae}, it was specifically for his salvific actions in saving Rome from Catiline’s conspiracy, and various military commanders were also called \textit{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 \textit{pater patriae}; though he was not given the title officially until 2 BC, there are extant coins from 20 BC where he was proclaimed \textit{conservator} and \textit{pares}: “\textit{SPQR PARENTI.. CONS(ervatori) SUO}”; see Lassen, "Roman Family," 113.

\textsuperscript{506} Harris, \textit{Restraining Rage}, 316.
recent article Cooper considers the rhetorical implications of Saller’s picture of the reciprocal relationship between parent and child.\textsuperscript{507} In explaining how public authority of Roman public officials was dependent on their cultivation and performance of private power, she emphasises that a man’s claim to legitimate authority was grounded in the public demonstration of his ability to elicit loyal obedience from dependents in his own household.

It is with this in mind that we should read Eusebius’ martyr narratives. This is particularly clear in the intricate tableaux of \textit{The Martyrs of Palestine}. Eusebius constructs narrative scenarios which bring out the domestic overtones of the encounters between martyrs and officials, and thus enforce the illegitimacy of the state official’s behaviour. In the brilliant construction of Porphyry’s confrontation with Firmilian the atmosphere of the \textit{domus} is imposed on the courtroom. When Firmilian is presented with Porphyry, the youngest martyr and the one who most easily fits a father-son paradigm, Eusebius drives home the image of the wrathful, out-of-control governor. This follows Eusebius’ account of Pamphilus treating Porphyry, his servant and pupil, as if he were his father. Pamphilus treats his servant like a son and elicits a public demonstration of loyal obedience which Firmilian cannot get, either from Porphyry or his own servant, Theodoulos. We cannot help but judge Firmilian next to Pamphilus. Pamphilus, Christian teacher and presbyter, demonstrates precisely those qualities of Roman leadership which the Roman governor Firmilian fails to.

Read in this light, the interaction between Origen and the governor with which we began contrasts Origen’s endurance and care for others with the irrational rage and

\textsuperscript{507} Cooper, "Closely Watched Households," 7.
mistreatment of the official. Origen demonstrates precisely that calm patience and ability to elicit willing responses in his dependents (e.g. his pupils) that the Roman judge lacks. Eusebius’ portraits of martyrs and state officials are constructed as polar opposites. Roman officials demonstrate a complete lack of precisely that self-control which the martyrs exhibit. Further, the state officials’ failure to elicit obedience from the martyrs is emphasised by their failure to treat them with the reciprocal respect with which good Roman men approached their dependents. At the exact moment the officials fail the martyrs arraigned before them are praised by Eusebius for their care and concern for those around them.

In Eusebius’ martyr narratives, as in their 2nd and 3rd century predecessors, martyrs emerge successful while their opponents’ authority disintegrates. But because of his realignment of the martyr-official dynamic, the consequences in Eusebius’ narratives are very different. Christian figures no longer emerge as symbols of resistance, but as better exemplars of precisely that model of good Roman leadership that the bad representatives of Empire have failed to exhibit. Their persistent self-control and positive treatment of dependents marks them as true inheritors of Roman legitimate authority.

Eusebius constructs martyr narratives where the mechanisms of Roman administration are not rejected wholesale. The mechanisms remain intact but the authority to operate them is transferred from non-Christian officials, who proved individually unworthy, to the Christian literati. Origen, Pamphilus, Porphyry and Seleucus all share the model of Christian authority based on self-control, paideia and care for dependents we have seen Eusebius construct in Chapters 1-3. Their interactions with Roman officials are proving
grounds for Eusebius’ contention that they best demonstrate the model of the temperate Roman leader. With the martyrs comes the final proof of what Eusebius has believed all along; that the Christians are the true inheritors of legitimate Roman authority.\textsuperscript{508}

\textsuperscript{508} For the connections between the roles of Roman magistrates and Christian bishops see most recently Kate Cooper, "Christianity, Private Power and the Law from Decius to Constantine: The Minimalist View," \textit{JECS} 19, no. 3 (2011): especially 332.
Conclusion: Offering the Book

This has been a study of stories, and I conclude with one more. It begins with Marinus, a successful Roman soldier stationed in Caesarea, gaining promotion to the rank of centurion. A colleague, jealous of his success, reports him as a Christian. Marinus, called before the judge Achaeus, confesses his Christianity. The judge advises a three hour delay for reflection. At this point Marinus, stepping outside the courtroom, is confronted by the bishop of Caesarea, Theotecnus, who leads him away and escorts him to the church. Taking him to the altar, he lifts Marinus’ cloak to reveal the sword girded beneath. In his other hand he holds out a book of the Gospels. Marinus is instructed to choose. Marinus having taken hold of the book, Theotecnus encourages him to adhere to that choice. The story concludes abruptly as Marinus is summoned back to court, persists in his confession of Christianity and is condemned. Within three sentences he is dead.

As in so many of the stories considered above, this one has a follow-up with a twist. One Astyrius, ‘renowned for his god-loving liberality (ἐπὶ θεοφιλεὶ παρρησίᾳ μνημονεύεται), EH 7.16.1’, a ‘Roman citizen of senatorial rank (ἀλῆ ἑλποῦ Ῥώμης συγκλητικῶν)’ who moves in the highest circles, ‘dear to kings and known to all because of his good lineage and wealth (βασιλεῖς τε προσφιλής καὶ πᾶσι γνώριμος εὐγενείας τε ἡνεκα καὶ περιουσίας)’, witnesses Marinus’ death. He takes the body, arraigns it in a ‘bright and very expensive garment (λαμπρὰς καὶ πολυτελοῦς ἔσθητος)’ and buries it with due care. So ends the story.
The Marinus episode is usually classed as a genuine third century martyr story. Herbert Musurillo, for example, includes it in his collection of pre-Constantinian martyr acta. However, there is no independent transmission of the story outside Eusebius, and Eusebius does not say he is quoting a document he has inherited, as he does elsewhere (e.g. *EH* 4.15.1-46; *EH* 5.1.1-5.2.8). However he has come by the story, it is recounted here in his own words. The Marinus episode is therefore another window onto Eusebius’ own outlook. In fact it epitomises our findings from the past four chapters.

Though Marinus is ostensibly the story’s protagonist, the focus is really upon Theotecnus the bishop. The crucial scene is the bishop’s intervention and the proffered choice in the church; little attention is paid to Marinus’ actual death. Moreover it is Theotecnus not Marinus who displays greater agency. The bishop is the subject of a series of emphatic active verbs of which Marinus is the object. Theotecnus ‘approached and dragged him away (ἀφέλκει, προσελθὼν ὁ μιλᾶς), *EH* 7.15.4’, and ‘taking him by the hand led him to the church (τῆς χειρὸς λαβὼν ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν προάγει)’. In the church Theotecnus, ‘having made him stand close to the holy place itself (πρὸς αὐτὸς στῆσας τὸ ἅγιασμα), ‘raises up his [Marinus’] cape (παραστέιλας αὐτοῦ τῆς χλαμύδος)’ for him. Theotecnus ‘pointed out to him the sword (αὐτῷ ξίφος ἐπιδείξας), and ‘brought him the writing of the holy gospels, and compared it [to the sword] (ἀντιπαρατίθησιν προσαγαγών αὐτῷ τῆν τῶν θείων εὐαγγελίων γραφήν)’. Finally, the bishop ‘bid him choose (κελεύσας... ἐλέσθαι)’. The martyr Marinus simply makes a tacit choice when instructed. It is Theotecnus’ voice too we hear in a series of imperatives: “Hold to this then... hold to God... may you receive what you have chosen, and walk in peace” (ἔχου τοίνυν, ἔχου... τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ τύχους ὄν εἴλου... καὶ βάδιζε μετ’

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Marinus’ discourse with the Roman judge is only reported indirectly. This is another Eusebian martyr story that affirms the value of effective pastoral church leadership.

Theotecnus is part of Eusebius’ carefully constructed network of church leadership. The Marinus episode follows a Eusebian succession list where Theotecnus is described as ‘also of Origen’s school (τῆς δ’ Ὠριγένου διατριβῆς καὶ), EH 7.14.1.’ There is also no suggestion that the bishop will be martyred with Marinus. This crisis arises unexpectedly in a period of calm, and we might therefore not expect another death. But elsewhere it is common in martyr narratives, including Eusebius’, for neutral Christians to protest against the Roman judge and be martyred too (see e.g. EH 5.1.9). This is not bishop Theotecnus’ role. He is to provide the book which aids his parishioner in need. He prompts Marinus into making the choice the judge Achaeus has tried to provoke.

Implicit in this symbolic contrast between book and sword is much of what we have teased out in the preceding chapters. It is striking that the sword, symbol of violent strength, is furnished by the martyr while the book, symbol of intellectual authority, is provided by a bishop rooted in the church’s institutionalised network. The book is the dominant symbol, and the bishop takes centre stage. Throughout the Ecclesiastical History, Eusebius is more interested in the book that supports the community, and the cleric who can read, interpret it and put it to pastoral use, than the violent resistance of the martyr.

510 On the importance of the hierarchies of voice in Eusebius, see e.g. Mendels, Media Revolution, 171.
The senator Astyrius too fits Eusebius’ broader picture. Whether he is a Christian remains unstated here; he clearly is in *EH* 7.17.1 which follows, but it is unclear if his dealings with Marinus have converted him (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 Eusebius quotes; *EH* 4.15.40-43; 5.1.59-63). Astyrius is another example of society’s highest echelons’ familiarity with Christianity in the *Ecclesiastical History*. Moreover, his action is memorable for its ‘god-loving generosity (ἐπὶ θεοφιλεῖ παρρησίᾳ). Astyrius does not speak here, so we find the language of παρρησία again used not for outspokenness but for kind action. It is the selfless act of the elite bystander, not the martyr’s resistance, which is characterised as παρρησία, and it is this, and the impression it gives of the church and its leadership, in which Eusebius is interested.

Here again then a martyr narrative serves as an opportunity to affirm legitimate church leadership and the spheres in which it moved. It is also noteworthy that this is a Caesarean story. Eusebius notes that Theotecnus was ‘of our time (ὁ θατ’ ήκ᾵ο)’; he was in fact Eusebius’ predecessor in the Caesarean see. The succession of legitimate authority figures in the *Ecclesiastical History* leads to Eusebius himself.

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Through Chapters 1 to 4 we have seen how Eusebius progressively builds a model of ideal Christian authority characterised by self-control, learnt through *paideia*, and manifested in care for dependents. On rocks of this ilk Eusebius built his church; a network of bishops all demonstrating these characteristics, inherited through
institutionalised pedagogical succession, enacted in their congregations and shared through reciprocal epistolary correspondence. In closing, I consider two potential consequences of this model of church leadership in the 4th century. In the Marinus episode, Eusebius is speaking about the actions of a Caesarean bishop and the role of the bishop generally. So too I propose two potential consequences; one personal and one visionary.

First, Eusebius’ rhetoric of authority will have consolidated his own position. It is easy to forget that our timeless historian was a provincial church leader in a politically turbulent period. The Introduction discussed contemporary suspicion of the Origenist tradition in this period. Oded Irshai has exposed too Eusebius’ wranglings with the Jerusalem see and its successive bishops Macarius and Maximus. Joseph Verheyden suggests that Eusebius’ Book 6 “Life of Origen” ‘certainly also served his own position and status.’ Perhaps this is another characteristic of the Book 6 stories we can extend to the Ecclesiastical History as a whole.

Eusebius had been educated in Pamphilus’ Caesarean school and, as we saw in the Introduction, was its star student. He had the familiarity with scripture and skill at exegesis of his Alexandrian forebears, and in the Caesarean library had inherited a material legacy of that intellectual tradition. He stresses elsewhere that he visited other libraries too (EH 6.20.1). Very few clerics would have been as steeped in the church’s literature as he. He was currently engaged on a literary project of unrivalled scope and novelty, intended to be a pastoral aid to the Christian community (EH 7.18.1; 8.2.3).

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511 Irshai, "Fourth Century Palestinian Politics."
512 Verheyden, "Origen in the Making," 725; see too Ferguson, Past is Prologue, 26.
513 On how the Ecclesiastical History fits Eusebius’ wider literary project, see DeVore, "Greek Historiography".
Eusebius stands as the most recent champion of that institutionalised intellectual succession he traces back through three hundred years of Christian history.

When Eusebius mentions Clement, for example, he singles out for comment that ‘Clement explained this matter in his Miscellanies, in the first book of which he sets out a chronological table (τὴν γέ τοι τῶν Στρωματέων πραγματείαν ὁ Κλήμης ὑπομνηματιζόμενος, κατὰ τὸ πρῶτον σύγγραμμα χρονικὴν ἐκθέμενος γραφῆν), EH 6.6.1.’ This cannot help but put the reader in mind of Eusebius’ own recently completed Chronicle. Eusebius creates a tie between himself and Clement. We should not forget either that Eusebius has traced this succession back to Jesus himself. Eusebius’ constructions of Christian authority therefore champion qualities he himself possessed and give him a pedigree stretching back to Christ. This was quite some reference, even if it was autobiographical.

In addition, sideling the authority of violent witness and advocating the legitimacy of flight may have been intended to vindicate his own actions. Eusebius had lived through the “Diocletianic Persecution” unscathed. His Martyrs of Palestine concerns the suffering of ‘those whom I myself knew (τούτους… μεθ’ ἡμᾶς γνωρίμους), EH 8.13.7.’ He was in and out of prison visiting Pamphilus while they wrote their Defence of Origen. Given Eusebius’ prominence, his survival cannot have gone unnoticed. That it did not do so is indicated by a later account. Epiphanius of Salamis recounts with glee how Eusebius was publicly accused of apostasy during the trial of Athanasius at Tyre. One Potamon bursts out:

“You sit there, Eusebius, and the innocent Athanasius is being judged by you? Who can put up with this? Tell me: were you not with me in prison during the persecution? And I
lost an eye for the truth, but you seem to have suffered no bodily injury, nor were you martyred, but you are alive and unmutilated. How did you get out of prison, unless you promised those who imposed on us the hardships of persecution to perform the unlawful deed, or actually performed it?”

ζὺ θαζέδῃ, Δὐζέβηε, θαὶ Ἀζαλάζηνο ἀζῶνο ὢλ παξὰ ζνῦ θξίλεηαη; ηίο ἐλέγθνη ηὰ ηνηαῦηα; ιέγε δέ κνη ζύ· νὐ ζὺλ ἐκνὶ ἤζζα ἐλ ηῆ θπιαθῆ ἐπὶ ηνῦ δησγκνῦ; θἀγὼ κὲλ ὀθζαικὸλ ἀπεβαιόκελ ὑπὲξ ἀιεζείαο, ζὺ δὲ νὒηε θαίλῃ ιεισβεκέλνλ ηη ἔρσλ ἐλ ηῶ ζώκαηη νὔηε ἐκαξηύξεζαο, ἀιιὰ ἕζηεθαο δ῵λ κεδὲλ ἞θξσηεξηαζκέλνο. πῶς ἀνεχώρηςας ἀπὸ τῆς φυλακῆς, εἰ μὴ ὅτι ὑπὲζρνπ ηνῖο ηὴλ ἀλάγθελ ηνῦ δησγκνῦ ἟κῖλ ἐπελέγθαζη ηὸ ἀζέκηηνλ πξ᾵μαη ἠ ἔπξαμαο, Panarion 68.8.4. 514

Eusebius’ response does not assuage our concern. Enraged, he shouts Potamon down and adjourns the court session, accusing Potamon of acting like a tyrant. There is no satisfying answer here to the lingering question of how Eusebius escaped persecution unharmed.

There is little reason to consider this accusation reliable. It is recorded only here, in a text unashamedly in favour of Athanasius (Potamon, for example is introduced as ‘the blessed Potamon, always zealous for the truth and orthodoxy and ready to speak out (ζῆλωτῆς δὲ ὥν ὑπὲρ ἄληθείας καὶ ὀρθοδόξιας ὁ προειρημένος Ποτάμων ὁ μακαρίτης, ἐλευθεροστομῶν).’ Whether Eusebius apostasised remains unclear. More important is that his failure to be martyred was noted by his opponents and used against him.

Eusebius cannot have been unaware of the potential for this; it may already have occurred in his lifetime. We should not forget either that episcopal authority had clashed with that of confessors in the church’s past, or that Eusebius’ and Pamphilus’ Defence of Origen was likely addressed to anti-Origenist confessors. The Ecclesiastical History’s suggestion that flight is not just a viable option for the Christian literati – whose future contribution is more valuable than the waste of their skills in a violent

death – but even preferable, was perhaps designed to shore up Eusebius’ own episcopal authority.

Eusebius’ model of legitimate church authority is therefore made in his own image.\textsuperscript{515} Many of the anecdotes we have considered contain reminiscent flashes of their author. Origen accompanying his pupils in prison reminds us of Eusebius’ visits to Pamphilus a century later. Dionysius’ avoidance of persecution enabled him to write the extensive descriptions of martyrdoms which benefitted posterity (\textit{EH 7.}praef.1.) These lengthy descriptions of martyrdoms under Decius (\textit{EH 6.41.1-6.42.6}) and Valerian (7.10.1-7.12.1) remind us of Eusebius’ own writings on the martyrdoms under Diocletian. If we knew Eusebius better, perhaps we would see him and his life on every page.

But second, beyond his personal situation Eusebius has a broader vision. He is writing in the first place for his fellow bishops; elite, Roman provincials of Hellenised education increasingly of the same calibre as the leaders of comparable non-Christian institutions. Eusebius’ history of the church erases those elements of its past that might make such men pause. Christian rejection of the family is reversed. Its asceticism is anaesthetised; co-opted into a rhetoric of self-control, its violent fringe chalked up to heresy or indiscretion. Its conflicts and disputes, divergent paths and theological wranglings are smoothed into one homogenous network of harmonious, inherited intellectualism. Its martyrs are muted, no longer heroes of resistance against Rome but proof of the constancy of Eusebius’ temperate model of church leadership. Eusebius’ picture of the church is one designed specifically for these elite, educated 4\textsuperscript{th} century church leaders.

\textsuperscript{515} We might compare Miller, \textit{Biography}, 135-36: ‘we will look at an author’s intent not only as a way of imagining his work’s context, but also as a reflection of the author’s deep sense of himself’.
This explains why, for example, Patricia Cox Miller sees in Eusebius’ Origen a “Janus-faced” figure. By that phrase she means a composite designed to appeal to two separate audiences – the Christian insider and the pagan outsider.\(^{516}\) As we saw in the discussion of audience in the Introduction though, this cannot be true – this is a text for Christians. Eusebius’ rhetoric of temperance solves the apparent dichotomy. There are not two audiences here, as Cox Miller suggests, but one. Eusebius’ writing is targeted at Christians, but Christians who share the education and stereotypes of their elite non-Christian neighbours.

Perhaps in closing I can take one slight step into the realm of conjecture. In my discussion of audience, I noted that both Mendels and Verdoner posited secondary audiences (see n26). In so doing both made some allowance for the position against which they had argued. Perhaps we too can allow for a secondary audience, but one that follows logically from the primary. Ancient publishing worked via ever-broader spheres. Beyond its first episcopal recipient, the *Ecclesiastical History* would have passed to those with whom he interacted. That included his students – on Eusebius’ model, the next generation of clerics. And it meant other clerics. But it also meant the local, educated elites of Empire, both Christian and non-Christian.\(^{517}\) That would have included those in positions of imperial administrative power, like Marinus’ benefactor Astyrius. The leaders’ of the 4\(^{th}\) century church were drawn from these circles; even if they were not, Eusebius’ writing encouraged them to think of themselves so (on his

\(^{516}\) Miller, *Biography*, 70.

\(^{517}\) We only need think of Ambrose’s and Symmachus’ correspondence to realise how natural was such interaction between Christian and non-Christian elites. In addition Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 40, notes that beyond the initial recipients of Christian documents was envisaged ‘the whole body of the faithful to whom they were read’. We can imagine the *Ecclesiastical History*’s clerical recipients incorporating its message into their preaching.
picture, the church’s past leaders had mingled effortlessly in such rarified spheres). Christian elites could count even emperors among their midst. In other words, once the *Ecclesiastical History* passed beyond its initial recipients, it would have been in the hands of the Empire’s administrative power-brokers.

This secondary audience raises a further possibility as to how Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* moulds the Christian future. Each chapter has shown that Eusebius does not simply present Christian leaders as acting in accordance with a traditional rhetoric of self-mastery; they do so better than their non-Christian contemporaries. Christians demonstrate familial piety when non-Christians abandon it. Christian ascetics demonstrate a self-control that sets them above their non-Christian counterparts, and means that the latter come to them as supplicants. Christian intellectuals teach both Christian and non-Christian learning to the leaders of the philosophical schools. Christian martyrs, particularly clerics, exhibit the calm self-control and care for dependents that the state officials torturing them fail to. If it is by such a rhetoric of self-control manifested in the ability to care for one’s dependents (and elicit willing reciprocity in return) that men in the Empire qualify for public office, then the inevitable conclusion of the *Ecclesiastical History* is that the Christian clergy are the best qualified men in the Empire.

In the first place, that means they are qualified to run the church. But if we consider readers outside the church hierarchy, how would they take this? How would the newly Christian Constantine have read it? As the last of Eusebius’ martyr stories fades in the ears, and the final intemperate imperial official slinks off the *Ecclesiastical History*’s stage, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Christian clergy would be a better bet to
wield not just ecclesiastical authority, but “state” authority too. The same qualities that enable Christian leaders to manage their congregations qualify them to manage the Empire’s communities. We are talking here of secondary audiences and suppositions, and our step has crossed the threshold of conjecture. But there can be no doubt that if Eusebius foresaw that Christian leaders were capable of wielding the authority of Empire, the coming history would prove him right.\(^{518}\)

\(^{518}\) See further Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). I note too the evocative closing comments of Cooper, “Christianity, Private Power and the Law,” 343: ‘It may have been this rootedness in the ancient Roman tradition of private power that allowed the Christian bishop so decisively to outlast the Roman order.’
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