

Heirs of Roman Persecution

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Chapter 16

Heirs of Roman persecution: Common threads in discursive strategies across Late Antiquity

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Introduction

At this point, the historical case studies presented in the preceding chapters, which span the geographic and chronological spread of Late Antiquity from the “peace” of Constantine to the shock waves of the invasions and occupations of the seventh century CE, have established the pervasiveness of the rhetoric of persecution in Christian and Manichaean circles in Late Antiquity. In the course of these studies, certain observations have emerged. Some of the authors of the chapters have discussed individual – and often local – conditions that encouraged or gave rise to persecution discourse. Many have attributed its purpose to identity formation. Some have questioned the relationship between objective historical conditions (reality) and reported violence, harassment, or coercion (rhetoric). That allegations of religious persecution are intended to delegitimize imperial or state prosecution against what is an objectively illegitimate political act – for example, treason – has been adduced as a possible motive. The slippage between prosecution and persecution, a number of the authors argue, is in the eye of the beholder. What I seek to do in the present chapter is to take these observations and interrogate them further. Why do certain themes and language recur? What are the conditions that encourage this type of discourse? Is there a direct relationship between these conditions and the production of new martyr narratives? What is the motive of those who produce persecution discourse? And, is there a direct relationship between the motive or intent of the authors and the likely effect on their intended audiences? These and other questions will be engaged with in this chapter in an attempt to understand why the rhetoric of persecution is so pervasive among Christians and Manichaeans in Late Antiquity, why we see the production of martyr narratives or apocalyptic increase in certain locations and at certain times, and what role persecution narratives play – as opposed to the role they are intended to play – in the communities in which they are promulgated. Finally, with regard to the vexed question of the relationship between rhetoric and reality, I will offer some tentative conclusions regarding what these narratives most likely tell us about the time at which they were generated or subsequently embellished and recirculated. I end on this note because a question of concern in recent years has been whether as scholars, in acknowledging and deconstructing the discourse

of religiously motivated violence, we have become so suspicious of the reported violence that we now view it entirely as constructed and thus, rightly or wrongly, deny it any validity.¹

The engagement with these questions will proceed in three parts. Firstly, I will adduce two studies that bracket the period that is the subject of this book – one from early Islamic Egypt, one from fourth-century North Africa – that offer insights concerning persecution discourse that I consider helpful. Secondly, I will introduce a number of theories from social and cognitive psychology – in particular, from the domain of moral psychology – that help to explain why certain language and themes keep recurring across different cultures and regions in Late Antiquity. This section will – necessarily, in brief – cover a number of topics: ideological narratives; sacred values and devoted actors; social–functional moral intuitions; and moral “commonsense,” feedback loops, and addiction to difference. What I will argue here is that the features common to persecution rhetoric are common precisely because of how the rhetoric of persecution taps into and activates parts of the human brain that transcend culture, even though the specific narrative framing might be culturally encoded. Thirdly, and finally, I will consider what this has to say about when and why persecution rhetoric emerges within a social group, with particular reference to the intended as well as the actual effect of that rhetoric on its audience.

Coming full circle in Africa

In 2006 Arietta Papaconstantinou published an insightful article in which she highlighted the emergence in non-Chalcedonian circles in Egypt in the seventh and eighth centuries of an entirely new cycle of martyr stories all of which claimed that the deaths had taken place under the Roman emperor Diocletian.² These hagiographies contain “extravagant” descriptions of literally unbelievable torture and suffering, in which the martyrs display suprahuman fortitude and are revived from death by supernatural means so that their suffering and torture can be extended.³ Included among these stories is an indigenizing legend of Diocletian himself, which tells how he was born into an Egyptian Christian family, became a soldier for the Persian campaign under Numerius, fell in love with and married the emperor’s daughter at Antioch, succeeded as emperor, rejected Christianity (apostatized), and began to persecute Christians.⁴ As Papaconstantinou goes on to explain, these narratives were produced in the context of the Arab conquest of Egypt in 641, when Chalcedonian Christianity was the state church benefiting from imperial support, while the non-Chalcedonian church had its own patriarch and rival parallel network of bishoprics, albeit largely resident in regional monasteries. Both churches had, since 451, been engaged in mutual polemic, with production increasing toward the end of the sixth century. Under Arab rule the two churches benefited from “even-handed indifference.” What we see in these narratives and in other texts produced in the early centuries of Arab rule – later entrenched in the Coptic church histories of the tenth and eleventh centuries – she argues, is “the Egyptian Monophysite (or non-Chalcedonian) Church searching

for a new identity and a new legitimacy. In this quest it was important to that Church to mark its indigenous origin.”⁵

The ideological narrative that emerged within non-Chalcedonian circles in this climate, Papaconstantinou outlines as follows:

the doctrinal divisions of Egyptian Christianity were a threat to the unity – indeed to the survival – of a community that was now no longer dominant. Drawing from the distinction between Christianity and Islam, John of Nikiu and George the Archdeacon introduced an ethnic and territorial element in what until then was a purely religious division: the Chalcedonians were identified with the Romans [the Byzantines, especially the emperor Heraclius], and the Monophysites with the local Egyptians. As the story goes, the Romans left the country after their defeat, and the Christian community that remained in Egypt had a common ethnic origin, a privileged position in the landscape, and a common history of suffering at the hands of foreigners. [...] In a parallel development, the Romans were gradually constructed as the imperial, foreign oppressors, whose theology was heretical and whose faith was corrupt. This was instrumental in bringing out more vividly the idea of an orthodox, local, suffering community.⁶

It is in this context that the martyr literature contributed, as she goes on to argue, to the construction of

a new foundational myth for the Coptic Church. To completely appropriate the persecution *epos*, the Egyptian Christian community also needed to appropriate all the key figures of the pre-Constantinian Church of the Martyrs. The Great Persecution of Diocletian acquired the status of a founding event.

[...] All these texts and legends point in the same direction. The post-Constantinian Church as a whole claimed to be *the direct heir of the persecuted Church*. The sacrifice of the martyrs was seen as the founding act of the new, dominant Christian community. This claim was all the stronger as it had been for a time contested by “fundamentalist” groups such as the Melitians, who could admittedly lay a better claim to being the Church of the Martyrs, a name they posted on the doors of their churches. Likewise, in the hagiographical production of the postconquest Monophysite Church, all the central characters in this story of martyrdom and persecution were once again – and even more radically – co-opted, so that the legendary history of the origins of the Coptic Church became entirely indigenous. By making the persecutor Diocletian an Egyptian, [...] the Coptic community in Islamic Egypt created its own narrative of salvation, a narrative that was entirely independent and self-sufficient.⁷

In this example, that postdates the case studies presented in this volume, we see the maturation – and continuing potency⁸ – of the discourse that these case studies trace: the claim to be heirs of Roman persecution.

I have adduced Papaconstantinou's tracing and analysis of the phenomenon in early Islamic Egypt at length because of the motives, conditions for, and characteristics of the production of persecution discourse toward which her study points, many of which are held in common with those brought out in the case studies presented in this volume. The discourse is, for instance, concerned with boundary-setting and identity-formation. It is concerned with legitimizing one's own non-dominant Christian faction and persuading an audience of that faction's supremacy by delegitimizing a rival Christian faction. It is associated with increased/renewed production of martyr narratives, which have a local association. It is driven in part by a concern for presenting one's religion as unified in a time when there is diversity. It is associated with a discourse of heterodoxy and orthodoxy. It is produced at a time when there is protracted interfactional (intra-Christian) dispute and in the wake of heightened mutual polemic. Yet it arises at a time when there is little or no objective state coercion, harassment, or persecution. Where the opposing faction was previously imperially endorsed and controlled episcopal cities, both factions are, in essence, now placed on an equal footing under the governance of a foreign political power that brings with it both a similar and distinctively different competing religion. In terms of its characteristic features, the discourse portrays its proponents as a persecuted people, and its opponents (Chalcedonians) as state-endorsed (imperial), oppressive, and heretical. It is the non-Chalcedonians who keep the pure faith (are orthodox), for which they suffer, and from which they never deviate in their suffering.⁹ What is perhaps unique in the martyr narratives produced in this period is that they look all the way back to – and tell stories of eyewitnesses to and victims of – the final pagan persecution; the persecution that, according to Lactantius, gave birth to the triumph of Christianity.¹⁰ This discursive strategy is prompted by the fact that Chalcedonian Christianity too could – and did – claim descent from the “church of the martyrs.” In order to wrest that title from them, the non-Chalcedonian (Coptic) literature under Arab rule looked back to what was now mythologized as a golden age of (unified, orthodox) Christianity – the period that stretched from the Great Persecution to the Council of Chalcedon.¹¹ In this respect, the rhetoric of persecution had matured as a discourse that could function independently of local reality and that could gloss over centuries of Christian disunity. It had come full circle.

The Coptic discourse of early Islamic Egypt at the same time highlights the dynamism of persecution rhetoric – a dynamism that has emerged in the case studies that precede this chapter. Where Christian communities of the seventh century elsewhere sought to explain the defeat of the “Romans” as a consequence of sin and a sign of divine disfavor, resulting in the production of apocalyptic discourse, as discussed in Chapter 15 by Strickler, in Egypt the non-Chalcedonian response was to distance themselves from the Roman defeat by identifying themselves as a group apart and appealing to the golden age of the martyrs as their inheritance. They did this through portraying themselves as a suffering church via the production of a significant number of new martyr narratives. The production of either or both apocalyptic literature and martyr stories can go hand in hand with the emergence of persecution rhetoric, as we have seen in Shepardson's chapter

on John of Ephesus (Chapter 14), in Morehouse's on Julian (Chapter 3), and in Digeser's chapter on Lactantius (Chapter 2). In other cases, as per Chapter 11 by Lester on sixth-century Iberia, accusations of persecution can fail to occur when historical circumstances might be expected to give rise to them, only later to be retrojected. A second very recent case study from Africa, this time from the very beginnings of the time period covered, is in these respects instructive.

Exploring the phenomenon from the perspectives of identity formation and trauma memory Jonathan Conant has recently revisited the question of the relationship between the real impact of the Diocletian persecution in North Africa and the claims North Africans subsequently made about it.¹² A first key point that Conant makes is the centrality of the memory of the conflict within North African Christianity. As he puts it, North Africans used the Great Persecution as an explanation for why their society "was so riven by religious violence." Stories of persecution and martyrdom sustained sectarian rivalry: "in succeeding generations North Africans would construct narratives of the betrayal of Christians by other Christians in the course of this persecution: acts of primordial evil that paralleled Judas' betrayal of Jesus."¹³ This ideological narrative of good and evil, exemplified in the betrayal of Christians by other Christians – Conant attributes its origin to Optatus and Augustine¹⁴ – anticipates the later narrative framing in Egypt of Diocletian himself as a "sort of Judas Iscariot."¹⁵ And yet, as Conant points out, during the persecution in Africa there appears to have been little violence against persons, coercion being focused on the handing over of inanimate objects (scriptures, liturgical objects, church property) and "the naming of names." In this respect coercion was not widespread across the Christian community, since the legislation applied mostly to clergy and church leaders, many of whom appear to have complied.¹⁶ What the persecution did produce, he argues, was a sense of vulnerability and hypervigilance on the part of Christians in the decades that followed. In the context of survivors whose family members had been named,

storytelling provided a way of working through a past that was real and that mattered. The few early stories that we are still able to hear strikingly focus on the twin themes of self-justification and the displacement of blame onto others. [...] Critically, though, rhetorical strategies like these relied on a broader Christian discourse already dominant in Africa by the end of the first decade of the fourth century that displaced feelings of anger and aggression away from the actual perpetrators of the persecution – the emperors, the imperial administration, and the local municipal authorities – and rationalised projecting them instead onto fellow victims of the anti-Christian edict of 303 [...].¹⁷

The *proditor* and *traditor* language prevalent in African debates of the fourth and fifth centuries about the appropriate response to persecution Conant sees as symptomatic of a subsequent hardening in attitudes toward, and a dynamic shift in, the definition of betrayal.

A second point that Conant makes concerns the production, reworking, and annual retelling in Africa of the acts of martyrs. Accusations of betrayal entwined,

he observes, with a corresponding search for (loyal) heroes. Dynamic change occurred in both instances. Just as the definition of betrayal shifted over time, martyr *acta* were living texts that continued to be elaborated, “successively reworked over time in order to suit the needs of the communities that used them.”¹⁸ As Conant points out,

generally speaking at least two trends of this reworking are particularly striking, both of which were probably already at play in the fourth century. First, narratives about the past were stripped bare – and in some cases built up again – to emphasise Christianity *per se* as a source both of victimisation in the *saeculum* and of transcendent spiritual strength for its adherents. Second, as these stories about the saints were distilled down to their essence, the reality that they sought to convey about the past was fundamentally emotional rather than historical. [...] It seems to have mattered deeply to those who curated the memory of the persecution that they bear witness not just to the sacrifice of those who had been executed by the imperial authorities, but also that they make their audiences feel the sense of anxiety that had accompanied actively self-identifying as Christian at the time. As the events of the persecution dimmed in living memory, some Christian authors seem to have become increasingly insistent on this point.¹⁹

This factor Conant sees as instrumental in the introduction of increasingly lurid details into martyr acts.²⁰ His observations prompt us to ask whether this same concern for producing emotional identification in the listener accounts for the production of new martyr stories in different contexts in successive centuries, on the one hand, and the extravagant hyperrealism of the martyr stories produced in early Islamic Egypt, on the other. Do his observations hold true only for the first generations after a perceived experience of trauma?

Regardless of the answer to this last question, Conant’s observations again tap into common themes and observations that have emerged from the studies presented in preceding chapters. That the rhetoric of persecution is engaged with the “curation of social memory” is a telling point. In this respect, as we have seen in many of the chapters, it is about a group’s way of constructing and “remembering” its past, both immediate and more distant. It is, as Conant points out, about group self-identification, produced by an anxiety about compromise or compliance with an external other, resulting in an emphasis on insider loyalty and betrayal. It is about telling and retelling stories of heroes and traitors that promote self-justification and keep the constructed “memory” emotionally alive and effective. Ultimately, the curation of social memory is dynamic, with shifts in definitions and in the narrative itself over time. Interestingly the concern with self-justification over having submitted instead of resisted, that resulted in North Africa in retrospective narratives of loyal clerics having tricked authorities and only deceptively complied,²¹ reemerges, for example, in sixth-century Iberia in claims that Leovigild was deceptive in his praying at the tombs of Nicene martyrs and that Nicene clergy were seduced into Arian conversion.²² There Lester observes, too, how the discourse shifted over time.

Cognition, social groups, and the rhetoric of persecution

On the surface, the rhetoric of persecution could be said to be about power and resistance to power in order to claim power or freedom for oneself.²³ It occurs when power is viewed by those subject to it as unjust.²⁴ We see variations on this assessment expressed in a number of the chapters here, made explicit by Falcasantos when she asserts:

I take as my starting point the position that any accusation of persecution arises first and foremost from coercive acts seen to limit the agency or rights of its victims while demonstrating or increasing the status, power, or agency of its perpetrators.²⁵

This starting point assumes that real power is exerted and that persecution rhetoric is triggered by actual actions – that is, that there is some objective reality, however it might be interpreted, that sits beneath the text. One entailment of this position is to locate the origin of persecution discourse in the slippage between prosecution and persecution.²⁶ Associated with this cluster of ideas is the concept of the “weaponization” of persecution discourse, which is wielded by one religious group against another or against imperial or regal authority. Associated with power, too, is the pervasive discussion in the preceding chapters of legitimation and delegitimation. A Foucauldian analysis would produce useful insights in these respects.

At the same time, in their analyses of their particular case studies, a number of the authors in this book appeal to narrative framing.²⁷ Others have introduced theories from memory studies, including the memory of trauma and the social performance of memory.²⁸ In addition to adducing trauma memory and the curation of social memory, for his part Conant, as discussed earlier, sees persecution discourse per se as engaged in displacing emotions like anger or guilt, and martyr narratives in particular as playing a role in engaging empathy and stirring up emotions. All of these observations point us to the link between language – in particular, the stories we tell ourselves – emotions, and cognition. In analyzing what persecution rhetoric does, why it develops, and why it is so pervasive, the role of memory – in terms of what is remembered and suppressed and in terms of its production, curation, and performance – deserves a detailed study of its own. For the remainder of this chapter, however, I will set detailed exploration of memory and power aside, leaving those analyses for future studies, and turn rather to the fields of social and cognitive psychology for their potential to produce yet another set of insights about what triggers persecution discourse and what it does to the community that embraces it or in which it is promulgated. In particular, when combined, theories from these and related fields take us beyond concerns about power that might operate at the conscious (rational) level to suggest that preconscious (prerational) affective mechanisms – that can present to the twenty-first-century observer or to opponents at the time as irrational – also play a significant role.

Moral intuitions, sacred values, and devoted actors

A common discursive thread observed across the case studies is that the community that self-identifies as persecuted perceives itself as battling a specific evil. At its extreme, in the ensuing narrative the perceived enemy becomes framed as Satan or the Antichrist.²⁹ As the narrative develops, the identified evil is portrayed as seeking to corrupt or destroy what the group holds sacred (the true faith). There is no gray. Everything is black and white (Manichean dualism). Language of purity (orthodoxy) and corruption (heterodoxy) is a significant feature. The pure followers (martyrs) are those who, when battling the evil, even to the point of death, are unwavering in their faith and do not deviate from the true path. In understanding why at their core the narratives are so remarkably consistent across so many different cultures, regions, and political settings in Late Antiquity, the work of Jesse Graham and Jonathan Haidt concerning moral intuitions and sacred values, and of Scott Atran concerning devoted actors contribute explanatory models that may prove helpful.³⁰

In order to appreciate the value of their contribution, some groundwork needs to be laid first concerning how moral cognition works in the brain, the agency of moral intuitions in moral judgments, and the role of social–functional moral intuitions in how groups cohere.³¹ Further, in order to bring together moral cognition and religion and its discourse of persecution in this particular way, a number of suppositions are required:

1. A religious movement or sect is a social group.
2. Religious groups are not special. Individuals bind together to form religious groups and religious groups split into sects or come into conflict with other religious groups on the basis of the same mechanisms that cause all social groups to bind, split or generate conflict.
3. It is not religion per se, but morality that is the primary force that binds social groups together.³² Morality sits beneath and shapes politics, economics, and religion.³³
4. Morality in this sense is distinct from ethics or religious values. It is not about what we should or should not do (determining the morally correct approach to a situation or what is ideally good, i.e., aspirant moral values), but social–functional values, that is, about the unconscious values and moral judgments that inform our everyday actions and behavior (operant moral values).

These suppositions are all open to contestation. Taken together, however, they build, I argue, a strong foundation for explaining how persecution and martyr narratives emerge in response to a particular perceived threat in the ways that they do, and why those narratives are common in and across Late Antiquity regardless of the degree to which one can quantify objective persecution.

Building on Durkheim’s and Weber’s ideas of community, authority, and sacredness, Graham and Haidt have spent the past decade developing explanatory theories concerning the “motives and motivated reasoning of partisans,”³⁴ key

among them the premise that groups organize and facilitate mutual cooperation on the basis of a surprisingly small number of moral foundations.³⁵ These foundations are the functional basis on which social groups overcome individual selfishness and cooperate – hence the label “social–functional” – and are distinct from the aspirational values (the ethics or moral code) that are consciously held up by a particular social group as the set of ideals according to which an individual should live her or his life. The degree of emphasis individual groups place on each of the moral foundations helps to explain, these scholars argue, “how and why the moral domain varies across cultures.”³⁶ The point they make, however, is that the foundations themselves are not variable but are cross-cultural, and social groups operate on the basis of all of the five foundations regardless of their particular emphasis.³⁷ While the concern of these scholars is with modern to postmodern societies, these same foundations can be demonstrated to shape and thus help to explain premodern societies and the social groups operative within them.³⁸

We can make this claim in part because moral judgment, according to the current consensus, is cognitive and operates at the level of intuition.³⁹ Since the processes in evolution are slow and the human brain of the third and the twenty-first centuries are both essentially cognitively modern,⁴⁰ it is reasonable to suppose that such basic ways of thinking are not just cross-cultural but also transhistorical. In fact, when it comes to the brain and moral cognition by 2010 there was already more or less consensus regarding four basic findings:

1. morality is largely universal, that is, cross-cultural;
2. there are, however, many moral judgments that do not fall into a universal category and that appear to be influenced by local culture and learning;
3. *all* moral decision processes resulting in behaviors, regardless of category, are carried out *before* conscious awareness of them (they result from a micro-second, intuitive response); and
4. there is a special device (“the interpreter”), usually located in the brain’s left hemisphere, that seeks to understand the rationale behind the pattern of behavior in others and/or oneself.⁴¹

Haidt calls the latter two processes “the emotional dog and its rational tail.”⁴² That is, we automatically and without exception make moral decisions or judgments at the preconscious level and rationalize them after the fact. The most important entailment of this discovery is that, while the reasons we give for an action may rationalize a gut response, the rationalization and the moral intuition are not logically consequential.⁴³ Understanding this helps to explain why the discourse and/or behavior of partisan religious groups can at times appear to be inconsistent with the espoused moral code.⁴⁴

The potential utility of this body of research becomes clearer when we examine the five moral intuitions or foundations that have thus far been discovered. Extracted from the adaptive challenges of social life discussed by evolutionary psychologists, Moral Foundations Theory seeks “to identify the best candidates for [...] the universal cognitive modules upon which cultures construct moral

matrices.”⁴⁵ The key adaptive challenges from which they evolved are defined as: “caring for vulnerable children”; “forming partnerships with non-kin to reap the benefits of reciprocity”; “forming coalitions to compete with other coalitions”; “negotiating status hierarchies”; and “keeping oneself and one’s kin free from parasites and pathogens, which spread quickly when people live in close proximity.”⁴⁶ Although there has been some variation in the labeling as the theory has progressed,⁴⁷ the five foundations identified are care/harm; fairness/cheating; loyalty/betrayal; authority/subversion; and sanctity/degradation. With respect to persecution discourse, we can immediately see that language of loyalty and betrayal, fairness and cheating (justice/injustice), and sanctity and degradation (purity/corruption, orthodoxy/heresy) play prominent roles. Each foundation is associated with a set of original triggers, characteristic emotions, and relevant virtues.⁴⁸ The characteristic emotions are compassion (care/harm); anger, gratitude, guilt (fairness/cheating); group pride, rage at traitors (loyalty/betrayal); respect, fear (authority/subversion); and disgust (sanctity/degradation). These characteristic emotions are of particular interest in that they correlate with the automatic, intuitive response (the gut moral judgment) that occurs before rationalization. Rationalization then usually occurs within the conceptual framework of the corresponding moral foundation.⁴⁹ Here we can immediately think of Conant’s argument that the retrospective shift in the definition of persecution that took place in Donatist and Catholic circles in North Africa was concerned with working out feelings of anger and guilt. That the associated narratives that emerged were focused on loyalty and betrayal is, as we shall see, significant.

What Haidt and his colleagues found in their experiments is that progressives placed strong emphasis on the first two foundations (care/harm and fairness/cheating), whereas conservatives placed more equal emphasis on all five.⁵⁰ This led Haidt to propose “that there are two common ways that cultures suppress and regulate selfishness, two visions of what society is and how it ought to work [...] the *contractual* approach and the *beehive* approach.”⁵¹ In the contractual (= progressive) approach the individual is the fundamental unit of value; in the hive (= conservative) approach, it is the group and its territory. This model further led Haidt to describe care/harm and fairness/cheating as individualizing foundations, in that they generate virtues and practices that protect individuals from each other and allow them to live in harmony as autonomous agents who can focus on their own goals; and loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation as binding foundations, because the virtues, practices, and institutions they generate function to bind people together into hierarchically organized *interdependent* social groups that try to regulate the daily lives and personal habits of their members.⁵² It should be stressed that neither approach to social cohesion is good or bad in itself. Both have pro- and antisocial entailments. These insights are particularly useful when brought into dialogue with the findings from the extensive and detailed analysis of fundamentalist religious movements undertaken by Martin Marty and Scott Appleby in the 1990s.⁵³ This is not to say that persecution narratives are necessarily fundamentalist. Some dovetail more neatly with fundamentalism than others. Most, however, share certain characteristics. Fundamentalist

movements, according to the findings of the project, “are by definition, militant, mobilized, defensive” and reactionary.⁵⁴ Fundamentalist religious movements mobilize and fight, whether ideologically or through action, in response to a perceived danger. When we contemplate the case studies presented here all of this sounds remarkably familiar. What I will argue in what follows is that anxiety or fear about the loss of something held sacred strengthens theivist intuitions. It is not surprising, then, that, in response to a perceived threat, in persecution discourse we see a tendency toward fundamentalist characteristics and strong emphasis on the binding moral foundations (loyalty, authority, sanctity = purity). In the case of persecution rhetoric authority expresses in specific creeds, which are deemed by a particular partisan group to be sacred.

A significant finding of Moral Foundations research is that groups that place strong emphasis on either set may work toward the same prosocial goals, but, as a result of the different moral foundations that drive the group, disagree strongly on the best way to achieve them. This finding is corroborated by the work of another moral psychologist, Joshua Greene, who uses the analogy of moral tribes to make the case that the same values that favor and foster intragroup cooperation can prove problematic when one group encounters another.⁵⁵ The intergroup conflict that can result he labels “the tragedy of commonsense morality.” To paraphrase his summary of how this works: groups share some core values; each group’s philosophy is woven into its daily life; each group has its own version of moral common sense; they fight, not because they are immoral, but because when they come into competition, they view the contested ground from very different moral perspectives.⁵⁶ Haidt labels this same phenomenon as “morality binds and blinds,” concluding: “[Morality] binds us into ideological teams that fight each other as though the fate of the world depended on our side winning each battle. It blinds us to the fact that each team is composed of good people who have something important to say.”⁵⁷ What this research collectively suggests is that, when we look at the phenomenon of the rhetoric of persecution, we should view those who self-identify in this way not as religious actors but as moral actors, driven intuitively by a particular set of values. This approach explains why there are such commonalities in the phenomenon across the *longue durée* of Late Antiquity and into Christian and para-Christian discourse under Islam, since it moves us beyond cultural constructs of religion to something that is, from a cognitive point of view, genuinely cross-cultural in that it is a common driver in the shaping of culturally constructed frames or points of view. It also helps to explain why the concepts persecution/prosecution, justice/injustice, purity/impurity, orthodoxy/heresy, heroes/villains, and persecutor/victim tend, in the context of persecution discourse, to be conceived of as sharply defined binaries and why their interpretation, as the authors of so many of these chapters argue, is in the eye of the beholder. Equally important, acknowledgement of the existence of moral intuitions and the moral commonsense constructed on the basis of them encourages us to view the perspective of those who self-identify as persecuted, as Fournier argues in the introduction (Chapter 1), as simultaneously a rhetorical construct and a worldview that, while extreme, is nonetheless authentic.

Yet another area in which moral psychology research can contribute is in the area of ideological narratives. In the course of their work on moral foundations, Graham and Haidt identified a particular ideological narrative founded on the five moral intuitions that is instrumental in producing terrorist acts and intergroup violence.⁵⁸ Building on the work of other scholars on “sacredness,” they argued for the inclusion of a psychology of sacredness in the “evolved psychological mechanisms” that are part of moral systems.⁵⁹ For Graham and Haidt sacred values are

moral concerns imbued with value far beyond practical utilities or self-interest. [...] [P]eople, things and ideas [...] can become sacralized because they are linked to these sacred values. And just as something is seen as worthy of ultimate protection, there is a vision of what it must be protected from: This is a vision of evil.⁶⁰

The ideological narrative that results from this process, they argue, is simple, effective at group binding, and encourages militant action.

[W]hen people join together to pursue political projects – from the demand for civil rights to violent revolution to genocide – they must share a common story, one that they accept as true without having authored it. Ideological narratives, then, by their very nature, are always stories about good and evil. They identify heroes and villains, they explain how the villains got the upper hand, and they lay out or justify the means by which – if we can just come together and fight hard enough – we can vanquish the villains and return the world to its balanced or proper state.⁶¹

Once again there is a remarkable consonance between persecution discourse and this ideological narrative. Persecution narratives have at their center heroes (dissident clergy, orthodox emperors/kings, and martyrs) and villains (heretical emperors/kings and heretical/apostate clergy and laity). Their focus is on an evil (heresy) against which the world needs to be protected. Orthodoxy is held up as sacred. The implicit message is that heresy is the source of all the evils in the world and that it urgently needs to be vanquished in order to restore the world to its proper (orthodox) state. That proper or balanced state is, in the eyes of those who construct these ideological narratives, pure, unmixed, and uncorrupted.

When we turn to explaining the prominence of martyr narratives in association with persecution discourse, as well as stories of force-feeding of heretical eucharists or forced baptism,⁶² the work of the anthropologist Scott Atran on “devoted actors” is highly suggestive. Atran, interested in extreme behaviors that, in rational terms, are out of proportion to prospects of success,⁶³ and in why certain political disputes become intractable, takes the work of the Moral Foundations theorists one step further to talk about certain moral values as “sacred values” that are intimately linked to personal and group identity. As he expresses it:

while the term “sacred values” intuitively denotes religious belief, in what follows, sacred values refer to any preferences regarding objects, beliefs, or

practices that people treat as both incompatible or nonfungible with profane issues or economic goods, as when land or law becomes holy or hallowed and as inseparable from people's conception of "self" and of "who we are."⁶⁴

For understanding what motivates voluntary martyrs (modern suicide bombers) in particular, Atran's summary of his findings regarding the entailments of "sincere attachment to sacred values" in multiple cultures and geopolitical hotspots across the contemporary world, is instructive:

(1) commitment to a rule-bound logic of moral appropriateness to do what is morally right no matter the likely risks or rewards rather than following a utilitarian calculus of costs and consequences [...]; (2) immunity to material trade-offs coupled with a "backfire effect" where offers of incentives or disincentives to give up sacred values heighten refusal to compromise or negotiate [...]; (3) resistance to social influence and exit strategies [...], which leads to unyielding social solidarity and binds genetic strangers to voluntarily sacrifice for one another; (4) insensitivity to spatial and temporal discounting, where considerations of distant places and people and even far past and future events associated with sacred values significantly outweigh concerns with here and now [...]; and (5) brain-imaging patterns consistent with processing obligatory rules rather than weighing costs and benefits and with processing perceived violations of such rules as emotionally agitating and resistant to social influence [...].⁶⁵

In essence, when sacred values come into play perception of what is right or wrong trumps utilitarian considerations (cost-benefit analysis), actors become blind to exit strategies and are more willing "to fight and risk serious loss/death rather than compromise"; and material incentives or disincentives are likely to be viewed as insulting/profane and to make the actors more intransigent.⁶⁶ Although Atran is describing and analyzing real actors across the globe in the present day, many of these same characteristics are expressed in the martyr narratives embellished and/or produced in the fourth to eighth centuries. This is particularly the case with the ideology of death before compromise. Suffering or dying to defend the values that the group holds sacred is, in martyr stories, proof of orthodoxy and becomes in itself almost sacred and heroic. If Conant is correct, the martyr stories were intended, via their liturgical instantiation and annual retelling, to stimulate their audience to identify emotionally with the central actors. Identity with these devoted actors, for some listeners, may well have occasioned identification with the sacred value/s for which they voluntarily gave up their lives.

In developing his theory of devoted actors further, what Atran adds to the insights of the moral psychologists is Fusion theory, taken from the field of social psychology. This introduces the idea of the fusing of self-identity with a unique collective identity, which is in turn fused with sacred values, providing all group members with "a similar sense of significance."⁶⁷ This has as much to say to the emergence of Christianity and its response to persecution – whether the

persecution was real or perceived – as to present-day jihadists and the Muslim Brotherhood. As he explains:

In the sweep of cultural evolution, movements that develop psychological mechanisms to promote devoted actors are more likely to succeed because they exploit evolved psychology (e.g., kin selection) in evolutionarily novel ways. The interaction of identity fusion and sacred values seems to be one such case, where the psychology of kin selection combines with bonding rituals (e.g., sacred oaths, *bayat*, to the brotherhood, *ikhwaniyah*, of jihad and its leaders) to inextricably cement individuals to the group via a shared spiritual and moral mission.⁶⁸

These insights are useful for understanding persecution discourse in two additional respects. Self-identifying as persecuted is powerful precisely because it serves to bind individuals with the same shared (sacred) values into a tightly knit “brotherhood.” At the same time, given the importance of bonding rituals for cementing individuals to the group and its mission, we can see why claims of force-fed eucharists and forced baptism occur in our narratives. The idea of receiving at the hands of heretics these particular rituals, which in late-ancient Christian thought on medical–philosophical grounds quite literally bonded Christians to Christ and to each other,⁶⁹ will, on the one hand, have shocked true believers, evoking disgust and, ultimately, anger. Through these rituals, the orthodox individual was, these stories tell us, literally ripped away from their own brotherhood and rebound to the heterodox community. On the other hand, these stories invoke the martyr (devoted actor) narrative. The orthodox have to be force-fed and forced into baptism precisely because, these stories imply, they resisted. Resistance for the true faith is a characteristic of martyrdom, which, in the circular logic of persecution discourse, is proof of orthodoxy.

Cause and effect

If these theoretical approaches help to explain why certain discursive threads are common in the rhetoric of persecution, they also provide a challenge to assumptions about that rhetoric’s purpose. A number of the case studies presented in the preceding chapters support Falcasantos’ assertion that “accusation of persecution arises first and foremost from coercive acts seen to limit the agency or rights of its victims.” But this should not always be assumed to be the case. A key finding of the Fundamentalism Project that can further be brought into dialogue with the research discussed in the previous section concerns what drives the setting of clear boundaries as a core fundamentalism characteristic. In the specific case of fundamentalist religious movements, boundaries, it is argued, “relate to the challenge of keeping the group’s identity in an open and often tempting society.”⁷⁰ This insight challenges us to look not for pervasive religious intolerance as a causal factor but rather religious tolerance,⁷¹ and helps to explain why we see persecution discourse so often expressing concern about apostasy. It also helps to explain why

persecution discourse incorporates discursive strategies – for example, claims of seduction, trickery, or force – for justifying current or past cooperation. The danger to which persecution discourse in the centuries after Constantine so often responds, as the cases of Julian, Leovigild, the Chalcedonian–non-Chalcedonian conflict, and early Islamic Egypt show, is less persecution, objectively defined, than a social order that is perceived to be too tolerant or too permissive. That is, the conditions in which persecution discourse arises, in these instances, are precisely the opposite of what the discourse itself portrays. In this case, the discourse is concerned with the fact that the majority of those religious adherents whom the person promulgating the persecution discourse believes should be insiders are mixing with those who are corrupt or impure and thus living in the gray zone.⁷² Persecution discourse in these instances is about persuading “apostates” that the world is black and white, that they are living in a time of moral decay, that their particular brand of the religion is at risk of losing its “purity,” and that their apostasy is at fault. At the same time, it is about persuading insiders who have not yet apostatized to stand firm and avoid apostasy as an evil. At its most extreme and most explicit, we see these ideas expressed once again in apocalyptic narratives.⁷³

There are probably multiple reasons why persecution discourse starts in the first place. A minority religious group may perceive itself as oppressed, coerced, or harassed for genuine reasons. The author of a persecution narrative may, as Fournier suggests, be an “oddball” or an unrepresentative extremist.⁷⁴ As in the case of the non-Chalcedonian church in early Islamic Egypt in the context of protracted intra-Christian dispute, the entrance of a tolerant third-party state power might change the dynamic, resulting in the efflorescence of martyr narratives and an appeal to a persecuted past as a means of creating a distinctive legitimating history and compellingly new identity. We should not, however, consider cause to be the same as effect, just as we should distinguish between the intention of the authors of persecution and martyr narratives and the impact of their persecution discourse once it was in circulation. As Fournier points out in the introduction, these narratives had “serious consequences” in Late Antiquity.⁷⁵ Conant argues on the basis of trauma studies that

[e]motional identification with the experience of the victim can include adopting the victim’s sense of helplessness, rage, and grief [...]. Thus the kind of fear validated by the narratives through which early Christians chose to curate their memories of the past could well have helped to reinforce a heightened sensitivity to perceived threats – real or imagined – not just in the generation of survivors, but in subsequent generations as well, and to validate an aggressive response, already displaced from the representatives of the late Roman state, and redirected instead toward those who were labelled as in any way “Other,” regardless of whether or not they were the cause of any actual pain or suffering.⁷⁶

As he points out, and as the research adduced in the previous section validates, ideological narratives are emotional narratives. Emotional narratives, these same

studies suggest, activate in the brain unconscious prerational responses. When they are repeatedly activated through emotional rhetoric the particular neural pathways engaged are strengthened as a result.⁷⁷ This in turn can help to explain partisan intractability. Additionally, at a cognitive level persecution narratives function as conceptual frames. Conceptual frames, as cognitive linguists argue, are simple, automatic, and reflexive.⁷⁸

Frames are cognitive shortcuts that we use to interpret the world around us, to represent the world to others, to reason about it and to make decisions having an impact on it. When we categorize a phenomenon in a frame, we give meaning to some aspects of what is observed, and at the same time we discount other aspects that are (or become) less relevant. Thus, frames provide meaning through a selective process, which filters people's perceptions and concepts, providing a specific perspective on a problem.⁷⁹

Narratives about good and evil, heroes and villains, persecutors and victims all have simple common structures. The problem, when they are activated, is that they may not be accurate, they leave out essential details, and it is difficult cognitively to override them. This is why persecution narratives can circulate and even "go viral" at times when there is little to no objective persecution. Arguing against them using the same language simply strengthens the narrative in the brain of the listener.⁸⁰ They are powerful precisely because they neurally bind emotions to the story. We feel fear when the hero is threatened, elated when the heroine wins or evil is defeated, and depressed or angry when evil prevails and we identify with the victim.⁸¹ Stories "with content that evokes high arousal positive (awe [or elation]) or negative emotions (anger or anxiety)," research shows, are more likely to go viral.⁸² It is in these respects that persecution narratives can take on a life of their own, independent of historical reality and of their authors' intentions.

It is perhaps no accident that the case studies in this volume begin and end with apocalyptic discourse. All of the cognitive and neural mechanisms thus far described suggest that, under the right conditions, persecution discourse is likely to produce a feedback loop that rearouses and heightens emotions and thus escalates intra- and intergroup tensions. In this respect, persecution discourse, even if it does not originate in violence, can be productive of violence. Apocalyptic discourse generates a particular sense of urgency. "Millennialism and apocalypticism," Gerhard van den Heever argues,

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. [... Apocalypticism] 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

reipristination of an earlier period of greater purity, whether this purity be ethnic, moral, or ideological.⁸³

For Christians of Late Antiquity, the myth of the Great Persecution as a golden age in which orthodox Christians stood firm and died for their faith, initiated by Lactantius, continues to resonate throughout all of the case studies. It is a story of a pure past that Christians – the right kind of Christians – must constantly strive to restore. As a founding myth it predisposes its adherents to think and act in distinctively adversarial ways. As Van den Heever continues,

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.⁸⁴

What actual impact this discourse had on the communities within which it circulated is difficult to quantify, but it is important that we remain open to the possibility that the violence reported in persecution narratives was itself, at times, generative. When we consider that emotional rhetoric of this kind quite literally stimulates the release of neurochemicals in the brain, and align this finding with the effect on the brain of constantly deferred gratification – in this instance, an ideological war that is never, according to the bulk of the narratives, resolved – we can conclude that the Christians of Late Antiquity may well have become attuned and addicted to difference.⁸⁵

Rhetoric and reality

To conclude, I will speculate in brief about what we can now say concerning the relationship between persecution rhetoric and historical reality on the basis of the aforementioned research and of the case studies presented in this volume. Before I do that, it is important to acknowledge that not all of the case studies demonstrate all of the characteristics or satisfy all of the conditions described earlier. What the case studies remind us of is the diversity and dynamism of persecution discourse as a phenomenon in Late Antiquity. That said, there are some conclusions that we can draw. Firstly, scholars are right to be suspicious of the violence reported in persecution discourse. As these studies show, it is important to test rhetorical claims of persecution and violence, wherever possible, against the historical record. In this respect, as Conant shows, the adduction of epigraphic and archaeological evidence can prove helpful.⁸⁶ We should be equally concerned when all that survives is the persecution rhetoric authored by a single individual

or a single religious faction. As the studies by MacDougall, Cohen, and Osequada show, a number of distinct groups can claim simultaneously to be victims of persecution. Often we gain only hints of the larger context, but when we do, the reality diverges significantly from the rhetorically constructed picture. This, as the cognitive research shows, is a natural consequence of ideological narratives and their cognitive framing. They are selective and simplified, and certain discursive threads are common across them for a reason. When apocalyptic narrative is a part of the discourse, we should be particularly wary. Additionally, when concerns with apostasy occur, we should look especially for evidence not of violence against the group that claims persecution, but for outsider tolerance and insider cooperation and accommodation. In these respects, what these studies suggest is a range of possibilities along a spectrum from real, but overstated, violence or coercion or harassment to a context of no objective oppression to even-handed treatment of all religious groups, including the party that is claiming persecution. This much we can say from the perspective of the position of the state toward Christian factions and toward their coreligionists, Manichaeans. Teasing out the relationship between persecution rhetoric and the behavior of Christian factions and their bishops and lesser clergy toward each other requires further deliberation. In this latter regard, the research about devoted actors, moral intuitions, moral commonsense, and ideological narratives suggests that looking to how groups behaved toward each other as a *consequence* of the circulation of such rhetoric rather than to how the rhetoric *reflects* behavior may prove more fruitful. There is much more to be said on that topic. What I have done here is simply to lay a foundation for helping us to understand why in so many different contexts across Late Antiquity so many groups claimed and continued to claim so consistently to be heirs of Roman persecution.

Notes

- 1 See Mayer (forthcoming c).
- 2 On the Antioch – later expanded into the Basilides – cycle, see Papaconstantinou (2006), 75.
- 3 Papaconstantinou (2006), 76–7.
- 4 Papaconstantinou (2006), 80, citing Schwartz (1958–60); and van den Berg-Ontswedder (1990).
- 5 Papaconstantinou (2006), 66–7.
- 6 Papaconstantinou (2006), 72.
- 7 Papaconstantinou (2006), 79–81, who notes that the “Era of Diocletian” gradually became common as a dating mechanism, enshrining the Coptic Church’s foundation as the “Era of the Martyrs” (emphasis added).
- 8 Just as the Eusebian and Lactantian constructions of Constantinian Christianity have dominated Christianity’s view of its past to the present day (see Digeser, ch. 2, this volume), so Papaconstantinou (2006) points to the endurance of the Coptic version of Egyptian Christianity’s origins.
- 9 Papaconstantinou (2006), 72, notes that in the Greek imagination “the capacity of Egyptians to endure pain or persecution” is a topos stretching back to classical antiquity.
- 10 Digeser (ch. 2).

- 11 On the production in Coptic in early Islamic Egypt of writings attributed to pre-Chalcedonian “orthodox” Greek fathers like John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem and Basil of Caesarea, see, e.g., van den Broek (2013), Voicu (2011, 2013), and Depuydt & Brakke (1991).
- 12 Conant (forthcoming).
- 13 Conant (forthcoming).
- 14 Conant (forthcoming).
- 15 Papaconstantinou (2006), 81.
- 16 Conant (forthcoming).
- 17 Conant (forthcoming).
- 18 Conant (forthcoming).
- 19 Conant (forthcoming).
- 20 Conant (forthcoming). On the point that hagiography is primarily concerned with mobilizing its audience to imitate the martyr in action, see Marcos (2015), 193.
- 21 Conant (forthcoming), citing examples where it is claimed that they handed over defective scriptures or church archives instead. See also Fournier, ch. 1, this volume.
- 22 See Lester, ch. 11, this volume. Note the similarity of the rhetoric: “Individuals who succumbed to conversion were not martyrs or heroes, but traitors who destabilized the boundaries between orthodox and heretical communities.” Cf. Shepardson (ch. 14, this volume) with regard to how John of Ephesus perceived the tactics of the Chalcedonian bishop of Antioch, Ephraim.
- 23 We use power here in the sense employed by Foucault (1983). One might suppose that religious freedom is at stake here also, but the development of this concept in the context of antiquity and early Christianity is not straightforward. See Leppin (2014). It is worth noting that Leppin (2014), 68–73, identifies *libertas* as a theme in Lactantius.
- 24 This is exemplified by current claims that otherwise constitutional investigations against US President Donald Trump (perceived as the unjust exercise of power by Democratic opponents) constitute “demonic attacks,” leading to a call by 250 evangelical leaders for a special day of prayer on his behalf. See <https://billygraham.org/story/special-day-of-prayer/> (posted May 26, 2019); www.foxnews.com/faith-values/trump-prayer-franklin-graham-media-attacks (posted May 29, 2019), accessed May 31, 2019.
- 25 Falcasantos, ch. 12, this volume.
- 26 See the chapters in this volume by Morehouse (ch. 3), Kahlos (ch. 4), Ployd (ch. 6), and Fournier (ch. 8).
- 27 See Strickler (ch. 15), who introduces Somers’ theory of narrative emplotment, and Digeser (ch. 2) and Falcasantos (ch. 12).
- 28 See Morehouse (ch. 3) and Falcasantos (ch. 12).
- 29 E.g., Fournier (ch. 1), re Dontatist claims; Cohen (ch. 9); Osequada (ch. 13); Shepardson (ch. 14); Strickler (ch. 15).
- 30 Graham & Haidt (2012); Graham et al. (2013); and Atran (2016), building on Graham & Haidt (2012).
- 31 What follows is a simplified discussion of a complex set of ideas, discussed at greater length and with additional references in Mayer (2017, 2018a, 2019, 2020, forthcoming a). The outline here is largely extracted from Mayer (forthcoming a).
- 32 This is the thesis of both Greene (2013) and Haidt (2012).
- 33 See Koleva et al. (2012).
- 34 See Haidt & Graham (2009), 373–4.
- 35 See Graham et al. (2013).
- 36 Haidt & Graham (2009), 373. See further Feder (2016a).
- 37 Haidt (2012), 144–5.
- 38 In making this case, the work of Feder in Near-Eastern and Hebrew religion is foundational. See Feder (2013, 2014, 2016b) and Mayer (2018a, 2019, forthcoming d).

- 39 Clarke (2014), 75: “On dual processing accounts of cognition [...] our cognitive activities fall into two basic types: effortful, deliberative and conscious (‘reason’); and automatic, intuitive and non-conscious (‘intuition’).” On the priority of intuition over reason in moral decision-making versus other kinds of decision-making, see the summary in Ervas et al. (2015), 645–6.
- 40 See Czachesz (2017), 49–61.
- 41 Debate on the basis of neuroscientific experimental findings published since 2010 tends to nuance these claims rather than overturn them: e.g., Clarke (2014), 75–81; and the essays in Liao (2016) and Ferrin (2017). The summary is taken from Gazzaniga (2010), no longer available online, but frequently cited.
- 42 Haidt (2001). In Haidt (2012), 32–60, this becomes “the intuitive dog and its rational tail.”
- 43 Haidt (2012), 82–3.
- 44 For instance, how the command to love one’s neighbour could be deemed not at all incompatible with coercion (see Fournier, ch. 1, and Ployd, ch. 6, this volume).
- 45 Haidt (2012), 146.
- 46 Haidt (2012), 146.
- 47 See, e.g., McKay & Whitehouse (2015), 454–5; Haidt (2009).
- 48 Haidt (2012), 146, fig. 6.2.
- 49 On this point, see the summation of their work on disgust in Rozin et al. (2008).
- 50 See Haidt & Graham (2009), esp. fig. 1. The greater the degree of conservatism, however, the greater the emphasis on the last three. The language of “progressives” and “conservatives” derives from modern political theory. I retain it here for convenience.
- 51 Haidt (2009).
- 52 Haidt (2009), 371–2, opens with a metaphor (Planet Durkheim) that exemplifies a hivist society. When a contractualist movement develops, the hivists and contractualists, with their different emphases, come into conflict.
- 53 The project, which ran from 1987 to 1995, produced five volumes. The findings are summed up in Almond et al. (1995) and reprised in Almond et al. (2003).
- 54 Almond et al. (2003), 99.
- 55 Greene (2013).
- 56 See Greene (2013), 4–5.
- 57 Haidt (2012), 219–366, esp. 366.
- 58 Graham & Haidt (2012).
- 59 Graham & Haidt (2012), 14.
- 60 Graham & Haidt (2012), 17.
- 61 Graham & Haidt (2012), 16.
- 62 See, in this volume, Fournier (ch. 8, on coerced rebaptism), Shepardson (ch. 14), and Strickler (ch. 15).
- 63 Atran (2010), xiv. His study is focused on understanding the actors in asymmetrical warfare, in particular suicide bombers.
- 64 Atran (2016), 194.
- 65 Atran (2016), 195.
- 66 Atran (2016), 195–7.
- 67 Atran (2016), 197.
- 68 Atran (2016), 198.
- 69 Mayer (forthcoming d).
- 70 Almond et al. (2003), 99.
- 71 The terms “tolerance” and “intolerance” are used here for the sake of convenience. For an overview of recent discussions about the problems that attach to the terms, see Mayer (2018b), 3–4, 6–7.
- 72 See the analysis of Islamic State actions and rhetoric by van den Heever (2018), 304–9, esp. 308; and Christian anxiety about crypto-Manichaeism discussed by Brand, ch. 7, this volume.

- 73 See Strickler (ch. 15, this volume) re 7th-century claims that the world was in the end times and that God was punishing the Roman empire because of its sins.
- 74 Fournier, ch. 1, this volume.
- 75 Fournier, ch. 1, this volume.
- 76 Conant (forthcoming).
- 77 See Ingram (2013); Mayer (2019), 79–93.
- 78 See Lakoff (2009), 21–42.
- 79 Ervas et al. (2015), 647.
- 80 Lakoff (2009), 15.
- 81 Lakoff (2009), 27–8.
- 82 See Berger (2013), esp. 93–124 (on the role of emotion) and 179–202 (on the effectiveness of stories); Berger & Milkman (2012), for the experimental basis.
- 83 Van den Heever (2018), 309.
- 84 Van den Heever (2018), 310.
- 85 On this point see Ingram (2013), 67–71; for the extended argument re addiction to emotional rhetoric, 55–100.
- 86 Conant (forthcoming).

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