

Without the library, I would not have been able to write my paper *Epiphanius's Condemnation of the Nazarenes: When Orthodox Christian Theology is Threatened by Jewish Practice*. Without the library, I would not have been able to turn this paper in for my class "Twilight of Antiquity" to receive an A in the course. Without the library, I would not have been able to receive the URCA travel grant to present at the Phi Alpha Theta Biennial Conference in New Orleans earlier this year. Even bigger than all of that, without the library, I would not be able to pursue a career in academia.

I have learned, and continue to learn, how to best use the library in my research. For my paper on Epiphanius, I spent hours searching for articles on databases and using ILLiad to obtain difficult to find books. Through JSTOR, I was able to gain access to the Epiphanius's *Panarion* in which I read about his opinion on a 4th century, Jewish-Christian sect, the Nazarenes. I was surprised to read that even though this group held orthodox Christian beliefs, Epiphanius condemned them as heretics because they continued to live according to Jewish practices. From there, I scoured JSTOR for secondary sources on this topic and found many useful studies that propelled my understanding of the historical context of Epiphanius and of the nuanced observations made by scholars about the Nazarenes. For example, I learned in an article written by Wolfram Kinzing that the Nazarenes lived between a Jewish community and a Christian community. This vital information was essential in illuminating my thesis that Epiphanius condemned the Nazarenes because their public Torah-observance, as believers in Christ, threatened his supersessionism. A theology that teaches that the Law of Moses is no longer operative in the life of a believer in Christ, even if that believer in Christ is Jewish. I was able to contrast the public nature of the Nazarenes with the private nature of other Jewish believers that Epiphanius mentioned in a different chapter of the *Panarion*. In the chapter entitled, "Against the Ebionites," Epiphanius rejoiced in the existence of Jewish believers in Christ amidst the Jewish community. He praised them even though they continued to observe the Torah. He was able to praise them because they were in private and not posing a threat to the Catholic Church. Whereas, Epiphanius was forced to condemn the Nazarenes because their Torah observance was in public and near two competing communities. The development of this thesis was solely dependent on the ability to have access to these primary and secondary sources.

Another department within the library that was essential to my success was interlibrary loan. My research topic has not received much attention in scholarship so finding the few books written on the topic would have been difficult and expensive but with ILL, I was able to obtain the necessary works to pursue my research. The most important book I was able to get through ILL was Ray Pritz's *Nazarene Jewish Christianity: From the End of the New Testament Period Until Its Disappearance in the Fourth Century*. This was the first scholarly book written exclusively on the Nazarenes and continues to be the most in depth. Not only did Pritz provide valuable information about the Nazarenes, as shown by how many times I cite his work in my paper, but he also surveyed other ancient writers who mentioned the Nazarenes.

This information became especially important during the Q&A portion of my presentation at the Phi Alpha Theta Conference. In preparation for my presentation, I re-read *Nazarene Jewish Christianity* the day before I presented and paid special attention to these other Catholic writers. It is a good thing I did because during the Q&A I was asked if the Nazarenes were intentionally antagonizing the Catholic Church. I was able to give an informed answer and explain how if the Nazarenes were intentionally antagonizing anybody, it was the Jewish community. We learn from Jerome, a contemporary of

Epiphanius, that the Nazarenes condemned other Jewish groups in their writings. The questioner was blown away by this answer and we had a fantastic conversation about it afterward.

With the help of the library, I was able to engage in the most thought provoking research I have ever worked on. With the help of the library, I was able to have an amazing experience presenting this research. With the help of the library, I plan on pursuing a career in academia and teaching.