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Women Praying and Prophesying:
Gender and Inspired Speech in First Corinthians

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An abstract of
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Abstract

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This project argues that gender is a central issue throughout 1 Corinthians 11–14 and the religious speaking practices in Corinth that prompted it. The tension in Paul's instructions, seen in the apparent contradiction between 1 Cor 11:2–16 and 14:34–35, exhibits the dual and opposing tendency of ancient authors to limit women's speech, yet to view women as particularly adept at communicating with gods.

The first chapter provides a history of interpretation of women and speech in 1 Corinthians. The second chapter establishes a local context for Paul's letter by examining evidence for religious speech that is specific to the Roman colony of Corinth. I analyze literary, epigraphical, and archaeological evidence for women prophesying, praying, and speaking in political and religious spaces.

The next two chapters examine women's speech in ancient Mediterranean contexts. In the third chapter, I show how authority issues and ambivalence toward women speaking outside of the home occurs when authors consider women's roles in religion, which crosses boundaries between household and state. The fourth chapter analyzes depictions of one prominent form of women's religious speech: oracular prophecy. Dramatic images of women prophesying allowed authors to experiment with ideas about how humans communicate with God(s).

The final two chapters interpret 1 Cor 11:2–14:40 in light of these contexts. I argue that the ambiguities in 11:2–16 stem from Paul's ambivalence between his overarching argument for an interdependent communal body and a bias toward gender differentiation and hierarchy. Since the argument is unclear, the passage creates a problem to which he must return—that is, women "praying or prophesying." The arguments in 11:17–14:25 about the assembly, spiritual gifts, the community as body, and inspired speaking allow the rhetorical space for Paul to move from the ambivalent argument in 11:2–16 to the silencing in 14:34–35. The topics of women and inspired speaking are intertwined in this letter and its socio-historical situation.

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INTRODUCTION

"Let women be silent in the church," writes Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians. This is a stark, seemingly self-evident statement, but Paul's views on women's speech are more complex than this instruction alone. Earlier in the same letter, he crafts a convoluted argument about whether men and women should cover their heads when "praying or prophesying" (1 Cor 11:2–16). He seems to advocate for maintaining outward distinctions between men and women: While speaking in Christian gatherings, women should cover their heads, but men should not. He does not instruct men or women to abstain from prayer or prophecy. Then, after a lengthy discussion about different modes of religious speech—prophecy and prayer in tongues—Paul instructs women to be silent and subordinate to men (1 Cor 14:34–35). Should women cover their heads while they speak, or should they remain silent? Do the intervening arguments about inspired speech cause Paul to modify his earlier acceptance of women praying and prophesying? What would these modes of speaking look like to an observer, and would Paul and the Corinthians view such communication with God differently if voiced by a man or a woman?

These questions begin my investigation into gender and inspired speech in First Corinthians and its ancient Mediterranean context. In part, this dissertation examines the differences in how ancient writers perceived prophetic speech when voiced by a man or a woman. Does gender differentiation play a role in how authors understand and describe oracular and ecstatic religious phenomena? Plutarch, writing about fifty years after Paul, asked a similar question in a treatise written for a female colleague and priestess at Delphi: "The poetic or prophetic art is not one art when practiced by men and another

when practiced by women, is it?" (*Mul. virt.* 243B). I take up Plutarch's question and ask whether expectations about what women are and how women speak influence the way authors like Paul and Plutarch wrote about prophetic speech—its linguistic forms, sources of authority, and physical manifestations. I argue that gender is a central issue throughout 1 Corinthians 11–14 and the religious speaking practices in Corinth that prompted it. The tension in Paul's instructions, seen in the apparent contradiction between 1 Cor 11:2–16 and 14:34–35, exhibits the dual and opposing tendency of ancient authors to limit women's speech in public settings yet to view women as particularly adept at communicating with the gods. For Paul, differentiating men from women in physical appearance, situating women as subordinate to men, and working through arguments about divine communication together create the cognitive and rhetorical space for prohibiting women from speaking in the assembly.

I. From "Women Praying or Prophesying" to "Let Women be Silent"

The placement of these two passages at the beginning and end of Paul's discussion about speaking in the assembly indicates the prominence of women in Corinthian spirit-filled speaking practices and the problems Paul seeks to correct. These passages, individually and together, raise a host of exegetical questions that influence historical reconstructions of the earliest Corinthian assembly. First, 1 Cor 11:2–16 is a convoluted argument. The precise practical issue of head coverings or hairstyles that Paul addresses in vv. 4–6 and 13–15 is unclear, as is the solution he proposes. He modifies his conclusion of vv. 7–9, woman is dependent on man, with his statements in vv. 11–12, man and woman are interdependent. The meaning of Paul's recommendation for women in v. 10—"woman ought to have authority (ἐξουσία) upon the head"—is unclear, as are

the rationales for the instruction. What is Paul telling the "women praying or prophesying" to do? What assumptions concerning women and their speech underlie his practical conclusions?

Three chapters later, Paul's instructions in 1 Cor 14:34–35 further complicate his view of men, women, and speech in the assembly. Whatever his conclusions about gender differentiation and head coverings are, in 11:2–16 Paul does not argue against women and men praying and prophesying in the ἐκκλησία. In 14:34–35, however, he instructs women to be silent in the assembly, citing as support "the law" and custom "in all the assemblies." This silencing follows two conditional instructions in vv. 28 and 30 that silence individual prophets and speakers in tongues to preserve communal order. In v. 34, however, the unconditional silencing of the plural addressee women breaks the rhetorical pattern. For women, Paul's concern is different: He wants them to avoid shame (14:35). Why does addressing women's speech elicit language of shame? His instructions, moreover, shift the place, recipient, and purpose of women's speech: She should speak in the home, to her husband, and for the purpose of learning.

The movement from the argument in Chapter 11, which allows men and women to speak in the assembly, to prohibiting women's speech in Chapter 14 raises further questions. Is Paul addressing the same individuals or groups in both places? Are the same speech acts in view in 14:34–35 as in 11:2–16 and/or in the rest of Chapter 14? Some scholars have argued that 14:34–35 (or 33b–36) is a non-Pauline interpolation, Pauline marginal gloss, or Paul's quotation of a Corinthian slogan. The textual evidence for interpolation theories is limited, and there are linguistic and rhetorical links to what precedes and follows these verses in Chapter 14, as well as links to 11:2–16 in the term

"shame" (11:6; 14:35) and in the reference to "all the assemblies" (11:16; 14:33, 34).[1] Considering 14:34–35 an interpolation, gloss, or slogan is an attempt to smooth over a problematic, even offensive, passage. These solutions, however, eliminate a passage that suggests, due to its connection to the entire section of 1 Cor 11:2–14:40, the presence and prominence of women in Corinthian inspired speaking practices.

These two passages raise the question: Why was women's speech contested ground in Corinth and for Paul? Answers to this question often characterize the first-century Greek world as patriarchal and constraining women's speech, and Paul as a man influenced by Jewish religion, Greek culture, and Roman values. He defers, therefore, to the dominant culture with regard to gender, whether because he agrees with its values or because he advocates an egalitarian movement but wants his communities to fit into the world rather than disturb it. Some Corinthian women and men, by contrast, informed by a new Christian reality, take a subversive stance to societal and cultural norms, blur gender boundaries, and break rules concerning women's speech and action.[2] These answers emerge in historical-critical scholarship before and after the growth of feminist hermeneutics in mainstream interpretation. Scholars differ in where they place error—whether on the Corinthians for being disruptive or on Paul for being restrictive.[3]

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[1] See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 529–30. See my discussion in Chapter 6.

[2] Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 38, describes women's gradual subordination in early Christianity as assimilation to Hellenistic culture. D. R. MacDonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), develops a model of resistance to patriarchalizing ecclesiastical tendencies in the Apocryphal Acts in comparison to the Pastoral Epistles.

[3] This type of judgment occurs in discussions of Corinthian "errors" outside of the question of women's speech in the assembly. John C. Hurd, *The Origin of 1 Corinthians* (London: SPCK, 1965), for example, argues that the Corinthians followed Paul's teachings but Paul changed his views, which necessitated his writing. Anthony Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," *NTS* 24.4 (1978): 510–26, by contrast, places blame on the Corinthian enthusiastic distortion of Paul's eschatological views. Feminist interpreters

These answers, however, distort the reality of women in the ancient Mediterranean world. Social norms and cultural commonplaces constrained women's speech more than men's speech. Men excluded women from certain settings in which political and judicial decision-making occurred. Women did, however, speak openly for various audiences in religious settings. Women were priestesses and participants, who engaged in prayer and prophecy on behalf of their communities. These activities, in turn, influenced the political world of men.[4]

In particular, the religious phenomenon of women who speak in prophetic modes is telling for the situation in Corinth. Much of Paul's rhetorical strategy in 1 Cor 12–14 focuses on dissociating prophecy from speaking in tongues and elevating prophecy above other forms of speaking in the ἐκκλησία. It is not clear, however, what Paul has in mind when discussing either form of speech. For this reason, it is worth considering how he and his audience would have encountered prophetic speech in their Corinthian setting. Female prophets dominated inspired divination in the prominent Greek oracles at Delphi, Didyma, and Dodona. The fascination with these prophets and their communication with

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tend to view Paul as restrictive toward women in 11:2–16 and 14:33b–36. See Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983); Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995). See discussion of this scholarship in Chapter 1.

[4] Scholars of Greek and Roman culture and religion have questioned the standard image of women as secluded, silent, and subordinate, and have discussed women's consciousness of their place in society and their important public and vocal roles in ritual and cult. See David Cohen, "Seclusion, Separation, and the Status of Women in Classical Athens," *Greece and Rome*, Second Series, 36.1 (1989): 3–15; John J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Barbara Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California, 2004); A. Lardinois and L. McClure, eds., *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2001); John Bodel, ed., *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); Susan G. Cole, *Landscapes, Gender, and Ritual Space: The Ancient Greek Experience* (Berkeley: University of California, 2004); Joan B. Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2007); M. G. Parca and A. Tzanetou, eds., *Finding Persephone: Women's Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2007); C. Schultz, *Women's Religious Activity in the Roman Republic* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina, 2006); Sarolta Takács, *Vestal Virgins, Sibyls, and Matrons: Women in Roman Religion* (Austin: University of Texas, 2007).

the gods, especially the Pythia at Delphi, continued into the first century CE, when Paul founded communities in Greece and Asia Minor. In the Roman context, the Sibyl and her collected oracles provided written guidance for imperial rulers to consult in crisis, as well as lore and images of female prophets for the collective imagination. Drawing upon this vibrant cultural lore, Jewish and Christian authors appropriated the name and image of the Sibyl to voice oracles for their own communities in crisis.

Placing Paul's statements about whether and how women and men should speak in conversation with these religious phenomena provides a window into how gender expectations influenced inspired speech in the ancient Mediterranean world. Is prophecy different—in practice or perception—when a man speaks compared to when a woman speaks? Do texts configure the authority, style, content, interpretation, or goals of prophecy differently when the prophet is female? Furthermore, does the difference between men and women prophesying in texts reflect historical experiences of prophecy, or is the difference rhetorical? Do male authors discuss female prophets to argue for a particular view of women's speech? Finally, how might this potential gender difference influence Paul's response to how women and men were praying and prophesying in Corinth?

The inquiry into prophetic speech is not meant to provide sources for the speech and actions of the Corinthian female and male prophets. Rather, I examine how gender differences surface in one form of religious, public speech—prophecy—and whether these conceptions of gender and speech clarify the issues at stake in Corinth and to how Paul responds, often in ambiguous and contradictory ways. By examining Paul's discourse about women and speech in the context of broader discussions of women's

religious and prophetic speech, I clarify Paul's argument of 11:2–16, the tension between 11:2–16 and 14:34–35, and the role of women in inspired speaking practices at Corinth.

II. Project Plan

Why was women's speech contested ground in Corinth and for Paul? This dissertation seeks a nuanced answer to this question by placing 1 Cor 11:2–14:40 within ancient Mediterranean discourse about women's speech. One particular focus is gender dynamics within prophetic speech, since Paul goes to lengths to differentiate men from women and prophecy from speaking in tongues. Exegetical questions about 1 Cor 11–14 form the impetus for my inquiry: What does Paul tell men and women to do in 11:2–16? What is the connection between 11:2–16 and 14:34–35? Is there contradiction, or do the preceding arguments anticipate the conclusion of Chapter 14? My exegetical contribution is to integrate interpretation of 11:2–16—a passage most often treated on its own or in relation to other Pauline "woman passages"—with the discussion of inspired speech in Chapters 12–14. My exegesis leads to socio-historical questions about the audience in Corinth: How did rhetoric about women's speech relate to the realities of women who spoke? What was the range of responses to Paul's arguments possible for women in Corinth who engaged in prophetic speech? To answer these questions, I analyze discourse concerning women and their speaking in public and inspired modes. The similarities and differences between how texts configure women, men, speech, and communication with gods illuminate Paul's arguments and provide entry into how women in Corinth may have understood the letter and their own religious speech.

The first chapter provides a history of interpretation of women and speech in First Corinthians. New Testament scholarship tends to address questions about women or

inspired modes of speech. When scholars consider women prophesying within Greek and Roman cultural contexts, they often replicate ancient portrayals of female prophets. I argue that bringing together questions of speech and gender is a profitable way of addressing the difficulties of 1 Cor 11–14 and is an entry point into one important aspect of ancient religious experience.

In the second chapter, I examine archaeological evidence, supplemented by literary texts, for the religious landscape of Corinth. The ritual spaces, images, and inscriptions of the first-century Roman colony of Corinth provide material context for Paul's statements about his Corinthian audience's religious life, communication with gods in Corinth, and the possibilities of women's speech in religious ritual activity. Since Paul and contemporary writers locate spaces and activities in which women's speech is acceptable, I examine in depth a few aspects of the socio-cultural landscape: women's presence in the inscriptions and monuments of the forum, praying in the Sanctuary of Demeter and temples of Isis, and evidence for Apollo devotion and oracular activity.

The next two chapters examine women's speech in ancient Mediterranean contexts. The third chapter places women's inspired speech, and Paul's problematizing it, within the context of discourse that limits women's speech in certain settings. Three authors—the Roman historian Livy, the Jewish philosopher Philo, and the Greek priest and philosopher Plutarch—demonstrate tension concerning women's speech and identify spaces and settings in which women's speech is acceptable. I analyze how the rhetoric of texts configures gender difference, feminine virtues, and spaces that were open or closed to women. I argue that authority issues and ambivalence toward women speaking outside

of the household occur when authors consider women's roles in religion, which crosses boundaries between household and state, and between humans and gods.

The fourth chapter analyzes depictions of one prominent form of women's speech in religious settings: prophecy in oracular temples and by legendary prophets. Well-known female prophets, associated with temples or with written collections of oracles, possessed political influence. Because of this role, philosophical, poetic, and oracular texts exhibit fascination with female prophets. In the Roman period, after the classical apex of the Delphic Oracle, authors such as Cicero, Lucan, Plutarch, and Pausanias continued to discuss the history and plausibility of oracles. Legends about the Pythia and Sibyl exaggerated the image of the frenzied female prophet and sexualized the prophetic process, yet allowed writers to explore issues of divine communication and interaction with humanity. I discuss the rhetoric of three literary images of female prophets in three genres—philosophical treatise, epic poem, and prophetic collection. Dramatic images of women prophesying were prevalent in the collective imagination and allowed authors to experiment with ideas about how humans communicate with God(s).

The fifth and sixth chapters provide exegesis of 1 Cor 11:2–14:40 in light of the contexts that I have outlined in Chapters 2–4. I argue that the difficulties and ambiguities of 1 Cor 11:2–16 create a problem that Paul returns to and addresses more definitively in 14:34–35. The convoluted passage of 11:2–16 reflects Paul's own conflict between his argument for an interdependent body that is the community and a bias toward gender differentiation and hierarchy. After working through his arguments that differentiate forms of inspired speech, Paul comes to a conclusion that is latent in 11:2–16, given his concerns for propriety and shame: Women should not speak in the assembly. I show how

11:2–16 and 14:26–40 are connected linguistically and rhetorically, how each of the arguments in 11:17–14:25 influence the argumentative progression from Chapter 11 to the end of Chapter 14, and how cultural perceptions of women's speech and the setting of Corinth impact the argumentative movement.

The study of prophecy in ancient Mediterranean religions indicates a reality quite different from Paul's voiceless idols (12:2): Gods spoke a lot, and often in the voice of a woman. Male-authored texts about women speaking in public and prophesying indicate the connection between establishing gender difference and both prohibiting women's speech and affirming women's role in communication with the divine different—that is, God or the gods. The tension in 11:2–16 exhibits this dual connection. Paul's differentiating and hierarchalizing tendencies in Chapter 11, along with his working through arguments about divine communication, lead him to prohibit women's speech.

This project contributes to studies of the New Testament, women in ancient Mediterranean religions, and feminist social history in several ways. First, I revisit complex Pauline passages, upon which much has been written, with the goal of integrating two topics—gender and prophetic speech—which will illuminate what Paul writes about each one. I read Paul's statements about gender and speech within layers of surrounding discourse about the difference between men and women, women's public speech, and women's prophecy. My project, moreover, aligns with scholarly efforts to situate varieties of early Christianity within their local embodiments—in this case, Corinth—using material evidence. With this effort comes the assertion that the Corinthians did not see a radical change in their religious landscape after baptism, as is

evident in the problems of 1 Corinthians, but made sense of new ideas and practices with reference to the familiar.

Questions about ancient history, gender, and religion intersect in my project, and I deal with elusive subject matter. In ancient texts, how do we read, on the one hand, religious experiences and, on the other, experiences of women who did not often write? Recent scholarly work on cultural phenomena in early Christianity and the ancient world has expanded paradigms for viewing women in ancient contexts and provided nuance to how scholars use texts and archaeology to discuss gender, religion, culture, and rhetoric. I provide a similarly nuanced discussion of women in another range of activies—inspired speech, prayer, and prophecy. My approach—combining analysis of argumentative patterns about women in ancient texts and archaeological evidence of religious practices—allows me to interpret how ancient authors defined women and their religious speech and to evaluate the distance between rhetoric and reality in these definitions.

CHAPTER 1
WOMEN'S SPEECH IN CORINTH:
RHETORIC AND HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

This chapter provides a history of the interpretation of women and religious speech in First Corinthians. Scholarship tends to address questions about either gender or inspired modes of speech. I argue that integrating questions of speech and gender is a profitable way of interpreting the exegetical difficulties of 1 Cor 11–14 and of examining one range of ancient religious activities—inspired speech, prayer, and prophecy.

Tension between describing ancient authors' rhetorical aims and reconstructing historical practices of real individuals and groups has existed in scholarship on First Corinthians since the emergence of historical-critical interpretation. As I recount the history of interpretation, I attend to scholars' assumptions about epistolary integrity and authorial consistency, their approach to rhetoric, and their own socio-cultural positions, and how these three issues influence how scholars reconstruct Corinthian history, in general and with specific reference to women or inspired speech.

I. Reading 1 Corinthians and Reconstructing the Corinthian Situation

Since the Corinthian correspondence is an extended conversation between Paul and an ἐκκλησία that he founded, revisited, and nurtured through his written word, these letters provide evidence about the formation, practices, and conflicts of early Christian communities. The one-sidedness of what was a multi-sided and ongoing conversation invites the interpreter to consider the voices of the people who asked Paul about practical issues, including prophetic modes of speaking in the assembly. Historical reconstruction of this community and their practices is not a neutral scholarly activity. Scholarly

reconstructions highlight how modes of reading and cultural biases influence how scholars construct narratives about the Corinthian congregation and early Christianity.

A. Ferdinand Christian Baur's Corinthian Factions

In his influential 1831 essay, Ferdinand Christian Baur considered the conflict in the Corinthian correspondence in order to sketch a history of early Christianity.[5] He begins with 1 Cor 1:12, in which Paul names four figures, who represent "parties" in the Corinthian conflict. Baur formulates two questions about these parties that scholars after him continue to debate: First, are these clear factions in the Corinthian community? Second, what are the sources of conflict and theological perspectives of the factions? Baur answers these questions with reference to his interpretation of the conflict in the letter to the Galatians. In both letters, two parties are in conflict: a "Judaizing" party, associated with Peter and Christ, and a "Gentile" faction, associated with Paul and Apollos. Baur suspects that Judaizing missionaries, like those in Galatia who advocated circumcision and separation from Gentiles, appeared in Corinth after Paul.

Three interrelated tendencies mark this reconstruction. First, Baur's goal is less about Corinthian history and more about the history of the origins and development of Christianity as a whole. Second, this tendency allows Baur to reconstruct the situation based on another Pauline text, Galatians. Third, his reconstruction identifies an early Christian dialectical process: The thesis—Peter and Jewish Christianity—and the antithesis—Paul and Gentile Christianity—meld into the synthesis of catholic Christianity in Acts and later documents. This developmental model became entrenched in historical-critical scholarship.

[5] Ferdinand Christian Baur, "Das Christus Partei in der korinthischen Gemeinde," *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* 5 (1831): 61–206. See also Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ* (1873; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003).

Baur attends to the language of 1 Cor 1–4, but he does not explain the conflicts in the rest of the letter. For him, all of the practical issues in Chapters 5–16—including head covering, speaking in tongues, and prophesying—are separate from the issue of party strife. He writes:

> All these occurrences, and the questions agitated in consequence of them, give us a very clear and vivid picture of the condition of the Corinthian church; yet it would be most interesting, to know more decidedly how the various parties were concerned in these various occurrences, and what share the Corinthian party spirit had in them.[6]

Baur adds a third question for subsequent interpreters: How do the differing views among the Corinthians influence the practical issues, social and religious, at stake in 1 Corinthians?

B. Sources of Problems: Gnosticism, Realized Eschatology, or Paul's Teachings

Two general approaches to this question persisted into the twentieth century. Some scholars took a *religionsgeschichtliche* approach and looked to outside influence from Hellenistic or Jewish culture to explain the sources of Corinthian theology, while others argued that one need not look further than Paul's teaching. Representative of the first argument is the Corinthian Gnosticism hypothesis, proposed by W. Lütgert and argued by U. Wilckens and W. Schmithals.[7] The opponents of Paul in Corinth adhered to a Hellenistic-Jewish Gnosticism, a "heresy" that entered Corinth from outside the community after Paul left. Schmithals makes the argument about Gnosticism in Corinth

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[6] Baur, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ,* 1:309.

[7] D.Wilhelm Lütgert, *Frieheitspredigt und Schwarmgeister in Korinth*, BFCT 12.3 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1908); Ulrich Wilckens, *Weisheit und Torheit: eine exegetisch-religions-geschichtliche Untersuchung zu 1. Kor. 1 und 2*, BHT 26 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959); Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971); trans. of *Die Gnosis in Korinth: eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen,* FRLANT 66 (Göttingen: Vendenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965).

based on a literary partition theory, which assigns sections of 1 and 2 Corinthians to different letters at different times in the life of the community.

First Corinthians 12:1–3 is central to Schmithals's argument.[8] He asks whether anyone would have actually voiced the phrase ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς in the assembly, and if so, who were they and why would they have cursed Jesus? Schmithals argues that they were Gnostic Christians who rejected a connection between the spiritual Christ and the human Jesus. Cursing Jesus represented this division and meant nothing to Christ, the object of spiritual worship. Schmithals discusses this unusual speech-act within the context of religious speech in Corinth. Spirit-inspired speech was not unique to Christianity, as many cults that thrived in Corinth—of Isis, Sarapis, and Cybele, for instance—engaged in ecstatic worship practices.[9]

A second approach questions Schmithals's use of Gnosticism and describes the Corinthian perspective by analyzing the correspondence in its literary integrity. Hans Conzelmann argues that the features of 1 Corinthians that Schmithals considered "Gnostic" were the products of popular philosophy and syncretistic religious tendencies and that the Corinthians were perhaps "proto-Gnostics" with enthusiastic and libertine tendencies.[10] For other scholars, Corinthian enthusiasm for wisdom and spirit was the error of over-realized eschatology.[11] Anthony Thiselton shows how realized eschatology

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[8] Part of "Epistle B." Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, 124–30.

[9] Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, 125. See Birger A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians: A Study in the Theology of the Corinthian Opponents of Paul and its Relation to Gnosticism* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for SBL, 1973). For Pearson, Gnosticism is a matter not of certain terminology, as it is for Schmithals and Wilckens, but of hermeneutic approaches to traditional terms and ideas.

[10] Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, trans. J. W. Leitch; Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 14–16.

[11] Nils A. Dahl, "Paul and the Church at Corinth," in *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies presented to John Knox*, ed. W. R. Farmer, C. F. D. Moule, and R. R. Niebuhr (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1967), 332–33; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London:

caused every practical problem Paul addresses, including enthusiastic worship practices.[12]

In Thiselton's view, the Corinthians are in error. John C. Hurd, on the other hand, argues that the Corinthians were not "over-doing it" but that Paul changed his teaching. Working from 1 Corinthians to Paul's original preaching in Corinth, Hurd reconstructs stages of Corinthian communication based on the letter itself. In the first movement from 1 Corinthians to the Corinthians' letter, Hurd differentiates material from oral reports and from the letter based on the περὶ δέ introductions (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1). He identifies different tone and content in sections that stem from written questions compared to oral reports.[13] Within this argument, Hurd sees 11:2–14:40 as a unified section on the topic of worship. Both 11:2 and 12:1 indicate responses to Corinthian questions. The reference to keeping Paul's "traditions" (παράδοσις) in 11:2 and the περὶ δέ in 12:1 indicate responses to prior written communication. Hurd calls 14:33b–36 "an afterthought about the first topic [11:2–16] after dealing with the second [12:1–14:33a]," a common pattern for Paul.[14] Hurd sees references to Paul's original time with them in the questions that lie behind 11:2–16 and 12:1–14:40. The Corinthians ask something like, "When you were with us, women worshipped without veils, and you spoke in tongues. But now you advocate other practices. What should we do?" A single question sparks the discussion in 12:1–14:40: "Concerning spiritual men, how can we test the Spirit when he speaks?"[15]

Black, 1971), 109; F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 49–50; Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 125–26.

[12] Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology," 510–26.

[13] Hurd, *Origin*, 65. Margaret M. Mitchell, "Concerning ΠΕΡΙ ΔΕ in 1 Corinthians," *NovT* 31 (1989): 229–56, questions this function of περὶ δέ.

[14] Hurd, *Origin*, 182.

[15] Hurd, *Origin*, 194.

Within this reading, Hurd does not posit an outside influence and real speech-act to explain 12:3. Rather, Paul pens a hypothetical, unreasonable saying—ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς—to illustrate how spirits are tested by the content of their utterances.[16]

The contrasts between arguments about Gnosticism, realized eschatology, and Paul's changing teachings highlight three difficulties in reconstructing the Corinthian situation. First is the issue of parallels: When is it necessary to look outside of Paul's letters for explanations for Corinthian viewpoints? What material is appropriate? Is this evidence originating or comparative material? Hurd and Thiselton acknowledge the probability that outside sources influenced the Corinthians, but they are skeptical about their ability to articulate that influence.[17] They are, however, confident in the possibility of reconstructing the Corinthian perpective based on literary analysis of 1 Corinthians, which leads to the second difficulty: the tendency of mirror reading, or reading a unified Corinthian position or question as the opposite of Paul's statement. Given that he acknowledges the "multiple and somewhat incoherent argument" of 11:2–16, Hurd is on shaky ground in attributing to the Corinthians the question, "Should women wear head coverings in worship?"[18] The complexity of the situation at Corinth and Paul's rhetorical purposes complicate inquiry into the Corinthian point of view. Third is the issue of the literary integrity of 1 Corinthians, an issue that comes into focus in the comparison between Schmithals and Hurd. Partition and interpolation theories alter the content available to the interpreter and thereby alter the interpreter's questions. Often these

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[16] Hurd, *Origin*, 71.

[17] Hurd, *Origin*, xv–xvi; Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology," 510.

[18] Hurd, *Origin*, 185.

theories depend on assumptions about the author and letter's coherence in language and arguments, as well as biases about what the interpreter wants Paul to have said.

C. The Sociological Turn: Theissen, Meeks, and Schüssler Fiorenza

These reconstructions pose theological answers to the question of Corinthian conflict. A shift from theological to sociological explanations occurs in the work of Gerd Theissen, Wayne Meeks, and other scholars influenced by social-scientific approaches. Theissen argues that the origins of Corinthian conflict are social and economic.[19] He sees this conflict in Paul's description of the various levels of power and nobility in the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor 1:26) and in the problems with the "haves" and "have-nots" during the Lord's Supper (11:17–34). Paul guides the Corinthians in navigating social stratification with an argument for unity and care for one another. Dale Martin follows Theissen's approach and argues, using modern sociological analogies and ancient parallels, that speaking in tongues marked high status and that those who spoke in this esoteric way did so to bolster their power and authority.[20]

Meeks argues for a different understanding of social status and its implications.[21] Rather than viewing the Corinthians as haves and have-nots, Meeks argues that multiple factors determine one's place in society and community, including wealth, prestige of occupation, gender, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. Status dissonance, the result of non-correlating status factors—high in one factor, low in another—explains more about the Corinthian experience than social stratification does. The tension over women's roles

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[19] Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

[20] Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 87–103. Cf. Martin, "Tongues of Angels and Other Status Indicators," *JAAR* 59.3 (1991): 547–89.

[21] Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale, 1983).

in the ἐκκλησία results from the status-inconsistent context of urban Corinth in which women led households, were active in the marketplace, gained wealth, and sought fulfilling religious experiences.[22] Meeks defines the ἐκκλησία by comparing its social structure to other groups in Mediterranean cities, including households, professional guilds, synagogues, and philosophical schools. This social description of ἐκκλησία is necessary to interpret the tensions about the governance of the community—Who wields authority? Who speaks in the ἐκκλησία?—and the rituals that define and communicate the identity and values of the group.

Sociological analysis provides correctives to theological arguments about the Corinthian situation. First, sociology orients the focus on ordinary people, the difficulties in their lives, and how they make meaning within their real world. Speaking in tongues, therefore, is not only an expression of a theological belief in the manifestation of the Spirit but also a way to negotiate social identity.[23] This approach takes focus away from how Paul understood prophecy and speaking in tongues and places it on how the Corinthians performed them. Second, the attempt to define the structure of the ἐκκλησία suggests symbiotic relationships between space, ritual action, and group identity. If women pray and prophesy in ἐκκλησία, the group setting influences the activities that take place within it, and these activities in turn define the group.[24] Third, since sociological analysis moves away from categorizing people in terms of factions,

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[22] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 71.

[23] Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 149. Kevin Muñoz, "How Not to Go Out of the World: First Corinthians 14:13–25 and the Social Foundations of Early Christian Expansion" (PhD diss., Emory University, 2008), uses sociological approaches to argue that glossolalia played a role in negotiating insider/outsider boundaries of the community and that Paul advocated controlled glossolalic practice to focus communal energy outward to conversion.

[24] Jorunn Økland, *Women in their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), similarly considers ἐκκλησία in terms of spatial discourse formed by ritual activities. See discussion below.

opponents, heretics, or Gnostics, other factors of individual and group identity—including gender, social status, and ethnicity—emerge in analysis of the Corinthian situation.

The social factor of gender has received attention in feminist biblical interpretation, which found its voice in historical-critical scholarship in the 1970–80s. Scholars like Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Antoinette Wire identify how texts have rhetorical goals and are complicit in power structures. Schüssler Fiorenza's feminist reconstruction of Christian origins raises to visibility women in the early Christian communities and criticizes scholarly tendencies to downplay women's involvement and promote stereotypes.[25] In a later article, she outlines her rhetorical methods and how they provide a pathway to "move from the 'world of the text' of Paul to the actual world of the Corinthian community."[26] This move is necessary for the historical purpose of restoring the unheard voices of the Corinthians, especially women. Schüssler Fiorenza distinguishes between three rhetorical situations: first, the actual historical situation, second, the implied or inscribed rhetorical situation, and third, the rhetorical situation of modern interpreters.[27] Analysis then moves through four stages: (1) rhetorical criticism of prior interpretations of 1 Corinthians, (2) analysis of the arrangement of the letter, (3) consideration of its rhetorical situation, and (4) historical reconstruction accompanied by political and ethical assessment.

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[25] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her.*

[26] Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation and Historical Reconstruction in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 33.3 (1987): 388.

[27] Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation," 388. Fiorenza draws from literary and rhetorical theorists: Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983); Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968), 1–14.

Within the first stage, Schüssler Fiorenza highlights the ethics of historiography. Historical reconstructions are not neutral works of scholarship; rather, they tell a story by highlighting certain data and supplying missing information to create a narrative. While the original audience of 1 Corinthians understood Paul's rhetoric by supplying information based on their own views, experiences, and prior interactions with Paul, scholars use "background" material from ancient Mediterranean sources.[28] Scholars, moreover, read Paul's rhetoric without acknowledging it as rhetoric: "In the process of reading 1 Corinthians the interpreter follows the directives of the implied author, who is not identical with the 'real' Paul, as to how to understand the community of Corinth."[29] Following the directives of the implied author results in characterizing the Corinthians as opponents and heretics, foolish and arrogant, misguided and disruptive—characterizations prevalent in historical reconstructions.

In Memory of Her works through these interpretive principles on a larger scale (Christian origins rather than 1 Corinthians) and with less methodological clarity.[30] Antoinette Wire's *Corinthian Women Prophets* carries out Schüssler Fiorenza's program with a "New Rhetoric" focus on the audience.[31] By analyzing the arguments of 1 Corinthians, Wire reconstructs a situation in which women prophets were active in the assembly and were Paul's opponents.[32]

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[28] Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation," 389.

[29] Schüssler Fiorenza, "Rhetorical Situation," 389.

[30] Schüssler Fiorenza's work represents one approach to feminist historiography of early Christianity. See Elizabeth Castelli, "Heteroglossia, Hermeneutics, and History: A Review Essay of Recent Feminist Studies of Early Christianity," *JFSR* 10.2 (1994): 73–98, for a description of the options for feminist historiography in the 1980–90s.

[31] C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*, New ed. (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1991).

[32] Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets.* See discussion below.

II. Women in the Corinthian Assembly

If women played a significant role in Corinth, as Wire and Schüssler Fiorenza have argued, what were they doing in the ἐκκλησία that prompted Paul's responses in 11:2–14:40? Like historical reconstructions of the Corinthian situation, answers to this question depend on assumptions about literary integrity, rhetorical coherence, and the extent to which Greek, Roman, or Jewish material provides parallels. An additional factor complicates the question: the interpreter's ideological views about women and gender relationships.

Three basic interpretive trends have occured. First, the majority of interpreters prior to the mid-20th century gave little consideration to the role of women, saw no contradiction between 11:2–16 and 14:34–35, and found these passages straightforward. When Robertson and Plummer, for example, consider the odd use of the term ἐξουσία in 11:10, they comment on the discrepancy between what Paul says and what he means, as they see it: "Why does Paul say 'authority' when he means 'subjection'?"[33] The exegetical difficulty does not lead them to question the role of women in Paul's thought and Corinthian life.[34] A second trend takes seriously the difficulties of these passages and proposes historical and literary solutions. For instance, one literary solution is that 14:34–35, or even 11:3–16, is an interpolation. This argument recognizes the contradiction

[33] A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed.; ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1914), 232.

[34] The three "trends" I highlight are not entirely chronological. While 11:2–16 and 14:34–35 posed little exegetical problem to NT scholars before the twentieth century, numerous female interpreters outside of the academic discipline of biblical studies struggled with the texts and with academic and popular use of interpretation that subordinated women. See, for example, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et al., *The Woman's Bible* (1895–1898; repr. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002). For discussion: Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to 1870* (New York: Oxford University, 1993), 138–66; C. de Groot and M. A. Taylor, ed., *Recovering Nineteenth Century Women Interpreters of the Bible* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007).

between the two passages, reconciles them based on assumptions of authorial consistency and epistolary editing, and places them within a developmental model of early Christianity.[35] Historical solutions turned to the contexts of Jewish, Greek, and Roman social and religious practices to explain what Paul meant about head coverings.[36] Third, feminist historical approaches consider women as subjects and seek motivations for religious acts and theological reasoning of Paul and women. The focus for feminist interpretation is less on the background for Paul's instructions on head coverings and more on why women may have removed them in worship.[37] The following discussion focuses on this third interpretive approach.

[35] See discussions of 14:34–35 by Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 699–705; Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 149–52; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 529–30. For arguments on 11:3–16 as an interpolation: W. O. Walker, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 and Paul's Views Regarding Women," *JBL* 94.1 (1975): 94–110; G. W. Trompf, "On Attitudes toward Women in Paul and Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3–16 and its Context," *CBQ* 42.2 (1980): 196–215. Arguments against: J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Interpolations in 1 Corinthians," *CBQ* 48.1 (1986): 81–94; Murphy-O'Connor, "1 Corinthians 11:2–16 Once Again," *CBQ* 50.2 (1988): 265–74. Interpolation theories for 11:2–16 have not persuaded many scholars, although recently C. Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16: Spirit Possession and Authority in a Non-Pauline Interpolation," *JBL* 124 (2005): 313–40, has resurfaced the issue from a different angle.

[36] On Jewish, Greek, and Roman customs of head covering and hair: P. Massey, "The Meaning of *katakalyptō* and *kata kephalēs echōn* in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16," *NTS* 53.4 (2007): 502–23; C. L. Thompson, "Hairstyles, Head-coverings, and St. Paul: Portraits from Roman Corinth," *BA* 51.2 (1988): 99–115; R. Oster, "Use, Misuse, and Neglect of Archaeological Evidence in Some Modern Works on 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 7,1–5, 8,10, 11,2–16, 12,14–26)," *ZNW* 83.1–2 (1992): 52–73; D. W. J. Gill, "The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head-coverings in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *TynBul* 41.2 (1990): 245–60. On male hairstyles and male homosexuality: Robin Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *JAAR* 40 (1972): 283–303; J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *CBQ* 42 (1980): 482–500; Raymond Collins, *First Corinthians*, Sacra Pagina 7 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999), 393–416.

[37] For example, see Ross Shepard Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women's Religions among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: Oxford University, 1992), 156, on her goals of considering the different reasons why women chose to become Christians.

A. Men and Women in Worship and the Galatians 3:28 Connection

Two scholars, Else Kähler and Morna Hooker, identified praying and prophesying in a worship setting as key to 11:2–16.[38] Hooker begins with the crux of the problem, 11:10, which includes two obscure phrases: “Woman ought to have authority on the head” and “because of the angels.” Hooker argues against the traditional interpretation of ἐξουσία as indicating a veil, which signifies a man’s authority over a woman.[39] The context of praying and prophesying, rather, indicates a necessary posture of obedience and subjection to God, not to men.[40] In v. 7, Paul’s language of “glory” places the relationships between God, man, and woman in the context of Jewish worship. Men glorified God in the presence of angels, thought to be present in worship. In this new worship, a woman should, therefore, conceal the glory of man in order to glorify God. Hooker writes: “The head-covering which symbolizes the effacement of man’s glory in the presence of God also serves as the sign of the ἐξουσία which is given to the woman; with the glory of man hidden, she, too, may reflect the glory of God.”[41] Women have a new power to pray and prophesy in the presence of God, which Hooker contrasts to Jewish customs. While differences of dress may occur, qualitative differences no longer exist in relation to God. Hooker concludes with reference to Gal 3:28.[42]

This connection to Gal 3:28 has continued throughout much of the scholarship on women in 1 Corinthians. For Hooker, Gal 3:28 summarizes the new worship evinced in 1

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[38] Else Kähler, *Die Frau in den Paulinischen Briefen: Unter besonderer Berücksichtegung des Begriffes der Unterordnung* (Zürich: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1960); Morna D. Hooker, “Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor 11:10,” *NTS* 10 (1963): 410–16.

[39] Hooker, “Authority on her Head,” 413. See the statement by Robertson-Plummer discussed above.

[40] Hooker, “Authority on her Head,” 414.

[41] Hooker, “Authority on her Head,” 415–16.

[42] Hooker, “Authority on her Head,” 416. C. K. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 248–50, follows Hooker’s argument.

Cor 11:2–16. For Robin Scroggs, Gal 3:28 plays a programmatic role in Paul's thought: It is "an essential corollary to his deepest theological conviction."[43] Paul's worldview revolves around the apocalyptic concepts of new creation and Christ as the eschatological Adam. When a community lives in the new creation, gender, ethnicity, and status are secondary to identity in Christ. Yet these characteristics remain inscribed upon bodies, and Paul's views of men and women develop within eschatological tension.[44] Scroggs places this radical view within the social context of ancient Mediterranean cultures, especially within diaspora Judaism, "since presumably Paul's early attitudes toward women would have been formed in this culture."[45] Scroggs draws on Philo and Josephus to describe diaspora Jewish culture, which he contrasts to "Paul's mature Christian views toward women," resulting in the "continual tension in which he must have lived and worked."[46] Scroggs is right to identify Paul's tension about women, but incorrect in identifying a prior, negative view with a monolithic diaspora Judaism.[47] The focus on Paul as former Jew results in denigrating diaspora Judaism and overlooking the context of the urban settings to and from which Paul wrote, Corinth and Ephesos.

In 1 Cor 11:2–16, Scroggs sees an argument consistent with the eschatological gender ideal of Gal 3:28 and the tension Paul experiences between new creation in Christ and the current created social order. Paul advocates mutual dependence of men and

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[43] Robin Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 288. See also Robin Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman Revisited," *JAAR* 42.3 (1974): 532–37.

[44] Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 287–88.

[45] Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 290.

[46] Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 290.

[47] Subsequent scholars have criticized the anti-Jewish bias of many interpretations of women in 1 Corinthians and in early Christianity as a whole. See M. Crüsemann and B. McNeil, "Irredeemably Hostile to Women: Anti-Jewish Elements in the Exegesis of the Dispute about Women's Right to Speak (1 Cor 14:34–35)," *JSNT* 79 (2000): 19–36.

women in the eschatological "not yet." Scroggs concludes that Paul is "the one clear voice in the New Testament asserting the freedom and equality of women in the eschatological community."[48] The agenda of rescuing Paul drives Scroggs's interpretation.[49]

The conversations about 1 Cor 11:2–16 and women in early Christianity have since revolved around determining what it means for Paul to claim "no longer male and female" and how such a statement influences patterns of thought, ritual, and social behavior. Wayne Meeks discusses Paul's statements about men and women in the context of the religious and social implications of the symbol of the androgyne, a primeval male-and-female being.[50] The status of women in the Mediterranean world was complex: Philo and Josephus provide evidence for misogyny, but evidence from Roman law and women's participation in trade indicate the changing, even improving, situation of women. This environment is the context for the androgyne symbol and its social and religious consequences. Meeks asks whether "the symbolism of the equivalence of male and female [was] a hallmark of group identification" in groups analogous to Christian communities.[51] In other words, how do stated ideas about male and female difference or

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[48] Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 302. Scroggs considers 14:34–35 a non-Pauline interpolation (284). In his commentary, Fee, *First Corinthians*, 502–503, also takes a positive, apologetic view of Paul's legacy for women.

[49] Scroggs, "Revisited," 532, acknowledges his bias toward rescuing Paul and his dismay at responses to his essay that criticized him for his apologetic tendency: "On the one hand, I was angered by the distortions made of Paul, from whatever point of view; on the other I was saddened by the bitterness of Christian women who could find so little—if any—support for their struggle in the long history of the church." Scroggs suggests that the issue in this passage may not actually be women at all, but a lingering uneasiness with male homosexuality, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 297. Murphy-O'Connor develops this argument in "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians."

[50] Wayne A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *HR* 13.3 (1974): 165–208. See also D. R. MacDonald, "Corinthian Veils and Gnostic Androgynes," in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, ed. K. King (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 276–92.

[51] Meeks, "Androgyne," 168–69, 176.

similarity influence the social realities of men and women in the group and in society at large? He finds “an intensified sense of role oppositions in Greco-Roman society and both a longing to overcome them and a fear of such a change”—a situation in which women might value speaking publicly.[52]

For Meeks, gnostic texts provide the mythical content of the baptismal formula—the cosmic reunification of male and female, which symbolizes the perfect, unified person, expressed ritually and socially through ascetic practices and separation from sexuality and society.[53] In Paul’s communities, the unification of male and female left its mark on 1 Corinthians (5:1–13; 6:12–20; 7:1–40; 11:2–16; 14:33b–36) and became a “focus of identity and dissension in the community.”[54] Meeks suggests that the παράδοσις that the Corinthians remember (11:2) is the baptismal formula. In later Christian circles, women “made themselves male” by dressing and wearing their hair like men. Disregarding outward signs of gender aligns with the realized eschatology of the Corinthians, and Paul’s response reiterates his counter-view of the delay of eschatological fulfillment.[55] The problem of 14:33b–36 remains, since it contradicts 11:2–16 and does not align with the androgyne myth. Meeks calls it an “afterthought” that silences the speech of charismatic women. There is no rescuing Paul: “The conservative reaction which was to dominate the later Pauline school begins already with Paul.”[56] Later scholars question the liberating effects of the androgyne myth, since it does not advocate

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[52] Meeks, “Androgyne,” 183.

[53] Meeks, “Androgyne,” 183–88, 196.

[54] Meeks, “Androgyne,” 199.

[55] Meeks, “Androgyne,” 202.

[56] Meeks, “Androgyne,” 204.

a movement to perfection in a gender neutral way. Women are to "become male," thereby affirming, not dissolving, gender hierarchy.[57]

B. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Paul's Ambivalent Impact for Women

Like Meeks, Schüssler Fiorenza identifies Paul's "double-edged" impact for women in early Christianity. He created new possibilities for marriage and worship yet restricted the speech of women because they were women.[58] She interprets Gal 3:28 as a baptismal formula that expressed equal existence of women and men in Christ and that explains women's actions in worship settings. Schüssler Fiorenza argues that Greek cults, especially mystery cults, provide the background for female ritual actions. She writes:

> Disheveled hair and head thrown back were typical for the maenads in the cult of Dionysos, in that of Cybele, the Pythia at Delphi, the Sibyl, and unbound hair was necessary for a woman to produce an effective magical incantation […] Flowing and unbound hair was also found in the Isis cult, which had a major center in Corinth.[59]

Flowing hair was a sign of prophecy and the presence of a god or spirit, and the Corinthian women adopted this appearance. Paul, on the other hand, did not want outsiders to view the Corinthian meetings as ritual madness (14:23) and instructed them to control their heads. For Paul, unbound hair was not a sign of prophecy; rather, he suggests that "bound-up hair must be understood as a liturgical symbol of woman's prophetic power."[60] Paul reorients prophecy to emphasize decency, order, and building up the community rather than freedom, enthusiasm, and equality.

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[57] Bernadette J. Brooten, "A Response to Corinthian Veils," in *Images of the Feminine in Gnosticism*, 293–96; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 229–31; Økland, *Women in their Place*, 181.

[58] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 236.

[59] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 227. Schüssler Fiorenza cites R. Kroeger and C. C. Kroeger, "An Inquiry into Evidence of Maenadism in the Corinthian Congregation," *SBL Seminar Papers* 14 (1978): 331–38.

[60] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 229.

Schüssler Fiorenza notes that 11:2–16 begins the section of the letter concerning spirit-filled worship, and reads inspired prophecy as background for the actions of Corinthian women. This connection leads to parallels with the Pythia, Sibyl, maenads, and Isis devotees. She does not delve, however, into the ritual or prophetic speech that characterizes the women in these cults. Rather, she focuses on the hair and heads of the women, as Paul does. Reference to cultural parallels draws attention to the syncretistic religious atmosphere of Corinth.[61] The problem is, however, that these parallels are based on earlier texts, problematic readings of key texts, and practices not local to Corinth.[62]

At the end of the section, 1 Cor 14:33–36, which Schüssler Fiorenza considers authentic due to textual and rhetorical reasons, is part of the "church order" of vv. 26–36, with rules for glossolalists, prophets, and wives. She argues that the rules for women, while different from those for glossolalists and prophets in their absolute nature, are not meant for all women but only wives of Christian men.[63] Only these women have husbands at home from whom they could learn. Paul has, moreover, distinguished wives from unmarried women and stated his preference for the unmarried state (1 Cor 7). The problem with this argument is twofold: First, Paul uses the same term, γυνή, without distinction in 1 Cor 11 and 14. Second, whether a woman was married or not, in most cases, she would have "her own man" at home—husband, father, or brother—who would be head of the household and to whom she could defer.

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[61] Torjesen, *When Women Were* Priests, 28, likewise sees female prophecy in early Christianity as syncretistic: "Women prophets in the Christian communities carried into this new religious movement roles that were similar to those played by their sisters who participated in Greek and Roman religions."

[62] Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 830. See Alan Padgett, "Feminism in First Corinthians: A Dialogue with Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza," *EvQ* 58.2 (1986): 121–32. In Chapter 2, I focus more on the local Corinthian context. In Chapter 3 and 4, I draw attention to persistent misreadings of certain texts and stereotypes of female prophets.

[63] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 231.

C. Antoinette Clark Wire's Corinthian Women Prophets

Antoinette Wire likewise emphasizes the prophetic context of the Corinthian women. She analyzes Paul's rhetoric and reconstructs his "opponents": Corinthian women prophets. Wire identifies women as not only an issue of sexuality and marriage or speech in the assembly—the "woman passages"—but Paul's main opponents throughout the letter. The woman passages, however, are key to Wire's construction of the Corinthian women prophets. First Corinthians 11:2–16 and 14:33–36 problematize women's prophetic speech, and her interpretations of these passages are the strongest in her book. Elsewhere, however, Wire forces the Corinthian women prophets upon the rhetoric of the text. The first sentence of the book assumes "women prophets" before analyzing the rhetoric that reveals them.[64] In other words, in identifying and isolating the women prophets as the source of conflict and main addressee, Wire oversimplifies the audience and situation at Corinth. The complexity and contentiousness of Paul's rhetoric indicates a complex and conflicted audience.[65]

This flaw in Wire's work does not negate the value of her rhetorical analysis and sustained attention to women. Wire wants to move beyond Paul's words to women's "behavior, daily and occasional, their position in society and the church, and their values and theology."[66] Wire identifies the Gal 3:28 baptismal formula, which draws on Genesis creation narratives, as a presupposition for Paul's argument. First Corinthians 11:7–9

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[64] Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 1: "The purpose of this study is to reconstruct as accurate a picture as possible of the women prophets in the church of first-century Corinth."

[65] Anders Erikkson, "'Women Tongue Speakers, Be Silent': A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric," *BibInt* 6.1 (1998): 80–104, makes a similar argument about the prominent role of women in Corinth, but thinks Paul calls the women "tongue speakers" instead of "prophets," as they would have called themselves. His rhetorical analysis is rooted in ancient rhetorical handbooks. He does not suggest that women tongue speakers are the opponents but are the main addressees for this section of the letter.

[66] Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 1.

refers to two Genesis *topoi*: First, man is the "image and glory" of God, and second, woman is made from man. The creation narratives provide theological linchpins to Paul's argument, but he alludes to, rather than quotes, these narratives. Wire argues that this use of Genesis suggests that the women who prayed and prophesied had their own exegetical arguments based on Genesis. In Gen 1:27, God creates "male and female" (ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς) in God's image. Quoting the Septuagint would have supported a woman's claim to being in the image of God. The παράδοσις in 11:2, moreover, may indicate that they appealed to a baptismal tradition that echoed Gen 1:27.[67] The version of the baptismal formula without the male-female pair in 1 Cor 12:12–13 supports Paul's reinterpretation of the Genesis narrative: Paul does not want "no longer male and female" emphasized in Corinth. Wire not only hypothesizes what women were doing in assembly but also attributes to them theological and exegetical argumentation.

Wire seldom cites Greek, Jewish, or Roman literature, but she includes an appendix of texts about women who prophesy. She states: "Parallel passages can prove nothing about each other until each complete text has been read in light of its own rhetoric and historical implications."[68] Comparative work can be fruitful for articulating the realities of women in Corinth: The voices of the women prophets take shape when placed within the cultural conversation about women's speech and when compared to prophetic traditions of the Pythia, Sibyl, and others. Wire's work establishes the possibility that prophesying women are central to the first-century Corinthian ἐκκλησία and to Paul's rhetoric.

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[67] Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets,* 119–22.

[68] Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, ix.

D. Jorunn Økland and the Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space

Jorunn Økland follows Wire in her assertion that gender is central to 1 Cor 11–14. She differs from her predecessor in that she is skeptical about what 1 Corinthians can reveal about historical women. Økland analyzes Paul's discourse to show how Paul uses gender categories to structure ritual space. Two scholarly developments enable Økland's work: first, archaeological evidence from ancient Corinth and its incorporation into scholarship on 1 Corinthians; second, the theoretical frameworks of discourse analysis and ritual theory.[69] Økland reads the landscape and ritual spaces of first-century Corinth as a "discourse of gender and ritual/sanctuary space."[70] She observes, for example, that the Demeter sanctuary, in which women served as cult officials and celebrated festivals, was located in a remote place enclosed with a wall that obstructed male gaze.[71] By contrast, men and women participated in imperial cult spaces, located at the forum, a predominantly male space.[72] The location of female sanctuaries on the margins of the city, along with the Egyptian cults of Isis and Sarapis, exhibits the association of female and foreign as outsiders.[73]

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[69] See the archaeological reports in *Corinth: Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* (Cambridge, MA, and Princeton, NJ: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1929–). In 1 Corinthians scholarship: John R. Lanci, *A New Temple for Corinth: Rhetorical and Archaelogical Approaches to Pauline Imagery* (New York: Lang, 1997); Daniel Schowalter and Steven Friesen, eds., *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, HTS 53 (Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School, 2005); S. Friesen, D. Schowalter, and J. Walters, eds., *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); S. Friesen, S. James, and D. Schowalter, eds., *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). On discourse analysis: Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973). Ritual theory: Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1977); Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1994); Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University, 1992).

[70] Økland, *Women in their Place,* 123–24.

[71] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 80–92.

[72] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 101–109.

[73] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 127–29.

Økland argues that the Corinthian ἐκκλησία is best understood as sanctuary or temple space, rather than household space. Many difficulties in 1 Corinthians, especially in Chapters 11–14, result from the differences between οἶκος and ἐκκλησία.[74] Rituals construct the sanctuary space of ἐκκλησία, but the location of the ἐκκλησία in homes leads to code confusion—silencing, speaking, and veiling mean different things in different spaces.[75] The creation of gender distinction and hierarchy at the beginning and end of Paul's discussion of ἐκκλησία indicates the constitutive role of the female-male dichotomy for conceptualizing sanctuary space. For Økland, the gender terms in the text emerge from this conceptual dichotomy, rather than actual realities of historical men and women.[76] Økland identifies the mirror reading that plagues historical reconstructions, and her inclination against such modes of reading is apt. Eliminating the possibility of historical recovery, however, limits her conclusions to the level of discourse. The lack of a direct relationship between Paul's rhetoric and the Corinthian situation does not make it futile to seek historical women in the silence—in what Paul does not say or what the monumental landscape of Roman Corinth does not preserve.[77]

For Økland, the issue in 1 Cor 11:2–16 is the gendered construction of sanctuary space. Paul does not define spaces or actions in this passage as distinctly male or female,

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[74] Økland, *Women in their Place,* 131–33.

[75] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 137–45.

[76] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 172: "I cannot see that the behavior of women in the ritual gatherings—or *Paul's view* of their behavior—is the *cause* of the surfacing of gender terms in the text. [… This view] presupposes that it is possible to move from Paul's utterances on women to historical women, an activity I find difficult, since I do not consider the historical situation as a fixed given that releases one specific response from Paul." Emphasis original.

[77] Økland follows Peter Brown's assertion that ancient male writers used women "to think with," *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia, 1988), 153. By contrast, Shelly Matthews, "Thinking of Thecla: Issues in Feminist Historiography," *JFSR* 17.2 (2001): 39–55, acknowledges the rhetoric of the role of women in early Christian texts, but critiques studies that solely focus on the discursive function of women and deny the possibility of their saying anything about the historical activities of women.

as he does in 14:33–37 and as physical Corinthian sanctuary spaces do. Instead, Chapter 11 differentiates male and female activities in communal gatherings through outward appearance.[78] Speech genres in Greek society also differentiate male and female: "The stereotypical maenad or oracle is a woman, whereas the stereotypical rational, mindful speaker is a man."[79] Whether speech is mindful or spiritual (14:15), then, may indicate categories based on gender. In terms of different phases of the ritual, Økland suggests that meetings began with a meal and moved to praying and prophesying. She argues that 14:33–37 indicates another phase of the meeting—a teaching portion, analogous to philosophical conversation or rabbinic Torah interpretation.[80] Paul excludes women's speech from this part of the meeting, but not from prayer and prophecy.[81] Finally, Økland posits another possibility for how the baptismal formula may have influenced 1 Cor 11–14: "Read in light of Gal 3:26–28 we could perhaps say that if women keep silent and accept that the collective representations of the ἐκκλησία space are male, women's voices cannot be heard and their heads not seen, then there is no male and female."[82] In other words, Gal 3:28 need not be seen as the liberating text for women, slaves, and Greeks, but as a text that plays into dominant discourses of hierarchy.

III. Defining Prophecy and Prayer in Tongues

At points, the scholarship on women in Corinth touches on forms of inspired speech: first, in Kähler and Hooker's emphasis on prayer and prophecy in worship

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[78] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 194.

[79] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 198.

[80] The terms μαθεῖν and λόγος in these verses suggest such a setting. Økland, *Women in their Place*, 195. Similarly, W. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1962), 251–55, argues that 14:33b–36 prohibits women from interpreting tongues or prophecy, but does not prohibit them from praying or prophesying.

[81] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 206.

[82] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 207.

settings, then in Greek parallels in eschatological, mythical, and ritual explanations for head coverings, and finally in Økland's suggestions about speech genres and stereotypes. Much of this scholarship, however, interprets 11:2–16 with 14:34–35 and skips what comes between—Paul's discussion of πνευματικά. Likewise, most scholarship that parses the arguments and forms of spiritual speech in Chapters 12–14 neglects gender.

In 1 Cor 12:1–14:40, Paul addresses "spiritual things" (12:1), distinguishes between proper and improper utterances that occur "by the spirit" (12:3), and identifies preferable forms of inspired speech (14:1–5). Prophesying builds up the ἐκκλησία, while speaking in tongues benefits the speaker. Scholars have defined these religious practices and addressed four main questions: First, what are the origins or backgrounds for the forms of speech discussed in 1 Cor 12–14? Central to this question is whether parallels from Judaism or Greek and Roman cults are appropriate. Second, what is the form and content of prophecy and speaking in tongues? This question is complicated by whether these phenomena are uniform or multiform, whether Paul is representative for Corinthian or early Christian practices, and whether he invents the distinction between prophecy and tongues. Third, does a state of ecstasy or altered consciousness accompany prophetic and/or glossolalic utterances? Fourth, what are Paul's rhetorical goals in defining prophecy and speaking in tongues as he does? The first two questions of origin and form are the traditional questions of historical-critical paradigms. The last two questions introduce social-scientific and rhetorical models and attend to ideologies of Paul and his audience.

A. Origins and Backgrounds for Prophecy and Tongues

Traditionally, scholars have considered the Old Testament and Judaism as the background for early Christian prophecy.[83] H. A. Guy, for example, argues that New Testament prophecy was the culmination of Hebrew prophecy, which reached its high point in Jesus.[84] Problematic in Guy's work is the lack of attention to second temple Judaism. Gerhard Dautzenberg corrects this problem by investigating a range of Jewish texts, including apocalyptic and wisdom literature, Qumran texts, Philo, and Josephus, and how these texts articulate the process of revelation.[85] He identifies a two-stage process in Jewish prophecy—reception and interpretation—and these stages are behind Paul's statements about "discerning spirits" (12:10). Dautzenberg emphasizes the phenomenon of prophecy, a helpful counter to studies that focus on the "office" of prophet and trace the history of Christianity as the development from charismatic to institutional leadership.[86]

David Aune questions the exclusive focus on Judaism, especially when considering prophecy in Corinth, a Roman colony on Greek soil.[87] His form-critical study categorizes Greek, Roman, and Jewish evidence according to the form and function of prophetic utterances in order to create a typology with which to analyze early Christian

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[83] H. A. Guy, *New Testament Prophecy: Its Origin and Significance* (London: Epworth, 1947); Helmut Krämer, Rolf Rendtorff, Rudolf Meyer, Gerhard Friedrich, "προφήτης," in *TDNT* 6:781–861; É. Cothenet, "Prophétisme dans le NT," in *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Supplement, vol. 8 (1972), cols. 1222–1337; D. Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979); Gerhard Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie: Ihre Erforschung, ihre Voraussetzungen im Judentum und ihre Struktur im ersten Korintherbrief* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975).

[84] Guy, *New Testament Prophecy*.

[85] Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie*, 43–121.

[86] As established by Adolf Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1908).

[87] David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 16–17.

prophecy. In his chapters on Greco-Roman prophecy, Aune discusses inspired oracles, including the Delphic oracle. He outlines the terminology used for prophets and oracular personnel, ritual actions, modes of inquiry and response, and views on inspiration and interpretation of oracles.[88] Aune also discusses oracular persons not connected to shrines—technical diviners (e.g., astrologers), inspired diviners (e.g., Sibyl), oracle collectors, and mediums.[89] His description of the varieties of ancient Mediterranean prophecy exhibits the difficulty of establishing origins for Christian prophecy and emphasizes form and function in comparison with other Mediterranean prophecy.

While Aune represents a shift to understanding prophecy within Greek and Roman contexts, scholars before him were willing to see the origins of glossolalia in ecstatic speech of Dionysian revelry, Cybele worship, or Apollonine divination. Dautzenberg, for instance, suggests that glossolalia has its background in Greek ecstatic speech but became a distinct phenomenon in early Christianity.[90] The tendency to align prophecy with Jewish parallels and glossolalia with Greek parallels replicates Paul's judgment of prophecy as edifying and speaking in tongues as unhelpful.[91]

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[88] Aune, *Prophecy*, 26–33.

[89] Aune, *Prophecy*, 35–40.

[90] Gerhard Dautzenberg, "Glossolalie," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum,* ed. T. Klauser (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1981), Vol. 11: col. 225–46; see also N. Engelsen, "Glossolalia and Other Forms of Inspired Speech According to 1 Corinthians 12–14" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1970); T. W. Gillespie, "A Pattern of Prophetic Speech in First Corinthians," *JBL* 97.1 (1978): 74–95; Luke T. Johnson, "Norms for True and False Prophecy in First Corinthians," *American Benedictine Review* 22 (1971): 29–45; Luke T. Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 105–17; C. G. Williams, "Glossolalia as a Religious Phenomenon: Tongues at Corinth and at Pentecost," *Religion* (1975): 320–38.

[91] Some scholars draw from Jewish contexts for parallels to speaking in tongues. Those who do so refer to the angelic dialects spoken by Job's daughters in the *Testament of Job*. See Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 87–89; R. A. Harrisville, "Speaking in Tongues: A Lexicographical Study," *CBQ* 38.1 (1976): 35–48; R. P. Spittler, "The Testament of Job," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth; 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 1:836.

A third proposal for origins is that neither Judaism nor Hellenism provides appropriate background. Christopher Forbes argues that the Greek parallels often adduced in scholarship—the Delphic and Delian Apollo traditions, cults of Dionysus and Cybele, and descriptions of inspiration by philosophers—are different from the phenomena discussed by Paul and other early Christian authors because they use different terminology to describe the process.[92] Forbes's approach is philological, and he does not consider the fluidity of language for religious experiences, nor does he consider Paul's rhetoric and ability to define the topic in his own terms. Forbes's work shows the limitations of an exclusive focus on origins and philological methods.

B. Form and Content of Prophecy and Tongues

For the second question of the form and content of prophecy, Aune determines criteria for isolating potential oracles in the New Testament and other early Christian writings. If a statement is attributed to a supernatural being, consists of a future prediction or information about the past or present a person would not reasonably know, and is introduced by an oracular formula, it is an authentic prophecy or modeled on expectations of prophetic form.[93] Aune finds that many early Christian prophecies are brief and poetic, spoken in the voice of the prophet yet "through" (διά) or "by" (ὑπό) the spirit or Lord, often eschatological in content, and frequently difficult to distinguish from other forms of discourse. Prophetic speech functions as divine legitimation for the speaker's authority, in conflict with or in the absence of established structures of authority.[94] This conclusion

[92] Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

[93] Aune, *Prophecy*, 247–48.

[94] Aune, *Prophecy*, 333–37. Two oracles identified by Aune occur in 1 Corinthians 12–14. In 12:3, the phrase "mute idols" indicates the pagan context of Corinth and possibly the experience of possession trance within this context. The saying "Jesus is Lord" is a recognition oracle, which was common in Greco-

aligns with the historiographical model of early Christianity as a movement from charisma to institution.[95]

As for speaking in tongues, two general hypotheses occur. First, glossolalia involved speaking in foreign, but untaught, languages—xenoglossia.[96] Second, glossolalists did not speak a real language but rather a patterned form of non-linguistic sounds or babbling.[97] Proponents of the first view draw support from the Pentecost miracle in Acts 2 and Paul's emphasis on interpretation and the many real languages in existence (1 Cor 12:10; 14:10–11, 13). Proponents of the second view point to Paul's comparison of speaking in tongues to the indistinct sounds of musical instruments (14:7–9) and parallels to unintelligible or obscured speech in Greek and Roman contexts. Defining "speaking in tongues" is complicated by whether Paul and his audience view or experience it the same, and whether they conceive of what Paul calls "tongues" as a category of speech different from "prophesying."

C. The Question of Mental States and Ecstasy

Paul's contrast between speaking in tongues as praying with the spirit and prophesying as speaking with the mind (14:14–15) leads to the question of whether he is

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Roman prophecy, while the saying "Jesus is cursed" is a hypothetical antithesis to the former (*Prophecy*, 256). First Corinthians 14:37–38 does not display any of Aune's criteria, yet this "pronouncement of sacral law" is likely in oracular style because it follows Paul's prophetic injunctions and serves to legitimate his instructions regarding prophecy throughout Chapter 14 (*Prophecy*, 257).

[95] See Laura Nasrallah's critique of this historiographical model, *An Ecstasy of Folly: Prophecy and Authority in Early Christianity*, HTS 52 (Cambridge: Harvard Divinity School, 2003), 11–19.

[96] Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 63–72; J. G. Davies, "Pentecost and Glossolalia," *JTS* 3 (1952): 228–32; R. H. Gundry, "'Ecstatic Utterance' (N.E.B.)?," *JTS* 17.2 (1966): 299–307; T. W. Harpur, "The Gift of Tongues and Interpretation," *CJT* 12 (1966): 164–71.

[97] Johnson, *Religious Experience*, 113–15; Gillespie, "A Pattern of Prophetic Speech," 81; Williams, "Glossolalia," n. 68. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 57–63, makes further distinctions between five possibilities: (a) ability to speak unlearned languages, (b) ability to speak heavenly or angelic languages, (c) combination of a and b, (d) sub- or pre-linguistic form of speech, or (e) an idiosyncratic form of language using archaic or foreign terms.

describing speech that occurs in an ecstatic state. Based on 14:32—"the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets"—Greeven argues that the prophet is in control, mentally aware, and not in an ecstatic state.[98] In contrast, Kraft and Dautzenberg argue that early Christian prophecy's apocalyptic nature and visionary characteristics means that it was ecstatic.[99]

Part of the difficulty is defining "ecstasy." Anthropological studies of spirit possession, shamanism, and trance states have provided insight.[100] "Trance" is the anthropological term for what religion scholars most often mean by "ecstasy"—the condition of mental dissociation marked by psychological and physical characteristics such as lack of response to stimuli, automatic rather than voluntary action, and reduced recognition of one's surroundings. "Spirit possession" and "shamanism" refer to mystical or theological interpretations of what happens during a trance state. Spirit possession is

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[98] H. Greeven, "Propheten, Lehrer, Vorsteher bei Paulus: Zur Frage der 'Ämter' in Urchristentum," *ZNW* 44 (1952–53): 12–13; See also É. Cothenet, "Prophétisme," 1296; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 245; Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy,* 152–55.

[99] H. Kraft, "Die altkirchliche Prophetie und die Entstehung des Montanismus," *TZ* 11 (1955): 250–53; Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie,* 18–24; See also Engelsen, *Glossolalia*, 204.

[100] Ian M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003); Erika Bourguignon, *Possession* (San Francisco: Chandler & Sharp, 1976); Erika Bourguignon, *Altered States of Consciousness and Social Change* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University, 1973). For anthropology of trance and possession related to women, see Janice Boddy, *Wombs and Alien Spirits: Women, Men, and the Zār Cult of Northern Sudan* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1989); Susan Starr Sered, *Priestess, Mother, Sacred Sister: Religions Dominated by Women* (New York: Oxford, 1994), 181–94; Mary Keller, *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power, and Spirit Possession* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2002). For use of anthropological theories in the study of Old Testament prophecy, see R. Wilson, "Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination," *JBL* 98 (1979): 321–37; R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1980). For use in NT prophecy: Aune, *Prophecy,* 19–22; T. Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy in Greco-Roman Religion and in 1 Corinthians," *NovT* 27.2 (1985): 125–40; and Mount, "1 Corinthians 11:3–16: Spirit Possession and Authority."

the entrance into and control of the body by a spirit, god, or demon, while shamanism is the travel of the soul from the human body to the world of the spirits.[101]

Terrence Callan suggests that Paul's language about the Holy Spirit indicates that spirit possession is closer to how he views what was happening in Corinth.[102] Callan, however, does not think this necessitates a trance state and examines how other ancient texts view mental states during prophecy. Based on Plato, Lucan, and Plutarch, he concludes that the μάντις at Delphi prophesied in a trance.[103] Philo, by contrast, describes Moses prophesying with presence of mind and has apologetic purposes in portraying Moses in this way.[104] Likewise, Paul, who has apologetic goals, articulates prophecy as not occurring in a trance, in contrast to speaking in tongues.[105] Callan does not read the Greek and Latin texts about Delphic prophecy with sensitivity to their rhetorical goals, as he does with Paul and Philo. He does not question the mad, frenzied depictions of the Pythian prophet. The resulting picture conforms to the weighted dichotomies common in scholarship: prophecy/tongues, Jewish/Greek, rationality/madness, Moses/Pythia, respectable/strange, and male/female.

D. Paul's Rhetorical Goals in Defining Inspired Speech

The assumption underlying this scholarship, which follows Paul's rhetoric, is that prophecy and glossolalia are different types of speech. Rhetorical criticism of 1 Cor 12–14 brings prophecy and speaking in tongues closer together in Corinthian practice and

[101] Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 38–42. Lewis, however, questions the strict distinction between spirit possession and shamanism. Non-mystical or secular interpretations of trance states also exist—for example, hypnosis in psychotherapy.

[102] Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy," 126.

[103] Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy," 128–32. Callan draws especially on Plato, *Phaedr.* 244A–B; *Tim.* 71E; *Ion* 534C–D; Lucan, *Bell. civ.* 5.167–69; Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 432C.

[104] Philo, *Mos.* 2.188–292. Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy," 133–36.

[105] Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy," 136–38.

examines Paul's strategies for pulling them apart. Wire views Paul's rhetoric in 1 Cor 12–14 as an argument dissociating prophecy from tongues based on his dissociation of communal benefit from individual benefit.[106] She argues that since Paul labors to differentiate the two modes of speaking, women prophets integrated the two. Paul emphasizes speaking in turn, while the Corinthian women emphasized freedom for all in prophesying.[107] The mirror reading is problematic, but her insight that Paul's view of prophecy and tongues is not normative and that he may invent the distinction to address the situation is important.

While Wire reads Paul's rhetoric to reconstruct the rhetorical situation and Paul's opponents, Laura Nasrallah reads his rhetoric as engaged in ancient discourses about knowledge and authority. Ancient debates about dreams, prophecies, visions, and oracles display concerns about how gods communicate with humans, which leads to questions about true and false communication and human access to knowledge. Nasrallah argues that discussions of ecstatic experiences by Plato, Philo, Paul, Tertullian, and the "Anti-Phrygian" source in Eusebius attempt to set limits on what can be known.[108] One way they create boundaries is by outlining taxonomies of ecstatic experiences. These taxonomies are not neutral but place value on one type of dream, madness, or vision as most able to lead to knowledge.[109] Likewise, Paul's separating and championing prophecy raises it above speaking in tongues and challenges how the Corinthians were defining their community.[110] Paul widens the gap between human and divine, thereby

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[106] Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 17–19, 140–46.

[107] Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 139.

[108] Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly*, 26.

[109] Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly*, 31–32.

[110] Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly*, 60.

questioning whether the Corinthians have the spirit or are able to prophesy.[111] Nasrallah limits her analysis to 1 Cor 12–14, but she acknowledges that Paul begins the topic of prophecy in 1 Cor 11:2–16. In fact, the separation of 11:2–16 from the rhetorical unit of Chapters 12–14 may serve Paul's purpose: "Paul may deliberately disaggregate his assertions regarding women, men, prophecy, and prayer from his focus on πνευματικά in the next chapter, because his conclusions were controversial."[112] Paul may have arranged the material to indicate that women were peripheral to the discussion of inspired speech, only to command their silence in the end.

IV. Women Prophets in Ancient Mediterranean Divination

In this scholarship on women and inspired speech in First Corinthians, rituals in Jewish, Greek, and Roman traditions have emerged as parallels for social conventions about women's speech and for religious activities of prophecy and prayer in tongues. This scholarship, however, rarely interacts with research on prophetic and divinatory phenomena in ancient Mediterranean religions. This lack of interaction results in neglect of the rhetoric of classical texts and disregard for developments in the fields of Greek and Roman religions and in comparative and anthropological studies of divination. Scholarship about the Pythia at Delphi or the Sibyl within their social worlds has faced many of the same challenges that interpretation of First Corinthians has. The literary evidence is fragmentary and not from the female prophets themselves. Certain ancient voices—Herodotus, Plato, and Plutarch—have been influential in reconstructing oracles and their divinatory methods, but their discussions of female prophecy fit into their rhetorical goals. Archaeological and epigraphical material from oracular temples

[111] Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly*, 76, 87–88.

[112] Nasrallah, *An Ecstasy of Folly*, 83.

supplements literary data but is likewise fragmentary and difficult to interpret. I examine three phases in research on women prophets in ancient Mediterranean divination: (1) efforts to categorize the data and describe the historical features of divination, (2) an anthropological turn that focused on divination within its social world, and (3) work that considers the rhetoric of prophets and prophecy within overlapping cultural systems.

A. Cataloging and Defining Divination

The earliest work on female prophecy was general research on divination in the ancient world. In the late-nineteenth century, Auguste Bouche-Leclercq published a four-volume history of ancient divination, in which he classifies divination into two types—inductive (observing signs in nature) and intuitive (dreams, necromancy, or enthusiasm)—and examines documentary evidence for Greek oracular temples and for Etruscan and Roman traditions.[113] W. R. Halliday followed with a study that focuses on methods within Greek divination, including the mechanics by which the μάντις, the inspired prophet who was itinerant or located at a temple, received messages from gods.[114] These early scholars were interested in categorizing methods of divination.

The next phase of research occurred in the 1950s–70s, when scholars began focusing on specific oracular sites and organizing literary, archaeological, and epigraphical data to reconstruct their history. Three scholars—Pierre Amandry, H. W. Parke, and Joseph Fontenrose—sketched the history of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi.[115] Parke and Fontenrose developed criteria for determining whether an oracle was

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[113] Auguste Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la divination dans l'antiquité*, 4 vols. (Paris: Leroux, 1879–82).

[114] W. R. Halliday, *Greek Divination: A Study of its Methods and Principles* (London: Macmillan, 1913).

[115] Pierre Amandry, *La mantique apollinienne à Delphes; essai sur le fonctionnement de l'oracle* (Paris: de Boccard, 1950); H. W. Parke and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1956); Joseph E. Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle* (Berkeley: University of California, 1978)

historical, literary, or legendary. They drew conclusions about the chronology and methods of the oracles and were less concerned with its religious logic or place within the social fabric of ancient Greece. Parke and Fontenrose made similar efforts for the temple at Didyma, other Apollo oracles in Asia Minor, and oracles of Zeus.[116]

In addition to his extensive work on these sites, Parke wrote a history of the Sibyls and Sibylline prophecy. He begins with the Jewish and Christian *Sibylline Oracles* to determine the underlying characteristics of the corpus and to suggest antecedents in classical antiquity.[117] He then analyzes fragmentary statements from Greek literature and hypothesizes a seventh-century date for the origination of Sibylline prophecy in Asia Minor. This form of prophecy began alongside Apollonine prophecy at sites like Didyma and Claros. Parke charts the Sibyl's increasing popularity in classical Greece, Cumae, Rome, and Christian literature. Parke's focus, as with his work on oracular temples, is organizing literary and archaeological evidence and determining origins. John J. Collins, from the discipline of biblical and Jewish studies, also examines Sibylline chronology and location. Unlike Parke, his interests remain with the literary *Sibylline Oracles*, which he contextualizes not in terms of archaic and classical Greek traditions but within second temple Judaism in Egypt and Asia Minor.[118]

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[116] Didyma and Asia Minor: H. W. Parke, *The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); Parke, "The Temple of Apollo at Didyma: The Building and its Function," *JHS* 106 (1986): 121–31; Joseph E. Fontenrose, *Didyma: Apollo's Oracle, Cult, and Companions* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987). Oracles of Zeus: D. M. Nicol, "The Oracle of Dodona," *Greece and Rome*, 2nd series, 5.2 (1958): 128–43; H.W. Parke, *The Oracles of Zeus: Dodona, Olympia, Ammon* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967).

[117] H. W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1988), 1–22.

[118] John J. Collins, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism* (Missoula, MT: SBL for the Pseudepigrapha Group, 1974). He revisited some of his questions and arguments twenty years later in *Seers, Sybils, and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

B. The Anthropological Turn: Jean-Pierre Vernant and Followers

All of this scholarship was documentary: Scholars wanted to catalogue and compose histories of sites and traditions. In the 1970s, anthropological research began to influence studies of ancient Mediterranean religion with questions about how cults fit into the texture of societies. Jean-Pierre Vernant began the shift to approach divination within its social world. He argues that scholars should analyze divination "in its dual dimensions as a mental attitude and a social institution."[119] For the mental dimension, he examines "the intellectual operations" during the ritual and "the logic of the system" that produces divine responses. He asks:

> What type of rationality is expressed in the game of divinatory procedure, the apparatus of oracular techniques and symbolisms, and the classificatory frameworks used by the seer to sort out, organize, manipulate, and interpret the information on which his competence is based?[120]

For the social dimension, he inquires about the function of oracular knowledge within societies:

> Because prophetic science is practiced on occasions when a choice, or important choices, need to be made and because it determines decisions, both public and private, how far does its field of application extend and what are the areas of social life subject to its authority?[121]

The volume in which these questions originally appeared includes essays by classicists and anthropologists, who analyze the social and experiential dimensions of divination.[122]

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[119] Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Parole et signes muets," in *Divination et rationalité*, ed. Jean-Pierre Vernant (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974). English translation: "Speech and Mute Signs," in *Mortals and Immortals*, trans. and ed. Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University, 1991), 303.

[120] Vernant, "Speech and Mute Signs," 303.

[121] Vernant, "Speech and Mute Signs," 303.

[122] Vernant, ed., *Divination et rationalité*. Essays by classicists include: Roland Crahay, "Bouche de la vérité"; Luc Brisson, "Du bon usage du dérèglement"; Jeannie Carlier, "Science divine et raison humaine"; Denise Grodzynski, "Par la bouche de l'empereur."

Scholars after Vernant have followed his approach and investigated the political, religious, and mental aspects of prophecy. Robert Parker analyzes the role of Delphi in Greek colonization and state formation.[123] Sarah Iles Johnston argues that divination in its many forms was central, not marginal, to Greek religion and that it "helps us to understand the mentalities that organize other aspects of human existence."[124] In the Roman context, Eric Orlin considers how Sibylline prophecy established new temples and cults, which in turn influenced the political structure and goals of the Republic.[125] David Potter examines the role of divination in maintaining Roman imperial power structures.[126] Esther Eidinow analyzes the mental dimension of two Greek religious phenomena—oracles at Dodona and curse tablets—to discuss how men and women, individually and collectively, "expressed and managed aspects of the uncertainty and risk of everyday life."[127] Her questions move toward the mental and emotional states of ordinary individuals, but her focus remains social, since risk and uncertainty are social constructs.[128]

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[123] Robert Parker, "Greek States and Greek Oracles," in *Crux: Essays Presented to G. E. M. de Ste. Croix on his 75th Birthday*, ed. P. A. Cartledge and F. D. Harvey (London: Duckworth, 1985): 298–326.

[124] Sarah Iles Johnston, "Introduction: Divining Divination," in *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination*, ed. Sarah Iles Johnston and Peter T. Struck (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 11. See also Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008).

[125] Eric M. Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Roman Republic* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 76–115.

[126] David Potter, *Prophets and Emperors: Human and Divine Authority from Augustus to Theodosius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

[127] Esther Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk among the Ancient Greeks* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007), 4.

[128] Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk*, 5: "Those who used oracles were uncertain and wanted to be sure they were making the right choice; those who turned to curses were usually already in a situation of danger and wanted to limit the damage their enemies might inflict." Connecting magic and divination follows the insights of scholars before her—notably Samson Eitrem and Fritz Graf: Samson Eitrem, *Orakel und Mysterien am Ausgang der Antike*, Albae Vigiliae (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1947); Fritz Graf, "Magic and Divination," in *The World of Ancient Magic: Papers from the First International Samson Eitrem Seminar at the Norwegian Institute of Athens*, ed. David R. Jordan, Hugo Montgomery, and Einar Thomassen (Bergen: Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1999), 283–98.

C. Gender Dynamics in Oracular Institutions

In older scholarship, the identity of the prophets as women was taken for granted, and gender was not a lens for analysis. Scholars' biases, moreover, about the nature of women shaped their interpretation of the fragmentary evidence. They often assumed that the female prophet at Delphi was not mentally engaged during prophecy. Her ecstatic state meant that she did not know what she was doing or saying and that the male temple officials translated, or even composed, the metered verse in which the oracles were recorded. Amandry and Fontenrose challenge this characterization. They emphasize the limitations of the evidence for how the prophetic ritual at Delphi occurred. Based on literary and visual portrayals of the prophet, they suggest that she spoke in clear, lucid speech. Amandry argues that Plato's discussion of types of madness (Dionysiac, poetic, and prophetic) in the *Phaedrus* has disproportionately influenced ancient and modern views of the oracle.[129]

Lisa Maurizio, Barbara Goff, and Sarah Iles Johnston have further challenged stereotypes of the mad, babbling, female prophet and have examined how social constructions of gender influenced how ancient authors portrayed prophets in literature. Maurizio uses ethnographic studies of possession to illuminate the style of the Delphic prophet's speech. She notes that seers from indigenous religious cultures, particularly in South America and Africa, use "randomizing devices" in their speech in order to obscure their otherworldly message and thereby protect their authority if the statement is judged false.[130] Maurizio sees a similar strategy in the Pythia's prophetic style: Her speech is

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[129] Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle,* 204–212; Amandry, *La mantique apollinienne à Delphes*. Parke and Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, 33, by contrast, suggest babbling and unclear speech.

[130] Lisa Maurizio, "Anthropology and Spirit Possession: A Reconsideration of the Pythia's Role at Delphi," *JHS* 115 (1995): 69–86.

obscure so that inquirers must interpret it. In response to social and political upheaval in which kings consulted the Delphic oracle, "the Pythias responded to colonists' needs by mirroring them: The Pythias developed a 'style,' ambiguity, that traced the colonists' desire to make the unknown readable by replicating it in language."[131] The prophet, therefore, melded her voice to benefit men and to retain her prophetic authority.

Goff likewise emphasizes the active role of female prophets within political systems with a focus on education. Goff suggests that Pythian prophets were trained in two areas: Delphic politics and methods of possession.[132] They would have learned the political needs and preferences of Delphi to give oracles that would have been favorable to the institution and to their position as ritual agents. Anthropological studies show that trance practitioners learn methods to control their mental state and communicate with the god or spirit thought to possess them.[133] These studies suggest that spirit possession is often practiced by women or lower-class members of hierarchical societies.[134] Likewise, women in the Delphic system may be exercising their political power in hidden and subversive ways, and they pass on training in ritual possession to their successors.

Johnston analyzes the rhetorical reasons for characterizing the Pythia in sexualized terms. She examines the trope of the Pythia as a virgin and as Apollo's bride and asks whether the process of prophecy at Delphi was actually considered a kind of sexual intercourse that led to "verbal pregnancy." She suggests that virginity was not central to understanding the Pythias' prophecy; rather, the celibacy of the prophet fits into

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[131] Maurizio, "The Voice at the Center of the World: The Pythias' Ambiguity and Authority," in *Making Silence Speak*, 42.

[132] Goff, *Citizen Bacchae*, 220.

[133] Goff, *Citizen Bacchae*, 282.

[134] See Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*; Sered, *Priestess, Mother, Sacred Sister*, 182–84.

general Greek prerequisites for most ritual officials, male and female. The emphasis on the virginity and worldly inexperience of the Pythia, therefore, is a later interpretation of priestly celibacy and is one "institutional wink" of the oracle. Johnston writes:

> The *ideal* Pythia was like the perfect bride insofar as she was both completely free from the pollution of sexual contact and free from too many ideas; even if it was not always possible to achieve this state of purity in reality, the insistent *characterization* of the Pythia in these terms was the wink that allowed the cult to continue.[135]

Johnston emphasizes the distance between the reality and characterization of the Pythia in literature. The sexualized language in these texts represents rhetoric that supported the institution, rather than the actual sexualized nature of the prophet or prophetic process.

Turning to Sibylline prophecy, J. L. Lightfoot examines the rhetoric of literary images of the Sibyl within overlapping cultural traditions. Lightfoot's work focuses on the extant Jewish and Christian *Sibylline Oracles* and integrates study of these texts with the rhetorical *topoi* used for Sibyls in Greek and Latin literature. She addresses "the question of the literary portrayal of Sibyls and the conventions of pagan Sibyllina which were inherited by the Hellenistic Jews, the Sibyl's place among the various species of classical *mantis*, and the various sorts of tension that inhere in the characterization of the Sibyls (are they mad or sane? human or divine? oral or bookish?)."[136] The character of the Sibyl allows Lightfoot to examine how the Jewish texts build on and depart from non-Jewish traditions in order to create a distinct prophetic form. In addition to placing the literary image of the Sibyl at the center of her work, Lightfoot discusses the *Sibylline Oracles* as not "just" a Jewish text or "purely" a Greek phenomenon. Rather, the *Sibylline*

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[135] Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination*, 44. Italics original.

[136] J. L. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles: With Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on the First and Second Books* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007), x.

Oracles represents the deep interaction of cultural forms in the religious phenomenon of female prophecy.

Further comparative work to determine how gender dynamics function in prophecy across traditions is in a volume edited by Jonathan Stökl and Corrine Carvalho, *Prophets Male and Female*.[137] These essays argue that gender is essential for understanding literary, inscriptional, and archaeological evidence of ancient prophecy. In Israel and the Ancient Near East, distinct patterns of prophecy indicate cultural preferences and gender dynamics: Most Neo-Assyrian prophets were female, Mari and Israel preferred male prophets, and a "third gender" or "genderless" prophet appears in ancient near eastern texts.[138] Greek prophets at oracles and in literature provide comparanda for the biblical and near eastern material in two essays.[139] This scholarship suggests that "every prophetic expression was a gendered expression, and that attention to those gender dynamics will continue to open up the ancient contexts of prophetic texts."[140] My comparative work that brings together Jewish, Greek, Roman, and early Christian prophecy enters this trajectory of scholarship.

V. Summary of Research and Questions Remaining

A central question in summarizing this research is: Where and how do women emerge in discussions of prophecy and inspired speech in the Corinthian community? This question has three parts: First, to what extent do interpreters consider gender in

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[137] Jonathan Stökl and Corrine L. Carvalho, eds., *Prophets Male and Female: Gender and Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013).

[138] Martti Nissinen, "Gender and Prophetic Agency in the Ancient Near East and in Greece," in *Prophets Male and Female*, 27–58.

[139] Nissinen, "Gender and Prophetic Agency"; Anselm C. Hagedorn, "The Role of the Female Seer/Prophet in Ancient Greece," in *Prophets Male and Female*, 101–26.

[140] Carvalho and Stökl, "Introduction," in *Prophets Male and Female*, 8.

describing forms and functions of inspired speech? Second, when and in what ways do modern interpreters refer to ancient practices of female prophecy? Third, do interpreters hypothesize about the social or religious significance of prophecy or inspired speech—whether Pauline, Pythian, Sibylline, or other—for women or men who engage in it?

First, studies of early Christian inspired speech rarely consider gender when describing the acts, forms, and function of prophecy and glossolalia. Aune, for example, discusses female prophets in Greek and Roman contexts, but gender does not enter his discussion of 1 Cor 12–14, the people who prophesied, or the act of prophesying. When interpreters discuss gender in relation to Paul's arguments in Chapters 12–14, they refer to the silencing in 14:34–35. Grudem, for example, argues that Paul excluded women from one form of speech, interpretation of prophecy, rather than from all speech.[141] Wire, followed by Erikkson and Økland, first considers the possibility that Paul addresses women in Chapters 12–14 and reads Paul's instructions concerning prophecy and tongues with women in view. I take cues from Paul's rhetoric and the organization of the letter to determine issues that are significant in Corinth. The framing of the arguments about prophecy and speaking in tongues with conflicting instructions about women and men indicate that gender dynamics influence perceptions and practices of inspired speech.

For the second question, Conzelmann's commentary provides a good case study. He cites parallels to the Delphic priestess at three points. In his interpretation of 1 Cor 14:2, Conzelmann discusses the unintelligibility of speaking in tongues and states that Greek ideas of the mantic πνεῦμα illuminate Paul's discussion. This mantic spirit is evident in the sources that discuss Pythian prophecy. Conzelmann writes: "The deity

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[141] Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy,* 251–55.

speaks out of the inspired man's mouth; he himself does not know what he is saying. In Delphi the priests interpret the Pythia's babblings."[142] Second, in comments on 14:14, in which Paul contrasts πνεῦμα and νοῦς, Conzelmann cites Lucan's *De bello civili* for existing views of inspiration that Paul inherits. He writes: "The spirit of Apollo expels the soul of the Pythia and dwells in her instead of it."[143] Finally, the term μαίνομαι in 14:23 elicits discussion of inspiration, mania, and ecstasy, for which Conzelmann cites Plutarch and Lucan on the Pythia and ancient ideas of ecstasy.[144] The Pythia, a prominent example of female prophecy, enters the discussion when unintelligibility, ecstasy, and madness are part of the discussion—at 14:2, 14, and 23—and when tongues, not prophecy, is the topic.[145]

As we have seen, it is inaccurate to speak of "the Pythia's babblings."[146] Fontenrose's catalog of Delphic oracles show clear, though often ambiguous speech, which contrasts with scholarly characterizations that take cues from Plato's description of madness.[147] Scholars have questioned not only the frenzied, babbling image of the prophet, but also the assertion that male priests were responsible for translating, or even composing, oracles.[148] The resulting image is a female prophet in control of the ritual and

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[142] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 234. He also cites Plato's discussion of types of madness (*Tim*. 71F) and the Sibylline traditions (Heraclitus, *fr*. 92).

[143] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 237, n. 51.

[144] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 243.

[145] Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy," is similar in his reference to and treatment of Delphic prophecy.

[146] Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle*, 204–212; Aune, *Prophecy*, 32–34; Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech*, 107–109.

[147] Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle*, 204–212; Contra Parke and Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, 33. See Amandry, *La mantique apollinienne à Delphes*, for the influence of Plato upon ancient and modern views of the Delphic oracle.

[148] See Parke and Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, 33. Goff, *Citizen Bacchae*, 279–82; Maurizio, "Anthropology and Spirit Possession"; Maurizio, "The Voice at the Center of the World," 38–54.

her voice. Rather than citing Plutarch and Lucan as evidence of prophetic madness and ecstasy, I analyze the images of female prophets within their own literary traditions and rhetorical situations. What literary purpose does Lucan's sensationalized narrative of an oracular inquiry serve? What do the *Sibylline Oracles* accomplish by presenting Jewish prophecy in a female voice? Did dramatic images of female prophets influence Paul's anxiety over women prophesying? If other religious experiences influence the actions of women and men in the Corinthian ἐκκλησία, what is the distance between how prophetic experiences are portrayed and how they occurred?

Scholars are similarly limited in their reference to archaeological material when discussing women and inspired speech in Corinth. The most prevalent use of Corinthian archaeological evidence is that of Isis cults in the Corinthia. Inscriptions, temples, and artifacts locate Isis in this area, and scholars draw conclusions about the frenzied speech of women based on literary texts about Isis festivals and devotion.[149] Bruce Winter has examined curse tablets from the Demeter Sanctuary and argued that they provide parallel vocabulary and grammar that explains the enigmatic ἀνάθεμα statement in 1 Cor 12:2.[150] His argument is problematic because he focuses on philological, rather than religious, questions, and decontextualizes the curse tablets. Finally, Økland has the most nuanced discussion of material evidence for men and women's spaces in Corinth, but she reads them as expressions of gendered spatial discourse.[151]

Third, discussions of the social and/or religious significance of prophecy for women who engage in it have gone in two directions. Wire discusses the significance of

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[149] See Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman;" Oster, "Use, Misuse, and Neglect."

[150] Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 164–83.

[151] Økland, *Women in their Place*, 78–130.

prophecy for Corinthian women, but her conclusions are flawed because she reads women's experiences and viewpoints as the opposite of what Paul writes ("mirror reading"), characterizes Christian Corinthian women as desiring liberation from constricting Greek customs, and neglects the broader discussion of women's speech and prophecy in the ancient world. Dale Martin is similarly suspicious of Paul and his ideological goals, which results in Martin's reading ideology onto the experiences of women with a negative result: A woman experiences veiling and prophecy in the same way Paul views it—veiling is restrictive and oppressive, and prophecy is like sex, which brings shame.[152] The last decade has seen nuanced approaches to Paul's discourse by Økland and Nasrallah, but neither scholar moves beyond Paul's rhetorical definitions of prophecy and women. Økland denies the possibility of retrieving the significance of prophecy for women and instead sees gender as a discursive category. This kind of discourse analysis has a blind spot in attending to religious experiences and social history.

Shelly Matthews argues that it is not enough to stop at analysis of how women are portrayed in ancient discourse: "Women may function in texts like phonemes or words, but they did more than that in history, because they also spoke."[153] The Pythia, Sibyl, priestesses at Dodona and Didyma, and Corinthian women prophets spoke, and their speech influenced the fabric of their societies in ways that ancient texts sometimes state but to which they more often only provide hints. To bridge the distance between rhetoric and social history, I bring multiple forms of evidence to bear on the question, "Why is women's speech contested for Paul and in Corinth?" In Chapters 2–4, I sketch the gender

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[152] Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 233–48.

[153] Matthews, "Thinking of Thecla," 51.

dynamics that inform the rhetorical situation in first-century Corinth, while describing the rhetorical characteristics of these texts. Chapters 5–6, then, provides an exegetical and socio-historical analysis of 1 Cor 11:2–14:40 that places Paul and the Corinthians within a context in which God(s) often spoke through women.

CHAPTER 2
WOMEN PRAYING AND PROPHESYING: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FROM CORINTH

In 1 Corinthians 12:1–3, Paul begins his discussion of "spiritual things" by recalling what his audience already knows about spirits and speech from their experiences when they were gentiles. "When you were ἔθνη," he writes, "you were enticed and carried away again and again to voiceless idols." For Paul, this means that they are able to judge statements to determine whether the Holy Spirit inspired them. The previous religious experiences of the Corinthians, therefore, form a foundation for their understanding of Paul's arguments about spiritual speech. Paul views these prior experiences as contrary to what he wants the community to do. Corinthian speech should be controlled and unified under one speaking spirit.

What did the Corinthians know about being carried away to voiceless idols? In this chapter, I examine evidence for inspired and religious speech that is specific to the Roman colony of Corinth. I discuss the benefits and limitations of turning to archaeological evidence in Corinth to inform interpretation of 1 Corinthians and its social and religious world. In particular, I analyze literary, epigraphical, and archaeological evidence for women prophesying, praying, and speaking in political and religious spaces in Corinth.

I. Introducing Corinth

A. History and Archaeology

The location of Corinth on the isthmus connecting mainland Greece and the Peloponnese means that the city occupies a strategic crossroads between the north and south parts of Greece and the eastern and western Mediterranean. To the east is the

Saronic Gulf, which facilitated movement into the Aegean Sea and to Asia Minor. To the west is the Corinthian Gulf, which facilitated travel in the Ionic Sea and to Italy and Sicily. Two ports came to serve the Corinthia: Lechaion, about two kilometers to the west, and Kenchreai, about ten kilometers to the east. The ancient city became established north of Acrocorinth, a monolithic rock that served as a defensive lookout and fortification. The land from the coastal plain to Acrocorinth was arable and provided fresh water, which gave the city the ancient reputation for being "well-watered" (εὔυδρος).[154]

For these reasons, the area that became Corinth was inhabited as early as the seventh millennium BCE.[155] Inhabitation was limited until the rule of the Doric royal family of the Bacchiadae, in the 8th to 7th centuries BCE, during which Corinth grew in population and became a unified state. The tyrant Kypselos overthrew the Bacchiadae in the 7th century and established some of the defining temples of the Corinthia, notably, the Archaic Temple of Apollo on Temple Hill in Corinth and the Temple of Poseidon in Isthmia (See Figure 2.3).[156] In the 6th century, Corinth established the Isthmian games, and the city grew in wealth because of the trade that crossed the isthmus.[157] A rivalry

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[154] Simonides, 720–723; Plutarch, *Her. mal.* 39; Ps-Dio Chysostom, *Or.* 36.18. On the geology of the Corinthia and its influence upon the development of Corinth, see Chris L. Hayward, "Geology of Corinth: The Study of a Basic Resource," *Corinth, The Centenary, 1896–1996*, ed. C. K. Williams and Nancy Bookidis; Corinth 20 (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2003), 15–42. On the water resources of the area and how Corinthians built and used fountains as sources of identity, see Betsey Ann Robinson, *Histories of Peirene: A Corinthian Fountain in Three Millennia* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2011); Mark E. Landon, "Beyond Peirene: Toward a Broader View of Corinthian Water Supply," *Corinth Centenary*, 43–62.

[155] John C. Lavezzi, "Corinth Before the Mycenaeans," *Corinth Centenary*, 63–74.

[156] On the early foundations of the Apollo temple, see Robin F. Rhodes, "The Earliest Greek Architecture in Corinth and the 7th-century Temple on Temple Hill," *Corinth Centenary*, 85–94.

[157] On the reputation of Corinth as wealthy, see Homer, *Il.* 2.569; Thucydides, *Hist.* 1.13; Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.377; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 2.23. On the *diolkos* land bridge and trade across the isthmus, see David K. Pettegrew, "The *Diolkos* and the Emporion: How a Land Bridge Framed the Commercial Economy of Roman Corinth," in *Corinth in Contrast*, 126–42.

between Athens and Corinth grew, and Athenian writers cultivated Corinth's reputation for sexual vice and sacred prostitution.[158] Corinth sided with Sparta and the Peloponnesian League in the Peloponnesian War. After the war, in 395 BCE, Corinth supported Athens against Sparta in the Corinthian War, but in 379 returned to the Peloponnesian League and alliance with Sparta against Athens and Thebes. These conflicts weakened Corinth and the Peloponnese and primed the area for the conquests of Philip II of Macedon. During the Hellenistic period, Corinth was predominantly under Antigonid control, until 243, when Aratus of Sicyon captured Acrocorinth, and persuaded the Corinthians to join the Achaean league (See Figure 2.4). In 146, Rome went to war with the Achaean league, and Lucius Mummius captured and destroyed Corinth. Some inhabitants remained in the area, but it was mostly deserted until Julius Caesar established the *Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis* on the ruins in 44 BCE (See Figure 2.5).[159]

The American School for Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA) has conducted excavations at Corinth for more than a century and has provided a wealth of material data for the history and society of the ancient Corinthians (Figure 2.2).[160] Much of the excavation has focused on the Roman forum and the areas around the forum, including

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[158] Plato, *Resp.* 404D; Strabo, *Geogr.* 8.378; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 3.23. Aristophanes, *fr*. 354, coined the term κορινθιάζεσθαι, "to practice fornication." Κορινθιαστής, "a prostitute-dealer," was the title of two plays by Philetaerus and Poliochus, according to Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 7.313C; 13.559A. John Lanci, "The Stones Don't Speak and the Texts Tell Lies: Sacred Sex at Corinth," in *Urban Religion*, examines the origins of Corinth's sexualized reputation.

[159] On the presence of inhabitants during the interim period, see Sarah James, "The Last of the Corinthians? Society and Settlement from 146 to 44 BCE," in *Corinth in Contrast*, 17–37; Benjamin W. Millis, "'Miserable Huts' in Post-146 BC Corinth," *Hesperia* 75 (2006): 397–404.

[160] The ASCSA publishes excavation reports in the series *Corinth* (43 vols.; Cambridge, MA, and Princeton, NJ: American School for Classical Studies at Athens, 1929–) and articles in *Hesperia*. ASCSA.net provides a freely accessible online portal for their digital catalog of publications, objects, and photos from Corinth.

Temple Hill, the Fountain of Glauke, the theater, and the odeum. Further afield are excavations to the north at the Asklepieion, Gymnasium, Lerna Spring, and North Cemetery; to the west at the Potter's Quarter and the Villa at Anaploga; and to the South at the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore and the Temple of Aphrodite on Acrocorinth (Figure 2.1). In addition to the immediate area of Corinth, the ASCSA has conducted archaeological research at Isthmia and Kenchreai. At Isthmia, the emphasis has been on the panhellenic Temple of Poseidon.[161] At Kenchreai, marine archaeologists have investigated the harbor and Temple of Isis.[162]

Challenges to interpretation of the archaeological materials come from subsequent human use of the area. Farming has disturbed the soil and layers near the surface, especially in the Demeter Sanctuary on the north slope of Acrocorinth. The modern village, moreover, is adjacent to the Roman forum and likely covers ancient structures. In addition to these natural patterns of human inhabitation, two deliberate destructions constrain knowledge of the Greek and Roman phases of the city. First, the Roman general Lucius Mummius destroyed the Greek city in 146 BCE (See Figures 2.3 and 2.4). Some inhabitants remained in the area, but the city did not exist as it had before Roman destruction. In 44 BCE, Julius Caesar reestablished Corinth as a colony, mostly populated by freed slaves, on the site of the old city. When Pausanias arrived in the mid-second century CE, he states: "The things worthy of mention in the city include the extant remains of antiquity, but the greater number of them belong to the period of its second

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[161] Nine volumes on Isthmia have been published by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (Princeton), from 1971–2012. These include three volumes by Oscar Broneer on the *Temple of Poseidon*, Isthmia 1 (1971), *Topography and Architecture*, Isthmia 2 (1973), and *Terracotta Lamps*, Isthmia 3 (1977).

[162] Six volumes in the series *Kenchreai: Eastern Port of Corinth* have been published. These include: R. Scranton, J. W. Shaw, and L. Ibrahim, *Topography and Architecture*, Kenchreai 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1978); Leila Ibrahim, *The Panels of Opus Sectile in Glass*, Kenchreai 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1976).

ascendancy" (*Descr.* II.2.6).[163] In other words, most of what Pausanias saw was from the Roman resettlement of the city (See Figure 2.5). Pausanias was most interested in temples and monuments that told the traveler about the identity of the city and region. Pausanias uses Greek names for gods, cults, and locations, and emphasizes Greek cultural identity rather than imperial Roman rule and its visual and physical markers upon Greek cities and landscapes.

After Pausanias's second-century visit, Corinth faced additional destructions, which limit material evidence of the Roman city. In the sixth century, emperor Justinian faced invasions from northern tribes. He used much of the marble from Corinthian architecture, sculpture, and inscriptions to build the Hexamilion, the fortification wall across the isthmus. Much of the sculpture and epigraphy from the Roman city, therefore, is fragmentary and of unknown provenience because archaeologists recovered them from the wall.[164] The ancient site, moreover, was subject to looting by invaders and destruction of temples by Christians. This situation has resulted in ambiguity regarding the dedicatees for many of the temples in Corinth. Inscriptions that would indicate the gods who were worshipped in the forum-area temples have not survived—hence, the labels "Temple C," "Temple E," and so on.

Despite these limitations, the wealth of archaeological research of Corinth makes it imperative to examine the material evidence that provides a local and embodied context for Paul's letter and his audience's perspectives. Paul and the Corinthians walked around

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[163] Translations of Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, by W. H. S. Jones, LCL.

[164] For discussion on the limitation of the epigraphical evidence, see John Harvey Kent, *The Inscriptions, 1926–1950*, Corinth 8.3 (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1966), 17–30. See also Benjamin Dean Meritt, *Greek Inscriptions, 1896–1927*, Corinth 8.1 (Cambridge, MA: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1931); Allen Brown West, *Latin Inscriptions, 1896–1926*, Corinth 8.2 (Cambridge, MA: American School of Classical Studies, 1931).

the forum, saw the Temple of Apollo, and drank from the springs and fountains of the city. The letter and its context cannot be divorced from their material setting. The limitations, however, require the interpreter to be cautious in overstating the evidence for any given social or religious activity. Furthermore, like philosophical, dramatic, and epistolary literature, archaeological materials are subject to social and ideological influences that require the interpreter to be critical of rhetoric—in this case, spatial, visual, and epigraphical rhetoric.

B. Temples and Religious Spaces in Roman Corinth

The Roman era of Corinth saw some continuity of religious spaces from the Greek city. After 44 BCE, the major Olympian cults continued to function: Aphrodite on Acrocorinth, Apollo on Temple Hill, Poseidon at Isthmia, Demeter on the north slope of Acrocorinth, and Asklepios near Lerna Spring. Isis and Sarapis devotion continued on the slope of Acrocorinth and in Kenchreai, before and after Roman settlement. Other particularly Corinthian cults ceased: The Heroön of the crossroads, the Sacred Spring, and stele-shrines ended with Roman destruction in 146. Roman inhabitants added cults to the religious landscape of Corinth: Venus, additional Apollo shrines, Hermes in the forum, and the imperial cult. The imperial cult was probably housed in Temple E, on the west side of the forum. The imperial *gens Iulia* claimed Venus as progenitor, and Augustus claimed a connection to Apollo, which makes their addition to the Corinthian forum logical. Hermes, as the market god, was often present in Roman fora.[165]

In addition to these civic religious spaces, archaeologists have found evidence for domestic shrines in households. A collection of smaller than life-size marble statues,

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[165] Nancy Bookidis, "The Sanctuaries of Corinth," *Corinth Centenary*, 257.

dating from the late-first to the mid-third or early-fourth centuries, was recovered from a *domus* in Panayia Field, southwest of the forum.[166] The statues include images of Roma, Asklepios, Artemis, Dionysos, Herakles, Europa, and Pan. This find reminds us that "religion," devotion to the gods, not only occurred in temples or sanctuaries but also in spaces used for a variety of household, economic, or political functions.

Even though cults of the major Olympian gods continued into the Roman era, the patterns of rituals and votive offerings changed. This change is most clear in the sanctuaries of Demeter and Asklepios. In the Asklepieion, archaeologists found terracotta votive offerings in the shape of body parts. In the Demeter Sanctuary, they found terracotta human and animal figurines and miniature winnowing baskets. These votive practices were prevalent in the classical period, but they dwindled in the Hellenistic era and did not exist in the Roman era.[167] Another change is in the practice of communal dining. Spaces for meals, dining implements, and food remnants are present in the classical and Hellenistic periods, particularly in the Demeter Sanctuary, the Asklepieion, and caves near the Temple of Poseidon at Isthmia.[168] At the Demeter Sanctuary, however, dining rooms went out of use by the Roman period and some were used for different cultic activities, such as depositing lead curse tablets.

This provides a brief sketch of the religious landscape of Roman Corinth and its change and continuity with the Greek era of the city. From here, I examine in more depth

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[166] See Lea Stirling, "Pagan Statuettes in Late Antique Corinth: Sculpture from the Panayia Domus," *Hesperia* 77.1 (2008): 89–161. Cf. domestic shrines at Aphrodisias: K. T. Erim, "Recent Work at Aphrodisias, 1986–1988," in *Aphrodisias Papers*, ed. C. Roueché and K. T. Erim; *JRA* Supplement 1 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1990), 9–36.

[167] This dating for the Asklepieion votive offerings renders Andrew Hill's suggestion implausible. Hill, "The Temple of Asclepius: An Alternative Source for Paul's Body Theology?" *JBL* 99.3 (1980): 437–39.

[168] Bookidis, "Sanctuaries," 255.

specific activities in Corinth: women's presence in the forum, prayer, and connections to prophecy.

II. Women's Presence in the Roman Forum: Inscriptions

In this section, my focus is on the social, political, and economic presence of women, especially in the area of the forum, the center of the political life of the city. Elite women made their mark on the forums of Roman cities, including Corinth, through their trade, benefactions, and political influence, as seen in inscriptions, statues, and monuments. The ways in which women and men characterize women visually and epigraphically in the forum suggests ways in which relationships, social roles, and virtues were expressed in Corinthian society.

Since the inscriptional and sculptural records of Corinth are limited in comparison to other Roman cities, only a few inscriptions and monuments provide information about women's roles in the social, religious, and political texture of the city. One inscription that likely comes from the forum area provides evidence for a priestess. A late-first to mid-second century Latin inscription, later reused as a Byzantine column capital, reads: "To Polyaena, daughter of Marcus, priestess of Victory (*sacerdoti Victoriae*). The high priest Publius Licinius Priscus Juventianius, [while still living (set up this monument)] with the official sanction of the city council to (this) excellent woman (*optumae*)."[169] Since the inscription was reused, its original location is unknown. The text of the inscription situates the monument within the sanction of the city council. The priestess is identified by her first name and her father's name. She is an "excellent woman" (*optumae*) and active in imperial cultic activity as the priestess of Victory.

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[169] Corinth inv. I-68 and I-293. Corinth 8.2, nos. 70 and 111; Corinth 8.3, no. 199. West (Corinth 8.2) suggests a late-first century date, but Kent (Corinth 8.3) places the lettering in the mid-second century.

Two inscriptions honor a woman named Regilla, the wife of Herodes Atticus.[170] Both inscriptions praise her "modesty" (σωφροσύνη). First, one statue base found near Temple F at the west end of the forum is the gift of Regilla's husband during her lifetime, between 143 and 160 CE.[171] Written in Greek, the inscription reads:

> This is a statue of Regilla. An artist carved the figure, which has translated all her prudent moderation (σωφροσύνη) into stone. It was given by great Herodes Atticus, pre-eminent above all others, who had attained the peak of every kind of excellence, whom she took as her husband, Herodes famous among Hellenes and furthermore a son (of Greece) greater than them all, the flower of Achaia. O Regilla, the city council, as if hailing you Tyche, has set up the marble statue before Tyche's sanctuary.

Kent notes the errors in engraving and suggests that this is the work of a poet trying to produce Homeric diction and writing in Greek while thinking in Latin. While the monument ostensibly honors Regilla, the inscription uses more words to praise her husband. Regilla's "prudent moderation [translated] into stone" reflects the excellence of Herodes Atticus. The second inscription about Regilla, also a statue base given by the city council (βουλή), presents the statue as an "image of modesty" (εἰκόνα σωφροσύνης).[172] The language of σωφροσύνη occurs frequently in honors of prominent women in the Roman world. The "Homeric" inscription equates Regilla with Tyche, the equivalent of the Latin *Fortuna*, who oversaw the fortune and prosperity of a city. Connecting Regilla with this goddess, whose image occurred frequently in the city, suggests Regilla's economic and political role in supporting the well being of the city.[173]

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[170] Corinth 8.1, no. 86; Corinth 8.3, no. 128.

[171] Corinth inv. I-1658. Corinth 8.3, no. 128.

[172] Corinth inv. I-620. Corinth 8.1, no. 86.

[173] Temple D is most likely the Temple of Tyche. See Charles M. Edwards, "Tyche at Corinth," *Hesperia* 59.3 (1990): 529–42. Several images of Tyche are in the sculpture and lamp collections at Corinth. Sculpture: S-1540 (Corinth 1.2, no. 5); Corinth inv. S-427 (Corinth 9.1, no. 6); S-802 (Corinth 9.1, no. 54). Lamps: L-179 (Corinth 4.2, no. 600); L-182 (Corinth 4.2, no. 603); L-759 (Corinth 4.2, no. 601). Richard

The lengthiest inscription honoring a woman in Corinth is an intact marble stele honoring Junia Theodora, found in 1954 by French archaeologists.[174] The stele was part of a late Roman tomb outside of Corinth, where it had been reused. The original location and context are unknown. Scholars infer a mid-first century date from the content of the decrees inscribed on the stele: In the years 43 and 57 CE, events in Lycia resulted in civic discord and may have caused Lycians to seek Junia Theodora's assistance.[175] This stele includes five letters to Corinth from the region of Lycia: two from the Lycian federal assembly, one from the city of Myra, one from Patara, and one from Telmessos.[176] The letters honor Junia Theodora, who played an important role in assisting Lycians in Corinth. Her assistance is political and economic: She influenced Corinthian authorities to favor citizens of Lycia (ln. 52) and was known for her public benefactions (εὐεργεσία) and welcome to Lycian travelers in her home (ln. 73). She was a "Roman, a fine and honorable woman and devoted to the nation" (Ῥωμαίᾳ γυναικὶ καλῆι καὶ ἀγαθῆι καὶ εὐνόωι τῶι ἔθωει, ln. 13; cf. ln. 22).

Virtue language, similar to that used in the Regilla inscriptions, describes Junia Theodora. The citizens praise her "modest living" (ζῶσα σωφρόνως), as well as her generosity, hospitality, and love of Lycia (ln. 24–27). She has ensured that her influence in Corinth lives on after her through her heir, Sextus Iulius, a Roman citizen who also has

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Stillwell, Robert L. Scranton, and Sarah Elizabeth Freeman, *Architecture*, Corinth 1.2 (Cambridge, MA: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1941); Oscar Broneer, *Terracotta Lamps*, Corinth 4.2 (Cambridge, MA: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1930); Franklin P. Johnson, *Sculpture 1896–1923*, Corinth 9.1 (Cambridge, MA: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1931).

[174] D. I. Pallas, S. Charitonidis, and J. Venencie, "Inscriptions Lyciennes trouvees à Solômos près de Corinthe," *BCH* 83 (1959), 496–508. SEG 18 (1962), no. 143.

[175] Pallas et. al., "Inscriptions Lyciennes," 505–506; R. A. Kearsley, "Women in Public Life in the Roman East: Iunia Theodora, Claudia Metrodora, and Phoebe, Benefactress of Paul," *TynBul* 50.2 (1999): 191.

[176] See text, English translation, and discussion by Kearsley, "Women in Public Life," 189–211.

goodwill for the Lycians and "imitates the devotion of Junia" (ln. 54–56). Because of her benefaction, the Lycians erect a portrait of Junia and honor her with a crown (ln. 60–68). This inscription provides a snapshot of a powerful woman who had political and economic influence in Corinth and who created connections between the city and other Mediterranean cities and regions.

In addition to Polyaena, Regilla, and Junia Theodora, other women are honored in inscriptions from Roman Corinth.[177] Women erected monuments and were active in euergetism in the city, most often alongside their sons or husbands.[178] Women purchased burial plots for themselves and their families.[179] A few names of freedwomen occur in honors and grave markers.[180] In honorific and burial inscriptions, men are often identified by their civic or religious roles—magistrates, priests, agnothetes, and so on. Except for Polyaena, priestess of Victory, and Chara, priestess of Neotera in a temple on the north slope of Acrocorinth, women are rarely identified by religious or political roles, even though they played them. They are more often identified by their familial relationships—they are daughters, wives, and mothers. Regilla is one woman whose monument—both image and inscription—was meant to say more about her husband than about her. Junia Theodora stands out as a woman who is not defined by a relationship with a man. Rather, she legitimates her male heir with her economic and political influence and generosity. In any case, the inscriptions and monuments that honored women or that women established show them in influential roles in cult, trade, and benefactions.

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[177] See Corinth 8.1, no. 115; Corinth 8.3, nos. 167, 176, 185, 226.

[178] Corinth 8.1, no. 80; Corinth 8.2, nos. 79, 124, 125; Corinth 8.3, nos. 152, 170, 173, 175, 176, 177, 185, 199, 237, 276, 321.

[179] Corinth 8.3, nos. 285, 286.

[180] Corinth 8.3, nos. 237, 276, 280.

III. Women Praying: Devotion to Demeter and Isis

A. The Sanctuary of Demeter in the Roman Period

The Sanctuary of Demeter on the north slope of Acrocorinth provides extensive, yet opaque, information about women as religious actors and their communication with the gods (See Figure 2.6). The Sanctuary provides evidence of votive offerings, sacrifice, dining, prayer, and curse rituals in the Greek and Roman eras of the city. In the Greek and Hellenistic periods, three terraces comprised the Sanctuary. The lower terrace held dining rooms, the middle was for sacrifices and votive offerings, and the upper had a theatre area for viewing rituals (Figures 2.6 and 2.7). Small, terracotta votive offerings of human and animal figurines, miniature harvesting baskets (λίκνοι), and food implements are the predominant finds from the site prior to its Roman destruction. Human and agricultural fertility and communal dining were central concerns in the sanctuary.

Scholarly reconstruction of religious activity in the Roman period, however, is more difficult because the Roman layers were less protected from erosion, plowing, and looting, and therefore less preserved than the older layers.[181] The Greek buildings in the Sanctuary were not completely destroyed by Lucius Mummius but abandoned during the interim period (146–44 BCE). Renewed ritual activity at the site began in the early- to mid-first century CE and rebuilding began in the last quarter of the first century, after an earthquake in 77 CE. The earliest activity occurred on the lower terrace, in and around one former dining room. Inscribed lead tablets, lamps, and incense burners suggest magical invocations and curses, occurring in a dark, lamp-lit room.[182] Some renovation to

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[181] N. Bookidis and R. S. Stroud, *The Sanctuary of Demeter: Topography and Architecture*, Corinth 18.3 (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1997), 273.

[182] Ronald Stroud, *The Sanctuary of Demeter: Inscriptions,* Corinth 18.6 (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2013).

the interior of this building occurred, but most new construction took place on the middle and upper terraces (Figure 2.8). This construction redefined the sanctuary space and created a focal point of three small temples on the upper terrace. Scholars continue to debate the extent to which the evidence for religious activity reflects continuity or change in the cult—in its rituals, meaning, participants, or the gods worshipped.[183]

1. Earliest Use: Curse Tablets on the Lower Terrace

After Roman resettlement, the inhabitants of Corinth revived many of the Olympian cults of the city: Apollo on Temple Hill, Poseidon at Isthmia, Aphrodite on Acrocorinth, and Asklepios near Lerna Spring. In comparison to these gods, the revival of Demeter cult was slow and seems not to have been a priority for inhabitants in reshaping the city's religious and political landscape.

Rather, the remaining visible walls on the lower terrace, along with the collective memory of this space as belonging to the chthonic goddess Demeter, attracted ritual activity. The sanctuary buildings were not completely destroyed by Lucius Mummius or dismantled during the period of abandonment before Roman colonization. The visible structures that remained may have attracted those who inscribed the tablets, and this activity may in turn have prompted construction.[184] The Building of the Tablets (Figure 2.8, K-L:21-22) was the only structure on the lower terrace rebuilt by the Romans. This

[183] Bookidis and Stroud have argued for interpreting the evidence within a framework of continuity: Demeter and Kore were the goddesses worshipped in this sanctuary in both the Greek and Roman periods and the boundaries of the sanctuary remained the same, even though the architectural features and artifacts changed. See Corinth 18.3; 18.6. Barbette Spaeth argues that the change to a Roman colony would have brought a change in religious practices and identifications of the gods to a Roman worldview. Ceres, Liber, and Libera, therefore, would have been worshipped here. Spaeth, "Cultic Discontinuity in Roman Corinth: The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on Acrocorinth" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Washington DC, 18 November 2006), 1–10. Taking a middle ground, Jorunn Økland takes up the complex question of Greek or Roman cult by examining how names of gods indicate cultural identity of devotees. See Økland, "Ceres, Κόρη, and Cultural Complexity: Divine Personality Definitions and Human Worshippers in Roman Corinth," in *Corinth in Context*, 199–230.

[184] Corinth 18.3, 273; Corinth 18.6, 138.

building was at a prominent location on the road that led to the middle and upper terraces. The first Roman renovation of this building occurred in the late first century and focused on the interior of the structure.[185] The Hellenistic dining couches were covered and four bases were constructed in a row in Room 7. Ten of the curse tablets were found around two of these bases and seem to be deliberately placed rather than discarded.[186] Bookidis and Stroud suggest that small stone altars were placed on the bases, upon or next to which petitioners placed tablets.[187] The building was renovated again in the third century, and at this time the west and possibly south walls were rebuilt and a new floor installed.[188] The room was in use after this renovation until the second half of the fourth century.[189]

Across the ancient Mediterranean world, Demeter was a goddess suitable for petitions for justice. For instance, in Knidos, Asia Minor, archaeologists excavated the Sanctuary of Demeter and found lead tablets with formulaic prayers for justice once displayed in the temple.[190] Also in Corinth, petitioners from the first to fourth centuries inscribed tablets and deposited them in Demeter's precinct. Excavators found eighteen lead tablets, many rolled up and pierced with nails. Ten of them were found near bases in a former dining room, called by excavators the "Building of the Tablets" (K-L:21-22).[191] Other tablets were found nearby on the lower terrace and on the upper terrace near the

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[185] Corinth 18.3, 277.

[186] Corinth 18.3, 279–82.

[187] Corinth 18.3, 286.

[188] Corinth 18.3, 288.

[189] An earthquake in 375 CE damaged the sanctuary and many other buildings in Corinth. Corinth 18.3, 291, 431.

[190] C. T. Newton, *A History of Discoveries at Halicarnassus, Cnidus, and Branchidae*, 2 vols. (London: Day & Son, 1862–63).

[191] Corinth 18.3, 277–82, 432–36.

central and eastern temples. The earliest of the tablets dates to the mid-first century CE, about a quarter of a century prior to construction on the middle and upper terraces.[192] Seventeen tablets are written in Greek, and one in Latin, a ratio that contrasts with the more prevalent use of Latin in inscriptions on the forum prior to Hadrian's reign.[193] The tablets are addressed to gods common in curse tablets: Hermes, Gaia and her children, the Fates, Demeter, Ananke ("Compulsion"), the Gods of the Underworld, and Thetis. Several tablets are prayers in which the petitioner asks a god or gods for retribution.[194] One tablet is a love charm and another a curse against an opponent in a court case. Many of the tablets are fragmentary and difficult to decipher.[195]

In addition to the tablets, excavators found terracotta lamps and incense burners (θυμιατήρια) in the Building of the Tablets. The small, confined space with a lack of windows suggests a dimly lit atmosphere in which only a few people could gather. In this room, excavators noted bits of lead from other disintegrated tablets.[196] These lead remnants and the possibility of other decomposed materials (wax, papyrus, etc.) used in magical procedures demonstrate the significance of the found lead tablets: They represent a portion of a larger number of petitions.[197] The lower terrace saw a significant amount of ritual activity that invoked chaotic powers to control difficult social circumstances.

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[192] Corinth 18.6, nos. 130 and 131, curses against a woman named Maxima Pontia.

[193] Corinth 8.3, 17–30. Latin dominates the inscriptions from the Roman colony prior to Hadrian: of 104 inscriptions, 101 are in Latin, and 3 are Greek. During Hadrian's reign, the ratio shifts: of 25 texts, 15 are Greek, 10 are Latin. After Hadrian, Greek is more prominent: 24 inscriptions are Greek, while 7 are Latin.

[194] On categorizing the tablets as judicial prayers, see Henk S. Versnel, "Prayers for Justice, East and West: New Finds and Publications since 1990," in *Magical Practice in the Latin West*, ed. R. L. Gordon and F. M. Simón (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 314.

[195] For a discussion of the state of the tablets and the texts and translations, see Corinth 18.6, 104–15.

[196] Corinth 18.6, 147.

[197] The *Greek Magical Papyri* note a variety of different materials used for curses, including papyri, reeds, skulls, bat wings, and clay bricks. See *PGM* IV.2093; IV.3189; IV.3258; XIa.2; XII.382–86.

At least six of the tablets target women, and a woman wrote or commissioned at least one tablet, perhaps more. The two earliest extant tablets, from the early first century CE, target the same woman, Maxima Pontia (nos. 130, 131). These tablets were found close together in the lower terrace, Room 2 of Building L-M:28—that is, on the same terrace but not in the same building as the majority of the tablets and ritual implements. These two tablets were written by the same hand and have a simple request: "Maxima Pontia, for destruction" (Μαξίμαν Ποντίαν ἐπὶ κατεργασίᾳ). Another woman, Karpime Babbia, is the target of two curses. Curse tablet no. 124 and the double tablet no. 125/6 were both found in the Building of the Tablets and date from the late first to the early second century.[198] Karpime Babbia is identified in both texts as a "weaver of garlands" (στεφανηπλόκος), which could indicate her occupation or a religious role connected to the sanctuary. The Babbii were prominent in Corinth during the first century CE, but this woman is not mentioned in inscriptions elsewhere.[199] These two texts against Karpime Babbia, along with no. 123, a curse on a circular, lid-like object, were written in the same hand. It is unclear, however, whether this means that the petitioner is the same person or if one, two, or three people contracted the service of the same magical professional or scribe.[200] The double tablet no. 125/6, at least, is the petition of a woman (Figure 2.9). This identification is clear in her repeated requests for fertility—"Make me fertile" (κάρπισαί με). Since this tablet is the most preserved and extensive text from the Sanctuary, I discuss its language and ritual setting further below.

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[198] A coin found in the floor indicates that 72 CE is the *terminus post quem*.

[199] Corinth 18.6, 109.

[200] On magical professionals, see Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1997), 151–52.

Another tablet, no. 118, targets a woman, Secunda Postumia. This text is a love charm that begins with the verb καταδεσμεύω, “I bind down.”[201] Tablets that “bind” targets for purposes of love are common throughout the ancient Mediterranean world and are formulaic in their language. This tablet, however, is the only tablet found in the Corinthian Sanctuary of Demeter that falls within the otherwise common category of love binding spells. One tablet found in a late Roman fill on the middle terrace (no. 132) seems to include a list of women’s names. The tablet is too fragmentary to determine its function or what the names mean. The women may be targets of curses or ritual officials at the sanctuary. Two curses on circular lead receptacles, nos. 123 and 128, may target women, but they are fragmentary and their targets unclear. One tablet, which includes two juridical curses written by two different hands against opponents in court cases (no. 122), curses men.

An overall picture of what we can know about the gender of petitioners and targets in the Demeter Sanctuary indicates that six targets are women (nos. 118, 123?, 124, 125/6, 128?, 131, 132), two texts target men (obverse and reverse of no. 122), and one petitioner is a woman (no. 125/6). Since curse tablets do not typically include information about the petitioner, it is to be expected that they say more about the targets than the petitioners. While magical practice is often imagined as gendered female by ancient writers and modern scholars, in practice men were just as active, if not more so, in creating binding spells and curse tablets.[202] The female character of this body of tablets

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[201] See the binding formula in *PGM* V.321–29. On the ritual and rhetoric of love curse tablets, see Christopher A. Faraone, “The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells,” in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. C. A. Faraone and D. Obbink (New York: Oxford University, 1991), 3–32.

[202] See John J. Winkler, “The Constraints of Eros,” in *Magika Hiera*, 214–43; Stephen J. Davis, “Forget Me Not: Memory and the Female Subject in Ancient Binding Spells,” in *Women and Gender in Ancient*

is not representative of overall trends in ancient magical practice. Rather, the gendering of these tablets comes from the gendered nature of the sanctuary space: The sanctuary on the north slope of Acrocorinth was identified as female in its Greek life, and in its Roman use, the new religious practices—though of a different character—continued to be performed predominantly by women.

A rolled up tablet (no. 133) found near the south wall of the central temple on the upper terrace exhibits similarities with the petitions for justice at the Knidos Sanctuary of Demeter.[203] The text of this tablet begins: Κυρία Δήμητρα δίκ<α>ια. The term δίκαια may be an epithet for the goddess, "Lady Demeter, the Just," or a neuter plural connected to the following request. Either way, the petition associates Demeter with obtaining justice.[204] This tablet is the only one from the Sanctuary that calls on Demeter. Beyond the initial address, the text is cryptic. The second line may include the name Ἀνάγκη, "Necessity," which occurs in other tablets from the Sanctuary.[205] The verb [ἀν]έθηκαν, "they dedicated," occurs in line 5. The verb ἀνατίθημι occurs often in votive inscriptions, as well as in petitions for justice on lead tablets. The petitioner here may be dedicating a target to Demeter, or making this person ἀνάθεμα, "a dedication."

A better-preserved text is the double tablet 125/6, against the woman named Karpime Babbia.[206] These two lead tablets were rolled up together and pierced with a nail

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Religions: Interdisciplinary Approaches, ed. S. Ahearne-Kroll, P. Holloway, and J. Kelhoffer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 248–59.

[203] Corinth inv. MF-1973-38. Corinth 18.6, 125–26.

[204] Stroud, Corinth 18.6, 127: "At the same time, in Knidos, Amorgos, and now on Acrocorinth, she [Demeter] was clearly considered as a goddess who could be appealed to in 'prayers for justice.'"

[205] Corinth 18.6, 127. See tablet nos. 122, 125/6.

[206] Corinth 18.6, 104–15. Corinth inv. MF-1969-294 and MF-1969-295.

(Figure 2.9).[207] This tablet expresses a desire for justice against a woman and displays a concern central to Demeter cults—female fertility. The petitioner "consigns and entrusts" (παραθίτομα[ι] καὶ καταθί[το]μα[ι]) Karpime Babbia to the "Fates who exact justice" (Μοίραις Πραξιδίκαις).[208] The unnamed female petitioner wants the Fates to expose Karpime Babbia's "acts of insolence" (τὰς ὕβρ[ι]εις). The misspellings and letter transpositions in these lines indicate that the author, whether the petitioner or a professional contracted to produce the tablet, has limited literacy. The petitioner asks "Hermes of the Underworld, Earth, and the children of Earth" (Ἑρμῇ Χθονίῳ, Γῇ, Γῆς παισίν), to attend to the woman's destruction. The petitioner lists the parts of her target that she wants destroyed—"her soul and heart and her mind and wits." Curse tablets often list body parts—moving from head to toe—for the god to bind or destroy.[209] This text, however, includes a more abstract and internal list.

The *pathos* of the situation emerges in the rhythmic and supplicatory language of the curse: "I adjure you and I implore you and I pray to you, Hermes of the Underworld" (ὁρκίζω σε καὶ ἐναρῶμαί σε καὶ ἐνεύχομαί <σ>οι, Ἑρμῆ Χθόνιε). She calls on the "great names" (τὰ μεγάλα ὀ[νύ]ματα) to make her fertile (κάρπισαί με): Ἀνάγκε, "Necessity," who is often invoked in the magical papyri and who, according to Pausanias, had a sanctuary dedicated to her and Βία ("Force") on the slope of Acrocorinth near the

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[207] Corinth 18.6, 104

[208] See Corinth 18.6, 104–15, for text and translation. Tablet 124 also targets Karpime Babbia. See discussions of the tablet and its translation by Versnel, "Prayers for Justice," 313–15; Laura S. Nasrallah, "Grief in Corinth: The Roman City and Paul's Corinthian Correspondence," in *Houses and Temples in Roman Antiquity and the New Testament*, ed. D. Balch and A. Weissenreider (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 128–32.

[209] On lists of body parts in curse tablets, see R. Gordon, "What's in a List? Listing in Greek and Graeco-Roman Malign Magical Texts," in *The World of Ancient Magic*, 239–77.

Sanctuary of Demeter (*Descr.* II.4).[210] Then, she invokes indecipherable *voces magicae*. The petitioner repeats the call to “the mighty name, the one carrying compulsion, which is not named recklessly unless in dire necessity” (τὸ μέγα ὄνυμα τὸ ἐπάνανκον, ὃ οὐκ εὐχερῶς ὀνυμάζεται, ἂν μὴ ἐπὶ μεγάλαις ἀνανκαί<ς>), and asks a third time for fertility. Karpime Babbia’s “acts of insolence” against the petitioner may relate to the petitioner’s lack of fertility. Perhaps she insulted the barren woman or flaunted her own ability to have children. The woman’s recourse is this tablet and ritual, especially asking the gods to give Karpime “monthly destruction” (ἐπιμήν<ι>ον κατεργασ[ί]αν). The repeated requests for fertility, supplicatory language, and call to Necessity indicate a powerless position. The petition, accompanied by precise rituals and spoken words in a dark room, empowers the woman.

Finally, one curse tablet from the first century CE in the Building of the Tablets is a love charm. The petitioner “binds” (καταδεσμεύω) Secunda Postumia—“her mind, her wits, her hands, her sinews, her knees, her entire body.”[211] This list of bound body parts follows conventions of love binding spells. On the reverse side is what Stroud calls an “intentional and puzzling palimpsest” in which a different hand wrote two texts: first, an unintelligible text, and second, another text inscribed in both horizontal and vertical lines on top of the first text.[212] The jumble of letters may include *voces magicae* or a message intended to be read in a different direction, or it could be completely unintelligible. Either

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[210] The love spell in *PGM* VII.302 invokes “Bitter Necessity,” followed by the MASKELLI formula. See *PGM* IV.526, 605. For possible known *voces magicae* in this text, see Corinth 18.6, 111, and Nasrallah, “Grief in Corinth,” 130.

[211] Corinth 18.6, 86–87, no. 118.

[212] Corinth 18.6, 91–92.

way, the obscurity and mystery created by writing in layers is intentional and viewed by the author as communicating a message (or messages) to an otherworldly recipient.

This renewed activity in the sanctuary would have drawn attention to the space. This activity may have been seen as unsavory—nocturnal, female-oriented curses that were simultaneously known yet hidden. Magical practices drew their power from chaos and chaotic powers—*Moira, Bia, Ananke* (Fate, Force, Compulsion). Curses appealed to chthonic gods and played on fear of retribution and social anxiety. Many of these tablets include *voces magicae*, names of multiple gods, and messages that are obscured in order to communicate in the gods' language. These tablets are, in many cases, the prayers of women.

2. Temple Construction in the Late First Century

There was a lag between renewed activity on the lower terrace and construction on the middle and upper terraces. When Romans reconfigured the sanctuary space, they imposed order on the liminal and chaotic space. They created symmetry, with north-south and east-west axes, and a retaining wall that created a boundary between the middle and lower terraces. They imposed monumentality in the enlarged propylon that established one access point to the space. They created a focal point in the triad of temples on the upper terrace. In the palempsestuous imprint of the site, we see how order, monumentality, and Roman religious sensibilities interacted with the previous structures and ongoing ritual activities (Cf. Figures 2.7 and 2.8).

In the Hellenistic period, a stairway and propylon created a path from the lower terrace to the middle and upper terraces. In the late first century, the Romans covered part or all of the lower part of the stairway to raise the level of the path to align with the

renovated buildings on the lower terrace.[213] On the middle terrace, Romans built a retaining wall that extended the terrace to the west and created a boundary between the middle and lower terraces.[214] The Romans enlarged the Hellenistic propylon, which coincided with a new design for the upper terrace. An axial line through the middle of the propylon bisects the central temple of the upper terrace. From the road, the approach led up the slope, past the Building of the Tablets, and through the propylon. Facing the Central Temple, one could then turn to proceed up the monumental T-shaped stairway to the upper terrace. At the top of the stairway, the visitor faced the East or West Temple and could proceed across the platform to the other two, each about 7 meters square and about 8 meters apart. They were prostyle temples facing north, with rectangular cella and small front porches.[215] The Central Temple was the most prominent of the three: It aligned with the propylon and was slightly larger than the other two.

The architecture communicates a straightforward message: This is an ordered, Roman space. The fragmentary evidence from the interiors of the three temples complicates the picture. The décor, inscription, statues, and ritual objects do not solely radiate Roman influence. The bedrock core of the West Temple yielded fragments of marble sculpture. One of these fragments is a braid that joins with an over life-size head found in a well on the middle terrace.[216] The head has an indentation in the forehead, which may have held wheat stalks, a symbol of fertility appropriate to many female gods,

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[213] Corinth 18.3, 301.

[214] Corinth 18.3, 303–308.

[215] Corinth 18.3, 337–38.

[216] Corinth 18.3, 362.

including Greek Demeter and Roman Ceres. The eyes were inlaid with semi-precious stones that were gouged out.[217]

The Central Temple has an intact floor mosaic, dated to the late-second to early-third century CE. At the entrance to the temple, slightly off-center to the right, is a dedication that reads: Ὀκτάβιος Ἀγαθόπους νεωκόρος ἐψηφοθέτησε ἐπὶ Χαρᾶς ἱερείας Νεωτέρας, "Octavius Agathopous, temple-warden, had the mosaic installed when Chara was priestess of Neotera" (Figure 2.10).[218] This inscription records the benefaction of a man with Greek and Latin names who holds the title νεωκόρος, "temple-warden," and the priesthood of a woman identified by her first name and role in the cult, "priestess of Neotera." Neither person has been identified elsewhere in Corinth, and the office of νεωκόρος is found here for the first time in Corinth.[219] The Central Temple must have been dedicated to the goddess represented by the epithet "Neotera." Elsewhere, Neotera, "the younger," designates goddesses associated with Sarapis, Isis, Apollo, Kore, Aphrodite, or Zeus Bronton. It sometimes is an epithet for Aphrodite, Hera, or Queen Kleopatra VII, or it can identify Nephthys, the younger sister of Isis.[220] Bookidis and Stroud argue that "Neotera" refers to Kore, "the younger" of the paired goddesses Demeter and Kore. This argument supports their view of continuity in the Sanctuary from the Greek to Roman periods and the identification of the West Temple with the marble head of Demeter found in the well. It also aligns with Pausanias's description of the three temples for Demeter, Kore, and the Fates on Acrocorinth (*Descr.* II.7). They do not,

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[217] Corinth inv. S-2663. Corinth 18.3, 333.

[218] Corinth 18.6, 15; Corinth 18.3, 338-39, 436–37.

[219] Corinth 18.3, 362–63.

[220] Corinth 18.3, 364.

however, rule out the possibility of syncretism of Isis and Demeter and, with them, Nephthys and Kore in the Sanctuary.[221]

The motifs in the mosaic floor further suggest Egyptian and mystery cult influence. In a rectangular motif above the inscription, two baskets with snakes coiled around them may be the *cista mystica*, sacred baskets that held the *aporrheta* of mystery cults.[222] Such baskets are associated with the mysteries of Demeter, as well as cults of Dionysus Sabazios and of Isis and Osiris.[223] Between the baskets are vestigia, a pair of footprints facing the entrance of the temple. As with *cista mystica*, vestigia are associated with a variety of gods in the Roman period, including Isis. No evidence elsewhere associates this iconography with Demeter and Kore. Footprints may symbolize a benefactor and worshipper's visit to the temple, or they may signify a theophany of the god.[224] Finally, a circular depression surrounded by blue tesserae in the mosaic may indicate where one of two *perirrhanteria*, ritual water basins, stood.[225] Two *perirrhanteria* and pieces of a large marble offering table were found in the temple. Additionally, several fragments of marble sculpture were found: a forearm, feet from three or four statues, marble fingers, sections of drapery, fragments from at least five horn-shaped objects, and a single finger of a bronze statue.[226] The south wall of this temple was of double thickness, which perhaps indicates the incorporation of a niche for a lifesize cult statue. The excavators suggest that some of the sculpture fragments may be

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[221] Corinth 18.3, 365.

[222] Corinth 18.3, 366.

[223] Corinth 18.3, 367.

[224] Corinth 18.3, 368–69.

[225] Corinth 18.3, 346.

[226] Corinth 18.3, 345.

from the same statue as the two marble heads found in the well between the middle and upper terraces. These heads are of young girls with elaborate hairstyles and may represent young priestesses or attendants of the goddess.[227]

Finally, the East Temple has yielded one artifact, a curse tablet, found on the gutted bedrock of the building.[228] Possibilities for this temple are Hades or Artemis, but Bookidis and Stroud suggest the Fates, or the *Moirai Praxidikai*, whom the curse tablet invokes and whom Pausanias records in a temple alongside the temples of Demeter and Kore (*Descr.* II.7).

The evidence for female activity in the Sanctuary is not limited to the inscriptions on the lead tablets. The mosaic inscription indicates that a woman named Chara held a priesthood in the late second to early third centuries, and it is reasonable to infer that such a priesthood extends back to the late-first-century construction of the three prostyle temples. In addition to a priestess of Neotera, there may also have been a priestess of "Presbytera" located in the West Temple and a priest or priestess of the god(s) in the East Temple. A prominent, wealthy man, Octavius Agapapous, supported the cultic activity of these women—and perhaps young girls, if the two statue heads from the well represent ritual attendents—in the form of the mosaic dedication. The marble fragments from the Central Temple suggest a space full of sculpture, and the marble heads of the young girls and Demeter are of fine quality marble and a careful artistic hand. These details suggest wealth and elite support of these temples.

The Egyptian and mystery elements suggest that complex cultural interaction was occurring in this sanctuary. In the Hellenistic period, cults of Isis and Sarapis were in

[227] Corinth 18.3, 333.

[228] Corinth inv. MF-1970-51. Corinth 18.6, no. 125/6.

Corinth, and evidence of their cults persists into the Roman period.[229] These Egyptian gods were also popular in Rome and Asia Minor in the first and second centuries. The mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis likewise were attractive to Romans, notably Hadrian, who was an initiate. Both Egyptian and mystery elements provide space for interaction between Greek and Roman cultures in Corinth. Greek Demeter, Roman Ceres, and Egyptian Isis shared attributes and seem to be somewhat assimilated in the Sanctuary. Individuals may have interpreted divine identities differently, and the archaeological evidence suggests that fluid interpretation was possible or even encouraged. In the next section, I examine the material and literary evidence for ritual activity and inspired speech in Isis cults in Corinth and Kenchreai.

B. Sanctuaries for Isis in Corinth and Kenchreai

1. Literary Evidence: Pausanias and Apuleius

Pausanias records several temples for Isis in Kenchreai and Corinth. Along the harbor in Kenchreai, he reports:

> ἐν δὲ Κεγχρέαις Ἀφροδίτης τέ ἐστι ναὸς καὶ ἄγαλμα λίθου, μετὰ δὲ αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῷ ἐρύματι τῷ διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης Ποσειδῶνος χαλκοῦν, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἕτερον πέρας τοῦ λιμένος Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ Ἴσιδος ἱερά.
>
> In Kenchreai are a temple and a stone statue of Aphrodite, after it on the mole running into the sea a bronze image of Poseidon, and at the other end of the harbor, sanctuaries of Asklepios and Isis. (*Descr.* II.2.3)

In Corinth, two Isis precincts, along with two Sarapis precincts, are on the slope of Acrocorinth, before altars for Helios, a sanctuary for Ananke and Bia, a temple of the Mother of the gods, temples of the Fates, Demeter, and Kore, and the Temple of Hera Bunaea. Pausanias writes:

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[229] See Dennis Smith, “The Egyptian Cults at Corinth,” *HTR* 70.3/4 (1977), 201–31.

> ἐς δὲ τὸν Ἀκροκόρινθον τοῦτον ἀνιοῦσίν ἐστιν Ἴσιδος τεμένη ὧν τὴν μὲν Πελαγίαν, τὴν δὲ Αἰγυπτίαν αὐτῶν ἐπονομάζουσιν, καὶ δύο Σαράριδος, ἐν Κανώβῳ καλουμένου τὸ ἕτερον.
>
> As you go up Acrocorinth, you see two precincts of Isis, one called Pelagian, and the other of Egyptian Isis, and two of Sarapis, one of them being of Sarapis called "in Canopus." (*Descr.* II.4.6)

In addition to Pausanias, Apuleius sets a religious scene at the Isis Sanctuary in Kenchreai (*Metamorphoses*, Book XI). I will discuss the religious elements of this text in further detail after I discuss the archaeological evidence.

2. Archaeological Evidence

Archaeologists have not located the Isis or Sarapis sanctuaries on Acrocorinth. They have, however, discovered several artifacts that support the presence of Isis and Sarapis devotion in Corinth: two dedicatory inscriptions to Isis and Sarapis, three (or four) Sarapis statues, terracotta figurines of Isis, images of Isis and Sarapis on lamps, and coins depicting Isis. The first dedicatory inscription is on a tripod base found in a manhole at the base of Acrocorinth. It reads: ΦΙΛΩΤΙΣ / ΦΙΛΩΝΙΔΑ / ΣΑΡΑΠΙ · ΙΣ[Ι], "Philotis, (daughter) of Philonidas, to Sarapis (and) Isis."[230] The fill in the manhole dates to the first century CE, and the inscription's letter forms date it to the third or second centuries BCE. A second dedication is on a fragment of green marble found near the theater: ISI • ET • SERAPI / V(OVIT) / C (AIUS) • IVLIUS [S]YR[US], "Gaius Julius Syrus made a dedication to Isis and Serapis."[231] The letter styling dates the inscription to the mid-first century CE. These two inscriptions suggest a wide timeframe—both pre- and post-destruction of Corinth—in which inhabitants made dedications to Isis and

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[230] Corinth inv. I-2650. Smith, "Egyptian Cults," 217.

[231] Corinth inv. I-2414. Corinth 8.3, no. 57. Elizabeth Milleker, "Three Heads of Sarapis from Corinth," *Hesperia* 54.2 (1985): 124.

Sarapis. The Egyptian pair attracted devotion from women and men and speakers of Greek and Latin.

Three statue heads of Sarapis have been found in Corinth, all from the second to third centuries CE. In these representations, Sarapis wears thick curls, a beard, and a calanthus on his head. One marble head was found north of the basilica on the Lechaion Road, another in a back room behind Shop XX in the South Stoa, and the third east of the theater.[232] The head found in the South Stoa may be from a house altar or shrine for Sarapis.[233] Another statue fragment found north of Temple D resembles a standard portrayal of Sarapis in the Roman period. He is seated on a throne with his left foot on a stool. Next to the throne is an animal. Its front paws, hind legs, and tail are still visible, and it appears to be a dog, possibly Cerberus.[234] This image corresponds to a second-century CE lamp made in Corinth, which portrays a seated Sarapis with a dog and scepter.[235] These two pieces provide an image of Sarapis that assimilates with Hades and Pluto iconography. A second century lamp from Corinth portrays a bust of Sarapis, bearded and wearing a calanthus, as in the sculptural busts.[236] Two lamps portray Isis: One Corinthian-made lamp found in Delos shows Isis with a sail, and one lamp found in Corinth has busts of Isis and Sarapis together.[237] Two first-century terracotta figurines from Corinth may represent Isis: One is a nude female figure nursing a child

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[232] Corinth inv. S-1457, S-2387, S-1982-3. See Milleker, “Three Heads.”

[233] Corinth 1.4, 137. Milleker, “Three Heads,” 129. For the argument that this is a “chapel” for Sarapis, see Smith, “Egyptian Cults,” 212, 216, 225, 228.

[234] Corinth inv. S-908. Smith, “Egyptian Cults,” 218–19.

[235] Broneer, Corinth 4.2, 206, no. 704.

[236] Corinth inv. L-181. Corinth 4.2, 194, no. 604

[237] Corinth inv. L-4106 (Isis and Sarapis). Delos lamp: Philippe Bruneau, “Isis Pélagia à Delos,” *BCH* 85 (1961): 435–36. See Smith, “Egyptian Cults,” 222–23.

(Harpocrates), and the second is a female bust with a lotus headpiece.[238] Several coins minted in Corinth in the second century represent Isis with a sail, which corresponds to Isis Pelagia, or "Marine," popular iconography in Corinth and Kenchreai in the second century.[239]

In contrast to the situation in Corinth, archaeologists have identified the Isis Sanctuary at Kenchreai. The architecture and objects from the sanctuary at the southwest end of the harbor are compatible with Isis devotion and literary descriptions by Pausanias and Apuleius.[240] Scranton identifies several building and renovation phases from a pre-Augustan foundation to abandonment around 375 and subsequent conversion to a Christian church in the fifth century. The temple complex in the first century CE had adaptations to the southwest rooms, which created a small courtyard, and after an earthquake in 77, the courtyard was remodeled and enlarged, and an apse was added. Around 100, a fountain court complex, hallway, and pylon court was constructed.[241] Except for the pylon court, none of the buildings are "Egyptianizing."[242] Scranton suggests that the fountain court may function as a symbolic substitute for the sea in rituals.[243]

Three artifacts found in the temple area provide information about the rituals that may have taken place in the sanctuary. First, an inscription given by G. Heios and his

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[238] Gladys R. Davidson, *The Minor Objects*, Corinth 12 (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1952), no. 386 (Isis with headpiece) and no. 387 (Isis nursing a child). Smith, "Egyptian Cults," 224.

[239] Smith, "Egyptian Cults," 221.

[240] Scranton et al., Kenchreai 1, 72.

[241] Kenchreai 1, 70.

[242] Kenchreai 1, 74.

[243] Kenchreai 1, 73.

wife honor their daughter as λικνοφόρος, the carrier of the winnowing fan (λίκνον), which may refer to a ritual item mentioned by Apulieus in *Metamorphoses* XI.10.[244] Second, a fragmentary inscription on a column reads ΟΡΓΙΑ. Scranton supplies "(Isis) Orgia," or "Isis of the mysteries," by analogy to an inscription from Saloniki.[245] This term was used also for the rites of Demeter and Eleusis, Orpheus, Cybele, and Dionysus.[246] "Isis of the mysteries" aligns with Apuleius's narrative of the Isis festival in Kenchreai. Finally, 120 panels of *opus sectile* in glass from the fourth century were found stacked in wooden shipping crates in the fountain court. They were waiting to be installed and abandoned after a destructive and traumatic event, possibly an earthquake in 365 or 375. The panels have Egyptian and Nilotic motifs that suggest connections to Isis.[247]

3. Apuleius's Isis Festival in Kenchreai* (Metamorphoses*, Book XI)

The Isis artifacts and architecture in Corinth and Kenchreai yield little evidence regarding prayers or speech that communicates with the gods. In his *Metamorphoses*, however, Apuleius narrates Lucius's conversion to the Isis cult and a festival for Isis in Kenchreai. Within this narrative, Apuleius provides prayers and hymns that fill in the picture of potential religious actions and speech in Isis rituals in the Corinthia. J. G. Griffiths suggests, moreover, that there is an autobiographical element to *Metamorphoses* Book XI. The detail and emotional impact in the description suggests that Apuleius was

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[244] Kenchreai 1, 72.

[245] Kenchreai 1, 73.

[246] LSJ, s.v. ὄργια

[247] Kenchreai 1, 68. See Ibrahim, Kenchreai 2.

an Isiac initiate or at least witnessed a festival in Kenchreai in the mid- to late-second century.[248]

Book XI begins with Lucius sleeping in a secluded place by the sea in Kenchreai, after having fled Corinth. He wakes up in fear and prays to the "Queen of Heaven," who may be Ceres, Venus, Diana, or Proserpine (XI.2). Apuleius uses Latin names for the goddesses but identifies them with Greek characteristics and temple locations—Demeter at Eleusis, Aphrodite at Paphos, and Artemis at Ephesos. Lucius asks for help to be changed from an ass back to a human, and he covers his bases on the names of the goddess: "By whatever name or ceremony or visage it is right to address thee" (XI.2). Lucius falls asleep again and sees the goddess in a vision. Lucius's prayer has worked, and she helps him. She identifies herself in similar ways as Lucius did: She is "mother of the universe, the mistress of all the elements, the first offspring of time." Many people have called her different names, but the Egyptians knew her true name, Isis (XI.5). She tells Lucius what to do the next day, during the festival (XI.6). Apuleius calls this vision an oracle: "Thus the oracle came to an end" (*Sic oraculi venerabilis fine*, XI.7).

The next day, Lucius witnesses the festival. Costumed soldiers, gladiators, bears, and men in drag precede the main procession. Men and women are part of the procession, and those initiated include "men and women of every rank and age" (XI.10). The priests who carry the sacred implements are men. Lucius sees the priest who holds the rose crown that the oracle said would instigate his transformation (XI.13). After the transformation, the procession sings praise to Isis: "This they did with clear voices in unison, raising their hands to heaven and acclaiming the radiant blessing bestowed by the

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[248] J. G. Griffiths, *The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI) by Apuleius of Madauros* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 6. Translations of *Metamorphoses XI* are from this edition.

goddess" (XI.13). Lucius's response is silence: "I stood rooted to the spot in silence […] What would be best for me to say first? How should I first use my restored voice? […] In what words and at what length was I to thank so great a goddess?" (XI.14). Here Apuleius captures both the collective praying and hymning part of the Isis rituals and the individual's desire to speak and pray in the wake of a transformative experience. Lucius's "restored voice" is the marker of his restored humanity.

The priest, who had a vision of Isis at the same time as Lucius, speaks for him, telling about Lucius's past and his future conversion and service to the goddess. Apuleius characterizes this speech as prophecy: "After prophesying in this manner, the excellent priest took several gasping weary breaths and was silent" (XI.16). The prophetic speech was physically taxing upon the priest, as seen in his gasping breaths. Lucius joins the procession to the temple where one priest summoned the sacred college ("as though to a public meeting") and prayed, "using the writings in a book, prayers for the prosperity of our great emperor, the senate, the knights, and the whole Roman people, as well as of sailors and ships and the entire domain of our rule" (XI.17). This prayer is for *Pax Romana*, and shows how Romans integrated Isis mysteries into the fabric of existing Roman religion and society.[249]

After the initial festival, Lucius stays in the temple and continues to have visions of the goddess, who instructs him to be initiated. Lucius makes a point to say that he cannot discuss the words and actions of the rituals on the day of his initiation (XI.23). After initiation, Lucius returns to Rome. Before leaving Kenchreai, he prays once more to

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[249] Sarolta Takács argues that Isis and Sarapis were not gods only for foreigners and lower classes but were fully integrated into the Roman system. As the empire grew, Romans found new appealing gods, art, and philosophy in their conquered lands and "their interest turned the newly-encountered, the peripheral, into an integral part of the Roman *Gedankenwelt*." Sarolta Takács, *Isis and Sarapis in the Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 16.

the goddess in emotional terms that articulate her appeal: “You bring the sweet love of a mother to the trials of the unfortunate” (XI.25). He also notes the limitation of speech to express his religious experience and feeling: “Nor have I the rich power of speech to express what I feel about your majesty; indeed a thousand mouths and tongues are not enough for the task, nor an everlasting sequence of tireless talk” (XI.25).

In examining Apuleius’s narrative of the Isis festival and initiation at Kenchreai, I have focused on speech: prayers, aretalogies of Isis, hymns, and statements about the limitations of speech. Several details resonate with the discussion of the rituals and tablets in the Corinthian Demeter Sanctuary, as well as the discussions about Paul’s arguments and female prophecy in the following chapters. First, as in the curse tablets, Lucius uses any name he can think to address the goddess. He and the Demeter Sanctuary petitioners cover their theological bases and draw from multiple cultural sources. Second, oracles and prophecy may come in dreams or visions at night and be physically taxing on the prophet. The priest who prophesies to Lucius gasps for breath and is silent after he speaks. While this episode is not as dramatic or violent as narratives about the Sibyl or Pythia, a similar idea about the physicality of prophecy occurs in this text. Third, speech and its limitation is characteristic of being human. The return of his voice, more so than his body, marks Lucius’s transformation from animal to human. In the presence of the goddess and after miracles, his voice fails him. Finally, the main human speakers in the religious settings are men—the priests and Lucius. Women are, however, present and participate in the collective praying and hymning. While the priests who carry the sacred

implements in *Metamorphoses* are men, the inscription from Kenchreai that honors a female λικνοφόρος suggests that in practice women held priesthoods of Isis.[250]

IV. Women Prophesying: Corinth and Oracular Temples of Apollo

A. Connections to Trans-Regional Oracles

Three trans-regional oracular temples of Apollo were prominent in the eastern Mediterranean region: Delphi, Didyma, and Klaros (Figure 2.11). The most iconic of these temples, Delphi, was influential during the archaic and classical Greek eras in political decisions for colonization and war (Figure 2.12).[251] In the Roman period, authors such as Plutarch considered this oracle to be in decline. While they did not inspire the same amount of fascination, the oracles of Didyma and Klaros, both located in western Asia Minor, were more active in the Hellenistic and Roman periods of their history than they were in the archaic and classical Greek eras. The Persians destroyed Didyma in 493, and it remained in ruins until Alexander captured Miletus and revived the temple in 334. The temple's revival resulted in a change of officials: Prior to 493, the priestly family of the Branchidae prophesied and oversaw the oracle, but in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, a female προφῆτις spoke for Apollo and a male προφήτης facilitated inquiries. These new customs likely imitated the famous oracular practices at Delphi.[252] Another oracle in Asia Minor, the Temple of Apollo at Klaros, experienced an increase in inquiries and popularity in the early Roman period until the fourth century. Unlike Delphi and Didyma, the Klarian spokespeople for the god were men. Male priests

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[250] Kenchreai 1, 72.

[251] See Parker, "Greek States and Greek Oracles," 298–326.

[252] H. W. Parke, "Temple of Apollo at Didyma," 123–24; Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination*, 82–89

descended into an artificial cavern in the temple to drink from a sacred spring, receive inquiries, and speak for Apollo.[253]

In the literary and inscriptional record for Delphic oracles, a few oracles address Corinth as recipient or topic.[254] First, Herodotus includes a series of oracles that respond to Eetion of Corinth and to the Corinthians about Kypselos and his dynasty (7th to 6th centuries).[255] Other oracles addressed to different kings or city-states identify Corinth as a destination for settlement or as an ally in wars.[256] Later, the Roman authors Pausanias, Diodorus Siculus, and Plutarch record inquiries from Corinthian delegations. By piecing together evidence from Pausanias and Diodorus, Fontenrose suggests a Corinthian inquiry about a plague that followed the death of the sons of Medea and Jason. The priestess instructed the Corinthians to appease Medea's sons by burying them in Hera's *temenos* and granting them heroic honors.[257] This is the first of two Pythian oracles that Pausanias recounts in his tour of Corinth. He shares this oracle when he comes to the Fountain of Glauke. Second, when he comes to two wooden images of Dionysus in the forum, Pausanias records an oracle from the Pythia after the death of Pentheus: The Corinthians were to find the tree upon which Pentheus died and honor it as a god.[258] Another second-century author, Plutarch, records a Corinthian inquiry about how to

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[253] Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination*, 76–81.

[254] Two catalogs compile the literary and inscriptional evidence for Delphic oracles: Parke and Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* [Abbrev. PW]; Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle* [Abbrev. F]. Each of these catalogs attempts to categorize each oracle as historical, literary, or legendary.

[255] Herodotus 5.92; PW # 6–9 = F Q59–62. Fontenrose evaluates these oracles as legendary rather than historical.

[256] PW #46 = F Q34; PW 136 = F H4; PW 242 = F Q242; PW 22 = F L3.

[257] Pausanias, *Descr.* II.3.7; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl*. 4.55.1; PW 199 = F L35.

[258] Pausanias, *Descr.* II.2.7; PW 547 = F L149.

remedy a plague or famine.[259] As is characteristic for evidence about the Delphic temple, most of these oracles refer to earlier events or legends but are recorded by Roman authors. In the case of Pausanias, he records oracles that shed light on things that he sees in second-century Corinth, including Medea's mark on the city in the Fountain of Glauke and an image of Terror (Δεῖμα) and the statues of Dionysus on the forum.

The oracle at Didyma is silent concerning Corinth. In Fontenrose's catalog of oracles from Didyma, Corinth does not appear as inquirer or subject.[260] Most of the cataloged oracles date to the period after Alexander's reconstruction of the temple to its final decline in the late Roman empire, from 334 BCE until the early fourth century CE. Corinth does not occur in any inscriptions from Didyma, oracular or otherwise.[261]

An inscription from Klaros records a delegation from Corinth of ten *hymnodoi* sent to the oracle during the reign of Hadrian.[262] Corinth stands out in the inscriptional record for Klaros: It is the only Achaean city to have consulted the oracle. Most visitors came from cities in western Asia Minor, with the central and eastern Asia Minor and Macedonia also well represented.[263]

Another connection to Klaros occurs in Pausanias's mention of "a bronze Apollo, called Klarios" (Ἀπόλλων ἐπίκλησιν Κλάριος χαλκοῦς) on the Corinthian forum (*Descr.* II.2.8). He mentions several statues near the Klarian Apollo, and one in particular may be

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[259] PW 199 = F L35.

[260] Fontenrose, *Didyma*.

[261] See Albert Rehm and Richard Harder, *Didyma. Teil 2: Die Inscriften*, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1958).

[262] T. Macridy, "Antiquités de Notion II," *ÖJh* 15 (1912): 54–55, no. 27. See Nancy Bookidis and Ronald S. Stroud, "Apollo and the Archaic Temple at Corinth," *Hesperia* 73.3 (2004): 404. For a discussion of the geographical distribution of the clientele of the oracles at Didyma and Klaros in the 2nd–6th centuries CE, see Aude Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon: Pratique et traditions oraculaires dans l'Antiquité tardive (II–VI siècles)* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 59–70.

[263] See the map of origins of inquirers in Busine, *Paroles d'Apollon*, 70.

connected to it: "On the market-place, where most of the sanctuaries are, stands Artemis called Ephesia" (ἔστιν οὖν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς, ἐνπαῦθα γὰρ πλεῖστά ἐστι τῶν ἱερῶν, Ἄρτεμίς τε ἐπίκλησιν Ἐφεσία, *Descr.* II.2.6). These two statues are connected to prominent temples in western Asia Minor: the Temple of Artemis in Ephesos and the Temple of Apollo in Klaros. The Corinthians may have erected these two statues, and perhaps others in their vicinity, upon instructions of the prophet of Klaros. Fritz Graf argues that the Klarian oracle was unique in prescribing image consecrations as remedies for plagues or calamities. Of the 28 oracles in Merkelbach and Stauber's catalog of Klarian oracles, which date from the late Hellenistic age to the second century CE, eight oracles instruct cities to set up statues of the gods to appease them and ward off disease and famine. Three inscriptions from Hierapolis, Caesarea Trocetta, and Kallipolis, dating to the second century CE, require sacrifices and the installation of an image of Apollo "the Archer" in the city gate or in front of the city to ward off plague. In a fourth inscription, the oracle requires a city to erect an image of Apollo's sister Artemis as she appears in Ephesos, with two burning torches. In this case, the victims thought a sorcerer caused the epidemic by burying wax figurines. Artemis's torches were meant to melt the figurines and break the spell.[264] Pausanias provides no background for the statues of Artemis Ephesia or Apollo Klarios on the Corinthian forum, and no statue or inscription survives that corresponds to the two images. Given these parallels, however, these statues may indicate a consultation of the Klaros oracle about a plague and/or suspicion of curses by a sorcerer or magician.

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[264] Fritz Graf, "The Oracle and the Image: Returning to Some Oracles from Clarus," *ZPE* 160 (2007): 114–15; R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, "Die Orakel des Apollon von Klaros," *Epigraphica Anatolica* 27 (1996): 1–54, nos. 4, 8, 9, 11.

The evidence for Corinthian connections to oracular temples, like much epigraphical and sculptural evidence in Corinth, is limited. Corinthians consulted the Delphic oracle before the destruction of the Greek city and the settlement of the Roman colony. Roman authors remember and record these consultations, which had become part of the local historical memory. In the Roman period, Klaros seems to be the more important oracle for Corinth. The Klarian Apollo on the forum, recorded by Pausanias, may have been the result of a consultation of Apollo at Klaros in the early Roman period. Male prophets, rather than the female prophets at Delphi and Didyma, spoke for Apollo at Klaros. Fewer depictions of these prophets exist in literature, and they did not capture the collective imagination as the Pythia and Sibyl did.

B. Apollo Temples and Images in Corinth

The Klarian Apollo on the forum is not the only image or temple of Apollo in Corinth. Pausanias mentions four monuments for Apollo: (1) Apollo Klarios (II.2.8); (2) an image and a sacred enclosure of Apollo near the Fountain of Peirene (II.3.3); (3) a temple and bronze image of Apollo on the road to Sikyon (II.3.6); and (4) a burnt temple of Apollo (or Olympian Zeus) outside of the city on the road to Sikyon (II.5.5). Archaeologists have identified the second and third of these monuments: the Roman Peribolos of Apollo and the Archaic Temple of Apollo on Temple Hill.[265] No definitive evidence identifies the Archaic Temple as dedicated to Apollo, but Bookidis and Stroud have combined literary and archaeological evidence to argue convincingly that this

[265] On the Archaic Temple: Bookidis and Stroud, "Apollo and the Archaic Temple"; N. Bookidis, "Corinthian Terracotta Sculpture and the Temple of Apollo," *Hesperia* 69.4 (2000): 381–452; Rhodes, "Earliest Greek Architecture in Corinth," 85–94. On the Peribolos: R. Stillwell and H. Ess Agnew, "The Peribolos of Apollo," in Corinth 1.2, 1–54; K. W. Slane, "Tetrarchic Recovery in Corinth: Pottery, Lamps, and Other Finds from the Peribolos of Apollo," *Hesperia* 63.2 (1994): 127–68.

temple was Apollo's.[266] They add to Pausanias's list a shrine of Apollo Augustus with a market complex attested by a Latin inscription on an Ionic architrave block.[267] Of these Apollo images and shrines, the only one that existed in the Greek city was the Archaic Temple. The Apollo Klarios, Peribolos of Apollo, and the Augustan Apollo shrine were Roman constructions.[268]

Was the Archaic Temple of Apollo an oracular temple? No literary evidence suggests that divination like that at Delphi, Didyma, or Klaros took place in the Temple of Apollo in Corinth. The archaeological evidence likewise yields little that suggests oracular activity. One lost archaic terracotta pinax, which Bookidis and Stroud present as evidence for the dedication of the temple to Apollo, may refer to prophecy. The excavator who found this artifact in 1902 tentatively reconstructed its inscription to read: Ἀπέλ[λωνος τ]ὸν μάν[τιν].[269] Bookidis and Stroud note the possible connection of this piece to the concept of Apollo as μάντις, "seer" or "diviner." They argue, however, for an alternative reconstruction of the text as a typical offering to a god, which follows the pattern of name of the god, name of the dedicator, pronoun of the object offered, and verb recording the dedication: [---] Ἀπέλ[λονι] | [---]ον μ᾽ἀν [ἐθεκε].[270]

The proximity of the Archaic Temple to the Sacred Spring may provide another potential connection to divination. A staircase leads from the southeast corner of the temple to the area of the Sacred Spring. Here, an architrave and pediment of a temple are

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[266] Bookidis and Stroud, "Apollo and the Archaic Temple."

[267] CIL III.534; Bookidis and Stroud, "Apollo and the Archaic Temple," 410, 414.

[268] Bookidis and Stroud, "Apollo and the Archaic Temple," 414.

[269] Corinth Notebook no. 14, 72–73. Bookidis and Stroud, "Apollo and the Archaic Temple," 418.

[270] Bookidis and Stroud, "Apollo and the Archaic Temple," 419.

just above ground level, giving the impression of a subterranean temple.[271] One of the metopes of this sunken temple created a hidden door that opened onto a concealed passage and water channel. An inscription near the door prohibited entry: “Inviolable place. Do not descend into. Fine: eight (coins).” This hidden door and restricted space may have functioned in divinitory procedures.[272] In Delphi, Didyma, and Klaros, a hidden and restricted chasm or cave facilitated the prophet’s divination. Springs, furthermore, provided inspiration in some form at Delphi, Didyma, Dodona, and Klaros. During the Roman period, however, the forum covered the Sacred Spring area. If oracular activity took place in this location, it would have been in the Greek city, not the Roman colony, and would not have been at the scale of Delphi, Didyma, or Klaros.

Corinth was not the home to a prominent oracular temple in which women prophesied. Apollo cults were present in the city, but it is not clear that inspired divination occured in them. The city consulted Delphi in the Greek period, and these consultations entered the historical memory of the city, as seen in Pausanias’s record. Corinth seems to have had a connection to Klaros in the second century CE, which means they would have sought the advice of an oracle that used men as spokespeople.

V. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to identify Corinthian spaces in which women may have spoken in religious and/or inspired modes. The forum, Sanctuary of Demeter, Temples of Isis and Sarapis, and Temples of Apollo provide potential spaces in which women prayed or prophesied. The claims I can make about the kinds of speech

[271] A similar construction is the Temple of Helen at Therapne. See Guy Sanders, “The Sacred Spring: Landscape and Traditions,” in *Corinth in Context*, 373.

[272] Sanders, “The Sacred Spring,” 366–72.

that took place in first-century Corinth and about the spaces in which men and women prayed and prophesied are constrained by the limitations of the material evidence. Some forms of inspired speech that women were engaged in include magical petitions in the Sanctuary of Demeter and hymns and prayers in festivals for Isis. Corinth did not have a Temple of Apollo in which a woman prophesied for the gods, but it did consult Delphi and Klaros, with female and male prophets, respectively. As in many Roman cities in the Greek east, women in Corinth established monuments and were honored for their political and economic benefaction. The material evidence from which I draw provides local context in which to evaluate literary depictions of women speaking in public and prophesying, as well as Paul's arguments for Corinth, which I discuss in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3
AMBIVALENCE TOWARD WOMEN'S SPEECH:
LIVY, PHILO, AND PLUTARCH

One of the most prevalent scholarly explanations for Paul's instructions for head coverings and silencing of women is that he was influenced by Greek, Roman, and/or Jewish cultural commonplaces. For example, on head coverings in 1 Cor 11:2–16, Hans Conzelmann asks: "Is Paul here simply demanding the observance of a Greek custom, or is he seeking to introduce a new custom, namely, the Jewish one?"[273] He suggests that the Corinthians experienced conflict between their practices and Jewish customs: "Tendencies toward emancipation from the tradition would have arisen in Corinth."[274] Extrapolating from Corinth to the early Christian movement, Karen Jo Torjesen sees a similar conflict between customs, yet identifies Greco-Roman norms as the source of friction. She writes: "Women's leadership was a widespread phenomenon in the early Christian churches. Tensions were nevertheless generated by the disparity between the socially established fact of women's leadership and the strict Greco-Roman demarcation of gender roles."[275] She argues that the independence and prominence of women in early Christianity clashed with traditional roles, and they therefore were submerged as Christians conformed.

Regarding Paul's silencing of women in 1 Cor 14:34–35, Joseph Fitzmyer, who reads these verses as Paul's quotation of Corinthian men rather than his own views, points to Greek and Latin texts that provide content for this culturally restrictive view. He writes:

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[273] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 184–85.

[274] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 185.

[275] Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests*, 35.

> The disgrace would be seen not only from the viewpoint of Jewish custom or tradition, but from what ancient society, in which the women lived, would normally think about their behavior. That judgment would be conditioned by contemporary mores and culture, well illustrated by the negative criticism of the public activity of women [by Juvenal, Plutarch, or Aristophanes].[276]

Similarly, Conzelmann, who views the verses as a later interpolation, argues that they are "a reflection of the bourgeois consolidation of the church" that "binds itself to general custom."[277]

These arguments are reductive. They are built on partial readings of parallel materials, in which little attention is given to the rhetorical goals of the texts in question. Within their historical and rhetorical contexts, these texts reveal some of the same issues regarding women's speech that Paul does. The situation in Corinth and in Paul's response is not one in which a new religious movement characterized by freedom must conform to traditional gender values, whether Jewish, Greek, or Roman. Rather, Paul and other contemporary authors share this tension over women's speech and identify religious ritual actions of women as one realm in which women's speech may be particularly desired. In this chapter, I examine three men on the topic of women's speech in order to argue that authority issues and ambivalence toward women speaking outside of the home occur when authors consider women's roles in religion, which crosses boundaries between household and state. What is often seen as a contradiction between 1 Cor 11:2–16 and 14:34–35, therefore, is a manifestation of a common ambivalence toward

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[276] Fitzmyer, *1 Corinthians*, 532. Fitzmyer cites Juvenal, *Sat.* 6.434–56; Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 142D; Aristophanes, *Eccl*.

[277] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 246. For the general custom, he cites primary texts Thucydides, *Hist.* 2.45.2; Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta*, 3.8.6.

women's speech, exacerbated by the boundary crossing nature of *religio* or dealings with God(s).

I. Livy's *History*: Roman Matrons Speaking in the Forum

One well-known Roman argument against women speaking in public is from Book 34 of Livy's *History*. Livy records the speech of the consul M. Porcius Cato (the Elder) against the repeal of the *Lex Oppia*, which restricted expensive clothing and jewelry during wartime. Livy (64 BCE–12 CE) wrote his history during the transition from the Republic to the Principate. He was from the north Italian city of Padua and not from the senatorial class or involved in politics, but he did have connections to the imperial family.[278] In the preface, Livy states the purpose of historiography:

> *Hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum, omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptu, foedum exitu, quod vites.*
>
> What chiefly makes the study of history wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lessons of every kind of experience set forth as on a conspicuous monument; from these you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result. (1.*praef.*10)[279]

In comparing history to "a conspicuous monument," Livy suggests the evocative and visual potential of history, as well as its ability to testify to Rome's triumphs. History is didactic, especially at the level of state decision making. The events concerning the *Lex*

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[278] For Livy's biography, see R.M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy, Books 1-5* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1965), 1–5. See also P. G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1961); R. Syme, "Livy and Augustus," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 64 (1959): 27–87.

[279] Translations of Livy, *History*, by B. O. Foster, F. G. Moore, A. C. Schlesinger, and E. T. Sage, LCL.

Oppia in Book 34 provide one lesson about women gathering and speaking in the forum.[280]

Livy records two speeches by Cato and Valerius for and against the Oppian law. With harsh rhetoric, Cato cites the extravagance and unruliness of women as reasons to keep the Oppian law in place. Since husbands cannot control their wives and keep them in their homes, the state needs to control women. The tribune L. Valerius, by contrast, argues for the repeal of the law. Valerius characterizes Cato's speech: "He used up more words in reproving the matrons than he did in opposing our bill" (*Qui tamen plura verba in castigandis matronis quam in rogatione nostra dissuadenda consumpsit,* 34.5.3). Valerius's speech highlights Cato's rhetoric, makes room for accepting women's public speech about political matters that affect them, and affirms male authority over women within the *domus*. Both speeches refer to the Roman matrons' role in transporting Magna Mater from Asia Minor to Rome, which identifies the fundamental, yet troubling, connection between religious and political activity.

In his narration, Livy foreshadows Cato's arguments. The economic strain of the Punic Wars caused the Senate to pass the *Lex Oppia*, which forbade women from possessing more than half an ounce of gold, wearing colorful dresses, or riding in a two-horsed vehicle. Since the wars had ended and the Senate had intended these measures to reduce economic strain on the state, two tribunes, M. Fundanius and L. Valerius proposed that they repeal the law (ca. 195 BCE). Two other tribunes, M. Junius Brutus and T.

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[280] For discussions on Livy's views of women, see S. E. Smethurst, "Women in Livy's *History*," *G&R* 19.56 (1950): 80–87; E. E. Best, Jr., "Cicero, Livy, and Educated Roman Women," *CJ* 65.5 (1970): 199–204; S. R. Joshel, "The Body Female and the Body Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia," in *Sexuality and Gender in the Classical World: Readings and Sources*, ed. L. McClure (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 163–87; Kristina Milnor, "Women in Roman Historiography," in *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Historiography*, ed. A. Feldherr (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009), 276–87.

Junius Brutus, argued for keeping the law. The result was a crowd of people—male and female—in the forum arguing about the law. He writes:

> *Matronae nulla nec auctoritate nec verecundia nec imperio virorum contineri limine poterant, omnes vias urbis aditusque in forum obsidebant viros descendentes ad forum orantes ut florente re publica, crescente in dies privata omnium fortuna, matronis quoque pristinum ornatum reddi paterentur.*
>
> The matrons could not be kept at home by advice or modesty or their husbands' orders, but blocked all the streets and approaches to the Forum, begging the men as they came down to the Forum that, in the prosperous condition of the state, when the private fortunes of all men were daily increasing, they should allow the women too to have their former distinctions restored. (34.1.5)

A certain class of women is active: Roman matrons, upper class married wives and mothers. Modesty (*verecundia*) characterizes the Roman matron, and in this case, their modesty has failed.[281] Their propriety does not keep them at home, nor do their husbands or state officials. The women's behavior reveals faults in the household and state. The location, magnitude, and actions of the crowd of women are problematic. They fill the streets and block the way to the forum. While in the streets and forum, they talk to men who are not related to them about the political issue. The place, audience, and subject of their speech create an unruly and unfeminine presence.

Cato begins his defense of the law—or, as Valerius characterizes it, his censure of the matrons:

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[281] An epitaph in Rome by a husband for his wife, which dates to the end of the first century BCE, exemplifies the rhetoric about the ideal Roman matron (CIL 6.1527, 31670). See Emily A. Hemelrijk, "Masculinity and Femininity in the *Laudatio Turiae*," *CQ* 54 (2004): 185–97. Modesty, religious duties, political support of husbands, and *pietas* are central values for matrons. See Suzanne Dixon, *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres, and Real Life* (London: Duckworth, 2001). For a discussion of the social basis of respect and shame (*verecundia*) in Roman culture, see Robert Kaster, "Between Respect and Shame: *Verecundia* and the Art of Social Worry," in *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005), 13–27.

> *Si in sua quisque nostrum matre familiae, Quirites, ius et maiestatem viri retinere instituisset, minus cum universis feminis negotii haberemus; nunc domi victa libertas nostra impotentia muliebri hic quoque in foro obteritur et calcatur, et quia singulas non continuimus universas horremus.*
>
> If each of us, citizens, had determined to assert his rights and dignity as a husband with respect to his own spouse, we should have less trouble with the sex as a whole; as it is, our liberty, destroyed at home by female violence, even here in the Forum is crushed and trodden underfoot, and because we have not kept them individually under control, we dread them collectively. (34.2.1–2)

The presence of the women in the forum results from the husbands' failure to be authoritative in the household. In Cato's view, ordered homes create a successful state. Cato fears the collective actions of women who speak *en masse*. The unified matrons are powerful, but their husbands should have stopped their unity before it began. For Cato, gender politics and state politics do not mesh: If women are powerful, men must be powerless and unable to act on behalf of the state. Men have *ius*, *maiestas*, and *libertas*, and should not be defeated or made impotent by the unity the women possess.

Cato imagines the dangers presented by the "meetings, gatherings, and secret consultations" (*coetus et concilia et secretas consultationes*) of women. He likens the body of women to that of the plebeians. When the lower classes recognize their position and unite, secession is possible. Matrons are not, however, a political group and should not pose these dangers to Rome.

Cato expresses his embarrassment as he walked through the crowds of women:

> *Equidem non sine rubore quodam paulo ante per medium agmen mulierum in forum perveni. Quod nisi me verecundia singularum magis maiestatis et pudoris quam universarum tenuisset, ne compellatae a consule viderentur, dixissem: "Qui hic mos est in publicum procurrendi et obsidendi vias et viros alienos appellandi? Istud ipsum suos quaeque domi rogare non potuistis?"*

> For myself, I could not conceal my blushes a while ago, when I had to make my way to the Forum through a crowd of women. Had not respect for the dignity and modesty of some individuals among them rather than of the sex as a whole kept me silent, lest they should seem to have been rebuked by a consul, I should have said, "What sort of practice is this, of running out into the streets and blocking the roads and speaking to other women's husbands? Could you not have made the same requests, each of your own husband, at home?" (34.2.8–9)

A women has expectations of dignity and modesty. Women's collective violation of codes of honor and shame make their speech in the forum infuriating for Cato. Since they have no shame, he must experience shame, when as a consul he should be experiencing honor. The second question Cato asks resembles Paul's instruction in 1 Cor 14:34–35 for women to ask question of their husbands at home. Cato and Paul alike draw attention to the "shame" women's speech brings to certain locations. Cato recognizes that women may have political concerns, but the streets and forum are male spaces. The location and audience of the women's questions are wrong.

Cato often refers to the ancestors and their customs to support his arguments. For instance, "Our ancestors permitted no woman to conduct even personal business without a guardian" (34.2.11). He also refers to the household regulations the ancestors instituted to make women obedient (34.3.1). Even with these regulations, in his day, men cannot control their wives. It is a slippery slope: If men allow wives to leave the house for this political demonstration, the next thing they will want is equality with their husbands. Then, they will go from equals to masters. He refers again to the good old days: "In the days of our forefathers" women did not fall for bribes and were not extravagant. Their ancestors had no reason to pass a law like the *Lex Oppia* (34.4.6).

Cato characterizes the matrons using standard gendered tropes. First, he compares them to horses that need to be domesticated: "Give loose rein to their uncontrollable

nature and to this untamed creature and expect that they will themselves set bounds to their license" (34.2.13).[282] Women are untamed and unable to set boundaries for themselves. Second, he characterizes women as preoccupied with superficial appearances.[283] Third, he thinks women judge themselves against one another and engage in rivalries. These last two characteristics create misplaced shame and indignation—when one woman looks better than another, the latter is ashamed (34.4.13–17). This shame should accompany their actions of speaking to men in the streets.

Women's roles in *religio*, the maintenance of Rome's relationship with the gods, complicate Cato's strict preference for keeping women out of the streets. One formative event from Rome's history provides an uneasy example of women's public gathering: the transport and receipt of the Idaean Mother goddess from Phrygia to Rome (ca. 204 BCE), which Livy records in Book 29. During the Punic Wars and after receiving omens, the priests consulted the Sibylline books and found an oracle that said a foreign invader would be defeated if Rome brought the Idaean Mother from Pessinus in Phrygia (29.10.4–5). An oracle from Delphi confirmed the Sibylline prediction, so ambassadors from Rome travelled to Pergamon to meet King Attalus. After Attalus escorted the Romans to Phrygia to obtain the goddess's figure, they transported it to Ostia, where "the best of good men among all the citizens," Publius Cornelius, met the ship with all the matrons of Rome (29.14.8). Livy writes: "The foremost matrons in the state, among whom the name of one in particular, that of Claudia Quinta, is conspicuous, received her" (*Matronae primores civitatis, inter quas unius Claudiae Quintae insigne est nomen, accepere*, 29.14.12). Many women participated in this momentous event: "The matrons

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[282] See Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 139B for a similar use of this trope.

[283] On the trope of women's superficiality and decadence, see Dixon, *Reading Roman Women*, 56–68.

passed the goddess from hand to hand in an unbroken succession to each other, while the entire city poured out to meet her" (*Eae per manus, succedentes deinde aliae aliis, omni obviam effuse civitate*, 29.14.13). The matrons' religious actions, in the open spaces of the city, were crucial to the state's success in war.

Cato interprets this event as a good reason for women to gather in the streets and forum: "It was a religious rite, and they were about to receive the Idaean Mother as she came from Pessinus in Phrygia" (*At non pietas nec sollicitudo pro suis, sed religio congregavit eas: matrem Idaeam a Pessinunte ex Phrygia venientem accepturae sunt,* 34.3.8). *Religio* is a good reason for women to gather, in contrast to what he sees as the current desire for opulent clothing and jewelry. At the same time, the Idaean Mother rite set a dangerous precedent for women's participation in large groups on behalf of the state. Cato expresses tension between two views: On the one hand, women should not gather and speak in the forum about political issues, but on the other, they have benefited, and should continue to benefit, the state through their religious actions.

In his response, Valerius uses many of the same rhetorical strategies: gender stereotypes, appeals to the ancestors, and the Idaean Mother event. He also draws attention to Cato's skillful use of the three components of oratory: the ability to leverage character, argumentation, and emotional responses for persuasion. Cato has exerted his powerful, weighty, and well known character for supporting the law. He gave "a long and carefully prepared speech" (34.5.2). His efforts to castigate the matrons appealed to emotion more than reason. In sum: "I know that there is this and still other vigorous language, which has been sought out to make the argument sound more convincing; we all know, too, that Marcus Cato is an orator not only powerful but sometimes even

savage, though he is kind of heart" (34.5.6–7). Cato is an effective orator but not the sole voice of Roman men about Roman women.

Like Cato, Valerius points to the past for support. When the Sabines captured Rome, matrons rushed between the lines to stop the conflict. Matrons ransomed the city when the Gauls captured it. Widows gave financial support to the treasury during the Punic Wars. Matrons greeted the Idaean Mother when she arrived in Rome. Again, the transport of the Phrygian goddess is formative for thinking about women's roles. For Valerius, in contrast to Cato, the incident proves that women care about Rome and are able to act on behalf of their community. In all of these cases, women use physical, economic, political, and religious power for the interests of Rome, which are also their own interests. Valerius asks: "Do we wonder that the women have acted in a case particularly their own?" (34.5.12). Masters listen to their slaves' wishes, but the senate does not listen to the "honorable women" who have gathered in the forum. For Cato, the matrons' actions are shameless. For Valerius, they are honorable.

Valerius, however, is not innocent of negative characterizations of women. For him, women are weak and concerned with issues that are less important than men's issues:

> *Virorum hoc animos vulnerare posset; quid muliercularum censetis, quas etiam parva movent? Non magistratus nec sacerdotia nec triumphi nec insignia nec dona aut spolia bellica iis contingere possunt; munditiae et ornatus et cultus, haec feminarum insignia sunt, his gaudent et gloriantur, hunc mundum muliebrem appellarunt maiores nostri.*
>
> A thing like this would hurt the feelings even of men: what do you think is its effect upon weak women, whom even little things disturb? No offices, no priesthoods, no triumphs, no decorations, no gifts, no spoils of war can come to them; elegance of appearance, adornment, apparel—these are the woman's badges of honor; in these they rejoice and take delight; these our ancestors called the woman's world. (34.7.7–9)

This statement contradicts his previous examples of women's activities in history. The Sabine women and the matrons who facilitated the transport of Magna Mater cared about priestly functions and military victories. Like Cato, Valerius falls back on gendered tropes of men being interested in important things, like war, and women in frivolous things, like clothing.

For Valerius, the repeal of the law is not a repeal of men's authority over women. He writes:

> *Numquam salvis suis exuitur servitus muliebris; et ipsae libertatem quam viduitas et orbitas facit detestantur. In vestro arbitrio suum ornatum quam in legis malunt esse; et vos in manu et tutela, non in servitio debetis habere eas et malle patres vos aut viros quam dominos dici.*
>
> Never while their males survive is feminine slavery shaken off; and even they abhor the freedom which loss of husbands and fathers gives. They prefer to have their finery under your own control and not the law's; you too should keep them in control and guardianship and not in slavery, and should prefer the name of father or husband to that of master. (34.7.12–13)

Valerius does not want to abnegate the power of men over women. In Roman marital customs and laws, women remained under the control (*in manu*) of their fathers or husbands. The *potestas*, legal authority, remained with the father unless the woman was married *cum manus*, wherein authority passed to the husband.[284] These laws and customs lie behind Valerius's statements, and he suggests that women prefer that their male relatives exercise control over them rather than the state. Valerius does not disagree with Cato, but he differs in how he sees the direction of influence. When the state runs smoothly, household masters can do their jobs properly. For Cato, household masters'

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[284] See Gaius, *Inst.* 1.48–49; See Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 15–21, for definitions of *potestas*, *manus,* and *usus* in Roman marital law and custom.

authority leads to the state running well, fewer disturbances in the forum, and women at home.

For Livy, the salient issues revolving around women speaking in public include the shame and modesty necessary for women and the problematic nature of women uniting and acting as a political body. Cato and Valerius fall back on commonplaces of women as jealous and overly concerned with appearances and petty things. For both speakers, the social structure and space of the household, in which men have *manus* and *potestas* over women and dependents, exists in a symbiotic relationship with the state: When individuals remain in their proper places in the household, the state benefits, and vice versa. Certain political events disrupt the equilibrium, and women's actions in public spaces are jarring results of disruption. In some cases, such as the Idaean Mother festival, women's religious actions set things right in the state, but their mass presence in the city, like that of the protesting matrons, is evidence of political instability and the potential power of women. Women's roles in *religio* allow them to act and speak in male spaces and influence the state, which introduces tension in Cato's rigid argument about the proper place for women's speech.

II. Philo of Alexandria: Women and the Female Part of the Soul

While Livy's historiography centered on early Republican Rome and was written during the the transition from Republic to Principate, Philo (20 BCE–50 CE) wrote philosophical treatises and biblical interpretation in Alexandria during the troubled reigns of the emperors Caligula and Claudius.[285] During this time, the Jewish community in Alexandria experienced upheaval and violence, spurred by political maneuvering

[285] On Philo's biography and thought, see E. R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1940); Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria* (New York: Oxford University, 1979); P. Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for his Time* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

between Alexandria and Rome and by existing tensions between Greek, Jewish, and Egyptian populations of the city.[286] In the midst of ethnic and political tension, philosophical education and literature flourished, and Philo represents these traditions within the substantial Alexandrian Jewish population. Philo's writings exhibit a cluster of issues about women speaking in public similar to those expressed by Livy. Certain spaces are not appropriate for women's speech—markets, courtrooms, and council halls—while other spaces are appropriate—households and temples. Religious rites bring women into spaces in which men interact and allow women to influence the stability of political entities of the household and state. Where Philo departs from Livy is in his gender symbolism, influenced by Platonic philosophy and allegorical biblical interpretation. This symbolism—in which male stands for the rational principle and female the sensual and material world—influences how he understands men and women in social and religious situations.

In two works, Philo discusses women's speech in public and religious settings. In *De specialibus legibus,* Book 3, he interprets Deuteronomy 25:11–12 literally and allegorically, which leads him to suggest restraint for women's speech and action in public. In *De vita contemplativa*, he envisions a utopian, contemplative community of male and female philosophers whose voices meld in ecstatic ritual and song. Both of these works bear the influence of Philo's dualism and allegorical interpretation of the Septuagint. Read together, these texts express a view of women's speech that sees all

[286] See Philo, *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium.* See discussion of these texts and the political climate of Alexandria during Philo's time in Erich Gruen, "The Jews in Alexandria," in *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2002), 54–83; John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE to 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 48–81; J. J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Maren Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

speech—both of men and women—as destructive and envisions an androgynous overcoming of destructive speech through religious and philosophical ritual.

A. Philo's Gender Dualism

A central part of Philo's philosophy that influences his interpretation of scripture and the social, political, and religious worlds around him is his distinction between the higher and lower parts of a person's being. The higher part is rational and God-facing, while the lower is sensual and mired in the material world. He uses a variety of paired terms to describe this dualistic anthropological situation: soul and body (ψυχή and σῶμα), the logical and illogical parts of the soul (τὸ λογικόν and τὸ ἄλογον ψυχῆς μέρος), the logical and the animalistic (ἡ λογική and ἡ ζωτική), spirit and blood (πνεῦμα and αἶμα), immortal and mortal (ἀθάνατον and θνητόν).[287]

Within this anthropology, Philo uses male and female categories. In *De opificio mundi*, the higher nature is οὔτ᾽ ἄρρεν οὔτε θῆλυ, "neither male nor female," and the lower nature is ἀνὴρ ἢ γυνή, "man or woman" (*Opif.* 134). In other words, the higher essence is asexual, indivisible, and prior to the two created male and female persons. The lower essence is male and female, sexual, and divided. Philo bases this anthropology on his interpretation of the Genesis creation account. In Gen 1:27, God created the human in the image of God, which means that humans possess νοῦς, the rational faculty that makes them like God (*Opif.* 69). In Gen 2:7, the second creation of the human, God breathed

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[287] Key texts that use these dualistic terms are: Philo, *Leg.* 3.161; *Her*. 55, 232; *Det.* 82; *Opif.* 135. See Richard A. Baer, Jr. *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 15–16, for a chart and discussion of Philo's varying terminology for the higher and lower nature of humans. For other discussions of Philo's views of gender and sexuality, see: William R. G. Loader, *Philo, Josephus, and the Testaments on Sexuality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011); Holger Szesnat, "Philo and Female Homoeroticism: Philo's use of *gynandros* and recent work on *tribades*," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods* 30.2 (1999): 140–47; Dorothy Sly, *Philo's Perception of Women*, BJS 209 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990).

into him, which demonstrates the likeness of God and humans. Both possess "breath of life," πνεῦμα ζωῆς (*Det.* 80; *Her.* 56–57). The formation of the woman, however, made the first human unlike God in that it was divided: It became ἀνὴρ ἢ γυνή. The man no longer focused solely on God. Another created being accompanied him and required his attention (*Opif.* 151–52). The man's desire for the woman, then, led to pleasure and sin.

In Philo's philosophy, the created man and woman of Genesis are symbols for the present division in human beings' lower nature. Man symbolizes the mind, νοῦς, and woman sense-perception, αἴσθησις. The female represents senses, desires, reproduction, and the material world. The male represents the mind that seeks God above created things. This gender dualism plays out in Philo's allegorical interpretation of scripture. For example, the wife of Potiphar, who seduces Joseph in Gen 39, symbolizes pleasure (*Somn.* 2.106). A similar interpretive approach occurs in *Spec.* 3, in which Philo discusses woman's speech and presence outside the home.

Gender dualism shapes Philo's views about salvation and progress in wisdom. In his interpretation of Exod 12:5, Philo describes progress as becoming male:

> For progress is indeed nothing else than the giving up the female gender by changing into the male, since the female gender is material, passive, corporeal, and sense-perceptible, while the male is active, rational, incorporeal, and more akin to mind and thought. (*QE* 1.8)[288]

For Philo, the female represents sexuality, reproduction, and creation—things best abandoned in the search for God. He also describes the process of moving away from the irrational senses to God-like rationality as becoming virgin:

> ἀνθρώπων μὲν γὰρ ἡ ἐπὶ γενέσει τέκνων σύνοδος τὰς παρθένους γυναῖκας ἀποφαίνει· ὅταν δὲ ὁμιλεῖν ἄρξηται ψυχῇ θεός, πρότερον αὐτὴν οὖσαν

[288] This fragmentary text is an ancient Armenian translation of the original Greek. See Philo, *Questions on Exodus*, trans. Ralph Marcus, LCL 401.

> γυναῖκα παρθένον αὖθις ἀποδείκνυσιν, ἐπειδὴ τὰς ἀγεννεῖς καὶ ἀνάνδρους ἐπιθυμίας, αἷς ἐθηλύνετο, ἐκποδὼν ἀνελὼν τὰς αὐθιγενεῖς καὶ ἀκηράτους ἀρετὰς ἀντεισάγει
>
> The union of human beings that is made for the procreation of children turns virgins into women. But when God begins to consort with the soul, he makes what before was a woman into a virgin again, for he takes away the degenerate and emasculate passions which made it womanish and plants instead the native growth of unpolluted virtues. (*Cher.* 50)

"Becoming male" and "becoming virgin" involve removing one's sexuality. A similar way of talking about God's implanting wisdom into souls occurs in Philo's *De vita contemplativa*, in which the "aged virgins" of the Therapeutrides are intimate with wisdom. These categories of male and female, rational and irrational, and mind and senses in turn influence how Philo views actual men and women in social and religious settings.[289]

B. *De specialibus legibus* 3.169–180: Spaces for Women's Speech

The four books of *De specialibus legibus* interpret the laws of Moses and are organized according to how individual laws relate to the Ten Commandments. The first book deals with the first two commandments, on not worshipping other gods or creating idols. The second book addresses the next three commandments, on oaths, breaking Sabbath, and honoring parents. The third book takes up laws relating to adultery and murder. The topic of female speech occurs in a passage that interprets Deuteronomy 25:11–12: "If men get into a fight with one another, a man with his brother, and the wife of one of them intervenes to rescue her husband from the hand of his opponent, and by reaching out her hand, she seizes his genitals, you shall cut off her hand; your eye shall

[289] For further discussion on male and female in Philo's philosophy, see Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female*.

not be merciful upon her."[290] For Philo, this law falls under the category of murder because it deals with physical assault. Philo's interpretation takes two routes. First, he argues that women should stay indoors and retain their modesty (3.169–77). Second, he provides an allegorical interpretation in which the woman represents the female part of the soul. The soul should suppress the female part, which grabs at material and sensual things (3.178–80). This passage, therefore, places literal and allegorical interpretations side by side and provides a useful example for considering how Philo's symbolic gender dualism relates to how he views men and women interacting in the real world.

Philo begins his literal interpretation by describing spaces that are and are not suitable for women. He writes:

> Ἀγοραὶ καὶ βουλευτήρια καὶ δικαστήρια καὶ θίασοι καὶ σύλλογοι πολυανθρώπων ὁμίλων καὶ ὁ ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ βίος διὰ λόγων καὶ πράξεων κατὰ πολέμους καὶ κατ᾽εἰρήνην ἀνδράσιν ἐφαρμόζουσι, θηλείαις δὲ οἰκουρία καὶ ἡ ἔνδον μονή, παρθένοις μὲν εἴσω κλισιάδρων τὴν μέσαυλον ὅρον πεποιημέναις, τελείαις δὲ ἤδη γυναιξὶ τὴν αὔλειον.
>
> Market-places and council halls and law courts and gatherings and meetings where a large number of people are assembled, and open-air life with full scope for discussion and action—all these are suitable to men both in war and peace. The women are best suited to the indoor life which never strays from the house, within which the middle door is taken by the virgins as their boundary, and the outer door by those who have reached full womanhood. (*Spec.* 3.169)[291]

This statement identifies different spaces for men and women and, for women, different boundaries for virgins and for those who have reached "full womanhood." Certain activities occur in male spaces: buying and selling in the ἀγοραί, politics in the βουλευτήρια, and judicial proceedings in the δικαστήρια. Speech, action, and the

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[290] LXX Deut 25:11–12: Ἐὰν δὲ μάχωνται ἄνθρωποι ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, ἄνθρωπος μετὰ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ προσέλθῃ γυνὴ ἑνὸς αὐτῶν ἐξελέσθαι τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ τύπτοντος αὐτὸν καὶ ἐκτείνασα τὴν χεῖρα ἐπιλάβηται τῶν διδύμων αὐτοῦ, ἀποκόψεις τὴν χεῖρα αὐτῆς· οὐ φείσεται ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἐπ᾽αὐτῇ.

[291] Translations of Philo, *De Specialibus legibus,* by F. H. Colson, LCL 320, modified.

potential for personal harm also occur in these areas. Openness (ὁ ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ βίος) and crowds of people (σύλλογοι πολυανθρώπων ὁμίλων) characterize these spaces, in contrast to the "indoor life" (ἡ ἔνδον μονή) of women. This physical space has boundaries, marked by inner and outer doors.

Philo goes on to define the household and the city as analogous but separate, much like Aristotle does.[292] There are "communities of two sorts, the greater of which we call cities and the smaller which we call households" (διττὸν γὰρ πόλεων εἶδος, μειζόνων καὶ βραχυτέρων· αἱ μὲν οὖν μείζους ἄστη καλοῦνται, οἰκίαι δ᾽αἱ βραχύτεραι). The larger one, the city (ἄστυ), is the domain of men, who practice statecraft (πολιτεία). The smaller one, the household (οἰκία), is the domain of women, who practice household management (οἰκονομία, 3.170). This separation of spheres means that a woman should remain within the boundaries of the house. The streets of the city are not suitable locations for her because men who are not related to her might see her.

There is one exception to this rule: Women should participate in religious rituals. Even in this exception there is a stipulation. Women should coordinate their movement outside with times when fewer people will be out.[293] He writes:

> μηδ᾽οἷα νομὰς κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς ἐν ὄψεσιν ἀνδρῶν ἑτέρων ἐξεταζέσθω, πλὴν εἰς ἱερὸν ὁπότε δέοι βαδίζειν, φροντίδα ποιουμένη καὶ τότε μὴ πληθυούσης ἀγορᾶς, ἀλλ᾽ἐπανεληλυθότων οἴκαδε τῶν πλείστων, ἐλευθέρας τρόπον καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἀστῆς ἐν ἠρεμίᾳ θυσίας ἐπιτελοῦσα καὶ εὐχὰς εἰς ἀποτροπὴν κακῶν καὶ μετουσίαν ἀγαθῶν.
>
> She should not be scrutinized like a vagrant in the streets before the eyes of other men, except when she has to go to a temple, and even then she should take pains to go, not when the market is full, but when most people have gone home, and so like a free-born citizen woman worthy of the

[292] See Aristotle, *Pol.* 1252B2.

[293] Cohen, "Seclusion, Separation, and the Status of Women in Classical Athens," 3–15, discusses a similar coordinated separation in ancient and modern Greek societies.

> name, with everything quiet around her, make her oblations and offer her prayers to avert the evil and gain the good. (3.171)

A woman's religious activity in a temple (εἰς ἱερόν) relates to her identity as a "freeborn citizen woman" (ἐλευθέρας . . . ἀστῆς). Women exercise their civic duties not by joining men in the market or courtroom but by conducting the household and by ritual activities of visiting the temple and making sacrifices and prayers. It is not clear what kind of temple, sacrifice, or prayer Philo has in mind. There was no Jewish temple in Alexandria, so he may be envisioning women involved in a variety of ritual activities—Jewish, Greek, or Egyptian. This broader view of the religious life of women in Alexandria fits within Philo's overarching goals of interpreting the Septuagint for the benefit of non-Jewish Alexandrians: He wants to show that the Jewish law was rational and indicated higher truths about God.

These ritual actions—visiting the temple and offering sacrifices and prayers—form the positive means by which women aid their husbands and affect the larger and smaller communities in which they are involved. By contrast, Deut 25:11–12 addresses a negative way that women participate in the city and help their husbands in disputes. Women should not assist their husbands by joining arguments with angry words or physical attacks, nor should they take part in wars or state emergencies (3.171). Philo recognizes that these societal crises affect women, who experience emotions that urge them to support their husbands. But a woman should not "make herself male by a boldness beyond what nature permits" (μὴ πλέον τῆς φύσεως ἀρρενούσθω θρασυνομένη, 3.173). For Philo, a woman's "boldness" (θρασύτης) and "insolence" (ὕβρις) indicate transgressions of gender norms.

Both spoken and physical attacks are problematic in these cases. Philo writes:

> λοιδορήσεται γὰρ γυνὴ κατ᾽ἀγορὰν ῥῆμά τέ τι τῶν ἀπηγορευμένων φθέγξεται, ἑτέρου δὲ κακηγοροῦντος οὐκ ἀποδραμεῖται τὰ ὦτα ἐπιφράξασα; νυνὶ δὲ προβαίνουσί τινες, ὡς μὴ μόνον ὑπὸ γλωσσαλγίας ἐν ἀνδρῶν ὄχλῳ γυναῖκες κακηγορεῖν καὶ προπηλακίζειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιφέρειν
>
> What, is a woman to wrangle in the market-place and utter some or other of the words which decency forbids? Should she not when she hears bad language stop her ears and run away? As it is, some of them go to such a length that, not only do we hear amid a crowd of men a woman's bitter tongue venting abuse and contumelious words, but see her hands also used to assault. (3.174)

Again, the location of women's speech—the marketplace—and the kind of speech—indecent, foul, and vituperative language—are not appropriate for women. Words are as violent and dangerous as physical attacks, so women should avoid both.

Philo then turns to the unlawful action of the wife and its punishment in Deuteronomy. If a woman grabs the opponent's genitals as he is fighting with her husband, the action shows extreme boldness not appropriate for a woman (εἴ τις γυνὴ τοσοῦτον καταθρασύνοιτο, 3.175). He likens the offense to women watching athletic spectacles in which men compete nude. "Shame" (αἰδώς) and "nature" (φύσις) are key: Viewing nude athletes violates the shame of women, and nature separates and differentiates male and female bodies. The spatial separation that Philo outlines—women in the household, men in the city—reinforces what he sees as the natural differentiation of male and female.

In the law from Deuteronomy, a woman's lack of self-control results in an extreme punishment, but for Philo, an allegorical interpretation mitigates a harsh, literal interpretation of the law. In Philo's terms, allegorical interpretation is "another [explanation] from highly gifted men who think that most of the contents of the law-book are outward symbols of hidden truths, expressing in words what has been left unsaid"

(3.178). Philo identifies male and female elements of the soul, which are analogous to men and women in the social structure of the family. The male part of the soul focuses only on God. By contrast:

> θήλεια δὲ ἡ ἐκκρεμαμένη τῶν ἐν γενέσει καὶ φθορᾷ καὶ ἀποτείνουσα καθάπερ χεῖρα τὴν δύναμιν αὑτῆς, ἵνα τυφλῶς τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων ἐφάπτηται, γένεσιν δεξιουμένη τὴν προπαῖς ἀμυθήτοις χρωμένην καὶ μεταβολαῖς, δέον τὴν ἀμετάβλητον καὶ μακαρίαν καὶ τρισευδαίμονα θείαν φύσιν.
>
> The female clings to all that is born and perishes; it stretches out its faculties like a hand to catch blindly at what comes in its way, and gives the clasp of friendship to the world of created things with its numberless changes and transmutations, instead of to the divine order, the immutable, the blessed, the thrice happy. (3.178)

The woman in Deuteronomy grasps at things, and thus symbolizes the female element of the soul, which clings to created things rather than God. In the Deuteronomy law, moreover, the woman grabs the “pair” (δίδυμοι), which Philo interprets as things that come into being through reproduction, which has two parts—“seed-sowing and birth” (σπορᾶς καὶ γενέσεως, 3.179). This “pair” is in contrast to the “monad,” God, for whom the male part of the soul reaches.

This allegorical interpretation is necessary because the law in its literal sense is objectionable. He writes:

> εἰκότως οὖν τὴν ἐφαψαμένην χεῖρα τῶν διδύμων ἀποκόπτειν διείρηται συμβολικῶς, οὐχ ὅπως ἀκρωτηριάζηται τὸ σῶμα στερόμενον ἀναγκαιοτάτου μέρους, ἀλλ᾽ὑπὲρ τοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς πάντας τοὺς ἀθέους ἐκτέμνειν λογισμοὺς ἐπιβάθρᾳ χρωμένους ἅπασιν ὧν γένεσίς ἐστι·
>
> Naturally, therefore, we are commanded in a symbol to cut off the hand which has taken hold of the “pair,” not meaning that the body should be mutilated by the loss of a most essential member, but to bid us exscind from the soul the godless thoughts which take for their basis all that comes into being through birth. (3.179)

In the next section, Philo discusses how the law assigns punishments that correspond to the offense (3.182). In this case, however, cutting off a hand and mutilating a woman's body does not fit the crime. An allegorical interpretation is, therefore, necessary.

These two interpretations of one law from Deuteronomy demonstrate how Philo's view of women in social settings and his dualistic concept of the female part of the soul relate: Women and the female part of the soul need control by rational men and the laws they create or by the rational male part of the soul. In social settings, this means that spatial boundaries and laws about women's movement and speech control women. In the human soul, the male part must control the female part, to the point of cutting off desires for anything except God. In the social explanation of the law, Philo makes an exception for the religious activities of women and suggests one way that women in public settings benefit the city and household through their ritual speech (prayer) and action (sacrifice). In the *De vita contemplativa,* Philo takes ritual speech and action a step further: He envisions an ideal way that women and men speak in ritual settings, individually and collectively, through ecstatic speech that reaches to wisdom and intimacy with God.

C. *De vita contemplativa*: Men, Women, and Ecstatic Speech

In the introduction to *De vita contemplativa,* Philo makes two statements that have occupied scholarship on this text, about the historicity of the group and the presence of women within it. First, he begins the document as if it were the sequel to another treatise:

> Ἐσσαίων πέρι διαλεχθείς, οἳ τὸν πρακτικὸν ἐζήλωσαν . . . αὐτίκα καὶ περὶ τῶν θεωρίαν ἀπασαμένων ἀκολουθίᾳ τῆς πραγματείας ἑπόμενος τὰ προσήκοντα λέξω, μηδὲν οἴκοθεν ἕνεκα τοῦ βελτιῶσαι προστιθείς, ὃ δρᾶν ἔθος ἐν σπάνει καλῶν ἐποτηδευμάτων ἅπασι τοῖς ποιηταῖς καὶ λογογράφοις . . .

> After discussing the Essenes, who zealously cultivated the active life, … I shall now proceed at once, following the sequence demanded by the treatment of this subject, to say what is fitting concerning those who have espoused the life of contemplation. I will add nothing of my own for the sake of embellishment, as is customarily done by all poets and historians. (*Contempl.* 1)[294]

This statement leads scholars to ask about the historicity of the religious group Philo describes. The Essenes were one sect of Judaism known from other sources.[295] The contemplative group, which Philo locates at the Mareotic Lake in Egypt, appears nowhere else in historical or archaeological records. When he assures his audience that he does not embellish his description of the group, some scholars take him at his word: He is uncritically describing a historical group.[296] Other scholars identify the coherence between the contemplative actions of the group and Philo's worldview as evidence that this treatise is a *fabula* about his envisioned ideal philosophical society.[297] Self control, reaching toward God and wisdom, allegorical interpretation of scripture, and the

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[294] Translations of Philo, *De vita contemplativa*, are by David Winston, *Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, The Giants, and Selections*, Classics of Western Spirituality Series (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1981).

[295] Philo, *Prob.* 75–91; *Hypoth.* 11.1–17; Josephus, *A.J.* 18.1.5 (§§ 18–22); *B.J.* 2.8.2–13 (§§119–161); Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 5.15.71–73; Hippolytus, *Haer.* 9.13–23. See Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, trans. S. Taylor and P. Christie, rev. and ed. by G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Black; 2nd and rev. ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979), Division II, Vol. 2, 188–218; Otto Betz, "The Essenes," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Vol. 3: The Early Roman Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999), 444–70.

[296] See Joan Taylor and Philip Davies, "The So-called Therapeutae of *De Vita Contemplativa*: Identity and Character," *HTR* 91.1 (1998): 3–24; Joan Taylor, "Virgin Mothers: Philo on the Women Therapeutae," *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 12.1 (2001): 37–63; Joan Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers of First-century Alexandria: Philo's 'Therapeutae' Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003); David Hay, "Things Philo Did and Did Not Say about the Therapeutae," *SBL Seminar Papers* 31 (1992): 673–83.

[297] Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Philo's *De Contemplativa Vita* as a Philosopher's Dream," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods* 30.1 (1999): 40–64. Ross Kraemer initially considered the community historical, but has modified her views in light of Engberg-Pedersen's persuasive argument. See Kraemer, "Jewish Women's Religious Lives and Offices in the Greco-Roman Diaspora, in *Her Share of the Blessings*, 106–27; Ross Kraemer, "Spouses of Wisdom: Philo's Therapeutrides Reconsidered," in *Unreliable Witnesses: Religion, Gender, and History in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011), 57–116.

negativity of senses and passions—a few of Philo's favorite things—are the important features of this group.

The second issue is the male and female composition of the group. Philo writes:

> ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις τῶν φιλοσόφων εὐθὺς ἐμφαίνεται διὰ τῆς προσρήσεως· θεραπευταὶ γὰρ καὶ θεραπευτρίδες ἐτύμως καλοῦνται.
>
> The vocation of these philosophers is disclosed at once by their name, for they are called, according to the true meaning of the etymology of the words, Therapeutae and Therapeutrides. (2)

Philo uses the masculine and feminine forms of the name, rather than an inclusive masculine title. He is explicit about the presence of women and men. The issue of gender has implications for the question of historicity. Is Philo describing actual religious actions of men and women in a community marked by justice and equality? If so, this group is remarkable in the ancient Mediterranean world, both within and outside of Jewish traditions. Or are they Philo's rhetorical creation to represent contemplative rituals that overcome divisions in the soul?

If Philo is describing an actual group, he filters his observations through his own philosophical and allegorical lens. The ritual separation and union of women and men's voices symbolize overcoming the divergence between female and male parts of the soul. In his observations of the lake community, one strand of thought that he emphasizes and that coheres with his other works is the destructive potential of speech. In the contemplative community, men and women overcome the negative aspects of speech through philosophy, scriptural interpretation, ascetic contemplation, and vocal and physical rituals. Philo uses an Exodus narrative to interpret the climactic ritual in terms of speech, wisdom, and salvation. This narrative helps him make sense of not only the

gendered nature of the community but also how they overcome social issues of speech, passion, and boundaries.

Philo calls the Therapeutae and Therapeutrides “philosophers” and “healers of the soul.”[298] They “have been taught by nature and the holy laws to worship the existent who is better than the good, purer than the one, and more primal than the monad” (2). He claims that their theology is superior to those who worship Greek gods, celestial bodies, demigods, carved images, or Egyptian gods (3–9). Philo sets the Healers apart from the cultures that surround them, not only by their physical isolation but also by their philosophical vision. The social realities that allow them to “heal the soul” include leaving family and possessions and participating in solitary, ascetic activities in a community (18–20). The Healers cut all ties with the outer world so that they are not drawn away from the community. In the outside world, money creates injustice and inequality, social realities that the community strives to overcome (17). Slaves do not serve the Healers, who all live the same way, no matter their rank, age, or gender.

After they have left their previous lives, the Healers live and work with goals of attaining wisdom. Philo describes the simple houses, clothing, and food of the group (24). Each member lives in his or her own room alone for most of the week. They do not “step beyond the outer door or even see it from afar” (30).[299] While in their rooms, the Healers pray, read, study, and write. They read scripture—law, prophets, psalms, and other writings—and interpret them using allegory. They use the writings of their community founders as models of allegorical interpretation of scripture (25, 30). They “compose chants and hymns to God in all kinds of meters and melodies” (29). These activities

[298] As a simple name for this group that includes both male and female, I often call them “Healers.”

[299] Cf. *Spec* 3.169, in which women do not cross the inner or outer doors of the house.

revolve around interpretation and creation of spoken and written language. They speak to God in prayer, hymns, and chants, and they hear God through scripture and interpretation. The result of this contemplation and study is the pervasive mental centering around God to the point that God appears in their dreams: “They always remember God and never forget him, so that even in their dreams no images are formed other than the loveliness of divine excellences and powers. Thus many of them, dreaming in their sleep, divulge the glorious teaching of their holy philosophy” (26). These dreams are the first hint of the inspiration that results from contemplation.

On the seventh day, the contemplatives gather in a meeting that is an extension of their daily activities and listen to the clear speech of a leader. The eldest male member speaks:

> οὐ δεινότητα λόγων ὥσπερ οἱ ῥήτορες ἢ οἱ νῦν σοφισταὶ παρεπιδεικνύμενος, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι διηρευνηκὼς καὶ διερμηνεύων ἀκρίβειαν, ἥτις οὐκ ἄκροις ὠσὶν ἐφιζάνει, ἀλλὰ δι᾽ἀκοῆς ἐπὶ ψυχὴν ἔρχεται καὶ βεβαίως ἐπιμένει.
>
> He makes no display of clever rhetoric like the orators or sophists of today, but after close examination he carefully expounds the precise meaning of his thoughts, which does not settle on the edge of the audience’s ears, but passes through the hearing into the soul, and there remains securely ensconced. (31)

This lecture displays the potential of clear speech: It can lodge itself in the soul. This type of speech is the positive counterpart to speech that so often occurs in the markets, council halls, or courtrooms that Philo mentions in *Spec.* 3. In this text, women were excluded from these places of destructive speech. In *Contempl.*, the female Therapeutrides join and listen.

The women, however, are physically set apart from the men. Philo writes:

> τὸ δὲ κοινὸν τοῦτο σεμνεῖον, εἰς ὃ ταῖς ἑβδόμαις συνέρχονται, διπλοῦς ἐστι περίβολος, ὁ μὲν εἰς ἀνδρῶνα, ὁ δὲ εἰς γυναικωνῖτιν ἀποκριθείς· καὶ γὰρ καὶ γυναῖκες ἐξ ἔθους συνακροῶνται τὸν αὐτὸν ζῆλον καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν προαίρεσιν ἔχουσαι. ὁ δὲ μεταξὺ τῶν οἴκων τοῖχος τὸ μὲν ἐξ ἐδάφους ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἢ τέσσαρας πήχεις εἰς τὸ ἄνω συνῳκοδόμηται θωρακίου τρόπον, τὸ δὲ ἄχρι τέγους ἀνάγειον ἀχανὲς ἀνεῖται, δυοῖν ἕνεκα, τοῦ τε τὴν πρέπουσαν αἰδῶ τῇ γυναικείᾳ φύσει διατηρεῖσθαι καὶ τοῦ τὴν ἀντίληψιν ἔχειν εὐμαρῆ καθεζομένας ἐν ἐπηκόῳ, μηδενὸς τὴν τοῦ διαλεγομένου φωνὴν ἐμποδίζοντος.
>
> This common sanctuary in which they meet every seventh day is a double enclosure, one part set off for the men, the other for the women. For women too customarily form part of the audience, possessed by the same fervor and sense of purpose. The partition between the two chambers is built up to three or four cubits above the floor in the form of a breastwork, while the space above up to the roof is left open. This serves two purposes: that the modesty proper to women’s nature be maintained and that the women seated within earshot with nothing to obstruct the voice of the speaker may obtain easy apprehension. (32–33)

This passage provides insight into how Philo views women and their participation in philosophy, male spaces, and public speaking. Women have “the same fervor and sense of purpose” and potential for philosophical enlightenment and worship of God. At the lake community, women study scripture, pray, and compose hymns in seclusion, just as men do. They assemble with the men and benefit from the same activity, listening to the speech of an elder male member of the group. They hear the speech so that it can enter their souls. Women must retain the virtue of modesty or shame (αἰδώς) that is proper to their nature. The community has a wall so that men cannot see the women, but the women can hear. For Philo, in normal life settings—streets, markets, courts, and council halls—the male gaze and male ways of speaking make female presence and hearing problematic. The lake community solves this problem with clear, philosophical speech and a physical barrier to obstruct views of the opposite sex.

Self-control (ἐγκράτεια) is central to the group's life: "They lay down self-control as a sort of foundation of the soul and on this build the other virtues" (34). Self-control is evident in how individuals in the group interact—male and female, old and young—and how they eat—bread and water only. More important are the intangible things on which they feast: They "revel and delight in being banqueted by wisdom, which richly and lavishly supplies her teachings" (34). Philo contrasts these spare meals to Greek and Italian banquets, as well as the symposia of Socrates, recorded by Xenophon and Plato (40–63). The result of rich food and drink at banquets is that the diners "bellow and rave like wild dogs" (40) and "are oppressed by a deep sleep, seeing and hearing nothing, as if possessing only one sense, and the most slavish one at that, taste" (45). The food and drink, which are vastly different from that of the Healers' banquet, result in loud, animal-like speech and dull hearing. For Philo, the problem with Socrates's symposia, which are often regarded "as models of proper amusements at banquets," is the exclusive focus on love—or, as Philo views it, "common and vulgar love":

> τὸ γὰρ πλεῖστον αὐτοῦ μέρος ὁ κοινὸς καὶ πάνδημος ἔρως διείληφεν, ἀνδρείαν μέν, τὴν βιωφελεστάτηνν ἀρετὴν κατὰ πόλεμον καὶ κατ᾿εἰρήνην, ἀφαιρούμενος, θήλειαν δὲ νόσον ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐναπεργαζόμενος καὶ ἀνδρογύνους κατασκευάζων, οὓς ἐχρῆν πᾶσι τοῖς πρὸς ἀλκὴν ἐπιτηδεύμασι συγκροτεῖσθαι.
>
> The greater part is taken up with common and vulgar love, which not only robs men of courage, the virtue most useful for life in peace as well as war, but produces in their souls the disease of effeminacy and renders androgynous those who should have been trained in all the pursuits making for valor. (60)

The symposia are meetings of men to discuss philosophy, a worthy goal, but the subject and result is unworthy and even dangerous. The danger is that men will become effeminate or androgynous. As in *Spec.* 3, Philo is concerned with what he sees as

transgressions of gender norms. The Therapeutic meals, by contrast, are androgynous in a different way: Men and women are both present. The community, rather than the individual, is androgynous, made of male and female.

The contrasting Greek and Italian banquets lead to Philo's description of the seven-week and fifty-day celebrations at the Mareotic lake. Every detail of this banquet contrasts with the negative foils: They recline on ordinary wood beds and cheap mats, have no slaves, drink water, and eat plain food (69–74). The group is ordered in rows and separated by gender (66, 69). Prior to reclining and eating, they pray, under the leadership of the Ephemereutae, men in charge of the services. They raise their eyes and hands to heaven, "eyes because they were trained to gaze on things worthy of contemplation, hands because they are pure of unjust gains and undefiled by any motive of the profit-making kind" (66).

Again, Philo makes it clear that women are present at these banquets. Their abstinence from sexual intercourse and their religious devotion are ideal postures toward God and wisdom and are what sets them apart from priestesses in other religious traditions. He writes:

> συνεστιῶνται δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες, ὧν πλεῖσται γηραιαὶ παρθένοι, τὴν ἁγνείαν οὐκ ἀνάγκῃ, καθάπερ ἔνιαι τῶν παρ' Ἕλλησιν ἱερειῶν, διαφυλάξασαι μᾶλλον ἢ καθ' ἑκούσιον γνώμην, διὰ ζῆλον καὶ πόθον σοφίας, ᾗ συμβιοῦν σπουδάσασαι τῶν περὶ σῶμα ἡδονῶν ἠλόγησαν, οὐ θνητῶν ἐκγόνων ἀλλ' ἀθανάτων ὀρεχθεῖσαι, ἃ μόνη τίκτειν ἀφ' ἑαυτῆς οἵα τέ ἐστιν ἡ θεοφιλὴς ψυχή, σπείραντος εἰς αὐτὴν ἀκτῖνας νοητὰς τοῦ πατρός, αἷς δυνήσεται θεωρεῖν τὰ σοφίας δόγματα.
>
> The women, too, take part in the feast; most of them are aged virgins who have maintained their purity not under constraint, like some of the priestesses among the Greeks, but voluntarily through their zealous desire for wisdom. Eager to enjoy intimacy with her, they have been unconcerned with the pleasures of the body, desiring a progeny not mortal but immortal, which only the soul that loves God is capable of

> engendering unaided, since the Father has sown in her intelligible rays whereby she can behold the teachings of wisdom. (68)

In this description, the virginity of the "mostly aged virgins" provides a foundation for discussing the philosophical search for wisdom in sexual and reproductive terms.[300] Both male and female members of the community are sexually abstinent, since they lead an ascetic lifestyle. Philo, however, comments further on female sexual purity and its results, intimacy with the female-personified Wisdom and the Father God, which results in philosophical progeny. The voluntary nature of the women's virginity, in contrast with the compelled virginity of some Greek priestesses (as Philo sees it), represents the necessary mental posture for accessing wisdom. Intimacy with wisdom does not stem from compulsion. Just as he has contrasted Egyptian, Greek, and Italian pantheons and banquets, here he contrasts their priestesses with the Therapeutrides.

Underlying this conception of the male and female philosophers who develop intimacy with wisdom are Jewish literary traditions that personify Wisdom as the divine female companion of God. In Proverbs, Wisdom of Solomon, and Sirach, "Sophia" is God's companion at creation and calls out to humanity to come to her banquets and become friends with God.[301] Erotic undertones and marital imagery mark the relationship that Woman Wisdom proposes for wise men.[302] At the heart of Proverbs is the choice between a relationship with Woman Wisdom or Woman Folly. Philo works within these traditions, yet he discusses the intimacy with Wisdom more for the female members of the community than for the male members. The Therapeutrides have a "zealous desire"

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[300] On what Philo means by "mostly aged virgins," see Taylor, *Jewish Women Philosophers*, 263–64; Kraemer, "Spouses of Wisdom," 73–75.

[301] See Prov 8:1–36; Wis Sol 7:7–8:4; Sirach 24:1–34.

[302] See Prov 4:5–9; 5:15–19; 7:4. See Claudia V. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Decatur, GA: Almond, 1985), 94–95.

and are “eager to enjoy intimacy” with her. This intimacy produces immortal progeny. In the sentence that describes the conception and birth of this offspring, Philo’s focus shifts from the female Therapeutrides to “the soul that loves God” (ἡ θεοφιλὴς ψυχή), a shift aided by the grammatical gender of ἡ ψυχή. The Father God provides the seed that allows the soul to become impregnated with immortal offspring. The female presence at these banquets allows Philo to describe the act of philosophy as reproduction, much like in Plato’s *Symposium*, the prophet and philosopher Diotima voices the idea that philosophy results in the soul giving birth.[303]

At the fifty-day festival, men and women remain separate so that the climactic event is dramatic. Philo is not clear whether the wall that separates men from women at weekly meetings separates them at this festival, but he states, “the men sit apart on the right, and the women apart on the left” (διανενέμηται δὲ ἡ κατάκλισις χωρὶς μὲν ἀνδράσιν ἐπὶ δεξιά, χωρὶς δὲ γυναιξὶν ἐπ᾽ εὐώνυμα, 69). As at the weekly meetings, the male president (προέδρος) speaks:

> στῆναι δὲ τοὺς διακόνους ἐν κόσμῳ πρὸς ὑπηρεσίαν ἑτοίμους, ὁ πρόεδρος αὐτῶν, πολλῆς ἁπάντων ἡσυχίας γενομένης πότε δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν; εἴποι τις ἄν· ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ πρότερον, ὡς μηδὲ γρύξαι τινὰ τολμᾶν ἢ ἀναπνεῦσαι βιαιότερον, ζητεῖ τι τῶν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς γράμμασιν ἢ καὶ ὑπ᾽ ἄλλου προταθὲν ἐπιλύεται
>
> [When] the attendants have taken their stand in good order ready for service, their president, after all are hushed in deep silence—here one might ask when is there not silence, but at this point there is silence even more than before, so that no one dares to utter a sound or breathe more forcefully than usual—in this silence, I say, he makes inquiry into some problem arising in the Holy Scriptures, or solves one propounded by someone else. (75)

[303] Plato, *Symp.* 206C–209C; On Diotima’s role, see David Halperin, “Why is Diotima a Woman?” in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 113–51.

The silence in the room reaches a magnitude not found before and that provides contrast to the climactic ritual moment. His speech is clear, and "he employs a leisurely mode of instruction, lingering and drawing things out through constant recapitulation, thus imprinting the thoughts in the souls of his hearers" (76). The content of his speech is allegorical interpretation of scripture. After he has finished speaking, he begins either a traditional hymn or one that he has composed. The group begins to sing with him, "in their places and in proper order." Everyone, men and women, πάντες τε και πάσαι, begins to sing (80).

In the sacred vigil after the meal, the Healers form two choirs, one of men, the other of women, at the center of the room. Philo does not mention the partition between men and women. It is unlikely that the space for the fifty-day gathering is different from that for the weekly gatherings, and the reason for the wall, the modesty of the women, applies still. The ritual could occur with a wall, since the focus is the melding of voices, not the meeting of bodies, and the wall takes on symbolic meaning in Philo's interpretation of the Red Sea. The women and men sing hymns to God and perform dances. After eating bread, drinking water, and listening to wise words, the Therapeutae and Therapeutrides are drunk on God's love, much like Bacchic revelers. The male and female choirs then mix to form one choir, "a copy of the choir organized at the Red Sea" (85).

In other works, Philo refers to the Red Sea and the songs of Miriam and Moses to discuss two topics: (1) lips and speech, since the Egyptians met their demise at the "lip" of the sea, and (2) the passions, which are horses that the rider, the mind, must tame. In *De confusione linguarum*, Philo uses Exod 14:30 in his arguments about how people use

speech to argue. In the Red Sea narrative, Israel saw the Egyptians dead "on the lip of the river" (τὸ χεῖλος τοῦ ποταμοῦ). This boundary or edge is an appropriate place for the defeat of an opponent:

> εὖ μέντοι γε ἔχει παρὰ τὸ χεῖλος τοῦ ποταμοῦ τὴν ἐναντίωσιν συνίστασθαι· χείλη δὲ στόματος μέν ἐστι πέρατα, φραγμὸς δέ τις γλώττης, δι᾽ ὧν φέρεται τὸ τοῦ λόγου ῥεῦμα, ὅταν ἄρξηται κατέρχεσθαι. λόγῳ δὲ καὶ οἱ μισάρετοι καὶ φιλοπαθεῖς συμμάχῳ χρῶνται πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀδοκίμων δογμάτων εἰσήγησιν.
>
> The lips are the boundaries of the mouth and a kind of hedge to the tongue and through them the stream of speech passes, when it begins its downward flow. Now speech is an ally employed by those who hate virtue and love the passions to inculcate their untenable tenets, and also by men of worth for the destruction of such doctrines. (*Conf.* 33–34)

The death of the Egyptians is the death of "unholy doctrines and of the words which the mouth and tongue and other vocal organs gave them to use" (*Conf.* 36). Similarly in *De somniis,* Philo interprets the death of the Egyptians on the lip of the sea to indicate the death of destructive words (*Somn.* 2.280). Speech is the powerful tool of logical arguments, dogmatic disputes, and marketplace disagreements. In *Contempl.*, the Healers work toward using speech in positive ways—to pray, create and sing hymns, and interpret scripture with wisdom as the goal.

Second, Philo cites this narrative to discuss how the mind must tame passions. In *Legum allegoriae* 2, Philo interprets Gen 49:16–18, which says that Dan, one of Jacob's sons, will "become a serpent in the road, seated on the beaten track, biting the horse's heel." Philo reads horses to represent passions and the horseman as the mind that controls passion. He cites as support Exod 15:1, in which Moses sings, "He cast horse and rider into the sea." In the Red Sea narrative, God cast the passions and the minds that cannot control them into the abyss (*Leg.* 2.102). In *De ebrietate,* Philo cites this verse with the

same meaning and purpose (*Ebr.* 111). He contrasts what happens to the Egyptian horses and riders in the Red Sea to the benefits of a well, which stands for wisdom—a deep, sweet stream that quenches the thirst of the soul (*Ebr.* 112).[304]

These two topics—speech and passions—come together in Philo's use of the Exodus narrative in *De somniis.* In this text, Philo categorizes prophetic or visionary dreams: (1) those set into motion by God, (2) those in which the mind moves with the soul of the universe, and (3) those in which the mind sets itself in motion (*Somn.* 2.1). When he interprets Abraham's dream in Gen 41, the phrase "the lip of the river" (Gen 41:17) again inspires a discussion of speech, silence, and the taming of passions. Philo outlines occasions for speech and silence. Silence is required when God defends a person or group from their enemies, as seen in Deut 27:19, Exod 14:14, and Exod 11:7. By contrast, singing hymns in honor of the good—here, when passions are defeated—is a necessary use of voice (*Somn.* 2.262–69). He cites Exod 15:1: "Let us sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea." Defeat of passions, however, is not the greatest good. The discovery of wisdom is the next step and reason for singing hymns. Philo again connects the song at the well, which stands for wisdom: "Israel sang this song at the well" (*Somn.* 2.270–71).[305]

Philo's persistent connection of the narrative of the Red Sea to speech and silence, taming passions, seeking wisdom, and singing hymns comes together in dramatic ritual form in *De vita contemplativa.* The Healers have tamed passions through ascetic lives. They know the appropriate times for silence and speech: silence in solitude, and speech in communal meetings. Their ultimate goal in both solitary and communal study is the

[304] Cf. Prov 18:4; Sir 24:21, 30–33.

[305] Quoting Num 21:17.

discovery of wisdom. Wisdom "richly and lavishly supplies her teachings" (*Contempl.* 35). The Therapeutae and Therapeutrides use their voices not for destructive speech but for harmonious music that celebrates their mastery over passions and encounter with wisdom. Philo writes: "The sea became a cause of salvation to the one side and of utter destruction to the other" (86). The choristers gain salvation from their ritual song modeled on the Red Sea.

The physical wall between male and female Healers mimics the sea in the biblical tale (33). Philo continues the analogy: "The waters virtually walled up in solid form, the intervening space thus opened up broadened into a highway fully dry" (86). Philo does not explicitly connect the partition to the walls of water in Exodus, but the implicit connection provides symbolic meaning to the ritual space. Men and women are separated—by God, nature, or society—and the ritual causes the separation to collapse, since their voices cross the boundary and form one song.

Miriam's song is yet another detail that allows Philo to connect the biblical narrative to the ecstatic ritual. Upon experiencing God's salvation at the Red Sea, "men and women alike were filled with divine ecstasy, formed a single choir, sang hymns of thanksgiving to God their Savior, the men led by the prophet Moses and the women by the prophetess (προφῆτις) Miriam" (87). As we have seen, the focus on passion, self-control, speech, and wisdom in *Contempl.* suggests Philo's interpretation of the Red Sea. Miriam is a prophet who, like Moses, is in touch with divine mysteries and leads the community. Prior to the song, the leaders in the meeting were men (31, 66–67, 75, 80). The ritual song is the first time Philo mentions female leaders alongside male leaders (83–84). Like the Israelites at the sea, "the choir of the Therapeutae and Therapeutrides,

singing in harmony, the soprano of the women blending with the bass of the men, produces true musical concord" (τούτῳ μάλιστα ἀπεικονισθεὶς ὁ τῶν θεραπευτῶν καὶ θεραπευτρίδων, μέλεσιν ἀντήχοις καὶ ἀντιφώνοις πρὸς βαρὺν ἦχον τῶν ἀνδρῶν ὁ γυναικῶν ὀξὺς ἀνακιρνάμενος ἐναρμόνιον συμφωνίαν ἀποτελεῖ καὶ μουσικὴν ὄντως, 88). Philo never says whether the men and women physically cross the partition. For Philo, who admires those who "live in the soul alone," the blending of voices and the creation of aural harmony would be enough to produce the ecstatic experience (90). The ritual ends with the banqueters alert and ready to use their bodies to continue work toward their philosophy (89).

The destructive reality and productive potential of speech is central to both *Spec.* 3.169–180 and *De vita contemplativa*. The danger of speech in social settings of markets, streets, and courtrooms means that women should stay away from those spaces. Their modesty and difference from men make them more vulnerable to destructive speech. But their religious speech, prayers that accompany sacrifices in temples, means that women cannot be excluded from public life—in terms of both spaces and the successful functioning of cities and households. In *Contempl.*, Philo's vision of an ideal setting for productive religious speech includes women and men. Women, like men, have the capacity and desire for creating hymns and seeking wisdom and enlightenment. This capacity is best encouraged in a setting in which men and women are physically separated. Modesty and self-control remain central to how Philo conceives of the relationship between women and men. On one level, this text is allegorical: Men and women stand for the logical and passionate parts of the soul. In Philo's worldview, women represent negative things, but at the same time, they are vital to his construction

of an ideal space in which a community overcomes the destructive nature of speech and glorifies wisdom.

III. Plutarch: Virtue and Speech in State and Household

The issues about women speaking that emerge for Livy and Philo also occur in Plutarch's writings (46–120 CE), yet with distinct valences according to his social setting, intellectual influences, and rhetorical goals.[306] Modesty is a female virtue, and Plutarch discusses what men should know about women who are not related to them—their appearance, reputation, and/or voice. The boundaries between and the symbiotic relationship of household and state impact how and where Plutarch advises women to speak. Religious rituals take place in both of these spaces and thereby accord women control over the well being of the household and state. This potential political power through religious ritual is problematic, so Plutarch suggests male oversight and control of women's rituals.

Plutarch's discussion of women speaking occurs primarily in two texts: *Mulierum virtutes* and *Conjugalia praecepta*.[307] In *Mulierum virtutes,* Plutarch asserts that men and women's virtues are the same. To support this claim, he recounts narratives about women acting and speaking to influence their community's well being. The household-oriented *Conjugalia praecepta* discusses when, where, why, and to whom women should speak.

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[306] On Plutarch's biography and writings, see R. Lamberton, *Plutarch* (New Haven: Yale University, 2001); Judith Mossman and Ewen Bowie, eds., *Plutarch and His Intellectual World: Essays on Plutarch* (London: Duckworth, 1997); C. P. Jones, "Toward a Chronology of Plutarch's Works," *JRS* 56 (1966): 61–74; D. A. Russell, "On Reading Plutarch's *Moralia*" *G&R* 15 (1968): 130–46; D. A. Russell, *Plutarch* (New York: Scribner, 1973).

[307] For scholarship on Plutarch's view of women, see F. le Corsu, *Plutarque et les femmes* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1981); W. L. Odom, "A Study of Plutarch: The Position of Greek Women in the First Century after Christ" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1961); Lisette Goessler, *Plutarchs Gedanken über die Ehe* (Zürich: Buchdruckerei Berichthaus, 1962); Yvonne Vernière, "Plutarque et les femmes," *Ancient World* 25.2 (1994): 165–69; A. G. Nikolaides, "Plutarch on Women and Marriage," *WSt* 110 (1997): 27–88.

Plutarch gives advice to two married students, and he advocates that the wife limit her speech to the household with her husband as audience. These texts display Plutarch's views of gender difference and how this difference influences women's speech. He argues that women's virtues are the same as men's, yet he envisions different roles and settings in which this virtue is enacted.

A. Women's Form, Fame, and Speech in *Virtues of Women*

In *Mul. virt.*, Plutarch addresses "the virtues of women," γυναικῶν ἀρεταί. Ἀρετή, even though it is grammatically feminine, refers to masculine qualities of excellence—valor, prowess, courage, bravery—that become proven in war.[308] Likewise, in this treatise, women's ἀρετή occurs during war. The rhetorical situation prompting this treatise is the death of a woman named Leontis, "the most excellent woman" (τῆς ἀρίστης), and a conversation about her between Plutarch and Klea.

> εὐθύς τε μετὰ σοῦ τότε πολὺν λόγον εἴχομεν οὐκ ἀμοιροῦντα παραμυθίας φιλοσόφου καὶ νῦν, ὡς ἠβουλήθης, τὰ ὑπόλοιπα τῶν λεγομένων εἰς τὸ μίαν εἶναι καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀνδρός τε καὶ γυναικὸς ἀρετὴν.
>
> I forthwith had then a long conversation with you, which was not without some share of consolation drawn from philosophy, and now, as you desired, I have also written out for you the remainder of what I would have said on the topic, that man's virtues and woman's virtues are one and the same. (*Mul. virt.* 242F)[309]

Klea was an educated friend of Plutarch's, a priestess at Delphi, and a leader of a Dionysian sacred group. She was, therefore, qualified to converse about philosophy, history, and religion.[310] According to Plutarch, she requested that he write for her the rest

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[308] LSJ, s.v. ἀρετή.

[309] Translations of Plutarch, *Mulierum virtutes,* by F. C. Babbitt, LCL 245.

[310] Plutarch dedicates another treatise, *Isis and Osiris*, to Klea. See Sarah Pomeroy, "Commentary on Plutarch's *Advice to the Bride and Groom*," and Philip A. Stadter, "*Philosophos kai Philandros:* Plutarch's View of Women in the *Moralia* and the *Lives*," in *Plutarch's Advice to the Bride and Groom and A Consolation to his Wife*, ed. Sarah Pomeroy (New York: Oxford University, 1999), 42–43, 173–75.

of what he would have argued about women's virtue: "Man's virtues and woman's virtues are one and the same" (*Mul. virt.* 242F–243A). The more common opinion was the opposite view: Women and men differ in ἀρετή, "virtue" or "bravery."

The method he uses to prove this thesis is historical exposition (τὸ ἱστορικὸν ἀποδεικτικόν, 243A). He narrates the actions of various groups and individual women—Trojan women, Persian women, Aretaphilia, Camma, and so on. For him, a comparative method is necessary: "And actually, it is not possible to learn better the similarity and the difference between the virtues of men and women from any other source than by putting lives beside lives and actions beside actions" (243B–C). The goal is to determine whether the intelligence of Tanaquil is the same as Servius, or the spirit of Porcia is the same as that of Brutus. He suggests that differences are not due to gender but to the individual nature of persons, the time and culture in which they lived, and their mode of living (243C). In other words, Plutarch suggests that being male or female is not the determinative factor in how one acts or speaks with virtue. There are "many different kinds of bravery, wisdom, and justice" (πολλὰς καὶ διαφόρους . . . ἀνδρείας καὶ φρονήσεις καὶ δικαιοσύνας, 243D).

Plutarch provides three possibilities for whether and how women should be seen in public. First, Thucydides says that the best woman is the one who is least talked about—whether the object of blame or praise (ψόγος ἢ ἐπαίνος)—because her body and her name (τὸ σῶμα καὶ τοὔνομα) stays home (242E).[311] Plutarch disagrees with this view. Second, and better, is Gorgias's view that not the "form" but the "fame" should be known (μὴ τὸ εἶδος ἀλλὰ τὴν δόξαν εἶναι πολλοῖς γνώριμον τῆς γυναικός, 242F). Finally, the

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[311] See Thucydides, *Hist.* 2.45; Ps.-Plutarch, *Apoph. lac.* 217F.

best alternative is the Roman custom that publicly (δημοσίᾳ) memorializes women after their death (μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν τοὺς προσήκοντας ἀποδιδοὺς ἐπαίνους, 242F).[312] This last option connects to the rhetorical situation, Leontis's death. These three options deal with the physical presence and reputation of women outside the home. For Plutarch, the community should know a woman's goodness. He is less clear about whether a woman should speak in public spaces.

Plutarch's examples come from historical or legendary times of war. The stories about women's bravery as a group (§§1–15) take three basic narrative patterns: (1) Women take action collectively to ensure victory and/or peace, especially in the absence of men (§§1, 4, 6); (2) women plot to overcome their husbands' enemy (§§7, 8, 10); and (3) women urge men to action (§§3, 5). Another story tells how the Phocian women held an assembly and vote of their own, which supported the male vote (§2). Other narratives have at their center women's shame as a motivating factor for action, whether theirs or that of the male characters (§§9, 11, 13). One narrative depicts violence against women, in which their silence and endurance is their virtue (§15). Plutarch's examples resemble the stories of past women to which Livy refers: the bravery of the Sabine women and the matrons' actions in greeting the Idaean mother.

The individual examples (§§16–27) also share overlapping patterns: (1) A tyrant or cruel man falls in love with a woman (§§16, 17, 19, 20, 25, 26); and (2) violence leads to the woman's plotting revenge, either her own or on behalf of her community (§§17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25). In one case of an enemy falling for a woman, she requests and attains peace as a result (§16). But in most cases, love results in imprisonment within the

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[312] Cf. Plutarch, *Cam.* 133B; Livy, *Hist.* 5.50; Cicero, *De or.* 2.11 (44).

household and/or violence, which in turn results in the woman's plot for retribution. Often these plots involve poison (§§19, 20). In one case, a woman reveals a plot against her own people, who revere her as a hero after her death (§18). In another, a woman who is barren encourages her husband to have a child with another woman and then passes off the child as her own (§21). One woman takes a risk for the honor of a man and buries the body of an enemy of the state (§23). In two cases, women are successful in overcoming their tyrant-husbands, and their communities ask the women to govern them after the death of their husbands. One of these women refuses and goes back to weaving (§19), but the second governs successfully (§27).

As for women speaking, these exempla provide little first person discourse. The predominant way that women speak in the collective examples is by chiding their husbands to be brave and fight their enemies. Short speeches or prayers occur in the individual examples. Since many of these speeches occur within the context of plots against tyrants, they are often purposefully deceptive. When confronted by her tyrant-husband about the potions she has been working on, Aretaphilia dissembles and tells him they are not poisons for him but apotropaic potions against the love charms that other women have made to attract him (§19). Timocleia's speech to the man who at once threatened to rob her, kill her, and make her his wife is also deceptive. She tells him that her valuables are down a well, which causes him to go down into it so she can kill him (§24). Camma, a priestess of Artemis who poisons Sinorix, the man who falls for her and kills her husband, prays to Artemis and thanks her for the justice she has provided in causing Sinorix's death (§20).

Two women in the last two examples speak in ways that are politically effective. An unnamed woman incited a revolt against tyrannical rule: "These few words thus spoken laid hold upon them all, and also incited the noble-minded, for very shame, to struggle for their liberty" (Τοῦτο γὰρ λεχθὲν τὸ ῥῆμα πάντων μὲν ἥψατο, τοὺς δὲ γενναίους καὶ παρώξυνεν αἰσχύνῃ τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἀντέχεσθαι, 262C). In the last tale, the wife of Pythes convinced him that forcing all men to work in the goldmines was tyrannical and destructive. She serves him food made of gold and explains the problem with his single-minded focus on gold and riches (263A). Her sensible words show him his error and show the people that she would be a better leader than her husband.

These illustrations for Plutarch's thesis—"the virtues of men and women are one and the same"—take place during war and trade on violence and deception. The male figures are violent and tyrannical, and the women are deceptive. Shame and order are important values for women, and women's appearance and beauty are key character traits, which result in men falling in love with them. The bravery of women, then, is using beauty and treachery for their community's victory and honor. Or, they support their men in victory by reminding them how to be men or by hiding their weapons on their bodies. The separation and differences between the sexes are upheld: Men and women do different things during war to gain victory and peace. Both men and women must act, but their actions are different.

B. Women Inside and Outside of the Home in *Conjugalia Praecepta*

The treatise *Conjugalia Praecepta* supplements the picture of how Plutarch describes women and their speech.[313] He dedicated it to his newly married students

[313] For analysis of this text, see Sarah Pomeroy, ed., *Plutarch's Advice to the Bride and Groom and a Consolation to his Wife* (New York: Oxford University, 1999); Goessler, *Plutarchs Gedanken*, 44–69;

Pollianus and Eurydice, who were from prominent families in Delphi.[314] The dedicatees of this treatise illuminate Plutarch's goals and the gender dynamics at work in his ideal marriage. Eurydice was Klea's daughter, and Plutarch taught both Eurydice and Pollianus philosophy. The similitudes recorded in *Conj. praec.* are points "you have often heard in the course of your education in philosophy" (ὧν οὖν ἀκηκόατε πολλάκις ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ παρατρεφόμενοι, 138C).[315] In the conclusion, Plutarch addresses Eurydice: "Always have on your lips the remarks you learned with me as a girl" (διὰ στόματος ἀεὶ τὰς φωνὰς ἔχειν ἐκείνας ὧν καὶ παρθένος οὖσα παρ᾽ἡμῖν ἀνελάμβανες, 145E). The female half of the implied audience is a woman educated in philosophy and the daughter of an educated woman. These women are in Plutarch's social circle and on his mind as he outlines his view of an ideal marriage.

The weight of the advice is unequally distributed between the spouses. I categorize the forty-seven similitudes in five groups based on which party—bride or groom—he addresses and which gender—men or women—he discusses and bases his advice.[316] First, Plutarch gives general advice to both parties; these similitudes are not particularly gendered.[317] Second, he makes suggestions for how the bride should act based on how women behave or on a woman-focused story or custom.[318] Third, he

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Cynthia Patterson, "Plutarch's 'Advice to the Bride and Groom': Traditional Wisdom Through a Philosophic Lens," in *Plutarch's Advice*, 128–37.

[314] A statue base of Eurydice is from the theater area at Delphi (SEG 1.159). About Eurydice, see G. W. Bowersock, "Some Persons in Plutarch's *Moralia*," *CQ* 15 (1965): 267–70; Bernadette Puech, "Prosopographie des amis de Plutarque," *ANRW* 2.33.6 (1992): 4849 (Eurydice), 4873 (Pollianus).

[315] Translations of this text are from Pomeroy, *Plutarch's Advice*.

[316] I do not count the introduction and conclusion (§48) in the total number of similitudes that I analyze for patterns.

[317] Group 1: §§ 2, 3, 4, 11, 13, 20, 21, 34, 38, 39, 42.

[318] Group 2: §§ 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 19, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 40, 41, 46.

advises the groom, given the nature and character of women.[319] Fourth, he provides advice for the bride, given the tendencies and character of men.[320] Finally, he makes recommendations for the groom based on the typical characteristics of men.[321] Plutarch more often generalizes about women's character than men's: Twenty-nine passages make conclusions based on how women are (Groups 2 and 3), compared to nine based on how men are (Groups 4 and 5). Moreover, Eurydice is the implied audience to more advice than Pollianus: Twenty-seven passages advise behaviors for the wife (Groups 2 and 4), compared to twelve suggesting behaviors for the husband (Groups 3 and 5). Plutarch addresses eleven passages to wife and husband more or less equally (Group 1).

Even though both Eurydice and Pollianus were Plutarch's students, their education in philosophy supports a marriage of unequal partners. In the conclusion, Plutarch urges Pollianus to discuss philosophy with Eurydice, but this discussion is not between partners who were both students of Plutarch. Rather, in an adapted quotation of Andromache from Homer's *Iliad,* Plutarch states that Pollianus is Eurydice's "guide and philosopher and teacher of the noblest and divinest lessons" (καθηγητὴς καὶ φιλόσοφος καὶ διδάσκαλος τῶν καλλίστων καὶ θειοτάτων, 145C).[322] Plutarch gives Eurydice to Pollianus as a student just as her father gives her as a bride. In similitude 33, he views the unequal partnership of spouses as hierarchical:

> κρατεῖν δὲ δεῖ τὸν ἄνδρα τῆς γυναικὸς οὐχ ὡς δεστότην κτήματος ἀλλ᾽ὡς ψυχὴν σώματος, συμπαθοῦντα καὶ συμπεφυκότα τῇ εὐνοίᾳ. ὥσπερ οὖν σώματος ἔστι κήδεσθαι μὴ δουλεύοντα ταῖς ἡδοναῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, οὕτω γυναικὸς ἄρχειν εὐφραίνοντα καὶ χαριζόμενον.

[319] Group 3: §§ 8, 12, 15, 17, 24, 29, 30, 33, 44.

[320] Group 4: §§ 16, 18, 22, 35, 36, 37, 45.

[321] Group 5: §§ 43, 47.

[322] Cf. Homer, *Il.* 6.429.

> But the husband should rule the wife, not as a master rules a slave, but as the soul rules the body, sharing her feelings and growing with her in affection. That is the just way. One can care for one's body without being a slave to its pleasures and desires; and one can rule a wife while giving her enjoyment and kindness. (142E)

Plutarch advocates a marital relationship in which the husband, the soul, rules the wife, the body. Aligning male and female to soul and body is similar to Philo's gender dualism that associates female with the senses and male with the mind. Plutarch sees this as a benevolent hierarchy, in which the soul is attentive to the body's feelings.

Spousal hierarchy maintains the core values of marriage—harmony (ἁρμονία) and partnership (κοινωνία). Plutarch uses the metaphor of music for harmony in the home: The Muses and Aphrodite should "ensure the tunefulness of marriage and home through discourse, harmony, and philosophy" (τὴν περὶ γάμον καὶ οἶκον ἐμμέλειαν ἡρμοσμένην παρέχειν διὰ λόγου καὶ ἁρμονίας καὶ φιλοσοφίας προσῆκον, 138C). The husband remains dominant in the harmony: "When two notes are struck together, the melody belongs to the lower note" (Ὥσπερ ἂν φθόγγοι δύο σύμφωνοι ληφθῶσι, τοῦ βαρυτέρου γίγνεται τὸ μέλος, 139D). The bass note, the husband, sets the tune and is the ruler and decision maker. Spouses create κοινωνία by sharing all things. Plato's *Republic*, which describes "the happy and blessed city … in which the words 'mine' and 'not mine' are least to be heard," forms the basis for Plutarch's arguments for marital sharing and partnership (140D–E).[323] Plutarch, however, has a selective reading of Plato: The citizens in Plato's ideal city share spouses, and marriage does not exist in the same way it does in Plutarch's world. Plutarch mines what is useful from Plato—the value of κοινωνία—but relocates it to the sphere in which he thinks it is possible, marriage and household.

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[323] Cf. Plato, *Resp.* 462C.

Education in philosophy not only ensures partnership and harmony in the household, but also wards off magic and superstitious forms of religion, which appeal to women. The "magic" of Plato or Xenophon keeps women away from the magic of witchcraft (καὶ φαρμάκων ἐπῳδὰς οὐ προσδέξεται τοῖς Πλάτωνος ἐπᾳδομένη λόγοις καὶ τοῖς Ξενοφῶντος, 145C). Philosophical education keeps a woman away from subversive interactions with divine powers. Sharing her husband's gods, moreover, keeps her from magic and superstition. Plutarch wants wives to have the same friends as their husbands, and "the first and most important of our friends are the gods" (οἱ δὲ θεοὶ φίλοι πρῶτοι καὶ μέγιστοι, 140D). For Plutarch, women are particularly susceptible to "strange cults and foreign superstitions" (περιέργοις θρησκείαις καὶ ξέναις δεισιδαιμονίαις, 140D). Knowledge of philosophy, which demonstrates the errors of superstition, and harmony with her husband, which includes shared gods and religious rites, ensures that women do not engage in their own "secret and furtive" (κλεπτόμενα καὶ λανθάνοντα) rituals (140D). Even within the household, religion is a source of tension between men and women.

Within this advice, several similitudes address women's speech inside and outside of the home. In two passages, Plutarch suggests that married women should not speak in public settings. First, Plutarch likens a woman's public speech to an immodest exposure of her body:

> Ἡ Θεανὼ παρέφηνε τὴν χεῖρα περιβαλλομένη τὸ ἱμάτιον. εἰπόντος δέ τινος "καλὸς ὁ πῆχυς," "ἀλλ᾽οὐ δημόσιος," ἔφη. δεῖ δὲ μὴ μόνον τὸν πῆχυν ἀλλὰ μηδὲ τὸν λόγον δημόσιον εἶναι τῆς σώφρονος, καὶ τὴν φωνὴν ὡς ἀπογύμνωσιν αἰδεῖσθαι καὶ φυλάττεσθαι πρὸς τοὺς ἐκτός· ἐνορᾶται γὰρ αὐτῇ καὶ πάθος καὶ ἦθος καὶ διάθεσις λαλούσης.
>
> Theano once exposed her hand as she was arranging her cloak. "What a beautiful arm," said someone. "But not public property," she replied. Not only the arms but the words of a modest woman must never be public property. She should be shy with her speech as with her body, and guard it

> against strangers. Feelings, character, and disposition can be seen in a woman's talk. (142C–D)

The woman who speaks is Theano, the wife and/or student of Pythagoras, according to tradition.[324] She was a philosopher, in whose name several texts circulated in antiquity.[325] The association with the virtuous and philosophical Theano gives this similitude weight, especially for Eurydice, a female student of philosophy. This statement recalls Plutarch's reflections about whether the "form" (εἶδος) or "fame" (δόξα) of a woman should be public knowledge. Here he adds a third issue: her speech (λόγος, φωνή, λαλεῖν). Like her form, her speech should not pass the doors of the home. The reason that a woman should not speak is that it exposes her "feelings, character, and disposition" (πάθος καὶ ἦθος καὶ διάθεσις). In oratory, men, such as Cato and Valerius in Livy's *History*, reveal these parts of their character and learn how to manipulate an audience based on crafted speech that revolves around emotion, logic, and character. According to Plutarch, this form of speaking and the power it provides the speaker is not for women.

In the similitude that follows, Plutarch suggests one way a woman can articulate her ideas in public—through her husband:

> Τὴν Ἠλείων ὁ Φειδίας Ἀφροδίτην ἐποίησε χελώνην πατοῦσαν, οἰκουρίας σύμβολον ταῖς γυναιξὶ καὶ σιωπῆς. δεῖ γὰρ ἢ πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα λαλεῖν ἢ διὰ τοῦ ἀνδρός, μὴ δυσχεραίνουσαν εἰ δι᾽ἀλλοτρίας γλώττης ὥσπερ αὐλητὴς φθέγγεται σεμνότερον.
>
> Pheidias's statue of Aphrodite at Elis has her foot resting on a turtle, to symbolize homekeeping and silence. A wife should speak only to her

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[324] See Diogenes Laertius 8.42–43.

[325] See her mention in Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 4; 19; Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth*. 132; 146; 265; 267. For texts attributed to her, see Suda, s.v. Θεανώ; Mary Ellen Waithe, ed., *Ancient Women Philosophers, 600 B.C.–500 A.D.* (Dordrect: M. Nijhoff, 1987). On women in Pythagorean philosophical traditions, see Sarah Pomeroy, *Pythagorean Women: Their History and Writings* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2013).

> husband or through her husband, and should not feel aggrieved if, like a piper, she makes nobler music through another's tongue. (142D)

In Greek thought and mythology, a tortoise symbolized confinement to the home, since it carried its home on its back.[326] Plutarch adds the association with silence. At the same time, the similitude suggests a tactic for women to gain a voice outside of the home: She talks through her husband and is like a piper, which makes her husband the flute. She is the voiceless but active speaker behind the speaker, while he is the noisy and passive instrument. This analogy, whether intended this way or not, presents a counter to the typical comparisons of women to empty vessels and to portrayals of women as passive and complementary to the activity of men.

Other passages address how husbands and wives should speak to one another in their own homes. The first similitude recounts a custom from Solon: On the wedding night, a bride should eat quince. Plutarch relates this custom to speech: "The first favor of lip and voice should be harmonious and sweet" (δεῖ τὴν ἀπὸ στόματος καὶ φωνῆς χάριν εὐάρμοστον εἶναι πρῶτον καὶ ἡδεῖαν, 138D). The marital harmony he advises throughout the document has at its heart how husbands and wives speak to each other. Later, he writes that a wife should keep a husband happy and away from divorce through agreeable conversation:

> δεῖ τοίνυν μὴ προικὶ μηδὲ γένει μηδὲ κάλλει τὴν γυναῖκα πιστεύειν, ἀλλ᾽ἐν οἷς ἅπτεται μάλιστα τοῦ ἀνδρός, ὁμιλίᾳ τε καὶ ἤθει καὶ συμπεριφορᾷ, ταῦτα μὴ σκληρὰ μηδ᾽ἀνιῶντα καθ᾽ἡμέραν ἀλλ᾽εὐάρμοστα καὶ ἄλυπα καὶ προσφιλῆ παρέχειν.

> A wife, then, ought not to rely on her dowry or birth or beauty, but on things in which she gains the greatest hold on her husband, namely,

[326] For the symbolism of the turtle, see Aesop, *Fab.* 508; Servius, *ad Aen.* 1.509. For Pheidias's statue of Aphrodite, see S. Settis, *CHELÔNÊ: saggio sull' Afrodite Urania di Fidia* (Pisa, 1966), frontispiece, 3–23, 173–74, 180, 195, 204–208, fig. I–II; Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, *L'Aphrodite grecque*, Kernos suppl. 4; Athens/Liège: Centre International d'Étude de la Religion Grecque Antique, 1994), 231–36.

> conversation, character, and comradeship, which she must render not perverse or vexatious day by day, but accommodating, inoffensive, and agreeable. (141A–B)

In the subsequent passage, Plutarch narrates an account about King Philip, Queen Olympias, and a Thessalian woman. The Thessalian woman wins over Olympias based on her beautiful appearance and clever speaking. Olympias recognizes that this woman's "magic charms" are internal (141B–C).[327] Likewise, Plutarch suggests that winning over one's husband is a function of internal charms of character and virtue, which manifest themselves in appearance and speech.

Plutarch advises Eurydice to sense her husband's mood and speak to him accordingly: She should keep silent when her husband is loud and angry, and soothe him with speech when he is silently upset (143C). In private conversations, wives adjust their speech to husbands. Plutarch urges the bride and groom to keep their conversations private. Just as men and women should not engage in public displays of affection, neither should they argue, disagree, and speak about each other in the open (139E–F). Plutarch draws boundaries between the household and the outside world. Women should not speak outside the home, and they should modify their speech inside the home so that it creates harmony. The possibility of a marriage filled with philosophy, harmony, and partnership in every activity is Plutarch's goal for Pollianus and Eurydice, and by extension any married couple that reads his work.

Plutarch wrote treatises for two women, Klea and Eurydice, who were not related to him and with whom he conversed outside of the home. The female addressees and the little information that Plutarch provides about them suggest a setting in which women

[327] This narrative turns on the widespread association of Thessaly with magic and witchcraft. See, e.g., Oliver Phillips, "The Witches' Thessaly," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, ed. P. Mirecki and M. Meyer (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 378–86.

sought philosophical education and played roles in ritual activities—in this case, at Delphi, a prominent oracular temple. Plutarch asks a question about gender difference and argues that men and women are more alike than different, yet he argues for distinct roles in the household and state.

IV. Conclusion

In 1 Corinthians 11–14, Paul modifies his recommendations about whether and how women should speak in the assembly. Issues about the spaces and definitions of the ἐκκλησία, religious experiences, gender difference and hierarchy, and shame surface throughout the arguments in 1 Corinthians 11–14 and strain Paul's ambivalence toward women's speech, evident in 1 Cor 11:2–16, to the point where he instructs against their speaking at all. In this chapter, I have shown that the same tension exists for contemporary authors—Livy, Philo, and Plutarch—and that similar issues cause or exacerbate this tension. Like Paul, the three authors are concerned with defining household, market, juridicial, and/or political spaces and stating which ones are acceptable for women's speech and presence. For Philo and Plutarch, the task of defining men and women's difference, or lack thereof, sometimes clashes with their attempts to recommend social behaviors. And, for the three authors, the relationship with the gods through ritual activities and speech provides one arena that crosses spatial boundaries and clear divisions between men and women, so that women's activity in this arena is necessary yet problematic. Paul's shifting statements about women's speech fits into common rhetoric about women.

CHAPTER 4
IMAGINING WOMEN PROPHETS: THE PYTHIA AND THE SIBYL IN PHILOSOPHICAL, POETIC, AND ORACULAR LITERATURE

As I will demonstrate in Chapter 5, Paul's convoluted argument in 1 Cor 11:2–16 creates a problem to which he had to return—that is, "women praying or prophesying." Why might this be a problem for Paul? What might he envision when he thinks about a woman who is praying in tongues or prophesying? In this chapter, I demonstrate the enduring conceptual connection between women and inspired prophecy in the Greek- and Latin-speaking Mediterranean world. I argue that dramatic images of women prophesying were prevalent in the collective imagination and allowed authors to experiment with ideas about how humans communicate with God(s). I suggest that these images—often frenzied, sexualized, and violent—influenced how Paul understood and responded to events in Corinth.

The examples of two authors, separated by six centuries, demonstrate the conceptual connection between women and inspired prophecy. First, in a fragment from Euripides's *Melanippe Captive*, the female title character articulates the role of women in religion and their association with forms of inspired prophecy. While the play is lost, the immediate context is a defense of women against men's criticism. Women are better than men, Melanippe says, because they do not need contracts to keep them from reneging on agreements, and they successfully manage households. Most important is their role in religion, a topic to which Euripides devotes ten lines:

> ἃ δ᾽εἰς θεοὺς αὖ—πρῶτα γὰρ κρίνω τάδε—
> μέρος μέγιστον ἔχομεν· ἐν Φοίβου τε γὰρ
> δόμοις προφητεύουσι Λοξίου φρένα
> γυναῖκες, ἀμφὶ δ᾽ἁγνὰ Δωδώνη<ς> βάθρα
> φηγῷ παρ᾽ἱερᾷ θῆλυ τὰ[ς] Διὸς φρένας
> γένος πορεύει τοῖς θέλουσιν Ἑλλάδος.

> ἃ δ᾽ εἴς τε Μοίρας τάς τ᾽ ἀνωνύμους θεὰς
> ἱερὰ τελεῖται, ταῦτ᾽ ἐν ἀνδράσιν μὲν οὐ<χ>
> ὅσια καθέστηκ᾽, ἐν γυναιξὶ δ᾽ αὔξεται
> ἅπαντα. ταύτῃ τἀν θεοῖς ἔχει δίκη
> θήλεια.

> Now as for dealings with the gods, which I consider of prime importance, we have a very great role in them. Women proclaim Loxias's mind in Phoebus's halls, and by Dodona's holy foundations, beside the sacred oak, womankind conveys the thoughts of Zeus to those Greeks who want to know it. Those rituals, too, which are performed for the Fates and the Nameless Goddesses are not open to men, but are promoted by women entirely. That is how the rights of women stand in dealings with the gods.[328]

Melanippe gives more attention to the role of women in "dealings with the gods" than their role in the household. Foremost is prophecy at the major oracles of Apollo, "Phoebus's halls," and Zeus, "Dodona's holy foundations." The women at these oracles "prophesy" (προφητεύω) the will of the gods. Second to oracular prophecy are rituals for the Fates and Furies. While not open to men, these rituals play an important role in establishing safety and consistency in the world of men and women.[329]

In the second century CE, Pausanias displays a similar connection between women and inspired prophecy. When in the course of his travelogue through Greece he comes to the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, he shares foundation legends for the oracle. He records verses from a hymn written by a woman named Boeo, who says that the man

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[328] Euripides, *fr*. 494. Translation by C. Collard and M. Cropp, LCL 504. The fragment comes from P. Berlin 5514 and a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus.

[329] See similar descriptions of the Fates and Furies in Euripides, *Iph. taur.* 944; Sophocles, *Oed. col.* 128–33; Aeschylus, *Sept.* 975–77; Aeschylus, *Eum.* 961–62. There were two statues of the Moirae at Delphi, to represent their dual nature (Olympian and chthonic) and liminal role between chaos and order (Plutarch, *E Delph*. 385C; Pausanias, *Descr.* X.24.4). On the Fates in ancient Greek drama and ritual, see S. Eitrem, s.v. Moira, *RE* 15.2449–97; Albert Heinrichs, "Namenslosigkeit und Euphemismus. Zur Ambivalenz der chthonischen Mächte im attic Drama," in *Fragmenta Dramatica*, ed. H. Hoffmann and A. Harder (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 161–201; Albert Heinrichs, "Anonymity and Polarity: Unknown Gods and Nameless Altars at the Areopagus," *Illinois Classical Studies* 19 (1994): 27–58; Sarah Iles Johnston, "Erinys," and Albert Heinrichs, "Moira," in *Brill's New Pauly*, ed. H. Cancik and H. Schneider (Leiden: Brill, 2004–2006), 5:34–35, 9:124–26.

Olen was the first prophet at Delphi. Pausanias notes that if this is the case, it is an anomaly: "Tradition, however, reports no other man as prophet, but makes mention of prophetesses only" (οὐ μέντοι τά γε ἥκοντα ἐς μνήμην ἐς ἄλλον τινά, ἐς δὲ γυναικῶν μαντείαν ἀνήκει μόνων, *Descr.* X.5.8). When he arrives at the rock on which the Sibyl named Herophile chanted oracles, he discusses traditions of the Sibyls. He has read the oracles and poetry composed by these women and records what they say about themselves, as well as the stories and relics of the different cities that claim them—Marpessus, Erythrae, and Cumae. He then mentions the Doves of Dodona and another prophetess, Phaënnis. Finally, he lists the men who were oracle-singers (χρησμολόγοι): Euclus, Musaeüs, Lycis, and Bacis. What is striking about his discussion of these prophets is that he briefly mentions the male prophets and does not record traditions about them or their oracles, even though he has read them (X.12.1–6). The female prophets, especially the Pythian priestess and the Sibyl, loom large in his mind and the traditions he records.

The Pythia, Sibyl, and Doves of Dodona are composite and legendary figures that occupied the imaginations of authors from Euripides to Pausanias and beyond. The socio-historical realities of these women, however, are elusive. Even texts that mention the prominent oracular prophets provide fragmentary information about the rituals at Delphi, Dodona, and Didyma, or about the identities of the women. Scholars have accumulated this fragmentary evidence and written histories of oracular locations and catalogs of responses, especially for Delphi.[330] A more recent anthropological turn in classical scholarship has analyzed the social, cultural, and religious implications of prophecy and

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[330] Amandry, *La mantique apollinienne*; Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle*; Fontenrose, *Didyma*; Parke and Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*; Parke, *The Oracles of Zeus*; Parke, *The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor*. See discussion in Chapter 1.

divination.[331] Within this socio-cultural analysis, however, few scholars have focused on the role of female prophets within a world that constrains women's voices in the assembly, marketplace, forum, and courtroom. The combination of the tension over women's speech and the exceptional role of female prophets in religious and political discourse creates a rhetorical situation in which authors develop images of frenzied virginal priestesses or frightening old women, who speak with and for the gods.

In this chapter, I examine how ancient authors create literary images of female prophets.[332] Oracles fascinate many authors. They incorporate prophets and prophecy into their historical narratives, philosophical musings, dramatic poetry, and prophetic collections. The images they create are tendentious and stereotyped.[333] Certain rhetorical *topoi* recur, and authors configure them according to their literary purposes. I analyze the image-creation of female prophets in literary categories—philosophical, poetic, and oracular texts—because literary traditions have different motives for characterizing female prophets as they do. For each tradition, I discuss the common motifs and

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[331] J.-P. Vernant's approach to divination marks a shift to socio-cultural questions, "Parole et signes muets," in *Divination et rationalité*; English translation: Vernant, "Speech and Mute Signs," in *Mortals and Immortals*, 303–17. See Parker, "Greek States and Greek Oracles," 298–326; Maurizio, "Anthropology and Spirit Possession," 69–86; Lisa Maurizio, "Delphic Oracles as Oral Performances: Authenticity and Historical Evidence," *CA* 16.2 (1997): 308–34; Johnston and Struck, eds., *Mantikê*; Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination*. See discussion in Chapter 1.

[332] The vocabulary authors use to describe women prophets and their activity varies. The Hebrew Bible uses נביאה for Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah, and the Septuagint translates this term as προφῆτις, just as it translates the masculine נביא as προφήτης (Exod 15:20; Judg 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14). Greek texts most often use the terms Πυθίη, προμάντις, or μάντις for the prophet at Delphi (e.g., Herodotus, *Hist*. 6.66; 7.111). She is also simply called the "priestess," ἱέρεια, as are the prophets at Didyma and Dodona (LSJ s.v. ἱέρεια. Herodotus, *Hist*. 5.72; 8.104; Plato, *Phaedr.* 244B). When discussing Delphic prophecy, authors use the masculine προφήτης to describe a male official of the temple (Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 438C). But the terminology is fluid: Authors also use προφῆτις for the Pythia, and προφητεύω for her action (e.g., Euripides, *fr*. 597). Plato relates the terms προμάντις and μάντις to μαίνομαι and μανία, terms for "madness," an etymological hypothesis that has had great influence over subsequent scholarship about prophecy (Plato, *Phaedr.* 244B). In Latin, the Pythian prophet and the Sibyl are *vates* (See Virgil, *Aen.* 6.65; Seneca, *Tro.* 37; Lucan, *Bel. civ.* 5.209).

[333] See discussion of the tendentious nature of prophet's images in Amandry, *La mantique apollinienne*, 19–24; Aune, *Prophecy*, 391.

rhetorical *topoi* that surface in discussions of prophecy and analyze one author's portrayal of a female prophet in further depth.

For the philosophical tradition, the character of the female prophet allowed authors to interrogate how gods communicate with humans. Philosophical writers were concerned with creating taxonomies for prophetic locations and methods—whether Plato's three forms of madness or Varro's list of Sibyls and their origins. I analyze in depth Plutarch's portrayal of the Pythia at Delphi, in *De Pythia oraculis* and *De defectu oracularum*. Since Plutarch was a priest at Delphi, he had a close vantage point within the institution that he described. In line with earlier philosophical writers, he rationalized the prophetic process and interpreted the prophet as a body and soul that could be moved by the god to speak.

In poetic traditions, including Greek drama and Roman epic, gods communicate with humans in dramatic, often violent, ways, and the female prophet is the body around which this drama and violence revolves. Issues that philosophical discourse touches on—ecstatic frenzy and the sexuality of the prophet—become central to portrayals of the Pythia or Sibyl in poetic discourse. For the focal text, I analyze the account of Appuis Claudius's consultation of the Pythia in Lucan's *De bello civili*, an unfinished Latin epic about the Roman civil war, written during the reign of Nero. Lucan's epic is far from the victorious foundation legend of Virgil's *Aeneid*, in which the gods favor the Romans and are active in their success. The gods have little direct influence in human affairs, but magical and divinatory communication plays a central role. Dreams, visions, and oracles are frightening and macabre moments that advance the narrative and are dominated by female characters.

Finally, the oracular tradition is the literary record of prophetic statements. While literary records were not an integral part of the inquiry process at the temples of Delphi, Dodona, and Didyma, other prophetic traditions—particularly Hebrew and Sibylline traditions—revolved around books of prophecy and their interpretation. Sibylline books were important for Roman republican and imperial leaders, and the interpretation of these books was an art in itself. The portrayal of the Sibyl in the composite Jewish and Christian *Sibylline Oracles* shares much with poetic traditions: She is frenzied and sexualized and experiences a violent prophetic process. The melding of cultural traditions, however, adds another layer to this character. The *Sibylline Oracles* trade on the popularity of the non-Jewish Sibyl to voice Jewish monotheism and apocalypticism and to portray prophetic communication in a way distinct from the male prophets of the Hebrew canon.

I have chosen the focal texts—Plutarch's Delphic dialogues, Lucan's *De bello civili*, and the *Sibylline Oracles*—because they have influenced New Testament and early Christian scholars' discussions about women and prophecy. Moreover, they span the centuries surrounding the establishment of Paul's communities (2nd century BCE to 2nd century CE), and, in the case of the *Sibylline Oracles*, have lives that extended into early Christian discourse. The variety of geographical and cultural contexts (Greek, Roman, Jewish, Egyptian) and literary genres provides a broad field in which to examine female prophecy, while allowing depth into specific texts and rhetorical perspectives.

I. Philosophical Traditions

A. History and Philosophy: Interrogating Communication with Gods

Two classical Greek authors, Herodotus and Plato, are influential for portrayals of female prophets in philosophical traditions. First, even though he is a historian rather than a philosopher, Herodotus influenced later philosophical discussions about female prophets, particularly with regard to views on ambiguous speech and interpretation, and for this reason I include his *History* in this section. Herodotus records several consultations of the oracle at Delphi and demonstrates its role in Greek politics, settlement, and wars.[334] In his *History*, the gods enter human affairs and advance the course of history through the oracle. The speech of the prophet is difficult for Herodotus's characters to understand, which necessitates interpretation. Second, in the *Phaedrus*, Plato delineates three forms of madness: Dionysian, poetic, and prophetic. The emphasis on madness in the prophetic process runs contrary to Herodotus's sober depiction of the Pythia, but it has had significant influence on subsequent portrayals of female prophets and on modern scholarship. Plato's concept of μανία displays philosophical tendencies to categorize types of madness and prophetic traditions, as well as the desire to define how divine communication works.

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[334] Herodotus is integral for scholarship that reconstructs the history and catalog of the oracles. See Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle*; Parke and Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*; Parker, "Greek States and Greek Oracles;" Roland Crahay, *La littérature oraculaire chez Hérodote* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1956). On Herodotus's use of oracles, see A. Fairbanks, "Herodotus and the Oracle at Delphi," *CJ* 1.2 (1906): 37–48; H. W. Parke, "Croesus and Delphi," *GRBS* (1984): 209–32; E. Barker, "Paging the Oracle: Interpretation, Identity and Performance in Herodotus' 'History,'" *G&R* 53.1 (2006): 1–28; Julia Kindt, "Delphic Oracle Stories and the Beginning of Historiography: Herodotus' Croesus Logos," *CP* 101.1 (2006): 34–51; Maurizio, "Delphic Oracles as Oral Performances," 308–34; Leslie Kurke, "'Counterfeit Oracles' and 'Legal Tender': The Politics of Oracular Consultation in Herodotus," *CW* 102.4 (2009): 417–38.

1. Herodotus's History

Herodotus mentions oracular temples and/or prophetic persons forty-two times throughout the narrative.[335] The majority of consultations occur at Delphi, but other diviners, oracles, and temples also appear: the oracle of Ammon in Libya, Abae in Phocis, Amphiaraus and Trophonius (1.46), Dodona (1.46; 9.93), the Branchidae at Miletus (Didyma) (1.46; 6.19), an oracle of Dionysus (7.111), a diviner named Tisamenus (9.33), and an oracle of Bacis (9.43). Early in the *History*, Herodotus demonstrates the accuracy of the oracle at Delphi and the process of interpretation that oracles require. King Croesus tested several oracles by sending emissaries to ask the prophets what he was doing at that time. The Pythia responded in hexameter verse, which the Lydian emissaries recorded and brought back to Croesus in Sardis. Croesus read all of the oracles, and only those from Delphi and Amphiaraus satisfied him: "When he heard the Delphian message, he acknowledged it with worship and welcome, considering that Delphi was the only true place of divination because it had discovered what he himself had done" (1.48).[336]

Even though Amphiaraus was also correct, it does not play the integral role in the narrative that Delphi does. Croesus, as well as other kings and delegations, continued to consult the oracle, whose statements were in clear, yet ambiguous, language. His second inquiry was about whether he should go to war with the Persians. Both Amphiaraus and Delphi gave the same answer: Croesus would destroy a great empire. He interpreted this

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[335] Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.19, 46–56 (Croesus), 65–68, 85–91 (Croesus), 167, 174; 3.57–58; 4.15, 150–51, 155–61, 163; 5.42–43, 63, 67, 79–80, 82, 89, 90, 92; 6.19, 34–35, 52, 66, 77, 86, 135, 139; 7.111, 139–43 (an oracle for Athens about the "wall of wood"), 148–49, 163, 169, 178, 220, 239; 8.35–39, 114, 122; 9.33, 42, 43, 93–94.

[336] Translation of Herodotus by A. D. Godley, LCL 117.

to mean that he would be victorious (1.53). His third consultation was about the length of his reign, which he again interpreted positively. After he was unsuccessful in his war with the Persians, he returned to the oracle to ask why she led him astray. The Pythia responded:

> None may escape his destined lot, not even a god … For Loxias declared to [Croesus] that if he should lead an army against the Persians he would destroy a great empire. Therefore, it behooved him, if he would take right counsel, to send and ask whether the god spoke of Croesus's or of Cyrus's empire. But he understood not that which was spoken, nor made further inquiry: wherefore now let him blame himself. (1.91)

The prophet tells him the correct interpretation of her oracles and demonstrates his interpretive errors. She is both the voice of the god and an interpreter of the god's words and human behavior. The process of interpretation, moreover, protects her and the Delphic institution from accusations of falsehood.

In this way, the oracle predicts and drives historical development. Fate cannot be avoided, but with proper interpretation, positive outcomes may occur. Herodotus punctuates the narrative with oracles, and they are the means by which the gods enter the history of Greece. In this earliest literary depiction of the Pythian prophet, she speaks in hexameter verse that must be interpreted by the recipient of the prophecy. When confronted by Croesus, she speaks clearly and interprets her prophecy. This is not the last time inquirers challenge her: Her integrity is a source of contention at other points in the *History*, especially when inquirers receive unfavorable oracles (5.63, 90; 6.66). Conflict over whether the Pythia tells the truth or can be bribed occurs also in later texts and in stories about other female prophets.[337] This literary trope indicates that the prophet had

[337] See similar stories of bribing the prophets at Delphi or Dodona: Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 5.16; Strabo, *Geogr.* 9.2; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl.* 14.13; Plutarch, *Her. mal.* 23; Pausanias, *Descr.* III.4.

control over the prophetic process and that her ability and authority caused anxiety for some inquirers.

2. Plato's Three Forms of Madness

Plato has a different, but equally influential, view of the prophet at Delphi. Plato does not recount oracles or discuss at length the prophetic process. Rather, in the *Apology, Phaedrus,* and *Ion*, he discusses inspiration and categories of prophetic, poetic, and Dionysian madness.[338] These discussions influenced ancient writers and modern scholars who have investigated Greek oracles and early Christian prophecy.[339] In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates discusses the madness, μανία, caused by love and argues that not all madness is negative. Some of the most beneficial things—poetry and prophecy—are provided through god-given madness.

> ἥ τε γὰρ δὴ ἐν Δελφοῖς προφῆτις αἵ τ' ἐν Δωδώνῃ ἱέρειαι μανεῖσαι μὲν πολλὰ δὴ καὶ καλὰ ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ δημοσίᾳ τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἠργάσαντο, σωφρονοῦσαι δὲ βραχέα ἢ οὐδέν· καὶ ἐὰν δὴ λέγωμεν Σίβυλλάν τε καὶ ἄλλους, ὅσοι μαντικῇ χρώμενοι ἐνθέῳ πολλὰ δὴ πολλοῖς προλέγοντες εἰς τὸ μέλλον ὤρθωσαν, μηκύνοιμεν ἂν δῆλα παντὶ λέγοντες.
>
> For the prophetess at Delphi and priestesses at Dodona when they have been mad have conferred many splendid benefits upon Greece, both in private and public affairs, but few or none when they have been in their right minds. If we should speak of the Sibyl and all others who by prophetic inspiration have foretold many things to many persons and thereby made them fortunate afterwards, anyone can see that we should speak a long time. (*Phaedr.* 244A–B)[340]

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[338] Plato, *Apol.* 22C; *Phaedr.* 244A–254A; *Ion* 533C–E

[339] See Plato's influence in: Plutarch, *Amat.* 758D–759C; Aelius Aristides, *In Defense of Oratory* 34–35, 40, 42–43. Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle*, 204–12, identifies Plato as the origin of the depiction of the Pythia as raving and mad. In studies of prophecy in early Christianity that depend on Plato for interpreting ecstatic states, see Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy," 128–29; S. J. Chester, "Divine Madness? Speaking in Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14.23," *JSNT* 27.4 (2005): 421–23; J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians and Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 225–47. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired*, 103–13, challenges Dunn's characterization of Delphic inspiration and dependence on Plato.

[340] Translations of Plato by H. N. Fowler, LCL 36.

Plato associates with each other the big three female prophets—Delphi, Dodona, and Sibyl. The good they do for individuals and communities occurs when they are "mad" or "raving" (μαίνομαι) in contrast to being in a state of right mind (σωφρονέω). The verb μαίνομαι and the noun μανία are Plato's vocabulary for describing the distinctive mental state of the prophet. Plato relates this vocabulary to the terminology for divination, the adjective μαντικός, "prophetic" or "oracular." Two other terms that Plato uses for the mental state are ἔνθεος, "full of the god," and κατέχω, "to hold fast or gain possession."[341]

Plato associates prophetic madness with two other forms of god-given madness: Poets experience inspiration from the Muses, and Bacchic revelers from Dionysus. In the *Phaedrus*, all three provide analogies to the mental state brought on by love. In the *Apology*, Socrates's focus is on poetic madness. Because of their inspiration, poets cannot understand their poetry and become wise. He states:

> ἔγνων οὖν αὖ καὶ περὶ τῶν ποιητῶν ἐν ὀλίγῳ τοῦτο, ὅτι οὐ σοφίᾳ ποιοῖεν ἃ ποιοῖεν, ἀλλὰ φύσει τινὶ καὶ ἐνθουσιάζοντες ὥσπερ οἱ θεομάντεις καὶ οἱ χρησμῳδοί· καὶ γὰρ οὗτοι λέγουσι μὲν πολλὰ καὶ καλά, ἴσασιν δὲ οὐδὲν ὧν λέγουσι.
>
> So again in the case of the poets also I presently recognized this, that what they composed, they composed not by wisdom, but by nature and because they were inspired, like the prophets and givers of oracles; for these also say many fine things, but know none of the things they say. (*Apol.* 22B–C)

Plato imagines that poets, the Sibyl, and the prophets of Delphi and Dodona are filled with the god and become mad. They then speak poetry or oracles, but after their madness ends, they do not know what they have said. Plato does not suggest behaviors or appearances that mark μανία or ἐνθουσιασμός. Neither does he speculate on how poetic

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[341] See *Phaedr.* 244E; *Ion*, 533E.

or prophetic madness occurs. By contrast, poetic literature provides vivid depictions of the physical manifestations of madness. The mental state of the prophet manifests itself in frenzied, wild behavior that emphasizes the physicality of possession by the gods.[342]

B. The Pythia in Plutarch's *De defectu oracularum* and *De Pythiae oraculis*

Plutarch, a Delphic priest, eclectic philosopher, and prolific writer, provides the most extended discussion of how prophecy worked at Delphi from any era of its long history.[343] Written in the late-first to early-second centuries CE, Plutarch's observations come from a man who may have witnessed the Delphic ritual. His arguments for the efficacy of prophecy blend philosophical perspectives and validate a ritual form of communication with the gods that extends back to archaic Greece in light of the new social, cultural, and political situation under Roman imperial rule. Like Herodotus and Plato, Plutarch gives little attention to the gender of the oracle. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Plutarch does comment elsewhere in his corpus on issues of gender, including the differences and similarities of men and women and the best practices for harmonious marriages. He addresses two treatises, *Mulierum virtutes* and *De Iside et Osiride*, to Klea, a priestess at Delphi, and another treatise, *Conjugalia praecepta*, to her daughter Eurydice and her husband, who were Plutarch's students. These dedications to Klea and Eurydice suggest that Plutarch had conversations with women who were religious officials and who may have experienced the prophetic ἐνθουσιασμός that he

[342] The prevalence of the idea of a mad and frenzied prophet was popular and widespread. Dio Chrysostom, *1 Regn.*, 52–56, demonstrates the divergence between what the speaker expects of prophets and what he experiences: "The manner of her prophesying was not that of most men and women who are said to be inspired; she did not gasp for breath, whirl her head about, or try to terrify with her glances, but spoke with entire self-control and moderation." (J. W. Cohoon, LCL 257).

[343] On Plutarch's priesthood at Delphi, see his *Quaest. conv.* III.700E, and an inscription from Delphi erected during his tenure as priest, CIG 1713.

describes.[344] His proximity to priestesses, along with his philosophical attention to language, divine communication, and men and women, makes him a valuable source for considering the gendered portrayals of prophets and prophecy within philosophical literature.[345]

Two dialogues, *De Pythiae oraculis* and *De defectu oraculorum*, provide detailed discussion of oracular processes at Delphi and the role of the Pythian priestess.[346] In these dialogues, Plutarch provides rational answers to religious questions about the oracle. The first text, *Pyth. orac.*, focuses on the form of oracular responses. In the past, the prophets gave oracles in verse, but in Plutarch's time they delivered oracles in prose. Why the change? Various philosophical positions—Stoic, Epicurean, and Platonist—address the versification of oracles and the workings of prophecy. The last half of the dialogue provides the argument of Theon, who likely voices Plutarch's position, concerning the Delphic ἐνθουσιασμός, or "God within," the means by which the oracle prophesies.[347]

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[344] On Klea's identity and education, see Stadter, "*Philosophos kai Philandros*," 173–75; E. Kapetanopoulos, "Klea and Leontis: Two Ladies from Delphi," *BCH* 90 (1966): 119–30; Puech, "Prosopographie des amis de Plutarque," 4842–43. See discussion of these texts in Chapter 3.

[345] Several works have addressed Plutarch's views on women, especially in the *Vitae, Conjugalia praecepta, Consolatio ad uxorem,* and *Mulierum virtutes*. See the essays in Pomeroy, ed., *Plutarch's* Advice to the Bride and Groom *and* A Consolation to his Wife; Patterson, "Plutarch's 'Advice to the Bride and Groom: Traditional Wisdom through a Philosophic Lens"; Odom, "A Study of Plutarch: The Position of Greek Women"; Lisette Goessler, *Plutarchs Gedanken über die Ehe*; J. Bremmer, "Plutarch and the Naming of Greek Women," *AJP* 102.4 (1981): 425–26; le Corsu, *Plutarque et les femmes*; Verniere, "Plutarch et les femmes," 165–69; K. Blomqvist, "From Olympias to Aretaphila: Women in Politics in Plutarch," in *Plutarch and his Intellectual World*: *Essays on Plutarch*, ed. J. Mossman and B. Ewen (London: Duckworth, 1997), 773–98; Nikolaidis, "Plutarch on Women and Marriage," 27–88; P. Walcot, "Plutarch on Women," *Symbolae Osloensis* 74 (1999): 163–83; B. Buszard, "The Speech of Greek and Roman Women in Plutarch's *Lives*," *CP* 105.1 (2010): 83–115; A. Chapman, *The Female Principle in Plutarch's "Moralia"* (Dublin: University College Dublin, 2011). The Delphic dialogues do not often enter into scholarly discussions about Plutarch's views about women.

[346] For critical commentaries on these two texts, see Robert Flacelière, "Sur la Disparition des Oracles" and "Sur les oracles de la Pythie" in *Dialogues Pythiques* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1974); S. Schröder, *Plutarchs Schrift De Pythiae Oraculis: Text, Einleitung, und Kommentar* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1990).

[347] Plutarch's own point of view is often elusive in the dialogues. Often one character is a stand-in for the author. In *Pyth. orac.*, Theon; in *Def. orac.*, Lamprias, Plutarch's brother. See discussion, Lamberton, *Plutarch*, 5.

The second text, *Def. orac.*, asks why the oracle is in decline. The dialogue provides four possible answers: (1) gods refuse to give oracles because of the wickedness of people; (2) population decline in Greece requires less communication from the gods; (3) gods use demigods to mediate between themselves and humans, and when demigods leave a place like Delphi, it loses its prophetic power; (4) the winds of prophecy that come from the earth change and may disappear. The dialogue does not come to a conclusion about which answer is correct, but the third and fourth are considered most plausible.

Plutarch became a priest at Delphi in 93 CE, and he likely composed these "Delphic dialogues" during his tenure.[348] Plutarch was Greek, living under Roman imperial rule during the "Second Sophistic" revival of attention to classical Greek philosophy and rhetoric.[349] Near the end of *Pyth. orac.*, he comments on the political stability of the empire: "War has ceased, there are no wanderings of people, no civil strifes, no despotisms, nor other maladies and ills in Greece requiring many unusual remedial forces" (πέπαυται δὲ πόλεμος, καὶ πλάναι καὶ στάσεις οὐκ εἰσὶν οὐδὲ τυραννίδες, οὐδ' ἄλλα νοσήματα καὶ κακὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὥσπερ πολυφαρμάκων δυνάμεων χρῄζοντα καὶ περιττῶν, *Pyth. orac.* 408B–C).[350] Stability means that questions to the oracle are different from those of the classical age. The dramatic setting of the dialogue indicates a context in which people visited the temple as tourists: Guides give tours to visitors and explain statues and inscriptions (*Pyth. orac.* 395B). This historical

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[348] Based on internal and external evidence, Ogilvie suggests a date of composition for *Def. orac.* between 95 and 115 CE. Since the two Delphic dialogues are related, *Pyth. orac.* was written around the same time. R. M. Ogilvie, "The Date of the *De Defectu Oraculorum*," *Phoenix* 21.2 (1967): 109. For dating of Plutarch's works more generally, see Jones, "Towards a Chronology of Plutarch's Works," 61–74.

[349] See Tim Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005); Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, A.D. 50–250* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998).

[350] Translation by F. C. Babbitt, LCL 306. On the intended audience, see Babbitt's introduction, *Plutarch's Moralia*, 5:256–57; C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1971).

situation influenced the oracles, as well as how Plutarch rationalizes the prophetic process.

Plutarch's questions deal with the form and mechanisms of prophecy and how the female prophet is an intermediary between the god and her human audience. His philosophical answers for these religious questions depend on Plato's definition of prophetic madness and enthusiasm. In another treatise, *Amatorius*, Plutarch refers directly to Plato's ideas of μανία from the *Phaedrus*. He discusses μανία that "does not exist without divine inspiration" (ἐστὶν οὐκ ἀθείαστος, 758E). This madness comes from outside the body, from a higher power, and "displaces the faculty of rational inference" (παρατροπὴ τοῦ λογιζομένου καὶ φρονοῦντος, 758E). Plutarch labels this madness "enthusiastic" (ἐνθουσιαστικός) and follows Plato in defining three kinds, which are inspired by different gods: the prophetic from Apollo, the Bacchic from Dionysus, and the poetic from the Muses. These forms of madness are different from the madness of love, the central topic of both Plutarch's *Amatorius* and Plato's *Phaedrus*, because inspired madness leaves a person, while love does not. He states: "The Pythia regains calm and tranquility once she has left her tripod and its exhalations" (ἡ Πυθία τοῦ τρίποδος ἐκβᾶσα καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν γαλήνῃ καὶ ἡσυχίᾳ, 759B). Plutarch develops these ideas of enthusiasm in his Delphic dialogues. Where he differs from Plato, however, is in his portrayal of prophetic inspiration as requiring the active role of the prophet. Plato's argument that prophets and poets do not know what they produce implies a passive mental state. For Plutarch, the prophet is not just a vessel into whom Apollo pours his prophecy; rather, she is responsible for the language of oracles and for the control of the institution and rituals.

The active role of the female prophet is manifest in Plutarch's discussion of how she communicates with the god and the people who receive her prophecy. In *Pyth. orac.*, the discussion begins with the complaint that the verse of a certain oracle is not as elegant as some poetry composed by human authors (396C). Theon responds by saying that the god does not actually compose oracles. Rather, he places visions in the mind of the prophet, and she vocalizes them (397C). She composes and speaks based on her own abilities. Similarly, in *Def. orac.*, Lamprias argues that the god does not act as a ventriloquist or employ the prophet's mouth as an instrument (414E). Rather, the soul is the instrument of the god. The god places visions and light into her soul (ἐκεῖνος δὲ μόνας τὰς φαντασίας παρίστησι καὶ φῶς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, *Pyth. orac.* 397C). This vision results from ἐνθουσιασμός, "the god within" or inspiration. When Lamprias describes the spirits (ῥεῦμα and πνεῦμα) from the chasms in the earth that may be responsible for prophecy, he states that they dispose souls to inspiration (ἐνθουσιαστικῶς) and impressions of the future (φαντασιαστικῶς τοῦ μέλλοντος, *Def. orac.* 433C). The πνεύματα cause the soul to enact its natural ability to see. Divine communication occurs inside the body and soul of the prophet, and the prophet's mind must transmit what it sees into human language.

In *Pyth. orac.*, Theon cites Heraclitus (5th century BCE): Apollo "neither tells nor conceals but indicates" (οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει). The medium of Apollo's signaling is "through a mortal body and a soul that is unable to keep quiet" (διὰ σώματος θνητοῦ καὶ ψυχῆς <ἀνθρωπίνης> ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν μὴ δυναμένης, 404E). Theon likens the god's communication through the Pythia to an object floating in water: The object's movements are erratic and circular, but its nature, in combination with external

forces, causes movement. Likewise, the priestess may look frenzied and out of her mind, but the god moves her natural abilities into action. Her body and mind participate in the process and shape the language of the oracle. In *Def. orac.*, the prophetic source—whether demigods or currents from the earth—act upon the body and soul. Ritual cleansings of the body allow the soul to relax so that it can "range amid the irrational and imaginative realms of the future" (<τῷ> ἀλόγῳ καὶ φαντασιαστικῷ τοῦ μέλλοντος ἐπιστρεφόμεναι, 432C). This movement of the soul requires the strength of a mind that will allow the soul to move into a different realm and experience inspiration. Sometimes the body itself is able to attain this state, but other times the body needs an outside stimulus. In the case at Delphi, a "prophetic breath" (τὸ μαντικὸν πνεῦμα) from the earth enters the body and prompts reception of inspiration (*Def. orac.* 433D–E).

The god, therefore, communicates to the prophet via ἐνθουσιασμός and the mantic πνεῦμα. The prophet must then communicate the god's message to human beings. On this side of the communication chain, versification is the key issue, since the dialogue in *Pyth. orac.* begins with a critique of the "barrenness and cheapness" of the language of the current priestesses (396C–D). Lack of verse is a source of contention because it caused people to question the truth of the prophet's speech and whether the god remained at the oracle. Plutarch suggests two reasons why the Pythia no longer speaks in verse. First, the adaptation of language responded to the needs of men. Plutarch attributes this change of language to both the god and the priestesses (*Pyth. orac*. 406E–F, 407D). In prior days when kings consulted the oracle about political actions, settlements, and wars, indirect statement and ambiguity was necessary: "It was not to the advantage of those concerned with the oracle to vex and provoke these men by unfriendliness through their

hearing many of the things that they did not wish to hear" (οὓς ἀνιᾶν καὶ παροξύνειν ἀπεχθείᾳ πολλὰ τῶν ἀβουλήτων ἀκούοντας οὐκ ἐλυσιτέλει τοῖς περὶ τὸ χρηστήριον, *Pyth. orac.* 407D).[351] The prophet adapted her voice to fit the needs of the social and political world and to retain her prophetic authority. As in the Pythia's interaction with Croesus in Herodotus's account, the vagueness of the Pythia's speech provides protection against petitioners' challenges or abuse of the prophet due to an oracle being incorrect.[352] The ambiguous nature of Pythian oracles ensures that prophecy cannot be wrong. It can only be misinterpreted. Because of the ambiguity of her language, powerful leaders are not able to control the priestess or the temple at Delphi.

A second reason for the adaptation of the language of oracles is the changing nature of the Pythia's abilities, due to personal differences and cultural changes. In *Pyth. orac.*, Plutarch suggests that prophetic spirits interact "with each person according to the art or ability that she possesses" (ἑκάστῳ καθ' ἣν ἔχει τέχνην ἢ δύναμιν, 405A). The use of the term τέχνη suggests that prophecy is a learned craft with particular goals, as in the Platonic sense of the term.[353] The terms δύναμις and φύσις suggest that prophecy requires a natural, inborn aptitude, which varies by person. Plutarch continues: "Some abilities and natures (δυνάμεις καὶ φύσεις) are created for some purposes and others for others, and each one of these is moved to action in a different way, even if the power that moves them all be one and the same" (405B). This statement is similar to Paul's concept of how

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[351] In a similar vein, and informed by modern anthropological studies of oracular procedures, Maurizio argues that "the Pythias responded to colonists' needs by mirroring them: the Pythias developed a 'style,' ambiguity, that traced the colonists' desire to make the unknown readable by replicating it in language." Maurizio, "The Voice at the Center of the World," 42. See also L. Walsh, "The Rhetoric of Oracles," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 33.3 (2003): 55–78.

[352] See Maurizio, "Anthropology and Spirit Possession," for discussion of this process from an anthropological perspective.

[353] Plato, *Phaedr.* 245A, 271C; *Phaed.* 90B; *Euthyd.* 282D; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1354A11; *Eth. nic.* 1140A8.

πνευματικά work within a diverse and unified community (1 Cor 12:11). Paul does not, however, discuss prophecy in terms of τέχνη, as Plutarch does, and Plutarch does not consider the workings of spirits in a communal setting, as Paul does. Plutarch is concerned with how the variety of oracular language reconciles with the unity and constancy of the god who inhabits the shrine. Variety and unity coexist in Delphic prophecy because prophets vary in their art and abilities.

To illustrate how spirits act upon different people in different ways, he discusses the current Pythia. She is an example of the natural aptitudes prophets possess for communicating with gods and the problem with expecting that oracles be composed in good Greek verse. This Pythia comes from a poor, peasant background and "brings nothing with her as the result of technical skill or of any other expertness or faculty, as she goes down into the shrine" (τραφεῖσα δ' ἐν οἰκίᾳ γεωργῶν πενήτων οὔτ' ἀπὸ τέχνης οὐδὲν οὔτ' ἀπ' ἄλλης τινὸς ἐμπειρίας καὶ δυνάμεως ἐπιφερομένη κάτεισιν εἰς τὸ χρηστήριον, *Pyth. orac.* 405C). Plutarch compares her to Xenophon's ideal bride, who is educated by her husband on the craft of household management:

> ὥσπερ ὁ Ξενοφῶν οἴεται δεῖν ἐλάχιστα τὴν νύμφην ἰδοῦσαν ἐλάχιστα δ' ἀκούσασαν εἰς ἀνδρὸς βαδίζειν, οὕτως ἄπειρος καὶ ἀδαὴς ὀλίγου δεῖν ἁπάντων καὶ παρθένος ὡς ἀληθῶς τὴν ψυχὴν τῷ θεῷ σύνεστιν.
>
> Just as Xenophon believes that a bride should have seen and heard as little as possible before she proceeds to her husband's house, so this girl, inexperienced and uninformed about practically everything, a pure, virgin soul, becomes the associate of the god. (*Pyth. orac.* 405D)[354]

The point is that the Pythia is pure with regard to education in technical or artistic skills: She does not know how to create eloquent verse and does not have the capacity for embellished language and metaphor. Plutarch's audience, moreover, should not expect

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[354] See Xenophon, *Oec.* 7.

the prophet to speak clearly and rationally because they do not expect clarity in other forms of divination, particularly augury. When Plutarch discusses the τέχνη of prophecy, he is discussing the language that prophets use to communicate with humans, more so than the methods they use to communicate with the gods.

In contrast with the current prophet, past Pythian priestesses prophesied in poetry. "That era," he says, "produced personal temperaments and natures which had an easy fluency and a bent toward composing poetry" (καὶ σωμάτων ἤνεγκε κράσεις καὶ φύσεις ὁ χρόνος ἐκεῖνος εὔρουν τι καὶ φορὸν ἐχούσας πρὸς ποίησιν, *Pyth. orac.* 405E). Education of young girls in classical Greece may have included instruction in poetry, singing, and dancing.[355] Plutarch registers a cultural shift in language that may hint at the changes in the education of women. He thinks that the current style of language of the Pythia is a change for the better. He writes:

> ἡ δὲ τῆς Πυθίας διάλεκτος, ὥσπερ οἱ μαθηματικοὶ γραμμὴν εὐθεῖαν καλοῦσι τὴν ἐλαχίστην τῶν τὰ αὐτὰ πέρατ' ἐχουσῶν, οὕτως οὐ ποιοῦσα καμπὴν οὐδὲ κύκλον οὐδὲ διπλόην οὐδ' ἀμφιβολίαν ἀλλ' εὐθεῖα πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν οὖσα πρὸς δὲ πίστιν ἐπισφαλὴς καὶ ὑπεύθυνοςοὐδένα καθ' αὑτῆς ἔλεγχον ἄχρι νῦν παραδέδωκεν.
>
> And as for the language of the Pythia, just as the mathematicians call the shortest of lines between two points a straight line, so her language makes no bend nor curve nor doubling nor equivocation, but is straight in relation to the truth; yet, in relation to men's confidence in it, it is insecure and subject to scrutiny, but as yet it has afforded no proof of its being wrong. (*Pyth. orac.* 408F)

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[355] See C. Calame, "Sappho's Group: An Initiation into Womanhood," in *Reading Sappho: Contemporary Approaches,* ed. Ellen Greene (Berkeley: University of California, 1996), 117, discusses the possibility of a "school" in which Sappho taught young women to compose and sing poetry. For philosophical perspectives on what education of girls should include, see Plato, *Resp.* 451C–461E; *Leg.* 7.804E; Musonius Rufus 3–4; Martial, *Epigrams* 10.35. Philosophers and rhetoricians viewed female education as important because children received their earliest knowledge of language and speech from their mothers. See Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.6–20; Cicero, *Brut.* 58.211.

The issue is "men's confidence in it," not the lack of truth. Interpretation is the source of problems resulting from prophecy, as Herodotus indicated. Plutarch states what might be called the Delphic institutional stance on the validity of oracles: If an oracle seems false, the problem is with the inquirer, not the prophet.

By drawing the analogy to Xenophon's bride and using the term παρθένος for the current priestess, Plutarch sexualizes the image of the uneducated priestess. She is pure with regard to sexual experience, which makes her an appropriate partner for the god. Plutarch's analogy deflects attention from the priestess's rural upbringing and lack of technical skill to the sexual analogy for the prophetic process.[356] Plutarch, therefore, witnesses two strategies that validated the Delphic oracle and allowed it to continue for centuries: (1) the ambiguous language of oracles and (2) the characterization of the prophet as pure. Her purity suggests that she can be influenced only by the god.

But were the priestesses as unknowing and uneducated as Plutarch indicates? In Herodotus's account, the priestesses at Delphi had control over the institution and rituals. They could refuse to prophesy, or they could accept bribes to favor one party. The same seems to be the case in the Hellenistic period and in Plutarch's time. Plutarch tells two anecdotes about priestesses who understood and exercised control over the rituals at Delphi. First, in *Alexander*, Plutarch recounts Alexander's consultation of the oracle concerning his expedition against the Persians (*Alex.* 14). He came on a day "against fortune" (κατὰ τύχην), when the oracle was not functioning. Despite institutional regulations, Alexander demanded a consultation. The priestess refused, citing the law as support. Alexander proceeded to drag her into the temple, which caused her to exclaim,

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[356] On the virginal characterization as an "institutional wink" that insulated Delphi from criticism, see Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination,* 44. On the education of Pythian priestesses, Goff, *Citizen Bacchae*, 220.

"You are invincible, my son!" Alexander took this statement as his oracle, "the oracle that he wanted from her" (ὃν ἐβούλετο παρ᾽ αὐτῆς χρησμόν). This case demonstrates the ability of the prophet to refuse the inquiries of powerful men, since the temple had laws that governed it. Alexander, however, responds with violence and interprets her words as he wished.[357]

Second, in *Def. orac.*, Plutarch discusses "the case of the priestess who died not so long ago" (ὥσπερ ἴσμεν ἐπὶ τῆς ἔναγχος ἀποθανούσης Πυθίας, *Def. orac.* 438A–C).[358] The point of the story for Plutarch is the necessity of the proper state of body and soul of the Pythia before the mantic session. Disturbances of the body "filter into her soul" (*Def. orac.* 437D). A state of emotion and instability incapacitates the imaginative faculty that allows visions from the god. In this case, the sacrifices of a delegation did not produce the proper results, which caused the Pythia's reluctance to prophesy: "She went down into the oracle unwillingly and halfheartedly." Her emotional agitation, which resulted from seeing the failed sacrifice, resulted in "harshness of her voice," violent and hysterical movements of her body, and death. Plutarch makes it clear that this is an unusual case: Her inspiration was "misleading, abnormal, and confusing" (παράφορον

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[357] Diodorus Siculus's story about Philomelos's seizure of Delphi includes a narrative that follows the same pattern. See *Bibl.* 16.25–27.

[358] In an attempt to date her death, Ogilvie, "Date," 117, points to Nicander's tenure as priest at Delphi prior to 67 CE, as well as Lucan's *De bello civili*. Lucan's account of the death of a prophet when Appius Claudius consults the oracle alters the common account of Appius's consultation and resembles Plutarch's more violent account. Ogilvie suggests that "Lucan has taken advantage of a recent sensation," the dramatic death of a Pythian priestess, and modified Appius's story to match. Since Lucan died in 65 CE with his work unfinished, Ogilvie suggests a date of 63 CE, which would have been about thirty years prior to Plutarch's writing, as a plausible date for Plutarch's Pythia "who recently died." Lucan, *De bello civili* 5.65–236. Cf. the less dramatic account of Appius Claudius's consultation in Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta* 1.8.10. See discussion in R. E. Heine, "A Note on Lucan's *Bellum civile* 5.79–81 and 5.121," in *CB* (1977): 44–45; J. Bayet, "La mort de la pythie. Lucain, Plutarque et la chronologie delphique," in *Mélanges dédiés à la mémoire de Felix Grat, I* (Paris: Pecquer-Grat, 1946), 53–76.

καὶ οὐκ ἀκέραιον καὶ παρακτικόν, 438A). Frenzy and erratic responses are not common, and even dangerous. He concludes:

> τούτων ἕνεκα καὶ συνουσίας ἁγνὸν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὸν βίον ὅλως ἀνεπίμεικτον ἀλλοδαπαῖς ὁμιλίαις καὶ ἄθικτον φυλάττουσι τῆς Πυθίας, καὶ πρὸ τοῦ χρηστηρίου τὰ σημεῖα λαμβάνουσιν, οἰόμενοι τῷ θεῷ κατάδηλον εἶναι, πότε τὴν πρόσφορον ἔχουσα κρᾶσιν καὶ διάθεσιν ἀβλαβῶς ὑπομενεῖ τὸν ἐνθουσιασμόν.
>
> It is for these reasons that they guard the chastity of the priestess, and keep her life free from all association and contact with strangers, and take the omens before the oracle, thinking that it is clear to the god when she has the temperament and disposition suitable to submit to the inspiration without harm to herself. (*Def. orac.* 438C)

The problem in this case was with "the omen before the oracle." A problematic sacrifice, as well as sexual or social contact with others, endangers the prophet during her communication with the god. The mention of chastity, however, is unnecessary to the context. The story has nothing to do with the priestess's sexual abstinence. Rather, the issue is a sacrifice gone wrong. Plutarch's mention of the prophet's abstinence sexualizes Pythian prophecy. For Plutarch, sexual activity, as well as any contact with outsiders, leads to emotional agitation and impurity of the body, which result in a soul not able to receive ἐνθουσιασμός. Abstinence from sexual contact was a ritual requirement for many Greek priesthoods, whether male or female, and would not have been unique to the female priestesses of Delphi. In the prophetic ritual, the prophet comes close to the god, and divine contact requires caution.

This anecdote reflects the importance of the woman as the ritual actor, her state of mind, and her control over the prophetic process. The reason for the failure of the oracular session was not the woman's sexual lapse or contact with strangers. Rather, the negative result of the sacrifice, which the delegation ignored, caused the failure of the

oracle and the death of the priestess. Oracular communication at Delphi was not subject to the desires of people. Rather, precise rituals and regulations ensured that the priestess and inquirers interacted properly with the god. The delegation, however, did not recognize this, and the prophetic session failed because of an attempt to control the prophet, the god, and their communication.

In *Mulierum virtutes*, which I discussed in the previous chapter, Plutarch poses a question about the gender of prophets and poets:

> Τί δέ; ἐὰν ποιητικὴν πάλιν ἢ μαντικὴν ἀποφαίνοντες οὐχ ἑτέραν μὲν ἀνδρῶν ἑτέραν δὲ γυναικῶν οὖσαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτήν, τὰ Σαπφοῦς μέλη τοῖς Ἀνακρέοντος ἢ τὰ Σιβύλλης λόγια τοῖς Βάκιδος ἀντιπαραβάλλωμεν, ἕξει τις αἰτιάσασθαι δικαίως τὴν ἀπόδειξιν, ὅτι χαίροντα καὶ τερπόμενον ἐπάγει τῇ πίστει τὸν ἀκροατήν;
>
> The poetic or prophetic art is not one thing when practiced by men and another when practiced by women, is it? And if we put the poems of Sappho side by side with those of Anacreon, or the oracles of the Sibyl with those of Bacis, will anyone have the power justly to impugn the demonstration because they lead the hearer, joyous and delighted, to have belief in it? (*Mul. virt.* 243B)

In other words, does the gender of the prophet make a difference in how the god communicates with her and how she in turn communicates with people? His language anticipates a negative answer, and he asks these questions within a text that argues that men and women are the same with regard to virtue. In the Delphic dialogues, his goal is not to answer this question, but it remains a compelling one.[359] He suggests that the Pythia's female identity is not significant in the prophetic process. Rather, his philosophical discussion highlights the mechanics of prophetic ἐνθουσιασμός, the

[359] Margaret Williamson, "Sappho and the Other Woman," in *Reading Sappho*, 248–64, takes up Plutarch's suggestion and compares Sappho's poetry with Anacreon's. She concludes that the artistry of Sappho differs from that of Anacreon, and their gender difference influences their art. On Sappho's poetic art, see also the other essays in *Reading Sappho*; Winkler, *Constraints of Desire*, 162–87; André Lardinois, "Keening Sappho: Female Speech Genres in Sappho's Poetry," in *Making Silence Speak*, 75–92.

difficulties of rendering and interpreting oracular language, and the necessary stability and purity of the body and soul to receive πνεῦμα. His description of the interaction of prophetic spirits with the body and soul of a person indicates that the mechanics would be the same for a man or woman. At the same time, the social realities of enculturation and education influence the prophetic process, oracular utterances, and Plutarch's observation of them. These variables introduce gender difference into prophecy, since education differed for men and women. The stories of particular prophets suggest the Pythia's control over the Delphic rituals and her role in formulating the language through which the god communicated to humans. Plutarch sexualizes the prophetic process by emphasizing the Pythia's abstinence from sexual contact and by using the trope of the bride of Apollo. The female prophet and the male god facilitate this sexual interpretation of prophecy.

II. Poetic Traditions

A. Poetry: Dramatizing Communication with Gods

In Greek and Latin poetry, authors provide vivid content to the prophetic madness that Plato and Plutarch described through a philosophical lens. In this literature, ecstatic and physical depictions of prophetic madness surface three issues. First, the frenzied state of the prophet creates interpretive problems: She is even more difficult to understand than Herodotus's composed Pythia. Second, poets depict possession as violent, and the prophet endures violence from both gods and men. Third, poets use sexualized language to describe the prophet's possession by the god. Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* dramatize the prophetic process through physical

descriptions of madness and establish the tropes that reach a dramatic crescendo in Lucan's *De bello civili*.

1. Aeschylus's Cassandra

In Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, Cassandra, the captured priestess of Athena, prophesies the murder of Agamemnon and the downfall of his family. When she begins to prophesy, the interaction between her and the chorus is a series of misunderstandings, which stem from what they expect based on her gender, appearance, and behavior. First, they expect her to lament, a speech genre for women in her situation, but she calls out to Apollo, "who is not the sort to come into contact with one who laments" (οὐ γὰρ τοιοῦτος ὥστε θρηνητοῦ τυχεῖν, 1075).[360] She continues and the chorus begins to recognize that she is prophesying: "It seems as though she is going to prophesy about her own sufferings. Divine inspiration can remain even in the mind of a slave" (1083–1084). When she alludes to the legend of Thyestes's children in graphic terms, the tone of the chorus shifts. They resist her prophecies: "Yes, we had indeed heard of your fame as a seer; but we are not looking for any prophets" (1098–1099). Even when she "unveils" her prophecy and speaks clearly—"I say that you are about to gaze upon the death of Agamemnon" (1246)—the chorus lacks comprehension.

Cassandra's prophecy occurs in waves that she cannot control, which portrays the physical and violent manifestations of communication with gods. The first wave indicates the visual nature of her prophecy: She sees action unfold (1072–1177), and she asks the audience to "look" (1114, 1125, 1176). Her vision is partial at first, and her prophecy is marked by questions (1100–1111). She describes her painful mental state: "The pain! The

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[360] Translation of Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* by A. H. Sommerstein, LCL 146.

terrible agony of true prophecy is coming over me again and again, whirling me around and deranging me in the <fierce storm> of its onset" (1215–1117). The second wave of prophecy results from gaining clarity of her vision: "Now my prophecies will no longer be looking through a veil like a newly-wedded bride" (1178–1180). Seeing clearly results in speaking clearly. Her speech, however, remains cryptic even though she says it is clear. Her ambiguous language protects her and prevents her from being a "a lying prophet, a door-knocker, a worthless blabberer" (1193–1194). Since her prophecy requires interpretation, it retains distance between the god's truth and her audience, a distance that the chorus finds uneasy.

An intermission in her prophecy occurs, and she tells how she gained prophetic ability from a sexual encounter with Apollo (1202–1213). Apollo "wrestled" with her and "breathed delight" (1206). She promised the sexual consummation of their relationship, but then refused, which doomed her to be a prophet who would never be believed. This is the stated reason the chorus does not understand her, but the course of the play indicates that the inherent ambiguity of language compounds unbelief and misunderstanding. In *Agamemnon*, the divine words are conceived in Cassandra. She has not, however, given birth, which means that the audience does not receive her words. Aeschylus, therefore, modifies the trope of impregnated prophet to highlight the need for interpretation. A misinterpreted prophecy is an unborn child.

Cassandra vocalizes divine images of the past, present, and future. She poses a challenge to the chorus and questions the tenuous relationship between language, prophecy, and truth. The question, "Who is to be believed?" runs throughout the drama. Cassandra's destiny as a prophet-not-believed questions the purpose of prophecy. Are

prophetic utterances meant to alter negative outcomes? Or should the prophet and client let be what will be? Cassandra voices the futility of being the means of communication between gods and humans. "And if I don't persuade you that all this is true, it makes no difference—how could it? The future will come, and you will soon behold it, take pity on me, and call me all too true a prophet" (1238–1241). Cassandra resigns herself to not being believed but has confidence in her prophecy.

2. Latin Epic Poetry: Virgil and Ovid

In the Latin epic tradition, Virgil's *Aeneid* likewise portrays Cassandra as a victim of violence and disbelief. She was "torn from the sacred depths of Minerva's shrine, dragged by her hair" (2.504–505). Cassandra is followed by another "prophet of doom," Calaeno, who shrieks oracles and instills dread in those who hear her (3.295–312). Finally, when the Sibyl guides Aeneas through the underworld, she experiences frenzied, uncontrolled inspiration. Visible and audible signs mark her possession:

> *cui talia fanit ante*
> *fores subito non voltus, non color unus,*
> *non comptae mansere comae, sed pectus anhelum,*
> *et rabie fera corda tument, maiorque videri*
> *nec mortale sonans, adflata est numine quando*
> *iam propriore dei*
>
> Suddenly all her features, all her color changes, her braided hair flies loose, and her breast heaves, her heart bursts with frenzy, she seems to rise in height, the ring of her voice no longer human. (6.46–50)[361]

Virgil portrays inspiration as though Apollo and the Sibyl were a rider and horse. She "tries to pitch the great god" but "his bridle exhausts her raving lips (*os rabidum*)" (6.79–80). The god "whips her on in all her frenzy (*furenti*), twisting his spurs below her breast"

[361] Translation of Virgil, *Aeneid*, by Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin, 2006).

(6.100–101). Virgil relates this frenzied movement to Bacchic madness (*immanis in antro bacchatur vates*, 6.77–78).

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Sibyl tells a story similar to that of the unrequited sexual relationship between Cassandra and Apollo. In exchange for her love, Apollo offers her any gift. She asks for the number of years equal to the grains of a nearby pile of sand but does not ask for endless youth. She then refuses Apollo's sexual advances. When she tells her story in *Metamorphoses*, she has lived 7,000 years and continues to age and shrink. In her old age, she no longer attracts Apollo: "I will seem never to have been loved, never to have pleased the god. Phoebus himself, perchance, will either gaze unknowing on me or will deny that he ever loved me" (14.149–151).[362] This passage surfaces three interconnected tropes that occur in Sibylline traditions: (1) the infinite age of the prophet, (2) the description of her as old and gray, and (3) her voice that endures through the ages. Ovid's Sibyl ages and shrinks, yet her voice continues when she is invisible (14.153).

These poetic images of female prophets go beyond Plato's philosophical evaluation of μανία and are influential for later depictions of the frenzied female prophet. Aeschylus and Virgil exaggerate the physical signs of the prophetic mental state. Depictions of μανία and *furor* as loosed hair, changing countenance, and inhuman voice do not align with images of the composed Pythia by Herodotus or Plutarch. Artistic representations of Pythia and other female prophets are few, but they imagine the prophets as calm and composed. On a 4th-century red-figure kylix, the goddess Themis, pictured as the Delphic priestess, prophesies for King Aegis. This image does not suggest

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[362] Translation of Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* by F. J. Miller, LCL 46.

erratic behavior (Figure 4.1).[363] In the first-century Roman context, a fresco from Pompeii presents Cassandra prophesying and does not indicate wild frenzy (Figure 4.2).[364] While a concept of a changed mental state—with terminology of μανία, ἐνθουσιασμός, κατέχω, *furor*, and *rabies*—was prevalent, especially following Plato, authors were unclear on how the madness became manifested in the behaviors of prophets. Often it was like wild, Bacchic madness, but sometimes it resembled the more composed, poetic madness of the Muses.

The sexuality of the female prophet, moreover, often emerges in poetry about the Delphic oracle, Cassandra, and the Sibyl. The sexual abstinence of oracular priestesses aligns with Greek requirements for purity in sanctuaries. In poetic depictions, this requirement feeds into imagining the mysterious prophetic process as sexual intercourse between the prophet and the god. The poets—Aeschylus, Virgil, and Ovid—are most exaggerated in this regard, but even the philosophically-minded Plutarch envisions the prophet as the bride of Apollo.

In Plutarch's dialogues, he records occasions on which men forced the prophet into the cavern at Delphi to prophesy. Human inquirers are not the only ones who forced prophets to speak. In discourse about prophets who speak extemporaneously, like Cassandra and the Sibyl, the god forces the prophet to see visions and speak. Given the associations of the prophetic process as sex with the god, the god's violence takes on disturbing meaning. For Aeschylus, Cassandra's visions come to her without her control and against her will. Likewise, the horse and rider metaphor in Virgil's image of the Sibyl portrays Apollo forcing her to speak, even though she tries to "pitch the great god"

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[363] Attic red-figure kylix, the Codrus Painter. Berlin, Staatliche Museen Antikensammlung F2538.

[364] Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. no. 111476.

(*Aen.* 6.79–80). The Jewish *Sibylline Oracles* portray the Sibyl as asking God for rest from the compulsion to prophesy.[365] At stake in depicting prophecy in physical, sexualized, and violent terms is who has control over the prophet and her speech—the gods, the men who inquire at the oracle, the temple personnel and institutional structure, or the prophet herself.

B. The Sacrifice of the Pythia in Lucan's *De bello civili*

M. Annaeus Lucanus was the grandson of Seneca the Elder, nephew of Seneca the Younger, and associated with the privileged circle around the emperor Nero in Rome. Lucan was a *quaestor* and *augur* and won prizes for his poetry.[366] When the political tides were turning against Nero, Lucan joined the Pisonian controversy, and after the emperor discovered the controversy, he forced Lucan to commit suicide in 65 CE. Lucan's only extant work, the incomplete epic poem *De bello civili*, dramatizes the rise of Julius Caesar through the Roman civil war. He dedicated this text to Nero, but this dedication may be ironic praise that compares Nero to Julius Caesar, whom Lucan casts as a tyrant and megalomaniac.[367]

The structure of Lucan's incomplete epic mimics Virgil's twelve-book *Aeneid*.[368] While Virgil wrote during the Augustan golden age and composed a foundation narrative that was victorious and celebratory, Lucan wrote during the tumultuous Neronian age,

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[365] Sibylline Oracles 3.1–7, 295–297. See further discussion below.

[366] On Lucan's biography, see Vacca, *Vita Lucani*; Suetonius, *Vita Lucani*; Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.56. See Karl-Ludwig Elvers, "M. Annaeus Lucanus," in *Brill's New Pauly*, ed. H. Cancik and H. Schneider (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 7:829–33; Jamie Masters, *Poetry and Civil War in Lucan's* Bellum Civile (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992); Susan H. Braund, *Lucan: Civil War, A New Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1992), xiii–l.

[367] Lucan*, Bel. civ.* 1.33–66. See Braund, *Lucan*, xiv.

[368] Braund, *Lucan*, xxxvii–xxxix; B. M. Marti, "La structure de la Pharsale," in *Lucain*, Entretiens Hardt 15 (Geneva: Vandoeuvres-Geneva, 1968), 1–50.

which caused him to question the legacy of Julius Caesar. The result is a dark narrative, which is pessimistic about the role of the gods within human affairs. The Olympian gods are absent. Instead, Fate (*fatum*) and Fortune (*fortuna*) are the divine figures at work. One way that the gods influence human decisions is through magical and divinatory communication. In *De bello civili* dreams, visions, and oracles are frightening moments, which female figures dominate.

Three violent scenes revolve around prophetic women. First, after the Romans consult the male prophet Figulus, who is unable to prophesy, a Roman matron runs through Rome, possessed and raving like a Bacchic reveler: "As the Bacchante races down from Pindus's summit, filled with Lyaeus of Ogygia, so a matron sweeps through stunned Rome, revealing with these words that Phoebus is harrying her breast" (*Nam quails vertice Pindi Edonis Ogygio decurrit plena Lyaeo, Talis et attonitam rapitur matrona per urbem Vocibus his prodens urguentem pectora Phoebum*, 1.674–677).[369] The uncharacteristic image of a Roman matron running, prophesying, and acting frenzied is jarring and dramatizes the import of her prophecy at the beginning of the war. After her prophecy, she falls speechless and exhausted by frenzy (*Haec ait, at lasso iacuit deserta furore*, 1.695). The second prophetic woman is the Delphic prophet whom Appius Claudius consults in Book 5. Again, the prophetic process is dramatic, frenzied, and violent, and men do not understand the oracle (5.64–236). Finally, Erichtho, a Thessalian witch, revives a corpse, who prophesies for Pompey's son. This episode exaggerates the fear and gore that Lucan associates with both divine communication and war. The witch "greedily vents her rage on the entire corpse: She sinks her hands into the eyes, she

[369] Translations of Lucan, *De bello civili*, by Susan Braund (Oxford: Oxford University, 1992).

gleefully digs out the cold eyeballs and gnaws the pallid nails" (6.540–542). In her spell, Erichtho compares her magical process to oracular communication: "The tripods and the prophets of the gods are graced with obscure answers; he who seeks the truth from ghosts and approaches bravely the oracles of relentless death, let him leave certain" (6.770–773). In Lucan's poem, questions circulate about how humans can best know divine truth.

In addition to these three mantic women, women appear in prophetic dreams to relay messages about the future to Caesar and Pompey. First, Caesar has a vision of the city Roma, personified as a woman in mourning (1.185–203). Second, Pompey sees his deceased wife Julia, the daughter of Caesar, standing on her funeral pyre. She tells him that he will not escape her and, by connection, her father (3.8–35). These unsolicited messages are as bleak as those given by the matron, the Pythia, and Erichtho.

For Lucan, these moments in which the men involved in war receive divine counsel display the futility of such communication. Caesar, Pompey, Appius, and Pompey's son interpret incorrectly or proceed with plans without taking prophecy into consideration. The violence and gore that mark these episodes mirror the violence and gore that is the war. This war is not the victorious foundation of an empire, but a moment in which chaos breaks out. This view of war, prophecy, and the gods shapes Lucan's narrative of Appius's Delphic consultation.

The relationship of this episode to other texts reveals Lucan's particular rhetorical goals. First, Lucan shares details with Virgil's account of Aeneas's visit to the underworld, accompanied by the Sibyl. The *Aeneid* influences Lucan's epic in its form and content, but Lucan inverts the victorious foundation story to create a kind of anti-

Aeneid.[370] In the Delphic episode, Lucan uses imagery similar to that used by Virgil to describe the Sibyl. In her madness, the god whips her like a horse: "And you [Phoebus] use not the whip alone and goads, but plunge flames into her guts; the prophetess submits to the bridle too, and she is not allowed to tell as much as she is allowed to know" (5.174–177).[371] Lucan shares the dramatic physical manifestations of prophecy in poetry.

Second, Lucan's Delphic episode may be related to the event that Plutarch records about "the priestess who recently died."[372] If this is the case, Lucan is not dependent on Plutarch's text, since he wrote about forty years earlier, but he may be using common knowledge of a consultation gone wrong to provide dramatic detail for his record of Appius's consultation. The force that Appius uses against the prophet and the resulting dramatic death resonates in the two stories. The "real" story of the Pythia that Plutarch records may have become popular around Lucan's time and played in people's imaginations of the Delphic oracle.[373]

Finally, two other sources record Appius's consultation: Valerius Maximus's *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* and Paulus Orosius's *Seven Books of History*. First, Valerius Maximus, writing about 30 CE, provides the most straightforward account, which shares the basic outline of Lucan's version. The anecdote occurs in a section in which Valerius discusses different kinds of miracles. The previous miracles he discusses were accomplished "of man and by chance," but this one was from the mouth of a god,

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[370] See F. M. Ahl, *Lucan: An Introduction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1976); O. S. Due, "An Essay on Lucan," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 23 (1962): 68–132; Marti, "La structure de la Pharsale."

[371] On the influence of Virgil, *Aen.* 6.9–158 upon Lucan, *Bel. civ*. 5.166–218, see Amandry, *La mantique apollinienne*, 21, 237–38; Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle*, 210.

[372] Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 438A–D. See discussion above.

[373] Ogilvie, "Date"; Bayet, "La mort de la pythie," Heine, "A Note on Lucan's *Bellum civile*." Fontenrose, *Delphic Oracle*, 210, thinks that Virgil is more influential for Lucan's shaping of this episode than the historical episode recorded later by Plutarch.

Apollo.[374] He introduces the episode by telling the outcome—the Pythia predicted Appius's death—and by noting Appius's role in the war and as governor of Achaea. Appius's motivation for consulting the oracle is that he wanted to know the outcome of the war. He uses his authority as governor to compel the priestess to descend into the cavern. Valerius notes the truth of the Delphic oracle, as well as its danger to the priestess—"too strong an intake of the divine breath is fatal to the mediums." She then sings in "dirgeful tones" and "obscure and ambiguous words." The episode concludes with the oracle, Appius's interpretation, and his death. Valerius does not record what happens to the prophet after this dangerous consultation. Second, Paulus Orosius, a Christian writing in the 5th century, has the polemical goal of discrediting non-Christian beliefs. He states Appius's reason for consulting the oracle: "He wished to test the already discredited credibility of the Pythian oracle."[375] According to Valerius Maximus, Appius seeks knowledge about the outcome of the war. According to Paulus Orosius, he tests an obsolete oracle.

Lucan differs from both of these authors in how he presents Appius's motivation, and this difference shapes how the narrative unfolds. Fear drives Appius to consult the oracle: "While the peoples and the generals prepared to fight, their fortunes unsure and destiny hidden, Appius alone fears to descend into the hazardous events of Mars and stirs the gods to disclose the outcome and he unbars prophetic Phoebus's Delphic shrine, closed through many a year" (5.65–70). Fear is a persistent emotion of many characters in this episode. The reason that the Delphic shrine is closed is because kings fear the

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[374] Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta* 1.8.10. Translation by D. R. Shackleton Bailey, LCL 492.

[375] Paulus Orosius, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans: The Apology of Paulus Orosius*, trans. I. W. Raymond (New York: Columbia University, 1936), Section 6.15.11, pp. 295–96.

future: “Our generation lacks no greater gift of gods than that the Delphic sanctuary has fallen silent, ever since kings fear the future and forbade the gods to speak” (5.111–114). When the priestess is summoned, she is “afraid to stand upon the terrifying threshold” (5.128). She gives reasons why the shrine is silent and why she should not go into the cavern, but “the virgin’s trick was obvious and her fear itself induced belief in the powers she denied” (5.141–142). After the priest forces her into the temple, she fears the inner shrine and stops at the first door and pretends to prophesy (5.146–148). Appius realizes that she is pretending, so in a rage he threatens her so that she “at last, … terrified, takes refuge at the tripods” (5.161–162). Her fear of Appius overcomes her fear of Apollo.

After stating Appius’s decision to approach the oracle, Lucan describes Delphi’s location at Mount Parnassus and the mythology about how Apollo took the oracle from Themis and killed the Python. He describes the oracular cavern, where “the earth’s vast chasms breathe out divine certainty and the soil exhales talking winds” (5.82–84). Lucan imagines a process similar to that which Plutarch describes. The gods inhabit the “dark earth” and the “empty air” within it. This air emerges from the cave and the priestess inhales it. Then, “When this power is received in the virgin’s breast and strikes her human spirit, it sounds and unlocks the prophetess’s mouth” (5.97–99). As with Plutarch, spirits interact with the prophet’s body to produce prophecy.

Lucan demonstrates the prophet’s reluctance to prophesy, her pretense of inspiration, and her dangerous encounter with the god (5.121–198). The priestess is happy that the god of the oracle is silent because contact with the god has harmful physical consequences: “If the god enters any breast, an early death is the penalty for taking in the deity, or the reward; because the human framework falls apart under the

frenzy's goad and surge, and the beatings of the gods shake their brittle lives" (5.116–120). Because of this violence, the prophet tries to dissuade Appius from his request and gives four possible reasons that the oracle is silent: (1) the divine breath left the chasm, (2) the crack in the earth has been closed up with rubble and ashes from barbarian attacks, (3) the Sibylline books have made the oracle obsolete, (4) no one is pious enough for the god's response (5.132–141). These reasons are similar to those Plutarch provides for the silence of Delphi. Appius and the priest recognize that fear motivates the Pythia's response and is evidence of the presence of the gods (5.141–142). The priest forces her into the temple, where she pretends to prophesy (5.146).

Before she goes into the temple, Lucan describes her action of binding her headband. He writes: "The coiled headband binds her hair in front and her tresses, let loose down her back, are encircled by white woolen band with Phocis's laurel" (*Stringit vitta comas, crinesque in terga solutos, Candida Phocaica complectitur infula lauro*, 5.142–144). This description of her hair and headband foreshadows what will happen to her later when she is possessed by the god: "Mad, she runs wild through the cave with frenzied neck, and dislodging with her bristling hair the headbands of the god and Phoebus's garlands, she whirls them with her tossing head through the temple's empty spaces" (5.169–172). The wild movements of her head, which dislodge her headband and cause her hair to flow freely, mark her possession. This depiction has influenced how scholars of First Corinthians interpret what may have been going on in Corinth: Prophesying women took off their head coverings in imitation of Delphic prophecy.[376] The problem with drawing the parallel in this way, however, is that Lucan's episode is a

[376] Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy," 125–40; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 237.

consultation gone wrong. Appius and the priest force her into the temple, the oracle has been silent for a long time, and she is not accustomed to prophecy and possession. This episode would not have been typical of Delphic rituals.

A second problem with this parallel is that Lucan has particular rhetorical goals in mentioning the prophet's hair and headband as he does. A similar portrayal of the Delphic prophet's headdress does not occur elsewhere in literature or art. The Attic red-figure cup in the Berlin National Museum depicts Themis with a cloth draped over the back of her head (Figure 4.1). Fontenrose suggests that the prophet wore a crown of bay-leaves and held a bay sprig while on the tripod.[377] Lucan's use of the terms *vitta*, linen or woolen strips of cloth used to tie hair together, and *infula*, a wool headband used as a sign of religious consecration, suggest a Roman style used primarily by brides and Vestal Virgins.[378] Lucan's description of the prophet's headband resembles the *seni crines*, the hairstyle worn by the Vestal Virgins, priestesses with which he, as a Roman, would have been more familiar (Figure 4.3). The Vestals' *infula*, moreover, had sacrificial connotations: Just as sacrificial victims were draped with garlands, the Vestal priestesses wore *infula* on their heads.[379] In this episode, Lucan is creating an image of a prophet who is also a sacrifice. In Plutarch's account of the priestess who died, the sacrifice prior to descending into the temple goes wrong and causes her reluctance. In Lucan's telling, no sacrifice occurs before Appius's consultation, as would have been the standard

[377] Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle*, 224. He cites Kallimachos, *Iambi* 4.26–27 and Lucan, *Bell. civ.* 5.142–44, which indicates more than a crown of leaves. See also Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess,* 76–77 (Delphic headgear) and 85–115 (dress of Greek priestesses).

[378] See Janet Stephens, "Ancient Roman Hairdressing: On (Hair)pins and Needles," *JRA* 21 (2008): 111. See also her video that reconstructs the *seni crines* hairstyle of the Vestal Virgins, using ancient tools and techniques: Janet Stephens, "Vestal Hairdressing: Recreating the *Seni Crines*," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eA9JYWh1r7U&list=UUboS0faGVeMi3n5_2LsVazw> (Accessed December, 2014).

[379] See *infula* for animal and human sacrificial victims in Virgil, *Georg.* 3.487; Lucretius, *Rer. nat.* 1.87.

procedure.[380] Instead, the verses about the priestess donning her headband interrupt the flow of the narrative and present her as a sacrifice, who will move wildly and erratically, like an animal, and die. This violent and off-kilter sacrifice aligns with Lucan's view of how the gods interact with human beings.

When the priestess enters the temple, she pretends to prophesy. She imitates what she thinks the mental and physical state would be: "Feigning the god, she speaks confused words from a tranquil breast, proving her mind inspired by sacred frenzy, by no mutter of indistinct voice" (5.148–150). Appius, however, does not see or hear what he thinks prophecy should look and sound like: deep tones, echoing voices, loosed hair, and shaking cavern (5.153–155). Lucan writes:

> Because her words did not erupt with trembling sound, her voice was not enough to fill the vast cave's space, the laurels were not shaken off by stiffening of her hair, the temple's threshold was unmoved and the grove untroubled: everything betrayed her fear to trust herself to Phoebus. (5.152–157)

Two expectations of the mental state and appearance of authentic prophecy are at play. These expectations do not reflect how prophecy actually happened but rather the anxiety over whether someone could fake possession and divine communication.

When the god finally possesses the prophet, he "poured [the spirit of the rock] into the prophetess; and at last Paean mastered her Cirrhaean breast and never more completely invaded his priestess's frame, drove out her former mind, and told the mortal part to leave her breast to him entirely" (5.165–169). This invasion of the body differs from the earlier description of how prophecy works by inhaling prophetic winds that unlock the prophet's mouth (5.97–99). This is the moment at which she whirls around

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[380] See Euripides, *Ion*; Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 438A–D. Amandry, *La mantique apollinienne*, 104–14.

and loses her headband, movements that Lucan likens to a Bacchic reveler (*Bacchatur demens aliena per antrum colla ferens*, 5.170–171). Like Aeschylus's Cassandra, she burns and feels pain. She "boils with a mighty fire," and Apollo "plunges flames into her guts" (5.173–175). The horse and rider imagery, seen also with Virgil's Sibyl, emerges here. The prophet sees all of time at once, and this vision weighs her down: "All time converges into a single heap and all the centuries oppress her unhappy breast, the chain of happenings so lengthy is revealed and all the future struggles to the light and the Fates grapple as they seek a voice" (5.177–181). The priestess is able to find Appius in the vision, and she prophesies in her frenzied voice (5.190–193). Clear, but ambiguous, speech comes after groans, howling, and frenzy. Animalistic sounds and movements mark the prophet: She is a sacrificial victim.

After she prophesies, Lucan returns to his earlier questions about how prophecy works (5.198–207). This digression serves to make the last part of the narrative more dramatic. The priestess bursts from the temple, still frenzied, and falls down, hardly living. Even though the god has stopped her speech, he has not stopped her frenzy, and he remains in her. She still sees her vision of all time, and her appearance reflects her ongoing vision: "She still rolls fierce eyes and roaming glances over all the sky, now with a frightened look, now grim with menace; her face is never still" (5. 211–214). As with Aeschylus's Cassandra, the violent and dark content of the vision is the cause of the violent and frenzied manifestation of prophecy. The visions these prophets see are not happy, and they react accordingly. When she emerges from the dark temple and enters the daylight, Apollo takes away his visions, and she falls down, hardly living (5.221–

224). The prophet was correct in her initial fear of Apollo: "The beatings of the gods" caused her death.

In the tradition of faulty interpretation that extends back to King Croesus, Appius misunderstands the ambiguous oracle. The oracle is: "Roman, you escape the mighty threats of warfare, taking no part in the crisis so enormous; you alone will gain repose in a mighty valley of the Euboean coast" (5.194–196). Appius was incorrect in interpreting the oracle to mean that he would find peace in Euboea. He waited out the war, but died anyway, and was buried near the Euboean coast (5.224–227). Lucan suggests that Appius should have not only listened to the oracle but also considered the prophet's actions before and after speaking. Her violent movements and death tell Appius just as much about the gods and his fate as her words do.

This episode has exerted an inordinate amount of influence upon modern views of the Delphic prophet. Joseph Fontensose writes: "It is, in truth, mainly this passage of Lucan that has produced the usual modern notion of the Pythia's activity. Lucan is not only describing an unhistorical consultation, but he had no knowledge of Delphi; he simply knew something of the poetic and legendary tradition."[381] This assertion cautions historians from using poetic portrayals to draw conclusions about how Delphi functioned or about female prophecy in general. The poetic traditions, however, evoked compelling images of prophets. These images were popular and likely influenced common perceptions about female prophets, especially outside of Delphi, Didyma, and Dodona, where people would have been more familiar with prophets. Evidence of the rhetorical

[381] Fontenrose, *Delphic Oracle*, 210.

power of these portraits lies in their adaptation in another form of literature, the prophetic collection of the *Sibylline Oracles* from diaspora Judaism.

III. Oracular Traditions

A. Prophecy: Recording Communication with Gods

In her interpretation of the first two books of the *Sibylline Oracles*, J. L. Lightfoot writes about the challenges of working with these texts: “One must establish a network of literary relations in which the Sibyl, that most textual of prophetesses, belongs.”[382] The Sibyl, unlike the prophets at Delphi, was known through her literary output as well as her dramatic portrayals. She was a textual prophetess: Her oracles were collected, compiled, and interpreted by itinerant oracle-interpreters and by Roman priests. Seen in this light, it is not surprising that a most textual people, the Jews, adopted the most textual female prophet, the Sibyl, in the extant *Sibylline Oracles*.

1. Male and Female Prophets in the Hebrew Bible

In the Hebrew Bible, prophesying is most often an activity for men—Moses, Aaron, Jeremiah, Isaiah. The prophetic collections in the Hebrew Bible, including the five books of Torah, are associated with male authors. These collections, like the *Sibylline Oracles*, are composite. For example, several historical and literary layers comprise the book of Isaiah.[383] Isaiah’s oracles are political and given in the first-person voice of God. At points throughout the collection, historical narration situates the oracles (e.g., “In the days of Ahaz, son of Jotham, son of Uzziah,” 7:1), and the prophet describes

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[382] Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, xi.

[383] See Joseph Blenkinsopp’s three-volume Anchor Bible commentary on Isaiah (New York: Doubleday, 2000, 2002, 2003), 1:71–105, 2:39–80, 3:25–65.

how he receives his prophecy (e.g., "Then the Lord said to me, Take a large tablet and write on it," 8:1).

The narratives that connect oracles describe how prophets receive their oracles from God, usually in visual or auditory terms. When he first receives prophecy, the archetypal Hebrew prophet, Moses, sees an angel of the Lord and hears the voice of God calling him from a burning bush (Exod 3:2–6). In addition to seeing and hearing God, Moses is told by God that God will direct the words that come out of his mouth (Exod 4:12–16). Samuel likewise experiences a prophetic call as a vision (1 Sam 3:1–19), and Isaiah sees God enthroned in heaven (Isa 6:1–4). Both Isaiah and Jeremiah are instructed to speak, and God or God's angels touch their mouths and place words on their lips (Isa 6:6–9; Jer 1:4–9).

One trope that characterizes male prophecy in the Hebrew Bible is the prophet's reluctance and the resulting conflict between God and the prophet. Again, Moses establishes the pattern. When God calls him, he says, "Who am I to speak to Pharaoh?" (Exod 3:11), then tells God he is slow of speech (4:12), and finally says, "Please send someone else" (4:13). God becomes angry with Moses, yet compromises with him and makes his brother Aaron his spokesperson (4:15–16). The adversarial relationship between God and prophet continues. In an enigmatic episode after Moses has received God's instructions and is on his way to Egypt, God comes to Moses at night and tries to kill him, but his wife Zipporah intervenes (4:24–26). Perhaps the most reluctant prophet in the biblical canon is Jonah, who flees when God tells him to go to Nineveh and prophesy (Jon 1:1–3). God's response is a storm on the sea, which causes the sailors to throw Jonah overboard and be swallowed by a fish (1:4–17). Prophets are reluctant to

accept their roles because the people to whom they speak often revile them and do not accept their political messages.

Compared to the images of female prophets in Greek and Latin philosophical and poetic literature, internal physicality and sexual aspects of prophecy are rare tropes in the male prophecy of the Hebrew Bible. Jeremiah describes his interaction with God in terms that resemble seduction or sexual assault: “O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed” (Ἠπάτησάς με, κύριε, καὶ ἠπατήθην, ἐκράτησας καὶ ἠδυνάσθης· ἐγενόμην εἰς γέλωτα, πᾶσαν ἡμέραν διετέλεσα μυκτηριζόμενος, Jer 20:7).[384] People mock him because of his message of “violence and destruction.” He describes his attempts not to prophesy and the resulting internal pain: “If I say, ‘I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,’ then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary of holding it in and I cannot” (καὶ εἶπα Οὐ μὴ ὀνομάσω τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου καὶ οὐ μὴ λαλήσω ἔτι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς πῦρ καιόμενον φλέγον ἐν τοῖς ὀστέοις μου, καὶ παρεῖμαι πάντοθεν καὶ οὐ δύναμαι φέρειν, 20:9). This description of prophecy as sexual aggression and internal fire and of the prophet as unable to control the prophecy resembles the poetic Greek and Latin traditions about Cassandra, the Delphic prophet, and the Sibyl.

Another male prophet who experiences physical pain is the apocalyptic seer Daniel. In apocalyptic literature, the seer often reacts to his visions in a way that

[384] See the discussion of the Hebrew verbs פתה (“entice”) and חזק (“be strong”) in this verse: Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1–20*, AB 21A (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 854; William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1–25*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 552. פתה in the Piel stem has sexual overtones in Exod 22:15; Judg 16:5; Hos 2:16. חזק in the Qal and H-stem has the sense of “force sexually” in Deut 22:25; 2 Sam 13:11.

highlights human helplessness in the face of God's revelations.[385] Daniel recounts how his strength left him, he became pale, and he fell into a trance after a vision (10:7–9). He shakes and is speechless before "the one in human form" (10:16–17). This physical shock results from being face to face with a supernatural being. Male prophets in the biblical traditions receive divine messages visually and aurally, with reluctance and conflict with God, and sometimes with physical pain.

Despite the Hebrew preference for male prophets, three female prophets are named in the Hebrew Bible, several unnamed female prophets make appearances, and a few named women are not called "prophet" but act or speak in prophetic modes. First, Miriam, Moses and Aaron's sister, leads Israelite women in a song of victory after the Egyptians drown in the Red Sea. In Exodus 15:20, she is called a "prophet," נְבִיאָה in Hebrew and προφῆτις in the Greek Septuagint. After the escape from Egypt, Miriam, Moses, and Aaron lead the Israelites through the wilderness, and in the course of travel, Miriam and Aaron complain about Moses, saying, "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" (Num 12:2). God hears their rival claim to authority based on prophetic ability and summons the three leaders. God distinguishes his communication with Moses from Aaron and Miriam and all other prophets:

> When there are prophets among you, I the Lord make myself known to them in visions; I speak to them in dreams. Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak face to face—clearly, not in riddles; and he beholds the form of the Lord. (Num 12:6–8)

The distinction between different types of divine communication and authority does not fall along gender lines. Rather, Moses is special: He sees the form of God, face to face.

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[385] John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 6.

The punishment for challenging Moses's authority, however, differs for the brother and sister. Miriam is struck with leprosy, but Aaron is not. After her brothers pray, God requires a process of separation and cleansing, and she must remain outside of the camp for seven days. Moses and Aaron's legacies of leadership and prophecy permeate the Hebrew Bible. Miriam's legacy is not as potent. She is named only once in the prophets, occurs in genealogies, and serves as a warning for leprosy as punishment.[386]

The second named female prophet is Deborah, one of the judges of Israel before the establishment of the kingdom. She is the only female judge and the only judge called a prophet (נְבִיאָה and προφῆτις), which suggests routes by which women were able to gain political power (Judg 4:4). After receiving a message from God, she summons a general, Barak, and tells him that God has commanded him to attack the Canaanites (Judg 4:5–7). Barak refuses to go to battle unless Deborah goes with him. Her statement when Barak requests her presence—"I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman" (Judg 4:9)—is an ambiguous oracular statement. The narrative reveals that "the hands of a woman" does not refer to Deborah, but to Jael, who kills the Canaanite general Sisera (Judg 4:17–22). Deborah and Barak succeed in battle and lead Israel in a victory song, much like Moses and Miriam (Judg 5:1–31).

The third female prophet is Huldah, again called נְבִיאָה and προφῆτις (2 Kgs 22:14). During the reign of Josiah, the high priest found a book of the law, and he took it to Huldah to ask her if the book was authentic. She tells them it is authentic and prophesies the inevitable punishment of Judah that results in the Babylonian exile (2 Kgs

[386] Mic 6:4. In genealogies: Num 26:59; 1 Chr 6:3. Her death and burial: Num 20:1. Miriam as warning: Deut 24:8-9. See Josephus, *A.J.* 3.54. Philo views her as a female prophet, parallel with Moses, in his *Vita contemplativa.* See Chapter 3 for discussion.

22:14–20; cf. 2 Chron 34:22–28). Huldah is the only prophet that the priest consults, and he does not question her judgment. In this brief, enigmatic story, a female prophet authenticates a book of the law for the religious and political leadership of Jerusalem. When the problem of an unknown book arises, they know whom to consult, where she lives, and what kind of expertise she has. Female prophets are not absent in Hebrew traditions, but male prophets are more prevalent and central to biblical understandings about what a prophet is.[387] The songs of Miriam and Deborah and the speech of Huldah are the only recorded "oracles" of biblical female prophets.

2. Sibylline Collections in Greek and Roman Traditions

By contrast, collections of Sibylline oracles circulated in the Greek and Latin speaking world. Oracle-interpreters, χρησμόλογοι, possessed books of oracles attributed to famous seers such as Sibyl, Bacis, and Musaeüs, and consulted them on behalf of inquirers. These books were popular and practical, not high aesthetic or literary art.[388] Pausanias read the oracles of Sibyl, as well as collections of Euclus of Cyprus, Musaeüs, and Bacis (*Descr.* X.12).

In the Roman republic and principate, the collection and consultation of Sibylline oracles came under the purview of the state. A legend about the Roman king Tarquinius places Rome's acquisition of the Sibylline books in the distant past (Dionysius of

[387] In addition to these named prophets, several unnamed female prophets receive brief mention. Isaiah conceives a son with a "female prophet" (Isa 8:3). Ezekiel condemns false prophets, male and female: "Set your face against the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own imagination" (Ezek 13:17). For Joel, a prophetic spirit that comes upon both men and women signifies a glorious future: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Joel 2:28). Named women who are not called "prophet" have prophet-like visions or speech and are later interpreted as prophets. Samson's mother has a vision of an angel who tells her she is pregnant (Judg 13:9–14). In later interpretation, Hannah's prayer in 1 Sam 2:1–10 earns her the reputation of a prophet. Philo, *Somn.* 1.254, calls Hannah "a prophetess and mother of a prophet."

[388] Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy*, 18.

Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 4.62.1–5). An old woman tried to sell the king nine books, but he refused. She then burned three books and made the same offer for the remaining six. After he refused again, she burned three more and offered the last three for the same price. He accepted, after consulting with a diviner who told him to make the deal. These books were eventually housed in the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill and consulted by technical diviners in times of crisis or to make sense of portents and omens. For instance, a consultation of the Sibylline collections led the Romans to import the eastern cult of the Phrygian mother goddess (Livy, *Hist.* 29.10–14). By Cicero's time, the priestly college of the *quindecimviri* attended to and interpreted the books (*Har. resp.* 13). Sibylline prophecy had become central to Roman religious and political institutions.[389]

When Augustus became *pontifex maximus*, he collected and inspected all prophetic books in circulation. He burned books of dubious origin and kept only the authentic Sibylline books in the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine (Suetonius, *Aug.* 31.1). Tacitus records the search for Sibylline books throughout Greece, Asia Minor, and Africa after the Sibylline books in Rome were destroyed. He records an incident in which the *quindecemviri* received a book and determined its authenticity (*Ann.* 6.12–13). These scattered tales about the loss of Sibylline books and the efforts at recovery and authentication demonstrates the authority of the Sibyl's prophecy in written form for the Romans.[390]

Two cultural strands, therefore, come together in the Jewish *Sibylline Oracles*: first, the limited presence of female prophets in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish textual

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[389] On the role of Sibylline books in the Roman Republic, see Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics*.

[390] On the role of Sibylline books in the Roman Empire, see David S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1990); Potter, *Prophets and Emperors*.

traditions, in Palestine and the diaspora; second, the textual nature of Sibylline traditions in Greek and Roman settings. The diaspora Jewish communities that produced and read the *Sibylline Oracles* knew and accepted oracular collections as a literary form. The collections of Hebrew prophets had political content and were discrete oracles redacted into a collection under one name. The *Sibylline Oracles* take the similar form of a prophetic collection, but the name of a stereotypical female, non-Jewish prophet gives the collection a different angle from which to voice apocalyptic judgment and to portray divine communication.

B. The Sibyl's Embodiment of Apocalyptic Prophecy in the *Sibylline Oracles*

The composite oracular collection of the *Sibylline Oracles* develops an image of a female prophet and her role in the prophetic process. Through her first-person self-descriptions, the character of the Sibyl creates an image of the process of prophecy that is distinct from other Jewish prophetic characters: Prophecy is embodied, violent, and sexualized. The female identity of this character in Greek and Roman depictions and Jewish adaptations facilitates this mapping of prophetic inspiration onto the body of the prophet in gendered and sexualized ways. In this section, I provide an overview of the Sibylline corpus and how it fits into broader cultural conceptions of Sibylline prophecy. Then, I analyze the first-person voice of the Sibyl to describe how her character brings the prophetic process to the foreground of this oracular collection. The violent images surrounding the Sibyl and other female prophets made her a compelling character to voice Jewish apocalyptic visions. In the *Sibylline Oracles*, the Sibyl embodies the violent imaginaries of apocalyptic traditions.

The *Sibylline Oracles* display interaction between multiple cultural sources, which result in a hybrid literary form. The twelve extant books claim to be voiced by the Sibyl, the inspired prophet from Greek and Roman traditions. She articulates Jewish (and, in later strata, Christian) monotheism, ethics, and eschatology. The rhetorical power of the oracles lies in this juxtaposition: A legendary non-Jewish prophet, often associated with Apollonine inspiration, is actually inspired by the one "Great God" and has been prophesying in line with the Jewish worldview for centuries.

The antiquity and long lifespan of the Sibyl is a recurring trope in Sibylline traditions. In the oldest reference to her, quoted by Plutarch, Heraclitus states that her prophecy "reaches to a thousand years with her voice through the god" (χιλίων ἐτῶν ἐξικνεῖται τῇ φωνῇ διὰ τὸν θεόν).[391] For Heraclitus, this long-lasting voice emanates from a "frenzied mouth," which introduces the second recurring trope: her maddened mental state. As we have seen, for Plato, the Sibyl represents prophetic madness, and Virgil dramatically portrays this madness. A third recurring trope is the Sibyl's geographical origin: Ancient writers spanning centuries—Heraclides (4th cent. BCE), Varro (1st cent. BCE), and Pausanias (2nd cent. CE)—record lists of multiple Sibyls with their homelands, ranging from Persia to Italy, Asia Minor to Libya. This geographic distribution provides the Jewish *Sibylline Oracles* with universality. Not only did the Hebrew prophets speak for God, but so did the Sibyls from Anatolia, Italy, and Libya.

The extant *Sibylline Oracles* take a form similar to, on the one hand, Hebrew prophetic collections and, on the other, the oracular books of Greek oracle-interpreters and of the Roman state: Layers of oracles from different times and places comprise the

[391] Heraclitus, *fr*. 92. Plutarch, *Pyth. orac.* 397A–B.

corpus. Later authors added to previous oracles, producing growing, fluid, and vibrant prophetic discourse. Several scholars have analyzed these layers in order to date and locate them geographically, historically, and culturally. For example, John J. Collins has analyzed Sib. Or. 3, the oldest book, and identified three main stages: (1) a main corpus, written in Egypt during the reign of the seventh Ptolemaic king in the second to first centuries BCE (Sib. Or. 3.97–349, 489–829); (2) oracles against various nations, written prior to the battle of Actium in 31 BCE (3.350–488); and (3) the introduction, written after 70 CE (3.1–96). Within the second stage, the oracles against nations, scholars have attributed various oracles to different Sibyls—for instance, vv. 381–387 to a Persian or Babylonian Sibyl and vv. 401–488 to the Erythraean Sibyl.[392] Collins, moreover, identifies changing Egyptian Jewish attitudes within Book 3. An optimistic outlook toward a Ptolemaic "king from the sun" who will bring peace gives way to an embittered view in which a human leader cannot save the world, but only God can purify the world through fire and catastrophe.[393]

Similarly, two stages comprise Books 1–2: a Jewish stratum around the turn of the era and a Christian stage by 150 CE.[394] *Sibylline Oracles* 1.324–400 adds a passage addressing Christ's incarnation to the original Jewish oracle, which outlines world history in ten generations. Christian redaction is also clear in 2.34–347, which discusses

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[392] John J. Collins, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism*; John J. Collins, "The Sibylline Oracles," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1983), 1:317–472. Erich Gruen, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998), 271–83, and R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles and its Social Setting*, SVTP 17 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 126–30, argue for different stratification of Sib. Or. 3.

[393] Collins, *Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism*, 99–100.

[394] A. Kurfess, "Christian Sibyllines," in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher; trans. R. M. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 2:703–45; J. J. Collins, "The Development of the Sibylline Tradition," *ANRW* 2.20.1, 441–46. On Sib. Or. 1–2, see Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*.

eschatological crises and the last judgment. Books 1–2 meld Biblical and Babylonian flood myths with Greek primeval mythology similar to that in Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. The layers of the first three books demonstrate the complex composition of the *Sibylline Oracles* and the fluidity of the tradition. Biblical, Babylonian, and Greek myths coexist with Jewish reactions to Hellenistic kings and Roman expansion in Egypt or Asia Minor. The apocalyptic worldview in parts of the corpus lends itself well to later Christian adoption and interpolation.

As we have seen, when compared to Greek and Roman traditions, female prophetic traditions play a limited role in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish discourse. Miriam and Deborah are the most prominent women called prophets, but their personalities and prophecies do not exert the same influence on subsequent Jewish and Christian traditions as their male counterparts. The female voice in the *Sibylline Oracles*, therefore, is striking. Greek and Roman traditions had legendary male prophets similar to the Sibyl—Bacis, Musaeüs, and Orpheus. Why did the authors and redactors choose the Sibyl to voice these oracles and be the non-Jewish prophet *par excellence*?

There are several possible reasons for the pseudepigraphical adoption of the Sibyl. First, the *Sibylline Oracles* take the voice of the Sibyl because a female prophet who considered or styled herself as a Sibyl composed them. Scholars who parse the layers in the compositions often attribute oracles to certain Sibyls—the Erythraean or Persian oracles in Book 3, for instance. This attribution takes seriously their authorship by a female prophet, but is complicated by the nature of Jewish pseudepigrapha.[395] Second, the choice of the Sibyl as voice may have more to do with the popularity of the Sibyl

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[395] Collins, *Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism*, 25–28.

across the Mediterranean region. Because of her legendary status, widespread popularity, and contemporaneous presence in literature, her image resonated in the cultures in which the *Sibylline Oracles* were produced. Third, the Sibyl dramatizes the gendering of difference in Jewish discourse. From a male perspective, women are the proximate and symbolic other. This perspective influenced how men portray women prophets and mediums. The otherness of women made them apt intermediaries between men and God. For diaspora Jews, the Egyptian, Greek, Phrygian, or Roman cultures among which they lived were also "other," and the Sibyl originated from and was popular in these cultures.

All of these reasons may play into the diaspora Jewish use of the Sibyl. In addition to these reasons, I propose that the nature of the Sibyl's prophetic image in poetic traditions and collective imagination resonated with the Jewish apocalyptic worldview expressed in these oracles. The *Sibylline Oracles* include key features of apocalypticism: schematized history in generations, ethical exhortation, mythical imagery, pseudonymous authorship, and visions of cosmological turmoil and divine judgment.[396] These last two features, pseudonymity and cosmic turmoil, create the distinctive voice of the *Sibylline Oracles*. Because of her associations with violent visions and possession, the Sibyl is a narrator who can embody the cosmological violence she prophesies.

In the self-descriptions that punctuate the corpus, this prophetic process and characterization of the Sibyl come to the foreground. In these passages, the prophet shifts from the oracles to a first-person narration of her history and the mechanics of her prophecy. These passages most often occur at the beginning or end of the books, or in

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[396] See discussion about definitions of apocalypse and apocalypticism in Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 1–25; Klaus Koch, *Ratlos vor der Apocalyptik* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1970).

transitions between discrete oracles. For instance, eight times in the introduction and main corpus of Book 3, the Sibyl shifts from third-person narration of oracles to first-person narration. These self-disclosures draw attention to the speaker and describe the physical manifestations of prophecy. They create an image of undulating and uncontrollable prophecy. The disjointed oracles came to the prophet at different times, and her voice provides her narrative, which links the disparate oracles.

The Sibyl’s self-description is a characteristic feature of Sibylline traditions outside of the Jewish *Sibylline Oracles*. Pausanias records the Sibyl’s autobiography:

> εἰμὶ δ’ ἐγὼ γεγαυῖα μέσον θνητοῦ τε θεᾶς τε,
> νύμφης [δ’] ἀθανάτης, πατρὸς δ’ αὖ κητοφάγοιο,
> μητρόθεν Ἰδογενής, πατρὶς δέ μοί ἐστιν ἐρυθρή
> Μάρπησσος, μητρὸς ἱερή, ποταμός <τ’> Ἀιδωνεύς
>
> I am by birth half mortal, half divine;
> An immortal nymph was my mother, my father an eater of corn;
> On my mother’s side of Idaean birth, but my fatherland was red
> Marpessus, sacred to the Mother, and the river Aïdoneus. (*Descr.* X.12.3)

A second-century CE inscription from a cave at Erythrae provides a similar self-identification that locates her in Erythrae.[397] The features of these self-descriptions—a semi-divine claim and report of parentage and homeland—occur also in the first-person sections of the Jewish *Sibylline Oracles*. They have a threefold function: They bring the person of the Sibyl to the forefront, describe the prophetic process, and redefine the Sibyl’s authority.

In terms of redefining authority, the *Sibylline Oracles* corrects ideas about the prophet from a Jewish perspective. Apollo is not the source of prophecy. “The Great God” is:

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[397] H. Engelmann and R. Merkelbach, eds., *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai* (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1972), Vol. 2, no. 224.

> οὐ ψευδοῦς Φοίβου χρησμηγόρος, ὅντε μάταιοι
> ἄνθρωποι θεὸν εἶπον, ἐπεψεύσαντο δὲ μάντιν·
> ἀλλὰ θεοῦ μεγάλοιο, τὸν οὐ χέρες ἔπλασαν ἀνδρῶν
> εἰδώλοις ἀλάλοισι λιθοξέστοισιν ὅμοιον.
>
> I am not an oracle-monger of false Phoebus, whom vain
> men called a god, and falsely described as a seer,
> but of the great God, whom no hands of men fashioned
> in the likeness of speechless idols of polished stone. (Sib. Or. 4.4–7)[398]

The Sibyl voices standard Jewish polemic against false gods and crafted idols.[399] Book 3 concludes with a long self-description that redefines the prophet's parentage and homeland (3.809–829). She says: "Some will say that I am Sibylla born of Circe as mother and an unknown father" (οἵ δέ με Κίρκης μητρὸς κἀγνώστοιο πατρὸς φήσουσι Σίβυλλαν, 3.815).[400] She instead claims to be Noah's νύμφη, "bride," which is translated in the Septuagint as "daughter-in-law": "I was his daughter-in-law and I was of his blood" (τοῦ μὲν ἐγὼ νύμφη καὶ ἀφ᾽αἵματος αὐτοῦ ἐτύχθην, 3.827). The term νύμφη plays on the associations of Sibyl as being nymph-born and draws traditions about her parentage to mind.[401] As her father-in-law, Noah provides the prophet with some of her oracles: "The first things happened to him and all the latter things have been revealed" (τῷ τὰ πρῶτ᾽ ἐγένοντο· τὰ δ᾽ἔσχατα πάντ᾽ ἀπεδείχθη, 3.828). The Sibyl describes both the past and future and has different sources for each age: God reveals the future, but she learned about the past from Noah.

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[398] Translations of the *Sibylline Oracles* are by John J. Collins, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.*

[399] Cf. Deut 28: 36; Hab 2:18; Jer 10:3–5; Isa 44:9–20; Ps 115:5; Wis 13:17–19; Bar 6:8; 3 Macc 4:16.

[400] I follow R. Buitenwerf, "The Identity of the Prophetess Sibyl in Sibylline Oracles III," in *Prophets and Prophecy in Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, ed. J. Verheyden (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 49, for the translation of this verse. The manuscripts read, καὶ γνωστοῖο πατρός, "and whose father is known," or "and whose father is Gnostos." This reading is problematic because it is not clear why having a known father is an insult and the name "Gnostos" is unattested. Buitenwerf, following Kurfess and Blass, proposes, κἀγνώστοιο πατρός, "and whose father is unknown." Cf. A. Kurfess, *Sibyllinische Weissagungen* (München: Heimeren, 1951); F. Blass, "Die Sibyllinen," in *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments*, ed. E. Kautzsch (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), 2:177–217.

[401] Buitenwerf, "Identity," 51–52.

Since the Sibyl is related to Noah, her past extends into primeval history, and she is one of a few people who lived through the catastrophe of the flood. She now envisions another catastrophe that will destroy the earth. She claims: "I say these things to you, having left the long Babylonian walls of Assyria, frenzied, a fire sent to Greece" (ταῦτά σοι Ἀσσυρίης Βαβυλώνια τείχεα μακρά οἰστρομανὴς προλιποῦσα, ἐς Ἑλλάδα πεμπόμενον πῦρ, 3.809–810). The claim to Babylon recalls the primeval Babel, the tower, and the confusion of languages (Gen 11).[402] She is not originally Greek, but she speaks Greek and prophesies for Greek-speakers after God confuses the world's languages. This passage places the Sibyl within Jewish time and traditions and presents her as an agent of apocalyptic judgment. In her frenzied, prophesying voice and body, she is "a fire sent to Greece."

The prophetic process that the Sibyl describes resembles that of Cassandra in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* or the Sibyl in Virgil's *Aeneid*. God places words and visions within the prophet's body—in her breast, mind, or heart.[403] This internal physicality of inspiration contrasts with the male prophets in the Hebrew Bible who most often see in visions outside of themselves, hear god's voice, and have words placed on their lips or in their mouths.[404] The beginning of Book 3 describes this violence as internal and caused by God. The Sibyl begins by asking for rest, because her heart has been laboring or suffering inside of her (3.2–3). These are the opening lines of the book, but they place the hearer in the middle of the prophet's experience. This self-description provides the connective tissue to the preceding Books 1 and 2. The Sibyl's prayer for rest, however, is

[402] See Buitenwerf, "Identity," 53.

[403] στῆθος: Sib. Or. 2.2; 3.162, 297, 490. νοῦς: 3.165, 821; 8.359. φρήν, ἦτορ, καρδία: 5.52; 12.298.

[404] Receiving visual and auditory messages from God: see Exod 3:2–6; Num 12:6; 1 Sam 3:1–19; Isa 1:1; Isa 6:1–4. Words placed on or in mouths and lips: see Exod 4:12–16; Isa 6:6–9.

not answered. She describes the renewed inspiration in violent, internal terms shared by many of the first-person passages throughout the collection: "But why does my heart shake again? And why is my spirit lashed by a whip, forced from within to proclaim an oracle to all?" (ἀλλὰ τί μοι κραδίη πάλι πάλλεται ἠδέ γε θυμός τυπτόμενος μάστιγι βιάζεται ἔνδοθεν αὐδήν ἀγγέλλειν πᾶσιν, 3.4–6). In similar terms, the Sibyl says in Book 4: God "drove a whip through my heart within to narrate accurately to men what now is and what will yet be" (οὗτός μοι μάστιγα διὰ φρενὸς ἤλασεν εἴσω, ἀνθρώποις ὅσα νῦν τε καὶ ὁππόσα ἔσσεται αὖτις, 4.18–20). The placement of vision or words in the Sibylline prophet comes with pain. When she asks for rest, new waves of vision come over her. This pattern continues throughout the main corpus of Book 3 (vv. 162–166, 196–198, 210–217, 295–303, 489–491, 698–701). In the second self-disclosure, for instance, she says, "The utterance of the great God rose in my breast and commanded me to prophesy concerning every land" (καὶ τότε μοι μεγάλοιο θεοῦ φάτις ἐν στήθεσσιν ἵστατο καί μ᾽ ἐκέλευσε προφητεῦσαι κατὰ πᾶσαν γαῖαν, 3.162–163). Later, she "prayed that the great begetter may stop the anguish, but again the voice of the Great God rose up in my breast" (καὶ λιτόμην γενετῆρα μέγαν παύσασθαι ἀνάγκης, καὶ πάλι μοι μεγάλοιο θεοῦ φάτις ἐν στήθεσσιν ἵστατο, 3.296–297; cf. 489–491).

The *Sibylline Oracles* creates an image of a Sibyl who is not in control of her prophecy. God forces her to prophesy. A heart shaken and a spirit lashed suggest ideas of frenzy or ecstasy as an altered mental state. Other terms in the self-descriptions suggest an ecstatic mental state. The Sibyl says: "I will speak the following with my whole person in ecstasy" (πᾶν δέμας ἐκπληχθεῖσα τάδ᾽ ἔσπομαι, 2.4). She calls herself "frenzied," οἰστρομανής, a term related to the sting of an insect and often used

metaphorically for madness derived from sexual desire, anger, or intoxication.[405] In Book 11, she worries that people will not recognize that she is a true seer but will call her "a messenger with a frenzied spirit" (μεμανηότι θυμῷ ἄγγελον, 11.318). She asks God to take away the frenzy (οἶστρον), inspiration (ἔνθεον ὀμφήν), and madness (μανίην φοβεράν), and grant her a more pleasing song (ἱμερόεσσαν ἀοιδήν) (11.323–324). From her experience, messages spoken in madness and frenzy are not accepted as true, while pleasing hymns or refrains are.

In other self-disclosures, the Sibyl uses similar images of her endurance of God's force, whips, scourges, and fire, but the emphasis shifts to her own wrong-doing, sexual promiscuity, and implications in idolatry. Her sexual past is tinged with shame and promiscuity in two passages—Sib. Or. 2.339–347 and 7.150–162. The latter passage is from a Christian book dating to the 2nd–3rd centuries CE.[406] The first passage comes from Book 2, which is Jewish but includes extensive Christian redaction.[407] Casting the Sibyl as a sinner who is promiscuous and neglectful of the poor makes her the opposite of early Christian expectations of pious women.[408] This emphasis on the sexual promiscuity of the Sibyl aligns with the Jewish association of idolatry and adultery in Hebrew Bible prophetic discourse.[409] As a non-Jewish prophet, the Sibyl is guilty of idolatry, even as she speaks for the Jewish God. In these two passages, she is also guilty of sexual promiscuity.

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[405] LSJ, s.v. οἰστράω, οἰστρομανής.

[406] Kurfess, "Christian Sibyllines," 2.703–45.

[407] Collins, "Development," 441–46, thinks that this passage could be either from the Jewish stratum (ca. 30 BCE to 70 CE) or the Christian (ca. 150 CE), but probably the former.

[408] See, for example, 1 Tim 5:3–15.

[409] For example, Jer 3:1–10; 5:7; 23:13–16; Ezek 6:9; 16:1–58.

In Book 2, she laments her own fate. She cared nothing for marriage, and she shut out people who were in need. Her house (μελάθροισιν) belonged to a very wealthy man (2.341–344). She asks for salvation from her "shameless" (ἀναιδέα) deeds (2.345). The same sins occur in Book 7: "I have known innumerable beds, but no marriage concerned me" (μυρία μέν μοι λέκτρα, γάμος δ᾽ οὐδεὶς ἐμελήθη, 7.153). Her wrongdoing is related to her unmarried status. The result is that "fire has eaten and will devour me" (πῦρ μ᾽ ἔφαγεν καὶ βρώσεται), and men "will fashion a tomb for me by the sea" (ἔνθα τάφον μοι ἄνθρωποι τεύξουσι παρερχόμενοί με θαλάσσῃ, 7.159), which may refer to the association of the Sibyl with caves at Cumae and Erythrae.[410] The image of fire devouring the Sibyl departs from Book 3, in which she is "fire sent to Greece." There she is the agent of judgment, but here she receives judgment because of her sexuality. In the last two lines, she claims that "the Father" told her about "the Son" and asks to be stoned for her sins.

While Greek discourse about the Sibyl and other female prophets highlight the sexuality of the prophet, her history is not sinful or shameful as it is in the *Sibylline Oracles*. Ritual virginity and prophecy as sex with the god are the key ideas regarding the connection of prophecy and sexuality for Greek writers. In Latin depictions, Virgil and Ovid delve into issues of shame and sorrow concerning the prophet's sexual relationship with the God. The Jewish and Christian authors of the *Sibylline Oracles* focus on female sexuality in a different way. She is not married—that is, does not adhere to the one God—and has had many partners—that is, listens to the voices of many gods. The concept of prophecy as sex with the god enables this move to emphasizing the shameful sexual past of the Sibyl.

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[410] See Parke, *Sibyls*, 71–95, on the cave at Cumae.

Despite her shameful history and her raving madness, the Sibyl speaks truth. A representative statement about her reputation for madness is from the self disclosure in Sib. Or. 3.809–829:

> οἵ δέ με Κίρκης
> μητρὸς κἀγνώστοιο πατρὸς φήσουσι Σίβυλλαν
> μαινομένην ψεύστειραν· ἐπὴν δὲ γένηται ἅπαντα,
> τηνίκα μου μνήμην ποιήσετε κοὐκέτι μ᾽οὐδείς
> μαινομένην φήσειε, θεοῦ μεγάλοιο προφῆτιν.
>
> Some will say that I am Sibylla born of Circe as mother and an unknown father, a crazy liar. But when everything comes to pass, then you will remember me and no longer will anyone say that I am crazy, I who am a prophetess of the great God.

People question her based on her dubious parentage and her appearance of madness, but the sources of her oracles, Noah and God, indicate their truth. The Sibyl laments that people do not believe her, but ultimately she knows that it does not matter. Everything she says will happen. Like the Delphic prophet and Cassandra, the Sibyl has an ambiguous style. She prophesies “divine riddles” (αἰνίγματα θεῖα, 3.812). The text does not, however, discuss the need for interpretation because the end is inevitable—the recipient does not have a choice that will delay or change the outcome.

The inevitable outcome, cosmological judgment, includes the same images of fire, whips, and bodies shaken that characterize the Sibyl’s prophetic process and experience. In Book 3, the oracles begin with praise of God that denounces idolatry and describes God’s role in creating everything—“springs and rivers, imperishable fire, days, and nights” (3.23). In apocalyptic literature, creation and eschatology are closely linked: The final revelation imagines the unraveling of creation. The oracles describe how God’s fire will destroy Rome, Nero, and Cleopatra. Rome will be destroyed “when the fiery cataract flows from heaven” (3.54). Similarly, “a burning power comes through the sea to land” to

destroy Nero (3.72). Cleopatra likewise brings God's wrath upon the earth in fire: "An undying cataract of raging fire will flow, and burn earth, burn sea, and melt the heavenly vault and days of creation itself into one, and separate them into clean air" (3.84–86). Fire is destructive, yet purifying. Visions of fire continue into the main corpus of Book 3 and are prevalent in all of the books of the collection.

Earthquakes are another means of destruction. As prophecy shook the Sibyl's heart, earthquakes will destroy regions, islands, and cities—Lydia, Cyprus, and Ephesos (3.449, 457, 459). Rome is an agent of this destructive power, as Roman conquest "will shake many" (3.177). The Sibyl calls God "earthshaker," an epithet used also in Homeric and Hesiodic poetry (3.405, 408). She also foresees the conclusion of God's judgment and coming age of peace: "The earth will no longer be shaken, groaning deeply" (3.752). Just as the Sibyl asks for rest from the heart-shaking prophecy, the earth groans for the end of its own shaking and violence. Also, just as the Sibyl asks God to save her from whips and scourges (2.344), the world will experience "whips of flame punishing the wicked" in the cosmic destruction (2.288).

Once again, I return to Plutarch's question in *Mulierum virtutes*: Are the oracles of Sibyl and those of Bacis different? In other words, does the gender of the prophet make a difference in how god communicates with her and how she in turn communicates with people? Since the oracles of the male seer Bacis and the non-Jewish Sibyls are not extant, this comparison is impossible. I have suggested, however, comparisons between the male prophets of the Hebrew Bible and the Jewish Sibyl. A striking difference between the collections of the Sibyl and those of the male prophets is the image of the prophet and her process that the self-descriptions create. These passages describe in

dramatic detail the physical manifestations of the prophet's process: Frenzy, madness, and pain emanate from divine messages placed inside the prophet's body. This text is indebted to poetic images of female prophets and, with these images, depicts how divine communication works in a way different from male prophets in Jewish discourse. Prophecy is a sexualized and violent process in this text, and the Sibyl makes this depiction of inspiration possible. She is, moreover, a prophet who embodies the doom she prophesies. Frenzied embodiment describes the process of prophecy and resonates with destructive apocalyptic visions. The violence in the collective imagination revolving around female prophets primed this apocalyptic image of the Sibyl.

IV. Conclusion

I have shown how images of female prophets were refracted through various literary lenses and rhetorical goals in philosophical, poetic, and oracular literature. Each text interacts with the dramatic images of women prophesying that were prevalent in the collective imagination and experimented with ideas about how humans communicated with God(s). From an eclectic philosophical perspective, Plutarch challenged a frenzied image of the Pythia, yet fell back on sexualized tropes for the prophetic process. In the poetic tradition of Latin epic, Lucan took the frenzied, sexualized, and violent image to an extreme to articulate a pessimistic view of the relationship between gods and men. The *Sibylline Oracles*, a Jewish and Christian oracular collection, drew on the frenzied image of the Sibyl in order to depict a prophet who embodies the violent imaginaries of an apocalyptic worldview. These dramatic images of women prophesying allowed authors to experiment with ideas about how humans communicate with God(s).

CHAPTER 5
AN AMBIVALENT ARGUMENT:
EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2–16

The apparent contradiction between First Corinthians 11:2–16, in which Paul seems to suggest head coverings for women while they are "praying or prophesying," and 14:34–35, in which Paul silences women in the ἐκκλησία, has prompted numerous exegetical solutions and rigorous hermeneutical debates. In the next two chapters, I propose a new way to view the relationship between these passages that focuses less on the contradiction and more on Paul's argumentative movement from Chapter 11 to the end of 14. I argue that the difficulties and ambiguities in 11:2–16—in vocabulary, syntax, logic, and subject matter—stem from Paul's ambivalence between his overarching argument in 1 Corinthians for an interdependent communal body, on the one hand, and a bias toward gender differentiation and hierarchy, on the other. Since the argument is unclear, the passage creates a problem to which he must return—that is, women "praying or prophesying." The arguments in 11:17–14:25 about conduct in the assembly, spiritual gifts, the community as body, and inspired speaking allow the rhetorical space for Paul to move from the conflicted argument in 11:2–16 to the silencing in 14:34–35. The topics of women and inspired speaking in the community, therefore, are intertwined in this letter and its socio-historical situation in Corinth.

In this chapter and the next, I present my exegetical argument in three parts. I analyze (1) the difficulties and ambiguities of 11:2–16, (2) how each argument in 11:17–14:25 modifies the argument about women speaking, and (3) the textual and rhetorical integrity of 14:26–40. My interpretation attends to the place of 11:2–16 and 14:34–35 within the overarching argumentative movement in 1 Cor 11–14. I do not assume that

Paul is always consistent in his thinking or in how he presents it. For this reason, I highlight the difficulties in the argument in 11:2–16 and the possibility that Paul revises his judgment on women speaking after he works through his definitions of the ἐκκλησία as body of Christ and different modes of inspired speech. The exegesis in these chapters accomplishes two things. First, it integrates analysis of the "woman passages" of 1 Cor 11–14 with interpretation of the discourse on spiritual gifts. Second, it demonstrates ways in which cultural perceptions and practices of women praying, prophesying, and speaking in religious settings may have influenced Paul's arguments.

In the three previous chapters, my analysis of archaeological and literary texts revealed themes that recurred when authors wrote about women's speech. First, spaces and settings evoked different expectations for men's speech versus women's speech. According to male authors, certain settings—households and sanctuaries—were more open to women than other spaces—forums, courthouses, streets, and marketplaces. Paul, likewise, in 1 Cor 14 defines the ἐκκλησία and its activities and concludes that the meeting is not an appropriate setting for women to speak. The presence of women in the archaeological record of Corinth, however, calls into question the separation that authors suggest. Second, the texts that I analyzed in Chapter 3 demonstrate a common ambivalence about women's speech: Authors both accept and reject women's speech. Paul displays a similar ambivalence, but his reasons differ according to his rhetorical goal of responding to a particular community that is already active. Third, issues of authority and interpretation of prophecy are central to discussions of female prophecy in the Greek, Roman, and Jewish texts that I examined in Chapter 4. Similarly, issues of authority, knowledge, interpretation, and power intersect in 1 Corinthians 11–14.

I anticipate two objections to my interpretation that I would like to address briefly at the outset. First, I read 14:34–35 as authentic to Paul and to this letter. I will discuss the text-critical evidence and rhetorical coherence of these verses within their literary context in the next chapter. I demonstrated in the first chapter how decisions about the integrity of the letter and about Paul's coherence depend on the interpreter's biases. These decisions, moreover, can alter the contents of the letter and obscure the socio-historical issues at stake. Second, I do not read Paul as a perfectly consistent writer or as someone who plans every argument prior to writing. Rhetorical criticism, especially the kind rooted in ancient rhetorical education, has benefited scholarly interpretation of Paul's letters. But, as I will show, 1 Cor 11:2–16 is a flawed argument that creates more problems than it solves. This flawed argument suggests that rhetorical arrangement is not foolproof. Paul sometimes goes down argumentative roads that are dead-ends from which he has to backtrack and make adjustments. This does not negate his rhetorical training or skill as an author, but it shows that he is dealing with real problems. His own cultural and social biases sometimes hinder his rhetorical ability.

I. The Structure and Difficulties of 1 Corinthians 11:2–16

First Corinthians 11:2–16 is a self-contained argument about gender differentiation in the communal gathering. The boundaries of the unit are marked by the ἐπαινῶ of 11:2 and the οὐκ ἐπαινῶ of 11:17. The passage is linked to the argument in 11:17–34 by this phrase and the topic of errors in communal practices. The placement between the discussion of eating meat offered to idols (8:1–11:1) and correct conduct during the Lord's supper (11:17–34) interrupts discourse about meals and introduces the topic of 12:1–14:40, spirit-inspired speech in the ἐκκλησία. In terms of the structure of

the letter, this passage begins a new section on worship practices when the Corinthians gather.[411] This part of the letter begins by discussing women's activity in worship and ends with a verdict on women's speech in the ἐκκλησία (14:34–35), indicating the significance of women's activity in Corinth for the situation Paul addresses.

After a note of praise in v. 2 (ἐπαινῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς), which primes positive reception of what follows, Paul's argument unfolds in four parts: (1) a theological premise in v. 3; (2) an argument from cultural norms of gender differentiation in vv. 4–6; (3) arguments alluding to the Genesis creation narrative in vv. 7–12; and (4) arguments from nature and custom in vv. 13–16. The argument is convoluted. Paul does not prove or explain his premise in v. 3. The precise practical issue he addresses in vv. 4–6 and 13–15 is unclear, and he modifies his conclusion in vv. 7–10 with vv. 11–12. The contradictions and flaws in logic indicate the complexity of the situation at Corinth and the constraints the context poses to what Paul can say.

In addition to problematic logic, the passage includes difficult vocabulary and syntax. This passage is the only one in Paul's letters in which certain terms relating to hair (ξυρᾶω, κείρω, κομάω, κομή) and to being covered (ἀκατακάλυπτος, κατακαλύπτομαι, περιβολαίος) occur. The verb πρέπω, "to be proper," and adjective φιλόνεικος, "victory-loving," in the final part of the argument are *hapax legomena* in Paul's undisputed letters. In addition to these unusual terms, two common terms, κεφαλή (though uncommon for Paul) and ἐξουσία, have multiple or obscured meanings. Difficult syntactical structures complicate both of these terms in vv. 4–5 and 10. A *crux*

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[411] So also Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*; Økland, *Women in Their Place*. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, places this passage within the block of material of Ch 8–11.

interpretum is the conclusion (διὰ τοῦτο) in v. 10, which includes two obscure phrases: ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς and διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. These phrases have resulted in glosses or corrections in manuscript traditions and in ancient translations.

These difficulties, ambiguities, and contradictions are evidence of Paul's conflicted position as he works through the implications of the dissolution of social differences in the new creation in Christ. One of Paul's overarching arguments in 1 Corinthians is for communal interdependence based on one way of framing the body of Christ metaphor (12:12–31). The subject of gender differentiation, however, is connected to gender hierarchy, which becomes explicit when Paul employs the body metaphor with an emphasis on headship. The result is an argument that goes in multiple directions and ends with an appeal to custom.

II. The Situation: Keeping Traditions, Praying, and Prophesying (11:2)

Paul reveals little about the situation in Corinth. A few details, however, provide a skeletal description of the context and why it may be problematic for Paul. First, the issue reflected in 11:2–16 has something to do with what Paul taught the Corinthians. Paul uses the language of teaching or tradition—παραδίδωμι and παράδοσις—in his praise of the Corinthians (11:2). This language in 11:23 and 15:3 signals central tenets of his gospel: in 11:23, Paul introduces a tradition to correct the Corinthian practice of a ritual, the Lord's Supper, and in 15:3, he recites a creedal-sounding narrative of resurrection appearances to correct their understanding of resurrection.[412]

What might the παράδοσις of 11:2 be? One possibility is that Paul taught the Corinthians part or all of the premise that follows in v. 3, "Christ is the head of every

[412] See also παράδοσις and παραδίδωμι in Rom 6:17; Gal 1:14; Col 2:8; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6.

man, man is the head of woman, and God is the head of Christ." If this is the teaching that he praises the Corinthians for keeping, it makes little sense why he would need to address the issue of gender differentiation in the assembly. In the next section of this chapter, I will argue that Paul did teach the Corinthians part of v. 3, but this teaching is not the referent of παράδοσις in v. 2. The statement in v. 3, rather, reminds them of, and clarifies, another previous teaching, one that better suits his argument.

Alternatively, the teachings in v. 2 deal with the baptism ritual, as it is reflected in the so-called baptismal formulae of Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 12:13, and Col 3:10–11. Scholars have argued that the view expressed in Gal 3:28, which professes "no longer male and female" in the new creation in Christ, underlies the actions of some women in the Corinthian assembly.[413] The baptismal formulae in Galatians and Colossians, moreover, liken baptism and entry into the community to a change of clothing. Those who are baptized "have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal 3:27) and "have clothed yourselves with the new, renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator" (Col 3:10). One could interpret such a statement to mean that clothing, a sign of one's identity, changes when one is "in Christ." In society, clothing marks difference—ethnicity, status, and gender—but in Christ these differences and their signs no longer exist. References to gender and clothing do not occur in 1 Cor 12:13, perhaps because clothing as a sign of gender identity is at stake in Corinth. A baptismal παράδοσις better explains the rise of a gender differentiation issue: Some women and men enact the statement "no longer male and female" by performing the same ritual actions and omitting outward signs of gender distinction.

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[413] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 226–32; Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 123–26.

A second point about the situation is that women are the main focus, not men and not men and women equally.[414] While Paul is concerned with proper outward signs of gender for both male and female, he gives closer attention to female head coverings and hair in vv. 5–6 and 13–15. The statement in v. 10, to which the argument in vv. 7–9 leads, addresses women. In vv. 11 and 12, Paul mentions woman first in both statements.

If women are the main addressees, what were the Corinthian women doing that caused Paul to construct this argument? They were praying and prophesying (vv. 5, 10, 13) alongside men (v. 4). Paul writes parallel statements for men and women in vv. 4 and 5: πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων and πᾶσα δὲ γυνὴ προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα. He provides no other clear evidence for the Corinthians' actions. These two forms of speaking in the assembly—praying and prophesying—align with the two types Paul differentiates in Chapters 12–14—praying in tongues and prophesying.[415] The bifocal definition of inspired speech in Chapter 11 anticipates that of Chapters 12–14.

What would these modes of speaking look like to an observer, and would Paul and the Corinthians view such communication with God differently if voiced by a man or a woman? In Chapter 4, I demonstrated the conceptual connection between women and inspired prophecy in the Greek- and Latin-speaking Mediterranean world. Female prophets, more so than their male counterparts, captured the imaginations of authors. These authors created images of prophets that were tendentious and stereotyped. These images—often frenzied, sexualized, and violent—may have influenced how Paul and the

[414] On this point, I disagree with Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, who has argued that the issue in this passage is the hairstyles of men, "Sex and Logic in 1 Cor 11:2–16," 482–500. Raymond Collins follows this argument and in his commentary entitles this passage, "Let men be men and women be women," *First Corinthians*, 393.

[415] Paul interchanges verbs λαλέω and προσεύχομαι when he discusses tongues. See 14:13–15.

Corinthians understood the language and mechanics of prophecy. This influence, paradoxically, may have been felt more in a place like Corinth, rather than Delphi, since female prophecy was not performed in the Corinthian Apollo Temple. Female prophetic traditions also raised questions about prophetic inspiration and interpretation, two issues that Paul likewise addresses in 1 Corinthians 11–14.

One text that illuminates the situation of women and men praying and prophesying together is Philo's *Vita contemplativa*, which I discussed in Chapter 3. In the rituals that Philo describes, men and women sing hymns or prayers that move them into an ecstatic state. The goal for this ecstatic speech is unity with divine wisdom. Something similar may be occurring in the ἐκκλησία in Corinth. Wisdom is a key component of Paul's teaching for the Corinthians and also is something that the Corinthians themselves value (1 Cor 1:18–31). In both the *Vita contemplativa* and texts about female prophets, praying and prophesying are gendered expressions. In the former case, male and female voices come to embody wisdom and an androgynous, pre-creation state. In the latter, gender difference influences the language of oracles, the way language is received and interpreted, and the sexualized image of the prophetic process. Since Paul introduces prayer and prophecy in this passage and connects them to gender differentiation, the performance of gender and inspired speech are intertwined.

III. Theological Premise: Heads and Bodies (11:3)

An emphasis on headship within the body metaphor begins in the premise in v. 3, which Paul introduces with the formula Θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι, an epistolary formula that

he uses to clarify something his audience already knows.[416] He outlines a series of three relationships:

1. παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστός ἐστιν
2. κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνήρ
3. κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός

The anomalies in syntax and structure illuminate Paul's goals. In terms of syntax, the first clause stands out. Its structure is different, while the second and third clauses are parallel.[417] The order of these statements is odd: One would expect to move up or down the hierarchy—woman to man to Christ to God (2, 1, 3) or God to Christ to man to woman (3, 1, 2). The order, rather, begins with the intermediate link, moves to woman and man, and then describes the divine relationship. The syntax and structure suggest that the first clause is different from the last two. I argue that it is a prior teaching that the Corinthians already know. The second and third clauses provide Paul's elaboration of the first relationship to address the situation at hand. In other words, the Corinthians already know "Christ is the head of every man." Now Paul shares two correlates: "Man is the head of woman" and "God is the head of Christ." The middle term, the man-woman relationship, is at stake in what follows, and Paul has grounded it in the Christ-man relationship.

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[416] See 1 Cor 10:1; 12:1, 3; 15:1. T. Y. Mullins, "Disclosure: A Literary Form in the New Testament," *NovT* 7 (1964): 44–50; Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, AB 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 262–63.

[417] The phrase παντὸς ἀνδρός receives emphasis in the first clause, while κεφαλή occurs in the first position in the second two relationships. The anarthrous κεφαλή is the predicate nominative, so the emphasis does not come across in English translation. BDF §273.

Are these relationships hierarchical?[418] The answer depends on whether the term "head," κεφαλή, indicates hierarchy. Κεφαλή is the first of several ambiguous, multivalent terms in this passage. Paul's use of the term anticipates the issue that he addresses in his argument: Women should have their heads covered when praying and prophesying in the assembly. For this reason, it is important to translate κεφαλή as the noun "head" to retain the multiple literal and figurative meanings at play.[419] Outside of this passage, Paul uses the term only in 1 Cor 12:21 and in a Septuagint quotation in Rom 12:20. In 1 Cor 12:21, Paul expresses the interdependence of body parts: The head cannot say to the feet, "I have no need of you." The term is more common in the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. In these letters, κεφαλή has a hierarchical connotation: Christ is the head of the body, the ἐκκλησία (Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:10, 19).

Throughout 1 Corinthians, Paul talks about bodies in two ways—(1) the literal, physical bodies that move about in the world, act in positive and negative ways, speak, eat, and have sex, and (2) the metaphorical, communal body of the ἐκκλησία. He bases the metaphor of the communal body on the physical body, and when he talks about physical bodies, he is also talking about the communal body. The same metaphorical play occurs in his use of the term κεφαλή. Literally, the term means the physical, anatomical head, and this meaning occurs in vv. 4a, 5a, 7, and possibly 10.

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[418] The implications of this question emerge in modern hermeneutical discussions. First, the third part of the premise suggests a subordinationist Christology, supported by other statements in the letter (3:21–23; 15:27–28), which has troubled orthodox readers. See Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, 229; Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 249; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 184. Second, the man-woman hierarchy is problematic for modern feminists, male and female.

[419] Contra Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 800, who translates using "preeminent" and "foremost."

From the literal term, three metaphorical meanings arise. First, κεφαλή is synecdoche for the whole person, as in the modern phrase, "to count heads."[420] This is one possible meaning for the term in vv. 4b and 5b. Second, κεφαλή can mean "authority," "controlling agent," or "leader," indicating a hierarchical relationship.[421] Third, κεφαλή may mean "source" or "origin," which does not necessarily indicate hierarchy.[422] *Orphic Fragment* 21a uses κεφαλή in this sense: "Zeus is the head, Zeus is the middle, and from Zeus all things are completed."[423] The interpretation of "head" as "source" in 1 Cor 11:2–16 draws support from Paul's argument from creation that imagines woman as created from man. Fee argues that κεφαλή as "source" negates a hierarchical interpretation of this passage: Paul's concern is relational.[424] It is not clear, however, that a definition of "head" as "source" excludes connotations of hierarchy and

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[420] LSJ, s.v. κεφαλή.

[421] In the LXX, κεφαλή translates the Hebrew ראשׁ, "head" or "leader" (Deut 28:13; Judg 11:11; 2 Kgdms 22:44; Ps 18:43; Isa 7:8–9; 9:13–15; 19:15; Jer 38:7). Josephus (*B.J.* 4.4.3) calls Jerusalem the "head" of the nation. Plutarch (*Cic.* 14.4–6) uses the term for the leader of the Roman republic. For a hierarchical interpretation, see Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, 229; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 409–11. For a non-hierarchical interpretation, see Fee, *First Corinthians*, 502–503; Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic," 492. See discussion in Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 812–13.

[422] S. Bedale, "The Meaning of κεφαλή in the Pauline Epistles," *JTS,* n.s. 5 (1954): 211–15. Barrett, Bruce, Scroggs, and Fee support this understanding for 1 Cor 11:3. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 248; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (London: Oliphants, 1971), 103; Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," 283–303, and "Revisited," 532–37; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 502–03.

[423] Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα, Διὸς δ' ἐ̃κ πάντα τελεῖται. See Carl Holladay, *Fragments of Hellenistic Jewish Authors, Volume 4, Orphica* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 189–92, for variations of this formula. Κεφαλή and ἀρχή are often interchanged in such statements. This theological statement is similar to the Pauline phrase, "From him and through him and in him are all things" (ἐκ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, Rom 11:36). Other texts that support the meaning of "origin": Philo (*Congr.* 12.61) calls Esau "the progenitor, the head" of a clan. In his dream interpretations, Artemidorus: "The head is the source of life and light for the whole body" and "the head resembles parents in that it is the cause of one's living" (*Onir.* 1.2; 1.35). Medical texts viewed the brain (ὁ ἐγκέφαλος) as both the "source" of sensations and emotions and the "control" of actions and desires. Hippocrates, *Morb. sacr.* 2.174–75; Galen, *De Usu Partium* 12.4. See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 816–17, for discussion.

[424] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 502–503: "Paul's understanding of the metaphor, therefore, and almost certainly the only one the Corinthians would have grasped, is "head" as "source," especially "source of life" [. . .] Thus Paul's concern is not hierarchical (who has authority over whom), but relational (the unique relationships that are predicated on one's being the source of the other's existence)."

authority.[425] The Orphic fragment quoted above indicates a hierarchical relationship, since the divine Zeus as head is placed above and is preeminent over humanity.[426] While a non-hierarchical interpretation is attractive, it is motivated by the apologetic desire to interpret Paul's ideas about gender as non-hierarchical.

Both metaphorical possibilities draw support from ancient texts, indicating that the term could elicit both meanings, depending on how the author frames the term. The premise in Paul's argument begins with the relationship between Christ and man, which sets up a hierarchy that extends to the other two relationships—man and woman, and God and Christ. In Chapter 11, therefore, Paul frames the body metaphor to envision a community in which hierarchy exists.

This framing resonates with how other authors contemporary to Paul structure relationships between men and women and use body terminology and metaphors. Philo's gender dualism, often expressed in body terms, provides a tool for allegorical interpretation of biblical texts. Male is soul, while female is body; male is mind, while female is sense-perception. As with Paul, there is a hierarchical valuation of male over female. Philo differs in that he does not express his dualism or hierarchy while thinking about or writing advice for a community. Plutarch similarly creates a hierarchical ordering of male and female as soul and body. Again, Plutarch does not have a community in mind; rather, in a marital relationship, he envisions the husband as soul and the wife as body, resulting in a benevolent hierarchy in which the soul is attentive to the body's needs. What distinguishes this passage in 1 Corinthians is that Paul combines two

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[425] Bedale, "The Meaning of κεφαλή," 215.

[426] Likewise, a hierarchical relationship is assumed in the above-cited Philo and Artemidorus texts, as parents, "the cause of one's living," have authority.

metaphorical uses of the body that were prevalent in the ancient Mediterranean: (1) the community as body politic, and (2) male-female relationships as body. The former has interdependence as a core value, while the latter emphasizes hierarchy.

IV. Cultural Norms of Gender Differentiation (11:4–6)

The metaphorical use of κεφαλή in describing the relationships between God, Christ, man, and woman sets up a practical issue—what individuals wear on their physical heads while speaking in the assembly. Paul proposes parallel, yet distinct, situations for men and women:

1. πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων
   καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.

2. πᾶσα δὲ γυνὴ προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτῳ τῇ κεφαλῇ
   καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς·
   ἓν γάρ ἐστιν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ.

The participles προσευχόμενος/προσευχομένη and προφητεύων/προφητεύουσα indicate two forms of speech that occur in the ἐκκλησία. These verbs are concentrated within 1 Corinthians in this passage and in Chapter 14 and link the arguments.[427] For Paul, prophesying is directed toward the community for "building up, exhortation, and encouragement" (14:3). Praying is directed toward God and should engage the spirit and the mind (14:15). These verses suggest that Paul knows or thinks that women in Corinth are performing the same kinds of public, spirit-inspired speech that men engage in, and at this point in his letter, he accepts such speech.[428]

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[427] προσεύχομαι: 11:4, 5, 13; 14:13, 14 [2x], 15 [2x]; προφητεύω: 11:4, 5; 13:9; 14:1, 3, 4, 5 [2x], 24, 31, 39.

[428] P. Bachmann, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 4th ed. (Leipzig: Deichert, 1936), reads the women's praying and prophesying as private and in the home, but this interpretation displays bias about the proper place of men and women. Scholars in the mid-20th to early-21st centuries have dismissed this view. See Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 250; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 505. There is also the question of how well modern conceptions of "public" and "private" reflect ancient views. On the difficulty of the terminology of

The syntax of κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων is difficult. Literally, it means "having down from the head."[429] A few manuscripts supply the explanatory gloss κάλυμμα, "covering" or "veil," before κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων, in an attempt to clarify this obscure phrase.[430] Most commentators interpret the phrase to refer to head coverings for men.[431] Alternatively, it may refer to hairstyles, since long hair is the subject of v. 14 and could be said to hang "down from the head."[432] Two parallel uses of κατὰ κεφαλῆς suggest the first option: Esther 6:2 LXX reads λυπούμενος κατὰ κεφαλῆς, "mourning with head covered," and Plutarch, *Mor*. 200F, κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἔχων τὸ ἱμάτιον, "having a cloak hanging down from his head." Like 1 Cor 11:4, the Esther text lacks a noun, but it is clear from the context of mourning that head covering is indicated. Plutarch provides the noun τὸ ἱμάτιον, just as some 1 Corinthians manuscripts add κάλυμμα to v. 4. Roman sculpture, including that of Corinth, portrays men wearing head coverings in cultic settings.[433]

The counterpart to κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων is ἀκατακαλύπτῳ τῇ κεφαλῇ, "with uncovered head." As with its parallel, some interpreters suggest that this phrase deals with how women wear their hair rather than with head coverings and could be translated "with loosed hair." This interpretation draws on practices in oracular speech associated

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"public" and "private" when discussing the Roman context, see Kate Cooper, "Closely Watched Households: Visibility, Exposure, and Private Power in the Roman Domus," *Past & Present* 197 (2007): 3–33.

[429] BDAG, s.v. κατά; BDF §225.

[430] Miniscules 424* 440. 999. 1315. See Reuben Swanson, ed., *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: 1 Corinthians* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2003), 161. These variants are not included in the apparatus of NA^{28}.

[431] See Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 411.

[432] Murphy-O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16"; Collins, *First Corinthians,* 393.

[433] D. W. J. Gill, "The Importance of Roman Portraiture for Head Coverings in 1 Cor 11:2–16," *TynBul* 41 (1990): 245–60; Richard E. Oster, "When Men Wore Veils to Worship: The Historical Context of 1 Cor 11:4," *NTS* 34 (1988): 481–505; Oster, "Use, Misuse, and Neglect," 52–73.

with the Pythia and the Sibyl.[434] In Lucan's *Civil War*, the Pythia dramatically experiences prophetic inspiration and her headband flies off her head in her frenzy. This episode has led some scholars to suggest that Corinthian women similarly became inspired, lost their head coverings, and let their hair flow freely as a sign of inspiration. As I demonstrated in Chapter 4, however, Lucan's episode has little to do with what actually happened on a regular basis at Delphi and aligns with his own poetic purposes. The fourth-century cup in the Berlin National Museum portrays the Delphic prophet sitting calmly with her head covered (Figure 4.1), and most literary depictions of the prophet under normal circumstances agree with this portrayal. As for the Sibyl, the key text that deals with hair is Virgil's *Aeneid*: "her braided hair flies loose" (VI.60). Lucan and Virgil are part of the Latin epic tradition, which exaggerated the physical frenzy of prophets for dramatic purposes. These images of flying hair do not reflect ritual practices, but they may have influenced how Paul imagined the female prophecy that took place in Corinth.

Paul draws on the cultural language of shame when he says that a man who prophesies or prays with head covered "shames his head" (καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ). While the first κεφαλή of this verse means the physical head, the second encompasses two metaphorical meanings: the man himself, since "head" is synecdoche for the whole person, and Christ, the figurative "head" of v. 3.[435] Paul plays with multiple meanings and, capitalizing on the multivalence of "head," says two things at once. By introducing the argument with the theological premise of v. 3, Paul expects the audience

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[434] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 227.

[435] Commentators often choose between meanings, but the decision is unnecessary. See Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 250.

to hear both meanings. Likewise, the woman shames her own head, or herself, and her figurative "head," man.[436] Paul reinforces the emphasis on shame with the last statement in the verse: "For it is one and the same as being shaved."[437] This statement, which is hyperbolic and draws on culturally accepted signs of femininity, emphasizes that women, more than men, are the issue in this passage. There is no parallel statement for men.

Paul continues this line of argumentation about culturally acceptable hair and head coverings for women. In two conditional statements of reality, he provides options for women: (1) be covered or (2) have her hair cut short (κειράσθω, κείρασθαι) or shaved off (ξυρᾶσθαι).[438] His use of the term αἰσχρός, "shameful," draws on the concept of shame and indicates that the second option is not acceptable. Paul later uses the same term, αἰσχρός, regarding female speech in the assembly (14:35). Much of this portion of the argument revolves around the performance of gender in culturally accepted hairstyles and clothing. It also hints at the performance of inspired speech, which will become more important in the arguments in 1 Cor 12–14.

V. Creation Narratives and Gender Identity (11:7–12)

The second part of Paul's argument moves from culturally-situated claims about hair and head coverings to theological arguments that contrast men and women based on

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[436] Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 412–13, displays an inconsistent back and forth movement on the issue of choosing a definition for "head" in these verses. About the disgrace of a man's head in v. 4 he writes: "Preferably it means that he disgraces Christ, 'the head of every man,' as in v. 3, from whom he would be concealing himself." But for v. 5 he writes: "'Her head' could mean 'the man' of v. 3 but in light of what follows in vv.5b–6c, it probably means her own physical head, and not both 'heads,' because the noun is singular." But then he seems to reverse his position in terms of this verse: "Such a woman would bring disgrace to her husband because she seems to consider herself on the same level as he."

[437] τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ, middle/passive perfect participle of ξυράω. BDAG, s.v. ξυράω. Outside of this passage, the term occurs in the NT only in Acts 21:24 in reference to a rite of purification.

[438] On the conditional statements: BDF §372. Some difficulty surrounds the term ξυρᾶσθαι. The occurrence of the verb in the previous verse indicates it comes from ξυράω, which results in the present middle infinitive ξυρᾶσθαι. However, κείρασθαι is an aorist middle infinitive, which suggests ξύρασθαι from ξύρω. The translation, however, is unaffected. BDAG, s.v. ξυράω.

the Genesis creation narrative. First, Paul draws from the creation narrative *topos* of God creating humans in God's image. Verse 7a provides the rationale that is missing from v. 4: "A man ought not to have his head covered because he is the image and glory of God." The phrase εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ echoes Gen 1:27—κατ᾽ εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς, "according to the image of God, God made him, male and female he made them." Paul's statement in v. 7 does not cite this verse, nor does his argument draw its authority explicitly from scripture.[439] In fact, it seems that Paul cannot quote the Genesis creation narrative from which he draws his logic because it says that God created them, "male and female," a textual detail that does not fit his argument.[440] The term δόξα elicits two semantic domains. First, Jews considered worship as the magnifying of God's glory. This idea may be the background of Paul's use of the term "glory," especially since he is discussing prayer and prophecy in the ἐκκλησία.[441] Second, the term δόξα, as "reputation," comes from Greek language for honor and shame. Plutarch uses this term when he discusses what men not related to a woman should know about her—her "form" (εἶδος), "fame" (δόξα), or "speech" (λόγος, φωνή).

Second, Paul draws from the Genesis *topos* of the creation of "woman from man" (γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός) in Gen 2:22–23. Again, Paul does not recite scripture. He does, however, quote Gen 2:24, "the two become one flesh," in his earlier discussion about how sexual intercourse with a prostitute defiles the communal body (6:16). This quotation indicates that the creation narrative influences his thinking about

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[439] This detail goes unstated by the majority of commentators, with the exception of Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets,* 119.

[440] Paul more often considers Christ, not man, the εἰκών of God (2 Cor 4:4). See Conzelmann's excursus on the term εἰκών, *1 Corinthians*, 187–88.

[441] Morna D. Hooker argues that this Jewish worship setting is key to Paul's instruction for women to 'have authority upon the head,' "Authority on Her Head," 410–16.

relationships—sexual and social—between men and women. As Paul reads it, the creation narrative supports an interpretation of man as "head," or "source," of woman. Verse 9 goes on to state that woman was created "for the sake of" man (διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα), a statement that may allude to the creation of woman as man's βοηθός, "helper" or "companion" in Gen 2:18.[442]

In v. 10, Paul draws a conclusion (διὰ τοῦτο) from his argument in vv. 7–9. What this conclusion entails, however, is not clear because of two ambiguous phrases: (1) ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, and (2) διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. Semantic and syntactic questions plague both phrases. What does ἐξουσία mean in this context? What is its sense when combined with the prepositional phrase ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς? What is the background for the reference to angels? Why does this verse have two causal phrases, the second of which does not follow from anything in the argument up to this point?

Verse 10 provides the conclusion to v. 7 in an AB-BA chiasm[443]:

A	Ανὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ **ὀφείλει**	κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν
	B εἰκὼν καὶ **δόξα** θεοῦ ὑπάρχων	
	B' ἡ γυνὴ δὲ **δόξα** ἀνδρός ἐστιν. (v. 7)	
A'	διὰ τοῦτο **ὀφείλει** ἡ γυνὴ διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους. (v. 10)	ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς

[442] BDAG, s.v. βοηθός. This term does not necessarily indicate a subordinate relationship. See Fee, *First Corinthians*, 517. BDAG, s.v. διά, B.2. In the second clause of this verse, $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ alone reads ἄνθρωπον rather than ἄνδρα. This reading eliminates the gender distinction that is key to this verse and to the argument as a whole.

[443] My analysis of this verse takes its starting point from Fee's observation about the relationship of v. 7 to v. 10 and their combined chiastic structure. Fee, *First Corinthians*, 514.

A	A man		**ought** not	to have head covered
	B	*since* he	is the image and **glory** of God	
But				
	B'	Woman	is the **glory** of man (v. 7)	
	For this reason			
A'	A woman		**ought**	to have authority on the head
	because of the angels (v. 10)			

From the **A** of v. 7, the reader expects the **A'** to say a woman should have her head covered. In fact, many early translations and church fathers witness κάλυμμα rather than ἐξουσία.[444] This reading attempts to make sense of the ambiguous phrase ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς.[445] None of the Greek manuscripts, however, includes this variant. The NRSV similarly translates, "to have a symbol of authority on her head."[446] This translation interprets ἐξουσία as a head covering or veil and sees the covering as a symbol of man's authority over woman, or her subjection. In Greek, however, ἐξουσία does not occur with a passive meaning.[447]

Throughout the passage up to this point, Paul argues for women covering their heads while speaking in the ἐκκλησία. The logic of the arguments in vv. 4–9 and 13–16 supports this conclusion. Is this what Paul is actually saying in v. 10? This question depends on the meaning of ἐξουσία. One suggestion is that Paul is working from a Hebrew word for head covering derived from the root *šlṭ*, "to exercise authority." This

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[444] Witnesses listed in NA^{28} and in Bruce Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Biblegesellschaft, 1994), 562: vg$^{\text{mss}}$ bo$^{\text{pt}}$ arm? eth$^{\text{ro}}$; Ptol$^{\text{lr}}$ Ir Tert Hier Aug.

[445] See Günther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles* (London: Oxford University, 1953), 223.

[446] Many modern English translations include the phrase "a symbol of" or "a sign of" to clarify the meaning of the verse: ASV, NASB, ESV, NET, NIV, NJB (adds more: "*a sign of* authority *over her*"), NKJV (though not in KJV: "power on her head"), NRSV.

[447] BDAG, s.v. ἐξουσία. Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, 232, see the difficulty of the Greek term and the discrepancy between what Paul says and what he means (as they see it): "Why does Paul say 'authority' when he means 'subjection'?" Fee, *First Corinthians*, 519, attributes their conclusion to a misreading of the term κεφαλή in a hierarchical sense.

argument, however, is untenable, since Paul would be playing on a term unfamiliar to the Greek-speaking Corinthians.[448] A second interpretation understands ἐξουσία to mean "control": Women should have control over their heads in worship.[449] This suggestion finds support in Paul's use of the term in 1 Corinthians. In his discussion of marriage, Paul uses ἐξουσία to mean having "control" over one's desires (7:37). Likewise, he uses the verb ἐξουσιάζω to indicate the control an outside person or force has on an individual in sexual and marital relationships (6:12; 7:4). To some extent, this meaning suits the context in 11:10—a woman should have control over her own head.

A third suggestion, and the one best supported by Paul's terminology in the letter, is that ἐξουσία refers to a right that Paul is asking the Corinthians to renounce.[450] Paul often uses the term ἐξουσία to indicate a "right" or "liberty" to act in a certain way. In 8:9, Paul cautions the Corinthians not to let their ἐξουσία to eat food offered to idols cause the weak to stumble. This exhortation leads to an excursus on his own ἐξουσία, which he renounces for the sake of others (9:4, 5, 6, 12, 18). In 6:12 and 10:23, Paul uses the related verb ἔξεστιν: The Corinthians have authority to do "all things," but Paul encourages them to let go of their authority to benefit the weak. This semantic field that Paul creates influences his use here: some women in Corinth may view a particular action as their ἐξουσία, but Paul urges them to renounce it.

Such an argument fits well with the underlying logic of Paul's practical arguments in the letter. But what does it mean for ἐξουσία to be ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς? In the parallel discussion of ἐξουσία in Chapters 8–10, certain Corinthians claim their freedom in Christ

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[448] Gerhard Kittel, *Rabbinica*, ARGU, 1, 3 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1920), 17–31; Str-B 3:435–37. See discussion in Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 189.

[449] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her,* 227–28.

[450] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 262.

by eating meat offered to idols. When other Corinthians, “the weak,” see this action, they are scandalized. In a sarcastic or condescending tone, Paul responds by asking them to reconsider their freedoms: “See to it that this authority of yours (ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμων αὕτη) does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak” (8:9). In the present case, certain Corinthian women claim their freedom in Christ by praying and prophesying in the assembly. When other Corinthians, perhaps men, see this action, they are scandalized. Verse 10 is, therefore, equivalent to 8:9. It is similarly harsh, yet not completely clear. When Paul tells women praying and prophesying to have their authority on their heads, he means that they should consider their authority in a different way, but he issues this recommendation without stating clearly that they have authority. In comparison to the idol meat situation, these women are the “strong,” which makes those (men?) who are scandalized the “weak.” Paul does not make this conclusion clear because it violates an ingrained view of gender hierarchy—women are weak, men are strong.[451] Paul’s final arguments from “the way things are”—propriety, nature, and custom—further show that he is working from cultural commonplaces. Ironically, women, who are “the weak in the world” (1:27), have become strong in Christ, an overturning of the norms of the world that Paul, according to 1:18–31, should support.

Since the late-second century, the meaning of διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους has puzzled interpreters. First, Tertullian suggested that the angels are the fallen sons of God in Gen 6:1–4. He argues that women should be veiled for protection from the gaze of men and

[451] Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 248, argues that this ideology stems from ancient physiological understandings of the body: “But when it comes to the male-female hierarchy, Paul abruptly renounces any status-questioning stance, accepting and even ideologically reinforcing a hierarchy of the body in which female is subordinate to male.”

angels.[452] Second, they may be good angels in the court of God, who are present in the worship of God. Texts from the New Testament and Qumran support this suggestion.[453] A third possibility, related to the second, is that wearing a head covering imitates the angels, who in Isaiah 6:2 cover themselves in the presence of God.[454] This explanation is unlikely because it makes little sense that only women should imitate the angels. Fourth, a few interpreters suggest ἄγγελοι are mortals rather than supernatural beings. Based on the use of the term in Revelation, Ambrosiaster interprets the angels as bishops, overseers of order in the ἐκκλησία.[455] Alternatively, ἄγγελοι could be human messengers, or outsiders to the assembly in Corinth, who may be confused or offended by the worship practices of the community (cf. 1 Cor 14:22–25). The interpretation of ἄγγελοι as referring to human messengers or leaders has merit in that it identifies order and outsiders as concerns of this passage and of 1 Cor 11–14 as a whole.

Again, Paul's references to angels, especially in this letter, provide insight. Angels are neutral beings: They are not particularly bad (option 1) or good (option 2). The characteristic feature of angels is that they are different from human beings (4:9; 6:3; 13:1). Paul's actions as an apostle have made him a spectacle to angels and human beings (4:9). In 6:3, Paul envisions an apocalyptic judgment in which those who are in Christ will judge angels (cf. Rom 8:38). In other words, the boundary between human and heavenly realms is broken. In 13:1, Paul refers to speaking "in the tongues of humans and

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[452] Tertullian, *Virg.* 7.2. Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 245, makes a similar argument from a different perspective and with a different conclusion regarding the threat of the "angelic phallus."

[453] NT: Rev 8:3. Qumran: See the *Rule of the Congregation*, "No man, defiled by any of the impurities of a man, shall enter the assembly of these ... for the angels of holiness are among their congregation." 1QSa 2:3–9 [Translated by F. Garcia Martinez]; See Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 419.

[454] Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 418.

[455] See Rev 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14. Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, trans. G. L. Bray (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 172.

angels" (ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων). Paul has referred to speech in this passage (vv. 4–5), and his reference to angels may connect to how he envisions inspired speech to happen. Angels play a role in Paul's apocalyptic worldview that he does not fully explain. They are participants in the worship of God, alongside humans, and they facilitate divine communication, perhaps like "winds" or "demigods" at Delphi (Plutarch, *Def. orac.*).

After the confusing instruction in v. 10, Paul returns to arguments from creation in vv. 11–12 and modifies his argument from vv. 7–9. The adversative conjunction πλήν marks an emphatic contrast from what has preceded it.[456] In Pauline use, it marks the concluding "takeaway" of an argument (Phil 1:18; 3:16; 4:14; cf. Eph 5:33). This concise, chiastic statement differs from the previous argument from creation:

οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς
οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς
ἐν κυρίῳ

Woman is not independent from man,
Nor is man independent from woman
In the Lord

"Woman" occurs first in this verse, in contrast to vv. 7–9.[457] The preposition χωρίς, "independent of," echoes the interdependence and mutuality between spouses in 7:4 and among parts of the body in 12:21. Schüssler Fiorenza suggests a translation of χωρίς as "different from": "Woman is not different from man, and man is not different from woman in Christ."[458] This translation aligns with Gal 3:28 but does not cohere with v. 12,

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[456] BDAG, s.v. πλήν. BDF §449.

[457] Manuscripts of the Byzantine tradition, however, reverse the order of "woman" and "man" in this verse to place "man" in the position of priority: οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς. Including D^1 K L Ψ and numerous miniscules. See Swanson, *NT Greek Manuscripts: 1 Cor*, 165, for a complete list.

[458] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 229.

which reaffirms gender difference and argues for interdependence based on this distinction. Paul often uses the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ, as he does ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησου, to express the religious and communal status of being “in Christ.” With the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ, the male/female pair, and repetition of the negative οὔτε, this verse recalls the pattern of Gal 3:28. I suggest that v. 11 is Paul’s alternative formula that affirms gender distinction and interdependence rather than the dissolution of difference.

Paul then elaborates on the interdependence of women and men in another chiastic statement that alludes to the Genesis narrative. As in v. 11, the statement is symmetrical and rhythmical:

ὥσπερ γὰρ	ἡ γυνὴ	ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός,
οὕτως καὶ	ὁ ἀνὴρ	διὰ τῆς γυναικός·
	τὰ δὲ πάντα	ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

For just as	the woman	is from the man,
Likewise also	the man	is through the woman;
	But all things are from God.	

The ἐκ and διά prepositions recall the creation relationships of vv. 8–9. In this verse, though, διά takes the genitive and alludes to the role of women in childbirth—all humans enter the world “through” the birth canal of a woman. The conclusion, “But all things are from God,” has parallels in 1 Cor 8:6, Rom 11:36, and Col 1:15–16, all of which are poetic, possibly traditional or liturgical constructions.[459] The symmetry and rhythm of vv. 11–12 lends it an “aura of tradition,”[460] similar to the baptismal formulae in Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 12:13, and Col 3:10–11. I argue that Paul provides οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρος as an alternative teaching to οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ (Gal 3:28). This statement corrects prior teachings and customs, just as the παράδοσις of 11:23–26 corrects errors at the communal

[459] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 144, calls 1 Cor 8:6 “a formula of confession.”

[460] Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 116, uses this phrase to describe 11:3, but not for 11:11–12.

meal. For Paul, the ἐκκλησία cannot exist without the distinction between woman and man. In other words, Paul posits an androgynous entity that is the communal body, rather than the individual. The ecclesial body is not "no longer male and female," but rather "both male and female." Philo's *Vita contemplativa* provides an analogue to this ritually-produced androgynous community. The group at the Mareotic Lake vocally expressed the "both male and female" nature of a communal life that strives for wisdom.

Paul's conflicted position between gender hierarchy and his argument for communal interdependence comes to the foreground in vv. 11–12. The argument in vv. 7–12, which draws from Genesis creation *topoi* to conclude "women ought to have ἐξουσία upon the head," is not Paul's most coherent or persuasive. In fact, his argument could have moved well from v. 6 to v. 13. Paul does not, however, usually argue solely from cultural and social commonplaces, as he does in vv. 4–6 and 13–16. Theological arguments support practical advice, and in this case he uses the Genesis creation narrative.[461] Paul alludes to Gen 1:27 (created in the image of God) and 2:18–23 (woman created from man's body), suggests a hierarchical understanding of the order of creation, and downplays the idea that both women and men were created in God's image. The argument from creation in vv. 7–9 reinforces the hierarchy of v. 3 and argues against the dissolution of difference in Christ. Creation is gendered and hierarchical, and so is the new creation.

This argument, however, does not sit well for Paul because he envisions a new creation that is not hierarchical but is gendered. He modifies his argument in vv. 11–12 to emphasize mutuality and interdependence of women and men in the community. Not

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[461] Wire suggests that the theological argument from the creation narrative is necessitated by how the Corinthians use Genesis 1–3 to support their actions. Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 119–20.

only do these verses correct his argument for hierarchy, they also correct potential arguments for the radical dissolution of difference, which includes women and men abandoning signs of gender and participating in ritual speech. These verses have the symmetry and rhythm of a παράδοσις that reframes a teaching like that of Gal 3:28. Rather than οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, Paul teaches the Corinthians, οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς ἐν κυρίῳ. In vv. 11–12, gender differences exist and signifiers of gender are necessary. At creation, man's body provided the stuff to create woman's body. In current human existence, inside or outside of Christ, women's bodies give birth to male and female infants. These differences in men and women's bodies provide the rationale for their difference and interdependence.

VI. More Cultural Arguments: Propriety, Nature, and Custom (11:13–16)

The last movement of the argument draws from what is proper (πρέπον), natural (φύσις), and customary (συνήθεια). This argument shares vocabulary, exegetical problems, and the cultural concept of shame with vv. 4–6. Paul tells the Corinthians to "judge among yourselves," as he does concerning idol meat in 10:15–16. The question of whether it is "proper" for women to be uncovered while praying anticipates a negative response following vv. 3–6 and 7–12, even if those arguments have not fully convinced the audience. Likewise, the second question (vv. 14–15) expects agreement.[462] Arguments from propriety and nature were common in the popular philosophy of Paul's time, especially in Stoic thought. Cicero personifies nature as a teacher.[463] Epictetus, in a

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[462] As indicated by οὐδέ: BDF §427. NA[28] ends the question after v. 15a, but the question extends to the end of the v. 15 and includes the ὅτι clause.

[463] Cicero, *Off.* 1.28.100: "If we follow nature as our guide, we shall never go astray."

discussion of hairstyles, considers nature's role in establishing the human body and distinguishing between male and female.[464] Paul's use of the term φύσις, however, does not consider nature a directing entity as these texts do. Rather, the combination of "proper" and "natural" for Paul is an argument for the way things are, or social acceptability.[465] The term ἀτιμία, "dishonor," once again uses the language of honor and shame. Whereas a man who wears long hair is dishonored, a woman's long hair is her δόξα, a term with theological implications in v. 7 ("glory") but which also means "reputation."[466]

A woman's hair is given to her "as something wrapped around" (ἀντὶ περιβολαίου). The term ἀντί means "as," rather than "instead of," indicating that long hair for women is equivalent to a cloak or covering.[467] Nature, therefore, provides an example from which women may take cues for proper head coverings. Women's long hair is a covering given by nature, indicating the propriety of an external head covering.

Paul's final attempt at persuasion is an appeal to follow custom and not to be contentious.[468] The condition, "If anyone is disposed to be contentious," is one of four such statements in the letter. First Corinthians 3:18, 8:2, and 14:37 use the same phrase, εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ, each with important terms in the letter: σοφός (3:18), γνῶσις (8:2), and προφήτης ἢ πνευματικός (14:37). A similar statement occurs in 10:12: "So the one who thinks (ὁ δοκῶν) s/he is standing, watch out not to fall." In each case, the argument

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[464] Epictetus 1.16.9–14.

[465] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 527.

[466] BDAG, s.v. δόξα, 3.

[467] BDAG, s.v. ἀντί.

[468] Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 262, argues that the often-overlooked term φιλόνεικος, "loving victory," is significant for understanding Paul's rhetorical goals in this argument and in the letter as a whole. The term refers to conflict and factionalism, which Paul argues against throughout the letter.

"dissociates thought from reality," by highlighting the difference between what the Corinthians think and what is reality according to Paul.[469] Paul expects "victory-loving" opponents, and with this final statement attempts to eliminate debate.[470]

Moreover, those who disagree with Paul do not follow the "custom," συνήθεια, of women praying and prophesying with head covered that "the churches" share. A few manuscripts change αἱ ἐκκλησίαι to ἡ ἐκκλησία.[471] Although Paul often speaks of "the ἐκκλησία of God" as universal and united (e.g., 1:2), he has no problem speaking of the multiple "ἐκκλησίαι of God," especially when their practices support his arguments (4:17; 7:17; 14:33). If any Corinthians object that his argument from cultural notions of shame, propriety, and nature stem from the outside world, to which they no longer belong because of their being "in Christ," this argument addresses that objection. The appeal to the "ἐκκλησίαι of God" is an appeal to uniformity in a movement that is larger than one particular assembly.

Paul's concern is order in the ἐκκλησία. His concern with order is manifest in his emphasis on hierarchy and on clothing and hair as signs of one's place within the order of the world. Underlying his concern with order and hierarchy is a cultural commonplace that views women as different from men. The problem is that elsewhere in 1 Corinthians Paul argues for a non-hierarchical construal of the community, caused by the world-changing event of Christ's death and resurrection. The strong should defer to the weak. The cross makes the wise foolish. The metaphor of community as body emphasizes

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[469] Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 14–15.

[470] On the force and function of the final statement of v. 15: Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 15; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 262; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 191.

[471] Miniscules 1241[s]. 1505. 2495. See Swanson, *NT Greek Manuscripts: 1 Cor*, 168. These are not listed in the critical apparatus of NA[28].

interdependence: The head cannot say to the feet, "I have no need of you." In 11:3, the head metaphor lies within the frame of hierarchy, but in 12:12–31, Paul shifts the frame for the body metaphor to interdependence and unity in diversity.[472] This shift, however, has already occurred in 11:11–12. The contradiction between the hierarchy of vv. 3 and 7–9 and the mutuality of vv. 11–12 reveals the tension between possible interpretations of Paul's vision of the community, especially in terms of women's roles.

This tension, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3, reflects a common cultural ambivalence toward women's speech, which was often exacerbated by the boundary crossing nature of religious ritual. Interactions with gods, especially in oracular speech and rituals, sought to cross the divide between divine and human. Moreover, women's roles in these rituals took them into spaces that men inhabited: forums, marketplaces, and sites of political assembly. In 1 Cor 11:2–16, Paul is working through issues that have arisen from men and women praying and prophesying in the ἐκκλησία. Paul's arguments that follow suggest different angles from which to consider these problematic speech practices, particularly in terms of the communal body metaphor, his evolving definition of ἐκκλησία space, and his differentiation of "praying in tongues" and "prophesying."

[472] See Max Black, "Metaphor," in *Models and Metaphors* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1962), for discussion of the "framing" of metaphors. See also Lynn Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned: Reading Metaphor in John's Apocalypse* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 72–84.

CHAPTER 6
THE ARGUMENTATIVE MOVEMENT FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 11:16 TO 14:40

Because of ambiguities and flaws in argumentation, which I outlined in the previous chapter, three questions remained open for Paul's Corinthian audience after reading or hearing 1 Cor 11:2–16. First, what should women do with their heads? In other words, what does "have ἐξουσία upon the head" mean? I have suggested that this phrase means that women should renounce a right, but this suggestion does not solve the problem of what Paul instructs them regarding head coverings. Second, should the community be defined by interdependence or hierarchy? Third, is it appropriate for men and women to pray or prophesy in the ἐκκλησία?

Paul does not return to the first question and the issue of head coverings or hairstyles. For this reason, I suggest that head coverings are not the underlying problem in 11:2–16. Rather, the second two questions indicate the real problems, and Paul returns to both of these issues in the arguments that follow. Paul picks up the second question about communal hierarchy or interdependence in the arguments in 11:17–34, 12:12–31, 13:1–13, and 14:26–40. He returns to the third question about praying and prophesying in the arguments in 12:1–11 and 14:1–40. I demonstrate how these two issues thread through the arguments in 11:17–14:40 and reframe the convoluted argument in 11:2–16 so that, in the end, Paul makes a more definitive statement about women speaking in the assembly.

I. Argumentative Movements in 11:17–14:25

In other parts of 1 Corinthians, Paul creates an argumentative pattern in which he discusses an issue, detours through another topic, and returns to the original issue to modify or clarify his argument in light of the intervening section. For example, the

discussion of Paul's apostolic authority in Chapter 9 seems to interrupt the argument about eating meat offered to idols in Chapters 8 and 10. These two chapters come to different conclusions: In Chapter 8, idols are nothing, but "the weak" are harmed by seeing others eat in temples. In Chapter 10, Paul suggests that idols are something, and that eating idol meat is sharing in the table of demons. Scholars do not explain this contradiction by seeing 8 or 10 as a non-Pauline interpolation.[473] Interpreters, rather, have argued that Chapter 9 moves Paul from the conclusion of Chapter 8 to that of 10 by offering himself as an example of modifying one's rights for the benefit of others, which becomes the overarching rule for idol meat situations.[474]

A similar pattern connects 11:2–16 and 14:26–40. The practical instructions about women and men speaking in the assembly are at odds, but the arguments about the community as body and spiritual speech allow Paul to gain clarity on the problem and modify his arguments based on the related issues they raise. In this section, I suggest ways in which each unit in 1 Cor 11–14 influences his conclusions about women's inspired speech.

A. The Ritual Meal in Assembly: 1 Corinthians 11:17–34

First Corinthians 11:17–34 separates the argument about head coverings, men and women, and praying and prophesying in 11:2–16 from the discourse about praying in

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[473] However, see Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 310–11, on Chapters 8–10 in his partition theory.

[474] For example, Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 199–200. This view is in contrast to scholars who see Ch. 9 as a digression to the argument and have little to say about its rhetorical function in the letter (Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 151; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 353) and to those who consider the chapter to be inserted here from a different letter (Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, 310–11).

tongues and prophesying in Chapters 12–14.[475] This allows Paul to start with a fresh argument in Chapter 12 and discuss spiritual things without reference to gender dynamics, at least at first. First Corinthians 11:17–34 returns to many of the same issues that Paul raised in Chapters 8–10: meals, perceived weak and strong members of the community, the proper locations for eating, and the ritual meal of the "Lord's Supper." Since 1 Cor 11:2–16 shares language with Chapters 12–14, and 1 Cor 11:17–34 shares language with Chapters 8–10, Chapter 11 creates a hinge between two major sections of the letter: It is simultaneously the conclusion of Chapters 8–11 and the beginning of Chapters 11–14. Both topics in Chapter 11 relate to the care of others' consciences and participation in rituals, on the one hand, and proper ways of speaking and interacting with others in the assembly, on the other.

The two units in Chapter 11 have similar introductions. In v. 2, Paul "commends" (ἐπαινῶ) the Corinthians for keeping the traditions he gave them. In v. 17, Paul "does not commend" (οὐκ ἐπαινῶ) them for their behavior in the assembly. "Traditions" or "teachings" (παράδοσις) are key to both passages. In v. 2, he is pleased that his audience is keeping traditions but goes on to correct some details. I suggested that he is proposing new "traditions" that will correct errors. In v. 17, Paul recites a tradition (ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν) in vv. 23–26 to correct the errors he sees in Corinth. Tradition, therefore, plays a different role in these two arguments. In the first, it is less clear what traditions Paul and the Corinthians share or how they may improve the situation. In the second, Paul recites the tradition and explains how it relates to the situation.

[475] Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly*, 83: "Paul may deliberately disaggregate his assertions regarding women, men, prophecy, and prayer from his focus on πνευματικά in the next chapter, because his conclusions were controversial."

Within his recitation and explanation of the Lord's Supper tradition, Paul introduces the spatial and social distinction between οἶκος and ἐκκλησία.[476] The problem is that the community is allowing divisions in the ἐκκλησία, rather than creating a unified Lord's Supper. Paul suggests that the οἶκος is different: It is the place for eating and drinking. The meal that occurs in ἐκκλησία is more than a meal: It is also a ritual that proclaims the Lord and anticipates his return. Paul does not draw the distinction between household and assembly in 11:2–16, but he does in 14:34–35. In the Lord's Supper discourse (11:17–34) and the instructions containing the silencing of women (14:34–35), different actions are appropriate for each space. Certain actions in the ἐκκλησία, moreover, cause shame. In 11:22, Paul asks, "Do you show contempt for the church of God, and do you humiliate (καταισχύνω) those who have nothing?" The verb καταισχύνω is the same used for shaming one's head in 11:4–6. The social distinction between men and women prompted "shame" in 11:2–16, and here the social distinction between upper and lower classes causes the problem. In 14:35, Paul again appeals to shame: "It is shameful for a woman to speak in church." In both cases, individuals should do things at home so that they do not bring shame to the ἐκκλησία. Only after the convoluted argument about men and women does Paul articulate the οἶκος/ἐκκλησία relationship in this way, which becomes critical to his later instruction for women.

Paul shares the spatial distinction between οἶκος and ἐκκλησία with the texts that I discussed in Chapter 3. For Livy, Philo, and Plutarch, different spaces elicit different expectations for women's activity and speech. They agree in the assertion that women were suited more to the household and less to the forum, streets, and council halls.

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[476] See the argument about Paul's definition of ἐκκλησία space in conversation with sanctuary space in the archaeological record of Corinth by Økland, *Women in their Place.*

Women's roles in religious ritual, however, provided occasions for women to pray or make sacrifices in spaces outside of the household. It is not clear where Paul's communities in Corinth would have met. Scholars have reconstructed gatherings in spaces in Corinth, including houses, taverns, gardens, or association buildings.[477] In any case, Paul encourages the Corinthians to make the physical space of their gathering an ἐκκλησία space, defined by ritual activities of the Lord's Supper and ordered by praying and prophesying. These are rituals in which both men and women, wealthy and poor, take part, but the participation of women in the non-household ἐκκλησία space may cause cognitive dissonance: Women play important roles in interactions with God, but their speech in public also causes problems of modesty or shame.

B. Voiceless Idols, One Speaking Spirit: 1 Corinthians 12:1–11

Since the Lord's Supper discourse separates 11:2–16 from the extended discourse about inspired speaking, Paul can introduce the topic of spiritual things (περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν) in his own terms.[478] In Chapter 11, he responds to specific issues of

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[477] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology*, 1st ed. (Wilmington, DE: Glazier, 1983), suggests imagining meetings in the Roman villa at Anaploga. David G. Horrell, "Domestic Space and Christian Meetings at Corinth: Imagining New Contexts and the Buildings East of the Theater," *NTS* 50.3 (2004): 349–69, suggests that the villa at Anaploga would not be an accurate space for Pauline meetings because it is dated no earlier than the late first century and it reflects a high socio-economic class. Horrell suggests instead the mixed-use buildings east of the theater that show evidence of cooking and food consumption. Daniel Schowalter, "Seeking Shelter in Roman Corinth," in *Corinth in Context*, makes a similar argument about how the villa at Anaploga skews perceptions about the socio-economic statuses of early Christians. He suggests investigation into how ritual action and language forms spaces. Jorunn Økland, *Women in their Place*, takes a similar approach. Annette Weissenrieder, "Contested Spaces in 1 Corinthians 11:17–33 and 14:30," in *Contested Spaces*, suggests that the verbs "sitting" and "reclining" indicate different uses of space that reflect different social constructions. She notes that frescoes in taverns in Pompeii depict lower classes sitting at taverns and in gardens and upper classes reclining at symposia. In a similar vein in the same volume, David Balch, "The Church Sitting in a Garden," highlights the use of moveable furniture in open spaces, such as gardens, and suggests the Corinthians would have been accustomed to meeting in taverns, open gardens, and peristyle gardens, and would have shaped the use of the spaces with furniture, postures, and movements.

[478] I translate the genitive plural τῶν πνευματικῶν as a neuter, "spiritual things," but it could also be masculine, "spiritual men/people." In 14:1, Paul returns to the topic of τὰ πνευματικά after discussing love in Chapter 13. The alternate translation is supported by Paul's warning to "anyone who thinks s/he is a prophet or spiritual person (πνευματικός)" in 14:37. See also the substantive use of the adjective in 2:13,

Corinthian behavior when the community comes together—whether or not they have been accurately reported to him or he understands their actions and the rationales behind them. Chapters 12–14 provide his definitions of πνευματικά, λαλεῖν or προσεύχεσθαι γλώσσῃ, προφητεύειν, ἐκκλησία, and τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. These definitions reframe the issue of women and men speaking in communal gatherings. After beginning with a broad view of the abilities people receive from the spirit, he narrows to πνευματικά of speech—prophecy and speaking in tongues.

With the disclosure formulae οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν and διὸ γνωρίζω ὑμῖν, Paul introduces a "new" topic on which the Corinthians need clarification.[479] In 12:1–3, he moves his audience from ignorance (ἀγνοεῖν), to knowledge from their former religious lives (οἴδατε), to the gap that remains and that Paul will fill (γνωρίζω ὑμῖν). Paul establishes a once-but-now pattern: Once the Corinthians were ἔθνη and idolators, but now they have and recognize the spirit of God.

Paul orients his argument in terms of his audience's prior religious experiences as ἔθνη, "gentiles": "You know how when you were gentiles you were led off and carried away again and again to voiceless idols (τὰ εἴδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα)" (12:2; cf. Gal 4:8; 1 Thess 1:9). The syntax is complex, as evident in the number of textual variants.[480] The combination of two conjunctions, ὅτι and ὅτε, is awkward; ὅτι should be read with the

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15; 3:1. For scholars who prefer the neuter translation, see Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 278; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 204; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 457. For the masculine: Weiss, *Der Erste Korintherbrief*, 294; Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 116; Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, 171–72; Erikkson, "Women Tongue Speakers," 84; Nasrallah, *Ecstasy of Folly*, 66–70.

[479] See discussion on disclosure formulae in Chapter 5.

[480] A few manuscripts and ancient translations omit either ὅτι or ὅτε. Omitting ὅτι: K 2464. Omitting ὅτε: F G 629 ar b d vg^{mss} sy^{p}; Ambst Pel. Some variants attempt to smooth the syntax of the phrase ὡς ἄν ἤγεσθε. ως ανηγεσθε: B^{2} F G^{c} 1241 | ωσαν ηγεσθε: G* latt. The first reads αν as a prefix rather than a particle, resulting in the verb ἀνάγω, "to lead up." The second reads, "as if you were led." See BDAG, s.v. ὡς ἄν; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 457–58.

phrase ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε—"how you were led off."[481] The particle ἄν indicates the iterative nature of the action—"again and again."[482] The combination of ἤγεσθε and ἀπαγόμενοι is repetitive, and the participle with the prefix intensifies the action.[483] The passive voice of the verbs reflects a passive, perhaps ecstatic, experience.[484] The "voiceless idols" do not initiate the action. Instead, they are the object to which the Corinthians were carried (πρὸς τὰ εἴδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα). Not only are the idols passive, but they also lack the ability to speak, a common trope in Jewish polemic against idolatry.[485]

How are the Corinthians who participated in cults of "voiceless idols" to view their previous religious experiences in relation to their current experiences of spiritual speaking in the assembly? Paul provides one point of continuity: The content of an utterance constitutes the main criterion for determining its authenticity and its provenance. The conjunction διό connects vv. 2 and 3 and indicates a conclusion that follows v. 2. Paul, therefore, places "speaking in the spirit of God" and the two potential statements—Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς and Κύριος Ἰησοῦς—within the context of the situation described in v. 2. Based on their background, Paul expects his audience to know about judging utterances. In Greek and Roman practices, visual or aural evidence of possession by a god or spirit—such as trancelike behavior or erratic speech—did not always

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[481] BDAG, s.v. ἄγω, 3. See Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, 259–60. On the grammatical problems and textual variants in v. 2, see Weiss, *Der Erste Korintherbrief*, 294; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 911–12.

[482] BDF §367. See Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 457.

[483] BDAG, s.v. ἀπάγω.

[484] The vocabulary in this verse does not indicate for certain whether Paul has ecstasy or trance in mind. See Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 205; Terrence Paige, "1 Cor 12:2: A Pagan Pompe?" *JSNT* 44 (1991): 57–59.

[485] See Deut 28: 36; Hab 2:18; Jer 10:3–5; Isa 44:9–20; Ps 115:5; Wis 13:17–19; Bar 6:8; 3 Macc 4:16; Sib. Or. 3:31; 5:84; 7:14; Acts 17:29.

accompany or verify communication from a god. People who received oracles evaluated and interpreted them to determine their authenticity and the proper response.[486]

Herodotus's depiction of how inquirers interacted with the prophet at Delphi provides an example of this concern for interpretation. The concern over the authenticity of oracles at Delphi continued into Plutarch's time, when observers often took the inelegant language of the prophet to mean that the god had abandoned the shrine. In a different way, the *Sibylline Oracles* addressed the anxiety over authenticity and interpretation: The prophetic narrator, rather than an inquirer or interpreter, internalized the anxiety over truth and voiced concern over whether she would be believed. Similar play with language, interpretation, and anxiety occurred in another form of religious speech and activity: magical practices of curse tablets and rituals. The curse tablets from the Sanctuary of Demeter in Corinth, even though they do not include the term ἀνάθεμα, locate ritual practices of harnessing divine power with written and spoken language in the Corinthia at Paul's time. If the term ἀνάθεμα exists, for the Corinthians, in curse tablet rituals, they may import conceptions of language and communication with gods from those experiences into Paul's arguments that use the term ἀνάθεμα.

The statements in v. 3 provide examples of how speech is connected to its divine source.[487] If someone says, "Jesus is a curse," the hearer knows that the spirit of God has

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[486] For various processes of evaluation and interpretation of prophecy and oracles, see Strabo, *Geogr*. 9.2.4; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibl*.16.26.2–3 and 27.1; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.20.27; Plutarch, *Mor.* 438A–C. See Chapter 4 for discussion.

[487] Some scholars argue that Paul invented the phrase for his argument (G. de Broglie, "Le texte fundamental de Saint Paul contre la foi naturelle (1 Cor. xii.3)" *RSR* 39 (1951–52): 253–66; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians,* 206; Fee, *First Corinthians,* 581; Richard Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 208–09). Since the term ἀνάθεμα comes from Jewish usage, some scholars propose that the saying comes from Jewish opponents and persecution in the synagogue. J. D. M. Derrett, "Cursing Jesus (1 Cor XII,3): The Jews as Religious Persecutors" *NTS* 21 (1975): 544–54. O. Cullmann, *Les premières confessions de foi chrétiennes*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Universitaires de France, 1948), 22–23, situates the saying within the threat or reality of pagan persecution. Schmithals argues that the Ἀνάθεμα saying came from

not inspired that person, even if she or he claims the spirit.[488] This knowledge is not based on the speaker's behavior but on whether the statement is congruent with what the hearer knows about the Holy Spirit. For the audience to accept Paul's argument, the statements must seem plausible with regard to their inspiration and setting in ritual speech. In the religious and social world outside of Christ, Corinthians claimed lords and pronounced curses. Paul makes two points: First, idols are voiceless and his audience's new religious orientation is different, and second, the Corinthians are equipped to discern whether a statement comes from the spirit of God.

Paul shifts from inspired utterances to a broad view of spiritual gifts in vv. 4–11. In parallel statements, he provides a threefold redefinition of the term πνευματικά: gifts (χάρισμα), services (διακονία), and activities (ἐνέργημα).[489] The term χάρισμα emphasizes the free gift from God. The Corinthians cannot "boast" or "be puffed up" about something over which they have no control. The term διακονία has an outward focus: One uses gifts to serve the community. The term ἐνέργημα, "activity," recurs in

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Christians influenced by a Hellenistic-Jewish Gnosticism; they cursed the bodily "Jesus" and revered the spiritual "Lord Christ" (Schmithals, *Gnosticism*, 127). An alternative background for the saying is from Greek and Roman cultic practices. E.-B. Allo, *Première Epitre aux Corinthiens*, EBib (Paris: LeCoffre, 1934), 278–80, and Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 280, suggest that Paul reacts to Christian ecstatics who cry out like the Sibyl or Cassandra in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 175–76, places the saying in the context of curse tablets of the eastern Mediterranean during the Roman imperial period, especially those found in the Demeter and Kore sanctuary in Corinth. Jouette Bassler, "1 Cor 12:3: Curse and Confession in Context," *JBL* 101. 3 (1982): 415–18, cautions against such historical arguments at the expense of understanding Paul's rhetoric and the connection of this verse to v. 2 and the arguments that follow.

[488] The manuscripts witness three variations in the endings of the phrase Ἀνάθεμα Ἰησοῦς. (**1**) In the reading of NA[28], "Jesus" is nominative: "Jesus is a curse." This reading is preferred because it is parallel to Κύριος Ἰησοῦς: ℵ A B C 6. 33. 81. 460. 1175[C]. 1241. 1739. 1881. t; Did. (**2**) A. Ιησουν, "Curse Jesus": 𝔓[46] D G K L P Ψ 104. 365. 630. 1175*. 1505. 2464. 𝔐 (here, 𝔐 =I 0201. ℓ249 ℓ846) ar vg[mss]; Ambst. (**3**) A. Ιησου, "The curse of Jesus": F 629. lat; Spec. Additional textual data are listed in Swanson, *NT Greek Manuscripts: 1 Corinthians*, 183.

[489] Scholars often read χαρίσματα as Paul's redefinition of πνευματικά. See Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 207; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 464–65, 482–84, attempts to categorize each named gift into the three distributions named in v. 4: gifts, services, and activities. Paul, however, does not indicate that these are three distinct categories.

verb form in vv. 6 and 11, in which God and the spirit "activate" manifestations in each person, emphasizing the divine source of action.

The repetition of the "one" and "same" spirit, Lord, and God amidst the numerous named gifts emphasizes unity despite diversity. In his discussion of Pythian prophecy, Plutarch was concerned with explaining the constancy of the god at Delphi, given the variety and changing nature of the language of prophets. Paul explains the symbiosis of unity and diversity in terms of the community as a diverse yet unified body. Diversity serves "the common benefit" (πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον), which is equivalent to "building up" (οἰκοδομή), an organizing metaphor in Chapter 14.[490] To demonstrate this diversity, Paul provides three lists of different kinds of πνευματικά. These lists are not identical and do not form a structured taxonomy.

Table 1: Lists of πνευματικά in 1 Cor 12:8–30 (Repeated or similar terms in bold type)

12:8–10	12:28	12:29–30
λόγος σοφίας	πρῶτον **ἀποστόλους**	**ἀπόστολοι**
λόγος γνώσεως	δεύτερον **προφήτας**	**προφῆται**
πίστις	τρίτον **διδασκάλους**	**διδάσκαλοι**
χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων	ἔπειτα **δυνάμεις**	**δυνάμεις**
ἐνεργήματα **δυνάμεων**	ἔπειτα **χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων**	**χαρίσματα** ἔχουσιν
προφητεία	ἀντιλήμψεις	**ἰαμάτων**
διακρίσεις πνευμάτων	κυβερνήσεις	
γένη γλωσσῶν	**γένη γλωσσῶν**	
ἑρμηνεία γλωσσῶν		**γλώσσαις** λαλοῦσιν
		διερμηνεύουσιν

Scholars often try to determine how the different items are related. Do λόγος σοφίας and λόγος γνώσεως indicate the gifts of apostles and/or teachers? Are apostles, prophets, and teachers "offices" at this point? Who is able to call herself a prophet? To what practices

[490] The same combination of "building up" and "many versus one" occurs in the opening of the idol food discourse in 8:1–6.

do these terms refer? The lists are not systematic, nor is it possible to determine distinct and identifiable activities.

Rather, three details are important in how Paul formulates the lists. First, he emphasizes variety. In the rest of Chapter 12, Paul elaborates on the value of diversity in the community. Second, he progresses from the gifts themselves to the people who possess them. The first list includes gifts, the second combines people and gifts, and the third focuses on the people who are gifted in distinct ways. Third, prophecy is superior to tongues. "Kinds of tongues" and their "interpretation" are consistently listed last, and prophets are second only to apostles in 12:28 and 29–30. Paul further affirms this hierarchy in Chapter 14.

C. The Body of Christ: 1 Corinthians 12:12–31

The body of Christ metaphor explains how diversity and unity are necessary and possible.[491] In Chapter 11, Paul discusses the relationship of men and women to Christ by framing the body metaphor with an emphasis on headship and hierarchy: "Christ is the head of man." The "head" terminology in 11:2–16 works on both literal and figurative levels. Paul is talking about the actual heads of men and women, as well as their figurative "heads," which indicate a hierarchical relationship. Paul suggests the interdependence of men and women (11:11–12) but does not articulate it in terms of the body. In 12:12–31, the body metaphor emphasizes plurality and mutuality: "For just as

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[491] Numerous scholars have investigated the background of this metaphor and its role in Paul's rhetoric. See E. Best, *One Body in Christ: A Study in the Relationship of the Church to Christ in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul* (London: SPCK, 1955); R. K. Sprague, "Parmenides, Plato, and 1 Corinthians 12" *JBL* 86 (1967): 211–13; Hill, "The Temple of Asclepius," 437–39; Jerome Neyrey, "Body Language in 1 Corinthians: The Use of Anthropological Models for Understanding Paul and His Opponents," *Semeia* 35 (1986): 129–70; Martin, *Corinthian Body*; A. S. May, *The Body for the Lord: Sex and Identity in 1 Corinthians 5–7* (London: T&T Clark, 2004); M. V. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006); Yung Suk Kim, *Christ's Body in Corinth: The Politics of a Metaphor* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008).

the body is one and has many parts, all parts of the body, even though they are many, are one body. Likewise also is Christ" (12:12). Christ is the body, not the head, and Paul elaborates on what this means for the community.

In 11:23–27, the body of Christ is the crucified body given on behalf of the Corinthians and broken in the ritual meal. The memory of Christ's body is key to the παράδοσις, which should rule conduct when the community gathers. When Paul reframes the metaphor in terms of mutuality, he again alludes to the ritual meal and baptism: "For we all were baptized by one spirit into one body—whether Jew or Greek, whether slave or free—and we all drank one spirit" (12:13). This statement holds in tension the unity and diversity that should define the community. Paul draws on the common baptismal experience of his audience. This recollection of baptism and its ritual language, however, omits the female/male pair present in the similar statement in Gal 3:28. In the two issues of Chapter 11—men and women speaking, and the ritual meal—social differences cause conflict in the ἐκκλησία. In the first case, Paul retains signifiers of social difference between men and women. In the second case, he wants the Corinthians to overcome social conflict and hierarchy between "haves" and "have-nots." The omission of the male/female pair from the statement about baptism in 12:13, read alongside affirmation of the difference between men and women in 11:2–16, indicates Paul's reluctance to dissolve this particular social difference, gender, in the ἐκκλησία.

In 12:14–26, Paul elaborates on the metaphor by creating a vivid image of the body. The speaking body parts create a humorous illustration in which Paul highlights certain details about the body—namely, the diversity of parts and the unity of the whole. The head is not central but is one of many characters that must recognize the

contributions of others. The head cannot say to the feet, "I have no need of you" (12:21). The statement by the foot—"Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body"—expresses the divergence between reality and what the foot says. Paul's response is: "That is no reason for it not to belong to the body" (12:15).[492] In other words, what a person says about her role does not change the reality of the body. The body metaphor affirms diversity and interdependence but retains functional specificity, since body parts have set places and activities.

Within this illustration of parts and their places, Paul explains the role of members who are weaker and without honor (12:22–26). Paul argues that parts that seem weaker (ἀσθενέστερα) are more necessary (ἀναγκαῖα). Throughout the letter, Paul raises weakness above strength and emphasizes the role of the weak in God's work (1:25–27). Weak consciences are vulnerable when they see others eat meat offered to idols (8:7–12; cf. 11:30). Paul claims his own weakness, in contrast to the strong Corinthians (2:3; 4:10; 9:22).[493] "Weakness" can describe physical, mental, or social limitations. Paul recognizes the usual order of the world—the foolish and weak are shameful—but God subverts that order: "God chose the foolish in the world to shame (καταισχύνω) the wise, and God chose the weak in the world to shame the strong" (1:27). When Paul claims his own foolishness and weakness in contrast to the Corinthians' wisdom and strength, he also claims his dishonor: "You are held in honor (ἔνδοξοι), but we are in dishonor (ἄτιμοι)" (4:10). For Paul, weakness and shame are paradoxical sources of honor in a world changed by Christ.

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[492] Literally, "not for this reason it is not from the body," οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος. See BDF §236.5

[493] This claim becomes central in the contentious arguments in 2 Cor 10–13. See 2 Cor 10:10; 11:21, 29, 30; 12:5, 9, 10; 13:3, 4, 9.

Paul continues with language of dishonor: “And those parts of the body which we think are least honorable (δοκοῦμεν ἀτιμότερα), we clothe these things with even more honor (τιμὴν περισσοτέραν περιτίθεμεν)” (12:23). With the verb δοκέω, Paul suggests that it is the thought that these parts are less honorable that makes them so. The verb περιτίθημι, “place around,” is often used of clothing, especially of headbands, wreaths, or head coverings.[494] The image of clothing is a common metaphor for the proper sensitivity to shame in both Greek and Roman contexts.[495] The terms “decent” (εὐσχήμων) and “indecent” (ἀσχήμων) reinforce the connection to social conceptions of shame.[496] This terminology resurfaces when Paul discusses his goals for order in the community. Decency in the ἐκκλησία forms the conclusion for his instructions in Chapter 14: “Let all things be done decently (εὐσχημόνως) and in order” (14:40).

Covering the “shameful” parts of the body alludes to the Genesis creation narrative. Before the entrance of the serpent, the man and woman were naked and not ashamed” (οὐκ ᾐσχύνοντο, Gen 2:25). After encountering the serpent and eating the fruit, “they knew that they were naked” and clothed themselves (ἐποίησαν ἑαυτοῖς περιζώματα, Gen 3:7). Adam tells God that he fears being naked (Gen 3:10), and God clothes them before sending them from the garden (Gen 3:21). Paul does not connect the body metaphor to the Genesis narrative through quotation of scripture. Paul has, however, already connected the creation narrative to issues of gender, clothing, and social

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[494] Job 39:20; Jos. *A.J.* 6.184; *T. Levi* 8:5–6; Matt 27:28. Of head coverings: *Pss. Sol.* 2:21; *T. Levi* 8:9; Philo, *Mos*. 2.243; Mark 15:17. In Esther 1:20 LXX, the verb takes the object τιμή, as in 1 Cor 12:23. BDAG, s.v. περιτίθημι.

[495] See Robert A. Kaster, “The Shame of the Romans,” *Transactions of the APA* 127 (1997): 3. Cf. D. L. Cairns, “Off with Her ΑΙΔΩΣ: Herodotus 1.8.3–4” *CQ* 46 (1996): 78–83.

[496] BDAG, s.v. ἀσχήμων. This term is often used in the context of illicit sexuality and nakedness. For example, in Gen 34:7, the term describes an illicit sexual act. Paul uses cognates of ἀσχήμονος in 1 Cor 7:36; 13:5.

evaluation of shame and honor. In 11:2–16, the concern is covering women. In 12:23, the concern is covering "dishonorable" parts of the body.

God established the body so that there is not dissension, and members care for one another (12:24–25). The repetition of συν-prefixed verbs in vv. 24–26 highlights the unity that Paul seeks in the community.[497] Just as God established the body, God situates parts within the ἐκκλησία: "God placed (ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο) the parts, each one of them in the body, just as God wished" (12:18). When he applies the metaphor to the community in vv. 27–30, Paul uses the same language: "And God placed (ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς) them [the parts, μέλη] in the assembly." Ἐκκλησία is equivalent to body, and the list of roles—apostles, prophets, teachers, powers, and gifts of healings—provide the analogues to head, hands, feet, hearing, and sense of smell. Paul defines the ἐκκλησία in terms of its parts—the people who have certain gifts and perform services and activities. Built into this definition of ἐκκλησία is interdependence and mutuality: Parts suffer and rejoice together. In 1 Cor 11:2–16, Paul combines two metaphorical uses of the body common in ancient Mediterranean thought: (1) the community as body politic and (2) hierarchical male-female relationships as body. In 12:12–31, the second of these metaphors has dropped out, resulting in a focus on mutuality.

By the end of Chapter 12, Paul has refined his definition of ἐκκλησία. In 11:17–34, he establishes that ἐκκλησία is not οἶκος. Now, he adds that it is both singular and plural, united and diverse. The stability of unity depends on the individual parts remaining in their places. Just as God places body parts that do not rebel against their roles, God places people in the ἐκκλησία (12:28). In the list of people and gifts at the end

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[497] This repetition also occurs in 11:17–34.

of the chapter, there is hierarchy: "First apostles, second prophets, third teachers." There is also exclusion of people from these roles: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" At this point, Corinthian women could place themselves in the role of apostle, prophet, or teacher. A woman who prophesies is a prophet. But the end of Chapter 14 denies this possibility by delineating three groups: those who speak in a tongue, prophets, and women. In Chapter 12, one of Paul's messages is, "Know your place in the body." In 14:26–40, he clarifies that a prophet's place is not the same as that of a speaker in tongues and a woman's place is not the same as a man's.

D. A Better Way: 1 Corinthians 13:1–13

In 1 Cor 13, Paul suggests a way better than striving for all gifts: The Corinthians should create communal life so that love rules all actions. The poetic discourse functions in a similar way within 1 Cor 11–14 as Chapter 9 does within 1 Cor 8–10.[498] In Chapter 9, Paul is an example of someone who gives up his ἐξουσία for the benefit of others, which modifies the conclusion of Chapter 8. As we have seen, the conclusion of 11:10—"women ought to have ἐξουσία upon the head"—is unclear. Given how he uses the term in 1 Cor 8–10, Paul may be obliquely referring to a woman's "right" or "authority" to pray or prophesy. In 14:34–35, he removes this right. The principle of self-giving love expressed in Chapter 13 reframes the unclear argument in 11:2–16 and provides further detail about what it means to be the body of Christ. Women and men have ἐξουσία to pray and prophesy, but communal love requires some of them to abandon the right. In Chapter 10, Paul advises Corinthian men and women to renounce their right to eat meat. In Chapter 14, he instructs women to renounce their authority to speak.

[498] Carl Holladay, "1 Corinthians 13: Paul as Apostolic Paradigm," in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson, W. A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 80–98.

The discourse on love reframes the value of praying or prophesying in terms of Paul's apocalyptic worldview. In a series of three conditional clauses, followed by the repetition of the phrase, "but I do not have love" (ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, 13:1, 2, 3), Paul challenges the role of inspired speaking in the community. The first conditional phrase, "If I speak in the tongues of humans and of angels" (ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων) refers to speaking practices that Paul will delineate in the next chapter. The reference to angels connects this form of speaking to "the angels" in 11:10. The lack of love makes the speaker "a clanging brass or a clashing cymbal" (χαλκὸς ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον).[499]

In the next conditional statement, Paul associates prophecy with knowing all mysteries and knowledge (εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα, πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν) and having every faith (ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν). Again, the lack of love leads to the inefficacy of this knowledge: The result is "I am nothing" (οὐθέν εἰμι). The third conditional statement has less to do with the topic of inspired speech: "If I give away all of my possessions and if I hand my body over so that I may boast" (κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυχήσωμαι).[500] This statement, however, refers back to Chapter 9, in which Paul defends his apostleship and emphasizes his economic sacrifice for the gospel, in which he also uses language of "boasting" (καύχημα, 9:15–16).

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[499] For references to brass and cymbals in cultic celebrations of Cybele and Isis, see Conzelman, *1 Corinthians*, 237.

[500] This preferred reading in NA[28] occurs in 𝔓[46] א A B 048. 33. 1739* co; Hier[mss]. Other manuscripts have the verb καυθήσομαι, "that I may burn" (C D F G L 6. 81. 104. 630. 945. 1175. 1881* latt sy[hmg]; Tert Ambst Hier[mss]); or the odd future subjunctive, καυθήσωμαι (K Ψ 365. 1241. 1739[c]. 1881[c]. 2464. 𝔐 [here 𝔐=1505. ℓ249. ℓ846]); or καυθη (105 sy[h]). Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 302; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 222–23; and Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 35, prefer καυθήσομαι, but the external evidence for καυχήσωμαι is early and strong, and the verb occurs often in Paul's letters. See discussion in BDF §28; BDAG, s.v. καίω; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 563; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 494.

Paul defines love with a series of verbs, two of which resonate with language that Paul uses throughout 1 Corinthians and particularly in Chapters 11–14. Love "does not puff itself up" (οὐ φυσιοῦται) and "does not act shamelessly" (οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ). The verb φυσιόω is an important term throughout 1 Corinthians (4:6, 18, 19; 5:2; 8:1) and contrasts with οἰκοδομέω, "build up." The verb ἀσχημονέω is honor and shame language, which has emerged in Paul's discussion of negotiating social differences, whether between classes or genders. Once again, the concept of shame emerges and requires the audience to rethink their prophetic and inspired speech. When Paul later states, "It is shameful for a woman to speak in the assembly," the audience remembers, "Love is not shameful."

Several statements in this section allude to inspired speech and divine communication in the broader context. First, "the tongues of humans and angels," which Paul does not explain, suggests that he views angels as playing a role in speaking in tongues. Supernatural beings, including angels, were the intermediaries between humans and gods in magical practices, as I demonstrated in Chapter 2. The tongues of angels, likewise, may allude to strategies for communicating with the divine through obscure and mysterious language. Second, Paul states that without love, these forms of speaking make the speaker "a clanging brass or clashing cymbal." In other words, they are noisy and indecipherable. Paul again uses musical analogies in Chapter 14 and suggests that musical instruments should not just produce noise but should also communicate ideas and be interpretable. This is in contrast to the festive use of musical instruments in the processions of Isis in Kenchreai, which Apuleius describes.

Finally, Paul contrasts the permanent and complete nature of love with the temporary and partial nature of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge. The closing part of

the poetic discourse orients his audience to the future, “whenever the end comes.” He emphasizes the temporary and partial nature of all current prophecy and knowledge. In oracular prophecy, there was anxiety over whether the prophet told the whole, accurate truth. Paul suggests that this is also the case in the Corinthian community, but they can look forward to a time in which prophecy becomes obsolete because human knowledge about God is complete. Prophecy and tongues become powerless because “then I will fully know, just as I also will be fully known” (13:12). The divine passive voice indicates the purpose of all inspired speaking: the communication between God and human beings. For Plutarch, the decline of prophecy was a troubling state because it could suggest the change or disappearance of the god. For Paul, however, prophecy’s decline and obsolescence will be a good thing because it will mean that God and humans can be face to face. Paul’s apocalyptic vision looks forward to a time in which “riddles” are not the means of communication between God and humanity. The Sibyl calls her oracles “divine riddles” (αἰνίγματα θεία, Sib. Or. 3.812). For Plutarch, the enigmatic language of the Delphic prophet necessitated interpretation. Paul agrees that prophecy needs interpretation, but he sees this need as temporary. The contrast between communication in “riddles” and “face to face” alludes to God’s statement to Miriam and Aaron about Moses’s prophecy and authority: “With him I speak face to face—clearly, not in riddles” (Num 12:8). Moses experienced a different kind of divine communication, which Paul looks forward to “whenever the end comes.”

E. Defining Prophecy and Praying in Tongues: 1 Corinthians 14:1–25

While Chapter 12 was about πνευματικά in a broad sense—any gift that one receives from the spirit—Chapter 14 narrows to two gifts, prophecy and speaking in

tongues. The bifocal nature of inspired speech in 11:2–16—praying and prophesying—anticipates the similar dual distinction in Chapter 14. Paul interchanges two verbs when discussing tongues: Corinthians "speak" or "pray" in a tongue (cf. 14:2 and 14:14). Paul names these two forms of speech and describes them as he does because he sees something problematic in the way men and women in Corinth were speaking. Hints to the problematic nature occur in how he defines praying in a tongue: It is "speaking into the air" (14:9), "speaking as a foreigner" (14:11), and "raving as if maddened" (14:23). These statements allude to religious practices outside of Paul's communities in Christ and return to the question of 12:2–3: How do inspired utterances and the behaviors that accompany them identify their divine source?

1. Pursue Prophecy in Order to Build Up (14:1–5)

Paul transitions from the discourse on love with an imperative: "Pursue love and strive for spiritual things, but even more that you may prophesy" (14:1). The language of "striving" or "being zealous for" (ζηλόω) recurs: The Corinthians are to strive for spiritual gifts (14:1), building up the ἐκκλησία (14:12), and prophesying (14:40). Since they are "zealous for spirits" (ζηλωταί πνευμάτων), Paul wants them to harness their zeal for the assembly. Paul repeats the phrase μᾶλλον δὲ ἵνα προφεύητε in v. 5: "I want all of you to speak in tongues, but even more that you prophesy." In the statements in vv. 1 and 5, "spiritual things" and "speaking in tongues" are parallel, and neither is as important as prophesying.

The reason for pursuing prophecy is that it builds up the ἐκκλησία. Paul repeats the terms οἰκοδομή and οἰκοδομέω four times in 14:1–5, and two more times in 14:12 and 17. The fundamental contrast between prophesying and speaking in tongues is that

one benefits the assembly and the other benefits the individual: “The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the assembly” (14:4). Paul provides a circumstance in which the former may benefit the assembly: If the speaker interprets, “the assembly may receive building up” (14:5).

This passage is not the first in the letter in which the building metaphor occurs. In 3:9, Paul says: “You are God’s building (οἰκοδομή).” This terminology reflects the principle of communal formation and development. Paul formed the foundation, and other workers build upon it (ἐποικοδομέω, 3:10, 11, 14). He specifies what type of building the community is: “Do you not know that you are God’s temple, and that God’s spirit dwells in you?” (3:16–17). After a rift between Paul and the Corinthians, Paul continues to view their relationship in terms of building: He builds up rather than tears down (2 Cor 10:8; 12:19; 13:10). Paul’s practical advice throughout the letter gives instructions for building methods. In the idol meat discourse, Paul contrasts knowledge and love using the term οἰκοδομέω: “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (8:1). In 10:23, Paul contrasts that which is lawful with that which builds up. Prophecy and tongues fit into this pattern. Things that are lawful—knowledge and tongues—are not as beneficial as things that build up—love and prophecy.

The key difference between prophecy and speaking in tongues, therefore, is whether speech is constructive for the community. The audience for each mode of speech is different: Someone who speaks in a tongue speaks to God, while someone who prophesies speaks to people. Beyond these distinctions, Paul gives little information about the content, process, and purpose of either form of speech, perhaps because he assumes his audience knows what he means by “prophesying” and “speaking in tongues.”

Rather, he discusses the communicative limitations of speaking in tongues and benefits of prophecy.

After introducing his argument in vv. 1–5, Paul presents three reasons for devaluing speaking in tongues. First, tongues, have limited efficacy as communication. Paul presents two illustrations, musical instruments and actual languages, to make this point. Second, the spirit is active when a person speaks in tongues, but the mind is "unfruitful." Third, an outsider's response to the spirit-inspired display during the meeting is not productive.

2. The Limited Efficacy of Speaking in Tongues (14:6–12)

Paul introduces the devaluation of tongues with a question: "Now, brothers, if I were to come to you speaking in tongues, how would I benefit you, unless I speak to you in a revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?" (14:6). This question muddles the distinction between tongues and prophecy, as it considers prophecy one potential message spoken in a tongue. The four types of utterances—ἀποκάλυψις, γνῶσις, προφητεία, διδαχή—have parallels in Paul's lists of πνευματικά (1 Cor 12:8–10, 28, 29–30; 13:1–2). Here they are analogous to the "distinction in the tones" (διαστολὴν τοῖς φθόγγοις, 14:7) of musical instruments. Language does not successfully communicate unless the hearers are able to determine the content of the utterance. To illustrate this point, Paul presents the first analogy: People who speak in tongues are like "lifeless things that give sound" (τὰ ἄψυχα φωνὴν διδόντα).[501] This phrase recalls Paul's

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[501] The accentuation of ὁμῶς, "likewise," is preferred to ὅμως, "nevertheless" (as in NA[28]) because Paul is establishing an analogy. BDF §450; Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 317–18.

characterization of "voiceless (ἄφωνα) idols" in 12:2.[502] The lack of distinction keeps knowledge from the hearers: "How will it be known (πῶς γνωσθήσεται) what is played with the flute or the harp?" (14:7; cf. 14:9). To reiterate this point, Paul provides another example, the trumpet, whose sound should accomplish an action, the preparation for battle. If instruments do not communicate their intent, they are pointless. This lack of efficacious communication characterizes speaking in tongues as an "unclear word" (μὴ εὔσημον λόγον) that does not produce knowledge. Previously Paul stated that the audience of speaking in tongues is God, not humans. Here, he has a negative view about the ability of tongues to communicate even to God: "For you are speaking into the air" (εἰς ἀέρα λαλοῦντες, 14:9).

The second illustration draws upon the audience's knowledge of the "ever so many kinds of languages in the world" (14:10). The phrase γένη φωνῶν, "kinds of languages," echoes the phrase γένη γλωσσῶν in 12:10 and 28. Paul uses φωνή, which usually means "sound" or "voice," for "language" to distinguish it from his specialized terminology of "tongues," the more common term for "language."[503] While idols are ἄφωνα (12:2), no human is ἄφωνος (14:10). The variety of human languages creates "foreigners" or "barbarians" (βάρβαρος): "Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of a sound, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me" (14:11). This verse introduces the concept of foreignness, which Paul discusses at greater length in vv. 16–17 and 21–25. Paul's use of the term βάρβαρος highlights the relative nature of

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[502] The term ἄψυχος is used by biblical, Jewish, and Greek writers for both musical instruments and cult images and statues. Of musical instruments: Euripides, *Ion* 881; Plutarch, *Mor*. 9C. Of cult images and statues: Wis 13:17; 14:29; Philo, *Congr.* 48. BDAG, s.v. ἄψυχος.

[503] BDAG, s.v. γλῶσσα, 2. In the narrative about the tower of Babel and confusion of languages, Genesis 11:1–9 uses three terms for language: χεῖλος (lip), φωνή (voice), and γλῶσσα (tongue).

foreignness. Anyone can be a βάρβαρος to any other person who does not share her language.[504] Paul then applies the analogy to the Corinthians (οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς) and restates his thesis: "Since you are zealous for spirits, strive for the building up of the assembly so that you may be rich" (14:12). In both analogies, Paul's point is that every communication should accomplish something between people. Signs have meaning, and the goal of speech is to transmit meaning from one person to another.

3. Mindlessness of Speaking in Tongues (14:13–19)

Paul's second concern with tongues is the lack of mental activity. Scholars have often interpreted Paul's statements about praying and singing praise with both spirit and mind in vv. 13–15 as reacting to oracular speech inspired by Apollo.[505] Cassandra, the Pythia, and the Sibyl were often portrayed as being out of their minds, as Plato suggested. The frenzied portrayals of female prophets by Aeschylus, Virgil, Lucan, and the *Sibylline Oracles* suggest the prophet's lack of a rational mental state during inspiration. Plutarch, however, problematizes this commonplace by arguing that prophetic spirits may be acting on the prophet's body and soul but her mind remains active since she must translate the vision into human language. He affirms, moreover, that when the prophet flails about and makes little sense, the process has gone wrong.

Paul may be aware of such portrayals of female prophets and wary of them if similar things are occurring in Corinth. His main point is the efficacy of communication and the emphasis on speech as an interaction between people, a concern that also occurs in texts about female prophets. Paul urges those who speak in tongues to pray that he or

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[504] Herodotus, *Hist*. 2.57; Ovid, *Tristia* 5.10.37. In Rom 1:14, Paul pairs Greeks and barbarians to indicate all people (cf. Col 3:11). BDAG, s.v. βάρβαρος

[505] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 237.

she may interpret (διερμηνεύω). The statements about the fruitfulness of the spirit and mind, therefore, support this exhortation. In two first-person statements, Paul presents the contrast between activity of spirit only and activity of both spirit and mind. First, "If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful (ἄκαρπος, 14:14)." The term ἄκαρπος fits into Paul's vocabulary of proselytizing as harvesting and foreshadows Paul's discussion of how inspired speech in the assembly turns outsiders to understanding (1 Cor 3:5–9). Paul presents a better way: "I will pray with the spirit, but I will also pray with the mind (νοῦς)" (14:15). The πνεῦμα is always active in speaking in tongues, praying, singing praise, and prophesying because the spirit effects such speech (Cf. 12:8–11). Paul argues that in addition to the communication between God and the individual through the spirit, communication must take place between humans through interpretation or translation. In the process of interpretation, the mind works. Paul uses himself as an example to reiterate this point: He speaks in tongues more than the Corinthians, yet in the ἐκκλησία he values teaching, or speaking with the mind, over speaking in tongues (14:18–19).

4. Responses of Outsiders to Inspired Speech (14:20–25)

The last argument focuses on the response of outsiders to various forms of speech. Different languages create foreigners. In the ἐκκλησία context, lack of interpretation makes the speaker and community "unfruitful"—that is, they do not attract others. First Corinthians 14:16–25 addresses the issues of outsiders and conversion by providing three potential responses: (1) "Amen" (14:16), (2) "You are out of your minds" (14:23), and (3) "Truly God is among you" (14:25).

First, "Amen" is the proper response to spiritual speech in the assembly. "Amen" indicates understanding, assent, and the correct identification of the utterance. Paul presents a situation that builds on his argument about mind, spirit, and interpretation: "Whenever you are praising in the spirit, how will someone who is occupying the place of the outsider say the 'Amen' to your thanksgiving since he does not know what you are saying?"[506] Why does Paul use the prolix phrase, ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου, when he could have simply said "the outsider" or "the unbeliever"? In vv. 16–17, Paul is not speaking about an unbeliever or outsider to the community, but rather a believer or community member who must "occupy the place of an outsider" because he or she cannot understand what is said. She becomes an outsider because the tongue-speaker is obscure or unintelligible. In other words, speaking in tongues creates foreignness within the community.[507]

After reflecting on his own abilities to teach and speak in tongues and urging the Corinthians to think as adults, Paul recites a saying from Isaiah, which he introduces with the phrase, "It is written in the law" (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται ὅτι). This saying provides the transition to Paul's concluding arguments against tongues, but he does not clarify the connection or interpret the saying because doing so would take him away from his main argument. The recitation of Isaiah 28:11 shares little vocabulary with the LXX version.

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[506] NA[28] places the interrogative punctuation after εὐχαριστίᾳ. I place the punctuation after the causal clause ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἴδεν. Cf. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 517.

[507] Using sociological models of conversion, Kevin Muñoz argues that glossolalia carries high status implications and nurtures group identity and boundary formation between insiders and outsiders. Because of the divided nature of the Corinthian congregation, speaking in tongues may have created divisions, resulting in an insider/outsider split within the boundaries of the community. For Paul, this split is problematic because energy is focused on the internal split rather than the interaction with outsiders to the community, so he seeks to mend the internal dynamics by championing prophecy. "How Not to Go Out of the World," 169–72.

Table 2: 1 Cor 14:21 and Isa 28:11–12 [LXX] (similar or shared terms in bold type)

1 Cor 14:21	Isa 28:11–12 [LXX]
ἐν **ἑτερογλώσσοις** καὶ ἐν **χείλεσιν ἑτέρων** **λαλήσω τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ** καὶ οὐδ᾿ οὕτως εἰσακούσονταί μου, λέγει κύριος.	διὰ φαυλισμὸν **χειλέων** διὰ **γλώσσης ἑτέρας**, ὅτι **λαλήσουσιν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ**, λέγοντες αὐτῷ Τοῦτο τὸ ἀνάπαυμα τῷ πεινῶντι καὶ τοῦτο τὸ σύντριμμα, καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλησαν ἀκούειν.

Paul may be working from a different Greek version or translating a Hebrew text as he writes. Or he may be reciting from memory, and, in doing so, he foregrounds certain terms and ideas and allows the broader context of Isaiah 28 to influence how he quotes it. Since the topic of Paul's discourse is γλώσσαις λαλεῖν, he places the term ἑτερογλώσσοις before χείλεσιν ἑτέρων. The term ἑτερογλώσσοις, or in Isa 28:11, διὰ γλώσσης ἑτέρας, provides the link between this scripture and the Corinthian context into which Paul has applied it. Paul does not include God's statement from Isaiah (Τοῦτο τὸ ἀνάπαυμα τῷ πεινῶντι καὶ τοῦτο τὸ σύντριμμα). Rather, what God says in 1 Corinthians is that God speaks to Israel with foreign tongues, yet they do not listen.

The context of Isaiah 28 reveals other links between the scripture and Paul's perception of the Corinthian situation. Isaiah 28 is a judgment oracle upon "the priest and prophet" who "reel with strong drink" and report their vision (Isa 28:7).[508] Prophecy has failed, and its practice has been abused. Isaiah expresses concern over who will receive the vision: "Those who are weaned from milk, those taken from the breast?"[509] Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians—"Brothers, do not be children in thinking, but be infants

[508] Isa 28:7 [LXX]: οὗτοι γὰρ οἴνῳ πεπλανημένοι εἰσιν, ἐπλανήθησαν διὰ τὸ σικερα· ἱερεὺς καὶ προφήτης ἐξέστησαν διὰ τὸν οἶνον, ἐσείσθησαν ἀπο τῆς μέθης τοῦ σικερα, ἐπλανήθησαν· τοῦτ᾿ ἔστι φάσμα.

[509] Isa 28:9 [LXX]: οἱ ἀπογεγαλακτισμένοι ἀπὸ γάλακτος, οἱ ἀπεσπασμένοι ἀπὸ μαστοῦ.

in evil, and in thinking be adults" (14:20)—precedes his quotation. The combination of errors in prophecy, discussion of foreign languages, and comparing his audience to children brings Isaiah 28 to mind as "law" that supports his argument. The Isaiah prophecy, moreover, presents an image of building after destruction: "See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation … And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet" (Isa 28:16–17).[510] "Building up" the community is likewise Paul's concern.

The Isaiah quotation in 1 Cor 14:21, therefore, suggests the role of outsiders of Israel—speakers of foreign tongues—in God's plan for Israel. This topic is a concern of Paul elsewhere—especially in Romans 9–11, in which he quotes Isaiah 28:16 (Rom 9:33)—but it does not often surface in 1 Corinthians. Three entities interact in Paul's recitation of Isaiah: (1) speakers of foreign tongues, (2) "this people," and (3) the Lord. Since the Corinthians are speakers of tongues, their speech takes on prophetic significance: God speaks to "this people," Israel, in foreign tongues and with the lips of strangers. The Corinthians, then, participate in the prophecy for Jerusalem.

Paul does not explore the significance of the quotation and does not delve into the relationship between Israel and foreigners as he does elsewhere. Instead, he retains focus on inspired speech and outsiders' responses. Scholars have often been puzzled by 14:22: "Therefore, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, but prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers." This statement seems to be the opposite of what Paul

[510] This is the NRSV translation of the Hebrew text. The LXX includes the language of foundations and cornerstones in v. 16, but does not include the lines and plummets in v. 17. Isa 28:16–17: Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐμβαλῶ εἰς τὰ θεμέλια Σιων λίθον πολυτελῆ ἐκλεκτὸν ἀκρογωνιαῖον ἔντιμον εἰς τὰ θεμέλια αὐτῆς, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ᾽αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυνθῇ. καὶ θήσω κρίσιν εἰς ἐλπίδα, ἡ δὲ ἐλεημοσύνη μου εἰς σταθμούς, καὶ οἱ πεποιθότες μάτην ψεύδει· ὅτι οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ὑμᾶς καταιγίς.

says in 14:16–17.[511] The potential responses of outsiders or unbelievers in vv. 23 and 25, however, indicate the difference between tongues and prophecy in creating believers. The creation of believers fits into Paul's understanding of why his gospel must go to gentiles (cf. Rom 11:25). The response in v. 23 suggests the outward similarity of speaking in tongues to ecstatic speech in Greek cults: "If, then, the whole assembly comes together in the same place and all are speaking in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say, 'You are out of your minds!'" (14:23). Those who enter the assembly are outsiders (ἰδιῶται), perhaps other believers visiting from a different location, or unbelievers (ἄπιστοι), those who have not been converted. The distinction between outsiders and unbelievers indicates that Paul considers the Corinthians' inspired speaking as something not known or performed by believers in all places. The term μαίνομαι, "to be mad or out of one's mind," draws on the language of religious madness associated with ecstatic practices.[512] With reference to the prophets at Delphi and Didyma and the Sibyl, Plato connects the terms μάντις (prophet) and μαντικός (oracular) to μαίνομαι. This etymological explanation, even if incorrect, became influential for how subsequent Greek speakers understood terminology for and experiences of oracular prophecy. In the context of 1 Cor 14, the statement is an improper response to speech that should be intelligible. The outsider recognizes the spirit/mind divide Paul discusses in vv. 13–15 and does not see minds at work or receive an intelligible communication; therefore, he makes a surface judgment and does not engage his own mind.

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[511] Muñoz, "How Not to Go Out of the World," 214–26.

[512] Euripides, *Bacch*. 999, 1295; Sophocles, *Ant.* 1152; Herodotus, *Hist*. 4.79. μαίνομαι does not only refer to cultic madness, but can also refer to madness brought on by love, wine, anger, art, etc. See LSJ, s.v. μαίνομαι. See discussions in Stephen J. Chester, "Divine Madness?: Speaking in Tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:23," *JSNT* 27.4 (2005): 417–46; Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy," 125–40; Muñoz, "How Not to Go Out of the World," 227–40; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 243.

The outsider responds to prophecy in a deeper and more active manner: “He will be convinced by all, he will be called to account by all. The secrets of his heart will be revealed, and, bowing down, he will worship God, proclaiming, ‘Truly God is among you!’” (14:25). This third response produces internal change, which results in the worship of God and correct identification of the prophecy and the community. The repetition of “all” as those who prophesy, convince, and call to account indicates the integral role of the speaker in communicating effectively. All who prophesy, not God or the spirit, convince the outsider. Through this communication, God is able to reveal secrets within hearts. The worship of God is the final outcome, indicating a change from unbeliever to believer, from outsider to insider. For this reason, prophecy is “not for unbelievers but for believers.” The statement, “Truly God is among you,” is the proper response to inspired speech because the outsider not only understands the prophetic utterance but also identifies the ἐκκλησία as the dwelling place of God. The statement is itself prophetic, a “legitimation oracle,” which identifies the divine source of a message.[513] Prophecy, therefore, not only creates believers, it also creates prophets. This constructive outcome provides the rationale for the instructions for order in vv. 26–40.

These arguments about prophecy and language in 1 Cor 14:1–25 are situated within cultural discourse about the interpretation and inspiration of prophecy. Paul addresses the question of how inspired utterances and the behaviors that accompany them identify their divine source. Like Plutarch, Paul argues that inspired speech works best when both mind and spirit are active. The activity of the mind leads to language that

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[513] For the term “legitimation oracle,” see Aune, *Prophecy*, 323–24, 332. Aune does not count this phrase among the oracles he identifies in Paul’s writings. I suggest that it fits the criteria and function of what Aune defines as a “legitimation oracle,” specifically a “recognition oracle,” which identifies the divine source of an oracle.

others can understand and interpret. The goal for the Corinthian community is not to have outsiders think that they are raving or frenzied or out of their minds, but rather to engage an outsider's mind so that they interpret prophecy to indicate the presence of God.

II. Instructions for Order when Praying or Prophesying in 14:26–40

First Corinthians 14:26–40 makes a clearer statement than 11:2–16 about whether women should speak in the assembly. Three terms connect 14:34–35 to Chapter 11. First, the instruction for women concludes with a rationale based on shame: "For it is shameful (αἰσχρός) for a woman to speak in the assembly." Throughout the letter, Paul uses the adjective αἰσχρός only in these two passages about women speaking in the assembly (11:6; 14:35). He uses the verb καταισχύνω, "to shame," in 1 Cor 1:27, 11:4, 5, and 22. The concept of shame marks Paul's thinking about women's speech. It is a concept that emerges in his discussion of men and women's appearances, resurfaces in the body metaphor in Chapter 12, and determines his conclusion about whether women should speak in the assembly. Second, both passages draw support from the customs in the assemblies plural, αἱ ἐκκλησίαι (11:16; 14:34).[514] Paul derives his instructions for women from how communities in Christ outside of Corinth order speech in gatherings.

Finally, the dual modes of speech, "praying or prophesying," provide a third point of contact. The silencing of women is part of the rhetorical unit from v. 26 to v. 40. After reflecting upon varieties of inspiration and speech in the assembly, Paul gives concrete instructions for retaining order: first, for those who speak or pray in a tongue (vv. 27–28); second, for prophets (vv. 29–33); and third, for women (vv. 34–35). Each of these instructions includes a third person imperative and a condition. To speakers in tongues

[514] Often interpolation theorists point to the plural ἐκκλησίαι in 14:34 as evidence: Paul writes about the one united church of God. 1 Cor 11:16 problematizes this argument.

and prophets, he says, “Let them speak.” If no one can interpret or another person receives a revelation, “Let them be silent.” The instruction for women reverses the pattern: Paul says, “Let them be silent.” If they must learn, “Let them ask their own men at home.” In Chapter 11, Paul identifies two groups of people—men and women—who do two activities—praying and prophesying. At the end of Chapter 14, he distinguishes between three groups of people—speakers in tongues, prophets, and women. Each group has its own activity and rules that guide order. Women are removed from the groups who can speak.

A. The Textual Integrity of 14:34–35

Scholars have proposed several explanations for the apparent contradiction between 11:2–16 and 14:34–35. The most entrenched solution is that 14:34–35 (or 33b–36) is an interpolation by a scribe whose ideas about women were in line with later Pauline texts, such as 1 Timothy. The external evidence for interpolation, however, is limited, and analysis of the key manuscripts shows that internal criteria and scholarly bias direct the arguments. Manuscripts of the Western text tradition (D F G 88* it^{d,g}; Ambrosiaster, Sedulius Scotus) place vv. 34–35 after v. 40. Based on the text-critical principle that a reading that explains variant readings is original, Gordon Fee argues that the original text did not include these verses. Instead, a different hand penned a gloss in the margins, which scribes then incorporated into two different places when they copied the text. Interpolation, then, explains the dual placement in the manuscript tradition.[515] Fee supports his text-critical conclusions with internal criteria: The verses interrupt Paul’s argument in Chapter 14, contradict 11:5, have a reference to “the law” that is

[515] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 699–700.

unusual for Paul, and are similar to deutero-Pauline statements in 1 Tim 2:11–12.[516] Many commentators agree that 14:34–35 is a non-Pauline interpolation.[517]

A variation of the interpolation theory is that these verses are a gloss that Paul added in the margin, and scribes placed it in two different positions when they copied Paul's edited autograph.[518] This suggestion takes into account the textual evidence and what seems to be an interruption of the argument of Chapter 14, but does not see inconsistency with 11:5 or Paul's other statements about women. Alternatively, scholars have proposed partition theories in which Paul wrote 14:34–35 in a different letter than that which includes 11:5.[519] This suggestion deals with the discrepancy between 11:5 and 14:34–35 but does not account for textual variations or consider vv. 34–35 to contradict Paul's views on women.

A closer examination of the textual transmission and key manuscripts renders an interpolation theory problematic. No manuscript omits 14:34–35. A number of "Western" manuscripts, mostly Greek-Latin bilinguals (D F G) and Old Latin manuscripts, place vv. 34–35 at the end of the chapter. Their significance, however, is limited because they can be traced to a common archetype and geographical area.[520] Three other manuscripts have

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[516] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 699; See discussion in Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 529.

[517] G. Fitzer, *Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde* (München: Kaiser, 1963); Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 246; Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 84–86. See discussion in Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 530.

[518] E. E. Ellis, "The Silenced Wives of Corinth (1 Cor 14:34–5)," in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis: Essays in Honour of Bruce M. Metzger*, ed. E. J. Epp and G. D. Fee (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 213–20; S. C. Barton, "Paul's Sense of Place: An Anthropological Approach to Community Formation in Corinth," *NTS* 32 (1986): 229–34.

[519] Hans-Josef Klauck, "Vom Reden und Schweigen der Frauen in der Urkirche," in *Gemeinde, Amt, Sakrament: Neutestamentliche Perspektiven* (Würzburg: Echter, 1989), 232–45.

[520] The text of F and G are almost identical. The codices are either copied from the same manuscript, or G is a copy of F. Only two Greek codices, D and F, independently witness this variant. See Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 84–86; Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 150; Curt Niccum, "The Voice of the Manuscripts on the Silence of Women: The External Evidence for 1 Cor 14:34–35," *NTS* 43.2 (1997): 250–52.

perplexing variants and scribal notations, which complicate the question: Codex Vaticanus (B), the 12th-century Minuscule 88, and the Latin Codex Fuldensis. Vaticanus has an Alexandrian text type, and vv. 34–35 occur after v. 33 (Figure 6.1). There is, however, a "bar-umlaut" siglum after v. 33 and v. 40, and Philip Payne argues that it signals the scribe's knowledge of a variant reading.[521] Curt Niccum, however, argues that this siglum is quite late, from the 14th century, and tells us little about early variants.[522] Miniscule 88 has an Alexandrian text type, but in this case it favors the Western text and places vv. 34–35 after v. 40. The Latin Codex Fuldensis displays vv. 36–40 in the lower margin, with a siglum indicating an alternative placement after v. 33 (Figure 6.2).[523] Victor of Capua was responsible for this codex, one of the oldest witnesses to the Vulgate text, which dates to between 541 and 546. This manuscript combines an Old Latin Gospel harmony with a Vulgate version of Paul's letters. In these verses, Victor follows the Vulgate order, with vv. 34–35 after v. 33, but notes in the margin the Old Latin order.[524]

Payne argues that the evidence of these three manuscripts suggests an original text without vv. 34–35. Niccum disagrees and suggests that Payne, Fee, and others who argue for interpolation do not weigh the evidence sufficiently. The two textual traditions, Alexandrian and Western, are not equal: Only a few related manuscripts that come from

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[521] Philip B. Payne, "Fuldensis, Sigla for Variants in Vaticanus, and 1 Cor 14.34–5," *NTS* 41.2 (1995): 250–59.

[522] Niccum, "The Voice of the Manuscripts," 245–46.

[523] The evidence in Fuldensis is often misread by scholars. Rather than vv. 34–35 being in the margins after v. 40, producing a reading in which vv. 34–35 occurs in two places, vv. 36–40 are in the margins with a siglum indicating their placement after v. 33. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 565. Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 149–52.

[524] Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005), 108. Eric W. Scherbenske, *Canonizing Paul: Ancient Editorial Practice and the* Corpus Paulinum (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013), 175–232, discusses at length Codex Fuldensis and Victor's editorial decisions and the hermeneutics underlying them.

the same geographical location attest to a reading of vv. 34–35 after v. 40.[525] Moreover, haplography could explain the dual position in the manuscripts. A scribe's eye could have jumped from the ἐκκλησίαις at the end of v. 33 to the ἐκκλησίᾳ at the end of v. 35, which means that he would have omitted vv. 33–34. He then could have realized his mistake after copying the rest of the chapter and added on the missing verses at the end, or in a marginal note, which a later copyist incorporated at the end of the chapter.[526]

The exegetical decision for interpolation, therefore, depends less on external criteria and more on internal factors—whether the verses break the logic of the argument in Chapter 14 and whether they reflect Paul's language and thought-world. The conversation about whether these verses are from the pen of Paul reveals interpreters' biases about what he or she wants Paul to be.[527] Is he a chauvinist or a feminist? Does anti-woman sentiment come from "Paulinism" or "early Catholicism"? These options impose modern categories upon Paul and the Corinthians.

Even if we establish the textual authenticity of these verses, do they reflect the views of Paul? Could Paul be quoting the Corinthians in vv. 34–35 and rejecting this view with v. 36? An argument that vv. 34–35 is a quotation of the Corinthians depends on establishing Paul's tendency to quote them.[528] If we concede that those statements

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[525] Niccum, "The Voice of the Manuscripts," 252–53.

[526] See Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*, 151.

[527] This ideological battleground is clear in W. Munro, "Women, Text and the Canon: The Strange Case of 1 Corinthians 14:33–35," *BTB* 18.1 (1988): 26–31, which argues for a non-Pauline interpolation theory. In the face of feminist interpretation, which she calls "a tangled web of explanation and accusation" (26), Munro takes issue with female scholars who do not consider 14:34–35 an interpolation, thereby exonerating Paul from charges of anti-feminism. Munro is not a text critic, does not thoroughly analyze the evidence, and overstates the consensus of scholars.

[528] See arguments for and against slogan hypotheses in various parts of 1 Corinthians: J. Murphy-O'Connor, "Corinthian Slogans in 1 Cor 6:12-20," *CBQ* 40.3 (1978): 391–96; J. E. Smith, "The Roots of a 'Libertine' Slogan in 1 Corinthians 6:18," *JTS* 59.1 (2008): 63–95; J. E. Smith, "Slogans in 1 Corinthians," *BibSac* 167 (2010): 68–88; Denny Burk, "Discerning Corinthian Slogans through Paul's Use of the

most often considered slogans are in fact from the Corinthians, comparing vv. 34–35 with these "slogans" displays the difference between them. First, in 6:12, 13; 7:1; 8:1, 4; and 10:23, Paul grants the validity of the saying and modifies it: For instance, "All things are permitted to me (slogan), but not all things are beneficial (modification)" (6:12; 10:23). In vv. 34–35, Paul does not provide such modification; rather, what follows are questions that are not clearly connected, do not provide instruction, and are derisive.[529] Second, the "slogans" are indicative statements about the Corinthians' reality, not subjunctive instructions. Third, if "All things are permitted to me" is a Corinthian saying, it makes little sense that they would cite the law or say, "It is not permitted." The law is Paul's concern, not the Corinthians'.

Rhetorically, the silencing in vv. 34–35 follows Paul's other silencings. Scholars who employ rhetorical approaches tend to view these verses as Paul's own voice and connected to his overarching argument.[530] The following analysis of the structure and argument of 14:26–40 demonstrates the logical and rhetorical integrity of this section.

B. The Rhetorical Integrity of 14:26–40

First Corinthians 14:26–40 provides practical instructions for ordering inspired speech. The section begins with a question—"What then, brothers?"—which signals the

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Diatribe in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20," *BBR* 18.1 (2010): 99–121; Robert von Thaden, *Sex, Christ, and Embodied Cognition: Paul's Wisdom for Corinth* (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo, 2012), 208–213; W. E. Phipps, "Is Paul's Attitude toward Sexual Relations Contained in 1 Cor 7:1?," *NTS* 28:1 (1982): 125–31; Alan Padgett, "Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradictions of Coiffure in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," *JSNT* 20 (1984): 49–86. The last of these reveals how close slogan theories are to interpolation theories: Anything that does not fit a positive image of Paul becomes non-Pauline.

[529] On the derisive nature of the questions, see N. M. Flanagan and E. H. Snyder, "Did Paul Put Down Women in 1 Cor 14:34–36?" *BTB* 11 (1981): 10–12; D. W. Odell-Scott, "Editorial Dilemma: The Interpolation of 1 Cor 14:34–35 in the Western Manuscripts of D, G, and 88," *BTB* 30 (2000): 68–74; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 530–31.

[530] See Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*; Wire, *Corinthian Women Prophets*; Erikkson, "Women Tongue Speakers."

transition from theological argument to practical instruction (cf. 1 Cor 10:19). Paul presents a situation: "Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation." The term συνέρχομαι indicates the gathering of the ἐκκλησία, in which a meal and inspired speech takes place (11:17, 18, 20, 33, 34; 14:23). The list of gifts that each person brings to the gathering resembles the list in 14:6. In 14:6, a revelation, knowledge, prophecy, or teaching provide the potential contents of "speaking in tongues." In 14:26, a psalm, teaching, revelation, tongue, or interpretation are different forms of speaking and included in the list at this point to reiterate that diverse forms of speaking should be channeled into "building up." Paul's lists of "spiritual things" are not stable and do not create rigid taxonomies. His main concern is differentiating between two forms of speaking—tongues and prophecy—as is also the case in these final instructions.

Paul states the thesis for his argument in two ways in vv. 26 and 40, which form an *inclusio* that marks the rhetorical unit. In v. 26, he states his argument in terms used in 14:1–5: "Let all things be for building up" (πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν γινέσθω). Paul reconfigures his thesis at the end of his practical instructions: "Let all things be done decently and in order" (πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω). The restated thesis defines οἰκοδομή: The community "builds up" the ἐκκλησία when decency and order are central values. In three parts, the instructions between vv. 26 and 40 outline how the community embodies these values: (1) for someone who speaks in a tongue (vv. 27–28), (2) for prophets (vv. 29–33), and (3) for women (vv. 34–35). The statements in vv. 36–40 conclude Paul's discourse on speaking in the assembly and imbue his instructions with authority as prophecy and commandment of the Lord.

The arguments differentiating prophecy from speaking in tongues anticipate the first two instructions for "someone who speaks in a tongue" and "prophets." The instructions in vv. 27–28 and 29–33 follow the same basic pattern. First, Paul restricts the number of speakers to "two or three." Second, he affirms the need for interpretation or evaluation. Third, he poses a situation in a conditional clause (ἐὰν δέ) and instructs the speaker in this situation to be silent, using a third-person singular imperative (σιγάτω). Finally, Paul elaborates upon the instruction with rationales that are rooted in his arguments in 12:1–14:25. The third instruction for women shares some vocabulary and features of this argumentative texture; however, the pattern and rationale for this instruction differs.

Order and intelligibility are central to Paul's instructions for speakers in tongues. He emphasizes the number of speakers and their speaking in turn (κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος, 14:27). Moreover, he intertwines speaking in tongues with interpretation. The former should not happen without the latter because of Paul's arguments in 14:1–25. The conditional clause addresses interpretation. If no one in the ἐκκλησία can understand the speaker, he should speak silently to God. After all, the audience for speaking in tongues is God (14:2).

Since it is intelligible, prophecy does not need interpretation; rather, it requires evaluation—"Let the others evaluate (διακρινέτωσαν)." This action is connected to a gift named in 12:10, evaluation of spirits (διακρίσεις πνευμάτων), but Paul does not explain the phrase in either place. "The others" who evaluate may consist of the other prophets or the whole community. The latter is preferable, given the repetition of "all"—all may prophesy, all may learn, all may be encouraged. Paul contrasts the "all" who are active

and built up in prophecy and the "two or at most three" who are active during a message in a tongue. The conditional clause in this instruction deals with the spontaneity of inspiration in prophecy: "If a revelation comes to another who is sitting there, let the first be silent." The passive ἀποκαλυφθῇ shows that the speaker does not control the prophecy; rather, God activates the gift (12:6). A prophet can speak as long as the spirit does not make a revelation to another person.

In v. 31, Paul reiterates the importance of order in the assembly and adds two more positive outcomes of orderly speaking: learning and encouragement of all. Even though a prophet may not be able to control when he receives a revelation or when the spirit activates his gift, "the spirits of prophets are subjected to prophets." In other words, prophecy is not subject to a disorderly, free-flowing spirit because "God is not a god of disorder (ἀκαταστασίας) but of peace." God will not provide revelations so that the assembly is in disarray but does things in order and peace. These characteristics mark true prophecy and the presence of the spirit "in all of the assemblies of the saints."[531]

The third instruction (vv. 34–35) has similarities with the first two that suggest its rhetorical connection to the passage as a whole. At the same time, the differences between the instructions to women and to the other two groups display the distinct issues that underlie Paul's silencing women. This section shares the basic pattern of a third-person imperative followed by a conditional statement that modifies the exhortation. The

[531] Disagreement exists in translations and commentaries about whether v. 33b (ὡς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἁγίων) completes the thought in v. 33a or introduces vv. 34–35. With v. 33a: KJV, NKJV; Barrett, Fee, Fitzmyer, Hays, Murphy-O'Connor, Robertson and Plummer, Schrage. With vv. 34–35: NA[28], RSV, NRSV, ESV, NIV, REB; Allo, Bruce, Collins, Conzelmann, Garland, Grosheide, Holladay, Kistemaker, Kremer, Lindemann, Soards, Thiselton. For citations and discussion, see Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 528–31. The former is preferable because of the textual issues of vv. 34–35. While question exists over the placement of vv. 34–35, v. 33b is not transposed. Moreover, v. 34 includes ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις; if v. 33b is part of the sentence in v. 34, it creates redundancy. If v. 33b completes the instructions to prophets, each instruction refers to the ἐκκλησία as the setting in which these guidelines are carried out.

difference is that the first two instructions begin with permissions for speaking (λαλείτω [implied in 14:27], διερμηνευέτω; λαλείτωσαν, διακρινέτωσαν), whereas the last one begins with the silencing: "Let women be silent (σιγάτωσαν) in the assembly." All three instructions include a third-person imperative of σιγάω. The difference is that in the first two instructions the silencing is singular and placed in the conditional statement; here the verb is plural and non-conditional.

As in the other two instructions, Paul locates speech and silence "in the assemblies" (14:28, 33, 34, 35). Paul moves freely from reference to the singular ἐκκλησία to the plural ἐκκλησίαι. In vv. 33 and 34, as in 11:16, the use of the plural "assemblies" appeals to the customs of the many communities of God. When Paul instructs the silence of prophets in the ἐκκλησία, order, learning, and encouragement provide the rationale (14:31). By contrast, the rationale for the silencing of women is vague: "For it is not permitted for them to speak." The passive voice of the verb obscures the identity of the one who does not permit women's speaking—Paul, God, Christ, or the Corinthians? Scholars often cite the verb ἐπιτρέπω as evidence for the non-Pauline interpolation of vv. 34–35. Paul does not often use the term, which is at home in the thought-world and language of the Pastoral Epistles.[532] The key comparison is 1 Timothy 2:12—διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ᾽ εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but she is to be silent." The influence, however, likely proceeds in the opposite direction: Paul's instruction for women's silence in 1 Corinthians provides the vocabulary for 1 Timothy. The authority Paul gains in later years, which causes authors to write in his name, allows

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[532] Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 246; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 699–710.

1 Timothy to state the instruction in the first-person, "I do not permit." By contrast, Paul does not fully claim his authority when he writes in the passive voice, "It is not permitted."

Paul continues: "But let them be subjected, just as the law also says." The imperative ὑποτασσέσθωσαν complements σιγάτωσαν and picks up vocabulary used in the instructions to prophets. In the case of prophets, "the spirits of prophets are subjected to prophets." This subjection supports the order and peace of the assembly. In the case of women, Paul connects silence and subjection to the law. The reference to the law provides another difficult term that scholars use to support interpolation theories. They argue that Paul does not cite support from the law in this way, but rather he quotes a specific passage (as in 9:8–9; 14:21) or views the law as a negative, cosmic force that is overcome in Christ.[533] This argument reads Paul's statements about law from Romans and Galatians into 1 Corinthians, which is somewhat justified, given 1 Cor 15:56 ("The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law"). The rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians, however, is different; Paul does not have to argue against the practice of the law because it is not the same issue in Corinth as it is in Galatia. He is permitted, therefore, to call on the law as authority for his argument.

What is the law to which Paul refers in v. 34? Given the pervasive current of creation logic and imagery that runs through his instructions for women in Chapter 11, I suggest that Paul has in mind the subjection of the woman after she and the man eat the fruit—"he shall rule over (κυριεύσει) you" (Gen 3:16). The "law" for Paul is Torah,

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[533] Fee, *First Corinthians*, 707; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 515.

including the primeval narratives upon which the society founded rules about male-female relationships.

As is the pattern in the instructions to speakers in tongues and prophets, a conditional statement modifies the imperative: “If they wish to learn something, let them ask their own men at home; for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the assembly.” Again, this statement shares vocabulary with the instructions for prophets: the verb μανθάνω, “learn.” For prophets, orderly speaking leads to everyone learning (ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν, 14:31). For women, Paul relocates learning to the home (ἐν οἴκῳ, 14:35). This verse, like 11:17–34, establishes ἐκκλησία as a space different from household. Different activities occur in ἐκκλησία and οἶκος, and different expectations of people mark these spaces. By moving women’s learning to the home, he contradicts his previous statement that “all may learn” when prophecy occurs. “All” do not learn in the assembly if women must save their learning for home. Paul removes women from the “all” addressed in the first two instructions, and even from the intended audience of the entire discourse about speaking in the assembly. First Corinthians 11:2–16 sets up women and men as addressees of Chapters 12–14: Both pray and prophesy in the ἐκκλησία. Up to 14:34, a Corinthian woman can place herself in Paul’s arguments about how she should prophesy, pray in a tongue, or interpret, and she can assent to or reject his arguments based on her experiences of the spirit and the community. In 14:34–35, Paul establishes “women” as a category of people separate from prophets or those who speak in tongues, and he removes women from the “all” who learn in ἐκκλησία.

Paul concludes his practical instructions in 14:26–40, as well as his entire argument about speaking in the ἐκκλησία, with vv. 36–40, in which he questions the

Corinthians' possession of the word of God (v. 36), reinforces his authority as a prophetic voice (vv. 37–38), and restates his thesis (vv. 39–40). The questions—"Or did the word of God come from you? Or did it come only to you?"—are disjunctive. They do not follow vv. 34–35 well, nor do they continue the thought in v. 33 if vv. 34–35 is read as an interpolation. The questions resemble the outraged questions in 1:13 and 11:22, but they lack explanation or elaboration. Since the questions follow the instructions to women, does Paul address only women or all of the Corinthians? The masculine μόνους, which modifies ὑμᾶς, suggests the latter. Paul's questions regard the origin and destination of the gospel, the word of God. The Corinthians must answer "no" to both questions: To the first, because in Chapters 1–4 Paul reminds them that he brought the gospel to them; to the second, because the Corinthians are aware of the plural ἐκκλησίαι through Paul's letters and the travels of their members. If they can claim the origin of the word of God, or that what they are trying to accomplish is exclusive to them, then the Corinthians need not heed Paul's instructions. Paul questions the Corinthians' authority in matters of inspired speech.

Paul continues to question the Corinthians' authority in the next statement: "If anyone thinks (εἴ τις δοκεῖ) he is a prophet or a spiritual person, let him recognize that what I write to you is a command of the Lord." This is the fourth statement that begins with εἴ τις δοκεῖ and highlights key vocabulary of the letter: σοφός, γνῶσις, φιλόνεικος, προφήτης, and πνευματικός (3:18; 8:2; 11:16; 14:37). "That which I write" refers not only to the instructions for women or to 14:26–36, but to all of Chapters 11–14.[534] Designating his instructions as "commandment of the Lord" provides them with

[534] See Aune, *Prophecy*, 258.

authority.[535] Scholars often consider the next statement—"If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized"—a prophetic statement.[536] Aune suggests that its style is "calculatingly oracular" to reinforce Paul's prophetic authority on the topic of prophecy and spiritual speech.[537] These statements place the audience in a precarious position if they choose to question or disobey Paul's arguments and instructions. His words are commandment and prophecy from God.

The long discourse about speaking in the ἐκκλησία concludes with vv. 39–40. Paul calls his audience "brothers" (ἀδελφοί), a masculine term that also can include women.[538] Paul, however, excludes women from speaking in vv. 34–35, which means that the instruction, "Strive to prophesy and do not prevent speaking in tongues," no longer applies to women. The thesis in v. 40, "Let all things be done decently (εὐσχημόνως) and in order (κατὰ τάξιν)," redefines building up the ἐκκλησία (14:26). Order is Paul's concern for male speakers, as is evident in his instructions for tongue-speakers and prophets. Decency is Paul's concern for women, as is evident in the issue of shame that arises in his instructions in 11:2–16 and 14:34–35.

I argued in Chapter 3 that male authors contemporary to Paul displayed ambivalence toward women's speech: They tended to keep women's speech out of political spaces but affirmed it in religious activities. Part of the ambivalence stemmed from the fact that religious activities often crossed social and spatial boundaries so that women became active in political spaces and on behalf of the community. Women's roles

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[535] Paul uses the term ἐντολή in 7:19, but it is an uncommon term for him. Zuntz, *Text of the Epistles*, 139–40, thinks it is non-Pauline.

[536] Ernst Käsemann, "Sentences of Holy Law in the New Testament," in *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), 68–69, classifies it as a sentence of holy law.

[537] Aune, *Prophecy,* 258.

[538] BDAG s.v. ἀδελφός

in prophecy exacerbated this ambivalence and prompted exaggerated and sexualized images of women prophesying. A similar tension arises for Paul between Chapter 11 and 14. He initially accepts women praying and prophesying, but his unease with the practice is evident in his struggle between hierarchical and interdependent interpretations of the communal body. After he categorizes inspired speech and articulates the priority for order, he reverses his acceptance of women praying and prophesying. Issues that arise in texts about women prophets—the difficulty of interpreting oracular speech and the embodiment of inspiration—lurk behind how he characterizes and categorizes speaking in tongues and prophesying. "Speaking into the air" and "raving as if maddened" do not result in the order and decency that Paul envisions. Paul defines ἐκκλησία space and its activities so that it is not an appropriate setting for women to speak.

III. Conclusion

Paul's argumentative movements in 1 Cor 11–14 allow him to modify his stance on women and men praying and prophesying. First, the distinction between οἶκος and ἐκκλησία, introduced in 11:17–34, foreshadows the same distinction in 14:34–35. This distinction occurs also in Greek and Latin texts that argue against women's speech in public. Second, considering religious experiences and observations in Corinth in 12:1–3 and 14:9–25 may elicit images of women prophesying in contemporary traditions. These popular images were often violent and sexualized, and Paul and the Corinthians may have struggled with this embodied understanding of prophecy. Third, the communal body metaphor in 11:2–16 and 12:12–31 favors a hierarchical rather than interdependent reading when Paul touches on one form of social difference, that between men and women. Finally, Paul orients the Corinthians so that love and building up the ἐκκλησία

are central values that guard against shame in communal gatherings. The cumulative effect of these arguments results in the instructions for order, culminating in “Let women be silent.”

This relationship of 1 Cor 11:2–16 to 14:26–40 and to what comes between has implications for interpreting prophecy and prayer in tongues. Gender is a central issue throughout 1 Corinthians 11–14 and its treatment of inspired speech in the ἐκκλησία, rather than a peripheral issue discussed at the beginning and end of the section. At the beginning and end, the authority and control of female voices is contested. Gender difference exacerbates questions about how God communicates with humans: How does human speech reflect the words and glory of God? What are the mechanics by which the divine being—whether god, angel, or spirit—speaks through women and men and provides them power? Should female voices wield prophetic and spiritual power, especially if women’s speech can be ambiguous and in need of interpretation? In 11:2–16, Paul does not let go of gender distinction in the new creation in Christ. He affirms signs of gender difference and interdependence, which are connected to order and hierarchy in the ἐκκλησία. His discussion of spiritual gifts and speech touches on the messiness and difficulty of discerning and controlling the spirit of God. Because of the disorder and threat of shameful behavior inherent in spiritual speaking, Paul errs on the side of caution and disallows female speech in the assembly.

CONCLUSION

I. Summary: The Gender Dynamics of Inspired Speech

At the beginning of this project, I suggested that an integration of research on gender and inspired speech in First Corinthians would illuminate the exegetical difficulties of 1 Cor 11–14 and the religious speaking practices in Corinth that prompted Paul's arguments. Two critical observations—one exegetical, one comparative—provided the impetus for this proposal: First, on either end of his discussion about spiritual speaking, Paul makes conflicting statements about women's speech in the ἐκκλησία. Second, female prophets spoke for the gods in many ancient Mediterranean oracular temples and literary traditions. These observations are not new, but prior New Testament scholarship has not combined them in a constructive way. Most scholarship has separated the two issues and addressed inspired speech in Chapters 12–14 and gender issues in Chapter 11. Alternatively, when scholars make connections between Greek prophecy and First Corinthians, they uncritically reproduce commonplaces about female prophets and attribute these actions to the prophets at Corinth. Antoinette Wire made a step forward in her rhetorical analysis of First Corinthians and reconstruction of women prophets in Corinth. Her work gestured to the comparative element but did not incorporate other texts to aid in her interpretation of Paul's letters. This dissertation builds on Wire's *Corinthian Women Prophets* by analyzing Paul's arguments within their cultural context.

While the intersection of prophecy and gender identity have not been fully explored in the New Testament and early Christianity, scholars of the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near East have begun such investigation. Johnathan Stökl and Corinne Carvalho,

in *Prophets Male and Female*, argue, "Every prophetic expression was a gendered expression."[539] Within the texts and history that they examine, the authors of the essays in this volume find that different traditions, cultures, or regions in the eastern Mediterranean and Near East had preferences for male, female, or third- or non-gendered prophets, who communicated with and were inspired by male or female gods. The potential causes and implications of these preferences say a lot about the religious practices and gender constructions of the cultures and regions. I suggest that the same can be said for early Christianity within its context in the eastern provinces and cities of the Roman Empire, including Corinth. The issues about women's speech that surface in 1 Corinthians 11–14 are evidence of the centrality of gender in prophecy and inspired speech in the ancient Mediterranean world.

The question, then, is: How was every prophetic expression a gendered expression in the Corinthian context? Throughout the dissertation, I identify two elements that shaped the gender dynamics of inspired speaking practices: spaces and bodies. First, spaces influenced how men and women interacted. In Chapters 2 and 3, I established the connections between space and speech, from archaeological and literary standpoints, respectively. Men expected that women would not be in certain locations. Different spaces—courtrooms, council or assembly halls, marketplaces, forums, temples, and houses—required of women different modes of speaking and often silence. The issue of shame emerged in connection with women's speech in spaces in which men spoke to one another about politics or business. Women, however, crossed the boundaries between these spaces because of their vital roles in religious rituals. Concerns for familial and

[539] Stökl and Carvalho, "Introduction," *Prophets Male and Female*, 8.

political well-being took women into forums, streets, and marketplaces. Archaeological evidence suggests the permeability of the spatial boundaries that male authors outlined and advocated. Furthermore, women's religious actions, especially in prophecy, crossed yet another boundary—that between humans and gods.

In Paul's letter, the spatial dynamic of women's speech becomes manifest in his definition of ἐκκλησία-space as distinct from οἶκος-space. Paul gradually shapes this definition throughout 1 Cor 11–14, especially in 11:17–34 and 14:26–40. Much has been made in scholarship of the "house churches" of early Christianity and women's roles in household management and, therefore, early Christian leadership. Ἐκκλησία, however, is a political term, the "assembly" of voting men in Greek cities. Paul suggests that the Corinthians shape ἐκκλησία space through religious ritual actions and speech. Paul's ἐκκλησία is, therefore, a blended space: It potentially met in households, was named and ordered as a political assembly, and was defined by religious speech and rituals. This blended space results in tension over the proper roles of various actors, especially women, within the space.

Second, issues of bodies and the embodiment of inspiration shaped men and women's inspired speech. In Chapter 4, I demonstrated how discourse about prophecy revolved around the female body as a site of inspiration. For Plutarch, prophetic spirits interacted with human bodies, and both spirits and bodies influenced the resulting oracles and their interpretation. Plutarch wrote from a site at which women were those who experienced inspiration, and his observation of these priestesses resulted in sexualized interpretations of their bodies and their interactions with the male god Apollo. Plutarch is not alone in these interpretations: Many Greek and Latin texts emphasize the prophet's

virginity, her ecstatic state, and the process of prophecy as sexual intercourse with the god. Sibylline traditions pictured the Sibyl as an aging woman—hence, a female body that is undesirable or even frightening. In the *Sibylline Oracles*, God's inspiration occurs internally—in the prophet's heart or breast—and shakes and burns her. This internal, embodied inspiration rarely occurs in the Hebrew Bible or Jewish depictions of male prophets, who tend to receive God's prophecy through their eyes or ears.

Paul does not articulate a sexualized version of prophecy, as texts about Cassandra, the Sibyl, and the Delphic prophet do. He does, however, establish the body—both individual and communal—as the site for inspiration. When Plutarch discusses the language of oracles at Delphi, he is concerned that the change from verse to prose threatened the constancy of the god at the temple. Similarly, Paul addresses the variety of spiritual gifts and what this diversity says about the god that inspires the Corinthians. Like Plutarch, Paul explains this problem by emphasizing the different abilities that individuals have. The same god energizes diverse abilities, including praying in tongues, prophesying, and intepreting inspired speech. For Paul, the metaphor of the community as body bolsters this argument: Just as bodies do, the community simultaneously has unity and variety. Rather than prophetic spirits working on the body of one prophet, Paul envisions a spirit working within a corporate body. Inspiration is a matter of the communal body of Christ speaking in the spirit.

In Corinth, the communal body is both male and female, and gender issues cause Paul to view the communal body variously as hierarchical and interdependent. For Paul, the differences between male and female bodies justify their different roles in the social setting of the ἐκκλησία. The Genesis creation narratives also play a formative role in how

Paul defines gender difference. This difference is connected to and expressed by hairstyles and clothing and by modes of speaking in the assembly.

These spatial and embodied aspects suggest that inspired speech was at its core a performance. Indeed, both prophecy and gender have performative elements. In using the language of "performance," I rely on Judith Butler's theories about gender. Butler argues that gender identity is not natural or ontological but is created daily by the actions of individuals in social and historical situations. She writes:

> Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of a gendered self.[540]

Butler emphasizes the role of the individual in embodying cultural possibilities. Bodies put on clothing and hairstyles, and they use gestures, vocal tone, and language that express social expectations for "woman" or "man." Butler finds similarities between these acts of gender and theatrical acts on a stage, hence the terminology of "performance."[541] Theatrical acts are collectively experienced by an audience. Likewise, gender performances gain meaning through shared interpretation of individual acts. The social agreement of a group to perform and repeat such acts gives them the appearance of naturalness and propriety.[542] The stage upon which these acts take place, moreover, makes all the difference. To demonstrate this, Butler contrasts the reactions that viewers might have to a transvestite in various settings: "The sight of a transvestite onstage can

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[540] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988): 519. Italics original.

[541] Butler, "Performative Acts," 521.

[542] Butler, "Performative Acts," 522.

compel pleasure and applause while the sight of the same transvestite on the seat next to us on a bus can compel fear, rage, even violence."[543] In this example, the transgression of gender norms has distinct implications in different spaces: On stage, where it "belongs," the gender performance is entertaining and subversive, but in ordinary life, social sanctions may lead to negative responses and punishment.

In ancient Greek cities like Corinth, there were cultural scripts for women and men, which included hairstyles, clothing, modes of speaking, and expectations for certain settings or spaces. Likewise, there were cultural scripts for prophets. When he describes a prophet that he meets, Dio Chrysostom expresses his expectations for prophetic performances: "The manner of her prophesying was not that of most men and women who are said to be inspired; she did not gasp for breath, whirl her head about, or try to terrify with her glances, but she spoke with entire self control and moderation" (*1 Regn.* 56). Dio's expectations resemble many of the images of female prophets that I discussed in Chapter 4. Throughout this dissertation, I have shown how these scripts—for prophets and for women—at once clash with and affirm one another. Prophecy is a performance of gender, in which expectations about women and their speech are affirmed but also which takes women out of their typical modes and accepted spaces for speaking. When issues arose in Corinth about gender differentiation and prophetic speech, the issue was not simply that the Corinthians were deviating from one or both cultural scripts. Rather the simultaneous clash and affirmation of scripts for gender and prophecy suggest that in the first century gender roles were never as simple as Livy, Philo, Paul, or Plutarch articulated them.

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[543] Butler, "Performative Acts," 527.

II. Implications of this Research

This dissertation argues that gender is a central issue throughout 1 Corinthians 11–14 and inspired speech in Corinth. This argument has several implications for reading Paul's letters and reconstructing early Christian discourse within its ancient Mediterranean settings. First, I argue that it is imperative to attend to the local religious, social, and cultural landscape of Corinth with material, visual, and literary evidence (Chapter 2). The communities to which Paul wrote were not homogeneous, but they made sense of his teachings and writings through the lens of what they saw and experienced on a daily basis. Paul reminds the Corinthians of this in 1 Cor 12:1–3. When scholars describe an aspect of early Christianity, such as inspired speech or gender roles, it will necessarily differ for Corinth, Ephesos, Galatia, Thessalonica, etc. Archaeological evidence, though fragmentary and difficult to interpret, provides concrete limits to general claims.

Second, I reorient how New Testament scholars situate Paul over and against the culture and society in which he wrote, especially regarding women's roles (Chapter 3). Scholars often characterize the first-century Greek world as constraining women's speech, and Paul as a man influenced by Jewish religion, Greek culture, and Roman values. From this picture, Paul either assimilates or is countercultural in his views of gender relationships. My analysis of authors contemporary to Paul suggests that the tension between accepting and limiting women's speech was common.

Third, my research suggests a more central role of female prophecy in early Christian discourse. There are two corollaries to this statement. First, the rhetorical creation of images of female prophets influenced the collective imagination and concepts

of inspiration and interpretation of divine language (Chapter 4). It is not enough to claim that Corinthian women imitated the frenzied and raving practices of female prophets, and it is wrong to use texts like Plutarch's Delphic dialogues and Lucan's *Civil War* as evidence for these behaviors. Rather, the ways Plutarch and Lucan describe the inspiration, language, and interpretation of female prophecy should be placed in conversation with how Paul discusses the same issues. Second, my suggestion about the prominence of prophetic women in Corinth recasts the significance of other New Testament texts that hint at female prophets. In Acts, the scriptural reference to Joel at Pentecost—"In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy"—may have played a larger, programmatic role in formative Christianity (Acts 2:17). Likewise, the enigmatic prophetic daughters of Philip and the conflict over the "woman with a Pythian spirit," whom Paul silences by exorcising the spirit, may hint at the prevalence of women prophets in early Christian discourse (Acts 16:16–19; 21:8). Seen within this context and trajectory, the female prophets of so-called Montanism, or the New Prophecy, in the second century, may not be such outliers.[544]

Finally, I question exegetical traditions that view Paul as always consistent in his thinking and rhetorical arrangement (Chapters 5 and 6). Paul wrote to real communities that experienced real problems, and he was influenced by limitations of what he knew about them and by his own cultural conditioning. The issues surrounding gender and speech, in particular, cause tension between his worldview and his practical advice. I have produced a new reading of 1 Corinthians 11–14, which focuses less on the

[544] For the oracles of these prophets, see Tertullian, *Res.* 11.2; *Exh. cast.* 8; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 49.1.2–3; 48.2.4; 48.12.4; 48.13.1; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* V.16.17. See Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority, and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996).

contradiction between 1 Cor 11:2–16 and 14:34–35 and more on how Paul's arguments in between these passages cause him to reevaluate his first statement about women's speech. In other words, Paul begins a flawed argument about women's speech in the assembly. After he works through arguments that define ἐκκλησία and the interaction of spirits with bodies in inspired speech, he modifies his original intructions and silences women in the ἐκκλησία. The implication for future scholarship on Paul's letters is that rhetorical approaches should account for his ambivalence and tension over certain ideas, particularly those that touch gender, social differences, and cultural norms.

The study of prophecy in the first-century Mediterranean world indicates a reality different from Paul's "voiceless idols": Gods spoke a lot, and often in the voice of a woman. Since these religious practices and experiences were not separate from social and cultural expectations of men and women, gender dynamics influence how they took place and how authors understood them. For Paul and the Corinthians, prophecy and prayer in tongues was indeed different for a woman.

FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Corinth Site Overview

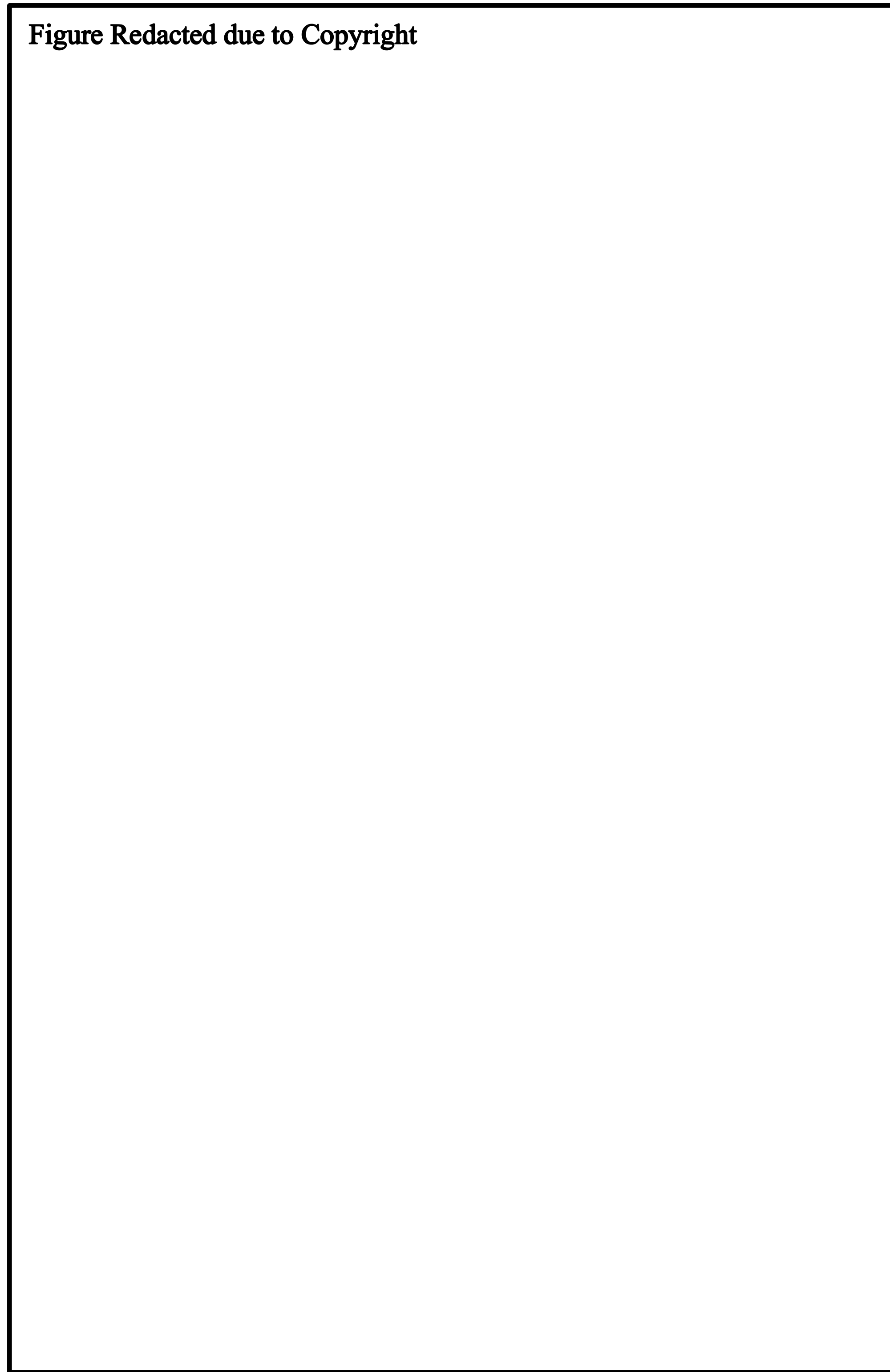


Figure Redacted due to Copyright

Figure 2.2: The Archaeological Site of Corinth

View of the Archaeological Site of Corinth from the East.
Photo by the author, July 2013.

Figure 2.3: Corinth in the Classical Period (5th century B.C.E.)

Figure Redacted due to Copyright

Figure 2.4: Corinth in the Hellenistic Period (2nd century B.C.E.)

Figure 2.5: Corinth in the Roman Period (3rd century C.E.)

Figure 2.6: North Slope of Acrocorinth

The North Slope of Acrocorinth from the forum.
The arrow indicates the location of the Sanctuary of Demeter.
Photo by the author, July 2013.

Figure 2.7: Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in the Hellenistic Period

Figure Redacted due to Copyright

Figure 2.8: Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in the Roman Period

Figure Redacted due to Copyright

Figure 2.9: Curse Tablet no. 125/6

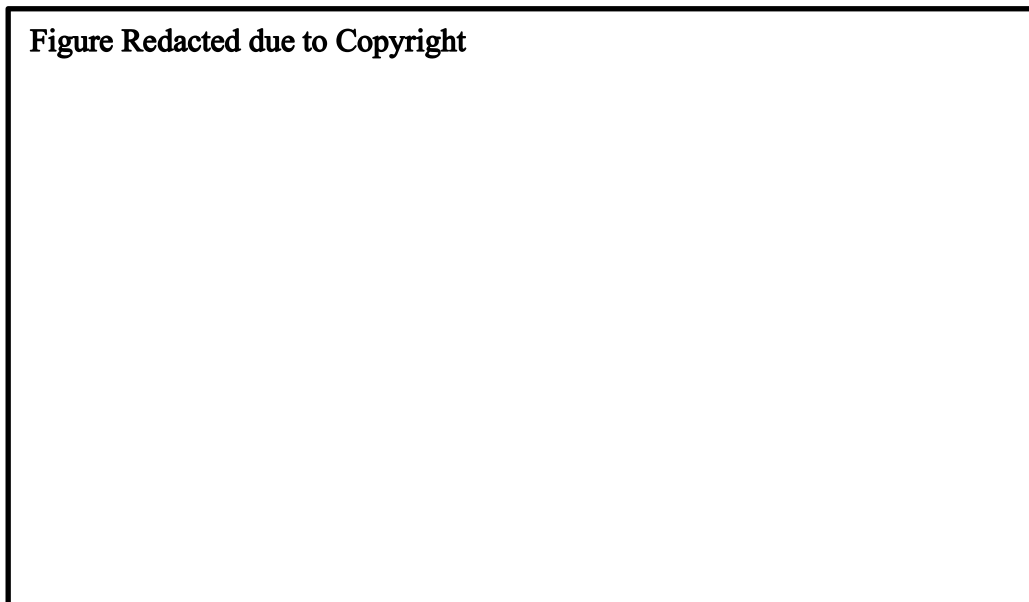


Figure 2.10: Mosaic Floor of Central Temple in the Sanctuary of Demeter

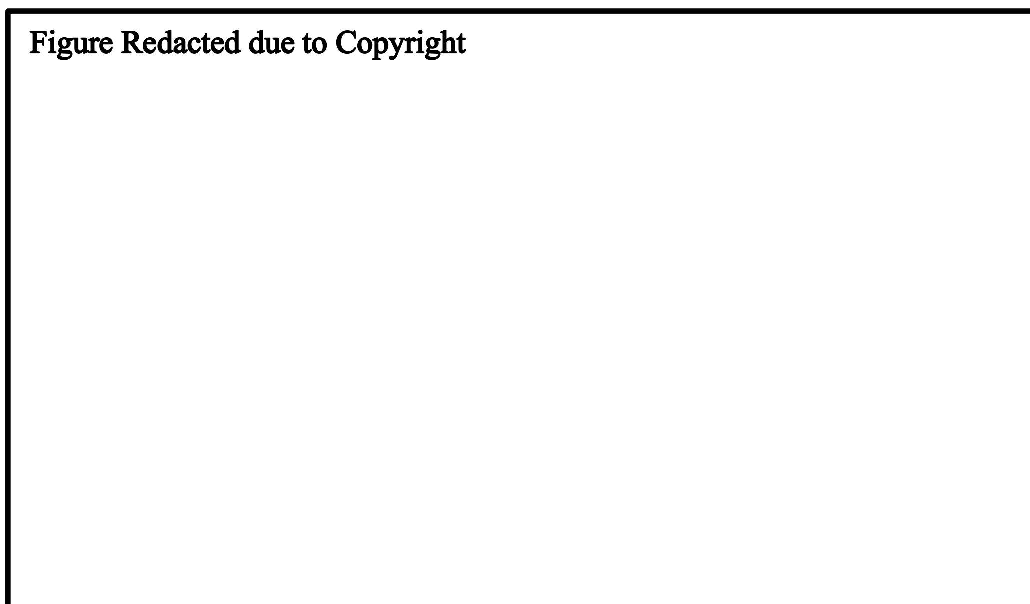
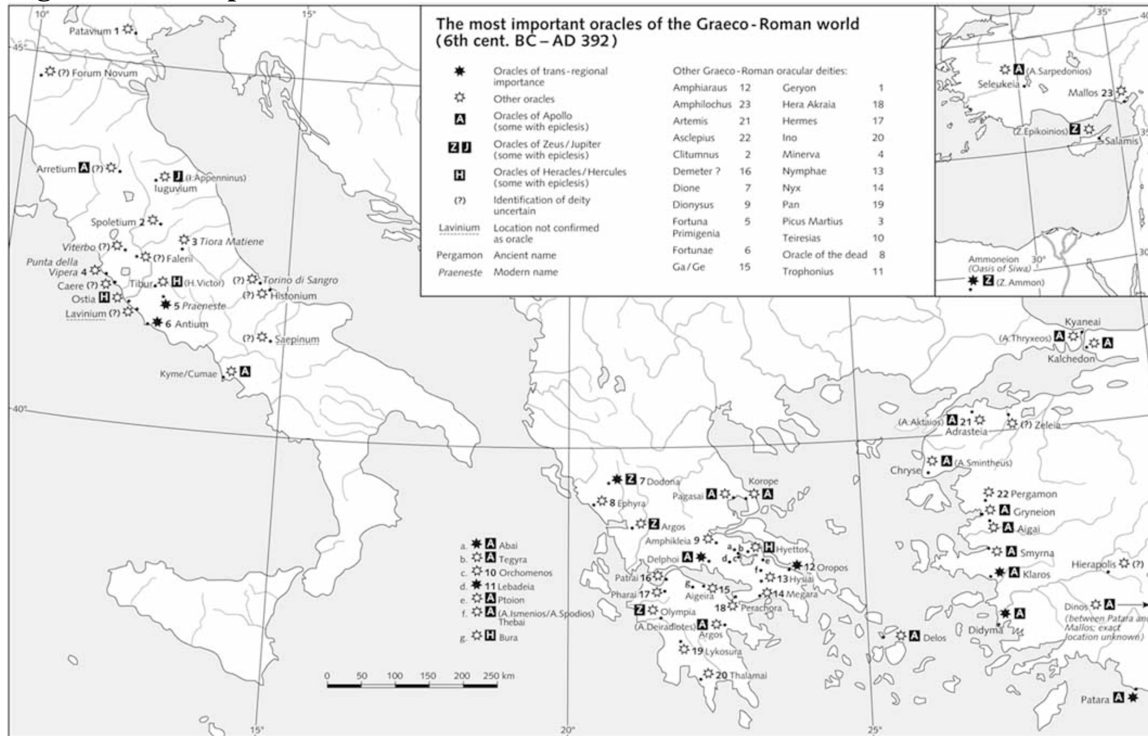


Figure 2.11: Map of Oracle Locations in the Ancient Mediterranean



Source: Brill's New Pauly

© Koninklijke Brill NV

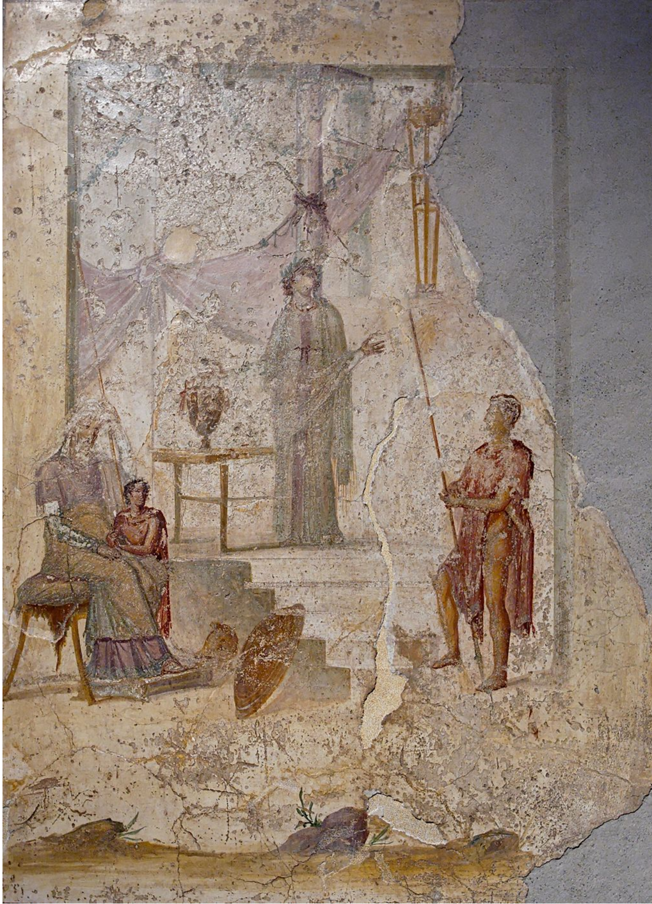
Figure 2.12: The Temple of Apollo at Delphi

Photo by the author, July 2013

Figure 4.1: Themis prophesying for King Aegeus

Attic red-figure kylix by the Codrus Painter. Berlin Ident. Nr. F2538.
© Photo: Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Photographer: Johannes Laurentius

Figure 4.2: Cassandra prophesying

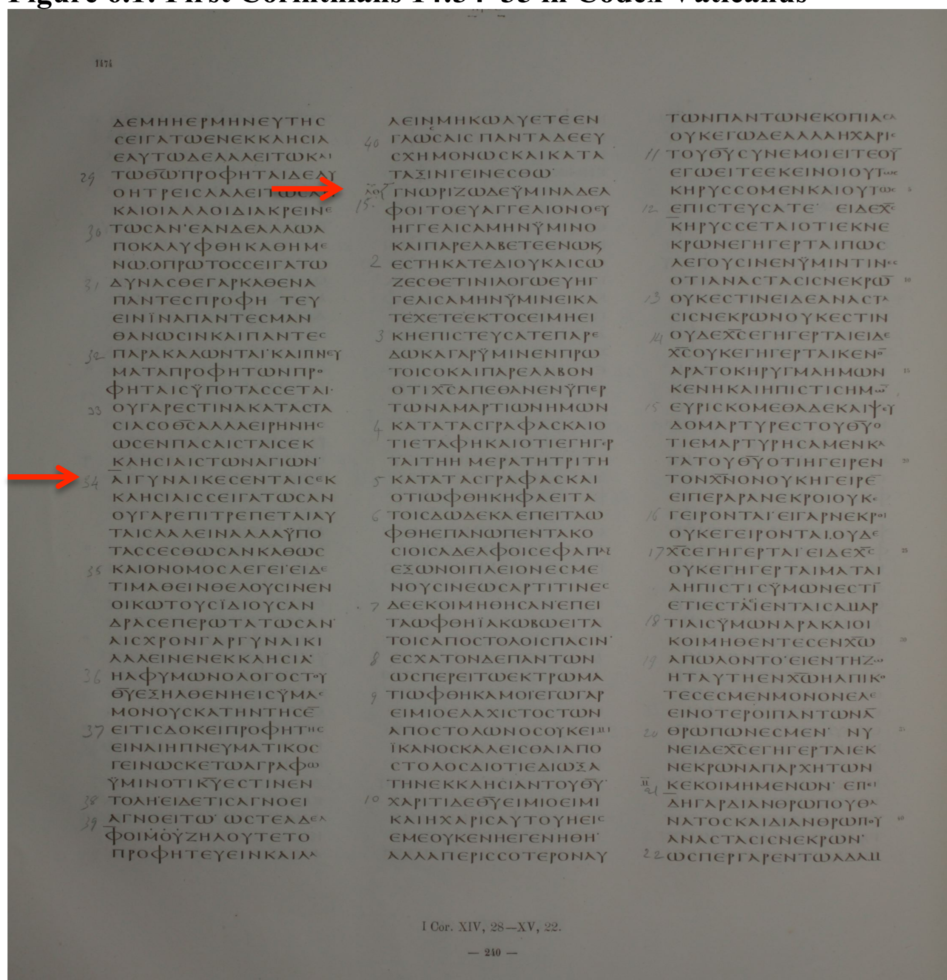


Cassandra draws lots with her right hand and predicts the downfall of Troy for Priam (seated, left), Paris, and a warrior leaning on a spear (Hector?). Fresco, ca. 20–30 CE, from the House of the Metal Grill (I, 2, 28) in Pompeii.
Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. nr. 111476.
Photo in the public domain.

Figure 4.3: Vestal Virgin

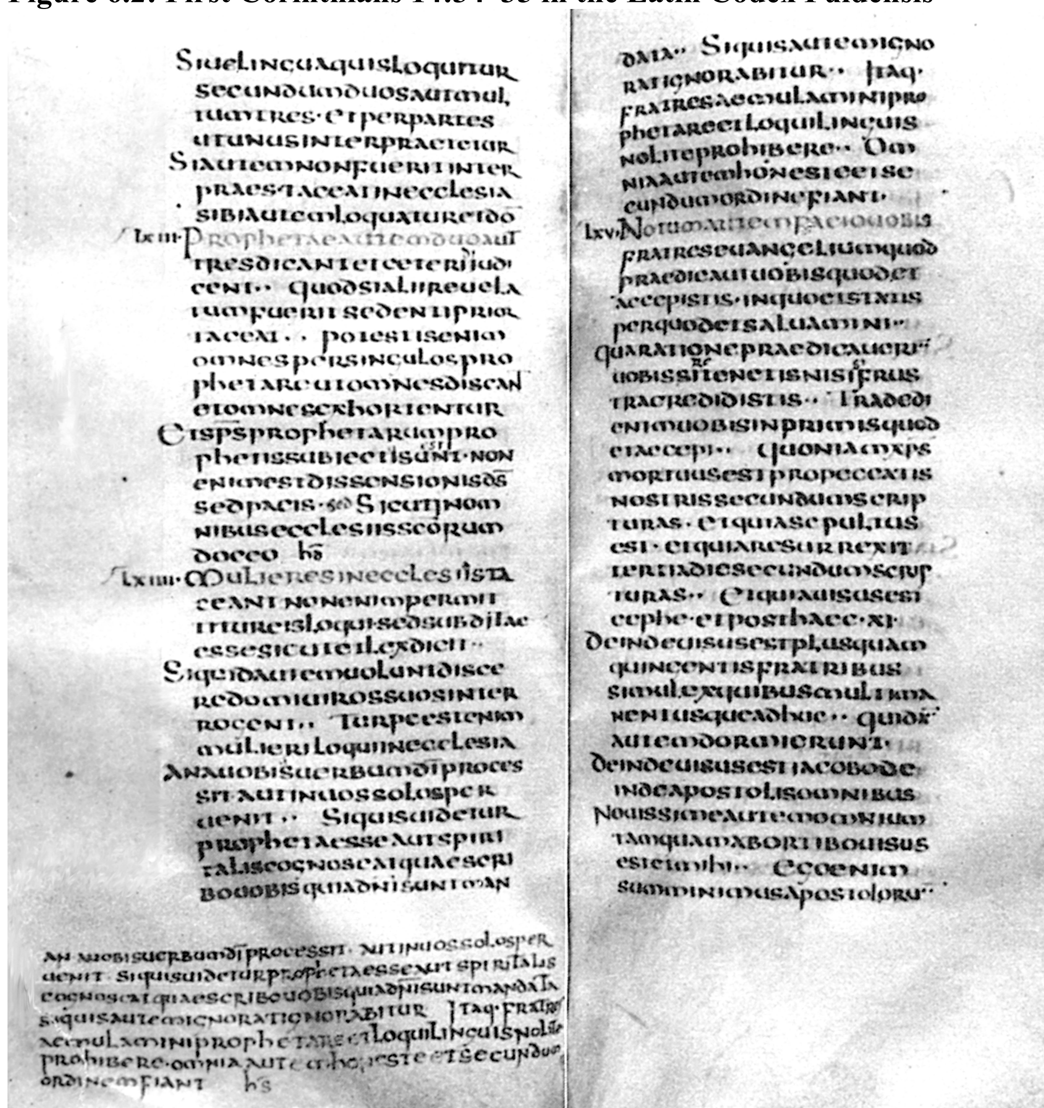
Marble head from a portrait statue of a veiled priestess of the goddess Vesta. Above her hair are six folds of the *infula*, a long woolen band wrapped around the head to hand in two loops, which hand behind the ears. Roman, ca. 2nd century CE.
British Museum Inv. nr. GR 1979.11.89
© Photo: Trustees of the British Museum

Figure 6.1: First Corinthians 14:34–35 in Codex Vaticanus



The “bar-ümlaut” sigla are highlighted with arrows.
Image used by permission from the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (www.csntm.org).

Figure 6.2: First Corinthians 14:34–35 in the Latin Codex Fuldensis



Note vv. 36–40 in the lower margin, and the siglum after v. 33, indicating an alternate placement.
Photo in the public domain.

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