RECONCEIVING RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

New Views from the Formative Centuries of Christianity

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1

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Early Christianity to late antiquity and beyond

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1

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Wendy Mayer[1]

Religion, religious conflict, and the neuroscientific turn

In their introductory essay to a volume analyzing contemporary religious conflict from three social science perspectives, Powell and Clarke both catalogue and unwittingly reinforce an assumption that has long underwritten and continues to inform theories about the intersection between religion, (in)tolerance, and conflict, namely that pre-Enlightenment societies were typically intolerant.[2] At the other end of the historical spectrum and until recently the beginning point for this hostility towards religious unorthodoxy has been set at the moment of Christianity's official adoption (313 CE) on the premise that polytheism is, by contrast, inherently tolerant.[3] By polytheism is meant – with the exception of ancient and early post-Second Temple Judaism – the religions of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. While the starting point for this so-called rise in intolerance has in recent years been pushed back into the third century,[4] the overwhelmingly dominant view persists that once Christianity became a *religio licita* and gained political power it became coercive, intolerant, and not infrequently violent.[5] The nostalgic view that the classical polytheist world is one of religious tolerance and coexistence, whereas monotheism, which is exclusivist, is responsible for much of the religious violence perpetrated between the rise of Christianity and the end of pre-modern history,[6] is, as Jan Bremmer and other theorists of religion have recently argued, itself an artefact of post-Enlightenment liberalism. This is an ideology which, in response to the protracted post-Reformation religious wars in Europe, conceived of religion as antithetical to the new age of science and reason and so sought to write religion permanently out of society. Henceforth it was restricted to the private domain.[7] This view of religion as in its death throes and as having no future impact on society is a hallmark of secularization theory.[8] Contemporary religious conflicts that engage the state are, in this view, to be attributed to a traditional or pre-modern, irrational society. This is an important point to which we will return, but for the moment let us simply point out that, with some recent significant exceptions, it continues to predicate twenty-first-century

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Western governmental responses to religious conflicts, as well as inform the ways in which Western scholars attempt to understand the phenomenon.[9]

As Fox and Sandler point out, scholars have been scrambling since the events of 9/11 both to explain the role of religion in an upsurge in national and transnational violence[10] and to reintroduce religion as a significant social variable into social, political, and international relations theory.[11] Research on this perceived new rise in religious intolerance is in some areas starting to align with insights from neuroscientific research that began to emerge in the 1980s and that have steadily been gaining acceptance, to the effect that the mind is embodied, and that affect or emotion has primacy to reasoned thought, particularly in regard to moral judgement.[12] If we accept that cognitive and moral systems lie behind the evolution within human society of religion,[13] then these findings have profound implications for the viability of secularization theory and a liberal view of the (negligible) social impact of religion. In fact one of the pioneers of such studies has long argued that the age of reason is a chimera that we need to move beyond, if we are to understand and accommodate morality (and thus religion) as a significant factor in human behaviour and society.[14] Ironically it is precisely what the age of Enlightenment rejected (the embodied mind) in favour of a body-mind dualism that promoted the priority of reason on the basis of science that science is now asking us to re-accept.

By now, the reader will be wondering what any of this has to do with religious conflict in general and the pursuit of the topic in relation to early Christianity and late antiquity in particular, but again the implications are profound. Firstly, religious tolerance is not an absolute, but in fact itself a moral virtue embraced by secularist liberal ideology.[15] It is a social construct of Enlightenment thought. If the foundations of that ideology are now in question, then we must ask whether that virtue's entailment – that religious intolerance is an evil, in that it damages the health of society – is valid. After all, as Powell and Clarke point out, liberalism itself would argue for a limit to tolerance when the tolerance of another religion is harmful to society.[16] Indeed, it is precisely this argument that we see informing recent conclusions concerning the limits of the tolerance of other religions under Roman rule in the period before Constantine.[17] The implication of this is that, even when we think that as scholars we are deconstructing dominant assumptions (in this case the inherent intolerance of monotheist and tolerance of polytheist religion), we need to ask ourselves whether, instead of succeeding, we are in fact simply adopting another element of the same paradigm.

Secondly, if a pre-Enlightenment view of the world is how we as human beings in fact behave and act in the world from a moral-religious perspective, then this is something we should intentionally move to embrace rather than back away from. The findings of the neurosciences do not condemn us to a world of superstition and prejudice from which we thought we had escaped,[18] but rather help us to accept the affective agency of religion in human society as a biological fact,[19] while providing us with tools that help us to explain and understand it. Further, if religion is to be inserted back into and perhaps even foregrounded in contemporary social-scientific and political theories, then it makes sense that it is to a world that conceived of religion in a way that is aligned with embodied cognition that we should look for answers. This is particularly the case, if, as current neuroscientific studies suggest, consciously suppressing in our own minds a rationalist view of the world that has been cognitively strengthened since birth is likely to prove extremely difficult.[20] While some answers may lie in taking a fresh look at traditional and/or non-Western societies and cultures,[21] including those of Africa, a fresh investigation of the role of religion in the pre-Enlightenment world and in the historical period which is thought to have witnessed the (old) "rise of intolerance," in particular – that is, the centuries immediately before and after the "rise of Christianity" – is likely to prove equally fruitful. This is particularly the case when we consider that in the ancient and late ancient Mediterranean world from the fifth century BCE up to at least the fifth century CE in elite circles a model of individual and societal health that was intimately linked to both morality and the embodied soul/mind held sway,[22] while across society the excluded middle – that is, the world of the supernatural – and religion were both enmeshed and embedded.[23] In these respects, whether one examines a philosophic sect, a monotheist, syncretist, hybrid, poly- or heno-theist religion in this period makes little difference. This point is important since, as we will see shortly, theorization of religious conflict in this period has been criticized for its Christianity-centred focus. Further, since social health is a desideratum not just of modern liberal ideology, but lies behind the moral foundational systems that have evolved across societies up to the present day,[24] we could just as well flip the subtitle of a recent book on the embeddedness of morality in twenty-first-century American politics[25] and ask: how can we understand twenty-first-century religious conflict without a first- (or second-, third-, or fourth-) century brain? Curiously this is precisely what has been proposed in a 2013 doctoral dissertation in the discipline of critical rhetoric. Appealing to Gorgias and the classical Greek theory of the sophist as social physician, the author, Brett Ingram, argues for the integration of the neurosciences into critical rhetorical theory in order to understand and address issues like the impact of rhetorical violence – a significant component in religious conflict – on the principle that current neuroscience confirms a surprising number of theories held by ancient Graeco-Roman philosophers on the embodied mind.[26]

Towards a new theorizing of religious conflict

Having established that study of religious conflict in an historical period at first sight so distant from the twenty-first century – but, as we can now see, not so distant at all – is not just an academic exercise, but may in fact prove essential to helping us understand and negotiate religious conflict in the contemporary world, the next step is to engage in laying a fresh set of theoretical foundations that incorporate and internalize what, for lack of a better term, we will call the neuroscientific turn.[27] This is important, if we are to move towards a self-conscious re-examination of religion and religious conflict in these critical(?) centuries.[28] In order to do this, however, we must first step back and take stock of some of the theories and presuppositions that dominate current readings of the phenomenon in early Christianity and late antiquity. We then need to address the plethora of definitions that attach to some of the terms used and the lack of clear definition in the case of others.[29] Lastly, we also need to ask ourselves what assumptions lie behind these approaches and to what subconscious ideological or moral systems they are attributable. That is, the more we lay out in the open, the better our chance of assessing what continues to be valid and what does not in a worldview that incorporates the embodied mind, as well as of improving our capacity to be self-conscious and self-critical about how and even why we study religious conflict. The latter is critical, since, as the neurosciences now point out, we ourselves rationalize the world and perform actions on the basis of what Burke would call a particular piety, that is, an individualized, internally coherent, largely subconscious moral system.[30] This is a substantial undertaking and not all of these steps can be completed in one chapter. Even engaging in just the first step – a critique of dominant and current approaches – is sufficient to demonstrate, however, that the neuroscientific turn disrupts our current approaches to religious conflict, while simultaneously pointing towards a number of paths for research that have been neglected.

Current approaches

Polytheism = tolerance | monotheism = intolerance

When we turn to current approaches, we have already raised and largely deconstructed one of the most dominant to date, that of polytheist (i.e., pre-Christian) tolerance and monotheist (i.e., Christian) intolerance. This, as a number of scholars have recently pointed out,[31] is a view that emerges within secularist liberal ideology in reaction to the bloody and protracted intra-Christian religious wars in Europe in the seventeenth century. At its crudest, the logical flow is that the Christian state was responsible for indefensible social harm, so religion (Christianity) must be excised from the political = public sphere. Since this is then enshrined as a doctrine of the separation of Church and state, the entire period during which the two were not separate, that is, the entire period in European history from the seventeenth century back to the conversion of Constantine, comes under suspicion. It thus serves to set the beginning point for Christianity's harmful impact on society at 313 CE. In this view, a period in which no religion gained political dominance within the cultures that gave birth to Europe becomes a golden age, imbued with the virtue of religious tolerance. In this nostalgic view the Roman imperial cult is conveniently forgotten or its influence on the state not viewed as comparable to that of Christianity. In this crude outline we can see the origins of at least two other lenses through which, to date, the study of religious conflict has been filtered: 1. That the conversion of Constantine constitutes a benchmark in the decline of religious tolerance; and; 2. A narrow focus on the religions of Greece and Rome, on the one hand, and on Christianity, on the other.[32] We need to note here that recently scholars have been working hard to foreground and overcome these biases.[33] This activity is associated with awareness-raising that concepts like "religion," "religious violence," "tolerance," and "intolerance" are not emic, that is part of the internal thought-world of Graeco-Roman society, until well beyond the fourth century CE.[34] And we have to admit that the concept "religious conflict" is likewise a modern, etic construct. It needs to be noted, however, that regardless of whether we adopt more emic terms like "forbearance" and "compulsion," as Maijastina Kahlos proposes,[35] we are still in essence addressing the same concepts. As we have already pointed out, the recent turn in scholarship towards an argument that there were limits to polytheist tolerance, matched by corresponding limits to Christian intolerance, while it appears to deconstruct this overarching model, in fact operates from within the same paradigm, where religious tolerance is a (modern, liberal) socially constructed virtue.[36]

The religious marketplace

A second dominant model, that of the religious marketplace, is related, and similarly benchmarks the conversion of Constantine and focuses attention on Christianity and the religions of Greece and Rome. In this model, derived from Rational Choice Theory, which is in turn anchored in the economic theory of Adam Smith, Christianity emerges in a pluri-religious urban society where it is in competition for converts.[37] The focus here is on the rise to success of Christianity against the other available religions. Within this model, the character of the relationship between religions in the first three centuries CE is described by the four Cs: coexistence, co-operation, competition, and conflict.[38] The ideas of rivalry, competition, or struggle as important social factors in turn have their basis in evolutionary and Marxist social theory.[39] In scholarship deriving from the discipline of Classics as opposed to Early Christian or Biblical Studies, in terms of the relationship between cults in the Hellenistic and Roman world competition has been viewed as both a social phenomenon and as an engine of religious change.[40] Both sets of ideas have been discussed and critiqued at length by Engels and Van Nuffelen in their introduction to the volume *Religion and Competition in Antiquity*, although it should be noted that they see the marketplace as a problematic metaphor rather than engaging directly with Stark and other rational choice of religion theorists.[41] What they do usefully highlight, for our purposes, is the failure of the negative entailment of this set of ideas, that Christianity signals the end of competition.[42] Of even greater significance is that this set of theories, too, emerges from within secularist liberal ideology that sees reason as a primary agent and religious pluralism as an ideal and that equates religious competition (equivalent to free market capitalism) with religious vitality.[43] Here the assumption of "rational choice" as applied to religion is particularly problematic. Where previous criticism of these models has focused on the validity of the idea of choice,[44] current neuroscientific findings about the primacy of affect over reason when it comes to moral judgement undermine not the idea of choice in regard to religion, but the primacy of reason in such a choice. These studies suggest, on the contrary, that emotion and intuition most likely play an initial role and that a person then rationalizes his or her choice, if at all, after the fact.[45]

By now it will be clear that modern sociology of religion as a discipline is to a large extent still under the influence of functionalist and secularist post-Enlightenment modes of thought and we must also ask whether a theory of religious competition per se, whether applied to a pluri-religious society, as is assumed to describe Graeco-Roman society prior to the conversion of Constantine, or one in which a single religion dominates, as is assumed to be the case subsequently, should not itself be subjected to critical re-examination. That is, competition as a model may or may not be a valid tool for assessing the role of religion in society in the ancient to late ancient world. If we are to accept or reject it with confidence, however, we need at the very least to expose to critical examination the ideological origins of the model and ask whether, given that religion has no clear definition within society at this period,[46] competition offers an adequate explanation.

A further point is that the ideology that underlies both the (in)tolerance and competition models and their variants is fundamentally Euro- (= Western-) centric, as is the bulk of the scholarship that informs them.[47] This, as we have already noted, creates an unconscious bias towards what are perceived to be the great ancestors of Europe and its Enlightenment – Greece and Rome and their religions – and to the successor majority religion that shaped the history of Europe and its colonies, Christianity. As scholars of Judaism, among others, have rightly pointed out, much scholarship on religion in classical and late antiquity to date retains these biases.[48] So scholars from within the discipline of Classical studies rightly criticise scholars of New Testament, Early Christian and Late Antique studies of examining Graeco-Roman religion through Christian-coloured or monotheist lenses.[49] The same criticism, however, can be levelled at much of the scholarship on Judaism, on religions beyond the borders of the Roman empire,[50] and on Manichaeism in this period, where the religions are examined less in their own right than from a predominantly Graeco-Roman-religious as well as Christian perspective.

Another entailment of these models and their underlying ideology, particularly in relation to the question of religious conflict, is a second subconscious bias, this time towards viewing each religion as a monolithic entity. While recent scholarship, with its emphasis on a spectrum of co-existing Judaisms, Islams, or Christianities, is beginning to unpack this bias in relation to monotheistic religions,[51] this conceptualisation of religion needs to be brought into greater dialogue with the view of polytheist cults as being by nature individual and local in their expression.[52] What current neuroscientific research on liberal versus conservative moral systems and on the intersection between affect, reason and behaviour suggests is that the adherents and their beliefs and practices within all religious systems are susceptible to polarization.[53] This language at present appears rarely, if at all, in the literature.[54] The concept of polarization itself suggests that religious conflict should be viewed not as a fixed or end state but as a process, while we need also to pay attention to the idea that all religious groups, not just monotheisms, are susceptible to sectarian fragmentation.[55] Under what conditions this phenomenon occurs or fails to occur across the full range of religions that existed in the ancient to late ancient world and to what degree it is attributable to the character of the individual religion (as opposed to other factors) is an avenue of research as yet inadequately explored.

Religious conflict = religious violence

This leads us to a third approach that currently dominates the study of both contemporary and early Christian and late ancient religious conflicts. This is an approach that views religious conflict from the sole perspective of one of its (extreme) modes of expression, religious violence. This holds true whether the focus is physical or rhetorical violence. Bremmer in his 2014 article, "Religious Violence between Greeks, Romans, Christian and Jews," refers to the appearance in the preceding decade of a "tsunami" of studies of the phenomenon in antiquity.[56] While this is somewhat exaggerated for antiquity, it comes closer to the mark when we add in books, articles, and new journals that seek to explain the phenomenon in the twenty-first century.[57] The recent increase in publications on religious fundamentalism and martyrdom both ancient and modern can be included as subsets of this approach.[58] This emphasis in response to not just the events of 9/11, but the constant reporting in the media of fresh examples around the world of suicide bombings, beheadings of apostates, and destruction of cultic sites is natural and has its uses. These we will discuss in a moment. The problem arises when this overwhelming emphasis on an extreme becomes fixed in both public and academic perception as representing the whole,[59] leading to the neglect not just of other potentially significant aspects of religious conflict, but of informed discussion on the question of where religious conflict in all its aspects and manifestations fits into concepts of social harm and social good.

The latter is a huge question that cannot be unpacked here.[60] Instead we will look briefly at the utility of just two of the numerous viewpoints and findings that have emerged from this vast body of research, one from contemporary studies, one from the study of late antiquity. Firstly, as Fox and Sandler point out, the focus on religious violence has opened up debate about the nature of the relationship between politics, ethnicity, race, and religion in national and transnational conflicts.[61] We see a similar discussion emerging in the work of Engels and Van Nuffelen concerning the Graeco-Roman world, where they argue for the interweaving of religion with ethnic and cultural differences, social distinctions, and politics.[62] The work of both Lakoff, in particular, and Haidt, in general, drawing on their own experimental work and that of others in the neurosciences, confirms the existence of an intimate connection at the cognitive level with morality in the case of politics.[63] Secondly, among scholars who study the world of late antiquity the focus on violence has drawn attention to an observable disjunction between violent discourse or speech and violent action. This is still in the process of being unpacked, but emerges most clearly in the case of the destruction of the cultic buildings and images of one religion (in this case, a variety of Graeco-Roman cults) by another (Christianity). Here a significant discrepancy is being revealed between the reportage of acts of violence in the dominant religion's rhetoric and the physical evidence.[64] Without the benefit of verifiable evidence, a similar discussion is nonetheless opening up regarding the relationship between stories of martyrdom and persecution in the early Christian centuries and their historical reality.[65] In this respect, Ingram's insightful discussion of the impact of violent rhetoric on the brain as physiological trauma opens up an avenue for dialogue between these discussions in late antiquity, research from the neurosciences, and critical rhetoric.[66] A significant aspect of religious conflict that has not been well explained by sociological theories to date is the precise nature of the relationship between what a religious leader says, the impact of that speech on a follower's brain, and that follower's actions. What Burke's piety theory, the theories of Bourdieu, and the current neuroscientific research together suggest is that this is in some respects simple and in others quite complex.[67]

Religious conflict = identity-formation

The emphasis on violence and the raising of questions about the role of the rhetoric of violence in relation to it brings us to one final influential perspective from which religious conflict in early Christianity and late antiquity has been addressed, which will be discussed only in brief. This is the analysis of conflict rhetoric through the lens of identity theory, more specifically the role of in-group/out-group bias in constructing identity.[68] This theory, adopted from social psychology, has been particularly influential in Late Antique studies, where the language of alterity, deviancy, and discussion of strategies of delegitmization of out-groups – for instance, bestial language applied to Jews, or accusations of child sacrifice against Christians – is common.[69] It also lies behind the oppositional labels "heresy/heterodoxy" and "orthodoxy."[70] Here, as in the case, of the first two theories discussed, we again see a marked bias in application towards Christianity,[71] this time with some slight justification in that Christianity is a newly emergent religion. The implications extend far beyond the identity-formation of Christianity and its various expressions, however, and there is much work to be done on how the rhetoric and/or praxis of other newly emerging religious groups, such as Rabbinic Judaism, Manichaeism, and Islam, was received,[72] and how the rhetoric that accompanied the refashioning of the identity of existing religious groups spawned, or emerged from within (and thus reinforced), conflict.[73] Slight progress has been made in broadening research into the in-group/out-group oppositional categories heresy-orthodoxy, where it is now, if slowly, increasingly being recognized that this particular bias is not specific to Christianity in particular, nor monotheisms in general.[74] There is also an emerging discussion about the gap between heresy-orthodoxy discourse, which foregrounds belief, and orthopraxy, which is now thought in regard to personal religious identity in the ancient to late ancient world to have had priority.[75] This has potential implications for the current direction in sociology-of-religion research, with its emphasis on religious fundamentalism.

Where identity research is beginning to produce particularly valuable insights concerns an emerging recognition of the gap between rhetoric that had previously been read as indicative of historical inter-group conflict and the reality that this is an example of in-group/out-group bias where the out-group label is used to refer to a deviant other inside the same religion. That is, what is rhetorically constructed as inter-group religious conflict, such as "pagan-Christian" or "Christian-Jewish," is now being revealed as a product of intra- or inner-group conflict in which the issue of clarifying group identity in a time of uncertainty is in the foreground. An example is the article by Douglas Boin, in which he deconstructs the previously influential oppositional categories "pagan" and "Christian."[76] This finding opens up our reading of current "Islamic-Christian" or "Islamic-Jewish" religious conflicts.

Of equal interest are recent studies which show how the application of in-group/out-group strategies in intra-group conflict can spread conflict beyond the group to the religion that is not the original target of the conflict, but is employed as the scapegoated other. Abel Mordechai Bibliowicz's recent book arguing that anti-Semitism is a by-product (an "unintended" consequence) of early intra-Christian conflict and identity-formation is an important example.[77] One final avenue of interest is recent discussion of the gap between increased activity directed towards memory construction inside a religious group – this is not explicitly polemical, but might be thought to suggest a response to external pressures – and historical reality, which indicates minimal real local or regional inter-religious conflict. This research is emerging in particular from exploration of the impact on local Christianities of the Arab conquest and the rise of a competing, dominant religion, Islam.[78] Such studies bring into ever-increasing question assumptions about the direct link between conflict rhetoric and conflict reality that have long held sway. Here again, the insights emerging from much of this research could be deepened by being brought more explicitly into dialogue with experimental psychology and neuroscientific research.[79] As Mar Marcos argues, maybe approaches that saw Christian narratives of violence towards other religions as reflecting real violence prove problematic not because there is no direct link between such narratives and actual violence, but because they placed the cart before the horse.[80] Is it possible, she asks, that the narratives of violence that arose as a part of boundary demarcation are causative? Instead of commemorating historical reality, did they subtly encourage acts of violence that occurred after the fact? The full mapping out of the agency of identity-formation in religious conflict, on the one hand, and of religious conflict in identity-formation, on the other, remains as yet some distance away.

Conclusion

If we are not at the beginning of a re-theorization of religious conflict, then the neurosciences are demonstrating compellingly that we should be. In showing that the primacy of reason in moral judgement is a myth, they disrupt ways of looking at the phenomenon that have dominated research, public perception, and governmental responses. At the very least, their findings call on us to attribute greater agency to emotion in religious belief, discourse, and action, than has previously been the case. Their precise implication for a revised theory of religious conflict, on the other hand, has yet to be unfolded. We argued that the first step is to engage in laying a fresh set of theoretical foundations that incorporate and internalize what, for lack of a better term, we called the neuroscientific turn.[81] In order to do that, we argued, we must first critically examine the theories that currently undergird how we describe, frame, and respond to religious conflict. This chapter has been a first step in that direction. As we suggested, even engaging in just the very beginnings of this first step – a critique of dominant and current approaches – has been sufficient to demonstrate that the neuroscientific turn disrupts our current approaches to religious conflict, while simultaneously pointing towards a number of paths for research that have been neglected or insufficiently explained. Further, this tentative step has shown how important it is for us as scholars to be more self-reflective and self-critical of our inherent Burkean pieties. One of the felicitous side-effects of this endeavour is that as scholars of religion in antiquity, late antiquity or African studies we are no longer required to find justifications for our research. On the contrary, if we are to understand why religious conflict occurs today in what is increasingly being acknowledged as the failure of the Age of Reason in what is biologically an embodied-mind world, then study of the phenomenon in the ancient to late ancient world, alongside studies of the phenomenon in historical and contemporary Africa – societies in which the embodied mind is accepted and in which religion is entwined with private and public life at every level – can now play an important, perhaps even central, role.

Notes

1 In addition to her role as Associate Dean of Research, Australian Lutheran College, University of Divinity, Wendy Mayer is also a Research Fellow in the Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies, University of South Africa. This chapter is dedicated to Luke Lavan, who first suggested the connection between current Western shock at religious conflict and European secularist ideology as a missing link in my thought. I am also deeply indebted to Jan Bremmer, who offered insightful comments on an earlier draft and pointed me towards additional supporting literature, and to Scott Bartchy, for his review and long discussion with me about the ideas presented in this article.

2 Russell Powell and Steve Clarke, "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance: Views from Across the Disciplines," in *Religion, Intolerance, and Conflict: A Scientific and Conceptual Investigation*, ed. S. Clarke, R. Powell, and J. Savulescu (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 7–10. It should be noted that the authors deconstruct this assumption to some extent for the period prior to the Enlightenment, but that their interest in ideologies that have influenced modern to postmodern conceptions lead them rather to presume that intolerance is normative across history and societies and resistant to change.

3 For critiques of this premise, see Joachim Losehand, "'The Religious Harmony in the Ancient World': Vom Mythos religiöser Toleranz in der Antike," *Göttinger Forum*

für Altertumswissenschaft 12 (2009): 99–132; Maijastina Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2009), 5–6; Tessa Canella, "Tolleranza e intolleranza religiosa nel mondo tardo antico: questioni di metodo," *Vetera Christianorum* 47 (2010): 249–66; Wendy Mayer, "Religious Conflict: Definitions, Problems and Theoretical Approaches," in *Religious Conflict from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, ed. W. Mayer and B. Neil (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 8–12, 17; David Engels and Peter Van Nuffelen, "Religion and Competition in Antiquity, an Introduction," in *Religion and Competition in Antiquity*, ed. D. Engels and P. Van Nuffelen (Bruxelles: Éditions Latomus, 2014), 13, 26; and Jan Bremmer, "Religious Violence Between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews," in *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators*, ed. A. Geljon and R. Roukema (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 8–30, esp. 12–18. See also Jan Bremmer's contribution in this volume.

4 See Polymnia Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique: la montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010); and Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the Great Persecution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012). The phrase "rise of intolerance" is itself predicated on a post-Enlightenment "rise of tolerance" in the Western world; see Powell and Clarke, "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance," 7–8.

5 See Mayer, "Religious Conflict," 13. Jan Bremmer, "Religious Violence," 12–14; and Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion*; and ead., *Dialogue and Debate: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360–430* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), have done much to deconstruct this view. The emerging view is summed up by Dirk Rohmann, *Book-Burning and Censorship in Late Antiquity*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 135 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), "Introduction" (p. 15, ebook version): "while religious conflicts demonstrably occurred, the Christianisation of the Roman Empire was much more peaceful and consensual than this . . . evidence implies at first glance." See, however, David Frankfurter, "'Religious Violence': A Phenomenology," *Ancient Jew Review*, February 24, 2016, www.ancientjewreview.com/articles/2016/2/24/religious-violence-a-phenomenology, accessed March 26, 2017, who cautions against this overly irenic view of religion and argues for the need for a phenomenology of religious violence.

6 In situating the roots of religious violence in monotheism, the work of the Egyptologist Jan Assmann has been particularly influential. See, e.g., J. Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); id., *Die Mosaische Unterscheidung oder der Preis des Monotheismus* (München: Hanser Akzente, 2003); id., *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt* (Wien: Picus Verlag, 2006); and most recently the essay, "Monotheismus und Gewalt," January 29, 2013, www.perlentaucher.de/essay/monotheismus-und-gewalt.html; accessed March 26, 2017; and, for a sample of critiques of his views, Losehand, "Religious Harmony," 111–12; Jan Bremmer, "Religious Violence and Its Roots: A View from Antiquity," *Asdiwal: Revue genevoise d'ánthropologie et d'historie des religions* 6 (2011): 71–9; and René Bloch, "Polytheismus und Monotheismus in der paganen Antike: Zu Jan Assmanns Monotheismus-Kritik," in *Fremdbilder-Selbstbilder: Imaginationen des Judentums von der Antike bis in die Neuzeit*, ed. R. Bloch et al. (Basel: Verlag Schwabe, 2010), 5–24. It is of interest that approaches from the perspective of evolutionary biology can arrive at the same conclusion. See, e.g., John Teehan, *In the Name of God: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Ethics and Violence* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), who, although he sees the moral psychology that predisposes us towards religion as responsible for violence, not religion per se, nonetheless views the universalist/exclusivist tendencies within Christianity's moral code as problematic. Regardless of whether he does so because the New Atheists,

among others, single out the three great monotheist religions as causative, his focus on Judaism, Christianity, and Islam serves unintentionally to underwrite this position.

7 In addition to Bremmer, "Religious Violence," 11–13, see the analyses of Powell and Clarke, "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance," 1–6; and Jonathan Fox and Schmuel Sandler, "The Question of Religion and World Politics," in *Religion in World Conflict*, ed. J. Fox and S. Sandler (London: Routledge, 2006), 4–6.

8 See Fox and Sandler, "The Question of Religion," 4; and the essay by Ingmar Persson and Julian Savulescu, "The Limits of Religious Tolerance: A Secular View," in *Religion, Intolerance, and Conflict*, 236–52.

9 The drive of Western liberalism is particularly evident in contemporary Anglophone studies of the phenomenon. See, e.g., in addition to the essays in Clarke et al., eds., *Religion, Intolerance, and Conflict* (esp. the essay by Powell and Clarke, 1–3, which raises the views of New Atheism), William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), and the lengthy review essay by Vincent W. Lloyd, "Violence: Religious, Theological, Ontological," *Theory, Culture and Society* 28.5 (2011): 144–54. The blog by the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, posted September 21, 2007, "Moral Psychology and the Misunderstanding of Religion," http://edge.org/conversation/moral-psychology-and-the-misunderstanding-of-religion, accessed March 26, 2017, and responses, are also instructive.

10 Since the impact remains largely confined to Near Eastern, African, and Asian nations, this is perceived by Western scholars as being by no means as severe as the religious wars of the seventeenth century (e.g., Powell and Clarke, "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance," 3). At the same time, there is some question as to whether the perception of a global increase in religious violence is justified. See the Pew Trust analysis of social hostilities involving religion 2006–2012, B.J. Grim et al., "Religious Hostilities Reach Six-Year-High," Pew Research Center, January 14, 2014, www.pewforum.org/2014/01/14/religious-hostilities-reach-six-year-high, accessed March 26, 2017, that documents a genuine rise internationally in religious hostilities up to 2012. The updates, "Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities," Pew Research Center, February 26, 2015, www.pewforum.org/2015/02/26/religious-hostilities, accessed March 26, 2017, and "Trends in Global Restrictions on Religion," Pew Research Center, June 23, 2016, www.pewforum.org/2016/06/23/trends-in-global-restrictions-on-religion, accessed March 26, 2017, indicate a global decline in religious hostilities since 2012, despite a rise in "religion-related terrorism."

11 Fox and Sandler, "The Question of Religion," 5–6, 10; and see the sample list of resulting publications cited by Mayer, "Religious Conflict," 1 n. 1. Fox and Sandler, "The Question of Religion," 6, document the beginnings of a reintroduction of religion as an important factor into political science theory in the 1980s, but point out that this was never mainstream. The quest for explanation has had a concurrent impact on historical research. See Bremmer, "Religious Violence," 8 n. 1, for a list of recent books on religious violence in antiquity.

12 See, e.g., Steve Clarke, *The Justification of Religious Violence* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 58–88, building on the work of Jonathan Haidt, "The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment," *Psychological Review* 108.4 (2001): 814–34, among others; and Brett Ingram, "Critical Rhetoric in the Age of Neuroscience" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2013). Ingram provides a substantial and extended critique of the literature to 2013.

13 This is the view of Moral Foundations Theory, which draws in turn on the theory of Emile Durkheim (*The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 1912) regarding the social-binding function of morality (religion). See J. Graham et al., "Moral Foundations Theory: The Pragmatic Validity of Moral Pluralism," *Advances in Experimental*

Social Psychology 47 (2013): 55–130. Teehan, *In the Name of God*, applies this specifically to the topic of religious violence.

14 See George Lakoff, *The Political Mind: Why You Can't Understand 21st-Century Politics with an 18th-Century Brain* (New York: Viking, 2008); id., *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). Omar Sultan Haque, "Moral Creationism: The Science of Morality and the Mutiny of Romantic Relativism," *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 11.1 (2011): 151–87, argues a similar case on the basis of neuroscientific research and evolutionary psychology.

15 See Powell and Clarke, "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance," 5–7, who situate it within the moral foundation system of "harm/care." On the latter see Graham et al., "Moral Foundations Theory," but note that the proponents of MFT themselves point out that the foundational moral systems they have thus far identified are not final. On the latter, see Jonathan Haidt and Craig Joseph, "How Moral Foundations Theory Succeeded in Building on Sand: A Response to Suhler and Churchland," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 23.9 (2011): 2117–18.

16 Powell and Clarke, "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance," 6. A recent example of the exercise of this principle is the triple rejection by local communities of the Hasidic Lev Tahor sectarian Jewish community within the USA, Canada, and now Guatemala on the basis that their practices and ideology were socially harmful (in each case contrary to state values enshrined in law). See Ian Johnston, "Orthodox Jews Expelled from Guatemalan Refuge After Being Threatened 'with Lynching,'" *The Independent*, Sunday August 31, 2014, www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/fundamentalist-jews-expelled-from-guatemalan-refuge-after-being-threatened-with-lynching-9701807.html, accessed September 12, 2014.

17 Engels and Van Nuffelen, "Religion and Competition," 13–14, who argue that the limit was reached "when a new religious form seemed to endanger the social and political cohesion of the city" or the later Roman state; and Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion*, 9–27. Bremmer, "Religious Violence," 14–18, is less concerned with arguing for tolerance within limits prior to the rise of Christianity than deconstructing the myth of polytheistic tolerance.

18 The idea that modern society has evolved beyond more primitive uses of religion derives from Social Darwinism, a doctrine further developed by Marx. See Bryan Turner, "The Sociology of Religion," in *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. J.A. Beckford and N.J. Demerath (London: Sage, 2007), 285.

19 See Ryan McKay and Harvey Whitehouse, "Religion and Morality," *Psychological Bulletin* 141.2 (2015): 447–73, who argue, however, that the concepts "morality" and "religion" themselves need to be deconstructed and carefully defined, if the relationship between biology and culture is to be determined without bias.

20 The embodied and cognitive intransigence of particular moral/value systems was first formulated by the rhetorician Kenneth Burke in *Permanence and Change* (1935) on the basis of his exposure to research on drug addiction. For a useful analysis of his theory of piety see Jordynn Jack, "'The Piety of Degradation': Kenneth Burke, the Bureau of Social Hygiene, and *Permanence and Change*," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90.4 (2004): 446–68. His theory of piety has since been validated and formalised by recent neuroscientific research as set out by Ingram, "Critical Rhetoric in the Age of Neuroscience," 55–100. I am deeply indebted to my colleague in Biblical Studies at Unisa, Johannes Vorster, for alerting me to the work of Burke on piety in the first instance. Interestingly, this theory neatly describes the anti-religious "religious" fervour of the New Atheists on the basis of their affective "addiction" to secularist rational liberal ideology.

21 This was the approach of Haidt, leading to insights concerning three additional foundational moral systems. See his reflection on the influence of his postdoctoral research in India in the blog "What Makes People Vote Republican?" September 8, 2008, http://edge.org/conversation/what-makes-vote-republican, accessed March 26, 2017. Durkheim himself derived many of his theories about religion and society from his study of traditional societies, especially Australian aborigines.

22 On the Greek conception of the body politic as susceptible to both disease and health, see G.E.R. Lloyd, *In the Grip of Disease: Studies in the Greek Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, repr. 2009), 1–13. For an outline and analysis of the medico-philosophical-moral therapeutic approach in the classical to early imperial periods, see Christopher Gill, "Philosophical Therapy as Preventive Psychological Medicine," in *Mental Disorders in the Classical World*, ed. W.V. Harris (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 339–62. The literature, both primary and secondary, on the therapy of the emotions in the ancient Graeco-Roman world is substantial.

23 On the latter point, see Bremmer, "Religious Violence," 11–12; Engels and Van Nuffelen, "Religion and Competition," 12.

24 On the basis of his experimental research, Haidt argues in "Moral Psychology" that, regardless of where one sits on the conservative-liberal spectrum, the foundational harm/care system is a guiding principle, whereas all of the foundational systems are concerned with regulating selfishness for the benefit of the social group.

25 Lakoff, *The Political Mind*, subtitled in its original printing: "Why You Can't Understand 21st-Century Politics with an 18th-Century Brain."

26 Ingram, "Critical Rhetoric in the Age of Neuroscience," esp. 14, 49–50. The primacy of affect/emotion over reason, one of the more significant recent neuroscientific findings, points us directly back to the Hellenistic emphasis on therapy of the affects/emotions, with significant implications for the connection between hate-filled or emotive speech and its (differentiated) impacts on the conscious mind and subconscious brain of the listener.

27 This is to distinguish it from the "cognitive turn," a label employed in scholarly literature of the 1980s and '90s to reference the application of findings and theories from psychology.

28 The question mark attached to "critical" is deliberate, in that the notion of a "rise of intolerance," whether located in the third or fourth century CE, and the link drawn to the rise to political dominance of monotheism (Christianity) – language now being recycled in relation to the twenty-first century and the rise to political dominance of another monotheist religion, Islam – are both concepts that require careful critical examination.

29 This is the case not just with the terms "religion," "tolerance," "intolerance," "religious conflict," "violence," but also with "social harm," "social health," and "virtue."

30 What cognitive theorists appear to agree on, regardless of the particular aspect of cognition on which their research focuses, is that the general systems they describe are comprised of different components from within a large set of variables at the level of the individual brain. In terms of morality, two conflicting variables in the same subset, however, cannot be held by the same individual brain at the same time. On neural binding, biconceptualism and moral contradiction see Lakoff, *The Political Mind*, 69–72.

31 See nn. 3 and 7–8 above. Losehand, "Religious Harmony," 104–9, provides a detailed and helpful critique of the myths associated with this ideology, tracing its development through Hume, Locke and Gibbon, among others. Canella, "Tolleranza e intolleranza," 249–52, independently traces a similar trajectory.

32 Although they debate precisely how the conversion of Constantine was a benchmark and do not explicitly focus on issues of (in)tolerance, the work of senior scholars of late antiquity is indicative in this regard. See, e.g., Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western*

Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200–1000 (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1996); Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire: A.D. 100–400* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); id., *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). The recent French, Spanish, and Canadian projects referenced in Mayer, "Religious Conflict," 9–10, 12–13, that are more explicitly concerned with issues of tolerance and intolerance, along with the articles in *Une antiquité tardive noire ou heureuse? Actes du colloque international de Besançon (12 et 13 novembre 2014), Institut des Sciences et Techniques de l'Antiquité*, ed. Stéphane Ratti (Besançon: Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2015), likewise follow these paths.

33 E.g., the works of Losehand, Canella, Bremmer, Kahlos, Engels, and Van Nuffelen cited (nn. 3 and 5 above). Similarly, Mar Marcos in her article, "'He Forced with Gentleness': Emperor Julian's Attitude to Religious Coercion," *Antiquité Tardive* 17 (2009): 191–204, carefully unpacks the contemporary language and avoids terms like "tolerance" or "intolerance" in favour of "coercion."

34 Bremmer, "Religious Violence," 10–12; Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion*, 2–4; Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique*, 40; Engels and Van Nuffelen, "Religion and Competition," passim. Canella, "Tolleranza e intolleranza," 262–6, argues for a similar problematisation of the terms *publicus*, *privatus*, *superstitio*, *dissimulatio*, *conviventia*, and *fides*.

35 Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion*, 2, 6–8.

36 We see this especially in the Critical Theory of Religion School, where religion is determinately negated and secularized in order to locate "religion" positively within a humane society. Here the proponents are responding not to the wars of the Counter-Reformation, but to the horrors of Auschwitz. See Rudolf Siebert, *Manifesto of the Critical Theory of Society and Religion*, 3 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

37 The most influential proponent of this theory is Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). For an insightful overview and critique, see Jan N. Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity Through the Eyes of Gibbon, Harnack and Rodney Stark* (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2010), 47–64.

38 This model has been influential among New Testament scholars, on which see Mayer, "Religious Conflict," 8–10, the first of the Cs sometimes being replaced by scholars of Graeco-Roman religion with "cohabitation." The model of the four Cs is set out by Richard Ascough in "Religious Coexistence, Co-Operation, Competition, and Conflict in Sardis and Smyrna," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Sardis and Smyrna*, ed. Richard S. Ascough (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), 245–52. For an example of the "cohabitation" paradigm, see the articles in *Beyond Conflicts: Cultural and Religious Cohabitations in Alexandria and Egypt Between the 1st and the 6th Century CE*, ed. Luca Arcari (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017).

39 See Engels and Van Nuffelen, "Religion and Competition," 11–12; Turner, "Sociology of Religion," 285; and Siebert, *Manifesto*, 1:11; although note that critical theory of religion proponents view their theory as an alternative to rational choice theory. See Warren S. Goldstein, "Introduction: Marx, Critical Theory, and Religion: A Critique of Rational Choice," in *Marx, Critical Theory, and Religion: A Critique of Rational Choice*, ed. Warren S. Goldstein (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1–2.

40 See Engels and Van Nuffelen, "Religion and Competition," 23–4 and literature.

41 Engels and Van Nuffelen, "Religion and Competition," esp. 27–9.

42 Engels and Van Nuffelen, "Religion and Competition," 24–6.

43 See the critiques of Frank J. Lechner, "Rational Choice and Religious Economics," in *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. J.A. Beckford and N.J.

Demerath (London: Sage, 2007), 81–97; and David Lehmann, “An Idea, a Tribe, and Their Critics: Rational Choice and the Sociology of Religion,” in *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 181–200.

44 See e.g., George Lundskow, “The Concept of Choice in the Rise of Christianity: A Critique of Rational-Choice Theory,” in *Marx, Critical Theory, and Religion*, 223–48; and the works cited by Bremmer, *Rise of Christianity*, 49 n. 198, where he describes Lundskow’s critique as “amateurish.”

45 See Haidt, “The Emotional Dog”; Ingram, “Critical Rhetoric in the Age of Neuroscience,” 59–66; Clarke, *Justification of Religious Violence*, 75–7. Ibid., 79–80, however, is reluctant to demote the role of reason and questions the validity of Haidt’s findings as a- or cross-cultural.

46 On this point, see esp. the argument of Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

47 Although it should be noted that sociologists of religion trace a divergent path between the twentieth-century view of religion and society that developed in the European context and in North America (Turner, “Sociology of Religion,” 291–5). Rational Choice Theory, for instance, emerges from the American, Critical Theory from the European context. This explains to some degree the opposition of Lundskow, a proponent of Critical Theory, to the thesis of Stark.

48 So Steven Fine in his review of *Palestine in Late Antiquity* (2008), *Review of Biblical Literature*, published online October 17, 2009, www.bookreviews.org, criticizes its author, Hagith Sivan, for viewing rabbinic sources through “Christianity-colored glasses.” A similar observation is made by Adiel Schremer, *Brothers Estranged: Heresy, Christianity, and Jewish Identity in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5, who argues that “the assumption that the destruction of the Second Temple marks a rupture in Jewish history subscribes, in a deep sense, to a Christian theological claim.”

49 Jörg Rüpke, “Early Christianity out of, and in, Context,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 99 (2009): 182–93, in his lengthy review of the first two volumes in *The Cambridge History of Christianity* series (2006–2007), roundly criticizes the majority of chapters in the first and a smaller number in the second for their dominant Christianity-centrism and lack of adequate contextualization. Engels and Van Nuffelen, “Religion and Competition,” 9 describe acknowledgement of this bias as “having almost become a trope.”

50 Here use of the traditional label “oriental” in opposition to Graeco-Roman religions contains its own set of assumptions and biases. For an attempt to re-theorize the approach to “oriental” religions within the Roman Empire, see the articles in *Panthée: Religious Transformations in the Graeco-Roman Empire*, ed. Corinne Bonnet and Laurent Bricault (Leiden: Brill, 2013), esp. the introduction, 1–14, where the editors provide a useful discussion of the development of the label and the approach to the religions classified as “oriental” under the influence of Francois Cumont.

51 See, e.g., Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), which proposes multiple Judaisms along a spectrum; and the articles in *Entre lignes de partage et territoires de passage. Les identités religeuses dans les mondes grec et romain: “Paganismes”, “judaïsmes,” “christianismes,”* Collection de la Revue des Études Juives 47, ed. Nicole Belayche and Simon C. Mimouni (Peeters: Leuven, 2009).

52 E.g., Engels and Van Nuffelen, “Religion and Competition,” 16–18, although, as they proceed to argue in the pages that follow, there was considerable variation in the spread and type of individual cults over time between classical Greece and imperial Rome. See also the recent work of Jörg Rüpke on individual as opposed to public religion

in the ancient world; e.g., *On Roman Religion: Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016).

53 Moral biconceptualism between the poles liberal-conservative is considered a fundamental aspect of embodied cognition by Lakoff, *Moral Politics*; and Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (London: Penguin, 2012).

54 Among the exceptions, see Johannes Hahn, "Gewaltanwendung *ad maiorem gloriam dei*? Religiöse Intoleranz in der Spätantike," in *Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz*, ed. H.-G. Nesselrath et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 227–52, with respect to late antiquity; and Marta Reynal-Querol and José G. Montalvo, "A Theory of Religious Conflict and Its Effect on Growth," WP-EC 2000-04 (Instituto Valenciano de Investigaciones Económicas Working papers, May 2000), with regard to contemporary religious conflict.

55 The different Hindu groups that emerged within India are one example. Equally illustrative is the survey of new religious movements with their roots in Indian religions, religions of south-east Asia, and in indigenous and pagan traditions in *New Religious Movements: A Guide. New Religious Movements, Sects, and Spiritualities*, ed. Christopher Partridge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 157–302.

56 See n. 3, to which can be added the volume in which his article appears, *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators*, ed. Albert Geljon and Riemer Roukema (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Troels M. Kristensen, *Making and Breaking the Gods: Christian Responses to Pagan Sculpture in Late Antiquity* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2013); *Coping with Violence in the New Testament*, ed. Pieter G.R. Villiers and Jan Willem van Henten (Leiden: Brill, 2012); and Rohmann, *Christianity, Book-Burning and Censorship*. See also the articles reflecting on ten years of the SBL panel "Violence and Representations of Violence among Jews and Christians," *Ancient Jew Review*, www.ancientjewreview.com/articles/2016/2/15/violence-and-representations-of-violence-section-at-10-retrospect-and-prospect, accessed March 26, 2017.

57 See, for example, the new *Journal of Religion and Violence* (first issue, 2013); Clarke, *Justification of Religious Violence*; Jimmy Carter, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014); Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (New York: Anchor Books, 2015); *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence*, ed. Michael Jerryson et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Hans G. Kippenberg, *Violence as Worship: Religious Wars in the Age of Globalization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), English translation of *Gewalt als Gottesdienst: Religionskriege im Zeitalter der Globalisierung* (München: C.H. Beck, 2008); *Religion, Terror, and Violence: Religious Studies Perspectives*, ed. Bryan Rennie and Philip L. Tite (New York: Routledge, 2008); and, for an example from the African context, Carole Rakodi, "Inter-Religious Violence and its Aftermath: Insights from Indian and Nigerian Cities," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 48.5 (2013): 557–76. Studies that seek to define the relationship between religion and political violence such as James F. Rinehart, *Apocalyptic Faith and Political Violence: Prophets of Terror* (New York: Palgrave, 2006); numerous articles in the journal *Terrorism and Political Violence*; and the foundation of a new discipline called Hate Studies, also come under this category.

58 See, e.g., *Religiöser Fundamentalismus in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, ed. Pedro Barceló (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2010), although the editor and contributors have been criticized for misinterpreting fanaticism and zealotry as fundamentalism; *Religious Fundamentalism and Political Extremism*, ed. Leonard Weinburg and Ami Pedahzur (London: Frank Cass, 2004); Candida R. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012); ead., *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom*

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); David Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005); and Rubén Rosario Rodgriguez, *Martyrdom and Political Violence: A Comparative Theology with Judaism and Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Bremmer, *Rise of Christianity*, 21 n. 90, supplies references to recent studies on voluntary martyrdom in the early Christian period, presumably inspired by the phenomenon in the twenty-first century. For studies that seek to bridge the gap between the two time periods, see Jan Bremmer, "The Motivation of Martyrs: Perpetua and the Palestinians," in *Religion im kulturellen Diskurs: Festschrift für Hans G. Kippenberg zu seinem 65. Geburtstag / Religion in Cultural Discourse. Essays in Honor of Hans G. Kippenberg on Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. B. Luchesi and K. von Stuckrad (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 535–54; and id., "Felicitas: The Martyrdom of a Young African Woman," in *Perpetua's Passions: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Passio Perpetua et Felicitas*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Marco Formisano (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 35–53. A focus on fundamentalism has been a significant driver in revitalizing sociology of religion research as it seeks to respond to global political developments (see Turner, "Sociology of Religion," 295–9).

[59] Charles Kurzman, *The Missing Martyrs: Why There Are So Few Muslim Terrorists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), for instance, argues that contemporary Muslim martyrs are in fact the exception rather than the rule. Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2013), makes a similar case for the first centuries of Christianity. On this phenomenon in scholarship, Jan Bremmer remarks: "Somewhat simplifying we can say that the less sympathetic a historian is to Christianity, the lower the number of martyrs will be" (Bremmer, *Rise of Christianity*, 20). His observations (Ibid., 20–3) on the ideological drive behind analyses resulting in figures towards either end of the scale likely apply equally to scholarly analysis of the practice in contemporary Islam.

[60] See Powell and Clarke, "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance," 23–4, who raise the possibility that for some social groups "intolerance in its various manifestations, from subtle discrimination and avoidance to outright aggression and homicide, may have been adaptive," although they hastily claim that, even if this is an evolutionary reality, it is by no means ethically defensible. Unpalatable as it seems to be to Western sensibilities, this is nonetheless a question that needs to be tackled unprejudicially.

[61] Fox and Sandler, "The Question of Religion"; and see Reynal-Querol and Montalvo, "A Theory of Religious Conflict," who look at the intersection between religion, ethnicity, and economic growth.

[62] Engels and Van Nuffelen, "Religion and Competition," 12–23.

[63] See the works cited in n. 53 above.

[64] The literature on this topic is mounting as is debate concerning the precise degree of discrepancy and the impact of the rhetoric of destruction on action. For representative books and articles on this topic see: Aude Busine, "From Stones to Myth: Temple Destruction and Civic Identity in the Late Antique Roman East," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6.2 (2013): 325–46; Kristensen, *Making and Breaking the Gods*; Jitse Dijkstra, "The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt," in *The Archaeology of Late Antique "Paganism,"* ed. Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 389–436; Klaus S. Freyberger, "Zur Nachnutzung heidnischer Heiligtümer aus Nord- und Südsyrien in spätantiker Zeit," in Nesselrath et al., *Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz*, 179–226; and *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Hahn, S. Emmel, and U. Gotter (Leiden: Brill, 2008). See also the chapter by Jitse Dijkstra in the present volume.

65 The literature on this topic is growing, largely in response to and in discussion with the work of Candida Moss (see n. 58), culminating in her controversial book *The Myth of Persecution*.

66 Ingram, "Critical Rhetoric in the Age of Neuroscience," 133–78. See my preliminary exploration of the applicability of this approach in Wendy Mayer, "Preaching Hatred? John Chrysostom, Neuroscience, and the Jews," in *(Revisioning John Chrysostom: New Perspectives Theories and Approaches*, ed. C.L. de Wet and W. Mayer (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

67 For a summation of both Burke and Bourdieu on the intransigence of piety/habitus, see Jack, "The Piety of Degradation," 451–3. What Burke and Bourdieu try to capture in their theories are the mechanisms described by recent studies in neuroplasticity and social and cognitive psychology in their description of how cognitive framing and metaphors function, the process of the strengthening of neural pathways by both mental and physical repetition, the priority of intuitive/subconscious affect/emotion over conscious reason, and the resistance of the resulting subconscious embodied neural pathways to change, particularly when a speaker attempts to bring persuasion about via logical discourse or reasoned argument. Ingram, "Critical Rhetoric in the Age of Neuroscience," 55 onwards, provides a careful and detailed account of the meeting points between the theories of Burke, Bourdieu, De Certeau, and Foucault and the findings of neuroscience, with special attention to the mechanisms engaged in resistance to persuasion, in persuasion by emotional rhetoric, and the short- and long-term effects on the brain of rhetorical violence.

68 For a useful outline and discussion of this theory, see Powell and Clarke, "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance," 19–22. Teehan, *In the Name of God*, 1–42, argues that this is intimately connected to moral psychology.

69 See, among numerous other examples, Susanna Drake, *Slandering the Jews: Sexuality and Difference in Early Christian Texts* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Jan N. Bremmer, "Early Christian Human Sacrifice Between Fact and Fiction," in *Sacrifices humains: dossiers, discours, comparaisons. Actes du colloque tenu à l'Université de Genève, 19–20 mai 2011*, ed. Agnès A. Nagy and Francesca Prescendi (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 165–76; Averil Cameron, "Jews and Heretics – a Category Error?" in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christian in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 344–60, esp. 351; and Andrew McGowan, "Eating People: Accusations of Cannibalism Against Christians in the Second Century," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994): 413–42.

70 There is a strong link between the theory that "orthodoxy" or purity discourse is a unique product of monotheism and the thesis that monotheism = intolerance. Again, the work of Assmann, although much criticized, has been influential in this respect. For an entry to the substantial literature on both sides of this debate, see n. 6 above.

71 This is a feature of recent discussion concerning "the parting of the ways" between Judaism and Christianity, for which the literature is vast. See, e.g., the articles in *La Croisée des chemins revisitée: Quand l'Église et la synagogue se sont elles distinguées?* ed. Simon Mimouni and Bernard Pouderon (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2012), esp. that of Annette Yoshiko Reed, and earlier literature cited. For other recent examples, see Tobias Nicklas, *Jews and Christians? Second-Century "Christian" Perspectives on the "Parting of the Ways" (Annual Deichmann Lectures 2013)* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014); and the articles in *The Faces of the Other: Religious Rivalry and Ethnic Encounters in the Later Roman World*, ed. Maijastina Kahlos (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

72 A recent example in this respect is the article by David Engels, "Historising Religion Between Spiritual Continuity and Friendly Takeover: Salvation History and Religious

Competition During the First Millennium AD," in Engels and Van Nuffelen, *Religion and Competition in Antiquity*, 237–84.

73 The reconstruction of a religion's past in memory (mnemohistory) is the primary approach of Jan Assmann based on the work of Maurice Halbwachs. See, e.g., Jan Assmann, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis* (München: C.H Beck, 2000); Naftali Cohn, *The Memory of the Temple and the Making of the Rabbis* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) demonstrates the value of this approach for understanding the construction of Rabbinic identity at a time of conflicting and competing models of Judaean-/Jewishness in the second to third centuries. Robert McEachnie, "A History of Heresy Past: The Sermons of Chromatius of Aquileia, 388–407," *Church History* 83 (2014): 273–96, does the same for Christianity in Italy in the later fourth century. Philip A. Cantrell, II, "'We Were a Chosen People': The East African Revival and Its Return to Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Church History* 83 (2014): 422–45 offers a contemporary African example. Cantrell traces the inadvertently precarious situation that the post-genocide Anglican Church in Rwanda currently faces as a result of the construction by Tutsi refugees of a mythico-history of themselves as a divinely "chosen people" in the pre-genocide Ugandan camps. The "Revival then and its complex re-telling now," as he summarizes, "will either promote more division or more unity" (445). See also Christopher Duncan, *Violence and Vengeance: Religious Conflict and Its Aftermath in Eastern Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), who engages with the complex interaction of memory, religion, and identity in hardening and escalating local violence.

74 See Boyarin, *Border Lines*, regarding the presence of these categories in late ancient Jewish as well as Christian discourse; Robert Langer and Udo Simon, "The Dynamics of Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy: Dealing with Divergence in Muslim Discourses and Islamic Studies," *Die Welt des Islams* 48 (2008): 273–88; and John B. Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy: Neo-Confucian, Islamic, Jewish and Early Christian Patterns* (Albany: State University of New York, 1998). There is also an emerging discussion as to whether, in a limited way, the concepts of "heresy" and "orthodoxy" were also present in Graeco-Roman philosophy. See Polymnia Athanassiadi, "The Creation of Orthodoxy in Neoplatonism," in *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin*, ed. Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajak (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 271–92; Digeser, *A Threat to Public Piety*; and Vera Sauer, *Relgiöses in der politischen Argumentation der späten römischen Republik: Ciceros Erste Catilinarische Rede – eine Fallstudie* (Suttgart: Franz Steiner, 2013).

75 Bremmer, "Religious Violence."

76 Douglas Boin, "Hellenistic 'Judaism' and the Social Origins of the 'Pagan-Christian' Debate," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22.2 (2014): 167–96. Cf. Christopher P. Jones, *Between Pagan and Christian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 6, on "pagan" as a Christian in-group label, but his interest is more in the actual state of relations between Christians and "pagans."

77 Abel Mordechai Bibliowicz, *Jews and Gentiles in the Early Jesus Movement: An Unintended Journey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Cf. Patricia A. Power, "Blurring the Boundaries: American Messianic Jews and Gentiles," *Nova religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 15.1 (2011): 69–91, whose account of an incipient conflict in the case of the Messianic Jewish community in America offers a comparable case with markedly similar agents two millennia later.

78 See, e.g., Arietta Papaconstantinou, "Saints and Saracens: On some Miracle Accounts of the Early Arab Period," in *Byzantine Religious Culture: Studies in Honor of Alice-Mary Talbot*, ed. Denis Sullivan et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 323–38; ead., "Historiography, Hagiography, and the Making of the Coptic 'Church of the Martyrs' in Early

Islamic Egypt," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 60 (2006): 65–86; David Engels, "Entre tolérance, désintérêt et exploitation: Les relations christiano-musulmanes en Sicilie du IXe au XIIIe siècle et leurs racines dans l'histoire religieuse de l'île," *Cahiers de Méditerranée* 86 (2013): 273–300; and Glenn Peers, "Finding Faith Underground: Visions of the Forty Martyrs Oratory at Syracuse," in *Looking Beyond: Visions, Dreams and Insights in Medieval Art and History*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 84–106.

79 See Powell and Clarke, "Religion, Tolerance, and Intolerance," 11–22, who outline a number of approaches that might prove beneficial; and, e.g., Lawrence Barsalou et al., "Embodiment in Religious Knowledge," *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 5 (2005): 14–57, with relevance for understanding the role of orthopraxy; and Juliette Schaafsma and Kipling D. Williams, "Exclusion, Intergroup Hostility, and Religious Fundamentalism," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48 (2012): 829–37, which points to the radicalizing effects of marginalization and in-group/out-group exclusion.

80 Mar Marcos, "Religious Violence and Hagiography in Late Antiquity," *Numen* 62.2–3 (2015): 169–96.

81 Brett Ingram's phrase "the age of neuroscience," with its suggestion that human society is now moving into the next age beyond that of reason, has both its advantages and disadvantages. An inherent danger is the evocation of social evolution theory or Social Darwinism, which may be precisely what the findings of the neurosciences speak against.

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