

# Wolfe and Eusebius

The Urth list — 4 messages, 4 voices, 11 Jun 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3309>

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James Wynn — 11 Jun 2002, 16:25

The recent talk about Chadwick's "History of the Early Church" made me think of another Church history book that I'm convinced is sitting on Wolfe's shelf at this moment: Eusebius' "Historia Ecclesiastica" ("History of the Church") which he started writing around 308 AD. Eusebius was the bishop of Caesarea in Palestine and drew partly from the 700+ works in the library there. He served in that region most of his adult life before Constantine's victory.

A search of the Urth lists revealed that it has already been shown here that Severian's name comes from a later name of the Encratites (a 2nd century Gnostic sect). But I didn't see anyone note that the varied and ingenious tortures of Christians in Gaul under Marcus Aurelius (Book 6) leads one to think of the Torturers Guild. Nor has anyone mentioned that Tatian, the Encratite's founder, wrote a composite of the gospels entitled "Diatesaron" meaning "THROUGH THE FOUR". So maybe when Tor said they wanted to break up the novel THIS was a reason Wolfe decided to break it into four novels rather than the traditional three?

The Gnostic doctrines of "Aeons" also bring to mind the universes and successive histories leading to the Hieros.

Just for completeness sake, I'll post what Eusebius says of the original Severians and what Irenaeus said of the Encratites:

Irenaeus ("Against the Heresies" Book I, chap. 28)

Springing from Saturninus and Marcion, those who are called Encratites (self-controlled) preached against marriage, thus setting aside the original creation of God, and indirectly blaming Him who made the male and female for the propagation of the human race. Some of those reckoned among them have also introduced abstinence from animal food, thus proving themselves ungrateful to God, who formed all things. They deny, too, the salvation of him who was first created (Adam). It is but lately, however, that this opinion has been invented among them. A certain man named Tatian first introduced the blasphemy. He was a disciple of St. Justin the Martyr's, and as long as he continued with him he expressed no such views; but after his martyrdom he separated from the Church, and, excited and puffed up by the thought of being a teacher, as if he were superior to others, he composed his own peculiar type of doctrine. He invented a system of certain invisible Aeons, like the followers of Valentinus; while, like Marcion and Saturninus, he declared that marriage was nothing else than corruption and fornication. But his denial of Adam's salvation was an opinion due entirely to himself.

Eusebius ("Historia Ecclesiastica" Book 4.29, translation by G.A. Williamson) "But a little while later a man called Severus lent his weight to this sect, and in consequence it's members have come to be called Severians after him. They make use of the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospels, interpreting in their own peculiar fashion the ideas contained in the Holy Writ, but they ridicule Paul the Apostle, setting aside his epistles, and reject even the "Acts of the Apostles". Their old leader Tatian produced a composite work by somehow combining the gospels, and called it the "Diatesaron": some people still possess copies. It is said that he was bold enough to

alter some of the Apostles' expressions as though trying to rectify their phraseology. He has left a great many works, of which the one most generally familiar is his famous essay 'The Greeks Answered', in which he discusses primitive times, showing that all the eminent writers of Greece belong to a much later period than Moses and the Hebrew prophets. This essay is, I think, the best and most helpful of all his writings."

- Crush

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Alice K. Turner — 11 Jun 2002, 19:42 · follows James Wynn

Thank you very much, Crush, for posting these-- right on the button. One can fossick around among these odd old writings, but I bet GW has too. Useful to have in the archive.

alga

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Jerry Friedman — 13 Jun 2002, 23:50 · follows Alice K. Turner

--- James Wynn <crushtv at HotPOP.com> wrote:  
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...

Well, it's less hubris than simply imitating the number of Gospels. (But what do I know? Maybe from a Catholic point of view, that wouldn't be hubris at all.)

Another thing that's not in the archives (that search function is great!) is that, since as Mantis has told us the names of Commonwealth citizens are those of Catholic saints, there must be Saints Severian. There are three at <<http://saints.catholic.org/stsindexs.html#S>> (but only one Severa). I don't see any relevance of any of them except the one who was martyred with St. Aquila--probably his wife, says the site. Does this make sense of that comment in one of the Afterwords that a connection between the Claw and the eagle of Jove is probably too pat? Maybe the connection is to St. Aquila, the eagle. And is this all in \_Lexicon Urthus\_?

Jerry Friedman

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James Jordan — 14 Jun 2002, 17:31 · follows Jerry Friedman

At 11:25 AM 6/11/2002 -0500, you wrote:

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Eusebius' "Historia Ecclesiastica" ("History of the Church").

Right on the money. I cannot imagine you are wrong about thi.

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Yes, and we do have quotations from Aurelius in Silk's book, no? And Severian founded the Torturers, and he's emperor. But Wolfe does not like the Torturers, and Severian is also a Christian of some sort. More conflation and ambiguity from Wolfe. Severian is Mr. Imperfect! I agree with alga (again! what's happening here, alga?): a great find and contribution to the discussion.

Nutria