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Jeremy Schott

Eusebius's Christian Library and the Construction of "Hellenistic Judaism"

This article approaches the idea of "Judeo-Christianity" at an oblique angle. For scholars of late antiquity, the idea of "Hellenistic Judaism" shares some of the problems that scholars of modernity have identified in "Judeo-Christianity." Each of these terms makes explicit and implicit claims about history; each also uses Judaism to reify a particular understanding of Christianity. This article examines the role of the fourth-century bishop and polymath Eusebius of Caesarea, and his famed library, in the creation of "Hellenistic Judaism." Eusebius drew a distinction between an ancient "Hebrew" theological tradition and a wider "Judaism." Echoing certain modern constructions of "Judeo-Christianity," Eusebius contended that the "Hebrew-Christian" tradition represented the most universal, civilized, and transcendent form of religion.

Among scholars and students of late ancient Judaism and Christianity, the category "Hellenistic Judaism" prompts some of the same questions and problems that "Judeo-Christianity" presents to scholars of European and North American modernity. The semantic range of the term is

Jeremy Schott is Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies, UNC-Charlotte.

flexible. On the one hand, it can refer merely to a historical periodization within the history of Judaism, corresponding to the "Hellenistic Period" in wider Mediterranean and Near Eastern history (roughly, from the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE to the beginning of the Roman Empire at the turn of the first millennium). On the other hand, it has often connoted a particular modality of Judaism emerging during this period. Used in this way "Hellenistic Judaism" refers to forms of Judaism understood to be "syncretistic," more "Hellenized" than its foil, the more parochial (or "pure") Judaism practiced in Jerusalem and its environs. The acme of Hellenistic Judaism is Philo of Alexandria, whose work has often been held to represent an elegant synthesis of Judaism and all that is best in the Hellenic tradition. In these readings, Philo's work stands as the zenith of a tradition of Hellenized/Hellenizing Jewish literature produced within the cultural melting pot of Ptolemaic Alexandria.[1]

This portrayal of Hellenistic Judaism was most prominent, though, in narratives of "Christian Origins," where the "Hellenizing" of Judaism was often conceptualized as a necessary condition for the spread of Christianity. The "Hellenizing" of Judaism, understood as its rationalizing and universalizing, was a "preparation for the gospel."[2] The schematic of "Hellenistic Judaism" and its relationship to early Christianity that I sketch here, in particular the problematic heuristic distinction between "Hellenistic" Judaism and "Palestinian" Judaism, along with the equally suspect ontological distinction between particularity and universalism, no longer holds sway among

[1] Perhaps the best-known scholar in this trajectory is Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935) and idem, *The Theology of Justin Martyr: An Investigation into the Conceptions of Early Christian Literature and Its Hellenistic and Judaistic Influence* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1968); among many studies see, e.g., Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) and Ronald Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Philo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[2] Among the many influential accounts of the history of early Christianity that implicitly or explicitly articulate this narrative, see Adolf von Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans. James Moffat, vol. 2 (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 2: "The extent to which Judaism was prepared for the gospel may also be judged by means of the syncretism into which it had developed"; Jean Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, in *A History of Early Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicaea*, trans. John A. Baker, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), section one of which is entitled "Preparation for the Gospel"; W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), esp. pp. 34–37 on "Alexandria"; Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, rev. ed., vol. 1 (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 13–23.

specialists in ancient Judaism and early Christianity. The historical distinction has been solidly debunked—perhaps most famously by Martin Hengel, who in his landmark *Judaism and Hellenism* argued convincingly that all Judaism during the Hellenistic period must be understood within the matrix of Hellenism.[3] More recent work has attuned scholars to the political investments implicit in metaphysical distinctions between cultural universality and ethnic particularity.[4] Nonetheless, the older "Hellenistic/Palestinian" distinction continues to cast a shadow.

The short essay that follows considers the role that a particular fourth-century bishop and polymath, Eusebius of Caesarea (c.260–339 CE), and his library, the famous "Library of Caesarea,"[5] played in the formation of "Hellenistic Judaism" as a key heuristic category in narratives of Christian history. The term "Hellenistic Judaism" is a coinage of modern scholarship. In his historical and apologetic writings, however, Eusebius came to rely on a particular set of texts in his library—the works of Philo, Artapanus, Eupolemus, Aristobulus, the *Letter of Aristeas*, and the Septuagint—which form the core of the literature studied under this modern rubric. Eusebius relied on this dossier of texts, moreover, to argue for the existence of an ancient "Hebrew" theological tradition, distinct from "Judaism." Christianity, he argued, was genealogically related to this ancient "Hebrew" tradition. Echoing certain modern constructions of "Judeo-Christianity," Eusebius contended that the "Hebrew-Christian" tradition represented the most universal, civilized, and transcendent form of religion.

[3] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. John Bowden (1969; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974). Some key and influential studies of Hellenistic Jewish literature include: John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity on the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Carl C. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 4 vols. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1983). For a more nuanced account of Jewish "Hellenism," see Erich S. Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) and idem, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), and for a innovative literary-critical approach to the question of "Hellenism" and "Judaism" in late-ancient Jewish literature see Daniel Boyarin, *Socrates and the Fat Rabbis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[4] See especially the work of Daniel Boyarin, notably *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) and *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

[5] For a reconstruction of the Caesarean Library and the history of the collection, see Andrew Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

Eusebius crafted his genealogy of "Hebrews," "Jews," and "Christians" in his great apologetic diptych: the *Gospel Preparation* / *Gospel Demonstration* (*PE*/*DE* hereafter).[6] Written roughly between 313 and the early 320s CE, the *Preparation* offered a fifteen-book apology for Christianity based on evidence from "Jewish" and "pagan" literature, while the twenty-book *Demonstration* explained Christianity by adducing and interpreting excerpts of biblical texts. The diptych is self-consciously concerned with both the categorization of texts and the construction of religious and ethnic identities.

At the beginning of the *Preparation*, Eusebius imagines the questions "someone" may put to the Christians.

> In all likelihood someone may first ask, who are we who propose to take up the pen, that is, are we Greeks or Barbarians, or what might there be between these? … To what punishments may fugitives from ancestral customs, who have become zealots for the foreign mythologies of the Jews which are slandered by all not be subjected? How is it not extremely depraved and reckless to exchange native traditions casually and take up, with unreasonable and unreflective faith, those of the impious enemies of all peoples? … [Christians, the imagined critic concludes] have "cut out for themselves a new, trackless desert path, that keeps neither the ways of the Greeks nor of the Jews." (*PE* 1.2.3)

Whatever the ultimate source of these rhetorical questions, the passage envisions Christianity as a dangerous hybrid.[7] Christians worship a Jewish God and read Jewish books, yet simultaneously disavow Judaism. Christian

[6] The standard text of the *Gospel Preparation* (*PE*) is *Die Praeparatio evangelica*, in *Eusebius Werke Band 8*, ed. K. Mras, 2 vols., Die Greichischen Christlicher Schrifsteller der Ersten Jahrhundert (GCS) 43 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954–1956). Translations that follow are my own, unless otherwise noted; for a complete English translation see *Preparation for the Gospel*, ed. and trans. E. H. Gifford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903). The standard text of the *Gospel Demonstration* (*DE*) is *Die Demonstratio evangelica*, in *Eusebius Werke Band 6*, ed. I. Heikel, Die Greichischen Christlicher Schrifsteller der Ersten Jahrhundert (GCS) 23 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1913) and English translation in *The Proof of the Gospel being the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea*, trans. W. J. Ferrar, 2 vols. (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1920).

[7] Debate continues as to whether Eusebius is here summarizing the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry of Tyre's polemics against Christianity, which he addresses specifically elsewhere in the *Preparation*, or is merely summarizing commonplace critiques; the identification of this polemics with Porphyry was first proposed by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Ein Bruchstück aus der Schrift des Porphyrius gegen die Christen," *Zeitschrift für die Neutes-*

discourse bears a strong resemblance to Greek philosophical discourse, yet Christians eschew Hellenism. Christianity is an aporia that demands resolution and clarification. The *Gospel Preparation* and *Demonstration* represent Eusebius's effort to define the "trackless desert" of Christianity (*PE* 1.2.4).

Eusebius exploits this unnerving limbo-land between Hellenism and Barbarism, Jew and Greek. For him, Christianity is precisely what the imagined critic feared it was—a people identified not by their ethnicity, but rather by the explicit rejection and erasure of ancestral identities. Eusebius casts Christianity as a white space—devoid of any ethnic or cultural colorings.

To carve out this space between Hellenism and Judaism, Eusebius sets up a *sunkrisis*—or formal rhetorical comparison—between them. In Aristotle, the term refers to a comparison of men's lives for the purposes of encomium. As a method that negotiates the tension between similarity and difference, *sunkrisis* could also be an effective tool for negotiating ethnic and cultural boundaries. Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* are an excellent example—in setting the lives of renowned Greeks in comparison with those of famous Romans, Plutarch negotiates the relationships between Hellenicity and Romanness in the context of Roman domination of Greece.[8] The earliest Christian apologists also deployed *sunkrisis* as an effective rhetorical tool.[9] Tatian's *Oration to the Greeks*, for instance, is set up as a *sunkrisis* of Greek and barbarian traditions. Thus Tatian urges the Greeks—"you who critique us, compare

tamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums 1, no. 1 (1900): 101–5. For the current debate, see, for example: Timothy D. Barnes, "Porphyry *Against the Christians*: Date and the Attribution of Fragments," *Journal of Theological Studies*, no. 24, 2 (1973): 424–42 and idem, "Scholarship or Propaganda? Porphyry's *Against the Christians* and its Historical Setting," *Bulletin of the Institute for Classical Studies* 39, no. 1 (1994): 53–65; 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), 119–50.

[8] See, for example, Rebecca Preston, "Roman Questions, Greek Answers: Plutarch and the Construction of Identity," in *Being Greek Under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic, and the Development of Empire*, ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 86–119 and Simon Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?: Contests in the History of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[9] Recent scholarship emphasizes that the work of second-century Christian apologists must be understood as emerging from complex negotiations of ethnic, cultural, and gendered identity politics in the high Roman Empire; see, for example, J. Rebecca Lyman, "Justin Martyr, Some Postcolonial Perspectives," in *Justin Martyr and His Worlds*, ed. Sara Parvis and Paul Foster (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 160–68, 212–14 and Laura Nasrallah, "Mapping the World: Justin, Tatian, Lucian, and the Second Sophistic," *Harvard Theological Review* 98, no. 3 (2005): 283–314.

(*sunkrivate*) your myths to our narratives" (*Orat.* 21.1). He also compares Moses and Homer—"let us place them in comparison (*en sunkrisei*)," Tatian intones, "for we will find that our doctrines are not only older than the teaching of the Greeks, but older even than the discovery of letters" (*Orat.* 31.1). Eusebius draws upon and develops the projects of his predecessors.[10] He casts the *Preparation* as a critical comparison of *theologies*—those of the Greeks and other gentiles, on the one hand, and that of the "Hebrews," on the other. "It is right," as Eusebius puts it, "to set the theologies of the Hebrews in comparison (*en sunkrisei*) with those of the Greeks" (*PE* 7.11.13). This comparison takes place on two fronts. First, in *Preparation* books 1–6, Eusebius considers the traditions of the Greeks and other gentiles. Lest Eusebius be accused of fabricating a partisan account, this comparison requires a return to primary sources—"I will not set down my own words (*emas phōnas*)," he writes, "but rather of those reputed to be most diligent in piety concerning those whom they call gods" (*PE* 1.5). Having completed his assessment of Egyptian, Phoenician, and Greek theology, Eusebius turns to an examination of Jewish books and Hebrew theology (I hope to make Eusebius's distinctions clear in what follows). Again, Eusebius will craft his argument "not in my own words (*ouk emais phōnais*) but again, only in the words of those approved by the Jews as regards their ancestral tradition of learning" (*PE* 8.1.3). The result of Eusebius's methodology—the *Preparation*—is a massive collection of quotations from source-texts punctuated and cemented by Eusebius's own commentary, critique, and section headings.

Eusebius uses his sources to argue in books 1–6 for the superiority of Hebrew theology in comparison with Greek theology. In books 7–9, he goes on to argue for the dependence of Greek thought on Hebrew wisdom—the so-called "plagiarism" motif so popular among early Christian apologists.[11] I want to draw particular attention to the source-texts that Eusebius musters in this portion of the *Preparation*—the Septuagint, Philo, Josephus, Demetrius, Eupolemus, Artapanus, and so forth, which represent the core of the set of texts traditionally studied as representative of "Hellenistic Judaism."

[10] On Eusebius's apologetics generally, see Aryeh Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[11] On the "plagiarism motif" see Arthur Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture*, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 26 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989) and Daniel Ridings, *The Attic Moses: The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers* (Göteburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1995).

Eusebius's *Preparation*, in other words, offers an excellent example of intertextuality, in the structuralist sense: the literal presence, through allusion, quotation, or citation, of texts within other texts. The textual typology of structuralist literary critic Gérard Genette offers a useful way to keep these usages distinct.[12] For Genette, intertextuality is but one of five types of "transtextuality"—Genette's neologism for "all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts."[13] In acknowledged contrast to Julia Kristeva's coinage of the term "intertextuality,"[14] Genette reserves the term "intertextuality" for "the actual presence of one text within another—quotation, plagiarism, and allusion all represent modes of intertextuality. Genettian intertextuality has been explored in considerable detail by Sabrina Inowlocki in her recent study of Eusebius's citational and quotational practices.[15] She demonstrates how several compositional tactics serve to bring Jewish, pagan, and Christian works into relation in the *Preparation*. On rare occasions, Eusebius will alter the letter of his sources—he does this, for example, in the case of several Philonic texts when he wishes to make Philo's theological language accord with his own and with that of the Platonic and Neoplatonic texts with which he sets Philo in comparison.[16] Eusebius is also very skillful in his cutting of quotations so as to highlight certain aspects of his source texts. In quoting the *Letter of Aristeas*, for instance, Eusebius cuts his quotations to emphasize the translation of the Hebrew scriptures and the figurative reading of the Torah while omitting material dealing less figuratively with sacrifices, the temple, and so forth.

In addition to "intertextuality," Genette identifies "paratextuality" as another mode of transtextuality. A work's paratext consists of all the elements that mediate between book and reader: titles, headings, subheadings, notes, dedications, prefaces, and so forth, and is of particular significance in analyzing Eusebius, who made creative use of chapter headings, tables, and so forth. Eusebius's use of chapter headings play an important role in establishing re-

[12] Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

[13] Ibid., 1

[14] Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel" and "The Bounded Text," in *Desire in Language. A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

[15] Sabrina Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[16] *PE* 7.13.1–2 (= Philo, *Questiones in Genesim* 2.62), Eusebius may add the expression *deuteros theos*; *PE* 7.13.4-6 (= Philo, *De plantatione* 8–10), Eusebius replaces *nomos* with *logos*.

lationships between texts in the *PE*. When Eusebius gathers various Greek *testimonia* for the antiquity and philosophical superiority of the Hebrews in *PE* Book 9, for example, his first testimony is, according to the chapter heading, "Porphyry on the illustrious philosophy of the Jews in ancient times" (*PE* 9.3). The quotation that follows—an account of the Essenes—is found in Porphyry's *On Abstinence*, where Porphyry had ranged it for comparison alongside examples of philosophical communities from India, Greece, and elsewhere (*De abst.* 2.26). Eusebius, however, knows that this portion of *On Abstinence* is a quotation from Josephus's *Jewish War*—in fact, Eusebius ascribes the same passage to Josephus when he quotes it in another of his works, the *Ecclesiastical History*. By carefully cutting the quotation and applying a chapter heading that masks Porphyry's source, Eusebius is able to make philosopher speak against himself.

Eusebius's working out of the categories "Jewish" and "Hebrew" through these transtextual poetics serves as a means to negotiate (and trouble) the politics of ethnic identity.

First, Jewish books. If he is going to compare Hebrew theology with that of other peoples, Eusebius faces a conundrum—Hebrew theology is found in Jewish books. To prove the special status of Hebrew wisdom, Eusebius must first differentiate the Hebrews from all other peoples—including contemporary Jews.[17] The difference between Hebrews and gentiles, moreover, also figures the difference between transcendence and embodiment, between universality and particularity, that has lain near the heart of Western philosophy at least since Plato. The Hebrews, Eusebius argues, were the first people to differentiate soul and body (*PE* 7.4.1). While all other peoples lived "according to the senses of the body" (*PE* 7.2.1), the Hebrews were *sui generis* in their recognition that the "true person" is found in the soul (*PE* 7.4.1). While the Phoenicians and Egyptians were worshipping the stars and natural phenomena, the Hebrews correctly inferred the existence of a transcendent creator through observation of the order in creation (*PE* 7.3.2).

The Jewish *ethnos* began in Egypt, when Joseph's descendants forgot the religion of their ancestors and began to assume Egyptian customs (*PE* 7.8.37). The Jews were so miscegenated that "their manner of life appeared to differ in no way from the Egyptians" (PE 7.8.37). God sent Moses, how-

[17] On Eusebius's distinction between "Hebrews" and "Jews," see also the work of Jean Sirinelli, *Les vues historiques d'Eusèbe de Césarée durant la period prénicéenne* (Dakar: Université de Dakar, 1961), 147–63 and 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), 57–132.

ever, as a lawgiver to reign in the wayward Jews. The Torah "was appropriate to the mores of those receiving it" (*PE* 7.8.38). That is, the legal regulations in the Torah were intended as a concession to Jewish licentiousness, a crutch to help the Jews climb out of the mire into which they had descended in Egypt.

For Eusebius, the difference between Hebrew and Jew also figures the difference between transcendent wisdom and embodied practice. The Jewish law does not apply to Christians, Eusebius argues, because it is ineluctably bound by geography and history. The Jewish Law enjoins festivals and sacrifices that can only be performed in Jerusalem; therefore, Eusebius argues, the Law was only ever applicable to Jews living in Palestine, not to non-Jews, nor Jews living in the Diaspora.[18] *A fortiori*, the Law is not applicable to Christians, who come from "all peoples, from the most far-flung regions of the earth" (*DE* 1.3.3).

In the opening of the *PE*, Eusebius had described Christianity as interstitial, lying (potentially) somewhere between Greek polytheism and Jewish practice. Likewise, Eusebius's Hebrews occupy a space between Jew and Gentile. As Eusebius puts it:

> Among all of [the Hebrews] there was not one mention of bodily circumcision, nor of the Jewish proclamation of Moses; therefore, it is not correct to call them Jews, but neither it is correct to call them Greeks, because they did not believe in many gods like the Greeks or the rest of the peoples. (*PE* 7.8.20)

For Eusebius, "Jewish" identity is marked by a physical sign (e.g., circumcision) and physical regulations (e.g., *kashrut*). In contrast, he claims that the ancient Hebrews had no need for this physical code. The Hebrew polity, Eusebius argues, was based on the innate purity of their souls, not historically contingent, human laws (*PE* 7.6.3). In Eusebius's telling, Christians and Hebrews are genealogically related in so far as both espouse a timeless monotheism and remain aloof from the error of other peoples.

Behind Eusebius's account of Christian and Hebrew kinship lie two key Pauline passages: Col 3:11 ("There is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian and Scythian") and Paul's figurative reading of

[18] "But that the ordinance that is according to Moses was appropriate for the Jews, as I said, and not for all of them, nor for those living in the Diaspora, but only for those residing in Palestine, will become clear to you through the following explanation" (*DE* 1.3.1).

Abraham's conversion in Gal 3:6–9. For anti-Christian polemicists, Pauline claims to transcend traditional categories of identity was emblematic of the disruption that Christianity presented to traditional ethnological reasoning. As one polemicist put it: "Now if Paul, play-acting, is at one time a Jew, but at another time a Roman, at one time without the Law, but at another a Hellene, and whenever he wishes [becomes] foreign and inimical to each [identity], undercutting each, he has thus made each meaningless, disguising his adherence to each with flatteries."[19] For Eusebius, however, Paul is a "Hebrew of Hebrews"[20] and the very fluidity of "Hebrewness" a mark of strength and superiority.

The genealogical connection Eusebius makes between "Hebrews" and "Christians" simultaneously *affirms* and *denies* traditional logics of ethnicity. Yet this very ambivalence permits Eusebius to position Christianity as an *ethnos* descended from the Hebrews and membership in that group as the *transcendence* of ethnicity and embodiment.[21] Becoming Hebrew/Christian thus effects an escape from ethnic particularity. As Andrew Jacobs has argued, the "terminological slippage" of Eusebius's distinction between Jews and Hebrews allows him to create "a 'frontier zone' in which 'Hebrew,' 'Jew,' and 'Christian' all mingle to produce the triumphant Christian self."[22] I would add that this "terminological slippage" is effective because it is refracted through the metaphysical distinction between transcendence and embodiment. Thus, the equation of "Hebrewness" with transcendence and the absence of the traditional elements of ethno-cultural identity (e.g., circumcision, dietary practices, etc.), mitigates the simultaneous claims of ethnic

[19] Macarius Magnes, *Apocriticus* 3.30–31, text in Richard Goulet, *Macarios de Magnésie. Le Monogénès* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2003), my translation. See also the discussion in Jeremy Schott, *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 44–45.

[20] For example, 2 Cor 11:22.

[21] Aaron Johnson ("Identity, Descent, and Polemic: Ethnic Argumentation in Eusebius' *Preparation Evangelica*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12, no. 1 (2004): 23–56) has pointed to the way in which Eusebius deploys "ethnic argumentation" to construct "narratives of descent" that legitimate Christianity while undercutting Greek claims to cultural superiority. To position the Hebrews as the most ancient and therefore authentic of peoples and to claim descent from them "functions as a legitimation of their rebellion against ancestral customs" (55). While Johnson's emphasis on the importance of ethnic argumentation offers an astute unknotting of the complexities of Eusebius' genealogical arguments, it does not take account of the metaphysical problem of transcendence and embodiment that fuel them.

[22] Andrew Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire in Late Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 29–32.

descent on the part of Christians. Put another way, by claiming "Hebrewness," Christians can safely "play the Jew."[23]

Eusebius's distinction between "Hebrews" and "Jews" in the *Preparation* also depends on a related distinction between "theology"—sets of theistic and cosmological beliefs—and cultic practices—the "idolatry" of the gentiles and Jewish circumcision/dietary practices. In the *Preparation*, Eusebius constructs "theology" as a transhistorical phenomenon that may be manifested in, but which transcends, the cultic practices of specific peoples. This distinction between "theology" and cultic practice reflects the same metaphysics that fuels the difference between "Jew" and "Hebrew/Christian." In Eusebius's account, theologies (like peoples) are thus authentic to the extent to the extent they transcend embodiment in specific cultural forms; likewise, theologies (like peoples) are false to the degree to which they are entangled in the processes of ethnogenesis and civilization.

The putative transhistoricity and universality of the category "theology" in the *Preparation* anticipates the category "religion" in modern academic discourses in significant ways. In these discourses, "religion" depends on and reinforces the partition of "secular" and "religious" fields, which, in turn, is determined by and helps determine the power dynamics of liberal democracy.[24] For its part, Eusebius's distinction between "theology" and "cult," which is also the difference between the universal and the particular, is conditioned by and conditions the power disparities between center and province characteristic of late-ancient imperial politics.[25]

Eusebius's intellectual project requires a cognitive space in which to stage relations between different theologies—and the category "Hebrew" serves this function. As the catalyst for Eusebius's *sunkrisis*, it opens a gap within which Eusebius can assemble Christianity. Having little to no positive content of its own, the category "Hebrew" acts as a cognitive bridge between

[23] The three preceding paragraphs summarize Schott, *Christianity, Empire*, 149–54, q.v.; for additional reading on the politics of late-ancient ethnological discourses, see the important work of Denise Kimber Buell, "Race and Universalism in Early Christianity," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10, no. 4 (2002): 429–68 and eadem, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); for discussion of the politics of ethnological discourses in antiquity more broadly, see Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[24] Particularly in anthropological discourses like that of Clifford Geertz, as analyzed by Talal Asad in *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 27–54.

[25] Further, see Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews*, passim; Schott, *Christianity, Empire*, 166-76.

Judaism and Hellenism, and between past and present. It is no accident that "Hellenistic," "Diaspora," or "Grecophone Judaism" served a similar function in modern scholarship, when it has been cast as a syncretic tendency or trend that anticipates of even prepares the way for Christianity.

If "Hebrew" provides Eusebius with the cognitive room to stage relations between Greek and Jewish texts, that staging requires a physical space as well. Euesbius's reading and writing happen some*where* and some*how*.

The first important "where" of Eusebius's intellectual activity is the locus of readability and interpretability constituted by written words. Eusebius aims to explain why Christians "accept Jewish *books* and gather most of our doctrine from the prophecies in them" (*PE* 1.5.10). Eusebius's admission that *books* lie at the heart of the matter is significant. Written-ness enables the distinction between theology (as transcendent, intellectual discourse) and *thrēskeia* (as embodied ethno-cultural practice) upon which Eusebius's distinction between Hebrew and Jew hinges. In being written, theologies also become readable, and in turn, in becoming readable, theologies enter the arena of *sunkrisis*. For Eusbeius, texts are not to be embodied in cultural practice (e.g., halakhically), but rather are objects to be read and brought into intertextual relationships.

This suggests another important "where" of Eusebius's scholarly—the Caesarean library. Indeed, the library lies like a tantalizing palimpsest behind the whole of Eusebius's literary corpus. Though Eusebius does not discuss the history or role of his library explicitly in the *Preparation*, he does reflect on another—the library of Alexandria. He provides extensive quotations from the *Letter of Aristeas*, but he prefaces these selections with his own brief account. The Hebrew scriptures, he claims, had been "hidden for ages in their native tongue." God, foreknowing the coming ascendancy of the Romans and the role their empire would play in making possible the transmission of the knowledge of God to all peoples, "put it into the mind of King Ptolemy" that the Hebrew scriptures should be "accurately translated and placed in public libraries (*dēmosiais bibliothēkais*)" (*PE* 8.1.5–8). For Eusebius, the Ptolemaic library serves as an *oikumene* in microcosm, the lisable space in which theologies become available for circulation and comparison.[26]

[26] On the preceding, see also Jeremy Schott, "Philosophies of Language, Theories of Translation, and Imperial Intellectual Production: The Cases of Porphyry, Iamblichus, and Eusebius," *Church History* 78, no. 4 (2009): 855–61.

The Caesarean library, like that of Alexandria, was an ambivalent space. At the core of the collection stood Origen's personal library. Like other philosopher's libraries, Origen's collection housed the works of his own philosophical school as well as those of others. Yet, as Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams have pointed out in their new study of the library,[27] Origen's library differed from those of his contemporaries in its orientation around a set of non-Greek texts—the books of the Hebrew Bible. As Grafton and Williams argue, this was also a collection that had undergone important transformations—having been translated first from Alexandria to Caesarea, and later, when Eusebius found himself bishop, from a private collection supported by private patronage into episcopal library. The library is thus a border post in which Eusebius can stage textual migrations and incursions. Here Eusebius cuts and sutures his books—separates Hecataeus' voice from Josephus's in the *Contra Apionem*; obscures the distinctions between the voice of Alexander Polyhistor and his Hellenistic Jewish sources; masks Josephus' voice with Porphyry's, and so forth, to weave a polyphonous text in which Jewish, Greek, and Christian voices, barbarian tongues as well as Greek, resonate contrapuntally.

In writing the *Preparation*, moreover, Eusebius works to resolve the tensions inherent in his diverse archive. Eusebius must blend others' voices with his own, dismembering the library's textual corpus and re-membering it in a univocal, Christian utterance—the *Gospel Preparation/Demonstration*. The Christian text—and through it Christianity itself—is constituted intertextually, both in the structuralist sense noted earlier, and a Bakhtinian/Kristevan sense—the co-presence, interdependence, and tension among various voices within and without a text.[28] Eusebius's methodology is always tense and anxious—pursuing its monologic pretensions through a differential practice—the ascription of texts to authorial personae with different ethno-religious identities.

Perhaps, then, the most potent threat to Eusebius's construal of Christian identity—an identity fashioned through the reading and processing of books—were these books themselves—the diverse set of texts housed in the Caesarean library. With its collection of Greek philosophical works, Jewish

[27] Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[28] See, for example, Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel" and "The Bounded Text."

texts, along with orthodox and heterodox Christian texts, the library stood as a tangible dismembering of Eusebius's discourse. Was Eusebius's Christian text—indeed, was Christianity itself—the collection seemed to say, nothing but a patchwork culled from the words of Jews and Greeks?

In this paper I have attempted to suggest several implications of Eusebius of Caesarea's constructions of "Hebrews" and "Hebrew theology" for modern discourse concerning "Judaism," "Christianity," and "Judeo-Christianity." Recent studies of the "history of the history of religions" suggest that the category "religion" emerges largely as a product (and instrument) of the subjugation of native cultures by (Christian) European imperialism.[29] I have tried to suggest that we might see a genealogically related discourse in the early fourth century, as Eusebius deployed "religion"—or something akin to it, "theology"—as a transhistorical category and a primary marker of ethnological difference. Moreover, the foregoing reading of *Gospel Preparation* can aid in calling "syncretism" into question as an analytical category for the study of the histories of Judaism, Christianity, and "Judeo-Christianity." The *Gospel Preparation* is often seen as carrying on and developing an apologetic rapprochement or synthesis—the union of a Jewish religious body with a Greek philosophical soul—usually traced through Origen to Philo, back to Artapanus and the Hellenistic Jewish historians.[30] Reading the *Preparation* as a complex intertextuality, however, suggests that syncretism is not something that happens "out there" in the realm of conflict and competition among already bounded and stable religious groups that that then finds expression in

[29] Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India, and "The Mystic East"* (London: Routledge, 1999); Russell T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), esp. chapter 2 "Autonomy, Discourses, and Social Privilege," 51–73; idem, *Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), esp. chapter 5 "'We're All Stuck Somewhere': Taming Ethnocentrism and Transcultural Understandings," 73–83; Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious," in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 269–84.

[30] See, for instance, Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price, eds., *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea*; see also Wilhelm Bousset, *Jüdisch-christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandrie und Rom: Literarische Untersuchungen zu Philo und Clemens von Alexandria, Justin und Irenäus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1975) and Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria*, 163. See David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), passim for a detailed study of Philo's reception among early Christian writers, including Eusebius.

written texts. Syncretism is not so much a synthesis of "religions" as much as it is a transtextual and intertextual effect—the traces of *specific* modes of reading and writing, and re-reading and re-writing, *specific* books housed in *specific* collections. At least some of what has seemed characteristic of Greek-speaking Diaspora Judaism, then, is a product of Eusebius's Christian library and the *Gospel Preparation*. The Hellenistic Jewish historians, Artapanus, and Philo, have all been transmitted, in one way or another, through the library of Caesarea.[31] The study of Hellenistic Judaism, then, is always in part an iteration of the Caesarean library—or, even, an ongoing rewriting of the *Preparation*.[32]

I have also hoped to show that Eusebius is one participant in a durable metanarrative in which "Christianities" are something worked out in the space between Judaism and Hellenism.[33] Eusebius's construction of the category "Hebrew" as a transcendent, a-cultural space in which to stage the agonism of his ethnologics functions in ways akin to certain modern discourses. To take one example, explored in detail by Mark Silk in his seminal article on the use of the "Judeo-Christian" tradition in the twentieth century United States, neo-orthodox theologians such as Reinhold Neibuhr found the tension between "Hellenism" and "Hebraism" a dynamic schema for working out Christian identity in the post-war world.[34] Such church-

[31] See Carriker, *Library of Eusebius*, 155–77 and Runia, *Philo*, passim.

[32] Eusebius recognized that his project was open-ended and that it, in effect, constantly pointed outside itself, back to the library, demanding of readers that they continue the work of *sunkrisis*: "A great throng of ancient and recent witnesses pours down upon me but since I am anxious about the length of my text, I leave their utterances for students to search for and study" (*PE* 9.42, trans. Gifford). See also note 2 above for a list of modern histories of early Christianity that explicitly invoke the title of Eusebius's *Gospel Preparation*.

[33] This metanarrative is fairly easy to trace in the table of contents of almost any globalizing history of early Christianity; to take a few examples, Diarmaid MacCulloch's recent *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York: Viking, 2010) opens with a pairing of introductory chapters on "Greece and Rome" and "Israel," in David Chidester's popular *Christianity: A Global History* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2000) the subheadings of Chapter 3 "Christ" (i.e., "Flesh and Spirit," "Death and Resurrection," Beginning and End") plays effectively on persistent analogies used by early Christians to differentiate Christianity and Judaism.

[34] Mark Silk ("Notes on the Judeo-Christian Tradition in America," *American Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1984): 65–85) discusses the development of Niebuhr's position on the relation between the "Hellenic" and the "Hebraic" as constitutive of Christianity. Niebuhr, he notes, derived this terminology from Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), which described their difference as that between reason (Hellenism) and embodied behavior (Hebraism), a difference functionally similar to Eusebius's distinction between "Hebrew" and "Jew."

historical and theological constructions were also politically invested. Where Eusebius's "Hebrew" is implicated in the politics of late-Roman imperialism, mid-twentieth-century American constructions of the "Judeo-Christian" tradition served as a space in which to unify "Western" capitalist ideologies against, first, fascism and, later, communism.[35] Finally, by attending to the effects of Eusebius's textual practices, we might better recognize that what emerges through this dynamic is itself never historically stable or fixed, but like Eusebius's "Hebrews," "Hellenistic-Judaism," and the various configurations of "Judeo-Christianity" explored in this collection of essays, comes to be and subsists not as a "syncretism," but as an ambivalence.

[35] Silk, "Notes," 65–70.