# First Cities in Late Antique Christian Thought

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Abstract: Debates about the demise of the Roman city have often considered the spread of Christianity as a factor in destroying the classical concepts that underwrote it. One way of understanding the impact of Christianity on classical urbanism is to examine its influence on concepts of the first city. By identifying the elements that make up a city, these ideas offer a useful means of investigating how writers perceived the fundamental nature of the city. Genesis clearly attributes the first city to Cain, something potentially in conflict with classical narratives of the city as part of a civilizing process. In practice, while Cain’s city was to become dominant in the early middle ages, it had little impact on late antique Christian thought prior to the late fourth century and particularly Augustine’s popularization of it in *De civitate Dei*. Earlier Christian writers such as Lactantius and Eusebius instead engaged with classical first cities in a wide variety of ways reflective of the debates in which they participated. Lactantius rejected these models of urbanism because they contradicted his understanding of history, morality, and justice, whereas Eusebius embraced them as a way of considering the role of the divine in human development. The differences in their approaches point to the variety in early Christian approaches to the city, suggesting that the city of God was not necessarily inherently incompatible with the classical city.

Keywords: City, Civilization, Augustine, Cain, Lactantius, Eusebius

“God the first Garden made, and the first city Cain.”

Abraham Cowley, *The Garden* (1666)[[1]](#endnote-1)

Few subjects in the study of late antiquity have received as much attention as the fate of the Roman city.[[2]](#endnote-2) Scholars have produced considerable work in contradiction or support of Liebeschuetz’s compelling portrayal of the decline of the *civitas*.[[3]](#endnote-3) Setting aside the inherent interest of the subject, the debate over cities has been so heated because of the manner in which they serve as proxies for a wide range of other topics.[[4]](#endnote-4) The shifting role and importance of cities also informs discussions of an altered ideological and cultural landscape in the late antique Roman world. It was a truism of the period to say that cities were made by men, not walls, and modern scholars have long recognized that the Greco-Roman city was made by ideas as much as by physical structures. The lives of all civilized men circled their city and their participation in its rites, rituals, and possession of its legal citizenship shaped their position and role.[[5]](#endnote-5)

For this reason, there has been great interest in the way ideas of the city may have altered in late antiquity.[[6]](#endnote-6) In addition to shifts in the economics and demography of urban centres, or the diminished role of cities in the administration of the empire, an obvious potential agent of change is the spread of Christianity across the Mediterranean. Liebeschuetz argued that Christianity was incompatible with the Greco-Roman city.[[7]](#endnote-7) Here we can hear the echoes of older scholarship, such as Fustel de Coulanges’s conviction that the Greco-Roman city was defined by its religion, and that the rise of Christianity was responsible for its end.[[8]](#endnote-8) Just as there has been work done on the way the increasing prominence and power of Christians was reflected in the changing physical landscape of the city, so scholars have sought to examine the way that classically educated Christians considered the mental landscapes they had inherited.[[9]](#endnote-9)

What follows aims to build on that work by examining a neglected aspect of the Greco-Roman concept of the city. Among the subjects that drew the attention of classical writers was how cities first came to be in existence. What the first city was and why it was created were important questions, and models of the early development of cities proliferated in the ancient world, generally as a crucial step in humanity’s journey from primitive animal solitude to sophisticated civilization, whether for good or for ill.[[10]](#endnote-10) This paper will consider the way in which Christian writers of the third and fourth centuries engaged with these ideas. This intellectual activity provides a case study with potential for conflict between classical and biblical traditions. Genesis 4.17 says that Cain founded the first city, an idea at odds with the prevailing views of Greco-Roman writers. Examining the reception of ideas of the first city therefore provides a means of considering the manner in which potentially competing traditions were managed.

The first city is particularly interesting because the way people think about the origins of an institution is indicative of the manner in which they perceive it in the present.[[11]](#endnote-11) Augustine characterized the first city as the archetype for all subsequent cities.[[12]](#endnote-12) In their categorization of the purpose of the first cities and their understanding of the changes that resulted from the institution, writers hinted at their understanding of the working of cities in their own day.[[13]](#endnote-13) But the first city also served as an entry to other subjects, among them the early history of the world as a whole, and the forces that brought humans together as a society. The former was a battleground in which Christians inherited talking points from earlier opponents of Greek cultural hegemony in the Hellenistic era.[[14]](#endnote-14) Possession of knowledge of the most distant past served as evidence for both the antiquity, and hence legitimacy, of a culture or faith, and as a demonstration of the superiority of its understanding more generally.[[15]](#endnote-15) The latter was of immense importance for writers in the third and fourth centuries attempting to consider what a Christian society should look like.

This paper will begin by demonstrating that the Genesis model in which Cain founded the first city received very little attention until Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* in the early fifth century, indicating that biblical authority did not automatically shape Christian thinking on the first city. A closer look will then be taken at the way prominent Christian writers did consider ideas of the emergence of the city by examining and comparing the discussion of the subject in the works of Lactantius and Eusebius.

## CITY OF CAIN

The Greco-Roman world developed a large number of ideas about the beginning of urbanism.[[16]](#endnote-16) There was no one clear line of transmission. Rather, a huge variety of different but related ideas could be drawn upon. In one category, a named cultural hero or divine entity gifts savage humanity with the ability to co-exist with each other as part of a permanent community and the skills to build a physical settlement. The process is often rapid, with humans going from the state of nature to urban living in the space of a lifetime. In many cases it is implied that cities would not exist without this super-human intervention.

An example is the *Hymn to Hephaestus* which praises Athena and Hephaestus who “taught splendid crafts to mankind on earth, that previously used to live in caves in the mountains like animals. But now that they have learned crafts through Hephaestus the famously skilled, they pass their lives at ease in their own houses the whole year through.”[[17]](#endnote-17) In his *Protagoras*, Plato attributed this development to Prometheus, who stole the required technical knowledge from Athena and Hephaestus, and to Zeus, who taught humans how to live sociably with each other through knowledge of justice.[[18]](#endnote-18) Pliny in his *Natural History* presents the first city as the result of the labors of a series of semi-divine heroes. He suggests that the first city was the acropolis at Athens, founded by the autochthonous Cecrops.[[19]](#endnote-19)

A second model posits a much more gradual development, in which humans, respond to dangers in their environment or to something in their fundamental nature. This is an anonymous process, with many intermediate stages, and one which is both natural and implicitly inevitable. Many of these writers attributed the rise of cities to the acquisition of a new skill or technology. For Diodorus Siculus and Horace this was the coming of speech, which allowed people to coordinate with each other to escape a Hobbesian war against all.[[20]](#endnote-20) Vitruvius believed that “the beginning of association among human beings, their meeting and living together, thus came into being because of the discovery of fire.”[[21]](#endnote-21) In his *De rerum natura*, Lucretius offered a similar vision of the rise of human concord.[[22]](#endnote-22) He saw the coming of cities was a sign of the onset of political communities, noting that “Kings began to found cities and to build a citadel for their own protection and refuge.”[[23]](#endnote-23)

Others emphasized an inherent instinct towards sociability as the primary cause of cities. Among the most influential was Aristotle in his *Politics*. His city was the merger of several villages, “For this reason, every city exists by nature, just as did the earlier associations [from which it grew]. It is the end or consummation.”[[24]](#endnote-24) As such, the city was not only a beneficial institution, but a natural and inevitable one. Likewise, Cicero viewed the city as the ultimate expression of a “certain social spirit which nature has implanted in man.”[[25]](#endnote-25)

Whether the product of divine aid or a natural process, the emergence of the first city could be interpreted in a positive or negative manner. Many of the negative accounts of the development of the city presented it as part of a loss of a Golden Age, that of Saturn, when humanity was fundamentally innocent. For Ovid, composing his *Metamorphoses*, one of the things that distinguished the Silver Age from the previous Golden Age was that “Then men sought shelter—shelter under caves, And thickets and rough hurdles bound with bark.”[[26]](#endnote-26) Seneca blamed the greed and ambition of architects for the creation of cities.[[27]](#endnote-27)

A prominent feature of many of these narratives was a connection between the city and law. Among Plato’s most famous concepts was that of the Just City, developed in his *Republic* in consideration of how the *polis* might be run to create a just society. Cicero reinforced the relationship between cities, laws, and civilization in his *De officiis*[[28]](#endnote-28);“And, without the association of men, cities could not have been built or peopled. In consequence of city life, laws, and customs were established, and then came the equitable distribution of private rights and a definite social system.”[[29]](#endnote-29)Cities required justice and law to function. Their development therefore prompted the development of law. Justice and law helped people live together, making them less dangerous to each other, promoting the development of city, but also defining them as a society. The just society was hard to achieve and frequently elusive, but it was at least theoretically achievable.

These accounts are united by their common theme of the city as part of a civilizing process, a key part of a package that marked a fundamental shift in the way humans lived. This depiction of the early development of cities is one seemingly at odds with that derived from the Bible. That Cain built a city would have been known to anyone familiar with Genesis 4.17 “And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.” This was an important point for Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*, completed in 426. Augustine was prompted to start in response to the sack of Rome in 410, but the ambition of his work very quickly outstripped this beginning. The Bishop of Hippo put Enoch City at the centre of his account of human history, and more specifically, humanity’s relationship to God. Augustine used Cain and Abel as the embodiment of the two cities[[30]](#endnote-30):

Now Cain was the first son born to those two parents of the human race, and he belonged to the City of man; the second son, Abel, belonged to the City of God . . . It is written, then, that Cain founded a city.[[31]](#endnote-31)

The first founder of the earthly city, then, was a fratricide; for, overcome by envy, he slew his brother, who was a citizen of the Eternal City and a pilgrim on this earth.[[32]](#endnote-32)

Cain’s role as the founder of the first earthly city provided Augustine with a perfect case study for his extended metaphor of the two cities, a starting point that could be read across human history. He explored to great effect the fratricidal parallel between Enoch and Rome, the first and the most famous of earthly cities:

It is not to be wondered at, then, that, long afterwards, at the foundation of that city which was to be the capital of the earthly city of which we are speaking, and which was to rule over so many nations, this first example – or, as the Greeks call it, archetype – of crime was mirrored by a kind of image itself. For there also, as one of the Roman poets says in telling of the crime, ‘The first walls were wet with a brother’s blood.’ [Lucan, *Pharsalia*,1.95] For this is how Rome was founded, when, as the history of Rome attests, Remus was slain by his brother Romulus.[[33]](#endnote-33)

The city of Enoch as archetype was crucial for both Augustine and those who followed him. Augustine saw no possibility for true justice in the earthly city. The earthly city, even if it was outwardly Christian, could not achieve true justice, as that was found solely in the City of God.[[34]](#endnote-34) Not only was the first city the creation of a sinful murderer, all subsequent cities would be as well.

Cain’s city was to become an essential element of medieval Christian thought on the beginnings of urbanism thanks to Augustine’s influence.[[35]](#endnote-35) Enoch City appeared in some of the most important works of the early medieval west, including Gregory the Great’s exegetical *Moralia in Job*, the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, and Bede’s *Commentary on Genesis*.[[36]](#endnote-36) Cain’s place as the first founder of the city, with the associated implications of worldly sinfulness, was firmly secured for the great surge of exegesis that emerged under the Carolingians.[[37]](#endnote-37) In general, their commentary aimed for completeness, including Cain as part of their Augustinian heritage. From the ninth century Genesis Commentaries became increasingly standardized.[[38]](#endnote-38)

The city founded by Cain would seem to provide an obvious point of contradiction between Christian thought and classical concepts of the development of the first city. Whereas most Greco-Roman narratives presented humanity slowly acquiring the skills and technologies necessary for communal urban living, in Genesis the second generation of humans were successfully founding cities in honour of the third. The biblical text offered a single archetypal city, from which all others were descended in imitation, unlike classical traditions which suggested that cities emerged in multiple different places. The potential for contradiction was recognized by Josephus, who put considerable effort into attempting to reconcile the first cities.[[39]](#endnote-39)

A natural assumption would be that because of the authority of Scripture, the account of Genesis would be taken at face value and very quickly become the dominant paradigm for the first city in Christian thought, displacing previous models. Early Christian history writing drew upon the Bible as a historical source.[[40]](#endnote-40) However, Enoch City took considerable time to acquire wide currency among Christian writers in late antiquity.

This is not to say that no early Christian writer ever employed Cain’s city against pagan claims about the past. Cain’s city appeared as an item of dispute between Christians and pagans in the writings of Theophilos of Antioch. In the second part of his treatise to the pagan Autolycus, composed ca. 180, Theophilos sought to prove the superiority of biblical history over the traditions of Greek mythology.[[41]](#endnote-41) Among his targets was the veracity of the Iliad, as he criticized the idea that Troy was the first city, “Cain also himself had a son, whose name was Enoch; and he built a city, which he called by the name of his son, Enoch. From that time was there made a beginning of the building of cities, and this before the flood; not as Homer falsely says: ‘Not yet had men a city built.’”[[42]](#endnote-42) Something of the force of Theophilos’s argument might have been lost due to his misreading of Homer, the line of the text being a reference purely to the site on which Troy stood and not to cities in general.[[43]](#endnote-43)

Theophilos was among the first Christian writers to consider Genesis as an account of the early history of humanity whose works have survived.[[44]](#endnote-44) His interest in Enoch City was purely as a part of the narrative of Genesis that needed to be defended. The composition of the *Ad Autolycum* dates to shortly after the publication of Celsus’s attack on Christianity in ca. 177. Celsus criticized Christians for accepting the parochial narrative of the Jews as a universal history.[[45]](#endnote-45) Theophilos may not have been directly responding to Celsus, but he was writing at a time where such disputes were growing increasingly sophisticated.[[46]](#endnote-46) The discussion of Cain’s city is preceded by material treating the expulsion from Eden and the murder of Abel and followed by a genealogy of Cain’s descendants.[[47]](#endnote-47) Here Theophilos took pains to assert the superior claims of Jubal over Apollo or Orpheus to be identified as the inventor of music.[[48]](#endnote-48) True knowledge of the first city served to buttress claims for true knowledge of religion.

Theophilos apart, there seems to have been very little interest in Cain’s city among late antique writers. Even when Genesis 4.17 was discussed, the idea that Enoch City was a real, physical settlement was not settled. The first-century Jewish exegete Philo of Alexandria interpreted Enoch City as representing Cain as the embodiment of philosophy “That the human mind is the measure of all things, an opinion held they tell us by an ancient sophist named Protagoras, an offspring of Cain’s madness.”[[49]](#endnote-49) Philo discussed Cain’s city at length, dismissing any notion that it might have been a real city, for “Everyone can see how the building of a city by a single man runs counter not only to all our ideas but to our reason itself. How is such a thing possible? Why, he could not have built even the most insignificant part of a house without employing others to work under him.”[[50]](#endnote-50)

Cain’s fate was to be solitary, deprived of human company and constantly wandering, “proscribed not only by his parents but also by the whole human race, counting him a genus peculiar and separate from the rational species, like one driven out and a fugitive, and one transformed into the nature of beasts.”[[51]](#endnote-51) This naturally militated against the foundation of an actual city. Rather, Cain’s city needed to be understood as “demonstrative arguments.”[[52]](#endnote-52) Continuing the link to philosophers, Philo added “With these, as though fighting from a city-wall, he repels the assaults of his adversaries, by forging plausible inventions contrary to the truth.”[[53]](#endnote-53) Cain thus became a stubborn debater, raising specious arguments against the faith.

Philo’s allegorical exegesis was highly influential for Christians in Alexandria including Clement and Origen, the latter of whom transmitted Philo’s work to Caesarea, where it was used by Eusebius.[[54]](#endnote-54) In the west, Ambrose drew heavily upon Philo.[[55]](#endnote-55) In his *De Cain et Abel,* the Bishop of Milan did not mention Cain’s city, but echoed Philo in describing Cain as passing ‘from a life of human kindness to one which was more akin to the rude existence of a wild beast’.[[56]](#endnote-56)

Among the first to pay attention to the city of Cain was Jerome. In a letter of 386 to the noblewoman Marcella, he sought to persuade her to leave Rome and join him in Palestine.[[57]](#endnote-57) Anticipating objections based on an identification of Jerusalem with the city “called Sodom and Egypt” in Revelation 11.8, Jerome argued that the passage needed to be understood “mystically,” and that Sodom and Egypt here referred to “the great city which Cain first built and called after his son.”[[58]](#endnote-58) Whether Jerome was thinking of Cain’s city as a real and literal place is unclear, but his comment that Enoch City “must be taken to represent this world” suggests a metaphorical employment.[[59]](#endnote-59)

He returned to Enoch City in about 392 while commenting on God’s promise in Micah 5.11 to “destroy the cities of thy land (*ciuitates terrae tuae*).” Jerome felt compelled to specify that this was because the cities in question had been built so that they were not like the heavenly Jerusalem, but rather resembled Cain’s city.[[60]](#endnote-60) Jerome named them “earthly cities” (*ciuitates terrae*) in order to echo the language of Micah while drawing a contrast with *caelestam Hierusalem*. Jerome expanded on these themes a little later in his *Commentary on Jonah*. In his discussion of Jonah 4.5, in which the reluctant prophet sits outside Nineveh, Jerome notes that Cain was the first to build a city.[[61]](#endnote-61) In doing so Jerome drew a parallel between the wicked cities of Enoch and Nineveh. Importantly, Jerome did not just observe that Cain founded the first city, but also hinted that this suggested something of the fundamental nature of all earthly cities by then moving to Hosea 11.9 “I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.”[[62]](#endnote-62) The earthly city thus became a place where God is not, fit only to be inhabited by the godless. Given his ambiguous views of the city, condemning city life in many letters, it is interesting that Jerome did not seek to develop the city of Cain further.[[63]](#endnote-63)

The immediate significance of Jerome’s mention of Cain’s city seems to have been missed. Sulpicius Severus included in his *Chronicle* (c.403) the information that “Cain had a son, Enoch, who, for the first time, founded a city; this city was named after its founder.”[[64]](#endnote-64) Severus has often been accused of carelessness, which may explain his attributing the city to Enoch.[[65]](#endnote-65) In his defence, the text in Genesis is a little ambiguous, which led others to assume that Enoch was the founder of his eponymous city.[[66]](#endnote-66)

Even Augustine, the great populariser of Enoch City, came to it relatively late in his career. The earliest hint that Augustine was considering Enoch City emerges in a sermon on Psalm 71, generally dated to 415, where he noted in passing “It is by no means insignificant that Cain was the first man to found a city.”[[67]](#endnote-67) That the historical reality of Cain’s city troubled him is indicated by Augustine’s *Questions on the Heptateuch*, a collection of responses to difficult questions raised from a reading of the first seven books of the Bible in 419, at the same time that Augustine was thinking about Book 15 of *De civitate Dei*. The very first question in the piece is entitled “On the city founded by Cain.”[[68]](#endnote-68)

Prior to this, Augustine’s views on Cain seem to have owed much to his teacher Ambrose. His *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, composed in the last years of the fourth century, saw Genesis foretelling the coming of Jesus, interpreting Abel as Christ and Cain as the Jews responsible for his murder.[[69]](#endnote-69) For his crime Cain is banished, doomed, as are the Jews to wander eternally bereft of a homeland. A vestigial reference to this earlier interpretation appears in *De civitate Dei*, where Augustine writes:

He [Cain] also prefigures the Jews by whom Christ was slain, the Shepherd of the flock of men, who was foreshadowed in Abel, the shepherd of the flock of sheep. But this is a matter of prophetic allegory, of which I shall here say no more. I recollect, however, that I have said something on this subject in my work called *Against Faustus the Manichaean*.[[70]](#endnote-70)

In *De civitate Dei*, Augustine had argued that Christians were separated from earthly society as a community of saints journeying together to the heavenly city, defined by their greater love of God than for terrestrial matters.[[71]](#endnote-71) To show Cain as an eternal wanderer, divorced from society, might confuse the issue. Instead Cain must be rooted in one place, hence the emphasis on him as a builder of a city.[[72]](#endnote-72)

 The Bishop of Hippo was well aware of the problems with the accounts of Cain’s city and felt the need to defend its plausibility. Augustine was clear that Enoch City was a real, physical city.[[73]](#endnote-73) In an extended passage he addressed this issue, “It seems to me that I must now defend the historical truth of Scripture, lest it be thought incredible that a city should have been built by one man at a time when, it seems, there are only four men on earth – or, rather, three, for Cain had slain his brother.”[[74]](#endnote-74) Among the difficulties faced by Augustine was the absurdity of a city with no people,[[75]](#endnote-75) “for a city is nothing other than a multitude of men bound together by some tie of fellowship; and so a city could not then have been established by one man.”[[76]](#endnote-76) Augustine was here wrestling with the same problems that had prompted Philo to reject Cain’s city as a historical entity.[[77]](#endnote-77) Augustine solved this problem by arguing that the writers of the Bible did not mention every human that was alive then, but merely those most relevant to the narrative. The great age to which people lived back then allowed them to have lots of children, so Cain had a large brood with which to populate the city even before Enoch’s birth, particularly as it was not immoral to marry within the family at that time. Interesting here is Augustine’s emphasis upon the city as a social community, a gathering of people, as much as any physical structures.

Augustine’s need to explain and defend Enoch City points to its lack of familiarity in the late antique West. Rather than being the natural result of a reading of Scripture, the City of Cain took a long time to emerge as the last word on the subject. It’s final victory as a concept owed much to its usefulness for Augustine’s very specific purposes in the later years of the second decade of the fifth century. The City of Cain owed its prominence to the *City of God*.

## LACTANTIUS AND EUSEBIUS

Instead of taking their cues from Genesis, earlier late antique thinkers engaged with older Greco-Roman ideas of the early development of cities. Among the most prominent of these writers were Lactantius and Eusebius. The two men make an obvious comparison. Born in the mid-third century, both were highly educated in the traditional Greco-Roman curriculum. Both came of age in the period of toleration for Christians between Valerian and Diocletian, and were deeply affected by the Great Persecution. Both were interested in the regime established by Constantine I. Lactantius was the tutor to Constantine’s son and presumed heir. Eusebius had no personal relationship with the emperor but gave a speech before him celebrating his thirtieth year on the throne and died while composing a *Life* of Constantine.[[78]](#endnote-78) The two men wrote prodigious amounts, including apologies for the Christian faith and texts designed to build a Christian body of knowledge. Their work would be immensely influential for subsequent Christian thought. Both also engaged with classical ideas about the development of the first cities at similar times, Lactantius in his *Divine Institutes*, Eusebius in his *Historia ecclesiastica* and *Demonstratio evangelica*. Yet there were striking differences in their approaches to the matter. Lactantius explicitly rejected ancient models of the emergence of cities, whereas Eusebius implicitly accepted them.

Lactantius and Eusebius were not the first Christians to have thoughtfully considered the idea of the city as natural by-product of a civilizing process. These were part of a wider conversation about the deep past of humanity, in which classical, Jewish, and Christian materials were interrogated.[[79]](#endnote-79) The broad terms of the concept could be employed by Christian apologists, responding to pagan criticism. In response to the attacks of Celsus, Origen argued that God had created hardship in order to force human development, prompting among other inventions that of the art of “of building; and in this way the mind also advanced to architecture.”[[80]](#endnote-80) For Origen, rationality was a divine gift that God wished humans to make use of by leaving them to the mercy of the elements.[[81]](#endnote-81) Origen’s depiction of the development of permanent structures as a result of divine beneficence providing the necessary skills and knowledge strongly echoes earlier models of the rise of the first cities.

Other Christian apologists also rose to the occasion. Answering pagans who condemned Christianity for its novelty in the first decade of the fourth century, Arnobius of Sicca drew an analogy between the adoption of the faith by new converts and primitive humans who, “when houses were built, and more comfortable dwellings erected . . . did not cling to their ancient huts, and did not prefer to remain under rocks and caves like the beasts of the field.”[[82]](#endnote-82) By this reasoning, Christianity was part of the progress of humanity, as inherent to human flourishing as buildings.[[83]](#endnote-83)

Through his teacher Pamphilus, Eusebius was heavily influenced by Origenist thought, while Lactantius was a student of Arnobius when they were both pagans.[[84]](#endnote-84) Origen and Arnobius were responding to different sorts of pagan criticism, but essential to their rebuttals was an understanding of human development that began with a primordial existence as part of nature, in which the emergence of buildings and cities was a key part of a subsequent advancement. Into this understanding the Christian deity was inserted. Whereas divine intervention in the development of humans in classical myth was a somewhat spasmodic and haphazard affair, the arguments above present the gradual advance of society as part of an extended plan.

### *Lactantius*

Lactantius offered the clearest hostile reaction to the classical model of the civilizing city in early Christian writing in Book 6 of his *Divine Institutes*. In an extended passage, Lactantius summarized two views of the emergence of cities held by philosophers.[[85]](#endnote-85) These pagan philosophers believed “that the people who were first born of earth led a nomadic life in forest and field and had no common bond of speech or law to keep them together; they used leaves and grass for beds, and caves, and grottoes for homes, and they fell prey to wild beasts and more powerful animals.”[[86]](#endnote-86) The first approach argued that humans began to congregate in the face of attacks from wild animals, “they began to build towns (*oppida*), to keep their nights safe and quiet or to keep the raids and incursions of the beasts at bay, not by fighting but by throwing up barriers.”[[87]](#endnote-87) Other pagan philosophers attributed the formation of settlements not to external pressure, but to an intrinsic social instinct within humans for “it was human nature to shun loneliness and to seek out company and fellowship.”[[88]](#endnote-88) Lactantius was derisive about both suggestions, describing them as “crazy.”[[89]](#endnote-89) As Lactantius observed the difference between the two concepts was not great “though their reasons are different, the outcome is the same.”[[90]](#endnote-90) The first explanation given by philosophers resembles that provided by Lucretius, a text that Lactantius was very familiar with.[[91]](#endnote-91) The second seems to owe more to Cicero’s *De re publica*.[[92]](#endnote-92)Nonetheless, Lactantius’s outline was fairly representative of the thoughts of a wide range of classical writers.

The *Divine Institutes* is a sophisticated work, begun during the Diocletianic persecutions and then revised in the context of the court of Constantine I.[[93]](#endnote-93) It was intended to accomplish several objectives. Among the most important was to defend Christianity in terms that an educated pagan would respect.[[94]](#endnote-94) That meant using elegant Latin and the tools of classical rhetoric.[[95]](#endnote-95) It also meant downplaying Scripture and instead making arguments with reference to classical literature. Lactantius was celebrated enough as a teacher to have taken a chair at the imperial capital at Nicomedia under Diocletian. The *Divine Institutes* show a genuine reverence for writers such as Cicero and Virgil.[[96]](#endnote-96) In the later books of the *Divine Institutes*, Lactantius also sought to consider what a Christian society would look like.

Given Lactantius’s explicit respect for pagan writers, the level of contempt he displayed for the theories advanced by philosophers on the first cities is striking, commenting that “Nonsense like that is unworthy of human intelligence. What poor and sorry people, to record their folly in writing!”[[97]](#endnote-97) The vehemence here implies that Lactantius thought it was important to disprove these models. Part of the point of this passage is to undermine philosophers, as hinted by Lactantius’s emphasis on their lack of agreement, for the philosophers “have put forward more than one reason for the founding of cities.”[[98]](#endnote-98) Lactantius saw philosophers as among the ringleaders for the persecution Christians were suffering.[[99]](#endnote-99) Throughout Book 6 he offers examples of the gaps in their knowledge, seeking to “demonstrate the ignorance of the philosophers about the nature of good and evil,” because they lack knowledge of God.[[100]](#endnote-100) Because they seek truth and virtue in this life “they fail to find it,” rather “they are like people all at sea, not knowing where they are going, because they cannot see their right course and they follow no guide.”[[101]](#endnote-101) Attacking the views of pagan philosophers on the development of the city thus formed part of a wider campaign against them.

Three larger purposes for Lactantius’s aversion to these explanations for the start of urbanism can be adduced. They are respectively concerned with history, morality, and justice. The first of these, the explicit reason given by Lactantius for rejecting both philosophical models for the development of the city, is that they contradicted the biblical account:

Both points of view are possible because there is no contradiction between them, but neither is true at all, because all over the world people are not born from earth as if they were seeded from the teeth of some dragon, as poets say; rather, one man was created by God, and from him and him alone the whole earth has been filled with human stock, in the same way presumably that it was filled again after the flood, and that is a fact they cannot deny.[[102]](#endnote-102)

There is no mention of Cain’s city here. Rather, in providing a decentralized perspective of human development that saw scattered humans gathering, the philosophers broke with the flood narrative, in which Noah and his descendants repopulated the world from one concentrated stock, already in possession of the knowledge of cities. Noah and the flood were key parts of the historical summary provided by Lactantius in Book 2.[[103]](#endnote-103) He emphasized Noah’s greater antiquity to legends of Uranus and Saturn, before detailing the geographical dispersal of his offspring, from whom all humans were descended. The reference to people being born from the earth from dragon’s teeth hints at another running theme throughout the *Divine Institutes*, Lactantius’s dismissal of pagan notions of spontaneous generation.[[104]](#endnote-104) Unlike Augustine, Lactantius did not identify a first city. Nonetheless, like Augustine his interpretation of the development of early civilization was linear. Part of the difficulty with the views of the origins of urbanism that he criticized was that they presented cities developing in multiple places independently. For Lactantius, all human civilization developed as part of a line running from Noah.

Lactantius placed great emphasis on knowledge of primeval humanity, observing in Book 7 that “Plato together with many another philosopher did not know the origin of things.”[[105]](#endnote-105) He condemned the Chaldeans as liars for claiming to have records that stretched back 470,000 years “which is mad.”[[106]](#endnote-106) In contrast to this ignorance and mendacity “We who are educated in knowledge of the truth by holy scripture . . . know the beginning of the world.”[[107]](#endnote-107) As well as asserting the truth of Scripture as history, this granted great authority to Christians, with their superior understanding and wisdom, who could then predict the ending of the world. It was therefore necessary to defend the historical account of the Bible.

The second main reason for Lactantius’s opposition to the first cities of the philosophers emerges from the wider context of the passage in question. In Book 6 Lactantius’s purpose was to instruct the reader of the duties of a Christian, with heavy inspiration from Cicero’s *De Officiis*. Having outlined the duties of a Christian to God, at 6.10 he turned to the duties of a Christian to their fellow humans. According to Lactantius, God made humans pious in order “that man would protect man, and they would love and cherish each other and give each other help against all dangers.”[[108]](#endnote-108) Owing to their common descent from Noah, all humans are kin, making harming each other a crime. Lactantius summarized this argument, “God deliberately made us a social animal because of his own piety; we need to see ourselves in others. We deserve no liberation from danger if we give no help ourselves, and we deserve no help if we deny it to others.”[[109]](#endnote-109)

In describing humans as a social animal Lactantius was moving into territory frequently discussed by ancient writers.[[110]](#endnote-110) Sociability was a defining attribute of humanity, with solitariness a trait of beasts and brutes.[[111]](#endnote-111) The city was the epitome of this social tendency. Aristotle had famously described humans as an animal of the *polis*.[[112]](#endnote-112) Cicero emphasized the importance of human cooperation as the origin of all good things.[[113]](#endnote-113) It was here that Lactantius addressed philosophical ideas of the first city. Whether the first cities appeared due to human cooperation against beasts or because of something inherent in human nature, both were at odds with Lactantius’s understanding of human society as the product of charity resulting from piety. If a true society could emerge without piety or the intervention of God there were implications for Lactantius’s wider vision of the benefits of a Christian society.[[114]](#endnote-114) Lactantius accused the philosophers of having “removed pity from man,” a theme he subsequently developed.[[115]](#endnote-115) Although Lactantius discussed the building of walls and structures to protect humans from the elements, his fundamental conception of the city was as a social community, guided by God’s pity.

A final concern for Lactantius can be adduced. As he observed, these narratives connected the start of cities to law, which was necessary for them to be bound together.[[116]](#endnote-116) The successful development of cities therefore implies the law codes of sufficient justice to make cities possible. But Lactantius was deeply sceptical of the possibility of justice in human society.[[117]](#endnote-117) He argued that “the twin arteries of justice are piety and fairness.”[[118]](#endnote-118) The first criterion ruled out pagan societies as capable of justice, but the second would raise difficulties even for a Christian Roman empire, “That is why neither Romans nor Greeks could command justice, because they kept people distinct in different grades from poor to rich, from weak to strong, from lay power up to the sublime power of kings. Where people are not all equal, there is no fairness: the inequality excludes justice of itself.”[[119]](#endnote-119) In Lactantius’s eyes, the state was built on violence and oppression. It was therefore impossible that these early cities could be just, because they were not Christian, and because all complex societies are founded on coercion. This gave Lactantius another reason to reject Greco-Roman models for the first city.

Lactantius offers an extremely useful example of a late antique Christian writer engaging with concepts of the first city. He provided three reasons which might have encouraged other Christians to avoid these ideas; a perceived need to combat pagan philosophers who criticized Christianity, worries about the contradiction with biblical chronology, and disagreement over the implications such models had for the logic underpinning human society. However, other Christians would approach the problem in a different manner.

### *Eusebius*

Eusebius was more open to Greco-Roman ideas of the first establishment of the city. Among the Bishop of Caesarea’s most important works was the *Praeparatio evangelica*, written between 314 and 318, in which Eusebius sought both to prove the superiority of Christianity through a critique of pagan religion and philosophy, and to guide Christian students through the legacy of the classical past.[[120]](#endnote-120) The *Praeparatio* would then be followed by the *Demonstratio evangelica*.Eusebius assembled a formidable body of material, to the extent that more than two-thirds of the *Praeparatio* is quotation.[[121]](#endnote-121) Rather than cite Scripture, Eusebius sought to use the Hellenes’s own words against them, showing that their beliefs were incoherent, or supported Christian doctrine.[[122]](#endnote-122) Among his objectives was undermining the authority derived by pagan gods through their apparent antiquity, so much of the text is concerned with the beginnings of religion among humans.[[123]](#endnote-123)

In order to discuss the beginnings of civilization he quoted Diodorus Siculus in the opening book of the *Praeparatio*, covering the creation of the world.[[124]](#endnote-124) Eusebius then moved to Diodorus’s account of primitive humans who, “living in a disorderly and savage state, used to go wandering out over the pastures.” Society began to develop as the attacks of wild beasts encouraged humans to congregate and they learned to take refuge in caves “For necessity itself became universally men's teacher in all things.” As an example of the classical conception of the advent of human civilization, Diodorus is fairly standard, as Eusebius observed.[[125]](#endnote-125)

Eusebius felt compelled to take issue with the Sicilian geographer on this matter. He accepted that the first humans had been technologically and socially primitive, describing them later as leading “a loose and wandering life like that of the beasts.”[[126]](#endnote-126) Rather, the Bishop of Caesarea criticized Diodorus for having written on these matters “without having mentioned God even so much as by name in his cosmogony, but having presented the arrangement of the universe as something accidental and spontaneous.”[[127]](#endnote-127) The initial focus of Eusebius’s counter-thrust was aimed at Creation, as Eusebius then assembled material from various Greek philosophers to demonstrate their lack of agreement as to the beginning of the universe, thus undermining their claims to knowledge.[[128]](#endnote-128) Nonetheless, the issue of the godless development of early humans was not forgotten. Instead, Eusebius sought to integrate the primitive emergence of the first cities into his divinely driven history.

Eusebius was aware of previous examples of this.[[129]](#endnote-129) There was a long tradition in Hellenistic writing of non-Greeks defending the superiority of their own culture by writing histories of their own nations in a manner accessible to Greek audiences.[[130]](#endnote-130) One such was the *Phoenician History* of Philo of Byblos, paraphrased in the *Praeparatio*, who provided a gradual narrative of increasing urbanization, with each stage being associated with another divine being.[[131]](#endnote-131) Eusebius was also familiar with Josephus’s efforts to combine Hellenistic concepts of primitive humans with the biblical narrative.[[132]](#endnote-132)

Eusebius’s solution to the potential difficulties the classical account of the emergence of cities posed for Christians first appeared in his *Historia ecclesiastica*.[[133]](#endnote-133) The development of the *Historia ecclesiastica* is complicated, with the first version probably being finished in 313/4 and updated forms appearing in 315/6, 325, and 326.[[134]](#endnote-134) Eusebius was thus working on the *History* at the same time that he was working on the *Praeparatio* and the *Demonstratio*. Although the main narrative in the *Historia ecclesiastica* begins with the incarnation, the introduction establishes a much older prehistory.[[135]](#endnote-135) Eusebius wanted to communicate a view of history in which the Christian God featured from earliest times and to rebut pagan charges of novelty.[[136]](#endnote-136) In order to do this, he needed to explain the relatively recent arrival of Christ, which had been attacked by Celsus and Porphyry.[[137]](#endnote-137) In Eusebius’s eyes this was due to the savagery of primitive humanity[[138]](#endnote-138):

They thought neither of city nor state, neither of arts nor sciences. They were ignorant even of the name of laws and of justice, of virtue and of philosophy. As nomads, they passed their lives in deserts, like wild and fierce beasts, destroying, by an excess of voluntary wickedness, the natural reason of man, and the seeds of thought and of culture implanted in the human soul.[[139]](#endnote-139)

The word of Christ would fall on deaf ears in this company, requiring God to tame their brutality, first with harsh punishments, then by sending angels and prophets to slowly transform their nature. By this rough tutorship “the heathen were softened by the lawgivers and philosophers who arose on every side, and their wild and savage brutality was changed into mildness, so that they enjoyed deep peace, friendship, and social intercourse.”[[140]](#endnote-140) Settlements could thus develop in a world where social relationships were possible. In this newly civilized condition humanity was made receptive to Jesus’s message. Notably these cities are based on gatherings of people, with little reference to physical buildings.

This explained the timing of the incarnation, but it also provided an account in which the traditional model of the development of humanity was Christianized. Rather than being accidental, the emergence of society was the deliberate product of the Creator intervening to shape and guide human progress. That this was important for Eusebius’s understanding of history and what it meant to be a Christian is suggested by its almost exact reappearance in the *Demonstratio evangelica*.[[141]](#endnote-141) The *Demonstratio* was a companion to the *Praeparatio*, which it was meant to follow by showing how Christianity fulfilled prophecies from the Old Testament.[[142]](#endnote-142) The *Praeparatio* and the *Demonstratio* put together were intended as a comprehensive rebuttal of Christianity’s critics and a suitable introduction to new converts and non-Christian sympathisers. The inclusion of God’s taming of primitive humanity indicates that Eusebius viewed this as not just of historical importance, but as something that all Christians should know.[[143]](#endnote-143)

This discussion of the first cities as part of a divinely managed civilizing process in both the *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Demonstratio evangelica* fit a wider narrative explored by the *Praeparatio*. In the *Praeparatio*, Eusebius argued that Christianity tamed the savagery of the nations “so that Persians who have become His disciples no longer marry their mothers, nor Scythians feed on human flesh, because of Christ's word which has come even unto them.”[[144]](#endnote-144) The creation of the first cities represented the beginning of a wider development as humans became ever more civilized through a closer and more truthful engagement with God. Unlike either Augustine or Lactantius, Eusebius felt no need to identify a single line of human development, being content to see the emergence of civilization in multiple places. This non-linearity resembles his chronological tables, which present a history of several nations side-by-side until they are unified by Rome and Christ.[[145]](#endnote-145)

Important for the coherence of this narrative was Eusebius’s belief in the possibility of justice in earthly affairs. A key part of the process he outlined was the philosophers and lawgivers, both Greek and Hebrew, who brought justice and law to primitive men.[[146]](#endnote-146) Although they were not Christian, the urban, civic societies they produced were genuinely superior and more just as a result of this civilizational development. The peak of this progress was the Roman Empire. Throughout his *Historia ecclesiastica* Eusebius pointed to pagan Roman Emperors who lived and ruled justly.[[147]](#endnote-147) His view that temporal society could get more just and that God was acting directly to make it so aligned with classical ideas of city and justice.

Eusebius’s use of classical models in his account of the first city was recognized by later readers.[[148]](#endnote-148) In his Latin translation of the *Historia ecclesiastica* inca. 402/3, Rufinus of Aquileia retained the discussion of the civilizing of humans, but extended it by elaborating on the impact of “lawmakers and philosophers” on primitive humans.[[149]](#endnote-149) “Sometimes they taught men to come together in friendship and to submit to pacts of concord, and at other times people learned to help each other and to have things for common use, until the human mind became willing to adopt more sensible habits and to accept the companionship of people with each other.”[[150]](#endnote-150) As Amidon has noted, this interpolated passage bears a resemblance to Lucretius’s description of early humans.[[151]](#endnote-151) The inclusion of this material indicates that Rufinus was well aware of the traditions that Eusebius was employing, indicating the way an educated reader familiar with ancient ideas could respond to their reuse in a Christian context.[[152]](#endnote-152) In his translation Rufinus added commentary in order to clarify or strengthen Eusebius’s argument.[[153]](#endnote-153) Here, Rufinus extends his source by emphasizing the point that human society, the ability of humans to coexist and cooperate, was the result of divine intervention. Eusebius had implied this by indicating that primitive humans lacked cities and states, but Rufinus drove the point home.

It was to be through Rufinus that subsequent readers in the Latin world encountered Eusebius’s *Historia ecclesiastica*. His engagement with Eusebius’s work about the early development of civilization and the conditions in which cities could emerge suggest that Eusebius was not simply a fossilized echo of concepts meaningless in a Christian world. Rather, classical ideas about the creation of settlements remained recognizable and compelling even in a time when writers such as Jerome were beginning to discuss Cain’s city. In his approach to Eusebius, Rufinus adds further testimony to the complexity of how ideas about the appearance of cities changed.

## CONCLUSION

Lactantius and Eusebius wrote at a time when there was no established Christian tradition on how to write about the beginning of cities. The exegetes and theologians of the middle ages could draw upon the resources provided by late antique writers such as Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, and Bede.[[154]](#endnote-154) Christian intellectuals of the early fourth century had to develop their own solutions to the challenges of interpretation they faced. Lactantius and Eusebius reached different conclusions in their approach to classical ideas of the early development of cities and civilization. The former saw them as fundamentally at odds with Christian truth, contradicting both biblical history and the role of divinely inspired love in building society. The latter embraced them as the most straightforward means to understanding the remote past, providing a vision of humanity before the civilizing process of divine intervention.

This disagreement is striking not just because of the biographical similarities between the two writers, but because they were engaged upon parallel exercises in their work. Both Lactantius and Eusebius were writing for a classically educated Christian audience, aiming both to provide arguments against pagans and to offer their readers a means to relate their Greco-Roman cultural hinterland with their faith. That the same exercise performed by very comparable men could result in such dissimilar results attests to the wide variety of approaches to thinking about the first city that were open to late antique Christians. A point of agreement between them is that neither mentioned Cain’s city, despite its presence in Scripture making it an obvious starting point for approaching the problem.

A number of conclusions arise from this observation. First, that there was nothing inevitable about the adoption of Enoch City as the canonical first city in Christian understandings of history. It was not until Augustine that Cain’s city received widespread attention. Second, that there were a number of different ways that Christian writers could engage with classical ideas of the first city, which ranged from outright rejection to wholehearted adoption. Rather than opposing older concepts of the first city in reaction against their hinterland, Christian writers’s views on the matter were frequently shaped by more contingent needs. Augustine was drawn to Cain’s city as a useful embodiment of the worldly city he wrote against. Likewise, Lactantius and Eusebius’s responses to the ancient first city were shaped by the specific point each was seeking to make; Lactantius’s society based on divine charity rather than innate instinct and Eusebius’s need to explain the timing of the coming of Christ.

These arguments were embedded within a particular set of debates with pagan philosophers and conversations about the relationship between Christian knowledge and Greco-Roman culture. Opinions about the beginnings of urbanism were shaped by writers’s conception of the possibility of justice in temporal affairs. Lactantius and Augustine rejected older models for the beginning of the city in part because of their shared scepticism of cities as the offspring and engine of justice. Eusebius by contrast did see the city as part of the creation of a more just society. That these arguments took place was precisely because the “Christian” city was by no means inherently incompatible with the classical city. This was a context that would be lost to readers in subsequent generations.

To return to the discussion that this article began with, the extent to which Christian ideas of the city undermined the classical Greco-Roman city will continue to be debated. Arguments about the first city suggests that Christian intellectuals continued to think about the origin and development of cities in a way that very much resembled those of their pagan interlocutors. The city remained fundamentally bound with their ideas of development that defined humans as civilized, sociable beings. As a result, the development of a distinctive late antique Christian concept of the origin of the city was slow and highly varied in its approach to the classical tradition. This should at the very least complicate arguments that early Christian thought was inherently opposed to the Greco-Roman city and that the rise of Christianity inexorably wiped out the network of ideas and beliefs that sustained it. If the classical city was rejected by Christians, it was a long and slow process, one that was neither inevitable nor universal.

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135. Ivan Krivouchine, “L’époque Préchrétienne dans l’*Histoire Ecclésiastique* d’Eusèbe de Césarée,” *Traditio*, 51 (1996): 287–94; Morlet, “L’Introduction de l’*Histoire ecclésiastique*.” [↑](#endnote-ref-135)
136. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea* (n.120 above), 100–101. [↑](#endnote-ref-136)
137. Or., *Cels*.4.8 (GCS 2:279, trans. Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, 189, n.42 above); Augustine of Hippo, *Epistula* 102.8 (ed. Klaus D. Daur, CCSL 31B *Epistulae CI–CXXXIX* [Turnhout: Brepols, 2009], 8–36, 13); discussed in Arthur J. Droge, “The Apologetic Dimension of the *Ecclesiastical History*,” *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Gōhei Hata (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 492–509, 493–7; Holger Strutwolf, *Die Trinitätstheologie und Christologie des Euseb von Caesarea: Eine dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung seiner Platonismusrezeption und Wirkungsgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 279–83. Sébastien Morlet cautions against too great an emphasis on Porphyry in “Eusebius’s Polemic Against Porphyry: A Reassessment,” *Reconsidering Eusebius*, ed. Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 119–50. [↑](#endnote-ref-137)
138. Robert M. Grant, “Civilization as a Preparation for Christianity in the Thought of Eusebius,” *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History*, ed. F. Forrester Church and Timothy George (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 62–70. [↑](#endnote-ref-138)
139. Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.2.19 (ed. Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen, GCS 9.1:22 [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903], trans. Ray J. Deferrari, *Ecclesiastical History* [Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953], 43). [↑](#endnote-ref-139)
140. Eus., *H*.*e*. 1.2.23 (GCS 9.1:24; trans. Deferrari, *Ecclesiastical History*, 44). [↑](#endnote-ref-140)
141. Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica*,8.Prologue (ed. Ivar A. Heikel, GCS 23, *Eusebius Werke 6* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913], 349; trans. W. J. Ferrar, *The Proof of the Gospel* [London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1920], 93); Morlet has argued that the account of God civilizing humanity did not appear in the first version of the Ecclesiastical History, and that Eusebius first developed it for the Proof of the Gospel and only later added it to the History. I am unconvinced by this suggestion, but it does not affect the overall point made here, “L’Introduction de l’*Histoire ecclésiastique*,” 57–94. [↑](#endnote-ref-141)
142. Kofsky, *Eusebius of Caesarea* (n.113 above), 1, 74–89. [↑](#endnote-ref-142)
143. On the construction of Christian knowledge, Sabrina Inowlocki, “Eusebius’s Construction of a Christian Culture in an Apologetic Context: Reading the *Praeparatio Evangelica* as a Library,” *Reconsidering Eusebius*, ed. Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 199–223. [↑](#endnote-ref-143)
144. Eus., *P.e.* 1.4 (GCS 43.1:18; trans. Gifford, *Preparation*, 12). [↑](#endnote-ref-144)
145. Richard W. Burgess, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography. Vol. 1, The Chronici Canones of Eusebius of Caesarea: Content and Chronology, A.D. 282–325* (Stuttgart: Fran Steiner, 1999). [↑](#endnote-ref-145)
146. Eus., *H*.*e*. 1.2.19 (GCS 9.1:22; trans. Deferrari, *Ecclesiastical History*, 43–44). [↑](#endnote-ref-146)
147. James Corke-Webster, *Eusebius and Empire: Constructing Church and Rome in the Ecclesiastical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 257–71. [↑](#endnote-ref-147)
148. Pier Franco Beatrice, “De Rufin à Cassiodore: La réception des *Histoires ecclésiastiques* Grecques dans l’Occident Latin,” *L’Historiographie de l’Église des Premiers Siècles*, ed. Bernard Pouderon and Yves-Marie Duval (Paris: Beauchesne, 2001), 237–57. [↑](#endnote-ref-148)
149. Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia ecclesiastica*,1.2.23 (ed. Theodor Mommsen, GCS 9.1 *Eusebius Werke* 2.1, “Die Lateinische Übersetzung des Rufinus” [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903], 25). [↑](#endnote-ref-149)
150. Ruf., *Hist.* 1.2.23 (GCS 9.1:25; trans. Philip R. Amidon, *History of the Church* [Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016], 29). [↑](#endnote-ref-150)
151. *History of the Church*, trans. Amidon, 29 n.26; Lucr., 5.1019–25 (LCL 181:456–8). [↑](#endnote-ref-151)
152. Jerome suggests that Rufinus was familiar with Lucretius, *Contra Rufinum*, 1.16 (ed. Pierre Lardet, CCSL 79 [Turnhout: Brepols, 1982], 15). [↑](#endnote-ref-152)
153. Mark Humphries, “Rufinus’s Eusebius: Translation, Continuation, and Edition in the Latin *Ecclesiastical History*,” *JECS*, 16 (2008): 143–64, 152, 154. [↑](#endnote-ref-153)
154. On the cumulative impact of early medieval exegesis, see René Wasselynck, “L’Influence de l’Exégèse de S. Grégoire le Grand sur les Commentaires Bibliques Médiévaux (VIIe–XIIe s.),” *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, 32 (1965): 157–204;Paul Meyvaert, “Bede and Gregory the Great,” *Bede and his World Vol 1: The Jarrow Lectures 1958–1978* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), 103–32; Joyce Hill, “Carolingian Perceptions on the Authority of Bede,” *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Scott DeGregorio (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2006), 227–49; Scott DeGregorio, “The Venerable Bede and Gregory the Great: Exegetical Connections, Spiritual Departures,” *Early Medieval Europe,* 18 (2010): 43–60;Constant J. Mews and Claire Renkin, “The Legacy of Gregory the Great in the Latin West,” *A Companion to Gregory the Great*, ed. Bronwen Neil and Matthew Dal Santo (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 315–41. [↑](#endnote-ref-154)