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978-0-521-87915-6 - Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch

Isabella Sandwell

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## RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Studies of religious interaction in the fourth century AD have often assumed that the categories of 'pagan', 'Christian' and 'Jew' can be straightforwardly applied, and that we can assess the extent of Christianization in the Graeco-Roman period. In contrast, Dr Sandwell tackles the fundamental question of attitudes to religious identity by exploring how the Christian preacher John Chrysostom and the Graeco-Roman orator Libanius wrote about and understood issues of religious allegiance. By comparing the approaches of these men, who were living and working in Antioch at approximately the same time, she strives to get inside the process of religious interaction in a way not normally possible due to the dominance of Christian sources. In so doing, she develops new approaches to the study of Libanius' religion, the impact of John Chrysostom's preaching on his audiences and the importance of religious identity to fourth-century individuals.

ISABELLA SANDWELL is Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Bristol.

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# RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

*GREEKS, JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN ANTIOCH*

BY

ISABELLA SANDWELL



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But as for Christ you love him, you say, and adopt him as the guardian of your city instead of Zeus and the god of Daphne and Calliope.

(Julian, *Misopogon* 357c)

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## *Preface*

This book started out as a PhD thesis completed at University College London in 2001. The original intention of that PhD was to produce a new approach to understanding religious interaction in the fourth century AD by exploring the writings of Libanius and Chrysostom alongside one another. I hoped to gain access to processes of religious interaction in a way that is not usually possible for the ancient world by taking advantage of the fact that these two authors, from different religious traditions, were working and writing in the city of Antioch almost contemporaneously. The original project did not get as close to achieving this goal as I would have liked. Four years of post-graduate study was barely enough time to get to grips with the massive body of material provided by Libanius and Chrysostom, let alone to develop a new theoretical model for understanding what their writings tell us about religious interaction. When I began to think about turning the PhD into a publishable book, it very quickly became clear that a lot more work was needed in order to make my study match the claims I was making for it. Over the last two years I have been engaged in this work and have tried to develop a strong theoretical grounding for ideas that previously had only embryonic form. The choice to alternate chapters on Libanius and John Chrysostom has remained, and chapters 5 and 6 in the current book bear quite a strong resemblance to chapters 1 and 2 in the original PhD. Otherwise, the current book is quite distinct from the PhD and has involved a complete reformulation of my arguments. In particular, my approach to how we use Libanius' writings on religion is now more sophisticated, as is my approach to issues of religious identity.

The completion of the book would not have been possible without the help of numerous individuals. Primarily, I am indebted to John North who has been with the project from the start as my PhD supervisor. Since the completion of the PhD he has continued to read drafts and offer invaluable advice and has been a constant source of encouragement. His approach to the study of ancient religion has had a massive impact on my thinking,

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often in ways that I do not even recognize at first, as has the example he has set that understanding the ‘big picture’ is always important. Another person who has been with the project from an early stage, and to whom I am greatly indebted, is Wendy Mayer. As a reader for an earlier, potential publisher, she read the original PhD. Since then, as a reader for Cambridge University Press, she has given detailed attention to numerous drafts and has played a crucial role in shaping the final form that it has taken. Her positive attitude towards my work as well as her expertise in the study of John Chrysostom have been invaluable. I must also thank Wendy Mayer for her less formal assistance in numerous email correspondences and for being a centre point around whom those interested in John Chrysostom have gathered. In the final months of completing this book Gillian Clark’s comments and advice on drafts have also been invaluable. Her detailed corrections of my work and her breadth of knowledge of the late-antique world have been of the greatest assistance. I could not have asked for a better colleague during the final stages of writing this book. Two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press have also read drafts. I must thank them for helping me to realize when I was not arguing the points that I thought I was arguing and for enabling me to see which aspects of my thinking were useful and important, and which confusing and superfluous. Without their comments and criticisms, this work would have taken much longer to reach its final state. Other people I must thank for practical help or general words of encouragement over the years of writing the PhD and the book are Richard Alston, Peter Brown, Peter Heather, Janet Huskinson, Wolf Liebeschuetz, Pierre-Louis Malosse, Stephen Mitchell, Charlotte Roueché and Charles Stewart. Elizabeth Burr, Jaclyn Maxwell, Alberto J. Quiroga Puertas and Silke Trzcionka have sent to me, or helped me to find, their unpublished works on John Chrysostom and Libanius. Thanks are also due to the Norman family for allowing me to see copies of A. F. Norman’s unpublished translations of Libanius’ orations and to Mary Whitby for helping me to obtain them. Friends and colleagues who have provided listening ears over coffees, lunches, drinks and emails include Céline Marquaille, Christy Constantakopoulou, Fiona Haarer, Riet van Bremen, Rebecca Flemming, Rachel Aucott and all my colleagues in the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Bristol. Finally, I must thank Danny Penman and my family for putting up with the fact that I have devoted every spare minute of the last two years to completing this book.

# Abbreviations

ACM	<i>Ancient Christian Magic, Coptic Texts of Ritual Power</i> , ed. M. Meyer, Princeton, 1999
CPG	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> , vols. I–IV, by M. Geerard, Turnhout, 1974–83; (suppl.) M. Geerard and J. Noret, Turnhout, 1998
CTh	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
EEC	<i>Encyclopedia of Early Christianity</i> , ed. E. Ferguson <i>et al.</i> , New York, 1990
LRE	<i>The Later Roman Empire AD 284–602: a Social and Economic Survey</i> , by A. H. M. Jones, Oxford, 1964
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca (Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca)</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1860–94
PGM	<i>Papyri Graecae Magicae</i> , trans. K. Preisendanz <i>et al.</i> , Teubner edition, Leipzig, 1928–31
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina (Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina)</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1844–65
PLRE	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , vol. I: AD 260–395, ed. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris, London, 1971
SC	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i>

Abbreviations of ancient texts are taken from the *Greek–English Lexicon* (LSJ), the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and the *Greek Patristic Lexicon*. The exceptions to this are the abbreviations of the works of John Chrysostom which are listed below.

<i>Ad Illum. Catech.</i>	<i>Catecheses ad Illuminandos</i>
<i>Adv. Eos.</i>	<i>Adversus Eos qui apud se habent subintroductas virgines</i>
<i>Adv. Jud.</i>	<i>Adversus Judaeos</i>

<i>Adv. Oppug.</i>	<i>Adversus Oppugnatores vitae monasticae</i>
<i>Contra Jud. et Gent.</i>	<i>Contra Judaeos et Gentiles, quod Christus sit deus</i>
<i>De Bapt. Christi</i>	<i>De Baptismo Christi</i>
<i>De Diab. Tent. Hom.</i>	<i>De Diabolo Tentatore</i>
<i>De Incomp. Dei Nat.</i>	<i>De Incomprehensibili Dei Natura</i>
<i>De Sac.</i>	<i>De Sacerdotio</i>
<i>De S. Bab. Contra Jul. et Gent.</i>	<i>De Sancto Babyla, Contra Julianum et Gentiles</i>
<i>Hom. in Act.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Acta Apostolorum</i>
<i>Hom. in Eryp. Mart.</i>	<i>In Martyres Aegyptios</i>
<i>Hom. in Gen.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Genesin</i>
<i>Hom. in Mart.</i>	<i>Homilia in Martyres</i>
<i>Hom. in Matt.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Matthaeum</i>
<i>Hom. de S. Bab.</i>	<i>De Sancto Hieromartyre Babyla</i>
<i>Hom. de S. Phil.</i>	<i>Homilia de Sancto Philogonio</i>
<i>Hom. de Stat.</i>	<i>Homiliae de Statuis ad populum Antiochenum habitae</i>
<i>In Cap. ad Galat. Comment.</i>	<i>Commentarius in Epistolam ad Galatas</i>
<i>In Ep. ad Coloss. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam ad Colossenses</i>
<i>In Ep. ad 1 Cor. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam Primam ad Corinthios</i>
<i>In Ep. ad 2 Cor. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam Secundam ad Corinthios</i>
<i>In Ep. ad Ephes. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam ad Ephesios</i>
<i>In Ep. ad Heb. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam ad Hebraeos</i>
<i>In Ep. ad Philip. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam ad Philippenses</i>
<i>In Ep. ad Rom. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam ad Romanos</i>
<i>In Ep. ad 1 Thess. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam Primam ad Thessalonicenses</i>
<i>In Ep. ad 2 Thess. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam Secundam ad Thessalonicenses</i>
<i>In Ep. ad 1 Tim. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam Primam ad Timotheum</i>
<i>In Ep. ad 2 Tim. Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam Secundam ad Timotheum</i>
<i>In Ep. ad Titus Hom.</i>	<i>In Epistolam ad Titum</i>
<i>In Kal.</i>	<i>In Kalendas</i>
<i>In Princ. Act.</i>	<i>In Principium Actorum</i>
<i>In S. Ignat. Mart.</i>	<i>In Sanctum Ignatium Martyrem</i>
<i>In S. Jul. Mart.</i>	<i>In Sanctum Julianum Martyrem</i>
<i>In S. Rom. Mart.</i>	<i>In Sanctum Romanum</i>