Ancestors as Icons: The Lives of Hebrew Saints in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*

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BIOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATIONS held powerful sway over the imagination of pagans and Christians alike in the the late Roman world. Written lives (*bioi*) could embody virtue, exemplify vice, evince a proper sense of the sacred, and articulate notions of authority and power (social, political, and divine).[1] Literary portraits of holy men (and sometimes women) possessed the capacity to shape the world and lives of late antique readers. Such representations might also provide powerful mechanisms of legitimation within the arguments developed for particular philosophical or theological positions.[2] Apologetic texts, which attempted to construct a defensible identity for Christianity[3] in often bitterly polemical response to

[1]See *e.g.* the relevant essays in T. Hägg and P. Rousseau, edd., *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 2000); M. J. Edwards and S. C. R. Swain, edd., *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1997); A. Wilson, "Biographical Models: the Constantinian Period and Beyond," in S. Lieu and D. Montserrat, edd., *Constantine: History, Historiography and Legend* (London/New York 1998) 112–121.

[2]Porphyry's *Vita Pythagorae* (as well as his *Vita Plotini*) and Iamblichus' *De Vita Pythagorica* were part of larger philosophical projects; for discussion see G. Clark, "Philosophic Lives and the Philosophic Life: Porphyry and Iamblichus," in Hägg and Rousseau (*supra* n.1) 29–51. Likewise the *Vita Antonii* legitimized Athanasian theology: D. Brakke, *Athanasius and Asceticism* (Baltimore 1995) 201–265; A. Cameron, "Form and Meaning: The *Vita Constantini* and the *Vita Antonii*," in Hägg and Rousseau 72–88. Written in theologically tumultuous times, the *Vita Constantini* was composed with apologetic intent: A. Cameron, "Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* and the Construction of Constantine," in Edwards and Swain (*supra* n.1) 145–174, esp. 163–169, 172–173.

[3]For discussion of the centrality of Christian identity to early apologetic efforts, see F. Young, "Greek Apologists of the Second Century," in M. J.

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Greek and Jewish opponents, could provide an apt context for the embodiment of an idealized identity within the contours of a lived life. Indeed, it is in the context of apologetic concerns that we can discern an instance of what might be called the "hagiographical impulse"[4]—that is, the inclination towards defining piety or the virtues, or "the holy," through the literary portrayal of a paradigmatic person. This evocation of the "hagiographic" in texts not considered hagiographies marks the firm hold of holy figures upon the late antique imagination, as well as the experimental nature, across and between traditional generic boundaries, of these texts.[5] The hagiographical impulse will be seen to have roots deep in earlier works; biographic and hagiographic elements will appear to be implicated in each other. The following remarks attempt to show the persistence of certain metaphors in literary reflections on particular lives, and to draw out the different applications of the various occurrences.

The *Praeparatio Evangelica*, written by Eusebius during the years 313–324,[6] offers revealing material on the importance of the lives of the saints for the apologetic task. Its massive fifteen books show Eusebius to be a careful apologist with keen insight into the importance of history—both universal and ecclesiastical—for the forging of Christian identity and the formulation of

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Edwards, M. Goodman, and S. Price, edd., *Apologetics in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1999) 81–104.

[4] The phrase is used by P. Cox Miller, for whom it suggests the turn towards a general way of life rather than the particularities of individual lives ("Strategies of Representation in Collective Biography," in Hägg and Rousseau [*supra* n.1] 221–222, 232).

[5] See the excellent discussion of Wilson (*supra* n.1) 107–112; on the distinctive "biographic trend" or "strong biographic turn" in the High Empire and late antiquity, see S. Swain, "Biography and the Biographic in the Literature of the Roman Empire," in Edwards and Swain (*supra* n.1) 1, 36; on the difficulties of defining the genre, see M. Edwards, "Epilogue: Biography and the Biographic," in Edwards and Swain 227–234.

[6] For considerations of date, see E. Schwartz, "Eusebios von Caesarea," *RE* 11 (1909) 1390–91; J. Sirinelli and E. des Places, *Eusèbe de Césarée. La Préparation Evangélique, Livre I* (SC 206 [Paris 1974]) 8–14.

a defense of that identity's viability.[7] In fact, it is history that lies at the crux of his apologetic method.[8] The *Praeparatio*'s argument is structured upon Eusebius' diligent retelling of the history of the world and its nations,[9] in particular the Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, Hebrews, and Jews.[10] For Eusebius, the Greeks were later than the others, and entirely dependent upon them for their cultural, religious, and mythological advances.[11]

While much of the *Praeparatio* grapples with reformulating (and hence, invalidating) Greek identity, Book 7, which is arguably the crux of the *Praeparatio*'s entire argument,[12] focuses on the ancient *ethnos* of the Hebrews. These were the ancient friends of God, whose lives of ascetic purity and spiritual illumination embodied all the characteristics of piety and

[7] For the salience of Christian identity in the *Praeparatio*, see M. Frede, "Eusebius' Apologetic Writings," in Edwards *et al.* (*supra* n.3) 242, 249; E. Gallagher, "Eusebius the Apologist: The Evidence of the *Preparation* and the *Proof*," *SP* 26 (1993) 251–260.

[8] See *e.g.* H. Doergens, "Eusebius von Casarea als Darsteller der phönizischen Religion," *Forschungen zur christlicher Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte* [Paderborn] 12.5 (1915) 1; G. Schroeder, *Eusèbe de Césarée. La Préparation Evangélique*, *Livre VII* (SC 215 [Paris 1975]) 19–20. *Cf.* the discussions of J. Sirinelli, *Les vues historiques d'Eusèbe de Césarée durant la période prénicéenne* (Dakar 1961) 135–252; G. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius* (Macon 1986) 33–110; A. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea Against Paganism* (Leiden 2000) 100–136.

[9] Previous apologists had likewise conceived of their task as similar to the national(ist) historiography of Hellenistic and Roman times: see P. Pilhofer, *Presbyteron Kreitton. Der Altersbeweis der jüdischen und christlichen Apologeten und seine Vorgeschichte* (Tübingen 1990); G. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition* (Leiden 1992); A. Droge, *Homer or Moses? Early Christian Interpretations of the History of Culture* (Tübingen 1989); D. Olster, "Classical Ethnography and Early Christianity," in K. Free, ed., *The Formulation of Christianity by Conflict through the Ages* (Lewiston 1995) 9–31.

[10] Phoenicians: 1.9.19–2.praef.3; Egyptians: 2.praef.4–2.1.53; Greeks: 2.1.52–6.11.83, and Books 10–15; Hebrews and Jews: Books 7–9.

[11] For Greek dependence on Phoenicians and Egyptians, 2.1.52–2.8.13; for dependence on the Hebrews, 10.1.2–13.13.66. This sort of anti-Hellenic argument had been made by numerous interested parties well before Eusebius: see E. J. Bickerman, "Origenes gentium," *CP* 47 (1952) 65–81; R. A. Oden, "Philo of Byblos and Hellenistic Historiography," *PEQ* 110 (1978) 115–126; M. J. Edwards, "Philo or Sanchuniathon? A Phoenician Cosmogony," *CQ* 41 (1991) 213–220.

[12] See Schroeder (*supra* n.8) 16, 21–22; D. König-Ockenfels, "Christliche Deutung der Weltgeschichte bei Euseb von Cäsarea," *Saeculum* 27 (1976) 356.

wisdom that the narratives of Phoenician, Egyptian, and Greek origins had lacked. "Nothing at all," Eusebius remarked, "has yet been found among any of the nations like the good provided us by the Hebrews."[13] After developing this characterization in broad terms,[14] Eusebius alerts his reader to the fundamental importance of Moses' narratives concerning the lives of the earliest Hebrew saints. In what follows, I assess some salient features of this passage for Eusebius' conceptualization of the writing of the lives of these Hebrew holy men. Consideration of literary antecedents (in particular Philo of Alexandria and Plutarch) will bring out the nuances of his approach to the writing of lives. This passage on Hebrew holy men will emerge as important for his wider apologetic concerns in the *Praeparatio.*

Prefaces and memorials

Throughout the *Praeparatio*, Eusebius had evinced a concern for relying on the indigenous sources of the various nations that figure in his argument.[15] The case for the Hebrews was no different: "We ought to observe the ways of the forefathers of the Hebrews from no other source than a native one, since we learned those of the Egyptians and those of the Phoenicians from their own sources" (7.8.1). The writings of Moses were, for Eusebius, the most important and most ancient of the indigenous Hebrew sources. Moses had undertaken the task of commemorating the lives and thought of the ancient Hebrews at a time when they were about to be forgotten by their wayward descendants:

[13] 7.1.3. Greek text: K. Mras, *Eusebius Werke* VIII *Die Praeparatio Evangelica* (GCS 43.1 [Berlin 1954]).

[14] *PE* 7.2–5. Schroeder (*supra* n.8) 41–42 has rightly seen these chapters as presenting a *parathesis* of Greek (or "pagan") and Hebrew theologies. Eusebius had early on noted the significance of *parathesis* between the nations (1.6.7).

[15] See König-Ockenfels (*supra* n.12) 355. The importance of using native sources had been previously acknowledged: *e.g.*, Joseph. *Ap.* 1.13,14,15, and *passim*; Tatian *Or.* 31; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 6.4 (35.1), *Protr.* 2.39.1; Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 1.5; Marcellus (=Ps.-Justin) *Cohortatio ad Graecos* 9.

> Indeed, Moses the great theologian, a Hebrew of Hebrews if ever anyone else was, knowing well the paternal customs, handed down in indelible memorials (*mnêmais anexaleiptois*) the lives of the Hebrew forefathers, as if in prefaces of the sacred laws, and of the good things they were deemed worthy of by God, and again the characters and punishments of other, godless and impious men, considering this to be a necessary lesson for those about to be taught his laws—as a prevention from the same sort of character as the base and as an encouragement (*protropên*) towards the life of the pious.[16]

Eusebius here suggests that Moses conceived his narrative of the lives of the ancient Hebrews as filling the role of a preface to his great lawcode.[17] Readers of Plato's *Laws* will sense a resonance between Eusebius' remark and the emphasis laid by Plato upon legal prefaces that were crafted so as to persuade the people of the value and legitimacy of the laws being codified.[18] Eusebius too was a reader of Plato's *Laws*, and in fact fills a great number of pages later in the *Praeparatio* enumerating the passages in which he sees direct dependence of the Greek lawgiver upon the Mosaic code.[19] The allusion here is evocative not only of the forthcoming comparison but also of Eusebius' own Platonizing

[16] *PE* 7.7.1. Compare Isoc. *Evag.* 75–77. On the importance of the lives of holy men as moral exemplars, see P. Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 1 (1983) 1–25.

[17] Eusebius later would claim that Moses' accounts of the creation of the world and humans were likewise prefaces to his lawcode: 7.9.1, 7.10.11, similarly 7.10.4, 8.

[18] In particular 722D–723C. For discussion see H. Yunis, *Taming Democracy* (Ithaca 1996) 211–236.

[19] This has led R. Mortley to name Eusebius "one of the great Platonists of the late antique era" (*The Idea of Universal History from Hellenistic Philosophy to Early Christian Historiography* [Lewiston 1996] 167). His construal of Eusebius' comparisons as an "assimilationist exercise" may, however, divert attention from its role in an otherwise anti-Greek polemic. The best treatment of Eusebius' use of Plato's *Laws* is now J. M. Schott, "Founding Platonopolis: The Platonic *Politeia* in Eusebius, Porphyry, and Iamblichus," *JECS* 11 (2003) 501–531. See also E. Des Places, "Les *Lois* de Platon et la *Préparation Evangélique* d'Eusèbe de Césarée," *Aegyptus* 32 (1952) 223–231; "Deux témoins du texte des *Lois* de Platon," *WS* 70 (1957) 254–259; "La tradition patristique de Platon," *REG* 80 (1967) 385–394 (all reprinted in *Etudes platoniciennes 1929–1979* [Leiden 1981]).

framework for reading Moses' narrative.[20] But what is distinctive in Eusebius' statement is that the lives of the Hebrew ancestors function as a persuasive, protreptic preface for the laws.

In addition to this conceptualization of the saint's life as a preface, Eusebius asserts that the lives written down by Moses endured as "indelible memorials"[21] for later generations. The next sentence claims that the Hebrew "friends of God … obtained by him an eternal memorial" (7.7.2). The notion that a written account of someone's life could function as a lasting memorial is at least as old as Isocrates' *Evagoras*[22] and Xenophon's *Agesilaus* (6.2, 11.16), two works that hold an important position in the development of Greek biography.[23] A written memorial of a person could be alleged as more lasting and far-reaching than memorials sculpted in stone or figured in a painting.[24] Rivalry between the written word and the sculpted or painted image found frequent articulation in texts claiming superiority over visual representations.[25] Isocrates had asserted that "while I consider images of bodies to be fair memorials, the

[20] See G. Favrelle, *Eusèbe de Césarée. La Préparation Evangélique*, *Livre XI* (SC 292 [Paris 1982]) 243–391. Schroeder (*supra* n.8) 58, 60, sees only Philonic influence here.

[21] Interestingly, he also refers to the inscription on the arch of Constantine as being marked with "indelible letters" (*VC* 1.40).

[22] *Evag*. 3, also 73–75. For discussion see D. Steiner, *Images in the Mind* (Princeton 2001) 278–281.

[23] See A. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge 1993) 50–51; P. Cox [Miller], *Biography in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley 1983) 8–9.

[24] Pindar's *Nemean* 5.1–6, where the poet disdains the art of the sculptor (*andriantopoios*) for commemorative purposes in favor of poetry, may be adduced in this regard as well. See Steiner (*supra* n.22) 251, 259–265. A similar sentiment is expressed later by Horace, *Odes* 4.8.

[25] So M. J. Edwards: "Portraiture competed with philosophy and biography for the distinction of bestowing immortality" ("A Portrait of Plotinus," *CQ* 43 [1993] 481). Or, as Steiner argues (*supra* n.22: 252), "Authors both before and after [Pindar] embed plastic representations in their works not so much to contest or challenge the image's claim as to harness its powers to their poetry or prose." Such a contest is clearly evoked in Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* 1.3: some have supposed the paintings, statues, and epitaphs incised on stone could stand as "eternal memorials, but all these were mortal things, consumed by length of time, inasmuch as they were the pictures (*indalmata*) of corruptible bodies, not portraying (*apotypounta*) the form of an immortal soul."

images of deeds and thoughts which someone might observe in well-crafted words alone are much more worthy" (*Evag.* 73). Agesilaus, according to Xenophon, prohibited a statue (*eikona*) to be fashioned of himself, and instead toiled unceasingly at crafting memorials (*mnêmeia*) of his soul.[26] As a result, his virtue obtained memorials in every land (*Ages.* 11.16). Similarly, Cassius Dio has Maecenas advise Augustus to avoid material images and forge images in the minds of his subjects through his benefactions and right rule: "but from your benefactions craft different images in the very hearts of men, which are undefiled and undying."[27] Tiberius, when offered imperial cult in Farther Spain, reportedly declared that it was sufficient for him to be remembered as worthy of his ancestors, generous, and brave: "These are my temples in your hearts, these my most beautiful and enduring images (*effigies*): for those formed in rock will be disdained like sepulchers, if the judgment of later generations turn towards hatred."[28] Such sentiments need only be written down to stabilize the memorialization. A written account of a heroic figure's life could be seen as effecting all that a visual image could and even more—a *bios* could more readily grasp the hero's virtue, and it could do so in a more lasting, comprehensive manner.

Writing lives and painting portraits

Plotinus refused visual portraits for reasons somewhat different from those motivating Maecenas. A certain embarrassment of being caught in a body, rather, led the Neoplatonic holy man to eschew such material memorialization (Porph. *Plot.* 1). No

[26] *Ages.* 11.7; see also Plut. *Ages.* 2.2, *Reg. et Imp. Apophth.* 191D, *Lac. Apophth.* 210D, 215A.

[27] Dio 52.35.3; see S. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1984) 199. Alternatively, a cruel king might leave behind memorials (*mnêmeia*) of impiety and hatred towards mankind (Philo *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 90).

[28] Tac. *Ann.* 4.38; for discussion and further examples in Latin literature see R. H. Martin and A. J. Woodman, *Tacitus: Annals Book IV* (Cambridge 1989) 189–191; similarly Plut. *Cat.Mai.* 19.4, *Reg. et Imp. Apophth.* 198F.

doubt Plotinus' biographer Porphyry intended his literary portrait as a superior form of representing the philosopher.[29] Such Platonizing considerations did not keep other authors of *bioi* from declaring that their written record was like a painting itself.[30] This metaphor is present, and in fact plays a crucial role, in Eusebius' discussion of Moses' narratives of Hebrew holy men. The nature of Moses' written memorials was such as to resemble a painted portrait. Moses "transmitted their images (*eikonas*) to those who wanted to learn the divine teachings narrating the lives of the ancients and portraying (*diatypoumenos*) the virtue peculiar to each as if in the image of a painting (*en eikoni graphês*)" (7.7.4). The written record of a holy ancestor's life was meant, therefore, to highlight the particular virtues which that life was seen to embody, just as a painted portrait would highlight those physiognomic traits distinctive to the individual represented. The production of these literary portraits was thus a moral task.[31]

That *bios*-writing ought to be conceived as a moral project, focused intently upon the portrayal of virtue or vice for the edification of the reader, was not new with Eusebius. Plutarch's preface to his *bios* of Alexander is the best-known example of the metaphor of biographical sketches as painted images.[32] He claims that he is writing lives not histories, and hence will focus

[29] See Edwards (*supra* n.25) 480–490. On the supposed identification of an ancient portrait of Plotinus (rightly criticized by Edwards), see H. P. L'Orange, "The Portrait of Plotinus," *CahArch* 5 (1951) 15–30, and "Plotinus-Paul," in *Likeness and Icon* (Odense 1973) 32–42.

[30] Most notably Plutarch, on whom see below.

[31] Similarly, at *DE* 5.praef. (107A: ed. I. Heike) Eusebius described Moses as writing the histories (*historias*) of holy men, "as if outlining images (*eikonas hypotypôsamenos*) of virtue" so that he might move his hearers to emulate good men.

[32] The fullest treatment of images (though particularly sculpted images) in Plutarch is J. Mossman, "Plutarch's Use of Statues," in M. A. Flower and M. Toher, edd., *Georgica. Greek Studies in Honour of George Cawkwell* (London 1991) 98–119.

upon those features that emphasize the individual's character.[33] "Therefore, just as painters (*zôgraphoi*) derive likenesses from the face and the forms of his appearance in which character is manifest, caring least for the other parts of the body, so we must be granted to undertake rather the signs of the soul and to portray (*eidopoiein*) each one's life through these, leaving to others the great deeds and struggles."[34] Plutarch's use of the painting metaphor is used here purely in its descriptive capacity[35]—just as a painter attempts to represent accurately the peculiar features of an individual's face,[36] so the biographer seeks to highlight the distinctive features of an individual's character. The written words were expected to form a faithful picture of reality, or as he noted elsewhere, "the deed appears through words as if in a mirror (*esoptron*)."[37] An historical narrative (*logos*) was reckoned an *eikôn* and *eidôlon* of historical deeds.[38] Though Plutarch elsewhere asserts the importance of emulating the virtues depicted in his literary portraits, he recognizes that the character represented will inevitably include

[33] *Alex.* 1.2. For discussion see J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch. Alexander: A Commentary* (Oxford 1969) xxxvii–xliii.

[34] *Alex.* 1.3; *cf. Cim.* 2, *De Mul. Vir.* 243B.

[35] This statement is not meant to disregard Plutarch's overall protreptic aims of his *bioi* (see *e.g. Tim.* praef., *Demetr.* 1), but only to maintain clarity as to what is meant by the metaphor here. On Plutarch's prescriptive intent for writing lives, see C. Pelling, "Plutarch's Adaptation of his Source-Material," in B. Scardigli, ed., *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (Oxford 1995) 142–145.

[36] Plutarch does not entirely deny that a painter might effectively portray inner virtue as well as external features; so Lysippus' image of Alexander gazing toward heaven was able to capture his character and virtue (*De Alex. fort.* 335B). See also *De glor. Ath.* 346E. Yet at *Cim.* 2, Plutarch claims superiority for the literary portrait at the expense of visual portraiture.

[37] *De glor. Ath.* 345F, *cf. Tim.* praef.

[38] *De glor. Ath.* 348B; *cf.* IV Macc. 17:7. Plutarch repeatedly applies the metaphor of painting to the historian's craft: likewise, the most powerful historians craft (*eidôlopoiêsas*) their narrative like a painting (347A); the pictorial vividness of their accounts lies in the disposition and characterization (*diatypôsei*) of events (347C). He may be indebted to Dionysius of Halicarnassus' characterization of an historian's subject reflecting his moral character, as "images of his soul" (*Ant.Rom.* 1.1.3); historians leave behind for those coming after them "memorials of their own souls, which will not be destroyed together with their bodies by time" (1.1.2).

vice along with virtue. The written life must, for Plutarch, realistically portray the various shades of the individual life.

The parallel of biographer and painter echoes the comparison of the poet and painter offered by Simonides (whom Plutarch quotes, *De glor. Ath.* 346F): "Painting is silent poetry and poetry is verbal painting." Plato continued the use of the metaphor in the *Republic*: a poet more or less poorly presents an image of the gods just as a painter more or less poorly represents the objects to be portrayed (377E); "a poetic imitator uses words and phrases to paint colored pictures" (601A).[39] Similarly, the *Politicus* likens his discourse on kings to the work of a sculptor and a painter (277A–C.);[40] in the *Laws* he refers to himself as a maker of "verbal images" (898B, *logôn eikonôn*).[41] Aristotle sees the work of the tragic poet as similar to that of a painter, whether "smearing the canvas" with beautiful colors or "painting an image in white" (*leukographêsas eikona*)" (*Poet.* 6.19).

Such comparison of the creative work of a writer and that of a graphic artist would have an enduring effect upon the conceptualization of the verbal and visual art.[42] Plutarch's notion of the biographer as a painter of literary images delineating character can thus be seen as tapping into this deeper tradition of considering the relationship of word and image, and of conceiving the writer's task. The writer of a life

[39] The emperor Julian would fault the Cynics of his day for their fabrication of "images and myths," asserting that "Only the liar and unjust need *skiagraphia*" (*Or.* 7.214a–b).

[40] For discussion of Plato's use of *enargeia* (or "clarity") in this passage, see G. Zanker, "Enargeia in the Ancient Criticism of Poetry," *RhM* 124 (1981) 307.

[41] See also *Phdr.* 275D for the similarity of writing to painting. At *Symp.* 215A–B the sculpted image develops into the verbal image.

[42] So Horace *Ars P.* 361, *ut pictura poesis.* For other examples from Latin poetry which instantiate either the similarity or the difference between the visual and verbal, see A. Laird, "*Vt Figura Poesis*: Writing Art and the Art of Writing in Augustan Poetry," in J. Elsner, ed., *Art and Text in Roman Culture* (Cambridge 1996) 75–94. For the later tradition see R. W. Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting* (New York 1967); Christopher Braider, *Refiguring the Real* (Princeton 1993); J. H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts* (Chicago 1958).

would naturally be sensitive to the parallel, since the aim of memorializing an individual was shared with the sculptor and portrait artist.

Plutarch's programmatic statement would serve as the model for Eusebius' own methodological reflections in the *Vita Constantini*.[43] After expressing the hope that God will become Constantine's painter (*grapheus*), "impressing (*encharattôn*) his struggles on a molding (*plaxin*) of heavenly monuments,"[44] Eusebius claims that for his part, he will "record in memory of the God-beloved [emperor] an image (*eikona*) through words, in imitation of mortal portraiture (*skiagraphias*)."[45] And, just as Plutarch claimed to disregard the great battles and achievements of his subject, so also Eusebius here states that he "will pass over most of the deeds of the thrice-blessed [emperor]"; instead, he "will speak and write only those things pertaining to his God-beloved life" (1.11). His literary efforts were meant to represent faithfully the character and piety of his subject. Furthermore, the representation itself was implicated in the moral development of Eusebius' readers: "the representation (*mimêsis*) of good deeds rouses desire towards the love of God" (1.10). His account, he hopes, will receive its brilliance from the bare recording of good deeds[46] and his commemoration (*hypomnêsis*) will provide a reading beneficial for life (*biôphelê*). Eusebius clearly advances beyond the purely descriptive use of the metaphor; the written *eikôn* or *mimêsis* of the holy emperor's

[43] On Plutarch's influence see Mortley (*supra* n.19) 174–181; for general discussion see Cameron, "Eusebius" (*supra* n.2) 145–174.

[44] *VC* 1.9. This passage is somewhat evocative of Eusebius' description of the prophet Isaiah's vision, which was "as if someone saw on a great panel (*pinaki*) the onslaught of wars and lands destroyed, sieges, and enslavements, worked out (*eneikonismenas*) with brilliant colors (*chrômatos anthesin*)" (*Comm.Is.* 1.1 [Ziegler 3]). Compare Plutarch's description of Zeno's *Republic* as giving shape (*anatypôsamenos*) to a dream or image (*eidôlon*) of good legislation and constitution (*De Alex. fort.* 329B).

[45] *VC* 1.10. For discussion see Wilson (*supra* n.1) 112–121.

[46] Note the similarity to Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 345F.

life serves an openly protreptic function.[47]

Eusebius' description of his own methodology in writing about Constantine's life bears close resemblance to his conception of Moses' biographical portrait-making at *PE* 7.7.4. However, in order to appreciate more fully what Eusebius is doing with the icon metaphor—that is, how Eusebius moves well beyond the descriptive use of the metaphor—we can consider three other instances of the metaphor in earlier authors, and then follow the metaphor throughout Book 7 of the *PE.* The first is well known and has already been mentioned. At both the commencement and the close of his prose encomium on Evagoras (3, 73–75), Isocrates explicitly contrasts his literary project of commemoration with visual memorials in material substances. Three reasons are adduced for the superiority of the written over the visual memorial. The last merits our interest:[48] "No one would liken the nature of their body to [images] molded or painted, but it is easy for those who choose not to be lazy to imitate another's character and thought, which is in the words" (75). The fairest appeal (*paraklêsin*) to the philosophic life is the collection of an individual's virtues into a written account (76). Isocrates states explicitly that his aim in writing about the life of Evagoras is the exhortation (*protrepomen*) towards philosophy,[49] so that his readers might emulate (*zêlountes*) the one who is praised as a model (*paradeigmasi*).[50] Moral progress was thus at the heart of Isocrates' biographical and encomiastic purposes.

[47] This function has often been overlooked in attempts to assess the text's historical reliability; see the corrective of Cameron, "Eusebius" (*supra* n.2) 145–174.

[48] The first is that noble men desire their virtues to be honored more than their physical features; the second is that physical memorials must remain in a fixed location, whereas written accounts can circulate widely.

[49] His description of Evagoras' Hellenizing reforms and promotion of philhellenic ideals (at 49–51, 66–67) must have been central to Isocrates' protreptic intentions.

[50] *Evag.* 77. The biographical projects of Porphyry and Iamblichus are quite similar: see Clark (*supra* n.2) 29–51.

A second such application of the metaphor has been overlooked in modern discussions.[51] Calanus, an Indian gymnosophist who encountered Alexander the Great, had been such a model of wisdom that, according to Philo of Alexandria, he was "as it were a copy and representation (*apeikonisma kai mimêma*) from the archetype of a painting."[52] Earlier in the same work, Philo declared that there were still men who were "stamped (*typôthentes*) by the good conduct of wise men, like images (*eikones*) from the archetype of a painting" (62). In an especially interesting instance at the beginning of his *De Abrahamo*, Philo draws out the relationship between the Hebrew forefathers who lived before the Mosaic law and the law itself. In an illuminating comment, Philo remarks that particular laws of Moses' legislation are, in fact, copies (*eikonôn*) of mortal Hebrew archetypes (*archetypous*), "such men as lived blameless and good lives, whose virtues are inscribed (*estêliteuesthai*)[53] in the most sacred books, and this is not only for their praise, but also so that the readers will be encouraged (*protrepsasthai*) to emulate the same."[54] These men were "animate (*empsychoi*) and rational laws."[55] The Mosaic laws were written images of the Hebrew archetypes, themselves living laws.

Eusebius shares this Philonic vision in central ways. For Philo, the written laws were images; whereas the written *bioi* are images for Eusebius. Both authors, however, are agreed in their overall conceptualization of the manner in which what is

[51] Even Schroeder (*supra* n.8), who was otherwise impressed by the Philonic influence upon *PE* 7, fails to note the allusion (his note at 7.7.4 remarks only that Eusebius, like Philo, saw each patriarch as a type of a virtue).

[52] Philo *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 94; for the application of *eikonismos* in later saints' lives, see G. Dagron, "Holy Images and Likeness," *DOP* 45 (1991) 23–33.

[53] For a similar use of this verb applied to monumentalizing the impressions (*typous*) of a person's virtues in letters, see Philo *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 95.

[54] *De Abr.* 3–4. Conversely, at *De spec. leg.* 4.149 Philo claimed that the unwritten laws were not inscribed (*encharagmena*) on monuments or on paper, but on the souls of those sharing in the same *politeia*.

[55] *De Abr.* 5. The use of *empsychos nomos* recurs at *V.Mos.* 2.4.3.

written relates to the hero's life. What is written (whether a law or a narrative account) are images, or copies, of the lives of ancient Hebrews. These images in turn provide the models of behavior and life for those who would be trained in divine things: "as an encouragement (*protropên*) for the life of the pious" (*PE* 7.7.1). The written image is simultaneously mimetic and protreptic. This unity of outlook between Eusebius and Philo was not coincidental. Eusebius surely had Philo's conception in mind, for there are strong and repeated verbal allusions to the *De Abrahamo* throughout Book Seven of the *Praeparatio*.[56]

A further resonance, though less strong than that with Philo, may be found in Clement of Alexandria. When mentioning Job as an "example" (*hypodeigma*) for Christians, Clement claims that "the ancient achievements (*katorthômata*) are set forth as images (*eikones*) for our own corrections (*epanorthômata*)" and the stories of martyrs are "models" (*paradeigmata*); for as many things as are written in Scripture are for our instruction and encouragement.[57] Hence, as with Philo, the notion of ancient humans as models, and the protreptic uses to which these models and their respective literary images can be put, vividly indicate a moral project behind the biographical portraits. There is a shift, then, in the application of the metaphor beyond the descriptive use of Plutarch. In Clement and Philo, the person's moral character provides a model for virtuous living and hence becomes iconic—that is, it is imaged in writing for the purpose of guiding the lives of readers—whether these are written narratives of their lives or written laws based upon their paradigmatic characters. There is, in other words, a moral shift in the conceptualization of Philo, Clement, and later Eusebius that is not as salient a feature of Plutarch. We see in the former

[56] See Schroeder (*supra* n.8) *passim*; Sirinelli (supra n.8) 149–151. For Eusebius' appropriation of Philo generally, see D. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Assen 1993) 212–234, and "References to Philo from Josephus up to 1000 AD," in *Philo and the Church Fathers* (Leiden 1995) 232–233.

[57] *Strom*. 4.5 (19.3–4), citing Rom. 15:4.

authors the prescriptive ("hagiographic")—over the merely descriptive ("biographic")—use of the metaphor of painted images.

With these examples of the image metaphor in mind, a brief tracing of the metaphor in Eusebius' *PE* 7 allows us to observe this conception of the biographical task as it extends throughout his account of the Hebrew holy men. After the narration of Enos (one of the Hebrew forefathers), Eusebius claims that a man of such character is worthy of emulation, and that Christians have attempted to seek God, "in a manner equal to the image of [Enos]" (7.8.12). Regarding Enoch, "We therefore considered it a blessed thing to emulate the life of this good image" (7.8.15).

The most significant example of this metaphoric understanding of the ancestor as an image is his assertion following the account of Noah: "This man, then, also would be an archetype, a living and breathing image (*eikôn zôsa kai empsychos*),[58] who had given an example (*hypodeigma*) to his posterity of the character that is pleasing to God" (7.8.18). This statement raises some important issues. For Philo, in the passage noted above, the Hebrews were archetypes, while the laws were images of these men. Eusebius, however, seems here to conflate both archetype and image in referring to the ancient Hebrews. A similar conflation occurs later when he describes the Logos as being an "archetype and true image of the God of all" (7.10.12).[59] He then follows this by saying that the human mind is created in the image of the Logos, and as such is "an image of

[58] The earliest occurrence of *empsychos eikôn* seems to be Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 368C; see also Porph. *Abst.* 4.9 (cited at Eus. *PE* 3.4.13); Eus. *DE* 5.4.12 (227B); Themistius *Philanth.* 81d5, *Pentaet.* 118a5; Greg. Nys. *C. Eunom.* 3.9.9. A somewhat similar notion appears in Plato's "living shrines" at *Leg.* 931D; for the position of this passage within the pagan debate on images, see A. H. Armstrong, "Some Comments on the Development of the Theology of Images," *SP* 9 (1966) 119–120.

[59] For the Logos as the image of God, see G. B. Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconclastic Controversy," *DOP* 7 (1953) 7–8. On Eusebius' Logos theology see Schroeder (*supra* n.8) 80–84; F. Ricken, "Die Logoslehre des Eusebios von Caesarea und der Mittelplatonismus," *Theologie und Philosophie* 42 (1967) 341–358.

an image (*eikona eikonos*)."[60] The conflation of archetype and image may be a result of the dual role Eusebius envisions the ancient Hebrews (and even the Logos) to have been filling. That is, they are meant to be observed as models (or archetypes) for holy living, while simultaneously being only copies themselves of a greater, or more holy, reality—the Hebrews existing as images of the Logos, the Logos in turn being an image of the "God of all."

At any rate, what is important about the passage on Noah is the distinctively moral shift that has occurred regarding the term "image." At 7.7.4, Eusebius had used "image" to refer to the mimetic quality of the biographical sketches (the *bioi*) of the Hebrews contained in Moses' writings. Beyond this, as these passages show, Eusebius is making the additional claim that the "images" are to serve as models (*hypodeigmata*) in the same paradigmatic way that Job's life had done according to Clement. The character represented in the biographical sketches functions as an image to be observed and so incorporated into the moral lives of the readers. The picture painted through the words of the narrative is thus a model for virtue.[61]

Eusebius' emphasis on the iconic quality of Hebrew holy men in the *Praeparatio* illuminates an important element of his theology of images that may be obscured by attention to his letter to Constantia.[62] The fragmentary and poorly attested letter to the emperor's sister offers one of the earliest expressions of

[60] The phrase seems to occur first at Philo *De op. mund.* 25.4; among Christian authors see Clem. Al. *Protr.* 10.98, *Strom.* 5.14 (94.5); Origen *Hom. in Luc.* 8; Methodius *Symp.* 6.1. A variation (*eidolon eidôlou*) occurs at Plot. *Enn.* 2.9.10; Porph. *Plot.* 1. The notion derives from Plato (*Resp.* 597D–E); see M. J. Edwards, *Neoplatonic Saints: The Lives of Plotinus and Proclus by their Students* (Liverpool 2000) 1 n.6.

[61] On the notion of verbal images carrying an iconic function, see V. E. F. Harrison, "Word as Icon in Greek Patristic Theology," *Sobornost* 10 (1988) 38–49.

[62] On the authenticity of the letter (*PG* 20.1545–1550) see S. Gero, "The True Image of Christ: Eusebius' Letter to Constantia Reconsidered," *JThS* 32 (1981) 460–470.

iconoclastic sentiment.[63] Icons of Christ for purposes of veneration were inappropriate: his true image could not be represented in material media, while an image of his earthly body would only portray the form of a slave. Elsewhere, however, Eusebius shows a significant openness regarding other visual images.[64] His promotion of verbal icons in the *Praeparatio* (and in the *VC*)[65] marks a straightforwardly positive conception of images and evinces a concern for the figural, the emblematic, and the exemplary.[66] These works exhibit the ultimate significance of paradigmatic figures whose character and way of life have been literarily imaged into written monuments. Images of holy men were integral as models in education towards virtue.

Images and argument

Eusebius' treatment of the ancient Hebrews lies at the crux of his entire apologetic project.[67] His narrative of the history of the Hebrew nation, which was claimed as the Christians' own,[68]

63 Eusebius should not be taken as offering a denunciation of Christian art in general, however; see the admirable treatment of C. Murray, "Art in the Early Church," *JThS* 28 (1977) 303–345. Attempts to explain the iconoclastic ideas of the letter by Eusebius' Origenism (so G. Florovsky, "Origen, Eusebius, and the Iconoclastic Controversy," *CH* 19 [1950] 77–96) or Arianism (a "shrinking from the historical Jesus," Mortley [*supra* n.19] 151–153) are less convincing.

64 See *HE* 7.18 (bronze statues [*ektypôma*, *andrianta*, *eikona*] of Christ and a woman in Caesarea Philippi); *VC* 3.3 (panel of Constantine slaying the dragon); *VC* 1.40 (statue of Constantine bearing the trophy of the cross; see also *HE* 9.9.10); *PE* 7.10.12 (humans made in the image of God are like imperial statues); *DE* 5.4 (226D) (the Son as image of the Father similar to imperial statues; later authors would also make positive reference to imperial statues as a Christological metaphor: Athanas. *III or. c. Arian.* 5; Basil *Hom. XXIV c. Sab. et Ar. et Anom.*, *PG* 31.608A); *DE* 5.9 (234C) (a painting of Abraham and angelic guests at Mamre).

65 A. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Berkeley 1991) 144.

66 See Cameron, "Eusebius" (*supra* n.2) 53–64.

67 See Schroeder (*supra* n.8) 14–16; E. Gallagher, "Piety and Polity: Eusebius' Defense of the Gospel," in J. Neusner, E. S. Frerichs, and A. J. Levine, edd., *Religious Writings and Religious Systems* II (Atlanta 1989) 139–155, and (*supra* n.7) 251–260.

68 Christ was seen as the restorer of the ancient Hebrew *ethnos*: *PE* 4.1.5, 7.8.40; *DE* 1.4 (78B–C), 1.6 (24C), 1.7 (25B, 26D, 27A, *passim*), 3.2 (90C, 91B–C, 102A), 3.6 (131C–D), 4.13 (169A), 9.11 (433C). For discussion see M. Hollerich, "Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First 'Court

was critically contrasted with his polemical retelling of the history of the rise of the other nations. An integral feature of Eusebius' stories of national origins, along with arguments for chronological lateness and cultural dependence (see *e.g.* Book 10), is the depiction of national character embodied in the lives of the ancient ancestors.[69]

The history of the nations was a history of lives that memorialized a distinctive character (*tropos*) and way of life (*politeia*). The pages of the *Praeparatio* contain detailed enumerations of the piety, wisdom, and holiness of the Hebrew ancestors in marked contrast to the impious lives of Phoenician, Egyptian, and Greek forefathers. Ascetic exemplarity and well-reasoned contemplation marked the images of Hebrew holy men. For the Greeks and others, Eusebius offered only censure of the ancestral customs as embodied in the lives of their national forebears. Their impiety, incontinence, and irrationality had only elicited Eusebius' aversion. "They have not even left a memorial (*mnêmên*) as virtuous men, but have handed down examples (*deigmata*) of the furthest immorality, licentiousness, cruelty, and foolishness for those who came after them to preserve" (2.4.1). Later he proclaims that the national ancestors "have left behind indelible memorials (*anexaleipta mnêmeia*) of their own nature for those who came after them" (3.10.19). Not only was their nature mortal, though they were worshiped as gods after their deaths, but their deeds "were written down as full of all shamefulness and immorality."[70] No iconic quality could be attributed to the lives of these Greek forefathers.

The Jews, whose hybrid roots lay in the adoption of Egyptian

Theologian,'" *CH* 59 (1990) 318; J. E. Bruns, "The Agreement of Moses and Jesus in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* of Eusebius," *VC* 31 (1977) 117–125.

[69] For a discussion of this in the first six books of the *Praeparatio*, see A. P. Johnson, "Identity, Descent and Polemic: Ethnic Argumentation in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*," *JECS* 12 (2004) 23–56.

[70] *PE* 3.10.21; compare *DE* 8.praef. (364A).

ways by once-pure Hebrews,[71] exhibited a similar incapacity for paradigmatic virtue. The pious ways of their forefathers had "grown weak with them and was blunted," they had forgotten the paternal virtue and "were brought around to the same sort of character (*homoiotropia*) as the Egyptians" (7.8.37). The nation was no longer worthy to be called by the name of their ancestors, and hence became the Jews.[72] It is in this historical context of deterioration that Eusebius envisions the biographical labors of Moses, "a Hebrew of Hebrews,"[73] as an effort to remind the Jews of their lost Hebrew heritage.[74]

Eusebius' censorious characterization of both Greeks and Jews provided a background against which the lives of the ancient Hebrew saints could shine forth all the more clearly. Their piety, wisdom, and moral purity were preserved in the writings of Moses as "indelible memorials" (7.7.1) for their descendants. They alone were considered worthy of the appellation "friends of God."[75] The biographical sketches of Hebrew ancestors encouraged a response of admiration and emulation from the reader. The Hebrew lives were icons.

Conclusion

The apologetic task undertaken in the *Praeparatio* was keenly biographical: the character of ancestral figures, "delineated as if

[71] *PE* 7.8.37–39. See A. Kofsky, "Eusebius of Caesarea and the Christian-Jewish Polemic," in O. Limor and G. Stroumsa, edd., *Contra Iudaeos. Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (Tübingen 1996) 59–83.

[72] Eusebius stresses the distinction between Hebrews and Jews most explicitly at 7.6; see Sirinelli (*supra* n.8) 157–160. For J. Ulrich, the formation of the Jews represents an *Aufstiegsphase* rather than a *Dekadenzphase*, since Jewishness is at least an improvement on Egyptian polytheism (*Euseb von Caesarea und die Juden. Studien zur Rolle der Juden in der Theologie des Eusebius von Caesarea* [Berlin 1999] 84). However, Eusebius' emphasis seems to be much more on the Hebrew-to-Jewish decline than Egyptian-to-Jewish ascent.

[73] *PE* 7.7.1. Ulrich (*supra* n.72) 62 may nevertheless go too far when he describes Moses as the high point of the Hebrew epoch, though he was certainly important as a transitional figure between the old era of Hebrew piety and the new one characterized by Jewish shortsightedness and moral languor.

[74] On the continued line of Hebrews after the formation of the Jewish nation, see Ulrich (*supra* n.72) 64–68.

[75] *PE* 7.4.6, an allusion to Philo *De Abr.* 50; see Ulrich (*supra* n.72) 59–60.

in a painting," was central. The passage on Moses the biographer marks an illuminating instance of Eusebius' attempt to do apologetics at the very cusp of momentous changes in the Roman world and his effort to manipulate the lives of the ancients within his own polemical framework. The metaphor of the written life as a painted image held a crucial role in Eusebius' legitimation of Christian identity as rooted in Hebrew holiness. The apology was bolstered by the paradigmatic piety and clear-sighted wisdom of the Hebrew saints. Their lives offered images both for emulation and for the validation of identity. Apologetics provided a powerful impetus for the hagiographical enterprise.

The metaphor of *bios* as painting would become an important topos in later hagiographical texts.[76] Its power to convey the aims of writing a holy figure's life remained fundamental. But the earliest application of the painting metaphor to characterize the task of writing saints' lives would seem to occur here, in the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, a rancorous response to both Greeks and Jews.[77]

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[76] *E.g.* Basil *Ep.* 2; Greg. Nys. *V.Mos.* 1 (*PG* 44.300B); Theodoret *HR* praef. 2–3, 5.6, 9.6, 12.6. For discussion see D. Krueger, "Typological Figuration in Theodoret of Cyrrhus's *Religious History* and the Art of Postbiblical Narrative," *JECS* 5 (1997) 413–419; P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, *Théodoret de Cyr. Histoire des moines de Syrie* (SC 234 [Paris 1977]) I 149–150. *Cf.* G. Bowersock, "The Syriac Life of Rabbula and Syrian Hellenism," in Hägg and Rousseau (*supra* n.1) 255–271.

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