RECONCEIVING RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity

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Symbolic revolutions: discourse and the reconstruction of society

Unresolved tensions regarding the social compact that is the "new" South Africa – the South Africa that came into being in the period 1990 to 1996 after a nearly century-long struggle by the (mostly) black African majority against racial-imperial disenfranchisement and oppression[1] – burst to the surface at the start of 2015 with the #RhodesMustFall campaign.[2] The campaign started on 9 March 2015 when a student, Chumani Maxwele, threw a bucket of faeces at the statue of Cecil John Rhodes on the campus of the University of Cape Town. The protest was motivated by the experience of oppression induced by the presence of the statue, as well as the groundswell of protest against what was identified as the vestiges of institutionalized racism in the University, race-based exclusionary practices preventing full participation in higher learning by disadvantaged black students, and colonial contents of curricula that entrenched colonial oppression of Africans. Protest gatherings led to the eventual removal of the statue from the university campus. The protest soon became violent with the occupation of university buildings, the burning of colonial era artworks, and spread to other universities.

Throughout South Africa in the course of 2015 there were instances of defacing and vandalism of statues of figures representing South Africa's colonial past: most prominently the statue of Queen Victoria in Port Elizabeth, King George V at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, and that of President Paul Kruger in Pretoria. Throughout 2015 and 2016 there have been constant violent protests, destruction of university property, and clashes between protesters and police and security personnel on various campuses. Perceptions of coloniality and epistemic violence in higher education – both in terms of curricula, academic campus culture, and financial exclusions of poor black students – soon saw the #RhodesMustFall campaign broaden out to a #FeesMustFall campaign (an at times violent protest against increasing university fees and shortages in student

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funding), eventually to also embrace, since September 2016, a #ScienceMustFall campaign. The latter was explicitly aimed at overturning the enduring legacy of an epistemology (to wit: Western science and the canon of authors and disciplinary conventions derived from the First World) that, in the language of the protest movements, serves the ongoing economic, political, and intellectual enslavement of black South Africans.[3] Hence the insistence on decolonializing higher education and the curriculum.

In the public debates that ensued, connections were drawn between the "symbolic, continued, existence of names, statues and sculptures left over from the colonial and Apartheid eras of South Africa" and how these "reflect the continued exclusion of different epistemologies of thought, different races, classes and gender based oppressions."[4] The wave of rolling student protests was quickly located within a broader conversation across the nation that seeks to apply pressure on the political imagination of the present day:

> It is a recurring theme in interpretive reflection on the #FeesMustFall protest movement that the protest should be understood in a wider context. Commentators were quick to draw connections between protests against the varied and complex exclusions from higher education and training as avenues out of poverty, and a violent history of a hegemonic racially derived episteme. In one case the call for a curriculum that moved "beyond narrow Eurocentric confines to one which grants equal status and value to African and other epistemic traditions," a lack characterized as "implicit, epistemic violence," is immediately tied to the fact that this experience of alienation in the context of students' experiences of higher education is the manifestation of wider, encompassing failure of social integration – the fall of apartheid removed the legal system of racial discrimination but not the effects of it in the economic and developmental inequalities it left in its wake.[5]

The Rhodes, whose name lived on in the protest campaign, is Cecil John Rhodes (1853–1902), Anglo-South African mining magnate and politician who emigrated in 1870 from Britain to the then Colony of Natal, and made his fortune first on the diamond fields of the northern Cape and subsequently on the goldfields of the then South African Republic. He eventually made a successful political career as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony 1890 to 1896 (he had to resign as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony and from the British South Africa Company, the company that had the Royal Charter to found the new colony of Rhodesia, after the failed Jameson Raid into the South African Republic). During his term as Prime Minister he promulgated the Glen Grey Act that regulated voting rights for blacks as well as establishing "purely natives territories" in the Transkei region of the eastern Cape, thus prefiguring and laying the groundwork for the later infamous legislative acts that deprived rural blacks from their ancestral land.[6]

Of importance in the context of this chapter are the "Confession of Faith" that Rhodes wrote in Oxford during a return to Britain to further his studies at Oxford University (dated 2 June 1877, reworked later that same year in Kimberley after his return from Britain), and his first will drawn up on 19 September 1877. In the "Confession" Rhodes expressed the desirability of establishing a secret society that will operate throughout the British Empire in all sectors of influence in order to further the political and economic interests of the British Empire, to bring the "whole uncivilised world" (sic) under British rule, to recover the United States into the British Empire so as to make the "Anglo-Saxon race" but one Empire. The first clause to the 1877 will begins:

> To and for the establishment, promotion and development of a Secret Society, the true aim and object whereof shall be for the extension of British rule throughout the world, the perfecting of a system of emigration from the United Kingdom, and of colonisation by British subjects of all lands where the means of livelihood are attainable by energy, labour and enterprise, and especially the occupation by British settlers of the entire Continent of Africa, the Holy Land, the Valley of the Euphrates, the Islands of Cyprus and Candia, the whole of South America, the Islands of the Pacific not heretofore possessed by Great Britain, the whole of the Malay Archipelago, the seaboard of China and Japan, the ultimate recovery of the United States of America as an integral part of the British Empire, the inauguration of a system of Colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament which may tend to weld together the disjointed members of the Empire and, finally, the foundation of so great a Power as to render wars impossible and promote the best interests of humanity.[7]

The will shows Rhodes to be a racist and an arch-imperialist, and it is in the context of what he represented that one should understand the current emerging discursive reconstruction of South African society, for the industrial capitalism that Rhodes helped found in South Africa in the late 19th century laid the groundwork for the whole social catastrophe that was apartheid-directed socially engineered South African society in the 20th century. To summarize a complex history, as I have done elsewhere, the history of apartheid as a social engineering project for the purpose of the disenfranchisement and economic exploitation of black South Africans along racial lines is not to be understood outside of the framework of the arrival, imposition, and growth of a capitalist economy in South Africa.[8]

> The imposition of industrial capitalism after the discovery of gold and the establishment of the first mining concessions in what soon became the city of Johannesburg (1884–1886) fundamentally changed what was (and remained so until well past the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the First World War) an agricultural, colonial-settler economy surrounding an "island of intense industrialisation" on

> the Witwatersrand with some pockets of industrial activity elsewhere. Gold attracted an imperial class of venture capitalists that quickly both concentrated financial power but also simultaneously expanded into an interconnected series of industries – South Africa was industrialising around mineral exports ("South Africa emerged from the British Empire as an export enclave" in the service of the Empire, so Keith Hart and Vishnu Padayachee).[9] The imposition of industrial capitalism set in motion a process of fairly rapid economic transformation through expanding industrialisation, rapid urbanisation, and fundamental socio-cultural transformations among the newly urbanised population. To achieve and maintain the profitability of the mining-led industrial revolution (mainly) on the Witwatersrand, a raft of legislation was needed in order to construct a "cheap labour economy." The three main legs of this raft of legislation were political disenfranchisement of blacks, land ownership regulations, and job reservations along racial lines.[10] To grossly simplify a long and complicated social history, the net effect of the economic demand for legislative social engineering was the destruction of the black agricultural peasantry, large-scale urbanisation among both poor whites and blacks with a concomitant emergence of mixed-race slums, and a long-going cultural modernising project among the black urban populations.[11] Thus, apartheid was a means for excluding black South Africans both from profiting from the new modes of production and relations to economic factors, and from their simultaneously disrupted traditional cultural values. The core accusation voiced in the current protests is that the arrival of democracy did not substantially correct this alienation.[12]

Thus, according to self-interpretations arising from the chorus of voices in the various #FeesMustFall movements, it is the legacy of this long socially defining process that has now come to roost. Ergo, the discourse of symbolic violence of the recent student unrest as it unfolded over the past two years suggests an interlinkage between history (as in internalized, experienced history, interpreted history), symbols of the past as the sites for contestations about the interpretation of history, and social formations.[13] If the unrest started with a focus on the statue of Cecil John Rhodes (and then extended to other similar symbols) as a symbol of a particular meaning-laden past, and had this symbolic meaning as its driving core (even as it fed into the follow-up rounds of protests), one may interpret the "symbolic revolution" through the concept of the instrumentality of history, or history-as-myth.

The phrase "history-as-myth" in the context of the argument pursued here encapsulates Roland Barthes's understanding of myth in "Myth Today."[14] Myth is not a simple system of ordinary or primary signification, but rather a secondary system of signification in which the sign, that is the combination of signifier-signified, itself becomes a signifier, that is, through a process of signification by

means of association and connotation. “Mythology takes this sign and turns it into a signifier for a new signified, a new concept . . . Myth, then, transforms first-order meanings into second-order meanings.”[15] Furthermore, this is not a neutral process of signification, but politically charged in that the political operates through mythologizing – specific power structures in society induce the particular associations and connotations that construct the myth. While myths have the capacity to disguise their own historicity and to present themselves as objective and natural (and hence become the site for the operation of ideology), it is precisely in disaggregating and fracturing social contexts that myths become dehistoricized as sites of social contestation.

It is therefore that the second part of the heading to this section, “discourse and the reconstruction of society,” deliberately evokes the title of the well-known and influential 1989 monograph of Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification*.[16] While Lincoln offers no definition of discourse in the book, it becomes clear from the assembled examples that discourse as a statement of “so things are” arises from an ensemble of operations, viz. symbolic-mythologizing (not only as the significatory practice itself – discourse assigns meaning – but also contestations regarding institutionalized significations); ritual practices – ranges of formalized actions that establish or set assigned meanings and interpretation in place; and classifications as establishments of hierarchies of authority. Since discourse is itself the product of the ability to define how things are and to arrange hierarchies of authority, it goes almost without saying that discourse is an operation of power and force (force understood here as the ability to enforce, to induce, which exercise of the ability ranges from persuasion, to threat, to coercion, to violence).[17] Hence, inducement and enforcement have as their constant counterparts, resistance, rebellion, and revolution – social discourse is the collective noun for the manifold manners and sites of interplay between both sides of the power divide.

Constructing a groundwork for comparison: destructions of religious symbols in the Spanish Civil War

While Bruce Lincoln, in the essay “Revolutionary Exhumations in Spain,” highlights the millennialist subversion of conventional orders of discourse and practice during the Spanish Civil War, mainly new habits of conduct and social organization among the Left Republicans, coupled with the “symbolic revolution” expressed in destruction and profanation of churches, killing of clerics, and exhumations of mummies of deceased priests and nuns, for the purposes of making this comparison more fruitful in the context of the introductory paragraph on the various #[Enter]MustFall campaigns in South Africa, it is useful to highlight in highly summary manner some salient features of Spanish history leading up to the conflict between revolutionaries and guardians of the old order in revolutionary Spain 1936 to 1939 as a comparandum by means of which to reimagine religious violence as “symbolic revolution.”[18]

In the course of the roughly century and a half, between 1805 and 1936, Spanish history pulled in two opposing directions:[19] simultaneously deeply traditionalist-monarchist *and* developing a liberal tradition (in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars and under influence of the French post-Revolution tradition, the Constitution of 1812 was an attempt to limit the power of the monarch and to establish a liberal state).[20] In effect the military coup of July 1936 that unleashed the civil war set in motion a series of culture wars: urban culture and cosmopolitan lifestyles versus rural tradition; secular against religious; authoritarianism against liberal political cultures; centre versus periphery; traditional gender roles versus the "new woman"; even youth against age, since generational conflicts were also present.[21]

Since the middle of the 19th century a steady industrialization and modernizing of the economy (mainly centred on cities like Madrid, Toledo, Zaragoza, and Barcelona, as well as the agricultural region around Valencia) occurred in the midst of what was still basically an agrarian economy founded on large *latifundia* (from which base the landowner class exerted considerable influence on the organization of the state; the landed oligarchy occupied most important government positions), itself standing on the back of a large peasantry perpetually surviving on the edge of starvation (brought on by a tradition of monoculture which meant insufficient harvest-incomes and deepening states of indebtedness of the peasantry).[22]

In the period, Spain was characterized by a fairly rapid urbanization with concomitant rise in modernized urban populations, professional organizations, and labour movements, all contributing to the growing cleavage between urban and rural Spain; and a short-lived economic growth period after the First World War coming to an end in the 1930s in the wake of the Great Depression. Nevertheless, the changes in social constitution of Spanish society (along with better communications and transport and the relatively freer circulation of new ideas) also brought with them increasing clamour for a political voice.[23] "The drama of liberal government in nineteenth-century Spain lay especially in the fact that no other country in the world made such persistent efforts to introduce such advanced political forms amid similar conditions of social and economic underdevelopment. Such premature liberalism had seemed destined to fail."[24] These democratizing movements came into conflict with the landowning class who resisted change when the Republican Socialist government attempted anything approximating land reform – "the reforms raised opposition among Spain's traditional elites."[25]

Politically, in the course of this tumultuous and turbulent century and a half, there had been, as well, a conflict regarding the legitimate line of succession in the royal house of Bourbon (between the Alfonsine and Carlist lines), popular uprisings against the ultra-conservatism of the monarchy and the establishment of the First Republic (1873 to 1874; ending with the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy); a number of military *pronunciamentos* and coups (a *pronunciamento* was a declaration by the military that the government has lost the ability to govern and this usually led to the formation of a new government);[26] and the establishment of semi-dictatorial regimes under the monarchy ending in 1931 with the abdication

of Alfonso XIII and the establishment of the Second Republic (1931 to 1939) under a Socialist government.

Two political forces played a central role in the unfolding of the civil war: the army and the Catholic Church. While the army itself at times played protector of liberal values, the loss of the remainders of the Spanish Empire (earlier in the 19th century, Spain lost all of its South American colonies, including Mexico, to liberation movements; 1898 to 1899 saw the loss of Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam to the United States of America after the Spanish-American War), and with it the colonial markets for economic exploitation, caused deep and long-during disaffection among the military class for the political classes in mainland Spain, resulting in a call "to make Spain great again." Thus during the political radicalization of the two decades leading up to the civil war, and under the onslaught of a Manichean dualist rhetoric of the opposition-as-enemy, the armed forces (who themselves did not initially form a unified front, ideologically or organizationally) steadily drifted Rightwards.

The Catholic Church, having been deeply enmeshed with the monarchical order in Spain for centuries, regarded itself as the guardian of traditionalism – the bulwark against the "consequences of encroaching political liberalism and cultural pluralism, both of which profoundly challenged its own monopoly on truth,"[27] and hence also as guardian of the landed patrician order in the rural, mainly agricultural districts. As a result, it had already begun to experience large-scale rejection by the peasantry who regarded the Church as complicit in their oppression, as well as by the industrial proletariat in the urban environments. The Catholic Church's response to this was the "apocalyptic tone" to the pastoral letter of the Cardinal Primate on 1 May 1931 which was an "incendiary royalist homily" calling on the faithful to mobilize in "spiritual and patriotic rearmament" coming close to declaring the Republic an illegitimate regime. Other bishops went further and actually described the Republic as the triumph of error and sin (the same dualist apocalyptic tone characterized discourse among the military as society radicalized).[28] As the Republican government set about its programme of re-engineering Spanish society, to a large extent the Catholic Church became the central focus of the cultural wars escalating in the country. The final break between the Catholic Church and the Republican government arose from the latter's policy of cultural modernization, laicization, and secularization – an attempt to subordinate the position and influence of the Church to that of the secular state. In this pursuit the Republicans rode a wave of anticlericalism – "As secularization increased, anticlericalism became the principal common denominator of the left. By the 1930s Spain had become a partially secularized country and thus had entered the 'danger zone' of cultural change in which religious conflict would become most intense."[29]

Anticlericalism took the practical shape, in the Republican programme of political reforms, of restrictions posed on the public expression of Church life, particularly the right to teach. Other restrictions regarded economic activity by

the Church, public demonstrations of religion, even the wearing of religious symbols like crucifixes by women, and in addition, the Society of Jesus was dissolved.[30] While in earlier times Church property had also been targeted for vandalism or destruction, with the maelstrom leading to the war gathering apace, very early in the life of the new Republic, "Catholic churches and buildings became targets of arson and mob destruction in the famous *quema de conventos* [burning of the convents] of 11–12 May 1931," which saw more than 100 buildings torched and sacked in Madrid and several cities of the south and east, destroying also priceless libraries and art. In the course of the civil war the war against the Church escalated, with numerous clerics killed, churches profaned, church rituals inverted in carnivalesque reversals, symbols destroyed (e.g., in Barcelona, Madrid, Toledo, Valencia, Almeria, Ripoll, and Vich)[31] – inter alia, the exhumations of Lincoln's description, and the most infamous of all events: the "execution" of the Sacred Heart of Jesus by Communist militiamen (Monument of the Sacred Heart on the Cerro de los Angeles, a hill a few miles south of Madrid which is regarded as the exact centre of Spain).[32] In areas controlled by Republicans, especially the more radical groups like POUM (Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista = Worker's Party of Marxist Unification) in Barcelona, a social revolution was set in motion by peasants and workers who collectivized farms, factories, and businesses of all sizes, including public services and transport. Culturally, the social revolution took the shape of new ways of address that stressed equality, even to the promotion of "free love." Thus, in enacting millenarian antinomianism, local radicals who burnt and desecrated churches, profaned religious symbols, and exacted a kind of genocide on religious personnel, sought to overturn a dominant cultural formation that had been structured by the discourses of religion, honour, and patronage and had legitimated relations of inequality for centuries.[33]

It is this utopian inversion of the conventional order of things, in which "secular ideologies functioned as politico-ideological substitutes for religion,"[34] that evoked the strong reaction from the range of conservative forces on the Right, in which "the wars of religion, which had never afflicted sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain, arrived in modern form in the 1930s with a vengeance. . . . Only as a kind of religious warfare can the intensity of the clerical–anticlerical conflict in Spain be understood."[35] The eschatological–millenarian ritual destruction and desecration of churches, shrines, statues, religious artworks, and the looting of church treasures, were seen as an assault on the public presence of Catholicism and the emotional power it still held over the population.[36] As a commentator on the times, Father Antonio Montero Moreno put it: the material destruction of "the sacred" unveiled "a rage against the religious world far more significant than if the killed are men of flesh and bone."[37]

As Spain descended into chaos, there were extrajudicial killings, executions, and assassinations on both sides, Republican and Nationalist; and both sides trumpeted news – real and fake – to show up the other as illegitimate and insurrectionist.

The language hardened on both sides: following the coup in July 1936, from various constituencies on the Right came the message that

> Spain *needed to be purged or purified*. Sometimes they even spoke of the need for a *blood sacrifice*. These kinds of sentiments unleashed a savage repression that happened from the outset everywhere in rebel Spain, including in many areas where the military rebels were in control from the start, where there was no armed resistance, no political resistance to speak of either, no "front," no advancing or retreating troops – in short, where there was no "war" according to a conventional definition of the term. What there was, however, was a *culture war that the perpetrators carried in their heads*. The coup had sanctioned its unleashing and thus opened the way to mass murder.[38]

On the Left the revolutionaries were equally convinced that they were carrying out a quasi-religious task:

> "We have rounded up all the priests and parasites. . . . We have lit our torches and applied the purifying fire to all the churches . . . and we have covered the countryside and *purified it of the plague of religion*," boasted the anarchist mouthpiece *Solidaridad Obrera*. And a similar mysticism of cathartic annihilation could be found in the words of an FAI member to a priest, before setting the latter's church on fire: "Can you see this lamp burning day and night in front of the tabernacle as a sign of love? Well, now, with the flame of this lamp, we're going to set fire to the church and thus purify the world of the lies you priests have disseminated." Priests were killed, temples were destroyed, ultimately because of the *need to eradicate the enemy within, to purge society of strange, pernicious elements, and to attain a simple, popular, feasible solution to the problems posed by the war and the revolution*.[39]

Both sides to the conflict fought the civil war on the belief that they were fighting their own Armageddon, the end-time apocalyptic conflict. On the Right, Falangist fascism was called on to "save civilization." In fact, within the Right, in Nationalist Spain – those parts controlled by the Nationalists – the conflict was interpreted as a "re-Christianization of Spain."[40] The Nationalist side interpreted the conflict as end-time conflict through images from the book of Revelation: José M. Pemán brings the apocalyptic symbolism of Revelation to bear in his *Poema de la Bestia y el Ángel* (*Poem of the Beast and the Angel*), in which he writes: "The smoke of incense and the smoke of cannons, which rise to the feet of God, together constitute a single affirmation of our faith and, besides, of our promise to save a world and restore a civilization."[41] After the civil war had already started, the Catholic Church reacted to the revolutionary violence enacted on it by the broad variety of Leftist forces: first, the "Pastoral Instruction of the

Bishops of Pamplona and Vitoria" censuring Basque Catholics' alliance with the "enemies of the Church"; then the Pope himself, in an address to 500 Spanish refugees on 14 September 1936, showed sympathy with the Nationalist cause; followed by the Bishop of Salamanca, Enrique Pla y Deniel's pastoral letter "Las dos ciudades" of 30 September in which he referred to the military uprising as "a Crusade against the children of Cain . . . a Crusade for religion, for the fatherland, for civilization";[42] the booklet *El caso de España* by the Primate of Spain (Cardinal Isidro Goma) of 23 November; and the famous "Joint Letter of the Spanish Bishops to the Bishops of the Whole World Concerning the War in Spain" of 1 July 1937, turned the Nationalist insurrection against the Republicans into a religious crusade.[43]

On the Republican side the conflict was cast as a fight against a fearsome apocalyptic monster: "a bloodthirsty dragon, its skin covered with the symbols of fascism and its three heads representing the three sworn enemies of the people – the rich, the military and the clergy" – the contents of a political poster published in the Catalan satirical magazine, *L'Esquella de la Torratxa*, 18 September 1936.[44] The combination of the rich, the military, and the clergy as the triad of oppressive forces, regularly appears in propaganda posters, like the well-known poster, Los Nacionales (The Nationals) attributed to Juan Antonio Morales, and issued by the Ministerio de Propaganda, which depicts a warship with a military officer (wearing a blue Nationalist fascist sash); a wealthy bourgeois businessman with a Swastika lapel badge; a corpulent Catholic cleric; and coloured Spanish Moroccan soldiers, feared for their cruelty and fierceness, but also evoking the origins of the military insurrection – in the Spanish overseas legions of the Spanish Moroccan army; in the midst of it all a gallows symbolizing the death wrought by their hegemony and political reactionary.[45]

On the Republican side a millenarian mindset interpreted mass killings as achieving a tabula rasa, while on the Nationalist, rebel, side the killings were seen as "a cleansing action designed to rid the community of sources of 'pollution' and the dangers they supposed."[46] On both sides, people of all ages and conditions fell victim to this "cleansing" (although it has to be pointed out that, for all the destruction and bloodletting, the destruction and killings were mainly concentrated in the first six months of the civil war; thereafter, arguably, issues of survival and eventual military success took precedence). But for the Nationalist forces, the cleansing or purification concerned people who symbolized cultural change and thus non-traditionalist understandings of mores, values, and behaviour: progressive teachers, intellectuals, self-educated workers, and "new" women. Falangist violence was targeted against the socially, culturally, and sexually different.[47] In addition, in Nationalist-Falangist territories there was equally a religious crusade, this time aimed at Protestant churches. In the view of the Right, Protestantism was a plague that needed to be cleansed.

Ironically, if the desecration and profanation of religious symbols and icons had as its purpose to demonstrate their mere artifact-ness and lifelessness, then these acts of desecration "seemed at the same time to reveal a basic, almost magical belief in their might and the necessity to escape from their influence at any

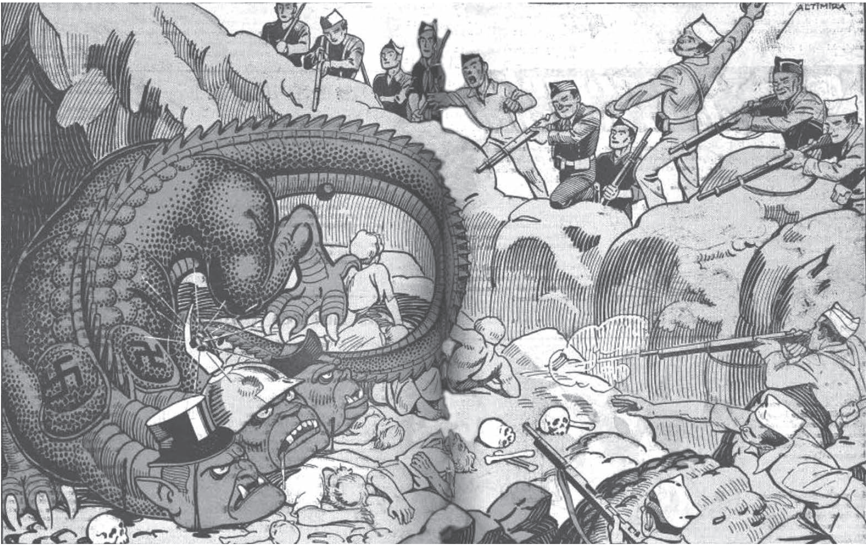

Figure 12.1 The apocalyptic monster cornered by the Republican forces. It appeared in the satirical magazine, *L'Esquella de la Torratxa*, 18 September 1936, 536–537. The caption (which unfortunately runs across the fold in the page and is difficult to read) says something like: "Come on, Comrades, the beast is already cornered."

Source: http://mdc2.cbuc.cat/cdm/compoundobject/collection/esquella/id/22670/rec/2983

cost."[48] There is, again, in this the matter of the experience of the living history embedded in the symbols of a social order that fueled the sentiments of heightened aversion not only to the symbols themselves but also what they stood for – the myth of a Catholic Spain. Thus, all the actors on the stage of the Spanish Civil War were caught on either side between deconstruction and reassertion of the social order.

Not to put too fine a point to it: in a context of increasing economic insecurity, an uncompleted social and economic revolution which left heightened expectations unfulfilled (even as exactly these evoked strong resistance from more conservative sectors of society), when the social fabric finally tore, it was the predominant symbolic order – the Catholic Church and all it stood for: the old oligarchic order; the entrenchment of monarchic authoritarian privileges and protections of the obtaining economic hierarchies; and its cultural and ideological hegemony over society, severely hampering social progress, democratization, and modernization – that became the focus of the ideologies operative in the Spanish Civil War on both sides. In this, I would contend, lies a powerful comparative moment to think the current symbolic revolutions with that play out in South Africa.

Figure 12.2 Los Nacionales (The Nationals), attributed to Antonio Morales, issued by the Ministerio de Propaganda.

Source: https://lts.brandeis.edu/research/archives-speccoll/spanishcivilwar/posters.html

Christianity emerging on the border between the classical and post-classical worlds: three vignettes

In the two preceding case studies, long-standing social tensions became acute in the context of sudden ruptures in the social fabric. If the symbolic revolutions discussed above are concretely situated in contexts of social disaggregation that resulted from severe reorganizations in social positionality among classes, groups, and institutionalized interests (and hence the eruptions of violence going with it – sentiments of affinity and disaffection act as the affective motor for violent behaviour), the 4th century CE as the century of the Christianization of the Roman Empire, the so-called Constantinian Revolution, was a more gradual process. Or, better put it, the evidence seems to suggest a more complex process of change that at times and in specific contexts, erupted in violence directed at religious artifacts, symbols, and institutions. I highlight these slow-moving changes in order to profile the symbolic revolutions that mark aspects of religious change in the Late Roman Empire.

The big religious and cultural revolution that was the Christianization of the late Roman Empire did not arrive out of the blue, out of nothing – it was the culmination of a series of cultural shifts of long duration:

a) Transitions from inspired oracular speech to book-centred religious discourses (Judaism, Christianity, Manichaeism – to name only the three most prominent, but strands of Buddhism had also made its presence felt in the late antique world – were characterized not only by the development of extensive canons of religious literature, but also by the rise of a class of expert commentators, which commentaries themselves came to constitute a library of religious resources);
b) Transitions from concrete, material, imagistic instantiations of divine presence to aniconic conceptions of divinity with concomitant new ways of mediating the divine: for instance, in the rise of various permutations of Neoplatonic theurgic and religious philosophies and practices, mysticism, and so on – outside of Christianity in Late Roman Neoplatonic philosophy and theurgy, itself a kind of ascetical gymnastics; in the rise of Jewish mysticism out of the intersection of Persian-derived apocalyptic discourses and "vertical" apocalyptic-cum-visionary traditions; and within Christianity with the emergence of asceticism as training for divine vision and full-blown mysticism ranging from Origen, Evagrius Ponticus, and Gregory of Nyssa, and the 6th-century mystic (pseudo-) Dionysius the Aereopagite, who drew on these earlier writers. In this regard, the monotheism of Christianity was a manifestation of the wider drift towards monotheism in the Late Roman world;[49]
c) Transitions from priestly classes of religious hierarchies to hermeneutic specialists (rabbinic and Christian teacher-theologians – even as they existed alongside a broad spectrum of popular religious practitioners, holy men, healers-diviners, etc. – constituted as class the new intellectual force determining the

shape of Christian discourses but also their relation to and intersection with secular authority);

d) Transitions from monocultural, singular ethnic social entities, and identity formations to international, multiethnic, and geographically dispersed populations of post-ancient religious communities held together not only by shared symbols, beliefs, and practices, but also by itinerant leaders and mobile texts, incorporation into which occurred through practices of conversion as a habituated new comportment with newly emerging social and identity formations;

e) And finally, transformations of the relationships between religious institutions and the hegemonic hierarchies organizing various social aggregates in the post-ancient or late antique world, that is, an emerging independence inhering in religious institutions vis-à-vis the state (the Christian church, conceived of an independent identity, exerted its social agency vis-à-vis the Roman state);[50]

f) And on the other side, and for our purposes here perhaps as important, the long survival, in new shapes and forms, of Graeco-Roman religious concepts and images (some examples by way of extremely abbreviated shorthand): Horus, the son of Isis, in the image of the baby Christ cradled in the arms of the holy Mother, similarly with the young Dionysus cradled in the lap of Hermes framed by an image of Theogonia and gift-bearing Dōrophoroi in the famous Dionysus mosaic of Sepphoris – evidence of a two-way street of impact between Graeco-Roman culture and emerging Christianity?;[51] the transformations of Cybele/Magna Mater and Isis into the Mother of God of Christianity;[52] the identification of Graeco-Roman deities with Christian religious figures, for instance, and, for our context here significant, Sarapis as Joseph in Alexandria, or the Buddha as the Christian saint Josaphat in Johannes Damascenus's *Barlaam and Josaphat*;[53] Middle- and Neoplatonism, along with Stoicism, as important philosophical frameworks informing Christian theological discourses;[54] the "easy coexistence" of Dionysus, the "pre-eminent pagan god of Late Antiquity" (Bowersock),[55] and the Christian myth in the work of Nonnus of Panopolis, the author of simultaneously the massively encyclopedic epic, the *Dionysiaca*, the eminent archive of Greek and Roman mythology at the acme of Graeco-Roman culture, and the versified version of the Gospel of John, the *Paraphrase of St. John*.[56]

As a paradigmatic example in the broader context of the argument pursued here, the case of Nonnus is particularly instructive. Distinguishing "pagan" from Christian writers in Late Antiquity runs aground on the rocks of the easy comportment in both directions with enduring classical paideia, as Jitse Dijkstra puts it with regard to Nonnus:

> Whereas the idea that these intellectuals formed a "pagan resistance" against Christianity in this period has found widespread acceptance, it has now been firmly rejected in favour of a more complex model of

> coexistence and interaction. No doubt there were some intellectuals who still adhered to the traditional cults and practices, but they were few and we should not confuse the extraordinary flourish of Hellenism in late antique Egypt with "paganism."[57]

As Dijkstra elaborates on the coexistence of "pagan" and Christian discourses: "[T]he religious transformation of Late Antiquity is seen as a dynamic and gradual process in which religions interacted in various, complex ways rather than that it was dominated by a stark Christian-'pagan' conflict."[58] Intellectuals on both sides of the divide shared in a widespread tendency towards classicizing literature. Thus Tim Whitmarsh could typify the period as one where becoming Christian did not

> necessarily mean rejecting other forms of religious practice. Some Christians were borderline Jews. Even after Christianity became Rome's state religion in the fourth century AD, many still clung to the old ways. . . . Polytheism and Christianity could exist side by side without any obvious friction. . . . A fourth-century Roman called Firmicus Maternus wrote both an astrological work that treated the planets as traditional Roman deities and an anti-pagan tract *On the Error of Profane Religions*. Did he convert in the interim, as scholars tend to assume? [The same question put to the religious identity of Nonnus of Panopolis in earlier scholarship] Maybe, but maybe he simply saw no great contradiction. . . . It was, as one scholar has put it, "easy to be a Christian and something else."[59]

Thus, reading the evidence from outside the triumphalist framework characterizing early Christian writers on the nature and fate of "paganism," one is left with the unavoidable impression, now strongly asserted in Late Antique scholarship, of the interpenetration of "paganism" and Christianity.[60] In spite of earlier scholarly convention of seeing a revitalized "pagan" resistance to Christianity among the Roman aristocracy, the reality was more one of relatively harmonious coexistence, in part due to class conformance on both sides (the cultural classicizing result of Graeco-Roman *paideia* – "pagan and Christian shared an increasingly conventionalized language of discourse . . . about the divine milieu"[61]), but also because of increasing intermarriage (the Roman aristocracy gradually Christianized).[62] Translated to the religious programme of Constantine, insofar as any existed, the question is to which extent Constantine enacted a deliberate programme of Christianization (and if he really did enact legislation against "pagan" religious practices and institutions – the evidence from the *Theodosian Code* is ambiguous).[63] Even with respect to his conversion the evidence for Constantine is not straightforward – what constituted the vision that was the basis of his conversion, and how is one to "read" his own biography of gradual Christianization?[64] Nevertheless, in spite of Constantine expressing a wish for the complete cessation

of "pagan" religious culture, he pragmatically elected to follow a "policy of contemptuous toleration":[65]

> Let no one use what they have received by inner conviction to the detriment of another. Rather, let everyone as far as possible apply what they have seen and understood to the benefit of their neighbor. . . . It is one thing voluntarily to undertake the contest for immortality, it is quite another to compel others to do so from fear of punishment . . . since I understand that some people are saying that the rites of the temples and the power of darkness have been entirely removed. I would indeed have earnestly recommended such removal to all mankind, were it not that the rebellious spirit of those wicked errors still remains obstinately fixed in the minds of some to the detriment of the common good.[66]

In Eusebius's rendering of the account, Constantine only forbade governors and magistrates from offering sacrifices (the pre-eminent grounds being their use for divination or the "false arts").[67] Constantine's further role in promoting Christianity was the ordering of an extensive church building programme (famously, he turned the holy land into a Christian theme park with his lavish building projects). His successors would be more explicit in discouraging and forbidding "pagan" religious practices: as the combined legislation by the sons of Constantine (appealing to Constantine) has it:

> *Bloody spectacles are not suitable for civil ease and domestic quiet*. Wherefore since we have proscribed gladiators, those who have been accustomed to be sentenced to such work as punishment for their crimes, you should cause to serve in the mines, so that they may be punished without shedding their blood. Constantine Augustus.[68]
>
> It is necessary that the *privileges which are bestowed for the cultivation of religion should be given only to followers of the Catholic faith*. We desire that heretics and schismatics be not only kept from these privileges, but be subjected to various fines. Constantine Augustus.[69]
>
> It is decreed that *in all places and all cities the temples should be closed at once*, and after a general warning, the opportunity of sinning be taken from the wicked. We decree also that *we shall cease from making sacrifices*. And if anyone has committed such a crime, let him be stricken with the avenging sword. And we decree that the property of the one executed shall be claimed by the city, and that rulers of the provinces be punished in the same way, if they neglect to punish such crimes. Constantine and Constans Augusti.[70]
>
> *Superstition shall cease; the madness of sacrifices shall be abolished*. For if any man in violation of the law of the sainted emperor, Our father, and in violation of this command of Our Clemency, *should dare to*

> *perform sacrifices, he shall suffer the infliction of a suitable punishment and the effect of an immediate sentence*.[71]

And yet, in spite of withdrawing state support for the traditional cults, and letting cult sites slide into benign neglect, and in spite of what amounted to legislation against the continuity of classical tradition (with all that this stood for: after all, partly in the name of this classical tradition Christians were persecuted), the very laws codified in the *Theodosian Code* reflect a grudging awareness that traditional religion persisted and that sacrifices did continue.[72] John of Ephesus, the Syrian Monophysite bishop of Ephesus, describes in his *Ecclesiastical History* his missionary work in the provinces of Asia, Caria, Lydia, and Phrygia, and how he found a well-organized and deeply entrenched "pagan" culture centred on the big temple of the Isodromian Mother near Tralles in Caria.[73] A law of 9 April 423 CE requires "the pagans who have survived" to follow recent legislation, adding that "although we would like to believe there be no [pagans] left any longer."[74] A later law of 14 November 435 CE sets harsher conditions:

> We interdict *all persons of a hardened pagan mind because of the accursed immolation of victims and the condemned sacrifices and the other acts forbidden* by the authority of the ancient *sanctiones*. We order all their groves, temples, and precincts, if they remain intact even now, *to be destroyed* by the decree of the magistrates [of the cities] and cleansed by the erection of the revered sign of the Christian religion [the cross].[75]

In contrast to earlier regulations, now the traditional sacred sites had to be destroyed and exorcized by the sign of the cross. And indeed, numerous temples and sacred sites of the old traditional religions were destroyed, not only by civic authorities but also by Christian monks and local bishops emboldened by the anti-"pagan" legislation emanating from the Christian court. What makes this large-scale erasure of traditional religion from the landscape of the Later Roman Empire remarkable is that it took place in a context where Christianity was, at the time of Constantine's conversion, a minority religion in the Empire (some calculations put it at 10% of the population). Witness a locality like Gaza in Palestine, where eight pagan temples stood against the one Christian church at the time when, under the leadership of the bishop of Gaza, Porphyrius, the temples were destroyed and burnt (in the year 402) in what can only be described as a minority incursion. This is apart from the many cases of temple conversions where "pagan" temples were reused as churches, like the famous Pantheon in Rome. Even so, a number of cult sites and temples remained open and in cultic business, like the Asklepieion in Athens, the temples at Carrhae-Harran, and the Isis temple at Philae. That it was not only a case of oversight is shown by the fact that Christian emperors could indeed also decree the reopening of "pagan" sanctuaries: in 382 CE Theodosius allowed a pagan temple to be re-opened at Edessa, although with the – by then – usual proviso that no sacrifices were carried out there.

In the context of this complex history of interaction between the Late Roman state and "pagan" religious institutions, the following exemplary events can be summarily described:

The removal of the Altar of Victory from the Roman Senate: With deep roots in Roman history and self-understanding, the cult of Victoria/Victory grew in importance in Rome through the Punic Wars to the end of the civil wars that ended the Republic (the famous temple to Victory erected on the Palatine Hill in 284 BCE, and the altar with statue in the Senate, begun by Julius Caesar and completed by Octavian in 29 CE). Senators swore allegiance to the state of Rome at the Altar of Victory, and each sitting of the Senate was opened by a sacrifice of incense on the Altar. Under the sons of Constantine, the Altar was to suffer removal, restoration, and eventual destruction: first removed from the Senate by Constantius II, restored to its place during the "pagan" revival under Julian, then removed again in 382 by Gratian (the latter the more enthusiastic of the anti-"pagan" Christian emperors). After Gratian's death in battle, the leading Roman senator and urban prefect, Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, wrote a petition to the new western emperor Valentinian II to request the restoration of the Altar of Victory. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, countered Symmachus's petition to the emperor with letters of his own (which carried the day and led to the petition denied). At stake in the literary debate was not the Altar of Victory as such, but the nature of religion, and whether traditional religious practices by its very essence involved sacrifices which are sites of ritual and moral pollution (as was argued by Ambrose). The underlying issue was Gratian's withdrawal of state funding for traditional cults, in defense of which Symmachus argued that

> "[t]hus we ask for peace for the gods of our fathers, the gods of our native land. It is reasonable to believe that whatever is worshipped by each of us is ultimately one and the same. We gaze at the same stars, we share the same sky, the same universe surrounds us."
>
> (*Third Relation*, 10)[76]

Earlier in the *Relation* Symmachus puts his petition squarely within the frame of tradition:

> "But even if the avoidance of such an omen were not sufficient, it would at least have been seemly to abstain from injuring *the ornaments of the Senate House*. Allow us, we beseech you, as old men to *leave to posterity what we received as boys. The love of custom is great*"
>
> (*Third Relation*, 6) (my emphasis).

In addition, Symmachus refers to the visit of Constantius II to Rome in 357 CE in glowing terms as one of admiration for traditional culture:

> He diminished none of the privileges of the sacred virgins, he *filled the priestly offices with nobles, he did not refuse the cost of the Roman ceremonies*, and

> following the rejoicing Senate through all the streets of the eternal city, *he contentedly beheld the shrines with unmoved countenance*, he read the names of the gods inscribed on the pediments, he enquired about the origin of the temples, and *expressed admiration for their builders*. Although he himself followed another religion, he maintained its own for the empire, for everyone has his own customs, everyone his own rites. The divine Mind has distributed different guardians and different cults to different cities.[77]

At stake was a number of converging issues: the relationship between the emperor and the Roman Senate, at a point in history where much of the political centre of gravity had already shifted East, and in particular was focused in Constantinople; the myth-history of "pagan" cult, in particular here the Altar of Victory, as stand-in for the deep history of Roman imperial tradition; and in general, the upholding of venerated traditions in a context of fairly rapid cultural changes.

The decline and destruction of the Artemision in Ephesus: As one of the famed seven wonders of the ancient world, and a temple cult that exerted religious and cultural influence beyond the province of Asia Minor, the Artemision of Ephesus was already in decline by the time Theodosius I ordered the temples closed in 391 CE. Roughly 150 years previously the Artemision suffered despoliation by the marauding Goths who sacked the city, looted the temple treasury, and burnt the temple down in 262 CE as part of a wider looting incursion into the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. The temple was rebuilt but it did not retain its previous brilliance as it was only partially rebuilt, and then with material derived from ruined parts of the building. Nevertheless, it remained in use as a cultic centre throughout the 4th century. In the meantime the Artemision featured as focus in anti-pagan invective, for instance in the second century apocryphal *Acts of John*, where in an episode recounting the apostle John's visit to Ephesus, the altar of Artemis broke into many pieces, temple objects fell to the ground, and the image of the deity broke into pieces, part of the temple tumbled in killing the priest – all on the preaching of the apostle (37–47), thus prefiguring in imagined, narrated discourse the kinds of destruction wrought on pagan temples later.

The account is dramatized further in the Syriac *History of John, the Son of Zebedee, the Apostle and Evangelist* (46) where the crowds acclaim that

> [w]e renounce this Artemis, in whom there is no use. . . . And the whole crowd cast cords about the image of Artemis, and pulled it down, and dragged it along, whilst bands were crying out before it and behind it: "Thou destroyer of our lives, arise, deliver thyself! Not from heaven didst thou descend; artisans made thee in a furnace."[78]

While parts of the Artemision were systematically carted off to adorn imperial building projects elsewhere, and thus by the beginning of the 5th century was already in a state of high disrepair,[79] it is the visit of John Chrysostom to Ephesus in 401 that is generally recounted as the moment of the final "destruction" of the

temple. According to contemporary encomia, John Chrysostom was hailed as "the destroyer of demons and overthrower of the temple of Artemis," and in the writings of the Christian poets Prudentius (*Against Symmachus*, 2.495)[80] and Paulinus of Nola (*Poem* 10.95)[81] John Chrysostom is exulted as the one who finally made Artemis yield to Christ (Paulinus may have played in his poem on both John the apostle, and the Christian rhetor, John Chrysostom). Chrysostom's "overthrow" of the temple may have amounted to no more than achieving success in stopping the continued cultic veneration of the deity, but the rhetor Libanius (who, ironically was Chrysostom's teacher), gives evidence to the widespread despoliation of churches by marauding bands of monks in his address to the emperor Theodosius to preserve ancient temples being destroyed:

> [The emperor has] not ordered the temples to be shut up, nor forbidden any to frequent them: nor have you driven from the temples or the altars, fire or frankincense, or other honours of incense, [yet monks run to them] bringing with them wood, and stones, and iron, and when they have not these, hands and feet. . . . the roofs are uncovered, walls are pulled down, images are carried off, and altars are overturned: the priests all the while must be silent upon pain of death. When they have destroyed one temple they run to another, and a third, and trophies are erected upon trophies: which are all contrary to law. This is the practice in cities, but especially in the countries.
>
> (*Or*. 30.7–8)[82]

The core of Libanius's argument is not only that it is against imperial legislation to destroy temples and shrines, but also that the religious sites themselves have formed the foundation of the very empire of which Theodosius is himself the emperor. The greatness of the Empire is enshrined in these monumental religious edifices. The marauding monks saw it differently.

The destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria: In 391 CE a Christian crowd under the leadership of the patriarch, Theophilus, attacked and destroyed the Serapeum in Alexandria and other pagan shrines in the city. The Serapeum was the biggest sanctuary in Alexandria and one of the most famous in antiquity. The prestige of the cult of Sarapis had to do, apart from the impressive site itself – a huge raised temenos and a richly adorned interior – also with the impressive mechanics of the cult building: a mechanical device caused tremors when one approached the statue of Sarapis (thus putting in effect the warning that touching the cult statue will set off an earthquake), hollow statues from which cult attendants blew trumpets and loudhailed commands, as well as a magnetic effect that kept a sun orb floating above the statue, in addition to the traditional Nilometer (the measure that showed the risen level of the Nile during flood) that was kept in the site as indication of Sarapis as protector of the annual Nile floods. So great was the presence of the sanctuary in the city that Eunapius could state: "For, on account of its temple of Serapis, Alexandria was a world in itself, a world consecrated by religion."[83]

The Christian riot was sparked off by a preceding riot by pagan Alexandrians. This was caused by the fact that a nearby public basilica that stood in disrepair was given to the patriarch for use by the growing Christian community. The basilica stood on underground rooms that had previously been discovered to have housed Mithraic groups. The Christians now paraded these cult items through the street with taunts directed at the pagan population. The pagans reacted by rioting through the city, capturing a number of Christians and keeping them hostage in the Serapeum where they blockaded themselves in. When the army intervened, the pagans appealed to the emperor, Theodosius, for justice. The imperial response elevated the Christians who died to martyrdom and provided clemency to the pagan rioters: "Litigation about the rest of the evils and roots of the discord, whatever had come forth in behalf of the defense of images, was not to be pressed. After these issues had been removed, the cause of the war would be removed" (Rufinus, *Hist. eccl*. 11.22).[84] It is, arguably, the latter phrase that sparked off the Christian riot. When earlier Theodosius had said that the "vain superstition of the pagans" had caused the riot in the first place, the crowd took the phrase to mean that the cult images had to be removed and destroyed. What Theodosius probably meant was that the pagans images that the Christians paraded through the city had caused the riot and that *this* offence should be stopped. Nevertheless, the end result is that the Christians attacked the temple grounds, axed off the head of the cult statue of Sarapis, tore the statue apart and burnt the torso in the amphitheatre. "Thus all over the world the shrines of the idols were destroyed," ended Theodoret of Cyrrhus his description of the destruction of the Serapeum.[85]

The Praetorian Prefect Oriens, Tatian, probably exercized a moderating influence over Theodosius in effecting a conciliatory response to the riot in Alexandria by pointing to the economic and political power of the local Hellenic elites in Egypt and elsewhere – "paganism was the hegemonic culture of Alexandria at the beginning of our period".[86] As hegemonic culture, Alexandrian paganism was an undifferentiated community, that is, pagan religious life was barely distinguishable from civic institutions.[87] In this kind of situation, a *pax deorum* (not only as toleration for the gods of others, but also as toleration for ancient cultural traditions) is necessary for maintaining social cohesion and harmony. If it was true for the most part of its history, that a wide variety of pagan cultic communities could exist side by side, and that even Christians and Jews could share in this discourse space – the evidence of Greek philosophical schooling highly visible in Christian theologians like Origen and Clement – the break came with the imperial anti-pagan legislation that for the first time constructed "paganism" as a counterpart to Christianity, and made "paganism" visible *as* paganism. "The city's pagans began to act in concert as they sought to preserve their status against the encroachments of the Christian community," as Haas puts it. (In spite of this constructed bifurcation, Christian discourse and "pagan" discourse continued to mutually inflect each other: as Glen Bowersock argued with respect to the cult of Aion in Alexandria, with the iconography of Aion as the pagan counterpart of Jesus – his festival the counterpart of the Christian Epiphany, celebrating the birth from a virgin of the

pagan god – as an example of Christianity impacting on pagan traditions and conceptualities.)[88]

If this reconstruction is plausible, then a root cause for the symbolic revolt in Alexandria can be identified in an intense identity conflict and social struggle between an educated Greek elite and a demos of disenfranchised (mostly) Christian population. This is not to reduce the conflict to a simple one of rich versus poor, educated to uneducated, but to understand the way in which a magnificent cult like this could be sustained to function: it is only by being embedded in the power relations in the city, with the rich, the civic elites and authorities, paying for the upkeep and festival outlays, that the cult could continue being a symbol for something else, namely an ordering of society that was being upended in the course of the 4th into the 5th century. The previous visits of the praetorian prefect of the East, Maternus Cynegius, a zealous promoter of the Theodosius legislation against pagan temple institutions and cultic practices (he had closed a number of temples elsewhere in the East), primed the atmosphere in Alexandria with expectation of a final showdown to come.

Some of the roots in the conflict lay much earlier: indirect evidence exists for the formation of the earliest Christian groups in Alexandria in the context of Jewish baptismal movements, that is, in movements of social dissociation, or counter-cultural movements, a context that inflected the discourse production of early Christians in Alexandria for the first three centuries of their presence there.[89] The regular rioting affecting the Jewish communities (leading to their eventual almost disappearance from Alexandria) was attributed to the presence of "Galileans," that is apocalyptic-minded Christians bent on disrupting pagan cultic worship and culture. Christians were caught up, from the beginning of the Christian mission in Alexandria, in the intergroup violence that escalated after the Roman administration introduced the poll tax on non-Greeks, in which unfolding of events the Jews petitioned for full citizenship during the reign of Claudius (and thus seeking out the Roman side in opposition to the Greeks and native Egyptians) – and suffered a pogrom for it. Reversals of status combined with violence suffered against the group call into question the very compact that made possible the (even though often troubled) coexistence of disparate ethnic groups in the same geographic locality. The anomic situation in which early Christian cult groups found themselves contributed to a cosmological revolt represented by one part of these traditions that are both a reflection of what is happening "on the ground" and the discourse that continues to inspire social revolt in circumstances that are dire.[90] As Henry Green puts it (in the larger context of the origins of Egyptian Gnosticism as a discourse of "cosmological revolt"):

> The initial gravitation by urban Jews, Greeks, and Egyptians to Christianity was a product of their anomic situation. In contrast, by the late second century, Christianity in Egypt progressively appealed to urban educated Greeks and non-Egyptians. It would require nearly another century, however, before significant numbers of rural Egyptian peasants

> became Christians. The spread of Christianity from social class to social class and from urban areas to rural environments is tied also to the socio-economic development of Roman Egypt. The fragmentation of Roman ideology and economy in Egypt and the institutionalization of Christian belief systems and social organizations are highly correlated.[91]

The destruction of the Serapeum as an iconic event constituted for Christians a final statement of the status reversal implied by early Christian visions of the end (*vide* the end of the book of Revelation). The triumphalist mockery sounding through Christian accounts of temple despoliations ("Sarapis was a nest of mice," said Theodoret; "For surely it is a grave impiety indeed, that holy places should be *defiled by the stain of unhallowed impurities*," Eusebius, "Letter of Constantine to Eusebius," *Life of Constantine* 3.52),[92] the identification of the cult objects and deities with demons and pollution, the statement of Theodoret with respect to Marcellus of Apamea's temple destructions: "No sooner did the multitude hear of the flight of the hostile demon than they broke out into a hymn of praise to God,"[93] would resound again in a modern time and in the same world.

The Taliban and the Buddhas of Bamiyan; ISIS and the Tomb of Jonah

The Taliban and the Buddhas of Bamiyan: In an act of "archaeological terrorism" the supreme leader of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Mullah Muhammed Omar, announced in early 2001 the impending destruction of the two colossal statues of Buddha in Bamiyan Province, 230 kilometres (150 miles) from the capital of Kabul.[94] Mullah Omar issued a ruling, on 26 February 2001, shortly before the destruction began against un-Islamic graven images, which means all idolatrous images of humans and animals. Despite worldwide condemnation and pleas to refrain from doing so, on the grounds of the heritage value of the statues (it is a World Heritage site), and from the side of Muslim clerics elsewhere that Mullah Omar's interpretation of Islamic law is wrong-headed and damaging to the image of Islam, on 2 March the Taliban started the destruction. When anti-aircraft and tank fire did not succeed in breaking up the Buddhas, truck-loads of dynamite were brought in to complete the destruction. Kofi Annan, the then United Nations Secretary-General, met with the Taliban's foreign minister, Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil, in Islamabad in an attempt to save what was widely valued as prime examples of Afghanistan's cultural heritage. The Taliban stood firm and even held that all other "moveable statues" – including more than a dozen smaller Buddha statues in the Kabul Museum – had also been destroyed.[95] In a scene reminiscent of the Christian mobs destroying pagan temples, as one observer stated: when the Buddhas finally crumbled, Taliban fighters "were firing weapons into the air, they were dancing and they brought nine cows to slaughter as a sacrifice."

What are the Buddhas of Bamiyan? The "Buddhas" refer to two colossal statues of the Buddha (the taller one standing about 53m tall, represented the Buddha Vairocana, the "Light Shining throughout the Universe Buddha"; the lesser statue of 36m, the Buddha Sakyamuni) cut into the sandstone cliffs facing the Bamiyan valley between the two mountain ranges of the Hindu Kush and the Koh-i-Baba, somewhere between the 3rd and 5th centuries CE. The original statues were impressive, as we learn from early descriptions:

> visible for miles, with copper masks for faces and copper-covered hands. Vairocana's robes were painted red and Sakyamuni's blue. These towering, transcendental images were key symbols in the rise of Mahayana Buddhist teachings, which emphasized the ability of everyone, not just monks, to achieve enlightenment.[96]

The site of the Buddhas in the long Kabul valley, but Afghanistan in general, was historically a place of stopover on travels along the Silk Road, connecting the various empires of India, China, Sassanian Persia, and later also the Muslim caliphates of Rashidun and then the Ummayads. It is particularly during the existence of the Kushan Empire (roughly 2nd century BCE to 3rd century CE), which spanned the current Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and stretched into northern India, that a syncretistic culture and religious environment developed in an empire that thrived commercially and culturally. Buddhists, Jains, Hindus, and Zoroastrians were present and established centres of learning. There is some evidence of Judaeo-Persians and Manichaeans, and later Nestorian Christians were also established in monasteries. The emergence of Mahayana Buddhism saw the establishment of monasteries amassing great wealth from endowments such that they were able to fund artworks and exerted a visual presence in the landscape with numerous stupas and images of Buddhist deities in the style now known as Gandharan Buddhist Art.[97]

In the context of the historical encounters, the Muslim conquerors of the 7th century onwards always had a difficult relationship to the Buddhists in the greater Afghanistan region. Even though they extended protection to other "religions of the Book" (and Buddhism certainly was one, and was also against idolatry), Muslims were hostile to Buddhists, calling them idol worshippers. Thus the Buddhists found themselves on the receiving end of constant repression. In more contemporary times, the caves around the Buddhas, where in centuries before Buddhist monks stayed, now refugees from the wars in Afghanistan took cover. And the area itself is contaminated by the fact that it lies at a point where some of the fighting for Kabul was fiercest in the armed conflict of various actors against the Taliban:

> Bamiyan was a base of the Taliban's opposition – Northern Alliance's "rebel" forces led by ousted Afghani President Borhanuddin Rabbani.

> How could the Taliban better humiliate the locals than to destroy their heritage? An earlier attempt to destroy the Buddhas came when the Taliban took control of Bamiyan in 1998. Then, the local Taliban governor talked the military commander out of the atrocity.[98]

Nevertheless, as Richard Foltz puts it, in spite of the area's rich cultural history into which treasury a range of religious traditions contributed, after the Islamization of the Silk Road, it was a melting pot no more. And herein lies part of the answer to the violence done to the Bamiyan Buddhas: the Taliban excized the other symbolically and physically from the landscape to achieve a "pure land" remaining.[99]

ISIS and the Tomb of Jonah: The case of ISIS and the destruction of the tomb of Jonah is equally a tale of entwinement of religion, culture, and politics.[100] The tomb of Jonah in Mosul is, according to very old tradition, the place where the prophet Jonah was buried after his preaching mission to Nineveh, as narrated in the Hebrew Bible. Present-day Mosul lies on the site of the ancient Assyrian city of Nineveh, and according to old legend, Jonah was buried in the city, in a site called Tell Nebi Yunus, or Hill of the Prophet Jonah. In pre-Christian literature the burial site of Jonah was identified somewhere in Palestine, but since early Christianity this was a pilgrimage site where a church was built over the purported burial place. The church was converted to a mosque after the Muslim conquest, and the present (destroyed) structure dated from the 14th century. The mosque also housed relics connected to Jonah, such as remnants of the whale that swallowed him as well as one whale tooth. The destruction of the heritage site was again met with widespread condemnation, since Jonah was, after all, a figure core to all three monotheistic book religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.[101] This was, however, not the only symbolic cleansing taking place. In the month preceding, ISIS fighters destroyed a number of other Sunni holy sites in Mosul, as well as seven Shiite places of worship in the predominantly Shiite Turkmen city of Tal Afar, about 31 miles (50 kilometres) west of Mosul.[102]

The destruction of holy sites is not an act of arbitrary, willful violence aimed at cultural heritage in the region. It is very much embedded in and flowing from the history of the rise of ISIS in Iraq. The aim of ISIS was to re-establish an end-time caliphate in the region of Syria-Iraq with a capital in the city of Raqqa, an ancient settlement largely refounded in Hellenistic times and remaining an important city through Roman, Byzantine, and Muslim periods of control into the present day. Part of the allure of the city was its strategic role as capital of the Ummayad Caliphate at the transition from the 8th to 9th centuries into the Abbasid Caliphate. The caliphate was called out in 2014 with the installation of Abubakr al-Baghdadi as caliph. The purpose of establishing the caliphate is to create a space for the end-time clash between "Rome" (= Christianity) and Islam, as well as to provoke the final eschatological showdown.[103] In the eschatological lore that animates ISIS ideologically, the city of Dabiq in northern Syria near the Turkish border will be

the site of the end-time apocalyptic war. In the *Shahih Muslim Hadith* the unfolding of end-time events are portrayed:

> Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: The Last Hour would not come until the Romans would land at al-A'maq or in Dabiq. An army consisting of the best (soldiers) of the people of the earth at that time will come from Medina (to counteract them). . . . And when they would come to Syria, he would come out while they would be still preparing themselves for battle drawing up the ranks. Certainly, the time of prayer shall come and then Jesus (peace be upon him) son of Mary would descend and would lead them in prayer. When the enemy of Allah would see him, it would (disappear) just as the salt dissolves itself in water and if he (Jesus) were not to confront them at all, even then it would dissolve completely, but Allah would kill them by his hand and he would show them their blood on his lance.[104]

These are, however, not decontextual, unanchored millennial apocalyptic imaginaries. ISIS emerged from the chaos that enveloped Iraq following the 2003 US-led invasion and subsequent breakdown of any semblance of functioning polity (some ISIS leaders, like Baghdadi himself, were inmates of the American prison Camp Bucca in Iraq at the end of the military invasion). In fact, it is a declared intention of ISIS to establish a caliphate without borders, in that it refuses to acknowledge the national borders that were established in the wake of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War in 1918. It is particularly the infamous secret Sykes-Picot agreement between France and Britain (with the approval of Russia) which divided up the ex-Ottoman territories into national states regardless of internal tribal cohesions, as well as into dominions and spheres of influence – the post-1920 history of Iraq was a particularly tragic example of this, basically being turned into a giant extraction field by France and Britain. Hence the view of the Sykes-Picot legacy as example of Western imperialism, but also that the borderless ISIS (that refuses to understand itself nor function as a normal state) is intent on restoring the original idea of Umma as the community of Muslims.[105] It was the traumatic experience of the invasion of Iraq and its aftermath that caused many to see the signs of the end all around them – the time for the end-time apocalypse was at hand.

By deliberately hearkening back to and re-enacting Salafi theology and practice, ISIS is turning the clock back to the earliest purest period of Islam. The Salafis or Wahhabis are an austere form of Islamic faith and practice oriented around a very literal interpretation of the Qur'an.[106] This is an Islamic theology that regards all innovation not accounted for in the earliest layers of tradition as idolatry, *takfir*, among which veneration of saints, seeking their intercession, and visiting their tombs, all of which are considered idolatry (*shirk*), impurities, and innovations in Islam (*bid'ah*). In this sense, all Muslims who do not hold to a strict practice are

declared non-Muslim in the eyes of ISIS (this counts for more than 200 million Shiite Muslims, and most of the Sunni world).

On a practical level, since the earliest days of Wahhabism, "archaeological terrorism" has been practiced against all religious installations and practices not allowed for in the Qur'an or earliest traditions. Upon the conquest of Medina, all the sites related to the family of the Prophet (except his own house) were razed, and in more recent times, Salafists in Saudia Arabia and elsewhere have been systematically destroying remnants of Islamic religious buildings and sites from the Ottoman era. It is a large-scale symbolic cleansing of any accruals to the faith and practice not accounted for in the Qur'an. In this manner ISIS projects a self-understanding of being back in the beginning years of Islam, being a small community of true believers amidst a large surrounding society of non-Muslims, in a state of *takfir*. The caliphate, then, is not just a political entity but also a vehicle for salvation. In this jihadist vision of ISIS, and jihadism is envisioned as a permanent state of religious obeisance, "the End of Days is a leitmotif of its propaganda."[107] The Qur'an itself is intensely interested in the events of the last days plotting out the various signs of the end-time, even if it does not offer a coherent narrative of end-time events (the Hadith literature is even more interested in the end-time): the appearance of the Dajjal (the Muslim Antichrist), the return of Jesus to fight and kill him, the appearance of the Mahdi (the Sunni Muslim messianic figure), the appearance of the beast from the Earth, the rising of the sun from the west, the appearance of Yajuj and Majuj (the biblical Gog and Magog), and the final destruction of the world – these events herald the Day of Judgement.[108]

In the official magazine of ISIS, *Dabiq* Issue 7 of 1436 A.H., the essay "The Extinction of the Grayzone" puts the point across very well. The "grey zone" is the state in which Muslims live in the world, not only in Western societies but also in majority Muslim countries.[109] Here they have to conform to state laws and cultural customs, and show allegiance to their host nations and communities, hence the picture on the cover page of Muslims carrying cards reading "Je suis Charlie," in solidarity with the French after the Charlie Hebdo murders. This grey zone is "the hideout of hypocrites."[110] This is the zone where Muslims waver between full adherence to Islam and conversion to Western religion (by implication, Christianity). Since the Prophet is understood in the Qur'an as a divider, there does not exist a real possibility for existence as Muslim in the grey zone:

> The destruction of the grayzone is comparable to the division resulting from the Islamic message when it was first conveyed by the Messenger (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). As the angels said when they appeared before the Prophet (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) while he was sleeping, "Muhammad is a divider" and "Muhammad divided the people" [Sahīh al-Bukhārī].[111]

The terror attacks in recent years in France, London, Brussels, and Madrid, to name a few, have the purpose to put "grayzone" Muslims on the spot and force

them to choose either apostasy or return to the Salafist Islam of ISIS and join the end-time struggle. Hence the title of the issue, which offers a commentary on the picture on the front cover, "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy." In the vision of the author of the *Dabiq* article, immersion in Western society is to be a hypocrite or an about-to-be apostate. The capitalist West with its military and economic power, and concomitant deviant and debased lifestyle, is the embodiment of Shaytan or the Dajjal (the Antichrist).

Thus, violence directed at religious institutions and persons is but an enactment of the process of the struggle of the End of Days on the way to Paradise. The Taliban in Afghanistan and ISIS in Iraq and Syria have been acting out a similar programme of purifying the land and impressing on the religious landscape a stark division between good and evil – it is an unmixing of the mixed state, to which is precisely what the programme of ISIS, announced as the "extinction of the grayzone," amounts.[112]

Conclusion

Four case studies traced the contours of symbolic revolts issuing in violence and destruction, the violent reordering of social spaces, across four very different contexts and periods. Shimmering below the surface is the fact that all four cases involved an apocalyptic, millennial vision of a kind. It is a typical misconception to understand apocalypticism, millennialism, and eschatology as things pertaining to the end of time – even if eschatology means the lore about the end. Millennialism and apocalypticism are *imaginaries of the now*, symbolic revolts in discourse and conceptuality that, at some point, can translate – and in certain contexts does translate – into physical revolts. Hence the almost overly many examples of violent millennialist movements.[113] Millennialism is a strongly evaluative social discourse, embodying strong sentiments of disaffection, dissociation, and alienation. It is shaped and intensified by heightened concentration on practices of purification and dedication to divine purpose as reconstructed and reimagined by the affected group through strategies of remythologization and re-traditionalization – typical of apocalyptic imaginaries is a conceptual repristination of an earlier period of greater purity, whether this purity be ethnic, moral, or ideological.

In studies of apocalypticism and millennialism[114] it is the conditions of social alienation and marginalization that feed millennialist worldviews, and in which they get established and deeply rooted. It is from these conditions that the sentiment arises that "the world stinks," a strong sense of aversion that manifests in an imagination of a catastrophic end to the world as it is, and a catastrophic process of restoration, which is labelled "catastrophic millennialism."[115] The imagination of a catastrophic end of the world as preparation for restoration is exactly a graphic explication of the negative affective relationship towards the surrounding context by those who adopt these apocalyptic visions. In comparative perspective, the introductory essay to the *Oxford Handbook of Millennialism* by Catherine Wessinger demonstrates the pervasive spread of such millennialist discourses

across cultures and contexts, but also that the conditions giving rise to these are very much comparable circumstances with comparable outcomes.

An apocalyptic worldview is essentially a violent worldview. The sentiments of disaffection projected on to the social context invite a strong emotional reaction and channelling of destructive energies towards what is seen as undesirable states of things obtaining in the world. Such a worldview is not only a social commentary on the state of things, it is also implicitly a call to arms to marshal the troops, so to speak, in an attempt to eradicate the grey zone, the area of compromises that gets erased under the pressure of societies that bifurcate under identity, ideological, and economic stresses and tensions. Purification is the "simplification" of the social aggregation.

Notes

1 The history of South Africa since the original Dutch settling of the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 is a history of conflict between various population groups, mostly understood as a racial conflict between European settler colonists and the black African indigenous population (the racial history of the population make-up of South Africa is more complex than this – it includes significant numbers of South-East Asians from the East Indies, Indians, Chinese, and the mixed-race group called the Cape Coloureds, each with its own trajectory of intersecting with the others in the making not only of the population of South Africa but also with the political history of South Africa). Resistance to colonial rule led to constant flare-ups of violent conflict through the 19th and 20th centuries, but escalated dramatically since 1960 after the Sharpeville massacre peaking in the period 1976 (the June 16 student uprising) through the mid-1980s with the repeated states of emergency. The states of conflict ended with the unbanning of the African National Congress in 1990 and the start of negotiations towards a political resolution of the crisis and the subsequent negotiated settlement that led to the inauguration of the post-Apartheid ANC government in 1994 and the adoption of the South African Constitution in 1996 with its Bill of Rights.

2 The campaign originally started as the Rhodes Must Fall campaign, but quickly evolved into the Twitter hashtag of #RhodesMustFall, which convention was quickly taken up for any other such campaign of resistance and protest, hence the inclusive moniker of #[Enter]MustFall.

3 The series of rolling protests also served to highlight the steady disaggregation of South African society. Not only has the original idea of the "Rainbow Nation," a term coined by Archbishop emeritus Desmond Tutu to indicate the arrival of a non-racial society after the fall of apartheid, been discredited. The protests also did not follow racial lines: there were black and white protesters supporting #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, and #ScienceMustFall, locally and overseas, just as there were black students and political commentators who criticised and condemned the protest movements, or at least the form they took. The speed with which the rolling protests engulfed South Africa makes any objective overview impossible, which is why the only way to document the protest movements is via online news media and social media posts. For some commentary on the original #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, see Amit Chauduri, "The Real Meaning of Rhodes Must Fall," *The Guardian*, March 16, 2016, sec. UK news, www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/16/the-real-meaning-of-rhodes-must-fall; Sam Dean, "Activist Behind Oxford University 'Rhodes Must Fall' Campaign Says He 'Should Have Whipped' White Student," *The Telegraph*, September 23, 2016, www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2016/09/23/activist-behind-

oxford-university-rhodes-must-fall-campaign-says/; Jenna Etheridge, "Permanent Removal of Uct Rhodes Statue Gets Green Light," *News24*, October 31, 2016, www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/permanent-removal-of-uct-rhodes-statue-gets-green-light-20161031; "'The Rhodes Statue Must Fall': UCT's Radical Rebirth | Daily Maverick," n.d., www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-03-13-the-rhodes-statue-must-fall-ucts-radical-rebirth/#; "Rhodes Must Fall," *Wikipedia*, February 11, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rhodes_Must_Fall&oldid=764877321; Vashna Jagarnath, "Op-Ed: The Crisis in Our Universities Is a Symptom of a Wider Social Crisis," *Daily Maverick*, October 6, 2016, www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-10-06-op-ed-the-crisis-in-our-universities-is-a-symptom-of-a-wider-social-crisis/; Brian Watermeyer, "Making Sense of the Student Protest Movement: Saying YES to Anger, NO to Hatred," Daily Maverick, *First Thing: Opinion Piece*, November 1, 2016, http://firstthing.dailymaverick.co.za/article.php?id=82412&cid=2016-10-31#.WBho9iRoBP0; Ayesha Omar, "Op-Ed: Moving Beyond the Discourse of Fees and Free Education," *Daily Maverick*, October 3, 2016 www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2016-10-03-op-ed-moving-beyond-the – discourse-of-fees-and-free-education/#.WBu6vCRoBP0. The #ScienceMustFall movement erupted on social media with a video on the decolonialising of science recording a debate on the campus of the University of Cape Town that went viral: www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9SiRNibD14 (at 1:14); see also the (positive) evaluation by Karin Brodie, "Yes, Mathematics Can Be Decolonised: Here's How to Begin," *The Conversation, Africa Pilot*, October 13, 2016 http://theconversation.com/yes-mathematics-can-be-decolonised-heres-how-to-begin-65963. At the University of South Africa the College of Human Sciences hosted for a number of years running a Decoloniality Summer School and have now established a Curriculum Transformation Committee that will formulate a Curriculum Transformation Framework in order to oversee transformation towards transformed and decolonialised teaching, research, and community outreach, Rivonia Naidu-Hoffmeester, "CHS to Address Demand for Decolonised Education," *E-News*, February 22, 2017, https://staff.unisa.ac.za/e-connect/e-news/2017/02/22/chs-to-address-demand-for-decolonised-education.

4 Brian Kamanzi, "'Rhodes Must Fall' – Decolonisation Symbolism – What Is Happening at UCT, South Africa?" *The Postcolonialist*, March 29, 2015, http://postcolonialist.com/civil-discourse/rhodes-must-fall-decolonisation-symbolism-happening-uct-south-africa/.

5 I provide a fuller description of the context and the protest movements in Gerhard van den Heever, "Naming the Moment. #ScienceMustFall, Power-Discourse-Knowledge, and Thinking Religion as Social Definition," *Religion & Theology* 23.3–4 (2016): 237–73. This citation is from p. 241.

6 A fuller biographical history of Cecil John Rhodes's life and career can be found in "Cecil John Rhodes," *South African History Online*, 2011, www.sahistory.org.za/people/cecil-john-rhodes.

7 For the text of the "Confession" and the first clause of the will, see Robert Alan Kimball, "1877: Cecil Rhodes, 'Confession of Faith,'" n.d., http://pages.uoregon.edu/kimball/Rhodes-Confession.htm.

8 Van den Heever, "Naming the Moment," 243–45.

9 Keith Hart and Vishnu Padayachee, "A History of South African Capitalism in National and Global Perspective," *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 81/82 (2013): 55–85, doi:10.1353/trn.2013.0004, here 55.

10 The notorious Natives Land Act no. 27 of 1913 was merely one in a series of legislative moves, first in the Cape Colony government then later in the Union of South Africa, to regulate black African land ownership (and deprive them of it), and which later led to the establishment of segregated "group areas." Political disenfranchisement went hand

in hand with this. In effect, the 1913 Act (as well as the later Native Trust and Land Act, no. 18 of 1936) prohibited black Africans from buying or renting land in 93% of South Africa. As to job reservation to preserve better paying employment for skilled and unskilled white workers, this was a deliberate strategy of the Union government to make possible the profitability of the industrial sector by depressing the wage bill for unskilled black workers; the Union of South Africa, *Report of the Economic and Wage Commission* (Cape Town: Government Printer. U.G. 14 of 1926) is cited in Nicoli Nattrass and Jeremy Seekings, "The Economy and Poverty in the Twentieth Century," in *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, vol. 2, 1885–1994, ed. Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager, and Bill Nasson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 518–72.

11 Some overviews on the social, economic, and material transformations taking place in South Africa between the end of the 19th century and the end of the Second World War: Philip Bonner, "South African Society and Culture, 1910–1948," 254–318; Nicoli Nattrass and Jeremy Seekings, "The Economy and Poverty in the Twentieth Century," 518–72; Tlhalo Raditlhalo, "Modernity, Culture, and Nation," 573–99, all in *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, vol. 2, 1885–1994, ed. Robert Ross, Anne Kelk Mager, and Bill Nasson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For an overview of the history of capitalism in South Africa since the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1884–1886 till the present day, see Hart and Padayachee, "A History of South African Capitalism."

12 The foregoing derives from Van den Heever, "Naming the Moment," 243–5.

13 Masana Ndinga-Kanga, "Poo-Pooing the Rhodes Historical Narrative," *Mail & Guardian. Thoughtleader, Blogs – Opinion – Analysis*, March 11, 2015, http://thoughtleader.co.za/masanandingakanga/2015/03/11/poo-pooing-the-rhodes-historical-narrative.

14 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972), 109ff. See also the introduction to Barthes's thought in Graham Allen, *Roland Barthes*, Routledge Critical Thinkers (London: Routledge, 2003), esp. 36–8 and 42–5 on mythologies and the semiology of myth.

15 Allen, *Roland Barthes*, 43.

16 Bruce Lincoln, *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). The original appeared in 1989.

17 Lincoln, *Discourse*, 3–5.

18 On the destruction and profanation of churches and religious symbols and artifacts, see the much more detailed description offered by Bruce Lincoln in the chapter, 'Revolutionary Exhumations in Spain', Lincoln, *Discourse*, 103–27. In general, on the Spanish Civil War, see among others, Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction*, Very Short Introductions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936–1939* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006); Stanley G. Payne, *The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933–1936: Origins of the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic 1931–1936* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1978); Hilari Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense: The Catholic Church and the Spanish Civil War*, trans. Gerald Howson (London: Routledge, 2007).

19 A detailed description of the tensions building up Spain is found in Payne, *Collapse*, 9–25, "The Republican Project."

20 On the swings between liberal and reactionary, Left and Right regimes, see Payne, *Collapse*, 3.

21 Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2.

22 Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, 2–3.

23 Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, 4.

24 Payne, *Collapse*, 1.
25 Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, 8; Beevor, *Battle for Spain*, 80.
26 For the various internal military conflicts during the 19th century, see Payne, *Collapse*, 2.
27 Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, 4.
28 Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, 8–9.
29 Payne, *Collapse*, 16.
30 As Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, puts it: "But what caused most popular offence was the Republic's interference with the Catholic culture that framed social identities and daily life: for example, the way the new authorities restricted religious processions or the ringing of church bells, or their interference with ceremonies and celebrations organized around local saints or local appellations of the Virgin Mary. This was a world of private and family devotions, but also of communal piety, where deeply felt emotions had as much to do with an allegiance to a way of life and a specific place (the immediate locality or *patria chica*) as with religious faith or spirituality per se. Or rather, loyalty to these things was indivisible" (10–11). More detailed descriptions of this particular aspect of the civil war, namely the anticlerical and anti-Church actions of the broad republican movement, can be found in Richard Maddox, "Revolutionary Anticlericalism and Hegemonic Processes in an Andalusian Town, August 1936," *American Ethnologist* 22.1 (1995): 125–43; Clifton Amsbury, "Reflections on Anticlericalism and Power Relations in Spain," *American Ethnologist* 22.3 (1995): 614–15; Julio de la Cueva, "Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities Against the Clergy During the Spanish Civil War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33.3 (1998): 355–69.
31 A more detailed list of profanations, desecrations, destructions of Church property, and killings, together with some photographs of such acts of vandalism and desecration, is found in the online blog, Mark Laskey, "No Gods, No Masters. Blasphemy and Anticlerical Violence During the Spanish Civil War," *Illuminating Shadows Dark Folkore, Strange History and Morbid Curiosities*, January 14, 2014, http://illuminating-shadows.blogspot.com/2014/01/no-gods-no-masters.html. The article synthesizes a wealth of information from a number of Spanish historical publications.
32 "Shots of War: Photojournalism During the Spanish Civil War," August 1936, https://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/swphotojournalism/m629-f02-19.html.
33 Maddox, "Revolutionary Anticlericalism," 128. Describing events in Aracena, but applicable to other theatres of conflict as well.
34 Payne, *Collapse*, 16.
35 Payne, *Collapse*.
36 Laskey, "No Gods, No Masters."
37 Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de La Persecucion Religiosa En España 1936–1939* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2004), cited in Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, "Killing God, Executing Christ: Modern Weapons for Old Dreams," New York University, February 26, 2013, http://roderic.uv.es/handle/10550/28757. Montero Moreno spoke of "a martyrdom of things."
38 Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, 28 (my emphasis).
39 de la Cueva, "Religious Persecution," 367–8 (my emphasis).
40 Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, 55.
41 Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*. The poem was published by Ediciones Jerarquiá, 1938. In a review of the work it was labelled "the greatest achievement of Spanish genius in the twentieth century up to that date," unsurprisingly, in the Jesuit review *Razón y Fe*, vol. 115 (1938), 133–45, Raguer, *Gunpowder and Incense*, 55 n. 11.
42 Laskey, "No Gods, No Masters," citing Daniel Sueiro and Bernardo Díaz Nosty, *Historia del franquismo* (Barcelona: Sarpe, 1986), 71.

43 de la Cueva, "Religious Persecution," 359.
44 de la Cueva, "Religious Persecution," 359.
45 See for instance, "The Visual Front: Posters of the Spanish Civil War from the UCSD's Southworth Collection," https://libraries.ucsd.edu/speccoll/visfront/nacionales.html.
46 Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, 29.
47 Graham, *The Spanish Civil War*, 29. For instance, the famous Spanish playwright Federico Garcia Lorca was killed because of his homosexuality.
48 de la Cueva, "Religious Persecution," 365.
49 On Late Roman monotheism, see Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede, eds., *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
50 See for instance the overviews of these transitions in Bruce Lincoln, "Epilogue," in *Ancient Religions*, ed. Sara Iles Johnston (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 241–51, now republished as "Ancient and Post-Ancient Religions," in id., *Gods and Demons, Priests and Scholars. Critical Explorations in the History of Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 73–82; Guy G. Stroumsa, *The End of Sacrifice: Religious Transformations in Late Antiquity*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 28–55; and Jörg Rüpke, "Patterns of Religious Change in the Roman Empire," in *The Changing Face of Judaism, Christianity, and Other Greco-Roman Religions in Antiquity*, ed. Ian H. Henderson and Gerbern S. Oegema, Studien zu Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit 2 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006), 13–33.
51 Glen W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity*, Thomas Spencer Jerome Lectures 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 52.
52 Stephen Benko, *The Virgin Goddess: Studies in the Pagan and Christian Roots of Mariology*, Studies in the History of Religions 59 (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Vasiliki Limberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Making of Christian Constantinople* (London: Routledge, 1994).
53 Sarapis as Joseph: Rufinus, *Hist. eccl*. 11.23, Rufinus of Aquilea, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia: Books 10 and 11*, trans. Philip R. Amidon (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 82; see also Frank R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization: C. 370–529. Volume 1*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 115 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 135. In all cases following, I have made use of English translations only, most of which are available in the public domain.
54 See in general, over a long career, the work of Abraham J. Malherbe, *Light from the Gentiles: Hellenistic Philosophy and Early Christianity. Collected Essays, 1959–2012*, ed. Carl R. Holladay et al., 2 vols., Supplements to Novum Testamentum 150 (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg, eds., *Stoicism in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010); Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages. I. Stoicism in Classical Latin Literature*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 34 (Leiden: Brill, 1985); Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages. II. Stoicism in Christian Latin Thought Through the Sixth Century*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1985).
55 Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity*, 41.
56 Robert Shorrock, *The Myth of Paganism: Nonnus, Dionysus and the World of Late Antiquity*, Classical Literature and Society (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2011); David Hernández de la Fuente, "Parallels Between Dionysos and Christ in Late Antiquity: Miraculous Healings in Nonnus' Dionysiaca," in *Redefining Dionysos*, ed. Alberto Bernabé et al., MythosEikonPoiesis 5 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 464–87; Domenico Accorinti, ed., *Brill's Companion to Nonnus of Panopolis*, Brill's Companions in Classical Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2016); and Konstantinos Spanoudakis, ed., *Nonnus of Panopolis in Context. Poetry and Cultural Milieu in Late Antiquity with a*

Section on Nonnus and the Modern World, Trends in Classics – Supplementary Volumes 25 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

57 Jitse H.F. Dijkstra, "The Religious Background of Nonnus," in Accorinti, *Companion*, 75.

58 Jitse H.F. Dijkstra, "The Religious Background of Nonnus," in Accorinti, *Companion*, 77.

59 Tim Whitmarsh, *Battling the Gods: Atheism in the Ancient World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 253. Whitmarsh cites here Mark Edwards, "The Beginnings of Christianization," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 142; the full citation is worth noting: "It was easy to be a Christian and something else, so long as one was not a severe philosopher or a bishop. The notion that Christianity is one, perhaps the best, of many roads to God was entertained by Zosimus the alchemist of Panopolis" continuing on with a description of cultic veneration by "pagans", Jews, and Christians at the shrine of Mamre, the site of Abraham's vision of God. It is entirely tantalizing to imagine the language of the widespread (and numerically well-attested) cult of Theos Hypsistos (the Most High God) furnishing the language for eventual Christian creeds, as in the inscription from Oenoanda: "Born of itself, untaught, without a mother, unshakeable, not contained in a name" [α]ὐτοφυής, ἀδίδακτος, ἀμήτωρ, ἀστυφέλικτος, οὔνομα μὴ χωρῶν, πολυώνυμος, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων, τοῦτο θεός· μεικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερὶς ἄνγ̣ελοι ἡμεῖς. (SEG 27–933). L. Robert has argued that these three lines were said by Lactantius to have been part of an oracle delivered by Apollo of Klaros, also occurring in another oracular response to the question of the nature of the god Apollo, cf. the note to the published inscription. Echoes of this language in Christian creeds: see for instance the "Clemens Trinitas" 5th/6th century from southern France, Denzinger/Hünermann #73–74.

60 Christopher P. Jones, *Between Pagan and Christian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014). I follow Jones's lead (as with other authors too) in using the term "pagan/paganism" in scare quotes. It is, of course, a term devised by Christian authors and initially never used by "pagans" for themselves. The term evokes a unity of religious identity where none existed – what went by the label of "pagan" was incredibly diverse: polytheist *and* monotheist; urban versus rural; mostly indicating traditional customs. Jones: "It is best therefore not to think of the distinction between pagans and Christians as a single spectrum running, like modern party-lines, from full or 'committed' Christians at one end and 'committed' pagans at the other, with 'center-pagans' and 'center-Christians' toward the middle. Who or what counts as 'pagan' depends very much on the outlook of the contemporary observer. . . . Paganism is always a blurred and shifting category that defies neat taxonomies" (7). See also Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Isabella Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians: In the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine* (London: Viking, 1986).

61 Frank R. Trombley, "Christianity in Asia Minor: Observations on the Epigraphy," in *The Cambridge History of Religions in the Ancient World*, ed. Michele R. Salzman and Marvin A. Sweeney, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 341–68; here p. 346.

62 Peter R.L. Brown, "Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman Aristocracy," *Journal of Roman Studies* 51.1–2 (1961): 1–11; see also John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital: Rome in the Fourth Century*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. chapter 7, 260ff.

63 The explicit legislation against "pagan" religion and sacrifices under Constantine's sons and dynasty seemed mainly aimed at the aspect of augury and divination; even among "pagan" intellectuals there had been a debate on the efficacy and desirability of animal sacrifices, cf. Neil McLynn, "Pagans in a Christian Empire," in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 575–7.

64 Mark Lee, "Traditional Religions," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 168–76. There are three versions of the vision of Constantine: the first recounted in the Latin Panegyrist 6.21.4; C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors. The* Panegyrici Latini, The Transformation of the Classical Heritage (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 248, relating it to a vision of the sun at a temple of Apollo in southern France; Lactantius, *Mort*. 44, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, Homily, And Liturgies*, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950), 739; Eusebius, *V. Const*. 2.27–31, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2 vol. 1, Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine*, trans. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 1240–44. Hereafter respectively *ANF* 7 and *NPNF* 2.1.

65 David M. Gwynn, *Christianity in the Later Roman Empire: A Sourcebook*, Bloomsbury Sources in Ancient History (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 142.

66 Eusebius, "Constantine's Edict to the People of the Provinces Concerning the Error of Polytheism," *V. Const*. 2.48ff, the citation from 2.60, *NPNF* 2.1, 1273.

67 "Constantine, like all emperors, was concerned about the subversive threat of magic and divination. He also demonstrated a missionary vigor in closing certain pagan sanctuaries that appeared immoral or were in other ways particularly offensive to Christians. Thus a ban on sacred prostitution led to the closure of temples at Aphaca and at Heliopolis in Phoenicia. The temple of the popular healing god Asclepius at Aegae in Cilicia was pulled down, and offensive pagan altars and statues removed from the holy site of the Oak-Tree of Mamre near Hebron, where God had appeared to Abraham," (reference to Eusebius, *V. Const*. 3.51–58), Stephen Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire, AD 284–641: The Transformation of the Ancient World* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 262.

68 *C.Th*. 15.12.1. The translation used for *C.Th*. throughout this study is that of Oliver J. Thatcher, ed., *The Library of Original Sources, vol. 4: The Early Medieval World* (Milwaukee, WI: University Research Extension Co., 1907), 69–71; online: https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/codex-theod1.asp.

69 *C.Th* 16.5.1.

70 *C.Th* 16.10.4.

71 *C.Th*. 16.10.2 (my emphasis).

72 The literature on this is almost inexhaustible. For a survey, see Mitchell, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, 242ff; also Frank R. Trombley, "Paganism in the Greek World at the End of Antiquity: The Case of Rural Anatolia and Greece," *Harvard Theological Review* 78.3/4 (1985): 327–52. That it was in many cases impossible to distinguish between "ordinary" cultural practices like local traditional festivals and "pagan" religion, is evident from the longevity of traditional festivals like the Brumalia and Saturnalia, the winter solstice and the spring equinox, the Lupercalia (and the scandal surrounding its celebration in Rome), New Year's Day and the Kalends, the widely celebrated Maiuma – festivities all deplored by Christian preachers but left alone by imperial legislation. As the *Theodosian Code* explicitly states: "When by our salutary law we forbade the practice of sacrilegious rites, we were not giving our authority

for the abolition of the festivals which bring the citizens together for their communal pleasure. *In consequence we decree that, according to the ancient customs, these forms of entertainment should be available to the people, although without any sacrifice or illegal superstition*" (*C.Th*. 16.10.17 = *C.J*. 1.11.4) (my emphasis). While animal sacrifices were banned, and no longer performed publicly, they now got transposed to the "private sphere" of cultural festivities. On the difficulty of distinguishing between "pagan religion" and culture, see Mitchell, *A History of the Later Roman Empire*, 247–9.

73 Trombley, "Paganism," 329; see also the chapter of Shepardson in this volume.

74 The text cited from Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization 1*, 11.

75 The text cited from Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization 1*, 11 (my emphasis).

76 The translation is from J. Vanderspoel, "Symmachus. Relation 3," online: http://people.ucalgary.ca/~vandersp/Courses/texts/sym-amb/symrel3f.html.

77 Symmachus, *Third Relation*, 8 (my emphasis). Reality was more complex: Constantius had reduced the role of the Senate in the governance of the empire because of their perceived inefficiency in providing solid support in the Western Empire for the emperor, and his promotion of "pagan" aristocrats to prefectoral positions had less to do with conciliation with "pagans" than with the realpolitik of appointing trustworthy officials, Robert Owen Edbrooke, "The Visit of Constantius II to Rome in 357 and Its Effect on the Pagan Roman Senatorial Aristocracy," *American Journal of Philology* 97.1 (1976): 40–61.

78 Translation from W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles. Edited from Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum and Other Libraries*, vol. 2 (London; Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1871), 3–60, online: www.tertullian.org/fathers/apocryphal_acts_02_john_history.htm. The *Syriac History of John* originated in the 5th/6th century, so most probably recounted the destruction of the Artemision from contemporary witness retrojected back to the time of the apostle John. For introduction to the text: Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha: Writings Relating to the Apostles, Apocalypses and Related Subjects*, trans. Robert McLachlan Wilson (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 435–6.

79 Clive Foss, *Ephesus After Antiquity: A Late Antique, Byzantine and Turkish City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 86–7.

80 *Prudentius*, vol. II, trans. H.J. Thompson, Loeb Classical Library 398 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 44.

81 P.G. Walsh, trans., *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*, Ancient Christian Writers 40 (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), 65.

82 Libanius, *Selected Orations, Volume II*, trans. A.F. Norman, Loeb Classical Library 452 (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1977).

83 *Lives of Philosophers*, 471, in Philostratus and Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists, Lives of Philosophers*, Loeb Classical Library 134, trans. Wilmer C. Wright (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921).

84 Cited after Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization 1*, 131.

85 Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.22, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2, volume 3, *Theodoret, Jerome, Gennadius, and Rufinus: Historical Writings*, trans. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 339. A detailed description of the events leading up to the riot resulting in the destruction of the Serapeum is found in Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict*, rev. ed. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 128–72.

86 Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 132.

87 Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 132.

88 Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity*, 22–8.

89 See for more detailed argumentation Gerhard van den Heever, "Early Christian Discourses and Literature in North African Christianities in the Context of Hellenistic Judaism and Graeco-Roman Culture," in *The Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa*, ed. Elias Kifon Bongmba (London: Routledge, 2016), 61–78; Gerhard van den Heever, "The Spectre of a Jewish Baptist Movement. A Place for Jewish-Christianity?" *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi* 34.1 (2017): 43–69.

90 This is of course not to say that all of the literary and cultural production of Alexandrian Jews stem from the situation of crisis – the backbone of their literary achievements is still the Greek translation of the scriptural tradition, what became the Septuagint; one can mention other texts too, like the romance *Joseph and Aseneth*, or the fragments of poems, the tragic play on the theme of the exodus by Ezekiel. The Septuagint became the heritage for Christians as well, but I am most concerned here with that literary output that came to define the various positions inherent in emerging Christianity. And these were mostly the literature of crisis.

91 Henry A. Green, *The Economic and Social Origins of Gnosticism*, SBL Dissertation Series 77 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985), 113.

92 Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.22, *NPNF* 2.3, 339; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, *NPNF* 2.1, 1341.

93 Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.21, *NPNF* 2.3, 337.

94 The destruction of the Buddhas were widely reported. I refer here to only two fairly comprehensive online news reports: W.L. Rathje, "Why the Taliban Are Destroying Buddhas," *USA Today*, March 22, 2001, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/science/archaeology/2001-03-22-afghan-buddhas.htm; Ahmed Rashid, "After 1,700 Years, Buddhas Fall to Taliban Dynamite," *The Telegraph*, March 12, 2001, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1326063/After-1700-years-Buddhas-fall-to-Taliban-dynamite.html. The phrase "archaeological terrorism" comes from Rathje.

95 An UN ECOMOS project is aiming at repairing some of the destroyed statues.

96 Rathje, "Taliban." Descriptions of the Buddhas come from the travel memoirs of the 7th-century Chinese monk, Hsüan-Tsang (Xuanzang), Li Rongxi, trans., *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions* (Berkeley, CA: BDK America, 2006).

97 Xinru Liu, "Regional Study: Exchanges within the Silk Roads World System," in *The Cambridge World History Volume 4: A World with States, Empires and Networks 1200 BCE – 900 CE*, ed. Craig Benjamin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 462.

98 Rathje, "Taliban."

99 Richard Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Premodern Patterns of Globalization*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

100 A good commentary on the destruction of the tomb can be found in Mark Movsesian, "Why Did ISIS Destroy the Tomb of Jonah?" *First Things*, July 28, 2014, www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2014/07/why-did-isis-destroy-the-tomb-of-jonah. I use the conventional acronym ISIS for Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, although they also go by the acronym ISIL, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or by the Arabic acronym of Daesh.

101 In the Hebrew Bible there are two Jonahs, Jonah son of Amittai from Gath-Hepher, active in the northern kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II (c.786–746 BCE; 2 Kings 14:25); and the eponymous prophet of the Book of Jonah, who was sent to preach judgement to the people of Nineveh in Assyria. The two are certainly not the same person. In the Qur'an the applicable section is Surat Yunus, Surah 10.

102 Reports by Human Rights Watch, Dana Ford and Mohammed Tawfeeq, "Extremists Destroy Jonah's Tomb, Officials Say," *CNN*, July 25, 2014, www.cnn.com/2014/07/24/world/iraq-violence/index.html.

103 BBC Monitoring, "Dabiq: Why Is Syrian Town so Important for IS?" *BBC News*, October 4, 2016, sec. Middle East, www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-30083303; James Denselow, "Syria: Dabiq and ISIL's End of Times," *Aljazeera*, October 2016, www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/10/syria-dabiq-isil-times-161017052013796.html; Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*, March 2015, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/.

104 *Hadith Shahih Muslim* 41.9, Imam Muslim, trans. Abdul Hamid Siddiqui, Volume: The Book Pertaining to the Turmoil and Portents of the Last Hour (Kitab Al-Fitan wa Ashrat As-Sa`ah), online: www.theonlyquran.com/hadith/Sahih-Muslim/?volume=41&chapter=9. The whole book is devoted to detailed imaginings of how the end-time will play out, all 26 chapters of it.

105 On ISIS and Sykes-Picot: Richard Falk, "A New World Order? ISIS and the Sykes-Picot Backlash," *Foreign Policy Journal*, December 26, 2015, www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2015/12/26/a-new-world-order-isis-and-the-sykes-picot-backlash/; James Miller, "Why Islamic State Militants Care So Much About Sykes-Picot," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, May 16, 2016, www.rferl.org/a/why-islamic-state-cares-so-much-about-sykes-picot/27738467.html; Ian Bremmer, "How the Sykes-Picot Agreement Helped Make a Messed-Up Middle East," *Time*, May 18, 2016, http://time.com/4341059/sykes-picot-agreement-anniversary/.

106 Wahhabism is named after an 18th-century preacher and activist, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792). He started a reform movement in the remote, sparsely populated region of Najd, advocating a strict version of Islam. Salafism, the official Saudi version of this strict Islam, is the broader "fundamentalist" movement of which Wahhabism is an even stricter circle.

107 Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants."

108 David Cook, "Early Islamic and Classical Sunni and Shi'ite Apocalyptic Movements," in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 267–82.

109 For another discussion of the notion of "grey zone", see the chapter of de Wet in this volume.

110 "Extinction of the Grayzone," 55.

111 "Extinction of the Grayzone," 55.

112 On the impact of millennialist and apocalyptic thinking in contemporary Islam, especially with respect to the development of jihadist movements, see Jeffrey T. Kenney, "Millennialism and Radical Islamist Movements," in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 267–82.

113 Catherine Wessinger, *How the Millennium Comes Violently: From Jonestown to Heaven's Gate* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2000); Catherine Wessinger, ed., *Millennialism, Persecution, and Violence: Historical Cases*, Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Eugene V. Gallagher, "Catastrophic Millennialism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 27–43; Peter Schäfer and Mark R. Cohen, eds., *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, Studies in the History of Religions 77 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), especially the chapter on the Branch Davidians of Waco, but most of the case studies involve some kind of injurious end.

114 The two terms actually denote the same phenomenon, so the use of both is redundant. "Millennialism" is the preferred term for sociologists, while "apocalypticism" is generally the preferred term for biblical scholars, theologians, and historians of religion.

115 Gallagher, "Catastrophic Millennialism," 28ff. The phrase, "the world stinks," comes from a report on how an American informant expressed his pessimism of the world.

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