Lactantius, Eusebius, and the Transformation of Christian Apologetics in the Constantinian Era

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Abstract

In my dissertation, *Lactantius, Eusebius, and The Transformation of Christian Apologetics in the Constantinian Era*, I examine how Lactantius and Eusebius take up and transform Christian apologetics. Christian apologetics is a mode of discourse characterized by explanation/defense of Christianity or elements thereof with reference to the ostensible critiques or questions of non-Christians. This mode of discourse was present amongst the earliest generations of Christians, but the prolific and influential early fourth century authors Lactantius, in his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII,* and Eusebius of Caesarea, in his *Apodeixis*, are the first to offer systematic reflection and analysis of it. Both authors wrote their texts during the twenty years of the reign of Constantine (306–37 CE), a time when Christianity received imperial endorsement and Christians rapidly gained power in the emperor's court and Roman society more broadly. I argue that apologetics proved useful to Eusebius and Lactantius as they sought to imagine a new kind of Christian elite, who could not only respond to philosophical critiques of Christianity, but who could also increasingly occupy new positions of privilege and responsibility in a Christianizing empire. Lactantius and Eusebius thus transformed Christian apologetics from a mode of discourse primarily reacting to the ostensible attacks of outsiders into a pedagogical discourse designed to shape religious insiders.

To understand how and why Lactantius and Eusebius transformed Christian apologetics, I first situate my analysis within some insights that have emerged from recent scholarly debates and discussions about ancient apologetics. These discussions have called into question the cordoning of apologetics in a pre-Constantinian age or in an "age of the apologists" in which Christians were especially marginal or disadvantaged. Recent scholarly debates and discussions have also illuminated the lack of consistent terminology in antiquity for the practice modern scholars tend to call apologetics and have concomitantly rejected the notion that there was anything like a proper "genre" of Christian apologetic writing. This is an important insight for my analysis, since both authors develop unique vocabularies to describe their projects and the projects of their literary predecessors. Finally, they have developed analysis of apologetics that explores its inter-communal and formative functions. The pedagogical themes that I argue are so powerfully present in both authors texts dovetails with these analytical focuses.

I next consider Lactantius in his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII,* where he describes a need for defense of wisdom and truth against anti-Christian ideas, a defense that is urgently needed because of the threat of physical violence against Christians. Lactantius articulates a lineage of previous authors of apologetic works upon whose work he will build, but who were ultimately inadequate to the task. Lactantius mentions a few disparate methodological mistakes and insufficiencies of rhetorical acumen that caused this failure, but fundamentally sees his predecessors' mistake as "defending" but not "teaching." Lactantius claims to be rectifying this situation by writing "*institutiones*" (pedagogical texts that introduce a discipline) that will not only correct error but also

instill the truth and form a new kind of educated Christian. Thus, in Lactantius' text the defense/response of apologetics is united with "instruction" and transformed into a tool for forming new kinds of Christian intellectuals.

Eusebius, in his *Apodeixis*, makes no distinction between "defense" and "instruction," but instead claims to be writing a "demonstration," whose hallmark is showing the inherent intelligibility and exclusive truthfulness of Christianity over against non-Christian practices or doctrines, in a distinguished line of previous authors going back to the apostle Paul. He argues that these demonstrations rightly serve a pedagogical function: they form and equip Christian intellectuals to contend with non-Christian peers and provide guidance for Christian inferiors. Recent scholars have emphasized the way Eusebius is articulating a kind of Christian *ethnos* in this text. My exposition builds on the arguments of this scholarship by noting that within this *ethnos* we find Eusebius focusing on the formation of the elite class within it. Therefore, in *Apodeixis* we see a project to form elite Christian intellectuals and also some description of what role these elite will play amongst religious outsiders and co-religionists.

This dissertation shows how Christian apologetics was re-imagined in the early fourth century by Lactantius and Euesbius, who transform this mode of discourse within a broader pedagogical frame designed to form Christian intellectuals. The similarity in these authors' projects suggest that they both see the apologetic mode of discourse as an important, perhaps essential tool in forming Christian intellectuals for the new situation of Christianity in the first three decades of the fourth century. Finally, by showing how Christian apologetics was similarly transformed by Lactantius and Eusebius, I

demonstrate previously unseen similarities between the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*.

Contents

Abbreviations

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
BSGRT	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina
CPL	Clavis Patrum Latinorum. Edited by Eligius Dekkers. 2nd ed. Steenbrugis: Abbatia Sancti Petri, 1961
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DE	Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica* (Demonstration of the Gospel)
FC	Fathers of the Church
HE	Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* (Ecclesiastical History)
DI	Lactantius, *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* (The Divine Institutes)
JECS	Journal of Early Christian Studies
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Mort.	Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* (The Death of the Persecutors)
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PE	Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* (Preparation for the Gospel)
PPS	Popular Patristics Series
SC	Sources chretiennes. Paris: Cerf, 1943–
StPatr	Studia Patristica

TTH	Translated Texts for Historians

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Introduction

The Passion of Julius the Veteran (*Passio Iulii Veterani*) is a brief story of a soldier set in 304 CE who is tried and executed for being unwilling "to offer sacrifice to the gods."[1] Julius' story of martyrdom seems simple and straightforward, and for this reason has often been treated as merely "historical," a martyr story that "really" happened, with little additional comment.[2] However, as Philip L. Tite has recently argued, it is actually noteworthy for its seemingly nuanced attitude to the persecuting governor, textured negotiation of Roman and Christian identity, and complicated evaluation of military service.[3] All of this is in at least apparent contrast with earlier Christian martyr acts which often lack such negotiations and posit a demonic agency behind the words and actions of many characters.[4] In this *passio*, Julius is the consummate soldier who has been faithful in his duties to his commanding officers for twenty-seven years.[5] The governor engages him in a debate about proper allegiances and where loyalty to emperors belongs relative to loyalty to Christ. In the narrative logic of the short martyr act, though the governor has the power to execute and is backed by the authority of an imperial edict, Julius comes out looking like the better man and the better

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[1] *Passio Iulii Veterani*, 1.4 (ET Musurillo, 260-261); *Passio Iulii Veterani* in Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs,* OECT (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

[2] Philip L. Tite, "A Conversation, an Edict, and a Sword: A Look at the *Martyrdom of Julius the Veteran*," JTS 70 (2019): 184-189.

[3] Ibid.

[4] For instance, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 3.1 (92-93) and *The Martyrs of Lyon and Vienne* 5 (152-153) in Éric Rebillard, ed., *Greek and Latin Narratives about the Ancient Martyrs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[5] *Passio Iulii Veterani*, 2.1 (Musurillo, 260-261).

Roman. Roman institutions, such as the military, and Roman identity more broadly can be absorbed and elevated by Christianity.

I begin with this *passio* for a set of related reasons. First, because its setting during the so-called Great Persecution of Diocletian and its likely date of composition during or shortly after this persecution, places it in roughly the same time period as the two texts by Lactantius and Eusebius I will be primarily considering in this dissertation—the first three decades of the fourth century. Secondly, in the case of the *Passio Iuli Veterani* we find many of the same sorts of negotiations and transformations that we will find in Lactantius and Eusebius: repurposing earlier Christian forms of discourse, bold subsuming of "pagan" cultural forms, and nuanced negotiations with official positions of imperial power. And while no single element here is exactly "new" in Christian history, its confluence and intensity suggest something particular about this historical moment.

The early fourth century was a time of considerable change in the Roman Empire, as the persecution of Christians begun by Diocletian (the Tetrarchic Persecution) gave way to imperial privilege and patronage, and Diocletian's unique governing experiment, what historians have dubbed the Tetrarchy, dissolved into the Constantinian dynasty.[6] The chronological focus of my study places it in the period often referred to as late antiquity

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[6] For the remainder of this dissertation, I have chosen to call the persecution begun by Diocletian, but continued and executed by several other emperors, the "Tetrarchic Persecution." This avoids any controversy surrounding the qualifier "Great" and is more precise than "Diocletianic Persecution."

—more specifically, the beginnings of late antiquity at the turn of the fourth century.[7] There will be some discussion of the second and third centuries, and some discussion of later years in the fourth and fifth centuries, but these are bookends to a study that is primarily concerned with the years in which the main texts I will be considering were written: roughly 305-324 CE. My focus will also be on the rhetoric, literature, and theology of Christians, though there will be some reference to various social, economic, administrative, and military changes that occurred around this time and other religions will play some part in the narrative.[8] A majority of my analysis will focus on the work of two influential Christians who contemporaneously composed massive works of Christian apologetics: Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica* and *Demonstratio evangelica* (a diptych I will usually designate with the single title *Apodeixis*).

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[7] It is with some hesitation that I have decided to use the expression "Late Antiquity." Late Antiquity can refer to periods of varying length (e.g., 150–750, 0–1000, 250–800) and geographically tends to connote more than regions under Roman hegemony or even the Mediterranean. I could with justification have used the designation "Later Roman Empire." The designation "Later Roman Empire," however, has tended to refer to the institutions and political history of Rome. This dissertation is indeed focused on the Roman Empire and is shaped around major changes that occurred in that empire, but I have chosen "Late Antiquity" because of its religious and cultural connotations and my choice of scholarly interlocutors. See Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1971); G.W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar eds., *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1999); Garth Fowden, *Before and After Muhammed: The First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Jas Elsner, *Empires of Faith in Late Antiquity: Histories of Art and Religion from India to Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[8] Defining and theorizing the word "religion" is almost an academic discipline in its own right, but tremendous precision is not necessary for the occasional and contextually clear ways I will be using the word. My own thinking about religion has been shaped by Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993) and William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), but with important qualifications from Kevin Schilbrack, *Philosophy and the Study of Religions: A Manifesto* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014) and Martin Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion,* trans. Steven Rendall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

I will argue that the projects of these two authors in their respective texts tells us something important about how they were drawing on and construing their Christian literary heritage, specifically Christian apologetic writing, and how they were seeking to shape and situate themselves and their communities in their new political situation. The *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* are ambitious, perhaps even grandiose, projects of literature. They include massive compilations of texts that were central to Greek and Roman identities and provide subversive readings of these same texts. They include hermeneutical guidance for their readers so that they will be prepared to read texts and authors not included in the compilation. Moreover, the projects of Lactantius and Eusebius are not merely prolonged engagements with putative opponents. They are designed to be exemplary, to form and shape Christian intellectuals in a new literary culture, a culture that sustains a new kind of intellectual who is also described in these same texts.

As the word is used in the study of early Christianity, apologetics (and cognates such as apologist, apology, apologetic) is a contemporary word that tends to refer to any early Christian text responding to the putative criticisms or questions of outsiders. While there is a discernible practice that corresponds to this designation, there doesn't seem to be any specific ancient label.[9] Thus, in Lactantius and Eusebius we find a continuation of the practice of apologetics, but we also find they develop their own labels and vocabulary for their projects and their perceived literary precursors. As they articulate purpose and

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[9] Related Greek and Latin words such as *defensio* and ἀπολογία are not used as contemporary scholars use the word "apologetic" and its cognates.

identity for their texts, we can perceive them writing apologetic texts that are designed to form a new kind of Christian intellectual for the new world of the early fourth century. Specifically, in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*, these authors provide programmatic statements that include sustained reflection on their projects and the practice of responding to the alleged critiques and questions of outsiders. In these passages, Lactantius and Eusebius posit an important (albeit imperfect) legacy of earlier Christian writers whose efforts they will complete or supersede in their own pedagogically inflected apologetic works.

I am using the word "transform" in my title for a few reasons. First because it captures the sense of both continuity and also change. Christian apologetics obviously don't begin with Lactantius and Eusebius; this practice has a considerable history preceding them, but they harness it for its perceived latent usefulness in addressing their own needs and concerns. Nevertheless, what these authors do with Christian apologetic writing is novel and bespeaks new contexts and concerns. I have also chosen "transform" because it is suitably broad enough to include the novel use to which Lactantius and Eusebius put Christian apologetics. We will see them evaluating predecessors, commenting on the goals and methods of the mode, and even creating new words and designations for apologetics and adjacent concepts.

Finally, I have chosen the word "transform" to indicate that my project fits amidst other series, monographs, and articles on late antiquity that describe how rhetoric, institutions, religion, architecture, or just about any part of culture was "transformed,"

"constructed," or "created," in this era.[10] At a minimum, my study will be like these others in tracing how something (in this case, Christian apologetic writing) was fashioned and transformed through the inception of late antiquity. However, there are some specific reasons why the texts and ideas normally associated with Christian apologetic writing are particularly ripe for this kind of analysis. Not only has there been no focused and extended study of how apologetics were shaped during Late Antiquity,[11] but there has also been considerable debate and discussion during the last few decades about many things related to apologetic writing.[12] While nothing quite like a consensus has emerged from these debates and discussions, there a few major points of agreements and trends of scholarship that will be useful for a study such as mine. For instance, the idea that there was anything like a genre of apologetics in antiquity has been mostly rejected. This

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[10] There is more than can fit in a single note, but to name a few: the *Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion,* ed. Daniel Boyarin, Virginia Burrus, Charlotte Fonrobert, and Robert Gregg; Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis, eds., *Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown* (London: Routledge, 2009); Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler, *Theurgy in Late Antiquity: The Invention of a Ritual Tradition* (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013); Guy G. Strousma, *The Making of the Abrahamic Religions in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Simon Goldhill, *The Christian Invention of Time: Temporality and the Literature of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[11] There has been writing on issues and ideas in Late Antiquity that are often associated with Christian apologetic writing, especially inter-religious polemic and identity construction. See for instance Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360-430* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007); Jeremy Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Mattias P. Gassman, *Worshippers of the Gods: Debating Paganism in the Fourth-Century Roman West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[12] Literature on Christian apologetic writing in the last few decades is extensive and I will interact with much of it especially in the next chapter. A few of the most important examples include: Robert M. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1989); Bernard Pouderon and Joseph Doré, eds., *Les apologistes Chrétienes et la culture Grecque* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1996); Mark Edwards, et al., eds., *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Averil Cameron, "Apologetics in the Roman Empire—A Genre of Intolerance?" in *Humana Sapit: Études d'Antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini*, ed. Jean-Michel Carrié and Rita Lizzi Testa, vol. 3, Bibliothèque de l'antiquité tardive (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 219-227; Bernard Pouderon, *Les apologistes Grecs du IIe siécle* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2005); Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Jörg Ulrich, and David Brakke, eds., *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009); idem, *Critique and Apologetics: Jews, Christians, and Pagans in Antiquity* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009); idem, *In Defense of Christ* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014).

insight allows for greater appreciation of why and how Lactantius and Eusebius develop unique vocabularies in their works. Additionally, contemporary scholarship has focused on the function these texts and the practice of apologetics more broadly have served in constructing and maintaining Christian identity. As I have already suggested, my exposition will explore how two late antique authors sought to use apologetics to form and shape co-religionists.

There will be a few important consequences to my argument. First, this dissertation will show how apologetics were transformed in the early fourth century. Fortunately, in both Lactantius and Eusebius, this transformation is not just found in the overall content of their texts but explicitly in their programmatic statements. It is in these parts of their work that these authors indicate a sense of the importance and inadequacy of the Christian legacy of responding to outsider criticisms. It is also at these moments that we find both authors use pedagogical language to re-imagine the goal and role of Christian literature that responds to outsider critique. Related to this use of pedagogical language, a second consequence of my dissertation will be in showing how some Christian authors were seeking to use Christian apologetic writing in the formation of Christian intellectuals in the Constantinian era. Though in different ways and to different degrees, both Lactantius and Eusebius describe their texts of Christian apologetic writing as having in view an ideal reader who will be formed and equipped by these texts. The formation of Christian intellectuals is also imagined in these texts as having considerable social and even political significance in the Constantinian era. Third, my analysis on all these points leads to a recognition of considerable similarity between the Christian

apologetic writing of Lactantius and Eusebius that has not been recognized before. This similarity is noteworthy in itself, but may also point to common social and theological trends that were effecting Christian discourse around the Mediterranean in the Constantinian era.

Finally, there will be a few important ancillary consequences that flow from these main ones. For instance, I will analyze some of Lactantius' and Eusebius' other writings, particularly their writing about the emperor and imperial history, to show how the ideal readers and goals they articulate in the *Apodeixis* and *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* inform their characterization of the ideal emperor. And I will gesture toward a few possible avenues of inquiry where my arguments could lead.

Outline of the Project

As I suggested above, I will need to analyze and discuss Christian apologetics in antiquity. In chapter one, I will look at contemporary discussions of, and debates about, Christian apologetic writing to unearth a few insights and clarifications of language that are useful for my argument. Regarding language, I will discuss the history of the modern use of the word "apologetic" as it tends to be used by contemporary scholarship of early Christianity. This designation is used in a distinct way in modern scholarship: ancient discourse designated ἀπολογητικός (or its cognates ἀπολογία or απολογέομαι) is not the same thing as "apologetic" as scholars of early Christianity tend to use that word.[13]

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[13] This is widely recognized by contemporary scholars of early Christianity writing on texts normally designated as apologetic. Anders Klostergaard Petersen*:* "The Diversity of Apologetics: From Genre to Mode of Thinking" in *In Defense of Christ*, 15-41, provides an especially thorough explanation of the difference.

Ancient ἀπολογίαι were a sub-category of forensic rhetoric designed to respond to accusations. “Apologetic” as contemporary scholarship of early Christianity has tended to use the word is much wider and more diverse. I will briefly look at the history of this category and the previously regnant epochal understanding of it that has been rendering untenable by recent scholarship. I will then explain what words and categories I find most helpful in understanding Christian apologetics. Briefly, Christian apologetic writing is characterized by explanation/defense of Christianity or elements thereof with reference to the ostensible critiques or questions of non-Christians. When considering early Christian literature, I prefer the modal word “apologetic” since it can be more easily used to modify other designations such as genre. Christians wrote apologetic letters and apologetic dialogues, and portions of works were apologetic. I also find the word “apologetics” useful in naming the practice of composing Christian apologetic writing. The words “apologist” and “apology” I will tend to avoid since the former is often associated with the epochal understanding of Christian apologetics and “apology” since it tends to be more easily confused with ancient rhetorical categories. I will also briefly point out ways contemporary scholarship has helped draw out the community forming and insider function of Christian apologetic writing—a perspective that dovetails with my analysis of the pedagogical rhetoric of Lactantius’ and Eusebius’ works. Finally, since I demonstrate how modern uses of the word “apologetic” (and cognates such as apology and apologetics) match no specific, ancient designation, I am well positioned to describe how the analysis of the works of Lactantius and Eusebius need to focus on the specific

vocabulary they develop in describing their texts and the Christian writers they claim as predecessors.

Chapter two is about Lactantius. After introducing Lactantius and his career, I will begin with an analysis of the programmatic statements in the beginning of book one and book five of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. Lactantius claims that in the past Christians have exclusively offered a "defense" of "divine truth," but that this defense was inadequate because previous writers were deficient in eloquence or education, or just had an deficient method of apologetics. In this context, Lactantius creates a genealogy of previous authors that he will surpass not only by defending more effectively than they did but also by combining "defense" with "instruction." I argue that the word "translate" is a helpful way of capturing Lactantius' notion of how Christian practices of responding to criticisms are done well. He envisions his project and those of his predecessors as designed to render Christian truth, cast by him as a kind of foreign wisdom, intelligible.

However, Lactantius envisions his work as not only doing this kind of translation but as pedagogical, as forming and fielding new intellectuals who will continue the work he has begun. Thus, Lactantius' text itself is not only about defending or teaching Christianity to non-Christians—it isn't even primarily about this. It is about transforming Christian apologetics into a tool to shape Christian intellectuals and a concomitant literary culture. Before finishing my discussion of Lactantius, I will briefly survey his corpus in light of my analysis. I will argue that Lactantius' pedagogical language, his attempt to form and field a new kind of Christian intellectual, and his concern with

building a new sort of Christian literary culture, are not relegated to his programmatic statements in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. All of these features are present to varying degrees throughout *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and most of the rest of his corpus. Taken together, my analysis strongly suggests that Lactantius saw his literary endeavors as a project that was as much social and political as theological. Eusebius' project in the *Apodeixis*, while different in some significant ways, bears a striking resemblance to Lactantius'.

In chapter three, after describing where *Apodeixis* fits in his wider corpus Christian apologetic writing, I will consider Eusebius' *Apodeixis* in much the same way as the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. I will look at the programmatic statements in this text, and then consider the broad strokes of his rhetorical strategy in light of these statements. Eusebius designates his text and texts written by his claimed predecessors as "demonstrations" that are designed to show the intelligibility and exclusive truthfulness of Christian doctrine or practice. He similarly positions his text amongst earlier Christian texts and evokes a Christian literary culture. Eusebius places the *Apodeixis* in a strong but paradoxical position amongst *and* over other texts in the literary lineage he is creating: he is writing a demonstration but one that includes and transcends previous demonstrations. Eusebius is also creating a pedagogical text, and even more than Lactantius he is explicit about whom he hopes to educate and what the result of this education will be. Eusebius' intellectual will be a figure equipped for debate with peers from both the "Greeks" and "those of the circumcision" in the public square, and his intellectual will also lead and guide subordinates. I will contend that the purpose of the text is to form Christian

intellectuals. This analysis dovetails with recent studies of the *Apodeixis* that focus on its ethnic argumentation. These studies have forcefully argued against the bifurcation of religious and ethnic reasoning in Eusebius' work. My analysis comports with these in suggesting that there is a civic and political dimension to Eusebius' project in the *Apodeixis*.

Finally, in chapter four, I will provide an extended discussion of Lactantius and Eusebius together. I will look at the main themes and purposes shared between these two authors: pedagogy, forming intellectuals, and transforming Christian apologetics. The differences we can see on these themes is important for making clear the unique character of their arguments, but the similarity is remarkable. I will further show in this chapter how their respective projects of Christian apologetic writing explicitly tie in with their other writing—especially historical and panegyrical writing. In both cases, the ideal Christian intellectual they envision bears striking resemblance to their narration of the emperor Constantine. Finally, I will gesture toward how my description of the use and transformation of Christian apologetic writing in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* may help us understand some subsequent writings. I will briefly consider Salutius' *On the Cosmos and the* Gods and Theodoret's *Cure for Greek Maladies*. I will conclude in a brief final chapter by reviewing the argument and offering some suggestions about what questions and future avenues for research are opened.

The remainder of this introduction will introduce two important, contextual dimensions. I will first say a bit more about pedagogy—an important and reoccurring

word in my analysis of Lactantius and Eusebius. I will describe briefly some of the content and significance of ancient education. I will then indicate how this background will help us see why and how these two authors develop their projects using the language of education.

Pedagogical Rhetoric and Goals in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*

As my argument will make clear, the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* make educational language central to their framing and purported purposes. In Lactantius' text, for instance, this pedagogical aim is already apparent in the title of his work as *institutiones*.[14] *Institutiones* were treatises designed to introduce various disciplines such as law or rhetoric. Lactantius opens his text by claiming that the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are like other introductory treatises for new students, and that his goal is "to instruct" (*instituere*) his readers.[15] *Institutio* is an unambiguously pedagogical word with clear connotations of formation and teaching. However much Lactantius plays with this idea—his *institutiones* are "divine" after all—the pedagogical valence remains.

Eusebius similarly describes the two parts of his diptych as educational. For instance, Eusebius claims in his opening to be writing for "the ignorant" (οἱ οὐχ εἰδότες), and though he quickly adds considerable nuance and definition to this designation the

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[14] *DI* 1.1.12. Lactantius, *Divine Institutes,* translated by Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey, TTH 40 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003); idem, *Divinarum Institutionum Libri Septem,* Eberhard Heck and Antonie Wlosok, eds., 4 vols, BSGRT (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005-2011).

[15] *DI* 1.1.20-21 (Heck and Wlosok, 5); 5.4.3 (Heck and Wlosok, 451).

idea that he is writing to meet a deficiency in learning is foundational.[16] Thus his first volume, the *Praeparatio evangelica*, is like a "preparatory treatise" that is designed to prepare one for higher learning—in this case the scripturally-focused *Demonstratio evangelica*.[17] It is "elementary instruction" (στοιχείωσις) and "introduction" (εἰσαγωγή), words that denote elementary educational material, written to prepare the learner for deeper and more difficult things. Later in the *Praeparatio* and in the *Demonstratio* Eusebius goes further in describing different kinds of Christians for whom different levels and forms of education are appropriate.[18] In light of this, and in preparation for my argument in the coming chapters, it is worth looking at an overview of education in antiquity.

Education in Antiquity

It is useful at this stage to say more about ancient education, particularly the social and political significance of its more advanced forms.[19] Hellenistic and Roman curriculum, structure, and goals share many similarities—with the Roman curriculum

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[16] *PE* 1.1.1-2 (SC 206, 96-97). Eusebius, *La Préparation évangélique,* ed. Jean Sirinelli and Édouard des Places, 9 vol., SC 206, 215, 228, 262, 266, 292, 307, 338 (Paris: Cerf, 1974); idem, *Preparation for the Gospel,* E.H. Gifford, trans., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981).

[17] *PE* 1.1.12 (SC 206, 102-105; ET Gifford, 5).

[18] *PE* 1.5.3-4; *DE* 1.8.

[19] The oft-cited classic of the twentieth century on Greek and Roman education is H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity,* trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956); See also Yun Lee Too, "Introduction: Writing the History of Ancient Education," in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity,* ed. Yun Lee Too (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1-10 for a description, analysis, and criticism of Marrou's significance in the study of ancient education.

apparently adapting to Greek models over the course of the Republican era.[20] There were, of course, varieties of pedagogies in antiquity.[21] In fact, as I will describe further below, education was a subject of considerable debate and conflict. Additionally, modern interpreters have probably assumed divisions between levels of education in the Greco-Roman worlds were more strict than they in fact were (for instance, writing as if they operated like grade levels in modern schools in the United States) and given an over-schematized impression of what education looked like on the ground in ancient cities and towns.[22] In other words, it is important to acknowledge that ancient education was far from entirely stable and was not always rigidly structured. Nevertheless, the three-stage educational program that is described in most textbooks and histories of Rome or the Hellenistic world are not entirely inaccurate; there are laws and inscriptions that clearly assume this tripartite division, and that division will be helpful here in providing a structure for considering what ancient education looked like and what social or ideological significance attended it.[23]

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[20] Marrou's classic narrates the structure and history of these two traditions as essentially the same. This is, of course, to oversimplify, but for my purposes the similarities are far more important than the differences. Some difference would be that Roman educational programs eschewed physical education, a central component of the Greek program, while jurisprudence was largely a development of Latin speakers. However, the tiers of education, the centrality of canonical texts that were memorized, and the importance of rhetoric are all shared features. See also Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 23-25.

[21] Yun Lee Too, "Introduction," describes the project of the volume to be to "offer a narrative about the variety of pedagogies from the Greco-Roman world" (11-13).

[22] Fredrick Arthur George Beck and Rosalind Thomas, "Greek Education," and J.V. Muir, "Roman Education," in *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization,* eds., Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 258-264 provide a concise, recent distillation of the traditional view of ancient education but still notes, for instance, that the *grammaticus* and *rhetor* were "probably never rigidly differentiated," 263.

[23] Yun Lee Too, "Introduction," 12 "Furthermore, antiquity seems to have produced a whole body of writing which was consciously concerned with, and often declared itself as concerned with, *paideia* because this was a political issue."

The basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic were taught by an elementary school teacher, *ludi magister* (or *litterator*) or γραμματιστής.[24] This level of education was more widely available than more advanced curriculum and could be accessed by most classes of male children and some female as well.[25] Although the skills acquired through this kind of basic education may seem apolitical and self-evidently valuable to us, even at this level there was a strong social and political dimension. Learning to read and write was accomplished by copying and memorizing passages from canonical Latin and Greek texts whose significance was literally internalized in this process. It was common for cities to actually fund and facilitate elementary education for all citizens—a fact that probably contributed to the relatively low pay received by *ludi magistri*.[26] Thus a vast number of citizens of varying classes were educated and formed, at least to some degree, as Latin or Greek speakers knowledgeable in the content and form of canonical texts.

After graduating from this level, students could be educated by a *grammaticus* or ὁ γραμματικός (the Latin being a loanword from Greek). In this stage, the memorization, analysis, and exposition of canonical texts was dominant. This level of education was

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[24] This level of education was most closely associated with children and childhood: see the essays in *The Oxford Handbook of Childhood and Education in the Classical World,* ed. Judith Evans Grubbs, Tim Parkin, and Roslyn Bell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Additionally, this level sometimes included music and athletics. For more, see Morgan, *Literate Education*, 33-39.

[25] Marrou, *A History of Education,* 202; Morgan, *Literate Education,* 48-49 nicely summarizes the way ancient education ideologically excluded women even though we know of many women who received a literate education.

[26] For a snapshot of the relative value an elementary teacher may have been perceived to have relative to a *grammaticus* or *rhetor* see the translation of Diocletian's Price Edict in Roger Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004) 139-146 in which *ludi magister* make 25% of what a *grammaticus* earns and 20% of what a *rhetor* earns.

more financially and socially exclusive. The relative importance of this stage of education can be inferred from the social status some *grammaticus* could achieve.[27]

Finally, for those male students with the means, graduation from secondary education led to a sort of "higher education" in rhetoric under a *rhetor* or σοφιστής.[28] There were other advanced subjects that many students could study in addition to, or even instead of, rhetoric such as law, medicine, or philosophy—many of which were studied at exclusive institutions in cosmopolitan centers.[29] However, training in rhetoric was normally seen as the means of forming elite members of society, such as those destined for positions in the imperial bureaucracy.[30] Those who passed through this higher level education would be expected to have already internalized canonical texts and authors. They would be expected to be able to participate in an elite culture of other similarly educated men and would be expected to be able to speak and write as their

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[27] Suetonius, *De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* in Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars,* J.C. Rolfe, trans., Vol. 2, LCL 38 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914) discusses the origin and significance of early Latin *grammatices* as well as some of the more illustrious examples of this professions. For instance *De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* III (ET LCL 38, 384-385), in which he writes, *Posthac magis ac magis et gratia et cura artis increvit, ut ne clarissimi quidem viri abstinuerint quo minus et ipsi aliquid de ea scriberent, utque temporibus quibusdam super viginti celebres scholae fuisse in urbe tradantur.* "After this the science constantly grew in favour and popularity, so much so that even the most eminent men did not hesitate to make contributions to it, while at times there are said to have been more than twenty well attended schools in the city."

[28] Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society, and Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 222; Morgan, *Literate Education,* 190-239.

[29] For more on philosophical education and admittance to philosophical schools, which are possible analogues for early Christian cultures and institutions, see Christoph Marksch, *Christian Theology and Its Institutions in the Early Roman Empire,* trans. Wayne Coppins (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015), 61-71.

[30] Robert A. Kaster, "Controlling Reason: Declamation in Rhetorical Education at Rome, " in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity,* ed. Yun Lee Too, 317-337, puts this well when he writes, "Control, finally, is what the schools of rhetoric were about. Through their lessons, the young elite males who frequented the schools learned to control their own speech so that they might one day control the opinions of others, in the law courts, in their correspondence, or in conversation" (334).

literary predecessors had. This education was designed to create the future leaders and shapers of society and of the Empire. Advanced education of this sort is the main point of reference for the pedagogical language of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*. Both authors gesture toward those who are ineligible for advanced education, but this is either a passing comment (Lactantius) or a description of those for whom the reader will be responsible (Eusebius). Of course, they also use the language of introduction or preparatory education for parts of their projects, but this is always on the way to the more advanced and sophisticated education their texts are claiming to provide.

Whose Education and its Ideological Significance in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*

It is against this backdrop that we can gain additional purchase on the pedagogical dimensions and rhetoric of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*. There is some late antique evidence for something like a distinctly Christian version of education that was in some sense separate or different from non-Christian education. For instance, there is papyrological evidence of school exercises in which students memorized and reproduced Scriptural texts in the same way other students memorized and reproduced

Homer or Vergil.[31] However, our authors are not first and foremost interested in education from top to bottom. Rather, their focus is on the highly educated—males of a certain social status who would have already passed through the care of a *ludi magister* and probably also a *grammaticus*. In other words, the pedagogical rhetoric of the texts I am considering assume a need for Christian education and are focused almost entirely on advanced education for privileged classes. They are writing as if to provide an alternative or supplementary advanced education that can absorb and subvert educational programs as they currently exist.

Memorizing, reading, and interpreting socially significant, "canonical" texts was central to ancient education. The social and political ideals are also apparent. Debates about education long predate our authors and are regularly part of debates about the state.[32] We can read Eusebius and Lactantius as participating in these debates. Nothing less than the future and health of society was bound up with education—especially education of the upper echelons. As the next section will make even clearer, when Lactantius and Eusebius describe their texts as providing a new and better education they are implying that they are providing for a new and better society. The pedagogical

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[31] David G. Martinez, "Christianity in the Papyri," in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology,* ed. Roger Bagnall (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) 590-622, and Jennifer R. Strawbridge, "How Present Is Romans in Early Christian School Exercises: Is P.Lond.Lit 207 Mislabelled?" (2010). Retrieved from Oxford University Research Archive https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:f8aa171a-cce1-47c0-bd3e-2493b4ef90e5. The existing examples are either Psalms or Pauline epistles. On Christian theological discourse and ancient education, see Josef Lössl, "Imperial Involvement in Education and Theology—Constantine and Constantius II," *Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 13 (2019): 22-41 who writes on page 27, "They relied for their education on existing pagan institutions and the cultural tradition which they represented. Whatever new forms and contents Christianity had to offer was building on that tradition, even if in the long run it would also transform it."

[32] Yun Lee Too, "Introduction," describes the project of the volume to be to "offer a narrative about the variety of pedagogies from the Greco-Roman world" (16); Morgan, *Literate Education,* 19-21.

language for both these authors carries implications beyond individual formation. The education they imagine their texts providing comes with associated notions of who will be receiving the education, what kind of person the education will be forming, and what role this person will play. Both Lactantius and Eusebius, albeit in different ways and with different emphases, speak as if the person formed by their texts of Christian apologetic writing will be equipped as a publicly significant intellectual. I will now conclude by describing the historical context in which Lactantius and Eusebius composed the texts I will be primarily considering.

The Political and Social Situation in which Lactantius and Eusebius Wrote

The works of Lactantius and Eusebius grew out of similar circumstances that strongly color their language and explain their genesis. To that end, I will provide a succinct description of the history that precedes and attends their composition. I will focus on political and religious history insofar as I think this is the most important context for understanding my main subject. I will pay special attention to two related topics as I narrate the history of the early fourth century: the Tetrarchic Persecution (primarily its representation in Christian texts), and the "Constantinian question" (his so-called conversion, religious policies, and relationship to Christianity).[33] The *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and the *Apodeixis* were written, revised, and revisited in a singular

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[33] "Above all, there lingers the monumental question of Constantine's conversion, the 'Constantinian question' par excellence." Noel Lenski, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

time of transition in Roman history. On the one hand, great upheaval, civil wars, aggressive new religious policies, experimentation in empire-wide governing and bureaucracy came lightning fast, year to year from 284 CE until the end of Constantine's reign. On the other hand, despite the tumult, Diocletian and Constantine were two of the longest reigning and most successful emperors Rome had ever known. Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and Eusebius' *Apodeixis* emerged right in the thick of this era. They were begun during or immediately after the Tetrarchic Persecution and completed sometime during or right at the end of Constantine's joint reign with Licinius.[34]

While they are clearly literary products that draw on the rhetorical and scholarly resources of earlier writings, it would be a mistake to see them as simply two additional texts in a gradually developing tradition of Christian writing. Rather, Eusebius and Lactantius are writing in a time of particularly powerful emperors assertively, and sometimes violently, experimenting with new religious policies, some of which centered on the communities to which these authors belonged. It is for this reason, at least in part, that these texts can be fruitfully read together. Whatever their differences, and there are many, Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and Eusebius' *Apodeixis* arise from Christian communities shaped by experiences of the historical circumstances of the

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[34] More on the dates when these texts may have been composed will come in later chapters. For now, I will note that the conventional date for the composition of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are 305–311, with a later revision in either 313 or 324. The date for the *Apodeixis* is between 313 and 325.

Tetrarchic Persecution and Constantine's privileging of Christianity.[35] It is also for this reason that it is necessary to have some grasp of what was happening in the Empire and how Christians were describing it around the time these texts were composed. In the remainder of this introduction, I will briefly narrate the story of Diocletian's regime, the civil wars that followed its failure, and then the Tetrarchic Persecution and the immediate aftermath of Constantine's rise to Augustus with special attention to the way these are described by Lactantius and Eusebius. In addition to helping set the stage historically for my main subject, an important additional benefit will be some further justification for my decision to focus on Lactantius and Eusebius together. In considering the persecution and the religious policy of Constantine, we will begin to see how these authors were instrumental in bequeathing to us a particular, skillfully constructed version of both the persecution and of Constantine.[36] We will also get some grasp, beyond the exegesis and analysis I will provide later in this dissertation, as to why these two authors may have constructed such similar projects, projects in which they independently transform Christian apologetic writing. I will suggest in what follows that it is not mere coincidence that Lactantius and Eusebius—separated by language and location—felt compelled to

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[35] There are some other texts of Christian apologetics that are chronologically right before or after the ones I'm considering. These are Firmicus Maternus' *De Errore Profanarum Religionum*, Athanasius' *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione*, and especially Arnobius of Sicca's *Adversus Nationes.* However, in addition to *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis'* almost synchronous dates of composition, they both contain extensive framing passages in which they characterize their apologetic works with pedagogical language—a feature that that makes these two works stand apart from the others mentioned above and suggests comparison may be worthwhile.

[36] Indeed, the politics and ideologies of representation and narration is a reoccurring theme in this brief section since there's no way to discuss "what really happened" in this time without attending to different, often competing versions of events.

produce compendious works of intellectual formation and literary culture building, texts of Christian apologetic writing transformed for the emerging era.

Diocletian and the Tetrarchy

In surviving sources, which are primarily written by Christians, Diocletian's tenure is primarily associated with the persecution of Christians and the Tetrarchy, and it is all too easily forgotten that his reign also ushered in the dawning of new, relative stability for the Roman Empire.[37] Diocletian's reign marks the end of the so-called crisis of the third century and, at least in many schemes of periodization, the beginning of the "later Roman Empire."[38] From about 235 CE (the death of Alexander Severus, the last of the Severan dynasty) until 284 CE, the empire saw hitherto unknown political instability, plague, famine, and increased threats on its borders. Between these years twenty-six men held the title of "emperor." At one point during this period, two ascendent empires seized

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[37] Modern scholars have demonstrated that Diocletian is responsible for a great many things, several of which permanently changed the shape of the Roman Empire, but only a few of which will be mentioned here. See Jill Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363: The New Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), x-xiii, 1-101; Timothy D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Stephen Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire: AD 284-641* (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2015); Roger Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 3-90.

[38] Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire*; Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire: CE 284–430* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Gillian Clark, *Late Antiquity: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1-12 has a very lucid discussion of different times "late antiquity" is said to begin, but despite considerable diversity, the majority place its beginning some time in the third century.

large swathes of land and formed their own rival entities.[39] There has been considerable debate about the extent of the crisis in the third century. Some historians have questioned its reality, or at least whether ancient inhabitants of the Roman Empire were aware it was happening.[40] For my purposes here, it is enough to note that Diocletian's reign was far longer than any emperor had managed to achieve in decades, and that he managed to shape the empire far more than most previous emperors had, particularly since the Severan dynasty.

The story of Diocletian's rise to power and ascension to Augustus as narrated in the surviving sources follows a familiar pattern, one trod by many emperors and would-be emperors before, especially since the death of Alexander Severus: a combination of

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[39] The Gallic Empire and the Palmyrene Empire, respectively. I should note that by saying the rise of these empires was a "crisis," we are speaking from a Romano-centric perspective. Much of what was disastrous for Rome may have appeared otherwise to these new empires, and perhaps also to many Romans. For scholarship written with a focus on the perspective of the Palmyrene Empire see Michael Sommer, *Palmyra: A History,* trans. Diana Sommer-Theohari (London: Routledge, 2018), 139-170, and Nathaniel Andrade, *Zenobia: Shooting Star of Palmyra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). For scholarship focusing on the Gallic empire, an entity whose character is much harder to ascertain due to a dearth of evidence, see John. F. Drinkwater, *The Gallic Empire: Separatism and Continuity in the North-Western Provinces of the Roman Empire A.D. 260-274* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1987).

[40] For questions about the extent or reality of the crises see Olivier Hekster, Gerda de Kleijn and Daniëlle Slootjes, eds., *Crises and the Roman Empire*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), and especially from this volume Wolf Liebeschuetz, "Was There a Crisis of the Third Century?" 11-20. See also Christian Witschel, *Krise – Rezession – Stagnation? Der Westen des römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Frankfurt: Buchverlag Marthe Clauss, 1999); Witschel, "Reevaluating the Roman West in the 3rd Century AD," Journal of Roman Archaeology 17 (2004): 251-281. For an argument that ancient people did not, or were perhaps unable, to recognize the crisis see Ramsay MacMullen, *Corruption and the Decline of Rome* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1988), 148-197. For a strong (and, I would contend, definitive) argument that the crisis was real and known across the empire see Clifford Ando, *Imperial Rome AD 193-284: The Critical Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 13-17.

fortune and demonstrations of military strength.[41] The apparently "official" version, the one likely crafted and pushed by Diocletian and his allies, is as follows: Diocletian's predecessor in the imperial purple, Carus, was struck by lightning while campaigning in Persia. Following normal dynastic protocols, his son Numerianus was proclaimed emperor by the army but was afflicted with a debilitating infection of his eyes while marching back to Roman territory. The praetorian prefect Aper—perhaps a fellow officer with Diocletian who had remained loyal to Carus during his own coup in 282 CE—snuck close to the curtained litter on which Numerianus was being carried and stabbed him to death.[42] Aper, hoping to seize power, attempted to keep his crime hidden, but the stench of Numerianus' rotting body gave him away. Upon arriving in Nicomedia in November, 284 CE, Diocletian (at this time known as Valerius Diocles) was chosen by a council of army officers as the new Augustus. Standing to address his troops, Diocletian drew a dagger, stabbed Aper, and swore he had played no part in Numerianus' death. Though there was still work to be done in establishing and consolidating his power (most significantly the rival Augustus, Carinus still ruled the western half of the empire), this is

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[41] Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire,*15-50 gives a helpful overview of the sources available for historical inquiry of the period. Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy*, also surveys available sources and provides an anthology of them that specifically relate to Diocletian and his colleagues. The story of Diocletian as narrated in this paragraph is drawn from the following three sources: Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus,* trans. H.W. Bird, TTH 17 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994); Eutropius. *Breviarium ab Urbe Condita,* trans. H.W. Bird, TTH 14 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993); the anonymous work *Epitome de Caesaribus,* Thomas M. Banchich, trans. Canisius College Translated Texts (Buffalo, NY: Canisius College, 2018). All three works (and two others I have not explicitly referred to in this passage) draw on the lost work conventionally called the *Kaisergeschichte.*

[42] Curtained, we read, to protect Numerianus' infected eyes from the elements. Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire,* 51-52; Bill Leadbetter, *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian* (London Routledge, 2009), 48-49.

a convenient date to mark the beginning of Diocletian's reign.[43] He moved immediately to engage Carinus, the son of Carus who had ruled as joint Augustus with his father, in combat. Carinus' army met Diocletian's in Illyricum. Diocletian was vastly outnumbered but still courageously advanced to meet Carinus in battle. Though Diocletian and his soldiers fought hard, they were almost overwhelmed by Carinus' troops, and may have lost the day had not Carinus' vicious character caught up with him. Before Diocletian's smaller army could be destroyed or routed, Carinus was murdered by one of his own tribunes for seducing the tribune's wife, in addition to the wives of many senators and other officers. In this "official" version of Diocletian's ascension, the version we find in all the sources that narrate this period in his career, Diocletian appears an honest and quietly virtuous soldier, one with no imperial ambitions upon whom the purple was thrust, as if by the gods.

It is clear that much of the narrative above is a product of Diocletian's propaganda. The lightning strike, due (according to Aurelius Victor) to Carus' hubris in disobeying an oracle, Aper's bizarre, failed plot, and Carinus' deviance sound like the kind of spin or outright falsehoods Diocletian and his allies might invent to cover less flattering versions of events.[44] However, in its basic outline, the narration provides a

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[43] Leadbetter, *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian,* 49, more cautious than many, and suspicious of over reliance on traditional periodization, writes, "The deaths of Numerian and Aper did not mark a decisive seizure of power, merely the staking of a claim."

[44] Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus,* 38-39, mentions the oracle. It should be noted, however, that none of our best sources cast explicit doubt on this story of Diocletian's ascension.

more or less plausible account of Diocletian's elevation to the imperial purple.[45] Diocletian was a successful military officer who had managed to attain a level of intimacy or at least proximity to Carus, the previous emperor who had also been a successful military officer before coming to power.[46] The death, or murder, of political rivals coalesced with an elevation to emperorship by the military. Indeed, inadvertently, the story as the surviving sources have it tells us something about the necessity for propagating a story of success that at once illustrates the virtues of the new emperor, the seeming inevitability of his rule, and the tyranny of his rivals. Yet despite the familiar pattern of his rise to power and the propaganda that likely colors our sources' narration of it, Diocletian's tenure would stand out from the post-Severan emperors that had come before; his reign would be instrumental in inaugurating a new era in the Roman Empire.

There is much that could be said about Diocletian's emperorship. He managed to rule longer and with fewer significant challenges to his rule than any emperor had since Antoninus Pius in the second century (138–161 CE), and he was the only emperor since Alexander Severus (died 235 CE), save Gallienus, to rule for more than a decade. Diocletian, and the other three men that would join him in his college of emperors (conventionally called the Tetrarchy), managed to hold or expand the borders of the

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[45] Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire,* 50-53. Five ancient historical accounts describe this series of events, but it is likely that all of them are drawing on the now lost, previously mentioned *Kaisergeschichte*.

[46] Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy,* 4-5, provides a tidy summary that attempts to read between the lines of Diocletian's propaganda as does Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire,* 50-53.

Empire and successfully squelch at least two attempted rebellions.[47] However, for my purposes, only two features of Diocletian's tenure are important: (1) his attempts at restructuring and centralizing the empire and (2) his establishment of joint rule with one and eventually three additional emperors. I will briefly illustrate and describe these two features and conclude by highlighting the propaganda that bolstered and presented it.

Diocletian's long and successful tenure as Augustus allowed him to implement increasingly bold (albeit probably *ad hoc*) and comprehensive reforms.[48] One of the most comprehensive reforms was Diocletian's reorganizing of provincial boundaries. Diocletian effectively increased the number of provinces from 45 to over 100.[49] This resulted in the dilution and dispersion of power: governors ruling smaller regions with smaller armed retinues under their control. Likely, his goal was to make it more difficult for a usurper to challenge him and to make taxation more effective. The latter goal was further facilitated by the organization of the Empire into dioceses managed by *vicarii* who were answerable to praetorian prefects. Correlatively, Diocletian established a regular, reoccurring indiction (assessment of owed tax revenue), and census.[50] Diocletian also instituted a far-reaching, though questionably effective, price edict that sought to standardize prices across the empire for an immense variety of consumer goods and

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[47] Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy,* 3-90, provides a helpful set of categories for considering Diocletian's major innovations.

[48] Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 25-31, 46-55.

[49] Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, 201-208, 209-225; The exact numbers and the timing of the divisions is impossible to ascertain. The enigmatic *Verona List* is an important source for this reorganization, but a source that does not admit as much precision as modern historians might hope.

[50] Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 59-64.

services.[51] The total effect of these policies was a level of centralization and imperial management that was hitherto unknown in the Roman Empire. To be sure, there are precedents, reforms that were designed to centralize and standardize the Empire. Two important precedents in the third century were Caracalla's grant of near universal citizenship and Decius' sacrifice edict. But neither Caracalla nor Decius seems to have had the inclination, political capital, or perhaps just time to centralize as thoroughly or as effectively as Diocletian managed.

The establishment of the so-called Tetrarchy contrasts, at least ostensibly, with Diocletian's monarchial agenda.[52] In 286 CE, Diocletian elevated his fellow soldier Maximian to the rank of Augustus, while both men held the title of highest office it was still understood that Maximian's rank was inferior to Diocletian's. Seven years later two more men, Galerius and Constantius, were granted the rank of Caesar—junior emperors to rule under Diocletian and Maximian, respectively. There is no way of knowing to what degree this college of emperors created by Diocletian was an improvised response to pressing exigencies (only justified on the back end) or a carefully and intentionally planned governing experiment.[53] However, it is clear from official imperial iconography (e.g., coins, statuary) that the visibility of all four (or two when it was just Diocletian and Maximian) and an emphasis on their concord and harmony were central to the projected

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[51] Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy,* 42-45; Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 65-70; Leadbetter, *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian,* 171.

[52] Leadbetter, *Galerius and the Will of Diocletian,* 1-6, describes the history of the designation "Tetrarchy" pointing out that it is thoroughly modern and may contain some misleading implications.

[53] Simon Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government AD 284-324* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 266-274; Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 31.

image of Diocletian's regime.[54] The function of this division of power seems to have been to solve military and succession problems. The two Augustuses and the two Caesars could be personally present to lead their armies as legitimate emperors wherever conflict arose either from usurpers or foreign invaders. Additionally, the Caesars were guaranteed eventually to hold the highest position of Augustus, following either the death of the Augustus under whom they served or that Augustus' inevitable retirement. The arrangement did not last the first attempt at a succession, and even though Diocletian maintained his position as monarch—the highest, most important, and final decision maker amongst the four—the choice to share rule amongst a hierarchy of emperors was irregular enough that it needed repeated justification.[55] For this reason, propaganda for the regime frequently referred to joint rule on the basis of *concordia*.[56] It is also part of the reason why the two Augustuses were regularly associated with Jupiter and Hercules in portraiture and rhetoric.[57] In addition to bolstering their divine status, the Augustuses' Iovian and Herculean identities implied a familial, pseudo-dynastic relationship between the two emperors. Moreover, as Jill Harries has argued, this identification of the emperors

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[54] Roger Rees, "Image and Images: A Re-examination of Tetrarchic Iconography," *Greece & Rome* 40 (1993): 181-200.

[55] Lactantius, *Mort.* 7, Lactantius, *On the Death of the Persecutors,* trans. J.L. Creed, OECT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Julian, "The Caesars," 315 A-B in Julian, *Julian,* trans. W.C. Wright, vol. 2, LCL 29 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917)*; Scriptores Historiae Augustae,* trans. David Magie, Vol. 2, LCL 140. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022), In the section on "Elagabalus," 35.4 (ET LCL 140, 164-167) Diocletian is said to have been "Father of the golden age" and Maximian "of the iron."

[56] Jurgen K. Zangenberg, "*Scelerum inventor et malorum machinator*: Diocletian and the Tetrarchy in Lactantius, De mortibus persecutorum" in Diederik Burgersdijk and Alan J. Ross, eds., *Imagining Emperors in the Later Roman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 42-43.

[57] Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire,* 27-30; Lactantius, *Mort.,* 8; *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini,* trans. C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 10.3.

with Jupiter and Hercules "was part of a general attempt at religious revival"; Diocletian had assertive and particular policies around appropriate cultic activity and groups perceived to be deviant.[58]

The Tetrarchic Persecution

Diocletian is probably most remembered for being the man who inaugurated the Tetrarchic Persecution—traditionally called the "Great Persecution"—in 303 CE. The exact reason why Diocletian and others in his college issued edicts designed to eliminate Christianity from the life of the Empire is a matter of debate amongst modern scholars. Good guesses are drawn from parallels between Diocletian's push toward centralization and his rhetoric of returning to the traditional religion and values of Rome.[59] Further, there is a specific precedent in Diocletian's legislation against the Manichaeans in the late third or early fourth century (right before his legislation against Christians).[60] There are some clues as to the general tenor of Diocletian's policies regarding "new" cults and "traditional" religion in this legislation. Diocletian and his colleagues write that traditional worship of the gods is regularly threatened by "novel" and "foreign" cults that tend to take hold during peacetime. It was the duty of governors to uproot these superstitions and encourage sacrifice to the ancestral gods.

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[58] Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 81.

[59] Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire,* 259.

[60] A.D. Lee, *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2015), 64-65 provides a helpful introduction and translation of the emperor's direction to a North African regarding Manichaeans. The date of this legislation was sometime between 297 CE and 302 CE.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of stability and effective management, the decision to outlaw Christian practice, effectively outlawing the religion itself, seems like bad policy. By 303 CE Christianity was everywhere in the empire.[61] Thus, despite the polemic of earlier opponents, and despite the rhetoric of some Christians themselves, adherents of the faith could be found in every strata of society by this time.[62] There has been considerable speculation on the number, or proportion of Christians in the Roman Empire around the year 300 CE—roughly the time I am here considering—and there is frankly no way to know for certain.[63] Beyond the inherent difficulty of attempting demography on a massive political entity that existed almost two millennia ago is the problem of definition. Christian influence extended beyond the baptized or the clergy, and there were no doubt many who were interested or sympathetic to Christianity but may not have taken the label upon themselves. Moreover, there was, and is, considerable debate and uncertainty over who "legitimately" counts as a Christian. Nevertheless, whatever the numbers, the visibility of Christianity, its presence across the empire and amongst most (if not every) class and occupation, allows for the modest assessment of Christianity as a significant presence in the Roman Empire by the year 300 CE. It would be no easy task to eliminate this religion. Timothy D. Barnes has gone so far as to argue that "by 300 no emperor could rule securely without the acquiescence of his Christian

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[61] Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire,* 258-259.

[62] Timothy D. Barnes, "Statistics and the Conversion of the Roman Aristocracy," JRS 85 (1995): 134-148.

[63] Bart Ehrman, *The Triumph of Christianity: How a Forbidden Religion Swept the World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 167-170 contains a helpful summary of different estimates ranging from 2-3% of the population to 20%.

subjects."[64] Whether or not Barnes is correct in this particular claim, his statement highlights the fact that the elimination of Christianity from the Roman Empire would have been an extensive, expensive, and likely quite difficult undertaking. In other words, there are intelligible reasons for the persecution in terms of Tetrarchic ideology and policy, but the pragmatics remain elusive.[65] Regardless of the rationale behind the policy, we know that its implementation began with a series of four edicts released from 303 CE to 304 CE.[66] The first, following on the burning and ransacking of a church in Nicomedia (the location of Diocletian's court), required Christians to hand over their scriptures and to refrain from meeting. The second and third related exclusively to Christian clergy with the former demanding their arrest and the latter allowing for their release if they offered sacrifice. The fourth edict, following the precedent of Decius' fifty years earlier, required universal sacrifice from all inhabitants of the empire and threatened execution to those who did not comply.[67] How many Christians acquiesced to this requirement and how

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[64] Timothy D. Barnes, "Christians and Pagans under Constantius." *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* 34 (1989): 301-338.

[65] It is worth quoting here Greg Woolf's comments on the efficacy of persecution in *Rome: An Empire's Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 263, "Yet comparative evidence does suggest the near eradication of Christianity was not an unrealistic aim. Manichaeism was eventually persecuted out of existence in the west. . . Buddhism was more or less extinguished in medieval India . . . Only fragments of the Christian communities of Roman Syria, Africa, and Spain survived the rule of the Islamic caliphate, despite the fact that overt religious discrimination was in fact unusual in its territories."

[66] G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, "Aspects of the Great Persecution," in *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy,* ed. Michael Whitby and Joseph Streeter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 35-68; Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 88-96, gives a very clear overview with references to the primary sources. There are two main sources for the edicts. The first is Eusebius, *HE*, book eight. Eusebius, *The History of the Church: a New Translation*, trans. Jeremy Schott (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2019). The second is Lactantius, *Mort.,* 12-15. I have not mentioned here the important precedent in the controversy of 299 when Diocletian required soldiers to sacrifice.

[67] J.B. Rives, "The Decree of Decius and the Religion of the Empire," JRS 89 (1999): 135-154, helpfully describes the implications of Decius' sacrifice requirement that seems to have provided precedent and inspiration for Diocletian's fourth edict.

many were punished is impossible to know. In Eusebius' presentation of the events, he uses frustratingly (for the modern historian) imprecise language: "many" acquiesced to the requirement of sacrifice and "many" willingly suffered the penalties for not.[68] Eusebius also, quite plausibly, describes several more questionable or liminal cases, cases in which people were held and then released without sacrificing, or cases in which governors claimed people sacrificed who had not.[69] What is clear is that the implementation of all four of these edicts varied considerably by region and time.[70] However, the argument of this dissertation requires less attention to the historical particulars of the persecution, and more attention to how it is narrated and characterized in Christian sources: especially Lactantius and Eusebius.[71]

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[68] Eusebius, *HE* 8.3-4 (Schott, 398-400).

[69] Ibid. 8.3 (Schott, 398-399).

[70] Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire,* 259. Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 90-96. It is possible that the fourth edict was never promulgated in the western half of the empire.

[71] "Martyrdom" and "persecution" are distinct but related categories that have been the subject of much discussion and debate. It is not necessary for this dissertation to interrogate and fine-tune a definition of either term. Rather, though acknowledging the reality of official, imperial suppression of Christianity by Diocletian and his colleagues, this study will follow the methods of scholarship since the "linguistic turn" in reading martyr acts and accounts of persecutions for their rhetorical and ideological significance. Elizabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 35-39, gives a very succinct summary of the history of persecution through the Tetrarchy; Candida Moss, *Early Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012) contains an excellent discussion and analysis of pre-Tetrarchic persecution; Timothy D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 97-148. For analysis of the events, law, and ideology of martyrdom in the fourth century see the essays in *Christian Martyrdom in Late Antiquity: History and Discourse, Tradition and Religious Identity*, ed. Peter Gemeinhardt and Johan Leemans (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012).

The Tetrarchic Persecution looms large in the writing of Christians in the fourth century.[72] The stories of martyrs made during the persecution were the regular subject of sermons and hagiographies.[73] The Tetrarchic Persecution even found its way into apocalyptic numerology that sought to determine the probable date of Christ's return.[74] Even for those texts written during the persecution or in its immediate aftermath, the Tetrarchic Persecution was already finding an important place in Christian discourse. However, it is not merely the specific concerns of this study that have led me to focus on Lactantius and Eusebius here; their writings are regularly the focus of students of the Tetrarchic persecution. These two are the most important writers for understanding the persecution because their *Historia ecclesiastica* and *De mortibus persecutorum* are invaluable sources not only for historians seeking to reconstruct the scope and goal of the persecution, but also for interpreters interested in how the persecution was theologized by Christians who experienced it. To summarize their theological assessment of the persecution—it is simultaneously a problem and also an opportunity.[75]

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[72] In what follows I will primarily use Lactantius' *Mort.* and Eusebius' *HE*. There are other relevant texts such as Eusebius' *De Martyribus Palestinae, Vita Constantini,* and (to a lesser degree) some anonymous martyr acts. However, only *HE* and *Mort.* provide full narratives of the persecution and most clearly demonstrate sustained theologizing of its significance.

[73] Peter Gemeinhardt and Johan Leemans, "Christian Martyrdom in Late Antiquity: Some Introductory Perspectives," in *Christian Martyrdom in Late Antiquity* 1-11.

[74] Sulpicius Severus, "Chronicle" 2.33.2. Sulpicius Severus, *Sulpicius Severus: The Complete Works,* trans. Richard J. Goodrich, ACW 70 (New York: The Newman Press, 2015); Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans,* trans. A.T. Fear, TTH 54 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010) 7.27; Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans,* trans. R.W. Tyson, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18.52.

[75] James Corke-Webster, *Eusebius and Empire: Constructing Church and Rome in the Ecclesiastical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 175-211.

The problem is whether God's providence can be reconciled with officially sanctioned, empire-wide violence against the Church.[76] Thus, as Eusebius begins to explain what happened in the persecution, he claims to be determined to say, "No more than enough to justify divine judgment." In other words, the violence was not random or, at least from the perspective of providence, not designed to harm the faithful. Rather, like for the Maccabean martyrs, the violence was a form of chastisement meant to drive Christians to repentance.[77] Christians had enjoyed years of peace that had encouraged them to be "conceited and lazy," particularly the "rulers" of the Church.[78] The judgment of God was not swift or merciless. Christians had been ejected from the military in 299 CE, and Eusebius interprets this event as a gentle form of divine chastisement that should have prompted repentance.[79] It was only after this, as the Church continued unabated in its errors, that God reluctantly allowed Diocletian to begin promulgating his anti-Christian edicts. Lactantius' *De mortibus persecutorum* contains variations on this theme also found in the *Historia ecclesiastica.* In the providential order, the persecutors of Lactantius' day, like those before them, were allowed to commit such tremendous wickedness against the people of God because the aggregate of all their sin would throw

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[76] Eusebius, *HE* 8.2; Lactantius, *Mort.* 1.5-6.

[77] 2 Maccabees 7:18-19; Jonathan A. Goldstein, *II Maccabees: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 289-319.

[78] Eusebius, *HE* 8.1 (ET Schott, 395-397).

[79] Ibid.; Lactantius, *Mort.* 9.

God's righteous judgement into sharper relief and would serve as a proof to future generations that there is one God and judge of the cosmos.[80]

Nevertheless, despite the clear purposes of divine providence, the persecuting governors and emperors are consistently characterized as vicious and irrational. In Lactantius' *De mortibus persecutorum* the wicked character of the persecutors is a particularly pervasive theme, but it is also prominent in Eusebius' writing. The persecutors indulge themselves in the most brutal forms of violence, and they victimize all types of people, including their noble and well-positioned peers.[81] The persecuting emperors are "tyrants," and their rule is delegitimized by their actions against the Christians.[82] Clearly, at least in the editions of the *Historia ecclesiastica* that have survived antiquity, this serves to justify the ascension of Constantine to co-Augustus in 312–324 CE and sole Augustus in 324–337 CE.[83] Thus, the narration of the Tetrarchic Persecution in these Christian authors acts much like Diocletian's propaganda in de-legitimizing some emperors or would-be emperors as vicious tyrants.

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[80] Lactantius, *Mort.* 1.6.

[81] Eusebius, *HE,* 8.6.

[82] Eusebius, *HE,* 8.14 (ET Schott, 414-417).

[83] Eusebius, *HE* 8.13 (ET Schott, 411-414) in which Constantine's elevation to "most perfect emperor and Augustus" by the legions is compared with God's identical proclamation "long before." Immediately following this episode is a description of Maximin as a ruler of "awful tyranny." There is considerable debate about possible different "versions" of *HE*. Jeremy M. Schott in his introduction to his translation *The History of the Church,* 26-28, provides a helpful summary of some arguments and issues surrounding the possibility of "versions" produced to respond to varying historical circumstances.

Additionally, the persecutors are often associated with demonic forces that inspire and motivate them to destroy God's people.[84] Considered from this perspective, the persecution is the continuation of a demonic conspiracy that has regularly sought to destroy the Church. However, Eusebius is clear in the beginning of book eight of *Historia ecclesiastica* that persecution has been intermittent and the product only of particularly bad emperors. More often, the empire and the Church were at peace and the prosperity of the former came from protection of the latter.[85] The Tetrarchic Persecution in Eusebius' telling is not only a form of divine judgment, it is also a symptom of tyrannical and illegitimate government that is in need of correction. In fact, the negative effects of the emperors' attack on the Church, according to Eusebius, is not restricted to social, political, or economic spheres but is reflected in widespread plague and famine.[86] Despite the fact that the persecution was divine discipline whose proximate cause was tyrannical governmental action, the narration of the Tetrarchic persecution provided an opportunity for Christian authors interested in celebrating the faithfulness of the martyrs.[87]

Both Lactantius and Eusebius are explicit in narrating the persecution that the subject of their writing is, as Eusebius puts it, "only those things by which first we

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[84] Eusebius, *HE* 8.4 (Schott, 399-400).

[85] Eusebius, *HE* 8.1; Robert M. Grant, "Eusebius and Imperial Propaganda," in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism,* ed. Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 658-683; James Corke-Webster, *Eusebius and Empire*, 249-279.

[86] Eusebius, *HE* 8.15.

[87] This is true of both authors, but far more for Eusebius, whose account of the persecution is largely just a sequence of martyr acts.

ourselves, then later generations, may benefit."[88] Thus, as Eusebius begins his long narration of the Tetrarchic Persecution in earnest, he writes, "Let me therefore proceed from this point to describe in outline the hallowed ordeal of the martyrs of God's word." Eusebius writes at length, moving from region to region, describing the suffering of the martyrs and the quality of their confession.[89] Regular martyrological tropes and *topoi* appear in his account as well as a putatively real letter from Phileas, the bishop of Thmuis in lower Egypt describing the ordeals and heroism of the martyrs in Alexandria.[90] Thus the Tetrarchic Persecution, for Eusebius at least, is a venue for remarkable feats of Christian virtue and faithfulness. Though also designed to discipline the Church for sin, and also a supreme example of demonic and human wickedness, it is primarily for Eusebius a catalogue of Christian heroes to celebrate and meditate upon. Lactantius, on the other hand, is far more interested in the persecutors and their fate than in martyr stories. Nevertheless, the martyrological element is still an important part of Lactantius' narration of the persecution.[91]

In the texts I will focus on for the remainder of this dissertation the persecution looms large, often just implicitly but sometimes, as in book five of Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, quite explicitly. We will see the Tetrarchic Persecution return several more times. *The Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* are both clearly

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[88] Eusebius, *HE* 8.2 (ET Schott, 397-398); see also Lactantius, *Mort.*, 1.6.

[89] Eusebius, *HE* 8.2-13.

[90] Eusebius, *HE* 8.10.

[91] Lactantius, *Mort.* 16; and Lactantius' dedication to the confessor Donatus in *Mort.* 1.

written with the stories of martyrs, judgment, and debates about governmental legitimacy looming in the background. But more important for me than the historical reality behind these texts, is the theologically suffused history of the persecution that Christians, in particular Eusebius and Lactantius, narrate. As I have already stated, these two authors are virtually the sole narraters of the Tetrarchic Persecution whose texts have survived antiquity and who lived while the persecution was occurring. In telling this story, both authors draw on earlier Christian literature (martyr acts and Christian apologetic writing that theologize Roman history), and reshape and expand them into large syntheses designed to do far more expansive ideological work than their predecessors. We will see their version of the persecution appear in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* and we will also see in these texts a similar process of drawing on and transforming earlier kinds of Christian literature.

Constantine

In 305 CE, after Diocletian's fourth edict against the Christians and his *vicennalia*, he and Maximian (the two original Augustuses) stepped down to allow their Caesars (Galerius and Constantius) to replace them. It is not exactly clear why the Augustuses chose this moment to step down. Lactantius claims that Galerius applied pressure and threats to get Diocletian to give up his spot, and Diocletian did have some kind of health issue in 304. But there remains considerable uncertainty and no explanation has been found entirely satisfactory.[92] Nevertheless, the succession occurred

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[92] Lactantius, *Mort.* 18; Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 41-42.

(the first time a Roman emperor willingly stepped down) and two new Caesars were chosen to replace the newly promoted Galerius and Constantius. Apparently, there was a general expectation that Constantius' son Constantine and Maximian's son Maxentius would take the spots, but when the succession was announced by Diocletian he named two of Galerius' allies and comrades as the new Caesars: Severus took Constantius' spot and Maximinus Daia took Galerius'.[93] This moment marks the beginning of the end for the Tetrarchic experiment and the inauguration of Constantine's visibility in imperial politics.

The details of the civil wars and the shifting alliances that occurred over the next several years are not relevant to my argument, but it may be helpful to describe the major events that led to Constantine's rise to the imperial office. Constantine quickly moved to undermine the college of emperors and to put himself, with his father's blessing, into power. Constantius died in 306 CE and Constantine was declared Augustus by the military—an act that ignored the promise of the position of Augustus granted to Severus by virtue of his position as Caesar. In 307 CE, Severus was defeated, captured, and executed by Maxentius who had been declared emperor by the Senate and Praetorian Guard.[94] Other emperors or aspiring emperors fell one by one over the next few years. In 310 Maximian, who had come out of retirement and had tried to retake the emperorship, was defeated by Constantine and forced to kill himself. In 311 CE, Galerius died of

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[93] Lactantius, *Mort.* 19; Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 42.

[94] Lactantius, *Mort.,* 26; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.

natural causes.[95] In 312 CE, Constantine battled and defeated Maxentius who drowned in the Tiber fleeing from his enemies. Finally, in 313 CE Maximinus Daia was defeated and died. Thus, by 313 CE only Constantine and Licinius (who had been made emperor by Galerius, Diocletian, and Maximian in 308 CE) remained. The former ruling the western half of the empire the latter the eastern. Constantine and Licinius' relationship was strained from early on and eventually led to open conflict (three times). In 324 CE, there was a final battle between the two emperors that saw Constantine victorious and Licinius taken captive. Constantine put Licinius to death in 325 CE.[96]

Constantine's political success was considerable and he ruled as Augustus slightly longer than even Diocletian did. Constantine and his allies defeated the emperors who were thought to be the worst persecutors, Galerius and Maximinus Daia (Diocletian died in 311 CE before Constantine could have been credited with his death).[97] After Licinius' death, Constantine was sole Augustus from 324 CE until his death in 337 CE. His dynasty lasted through the reigns of his three sons (Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans) and his nephew Julian, whose untimely death in 363 CE marked the end of the Constantinian dynasty.

Moreover, and most famously, Constantine represents a new relationship of emperor (and Empire) to Church. It is not necessary for me to spell out in detail

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[95] Or divine causes according to Lactantius, *Mort.* 33-35.

[96] Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981) 214.

[97] On Diocletian's death see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 41. Diocletian had retired to his large palace in Dalmatia after he stepped down as Augustus in 305 and, besides the few times he reappeared to assert his authority, seems to have lived a relatively quiet life "growing cabbages," though he may have killed himself. See *Epitome de Caesaribus* 39.5-7.

Constantine's actual policy regarding Christianity and traditional Roman cults. In fact, there is not total agreement amongst historians on exactly what Constantine's policy really was or what his goals may have been.[98] However, there are a few touchstones that will help us see more clearly the contributions of Lactantius and Eusebius.[99] First, Constantine's famous vision in 312 CE is a convenient place to mark a turning point (and does seem to coincide with an increased interest in Christianity on his part), but his relationship with the faith continued to evolve through his entire reign.[100] The same should be said of the so-called Edict of Milan. Although the significance of this statement put out by Constantine and Licinius has been exaggerated in the past, it is still a

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[98] For example, some have argued that Constantine outlawed sacrifice after defeating Licinius such as Timothy D. Barnes, "Constantine, Athanasius, and the Christian Church," in *Constantine: History, Historiography, and Legend,* ed. Samuel N. C. Lieu and Dominic Montserrat (London: Routledge, 1998), 7-8 and *Constantine and Eusebius,* 210. In contrast, see H.A. Drake, "Constantine and Religious Extremism," in *Constantine: Religious Faith and Imperial Policy,* ed. A. Edward Siecienski (London: Routledge, 2017), 11-26, argue that Barnes argument is fatally based on a faulty reading of one of Constantine's letters and that the emperor likely issued no such prohibition. Edward J. Watts, *The Final Pagan Generation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2015) 53-63, offers a summary of the issues around Constantine's purported pro-Christian and, especially, anti-pagan policies. One ingenious attempt to discern Constantine's positions(s) regarding the practices of traditional religion can be found in John Noël Dillon, *The Justice of Constantine: Law, Communication, and Control* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012), 53-55, in which a careful reading of Constantine's legislation on sacrifice and haruspices provides some tantalizing suggestions about how many practices remained legal, even as they were cast as distasteful and bound up with an old and fading epoch.

[99] Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 160-164, lists and explains the exact ways Constantine privileged Christians, and some of the uncertainty about the reality or at least motive behind certain measures.

[100] Noel Lenski, *Constantine and the Cities: Imperial Authority and Civic Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016) 27-29, convincingly argues that "transformation" is a *leitmotif* in Constantine's self-presentation that was also picked up by his interpreters. See also Thomas Grünewald, *Constantinus Maximus Augustus: Herrschaftspropaganda in der zeitgenössischen Überlieferung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990). On Constantine's vision the two most important sources (unsurprisingly) are Lactantius (*Mort.* 44.5) and Eusebius (*Vita Constantini* 1.28.2), and (also unsurprisingly) they differ, ever so slightly, on the details. Eusebius, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine,* trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Clarenodon Press, 1999). Lactantius seems to say the vision was of a *chi rho* (although the Latin is vague), while Eusebius clearly says it is a cross. There are further complications and questions (not least being Constantine's "pagan vision" of 310). For a summary of the issues see H.A. Drake, *Century of Miracles: Christians, Pagans, Jews, and the Supernatural 312-410* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 51-66.

consequential and important statement by two Augustuses on their religious policies.[101] Second, Constantine used his personal wealth and legislative power to restore and expand Church property.[102] This was something Constantine began to do almost immediately after his defeat of Maxentius, at least for the Roman Church and its bishop Militiades.[103] Correlatively, Christian clergy began to enjoy certain legally sanctioned benefits such as exemption from liturgies. Moreover, and importantly, Constantine did not just grant gifts and benefits to Christians and Christianity but sought to harness its leadership to realize parts of his social agenda and sidestep the corruption of the imperial bureaucracy.[104]

Third, Constantine not only patronized and privileged the Church, he also sought to influence and manage it. Almost immediately after the defeat of Maxentius, Constantine began to try to sort out the disunity and conflict that had arisen in North Africa with the emergence of the Donatist controversy. Constantine assembled the Council of Nicaea and, as is plain from his *Oration to the Saints*, he thought concord and harmony amongst the bishops was a desirable goal.[105] Nevertheless, Constantine's policy toward non-Christians seems to have been far more tolerant than the way his policy

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[101] Noel Lenski, "The Edict of Milan." Pages 27-56 in *Constantine: Religious Faith and Imperial Policy,* ed., A. Edward Siecienski (London: Routledge, 2014) 27-56, nicely reviews and refutes some of the more extreme positions on the importance of the "edict," especially Timothy D. Barnes.

[102] David Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 163-171.

[103] Bill Leadbetter, "Constantine and the Bishop: The Roman Church in the Early Fourth Century," *The Journal of Religious History* 26 (2002): 1-14.

[104] H.A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 103-108.

[105] E.g., Constantine, "The Oration to the Saints," 23 in *Constantine and Christendom,* trans. Mark Edwards, TTH 39 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003), 56-57. See Potter, *Constantine the Emperor,* 221-224 for a helpful summary of the oration's contents.

appears in the writings of his Christian biographers, such as Eusebius'. Constantine's policy regarding traditional cults and forbearance surrounding religious difference was nuanced, and not entirely consistent, but generally tolerant.[106] This is fairly clear from his rhetoric and also from numismatic and inscriptional data. This final point about Constantine's tolerant religious policy leads to what is most important about him for this dissertation: his representation in contemporary Christian sources.

It would be easy to see Christian writing about or for Constantine during his lifetime as no more than sycophantic and exaggerated.[107] However, this sort of evaluation would not take adequate stock of the conventions of panegyrical rhetoric and the way Christian authors were refracting imperial propaganda to subtly create a version of the emperor amenable to their agendas. Eusebius, and to a lesser extent Lactantius, do not simply write about Constantine, more properly they *write* Constantine.[108]

I have already noted how Eusebius describes Constantine's ascension to emperor as a divine appointment that is eventually recognized by mortals when the legions acclaim him as emperor. He is also described by Eusebius as consummately pious, a

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[106] H.A. Drake, "Constantine and Consensus," *Church History* 64 (1995): 1-15.

[107] In particular, many scholars of earlier generations assessed Eusebius this way; see Michael J. Hollerich, "Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First 'Court Theologian,'" *Church History* 59 (1990): 309-325 for a useful discussion.

[108] David Potter, "Writing Constantine," in *Constantine: Religious Faith and Imperial Policy,* ed. A. Edward Siecienski (London: Routledge, 2017), 91-112; Raymond Van Dam, "The Sources for Our Sources: Eusebius and Lactantius on Constantine in 312–313," in *Constantine: Religious Faith and Imperial Policy* 59-74; Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 158, puts this point succinctly, writing, "But his image was also the creation of others, notably of Lactantius, and of Eusebius…"

destroyer of ungodliness, and a restorer of the empire.[109] Constantine, for both Lactantius and Eusebius, is a divinely chosen instrument for bringing piety, justice, and stability back to the Roman Empire.[110] However, unlike for Constantine himself, this had quite a bit to do with eliminating sacrifices and destroying non-Christian cultic centers. Constantine, at least in Eusebius' writing, is also a champion of orthodoxy against heretics and their followers.[111] All indications lead to the conclusion that Constantine was more concerned with concord amongst Christians than excising heresy from the Church. In other words, Constantine's self-presentation and official policy is not the same as the way he is narrated by Lactantius and Eusebius. I will have more to say about this in my final chapter where I will show how the literary projects of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* correlate with the imperial portraits these authors paint, but at this point it suffices to note that our authors are very clearly involved in projecting a certain ideal of imperial power.

As I have already mentioned, the works of Eusebius and Lactantius' that will occupy me for the bulk of this dissertation were composed some time between 305 CE and 324 CE: in the midst of or immediately following the Tetrarchic Persecution, and before or immediately following Constantine and Licinius' final battle for the role of sole emperor in 324 CE. As Christian writers, this historical moment goaded and shaped

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[109] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 2.12; 3.1-3; *On Christ's Sepulchre,* 16 in Eusebius, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*, trans. H.A. Drake (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975), 119-123; *HE* 10.4 (Schott, 462-479)*;* Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 177-180.

[110] *DI* I.1.13.

[111] Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 3.63-66.

Lactantius and Eusebius' literary productions. We will find in both their texts an impulse to clarify and commend a specifically Christian cultural heritage, and a simultaneous sense that no matter how they construe this heritage it is somehow not adequate to the situation at hand. However, these authors were not simply *responding*. As I have argued, these authors were fully involved in shaping perceptions of the past and present. The Tetrarchic Persecution and the reign of Constantine were given a particular, and often quite similar, tenor and significance by Lactantius and Eusebius. Thus, just as these authors were involved in the theo-political activity of historiography and imperial biography—often repurposing and expanding earlier Christian literature in the process—so too, I will argue, was something analogous going on as these authors composed their works of Christian apologetic writing the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*. But before turning to Lactantius and Eusebius, it is necessary to consider Christian apologetic writing.

Chapter 1: The Language of Apologetics

Introduction

In this chapter, I will briefly provide some analysis and description of recent debates and discussions about Christian apologetics. This will serve my argument in three ways. First, it will help readers see where my work fits within recent scholarship on Christian apologetic writing. There are a few recent insights and trends that are important for my argument. Specifically, a more chronologically diffuse account of apologetic writing that does not constrain it to an "age of the apologists," a focus on the community forming or insider function of apologetics, and a modal conception of "apologetic" that accounts for its appearance in a variety of literary forms and contexts. Second, it will allow me to briefly explain what language I find most useful for framing my analysis of Lactantius and Eusebius. I will argue "apologetics" (a practice) and "apologetic" (an adjective indicating a literary mode) are most useful for my analysis. Finally, this brief foray will make clear that modern uses of the word apologetic (and cognates such as apology and apologetics) match no specific, ancient designation. Thus, in analyzing the works of Lactantius and Eusebius it will be more necessary to focus on the specific vocabulary they develop in describing their texts and the Christian writers they claim as predecessors.

Early Christian Apologetics: The Traditional Story

To highlight the significance of contemporary reappraisals of Christian apologetic writing it will be useful to review something like the "traditional" or "conventional" story

of early Christian "apologies." In this story, Christian "apologies" (from the Greek ἀπολογίαι, roughly equivalent to the Latin *defensiones*) were works written by Christian writers, often referred to as "apologists," that participated in a single, often distinctly Christian, genre. In histories of early Christianity or the later Roman Empire, apologies tend to be placed in a certain era of Christianity's growth or evolution—modern scholars have designated an "Age of the Apologists" (usually the second half of the second century and also sometimes the beginning of the third) that came and, inevitably, went.[1] Many monographs and sections of larger histories narrate why Christians began composing "apologies" and how or why these texts disappeared (or morphed into something unrecognizable) as the "High Empire" (roughly 100-200 CE) gave way to the later Roman Empire (beginning circa 300 CE). The traditional way of telling this story focuses on the vulnerable status of Christians, a status that was legally, socially, and religiously marginal.[2] To meet the challenges of a hostile culture, certain Christians combed the literature of the "pagan" world to find points of commonality and concocted arguments for the rationality and moral superiority of their communities and doctrines. Taking a cue from Plato, the genre of "apology," a written version of a defense speech in a trial, was the obvious genre choice to respond to accusations and defend one's

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[1] One classic example is Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma,* trans. Neil Buchanan, 7 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1896–1905) which makes considerable use of the "Apologists" and their "Apologies" as a way of designating an epoch that, for Harnack, seems to definitively end with Origen. See, for instance, 2:170-230. However, this periodization is still in common currency as can be seen in the popular recent history by Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York: Penguin, 2009) 110: "he [Justin Martyr] was chief among a series of 'Apologists' who, in the second century, opened a dialogue with the culture around them in order to show that Christianity was superior to the elite wisdom of the age." See also Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1999), 54-67.

[2] See Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century,* 1-2, where he argues that the writing of "apologetics" is definitionally only possible amongst religious groups in the minority amongst a hostile religious majority.

community. These Christians ("the Apologists") thus composed apologies of their own, addressed them to their "cultured despisers," and attempted to prove the superiority, or at least acceptability, of Christianity. And just as conditions of persecution and minority status gave birth to these apologies, the alteration of those conditions, especially the legal acceptance of Christianity in the early fourth century, spelled their irrelevance and eventual demise. Or so the "traditional" or "standard" story often goes.

Amongst many scholars of early Christianity, Christian apologetic writing has been the subject of much reevaluation over the last few decades—the "standard" or "traditional" story has been scrutinized and found inadequate. Many scholars have called into question the definition and in a few cases even the existence of a meaningful category of Christian apologetic writing. Many have particularly criticized the idea that there was or is anything like an apologetic "genre," and others have focused on the inappropriateness of relegating this kind of writing to the pre-Constantinian era. Part of the reason for all this controversy can be laid at the feet of unclear distinctions, and a partial, uneven overlap between ancient and modern uses of the word "apologetic" (or its ancient cognates). The connection between ancient rhetorical categories, early Christian texts, and modern scholarly classifications is tenuous. However, the debates are not passionately pursued simply because scholars are intent on analytic precision. Being clear about what "apologetic" *is* often attends arguments about *why* texts of Christian apologetic writing were composed, and *what sort of work* these texts did—what function they served for their authors and their communities. These concerns comport with why I will briefly wade into the discussion in this chapter. The particular kinds of texts

composed by Lactantius and Eusebius in the early fourth century were not *sui generis*, and to properly appreciate what purpose they may have served we need to have some sense of what relevant literature precedes it. Additionally, insofar as I am interested in seeing how these authors *transformed* the kind of writing contemporary scholars tend to call "apologetic," we need to know what that kind of writing is.

In the next section, I will briefly look at the history of the modern category, and some of the reasons for its existence and persistence. Calling a certain group of early Christian texts "apologies" or "apologetic" is, to a large degree, a legacy of nineteenth-century scholarship, but it has some resonances with earlier anthologies and literary categorizations. I will conclude this history with recent scholarly debates about Christian apologetic writing, and the taxonomical and interpretive issues that this scholarship has unearthed. In light of this, I will explain the language and categories I have chosen to use. I will argue that the texts and portions of texts modern scholarship tends to call "apologetic" are better understood as a mode rather than genre. I will also argue that the word "apologetics" for the practice of composing or producing apologetic discourse is a useful category.

After this, I will be well positioned to show how my analysis highlights the significant and creative work of Lactantius and Eusebius' projects. We will see the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and the *Apodeixis* more clearly when we remember that Christian apologetic writing is a contemporary designation and that Lactantius and Eusebius develop and use their own vocabularies.

The History of the Category and Contemporary Discussions

In antiquity, an apology (Greek ἀπολογία or Latin *defensio*) was a species of forensic rhetoric that offered a defense against accusation(s).[3] While at times the word could be used in a somewhat broader way to indicate a defense of any kind, forensic connotations were the norm.[4] Texts that received the label "apology" were usually either copies of actual court defenses or texts presenting themselves as such to achieve some rhetorical goal. For instance, Plato's *Apology* is a purported transcript of Socrates' defense against his accusers in the Athenian court, and Isocrates' *Antidosis* is explicitly described as a text written to look like an apology (as if it were a response to accusations in court) but that is actually designed to respond to various slanders against the author's profession.[5] The rhetorical form would often allow authors to reach far beyond the ostensible purpose of defense to attack accusers, reflect on philosophical issues, and defend whole communities and/or ways of life. Despite these varied uses, and despite the

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[3] Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson, trans. Matthew T. Bliss, Annemiek Jansen, and David E. Orton (Leiden: Brill, 1998), § 61.1b; Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 1354a in *Art of Rhetoric,* trans. J. H. Freese (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 5-10; Menander Rhetor, 1.331.1-14, "Treatise One," in *Menander Rhetor,* ed. and trans. D.A. Rusell and N.G. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 2-3; Latin has the same divisions of rhetoric: forensic (*iudicalis*) rhetoric was divided into accusation (*accusatio*) and defense (*defensio*), which corresponds to the Greek equivalents κατηγορία and ἀπολογία. See for instance *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Theodor Nüsslein (Düseldorf/Zürich: Artemis & Winkler, 1998), 1.2 (10-12); Cicero *De Inventione* 1.5 in *On Invention. The Best Kind of Orator. Topics,* trans. H. M. Hubbell, LCL 386 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 12-17; *De Oratore* 1.141 in Cicero, *Brutus. Orator,* trans. G. L. Hendrickson, H. M. Hubbell, LCL 342 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 414-417.

[4] Loveday Alexander, "The Acts of the Apostles as an Apologetic Text," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire,* 21; John M.G. Barclay, trans., *Against Apion, Flavius Jospheus: Translation and Commentary.* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), xxxiv-xxxvi.

[5] Isocrates, *Antidosis* 8, writes of defending his career and character by explicitly adopting the fiction of a trial in which his discourse would "take the form of an *apologia*" (ἐν ἀπολογίας σχήματι). Isocrates *On the Peace. Areopagiticus. Against the Sophists. Antidosis. Panathenaicus.* trans. George Norlin, LCL 229 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 188-189.

fact that an apology could form a part of a larger composite text, the ancient rhetorical category remained fairly well-defined and, as far as we know, its definition and purpose were never a subject of debate.[6] How this word relates to what scholars of early Christianity normally call "apologetic" is part of what has occasioned reappraisal amongst contemporary scholars.

The history of designating a set of early Christian texts "apologetic" is relatively recent, but its roots go much further back. In the *Historia ecclesiatica*, Eusebius refers to several second-century authors writing ἀπολογίαι, including Aristides, Justin, Melito, and Tertullian. It appears that Eusebius, or the catalogue of texts upon which he depends, consistently labels Christian documents written to Roman authorities ἀπολογίαι. Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica* is the first example in which this nomenclature is clearly evident. After Eusebius, Byzantine collections give evidence of a nascent collection of texts of Christian apologetic writing as can be seen in what is often called the "first apologetic corpus," *Parisinus graecus 451*.[7] Assembled in 914 by Bishop Arethas of Caesarea, this codex includes writing by Tatian, Athenagoras, Clement, and Eusebius.[8] The early modern Fédéric Morel assembled a collection of texts which is the first to look something like what contemporary scholars usually mean when they mention an "early

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[6] The "apologetic epistle" is an interesting and apparently unique case of a discourse other than an oration (real or literary) being classified as an apology. See Pseudo-Demetrius in Abraham J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 1988).

[7] Bernard Pouderon, *Les apologistes Grecs du IIe siécle* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2005), 15.

[8] Parvis, "Justin Martyr and the Apologetic Tradition," 116. There is considerable debate about whether Eusebius of Caesarea wrote *Contra Hieroclem*. See chapter 3.

Christian apology" or something similar.[9] However, the establishment of something like a standard collection of early Christian "apologies," going by that name, is usually thought to originate with J.C.Th. Von Otto's collection from 1851, *Corpus apologetarum christianorum saeculi secundi*.[10] While Otto only includes Greek writers from the second century, this collection, with only a few idiosyncrasies, seems to have established the category of "apology" "apologists," or "apologetics" as it has typically been used by modern scholars of early Christianity: Quadratus, Aristides, *Disputatio Iasonis et Papisci*, Justin, Tatian, Melito, Apollinarius, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and the *Epistula ad Diognetum*.[11] This list consists only of authors Eusebius says wrote ἀπολογίαι (though it includes some of their texts he does not call ἀπολογίαι), except he omits Tertullian (either because Otto thought it was written in the third century or because it was composed in Latin), and adds the *Disputatio Iasonis et Papisci*, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and *Epistula ad Diognetum.*[12] Following Otto's lead, the influential collections by J.A. Giles and E.J.

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Oskar Skarsaune, "Justin and the Apologists," in *The Routledge Companion to Early Christian Thought*, ed. D. Jeffrey Bingham (London: Routledge, 2010), 121-122.

[11] Ibid. 134n1. For example, Richard A. Norris Jr. "The Apologists," in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature,* ed. Lewis Ayers, Andrew Louth, and Frances Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 36-44. Some of these apologists only survive in fragmentary form or from the brief descriptions provided by other ancient authors.

[12] Readers may have noticed that *Disputatio Iasonis et Papisci* is not normally considered Christian apologetic writing. As I stated, the other authors are those Eusebius says wrote an ἀπολογία (other than Tertullian, who wrote in Latin) plus Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and the anonymous *Epistula ad Diognetum*. *Disputatio Iasonis et Papisci*, likely written by Ariston of Pella, exists in fragments, some of which have only recently become available, and seems to narrate a dispute between a Christian and a Jewish person that ends with the Jewish person converting to Christianity. The strangeness of its inclusion may be partially explained by Otto's decision to include every extant text by Justin, including his *Dialogus cum Tryphone*. Justin's dialogue seems to be quite similar in form and content to *Disputatio Iasonis et Papisci*. Justin's *Dialogus cum Tryphone* is still sometimes included in anthologies and studies of Christian apologetic writings, but this perhaps raises the question of not why Otto included *Disputatio Iasonis et Papisci*, but why later writers on Christian apologetic writing didn't. For more on this dialogue, see Harry Tolley, "The Jewish-Christian Dialogue *Jason and Papiscus* in Light of the Sinaiticus Fragment," Havard Theological Review 114 (2021): 1-26.

Goodspeed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries focused almost exclusively on texts thought to be composed in the second or early third century. These always included the writings of Justin, Athenagoras, Tatian, and Theophilus, but no two collections contained exactly the same texts for instance Carlaw's includes the New Testament book of Hebrews.[13] D.H Williams has argued that the popularity of these collections was probably instrumental in the epochal notion of "the age of the apologists."[14]

Scholarship of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century has questioned some of the assumptions and implications of this earlier scholarship and also moved in new interpretive directions that are relevant to this dissertation. I have distilled three that are particularly significant for my analysis of Lactantius and Eusebius. First, the idea of an "age of the apologists" in which Christians wrote in response to critics that disappeared when Christians or Christianity became more prominent or powerful should be jettisoned. Averil Cameron's seminal essay, "Apologetics in the Roman Empire—A Genre of Intolerance?" analyzes previous scholarship on Christian apologetics and, among many important contributions, argues that Christian apologetics were not restricted to a pre-Constantinian era.[15] She notes that this view is usually predicated on the assumption that apologetic literature only exists to actually persuade critics, an idea she refutes. If apologetic writing has some function other than convincing critics, then the legal or social significance of critics of Christianity is not determinative for its existence.

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[13] Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith,* 4-5. On page 5n15 Williams lists several encyclopedia articles, internet entries, and Church history surveys that assume an "age of the apologists" in the second and early third centuries.

[14] Ibid., 4-5.

[15] Cameron, "Apologetics in the Roman Empire—A Genre of Intolerance?" 226.

She also argues that this epochal way of approaching Christian apologetic is "suggestive of too great a rupture brought about by Constantine."[16] Similarly, a significant portions of D.H. Williams' recent monograph is dedicated to showing the arbitrariness and untenability of restricting Christian apologetic literature to the second or third centuries. Though he does try to map some of the ways the writing changed under new circumstances.[17] Similarly, many recent studies and collections of essays have worked to unseat the assumption that Christian apologetic writing should be primarily restricted to the second century. For instance, the influential *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* attempts to break down some restrictions of chronology or religious identity when writing about apologetics and includes analysis of authors well after the "age of the apologists."[18] Problematizing the notion of an "age of the apologists" is important for my analysis. Insofar as I am interested in apologetic texts written in the Constantinian era, I am already implicitly rejecting "age of the apologists" epochalism. There is nothing more "apologetic" about the second or third century than the fourth. The Christian practice of responding to the perceived criticisms of outsiders regularly changed in form and function, but it was was not more natural or characteristic to one period than another. More specifically, I am following work such as Williams' (and also Maijastina Kahlos')

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith,* 4-5; 397-429.

[18] Mark Edwards, et al, eds. *Apologetics in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

in exploring the shape apologetic discourse took under different political and religious conditions.[19]

Second, and relatedly, considerable recent scholarship on apologetic writing emphasizes how this literature could serve to create and maintain Christian identity. Averil Cameron is central again in describing and commending this view. Cameron notes the important and vexed question of audience and claims, "One function of apologetic has clearly to do with the search for identity and self-definition."[20] Likewise, two of Maijastina Kahlos' recent monographs explore issues of self-definition, boundary maintenance, and construction of the "Other" in Christian apologetic writing.[21] On this view, analysis of Christian apologetic writing should shift its focus from conditions of persecution and minority status and instead center what function this literature may have served within Christian communities. D.H. Williams' monograph and survey of Christian apologetic writing argues that exhorting, teaching, and forming sympathetic insiders was the primary role of these texts.[22] My interpretation of Lactantius and Eusebius will similarly center the formative role their apologetic texts have for Christians rather than the putative criticisms of opponents. While I will justify this interpretation exegetically, I am also participating in this wider trend in recent scholarship.

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[19] Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360-430* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007). Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith,* 4-5; 371-429.

[20] Cameron, "Apologetics in the Roman Empire—A Genre of Intolerance?"

[21] Kahlos, Maijastina. *Debate and Dialogue; Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2009). Although less focused on apologetic writing, Judith Lieu's work has pioneered this way of analyzing early Christianity. See her *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[22] Williams, *Defending and Defining the Faith*, 11.

Finally, it is necessary to accept the fluidity and considerable areas of grey in defining Christian apologetic. There has been considerable discussion and debate over the how to define the texts designated "apologetic" in collections such as Otto's. Much of this debate has centered on the use of the word "genre" and whether this is an appropriate label for the diverse and formally distinct texts normally designated "apologetic." For instance, the editors of *Apologetics in the Roman World* open their seminal collection of essays with a working definition of "apologetics," one that provides both the contributors and many subsequent scholars with a valuable starting point, as a "practice."[23] Similarly, Anders-Christian Jacobsen also eschews the label genre, but is happy to concede common "method," "mode," or "strategy" as the criterion for delineating a category of Christian apologetic writing.[24] The defining characteristic for Jacobsen is taken from the original definition of the word: defense. A text is "apologetic" if it is defending a community or individual against accusations.[25] Sensibly, Jacobsen is not interested in a definition that precludes disagreement about whether some texts fit, and asserts that "apologetic" should be seen as a spectrum with various texts falling somewhere on the scale between "some apologetic features" and "an apology."[26] Also, Averil Cameron argues that the sense that certain texts share something in common, something normally designated "apologetic," despite their obvious differences in genre, is best understood as

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[23] Mark Edwards et al., "Introduction," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire,* 1.

[24] Anders-Christian Jacobsen, "Apologetics and Apologies—Some Definitions," *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics,* 5-21.

[25] Ibid. 5.

[26] Ibid. 12-13.

a "mode" or "strategy."[27] Finally, Anders Klostergaard Petersen in his essay, "The Diversity of Apologetics: From Genre to Mode of Thinking," argues persistently clear distinction between *etic* and *emic* uses of the word "apologetic" would clear up considerable confusion on the issue.[28] He effectively shows that considerable clarity is gained by consistently recognizing the differences between the etic and emic definitions of the word "apology" (and its cognates). Assuming equivalent use of that word has led to some misleading and occasionally bizarre attempts to find where "apology" (ἀπολογία) is used in a Christian text and assuming it must mean something like what contemporary scholars have meant by that word.[29] For him, at the *etic* level there is a modal form of apologetic that is not identical with the ancient definitions of an ἀπολογία or απολογητικός.

There are some clear differences between the proposals of these scholars, but there are also some common lessons to be gleaned. One of these is the difference between ancient definitions of apology (ἀπολογία; *defensio*) and its cognates, and the way that word is used amongst contemporary scholars of early Christianity. Another is a relatively

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[27] Ibid. 223; similarly, Laura Salah Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second Century Church amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) first argues that there is no apologetic genre, and then claims the apologetic texts she is considering "can and should be read together" since "all five respond to the blurring of the human and divine statuary, other images, and in religious practice; to the debate about what constitutes true religion or piety; to the question of what constitutes true justice under the empire; and to the negotiation of identity in a world where Greek ethnicity and forms of culture are special commodities in the global market of the Roman Empire" (28).

[28] Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "The Diversity of Apologetics: From Genre to Mode of Thinking," 15-41.

[29] See for instance Michael Frede, "Eusebius' Apologetic Writings," in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* 228-229, where he hunts down Eusebius' use of this word and jumps to the conclusion that Eusebius must have in mind something like our capacious, modern category.

consistent move away from genre language and a move toward discussion of practice (apologetics) or mode (apologetic). This leads into the last section of this brief chapter.

My Language: Apologetics, Apologetic

As the brief survey above indicated, there has been some debate and disagreement about what words to use when discussing Christian apologetic writing. Thus, I will here offer a brief discussion of how I will use the word "apologetic" and its cognates. In this dissertation I have and will use the word *apologetics* when referring to the practice of writing, creating, or speaking apologetic discourse. Having a word for the "practice" of writing apologetic literature is helpful for emphasizing that these texts have a function and that their composition was something *done* that carried social and theological implications. Additionally, I find it useful in writing about the texts and communities that I attend to in this dissertation to have a word that is strictly about the literature itself (e.g., apology, apologetic), but to have a word that indicate the tradition or act of composition.

I will also often use the adjective "apologetic" because, from a literary perspective, modal language best captures the similarity of content and tone present amongst the texts normally called apologetic, while also allowing for the obvious differences in form and genre that exists between many of these texts.[30] In opting for the language of "mode" I am following the lead of Averil Cameron and Anders-Christian

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[30] Alistair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) 106-111.

Jacobsen.[31] I will not write of "an apology" (unless discussing an ancient text titled ἀπολογία), but I will refer to "apologetic epistles" or "apologetic speeches." Similarly, unless quoting or referring to the words of other scholars, I have and will normally use the phrase *Christian apologetic writing* when writing about the apologetic literature of early Christians. I have chosen to normally provide the qualifier "Christian" not because I am trying to draw a contrast with the apologetic writing of others, but simply to be absolutely clear that I am focusing on a phenomenon amongst Christians.

I offered a brief definition of the word "apologetic" in the introduction. I will present it again here but expand on it slightly based on the definitions I gave above. Christian apologetics is the practice of composing or communicating an explanation/ defense of Christianity or elements thereof with reference to the ostensible critiques or questions of non-Christians. Christian apologetic writing is a text or portion of text characterized by explanation/defense of Christianity or elements thereof with reference to the ostensible critiques or questions of non-Christians.

Apologetics, Apologetic: A Heuristic

Having spent time discussing the language of "apologetics" and what words I find most suitable, it is important to emphasize what was perhaps only implicit in what I wrote above: the contemporary use of the word "apologetic" (and cognates) is not ancient

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[31] I have chosen not to use the other words Cameron and Jacobsen seem to suggest as roughly equivalent: "strategy" and "method." These words carry teleological implications insofar as strategy and method normally assume certain ends. These kinds of teleological implications are likely too restrictive in light of the diverse texts which are normally designated "apologetic," and these labels seem to assume too much about what Christian apologetic writing must be designed to do.

nomenclature. The words “apologetics” and “apologetic” serve a heuristic role in this dissertation. It is a contemporary word for the practices and literature of early Christians that defended against or answered the putative criticisms or questions of outsiders. In my analysis of Lactantius and Eusebius that will follow, it is essential to remember that they do not thematize the word “apologetic” (ἀπολογία or *defensio*) or label their works as such.

Therefore, while framing my discussion of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* in terms of Christian apologetic writing is useful for recognizing the broader trends and traditions in which they were participating, my analysis of these authors will focus instead on the specific texts and authors they claim as predecessors and also the unique nomenclature they develop for their texts. To that end, I will focus on the way they frame their texts where they reflect on the kind of writing they believe they are doing and also the specific Christian texts that these writers cite. In this way, my analysis can remain relevant to thinking about the Christian practice that contemporary scholarship tends to call apologetics without falling into a definitional quagmire.

We will find Lactantius and Eusebius using the purported questions/criticisms of outsiders, and the past attempts of Christians to response to these criticisms, as major features of their programmatic statements. But we will not find them using the words “apologetic” or “apologetics” or “apology” (or ἀπολογία or *defensio*) as primary designations for their works. Instead, Lactantius will claim that he is realizing the true potential of *defensio* by including it in a pedagogical text of *institutiones*. Eusebius,

correlatively, will gesture broadly to Christian texts of "demonstration" that show and prove the truthfulness of Christianity in the face of outsider critiques.

Conclusions

This chapter lays necessary conceptual groundwork because the literary background and inspiration for the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* is regularly assumed to be a pre-existing, consciously composed genre of texts called "apologies." As I have shown in this chapter, that assumption is misguided. It is unclear exactly to what degree the practice of responding to outsider critiques ("apologetics") was recognized amongst early Christians, but the first extended reflection on it is in the writings of Lactantius and Eusebius. For the remainder of this dissertation, I will be intentional in the language I use. We will see that as Lactantius and Eusebius reflect on Christian apologetic writing they draw on different types of texts from one another—variant beyond the obvious differences in language. Nevertheless, their reflection, and projects more broadly, seems to fund similar goals and see overlapping purposes in Christian apologetic writing—goals and purposes that are fitted to their circumstances in the Constantinian era but are far from the role of apologetics in previous generations.

Chapter 2: Lactantius and Defense Perfected with Instruction

> "Therefore what is stopping us? Why not take an example from these very people? Even as they passed down to their descendants falsehood which they invented, let us pass down something better to our descendants, the truth which we have found."
>
> *Quid ergo impedit, quin ab ipsis sumamus exemplum, ut quomodo illi quae falsa invenerant posteris tradiderunt, sic nos qui verum invenimus posteris meliora tradamus?*
>
> Lactantius, *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* 2.7.6[32]

Introduction

Lactantius continues the established practice of writing Christian apologetics, but with Lactantius we find Christian apologetics put to new use. For one thing, he names, paraphrases, evaluates, and describes previous authors of Christian apologetic writing. Indeed, he creates something like a genealogy of previous composers of Christian apologetic writing in whose lineage his own work stands. Lactantius does this as a part of his attempt to draw out and bolster the formative and educational dimensions of Christian apologetic writing. In his own terms, he wants to connect "defense" with "instruction," to respond not only to critiques or questions but also to reshape readers or hearers into different kinds of actors. I will describe what Lactantius is doing in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* as a kind of *translation* designed to be imitated by his readers and hearers. Concomitantly Lactantius evokes a lineage of Christian writers all deploying Christian apologetic writing for the same purpose he has set for the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. I will argue in this chapter that Lactantius' ambitious aims in his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* (*DI*) are best understood with reference to the reflection

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[32] Lactantius, *DI* 2.7.6 (Heck and Wlosok, 142, my translation).

and legacy building he does in the programmatic sections of the *DI*. In what follows, I will first situate Lactantius and his writings in their historical context—straddling the trauma of the Tetrarchic Persecution and the ascendence of the pro-Christian Constantine. As I described earlier, Constantine's policies and agendas included a place for Christian leaders that was both a privilege and also came with expectations for the comportment and values of those leaders and the role they would play in the Empire. This background helps in understanding some of the formative aspirations in Lactantius' writing. After this, I will discuss some major scholarly opinions about *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* to distill some points of agreement and persistent debate amongst scholars of Lactantius. This will set the stage for the greater part of this chapter where I will analyze the beginnings of book one and book five of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. In these sections, Lactantius sets out his literary and theological agenda while articulating a history of previous composers of Christian apologetic writing. I will argue that there is a chronologically forward and backward looking emphasis in these sections that has been mostly unrecognized. By backward-looking, I mean that Lactantius is intentionally imagining and articulating a legacy of Christian intellectuals upon whose work he is building: previous composers of Christian apologetic writing who "made a good start" but whose work is in need of supplementation. By forward looking, I mean that this evocation of legacy is also part of his larger pedagogical purposes. Lactantius' project is not just to present or argue for the truth of Christianity, but to provide a paradigmatic, Ciceronian translation of Christianity that can contribute to the formation of Christian intellectuals. Finally, I will suggest how my analysis may grant new insights into the rest

of Lactantius' writing, both in and also outside the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* in a brief final section looking beyond the programmatic statements.

Situating Lactantius and His Writings

Already by the end of the fourth century, only sixty or so years after his death, the prolific Christian writers Jerome and Augustine know, quote, and debate the importance of Lactantius and his texts. Both of these authors, when making lists of well-known and influential Latin writers, regularly include Lactantius. Augustine mentions him in a list of exemplary Christian writers who, like Moses, "plundered the gold of the Egyptians."[33] Jerome, one of our primary sources of information for Lactantius' career, is somewhat more critical than Augustine in his letter to Paulinus of Nola where he describes Lactantius as readier to "tear down the arguments of opponents" than to "teach our doctrines."[34] Nevertheless, Lactantius' status and importance is clear even to Jerome who, in a different letter, praises Bishop Heliodorus' nephew Nepotian by listing the ecclesiastical luminaries Nepotian intimately knew, amongst whom Lactantius is prominent.[35] This reputation was not a merely posthumous honor for Lactantius. At different times in his career, he was held in esteem both by Constantine and, apparently, Diocletian. According to Jerome, later in life, Lactantius tutored Crispus, Constantine's

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[33] Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 2.146; ed. and trans. R.P.H. Green, OECT (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 2.146 (ET Green, 126-127).

[34] Jerome, *Ep.* 58.10 (ET Fremantle, Lewis, and Martley, 311); Jerome, *The Principal Works and Letters of St. Jerome*, trans. W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W.G. Martley, NPNF (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1892). Is it only a coincidence that Jerome's criticism of Lactantius echoes Lactantius' criticism of Tertullian in *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* 5.4.3?

[35] Jerome. *Ep. 60.*10.

son.[36] Lactantius himself mentions being called to the imperial court of Diocletian in Nicomedia as a teacher of Latin rhetoric, no doubt as part of Diocletian's effort to strengthen the cultural and political importance of his *de facto* capital.[37] In brief, leading imperial and ecclesiastical figures often heard Lactantius when he was alive and read him when he was dead.[38]

It is impossible to construct with any certainty most of the details of Lactantius' life—even the better documented periods are spotty. Yet, despite the gaping holes in his biography, it is possible to identify some of the major events and highlights of Lactantius' career. He was born in the mid-third century somewhere in Africa (the exact city is unknown).[39] According to Jerome, Lactantius studied with Arnobius of Sicca who taught him the art of rhetoric. The influence of Arnobius on Lactantius is a vexed question exacerbated by the fact that neither makes any explicit mention of the other.[40] By his own

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[36] Jerome, *On Illustrious Men* 80; Jerome, *On Illustrious Men,* trans. Thomas P. Halton, FC 100 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999).

[37] *DI* 5.2.2; in *Mort.* 7.10, Lactantius claims that Diocletian hoped to make Nicomedia equal to Rome.

[38] In the introduction to their translation, *Divine Institutes,* Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey write of Lactantius' rhetorical career, "So he must have been, if not the best in the world at his profession, at least very well known and very well connected—someone with a network of people, especially ex-pupils and protégés, reaching into powerful places" (2).

[39] It is impossible to be more precise than this about his age. Jerome in *On Illustrious Men*, 80 (Halton, 111-113) says that Lactantius began to tutor Crispus when he was in "extreme old age." Assuming that this appointment began in Trier around 310—a widely held and not unreasonable inference—and that Jerome is correctly informed on this issue, Lactantius' birth is placed as early as 240. Oliver Nicholson, "Lactantius on Military Service," SP 24 (1993): 177n10 argues that *extrema senectute* (translated "extreme old age" by Halton) must mean 70 or older, corresponding with the Saturnine phase of one's life that commences with the beginning of one's eighth decade.

[40] Jerome, "On Illustrious Men," 80 (Halton, 111-113); Arnobius of Sicca, *The Case Against the Christian,* trans. George E. McCracken, ACW 7-8 (Westminster, MD: New Press, 1949) 3-57; Anthony P. Coleman, *Lactantius the Theologian: Lactantius and the Doctrine of Providence* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2017), 9-11; Michael Simmons, *Arnobius of Sicca: Religious Conflict and Competition in the Age of Diocletian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) 47-93.

account, Lactantius was a lifelong teacher of rhetoric who assisted young men as they prepared for public careers.[41] The date or time period in which he began associating himself with Christianity is uncertain though some have argued for a later date (after arriving in Nicomedia) and others have argued, or assumed, one much earlier. Regardless, in Lactantius' extant texts there is a clear and thoroughgoing knowledge of Christian writings.[42] Lactantius' invitation to teach rhetoric at the court of Diocletian (mentioned above) only slightly preceded the issuing of the emperor's first edict against the Christians in 303 CE and several public attacks by two critics of Christianity.[43] One of these critics is evidently Sossianus Hierocles,[44] the author of at least two literary attacks on Christianity one of which is "The Lover of Truth," a text that sought to undermine the uniqueness of Christ by comparing him to the wonder working philosopher Apollonius of Tyana.[45] The identity of the other critic is not certain, but some scholars have argued for and others against the identification of this person with Porphyry of Tyre.[46] Regardless of

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[41] *DI* 1.1.8.

[42] The date of Lactantius' conversion or self-identification as a Christian is not important for my exposition. However, I tend to find an earlier date more convincing. Coleman, *Lactantius the Theologian: Lactantius and the Doctrine of Providence,* 10-11; 11n14.

[43] *DI* 5.2-3; Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 1-3; Jill Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 88-96.

[44] Coleman, *Lactantius the Theologian,* 15.

[45] Although Sossianus' text is no longer in existence, its refutation by Eusebius (perhaps not Eusebius of Caesarea), a Christian, is. It is appended to the end of Philostratus, *Letters of Apollonius. Ancient Testimonia,* Christopher P. Jones, trans., LCL 458 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006) 154-258.

[46] For instance, Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire,* 93-102 argues strongly for this identification while Timothy D. Barnes, "Scholarship or Propaganda? Porphyry *Against the Christians* in Its Historical Setting," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 39 (1994): 53-66, vehemently disagrees. See also Jeremy Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 79-81, 90-96; And Eberhard Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*. Zum Selbstuerständnis des Apologeten Lactanz." Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 51 (2005): 208-209; more recently, Gassman, *Worshippers of the Gods,* 19n3 simply dismisses the idea that it could be Porphyry in a terse footnote.

the identity of the second critic, the anti-Christian lectures of these two men and the issuing of Diocletian's first edict against the Christians were the catalyst for the next major phase of Lactantius' career. He seems to have spent the following few years still living in Nicomedia, and he may have begun composing his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* at that time though he did not finish them until later.[47] There is some uncertainty about Lactantius' location and occupation after leaving Nicomedia but before finding his way to the next known phase of his life.[48] What is certain is that within a few years of leaving Nicomedia, he would again be in an imperial court, but this time Constantine's as the tutor of the emperor's son Crispus. He may have become Crispus' tutor as early as 310 CE, but his role as tutor almost certainly had ended by 317 CE when Crispus was declared Caesar.[49] It is uncertain when Lactantius died or exactly what duties he might have fulfilled after his time as Crispus' tutor, but a little bit can be said about when his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* (the chief topic of this chapter and Lactantius' central work) were composed.[50]

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[47] In *DI* 5.11.15 Lactantius mentions observing a Christian being tortured by a governor of Bythinia for two years, but Lactantius also speaks of living in Nicomedia in the past tense *DI* 5.2.2. Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 2-3; Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentium,* 85.

[48] Coleman, *Lactantius the Theologian,* 18; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 290-291n95.

[49] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes*, 3; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 13 dates Lactantius' appointment as tutor of Crispus to 313 CE. Coleman, *Lactantius the Theologian,* 23, for a discussion of the end of Lactantius' time as a tutor.

[50] Coleman, *Lactantius the Theologian,* 28, writes, "There is no record of his death in any of the ancient *testimonia*, but it would be difficult to imagine Lactantius enduring beyond the year 325." Regarding the centrality of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII,* Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere,*" 205, refers to it as his "Hauptwerk." Several other works by Lactantius look forward or back (depending on their date of composition) at the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*—it would seem Lactantius thought of it as his "Hauptwerk" as well.

While it is sometimes averred that Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are a product of the trauma of Diocletian's anti-Christian measures and were written "in response to persecution,"[51] this does not take seriously Lactantius' continued use of the text as seen both in his production of a second edition and an epitome (*Epitome divinarum institutionum*). Clearly, the initial composition of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* occurred while the Tetrarchic persecution was ongoing and before Christianity began its new relationship with the emperor and his policies. On the basis of *DI* 5.11.15, in which Lactantius claims to have observed over the course of two years the torture of a Christian by a Bythinian governor, 305 (two years after the beginning of Diocletian's legislation against Christians) is the accepted *terminus post quem*.[52] In *DI* 5.23.1-5, Lactantius writes as if the persecuting emperors are still alive and awaiting judgement. Thus, 310 CE or 311 CE—Maximian having died in the summer of 310 CE—is the usually accepted *terminus ante quem*.[53] For this reason, the fairly uncontroversial dating for the first version of the *DI* is 305-310/311. This first edition differs from the second edition because it lacks certain "dualistic" sections as well as encomiastic dedication

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[51] Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 81, describes and disagrees with this position; overtly, in their introduction to their translation, *Divine Institutes*, Bowen and Garnsey assert, "*Divine Institutes* should be read as a product of and witness to the Great Persecution, and not as a response to the turnabout in the Church's fortunes that happened under Constantine" (43). Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284-363,* 96, agrees.

[52] In *De opificio Dei* 20.9, Lactantius claims he is still planning to write the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* but that persecution has begun; Lactance, *De opificio Dei* 20.9 (SC, 214-215), in Michel Perrin ed., *L'ouvrage du Dieu Créateur,* 2 vols. SC 213-214 (Paris: Cerf, 1974). Thus, Eberhard Heck, *Die dualistischen Zusätze und die Kaiseranreden bei Lactantius* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1972) 144, infers that 304 CE is the likely date of composition for the former work.

[53] Coleman, *Lactantius the Theologian,* 17; Elizabeth DePalma Digeser "Lactantius and Constantine's Letter to Arles: Dating the *Divine Institutes*," JECS 2 (1994) 38; 43-44; Heck, *Die dualistischen Zusätze und die Kaiseranreden bei Lactantius,* 144 reasons that, at the longest, news of the death of Maximian would have reached Lactantius by 311 even if he was on the other side of the empire.

passages to Constantine.[54] There has been some debate about when, and under what circumstances, the second edition was composed. Dates as early as 314 CE and as late as 324/325 CE have been proposed.[55] For my purposes, both the early date and the late date make the same point: Lactantius saw the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* as a text rightly fitted to Constantine and his policies. Lactantius clearly did not think the new era Constantine had inaugurated for Christians made his *magnum opus* irrelevant, or that its work was done because persecution had ceased. Indeed, the praise and dedication to Constantine was something Lactantius apparently believed fit quite naturally into the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. Lactantius does not merely insert non-sequitur dedication passages but integrates these portions with the previous edition and provides additional explanation and elaboration on what he is doing in the text.[56]

Moreover, it is clear that Lactantius did not consider the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* to be an occasional composition responding to a very particular set of circumstance. In contrast to a text such as Cyprian's *Ad Demetrianum*, Lactantius speaks little about the historical circumstances under which he's writing and is far more

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[54] See Heck, *Die dualistischen Zusätze und die Kaiseranreden bei Lactantius* for analysis of these passages and where they appear in the manuscript tradition. Eberhard Heck, "Die dualistischen Zusätze und die Kaiseranreden bei Lactantius," StPatr 13 (1975): 185-188 is a useful summary of the main issues addressed by the monograph with a few additional insights from the author.

[55] Heck, *Die dualistischen Zusätze und die Kaiseranreden bei Lactantius,*140-143, argues for the later date; Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire,* 134-135, the earlier.

[56] Antonie Wlosok, "Zur lateinischen Apologetik der constantinischen Zeit (Arnobius, Lactantius, Firmicus Maternus)," *Gymnasium* (1989): 133-147. That is not to say that there isn't a somewhat haphazard character—grammatically and argumentatively—with the passages in their context.

interested in offering a very broad explanation and justification of Christianity.[57] Finally, Lactantius wrote his *Epitome divinarum institutionum* sometime "long after" (*iam pridem*) the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* for one Pentadius who was requesting a condensed version of the original.[58] When we think this was written obviously depends on when we date the composition of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and which version of it Lactantius is epitomizing. Nevertheless, its occasion and existence well after the composition of the original text demonstrate continued interest and perceived use in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, even if some people preferred a briefer version.[59] However marked by Diocletian and his colleagues' anti-Christian legislation, the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are not reducible to this context. The content of the text, its constructive arguments and strident statements of Christian supremacy, cannot be restricted to the context of imperial hostility and persecution. My analysis of 1.1 and 5.1-4 will only strengthen this contention.

There is wide agreement that Lactantius' arguments (primarily found in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*) had real effects on the policies, or at least rhetoric, of Constantine. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser has argued that Constantine's policies, especially regarding his relatively tolerant position on religious diversity, reflect the

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[57] Mark Edwards, "The Flowering of Latin Apologetic: Lactantius and Arnobius" in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire*, 202, who claims Lactantius was "aiming at a similar effect on every audience, without regard to context, place, or time."

[58] Lactantius, *Epitome divinarum institutionum* Pr. 1; *Epitome Divinarum institutionum,* ed. Eberhard Heck and Antonie Wlosok, BSGRT (Leipzig: Teubner, 1994).

[59] Ibid. Lactantius defends the length of his work and claims Pentadius, at whose request he writes *Epitome divinarum institutionum*, is seeking to be made famous (*celebrare*) by connecting his name to *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. In *DI* 1.1.20-21, Lactantius describes *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* as exactly the right length—short.

thinking of Lactantius in his magnum opus, *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*.[60] Specifically, Lactantius argues for *patientia*, or forbearance, regarding *religio* since true religion by definition cannot be coerced and must originate in a willing soul.[61] More recently, Noel Lenski has confirmed this point and provided more specificity in an article on the so-called "Edict of Milan."[62] However, it is not simply the case that Lactantius and his writings were important to Constantine's regime.

A large part of H.A. Drake's *Constantine and the Bishops* provides a compelling explanation for at least some of the reasons Christianity may have been significant to Constantine's agenda. According to Drake, Constantine saw in the network of Christian bishops a potential tool for realizing parts of his social agenda and side stepping the corruption of the imperial bureaucracy.[63] Much of this portion of Drake's argument is an attempt to explain Constantine's legislation that granted considerable judicial powers to episcopal authorities.[64] It is not necessary to rehearse the particulars of Drake's argument at this juncture, but it is worth remembering that Constantine's agenda for Christianity was not just about granting privileges but also about requiring public services. Minimally, it is certain that Lactantius stood very close to the center of imperial power for much of

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[60] Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire,* 115-143; Judith Evans Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity: The Emperor Constantine's Marriage Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press Oxford, 1995) 45, is more circumspect about the influence Lactantius had on actual laws, but agrees that he at least influenced the rhetoric and propaganda of Constantine.

[61] Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion,* 49-55.

[62] Lenski, "The Edict of Milan," 27-56.

[63] Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*, 103-108.

[64] Ibid. 322-325.

Constantine's tenure as Augustus.[65] Also, that Constantine's interest in Christianity and many of its elite and most educated members were of particular importance to his imperial agenda. In other words, *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are not merely an artifact of the Roman Empire between 303 CE and 311 CE, nor are their significance relegated to those years.

In what follows, I will take seriously *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* as a text that straddles the fast-moving reversal of fortunes Christians experienced in the first two decades of the fourth century.[66] In *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, the persecution of Diocletian and his colleagues looms large. Yet *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are also an attempt to articulate a certain kind of Christian identity that is politically feasible and requires (or at least hopes for) a sympathetic emperor. The dedication passages are not panegyric arbitrarily attached to an otherwise irrelevant text. Lactantius sees what he had already composed in the time of persecution as relevant and easily adaptable to the change of circumstances ushered in by Constantine's ascendance and relevant to the emperor's agenda.[67]

Having said all this, my exegetical ambitions in this chapter are fairly circumscribed, though I will suggest that my reading has wide implications. I will look at

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[65] Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 106-107; Oliver Nicholson, "*Caelum Pontius intuemini*: Lactantius and a Statue of Constantine," StPatr 34 (2001): 177-196.

[66] Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*," 205, writes, "Lactanz…ist der letzte der sechs christlichen Apologeten lateinischer Sprache bis zur Zeit Constantins und ist Zeitzeuge der 'constantinischen Wende,' der Vorgänge, die dazu führten, daß Constantin das schon 311 von Galerius lizenzierte Christentum seit 312/313 bevorzugte."

[67] Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentium,* 84-88 similarly places Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* in "Die Apologie in der diokletianish-konstantinischen Epoche."

Lactantius' explicit statements of literary purpose and self-description in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. The crux of my analysis will be Lactantius' account of his project, his predecessors, and his goals in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* 5.1.1-4 and 1.1. The former occurs in roughly the middle of the work and has been called "tantamount to a reintroduction to the whole work."[68] It is also, most importantly, Lactantius' discussion of the authors of Christian apologetic writing who precede him. The latter (1.1) is, obviously, the inauguration of the work in which Lactantius introduces most of his main themes and literary strategies. I will read these two purpose statements to see how Lactantius not only envisions his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, but also how he is trying to situate past Christian orators and writers and shape those who will follow his example—*docti* who have written before him and others who will come after. These passages loom large in most analyses of Lactantius, whether these analyses are of his rhetoric, his biography, or his relationship with earlier Christian writers. I am hardly the first to write about them, a fact that grants me several interlocutors. Nevertheless, I have a few interpretive focuses I will bring to bear on these passages that will shed new light on their significance. First, while the content of these passages are normally the sole focus of interpreters, I intend to also look at the reason for their composition and inclusion in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. Put differently, I want to ask not only *what* Lactantius has to say about his project, his Christian literary predecessors, and his perspective imitators, but *why* he decides to frame his work the way he does and chooses to catalog his predecessors and anticipate those who will follow in his footsteps. Second, I want to

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[68] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes,* 281n1.

look at how Lactantius is construing his project in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, especially what kind of reader he is forming and what literary and intellectual tradition he claims to be bequeathing to this reader. I will argue that careful attention to the programmatic statements in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* that are cognizant of these focuses shows Lactantius to be defining his work, a work he sees as paradigmatic, as an act of translation. In so doing, Lactantius uses apologetics as a tool to fit readers as literary and rhetorical combatants in a battlefield delineated and populated in his text.

Before turning to these passages, I want to briefly look at major scholarly interpretations of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* as well as some of the *DI*'s structural features, themes, and argumentative strategies. In this way, I will highlight and introduce some of the major features of the *DI* and some of the major interpretive opinions about it. I will return to this in the conclusion to discuss how my analysis of I.1 and 5.1-4 reshapes our reading of the text as a whole as well as Lactantius' other, more topically focused texts.

Some Major Scholarly Opinions about the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*

Exactly what the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are—what genre they belong to and what Lactantius' literary project entails—is a matter of some discussion and debate. Mark Edwards thinks the *DI* should be classified as an epideictic composition intending to be "the last and best in a line of Latin authors on behalf of Christianity."[69] He understands Lactantius' argument for the supremacy of Christianity to be both civic and

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[69] Edwards, "The Flowering of Latin Apologetic," 201-204.

rhetorical. Lactantius, through argument and displays of deep knowledge of the Latin syllabus, presents Christianity as the only path to virtue, a just state, and fidelity to the *mos maiorum*.[70] According to Edwards, Lactantius, at least in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, does not provide substantive theological arguments nor does he ground his argument in the particularities of a specific historical moment. Instead, Lactantius' goal is "rhetorical" insofar as he's narrating for his readers a new and better way of being Roman.[71] It is also "rhetorical" in that Lactantius painstakingly (sometimes tediously) quotes and alludes to the luminaries of the Latin literary tradition: especially Cicero.[72] To some degree, Edwards' analysis parallels Antonie Wlosok.[73]

Wlosok argues that the beginning of the fourth century saw Christianity confronting the old criticism that it was a betrayal of the *mos maiorum* and the new problems of "der Neuplatonisum," "die Mysterienkulte," and "das Bildungsproblem."[74] Lactantius sets about confronting "das Bildungsproblem." Wlosok's reading of Lactantius takes into account his entire corpus, and sees it together constituting an "apologetic"

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[70] Ibid., 206-219.

[71] Ibid., 197.

[72] For definitive discussions and catalogues of Lactantius' citations and use of other sources see the index in Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum Liber,* eds., Samuel Brandt and George Laubmann, CSEL 27/2 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1890) (355-357 for Cicero); Pierre Monat, *Lactance et la Bible: Une propédeutique latine á la lecture de la Bible dans l'Occident contantinien* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1982); Jackson Bryce, *The Library of Lactantius* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 417-422; Robert M. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 58-72, although on Ogilvie, see Eberhard Heck, "Review of R. Ogilvie, *The Library of Lactantius,"Gnomon* 52 (1985): 572-574. Cicero is by the far most frequently cited ancient author and the one who makes the deepest impact on Lactantius' ideas and rhetoric, but Lactantius also makes frequent use of Seneca, Lucretius, Varro, Vergil, the Hermetic Corpus, the Sibylline oracles, and many others.

[73] Wlosok, "Zur lateinischen Apologetik der constantinischen Zeit," 133-147.

[74] Ibid., 135.

agenda that ends up fulfilling the dual role of making Christians appear (at least potentially) educationally respectable, and also arguing for and demonstrating a "christlichen Poetologie und Ästhetik."[75] Lactantius exhibits his mastery of the Latin canon—a task begun by Minucius Felix but not attempted by Cyprian or Tertullian—as he argues that the great poets of this canon can be useful for Christianity.[76] Wlosok suggestively argues that Lactantius' poem *De ave phoenice* should be read as an experiment in the new, Christian poetics he was elaborating in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*.

In *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome*, Elizabeth DePalma Digeser argues that the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are an attempt to address the insufficiency of "Latin apologetic literature."[77] The persecution that began in 303 CE and the increasingly sophisticated attacks of critics of Christianity required a response that corrected errors and inculcated the truth. He chose the form of "Institutes" to suggest a systematic presentation of the basic principles of Christianity.[78] Lactantius is attempting to answer the charges of jurists and philosophers, while also setting out an argument for Christian superiority and (a form of) religious tolerance.[79] By highlighting Lactantius' response to the "philosophers" (chief amongst, according to Digeser, being Porphyry),

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[75] Ibid., 136.

[76] Ibid., 137-138.

[77] Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire,* 7-11.

[78] Ibid., 9.

[79] Ibid.

Digeser is able to cogently explain Lactantius' choice to rely so heavily in his argument on the authority of oracular literature—exactly the authorities that contemporary Neoplatonist philosophers were making central to their theological arguments. Interestingly, in contrast to Edwards, Digeser finds a strong, specific historical strain in a coded critique of Diocletian and the Tetrarchy running through Lactantius' Euhemerestic discussion of Saturn and Jupiter.[80] More controversially, she takes Constantine's political program quite broadly to be anticipated and inspired by Lactantius.[81]

Eberhard Heck argues that Lactantius is of paramount importance, particularly in his "Hauptwerk" the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, as the first Latin author to work out a synthesis of Christianity and Greco-Roman literature. He writes, "Vielmehr liegt seine geistesgeschichtliche Bedeutung darin, daß er in Theorie und Praxis als erster Römer den Boden bereitet hat für die Übernahme griechisch-römischer Bildungstradition in das Christentum…"[82] Heck takes seriously Lactantius' criticism of his "apologetic predecessors"—especially Tertullian—that they offered responses to attacks but not instruction, and that they failed to establish the fundamentals of Christian truth to non-Christian, Greco-Roman interlocutors.[83] The *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* can be seen as structurally rectifying Tertullian's error of defending but not teaching by

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[80] Ibid., 32-40; while most interpreters see some of this present in the Institutes, Digeser's strong position that the Euhemeristic argument is essentially one long, coded contemporary political critique has been far more controversial. As Gassman, *Worshippers of the Gods,* 22-23, writes, "While Lactantius' account may contain 'pointed topical allusions' (as Peter Garnsey has termed them), his critique of the gods cannot be read as an attack on the emperors specifically."

[81] Ibid., 115-144; see Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*," 220, for criticism of Digeser's work.

[82] Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*," 240.

[83] Ibid. 227.

balancing defense with instruction, *defendere et instituere.* Books 1-3 are extended critiques of the Roman pantheon and the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition while books 4-7 present and explain true *religio et sapientia*.[84] Heck compellingly explains and presents Lactantius as a thoroughgoing Ciceronian rhetor who writes to influence an educated audience.[85] In so doing, Lactantius develops a "Theorie der Apologetik" that appreciates while still criticizing his "apologetic" predecessors, particularly in light of the attacks of two opponents: one of whom presents a Platonic argument against Christianity and the other a traditional, religio-political criticism of the Christians.[86]

Jeremy Schott describes the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* as an anticipation of Augustine's *City of God* and, at least in length and thoroughness, a peer of Origen's *Contra Celsum*. Schott writes, "Lactantius writes for an educated audience familiar with all that is best in arts and letters and combines a skillful critique of traditional religion and philosophy with an "apologetic" presentation of central Christian doctrines."[87] The text is a response to both the persecution itself and the anti-Christian polemics of two unnamed men present in the court of Diocletian with Lactantius. More specifically, Lactantius writes to counter the oracular philosophical system of Porphyry (Schott follows Digeser in arguing that Porphyry is one of the two unnamed anti-Christian polemicists) on its own

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[84] Ibid. 211, 221; Lactantius himself suggests such a structure e.g. *DI* 2.3.25.

[85] Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*," 223.

[86] Ibid. 225-229.

[87] Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 80.

terms, and to narrate a new history of religions that gives Christianity primacy of place.[88] Finally, Schott situates the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* in both their originating context and in the Constantinian context in which they were revised and reissued. The *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* thus embody a genre shift—"from apologetic to panegyric"—and also narrate Constantine's ascendence and success as intimately bound up with the ascendence and success of the one, true, ancient religion against the multi-form false religions of the *gentes*.[89]

Finally, Mattias Gassman's *Worshippers of the Gods: Debating Paganism in the Fourth-Century Roman West* locates Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* as a first moment in a wider debate between Christians and those adhering to traditional worship of the gods.[90] Gassman minimizes political critique in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and argues that Lactantius' work "is not a work of political (even religious-political) theory" and that his central question is "how the reader can find, and ought to live upon, the true path to the supreme God."[91] Cicero is interpretively central in Gassman's analysis, as for most interpreters of Lactantius, but Gassman more than others shows exactly where and how Lactantius uses and moves beyond Cicero.[92] Cicero, on Gassman's reading, provides a vivid example of the limits and dangers of reasoning apart

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[88] Ibid., 81.

[89] Ibid., 106-109.

[90] Gassman, *Worshippers of the Gods,* 19-47.

[91] Ibid., 23.

[92] Ibid., and especially 24-37.

from divine aid.[93] Nevertheless, Gassman argues that unlike Cicero, Lactantius is attempting to shift his educated readers' attention away from "public religiosity" to a endemically embattled and persecuted Christianity.[94]

As this brief survey has illustrated, the debates and varieties of emphases between contemporary scholars are minimal compared to the considerable agreement on the general character and form of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. First, the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are a rhetorical and literary project designed to demonstrate deep knowledge of, and engagement with, the canon of elite Latin literature. Thus, Lactantius has in view a fairy well-read and educated audience who will keep up with his references and allusions, people who respect and appreciate Cicero, Vergil, Varro, and the numerous other authors Lactantius uses. In addition, Lactantius is interested in the hermeneutical project of delivering an alternative, Christian interpretive option for many of these texts. He is not merely showing *that* he knows these authors, but that, when read correctly, *the authors themselves* tell the truth about the world and anticipate Christianity.[95] Second, there are "universal" and "ultimate" claims and ambitions in this text, but it is clearly also responding to recent political events. There is both an occasional character to the text as it is marked by the Tetrarchic persecution and Constantine's patronage, and (at least an aspiration) to argue for sweeping, far-reaching claims about religion, philosophy,

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[93] Ibid., 26; in *DI* 1.1.5-6, for instance, Lactantius discusses just this issue.

[94] Gassman, *Worshippers of the Gods,* 38.

[95] *DI* 1.11.30.

government, and history.[96] This is in evidence throughout the text but is especially visible in the very careful and intentional structuring of the seven books. The *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are constantly summarizing and rehearsing earlier sections and anticipating later ones.[97] Indeed, Lactantius' entire corpus is looking forward or backward at the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*.[98] Finally, Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* have a pedagogical aim. They are not merely a response to criticisms and accusations, though they are not less than this, rather, they are an attempt to teach and inculcate the fundamentals of Christianity.[99]

There is, however, at least one standing point of disagreement that I hope to address in my analysis. To what degree, if at all, is Lactantius' project public, political, or interested in the state and society? Is Lactantius' project more about pointing the way to faithfulness for individuals who will inevitably live in a context of persecution, or does his project have a pronounced public and constructive element? As I have argued above, Lactantius' connections, the time in which he wrote, and the apparent place Christianity held in Constantine's agenda all point in the direction of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* not being about only "private" or "religious" concerns. In what follows, I will argue on exegetical grounds that Lactantius' project in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*

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[96] *DI* 5.1-4 succinctly illustrates this dual character of the work.

[97] E.g., *DI* 1.1.19-25; 7.1.

[98] Lactantius, *De ira Dei* 2; Lactantius, *La Colére de Dieu,* ed. Christiane Ingremeau, SC 289 (Paris: Cerf, 1974); *De opificio Dei,* 20.

[99] *DI* 1.1.12; 5.4.3.

envisions a new sort of educated person whose import and influence is significant beyond assisting individuals amidst an intractably hostile environment.

Divinarum institutionum libri VII: First Matters

My initial approach to *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* will look at the questions of title and inspiration. Lactantius calls his text an *institutiones*, a kind of educational work or text book. The reason for this title is worth exploring at the outset. Additionally, as the above survey illustrated, Cicero, both explicitly and stylistically, permeates *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. Therefore, it is also worthwhile at the outset to consider some of the ways Lactantius associates himself with Cicero, especially in book one. As will become clear in what follows, the literary identity of *institutiones* and Lactantius' explicit associating with Cicero are related.

Why *Institutiones*?

An exploration of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* reasonably begins with their stated literary identity as instruction or teaching. Instruction (*instituere; institutio*) is a central literary identity in Lactantius' text, and one he references several times.[100] In book five (5.4.3), Lactantius will identify the basic shortcoming of Tertullian's *Apologeticus* as only offering "defense" (*defensio*) when it should have also included "instruction"

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[100] For instance, *DI* 5.4.3. There may be parallels between Lactantius' concern for, and discussion of, "teaching" (*institutere*) and Augustine's notion of "teaching" (*doctrina*). For instance, in both cases "teaching" is explored in conjunction with extended discussion of appropriate resources and authors—"plundering the Egyptians" and helpful ecclesiastical authors. Additionally, both authors, in discussing teaching, analyze the appropriate formation and character of teachers. See Karla Pollman, "Doctrina christiana (de)," in *Augustinus Lexikon* vol. 2, ed. Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1996-2002), 552-575; James J. O'Donnell, "*Doctrina Christiana, de,*" in *Augustine through the Ages*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 278-280.

(*instiutio*). While this amounts to a contrast of sorts for Lactantius (defense can be separated from instruction), it also marks two things that should be held together. Apologetics should also be education.

As Lactantius describes it, his text is not merely a presentation of information or a refutation of error. He is writing *institutiones* (1.1.12) and titles his treatise *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. *Institutiones* were pedagogical texts designed to instruct and form a student in the fundamentals of a discipline.[101] There were institutes of rhetoric, such as Quintilian's, and civil law, such as Gaius' or one of the several others that were later collected in the Code of Justinian.[102] Lactantius explicitly compares his text to the latter kind.[103] In a passage alluding to Cicero's *De legibus* in the opening of the work he writes,

> And if some jurists and arbiters of fairness have composed well-ordered Institutes of Civil Law (*Institutiones civilis iuris*), by which they settle the lawsuits and contentions of disagreeing citizens, how much better and more proper (that) we will set forth in writing Divine Institutes (*divinas institutiones*), in which we write not about dripping water or water enclosures or fist fights, but about hope, life,

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[101] Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*," 218-219 discusses the possible significance of Lactantius' use of the adjective (*divinus*).

[102] Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire,* 9, but also adds "philosophy." I do not think the cross-references she provides prove that the word *institutiones* could refer to manuals of philosophy, 147n15. (Apparently drawn from Lewis and Short). Both Seneca, *De beneficiis* 2.20.2 and Cicero in *De natura deorum* 1.4.8 refer to *insititutiones* of philosophy in general or specific philosophical schools, but neither is describing the kind of introductory text or handbook of rhetoric or law that Lactantius has in mind. It is not clear in the above two cases that the author is referring to texts at all, see Thomas, *Defending Christ,* 174-175. Seneca, *Moral Essays,* vol. 3, trans. John W. Basore, LCL 310 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935). Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods. Academics,* trans. by H. Rackham, LCL 268 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933).

[103] Catherine Schneider, "Quintilian in Late Antiquity: From Lactantius to Isidore of Seville," in *The Oxford Handbook of Quintilian,* ed. Marc Van Der Poel, Michael Edwards, and James J. Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 317, argues that Lactantius' rhetorical background and the subject of his book suggest that, "Lactantius thus probably had the *Institutio* [of Quintilian] in mind when entitling his own writing."

> salvation, immortality, and God, so that we might settle deadly superstitions and the most vile errors. (1.1.12).[104]

In this passage, as numerous scholars have pointed out, Lactantius is alluding to Cicero's dialogue *De legibus* in which Cicero subtly diminishes the manuals of the jurists who, he implies, write only about the finer points of petty squabbles.[105] How well Lactantius actually knew the writings of jurists and the juristic discipline is a matter of some debate.[106] Nevertheless, however much he really knew, Lactantius' rhetorical point is clear. He is writing a manual to introduce a discipline and train new practitioners. In this sense the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* will be like manuals of civil law, but it will not be like them insofar as its content and purpose far exceeds theirs. The allusion to Cicero's *De legibus* in the above citation helps establish this.

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[104] *DI* 1.1.12 (Heck and Wlosok, 4; ET TTH 40, 58-59), *Et si quidam prudentes, et arbitri aequitatis, Institutiones ciuilis iuris compositas ediderunt, quibus ciuium dissidentium lites contentionesque sopirent: quanto melius nos et rectius diuinas Institutiones litteris persequemur; in quibus non de stillicidiis, aut aquis arcendis, aut de manu conserenda, sed de spe, de uita, de salute, de immortalitate, de Deo loquemur, ut superstitiones mortiferas, erroresque turpissimos sopiamus? Ius civile,* or civil law, in Roman jurisprudence is variously defined by different authors in different eras, but generally seems to indicate the laws specifically covering Roman citizens. See Jill Harries, *Cicero and the Jurists* (London: Duckworth, 2006) 68-70. Jurists would often contrast and compare *ius civile* with *ius naturale* or *ius gentium.* See for instance Gaius, *Institutiones* 1.1; Francis de Zulueta, trans., *The Institutes of Gaius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958).

[105] Cicero, *De legibus* 1.14; Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire*, 57; Bryce, *The Library of Lactantius,* 9; Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes,* 59n3; Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*. Zum Selbstuerständnis Des Apologeten Lactanz," 219. But maybe also *De legibus* 2.47 as I will discuss below. Cicero, *De re publica; De legibus; Cato maior de senectute; Laelius de amicitia,* ed. and trans. J.G.F. Powell, OCT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

[106] Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity,* 31-32; Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire*, 56-63; Contardo Ferrini, "Die juristischen Kenntnisse des Arnobius und des Lactantius," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Romanistiche Abtheilung* 15 (1894): 346-352.

Divinarum institutionum libri VII: Like and Unlike Cicero

In *De legibus* 1.14, Cicero's friend Atticus says to him, "But now I entreat you to begin to explain what you believe about civil law."[107] Cicero notes that jurists have already composed manuals of civil law that deal in exacting detail with the finer points of laws even about "dripping water and walls."[108] These texts and those who write them have missed the larger context and significance of civil law, Cicero avers, and so surely Atticus cannot have something like that in mind. He does not. Rather, Atticus has in mind a sequel to Cicero's *De Republica*, a sequel in which, like Plato, Cicero will articulate the laws of his ideal commonwealth (1.15). Cicero accepts this request and in the remainder of the dialogue attempts to set his entire discussion of individual laws, regulations, and institutions in the wider and more philosophically respectable context of natural law.[109]

However, Lactantius may also be alluding to a similar moment in book two of *De legibus*. In this section, Cicero mentions the absurd idea, apparently defended by others, that a *pontifex* would need to be familiar with civil law. Why, he asks rhetorically, would a priest need to know the laws regarding "walls or water or all such things?"[110] A priest's occupation is concerned only with "religion" (*religio*). If this is the allusion Lactantius has in mind, then he would be suggesting that his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are

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[107] *De legibus* 1.14 (Powell, 163-164, my translation) *Sed iam ordire explicare, quaeso, de iure civili quid sentias.*

[108] Ibid. (Powell, 163-164, my translation) …*de stillicidiorum ac de parietum*…

[109] Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire*, 47.

[110] Cicero, *De legibus* 2.47 (Powell, 222, my translation) Compare the allusion/citation: Lactantius writes, *de stillicidiis aut aquas arcendis aut de manu conserenda*, in 1.14 (Powell, 163-164) Cicero writes, *de stillicidiorum ac de parietum iure*, in 2.47 (Powell, 222), *de iure parietum aut aquarum aut ullo omnino*.

not like the petty quibbling of the jurists but are concerned in a focused way with the priestly duty of determining proper relations to the divine.

It might not be necessary to decide which passage Lactantius has in mind; the allusion is ambiguous and this could be intentional. In this introduction, Lactantius is not paralleling his project only with the legal agenda articulated in *De legibus* 1.14. Digeser is too restrictive in her reading of this passage when she claims that Lactantius only has in mind Cicero's political texts: *De republica* and *De legibus*.[111] Plainly Lactantius is alluding to *De legibus*, but the intertext is not a single passage from a single treatise. Lactantius is intentionally paralleling his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* with Cicero's entire philosophical project both to grant his own a literary context and to subvert Cicero's. The sentences before the allusion in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* to *De legibus* makes this clear. Immediately before the passage quoted above (1.1.12), Lactantius justifies his project in comparison to "certain exceptional orators" who ultimately turned to "philosophy" from the work of pleading cases (1.1.11). Heck aptly characterizes this transition, "Aber nun verläßt er sozusagen das Gerichtslokal, wechselt in eine Villa Ciceros."[112] His use of the plural not withstanding, Lactantius assuredly has Cicero in mind, alluded to just before in 1.1.1-4, who turned late in his career to writing philosophical treatises.[113] Lactantius even uses one of Cicero's puns from *De officiis*

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[111] Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius and Rome,* 59-60.

[112] Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*. Zum Selbstuerständnis Des Apologeten Lactanz," 217.

[113] Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.6-9; Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire*, 59-60.

1.44.156 in this sentence.[114] Cicero is always quite explicit in his later philosophical treatises that what he is doing is not merely an individual search for enlightenment, a personal quest for the consolation of philosophy.[115] Rather, Cicero is trying to introduce, educate, and form his (Roman) readers in "Greek teachings" (*graeces institutiones*).[116] Forced by a hostile political environment to abdicate his public station, Cicero serves the common good by translating and making available the riches of Greek philosophy for his fellow citizens. He believes he has done this in an exemplary fashion, but he has also done it with hopes that others might follow in his footsteps, that others might produce *Latin* philosophy as he has done.[117] This is exactly the kind of thing Lactantius has in mind. Lactantius, with references and allusions to Cicero's philosophical project, is positioning himself and his work as a Ciceronian literary endeavor designed to translate and make available "truth" for those who only knew partially or imperfectly before. And, like Cicero, as confident as he is in the quality of his work, he is also intending to inspire imitators who will write more of the same kind of texts in the future—this purpose is especially obvious in book five of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*.

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[114] Pierre Monat, *Institutes Divines,* SC 326 (Paris: Cerf, 1986) 34n2. Monat gives credit to M. Testard who identified Lactantius' use of Cicero's pun. "Elle attire l'attention our le jeu de mots *otium/negotium*, que Lactance reprend á Cicéron en se souvenant précisément de ce passage."

[115] Cicero, *De divinatione* 2.1-7; Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.6-9. Though the personal consolation motivation is also mentioned by Cicero, since the project follows on the heels of his daughter's death. Cicero, *On Old Age. On Friendship. On Divination*, trans. W.A. Falconer, LCL 154 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923)

[116] *De natura deorum* 1.8 (ET LCL 268, 10-11).

[117] Ibid. 1.7-8.

Divinarum institutionum libri VII as Translation

I have chosen the word "translator" to bring out the way Lactantius is associating himself with Cicero, and more generally how he is conceiving of his project and its significance both in the present and also the future. Cicero literally and figuratively translates the Greek philosophical tradition into a new medium. He also condenses it and presents it systematically through a series of treatises. Lactantius similarly is a "translator" but of *veritas Dei* (not Greek philosophy) insofar as this truth is concealed in rough and obscure texts.[118] Jonathan Z. Smith's notion of translation might illuminate what Lactantius is up to here.[119] Explanation of the unknown or different is "at heart, an act of translation" that redescribes according to the categories and language of the "public" for whom the translation is being made.[120] The translation, according to Smith, is always corrigible and provisional. In other words, it is always in need of supplementation and continuation: a good translator is hoping for more translators to attend to the same subject in the future. In this sense, both Cicero and Lactantius are like the scholar who seeks to make available in one discourse (familiar and primary for their respective audiences) the content of another (strange or unknown), even if the "translation" is only from one kind of Latin to another. This sheds light on some otherwise puzzling moments in *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* such as when he designates Scripture as "common" and "simple" (5.1.15), or when he describes of Peter,

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[118] *DI* 1.1.7; 5.1.15.

[119] This is an important and regularly invoked concept for Smith; see "When the Chips are Down," in *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 30-31.

[120] Ibid. "The Topography of the Sacred," 105-106.

Paul, and the other disciples as "uneducated" (5.3.1).[121] The current form of divine truth is strange and alien to the educated (*docti*).[122] It is in need of translation so as to be intelligible. Scripture is in need of eloquent and educated translators so as to be made available for those who otherwise cannot hear it.[123] The work of these translators is thoroughly described in book five, but we can already see based on what I've shown here the way Lactantius is conceptualizing his work, his assumptions about his predecessors, and his aspirations for future translators. He is creating a project of translation that renders truth into a medium that will be comprehensible to the educated and, as I have suggested, is somethings that envisions or hopes for future translators.

In Antonie Wlosok's language, Lactantius project of translation in *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* is addressing the "das Bildungsproblem" (the education problem). Translation, and Lactantius' effecting of the persona of a translator, help render more clearly what he is doing and why. Lactantius' work is designed to be paradigmatic and looks to the formation and education of its readers for their own, future translations.

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[121] *DI* 5.1.15 (Heck and Wlosok, 439; ET TTH 40, 283) and 5.3.1 (Heck and Wlosok, 445; ET TTH 40, 286): *communis*, *simplex, rudis.*

[122] There will be more on the educated (*docti*) vs the uneducated (*indocti*) below.

[123] Talal Asad, "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Anthropology," in *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 171-199, provides an interesting insight that is related to what I have suggested here. Ideally, a translation would attend to the *intentio* of the original text and would "harmonize" with it. For this reason, it could be rendered as a "dramatic performance, the execution of a dance, or the playing of a piece of music" (193). However, the genre restrictions on social scientific translation of cultures makes what is translated part of "social science" rather than "a part of our living heritage." Asad is implying that translation causes its subject to inhabit and "become part of" the genre in which it is rendered. From this perspective, one could suggest that Lactantius is here making "divine truth" a part of the Latin literary canon.

The Ciceronian project Lactantius is imagining fits neatly with his choice of *institutiones* as a genre designation. The comparison with *institutiones civilis iuris* is designed to introduce the allusion to *De legibus*, but "institutes of civil law" are not meant to provide an overarching point of reference. Even a cursory comparison of existing *Institutiones civilis iuris* (such as Gaius or any of those contained in the Digest) reveal an entirely different kind of text from the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. Instead, Lactantius is telling us something about the import of his text. The *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are designed to introduce the "divine" fundamentals and, as will become particularly clear in 5.1-4, grant imitators a model and heritage.

Programmatic Statement: *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* 1.1

In addition to weaving together many themes and topics important for his presentation, the first chapter of the first book of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* also introduces several important elements for my interpretation of Lactantius. Here Lactantius begins to suggest that his text is primarily designed for the highly educated. He also claims that there has been a lack of adequate Christian intellectuals who are able to sufficiently present the truth in an adequate way. Finally, he begins to spell out the pedagogical aspirations of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*.

Men Who Tried and Failed: The Origin of Truth and the Need for "Champions"

The beginning of Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* (1.1) succinctly introduces most of his main themes, aims, and literary ambitions. He begins,

> In the days when men of outstanding ability made a serious commitment to learning, they dropped every activity both public and private and devoted all the

> effort they could spend on it to the search for truth. They thought it far more glorious to investigate and understand the essence of things human and divine than to concentrate on piling up wealth and accumulating honours. Those are fragile and earthly aims, and concern only the physical self, and so they cannot make anyone a more honest or a more just person. These men certainly deserved their acquaintance with truth: their desire to know it was so strong that they wanted to put it before all else; some abandoned all they had and renounced every pleasure, as is agreed, in order to strip themselves bare and follow virtue pure and simple. The very word virtue and the power of it had so much weight with them that in their judgment it contained in itself the prize of the supreme good.[124]

Lactantius opens by mentioning men of past ages with "great and excelling character" (*magno et excellenti ingenio*) who committed themselves entirely to the search for "truth" (*veritas*) (1.1.1). They seemed to make a good start because they renounced "pleasure" (*voluptas*) and sought "virtue" (*virtus*) believing the latter to lead to "the supreme good" (s*ummum bonum*; 1.1.4). These men, as Lactantius characterizes them, are of the highest caliber and spared no effort in their attempt to achieve virtue and learn the truth. But their efforts and intentions were in vain. Lactantius continues,

> But they did not achieve their desire; they wasted their effort along with their energy, because truth (which is a secret of God most high, the creator of all things) cannot be grasped by the intelligence and the senses that serve it: there would otherwise be no difference between God and humanity if the planning and thinking of God's eternal greatness could be attained by human thought. As it is impossible for divine thinking to become known to man by his own efforts, so God has not allowed man in his search for the light of wisdom to go astray any longer, wandering in inescapable darkness with nothing to show for his toil: eventually he opened man's eyes and made him a gift of the acquisition of truth,

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[124] *DI* 1.1.1-4 (Heck and Wlosok, 1-2; ET TTH 40, 57). *Magno et excellenti ingenio uiri, cum se doctrinae penitus dedissent, quidquid laboris poterat impendi, contemptis omnibus et priuatis et publicis actionibus, ad inquirendae ueritatis studium contulerunt; existimantes multo esse praeclarius humanarum diuinarumque rerum inuestigare ac scire rationem, quam aut struendis opibus, aut cumulandis honoribus inhaerere. Quibus rebus, quoniam fragiles terrenaeque sunt et ad solius corporis pertinent cultum, nemo melior, nemo iustior effici potest. Erant illi quidem ueritatis cognitione dignissimi, quam scire tantopere cupiuerunt; atque ita, ut eam rebus omnibus arteponerent. Nam et abiecisse quosdam res familiares suas, et renuntiasse uniuersis uoluptatibus constat, ut solam nudamque ueritatem nudi expeditique sequerentur: tantumque apud eos ueritatis nomen et auctoritas ualuit, ut in ipsa esse summi boni praemium praedicarent.*

> first to demonstrate that human wisdom is non-existent, and then to show the errant wanderer the path to immortality.[125]

Despite their worthy effort, these men failed because truth can only be a divine gift—if it could be discovered and comprehended by human ingenuity then there would be "no difference between God and humanity" (1.1.5-6). The most men of the past were able to achieve fell far short of the goals they set for themselves. As Lactantius describes it here, this failure is not a failure of effort but of capacity. The "men of great and excelling character" could never reach their goal because there is a fundamental, providentially arranged difference between God and humanity. Humans need to have their "eyes opened" by God, from whom alone wisdom can come. However, Lactantius suggests, something has changed. In the current era, God has opened the eyes of humanity and given them truth. In this new era, Lactantius can succeed where the men of old failed by demonstrating a different and effective way of comprehending the truth.

Men Who Succeed: How the Truth Should Be Presented

Lactantius continues,

> Few take advantage of this bountiful gift from heaven; the truth is wrapped in obscurity. Learned men (*doctis*) despise it since it lacks suitable champions (*assertoribus*) while the ignorant (*indoctis*) hate it because of its natural austerity, something that human nature, prone to vice, cannot bear. In all the virtues there is an admixture of bitterness, whereas the vices are spiced with pleasure, and so people are put off by the one and beguiled by the other, and they plunge headlong into the embrace of evil rather than good because they are misled by a phantom of

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[125] *DI* 1.1.5-6 (Heck and Wlosok, 2; TTH 40, 57). *Sed neque adepti sunt id quod uolebant: et operam simul atque industriam perdiderunt; quia ueritas, id est arcanum summi Dei, qui fecit omnia, ingenio ac propriis non potest sensibus comprehendi: alioqui nihil inter Deum hominemque distaret, si consilia et dispositiones illius maiestatis aeternae cogitatio assequeretur humana. Quod quia fieri non potuit, ut homini per seipsum ratio diuina innotesceret, non est passus hominem Deus lumen sapientiae requirentem diutius errare, ac sine ullo laboris effectu uagari per tenebras inextricabiles; aperuit oculos eius aliquando, et notionem ueritatis munus suum fecit: ut et humanam sapientiam nullam esse monstraret, et erranti ac uago uiam consequendae immortalitatis ostenderet.*

> good. In this confusion I am sure that help is needed if the learned (*docti*) are to be directed towards true wisdom (*sapientiam*) and the ignorant (*indocti*) towards true religion (*religionem*), and this is a much better calling, more useful and more worth boasting of, than the profession of rhetoric, in which we spent so long training young people not to be good but to be cleverly bad. We shall do much better now to discuss the precepts of heaven, which we can use to aim people's minds towards the worship of the true greatness; offering knowledge of eloquence does not deserve as well of mankind as teaching the life of duty and innocence. That is why in Greece philosophers were held in greater esteem than orators: philosophers were reckoned to be teachers of how to live well, and that is a much more distinguished business, because speaking well concerns few, but living well concerns everyone. Nevertheless, the practice of pleading imaginary cases has helped me considerably: I can now use my plentiful command of rhetoric to plead the cause of truth (*veritatis*) to its end. Though truth can be defended, as many often have defended it, without eloquence, nevertheless it ought to be illuminated and indeed maintained with clarity and splendour of utterance, so that it floods into people's minds more forcefully, with the equipment of its own power and religion and its own brilliance of rhetoric. It is upon religion and things divine, therefore, that our argument will focus.[126]

Unlike in ages past, truth has been given by God, but despite the availability of this "gift from heaven" "few take advantage" of it. This is because there is a lack of "suitable champions" (*assertores*). By this, Lactantius seems to have in mind a person who would somehow present the wisdom of God to the many who can't or won't receive it. At this stage in Lactantius' presentation it is evident that he is implicitly positioning

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[126] *DI* 1.1.7-10 (Heck and Wlosok, 2-3; ET TTH 40, 57-58). *Verum quoniam pauci utuntur hoc coelesti beneficio ac munere; quod obuoluta in obscuro ueritas latet; eaque uel contemptui doctis est, quia idoneis assertoribus eget, uel odio indoctis, ob insitam sibi austeritatem, quam natura hominum procliuis in uitia pati non potest (nam quia uirtutibus amaritudo permixta est, uitia uero uoluptate condita sunt; illa offensi, hac deliniti feruntur in praeceps, et bonorum specie falsi, mala pro bonis amplectuntur) succurrendum esse his erroribus credidi: ut et docti ad ueram sapientiam dirigantur et indocti ad ueram religionem. Quae professio multo melior, utilior, gloriosior putanda est, quam illa oratoria, in qua diu uersati, non ad uirtutem, sed plane ad argutam malitiam iuuenes erudiebamus. Multo quippe nunc rectius de praeceptis coelestibus disseremus, quibus ad cultum uerae maiestatis mentes hominum instruere possimus: nec tam de rebus humanis bene meretur, qui scientiam bene dicendi affert, quam qui pie atque innocenter docet uiuere: idcirco apud Graecos maiore in gloria philosophi, quam oratores fuerunt. Illi enim recte uiuendi doctores sunt existimati: quod est longe praestabilius: quoniam bene dicere, ad paucos pertinet, bene autem uiuere ad omnes. Multum tamen nobis exercitatio illa fictarum litium contulit, ut nunc maiore copia et facultate dicendi causam ueritatis peroremus: quae licet possit sine eloquentia defendi, ut est a multis saepe defensa; tamen claritate ac nitore sermonis illustranda, et quodammodo disserenda est, ut potentius in animos influat et ui sua instructa, et luce orationis ornata. De religione itaque nobis rebusque diuinis instituitur disputatio.*

himself as this "suitable champion." He will use the power of rhetoric in which he is trained and learned, as well as his background in teaching other rhetors, to allow the truth to "flood into people's minds more forcefully." In other words, Lactantius will present this divine gift in such a way that the "learned" (*docti*) can accept it because he will wrap it in rhetorical and literary sophistication (1.1.7-10).[127] Lactantius is more specific about what this presentation will entail in the following sentences,

> Some of the greatest orators, veterans of their art, have emerged from their life's work of pleading to turn in the end to philosophy, convinced it was the truest relief from toil that they could have: if torment of mind was all they got in searching for what could not be found (peace of mind seems not in fact to have been the aim of their search so much as trouble, and a much more irksome trouble than they were in to start with), then I shall be all the more right to aim for that haven of total sureness which is wisdom (*sapientia*), the wisdom that is pious, true and of God, in which everything is readily uttered, sweet to hear, easy to grasp and honourable to do.[128]

Lactantius' mention of the "greatest orators" who pursued "philosophy" is meant to be an allusion to Cicero, a point about which I'll have more to say shortly. However, leaving aside the allusion, Lactantius in this passage is constructing his image as one like the great men he previously described in 1.1.1, except unlike them he has access to pure, certain, and clear wisdom. It is only in book 3 when the brief mention of "more irksome

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[127] Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.5 (LCL 268, 6-7), mentions the importance of his topic for both *docti* and *indocti* as Lactantius does in the passage above. Moreover, also like in Cicero's *De natura deorum*, Lactantius' effort hereafter is implicitly, and occasionally explicitly, intended for *docti* alone. There will be more on this below.

[128] *DI* 1.1.11-12 (Heck and Wlosok, 3-4; ET TTH 40, 58-59). *Nam si quidam maximi oratores professionis suae quasi ueterani, decursis operibus actionum suarum, postremo se philosophiae tradiderunt, eamque sibi requiem laborum iustissimam putauerunt; si animos suos in earum rerum, quae inueniri non poterant, inquisitione torquerent, ut non tam otium sibi, quam negotium quaesisse uideantur, et quidem multo molestius, quam in quo fuerant ante uersati: quanto iustius ego me ad illam piam, ueram, diuinamque sapientiam, quasi ad portum aliquem tutissimum conferam, in qua omnia dictu prona sunt, auditu suauia, facilia intellectu, honesta susceptu?*

trouble" for those who eagerly pursued philosophy is fully developed. It is immediately following this that Lactantius compares his text to "institutes of civil law" (1.1.12), an allusion to Cicero's *De legibus*, which I already discussed in the previous section. After this, in a brief passage which I will pass over, he provides a dedication to Constantine and a further comment on inadequate guides to wisdom (1.1.13-18), then continues,

> We, however, who have received the sacrament of true religion (*religionis*) have the truth by divine revelation, and we follow God as the teacher of wisdom and the guide to virtue (*virtutis*): we therefore invite all people to the food of heaven with no distinction of age or sex; there is no sweeter food for the soul than the knowledge of truth. We have devoted seven volumes to asserting and illuminating this truth; it could involve an almost endless, an infinite labour, since anyone wanting to develop the discussion to the full would find such lavish abundance of material that his volumes would have no number and his flow of words no stop. We, however, shall manage it all in short form, because what we have to offer is clear and lucid (so much so, indeed, that it is surprising people found the truth so difficult to see, especially those with a reputation for intelligence), and our aim is anyway one of instruction (*instituere*), of redirecting people from the error that entangles them on to a straighter path.[129]

At its heart, Lactantius' project entails uniting what has become inappropriately dispersed and separated: "wisdom" (*sapientia*; 1.1.12) and "religion" (*religio*; 1.1.19). This will amount to a restoration of "virtue" (*virtus*; 1.1.11-12) and "justice" (*iustitia*; 1.1.19). These are the major themes of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. Moreover, he frames his work as a concise and teleologically focused text. The Institutes are

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[129] *DI* 1.1.19-21 (Heck and Wlosok, 5; ET TTH 40, 59-60, modified). *Nobis autem, qui sacramentum uerae religionis accepimus, cum sit ueritas reuelata diuinitus, cum doctorem sapientiae ducemque uirtutis Deum sequamur, uniuersos sine ullo discrimine uel sexus uel aetatis ad coeleste pabulum conuocamus. Nullus enim suauior animo cibus est, quam cognitio ueritatis, cui asserendae atque illustrandae septem uolumina destinauimus, quamuis ea res infiniti pene sit operis et immensi: ut si quis haec dilatare atque exequi plenissime uelit, tanta illi rerum copia exuberet, ut nec libri modum nec finem reperiat oratio. Sed nos idcirco breuiter omnia colligemus; quod ea quae allaturi sumus, tam clara sunt et lucida, ut magis mirum esse uideatur tam obscuram uideri hominibus ueritatem, et iis praecipue, qui sapientes uulgo putantur, uel quod tantummodo instituendi nobis homines erunt, hoc est, ab errore quo sunt implicati, ad rectiorem uiam reuocandi.*

designed to clear up confusion, eliminate error, and teach those who do not know it yet, or at least don't know it sufficiently, about the truth of God. At this stage, Lactantius has described the problem that he is seeking to address and positioned himself with reference to inadequate, previous authors of Christian apologetic writing, or, to use his language, educated "champions" (*assertores*) of the truth. Moreover, in these opening passages, Lactantius describes himself as uniquely positioned to address this problem. In book five, Lactantius will expand and specify exactly how he is uniquely positioned. He will explicitly describe his work as paradigmatic and articulate the goal of producing future producers of Christian apologetic writing who will follow in his footsteps.

In essence, this first section encapsulates, or at least anticipates, the entirety of his seven book tome. Lactantius is fundamentally concerned with correcting misunderstandings and drawing (back) together wisdom (*sapientia*) and religion (*religio*)—the subject of his first three books.[130] The consequence of this will be a restoration of justice (*iustitia*) and virtue (*virtus*) that will lead to the supreme good (*summum bonum*) of eternal life—the subject of his final four books.[131]

Lactantius will prioritize oracular sources because they are directly from God, "the truth by divine revelation," rather than the musings of philosopher and poets, though he will still make liberal use of numerous sources (1.1.19). The task could become

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[130] And he repeats this goal in *DI* 1.1.25 (Heck and Wlosok, 6; ET TTH 40, 60) as he begins to address the topic of book 1, writing, "I can summarize this knowledge as follows: no religion should be adopted without wisdom in it, and no wisdom should be accepted without religion in it."

[131] There are a few different ways the institutes can be organized that are mentioned by Lactantius. Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*," 221.

"infinite," one in which the "lavish abundance of material" would result in an unending number of books and words (1.1.20).[132] So Lactantius restricts himself to a mere seven books so as "to instruct" (*instituere*) people into truth and away from error (1.1.20-21).

Docti vs. *Indocti*

Before moving to book five, I need to emphasize further exactly what sort of audience Lactantius seems to envision in this text—an issue only briefly touched on above.[133] Lactantius describes his project as aimed at a particular type of person: the learned (*docti*). As mentioned above, the assumed audience of Lactantius' text is clearly those who have at least some degree of familiarity with the Latin canon of Lactantius' day.[134] This is obvious from the quotations and allusions throughout the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. However, what is less often noted is the rhetorical significance of naming this audience, particularly in 1.1 and, as we will see, in 5.1-4. In 1.1.7, Lactantius introduces a contrast between *docti* and *indocti* both of whom are in need of enlightenment. He writes, "Either it (truth) is held in contempt by the learned (*docti*) because it lacks suitable advocates or is held in hatred by the unlearned (*indocti*) because of its natural austerity."[135] Assistance is needed "so that the learned (*docti*) are directed to

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[132] Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 1.Pr.25. Quintillian, *The Orator's Education,* ed. and trans. Donald A. Russell, vol. 1, LCL 124 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[133] See section above, "Men Who Succeed: How the Truth Should Be Presented," on *DI* 1.1.7-10.

[134] Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 80; Wloslok, "Zur lateinischen Apologetik der constantinischen Zeit," 135.

[135] *DI* 1.1.7 (Heck and Wlosok, 2, my translation). *Vel contemptui doctis est, quia idoneis adsertoribus eget, vel odio indoctis ob insitam sibi austeritatem.* The word *adsertor* that I have translated "advocate" is Lactantius' designation for educated and rhetorically skilled spokespeople (e.g. 1.3.21).

true wisdom (*sapientia*) and the unlearned (*indocti*) to true religion (*religio*)."[136] This statement of universal need—both the educated and uneducated are in need of divine assistance—should not occlude the obvious goal and purpose Lactantius suggests in the following sentences. He notes that his previous occupation in *oratoria*, in which he taught young men to argue in court (regardless of the truth of what they were defending), pales in comparison to being an advocate for true religion and wisdom (1.1.8-10).[137] In other words, Lactantius plans to do something about the absence of "advocates" (1.1.7) that has made truth so impalpable to the "learned." To be sure, Lactantius will be one of these advocates. But just as he, as a rhetorician, taught aspiring rhetors, now he, as an advocate, will teach aspiring advocates. The programmatic statement of book five develops this further.

Programmatic Statement: *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* 5.1-4

As mentioned above, Lactantius' organization and focus in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* is quite clear and explicit. The introduction of each book provides a summary of what has come before and a reminder of what is to come.[138] Additionally, each book begins by reflecting on the the topic dealt with in the current book and (save the final two) by addressing Constantine.[139] In book five, Lactantius opens with this

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[136] Ibid. (Heck and Wlosok, 2, my translation). *Ut et docti ad veram sapientiam dirigantur et indocti ad veram religionem.*

[137] Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 208-214, on the social significance of oratory in Roman education.

[138] Edwards, "The Flowering of Latin Apologetic," 204.

[139] And even in the last two books Constantine is addressed just not in the beginning: 6.3.1 and 7.26.10.

address to Constantine, but does not immediately mention the plan of the current book or its topic, *iustitia*. Instead, Lactantius begins with what Bowen and Garnsey say is "tantamount to a re-introduction to the whole work."[140] It should be noted that this is not an entirely arbitrary moment to provide a "re-introduction" to the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. If one assumes the seven-book plan and assumes the intent to write material that would speak to the plan of the entire work around the middle of the composition, Lactantius had only the beginnings of book four and book five as candidates. Relatedly, Heck mentions the chronological appropriateness of this introduction: having described the origin of falsehood (books one-three) and the life of Christ (book four), both sections concerned with the past, he begins in book five to discuss the present and future.[141]

Heck's suggestion might open up a further reason: Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* up until now have been generally (with some digressions) about refuting and undermining non-Christian religious practices and anti-Christian arguments. Lactantius has been providing defense (Lat. *defensio*), but beginning in book five he pivots to commending teaching (*institutio*) of true religion. In other words, an important purpose for *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* (to both defend and teach) is emphasized by Lactantius' decision to reintroduce his purpose when he shifts from one to the other. In this way, *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* is much like Augustine's later *City of God*

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[140] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes,* 281n1.

[141] Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*." 222.

11.1 in which he provides a kind of re-introduction when shifting from replying "to the enemies of this Holy City" to discussing its origin and goal.[142]

Moreover, the second opening is not mere re-statement, something written only as an aid for readers or as a product of Lactantius' penchant for wordiness. Lactantius is not merely reiterating what he said in 1.1, nor is he contradicting what came earlier in the text. Instead, 5.1-4 reenforces and expands on what came earlier. Specifically, as I will demonstrate, Lactantius' further explication of his ideal audience and his evaluation of his predecessors creates a literary landscape populated with various *exempla* designed to produce a new kind of *docti*.

For Whom: *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*

Lactantius opens by speaking about, and to, a person "out of those inept with religions" (*ex istis inepte religiosis*) who will rankle at his composition thus far (5.1.1). There is a marked ambivalence about exactly what this might accomplish amongst those who are already critics of Christianity. On the one hand, Lactantius pleads with them to first listen to the entire argument before condemning what he has to say (5.1.2).[143] These people Lactantius hopes to "engage and debate" (*congredi et disputare*) so that he might lead them "from an absurd opinion" (*ab inepta persuasione*) "to the truth" (*ad veritatem*) (5.1.8).[144] On the other hand, these people "more easily imbibe the blood of the just than

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[142] Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans,* 11.1 (ET Tyson, 449-450).

[143] *DI* 5.1.2 (Heck and Wlosok, 435-436). *Ab hoc tamen si fieri potest humanitatis iure postulamus, ut non prius damnet quam universa cognoverit.*

[144] *DI* 5.1.7 (Heck and Wlosok, 437, my translation). *Cum talibus nunc congredi et disputare contendimus, hos ad veritatem ab inepta persuasione traducere.*

their words" (Ibid.).[145] They are "stubborn" (5.1.3)[146] and because of this "debate is annulled" (5.1.5).[147] The intractable character of Lactantius' intended audience leads him to ask, "So: shall we be wasting our time (5.1.9)?"[148] Unsurprisingly (four books into the composition), Lactantius still sees a use in his literary project of answering these opponents and teaching Christianity because at the very least he might strengthen Christians, particularly those who are unstable or uncertain.[149] Lactantius writes,

> Most people waver, especially those of any attainment in literature. Philosophers, orators, and poets are all pernicious for the ease with which they ensnare incautious souls in beguiling prose and the nice modulations of poetical flow. They are honey, hiding poison, and that is why I wish to combine wisdom with religion, so that all that empty learning is no obstruction to enthusiasts, and the scholarship of letters not only does no harm to religion and justice but actually assists them as far as possible – provided the scholar of literature becomes more learned in the virtues and wiser in the truth. Besides, even if it benefits no one else, it will benefit me: it will bring joy to my conscience, and my mind will be

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[145] Ibid. (Heck and Wlosok, 437, my translation). *Qui sanguinem facilius hauserint quam verba iustorum.*

[146] "Stubborn" is Latin *pertinacia*. In this same passage, Lactantius' opponents are also accused of *superstitio* (5.1.1). Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes,* 279n2, referring to the epistles of Pliny the Younger to Trajan, claim *pertinacia* and *superstitio* were both stock accusations against Christians.

[147] *DI* 5.1.5 (Heck and Wlosok, 436, my translation), *Disceptatione sublata;* Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*," 222-223 notes the chilling seriousness of the combat language here in light of the persecution occurring during its time of composition. Lactantius is "blutiger Ernst."

[148] *DI* 5.1.9 (Heck and Wlosok, 437-438). *Quid igitur? Operamne perdemus?*

[149] Ibid. *Nostros tamen confirmabimus, quorum non est stabilis ac solidis radicibus fundata et fixa sententia*.

> glad to be working in the light of truth, which is the food of the soul and steeped in unbelievable delight.[150]

Lactantius claims that people who may "waver" tend to be those who have some knowledge of "literature." In other words, one of Lactantius' chief imagined audiences is not the paradigmatic outsider, but also a well-educated and widely read person who may be sympathetic to Christianity or identify as a Christian themselves but is prone to "waver." At least one pertinent question arise from what Lactantius says here and how we understand "identity." What is meant by "Christian" for Lactantius' imagined audience and in what sense is that salient? Perhaps they are someone who, at least to a degree or on certain points, finds anti-Christian arguments compelling. Or, perhaps, they are someone who might be prone to acquiesce to the requirements of one of Diocletians edicts or some similar piece of legislation: offering sacrifice to the gods, handing over Christian texts for destruction. On the model of identity commended by Éric Rebillard, someone's identity as a Christian is one of several identities that constitute the individual and different contexts and events can "activate" one or more latent identities.[151] Mattias Gassman, in conversation with Rebillard, notes how Rebillard's model of identity and his analysis of

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[150] *DI* 5.1.9-12 (Heck and Wlosok, 437-438; ET TTH 40, 282) *Nutant enim plurimi ac maxime qui litterarum aliquid attigerunt. Nam et in hoc philosophi et oratores et poetae pernisciosi sunt, quod incautos animos facile inretire possunt suavitate sermonis et carminum dulci modulatione currentium. Mella sunt haec venena tegentia. Ob eamque causam volui sapientiam cum religione coniungere, ne quid studiosis inanis illa doctrina possit officere, ut iam scientia litterarum non modo nihil noceat religioni atque iustitiae, sed etiam prosit quam plurimum, si is qui eas didicerit, sit in virtutibus instructior, in veritatis sapientior. Praeterea etiamsi nulli alii, nobis certe proderit: delectabit se conscientia, gaudebitque mens in veritatis se luce versari, quod est animae pabulum incredibili quadam iucunditate perfusum.* I have chosen to stay closer to the Latin and bring out the valence of agency in Lactantius' language by modififying Bowen and Garnsey's "philosophy, oratory, and poetry" for *philosophi et oratores et poetae* as "philosophers, orators, and poets."

[151] Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity: North Africa, 200-450 CE* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 1-6.

Christian texts are useful in recovering otherwise occluded, ancient perspectives.[152] However, he contends that Rebillard notion of identities hides the "religious freight" of "Graeco-Roman civic life" and that Rebillard's notion, at least implicitly, operates with an overdetermined separation of the "religious" and the "secular.[153] Nevertheless, Rebillard's careful discussion of "identities" what he calls "the internal plurality of the individual" may perhaps help us glimpse the understanding of Lactantius' "waverer." They may not necessarily be someone who "wavers" in being a Christian *per se*, but someone who "wavers" in being a Christian in the way Lactantius would consider legitimate or sufficient. Lactantius is thus arguing for a more integrated configuration of identities in which "Christian" is in some way more salient or dominant than it would otherwise would be for some of his readers.

Regardless, the "waverer" on Lactantius' view is susceptible to the seductive charm of "philosophers, orators, and poets" (5.1.10). In part, Lactantius is here echoing a common classical anxiety about rhetoric: eloquence can be used to make falsehood appear convincing and palatable.[154] Lactantius implies that up until his writing those composing effective rhetoric and literature normally composed "honey" (*mella*) that hid "poison" (*venena*) (5.1.11). Lactantius wants to end this noxious legacy and to "combine wisdom and religion" so that the elegance of rhetoric and literary finesse will provide no

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[152] Gassman, *Worshippers of the Gods,* 12-13.

[153] Ibid., 13.

[154] Plato, *Gorgias* 464c-465d; *Phaedrus* 257c-279c; Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.936, 4.11; Plato, *Lysis. Symposium. Phaedrus,* ed. and trans. Christopher Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy, LCL 166 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022); Plato, *On the Nature of Things,* trans. W.H.D. Rouse, LCL 181 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924); Edwards, "The Flowering of Latin Apologetic," 205.

hindrance to comprehending the truth. And if he fails to convince even these people, he avers that the writing of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* will at least "bring joy" to his "conscience" and that his "mind" will "be glad" (5.1.12).[155] In other words, the writing will be salutary for at least someone, even if that is only Lactantius himself.[156] Even here, we see echoes of Cicero's writings. Lactantius' elaboration of purpose and goal parallels Cicero's in *De natura deorum* 1.6-9. Both describe making available wisdom to those for whom it would otherwise be unavailable: though one translates into "sweet" rhetoric and the other into Latin. Both mention convincing those who are critical of the project as a whole, those who are in a wavering or unstable place, and the consolation that at least the act of composing will be beneficial to the writer himself. Lactantius' Ciceronian translation project is still in full view. He continues,

> This is no case for despair, of course; perhaps 'we sing not to the deaf'. Things are not so bad—-or else unclean spirits have more licence than the holy spirit—-that sound minds do not exist to take pleasure in truth and to see and follow the right path once it is shown them. Simply rim the cup of wisdom with honey from heaven, so that bitter medicine can be drunk unawares with no hostile reaction: the initial sweetness beguiles, and the harshness of the bitter flavour is concealed beneath the covering of sugar. This is the principal reason why holy scripture

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[155] *DI* 5.1.13 (Heck and Wlosok, 438; ET TTH 30, 282). *Praeterea, etiamsi nulli alii, nobis certe proderit: delectabit se conscientia, gaudebitque mens in veritatis se luce versari, quod est animae pabulum incredibili, quadam iucunditate perfusum.* Cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.9.

[156] Cf. Cicero, *De Divinatione* 2.1-2; *De natura deorum* I.4; Cicero, *On Old Age. On Friendship. On Divination,* trans. W.A. Falconer, LCL 154 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923).

> lacks the trust of the wise, both scholars and rulers of this age: its prophets have spoken to suit normal people, in plain and ordinary language.[157]

Ultimately Lactantius is not so pessimistic about the success of his project (5.1.13). Returning to the image of honey, Lactantius claims that the sometimes hard to swallow "medicine" of the truth can be made desirable by "rimming the cup" with "honey from heaven" (5.1.14). Indeed, this incongruity of literary sophistication and truth is the fundamental reason "both scholars and rulers of this age" (*et doctos et principes huius saeculi*) do not know the truth of Christian scripture (5.1.15). Instead, the "prophets" were intending to speak in the diction of "normal people." The divine wisdom, given by God because humans were constitutionally incapable of finding the truth no matter how hard they tried, was transmitted through the rough and common words of the common person. Lactantius likely does not mean this to be a criticism of the prophets and their words—the words are well fitted to *indocti*. The blame thus lies less with the "plain and ordinary language" and more with its interpreters and *their* texts, which have been entirely or partially deficient in learning (5.1.18).[158]

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[157] *DI* 5.1.13-15 (Heck and Wlosok, 438-439; ET TTH 40, 282-283). *Verum non est desperandum, fortasse 'non canimus surdis'. Nec enim tam in malo statu res est—aut plus impuris spiritibus quam sancto licet—ut desint sanae mentes, quibus et veritas placeat et monstratum sibi rectum iter et videant et sequantur. Circumlinatur modo poculum caelesti melle sapientiae, ut possint ab imprudentibus amara remedia sine ulla offensione potari, dum inliciens prima dulcedo acerbitatem saporis asperi sub praetexto suavitatis occultat. Nam haec in primis causa est cur apud sapientes et doctos et principes huius saeculi scriptura sancta dide careat, quod prophetae communi ac simplici sermone ut ad populum sunt locuti.*

[158] *DI* 5.1.18 (Wlosok and Heck, 439; ET TTH 40, 283). "Hence their disbelief in God's word, because it wears no make-up, and the disbelief extends to its interpreters, because they are not educated men, or only slightly so, themselves, and it is exceedingly rare for such people to have good powers of expression." *Non credunt ergo divinis, quia fuco carent, sed ne illis quidem qui ea interpretantur, quia sunt et ipsi aut omnino rudes aut certe parum docti.*

The Heralds of the Past and the Heralds Needed Now

The disdain that the "truth" has suffered amongst "both the scholars and rulers of this age" is not only the result of a malformed preference for eloquence over substance. Lactantius continues,

> Hence its (eloquence's) contempt for this humble stuff of ours, and its flight from mysteries that seem to oppose it: it (the truth) likes publicity, of course, and looks for crowds to throng around it; wisdom and truth in consequence have no adequate heralds (*idoneis praeconibus*), and those strong with literature who came to their rescue were inadequate to defend them.[159]

Lactantius argues that wisdom and truth have had no "adequate heralds" (*praecones idoneus*) (5.1.21). Even those "strong with literature" were not fit to defend the truth (Ibid.). This is a return to an idea already forcefully asserted in 1.1.7, the lack of suitable advocates, defenders, or teachers of the truth. Lactantius' vocabulary is not entirely consistent for the "adequate herald." In book one he called them *assertor* and here *praeco*, but the referent is the same—Christians with the sophistication and will to represent Christianity adequately. Lactantius is claiming that there is general lack or deficiency amongst Christians of educated people who are able to present, or as I have described it "translate," *veritas Dei* into a form that will be digestible by educated outsiders. However, Lactantius is not satisfied speaking only in general terms. He writes,

> Among those known to me in this capacity, one notable advocate was Minucius Felix. His book, called Octavius, makes plain how he could have been a sufficient advocate for truth if he had devoted himself totally to the subject. Septimius

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[159] *DI* 5.1.20-21 (Heck and Wlosok, 439-440; ET TTH 40, 283, slightly modified). *Ergo haec quasi humilia despicit, arcana tamquam contraria sibi fugit, quippe quae publico gaudeat et multitudinem celebritatemque desideret. eo fit, ut sapientia et ueritas idoneis praeconibus indigeat. et si qui forte litteratorum se ad eam contulerunt, de fensioni eius non suffecerunt.* I have translated *idoneis praeconibus* as "adequate heralds" to match it with earlier uses of Lactantius' Latin and *qui forte litteratorum se* as "those strong with literature" instead of "scholars" as it is in TTH.

> Tertullian also was experienced in every kind of literature, but his eloquence was uneven, and he was rather rough and not at all lucid: even he failed to earn sufficient fame. The only one of real distinction was thus Cyprian: he won himself considerable fame as a professor of rhetoric, and he also wrote a great deal worth admiring for itself. He had an easy talent, a sweet flow of words, and (the greatest of virtues in exposition) he was clear; you could not tell with him whether elegance of language, success in explanation or power of persuasion came first. Beyond a power of words, however, Cyprian cannot go in satisfying those who do not know God's sacred mystery, because what he spoke of is both mystical and prepared for the ears of the faithful alone. The learned of this age who become acquainted with his writings usually mock them. I have heard of one, certainly a man of eloquence, who changed one letter and called him Coprian, on the grounds that he employed on old wives' tales a literary talent that deserved better. If that can happen to a man of some charm with words, what can we think is the fate of those whose prose is thin and ugly, who have never had an ability to persuade in them, or a skill in argumentation, or even a power of plain rebuttal?[160]

In sections 22-28, he names and evaluates those known to him who were "heralds" of truth and wisdom: Minucius Felix, Septimius Tertullian, and Cyprian (5.1.22). Minucius Felix, in the *Octavius*, showed that he could have been a "sufficient advocate for truth" if he had completely committed himself to that pursuit. Tertullian was "experienced in every kind of literature," but he was obscure and lacked rhetorical polish. Because of this, he failed to "earn sufficient fame" (5.1.23). Cyprian is the only one who stands out as imminent and clear (5.1.24). Nevertheless, Cyprian was still vulnerable to

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[160] DI (TTH, 283-284) V.1.22-28 (BSGRT, 440-441) *Ex iis qui mihi noti sunt Minucius Felix non ignobilis inter causidicos loci fuit. Huius liber, cui Octauio titulus est, declarat quam idoneus ueritatis adsertor esse potuisset, si se totum ad id studium contulisset. Septimius quoque Tertullianus fuit omni genere litterarum peritus, sed in eloquendo parum facilis et minus comptus et multum obscurus fuit. Ergo ne hic quidem satis celebritatis inuenit. Unus igitur praecipuus et clarus extitit Cyprianus, quoniam et magnam sibi gloriam ex artis oratoriae professione quaesierat et admodum multa conscripsit in suo genere miranda. Erat enim ingenio facili copioso suaui et, quae sermonis maxima est uirtus, aperto, ut discernere non queas, utrumne ornatior in eloquendo anfelicior in explicando an potentior in persuadendo fuerit. Hic tamen placere ultra uerba sacramentum ignorantibus non potest, quoniam mystica sunt quae locutus est et ad id praeparata, ut a solis fidelibus audiantur. Denique a doctis huius saeculi, quibus forte scripta eius innotuerunt, derideri solet. Audivi ego quendam hominem sane disertum, qui eum immutata una littera Coprianum uocaret, quasi quod elegans ingenium et melioribus rebus aptum ad aniles fabulas contulisset. Quodsi accidit hoc ei, cuius eloquentia non insuauis est, quid tandem putemus accidere eis, quorum sermo ieiunus est et ingratus? Qui neque uim persuadendi neque subtilitatem argumentandi neque ullam prorsus acerbitatem ad reuincendum habere potuerunt.* Translation from TTH.

the base insults of Christianity's ruthless critics; one of whom liked to pun on Cyprian's name and call him "Coprian" ("little turd").[161] Lactantius celebrates Cyprian's popularity, eloquence, and powers of lucid persuasion, but finds him wanting because what he spoke about was only designed for the "faithful" (5.1.26). It is for this reason that the "learned of this age" mock him and claim that his rhetorical acumen was wasted on "old wives tales" (5.1.27). Lactantius summarizes the situation:

> Therefore since for us sufficient and skilled instructors are absent, who could vehemently and sharply refute popular errors, who could elegantly and fully defend the whole cause of truth, this very deficiency has provoked certain people, so that they dare to write against truth unknown to them.[162]

So in 5.1 Lactantius has discussed at length who he thinks might benefit from reading the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and what has made the work necessary. With some rhetorical flourish, and a bit of digression, Lactantius argues that his text is best suited for his coreligionists who are "strong with literature," educated readers who would be familiar with the words of "Philosophers, Orators, and Poets." The identification of the *docti* as the intended audience was already made in 1.1, but who those people are and what types of knowledge they will possess is fleshed out in 5.1. The *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are designed for the sophisticated. The issue the

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[161] John McGuckin, "Does Lactantius Denigrate Cyprian?" JTS 30 (1988): 121 gives the translation "little turd." Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes,* 284n12 simply note, "*Kopros* is the Greek word for dung." McGuckin argues that Lactantius' inclusion of this insult is an indirect way of mocking Cyprian—obliquely making the insult himself by putting it in someone else's mouth. I read Lactantius as being more interested in illustrating the ruthlessness and pettiness of Christianity's critics. That is why he sarcastically introduces this critic as "certainly a man of eloquence." Lactantius' praise of Cyprian is real even if it is qualified.

[162] *DI* 5.2.1 (Heck and Wlosok, 441-442; ET TTH 40, 284, modified). *Ergo quia defuerunt apud nos idonei peritique doctores, qui vehementer, qui acriter errores publicos redarguerent, qui causam omnem veritatis ornate copioseque defenderent, provocauit quosdam haec ipsa penuria, ut auderent scribere contra ignotam sibi veritatem.*

institutes are addressing, and by implication Lactantius is addressing, is the lack of suitable "advocates." Up to now truth, originally given in "plain and ordinary language," has been unable to break through to the educated because no one was able to present it with the "honey" of elegant rhetoric. Nevertheless, despite the inadequacy of former Christian writers, Lactantius still thinks it worthwhile to list and thoughtfully evaluate those who, he at least claims, attempted something in the past like what he is attempting now.

More on Previous Authors of Christian Apologetic Writing: How the Work Should be Done

In short order, Lactantius returns to these authors and how his project relates to theirs, but first he mentions some of the critics who have made his work so urgent. Because of this lack of adequate, educated Christian advocates, there was occasion for two unnamed, anti-Christian writers to publish their attacks (5.2.1). Having discussed past advocates for "truth," Lactantius passes quickly by anti-Christian writers of the past and discusses instead "two people" he encountered in Bithynia (5.2.2). One was a "philosopher" the other a "judge" who wrote, as Lactantius reckons it, ignorant nonsense that inspired real violence against Christians. After Lactantius describes the occasion and content of some of their arguments, he returns in 5.4 to a discussion of his task in light of his predecessors. There have been many who have attacked Christians both in Greek and Latin so Lactantius desires to write a text that will refute not only existing accusations but also eliminate the possibility of anyone writing against Christians ever again (5.4.1-2). Lactantius claims that he is writing in such a way that, should they hear his text or one

like it, they will either convert or (at least) be silenced.[163] It is at this point that Lactantius returns to a discussion of his predecessors, and mentions by name the works of Tertullian and Cyprian, works which he will claim form part of the literary pedigree of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* (5.4.3-4).

> A version of this was argued by Tertullian in his book called *Apologeticus*; even so, because there is a difference between merely responding to attacks, when defence (*in defensione*) and denial is the sole form, and teaching (*instituere*) something new, which is what I am doing, when the full doctrinal content has to be in place, I have not shrunk from the labour of developing in full material which Cyprian failed to develop in the speech where he tried to refute Demetrianus 'barking and bawling', as he put it, 'against the truth.' He failed to exploit the material as he should have done, because Demetrianus should have been rebutted with arguments and reason, and not with quotations from scripture, which he simply saw as an empty, concocted fabrication. Since he was arguing against a man ignorant of the truth, Cyprian should have kept his scriptural texts back a while; he should have given the fellow some elementary education (*a principio*), as if he were a student (*rudem*), showing him the light (*lucis*) gradually (*paulatim*) so he would not be blinded by exposure to all the light at once (*ne toto lumine obiecto caligaret*). Children (*infans*) cannot take food in all its strength when they have tender stomachs (*ob stomachi teneritudinem*); they are nourished instead with milk, which is liquid and bland, until their powers develop and they can feed on stronger stuff: so Demetrianus should first have been offered human testimony (*humana testimonia*) since he could not yet take God's evidence, the evidence of philosophers and historians, that is; then he could be refuted as far as possible by authorities which he himself acknowledged. Cyprian failed to do this because he

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[163] *DI* 5.4.2 (Heck and Wlosok, 451; ET TTH 40, 289). "They have only to give ear, and I can ensure that all who think like that will either adopt what they previously condemned or (which is much the same) will eventually leave off their scorn and derision." *Praebeant modo aures; efficiam profecto ut quicumque ista cognoverit, aut suscipiat quod ante damnavit aut, quod est proximum, deridere aliquando desistat.* It is largely based on this line that Mark Edwards draws his conclusion that Lactantius hopes to be the last in a line of people writing in Latin on behalf of Christianity "The Flowering of Latin Apologetic," 201-204. In isolation, this line could be read that way, but as we will see, the finality Lactantius envisions for his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* flows from the inspiration they will give to other future Christian writers.

> was swept away by his own remarkable knowledge of divine literature; indeed, he was content with only those things with which the faith is constituted.[164]

Lactantius first claims that in his *Apologeticus* Tertullian was attempting the same kind of thing as the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* (5.4.3).[165] Nevertheless, Lactantius continues, there is a fundamental difference because Tertullian was only interested in "defense" (*in defensione*) whereas Lactantius has set out "to teach" (*instituere*).[166] Similarly, Cyprian failed along the same lines as Tertullian in his "speech" against Demetrianus who was "barking and bawling."[167] However, Lactantius has a further criticism regarding Cyprian's approach to answering Demetrianus, and much more to say about Cyprian in general.

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[164] *DI* 5.4.3-7 (Heck and Wlosok, 451-452; ET TTH 40, 289-290). *Quamquam Tertullianus eandem causam plene perorauerit in eo libro cui Apologetico nomen est, tamen quoniam aliud est accusantibus respondere, quod in defensione aut negatione sola positum est, aliud instituere, quod nos facimus, in quo necesse est doctrinae totius substantiam contineri, non defugi hunc laborem, ut implerem materiam,quam Cyprianus non est exsecutus in ea oratione, qua 'Demetrianum' sicut ipse ait 'oblatrantem' atque 'obsterpentem' ueritati redarguere conatur. qua materia non est usus ut debuit. non enim scripturae testimoniis, quam ille utique uanam fictam commenticiam putabat, sed argumentis et ratione fuerat refellendus. nam cum ageret contra hominem ueritatis ignarum, dilatis paulisper diuinis lectionibus formare hunc a principio tamquam rudem debuit eique paulatim lucis principia monstrare, ne toto lumine obiecto caligaret. Nam sicut infans solidi ac fortis cibi capere uim non potest ob stomachi teneritudinem, sed liquore lactis ac mollitudine alitur, donec firmatis uiribus uesci fortioribus possit, ita et huic oportebat, quia nondum poterat capere diuina, prius humana testimonia offerri id est philosophorum et historicorum, ut suis potissimum refutaretur auctoribus. Quod quia ille non fecit raptus eximia eruditione diuinarum litterarum, ut his solis contentus esset quibus fides constat, accessi deo inspirante, ut ego facerem et simul ut viam ceteris ad imitandum pararem.*

[165] The use of the transliterated Greek word "*Apologetikos*" (ἀπολογητικός) speaks to the probable original title of Tertullian's work, although the better manuscripts of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* have the (probably) corrupt, neuter *apologeticum*. See Simon Price, "Latin Christian Apologetics: Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Cyprian," in Apologetics in the Roman Empire, 105-129.

[166] As Garnsey and Bowen, 290n24, point out this is almost certainly an allusion to the title of the *Institutiones divinae*, which Lactantius explained in 1.1.

[167] *DI* 5.4.3 (Heck and Wlosok, 451; ET TTH 40, 289-290). Quoting directly from Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 1; Cyprian, *Ad Donatum. De mortalitate. Ad Demetrianum. De opere et eleemosynis. De zelo et livore. De dominica oratione. De bono patientiae,* ed. M. Simonetti, C. Moreschini, Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1976).

Cyprian attempted to rebut Demetrianus with Scriptural texts, but should have (at least at first) restricted himself to "arguments and reason" when refuting him (5.4.4-5).[168] Scripture for Demetrianus was merely an "empty, concocted fabrication" and would be rejected out of hand (5.4.4).[169] Lactantius explains Cyprian's rhetorical error with a series of metaphors. Demetrianus, ignorant of the truth, is like a "student" (*rudis*) who needed to be lead along "gradually" (*paulatim*) to the truth beginning with introductory material (*a principio*). In this way, Demetrianus could have been gradually illuminated by the principles of "light" (*lux*) and not "blinded by exposure to all the light at once" (*ne toto lumine obiecto caligaret*) (5.4.5). Demetrianus was like a "child" (*infans*) who is unable to eat solid food because of a "tender stomach" (*ob stomachi teneritudinem*), and must first drink milk (5.4.6). Milk is "weak" and "liquid," but necessary before a person develops and can stomach stronger stuff. Switching to forensic language in a final metaphor, Lactantius contends that philosophers and historians, who provide inferior but essential "human testimony" (*humana testimonia*), would have met the need at this stage and could have assisted Cyprian in refuting Demetrianus with the latter's own authorities. Lactantius, however, suggests that Cyprian's failure in appropriately responding to

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[168] *DI* 5.4.4-5 (Heck and Wlosok, 451-452; ET TTH 40, 290). "He failed to exploit the material as he should have done, because Demetrianus should have been rebutted with arguments based in logic, and not with quotations from scripture, which he simply saw as silly fiction and lies. Since he was arguing against a man ignorant of the truth, Cyprian should have kept his scriptural texts back a while; he should have given the fellow some primary training, as if he were a beginner, showing him the elements of illumination little by little to avoid blinding him with all the light at once." *Qua materia non est usus ut debuit. Non enim scripturae testimoniis, quam ille utique vanam fictam commenticiam putabat, sed argumentis et ratione fuerat refellendus. 5. Nam cum ageret contra hominem veritatis ignarum, dilatis paulisper divinis lectionibus formare hunc a principio tamquam rudem debuit eique paulatim lucis principia monstrare, ne toto lumine obiecto caligareti*.

[169] *DI* 5.4.4 (Heck and Wlosok, 451-452, my translation). *Quam ille utique vanam, fictam, commenticiam putabat.*

Demetrianus was a side effect of his profound knowledge of "divine literature" (5.4.7).[170] Lactantius' final word about Cyprian is that he "was content with only those things with which the faith is constituted."[171] Cyprian's deficiency in his *Ad Demetrianum* is not a deficiency in his holiness or knowledge. In fact, Cyprian may have been *too* holy to compose an adequate response to Demetrianus. Nevertheless, Lactantius' criticisms of both Tertullian and Cyprian, in combination with what he has said in 1.1. and 5.1, illuminate the notion of Christian apologetic writing Lactantius is articulating. Rightly, it is *defense* and *instruction*—responding to charges, tearing down the opponent and their views, and also inculcating truth. Balancing defense and instruction is a delicate matter that should take as its building blocks the texts and ideas known and respected outside Christian communities.

Excursus: Lactantius' Claimed Lineage

At this point, it is worth looking a little more closely at the actual texts Lactantius invokes as a lineage for his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* before asking why and how he is claiming this pedigree. In each case, the *topoi* I delineated in chapter one will be apparent as the substance of each of these texts. They are works of Christian apologetic writing in the sense in which I defined that word in the previous chapter, but that does not tell us everything about why and how Lactantius is claiming them as part of his legacy.

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[170] *DI* 5.4.7 (Heck and Wlosok, 452, my translation). *Quod quia ille non fecit raptus eximia eruditione divinarum litterarum.*

[171] *DI* 5.4.7 (Heck and Wlosok, 452, my translation). *Ut his solis contentus esset quibus fides constat.*

Minucius Felix's *Octavius* (the first predecessor mentioned by Lactanius in *DI* 5.1) only exists today because of a single manuscript where it was preserved, apparently, because it was thought to be an eighth book of Arnobius' *Adversus Nationes*.[172] The setting of *Octavius* is a leisurely walk from Rome to Ostia on a pleasant autumn day, a holiday on which three urbane and sophisticated men are enjoying one another's company.[173] The congenial and idyllic setting quickly gives way to a debate after Minucius Felix's one friend criticizes the other for blowing a kiss to a statue of Serapis (2-3). Thus, the form of the majority of the text is a dialogue in which the author stands as judge over a debate between his two friends Octavius (the mature Christian) and Caecalius (the anti-Christian interlocutor). The basic structure is simple: an opening that sets the scene (1-4), Caecilius' accusations against the Christians (5-13), a transition between the two speakers (14-15), Octavius' rebuttal (16-38), and a conclusion (39-40). Caecilius' criticism of Christianity is part denigration of Christian intelligence, part rumors of anti-social behavior, and part theological skepticism (about the character and even existence of the gods, and especially about divine providence) mixed with Roman religious conservatism—a very Ciceronian position (5-13). Octavius' rebuttal is far longer and more substantive. He argues that all people, regardless of their education and background, are created with reason and therefore should think seriously about theological questions (16-17). He defends divine providence which, he argues, logically leads to an acceptance of monotheism (18-20). Octavius musters several arguments for

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[172] Svend Erik Mathiassen, "Minucius Felix, Octavius," in *In Defense of Christ,* 185-198.

[173] Minucius Felix and Tertulian, *Apology. De Spectaculis. Minucius Felix: Octavius,* trans. T.R. Glover and Gerhald H. Rendall, LCL 250 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931).

God's oneness, including an analogy with Romulus' fratricide ("there can only be one") (18). But the bulk of his response is a Euhemeristic, de-mythologizing of the gods mixed with a dash of demonology (21-37). Finally, Octavius includes a throwaway swipe at (some) philosophers, including Socrates, whose apparent skepticism he thinks is contemptible (38).

Tertullian's *Apologeticus* is longer than the *Octavius*, though there is an irrefutable literary relationship between the two texts.[174] Similarly, Tertullian's longer and (probably) earlier *Ad nationes* seems to have been drawn upon when he was writing *Apologeticus*.[175] Timothy Barnes dates the *Apologeticus* to "197 or sometime later," but it is unlikely to be much later because of its reference to the "Parthians" as apparent enemies of Rome (37.4); the "Parthians" were defeated by Septimius Severus in 198 CE.[176] Considering only manuscript prevalence, the *Apologeticus* was Tertullian's most popular work with subsequent generations of Christians and survives in two recensions.[177] Indeed, as evidenced from Eusebius' quotations in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the *Apologeticus* (at least some of it) was even translated into Greek.

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[174] Mathiassen, "Minucius Felix, Octavius," 188, writing about the relative dating and relationship between these two texts writes that they have "such striking similarities, point by point, that internal dependence is indisputable."

[175] Carl Becker, *Tertullians Apologeticum: Werden und Leistung* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1954) provides a detailed comparison and analysis of these two texts that strongly suggests *Ad Nationes* is the earlier and provided the basis for much of the *Apologeticus*. Simon Price, "Latin Christian Apologetics: Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Cyprian," 107-110, acknowledges all of this but pushes back against any notion of *Ad nationes* as a "first draft" instead emphasizing its apparently different rhetorical goal and literary character.

[176] Timothy Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 30-56; Niels Willert, "Tertullian," in *In Defense of Christ,* 161-162.

[177] Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study,* 13-21; the divergence in these recensions is not germane to my interpretation of the text.

Tertullian's text is in the form of a petition, or open letter to the "overseers of the Roman Empire" (*Romani imperii antistites*), a vague designation that in context seems to indicate any magistrate with any legal power over Christians.[178] The structure of *Apologeticus* has been analyzed in terms of classical rhetoric and appears to be a text carefully crafted by an author with awareness of forensic rhetorical practice.[179] Tertullian opens with a multi-pronged attack on the character and consistency of Roman justice (1-6). In the midst of this opening, he also names his purpose and signals a central argumentative strategy, writing, "Now I am standing for the cause of our innocence, and I will not only do such a small thing as refuting the charges against us, but also I will cast back these very charges upon those who charge us" (4).[180] Tertullian catalogues some particular accusations against Christians (incest, infanticide, and cannibalism) that he claims they are routinely accused of (7-9) and mocks their absurdity. But Tertullian quickly moves to two more substantive charges, "You say, 'You do not honor the gods and you do not offer sacrifices for the emperors'" (10).[181] The former charge is answered by attempting to prove that the "gods" are not real (argued via Euhemeristic theory and straightforward mockery of

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[178] Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 1.1 (ET LCL 250, 2-3); addressed in 50.12 (ET LCL 250, 226-227), the very end of the treatise, as "fine governors" (*boni praesides*).

[179] R.D. Sider, "On Symmetrical Composition in Tertullian," JTS 24, no. 2 (1973): 408-418; See R.D. Sider, *Christian and Pagan in the Roman Empire: the Witness of Tertullian* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 5-6, for an outline informed by ancient rhetorical conventions. Price, "Latin Christian Apologetics: Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Cyprian," 117, commends Sider's work but argues that it is not entirely "satisfactory" since it does not consider rhetoric in the second century (it is overdependent on Cicero), is too schematic, "and depends in part on the use of abstract Latin nouns, some of dubious authority."

[180] Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 4.1 (LCL 250, 22-23, my translation). *Iam de causa innocentiae consistam, nec tantum refutabo quae nobis obiciuntur, sed etiam in ipsos retorquebo qui obiciunt.*

[181] Ibid., 10.1 (LCL 250, 54-55, my translation). *"Deos," inquitis, "non colitis et pro imperatoribus sacrificia non penditis."*

Greco-Roman culture) and that Christian piety refers to the true God (argued mainly through the veracity of prophecy and antiquity of Christian Scripture) (10-21). The true reason that "pagans" are deceived into worshiping their false gods and killing the Christians is that demonic forces are acting on them (22-24). Yet this bleak state of affairs offers another compelling argument for the truth of Christianity. Demons are subject to the word and power of Christians, and they will even confess the truth of the Christian religion as they are being exorcised. The second charge, which amounts to an accusation of treason or forming a dangerous anti-social society, Tertullian responds to by describing how Christians support the emperor and how their churches are models of temperance, modesty, and self-control (25-45). Tertullian concludes by demonstrating the superiority of Christian communities to philosophical sects and by arguing that despite appearances Christians are in control, and, though they can be killed, they cannot be harmed by persecution (46-50).

Cyprian's *Ad Demetrianum* is much shorter than both *Apologeticus* and *Octavius*; it is chronologically the last of these texts and also the last in Lactantius' two lists of earlier Christian authors. Despite some arguments, or assumptions, to the contrary, the exact position or legal authority of the primary addressee (Demetrianus) is entirely uncertain from both internal and external evidence. Indeed, Cyprian's opening is so dismissive and disdainful of Demetrianus that he has to give a reason for his decision to respond to him at all. Instead, Cyprian claims he's writing for others who have been influenced by his lies and might take a lack of response as an admission of guilt (1-2). Apparently, Demetrianus has been blaming Christians "because wars are occurring

frequently, plagues are surging, famines are raging, storms and rain showers are suspended by extended cloudless skies."[182] The reason for this state of affairs should be self-evident and does not require recourse to some special revelation because "the world has grown old" (3).[183] Nevertheless, the cause of these apparent misfortunes is not merely the world's age, they also correlate to the predictions of Scripture about God's judgement on "idolatry," the characteristic religious practice of non-Christians. Therefore Christians are not the cause of the wars, plagues, and famines, but the demonic religiosity of Demetrianus and his coreligionists (3-11) are. Unjust laws target Christians. As a result, God is not merely ignored, but indirectly attacked through violence inflicted on God's people (12-13). Everything about the "idols" non-Christians worship suggests the truth about those "idols" and the gods they are supposed to represent: they are part of a demonic conspiracy to subjugate their adherents (14-16). Christians are different. They worship their God differently, their ethics and relationship to their enemies are different, and they even suffer differently (16-21). Cyprian warns that a day of judgment is coming and that the present difficulties are merely of foretaste of what is to come (22-25). He concludes with a hortatory, "This one (Christ), if it is possible to do, let us all follow, let us be enrolled as his citizens by his sacrament and sign" (26).[184]

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[182] Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 2 (Simonetti, 35, my translation). *Sed enim, cum dicas plurimos conqueri quod bella crebrius surgant, quod lues, quod fames saeviant, quodque impres et pluvias serena longa suspendant nobis imputari, tacere ultra non oportet.*

[183] Ibid., 3 (Simonetti, 36; ET FC 36, 169). *Quia ignares divine cognitionis et veritatis alienui es, sillud primo in loco scire debes, senuisse iam mundum.* Cyprian, *Treatises,* trans. Roy J. Deferrari, FC 36 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1958).

[184] Ibid., 26 (Simonetti, 51, my translation). *Hunc, si fiere potest, sequamur omnes, huius sacramento et signo censeamur*.

Considered just in relationship to one another, there are several similarities and differences between these texts. There are some obvious commonalities. One of the most prominent is that each features, though to different degrees, the purported criticisms of outsiders as a structural feature. Caecilius' attack on the Christians is similar to the various charges Tertullian mentions and also similar to the attack of Demetrianus that Cyprian mentions in the beginning of his text. The rhetorical maneuver of turning the opponents accusations back upon them is also liberally deployed in all three texts ("I'm not the cannibal, you're the cannibal!"). Further, each author posits a demonic conspiracy lying behind traditional religious practice, though the justification for this assertion is different for each author. And, at least between Minucius Felix and Tertullian, there are some clear examples of direct borrowing. In other words, beyond the fact that these are all apologetics works (i.e., responding to the putative questions and criticisms of outsiders), they are also developing many of the same arguments and are occasionally borrowing directly from one another.

But there are some striking, significant differences. The form of each text is different. Tertullian writes an "appeal" to *Romani imperii antistites* with clear forensic themes, ostensibly designed to prove the innocence of Christians and the guilt of their critics. Minucius Felix writes a dialogue which concludes with the conversion of the one non-Christian participant—a conclusion that plausibly says something about the rhetorical purpose of the dialogue. Cyprian's text is written to a specific critic, though not one holding any official position in provincial or imperial administration, but for the purpose of possibly convincing those who have been influenced by his slanders—though

the radical difference between Christians and non-Christians that Cyprian posits complicates this possibility. Therefore, the pedigree that Lactantius imagines for the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* is intelligible, but he flattens the differences and narrates each member text as one more example of the same kind of phenomenon. The respective texts of these authors certainly have some interesting points in common, but the formal differences between their texts and their apparently quite different literary goals highlight the inventive quality of Lactantius' decision to bind them together in a single literary trajectory. As he reflects on and conceptualizes his work of Christian apologetic writing he creates a lineage of writers who attempted what Lactantius is now accomplishing. So why does he do this and what literary or rhetorical precedents are there for such a thing?

Describing and Listing Previous Authors of Christian Apologetic Writing, Creating a Legacy

Lactantius' discussion and evaluation of his predecessors has elicited comment from many scholars, most of whom take him to be primarily critical. Digeser, in citing part of this section, claims he "deplores" the "pugnacious language" and "reliance on Scripture" that characterized these texts.[185] N.L. Thomas claims Lactantius is "little more than dismissive of the three central forerunning Latin apologists" and describes Lactantius as "castigating" Cyprian.[186] Edwards and Heck provide a more balanced evaluation of Lactantius' catalogue of his predecessors, taking seriously his praise as well

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[185] Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire*, 9.

[186] Thomas, *Defending Christ,* 176-177; see also McGuckin, "Does Lactantius Denigrate Cyprian?" 119-124.

as his criticisms.[187] Edwards claims Lactantius hopes to be "the last and best in a series of apologies produced by Latin authors on behalf of Christianity,"[188] but does not note that the "series" is an invention of Lactantius. Heck stands out by claiming that Lactantius is not attacking Minucius Felix or Cyprian or Tertullian, but is instead providing a narrative of sorts: from previous Christian "apologists," through contemporary opponents, to the need for *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*.[189] Because he does not isolate the individual critiques and compliments, but instead reads the presentation of the "apologists" as part of a narrative leading to present conflicts, I find Heck's analysis to be generally more sensitive to what Lactantius is doing in this passage. However, I would like to further suggest that the listing and evaluating itself is significant. It would have been entirely possible to simply ignore previous authors, or to subtly absorb and co-opt the parts of their texts he might have found useful.[190] In fact, at least one of the authors mentioned by Lactantius in this passage did just that. As described above, there is a clear literary relationship between Minucius Felix's *Octavius* and Tertullian's *Apologeticus* that proves one of these authors is borrowing from the other without ever mentioning or crediting his source.[191]

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[187] Edwards, "The Flowering of Latin Apologetic," 203-204; Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*," 224-229.

[188] Edwards, "The Flowering of Latin Apologetic," 203; I would also take issue with "last" as Lactantius clearly hopes others will follow in his footsteps as I will discuss below.

[189] Heck, "*Defendere—Instituere*," 224-229

[190] Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 52-98.

[191] It is normally thought Minucius Felix borrows from Tertullian. Thomas, *Defending Christ: The Latin Apologists before Augustine,* 63-65, argues the influence flows in the opposite direction.

What Lactantius is doing in creating this series is best read with similar literary patterns of other Latin authors, especially Cicero, and more broadly in the context of ancient debates and reflection on different forms of discourse. Cicero, whom Lactantius seems to know more thoroughly than any other writer, regularly catalogues and analyzes previous writers or orators in relevant portions of his own work. For instance, *De natura deorum* provides a presentation of three philosophical schools and describes and explains numerous individual philosophical opinions through the course of the dialogue.[192] Almost always this narration and analysis of previous authors is partly a project of bolstering and making relevant whatever Cicero is writing. However, often the narration and analysis is done to introduce writers whose work Cicero is commending to his readers. And always, Cicero is thereby rendering visible and delineating a literary culture. In *De legibus*, before the titular subject is broached, Cicero's brother Quintus discusses history, a genre in which Romans lag behind Greeks.[193] Quintus describes the virtues and flaws of every previous Latin historian.[194] While the conclusion Quintus reaches is that historical writing in Latin is inadequate, the listing and cataloguing of previous historians is designed to create a sense of who counts as a historian, what their faults and virtues are, and where a new text might fit in this field. Likewise, in his own *Institutiones*, Quintilian spends a tremendous amount of time describing and recommending writers and orators in Latin

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[192] The three books of *De natura deorum* attend to the arguments of Velleius the Epicurean, Balbus the Stoic, and Cotta the Academic in each book, respectively. Plato (2.32), Aristotle (2.42), Theophrastus (1.35), and other philosophers are also mentioned and discussed in the text.

[193] Cicero, *De legibus* 1.5.

[194] Ibid., 1.5-7.

and Greek.[195] Some of these figures are entirely and unhesitatingly commended without qualification, but a majority of them have both faults and virtues pointed out. Nevertheless, despite their mixed review, Quintilian is still insistent that the orator formed in his educational project should know these predecessors.

These examples provide a better standpoint for evaluating what Lactantius is doing in 5.1-4. While there is no doubt that Lactantius is justifying the necessity of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* by evaluating his predecessors, he is also making these figures visible and creating a kind of Christian, literary landscape. Lactantius does not just reflect upon Christian apologetic writing in the abstract or in general terms. He identifies previous authors of Christian apologetic writing and evaluates them according to his own notion of how this mode is meant to be composed and what it is designed to do. Part of what this does is create a sense of legacy, a kind of Christian literary heritage is imagined. And as in Cicero's treatises, the translation the author is creating is not merely about doctrines or ideas, it also includes introducing a literary culture—naming, commending, and debating important predecessors.[196] The goal of this project is rendered more clear in the next sentences.

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[195] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratorio* 10.1.46-84; 10.1.85-131.

[196] Some sixty years later, Jerome's *Chronicon* similarly narrates a series of Christian writers and orators in an attempt to render visible a Christian intellectual and literary culture, and also to narrate that culture into Roman history. See Mark Vessey, "Reinventing History: Jerome's Chronicle and the Writing of the Post-Roman West," in *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians: Roman History and Culture 284-450 CE,* ed. Scott McGill, Cristiana Sogno, and Edward Watts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 265-289.

Divinarum institutionum libri VII 5.4.7-8: The Ultimate Goal

Immediately following the discussion of Cyprian, Lactantius moves to situate the importance of his own work in the literary landscape he has painted. "I have engaged, with God's inspiration, so that I might establish (something) and at the same time so that I might prepare a way for others to imitate."[197] The *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are not only an attempt to persuade the unconverted or bolster the wavering, they are also designed to lay out a path and to exhort others to follow.

> And thus if, by our exhortation, people of learning and eloquence begin to muster around this truth, and if they should choose to devote their talents and power of eloquence in this battlefield of truth, no one will doubt that false religions and all shortly-to-perish philosophy will be winnowed out, if it is persuasive to everyone that as much as this is the only religion, so also it is the only true wisdom.[198]

This statement, the final passage before Lactantius turns to the main topic of book five, grants an important insight into Lactantius' whole project. He is interested not only in convincing the *docti*, but in creating an entirely new kind of *docti*. There have already been intimations of this goal. Lactantius always refers in the plural to the class of people he sees as necessary to translate the truth of God. What is needed, he has said, are "heralds" (*praecones* 5.1.21) and "champions" (*assertores* 1.1.7). No matter how highly Lactantius thinks of his own ability, he has been implying all along it is too much for one person. Moreover, Cicero's philosophical project, which is so clearly in the background

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[197] *DI* 5.4.7 (Heck and Wlosok, 452; ET TTH 40, 290, slightly modified). *Accessi, deo inspirante, ut ego facerem et simul ut viam ceteris ad imitandum pararem.*

[198] *DI* 5.4.8 (Heck and Wlosok, 452; ET TTH 40, 290). *Ac si hortatu nostro docti homines ac diserti huc se conferre coeperint et ingenia sua vimque dicendi in hoc veritatis campo iactare malverint, evanituras brevi religiones falsas et occasuram esse omnem philosophiam nemo dubitaverit, si fuerit omnibus persuaso cum canc solam religionem, tum etiam solam veram esse sapientiam.*

of so much of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, Cicero regularly described as exemplary not final. We can see Lactantius' project imitating Cicero's in this way too. Lest one is tempted to think that the hope of future Christian writers imitating the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* is only significant to these programmatic sections, one has only to consider the way Lactantius deals with various categories of "pagan" literature. The goal of forming and fielding a new kind of Christian intellectual makes sense of what Woslok has described as new hermeneutical strategies, both explicitly and described and also modeled, for reading the poets and the philosophers.[199] The *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are not only designed to induct the unconverted or reassure the faithful, they are also designed to be paradigmatic.

My analysis of the programmatic statements in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* carries several implications. *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* have often been conceived as the closing of a chapter and Lactantius has been read as rhetorically positioning his text as final. This is clearly not the case. Lactantius is engaged in a project of creating a new kind of Christian intellectual and a concomitant literary culture that has forward momentum.[200] Additionally, this project of building a literary culture, the articulation of legacy, and the clear purpose of forming Christian rhetors who will match in verbal combat anti-Christian polemicists who inspire and justify persecution, strongly suggests that Lactantius is more "political" than interpreters such as Gassman have

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[199] Wlosok, "Zur lateinischen Apologetik der constantinischen Zeit," 138.

[200] Perhaps to be compared with what Dawn LaValle Norman says Methodius is doing in his Symposium. See Dawn LaValle Norman, *The Aesthetics of Hope in Late Greek Imperial Literature: Methodius of Olympus' Symposium and the Crisis of the Third Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

argued.[201] While it is true that Lactantius does not provide anything like a political philosophy, his project of subsuming and re-interpreting the Latin literary canon, read now in light of newly translated Christian truth, and his Ciceronian translation project carry obvious political overtones. Lactantius' project is well fitted to the Constantinian epoch that began to dawn while he was composing *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. Finally, Lactantius' writings clearly mark a new moment in the history of Christian apologetic writing, but not in the way this has often been conceived. Lactantius provides extended reflection on the significance of apologetic writing for Christianity, including a fairly robust evaluation of his predecessors who composed Christian apologetic writing. The extended reflection itself, in addition to the making visible previous authors of Christian apologetic writing, is already noteworthy and unprecedented. But even more interesting is the way Lactantius' reflections and prescriptions for apologetics are bound up with his goal of instructing future authors of this mode.

Beyond the Programmatic Statements

My analysis of these programmatic statements allow for a fresh analysis of Lactantius' project as a whole. Lactantius' Ciceronian translation project is evident throughout the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and in almost every text of his *oeuvre*. The goal of this project is always both immediate, to convince and teach the reader, and also exemplary, to inspire and guide future composers of Christian apologetic writing—writers whom Lactantius calls "heralds" or "champions" in *Divinarum institutionum libri*

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[201] Gassman, *Worshippers of the Gods,* 46-47.

VII. And Lactantius regularly does this by invoking a Christian intellectual culture and legacy.

Divinarum institutionum libri VII: Beyond the Programmatic Statements

Divinarum institutionum libri VII themselves are opened up in new ways when my interpretation of the programmatic statements are borne in mind. One of the major argumentative strategies employed in the Institutes is the use of the trusted sources of poets, philosophers, and other Greek or Roman intellectuals. Often these authors are simply contradicted, but more often Lactantius provides alternative readings or even interpretive rules that make the texts of opponents speak divine truth.[202] In this way, he is not only teaching those who don't know God, translating divine truth into a literary and rhetorical idiom they will understand, but also rendering in principle the whole Latin literary canon into a form that is usable and salutary for Christians. Much of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* can be read as a concerted attempt to render visible and accessible an entirely new literary culture. This goes some way in helping us see the significance of the specific occasions when Lactantius actually mentions Christian authors by name. Thus, in 1.11.55-62, in the midst of a lengthy discussion of the mortal origins of Saturn, Lactantius introduces Minucius Felix and explains this author's history of Saturn. Lactantius ultimately argues that Minucius Felix is "indeed [saying something] similar to the truth, but not the truth."[203] This vaguely dismissive way of referencing the

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[202] E.g. *DI* 1.11.30 (Heck and Wlosok, 46; ET TTH 40, 82). *Nihil igitur a poetis in totem fictum est. "*No poetical work is a total fiction."

[203] *DI* (TTH, 86) 1.11.56 (Heck and Wlosok, 53; ET TTH 40, 82). *Sunt haec quidem similia veri, non tamen vera. "*That is close to the truth, but not the actual truth."

earlier author of Christian apologetic writing should not occlude our appreciation for the context and character of Lactantius' citation. The citation occurs in the midst of Lactantius' engagement with Cicero and Ennius—the major source for Lactantius' knowledge of Euhemerus and his theories (1.11.44-49; 1.11.63-65). Similarly, at the end of the same book of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, Lactantius introduces the Christian writer Theophilus of Antioch (1.23.1-5). Theophilus and his text are named and used to contribute to Lactantius' argument that the traditions of worship amongst his opponents are far more recent than is usually imagined.[204]

De opificio Dei

Lactantius' slightly earlier, and earliest surviving, *De opificio Dei* is a short treatise defending and exploring providence (*providentia*) by providing an analysis of the human body (*corpus*) and, to a lesser degree, soul (*anima* or *mens*).[205] The *leitmotif* running through his description of the body is that it is useful and beautiful. According to Lactantius, no part of the body, considered in isolation or relative to its other parts, is arbitrary. Lactantius' interlocutors are many of the same authors he engages in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* (e.g. Cicero, Varro, Ennius), and his foil is the philosophers who have denied providence, especially Epicurus as read through Lucretius. More generally, he is concerned to address "philosophers" who diminish or attack Christianity and are complicit in violence or legal coercion against Christians.

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[204] Oliver P. Nicholson, "The Source of the Dates in Lactantius' 'Divine Institutes,'" JTS 36 (1985): 291-310, provides a thorough analysis of Lactantius' use of Theophilus to derive most of his dates.

[205] Lactantius, *L'ouvrage du Dieu Créateur,* ed. Michel Perrin, 2 vols, SC 213-214 (Paris: Cerf, 1974); Lactantius, *The Minor Work,* Sister Mary Francis, FC 54 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1965).

He opens by addressing "Demetrianus" for whom the treatise is composed (1.1). Demetrianus is not his patron, but a student of Lactantius whose former success in "literary pursuits" and "language" suggests he should be "eager" in "these truths that pertain to life" (1.2).[206] That Demetrianus is a Christian is made explicit a little later in the introduction (1.7), but even before this is made explicit Lactantius makes clear that he is writing this text and developing the arguments it contains to "better arm" and "better teach" the "philosophers of our sect" (1.2).[207] The audience of the *De opificio Dei* is thus double: both "we" and "others" can be instructed by this text (1.3). In other words, both the burgeoning authors of Christian apologetic writing who can imitate Lactantius and also the readers who need to be converted.

The topic Lactantius is concerned with in this treatise is divine providence investigated through an analysis of the human person—primarily body but also soul. Providence was a standard *topos* in philosophical debate and discussion, and it also forms something of a theological center for Lactantius.[208] However, explicitly in the introduction to the *De opificio Dei*, Lactantius claims the topic is fitting because it is one that Cicero, "a man of singular intelligence," attended to on several occasions but never

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[206] *De opificio Dei* 1.2 (SC 213, 106-107; ET FC 54, 5). *Nam si te in litteris nihil aliud quam linguam instituentibus auditorem satis strenuum praebuisti, quanto magis in his veris et ad vitam pertinentibus docilior esse debebis?* "If you showed yourself to be an eager enough pupil in literary pursuits for nothing more than training in language, how much more docile ought you to be to these truths which pertain to life?"

[207] Ibid. (SC 213, 106-107, my translation). *Quominus aliquid extundam quo philosophi sectae nostrae quam tuemur instructiores doctioresque in posterum fiant.*

[208] Coleman, *Lactantius the Theologian: Lactantius and the Doctrine of Providence,* throughout, but nicely summarized in 235-243.

adequately addressed (1.12).[209] Indeed, Peter A. Roots has fittingly described Lactantius "taking on the mantle of Cicero" in this passage and that the treatise as a whole is designed to "supplement and improve on" the *De natura deorum* in particular.[210] Thus, even in this early work, Lactantius is explicitly conceiving of his task in Ciceronian terms. The difference here is that Lactantius' more thoroughly appropriative and subversive Ciceronian project in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* is less fully developed in the *De opificio Dei*. In this earlier text, Lactantius seems content to frame his discussion as a correction and expansion of Cicero.

The *De opificio Dei* is a sort of prelude to the the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. Indeed, Lactantius seems to imply as much in the final section of the treatise (20.1).[211] Most of what is found in the earlier work is expanded and re-set in his magnum opus. Moreover, there are some turns of phrase and categories that would ill-fit the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, for instance his designation of Christian "philosophers" (a word that always designates someone outside his community in the Institutes) and his slightly different evaluation of Cicero.[212] Nevertheless, the analysis I have done of the programmatic portions of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* render the significance of this earlier treatise clearer. Even here, Lactantius is interested in

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[209] *De opificio Dei* 1.12 (SC 213, 110-111, my translation). *Quod Marcus Tulius, vir ingenii singularis.*

[210] Peter. A. Roots, "The *De opificio Dei*: The Workmanship of God and Lactantius," *The Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987): 472.

[211] *De opificio Dei* 20.1 (SC 214, 214-215; FC 54, 55). *Quibus contentus esse debebis plura et meliora lecturus, si nobis indulgentia caelitus venerit.* "But please be content with these, since you will have more and better things to read if heavenly indulgence comes to my aid."

[212] See Luise Achmed, *Bilder von den Anderen: Christliches Sprechen über Heiden bei den lateinischen Apologeten* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2017), 157-159 on the "philosophers" in Lactantius.

addressing *docti*, especially Christians with at least some background in learning and literature. He is interested, by example and exhortation, in shaping these Christian *docti* into participants fitted to meet the challenge of Christian opponents. Insofar as Lactantius in *De opificio Dei* is looking at a nascent and future Christian culture of intellectuals, and insofar as he is involved in a hermeneutical project of making sense of the major texts and figures of the Latin canon, he is anticipating the more ambitious and sophisticated project of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*.

De ira Dei

Finally, Lactantius' *De ira Dei*, promised in 2.17.5 of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, provides another example. Like the earlier *De opificio Dei, De ira Dei* is a brief treatise dealing with a particular issue—in this case whether God can be wrathful. This text is addressed to a certain "Donatus" (1.1), perhaps the same addressee as *De mortibus persecutorum*. The kind of clear references or allusions to Cicero that we saw in previous works is not present in the introduction to this work, unless it is the very Ciceronian first three words.[213] What is provided in the introduction, however, is a kind framework or outline for Christian apologetic writing that Lactantius presents as a model and within which he situates his current work. Lactantius writes that there are "many steps on the ascent to the habitation of truth" and claims, as in V.4 of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* when critiquing Cyprian, that a full and immediate revelation of the truth would

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[213] Sister Mary Francis, *The Minor Works,* 61n1, notes a similarity between this opening and one of Cicero's treatises. Compare *De ira Dei* (SC 289, 90-91) 1.1 *Animaduerti saepe, Donate…* with Cicero, *Paradoxa Stoicorum,* 1.1 (LCL 349, 254-255), *animaduerti, Brute, saepe.* Cicero, *On the Orator: Book 3. On Fate. Stoic Paradoxes. Divisions of Oratory,* trans. H. Rackham, LCL 349 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942).

be unhelpful or even destructive for the uninitiated (2.1).[214] Thus, it is necessary for a mind to ascend three steps before it can tolerate the "light' and know the true God. First, one must understand "false religions" and "impious cults," then one must understand there is one supreme God who has created the world, finally, one must know the one this God sent (Christ) and thus be instructed in the worship of the true God and in justice (2.2). However, upon each step there are dangers that can cause someone to fall (2.3). Lactantius lists the sorts of pitfalls that attend each step, making explicit reference to the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* in which he dealt with some of them, and situates his current work on the second step (2.3-6). The reference to the Institutes is appropriate and a careful reader will see the plan of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* comports with the three steps laid out here. In the current work, however, Lactantius' purpose is more limited. Having been fully instructed in the knowledge of God's minister, worship, and justice, on the second step, one can go awry by having incorrect ideas about the character of the supreme God (2.7). It is obvious that Lactantius' explicit, intended audience for this text is those who have ascended these steps. Lactantius' goal here is to create resources for, and to shape, future Christian writers who will follow in his footsteps. He is here again reflecting on Christian apologetic writing for the purpose of forming and fielding *docti* ready to engage with the ignorant or the hostile.

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[214] *De ira Dei* 2.1 (SC 289, 92-93; FC 54, 62-63). *Nam cum sint gradus multi per quos ad domicilium veritatis ascenditur, non est facile cuilibet evehi ad summum. Caligantibus enim veritatis fulgore luminibus, qui stabilem gressum tenere non possunt revoluuntur in planum.* "Although there are many steps by which an ascent is made to the dwelling of truth, it is not easy for anyone at all to be conducted to the summit. For when the eyes are blinded by the brilliance of the truth, those who cannot keep a firm hold are rolled back upon the level ground." Translation is from Francis, 62-63. *La Colére de Dieu*. Edited by Christiane Ingremeau. SC 289. Paris: Cerf, 1974.

This cursory discussion of Lactantius' corpus in light of my exposition of 1.1 and 5.1-4 of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* is meant to be suggestive not comprehensive. However, I believe it has been sufficient to illustrate how new horizons of interpretation are opened up if we attend closely, and with certain questions in mind, to the way Lactantius positions his text, imagines its pedigree, and conceptualizes Christian apologetic writing.

Conclusions

Lactantius is addressing himself to the *docti* not only to convert or reassure them (depending on their need) but also to enlist them as "champions" and "heralds" of truth. Lactantius also claims previous authors of Christian apologetic writing as veterans whose work provide important, albeit insufficient, precedents for his project. Thus Lactantius casts his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* as a pedagogical text designed to instruct and inculcate the basics of divine truth, and also as a paradigmatic example of translation for subsequent *docti*. The programmatic statements where Lactantius positions his text and articulates the goals he has in mind for his readers are part of how he conceptualizes and transforms Christian apologetic writing. Jeremy Schott convincingly illustrates the "timbre" the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* take when the Constantinian dedication passages are not isolated from their literary contexts.[215] Imperial praise colors how we see the rest of the text. I would suggest that Lactantius' project as I have described it can be fruitfully read in a similar way. The kind of translation and literary culture building Lactantius commends and exemplifies is not merely a defensive move designed to fend

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[215] Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 96-97.

off the attacks of persecutors and their intellectuals. It is a substantive attempt to reshape the social and political environment such that Roman identity and imperial politics are rightly seen as Christian. My analysis opens up new ways of readings Lactantius' corpus, and also new ways of understanding how his literary efforts correlate to his significance for Constantine and his policies. I will have more to say about the latter in chapter 4, but first, Eusebius.

Chapter Three: Eusebius, Forming Christians Ready to Respond and Ready to Lead

Introduction

In many ways, Eusebius is quite different from Lactantius. While Lactantius wrote in Latin and lived most of his life, as far as we know, in the western part of the Roman Empire, Eusebius wrote in Greek and lived his entire life in the eastern portion. Lactantius, a layperson who quite rarely refers to topics of ecclesiastical concern (e.g. heresy, sacraments), contrasts sharply with Eusebius, an ecclesiastical figure through and through, a bishop who participated in the major theological disputes of the early fourth century and was an important, if somewhat controversial, figure at the Council of Nicaea. Eusebius' deep immersion in the writings of previous Christians and his composition of extensive biblical commentaries juxtaposes with Lactantius' reticence about quoting or citing Biblical texts. It is no doubt these sorts of differences that have occluded sustained comparison between the two writers.[1] However, though I will not provide extended comparison until the next chapter, a few preliminary remarks about why reading these two together are in order.

Lactantius and Eusebius were contemporaries—probably born around the same time—though Eusebius was likely a little younger than Lactantius and outlived him by about a decade. Both were not only vocal supporters of Constantine but had at least some

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[1] Of course many scholars have discussed Eusebius and Lactantius in tandem, but this is usually because their historical writings constitute some of the only narrative accounts of events in the early 4th century. For instance, Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (San Fransisco: Harper San Fransisco, 1986), 604-608.

degree of proximity to the emperor. Moreover, their writing and thought often attend to the same issues in similar ways. For instance, as I briefly described in the introduction, there are numerous theological and historical overlaps between Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica* and Lactantius' *De mortibus persecutorum,* though the latter is a much more focused historiography that is mostly concerned with the recent Tetrarchic persecution. Both texts contain vignettes of martyrs. Both texts are designed to explain and theologize the relationship of the Church to the Roman Government, especially during periods of conflict. Finally, both texts are concerned with narrating the history of Christianity in a public, political space made intelligible by referring to the providence of the Christian God.

To anticipate somewhat, the works of Christian apologetic writing of Lactantius and Eusebius that are my focus (Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica* and *Demonstratio evangelica* and Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*) also share several commonalities: in length, ambition, strategy, and afterlife.[2] I will discuss this further in the next chapter, but here it suffices to note that both texts provide extended purpose statements and reflections on the Christian practice of responding to outsider critiques and questions (what I am called apologetics)—statements in which they both seek to situate and circumscribe other Christian writings. They also draw heavily, as a central argumentative feature, on citations, quotations, and allusions to texts of the Greco-Roman canon. For obvious reasons, Eusebius uses almost exclusively Greek writers whereas Lactantius almost exclusively uses Latin, but the basic effect is the same. *Apodeixis* and

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[2] As I mentioned in my introduction, when referring to Eusebius' dual work *Praeparatio Evangelica* and *Demonstratio Evangelica* I will usually follow the convention of simply referring to the pair as *Apodeixis.*

the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are both very large texts that contain and provide context for a compendium of citations from other writings. Both contain allusions to, or commentary on, recent socio-political happenings and, I will argue, gesture toward a new Christian political order. Finally, both the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and the *Praeparatio evangelica* with its companion the *Demonstratio evangelica* present themselves as pedagogical texts. I will show that a sustained comparison of these two authors' respective projects grants us a fascinating portrait of what Christian intellectuals were attempting to do with Christian apologetic writing in the Constantinian era: transforming the mode, articulating literary legacies for their texts, and offering unique reflection on how the Christian practice of defense and response could be useful. While there are important differences between the two, one can glimpse in the projects of Christian apologetic writing of Eusebius and Lactantius a need for new hermeneutical and pedagogical strategies designed in part to shape new social and civic identities. One can glimpse a perceived need to transform apologetics for a transforming environment.

In what follows, I will begin by chronologically situating the *Apodeixis* and briefly narrating Eusebius' biography. The nature of the evidence will require that I pay special attention to Eusebius' literary output, but this biographical section will also serve to show how he related to the Constantinian epoch. Like with Lactantius and his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, bearing in mind where Christianity and its leaders fit in Constantine's agenda will help us appreciate the shape and ostensible purpose of Eusebius' *Apodeixis*. After this, I will look briefly at Eusebius' other texts of Christian apologetic writing to demonstrate the significance of the *Apodeixis* amongst this corpus.

This section will suggest that Eusebius' fullest and most important work of Christian apologetic writing is *Apodeixis.* Then I will turn to the *Apodeixis* itself.

My analysis will focus on Eusebius' programmatic statements with occasional references to other parts of the *Apodeixis* and to the text as a whole. While my argument will follow the order of the text, I will also highlight dimensions of Eusebius' framing and purpose that will help us see how Eusebius develops and expands the Christian practice of responding to criticism (apologetics) into a pedagogical program for shaping Christian elite. Eusebius can be prolix and uses a variety of words to label and describe *Apodeixis*, but the overarching rhetorical cast Eusebius gives his text is pedagogical. Eusebius consistently uses language that suggests *Apodeixis* is an educational text designed to teach and shape readers who are in need of intellectual and spiritual formation. Pedagogy implies students and an educational *telos*, therefore my analysis will look at the sort of reader Eusebius envisions for his text. The envisioned reader is not an outsider but a Christian who, from Eusebius' perspective, needs to be shown the "reasonableness" and "demonstrability" of Christianity. They are elite men of a certain literate class who need to know the library of texts Eusebius presents and who also need to know the correct way to interpret these texts *and* how to communicate those interpretations. Eusebius arranges the texts and provides brief comments to prime his students to *use* these texts to "demonstrate" (show and prove) the veracity of Christian teaching. The students formed by the *Apodeixis* will become teachers and guides themselves, vying with religious others in public and guiding other classes in the Christian community.

Eusebius' Biography

It is uncertain exactly when Eusebius was born, but it is certain that it was in the "early 260s or thereabouts" in the city of Caesarea Maritima.[3] There is no direct evidence of his first few decades, but he was likely resident in Caesarea and, from quite early on, closely connected to his mentor, the bishop Pamphilus.[4] Caesarea, named for Caesar Augustus and founded by Herod the Great between 22 and 9 BCE, was an important urban center and administrative hub for Judaea. The city boasted all the amenities and furnishings of a major Roman settlement, including aqueducts, a hippodrome, and a temple dedicated to Roma and Augustus. As Andrew Carriker succinctly writes, "By any measure, Caesarea was a prosperous and sophisticated city."[5] In fact, its entire history from founding until the time of Eusebius can be seen as one of increasing political and cultural importance.[6] With the exception of a few trips to other cities in the Eastern Mediterranean, Eusebius would spend his whole life in Caesarea Maritima.[7] In addition to the amenities of a major metropolitan center in the Roman Empire, it also housed an

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[3] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 94; Aaron P. Johnson, *Eusebius* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 18; see *HE* 7.26.3 for a clue as to Eusebius' age.

[4] Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* 81; because of Eusebius' connection to Pamphilus "the martyr" he was often called "Eusebius Pamphili." Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 94, argues that he was probably formally adopted by Pamphilus. Jerome, *On Illustrious Men,* trans. Thomas P. Halton, FC 100 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999).

[5] Andrew Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1-2. In these pages, Carriker also provides a very thorough discussion of the size and population of Caesarea Maritima.

[6] Joseph Patrich, "Caesarea in the Time of Eusebius," in *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on Literary, Historical, and Theological Issues,* ed. Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni (Leiden: Brill, 2011) 1-3; Alexander Severus had given Caesarea the title "Metropolis Palaestinae."

[7] For instance, at some point he visited Thebaid in Egypt (*HE* 8.4); at another time he delivered a speech in Constantinople, and of course he was present at the Council of Nicaea. For more on Eusebius at Nicaea see Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 214-219.

important and impressive Christian library. After he died in 253 CE, Origen's personal library became the beginning of a collection that would evolve into the famous library in Caesarea.[8] Pamphilus and Eusebius maintained and expanded the collection, with the latter continuing it after Pamphilus' death.[9] The contents of the Library of Caesarea formed the intellectual and textual basis of Eusebius' own literary productions, explaining both their impressive scope and surprising lacunae.[10] Although his early life is largely unknown, his activity as a panegyrist and biographer for Constantine, his voluminous literary output, and his participation in most of the major ecclesiastical conflicts of his time render the second part of his life relatively visible to contemporary scholars.[11]

We know nothing about Eusebius' time as a presbyter aside from a brief mention in his letter to his diocese following the Council of Nicaea, but he was ordained a bishop in 313 CE or shortly thereafter and held this position until his death in 339 CE.[12] During the Tetrarchic Persecution, Pamphilus was arrested and forced to work in the mines until he was eventually killed. Eusebius, for reasons unknown to us, escaped a similar fate and managed to continue visiting Pamphilus even during his sentence of hard labor in the

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[8] Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in Early Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 155-159; Andrew Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea*, 1-36.

[9] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 93-95.

[10] It also had ideological effects on Eusebius' construal of Christian identity; see Jeremy Schott, "Philosophies of Language, Theories of Language, and Imperial Intellectual Production: The Cases of Iamblichus, Porphyry, and Eusebius," *Church History* 78 (2009): 855-861.

[11] Johnson, *Eusebius*, 18, notes the limited biographical use of Eusebius' extant writings. However, knowing what he wrote, when, and for what purpose probably tells us at least *something* about Eusebius' biography. See Michael J. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah: Christian Exegesis in the Age of Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 1.

[12] Johnson, *Eusebius,* 19.

mines.[13] In fact, it was during Pamphilus' time in the mines (probably 308-309 CE) that he and Eusebius co-wrote an *Apologia pro Origine*.[14] Sometime before his ordination to the episcopate, Eusebius also wrote two of his earliest surviving works: *Chronicon* and *Generalis elementaria introductio*. The latter was composed of ten books, only four of which survive. I will have more to say about this text in the next section; suffice to say here that it only partially survived antiquity and in content and purpose seems to anticipate the much longer and more developed *Apodeixis*. The *Chronicon* provided the foundation for the more famous and better preserved *Historia ecclesiastica*. Both the *Chronicon* and *Generalis elementaria introductio* could not have been composed earlier than 306 CE or later than 310 CE, or perhaps, 313 CE.[15] The *Praeparatio evangelica* and *Demonstratio evangelica*, composed as companion pieces and the main works considered in this chapter, must have been written after the defeat of Maximinus Daia in 313 CE, which is referred to in *Praeparatio evangelica*.[16] The date of their completion is far less certain, though some of the language suggests a pre-Nicene period.[17] The normal proposed date of publication for *Praeparatio evangelica* is between 314 CE and 318 CE,

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[13] James Corke-Webster, *Eusebius and Empire: Constructing Church and Rome in the Ecclesiastical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 20-21 mentions the "cloud of suspicion" that surrounded Eusebius (and his library's) avoidance of destruction during the persecution.

[14] The first book of which survives in a Latin translation by Rufinus. See Thomas P. Scheck, trans. *Apology for Origen with On the Falsification of the Books of Origen*, FC 120 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010) 3-31.

[15] Richard Burgess, "The Dates and Editions of Eusebius' *Chronici Canones* and *Historia*" JTS 48 (1997): 471-504; idem, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999).

[16] *PE* 4.2.11. Eusebius, *La Préparation évangélique,* ed. and trans. Jean Sirinelli and Édouard des Places, 9 vols., SC 206, 228, 262, 266, 215, 369, 292, 307, 338 (Paris: Cerf, 1974); Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel,* trans. E.H. Gifford (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).

[17] Johnson, *Eusebius*, 19.

and between 318 CE and 324 CE for the *Demonstratio evangelica*.[18] Thus, taken together, the *Apodeixis* was composed sometime between 314 CE and 324 CE. Finally, Eusebius produced a shortened and reworded version of *Praeparatio evangelica* and *Demonstratio evangelica* in a much shorter text called *Theophania*.[19]

Eusebius was a major player at the Council of Nicaea, and his writings grant invaluable historical evidence into its proceedings. Additionally, the council provides a helpful benchmark for determining when many of Eusebius texts may have been written. Certain words and phrases that fell out of favor after the Council of Nicaea or that sounded particularly subordinationist such as "second god" are notably present in some works (likely to have been written before the council) and absent in others (likely to have been written after the council).[20] Before the Council of Nicaea, in addition to the texts already mentioned, Eusebius wrote *Historia ecclesiastica, Commentaria in psalmos*, and likely his *De martyribus palestinae*. After the council, Eusebius wrote his famous *De laudibus Constantini* (containing the originally distinct *De sepulchro Christi*) and *Vita Constantini* as well as his *Contra Marcellum, Commentaria in Isaiam,* and *De ecclesiastica theologia.* Of less certain date is Eusebius' study-aids, *Canon, Onomasticon*, and the more *ad hoc Quaestiones evangelicae ad Marinum* and *Quaestiones evangelicae ad Stephanum* all of which are designed to assist with serious biblical study.[21] This is not

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[18] Corke-Webster, *Eusebius and Empire,* 42-43n118 summarizes scholarship on dating.

[19] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 186-187, but see also Johnson, *Eusebius,* 46-49.

[20] Lewis Ayers, *Nicaea and Its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 90-91.

[21] Eusebius' study aids were not inert helps to accessing Biblical literature but shaped users understanding of the biblical text. See Jeremiah Coogan, *Eusebius the Evangelist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

to mention the works known to have been composed by Eusebius but which are now lost or exist only in a few fragments.

This tremendous literary output, produced while fulfilling all the duties and obligations of a bishop of an important metropolis, gestures towards two of Eusebius' characteristics of central importance for this study: his interest in producing new forms of Christian scholarships and his focus on pedagogy. As James Corke-Webster writes, "Eusebius was not writing in a vacuum but was deeply rooted in a rich Graeco-Roman heritage and shaped by his Christian pedigree….That influence is evident in his extraordinarily learned, inventive, and interwoven body of work, through which runs a central historical thread and an overarching concern for pedagogy."[22] The portrait of Eusebius that has emerged from this brief, roughly sketched biography of Eusebius the writer, teacher, and bishop contrasts with a prevalent but inaccurate version of Eusebius as primarily a booster or propagandist for Constantine.[23] Eusebius' relationship with Constantine was exaggerated in earlier periods of scholarship in which he was often portrayed as the emperor's "court theologian."[24] In fact, according to Barnes, he only met

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[22] Corke-Webster, *Eusebius and Empire,* 17.

[23] Michael J. Hollerich, "Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First 'Court Theologian,'" 309-325, provides a useful summary and critique of older assessments of Eusebius as a "court theologian" for Constantine. The idea that Constantine and Christian leaders, Eusebius chief among them, cooperated to project a new thoroughly Christian, anti-pagan imperial ideology can still be found in the writings of modern theologians. See for instance Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of Nations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 197-199 and also Oliver O'Donovan and Joan Lockwood, eds., *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999) 49-51.

[24] This phrase may come from Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in which he contends Eusebius was "less tinctured with credibility, and more practiced in the arts of courts, than that of almost any of his contemporaries." *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols. (London: The Folio Society, 1984), 2.197.

the emperor four times.[25] That Eusebius was not a mere propagandist or imperial lackey should make us attentive to the way he projects, shapes, and narrates Rome and its political actors. It should also make us hesitant to assume a tremendous disjunction between what is purported in earlier texts and Eusebius' later, more overtly pro-Constantinian texts. Nevertheless, although his direct political influence was likely minimal, at least in his lifetime, Eusebius' indirect influence on theological and political disclosure was, and is, considerable.

Eusebius' Corpus of Christian Apologetic Writing

There is not agreement amongst contemporary scholars on which of Eusebius' works to categorize as apologetic.[26] While there are several texts that are unanimously regarded as apologetic (e.g., *Apodeixis, Generalis elementaria introductio*), there are others (e.g., *De sepulchro Christi*, *Historia ecclesiastica*) whose apologetic character is a subject of disagreement. As I described earlier, there's been some debate about Christian apologetic writing and how it should be identified so it is probably not surprising that there isn't uniformity in opinion about the works of Eusebius and their participation in this mode. Rather than attempting to adjudicate where this mode might be appearing in Eusebius' work, I will briefly consider the works generally thought to either anticipate or borrow from *Praeparatio evangelica* and *Demonstratio evangelica: Contra Hieroclem,*

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[25] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 266-327.

[26] Sabrina Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 13-14; Aryeh Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Johnson, *Eusebius*, 25. For an older list see Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3 (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1960).

Contra Porphyrium, Generalis elementaria introductio, Theophania, and *De sepulchro Christi.* In so doing, I will grant a sense of the sorts of arguments and themes that are most important in Eusebius' apologetic writing and also suggest, with many other interpreters, that *Apodeixis* is definitive for Eusebius.[27]

Contra Hieroclem and *Contra Porphyrium*, while both generally accepted as examples of Christian apologetic writing, are not particularly helpful in analyzing Eusebius' works of Christian apologetic writing. The *Contra Hieroclem* written by one Eusebius to answer Sossianus Hierocles' *Lover of Truth* is an object of some controversy.[28] Whether this text was written by Eusebius of Caesarea or a different, otherwise unknown Eusebius, and then incorrectly transmitted with texts by the bishop of Caesarea is a subject of considerable, unresolved debate. Tomas Hägg and Aaron Johnson have argued *Contra Hieroclem* was written by a different Eusebius while Salvatore Borzì, Christopher Jones, Federico Montinaro and Lisa Neumann have argued for its authenticity.[29] It is a relatively short text, stylistically quite different from anything else Eusebius wrote, and it is not referenced or referred to anywhere else in Eusebius' extant

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[27] Ibid. 174-175; Aaron Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 12-13; Lorenzo Perrone, "Eusebius of Caesarea as a Christian Writer," in *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millenia,* ed. Avner Raban and Kenneth G. Holum (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 515-530; Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 137; *Apodeixis* is also Eusebius' longest by far. It is thirty-five books to the the now lost *Contra Porphyrium's* twenty-five.

[28] Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors,* 13.

[29]Tomas Hägg, "Hierocles the Lover of Truth and Eusebius the Sophist," *Symbolae Osloenses* 67 (1992): 138–150; Aaron P. Johnson, "The Author of the *Against Hierocles*: A Response to Borzí and Jones," JTS 64 (2013): 574-594; Timothy D. Barnes, "Scholarship or Propaganda? Porphyry Against the Christians and Its Historical Setting," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 39 (1994): 60n35 accepts Hägg's argument; Salvatore Borzì, "Sull' autenticità del *Contra Hieroclem* di Eusebio de Cesarea," *Augustinianum* 43 (2003): 397–416; Christopher P. Jones, "Apollonius of Tyana in Late Antiquity," in *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didactism, Classicism,* ed. Scott F. Johnson (London: Routledge, 2006) 49–64; Federico Montinaro and Lisa Neumann, "Eusebius was the author of the *Contra Hieroclem," Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum / Journal of Ancient Christianity* 22 (2018): 322–326.

works or in Jerome's list of Eusebius' works in *De viri illustribus*. The text is really only a response to one portion of Hierocles' text: the comparison of Jesus to Apollonius of Tyana, a comparison in which Jesus comes out looking inferior. Because of its controversial status and the uncertainty around its authorship, I will not be considering it any further.

The twenty-five book *Contra Porphyrium* has not survived antiquity, but was a response to Porphyry's *Philosophy from Oracles* and/or his *Against the Christians*.[30] Porphyry's philosophy and his reasons for criticizing Christianity, not to mention the apparent shift in his evaluation of Jesus between *Philosophy from Oracles* to *Against the Christians,* are important issues that are relevant to understanding much of Eusebius' work.[31] While some have argued, or simply assumed, that Porphyry's work is the implicit target of virtually all of Eusebius' Christian apologetic writing, several scholars have more recently taken Eusebius' response to Porphyry to have been mostly contained in the *Contra Porphyrium* and the extant works to be only occasionally or tangentially responding to Porphyry as one of many anti-Christian polemicists.[32] In any case, both Porphyry's attack on the Christians and Eusebius' rebuttal in *Contra Porphyrium* have

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[30] Mentioned by Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 81; see also Sébastien Morlet, "Eusebius' Polemic Against Porphyry: A Reassessment," in *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on Literary, Historical, and Theological Issues,* ed. Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 119-150.

[31] Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 8-9, 164-169; Aaron P. Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 24-29, 277-280.

[32] Robert Lee Williams, "Eusebius on Porphyry's 'Polytheistic Error,'" in *Reading Religion in the Ancient World: Essays Presented to Robert McQueen Grant on His 90th Birthday,* eds. David Edward Aune and Robin Darling Young (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 273-288; Jeremy Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 136-154; Morlet, "Eusebius' Polemic Against Porphyry"; Johnson, *Eusebius*, 28-29.

been lost save a few fragments. It is impossible to know what genre, framing, or stated goals Eusebius may have had in this text. I will make occasional reference to Porphyry insofar as that is significant for evaluating the *Apodeixis*, but, as the nature of the case demands, the *Contra Porphyrium* itself will remain essentially unanalyzed in this study.

Generalis elementaria introductio may have been Eusebius' earliest work but only four of its ten books, and fragments of one more, have survived antiquity. In genre, it is a handbook to a particular way of life and set of doctrines, like handbooks of philosophy.[33] It is impossible to know with certainty exactly what the contents of the *Generalis elementaria introductio* are in their entirety since only books 6-9 survive complete, but we know the first five books had something to do with "testimonies concerning our Lord and savior Jesus Christ" that were presented through "clear, trustworthy, and truthful demonstrations and syllogisms" and made only a few references to the "divine writings believed in by both us and the Jews."[34] In contrast to what the first five books were apparently about, the four surviving books (sometimes referred to in English as *The Prophetic Selections*) are a catalogue of citations from the Hebrew Bible accompanied by

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[33] Johnson, *Eusebius,* 54-63; Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002), 172; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 167-168; Alcinious, *Handbook of Platonism*, trans. John Dillon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) is an example of such a handbook. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 167-174, describes books 5-9, the only portions to survive in their entirety and often titled *Eclogae propheticae* in modern scholarship. Book ten can be mostly reconstructed from fragments contained in "a catena of patristic comments on Luke compiled by Nicetas of Heraclea in the eleventh century." Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 167-168.

[34] Eusebius, *Generalis elementaria introductio* 6.1. Λόγου τε καὶ βίου διεξοδευθεῖσα τὰς περὶ τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μαρτυρίας, δι' ἐναργῶν καὶ πιστῶν καὶ ἀληθῶν ἀποδείξεών τε καὶ συλλογισμῶν ἐπιστοῦτο, βραχείαις κομιδῇ ταῖς ἀπὸ τῶν παρά τε Ἰουδαίοις καὶ ἡμῖν πεπιστευμένων θείων γραφῶν ἐπὶ τέλει χρησαμένη μαρτυρίαις. Greek text from *Patrologia Graeca,* ed. Jean-Paul Migne, vol. 22, Series Graecae (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1857) in which the extant books 6-9 of *Generalis elementaria introductio* are contained under the title *Eclogae propheticae*. For analysis of what the content and goal of the first five books may have been see Aaron P. Johnson, "Eusebius the Educator: The Context of the *General Elementary Introduction"* in *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on Literary, Historical, and Theological Issues,* ed. Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99-118.

Eusebius' Christocentric interpretations. The structure of *Generalis elementaria introductio* mirrors the structure of *Apodeixis*. It begins with general arguments or evidence pointing to Christianity (as in *Praeparatio evangelica*) and concludes with interpretations of the Hebrew Bible attempting to prove the veracity of Christianity and to prove that Scripture does not belong to Judaism. Thus the *Generalis elementaria introductio* may stand as a precursor, perhaps even a first draft, of what we find more fully developed in the *Apodeixis*.

The *Theophania* is a different case. This five-book work is based on the earlier, and considerably longer, *Apodeixis*.[35] Nevertheless, in the *Theophania*, Eusebius is writing a different kind of text for a different context and for a different purpose.[36] Other than some Greek fragments, the *Theophania* has survived only in a Syriac translation.[37] The *Theophania* contains no opening programmatic statement and is far less clear about purpose and internal audience than most of Eusebius' other works—especially the diptych upon which it was based. Nevertheless, the arc of Eusebius' argument in these five books is relatively clear and there are occasional moments when he gives some glimpse of his purpose and goal in composing the text. Book one describes and elaborates on the Logos as creator and image of God. In this book, Eusebius explains the basic

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[35] Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism,* 278. "Eusebius' motive in writing *The Theophany* may have been to present the enormous undertaking of the dual composition (*The Preparation for the Gospel* and *Demonstration of the Gospel*) in a more accessible form for the wider public." Samuel Lee, *Eusebius of Caesarea, on the Theophania or Divine Manifestation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (Cambridge: Duncan and Malcolm, 1843), xxi-xxii, is alone in arguing that the *Theophania* was a short work later expanded into the considerably longer *Apodeixis*.

[36] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius,* 186-188; Johnson, *Eusebius*, 47.

[37] Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 187; the only English translation and introduction was composed by Samuel Lee, *Eusebius of Caesarea, on the Theophania or Divine Manifestation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

duality of creation (spiritual and physical) and argues for the necessity of an intermediary between the supreme God (the author of providence, another subject of the book) and the supreme God's creation. Book two describes the state of affairs that has followed from not obeying the seeds of the Logos implanted in every rational soul. Humans were corrupted by demons who masqueraded as gods and who also instituted animal sacrifice and wars—among other things. However, once Roman hegemony had created a measure of political unity and peace, the time was ripe for the Logos to appear.[38] These first two books reproduce arguments (sometimes word for word) from the *Praeparatio evangelica*.[39] Book three begins by looking at the effects of Christ's coming: peace, prosperity, the end of Christian persecution, the remarkable victory of the Church despite persecution. The evidence for these effects have only been gradually unfolding after the incarnation and into Eusebius' own time. The second half of the book deals with possible objections to the incarnation, passion, and resurrection, each of which is described as soteriologically and epistemologically necessary. Book four catalogs and explains the prophecies of Jesus that were fulfilled in his lifetime or in subsequent history. Book five, largely repeating *Demonstratio evangelica* 3.3-7, refutes the charge that Jesus and the apostles were magicians or frauds.

Despite numerous similarities between *Theophania* and the *Apodeixis*, some of the structure and rhetorical goals (insofar as this can be determined) are different for

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[38] E.g. *Theophania,* 2.65.

[39] Hugo Gressmann, *Studien zu Eusebs Theophanie* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1903), 143-147, in the form of tables, provides the parallels between *Theophania* and its Greek fragments*, Apodeixis*, and *HE*; Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism,* 278.

these two works. In content, there is a shift in how the two texts treat the figure of Plato. There is a three-book discussion of Plato in *Praeparatio evangelica* that lists and describes the numerous parallels between his writings and Hebrew literature—due, of course, to Plato's borrowing from the "barbarian philosophy" of the Hebrews.[40] While there is debate about exactly how positive Eusebius was toward Plato in *Praeparatio evangelica*, no such debate is possible for *Theophania*.[41] In the latter work, Plato's proximity to the truth actually makes him more worthy of condemnation as a disingenuous deceiver and Eusebius says as much.[42] Further, Kofsky notes that the *Pax Romana* is a far more central feature of the *Theophania* than the *Apodeixis*.[43] This does not imply, as Kofsky seems to assume, that the *Apodeixis* is less political or more abstract than the *Theophania*, but in terms of relative length of consideration Kofsky is correct. The Christological focus of *Theophania* is another unique feature. Even while it borrows arguments, phrases, and whole passages from its predecessor, it puts many of those arguments to a new use as evidence for the incarnation.[44] Additionally, there is markedly less interest in the Hebrew Bible and considerably more focus on the fulfillment of

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[40] *PE* 11-13.

[41] Johnson, *Eusebius,* 33-35 believes Plato to be generally an object of approbation in *PE* and reads Eusebius' praise as "only partly persuasive." Édouard de Places, "Eusèbe de Césarée juge de Platon dans la Préparation Evangélique," in *Mélanges de Philosophie Grecque* (Paris: Vrin, 1956) 69-77, and Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism,* 282-286, argue for a far more positive description of Plato in PE. Indeed, where Johnson sees the praise of Plato as "only partly persuasive," it could be said Kofsky and de Places see Eusebius' criticisms as "only partly persuasive."

[42] *Theophania* 2.30-46 (Lee, 97-105).

[43] Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism,* 286-287.

[44] Johnson, *Eusebius*, 47-48.

prophecies ostensibly made by Jesus. In fact, almost the entire subject of *Theopania* book four is Jesus' prophecies and their fulfillment.

There are some unknowns about the relationship between *Theophania* and *Apodeixis*. For instance, the former, especially in books 3-5, follows and reproduces arguments from *Demonstratio evangelica*, while also containing some large sections of seemingly unique material. However, it is entirely possible, indeed likely, that some of this seemingly unique material is from the missing books of *Demonstratio evangelica*. Kofsky attempts to infer the content of some of these arguments, but generally he is only able to speculate in broad strokes.[45] Regardless of some particular questions and uncertainties, *Theophania* is a reworking and condensing of the *Apodeixis* designed to prove the veracity, necessity, and character of the incarnation, passion, and resurrection. And, despite some different focuses and themes, the main arc of the argument is the same as can be seen by simply noting that *Praeparatio evangelica* is the primary source for *Theophania* books 1-2 and *Demonstratio evangelica* for books 3-5.

De sepulchro Christi is a similar composition to the *Theophania*: a condensing and reworking of the *Apodeixis* but for a new audience and with new rhetorical goals. However, *De sepulchro Christi* is a markedly different example of the rhetorical work the content of *Apodeixis* could do, well beyond its original context. *De sepulchro Christi* has come down to us as one part of a work normally titled *De laudibus Constantini*, in which

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[45] Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism,* 294-311.

it is imperfectly stitched together with Eusebius' *Oratio tricennalis*.[46] The latter is a panegyric for Constantine and his sons in Constantinople to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of Constantine's elevation to the imperial purple. The *Oratio tricennalis* contains a few of the same themes and arguments as the *De sepulchro Christi,* but has different concerns and was delivered at a manifestly different occasion. *De sepulchro Christi* is also written for Constantine, and focuses on his patronage and building projects for the Church, especially the Church of the Holy Sepulcher built on the site of Christ's tomb. Like in the *Oratio tricennalis,* Eusebius' Logos theology and narrative of decline are prominent, but unlike in the earlier oration, which is largely a meditation on the mimetic relationship of the highest God, Logos, and earthly monarch, *De Sepulchro Christi* is primarily an answer to charges by critics of Constantine's construction of churches.[47] These critics of Constantine's architectural projects are called by Eusebius "those ignorant of divine things" (οἱ τῶν θείων ἀγνώμονες) and their complaints are introduced in the beginning of the oration.[48] These people claim that either reverence of corpses should be disallowed or, all things being equal, Christ's tomb should hold no more important a place than the tomb of any other deified hero.[49] The basic arc of

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[46] In his translation and introduction, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Oration*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975), 30-45; H.A. Drake definitively argued that the single *De laudibus Constantini* is actually two speeches stitched together: Eusebius' *Oratio tricennalis* delivered in Constantinople and *De sepulchro Christi* delivered in Jerusalem shortly thereafter. Both orations were partially rewritten, mostly at the end of the former and beginning of the latter, perhaps by Eusebius himself, to help the two disparate texts fit with one another.

[47] Although in *De sepulchro Christi* 16, the synchronous arrival of the Church and the Roman Empire are features of Eusebius' argument.

[48] *De sepulchro Christi* 11.3 (Heikel, 224; ET Drake, 103); Eusebius, *Über das Leben Constantins. Constantins Rede an die heilige Versammlung. Tricennatsrede an Constantin,* ed. I.A. Heikel, vol. 1, Eusebius Werke (Berlin: J. C. Hinrichs 1902).

[49] Ibid., 11.4.

Eusebius' response is similar to *Theophania* and thus similar to the basic arc of *Apodeixis*. Because of their descent into worse and worse forms of error and demon worship, the Logos descended to live amongst humans as a human.[50] The passion of the Logos' human form served to demonstrate his power over death and to be a sacrifice for the sin of polytheism.[51] The *Pax Romana*, the miraculous spread of Christianity, the destruction of persecutors, and the building of remarkable church buildings are all evidence of the reality and efficacy of the Logos' incarnation, death, and resurrection.[52] Hebrew Scripture and the prophecies of Christ clearly foretold the current state of affairs thus demonstrating both the truth of these Scriptures and their proper status as belonging to Christians.[53] Eusebius ends his oration by addressing Constantine directly as he did briefly in the opening. Constantine, Eusebius says, probably had no need for this long explanation since he has direct experience of the Logos guiding and communicating with him.[54] Nevertheless, Eusebius closes by reminding Constantine of the ways and means the Logos has used to lead him: a final, indirect evidence of the truth of the Logos' incarnation and the fittingness of the new church building.

De sepulchro Christi is an appropriate oration with which to end my discussion of Eusebius' works of Christian apologetic writing because it sits on the margins between

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[50] Ibid., 13-14. Chapter 12 is Eusebius' explanation for the necessity of the Logos as a meditator between the highest God and creation.

[51] Ibid., 15.

[52] Ibid., 16-17.

[53] Ibid., 16.

[54] Ibid., 18.

works normally understood to be “apologetic” and works of a different character or genre. The oration was clearly delivered in the presence of Constantine and one could easily argue it is best categorized as a panegyric. Praise of Constantine bookends the piece, and the oration's stated purpose is to justify and explain Constantine’s actions. Nevertheless, after the opening, Constantine quickly fades from the oration and only briefly reappears in its conclusion. Instead, Eusebius defends the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher even as he uses its construction as an argument in favor of the truth of Christianity. The story of humanity’s fall into worse and worse forms of polytheism, the concomitant necessity of the incarnation, and the prophetic and historical evidence for its occurrence, are here deployed to praise and justify Constantine and his building project.

This survey illustrates that Eusebius’ *Apodeixis* is not merely one text amongst several in his corpus. It is the longest and most developed statement of a basic argumentative arc first developed in *Generalis elementaria introductio* and reused in later works such as *Theophania* and *De Sepulchro Christi*. Beyond the basic argumentative arc, specific passages were often reproduced in their entirety for later works as can be seen in *Theophania*. The *Apodeixis* represents, in size and significance, something central or definitive in Eusebius’ corpus. This is true not only in terms of length and sophistication, but also in terms of the influence this text had on Eusebius’ later writings. Thus, although Eusebius’ theological language and concerns would shift over time, the *Apodeixis* stands as something close to a definitive statement for Eusebius. To grasp

Eusebius' ideas about Christian apologetic writing, and to see the uses to which he thought it could be put, one is best served by looking at the *Apodeixis*.

The remainder of this chapter will primarily focus only on a few portions of the *Apodeixis*. Most of the exegesis will center on Eusebius' programmatic statements in which he summarizes the content of the work, describes his goal, and explains his methodology. A majority of the *Apodeixis* is lengthy, usually verbatim quotations from other texts. As fruitful as it is to consider the placement of these citations and Eusebius' (usually brief) commentary surrounding them, paying close attention to how Eusebius frames the work in his purpose statements is central to any attempt to understand what the overall goals of the text may be. These programmatic statements provide a lens for reading the *Apodeixis.* The ethno-religious character of the argument made in the *Apodeixis* (addressing the question,"If Christians aren't Jews or Greeks, what are they?") has been central to some influential recent analysis of it—especially the first volume of the diptych, *Praeparatio evangelica*.[55] In what follows, I will argue that the ethnic reasoning of the text, dovetailing with its pedagogical character, amounts to a kind of transformation of apologetics. For Eusebius, Christian writing that attends to the questions or critiques of outsiders becomes a tool for shaping a new kind of influential and educated Christian—an elite class amongst the wider Christian community. I will now turn to the *Apodeixis*, I will argue that Eusebius suggests he has an ambitious goal in

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[55] In particular, Aaron Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica*; but also Sébastien Morlet, *La 'Démonstration évangélique' d'Eusèbe de Césarée: Étude sur l'apologétique chrétienne à l'époque de Constantin,* Collection des études Augustiniennes, Série antiquité (Paris: Institut d'études Augustiniennes, 2009) has suggested some similar themes may be present in the DE. The reading of both texts together in ethno-religious terms was anticipated in Eugene V. Gallagher, "Eusebius the Apologist: The Evidence of the *Preparation* and the *Proof*," StPatr 26 (1993): 251-260.

composing it. In this text, Eusebius is seeking to create a pedagogical text designed to articulate and form a new elite class of educated Christian equipped to engage with non-Christian and anti-Christian elites. I will argue that this ambitious goal involves transforming and conceptualizing Christian apologetics as reaching its latent potential in just such a project.

Praeparatio evangelica 1.1

Periodically through the course of both the *Praeparatio evangelica* and *Demonstratio evangelica*, Eusebius pauses to re-explain his project and remind his readers where in the voluminous *Apodeixis* they are. At these points of orientation, Eusebius situates his text amongst previous Christian texts and anti-Christian complaints, and/or reexplains his method and purpose. Much of my analysis attends to these sites as they most clearly show how Eusebius is casting his text. The first of these moments of orientation is, predictably, at the beginning of book one of *Praeparatio Evangelica*. Here he begins with a dedication and an introduction to the entire *Apodeixis* before turning more directly to a discussion of the goal and purpose of the first volume, the *Praeparatio.* I will begin by considering this prologue and what it says about the entire work before turning to the *Praeparatio evangelica* and *Demonstratio evangelica* individually.

What Sort of Thing Is This Text? Defining Terms and the Introduction of Pedagogical Rhetoric: 1.1.1

Praeparatio evangelica 1.1.1 is an introduction not only to the *Praeparatio*, but also to the entire diptych.[56] He begins by dedicating his work to Theodotus, bishop of Laodicea, who had a close relationship with Eusebius and whose fortunes were later tied to his during the controversies leading up to the Council of Nicaea.[57] Praise of Theodotus and admonition for his assistance via prayer is, at least according to number of words used, the primary focus of this opening paragraph. However, in dedicating the treatise, Eusebius also provides a few one word designations for his work and a terse explanation of his goal.

> While leading the ignorant (τοῖς οὐκ εἰδόσι) with regard to Christianity, namely what sort of thing it is, through the treatise (πραγματείας) at hand, which promises to include the Evangelical Demonstration (τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἀπόδειξιν), I have dedicated this work to you, Theodotus, divine treasure among bishops, God-beloved and holy head, if somehow I might gain help from you, by godly sacrifices for us helping me accomplish great things in the material set forth (ὑπόθεσιν) of the evangelical teaching (τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς διδασκαλίας).[58]

The proposed text is a "treatise" (πραγματεία), encompassing "the Evangelical Demonstration" (τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἀπόδειξιν), and a "setting forth" (ὑπόθεσις) of the

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[56] The manuscripts include tables of contents beginning each book. The tables were probably composed by Eusebius as an aid for his readers, who would be managing this very long and intricate text. See Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 182-183. The portion of book 1 consider here is titled Τίς ἡ τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς ὑποθέσεως ἐπαγγελία (SC 206, 94-95).

[57] *HE* 7.32.23.

[58] *PE* I.1.1-2 (SC 206, 96-97, my translation). Τὸν χριστιανισμόν, ὅ τι ποτέ ἐστιν, ἡγούμενος τοῖς οὐκ εἰδόσι παραστήσασθαι διὰ τῆς προκειμένης πραγματείας τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἀπόδειξιν περιέξειν ἐπαγγελλομένης, τήνδε σοι, θεῖον ἐπισκόπων χρῆμα, Θεόδοτε, φίλη θεοῦ καὶ ἱερὰ κεφαλή, σὺν εὐχαῖς ἐπεφώνησα, εἴ πως ἄρα τῆς παρὰ σοῦ τύχοιμι βοηθείας, ταῖς φιλοθέοις ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἱερουργίαις τὰ μεγάλα μοι συμπράττοντος εἰς τὴν προβεβλημένην τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς διδασκαλίας ὑπόθεσιν. The phrase ὅ τι ποτέ ἐστιν evokes philosophical rhetoric (e.g., Plato, Meno 71B) and may anticipate Eusebius' arguments in the last five books of the *Praeparatio.* Compare Plato, *Meno* 71b (LCL, 266-277) in Plato, *Laches. Protagoras. Meno. Euthydemus,* trans. W.R.M. Lamb, LCL 165 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924).

"evangelical teaching" (τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς διδασκαλίας) being "set forth" so as to lead "the ignorant" (οἱ οὐκ εἰδότες) "with regard to Christianity." This opening sentence uses suggestive but somewhat vague words to designate *Apodeixis*. Πραγματεία, for instance, is a word that can denote a literary production of numerous genres on philosophical, scientific, or historical subjects. The bit of specificity provided in the introduction lies in the references to the content of the work as τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἀπόδειξιν, and as a planned presentation τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς διδασκαλίας. The former phrase, τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἀπόδειξιν, is the title of the second volume. Eusebius implies that it is, in some sense, the true or ultimate goal of his writing and that Theodotus can expect the project to include this most essential demonstration.[59] The work as a whole, however, is a presentation τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς διδασκαλίας. This phrase remains nebulous in the introduction, but its combination with the "demonstration" points to an important conjunction for Eusebius: "teaching" and "proof." For the sake of the ignorant, he will demonstrate the gospel, which will simultaneously form a part of teaching the gospel. The phrase "the ignorant" (οἱ οὐχ εἰδότες) gives the first indication of the internal audience Eusebius is constructing. "The ignorant" is a somewhat vague identification, but one that indicates persons in need of education. In particular, persons who are ignorant of "Christianity," but exactly who that means is left undefined at this point.[60] They could be a true outsider, ignorant and hostile, perhaps a recent convert who does not know exactly "what kind of

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[59] Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism,* 74, correctly notes that the "Preparation" receives its name by being a preliminary work that clears the way for the more central "Demonstration," but he seems to misread Eusebius when he suggests that the entire diptych is titled "Demonstration of the Gospel." If this were meant to be an all-encompassing title, why would Eusebius tell Theodotus that his present work would include or encompass τὴν εὐαγγελικὴν ἀπόδειξιν?

[60] This phrase is perhaps reminiscent of *De sepulchro Christi* 11.3, οἱ τῶν θείων ἀγνώμονες (Heikel, 224).

thing" Christianity is, or even someone who has been part of the faith for some time but who lacks articulable knowledge of Christianity. This is a work designed to offer the gospel and its demonstration to those who, in some sense, do not know it.[61]

I have described this opening sentence as "vague" and "unspecific." However, although at this point the text could theoretically go in several directions, there are strong hints of the pedagogical purpose and identity Eusebius will develop in the following sections. Since he is writing for those who "don't know" there is at least an implication that his text is designed to meet a deficit in knowledge. Similarly, the text is a presentation of "evangelical teaching," another indication that the *Apodeixis* is being positioned as a pedagogical text. This introduction also includes the important word "demonstration," here qualified by "evangelical," that will be a central literary identity in the text.

The Gospel: Ancient, Universal, and Demonstrable: 1.1.2-9

Eusebius follows this first sentence with a definition of the "gospel."[62] With reputable philosophical thinkers, and as Moses does in the Pentateuch according to book eleven, Eusebius will define his first principles and key terms before beginning in earnest.[63] The gospel, according to Eusebius in this passage, is the announcement of the appearance of the greatest blessings for souls possessing intellectual being (τὰ δὲ ψυχαῖς

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[61] Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 137, claims this passage implies that the *Apodeixis* is designed to respond to "any and all critics of Christianity," though most of Schott's interpretation sees Eusebius almost exclusively focused on Porphyry and his attacks on Christianity.

[62] *PE* 1.1.2-8.

[63] *PE* 1.4.4.

νοερὰν οὐσίαν κεκτημέναις φίλα τε καὶ προσήγορα): chief amongst those blessings is "true piety."[64] This piety is a gazing upon God, the creator of everything, a gazing that is accompanied by concomitant friendship with God.[65] Friendship with God, created through piety, is "proclaimed" by the Word to all people regardless of their class, ethnic background, and gender: the one Father brings one blessing to all of humanity, who share in one nature.[66] This was fundamentally what the appearance of the Word entailed—a proclamation of friendship with its Father.[67] The words of Paul from two letters are quoted here to elaborate and explain this point. Eusebius writes, "'For God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not reckoning their trespasses against them,' as the divine oracles teach, 'When he came,' they say, 'he preached peace to those far away and peace to those near.'"[68] In addition to contributing to the scholastic quality of the work, this definition also presents the gospel as "proclaimed." By this I mean, the gospel is here a series of claims (e.g. the appearing of the Word) and an implicit exhortation to a spiritual/moral program (e.g. "true piety"). This is distinct from any sort of

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[64] *PE* 1.1.2-3 (SC 206, 96-99, my translation). Εἴη δ' ἂν τούτων τὸ κεφάλαιον εὐσέβεια, οὐχ ἡ ψευδώνυμος καὶ πολυπλανής, ἀλλ' ἡ σὺν ἀληθείᾳ τὴν προσηγορίαν ἐπιγραφομένη. "Now the chief of these blessing must be religion, not that which is falsely so called and full of error, but that which makes a true claim to the title."

[65] *PE* 1.1.3.

[66] *PE* 1.1.6-7 (SC 206, 98-101; ET Gifford, 3).

[67] *PE* 1.1.8 (SC 206, 100-101, my translation). Ταύτην ὁ Χριστοῦ λόγος ἦκε τὴν πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ πατέρα φιλίαν τὸν σύμπαντα κόσμον εὐαγγελιούμενος. "Christ's word came proclaiming to the whole world this friendship with his Father."

[68] *PE* 1.1.8 (SC 206, 100-101; ET Gifford, 3). Θεὸς γὰρ ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ, μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα ᾗ τὰ θεῖα διδάσκει λόγια, ἐλθών τε, φησίν, εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην τοῖς μακράν, εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς. Quoting 2 Corinthians 5:19 and Ephesians 2:17.

"demonstration" that will require presentation of testimony and logical argumentation. The definition of the gospel is necessarily related to, and distinct from, its demonstration.

Nevertheless, defining the gospel quickly begins to move toward proving its veracity. Eusebius must also make clear its demonstrability and, correlatively, its antiquity. The gospel can be shown as true, and this showing is partly possible because of the number of ancient testimonies. Thus, in the next sentence, he claims that the same things were similarly announced long before the appearing of the Word by the "sons of the Hebrews."[69] He writes,

> These things the children of the Hebrews were long ago inspired to prophesy to the whole world, one crying, "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the LORD, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him: for the kingdom is the LORD'S, and He is the ruler over the nations"; and again, "Tell it out among the heathen that the LORD is king, for He hath also established the world, which shall not be moved"; and another saith, "The LORD will appear among them, and will completely destroy all the gods of the nations of the earth, and men shall worship Him, every one from his place."[70]

The introduction to "the Hebrews" comes with three quotations from the Hebrew Bible: Psalm 22:27-28, Psalm 96:10, and Zephaniah 2:11. All of these passages are oracular sayings predicting a universal, pan-ethnic turning to "the Lord" and, at least in the case of the Zephaniah quotation, a prediction that "the Lord" would also "completely destroy all the gods of the nations." These quotations from Scripture begin to anticipate

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[69] *PE* 1.1.9 (SC 206, 100-101; ET Gifford, 3-4).

[70] *PE* 1.1.9 (SC 206, 100-101; ET Gifford, 3-4). Ταῦτα πρόπαλαι παῖδες Ἑβραίων θεοφορούμενοι τῷ σύμπαντι κόσμῳπροεθέσπιζον. ὁ μέν τις βοῶν μνησθήσονται καὶ ἐπιστραφήσονται πρὸς κύριον πάντα τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς, καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ πᾶσαι αἱ πατριαὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν, ὅτι τοῦ κυρίου ἡ βασιλεία, καὶ αὐτὸς δεσπόζει τῶν ἐθνῶν· καὶ πάλιν· εἴπατε ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὅτι κύριος ἐβασίλευσε· καὶ γὰρ κατώρθωσε τὴν οἰκουμένην, ἥτις οὐ σαλευθήσεται· ὁ δὲ φάσκων ἐπιφανήσεται κύριος ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐξολοθρεύσει πάντας τοὺς θεοὺς τῶν ἐθνῶν τῆς γῆς, καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτῷ ἕκαστος ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτοῦ.

the method and the specific plan of the work. The words of the Hebrews quoted here divinely, if somewhat less clearly, proclaimed truths that are now spread abroad amongst all people as they are announced by the recently appearing Word.[71] The *Apodeixis* will be a work heavy on quotation and chronological argumentation, and these two features appear here for the first time.

Thus this introductory section that defines the gospel and introduces Hebrew Scripture (which opaquely announces the same gospel) serves two important functions. First, it delineates the content of the gospel. The rest of the treatise will mostly assume this definition (rather than articulating it again), thus this opening section serves to settle a persistently important term. Second, it anticipates several important themes and concepts for the rest of the *Apodeixis*. It begins the delineation of different classes or kinds of people, and introduces the ethnic argumentation that will be central in the following books. The negotiation of these differences and the articulation of a new kind of elite will be important part of what Eusebius does later.

However, the fulfillment of prophecy in the coming of the Word and the establishment of the Church is properly the subject of the *Demonstratio evangelica*—properly the "middle of the argument," Eusebius writes.[72] First, he needs to say more about the first volume, the *Praeparatio*, and a bit more about the overall plan for his *Apodeixis*.

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[71] *PE* 1.1.10.

[72] *PE* 1.1.11 (SC 206, 102-103; ET Gifford, 4). Ἀλλὰ γὰρ τί χρὴ σπεύδειν φθάνοντα τῇ προθυμίᾳ τὴν τῶν διὰ μέσου λόγων ἀκολουθίαν, ἀναλαβεῖν ἐξ ὑπαρχῆς δέον καὶ τὰ ἐμποδὼν ἅπαντα διαλύσασθαι; "But why should we hasten on to anticipate in our eagerness the due order of intermediate arguments, when we ought to take up the subject from the beginning, and clear away all objections?"

A Pedagogical Program Shaped around the Questions of Greeks and "Those of the Circumcision": 1.1.9-12

This passage is important in making clear the fundamental connection between answering the questions of outsiders (i.e., apologetics), and Eusebius' pedagogical agenda in *Apodeixis*. He designates the *Praeparatio evangelica* as an appropriate "introduction" (ὑπαρχή). In part, it will answer the objection that Christians are irrational and depend only on faith.[73] Eusebius writes,

> With good reason therefore, in setting myself down to this treatise on the *Demonstration of the Gospel*, I think that I ought, as a preparation for the whole subject, to give brief explanations beforehand concerning the questions which may reasonably be put to us both by Greeks and by those of the Circumcision, and by every one who searches with exact inquiry into the opinions held among us.[74]

At this point Eusebius anticipates his central organizing principle developed more fully in the next chapter, the dual objections of critics of Christianity. The *Apodeixis* will respond to the objections of both "Greeks" and "those of the circumcision" and by any who search carefully for the doctrines of the Christians.[75] The pan-ethnic character of the claims of the Gospel articulated before via quotations from both the Pauline corpus and the Hebrew Bible is paralleled here in a similarly pan-ethnic articulation of questions or

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[73] *PE* 1.1.11; cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.9. Origen, *Contra Celsum,* trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

[74] *PE* 1.1.11 (SC 206, 102-103; ET Gifford, 4). Εἰκότως ἐπὶ τήνδε καθεὶς τὴν πραγματείαν τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς ἀποδείξεως, εἰς προκατασκευὴν τῆς ὅλης ὑποθέσεως ἡγοῦμαι δεῖν βραχέα προδιαλαβεῖν περὶ τῶν ζητηθέντων ἂν πρὸς ἡμᾶς εὐλόγως ὑπό τε Ἑλλήνων καὶ τῶν ἐκ περιτομῆς παντός τε τοῦ μετὰ ἀκριβοῦς ἐξετάσεως τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς διερευνωμένου.

[75] Ibid. The specifics of this complaint occupy the majority of the next chapter of the *Praeparatio evangelica*.

criticisms that all kinds of *ethnoi* may have for Christians. In the following sentence, Eusebius gives a further designation for his literary project writing,

> For in this way I think my argument will proceed in due order to the more perfect teaching of the *Demonstration of the Gospel*, and to the understanding of our deeper doctrines, if my preparatory treatise (προπαρασκευῆς) should help as a guide, by occupying the place of elementary instruction (στοιχειώσεως) and introduction (εἰσαγωγῆς), and suiting itself just now approaching from amongst the *ethnoi*. But to those who have passed beyond this, and are already in a state prepared for the reception of the higher truths, the subsequent part will convey the exact knowledge of the most stringent proofs of God's mysterious dispensation in regard to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.[76]

The *Praeparatio evangelica* is like a preparatory treatise in an education program that begins the process of leading students until they are ready for "higher truths."[77] Eusebius continues to use educational language to describe what his first volume is meant to be. It is a "preparatory treatise" (προπαρασκευή) that holds the place of "elementary instruction" (στοιχείωσις) and an "introduction" (εἰσαγωγή).[78] Eusebius claims to be designing this introduction for those "just now approaching from amongst the *ethnoi*" whereas the following part, the *Demonstratio evangelica*, will be suited for those looking to know the proofs of God's dispensation in Christ.[79] There are a few important themes

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[76] *PE* 1.1.12 (SC 206, 102-105; ET Gifford, 4-5). Ταύτῃ γάρ μοι δοκῶ τὸν λόγον ἐν τάξει χωρήσειν εἰς τὴν ἐντελεστέραν τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς ἀποδείξεως διδασκαλίαν εἴς τε τὴν τῶν βαθυτέρων δογμάτων κατανόησιν, εἰ τὰ τῆς προπαρασκευῆς ἡμῖν πρὸ ὁδοῦ γένοιτο, στοιχειώσεως καὶ εἰσαγωγῆς ἐπέχοντα τόπον καὶ τοῖς ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἄρτι προσιοῦσιν ἐφαρμόττοντα· τὰ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα τοῖς ἐνθένδε διαβεβηκόσι καὶ τὴν ἕξιν ἤδη παρεσκευασμένοις εἰς τὴν τῶν κρειττόνων παραδοχὴν τὴν ἀκριβῆ γνῶσιν παραδώσει τῶν συνεκτικωτάτων τῆς κατὰ τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μυστικῆς οἰκονομίας.

[77] *PE* 1.1.12 (SC 206, 102-105; ET Gifford, 5); cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 1.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Christ the Educator*, trans. Simon P. Wood, FC 23 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1954).

[78] PE (Gifford, 5) I.1.12 (SC, 102-105); Michael Frede, "Eusebius' Apologetic Writings," 230, suggests that this may be an allusion to Eusebius' earlier *Generalis elementaria introductio.*

[79] PE (Gifford, 5) I.1.12 (SC, 102-105).

and argumentative goals established in this passage. For instance, the passage nicely illustrates an important way Eusebius constructs a paradoxical Christian identity: as a people drawn from a variety of ethnic identities who will also become a new ethnicity altogether.[80]

More significant for the rhetorical and literary agenda Eusebius is developing, however, is the way this passage adds specificity and clearly establishes the pedagogical cast he is giving the *Apodeixis*. Eusebius is being very specific about where each volume in the diptych fits and who should attend to the different stages. He does this by fleshing out who "the ignorant" (οἱ οὐχ εἰδότες) of the first paragraph may be. The second volume (*Demonstratio evangelica*) is designed for those who have already made some progress in Christian teaching and are ready for deeper matters. The first volume (*Praeperatio evangelica*), however, is clearly not envisioned as a treatise to be directly read by the anti-Christian polemicist or consummate outsider. The "ignorant" are a generic category of Christian who are, as Eusebius sees it, insufficiently formed in knowledge of Christian teaching. The *Praeparatio* is specifically targeted at the subcategory of the "ignorant" who, though already "approaching from amongst the ἔθνοι," are not ready for "deeper doctrines." The labels he applies to the *Praeperatio*—"preparatory treatise" (προπαρασκευή), "elementary instruction" (στοιχείωσις), "introduction" (εἰσαγωγή)—denote just such an identification.

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[80] Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica.* This is a running argument in Johnson's monograph, but it is nicely summarized on page 232: "Eusebius' defense of Christianity is achieved through a representation of Christians as both 'the Church from the nations" and as a nation reviving the Hebrew *politeia*. Such an identity intrinsically entails, and even boasts, the transgression of national boundaries."

How 1.1 Prepares for the Pedagogical Program Eusebius Will Develop in the Following Sections

This opening chapter operates to describe in broad terms what the next thirty-five books will be designed to accomplish and how they relate to one another. The *Apodeixis* will be a presentation of "the Gospel" that will develop and demonstrate its truthfulness. In this opening chapter there is a marked reticence on Eusebius' part to label his work with a single designation. The *Apodeixis* as a whole is a πραγματεία ("treatise"), and the *Praeparatio* "holds the place of" στοιχείωσις ("elementary instruction") and εἰσαγωγή ("introduction"). Nevertheless, the dominant note for Eusebius is pedagogical.[81] Eusebius' text is leading, forming, and teaching those at various stages of advancement in Christian doctrines. Based on this first chapter, Eusebius is beginning to present a text that will teach ones who are in some way ignorant of Christianity, but who are also able to understand the criticisms of the "Greeks" and "those of the circumcision."

Praeparatio 1.2-1.3.6: Legacy and a Christian Literary Culture

The following four chapters, the remainder of the introduction, develop and explain the method and goal of the *Praeparatio* (with occasional nods to the goal of the entire *Apodeixis*). Chapter two is a development of the kinds of questions, first mentioned in 1.1.11, that might easily occur to one trying to understand the religio-ethnic identity of

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[81] See PE (Gifford, 196-197) V.1.7 (SC, 242-245) where Eusebius, describing the benefits brought into the world by the appearance of the "Savior," emphasizes the ubiquitous composition of "books," and delivering of "speeches," "all kinds of education," and "exhortations."

the Christians.[82] "Greeks" would naturally wonder whether Christians were "Greeks or Barbarians."[83] It appears that Christians have profanely and dangerously abandoned the ways of their fathers for the ways of the Jews. Worse still, they have not even adhered to the doctrines and laws of the Jews but innovated and "cut out for themselves a new kind of track in a pathless desert."[84] "Sons of the Hebrews" would naturally complain that the Christians have simply appropriated Jewish Scripture, ignored its laws, and highlighted passages of judgment against Israel while willfully ignoring passages of blessing for that nation.[85]

Who Has Written and Who Is Writing Demonstrations

After a brief invocation of "the God of all things through our savior, his Word, as through a high priest," chapter three begins with a return to the accusation of irrationality from 1.1.11 before it quickly expands into a discussion of Eusebius' Christian

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[82] Aaron Johnson's work is seminal regarding Eusebius' ethnic argumentation in *Praeparatio evangelica*. See Aaron P. Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica,* and "Identity, Descent, and Polemic: Ethnic Argumentation in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica," JECS 12 (2004): 23-56; Jeremy Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* 136-154 also emphasizes Eusebius' ethnic reasoning.

[83] PE (Gifford, 5) I.2.1 (SC, 104-105). Translation above is Gifford.

[84] PE (Gifford, 6) I.2.4 (SC, 106-107) πῶς δ' οὐ μοχθηρίας εἶναι καὶ εὐχερείας ἐσχάτης τὸ μεταθέσθαι μὲν εὐκόλως τῶν οἰκείων, ἀλόγῳ δὲ καὶ ἀνεξετάστῳ πίστει τὰ τῶν δυσσεβῶν καὶ πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι πολεμίων ἑλέσθαι, καὶ μηδ' αὐτῷ τῷ παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις τιμωμένῳ θεῷ κατὰ τὰ παρ' αὐτοῖς προσανέχειν νόμιμα, καινὴν δέ τινα καὶ ἐρήμην ἀνοδίαν ἑαυτοῖς συντεμεῖν, μήτε τὰ Ἑλλήνων μήτε τὰ Ἰουδαίων φυλάττουσαν; "And must it not be proof of extreme wickedness and levity to lightly put aside the customs of their own kindred, and choose with unreasoning and unquestioning faith the doctrines of the impious enemies of all nations? Nay, not even to adhere to the God who is honoured among Jews according to their customary rites, but to cut out for themselves a new kind of track in a pathless desert." Translation here and above is Gifford.

[85] PE (Gifford, 6-7) I.2.5-8 (SC, 106-109)

predecessors who had been involved in similar literary projects.[86] The accusation of irrationality is demonstrably false and easily refuted, according to Eusebius, simply by considering the teaching, writing, and debating of Christians.[87] However, the things Christians have written in the past are not identical with what Eusebius is currently attempting. He writes,

> It is true that most of those before us have eagerly pursued other kinds of work, at one time by organizing refutations and replies to the arguments against us, at another time by exegetical commentaries on the inspired and holy Scriptures, and by interpretive discourse on particular points, or again by representing our teachings as in a debate.[88]

Nevertheless, Eusebius continues, the writers before him have "eagerly pursued other kinds of work (πραγματεία)," as in kinds of writing different from what is being attempted in the *Apodeixis*. It is at this point that Eusebius lists some of the literary strategies previous writers had employed: "by organizing refutations and replies to the arguments against us," "by exegetical commentaries on the inspired and holy Scriptures," "by interpretive discourse on particular points," and "by representing our teachings as in a debate." It is not entirely clear what texts or discourses Eusebius has in mind here. Some of these appear to be modes Christians have used to engage with their interlocutors in the past, but not all of them. The list is quite broad, one would be hard pressed to think

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[86] *PE* 1.3.1-2 (SC 206, 108-111; ET Gifford, 7, slightly modified). Τούτων εὐλόγως ἂν ἡμῖν ἐν πρώτοις ἀποῤῥηθέντων, φέρε τὸν τῶν ὅλων θεὸν διὰ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, τοῦ αὐτοῦ λόγου, ὡς δι' ἀρχιερέως ἐπικαλεσάμενοι τὸ πρῶτον τῶν προταθέντων ἀποκαθάρωμεν, συκοφάντας προαποδείξαντες τοὺς μηδὲν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς δι' ἀποδείξεως παριστάναι, ἀλόγῳ δὲ πίστει προσέχειν ἀποφηναμένους.

[87] *PE* I.3.1-3.

[88] *PE* (Gifford, 7) 1.3.4 (SC 206, 110-111; ET Gifford, 7). Ἐσπούδασται μὲν οὖν πλείστοις τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν πολλή τις ἄλλη πραγματεία, τοτὲ μὲν ἐλέγχους καὶ ἀντιῤῥήσεις τῶν ἐναντίων ἡμῖν λόγων συνταξαμένοις, τοτὲ δὲ τὰς ἐνθέους καὶ ἱερὰς γραφὰς ἐξηγητικοῖς ὑπομνήμασι καὶ ταῖς κατὰ μέρος ὁμιλίαις διερμηνεύσασι, τοτὲ δὲ τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς δόγμασιν ἀγωνιστικώτερον πρεσβεύσασιν.

of a Christian writing that couldn't at least potentially fit in it, and it is not the only list Eusebius provides in this chapter. Just a few sentences later, Eusebius mentions his literary peers, focusing on contemporary writers. Here he says,

> Hence, by recent authors also, there are, as I have said, numerous demonstrations (ἀποδείξεις), which we may carefully read, very clever and clear, written in argumentative form, treatises in defense of our teaching, and not a few commentaries carefully made upon the holy and inspired Scriptures, showing by logical demonstrations the unerring truthfulness of those who from the beginning preached to us the word of godliness.[89]

Here his designation for the writings they produced is "demonstration" (ἀποδείξεις) some of which are commentaries on "holy and inspired writings" others of which are "treatises in defense of our teaching." These works are "numerous," "clear," and "very clever." Despite his apparent reticence about naming any particular authors or works at this stage, Eusebius clearly takes a very wide and ostensibly positive view of his literary predecessors. According to Eusebius, Christianity can boast an impressive array of writers and thinkers with whom his readers would do well in gaining acquaintance. Indeed, in constructing this web of literary associations and gesturing toward an impressive, pedigree of former Christian authors, Eusebius includes the Christian author

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[89] *PE* 1.3.6 (SC 206, 112-113; ET Gifford, 8, slightly modified). Ὅθεν καὶ τῶν νέων συγγραφέων μυρίας ὅσας, ὡς εἴρηται, πανσόφους καὶ ἐναργεῖς μετὰ συλλογισμῶν ἀποδείξεις ὑπέρ τε τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς γραφείσας λόγου διαγνῶναι πάρεστιν ὑπομνήματά τε οὐκ ὀλίγα εἰς τὰς ἱερὰς καὶ ἐνθέους γραφὰς πεπονημένα, τὸ ἀψευδὲς καὶ ἀδιάπτωτον τῶν ἀρχῆθεν καταγγειλάντων ἡμῖν τὸν τῆς θεοσεβείας λόγον γραμμικαῖς ἀποδείξεσι παριστῶντα.

par excellence. He writes, "The very first indeed rejecting false and fallacious plausibilities, but using indisputable demonstrations, was the holy apostle Paul."[90]

Paul, the Originator of Demonstrations

"The holy apostle Paul" is designated as the origin of the literary trajectory Eusebius is articulating. Paul is, "the very first…rejecting false and fallacious probabilities, but using indisputable demonstrations." The founding figure for Eusebius' literary endeavor in the *Apodeixis* is not, as one might imagine, an obvious practitioner of apologetics such as Justin Martyr or Josephus or even Origen, about whom Eusebius will have many positive words later in the *Preparation*.[91] The founding figure is the apostle Paul. Why Eusebius chooses Paul may have less to do with the specifics of Pauline writings, and more to do with the rhetorical power of associating his work and the literary culture he's invoking to the prestigious, founding figure. Nevertheless, by providing some quotations from Paul in and around this section Eusebius is not just granting his text an association with Paul, but also granting Paul's text an association with his. Even Christian literature such as Paul's can be read *as* demonstrations that prove the intelligibility of Christianity in the face of criticisms or questions from outsiders.

As we have already seen, the literary legacy Eusebius is evoking for *Apodeixis* is quite broad. Eusebius even includes biblical commentaries as precursors to the kind of

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[90] *PE* 1.3.5 (SC 206, 110-113; ET Gifford, 8, slightly modified). Πρῶτός γέ τοι πάντων ὁ ἱερὸς ἀπόστολος Παῦλος τὰς μὲν ἀπατηλὰς καὶ σοφιστικὰς πιθανολογίας παραιτούμενος, ἀναμφιλόγοις δὲ χρώμενος ταῖς ἀποδείξεσιν. Πιθανολογία and απόδειξις are contrasting forms of argument in philosophical literature. The former is an argument from probability and the later a demonstration, such as a mathematical formula. See Plato, *Theaetetus* 162e; Plato, *Theaetetus. Sophist*, trans. Harold North Fowler, LCL 123 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921).

[91] E.g., *PE* 6.10.50.

work he's doing in the *Praeparatio*, or perhaps the entire *Apodeixis*. The common denominator in all of the texts he mentions seems to be rhetorical and epistemological: they are "demonstrations" that make clear the intelligibility and truthfulness of their subject. It is implicit in Eusebius' description that these demonstrations have in view the putative questions or objections of non-Christians (they are demonstrations *for* or *to* someone), but those questions or objections can be engaged in many ways and can apparently remain only implicit. As we already saw in the first chapter of the *Praeparatio*, Eusebius has been framing his text and its literary purpose pedagogically. He does not abandon that identity here but specifies how his writing will operate pedagogically, what sorts of literature should be seen as akin to it, and who its originating figure is. For Eusebius, there is a long line of, and existing composers of, "demonstrations" in the lineage of the apostle Paul. These texts and their authors should be read, and they should be read *as* texts demonstrating, exhibiting and proving, the veracity of Christianity.

Demonstrations and Demonstrators: How 1.3.1-6 Positions *Apodeixis*

In this section, Eusebius has conceptualized his text and a broad, amorphous collection of other Christians writings as essentially a form of "demonstration," something designed to make clear the intelligibility and truthfulness of Christianity. The only thing uniting these texts is that they in some way make reference to the questions or criticisms of non-Christians. This broad situating amongst "demonstrations" allows Eusebius to position his text in two ways. First, he builds up and commends Christian literary culture—past and future. The *Apodeixis* is like innumerable, different kinds of

texts written by Christians. It is designed to explicate, make clear and intelligible, the truth of Christian teaching. Importantly, these demonstrations are following in a tradition of demonstration begun by the Apostle Paul. It is no accidental feature of this passage that it names and celebrates a literary "founder." There was an important "parental model" in ancient discussion and theorizing of forms of literature and oratory.[92] The naming and celebrating of a founding figure was a normal way of designating a certain type of discourse or genre and also one's participation in it. Eusebius is placing the *Apodeixis* within a literary culture he is claiming was inaugurated by the apostle Paul. Moreover, a closer look at the forms of writing Eusebius mentions suggest they are not entirely *ad hoc*: they broadly include commentary on Scripture, response to arguments, and explications of particular doctrines.[93] All of these kinds of writing form part of the much larger and more comprehensive *Apodeixis*.[94] I will look more closely at the specific texts Eusebius cites shortly.

Second, Eusebius is not only placing his diptych *within* a literary culture, he seems to be placing it *over and above* that literary culture. In my exposition above, I did not quote a short sentence in 1.3.5 that has generated considerable discussion. Eusebius claims that he will be proceeding in "a special way."[95] He makes this claim in the midst

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[92] Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, "Ancient Literary Genres: A Mirage?"in *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 34 (1985): 74-84.

[93] *PE* 1.3.4; 1.3.6.

[94] Jean Sirinelli and Édouard des Places, *La Préparation évangélique,* SC 206, 234-235. These commentators conclude that this is the basis for Eusebius' claim to originality—the combination of different genres.

[95] *PE* 1.3.5 (SC 206, 110-113; ET Gifford, 8). Ἡμῖν γε μὴν ἰδίως ἡ μετὰ χεῖρας ἐκπονεῖται πρόθεσις.

of noting literary predecessors and claiming Paul as his luminous, founding figure. Thus, Eusebius is involved in a complicated, simultaneous positioning. On the one hand, he is writing a text within and amongst other Christian writers, writers who should be well regarded and respected in their own right. On the other hand, the *Apodeixis* is in some sense unique and specially placed vis-à-vis the texts of other Christian writers, a point made both by the explicit claim of writing "in a special way" and in connecting his text directly to "the Holy apostle Paul." Eusebius is at once evoking a Christian literary legacy, a long and honorable line of demonstrators, and also positioning his text in a place of mastery over it. Thus, Eusebius is able to evaluate previous Christian writings according to how well they work as "demonstrations" as he well develop that idea in his text.

In a sense, Eusebius is resisting circumscribing *Apodeixis* into a preexisting genre as he attempts to subordinate much other Christian writing to the *Apodeixis*. Eusebius is suggesting that all, or at least much, Christian writing is "demonstration" and is thus fit for the same purpose as his diptych. Moreover, as an important side effect of identifying previous examples, Eusebius is able to imagine a literary culture—something that will be important for the ideal reader he imagines he is forming (more on this below). In articulating a literary culture, Eusebius is hoisting upon it a purpose and character in line with his goals in the *Apodeixis*. I will return below to how I see this relating to Eusebius' claim to originality and his method of citing, usually at great length, the writings of other authors.

Excursus: Citations of Earlier Christian Writers in the Praeparatio

It is worth surveying briefly where and how previous Christian writers actually appear in the rest of the *Apodeixis* to see how this comports with Eusebius' discussion of his literary peers and predecessors in book one. It is obvious at the implicit level that Eusebius draws on his vast library of earlier Christian writers. For instance, Origen's *Contra Celsum* is almost certainly the source behind several arguments and ideas in the *Apodeixis*.[96] However, more germane to the literary identity Eusebius is creating, are the authors he names and cites in his text. With just a few exceptions, all of these occur in the *Praeparatio*. This is primarily a function of the character of the *Demonstratio* that is so explicitly focused on Scriptural interpretation—it is concerned with adding Scripture to the library Eusebius is building in the *Apodeixis*.[97] I will as briefly as possible relate, book by book, what Christian authors are cited, how they are named or introduced, and in what context they appear.

Book one, after the introduction, is about the antiquity of Phoenician and Egyptian astral worship—newer than monotheism but older than the myths of the gods—and includes an explanation of the Phoenician "theology" (θεολογία), a word that seems to primarily indicate mythology or theogony but also includes some elements of cult and ritual. Characteristic for the *Apodeixis*, the Phoenician theology is mostly related through massive quotations from writers whom Eusebius can claim are sympathetic to their subject. Eusebius concludes by calling Phoenician theology "the madness of the ancients"

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[96] E.g. *PE* 1.1.11; cf. *Contra Celsum* 1.9 on Christians demanding "belief" without "demonstration."

[97] We also don't know what the second half of DE contained. Perhaps Eusebius made more capacious use of other Christian writings—such as Origen's commentaries—in the now lost ten books.

(ἡ τῶν παλαιῶν φρενοβλαβεία) that Christians have been taught "to escape from it without looking back."[98] Book two follows a similar method but moves to Egyptian "theology," which is given the same treatment as Phoenician,[99] and is similarly judged "shameful" (ἀσχήμων) and amounts to a kind of "atheism."[100] Eusebius then moves to his more important target, Greek "theology," which he argues is a derivative, and fragmentary form of the earlier Phoenician and Egyptian versions.[101] It is at this point that Eusebius turns to the "initiations" and "esoteric mysteries" of the gods of which he's been speaking,[102] and decides to draw explicitly on his first Christian author, "the marvelous Clement" who had personal knowledge of these mysteries before being rescued by the "word of salvation."[103] Eusebius then quotes large sections from books two, three, and four of Clement of Alexandria's *Protrepticus*, interrupted occasionally by his own exposition and commentary.[104]

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[98] *PE* 2.P.1-2 (SC 228, 34-35; ET Gifford, 48). Τὰ μὲν δὴ τῆς Φοινίκων θεολογίας τὸν προειρημένον περιέχει τρόπον· ἧς ἀμεταστρεπτεὶ φεύγειν καὶ τῆς τῶν παλαιῶν φρενοβλαβείας τὴν ἴασιν μεταδιώκειν ὁ σωτήριος εὐαγγελίζεται λόγος. "The theology of the Phoenicians is of the character described above, and the word of salvation teaches us in the gospel to escape from it without looking back, and earnestly to seek the remedy for this madness of the ancients."

[99] *PE* 2.1.1-50, quoting from Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca historica* which itself drew on the Egyptian historian Manetho.

[100] *PE* 2.1.51 (SC 228, 54-57, my translation).

[101] *PE* 2.1.52-2.2.1, again quoting from Diodorus Siculus.

[102] *PE* 2.2.63 (SC 228, 78-79; ET Gifford, 66-67). "Let it suffice us, however, to have made these extracts from the theology of the Greeks, to which it is reasonable to append an account of the initiatory rites in the inner shrines of the same deities."

[103] *PE* 2.2.64 (SC 228, 80-81; ET Gifford, 67). Ταῦτα δὲ Κλήμης ὁ θαυμάσιος ἐν τῷ πρὸς Ἕλληνας Προτρεπτικῷ διαρρήδην ἐκκαλύπτει, πάντων μὲν διὰ πείρας ἐλθὼν ἀνήρ, θᾶττόν γε μὴν τῆς πλάνης ἀνανεύσας, ὡς ἂν πρὸς τοῦ σωτηρίου λόγου καὶ διὰ τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς διδασκαλίας τῶν κακῶν λελυτρωμένος. "These matters are unveiled in plain terms by the admirable Clement, in his *Exhortation to the Greeks*, a man who had gone through experience of all, but had quickly emerged from the delusion as one who had been rescued from evil by the word of salvation and through the teaching of the Gospel."

[104] *PE* 2.3-7.

Book three is primarily concerned with describing and discrediting physicalist, allegorical, and more recent Platonist forms of allegorical interpretation of the ancient "theologies." In this book Eusebius assiduously avoids quoting a source that could be considered hostile to his subject, and only quotes from "their" writers.[105] In book four, Eusebius criticizes institutions and practices more closely associated with "laws" and political institutions—oracles and sacrifices. Predictably, these institutions are of demonic inspiration and are only efficacious in confused and partial ways. Moreover, some of the "gods" have actually required human sacrifice, a fact that evidences their demonic origin. It is on this latter point that Eusebius again quotes Clement of Alexandria in his *Protrepticus,* introduced again as "the marvelous Clement," who has already done Eusebius' work for him by scouring Greek sources for evidence of human sacrifice.[106] Book five continues the same line of argument, mostly about oracles, but again defers only to "the Greeks themselves" and thus quotes no Christian (or Jewish/Hebrew) authors.[107] Book six continues with the same line of argument but shifts the focus to the philosophical concept of fate, an issue naturally arising from discussions of prophecy and

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[105] *PE* 3.P.2 (SC 228, 138-139; ET Gifford, 90). "And let us say nothing of ourselves, but on all points make use of their own words, so that we may again learn their venerable secrets from themselves."

[106] *PE* 4.16.12-13 (SC 262, 170-173; ET Gifford, 172-173). Introduced in 4.16.12 this way: Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν τοῦτον εἶχε τὸν τρόπον. εἰκότως ἄρα ὁ θαυμάσιος Κλήμης ἐν τῷ πρὸς Ἕλληνας Προτρεπτικῷ, ταὐτὰ δὴ ταῦτα ἐπιμεμφόμενος, τοιάδε καὶ αὐτὸς τὴν πλάνην τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπολοφύρεται λέγων. "With good reason therefore does the excellent Clement himself also, in his *Exhortation to the Greek*, when finding fault with these customs, lament as follows over the delusion of mankind and say…"

[107] *PE* 5.1.2 (SC 262, 240-241; ET Gifford, 195-196). Ἄκουε τοιγαροῦν αὐτῶν Ἑλλήνων ὁμολογούντων ἐκλελοιπέναι αὐτῶν τὰ χρηστήρια, οὐδ' ἄλλοτέ ποτε ἐξ αἰῶνος ἢ μετὰ τοὺς χρόνους τῆς σωτηρίου καὶ εὐαγγελικῆς διδασκαλίας τὴν ἑνὸς τοῦ παμβασιλέως καὶ δημιουργοῦ τῶν ὅλων θεοῦ γνῶσιν φωτὸς δίκην πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἀνατειλάσης. "Hear therefore how Greeks themselves confess that their oracles have failed, and never so failed from the beginning until after the times when the doctrine of salvation in the Gospel caused the knowledge of the one God, the Sovereign and Creator of the universe, to dawn like light upon all mankind."

prognostication. Book six contains quite a bit of Eusebius' own argumentation on the subject, such as chapter six, but concludes with his first putative citation "from the holy writings" (ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων).[108] However, the "bare letter" of Scripture would likely be unhelpful since they are "obscurely expressed."[109] Instead, Eusebius will bring forth the "interpreter" (ἑρμηνεύς), the "admirable Origen" (ὁ θαυμάσιος Ὠριγένης).[110] This is followed by an extended quotation, apparently from an otherwise lost commentary on Genesis by Origen in which he has a lengthy digression on astrology and fate when commenting on Genesis 1:14 (where "lights" are put in the sky "for signs").[111]

The previous six books have been anticipating book seven, a pivotal portion of the *Apodeixis*, which, like book six, contains quite a bit of Eusebius' own argumentation and interpretation. The subject of book seven is the "philosophy" and "piety" of the Hebrews that Christians have chosen over against their ancestral ways.[112] Toward the end of this book, following his discussion of humanity's unique rational nature, Eusebius opposes the idea that matter is preexistent, sharing with God the qualities of eternity and being ungenerate.[113] However, Eusebius decides to allow "those who have thoroughly

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[108] *PE* 6.10.49 (SC 266, 232-233; ET Gifford, 302), other than the few brief quotations in his introduction.

[109] *PE* 6.10.50 (SC 266, 232-233; ET Gifford, 302-303).

[110] Ibid.

[111] *PE* 6.11 (SC 266, 234-271; ET Gifford, 303-319), though parts of this quotation also appear in the *Philokalia.* See Gifford, *Preparation for the Gospel,* 303n281a.

[112] *PE* 7.1.1 (SC 215, 144-147; ET Gifford, 321). Ἑβραίων πέρι λοιπὸν καὶ τῆς κατὰ τούτους φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ εὐσεβείας, ἣν τῶν πατρίων ἁπάντων προτετιμήκαμεν, τὸν τοῦ βίου τρόπον ὑπογράψαι καιρός. "Next as to the Hebrews, and their philosophy and religion which we have preferred above all our ancestral system, it is time to describe their mode of life."

[113] *PE* 7.18.

examined" this idea in the past to speak for him.[114] He quotes first from Dionysius of Alexandria's otherwise lost *Against Sabellius*, then Origen's *Commentary on Genesis*, and, after a quotation from Philo "the Hebrew," a Christian called "Maximus" (likely to actually be a text by Methodius of Olympus) from his treatise *Concerning Matter*.[115] Book eight describes the polity of the "Jews" established by Moses, a provisional arrangement designed to assist the descendants of the Hebrews who had fallen into polytheistic errors. This book follows the same principle of quoting only from "their writings," which means this book is almost entirely quotations from Jewish authors.[116] Book nine provides a transition to the next section on the similarities between Greek and Hebrew ideas by attempting to prove that the writings of the Hebrews were known by and pre-date eminent Greek figures. Within this argument he mentions "our Clement" again, quoting from book 1 of the *Stromateis* in which Clement describes various Greco-roman luminaries who knew the writings of "Moses" or particular "Jews."[117]

Books ten broadly lays out the case that the Greeks have stolen all their best ideas from the Hebrews, thus none of these ideas are properly "Greek." Additionally, Eusebius bolsters this argument by characterizing "Greeks" as people who regularly steal ideas or

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[114] *PE* 7.18.13 (SC 215, 264-265; ET Gifford, 361).

[115] *PE* 7.19-22 (SC 215, 266-313; ET Gifford, 362-364), each author's quotation taking up an entire chapter. On the citation of the text by "Maximus" and why Methodius is likely the actual author, see Guy Schroeder and Édouard des Places, *La préparation évangélique,* SC 215, 112-126.

[116] E.g., Aristeas, Josephus, and Aristobolus are all cited at some point in this book. Philo is also frequently cited, but Eusebius is coy about his religio-ethnic designation, calling him a "Hebrew" (like the pre-Mosaic monotheists) in most places, but in this chapter simply calling him by his name and gesturing toward his relationship to Jewish people as his "countrymen."

[117] *PE* 9.6 following on 9.5 and Josephus' discussion of Clearchus, a Peripatetic philosopher, who claimed to have known a Jewish man who was an associate of Aristotle.

cultural forms and claim them as their own—such as when philosophers plagiarize one another. This latter idea is fleshed out with quotations from book six of Clement's *Stromateis*.[118] A few chapters later, following on an extended description of the people who invented the alphabet (*not* the Greeks), Eusebius quotes Clement's *Stromateis* again, but this time from book 1 in which Clement lists various things invented by "barbarians" rather than "Greeks."[119] Finally, the conclusion of book ten is a presentation of evidence that shows Moses pre-dating all of Greek civilization, but most importantly the philosophers. Most of this evidence is drawn from "those who have preceded us," Christian scholars who wrote their own demonstrations.[120] Eusebius waxes eloquent about these writers: "There have been in our midst cultured men even second to no one of education, not cursorily committed to sacred things, who also have proved the present hypothesis by exact elucidation from the ancient history from the Hebrews, using rich and varied evidence of demonstration."[121] He goes on to cite Julius Africanus' *Chronography*, Tatian's *Oration to the Greeks*, and Clement's *Stromateis*.[122] Each of

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[118] *PE* 10.2.

[119] *PE* 10.6 (SC 369, 390-397; ET Gifford, 508-510).

[120] *PE* 10.9.26 (SC 369, 422-423; ET Gifford, 522). Σκέψασθαι δὲ καιρὸς καὶ τὰς τῶν πρὸ ἡμῶν περὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ὑποθέσεως ἀποδείξεις. "But it is time to examine also the arguments upon the same subject of those who have preceded us"

[121] *PE* 10.9.27 (SC 369, 424-425, my translation). Γεγόνασι δὴ παρ' ἡμῖν λόγιοι ἄνδρες καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ παιδείας οὐδενὸς δεύτεροι τοῖς τε θείοις οὐ παρέργως καθωμιληκότες, οἳ καὶ τὴν παροῦσαν ὑπόθεσιν ἐπ' ἀκριβὲς διευκρινήσαντες τῇ παρ' Ἑβραίοις συνέστησαν ἀρχαιολογίᾳ, πλουσίᾳ καὶ ποικίλῃ κατασκευῇ κεχρημένοι τῆς ἀποδείξεως.

[122] *PE* 10.10-12, and follows with a citation from Josephus in 10.13 to add the evidence of "the Hebrews themselves."

these passages demonstrate the antiquity of Hebrew literature and "philosophy" over against all things Greek.

Books eleven, twelve, and thirteen amount to one large section in which Eusebius proves that Greek philosophy is largely derivative from Hebrew ideas by comparing the latter to Plato, the best and therefore most appropriately representative figure of the philosophical tradition.[123] Within these three books Eusebius quotes Clement twice, both times from his *Stromateis*, in which Clement describes particular doctrines he believes have been taken by the Greeks, especially Plato, from the Hebrews.[124] The final two books, fourteen and fifteen, are also about Greek philosophy but are a sort of mopping up job in which Eusebius attacks all the other philosophers and schools besides Plato. Partly this is achieved by highlighting the vast diversity and outright contradictions between the schools—"philosophy" taken as a whole is hopelessly confused. Within these books Eusebius only quotes one Christian text, Dionysius of Alexandria's *De natura* in which he attacks Epicurean atomism rejection of providence.[125]

As this brief survey has illustrated, Eusebius' double-positioning in 1.3 is not just rhetorical flourish. Eusebius' deployment of early Christian writers in the *Praeparatio evangelica* both commends them (for instance, often Eusebius attaches an honorific to their names such as "admirable" or "honorable"), and also shows his *Apodeixis* to be the superseding project and authority by weaving pieces of their texts into his much larger

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[123] *PE* 10.14.16-17; 11.P.3.

[124] *PE* 11.25; 13.13 both quotes come from book 5 of the *Stromateis*.

[125] *PE* 14.23.

work. Between the founder of "demonstrations," the apostle Paul, and Eusebius, are innumerable Christian writers who are commendable and useful, but ultimately in need of Eusebius' curation and treatment. Eusebius is turning their demonstrations into *the Demonstration*.

Praeparatio 1.3.7-1.5

Eusebius follows his discussion of predecessors in 1.3.1-6 with a lengthy digression on how words are not strictly necessary since the works of the Lord are so clear and manifest.[126] While this passage is a digression, it also provides reinforcement and exploration of Eusebius' parsing of different kinds of people and their needs in the current dispensation.

He begins by listing in a terse fashion a series of proofs: the fulfillment of Christ's prophecies, the fulfillment of the Hebrew prophets' predictions, the synchronicity of the *Pax Romana* with the appearance of Christ, and the progress of reason and virtue that preceded and accelerated after the founding of the Church by the Word.[127] This section is something of a detour—a miniature rehearsal of some of Eusebius' favorite themes—but it does set him up to make an important additional point of prolegomena. Despite these manifest and irrefutable facts, Eusebius defends his decision to continue with the *Praeparatio*, a work that is primarily designed to unmask and parade the "superstitious

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[126] *PE* 1.3.7-I.5.1 (SC 206, 112-131; ET Gifford, 8-16). Eusebius begins this section, πλὴν ἀλλὰ περιττοὶ λόγοι πάντες, ὧν ἐναργῆ καὶ σαφέστερα τὰ ἔργα, ἅπερ ἡ θεία καὶ οὐράνιος τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν δύναμις, πάντας ἀνθρώπους τὴν ἔνθεον καὶ οὐράνιον ζωὴν εὐαγγελιζομένη, διαρρήδην εἰσέτι καὶ νῦν ἐπιδείκνυται. "Nevertheless, all words are superfluous, when the works are more manifest and plain than words—works which the divine and heavenly power of our saviour distinctly exhibits even now, while preaching good tidings of the divine and heavenly life to men."

[127] Eusebius' notion of progress, leading to the *Pax Romana* as a necessary prerequisite for the appearance of the Word, is also thoroughly narrated in *HE* 1.1.22-24. See also, Arthur Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretation of the History of Culture* (Tübingen: Mohr Sieback, 1989), 168-171; 180-193.

delusions" of "idolatry."[128] The *Praeparatio*, while perhaps not strictly necessary to prove the veracity of Christianity, serves to draw into sharp relief the benefit of salvation. Only by dwelling on the horrors that are being expelled by the Word can salvation be truly appreciated. This is an important rhetorical point for Eusebius. He wants to argue that the truth of the gospel is not something arcane or difficult to access. In fact, a running *leitmotif* in this introduction has been the way the gospel reaches and includes every kind of person.[129] However, to push this point too far is to call into question the very work Eusebius is currently composing. So he positions his text as important, but designed only for a certain kind of person. For Eusebius, there is a sense in which even those unable to follow literary arguments can simply observe what is true. However, these people are not those for whom *Praeparatio* is composed. *Praeparatio* and its companion piece are for those who will be able to understand, and articulate themselves, the detailed historical and literary arguments Eusebius will develop in this work. Eusebius has more to say about these people in the following sections.

For Whom the *Apodeixis I*s Designed (and for Whom It Isn't): 1.5.3-9

Eusebius writes, "As the present work is to be a complete treatise on this very subject, we exhort and beseech those who are fitly qualified to follow demonstrative arguments, that they give heed to sound sense, and receive the proofs of our doctrines more reasonably, and 'be ready to make a defense to any who ask for the reason for the

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[128] *PE* 1.5.1 (SC 206, 130-131; ET Gifford, 16).

[129] E.g. *PE* 1.1.6-7. Cf a similar concern, albeit addressed quite differently, in Origen, *Contra Celsum* Pr.

hope that is in us.'"[130] Thus, Eusebius claims that his work is written for a certain kind of person—those able to follow demonstrative arguments—so that they will be ready "to make a defense to any who ask for the reason for the hope that is in us." The thirty-five books of the *Apodeixis*, the philosophical arguments and lengthy quotations it contains, are only, at least only directly, for a very specific kind of person. Of course other kinds of people, the ones lacking the leisure, education, or intelligence to follow a demonstration, are also provided for in the current dispensation. Eusebius writes of them,

> But since all are not so qualified, and the Word is kind and benevolent, and rejects no one at all, but heals every man by remedies suitable to him, and invites the unlearned and simple to the amendment of their ways, naturally in the introductory teaching of those who are beginning with the simpler elements, women and children and the common herd (γύναια καὶ παῖδας καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀγελαίων πλῆθος), we lead them on gently to the religious life, and adopt the sound faith to serve as a remedy, and instill into them right opinions of God's providence, and the immortality of the soul, and the life of virtue.[131]

This kind of person is given true doctrines but can only receive them by "faith and hope."[132] Here Eusebius makes even clearer the sort of reader he envisions for his work: educated, intelligent, possessing adequate leisure, one who is intellectually capable of going beyond mere "faith and hope." Moreover, the person formed by Eusebius'

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[130] *PE* 1.5.2 (SC 206, 130-131; ET Gifford, 16, slightly modified). Τοὺς μὲν ἐπιτηδείως ἔχοντας ἔπεσθαι λόγων ἀποδείξεσι προτρέπομεν καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν φρονήσεως ἐπιμέλεσθαι καὶ λογικώτερον τῶν δογμάτων τὰς ἀποδείξεις παραλαμβάνειν "ἑτοίμους τε εἶναι πρὸς ἀπολογίαν παντὶ τῷ ἐπερωτῶντι ἡμᾶς τὸν λόγον τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐλπίδος".

[131] *PE* 1.5.3 (SC 206, 132-133; ET Gifford, 16, slightly modified). Ἐπεὶ δὲ μὴ πάντες τοιοῦτοι, φιλανθρώπου τυγχάνοντος τοῦ λόγου καὶ μηδένα μηδαμῶς ἀποτρεπομένου, πάντα δὲ ἄνθρωπον τοῖς καταλλήλοις ἰωμένου φαρμάκοις καὶ τὸν ἀμαθῆ καὶ ἰδιώτην ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν τρόπων θεραπείαν παρακαλοῦντος, εἰκότως ἐν εἰσαγωγῇ τοὺς ἀρχομένους τῶν ἰδιωτικωτέρων, γύναια καὶ παῖδας καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀγελαίων πλῆθος, ἐπὶ τὸν εὐσεβῆ βίον χειραγωγοῦντες ὡς ἐν φαρμάκου μοίρᾳ τὴν ὑγιῆ πίστιν παραλαμβάνομεν, ὀρθὰς δόξας περὶ θεοῦ προνοίας καὶ περὶ ψυχῆς ἀθανασίας καὶ περὶ τοῦ κατ' ἀρετὴν βίου ἐντιθέντες αὐτοῖς.

[132] *PE* 1.5.3-9 (SC 206, 132-135; ET Gifford, 17-19), drawing on Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.9-11.

demonstration will be prepared to answer critics for themselves and to "demonstrate" Christianity to "all those who would ask," a point Eusebius emphasizes by twice quoting 1 Peter 3:15 ("be ready to answer all those asking the reason for the hope in us") in the prologue.[133] A few paragraphs later, Eusebius will give an additional justification for *Praeparatio evangelica:* thorough exploration of the origin and history of their forefathers' customs is the only way to answer directly the charge of apostasy from ancestral custom.[134] In other words, although there are some clear and readily comprehensible facts that demonstrate the truth of Christianity, such as the fulfillment of prophecies and synchronicity with the *Pax Romana*, these facts do not actually respond to the particular charge of abandoning the Greek way of life. Thus, Eusebius' text will grant its readers a response to the sorts of charges regularly brought against Christians to discredit them.

The universality of the Gospel is not compromised or undermined by what Eusebius is doing—and this is an additional dimension of the project he is developing and the use of "demonstrations." He is developing a project designed only for particular classes of people, not for the majority. Additionally, while there are "demonstrations" so inherent in the character of the world that the truth is evident even if no one speaks a word, there are particular practical/rhetorical reasons why providing written demonstrations such as Eusebius' writing is worthwhile.

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[133] *PE* 1.3.5 (SC 206, 110-113; ET Gifford, 8); 1.5.2-3 (SC 206, 130-133; ET Gifford, 16).

[134] *PE* 1.5.10-12.

"In a Special Way" and Eusebius' Citation Method

There are two points Eusebius makes about the method and literary form of his text that require further analysis. First is his claim in 1.3.5 where, when listing and explaining his predecessors, he claims, "However, the presentation I am completing is being done in a special way."[135] Exactly what Eusebius means by this is not made explicit. The notion of a writer doing something new or striking out on their own is a *topos* found across vast swaths of ancient literature.[136] Minimally, Eusebius is claiming to be writing something comparable to, but different from, the kinds of literature he has previously mentioned: "organizing refutations and replies to the arguments against us," "exegetical commentaries on the inspired and holy Scriptures," "interpretive discourse on particular points," or "representing our teachings as in a debate."[137] These kinds of texts are useful, Eusebius suggests, but what he is doing is something different. There have been several different opinions about exactly what this difference might be. Relatedly, and the second point I want to explore, is Eusebius' citation method mentioned in the close of the introduction at 1.5.10. Eusebius writes, "But in the manifestation of the things I will be making clear I will not put down my own words, but (the words) of those

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[135] *PE* 1.3.5 (SC 206, 110-113, my translation). Ἡμῖν γε μὴν ἰδίως ἡ μετὰ χεῖρας ἐκπονεῖται πρόθεσις.

[136] John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), esp. 217-257.

[137] *PE* 1.3.4 (SC 206, 110-111, my translation).

most interested in making zealous praise of the ones they call 'gods,' so that our discourse might stand outside the suspicion of being entirely fabricated by us."[138]

Sabrina Inowlocki takes Eusebius' claim to uniqueness in 1.3.5 to be connected to his methodological statement in 1.5.10.[139] Eusebius seems to claim in 1.5.10 that by proving his point through the direct quotes of opponents and those that hold contrary doctrines he is on especially strong ground.[140] Inowlocki notes that this citation method was actually commonplace in debates between philosophical schools and has some precedents in Josephus' *Contra Apionem* as well as partial parallels with Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen.[141] In other words, if Eusebius' citation technique is the basis of his claim to originality, he is wrong and perhaps even disingenuous. Others have noted that, while the citation technique in itself is not unique to Eusebius, the scale and scope of citation in the *Praeparatio*, a side effect of Eusebius' commitment to the technique, is of a different magnitude than his predecessors and marks the work as unique.[142] Aaron Johnson claims this method of extended citation is part of his argumentative goal of constructing a new ethnic identity, and his literary purposes which were both

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[138] *PE* 1.5.14 (SC 206, 138-139, my translation). Θήσω δὲ οὐκ ἐμὰς φωνὰς ἐν τῇ τῶν δηλουμένων ἐκφάνσει, ἀλλ' αὐτῶν δὴ τῶν μάλιστα τὴν περὶ οὕς φασι θεοὺς εὐσέβειαν περισπούδαστον πεποιημένων, ὡς ἂν ὁ λόγος ἁπάσης ἐκτὸς τῆς περὶ τὸ πλάττεσθαι ἡμᾶς ὑπονοίας κατασταίη.

[139] Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors*, 53.

[140] The argumentative strategy of using an opponent's words against them, or finding support in ostensibly hostile or indifferent third parties, is found in *HE* 2.8.1 and 5.5.3. See also David Rokeah, *Jews, Pagans, and Christians in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 9-10; Josephus makes liberal use of this rhetorical tool in *Contra Apionem* 1.4, 1.58-59, 1.219-220; Josephus, *The Life. Against Apion,* trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, LCL 186 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926).

[141] Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors,* 33-73.

[142] Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism,* 81-83; Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 139-140.

"apologetic" and "pedagogical."[143] However, Johnson also claims that the citation method is not the basis of Eusebius' claim to uniqueness—at least not *per se*. That claim is grounded in Eusebius' emphasis "upon deeds, upon actual historical fact, upon real occurrences in the multi-national world that he portrays."[144] Thus, Eusebius' purportedly original composition is "different" insofar as it attends to historical texts and arguments. Johnson, of course, sees in this commitment to history the logic behind Eusebius' use of extensive, verbatim quotations. Michael Frede sees Eusebius' claim to uniqueness and his citation method as entirely separate things.[145] Frede claims that Eusebius' originality is expressed negatively ("I will be writing something different"), and that it amounts to Eusebius's attempt to write a non-polemical, relatively conciliatory, pedagogically focused "apologetic" work.[146] An important, more contextually sensitive interpretation, however, can be found in the arguments of Jean Sirinelli and Édouard des Places, and Lorenzo Perrone who understand Eusebius' mentioning of different kinds of literary precedents to be the basis of his claim to originality.[147] Eusebius, according to these authors, is providing a text that gathers and synthesizes various kinds of Christian literature.

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[143] Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 60-61.

[144] Ibid. 202-203 Johnson also claims, in 203n18, that "Eusebius' approach in this regard was not novel at all. "

[145] Frede, "Eusebius' Apologetic Writings," 231.

[146] Ibid., 242-249. Compare Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 175, commenting on the *Apodeixis,* "The enormous work is the most majestic and disdainful of all polemics."

[147] Jean Sirinelli and Édouard des Places, Eusèbe de Césarée, *La Préparation évangélique,* SC 206, 235-236; Perrone, "Eusebius of Caesarea as a Christian Writer," 527-528.

Exactly what Eusebius might have in mind when he claims that he is striking out in a unique way is simply not explicit in the text. It is likely for this reason that many scholars have assumed his citation method, one of the most striking and characteristic features of *Praeparatio evangelica*, must be the basis for his claim to originality. However, if that is the case, then Eusebius inexplicably delays his mention of this method for two chapters, and when he does mention it, he does not signal a return to the topic of originality. Moreover, this view does not take seriously how often Eusebius cites Christian author, those to whom he attaches the personal pronoun "our," as I have already shown in the excursus above. It is more plausible, I would argue, to set this statement in its immediate literary context. Eusebius has clearly emphasized the pedagogical character of his text. He is casting it as a training program for educated Christians so that they will be equipped to participate in a social environment that, however amenable to Christianity in the 310s, is still populated with savvy, well-read critics and opponents. Previous Christian writings are important and worthy of consideration, but they are in some sense inadequate to produce someone always "ready to give an answer to those who would ask." Eusebius' writing is "being done in a special way" insofar as it is attending to the creation of a new kind of Christian, intellectual elite. The unique quality of Eusebius' work, at least as he sees it, is not reducible to a single strategy or method, but is found in the telos of the entire composition.

Nevertheless, I would argue that there is a relationship between this pedagogical goal and Eusebius' citation method. In Sabrina Inowlocki's essay, "Eusebius' Construction of a Christian Culture in an Apologetic Context: Reading the *Praeparatio*

evangelica as a Library,"[148] she argues that Eusebius is "constructing and empowering a Christian culture" in the *PE*. He does this by drawing on the methods of previous writers who created encyclopedic texts that effectively created portable libraries such as Polybius, Pliny, or Athenaeus of Naucratis.[149] Inowlocki makes this argument by noting the way Eusebius evokes the actual taking and reading from a wide variety of texts in his citation formulas, what she calls "the performance of erudition" defined as "theatricalized acts of reading and writing."[150] What Inowlocki does not mention, however, is the way Eusebius' purpose statements and introduction fit with her insights. Eusebius' attempt to create and articulate a Christian literary culture is part of his goal of forming Christian intellectuals, shaped and immersed in the textual and discursive landscape Eusebius is creating in the *Apodeixis*.

This is reenforced by what Eusebius writes in 1.5, the final chapter of the introduction. After a litany of proofs and explanations in chapter four, almost entirely anticipations of the arguments Eusebius will expand in the remainder of the text, Eusebius notes he is getting ahead of himself.[151] He offers one final exhortation and gesture toward the reader for whom he is writing and why. "We are urging and imploring

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[148] Sabrina Inowlocki, "Eusebius' Construction of a Christian Culture in an Apologetic Context: Reading the *Praeparatio evangelica* as a Library," in *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on Literary, Historical, and Theological Issues,* Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 199-224.

[149] Ibid., 199-209.

[150] Ibid., 199; Inowlocki also argues that the structure of the text can be seen as evoking the architecture of a library, for instance in 209-213, where she argues that the lives of the Hebrew saints in book 7 as the "apse" of his library in which portraits of exemplary figures were regularly placed in a library.

[151] *PE* 1.4, for instance, anticipates in part his ethnographic arguments and his taxonomy of different forms of idolatry.

those able studiously to follow demonstrations of arguments to attend to wisdom and to receive the demonstrations of our teachings 'to be ready to answer all those asking the reason for the hope in us.'"[152] This class of people is in explicit contrast to "women and children and the common herd."[153] These latter will never be able to understand the demonstrations and will never be prepared to answer and defend. Instead, the elite are implicitly called upon to act as "physician" "ruler" and "master" leading the "herd" to right "opinion" (δόξα)—an epistemological category inferior to true knowledge grasped through logical demonstration.[154] The first five chapters of book one that I have interpreted above represent the most thorough purpose statement in the *Apodeixis*. In these chapters, he has defined his project and those of his predecessors as "demonstrations." Others have created demonstrations in the past, beginning with the apostle Paul, but Eusebius' text will include and transcend these earlier examples. For him, demonstration is rightly designed to form Christian intellectuals equipped to engage with all kinds of critics and questioners and also to guide and lead the mass of less educated or capable Christians. However, although this is most fully explained in 1.1-5, the pedagogical and social goals he articulates here are detectable elsewhere in the

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[152] *PE* (Gifford, 16) 1.5.2-3 (SC 206, 118-121; ET Gifford, 16, slightly modified). Τοὺς μὲν ἐπιτηδείως ἔχοντας ἕπεσθαι λόγων ἀποδείξεσι προτρέπομεν καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν φρονήσεως ἐπιμέλεσθαι καὶ λογικώτερον τῶν δογμάτων τὰς ἀποδείξεις παραλαμβάνειν 'ἑτοίμους τε εἶναι πρὸς ἀπολογίαν παντὶ τῷ ἐπερωτῶντι ἡμᾶς τὸν λόγον τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐλπίδος'.

[153] *PE* 1.5.3 (SC 206, 120-121; ET Gifford, 16). Γύναια καὶ παῖδας καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀγελαίων πλῆθος.

[154] *PE* 1.5.3-4 (SC 206, 120-121; ET Gifford, 17). The "common herd" who lack reason and intelligence are in danger of being deceived by the clever and wicked according to Eusebius in 4.1.10. The masses will either be tended by Christian elite or destroyed by others who are greedy and unscrupulous.

diptych. I will next look at one of these places—the introduction to the final book of the *Praeparatio.*

Praeparatio evangelica 15.1

Several times, Eusebius makes statements about the structure of his text and the logic of its organization. Sometimes these statements only refer to the workings of specific portions. For instance, in 1.6.5 and, somewhat differently, in 4.1, Eusebius describes what he plans and/or what has come before and gives the logic for his structure.[155] However, in the beginning of book fifteen, he gives a far more comprehensive statement about what he has been trying to accomplish in the text.[156] The structure that Eusebius lays out here is the following: (1-3) myths and their physicalist interpretation, (4-6) oracular theology and fate, (7-9) the doctrine and history of the Hebrews and their confirmation by Greek writers, (10) Greek plagiarism from the Hebrews, (11-13) philosophical agreement between the Greeks and Hebrews, (14-15) and criticisms of the various philosophical schools insofar as they diverge from Hebrew theology.[157] More important for my purposes, are the implications here about what Eusebius hopes this text will accomplish and why he has designed it as he has.

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[155] Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 234-236.

[156] The heading for this section, *PE* 15.pr (SC 206, 228-229; ET Gifford, 848), is ΠΡΟΟΙΜΙΟΝ ΠΕΡΙ ΑΠΑΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΥΠΟΘΕΣΕΩΣ. "Preface concerning the whole argument."

[157] *PE* 15.1.1-5; Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument*, 235-236, has a very useful outline of *Praeparatio evangelica* based on this passage. However, his outline, while perhaps more accurate to the actual content of the *PE*, is not precisely the outline Eusebius spells out here.

Eusebius' Intellectuals: Well-Versed and Unswervingly Rational

In the first purpose statement of 15.1 Eusebius makes reference back to the accusation of a double apostasy explicated in 1.2. He begins by claiming the *Preparatio evangelica* was written to defend and explain why Christians have left "the polytheistic error of all the nations."[158] This "defense" however comes with a concomitant account of Christians, at least the intellectual Eusebius is trying to form. He writes, "For in this way our decision to withdraw from these also will be freed from all reasonable blame, for that we have preferred the truth and piety found among those who have been regarded as Barbarians to all the wisdom of the Greeks, not in ignorance of their fine doctrines, but by a well reasoned and impartial judgement."[159]Eusebius claims that the decision of Christians to leave the Greek way of life for the Hebrew was "well-reasoned" and "impartial," attending to the "fine doctrines of the Greeks" and done also by comparing the "philosophy" and "religion" of the Greeks and Hebrews.[160] That is, not only have Christians behaved reasonably they have also acted on the basis of a deep and reflective knowledge of literature—a claim Eusebius anticipated in 9.1.1 where he writes that he and his coreligionists did not accept the "Hebrew oracles" "without just reasoning" but

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[158] *PE* 15.1.1 (SC 338, 228-229; ET Gifford, 848). Τὴν πολύθεον τῶν ἐθνῶν ἁπάντων πλάνην ἐν ἀρχαῖς τῆς Εὐαγγελικῆς Προπαρασκευῆς ἀπελέγξαι πρὸ πολλοῦ θέμενος ἐπὶ συστάσει καὶ ἀπολογίᾳ τῆς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀναχωρήσεως, ἣν μετ᾽ εὐλόγου κρίσεως πεποιήμεθα. "I thought it important in the beginning of the *Preparation for the Gospel* to refute the polytheistic error of all the nations, in order to commend and excuse our separation form them."

[159] *PE* 15.1.12 (SC 338, 234-235, my translation). Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ τῆς τούτων ἀναχωρήσεως τὸ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν κεκριμένον εὐλόγου πάσης ἀπολύοιτ᾽ ἂν κατηγορίας, ὅτι δὴ μὴ ἀγνοίᾳ τῶν παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς σεμνῶν, ἐξητασμένῃ δὲ καὶ βεβασανισμένῃ κρίσει τὴν παρὰ τοῖς νενομισμένοις βαρβάροις ἀλήθειάν τε καὶ εὐσέβειαν τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἁπάντων προτετιμήκαμεν.

[160] PE (Gifford, 849) XV.1.6 (SC, 230-233).

"with carefully tested judgement and thought."[161] We noted above that the internal audience Eusebius evoked in book one are the those who have left the "nations" for Christianity, but are in need of further instruction and formation. This suggests that Eusebius' description of Christians as imminently well-educated and thoughtful may be at least as much hopeful as descriptive. Nevertheless, we can see here something of Eusebius' ideal reader who will be shaped by his text. These readers will present as self-controlled, logical, and well-versed in the ways of the people they have left and also the people they have joined.

This fits with other hints Eusebius occasionally gives as to the activity he anticipates from the readers formed in his *Apodeixis*. For instance, in book nine Eusebius collects a series of quotations from non-Jewish writers that testify to the antiquity of the Hebrews and the Jewish Scriptures. At the end of the book, Eusebius tantalizingly mentions "many other witnesses," "ancient" and "recent" historians who provide similar evidence. He invites "the eager learner" (φιλομαθής) to seek out and track down these sources themselves.[162]

Eusebius is clear that book fifteen is the conclusion of his *Praeparatio* and that once it is completed he will pass on to the other "charge" brought against the Christians

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[161] *PE* 9.1.1 (SC 369, 188-189; ET Gifford, 434). Καὶ τῆς τῶν παρ' Ἑβραίοις λογίων ἀποδοχῆς οὐκ ἀσυλλογίστως ἡμῖν, κρίσει δὲ καὶ διανοίᾳ ἐξητασμένῃ γεγενημένης. "Now since we have surveyed the proofs that our acceptance of the Hebrew oracles has not been made without reasoning, but with carefully tested judgment and thought."

[162] *PE* (Gifford, 487) 9.42.4 (SC 369, 344-345; ET Gifford, 487). See also *DE* 1.9.20 where Eusebius uses the same word (φιλομαθής) in designating the reader who should look at a question on their own. Eusebius, *Die demonstratio evangelica,* ed. I.A. Heikel, vol. 6, Eusebius Werke (Berlin: J. C. Hinrichs, 1913); Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel,* trans. W.J. Ferrar (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981).

by "those of the circumcision."[163] These two works will be bound together as a unity that will "bring to completion the goal of the whole discussion."[164] The second work, to which I will now turn, Eusebius takes to be more "complete" or "full."[165] Although there are some significant differences between the *Praeparatio* and the *Demonstratio*, we will find that they are essentially involved in the same project.

Demonstratio evangelica

Unlike the *Praeparatio, Demonstratio evangelica* has only partially survived antiquity. Out of twenty books, only the first ten and a few portions of the fifteenth book still exist. This limits some of what can be said about this text. Contemporary scholars have made some plausible guesses about the contents of the mostly lost, last ten books, but any statement about these lost books must remain qualified and provisional.[166] No doubt something that would be very useful for my analysis of Eusebius' project in the *Apodeixis* has been lost. Fortunately, what survives is more than adequate to say something meaningful about this text.

The *Demonstratio* shares a purpose with its companion piece, the *Praeparatio*: it is a pedagogical text written for the same sort of audience as its prequel, well educated, elite men. The *Demonstratio*, however, develops Eusebius' delineation and formation of an educated, Christian intellectual both in the specific kind of texts it engages and in how

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[163] *PE* 15.1.9 (SC 338, 232-233, my translation).

[164] *PE* 15.1.9-10 (SC 338, 232-235; ET Gifford, 850).

[165] Ibid.; *PE* 15.62.16-18; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 182.

[166] Morlet, *La 'Démonstration évangélique' d'Eusèbe de Césarée,* 110-150.

it describes their role in the Christian community and the wider world. In other words, this text is clearly the final step in Eusebius' imagined training program after which students will be prepared to engage with interlocutors, direct the Christian community, and interpret Scriptural texts for themselves.

DE I.1.1-10: Intellectuals Ready to Respond to "Those of the Circumcision"

The *Demonstratio evangelica* begins with another brief dedication and very broad statement of purpose just as the *Praeparatio evangelica* did. *Demonstratio evangelica*, however, is much more concise in its statement of purpose and method than its companion piece. Eusebius writes, "Behold already, divine wealth amongst bishops, Theodotus, holy man of God, with God and indeed with our savior the Word of God, after the first hard work of the plan of the Evangelical Preparation in fifteen books, this great thing has been accomplished by us."[167] Eusebius quickly moves to an explanation of his method in the current work. He will present the "Evangelical Demonstration" from the prophecies of the Hebrews (earlier than all Greek learning as the *PE* argued).[168] The prophets will be his "witnesses" whose words will be quoted verbatim and then correlated with later events. Broadly speaking, the words of the prophets have been fulfilled "in myriad and diverse ways."[169] In the following chapter, Eusebius is more

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[167] *DE* 1.P.1 (Heikel, 2, my translation). Ἰδοὺ δή σοι, θεῖον ἐπισκόπων χρῆμα, Θεόδοτε, ἱερὲ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπε, σὺν θεῷ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ γε τῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ, μετὰ τὴν πρώτην Προπαρασκευὴν τῆς Εὐαγγελικῆς ὑποθέσεως ἐν ὅλοις πεντεκαίδεκα συγγράμμασι διαπεπονημένην ἡμῖν, μέγα τοῦτο πρὸς ἡμῶν ἐξανύεται.

[168] *DE* 1.P.1-2 (Heikel, 2; ET Ferrar, 1). Δέχου δῆτα, ὦ φίλη κεφαλή, τὴν αἴτησιν καὶ ταῖς εὐχαῖς ἡμῖν συμπόνει, τὴν Εὐαγγελικὴν Ἀπόδειξιν ἤδη λοιπὸν ἐκ τῶν ἀνέκαθεν παρ' Ἑβραίοις ἀνακειμένων προρρήσεων παραστήσασθαι πειρωμένοις. πῶς δὴ καὶ τίνα τρόπον. "Grant then, dear friend, my request, and labour with me henceforward in your prayers in my effort to present the Proof of the Gospel from the prophecies extant among the Hebrews of earlier times."

[169] *DE* 1.P.3 (Heikel, 1, my translation). Μυρία μὲν ἂν εἴη καὶ ἄλλα.

explicit about what particular events he will find foretold in the Hebrew prophets. The birth, life, miracles, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of the incarnate Word are all said to have been predicted in minute detail.[170] Moreover, the Hebrew prophets proclaimed, predicted, and lamented the "impiety" and "punishment" of the Jewish people.[171] These proofs, Eusebius claims, will demonstrate the truth of these prophets' teachings (elaborated in *PE* 7-9), a demonstration that is further confirmed in the "genuine," "sincere character," and "virtue" of these inspired men."[172] In essence, the *Demonstratio* is an extension of the citation method of the *Praeparatio*. Eusebius is constructing a library for the intellectuals he's forming, but now that library will include the texts needed especially for responding to "those of the circumcision," the texts of Scripture.[173] This overview of the argument that is to come is followed by one of the more revealing portions of Eusebius' introduction to the *Demonstratio*. Eusebius makes a statement about why he is attempting to be so complete in his treatment and what most

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[170] *DE* 1.1.1-5.

[171] *DE* 1.1.6 (Heikel, 4; ET Ferrar, 3-4).

[172] *DE* 1.1.9 (Heikel, 5; ET Ferrar, 4-5). Τοσούτων διὰ τῶν καθ' Ἑβραίους θεολόγων ἀναπεφωνημένων καὶ εἰς δεῦρο πᾶσιν εἰς φανερὸν τὰς ἐκβάσεις ἐπιδεικνυμένων, τίς οὐκ ἂν τὸ ἔνθεον ἀποθαυμάσειε τῶν ἀνδρῶν; τίς δ' οὐχὶ τῆς κατ' αὐτοὺς θεοσεβείας καὶ φιλοσοφίας τὰ μαθήματά τε καὶ τὰ δόγματα κύρια καὶ ἀληθῆ εἶναι ὁμολογήσει, τὴν ἀπόδειξιν παρεχόμενα οὐκ ἐν λέξεσι κεκομψευμέναις, οὐδ' ἐν δεινότητι λόγων ἢ κακοτέχνοις ἀπάταις συλλογισμῶν, ἐν ἁπλῇ δὲ καὶ ἀπανούργῳ διδασκαλίᾳ, ἧς τὸ γνήσιον καὶ εἰλικρινὲς τῆς ἀληθείας ἡ τῶν θεσπεσίων αὐτῶν ἐκείνων ἀνδρῶν ἀρετή τε καὶ θεογνωσία παρίστησιν; "If so many things were proclaimed by the Hebrew divines, and if their fulfillment is so clear to us all to-day, who would not marvel at their inspiration? Who will not agree that their religious and philosophic teachings and beliefs must be sure and true, since their proof is to be found not in artificial arguments, not in clever words, or deceptive syllogistic reasoning, but in simple and straightforward teaching, whose genuine and sincere character is attested by the virtue and knowledge of God evident in these inspired men?"

[173] Since Eusebius regularly correlates texts from the Hebrew Bible with the New Testament, the library he creates in *DE* effectively includes both testaments.

Christians, he claims, normally believe about the evidence of the prophets. Eusebius writes,

> Of course I know all too precisely that it is common with everyone who has genuinely received our savior and lord Jesus as truly being the Christ of God, first to seem to persuade themselves to believe that they have believed not otherwise in him than is consistent with the prophetic witnesses concerning him. Then this same one also warns everyone, against whom they might enter into an argument, that to be able to prove the subject with demonstrations is not easy.[174]

The completeness of Eusebius' *Demonstratio* to be drawn from the Hebrew prophets is in some sense meant to assist those who believe rightly, but assume in encounters with critics that their beliefs concerning "the prophetic witnesses" are "not easy" "to prove…with demonstrations." In other words, these are Christians lacking the knowledge to adequately engage with critics and other non-Christian interlocutors. This is precisely in line with the sort of internal audience we saw Eusebius constructing in the *Praeparatio*. These are people who have left their former identities to become Christians, but still require additional training and formation. Training and formation that will make them effective "demonstrators" of the evangelical teaching to any who would reproach them. The accent now, however, is not on answering the objections of those who would criticize them for abandoning the Greek way of life, but by those who would question their ability or right to read and interpret Scripture.[175]

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[174] *DE* 1.1.10 (Heikel, 5; ET Ferrar, 5). Εὖ μὲν οὖν οἶδα ἀκριβῶς ὅτι πρόχειρον ἅπασι, τοῖς τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν ὡς ἂν αὐτὸν ἀληθῶς ὄντα τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ γνησίως παραδεδεγμένοις, πρῶτον μὲν πείθειν αὐτοὺς δοκεῖν, ὅτι μὴ ἄλλως εἰς αὐτὸν πεπιστεύκασιν ἢ ταῖς περὶ αὐτοῦ προφητικαῖς μαρτυρίαις ἀκολούθως, ἔπειτα τοῦτ' αὐτὸ καὶ πᾶσιν, οἷς ἂν εἰς λόγους καταβαίνοιεν, προβάλλεσθαι· μὴ μὴν ῥᾳδίως τὸ ἐπάγγελμα πιστοῦσθαι ταῖς ἀποδείξεσι δύνασθαι.

[175] See also *DE* 3.P.1 (Heikel, 94; ET Ferrar, 101). Δι' ὃ καὶ ὡς οἰκείων ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀλλοτρίων αὐτῶν μεταποιούμεθα· "And given the reason of our regard for the oracles of the Jews, while we reject their rule of life."

Readers Ready to Meet and Manage Religious Others: *DE* 1.1.11-19

Nevertheless, Eusebius claims that this work is not a "writing against the Jews."[176] Eusebius is adamant about rejecting this characterization.[177] As Christianity is established by the argument of fulfilled prophecies, the Jews are also vindicated because their Scriptures are shown to be true.[178] For the Greeks as well, his vindication of the prophets should hold a certain appeal insofar as it will demonstrate to them the inspired and sincere truth.[179] Eusebius is suggesting that the spectrum of ethnic identity implied in the Jew/Greek binary can be understood as finding its completion or fulfillment in the *Demonstratio*. This point is pressed home in the closing of 1.1 where Eusebius provides his invocation and names, "the God of Jews and Greeks alike."[180] This project will also

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[176] *DE* 1.1.11 (Heikel, 5; ET Ferrar, 5). This turn of phrase, ἡ γραφη κατά Ιουδαιων, is the name of a text written by Apion according to Pseudo-Justin, *Cohortatio ad gentiles* 9.e-10.a, Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.21.101, and by Clement in a text only known in the *PE* (10.12.2), and Julius Africanus also in *PE* (10.10). In his *Contra Apionem*, however, Josephus never names a particular text by Apion, but refers rather more generally to his "accusations" and "slanders" made in λόγοι. Polyhistr mentions a work written by Apollonius Monlon that was κατά Ιουδαιων (*PE* 9.17). The categories "Jew" and "Hebrew" are very important in both the *PE* and, especially, the *DE*. Jean Sirinelli, *Les vues historiques d'Eusèbe de Cesaree durant la period prénicéenne* (Dakar: Université de Dakar, 1961), 147-63; Jörg Ulrich, *Euseb von Caesarea und die Juden: Studien zur Rolle der Juden in der Theologie des Eusebius von Caesarea* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 57-130 esp. the flow chart on 59. There is occasional slippage in Eusebius' use of these categories. For an explanation as to why this slippage may occur, see Andrew S. Jacobs, *The Remains of the Jews: the Holy Land and Christian Empire in Late Antiquity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003) 29-33. Justin and Pseudo-Justin, *The First Apology. The Second Apology. Dialogue with Trypho. Exhortation to the Greeks. Discourse to the Greeks. The Monarchy or the Rule of God,* trans. Thomas B. Falls, FC 6 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1948). Clement of Alexandria, *Stromaties, Books 1-3,* trans. John Ferguson, FC 85 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press).

[177] *DE* 1.1.11 (Heikel, 5; ET Ferrar, 5). Ἄπαγε, πολλοῦ γε καὶ δεῖ. "Perish the thought, far from that!"

[178] Ibid.

[179] *DE* 1.1.12.

[180] *DE* 1.1.19 (Heikel, 7; ET Ferrar, 7). Φέρε οὖν τὸν τῶν ἁπάντων Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ Ἑλλήνων θεὸν δι' αὐτοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἐπικαλεσάμενοι. "And so now with an invocation of the God of Jews and Greeks alike in our Saviour's name."

contribute to silencing the "slanderers," confronted in the introduction to the *Praeparatio*, who claim that Christians are unable to demonstrate or offer arguments for themselves.[181]

Despite his focus on the words of the prophets, Eusebius will not be writing a complete commentary on Scriptural passages—something like the thorough, close readings of Scripture one finds in his *Commentary on Isaiah*.[182] The *Demonstratio* has a clear purpose and parallels in method and goal its companion piece. In the *Demonstratio*, Eusebius will answer the charges of the Jews who claim that Christians have no right to the Hebrew Bible if they reject the laws and customs of Judaism.[183] The response to the Jews will proceed along the same route as the response to the Greeks. Eusebius, with limited introduction and commentary, will demonstrate using "their texts" that in fact Christianity is vindicated and their criticisms are incorrect—and that "their texts" are actually "our texts." Eusebius here even contends that one side effect of this work will be a refutation of "heretics" who tend to despise "the prophets."[184] Thus, the *Demonstratio* with the *Praeparatio* aims to form Christian intellectuals capable of managing a tripartite division of others: Jews, "pagans," and "heretics."[185]

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[181] *DE* 1.1.13; *PE* 1.1.11, 1.3.1-2.

[182] *DE* 1.1.14 (Heikel, 6; ET Ferrar, 6). "My argument will dispense with longer systematic interpretation of the prophecies and will leave such a task to any who wish to make the study, and are able to expound such works."

[183] *DE* 1.1.18-19.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Cf. Averil Cameron, "Apologetics in the Roman Empire—A Genre of Intolerance?," 222.

Demonstratio Evangelica 1.8: More on the Two Classes of Christians

Besides the introduction I have just described, there are a few other salient moments in the *Demonstratio* for the argument I have been advancing. The first book is largely a description of "the culture of worship (θεοσεβεία) placed before us."[186] What Eusebius means by this is partly an argument for why Christians do not adopt "Judaism" (a provisional, symbolic version of Hebrew piety that could never truly be universal) and how the Christian way of life is a retrieval and deepening of the faith of the Hebrew patriarchs.[187] This Christian way of life, however, contains more than one path. Later in book one, comparing Jesus to Moses, Eusebius writes,

> The one (writing) on soulless stone, the other (writing) perfect commands of the new covenant on living minds. But his disciples, accommodating their teaching to the minds of the people, according to the Master's will, delivered on the one hand to those who were able to receive it, the teaching given by the perfect master to those who rose above human nature. While on the other side of the teaching which they considered was suitable to men still in the world of passion and needing treatment, they accommodated to the weakness of the majority, and handed over to them to keep sometimes in writing, and sometimes by unwritten ordinances to be observed by them. Two ways of life were thus given by the law of Christ to His Church. The one is above nature, and beyond common human living; it admits not marriage, child-bearing, property nor the possession of wealth, but wholly and permanently separate from the common customary life of mankind, it devotes itself to the service of God alone in its wealth of heavenly love… (and) with virtuous deeds and words; with such they propitiate the

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[186] *DE* (Ferrar, 7) 1.1.19 (Heikel, 7; ET Ferrar, 7, slightly modified). Τίς ὁ τρόπος τυγχάνει τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶςαὐτοὺς θεοσεβείας. "We will take as our first as our object inquiry, what is the character of the religion set before Christians."

[187] See Eduard Iricinschi, "Good Hebrew, Bad Hebrew: Christians as *Triton Genos* in Eusebius' Apologetic Writings," in *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on Literary, Historical, and Theological Issues,* Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2011) 69-97.

> Divinity, and celebrate their priestly rites for themselves and their race. Such then is the perfect form of the Christian life.[188]

In 1.8.1, Eusebius claims Jesus' apostles, "accommodating their teaching to the minds of the people," put forward two ways of life.[189] The first group, in which Eusebius clearly includes himself, is characterized by their asceticism and separation from the common life of humanity.[190] More significantly, this group of spiritual elite are in charge of "teaching and preaching" (1.9.14)[191] and their "words" are designed to help those following the "second way of life."[192] The "second way of life" is concerned with managing households, having children, marriage, and all types of "more human" activities. There is clear ascetic and quasi-ecclesiastical language in this description of the first way of life, but it is not possible to neatly map the distinctions here on to "ordained" and "lay." The ones following the more perfect way of life are described as having responsibility both to their community and even "their race." This passage thus seems to imply a similar distinction between different grades of Christians that I have argued

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[188] *DE* 1.8.1-2 (Heikel, 39; ET Ferrar, 48-49, modified). Ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐν πλαξὶν ἀψύχοις, ὁ δ' ἐν διανοίαις ζώσαις τὰ τέλεια τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης παραγγέλματα. οἱ δέ γε αὐτοῦ μαθηταὶ τῷ τοῦ διδασκάλου νεύματι κατάλληλον ταῖς τῶν πολλῶν ἀκοαῖς ποιούμενοι τὴν διδασκαλίαν, ὅσα μὲν ἄτε τὴν ἕξιν διαβεβηκόσι πρὸς τοῦ τελείου διδασκάλου παρήγγελτο, ταῦτα τοῖς οἵοις τε χωρεῖν παρεδίδοσαν, ὅσα δὲ τοῖς ἔτι τὰς ψυχὰς ἐμπαθέσι καὶ θεραπείας δεομένοις ἐφαρμόζειν ὑπελάμβανον, ταῦτα, συγκατιόντες τῇ τῶν πλειόνων ἀσθενείᾳ, τὰ μὲν διὰ γραμμάτων τὰ δὲ δι' ἀγράφων θεσμῶν φυλάττειν παρεδίδοσαν, ὥστε ἤδη καὶ τῇ Χριστοῦ ἐκκλησίᾳ δύο βίων νενομοθετῆσθαι τρόπους· τὸν μὲν ὑπερφυῆ καὶ τῆς κοινῆς καὶ ἀνθρωπίνης πολιτείας ἐπέκεινα, οὐ γάμους, οὐ παιδοποιίας, οὐδὲ κτῆσιν, οὐδὲ περιουσίας ὕπαρξιν παραδεχόμενον, ὅλον δὲ δι' ὅλου τῆς κοινῆς καὶ συνήθους ἁπάντων ἀνθρώπων ἀγωγῆς παρηλλαγμένον,καὶ μόνῃ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ θεραπείᾳ προσῳκειωμένον καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἔρωτος οὐρανίου…δόγμασι δὲ ὀρθοῖς ἀληθοῦς εὐσεβείας ψυχῆς τε διαθέσει κεκαθαρμένης, καὶ προσέτι τοῖς κατ' ἀρετὴν ἔργοις τε καὶ λόγοις· οἷς τὸ θεῖον ἐξιλεούμενοι τὴν ὑπὲρ σφῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν σφίσιν ὁμογενῶν ἀποτελοῦσιν ἱερουργίαν.

[189] *DE* (Ferrar, 48) 1.8.1 (Heikel, 39; ET Ferrar, 48); James Corke-Webster, *Eusebius and Empire,* 125-129.

[190] *DE* 1.8.1-2.

[191] *DE* 1.9.14 (Heikel, 42; ET Ferrar, 52).

[192] *DE* 1.8.3-4 (Heikel, 39-40; ET Ferrar, 49-50).

underlies the project of education and formation Eusebius is articulating in the *Apodeixis*. One kind of person, an elite for whom the *Apodeixis* is appropriate and whose responsibilities are both vertical (regarding those "below") and horizontal (engaging non-Christian peers), and another kind of person cared for and guided by the elite.

The Relationship with Scripture Encouraged in the *DE*

The relationship with Scripture Eusebius commends in the *Demonstratio* fits well with his notion of an intellectual/spiritual elite. Scripture, according to Eusebius, is different than the writings he primarily dealt with in the *Praeparatio*. Eusebius forthrightly claims Scripture is, on the one hand, clear enough to provide "demonstrations" to prove the truth of Christianity, but, being a good student of Origen, Eusebius maintains that there are deeper layers and levels to Scripture.[193] Partly the arcane dimension of Scripture is, Eusebius argues, a divine conspiracy. Specifically, there are "disguised prophecies" that are unfavorable to the "Jews." These were kept hidden so that the Jewish people would not destroy Scripture in the time when they were solely responsible for its survival.[194] But this is not the whole of Eusebius' understanding of Scripture. Eusebius is, as I already mentioned, clear that he is not going to provide a full commentary—"a long systematic interpretation"—but he is also clear that commentary is a worthwhile activity.[195] Eusebius is only providing a "brief collection" and there is still

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[193] E.g., *PE* 6.11; Morlet, *La 'Démonstration évangélique' d'Eusèbe de Césarée,* 585-622.

[194] *DE* 6.P.3 (Heikel, 251). Τὰ μὲν οὖν δι' ἐπικρύψεως ἡγοῦμαι τῶν ἐκ περιτομῆς ἕνεκα κεκαλυμμένως ἀποδεδόσθαι, διὰ τὰ θεσπιζόμενα κατ' αὐτῶν σκυθρωπά· δι' ἅπερ εἰκὸς ἦν καὶ ἀφανίσαι ἂν αὐτοὺς τὴν γραφήν, εἰ ἐκ τοῦ προφανοῦς τὴν ἐσχάτην αὐτῶν ἀποβολὴν ἐσήμαινεν. οὕτως γοῦν καὶ τοῖς προφήταις αὐτοῖς ἐπιβουλεῦσαι αὐτοὺς κατέχει λόγος, δι' οὓς ἐποιοῦντο κατ' αὐτῶν ἐλέγχους.

[195] *DE* 1.1.14 (Heikel, 6; ET Ferrar, 6).

"much more to discover" in the Scriptural text.[196] In the conclusion of book ten on the Passion of Christ and its anticipation in the Hebrew Bible, Eusebius admits his discussion has been only cursory, but encourages his readers to "search the Scriptures" for themselves to look for additional divine truth contained therein.[197] In other words, Eusebius encourages his readers to engage with Scripture themselves like they did the non-Christian texts in the *Praeparatio*—as a source to prove and show the veracity of Christianity—while being careful also to encourage his readers to engage Scripture at other levels and for other purposes.

Conclusions

As my exposition has suggested, we should recognize the extent to which Eusebius casts his grand work, *Apodeixis*, as a pedagogical text. For him, the practice of apologetics is an integral part of educating a certain kind of Christian elite. Eusebius conceptualizes and practices Christian apologetics in such a way that it becomes part of an ambitious educational program. I am not the first to suggest that this text be seen as pedagogical, but my analysis has shown the extent to which Eusebius himself frames his text as a teaching tool designed to form Christian intellectuals.[198] Moreover, the

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[196] *DE* 8.5.6 (Heikel, 401; ET Ferrar, 149).

[197] *DE* 10.8.112 (Heikel, 492; ET Ferrar, 236). Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἡμεῖς, ἐφ' ἕτερα συνελαύνοντος τοῦ καιροῦ, διαδραμόντες ἀκροθιγῶς διεξήλθομεν· ὅτῳ δ' ἂν μέλῃ τῆς τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν παρακελεύσεως φήσαντος, 'ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς, ἐν αἷς δοκεῖτε ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχειν· καὶ αὗταί εἰσιν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ', ἑκάστῃ λέξει τοῦ ψαλμοῦ τὸν νοῦν ἐμβαθύνας, τὴν ἀκριβῆ διάνοιαν θηρεύσαι ἂν τῆς ἐν τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἀληθείας. "In this exposition I have but touched the fringe of the subject, but I must now pass on in haste to other topics, since time presses. But whoever cares for the Saviour's bidding, 'Search the Scriptures, in which ye think to have eternal life, and those are they that witness to me,' let him plunge his mind in each word of the Psalm, and hunt for the exact sense of the truth expressed."

[198] Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument,* 14-15*;* Morlet, *La 'Démonstration évangélique' d'Eusèbe de Césarée,* 51-59.

recognition that Eusebius is quite consistently representing the *Apodeixis* as a pedagogical text naturally leads to two additional questions that my analysis has sought to answer—to the extent possible. First, the question of what kind of student this pedagogical text assumes. I have shown that clearly Eusebius is envisioning a student who is already in some proximity to Christianity and on a trajectory toward it. Moreover, these Christian students are educated, adult men. Second, the question of what the result or purpose of this education will be. Eusebius envisions students who will be well versed in Christian and non-Christian texts. However, Eusebius is clearly not interested in mere familiarity. Eusebius arranges the texts and provides brief comments to prime his students to *use* these texts to *demonstrate* (show and prove) the veracity of Christian teaching. He also seems to envision readers who will become teachers and guides for other classes. As several recent scholars have convincingly argued, Eusebius' *Apodeixis* provides an ethnic argument that Christian are a new race that is drawn from, and also transcends, all other ethnicities. My analysis suggests that the *ethne* Eusebius is constructing is more textured and tiered than previously appreciated. The new Christian *politeia* that Eusebius is constructing is not egalitarian. It has room for every class, but the Christian intellectual he is trying to form is rightly a teacher and leader of the subordinate classes.

Thus, while Eusebius' ambitious project is a work of apologetics, it also amounts to something like a full-orbed absorption and re-deployment of previous Christian literature. The pedagogical casting of the text, the extended description of how the *Apodeixis* will form a new Christian intellectual, and the description of previous Christian writers who also wrote "demonstrations," flow from Eusebius' reflections on his project

and his claimed predecessors. For Eusebius, the true "demonstration" is one that serves this pedagogical, social, and, perhaps, ecclesiastical role.

In my next chapter I will bring together my interpretation of Eusebius and Lactantius. It will become clear in my analysis that despite their differences their texts are involved in the same sort of social-theological project. They both have in view ideal readers who will be formed and equipped by their texts. Equipped, at least partly, in light of the social and political realities of the post-persecution, Constantinian Era. Both these writers reflect upon and transform the Christian practice of responding to putative questions and criticisms of outsiders (apologetics) as part of a wider attempt to construct a Christian literary culture for the publicly significant, Christian intellectuals they hope to form. I will also argue that the characterization of Constantine we find in both these authors is illuminated by their Christian apologetic writing.

Chapter 4: The Convergence and Divergence of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*

Introduction

The last two chapters, the heart of this dissertation, have included detailed analysis and discussion of Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and Eusebius' *Apodeixis*. While I have paid particular attention to their framing devices and programmatic statements, I have also included some discussion of each text as a whole, and of some of the rest of the authors' corpus. There are many similarities my exposition has brought out between these two authors such as their pedagogical rhetoric, their shared interest in literary culture, and their extended statements of purpose set in relation to previous Christian writers. However, the task remains of exploring and describing the nature of their similarities. In this chapter, I will do just that. I will argue that in these two projects, albeit in different forms, we find both authors developing projects intended to develop Christian intellectuals and a concomitant Christian literary culture. Relatedly, particularly in their programmatic statements, we find a sense that prior Christian apologetics are inadequate and must be transformed.

Thus, as part of developing these projects, both authors develop their own projects for equipping or forming Christian intellectuals that include and expand much of what characterized the practice of Christian apologetics. As I will discuss further in this chapter, responding to the putative questions and criticisms of non-Christians is integral to the project of forming and equipping Christian intellectuals. Apologetics, for these authors, is bound up with participating in, and dominating, the new post-persecution,

Constantinian political environment. I will compare each author's respective project through the lens of three key, related dimensions that my analysis has shown to be important in both the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*: pedagogical rhetoric and goals in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*, forming Christian intellectuals, and the use of apologetics. While I do this comparative work, I will also make clear what is unique to each author. Lactantius' vision is not identical with Eusebius' and it would be a distortion to imply as much. However, even in their differences we will see variations on some of the same central themes.

The final portion of this chapter will be a discussion of where my analysis leads. In the first place, I think it gives us new insights into how our authors describe and narrate emperors. Apologetics, at least as it appears in Lactantius and Eusebius, was public and political. This insight can shed new light on how these authors characterize Christian emperors, especially Constantine whose ascendence occurred as they constructed their respective texts. Secondly, I will briefly gesture toward some texts later in the fourth and fifth centuries that I think could be fruitfully analyzed in light of Lactantius' and Eusebius' projects. Finally, in my conclusion, I will look one last time at what I think these authors' projects can tell us about Christian apologetic writing.

Pedagogical language and purpose in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*

My argument has made clear that the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* made educational language central to their framing and purported purposes. For Lactantius, this pedagogical aim is already apparent in the title of his work as

insitutiones.[1] *Institutiones* were treatises designed to introduce various disciplines such as law or rhetoric. Lactantius opens his text by claiming that the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* are like other introductory treatises for new students, and that his goal is "to instruct" (*instituere*) his readers.[2] *Institutio* is an unambiguously pedagogical word. Moreover, as I argued, Lactantius' focus on the "learned" (*docti*) and his claim to be providing future Christian writers with a literary model can be aptly described as a pedagogical goal. Indeed, his preoccupation with rhetoric—both its practice and instruction—have clear pedagogical connotations, something I will say more about in the next section.[3]

Eusebius similarly describes the two parts of his diptych as educational, though with more specificity about how his project will serve various classes than Lactantius. Eusebius claims in his opening to be writing for "the ignorant" (οἱ οὐχ εἰδότες), and though he quickly adds considerable nuance and definition to this designation, something I will discuss more in the next section, the idea that he is writing to meet a deficiency in learning remains.[4] At various junctures in *Praeparatio evangelica* and in *Demonstratio evangelica* Eusebius describes differing kinds of Christians for whom different levels and forms of education are appropriate.[5] For some, receiving the truth by faith is sufficient, but for others, his intended audience, careful study and the internalization of

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[1] *DI* 1.1.12.

[2] *DI* 1.1.20-21; 5.4.3.

[3] E.g. *DI* 1.1.8; 5.1.10.

[4] *PE* 1.1.1-2 (SC 206, 96-97, my translation).

[5] *PE* 1.5.3-4; *DE* 1.8.

"demonstrations" is essential. The pedagogical rhetoric and the focus on the class of people most able to receive the highest and most sophisticated forms of education is clear in Eusebius and largely shared with Lactantius, even though the former is more nuanced about levels of education and kinds of learners.

As I described in my opening chapter, advanced education of the sort provided by a *rhetor*, is the main point of reference for the pedagogical language of the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*. Both authors gesture toward those who are ineligible for advanced education, but this is either a passing comment (Lactantius) or a description of those for whom the reader will be responsible (Eusebius). Of course, they also use the language of introduction or preparatory education for parts of their projects, but this is always on the way to the more advanced and sophisticated education their texts are claiming to provide. They are writing as if to provide an alternative or supplementary advanced education that can absorb and subvert educational programs as they currently exist.

Lactantius writes as if his goal is to transform an already existing, educated class into a new form. For him, this amounts to a sort of re-education in which *intellectuals* are re-equipped and redeployed as *Christian intellectuals*. Eusebius' ideal, at least ostensibly, seems to be the education of a burgeoning intellectual who has not yet completed higher education.[6] That is, he talks as if he is creating alternative, upper-level education

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[6] There's parallel between the tripartite educational program of Clement of Alexandria, for instance *Paedagogus* 1.1, and what Eusebius is doing in the *Apodeixis*. Clement's "elite," what he calls the "gnostic," is different in many ways from what Eusebius describes. See Judith Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher According to Clement of Alexandria," JECS 9 (2001): 3-25. Nevertheless, there is important work that could be done comparing the pedagogical ideals and rhetoric of Clement with Eusebius —who knows and cites Clement regularly.

altogether. The difference between these two authors is probably more apparent than actual, and the effect is very similar. In both cases they write to form a new kind of advanced student with a new kind of Christian education.

Memorizing, reading, and interpreting socially significant, "canonical," texts was central to ancient education. It is within this social reality that Lactantius' and Eusebius' pedagogical language intersects with their method of providing massive, verbatim quotations from historians, poets, philosophers, and other highly regarded classical authorities. Education or re-education of a new Christian elite would have to involve knowledge of these authors, but only with the guidance and selective curation of a master. Lactantius' way of dealing with these authors is to recast them as sources, however unintentional and imperfect, of wisdom. These authors, read rightly, are the vehicle for divine truth. Similarly, Lactantius is the author more overtly concerned with communication, with students who would know and use rhetorical training.[7] One of Lactantius' stated goals is to harness the power of rhetoric and rhetorical training for what he sees as an unfairly maligned truth. The concern with rhetoric and rhetorical education should not be seen as a new or different issue than the pedagogical. Indeed, Lactantius' concern with rhetoric is part and parcel of his pedagogical agenda.

Eusebius, on the other hand, while also providing hermeneutical advice and interpretive keys, is creating a much larger and more ambitious new syllabus. In the *Apodeixis*, Eusebius not only curates and comments on a library of ancient, "pagan" authors, but also gives Scripture the same treatment. It is taken for granted that

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[7] DI (TTH, 57-58) I.1.7-10 (BSGRT, 2-3); (TTH, 170-173) III.1.2-4 (BSGRT, 204-22); (TTH, 282) V.1.10-20 (BSGRT, 438-440).

Lactantius' intellectual will know Christian truth, but Eusebius is not so sanguine—at least not so sanguine about his intellectual's facility with Scripture. Nevertheless, for Eusebius, as for Lactantius, there is a concern for rhetoric. Eusebius does not use the word (ἡ ῥητορική) when describing his pedagogical goals, but his concern with "demonstrating" and forming future "demonstrators" is only superficially different from Lactantius' concern to produce effective rhetoricians.[8] The intellectual activity that Eusebius commends for the readers formed by his text is only important insofar as it is communicative and performative.

The social and political ideals are also apparent. Debates about education long predate our authors and are regularly bound up with debates about the state.[9] Thus, we can read Eusebius and Lactantius as participating in these debates. Nothing less than the future and health of society was bound up with education—especially education of the upper echelons. As the next section will make even clearer, when Lactantius and Eusebius describe their texts as providing a new and better education they are implying that they are providing for a new and better society.

Forming Christian Intellectuals

The pedagogical language for both these authors carries implications beyond individual formation. The education they imagine their texts providing comes with associated notions of who will be receiving the education, what kind of person the

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[8] Ἀπόδειξις and its cognates, for instance, are important categories in Aristotle's *Rhetorica*. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric,* trans. J. H. Freese, rev. Gisela Striker, LCL 193 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).

[9] Yun Lee Too, "Introduction: Writing the History of Ancient Education," describes the project of the volume (*Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*) to be to "offer a narrative about the variety of pedagogies from the Greco-Roman world" (16); Morgan, *Literate Education,* 19-21.

education will be forming, and what role this person will play. Both Lactantius and Eusebius, albeit in different ways and with different emphases, speak as if the person formed by their texts of Christian apologetic writing will be equipped as a publicly significant intellectual.

Lactantius' Intellectual and Eusebius' Intellectual

Lactantius is transparent that his intended audience are *docti*, readers who are well-versed in Latin Literature and rhetoric.[10] While at times he writes as if his goal is merely to convert or convince *docti*, he is explicit in *DI* V.4.7-8, and there are other implicit indications, that he hopes to form and field a new and better kind of *doctus*. Lactantius' language for this person is not entirely settled, but he variously refers to them as "champions" (*assertores*) and "heralds" (*praecones*). Lactantius is interested in forming educated Christians who will know and use their Christian, literary predecessors, but his emphasis is on Christian intellectuals who will themselves be translators of *veritas dei* into the idiom of non-Christian intellectuals. Lactantius evokes a battlefield, a sort of bloody public square, in which anti-Christian polemicists and those vulnerable to their arguments will be engaged and bested by Christians who can use his *institutiones* as a model.[11] The goal and role of Lactantius' new *docti* is found in an agonistic, public square.

Eusebius also seems to be writing as if his readers will become a new sort of intellectual. His pedagogical language and discussion of reader formation is stitched

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[10] Jeremy Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 80; Antonie Wlosok, "Zur lateinischen Apologetik der constantinischen Zeit," 135.

[11] *DI* 5.4.

together with his structuring of the *Apodeixis* around the complaints of "Greeks" and "those of the circumcision."[12] Eusebius is suggesting that he hopes to prepare readers who will be ready to engage with well-educated religious others. Likewise, in the beginning of the *Demonstratio*, Eusebius describes a "common" occurrence in which Christians are asked to give an account of how they can legitimately use and read the Hebrew Bible.[13] He laments that normally they are unable to give a response. One of his explicit goals, then, is to provide for those found in such a situation. He wants to equip his readers so they are able to answer interlocutors and "demonstrate" their valid claim on Scripture, and also show how their critics have no claim on these same texts.

Eusebius, however, explicitly describes other roles for the Christian intellectual he is forming. These intellectuals are elites who have a responsibility to guide, teach, and care for those lower down the social ladder. There is a developed ecclesiology in Eusebius' writing that is lacking in Lactantius' that occasions some of this paternalism. Eusebius writes as if, though with a measure of vagueness, his ideal readers will avail themselves of a level of ascetic discipline and perhaps will even be in an official position of ecclesiastical leadership.[14] There are two kinds of Christians according to Eusebius, one of whom teaches and leads and fulfills some kind of priestly and ascetic vocation. The other, described in less detail and clearly not the imagined audience for the *Apodeixis*, is "simple," "uneducated," and/or belong to classes that are ineligible for

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[12] *PE* 1.2.1-8.

[13] *DE* 1.1.10.

[14] *DE* 1.8.1-4.

advanced education. But the vagueness about the intellectuals he imagines is, I think, significant. Elsewhere, Eusebius writes with no ascetic or ecclesiastical overtones of the readers formed by his text as "physicians" "rulers" and "masters" who are responsible for guiding the "common herd," partially made up of "women," "children," and laborers who lack the leisure time for serious education.[15] Taken as a whole, it is not entirely clear in the *Apodeixis* the ecclesiastical status of the intellectuals Eusebius imagines he is forming. It is clear, however, that he envisions responsibilities for them that run both vertically and horizontally. They will tend to their lessers and also contend with sophisticated peers in public.

What we find in both these authors, then, is an imagining of Christians intellectuals, educated elites, who will be able to compete with and dominate religious others for influence in a public square. Lactantius' intellectuals will be rhetorical adepts who are able to defeat, silence, or perhaps convert non-Christian critics who have been responsible for marginalizing Christians, at times even instigating violence. For Eusebius, his intellectuals have a responsibility to other classes. They will not only contend with their non-Christian peers. They will also govern their inferiors. While they will be equipped to respond to the criticisms of "Greeks" and "those of the circumcision" with unassailable "demonstrations," they will also be students of Scripture who guide "women," "children," and "the common herd." The public and political implications of these authors' projects is obvious. At least as they characterize their texts, the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* are designed to equip well educated Christians so

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[15] *PE* 1.5.3 (SC 206, 132-133, my translation).

they will know how to compete with critics, or any kind of religious other, for societal influence and significance.

Additionally, as I will say more about in the following section, in describing, commending, and seeking to train Christian intellectuals, Lactantius and Eusebius highlight Christian predecessors who are characterized as commendable, but inadequate at least in the current moment.

The Transformation of Apologetics in the Projects of Lactantius and Eusebius

It is within this pedagogical program of educating a new Christian intellectual that we should see the significance of these authors' transformation of the practice of Christian apologetics, the practice of answering the putative questions and critique of non-Christians. As I argued in chapter one, "apologetics" is a contemporary designation that serves a heuristic function. Thus the language is helpful for categorizing a discernible practice of early Christians, but there is no equivalent language amongst ancient authors. Nevertheless, though there is nothing like an apologetic genre, it was a well-established practice amongst early Christians to write in response to the ostensible critiques of outsiders. Christians of the second and third century recognized this as an established practice and attempted in piecemeal ways to describe it. However, such reflections were fragmentary prior to Eusebius and Lactantius, who each offered robust reflections on the nature of responding to outsider critique and worked to absorb this practice into a more holistic program of Christian intellectual formation. Thus, while Lactantius and Eusebius

develop distinct vocabulary for their texts and variously construe the lineages of claimed literary predecessors, we find similarities in how they situate apologetics in their projects.

In what follows, I will explore how these authors construe the practice of responding to putative critiques of outsiders and seek to marshal it for their agendas. It seems that the inter-communal and identity forming function of apologetics is, at least to some degree, recognized and exploited by these authors. As they seek to create pedagogical texts to form Christian intellectuals, they look to Christian apologetic writing. In what follows, I will describe how apologetics are absorbed and situated in each authors' programmatic statement.

Divinarum institutionum libri VII: **A Legacy of Apologetics Perfected through Instruction**

Lactantius calls his text *institutiones*, a treatise designed to introduce a discipline. However, Lactantius is careful about crafting this literary identity and in describing how his "divine" *institutiones* include, expand, and complete previous kinds of Christian writing. One distinct and important part of how he does this is by determining whom he will mention as predecessors, describing their texts, analyzing their faults and virtues, and locating his project within a trajectory he claims they began. Lactantius' description of his predecessors, as I have argued, serves a few functions. One function is to contrast his project with his predecessors in such a way that his work builds upon, while also surpassing, their works. A fundamental way he does this is by describing his predecessors as involved in only *defensio* ("defense"), and this with only varying degrees of success. In contrast, Lactantius claims to be uniting *defensio* with *insitutio* ("teaching" and clearly

cognate with *insitutiones*). In this way, the practice of what contemporary scholars call "apologetics" is noted and transformed in Lactantius' project. Whether or not Lactantius is entirely fair in his assessment of his predecessors, it is clear that he is creating an explicit and ambitious re-imagining of what role apologetics might play.

Another function of Lactantius' listing and describing of his predecessors, the one I argue has been insufficiently acknowledged in previous scholarship on Lactantius, is to make visible a Christian literary culture. Lactantius is quite specific about the authors and texts he has in mind: Minucius Felix's *Octavius*, Tertullian's *Apologeticus*, and Cyprian's *Ad Demetrianum*.[16] He creates a genealogy of previous authors who wrote to defend Christianity, writers of "apologetics," in whose legacy he stands and beyond whom his work will push. Lactantius suggests that like him these authors were attempting to translate the "truth of God," normally available only in an unsophisticated and unappealing form, into a rhetorically pleasing form that will be compelling to *docti*. Therefore, even as Lactantius points to the insufficiency of his predecessors, he surfaces and qualifiedly commends an existing Christian literary culture. This is borne out in the way these authors, and other Christian authors, appear in the the rest of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*.

I further suggested we could apply the word "translation" to Lactantius' project, in particular a Ciceronian translation. As Cicero, Lactantius' major model and influence, translated Greek philosophy into Latin, likewise Lactantius translates the "rough" form of divine truth into pleasing rhetoric. This claim that "divine truth" has been revealed in

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[16] *DI* 5.1; 5.4.

rough and common forms that are impalpable and unintelligible to the educated (*docti*) forms the rationale for Lactantius' project and what claims his predecessors were ultimately attempting in their works of *defensio*. What these authors were groping toward, and what Lactantius claims to be creating, is writing that will uniquely draw in and communicate to a certain class of educated people. Moreover, Lactantius' project will also—good examples beget progeny. A translation is always provisional and corrigible, and as it draws in *docti* it will send them back out again as "heralds" and "champions" of truth, champions who produce their own works of Christian apologetic writing.

By describing a literary legacy of previous composers of Christian apologetic writing who made a good start but failed to accomplish their goals, and by suggesting that his work is meant to guide and inspire future Christian intellectuals, Lactantius' text is granted a kind of forward momentum. He is writing to fill a deficit, and also to become an example for future Christian rhetors his text will help train and deploy. For Lactantius, "apologetics" is a practice that reaches its true potential when it becomes part of forming Christians who can engage and dominate a public square where hostile critics tend to hold considerable influence over the minds of ignorant non-Christians. Lactantius' articulation of a literary project that builds on previous works of *defensio* while surpassing them by including *institutio* allows him to imagine a legacy for his own work and those he hopes will follow him, and also to commend and bolster his own text which he can describe as drawing on but ultimately surpassing previous Christian writers.

Apodeixis: Demonstrating Christianity

Compared to Lactantius, Eusebius is less specific (and less critical) in his introduction about literary predecessors and previous examples of the kind of writing he is doing in the *Apodeixis*. He gestures vaguely, albeit at some length, towards texts and kinds of writing that are predecessors of his *Apodeixis*. Nevertheless, two observations are helpful an assessing how he transforms the practice of apologetics. First, is his decision to use the questions or criticisms of two kinds of outsiders—"Greeks" and "those of the circumcision"—as his major structuring device. By doing this, Eusebius is explicitly putting the critical views of outsiders in a constitutive position in his text. Second, in describing the texts written to answer these groups in the past, he consistently uses the label ἀπόδειξις ("demonstration"). In Eusebius' thought, the practice of apologetics produce "demonstrations" designed to fulfill both a rhetorical and epistemological role: they communicate and show the intelligibility of Christianity. Eusebius describes previous writers who attempted to "demonstrate" the truth of Christianity "by organizing refutations and replies to the arguments against us," "by exegetical commentaries on the inspired and holy Scriptures," "by interpretive discourse on particular points," and "by representing our teachings as in a debate."[17] Eusebius claims that these Christian writers have produced "demonstrations" that are "numerous," "clear," and "very clever."[18] Demonstrations are, apparently, capable of appearing in a

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[17] *PE* 1.3.4-5 (SC 206, 110-111, my translation).

[18] *PE* 1.3.8 (SC 206, 114-115, my translation).

wide variety of literary forms, but all of this writing finds its origin in "the holy apostle Paul."[19]

In this vague gesturing toward literary predecessors, and in anchoring his text in a tradition begun with the apostle Paul, Eusebius imagines apologetics as something ubiquitous in the Christian literary tradition that is ennobled by its association with the apostle. However, Eusebius also claims that his *Apodexis* will be done "in a special way." I have argued that we should understand Eusebius' claim to uniqueness in its immediate literary context in the programmatic statement. To that end, I would argue that Eusebius' transformation of apologetics (the Christian practice of responding to outsiders) is located precisely in his decision to cast his text as pedagogical. While it is true that since the apostle Paul Christians writers have been responding to critiques with "demonstrations," Eusebius will both transcend and build upon this legacy by integrating it into a full-orbed project of formation.

Both *Apodeixis* and *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* articulate, for the first time in Christian literature, a legacy and purpose of the Christian practice of responding to the putative questions and critiques of outsiders. We can grasp some of how these authors are transforming apologetics when we attend to how they describe a legacy of previous writers and position themselves as superior to these writers. Moreover, while articulating this legacy, they posit potentials and purposes to it that they claim to be incorporating and transcending. In this way, apologetics is transformed partly by being explained.

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[19] *PE* 1.3.6 (SC 206, 112-113; ET Gifford, 8).

Additionally, both authors, albeit in different ways, see the practice as being more perfectly realized in the education and formation of Christians.

Thus, we see in both these authors—though writing in different places, with different theological instincts, and in different languages—a remarkable correspondence of literary purpose and character. Why these correspondences granted the lack of direct interaction between these two authors? While there is no way to know for certain, the most plausible answer is that the emerging political and social situation of Christians in the 310s and 320s pushed our writers to a similar response. There was both the possibility of unprecedented, and substantive influence and importance in the Roman Empire for Christians and Christianity. There was also the anxiety that comes from the recently ended—and perhaps in some places still ongoing—persecution. Moreover, even with significant, official imperial support, there was still considerable religious difference and debate. Therefore, we see in Lactantius and Eusebius an attempt to imagine, and simultaneously form, a Christian literary culture fitted to the uncertainties and possibilities of the present, but also envisioned as part of a grand legacy of impressive Christian intellectuals. Apologetics apparently that seems both important to situation at hand and also inadequate at least as it has been previously practiced. Thus apologetics deployed and transformed by Lactantius and Eusebius.

Images of the Emperor

So what implications follow from my reading? I have been fairly explicit about how the projects of these authors carry social and political connotations. However, I will further argue that this insight can tell us something important about how Lactantius and

Eusebius construct their images of the emperor. This is realized in slightly different ways for each author, but it becomes clear that the sort of project of forming Christian intellectuals and a new literary culture these authors are forwarding is related to the way they write about the emperors they see as allies, especially Constantine.

What the Emperor Can Accomplish in the Writings of Lactantius

In Lactantius' revision of his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, each book includes an address to Constantine added, with a few other edits, after a first edition had been published.[20] While the addresses in books 2-6 are only brief, vocatives inserted into the text, books one and seven contain much longer, and conceptually relevant, addresses in which Lactantius attempts to integrate his praise of the emperor with the rest of his literary and theological project in *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. Bowen and Garnsey have argued that these are mere afterthoughts—panegyrical addendums that are largely irrelevant to the argument at large.[21] Jeremy Schott has seen more significance in these dedication passages. In particular, he argues the final, lengthy dedication in book seven grants a new "timbre" to the rest of the text surrounding it.[22] Lactantius' eschatological and millenarian musings in book seven are able to be interpreted in light of the end of persecution and the return of the Emperor, and the empire, to the one true religion. Following Schott's reading, I will argue that these moments, often seen as little more than post-hoc, sycophantic afterthoughts, can be illuminated by considering the goals and

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[20] Heck, *Die dualistischen Zusätze und die Kaiseranreden bei Lactantius*.

[21] Bowen and Garnsey, *Divine Institutes,* 43; 48-51.

[22] Jeremy Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity,* 96-97.

character of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. There is a mirroring between the terms Lactantius uses for his own project and his praise of Constantine. At the strictly literary level this mirroring integrates the passages into their context and the work as a whole. However, beyond this, the specific language Lactantius uses and the action he attributes to Constantine suggest he is envisioning the emperor as the ideal Christian *doctus*—as a "herald" or "champion" for the truth.

In book one, after 1.1.1-12, Lactantius turns to his first address to Constantine. Writing of the *institutiones* he is about to begin, "This work I now commence under the auspices of your name, Constantine, emperor most great: you were the first of Roman emperors repudiate falsehood and first to know and honour the greatness of the one true God."[23] Constantine is not merely a great emperor in conventional ways. He is the first to know the true God and to repudiate falsehood. The repudiating of falsehoods is precisely

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[23] *DI* 1.1.13-16 (Heck and Wlosok, 4; ET TTH 40, 59). *Quod opus nunc nominis tui auspicio inchoamus, Constantine, Imperator Maxime, qui primus Romanorum principum, repudiatis erroribus, maiestatem Dei singularis ac ueri et cognouisti et honorasti. Nam cum ille dies felicissimus orbi terrarum illuxisset, quo te Deus summus ad beatum imperii culmen euexit, salutarem uniuersis et optabilem principatum praeclaro initio auspicatus es, cum euersam sublatamque iustitiam reducens, teterrimum aliorum facinus expiasti: pro quo facto dabit tibi Deus felicitatem, uirtutem, diuturnitatem: ut eadem iustitia, qua iuuenis exorsus es, gubernaculum reipublicae etiam senex teneas, tuisque liberis, ut ipse a patre accepisti, tutelam Romani nominis tradas. Nam malis, qui adhuc aduersus iustos in aliis terrarum partibus saeuiunt, quanto serius, tanto uehementius idem omnipotens mercedem sceleris exsoluet: quia ut est erga pios indulgentissimus pater, sic aduersus impios rectissimus iudex. Cuius religionem cultumque diuinum cupiens defendere, quem potius appellem, quem alloquar, nisi eum per quem rebus humanis iustitia et sapientia restituta est?* "This work I now commence under the auspices of your name, Constantine, emperor most great: you were the first of Roman emperors to repudiate falsehood and first to know and honour the greatness of the one true God. Ever since that day, the happiest to dawn upon the earth, when God most high raised you to the blessed peak of power, you inaugurated a reign that all desired for their salvation, and you began it outstandingly when you made amends for the abominable crime of others and brought back justice from her overthrow and exile. 14 For this, God will grant you happiness, virtue and long life, so that in your old age you may still keep the helm of state with the justice that you began with in your youth, and hand on the guardianship of the name of Rome to your children as you received it from your father. 15 The wicked who still persecute the good in other parts of the world will pay full measure for their evil to the almighty one, and the later they do so, the fiercer the payment, because just as he is a most indulgent father to the pious, so he is a harsh judge of the impious. 16 In my desire to protect his faith and divine worship, whom should I sooner appeal to, whom sooner address, than him through whom justice and wisdom have been restored on earth?"

what Lactantius claims he will be doing in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and what he expects from those who set out on the same path.[24] In Constantine's reign, his exceptional actions have resulted in "returning justice (*iustitia*)" and will be honored with a lengthy reign and dynastic legacy—the handing on of the imperial office to his children. In the final sentence, Lactantius writes, "Desiring to defend his [God's] religion and divine worship (*religionem cultumque divinum*) whom greater should I address, whom should I speak to except him, through whom justice (*iustitia*) and wisdom (*sapientia*) have been restored to humans?"[25]

Here Lactantius draws together virtually all of his major themes: justice, wisdom, religion. And he claims that in Constantine's rule these things are being defended, restored, and championed. In other words, Constantine's reign and character bears a striking resemblance to the kind of person Lactantius imagines his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* might form, and his reign is strikingly similar to the consequences he hopes for his text and those who compose similar texts in the future. The final dedication passage in 7.26.11-17 uses most of the same language to describe Constantine and his rule. He has re-established "justice" by knowing the "truth," only adding in this passage the more explicit claim that Constantine has "re-established his holy religion" (*religio*).[26]

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[24] *DI* 1.1.12; 5.2.1.

[25] *DI* 1.1.13-16 (Heck and Wlosok, 4, my translation).

[26] *DI* 7.26.15 (Heck and Wlosok, 730-732, my translation). *Nec immerito rerum dominus ac rector te potissimum delegit, per quem sanctam religionem suam restauraret.*

In the *De mortibus persecutorum*, Lactantius is generally committed to his theme of describing the destruction of those who persecuted Christians so "all who were remote or will live in the future, might know to what extent the supreme God has revealed his power and majesty in extinguishing and utterly destroying the enemies of his name."[27] Nevertheless, even in this text, we get bits of description and narration of "good" rulers as Lactantius writes that Licinius and Constantine are those who have "repealed" the "words" of the "wicked" and begun an "era of peace."[28] And, with a bit more specificity than is common in *De mortibus persecutorum*, in a passing remark, Lactantius writes of Constantine "restoring" the "holy religion."[29]

There is a confluence in the rhetoric and vocabulary Lactantius uses to describe the emperors he sees as allies, particularly Constantine, and his own project in *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*—a project he hopes to continue through future *docti*. As I have already described, this relates to wisdom, truth, worship, religion, the refutation of error, and other central themes and goals of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*. However, there is also a lack of complete coalescence. In 5.4, for instance, Lactantius happily draws on martial metaphors to describe the socio-rhetorical contest he has entered against anti-

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[27] *Mort.* 1.7 (Creed, 4-5, slightly modified). *De quorum exiit nobis testificari placuit, ut omens qui procul remoti fuerunt vel qui postea futuri sunt, scirent quatenus virtutem ac majestatem suam in extenguendis delendisque nominis sui hostibus deus sumos ostenderit.*

[28] *Mort*. 1.3 (Creed, 4-5). *Excitavit enim deus principes qui tyrannorum nefaria et cruenta imperia resciderunt, humano generi providerunt, ut iam quasi discusso tristissimi temporis nubilo mentes omnium pax iucunda et seren laetificet*. "For God has raised up emperors who have repealed the wicked and bloodthirsty commands of the tyrants and have taken thought for the human race, so that now, with what we may call the cloud of that most sombre epoch dispersed, a joyful and serene peace gladdens the minds of all."

[29] *Mort*. 24.9 (Creed, 38-39). *Haec fuit prima eius sanctio sanctae religions restitutae*. "This was the first measure by which he (Constantine) sanctioned the restoration of the holy religion."

Christian critics; he describes a battlefield he hopes to dominate by equipping and fielding elite, Christian "soldiers." In his praise of Constantine, he uses the same language, but the metaphorical has shifted into the literal. At this level, there remains a lack of resolution and integration. Is Lactantius now arguing that the goals of his rhetorical project are just as easily achieved by the use of traditional political and military means? The only possible hint to how Lactantius seeks to resolve this tension is in his first dedication passage. Here Lactantius, somewhat awkwardly, commends Constantine for doing *almost* everything he describes his *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* as accomplishing save "defending" "religion" and "worship," something he has set out to do with the blessing of Constantine as a patron. Yet even this possible division of labor is muddied in the final dedication passage where Constantine is said to have "restored" "religion."

Constantine the Christian Intellectual in the Writings of Eusebius

For a variety of reasons, Eusebius' Constantinian works have attracted considerable attention and, save his *Historia ecclesiastica*, are easily his most famous works (especially his *Vita Constantini*). The traditional picture of Eusebius as a "court theologian," who baptized imperial ambition and conjoined Church and state, has been effectively criticized and rejected by contemporary scholars. Michael J. Hollerich offered an important corrective to this reading of Eusebius in 1990 that takes more seriously the consistency of his earlier political vision and his later Constantinian writings.[30] A more fruitful way of understanding Eusebius' Constantinian writings, particularly his *Vita*

[30] Michael J. Hollerich, "Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius,'" 309-325; see also Michael J. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah*.

Constantini, is as a *Fürstenspiegel* (mirror for princes). Aaron Johnson has offered some helpful suggestions for the way this characterization can make clear how Eusebius' concerns as seen in his Christian apologetic writing from earlier periods are still determinative in his later, panegyrical texts.[31] However, I would further suggest that Eusebius' vision for the Christian intellectual he is forming in the *Apodeixis* provides important background for the portrait of Constantine he constructs. What follows will only be suggestive, not a full analysis of all of Eusebius' writings on Constantine, but will, I think, further demonstrate how Eusebius' project in the *Apodeixis* is intertwined with his socio-political concerns.

The *Vita Constantini* is (in)famous for its apparent use of "Hellenistic ruler-theory," wherein a sovereign is marked out by the divine to represent and imitate god to the ruler's subjects.[32] While this ideology is certainly part of the pedigree of Eusebius' influences, others have noted that Eusebius' take on the *mimetic* ruler/god pattern is probably more proximately influenced by Platonic sources (mediated through Clement of Alexandria and Origen) and is clearly deeply indebted to scriptural patterns and *topoi*.[33] For instance, Constantine's childhood is explicitly paralleled with Moses'. In all this analysis, however, the focus is on the way Constantine's rule is validated and/or Christianized. Less commonly noted is the motif in *Vita Constantini* of the emperor as a teacher and guide. Eusebius narrates Constantine's rule as not only an administrator and

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[31] Aaron Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument,* 193-196; all of 153-197 is also relevant.

[32] Norman Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London: Athlone Press, 1955), 168-172.

[33] Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine*, 34-39.

military figure, but as a model, by what he says and does, for his subjects. Constantine is a "lesson" (διδασκαλία) in the "godly pattern" (θεοσεβοῦς ὑποδείγματος) for humanity,[34] and also a "teacher to all" (διδάσκαλος πᾶσιν) of "piety" (εὐσεβεία).[35]

Constantine's education in rhetoric, as well as his moral virtues, are impeccable.[36] His conversion is not first due to divine revelation (though Constantine is described as directly connecting with God elsewhere), but reasoned consideration of the arguments and evidence for Christianity.[37] Constantine is described as a teacher of piety, specifically of those under his direct authority—members of his court and the military—whom he leads in the study of Scripture.[38] His orations were self-written and designed to establish a rule that was "pedagogical" and "reasonable."[39] Constantine's speeches would include refutations of "polytheistic error" explanations of "providence" and even a "demonstration" of the "necessity" of the "Savior's" "economy" appearing just as it did.[40]

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[34] *Vita Constantini* 1.4.1 (Heikel, 9; ET Cameron and Hall, 69, slightly modified).

[35] *Vita Constantini* 1.5.2 (Heikel, 9; ET Cameron and Hall, 69, slightly modified). Εὐσεβείας εἰς αὐτὸν διδάσκαλον πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι κατεστήσατο.

[36] *Vita Constantini* 1.19.2.

[37] *Vita Constantini* 1.27.3.

[38] *Vita Constantini* 1.32.3.

[39] *Vita Constantini* (Cameron and Hall, 163-164) 4.29.1 (Heikel, 128; ET Cameron and Hall, 163-164). Καὶ μὴν τὴν αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ διάνοιαν τοῖς ἐνθέοις συναύξων λόγοις, ἐπαγρύπνους μὲν διῆγε τοὺς τῶν νυκτῶν καιρούς, σχολῇ δὲ λογογραφῶν συνεχεῖς ἐποιεῖτο τὰς παρόδους, προσήκειν ἡγούμενος ἑαυτῷ λόγῳ παιδευτικῷ τῶν ἀρχομένων κρατεῖν λογικήν τε τὴν σύμπασαν καταστήσασθαι βασιλείαν. "Indeed in order to enlarge his understanding with the help of the divinely inspired words, he would spend the hours of the night awake, and repeatedly made public appearances without calling upon speechwriters; he thought that he ought to rule his subjects with instructive arguments, and establish his whole imperial rule as rational."

[40] *Vita Constantini* 4.29.3 (Heikel, 128; ET Cameron and Hall, 164).

Vita Constantini characterizes Constantine as a well-read and highly educated Christian leader who guides his subordinates into greater holiness. Moreover, Constantine's actions are described as being self-conscious "demonstrations" of the truth of the Gospel over against non-Christian alternatives. The parallels with the vision of a Christian intellectual that I described in the *Apodeixis* should be clear. Constantine fulfills the roles Eusebius gives to his imagined Christian intellectual. It seems that Eusebius has partially assimilated his earlier conceptions of the ideal, Christian intellectual formed through his project (the *Apodeixis*) with the pro-Christian emperor. However, Constantine allows for a sort of embodied or acted demonstration—one who demonstrates in word *and* deed.[41]

The other two Constantinian writings, *De sepulchro Christi* and *Laus Constantini*, largely fit the themes I have sketched in *Vita Constantini*. In *Laus Constantini* we also read about Constantine's "learning" that he has instilled in his sons, the "Caesars."[42] Moreover, the mimetic character of Constantine's rule itself also suggests a pedagogical function in the *Laus Constantini*. The Word is the "the great savior teacher" in whose cosmic rule Constantine's empire participates.[43] Indeed, the emperor himself is like a "noble teacher" whose subjects are his "students,"[44] and whose empire is now filled with

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[41] *Vita Constantini* 1.8.4-I.9.1.

[42] *Laus Constantini* 1.3; 5.8.

[43] *Laus Constantini* 1.3 (Heikel, 197, my translation). Ὑπὸ μεγάλῳ σωτῆρι διδασκάλῳ παιδευόμενοι. Also 2.5.

[44] *Laus Constantini* 5.8 (Heikel, 205-206; ET Drake, 90). Ὡς ὑπὸ διδασκάλῳ παιδευομένοις ἀγαθῷ.

students of Scripture and saving doctrine.[45] In *De sepulchro Christi*, the theme of the *Vita* that the actions of Constantine can amount to additional demonstrations of the Gospel is prominent. Here the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is itself evidence for the truth of the Gospel.[46] Thus, the emperor is able to provide an architectural demonstration of the Gospel.

Eusebius' way of characterizing Constantine seems more developed than Lactantius', particularly vis-à-vis Eusebius' *Apodeixis*. Constantine in almost every way measures up to Eusebius' ideal of a Christian intellectual. Constantine is a well-educated Christian leader who rationally contends with opponents, teaches subordinates, and is diligent in further study of Scripture. Certainly, the emperor has the means at his disposal to occasion more practical demonstrations of the Gospel, building projects or legislation that evidence the truth of Christianity, but Eusebius seems to tacitly acknowledge that these "demonstrations" only count as such when they are spoken of. Demonstrations are properly linguistic realities and can only be applied metaphorically to deeds. Regardless, there is a clear strain in Eusebius' characterization of Constantine that makes him into one more Eusebian style author of Christian apologetic writing. Constantine is like the ideal student who has gone through the educational program Eusebius has articulated in the *Apodeixis*.

This section has suggested that my analysis of the projects of Christian apologetic writing of these two authors has bearing on how we read their more overtly political,

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[45] *Laus Constantini* 10.2-3.

[46] *De Sepulchro Christi* 11.5; *De Sepulchro Christi* 17-18.

imperially focused writing. While in Eusebius the integration seems more complete, both authors can be read as narrating emperors and ideal imperial rule as consonant with, and participating in, the kind of project they lay out in their works of Christian apologetic writing. There is a close relationship between the sophisticated and detailed texts of Christian apologetic writing of these authors and how they attempt to narrate or characterize the rule of the "first Christian emperor."

In the final section of this chapter, I will explore what my analysis might suggest about later texts. I will briefly look at just a few examples: *Concerning the Gods and the Cosmos* by Salutius, and *Cure for Greek Maladies* by Theodoret of Cyrus.

The Legacy of Eusebius and Lactantius

If I am correct in seeing a certain, similar use of apologetics in the *Apodeixis* and *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, then it is worth asking whether this use was the product of a unique set of circumstances, likely to fade as quickly as it appeared, or something that would be taken up by later authors. Similarly, it is worth looking for future transformations in other, later texts. Thus this penultimate section will offer some cursory suggestions about apologetics in two, slightly later texts.

The one extant writing of Saturninius Secundus Salutius, *Concerning the Gods and the Cosmos* (Περὶ θεῶν καὶ κόσμου) is one possible text where our authors' legacy is

significant.[47] Salutius was a close friend of the emperor Julian and contemporary scholars have usually considered him and his writing only insofar as they are important for understanding the emperor. Only one, relatively brief text by Salutius survives and it has often been described with the anachronistic, Christian term "catechism."[48] This word is clearly meant to designate the text as an educational, religious document. Another common way of viewing the text is as a contribution to a propaganda campaign to bolster Julian's brand of "paganism" and to implicitly attack Christians.[49] However, in both views there tends to be some uncertainty because the characteristics of the text seem so unlike any ancient parallels.

A cursory look at the text, however, shows some interesting parallels with the projects of Eusebius and Lactantius.[50] For instance, Salutius' reader is described by the author as someone with enough means and status to be already fairly well educated and

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[47] There has been some limited debate about who wrote this text. The prevailing opinion, and the one I will be following here, is that it was written by Saturinius Secundus Salutius, Praetorian Prefect of the east. This position has been defended by A.D. Nock, ed. and trans., *Concerning the Gods and the Universe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), xcvi-civ, and Polymnia Athanassiadi, *Julian: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 68; A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, *A.D. 260-395* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), identifies the author as one "Flavius Sallustius" (796; 797-798); G.W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 125 gives probably the best, most concise discussion of the debate between those who believe the text was written by "Flavius Sallustius" or "Satrinius Secondus Salutius." Bowersock also argues the text was written by the latter.

[48] Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler, "Religious Education in Late Antique Paganism," in *Religious Education in Pre-Modern Europe,* ed. Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler and Marvin Döbler (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 126-129; apparently the designation can be traced to Franz Cumont in 1892 and there have been slightly different interpretations of its exact genre; Athanassiadi, *Julian*, 126-127.

[49] Nock, *Concerning the Gods and the Universe,* cii-ciii; Glanville Downey, "The Emperor Julian and the Schools," *The Classical Journal* 53 (1957): 99.

[50] There is no way of knowing if Salutius is actually responding to or intentionally writing a text similar to something like Eusebius' *Apodeixis* (though it is far from implausible since we know Julian read it). See Julian, *Contra Galilaeos*, Fr. 53. Julian, *Contre les Galiléens,* ed. and trans. A. Giavatto and R. Muller, (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2018).

intellectually trained.[51] This reader will be instructed and guided in proper knowledge of the cosmos and the gods, for the good of society, and so they will be resilient to the arguments of "unintelligent" people who reject Salutius' philosophical and theological ideas. The non-elite, however, do find their way into Salutius' text occasionally.[52] Salutius constructs a hierarchy in which some are able to follow and understand the deeper, philosophical truths about the gods and others are to be kept in the dark about such things. Thus, it is worth asking to what degree we can see Salutius' text participating in a vein similar to that found in *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*.

The bishop Theodoret of Cyrus' fifth century *Cure for Greek Maladies* (*Graecarum affectionum curatio*) draws heavily on Eusebius' *Praeparatio*. Theodoret even commends reading the *Praeparatio* in the second discourse of his treatise.[53] More interesting, however, is the way Theodoret's text of Christian apologetic writing is also cast pedagogically. Theodoret claims that his text is designed to teach, to meet an educational deficiency amongst the "simple."[54] However, Theodoret's educational goals are different from his hero Eusebius'. The latter's ambitious use of apologetics to form a new intellectual has been supplanted in Theodoret's work. Theodoret also offers his own

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[51] *Concerning the Gods and the Universe,* 1.1-3; Athanassiadi, *Julian*, 154; Iamblichus, *De mysteriis* 1.3; see A.A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Skeptics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986) 149-150 for Stoic ideas on knowledge of the gods' existence mentioned in this passage from Salutius. Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries,* ed. and trans. Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbel (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

[52] *Concerning the Gods and the Universe* 3.3 (Nock, 4-5, my translation), where Salutius contrasts "all in common" (κοινὰ πᾶσιν) with "the intelligent" (τὰ ἐκ τῶν νοητῶν) and 3.4 (Nock, 4-5), where the former are simply called "the unintelligent" (ἀνοήτοις).

[53] Theodoret, *Cure for Greek Maladies* 2.97. Theodoret, *De Graecarum affectionum curatione,* ed. and trans. Clemens Scholten, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

[54] Ibid., Pr.1-3 (Scholten, 132-135).

take on the Christian tradition of responding to the putative critiques and questions of outsiders, "apologetics," that may represent a new transformation. For him Christian apologetic writing is medicinal (θεραπεία)—designed to heal or prevent the wounds caused by "Greek" error. What social and political circumstances account for this shift are worth considering. Minimally, it can be plausibly suggested that the anxieties and excitements of the early fourth century that made apologetics seem important for equipping Christian intellectuals who will be interacting with non-Christian critics have given way to apologetics as a pastoral tool for easing doubts and discomfort amongst the faithful.

These gestures toward later texts are merely meant to be suggestive—they go beyond the scope of my primary interest. It seems highly unlikely that the popular and ambitious texts of Lactantius and Eusebius would not inspire and influence subsequent Christian writers. My analysis has suggested some particular features of these texts that are worth looking for in later texts.

Conclusions

As I have shown, the texts by Lactantius and Eusebius that have been my focus demonstrate parallel transformations of apologetics. To conclude, I want to ask what the projects of Lactantius and Eusebius can tell us about Christian apologetic writing more generally. These authors recognize some under-appreciated uses of Christian apologetic writing. Put simply, one use of Christian apologetic writing seemed to be to form and present Christians as publicly significant. Texts of Christian apologetic writing are regularly overtly political: addressing emperors, critiquing laws, and attacking public

cults. Many works of Christian apologetic writing are attempts to muscle Christian discourse, and Christian intellectuals, into the public square. Laura Salah Nasrallah, writing on Christian apologetic writing, puts this well when she says, "These texts claim that Christians can and should address the emperors, that Christians stand upon a stage large enough to address an entire race or language group, and that the imperial family and the Greeks should sit down and take notice."[55] In other words, she suggests, Christian apologetic writing often present Christianity, and specifically its educated representatives, as significant and important figures in their socio-political landscape. From the beginning, much Christian apologetic writing was at least implicitly looking to present Christians in such a way. Nevertheless, Lactantius and Eusebius amplify and re-work this use in their writings such that one regular valence of rhetoric in early instances of Christian apologetic writing becomes part of an explicit and thoroughgoing literary identity.

Additionally, Christian apologetic writing is never a neutral presentation of information, as Antonie Wlosok puts it, Christian apologetic writing is regularly designed to teach.[56] Thus, sometimes quite explicitly, texts of Christian apologetic writing were attempts to shape readers, in speech and comportment, so they will be ready to engage with critics and interlocutors. They are often not texts designed to directly answer critics. They are texts designed to equip sympathetic readers who will themselves be ready, or at

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[55] Laura Salah Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture,* 28.

[56] Antonie Wlosok, *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike: Bd. 4: Die Literatur des Umbruchs. Von der römischen zur christlichen Literatur 117 bis 284 n. Chr Abt. 8 Teil 4 - Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft,* ed. Klaus Sallmann (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 1989), 218; in Wlosok's exact words, apologetic texts are always designed *cohortari, defendere, instituere.*

least feel that they are ready, to answer critics. It is important to note that this preparation for engagement does not necessarily envision convincing or converting interlocutors. We can see hints of this even in some of the earliest examples of Christian apologetic writing. Justin writes toward the end of his *First Apology* that, even if Christianity is not honored as the truth, its members deserve the respect accorded other citizens. Justin is essentially expressing the minimal hope that his arguments have at least demonstrated that Christians should be taken seriously.[57] Our authors pick up on this formative and pedagogical use of Christian apologetic writing and make it central to their use of it. Lactantius and Eusebius recognize in Christian apologetic writing a mode of discourse that can equip and encourage educated Christians as they jockey for power and influence with their non-Christian peers.

However, the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* also remind us of how flexible Christian apologetic writing is. Eusebius can, with at least some limited degree of plausibility, claim that his work of Christian apologetic writing stands in a tradition with the letters of Paul. Lactantius with a bit more restraint offers his lineage of three previous authors of Christian apologetic writing, but even he, in attempting to transform Christian apologetic writing so that it will comport with his own goals, misrepresents the members of his genealogy. It is impossible, for instance, to square Cyprian's *Ad Demetrianum* with Lactantius' claim that Christian apologetic writing is designed to render palpable and intelligible the truth of God. Lactantius claims Cyprian fails at a task he may have never set out to accomplish. In both cases, the claim of legacy

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[57] Justin, *First Apology* 68.1. Justin Martyr. *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr, Apologies,* trans. and ed. Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, OECT (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

and the very real participation in a mode of Christian writing that was already centuries old by the fourth century stand in some dissonance with the ambitious and specific goals of these authors.

Conclusion

I set out to consider the apologetic projects of two influential Christian writers of the early fourth century: Lactantius and Eusebius. After providing some background information and context, a majority of my dissertation was an attempt to read closely the texts of theirs widely considered to be their major works of Christian apologetic writing: Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and Eusebius' *Apodeixis.* I noted how both these texts centered pedagogical rhetoric and I considered how this rhetoric, and related features of these texts, help us understand how they fit in the Constantinian era. My close reading and analysis of Lactantius' and Eusebius' texts led to a comparison—a reading of these two authors together—that concluded they were similarly making use of the Christian practice of responding to outsider critiques or questions (what contemporary scholars tend to call apologetics) to form and imagine a new kind of Christian intellectual. In this conclusion, I will briefly summarize my argument and make some suggestions for future avenues of research and inquiry that follows from my analysis.

In my introductory section, after previewing the argument of my dissertation, I described two important preliminary items. First I discussed pedagogical rhetoric and education in the Greco-Roman world. The language of education is a prominent feature of both Lactantius' *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and Eusebius' *Apodeixis*. In discussing this language, I noted that the normally terminal level of education, taught by a *rhetor*, seems to be the primary point of reference for the pedagogical rhetoric of both *DI* and *Apodeixis.* I also described how both of these texts can be read as participating in debates about education that were bound up with debates around the character of society

and the state. Finally, I concluded my introduction with a cursory narration of the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine. In addition to emphasizing the significance of both the Tetrarchic Persecution and Constantine's privileging of Christianity, I described how the latter's policy was not simply advantageous for Christians but also tried to make use of Christian leaders in furthering some of his social and political agenda.

Chapter one was a brief description of recent discussions and debates surrounding Christian apologetics in antiquity. Although nothing quite like a consensus has emerged around apologetics amongst scholars of early Christianity, I distilled a few widely agreed upon insights from recent scholarship that help form the background for my study of Lactantius and Eusebius. For instance, I noted that the epochal notion of an "age of the apologists" had been largely rejected and that the identity forming, intra-communal dimension of apologetics had been emphasized in recent scholarship. I also described the language I found most useful for thinking about the category of literature to which *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* belong. I prefer the word "apologetics" to indicate the practice of responding to the putative criticisms or questions of outsiders and the modal language of "apologetic" when discussing literature in which is this practice is evident. Of particular importance in this section, was noting that the word "apologetic" and its cognates (E.g., "apologetics," "apologies") that scholarship tends to use to categorize *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* are contemporary labels that, though heuristically useful, run the risk of stymying attention to the actual language developed by Lactantius and Eusebius as they construct their projects.

In chapter two, I analyzed Lactantius' project in the *Divinarum institutionum libri VII*, particularly his programmatic statements in books one and five. Lactantius claims to be uniting "defense" (something he says many previous Christian writers have attempted) with "instruction." I argued that we should understand Lactantius' work as a kind of Ciceronian translation project. He claims to be converting the "rough" and "common" language of divine truth (the diction of the *indocti*) into the rhetorically polished and sophisticated diction of the sophisticated classes (*docti*). However, Lactantius' project is not designed to be singular. I argued that Lactantius' work is not only concerned with *doing* the work of translation, but also in forming and fielding Christian elites who will do similar types of work. Lactantius envisions future advocates who will use his work as a model for their own, advocates who may be able to effect significant societal change.

In chapter three I turned to Eusebius who also draws heavily on pedagogical language in his presentation of his work, describing it as a "teaching" for "the ignorant," those insufficiently educated in the rationality of Christianity. Thus, his primary designation for his own work, and those by authors he describes as predecessors, is *demonstration* (ἀπόδειξις)—a text designed to show the inherent intelligibility and exclusive truthfulness of Christianity over against non-Christian practices or doctrines. Although these texts rightly make reference to the questions and criticisms of outsiders, Eusebius is clear that their primary use is in forming and equipping Christian intellectuals. More than Lactantius, Eusebius is quite explicit about the goals of character and skill he has for a reader shaped by his project. He hopes to shape elite men who will be equipped for urbane debate with their non Christian-peers as well as being prepared to

direct and lead coreligionist from less educated classes. There are possible ascetic and ecclesiastical valences in Eusebius' description of the Christian "demonstrator" shaped by his writing, but Eusebius leaves the ecclesiastical status of his ideal reader unarticulated. By doing so, he leaves open the possibility for *demonstrators* fulfilling a variety of roles and functions in distinct venues.

Finally, I offered some side by side analysis of these two authors, re-considering their projects with three focuses: pedagogical rhetoric, forming Christian intellectuals, and transforming apologetics. Both authors develop projects using pedagogical language that explicitly look to form a new kind of Christian intellectual who can be socially and civically significant. These projects reference and draw on the legacy of the Christian practice of responding to the putative critiques and criticisms of outsiders. In so doing, both Lactantius and Eusebius narrate a kind of history of apologetics in which their texts stand, but which will be transcended and/or completed by their newer works. I concluded this chapter by gesturing toward some slightly later texts that could be seen differently in light of my analysis of *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*.

In these final paragraphs, I will suggest some further questions and avenues of ongoing research that could follow on this dissertation. My analysis of the kind of formative aspiration in the apologetic discourse of Lactantius and Eusebius naturally fits with discussions of debate and dialogue in the decades and centuries following these authors. Averil Cameron, for instance, has recently written important studies on the

significance of dialogue in late antiquity and Byzantium.[1] A potentially fruitful avenue of inquiry, would consider how the participants in these debates are characterized and how the sorts of arguments they deploy relate to aspirationally formative texts such as *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis*. Does Christian dialogue and debate in the later fourth century evidence cognizance of what I argued these Constantinian authors were attempting? Are Christian intellectuals finding texts such Lactantius' and Eusebius', or perhaps something similar, useful in their public wrangling with non-Christian (or "heretical") interlocutors?

Relatedly, insofar as *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* see civic and political significance to their arguments, it is worth looking at the political theology and legal reasoning of Christian sources later in the fourth century and beyond. Is the use to which Lactantius and Eusebius believe apologetic discourse and those shaped quietly abandoned, or do Christian writers continue in a similar vein? More specifically, both Lactantius and Eusebius imagine Christians formed and shaped by projects such as theirs will be well suited to exercise significant roles in the public square. Are ideals of civic Christian leadership such as we find in *Divinarum institutionum libri VII* and *Apodeixis* relevant in later Christian writings about the state and where Christians or the Christian Church fit within it?

I have argued that the Christian practice of responding to outsider critique (apologetics) is transformed in the writing of Eusebius and Lactantius. A sub-theme of

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[1] Averil Cameron, *Dialoguing in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2014); Averil Cameron and Niels Gaul, eds., *Dialogues and Debates from Late Antiquity to Late Byzantium* (London: Routledge, 2017).

my argument has been the way this practice changes and adapts, but can remain relevant in new times and places. Thus, methodologically speaking, future study could attend to the use and development of this kind of discourse with an eye toward how it responds to, and is shaped by, different social and political contexts. I gestured toward this in my brief discussion of Theodoret of Cyrus, but more sustained analysis of this text and others like it, with special attention to how they draw on and transform apologetics, could be valuable. Indeed, the overturning of the epochal notion of an "age of the Apologists" and the identity forming use of apologetics that I described in chapter one should naturally lead to just such a thing.

Finally, with regards to the writings of Eusebius, it has been noted by others that he has a "bookish" bent that tends to emphasize or make much of "scholastic" and specifically "pedagogical" concerns.[2] Nevertheless, though this thread that runs through his work has been noted by others, the character of this pedagogy and its *telos* have not been a subject of sustained study. I have started such a process, but my focus has been almost exclusively on Eusebius' *Apodeixis* and the way he developed this project with a certain kind of pedagogy and resultant Christian intellectual in mind. A future project could fruitfully consider the whole Eusebian corpus (or perhaps just one more of his major projects) to trace how his pedagogical emphases and concern for shaping educated, elite Christians appears and is developed through his career and in different kinds of texts.[3] In addition to expanding our understanding and appreciation of Eusebius' thought,

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[2] E.g., Corke-Webster, *Eusebius and Empire*, 17; Johnson, *Eusebius*, 51-84.

[3] Perhaps a text such as Peter Martens', *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), could provide a model for such an undertaking.

such a study could potentially expand our understanding of what role Christian elites were aspiring toward in the Constantinian era and how they were attempting to repurpose the Christian literary tradition to achieve their goals.

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