Anti-Judaism versus Anti-Semitism: The Racialization of Jews in Late Antiquity

Abstract:
This article interrogates the arbitrary distinctions made between "anti-Judaism" and "anti-Semitism" by contextualizing the treatment of Jews in Roman late antiquity within the broader framework of premodern critical race studies. It illustrates the value of employing models such as racialization and monstrification when reconstructing the various iterations of anti-Jewish prejudice that populate the long history of Christianity. More specifically, it outlines the modes of racialization utilized in two fourth-century Christian writings: Eusebius's two-part apology and the Pseudo-Hegesippus. While Eusebius's work serves as an example of the racialization of Jews through ethnographic mythmaking, the so-called Pseudo-Hegesippus demonstrates the use of monstrification in the service of creating an affective culture of fear and hatred toward Jews. Such examples of Christian race-making in late antiquity contribute to the task of tracing the developments of premodern race beyond the medieval period and disrupts the arbitrary and limiting distinctions made between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism.

Keywords:
Race and Ethnicity; Race and Ethnicity Studies; Christianity; Judaism; Global Antiquity to Early Medieval

Introduction

One of the more stimulating and analytically productive dimensions in the study of premodern race is the question of how historians formulate Christian prejudice and violence against Jews throughout Western history. This question is significant in part because anti-Jewish prejudice is a thread that runs across the full length of the history of race-making in the West, making it a valuable resource for analyzing the topic.[1] The question is also significant because it shines a spotlight on the otherwise often unexamined assumptions behind the taxonomies that scholars employ in reconstructing the histories of race and religion.[2]

A common practice of modern scholarship on the issue has been to frame premodern forms of prejudice against Jews as "anti-Judaism" and modern forms as "anti-Semitism."[3] The former is understood to be prejudice along fluid religious and cultural lines, while the latter is conceptualized as prejudice along fixed "biological" lines.[4] Such an understanding mirrors the more general scholarly tendency to make arbitrary but sharp distinctions between *ethnicity* and *race* in the study of ancient societies.

This paradigm of interpreting premodern anti-Jewish prejudice strictly through the prism of religion or ethnicity has long been the standard practice in the study of Jews and Judaism in antiquity as well. On the one hand, scholars investigating the place of Jews in the wider Greco-Roman context often employ the category of ethnicity to frame Greek and Roman anti-Jewish prejudice, while simultaneously admitting the numerous problems that this modern category elicits.[5] On the other hand, historians of early Christianity contextualize Christian prejudice against Jews as a religious issue, which remains the most common mode of interpreting the long list of early Christian anti-Jewish writings commonly referred to as the *Adversus Judaeos* traditions.[6]

While ethnicity and religion have been and can be useful analytical frameworks in the study of ancient societies, they are not without their interpretive deficiencies. For starters, both religion and ethnicity are modern European categories that cannot be retrofitted onto premodern social structures in neat and precise ways.[7] Additionally, these categories have had the effect of framing the history of race purely as a history of ideas, at the expense of decentering the discursive and structural shifts that shape the long genealogy of race.

By contrast, scholars working in premodern critical race studies are providing important correctives to this shortcoming in the study of premodern iterations of structural bias and violence against Jews. For example, in her exhaustive treatment of race-making in medieval Europe, Geraldine Heng provides a useful paradigm for understanding race-making as "specific historical occasions in which strategic essentialisms are posited and assigned through a variety of practices and pressures" (Heng, 2018, p. 3). With respect to the issue of the "Jewish corollary," she outlines the contours of what she terms "religious race," demonstrating through numerous examples the point that race-making is not always based on somatic features alone. Her examples include discussions of the ways in which Jews are racialized (particularly in medieval England) through ritualized group practices, cultural fictions, and the force and discourse of institutions of church, state, law, and learning.[8]

Additionally, Classicists like Shelley Haley, Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Denise Eileen McCoskey, and Jackie Murray (among others) are charting new avenues of interpretation in the study of Classical literature and societies.[9] In her analysis of racecraft in the *Odyssey*, for instance, Murray delineates the "mechanisms of race-making" that populate the epic (Murray, 2021, pp. 145–151). She shows how strategies such as *centring* (and *de-centring*), *monstrification*, *ritual deference*, and *sexual asymmetry* are critical to exploring the mechanisms of race-making in ancient literature.[10] Murray's critical reading of the *Odyssey* with a focus on the means and methods of race-making provides a useful template for re-reading early Christian texts.

Similar to these approaches in the study of Classical literature, a number of scholars of early Christianity have introduced new models for analyzing ethnic and racial modes of thinking in early Christian sources. For example, in her monograph titled *Why This New Race?*, Denise Buell argues that early Christian claims to peoplehood—which she labels "ethnic reasoning"—should be taken seriously, or at face value (Buell, 2005, pp. 5-10). She conducts close readings of various Christian texts from the second and third centuries with this in mind. Her approach deviates from conventional interpretations of ethnic or racial language in early Christian literature as largely (or even entirely) rhetorical, thus spurring new ways of thinking about early Christian identity as an *ethnos* (people) or *genos* (race).[11]

In *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature*, Gay L. Byron deftly demonstrates the apocalyptic significations of Blackness as a symbol of sin and the infernal. Perhaps the most instructive portion of her contribution is the intersectional approach she utilizes to demonstrate the multivalence of the symbolisms used to describe Black women. She asserts the importance of highlighting the simultaneity of gender and race in the symbolic language employed by early Christian authors, noting that Black women are negatively signified on account of both their color and their sex (Byron, 2002, p. 7).

Furthermore, in "The Slippery Yet Tenacious Nature of Racism," Susanna Heschel highlights the need for scholars of religion and ethicists to interrogate their formulations of racism and the race concept (Heschel, 2015, pp. 22-23). Matthijs den Dulk draws on Heschel's arguments to push back against the restrictions on discussing race in early Christian contexts. His

reading of Origen's *On First Principles,* in his article titled "Origen of Alexandria and the History of Racism as a Theological Problem," demonstrates that some of the rhetoric in Origen's work exhibits important similarities with later modes of racist thinking (den Dulk, 2020, p. 172). In what follows, I extend the lines of inquiry underwriting these recent works, with the goal of illustrating the significance of early Christianity to the history of race.

More specifically, I utilize racialization (or race-making) as a model for analyzing the treatment of Jews in late antiquity. Any analysis of the early Christian *Adversus Iudaeos* traditions must necessarily distinguish between real or rhetorical Jews as the objects of criticism in a given text. My focus in this paper will be on Christian formulations of rhetorical, as opposed to real, Jews. While an analysis of Christian discourses against real Jews must take into account the localized differences between Jewish-Christian relations at different points in space and time in the ancient world, invectives against rhetorical Jews are by nature intended to be generalized and universally applicable judgments.

With this in mind, I investigate the correlation between the shifting socio-political structures of the Constantinian era and the corresponding shifts in Christian ethnographies of Jews. Christian imperialism was totalizing in its scope of domination. It not only supplanted the socio-political elite of the Roman imperial structure, but also fundamentally reconfigured much of the epistemological and social paradigms operating in the late Roman empire.[12] Christian authors of the fourth century redefined the meanings of myth, peoplehood, ancestors, land, rituals, culture and the relationships between them all.[13]

This gradual process entailed both structural shifts and the rhetorical strategies employed to legitimize these shifts. Within this gradual discursive process, the racialization of Jews becomes central to re-inventing the ethnographic myths of Christianity by appropriating Jewish symbols and ethnic narratives in ways intelligible to the Greek and Roman elite. First, this required the de-centring of Jewishness as a defunct race, as demonstrated in Eusebius's two-part ethnographic treatise titled *Praeparatio Evangelica* and the *Demonstratio Evangelica*. Eusebius accomplishes his rhetorical objectives by *historicizing* the connection between Christians and the ancestral accounts of the Hebrews found in the Hebrew Bible. Secondly, the *De Excidio Hierosolymitano* of the so-called Pseudo-Hegesippus illustrates the strategy of monstrification employed to foster fear, hatred, and enmity toward Jews.

Eusebius's Rewriting of Jewish History

To begin, Eusebius is positioned at one of the most critical moments in the history of Christianity. He survives the Great Persecution (303-311 CE) and then lives long enough to witness the reign and death of Constantine. Constantine was the first Roman emperor to champion Christianity. As John Meyendorff succinctly writes of him, "No single human being in history has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the conversion of so many to the Christian faith" (Meyendorff, 2011, p. 7). When Constantine elects to patronize the Christian churches, Eusebius is frequently by his side. He is present at the first ecumenical council at Nicaea 325 CE, a watershed moment in the gradual and discursive establishment of orthodoxy. He also becomes quite instrumental in the production of a large number of literary works aimed at solidifying the rise of Christianity as an economic and political force.

The modes of circulation and legitimation of discourses vary not only across different cultures, but also across time within the same cultural milieu (Foucault, 1984, p. 117). Such a shift in the modes of circulation and legitimation of discourses certainly characterizes the

Constantinian revolution in late-antiquity. Christianity introduces into Greco-Roman political discourses a new significance to the written word. The book becomes sacred. As a result, those positioned and empowered to determine which books count as legitimate, and which do not, carve out a space for knowledge production, dissemination, and destruction that previously did not exist. In short, post-Constantine Christians pivot from thoroughly apocalyptic discourses of resistance toward empire, to strategically and ambivalently apocalyptic discourses of Christian imperialism.[14]

Eusebius actively participates in the early stages of these discursive shifts, writing several works in service of the Christian empire. He first establishes himself as Christianity's first historian, writing his genre-defining work *The Ecclesiastical History*. He also writes numerous other works that have survived, from letters, to homilies, to biblical commentaries.[15] However, the works most crucial for analyzing the means of racialization he employs to substantiate Christians as legitimate actors in the empire is his two-part ethnographic treatise titled *The Praeparatio Evangelica* and the *Demonstratio Evangelica,* or *The Preparation of the Gospel* (hereafter the *PE*) and *The Proof of the Gospel* (hereafter the *DE*). Eusebius begins writing the work soon after Constantine's victory over Maxentius in 312 and completes it a few years later, although an exact date for the completion of the work cannot be fixed (Gifford, 1981, xiii).

The *PE* records biblical, philosophical, and ethnographic treatises quoted from a large number of writers, both Christian and non-Christian. While much of the work thus simply reiterates earlier apologies for Christianity, the two-part work does contain an important innovation in Christian modes of legitimation. There is in the text a radical re-invention of the Christian ethnographic myth that historicizes (rather than analogize or typologize) the Christian connection to the ancient Hebrew tradition.[16]

To understand this Eusebian innovation in Christian mythmaking, it will be helpful to first set the scene for the writing of the *PE* and the *DE*. The primary impetus for the two-part apology was the invective against the Christian religion produced by the third-century Neoplatonist, Porphyry. Porphyry was a disciplined pagan who practiced asceticism and whose polemic against Christianity, tilted *Against the Christians*, displayed an uncanny familiarity with the Hebrew and Christian sacred books (Barnes, 1981, p. 193). So devastating was his attack on Christianity that no less than thirty writers took up their pens to defend the Christian cause (Foakes-Jackson, 1933, p. 20).

Porphyry's primary objection to Christians was the novelty of their customs. He charged them in the Roman public court (and most likely in the court of emperors like Diocletian, before whom he lectured) with being apostates twice over. First, they abandoned the ancestral traditions of Judaism, from which they emerged. Second, they misled others to abandon their own ancestral traditions for Christianity. These charges carried enormous weight in antiquity, since the identity of a people was inextricably tied to their ancient customs, rituals, and gods of their ancestors. Greco-Roman modes of being in the world made no separation between land, people, customs, and what we would call religion (Fredriksen, 2008, pp. 3–15). Moreover, ancient writers understood the welfare of society to be acutely dependent on the *cultis deorum*, or the proper worship or care of the gods. The opening lines of the *PE* enumerate this conundrum facing Christian apologists in light of the charges leveled against them by the Roman intellectual elite:

> For in the first place any one might naturally want to know who we are that have come forward to write. Are we Greeks or Barbarians? Or what can there be intermediate to these?... What then may the strangeness in us be, and what the new manner of our life?

> And how can men fail to be in every way impious and atheistic, who have *apostatized from their ancestral gods* (οἱ τῶν πατρίων ἐθῶν ἀποστάντες) by whom every *nation* (ἔθνος) and every *state* (πόλις) is sustained? Or what good can they reasonably hope for, who have set themselves at enmity and at war against their preservers, and have thrust away their benefactors? For what else are they than *fighters against the gods* (θεομαχοῦντας) (*PE* 2.1.2)?

While modern readers might interpret such rhetorical questions as inherently (or even exclusively) religious in character, a critical reading demonstrates several points about ancient claims to peoplehood highlighted in this passage. First, ethnic identity could not be divorced from one's ancestral traditions. Second, this ethno-religion had to be rooted in antiquity; it could not be novel. Thirdly, one's commitment to the ancient customs of one's people was paramount to Roman imperial public life. Political leaders (who were also *de facto* religious leaders) needed to convince the populace that they operated within the favor of the gods, which was seen as the essential foundation for the welfare of society.

Eusebius's apologetic works establish new modes of conceptualizing what it means to be a good Roman and preserver of the state in light of this discursive and epistemological background. To legitimize Christians as worthy inheritors of Roman imperial power, the author needed to connect Christianity with an ancient ancestral custom and to show that Christians possessed the favor of divine power. To this end, one finds in the *PE* and *DE* an ethnographic account that establishes the antiquity of Christianity, while simultaneously *de-centring* the Jewish people. Here I utilize the concept of *de-centring*, in the vein of Murray's reading of *The Odyssey*, to refer to rhetorical strategies of reframing the ethnographic history of Jews in ways that marginalize and reject Jewish perspectives while simultaneously foregrounding Christian ones.

First, Eusebius appeals to the religious/philosophical sensibilities of the Roman elite by emphasizing the contemplative and ascetic life. In Book Seven of the *PE*, he depicts the earliest stages of human life as a cauldron of idolatry and hedonism, wherein humans persisted in attending to their bodily senses only (*PE* 7.2.1). Time after time he reiterates the qualitative distinction that he makes between a carnal, bestial life of the body and a contemplative, ascetic life lived for the soul. He then makes the claim that "the Hebrews" constitute the "most ancient *ethnos*" who precede even the Greeks in the philosophically erudite nature of their customs.

These ancient Hebrews, or the "pre-Mosaic and pre-Judaic saints" as the text sometimes refers to them, seek after the one omnipotent God while the rest of the world chases after vain pleasures (*PE* 7.3.1). As other nations worship rocks, trees, humans and animals, the Hebrews recognize the elements in nature not as gods but merely as the creations of the one true God (*PE* 7.3.2-3). Above all, the Hebrews discover the sanctity of the inner self (or the soul), and they grow to cherish it over against the lustful desires of the flesh. After painting the ancient Hebrews as the pioneers of the philosophical (that is to say monotheistic and ascetic) manner of life, Eusebius then argues that they are the ancestors of Christians. He writes as follows:

> Though they were neither Jew nor Greek by birth, we know them to have been conspicuously pious, holy, and just. This compels us to conceive some other ideal *of religion* (θεοσεβείας), by which they must have guided their lives. Would not this be exactly that third form of religion midway between *Judaism* (Ἰουδαϊσμοῦ) and *Hellenism* (Ἑλληνισμοῦ), which I have already deduced, as the most ancient and most venerable of

> all religions, and which has been preached of late to all nations through our Savior. Christianity would therefore be…the *most ancient polity for holiness* (παλαίτατον εὐσεβείας πολίτευμα), and *the most antique philosophy* (καὶ ἀρχαιοτάτη μέν τις φιλοσοφία), only lately codified as the law (*DE* 1.2.9-10).

To substantiate this connection between Christians and the ancient Hebrews, moreover, Eusebius inscribes an ethnography of Jews that effectively divorces them from the ancient Hebrew tradition. He does this by locating the origins of the Jewish people in Egypt. Spurred by a devolution in moral character and cultural assimilation to Egyptian customs, the children of the Hebrews become Jews over the course of their captivity in Egypt.[17] Eusebius writes,

> But after the Hebrews who have been mentioned, *the race of their descendants* (τὸ τῶν ἀπογόνων γένος) began to grow into a great multitude. *The Jewish race* (τὸ Ἰουδαίων… ἔθνος), which they constituted, now went on multiplying daily and waxing great, until the influence of the pious conduct of their godly forefathers of old began little by little to be weakened and blunted…they forgot the virtue of their forefathers, and came round in their modes of living to like customs with the Egyptians so that their character seemed to differ in nothing from the Egyptians (*PE* 7.8.37).

In this way, the bishop of Caesarea crafts a sublime antiquity for Christianity while de-centring Jews in one fell swoop. Whereas earlier apologists, like Justin Martyr and Origen, had utilized allegorical and typological arguments to wed Christian customs to the Hebrew scriptures, Eusebius by contrast historicizes both the roots of the Christian *ethnos* and the ethnogenesis of Jews. What results is a portrait of Christianity as a continuation of the most ancient and philosophically most pristine ethnic tradition, while Jews are denigrated as the perpetrators of a deviant and obstinately carnal ethnic identity.

The discursive strategies of race-making can be gleaned from such arguments. By redefining peoplehood along the lines of customs or manners of life (as opposed to blood, land, and language), late antique Christian discourse allows for strategic ethnic and socio-political alliances. Those seeking to attain legal power, economic assets, and social status now had the option of joining the Eusebian "we," a strategically ambiguous use of the first-person plural. In particular, it creates opportunities of the intellectual elite, who now have a discursive blueprint for how to legitimize their claims to wealth and higher socio-political positions.

Conversely, this re-invention of the ethnogenesis of Jews functions to malign and ostracize Jews as a cursed and defunct race. Severing the ties between Jews and the ancient Hebrew tradition robs them of the claims to antiquity necessary for maintaining legitimacy within the Greco-Roman intellectual milieu. Redefining ethnicity along the lines of philosophical and religious customs, moreover, serves to signify the meaning of Jewishness itself as a perennial rejection of the philosophical ascetic life. To be Jewish, in effect, means to be tied to a low carnality, and to despise the spiritual and divine guidance of Providence, which in Eusebius's day appeared to favor Christians.

By the time Eusebius dies in 339, the Christian takeover of the empire had made considerable progress. However, the place and legitimacy of Christianity in the Roman public and political sphere was far from certain. Judaism still presented a formidable challenge to the validity of Christian interpretations of the Bible. Numerous Christian tracts written against the practice of Judaizing, or converting someone to Judaism, indicate that Jews continued to be

rivals of Christian proselytism well into the fifth century.[18] Greek and Roman critics of Christianity do not disappear overnight either. One detects a pattern of anxiety and fear in Christian self-definitions produced in the middle of the fourth century. This fear heightens the Christian enmity for Jews, whose presence continues to haunt the rising Christian elite.

Portrayals of Jews in Pseudo-Hegesippus

One work that demonstrates the anxiety-induced amplification of Christian enmity toward Jews is a late fourth-century Latin reworking of Josephus's *Jewish War*. This text comes to be mistakenly associated with a second-century Christian writer named *Hegesippus*, who is mentioned by Eusebius in the *HE*. As a result, this adaptation of the *Jewish War* is sometimes referred to as *Pseudo-Hegesippus*. The original title of the work, however, has been lost and the text bears several different titles in the medieval manuscripts in which it appears.[19] But it is the title first given to the text in a tenth-century Spanish manuscript that has become the standard appellation for the work: *De excidio Hierosolymitano* ("On the Destruction of Jerusalem") (Bell, 1987, p. 350).

While a comprehensive list of all the known manuscripts that contain the *DEH* is currently not available, according to some estimates, there are probably as many manuscripts and fragments of the *DEH* as there are manuscripts and fragments of the Latin *Jewish War* or the Latin *Jewish Antiquities* (Pollard, 2015, p. 69). This is a surprising estimate, given that there are more than 150 manuscripts of the Latin *BJ* and close to 200 copies and fragments of the Latin *AJ* that are extant (Pollard, 2015, p. 69). In addition, there are at least twenty-one known manuscripts of the text that all date from before 1000 CE, and three dating before 700 CE. The large number of textual witnesses and the survival of relatively early manuscripts of this work illustrate its popularity among late antique and medieval Christians, although the interest of modern scholarship in the text has yet to match its popularity in the premodern world.

Despite being overlooked by much of modern scholarship, the *DEH* exemplifies an important moment in the development of early Christian racialization of Jews. Internal evidence suggests that the text is produced sometime around 370. This date is crucial because it follows on the heels of the reign of Rome's last non-Christian emperor, Julian the so-called apostate. In the brief time that Julian presides as sole ruler of the empire between November 361 and June 363 CE, he undertakes an ambitious, though ultimately abortive, attempt to revive the dying Greek and Roman religious traditions and to drive back the rising tide of imperial Christianity. Julian's attacks against Christianity, despite being unsuccessful, illustrate the still tenuous social position of Christians and their discourses of legitimacy in the middle of the fourth century.

As part of his campaigns against the Christians, whom he deridingly referred to as the Galileans, Julian committed himself to helping Jews rebuild their Temple. The reconstruction of the Jewish Temple would have killed two birds with one stone for Julian. On the one hand, he believed that it was his responsibility as both the political and religious leader of the empire to ensure the *cultis deorum*, the proper care of the gods (Finkelstein, 2018, p. 14). This meant ensuring the continuation of the worship of the ancestral gods of all people, including Jews. Rebuilding the Temple would revive the sacrificial dimension of Judaism that had been lost at the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

On the other hand, a rebuilt Temple would also undermine Christian claims about the displacement of Judaism by Christianity. Beginning in the second century, Christians had long pointed to the destruction of the Temple as a divine sign of the resettlement of God's favor from

Judaism to Christianity. Julian's attempt to rebuild the Temple, therefore, heightened the anxiety among Christians, whose very identity and legitimacy as a religious system depended on the continued de-centring of Jews.[20]

In her recent monograph on "white rage," Carol Anderson discusses how the fears and anxieties associated with the potential loss of socio-political dominance can produce heightened moments of racial hatred and violence (Anderson, 2016). Moreover, Heng has outlined how the creation of "affective cultures of hate and fear" in the medieval period contributed to the periodic combustions of violence against Jews (Heng, 2018, p. 19). One can potentially read the *DEH* as a similar moment in the late antique racialization of Jews. The author of the work transforms the text of Josephus by adding numerous passages filled with acerbic invectives against Jews.

Monstrification here becomes a helpful heuristic for thinking through the means and methods of racialization employed in the *DEH*. Murray discusses how although monstrification typically takes the form of maligning the bodies and physical features of the subaltern group, a subaltern group that shares similar phenotypical traits with the dominant group may be racialized through metaphorical associations with the monstrous (Murray, 2021, p. 144). The monstrification of Jews in the *DEH* fits into the latter type, wherein Jews are depicted as murderers and inhuman cannibals.

Arguably the most illustrative example of this mode of monstrification is found in chapter 40 of book five in the *DEH*. This chapter relates the story of Maria, a mother to an infant son who finds herself trapped in the city of Jerusalem during the Roman siege of the city. In the months long famine that ensues as a result of the Roman blockade, she is driven by hunger and madness to kill, cook, and eat her own son. The story, which first appears in Book 6 of Josephus's *Jewish War*, becomes one of the most famous stories about Jews circulating among medieval Christians (Mason, 1993, p. 11). In fact, its popularity among Christians is second only to the *Testimonium Flavianum*, the passage in *Jewish Antiquities* 18 that mentions Jesus—easily the most significant (and most debated) extra-biblical reference to Christianity's founding figure (Kletter, 2016, p. 369).[21]

The anonymous author of the *DEH* utilizes the story of Maria to monstrify Jews as a cursed race of savages. He inserts into the Josephan account of the story of Maria a lengthy speech delivered through the mouth of Titus, the then general of Rome's legions conducting the siege. After he hears about the horror of the cannibalistic mother, Titus (raising his hands to heaven) says the following:

> "Indeed, we came for war but we are not contending with human beings. What sensible thing can I say against all the madness of monsters and wild animals? Even wild animals love their offspring, which they feed in spite of their own hunger…and they abstain from the bodies of wild animals similar [to them]. That a mother has devoured a member to which she gave birth is beyond every hardship. I absolve myself clean before you from this contagion, whatever power you are in heaven" (*DEH* 5.41.10-18).[22]

Whereas the story of Maria is designed to elicit pity from the reader in Josephus's account, the *DEH*'s framing of the story through the speech of Titus has the opposite effect. It is an iteration of the affective fictions of enmity and fear instrumental for fostering a hatred of the subaltern, in this case Jews living among Christians. The *DEH* contributes to this form of race-making not only by depicting Jews as savage, murderous, cannibalistic, but also by consistently associating the meaning of Jewishness with the execution of Jesus. Jews, according to the so-

called Pseudo-Hegesippus, have always been murderers of God's prophets. In effect, the *DEH* strategically essentializes a certain historical narrative about Jews in the service of racializing them.[23]

The intense enmity toward Jews in fourth-century texts like the *DEH* runs concurrently with the gradual erosion of the legal protections afforded to Jews under Roman law. This structural shift is indicated in part by a series of imperial decrees recorded in the Theodosian Code.[24] For example, as early as 335, Jews are restricted from circumcising their slaves. By 356, they are threatened with capital punishment for converting women to Judaism, an ethno-religion that is by then referred to in the law code as a *flagitium*, a term variously translated as *wickedness* or *crime*. Another law passed in 393, after the outlawing of all non-Christian Greco-Roman religions by Theodosius I, criminalizes the destruction of Jewish synagogues.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by returning to the issue of "Jewish corollary" to the axiom that race is strictly a modern phenomenon. Specifically, I seek to draw attention to the following questions: what is lost and what is gained by the use of the categories anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism in tracing the history of Christian enmity and violence toward Jews? What is gained and what is lost by framing this history through the categories of ethnicity, religion, or race? While no doubt there will be many more answers to these questions than those proposed in this short essay, I have highlighted what I see to be important consequences of the ways in which this history is framed.

Historians of antiquity, both those who work in Classics and those who work in early Christian studies, have struggled to figure out how to adequately fuse the conceptual horizons of ancient writers with those employed by modern scholarship. This has been especially the case concerning the uses of the terms *race*, *ethnicity* and *religion*. Reading anti-Jewish tracts written by early Christians simply as religious invectives creates conceptual corridors that limit the historian's interpretations. In practice, arbitrary distinctions made between premodern anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism become hermeneutic blinders, which often serve to rationalize the discontinuities and complexities of their writings through a strictly religious paradigm.

By contrast, what the analytic model of racialization provides for the study of this issue is a range of theories and methods designed to focus attention on the structural dimensions of social formation. In particular, it shows the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between rhetorical strategies and the social structures they are meant to legitimize. It forces the historian to conceptualize not the generic and nebulous histories of "Christians" and "Jews," but rather the rhetorical and socio-political mechanics of specific actors struggling to position themselves favorably in an unstable and shifting social structure.

ENDNOTES

[1] For an argument about how anti-Jewish prejudice is central to both the origins of Christian identities as well as Western forms of race-thinking, see Carter (2008). Carter makes the argument that "modernity's

racial imagination has its genesis in the theological problem of Christianity's quest to sever itself from its Jewish roots" (Carter, 2008, p. 4).

[2] Given the racialized language and social structure of contemporary society, an important facet of premodern race studies will be the disclosing of the conceptual corridors into which historians direct contemporary conversations on race. Neither the *use* nor *disuse* of the term race in the study of the premodern world is without its attendant socio-political consequences. Geraldine Heng makes this point as follows: "…the use of the term *race* continues to bear witness to important strategic, epistemological, and political commitments not adequately served by the invocation of categories of greater generality (such as *otherness* or *difference*) or greater benignity in our understanding of human culture and society. *Not* to use the term *race* would be to sustain the reproduction of a certain kind of past, while keeping the door shut to tools, analyses, and resources that can name the past differently" (Heng, 2018, p. 23).

[3] For a classic example of this approach, see Chazan (2017). For A discussion of the ways "race" and "religion" are defined vis-à-vis the anti-Judaism/Semitism divide, see Walz (1995). For an argument distinguishing the ideologies of ancient anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism, as well as the medieval shift that separates the two, see Langmuir (1990). See also Gager (1985), William Parkes (1961).

[4] The biological turn in distinguishing modern forms of prejudice from premodern ones also characterizes the framework in most survey histories of race. For an example of this, see Fredrickson (2002).

[5] For the modernity of the term as well as difficulties in applying it to the study of antiquity, see Gruen (2020, 2013, 2012, 2011), Hall (1997), Berzon (2018), Buell (2005), and Shelley (2016). Gruen, for example, recognizes the arbitrariness of electing *ethnicity* over *race* in the study of ancient societies: "Scholars have strained, often ingeniously, to conceptualize ethnicity as something different from race. 'Race' can have disturbing implications, especially in the wake of events of the mid-twentieth century, and too often since. 'Ethnicity' seemed a less combustible, a more sanitized, term. But the arbitrary shift does not alter the substance of the matter. If ethnicity is conceived of in terms of biology and heredity, it is quite indistinguishable from race, and there is no meaningful advantage in using the one term rather than the other" (Gruen, 2013, p. 2).

[6] The scholarship on early Christian "anti-Judaism" is vast, but some key works include the following: Paget (1997, 2010), Radford Ruether (1991), Jacobs (2003), and Taylor (1995). For a brief overview of the approaches of scholarship related to Christian texts of late antiquity, see Reed (2015).

[7] For problems with employing the term *religion* within the study of antiquity, see the recent essays in *Theorizing Religion in Antiquity*: Mason (2019); Nongbri (2019); Schilbrack (2019). The essays are partly written in response to Nongbri's incisive monograph on the etymological history of the term religion in Nongbri (2015).

[8] For more on this point, see especially Heng, 2018, pp. 55–109.

[9] The list of premodern critical race studies of the Classical period is growing quickly. Notable examples of recent works include Haley (2009, 1993), Murray (2021), McCoskey (2012, 2003, 2002). The edited volume published in response to the Black Athena debate also contains some helpful introduction to the various issues involved in the study of Classics and race. See Lefkowitz & Rogers (1996).

[10] Crucial to Murray's formulation of models such as *centring* and *monstrificaiton* is the distinction between inalienable and alienable humanities that certain modes of racecraft distribute differentially between the dominating and subaltern groups (Murray, 2021, p. 144).

[11] In addition to her monograph, see also Buell (2001, 2002, 2004) on the relevance of race for analyzing modes of early Christian identity formation. Part of the value of Buell's contribution involves the ways in which her analysis highlights the problem of fusing ancient (e.g. *ethnos, laos, genos*) and modern (e.g. *race, ethnicity, nation, religion*), categories of peoplehood. For a helpful discussion of this problem, see Mason (2019). Because there is no universally consistent basis wherein ancient terms can be translated by modern ones on a one-for-one basis, the terms *ethnos, laos,* and *genos* can variously be interpreted as race, nation, or ethnicity.

[12] For example, Peter Brown provides an exhaustive analysis of the discursive strategies that allowed the rising Christian elite to legitimize their wealth accumulation in late antiquity (Brown, 2014).

[13] The sharp focus here on early Christian race-making should not be read as an argument that early Christian texts are the only ancient sources that can fruitfully be read as racializing discourses. A number of Jewish texts also evince various strategies of formulating Jewishness by contrasting it with stereotypes of monstrified Gentiles. For a discussion of the ways in which such Jewish discourses of the racialized other operate, see Wasserman (2017).

[14] Stephen Shoemaker highlights the need for a renewed assessment of the differences between empire-resistant apocalypticism and pro-imperial apocalyptic discourses as they appear in post-Constantine Christianity (Shoemaker, 2018, pp. 11–37). For an excellent treatment of empire-resistant apocalyptic writings, see Portier-Young (2011).

[15] While the scholarship on Eusebius is vast, the following resources provide excellent introductions to the life and writings of the Bishop of Caesarea: Grant (1980), Hollerich (1992), Johnson (2006), Inowlocki (2006), Schott and Johnson (2013).

[16] The concept of re-invention, or "reoccupation" (to employ Terence Keel's terminology) is an important aspect to tracing the genealogy of race. For discussions of this issue, see Heng (2015), Keel (2019). For the centrality of re-inventions as the characterizing features of descent (or *Herkunft*) within a genealogical analysis of history see Noujain (1987).

[17] The association between Jews and their origins in Egypt is not entirely new to Eusebius. Anti-Jewish historians, particularly Apion, had asserted that Jews were descendants of the Egyptians, the lower and despised 'unclean' classes of Egyptian society, or shepherd people who were driven out of Egypt. For more on this point, see Johnson (2006).

[18] The issue of Christian anxieties over Jewish proselyting also demonstrates the still quite porous boundaries that existed between the two communities in various parts of the ancient world. Numerous works have analyzed the entanglements between Judaism and Christianity, which extended into the fourth century and played a significant role in intensifying the tone of Christian invectives against Jews. For more on this issue, see for example Boyarin (2004), Reed and Becker (2007), Sandgren (2010), and Paget (2010).

[19] Most of the earliest manuscripts that contain the text bear as their titles different variations of *historia Iosippi* (the History of Josephus) or *de bello Judaico* (the Jewish War). For example, in the Reichenau catalogue that is produced around 822 CE, the title of the text is *de bello Judaico libri V excerpti de historia Josephi* (Pollard, 2015, pp. 77-78).

[20] For more on this point, see (Bay, 2021). The Christian anxieties around Julian's abortive attempt to rebuild the Jewish Temple are further demonstrated by the large number of works that make a point of emphasizing the failure of the project as a divine sign of the election of Christians over against God's rejection of the Jews. For more on this, see Levenson (2003).

[21] Its popularity among medieval Christians is demonstrated in part by textual evidence in some manuscripts, in which the story of Maria is "the most often illustrated of all episodes recounted in Josephus's histories" (Kletter, 2016, p. 369). For discussions on how art becomes a powerful tool of race-making in the medieval period, see (Bindman et al., 2010).

[22] "ad bellum quidem venimus sed non cum hominibus dimicamus. adversus omnem rabiem beluarum ac ferarum, quid sensibilia loquar? adversus omnem rupium immanitatem decernimus. diligunt ferae fetus suos, quos etiam in fame sua nutriunt, et quae alienis corporibus pascuntur, a consimilium ferarum abstinent cadaveribus. hoc ultra omnem acerbitatem est, ut membra quae genuit mater vorarit. mundus ego ab hoc contagio tibi me absoluo, quaecumque in caelo potestas es" (DEH 5.41.10-18).

[23] This point is made in several places, including during the speech of Titus that follows that paedophagia of Maria: "Indeed, I had heard that the fierceness of this people is intolerable, [they] who by their absurd ideas arouse themselves toward every insolent act…and there is the common opinion that these people also plotted against divine things and their punishment is the proof" (DEH 5.41.3).

[24] The Theodosian Code lists several laws regarding the Jews, including the following: "If any Jew should…circumcise a Christian slave…he shall not retain in slavery such a circumcised person. But the person who endured such treatment shall obtain the privilege of freedom" (CT 16.9.1, Oct 335); "It shall be observed that Jews shall not hereafter unite Christian women to their villainy (*flagitium*); if they should do so, however, they shall be subject to the peril of capital punishment" (CT 16.8.6, May 356); "It is sufficiently established that the sect of the Jews is forbidden by no law (*iudaeorum sectam nulla lege prohibitam satis constat*)...We are gravely disturbed that their assemblies have been forbidden in certain places...hence you are to use all the official means at your disposal to combat the excesses of those who in the name of the Christian religion presume to destroy the synagogues" (CT 16.8.9, 393).

REFERENCES

Anderson, C. (2016). *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (First Dutch Edition). Bloomsbury USA.

Barnes, T. (1981). *Constantine and Eusebius*. Harvard University Press.

Barth, F. (Ed.). (1998). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Waveland Press.

Bay, C. (2021). Writing the Jews out of History: Pseudo-Hegesippus, Classical Historiography, and the Codification of Christian Anti-Judaism in Late Antiquity. *Church History*, *90*(2), 265–285.

Becker, A. H., & Reed, A. Y. (Eds.). (2007). *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Fortress Press.

Bell, A. A. (1987). Josephus and Pseudo-Hegesippus. In L. H. Feldman & G. Hata (Eds.), *Josephus, Judaism and Christianity* (pp. 349–361). Wayne State University Press.

Berzon, T. (2018). Ethnicity and Early Christianity: New Approaches to Religious Kinship and Community. *Currents in Biblical Research*, *16*(2), 191–227.

Bindman, D., Gates Jr., H. L., & Dalton, K. C. C. (Eds.). (2010). *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Volume II: From the Early Christian Era to the "Age of Discovery": Part 1: From the Demonic Threat to the Incarnation of Sainthood* (2nd edition). Harvard University Press.

Boyarin, D. (2004). *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Brown, P. (2014). *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD*. Princeton University Press.

Buell, D. K. (2001). Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition. *The Harvard Theological Review*, *94*(4), 449–476.

Buell, D. K. (2002). Race and Universalism in Early Christianity. *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, *10*(4), 429–468.

Buell, D. K. (2005). *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity*. Columbia University Press.

Buell, D. K., & Hodge, C. J. (2004). The Politics of Interpretation: The Rhetoric of Race and Ethnicity in Paul. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *123*(2), 235–251. https://doi.org/10.2307/3267944

Byron, G. (2002). *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature*. Routledge.

Carter, J. K. (2008). *Race: A Theological Account*. Oxford University Press.

Chazan, R. (2017). *From Anti-Judaism to Anti-Semitism*. Cambridge University Press.

den Dulk, M. (2020). Origen of Alexandria and the History of Racism as a Theological Problem. *The Journal of Theological Studies*, *71*(1), 164–195.

Finkelstein, A. (2018). *The Specter of the Jews: Emperor Julian and the Rhetoric of Ethnicity in Syrian Antioch*. University of California Press.

Foakes-Jackson, F. J. (1933). *Eusebius Pamphili: Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine and First Christian Historian*. W. Heffer & Sons.

Foucault, M. (1984). What is an Author? In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (pp. 101–120). Pantheon Books.

Fredrickson, G. M. (2002). *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton University Press.
Fredriksen, P. (2008). *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism*. Doubleday.
Gager, J. G. (1985). *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*. Oxford University Press.
Gifford, E. H. (1981). Introduction. In *Preparation for the Gospel: Vol. I*. Baker Book House.
Grant, R. M. (1980). *Eusebius as Church Historian*. Clarendon Press.
Gruen, E. (2013). Did Ancient Identity Depend on Ethnicity? A Preliminary Probe. *Phoenix, 67*(1/2), 1–22.
Gruen, E. S. (Ed.). (2011). *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Getty Research Institute.
Gruen, E. S. (2012). *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*. Princeton University Press.
Gruen, E. S. (2020). *Ethnicity in the Ancient World—Did it matter?* De Gruyter.
Haley, S. P. (1993). Black Feminist Thought and Classics: Re-membering, Re-claiming, Re-empowering. In N. S. Rabinowitz & A. Richlin (Eds.), *Feminist Theory and the Classics* (pp. 23–43). Routledge.
Haley, S. P. (2009). Be Not Afraid of the Dark: Critical Race Theory and Classical Studies. In L. Nasrallah & E. S. Fiorenza (Eds.), *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings: Investigating Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Early Christian Studies* (pp. 27–50). Fortress Press.
Hall, J. M. (1997). *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*. Cambridge University Press.
Heng, G. (2015). Reinventing Race, Colonization, and Globalisms across Deep Time: Lessons from the Longue Durée. *PMLA, 130*(2), 358–366.
Heng, G. (2018). *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*. Cambridge University Press.
Heschel, S. (2015). The Slippery Yet Tenacious Nature of Racism: New Developments in Critical Race Theory and Their Implications for the Study of Religion and Ethics. *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics, 35*(1), 3–27.
Hollerich, M. J. (1992). Eusebius as a Polemical Interpreter of Scripture. In *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism* (pp. 585–615). Wayne State University Press.
Inowlocki, S. (2006). *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context*. Brill.
Jacobs, A. S. (2003). *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire in Late Antiquity* (1st edition). Stanford University Press.
Johnson, A. P. (2006). *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius' Praeparatio Evangelica*. Oxford University Press.
Johnson, A., & Schott, J. (Eds.). (2013). *Eusebius of Caesarea: Tradition and Innovations*. Center for Hellenic Studies.
Keel, T. (2019). *Divine Variations: How Christian Thought Became Racial Science*. Stanford University Press.
Kletter, K. M. (2016). The Christian Reception of Josephus in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. In H. H. Chapman & Z. Rodgers (Eds.), *A Companion to Josephus* (pp. 368–381). Wiley Blackwell.
Langmuir, G. I. (1990). *History, Religion, and Antisemitism*. University of California Press.
Levenson, D. B. (2003). The Ancient and Medieval Sources for the Emperor Julian's Attempt to Rebuild the Jerusalem Temple. *Journal for the Study of Judaism, 35*(4), 409–460.

Mason, S. (1993). *Josephus and the New Testament*. Hendrickson Publishers.
Mason, S. (2019). Our Language and Theirs: "Religious" Categories and Identites. In N. P. Roubekas (Ed.), *Theorizing Religion in Antiquity* (pp. 11–31). Equinox Publishing.
McCoskey, D. E. (2002). Race Before 'Whiteness': Studying Identity in Ptolemaic Egypt. *Critical Sociology*, *28*, 13–39.
McCoskey, D. E. (2003). By Any Other Name?: Ethnicity and the Study of Ancient Identity. *Classical Bulletin*, *79*(1), 93–110.
McCoskey, D. E. (2012). *Race: Antiquity and Its Legacy*. Oxford University Press.
Meyendorff, J. (2011). *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church 450-680 A.D.* (Vol. 2). St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
Morris, S. P. (1996). The Legacy of Black Athena. In M. R. Lefkowitz & G. M. Rogers (Eds.), *Black Athena Revisited* (pp. 167–174). University of North Carolina Press.
Murray, J. (2021). Race and Sexuality: Racecraft in the Odyssey. In D. E. McCoskey (Ed.), *Bloomsbury Cultural History of Race in Antiquity* (Vol. 1, pp. 137–156). Bloomsbury Academic.
Nirenberg, D. (2009). Was There Race Before Modernity?: The Example of "Jewish" Blood in Late Medieval Spain. In M. Eliav-Feldon, B. Isaac, & J. Ziegler (Eds.), *The Origins of Racism in the West* (pp. 232–264). Cambridge University Press.
Nongbri, B. (2013). *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept*. Yale University Press.
Nongbri, B. (2019). The Present and Future of Ancient Religion. In N. P. Roubekas (Ed.), *Theorizing Religion in Antiquity* (pp. 1–8). Equinox Publishing.
Noujain, E. (1987). History as Genealogy: An Exploration of Foucault's Approach to History. In *Contemporary French Philosophy* (pp. 157–174). Cambridge University Press.
Paget, J. (1997). Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity. *Zeitschrift Fur Antikes Christentum*, *1*(2), 195–225.
Paget, J. (2010). *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity*. Mohr Siebeck.
Parkes, J. W. (1961). *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue; a Study in the Origins of Antisemitism*. World Publishing Company.
Pollard, R. M. (2015). The De Excidio of "Hegesippus" and the Reception of Josephus in the Early Middle Ages. *Viator*, *46*(2), 65–100.
Portier-Young, A. E. (2011). *Apocalypse Against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism*. Eerdmans.
Reed, A. Y. (2015). "Jewish-Christian" Apocrypha and the History of Jewish/Christian Relations. In P. Piovanelli & T. Burke (Eds.), *Rediscovering the Apocryphal Continent: New Perspectives on Early Christian and Late Antique Apocryphal Texts and Traditions* (pp. 87–116). Mohr Siebeck.
Ruether, R. R. (1991). The Adversus Judaeos Tradition in the Church Fathers: The Exegesis of Christian Anti-Judaism. In J. Cohen (Ed.), *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict* (pp. 174–192). New York Universtiy Press.
Sandgren, L. D. (2010). *Vines Intertwined: A History of Jews and Christians from the Babylonian Exile to the Advent of Islam*. Hendrickson Publishers.
Schilbrack, K. (2019). Imagining Religion in Antiquity: A How To. In N. P. Roubekas (Ed.), *Theorizing Religion in Antiquity* (pp. 59–78). Equinox Publishing.

Shelley, N. P. (2016). *The Concept of Ethnicity in Early Antiquity: Ethno-symbolic Identities in Ancient Greek, Biblical Hebrew, and Middle Babylonian Texts* [Ph.D. diss.]. Columbia University.

Shoemaker, S. J. (2018). *The Apocalypse of Empire: Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*.

Taylor, M. (1995). *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus*. E.J. Brill.

Walz, R. (1995). Der vormoderne Antisemitismus: Religiöser Fanatismus oder Rassenwahn? *Historische Zeitschrift*, *260*, 719–748.

Wasserman, M. B. (2017). *Jews, Gentiles, and Other Animals: The Talmud After the Humanities*. University of Pennsylvania Press.